

**SHAKESPEARE'S
TRAGEDY OF KING
RICHARD THE THIRD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649703616

Shakespeare's Tragedy of King Richard the Third by William Shakespeare & William J. Rolfe

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM J. ROLFE

**SHAKESPEARE'S
TRAGEDY OF KING
RICHARD THE THIRD**





SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF

King Richard the Third

EDITED, WITH NOTES

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NEW YORK: THE BAKER & TAYLOR CO.
33-37 EAST 17TH STREET, UNION SQ. NORTH

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INTRODUCTION
TO
KING RICHARD THE THIRD.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

THE earliest known edition of the play is a quarto printed in 1597, with the following title-page :

The Tragedy of | King Richard the third. | Containing, |
His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: | the
pittiefull murder of his innocent nephewes : | his tyrannicall
vsurpation : with the whole course | of his detested life, and
most deserued death. | As it hath beene lately Acted by the |
Right honourable the Lord Chamber- | laine his seruants. |
AT LONDON | Printed by Valentine Sims, for Andrew

Wise, | dwelling in Paules Chuch-yard, at the | Signe of the
Angell. | 1597.

The play had been entered on the Stationers' Registers on the 20th of October, 1597, by Wise, under the title of "The Tragedie of Kinge Richard the Third, with the death of the Duke of Clarence."

A second quarto edition was published the following year, with the addition of "*By William Shake-speare*" on the title-page; in other respects it is a reprint of the first. Other quarto editions appeared in 1602, 1605, 1612, and 1622. All four are said to be "newly augmented," but they contain nothing that is not found in the 2d quarto, unless it be additional errors of the press.*

The text of the play in the 1st folio differs materially from that of the quartos. Besides many little changes in expression, it contains several passages—one of more than fifty lines—not found in the earlier texts; while, on the other hand, it omits sundry lines—in some cases, essential to the context—given in the quartos. The play is, moreover, one of the worst printed in the folio, and the quartos often help us in correcting the typographical errors. Which is on the whole the better text, and what is the relation of the one to the other, are questions which have been much disputed, but probably will never be satisfactorily settled. The Cambridge editors remark: "The respective origin and authority of the 1st quarto and 1st folio texts of *Richard III.* is perhaps the most difficult question which presents itself to an editor of Shakespeare. In the case of most of the plays a brief survey leads him to form a definite judgment; in this, the most attentive examination scarcely enables him to propose with confidence a hypothetical conclusion." Staunton says: "the diversity has proved, and will continue to prove, a source of

* A seventh quarto edition was printed in 1629, not from the folio of 1623, but from the quarto of 1622. An eighth quarto, a reprint of the seventh, appeared in 1634.