

**SHAKESPEARE'S
TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO,
THE MOOR OF VENICE**

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Shakespeare's Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice by William Shakespeare & William J. Rolfe

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM J. ROLFE

**SHAKESPEARE'S
TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO,
THE MOOR OF VENICE**



THE GUILD CHAPEL, STRATFORD ON-AVON.

SHAKESPEARE'S
TRAGEDY OF
OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

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WITH ENGRAVINGS.



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"She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I lov'd her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd —
Here comes the lady; let her witness it."
(i. 3. 167-170.)



VENICE.

INTRODUCTION

TO

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

The first edition of *Othello* was a quarto, published in 1622 with the following title-page :

THE | Tragædy of Othello, | The Moore of Venice. | *As it hath bene diuerse times acted at the | Globe, and at the Black-Friers, by | his Maiesties Seruants. | Written by VVilliam Shakespeare. | LONDON, | Printed by N. O. for Thomas Walkley, and are to be sold at his | shop, at the Eagle and Child, in Brittons Bursse. | 1622.*

This edition had the following preface :

The Stationer to the Reader.

To set forth a booke without an Epistle, were like to the old English prouerbe, A blew coat without a badge, & the Author being dead, I thought good to take that piece of worke vpon mee: To commend it, I will not, for that which is good, I hope euery man will commend, without intreaty: and I am the bolder, because the Authors name is sufficient to vent his worke. Thus leauing euery one to the liberty of iudgement: I haue ventered to print this Play, and leaue it to the generall censure.

Yours,

Thomas VValkley.

The next year it appeared in the first folio, where it occupies pages 310-339 inclusive, in the division of "Tragedies." The folio text varies materially from that of the quarto, and was evidently printed from a different MS. of the play.

How the publishers of the two editions arranged the question of copyright, it is impossible to say.* The copyright of the quarto remained the property of Walkley until March 1st, 1627-8, when it was assigned unto Richard Hawkins, who brought out an edition of it in 1630. In May, 1638, Ursula, widow of Richard Hawkins, assigned the copyright to Messrs. Mead and Meredith, who in January, 1638-9, disposed of it to William Leak, who issued what he termed "the fourth edition" of the play in 1655. Other quarto editions appeared in 1681, 1687, and 1695 (Halliwell).

Othello was formerly placed among the latest of Shakespeare's works; Warburton and Malone (except in his last edition) dating it 1611, Chalmers 1614, and Drake 1612. After the publication in 1842 of the Shakespearian entries

* Collier says that the publishers of the folio probably purchased Walkley's interest in *Othello*, and thus became entitled to include it in their edition; but the facts given by Halliwell show that it remained the property of Walkley long after the publication of the folio.