

**THE CHILDREN OF THE CHAPEL AT
BLACKFRIARS, 1597-1603.
INTRODUCTORY TO THE CHILDREN
OF THE REVELS, THEIR ORIGIN,
COURSE AND INFLUENCES**

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The children of the chapel at Blackfriars, 1597-1603. Introductory to The children of the Revels, their origin, course and influences by Charles William Wallace

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CHARLES WILLIAM WALLACE

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BY CHARLES WILLIAM WALLACE

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AND DRAMA OF SHAKESPEARE'S TIME : : : : : :

By *CHARLES WILLIAM WALLACE Ph.D.*

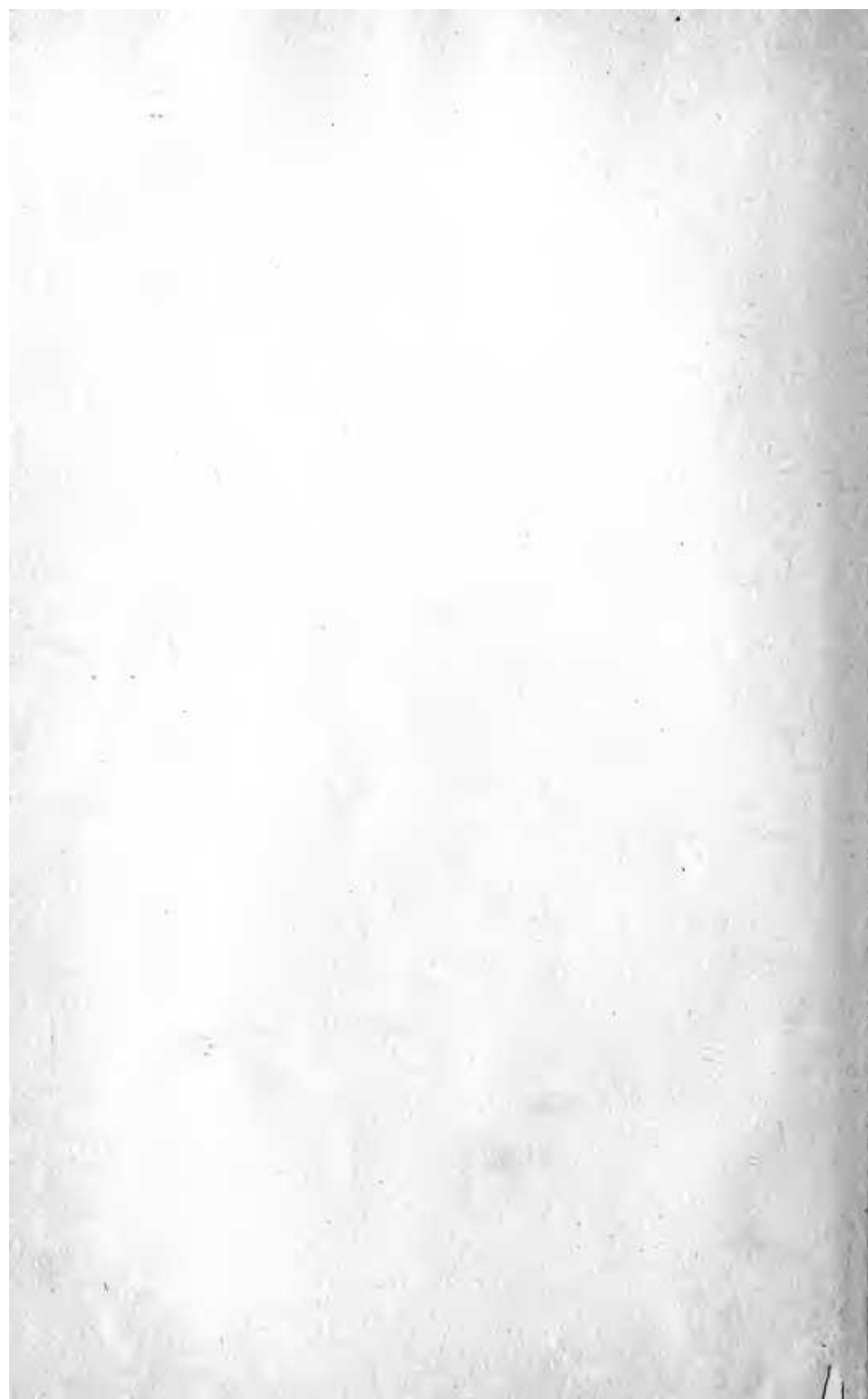
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

"But there is Sir
an ayrie of Chil-
dren, little Yafes,
that crye out on
the top of quef-
tion; and are
most tyrannical-
ly clap't for't:
these are now
the Fashion."—
Hamlet, II, ii.

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PREFACE

SOME years ago I undertook to edit an old play of one of the children-companies, prefaced by a historical introduction. I found I could not do it conscientiously without finding out the truth about the company that played the piece. An examination of the published works of Europe and America touching the children-actors showed a woeful jumble of variegated error as a result of the romantic or unfaithful treatment of the meager facts. Manifestly the truth was not known, and the facts were in chaos. So the two or three paragraphs into which I had intended to condense the matter for my introduction, I saw vanish into vapor.

This condition of affairs threw me back on the unpromising data, and I began searching archives for new data and investigating the sources and relations of both old and new. The advance has been steady since the first day. I soon found the children's company in question was related to other children-companies, and these in turn to the men-companies, and all of them to the nature and place of acting, and especially to the spirit and form of the drama. My contemplated two or three paragraphs now expanded into a chapter, then a section, then a volume, and finally I am trying, by excluding the bulkiest and least related documents, to confine results within the limits of three volumes.

Meanwhile the contemplated edition of the old play is biding its time. So are certain other editions, all of which can conscientiously and scientifically be undertaken only when this work as a proper historical basis is complete.

The following introductory chapters constitute the first section of volume I. Many of the documents for volume III were assembled and the MS. for volume I and partly for volume II was prepared for the press in 1904-6, during my two-years absence from the University of Nebraska, with residence and research in Europe, particularly in Germany, France, and England. This first section was accepted for the doctorate by the Philosophical

Faculty of Albert-Ludwig University, Freiburg i/Br., where I acquired the degree of Ph.D. in the summer semester of 1906. With a larger courtesy than I could have hoped,—a courtesy characteristic of the true lover of learning in the German universities,—that Faculty voted to grant me the privilege of adding results of contemplated further research at a future time. By virtue of this grace, the present publication is delayed two years. I have accordingly reworked and expanded most of the chapters, incorporating such results of my more recent researches as properly fall within the scope of this section. Fortunately my latest finds have, with but rare and minor exceptions, been mainly in the nature of documentary and final substantiation of conclusions reached from the more slender evidences first used.

In coming to the study of the children-companies, their widely ramifying influences on stage and drama, and the characteristics of their *repertoire* in its entirety, every one finds himself, I suppose, pretty much in the condition I was in when I set about the work. We are hindered by lack of knowledge, and conditioned by our preconceptions derived from the mass of past error and from false perspectives of sectional studies, as the treatment of isolated dramas, or isolating topics running through a series of dramas, and by special treatises that strain facts to maintain a theme. As for myself, I have been forced to give up one conception and one supposed fact after another, until now I find nearly every essential detail in this history is different from what I had supposed from these books and special studies to be the truth.

In the preparation of this work, I have had no theme to maintain, no theory to defend, and none to propose. My sole guide has been the simple desire to find the truth. I have told it as I found it, in plain and simple fashion, so that others may read it. In order that they may judge for themselves, I have given also the evidences, usually in foot-notes. These are therefore the most valuable part of the work. The foot-notes, constituting more than half of the whole work, may seem sometimes burdensome. But, intended for the scholar, they are in fact the only part in which I take special pride, for it has been my desire to assemble materials and references that may hereafter be cited as reliable.