

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Budget – Greve editor
April 3, 1886

As You like It: A Dialogue

A. Hello, B, I have not seen you since you lectured me on Canon Farrar's lecture. I fear, however, that you got a little sentimental over that antique ballet girl Aimeé.

B. Why my remarks about Aimeé were perhaps taken too literally. I merely took her as a type, as an example to point therewith my moral.

A. I never heard Aimeé and morals mentioned in the same sentence before. Well, what have you seen lately that does not suit you? I hear you took in Mary Anderson.

B. Yes; I did. I saw her in Rosalind.

A. Well, what did you think of her? Disappointed again I suppose.

B. Yes, I was. Not so much with her acting; I expected just about what I saw. But her conception of the part did not suit me. I have seen Neilson, Modjeska, Fanny Davenport, and Anderson in that part, not to speak of minor celebrities, and none of them suited me exactly. Of course Neilson was very fine, as she always was, and looked the part to perfection, but none of them conceived the part as I do.

A. Why, what was the matter? What is your conception of the play?

B. Well, I look upon the play as a perfect pastoral, almost equal to some of [Theocritus'] idylls with nothing grotesque. In the conversation between Rosalind and Orlando, why the fellow that supported Mary Anderson acted as if the whole thing was a vulgar farce; he ridiculed by his manner all the pretty speeches that Shakespeare put in his mouth.

A. Well, how would you expect the man to make love to another man

without doing so?

B. That's just the point. I don't think that it was ever intended that Orlando should make love to Rosalind as a man. I think he knew all the time that Rosalind was a woman and that woman his Rosalind.

A. That is a different conception from the ordinary one to be sure. Where did you get that?

B. From the play itself. My idea is that Orlando sees through Rosalind's disguise the instant he meets her, and that, in order to declare his love to her and woo her in safety, he pretends to her to be deceived, and so keeps up the deception. She never for an instant suspects him of penetrating his disguise, but he all the time is fully conscious of her identity. Any other explanation involves the absurdity that we see acted on our stage. Whoever heard of a man mistaking a woman, dressed in man's clothes for a man, and that woman, too, the woman he loves.

A. It seems to me that you will find it difficult to reconcile some of the lines of the play to that conception.

B. Take the first conversation they have together in the Forest of Arden. Says Orlando:

“Fair youth, I would I could make the believe I love ——and then when Rosalind asks him if he be the youth who hangs the verses on the trees, he replies, “I swear to thee youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am he, that unfortunate he.” Then says Rosalind: “But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?” To which Orlando replies: “Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.” Then Rosalind tells him how love can be cured, to which she responds: “I would not be cured, youth.” Then Rosalind: “I would cure you if you would but call me Rosalind, and come every day to my cote and woo me.” Orlando: “Now by the faith of my love I will; tell me where it is.”

If Orlando did not know he was talking to Rosalind, why should he be so anxious to convince the youth of his love, and why should he refuse to be cured until Roseland, in the person of the youth, offers to cure him, if he would come every day to her cote.

A. Yes, but how explain this in Act IV, Sc 1. When Rosalind asks him, “am I not your Rosalind?” that he answers. (Orlando) “I take some joy to say

you are because I would be talking of her.”

B. Nothing more natural. He does not want her to know he has recognized her. He thinks, by this deception, he can find out her sentiments for him which he does in the next few lines. Take the lines were Oliver brings the bloody napkin, and Rosalind faints and pretends that she is counterfeiting. Oliver advises her to “Counterfeit to be a man.”

A. Well, the conception is certainly a novel one. But I am afraid the lines do not bear it out.

B. It depends upon the point of view. At any rate whether my conception is the one intended by Shakespeare or not, it will bear consideration. It's “As you like it.”

Charles Theodore Greve