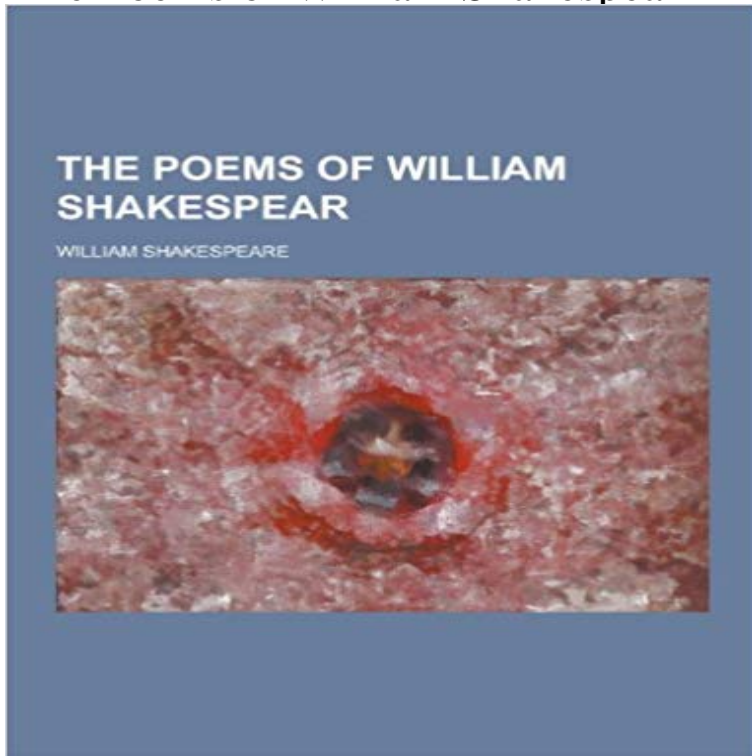


The Poems of William Shakespear



This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1855 edition. Excerpt: ... 147 SONNETS. [shakspeares Sonnets were entered on the books of the Stationers Company on the 20th of May, 1609, and published in the same year by Thomas Thorpe, together with the poem called A Lovers Complaint. The allusion to these Sonnets by Meres shows that some of them must have been written, and in private circulation, before 1598; and it is not unlikely that the greater part belong to nearly the same period. A conflict of hypotheses, intimately connected with the date of the Sonnets, has been raised respecting the facts and persons to which they are supposed to refer. The whole interest of this controversy is derived from the assumption that they relate to actual occurrences, and represent real emotions; an assumption justified, to some extent, by the air of gravity and truthfulness that pervades them, but weakened, if not absolutely destroyed, by the want of agreement in the grounds on which it is maintained. Schlegel is of opinion that the Sonnets reveal the early life of the poet, and contain the confessions of his youth. Coleridge believes that they express an actual passion, and that they were all addressed to a woman; a supposition which Mr. Hallam holds to be totally untenable. Chalmers is at considerable pains to prove that they were addressed to Queen Elizabeth, the allusion to the male sex being intended to typify her majesty in her capacity as sovereign. Gildon and Sewell had a loose impression that the Sonnets were amatory throughout, and written in praise of a mistress. Tyrwhitt, Farmer, Steevens, Malone, and Drake maintain that upwards of a hundred were addressed to a man, but cannot agree as to the exact number, and differ still more

widely as to the person who was the object of them. Mr. Armitage Brown, who has...

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