

**THE FIRST PART OF
HENRY THE FOURTH**

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The first part of Henry the Fourth by Frederic W. Moorman

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FREDERIC W. MOORMAN

**THE FIRST PART OF
HENRY THE FOURTH**

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THE WARWICK SHAKESPEARE

Works.

THE FIRST PART
OF
HENRY THE FOURTH

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PREFACE

In sending forth this edition I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness to former editors and commentators.

In preparing the Notes, I have received considerable help from Mr. K. Deighton's edition of the *First Part of Henry IV*, and from Messrs. Halliwell and Wright's revised edition of Nares' *Glossary*.

In my treatment of Shakespeare's verse (see Appendix) I have closely followed the plan of Professor Herford's "Outline of Shakespeare's Prosody", appended to his edition of *Richard II* in the Warwick Shakespeare, and have also made use of Professor Schipper's *Englische Metrik* and Dr. Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar*.

Among works consulted in the preparation of the Introduction, Kreyssig's *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare* and Brandes' *William Shakespeare* call for special notice. I also owe suggestions to an article by Professor A. C. Bradley, entitled "The Rejection of Falstaff", which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for May, 1902, and to which my attention was drawn by Mr. E. de Sélincourt of University College, Oxford.

Lastly, I should like to acknowledge my great indebtedness to my esteemed friend and former teacher, Professor C. H. Herford, for valuable suggestions in all stages of the work.

F. W. M.

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INTRODUCTION

1. LITERARY HISTORY OF THE PLAY AND DATE OF COMPOSITION

The literary history of the *First Part of Henry IV* is a history of success. The first (Quarto) edition of the play appeared in 1598, with the following title:—The | History of | Henry the Fourth; | 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 Falstaffe. | At London. | Printed by P. S. for Andrew Wise. . . . 1598. As the title indicates, this was only the First Part of the play; the Second Part issued from the house of the same publisher two years later. In the year 1599, a second edition of the *First Part of Henry IV* appeared, which, according to the title-page, had been “newly corrected by William Shakespeare”. Three more quarto editions were produced before the author’s death (dated 1604, 1608, 1613)—a sufficient indication of the popularity of the play with the reading public of Shakespeare’s time. Of his other plays only *Richard III* reached a fifth edition by 1616.

The success of the play, which was largely due to the Falstaff scenes, is revealed in other ways. If tradition tell true, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* owes its creation to Queen Elizabeth’s delight in Falstaff, and to her desire to see him in love. There is, further, a reference to Falstaff in the speech of Macilente which brings to a conclusion Ben Jonson’s *Every Man out of his Humour*, 1599:

“Marry, I will not . . . beg a plaudite for God’s sake; but

if you, out of the bounty of your good-liking will bestow it, why, you may in time make lean Macilente as fat as Sir John Falstaff."

But the most striking illustration of the popularity of the famous knight is that furnished by the frontispiece to Kirkman's *The Wits, or Sport upon Sport*, a collection of farces and drolls, published in 1673. The engraving represents the stage of the Red Bull Playhouse, on which appear such conventionally comic characters as the Simpleton, the Changeling, and the French Dancing-master; amongst these is seen Sir John Falstaff accepting a cup of sack from the hands of Dame Quickly. But this popularity was not won without the intrusion of a note of dissent. In the original version of the play, as delivered by the author to the actors, Falstaff bore the name of Sir John Oldcastle, the famous Lollard who suffered martyrdom under Henry V. The character of Oldcastle had after his death been travestied by the orthodox party in the church until, in spite of subsequent Protestant opposition, he assumed the form of a roysterer and profligate, the corrupter of Henry V during his youth. He appears in this light in the old play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, whence Shakespeare drew several hints for his own work, amongst others the name and a faint outline of the character of the Lollard knight. The fact that the Elizabethan public readily identified Shakespeare's knight with the Lollard martyr aroused the resentment of Henry Brooke, Lord Cobham, who claimed descent from Oldcastle. By making his grievances known at court, he forced Shakespeare to substitute the name of Falstaff for that of Oldcastle in the first quarto editions of both parts. To destroy effectually the idea that Falstaff was to be identified with the Lollard knight, Shakespeare makes a very definite statement in the Epilogue to *2 Henry IV*:

"If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it . . . where for anything I know Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already