

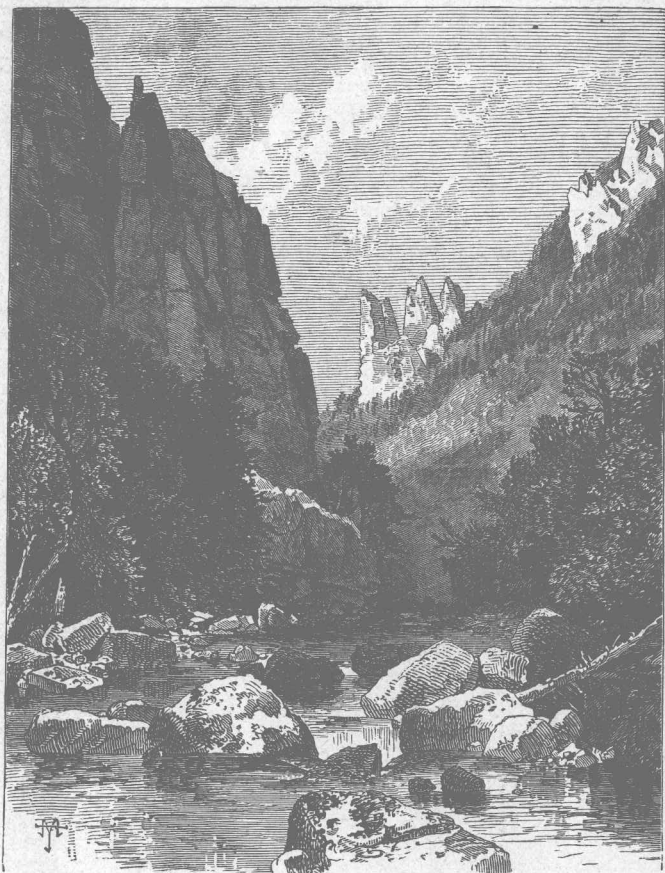




SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY  
OF  
THE WINTER'S TALE



5  
mb



VALLEY IN BOHEMIA.

5  
mb

SHAKESPEARE'S  
COMEDY OF  
THE WINTER'S TALE.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, LITT. D.,

FORMERLY HEAD MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

*WITH ENGRAVINGS.*



NEW YORK .. CINCINNATI .. CHICAGO  
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

# ENGLISH CLASSICS.

EDITED BY WM. J. ROLFE, LITT. D.

Illustrated. 12mo, Cloth, 56 cents per volume.

## SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS.

The Merchant of Venice.  
Othello.  
Julius Cæsar.  
A Midsummer-Night's Dream.  
Macbeth.  
Hamlet.  
Much Ado about Nothing.  
Romeo and Juliet.  
As You Like It.  
The Tempest.  
Twelfth Night.  
The Winter's Tale.  
King John.  
Richard II.  
Henry IV. Part I.  
Henry IV. Part II.  
Henry V.  
Henry VI. Part I.  
Henry VI. Part II.  
Henry VI. Part III.

Richard III.  
Henry VIII.  
King Lear.  
The Taming of the Shrew.  
All's Well that Ends Well.  
Coriolanus.  
The Comedy of Errors.  
Cymbeline.  
Antony and Cleopatra.  
Measure for Measure.  
Merry Wives of Windsor.  
Love's Labour's Lost.  
Two Gentlemen of Verona.  
Timon of Athens.  
Troilus and Cressida.  
Pericles, Prince of Tyre.  
The Two Noble Kinsmen.  
Venus and Adonis, Lucrece, etc.  
Sonnets.  
Titus Andronicus.

GOLDSMITH'S SELECT POEMS.

GRAY'S SELECT POEMS.

MINOR POEMS OF JOHN MILTON.

BROWNING'S SELECT POEMS.

BROWNING'S SELECT DRAMAS.

MACAULAY'S LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME

WORDSWORTH'S SELECT POEMS.

LAMBS' TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES.

LAMBS' TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES.

EDITED BY WM. J. ROLFE, LITT. D.

Illustrated. Cloth, 12mo, 50 cents per volume.

Copyright, 1879 and 1898, by HARPER & BROTHERS.

Copyright, 1907, by WILLIAM J. ROLFE.

The Winter's Tale.

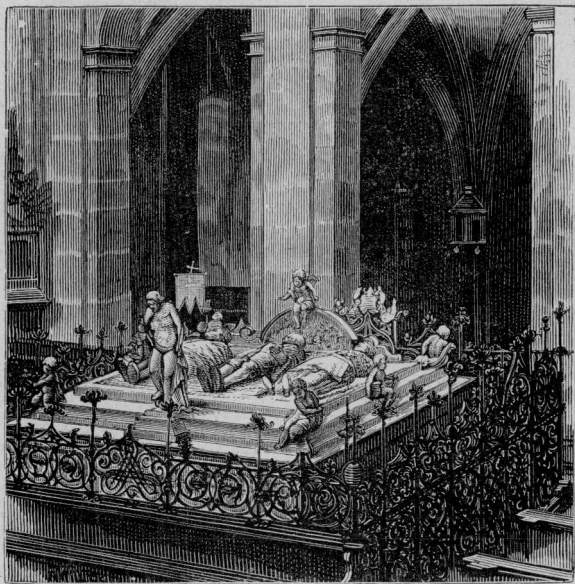
W. P. 12

## CONTENTS.

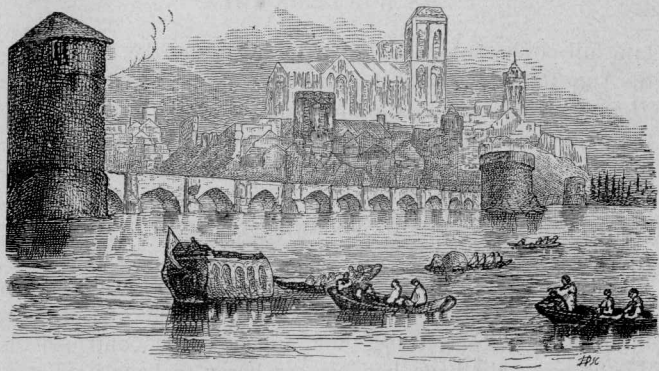
---

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO THE WINTER'S TALE.....	9
I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.....	9
II. THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT.....	12
III. CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE PLAY.....	13
THE WINTER'S TALE.....	39
ACT I.....	41
" II.....	59
" III.....	76
" IV.....	90
" V.....	124
NOTES.....	145





ROYAL MAUSOLEUM IN THE CATHEDRAL AT PRAGUE.



A SEAPORT IN BOHEMIA.

What country, friends, is this? (*T. V. i. 2. 1*).

## INTRODUCTION

### TO

# THE WINTER'S TALE.

---

#### I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

*The Winter's Tale*, so far as we have any knowledge, was first printed in the folio of 1623, where it is the last of the "Comedies," occupying pages 277 to 303 inclusive.

Malone found a memorandum in the *Office Book* of Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, which he gives (see Var. of 1821, vol. iii. p. 229) as follows:

"For the king's players. An olde playe called Winter's Tale, formerly allowed of by Sir George Bucke, and likewise by mee on Mr. Hemmings his worde that there was nothing profane added or reformed, thogh the allowed booke was missinge, and therefore I returned it without a fee, this 19 of August, 1623."

Malone also discovered that Sir George Buck did not ob-

tain full possession of his office as Master of the Revels until August, 1610;\* and he therefore conjectured that *The Winter's Tale* "was originally licensed in the latter part of that year or the beginning of the next." This date is confirmed by the MS. Diary of Dr. Simon Forman, since discovered (see our ed. of *Richard II.* p. 13, and cf. *M. N. D.* p. 10), which contains the following reference to the acting of "the Winters Talle at the glob, 1611, the 15 of maye:"†

"Obserue ther howe Lyontes the kinge of Cicillia was overcom with Ielosity of his wife, with the kinge of Bohemia, his frind, that came to see him, and howe he contriued his death, and wold haue had his cup-berer to haue poisoned, [*sic*] who gaue the king of bohemia warning ther-of, & fled with him to bohemia / Remember also howe he sent to the Orakell of appollo, & the Aunswer of apollo that she was giltles, and that the king was Ielouse, &c, and howe Except the child was found Again that was loste, the kinge should die with-out yssue, for the child was caried into bohemia, & ther laid in a forrest, & brought vp by a sheppard. And the kinge of bohemia his sonn married that wentch, & howe they fled in Cicillia to Leontes, and the sheppard hauing showed the letter of the nobleman by whom Leontes sent a [*sic*] was that child, and the Iewelless found about her. she was knownen to be leontes daughter, and was then 16 yers old.

Remember also the Rog. that cam in all tottered like coll pixci / and howe he feyned him sicke & to haue bin Robbed of all that he had, and how he cosoned the por man of all his money, and after cam to the shop sher‡ with a pedlers packe, & ther cosoned them Again of all ther money. And howe he changed apparrell with the kinge of

\* The *Stationers' Registers* show, however, that he had practically the control of the office from the year 1607.

† We give the passage as printed in the *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society*, 1875-76, p. 416.

‡ That is, sheep-shearing.

bomia his sonn, and then howe he turned Courtiar, &c / beware of trustinge feined beggars or fawninge fellouse."

The following entry in the *Accounts of the Revels*, quoted by most of the editors, has been proved to be a forgery, like the similar entries concerning *The Tempest* (see our ed. p. 8), *The Merchant of Venice* (p. 19), and other of Shakespeare's plays, but it is based upon correct information :

The Kings players.	The 5th of Nouember [1611]; A play called y <sup>e</sup> winters nightes Tayle.
-----------------------	--

The internal tests, metrical, æsthetic, and other, all tend to show that the play was one of the poet's last productions. Dowden (*Shakspeare Primer*, p. 151), says of it: "The versification is that of Shakspeare's latest group of plays; no five-measure lines are rhymed; run-on lines and double-endings are numerous. The tone and feeling of *The Winter's Tale* place it in the same period with *The Tempest* and *Cymbeline*; its breezy air is surely that which blew over Warwickshire fields upon Shakspeare now returned to Stratford; its country lads and lasses, and their junketings, are those with which the poet had in a happy spirit renewed his acquaintance. This is perhaps the last complete play that Shakspeare wrote."

It may be noted here that Ben Jonson has a little fling at *The Winter's Tale* in the Induction of his *Bartholomew Fair*, published in 1614: "If there be never a Servant-Monster i' the fayre, who can helpe it, he sayes; nor a nest of Antiques? He is loth to make nature afraid in his playes, like those that beget Tales, Tempests, and such like Droleries." The "antiques," or *antics*, are evidently the dancing Satyrs of iv. 4, as the "servant-monster" is the Caliban of *The Tempest* (see our ed. of that play, p. 8).

*The Winter's Tale* is one of the most carefully printed plays in the folio, even the punctuation being exceptionally accurate. The style presents unusual difficulties, being more elliptical, involved, and perplexing than that of any other

work of Shakespeare's. Under the circumstances, as White remarks, "it is rather surprising that the text has come down to us in so pure a state; and the absolute incomprehensibility of one or two passages may safely be attributed to the attempt, on the part of the printers, to correct that which they thought corrupt in their copy, but which was only obscure."

## II. THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT.

The story of *The Winter's Tale* is taken from Robert Greene's *History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, which appeared first in 1588, under the title of *Pandosto*, and passed through several editions. Shakespeare follows the novel in most particulars, but varies from it in a few of some importance. For instance, in the story as told by Greene, Bellaria (Hermione) dies upon hearing of the loss of her son; and Pandosto (Leontes) falls in love with his own daughter, and is finally seized with a kind of melancholy or madness, in which he kills himself. The poet appears to have changed the *dénouement* because he was writing a comedy, not a tragedy.

One of the minor incidents may possibly have been altered for another reason. In *Pandosto* the daughter of the king is cast adrift at sea in a rudderless boat. Collier suggests that this was changed in *The Winter's Tale* because in *The Tempest* the same incident had already been used in the case of Prospero and Miranda. The two plays are undoubtedly of nearly the same date, but, as Gervinus observes, this alteration in the story does not prove that *The Tempest* was written first, but only indicates that the plan of both pieces was sketched at the same time.

We need hardly add that the poet's indebtedness to the novelist, as in so many other cases of the kind, is really insignificant. "Whatever the merits of Greene's work—and it is a good tale of its sort and its time, though clumsily and pedantically told—they are altogether different in kind (we

will not consider the question of degree) from the merits of Shakespeare. In characterization of personages the tale is notably coarse and commonplace, in thought arid and barren, and in language alternately meagre and inflated; whereas there are few more remarkable creations in all literature than Hermione, Perdita, Autolycus, Paulina, not to notice minor characters; and its teeming wealth of wisdom, and the daring and dainty beauty of its poetry, give the play a high place in the second rank of Shakespeare's works. Briefly, it is the old story over again: the dry stick that seems to bloom and blossom is but hidden by the leafy luxuriance and floral splendour of the plant that has been trained upon it" (White).

### III. CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE PLAY.

[*From Ulrici's "Shakspeare's Dramatic Art."*\*]

The general foundation and plan of the whole—the jealousy of Leontes, the seclusion of the Queen and the repentance of her husband, the young Prince's love for the exceedingly beautiful shepherdess, etc.—although unusual, are nevertheless in accordance with reality; the characters, also, are consistently developed, without sudden changes and psychological improbabilities. Individual features, however, are all the more fantastic. We have here the full sway of accident and caprice in the concatenation of events, circumstances, and relations; every thing is removed from common experience. Not only is Delphos spoken of as an island and Bohemia as a maritime country (local reality, therefore, disregarded), but the reality of time also is completely set aside, inasmuch as the Delphic oracle is made to exist contemporaneously with Russian emperors and the great painter Julio Romano; in fact, the heroic age and the times of chivalry, the ancient customs of mythical religion, and

\* *Shakspeare's Dramatic Art*, by Dr. Hermann Ulrici; translated by L. D. Schmitz (London, 1876), vol. ii. p. 30 fol. (by permission).



Christianity with its institutions are brought together *sans cérémonie*. It is a matter of accident that the death of the Crown Prince is announced simultaneously with the utterance of the oracle, and that the condition of the Queen appears like actual death. It is purely an accident that the babe is saved at the very moment that the nobleman who exposed it is torn to pieces by a bear, and that his ship, with all on board, is lost, so that no tidings could be carried back to Sicilia. It is mere accident that the young Prince of Bohemia strays into woods, and meets the shepherds with whom the Princess is living. In the end similar freaks of chance repair the results of the first accidents, bring all the dramatic personages together in Sicilia, put every thing into its proper order, and bring about a happy conclusion. As, therefore, the unreal, the fantastic, is here expressed in individual features rather than in the general fundamental relations of the play, so it is also more the interaction of external matters of chance that governs the whole and solves the contradiction of opinions and intentions, of deeds and events; thus, in spite of all the apparent impossibilities, that which is rational and right is ultimately brought about.

It is just this sovereignty of eternal contingency, however, that gives the play the character of a tale and its title. For pure contingency—in its outward, objective form, which, as such, interrupts the order of nature, the given disposition of time and space, the causal connection of things, and comes in between like a foreign element—stands in the closest affinity to the idea of the marvellous. A tale or fairy tale, however, does not, as might be supposed, assume the wonderful merely as a form or outward dress; the wonderful is rather an essential element in it, because it is itself essentially based upon the *mystic* view of things, which looks upon life only as the outward form of a deep, unrevealable mystery, to which every thing, therefore, appears an inexplicable wonder. Accordingly, that which in common life—in our

ignorance of its cause and necessity—we call chance, is made the ruling principle of the tale or fairy tale, and, in order that the principle, as such, may also be clearly and distinctly brought forward, it presents itself in strange, arbitrary, and fantastic shapes, in outward forms opposed to common reality. What is fairy-tale-like in character is, on this very account, a legitimate ingredient in the comic view of life, *but only in the comic view*; a tragic fairy tale would be a poetical monstrosity.\* In *The Winter's Tale*, however, Shakspeare has not opened up the whole region of the marvellous; he has described the wonderful, not so much in its outer form as in its ideal nature and character. In fact, it exists here only in the incomprehensibility of outward contingency and the mysterious connection of the latter with the actions and fortunes of the dramatic characters. By thus modifying the idea Shakspeare has brought the whole nearer to the common reality of life, and enhances the effect by the greater illusion, for, in fact, a tale gains in poetic beauty when the representation of the marvellous is introduced noiselessly, as if it were the most ordinary of occurrences.

Shakspeare has here again, I think, intimated by the title of his play in what sense he took up and worked upon Greene's romance. He could hardly have intended merely to dramatize a traditional tale; the play is not called "*A Winter's Tale*," but "*The Winter's Tale*." The poet's intention here was again, as it were, to hold the mirror up to nature, to show the body of the time its pressure. In other words, he wished to show that from a certain point of view life itself appears like a strange, cheerful, and yet eerie winter's tale—a tale told to a circle of poetically disposed listeners gathered round the flickering fireside of a peaceful, happy home, on a raw winter's night, by a master in the art of story-telling, while the atmosphere of the warm, secure,

\* Accordingly the alterations which Shakspeare made in Greene's novel were artistically necessary.



and joyous assembly mixes with the terrors of the adventures narrated, and with the cold, dismal night outside. It becomes this solely by the mysterious veil that envelops the power of chance which is spread over the whole. It is cheerful because through this veil we everywhere get a glimmer of the light of a future which is leading all towards what is good, and because we everywhere feel that the dismal darkness of the present will be cleared off by a necessity which, even though equally dark, is internal. And yet a gentle shudder runs through our frame . . . when we behold how, owing to the mysterious connection in the power of evil, mischief follows close upon the footsteps of sin, threatening the welfare of the whole kingdom; and again when we behold how accident, as the avenging angel, seizes and destroys even the unwilling tools of crime, and how this complication of crimes even threatens to disturb the peaceful, innocent happiness of the old shepherd and his family.

It is self-evident that when life appears like a strange winter's tale, the conception cannot and should not be regarded as the plain and absolute truth. Shakspeare's intention was rather to set forward but one side, one element of the whole which is but little taken into consideration. And, in fact, this view of life contains the profound truth that life does not present itself to man only in its undimmed transparency and perfect clearness, like a bright, cheerful summer's day, but that it is enveloped in a mysterious, irremovable veil, and governed by a power that cannot always be recognized. Shakspeare does not forget to point to the fact that the only means a man has of protecting himself from this dark power is by strict adherence to the moral law and to the ethical order of the universe, and that, on the other hand, he inevitably falls a prey to it by wandering from the right path, by passion and want of self-control, and thus becomes a play-ball to its good or bad humours.