

**THE RICHARD MANSFIELD  
ACTING VERSION  
OF KING HENRY V: A  
HISTORY IN FIVE ACTS**

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The Richard Mansfield Acting Version of King Henry V: A History in Five Acts by Wm. Shakespeare & Richard Mansfield

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**WM. SHAKESPEARE & RICHARD MANSFIELD**

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*The* RICHARD MANSFIELD  
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KING HENRY V

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*Richard Mansfield*

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*A History in Five Acts*

by

W<sup>m</sup> Shakespeare

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*Which version was for the first time  
presented by M<sup>r</sup> RICH<sup>d</sup> MANSFIELD*

*& his Company of Players  
on the STAGE of the*

GARDEN THEATRE

October 3<sup>rd</sup>

M C M

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M . C M . & L  
R. B. P.

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*An* INTRODUCTION  
By MR MANSFIELD

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HARV 31 DEC '88







ENRY V. can hardly be termed a play—it is rather an Epic—or a chronicle, in a series of stirring scenes, of the invasion of France by the King of England and the wooing and betrothal of the Princess Katherine. As the latter episode only occupies a portion of the last act, the work may be said to be lacking in what is technically termed

“love interest.” But, on the other hand, the inducements that led me to produce *Henry V.* were a consideration of its healthy and virile tone (so diametrically in contrast to many of the performances now current); the nobility of its language, the breadth and power of which is not equalled by any living poet; the lesson it teaches of Godliness, honour, loyalty, courage, cheerfulness and perseverance; its beneficial influence upon young and old; the opportunity it affords for a pictorial representation of the costumes and armour, manners and customs, of that interesting period, and perhaps a desire to prove that the American stage is, even under difficulties, quite able to

## *An Introduction by* RICHARD MANSFIELD

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*bold its own artistically with the European. The ambition of my stage career has been to prove the superiority of the American stage and the American actor, and I maintain that to-day against all those who pretend the contrary. But perhaps I was influenced beyond any other reason by the desire to drag Henry V. out of a slough of false impressions that had materially affected his impersonation upon the stage. This rôle had for a long time been considered as requiring on the part of the actor nothing more than a healthy pair of lungs. Henry was not supposed to make any claims upon the intelligence or the heart of the artist. He (as an acting part) was supposed to be devoid of sentiment, finesse, variety and feeling. Let us see how far this is the case. The student who approaches the character of Henry with a view to impersonation, will consider him, in looking with my eyes, somewhat in this fashion: in the first act, in order not to disconnect the chain that still binds him to the Prince Hal of the preceding play, we must find him youthful, debonair, gracious and yet with a new-born kingliness and tact and state-craft, which even after the utterances of the archbishop, surprise and interest. In the subsequent scene, on the quay at Southampton, in the unmasking of the three traitors, Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, and especially in his address to his former bosom friend, Scroop, we at once strike a note of profound melancholy and pathos: "Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels." Henry in his roystering days had come upon deceit and villainy and venality, but this was where he might naturally expect it;—here, for the first time, and in the very beginning of his reign, he stumbles upon treachery so hideous and lying so near to his heart, as may well have shaken his very soul. This awakening, his horror and his grief, cannot be expressed by mere noise. We next find him exhorting his soldiers in clarion tones, or depicting to the city-fathers of Harfleur in lurid*