

(b) 1594-1600. During this period most of the great comedies and the English historical plays were produced. To this period belong, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Richard II.*, *Henry IV.*, and *Henry V.*

(c) 1600-1606. During this period most of the great tragedies were produced. To this period belong to *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.

(d) 1606-1612. This is a period of later tragedy and of serious comedy. To this period belong, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale*.

Shakespeare himself took no pains to preserve his plays in permanent form. In all only fifteen of his plays were printed during his lifetime. In 1623, however, seven years after his death, a complete collection of his plays, thirty-six in all, were published in what is known as *The Folio of 1623*.

NOTE.—A folio page is about the size of an ordinary page of foolscap (about 13" x 8½"), formed by folding the printer's sheet of paper once. When the printer's sheet is divided into four parts, the size of page is known as *quarto*; when divided into eight parts it is *octavo*; when divided into twelve parts it is *duodecimo*. The plays which were printed during Shakespeare's lifetime were published in quarto volumes, as distinguished from the later folios.

The Theatre in Shakespeare's Time.

The first theatre in London was built in 1576, and was known as *The Theatre*. Both this and other theatres which followed, *The Curtain*, *The Globe*, *Blackfriars*, and others, were built outside the city limits in order to escape the restrictions which were placed on the theatre by the Puritans. Most of the theatres were frame structures which were open to the sky, the only roofed part being the stage, or, at most, the raised seats next the walls. The better class of people occupied seats in the boxes overlooking the stage, or sat on stools or reclined on the rushes on the floor of the stage itself. The floor of the pit was merely hard earth, and it was not provided with seats. The admission to the pit was only a penny, and here the rabble crowded together, jostled each other, cracked nuts, ate apples, and laughed and joked and made sport of the actors.

The performance of the play began at three o'clock in the afternoon, and usually lasted two or three hours. The stage was hung with black