

**SHAKESPEARE'S
COMEDY OF
THE TEMPEST**

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Shakespeare's Comedy of The Tempest by William J. Rolfe

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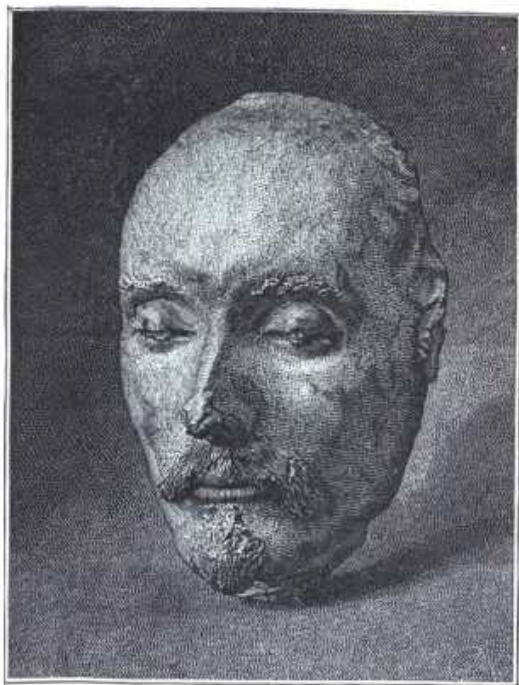
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WILLIAM J. ROLFE

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COMEDY OF
THE TEMPEST**



THE KESSELSTADT DEATH-MASK (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH).

SHAKESPEARE'S
COMEDY OF
THE TEMPEST.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY

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WITH ENGRAVINGS.



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The groans
Did make wolves howl (l. 2. 288).



"BERMOOTHES"

INTRODUCTION
TO
THE TEMPEST.

I. HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

The Tempest occupies the first nineteen pages of the Folio of 1623, and no earlier edition of the play has been discovered. It is not unlikely, as White has suggested, that "it was made the leading play, as being one of the latest and most admired works of its author." Mr. Joseph Hunter* has attempted to show that it was written as early as 1596; but the commentators generally agree that the date cannot be put earlier than 1603, and that it was probably as late as 1611.

* *New Illustrations of Shakespeare* (1845), vol. i. pp. 122-157.

The speech of Gonzalo (ii. 1), "I' the commonwealth I would by contraries," etc., is manifestly copied (see p. 124 below) from a passage in Florio's translation of Montaigne, which appeared in 1603. We must therefore believe that the play was written after that time, unless we adopt the hypothesis that Shakespeare had seen Florio's work in manuscript. The *Accounts of the Revels at Court* state that *The Tempest* was performed before King James, Nov. 1st, 1611; but the entry, which is as follows, is now known to be a forgery:

By the Kings players.	Hallomas nyght was presented att Whitthall before y ^e Kinges Ma ^{tie} a play called the Tempest.
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"To this positive external testimony,"* says White, "are to be added some external probabilities. First, in the occurrence of a passage in the Introduction to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, written between 1612 and 1614, which has a hit, not necessarily ill-humored, at those who have 'a *Servant-monster*' in their *dramatis personæ*, and 'beget *Tales, Tempests*, and such like *Drolleries*,' where the allusion to *The Tempest* is too plain to be mistaken—an allusion which would be made only when the impression of that play was fresh in the public mind. Next, in the publication by Sil[vester] Jourdan of a quarto pamphlet entitled 'A Discovery of the Barmvdas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels: by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers, and Captayne Newport, with diuers others. London, 1610.' This pamphlet tells of the tempest which scattered the fleet commanded by Somers and Gates, and the happy discovery, by some of the shipwrecked, of land which proved to be the Bermudas. It alludes to the general belief that these islands 'were *never* inhabited by any Christian or Heathen people,' being 'reputed a most *prodigious and enchanted* place,' adding that, nevertheless, those who were cast away upon them, and lived there nine months, found the air temperate and the country 'abundantly fruitful of all fit nec-

* The entry, though a forgery, is based upon correct information.