

ENGLISH
HISTORICAL PLAYS



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ENGLISH HISTORICAL PLAYS

BY

SHAKESPEARE, MARLOWE, PEELE,
HEYWOOD, FLETCHER,
AND FORD

ARRANGED FOR ACTING, AS WELL AS FOR READING

BY

THOMAS DONOVAN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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P R E F A C E

IN these two volumes are collected the best of those plays founded on English history that have been spared to us from the larger supply existing in Shakespeare's time,—fire, neglect, and perhaps fanaticism, having deprived us of many others. Taking Shakespeare's ten chronicles as a basis, nearly all the gaps that he left in the continuity of his English history are here filled in with plays written by his contemporaries: Peele, Marlowe, Heywood, and Ford having all lived in the time of the great master. We have thus placed before us a series of plays by our greatest dramatists, representing the chief incidents of three hundred years, among the most eventful in English history. These are not, however, mere reprints of the old plays, but they are resettlings of them in what is thought to be the simplest and most effective form for dramatic performance. It need hardly be said that all these plays were written to be acted, and yet fully one half are unknown to the modern stage, while many of them have not been produced in an English theatre since the time of the Stuarts; the reason commonly assigned for this neglect being that, as written, they cannot be acted. Indeed, in the form in which we