

**SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY
OF KING HENRY
THE FOURTH, PART 1.
EDITED, WITH NOTES**

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Shakespeare's history of King Henry the Fourth, part 1. Edited, with notes by William J. Rolfe

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WILLIAM J. ROLFE

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OF KING HENRY
THE FOURTH, PART 1.
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SHAKESPEARE'S
HISTORY OF
KING HENRY THE FOURTH

PART I.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,
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WITH ENGRAVINGS.



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The better part of valour is discretion (v. 4. 119).



HENRY IV.

INTRODUCTION
TO THE
FIRST PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

The First Part of King Henry the Fourth was first published in quarto form in 1598, with the following title-page (as given in the Cambridge ed.):

The | History of | Henrie the | Fovrth ; | With the battell
at Shrewsburie, | *betweene the King and Lord* | Henry Percy,
surnamed | Henrie Hotspur of | the North. | *With the*
humorous conceits of Sir | John Falstalffe. | AT LONDON, |
Printed by P. S. for Andrew Wise, dwelling | in Paules
Churchyard, at the signe of | the Angell. 1598.

It had been entered by Wise on the Stationers' Registers, under date of February 25, 1597-8, as "a booke intituled The

historye of Henry the iiiijth with his battaile of Shrewsburye against Henry Hottspurre of the Northe with the conceived mirth of Sir John ffalstoff." A second quarto edition was brought out in 1599, followed by others in 1604, 1608, and 1613. Each of these appears to have been printed from its predecessor; and a partially corrected* copy of the last in the series seems to have furnished the text of the play for the 1st folio. Subsequent editions in quarto were printed in 1622 (probably too late for the folio editors), 1632, and 1639.

The play was probably written in 1596 or 1597. Chalmers and Drake advocate the former, Malone the latter date. Furnivall assigns it to "1596-7;" Fleay to "1596, or more probably 1597;" Stokes, to 1597, "and to the end of that year, for the date of the entry seems to suggest that it was a Christmas play." It is mentioned by Meres (see *M. N. D.* p. 9) in 1598.

II. THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT.

As we have stated in our edition of *Henry V.* (p. 10), Shakespeare drew the materials of both that play and this from Holinshed's *Chronicles* and from the old play of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. A Sir John Oldcastle appears in the latter as one of Prince Henry's wild companions. That the poet adopted the name is evident from allusions of subsequent writers, from the circumstance that in the first (1600) quarto edition of 2 *Henry IV.* the prefix "Old." is found before one of Falstaff's speeches, and from Henry's calling the knight "my old lad of the castle" (i. 2. 38). In 2 *Hen. IV.* iii. 2. 28, moreover, Falstaff is said to have been "page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk," which the historical Oldcastle actually was. "This historical Oldcastle is better known as Lord Cobham, the

* "In many places the readings coincide with those of the earlier quartos, which were probably consulted by the corrector" (Camb. ed.).