Some Academic Grammar Plays

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Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Apr., 1910), pp. 199-200

Published by: [Modern Humanities Research Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3713339>

Accessed: 29-01-2016 14:52 UTC

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SOME ACADEMIC GRAMMAR PLAYS.

In their account of *Bellum Grammaticale* (*Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* xxxiv, p. 273) Churchill and Keller say, 'Auch ins Englische scheint es übersetzt zu sein; darauf deutet der Titel *The Grammar War* (12°), der sich in dem der Komödie *Lingua*, 1657, angehängten Katalog von Simon Miller in London findet.' The play referred to exists in the British Museum MS. Add. 22725: '*Basileia seu Bellum Grammaticale Tragico-Comoedia. Sub ferias Nativitatis Acta, à Generosis Scholae Craneburgensis alumnis. An: 1666.*' On one of the binding pages is written 'Samuel Hoadley His Book 1667.' On another a second title, 'The warr of Grammar, a Tragick-Comedy Acted by the Scholars of Cranebrook School more than once not without applause. In which the whole vulgar Grammar with something of the Authors own, is festively handled.' At the end of the Praeludium comes the announcement, 'Hi ludi in seria ducunt,' which is only too true, for the play, in English, reads almost like a Latin grammar, with frequent question-and-answer dialogue. Though not an exact translation of the earlier Latin play, it appears to be inspired by it, and the *dramatis personae* are for the most part the same. A still later example of this same type of Latin grammar play is the 'Words made Visible: or Grammar and Rhetorick accommodated to the Lives and Manners of Men. Represented in a Country School for the Entertainment and Edification of the Spectators. London, Printed by B. G. for Daniel Major and are to be sold at the Flying-horse in Fleet Street, Dan. Brown next the Queens head without Temple-bar, and Tho. Arrel at the Hand and Scepter in Fleet-street. 1679.' There is a copy of this in the Bodleian. It consists of two parts, neither with any division into acts or scenes. The speakers in the second part are figures of speech; in the first they are almost identical with those of the first two plays mentioned, but less formally designated. For instance, 'Ralph Pone and Jeffery Prae, two Prepositions' are in *Basileia* merely 'Praepositio, Princeps,' and in *Bellum Grammaticale* 'Cis, Regina Praepositionum.' *Words Made Visible* has an interesting preface, from which I quote the following: 'Both parts were composed for private diversion, and acted by the Lads of a Country School, where they received a general applause from Just Hands and Judicious heads, and certainly...such Subjects (as more agreeable) may be as proper, and far more useful than the Bully-tricks of blustering Ajax, a dull

story of an amorous Sot, and a gilding Wench out of Terence, or Plautus, or any the more smutty scenes of latter dramatists;...'

Still another rhetoric drama is 'Princeps Rhetoricus or Πιλομαχία: the Combat of Caps Drawn forth into Arguments, General and Special. In usum Scholae Masonensis: Et In Gratiam totius Auditorii Mercurialis ...London...1648.' This print, of which a copy exists in the King's Library, British Museum, contains little or no text, but is a description in great detail of the arguments, action and costume of the five acts of the play. It is most interesting, and well worth reprinting. The author of the play is John Mason, of Catherine Hall, Cambridge.

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THE MAD SONGS IN 'THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.'

In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Shakespeare and Fletcher, there are certain snatches of song sung by the mad daughter of the gaoler, that have not hitherto been identified by any of the editors of the Play.

In Act III, scene 4, she sings:

For Ile cut my greene coat a foot above my knee,
And Ile clip my yellow locks an inch below mine e'e:
Hey nonny, nonny, nonny.

These lines recall a formula that is of frequent occurrence in the ballads. Thus in *Child Waters* (No. 63, Child, version A, from Percy MS., p. 274, Hales and F., ii, 269) stanza 9 runs:

If you will my footpage be, Ellen,
As you doe tell it me,
Then you must cutt your gowne of greene
An inch above your knee.
Soe must you doe your yellow lockes,
Another inch above your eye; etc.

(Compare pp. 150 *a*, 165 *b*, and 216 *b*, of the one-volume edition of *Child's English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.)

In the next scene (III, 4) she sings two stanzas from a lost version of a famous old sea-song:

The George alow! came from the south,
From the coast of Barbary-a: etc.

with which compare *The Sailor's only delight*, describing the fight between the *George Aloe* and the *Sweepstake*. This ballad will be easily referred to, in Mr Christopher Stone's pleasant collection of