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'LOCRINE' AND THE 'FAERIE QUEENE.'

Mr C. Crawford has written, "'Selimus" is full of "The Faerie Queene"...but "Locrine," so far as I have been able to discover, never once borrows from Spenser's poem¹. Professor C. F. Tucker Brooke and Professor Cunliffe both refer to this statement and agree with it². Twice, however, a suggestion has been made that the author of *Locrine* may have been in part indebted to the *Faerie Queene*. Erbe points out that in the play Gwendolen is married to Locrine before the coming of Estrild, which accords with the story as told by Warner and Spenser, and does not agree with other versions of the story³. He concludes that the playwright may have used either Warner or Spenser, or may have made the change independently. Brotanek, assuming a late date for *Locrine*, suggests that the author may have got the idea for his play from Spenser, but attempts no proof⁴.

One point of likeness between *Locrine* and the *Faerie Queene* has hitherto escaped notice. Both the play and the poem introduce the character of Debon, an associate of Brutus. In my investigation of the sources of the Chronicle History in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*⁵ I failed to find any previous mention of this eponymous hero of Devonshire. In Spenser he is conspicuous. He is twice mentioned for his encounter with Coulin⁶, and like both the well-known Corineus, and the elsewhere unknown Canutus, he received from Brutus a part of the kingdom. Each of the three, according to Spenser, gave his name to his possessions, so that we have Cornwall, Devonshire, and Kent⁷. In the many other extant versions of the story of Brutus previous to the time of the *Faerie Queene* there is no mention of Debon, or of any adventure corresponding to his leaping match with Coulin. The appearance of his name in the play *Locrine* is therefore significant.

It is possible that Spenser and the author of *Locrine* may have had a common source, in popular tradition if not in some book, but it seems more probable that the playwright borrowed the character of Debon from the poet, without going farther afield. This statement, however,

¹ *Notes and Queries*, 1901, No. 163, p. 102.

² *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke, Oxford, 1908, p. xix. *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. v, ch. 4, *Early English Tragedies*, by John W. Cunliffe, p. 87.

³ *Die Locrinesage*, T. Erbe, Halle, 1904, p. 71.

⁴ *Beiblatt zur Anglia*, vol. xi, p. 206.

⁵ *The Sources of The British Chronicle History in Spenser's Faerie Queene*, by Carrie A. Harper, Bryn Mawr Monograph, 1910, pp. 50—51.

⁶ *F. Q.* Book II, Canto 10, Stanza 11, and Book III, Canto 9, Stanza 50.

⁷ *F. Q.* Book II, Canto 10, Stanza 12.

does not necessarily force us to the inference that Spenser invented the material. There is ample evidence that Spenser had antiquarian tastes which would have led him to obscure material which was not in general circulation, and therefore not likely to be known to the author of *Locrine*.

Debon has little part in the action of the play, but he has a speech (Act I, Sc. 1, ll. 139—140) which includes mention of his name, and according to the stage directions (Act II, Sc. 5) he is killed on the stage. In addition he is twice referred to, once in Albanact's lament (Act II, Sc. 5, ll. 64—65):

The day is lost, the *Hunnes* are conquerors,
Debon is slaine, my men are done to death,

and again in the speech of Thrasimachus to Locrine (Act III, Sc. 1, ll. 34—36), where it is said that Hubba

murthered all with fatall massacre.
Amongst the which old *Debon*, martiall knight,
With many wounds was brought vnto the death.

The part that Debon plays is on the one hand too slight and on the other hand too closely interwoven with the texture of the whole, to be the result of revision.

A few straws of evidence, which in themselves have little importance, help to confirm a belief that the author of *Locrine* was influenced by the *Faerie Queene*. There is the point of Locrine's marriage to Gwendolen before the fight with Humber, already brought out by Erbe. There are also the facts that in the play as in Spenser Brutus makes division of his kingdom before his death, and makes Locrine the chief ruler; that is, in Spenser Brutus leaves him 'the soueraine Lord of all,' and in the play Brutus gives him the 'regall Crowne' (Act I, Sc. 1, ll. 189 ff.). Other versions of the story show variations in these points, although Spenser's form of it is not unique¹.

Such borrowing from the *Faerie Queene* is not of a nature to weigh in Professor Cunliffe's argument, based on the respective use and non-use of the *Faerie Queene* in the two plays, that *Selimus* and *Locrine* are by different authors². The author of *Locrine* borrowed material, the author of *Selimus* borrowed lines³. Such borrowing is sufficient,

¹ See *Sources of The Br. Chr. Hist. in Sp.'s F. Q.*, pp. 52—56.

² *Op. cit.* p. 87.

³ The following parallel between *Selimus* and the *Faerie Queene* has not hitherto been pointed out. *Selimus*, l. 744: 'And dye my shield in dolorous vermeil.' *F. Q.* II, 10, 24: 'The greene shield dyde in dolorous vermeil.'

however, to controvert any dating of the play earlier than 1590, even if it does appear to be, as Tucker Brooke says, 'a tragedy of the type of about 1585'.

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JOHN MASON AND EDWARD SHARPHAM.

Editions of *The Turke* by John Mason and *The Fleire* by Edward Sharpham have lately appeared in Professor Bang's most valuable series, *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas* (Bd. xxxvii and xxxvi respectively). In each case the Editor has tried to trace the story of the dramatist's life, and in each case he has shown his inability to deal with the biographical material afforded by the University records of Oxford and Cambridge. A note on the two cases may therefore be useful to future editors, especially foreign editors, of the works of English University men.

Mr Joseph Q. Adams, Junior, who has edited *The Turke*, shows from a contemporary document that John Mason was one of the sharers of the Whitefriars theatre. That is all we hear of him till Jacobs in 1714 remarks, 'He was Master of Arts, but of what University I cannot learn.' A further stage is reached when Baker, Reed, etc., in the *Biographia Dramatica*, 1782, state 'He is supposed to have been of Catherine Hall, Cambridge, and to have taken the degree of B.A. there in 1606.' From the fact that Jacobs said Mason was M.A., and the other fact that Mason in 1608 was living in London and identified with the Whitefriars Playhouse, Mr Adams suggests that if he took a degree in 1606, it was probably the M.A. and not the B.A. degree. To pursue the matter further, Mr Adams applied to St Catharine's College, and received kind help from Mr A. W. Spratt, who however informed him that no Admission Books of St Catharine's of this date were extant, while the Master of the College wrote that Mr Adams might be sure that, if Mr Spratt could not 'find the answer,' no one else could.

This was perhaps a little misleading. At any rate Mr Adams gave up the quest. He ought, of course, to have found out that a Cambridge man not only enters a College, but is soon after matriculated in the University, which later gives him its degrees: and that

¹ *Op. cit.* p. xx.