

“Yes, you were telling me once, when we were interrupted, how you came to introduce this body of men into the scene; it might be worth while to mention the incident along with these practical details of the working of the piece.”

“It came about in this wise. I went into Quaritch’s bookstore one day, and among other curious books I picked up an old, black-letter volume. It was a work on ‘Ceremonies,’ with four large illustrations. I went into the shop to spend four or five pounds; I spent eighty-four or five, and carried off the black-letter book on ‘Ceremonies,’—all Italian. I was at the time preparing ‘Much Ado’ for the Lyceum. In the picture of a wedding ceremony I saw what struck me at once as a wonderful effect, and of the period too,—the Shakespeare period. The effect was a mass of vergers, or javelin men,—officers of the church, I should imagine. They were dressed in long robes, and each carried a halberd. I pressed these men at once into the service of Shakespeare and his cathedral scene at Messina, and got that impressive effect of their entrance and the background of sombre colour they formed for the dresses of the bridal party. And it is right too,—that’s the best of it. Not long ago I was at Seville, and saw a church ceremony there, where the various parties came on in something like the fashion of our

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