

Reminiscent of Mr. Everett King.

The Shakespeare Birthday Club Which
Was Organized by Him and of Which
He is Secretary.

WE have sympathised with Mr. Everett King's unhappy prince of Denmark; cordially hated Richard III as he portrayed him, and studied afresh his presentation of Shylock with mingled sorrow and wonder—wonder at the bitterness of the representative of a down-trodden race, wonder at such reasonableness and strong self justification. But Everett King, as organiser and secretary of a Shakespeare birthday club appears in a new role, this time on the stage of life.

Called together on April 23 1900 at Mr. King's invitation, authors, actors, poets, and critics met to celebrate the natal day of the Bard of Avon.

Mr. Randolph Hartley, the critic on the "New York Dramatic Mirror" who was one of the first members, thus writes of that memorable night:—

"A party of players and sympathetic souls gathered in this city, on the night of April 23, to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday, and to form a society to perpetuate its celebration among players and men and women of kindred spirit. The veteran actor, James Booth Roberts, the poet and humorist, Richard Lew Dawson, and the retired actor, Neil Gregory, came from Philadelphia. Besides these there were present Edmund D. Lyons, Walter Hartzell, Howard Girard Hall, Vaughan Kester, William F. Clifton, Helen Byron, Randolph Hartley, Amelia Rittenhouse, Horace Lewis and Everett King.

"A true Shakespearean feast was served, and a toast to Shakespeare was drank in wassail. Mr. Roberts delivered an impressive address, and read with splendid effect Hamlet's soliloquy on Death, Othello's ad-

dress to the Senate, and Coppee's "Siege of Saragossa." The players gave snatches from their favourite passages of Shakespeare, and the poets recited their own verses. It was resolved that those present should form a society, to be known as The Birthday Club, for the purpose of celebrating in a fitting fashion the day that should mean so much to the player. Mr. Roberts

Shakespeare would aptly have described as "a merry meeting."

Of the autograph letters received THE BLUENOSE has had the privilege of seeing those from William Winter, author of "Shakespeare's England" from Charles Henry Metzler, Dramatic Critic on the Criterion.

Mr. King is as enthusiastic a secretary and Club member as he is a tragedian, and while in the midst of his hardest work in Halifax planned a Christmas surprise for each of his colleagues in the nature of a souvenir certificate of membership to the Shakespeare Birthday Club. Mr. Lewis Smith, of this city, has embodied this plan in a pendrawing from which a large plate was engraved, and of which we are pleased to present, this week, a small reproduction.

In a low ceiled room, near the table which is set for 14 guests, (the original number of members) appears the spirit of Shakespeare. The recessed fireplace and seats are from Anne Hatheway's Cottage, the Chairs from Shakespeare's time.

Comedy and Tragedy hold a scroll bearing the signature of Shakespeare and the years of his birth and death, both on St. George's day, April 23rd. St. George and the dragon are represented in bas relief at the base of each pillar.

Symbols of Passion, Inspiration and Spirit, Mirth and Sorrow, Comedy and Tragedy, Music, Worldly Wealth and Immortality, the Grotesque and the Beautiful, are all woven into the border. Representations of Stone tablets, for member's name and date of joining, blank scrolls for president's and secretary's signatures, and an apt Shakespearean quotation complete the design.

Before this appears Mr. King will have left Halifax to fill an engagement in St. Sohn, but we are sure that his many friends and admirers in the city will join with us in the thought of his own quotation, "The best wishes that can be forged in your thoughts be servants to you."



Certificate of Membership in the Shakespeare Birthday Club.

was elected president, Mr. Lyons vice-president, Mr. Lewis treasurer, Mr. Hartzell Counsel, and Mr. King secretary.

"A charter has been applied for, and the organization, which has a noble and worthy motive, promises to grow in strength and honor, and to become a far reaching influence for good. The following sonnet, by Mr. Dawson, was composed for the occasion:

'Genius of all the ages! as a child
I pored entranced upon your magic scenes,
Where every shape of earth and air convenes
With all the past whose pyramid you piled.
And down its sides a long procession filed
Across my vision, heroes, clowns, and queens—
Spirits that brought the mystic mighty means
By which the parts of truth are reconciled;
And as the light reveals your farther bound
New wonders from your caves and peaks unfold,
Voices of life and nature clearly sound,
And all the future story is foretold!
Then, though the years bring wisdom, power, gain—
Within your spell I still a child remain!

"Sympathetic letters were received from many players, who found it impossible to attend what