

THE RIVERSIDE
SHAKESPEARE



The Riverside SHAKESPEARE

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The cover illustration shows a section of a sixteenth-century embroidered valance
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Publisher's Preface

In the words of the First Folio of 1623, *The Riverside Shakespeare* is addressed "To the great Variety of Readers. From the most able, to him that can but spell." In the plainer language of our day, this means that the book has been designed with the general reader, the student, and the scholar equally in mind.

The plan of the volume was ambitious from the start. The central spire of its accomplishment is a completely re-edited text, generally modern in spelling and punctuation, yet sensitively reflecting the rhythms and modulations of the Elizabethan voice. This text and its appurtenances, including full textual notes and a history of Shakespeare textual scholarship and editing, is the sole work of G. Blakemore Evans of Harvard University, and will, we believe, stand as a model for generations to come.

In somewhat the manner of Dr. Johnson's preface of 1765, the volume is introduced by a classic statement of the known facts of Shakespeare's life and work, together with the major critical opinions and salient existing problems. This statement, by Harry Levin of Harvard University, will generously reward repeated reading as the reader's knowledge and appreciation grow; it is compact of thought and learning which will yield up their fullest savor with experience and time.

Introductions and explanatory notes to the plays and poems record existing scholarship and criticism, and are rich in original insights. These were provided by a panel of distinguished editors: Herschel Baker of Harvard University for the history plays; Frank Kermode of University College, London, for the tragedies; Hallett Smith of the California Institute of Technology for the romances and the poems; and Anne Barton of Bedford College, London, for the introductions to the comedies. Notes to the comedies, begun by Lloyd E. Berry of the University of Missouri, were completed by Professor Evans and Marie Edel of Houghton Mifflin Company. Professor Evans has also supplied a fully edited version—the first to be included in a one-volume Shakespeare—of those additions to *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* which are thought by many to be Shakespeare's and partly written in his hand.

An afterpiece by Charles H. Shattuck of the University of Illinois reviews and assesses the staging and acting of Shakespeare's plays from the Restoration to the present, and ends with a section on Shakespeare in film. Two appendixes by Professor Evans, "Annals, 1552-1616" and "Records, Documents, and Allusions," provide unusually full historical setting and references for the main events of Shakespeare's life and career, and for the main political, literary, and cultural events of Tudor and Jacobean England. And a body of contemporary illustration, provided largely through the researches of Professors Evans and Baker, sheds light on Elizabethan life and thought and will greatly help the student and the general reader to understand and visualize what he reads, over a range from costume to cosmology, from the life of *street and tavern* to the panoply of place and state.

Over ten years in the making, the project developed a life of its own, with its own vital statistics. The undertaking was jointly conceived and launched by Gordon N. Ray of the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and Henry F. Thoma of Houghton Mifflin Company. Without the learning and long devotion of Marie Edel, who tirelessly enspirited and oversaw the whole development of the book, the volume could never have seen the light of day. Each of our editors has served beyond the requirements of his task. And each has stood as a model not only of erudition but of grace under pressure and comfort in crisis.

The Riverside Shakespeare began to spread its influence some years before its publication. Its text is the basis for Professor Marvin Spevack's computer-generated *Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare*, and for the one-volume *Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare* based on this longer work.

It is with a sense of making a contribution to the culture of this generation, as well as of offering an exemplum of dedication and unselfish accomplishment by our distinguished editors, that Houghton Mifflin Company presents *The Riverside Shakespeare*.

Harold T. Miller, President
Houghton Mifflin Company

Textual Editor's Acknowledgments

The Textual Editor has received, over the years, much special help and advice from friends and colleagues which it is now his happy privilege to acknowledge. Dr. Marie Edel, apart from her own share in this edition, has served throughout as an unofficial general editor, and her learning, critical insight, and infallible eye for detail have placed me, *sine spe*, profoundly in her debt. Our long association has been a continuing source of pleasure to me. Professor Marvin Spevack, who used the present text as the basis for his *Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare* (6 vols., 1968-70), has been more than helpful in a variety of ways, particularly in rechecking the accuracy of the text and Textual Notes. To both these friends my gratitude goes far beyond anything I can possibly express. I am further greatly indebted to the unfailing kindness and patience of the staffs of the Houghton Library and the Harvard Theatre Collection, especially to my old friend Dr. William Bond, Director of the Houghton Library, Miss Carolyn Jakeman, Miss Katherine Pantzer, Miss Marte Shaw, and Dr. Jeanne Newlin. Miss Eva Faye Benton, English Librarian at the University of Illinois, also has my special thanks, as do Professors Michael T. Kiernan, Frederick Kiefer, and David George, each of whom in different ways assisted me at need. Finally, to my wife, who with truly Spartan endurance read aloud to me the complete text (including all the punctuation marks!), I offer once again my wondering and loving thanks for her continual support in this and all other things.

G. Blakemore Evans

Abbreviations

F1, F2, etc. First Folio, Second Folio, etc.	conj. conjecture
O1, O2, etc. First Octavo, Second Octavo, etc.	om. omit(s), omitted
Q1, Q2, etc. First Quarto, Second Quarto, etc.	o.s.d. opening stage direction
(c) corrected state	s.d(d). stage direction(s)
(u) uncorrected state	s.p(p). speech-prefix(es)
	subs. substantially

Key to Works Cited

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General Introduction

Harry Levin

I. THE SHAKESPEAREAN HERITAGE

Now and again the observation is offered about a great writer that he has created a world of his own. Such artificial worlds are necessarily smaller than the one we live in; otherwise they would not help us much to understand it; like a map, they locate situations by reducing them to a comprehensible scale. Lifelike and large as these representations of truth may seem to us, they are limited nonetheless by the means and motives of their creation. Yet the writers whom we regard as the very greatest have a way of surpassing limitations by convincing us that their range of perception is just as wide, and their sense of reality just as authentic, as anything that we are ever likely to encounter during the course of our own experience. So the ancients placed Homer in a unique position because his epic outlook seemed to be coextensive with the breadth and depth of the world they knew. Similarly, for the Middle Ages, all the circumstances of human existence were summed up in the luminous vision of Dante. Since then man's horizons have so enlarged and his problems have so complicated themselves that, although he still can find much beauty and significance in the poetry of Homer and Dante, they have long since ceased to serve as his active guides. Indeed, if it were not for Shakespeare, we might well doubt whether any single creative genius could have encompassed so much of the variety, the profundity, and the abundance of life as it has been lived in the modern era of civilization.

Shakespeare's works have therefore been accorded a place in our culture above and beyond their topmost place in our literature. They have been virtually canonized as humanistic scriptures, the tested residue

of pragmatic wisdom, a general collection of quotable texts and usable examples. Reprinted, reedited, commented upon, and translated into most languages, they have preempted more space on the library shelves than the books of—or about—any other author. Meanwhile they have become a staple of the school and college curricula, as well as the happiest of hunting-grounds for scholars and critics. As plays they continue to meet the one decisive criterion by maintaining their importance in the dramatic repertory, all the way from Harlem to Uzbekistan, and to provide the roles that leading actors compete in when they seek to demonstrate their talents. Ever since David Garrick staged his Stratford Jubilee of 1769, Shakespeare's native town has been a shrine for literary pilgrims; more recently its festival has come to set a standard for Shakespearean productions; and now the cult has spread to transatlantic Stratfords in Ontario and Connecticut, not to mention regular performance at innumerable theatres elsewhere. If all this seems to smack too uncritically of ritual observance and traditional piety, we should be reminded that Shakespearean drama has continually renewed itself through adaptation to changing times. It has adapted not only to contemporary dress but to current issues; thus the conflicts of the Roman plays have been sharpened by the political pressures of the twentieth century.

Shakespeare showed prophetic insight into his own future when, looking back to Rome in *Julius Caesar*, he allowed his Cassius to look ahead down the centuries to come:

How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

(III.i.113-15)

The leading spirit among his fellow dramatists, Ben Jonson, also foresaw that triumphant survival when he prefaced Shakespeare's First Folio with the poetic tribute: "He was not of an age, but for all time!" But Jonson, who was well aware that such universality must have its basis in a firm grasp of immediacy, had begun his poem by hailing Shakespeare as the major voice of his time: "Soul of the Age!" Few of his contemporaries had been quite so magnanimous or far-seeing. The earliest critical recognition of his career had been a truculent outburst from Robert Greene, hack-writing upon his very deathbed in 1592, and denouncing Shakespeare as a young upstart for his presumption in vying with those already established playwrights whom we call the University Wits. That outburst was countered soon enough by a handsome retraction from Greene's editor, Henry Chettle, and the subsequent testimonials from Shakespeare's colleagues suggest their personal affection and professional esteem.¹ In those days, however, merely to be recognized as a playwright was to be rather an artisan than an artist; it did not carry with it any particular standing as a man of letters. His more serious literary pretensions were declared when he brought out his two narrative poems in the classical erotic vein, and when he privately circulated his sonnets, which would be published belatedly under other auspices.

As for the plays, they were the property of the producing company, which had commissioned and bought them outright at ten pounds or so apiece. So long as they were popular on the stage, it would not have been in the company's interest for them to be printed. Sooner or later slightly more than half of them found their way into print, many of these pirated and garbled, through the separate editions known as quartos. Subject to such hazards of publication and to the rigors of censorship, Shakespeare's hand was obscured by anonymity while he was young and unknown, and credited apocryphally with plays by other hands when he was older and famous. On the whole, it is surprising and fortunate that the corpus of his writing has mainly come down to us through so authoritative an edition as the First Folio. Seven years before that landmark appeared, Jonson had braved the scorn of critics for gathering up the plays he had written to date and bringing them out in folio as *Works*—a format and a title which then seemed much too pretentious for mere stage-pieces. Shakespeare's collected volume, edited by two of his fellow actors and theatrical partners, John Heminge and Henry Condell, bore a title simply indicating the disposition of its contents: *Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*. From its appearance in 1623, seven years after his death, Shakespeare stood among England's principal authors; but through the seventeenth century he shared equal applause with the scholarly Jonson and the courtly John Fletcher; he did not emerge into the light of preeminence until Dryden signaled him

as that writer who possessed "the most comprehensive soul."

The neo-classicists of the eighteenth century, emphasizing that opposition between nature and art which Shakespeare had done so much to reconcile, thought of him as a wholly natural genius who was consequently lacking in conscious artistry. The turning point in the history of his reputation came with the preface to Samuel Johnson's edition of 1765. It was Dr. Johnson who, rescuing Shakespeare from the indignity of being harshly judged by neo-classical rules, insisted on granting him the status of a classic. If his plays followed certain laws of their own, henceforth the path lay open to the discovery of those laws. But the Romantics were as eager to associate him with nature itself as their predecessors had been to distinguish his endeavors from their notions of art. Even Ben Jonson's eulogy had been, as he dryly put it, "on this side idolatry." During the later eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare's interpreters practiced what Bernard Shaw liked to call "Bardolatry." They all but deified the Bard of Avon because he was the creator of so many characters who could be treated as if they were human beings—could be identified with, psychologized over, arraigned for moral judgment. Shakespeare's full-bodied realism, as opposed to the more formal characterization of continental drama, meanwhile triumphed over the barriers of verse translation. His name became a rallying cry in the campaigns for Romanticism, and his influence contributed to the self-realization of the various national literatures of Europe.

Our century, which has latterly celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of his birth, has brought him the twelfth generation of his continuing audience. Yet, despite the ever-widening time-span, we may approach him somewhat more closely today than we could have done at intervals in the past. Historical knowledge of his period has helped to bridge the gap, while a comparative view of the drama is helping us to see his work in more extended and clarifying perspective. So much interpretation has surrounded it that we sometimes barely glimpse the forest because of the many screeds which the commentators, like his Orlando, have hung upon the trees. But commentary is useful in alerting us to assumptions or implications we might have missed, and editorial scholarship has learned to correct distortions by removing encrustations. It is the purpose of this introduction, and of the comments that herewith introduce and accompany Shakespeare's texts, to set them into their most meaningful contexts. Universal as his attraction has been, it is best understood through particulars. Though—to our advantage—his creations are relatively timeless, they would not mean so much to us if they had not been timely in their day. Nor would they have made their lasting impact, if their author had not been past master of his exacting and exciting medium, linguistic, poetic, dramatic. Since that mastery was the ripe attainment of an individual mind, we owe some attention to the man in his time before turning to the materials and techniques of his art.

¹ The passages from Greene and Chettle, together with various other biographical and critical documents referred to in this essay, are reprinted in Appendix B below.

II. THE BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

Contrary to a fairly widespread impression, there is no special mystery about his life. Indeed it is unusually well documented, for a commoner's of his period. Unfortunately for our personal curiosity, most of this documentation takes the colorless form of entries in parish registers or municipal archives, legal instruments involving property, all too fragmentary theatrical records, and a few business letters to or about him. The biographical outline provided by more than a hundred such documents is filled in by well over fifty literary allusions to Shakespeare and his works in the published writings of contemporaries. But these details, even when they have been eked out by traditions and conjectures, scarcely combine to portray a vivid personality. Modern readers, accustomed by the Romantics to poets who lived their poems and dramatized their lives, have felt somewhat put off by the undramatic nature of the dramatist's private career. The figure of Shakespeare as a practical man of affairs, although well attested by the evidence, seemed rather too modest to occupy the lofty pedestal reared by the Bardolaters. Hence the strange proliferation of irresponsible theories proposing rival candidates for the authorship of Shakespeare's work, most of them titled and all of them colorful but none of them circumstanced to have done the job—as William Shakespeare indubitably was. His existence should not seem uneventful if we consider that its main events were the thirty-eight plays created, in rapid succession and brilliant diversity, within a span of less than twenty-five years.

The first recorded fact under the family name at Stratford-on-Avon is neither inspiring nor revealing: it is the imposition of a fine upon the poet's father for countenancing a dunghill too near the house and shop on Henley Street that would be pointed out as Shakespeare's birthplace. What would be truly significant was the son's lifelong connection with the prosperous and picturesque market town in the rich heart of rural England. He was a country boy, and he kept returning to the Warwickshire countryside, like the fabled giant who renewed his energies by touching his native soil. North of the winding Avon lay the Forest of Arden, which must have cast some shade on the woodland scenes of *As You Like It*, even though the play introduces tropical flora and fauna, and is linked by verbal associations with the Franco-Belgian Ardennes. The association that means most here, however, is the fact that Shakespeare's mother had been Mary Arden, and that her yeoman family was related to those Ardens who held large estates nearby. Her husband, John Shakespeare, son of a local tenant farmer, was by trade a glover or leatherworker. He became one of Stratford's leading citizens, was elected a burgess or member of the town council, acted as magistrate and in various civic capacities, and served a brief term as bailiff or mayor during William's infancy. Though John's fortunes declined before his death in 1601, about the time when *Hamlet* was being completed, he lived to be granted the arms and

style of a gentleman, probably through the endeavors and the successes of his son.

Thus, like many good English families, the Shakespeares made the transition from the status of tradesman to that of esquire during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The name of their eldest son William appears first on record under the date of his baptism, April 26, 1564, at the Church of the Holy Trinity, where he was to be buried just fifty-two years afterward. Since the day of his death in 1616 was (if the inscription on his monument in the church can be trusted) April 23, which is also the holiday of England's patron Saint George, it is coincidentally celebrated as Shakespeare's birthday. Because the sons of burgesses were specifically entitled to free tuition at the local grammar school, it seems most probable that he studied there, absorbing a curriculum strongly based on rhetoric, Christian ethics, and classical literature. He did not go on to attend a university; and, understandably, he would not be regarded as a man of learning by such consciously erudite humanists as Jonson and Milton. But our age is so much less devoted than theirs to the cultivation of the classics that what looked to Jonson like "small Latin and less Greek" might well strike us as a respectable grounding in the humanities. His plays show amply that he was conversant with Latin and French, plus a smattering of other foreign languages, history both ancient (notably Plutarch) and modern (the British chronicles), philosophic speculation (Montaigne), continental fiction such as Boccaccio's, earlier English poets like Chaucer and Gower—not to mention fellow Elizabethans, from the high-minded Sidney to the abusive Greene.

A writer's reading tends to reveal itself most directly through his earliest efforts, and Shakespeare's small somewhat of the Greco-Roman lamp in their use of quotation and mythological ornament. The prototypes for academic drama, as Polonius would duly observe, were Seneca for tragedy and Plautus for comedy. It is no accident that the apprentice Shakespeare, while feeling his way toward popular dramatic forms of his own, was to experiment with the Senecan *Titus Andronicus* and the Plautine *Comedy of Errors*; and it is noteworthy that Francis Meres, when he attempted a survey of English writers in his *Palladis Tamia* of 1598, cited Shakespeare as the versatile counterpart of both Roman playwrights—also mentioning Ovid as his forerunner in the field of amorous poetry. One of the better-grounded Shakespearean rumors, coming down to us from an actor in his troupe, tells us that he taught Latin for a while as a country schoolmaster. But he has expressed his opinion of pedantry in *Holofernes* and *Love's Labor's Lost*. The book-learning that Shakespeare displays here and there is far less impressive, in the long run, than his fund of general information. His frame of reference is so far-ranging, and he is so concretely versed in the tricks of so many trades, that lawyers have written to prove he was trained in the law, sailors about his expert seamanship, naturalists upon his botanizing, and so on through the professions. If

this be paradox, it is resolved by Fielding's remark that Shakespeare was "learned in human nature." So far as education has genuine meaning, he must be viewed as a genuinely educated man.

Some confusion seems to attend the facts regarding his marriage, but these are too meagre to encourage surmises. We know that a license was obtained on November 27, 1582, that the former Anne Hathaway was eight years his senior, and that their elder daughter Susanna was born six months later and christened on May 26, 1583. But, since the betrothal might have taken place at some previous point, we may allow the couple the benefit of ceremonies timed more casually in their day than in ours. Nor should we infer any reservations about his wife from the one bequest to her in his will: that "second-best bed" may have been hallowed by conjugal sentiments, and she was provided for otherwise through her dower rights. Given the circumstances of his calling, which inevitably centred on London and occasionally branched out into provincial tours, it could be said that he was at some pains to keep up his domestic ties with Stratford. Twin children, Hamnet and Judith, were born there in 1585; Hamnet, his only son, was to die eleven years later. Biography loses sight of Shakespeare during the interval between the birth of the twins and Greene's attack in 1592, but the latter makes it quite explicit that Shakespeare had meanwhile become a player and was already emerging as a playwright. Retrospectively it would seem clear that those crucial seven years had been fully occupied, not to say well spent, in preparing to meet the demands of the theatrical profession and to endow it with a steady sequence of its finest vehicles.

Though he is listed as having appeared in his own plays and Jonson's, we have no account of his acting. The two roles that tradition has assigned to him are secondary, though not uncongenial: the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the old servitor Adam in *As You Like It*. In any case, the fundamental certainty about Shakespeare is that he was a man of the theatre to his fingertips. No titled amateur could have conceivably handled, with such practiced and inventive skill, all the available resources of his professional medium. His craftsmanship as a dramatist was solidly backed, like Molière's, by long experience as an actor-manager—by the manager's sense of the public, as well as the actor's talent for projecting himself into other selves. During the seasons of 1592–3 the plague was making its terrible visitations; and while the London theatres were closed, Shakespeare seems to have been composing his non-dramatic Ovidian poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. When the theatres reopened, he was one of the sharers or partners in a newly organized company under the sponsorship of the Lord Chamberlain, head of the royal household. This company was to dominate the Elizabethan and the Jacobean stage (in the later period under the sponsorship of King James himself), performing publicly at the famous Globe playhouse and for smaller audiences at the Blackfriars. Along with its best-known actors,

Richard Burbage and William Kemp, he received payment for presenting two plays before the Queen at court during the Christmas festivities of 1594.

The Chamberlain's Men had not infrequent occasion to offer such command performances; and after 1603, when the troupe became His Majesty's Servants, its sharers were officially treated as members of the royal household. Shakespeare made other connections with courtly circles, principally through the patronage of the dashing young Earl of Southampton, to whom he had dedicated both of his printed poems. Southampton is one of those actual personages who have been identified with the noble youth addressed in Shakespeare's sonnets. On that theme there has been—in Falstaffian disproportion—an intolerable deal of conjecture to one halfpennyworth of fact. If the sonnets constitute the key with which Shakespeare "unlocked his heart," in Wordsworth's unguarded phrase, then they have opened no secret doors; if they had done so, as Browning retorted, "the less Shakespeare he." To reread them as if they were confessions is to beg a moot question, since there is just as little external support for attempts at other identifications: the Dark Lady, the rival poet. Doubtless Shakespeare could not have dealt so movingly with love and friendship and with literary and sexual rivalry if he had not experienced them in some intimate guise. But his sonnets would differ unbelievably from his plays, and would come suspiciously close to the effusions of more subjective writers, if he had not again been exercising his gift for dramatic projection. The sonneteer's involvement, within his formal genre, is that of the dramatist with his *dramatis personae*. After all, it is he himself who assumes the identities of his characters:

my nature is subdu'd
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.

(Sonnet 111.6–7)

The advance in Shakespeare's worldly fortunes is evident from a number of business transactions. In 1597 he acquired New Place, one of the most substantial residences in Stratford. Gradually he had given up acting for writing; and by his late forties, several years before his relatively early death, he was living in retirement there. His meticulous testament, which remembers his colleagues, seems designed to perpetuate his estate through his elder daughter's progeny. But his line did not survive his grandchildren; for his many living descendants we must look to the drama. His monument, the bust in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church, is thought to be a true—if stylized—portrait. The same benignant features greet the reader from the frontispiece to the Folio. The recurrent word in the testimonials of Shakespeare's friends and acquaintances is "gentle." It characterizes an engaging but self-effacing person who, while remaining impersonal, could penetrate the minds of multitudinous personalities. Coleridge described him as "myriad-minded." Keats suggested how those many aspects must have been integrated when he spoke of "Negative Capability," that quality