



Ä
SHAKESPEARE'S

H 648
288
COMEDY OF

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

EDITED, WITH NOTES

BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, LITT.D.

FORMERLY HEAD MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK ·· CINCINNATI ·· CHICAGO
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
Or

Ä

COPYRIGHT, 1877 AND 1898, BY
HARPER & BROTHERS.

COPYRIGHT, 1903 AND 1905, BY
WILLIAM J. ROLFE.

MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

W. P. 10



и 42014-50

PREFACE

THIS edition of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was first published in 1877. As now revised it is substantially a new edition on the same general plan as the revised *Merchant of Venice* and other plays which have preceded it.

The greater part of the notes on *textual variations* have been either omitted or abridged. This play, like most of the others read in schools and colleges, is now among the twelve plays that Dr. Furness has edited. No teacher can afford to do without his encyclopedic volumes, in which all the readings and notes of the early and the standard modern editions are epitomized, together with large extracts from the best commentators and much admirable criticism by Dr. Furness himself. His edition is, in fact, a condensed library of the literature relating to the play, giving in compact and inexpensive form a vast amount of valuable matter, much of which would otherwise be inaccessible to the great majority of teachers and students.

I have also omitted "most of the "Critical Comments" from the introduction, as the books from which they were taken are now to be found in public and school libraries. For these extracts I have substituted familiar comments of my own, and have added more of the same kind in the Appendix. A concise account of Shakespeare's *metre* has also been inserted as an introduction to the Notes.

Minor changes have been made throughout the Notes. Some have been abridged, some have been expanded, and new ones have been added, including a considerable number in place of those referring to my former editions of other plays. The book is now absolutely complete in itself.

I believe that teachers will prefer the new edition to the old one; but both can be used, without serious inconvenience, in the same class or club.