

**THE FAMOUS  
HISTORY OF THE LIFE  
OF KING HENRY VIII**

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The famous history of the life of King Henry VIII by C. Knox Pooler

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**C. KNOX POOLER**

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THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE  
GENERAL EDITOR: W. J. CRAIG  
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THE WORKS  
OF

THE FAMOUS HISTORY  
OF THE LIFE OF  
KING HENRY VIII

EDITED BY  
C. KNOX POOLER

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## INTRODUCTION

IN 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, "The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eight" with the running title "The Life of King Henry the Eight" appeared as the last of the Histories in Heminge and Condell's edition (the First Folio) of Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. So far as we know, it had not previously been published or in any way associated with Shakespeare's name. It has, however, been traced by Tyrwhitt to Shakespeare's theatre and fellow-actors, if it is, as he suggested, the play during the representation of which the Globe Theatre was burnt to the ground on the 29th of June, 1613. The evidence is as follows:—

*A letter from Thomas Lorkin to Sir Thomas Puckering* (Harl. MS. 7002, fo. 268):—

"London this last of June 1613.

"No longer since then yesterday, while Bourbege his companie were acting at ye Globe the play of Hen. 8, and there shooting of certayne chambers in way of triumph; the fire catch'd & fastened upon the thatch of ye house and there burned so furiously as it consumed the whole house & all in lesse than two houres (the people having enough to doe to save themselves)."

*Letter from Sir Henry Wotton to his nephew, Sir Edmund Bacon* (Reliquiæ Wottoniæ, 1685, pp. 425-6):—

"Now, to let matters of state sleep, I will entertain you at the present with what hath happened this week at the Banks side. The King's Players had a new Play, called *All is true*, representing some principal pieces of the reign of *Henry* the 8<sup>th</sup>, which was set forth with many extraordinary Circumstances of Pomp and Majesty, even to the matting of the