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By

Milton Crane

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TO
OSCAR JAMES CAMPBELL

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PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to examine in some detail the use which Shakespeare made of prose in his plays. It is clear that a consideration of Shakespeare's prose necessarily involves the most profound problems of the structure and texture of the plays, for it is impossible to treat the prose apart from the verse, or the prose scenes apart from the verse scenes. Prose is but one of the elements in the plays and must be understood in the context of the plays, not *in vacuo*. A study of the prose, therefore, will ultimately have value only insofar as it directs the reader's attention to larger critical questions concerning Shakespeare's art and technique. It is in that hope alone that any man dares to add a single item to the critical bibliography of Shakespeare.

Mr. Richard David will find in the present book the spiritual descendant of his brief but illuminating essay on Shakespeare, *The Janus of Poets*. Professor Mark Van Doren originally suggested the idea, as he has suggested so many. The late Professor Theodore Spencer supervised the preparation of a first version as a dissertation at Harvard University. The late Professor George Lyman Kittredge and Mr. Harley Granville-Barker generously supplied advice and information in memorable conversations. Both the book and its author owe most of all, however, to the expert scholarship and profound critical insight of Professor Oscar James Campbell.

M. C.

Chicago, Illinois
January, 1951

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