

**THE OLD-SPELLING
SHAKESPEARE: BEING THE
WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE IN THE
SPELLING OF THE BEST QUARTO
AND FOLIO TEXTS**

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F. J. FURNIVALL & W. G. BOSWELL-STONE

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Edited by F. J. Furnivall and the late
W. G. Boswell-Stone.



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THE TEMPEST

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WITH INTRODUCTION

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The Tempest

INTRODUCTION

DATE

THOUGH the exact year of the production of this play cannot be absolutely determined, critics are now almost universally agreed in placing it among the last of Shakespeare's compositions. Among the evidence which has been produced as bearing on the question may be cited Gonzalo's forecast of his policy as king of the island in Act II. scene i. which is taken almost directly from Montaigne, whose work was translated by Florio and published in 1603. Shakespeare is known to have had a copy of this book, and thus 1603 is obtained as the earliest date at which the play could have been written. Secondly, Ben Jonson has been supposed to allude to the *Tempest* in his celebrated passage in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, 'If there be never a Servant-Monster in the Fair, who can help it (he says) nor a nest of Anticks? He is loth to make nature afraid in his plays, like those that beget Tales, Tempests and such-like Drolleries, to mix his head with other men's heels.' *Bartholomew Fair* was produced in 1614, which is thus the latest date at which the *Tempest* could have been written. Thirdly, a book entitled *A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Devils; by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers, and Captayne Newport, with divers others, 1610*, written by Silvester Jourdain, has been thought to have some bearing on the question. The writer gives an account of a terrible storm by which they were cast on an enchanted island, where they found to their surprise 'the ayre so temperate and the country so abundantly fruitfull of all fit necessities for the sustentation and preservation of man's life' that they spent nine months in very fair comfort.

The Tempest.

There are certain parallels which may be detected in his narrative with phrases in the *Tempest*. Though it had little influence on the scheme of the play, it is certainly probable that Shakespeare had read this work, and it is quite possible that he may have been impelled to write a play on the subject of a storm and an enchanted island at the time when this account was received with so much favour. Accepting this, 1610-11 would be the date to which this play must be set down, and this entirely agrees with the internal evidence.

In the whole play, omitting the songs and masque, there are only two rhyming lines: double endings abound, while light and weak endings are comparatively numerous. The diction is often almost overburdened with ideas, the narrative element is freely used, and the tinge of gloom which accompanies the play till the conclusion when it is dissolved in forgiveness and marriage are all suggestive of Shakespeare's final period. It is difficult to support the idea that Shakespeare was bidding farewell to the stage in the character of Prospero: it was hardly in his nature to put himself forward so prominently and assertively: while it is more than probable that the *Winter's Tale* succeeded the *Tempest*. The construction of the former play is more rugged than that of the *Tempest*, and an ingenious argument has been given by Mr. Collier that Shakespeare departed from Greene's *Pandosto* (in which Florizel and Perdita's prototypes are shipwrecked) as this would savour too much of the *Tempest* which had only recently appeared. The years 1610-11 may then be taken as the probable date of composition of this play.

THE TEXT

The *Tempest* was first printed in the Folio of 1623, where it occupies the first place among the comedies. It is exceedingly well printed and the emendator has had little scope for his ingenuity. In the few passages that present any difficulty, however, the suggestions made are bewildering in their quantity and complexity. The epilogue is generally admitted to be by some other hand than the author's: and doubts have been thrown on the masque with which Prospero entertains Ferdinand and Miranda. This is probably genuine nevertheless: there is nothing in the