

The Lake English Classics

SHAKSPERE'S

H A M L E T

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

BY

WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON, M.A., Ph.D.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CHICAGO

SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY

1908

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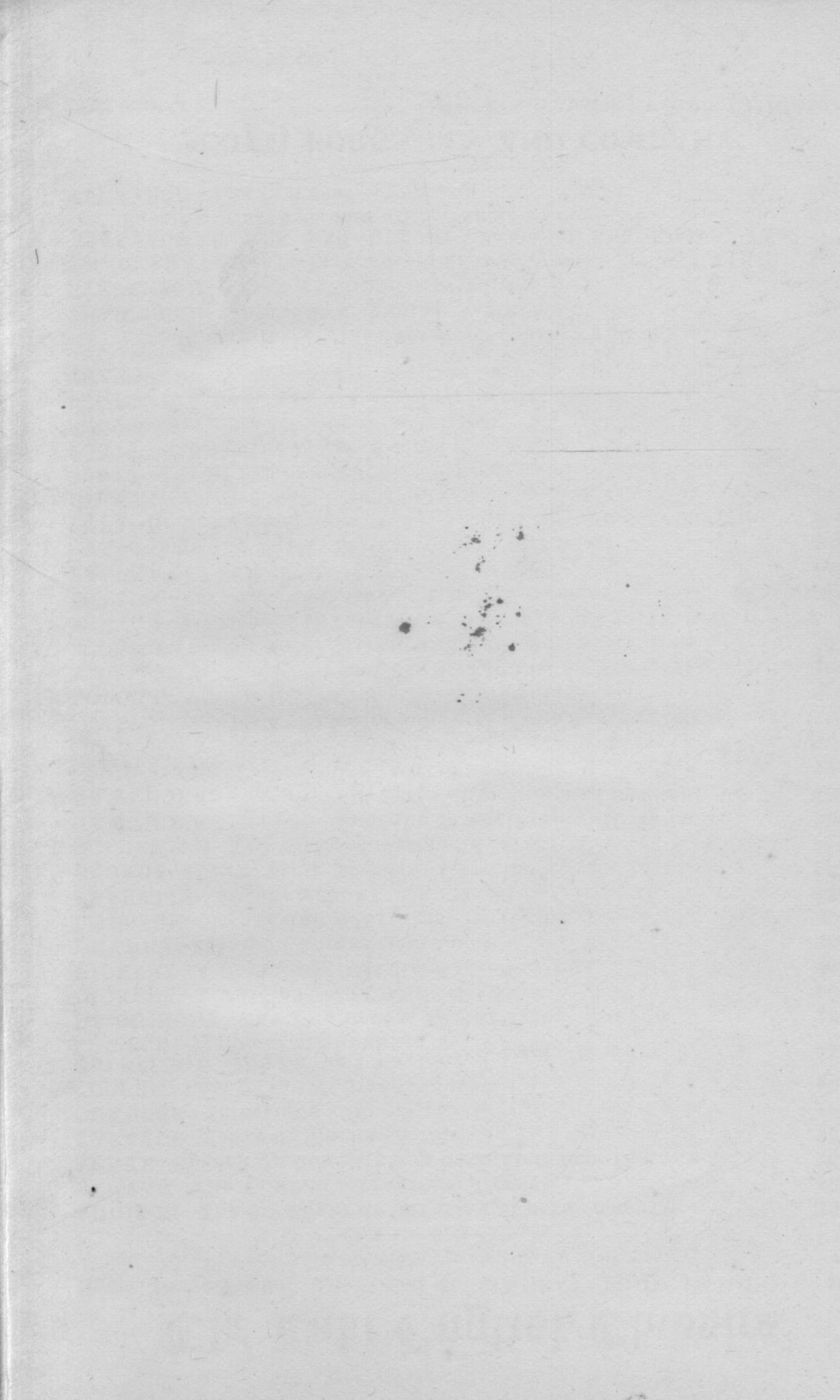
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Under the editorial supervision of LINDSAY TODD DAMON, A. B.
Professor of Rhetoric in Brown University.

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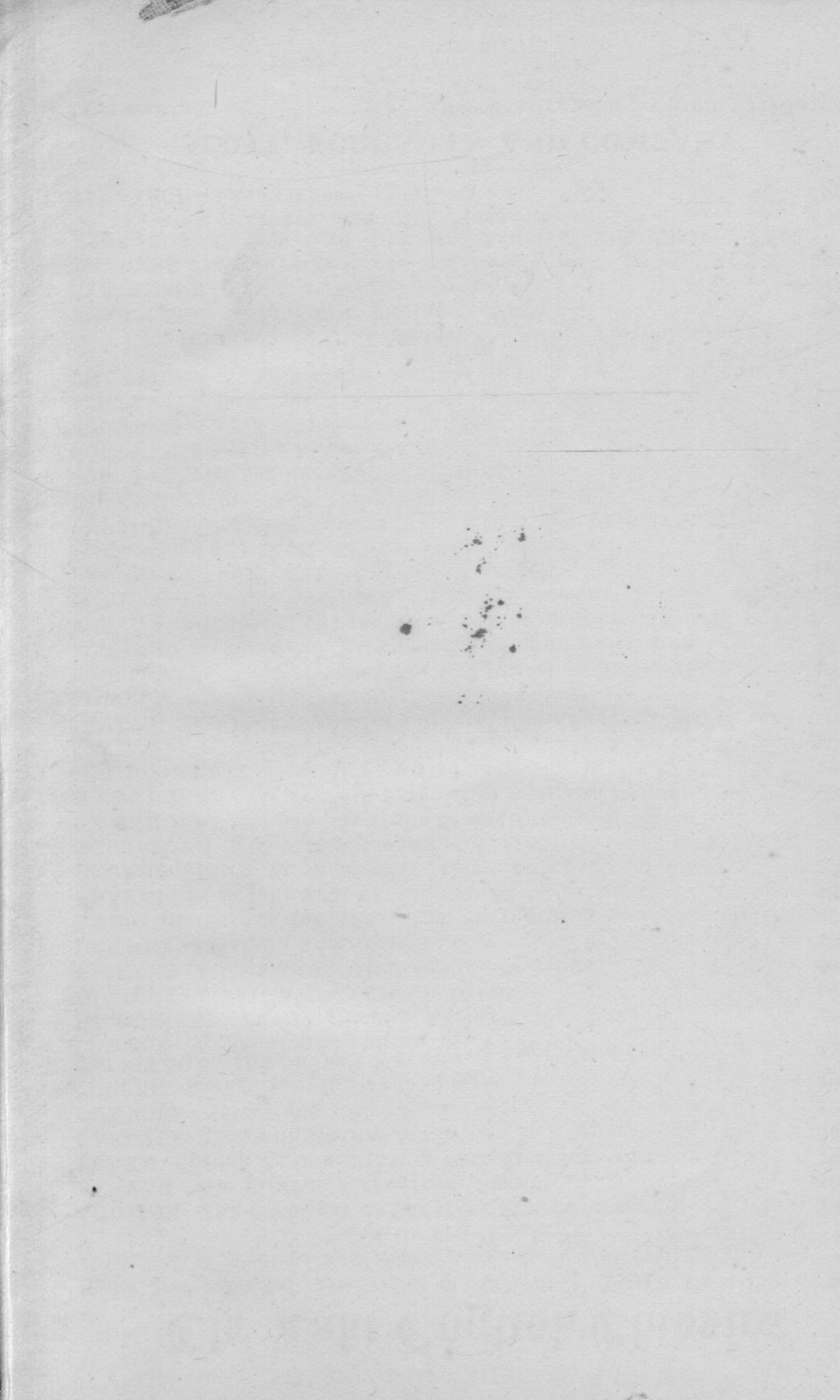
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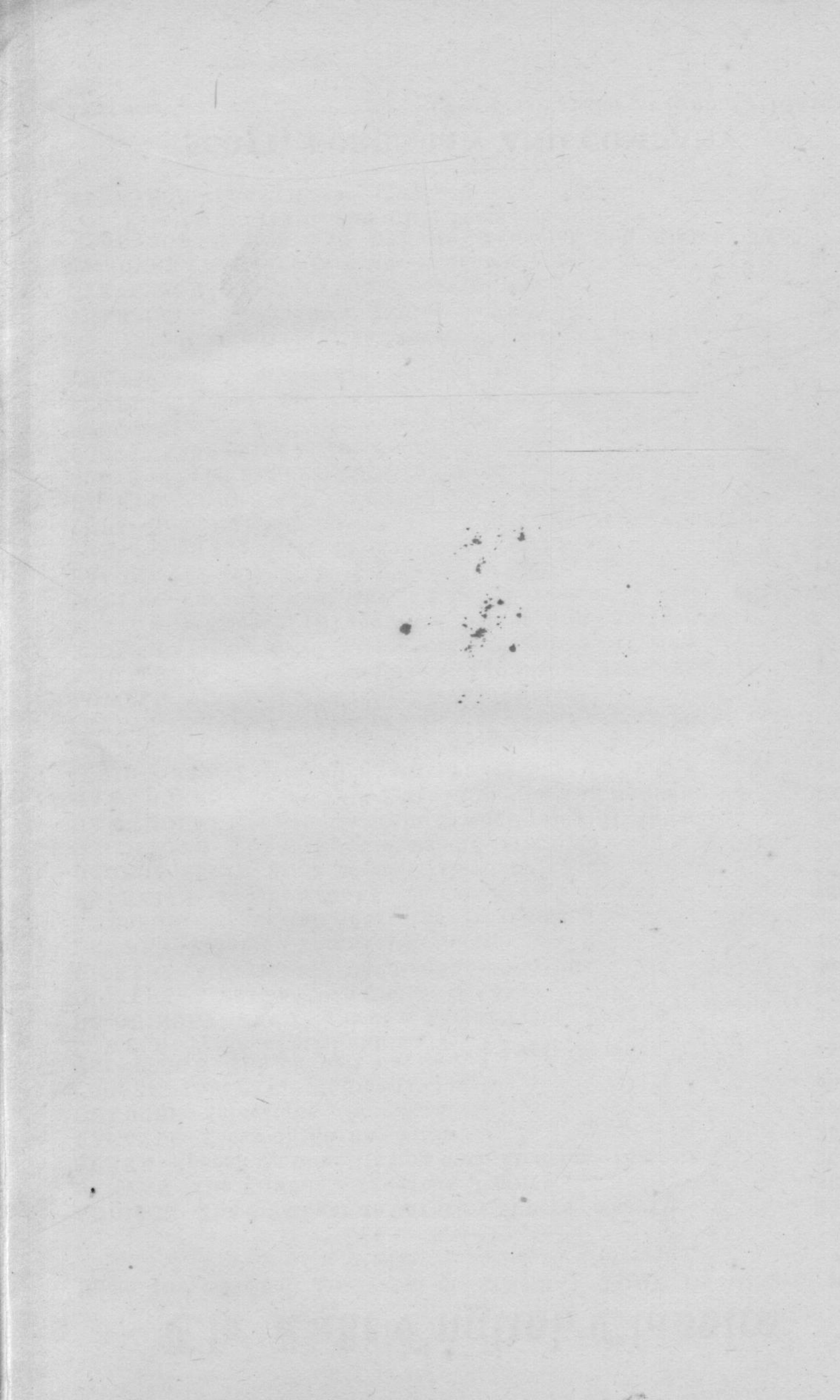
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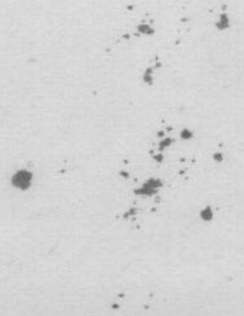
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PREFACE.

The aim in the present series is to offer a satisfactory text of each play with as full an equipment of introduction and notes as is necessary for thorough intelligibility. In the case of *Hamlet*, the text presents a problem of exceptional difficulty. Each of the two main sources of the text, the second Quarto and the first Folio, contains passages not found in the other. Modern editions include both sets of passages, thus giving a form of the play considerably longer than any presented on the stage in Shakspeare's time. The present text is based on the second Quarto, the longer of the two early versions, and the additional passages from the first Folio are enclosed in square brackets. It is thus possible to read the play in what is, so far as length is concerned at least, one of the forms in which it was acted on the Jacobean stage; while all the advantages of a complete text, compiled from both sources, are preserved.

The first section of the introduction, dealing with Shakspeare and the drama, is intended to give the student an idea of the place of the play in literary history. In the treatment of the

source of the play the attempt has been made to give the essential facts with regard to the earlier forms of the story in as simple a form as is consistent with accuracy. So many theories have been put forth with regard to the relations of the different versions that it was manifestly impossible to mention more than a very few; and in his selection of these the editor has been guided by his own judgment. The limits of the scope of this series have made necessary at times a summary treatment or even a neglect of views which he realizes are entitled to a consideration more detailed than was possible here. The sections on language and metre present some of the peculiarities of Shakspeare's English and versification in a more systematic fashion than is possible in separate notes.

Although the task of aesthetic interpretation has been, for the most part, left to the teacher, the editor has ventured to draw attention in the notes to some of the more important points in the structure of the plot and in the exposition of character. No attempt, however, has been made to argue the great controverted questions of the play, though it is hardly to be expected that all traces of the editor's attitude on these have been avoided.

Among previous editions used in the preparation of the present volume, Dr. Furness's *Variorum Hamlet* has been, as usual, of immense

service. To the more recent studies of Professor Boas in his new edition of Kyd, and of Professor A. H. Thorndike in the brilliant discussion quoted in the introduction, special obligations must be acknowledged. Of a debt somewhat different in kind, the editor has been constantly reminded in the writing of these notes. The major part of what is of value in them is due to the training received from his teachers, the late Professor Child and Professor George Lyman Kittredge, both of Harvard. It is impossible after a lapse of years to distinguish the precise source of individual interpretations, so that this general statement of indebtedness and gratitude must perforce take the place of detailed acknowledgements.

For further details on the life and works of Shakspeare, the following may be referred to: Dowden's *Shakspeare Primer* and *Shakspeare, His Mind and Art*; Sidney Lee's *Life of William Shakespeare*; *William Shakspeare*, by Barrett Wendell; *Shakspeare and His Predecessors*, by F. S. Boas; and *The Age of Shakespeare*, by Allen and Seccombe. The most exhaustive account of the English Drama down to the eighteenth century is A. W. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature*. Both this work and that of Sidney Lee are rich in bibliographical information. For questions of language and grammar, see A. Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon*, J. Bartlett's *Concordance to Shakespeare*, E. A. Abbott's Shake-

spearian Grammar; and, for general questions of dramatic construction, Gustav Freytag's *Technik des Dramas*, translated into English by E. J. MacEwan, and Dr. Elisabeth Woodbridge's *The Drama, Its Law and Its Technique*.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

September, 1903.