

**THE BOOK OF
SHAKESPEARE,
THE PLAYMAKER**

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The Book of Shakespeare, the Playmaker by Various

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VARIOUS

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

"He was a happy imitator of nature, was a most gentle expresser of it: his mind and hand went together; and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received a blot in his paper."

*From the address of the editors, prefaced
to the folio edition of Shakespeare, 1623.*

JOHN HEMINGE
HENRY CONDEL



THE BOOK OF
Shakespeare, the Playmaker

WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION BY
TWENTY STUDENTS OF

The University of North Dakota

Under the Direction of
PROFESSOR FREDERICK H. KOCH
of the Department of English



DESIGNED FOR THE
Shakespeare Tercentenary Commemoration
by
The Sorck and Buskin Society

For Presentation at
THE BANKSIDE THEATRE
on the Campus of
The University of North Dakota

GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA
JUNE 12 and 13, 1916.

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

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TO
FRANK LE ROND McVEY
PRESIDENT OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
with Appreciation and Affection

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Commendatory Verses

Prefixed to the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's Works
Published in 1623

"To the memory of my beloved, the author, Master William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us.

Sweet Swan of Avon, what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza and our James!
But stay; I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanc'd, and made a constellation there:
Shine forth thou star of poets, and with rage
Or influence chide or cheer our drooping stage;
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night,
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light."

Ben Jonson

"To the memory of Master W. Shakespeare

We wonder'd, Shakespeare, that thou went'st so soon
From the world's stage to the grave's tiring-room:
We thought thee dead; but this thy printed worth
Tells thy spectators that thou went'st but forth
To enter with applause. An actor's art
Can die, and live to act a second part:
That's but an exit of mortality,
This a re-entrance to a plaudite."

I .M. (James Mabbe)

Communal Play Making

Shakespeare, the Playmaker, is a communal masque designed and written by a group of twenty students at the University of North Dakota to commemorate the tercentenary of the death of William Shakespeare.

The idea is original in conception. Perhaps, as our Professor of History express it, when it was first suggested, it is "audacious, but thoroly Elizabethan!" Its aim is to suggest, first, something of the earliest efforts of Shakespeare as an unknown craftsman, and the possible beginnings of his "Players' Scenes" of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It aims, further, to suggest the mature achievement of the playmaker, gathering from returning voyagers wondrous tales of new-found lands beyond the sea, and translating them into a magical play, *The Tempest*—a play embodying the poet's own vision of the new world of America.

In manner of composition, likewise, the idea is original. The same unique plan of communal authorship by which *A Pageant of the North-West* was composed two years ago, has been followed in the preparation of *Shakespeare, the Playmaker*. It marks another contribution to the new pageantry of the people, and suggests a still further development of coöperative authorship in making community drama. It has reassured us that literary as well as histrionic talent may be cultivated by a group of earnest workers, that not only can the people participate as actors in a community play, but, by collaboration under proper leadership, can actually *create* a drama democratic—a new art-form of the people, embodying their own interpretation of life.

But this form of democratic composition is not new; it suggests the very beginnings of literature, and foreshadows, perhaps, a revival of native amateur art. It evolves a remarkable working together, and a result enriched with as many viewpoints as there are writers. Most remarkable of all, perhaps, is the artistic unity which may come out of such composite authorship—compelling rhythm of color and sound, of sunlight and shadow, mellowed into poetry, native amateur poetry of genuine appeal.

It may be well for us to remember in our Tercentenary Commemoration that Shakespeare was indeed the consummation of centuries of experimentation by the people, the fulfillment, after all the years, of the amateur spirit in England striving thru generation after generation to perfect itself at length in his timeless poetry.