

SHAKESPEARE'S
COMEDY OF
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

EDITED, WITH NOTES,
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WITH ENGRAVINGS.



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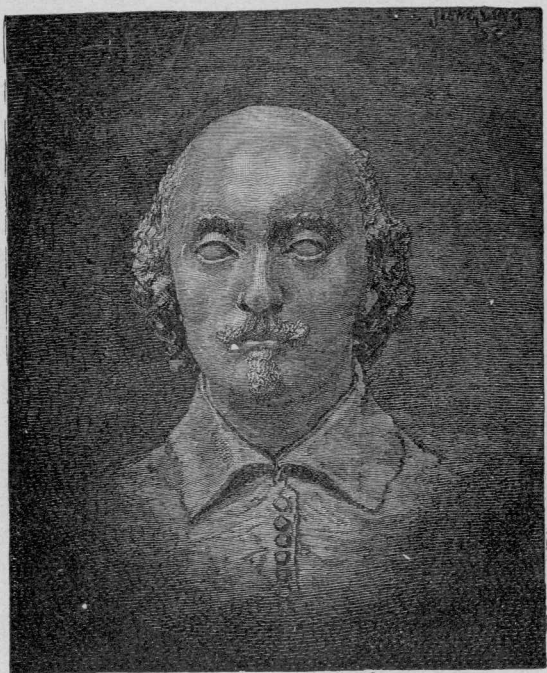
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Taming of the Shrew

W. P. 13



BUST OF SHAKESPEARE, BY W. R. O'DONOVAN.

PREFACE.

The Taming of the Shrew is one of the most interesting of the plays, from the fact that it is not wholly Shakespeare's, and that we have the earlier play from which he took the main incidents of his plot, as well as some minor details of the action and occasionally the very phraseology. In the *Notes* I have quoted more of this old play than any other editor has given (except Halliwell, who reprints the whole of it in his great folio edition), in order that the reader may see just how Shakespeare has made use of it. The comic parts of it have considerable merit, but the serious or sentimental portions are generally poor, sometimes very poor. Shakespeare helped himself freely to the former where they suited his purpose, but the latter he used scarcely at all. For instance, in iv. 3 and iv. 5 he followed the old play quite closely, as the extracts on pages 159, 161, and 166 will show; and so, too, in the final scene until we come to Kate's long speech (136-179), where he gives us something all his own and in keeping with the character, instead of the pedantic homily (see page 171) on the creation of the world and of man, with which the earlier Kate is absurdly made to address her sisters. This is but one illustration out of many that might be cited to show how Shakespeare has bettered the characterization of the old play, not only by making the personages consistent with themselves, but also by lifting them to a higher plane of humanity. Kate, "curst" though she be, is not the vulgar vixen the earlier playwright made her; and Petruchio, if "not a gentleman," judged by the standard of our day (see p. 27 below), is much nearer being one than his prototype Ferando. The two Kates are tamed by the very same methods, but in the case of the first we miss all the subtle touches that show the result to be a genuine "moral reform" (compare the quotation from Clarke, p. 161 below), and make us feel

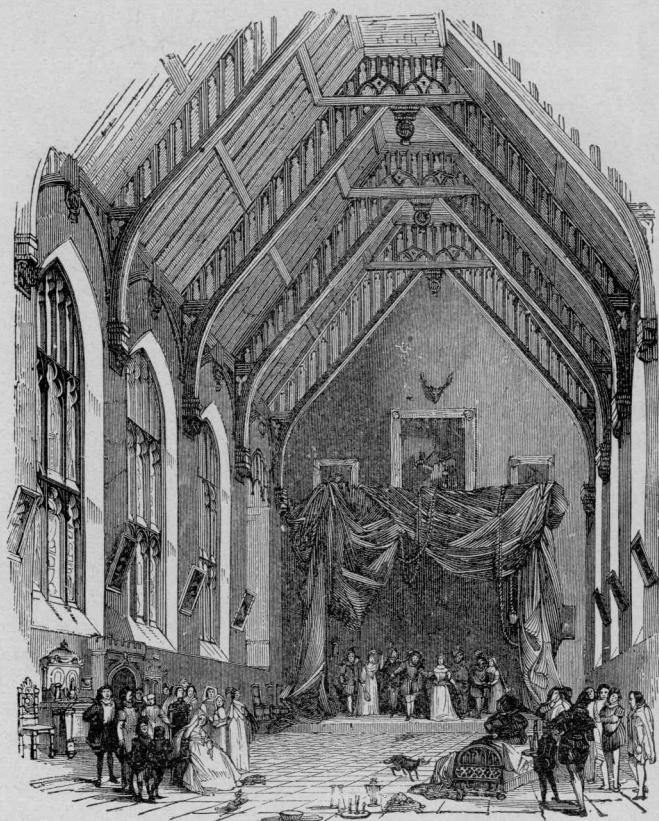
that the Shrew has learned to love her conqueror as well as to respect him—"taming her wild *heart* to his *loving* hand," as Beatrice expresses it.

The extracts from *The Taming of a Shrew* are copied verbatim from the reprint published by the Shakespeare Society in 1844. I have preferred not to modernize the spelling and pointing, as most of the editors have done, because the original is an interesting specimen of the printing of the time. The proof-reader, like Quince in his prologue, does not "stand upon points," and consequently the text is often "like a tangled chain, nothing impaired, but all disordered." The reader will no doubt find some amusement in disentangling it.

The illustrations on pages 8, 9, 41, 56, 71, 72, 84, 107, and 108 are from Knight's "Pictorial Shakspeare." The views of the town-house and the church of St. Giustina (completed in 1549, and still standing) at Padua are copied by Knight from the "Storia Dimostrazione della Città di Padova," 1767. That of Pisa is from a print by Franciscus of Milan, 1705, but the famous *quattro fabbriche* look just as they do to-day. The Prato della Valle (now known as the Piazza di Vittorio Emmanuele) is from Piranesi, 1786; and the Gymnasium from an old print in the King's Library, British Museum.

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ITINERANT PLAYERS IN A COUNTRY HALL.



WINCOT.

INTRODUCTION
TO
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

The Taming of the Shrew was first printed, so far as we know, in the folio of 1623, where it occupies pages 208–229 in the division of “Comedies.” A quarto edition appeared in 1631 with the following title-page, which we transcribe

from one of the copies in the Barton collection, Boston Public Library:

A WITTIE | AND PLEASANT | COMEDIE | Called |
The Taming of the Shrew. | As it was acted by his Maiesties |
Seruants at the Blacke Friers | and the Globe. | *Written by*
 Will. Shakespeare. | *LONDON,* | Printed by *W. S.* for *Iohn*
Smethwicke, and are to be | sold at his Shop in Saint *Dunstones*
 Church- | yard, vnder the Diall. | 1631.

Collier (2d ed.) maintains that this quarto was printed long before 1623, perhaps as early as 1607 or 1609, that its publication was "stayed" for some reason, and that a remnant of the edition was brought out by Smethwicke in 1631 with a new title-page; but, according to the Cambridge editors, an examination of Capell's copy shows that "the title forms part of the first quire, and has not been inserted," and "the paper on which it is printed is the same as that used for the rest of the play." A minute comparison of the quarto with the folio proves that the former was printed from the latter.

The Taming of the Shrew is evidently an adaptation of an earlier play published anonymously in 1594 under the title of "A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew," which had been "sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembrook his seruants."* Fleay believes that this old play was written by Marlowe and Shakespeare in conjunction in 1589, but the critics generally agree that the latter had no hand in it. They also agree that somebody besides Shakespeare had a hand in the revision of the play. We are inclined to adopt the theory of Furnivall and Dowden that *The Taming of the Shrew* is Shakespeare's adaptation, not of the original *Taming of a Shrew*, but of an enlarged version of that play made by some unknown writer. As Furnivall puts it, "an adapter, who

* Reprinted by Steevens in 1776, and by the Shakespeare Society in 1844.

used at least ten bits of Marlowe in it, first recast the old play, and then Shakspeare put into the recast the scenes in which Katherina, Petruchio, and Grumio appear." Dowden remarks: "In *The Taming of the Shrew* we may distinguish three parts: (1) the humorous Induction, in which Sly, the drunken tinker, is the chief person; (2) a comedy of character, the Shrew and her tamer Petruchio being the hero and heroine; (3) a comedy of intrigue—the story of Bianca and her rival lovers. Now the old play of '*A Shrew*' contains, in a rude form, the scenes of the Induction, and the chief scenes in which Petruchio and Katherina (named by the original writer Ferando and Kate) appear; but nothing in this old play corresponds with the intrigues of Bianca's disguised lovers. It is, however, in the scenes connected with these intrigues that Shakspeare's hand is least apparent. It may be said that Shakspeare's genius goes in and out with the person of Katherina. We would therefore conjecturally assign the intrigue-comedy—which is founded upon Gascoigne's *Supposes*, a translation of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*—to the adapter of the old play, reserving for Shakspeare a title to those scenes—in the main enlarged from the play of '*A Shrew*'—in which Katherina, Petruchio, and Grumio are speakers."*

* Compare what White says in his Introduction to the play: "A play in Shakespeare's day was as often written by two, or three, or four persons as by one: each theatre had several poets and playwrights in its pay, if not in its company, ready to write or rewrite, as the spirit moved or occasion required; and Shakespeare's own company was of course not an exception to the general rule. Our *Taming of the Shrew* is an example of the result of this system. In it three hands at least are traceable: that of the author of the old play, that of Shakespeare himself, and that of a colabourer. The first appears in the structure of the plot, and in the incidents and the dialogue of most of the minor scenes; to the last must be assigned the greater part of the love business between Bianca and her two suitors; while to Shakespeare belong the strong, clear characterization, the delicious humour, and the rich verbal colouring of the recast Induction, and all the scenes in which Katherina and

As to the date of the play the critics differ widely. Drake, Knight, and Delius put it in 1594, Malone (after first making it 1606) in 1596,* Chalmers 1598, Collier (whom White is disposed to follow) 1601-3, Fleay 1601-2, Furnivall 1596-7, and Dowden "about 1597." The internal evidence seems to us to favour a date not later than 1597, and possibly a year or two earlier. The play is not mentioned by Meres in 1598.†

II. THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT.

These appear to be limited to the old play and Gascoigne's *Supposes*, already mentioned. The latter was "englished" from Ariosto in 1566. Holt White compares the story of the Induction with a part of Sir Richard Barchley's *Discourse on the Felicitie of Man*, 1598; Malone with a tale in Goulart's *Trésor d'Histoires*, etc. (translated by E. Grimstone, 1607, but some of the tales may have appeared in English much earlier); and Steevens, with a story quoted from Marco Paolo

Petruchio and Grumio are the prominent figures, together with the general effect produced by scattering lines and words and phrases here and there, and removing others elsewhere, throughout the rest of the play."

This last point seems to us an important one; and it explains, we think, the difficulty that some of the critics have had in deciding just how much Shakespeare had to do with certain parts of the play. He *re-wrote* considerable portions of it and *retouched* the rest. This will be considered more in detail in the *Notes*.

* See the Var. of 1821, vol. ii. p. 340. White inadvertently transposes the dates: "Malone decided at first for 1596, afterward for 1606."

† See our ed. of *M. N. D.* p. 9. Craik, in his *English of Shakespeare* (see our ed. p. 9), and Hertzberg would make *The Taming of the Shrew* Meres's *Love Labours Wonne*; but, as Stokes remarks (*Chron. Order of Shakespeare's Plays*, p. 37), "their theory need not be accepted when we find that Craik's chief argument is drawn from one of Mr. Collier's MS. corrections, and that the German professor's reasons have been answered by his countryman, Dr. Karl Elze." Delius, who dates the play in 1594, says that Meres does not mention it because Shakespeare was only part-author of it. See also the *Transactions of the New Shaks. Soc.* for 1874, p. 123.

by Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621. T. Warton says that it is to be found in a collection of short comic stories, printed in black letter in 1570, "sett forth by maister Richard Edwards, mayster of her Maiesties revels ;" and that it is like "an incident which Heuterus relates from an epistle of Ludovicus Vives to have actually happened at the marriage of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, about the year 1440." Percy, in his *Reliques*, gives an old ballad on the same subject, *The Frolicsome Duke, or the Tinker's Good Fortune*, the date of which is not known. Knight remarks that the story is in all probability of Eastern origin, being found in the *Thousand and One Nights* ; and Mr. Lane conjectures that it is founded on fact.

III. CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE PLAY.

[From Hazlitt's "*Characters of Shakespear's Plays*."*]

The Taming of the Shrew is almost the only one of Shakespear's comedies that has a regular plot and downright moral. It is full of bustle, animation, and rapidity of action. It shows admirably how self-will is only to be got the better of by stronger will, and how one degree of ridiculous perversity is only to be driven out by another still greater. Petruchio is a madman in his senses ; a very honest fellow, who hardly speaks a word of truth and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures. He acts his assumed character to the life, with the most fantastical extravagance, with complete presence of mind, with untired animal spirits, and without a particle of ill-humour from beginning to end. The situation of poor Katherine, worn out by his incessant persecutions, becomes at last almost as pitiable as it is ludicrous, and it is difficult to say which to admire most, the unaccountableness of his actions or the unalterableness of his resolutions. It is a character which most husbands

* *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, by William Hazlitt, edited by W. Carew Hazlitt (London, 1869), p. 219 fol.

ought to study, unless the very audacity of Petruchio's attempt might alarm them more than his success would encourage them. . . .

The most striking and at the same time laughable feature in the character of Petruchio throughout is the studied approximation to the untractable character of real madness, his apparent insensibility to all external conditions, and utter indifference to every thing but the wild and extravagant freaks of his own self-will. There is no contending with a person on whom nothing makes an impression but his own purposes, and who is bent on his own whims just in proportion as they seem to want common-sense. With him a thing's being plain and reasonable is a reason against it. The airs he gives himself are infinite, and his caprices as sudden as they are groundless. The whole of his treatment of his wife at home is in the same spirit of ironical attention and inverted gallantry. Every thing flies before his will, like a conjurer's wand, and he only metamorphoses his wife's temper by metamorphosing her senses and all the objects she sees, at a word's speaking. Such are his insisting that it is the moon and not the sun which they see, etc. This extravagance reaches its most pleasant and poetical height in the scene (iv. 5) where, on their return to her father's, they meet old Vincentio, whom Petruchio immediately addresses as a young lady. . . .

The whole is carried off with equal spirit, as if the poet's comic muse had wings of fire. It is strange how one man could be so many things; but so it is. The concluding scene, in which trial is made of the new-married wives (so triumphantly for Petruchio) is a very happy one.

In some parts of this play there is a little too much about music-masters and masters of philosophy. They were things of greater rarity in those days than they are now. Nothing however can be better than the advice which Tranio gives his master for the prosecution of his studies:

"The mathematics and the metaphysics,
 Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you;
 No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en:
 In brief, sir, study what you most affect."

The Taming of the Shrew is a play within a play. It is supposed to be a play acted for the benefit of Sly the tinker, who is made to believe himself a lord when he wakes after a drunken brawl. The character of Sly and the remarks with which he accompanies the play are as good as the play itself. His answer when he is asked how he likes it—"In-different well; 't is a good piece of work, would 't were done!"—is in good keeping, as if he were thinking of his Saturday night's job. Sly does not change his tastes with his new situation, but in the midst of splendour and luxury still calls out lustily and repeatedly for "a pot o' small ale." He is very slow in giving up his personal identity in his sudden advancement:

"I am Christophero Sly; call me not honour nor lordship. I ne'er drank sack in my life; and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef. . . . What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christophero Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a peddler, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bearherd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not; if she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lying'st knave in Christendom."

This is honest. "The Slys are no rogues," as he says of himself. We have a great predilection for this member of the family; and what makes us like him the better is that we take him to be of kin (not many degrees removed) to Sancho Panza.

[From Schlegel's "*Dramatic Literature*."*]

The Taming of the Shrew has the air of an Italian comedy; and indeed the love intrigue, which constitutes the main part

* *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, by A. W. Schlegel; Black's translation, revised by Morrison (London, 1846), p. 381 fol.

of it, is derived mediately or immediately from a piece of Ariosto. The characters and passions are lightly sketched; the intrigue is introduced without much preparation, and in its rapid progress impeded by no sort of difficulties; while, in the manner in which Petruchio, though previously cautioned as to Katherine, still encounters the risks in marrying her, and contrives to tame her—in all this the character and peculiar humour of the English are distinctly visible. The colours are laid on somewhat coarsely, but the ground is good. That the obstinacy of a young and untamed girl, possessed of none of the attractions of her sex, and neither supported by bodily nor mental strength, must soon yield to the still rougher and more capricious but assumed self-will of a man: such a lesson can only be taught on the stage with all the perspicuity of a proverb.

The prelude is still more remarkable than the play itself: a drunken tinker, removed in his sleep to a palace, where he is deceived into the belief of being a nobleman. The invention, however, is not Shakspeare's. Holberg has handled the same subject in a masterly manner, and with inimitable truth; but he has spun it out to five acts, for which such material is hardly sufficient. He probably did not borrow from the English dramatist, but like him took the hint from a popular story. There are several comic motives of this description, which go back to a very remote age, without ever becoming antiquated. Here, as well as everywhere else, Shakspeare has proved himself a great poet: the whole is merely a slight sketch, but in elegance and delicate propriety it will hardly ever be excelled. Neither has he overlooked the irony which the subject naturally suggested: the great lord, who is driven by idleness and ennui to deceive a poor drunkard, can make no better use of his situation than the latter, who every moment relapses into his vulgar habits. The last half of this prelude, that in which the tinker, in his new state, again drinks himself out of his senses, and is