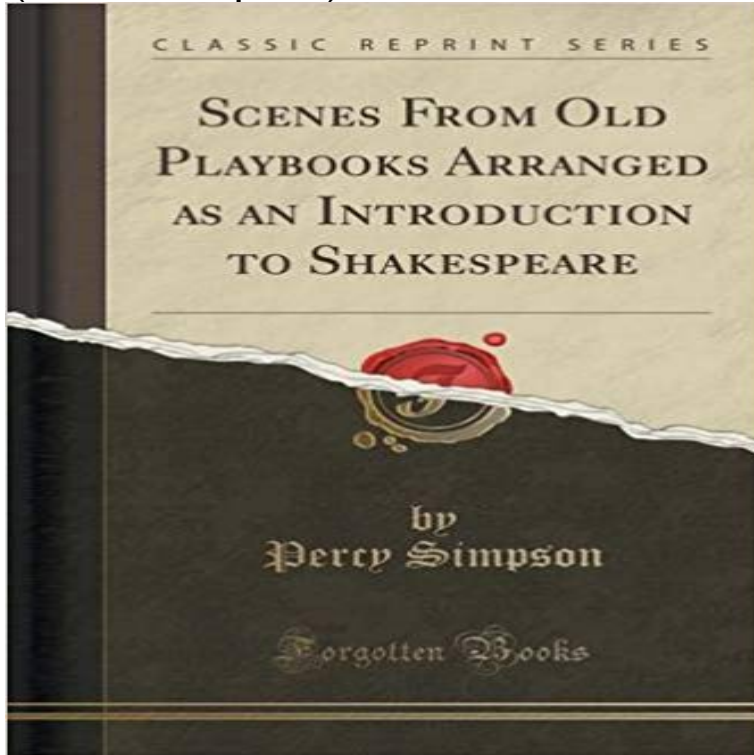


Scenes From Old Playbooks Arranged as an Introduction to Shakespeare (Classic Reprint)



Excerpt from Scenes From Old Playbooks Arranged as an Introduction to Shakespeare This book is an attempt to solve in practical form some of the difficulties involved in a first reading of Shakespeare. The historical plays, which are comparatively simple for a beginner, and the comedies, with their vivid picture of contemporary life, were obviously the sources upon which to draw; in most cases a sequence of scenes has been given. To lighten the difficulty presented by the language, phrases, lines, and sentences have been lopped freely whenever this could be done without positive ruin to the context; and occasionally the easier of two readings has been deliberately adopted. The book has been edited solely with an eye to young readers. The only notes are stage-notes, and these have been lavishly supplied; their helpfulness in a school edition seems as yet to be imperfectly recognized. They come from many sources. Some are traditional, as Falstaffs by-play with his shield (p. 223), or the exquisite suggestion for Thisbys suicide, taken from Edward Sharphams play, The Fleire, 1607, sig. E verso- Faith, like Thisbe in the play, ahas almost killed himself with the scabbard. The scenes from The Merchant of Venice owe some incidental touches to Mr. R. G. Moultons brilliant study of the plot in his Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist; in the trial scene I have used the suggestions of the distinguished actor, Edwin Booth, as recorded by Dr. Furness ; for Shylock throughout I have drawn freely on my own memories of Sir Henry Irvings great impersonation. To my friend and old colleague, the Rev. F. A. Hibbert, Head Master of Denstone College, I owe warm thanks for the loan of his privately annotated acting-copies. A play of Shakespeare is performed at Denstone yearly, and my experience as a stage-managcr there has contributed not a little to the making of this book. I desire to

place on record my debt to the boys of my
old company; they taught me much, wha

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