

# The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Vol. 7 of 20: With a Life of the Poet, Explanatory Foot-Notes, Critical Notes, and a Glossarial Index (Classic Reprint)

William Shakespeare



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First printed in the folio of 1623. The play is badly printed, considerably worse than most of the plays originally printed in that volume; though not so badly as All's Well, Timon of Athens, and Coriolanus. Besides many slighter errors, not very difficult of correction, it has a number of passages that are troublesome in the highest degree, and some that have hitherto baffled the most persevering and painstaking efforts to bring them into a satisfactory state: insomuch that they should, perhaps, be left untouched, as hopelessly incurable. Still I suppose it would hardly do to give up the cause on the plea that the resources of corrective art have here been exhausted. The details of the matter are, I believe, fully presented in the Critical Notes, and therefore need not be further enlarged upon here.

It has been ascertained beyond question that The Tempest was written at some time between the years 1603 and 1613. On the one hand, the leading features of Gonzalo's Commonwealth, as described in Act ii., scene I, were evidently taken from John Florio's translation of Montaigne, which was published in 1603. In Montaigne's essay Of the Cannibals, as translated by Florio, we have the following: "Meseemeth that what in these nations we see by experience doth not only exceed all the pictures wherewith licentious Poesy hath proudly embellished the golden age, and all her quaint inventions to feign a happy condition of man, but also the conception and desire of Philosophy.

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