The Cambridge History of English Literature. Vol. VI by A. W. Ward; A. R. Waller

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REVIEWS.

The Cambridge History of English Literature. Edited by A. W. WARD and A. R. WALLER. Vol. VI. The Drama to 1642. Cambridge: University Press. 1910. 8vo. x + 533 pp.

IN the review devoted to the fifth volume of this invaluable work, and published in the July number of *The Modern Language Review*, the space demanded for a due consideration of the chapters on Shakespeare necessitated a postponement of our review of the last two chapters of that volume. These chapters concern 'the lesser Elizabethans' (using the last word strictly), and the social and political conditions of the reign in their influences on the drama. In the former Mr Ronald Bayne has cleared up much that we know only from the confused accounts and memoranda of Henslowe. It is worth recognising, for example, that there were no 'lesser dramatists' in the Greene-Marlowe group: 'The lesser dramatist is the result of the extraordinary interest in the drama which these authors created': and further that 'we have to wait some years before the work of lesser writers survives sufficiently to enable us to appraise it.' Nevertheless Munday, Chettle, Haughton, Porter and others, humbler workers in Henslowe's mart of theatrical trade, assume position and character under Mr Bayne's hand, and the touch of their work with that of greater men is skilfully suggested. We are glad to find the robust vigour of Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abington* rated at its true value, and welcome the hint as to its probable influence on Jonson. In the final chapter of the fifth volume Dr Ward brings together with grasp and discernment the political and social aspects of the age as affecting the stage, marking the conditions in which the Elizabethan drama reached its height and contrasting them with the symptoms of what was to come.

Turning to the sixth volume, we find Professor Thorndike leading off with an adequate and orthodox account of Jonson and his work, in which he properly distinguishes (as it has not always been distinguished) the quality of the poet's avowed classicism, and happily attributes to his 'impeding garrulity' and 'absence of charm,' the circumstance that the judicious (whose opinion alone Jonson did not disdain) lend an intellectual assent to the poet's literary qualities, but warm only to the man. Jonson's development from romantic drama into the comedy of humours, which became his forte, is well brought out; and

Professor Thorndike refuses to follow Creizenach in his denial to Jonson's authorship the brilliant 'additions' to *The Spanish Tragedy*. Nor is the second chapter on Chapman, Marston and Dekker by Professor Dixon less informing and satisfactory. The vital defect of Chapman's dramatic art is touched in the words 'he never learned to think in any character but his own'; the personal character of Marston is rescued, with much show of justice, from the critical obloquy under which it has often suffered; and the enduring poetic charm of Dekker and especially the essentially English quality of his art is recognised to the full. We could wish greater attention to have been paid to Mr Robertson's recent discussion of *Alphonsus of Germany*, with his denial of the authorship of it to Chapman¹; and the alleged collaboration of Chapman with Shirley in *Chabot* and *The Bull*, slender as is the evidence, deserves perhaps a fuller treatment. Is it Shirley's hand that gives to the former effective play not only its clarity of plot and directness, but that power of pathos which Professor Dixon justly denies to Chapman elsewhere?

The separation of the qualities that mark the lithe and supple genius of Middleton from the grosser yet essentially larger nature of Rowley in works of their joint authorship has already formed the subject of scholarly comparison; but never has this distinction been so effectively drawn and with such a fine feeling for its subtleties as in the chapter by Mr Symons on these poets. The swiftness and sureness of Middleton in his verse as in his prose; how Rowley, less articulate, but infinitely more imaginative and therefore truer to the verities of life, lifted the range of Middleton's vision and humanised his art, all this and much more of this interesting collaboration is set forth with admirable critical discernment. Withal Mr Symons seems scarcely just to Rowley's rare play, *A Shoemaker a Gentleman*, now accessible in reprint together with his forcible and sincere, if overdone, *All's Lost by Lust*². In the fourth chapter the long and chequered dramatic career of Heywood is followed by Dr Ward, and his primacy in the domestic drama, together with his estimable modesty as a man and a playwright, is duly emphasized. Particularly interesting is the critic's justification of the credibility of the author in his famous statement that he had 'either an entire hand or at the least a main finger' in two hundred and twenty plays. Features of Mr Macaulay's treatment of Beaumont and Fletcher which follows are his excellent contrast of the versification and poetic manner of Fletcher and Shakespeare; his showing more clearly than heretofore how Fletcher was the innovator, while Beaumont was more distinctly in affinity with the older Elizabethan school; and his recognition in Massinger of a capacity superior to Fletcher's in the conduct of an entire plot, however happy Fletcher may be in the management of single scenes. In view of the preternatural

¹ *Did Shakespeare Write "Titus Andronicus"?* pp. 123 sq.

² *William Rowley his 'All's Lost by Lust' and 'A Shoemaker a Gentleman' with an Introduction on Rowley's place in the drama*, by C. W. Stork, *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, xiii. 1910.

precision with which some critics of late have assured us that at such and such a line Beaumont laid down the pen and Fletcher took it up, it is refreshing to read from one so long experienced in these vexed questions, 'When a critic, with no external evidence of authorship before him, concludes that a certain play was originally written by Beaumont, afterwards revised by Fletcher and finally rewritten by Middleton, he is evidently dealing in mere guesswork.' Suggestive, too, is the conclusion: 'It is probable that the popularity of Beaumont and Fletcher on the stage in the latter part of the century, together with the acceptance of their language by Dryden as a standard of pure English, had more influence than is commonly acknowledged upon the development of English style during that period in the direction of classical simplicity.'

Professor Koepfel's presentation of the dramatic art of Massinger is as able as it is thorough. After setting forth the somewhat intricate relations of the poet to the Pembroke family, chief hereditary patrons of the poets, the author summarizes in several direct paragraphs the quality of Massinger's excellent dramatic art, and especially the nature and the limitations of his power to draw character. To the alleged cases of Massinger's apparent sympathy with the Roman form of worship might well be added the figure of the efficient and beneficent Jesuit, Francesco, in *The Renegado*. Perhaps it might be asked, if Massinger's 'use of alliteration is very discreet,' how can it be likewise 'in most cases undoubtedly unconscious'? And why mention 'tricks of the euphuistic style,' even to note their absence in a poet who did not begin to write until this aberration of style in prose and of strictly Elizabethan times had become a thing of the past for a generation? It cannot be that a critic of Professor Koepfel's eminence and nationality could be infected by the loose and unscientific employment of this word which, in a recent notable history of English poetry, dubs a whole generation of writers 'poetical euphuists.'

Of Cyril Tourneur, if Professor Vaughan will pardon us, we really know a little more than 'the dates at which his plays and poems were published.' He appears to have been a son or at least a relative of Captain Richard Turner, 'water-bailiff of Brill,' and spent several years in the Low Countries, acting temporarily as secretary to the council of war on the occasion of the expedition of 1625 to Cadiz¹. As to the two tragedies that custom has associated with his name, their difference in quality, design and character of diction is such that we should prefer to raise the question of the possibility of one man's authorship of them both, rather than remain content, as does Professor Vaughan, with this difference for determining priority in composition. Professor Vaughan has not done justice to these extraordinary plays by his remark that the characters for the most part are 'either puppets or incarnate abstractions of various virtues and vices.' Nor do we feel

¹ G. Goodwin, *The Academy*, May 9, 1891, p. 442, and the references there given to the *Calendar of State Papers*.

more satisfied with the suggestion that the *Northward, Eastward and Westward Hoe* series is to be regarded mainly as an 'afterswell' of the famous war of the theatres. Quicksilver, in *Eastward Hoe*, with his pranks and his conversion, is a capital take-off of the whole class of idle apprentices of the day, and the entire play is gently satirical of the city. The other two comedies belong to the Middletonian species, and needed no allusion to excellent old Chapman to make up their coarse conventional merriment. While Professor Vaughan was looking for satirical allusions, why did he omit the good natured gibes at *Hamlet* in *Eastward Hoe*? We are glad, in view of these little 'dissensions,' to commend the adequate treatment of the difficult subject of Webster with which this chapter concludes: for however the other greater dramatists rise into success at times in their poetry, their characterization, or in the handling of the plot, Webster alone with Shakespeare attained that sense of a depth beyond, dominated by an impenetrable tragic gloom, which gives his two master tragedies their place among the highest triumphs of the romantic conception of life.

In the eighth chapter on Ford and Shirley Professor Neilson begins with an excellent distinction. Recalling the publication of the folio of Shakespeare in 1623, he finds that previous playwrights have been students of the playhouse, but these for the first time students of literary drama. The remark is of course truer of Ford than of Shirley, whose touch with the stage remained to the end close and intimate; but indubitably there is a literary air about the drama of the time of King Charles that does not belong to the stage in the days of his predecessors. Professor Neilson's treatment of Ford suggests the growth of the dramatist's romantic unorthodoxy with regard to the tyrant passion love and the subtle casuistry with which he defends it, and refers his plays to a larger number of sources and influences, it may be surmised, than Ford, who was emulous of originality, would himself have confessed or perhaps even have recognized. It would be interesting to know more of Mr Sherman's surmise (in an unpublished thesis, which the present reviewer has not seen) that *Volpone* may have influenced *The Fancies*, *Chaste and Noble*, or how the philandering of Gascoigne's *Ferdinando Jeronimi*, which is pure comedy, could have affected the intricate, serious motive of *Love's Sacrifice*. Professor Neilson's treatment of Shirley is eminently fair and sound. Conventional with all his ingenuity was Shirley, and resonant with echoes of the great drama of the past, but it is difficult to prove him decadent. There is an unobtrusive wholesomeness about him and his competent art which falls into contrast alike with the rhetorical Massinger and the hectic Ford.

And now having traversed this great drama, leaping from peak to peak, with a cheerful disregard for things below, we descend to the 'lesser Jacobean and Caroline dramatists': unhappy adjectives that, unlike Elizabethan, denote only the accidents of time. It is difficult to follow Mr Bayne in his idea that Day in his *Ile of Gulls* created 'a new dramatic type.' Happier, it would seem, is his reference of Day's light

art in comedy to the impulse of Lyly, with suggestion, so far as he could follow it, from Shakespearean comedy. The comparison, too, of Lyly's lyrics, the epigrammatic flavour of which is the best argument against depriving him of them, to those of Herrick seems unhappily wide of the mark. This chapter with its enumeration of names and brief words of characterization is perhaps as well done as the impracticable conditions of the problem would permit. Let us think of political history or any other subject, written on this impossible plan. The biographies and deeds of the kings and greater men, written up in chronologically consecutive chapters, and then all the lesser things gathered together. The doings and campaigns of the great Caesars in eight chapters, the ninth on the City of Rome, the tenth on plebeians and patricians, the last on art and coinage. The present reviewer has no desire to be captious, but he feels that no true picture of the trend and development of our great drama can be received where the method is that of successive printing in several colours, first all the blacks, then all the reds, then all the greens, yellows and blues, each changing, and modifying the whole picture which must be held provisionally in mind until the last block comes from the press. Here in the tenth chapter of a second volume on the drama up to 1642 we first reach an account of the Elizabethan stage and the constitutions of the old theatrical companies; and the historic quarrel between the city and the court, which so deeply affected the course of things theatrical, especially in very early times, is reserved for a final chapter. Possibly these defects are inseparable from the cooperative plan which has none the less much to recommend it; and yet apparently the history of literature is the only subject that remains tethered to biography and the chronology of accidental publication.

Returning to our immediate business, it would be difficult to find a more temperate and informing chapter than that of Mr Child on The Elizabethan Theatre. We could wish that there were space to expatiate on its capable use of the most recent material and its many other good points. Professor Manly's contribution, too, an account of the Chapel Royal, puts in order a subject hitherto in great confusion and little correlated in its true significance to the history of the drama. We are glad to find the author taking a negative view of Professor Wallace's idea that Queen Elizabeth actually established and maintained a theatrical company in the Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars. But why cast 'historic doubts' on Thomas Preston and his authorship of *Cambyzes*? Better men than Preston did not disdain to use the drama in academic wise and Preston with all his honours upon him belonged precisely to the class of Gager, Legge, Gwinne and the rest.

In the scholarly chapter (XII) by Professor Boas on University Plays we have a genuine contribution to an interesting subject, until lately not consecutively treated nor otherwise than sporadically investigated. Many of the academic dramas mentioned in this chapter are set forth as to their contents and character for the first time and the proportion and development of the subject are happily preserved. Professor Boas

has used effectively, too, the recent contributions to this subject, especially those of Professor Moore Smith, who has made the field of the English Latin drama his own. The chapter on the masque once more by Mr Bayne, offers several suggestive points. Among them the essentially non-dramatic character of the masque as such; the existence of the antimasque, despite Jonson, implicit in the masque from the first; and above all the example of Spenser in the creation of a visual, beautiful unreal world, precisely that in which the masque with its allegory and mythology was subsequently to revel. Happy is the designation of Jonson's genius in the masque as 'Aristophanic' in its 'combination of robust naturalism and imaginative fancy'; and the full recognition accorded to that great master for the admirable quality of his comic vein in the masque is as just as it is novel. With a well-considered chapter on the Puritan attack upon the stage, by Mr J. Dover Wilson, beginning in the Middle Ages and extending to the closing of the theatres, the sixth volume concludes.

In a review necessarily made up of such a multiplicity of detail, where facts jostle theories (even if theories do not jostle facts) and argument treads on the heels of criticism, it is impossible to do adequate justice to the many and genuine merits of this work. Despite a general plan that sacrifices much to the object of getting things together under a biographical title or a generally inclusive one, such as 'Political and Social Aspects,' 'The Children of the Chapel,' 'The Puritan Attack upon the Stage,' the editors have succeeded in giving a surprising degree of equality to the diverse contributions; and the tendency of the specialist to assume a knowledge of his facts in order to gain space for his theories has been judiciously curbed. Nothing but praise, too, is to be bestowed upon the carefully prepared bibliographies and incidental appendices. Altogether it is a fortunate augury for the future of scholarship that a work, enlisting the cooperation of Germany, France and America, wherever the torch of English learning is upheld, should thus proceed in its successful progress towards completion.

F. E. SCHELLING.

PHILADELPHIA.

Shakespeare's Roman Plays and their Background. By M. W. MACCALLUM. London: Macmillan. 1910. 8vo. xvi + 666 pp.

The general merits of Professor MacCallum's volume—its comprehensive survey of its subject, its sound scholarship, its lucid and attractive style, its skilful analysis of character—have already been widely recognised by reviewers and by students. It will therefore be advisable in the present notice not to enlarge upon these points, but to deal mainly with some features of the work which are perhaps specially suitable for discussion in the pages of *The Modern Language Review*.

I am glad to see that in his Preface Dr MacCallum makes so handsome an acknowledgement of his indebtedness to F. A. T. Kreyssig,