



ASTER J. JOHNSON

Épilogue

Mistress Shakespeare's revelation is a great surprise to me, as she anticipated. None of us ever dreamed that Cesario was aught else than he appeared.

We regretted his untimely departure, and often said that he had played his part as if he were indeed a woman. We meant it for idle compliment. Behold, it was true!

Methought Mistress Shakespeare's chronicle would be a few brief pages; and see its bulk! Verily, women's ways are strange. She hath poured out her very heart in this volume, careless who shall behold it. Shall I, for Will's sake, for her sake, make it public?

I cannot, alas! consult with her about it, nor advise alterations and omissions. A week or two ago, shortly after she had finished this history, she died, quite suddenly and painlessly, Will's name upon her lips. She had had many trials, yet she was a happy woman. Will Shakespeare's wife could not be otherwise. I shall not soon forget the smile of perfect joy

