

THE KITTREDGE SHAKESPEARES

Richard II

Edited by George Lyman Kittredge / Revised by Irving Ribner



William Shakespeare

King Richard the Second



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PREFACE

The New Kittredge Shakespeares

The publication of George Lyman Kittredge's *Complete Works of Shakespeare* in 1936 was a landmark in Shakespeare scholarship. The teacher who for almost half a century had dominated and shaped the direction of Shakespearean study in America produced what was recognized widely as the finest edition of Shakespeare up to his time. In the preface to this edition Kittredge indicated his editorial principles; these allowed a paramount authority to the Folio of 1623 and countenanced few departures from it, while at the same time refusing to "canonize the heedless type-setters of the Elizabethan printing house." Kittredge's work was marked by a judicious conservatism and a common sense rarely found in equal measure in earlier editors of Shakespeare. In the thirty-odd years which have gone by since the appearance of this monumental volume, however, considerable advances have been made in the establishment of Shakespeare's text, and our body of knowledge about the dates, sources, and general historical background of Shakespeare's plays has vastly increased. The present revision is designed to apply this new knowledge to Kittredge's work so that it may have as much value to the student and general reader of today as it had to those of thirty years ago.

Before his death Kittredge had issued, in addition to *The Complete Works*, separate editions of sixteen of the plays, each copiously annotated. Some of the notes were unusually elaborate, but they interpreted Shakespeare's language with a fullness and precision attained by few other commentators, for Kittredge had few equals in his intimate knowledge of Elizabethan English. In freshly annotating the plays I have, accordingly, tried to use

Kittredge's own notes as fully as space would permit. Where I have repeated his distinctive language or recorded his characteristic critical opinions, I have followed the note with the symbol [K]; where Kittredge's definition of a term can be found in essentially the same words in other editions, I have not used the identifying symbol. Every annotator draws upon the full body of the notes of earlier editors, and to give credit for every note is impossible. Notes have been placed at page bottoms.

The brief introductions which Kittredge wrote for the plays have been replaced by new ones, for what seemed like indisputable fact some thirty years ago often appears today to be much more uncertain, and many new issues of which Kittredge was not aware have been raised in recent criticism. The new introductions seek to present what are now generally agreed to be basic facts about the plays and to give some indications of the directions which modern criticism has taken, although specific analyses of individual plays are avoided.

Such great authority attaches to Kittredge's text that it has not frequently — and never lightly — been departed from. Where changes have been made, they have usually involved the restoration of copy-text readings now generally accepted in place of the emendations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editors of which Kittredge, in spite of his extraordinary conservatism in this regard, sometimes too easily approved. Only rarely has an emendation been adopted in the present revision which was not also adopted by Kittredge. All departures from the copy-texts are indicated in the notes, emendations followed by the names of the editors by whom they were first proposed. Wherever Kittredge's text has been departed from for any reason, his reading is given in the notes. Modern spelling has in a few instances been substituted for Elizabethan forms which are mere spelling variations but which Kittredge nevertheless retained. His punctuation has not been altered except in a few very rare instances.

The system of recording elisions and contractions which Kittredge explained in his introduction to *The Complete Works* has been retained, as has his method of preserving to the fullest the copy-text stage directions, with all additions to them enclosed within square brackets. (First Folio stage directions are not

bracketed even when used in those plays for which a quarto has provided the copy-text.) Although modern editors recognize the vagueness of the place settings of Elizabethan plays and are reluctant to include the place designations so favoured by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editors, much historical interest nevertheless attaches to these, and Kittredge's place designations have been retained between square brackets. Kittredge's attempt to retain the line numbering of the Globe text, which resulted in considerable irregularity in prose passages, has here been abandoned, and the lines of each play have been freshly numbered. Kittredge's act and scene divisions have been retained, as has his practice of surrounding by square brackets those divisions which are not in the copy-texts.

The plan of *The New Kittredge Shakespeares* is a comprehensive one. They will include a new edition of *The Complete Works* and individual editions of each of the plays, the sonnets, and the poems. A comprehensive introduction to Shakespeare's life, times, and theatrical milieu will be published both as a separate volume and as an introduction to *The Complete Works*.

IRVING RIBNER

INTRODUCTION

The Tragedy of King Richard the Second

◇◇◇◇◇ *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* is the opening play of an historical tetralogy which includes the two parts of *Henry IV* and ends with *Henry V*. It was entered in the Stationers' Register by Andrew Wyse on August 29, 1597, and issued by him in quarto in the same year. Two more quartos were issued by Wyse in 1598, attesting to the play's great popularity. None of these three quartos contains the scene of Richard's deposition (IV.i.154-318), which was probably suppressed for fear of censorship, although there can be no doubt that it was part of the play as originally written. In 1603 Wyse transferred his rights to Matthew Law, who in 1608 published a fourth quarto containing an imperfect version of the deposition scene which he seems to have obtained by memorial reconstruction. He issued a fifth quarto in 1615. The first quarto appears to have been set either directly from Shakespeare's manuscript or from a transcript of it, and each of the succeeding quartos was set from its immediate predecessor. The Folio text of 1623, which contains a more perfect version of the deposition scene than that in Q⁴, appears to have been printed from one of the earlier quartos which had been collated with the theatre prompt-book, itself derived from Shakespeare's foul papers. Which quarto was used has been much debated. Most scholars have held that it was Q³. One theory holds that a composite copy made up of Q³ and the two final leaves of Q⁵ was itself used as a printed prompt-copy after careful collation with a worn-out manuscript prompt-book, and that this served as copy for the Folio. Probably the matter will never be settled

with finality. The present text is based upon the quarto of 1597, although the Folio text, which has considerable independent authority, has been used for the deposition scene and in other places where the quartos are faulty. The quartos contain no act or scene division; the Folio has Latin act and scene division throughout.

DATE

Since Shakespeare drew in part upon Samuel Daniel's *First Four Books of the Civil Wars*, a poem published in 1595, *Richard II* cannot have been written earlier than that year. The play was probably in existence by December 7, 1595, if we can rely upon an extant letter of that date in which Sir Edward Hoby invites Sir Robert Cecil to a private showing of what appears to have been Shakespeare's play, although it is impossible to be entirely certain of this. A date of 1595 accords with all other considerations and is certainly the most reasonable that has been proposed.

SOURCES

Although *Richard II* is based primarily upon the 1587 edition of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, Shakespeare seems to have read widely in preparation for this play. It has been suggested that in addition to Holinshed and Daniel's *Civil Wars*, he drew upon Edward Halle's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of York and Lancaster* (1548), Lord Berners' translation of the French *Chronicle* of Jean Froissart (1523-5), an anonymous play called *Woodstock* or *The First Part of Richard II*, extant in British Museum MS. Egerton 1995, the 1587 edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates*, and two French eyewitness accounts of Richard's fall, both dating from 1400 and available to him only in manuscript: Jean Creton's verse *Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre Richard* and an anonymous *Chronicque de la Traison et Mort du Roy d'Angleterre Richard*.

That he used all of these, however, is dubious. There is little in Edward Halle's account, for instance, which he could not have derived from Holinshed, who himself followed Halle closely.

That he could have had access to the French accounts is unlikely. A stronger case can be made for his use of Berners' Froissart and *A Mirror for Magistrates*, both widely read works in Shakespeare's time. Parallels between Shakespeare's play and Daniel's poem are particularly strong in Act V, and although scholars long debated which of the two works was written first, it is now generally agreed that Shakespeare was the borrower.

WOODSTOCK

The existence of the anonymous play, *Woodstock*, poses various problems, for it deals with the earlier events of Richard's reign and ends with the Duke of Gloucester's death, at which point Shakespeare's play begins. It is clear that the two plays complement one another as a comprehensive portrait of Richard's reign, and the student, in fact, will be better able to understand some elements in *Richard II* by reading *Woodstock* (available in an excellent edition by A. P. Rossiter, London, Chatto & Windus, 1946). The date of the *Woodstock* manuscript, however, cannot positively be determined, and thus the play's relation to Shakespeare's must remain uncertain. It is possible that Shakespeare borrowed from it, for there are very close similarities between the two works, but it is also possible that *Woodstock* may have been the work of a later dramatist who drew upon Shakespeare. It has been suggested that Shakespeare's *Richard II* may be the second part of a two-part play, the first part of which has not survived, and that *Woodstock* may have been written in imitation of this lost Shakespearean play. That *Woodstock* itself may be Shakespeare's work is highly unlikely.

THE TUDOR MYTH

Richard II and the three plays which follow it may profitably be seen in the light of a view of earlier English history which appears first in the *Anglica Historia* of Polydore Vergil, an Italian humanist commissioned by King Henry VII to write a history of England which might support the dubious claim of the Tudors to the throne. This view, which has come to be known as "the

Tudor myth," explained the almost one hundred years of civil discord from the murder of Richard II in 1399 to the accession of Henry VII in 1485 in terms of a great scheme which God in his eternal providence had devised for England. The "myth" is in line with the Christian providential history of the Middle Ages which saw all human events as reflections of divine will (although "secondary" causes in the desires and passions of men were recognized) and which saw the primary function of the historian as the recorder of God's providential government of humanity.

According to this view of history, the deposition of Richard II was a great sin committed by the English people against God, for the king was God's deputy and agent upon earth. Accordingly, England had to suffer, and the reign of Henry IV was plagued by disorder and rebellion. Under Henry V, God's wrath was temporarily suspended, and "the mirror of all Christian kings" was permitted to achieve his great victory at Agincourt. Upon his death, however, the full fury of God's wrath was again visited upon England, with the bloody Wars of the Roses under King Henry VI and finally the tyranny of Richard III. But this time God's anger began to abate, as England had done sufficient penance for her sins. He therefore sent to England his chosen emissary, Henry of Richmond, who destroyed the tyrant Richard III and by marrying Elizabeth of York united the houses of York and Lancaster and began the long age of peace and prosperity whose fruition Shakespeare and his contemporaries could see in the reign of his granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth.

This view was carried on by Edward Halle and by Holinshed. Although it is crucial to an understanding of Shakespeare's history plays, Shakespeare never follows it blindly. He rather explores it, probing its contradictions and antitheses, concerned with the problems of what makes a good king and of how political power impinges upon private morality. We must recognize that in his Lancastrian tetralogy Shakespeare is dealing with events of a peculiar pertinence to his own time, and that with Queen Elizabeth aged and childless many Englishmen dreaded that upon her death rival factions would again plunge England into civil war, and that the chaos which had ended with the coming of the Tudors would again return.

THE HISTORICAL RICHARD

Medieval political theory regarded the king as responsible to the lords of the realm as well as to God, as King John had been forced to acknowledge in signing Magna Carta; medieval kings were not considered to be responsible to God alone, as was Shakespeare's Queen Elizabeth, for this was a Renaissance political doctrine which was not asserted in England until the coming of the Tudors. Historically the deposition of Richard II occurred in a medieval, feudal context, and not in the later Tudor absolutist terms of Shakespeare's play.

The historical Richard II was the grandson of King Edward III who ruled England from 1327 to 1377, outliving by less than a year his eldest son, Edward the Black Prince, famous for his conquests in France. Richard, son of the Black Prince, succeeded his grandfather at the age of eleven, and England was ruled for him by the eldest of his surviving uncles, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. During the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 the young king behaved with great courage, himself stabbing the rebel Wat Tyler. When Gaunt left to fight in Spain, the regency passed to Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Gloucester, the sixth son of Edward III, who seems to have been a cruel and scheming politician anxious to secure the throne for himself, rather than the "plain well-meaning soul" that Shakespeare makes of him.

As Richard grew older he gathered about him a court party of favourites who opposed Gloucester and his supporters, including Gaunt's son, Henry Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham and later Duke of Norfolk. These men seized some of Richard's followers and had them summarily executed. In 1389 Richard declared himself of age and ready to rule England by himself. Gloucester was forced to give up his regency; but he did so unwillingly, refusing to recognize that Richard was of age and continuing to intrigue against the crown. For several years Richard seems to have ruled competently, even effecting a reconciliation with the lords who had followed Gloucester. As Gloucester's intrigues became more insupportable, he was kidnapped by Richard's agents, conveyed to the English

stronghold of Calais in France and there murdered. Historically, Mowbray had nothing to do with this death, which seems to have been engineered by one Lapoole, but for the purpose of his play Shakespeare combines these two historical figures.

After the death of his Queen, Anne of Bohemia, Richard married Isabella of France. He gathered new favourites about him and by various unscrupulous financial schemes which alienated his subjects he raised money to support a luxurious and extravagant court. In 1398 Bolingbroke and Mowbray quarrelled, and at this point Shakespeare's play begins. Upon the return of Bolingbroke from exile to regain the estates Richard had unlawfully seized from him, Richard was deposed by the lords of the realm who had deserted him in favour of Bolingbroke, who now became King Henry IV. Since the deposed king soon became a rallying point for all of those who opposed the new regime, in 1400 Richard was murdered at Pontefract (Pomfret) Castle in Yorkshire.

RICHARD II AND THE EARL OF ESSEX

The dethroning of a king was a dangerous subject to present upon the Elizabethan stage, and it is clear from contemporary evidence that *Richard II* was disliked by Queen Elizabeth. On February 7, 1601, the queen's favourite, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, staged an abortive uprising against the throne. It was promptly put down, and in the following year Essex was beheaded and the Earl of Southampton, Essex's close associate and probably Shakespeare's patron, was imprisoned for his part in the affair. It is interesting that on the day before the Essex uprising Sir Gelly Meyrick, one of the earl's supporters, arranged with Shakespeare's company for the performance at the Globe of a play about the deposition and murder of King Richard II. That this was Shakespeare's play there is little doubt. Shakespeare's company was examined at Essex's trial, but the actors were exonerated of any complicity in the insurrection. Why this play should have been chosen as a means of inspiring partisans in a rebellious enterprise raises many questions. It may well be that the play's emphasis upon the destructive effects of flatterers

and parasites had a particular appeal to Essex, who claimed as his own purpose the removal from Queen Elizabeth of her ill-advisers. Essex, of course, had no intention of murdering the queen.

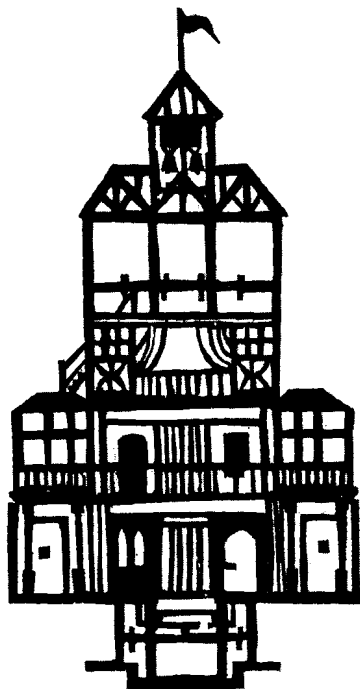
THE DEPOSITION THEME

Shakespeare's Richard is not the royal martyr he had been made in some accounts, nor is he the evil, avaricious and even lustful king he had been pictured in others, such as *A Mirror for Magistrates*. Yet there is something of both points of view in Shakespeare's portrait. Since Queen Elizabeth claimed descent from the Lancastrian kings, and since Bolingbroke was the father of the glorious Henry V, he could not be portrayed — as he easily might have been — as a villainous usurper and murderer. In fact, while Shakespeare dwells upon the deposition and death of Richard, he tends to mute the theme of usurpation, so that Bolingbroke appears to be a creature of events, rising naturally to assume the throne of England which has been vacated for him. Once he has set foot in England to claim his inheritance by force, he cannot turn back until he is king and Richard is dead. Richard is portrayed as bringing about his own downfall, and there is constant emphasis in poetic ritual upon his self-deposition. As Richard declines and falls, however, sympathy for him increases; and as Bolingbroke rises, sympathy for him declines.

In this dramatic device Shakespeare shows the influence of Marlowe's play, *Edward II*, and it may have been the example of this play, in addition to the peculiar political problem with which Shakespeare was involved in *Richard II*, which caused him to develop in this play his first great tragedy of character. The self-deposition of Richard is also the tragic fall from high place of a man who because of certain inherent weaknesses is unable to cope with a situation he himself has helped to bring about. The political issues of the play made it necessary that Richard bring about his own downfall, and out of this necessity may have come the resulting fusion of dramatic tragedy with dramatic history.

THE TRAGEDY OF

King Richard the Second



[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING RICHARD II.

JOHN OF GAUNT, *Duke of Lancaster*, } *uncles to the*
EDMUND OF LANGLEY, *Duke of York*, } *King.*

HENRY, *surnamed BOLINGBROKE, Duke of Hereford*, son
to JOHN OF GAUNT, afterwards KING HENRY IV.

DUKE OF AUMERLE, *son to the DUKE OF YORK.*

THOMAS MOWBRAY, *Duke of Norfolk.*

DUKE OF SURREY.

EARL OF SALISBURY.

LORD BERKELEY.

BUSHY, }
BAGOT, } *servants to KING RICHARD.*
GREEN, }

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

HENRY PERCY, *surnamed HOTSPUR, his son.*

LORD ROSS.

LORD WILLOUGHBY.

LORD FITZWATER.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER.

LORD MARSHAL.

SIR STEPHEN SCROOP.

SIR PIERCE OF EXTON.

Captain of a band of Welshmen.

Two Gardeners.

QUEEN to KING RICHARD.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.

Ladies attending on the QUEEN.

*Lords, Herald, Officers, Soldiers, Keeper, Messenger,
Groom, and other Attendants.*

SCENE—*England and Wales.*]

Act One



SCENE I. [*London. The Palace.*]

*Enter King Richard, John of Gaunt, with other Nobles
and Attendants.*

- KING. Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,
Hast thou, according to thy oath and band,
Brought hither Henry Hereford, thy bold son,
Here to make good the boist'rous late appeal,
Which then our leisure would not let us hear, 5
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?
- GAUNT. I have, my liege.
- KING. Tell me, moreover, hast thou sounded him
If he appeal the Duke on ancient malice,
Or worthily, as a good subject should, 10
On some known ground of treachery in him?
- GAUNT. As near as I could sift him on that argument,
On some apparent danger seen in him
Aim'd at your Highness, no inveterate malice.

I. i. Holinshed locates this scene at Windsor and is followed in this by some editors. Actually, the problem is irrelevant, for no indication of place was given on the Elizabethan stage. 1 *Old John of Gaunt* Shakespeare emphasizes the age of Gaunt who was actually 58 at the play's opening. His name comes from his birth-place of Ghent in Flanders. *time-honoured* venerable. 2 *band* bond. 4 *late appeal* recent accusation and challenge, in that the accuser stands ready to fight in support of his contention. 5 *leisure* lack of leisure. 9 *on ancient malice* because of an old grudge. 10 *worthily* with pertinent evidence. 12 *sift* discover his motives by questioning him. *argument* subject. 13 *apparent* open, obvious.

Enter Bolingbroke and Mowbray.

16 *ourselves* The king normally uses the plural in speaking of himself. 18 *High-stomach'd* haughty and stubborn. 23 *hap* fortune. 24 *Add . . . crown* add immortality (in heaven) to the other honours inherent in the crown. 26 *you come* in which you come. 28 *object* charge. 32 *Tend'ring* caring for and cherishing. 34 *appellant* accuser. 38 *divine* immortal. 40 *Too good*, of too noble a rank. 43 *aggravate the note* make more clear the mark of disgrace. 46 *right-drawn* drawn in a righteous cause. 47 *cold* calm. *accuse my zeal* accuse me of lack of