



# MACBETH

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EDITED BY W. J. ROLFE

MACBETH

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*Johnnie Pearson*



MRS. SIDDONS AS THE TRAGIC MUSE (*Reynolds*)

# SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF

# MACBETH

EDITED, WITH NOTES

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS edition of *Macbeth*, first published in 1877, is now revised on the same general plan as the *Merchant of Venice* and other plays that have preceded it.

Most of the notes on *textual variations* (of less importance in this play than in some others, as the folio text is the only early one) have been either omitted or abridged. Teachers in secondary schools or in colleges who may wish to give more attention to this subject will of course make use of Dr. Furness's encyclopedic edition of the play, which in other ways also they will find indispensable.

I have likewise omitted most of the "Critical Comments" from the introduction and elsewhere, as the books from which they were taken are now generally accessible in public and school libraries. For these extracts I have substituted comments of my own, in the course of which I have attempted to settle some questions that have been much discussed, but, to my thinking, never satisfactorily answered. I have endeavoured to show how Shakespeare himself answers them, instead of reading into the play what is not there, as some excellent critics seem to me to have done.

In the Appendix I have discussed certain questions concerning the character of Banquo that have been raised in recent years by German and other critics; and concerning the part of Hecate, which I cannot believe to be from the hand of Shakespeare. These

questions, also, I endeavour to settle by the internal evidence of the play.

I have retained the extracts from Holinshed in the introduction to the Notes, because I think they will interest many readers and students who may not have Furness's edition at hand, or would not look the matter up in a separate book. Young students might well read parts of it with the teacher, as a quaint specimen of Elizabethan prose.

The Notes have been carefully revised throughout, some being abridged, some expanded, and new ones added, including a considerable number in place of those referring to my editions of other plays. The book is now absolutely complete in itself.

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

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO MACBETH . . . . .	9
The History of the Play . . . . .	9
The Historical Sources of the Play . . . . .	12
Macbeth and Lady Macbeth . . . . .	15
MACBETH . . . . .	43
Act I . . . . .	45
Act II . . . . .	67
Act III . . . . .	83
Act IV . . . . .	105
Act V . . . . .	128
NOTES . . . . .	149
APPENDIX . . . . .	282
Comments on Some of the Characters . . . . .	282
The Time-Analysis of the Play . . . . .	296
List of Characters in the Play . . . . .	299
INDEX OF WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED . . . . .	301