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SHAKESPEARE PROBLEMS

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V. A STUDY OF
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BY
FRANCES A. YATES

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P R E F A C E

When Shakespeare introduced the character of Holofernes, the pedant, into his topical comedy of *Love's Labour's Lost*, did he or did he not intend him as a satirical portrait of John Florio? This is a question which has often been asked and which a student of Florio's life and works must eventually face. I had originally intended to devote a chapter to it at the end of my life of Florio; but that project was soon abandoned because there proved to be far more material for the biography than I had imagined, and, as I came to know more about Florio, I realised that the Holofernes problem would require a book to itself. By kind permission of the editors, the resulting volume forms one of the Shakespeare Problems Series.

The answer to the question "Is Holofernes Florio?" turns out to be "Yes and no"; and in the course of reaching this answer we find that Florio has introduced us to people who can explain, not merely his own part in the play, but very nearly the whole secret of the topical application of *Love's Labour's Lost*. The elucidation of a few jokes about comic schoolmasters leads on to matters of much greater importance, matters indeed upon which I should never have had the temerity to embark had they not turned out to be concealed in the problem which I had set myself.

The present study does not by any means exhaust the possibilities of the material upon which it is based, and the student will notice many points at which further work is waiting to be done. I do not expect, nor wish, that any of my findings should be accepted without cautious testing of the evidence.

I should like to express my grateful thanks to Dr A. W. Pollard for his most valuable suggestions as to the arrangement of my material, and other helpful criticisms which have been of the greatest assistance and encouragement to me.

FRANCES A. YATES

Christmas 1935