

**SHAKESPEARE AND HIS DAYS:
A STUDY OF THE TOPICAL
ELEMENT IN SHAKESPEARE AND
IN THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649122097

Shakespeare and his days: a study of the topical element in Shakespeare and in the Elizabethan drama by J. A. De Rothschild

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

J. A. DE ROTHSCHILD

**SHAKESPEARE AND HIS DAYS:
A STUDY OF THE TOPICAL
ELEMENT IN SHAKESPEARE AND
IN THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA**

Shakespeare and His Day

A STUDY OF THE
TOPICAL ELEMENT IN SHAKESPEARE
AND IN THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

Being the *Harness Prize Essay*, 1901

BY

J. A. DE ROTHSCHILD

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

41 AND 43 MADDOX STREET, BOND STREET, W.

1906

GENERAL

R

TO THOSE OF MY FRIENDS

WHO WILL READ IT

I

DEDICATE

THIS BOOK

151814

‘ When Shakespeare, Jonson, Fletcher, ruled the stage,
They took so bold a freedom with the age,
That there was scarce a knave or fool in town
Of any note but had his picture down.’

SIR CHARLES SCROPE *before 1680.*

‘ Many of our Shakespeare’s plays, you know, are
founded upon authenticated facts.’

STERNE, *Tristram Shandy.*

FOREWORD

IN writing the following pages an attempt has been made to extract from the Elizabethan drama something of Elizabethan life. There is no field perhaps that could offer a wealthier fund of Elizabethan remains than the contemporary drama. Grey piles stand here and there to remind one of the past ; but more eloquent than masonry is the literature of that time, and the spirit it enshrines is, after all, the finest link with those days.

What has been done will doubtless partake of the limitations of an essay on a set subject ; and yet it is hoped that the result will neither be devoid of interest, nor without its uses for purposes of study. The treatment is obviously far from exhaustive on a subject which opens up so many

vistas and ranges over so long a period. If but some few nooks and corners of the Elizabethan background have been lit up in the process, it is felt that the undertaking will in some measure have justified itself.

The scheme of the work is briefly this : in the first place, to shadow forth some of the Elizabethan personalities and events ; and, secondly, to evolve something of the general colours and forms of Shakespeare's times. The creator of Falstaff has therefore been taken as the main subject of investigation ; his fellow-dramatists have merely supplied subsidiary detail.

It is believed that the picture produced by these allusions massed together represents work of an independent character ; but for some of the particular points, dealing with definite personages or events, indebtedness must be acknowledged to Dr. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature*, to a paper by Mr. Sidney Lee in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1880, as well as to certain of the contributions made to the *Transactions* of

FOREWORD

vii

the New Shakespeare Society. The opportunity of so doing is here gladly taken, as also of thanking a friend, who wishes to remain nameless, for his kindness in reading the proofs and in suggesting certain valuable alterations.

LONDON, *April 1906.*