

**VARIANT EDITION.
SHAKESPEARE. A MIDSOMMER
NIGHTS DREAM: FACSIMILE
REPRINT OF THE TEXT OF THE
FIRST FOLIO, 1623**

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & HENRY JOHNSON

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Variant Edition

SHAKESPEARE



A

MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME

FACSIMILE REPRINT OF THE TEXT OF THE
FIRST FOLIO, 1623

*With Foot-Notes giving every Variant in Spelling and
Punctuation occurring in the two Quartos of 1600,
according to the perfect Copies of the Original
Texts in the Barton Collection,
Boston Public Library*

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

HENRY JOHNSON



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HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1888



Preface.

THE present edition of *A Midsummer nights Dreame* has been prepared with a view to assist in putting the study of this Shakespearian text on a more permanent basis than is commonly laid. It gives the original material in full, including every variation in spelling and punctuation of the two editions of the play published in Shakespeare's life-time, from the First Folio text. The latter has been used as the principal text for its having been the last which may have had the benefit of Shakespeare's manuscript authority.

While there will always be a place for conjectural emendation, the necessity for it is constantly diminishing with every advance in the knowledge of Elizabethan English.

Why should not the study of Shakespeare, at least in universities, begin with putting into the student's hands all the textual facts? Of course the student will never cease to need more help than the best teacher and all the commentators can give. This edition will be useful only if the supposition is correct, that teacher and student should be first concerned with what Shakespeare wrote, as far as the authoritative original texts enable us to judge. And it seems too much to assume that the grounds on which a word or a phrase is generally rejected as not Shakespeare's are either so profound or so delicate as to be beyond the judgment of any student. Whoever rejects the "Now bent" of I. i. 10 must do so on other grounds than that it is less beautiful or apt than Rowe's emendation, "New-bent." The notes include every variation from the texts of Fisher, Roberts, and the Folio which the Cambridge, Globe, Clarendon Press, Delius, Rolfe, Hudson, and White editions agree in adopting. For the source of these changes I am indebted to the Cambridge edition; I have, of course, verified the references whenever it has been

possible for me to do so. In all these editions the spelling and punctuation have been modernized throughout. Many stage-directions, which were deemed dispensable by the seventeenth-century editors, have been introduced into nearly all modern editions.

It is my agreeable duty to express my cordial thanks to Hon. Mellen Chamberlain, Librarian of the Boston Public Library, for facilities in the consultation of the Shakespearian treasures in his custody ; also to Mr. Arthur Mason Knapp, Librarian of Bates Hall, Boston Public Library, for courteous assistance.

BRUNSWICK, MAINE, *October, 1887.*

Introduction.

I. DATE OF COMPOSITION. — Of the earliest known reference to *A Midsummer nights Dreame*, Halliwell-Phillipps, in his indispensable *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, Seventh Edition, Longmans, London, 1887, II, 148, writes as follows: "The following extracts [including other references to Shakespeare besides the allusion to the present play] are from a treatise entitled 'A comparative Discourse of our English poets with the Greeke, Latine and Italian poets,' which is near the end of a thick little volume called '*Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury, being the Second part of Wits Commonwealth. By Francis Meres, Maister of Artes of both Universities. Viuitur ingenio, cetera mortis erunt. — At London. — Printed by P. Short for Cuthbert Burbie, and are to be solde at his shop at the Royall Exchange, 1598.*' There can be no doubt that this chapter was written in the summer of 1598, the work itself having been entered at Stationers' Hall on the 7th of September in that year, and there being in the Discourse a notice of Marston's Satires registered on the previous 27th of May."

The reference to the present play is as follows: "As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among y^e English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Götleme of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labors lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsommers night dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2.* *Richard the 3.* *Henry the 4.* *King Iohn*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo* and *Juliet*."

The year 1598 is consequently a date before which the play must have been written. With this limitation, the actual date of composition is as yet a matter of pure conjecture, based on considerations of plot, style, rhythm, etc., or on imaginable

allusions to events of recent occurrence. Moreover, the play may have been composed in honor of a marriage, and on this as a principal ground has been supposed to have been written as early as in 1590, the year of the marriage of Essex. This is the year to which it is ascribed in the English Philological Society's Dictionary, *s. v. Abridgment*. Perhaps the most generally preferred date of composition is 1594.

II. THE FIRST EDITION. — The first edition was published in 1600 by Thomas Fisher, with the following title-page: —

A
Midfommer nights
dreame.

As it hath beene sundry times pub-
lickely acted, by the Right honoura-
ble, the Lord Chamberlaine his
seruants.

Written by William Shakespeare.

[Publisher's device.]

¶ Imprinted at London, for *Thomas Fisher*, and are to
be foulded at his shoppe, at the Signe of the White Hart,
in *Fleete streete.* 1600.

This title-page and that of the second edition according to the Barton copies were published in facsimile among the illustrations in Mr. Justin Winsor's *Shakespeare Bibliography*, Boston, 1876. Mr. Winsor states that at that date, 1876, the Barton copy was the only one of the first edition in the United States. This continues to be the case.

Every student of Shakespeare is grateful for the publication of facsimiles in photo-lithography of the first and second editions of this play, with introductions by J. W. Ebsworth, M. A., which were issued in London, 1880, in the series of *Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles*, executed under the superintendence of F. J. Furnivall, M. A., Ph. D. The Fisher

quarto facsimile was made up from photographs of two copies, that of the Duke of Devonshire being used for fifty-five pages, and that of Mr. Alfred H. Huth for the other eight, deficient in the duke's copy. The perfect Barton copy shows many more variations from this facsimile than one would look for, even in a book of that period. In some eighty-one cases I have noted the absence of a punctuation-mark or a letter from the facsimile while it would be plainly present in the Barton copy; as, for instance, in I. 1. 21, where the Barton copy has "*thee?*" and the facsimile "*thee*". In some sixty-one instances, where the facsimile might leave one in doubt as to the reading of the quarto, in such slight details as confusion of *f* and *j* or *r* and *t*, I find the Barton copy to furnish plainly the reading which would naturally be assumed to exist. In almost every case of this sort there can be no possible ambiguity as to the author's intention. This absence of doubt is also true in most cases of the lacking punctuation-marks and letters in the facsimile. There are also a few manifestly intentional corrections of the type during the course of the printing of the original edition.

The Fisher quarto (F) was entered in the Stationers' Register as follows:—

[A. D. 1600.] 8 Octobris.

Thomas ffysshher Entred for his Copie vnder the handes of
master RODES *f* and the Wardens, A booke called *A Myd-
sommer nightes Dreame*. . . . vj^d¹

It was published in the same year, and consists of thirty-two leaves, thirty-five lines to a full page, excepting in the case of leaves G and G₂, which have on each of the four pages thirty-four lines. The Duke of Devonshire's copy of the Roberts quarto has B₁ *verso* and B₂ *recto* printed from the identical forms which served for the same pages of the Fisher quarto. These pages, not being *recto* and *verso* of one leaf, cannot have been inserted in the copy. They prove the priority of the Fisher quarto, in which these pages are uniform in individualities of spelling with all the others, while they are conspicu-

¹ From Prof. Arber's *Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers*, etc., III. 174, as quoted in the Fisher facsimile, page v, above referred to.

ously different from all the others in the Roberts quarto. The Barton copy of the Roberts quarto does not show this peculiarity, but has the two pages referred to quite uniform in spelling with the rest of the Roberts text. The copy used by the Cambridge editors was like the Barton.

This proves that there were at least two issues of the Roberts quarto. The punctuation of the Fisher quarto is careful, and, being manifestly rhetorical, if I may term it so, rather than grammatical, can never be ignored in the interpretation of the text.

III. THE SECOND EDITION. — The second edition (R) was not entered in the Stationers' Register. It was published in the same year as the first, with the following title-page: —

A
Midfommer nights
drame.

As it hath beene fundry times pub-
likely acted, by the Right Honourable,
the Lord Chamberlaine his
seruants.

Written by William Shakespeare.

[Printer's device.]

Printed by James Roberts, 1600.

It consists likewise of thirty-two leaves, thirty-five lines to a full page. It corresponds with F, page for page to a word, though not line for line, excepting in the cases of leaves G and G₂ which are set up, presumably by oversight, a line short in F. With the last line of G₃ *recto* the uniformity with F is restored.

Although the identity of B *verso* and B₂ *recto* in R (Duke of Devonshire's copy) and F does not prove that Roberts was the printer of F, it shows, nevertheless, that he *may* have been, and so may have had access to the MS. which was used for F.

Almost the only improvements in R over F are typographi-