

**SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY  
OF A MIDSUMMER-  
NIGHT'S DREAM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649703227

Shakespeare's Comedy of a Midsummer-Night's Dream by William Shakespeare & William J. Rolfe

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM J. ROLFE**

**SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY  
OF A MIDSUMMER-  
NIGHT'S DREAM**





A PLAY AT THE BLACKFRIARS.



SHAKESPEARE'S

COMEDY OF

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, A.M.,

FORMERLY HEAD MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS

*WITH ENGRAVINGS.*



*NEW YORK:*

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,  
FRANKLIN SQUARE.

1888.

## ENGLISH CLASSICS.

EDITED BY WM. J. ROLFE, A.M.

Illustrated. 16mo, Cloth, 56 cents per volume; Paper, 40 cents per volume.


### SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS.

The Merchant of Venice.	The Taming of the Shrew.
Othello.	All's Well that Ends Well.
Julius Cæsar.	Coriolanus.
A-Midsummer-Night's Dream.	The Comedy of Errors.
Macbeth.	Cymbeline.
Hamlet.	Antony and Cleopatra.
Much Ado about Nothing.	Measure for Measure.
Romeo and Juliet.	Merry Wives of Windsor.
As You Like It.	Love's Labour's Lost.
The Tempest.	Two Gentlemen of Verona.
Twelfth Night.	Timon of Athens.
The Winter's Tale.	Troilus and Cressida.
King John.	Henry VI. Part I.
Richard II.	Henry VI. Part II.
Henry IV. Part I.	Henry VI. Part III.
Henry IV. Part II.	Pericles, Prince of Tyre.
Henry V.	The Two Noble Kinsmen.
Richard III.	Venus and Adonis, Lucrece, etc.
Henry VIII.	Sonnets.
King Lear.	Titus Andronicus.

### GOLDSMITH'S SELECT POEMS.

### GRAY'S SELECT POEMS.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

 Any of the above works will be sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States, on receipt of the price.

Revised by  
Mrs. James Hamilton Campbell  
2-1-1932

## CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.....	9
I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.....	9
II. THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT.....	14
III. CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE PLAY.....	16
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.....	41
ACT I.....	43
" II.....	55
" III.....	69
" IV.....	91
" V.....	100
NOTES.....	115





ATHENS RESTORED, FROM THE PNYX.



THE THESEUM RESTORED.

INTRODUCTION  
TO  
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

The earliest known reference to *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is in the *Palladis Tamia* of Francis Meres, published in 1598.\* It is the opinion of the best critics that it was

\* The passage is as follows: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for comedy, witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love Labors Lost*, his *Love Labours Wonne*, his *Midsummers Night Dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for tragedy, his *Richard the 2.*, *Richard the 3.*, *Henry the 4.*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*."

written some years before that date, perhaps as early as 1594. Probably in ii. i. 88-117 there is an allusion to the unseasonable weather of that summer, which is thus described in the MS. Diary of Dr. Simon Forman :\*

" Ther was moch sicknes but lyttle death, moch fruit and many plombs of all sorts this yeare and small nuts, but fewe walnuts : this monethes of June and July wer very wet and wonderfull cold like winter, that the 10. dae of Julii many did syt by the fyer, yt was so cold ; and soe was yt in Maye and June ; and scant too faire daies together all that tyme, but yt rayned every day more or lesse : yf yt did not raine, then was yt cold and cloudey : there were many gret fludes this sommer, and about Michelmas, thorowe the abundaunce of raine that fell sodeinly, the brige of Ware was broken downe, and at Stratford Bowe, the water was never sine so byg as yt was ; and in the lattere end of October, the waters burste downe the bridg at Cambridge, and in Barkshire wer many gret waters, wherwith was moch harm done sodeinly."†

\* See our *Richard II.* p. 13. We give the passage as it appears in Halliwell's folio ed. of Shakespeare.

† Stowe, in his *Chronicle* (quoted by Halliwell), says of the same year :

" This year, in the month of May, fell many great showers of rain, but in the months of June and July much more ; for it commonly rained every day or night till St. James' day, and two days after together most extremely ; all which notwithstanding, in the month of August, there followed a fair harvest, but in the month of September fell great rains, which raised high waters, such as stayed the carriages, and broke down bridges at Cambridge, Ware, and elsewhere in many places."

Churchyard, in his *Charité*, published in 1595, refers to the preceding year as follows :

" A colder time in world was never seene ;  
The skies do lowre, the sun and moons wax dim ;  
Sommer scarce knowne, but that the leaves are greene.  
The winter's waste drives water ore the brim ;  
Upon the land great flotes of wood may swim.  
Nature thinks scorne to do hir dutie right,  
Because we have displeasde the Lord of Light."