

ENGLISH HISTORY
IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS



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BY

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"We can say
He shows a history couched in a play.
A history of noble mention, known
Famous and true: most noble, 'cause our own:
Not forged from Italy, from France, from Spain,
But chronicled at home."

—*Ford's Prologue to Perkin Warbeck.*

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TO
WILLIAM PRESTON JOHNSTON, LL D.
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PREFACE.

THIS volume had its origin in a course of lectures on the study of history as illustrated in the plays of Shakespeare. It is never safe to assume that what has been listened to with attention will be read with interest. The lectures, however, have been recast, pruned, and amplified, and much machinery has been added in the way of tables of contents, bibliography, chronological tables, and index. With such helps it is hoped that these pages may effect a working partnership between the Chronicle of the formal historian and the Epic of the dramatic poet. They are addressed especially to those readers and students of English History who may not have discovered what an aid to the understanding of certain important phases of England's national development lies in these historical plays, which cover a period of three hundred years—from King John and Magna Charta to Henry VIII. and the Reformation.

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