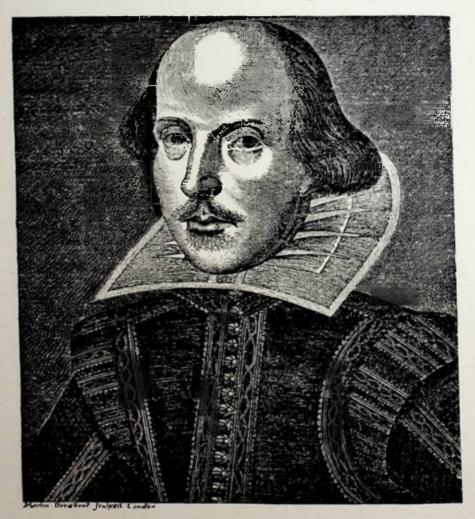


Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Stratford-upon-Avon 23rd April, 1932

SHAKESPEARES

COMEDIES, HISTORIES, & TRAGEDIES.

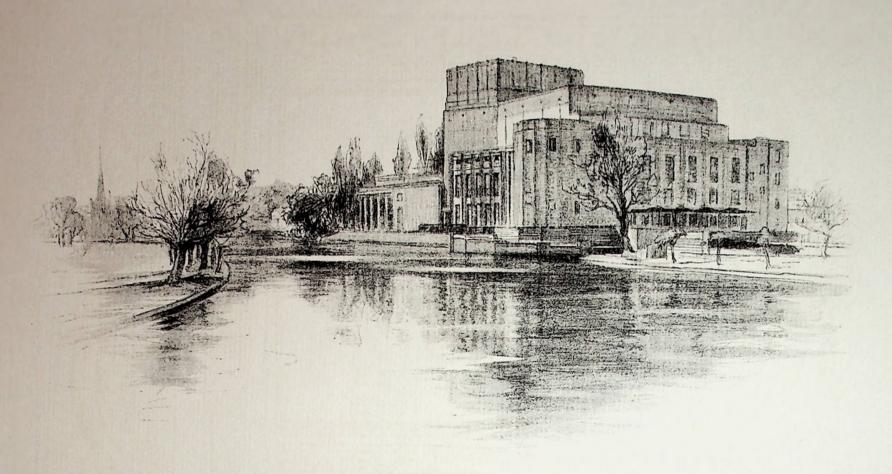
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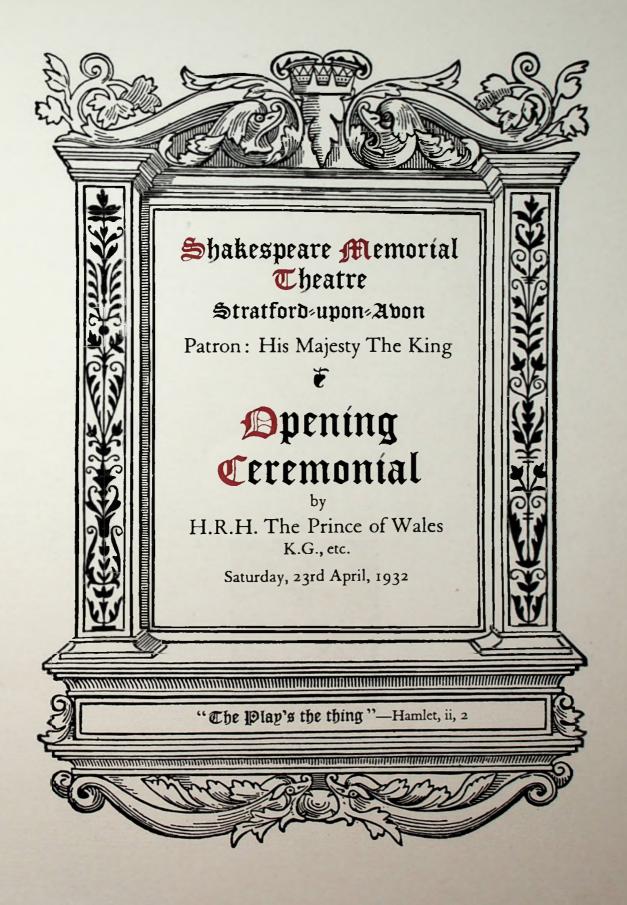
LONDON Printed by Isaac laggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

"And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

—A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.



Shakespeare Memorial Theatre from the Bridge





This copyright Souvenir of the Opening of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre has been printed in Great Britain for the Governors

A Message from England's Poet Laureate

Beside this House there is a blackened shell,
The theatre that Flower built of old,
Lest English love of Shakespeare should grow cold.
He, Stratford's citizen, established here
A home for Shakespeare, that for many a year
Drew happy thousands till the fire befell.
I saw its ruins, black in smoke that rolled.

Now a new House has risen: it is given
Not by one citizen or state: it stands
Given to us by many hundred hands
American and British: nay, each race
Upon this earth has helped to build this place
Lovers of Shakespeare everywhere have striven
Every man gave it out of all earth's lands.

First, let us thank the givers for the gift,
This consecrated gift of brick and stone,
Where Poetry the Queen shall have her throne.
Long may the givers come here to unite
With us, in Shakespeare's service of delight—
The acted passion beautiful and swift,
The spirit leaping out of flesh and bone.

And may this House be famous, may it be
The home of lovely players: and a stage
Schooling young poets to a fruitful age.
We but begin, our story is not told:
Friends, may this day begin an age of gold,
England again a star among the sea,
That beauty hers that is her heritage.
—John Masefield.





To the Builders of the Aew Shakespeare Memorial Theatre

A Message from Sir Archibald D. Flower
(Chairman of the Governors)

The builders of the New Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon live in every part of the world. They are the people who have subscribed to the Rebuilding Fund, or who have given their services in support of the cause. They represent every civilized country, and almost every class in each community. Millionaires are to be found in their ranks, side by side with famous scholars, men of letters, statesmen, thousands of boys and girls and men and women who make no bid for celebrity, simple lovers of the drama. Whatever their estate, and whatever the measure of the help they have been able to give, the Governors regard them one and all as the builders of this new Theatre, which is not a national Memorial to Shakespeare, nor even an Anglo-Saxon Memorial, but a Memorial raised by the united desire and aspiration of men and women of all races and creeds who meet together

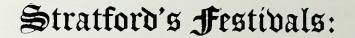
in that world of the spirit where there are no frontiers. On that account will the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre stand as one of those potent agencies whose influence draws the individuals who make up the nations of the world ever closer

together.

Wherever possible the Governors have privately acknowledged the generous help given by the theatre-builders, and as their name is legion specific public acknowledgment obviously cannot be accorded here. Yet we feel that one single exception must be made. The magnificent spirit with which the United States of America entered into this project demands special recognition on this occasion. America claimed the honour of an equal share with the rest of the world in the building and endowment as "a payment at a low rate of interest on a debt owed to William Shakespeare which will grow with the centuries." Without the help of America our plans would have been seriously diminished in their application, and a theatre erected far less suited to its splendid scope. To the practical idealism of the citizens of the United States we owe the fact that the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre will be equal to every demand that the future is likely to impose.

To them, as to all the other builders in this country and abroad, we express our sincere gratitude, together with the assurance that our gratitude will prove no less practical than their help in that we shall seek worthily to legislate for the great Memorial which has been committed to our trust.

We add the hope that as many as possible of our fellow builders will maintain a continuing interest by attending the Festivals, encouraging us ever to improve the standard already set and so to help to put the Stratford-upon-Avon Memorial on a sound, permanent basis worthy of our greatest dramatist and of the country which gave him birth.



Their Birth, Growth and Significance

By A. K. Chesterton



OME twenty years after the death of Shakespeare The Rev. John Ward, a local clergyman who took an intelligent interest in all sorts of things, wrote in his diary a query as to whether a Mr. Haylin did well, "in reckoning dramatick poets which have been famous in England," to

omit the name of the Stratford singer. This would seem to make it clear that Stratford-upon-Avon's recognition of the supreme significance of Shakespeare was not immediate, and no doubt even when pilgrims began to arrive towards the end of the seventeenth century, anxious to collect details of his life, the honest yeomen were still slow to grasp the fact that a world-figure had sprung from their humble little town. The eighteenth century enlightened them more than a little, because pilgrimages became more frequent and Stratford-upon-Avon gradually awoke to its destiny as a shrine of national, and international, importance.

Stratford's "awareness" was heightened by the Jubilee Celebrations which David Garrick staged in the town for



the second centenary of the poet's birth. Elaborate festivities were held, and, although the occasion was not by any means an uproarious success, we are justified, I think, in looking upon it as the birth of the Festival idea. This idea was carried a step further in 1816 (by which time the town was assured of its fame as a repository of Shakespearean relics) when a grand pageant of characters from the plays made a brave show in the streets, but it was not fully exploited until more than fifty years later, when there lived and dreamed in the town a business-man who saw the glorious opportunity of making Stratford the home, not only of the poet's mortal relics, but even more of his immortal genius. Shakespeare should have a theatre in his native town, so that visitors could come, not just to a museum, but even more to a communion with the great soul of the master-spirit of England. That gentleman was Mr. Charles Flower and the first consequence of his dream was that he was laughed to scorn by a number of his fellow Englishmen for his pains. Many of his townsmen, however, proved loyal, and with their help Mr. Flower persevered, and eventually translated his dream into a practical proposal for the erection of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. The second consequence was that the titters of Stratford were put to shame by the derisive howls which went up from London. Scarcely a London newspaper or periodical could resist the temptation to tilt at the preposterous notion of so brave and ambitious an ideal flourishing some ninety miles from the Metropolis, in the rustic heart of England. Mr. Flower and his friends abided the derision and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was built. The whirligig of time brings in his revenges, and the revenge in this instance has been pleasant as well as sweet, because London for the most part has made honourable amends, and done so with a gracious and right royal will.

The theatre was built on the lovely banks of the Avon, and in accordance with the best architectural traditions of the period. Fashions change, and a later generation was to find that better provision might have been made for player and spectator alike, and in their recoil from the rather ornate elaborations which pleased their fathers they were no less critical of the exterior of the building. Be that as it may, the theatre served, and served magnificently, justifying itself in a manner which words are inadequate to commend. From every part of the world came the pilgrims, ordinary men and women living ordinary lives, to surrender themselves utterly to the depth and passion of Shakespeare's genius, and to go with his spirit upon exultant journeys to the abiding

world, which perhaps is the only real world, where there are no limits set to human voyaging and man's aspiring spirit reaches to the stars. Those of us who have attended at these high ceremonies, and come forth many a time into the enchanted air of a midsummer's night in Stratford with that sense of the magical abundance of life which great poetry gives, were no more disposed to quarrel with the building that provided such happiness than we would be to quarrel with a grate which warmed and heartened us with its blaze.

During many years the work of the Festival movement went on, and then, on a Spring afternoon in 1926, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was destroyed by fire. The mood of despondency scarcely had time to enter into possession of our souls when Sir Archie Flower, who has consecrated his life to furthering the movement set on foot by his uncle, and his fellow-governors, paying the time but needful woe, determined that the Festivals should continue in a temporary home and sent a message ringing round the world announcing that in the place of the old theatre a new and a better theatre should arise. Almost incredible difficulties were encountered during the next few years, but they were overcome with valiant patience, and to-day the new and better theatre stands upon the Avon's banks.

Here is not the place to pay extended tribute to the labours of Sir Archie and Lady Flower and of all their loyal colleagues and assistants who have accomplished this tremendous feat, and modest hands would indubitably cross one out were it to be penned, but theatre-lovers the world over would be indignant, and rightly indignant, with any writer who wrote a survey of the Festival movement in Stratford and

failed to pay at least a little of the large tribute that is due.

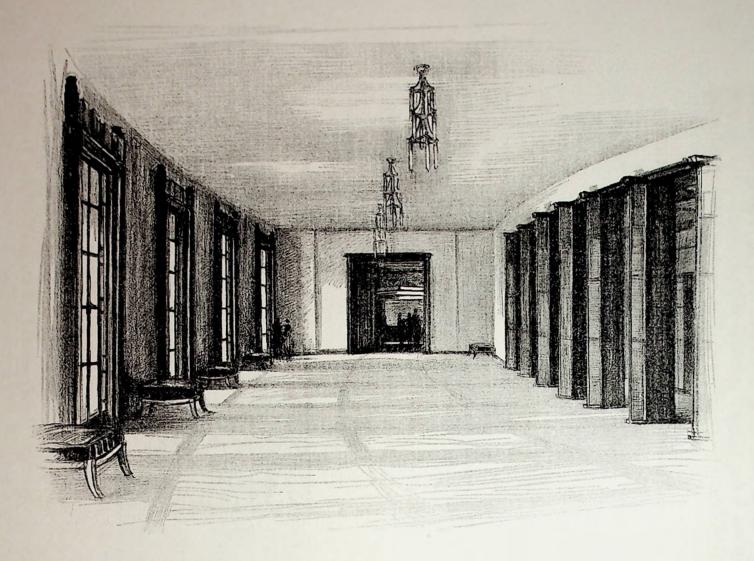
One ventures to suggest, too, that when the curtain rings up upon the first performance in the glorious new playhouse, players and audience will remember with gratitude not only the builders of this second theatre (and the term "builders" is intended to include all the generous subscribers to the cause, with particular reference to the greathearted public of America) but also Charles Flower and the builders of the old theatre whose spirit lives on just as surely now as it did before the fire of 1926. We shall remember, too, those others who gave so much of their splendid worth to the old theatre, the actors and actresses who tended the Shakespearean flame here during fifty years and more, and if there is one name which deserves to be singled out above the rest, then most humbly would I commend the name of

Sir Frank Benson, whose splendid wayfaring in Stratford belongs most worthily to the immortal traditions of the town.

The debt to the past acknowledged, we shall pass on to the illimitable promise of the future, convinced that the deathless characters of Shakespeare will live as never before in the spaciousness that has now been prepared for them. Let us pay no heed to those critics who sneer at mechanical devices such as a rolling stage, and profess an attachment to the cult of cramped performances in front of curtains. Shakespeare was no fashioner of "cults," and would have rejoiced to exploit the terrific opportunities, here accorded the producer, of encompassing the passage of the years in terms of seconds, and of unashamed indulgence in the poetry of panoramic spectacle and the pure delight of the pageant.

We have been given a theatre which is an honest contribution from our own age, and all the special advantages which the twentieth century offers in the way of technical aids have been incorporated to make as fine and as enduring a playhouse as has ever been seen in Great Britain. It is a playhouse such as Shakespeare would have gloried in, and one may say without hesitation that the world has been enriched by the building of a citadel wherein the holy spirit of man shall remain true to its highest achievements throughout the splendid march of time.





Shakespeare Memorial Theatre The Dress Circle Foyer



A Summary of Events since the Theatre was destroyed by fire and a Short Description of the New Theatre

A National Appeal

An eloquent appeal for funds was issued by the Prime Minister, The Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, The Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald, Lord Oxford and Asquith and Mr. Thomas Hardy.

An Independent Advisory Council

As their task was of national importance the Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre called in, to advise them, a Council consisting of The Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna, Sir Charles Holmes, Sir James Barrie, Mr. Guy Dawber and Mr. Granville Barker, representing Finance, Art, Literature, Architecture and the Drama.

This Advisory Council recommended—and the Governors agreed—

(a) That an Architect should be chosen by public competition under the auspices of the Royal Institute of British Architects;

(b) That the site of the old Theatre on the banks of the Avon should be used if sufficient additional space could be provided adjacent to it.

This was made possible by a generous action on the part of the Great Western Railway Company, who agreed to sell to the Governors at a low price some acres of land, on the other side of the public gardens, then covered by some useful but very unsightly warehouses.

The Governors were then in a position to exchange this land for sufficient land belonging to the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation which adjoined the old Theatre. The Corporation, on their part, undertook to remove the warehouses and throw this area into the public gardens—a great improvement to the town and the setting of the new Theatre.

It was recognised that to build on this site would be far more costly than elsewhere, as the whole structure had to be carried on 290 30-ft. concrete piles, while all four sides would be visible as compared with the usual building of a Theatre, where only one façade has to be considered. At the same time, the associations with the old Theatre and the charm of the position on the river bank were held to constitute an asset which the Governors could not ignore.

Choice of Architect

A competition open to British, Canadian and American Architects was organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects. They appointed Mr. Robert Atkinson, F.R.I.B.A., as Assessor, with Mr. Guy Dawber, A.R.A. (their then President), Mr. Cass Gilbert, President of the National Academy of Design (U.S.A.), and Mr. Raymond M. Hood (U.S.A.), as Honorary Assessors.

In accordance with the rules of the R.I.B.A. these Assessors made the award. Their final decision was in favour of the design by Miss Elisabeth Scott, A.R.I.B.A. She entered into partnership with Mr. Maurice Chesterton and Mr. John C. Shepherd, and they were duly appointed as the Architects to carry out the work. Immediately after the appointment the Governors sent the Architects, accompanied by the Director of the Festivals (Mr. Bridges Adams), to study Theatres in Berlin and other Continental cities.

The Foundation Stone was laid on July 2nd, 1929, with full Masonic ceremonial, by The M.W. Pro Grand Master, The Right Honourable Lord Ampthill, G.C.S.I., G.S.I.E.

The Governors were able to supply a full specification of their requirements for the interior, such as seating capacity, actors' dressing rooms, refreshment rooms, wardrobe storage and stage equipment, necessitating a height of 70 feet above the stage for the purpose of "flying" scenery. Excavation below the stage had to be made to a depth of 30 feet, which was 17 feet below the level of the bottom of the river.

The Architects have been most successful in working out a plan providing for these requirements and the Governors are happy in the knowledge that they have been able to assist in evolving the most complete "workshop" for the production of plays which exists in the English-speaking world.

It usually happens that the working parts of a theatre, the stage, with its great height, the dressing rooms, carpenter's shops and stores are

hidden away, leaving to the outside view only one façade between other buildings. In this case, owing to its isolated position, the whole theatre is visible from every side, and this is a reason, not perhaps fully realised, why this Theatre has met with criticisms that might have been withheld had people understood the requirements which had to be met. In all matters concerning the external design and internal decorations the Architects have had a perfectly free hand. The Governors have consistently refrained from any interference in this respect. Any other course must have led to confusion, for opinions in regard to taste are bound to differ. This is exemplified by the fact that Miss Scott's design has evoked extremes of praise and the reverse. The Governors felt that they could not do better than rely on the judgment of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

When it became evident both to the Architects and to the Governors that many engineering, as distinct from purely architectural, problems had to be solved in regard to foundations and steel work, Mr. B. L. Hurst, M.Inst.C.E., M.I.Mech.E., was called in and he has rendered invaluable assistance. The Architects also called in Mr. Hope Bagenal, A.R.I.B.A., to advise on acoustics and Mr. Harold Ridge, A.R.S.M., as Consulting Electrical Engineer.

On stage equipment as well as lighting, our Director has throughout placed his technical knowledge at the disposal of the Architects.

The "rolling" stages, the "bridges" (lifts) and "cyclorama" have been constructed with great skill by Messrs. Knight & Co. (Engineers), Ltd.

A new and very comfortable seat, specially designed for our Theatre by Sir Herbert Austin, and fitted with Macinlop rubber, has been installed.

The main contract for general electrical equipment has been efficiently carried out by the Shropshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire Supply Company, and the stage lighting has been carried out under sub-contract by the Strand Electric Company. Messrs. Holliday & Greenwood, contractors for the foundations, with their foreman, Mr. J. R. Farndon, carried out their difficult task very thoroughly and due acknowledgment must also be made to the contractors for the superstructure, Messrs. Wallis & Company, who, with a band of craftsmen working under their foreman, Mr. E. G. Miller, in close co-operation with Mr. R. C. Long, Clerk of the Works, have entered into their work with real enthusiasm.



Holy Trinity Church from the Theatre Garden



Description of the Theatre

Miss Scott's original conception was that the building should be of white concrete. In their report the Adjudicators suggested that brick would be warmer and more in harmony with the general aspect of the town, and Miss Scott adopted their suggestion. The Adjudicators also approved the brick chosen by the Architects. The building is designed for mass effects, and the façades, while simple in proportion, are enriched by the use of contrasting colours and modelling of the brickwork. The entrance front has, as its most important decoration, panels carved by Mr. Eric Kennington, the designer of the War Memorial at Soissons, known as "The Soissons Trinity," as well as other fine memorials.

Entering under the portico, the visitor finds himself in a spacious vestibule, the box office facing him, and cloak rooms on both sides.

The Dress Circle is reached by a fine circular staircase of green marble opening on to a large reception room on the left and through a beautiful upper foyer. On the ground floor is a large refreshment room with French windows opening out on to the river terrace, from which a splendid view is obtained of the river, with the church in the distance in which the poet lies buried.

The north frontage is occupied on the ground floor by administration offices and dressing rooms, and on the floors above by further dressing rooms, bath rooms, rehearsal room, etc. The comfort of the players is receiving special attention and, in the words of Polonius, they are being "used according to their deserts." The large space under the Dress Circle has been utilised for the storage of the thousands of costumes belonging to the Governors.

The Upper Balcony has a separate entrance on the north front, and from here five French windows open out on to the flat roof over the main entrance with a fine view including the fifteenth century Clopton Bridge—a great advantage during the intervals on a hot summer's day.

On the fireproof "safety" curtain, a scene depicting Stratford-upon-Avon in Shakespeare's day has been designed and executed by Vladimir Polunin, Professor of Theatrical Design at the Slade School. The Auditorium design, including the stage, has been carefully studied with the object of forming a setting for any type of production. Effects are

obtained by the use of materials such as natural woods.

Not only does every seat command an uninterrupted view of the stage, but the angle of vision in every case has been devised with a view to the complete comfort of the audience rather than to any great numeral capacity. The Theatre accommodates about one thousand people, this being the average capacity of a London theatre. The performance of Shakespeare calls for intimacy as well as breadth. Ample depth below the stage has made it possible to install "bridges" of the usual type, and, owing to the great width made available by the site, "rolling" stages have been installed—these are a new feature in England and must not be confused with the device of a "revolving" stage.

Deep bays on either side of the stage have been provided in which the rolling platforms rest when not required. Here a complete scene can be set until needed. Thus it is possible to use the open stage alone or one of these platforms can be rolled into position as required. When the two rolling stages are coupled together it is possible to set three complete scenes, any one of which can be moved rapidly and without noise into

position in front of the proscenium opening.

Again, while one of the rolling stages is in use, the "bridges" can be lowered and another set arranged on them ready to be raised as soon as the rolling stage has gone back into its bay, and when the rolling stages are "off" the bridges can also be raised to form rostrums or other features of desired character.

By this device it will be possible to avoid the waits and noise so often occasioned by change of scene and the same rapidity and continuity of action can be ensured as when the plays were given with only curtains as their setting.

At the same time, the construction of the fore stage with entrances and exits outside the proscenium opening has been so designed as to facilitate the production of Shakespeare, when desirable, in a fashion approximating to that of his own day. The stage equipment includes the usual counterweight installation, a movable "cyclorama" and a fully equipped painting gallery and frame. Scene docks adequate to the needs of Repertoire (eight different plays are given in a week) are provided with capacious property room and carpenter's shop.

The heating and ventilating installations are housed in the basement. All up-to-date fire-fighting appliances are installed and various arrangements necessary for public safety fully conform to the present-day

requirements of the authority concerned.

All these facilities will ensure that the Governors will not be debarred in the future, as they have been in the past, from inviting to their theatre producers of international reputation to give special performances as an adjunct to the Festivals and to this end a layout has been adopted which embodies the best features of modern European stage construction.

The primary object of this theatre is to keep green the memory of Shakespeare by the presentation of his plays upon the stage. As in the past the Shakespeare Festivals will be carried on from April to September, when the majority of visitors from overseas come to this country. Increasing facilities of transport by road, rail, and air encourage the Governors to hope that during the other six months of the year the possession of so perfect a theatre will make possible the presentation of other forms of dramatic and musical art.







On Saturday, April 23rd, Part I of King Henry the Fourth will be given at the matinée, and Part II at the evening performance. Each week from Monday, April 25th, to Saturday, May 28th inclusive, the following plays will be given: King Henry the Fourth, Parts I and II, Twelfth Night, Julius Caesar, As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream and King Lear. The Summer Festival commences on Monday, June 27th, and closes Saturday, September 10th, when The Winter's Tale and King Richard the Second will be added to the above repertoire.



Notes on the Production of this Souvenir

The reproduction of the title-page of the First Folio Shakespeare, with the Droeshout Engraved Portrait in early state, at the commencement of this Souvenir, has been reproduced from the copy acquired by the British Museum in September, 1922. The border surround to Mr. Chesterton's article on "Stratford Festivals" has been built up from the decorative headpiece used on the preliminary page in the First Folio "To the memory of my beloued, The Avthor, Mr. William Shakespeare: And what he hath left vs." The decorative headpiece to Sir Archibald Flower's Message "To the Builders" has been recut from that used on the dedication page by the publishers in the same Folio to "William Earle of Pembroke and Philip Earle of Montgomery, etc." The headpieces at the commencement of the other articles have also been reproduced from the First Folio.

The illustrations, which are copyright, are reproduced direct from pencil drawings which have been made specially for this work by Miss Dorothy Woollard.

The paper used for the printing of this Souvenir has been specially made for the purpose, only selected rags being used in its manufacture.

The type used for the headings to the articles is a recutting of the famous "black letter" used by Wynkyn de Worde, William Caxton's principal assistant, who succeeded to his master's business and plant on the death of England's First Printer. This "black letter" has never been surpassed by typecutters, and it deservedly gave the name "Old English" to the many "black" or "gothic" types used by printers in this country for several centuries. Indeed, even now, the term "Old English" is common for all kinds of "black letter" in many printing offices. The type in which the articles are set is Linotype Granjon, designed by the printer of this work, which has been produced and printed by George W. Jones, at The Sign of The Dolphin, next to Dr. Johnson's House in Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.