

the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. These different episodes are combined in one plot through the fact that they are all bound up with the marriage of Theseus. The play opens with a reference to the wedding, which is to take place four days later. Hermia is required to give an answer to Theseus and Egeus upon the same day. The fairies have come "from the farthest steppe of India" to give to Theseus and Hippolyta "joy and prosperity." The play upon which Bottom and his companions are so seriously engaged is to be acted before Theseus "on his wedding day at night." By a series of accidental circumstances, too, the four stories are bound still more closely together. It so happens that it is in the same wood, "a mile without the town," that the lovers have agreed to meet and that the clowns have arranged to rehearse their play. Here, too, the fairies have come to dance in the moonlight, and in the early morning it chances that Theseus and Hippolyta have come hither "to observe the rite of May." And so it happens that the fairies have by chance come into contact with the lovers and the "hempen homespuns", and that Theseus meets with the lovers again upon the day of his wedding. In the last Act of the play all the episodes find their natural conclusion in the palace of the Duke. Theseus and Hippolyta and the other lovers look on at the acting of *Pyramus and Thisbe* by the company of clowns, and at midnight "by the dull and drowsy fire" the fairies come to bless the house of Theseus. Because the play as a whole has no distinct plot there is no real climax in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The complication, such as it is, is completed in Act III., Scenes I. and II., and the dénouement begins in Act III., Scene II., when Oberon undertakes to undo the mischief which has been caused by the "shrewd and knavish" Puck.

Sources of Interest.

In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* the thread of the plot is in reality very slight. The marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta gives the audience little concern. The inconstancy of the lovers is amusing but does not hold the serious attention of the audience. The quarrel of Oberon and Titania is merely the result of a whimsical fancy, and the clowns are amusing chiefly because of their ignorance and their mistakes. The