

**WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649168224

William Shakespeare by John Masfield

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JOHN MASEFIELD

**WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE**



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NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY



WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE

BY
JOHN MASEFIELD

AUTHOR OF "THE TRAGEDY OF
POMPEY THE GREAT," "MULTI-
TITUDE AND SOLITUDE," "LOST
ENDEAVOUR," "CAPTAIN MAR-
GARET," "THE TRAGEDY OF
HANNIBAL," ETC.

LONDON
WILLIAMS AND NORGATE

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

PR
2895
M4
1911
626169
6.1.56

THIS book is written partly for the use of people who are reading Shakespeare, and partly to encourage the study of the plays. Though the plays are the greatest things ever made by the English mind it cannot be said that the English reverence their poet. There is no theatre in London set apart for the performance of Shakespeare. There is no theatre in London built for the right production of Shakespeare. There are not in the empire enough lovers of Shakespeare, or of the poetical drama, or of poetry, to take the British stage from the hands of ground landlords, and make it again glorious with the vision of the pageant of man. These are sad things; for art is the life. Art is the thought of men with vision. When art is scorned it is a sign that the men without

vision are in power. "Where there is no vision the people perish."

Worldly Empire has always been gluttonous and foolish. It has always been a monstrous sentimental bubble blown out of something dead that was once grand. Man's true empire is not in continents nor over the sea, but within himself, in his own soul. Here in London, where a worldly empire is controlled, there exists no theatre in which the millions can see that other empire. They pass from one grey street to another grey street, to add up figures, or to swallow patent medicines, with no thought that life has been lived nobly, and burningly and knightly, for great ends, and in great passions, as the vision of our great mind declares.

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