MACBETH: WITH NOTES, INTRODUCTION AND GLOSSARY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649455560

Macbeth: With Notes, Introduction and Glossary by William Shakespeare & George Smith

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & GEORGE SMITH

MACBETH: WITH NOTES, INTRODUCTION AND GLOSSARY

Trieste

· DRESSES · AND · MILITARY · COSTUMES ·
· OF · THE · 9th · & · 10th · CENTURY ·

MACBETH

WITH NOTES, INTRODUCTION AND GLOSSARY

BY

GEORGE SMITH, M.A.

Principal, U.F.C. Training College, and Examiner in Education, University of Aberdeen

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

T. H. ROBINSON

And Many Illustrations in the Introduction and Glossary from Contemporary Prints

1902

LONDON

J. M. DENT AND COMPANY

29 and 30 BEDFORD STREET, W.C.

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH.

Introduction.

Life of Shakespeare—Birth and Parentage.—The play of *The Tragedy of Macbeth* was written by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, who was born at Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, on the 22nd or 23rd April 1564. The latter date has been accepted as the more likely, an old tradition stating that he died on the anniversary of his

The Village of Wilmecote or Wincot in 1852.

birth, and we know beyond question his death occurred on April 23rd, 1616. His father, John Shakespeare, belonged to a family which had given generations of substantial yeomen to the Midland districts of England. At the time of the poet's birth John was a prosperous "general merchant" in agricultural produce. Corn, malt, hides, wool, leather, hay are named among the wares in which he dealt. Aubrey, the first biographer of Shakespeare, styled the father of the latter "a butcher." Others have classed him as a "glover." Possibly, like colonial storekeepers of the present day, he may have united many branches of trade in himself, so as to consult the convenience of rural customers coming from a distance.

In 1557 John married a local heiress, Mary, younger daughter of Robert Arden, a prosperous farmer of Wilmcote, in the parish of Aston Cantlowe, near Stratford. To John she brought the estate of Asbies, a property of some fifty acres, in Wilmecote, with a house upon it.

Early Years.—William was the third child but the eldest son. The house of his birth is still extant but greatly modified. It is one of the two attached dwellings in Henley Street, Stratford,

Shakespeare's Birthplace, 1769.
(*From the Gentleman's Magazine.*)

now held by the Corporation of that town on behalf of the subscribers to the public fund. Amid domestic comfort, and a certain degree of affluence, Shakespeare's childhood was spent. His father's civic promotion had been unusually rapid. He had passed through all the various offices in quick succession, from that of "ale-taster" in 1557 to "bailiff" in 1568. In the latter year he entertained two companies of players—the "Queen's" and the "Earl of Worcester's" men—probably for the first time in the history of the burgh. In September 1571 he became Chief Alderman, the highest civic position attainable, and held it until September 1572.

John Shakespeare's Reverses.—About Michaelmas (October) of the latter year adversity of some unknown kind

seems to have fallen upon the busy merchant. His prosperity declined. He was unable to contribute to the customary civic levies for the relief of the poor, etc., his property had to be mortgaged to his brother-in-law, Edmund Lambert, and at last he was deprived of his seat in the Council on the ground of irregularity in attendance.

Shakespeare's Education.—During the first seven or eight years of his life William had probably known a fair measure of

Court yard of the Grammar School, Stratford.
(*From an engraving by Fairholt.*)

domestic comfort. He would be sent, as was usual, to the Free Grammar School at Stratford, an old "foundation" re-organised by Edward VI. His teachers there would in all likelihood be Walter Roche, who was succeeded by Thomas Hunt in 1577, while the "matter" of the instruction imparted would be almost wholly classical. After the boys had gone through the Accidence (*cf. Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV. i.) and *Lily's Latin Grammar*, along with the *Sententiae Pueriles*, they passed on to the study of Ovid, Virgil, Horace, Livy, Seneca, Cicero, Terence and Plautus, while Baptist Mantuanus, the popular Renaissance poet, was widely read as an introduction to Virgil. Greek was rarely taught in the provinces, and there are no traces of its having formed part of the school course in Stratford until later. That the system of education pursued in Shakespeare's case was thorough is evident from those scenes in *Love's Labour's*

Lost where Holofernes appears, and also in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* where Sir Hugh Evans is introduced examining his pupil in the early pages of the Accidence. French, likewise, formed one of the branches in which the poet attained considerable proficiency, as the dialogues in that language in *Henry V.* undeniably prove. Some writers have found difficulty in accounting for Shakespeare's marvellous fund of information by the amount of school training that had fallen to his lot. But he had received a sound middle-class education, and had profited by it, as Shakespeare alone could profit. During this period, any boy possessing that marvellous union of keen faculty with receptive capacity characteristic of him, must have amassed, through the medium of the senses alone, just such a vast store of information as he acquired. Sir Walter Scott's mind was constituted on somewhat similar lines, and in age he could repeat entire pages of ballads which he had heard only once recited in early youth.

Shakespeare begins Work.—Shakespeare's schooldays probably lasted from 1571-1577. At thirteen, owing to his father's increasing commercial difficulties, the boy was removed from school, and according to one tradition was apprenticed to his father's business, according to another, bound to a butcher. To this myth, Aubrey makes the addition, that when the future dramatist killed a calf he was wont to make a speech and do it in high style.

Shakespeare's Marriage.—The events of those five years 1577-1582 are wrapped in a mist of obscurity. There can be little doubt, however, they must have been years of steady mental growth and the acquisition of stores of knowledge. When next we hear of him he was assuming responsibilities that were to influence the whole of his after career. In November 1582 he married Anne, youngest daughter of Richard Hathaway of Shottery, near Stratford, who, like Robert Arden, the poet's grandfather, was a substantial yeoman-farmer. There is some ground at least for thinking that the union was not a happy one, for the wife was the senior by eight years of her husband. The reference in *Twelfth Night* (II. iv. 29) to a parallel case has often been regarded as suggested by his own state.

Shakespeare leaves Stratford for London.—In