

the best of Shakespeare's plays in each of the three classes; but the order indicates merely the author's personal opinion of the relative merits of the plays in each class. Thus *Merchant of Venice* would be the first of the comedies for the beginner to read, and *Julius Cæsar* is an excellent introduction to the historical plays and the tragedies.

COMEDIES. *Merchant of Venice, Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It, Winter's Tale, The Tempest, Twelfth Night.*

TRAGEDIES. *Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Hamlet, King Lear, Othello.*

HISTORICAL PLAYS. *Julius Cæsar, Richard III, Henry IV, Henry V, Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra.*

Doubtful Plays. It is reasonably certain that some of the plays generally attributed to Shakespeare are partly the work of other dramatists. The first of these doubtful plays, often called the Pre-Shakespearian Group, are *Titus Andronicus* and the first part of *Henry VI*. Shakespeare probably worked with Marlowe in the two last parts of *Henry VI* and in *Richard III*. The three plays, *Taming of the Shrew, Timon, and Pericles* are only partly Shakespeare's work, but the other authors are unknown. *Henry VIII* is the work of Fletcher and Shakespeare, opinion being divided as to whether Shakespeare helped Fletcher, or whether it was an unfinished work of Shakespeare which was put into Fletcher's hands for completion. *Two Noble Kinsmen* is a play not ordinarily found in editions of Shakespeare, but it is often placed among his doubtful works. The greater part of the play is undoubtedly by Fletcher. *Edward III* is one of several crude plays published at first anonymously and later attributed to Shakespeare by publishers who desired to sell their wares. It contains a few passages that strongly suggest Shakespeare; but the external evidence is all against his authorship.

Shakespeare's Poems. It is generally asserted that, if Shakespeare had written no plays, his poems alone would have given him a commanding place in the Elizabethan Age.

Nevertheless, in the various histories of our literature there is apparent a desire to praise and pass over all but the *Sonnets* as rapidly as possible; and the reason may be stated frankly. His two long poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece," contain much poetic fancy; but it must be said of both that the subjects are unpleasant, and that they are dragged out to unnecessary length in order to show the play of youthful imagination. They were extremely popular in Shakespeare's day, but in comparison with his great dramatic works these poems are now of minor importance.

Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, one hundred and fifty-four in number, are the only direct expression of the poet's own feelings that we possess; for his plays are the most impersonal in all literature. They were published together in 1609; but if they had any unity in Shakespeare's mind, their plan and purpose are hard to discover. By some critics they are regarded as mere literary exercises; by others as the expression of some personal grief during the third period of the poet's literary career. Still others, taking a hint from the sonnet beginning "Two loves I have, of comfort and despair," divide them all into two classes, addressed to a man who was Shakespeare's friend, and to a woman who disdained his love. The reader may well avoid such classifications and read a few sonnets, like the twenty-ninth, for instance, and let them speak their own message. A few are trivial and artificial enough, suggesting the elaborate exercises of a piano player; but the majority are remarkable for their subtle thought and exquisite expression. Here and there is one, like that beginning

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,

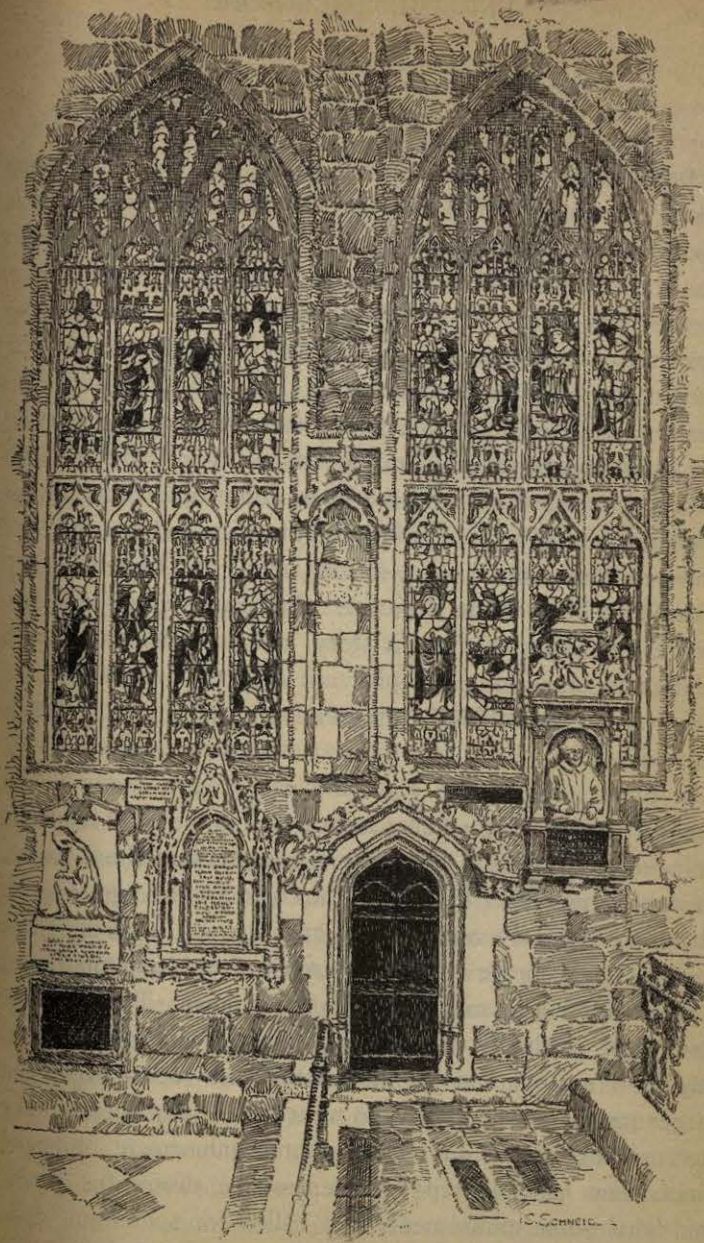
which will haunt the reader long afterwards, like the remembrance of an old German melody.

Shakespeare's Place and Influence. Shakespeare holds, by general acclamation, the foremost place in the world's literature, and his overwhelming greatness renders it difficult to

criticise or even to praise him. Two poets only, Homer and Dante, have been named with him; but each of these wrote within narrow limits, while Shakespeare's genius included all the world of nature and of men. In a word, he is the universal poet. To study nature in his works is like exploring a new and beautiful country; to study man in his works is like going into a great city, viewing the motley crowd as one views a great masquerade in which past and present mingle freely and familiarly, as if the dead were all living again. And the marvelous thing, in this masquerade of all sorts and conditions of men, is that Shakespeare lifts the mask from every face, lets us see the man as he is in his own soul, and shows us in each one some germ of good, some "soul of goodness" even in things evil. For Shakespeare strikes no uncertain note, and raises no doubts to add to the burden of your own. Good always overcomes evil in the long run; and love, faith, work, and duty are the four elements that in all ages make the world right. To criticise or praise the genius that creates these men and women is to criticise or praise humanity itself.

Of his influence in literature it is equally difficult to speak. Goethe expresses the common literary judgment when he says, "I do not remember that any book or person or event in my life ever made so great an impression upon me as the plays of Shakespeare." His influence upon our own language and thought is beyond calculation. Shakespeare and the King James Bible are the two great conservators of the English speech; and one who habitually reads them finds himself possessed of a style and vocabulary that are beyond criticism. Even those who read no Shakespeare are still unconsciously guided by him, for his thought and expression have so pervaded our life and literature that it is impossible, so long as one speaks the English language, to escape his influence.

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"



AMERICAN MEMORIAL WINDOW IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, STRATFORD-ON-AVON

V. SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEMPORARIES AND
SUCCESSORS IN THE DRAMA

Decline of the Drama. It was inevitable that the drama should decline after Shakespeare, for the simple reason that there was no other great enough to fill his place. Aside from this, other causes were at work, and the chief of these was at the very source of the Elizabethan dramas. It must be remembered that our first playwrights wrote to please their audiences; that the drama rose in England because of the desire of a patriotic people to see something of the stirring life of the times reflected on the stage. For there were no papers or magazines in those days, and people came to the theaters not only to be amused but to be informed. Like children, they wanted to see a story acted; and like men, they wanted to know what it meant. Shakespeare fulfilled their desire. He gave them their story, and his genius was great enough to show in every play not only their own life and passions but something of the meaning of all life, and of that eternal justice which uses the war of human passions for its own great ends. Thus good and evil mingle freely in his dramas; but the evil is never attractive, and the good triumphs as inevitably as fate. Though his language is sometimes coarse, we are to remember that it was the custom of his age to speak somewhat coarsely, and that in language, as in thought and feeling, Shakespeare is far above most of his contemporaries.

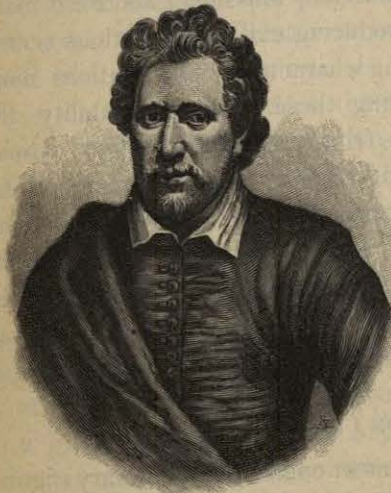
With his successors all this was changed. The audience itself had gradually changed, and in place of plain people eager for a story and for information, we see a larger and larger proportion of those who went to the play because they had nothing else to do. They wanted amusement only, and since they had blunted by idleness the desire for simple and wholesome amusement, they called for something more sensational. Shakespeare's successors catered to the depraved tastes of this new audience. They lacked not only

Shakespeare's genius, but his broad charity, his moral insight into life. With the exception of Ben Jonson, they neglected the simple fact that man in his deepest nature is a moral being, and that only a play which satisfies the whole nature of man by showing the triumph of the moral law can ever wholly satisfy an audience or a people. Beaumont and Fletcher, forgetting the deep meaning of life, strove for effect by increasing the sensationalism of their plays; Webster reveled in tragedies of blood and thunder; Massinger and Ford made another step downward, producing evil and licentious scenes for their own sake, making characters and situations more immoral till, notwithstanding these dramatists' ability, the stage had become insincere, frivolous, and bad. Ben Jonson's ode, "Come Leave the Loathed Stage," is the judgment of a large and honest nature grown weary of the plays and the players of the time. We read with a sense of relief that in 1642, only twenty-six years after Shakespeare's death, both houses of Parliament voted to close the theaters as breeders of lies and immorality.

BEN JONSON (1573?-1637)

Personally Jonson is the most commanding literary figure among the Elizabethans. For twenty-five years he was the literary dictator of London, the chief of all the wits that gathered nightly at the old Devil Tavern. With his great learning, his ability, and his commanding position as poet laureate, he set himself squarely against his contemporaries and the romantic tendency of the age. For two things he fought bravely, — to restore the classic form of the drama, and to keep the stage from its downward course. Apparently he failed; the romantic school fixed its hold more strongly than ever; the stage went swiftly to an end as sad as that of the early dramatists. Nevertheless his influence lived and grew more powerful till, aided largely by French influence, it resulted in the so-called classicism of the eighteenth century.

Life. Jonson was born at Westminster about the year 1573. His father, an educated gentleman, had his property confiscated and was himself thrown into prison by Queen Mary; so we infer the family was of some prominence. From his mother he received certain strong characteristics, and by a single short reference in Jonson's works we are led to see the kind of woman she was. It is while Jonson is telling Drummond of the occasion when he was thrown into prison, because some passages in the comedy of *Eastward Ho!* gave offense to King James, and he was in danger of a



BEN JONSON

horrible death, after having his ears and nose cut off. He tells us how, after his pardon, he was banqueting with his friends, when his "old mother" came in and showed a paper full of "lusty strong poison," which she intended to mix with his drink just before the execution. And to show that she "was no churl," she intended first to drink of the poison herself. The incident is all the more suggestive from the fact that Chapman and Marston, one his friend and

the other his enemy, were first cast into prison as the authors of *Eastward Ho!* and rough Ben Jonson at once declared that he too had had a small hand in the writing and went to join them in prison. Jonson's father came out of prison, having given up his estate, and became a minister. He died just before the son's birth, and two years later the mother married a bricklayer of London. The boy was sent to a private school, and later made his own way to Westminster School, where the submaster, Camden, struck by the boy's ability, taught and largely supported him. For a short time he may have studied at the university in Cambridge; but his stepfather soon set him to learning the bricklayer's trade. He ran away from this, and went with the English army to fight Spaniards in the Low Countries. His best known exploit there was to fight a duel between

the lines with one of the enemy's soldiers, while both armies looked on. Jonson killed his man, and took his arms, and made his way back to his own lines in a way to delight the old Norman troubadours. He soon returned to England, and married precipitately when only nineteen or twenty years old. Five years later we find him employed, like Shakespeare, as actor and reviser of old plays in the theater. Thereafter his life is a varied and stormy one. He killed an actor in a duel, and only escaped hanging by pleading "benefit of clergy"¹; but he lost all his poor goods and was branded for life on his left thumb. In his first great play, *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), Shakespeare acted one of the parts; and that may have been the beginning of their long friendship. Other plays followed rapidly. Upon the accession of James, Jonson's masques won him royal favor, and he was made poet laureate. He now became undoubted leader of the literary men of his time, though his rough honesty and his hatred of the literary tendencies of the age made him quarrel with nearly all of them. In 1616, soon after Shakespeare's retirement, he stopped writing for the stage and gave himself up to study and serious work. In 1618 he traveled on foot to Scotland, where he visited Drummond, from whom we have the scant records of his varied life. His impressions of this journey, called *Foot Pilgrimage*, were lost in a fire before publication. Thereafter he produced less, and his work declined in vigor; but spite of growing poverty and infirmity we notice in his later work, especially in the unfinished *Sad Shepherd*, a certain mellowness and tender human sympathy which were lacking in his earlier productions. He died poverty stricken in 1637. Unlike Shakespeare's, his death was mourned as a national calamity, and he was buried with all honor in Westminster Abbey. On his grave was laid a marble slab, on which the words "O rare Ben Jonson" were his sufficient epitaph.

Works of Ben Jonson. Jonson's work is in strong contrast with that of Shakespeare and of the later Elizabethan dramatists. Alone he fought against the romantic tendency of the age, and to restore the classic standards. Thus the whole action of his drama usually covers only a few hours, or

¹A name given to the privilege—claimed by the mediæval Church for its clergy—of being exempt from trial by the regular law courts. After the Reformation the custom survived for a long time, and special privileges were allowed to ministers and their families. Jonson claimed the privilege as a minister's son.

a single day. He never takes liberties with historical facts, as Shakespeare does, but is accurate to the smallest detail. His dramas abound in classical learning, are carefully and logically constructed, and comedy and tragedy are kept apart, instead of crowding each other as they do in Shakespeare and in life. In one respect his comedies are worthy of careful reading, — they are intensely realistic, presenting men and women of the time exactly as they were. From a few of Jonson's scenes we can understand — better than from all the plays of Shakespeare — how men talked and acted during the Age of Elizabeth.

Jonson's first comedy, *Every Man in His Humour*, is a key to all his dramas. The word "humour" in his age stood for some characteristic whim or quality of society. *Every Man in His Humour* Jonson gives to each of his characters some prominent humor, exaggerates it, as the cartoonist enlarges the most characteristic feature of a face, and so holds it before our attention that all other qualities are lost sight of; which is the method that Dickens used later in many of his novels. *Every Man in His Humour* was the first of three satires. Its special aim was to ridicule the humors of the city. The second, *Cynthia's Revels*, satirizes the humors of the court; while the third, *The Poetaster*, the result of a quarrel with his contemporaries, was leveled at the false standards of the poets of the age.

The three best known of Jonson's comedies are *Volpone*, *or the Fox*, *The Alchemist*, and *Epicæne, or the Silent Woman*. *Volpone* is a keen and merciless analysis of a man governed by an overwhelming love of money for its own sake. The first words in the first scene are a key to the whole comedy:

(*Volpone*)

Good morning to the day; and next, my gold!
Open the shrine that I may see my saint.

(*Mosca withdraws a curtain and discovers piles of gold, plate, jewels, etc.*)

Hail the world's soul, and mine!

Volpone's method of increasing his wealth is to play upon the avarice of men. He pretends to be at the point of death, and his "suits," who know his love of gain and that he has no heirs, endeavor hypocritically to sweeten his last moments by giving him rich presents, so that he will leave them all his wealth. The intrigues of these suits furnish the story of the play, and show to what infamous depths avarice will lead a man.

The Alchemist is a study of quackery on one side and of gullibility on the other, founded on the mediæval idea of the philosopher's stone,¹ and applies as well to the patent medicines and get-rich-quick schemes of our day as to the peculiar forms of quackery with which Jonson was more familiar. In plot and artistic construction *The Alchemist* is an almost perfect specimen of the best English drama. It has some remarkably good passages, and is the most-readable of Jonson's plays.

Epicæne, or the Silent Woman, is a prose comedy exceedingly well constructed, full of life, abounding in fun and unexpected situations. Here is a brief outline from which the reader may see of what materials Jonson made up his comedies.

The chief character is Morose, a rich old codger whose humor is a horror of noise. He lives in a street so narrow that it will admit no carriages; he pads the doors; plugs the keyhole; puts mattresses on the stairs. He dismisses a servant who wears squeaky boots; makes all the rest go about in thick stockings; and they must answer him by signs, since he cannot bear to hear anybody but himself talk. He disinherits his poor nephew Eugenie, and, to make sure that the latter will not get any money out of him, resolves to marry. His confidant in this delicate matter is Cutbeard the barber, who, unlike his kind, never speaks unless spoken to, and does not even knick his scissors as he works. Cutbeard (who is secretly in league with the nephew) tells him of *Epicæne*, a rare, silent woman, and Morose is so delighted with her silence that he resolves to marry her on the spot. Cutbeard produces a parson with a bad cold, who can speak only in a whisper, to marry them; and when the parson coughs after the ceremony

¹ A similar story of quackery is found in Chaucer, "The Canon's Yeoman's Tale."

Morose demands back five shillings of the fee. To save it the parson coughs more, and is hurriedly bundled out of the house. The silent woman finds her voice immediately after the marriage, begins to talk loudly and to make reforms in the household, driving Morose to distraction. A noisy dinner party from a neighboring house, with drums and trumpets and a quarreling man and wife, is skillfully guided in at this moment to celebrate the wedding. Morose flees for his life, and is found perched like a monkey on a crossbeam in the attic, with all his nightcaps tied over his ears. He seeks a divorce, but is driven frantic by the loud arguments of a lawyer and a divine, who are no other than Cutbeard and a sea captain disguised. When Morose is past all hope the nephew offers to release him from his wife and her noisy friends if he will allow him five hundred pounds a year. Morose offers him anything, everything, to escape his torment, and signs a deed to that effect. Then comes the surprise of the play when Eugenie whips the wig from Epicene and shows a boy in disguise.

It will be seen that the *Silent Woman*, with its rapid action and its unexpected situations, offers an excellent opportunity for the actors; but the reading of the play, as of most of Jonson's comedies, is marred by low intrigues showing a sad state of morals among the upper classes.

Besides these, and many other less known comedies, Jonson wrote two great tragedies, *Sejanus* (1603) and *Catiline* (1611), upon severe classical lines. After ceasing his work for the stage, Jonson wrote many masques in honor of James I and of Queen Anne, to be played amid elaborate scenery by the gentlemen of the court. The best of these are "The Satyr," "The Penates," "Masque of Blackness," "Masque of Beauty," "Hue and Cry after Cupid," and "The Masque of Queens." In all his plays Jonson showed a strong lyric gift, and some of his little poems and songs, like "The Triumph of Charis," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," and "To the Memory of my Beloved Mother," are now better known than his great dramatic works. A single volume of prose, called *Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter*, is an interesting collection of short essays which are more like Bacon's than any other work of the age.

Beaumont and Fletcher. The work of these two men is so closely interwoven that, though Fletcher outlived Beaumont by nine years and the latter had no hand in some forty of the plays that bear their joint names, we still class them together, and only scholars attempt to separate their works so as to give each writer his due share. Unlike most of the Elizabethan dramatists, they both came from noble and cultured families and were university trained. Their work, in strong contrast with Jonson's, is intensely romantic, and in it all, however coarse or brutal the scene, there is still, as Emerson pointed out, the subtle "recognition of gentility."

Beaumont (1584-1616) was the brother of Sir John Beaumont of Leicestershire. From Oxford he came to London to study law, but soon gave it up to write for the stage. Fletcher (1579-1625) was the son of the bishop of London, and shows in all his work the influence of his high social position and of his Cambridge education. The two dramatists met at the Mermaid tavern under Ben Jonson's leadership and soon became inseparable friends, living and working together. Tradition has it that Beaumont supplied the judgment and the solid work of the play, while Fletcher furnished the high-colored sentiment and the lyric poetry, without which an Elizabethan play would have been incomplete. Of their joint plays, the two best known are *Philaster*, whose old theme, like that of *Cymbeline* and *Griselda*, is the jealousy of a lover and the faithfulness of a girl, and *The Maid's Tragedy*. Concerning Fletcher's work the most interesting literary question is how much did he write of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, and how much did Shakespeare help him in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

John Webster. Of Webster's personal history we know nothing except that he was well known as a dramatist under James I. His extraordinary powers of expression rank him with Shakespeare; but his talent seems to have been largely devoted to the blood-and-thunder play begun by Marlowe.

His two best known plays are *The White Devil* (pub. 1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (pub. 1623). The latter, spite of its horrors, ranks him as one of the greatest masters of English tragedy. It must be remembered that he sought in this play to reproduce the Italian life of the sixteenth century, and for this no imaginary horrors are needed. The history of any Italian court or city in this period furnishes more vice and violence and dishonor than even the gloomy imagination of Webster could conceive. All the so-called blood tragedies of the Elizabethan period, from Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* down, however much they may condemn the brutal taste of the English audiences, are still only so many search lights thrown upon a history of horrible-darkness.

Thomas Middleton (1570?-1627). Middleton is best known by two great plays, *The Changeling*¹ and *Women Beware Women*. In poetry and diction they are almost worthy at times to rank with Shakespeare's plays; otherwise, in their sensationalism and unnaturalness they do violence to the moral sense and are repulsive to the modern reader. Two earlier plays, *A Trick to catch the Old One*, his best comedy, and *A Fair Quarrel*, his earliest tragedy, are less mature in thought and expression, but more readable, because they seem to express Middleton's own idea of the drama rather than that of the corrupt court and playwrights of his later age.

Thomas Heywood (1580?-1650?). Heywood's life, of which we know little in detail, covers the whole period of the Elizabethan drama. To the glory of that drama he contributed, according to his own statement, the greater part, at least, of nearly two hundred and twenty plays. It was an enormous amount of work; but he seems to have been animated by the modern literary spirit of following the best market and striking while the financial iron is hot. Naturally

¹In this and in *A Fair Quarrel* Middleton collaborated with William Rowley, of whom little is known except that he was an actor from c. 1607-1627.

good work was impossible, even to genius, under such circumstances, and few of his plays are now known. The two best, if the reader would obtain his own idea of Heywood's undoubted ability, are *A Woman killed with Kindness*, a pathetic story of domestic life, and *The Fair Maid of the West*, a melodrama with plenty of fighting of the popular kind.

Thomas Dekker (1570-?). Dekker is in pleasing contrast with most of the dramatists of the time. All we know of him must be inferred from his works, which show a happy and sunny nature, pleasant and good to meet. The reader will find the best expression of Dekker's personality and erratic genius in *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, a humorous study of plain working people, and *Old Fortunatus*, a fairy drama of the wishing hat and no end of money. Whether intended for children or not, it had the effect of charming the elders far more than the young people, and the play became immensely popular.

Massinger, Ford, Shirley. These three men mark the end of the Elizabethan drama. Their work, done largely while the struggle was on between the actors and the corrupt court, on one side, and the Puritans on the other, shows a deliberate turning away not only from Puritan standards but from the high ideals of their own art to pander to the corrupt taste of the upper classes.

Philip Massinger (1584-1640) was a dramatic poet of great natural ability; but his plots and situations are usually so strained and artificial that the modern reader finds no interest in them. In his best comedy, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, he achieved great popularity and gave us one figure, Sir Giles Overreach, which is one of the typical characters of the English stage. His best plays are *The Great Duke of Florence*, *The Virgin Martyr*, and *The Maid of Honour*.

John Ford (1586-1642?) and James Shirley (1596-1666) have left us little of permanent literary value, and their works

are read only by those who wish to understand the whole rise and fall of the drama. An occasional scene in Ford's plays is as strong as anything that the Elizabethan Age produced; but as a whole the plays are unnatural and tiresome. Probably his best play is *The Broken Heart* (1633). Shirley was given to imitation of his predecessors, and his very imitation is characteristic of an age which had lost its inspiration. A single play, *Hyde Park*, with its frivolous, realistic dialogue, is sometimes read for its reflection of the fashionable gossip talk of the day. Long before Shirley's death the actors said, "Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone." Parliament voted to close the theaters, thereby saving the drama from a more inglorious death by dissipation.¹

VI. THE PROSE WRITERS

FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626)

In Bacon we see one of those complex and contradictory natures which are the despair of the biographer. If the writer be an admirer of Bacon, he finds too much that he must excuse or pass over in silence; and if he takes his stand on the law to condemn the avarice and dishonesty of his subject, he finds enough moral courage and nobility to make him question the justice of his own judgment. On the one hand is rugged Ben Jonson's tribute to his power and ability, and on the other Hallam's summary that he was "a man who, being intrusted with the highest gifts of Heaven, habitually abused them for the poorest purposes of earth—hired them out for guineas, places, and titles in the service of injustice, covetousness, and oppression."

Laying aside the opinions of others, and relying only upon the facts of Bacon's life, we find on the one side the politician, cold, calculating, selfish, and on the other the literary and

¹ The reader will find wholesome criticism of these writers, and selections from their works, in Charles Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, an excellent book, which helps us to a better knowledge and appreciation of the lesser Elizabethan dramatists.

scientific man with an impressive devotion to truth for its own great sake; here a man using questionable means to advance his own interests, and there a man seeking with zeal and endless labor to penetrate the secret ways of Nature, with no other object than to advance the interests of his fellow-men. So, in our ignorance of the secret motives and springs of the man's life, judgment is necessarily suspended. Bacon was apparently one of those double natures that only God is competent to judge, because of the strange mixture of intellectual strength and moral weakness that is in them.

Life. Bacon was the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Seal, and of the learned Ann Cook, sister-in-law to Lord Burleigh, greatest of the queen's statesmen. From these connections, as well as from native gifts, he was attracted to the court, and as a child was called by Elizabeth her "Little Lord Keeper." At twelve he went to Cambridge, but left the university after two years, declaring the whole plan of education to be radically wrong, and the system of Aristotle, which was the basis of all philosophy in those days, to be a childish delusion, since in the course of centuries it had "produced no fruit, but only a jungle of dry and useless branches." Strange, even for a sophomore of fourteen, thus to condemn the whole system of the universities; but such was the boy, and the system! Next year, in order to continue his education, he accompanied the English ambassador to France, where he is said to have busied himself chiefly with the practical studies of statistics and diplomacy.

Two years later he was recalled to London by the death of his father. Without money, and naturally with expensive tastes, he applied to his Uncle Burleigh for a lucrative position. It was in this application that he used the expression, so characteristic of the Elizabethan Age, that he "had taken all knowledge for his province." Burleigh, who misjudged him as a dreamer and self-seeker, not only refused to help him at the court but successfully opposed his advancement by Elizabeth. Bacon then took up the study of law, and was admitted to the bar in 1582. That he had not lost his philosophy in the mazes of the law is shown by his tract, written about this time, "On the Greatest Birth of Time," which was a plea for his inductive system of philosophy, reasoning from many facts to one law, rather than from an assumed law to particular facts,

which was the deductive method that had been in use for centuries. In his famous plea for progress Bacon demanded three things: the free investigation of nature, the discovery of facts instead of theories, and the verification of results by experiment rather than by argument. In our day these are the A, B, C of science, but in Bacon's time they seemed revolutionary.

As a lawyer he became immediately successful; his knowledge and power of pleading became widely known, and it was almost at the beginning of his career that Jonson wrote, "The fear of every one that heard him speak was that he should make an end." The publication of his *Essays* added greatly to his fame; but Bacon was not content. His head was buzzing with huge schemes,—the pacification of unhappy Ireland, the simplification of English law, the reform of the church, the study of nature, the establishment of a new philosophy. Meanwhile, sad to say, he played the game of politics for his personal advantage. He devoted himself to Essex, the young and dangerous favorite of the queen, won his friendship, and then used him skillfully to better his own position. When the earl was tried for treason it was partly, at least, through Bacon's efforts that he was convicted and beheaded; and though Bacon claims to have been actuated by a high sense of justice, we are not convinced that he understood either justice or friendship in appearing as queen's counsel against the man who had befriended him. His cold-bloodedness and lack of moral sensitiveness appear even in his essays on "Love" and "Friendship." Indeed, we can understand his life only upon the theory that his intellectuality left him cold and dead to the higher sentiments of our humanity.

During Elizabeth's reign Bacon had sought repeatedly for high office, but had been blocked by Burleigh and perhaps also by the queen's own shrewdness in judging men. With the advent of James I (1603) Bacon devoted himself to the new ruler and rose rapidly in favor. He was knighted, and soon afterwards attained another object of his ambition in marrying a rich wife. The appearance of his great work, the *Advancement of Learning*, in 1605, was largely the result of the mental stimulus produced by his change in fortune. In 1613 he was made attorney-general, and speedily made enemies by using the office to increase his personal ends. He justified himself in his course by his devotion to the king's cause, and by the belief that the higher his position and the more ample his means the more he could do for science. It was

in this year that Bacon wrote his series of *State Papers*, which show a marvelous grasp of the political tendencies of his age. Had his advice been followed, it would have certainly averted the struggle between king and parliament that followed speedily. In 1617 he was appointed to his father's office, Lord Keeper of the Seal, and the next year to the high office of Lord Chancellor. With this office he received the title of Baron Verulam, and later of Viscount St. Alban, which he affixed with some vanity to his literary work. Two years later appeared his greatest work, the *Novum Organum*, called after Aristotle's famous *Organon*.

Bacon did not long enjoy his political honors. The storm which had been long gathering against James's government broke suddenly upon Bacon's head. When Parliament assembled in 1621 it vented its distrust of James and his favorite Villiers by striking unexpectedly at their chief adviser. Bacon was sternly accused of accepting bribes, and the evidence was so great that he confessed that there was much political corruption abroad in the land, that he was personally guilty of some of it, and he threw himself upon the mercy of his judges. Parliament at that time was in no mood for mercy. Bacon was deprived of his office and was sentenced to pay the enormous fine of 40,000 pounds, to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure, and thereafter to be banished forever from Parliament and court. "Though the imprisonment lasted only a few days and the fine was largely remitted, Bacon's hopes and schemes for political honors were ended; and it is at this point of appalling adversity that the nobility in the man's nature asserts itself strongly. If the reader be interested to apply a great man's philosophy to his own life, he will find the essay, "Of Great Place," most interesting in this connection.

Bacon now withdrew permanently from public life, and devoted his splendid ability to literary and scientific work. He completed the *Essays*, experimented largely, wrote history, scientific articles, and one scientific novel, and made additions to his *Instauratio Magna*, the great philosophical work which was never finished. In the spring of 1626, while driving in a snowstorm, it occurred to him that snow might be used as a preservative instead of salt. True to his own method of arriving at truth, he stopped at the first house, bought a fowl, and proceeded to test his theory. The experiment chilled him, and he died soon after from the effects of his exposure. As Macaulay wrote, "the great apostle of experimental philosophy was destined to be its martyr."