Much has been written on the cultural significance of Shakespeare, his influence on particular periods, and his appropriation and subsequent transformation. However, no book until now has specifically addressed the nature of the relationship between Shakespeare and Victorian women. Gail Marshall gives an account of the actresses who played an essential part in redeeming Shakespeare for the Victorian stage, the writers who embraced him as part of the texture of their own writing as well as of their personal lives, and those women readers who, educated to be alert to the female voices of Shakespeare, often went on to re-read Shakespeare for their own ends. Dr Marshall argues that women form a fundamental part of the narrative of how the Victorian Shakespeare was made, and that translation, rather than terms such as ‘appropriation’ or ‘adaptation’, is the most pertinent metaphor for understanding the symbiosis between Shakespeare and Victorian women.

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Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, politics, social organization, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as ‘background’, feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field. This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work which intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history, or literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

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SHAKESPEARE AND VICTORIAN WOMEN

GAIL MARSHALL
For Rosa with much love,
and in fond memory of Inga-Stina Ewbank
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3 Lucy Madox Brown, *Romeo and Juliet in the Tomb* (1870). Reproduced by kind permission of the National Trust. Photograph by permission of Cliff Guttridge and Angela Thirlwell.

4 ‘Great Attraction’, *Punch*, 31 May 1899, p. 258.

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