

- (2) the anonymous Italian comedy *Gl' Ingannati* (1531);
 (3) Gonzaga's play *Gl' Inganni* (1592).

It must not be supposed that Shakespeare's indebtedness to these sources amounts to much. The poetry of *Twelfth Night*; its romance and humour; the manner in which ideas borrowed from other writers are turned to finer issues and improved upon; the whole of the comic underplot; the skilful interweaving of the comic and serious parts; above all, the characterisation: these things, which make *Twelfth Night* the beautiful work it is, are absolutely Shakespeare's own.

The extent of Shakespeare's indebtedness.

V

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAY

Twelfth Night has always been a favourite play with students of Shakespeare. Its charm lies primarily in the union of humour with romance, of diverting action with masterly characterisation.

There is the obvious humour of the scenes in which Malvolio is tricked; of the revelling-scenes wherein Sir Andrew is made the butt of his wittier companions; of the duel-scene; and of the confusions that arise through the resemblance of the brother and sister. And a less obvious but equally delightful humour animates many another incident and idea in the play. Thus Orsino's protesting a changeless love for Olivia—and transferring that love to Viola (with Olivia's full approbation); Olivia's protesting that for seven summers she will keep fresh a "brother's dead love" in cloistered seclusion from the sight of men—and falling in love with the first handsome young man who crosses her path (we hear no more of the dead brother); the fatuous Sir Andrew's presumption in paying court to the rather imperious Countess; Sebastian's calm acceptance of Olivia for a wife, and easy self-confidence in his love-affairs, so unlike the tortures of anxiety endured by Olivia and Viola and Orsino; all these things surely (and much else) were "intimated" to the poet by the very "spirit of humours."

Humour.

The humour of *Twelfth Night* is certainly one of its chief charms.

Its effect is set off and heightened by combination with a romantic strain. "Romantic" as applied to incident suggests something remote from actual *Romance.* experience, lying beyond the scope of everyday life. The tone of *Twelfth Night* is in this sense romantic. Some of the incidents which we have just cited as illustrations of Shakespeare's humour have also an element of romance; and the play as a whole is romantic in that it is made up of events which, being individually out of the common, assume a tinge of improbability when brought together. Not that this improbability (perhaps I should say unreality) strikes us as we read¹ the play, because we feel, or ought to feel, from the outset that we are moving in a world of romance and whimsical intrigue in which the prosaic conditions of real life and its sober tests do not apply.

Considered merely as a tale *Twelfth Night* is interesting. There are comedies in which the interest turns more on the characters than on the action. But in *Twelfth Night* the story itself interests and diverts. Our attention is held by what happens. *Action.*

Of the characters something will be said later. Characterisation is the great feature of Shakespeare's plays, and the characterisation of *Twelfth Night* is no exception. *Characterisation.*

Another notable quality of this play is its harmony of design and execution. It is a complete and uniform work: "appearing to have been struck out at a heat, as if the whole plot, its characters and dialogue, had presented themselves at once, in one *Harmonious style, uniformity, and completeness.*"

¹ The case is perhaps different when we see the play acted, and *Twelfth Night* does not for stage-purposes rank among quite the best of Shakespeare's comedies. Thus its stage-history will not bear comparison with that of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The reason, I think, is that in actual representation the unreality of a romance becomes too apparent. Romantic incidents, to be effective, should be imagined, not seen. These remarks would also apply to *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, a piece that is comparatively seldom revived on the London stage nowadays.

harmonious group, before the 'mind's eye' of the poet, previously to his actually commencing the formal business of writing¹."

Thus the plot and underplot are worked out, with no omissions or superfluous details, so that each part is fitted to its place; and they are combined into a 'harmonious whole.

In some plays the interest flags at times; or the work does not keep at the same level. *Twelfth Night* is not marred by inequalities; there are no ups and downs. Its characteristic is an even, sustained excellence.

Again, the action, characterisation, and diction of the play are suited to each other. There is no elaborate or subtle character-drawing, except possibly in the case of Malvolio. The *dramatis personæ* are depicted with few, but vivid strokes: a method which fits the rapid movement of the play, for amid busy intrigues and a succession of amusing incidents there is no place for complex studies of human nature. And as the characterisation is adapted to the action, so is the diction appropriate to both—light and pointed in the colloquial, comic scenes of the underplot, but informed in the serious parts with a poetic grace finely expressive of the comedy's higher strain of romance and sentiment. Justly then do critics dwell on the "perfect unity" of *Twelfth Night*.

Another feature is the genial spirit that pervades the piece—its tone of pure kindliness and pleasure. *Genial spirit.* "This," says Hazlitt², "is justly considered as one of the most delightful of Shakespear's comedies. It is full of sweetness and pleasantry. It is perhaps too good-natured for comedy. It has little satire, and no spleen. It aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them." We cannot help thinking that *Twelfth Night* was the outcome of a period of serenity; though it has the necessary hints at life's shadows.

¹ Verplanck.

² *Characters of Shakespear's Plays.*

VI

THE CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

(The heroine is Viola, since her assumption of disguise is the motive-spring of the plot, and our sympathies are mainly centred upon her. To think of *Twelfth Night* is to think at once of Viola.)

(She is characterised by the essentially feminine qualities of tenderness, modesty and shrinking delicacy of feeling. These qualities become more conspicuous when we compare her with other maidens in Shakespeare who assume the disguise of male attire. Rosalind for instance has a buoyant vitality of spirit that carries her through difficulties; Portia can trust in any emergency to her virile intellect, ready wit and force of will. Viola does not possess these gifts; she is a graceful, imaginative girl who has conceived a plan that brings her into hazardous places through which she has scarce strength of heart or head to steer her course. She is filled with "a sweet consciousness of her feminine nature," and though she plays her part creditably, "never forgets, nor allows us to forget, that she is playing a part¹."

Her girlishness reveals itself in little ways; and when she is confronted with danger, as in the duel-scene, she almost breaks down in her disguise, and we wonder whether the discovery can be delayed. This antithesis between the boldness of her scheme, with its attendant pretence of manhood², and the girlish gentleness of her nature has a great charm and humour.)

(Viola is very loyal and true. Herself in love with Orsino, she still pleads for him most earnestly with Olivia—indeed, with far greater earnestness than he had manifested in his own suit. (She would never dream of playing him false:

"I'll do my best
To woo your lady—[*Aside*] Yet, a barful strife!
Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife."

¹ Mrs Jameson, *Characteristics of Women*.

² A pretty comic touch is her use of bold slang phrases like "Westward-ho!" (said with a fine assumption of mannishness), III. I. 145.

Her love, quiet and unchanging, contrasts with Orsino's fickle, over-eloquent fancy, no less than with Olivia's impetuous passion. And it is marked by a lowliness very characteristic of her modest nature; for she seems quite content to accept Orsino's love at second-hand. Would Portia or Rosalind have been so acquiescent?

Olivia is a great lady, dignified and competent. She rules her household and directs its affairs with ease and discretion, as Sebastian notices directly. The members of the household evidently stand in awe of their mistress. That she has admirable common sense may be inferred from her remarks about the Clown and her reproof to Malvolio (I. 5. 97-104).

(She is somewhat cold and self-contained; inclined to keep her social inferiors at a distance.) Thus there is no familiarity between her and her gentlewoman Maria. "I see you what you are, you are too proud," says Viola at their first meeting. It may be partly the pride of rank: it is doomed to be humbled.

(For by a freak of fortune Olivia falls suddenly and completely in love with the Duke's page, though she will have none of the Duke himself.)

(No longer reserved, no longer careful about her rank, she deigns to woo him, and his opposition only increases her wilful determination, since she is so accustomed to have her own way. She knows of course that she is giving cause for unfriendly criticism of her conduct, the more so because she had protested her intention to withdraw from the world; yet she pursues her object persistently, and ends by throwing all dignity and decorum to the winds and carrying her lover (as she supposes) off to the church.)

As with Viola, there is an antithesis between the natural character of Olivia and the part which a caprice of fortune leads her to play. Stated barely, her conduct appears somewhat indelicate; yet no such impression occurs to us in reading the piece because the whole story is treated in a spirit of pure romance. It is all too fanciful and poetic to be taken and criticised very seriously. Compared

with Viola, Olivia does not appeal very strongly to our sympathies, though there is a strain of kindness in her¹.

Main It is as Malvolio's foe that Maria, the sharp and witty of tongue, is prominent. She originates the plot against him, carries it through, and when it is reaching its end passes out of the play. *Maria.* [In her scheming against Malvolio she seems to be the very spirit of malicious wit assailing its natural enemy, solemn dulness. She is typically appropriate to a comedy of intrigue, and moves in it as in her element.] Intrigue is needed to bring out the points of such a character.

[Maria has wonderful sharpness of insight as of speech. She reads Malvolio's character through and through, and perceives defects hidden from all the others (except perhaps the Clown). Hence in her letter she is able to play precisely upon his weaknesses and advise him to commit the very faults to which he is prone; and when he comes into Olivia's presence with his loverlike airs how adroitly does her question "Why appear you?" (III. 4. 40, 41) lead him on to cut the most ridiculous figure.] *Letter*

Another proof of her cleverness is the ease with which she adapts herself to those about her: merry enough with Sir Toby and his friends, but demure before Olivia. She has ambition; she means all along to marry Sir Toby and become "my lady." Her design is no secret; the Clown jokes her about it (I. 5. 29), and Sir Toby is complacently conscious that she "adores" him (II. 3. 196). Probably it is as much with a view to pleasing Sir Toby (who cannot endure Malvolio) as to gratifying her own dislike of the steward that she proposes, and takes so much pains to carry out, the plot. Its success at any rate leads to the much desired result, Sir Toby marrying her "in recompense" (v. 372) of her cleverness and trouble².

¹ Cf. her anxiety about Malvolio (III. 4. 67-70), and her pity for him in his humiliation (v. 353-363, 377).

² Cf. his remark "I could marry this wench for this device," said at the end of the letter-scene, II. 5. 200.

(Orsino¹ is an attractive figure:)

Orsino.

"Of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulg'd, free, learn'd, and valiant,
And in dimension and the shape of nature
A gracious person."

(He is kindly and courteous to all; eloquent and full of poetic thoughts and sentiment. Yet, though he may win sympathy at first he does not retain it; we begin after a time to doubt the genuineness of his feeling. It is a self-conscious melancholy in which really he delights. He feeds on his love as on some dainty fare. He makes it serve as an occasion of fine speeches; for, like Shakespeare's Richard II, he is a *connoisseur* of phrases. As he speaks of his sorrows he is not the true lover but the literary artist using his own emotions as a "subject." Like Richard, he *does* little: he merely talks most beautifully and pays court by deputy instead of going himself. When at the close he calmly transfers to Viola what he supposes to be his affections we are not surprised; we have ceased to believe much in them. His love of Olivia was almost a fiction; she had only "enchanted his imagination, not won his heart," just as Othello fascinated the girlish fancy of Desdemona rather than really won her love. We may doubt indeed whether Orsino would ever be much in love with anyone but himself. An amiable egoist, he would always remain in his own eyes the person of chief consequence, and accept Viola's devotion as a matter of course.)

(Malvolio has much to recommend him². He seems a capable and trustworthy man, sober and diligent in discharge of duties.) Olivia turns to him in any difficulty, evidently relying on his discretion (I. 5. 116, 318, II. 3. 77, III. 4. 5-7). She is much concerned about his supposed malady, and "would not have him miscarry for the half of her dowry" (III. 4. 67-70). Her good opinion is strong testimony to his merits. Unfortunately

¹ The name, no doubt, was suggested by that of the great Italian family of *Orsini*. He is described as a Duke only in the first Act; in the rest of the play he is called 'Count.'

² It was Charles Lamb's view that Malvolio "is not essentially ludicrous" but "is a very good man."

those merits are marred by a defect which Olivia describes with precision when she says, "O you are sick of self-love, Malvolio" (I. 5. 97).

("Self-love" implies extreme self-conceit and vanity. With Malvolio "self-love" is what Pope calls "the ruling passion." It dominates his whole character. Self-conceited people of a serious turn are apt to be censorious and find fault; they judge others by the lofty standard of their own imaginary excellencies and find them wanting. Malvolio has a positive gift for fault-finding.) With what unctuous satisfaction does he deliver Olivia's reprimand to the revellers and reprove Maria (II. 3. 93-109, 130-133)! How he enjoys the thought of censuring Sir Toby and bidding him "amend his ways" (II. 5. 61-81)! His bearing towards his fellow-servants may be inferred from Maria's remark that if he does go mad, and has to be confined, "the house will be the quieter" (III. 4. 147). Even in such a small matter as overtaking Viola and giving her Olivia's ring he lets his weakness steal out: "You might have saved me my pains" (II. 2. 5, 6). Malvolio in short is one of those over-virtuous people who love virtue not only—perhaps, not chiefly—for its own sake but for the right that it gives them (they suppose) to judge and condemn their neighbours.

(He has not a grain of humour—indeed, self-conceit and humour are incompatible—and little sympathy with his fellow-creatures: the self-conceited are too much wrapt up in themselves to have wide views and tastes. Hence Malvolio takes things too seriously¹ and regards all that lies outside his own narrow sympathies as wrong. Disinclined to carouse, he thinks indulgence in "cakes and ale" an unpardonable "disorder." Too dull to see a joke, he looks on the Clown's jests as offences against sense (I. 5. 89-96). Such men magnify trifles into grave misdemeanours.

(His vanity about his personal appearance and manners is ludicrous. He "practises behaviour"; is confident that his "complexion," if any, will touch Olivia, and that all who look on him *must* love him; is not unconcerned about his

¹ He mistakes "bird-bolts" for "cannon-bullets" (I. 5. 100).

dress—"branched velvet gowns" and the like; and feels that a grand air, "the humour of state," will become him mightily.

(He has an overweening sense of his own importance, and forgets that he is not "any more than a steward" (II. 3. 123). The other members of the household are in his eyes "lighter people," "idle shallow things," whose element he is above (III. 4. 136, 137).)

In fact, Malvolio has the most exalted opinion of his own merits: is "the best persuaded of himself,...*crammed*, as he thinks, with excellencies¹" (II. 3. 162, 163); and the signal proof of his mingled self-conceit, want of humour, personal vanity and self-importance is the readiness wherewith he credits the preposterous idea that Olivia loves him—and "stoops to conquer." That she, graced with youth and beauty, rank and wealth, and wooed by the charming Orsino, sovereign of the realm, should prefer her prosaic house-steward: this notion does not strike Malvolio as at all strange—"there is example for 't," he reflects: and what² more can be said?

Yet one is a little sorry for him. He suffers, surely, more than he deserves, and the scene of the "dark room" (IV. 2) has pathos as well as humour. The bitterness of the humiliation inflicted upon Malvolio almost raises it into the region of tragedy, for mortifying as it would be to any one, it must be well-nigh intolerable to a man of his temperament. Olivia's sympathy, however, may be some salve to his wounded *amour propre* (v. 353-363, 377).

Sir Toby, with his wit, relish of humour and genius for sociability, reminds us in a far-off way of Falstaff, and inspires something of the liking which we cannot help feeling for his greater prototype. Perhaps we ought not to like this rollicking toper any more

¹ Note specially the whole of Maria's description of him (II. 3).
² Maria hints at another aspect of his character when she speaks of him as a "time-pleaser" (II. 3. 160). We may well attribute to his censoriousness a touch of that hypocrisy from which the Puritanism of some was not exempt. A conscientious Puritan would not have followed the injunction about the "yellow stockings"; and then that "branched velvet gown"!

than Sir John, but most of us do, in an apologetic fashion: he has such a genial way with him, so keen a sense of fun, such good temper. He is brave too (unlike Sir Andrew) and manly: witness his readiness in encountering Sebastian. He treats his friend shabbily, fooling money out of him, but does it with a diverting adroitness which makes the jest of the whole business hide the meanness of his conduct. For all his intercourse with the servants of the household, he retains a sense of his rank, and it comes out very comically at times, as in the letter-scene when Malvolio presumes to call him "kinsman" (II. 5. 61). He has a rough and ready sort of cleverness that gratifies his love of fun by devising comic situations such as the episode of the duel (where he shows skill in bringing the unwilling combatants together). But his cleverness is outdone by Maria's: admiration of her scheme brings matters to a crisis between them; and by a fine turn of poetic justice, while he is ridiculing Malvolio for falling an easy victim to the trick, he is himself caught in her net. And, if we mistake not, she will keep him in better order with that sharp tongue.

Sir Andrew is the butt on whom Sir Toby (like Maria and the Clown) exercises his wit: foolish himself, he is the cause of admirable fooling in others. He is also the echo¹ of his friend in such kind that apart from his dulness he can scarcely be said to have any personality. He follows Sir Toby's lead always; repeats his "very phrases"; and whatever Sir Toby bids him do, whether it be to stay a week longer or write a challenge, mildly acquiesces. Up to the very end no suspicion of his friend's false play crosses his thoughts. His confidence and admiration remain unshaken (v. 196-198); and his last words in the play are an offer of assistance to Sir Toby so that they may keep "together" (v. 210, 211). Sir Andrew typifies the fantastic fool—Malvolio, the solemn coxcomb; but whereas Malvolio perceives how he has been treated and thus stirs our sympathy, Sir Andrew is armed with the

¹ See I. 3. 67, 68, note; and cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where Slender is the "echo" of Justice Shallow. This feature of Sir Andrew's character is *much emphasised* in the play.

happy unconsciousness and self-content of true imbecility, so that pity were merely wasted upon him. His cowardice needs no comment.

The Clown Feste¹ shows himself a shrewd observer of men and things; he judges Orsino aright (II. 4. 75-81), and perhaps Malvolio too (I. 5. 84-87). His insight into character is combined with versatility; he readily estimates the company in which he is and suits his bearing to it, always "adapting himself to the mood of the moment²." Thus, he humours the sentimental Duke by singing him dreamy, old-world ballads; yet joins the two knights in their carouse, talks amusing nonsense, and starts the "catch." To quote his own description of himself, he is "for all waters" (i.e. ready to play whatever part the occasion requires), and fulfils Viola's estimate (III. 1. 67-74) of the complete jester, observing the "mood" and "quality" of those on whom he jests, and "the time." Indirectly his songs, in their varied style, illustrate the different characters of the people to whom they are addressed, and thus have a dramatic relation to the general movement of the piece.

He is less wise and "deep-contemplative³" than Touchstone in *As You Like It* (with whom one naturally compares him). Touchstone, having seen "cities of men and manners," is more of a philosopher, and more of a satirist; a jaded courtier, he uses his folly as a cloak for railing sarcasm against the world and its ways; there is method—and bitterness—in his madness. Feste inclines rather to the cap-and-bells side of his profession. A practical joke like the part he plays in the "dark room" suits him, but would scarcely suit Touchstone. Feste is rather the jester; better tempered, if less pointed, in his folly. He has more humour; Touchstone more wit. Yet his cleverness is such that only by irony is he called "the Fool" of the play; for

¹ From Lat. *festus*, 'cheerful, gay'; a fitting name for a jester.

² Gervinus, who brings out this point admirably.

³ Cf. *As You Like It*, II. 7. 30-32:

"My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,
That fools should be so deep-contemplative,
And I did laugh."

those who are really made to appear as fools are Sir Andrew, a "natural," and Malvolio, a "wise man folly-fallen."

We see little of Sebastian, but that little leaves a pleasant impression. Perhaps the most striking feature of his character, and dramatically the most important because of the contrast which it points, is his blunt, downright simplicity, which finds vent in vigorous deeds. Unlike Orsino, he acts, and neither reflects nor talks much. Picture Orsino in his place when Olivia mistakes him for Cesario: how subtly Orsino would have analysed the situation, how eloquent and poetical he would have been, and how irresolute! Sebastian merely offers some commonplace remarks on the strangeness of the affair, quickly grasps the essential facts that Olivia is a desirable wife and wants to marry him, and makes no more ado about settling the matter straightway than about repaying Sir Andrew's rash blows. This plain practicality stands out effectively in a piece so full of sentiment; and his entire naturalness is a relief after the artificial self-consciousness of Olivia and Orsino.

VII

OUTLINE OF THE STORY OF THE PLAY

Act I., Scene 1. At the palace of Orsino, Duke of Illyria. We hear of his suit to the Countess Olivia, who rejects his offers of love.

Scene 2. On the coast of Illyria. Viola, a young girl of noble birth, has just been wrecked with her twin-brother, Sebastian; she does not know whether or not he has been lost in the wreck. Learning from the captain of the shipwrecked vessel that the ruler of the country is Duke Orsino, a former friend of her dead father, she conceives the plan of disguising herself as a page-boy and entering Orsino's service.

Scene 3. At the house of Olivia. The scene introduces us to three characters who will be conspicuous in the under-plot, viz. Olivia's maid, Maria; her kinsman, Sir Toby Belch; and his friend, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a foolish

knight, who, at Sir Toby's instigation, is a suitor for Olivia's hand.

Scene 4. At Orsino's palace. Viola has carried out her plan, and is now, under the name Cesario, a page of Orsino. She is sent by Orsino to plead his cause with Olivia. *Viola herself has fallen in love with Orsino.*

Scene 5. At Olivia's house. We meet three new characters—Olivia; the Clown, Feste, the jester of her household; and the prim, rather puritanical, steward, Malvolio. Orsino's messenger, Cesario (Viola), arrives, is admitted to Olivia's presence, and pleads for Orsino. *Olivia falls in love with Cesario*, whom she believes, of course, to be a young man. Cesario leaves, and Olivia sends a ring after him, and bids him come again.

(The position therefore of the love-affairs at the end of the first Act is this: Orsino loves Olivia; Viola loves Orsino; Olivia loves Viola, i.e. Cesario.)

Act II., Scene 1. On the coast of Illyria. Sebastian, Viola's twin-brother, was saved at the wreck by a sailor, Antonio. He is now telling Antonio about his sister, Viola—*how much she resembled him*. He believes that she has perished. Bidding farewell to Antonio, he goes on his way to Orsino's court. Antonio, who has conceived a strong liking for Sebastian, follows him.

Scene 2. Near Olivia's house. Malvolio overtakes Viola (Cesario), who has just left Olivia, and gives her the ring sent by Olivia. Viola guesses the secret of Olivia's love.

Scene 3. At Olivia's house: a revelling scene. Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and the Clown are drinking and singing. Maria comes to tell them that Olivia is vexed at the disturbance. Then Malvolio enters and reprimands them in Olivia's name. On his departure Maria proposes a scheme against him: she will compose a letter which shall delude him into believing that his mistress, Olivia, is in love with him.

Scene 4. At Orsino's palace: a scene of sentiment, in which the chief actors are Orsino and Viola, who speaks the famous lines "She never told her love." Orsino again sends Viola to Olivia. (The interest of the scene lies in the

fuller revelation of Orsino's character and of Viola's feelings towards him.)

Scene 5. In Olivia's garden. Malvolio finds the letter written by Maria and is deluded exactly as she wished.

Act III., Scene 1. In Olivia's garden. Viola enters, and meets the Clown; he goes into the house to tell Olivia of Viola's coming. The rest of the scene passes between Viola and Olivia who reveals her love of the page. Viola repels Olivia's overtures.

Scene 2. At Olivia's house. Sir Andrew has seen the meeting of Olivia and Viola in the last scene, and is jealous of the favour shown by the Countess to the page. Sir Toby, knowing Sir Andrew to be a coward, persuades him to challenge Viola to a duel.

Scene 3. A street in the city. Sebastian and Antonio have arrived in the town, though Antonio knows that for certain reasons it is dangerous for him to be there. Antonio lends Sebastian his purse and goes off to seek a lodging, while Sebastian wanders about the town. (Sebastian and Viola being in the same city, and Viola being dressed as a young man—indeed, like her brother, III. 5. 416-418, V. 241—we now expect confusions to arise from the resemblance between them.)

Scene 4. In Olivia's garden. Olivia sends for Malvolio; Maria hints that he is very strange in his manner. Malvolio appears, dressed in a peculiar way, and behaves as if he were Olivia's lover—to the amazement of Olivia. Believing him to be really affected in his head, Olivia hands him over to the care of Sir Toby, who carries the scheme against Malvolio a step further and has him shut up in a dark room.

We then pass to the proposed duel between Sir Andrew and Viola. Each is really afraid to fight, but Sir Toby and Fabian urge them on; and then, just when they are about to draw their swords, Antonio enters, mistakes Viola (Cesario) for Sebastian, and wishes to fight in Viola's place with Sir Andrew. Antonio, however, is now arrested by officers of Orsino. In his difficulty he appeals to Viola for the purse lent to Sebastian, and more confusions arise through the resemblance of the twins.

Act IV., Scene 1. Near Olivia's house. The Clown meets Sebastian and supposes him to be Cesario (Viola). Sir Andrew and Sir Toby entering make a similar mistake, and Sir Andrew resumes (as he thinks) the quarrel with Cesario which Antonio interrupted. Olivia comes on the scene, repeats, of course, the mistake made by Sir Andrew and Sir Toby, whom she bids leave her, and asks Sebastian to go into the house with her. He consents, wondering what it all means.

Scene 2. At Olivia's house. Malvolio has been confined by Sir Toby in a dark room because of his supposed madness. The Clown visits and talks with him, first in the assumed character of a clergyman, then in his own person. The Clown agrees to take a letter from Malvolio to Olivia. (This letter, given to Olivia in Act v., explains the complications connected with the scheme against Malvolio; we feel now that the underplot has been nearly worked out.)

Scene 3. In Olivia's garden. Sebastian expresses his amazement at Olivia's conduct towards him—a stranger to her. Then Olivia enters, with a priest, and begs Sebastian—Cesario, as she thinks—that they may be “betrothed” to each other. He agrees—no doubt astonished at, yet not resenting, a wife. She (still thinking him Cesario) must be equally surprised.

Act V. Near Olivia's house. The complications of plot and underplot are cleared up. Viola and Sebastian meet in the presence of most of the characters of the play, and the resemblance between them explains all difficulties. Olivia finds that she has been “betrothed” to Sebastian, not to Cesario, and is content with the exchange. Orsino, as he cannot win Olivia, transfers his love to Viola. Malvolio's letter is delivered to Olivia (who in the distraction of her love-affairs had forgotten all about him), and she sends for him. At his entrance Fabian explains the trick played upon Malvolio, and adds that as a reward for her cleverness Sir Toby has married Maria.

In considering the structure of the play we should note how important to the plot the notion of mistaken identity

becomes during the last two Acts. The effect of the confusion produced by the resemblance between Sebastian and Viola runs throughout these two Acts, the scene of "the dark room" (IV. 2) alone excepted.

VIII

I am glad to have an opportunity of adding now (1903) some remarks in the fine work on Shakespeare by the Danish critic, Brandes (English translation, 1898):

Twelfth Night is perhaps the most graceful and harmonious comedy Shakespeare ever wrote. It is certainly that in which all the notes the poet strikes, the note of seriousness and of raillery, of passion, of tenderness, and of laughter, blend in the richest and fullest concord. It is like a symphony in which no strain can be dispensed with, or like a picture veiled in a golden haze, into which all the colours resolve themselves....

Schlegel made long ago the penetrating observation that, in the opening speech of *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare reminds us how the same word, "fancy," was applied in his day both to love and to fancy in the modern sense of the term; whence the critic argued, not without ingenuity, that love, regarded as an affair of the imagination rather than of the heart, is the fundamental theme running through all the variations of the play....

While Olivia is sighing in vain for Viola, she necessarily appears as though seized with a mild erotic madness, similar to that of the Duke: and the folly of each is parodied in a witty and delightful fashion by Malvolio's entirely ludicrous love for his mistress, and vain confidence that she returns it. Olivia feels and says this of herself, when she exclaims—"Go call him hither" etc. (III. 4. 15, 16).

This parody is part of the balance and symmetry of the play's structure.

Dr Brandes notes that the incident of Olivia falling in love with Orsino's disguised messenger finds a close parallel in a Spanish novel, entitled *Diana* (well known to the Elizabethans through a translation), by the Portuguese writer Montemayor.

The Malvolio-element has always been the main source of the popularity of *Twelfth Night*, especially as regards

the theatre; and Dr Brandes reminds us that the set of complimentary verses prefixed to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's Poems, in referring to the dramatist's most popular characters, mentions only three from the Comedies—thus:

“let but *Beatrice*

And *Benedicke* be seene, loe in a trice

The Cockpit, Galleries, Boxes, all are full

To hear *Malvoglio*, that crosse garter'd Gull.”

A further postscript (1929): Students who would like to know more about “the Egyptian thief” than can be given in a Note (v. I. 121, 122) will find an interesting account of the story in Lord Ernle's book, *The Light Reading of Our Ancestors* (1927), pp. 27-31.