

**ALL'S WELL  
THAT ENDS WELL**

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All's Well That Ends Well by William Shakespeare

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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used is that of the "Cambridge" Edition.*



*Westford of Grover's School*

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BOCCACCIO'S GARDEN AND ITS FERRY,  
THE LOVE, THE JOVAGNUS, AND THE GALLANTRY!  
AN IDYLL, WITH BOCCACCIO'S SPIRIT WARM,  
FRAMED IN THE SILENT POEZY OF FORM.

COLERIDGE: *The Garden of Boccaccio.*

SHAKESPEARE'S  
COMEDY OF  
ALL'S WELL THAT  
ENDS WELL · 52 ·



WITH PREFACE ·  
GLOSSARY · &c · BY ·  
ISRAEL GOLLANCZ ·  
M.A.

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"*There never was, perhaps, a more beautiful picture of a woman's love, cherished in secret, not self-consuming in silent languishment—not pining in thought—not passive and 'desponding over its idol'—but patient and hopeful, strong in its own intensity, and sustained by its own fond faith. The passion here reposes upon itself for all its interest; it derives nothing from art or ornament or circumstance; it has nothing of the picturesque charm or glowing romance of Juliet; nothing of the poetical splendour of Portia, or the vestal grandeur of Isabel. The situation of Helena is the most painful and degrading in which a woman can be placed. She is poor and lowly; she loves a man who is far her superior in rank, who repays her love with indifference, and rejects her hand with scorn. She marries him against his will; he leaves her with contempt on the day of their marriage, and makes his return to her arms depend on conditions apparently impossible. All the circumstances and details with which Helena is surrounded are shocking to our feelings and wounding to our delicacy, and yet the beauty of the character is made to triumph over all; and Shakespeare, resting for effect on its internal resources and its genuine truth and sweetness, has not even availed himself of some extraneous advantages with which Helen is represented in the original story."*

Mrs JAMESON.

Stark's  
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E. D. White  
9-18 11

## Preface.

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The First Editions. *All's Well that Ends Well* appeared for the first time in the First Folio. It is certain that no earlier edition existed; the play was mentioned in the Stationers' Register under Nov. 8th, 1623, among the plays not previously entered. The text of the first edition is corrupt in many places, and gives the impression of having been carelessly printed from an imperfectly revised copy. There is no record of the performance of *All's Well that Ends Well* during Shakespeare's lifetime; the earliest theatrical notices belong to the middle of the eighteenth century.

The Date of Composition. The remarkable incongruity of style characteristic of *All's Well that Ends Well*—the striking contrast of mature and early work—can only be accounted for by regarding the play as a recast of an earlier version of the comedy. Rhyming lines, the sonnet-like letters, the lyrical dialogues and speeches, remind the reader of such a play as *Love's Labour's Lost*. The following passages have not inaptly been described as 'boulders from the old strata embedded in the later deposits':—Act I. i. 231-244; I. iii. 134-142; II. i. 132-213; II. iii. 78-111, 131-151; III. iv. 4-17; IV. iii. 252-260; V. iii. 60-72, 325-340.

It seems very probable, almost certain, that the play is a revision of '*Love's Labours Wonne*,' mentioned by Meres in his *Palladis*

*Tamias* (1598). '*Love's Labour's Waste*' has been variously identified by scholars with *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*. A strong case can, however, be made for the present play, and there is perhaps an allusion to the old title in Helena's words (V. lil. 314, 315):—

' *This is done;*  
*Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?*'

The play was probably originally a companion play to *Love's Labour's Lost*, and was written about the years 1590-92. It may well have belonged to the group of early comedies. The story, divested of its tragic intensity, may perhaps link it to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; the original Helena may have been a twin-sister to the 'Helena' of the '*Dream*'; the diction and metre throughout may have resembled the passages to which attention has already been called.

There is no very definite evidence for the date of the revision of the play. The links which connect it with *Hamlet* are unmistakable; the Countess's advice to Bertram anticipates Polonius's advice to Laertes; Helena's strength of will and clearness of purpose make her a sort of counterpart to Hamlet, as she herself says:—

' *Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,*  
*Which we ascribe to heaven; the fated sky*  
*Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull*  
*Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull,*  
(L. i. 231-4).

Furthermore, the name 'Corambus' (IV. iii. 185) recalls the 'Corambis' of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*; similarly the name 'Escalus' is the name of the Governor in *Measure for Measure*. In the latter play, indeed, we have almost the same situation