

**THE WORKS OF
SHAKESPEARE. THE
FIRST PART OF
KING HENRY THE SIXTH**

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The works of Shakespeare. The first part of King Henry the Sixth by William Shakespeare & H. C. Hart

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & H. C. HART

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THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE
GENERAL EDITOR : W. J. CRAIG

THE FIRST PART
OF
KING HENRY THE SIXTH

see
English

THE WORKS
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SHAKESPEARE

THE FIRST PART OF
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EDITED BY
H. C. HART



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INTRODUCTION

THERE is only one text for Part I. of *Henry VI.*, that of the first Folio, 1623. In this respect it stands on a different footing from Parts II. and III., and for this reason chiefly, it is best to consider it here as a play by itself and not as a portion of the trilogy: since Parts II. and III. are founded upon earlier plays whose texts we fortunately possess.

But it must be borne in mind that, structurally speaking, no such separation is legitimate. Of this we will become aware at the beginning of Part II., where the sequence of events from Part I. is clearly maintained, and purposely, if somewhat carelessly, adhered to by the same hand or hands.

Whether Part I. is, as we have it from the Folio, founded upon an older play is one of the first questions that occurs; whether in its remodelled state, supposing it to have been so founded, it is by Shakespeare, or how much of it is by Shakespeare is another question of long-standing difficulty. What other authorship is traceable and whose and where?—all these are admittedly amongst the most troublesome that a student can be confronted with; and their difficulty increases as we consider Parts II. and III.

Before entering into these discussions, let us string together our facts, touching on the appearance of Part I.

In Henslowe's Diary (folio 7, p. 13, Bullen's reprint) the following entry occurs: "Ne (New) . . . R^d. at harey the vj. the 3 of Marche 1591 . . . iiijth xvjth 8^d." Between that date and the 22nd of April, 1592 (the following month) there are six (or seven) more entries of its appearance, and its popularity was greater than such favourites as even *Jeronymo* or the *Jew of Malta*. Its entries continue regularly down to 31st January, 1593 (the following year). *Titus Andronicus* is the only other