

**THE MYSTERY OF
SHAKESPEARE'S
SONNETS: AN
ATTEMPTED ELUCIDATION**

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The Mystery of Shakespeare's Sonnets: An Attempted Elucidation by Cuming Walters

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BY

CUMING WALTERS



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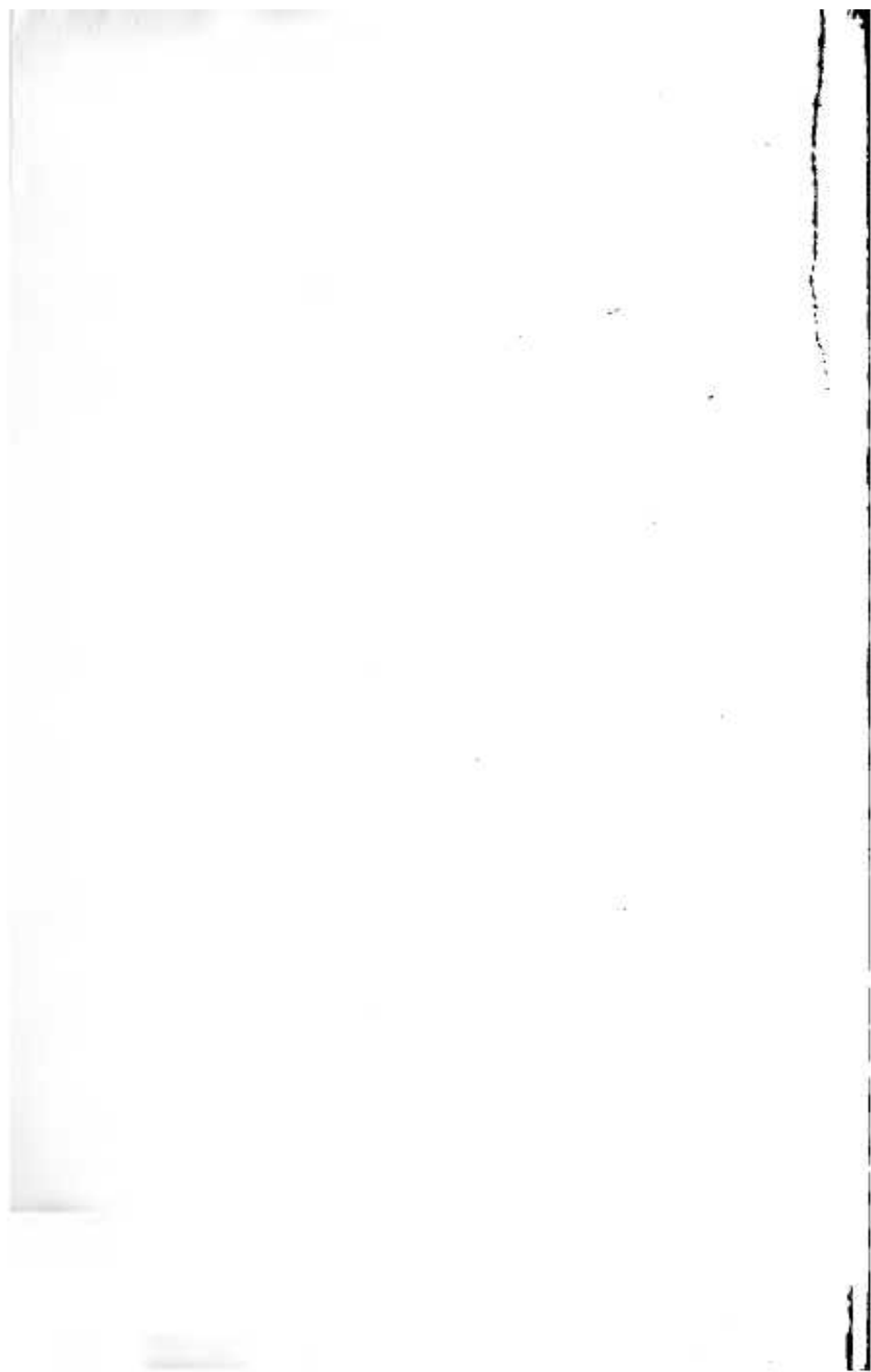
To My friends,
THE MEMBERS OF THE LITERARY AND
DRAMATIC SOCIETY,
THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
AND
THE MEMBERS OF THE SPENCER CLUB,
(ALL OF BIRMINGHAM),
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS
DEDICATED.

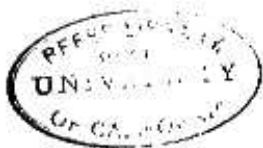
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FOREWORD





FOREWORD

THE following chapters are mainly reproduced from articles contributed to the *New Century Review*. They are a modest, but, I trust, not wholly unworthy addition to the literature which in course of years has gathered about Shakespeare's Sonnets. The only merit I claim for my attempted solution of the problem they present is that I cast no aspersion upon the character of the poet, and do not impute personal offence and personal dishonour to him in order to create a basis for a theory. At a time when the traducing of our greatest poet is not, seemingly, altogether unwelcome or unpopular, and when even those who have a perfect faith in his identity do not hesitate to cast a slur upon him, or ascribe to him odious sins for which history supplies no warrant, my effort at vindication may escape contempt, though it may fail to convince. No student of Shakespeare claims that the poet was a perfect man, that he lived the life of a saint, or that he always maintained his own ideal standard. But this does not justify us in wantonly and gratuitously adding new and purely imaginary vices to the list, even if by so doing it were possible to strain an extra meaning from a few obscure stanzas.