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Tales, Volume 3
Mary Cowden Clarke
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The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines

Mary Cowden Clarke (1809-98) was the daughter of the publisher Vincent Novello. She was a noted Shakespearian scholar who produced a complete concordance to his works in 1845, and her fascination with the plays led to her publishing in 1850 a series of imaginative accounts of the girlhood of some of his heroines. Her motive was 'to imagine the possible circumstances and influences of scene, event, and associate, surrounding the infant life of his heroines, which might have conduced to originate and foster those germs of character recognized in their maturity as by him developed; to conjecture what might have been the first imperfect dawns of that which he has shown us in the meridian blaze of perfection.' These 'prequels' offer a back-story which is surprising in its subversive interpretation of the plays and especially of the role of the 'hero'. This volume contains the stories of Beatrice and Hero, Olivia, Hermione, Viola and Imogen.

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VOLUME 3

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THE
G I R L H O O D
O F
SHAKESPEARE'S HEROINES ;
I N
A SERIES OF FIFTEEN TALES,
B Y
MARY COWDEN CLARKE,

Author of the Concordance to Shakespeare.

“as petty to his ends,
As is the morn-dew on the myrtle leaf
To his grand sea.”

Shakespeare.

TALE XI.
BEATRICE AND HERO; THE COUSINS.

L O N D O N :
W. H. SMITH & SON, 136, STRAND; AND SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1851.

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TO

CHARLES ROBERT LESLIE, Esq., R.A.,

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS PICTURE OF

SHAKESPEARE'S "BEATRICE;"

AND OF HIS UNIFORM MASTERY IN

THE POET'S SUBJECTS;

THIS TALE IS DEDICATED

BY

MARY COWDEN CLARKE.