

**COMEDY OF AS
YOU LIKE IT**

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Comedy of As you like it by William Shakespeare & William J. Rolfe

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM J. ROLFE

**COMEDY OF AS
YOU LIKE IT**



SHAKESPEARE'S

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COMEDY OF

AS YOU LIKE IT.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY

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THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

INTRODUCTION
TO
AS YOU LIKE IT.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

As You Like It was first printed, so far as we know, in the folio of 1623, where it occupies pages 185-207 in the division of "Comedies." The earliest notice of it by name is found in the Registers of the Stationers' Company, on a leaf which does not belong to the regular records, but contains miscel-

laneous entries, notes, etc. Between two of these, the one dated in May, 1600, and the other in June, 1603, occurs the following memorandum:*

4 Augusti	
As you like yt / a booke	}
Henry the ffift / a booke	
Euery man in his humour / a booke	
The commedie of muche A doo about nothing a booke /	
	} to be staied.

All these "books" are stated to be "my lord chamberlens menns plaies," which confirms Malone's opinion that the entry refers to the year 1600. *Henry V.* and *Much Ado About Nothing* were duly licensed (the former on the 14th and the latter on the 23d of August) and published that year; and it is not likely that the plays would have been "staied" after the publication of two of them. The prohibition was probably removed soon after it was recorded; and, as Halliwell suggests, the clerk may not have considered it worth the formality of a note in the body of the register.

On the other hand, *As You Like It* is not mentioned by Meres in his enumeration of Shakespeare's plays† in *Paladis Tamia*, which was published in September, 1598; and it contains a quotation (see iii. 5. 80) from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, the earliest known edition of which appeared in the same year. It may therefore be reasonably concluded,

* We print this as Wright gives it. In Halliwell's folio ed. it appears thus:

4 Augusti.	
As you like yt, a booke. Henry the ffift, a booke. Every man in his humor, a booke. The Commedie of Much Adoo about nothinge, a booke.	}

Collier gives it twice (in the introductions to *Much Ado* and *A. Y. L.*), but the versions do not agree with each other or with either of the above. The matter is of little importance, and we refer to it only as illustrating one of the minor trials of an editor who cannot refer to original documents, but has to depend on copies made by others.

† See the passage in our ed. of *M. N. D.* p. 9.