

**KING HENRY IV.  
PART I; PP. 1-128**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649495733

King Henry IV. Part I; pp. 1-128 by William Shakespeare & John Hunter

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Cover @ 2017

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & JOHN HUNTER**

**KING HENRY IV.  
PART I; PP. 1-128**



SHAKSPEARE'S  
KING HENRY IV.  
PART I.

WITH EXPLANATORY AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES

AND

NUMEROUS EXTRACTS FROM THE HISTORY ON WHICH THE PLAY IS FOUNDED.

*Adapted for Scholastic or Private Study.*



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LONDON:  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1871.

*Malone. P. 114*

LONDON: PRINTED BY  
SPOTTISWOOD AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

## PREFACE.

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OF THOSE PLAYS of Shakspeare which in the old copies were called *Histories*, some, as, for example, *King Richard II.*, are purely historical; and in these the history constitutes the plot. Such plays as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Cymbeline*, were not called *Histories*, and are not properly historical plays, for in these the story is made subservient to the plot. In the reign of King Henry IV. Shakspeare found a subject too meagre in historical interest to allow of his founding a drama mainly on the narrations of his favourite chronicler, Holinshed. His two plays on that subject, therefore, though called *Histories*, employ the history chiefly to regulate the plot. 'The exuberance of his genius and of his feelings,' says Reed, in his *Lectures on English History*, 'required something more than the cold, uneventful misery of the palace of the politic Henry; and accordingly going down to the lower stratum of society, he must have delighted in creating Falstaff and his associates, to make amends for the dull company of the king, and the courtiers and nobles.' The same writer properly observes, that 'the link of association between the serious

and the comic parts of these plays, is to be found in the character of him who is the Prince Henry of the palace, and the Prince Hal of his boon companions in the tavern.'

The first edition of the First Part of *King Henry IV.* had the following title: 'The History of Henrie the Fourth; with the Battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King and Lord Henry Percy; surnamed Henrie Hotspur of the North. With the Humorous Conceits of Sir John Falstalffe. London: Printed by P. S. for Andrew Wise, 1598.' Five other editions were printed before it was incorporated in the folio of 1623. The play was probably composed in 1597, the year in which it was registered on the books of the Stationers' Company.

Shakspeare found the stage in possession of an old play entitled 'The famous Victories of Henry the Fifth,' and from this he adopted the leading incidents of his *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.*, and also took the hint, though certainly not the lineaments, of his Falstaff. The old play is a very sorry production, though it obtained great popularity through the flattery which national pride found in its historical representations. Its author, whose name has not come down to us, followed Holinshed, but Shakspeare consulted for himself, to some extent, the pages of his favourite chronicler. The superiority of Shakspeare's delineations of character over those presented in 'The Famous Victories,' is immeasurable. In the old play, the Prince is an impudent bully, and a blackguard, with no 'sparkles of a



better hope' (*K. Richard II.* v. 3); while Sir John Oldcastle, a character to which not more than thirty lines are assigned in the whole piece,—a character which some suppose to have suggested to Shakspeare his Falstaff, is a grovelling profligate, neither 'witty in himself,' nor 'the cause that wit is in other men' (2 *K. Henry IV.* i. 2), but, along with the other associates of the Prince, altogether despicable. It is certain, however, that Shakspeare at first gave his fat knight the name of Sir John Oldcastle, being afterwards induced to alter it, on account of representations made to him of the dissimilarity between the stage character and that of Lord Cobham, the Sir John Oldcastle of history, some of whose descendants were then alive, and would naturally feel aggrieved by the huge sensual knight of the Boar's Head tavern bearing their ancestor's name.

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PASSAGES ILLUSTRATIVE  
OF  
SHAKSPEARE'S 'KING HENRY IV.'  
PART I.

ABRIDGED FROM HOLINSHED'S 'HISTORY OF ENGLAND.'

- - -

'OWEN GLENDOWER was son to an esquire of Wales. He was first set to study the laws of the realm, and became an utter barrister, or an apprentices of the law (as they term him), and served King Richard at Flint Castle when he was taken by Henry duke of Lancaster; though other have written that he served this King Henry IV., before he came to attain the crown, in room of an esquire; and after, by reason of variance that rose betwixt him and the lord Reginald Grey of Ruthin, about the lands which he claimed to be his by right of inheritance, when he saw that he might not prevail, finding no such favour in his suit as he looked for, he first made war against the said lord Grey, wasting his lands and possessions with fire and sword. The king advertised of such rebellious exploits enterprised by the said Owen and his unruly complices, determined to chastise them, and so with an army entered into Wales; but the Welshmen with their captain withdrew into the mountains of Snowdon.

'Owen Glendower, according to his accustomed manner, robbing and spoiling within the English borders, caused all the forces of the shire of Hereford to assemble against them under