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PATIENT GRISSIL:

A Comedy

BY

THOMAS DEKKER, HENRY CHETTLE, AND
WILLIAM HAUGHTON.

[Reprinted from the Black-Letter Edition of 1603.]

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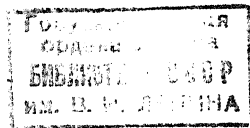
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.



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INTRODUCTION.

The French lay claim to the original of the story of Griselda; and the Abbé de Sade (Mem. de Petrarch, iii, 797) asserts that it is found in a manuscript called *Le Parement des Dames*. Mr. Campbell, in his "Life of Petrarch," follows the authority of de Sade upon this point; but it seems that the French manuscript, containing the novel of Griselda, was the work of Olivier de la Marche, who was not born till considerably after the death of Boccaccio. (Tyrwhitt's Introd. to Cant. Tales, i. cxcv. edit. 1830, 8vo.) Whencesoever, therefore, Boccaccio derived his materials, we know of no earlier version than that which he has left us in his Decameron, of which it forms the tenth novel of the last day. In a note at the end of the table to the Giolito edition of Boccaccio, 12mo., 1552, it is said, "*Il Petrarca tradusse la presente Novella in lingua Latina, e mandolla al Boccaccio,*" which we know to be the fact, because the letter from Petrarch to Boccaccio, transmitting the translation of it, is still extant; (Op. Petrarch. edit. Basil, 1581, 540.) and Petrarch adds that "he had heard the story many years before." It is very possible, therefore, that Boccaccio was originally indebted to Petrarch for the incidents which he subsequently

wove into a narrative, which gave so much delight to the poet of Vacluse. Chaucer, too, in the prologue to his "Clerk of Oxenford's Tale," informs us that he (speaking in the person of the narrator) had heard the substance of it from Petrarch himself at Padua, and makes no allusion to Boccaccio. It may not be easy at this time to fix with certainty the date when Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua, but there seems no ground for altogether discrediting his testimony on the point.

As far as can now be ascertained, the French were the first to bring the subject on the stage: *Le Mystere de Griselidis* was represented in Paris as early as 1393, (Warton's Hist. Engl. Poetry, ii. 251, edit. 8vo. 1824.) and more than a century afterwards it was printed by Jehan Bonfons in Paris, under the title of *Le Mystere de Griselidis de Saluces, par personnages*. A re-impression of this edition was made by Pinard, and published by Silvestre, as recently as 1832. It is singular, considering the popularity of the subject in Italy, and the peculiar facility with which it could be adapted to the stage, that it remained undramatized in that country until 1620. This statement we make upon the authority of Apostolo Zeno, who himself converted the story into an opera, and whose testimony is not to be disputed. In Germany it was adopted, and adapted, in the middle of the sixteenth century, Hans Saachs having converted it into a drama as early as the year 1550.

English readers first became acquainted with the story by means of Chaucer's beautiful and extended versification of the incidents; and comparing them with those in Boccaccio's novel, it may be inferred that