

**THE PLEA OF THE
MIDSUMMER FAIRIES, HERO
AND LEANDER, LYCUS THE
CENTAUR, AND OTHER POEMS**

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The plea of the midsummer fairies, Hero and Leander, Lycus the Centaur, and other poems by
Thomas Hood

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THOMAS HOOD

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P L E A
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HERO AND LEANDER,
LYCUS THE CENTAUR,

AND
OTHER POEMS

By THOMAS HOOD,
AUTHOR OF "WHIMS AND ODDITIES," ETC. ETC.

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THE
P L E A
OF
THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES.



to

CHARLES LAMB, Esq.

My dear Friend.

I THANK my literary fortune that I am not reduced, like many better wits, to barter dedications, for the hope or promise of patronage, with some nominally great man; but that where true affection points, and honest respect, I am free to gratify my head and heart by a sincere inscription. An intimacy and dearness, worthy of a much earlier date than our acquaintance can refer to, direct me at once to your name: and with this acknowledgment of your ever kind feeling towards me, I desire to record a respect and admiration for you as a writer, which no one acquainted with our literature, save Elia himself, will think disproportionate or misplaced. If I had not these better reasons to govern me, I should be guided to the same selection by your intense yet critical relish for the works of our great Dramatist, and for that favourite play in particular which has furnished the subject of my verses.

It is my design, in the following Poem, to celebrate, by an allegory, that immortality which Shakspeare has conferred on the Fairy mythology by his *Midsommer Night's Dream*. But for him, those pretty children of our childhood would leave barely their names to our maturer years; they belong, as the mites upon the plumb, to the bloom of fancy, a thing generally too frail and beautiful to withstand the rude handling of time: but the Poet has made this most perishable part of the mind's creation equal to the most enduring; he has so intertwined the Elfin with human sympathies, and linked them by so many delightful associations with the productions of nature, that they are as real to the mind's eye, as their green magical circles to the outer sense.

It would have been a pity for such a race to go extinct, even though they were but as the butterflies that hover about the leaves and blossoms of the visible world.

I am, my dear Friend,

Yours most truly,

T. HOOD.