# SHAKESPEARE'S

# ENGLAND

# Shakespeare's England

An Account of the
*Life & Manners*
of his AGE

Volume
I


Clarendon Press Oxford

# PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to describe the habits of the English people during Shakespeare's lifetime. The attempt would be worth making even if Shakespeare had never lived. It has been made in the belief that an understanding of the world he lived in is a step to the understanding of Shakespeare. Language is, no doubt, a great preservative, and Shakespeare speaks directly every day to many people who never trouble themselves with the changes that have come over England since he was buried at Stratford. Nevertheless, they would understand him better if they knew more of his surroundings and of the audience that he addressed. Half the errors and fantasies of popular Shakespeare criticism find their opportunity in indifference to these matters, or in ignorance of them.

This kind of study of Shakespeare, which deals with bare, and often trivial, matter of fact, does not appeal to the metaphysician, or to any of those who covet the glow that comes from brisk exercise in large empty spaces. But no apology need be offered to the artist, for the artist knows that life is a hand-to-mouth affair, and that happiness, which is the spirit of life, is concerned not with the interstellar distances, but with that small portion of space which is more or less under our control. To order it rightly and pleasantly is art. The body must be fed and clothed, and a shelter must be built for it from the weather ; when these things are done, the mind must still be occupied and humoured with play, which mimics the labours that it seeks to escape from.

The truth was well handled by Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in their profound discussion of human life. 'Does not our life consist of the four elements?' said Sir Toby. 'Faith, so they say,' said Sir Andrew, 'but I think it rather consists of eating and drinking.' Sir Andrew is a foolish gentleman, but those who want to know what Shakespeare thinks must not neglect what his fools say. After all, how does one age differ from another? The elements remain the same; earth, air, fire, and water; birth, marriage, and death; these are not much altered from century to century. It is the little things that change, and in their change serve as an index to the character of a man or of an age. Everything in one sense remains the same; everything in another sense is different. Some slight changes in material conditions alter manners, customs, values, and the meanings of spoken language.

Shakespeare's book is not the only book that is sometimes read with imperfect intelligence. In the authorized translation of the Bible, produced in King James's reign, and in the Book of Daniel, the people are told to fall down and worship the golden image when they hear the sound of 'the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music'. It might be thought that those are the instruments which were played in King Nebuchadnezzar's time. They are the music of Elizabethan England.

Elizabethan England is reflected everywhere in Shakespeare's works; he held the mirror up to nature, but the nature that passed across it was English nature of the time of Elizabeth. He said many things that are true for all time; but if we understand the world that he moved in and the language that he spoke, we are saved from mistaking the accidents of his time for the essentials of his thought.

The English school of Shakespeare criticism has always been strong in antiquarian lore. Theobald, Malone, Drake, Furnivall, and a score of others have served Shakespeare's fame well, and have drawn a better meaning out of his plays than the philosophers have read into them. The best that can be hoped for this book, the work of many hands, is that it may be judged to be not unworthy of its ancestry, and of the service to which it is dedicated.

So long ago as 1905 Sir WALTER RALEIGH sketched the first plan of this book, and in 1909 Sir SIDNEY LEE undertook its production. He arranged for the writing of most of the treatises now published, set on foot the first selection of the illustrations by which they are accompanied, and made additions from his own collections and from fresh researches. In 1911 he was obliged to postpone work upon the book, and in 1914 to relinquish the hope of completing it. Successive editors who took up the task were withdrawn by war work in the course of 1914–15, and owing to these inevitable delays, not by design, the book appears in the tercentenary year of Shakespeare's death, and in the midst of the Great War.

The Clarendon Press esteems itself fortunate to have been able to employ for the completion of the work the practised hand of Mr. ONIONS, co-editor of the Oxford Dictionary and author of the Shakespeare Glossary, which at long last has given us a complete and authoritative survey by an English scholar of such Shakespearian words and meanings as are no longer current in English speech. The minute examination of the vocabulary of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, made for the purposes of the glossary, has been very profitable to the present work : it has tended to secure

completeness and has called attention to or thrown light upon sundry passages and allusions which might have escaped notice. Mr. Onions desires to acknowledge on his own behalf the benefits he has received from the constant counsel and encouragement of Sir Walter Raleigh, and in the later stages of the editorial work, from collaboration most kindly undertaken by Mr. Nichol Smith. Mr. P. E. Matheson, also, has helped with the final reading of the proofs, and throughout much assistance and advice has been given by Mr. C. F. Bell, Mr. Percy Simpson, and Mr. Emery Walker, and, on special points, by Mr. F. P. Barnard, Mr. Raymond Beazley, Sir William Osler, and Dr. C. W. Singer. The verification of references and the reading of proofs have been largely in the hands of Mr. Yockney and Mr. Dadley of the Oxford Dictionary; the index of proper names was prepared by Mr. Ostler of the Clarendon Press and Mrs. A. F. New. The new editor and the publishers, at the completion of an undertaking upon which no pains have been spared, express their thanks to the authors who have waited patiently for publication, or have made possible the very considerable additions of letterpress and illustrations which have been collected during the editorship of Mr. Onions.

Acknowledgements for permission to reproduce title-pages, prints, and pictures are in the first place due to the Director of the British Museum and the Librarian of the Bodleian Library at Oxford; the illustrations which form part of this book are in a large proportion derived from treasures of which they are the guardians. Other institutions or corporate bodies to which acknowledgements are due are: the Ashmolean Museum, for the

portraits of John Dee and John Bull, and Pieter Breughel's print of 'An Alchemist'; the National Portrait Gallery, for the portraits of Prince Henry by P. van Somer, Sir Walter Ralegh, and Sir Edward Coke by Cornelius Jansen van Ceulen, and the perspective portrait of Edward VI; the Public Record Office, for Shakespeare's signature to a deposition; Somerset House, for the three signatures of Shakespeare to his will; the Library of the Guildhall, London, for Shakespeare's signature to the Blackfriars deed; the University of Cambridge, for the title-page of Camden's Greek Grammar; the University of Edinburgh, for a plate from Derricke's *Image of Ireland*; the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, for the picture of the Palace of Sheen; the Society of Antiquaries, London, for permission to reproduce an engraving from a picture in their possession of 'Preaching at St. Paul's Cross', and for the use of their negative of the Earl of Derby's Elizabethan picture of a card-party; to the Governors of Dulwich College, for the portraits of Alleyn, Field, and Burbage; to the Worshipful Company of Barbers, for permission to reproduce an engraving of the picture in their possession of Henry VIII conferring a charter; to the Trustees and Guardians of Shakespeare's Birthplace, for the Quiney letter and tradesmen's tokens.

Many private persons have kindly given permission for the photographing of subjects for reproduction in this book: His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, eight designs by Inigo Jones for the staging of Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens*, at Chatsworth; His Grace the Duke of Portland, the portrait of the third Earl of Southampton, at Welbeck Abbey; His Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, the picture of Court of Wards and Liveries,

at Goodwood; the Right Honourable the Earl of Derby, the picture of an Elizabethan card-party, at Knowsley; the Right Honourable the Earl of Ilchester, the picture by Marcus Gheerarts of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Blackfriars, at Melbury; the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury, the picture by Hoefnagel of a marriage fête at Horsleydown, at Hatfield; the Viscount Dillon, the portrait of Queen Elizabeth, at Ditchley; the Reverend Wentworth Watson, the garden mount at Rockingham Castle; Mr. Percy Macquoid, three pieces of furniture in his collection; Mr. W. H. Godfrey, the reconstructive sketch by him of The Fortune theatre.

Mr. John Hogg has kindly given permission for the reproduction of two illustrations from Sir W. H. St. John Hope's *Heraldry for Craftsmen and Designers*; Messrs. Batsford for four architectural pictures from Mr. J. Alfred Gotch's *Early Renaissance Architecture in England*; the editor of *The Architectural Review* for the use of the block of Mr. W. H. Godfrey's reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre, and Mr. Freeman O'Donoghue for his photograph of Viscount Dillon's portrait of Queen Elizabeth. The negative of the Shakespeare bust at Stratford-on-Avon was specially made for Captain Purchas.

# ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYED IN QUOTATIONS FROM SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

| | |
|---|---|
| All's W. | = All's Well that Ends Well |
| Ant. & Cleop. | = Antony and Cleopatra |
| A. Y. L. | = As You Like It |
| Com. of E. | = Comedy of Errors |
| Cor. | = Coriolanus |
| Cymb. | = Cymbeline |
| Haml. | = Hamlet |
| 1 Hen. IV | = The First Part of King Henry IV |
| 2 Hen. IV | = The Second Part of King Henry IV |
| Hen. V | = King Henry V |
| 1 Hen. VI | = The First Part of King Henry VI |
| 2 Hen. VI | = The Second Part of King Henry VI |
| 3 Hen. VI | = The Third Part of King Henry VI |
| John | = King John |
| Jul. Caes. | = Julius Caesar |
| Lear | = King Lear |
| Lover's Comp | = A Lover's Complaint |
| Love's L. L. | = Love's Labour 's Lost |
| Lucr. | = The Rape of Lucrece |
| Macb. | = Macbeth |
| Meas. for M. | = Measure for Measure |
| Merch. of V. | = The Merchant of Venice |
| M. Wives | = The Merry Wives of Windsor |
| Mid. N. D. | = A Midsummer Night's Dream |
| Much Ado | = Much Ado about Nothing |
| Oth. | = Othello |
| Pass. Pilg. | = The Passionate Pilgrim. |
| Pericles | = Pericles |
| Rich. II | = King Richard II |
| Rich. III | = King Richard III |
| Rom. & Jul. | = Romeo and Juliet |
| Sonnets | = Sonnets |
| Tam. Sh. | = The Taming of the Shrew |
| Temp. | = The Tempest |
| Timon | = Timon of Athens |
| Tit. Andr. | = Titus Andronicus |
| Troilus | = Troilus and Cressida |
| Tw. N. | = Twelfth Night |
| Two Gent. | = The Two Gentlemen of Verona |
| Ven. & Ad. | = Venus and Adonis |
| Wint. Tale | = The Winter's Tale |
| chor. | = chorus |
| epil. | = epilogue |
| ind. | = induction |
| prol. | = prologue |
| st. dir. | = stage direction |

*The text used is that of the Oxford Shakespeare, except where for special reasons it has been necessary to set it aside.*

# O D E

ON THE TERCENTENARY COMMEMORATION

OF

## SHAKESPEARE

BY

*ROBERT BRIDGES* Poet Laureate

1916

KIND dove-wing'd Peace, for whose green olive-crown
The noblest kings would give their diadems,
Mother, who hast ruled our home so long,
How suddenly art thou fled!
Leaving our cities astir with war;
And yet on the fair fields deserted
Lingerest, wherever the gaudy seasons
Deck with excessive splendour
The sorrow-stricken year,
Where cornlands bask and high elms rustle gently,
And still the unweeting birds sing on by brae and bourn.

The trumpet blareth & calleth the true to be stern:
Be then thy soft reposeful music dumb;
Yet shall thy lovers awhile give ear
—An' tho' full-arm'd they come—
To the praise of England's gentlest son;
Whom, when she bore, the Muses lov'd
Above the best of eldest honour
—Yea, save one without peer—
And by great Homer set,
Not to impugn his undisputed throne,
The myriad-hearted by the mighty-hearted one.

For God of His gifts pour'd on him a full measure,
And gave him to know Nature & the ways of men:
And he dowr'd with inexhaustible treasure
A world-conquering speech,
Which surg'd as a river high-descended
That, gathering tributaries of many lands,
Rolls through the plain a bounteous flood,
Picturing towers & temples
And ruin of bygone times,
And floateth the ships deep-laden with merchandise
Out to the windy seas to traffic in foreign climes.

Thee, SHAKESPEARE, to-day we honour; and evermore,
Since England bore thee, the master of human song,
Thy folk are we, children of thee,
Who, knitting in one her realm
And strengthening with pride her sea-borne clans,
Scorn'st in the grave the bruize of death.
All thy later-laurel'd choir
Laud thee in thy world-shrine:
London's laughter is thine;
One with thee is our temper in melancholy or might,
And in thy book Great-Britain's rule readeth her right.

Her chains are chains of Freedom, & her bright arms
Honour, Justice and Truth and Love to man.
Though first from a pirate ancestry
She took her home on the wave,
Her gentler spirit arose disdainful,
And, smiting the fetters of slavery,
Made the high seaways safe & free,
In wisdom bidding aloud
To world-wide brotherhood,

Till her flag was hail'd as the ensign of Liberty,
And the boom of her guns went round the earth in salvos
of peace.

And thou, when Nature bow'd her mastering hand
To borrow an ecstasy of man's art from thee,
Thou, her poet, secure as she
Of the shows of eternity,
Didst never fear thy work should fall
To fashion's craze nor pedant's folly
Nor devastator, whose arrogant arms
Murder and maim mankind;
Who, when in scorn of grace
He hath batter'd & burn'd some loveliest dearest shrine,
Laugheth in ire & boasteth aloud his brazen god.

* * * * * *

I SAW the Angel of Earth from strife aloof
Mounting the heavenly stair with Time on high,
Growing ever younger in the brightening air
Of the everlasting dawn:
It was not terror in his eyes nor wonder,
That glance of the intimate exaltation
Which lieth as Power under all Being,
And broodeth in Thought above—
As a bird wingeth over the ocean,
Whether indolently the heavy water sleepeth
Or is dash'd in a million waves, chafing or lightly laughing.

I hear his voice in the music of lamentation,
In echoing chant and cadenced litany,
In country song and pastoral piping
And silvery dances of mirth:

And oft, as the eyes of a lion in the brake,
His presence hath startled me . . .
In austere shapes of beauty lurking,
Beautiful for Beauty's sake;
As a lonely blade of life
Ariseth to flower, whensoever the unseen Will
Stirreth with kindling aim the dark fecundity of Being.

Man knoweth but as in a dream of his own desire
The thing that is good for man, and he dreameth well:
But the lot of the gentle heart is hard
That is cast in an epoch of life,
When evil is knotted and demons fight,
Who know not, they, that the lowest lot
Is treachery hate and trust in sin
And perseverance in ill,
Doom'd to oblivious Hell,
To pass with the shames unspoken of men away,
Wash'd out with their tombs by the grey unpitying tears
of Heaven.

But ye, dear Youth, who lightly in the day of fury
Put on England's glory as a common coat,
And in your stature of masking grace
Stood forth warriors complete,
No praise o'ershadoweth yours to-day,
Walking out of the home of love
To match the deeds of all the dead.—
Alas! alas! fair Peace,
These were thy blossoming roses.
Look on thy shame, fair Peace, thy tearful shame!
Turn to thine isle, fair Peace; return thou & guard it well!

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