

Philip Massinger by A. H. Cruickshank

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of an abridged version is weak also, unless the much stronger evidence that this was so in the other three piracies is admitted to support it.

In support of his more important contention that Shakespeare wrote *Henry V*, as it stands in the Folio, all of a piece, Mr Price has done a valuable bit of spade-work, which enables him to claim that in numerous instances the Folio is nearer to Holinshed than the Quarto and must therefore be regarded not as a revision, but as the earlier version. He himself regards this evidence as decisive, but its relevance largely depends on how we imagine an Elizabethan dramatist worked, when called in to make an old play more attractive. Sometimes, no doubt, a dramatist would rewrite an old play as a whole; more often, it may be submitted, he rewrote only certain scenes, or parts of scenes. Now it is precisely where *Henry V* follows Holinshed most closely that I find it difficult to believe that Shakespeare wrote it about the time that he was writing *Julius Caesar*. On the other hand all that relates to Falstaff and Pistol *must* be of about this date. In the Pirated Quarto the process of abridging and transcribing would take the text farther from Holinshed than is the Folio, in which the historical verse need not have been touched; the prose humours on the other hand are simple piracies. If, as seems clear, the incredibly lame couplet which ends the Prologue to Act II,

But till the King come forth and not till then  
Vnto Southampton do we shift our scene,

is an addition to explain the insertion of two London scenes in an Act which the rest of the Prologue places wholly in Southampton and France, then there must have been an earlier version of the play to correspond with the Prologue in its original form. Mr Price passes over this point in silence, and thereby weakens his case. But his pamphlet is a very able one, which no one interested in the play can afford to neglect, and for which I am personally very grateful.

LONDON.

A. W. POLLARD.

*Philip Massinger.* By A. H. CRUICKSHANK. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1920. 228 pp. 15s.

In view of the light that has been thrown upon his writings since the days of Gifford, Hartley Coleridge and Cunningham, an adequate modern monograph on Massinger has long been needed. The want still remains to be supplied, for Professor Cruickshank's study of the dramatist is disappointingly incomplete and superficial. It contains no systematic discussion either of the dates of Massinger's plays or of the sources whence he derived his plots, nor (a more serious omission) is any attempt made to bring within the critical survey of the dramatist's work, the large bulk of that work (unrecognized by Gifford and the earlier critics) contained in the 'Beaumont and Fletcher' folios, and this although Professor Cruickshank is conscious of the injustice that has been done to Massinger through the tacit acceptance of the early uncritical attribution to Beaumont and Fletcher of some of the best of his work.

The author seems at first to have planned a dissertation on very modest lines. His design, he tells us, 'first widened as it went on, and then contracted.' His text still retains traces of the alteration of his plans that it would have been well to have removed; for instance, although on page 23 we are told that 'it would take us too far from our subject' to enter in detail on the problems presented by *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, later in the book twenty pages are devoted to them. Professor Cruickshank, with perfect fairness and impartiality, discusses the arguments in favour of Massinger's participation in both plays, and comes to the conclusion that he had no hand in either. But it does not seem unfair to suggest that, if Massinger's hand were present, he would not be able to detect it. Far from being competent to distinguish Massinger's style from Shakespeare's, he cannot even distinguish it from Fletcher's. To show 'how tender Massinger is at his best,' he quotes Antonio's speech in *IV, iii*, of *A Very Woman*, beginning:

Not far from where my father lives, a lady,  
A neighbour by, blest with as great a beauty  
As nature durst bestow without undoing  
Dwelt, and most happily, as I thought then  
And bless'd the house a thousand times she dwelt in...

If this speech, with its end-stopped lines and double endings, is not Fletcher's, then all the critics who have devoted their attention to the authorship of the Massinger-Fletcher plays are mistaken<sup>1</sup>.

The Appendix in which the collaborated plays are dealt with clearly shows that Professor Cruickshank lacks the intimate acquaintance with his author's metre and diction which could alone give value to his pronouncements as to their authorship. He cannot find Massinger's hand in plays where it is so evident as in *The Double Marriage*, *The Beggars' Bush* and *Love's Cure*. And he is not always careful in his comments on the views of previous critics. Of *The Custom of the Country* he observes 'This play owes very little to Massinger. Boyle, in attributing Act II to him, must have been guided solely by metrical considerations.' This is not the case, as a reference to Boyle's paper on Beaumont, Fletcher and Massinger in *The New Shakspere Society's Transactions* would have shown. 'There is not a trace of Massinger's style in the Act,' adds Professor Cruickshank. But indeed there is. These lines for instance (from one of Duarte's speeches in the first scene)—

if [I were] a physician,  
So oft I would restore death-wounded men  
That where I liv'd Galen should not be nam'd  
And he that join'd again the scatter'd limbs  
Of torn Hippolytus, should be forgotten

<sup>1</sup> Through an unfortunate clerical error in Boyle's article on Massinger in the *D.N.B.*, Professor Cruickshank (pp. 129, 157) has been led to believe that Boyle was of opinion that Massinger wrote this scene of *A Very Woman*. For 'iv, 1, 3,' in the *D.N.B.* ['Massinger's share is i, ii, 1, 2 and 3 (to "enter Pedro"), iv, 1, 3'] we should read 'iv, 2 and v.' See Boyle's paper in *The New Sh. Soc. Transactions*, 1880-6, pp. 614-5, and the evidence there cited.

are very much in the style of this passage (which Professor Cruickshank quotes in another connexion) from Sforza's appeal to the doctors in *The Duke of Milan*:

O you earthly gods,  
You second natures, that from your great master  
Who join'd the limbs of torn Hippolytus,  
And drew upon himself the Thunderer's envy,  
Are taught those hidden secrets that restore  
To life death-wounded men!

To one whose ear is attuned to Massinger's verse, and is familiar with his stock phrases and rhetorical peculiarities, there can be no doubt of his responsibility for the parts of the play attributed to him by Boyle, Bullen and Macaulay.

Neither this Appendix nor the one that follows it argues close acquaintance with Massinger's works. The latter contains passages from Shakespeare and Massinger chosen to illustrate Shakespeare's influence on Massinger. Many of the parallels are extremely weak. It is hard upon Massinger that he should be unable to write

And I, to make all know I am not shallow,  
Will have my points of cochineal and yellow

without arousing a suspicion that he was indebted to *Twelfth Night* ('Remember who commended thy yellow stockings') or that it should be assumed that

It continuing doubtful  
Upon whose tents plum'd Victory would take  
Her constant stand

was suggested by Othello's

Farewell the plum'd troops, and the big wars  
That make ambition virtue.

The extent of Massinger's indebtedness to Shakespeare has sometimes been exaggerated, but Professor Cruickshank has left unnoticed numbers of passages in his plays, containing indisputable echoes of Shakespeare, more worthy of record than these.

The book nevertheless contains some sound criticism and not a little information that is not to be found in any edition of Massinger's works. Particularly worthy of notice are the careful collations of the MSS. of *Believe as You List* and *The Parliament of Love*, and the excellent facsimiles of a portion of the former MS. and of Field, Daborne and Massinger's joint appeal to Henslowe. Still more valuable are the reprints of the two poems by Massinger ('The copie of a Letter written upon occasion to the Earle of Pembroke' and the 'New Yeare's Guilt' to the Countess of Chesterfield) preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, hitherto unpublished in this country. The first, addressed to William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, is of great interest, since not only does it contain what appears to be a clear reference by the dramatist to his early unacknowledged dramatic work in collaboration with Fletcher and others, but also first hand evidence that Massinger, at any rate during the earlier part of his career, was an actor. Professor

Cruickshank hesitates to draw this conclusion, but it seems impossible to put any other construction on Massinger's words. After a reference to the contemptible behaviour of many of the poets of his time who lavished praise upon their patrons only so long as they were paid for it, he continues :

Lett them write well that doo this and in grace  
I would not for a pension or a place  
Part soe w<sup>th</sup> myne owne candor, lett me rather  
Live poorely on those toyes I would not father  
Not knowne beyond a Player or a Man  
That does pursue the course that I have ran  
Ere soe grow famous.

The modest reference to his dramatic works as 'toys' is characteristic of Massinger. He speaks of them in the same way in the poem *Sero sed serio* addressed to the fourth Earl of Pembroke in 1635, on the death of his son Charles, Lord Herbert. The Dublin poem must have been written some time after 1615 when the third Earl became Lord Chamberlain, and presumably before 1622, when Massinger's name first appears (with Dekker's) on the title-page of a drama. The word 'player' can mean nothing but an actor, a performer in stage plays. There is no support in the Oxford dictionary for the supposition that it was ever used in the sense of 'playwright,' and in any event it is impossible that it should have that meaning here. Since Massinger takes credit to himself for not acknowledging his literary productions, he cannot intend to convey to the Earl of Pembroke that it is his desire to be known as a dramatist.

Professor Cruickshank writes in a pleasant, scholarly style, and the book is carefully printed and produced. Two small errors call for notice. On page 9 the assertion that we find in Massinger's plays 'constant references to...the slave market' is insufficiently authenticated by a single reference to a scene in *A Very Woman* which the author himself (page 129) attributes to Fletcher; and in the quotation from the Dublin poem on page 6 (correctly reproduced in the Appendix) 'mine own candour' is misprinted 'over-candour.'

H. DUGDALE SYKES.

ENFIELD.

*Les Doctrines Médiévales chez Donne, le poète métaphysicien de l'Angleterre* (1573—1631). By MARY PATON RAMSAY. Oxford: University Press. 1917. 8vo. xi + 338 pp. 7s. 6d.

*La Pensée de Milton.* Par DENIS SAURAT. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan. 1920. 8vo. 362 pp. 20 fr.

*Milton und das Licht: Die Geschichte einer Seelenerkrankung.* Von HEINRICH MUTSCHMANN. Halle: Max Niemeyer. 1920. pp. vi + 36. 3 M.

The two former works are characteristic products of the deeper and more meticulous study of English authors which is traceable to the place