

plague years in London when the theaters were closed.

At the opening of *King Lear*, the title character, ruler of England, announces he will divide his kingdom among his three daughters according to their love for him. Goneril and Regan make elaborate declarations of love for him, while Cordelia says simply that she loves him as a daughter ought. Despite the protests of his closest advisor, the Earl of Kent, Lear disowns Cordelia and splits his domain between Regan and Goneril. He then banishes Kent and goes to live with Goneril. The king of France marries Cordelia despite her lack of dowry and title. Lear soon quarrels with Goneril over his entourage, which includes the banished yet loyal Kent in disguise, and leaves to live with Regan. Lear and Regan also argue, and she reduces the number of his retainers. Goneril arrives and the sisters dismiss Lear's courtiers altogether. Lear, driven to madness by their ill-treatment, wanders about in a tempest and is led to shelter by the Earl of Gloucester, who is blinded by Regan and her husband because of his "treachery." Gloucester's faithful son Edgar prevents his suicide, while his illegitimate son Edmund becomes Goneril's lover. Cordelia leads an army to rescue Lear from her sisters and is reconciled with him; Lear regains his sanity. Cordelia's forces are defeated by those of her sisters, and she and Lear are imprisoned. Regan has also become Edmund's lover, so she and Goneril fight and kill each other. Edgar mortally wounds Edmund, who has ordered Cordelia to be hanged. Lear dies of his grief.

This second quarto of *King Lear* was bound by the British Museum Bindery in nineteenth-century red sheep with gilt tooling, which includes the crest of David Garrick on both boards. "SHAKESPEARE. KING LEAR. 1608." is



