University Drama in the Tudor Age by Frederick S. Boas

Review by: E. K. Chambers

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probability in incident and in pursuit of their moral, and that their dialogue is not bright enough, though Cumberland's is not without its share of vigour.

The upshot of these remarks is that eighteenth century drama is too abundant and on the whole too uniform in tone and level in merit to be adequately represented by the volume before us. While grateful for what we have, we hope for a second series, traversing the ground again, and introducing us to fresh authors. Instead of completing *The Conquest of Granada* the Editors might give us *Tyrannic Love* 1669 and *The Rehearsal* 1671: and they might add Rowe's *Fair Penitent* 1703; Cibber's *Careless Husband* 1704; brisk Susannah Centlivre's *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* 1718, near the end of her career; perhaps Fielding's *Historical Register* 1737, or another farce; Thomson's *Tancred and Sigismunda* 1745 (not on Boccaccio's and Dryden's subject), or, better, the really strong *Sophonisba* of 1730, of which few know more than the ridiculous line which passed unnoticed at the representation; Lillo's *George Barnwell* 1731 or Moore's *Gamester* 1753; Home's *Douglas* 1756; Murphy's *The Way to Keep Him* 1760; Garrick and Colman's *Clandestine Marriage* 1766; the opposed comedies, *False Delicacy* and *The Good-Natured Man*, of 1768; Cumberland's *West Indian* 1771 (better than *The Brothers* 1769) with Sheridan's *Critic* 1779; concluding with Hannah Cowley's *The Belle's Stratagem* of 1780. That list of sixteen still excludes Young's work, many marked single plays by different writers, and the whole crop of Shakespearean or Voltairean adaptations by Aaron Hill and others: That it would be inferior in dramatic or literary merit to the present collection goes without saying; but the inaccessibility of its contents would give it as warm a welcome from the widening circle of students, and, if it be true that the literary character of an age is best seen in work below the best, it would even better correspond with the present title.

R. WARWICK BOND.

NOTTINGHAM.

University Drama in the Tudor Age. By FREDERICK S. BOAS. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1914. 8vo. xi + 414 pp.

A series of Clark Lectures and a valuable chapter in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* have already demonstrated the intimate knowledge which Dr Boas has acquired of that fascinating by-path of Renaissance literary history, the academic drama. He now resumes the subject on an ampler canvas, and deals exhaustively both with the records of acting at Oxford and Cambridge and with the content of the surviving plays during the sixteenth century. The result is a volume of solid erudition, based on a considerable amount of research into university and college archives, as well as a patient study of the texts and their sources, and only needing the addition of a volume covering the Jacobean and Caroline periods to furnish a complete monument of the rise and

fall of one of the most remarkable of educational experiments. For it must be remembered that the Latin play at least was always an academic exercise, like the scholastic disputation which it supplemented or supplanted, and was thus enabled, in spite of the frowns of theological precisians, to maintain its footing in a society for which the mere professional varieties of the drama, still tainted with the discredit of the pagan mime, were in theory, and to some extent in practice, taboo. One of Dr Boas's most interesting chapters deals with the controversy which broke out in 1592 between William Gager of Christ Church and John Rainolds of Corpus as to the legitimacy of *mimesis* even in its most respectable form. Gager was rash enough to stage Rainolds in an after-piece as Momus, and thus opened the gates to a flood of dialectic which finally culminated in *The Overthrow of Stage-Playes* published by Rainolds in 1599. Gager's own temperate and reasonable defence of his position still remains in manuscript; Dr Boas quotes freely from it, but has not ventured to print it in full. Other chapters deal with the visits of Queen Elizabeth to Cambridge in 1564 and to Oxford in 1566 and 1592, and with the abundant opportunities thus offered to the playwrights; with the influence of Seneca upon academic tragedy and of Italian models upon academic comedy; and with the topical drama in English and Latin to which, under the stimulus of contemporary controversies, the Cambridge writers of the end of the century turned their attention. Dr Boas has recovered the full text of Gager's *Dido*, and devotes a considerable amount of space to examining the literary quality of this and other plays by the same writer, who is no doubt the most talented exponent of his neo-classical tradition. Throughout, indeed, Dr Boas makes a laudable attempt to treat the academic drama from the point of view of literature rather than of archaeology. Appendices give lists of performances, and so far as possible identify the recorded names of actors; and deal in detail with two pre-Elizabethan texts, whose university origin is conjectural, an *Absalon* which Dr Boas does not see his way to identifying with that of the humanist Thomas Watson of St John's, Cambridge, and the curious *Synedrion Animalium* of Ralph Worsley, which exists in both a prose and a verse form, and is based on Caxton's *History of Reynart the Foxe*.

Dr Boas does not leave much for the gleaner. He might perhaps have found room in his chronicle for the *Philotas* which, according to Samuel Daniel, was produced at St John's, Oxford, by Richard Lateware at some date before 1596, and for the 'Tragedy of Tancredo' in which, as Walton tells us, Sir Henry Wotton, while a student at Queen's College, Oxford, in 1586, gave 'an early and a solid testimony of his future abilities.' The 'poetical fancies' of Richard Eedes of Christ Church probably included, in addition to his *Caesar Interfectus*, some trifles in English, for the *Inner Temple Petyt MS.* 538, ff. 299, 300^v, ascribes to him 'A dialogue between Constance and Inconstancie, spoken before the Queenes Majestie at Woodstock,' and also 'The Melancholie Knights complaint in the wood.' I have not yet had an opportunity to turn up the manuscript, but the former piece must be that printed in *The*

Phoenix Nest of 1593 and rashly attributed by Mr Bond to Lyly (*Works*, I, 458), and the latter may prove to be either the 'Chaplain's Relation' probably delivered at the same visit (Bond, I, 464) or possibly a part of the earlier Woodstock entertainment of 1575, for which it is extremely desirable to find an author. The scandalous show with which Cambridge students pursued Elizabeth to Hinchinbrook in 1564, must, I think, from the account given by the Spanish ambassador, have been a mask rather than a play; and in view of the character of the representations which had been allowed at court during the first Christmas of the reign, it is perhaps fair to suggest that the royal lady's disgust had what may be described as a diplomatic origin. Dr Boas gives an excellent summary of the difficult questions as to the date and authorship of the second *Return from Parnassus* play, although on the whole I think that the balance of evidence is in favour of 1601–2 rather than 1602–3. He rightly rejects the conjecture of John Day's authorship. If it is legitimate to add one more to the many attempts to find a man, possibly with the initial D, of whom it could be intelligibly said that 'Cheshire seems to privilege his name,' may I point out that the family of Dutton had a curious traditional privilege of jurisdiction over minstrelsy in Cheshire? I do not know whether any Dutton can be traced at St John's, Cambridge. By a slip on p. 332 'Kinsader' is identified with Lodge instead of Marston. On p. 367 Caxton's *Reynart the Foxe* is dated 1581 instead of 1481. And on p. 197 a minute piece of chronology has gone wrong through a failure to observe that in 1592, being a leap-year, Feb. 6 and not Feb. 5 was a Sunday.

E. K. CHAMBERS.

LONDON.

The Drama of Sensibility. A Sketch of the History of English Sentimental Comedy and Domestic Tragedy, 1696–1780. By ERNEST BERNBAUM. Boston and London: Ginn and Company, 1915. 8vo. viii + 288 pp.

When the wide and even elastic extent of the field covered by the phrase 'The Drama of Sensibility' is considered, and further when one recognizes how adequately Dr Bernbaum has dealt with the little read and less liked polite comedy of the mid decades of the eighteenth century, it is impossible to have anything but praise for so admirable a piece of literary history and criticism as he has just given us. Exhaustive research in arid bypaths was entailed, for, as Dr Bernbaum remarks in his preface, in order to discuss these groups of plays intelligibly it was often necessary for him to enter into minute details and to outline many plots, the knowledge of which, in dealing with rather better-known schools, he might have fairly taken for granted. The fact cannot be gainsaid that the super-refined and ultra-sentimental comedy of the eighteenth century is with certain notable exceptions