Jacobean Dramatists
Critical Heritage Set

Edited by
B.C. Southam
Christopher Marlowe

Edited by
Millar MacLure

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The Critical Heritage series collects together a large body of criticism on major figures in literature. Each volume presents the contemporary responses to a particular writer, enabling the student to follow the formation of critical attitudes to the writer's work and its place within a literary tradition.

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CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE
THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

Edited by
MILLAR MacLURE

London and New York
The reception given to a writer by his contemporaries and near-
contemporaries is evidence of considerable value to the student of
literature. On one side we learn a great deal about the state of criticism
at large and in particular about the development of critical attitudes
towards a single writer; at the same time, through private comments
in letters, journals or marginalia, we gain an insight upon the tastes
and literary thought of individual readers of the period. Evidence of
this kind helps us to understand the writer’s historical situation, the
nature of his immediate reading-public, and his response to these
pressures.

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of this early criticism. Clearly, for many of the highly productive and
lengthily reviewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, there
exists an enormous body of material; and in these cases the volume
editors have made a selection of the most important views, significant
for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality—
perhaps even registering incomprehension!

For earlier writers, notably pre-eighteenth century, the materials
are much scarcer and the historical period has been extended, sometimes
far beyond the writer’s lifetime, in order to show the inception and
growth of critical views which were initially slow to appear.

In each volume the documents are headed by an Introduction, dis-
cussing the material assembled and relating the early stages of the
author’s reception to what we have come to identify as the critical
tradition. The volumes will make available much material which
would otherwise be difficult of access and it is hoped that the modern
reader will be thereby helped towards an informed understanding of
the ways in which literature has been read and judged.

B.C.S.
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Acknowledgments

This account of Marlowe's reputation and achievements, extending over three centuries, is inevitably indebted to S. A. Tannenbaum, 'Marlowe: a Concise Bibliography' (New York, 1937) and its 'Supplement' (New York, 1947); to C. F. Tucker Brooke, 'The Life of Marlowe' (1930); F. S. Boas, 'Christopher Marlowe: A Biographical and Critical Study' (Oxford, 1940; reprinted 1964). Other obligations to Marlowe scholarship are indicated in the notes to the Introduction and in the headnotes to the selections from biography and criticism.

The editor and publishers gratefully acknowledge permission to reproduce copyright material as follows: Ernest Benn for No. 49; Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, for Nos 41 and 48; and The Society of Authors on behalf of the Bernard Shaw Estate for No. 56.

The initial collection and arrangement of documents for this book was done during a leave of absence (1972-3) from my College, assisted by a grant from the Canada Council. Julia Keeler not only found much of the material, but prepared a valuable bibliography of Marlowe criticism beyond what is reproduced here. I am most grateful to the General Editor of the series, and to Routledge & Kegan Paul, who have been most helpful in the revival and repair of a collection which I hope will be useful to students of Elizabethan drama and nineteenth-century literary journalism.
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Introduction

This is not a Marlowe 'allusion-book', though it begins with allusions and some non-literary documents. These, however well-known from frequent reproduction, are necessary to establish the sources of the Marlowe stereotype upon which so much of the critical comment depends, down to the beginning of our own century, and beyond that; the general pattern of the Marlowe tradition is clear: a mixed bag of contemporary and early seventeenth-century references to a powerful personality, a brief and brilliant literary career, and a melodramatic death; then, after the Restoration, a virtual eclipse both of facts and opinions about him; the gradual recovery of the texts of his work and the nature of his milieu by eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century bibliographers and antiquaries; the enthusiasm of some Romantic critics and their followers; the extensive editorial and critical tributes of some Victorian men of letters and their successors; finally, by a collaboration of twentieth-century scholarship and the development of fresh critical assumptions, the emergence in the learned journals of what can only be called the Marlowe industry.

The present collection is intended to carry the reader barely to the threshold of this last phase; it begins with the malignant taunts of Robert Greene and the adulatory remarks of Marlowe's friends and literary associates, and ends with the abrasive comments of the younger G. B. Shaw and the rhapsodies of Swinburne. For the twelfth-century flowering of the critical heritage, one may look to one important anthology, 'Cambrist', (first published in 1897) and (1) the Oxford Shakespeare...
Introduction

The literary world of London in the last decade of the sixteenth century was a small world, focused on the ambitions of theatrical managers and the profits of stationers, in a society run by an established aristocracy, by wealth and by privilege, not by rationality and not always reliable patronage. It was into this "fringe" society that Marlowe, who had read divinity at Cambridge on an Archbishop Parker scholarship, and had got his M.A. by special intervention of the Queen's Council (apparently assured that he had been valuable as a secret agent on the Continent), emerged suddenly (1587?) with his "Tamburlaine", Edward Alleyn in the starring role. And the first important response to this event (so far as we know) came from Robert Greene, Cambridge scholar, playwright, pamphleteer, capable from the beginning of melodramatic exploitation of his own powers and afflictions — though we have to take issue with him and others, the fact that training in rhetoric could make a minor irritation into a major attack, or a passing approval into panegyric. Understanding this current idiom helps us to keep in some perspective most of the contemporary references to Marlowe.

"Perimedes the Blacksmith" (1588), a gallimaufry of tales and moral precepts, would be forgotten except by specialists, were it not for the significant reference to Marlowe in the preface "To the Gentlemen readers" (No. Ia). Greene's envy of Marlowe's "bragging blank verse" is here a left-handed tribute to the immediate success of "Tamburlaine", supported, in this mess of oblique allusions, by the pun in "Merlin's race", for "Marlin" was the form in which Marlowe's name had most frequent occurrence, especially at Cambridge. Here also is the implicit (later explicit) identification of Marlowe's personality and opinions with those of his protagonists, and the charge of 'atheism': atheists, blasphemers and 'epicures' being, not technical terms, but words of abuse for all iconoclasts, loose livers, unorthodox thinkers and, generally, dangerous men. Greene's last message to the "University Wits", his address "to those Gentleman his Quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plays" in his "Groatsworth of Wit" (1592), is notorious for its attack on Shakespeare as "the onely Shake-scene in a countrey"; the address to Marlowe (No. Ib), with its obvious reference to the Machiavelli Prologue to "The Jew of Malta", merely reinforces,...
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with that histrionic sorrow which overcome him in his last days, what he had written before, with the added tribute
which he had to give to success. When Henry Chettle edited
this for the press, he was very touchy about Marlowe, while
warm to Shakespeare, yet he did pay tribute to Marlowe's
learning – a theme repeated by others, as we shall see
(No. 2).

This was written late in 1592. On 30 May 1593, Marlowe
was killed at Deptford, and this event, because of the
mysterious circumstances and the man's reputation, was the
subject of ill-informed and heavily moralized comment,
which in time became a "mirror" for journalists and a
staple of journalism. And Marlowe's ghost began at once
to haunt the notorious Thomas Nashe - Gabriel Harvey con-
troversy, which began as the sixteenth-century counterpart
of a "TLS" correspondence, and ended in pointless scurri-
licity. This is no place to rehearse the course of that
exhilarating exchange, which ended with the burning, in
June 1599, by episcopal authority, of some scurrilous and
libelous publications, including Marlowe's translation of
Ovid's "Amores" with the "Epigrams" of Sir John Davies, but
some things come out which are worth notice. We can be
reasonably sure that Nashe wrote an elegy on Marlowe, pre-
fixed to a lost copy of 'The Tragedy of Dido' (1594), (2)
also that his often-quoted attack on 'ideot Art-masters'
who 'think to out-brave better pens with the swelling bum-
bast of bragging blank verse' in his preface to Greene's
'Menaphon' (1589) is not an attack on Marlowe but on
'dramatic writing generally' (as his great editor McKerrow
puts it). We have his word, in 'Have with You To Saffron-
Walden' (1596): 'I never abusd Marloe, Greene, Chettle
in my life, nor one of my friends that used me like a frend',
and, as we shall see, he paid an especially eloquent and
subtle tribute to Marlowe in a fine phrase. In the second
issue of 'Christ's Teares over Ierusalem' (1594), he noted
that Harvey had 'most notoriously & vilely dealt' with
'Maister Lillie, poore deceased Kit Marlow' and others:
the reference is to Harvey's 'A New Letter of Notable
Contents', published in late 1593, in which Harvey refers
to Marlowe as 'a Lucian' and, in a set of daggered verses
at the end, seems to suggest that Marlowe died of the
plague (No. 6).

From Harvey's noisy slights allusions the worse better
in later, one notes with grim relief in the most influen-
tial of the early contributions to the Marlowe legend, the
Puritan Thomas Beard's 'The Theatre of Gods Iudgements'
(1597). Beard's comments were repeated, paraphrased, illi-
quated, not so much about the particular (and inaccurate)
account of Marlowe's death, as for putting him in his
place, so to speak, in the scheme of God's providence and punishments, a pattern that the nineteenth-century critics could either accept or deny, depending on their way of thinking about the Elizabethan age, and what they knew about it. Beard's book was a translation-compilation of exempla, and in his chapter Of Epicures and Atheists he added to continental mirrors of iniquity - for example, Pope Julius II, Rabelais and Jodelle - Marlowe (No. 8). Francis Meres and William Vaughan added their invective (Nos 3, 4). And there is an obvious reference in the chronicle William Marston (No. 9). Beard's account, which achieved several editions, is based on contemporary gossip about Marlowe's atheism. Thomas Kyd's confessions to the Lord Keeper, Sir John Puckering, and Richard Baines's Notes, which are here placed synchronologically among contemporary allusions to Marlowe, were not public documents (Nos 3, 4). Baines was often referred to as 'Bame', by a false transcription, and was first published by Joseph Ritson in 1782 (see below). (3) The first was written in fear, the second in politic malice. But there is no reason to suppose that Marlowe did not say something of what they said he did: he was a Deist before Deism, a Higher Critic before the Higher Criticism, all this apart from incidental blasphemy, uttered in drink, perhaps, or just to shock. He was a pretty rough character, to tell the truth. But it is now proper to turn to the testimonies of other contemporaries and successors who professed letters: publishers, fellow dramatists, custodians of the house of fame.

The only work of Marlowe published in his lifetime, the two parts of Tamburlaine (1590), was prefaced by an address 'To the Gentlemen Readers' by the printer Richard Jones, in which he explains that he has left out 'some fond and friuolous lestures ... far unmeet for the matter' used on the stage but not fitting for 'the eloquence of the Authour'. Marlowe's name did not appear on the title page, but the authorship was no secret. The tribute to learning, to eloquentia, comes out, with reservations or not, time and again. For example, in George Peele's Testament of Cresseid (1599), 'hath the orator been of the futter? ... to Bacchus or the Venus ... a minstrel of the Authour'. Then there is the testimonies of other contemporaries who professed letters: publishers, fellow dramatists, custodians of the house of fame.

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George Chapman, as one of the triad of 'makers', the others being Homer and Orpheus. Chapman's characteristically solemn and powerful gesture in Marlowe's direction, early in his completion of 'Hero and Leander' (No. 11), supports this; so does the epigrammatic verdict of the Cambridge scholars, with their 'wit's less from heaven' and its hellish counterpart (No. 13); even the casual bumbling of Henry Petowe, one of the most minor of minor versifiers, who attempted a continuation of 'Hero and Leander', in a pseudo-Italianate manner in 1598, pays tribute to an 'admired Poet'.(6) The whole tradition is summed up in the often-quoted verses of Michael Drayton, written before 1627 (No. 15).

Marlowe's words were all air and fire; the baser elements were left to his enemies, though he had friends too, notable among them the printer Edward Blunt (No. 10); and Thomas Thorpe, the publisher of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets', dedicates to Blunt Marlowe's translation of the first book of Lucan's 'Civil Wars', in 1600, refers to "that pure elemental wit" whose memory was good for both friends and stationers.(7)

It is impossible here to reproduce or even refer to many of the great number of allusions, incidental tributes, and parodies, which were collected by Tucker Brooke from the period before the closing of the theatres in 1642.(8) Some are especially significant, and a majority have to do with 'Hero and Leander' and 'Tamburlaine', both treasuries of familiar quotations.

No one matched the condensed allusiveness of Shakespeare, in whose shadow, for later generations, Marlowe was eclipsed. When, in III, iii of 'As You Like It' (1598), Touchstone says: "When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room", he manages to get into a few words, with the help of a mention of "the most capricious poet, honest Ovid ... among the Goths" just before, not only references to Marlowe's translation of Ovid's "Amores", and to the most famous line from the first scene of 'The Jew of Malta', but, apparently, to the actual wording of the Queen's coroner's verdict on Marlowe's death, in a quarrel over "le recknynge", discovered for us by Professor Hotson in 1925. (9)

When he was writing 'As You Like It', Shakespeare certainly had 'Hero and Leander' in his mind, for Philip Sidney's phrase "Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, 'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight'"
The Passionate Shepherd was the most popular song of the time, "that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago," says Izaak Walton in 'The Compleat Angler' (1653, 1655). Parody and burlesque, from whatever motives directed, are tributes to the power of the original words. All depend on recognition. They are also reductive, because they separate the most popular and exposed parts from the total composition. So (to quote with 'As You Like It'), Rosalind says gaily that Leander 'being taken with the cramp was drown'd' and adds the final anti-romantic sentiment: 'Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love' (IV. i. 99-103). Jonson makes 'Hero and Leander' the subject of a prelude in 'Every Man in His Humour' (1598, IV. i), but in the prelude to the parody in 'Bartholomew Fair' (1614), as in the report of his remarks about Marlowe in the preface to 'The Chast and Lost Lovers' (1651) - 'examples fitter for admiration than for parallel' - we find one side of his balanced judgment on Marlowe and his influence, as we find the other in his well-known comment on the "bathumaisian style" in his 'Fibber' (IV. i), and, perhaps, in his competitive translation of Ovid's "Amores," I, vi, incorporated in 'The Poetaster' (1601). 

The famous phrase, "Marlowe's mighty line," is a generous dismissal from the presence chamber of the immortals. 'Hero and Leander' (seven editions, 1606-37) was a bedside book, though its popularity owed nothing to Chapman's completion of 'that partly excellent Poem of Master Marloes', as he called it in his preface to his translation of Musaeus (1616). One of Thomas Middleton's topical characters refers to it, with 'Venus and Adonis', as 'two luscious marrow-bone pies for a young married wife'. But the stage is not familiar but public, and the countless reminiscences of striking lines and scenes from the plays, during this period, testify not only to the memorability of Marlowe's verse, but to the power of a style in the public theatres, a style which inflates the purple passage or the scene-concluding couplet, where the comic exchanges are conducted unintelligibly full-voice with horseplay and special effects (as in 'Doctor Faustus'), and the narrative and descriptive parts are done at speed. Edward Alleyn is not dead yet. But when Thomas Heywood revived 'The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta' at Court and the Cockpit in 1632, having apparently tempered a bit with whatever text he had, in his rather elaborate preface he felt obliged to divide the honours between the learned poet and the actor, who forty years before had held the stage (No. 17). The 'high astounding
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Terms of Tamburlaine, when badly imitated, could slide all too easily into rant, starred with half-cap terms and thundering threats. In the words of Joseph Hall's satiric description, and offered a generous invitation to parody. Subject in his rage, Tamburlaine drawn to the 'pampered jades of Asia', were favourite episodes for such treatment.

Apart from very numerous echoes and imitations of conspicuous passages, such as the apostrophe to Helen, 'Doctor Faustus' made the greatest noise with its Devils and such like Tragical sport. For example John Melton, in 'The Astrologaster' (1620), tells how 'staggert' Deuills runn roaring over the Stage with Squibs in theire mouthes, while Drummers make Thunder in the Tyring-house', and William Prynne reports a horrific legend of a particular performance, also caused in Kempey, where the play was running for two nights, which ended up in such a bloodbath, that in the meantime, on account of the noisy turbulence, it is notable that there seeme to be little or no reference to the central tragedy of the play; rather Faustus and Mephistophilis, like Barabas in 'The Jew of Malta', become stock types unconnected with their creator. This did not happen with 'Hamlet', 'Romeo', or 'The Massacre at Paris', presumably because they did not write such a theatrical novely, at least not after the 1580s.

11 (1660-1781)

It may seem that I have given a disproportionate amount of attention to these bits and pieces; none of these critical errors or professions of ignorance, clichés of biography, and snap judgments which make poor reading. Like others who have considered this break in the Marlowe tradition (notably Tucker Brooke and Boas), I have no
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An easy explanation for this virtual eclipse. Some obvious reasons come to mind: the re-establishment of the London theatres under different managerial arrangements, with different audiences and partly different theatrical traditions; the influence of the Puritan calumnies; the scarcity of texts which confined them to the casual interest of collectors and the curiosity of antiquaries, and helped to make Marlowe a 'shaker dramatist', and, above all, an assumption of 'period', of the remoteness of everybody but Shakespeare. Marlowe was of an age, and often lost even to that.

Any survey of Marlowe's fate in the Restoration period must begin with Samuel Pepys's account, when he went with his wife to the Red Bull on 26 May 1662, and they saw 'Doctor Faustus' so wretchedly and poorly done, that we were sick of it'. This was the version printed in 1663, much mutilated. The 'The Jew of Malta', acted at Dorset Garden c. 1686 (1697). When Charles Henderson published his 'Tamerlane the Great', as it is acted by their Majesties' Servants at the Theatre Royal in 1681, a play which he claimed had 'received some rules of correction from Mr. Dryden himself', he affirmed against some capricious critics: (15)

I never heard of any Play on the same Subject, until my own was acted, though it hath been told me, there is a Cock Pit Play, going under the name of 'Tamberlain the Great', or 'Tamberlane the Great', which how good it is, anyone may judge by its obscurity.... I drew the design of this Play, from a late Novell, call'd 'Tamerlane and Asteria'.

The silence on the stage was echoed from the study. Marlowe does not appear in Thomas Fuller's 'Worthies of England' (1662), and he is not mentioned by Dryden, of all people. (It is perhaps proper to mention in this place the confusing disappearances of Marlowe among the literary journals: in an unsigned notice in the 'Monthly Review' (September-December 1820), until, 59-67) Marlowe appears as 'a borrowed designation of the great Shakespeare' and his 'Tamerlane and Astrea' becomes 'Tamerlane and Tamerlane'. The compilers of literary history after the Restoration are sparse, uncertain, and tend naturally to repeat the mistakes and emphases of their predecessors. So Edward Phillips (No. 19), when he finds itself often in biographical
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Dictionaries and the like, partly no doubt because of the tradition that his uncle, John Milton, had a hand in his early education. A contemporary account of his life by John Fordham of Souham (No. 22) suggests that Marlowe was a poet as well as a playwright. He was one of the earliest to be included in anthologies by Gerard Langbaine (No. 21); as Anthony a Wood, with some flourish (No. 22). The canon was uncertain: 'Tamburlaine' was excluded by Phillips and then restored; 'Lust's Dominion' keeps cropping up. The dates of birth and death were either vague or altogether mistaken: for example, the antiquary William Oldys, in his marginalia on a copy of Langbaine, writes, incredibly, that Marlowe 'was born about the former part of Edwd. VI', and John Aubrey jotted down in his notes on Ben Jonson that he had it from Sir Ed. Shirburn that Jonson killed 'Marlow ye Poet on Bunhill, coming from the Green-curtain playhouse'. Marlowe meant so little that he could be confused with Gabriel Spencer.

Robert Dodsley published his first 'Selection of Old Plays', including 'Edward II', a series which continued to go under his name; the prefatory material adds nothing new: Marlowe was actor as well as poet; Beard and the 'Return from Parnassus' are quoted, 'Lust's Dominion' is in the canon (116-17). Tuckers Brooke makes this as the beginning of the rediscovery of Marlowe, with 'The Jew of Malta' in the second edition of 1780. But the catalogues continue to reproduce the old stuff: 'The Poetical Register' (1723) has nothing to add to Phillips; nor has 'A Compleat List of all the English Dramatic Poets' (1747); W. R. Chetwood, in his 'General History of the Stage' (1758), believes that Marlowe wrote the preface to 'The Jew of Malta' at the Cockpit in 1631. Chetwood was for the first time to quote Petowe as the continuator of 'Hero and Leander', without any mention of Chapman (so Bishop Tanner in his 'Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica' of 1748), provide no new information save for one fragment of opinion: 'Posterity will hardly believe, that there was ever a time when free-thinking was deemed criminal.' Chetwood also produced or copied a forged letter from George Peele, which could never have managed publication in a better informed time.(16) Dr John Johnson's famous 'Preface to his Edition of Shakespeare's Plays' (1765), though it does not mention...
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Marlowe reflects current opinion in a memorable way: (17)

This however is certain that [Shakespeare] is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older author, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

Elsewhere in the "Preface" he speaks of the barbarity of that age: "The publick was gross and dark.... Marlowe is secure from censorious approbation in whose welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity." And he notes that "other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or agregated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity." This could serve as a representative pre-Romantic comment on Marlowe.

Thomas Warton's discussion of Marlowe in his "History of English Poetry" (1740-48, No. 24) is a convenient landmark; even his inaccuracies and snap judgments provided starting-points for other scholars, and his estimating comment on Marlowe's character provoked Joseph Ritson to publish the Baines "Note" (No. 23).

Ill (1782-1896)

Of the great Shakespearean scholars of the late eighteenth century who did so much to collect, preserve and annotate Elizabethan literary texts (for example, Reed, Steevens and Malone) Edmund Malone (1741-1812), friend of Johnson and Reynolds and editor of Shakespeare (1790), who did most for Marlowe. He made up a volume of the works by putting together early editions of individual pieces, supplemented by manuscript transcriptions where the originals were not available, and adding valuable and interesting marginalia and annotations. This book, which is now in the Bodleian Library (Mai. 133), cost him five guineas, including the binding. In his notes he disposes of the legend that Marlowe was an actor, gets the birth date right within a year, transcribes the Baines libel in full, cites the usual authorities and contemporary testimonies. But he made mistakes; he included "Lust's Dominion" (1657) in the canon and, by a misinterpretation of two ambiguous documents, attributed "Tamburlaine" first to Nashe, and later to Nicholas Breton. (18) Malone dealt with facts and objects rather than speculations, but his sensibility was refined, so that he can write of "Hero and Leander" that "many of the lines remind one of Dryden".
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The reprinting of reprints of Marlowe's plays and poems in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was not generally accompanied by much advancement in bibliographical investigation or inventive criticism. The painful discoveries and speculations could not be exploited by popular compilers, among whom there is nothing worth mentioning between D. E. Baker's *Biographica Dramatica* (2nd ed., 1782) and the first collected edition of 1826, edited by one George Robinson, full of 'the grossest errors' (Dyce) and valuable to us for the MS. notes of James Broughton (in the British Museum copy; for Broughton, see below), though Robinson used Malone's notes, did not accept 'Ivan's Denial', and summed up the early allusions with a slice antithesis: Marlowe was 'the favorite of the learned and witty, and the horror of the precise and religious'. Nor were the reprints received with constant approbation of their quality. A reviewer of the republication of *The Jew of Malta* in the series 'The Ancient British Drama' (1, 1810) cannot see any obvious reason for it: (20)

'It is one of the most extravagant of the old plays in plot and conduct: though as to conduct indeed there is none in it, -- for events of the utmost consequence ... follow one another even without the division of acts ... and whatever abstract section besides there may be, were thought of dramatic accommodation, are here drag-ged neck and heels into the service of the stage.

The editor of *Doctor Faustus*, C. W. Dilke (in his *Old English Plays* [1814, I, 8-9]), is apologetic: 'This singular evidence of "the credulous ignorance" which then prevailed, is by no means a favourable specimen of the plays to be submitted to the public in this work.' Henry Maitland found the play 'exceedingly imperfect and disproportioned' while recognizing its lofty and magnificent passages; he thought 'Edward II' has 'more propriety.

Francis Jeffrey compared 'Faustus' unfavourably with Byron's *Manfred*:

There is nothing to be found in *Faustus* of the pride, the abstraction, the heartrooted misery in which that originality consists.... In style, too, of Marlowe, though elegant and scholarlike, is weak and childish compared with the depth and force of much of what we have quoted from Lord Byron.

Byron himself wrote to John Murray: 'As to the "Faustus" of Marlowe, I never read, never saw, nor heard of it...... I deplore Marlowe and his progeny.' (21)
There is persistent evidence of ignorance and incomprehension, for example in an article on Marlowe and his principal writings in the 'European Magazine' of April-May 1821 (liix, 309-15, 413-18); among his comments the author ('J.T.M.') reproduces the usual 'memoir', interprets Drayton's 'fine madness' as meaning that the author was insane. We may pass over this stuff, and note that even among the most pedantic references to Marlowe during the Romantic period there is an increasing emphasis upon the great poet and the imperfect dramatist, the two in one, the one exalted, the other accommodated to contemporary tastes. The Romantic idea of Marlowe begins to emerge, and even if it does not continue without reservations through the Victorian age, the vocabulary is there, and often repeated, and indeed this way of considering Marlowe is a 'translation' both of the plays and poems and the earlier allusions and judgments into tentative and somewhat oblique description of the progress of literature and the stage. Marlowe ceases to be provincial in time and place, becomes, by way of 'Faustus', European, by way of the cult of the artist, universal.

The incidental comments about 'Doctor Faustus' by Scott ('Christopher Marlowe's "Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus" - a very remarkable thing. Grand subject - and grand') and, later, by Goethe ('I mentioned Marlowe's "Faust". I thought of translating it. I had thought of translating it. I was fully aware that Shakespeare did not stand alone'), though ritually reproduced by most editors, are unhelpful. In the inevitable comparison of Marlowe's and Goethe's treatments of the ancient legend, Marlowe often suffers from his lack of great thoughts, great ideas, sublimity, cloudy abstraction. In retrospect, the tribute of the young Irish poet Thomas Dermody, in his The Pursuit of Patronage, A Poetical Epistle, is perhaps more significant, not only because he exploits the Meres account of Marlowe's end, but because he has some empathy with a lost young poet of another age (No. 26). Charles Lamb's brief comments in his 'Specimens', first published in 1808 (No. 27), were most influential for future estimates of Marlowe; in them, amazement alternates with easy perceptiveness, and, as Lamb was to write later, the selections are 'scenes of passion, sometimes of the deepest quality ... that which is more nearly allied to poetry than to wit, and to tragic rather than to comic poetry ... to illustrate what may be called the moral sense of our ancestors'. This anthologizing of 'purple passages' excludes the stage from the bedside book, and in effect seeks to make contemporary an idiom alien, in its own frame of reference, and so different.
Lamb's brief but pregnant observations were succeeded by others displaying more or less enthusiasm. Sir Egerton Brydges, for example, reprinting 'Hero and Leander' in his *Restituta* (1815), notes 'that fervency of language, that copiousness of natural and beautiful imagery, which breathe the soul of the genuine child of the Muse, bathed in the living waters of the Pierian spring' (ii, 320), and contrasts Marlowe's poems, including the translation of Lucretius, with other productions of that age 'that are only valuable as curiosities'. *Shakespeare and His Times* (1817) by Nathan Drake, MD, 'a religious and truly excellent man', finds Marlowe 'egregiously misled ... by bad models, and his want of taste has condemned him, as a writer for the stage, to an obscurity from which he is not likely to emerge'. Of 'Drummlein', Drake observes 'while a few passages indicate traces of so common order, the residue is a tissue of unmingled rage, absurdity, and fustian' (ii, 245), though he finds *Romance of Rosamond* and *Edward II* (1602) 'true to the death-words, true to the death-name'. William Odber, 'a comedian of no great note', in his prefatory remarks to the edition of 'The Jew of Malta' (1825), writes of Marlowe as 'a genius that is inferior only to Shakespeare', deprecates the poetry of his 'Tamburlaine', and observes that 'his foundation is in the pathless sublime' (i, 145).

Drake's predicted curtain of obscurity for Marlowe's plays was lifted for a short time by Edmund Kean's revival of 'The Jew of Malta' in the spring of 1818, at Drury Lane (No. 28). I have reproduced two reviews and a later account unabridged: any performance of a Marlowe play between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries has a special importance, and the 'Blackwood's' notice in particular confirms our impression of the inevitably ambiguous attitude to Marlowe at that time. Kean and Penley did not take the play as it was; neither did Heywood before them; it is, after all, what we now call a black comedy. The production at Drury Lane in 1825 of George Beere's 'Faustus: A Romantic Drama', recalled by a contributor to *The Cornhill Magazine* (July, 1879) 'as a curious mixture of Marlowe's and Goethe's work, with a strong infusion of Der Freischutz and Don Giovanni', would not deserve our attention, except to note that the Faust subject offered itself from the beginning as an opportunity for the modern
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We have noted the silence of Dryden, to one reader at least inexplicable because Marlowe (like Chapman after him) virtually anticipated the "heroic play", the "silent, almost invisible, and casual reference from Coleridge, who attributed "Titus Andronicus" to Marlowe because it was like "The Jew of Malta", and he was "familiar enough* with Marlowe's *Faustus* and planned a "Faust" of his own.(23) The first of the major critics to write expansively on Marlowe is Hazlitt (No. 29).

Hazlitt had a "quotation-memory", and that sort of recall, like Lamb's, tends to dissociate the "striking parts" from the whole, and so in theatrical, in the sense that a play, like an heroic poem, begins with a plan. He also subscribes to the notion that the Elizabethans were ignorant and barbarous, and that their productions were the fruits of nature and not of art. He presents "the scattered fragments and broken images" of those dramatists with judicial enthusiasm. We must remember that his comments were public, adapted to his audiences; when Thomas Lovell Beddoes wrote of them as ghosts - "the worm is in their pages" - he was expressing the private view that there could be a new Elizabethan, "a bold trampling fellow", that the "God", gentlemen, that's wonderful. Hazlitt's influential description of Marlowe, 'there is a lust of power in his writings, a hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, a glow of the imagination, unhallowed by any thing but its own energies', is no less interesting than his ignoring 'Tamburlaine' and undervaluing 'Edward II'; it is the "fierce glow of passion" which moves him to admiration.

The early Collier (No. 30) is level-headed and simple, like one writing a firm letter of recommendation, but in his "The Poetical Decameron" (Edinburgh, 1805, II, 256) he, like Hazlitt, produced a memorable characterization of Marlowe: "the very Tom Paine of the age of Elizabeth; nothing short of it." Such was the current acater of the Beloved Hero". Men in his "History of English Dramatic Poets" (1st ed., 1806, II, 100) like Dean image the drama of Marlowe's "Tamburlaine", and uses such expressions as "fervid and exalted genius", he anticipates Leigh Hunt's opinion (No. 32) that Marlowe "condescended to write fustian for the court". Condemned to be a "chamber dramatist", Marlowe was left to such fustian epigones as "a boost post" of the first sentiments belong to a school of lecturing on the poets, the "boil gentlemen, that's wonderful" style, of which I
have had some experience. It is not to be despised, nor is R. H. Horne’s “The Death of Marlowe” (1837), which Bullen reprinted in 1885. It is absurd, of course, but what Horne tried to do was to bring together some of those ‘poor, poor dumb names’ that Hazlitt recalled, and make a little story. Marlowe is the protagonist in a play writ-
ten by no one, in the words of the encyclopedist, ‘look
up literature’.

After all this nonsense, we may return to James Broughme, walking in the easy steps of Malone. There was no ‘Times Literary Supplement’ then, with its communi-
tations, and it seems that in spite of ‘Blackwood’s’, the ‘Gentleman’s’, the ‘Edinburgh Review’, the men of letters

shook easily over such information as was gradually
brought to bear upon Marlowe, and not without repetition.

Broughton’s articles in the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ (1830) are concerned to restate and correct the various estimates of Marlowe’s life
and work, and to set the record straight where scholar’s cars, and is the best authority between Malone and Dyce (No. 31). Meanwhile the references to Marlowe
preserved their usual routine: a translation of Schlegel’s ‘A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature’ (1846) reports that Marlowe’s ‘verses are flowing, but
without energy’, a saying remedy, there is little to
interest us in an early American view, Thomas B. Shaw’s ‘Outlines of English Literature’ (Philadelphia, 1858),
except that there Marlowe is called ‘the spokesman of the
English stage’ and one whose life was as ‘wild and irregu-
lar as his genius’. ‘Titus Andronicus’ was for Isaac
Disraeli in his ‘Amenities of Literature’ (1859) ‘evi
dently one of Marlowe’s gigantic pieces’. Robert
Cartwright, in his ‘Footsteps of Shakspere’ (1862),
attributed The Passionate Shepherd to Shakespeare, and
added the interesting note, in the light of the tradition,
that Marlowe’s life was not of dissipation, ‘but that of
an artist devoted to his profession’.

Such compilers and writers of surveys as these operate on a very different level from the scholar-editor.

Alexander Dyce’s edition of the ‘Works’ (1850, 3 vols;
revised ed., 1858) remains an important landmark. As the
extracts from his introduction here reproduced show (No.
33), Dyce made no creative break-through as an interpre-
ter, but he had a passion for the Elizabethan drama — ‘it
became for us the embodiment of that Renaissance which had
given sculpture, painting, architecture and a gorgeous
undergrowth of highly-coloured poetry to the Italians’
(I, xvii) — and for him the work is not in its pages.
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In spite of time and neglect, in spite of the fire of London, in spite of Nutton's too-celebrated code, in spite of named editors and notorious printers' errors, in spite of that of Politically Incorrect authority, we still have at our disposal documents for building up the English drama as a whole (I, xxiii).

In his account of Marlowe's career Dyce clears up some points, for example the firm attribution of 'Tamburlaine' to Marlowe, but follows his predecessors in accepting the tradition that he began as an actor; he prints in an appendix the 'ballad' 'The Atheist's Tragedy', and also a bowdlerized version of the Baines document. It is instructive to compare his information, and his tentative treatment of some of it, with the account of Marlowe in C. H. and F. Cooper, 'Athenae Cantabrigienses' (1861), which sets out to assemble rather than to evaluate the elements of the tradition, and to list works written or ascribed to Marlowe, and the sources of the plays, and the various cases of 'Last's Henriad'.

In 1888, when Edward Dowden's 'Transcripts and Studies' appeared, he noted that his essay on Marlowe (No. 15) had been written 'before the literary cult of Marlowe's genius had become the mode'; it was first published in the 'Fortnightly' in January 1870. Indeed there is much miscellaneous stuff between the editions of Dyce and Bullen (1885), but some of it at least should not be passed over. The 'Faustus' makes the over-tone of comparison between Marlowe and Goethe. On the light side, we have Arthur Houston, Professor of Political Economy at Trinity College, Dublin: 'Any one accustomed to the plot as constructed by Goethe, will sadly miss the sweet face of Marguerite from the group drawn by Marlowe in his "Faustus"...... The play, I think, grows weaker as it proceeds.' (Houston, by the way, excuses the excesses of "Tamburlaine" for the reason that "the principal characters are Eastern barbarians, proverbially prone to the extremes of passion, and addicted to the use of hyperbolical expressions. Marlowe in my opinion has been rather under-rated." G. H. Lewes (No. 36), who finds Marlowe's play, in spite of many significant passages, "musty, vulgar and ill-conceived". This he blames in part on a literal-minded audience — the Renaissance habit of allegory was set of his view. Marlowe, he says, does not give the legend a philosophic treatment. Instead, he tells his tale of the "dark star, of something abstract, a passion or an idea". And it is Buxton who is right. The introductory Notice to Francis
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Cunningham's edition of the "Works" (1870) is completely derivative, but an unsigned review in the "Atlantic Monthly" (September 1870) is both revealing and enigmatic. "His characters are not as much men as types of humanity, the animated mould of human thought and passion which in-clude, each one of them, a thousand individuals." The latent insights in such readings are unconsciously para-dized in such judgments as this:(26)

He plunged into the haunts of wild and profligate men, lighting up their murky caves with his poetical torch, and gaining nothing from them but the renewed power of scorning the unspiritual things of our being, without the resolution to seek for wisdom in the daylight track which every man may tread.

After these humid phrases, Dowden is cool and clear. He finds Marlowe a "subjective poet", like Schiller, but "Satanic": he is 'great, ardent, aspiring', but the critic recognizes an imaginative control working there.

Two New England voices, sharing the same assumptions but reaching quite different conclusions, according to their qualities, belong here. Edwin P. Whipple (1819-86), born in Gloucester, Mass., Hazlitt's counterpart in what we now call, "adult education," gave a series of lectures in the Lowell Institute, published first in the "Atlantic Monthly" (1867-8) and later as "The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth" (Boston, Mass., 1869). For him Marlowe was "this stormy, irregular genius, composed of Exanian ruf-fian and Arcadian singer"; he shared with his Faustus some "individual and intimate business with the Evil One"; he was "the proud-est and fiercest of intellectual aristocrats"; in "Tamburlaine", "the writer seems to say, with his truculent hero, "This is my mind, and I will have it so."" H. N. Hudson, who also finds Marlowe making a big archaic noise - which he, like his contemporaries, had never heard on the stage - anticipates in his comments the critical vehicle which makes Marlowe one ancestor of the 'heroic play' (No. 37).

"Make it new" was not a direction for the mid-Victorian critics of Marlowe, or indeed their successors to the end of the century. They repeat each other, and they return to a few reverberant figures. The translation of H. A. Taine's "Histoire de la littérature Anglaise" (1872), in which the author examines the "faculté maîtresse" of a man's work in terms of his milieu, seems to have had some influence: in that florid prose, Marlowe appears as a Bohemian sceptic, "a primitive and genuine man ... the slave of his passions ... moulded by his lusts", and all that (No. 36). Poor 'G.B.S.', in the "Cornhill Magazine" (September 1874,
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329-49) spends some time over the apocryphal port-

rait, has some reservations about the Taine stereotype,

but decides that Marlowe is 'a superb Byron1, feels more

at home with 'Doctor Faustus* than with *Faust*, and anti-

icipates later comments by observing that, as for the

poet's theological views, 'they were not more greatly

unorthodox than those of many intellectual men and

advanced thinkers of the present day'. He refers

obliquely to Bishop Colenso, 'His face is in shadow',

but, judging by *The Nativity* (No. 41), the*Faust* Factor

is the key. In William Minto, who makes it a *Jesuitist*

(No. 38); so Charles Grant, in The Two Fausts 'Contem-

porary Review', July 1881), 'concentrated passion rather than

objective insight and just appreciation of the comparative

value of the various elements of human life'. "Harmo-

tiness of imagination", writes Henry J. Nicholl, in his *Land-

marks of English Literature* (New York, 1883, 71),

'descriptive of a hot and fevered youth unrestrained by

law, and of a mind all too easily carried off and aspir-

ing after better things.'

A. W. Ward returns us once again to sobriety, in his

comments on "Edward II", and in the only sensible expla-

nation I have read from a scholar rather than an actor or

director of what blank verse is supposed to do (No. 39).

But Ward says finally of Marlowe that 'the element in

which as a poet he lived was passion'. In fact, continued

reading in these "appreciations" by Victorian men of

letters can be a numbing experience. These critics have

not seen performances of the plays, however deformed; and

they have not read the text with attention to how the

words work. Their comments are summary and expansive, and

though they may choose different elements in the ouve-

r, they remain for the most part within the

limits of the tradition and delight in repeating the

azer's of their predecessors. Occasionally there is

relief from the over-riding vocabulary: the author of

*Faust on the Stage* (No. 40), for example, making the

inevitable comparison of 'Faustus' with 'Faust', comments

on the persistence of superstition, and in the literature

of Marlowe his play 'is the outcome of an unostentatious

mind'.

The illustrious A. C. Bradley is in the mainstream of

interpretation, but his range of reference, his incisive-

ness and his enthusiasm make his essay the most satisfying

of all these. He choice dominant motifs, 'lift ascent', for

example, but he will not accept Marlowe's 'wander' and 'thirst' after

weightlessess', and his comments on 'Faust and Labour' are eulogistic

without being soppy. The temptation and
contrast with 'Endymion' is not just a gesture. J. A. Symonds's eighty-seven-page essay on Marlowe, some of the more influential parts of which are reproduced here (No. 42), deals very briefly with the biographical material, more at length with the workplaces of Romanesque High verse, and gives us 'the sculptor-poet of Colossi, who dramatizes ideal conceptions infused with 'the blood of his own untamable heart'. In a phrase as often quoted as Hazlitt's 'hunger and thirst', Symonds finds the 'leading motive' to be 'L'Amour de l'Impossible'.

The Symonds essay was read by A. H. Bullen before publication, but Bullen, in the introduction to his edition of the 'Works' (1885) writes, as an editor should, with more detachment, so that while one may catch a phrase from Symonds one gets an established doctrine from Bullen (No. 43). But some of his incidental comments show a more profound penetration of Marlowe's poesy: 'In discovering the origin of the morality included in Greene's 'Groatsworth of Wit' as 'that crazy duchess's madcap soul, a weak and miserable spirit'; he recognizes the important thesis was for Elizabethans, and praises Marlowe's verse in his translation of the 'Civil Wars'; and he puts Marlowe's 'atheism' in its historical setting, adding, 'If Marlowe had been a man of such abandoned prin-
ciples as his enemies represented, I strongly doubt whether Chapman, who was distinguished for strictness of life, would have cherished his memory with such affection and respect' (I, lxix). Marlowe's life and opinions are seen through the perspective glass of a nineteenth-century 'free-thinker' in the pages of the magazine 'Progress' (No. 46). Bullen's reviewer in the 'Nation' is eloquent, detached, amusing and important (No. 44).

I have noted earlier in this introduction that it is necessary to distinguish the 'higher criticism' of Marlowe, the work of scholars and sages, from other allu-
sions and comments, which, however uninspiring or uninnova-
tive, at least demonstrate Bullen's prediction that the study of Marlowe's works would no longer be restricted to antiquaries and bibliophiles. There was little influence exerted from the first development upon the second. When H. C. Pearson, in a review of Bullen's edition, observed that 'the idea that under cover of Tamburlaine and Faustus, and Barabas, Marlowe was venting his own unholy lusts is ludicrous. The way in which his Mephistophilis is conceived ought to acquit him of that charge forever,' Henry Arthur Jones's dramatic solution of the problem of religion in 'Faustus' is too sophisticated for the moralists (No. 45).

Marlowe was indeed 'taken up' by the literary societies
in the 1880s, and the records of their sessions, of which I give two examples (Nos 30, 31), should not be treated
with condescension; Frederick Rogers's paper on 'Tamburlaine1' for example, has more interest than some more
academic discussions of the play. At another meeting of
the Clifton Shakspere Society, in 1893, one speaker found
Milton's 'simple, sensuous and passionate' an appropriate
description of 'Hero and Leander', thought it a pity that
Chapman finished the poem, and added: 'Shakespe-are would
have disposed of the whole in verse'; and he added that he
also was capable of fixing his mind merely upon the
beauty of a story, without giving it a bearing upon con-
duct - a rare gift.' (29) Henry Morley anticipated some
twentieth-century opinions about Marlowe's orthodoxy:(30)

Thus Marlowe in his first two plays set forth the ruin
of a human pride that turns away from God. 'Flaunting
Tamburlaine' was not the work of a blasphemous poet.
It was a picture of the pride of self-dependent, vitally
power and its vanity, as 'Faustus' was a picture of the
pride of self-dependent intellect, commending in its
epilogue a simple trust in God. Depths of religious
feeling were elicited when this was the new play, and
perhaps the poet's own spirit of self-abandoning love
had been the death of the Spanish Armada.

But the stormy, truculent, humourless, titanic being, who
is Edward Meyer's words 'had studied Machiavelli with a
vengeance', remains to the end of the century the favour-
ite portrait.

A nice example of the contrast I have noted between the
two levels of critical appreciation may be found by consider-
ing together the American scholars writing about the same
time, Denton J. Snider and James Russell Lowell. Snider
(1841-1925) was a graduate of Oberlin College, Ohio, pro-
minent in the 'St Louis Movement' of popular education, a
prolific author and lecturer on the 'great books', or, as
he termed them, the Literary Bibles of the Occident.
Treating of the Faust legend, he notes that in the Renais-
sance 'the mythus of Faust will ... become all-embracing,
the gigantesque image of the time', and that the Faust of
Marlowe is 'a Protestant, tragic, the Devil gets him'.
Faust (here he means the Faust mythos) (31)

Deals the complete possibility, if not his complete
fulfilment, in the single-bosom man of today. The
latter is wrestling with unknown continents, and is
competing Nature in terms quite unheard of hitherto;
the limits of the physical world seem no boundary to
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him—his spiritual striving is not present in so high a degree, not in the spiritual victory.

Snider looks west; Lowell, on whose intellectual distinction, sensibility and influence no comment is needed, looks east, back to the roots of the language, and the roots of his own passion for literature (No. 57). His response to Marlowe's language is itself moving, and the inevitable comparison with Shakespeare is conducted with propriety.

Marlowe's effects seem to him sometimes like those of 'an imaginative child'. George Saintsbury returns to this analogy in his account of the 'romantic genius', and ends with the description of 'Marlowe and his crew' as disorderly Titans (No. 68). Havelock Ellis's introduction (No. 49) is of importance not for its florid eulogy but because it inaugurated a popular series and was widely read; as I recall, it was the first thing I ever read about Marlowe.

What is one to say about the rhapsodies of Swinburne? Out of fashion now, though some strains of the old music were heard when Dylan Thomas died. The source of such tributes is at the beginnings of our culture: the god is in the poet. Of the three pieces reprinted here (No. 52), the essay from 'The Age of Shakespeare', hyperbolical though it is, gives us Swinburne's summing up.

Two other critics of the 1890s decide, regretfully, that Marlowe will never take his place among the immortals. He is wonderful, but he won't do. A critic of 'Doctor Faustus', very appreciative though deploiring lack of 'fun' in Marlowe, writes that 'it is impossible that Marlowe will ever receive just recognition'; he is quenched by Shakespeare (No. 54); and W. J. Courthope finds the dramatist lacking in Conscience (No. 55). 'A just instinct has told us', wrote William Archer, (32) that the great mass of Elizabethan, Restoration and Eighteenth-century plays have nothing to say to the modern audience because they exemplify primitive and flimsy realism; they are coarse, gross and unequalled manner, and call for forms of virtuosity in representation which are well nigh extinct on the modern stage.

A brief account of two public occasions, very different in their intentions and effects, closes this survey. On 16 September, 1891, Henry Irving, who had played Mephistophilis in W. G. Wills's adaptation of 'Faustus' at the Lyceum in 1885, unveiled a memorial to Marlowe at
Canterbury. The money was raised by public subscription, and J. G. Lewis issued 'Christopher Marlowe: Outlines of his Life and Works' (Canterbury, 1891) to awaken local (and other) interest in the project. He confesses that he 'was amazed at the ignorance, apathy, or positive hostility displayed with reference to Marlowe'. In the preface of the pamphlet, Lewis associates Marlowe's early death with those of Shelley and Keats, touches lightly on the atheism bogey - 'we live in a more tolerant age' - and explains how the dramatist wrote for robust audiences, 'men well-nigh as ardent as himself'. The speeches at the Commemoration (No. 51) were full of the usual platitudes, but it was noted that Irving 'was very guarded in expressing his opinion of the dramatic qualities of Marlowe's plays'.

The revival of ‘Doctor Faustus’ by the Elizabethan Stage Society, on a stage after the model of the Fortune Playhouse, on 2 and 4 July 1896, was produced by William Poel. Swinburne's Prologue (No. 52b) was recited by Edmund Gosse. In his programme note, Poel noted that (33) the greater seriousness which marked the age of the Reformation gave a tragic dignity to the conception of the revolt of a human being against his god, and invests the spirit of such a defiance with what has been truly called a titanic character.

Bernard Shaw's review (No. 56), with its vivid description of the production, and its enthusiastic attack on the 'emotional' approach of Swinburne, sets the stage for his own, which he dedicates to Harriet Shaw. It is an attack on the 'waste of Shakespeareanism', and ends with the declaration that ms. who 'set the end of scollerisme in English blank verse'.

In the quatercentenary year, 1964, the 'Tulane Drama Review' devoted its summer issue to articles on Marlowe. Of these the most relevant here is Irving Ribner's Marlowe and the Critics. Ribner reviews succinctly much of the matter reproduced in the present book, and notes how twentieth-century critics have been supported by the important biographical and bibliographical discoveries of contemporary scholars, in their revaluations of Marlowe's place in the thought and dramatic experience of his own age and of his significance for ours. He concludes that Marlowe 'in a real sense belongs to the twentieth century.
... only in the last fifty years have either the man or his works come to be seen for what they really were'.(35) In another place, I have made the same point, though in a less provocative way,(36) for I do not share Ribner's dismissive approach to the mass of Romantic-Victorian criticism, nor the assurance in the explicit 'what they really were'. Still less is it possible to accept such a superficial version of our vested interest in Marlowe as this: that he is 'singularly relevant to the twentieth century' because like us he 'is fascinated by power' and saw 'the ancient moral and religious limitations giving way'.(37)

But it is true that the critical tools have been sharpened, made more numerous and subtle by accretions from other disciplines, and this process has effectively under-cut that prevailing and stultifying nineteenth-century assumption that the plays and poems are wholly expressions of the personality of their author. We have seen how this assumption limits both a free reading of Marlowe and free experiment in the critic's own imagination, so that he ascends to rhapsody or descends to speculation. This approach did not disappear with Ellis and Swinburne; my rather arbitrary cut-off of selections disguises its continuity. Ribner cites various examples; it appears in its most extreme expression in A. L. Rowse's 'Marlowe'.(38)

On the other side, to detach the poet so thoroughly from his work that it is possible to analyse it almost purely in terms of Elizabethan literary conventions and techniques, to explicate his text as if he were Donne or his ideas as if he were Hooker, is, as Robert Burton would say, all out as bad as the other extreme. Marlowe comes through so strongly that a via media is possible only for bibliography - or students' notes. What is possible in interpretation is a kind of emphasis which reflects, however modestly, the reader's collaboration with his author. For most of the authors of this earlier part of the critical heritage Marlowe exists in the shadow of Shakespeare, either as precursor or as inferior, but something else can be made of the comparison, and a few of them made it. In Harry Levin's words, 'Marlowe is always himself - as opposed to the "negative capability" of Shakespeare'.(39) To this we may add the immensely sensible judgment of J. B. Steane: 'It is not sentimental or romantic to see the man in his work to a greater extent than is true of most artists; it is natural and reasonable.'(40)

What is unreasonable and unsatisfying in the older criticism is the custom of dealing with the works seriatim, without for the most part taking into account the
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relations of the parts to the whole centre, or the signi-
ficance of the classical sources. The influence of Ovid's
'Amores' on 'Hero and Leander' goes unmentioned, nor is
there any serious suggestion that Lucan must have con-
tributed to Marlowe's imagination of the superman; the
reflections of the university curriculum in 'Faustus' are
not related to the form of the 'prologue' in 'Hero and
Leander', I, 199 ff., and the implications of the poet's
fascinated interest in geography ('the great globe
itself'), which also owes something to Bacon as well as to
old maps, are hardly considered at all.

... the conception of power, separ-
ateness and dominance of texture in Marlowe's writing was
not only congenial to their age, but right, like the con-
cupise of him as a first poet - Drayton's word - so that
these writings I have collected make a 'fruitful plot of
sculptures' too.

NOTES

Place of publication for works cited is London, unless
otherwise indicated.

1 See 'Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays', ed.
Clifford Lynch (Doverliah Cnuney Views, Reprinted
Cliffs, NJ, 1966); 'Drama Drama Review' (summer 1964),
viii, no. 4; 'Christopher Marlowe', ed. Brian Norris
(Mermaid Critical Commentaries, 1968); 'Criticism on
Marlowe', ed. Judith O'Neill (Readings in Literary
Criticism, IV, 1969); among 'casebooks' and other
aids to study, I am especially indebted to 'Marlowe:

2 Thomas Hanke, 'Works', ed. E. K. Miller (Oxford,
1963), II, 261-3.

3 Another reference to Marlowe's atheism may be found in
Edwin Aldrich's remarks to Henry Oxinden, how he
'wrote a book against the Scriptures'. Aldrich matricu-
lated at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1597. See
F. S. Boas, 'Christopher Marlowe: A Biographical and
Critical Study' (Oxford, 1940), 19, 110.

4 Oxinden: 'Mr. Aldrich saies that Marloe ... was a
rare scholar and made excellent verses in Latin.' The
only latin verses we have that can be attributed to
Marlowe in the epigraph on Sir Roger Mortimer; see 'The
Triumph', ed. Miller Hackett (London, 1968), 257,
5 "Hackett London Stuff" (Scolar Press Facsimiles, 1971),
Fig. 31a.
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6 ‘The Second Part of Hero and Leander. Conteyning their further Fortunes’ (1608), sig. B3.
7 For the complicated copyright arrangements, see ‘Poems’, ed. Bynae, sig. B3.
11 Ibid., 146.
12 C. F. Tucker Brooke, ‘Vergiliana’ (1927), 1, iii.
15 C. Saunders, ‘Tamburlaine the Great’ (1861), 1, iii.
16 Tucker Brooke, Reputation, 391.
20 ‘Monthly Review’ April 1812, 141, 130.
22 Scott’s private notebooks, 26 May 1897, [J. G. Lock].
24 From a letter to T. F. Kelsall, 11 January 1825, quoted in Edmund Gosse, ‘Critical Kit-Kats’ (1913), 39.
25 ‘The Afternoon Lectures in English Literature’ (1863), 151.
27 In the Academy” (18 November 1862), nati 100.
30 ‘Quarey and His Time’ (1892), 219.
31 ‘Gozz’s Feast. First Part: A Commentary on the
26 Introduction

Literary Bibles of the Occident (Boston, Mass., 1906), i, 27, 39, 41.
28 No attempt has been made in this survey to give proper representation to Continental editions of and comments on Marlowe, where the emphasis, at least at first, is inevitably on "Doctor Faustus". Tucker Brooke (Regu-
lation, 406-7) cites a number of important titles. In addition to Taine, (No. 36), we may note the first
French translation of "Faustus", by François-Victor Hugo (Paris, 1858) - "Marlowe, ce poète de l'Angleterre calviniste"; Hermann Ulrici's "Shakes-
ppeare's Dramatic Art" (trans., 1876), which helped to
establish the stereotype of the
"titanic
Marlowe"; and
the excellent edition of "Edward II" by Wilhelm Wagner
(Hamburg, 1871).
29 "Tulane Drama Review" (summer 1964), viii, no. 4, 211.
30 "Tulane Drama Review", viii, no. 4, 26.
33 "The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe", ed. J. B.
Streeter (Penguin English Library, 1969), 16.
Note on the Text

The text for Marlowe's plays, poems and translations used throughout is 'The Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe', General Editor R. H. Case (1930-3, 6 vols, reprinted Gordian Press, 1966). The place of publication for works cited in the headnotes to the selections in London, unless otherwise indicated.

In the notes following the documents, original notes are indicated by *, t, etc., and editor's notes are numbered.
Robert Greene (1560?–92), romancer and playwright, was educated at Cambridge and thereafter lived by his pen in London, according to his own and other accounts, a dissipated existence. His best known play is "The Honest History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" (acted 1594). He exploited his knowledge of the Elizabethan underworld in the Cony-Catching pamphlets. "A Groatsworth of Wit" was his dying testament, and is chiefly remembered for the attack on Shakespeare as "the only Shake-scene in a countrey".

From "Perimedes the Blacksmith" (1588), sigs A3-A3v.

To the Gentlemen readers, sweit

I keep my old course, to palter up some thing in Prose, using mine old poetry stil ... although iasime the

Gentlemen Poets, made my two mad men of Rome beat me out of their paper bucklers: & had it in derision, for that I

could not make my verses let upon the stage in tragical

Symphony, putting in all the words that for tragedie

are knowne. Those the duel of the Romans and the

Turks, at the decease of the Emperor; those the

Dumbfart, or stammering with the mad priest of the

nunntet but let me either openly peck out the eyes at

 disagreous hands: then wanting set out such implease
instances of intolerable poetrie, such mad and scoffing poets, that have propheticall spirits as bold as Merlins race, if there be anye in England that set the end of scollerisme in English blancke verse, I thinke either it is the humor of a novice that tickles them with selfe-love, or to much frequenting the hot house hath swet out all the greatest part of their wits.

(b) From "A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance" (1592), sigs E4v-Fl.

Wondere not, (for with thee will I first began), thou famous gracer of Tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee (like the foole in his hart), There is no God, should now give glorie unto his greatness: for penetrating is his power, his hand lieth heauie vpon me, he hath spoken vnto me with a voice of thunder, and I haue felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should the excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glorie to the giver? What are his rules but mere confused numbering, able to extirpate in small time, the generation of mankind. For if Sic volo, sic ibi, hold in those that are able to commaund: and if it be lawfull Fas & nefas to doe any thing that is beneficall, onely Tyrants should possesse the earth, and they striving to exceed in tyrannie, should each to other be a slaughter man, till the mightiest outliving all, one stroke were lefte for Death, that in one age mans life should end. The brocher of this Diabolicall Atheisme is dead, and in his life had neuer the felicitie hee aymed at: but as he began in craft, liued in feare, and ended in despaire. Quam inscrutabilia sunt Dei iudicia?

This murderer of many brethren, had his conscience seared like Caine: this betrayer of him that gaue his life for him, inherited the portion of Judas: this Apostata perished as ill as Iulian: and wilt thou my friend be his disciple? Looke but to me, by him perswaded to that libertie, and thou shalt find it an infernall bondage. I knowe the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but wilfull striuing against knowne truth, exceedeth all the terrors of my soule. Defer not (with me) till this last point of extremitie; for little knowst thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.
31* Marlowe: The Critical Heritage 1888-1896

NOTES
1. If I will it so, I order it so.
2. Right and wrong.
3. How inscrutable are the judgments of God!

J. HENRY CHETTLE
1592

Henry Chettle (d. 1607) was connected with the printing trade, and was an industrious minor collaborator with other dramatists in many plays produced by Philip Henslowe.

From 'Kind-Harts Dreame' (1592), sigs A3v-A4.

'To the Gentlemen Readers'

About three months since died R. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry Books sellers hands, among other his treasure of wit, in which a letter written to divers playwrights, is offensively by one or two of them taken, and because the dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceits a living Author: and after tossing it two and fro, no remedy, but it must light on me. How I have all the time of my conversing hindred the bitter inaving against scholars, it hath been very well knowne, and how in that I dealt I can suffice prooue. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I knew not, but if I knew, if I was not of those that by others were offended, and after tossing it two and fro, no remedy, but it must light on me. For the first, whose learning I reuerence, and at the perusing of Greenes Booke, strooke out what then in my conscience I thought was displeasure writ or had it heene time, yet to publish it, was insensible: him I would wish to use me no worse than I deserve.
In the spring of 1593, the authorities were anxious to find, under a general warrant, persons suspected of libel or sedition, or just "unsafe" opinions. The Privy Council issued a warrant for Marlowe's arrest on 18 May, with instructions to seek him at Scadbury in Kent, Sir Thomas Walsingham's house. On 12 May they arrested Thomas Kyd, the author of "The Spanish Tragedy" (1587-94?), then a conspicuous playwright, apparently tortured him, and secured a document from him in two letters to the Lord Keeper, Sir John Puckering. It must be remembered that Kyd wrote in fear.

From BM Harl. MS 6849, f. 218, Harl. 6848, f. 218, reproduced from C. F. Tucker Brooke, "The Life of Christopher Marlowe" (1930), app. XI, XII.

At my last being with your Lordship to entreat some speeches from you in my favor to my Lorde, whose (though I think he rest not doubfull of some innocence) both you, in his discretion judgment feared to offend in his respecting me, without your honor, unknowne pruicil, so it is some light honorable that the thought trans|--al hath you to conceive some suspicion, that your Courtship holdes me, in, concerning Atheisme, a deadlie thing which I was undeservedly chargd withall, & therefore have I thought it remittable, because I am in your honor, am before the sense of my conscience, thereto to satisfy the world and you: The first and most (though insufficient surmise) that ever as therein might be made of me, groweth thus. When J was first proceeded for this libel, it passeth for three papers (which I carde not for) & which vnaskt J did deliuer vp, were found some
fragment of a

disputation touching that opinion affirmed by Marlowe to be

with some of mine (unknown to me) by some occasion of our

writing to one

chamber two years space

My first acquaintance with this Marlowe, rose upon his

wearing name to

serve my Lord although his Lordship never knew his

existence, not to writing to his

playes, else never could my Lord endure his name, or

take, when he had heard of his conditions, not well in deed the forme of divine

piety yet was done in his

Lordship house, have quadred with such repugnancy.

That J could lose or be familar friend, with one so

intemperate, were very rare,

when that such high part was added in ipsea

truth, which neither was in him, for person, qualities, or

honestie, besides he was

intemperate & of a cruel hart, the veris contractes to

which, my greatest enemies

will cast by me.

J is not to be emended amongst the best conditions of

men to taxe or to

obviate the deed this mortal new mendment, but this

which I have J with poor

Lordship favor, dased in the greatest cause, which is to

cure my soul of lying

thought an atheist, which some will assure he was.

You were assured that J was set of that vile

place your Lordship to acquire of such as he covered

with albeit, that in (as we

gave to understand) with Merriot, Warner, boyles, and

same stationers

in Pauls churchyard, when J in no sort can access nor

by several compagnies, of whose consent if J had been,

no question but

J also should have been of their consent, for ex animo

nuastic artifices aequius

artifices.

Of the religion & life J have alreadie given some

data in the late compositions

& of my recent running to the store, although perhaps my

seizes and

undeserved tortures felt by some, mild have engendred more
impatience when base by base hath driven so many (mo extra causa
which it shall never do with me). But whatsoeuer I have felt Right
honourable this is my request not for reward but
in regard of my true innocence that it will please your
Lordships so to [use] the same & me, as I may still return the favours of my Lord, whom
I have served almost
their yeares hence, in credit until now. & now an
honest man, not
herein be somewhat done for my recoverie. for if I do know
his loving kindness
your honour & the state in that due reverence, as he
would so wold were the
Lewis monestaries of his townes and cause both towards his
and devoted Majesties your Lordships
shall serve I shall your
greater instance which
I have observed.
As for the Libel Laide vnto my chardg I am resolued
with receyving of ye sacrament
to astartle your Lordships & the Welt that I was neither
agent nor consente thereto
Honesty & good name was not on or of his own
dispos to leendeth base
with present of duetie or religion, or to reduce himself
to that he was not borne
unto by his wise and honest Lordships to suspect me,
I shall heare in all humilitie
& in the fears of God that it will please your Lordships
not to judge me out of
prove my self, and to expect them on as they ar in deed Cun
these instatilles
nulla capitation sit quae seors, qui num maxime
fallant in agent vs vitri
boni esse videatior fide dubitabilis venit
et consente quos id agent vs vitri
et in the truth, when
not their lyres that
honest have accord ed shall examinet & rippes my
effectually now
make I chasse with weil to line & shake the verer of my
and ease the
lier for which the ignorant suspect me guilty of the
self do this...
And that (for now I feare me I prove treason) assuring
your good Lordship.
that if J knewe any whom J could iustlie accuse of that
damnable offence to
the awefull Majestie of god or of that other mutinous
sedition towrd the state
J wold as willinglie reveale them as J wold request your
Lordships better thoughtes of
we that never haue offended you
Your Lordships most humble in all duties
Th. Kydde

II

Pleaseth it your honourable Lordship touching marlowes
monstruous opinions as J
cannot but with an agreed conscience think on him or
them as much as I but particularists
fewe in the persons all those that kept him greater con-
sciences.
discharge of duty both towards god your Lordships &
the world that such base J thought
good brefflits to discover in all healnesses
first it was his custom when J knewe him first & as
J bare sole he
complied it in tattle-talk or otherwise to lest at the
right of god & strive in argument to frustrate &
corrupt what hath been
spoken or writ by propheta & such helly men
1 He said report St. John to be our saviour Christes
Alexis J cover it with reverence
and trembling that in that Christ did love him with an
extraordinary love.
2 That for me to write a poem of St. paules conversion as
J was determined
he said wil he so as J should go write a book of fast &
loose, esteming
paul a juggle.
3 That the prodigall Childe's portion was but fewe nobles
purse as near the bottom in all pictures, and that it
neither was a lost
or sixe nobles then was thought a great patrimony
not thinking it a parable.
4 That things esteemed to be done by divine power might
have once been so
by others which he said no reasonable
sell slight exception to
stayed out on J & many others in regard of his other
Richard Baines (b. 1566?) has been identified with some assurance by Brooke and Boas as a member of the Middle Temple, a shady character who appears here as an informer (see F. S. Boas, 'Christopher Marlowe', Oxford, 1940, 245-50). He seems to have sent his note to the council about the time of Marlowe's death; a copy was sent to the queen on 2 June. The most useful discussion of Marlowe's 'atheism', his possible connection with the circle of free-thinking intellectuals, including Thomas Hariot the distinguished mathematician, and with other connections, see Richard Chevley, in R. M. Water, ed., 464, ff. 150-6; reproduced here from C. F. Tucker Brooke, 'The Life of Christopher Marlowe' (1930), app. III. Words in square brackets have been scored through in the original.

A note Containing the opinion of on Christopher Harly Concerning his damnable [opini] Judgment of Religion, and scorn of Gods word. 

A note Containing the opinion of on Christopher Harly Concerning his damnable [opini] Judgment of Religion, and scorn of Gods word.

Be it further considered that Moses was not a Juge but that one
Heriots being Sir W Raleighs man Can do more then he.<nThat Moyses made the Jewes to travel xl yeares in the wildernes, (which Jorney might haue bin done in lesse then one yeare) one they came to the promised land to thintent that those who were prive to most of his subtilties might perish and so an everlasting superstition Remain in the hartes of the people.<nThat the first beginning of Religioun was only to keep men in awe.<nThat it was an easy matter for Moyses being brought vp in All the arts of the Egiptians to abuse the Jewes being a rude & grosse people.<nThat Christ was a bastard and his mother dishonest.<nThat he was the sonne of a Carpenter, and that if the Jewes among whom he was borne did Crucify him they best knew him and whence he Came.<nThat if he were put to write a new Religion, he would undertake both a more Exellent and Admirable methode and that all the new testament is filthily written.<nThat the woman of Samaria & her sister were whores & that Christ knew them dishonestly.<nThat St John the Evangelist was bedfellow to Christ and leaned alwaies in his bosome, that he vsed him as the sinners of Sodoma.<nThat all they that love not Tobacco & Boies were fools.<nThat all the apostles were fishermen and base fellowes nether of wit nor worth, that Pauli only had wit but he was a timorous fellow in bidding men to be subject to magistrates against his Conscience.<nThat he has as good Right to Coine as the Queen of England, and that he was acquainted with one Poole a prisoner in Newgate who hath greate Skill in mixture of mette and having learned some things of him he meant through help of a Cunninge stamp maker to Coin ffrench Crownes pistoletes and English shillinges.<nThat he has as good Right to Coine as the Queen of England, and that he was acquainted with one Poole a prisoner in Newgate who hath greate Skill in mixture of mette and having learned some things of him he meant through help of a Cunninge stamp maker to Coin ffrench Crownes pistoletes and English shillinges.
38 MARLOWE: THE CRITICAL HERITAGE 1588–1896

...because he brought the salutation to Mary.

That on Mr. Holmley [hath Cholmley] hath Confessed that he was persuaded by Marlowe's Reasons to become an Atheist.

These things, with many other shall by good & honest witnesses be approved to be his opinions and Common Speeches and that this Marlowe doth not only hold these himself, but almost into every Company he comes he persuades men to Atheism willingly to be afraid of highnesses and noblesse not to be afraid of the sleight of those that be in that profession. So that as J. Richard Baines will justify & approve both by mine oath and the consciences of many honest men, and almost all men with whom he hath conversed any time will testify the same, and as J. think all men in Christianity ought to endeavor that the mouth of so dangerous a member may be stopped, he saith likewise that he hath quoted a number of Contrarieties out of the Scripture which he hath given to some great men who in convenient time shall be named. When these things shall be called in question the witnesses shall produce.

Richard Baines

5. GEORGE PEELE

1593

George Peele (1558–97?) was another of the 'University [in his case Oxford] Wits', 'driven (as myself) to extreme shifts', as Greene put it in his 'Groatsworth of Wit' (sig. Flv). His finest play is 'The Old Wives Tale' (1595), a fascinating romantic piece. 'The Honour of the Garter' is an occasional poem, directed to the Earl of Northumberland on his installation as a knight of that order, 26 June 1593. In the Prologue, Marlowe, who was four weeks dead, is commended after Sidney, Sir Francis Walsingham and others.

And after thee
Why hie they not, unhappy in thine end,
Marley, the Muses darling for thy verse;
Fitte to write passions for the soules below,
If any wretched soules in passion speaks?

6. GABRIEL HARVEY
1593

Gabriel Harvey (c.1550-1631) was a frustrated academic politician, at once an ornament to Cambridge as a rhetorician, and an embarrassment as a personality. His friend and promoter of Spenser, his ill hour he became involved in pamphlet controversy with the Elizabethan Juvenal, Thomas Nashe. The piece reproduced below is obscure: it may just possibly not refer to Marlowe at all.

From 'A New Letter of Noble Contents' (1593), sigs A3r-B4v.

SONNET.

I lay in melancholy bed,
Before the dawning of the sanguine light:
When Echo shrill, or some Familiar Spright
Buzzed an Epitaph into my head.

Magnifique Minds, bred of Gargantua race,
In grisly weed His Obsequies waiment,
Whose Corps on Powles, whose mind triumph'd on Kent,
Scorning to bate Sir Rodomont an ace.

I mus'd awhile: and having mus'd awhile,
lesu, (quoth I) is that Gargantua minde
Conquerd, and left no Scanderbeg behinde?
Vowed he not to Powles A Second bile?

What bile, or kibe? (quoth that same early Spright)
Have you forgot the Scanderbegging wight?
Is it a Dream? or is the Highest mind,
That ever haunt, his mind, or haunt, his mind;
That breath, that taught the Timpany to swell?
No, and the plague contended for the game:
The hawty man extolles his hideous thoughtes,
And gloriously insultes upon poor souls;
That plague themselves: for faint hearts plague them-

e.

The tyrant Sickness of base-minded slaves
Oh how it dominer's in Coward Lane!
So foileth he repents his base hell,
When he had ginn'd at many a dolefull knell.
The grand Sickness dissolv'd his trade Council,
That once you saw; now see not;
Startly struck-home the peremptory stroke,
He that nor feared God, nor dreaded Vice,
Nor ought admired, but his wondrous self.
Like Iunos gawdy Bird, that proudly stares
On glittering fan of his triumphant tail;
Or like the ugly Bugg, that scorn'd to dy,
And mountes of Glory rear'd in towring witt:
Alas: but Babell Pride must kiss the pitt.

7. JOSEPH HALL
1597-8

Joseph Hall (1574-1656) published "Virgidiarmarum" (six books of "Toothless" and "Byting" satires) when he was a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The first group includes much comment on the occupied literary genres, and incidental reference to a number of popular contempor-
ary authors. Hall later became a conspicuous churchman, Bishop of Exeter and Norwich, and engaged in a pamphlet war with Milton. "Virg.*, I, iii, is concerned with

One higher pitch'd doth set his soaring thought
On crowned kings that Fortune hath low brought:
Or some upreared, high-aspiring swaine
As it might be the Turkish Tamberlaine.
Then weeneth he his base drink-drowned spright,
Rapt to the threefold loft of heavens hight,
When he conceives upon his fained stage
The walking stage of his great personage,
Graced with huf-cap termes and thundring threats
That his poor hearers hayre quite upright sets.
Such soone, as some brave-minded hungry youth,
Sees fitly frame to his wide-strained mouth,
He vaunts his voyce upon an hyred stage,
With high-set steps, and princely carriage:
Now soouping in side robes of Royaltie,
That earst did skrub in Lowsie brokerie.
There if he can with termes Italianate,
Big-sounding sentences, and words of state,
Faire patch me up his pure Iambick verse,
He ravishes the gazing Scaffolders.

THOMAS BEARD
1597

Thomas Beard (d. 1632) had the distinction of being Oliver Cromwell’s schoolmaster at Huntingdon. The Theatre of Gods judgements  was his first book of many, including a proof that the Pope is Antichrist (1625), like all his work utterly unoriginal.

Not inferior to any of the former in Atheisme & impiety, and equal to all in manner of punishment was one of our own nation, of trash and late memory, called Marlin (morgan glo- ginal note: Marlow), by profession a scholler, brought up from his youth in the University of Cambridge, but by practice a plebeian, and a Pest of scrupulosity, who by giving too large a scope to his own wit, and suffering his lust to haunt the general sense, so that his works are so execrated, that they not only in word blasphemed
the trinitie, but also (as it is credibly reported) wrote bookes against it, affirming our Saviour to be but a deceiuer, and Moses to be but a coniurer and seducer of the people, and the holy Bible to be but vaine and idle stories, and all religion but a devise of policy. But see what a hooke the Lord put in the nostrils of this barking dogge: it so fell out, that in London streets as he purposed to stab one whom he ought a grudge vnto with his dagger, the other party perceiving so avoided the stroke, but catching hold of his wrest, he stabbed his own dagger into his owne head, in such sort, that notwithstanding all the meanes of surgerie that could be wrought, he shortly after died thereof. The manner of his death being so terrible (for he even cursed and blasphemed to his last gaspe, and together with his breath as ruth free out of his mouth) that it was not only a manifest sign of God's judgment, but also an horrible and fearefull terrour to all that beheld him. But herein did the justice of God most notably appeare, in that hee compell'd his owne hand which had written those blasphemies to be the instrument to punish him, and that in his braine, which had devised the same. I would to God (and I prayed it from my heart) that all Atheists in this realme, and in all the world beside, would by the remembrance and consideration of this example, either forsake their horribile impietie, or that they might in like manner come to destruction: and so that abominable sinne which so flourished amongst men of greatest name, might either be quite extinguished and rooted out, or at least smotherd and kept vnder, that it durst not shew it head any more in the worlds eye.

9. WILLIAM RANKINS

Little is known of Rankins. He wrote a book against stage-plays, *A Mirrour of Monsters* (1587), and, probably, 'The English Ape' (1588), listing the vices Englische men have taken over from foreign nations; he may also be the 'Rankens' who worked on plays for Philip Henslowe. The passage reproduced almost certainly refers to Marlowe. From 'Seven Satyres' (1598), ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool, 1948), 15.
For for a while I must associate them [i.e. the melancholy, Saturnian types] That reaching Politicians will be nam'd, And what is done in countries far do ken, Virging that nature all the world hath fram'd, Affirming God in things is needless nam'd: But that the influence of the hauen effects Our good or bad still grace'te by all respects, That take a pride in damned Machiavelly, And study his disciples to be thought: Allowing all deeds be they ever so vile, Such as have hell-born Atheisme taught, Accounting scriptures customs that are naught, Such as are earnest Turks, where is a Turk, And call the Alchoran a godly works.

Edward Blunt or Blount (1564–1632) was one of the most important printers and publishers of the period. He published Florio's 'Montaigne' (1603) and Shelton's 'Don Quixote' (1612, 1615), and shared in the printing of the Shakespeare First Folio (1623).

From the dedication to Sir Thomas Walsingham of 'Hero and Leander' by Christopher Marlowe (the first known edition: Marlowe's part of the poem, incomplete).

To the Right Worshipfull, Sir Thomas Walsingham, Knight:

Sir, we think not our selues discharged of the dutie wee owe to our friend, when we have brought the breathless bodie to the earth: for albeit the eye there taketh his ever farewell of that beloved object, yet the impression of the man, that hath borne there vote on, living or after life in our memory, those putteth we in mind of farther obsequies due vnto the deceased. And namely of the performance of whatsoeuer we may judge shall make to his living credit, and to the affecting of his determinations prevented by the stroke of death. By these meditations (as by an intellectual will) I suppose my seruice executor
to the unhappily deceased author of this Poem, yea whom knowing that in his life time you bestowed many kind favours, entertaining the parts of reckoning and worth which you found in him, with good countenance and liberal affection: I cannot but see so far into the will of him dead, that whatsoever issue of his brain should chance to come abroad, that the first breath it should take might be the gentle air of your liking: for since his self had been accustomed thereto, it would prove more agreeable to you and your right children, than any other foster countenance whatsoever.

11. GEORGE CHAPMAN

George Chapman (1559–1634), the translator of Homer, Hesiod and Musaeus, was also an important innovating dramatist in both tragedy and comedy, and a learned, eloquent, if often obscure poet.

From 'Hero and Leander: Begun by Christopher Marlowe: and finished by George Chapman' (1598).

(a) From the dedication to Lady Walsingham.

I present your Ladiship with the last affections of the first two lovers that ever Muse shrined in the Temple of Memorie; being drawn by strange instinct to employ some of my serious time in so trifling a subject, which yet made the first Author, divine Musaeus, eternal. And were it not that we must subject our accounts of these common received conceits to servile custom; it goes much against my hand to signe that for a trifling subject, on which more worthines of soule hath been shewed, and weight of divine wit, than can vouchsafe residence in the leaden gravitie of anyMoney-Monger; in whose profession all seri-oue subjects are concluded.
New light gives new directions, features new
To fashion our inwards that sense,
New hard (so last more hard) more grave and blest
Our subject rate, and our stories must out file,
Loses edge in taken off, and that light flame,
Those thoughts, loves, longings, that before became
High vapourless blood, and made sharp sights
That being snuffed away (upstruct) now we praise,
As being snuffed Energy covers theobserver...
Then they most strongly-intellectual fire,
That proper to my soul has power to inspire
Her burning faculties, and with the wings
Of thy ymphasthenic flame visit the springs
Of the immortal Muse: O thou that art
Both fellow Nature finds (\*eternal) Eilean
Of his free soul, above living subject stood
Up to the skin in the Pyrenean flood,
And drink to me whole this Musean storie,
Describing it to double Memorie;
Confess with it, and make my pledge as deep,
Tell it how much his late desires I tender,
(If yet it know not) and to light surrender
My soules darke offspring, willing it should die
To know, to passione, and auendite.

11. FRANCIS MERES

Francis Meres (1565-1647), an amateur of literature, was
educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge (Spenser's col-
lege). 'Palladis Tamia' was the continuation of a work
published the previous year; it is useful to scholars
chiefly for its list of Shakespeare's works known to the
author in 1598. Boas observes that Meres's 'obsession
with parallels ... works more mischief than Beard's theol-
ogical fanaticism'.

From 'Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury, Being the Second
Part of Wits Commonwealth' (1598); text from Scholars*
Facsimiles and Reprints (New York, 1938), 286v and 287r.
As Iodelle, a French tragicall poet being an Epicure, and
an Atheist, made a pitifull end: so our tragicall poet
Marlowe: The Critical Heritage 1588-1896
for his Epicurisme and Atheisme had a tragicall
death: you may read of this Marlowe more at large in the
'Theatre of God's Judgment', ... As the poet Lycomus was
shot to death by a certain rival of his; so Christopher
Marlowe was stabbed to death by a handy serving man, a
rival of his in his lewde love.

13. 'THE PARNASSUS PLAYS'
1598-1601

This trilogy, produced by the students of St John's
College, Cambridge, contains a number of allusions to
recently conspicuous literary figures. In the first,
'The Pilgrimage to Parnassus', there is a timely imitation
of Marlowe's aside on the poverty of scholars ('Hero and
Leander', I, 471-2), and in 'The Second Part of the
Return from Parnassus' a summing-up.
From 'The Three Parnassus Plays', ed. J. B. Leishman
(1949), 242-3.

Ingenuus: Christopher Marlowe
Iudicio: Marlowe was happy in his buskin'd muse,
Alas unhappy in his life and end.
Fifty it is that wit so ill should dwell,
Wit lent from heaven, but vices sent from
hell.
Ingenuus: Our charger hath lost, Pluto hath got,
A Tragick penman for a driery plot.

14. WILLIAM VAUGHAN
1600

William Vaughan (1577-1641), educated at Jesus College,
47 Marlow: The Critical Heritage 1588-1896

Oxford, was a deeply religious person of the Puritan persuasion, a very minor poet in Latin and English, and one of the early 'planters' of Newfoundland.

From 'The Golden-grove, moralized in three bookes' (1601), i, iii (Oxford).

Not inferior to these was one Christopher Marlow by profession a play-maker, who, as is reported, about 7 years ago wrote a book against the Trinitie; but see the effects of God's justice; it so hapned, that at Detford, a little village about three miles distant from London, as he meant to stab with his poniard one named Ingram, that he driped the blood upon the table to which he was invited to a feast, he quickly perceiving it, as he stabbed the stroke, took instantly drawing out his dagger for his defence, he stabd this Marlow into the eye, in such sort, that his brains comming out at the daggers point, hee shortly after dyed.

15. MICHAEL DRAYTON

Michael Drayton (1563-1631) wrote successfully in most of the genres, from the pastoral eclogue to the historical narrative poem. His most ambitious works were 'The Baron's Wars' (1607) and the immense topographical poem on England, 'Polyolbion' (1622).


Next Marlow bathed in the Thespian springs
Had in his close these transcendens things,
That the first Poesy had, his raptures were,
For that fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a Poets braine.
William Prynne (1600-69) was an immensely prolific and savage Puritan pamphleteer. "Histrio-Mastix" is the most Representative attack on the stage between Stephen Gosson's 'Schoole of Abuse' (1579) and Jeremy Collier's 'Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage' (1698). Another version of the fabricated tale reproduced below was 'reported' from Exeter; see E. K. Chambers, 'The Elizabethan Stage' (1923), III, 424.

From 'Histrio-Mastix' (1633), fol. 396.

Not to relate the various tragical ends of many, who in my remembrance at London, have beene slain in Playhouses, or even murder'd there committed ... together with the visible apparition of the Devill on the Stage at the Belswage Play-house, in Queene Elizabeths dayes, (to the great amazement both of the Actors and Spectators) whiles they were there profanely playing the History of Faustus (the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it).

Thomas Heywood (1574-1641) was a man of the theatre for over thirty years; students of the drama remember him especially for "A Woman Kilde with Kindness" (1607). His revival of 'The Jew of Malta' in 1632, with probable additions and adaptations by himself or others gives us the only extant first version of the play.

From 'The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta As it was Playd before the King and Queene, in His Majesties Theatre at White-Hall, by her Majesties Servants at the Cock-pit. Written by Christopher Marlowe' (1633), sigs A1, A4, Abr.
(a) From To my Worthy Friend, Mr. Thomas Hemme, of Grayes Inn, &c.

This Play, composed by so worthy an Author as Mr. Marlov; and the part of the Jew presented by so unimitable an Actor as Mr. Allin, being in this latter Age commended to the Stage: As I when'd it sent the Counts, and presented it to the Cockpit, with these Prologues and Epilogues from myself, as one being well taught by the Press, was loath it should be published without the ornament of an Epistle....

(b) From The Prologue spoken at Court:

Gracious and Great, that we so boldly dare,
('Mongst other Playes that now in fashion are)
To present this; writ many yeares agoe,
And in that age, thought second unto none;
We humbly craue your pardon....

(c) From The Prologue to the Stage, at the Cocke-pit:

We know not how our Play may passe this Stage,
Mario. But by the best of Poets in that age
The 'Malta Jew' had being, and was made;
Allin. And He, then by the best of Actors play'd:
In 'Hero and Leander', one did gaine
A lasting memorie: in 'Tamberlaine',
This Jew, with others many: th'other wan
The Attribute of peerlesse, being a man
Whom we may ranke with (doing no one wrong)
Proteus for shapes, and Roscius for a tongue,
So could be speake, so vary....

18. BEN JONSON
1640

Ben Jonson (1572-1637), poet and playwright, in his references to Marlowe, as otherwise, was a preening-point between the old rhetoric and the new, and self-consciously a maker of literary history.
The true Artificer will not run away from nature, as hee were afraid of her; or depart from life, and the likeness of Truth; but speaks to the capacity of his Hearers, and though his language differ from the vulgar somewhat; it shall not fly from all humanity, with the Tamerlans, and Tamer-Chams of the late age, which had nothing in them but the scenical strutting, and furious vociferation, to warrant them to the ignorant gapers.
Edward Phillips (1630-96) was Milton's nephew, and educated by him. He was a hack writer and compiler; his "New World of Words" (1658), a philological dictionary, was very popular. He tutored the son of John Evelyn, the diarist and dilettante, Evelyn wrote of him, "a sober, silent, and most harmless person, a little versatile in his studies."

From "Theatrum Poetarum Anglicorum... First published 1675, and now enlarged" (1800), 113-4.

Christopher Marlowe, a kind of second Shakespeare (whose contemporary he was) not only because like him he rose from an actor to be a maker of plays, though inferior both in fame and merit; but also because in his began poem of "Hero and Leander", he seems to have a resemblance of that clean, and unsophisticated Wit, which is natural to that incomparable poet; this poem being left unfinished by Marlowe, who in some riotous fray came to an untimely and violent end, was thought worthy of the finishing hand of Chapman in the performance wherein nevertheless he fell short of the spirit and invention with which it was begun. Of all that he hath written to the stage six "Dr. Faustus" hath made the greatest noise with its Devils, and such like tragic sport, and see his other two tragedies, namely, his "Edward the Second" and "Massacre at Paris", besides his "Jew of Malta", a tragi-
comedy, and his tragedy of 'Dido', in which he was joined with Nash.

20. WILLIAM WISTANLEY
1687

William Winstanley (1628-90) was, according to Anthony à Wood, at one time a barber, but though he forsook the razor he kept the scissors, 'for he borrowed without stint, and without acknowledgement'. He was an inveterate compiler of biographical and historical matter.

From 'The Lives of the most Famous English Poets, or the Honour of Parnassus' (1687), I34.

Christopher Marlowe was ... not only contemporary with William Shakespeare, but also, like him, rose from a Actor, to be a writer of Comedies and Tragedies, yet was he much inferior to Shakespeare, not only in the number of his Plays, but also in the elegancy of his Style. His pen was chiefly employed in Tragedies [i.e. 'Tamburlaine' I and II], but none made such a great noise as his Comedy of 'Doctor Faustus' with his Devils, and such like tragic Sport, which pleased much the humors of the Vulgar. He also began a Poem of 'Hero and Leander', wherein he seemed to have a resemblance of that clear and unsophisticated Wit which was natural to Musaeus that incomparable Poet. This Poem being left unfinished by Marlow, who in some riotous Fray came to an untimely and violent end, was thought worthy of the finishing hand of Chapman, in the performance whereof, nevertheless he fell short of the Spirit and Invention with which it was begun.
Gerard Langbaine (1656-92), biographer and critic, had the distinction of being numbered among Dryden’s enemies.

From ‘An Account of the English Dramatick Poets’ (1691).

Christopher MARLOE

An Author that was Contemporary with the Incomparable Shakespear, and the who trod the Stage with applause both from Queen Elizabeth, and King James. Nor was he account’d a less Prefect Poet by the judicious Johnson and Aymard his Fellow Actor, titles him, the best of Poets. Nor was he account’d a less Excelent Poet by the judicious Johnson: and Heywood his Fellow Actor, stiles him, the best of Poets. In what esteem he was in his time may be gathered from part of a copy of verses writ in that Age, call’d a ‘Censure of the Poets’, where he is thus Characteriz’d:

[Quotes Drayton, see No. 15, above.]

He writ besides a Poem, call’d ‘Hero and Leander’, whose mighty lines (says that* Mr. Benjamin Johnson, a Man sensible enough of his own Abilities, was often heard to say, that they were examples fitted for Abstraction, even on whom they had so strong an imperious power, that he could not but wish for some other subject, who according to Mr. Philips, in some smaller form, came to an entirely and violent end, it was finished by Mr. Chapman, and printed octavo Lond. 1606.

Note

*Bosworth’s Poems, Pref.
Anthony à Wood (1632-95), the historian of Oxford and biographer of its scholars, was noted not only for his learning but for the independence of his judgments. Note how he has embroidered Beard and Meres (Nos 8 and 12 above). Edward Phillips had attributed 'Tamburlaine' to Thomas Newton, hence the intrusion of Marlowe into an Oxford book.

From 'Athenae Oxonienses' (1691), article on Thomas Newton (ed. 1815), II, col. 9.

But in the end, so it was, that this Mario giving too large a swing to his own wit, and suffering his lust to have the full reins, fell to that outrage and extremity, as Jodelle a French tragical poet did, (being an epicure and an atheist,) that he denied God and his Son Christ, and affirmed the holy Bible to contain only vain and idle stories, and all religion but a device of policy. But as the end of this person, which was noted by all, especially the precisians. For so it fell out, that for his rival a bawdy serving-man, one rather fit to be a pimp, than an ingenious amoretto as Marlow conceived himself to be. Whereupon Mario taking it to be so high affront, rush'd in upon him, and, with his dagger, stabbed him, with his dagger: But the serving-man being very quick, so avoided the stroke, that withal catching hold of Mario's wrist, he stab'd his own dagger into his own head, in such sort, that notwithstanding all the means of surgery that could be wrought, he shortly after died of his wound, before the year 1593.

Note

*See in Tho. Beard's Theatre of God's Judgments, lib. 1, chap. 23.*
Theophilus Cibber (1703-58) was the son of Colley Cibber, the actor-dramatist pilloried by Pope, and himself connected with the theatre. His 'Lives of the Poets' in five volumes was largely, it appears, the work of one Robert Shiels.

From 'The Lives of the Poets' (1753), 1, 40-1.

Christopher Marlowe

Was bred a student in Cambridge, but there is no account extant of his family. He soon quitted the University, and became a player on the same stage with the incomparable Shakespeare. He was accounted, says Langbaine, a very fine poet in his time, even by Ben Johnson himself, and Heywood his fellow-actor stiles him the best of poets. In a copy of verses called the Censure of the Poets, he was thus characterized.

Next Marlow bathed in Thespian springs, And in the three three ordinary things, That your first poets had; his rapture was All air and fire, which made his verses clear; For that fine madness still he did retain, Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

His genius inclined him wholly to tragedy, and he obliged the world with six plays, besides one he joined for with Nash, called 'Dido Queen of Carthage'; but before I give an account of them, I shall present his character to the reader upon the authority of Anthony Wood, which is too singular to be passed over. This Marlow, we are told, presuming upon his own little wit, thought proper to practice the most epicurean indulgence, and openly professed atheism; he denied God, Our Saviour; he blasphemed the adorable Trinity, and, as it was reported, wrote several discourses against it, affirming Our Saviour to be a deceiver, the sacred scriptures to contain nothing but idle stories, and all religion to be a device of policy and priestcraft. Marlowe came to a very untimely end, as some remarked, in consequence of his ensorcelled blasphemies. It happened that he fell deeply in love with a
low girl, and had for his rival a fellow in livery, who looked more like a pimp than a lover. Marlowe, fired with jealousy, and having some reason to believe that his mistress granted the fellow favours, he rushed upon him to stab him with his dagger; but the footman being quick, avoided the stroke, and escaping held Marlowe's wrist, which he then turned, and the fellow stabbed him with his own weapon, and notwithstanding all the assistance of surgery, he soon after died of the wound, in the year 1593. Some time before his death, he had begun a work, the first part of which he had published; it was an excellent poem called 'Hero and Leander', which was afterwards finished by George Chapman, who fell short, as it is said, of the spirit and invention of Marlowe in the execution of it.

What credit may be due to Mr. Wood's severe representation of this poet's character, the reader must judge for himself. For my part, I am willing to suspend my judgment till I meet with some other testimony of his having thus heinously offended against his God, and against the best and most amiable system of Religion that ever was, or ever can be: Marlowe might possibly be inclined to free-thinking, without running the unhappy lengths that Mr. Wood tells us, it was reported he had done. We have many instances of characters being too lightly taken up on report, and mistaken through a too easy credulity; especially against a man who may happen to differ from us in some speculative points, wherein each party however, may think himself orthodox: The good Dr. Clarke himself, has been as illspoken of as Wood speaks of Marlowe.

His other works are:
1. 'Dr. Faustus', his tragical history printed in 4to. London, 1661.
2. 'Edward the Second', a Tragedy, printed in 4to. London - when this play was acted is not known.
3. 'Jew of Malta', a Tragedy played before the King and Queen at Whitehall, 1633. This play was in much esteem in those days; the Jew's part being performed by Mr. Edward Alleyn, the greatest player of his time, and a man of real piety and goodness; he founded and endowed Dulwich hospital in Surry; he was so great an actor, that Betterton, the Roscius of the British nation, used to acknowledge that he owed to him those great attainments of which he was master.
4. 'Lust's Dominion; or the Lascivious Queen', published by Mr. Kirkman, 8vo. London, 1661. This play was altered by Mrs. Behn, and acted under the title of the 'Moor's Revenge'.
5. 'Massacre of Paris, with the death of the Duke of Guise', a Tragedy, played by the Eight Honourable the Lord...
Admiral's servants. This play is divided into acts; it begins with the fatal marriage between the King of Navarre, and Marguerite de Valois, sister to King Charles IX; the occasion of the massacre, and ends with the death of Henry III of France.

6. "Tamerlane the Great; or the Scythian Shepherd", a Tragedy in two parts, printed in an old black letter, Nov. 1593. This is said to be the worst of his productions.

Thomas Warton (1728-90) was Professor of Poetry at Oxford (1757-67), and Poet Laureate (1785-90). His "Observations on the Faerie Queen of Spenser" (1754), and his "History of English Poetry" (1774-81) both show, in addition to their general usefulness, a modest appreciation of the 'romantic' sensibility. For the extracts from the "History" concerning Marlowe, I have chosen to use the 1824 edition, with its "numerous additional notes by the late Mr. Ritson, the late Dr. Ashby, Mr. Bruce, Mr. Park, and other eminent antiquaries", since it gives useful information for the state of Marlowe scholarship and criticism during the period.

The "Elegies" of Ovid, which convey the obscenities of the brothel in elegant language, but are seldom tinctured with the sentiments of a serious and melancholy love, were translated by Christopher Marlowe below mentioned, and printed at Middelburgh without date. This book was ordered to be burnt at Stationers' hall, in 1599, by command of the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London....

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Christopher Marlowe, or Marloe, educated in elegant letters at Cambridge, Shakespeare's cotemporary on the stage, often applauded both by queen Elizabeth and king James the First, as a judicious player, esteemed for his poetry by Jonson and Shadston, and one of the most
distinguished tragic poets of his age, translated Coluthus's 'Rape of Helen' into English rhyme, in the year 1587. I have never seen it; and I owe this information to the manuscript papers of a diligent collector of these fugacious anecdotes. (i) But there is entered in Jones, in 1595, 'A booke entituled "Raptus Helenae," Helens Rape, by the Athenian duke Theseus.' (k) Coluthus's poem was probably brought into vogue, and suggested to Marlowe's notice, by being paraphrased in Latin verse the preceding year by Thomas Watson, the writer of sonnets just mentioned. (l) Before the year 1598, appeared Marlowe's translation of the "Tragedy of Hero and Leander," the elegant production of an unknown poet of Alexandria, but commonly ascribed to the antient Musaeus. It was left unfinished, but what was called a second part, which is supposed to have been published in 1598, appeared by one Henry Petowe. (m) Another edition was published, with the first book of Lucan, translated also by Marlowe, and in blank verse, in 1600. (n) At length George Chapman, the translator of Homer, completed, and printed it at London in 1606, the same year in which appeared the first edition of Marlowe's plays. It probably suggested to Shakespeare the allusion to Hero and Leander, in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," under the player's blunder of Limander and Helen, where the interlude of Thisbe is presented. (p) It has many nervous and polished verses. His tragedies manifest traces of a just dramatic conception, but they abound with tedious and uninteresting scenes, or with such extravagancies as proceeded from a want of judgment, and these barbarous ideas of the times, over which it was the peculiar gift of Shakespeare's genius alone to triumph and to predominate. (q) His 'Tragedy of Dido queen of Carthage' was completed and published by his friend Thomas Nashe, in 1594. (r)

Although Jonson mentions Marlowe's MIGHTY MUSE, yet the highest testimony Marlowe has received, is from his cotemporary Drayton; who from his own feelings was well qualified to decide on the merits of a poet. It is in Drayton's Elegy, To my dearly loved friend Henry Reynolds of Poets and Poesie.

Next Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springes,
Had in him those braue translunary thinges,
That the first poets had: his raptvres were
All air, and fire, which made his verses clear:
For that fine madness still he did retaine
Which rightly should possessse a poet's braine. (t)
In the 'Return from Parnassus', a sort of critical play, acted at Cambridge in 1606, Marlowe's antagonist, having allotted to Chaucer and grave Spenser, the highest seat in the Elizian grove of Bayes, has thus arranged Marlowe. 'In another company sat learned Atchlow and, (tho he had been a player molded out of their penes,*ftyet because he had been their lover and register to the Muse) inimitable Bentley§: these were likewise carowing out of the holy well, &c. Whilst Marlowe, Greene, and Peele, had gott under the shadow of a large vine, laughing to see Nashe, that was but newly come to their college, still haunted with the same satyrical spirit that follows him here upon earth. (x) Marlowe's wit and spriteliness of conversation had often the unhappy effect of tempting him to sport with sacred subjects; more perhaps from the preposterous ambition of courting the casual applause of profligate and unprincipled companions, than from any systematic disbelief of religion. His scepticism, whatever it might be, was construed by the prejudiced and peevish puritans into absolute atheism: and they took pains to represent the unfortunate catastrophe of his untimely death, as an immediate judgment from heaven upon his execrable impiety. (y) He was in love, and had for his rival, to use the significant words of Wood, 'a bawdy servingman, one rather fitted to be a pimp, than an ingenious amoretto, as Marlowe conceived himself to be.' (z) The consequence was, that an affray ensued; in which the antagonist having by superior agility gained an opportunity of strongly grasping Marlow's wrist, plunged his dagger with his own hand into his own head. Of this wound he died rather before the year 1593. (a)

One of Marlowe's tragedies is 'The tragical history of the life and death of doctor John Faustus,' a proof of the credulous ignorance which still prevailed, and a specimen of the subjects which then were thought not improper for tragedy. A tale which at the close of the sixteenth century had the possession of the public theatres of our metropolis, now only frightens children at a puppet-show in a country-town. But that the learned John Faust continued to maintain the character of a conjuror in the sixteenth century even by authority, appears from a 'Ballad of the life and death of doctor Faustus,' which in 1588 was licensed to be printed by the learned Aylmer bishop of London, (b) As Marlowe, being now considered as a translator, and otherwise being generally ranked only as a dramatic poet, will not occur again, I take this opportunity of remarking here, that the delicate sonnet called the Passionate
Shepherd to his Love, falsely attributed to Shakespeare, and which occurs in the third act of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' was not actually written by Marlowe. (c) Isaac Walton in his 'Compleat Angler,' a book perhaps composed about the year 1640, although not published till 1653, has inserted this sonnet, with the reply, under the character of "that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlowe, not at least fifty years ago: and — an Answer to it which was made by sir Walter Raleigh, in answer to Marlowe, also not at least fifty years ago." In 'England's Helicon,' a miscellany of the year 1600, it is printed with Christopher Marlowe's name, and followed by the reply, subscribed Ignatius, Raleigh's constant signature. (d) A page or two afterwards, it is initiated by Raleigh. That Marlowe was admirably qualified for what Mr. Mason, with a happy and judicious propriety, calls pure poetry, will appear from the following passage of his forgotten tragedy of 'Edward the Second,' written in the year 1590, and first printed in 1598. The highest entertainments, then in fashion, are contrived for the gratification of the infatuated Edward, by his profligate minion Piers Gaveston.*

Notes
i MSS. Coxeter.
* April 12. REGISTR. STATION. B. fol. 131. b.
* [Nashe in his 'Lenten Stuffe' 1599, asks whether any body in Yarmouth hath heard of Leander and Hero, of whom divine Musaeus sung, and a diviner Muse than him Kit Marlow? p. 42. It is the suggestion of Mr. Malone, that if Marlow had lived to finish his 'Hero and Leander,' he might perhaps have contested the palm with Shakespeare in his 'Venus and Adonis,' and 'Rape of Lucrece.' Shaksp. x. p. 72. edit. 1791. Marlow's translation of Ovid's 'Elegies' is noticed at p. 246. supr. - PARK.]
* For Purfoot, 4to. See Petowe's Preface, which has a high panegyric on Marlowe. He says he begun where Marlowe left off. In 1593, Sept. 28, there is an entry in the Registers of the University of Oxford, to the effect that John Wilie of Oxford, a bookseller, gave a volume of poems written by Christopher Marlowe, a translation of the entire work of Marlowe, in metre of Pope's 'Lycidas,' printed in 1699. It occurs.
again in the registers of the Stationers, in 1597, 1598, and 1600. REGISTR. STATION. A. fol. 162. a. Perhaps this is the old song of which Hamlet in joke throws out some scraps to Polonius, and which has been recovered by Mr. Steevens. 'Hamlet,' Act ii. Sc. 7. [See also Jephtha judge of Israel, in REGISTR. D. fol. 93. Dec. 14, 1624.] This is one of the pieces which Hamlet calls pious chansons, and which taking their rise from the Reformation, abounded in the reign of Elizabeth. Hence, by the way, we see the propriety of reading pious chansons, and not pons chansons, or ballads sung on bridges, with Pope. Rowe arbitrarily substituted rubric, not that the titles of old ballads were ever printed in red. Rubric came at length simply to signify title, because, in the old manuscripts, it was the custom to write the titles or heads of chapters in red ink. In the Statutes of Winchester and New College, every statute is therefore called a RUBRICA.

But this version of Lucan is entered, as above, Sept. 28, 1593, to John Wolfe, Ibid. fol. 300. b. Nor does it always appear at the end of 'Museus' in 1600. There is another edition in 1616, and 1629. 4to. The edition of 1616, with Chapman's name, and dedicated to Inigo Jones, not two inches long and scarcely one

To the joint version of Marlow and Chapman, Cokain thus alludes in his 'Remedy for Love':

MUSAEUS Englished by two poets shun;
It may undo you though it be well done.

Dr. Anderson, however, is of opinion, that the work is worthy of republication. British Poets. 4to. There is another edition in 1616, and 1629. The edition of 1616, with Chapman's name, and dedicated to Inigo Jones, not two inches long and scarcely one
broad, is the most diminutive product of English typo-
graphy. But it appears a different work from the edi-
tion of 1606. The 'Ballad of Hero and Leander' is
entered to J. White, Jul. 2, 1614. REGISTR. STATION.
c. fol. 252. a. Burton, an excellent Grecian, having
occasion to quote MUSÆUS, cites Marlowe's version,
'Melancholy,' pag. 372. seq. fol. edit. 1624.
qu.Be in his Essay prefixed to Marlowe's 'Dido,'
his works he quotes the play. Mr. Malone is of opinion,
from a similarity of style, that the Tragedy of
'Locrine,' published in 1595, attributed to Shakes-
peare, was written by Marlowe. HENRY VI. i. 184.
He conjectures also Marlowe to be the author of
the old 'King John.' Ibid. i. 182. And of 'Titus
Andronicus,' and of the lines spoken by the players in
the 'Winter's Tale.' Ibid. i. 371.
r In quarto. At London, by the widow Orwin, for Thomas
Woodcocke. Played by the children of the chapel. It
begins,
'Come gentle Ganimed('*
It has been frequently confounded with John Right-
wise's play on the same subject performed at saint
Paul's School before Cardinal Wolsey, and afterwards
before queen Elizabeth at Cambridge, in 1564.
(I doubt whether any play that had been acted before
Cardinal Wolsey, could be performed again before
queen Elizabeth, on any such occasions I believe they never
exhibited stale or second-hand goods, but fresh for
the nonce.)

We find no mention of the last tragic of Dido
and Aeneas, performed at Oxford, in 1585, before
the prince Alaco. (See supra. iii. 273.) One must Realist
days to the First Player on this favorite story. In
1598, was entered 'a ballet of a lover blemplacing his
Fortuna by Dido and Aeneas for the same romance,'
REGISTR. STATION. iv. fol. 128. p. n. The same play,
REGISTR. STATION. iv. fol. 129. p. 1. In old ballads we read the name of queen Dido. Perhaps
from some ballad on the subject, Shakespeare took his
idea of Dido standing with a willow in her hand on the
sea-shore, and beckoning Aeneas back to Carthage.
'Merchant of Venice.' ACT v. Sc. i. Shakespeare has also
strangely falsified Dido's story, in the S. P. of
'King Henry the Sixth,' ACT iii. Sc. ii. I have before
mentioned the interlude of Dido and Aeneas at Chester.
s Langbaine, who cites these lines without naming its
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Know their author, by a pleasant mistake has printed this word sublunary. 'Dram. Poets,' p. 324. That Marlowe was a favorite with Jonson, appears from the Preface to one Bosworth's poems, who says, that Jonson used to call the mighty lines of Marlowe's 'Museum' fitter for admiration than parallel. Thomas Heywood, who published Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta,' in 1635, wrote the Preface, spoken at the Cockpit, in which Marlowe is held up to admiration, and in praise of his 'Museus,' which was in this play that Allen, the founder of Dulwich college, acted the Jew with so much applause.

Hawkins's 'Old PI.' iii. p. 215. Lond. 1607. But it is entered in 1605, Oct. 18, to J. Wright, where it is said to have been acted at Saint John's. REGISTR. v. fol. 130. b. See other contemporary testimonies of this author, in 'Old Plays.' (in 12 vol.) Lond. 1780. 12mo. vol. ii. 308.

Another edition of this tract, with our parts, inser- thres at this place 'learned Watson, industrious Kyd, and ingenious Atchlow.' Watson has been mentioned as a sonneteer, and Kyd was a writer of tragedy. - PARK.

Nash thus speaks of Bentley, in his 'Prince Penni- esses,' after noticing Ned Allen and the principal actors. - 'If I write any thing in Latine (as I hope one day I shall), not a man of any desert here neglect us, but I will have up: - Tarlton, Knell, Bentley, shall be made known to France, Spain, and Italy,' &c. Bentley, in his Apology, celebrates 'Knell, Amstey, Wilson, and Lanam, as players who by parts as distinct, that it were a sin to drown their works in Lethe.' John Bentley is introduced by Ritson in 'Bibl. Poetica,' as the author of a few short poems in an ancient MS. belonging to Samuel Lysons, Esq. Robert Mills, a schoolmaster of Stamford, has various verses in one of Rawlinson's MS. in the Bodleian library, entitled 'Miscellanea Poetica.' - PARK.

'A Knight's Conjuring,' Signât. L. 1607. 4to. To this company Henry Chettle is admitted, [See supr. p. 116.] and is saluted in bumpers of Mollicon on his arrival. 'In comes Chettle, sweating and blowing, by reason of his fatten in hempers of Mollicon on his arrival. 'In comes Chettle, sweating and blowing, by reason of his fatten in hempers of Mollicon on his arrival. And 'Account of the blasphemies and damnable
opinions of Christ. Marley and 3 others, who came to a
sudden and fearful end of this life.* MSS. HARL.
6853.80. fol. 320.

[For the sake of exposing Mr. Warton's urbane though
injudicious apology for the atheism of Marlowe, this
paper was printed in Ritson's Observations, and it too
gloriously exhibits the diabolical tenets and debauched
morals of unhappy Christoph[er] Marlow. - PARK.]

y "Athen. Oxon." i. 338. See Meres, "Wits Tr." fol. 287.

z Marston seems to allude to this catastrophe, 'Certaine
Satyres.' Lond. for Edmund Morte, 1598, 12mo. SAT. ii.

Tis looser-leg'd lads, that same common drab,
For whom good Tubro tooke the mortal stab.

By the way, Marlowe in his 'Edward the Second,' seems
to have ridiculed the puritans under the character of
the scholar Spencer, who 'sits at a table end, wears a little hood, buttoned like pins heads, and
's is curate-like in his attire,

Through inwardly licentious enough.'

It is at least probable, that Marlow dressed his
scholar from what he saw wore in or before the year
1593, small conical buttons &c. were then the prevail-
ing fashion. See the pictures of Lord Southampton, Sir
Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh, who were 'curate-
like' in his attire. - ASHBY.

a Entered, I think for the first time, to T. Bushell,
Jan. 7, 1600. REGISTR. STATION. C. fol. 67. b. Or
rather 1610, Sept 13, to J. Wright. Ibid. fol. 199. b.

[The Nymphs Reply to the passionate Shepherd, is in
'England's Helicon.' Isaac Walton informs us, that
this reply was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his young-
er days. Mr. Warton observes, that this Reply is sub-
scribed IGNOTO, Raleigh's constant signature. Another
very able critic (Ritson) contends that this signature
was affixed by the publisher to express by it his
ignorance of the author's name. Mr. Warton, however,
has perhaps good reason for his opinion though he
neglected to adduce them; and it is to be observed,
that in Mr. Steevens's copy of the first edition of England's Helicon, the original signature was W. R.;
the second subscription of IGNOTO (which has been
followed in the subsequent editions) being rather
awkwardly pasted over it. Caley's Life of Raleigh.

H [It seems somewhat remarkable that Marlow, in describ-
ing the pleasures which Gaveston contrived to debauch
the infatuated Edward, should exactly employ those
which were exhibited before the sage Elizabeth. But
to her they were only occasional and temporary relaxa-
tions.] AMMV.

25. JOSEPH RITSON

Joseph Ritson (1752-1803) was a combative and eccentric
antiquary and a morose vegetarian, editor of important
collections of popular poetry, and author of many works
consulted with profit by students of the literary tradi-
tion, for example, 'Bibliographia Poetica' (1802). His
censure of Warton's 'History' was based on his opinion
that it was 'a tolerable specimen of the numerous errors,
fallacies, and plagiarisms, of which he had been guilty
in the course of his History*.' For the benefit of those
influenced by Warton's tolerant account of Marlowe's
opinions, he reproduced, after the preface below, the
'Note* of Richard Baines (No. 4).

From 'Observations on the Three First Volumes of the
History of English Poetry in a Familiar Letter to the
Author' (1782), 38 ff.

A great deal has been said about Marlow, his opinions and
evil, from age to age; from Beard to Warton: the oldest
writers (*prejudiced and peevish Puritans*) directly
arraigned him of atheism and blasphemy; and those of more
modern times (pious and orthodox churchmen) generously
labour to rescue his character either by boldly denying,

or artfully extenuating the crimes alleged against him
but not an iota of evidence has been produced on either
side. I have a great respect for Marlow as an ingenious
poet, but I have a much higher regard for truth and jus-
tice; and will therefore take the liberty to produce the
strongest (if not the whole) proof that now remains of his
diabolical views, and debased morals: and if you, Mr.
Warton, still choose to think him innocent of the charge,
I shall be very glad to see him thoroughly white-washed in
your next edition. The paper is transcribed from an old
MS. in the Harleian library, cited in one of your notes,
and was never before printed.

[Baines's 'Note' follows, 60-1.]
Thomas Dermody (1775-1802) was born in Ennis, County Clare, went to Dublin to become a poet, and died of dissipation. His collected poems were published in 1807.

From "The Pursuit of Patronage", in "Poems: Moral and Descriptive" (1800), 55.

Who, led by sweet Simplicity aside
From pageants that we gaze at to deride,
Has not, while wilder'd in the bow'ry grove,
0ft sigh'd: 'Come, live with me, and be my love'?

Yet, oh', be love transformed to deadly hate,
As freezes memory at Marlow's fate:
Disastrous bard, by too much passion warm'd,
His fervid breast a menial beauty charm'd;

Nor, vers'd in arts deceitful woman knows,
Saw he the prospect of his future woes.
Vain the soft plaint, that sordid breast to fire
With warmth refin'd or elegant desire;
Vain his melodious magic, to impart
Affections foreign to th' unfeeling heart;
In guardless ecstacy's delicious glow,
He sinks beneath a vassal murd'rer's blow.

O'er his dread fate my kindred spirit stands
Smit with commutual wound, and Pity wrings her hands.
Ah', had some genial ray of bounty shone
On talents that but lack'd its aid alone,
Had some soft pennon of protection spread
Its eider plumage o'er that hapless head,
What emanations of the beauteous mind
Had deck'd thy works, the marvel of mankind:
Snatch'd from low-thoughted Care thy stooping soul,
And plac'd thee radiant on Fame's deathless roll;
Where still anneal'd, thy own unequall'd strain
Shall crown'd by sensibility remain!

27. CHARLES LAMB
1808

Charles Lamb (1775-1834), schoolfellow and friend of Coleridge, clerk in India House for more than thirty years, is best remembered for the ‘Essays of Elia’ (1823). The ‘Specimens’ was influential in establishing a romantic sentiment about Marlowe. Lamb loved old books. From ‘Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the Time of Shakespeare’ (ed. 1835), I, 19-45.

[Lamb reproduces an extract from ‘Lamb’s Rambles’: the descriptions of the hero in ‘Tamburlaine’, II, i, 3-23, 35-66; IV, ii, 1 ff.; ‘Melos, a popgun’d jade’, etc.; Gaveston’s invitation to delights in ‘Edward II’, I, i, 71; the deposition scene (IV, i) of that play, and the murder (IV, v, 44 ff.); the opening soliloquy of Barabas in ‘The Jew of Malta’, I, i, 1-47; and the final scenes of ‘Doctor Faustus’.]

The lunes of Tamburlaine are perfect ‘midsummer madness.’ Nebuchadnezzar’s are mere modest pretensions compared with the thundering vaunts of this Scythian Shepherd. He comes in (in the Second Part) drawn by conquered kings, and reproaches those pampered jades of Asia that they can draw but twenty miles a day. Till I saw this passage with my own eyes, I never believed that it was anything more than a pleasant burlesque of Mine Ancient’s. But I assure my readers that it is soberly set down in a Play which their Ancestors took to be serious. I have subjoined the genuine speech for their amusement. Other Tamburlaines, drawn...
in his chariot by Trebizon and Soria, with bits in their mouths, reins in his left hand, in his right hand a whip, with which he scourgeth them.

This tragedy is in a very different style from 'mighty Tamburlaine.' The reluctant pangs of abdicating Royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his Richard the Second; and the death-scene of Marlowe's King II. is as terrible as any in ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted.

Marlowe's Jew does not approach so near to Shakspeare's as his Edward II. does to Richard II. (Ripplack, in the midst of his savage purpose, is a man. His motives, feelings, resentment, have something human in them. 'If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?' Bardem is a mere monster, brought in with a large painted nose, to scare the rabble. He kills children, poisoners, and murderers; he invents infernal machines. He is just such an exhibition as a century or two earlier might have been played before the Londoners, by the Royal command, when a general pil-lage and massacre of the Hebrews had been previously resolved on in the cabinet. It is curious to see a superstition wearing out: the idea of a Jew (which our pious ancestors contemplated with such horror) has nothing in it now revolting. We have tamed the claws of the beast, and pared its nails, and now we take it to our arms, fondle it, write plays to flatter it: it is visited by princes, affects a taste, patronises the arts, and is the only liberal and gentleman-like thing in Christendom...
familiarly, which would be death to others. Milton, in the person of Satan has started speculations fiercer than those of the little ballets of the gallant stock; and the precise stern-faced Richardson has strengthened Vice, from the mouth of Lovelace, with entangling sophistries and abstruse pleas against her adversary Virtue, which Sedley, Villiers, and Rochester, wanted depth of Libertinism sufficient to have invented.

28. REVIVAL OF 'THE JEW OF MALTA' BY EDMUND KEAN
1818

A thorough discussion of this revival, on 34 April 1818, at Drury Lane, by Edmund Kean (1789-1833), the reigning tragic actor of that age, may be found in James L. Smith, 'The Jew of Malta' in the Theatre, 'Christopher Marlowe' (Mermaid Critical Commentaries), ed. Brian Morris (1968), 7-11. Kean and his collaborator, Samson Penley, tore the play apart and re-shaped it as a vehicle for Kean's playing 'the noble alien monstrously wronged and magnificently revenged'. I reproduce here extracts from two contemporary reviews, and a retrospective comment from a life of Kean.

(a) From an unsigned review in 'Blackwood's Magazine' (May 1818), iii, 309-09.

"The Jew of Malta" is, on many accounts, a very curious and interesting work. It is undoubtedly the foundation and model of all subsequent dramatic poems, and yet it possesses claims to no common admiration for itself. For, besides the high poetical claims it exhibits, it may be considered as the first regular and consistent English drama; the first consistent and successful attempt to embody that dramatic unity which had till then been totally neglected or overlooked. The dramatic poem which preceded the "Jew of Malta" could be called a mere collection of events, instead of relating them. The poet, instead of telling a story himself, introduced various persons to speak their own thoughts and feelings, as they might be supposed to arise from certain events and circumstances;
but his characters, for the most part, expressed them-
selves in a style and language moulded and tinctured by
his particular habits of thinking and feeling.

Marlow was the first poet before Shakespeare who
possessed any thing like real dramatic genius, or who
seemed to have any distinct notion of what a drama should
be, as distinguished from every other kind of poetical
compositions. It is with some hesitation that we dissent
from the opinion of an able writer in this Magazine, in
thinking that the 'Jew of Malta' is Marlow's best play.

Not that we like it better than the 'Faustus' or 'Edward II.',
but it is better as a play. There is more variety
of character, and more of moral purpose, in the 'Edward II.',
and the Faustus exhibits loftier and more impres-
sioned poetry; but neither of these plays possess, in so
great a degree as this one before us, that rare, and when
judiciously applied, most important quality, which we have
called dramatic unity, - that tending of all its parts to
engender and sustain the same kind of feeling throughout.

In the 'Jew of Malta', the characters are all, without
exception, wicked, in the common acceptance of the term.

Barabas, the Governor, Ithamore, the Friars, Abigail, to
compass their own short-sighted views, all set moral re-
straint at defiance, and they are all unhappy, - and their
unhappiness is always brought about by their own guilt.

We cannot agree with many persons in thinking, that this
play is without a moral purpose; or that Barabas is a mere
monster, and not a man. We cannot allow, that even Itha-
more is gratuitously wicked. There is no such thing in
nature - least of all in human nature, and Marlow knew
this. It is true that Ithamore appears to be so at first
sight. He finds it a pleasant pastime to go about and
kill men and women who have never injured him. But it
must not be forgotten that he is a slave; and a slave
should no more be expected to keep a compact with the
kind from which he is cut off, than a demon or a wild
beast. Who shall limit the effects of slavery on the
human mind? Let those answer for the crimes of Ithamore
who broke the link that united him to his species. For a
more full account of this play in its original state, we
refer the reader to Vol. II. p. 260, of this Magazine.

The alterations in the 'Jew of Malta', as it has now
been performed, are chiefly confined to omissions, with
the exception of a long and tedious scene between Lodowick
and his brother, in which the Governor describes to
the audience the story of his love for Abigail, the Jew’s daughter, which adds not nearly any thing
about. What could be the inducement to change the fine
and characteristic commencement of the original, in which
we are at once introduced to Barabas in his counting-house, among his gold? Lodowick and Mathias are very uninteresting and intrusive people at best; and it is quite time enough to be troubled with them when the author wants them to serve to heighten his principal character. But it is a remarkable fact, that managers of theatres seem to have lost the true purposes and bearings of the dramatic art to any other given set of people whatever. After saying this generally, it is but fair to add, that we noticed two slight alterations in this play, which seemed to strike something that looked almost like genius.

In the third act, after having purchased the slave Ithamore, in order to ascertain whether he will suit his purpose, Barabas desired to know his 'birth, condition, and profession.' Ithamore answers, that his profession is any thing his new master pleases. 'Hast thou no trade?' says Barabas; 'then listen to my words;' and then, after counselling him to discard all natural affections, proceeds, in a horrible and most unnatural speech, to sum up all his own past crimes, by describing how he has been accustomed to employ his time.

As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights, And kill sick people groaning under walls: Sometimes I go about and poison wells, &c. Instead of omitting this speech altogether in the acted play, Barabas is made (aside) to feign that he has done all this, in order to try Ithamore's disposition. This is a very happy thought; and the answer of Ithamore is not less so. Instead of echoing back in a boasting confession of the same kind of guilt, as he does in the original, Ithamore, with a low and savage cunning worthy of the character, hints, generally, that he knows and has practised better tricks, to plague mankind, than even those his master has just spoken of, but that 'none shall know them.' We consider both these as very lucky hits, though not likely to tell, or even be noticed in the representation. We willingly offer the credit of them, wherever it is due.

The other chief alterations from the original, are the omission of every thing relating to the poisoning of the nuns, and some change, not much for the better, in the manner of Barabas's death. We think the play, upon the whole, greatly injured by the alterations, and see no reason for any of them except those we have alluded to, and they are only stated to the closer. The performance flags very much during the second and third acts, and is not likely
to become a favourite with the public. The whole weight of the play lies upon Mr Kean. No one has a single line that can be made anything of in the way of acting. The character of Barabas is, as far as it goes, still enough adapted to display some of Mr Kean's peculiar powers, but not those of the highest or rarest kind. In some parts, however, — and these the very best, — he made more of the character than the author has done. There was something very fine and aquellific in his manner of delivering that admirable speech at the beginning of the second act, where he goes before daylight to seek for Abigail, who is to bring him the concealed remnant of his treasures.

Thus, like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings,
Vexed and tormented runs poor Barabas
With fatal curses towards these Christians, &c.

The next speech is still finer than this; and Mr Kean's manner of delivering was beautifully stentive and impressive.

Now I remember those old women's words,
Who, in my wealth, would tell me winter's tales,
And speak of spirits and ghosts that glide by night
About the place where treasure hath been hid;
And now methinks that I am one of these:
For whilst I live, here lives my soul's sole hope,
And when I die, here shall my spirit walk.

Also, when Barabas recovers the gold he has concealed, nothing could surpass the absolute dilution of drunkard joy with which he gives the speech, — or rather the string of exclamations in the same scene, beginning 'Oh, my girl, my gold!' &c.

But surely, when Barabas wrou'st us as Elia on the character would adopt of its being made, but it bore no more comparison to that of Shylock, than the play of the 'Jew of Malta' does to the 'Merchant of Venice'.

We would willingly omit to notice the song that Mr Kean was made to sing, when disguised as the minstrel. This contemptible degradation could never be of his own choosing. He has a voice of such perfect purity and excellence, that it would not do to waste it on such trifles. Had he been an artist in himself, or his private friends, in this way, in the name of all that's pleasant, let him. But his public fame should not be trifled with for 'an old song,' much less for a new one.
April 24. Marlowe's tragedy of "The Jew of Malta" was revived this evening. This we conceive to be a fairer description of the performance than appeared in the printed bills, where it was called "a play founded on Marlowe's tragedy." In fact, the variations from the original plot, if any, are too inconsiderable to be noticed, and the variations from that source are not at all in the nature of interference. There may, perhaps, be an old scene here and there, belonging to the modern author, but they are neither numerous nor conspicuous enough to establish a partnership in that production, with respect to which he can claim little more than the credit of having recommend ed it. The tragedy itself is pretty generally known; but the variations from the original plot, if any, are too inconsiderable to be noticed, and the variations from that source are not at all in the nature of interference. The events in which he is concerned are various, the motives by which he is actuated are terrific, but whether from the recollection of Shakespeare's Shylock, or from a distaste to the simplicity of our antient writers, or, as we would rather hope, from a disinclination to recognize within the limits of probability the multitude of atrocities ascribed to the Jew, he does not make that impression upon the whole which was to be expected from so great a name. We are now alluding merely to the Play, for if ever there was an instance when the acting was likely to overbear all objections in the production itself, it was that of Mr. Kean as Barabas. Unfortunately for the general impression of the Tragedy, the first act was that in which he had more scope for display. Perhaps there is no act taken altogether, in any of the numerous parts he has already performed, which exhibits a more favorable and continued specimen of his wonderful powers. But the succeeding ones are by no means equal to the first, and he has not that power of maintaining a consistent and artificial, that we doubt whether there is another performer on the stage who could have saved it from a laugh. Not only did he succeed in doing so, but in commencing to it in a high degree of tragic solemnity. It would require more time than we can devote to it at present, to enumerate the different instances in which he succeeded, but to mention a few, we would select his deportment before the Senate, where commanded to surrender half his wealth, his directions to his daughter where his treasure lay concealed, his soliloquy descriptive of the prosperity of his tribe,
his joy on receiving the money bags, and that spirit of insatiable revenge which he kept constantly before the audience, from the rising until the falling of the curtain. He sang a song in the disguise of a harper, which produced a very powerful effect, and was rapturously encored. Our readers will readily suppose that this vocal undertaking was more remarkable for its taste than its compass; and if the piece should become popular, it will owe that popularity to Mr. Kean. This is the only character in the play which, in our opinion, is worth mentioning. The applause, which was vehement in the first act, became more moderate as the play advanced, until at the end it broke out with all its former vehemence. We had nearly forgotten to mention Ithamore, performed by Mr. Harley, whose character forms an exception to the general censure we passed upon the subordinate personages. Though not of the tragic cast, it was an original and impressive portrait, and was extremely well sustained. The piece was announced for repetition with loud and continued applause.

April 30. Mr. Kean performed the part of Barabas, in 'The Jew of Malta', with his usual spirit this evening, but having resisted a very general encore at the conclusion of the Harper's song, the audience testified their disapprobation by opposing the further progress of the piece. Mr. Kent came forward in this juncture, and stated on the part of Mr. Kean, that he felt himself so much indisposed as to be scarcely able to go through the remainder of the character. This explanation restored the good humour which was for a moment suspended, and the piece proceeded to its conclusion with much applause.

(c) From F. W. Hawkins, 'The Life of Edmund Kean' (1869), I, 39-43.

The production of this tragedy, considering that it had experienced a total and incomprehensible neglect of two centuries, was certainly the most hazardous experiment in the whole series of Kean's revivals, inasmuch as the poetical power, fervid passion, and wild grandeur characteristic of Marlowe's works but ill compensate the playgoer for the imperfect construction of his plots, the disorder and improbability of his incidents, and the alternate reality and insignificance with which his characters are impressed. The 'Jew of Malta' exhibits more of his defects than any of the other six plays from his pen that have descended to posterity; it is powerless to enchain that absorbed and riveted interest with which we contemplate his 'Faust' (the prototype of Goethe's) on the brink of everlasting
ruin; or move us to that pity and terror which redeem his
'Edward II'. from the disgust otherwise provoked by his
irresolution and effeminacy. The character of Barabbas is
obviously drawn to second and stimulate the popular hatred
against the Jews of the Elizabethan period, and, in fur-
therance of this intention, Marlowe has compounded him of
the most malignant passions which can agitate the human
breast, without one shade of natural feeling or worthy
impulse to relieve the inherent gloom associated with the
stubborn line of his disposition. These are the qualities,
that beautiful element of humanity which pervades the
actions, those ever-glancing lights and shadows which
make the Shylock of Shakespeare "more than half a Christ-
ian"! The 'Jew of Malta' can no longer retain a hold of
the stage when the combined influences of philosophy and
civilization touch us to remember that -

On every sect pernicious passions fall,
And vice and virtue reign alike in all.

The play is almost exclusively occupied with the develop-
ment and fulfilment of schemes organized by Barabbas in
revenge for the deprivation of his wealth by the Governor
of Malta. Alleyn, its original representative, succeeded, we are told, in
throwing around it a sort of dignity, but after his death it quickly faded from the memory, and the play was
steadily ever heard of until Kean recalled it into a
transient vitality. In its revival much of the rancour
against the Jews which sully Marlowe's pages was expur-
gated; all expressions incompatible with a better sense
of morality and refinement than that of the Elizabethan
period was removed; and the quaint and obsolete phraseo-
logy with which the original abounds was corrected and
modernized. There was no intention to insult the general
body of the Jews by producing the play during the feast of
the Passover, as was supposed at the time, for it was
expressly stated in the prologue that it was foreign to
the intention of the revivers to attach any stigma or
opprobrium to the Hebrew name. Kean's Barabbas was a very
fine and impressive performance. He illumined and rend-
ered tolerable a dark and gloomy portrait, and it only
needs to record this fact to convey the highest eulogy on
his acting. He seized upon every passage that could dif-
fuse an air of truth and probability around the character
with instinctive discrimination. If ever there was an
instance where the acting of a principal performer overbore
all obstacles in the production itself, it was that of
Kean in Barabbas. His deportment before the senate when
commanded to surrender his wealth; his bitter execration on its confiscation; his directions to his daughter where his treasure lay concealed; the soliloquy descriptive of the persecution of his tribe; and the scene where the discovery of the gold and jewels enabled him to resume his former splendour and means of mischief, were treated in a manner possible only to the highest order of Historic superiority. Nothing could have been finer than the absolute delirium of drunken joy with which he burst out, 'Oh, my girl, - my gold!' The heaviness of the fourth act was finely relieved by a song warbled by the tragedian in the disguise of a harper. It was executed à merveille, and produced a powerful effect.

Note

1 Superbly.

29. WILLIAM HAZLITT

1820

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was a vivid and formidable figure in the literary life of his time, associate and interpreter of his Romantic contemporaries. He was a liberal in politics, life and criticism, and his comments on Marlowe constitute part of his tribute to a literary heritage which he found undervalued. From Lectures chiefly on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth, in 'Complete Works', ed. P. P. Howe, VI (1931). 175-6, 202-3, 207, 209-10, 211.

Perhaps the genius of Great Britain (if I may so speak without offence or flattery), never shone out fuller or brighter, or looked more like itself, than at this period. Our writers and great men had something in them that was peculiar to themselves; they were not French, they were not Dutch, or Greek, or Latin; they were not truly English. They did not look out of themselves to see what they should be, they sought for truth and nature, and found it in themselves. There was
as tinsel, and but little arts; they were not the spoiled children of affectation and refinement, but a bold, vigor-
ous race of thinkers, with prodigious strength and energy, with none but natural grace, and heartfelt unobtrusive delicacy. They were not at all sophisticated. The mind of their country was great in
them, and it prevailed. With their learning and unex-
pected acquirements, they did not forget that they were men:
with all their endeavours after excellence, they did not
lay aside the strong original bent and character of their
minds. What they performed was chiefly nature's handy-
work, and time has claimed it for his own. To these,
however, might be added others not less learned, nor with
a scarce less happy vein, but less fortunate in the event,
who, though as renowned in their day, have sunk into 'mere
oblivion' and of whom the only record (but that the nob-
est) is to be found in their works. Their works and
their names, 'poor, poor dumb names,' are all that remains
of such men as Webster, Dekker, Marston, Marlow, Chapman,
Heywood, Middleton, and Rowley. 'Now love, how hono-
red once, falls from us;' though they were the friends and
fellow-workers of Shakespeare, sharing his fame and for-
tunes with him, the victors ofScenario, and the masters of
Beaumont and Fletcher's well-sung woes. They went out one
by one unnoticed, like evening lights; or were swallowed
up in the headlong torrent of puritanic zeal which sur-
ceded, and swept away every thing, in its unerring
course, throwing up the wrecks of taste and genius at
random, and at long fitful intervals, amidst the painted
gew-gaws and foreign frippery of the reign of Charles II.
Mr. Spence, in his fragments and broken images to erect a
temple to true Fame. How long, before it will be completed?

Marlowe is a name that stands high, and almost first in
this list of dramatic worthies. He was a little before
Shakespeare's time, and has a marked character both from
him and the rest. There is a lust of power in his writ-
ings, a hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, a glow of
the imagination, unhallowed by anything but its own ener-
gies. His thoughts burn within him like a furnace with
bickering flames; or throwing out black smoke and mists,
that hide the dawn of genius, or like a poisonous mineral,
corrode the heart. His 'Life and Death of Doctor Faustus,'
though an imperfect and unequal performance, is his great-
est work. Faustus himself is a rude sketch, but it is a
gigantic one. This character may be considered as a per-
sonification of the pride of will and eagerness of curio-
sity, sublimed beyond the reach of fear and remorse. He
is hurried away, and, as it were, devoured by a howling
desires to enlarge his knowledge to the utmost bounds of nature and art, and to extend his power with his knowledge. He would realise all the fictions of a lawless imagination, would solve the most subtle speculations of abstract reason, and for this purpose, sets at defiance all mortal consequences, and leagues himself with demoniacal power, with 'fate and metaphysical aid.' The idea of witchcraft and necromancy, once the dread of the vulgar and the darling of the visionary recluse, seems to have

as the result of the character is grand and daring, the execution is abrupt and fearful. The thoughts are vast and irregular; and the style halts and staggers under them, 'with uneasy steps'; — 'such footing found the sole of unblest feet.' There is a little fustian and incongruity of metaphor now and then, which is not very injurious to the subject.... The intermediate comic parts, in which Faustus is not directly concerned, are mean and grovelling to the last degree. One of the Clowns says to another:

'With weary stage! — *each forcing fust the sole of unblest feet.*' There is a little fustian and incongruity of metaphor now and then, which is not very injurious to the subject.... The intermediate comic parts, in which Faustus is not directly concerned, are mean and grovelling to the last degree. One of the Clowns says to another:

'Wilt thou what hast got there? A book? Why thou canst not tell me what a word on 't.' Indeed, the ignorance and barbarism of the time, as here described, might almost justify Faustus's overstrained admiration of learning, and took the more to heart, because it was but an excitement, so the Indians are made drunk with wine.' Goethe, the German poet, has written a drama on this tradition of his country, which is considered a masterpiece.
or impiety attributed to him, unless the beliefs in witchcraft and the Devil can be regarded as such; and at the time he wrote, not to have believed in both, would have been construed into the rankest atheism and irreligion. There is a delight, as Mr. Lamb says, 'in dallying with interdicted subjects;' but that does not, by any means, imply either a practical or speculative disbelief of them.

'Edward II.' is, according to the modern standard of criticism, Marlowe's best play. It is written with few offences against the common rules, and in a succession of smooth and flowing lines. The poet however succeeds less in the voluptuous and effeminate descriptions which he here attempts, than in the more dreadful and violent bursts of passion. 'Edward II.' is wrote with historic truth, but without much domestic effect. The management of the characters is feeble and desultory; the interludes and some of the escapes or narratives which are related in the various scenes of fate; the characters are too worthless, have too little energy, and their punishment is, in general, too well deserved, to excite our commiseration; so that this play will bear, on the whole, but a distant comparison with Shakespear's 'Richard II.' in conduct, power, or effect.

But the death of Edward II, in the play, is certainly superior to that of Shakespear's King; and in heart-breaking distress, and the sense of human weakness, claiming pity from utter helplessness and conscious misery, is not surpassed by any writer what- ever.

I do not think 'The Rich Jew of Malta' so characteristic of this writer's powers. It has not the same fierce glow of passion or expression. It is extreme in act, and outrageous in plot and catastrophe; but it has not the same vigorous filling up. The author seems to have relied on the horror inspired by the subject, and the national disgust excited against the principal character, to excite the feelings of the audience; for the rest, it is a tissue of gratuitous, unprovoked, and incredible atrocities, which are committed, one upon the back of the other, by the parties concerned, without motive, passion, or object. There are, notwithstanding, some striking passages in it, as Barabbas's description of the brave, Phillus Borum; the relation of his own unaccountable villanies to Ithamore; his exulting over his recovered jewels 'as the morning lark sings over her young;' and the backwardness he declares in himself to forgive the Christian injuries that are offered him, which may have given the idea of one of Shylock's speeches, where he ironically disclaims any enmity to the merchants on the same account. It is perhaps better fair to compare the 'Jew of Malta' with the
"Merchant of Venice"; for it is evident, that Shakespeare's genius shews to as much advantage in knowledge of character, variety and stage-effect, as it does in point of general humanity....

Note
* He died about 1594.

JOHN PAYNE COLLIER
1820

John Payne Collier (1789-1883) was a research scholar of great industry and unusual gifts, contributor to the publications of the Camden Society, the Percy Society, and the Shakespeare Society, editor of an annotated Shakespearian text which he made available to the public in an immense number of documents subject to suspicion. The brief extracts below, from early contributions to the "Edinburgh Review", are conventional and free of "discoveries".

From the "Edinburgh Review" (June 1820), vi, 521; (August 1820), vii, 151-2.

[Collier quotes 1 "Tamb.", IV, ii, 1-40, and proceeds:]

It is not to be denied that this address of "Tamburlaine" is extravagant, perhaps bombastic; but besides the author's purpose to surprise by striking novelty, we ought to take into account the country in which his scene principally lies - Persia - the seat of grandeur and luxury; and in order to keep up mass probability, according to existing notions, Marlowe was obliged to make his language correspond with the nature of the scene, and the properties of the characters represented. As for any
The rhodomontades put into the mouth of Tamburlaine, (for they are confined almost exclusively to him,) they are not half so exaggerated and wind-swollen as the sentiments Dryden has in many places given to his favourite Almanzor in "The Conquest of Granada." Nathan Lee's "Alexander the Great" has also gone beyond it in several well known instances; and if Marlowe has represented his hero as drawn in his car by captive princes, he but complied with the popular notion of the character of Tamburlaine and the truth of history, as far as either was known to audiences at theatres. I will venture to assert, that there is nothing from the beginning to the end of the two parts of "Tamburlaine" to compare with the absurd, not to say ridiculous, loose speeches of Cethegus in Ben Jonson's "Catiline." How often has豪on been lashed for the inflated and disgusting picture he has given of the slaughters of Marius and Sylla; but Ben Jonson has not only put the whole of it into the mouth of Cethegus, but he has out-heroded Herod in the accumulation of bloated epithets and offensive impossibilities. I could easily verify what is stated by quotations, but they would lead us out of the way, and are perhaps unnecessary. Recollecting, with Dryden, that Marlowe's "raptures were all air and fire," and that he was gifted with that "fine madness," with which poets' brains ought to be possessed, we may read the subsequent description of Zenocrate, the mistress of Tamburlaine, with much admiration.

[Quotes i 'Tamb.', V, ii, 72-110.]

The other dramatic productions in which Marlowe was alone concerned are five in number, and as we have before alluded to the general change he conceived from verse to blank verse, from low comedy to stately tragedy, and subsequently from inflated bombast to a more refined and chastened style, it is comparatively easy to trace the course and progress of his muse. His plays were all printed at very different dates, between 1590 to 1657; but the order in which they were written may be arrived at without much difficulty or uncertainty. His first efforts were, doubtless, that the examination of which we have just completed, and his last, his "Edward II.," which, as a historical play, has been recommended it to the "True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York," with many of the materials of which Shakespeare constructed his "Henry VI." Part 3. All Marlowe's other pieces are in various gradations of improvement, with the exception, perhaps, of "The Massacre
of Paris,' which was obviously a work of great haste, and got up for the purpose of gratifying the vulgar feeling against popery of the time. Nor is there anything to recommend it, and I forbear to quote from it, because though its execrations may render it curious, it would throw but a faint light on this undertaking. I may say, however, that the plot, as far as it deserves the name, is most irregularly conducted, and is little better than mere bustle and confusion, and incongruity from beginning to end. Scarcely a single poetical passage is to be found in it; and though the name of Marlow be upon the title-page, I feel satisfied that it is merely the imposition of the bookseller, availing himself of the popularity of so esteemed a poet.

On the other hand, 'The Tragical Historie of Dr Faustus,' 'The Rich Jew of Malta,' 'Lusts Dominion,' and the English historical play of 'Edward II.' all possess, in a greater or less degree, strong claims to our admiration. The first of these has had justice done to it in Mr Lamb's 'Specimens,' where several characteristic extracts are inserted. It is well known that the greatest living poet of Germany has constructed a tragedy upon the same story. There is one circumstance in Marlow's play of 'Faustus' which is receiving much attention - the representation of the Pope of Rome descending the throne of the exalted Mahomet. In 'Faustus,' the Pope is made to employ the same kind of footstool in ascending his chair, using the back of the 'Saxon Bruno,' who had put in claim to the See of Rome. Of 'The Rich Jew of Malta' I shall say nothing, because it has recently been introduced upon the public stage, where Kean represented Barabas. 'Lusts Dominion, or the Lascivious Queen,' contains some beautiful poetry and harmonious versification, though here and there we find traces of that bombastic style Marlow at first employed to gratify his audiences: thus, in one place, Eleazar, the Moor, tells his king,

My liege, the tongue of true obedience
Must not gainsay the sovereign's impose:
By heaven, I will not kiss the cheek of sleep
Till I have fetched those traitors to the court.

This puffing-up stuff may well be contrasted with such delightful passages as the following, in which the Queen is endeavouring to assuage the angry Moor:

Looke smoothly on me! -
Chime out your softest strains of harmony,
And on delicious musick's silken wings
Send ravishing delight to my loue's ears.
That he may be inamour'd of your tunes.

The "Edward II." of the same author in no respect differs from some of the historical plays attributed to Shakespeare, excepting in its superiority, both in conduct and poetry. It has been already said, that the "Richard II." of the latter has been drawn upon the model of Marlowe's unhappy monarch. In its inferiority, it is quite as finely contrasted with that of the rash and blustering Mortimer, as the disposition and conduct of Richard is with the hot aspiring Bolingbroke. I had purposed to go into some detail on the peculiar merits of this play, but to do so with any success would demand an article of itself, and it is the less necessary as the historical tragedy is inserted in Dodsley's Collection. Your readers will also, perhaps, be of opinion that I have already pent long enough upon Marlowe.

Note
* A copy of it was not many months since sold by Mr Evans of Pall-Mall for about ten guineas.

31. JAMES BROUGHTON
1830

James Broughton (fl. 1830) discovered Marlowe's burial registered in St Nicholas, Deptford, dismissed the tradition that he was an actor, and examined the "evidence" about his character and opinions with critical detachment. His notes in the British Museum copy of the 1826 edition of the 'Works' should also be noted.

From Life and Writings of Christopher Marlowe, in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' (January-June 1830), i., 1-8, 121-4, 222-4, 251-3, 359-7, passim.
Having now expressed my opinion pretty fully upon the question of Marlowe's imputed blasphemies, I have little more to offer upon this point, except to assure the reader, whatever be my humble attempt to vindicate the poet's fame, will not form his conclusions without deliberately reperusing and comparing the evidences upon which the charge has been grounded, dispassionately weighing the probability of the several narratives; and, above all, taking into full consideration the circumstance that he who first broached the tale which others have heedlessly adopted, was a fierce and vindictive Puritan. Let him call to mind the rancorous malignity displayed by the members of that intolerant sect towards those who distinguished themselves by encouraging the arts which impart grace and elegance to society; and, above all, towards those who upheld the enormities of the Drama. Let him recollect of what extravagances this same spirit, sometimes dormant, but never extinct, has impelled mankind to the commission in our times, when the conflagration of one theatre has been styled from the pulpit a national blessing, and the sudden downfall of another described (in a strain of impious buffoonery) as the triumphant issue of a contest between the Deity and the Evil Principle for the possession of its site*; when a writer, who probably would feel offended at being termed a fanatical fool, has ventured to assert, in print, that "thousands of unhappy spirits, and thousands yet to increase the number, will look back with unutterable anguish on the nights and days in which the plays of Shakspeare ministered to their guilty delightst!" Let him ask himself whether a writer capable of seriously, and perhaps conscientiously, promulgating such sentiments as these, would hesitate to go a step further, and blacken by any means in his power the moral character of the author whose writings he so earnestly decries? Or whether he would not deem the invention of any libel, having a tendency to deter men from the perusal of them, a mere pious fraud - a piece of commendable duplicity? That Beard, with whom originated the charges against Marlowe, reasoned and acted somewhat after this fashion, is my firm conviction; but the reader, who has now before him all the accessible materials wherein to form an opinion, will dispassionately weigh the probabilities...
ship at an earlier period; nor does any proof whatever exist of his having been an actor, though his biographers, drawing their inferences from the probability of the thing, have universally pronounced that it actually was the case, and Norton even declares, that he was often applauded by Queen Elizabeth and King James the First, as a judicious player. With respect to Elizabeth, this assertion, for which no authority is quoted, is probably akin to the blunder which long confused his tragedy of 'Dido' with the Latin piece of that name, acted before her at Cambridge; and as to James, it may be sufficient to remark that he never was in England till 1603, ten years after Marlowe's death, or that his applause, if expressed at all, must have been bestowed somewhat at hazard, unless, indeed, Christopher undertook a journey to Edinburgh purposely to convince the Scottish monarch of his histrionic abilities. 'Tis true that Guthrie, in his 'History of Scotland,' says that James, to prove how thoroughly he was emancipated from the tutelage of his clergy, desired Queen Elizabeth, in the year 1599, to send him a company of English comedians which she did, and he gave them a license to act in his capital and in his court; but as Marlowe had then been six years in his grave, it is clear that he was not one of the party. This erroneous supposition, that Marlowe was an actor, arose, I believe, from an equivocal expression made use of by Greene in his 'Groat's-worth of Wit,' where he styles him a 'famous gracer of tragedians;' but at this period the words tragedian and comedian, which now seldom signify anything but actor, were commonly put for dramatist; and, in fact, a century after, they were still used in that sense.

2. 'DOCTOR FAUSTUS,' 1604.

This tragedy was originally represented about 1590, and long continued to be a popular performance, retaining possession of the stage till towards the close of the 17th century. Phillips (Poem. Rarit.) says that it 'made more noise than any of Marlowe's plays.' There are five old editions, all of which have in the title page a rude wood-cut, depicting Faustus raising a devil. The most recent of them, dated 1663, is of no authority, being carelessly printed, and interpolated with passages from 'The Jew of Malta;' but variations from the original text had apparently been made before, since in the accounts kept by Philip Henslowe, proprietor of the Rose Theatre, the following item occurs:

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Lent unto the Company, the 22 of November, 1602, to pay unto Mr. Noble and Samuel Rowley, for their aduance in Doctor Faustus, the summe of liii lb.

The latest alteration of the piece was made by Mountfort the player, and acted at the Theatre in Desert Gardens; a contemptible production, in which Harlequin and Scaramouch are the principal performers, and at the conclusion, after Faustus has been torn asunder by the devils, his limbs reunite, and he joins the other personages of the drama in a jig.

The beauties of this play have been eloquently expatiated upon by numerous writers, and though defective as a whole, it certainly merits all the praise it has received. Some exquisitely poetical passages might be selected from it, especially the apostrophe of Faustus to the shade of Helen, with the last impassioned soliloquy of agonized despair, which is terminated by putting an end to the circle of the wheel on which he is seated. All which seem to the reader a thrill of horror, mingled with pity for the miserable sufferer. The appearance of the devils in this scene, to bear away their victim, seems to have shocked many persons, as bordering upon profanity; and among the relations of marvels, there was long current a story, that upon a certain occasion, one of the party, in the character of the devil, actually appeared, and assumed his shape. Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, was the original representative of Faustus, and if I mistake not, the compilers of the 'Biographical Dictionary' assert, upon some authority or other, that he was the first urged to that pious undertaking by those serious reflections which the occurrence alluded to very naturally excited. This strange tale is thus mentioned in Prynne's 'Histrio-Mastix,' 1633, fol. 556.

'EDWARD THE SECOND,' 1598.

Viewed as a whole, this is by far the best of Marlowe's plays. The character of Edward is admirably drawn; his infatuated attachment to his worthless minions, his imprudence, his imbecility, his sorrows, his arrogance and insolence, are all depicted with an adherence to nature and with a boldness of colouring which impart the deepest interest to the various scenes, and place Marlowe in the first rank of dramatic writers. The piece was evidently the prototype of Shakespeare's 'Richard the Second,' with which it may challenge comparison, and certainly be.
of Mortimer, jun. as evidently gave the hint for Hotspur. The play was entered on the Stationers' Books, in July, 1593, and printed 1598. There are two other old editions, dated 1612 and 1622.

A. "THE JEW OF MALTA," 1633. This tragedy, which, after a slumber of almost two centuries, was revived at Drury Lane in 1818, possesses many beauties, but the interest depends too exclusively upon the character of the Jew; the plot is excessively wild and improbable, not to see the charm of the language compensate for the extravagance of the incidents, in contriving which the author seems to have thought it the perfection of skill to accumulate horror upon horror. The play was coolly received on its reproduction in 1818, and soon laid aside.

The character of Barabbas, an original and vigorous conception, no doubt suggested to Shakespeare that of Shylock, and both were designed to fall in with and humour the popular prejudices against Jews, which in Elizabeth's days raged in an extravagant manner. Alleyn, who was greatly celebrated for his performance of Barabbas, was doubtless the original representative. To render the appearance of the Israelite more hideous, he was equipped with a huge false nose, which, as appears from various passages in old plays, was the customary decoration of users upon the stage. To this, Alleyn, his servitor, alludes, when he says (act 2), "I have the bravest, grave[n]t, secret, subtle, double-nosed harpie for my master, that ever gentleman had." A play in a similar taste apparently preceded that of Marlowe, since Gosson, in his "School of Abuse," 1579, remarks, "The Jew shown at the Bull represents the greediness of worldly choosers, and the bloody mindes of usurers.

I here take my leave of Marlowe and his productions. That my feeble arguments will suffice wholly to wipe from his memory the stigma with which for upwards of two centuries it has been branded, I cannot so far flatter myself as to suppose. Many, after examining the question, will doubtless remain unconvinced; while others, without considering it at all, will continue to take for granted the current tale of his enormities, and stedfastly to believe that..."
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his steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubt to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder
And the flame of Heaven again assailed, if Heaven the while,
On man and men’s research could deign to do more than smile.

My end, however, will be accomplished, should but some few be induced to pause ere they condemn him; and, at all events, the facts and data accumulated in these papers, which have not been collected without some large expense of time and trouble, cannot fail to be of service to any one who may thereafter be engaged in a kindred enquiry.

Yours, &c  JAMES BROUGHTON.

Notes
† "Eclectic Review," Vol. iii. Pt. i. p. 76.

32. LEIGH HUNT
1844

Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), essayist, journalist, minor poet, was editor of the " Examiner" (1808-21), and served a term in prison for reflections on the Prince Regent in that journal. A gracious and ephemeral writer, he was an catalyst for the Romantic poets, and Dickens’s caricature in "Harold Skimpole" hardly does him justice.
From "Imagination and Fancy" (1844), 130-41.

If ever there was a born poet, Marlowe was one. He perceived things in their spiritual as well as material relations, and gave them a corresponding felicity. Rather, he struck them as with something sweet and glowing that rushes by; - perfumes from a censer; - glances of love and beauty. And he could accumulate images into an elaborate and lofty grandeur. Chapman said of him,
that he stood  
Up to the chin in the Pierian flood.

Drayton describes him as if inspired by the recollection:–

Next Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,  
Had in him those brave translunary things,  
That the first poets had; his raptures were  
All air and fire, which made his verses clear:  
For that fine madness still he did retain,  
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

But this happy genius appears to have had as unhappy a  
will, which obscured his judgment. It made him condescend  
to write fustian for the town, in order to rule over it;  
And brought him in the prime of his life, in a violent end in a tavern. His plays abound in wilfull and self-worshiping speeches, and every one of them turns upon some kind of ascendency at the expense of other people. He was the head of a set of young men from the university, the Peeles, Greens, and others, all more or less possessed of a true poetical vein, who, bringing scholarship to the theatre, were intoxicated with the new graces that throve on the old bombast, carried to their height the vice as well as wit of the times, and were destined to see, with indignation and astonishment, their work taken out of their hands, and done better by the uneducated interloper from Stratford-upon-Avon.

Marlowe enjoys the singular and (so far) unaccountable honour of being the only English writer to whom Shakespeare seems to have alluded with approbation. In 'As You Like It,' Phoebe says,  

Dead Shepherd! now I know thy saw of might, -  
'Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?*

The 'saw' is in Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander,' a poem not comparable with his plays. The raving part of Marlowe's reputation has been chiefly owing to the tragedy of 'Tamburlaine,' a passage in which is laughed at in 'Henry the Fourth,' and has become famous. Tamburlaine cries out to the captive monarchs whom he has yoked to his car, -

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia,  
What! can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine?

Then follows a picture drawn with real poetry:—

The horses that guide the golden eye of Heaven,
And blow the morning from their nostrils (read "nostrils")
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,
Are not so honour'd in their governors,
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.

Marlowe, like Spenser, is to be looked upon as a poet who had no native precursors. An Spenser is to be criticized with an eye to his poetic ancestors, who had nothing like the Faerie Queene, so in Marlowe with reference to the authors of Gorboduc. He got nothing from them; he prepared the way for the versification, the dignity, and the pathos of his successors, who have nothing finer of the kind to show than the death of Edward the Second—yet Shakespeare himself—and his imagination, like Spenser's, haunted those purely poetic regions of ancient fable and modern rapture, of beautiful forms and passionate expressions, as a common property of inspiration, and whence their language drew "empyrean air." Marlowe and Spenser are the first of our poets who perceived the beauty of words; not as apart from their significance, nor upon occasion only, as Chaucer did (more marvellous in that than themselves, or than the originals from whom he drew), but as a habit of the poetic mood, and as receiving and reflecting beauty through the feeling of the ideas.

33. ALEXANDER DYCE

1850

Alexander Dyce (1798-1869) early abandoned the active exercises of holy orders for literary pursuits, chiefly editions of early poems and plays. His edition of Shakespeare (1857), like his Marlowe and others, continues to be useful. His knowledge of Elizabethan literature was remarkable, and he was meticulous in his use of the authorities at his command.
With very little discrimination of character, with much
equivocation of incident, with no pathos where pathos was
expected, and with a profusion of inflated language,
'Tamburlaine' is nevertheless a very impressive drama, and
undoubtedly superior to all the English tragedies which
preceded it; superior in show, in the effectiveness with
which the events are brought out, in the poetic feeling
which animates the whole, and in the nerve and variety of
the versification. Marlowe was yet to show that he could
impart truthfulness to his scenes; but not a few passages
from 'Tamburlaine,' as grand in thought, as splendid in imagery, and so happy in expression, as any
which his later works contain.

The well-known fact, that our early dramatists usually
borrowed their fables from novels or "histories," to which
they often servilely adhered, has been thought no deroga-
tive from their merits. Yet the latest biographer of
Marlowe dismisses 'Faustus' as 'unworthy of his reputa-
tion,' chiefly because it "closely follows a popular rom-
age of the same name." Certain it is that Marlowe has
"closely followed" the prose 'History of Doctor Faustus';
but it is equally certain that he was not indebted to that
"History" for the poetry which he has in-
spired into his play, for those thoughts of surpassing
beauty and grandeur with which it abounds, and for that
feared display of mental agony at the close, compared to
which all attempts of the kind by preceding English drama-
tists are "poor indeed." In the opinion of Hazlitt,
"Faustus," though an imperfect and unequal performance,
is Marlowe's greatest work. Mr. Hallam remarks, "There
is an awful melancholy about Marlowe's Mephisto-
philes, a sadness and pathos that impart an eerie
beauty to all that is rife in the scene of death. But the fair
form of Margaret is wanting." In the comic scenes of 'Faustus'
(which are nearly all derived from the prose 'History') we
have blemishes of the worst description; and it is diffi-
cult not to believe that Marlowe is answerable for at
least a portion of them, when we recollect that he had
inserted similar scenes in the original copy of his 'Tam-
burlaine.'

In what year Marlowe produced 'The Jew of Malta' we are
unable to determine. The words in the Prologue, "See the
Jew is dead," are evidence that it was composed after
23rd Dec. 1588; and Mr. Collier thinks that it was probably written about 1588 or 1589. Perhaps our earliest per-
formance of Alleyn; and there was no reason why the aspect of the Jew should not be rendered as grotesque and hideous as possible by means of a false nose. In Rowley's "Search for Money," 1609, a person is
described as having "his visage (or vizard) like the arti-
ficial Jew of Marlowe's troupe," and a speech in the play
itself, "Oh, brave, master! I worship your nose for
this," is a proof that Marlowe intended his hero to have
a false nose. It was natural that this should be the case.
In the "Search for Money," the Jews were often per-
formed with an extra quantity of nose; it was thought
that a race so universally hated could hardly be made to
appear too ugly....

The character of Barabas, upon which the interest of
the tragedy entirely depends, is delineated with no ordi-
nary power, and possesses a strong individuality.
Unfortunately, however, it is a good deal overcharged;
but I suspect, that in this instance at least, Marlowe
violated the truth of nature, not so much from his love of
exaggeration, as in consequence of having borrowed all
the atrocities of the play from some now-unknown novel,
whose author was willing to flatter the prejudices of his
readers by attributing almost impossible wickedness to a
son of Israel. "The first two acts of "The Jew of
Malta," observes Mr. Hallam, "are more vigorously con-
ceived, both as to character and circumstance, than any
other Elizabethan play, except those of Shakespeare;" but
the latter part is so inferior that we rise from a perusal of
the whole with a feeling akin to disappointment. If the
dialogue has little poetry, it has often great force of expres-
sion. "That Shakespeare was well acquainted with this
tragedy cannot be doubted; but that he caught from it
more than a few trifling hints for "The Merchant of Venice"
will be allowed by no one who has carefully compared the character of Barabas with that of Shylock. -- An allusion in the poem of Nashe was pro-
bably suggested by Marlowe's "The Jews of Malta," which
was written in 1592, and which seems to have been
written in the last months of his life. If we compare the
other works of Marlowe, the same will appear, as the
years go on, the last of his plays stand the test of time
better than any of his earlier pieces, and one of our author's latest pieces, has been adopted by no one.

From that time these, which previously were more or less in all
"chronicle histories" anterior to those of Shakespeare, this drama is not wholly free; its crowded incidents do not always follow each other without confusion; and it has few of those "raptures,* for which Marlowe is eulogized by one of his contemporaries. But, taken as a whole, it is the most perfect of his plays; there is no overdoing of character, no turgidity of language. In the two scenes which give the chief interest to this drama Lamb remarks: 'The reluctance of abdicating royalty in Edward Fur-

ness furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his Richard the Second; and the death-scene of Marlowe's King moves pity and terror beyond any scene ancient or modern with which I am acquainted.' The excellence of both scenes is indisputable; but a more fastidious critic than Lamb might perhaps object to such an exhibition of physical suffering as the latter scene affords....

We must now turn from his works to the personal history of Marlowe. - It is not to be doubted that by this time he had become acquainted with most of those who, like himself, were dramatists by profession; and there can be little doubt that beyond their circle (which, of course, included the actors) he had formed few intimacies. Though the demand for theatrical novelties was then intense, plays were scarcely recognized as literature, and the dramatists were regarded as men who held a rather low rank in society: the authors of pieces which had delighted thousands were generally looked down upon by the grave substantial citizens, and seldom presumed to approach the mansions of the aristocracy but as clients in humble attendance on the bounty of their patrons. Unfortunately, the discredit which attached to dramatic writing as an occupation was greatly increased by the habits of those who pursued it a few excepted, they were improvident, unprincipled, and dissolute. - Now resting in the capitals or wandering abroad in the provinces, they were at their ease, now rioting in taverns and "ordinaries" on the profits of a successful play, now looking in the bourses of poverty till the completion of another drama had enabled them to resume their revels. - At a somewhat later period, indeed, a decided improvement appears to have taken place in the
moral of our dramatic writers: and it is by no means improbable that the high respectability of character which was maintained by Shakespeare and Jonson may have operated very beneficially, in the way of example, on the playwrights around them. - But among those of superior station there was at least one person with whom Marlowe lived on terms of intimacy: the publisher of his posthumous fragment, 'Hero and Leander,' was induced to dedicate it 'to the worshipful Sir Thomas Walsingham, knight,' because he had 'bestowed upon the author many kind favours, entertaining the parts of reckoning and worth which he found in him with good countenance and liberal affection.' Nor is this the only proof extant that Sir Thomas Walsingham cultivated a familiarity with the dramatists of his day; for to him, as to his 'long-loved and honourable friend,' Chapman has inscribed by a sonnet the comedy of 'A Fool.'

This version of the 'Amores,' taken altogether, does so little credit either to Marlowe's skill as a translator or to his scholarship, that one is almost tempted to believe it was never intended by him to meet the eye of the world, but was made, merely as a literary exercise, at an early period of life, when classical studies chiefly engaged his attention. We look in vain for the graces of Ovid. In many passages we should be utterly puzzled to attach a definite meaning to the words, if we had not the original at hand; and in many others the Latin is erroneously rendered, the mistranslations being sometimes extremely ludicrous. I doubt if more can be said in praise of this version than that it is occasionally spirited and flowing. In this paraphrase on the very elegant production of the Pseudo-Musaeus had been projected and was already partly composed by Marlowe, when death put an end to his labours; and as much of 'Hero and Leander' as could be discovered after his decease, having been entered in the Stationers' Books 28th September, 1593, was given to the press in 1598. - While the poem of the Greek grammarian is comprised in 341 verses, the fragment in question extends to above 80.

In this paraphrase Marlowe has somewhat impeded the progress and weakened the interest of the story by introducing extraneous matter and by indulging in whimsical and frivolous details; he occasionally disregards costume; he is too fond of conceits; he is too prodigal of "wise saws" and moral axioms. But he has amply redeemed these faults by the exquisite perception of the beautiful which he...
displays throughout a large portion of the fragment, by descriptions picturesque and vivid in the extreme, by nervous felicities of language, and by skilful modulation of the verse. - The quotation from this poem in 'As You Like It' may be considered as a proof that it was admired by Shakespeare; and the words which are there applied to the author, - "dead shepherd," - sound not unlike an expression of pity for his sad and untimely end. Jonson, too, in 'Every Man in his Humour' has cited 'Hero and Leander'; and he is reported to have spoken of it often in terms of the highest praise.

George Henry Lewes (1817-78) was a versatile and accomplished man of letters, and Lyman's philosopher. - This post-Gothic treatment of 'Doctor Faustus' and its age is most suggestive for the general Victorian view.

From 'The Life and Works of Goethe' (1864), 475-8.
Marlowe: The Critical Heritage 1588-1896

or 'Tamburlaine the Great'. It is simply the theatrical treatment of a popular legend, — a legend admirably characteristic of the spirit of those ages in which men, believing in the agency of the devil, would willingly have bartered their future existence for the satisfaction of present desires. Here undoubtedly is a philosophical problem, which even in the present day is constantly presenting itself to the speculative mind. Yes, even in the present day, since human nature does not change, — for it is only the means of barter that have changed, it only manifests itself differently. Now, in true, no longer believes in the devil's agency; at least, they no longer believe in the power of calling up the devil and transacting business with him; otherwise there would be hundreds of such stories as that of 'Faust'. But the spirit which created that story and rendered it credible to all Europe remains unchanged. The sacrifice of the future to the present is the spirit of that legend. The blindness to consequences caused by the imperiousness of desire; the recklessness with which inevitable and terrible results are braved, provided that a temporary pleasure can be obtained, is the spirit which dictated Faust's barter of his soul. We no longer make compacts with the devil by means of necromancy, but we have our own Desires, imperious, insidious, and for them we barter our existence, — for one moment's pleasure risking years of anguish.

The story of Faustus suggests many modes of philosophical treatment, but Marlowe has not availed himself of any: he has taken the popular view of the legend, and given his hero the vulgarest motives. This is not meant as a criticism, but as a statement. I am not sure that Marlowe was wrong in so treating his subject; I am only sure that he treated it so. Faustus is disappointed with logic, because it teaches him nothing but debate, — with physic, because he cannot with it bring dead men back to life, — with law, because it concerns only the 'external trash', — and with divinity, because it teaches that the reward of sin is death, and that we are all sinners. Seeing advantage in none of these studies he takes to necromancy, and there finds content; and how?

[Quotes I, i. 94-98.]

There may in this seem something trivial to modern apprehensions, yet Marlowe's audience sympathized with it,
faustus: the critical heritage 1588-1896

having the feelings of an age when witches were burned, when men were commonly supposed to hold communication with infernal spirits, when the price of damnation was present enjoyment.

the compact signed, faustus makes use of his power by scampering over the world, performing practical jokes and vulgar incantations, - knocking down the pope, making horns sprout on the heads of noblemen, cheating a jockey by selling him a horse of straw, and other equally vulgar tricks, which were just the things the audience would have done had they possessed the power. tired of his buffooneries he calls up the vision of helen; his rapture at the sight is a fine specimen of how marlowe can write on a fitting occasion.

his last hour now arrives: he is in motion with sorrows, and is attacked with remorse, like many of his modern imitators, when it is too late; sated with his power, he now shudders at the price. after some tragical raving, and powerful depicted despair, he is carried off by devils. the close is in keeping with the commencement: faustus is damned because he made the compact. each part of the bargain is fulfilled: it is a tale of sorcery, and faustus meets the fate of a sorcerer.

his vulgar conception of the story is partly the fault of his age, and partly his own. the vulgar conception of the play is partly the fault of the stage, and partly marlowe's own. the vulgar conception of the audience is partly the fault of the play, and partly the stage. but the vulgar conception of the legend is entirely a modern creation.

the vulgar conception of this play is partly the fault of his age, and partly his own. the vulgar conception of the play is partly the fault of the stage, and partly marlowe's own. the vulgar conception of the audience is partly the fault of the play, and partly the stage. but the vulgar conception of the legend is entirely a modern creation.
Edward Dowden (1843-1913) was Professor of English Literature at Trinity College, Dublin (1887-1913). His most influential work was his 'Shakspere, His Mind and Art' (1875). His references to a Marlowe 'cult' and his attack on German criticism are especially interesting. From 'Transcripts and Studies' (1888), 437-55, first published in the 'Fortnightly Review', January 1870.

The study of Shakspere and his contemporaries is the study of one family consisting of many members, all of whom have the same life-blood in their veins, all of whom are recognizable by accent and bearing, and acquired habits, and various unconscious self-revelations as kinsmen, while each possesses a character of his own, and traits of mind and manner and expression which distinguish him from the rest. The more one studies the facts of Shakspere's life the more one is impressed by the sudden and gradual approach, now on this side, now on that, of the common nature of this great family of writers, until we are in complete intellectual possession of it, and in tracing out the characteristics peculiar to each of its individuals. There is, perhaps, no other body of literature towards which we are attracted by so much of unity, and at the same time by so much of variety. If the school of Rubens had been composed of greater men than it was, we should have had an illustrious parallel in the history of painting to the group of Shakspere and his contemporaries in the history of poetry.

The 'school of Rubens' we say; we could hardly speak with accuracy of the 'school of Shakspere.' Yet there can be no doubt but that he was the master of the inferior and younger artists who surrounded him. It is the independence of so many a man and its thorough individuality, rather than comprehensive greatness or beauty of poetical achievement, which has given him a position right to the second place amongst the Elizabethan dramatists. A little in comparison with the Idylls of the King, a little in comparison with the Bride of Lammermoor, a little in comparison with the Measure for Measure, and a little in comparison with the Uncle Tom's Cabin, and a little in comparison with the other dramas which were in some respects much less matured; but at a time when plays and criers were little esteemed, he had almost a nineteenth-century sense of the dignity of art, and of his own art in particular.-
And he told them plainly he deserved the bays.

For his were called Works, where others were but Plays.

But Webster, and Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher, and Shirley (who, were content, like Shakespeare, to write 'play,' and did not aspire to 'works') are really followers of the greatest of all dramatic writers, and very different handiwork they would probably have turned out had they wrought in their craft without the teaching of his practice and example. Shakespeare's immediate predecessors were men of no mean poetry; but they are separated by a great gulf from his contemporaries and immediate successors. That tragedy is proportioned to something else than the number of slaughtered bodies piled upon the stage at the close of act five, that comedy has store of mirth more vital, deeper, happier, more honest than springs from Jigging veins of rhyming mother wits, and such conceits as clownage keeps in pay—these were discoveries in art made by Shakespeare; and is it too much to suppose that but for him these discoveries might have come later by a dozen years or more? The works of the pre-Shakespeareans are of small interest for the most part, except as illustrating a necessary stage of growth in the history of the drama. They do not win one at once with the charm, the singleness of aim, the divine innocence, the sacred temerity, the sublimation of art, which we are sensible of in the works of Raphael's predecessors. Italian painting may be personified under the figure of a royal maiden, who, after a period of chaste seclusion and tender virginity, came forth into the world, and was a queen and mother of men. The English drama was, first, a schoolboy, taught rude piety by the priests, and rude jokes by his fellows; then a young man, lusty, passionate, mettlesome, riotous, aspiring, friendly, full of extravagant notions and huffing words, given to irregular ways and disastrous chances and desperate recoveries, but, like Shakspere's wild prince, containing the promise of that grave, deep-thoughted, and magnificent manhood which was afterwards realized.

It is, however, amongst the pre-Shakespeareans that we find the man who, of all the Elizabethan dramatists, stands next to Shakespeare in poetical stature, the one man who, if he had lived longer and accomplished the work which lay clear before him, might have stood even beside Shakspere, as supreme in a different province of dramatic art. Shakespeare would have been master of the realists or naturalists; Marlowe, master of the chimerical.
The starting-point of Shakspere, and of those who resemble him, is always something concrete, something real in the moral world - a character and an action; to no more elementary components than human characters and actions can the products of their art be reduced in the alchemy of critical analysis; further than these they are irreducible. The starting-point of Marlowe, and of those who resemble Marlowe, is something abstract - a passion or an idea, in a passion or an idea each work of theirs can be reduced, but not to the starting-points of Shakspere. The starting-points of Twelvetrees, Antonio and Shylock, Portia and Nerissa, Lorenzo and Jessica, Bassanio and Gratiano - these, and a passage in the lives of these, are the true subjects. Even of 'Romeo and Juliet' the subject is not love, but two young and living hearts surrounded by a group of most living figures, and overshadowed by a tyrannous fate. Those critics, and they are unfortunately numerous since German criticism became a power in this country, who attempt to discover an intention, idea, or, as they say, motto presiding throughout each of Shakspere's plays, have got upon an entirely mistaken track, and they inevitably come out after labyrinthine wanderings at the other end of nowhere. Shakspere's trade was not that of preparing nuts with concealed mottoes and sentiments in them for German commentators to crack. Critics, who sought in Shakspere's poems, often visited by a self-consciousness which went bankruptcy after ideas and intentions, critics now, clearly the faculty of all attempts to release from their obscurity the secrets of his own works, so if the mystery of what he has created were other than the mystery of existence, the mystery of the universe, the mystery of the soul, from the starting-point of an idea or passion, and the critic who might disclose all the treasures of Shakspere's art without ever having the honour to discover a soul, may really, by dexterous anatomy, come upon the souls of Marlowe's or of Milton's creatures - intelligent monads seated observant in the pineal gland. Shakspere and Marlowe, the two foremost men of the Elizabethan artistic movement, remind us in not a few particulars of the two foremost men of the artistic movement in Germany eighty or ninety years ago, Goethe and Schiller. Shakspere and Goethe are incomparably the larger and richer natures, their art is incomparably the greater and more fruitful; yet they were themselves much greater than their art. Shakspere rendered more by a measureless sum of a man's whole nature into poetry than Marlowe did; yet his own life ran on below the rendering of it into poetry, and was never wholly absorbed and lost therein. We can believe that under different circumstances Shakspere might.
never have written a line, might have carried all that lay within him unrecorded to his grave. While still in the full manhood of his powers, he chose to put off his garments of enchantment, break his magic staff, and dismiss his airy spirits; or, in plain words, bring to a close his career as poet, and live out the rest of his life as country gentleman in his native town. It is a suggestive fact, too, that the scattered references to Shakespeare which we find in the writings of his contemporaries, show him no less the man than the poet, and make it clear that he moved among his fellows with no assuming of the bard or prophet, no aspect as of one inspired, no air of authority as of one divinely commissioned; that, in the country, he appeared as a pleasant comrade, genial, gentle, full of civility in the large meaning of that word, upright in dealing, ready and bright in wit, quick and sportive in conversation. Goethe, also, though he valued his own works highly, valued them from a superior position as one above them, and independent of them. But Marlowe, like Schiller, seems to have lived in and for his art. His poetry was no episode in his life, but his very life itself. With an university education, and a prospect, which for a man of his powers can hardly have been an unpromising one, of success in one of the learned professions (not necessarily the Church), he must have been rent with the thought of poor education, and poverty from which he had sprung, and to poverty the despair of an actor's and playwright's life. The contemporaries usually speak of him as a man who was possessed by his art, rather than as one who, like Shakespeare, held it in possession.

That fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.
So wroté Drayton; and according to Chapman's fine hyperbole he
Flew
Up to the chin in the Pierian flood.

This is not the way in which Shakespeare is spoken of. Nor is it in an uncharacteristic circumstance that probably while he lay for a short time tortured with the wound of his own dagger, death was hastening, one of Marlowe's chief anxieties, if the tradition be trustworthy, was for the fate of his 'Hero and Leander,' and that he recommended it for completion to the man of all others best fitted for the task — the great translator of Homer, whose
But if Marlowe be the Büchner - the subjective poet, echoing the mood of the century, exalting and elevating, of Elizabethan art - he is a Schiller of a decided satanic school. With an important critical movement behind him, around him a regulated state of society, and many influences calling into activity the better part of his nature, the true Schiller's head and heart and sensibilities as an artist passed through their 'Sturm und Drang' fever, and came forth illuminated, purified, and elevated. On the other hand, the world amid which he moved was too much one of merely cultured refinement; no rude but large and ardent popular heart beat in his hearing; rather, in the court and salons and theatre of Weimar, official waistcoats rose and fell with admirable but not very inspiring regularity over self-possessed and decorous bosoms. The talk was of poems, pictures, busts, medals, and the last little new law of the Duke. It is not surprising that Schiller's art should have a touch of coldness in it. Marlowe had behind him, not a critical movement like the German, but the glare of Smithfield fires and the ghostly procession of noble figures dealt with by the headsman on Tower Hill, terrible religious and political battles, and the downfall of a faith. For his own part, taking art as the object of his devotion, he thrust all religions somewhat fiercely aside, and professed an angry Atheism. The Catholic hierarchy and creed he seems to have hated with an energy profoundly different from the feeling of Shakespeare, distinguished as that was by a discriminating justice. The reckless Bohemian London life which Marlowe shared with his companions, Greene, Peele, Nase, and other wild livers, had nothing in it to sober his judgment, to chasten and purify his imagination and taste, nothing or very little to elevate his feelings. But it was quick and passionate. The 'Sturm und Drang' through which our English dramatists passed was of far greater stress than that of Germany. Marlowe lived long enough to escape from the period, to speak, of his 'Robbers,' not long enough to attain the serene ideality of a 'Wilhelm Tell.' But Marlowe possessed one immense advantage over Schiller - he stood not in the midst of a petty ducal court, but in the centre of a great nation, whose elements were rapidly growing in consciousness of a national power, a time when the nation was no agglomeration of atoms cohering by accident, but a living body, with
something like a unity of ideas, and with feelings self-
organised around splendid objects of common interest,
pride, and admiration. The strength and weakness of what
Marlowe accomplished in literature correspond with the
influences from the real world to which he was subject.
He is great, ardent, aspiring; but he is also without
balance, immoderate, extravagant. There is an
artistic grace which is the counterpart of the theological
grace of charity. It pervades everything that Shakspere
has written; there is little of it in Marlowe's writings.
There is in them 'a hunger and thirst after unrighteous-
ness, a glow of the imagination unhallowed by anything but
its own energies. His thoughts bear within him the fire of
furnace with incendiary flames, or throwing out black
smoke and mists that hide the dawn of genius, or like a poison-
ous mineral corrode the heart.'* If a Schiller, then,
surely a Schiller of a Satanic school.

Marlowe's works consist of six or seven plays and some
translations, one of which - a paraphrase of the "Hero and
Leander" of the pseudo-Musaeus - is remarkable as evidenc-
ing, more than any other of his writings, the Renaissance
feeling for sensuous beauty which Marlowe possessed in a
degree hardly, if at all, less than that displayed by
Shakspeare. One was produced in conjunction with Nash, and we
cannot safely assign to its authors their respective
shares in the work. One - "The Massacre at Paris" - seems
to have been thrown off to meet some temporary occasion,
and certainly, however this may have been, it is in any case with-
out merit. A third was written, we can hardly doubt, when the poet
in the transition period from his early to what would have been,
if he had lived, his mature style. Though in some respects the
best, it is in truth the least characteristic of all his
more important writings. There are critics who can more
readily forgive any literary deficiencies or inequalities that arise of itself passion, who can bear with every
deficiency in the poet's thought, in his language, in his
thinking power, in his style, in his shaping of hands, but who
have no tolerance for splendid crimes, the sins of the
sanguine temperament, extravagant fancy, thoughts that
climb too high, turbulence of manner, and great swelling
words of vanity. These have pronounced "Edward the
Second" Marlowe's best play. And if in, doubtless, few
cases, the faults of the play, not the play itself, pre-
ceded it, from the wasting sickness of poetical style,
which "Edward" itself, and with it "the other" too, but,
except in a few scenes, and notably the closing ones, it
wants also the clear rapture, the high refection of wit,
The "brave translunary things," the single lines — each are enough to ransom a poet from captivity — which especially characterise Marlowe. The historical matter he is unable to handle as successfully as a subject of an imaginary or partly mythical kind; it does not yield and take shape in his hands as readily, and accordingly "Edward the Second," though containing a fine apocalyptic paragraph, is rather a series of scenes from the chronicles of England than a drama.


Three plays remain, and on these the fame of Marlowe may safely rest — "Tamburlaine the Great," "The Tragical History of Dr Faustus," and "The Jew of Malta." Each of these is admirably characteristic, and could have proceeded from no other brain than that of its creator. The three together form a great achievement in literature for a man probably not more than twenty-seven years of age, and stand by reason of their unexampled richness, their fire and light, from the neighbouring road of dramatic composition, and close to one another — a little group distinguished by peculiar marks of closest kinship, a peculiar physiognomy, complexion, and accent. Each of the three is the rendering into artistic form of the workings of a single passion, while at the same time each of these several passions is only a different form of life assumed by one supreme passion, central in all the great characters of Marlowe, magisterial, claiming the whole man, and in its operation fatal.

The subject of "Tamburlaine" — probably Marlowe's earliest work, certainly the first which made an impression on the public — if we would express it in the simplest way, is the mere lust of dominion, the passion of "a mightly hunter before the Lord" for sovereign sway, the love of power in its crudest shape. This, and this alone, living and acting in the person of the Scythian shepherd, gives unity to the multitude of scenes which grow up as and fall away, like the fiery-hearted blossoms of some inexhaustible tropical plant, blown with sudden and strong vitality, fading and dropping away at night, and replaced next morning by others as sanguine and heavy with perfume. There is no construction in "Tamburlaine." Instead of two plays there might as well have been none, if Marlowe could have found it in his heart to husband his large supply of kings, emperors, soldans, pashas, governors, and viceroys who perish before the Scourge of God, or had he been able to discover empires, provinces, and principalities with which to endow a new race of rulers. The plot ends from sheer exhaustion of resources. As Alexander was reduced to weep for another world to conquer, so Tamburlaine might have wept...
because there were no more emperors to fill his cages, no more monarchs to increase his royal stud. He does not
weep, but what is much better, dies. The play resembles
in its movement no other so much as the 'Sultan Amurath'
of De Quincey's elder brother. 'What by the bowstring,
and what by the scimitar, the sultan had so thinned the
population with which he commenced business that scarcely
any of the characters remained alive at the end of Act the
first.' Five crops had to be taken off the ground in the
tragedy, amounting, in short, to five tragedies involved
in one. The difference is, that Marlowe could not be
satisfied with less than ten crops and a corresponding
number of tragedies.

'Tamburlaine' is the work of a master-hand, un-
trained. If from some painting ill-composed, full of
crude and violent colour, containing abundant proofs of
weakness and inexperience, and having half its canvas
crowded with extravagant grotesques with which the artist
took for sublime — if from such a painting one wonderfull face
looked out at us, the soul in its eyes and on its lips,
a single desire possessing it, eager and simple as a
flame, should we question the genius of the painter? And
somewhat in this manner the single passion which has the
lust and the pride of conquest, the ambition to be a god
upon earth, the confident sense that in one's own will resides
the prime force of nature, disdain of each single thing,
how splendid soever, which the world can offer by way of
gift or bribe, because less than the possession of all,
desire which no influence, no Nothing, no fear, no hope,
drawn from history that they are real in not existing, are
yet even imagined in a vivid way by only few persons. The
demands which most of us make on life are moderate; our
little lives run on with few great ambitions, and this
gross kind of ambition is peculiarly out of relation to
our habits of desire. But Marlowe, the son of the Canter-
bury shoemaker, realised in imagination this ambition as
if it were his very own, and gave it most living expres-
sions. . .

Faustus is the Paracelsus of Marlowe. Over the soul of
the Wurtemberg doctor the passion for knowledge dominates,
and all influences of good and evil, the voices of damned
and of blessed angels reach him faint and ineffectual as
dreams, or distant music, or the suggestions of long-

subject in the stream of Marlowe's genius are
hurried in a single direction. Pride of will draws to
itself all other forces of his nature, and made them secondary and subordinate; and accordingly we are not surprised when we find that, in Marlowe's hands, the passion for knowledge which possesses Faustus becomes little more than a body, as it were, giving a special form of life to the same consuming lust of power which he had treated in the earlier drama of 'Tamburlaine.' In Faustus, in the suggestion of the Tempter, the words 'knowing good and evil' grow dim in the unhallowed splendor of the promise 'Ye shall be as gods.' All secrets of Nature and of Fate he desires to penetrate, but not in order that he may contemplate their mysteries in philosophic calmness, nor that he may possess his soul in the serene light of ascertained primal truths; rather it is for the lordship over men and things which knowledge places in his hands that he chiefly desires it. Logic, law, physics, divinity, have yielded their whole stores into his keeping, but they have left his intellect unsatisfied, craving for acquisition of a less formal, a more natural and living kind, and they have afforded him no adequate field, and but feeble instruments for the display of the forces of his will. It is magic which with every discovery to the intellect unites a corresponding gift of power:-

'Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me.

What is knowledge worth if it does not enable him to obtain mastery over gross matter, over the lives and fortunes of men, over the elements of air and earth, of fire and water, and over the actions, events, and spirits of the world? In Faustus this desire is the boundless desire, the unbridled desire, the unquenchable desire, the unattainable desire, the unfulfilled desire, which he desires, and which he craves to satisfy. Logic, law, physics, divinity, have furnished him with a power, but that power is as nothing beside the power of magic. The pleasure, which afterwards he seeks, less for its own sake than to banish the hated thought of the approaching future, is the quintessence of pleasure. He is not made for coarse delights. He desires no beauty but that of 'the fairest maid in Germany,' or the beauty of Helen of Troy.
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Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

He chooses no song but Homer’s song, no music but that of
Amphion’s harp:-

Long ere this I should have slain myself
Had not sweet pleasure conquer’d deep despair.

And have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander’s love and Oenon’s death?

And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes,
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephistophilis?

And in the scene of parting with the two scholars,
immediately preceding the uncompanioned agony of the
doomed man’s latest hour - a scene distinguished by a
lofty pathos which we find nowhere else in Marlowe - there
is throughout an atmosphere of learning, of refinement, of
scholarly urbanity, which makes us feel how thoroughly
Marlowe had preserved the original conception of the
character of Faustus, even while he degraded him to the
low conjuror of certain passages, introduced by a writer
singularly devoid of humour, to make sport for the
groundlings of the theatre.

A grosser air is breathed throughout ‘The Jew of
Malta.’ The whole play is murky with smoke of the pit.
Evil desires, evil thoughts, evil living, fill its five
acts to the full. Interactions of the picture are an
inscription of unrighteousness throughout;
but, as might also be in one of Rembrandt’s paintings, in
the centre there is a head relieved against the gloom, lit
by what strange light we do not know, unless it be the
reflection from piles of gold and gems - a head fascinat-
ing and detestable, of majestic proportions, full of
intellect, full of majesty and deceit, with wrinkled brow,
beak-like nose, cruel lips, and eyes that, though half-
hooded by leathery lids, triumph visibly in the success of
something devilish. Barabas is the dedicated child of sin
from his mother’s womb. As he grew in stature he must
have grown in crooked wisdom and in wickedness. His heart
is a nest where there is room for the patrons of the seven
deadly sins to lodge, but one chief devil is its permanent
occupant - Mammon. The lust of money is the passion of
the Jew, which is constantly awake and active. His bags
are the children of his heart, more loved than his skul-
gull, and the desire because they were begotten through
deceit or by violence. Yet Barabas is a superb figure.
His energy of will is so great; his resources and inventions are so inexhaustible; he is so illustrious a representative of material power and of intellectual. Even his love of money has something in it of sublime, it is so huge a desire. He is no miser treasuring each contemptible coin. Precisely as Tamburlaine looked down with scorn at all ordinary kingdoms and lordships of the earth, so Faustus held for worthless the whole sum of stored-up human learning in comparison with the infinite knowledge to which he aspired. Genuine disdain the quickness of common men....

It has not seemed necessary here to dwell upon all that is worthless, and worse than worthless, in Marlowe's plays — in the midsummer madness of 'Tamburlaine,' the contemptible buffoonery of 'Dr Faustus,' and the overloaded sensational atrocities of 'The Jew of Malta.' Such criticism every one but an Ancient Pistol does for himself. We all recognise the fustian of Marlowe's style, and the ill effects of the demands made upon him by sixteenth-century play-goers for such harlequinade as they could appreciate. A more important thing to recognise is that up to the last Marlowe's great powers were施展, while this judgment was becoming acute, and this advance from melodrama to theatrical poetry was being achieved. The greatness of his verse was reached as early, if not earlier, than his tragic gifts. 'Tamburlaine' was written at the age of twenty-two, 'Faustus' two or three years later. At such an age accomplishment is rare; we usually look for no more than promise. If Shakspere had died at the age when Marlowe died we should have known little of the capacity which lay within him of creating a Macbeth, a Lear, an Othello, a Cleopatra. Marlowe has left us three great ideal figures of Titanic strength and size. That we should say is much. In one particular a most important advance from 'Tamburlaine' to 'Dr Faustus' and the later plays dis- criminal is discernible — in versification. His contemporaries appear to have been much impressed by the greatness of his verse — Marlowe's mighty line; and it was in the rhetoric of 'Tamburlaine' that blank verse was first heard upon a public stage in England. But in this play the blank verse is like a gorgeous robe of brocade, stiff with golden embroidery; afterwards in his hands it becomes pliable, and covers in noblest lines the quickness of common men.

Note
* Hazlitt.
Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828-93) sought, in literary history, to determine how ‘la race, le milieu et le moment’ interplay in creative activity. The first edition of the ‘Histoire’ was published in 1863-4.


Thus was this theatre produced; a theatre unique in history, like the admirable and fleeting epoch from which it springs, the work and the picture of this young world, as vivid, as unshackled, and as tragic as itself. As an original and national drama springs up, the poets who establish it, carry in themselves the sentiments which it represents. They display better than other men the public spirit, because the public spirit is stronger in them than in the mass of the people. They put forth in their heart with a bolder or a juster cry, and hence their voices become the voices of all.... Equally in England the poets are in harmony with their works.

Almost all are Bohemians, born of the people, yet educated, and for the most part having studied at Oxford or Cambridge, but poor, so that their education contrasts with their condition. Ben Jonson is a bricklayer, and himself a bricklayer; Marlowe is the son of a shoemaker; Shakespeare of a servee gentleman; Marlowe of a servant. They live as they can, get into debt, write for their bread, go on the stage. Peele, Lodge, Marlowe, Marlowe, Shakespeare, played, are actors; most of the details which we have of their lives are taken from the journal of Henslowe, an old pawnbroker, later a moneylender and manager of a theatre, who gives them work, advances money to them, receives their manuscripts or their wardrobes as security. For a play he gives seven or eight pounds; after the year 1600 prices rise, and reach as high as twenty or twenty-five pounds. It is clear that, even after this increase, the trade of author was necessary, like Shakespeare, to become a manager, to try to have a share in the property of a theatre; but the case is rare, and the life which they lead, a life of comedians and actors, improvident, full of success, lost amid...
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debauchery and acts of violence, amidst women of evil fame, in contact with young profligates, in provocations and misery, imagination and licence, generally leads them to exhaustion, poverty, and death. Men received enjoyment from them, and neglected and despised them....

Marlowe was an ill-regulated, dissolute, extravagantly vehement and audacious spirit, but grand and sombre, with the genuine poetic frenzy: pages moreover, and rebellious in manners and creed. In this instinctive return to the senses, the corporeal instincts and the ideas which give them their warrant, break forth impetuously. Marlowe, like Greene, like Kett, is a sceptic, denies God and Christ, blasphemes the Trinity, declares Moses 'a juggler,' Christ more worthy of death than Barabbas, says that if he were to write a new religion, he would undertake both a more excellent and more admirable method, and 'almost in every company he cometh, persuadeth men to Atheism.' Such were the rages, the excesses which liberty of thought gave rise to in those new minds, who for the first time, after so many centuries, dared to walk unfettered. From his father's shop, crowded with children, from the stirrups and awls, he found himself at Cambridge, probably through the patronage of a great man, and on his return to London, in want, amid the licence of the green-room, the low houses and taverns, his head was in a ferment, and his passions were heated. He turned actor; but having broken his leg in a scene of debauchery, he remained lame, and could no longer appear on the boards. He openly avowed his infidelity, and a prosecution was begun, which, if time had not failed, would probably have brought him to the stake. He made love to a drab, and trying to stab his rival, his hand was turned, so that his own blade entered his eye and his brain, and he died, still cursing and blasphemer. He was only thirty years old. Think what poetry could emanate from a life so passionate, and occupied in such a manner: first, exaggerated declamation, heaps of murder, atrocities, a pompous and furious display of tragedy soaked in blood, and passions raised to a pitch of madness. All the foundations of the English stage, 'Ferrex and Porrex,' 'Cambyses,' 'Hieronymo,' even the 'Pericles' of Shakspeare, reach the same height of extravagance, force, and horror. It is the first outburst of youth. Recall Schiller's 'Robbers,' and how modern democracy has recognised for the first time its picture in the metaphors and cries of Charles Moor. So here the characters struggle and jostle, stamp on the earth, gnash their teeth, shake their fists against
The trumpets sound, the drums beat, coats of mail file past, swords clash together, men stab each other; or
they die, kings die, straining a base voice; how death grips death with greedy talons gripe my bleeding heart;
and like a happy riddle on my life.' The hero in Tamburlaine the Great' is seized on a chariot drawn by chained
towns, burned towns, burned human and children, men to the sword, and finally, seated with an incredible sickness,
vainly struggling against the world with his emotion, raves against the gods, whose hands afflict his soul; and when he would free himself. There already is the picture of senseless pride, of blind and
murderous rage, which passing through many devastations, at last arms against heaven itself. The overflowing of
savage and immediate instinct produces this mighty sound-
ing verse, this prodigality of carnage, this display of
overloaded splendours and colours, this railing of demoniac passions, this aspect of grand impiety. If in the
dramas which preceded it, 'The Massacre at Paris,' 'The
Jew of Malta,' the bombast decreases, the violence remains.
There is the living, struggling, natural, personal man,
not the philosophic type which Goethe has created, but a
primitive and genuine man, tortured, thirty, the slave of
his passions, this wildness of grand impiety. If in the
dramas which preceded it, 'The Massacre at Paris,' 'The
Jew of Malta,' the bombast decreases, the violence remains.
There is the living, struggling, natural, personal man,
not the philosophic type which Goethe has created, but a
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Jew of Malta,' the bombast decreases, the violence remains.
There is the living, struggling, natural, personal man,
not the philosophic type which Goethe has created, but a
primitive and genuine man, tortured, thirty, the slave of
his passions, this wildness of grand impiety. If in the

The scene of these two plays ['Tamburlaine'], which are substantially one, takes in the whole period of time from the hero's first conquest till his death; so that the action ranges at large over diverse kingdoms and empires. Except the hero, there is little really deserving the name of characterization, this being a point of art which Marlowe had not yet mastered, and which he never attained but to a moderate degree, taking Shakespeare as the standard. But the hero is drawn with grand and striking proportions, and great vitality stand out in some prominence; the author lacking that balance of powers which is requisite, to produce the symmetry and roundness met with in the highest forms of Nature. And he knew not, apparently, how to express the hero's greatness in word, but by making him bethump the stage with tempestuous verbiage; which, to be sure, is not the style of greatness at all, but only of one trying to be so, because he is not so. For to talk big is the instinct of ambitious lillenesse. But Tamburlaine is also represented in act as a most magnanimous prodigy: amidst his haughtiest strides of conquest, we have strains of gentleness mingling with his iron sternness; and he everywhere appears lifted high with generous passions and impulses: if he regards not others, he is equally ready to sacrifice himself, his ease, pleasure, and even life, in his prestigous lust of glory.

As to the rest, this drama consists rather of a long series of speeches than any genuine dialogue. And the persons all speak from one brain, the hero talking just like the others, only more so; as if the author had no way to discriminate character but by different degrees of the same thing: in which respect the work has often reminded me of divers more civilized stage preparations, such as Addison's 'Cato,' Young's 'Revenge,' et id genus omne. For the proper constituent of dramatic dialogue is, that the persons strike fire out of each other by their sharp collisions of thought, so that their words relish at once of the individual speaking and the individual spoken to. Moreover the several parts of this work are not moulded together in any thing like vital unity; the materials seem bundled up arbitrarily, and for stage effect, instead of being assorted on any principle of organic coherence; everything thus going by the author's will, not by any law of reason or art. But this is a high region, from which there was in that age but one man big enough to be seen: so it's no use speaking of the rest. Therewithal the work affects us, throughout, as a dead-level of superlatives; everywhere we have nearly the same boisterous wind of tragical storm-and-stress; so that the effect is much like
that of a picture all foreground, with no perspective, no proportionations of light and shade, to give us distinct impressions.

'The Jew of Malta' shows very considerable advance towards a chaste and sober diction, but not much either in development of character or composition of parts. Barabas the Jew is a horrible monster of wickedness and cunning, yet not without strong lines of individuality. The author evidently sought to compass the effect of tragedy by accumulation of murders and other hellish deeds; which shows that he had no steady ideas as to wherein the true secret of tragic terror lies: he here strives to reach it by overfilling the senses; whereas its proper method stands in the joint working of the moral and imaginative powers, which are rather stifled than kindled by causing the senses to "sup full of horrors." The piece, however, abounds in quick and caustic wit; in some parts there is a good share of dialogue as distinguished from speech-making; and the versification is far more varied and compact than in 'Tamburlaine.' Still the work, as a whole, shows little that can properly be called dramatic power as distinguished from the general powers of rhetoric and wit.

'The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus,' probably written before 1590, exhibits Marlowe in a higher vein of workmanship. I think it must be acknowledged that he here wields the right elements and processes of tragic effect with an ordinary subtlety and power. Faustus, the hero, is a mighty necromancer, who has studied himself into direct communion with preternatural beings, and beside whom Friar Bacon sinks into a tame forger of bugbears. A Good Angel and a Bad Angel figure in the piece, each trying to win Faustus to his several way. Lucifer is ambitious to possess "his glorious soul," and the hero craves Lucifer's aid, that he may work wonders on the Earth. At his command, Mephistophilis, who acts as Lucifer's prime minister, visits him to negotiate an arrangement: I must quote a brief passage from their interview:

[Quotes I, iii, 65-99.]

This passage, especially the hero's cool indifference in questioning about things which the fiend shudders to consider, has often struck me as not altogether unworthy to be thought of in connection with Milton....

"That which moves, and is not moved, is fixed in place.

That which is moved, and is moved, is not fixed in place.

This is the difference between the higher and better style of versification than any part of 'Tamburlaine.' The author's division has grown more alien and facile to his thought; consequently it is highly varied in pace and movement, showing that in his hand the noble..."
instrument of dramatic blank-verse was fast growing into
tune for a far mightier hand to discourse its harmonies
upon. I must add that considerable portions both of this
play and the preceding are meant to be comical. But the
result only proves that Marlowe was incapable of comedy.
No sooner does he attempt the comic vein than his whole
style collapses into mere balderdash. In fact, though
plentifully gifted with wit, there was not a particle of
real humour in him, none of that subtle and pervasive
choice power can hardly live but in the society of cer-
tain moral elements that seem to have been left out of
his composition.

Edward the Second,' probably the latest, certainly
much the best, of Marlowe's dramas, was printed in 1598.
Here, for the first time, we meet with a genuine specimen
of the English Historical Drama. The scene covers a
period of twenty years; the incidents pass with great
rapidity, and, though sometimes crushed into indistinct-
ness, are for the most part well used both for historic
truth and dramatic effect; and the dialogue, generally,
is nervous, animated, and clear. In the great article
of character, too, this play has very considerable merit.
The King's insane dotage of his favourites, the upstart
vanity and insolence of Gaveston, the artful practice and
doubtful virtue of Queen Isabella, the factious turbulence
of the nobles, irascible, arrogant, regardless of others'
liberty, jealous of their own, sudden of quarrel, eager
in revenge, are all depicted with a goodly mixture of
energy and temperance. Therewithal the versification
moves, throughout, with a freedom and variety, such as may
almost stand a comparison with Shakespeare in what may be
called his earlier period; as when, for instance, 'King
Richard the Second' was written. It is probable, however,
that by this time, if not before, Marlowe had begun to
feel the power of that music which was to charm him, and
all others of the time, out of audience and regard. For
we have very good evidence, that before Marlowe's death
Shakespeare had far surpassed all of that age who had
ever been competent to teach him in any point of dramatic
worship.

Marlowe is of consequence, mainly, as one of the first
and greatest improvers of dramatic poetry in so far as
relates to diction and metrical style; which is my reason
for emphasizing his work so much in that regard....

Others have thought that Marlowe, if he had lived,
would have made some good approach to Shakespeare in
tragic power. A few years more would no doubt have lifted
him to very noble things, that is, provided his powers
could have been kept from the settings and strophes of debauchery; still, any approach to that great Divinity of the Drama was out of the question for him. For, judging from his life and works, the moral part of genius was constitutionally defective in him; and, with this so defective, the intellectual part cannot be truly itself; and his work must needs be comparatively weak in those points of our being which it touches, because it does not touch them all; for the whole must be moved at once, else there can be no great moving of any part. No, no! there could not have been in Marlowe, great as he was, a tithe of Shakespeare, for tragedy, nor any thing else.

To go no further, he was, as we have seen, destitute of humour; the powers of comedy evidently had no place in him; and these powers are indispensable to the production of high tragedy; a position affirmed as long ago as the days of Plato; sound in the reason of the thing; and, above all, made good in the instance of Shakespeare, who was mainly because he had all the powers of the human mind in harmonious order and action, and used them all, explicitly or implicitly, in every play he wrote.

Note

1 And all of that kind.

38. WILLIAM MINTO

1874

William Minto (1845-93) held the chair of Logic and English in the University of Aberdeen from 1880 to 1893. The comment here reproduced may be taken as the typical response to Marlowe at that time.

From 'Characteristics of English Poets' (1874; Boston, 1897), 233, 236-7.

Marlowe's alleged writings against the Trinity have never been seen; in all probability, like some alleged infidel works of the Middle Ages, they never existed, but there
seems no reason to doubt that he was, as his accusers averred, a man that neither feared God nor regarded man. His only avowed aim in life was the easy enjoyment of his pleasure. The vision of Hero and Leander was a ruin of his life, and it shone with a burning intensity proportioned to the violence of his tempestuous moods. The vision of Hero and Leander was a rapt surrender of the whole soul to impassioned meditation on luxurious beauty. In his life as in his plays, such intervals of delight were probably rare. Tamburlaine is a most impas-sioned adorer of divine Zenocrate; Faustus hangs in ecstatic worship on the lips of Helen; but these are only brief transports in lives where energy and ambition are devouringly predominant. Marlowe’s genius was little adapted to sonneteering and pastoral poetry: he stigmatized the fashionable love-lyrics as ‘egregious foppery,’ and derided them with rough ridicule. He wrote no sonnets; only one pastoral song has been ascribed to him, and it is direct and free. A moment of poignant rapturous enjoyment, an impulsive outburst of delight that will take no denial. Marlowe was a clear and powerful genius, and we often seem to catch in his poetry an undercurrent of almost angry contempt for commonplace. The most generally impressive of Marlowe’s works is his fragment on the tale of Hero and Leander, and if we found our mind only upon this, we should form most erroneous notions of his genius. We should suppose his worship of beauty, which was but a rare and transient passion, to have been the presiding force of his imagination. It is in his plays that we find the world of storm and strife wherein his delight was constant, and a heaven of passion and light, where all things were made to serve his thought, feeling, and destructive energy: a region where everything is on a gigantic scale, peopled with creatures that are vastness in the largeness of their composition and the littleness of their passions.

"Tamburlaine" was Marlowe’s first play, but the impetu-ous swell of his conceptions cannot be said to have been moderated as he went on. His "raptures all air and fire" were not, I believe, the extravagance of youth; still less could they have been, as Mr. Collier seems to think, the result of inexperience in blank verse, and mistaken effort to make up by bombastic terms for the absence of rhyme: they were part of the constitution of this individual man. It is impossible to say what he might have done had he lived longer, but it is certain that, had he been spared, he would have advanced this high expression out, and proved himself capable of speaking up smoother. But as long as he lived he found fuel for his lofty raptures. He could not repeat another conqueror of the world, but his heroes are all...
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expanded to the utmost possible limit of their circum-
stances. The Jew of Malta is an incarnation of the devil
himself: he is no less universal in his war against all
mankind that are within reach of his power: he fights
single-handed with monstrous instruments of death against
a whole city, and does not scruple to poison even his own
daughter. Faustus is not a superhuman being, but his
ambition is even greater than Tamburlaine's: he more
beyond the petty possibilities of humanity, leagues him-
self with superhuman powers, and rides through space in
a fiery chariot exploring the secrets of the universe.

39. A. W. WARD

Sir Adolphus William Ward (1837-1924) was Professor of
History and English Literature and Language, Owens
College, Manchester, 1866-97. He was author of 'A History
of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne'
(1875), and for a time drama critic for the 'Manchester
Guardian'.

From 'A History of English Dramatic Literature to the
Death of Queen Anne' (1875), I, 196-9, 201-3.

The dramatic merits as well as the poetic beauties of
'Edward II' are extremely great. The construction is upon
the whole very clear, infinitely superior e.g. to that of
Peele's 'Edward I.' The two divisions into which the
reign of Edward II naturally falls, viz. the period of the
ascendancy of Gaveston and that of the ascendancy of the
Spencers, are skilfully interwoven; and after the catas-
trophe of the fourth act (the victory of the King's adver-
saries and his capture) the interest in what can no
longer be regarded as uncertain, viz. the ultimate fate of
the King, is most powerfully sustained. The characters too are mostly well drawn; there is no ignobility about the King, whose passionate love for his favourites is itself traced to a generous motive. He is without courage and spirit in the face of danger; but his weakness is his doom. Misfortune utterly breaks him, and never term the "drowsiness of woe" (to use Charles Lamb's expression), and, after a last struggle between pride and necessity, the lingering expectation of a certain doom, been painted with more tragic power. The scene in act iv, where the King seeks refuge among the monks of Neath Abbey, is of singular pathos; but it is perhaps even more remarkable how in the last scene of all the abysmal horror of the situation is depicted without our sense of the loathsome being aroused; and how pity and terror are mingled in a degree which Shakespeare himself only in the murder of Don Juan attains to. For the combined power and delicacy of treatment, the murder of Edward II may be compared to the murder of Desdemona in 'Othello'; for the fearful suspense in which the spectator is kept, I know no parallel except the 'Agamemnon' of Aeschylus, but even here the effort is inferior, for in the English tragedy the spectator shares the suspense, and shares the certainty of its inevitable termination, with the sufferer on the stage himself. Of the other characters I will not dwell here any more, except to note the skill with which the character of young Edward (afterward Edward III) is drawn, and how our goodwill is preserved for him, even though his name is put forward by his father's enemies. Infanta's innocence is admirably reproduced; he is a Fool, and has a touch of flippant insolence in the last, which he repays his in- structor with the ace. This is the only comic scene in the play.

I thank you all, my lords: then I perceive That heaving's one, and hanging's the other, And death is all.

The imperious haughtiness of Young Mortimer is equally well depicted; in the character of the Queen alone I do not any indication of the transition from her faithful but despairing attachment to the King to a guilty love for Mortimer. The dignity of the tragedy is not marred by any comic scene, which is well, for humor is not Marlowe's strong point; but there is none too in the murder scene. Baldock as an unscrupulous upstart, who fawns upon the great, and gains influence by means of his ability to find for everything reasons, or, as his interlocutor terms them, quandocidem.112
The play is written of course in blank verse, of a flowing as well as vigorous description; but rhymes are not unfrequent. The author's love of classical quotations finds vent on several occasions and the number of classical allusions is extraordinary; besides Leander and Daphne, who from different reasons were naturally in Marlowe's mind, Cimon, the Graces, Paris, Hector, Helen, Atlas, Plautus, Charon, and Trojan Horse, as well as Cæcilia and other historical parallels, are mentioned....

Having dwelt at the utmost length which I could permit myself upon the several plays attributable without doubt to Marlowe, I must be brief in my concluding remarks on his position as a dramatist. His services to our dramatic literatures are wondrous. As the author who first introduced blank verse to the popular stage he rendered to our drama a service which it would be difficult to overestimate. No innovation could have done more to preserve it from the danger of artificiality of form, which so readily leads to artificiality of matter, to which the drama is at all times peculiarly exposed. It is obvious that on the stage no form of rhymed verse can, except in isolated lyrical passages, prevail except the rhymed couplet; and it is the couplet in particular which leads to an antithetical arrangement of thoughts, which is of its essence a constant application of rhetorical practice. Thus rhymed couplets, while their use in special cases (such as the close of a speech or any other peculiarly emphatic passage) will always commend itself, cannot without great danger both to the continuity and the naturalness of dramatic movement be employed as the ordinary form of dramatic verse. It is not too much to say that their use in the French drama has contributed to mould the character of a whole development, which continues to this day, of French dramatic literature, while their abandonment by the English popular stage had an equally decisive effect upon our own. In substituting blank verse, Marlowe at first thought it necessary to compensate by rhetorical efforts of another kind for the loss of immediate effect entailed by the change; but already in his later plays it is perceptible how unnecessary he had come to feel the substitution of rant for antithesis; and as the metre easily adapted itself to his hand, he recognised in practice its supreme merit of flexibility; so that whereas his earlier blank verse is monotonous, his later is varied in rhythm and cadence. The English drama never returned to rhyme, except in a phase of its history which is to be regarded as a conscious departure from its national course; and it was reactivated an endeavor forced upon it by the influence of foreign example, finally recovered
on this head by the most eminent of their English follow-
ers. Altogether, it may well be doubted whether any
literary innovation has ever been so rapidly and so perma-
nently successful as this, in which the critically import-
ant step is associated with the name of Marlowe.

His second service to the progress of our dramatic
literature, though not perhaps admitting of so precise a
statement, is one more important than the other. The
spirit of Marlowe, as it appears to-day in the best works
of the Elizabethan drama, is the spirit in which he ran
in a dramatic author, is far from satisfying all the
elements of his art. In construction, though by no means
unskilful and at times excellently successful, he is care-
less; and it is only rarely that he applies himself to the
development of character. It is not just to say of the
author of 'Edward II' that he never represents any dra-
matic conflicts except those between human impulses of all
control and of all limits, and the control and the limits
which the conditions of human life impose; it is not just
to deny that he can move the springs of pity as well as
of terror, and depict other passions besides those of
ambition and defiant self-exaltation. But during his
brief poetic career he had not learnt the art of mingling,
except very incidentally, the operation of other human
motives of action with those upon which his ardent spirit
were especially dwelt; and of the divine gift of humor,
which lies so close to that of pathos, he at the most
exhibits occasional sign. The element in which he was a
painter, that is, of that spirit of the time, was the
least lyrical with that poetic passion which form of liter-
ary expression desires to express the simplest fancies.
After Marlowe had written, it was impossible for our dramatists
to return to the cold horrors or tame declamation of the
earlier tragic drama; the 'Spanish Tragedy' and 'Gorboduc'
had alike been left behind. "His raptures were all ayre
and fire;" and it is this gift of passion which, together
with the service to the outward form of the Elizabethan
drama, makes Marlowe worthy to be called not a predeces-
sor, but the earliest in the immortal company, of our great drama-
tists.

Note

Quandoquidem: 'seeing that', or 'since indeed', a
pedantic opening.
An interesting comment on the persistence of belief in the principalities and powers of the air and on Marlowe vs Goethe. The article is titled "Faust on the Stage". From 'All the Year Round' (28 June, 1879), xliii, 40-1.

'The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus' is then the earliest literary work extant purporting to treat of the Wittenberg savant and conjuror — terms almost synonymous. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, astronomy and astrology, chemistry and alchemy, signified exactly the same thing; in fact, our prosaic and matter-of-fact ancestors cared very much more for the arts of divination, the transmutation of metals, and the secret of perpetual youth, than for any abstract idea of science. What may be called the poetry of science, the love of knowledge for its own sake, is a recent invention, like the love of picturesque scenery, and the arts of spelling accurately and speaking decently and modestly. Some of these last are not very widely distributed even now, any more than a knowledge of the difference between science and quackery. In queer lower strata both survivals of the thoughts and customs of centuries long dead and dying are still retained. The popularity of Mr. Punch amongst his charges is due to his exuberant humour, but in essentials just as of old. There are thousands of people even in England who have no notion of the difference between astronomy and astrology than their ancestors of four hundred years ago. White witches are yet to be found in Devonshire, and gipsies everywhere that a silver spoon is to be picked up. More than this, the present Astronomer Royal, like Flamsteed, who lived a century and a half before him, is besieged with requests to find lost linen and spoons, to "take the stars off" a favourite son who has a strange knack of losing his watch when he goes to market, to "fix the planets" for a pet daughter, or to find the whereabouts of stolen property. A yearly average arrives at the Observatory at Greenwich of letters containing droll requests of this kind, proving that vulgar human nature is profoundly penetrated with the wisdom of Buckle's apothegm that 'the chief use of knowledge of the past is to predict the future.' In a rough kind of way these good people agree with the philosopher,
albeit they import the revelations of the planets into their calculations. In Marlowe’s time nobody doubted his astronomical knowledge; the greatest living woman, saving Elizabeth herself, Catherine de Medicis, spent a part of every day with Ruggieri, her necromancer, in the lower storey built into the wall of the Paris corn-market, or in the loftier observatory at Blois. It was in the latter that the Italian juggler cast the horoscope of Henry of Navarre, and found that he would reign in France; a prediction which absolutely drew away the queen from the Huguenots, and left the Catholics free to reinforce their troops, under the command of the greatest living man, the Duke of Guise. It was, therefore, not astonishing that the world should have a lively sense of the personal presence of Lucifer, at the time Kit Marlowe tippled sack at Deptford. Honest Kit himself never doubted the personal spirit of devil, he presented as with the personality of Shabboleth the Great, after the manner of the old Sumerian notion. In reading Marlowe’s wonderful work it is impossible to imagine that the author doubted the possibility of the events he puts before the spectator. This simple faith gives a greatness to the Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, that one is far from finding in the great work of Goethe. Marlowe’s work is the outcome of an undoubting mind - not the statement of a great problem yet unsolved. After the old simple fashion, Marlowe points his moral before he begins to adorn his tale, and tells us, through the medium of the chorus, how Faustus is graced with Doctor’s name,

Excelling all, and sweetly can dispute
In the heavenly matters of theology:
Till swoln with cunning, and a self-conceit,
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
and so sutfeits on the cursed necromancy. Marlowe wrote, as Goethe could not write, in the firm belief of the possibility of what he wrote. Goethe’s earth and air spirits are abstractions; Marlowe’s are concrete actualities, and throughout the Elizabethan’s wonderful play there is no hint, any more than there is in a mediaeval mystery, that the events in it are either impossible or even improbable. There is another curious point of difference,
not with the last thought of Goethe in the second part of Faust, but in the first or dramatic part—a difference clearly ascribable to the fervent religious faith of the sixteenth century. Throughout Marlowe’s play there is the constant interposition of good counsel and warning to repentance. Faustus signs the contract, but it is throughout suggested that it might have been annulled had he turned back in time; the Christian doctrine of repentance is never forgotten, and Faustus is constantly opened a loophole of escape.

Weary of success as a learned doctor, he asks:

Are not thy bills hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague,
And thousand desperate maladies been cured?

Human knowledge being compassed, he applies to the supernatural, and accordingly calls in two doctors learned in the art magical, “the German Valdes,” whose name hath a most un-Teutonic sound, and Cornelius. These worthies instruct him how to use the works of Bacon and Albertus Magnus, in conjunction with the Hebrew Psalter and New Testament, so as to raise spirits more potent than those of Owen Glendower (teste Hotspur). His interview with Mephistopheles is marked by several peculiarities, notably one not overlooked by Milton:

FAUST. Where are you damned?
MEPH. In hell.
FAUST. How comes it then that thou art come out of hell?
MEPH. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it;
Think’m I that I, that saw the face of God
And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

This Mephistopheles is not the mocking fiend of Goethe, but rather the moral Lucifer of Milton. He is determined to secure the soul of Faustus, and during his twenty-four years of service realizes every kind of impossibility for his temporary master. Some perseverance on the part of the fiend is required, for Marlowe’s Faustus is a shabby client, ever trying to escape performance of his bond. This Mephistopheles infers that the mystic and comprehensive answer to Where is hell? is
Marlowe: The Critical Heritage 1588–1896

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed in one self place: but where we are is hell, and where hell is there must we ever be, must not be understood too literally. Nothing would have been farther from Marlowe’s purpose than to shake popular belief in an actual fixed place of eternal punishment. Firstly, such doctrine would have been utterly opposed to the teachings of his day; secondly, it would have made an end of his tragedy. The reality of the infernal regions is as necessary to Marlowe as to Dante. Neither doubted their existence; while, on the other hand, Goethe held what are called ‘advanced views’ on such subjects, and, whether he chose openly to avow his disbelief in eternal punishment or not, treats his angels and spirits in Faust as mere poetical machinery. Just as Julius Caesar, according to Sallust, treated the old Pagan gods in that memorable speech in the senate house, touching the complexity of Fate, there is no real good or evil spirit in Goethe’s wonderful work, and the malicious Mephistopheles is rather recollected as a servant of good things than as a malignant fiend. Now Marlowe, on the contrary, is very real. Not only is Faustus duly handed over to the foul fiend at the conclusion of the tragedy, but a perpetual conflict is maintained between his good and bad angels. He is warned over and over again, and it is implied that even such contract as he has signed with Lucifer may be voided by prompt repentance and succession. He is shown, within the compass of eight days, the face of heaven, of earth, and of hell. The seven deadly sins appear before him, and describe their attributes; he is given every chance of repentance in vain. Yet he is not shown to be oppressed by the Greek destiny. On the contrary, his power to desire is asserted by the frequency of the appeals made to him. He is vanquished by his own weakness — sensuality.

41. A. C. Bradley
1880

Andrew Cecil Bradley (1851–1935) is best known for his "Shakespearean Tragedy" (1904); twentieth-century critics take off from it, either by way of exposition or
accommodation. His comments on Marlowe, in which he shares the assumptions of his contemporaries, are still important.


Marlowe has one claim on our affection which everyone is ready to acknowledge; he died young. We think of him along with Chatterton and Burns, with Byron, Shelley, and Keats. And this is a fact of some importance for the estimate of his life and genius. His poetical career lasted only for six or seven years, and he did not outlive his 'hot days, when the mad blood's stirring.' An old ballad tells us that he acted at the Curtain theatre in Shoreditch and 'brake his leg in one rude scene, When in his early age.' If there is any truth in the last statement, we may suppose that Marlowe gave up acting and confined himself to authorship. He seems to have depended for his livelihood on his connection with the stage; and probably, like many of his fellows and friends, he lived in a free and even reckless way. A more peculiar characteristic of Marlowe's was his 'atheism.' No reliance can be placed on the details recorded on this subject; but it was apparently only his death that prevented judicial proceedings being taken against him on account of his opinions. The note on which these proceedings would have been founded was the work of one Bame, who thought that 'all men in christianity ought to endeavour that the mouth of so dangerous a member may be stopped,' and was hanged at Tyburn about eighteen months afterwards. But other testimony points in the same direction; and a celebrated passage in Greene's 'Groatsworth of Wit' would lead us to suppose that Marlowe was given to blatant pro-
fanities. Whatever his offences may have been - and there is nothing to make us think he was a bad-hearted man - he had no time to make men forget them. He was not thirty when he met his death.
a glance at Marlowe's first play. On the one hand it stands at the opposite pole to the classic form of the drama as it is found in Seneca, a form which had been adapted in 'Gorboduc,' and which some of the more learned writers attempted to nationalise. There is no Chorus in 'Tamburlaine' or in any of Marlowe's plays except 'Dr. Faustus'; and the action takes place on the stage instead of being merely reported. On the other hand, in this, the first play in blank verse which was publicly acted, he called the audience

From juggling veins of chyming mother-wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
and fixed the metre of his drama for ever as the metre of English tragedy. And, though neither here nor in 'Dr. Faustus' could he yet afford to cast off all the conceits of clownage, he was in effect beginning to substitute works of art for the fourscore popular representations of the day. Doubtless it was only a beginning. The two parts of 'Tamburlaine' are not great tragedies. They are full of mere horror and glare. Of the essence of drama, a sustained and developed action, there is as yet very little. As action they stand entirely from the lasting passion of a single character. And in the conception of this character has Marlowe quite freed himself from the defect of the popular plays, in which, naturally enough, personified virtues and vices often took the place of men. Still, if there is a touch of this defect in 'Tamburlaine,' as in the 'Jew of Malta,' it is not a serious one. The ruling passion is conceived with an intensity, and portrayed with a sweep of imagination unknown before; a requisite for the drama hardly less important than the faculty of constructive invention is attained, and the way is opened for those creations which are lifted above the common and yet are living flesh and blood. It is the same with the language. For the buffoonery he partly displaced Marlowe substitutes a swelling diction, 'high astounding terms,' and some outrageous bombast, such as that which Shakespeare reproduced and put into the mouth of Pistol. But, laugh as we will, in this first of Marlowe's plays there is that incommunicable gift which means almost everything, an art a manner perfectly individual, and yet, at its best, free from eccentricity.
writing is, to use his own words,

'lift upward' Marlowe's style was at first, and so it remained. It degenerates into violence, but never into softness. If it falters, the cause is not doubt or languor, but haste and want of care. It has the energy of youth; and a living poet has described this among its other qualities when he speaks of Marlowe as singing

With much of gold, and morning in his eyes.

As a dramatic instrument it developed with his growth and acquired variety. The stately monotone of 'Tamburlaine,' in which the pause falls almost regularly at the end of the lines, gives place in 'Edward II' to rhythms less suited to pure poetry, but far more rapid and flexible. In 'Dr. Faustus' the great address to Helen is as different in metrical effect as it is in spirit from the last scene, where the words seem, like Faustus heart, to 'pant and quiver.'

The expression 'lift upward' applies also, in a sense, to most of the chief characters in the plays. Whatever else they may lack, they know nothing of half-heartedness or irresolution. A volcanic self-assertion, a complete absorption in some one desire, is their characteristic. That in creating such characters Marlowe was working in dark places, and that he develops them with all his energy, is certain. But that in so doing he shows (to refer to a current notion of him) a 'hunger and thirst after unrighteousness,' a desire, that is, which never has produced or could produce true poetry, is an idea which Hazlitt could not have really intended to convey. Marlowe's works are tragedies. Their greatness lies not merely in the conception of an unhallowed lust, however gigantic, but in an insight into its tragic significance and tragic results; and there is as little food for a hunger after unrighteousness (if there be such a thing) in the appalling final scene of 'Dr. Faustus,' or, indeed, in the melancholy of Mephistopheles, so grandly touched by Marlowe, as in the catastrophe of 'Richard III' or of 'Antony and Cleopatra.' And there is as little food for a hunger after unrighteousness in the acts of the 'Jew of Malta' Barabas has become a mere monster; but for that very reason the character, reason to show Marlowe's peculiar genius, and Shakespeare himself has not, as Shakespeare himself, has not portrayed the sensual lust after gold, and the touch of imagination which redeems it from insignificance, with such splendor as the opening speech of Marlowe's
play. Whatever faults however the earlier plays have, it is clear, if "Edward II" be one of his latest works, that Marlowe was rapidly regaining the form in that play in the evolution of the two great excess to which he had given birth in his earlier works. To say nothing of the "fair" Helen, and the play of a single character, there is the most decided advance both in construction and in the dialogue.

Of the weightier qualities of Marlowe's genius the extracts from his purely poetical works give but little idea; but just for that reason they bring to the variety of his powers. Beaumont has suggested that line with the phrasal "come live with me and be my love," which has run in many a head beside Sir Hugh Evans's. But the shepherd would hardly be called "passionate" outside the Arcadia to which the lyric really belongs. Of the beautiful fragment in ottava rima nothing is known, except that it was first printed with Marlowe's name in 'England's Parnassus,' 1600. The translations of Lucretius and Ovid (the former in blank verse) were perhaps early studies. It is curious that Marlowe, who felt the charm of classical amatory verse, and whose knowledge of Virgil is shown in his 'Queen Dido,' should have been the man who, more than any other, secured the theatre from the dominion of inferior classical dramas. How fully he caught the inspiration, not indeed of the best classical poetry, but of that world of beauty which ancient literature seemed to disclose to the men of the Renaissance, we can see in many parts of his writings, in Faust's address to Helen, in Beaumont's description of the sports at Court, in the opening of 'Queen Dido'; but the fullest proof of it is in the fragment of 'Hero and Leander.' Beaumont wrote a 'Salmacis and Hermaphroditus,' Shakespeare a 'Venus and Adonis,' but both found their true vehicle in the drama. Marlowe's poem not only stands far above one of these tales, and perhaps above both, but it stands on a level with his plays; and it is hard to say...
what excellence he might not have reached in the field of narrative verse. The defect of his fragment, the intru-
sion of ingenious reflections and of those conceits with one of which our selection unhappily terminates, was the
fault of his time; its merit is Marlowe's own. It was
suggested indeed by the short poem of the Pseudo-Musaeus,
an Alexandrian grammarian who probably wrote about the end
of the fifth century after Christ, and appears to have been
translated into English shortly before 1580; but it bears no
resemblance to any other poem in that metre composed before, not, perhaps, in there any writer since
which distinctly recalls it, unless it be 'Endymion.'
'Pagan' it is in a sense, with the Paganism of the Renas-
cence: the more pagan the better, considering the subject.
Nothing of the deeper thought of the time, no 'looking
before and after,' no worship of a Gloriana or hostility
to an Acrasia, interferes with its frank acceptance of
sensuous beauty and joy. In this, in spite of much resem-
bance, it differs from 'Endymion,' the spirit of which is
not fruition but unsatisfied longing, and in which the
vision of a vague and lovelier ideal is always turning the
enjoyment of the moment into gloom. On the other hand, a
further likeness to Keats may perhaps be traced in the
pictorial quality of Marlowe's descriptions. His power
does not lie in catching in the aspect of objects or
scene those deeper suggestions which appeal to an imagi-
nation stored with human experience as well as sensitive
to colour and form; for this power does not necessarily result in what we call pictorial writing; but his
power does in this. He mediates between the object and
himself, so that his power of expression appeals directly to sense as vividly as he apprehends it.
Not in this - the case with the description of objects -
alone. The same complete absorption of imagination in
scene appears in Marlowe's account of the visit to Hero's
tower. This passage is in a high degree voluptuous, but
it is not prurient, for prurience is the sign of an un-
satisfied imagination, which, being unable to present its
object adequately, appeals to extraneous and unpoetic
feelings. But Marlowe's imagination is completely satis-
fied; and therefore, though he has not a high theme (for it is a mere sensuous joy that is described, and there is
next to no real emotion in the manner), he is able to make
fine poetry of it. Of the metrical qualities of the poem
there can be but one opinion. Shakespeare himself, who
* never reached in his own narrative
verse a melody of soundness and richness which
Marlowe might have applied his own words -
That calls my soul from forth his living seat
To move into the measure of delight.

Marlowe had many of the makings of a great poet: a capacity for Titanic conceptions which might with time have become Olympian; an imaginative vision which was already intense and must have deepened and widened; the gift of style and of making words sing; and a time to live in such as no other generation of English poets has known. It is easy to regret the early death of a genius of so great a range of perceptions into life and character was contrasted; of poetic power he shows hardly a trace, and it is incredible that he should have written the Jack Cade scene of 'Henry VI'; no humor or tenderness suffuses his pathos; there is not a single female character in his plays whom we remember with much interest; and it is not clear that he could have produced songs of the first order. But it is only Shakespeare who can do everything; and Shakespeare did not die at twenty-nine. That Marlowe must have stood nearer to him than any other dramatic poet of that time, or perhaps of any later time, is probably the verdict of nearly all students of the drama. His immediate successors knew well what was lost in him; and from the days of Peele, Jonson, Drayton, and Chapman, to our own, the poets have done more than common honour to his memory.

Note

* Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might;
  'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?'
  'As You Like It,' iii. 5.

42. J. A. SYMONDS
1884

John Addington Symonds (1840-93) was a cultivated Borax
poet; his 'History of the Renaissance in Italy' is still
read. He wrote a preface to Marlowe's Faustus, and con-
tinued to English drama for the first volume of Havelock
Ellis's 'Studies in the History of Sex,' 1928. His view of
Marlowe is a vivid expression of the received critical
opinion at that time.
Marlowe has been styled, and not unjustly styled, the father of English dramatic poetry. When we reflect on the conditions of the stage before he produced "Tamburlaine," and consider the state to which he left it after the appearance of "Edward II.," we shall be able to estimate his true right to this title. Art, like Nature, does not move by sudden leaps and bounds. It required a slow elaboration of diverse elements, the formation of a public able to take interest in dramatic exhibitions, the determination of the national taste toward the romantic rather than the classic type of art, and all the other circum- stances which have been dwelt upon in the preceding studies, to render Marlowe's advent so decisive as it proved. Before he began to write, various dramatic species had been assayed with more or less success. Comedies modeled in form upon the types of Plautus and Terence; tragedies conceived in the spirit of Seneca; chronicles rudely arranged in scenes for representation; dramas of compliment and allegory; had succeeded to the religious Miracles and ethical Moralities. There was plenty of productive energy, plenty of enthusiasm and activity. Theatres continued to spring up, and acting came to rank among the recognized professions. But this activity was still chaotic. None could say where, or in what way, the public taste was centered. To us, students of the past, it is indeed clear enough in what direction lay the real life of the drama; but this was not apparent to contemporaries. Scholars deplored the shows of mingled bloodshed and buffoonery in which the populace delighted. The people had no taste for dry and formal disquisitions in the style of "Gorboduc." The blank verse of Shakespeare was affecting. The public was affected; the opening complexes of the popular theatre interfered with dialogue and free development of character. The public itself was divided in its tastes and instincts; the web inclining to mere drolleries and amuse- ments upon the stage, the better vulgar to formalities and studied coincidences. A general body of sober middlemen, by the force of numbers, was able to influence the choice of all forms of dramatic art with undisguised hostility. Meanwhile, no really great poet had arisen to stamp the tendency of either Court or town with the authentic seal of genius. There seemed a danger lest the fortunes of the
stage in England should be lost between the prejudices of a literary class, the puerile and lifeless pastimes of the multitude, and the disfavour of conservative moralists. From this peril Marlowe saved the English drama. Amid the chaos of conflicting elements he discovered the true and living germ of art, and set its growth beyond all risks of accident by his achievement.

When, therefore, we style Marlowe the father and founder of English dramatic poetry, we mean that he perceived the capacities for noble art inherent in the Romantic Drama, and proved its adaptability to high purpose by his practice. But of confusion he brought order, following the clue of his own genius through a labyrinth of dim un- mastered possibilities. Like all great craftsmen, he worked by selection and exclusion on the whole mass of material ready to his hand, and his instinct in this process of selection was the true equivalent of the process of arrangement in the Lamb House. Out of confusion he brought order, following the clue of his own genius through a labyrinth of dim un- mastered possibilities. Like all great craftsmen, he worked by selection and exclusion on the whole mass of material ready to his hand, and his instinct in this process of selection was the true equivalent of the process of arrangement in the Lamb House. 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...About Marlowe there is nothing small or trivial. His verse is mighty; his passion is intense; the outlines of his plots are large; his characters are Titanic; his fancy is extravagant in richness, insolence, and pomp. Marlowe could rough-hew like a Cyclops, though he was far from being able to finish with the subtlety and smoothness of a Praxiteles. We may compare his noblest studies of character with marbles blocked out by Michel Angelo, not with the polished perfection of ‘La Notte’ in San Lorenzo. Speaking of ‘Dr. Faustus,’ Goethe said with admiration: ‘Das große ist in allem.’ Magnificently planned, and executed with a free, decisive touch, that never hesitates and takes no heed of modulations. It is in this vastness of design and purity, this simplicity and certainty of purpose, which strikes us first in Marlowe. He is the sculptor-poet of Colossi, aiming at such effects alone as are unattainable in figures of a superhuman size, and careless of fine distinctions or delicate gradations in their execution. His characters are not so much human beings, with the complexity of human attributes combined in living personality, as types of humanity, the animated moulds of human lusts and passions which include, each one of them, the possibility of many individuals. They are the embodiments of single qualities and simple forces. This tendency to dramatise ideal conceptions, to vitalise character with one dominant and tyrannous motive, is very strong in Marlowe. Were it not for his own fiery sympathy with the passions thus idealised, and for the fervour of his conceptive faculty, these colossal personifications might have been insipid or frigid. As it is, they are far from deserving such epithets. They are redeemed from the coldness of symbolic art, from the tiresomeness of tragic humours, by their author’s intensity of conviction. Marlowe is in deadly earnest, while creating these colossal personifications, and not an evil or somewhat amiss personification, but his own unadulterated heart is the new atmosphere from which these words spring. We feel then to be spectators of these things, our eyes awed by the splendour of his genius, our hearts moved by the beauty of his passion, our ears thrilled by the power of his style.
woman's character. His Abigail is a mere puppet. Isabella, in his 'Edward II.,' changes suddenly from almost object fawning on her husband to an object of dependence on an ambitious paramour. His Dido owes such power as the sketch undoubtedly possesses to the poetry of the Fourth Aeneid.

It is no function of sound criticism to decoct a poet's work into its final and residual essence, deducing one motive from the complex efforts and the casual essays of a mind placed higher than the critic's own; or inventing a catch-word whereby some incommensurable series of achievements may be ticketed. And yet, such is the nature of Marlowe's work, that it imperatively indicates a leading motive, irresistibly suggests a catch-word. This leading motive which pervades his poetry may be defined as Amour de l'Impossible - the love or lust of unattainable things; beyond the reach of physical force, of sensual faculty, of mastering will; but not beyond the range of man's inordinate desire, man's infinite capacity for happiness, man's everlasting thirst for beauty, power, and knowledge. This catch-word of the Impossible Amour is thrust by Marlowe himself, in the pride of his youthful insolence and lawlessness of spirit - in the pride of his soul's revolt against the given order of the world. He and the Titanic characters into whom he has infused his spirit - even as a workman through the glass-pipe blows life-breath into a bubble, permanent so long as the fine vitreous form endures - he and all the creatures of his fancy thirst for things beyond man's grasp, not merely because these things exhaust man's faculties in the pursuit, but also because the full fruition of them has been interdicted. Thus Marlowe's lust for the impossible, the lust he has injected like a molten fluid into all his eminent dramatic personalities, is in desire for joys conceived by the imagination, floating within the boundaries of will and sense at some fixed moment, but transcending these firm limitations, luring the spirit onward, exhausting the corporeal faculties, engaging the soul itself in a strife with God. This lust assumes the shape of thirst for power, of thirst for beauty, of thirst for knowledge. It is chiefly thirst for power which animates this poet and his brood. When knowledge, as in Faustus, seems to be the bait, that
knowledge will redound to power. But there is a carnal element in the desire itself, a sensuality which lends a
grasp to Belial on the heart-strings of the lust. This sometimes soars aloft in aspirations, exhales itself in longings after Helen, the world’s queen of loveliness, evoked from Hades; sometimes it sinks to avaricious, solitary, glutinous delight in gems. It resolves itself again into the thirst for power when we find that the jewels of Barabas are hugged and gloated over for their pricy of buying states, corrupting kingdoms; when we see that the wraith of Helen has been dragged from Lethe to flatter a magician’s vision of omnipotence.

43. A. H. BULLEN

Arthur Henry Bullen (1857-1920) was a prolific and influential editor and publisher of English Renaissance dramatic and poetic texts. As the extracts below indicate, he was not an original or searching critic.


It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of 'Tam-burlaine' in the history of the English drama. To appreciate how immensely Marlowe outdistanced at one bound all his predecessors, the reader must summon courage to make himself acquainted with such productions as 'Gorboduc,' 'The Misfortunes of Arthur,' and 'Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes.' He will then perceive how real is Marlowe’s claim to be regarded as the Father of the English drama. That the play is stuffed with bombast, that exaggeration is carried sometimes to the verge of burlesque, no sensible critic will venture to deny. But the characters, with all their stiffness, have life and movement. The Scythian conqueror, ‘threatening the world in high astounding terms,’ is an impressive figure. There is nothing mean or trivial in the invention. The young poet threw into his work all the energy of his passionate nature. He did not pause to polish his lines, to correct
and curtail; but was borne swiftly onward by the wings of his imagination. The absence of chastening restraint is felt throughout; and, indeed, the beauty of some of the most majestic passages is seriously marred by the introduction of a weak or ill-timed verse. Take the following passage from the First Part:

Nature that framed us of four elements,
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown, (ii. 7.)

The ear exults in the sonorous march of the stately verse as each successive line paces more majestically than the preceding; but what cruel discomfiture awaits us at the end! It seems almost inconceivable that the poet should have spoilt so magnificent a passage by the lame and impotent conclusion in the last line. For the moment we are half inclined to think that he is playing some trick upon us; that he has deliberately led up to an anti-climax in order to enjoy the malicious satisfaction of laughing at our irritation. The noble and oft-quoted passage on Beauty (1 'Tamburlaine,' v. 1) is injured considerably by the diffuseness of the context. Marlowe seems to have blotted literally nothing in this earliest play.

Before leaving 'Tamburlaine' a word must be said about Marlowe's introduction of blank verse. Unrhymed verse of ten syllables had been employed both for epic and dramatic purposes before Marlowe's time. The Earl of Surrey, in his translation of Books ii. and iv. of Virgil's 'Aeneid,' had been the first to transplant the metre from Italy. Surrey was a charming sonneteer and graceful lyrist; but it would be absurd to claim that his translations from Virgil afford the slightest hint of the capabilities of blank verse. It is impossible to select six consecutive lines that satisfy the ear. Without freedom or swing the procession of languid lines limps feebly forward. When we come to 'Gorboduc,' the first dramatic piece in which rhyme was discarded, the case is so better, little advance, or rather none at all, has been made in rendering
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the verse were flexible. Misled by classical usage, all writers before Marlowe aimed at composing blank verse on the model of Greek iambics. Confusing accent with quantity, they regarded accentuated and unaccentuated syllables as respectively long and short. Hence the aim was to end each line with a strongly accentuated syllable, immediately preceded by one that was unaccentuated; in the rest of the line unaccentuated and accentuated syllables occurred alternately. Thus, to complete the monotonous effect, all freedom of movement was naturally excluded. This state of things Marlowe abolished. At a touch of the master's hand the heavy-gaited verses took symmetry and shape. That the blank verse of 'Tamburlaine' left much to be desired in the way of variety is, of course, undeniable. Its sonorous music is fitted rather for epic than dramatic purposes. The swelling rotundity of the italicised lines in the following passage recalls the magnificent rhythm of Milton:

The galleys and those pilling brigandines
That yearly sail to the Venetian Gulf,
And hover in the Straits for Christians' wreck,
Shall lie at anchor in the Isle Asant
Until the Persian fleet and men-of-war,
Sailing along the oriental sea,
Have fetched about the Indian continent
Even from Persepolis to Mexico.

Later, Marlowe learned to breathe sweetness and softness into his 'mighty line,' - to make the measure that had thundered the threats of Tamburlaine falter the sobs of a broken heart....

But on the strength of internal evidence we might go further, and say that the comic scenes (in 'The Jew') are in no instance by Marlowe. As far as possible, it is well to avoid theorising, but I must state my conviction that Marlowe never attempted to write a comic scene. The Muses had dowered him with many rare qualities - nobility and tenderness and pity - but the gift of humour, the most grateful of all gifts, was withhold. To excite 'tears and laughter for all time' was given to Shakespeare alone; but all the Elizabethan dramatists, if we except Ford and Cyril Tourneur, combined to some extent humour with tragic power. The Elizabethan stage rarely tolerated any tragedy that was unrelieved by scenes of mirth. It was in vain to plead the example of classical usage, to point out that the Attic tragedians never jested. Fortunately the 'understanding' pittites were not learned in the classical tongues; they applauded when they were satisfied, and they
'Mowed' when the play dragged. As the populace in Horace's time clamoured 'media inter carminis,'(1) for a bear or a boxer, so an Elizabethan audience, when it felt bored or scared, insisted on being enlivened by a jester or a clown. After a little fuming and fretting the poets prepared to Agathon, who was too drunk and drowsy for argument or contradiction, as the dawn broke over that memorable symposium. But Marlowe could not don alternately the buskin and the sock. His fiery spirit walked always on the heights; no ripple of laughter reached him as he scaled the 'high pyramids' of tragic art. But while the poet was pursuing his airy path the actors at the Curtain had to look after their own interests. They knew that though they should speak with the tongues of angels yet the audience would turn a deaf ear unless some comic business were provided. Accordingly they employed some hack-writer, or perhaps a member of their own company, to furnish what was required. How execrably he performed his task is only too plain....

Charles Lamb remarked that 'the reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished him which Shakespeare more improved in his "Richard the Second"; and the death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted.' Mr. Swinburne thinks that there is more discrimination of character in Marlowe's play than Shakespeare's; that the figures are more life-like, stand out more clearly as individual personalities. It may also be urged that there is more 'business' in Marlowe's play; that the action is never allowed to flag. The character of the gay, frank, fearless, shameless favourite, Piers Gaveston, is admirably drawn. Even in the presence of death, with the wolfish eyes of the grim nobles bent on him from every side, he loses nothing of his old jauntiness. Marlowe has thoroughly realized this character, and portrayed it in every detail with consummate ability. Hardly less successful is the character of Young Spenser, the insolent compound of recklessness and craft, posing as the saviour of society, while he stealthily pursues his own selfish projects. In his drawing of female characters, Marlowe showed no great skill or variety. The features of some of his personages are either so dim as to present no likeness at all, or they are excessively unlovely. Isabella is a vixen, selfish women, without any
strength of character. She is hurt at finding herself neglected by the king, but the wound is only surface-deep. She is hurt, but she is not heartbroken. She is hurt, but she is not broken.——To be broken, a heart would have to be broken, and with steel indifference would have sacrificed her paramour, whom, with all his weakness, is not wholly ignoble. In all literature there are few finer touches than when after revealing his fearful suffering and privations in the dungeon, he gathers his breath for one last kingly utterance:

Tell Isabel, the queen, I looked not thus
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there embraced the Duke of Clermont.

What heart-breaking pathos in those lines! For a moment, as his thoughts travel back across the years, he forgets the squalor of his dungeon and rides blithely beneath the beaming eyes of his lady. It has been objected that the representation of the king's physical suffering oversteps the limit of dramatic art. Euripides was censured by ancient critics for demanding tragedy too torture the judgment of readers so on the side of Herodias, out of his criticism. Besides, if Herodias owed Sophocles more or less than the physical suffering of Philoctetes excites the horror of spectators, the horrors of the walls of Webster's dungeon do not equal the horrors of the walls of Webster's dungeon.——The physical suffering of 'Philoctetes' is correct; the physical suffering of 'Philoctetes' is incorrect.——'Lear,' exposed in horror and symptoms of physical agony stung on the English stage. But criticism, which fears to raise its voice against Shakespeare, shows no mercy to Shakespeare's contemporaries.

Note

1 In the midst of (serious) dramatic presentations.

44. UNSIGNED REVIEW OF BULLEN'S EDITION OF 'THE WORKS'

From the 'Nation', xl (1885), 424-6, 446-8.
Mr. Bullen is to give us, in handsome print and paper, and
well and wisely seen to for the readings, all our drama-
tists, of about Shakspere's time, who have earned of their
after-comers the work and cost of printing. These will
not be very many, and all of them will be well worth the
having. 'Kit' Marlowe, who may with truth be called the
first of these, comes first from Mr. Bullen, and is set
forth by him with gentle and tender hands. Dramatic
poetry, higher up than his, had been but a worthless ooze,
or a soiled and muddy trickle. He gave it a new begin-
ing, unlike what had been before, and on another scale.

To come upon a starting-place, or a turning-place, in
the life of the race of men, or of our English branch of
it, is a great thing. Such a thing it is to find at
Hissarlik hauberk, or helm, or shield - 'exesa .  .  .
scura rubigine' - or at Bannockburn some little, crooked,
earth-eaten bit of one of the iron calthrops that tumbled
the English Edward's horses and horsemen on Scottish
soil. So, too, it would be if we could come in upon unfinished
work - work on its way to perfectness - of any one such
mastering man as Pheidias or Zeuxis. It startles us, this
day, to see, in that painting left by one of our American
masters but half done, the later and larger figure coming
forth, as it were, of its former self. Now, is it not
much to find, in its very making, our ten-syllable blank
verse - the verse of Shakspere and Milton? This we shall
find in Marlowe's plays; and these plays we shall find not
unworthy of being read by those even who can feel and
understand the sharpness of insight, and strength, and
grace, and manifoldness that are in Shakspere and Goethe,
and the mirthfulness - rather unkindly, grim, ghastly - of
the one; and of the other, frolic, neighborly and good-
fellowship.

Two little lines, most musical, and with a dainty pic-
ture in each word, have for generations drawn men's hearts
towards Marlowe:
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.
They are in themselves a full and rounded poem. Shak-
spere, a little Marlowe's younger, borrowed these, and
more, in one of his plays, and Izaak Walton, in his
'Angler,' taken in the whole piece from which they come, from Marlowe, disreputable in life, and worse in death.

Poor Marlowe. Disreputable in life, and worse in death; loathed by all men professing godliness; yet must we think that his heart was not all bad, and we know that he did for our great English tongue good work, and in our tongue did good work too, and that both these works are great and lasting. Still we have not read his plays, and weighed him well, we are looking to find even more in him and them than can be found; and this because we find so much. He was the first English writer of true plays; and as Lucretius, first of Roman writers, made great poetry for his own use, to give philosophy through it to his countrymen, such in the same way, though keen, did Marlowe. Besides this work — besides his plays and the verse in which he wrote them, and his easy ten-syllable rhyme, and that one melodious madrigal which all readers of English have loved from boyhood, and besides, through all, his strong and swift imagination — if all this be not enough, there is nothing worthy in the man, or in what he did to give him hold upon the memory of men. Yet when we say 'Poor Marlowe!' as men used to say 'Poor Burns.' (and for all the self-same reasons, and for others too), we say it with the assured feeling that Marlowe, though nothing like so great, is great enough to take and stand by what belongs to him in fair and equal weighing, though his bad weigh heavily. He has, at the same time, as one feels sure, enough of manhood to need and crave, if he could speak, some good and kindly thought from fellow-men, and has, as poet — and even as man — good right to it.

Marlowe could never claim, like Burns, to have held fast to, and carried safely through whatever filthiness of drinking and debauchery, a great deal of the best manliness of this human nature that we all are made in, and in which we feel each other, and take from one another the push of thought and feeling. He cannot claim, like Burns, to have used whatever he had of that best manliness for the good of the rest of men, and to have given to it melodious utterance for all coming time. Marlowe had not so large possession in the great faculties and great feelings of humanity. Then that true pitch of our frame, in which fun of the higher and finer sort, or of the broader and heartier sort, born, in whatever sort, true fun (that merriness of the happy fitting together of our being) shows itself so readily in liking and in kindly laughter, and in which, as readily, fellow-feeling, sorrow-sharing, shows itself in loving tears and tears of hurt and wrong — was almost wanting in him. From Burns the fun and fellow-feeling were running over on all sides, and at all times above — sad, serious, and merry, all at once.
Yet feeling, strong and fine, was not wanting in Marlowe. This his 'Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus' shows, in Faustus and in the scholars and others, beyond all question. So, too, the episode of Olympia, in 'Tamburlaine,' and Zenocrate, and better (though there is too little of her) Abigail, the Jew's daughter - these all show the respect which he could understand and, we may hope, feel for what in woman is lovely and becoming; and nothing witnesses more strongly than this that the finer and better nature was somewhere in this poet, at least at some times. If he saw few women in his plays, and if the parts they play are few, he felt for what they are and for what they may be; and the times unhappily allowed, he does not riot in the bellying of that better sex whose goodness is our best possession and whose sadness is the desolate bane to men.

Of Marlowe's plays, 'Tamburlaine the Great' must have opened the English stage as a new thing and, in spite of faults of its author and of errors in its time, failed not to startle and amaze and wound and rouse the English play-gazers wondrously and applauded much, laughed a little, and the play was called for, and crowds went to it, for a hundred nights, before they had had enough of it. So the author wrote a Second Part, very much of a piece with the First. That was the earliest English play that, for the character, and for what we said, and for the way of saying it, was worth the being recalled to the stage, or being remembered; and that play was the first work in which our English blank verse, living, and strong, and large, was used - as noble, sometimes, as any that came later.

But Marlowe was stirred with the great thought of giving to his English fellow-countrymen plays lofty as the old Greek plays, and in the language of the Elizabethan age. The huge shape of Timour Lenk - Timour the Limper, stalking over some thousand leagues of the world, this way and that, and overcoming all the Eastern lands, almost, caught in the player-poet's eye. That Timour had been, in his flesh and blood and whatever else helped to his making, a man of boundless ambition, of very great power over men, of won-
drous quickness in gathering hosts, and strength in holding them together, of most uncommon skill in planning, and downright might in doing in leaguer and field of battle. Killing, breaking-down, laying waste - the man was, for hardness of heart, hard-heartedness, hardness and heaviness of hand, worse, if anything, and on a vastly larger scale, than Horace's Achilles, in ruthless wrong and cruelty: 'Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, Jura negat sibi nihil.', Timour Lenk, therefore - in Englishmen, 'Tamburlaine' - such as he was, and with
crowds of kings becrowned and bedizened with purple and crimson and sable and velvet, and festooned, embroidered, with- 
out the wheel, in his triumphal car. Hecate meant. "This was an heroic figure for a great plot of five acts, for speech of a new sort, on a new scale; and gave 
chances for shows upon the stage, to catch and refresh those who wearied of much speech better than their wonted 
tells. His hope and plan the poet sets forth thus, in the 
Prologue:

We'll lead you to the stately tent of war
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world in high astounding terms;

In this he succeeded, and so well as to make all those of 
our own tongue who love work of imagination and verse,
good and fitting, from that time downward, adhere to him.

In these two plays - the First and Second Parts of 
'Tamburlaine the Great' - the love in our hearts, it is 
true, is scarcely touched; the higher and finer feelings 
are seldom, if they are ever, called out; it would be hard 
to find a lofty, noble, or kindly sentiment from the 
beginning to the end of them. If one is interested, it is 
not that one likes the hero or any single one of the other 
men in them. By way of relief to the throng of men, and 
those mostly Scythians, Persians, Turks, doing nothing 
else than quarrelling, fighting, and bragging, one woman, Zenocrate, is carried through a play and a-half, and, 
though not strongly drawn, lightens the action and makes 
all less wickedly. Olympia, taken suddenly into the 
Second Part, after Zenocrate's death, and not too suddenly 
kill'd off out of it, is well drawn, though not new, and 
loves to the same end. Hecate's play is, without a 
question, the best of the two of these, and is filled with 
nobleness and faith and trustiness even to death, and the 
plot關於 itself with beautiful exactness. In neither 
part of Tamburlaine" is there anything that we can call 
plot, and the heroic barbarians would be insufferably 
tiresome to use, without at least so much of a gentler 
element brought in as those women bring.

For others, such as they now (not much to our liking), Tamburlaine is strongly drawn, for what the author meant 
him, and is kept to his level always; and the generals,
preposterous character-drawing and scene. The Turkish Admiral and Abigail, the Jew's daughter, are admirable, as far as they go, but are such cut-and-dried out of the play after a short life in it. 'The Massacre of Paris' has some beautiful passages and some very bad things - but even for pages. It cannot, for a moment, stand, as a poem, beside Virgil's account of Dido's tragedy, and wants a good deal to make it into a substantial play. 'The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage,' shows some beautiful passages and some very bad things - but even for pages. It cannot, for a moment, stand, as a poem, beside Virgil's account of Dido's tragedy, and wants a good deal to make it into a substantial play. 'The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage,' shows some beautiful passages and some very bad things - but even for pages. It cannot, for a moment, stand, as a poem, beside Virgil's account of Dido's tragedy, and wants a good deal to make it into a substantial play. The bad parts do not in any way help, nor were they in any way needed. Not one of all these that we have run over is without strength or beauty, more or less.

In these plays, as might be guessed after what we have said, is no real fun-making of any sort, nor is there a single character in them capable of the making or enjoying of fun, or of knowing it when he sees or hears it. There are, indeed, certain 'situations' which perhaps were meant to be funny, and were likely so to the men of the time, she shouted their lungs out over the kings in harness and Tamburlaine's cry to them: 'Hola, ye pampered jades of Asia!' Thus - to take an instance out of a stage direction - 'Mycketes' ( whose army is on the ground) * comes out alone with his crown in his hand, offering to hide it, 'and Tamburlaine, with another great army there to fight Mycketes, joins him, asking: 'Is this your crown?' Of unintended funniness is this, where the hitherto shepherd Tamburlaine, at the outset of his great march across the Eastern World, has the Princess Zenostrate, daughter of the Sultan of Egypt, a prisoner, beseeching him as a shepherd 'to pity her distressed plight,' and presently, without the slightest stay in their talking, he says: 'Lie here, ye weeds that I disdain to wear' [his pastoral garments]

This complete armor and this curtle-axe
Are not more befitting Tamburlaine,
as if the intermediate process - whatever it might be with
a Scythian shepherd - between the wearing of a garb which
betokened him so mean a man as a keeper of sheep, and the
appearing in full effulgence of a warrior's armor, had
been rehearsed while he stood there talking with the
Princess. Other things of this sort might be
found if looked for.

Now, that the bringing in of fun and frolic to offset
sharply the mournful and heart-harrowing of the play brought wondrous life-likeness into our English tragedy, others can see easily besides ourselves; and that a new zest for readers, as well as for seers and hearers, of plays in our tongue has come with that bringing-in. Our thoughtful, all-prodigious, all-weighting cousin-Germans were drawn, without a will for it, to English tragedy, and Frenchmen, too, whose lodged in us and our tongue is still, and a drawn-out, self-worship to all about us. And for all this, all England, and all the world, I think it better, and will keep it in a warmer place in the heart, because its gloom is not all gloomy. Ownership of mood, which must last long undamaged, as of iron or clay, does not belong to men. In the glimmer of darkened rooms from which the dead has been lately borne, will come out a burst of mirthfulness at unawares, and this from no 'widows of Ephesus,' but from true mourners. Sometimes the mournfulness is a fitting and most touching element in the action and passion. In that poem truly dramatic, though no drama, and of marvellous beauty and sadness, 'The Bride of Lammermoor,' the mirth made up the sadness and passion, and the mirth and the sadness were made up by the same sort of deep inwards, which come out in the odour of the tale on the white satin or silk in the brow, or the mark of hidden strength, belongs to the black velvet of the pall.

The Greeks and Latins, as we know, unlike our own greatest writers, held these dark and light things wide apart, one from the other, keeping sad steadily to sad, and mirth to mirth. So the Greeks and Latins, though their tragic element was less than they are either Greek or Romans, bare held, with might and main, to the same rule. Their French speech oftentimes in trying to march stately on sublime heights, yet one can never with their leaves smile in one of their tragedies. Any funny thing must have slipped in in spite of the author (as there will be something similar in the English 'The Cid' when the Cid, who has killed in a duel the father of his bride, is to be formally pursued by her as the avenger of blood, makes his way in some absence of the never-absent duenna of Spanish maidens, and proclaims that to his true love's champion in the lists whom she insists upon his doing his best to kill for her own sake ('her sake' for his own), he, the Cid, her lover, will present not his dame (his 'amour,' his 'cervelle,' his 'poumon,' but his 'estomac ouvert,' 'ravished with the thought' that it is for her 'honor' that he is thus putting in use his very best knowledge of anatomy).
Frenchmen, besides Molière, can make fun, and even the writers of some of their best tragedies; but never, of their own will, in their tragedies. Marlowe could not, at any time. But one thing stands out steadfast in our minds after his scenes and characters all are gone, and that is the Verse. With this the poet sometimes throws a flash of glory upon a mountain-top, sometimes a golden gladness over all the heavens; he pours a torrent, splashing and roaring and glittering, down a cliff's front, or through a winding glen; he makes a sea heaving with broad-sailed, deep-hulled merchantmen, laboring toward some great mart; he draws a thronging, bustling crowd over earth and sky, or makes the spring or summer landscape choky with bird-song and the flitting of birds' wings. All come to us as it went from him: the angle of reflection to the reader's eye, as elsewhere in optics, is the same as the angle of incidence from the author's mind. He can do, in verse, anything that he knows, and we see all done, and wonder at the man's strength of bodying and uttering - as great, when at its best, as in Lucretius, but not so often at its best as in Lucretius. So Marlowe made Blank Verse almost perfect.

By the time of Shakspere's best play-writing, and, of course, long before Milton's time, that measure itself and was known in the race of English poetry, and came at call in it; and it wore, always, much the same outward likeness. In Marlowe's plays we find it learning to have a life, and to live its own life; we find it growing, and taking shape and character. With him it is most often dignified, sometimes impressive and even splendid; now and then, indeed, it is fairly sublime. Often, however, Marlowe's verse is awkward and ungainly, and - alas! not alone - laughable or paltry - coming to the ground with the thought (which it ought to have carried) underneath. This one does not like to say of a man strong and skilful, who has done much good work; but it is only plainer than most plain things that sometimes he himself, as one might do who was ashamed or afraid of having wrought wrought some of his work too well, would with his own hand mar it after the doing. This fear or shame, though not often true of any way, might perhaps have been true of him, for his fellows and comrades were mostly a roystering, reckless, chaffing, scoffing set. Not a few of them were nasty, and slippery, and cold-blooded as fishes, and, like fishes, ready to snatch at and tear, and to gulp down in gobbets, and batten themselves upon, any unlucky one of their own kind who chanced at the time to be swimming.
weakly or sickly. Among such comrades a man might easily be shamed for having shown too lofty thought or too good feeling, or be afraid of showing them. In most ways Marlowe was not better than the rest: there were sad things enough about his whole life, and they were crowded thick enough about his death, to make his seen seem about the worst among them.

The want in Marlowe of that finest fashioning and fitting, together from which spring freely forth, ever fresh, mirth, harmless as happy; sadness needing to be soothed; quick sorrow with those who are hurt; love, through all the blood, for what is great and true - the want of this best making-up, and the want of much growing toward it, or effort after it, as life among men went on, was likely, more than scoffing ways of his comrades, or even the 'drink-drowned'-ness of 'spright' (spirit) which Hall gives him, to mar his better work. The 'spright,' in that state, 'rapt to the threefold loft of heaven-hight,' as Hall says, might have one head-long downfall at a time, for it is unsteady, unsafe treading on the clouds, then but a soaring high aloft, and tumbling, and soaring, and tumbling, between lines following each other closely. The best genius, from being fully akin to others, can easily go along one or other of the many channels that lead into its fellows, and look back at itself and its work from that side. This Marlowe could not; and if it be that tries to make us laugh, as in 'Faustus' by a leg coming off the wizard, and elsewhere by such worse than clown's play, it is beyond bearing. The likelihood is that borrowing and using Shakspere did, in a large, free way, and the putting in of what was meant to be witty or droll, to any one else's plays, was often done and known to be done; sometimes ordered, of some one or more who happened to have the time and will.

The history of blank verse in English is not short. We had had our irresistible verse in Chaucer - in Chaucer it is already perfect, whether his own thoughts and words, such as fellows of some colleges (as nears, without asking, of one another, and wear, shirts-blue, or scarlets, or waistcoats, even, but any of these almost might write any closeness into any one's play that was on the boards, and anywhere in it. That borrowing and using Shakspere did, in a large, free way, and the putting in of what was meant to be witty or droll, to any one else's plays, was often done and known to be done; sometimes ordered, of some one or more who happened to have the time and will.

The history of blank verse in English is not short. We had had our irresistible verse in Chaucer - in Chaucer it is already perfect. Some of our fathers chanced for rhyme had got hold of the ear of Christendom. Their latin measures, ever, had been turning into rhyme, for hundreds of years. Rapidly, just as it was growing early summer to the thought and fancy
of the English race, the Earl of Surrey, a gallant, clever, and accomplished knight, and a deft worker in English rhyming verse of many sorts, found, when in Italy, a measure of another sort than any used in England. Rhythmic it was; dignified, and yet easy; free from all bondage to rhythm, where rhyming might be a bondage. Of this great fault glaring example may be found in plays (as of Racine and Corneille — great writers both) where the life-likeness is hindered very much by the rhyming of the speeches, and where a frequent change of speakers makes the sudden flinging of the rhyme from one to another tiresome and absurd.

Our English poetry, as we find it in Chaucer, is a supple, lively thing, that would bear cutting and bending and pulling, like every young language — like Homer's Greek, where the many vowels, blending sometimes, some- times sundering; the various alternative endings; the various inflections for the same word on one, and the like, for the measure of sound, with much variety; this was the most perfect vehicle for expressing thought and figure, and telling and pleading and love-speaking, and for fastening upon the memory, that ever was in the world. Our English, though never so free as Greek, and very far less melodic, has kept the double ending, where Greek had kept the double ending, which we have so much lost. Though with the Germans it is still, and may be forever, easy. In the Italian blank verse the last foot is that of the old Greek and Latin versification and trochaic measure — a long and a doubtful syllable; its rhyming verses only take on another grace. It has the double ending, which is not for every speech flowing with vowels. Here is a bit (unrhymed) of about the time of Surrey, taken at first glance:

Quindi uscian fuor voci canori e dolci
E di cigni, e di ninfe, e di sirene;
Di sirene celesti; e n' uscian suoni
Soavi e chiari, e tanto altro diletto,
Ch' attonito, godendo ed ammirando,
Mi fermai —-

*Tasso, *Aminta*
Even the eye sees the soft melody of these words; but let a gentle voice read them to the ear rightly!

This measure Surrey took, without the double ending but admitting it, and set over, into the first blank verse that ever was used in English, two books of the *Aeneid.*

A fair specimen, perhaps, is this:

As when Apollo leaveth Lycaon,
When that he walkes upon Mount Cynthion,
His sprinkled creesse represent with garlandes softe
Of tender leaves, and trussed up with golde,
His quivering ducts clattering behind his bache —
So freshe and lustie did Aeneas seme.

Let Surrey, who brought over for us this measure from Italy, have his credit; and that it was a poet who saw the worth of it, the spirit and strength of these few words shall witness: "His quivering ducts clattering behind his bache" is Virgil's 'tela sonant humeris' (his weapons sound, on his shoulders). Of course, a little bit like this above can give no sufficient acquaintance for a critical analysis: for this a good deal more must be read, and will be pleasant reading.

**Note**

1. From thence issued out the sweet and harmonious music of swans, of nymphs and sirens, celestial sirens; from thence proceeded sounds so sweet and clear, and so many other delights, that I stood spellbound with pleasure and admiration.

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151. Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929) was a most successful and influential dramatic craftsman.

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From the "Nineteenth Century" (January 1885), vol. 1, p. 142.
We will take the three greatest and most representative names of that age, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson, and ask how they dealt with religious matters. The comparison is very interesting, as it also incidentally discloses the different bent of each genius and the different texture of his mind. The essential reverence of these three writers will scarcely be questioned if reverence is to be reckoned by the wholesomeness of the feelings rather than by the squeamishness of the ears. Though even in the matter of words it may be asked whether the clean and healthy outspokenness of some of the Elizabethan writers is not more reverent of everything worth reverence than the putrid leer and imbecile suggestiveness of some modern songs that have been imported into the modern theatre.

To begin with Christopher Marlowe, 'Son first-born of the morning, sovereign star.' In Marlowe there is none of the familiar playful quotation of Scripture so frequent in Shakespeare, or the broadly comic portraiture of religious hypocrisy unctuously mouthing Holy Writ to its own ends that Ben Jonson delights in. Marlowe's fiery genius sets directly about its main ends, and in 'Doctor Faustus' seizes the heart and core of the Christian doctrine, and appropriates as much as is necessary for the scheme of his play. There is no hesitation, no question in Marlowe's mind as to the perfect right of his art to enter this region and take full possession of it. Fragments of Christian dogma are tossed hither and thither in the burning whirlpool with saucy and strapless heathen history and mythology, while the living heat of the poet's imagination binds and matts all the strange ingredients into one liquid flame of terror, and the spectator watches, with harrowing suspense and breathless inescapable impression of reality, the damnation of a soul. Omitting the wretched buffoonery of the comic scenes as possible interpolations or concessions to the groundlings, there is no room left for any thought of reverence or irreverence. The question of the comparative truth of the Greek mythology and the creed of Christendom sinks into a matter of 'words, words, words,' as we contemplate the awful picture of the death agony of Faustus. Marlowe compels our acquiescence that that at least is real, is true. It would be impertinent to defend the 'Faustus' against any possible charge of irreverence which the choleric, bilious temperament of superfine godliness might bring against it. No poet ever reaches such inaccessible heights of inspiration without remaining quite impervious and out of the reach of harm by any assault from that quarter. It could only be in an outburst of bewildered indignation or riotous effort that one
could put the question, whether in the matter of reverence of man's spiritual nature the age that produced Marlowe's 'Faustus' has any need to feel ashamed of itself when brought to the bar of the age that demanded a version of the same legend brought down to the average intelligence of a modern burlesque audience.

Marlowe, like Shelley, came to a violent, sudden and accidental death in his twenty-ninth year. In almost all other respects they may be said to have been very dissimilar, although the loving student of both will probably find in the earlier writer indications of that fearless, wide-eyed spirit of inquiry, of eager prying into the unknown and forbidden, which distinguished Shelley. The marvellous faculty of stringing common words and simple ideas into perfect music is common also to both. How nearly they occasionally approximate in this respect is evident to a superficial reader because of the variety of the instances in which the earlier writer handles themes giving opportunity for comparison with the later. Further, they are alike in this - that the reader of their works finds in the most impersonal of them an intensely personal element, which enables him to grasp (as far as his intelligence permits) the immost essence of their respective personalities. Know Shakespeare from end to end and you are little nearer his personality, so perfect is his objective dramatic power. Study Marlowe's far smaller and less precious legacy, and you acquire no mean knowledge of his temperament and intelligence. This is
fortunate, for, even these omission records, we know
about nothing of him. The little that is recorded in
the slave the fact, however, that his accusers, although con-"
no scruple about using the puppets of a dead one as dramatic machinery? The latter is the more likely supposition. Side by side with the constant flouting at religion is a curiously persistent belief in 'stars,' and it is not at all improbable that Marlowe may have held, in common with many gifted men of his age, that the occult arts veiled hidden truths and forces. The present-day tendency of some Freethinkers to take up with spiritism and all its train of cults favors this view. Such an attitude was more excusable in a time when the staff of physical science was not ready to the hand. Only such paltry crutches as the black arts afforded were available to the Elizabethan who threw away the support of religion. The need of knowledge and Marlowe's craving for it are pitifully illustrated in the querulous and incessant demands of Faustus in his colloquies with Mephistophilis. In the futile desire to know more, which was his sin, Marlowe may have typified his own mental unrest, and the doctor's wholly disproportionate punishment may have shadowed forth the poet's estimate of the scorn and persecution which surrounded the open-eyed inquirer in his age. If Marlowe became, as is alleged, a sensualist, it is not to be wondered at. He had found religion false, and so turned his eyes from another world to this. Here he found no firm foundation in science, which was then a mere assemblage of religion-begotten quackery; and nothing remained but to make the best of the delights of the little visible world in which he was hedged about by vast walls built by ignorance, over which no man dare look on pain of stake and gallows, and above which was only visible the unattainable heavens. The full force of an eager nature was thrown into the channels of delight of sense, and he doubtless tried to make the best of all the good things of life, concluding with the preacher that 'there is no better thing under the sun than to eat and to drink and to be merry.' While allowing this, it must be added that his works do not favor the ill-supported theory of his abandoning profligacy of character. Their very existence is proof that a large portion of his short time of public life was spent in the production of literature which is obviously the outcome of a clear and elevated mind, and their moral tone, so far as there is any, is sound, if not elevated. In them we trace the hand of a revolutionist condescending of all established shams, and some of his peculiarities may be traced back to that whole history of life and mankind. But this very despair and revolt are the outgrowth of a healthy mind mainspring for better things. Evils and evil-doers are depicted in vivid colors with an unerring touch, not delicately tricked out in
attractive guise to pander to the base tastes of the reader or hearer. Where pity and sympathy are asked for Bella-mira die without a regret, but Abigail touches the heart-strings. Marlowe seems to commend much that the blindly orthodox do not approve, but from the standpoint of those who deduce their moral scheme of life from a rational basis he seldom if ever errs.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL
1887

James Russell Lowell (1819-91), a genuine Boston mandarin, succeeded Longfellow as Professor of Belles-lettres at Harvard in 1855, was editor of the 'Atlantic Monthly' (1857-61), and served his country abroad in the embassies at Madrid and London. His most popular publication was the facile and satiric 'Biglow Papers' (1848, 1867). The comment on Marlowe is part of the Lowell Institute Lectures, 1887.

Do not consider such discussions as these useless or nugatory. The language we are fortunate enough to share, and which, I think, Jacob Grimm was right in pronouncing, in its admirable mixture of Saxon and Latin, its strength and sonorousness, a better literary medium than any other modern tongue - this language has not been fashioned to what it is without much experiment, much failure, and infinite expenditure of pains and thought. Genius and pedantry have each done its part towards the result which seems so easy to us, and yet was so hard to win - the one by way of example, the other by way of warning. The purity, the elegance, the decorum, the chastity of our mother-tongue are a sacred trust in our hands. I am on the side of the modest and the sober, the natural and the simple, and yet I cannot see that we have the least necessity of it, about our privileges to make it what we will because we are in a majority. A language belongs to those who know best how to use it, how to bring out all its resources, how to make it search its coffers round for
the pithy or concisen phrase that suits the need, and
they who can do this have been always in a pitiful mi-
nority. Let us be thankful that we too have a right to it,
and have proved our right, but let us set up no claim to
to vulgarize it. The English of Abraham Lincoln was
not because he learned it in Illinois, but because he
learned it of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible, the
constant companions of his leisure. And how perfect it
was in its homely dignity, its quiet strength, the
serving one with which it struck one not needed to
strike more! The language as alive here, and will grow,
great and enduring. We may not be necessary to salva-
tion or to success in life, but it is one of the most powerful factors of civiliza-
tion. As a people we have a larger share of it and more
widely distributed than I, at least, have found elsewhere,
but as a nation we seem to lack it altogether. Our coin-
age is ruder than that of any country of equal preten-
sions, our paper money is filthily infectious, and the
engraving on it, mechanically perfect as it is, makes of
every bank-note a missionary of barbarism. This should
make us cautious of trying our hand in the same fashion
on the circulating medium of thought. But it is high
time that I should remember Maître Guillaume of Patelin,
and come back to my sheep.

In coming to speak of Marlowe, I cannot help fearing
that I may fail a little in that equanimity which is the
first condition of all helpful criticism. Generosity
there should be, and enthusiasm there should be, but they
should stop short of extravagance. Praise should not
weaken into eulogy, nor blame fritter itself away into
fault-finding. Goethe tells us that the first thing
needful to the critic, as indeed it is to the wise man
generally, is to see the thing as it really is; this is
the most precious result of all culture, the surest war-
rant of happiness, or at least of composure. But he also
bids us, in judging any work, seek first to discover its
beauties, and then its blemishes or defects. Now there
are two poets whom I feel that I can never judge without
a favorable bias. One is Spenser, who was the first poet
I ever read as a boy, not drawn to him by any enchantment
of his matter or style, but simply because the first
verse of his great poem was, -

A gentle knight was pricking on the plain,
and I followed gladly, cheats of adventure. Of course I
understood nothing of the allegory, never suspected it,
fortunately for me, and I am surprised to think how much
of the language I understood. At any rate, I grew fond of him, and whenever I see the little brown folio in which I read him, my heart warms to it as to a friend of my childhood.

With Marlowe it was otherwise. With him I grew acquainted during the most impressible and receptive period of my youth. He was the first man of genius I had ever really known, and he naturally bewitched me. What cared I that they said he was a deboshed fellow? As to me he was the voice of one singing in the desert, of one who had found the water of life for which I was panting, and was at rest under the palms. How can he ever become to me as other poets are? But I shall try to be lenient in my admiration.

Christopher Marlowe, the son of a shoemaker, was born at Canterbury, in February, 1563, was matriculated at Queens College, Cambridge, in 1580, received his degree of bachelor there in 1583 and of master in 1587. He came early to London, and was already known as a dramatist before the end of his twenty-fourth year. There is some reason for thinking that he was at one time an actor. He was killed in a tavern brawl, by a man named Archer, in 1593, at the age of thirty. He was taxes with atheism, but on inadequate grounds, as it appears to me. That he was said to have written a tract against the Trinity, for which a license to print was refused on the ground of blasphemy, might easily have led to the greater charge. That he had some opinions of a kind unusual then may be inferred, perhaps, from a passage in his 'Faust.' Faust asks Mephistopheles how, being damned, he is out of hell. And Mephistopheles answers, 'Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.' And a little farther he explains himself thus:

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed,
In one self place; for where we are is hell,
And where hell is there must we ever be;
And, to conclude, when all the earth dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that are not heaven.

Milton remembered the first passage I have quoted, and puts nearly the same words into the mouth of his Lucifer. If Marlowe was a liberal thinker, it is not strange that in that intolerant age he should have incurred the stigma of general unbelief. For stirred by the same feeling, some of his contemporaries who were accused of atheism, were acquitted on the ground that they were disputing about things which are disapproved of them, and along with them the character of him who holds them.

This at least may be said of him without risk of violating the rule of no good ends. If that he is one of the
most masculine and fecundating natures in the long line of British poets. Perhaps his energy was even in excess. There is in him an Oriental lavishness. He will impoverish a province for a simile, and pour the revenues of a kingdom into the lap of a description. In that delightful story in the book of Esdras, King Darius, who has just dismissed all his captains and governors of cities and satraps, after a royal feast, sends couriers galloping after them to order them all back again, because he has found a riddle under his pillow, and wishes their aid in solving it. Marlowe in like manner calls in help from every the remotest corners of earth and heaven for what seems to us as trivial an occasion. I will not say that he is bombastic, but he constantly pushes grandiosity to the verge of bombast. His contemporaries thought he passed it in his 'Tamburlaine.' His imagination flames and flares, consuming what it should caress, as Jupiter did Semele. That exquisite phrase of Hamlet, 'the modesty of nature,' would never have occurred to him. Yet in the midst of the hurly-burly there will fall a sudden hush, and we come upon passages calm and pellucid as mountain tarns filled to the brim with the purest distillations of heaven. And, again, there are single verses that open silently as roses, and surprise us with that seemingly accidental perfection, which there is no use in talking about because itself says all that is to be said and more....

Yes, Drayton was right in classing him with 'the first poets,' for he was indeed such, and so continues,—that is, he was that most indefinable thing, an original man, and therefore as fresh and contemporaneous to-day as he was three hundred years ago. Most of us are more or less hampered by our own individuality, nor can shake ourselves free of that chrysalis of consciousness and give our 'souls a loose,' as Drayden calls it in his vigorous way. And yet it seems to me that there is something even finer than that fine madness, and I think I see it in the imperceptible sanity of Shakespeare, which made him so much an artist that his new work still bettered his old. I think I see it even in the almost irritating calm of Goethe, which, if it did not quite make him an artist, enabled him to see what an artist should be, and to come as near to being one as his nature allowed. Marlowe was certainly not an artist in the larger sense, but he was putting in practice the fine madness of the poets,—a very rare gift. But his mind could never submit itself to a controlling purpose, and renounce all other things for the sake of that. His plays, with the single exception of 'Edward II.,' have no organic utility,
and such unity as is here is more apparent than real. Passages in them stir us deeply and thrill us to the marrow, but each play as a whole is ineffectual. Even his 'Edward II.' is regular only to the eye by a more orderly arrangement of scenes and acts, and Marlowe evidently felt the drag of this restraint, for we miss the uncontrollable energy, the eruptive fire, and the feeling that he was happy in his work.

There are, properly speaking, no characters in the plays of Marlowe - but personages and interlocutors. We do not get to know them, but only to know what they do and say. The nearest approach to a character is Barabas, in 'The Jew of Malta,' and he is but the incarnation of the popular hatred of the Jew. There is really nothing human in him. He seems a bogey rather than a man. Here is his own account of himself:

[Quotes II, iii, 175-201.]

Here is nothing left for sympathy. This is the mere lunacy of distempered imagination. It is shocking, and not terrible. Shakespeare makes no such mistake with Shylock. His passions are those of a man, though of a man degraded by oppression and contempt; and he shows sentiment, as when he says of the ring that Jessica had given him, 'A precious stone of price unfenced and virtuous.' Shakespeare makes us feel that Barabas has good reason, or thought he had, to hate Christians. At the end, I think he meant us to pity Shylock, and we do pity him. And with what a smiling background of love and poetry does he give relief to the sombre figure of the Jew. In Marlowe's play there is no reprieve. And yet it comes nearer to having a connected plot, in which one event draws on another, than any other of his plays. I do not find enough to carry me on to the end, where the defiant death of Barabas in a caldron of boiling oil he had arranged for another victim does something to make a man of him. But there is no controlling reason in the piece. Nothing happens because it must, but because the author wills it so. The conception of life is purely arbitrary, and as far from nature as that of an imaginative child. It is curious, however, that here, too, Marlowe should have pointed the way to...
Shakespeare. But there is no resemblance between the Jew of Malta and the Jew of Venice, except that both have daughters whom they love. But there is no resemblance between the Jew of Malta and the Jew of Venice, except that both have daughters whom they love. Nor is the analogy close even here. The love which Barabas professes for his child fails to humanize him to us, because it does not prevent him from making her the abhorrent instrument of his wanton malice in the death of her lover, and because we cannot believe him capable of loving anything but gold and vengeance. There is always something extravagant in the imagination of Marlowe, but here it is the extravagance of absurdity. Generally he gives us an impression of power, of vastness, though it be in the vastness of chaos, where elemental forces battle blindly one against the other. But they are elemental forces, and not mere stage properties. Even Tamburlaine, if we see in him— as Marlowe, I think, meant that we should see— the embodiment of brute force, without reason or conscience, he is a blusterer, and becomes, indeed, no less a blusterer, and becomes, indeed, no less a blusterer, and becomes, indeed, no less a blusterer, and becomes, indeed, no less a blusterer. There is no evolution of strength in this play that seems to add a cubit to our stature. Marlowe had found the way that leads to style, and helped others to find it, but he never arrived there. He had not self-denial enough. He can refuse nothing to his fancy. He fails of his effect by over-emphasis, heaping upon a slender thought a burden of expression too heavy for it to carry. But it is not with fagots, but with priceless Oriental stuffs, that he breaks their backs.

Marlowe's 'Dr. Faustus' interests us in another way. Here he again shows himself as a precursor. There is no attempt at profound philosophy in this play, and in no other of his, except 'The Jew of Malta.' Dr. Faustus, however, is even in its essence more fantastic. Disengaged from these, the figure of the protagonist is not without grandeur.... I may be reading into the book what is not there, but I cannot help thinking that Marlowe intended in this to depict the inevitably consectu-

ral degradation of a soul that has renounced its ideals. That he, too, like his fellows, was forced to make
The daily task bring in the daily bread. We have seen how fruitful his influence has been, and perhaps his genius could have no surer warrant than that the charm of it lingered in the memory of poets, for theirs is the memory of mankind. If we allow him genius, what need to ask for more? And perhaps it would be only for him among the group of dramatists who surrounded Shakespeare that we should allow it. He was the herald that dropped dead in announcing the victory in whose fruits he was not to share.

Note
1. Nothing too much.

48. GEORGE SAINTSBURY
1897

George Saintsbury (1845-1933), Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at Edinburgh (1895-1915), abundant author of literary history and biography, connoisseur of English prosody and of wine, is not so highly regarded now as he once was. His observations about Marlowe’s life are conventional and his criticism prejudiced by the unhappier elements in the tradition.


But the interest of Marlowe’s name has nothing to do with these obscure scandals of three hundred years ago. He is the undoubted author of some of the masterpieces of English verse; the hardly to be doubted author of others not much inferior. Except the very greatest names — Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, Dryden, Shelley — no author can be named who has produced, when the proper historical estimate is applied to him, such work as is to be found in ‘Tamburlaine’, ‘Doctor Faustus’, ‘The Jew of Malta’, ‘Edward the Second’, ‘Hero and Leander’ and the ‘Passionate Shepherd’ in another. I have but very little doubt that the powerful, if formless, play of
"Lust's Dominion" is Marlowe's, though it may have been rewritten, and the translations of Lucan and Ovid and the minor work which is, more or less, probably attributed to him swell his tale. Prose he did not write, perhaps could not have written. For the one characteristic lacking to his genius was measure, and prose without measure, as numerous examples have shown, is usually rubbish. Even his dramas show a singular defect in the architectural quality of literary genius. The vast and formless creations of the writer's boundless fancy completely master him. His aspirations after the immense too frequently leave him content with the simply unmeasured. In his best play as a play, "Edward the Second," the limitations of a historical story impede something like a restraining form on his glowing imagination. But if we consider this play, it is surprising that no one of his greatest dramas has the bad quality of being, as they often are, a poetical message without a plot. For he was not only an original, but also the confinement of reality after a fashion, in a chaotic thing on a whole, without any great beauty in parts. The "Tragedy of Dido" (to be divided between him and Nash) is the worst thing he ever did. But in the purely romantic subjects of "Tamburlaine," "Faustus," and "The Jew of Malta," his genius, untrammelled by any limits of story, showed itself equally unable to contrive such limits for itself, and able to develop the most marvellous beauties of detail. Shakespeare himself has not surpassed, which is equivalent to saying that no other writer has equalled, the famous and wonderful passages in "Tamburlaine" and "Faustus," which are familiar to every student of English literature as examples of the apotheosis of poetic power with measure. The tragic imagination in its wildest flights has never summoned up images of pity and terror more imposing, more moving, than those excited by "The Jew of Malta." The riot of passion and delight in the beauty of colour and form which characterise his version of "Hero and Leander" has never been approached by any writer. But Marlowe's ability to introduce into his poems and plays the highest and noblest elements of the imagination, I cannot judge, never would have had any power of introducing into it the law of the peras. It is said in his plays, that had he lived, and had his lot been happily cast, we should have had two Shakespeares. This is not wise. In the first place, Marlowe was totally destitute of humour - the characteristic which united with his tragic and imaginative powers makes the world smile, and, though the humour is grim and intermittent, Dante, in other words, he was absolutely destitute of the first requisite of self-criticism. In the natural course of things, as the age of his youthful
The imagination ceased to mount, and as his craving for immensity hardened itself, he would probably have degenerated from bombast shot through with genius to bombast pure and simple, from "Faustus" to "Jerkimo" and from "Faustus" to "Jerkimo's Domination". Apart from the magnificent passages which he can show, and which are simply intoxicating to any lover of poetry, his great title to fame is the discovery of the secret of that "mighty line" which a seldom-erroring critic of his own day, not too generously given, vouchsafed to him. Up to his time the blank verse line always, and the semi-couplet in heroic, or member of the more complicated stanzas usually, were either stiff or nerveless. Compared with his own work and with the work of his contemporaries and followers who learnt from him, they are like a dried preparation, like something waiting for the infusion of blood, for the inflation of living breath. Marlowe came, and the old wooden versification, the old lay figure structure of poetic rhythm, was cast once for all into the lumber-room where only poetasters of the lowest rank went to seek it. It is impossible to call Marlowe a great dramatist, and the attempts that have been made to make him out to be such reach one of the attempts that have been made to call Molière a great poet. Marlowe was one of the greatest poets of the world whose work was cast by accident and caprice into an imperfect mould of drama; Molière was one of the greatest dramatists of the world who was obliged by fashion to use a previously perfected form of verse. The state of Molière was undoubtedly the more graceful; but the splendour of Marlowe's uncut diamonds of poetry is the more wonderful.

The characteristics of this strange and interesting school may be summed up briefly, but are of the highest importance in literary history. Unlike their nearest analogues, the French romantics of fifty years ago, they were all of academic education, and had even a decided contempt (despite their Bohemian way of life) for un-scholarly innovators. They manifested (except in Marlowe's fortuitous and purely genial discovery of the secret of blank verse) a certain contempt for form, and never, at least in drama, succeeded in mastering it. But being all, more or less, men of genius, and having the keenest sense of poetry, they supplied the dry bones of the precedent dramatic model with blood and breath, with vigour and variety, which not merely informed but transformed it. "David and Bethsabe", "Doctor Faustus", "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay", are chaotic enough, but they are of the chaos that precedes cosmic development. The almost insane bombast that marks the whole school has for its...
been noticed; the character of the shrieks and gestures of healthy childhood, and the insensibility to the really comic which also marks them is of a similar kind. Every one knows how natural it is to childhood to appreciate bad jokes, how seldom a child sees a good one. Marlowe and his crew, too (the comparison has no doubt often been used before), were of the brood of Otus and Ephialtes, who grew so rapidly and in so disorderly a fashion that it was necessary for the gods to make an end of them. The universe probably lost little, and it certainly gained something.

49. HAVELOCK ELLIS

1887

Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) wrote widely and influentially in literature, psychology, sociology and science. He founded the Mermaid Series of the best plays of the old dramatists, of which the Marlowe volume was the first.

For us, however, the wonder of 'Tamburlaine,' and of Marlowe's work generally, lies in the vivid and passionate blood, in the intensely imaginative form, with which he has clothed the dry bones of his story. We had no power of creative imagination; Shakespeare borrows his stories, but he makes it alive with his own soaring passion. With the exception of 'Edward II.,' which stands alone, Marlowe's dramas are secondary, written by the poet-energies of his own dominating personality. In his own hero, and the sanguinary Scythian utters the deepest secrets of the artist's heart. "What is beauty?" he asks himself.

[Quotes 1 'Tamb.', V, ii, 97-110.]

'Tamburlaine' is a divinely strong and eagerhearted poet, and these words are the key to his career. He sees for ever an unattainable loveliness beckoning him across the world, and how can his ardent blood rest 'attemptless,
faint and destitute?*  

*Quotes 1 "Tamb.", II, vii, 21-7.*

the poet in byzantine habits. Like Shelley, in some prior state of existence he had loved an Antigone, and he cannot stay. But like Keats also he has an intense feeling for the imaginative show and color of things, of milk-white steeds laden with the heads of slain men, and

Besmeared with blood that makes a dainty show,

of naked negroes, of burnished gold,

"And ride in triumph through Persepolis?*

Is it not brave to be a king, Techelles?

'Unconscious and Thersiades,  
Is it not passing brave to be a king,  
'And ride in triumph through Persepolis?"

With this song of radiant joy in the unattainable, young Kit Marlowe, like another Christopher, sailed to discover countries yet unknown, to attain the 'sweet fruition' of his crown.

In "Edward II." Marlowe reached the summit of his art. There is little here of that amour de l'impossible, which, as Mr. Symonds observes, but characterizes his earlier work. Here is the supreme tragic creation. It has long been a custom among critics to compare "Edward II." with "Richard II." This is squarely fair to Shakespeare; the melancholic and careless murder of Richard cannot be mentioned in presence of the chastened tragedy and lightless moments of Edward's last days, the whole of Shake-

'speare's late poetry is distinctly inferior in organic structures and in dramatic characteristics. It was not till ten years later that Shakespeare came near to this serious residences, those deep and solemn tragic tones.

There is, at last, one precious fragment which we must not pass by, for it bears Marlowe's intensely personal impress. Without this fragment of 'Hero and Leander' we should not have known the full American and
range of his genius. It is the brightest flower of the
English Renaissance, apart from that moral energy of the
Reformation of which Chapman, together with something less
than usual of his elaborate obscurity, afterwards gave it
some faint tincture. It is a free and fresh and eager
song, 'drunk with gladness,' - like Hero who 'stayed not
for her robe,' but straight arose to open the door to her
lover - full of ideal beauty that finds its expression in
the form and colour of things, above all in the bodies of
men and women; for the passion of love, apart from the
passion of beauty, Marlowe failed in gear. No Elizabe-
than had so keen a sense of physical loveliness as these
lines reveal:

[Quotes I, 61-9, 'His body was as straight....']

Shakespeare could not have been younger than Marlowe when
he wrote his 'Venus and Adonis;' which has ever since been
considered one of his most enigmatic sonnets. 'Venus and
Adonis' is oppressive with its unexpanded power; its workmanship is
perhaps more searching and thorough, though so much less
fulfilled than that of 'Hero and Leander'; but we turn
away with delight from its massive monotonous energy, its
close and sexual atmosphere, to the free and open air,
the color and light, the swift and various music of
Marlowe's poem. Shelley has scarcely surpassed the sweet
gravity which the verse of 'our elder Shelley' here
reaches.

50. MARLOWE IN THE LITERARY SOCIETIES (a)
1888

From the proceedings of the Clifton Shakespeare Society,
22 May, 1888, in the 'Academy' (13 October 1888), xxxiv,
419-20.

MEETINGS OF SOCIETIES.

CLIFTON SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY. - (Saturday, May 22).
J. H. Tucker Esq., in the Chair - Mr. W. Prowse, in a
paper which he read on "Edward II.," said that he consid-
ered this "Chronicle" in some respects superior to the
early Shaksperian history-plays, and, with the exception
of some of Shakspere's studies, the finest historical
plays in our language. There are passages in it in which
Marlowe rises to sublime poetic pitch. In the dedication
verse, Edward gives the debate in a speech of such rich
and varied harmony that in this is to be seen the mas-
ter's perfect command of his own mighty line. Marlowe's
inferiority to Shakspere is shown in his want of the sense
of humour and in his inability to draw a woman's charac-
ter. - Miss Emma Phipson sent a few Notes on "Edward II.," in
which she said that it seemed to her that, in the
narrow limits to which Marlowe confines himself, he
approaches very closely to Shakspere, if he does not
excel him, in vigour of expression and in boldness of
conception. Marlowe does not trouble himself to depict
the varying moods and inconsistencies of character that
give such reality to Shakspere's personages. He finds
generally one simple quality, and brings out that quality
with wonderful force. It may be that he had not suffi-
cient skill to analyze more deeply the springs of con-
don; but it was more likely that he deliberately chose to
fix generally one simple quality, and to bring that quality
with wonderful force. It may be that he had not suffi-
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cient skill to analyze more deeply the springs of con-
don; but it was more likely that he deliberately chose to
fix generally one simple quality, and to bring that quality
with wonderful force. It may be that he had not suffi-
certainly give in his work a
great charm. None of his characters appear to act from
principle, but solely from impulse; their ideas of right
and wrong are hazy in the extreme. We therefore do not
counter whether, if they were living people, we should
like to have them as friends, as we do many of Shak-
spere's characters. They do not grow as they come into the
play as counters, ready stamped. Such
as they are in the first act, they continue to the last.
Miss Phipson, after referring to some of the characters
in "Quintainum," went so far as to say that she considered
"Edward II." a very interesting production. The repu-
tations of the English drama are so bad at present, it is
too terrible to be tragic. The repulsive details, which
may consistently be told in a narrative poem, are out of
place in the dramatic form, which is primarily intended
for acting. In this play there are several illustrations
of Marlowe's knowledge of natural phenomena; and many of
them suggest parallel passages in "Henry VI.," and are
transferred to the English drama in a manner suggestive of
authorship. - Mr. John Taylor read An Historical Note on
"Edward II."; A paper by Mr. J. W. Mills on "Tambur-
laine" was read; Mr. Mills chose this play as well exhibit-
ing Marlowe's style and power. He said that when we
note the wonderful group of Elizabethan dramatists, we are led to the reflection that in the literature of other nations also dramatic art suddenly reached the summit of absolute perfection in the hands of two or three contemporaries. The valorous survivors of Marathon, and the heroic seamen who manned the wooden walls of Salamis to rescue Greece and European culture from the gorgeous savagery of Persian barbarism, might have heard, in the evening of their days, the roll of the thunder of Aeschylus in delightful alternation with the noble eloquence of Sophocles and the tender pathos of the dramatist of love. So in France Corneille, Racine, and Molière arose within the brief space of thirty years and a like period, in that tranquil epoch of peaceful development succeeding to those complex conflicts that the militant Duchy of Prussia was staggering through, one made illustrious by the birth of Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller. It would, doubtless, in those cases be interesting to inquire what mighty political upheaval among the nations prepared the soil, and what fervent intellectual commotion sowed the seed whence these splendid harvests of literary wealth were gathered into the granary of the world's thought; but as the connexion between 'Tamburlaine' and Shakespeare is unquestionable, a close examination of that play is necessary in the study of the literary relations of the Elizabethan dramatists. It is manifest that it was the great success of 'Tamburlaine' which led to the production of the 'Troublesome Raigne of King John.' 'Tamburlaine' marks a great advance in art upon 'Ferreus and Porreus,' or 'Locrine,' and it presents the finality of form for English dramatic writing. In itself, as a spectacle of military bustle and of Oriental gorgeousness, it was all a-blaze with fantastic gems and gold. Certain episodes of the play, however much they may shock us by their barbarous cruelty, would exactly hit the tone of thought in a pre-Shakesperian audience, ignorant, unschooled, and unaccustomed to the higher pleasures of a refined stage. 'Tamburlaine,' moreover, had some legitimate claims upon popular affection. As a reflex of the spirit of the period, it is all a-blaze with fantastic gems and gold. Again, as in Marlowe's time the next formidable power was neither Spain nor yet the Holy Roman Empire, but the Ottoman Kingdom, passages in 'Tam- bulbinaire' referring to the subjugation of the Turks must have been a delight to an Elizabethan audience. There were also secondary causes which contributed to the success of the play. The ease, fluency, and grace of much of the versification must strike the most careless reader. Sometimes the sentiments are sublime and
beautiful, and their expression most melodious. In this production of Marlowe's prolific youth, fitful outpourings of genius foreshadowed the highest possibilities of art. Lines there are, and even passages, quite worthy of Shakspere. Here and there are some he seems to have borrowed. That Marlowe may have held atheistical notions is more consistent with certain parts of the play; but there is here no evidence to suspect the other charge brought against him of leading a life of gross immorality and licentiousness. On the contrary, it is extremely improbable that 'Tamburlaine' could be the work of a man swayed by libidinous impulses, and living a life of debauchery and licentiousness. It must be said that the play abounds in bathos, but from this Shakspere himself was not entirely free. In the case of 'Tamburlaine,' an audience would consider that it was merely that hyperbolic mode of Oriental speech, such as they found in its mere subdued tones even in the Hebrew Scriptures. Anyone who, with even judgment and attentive mind, reads through this play, must admire the marvellous ripeness of Marlowe's powers when he was but twenty-two years of age, and deplore that lofty spirit —

Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
which went down suddenly into darkness, ere yet his sun had reached the noon. — Mr. Walter Strachan read an account of The 1886 Pilgrimage to Stratford, recording, with interesting detail, the doings of a party of the society who paid a visit to Stratford on May 18. This meeting brought to an end the Society's eleventh session. The plays for next session are 'Merchant of Venice,' 'Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,' 'Henry IV.,' 'London Prodigal,' 'Henry VI.,' 'Edward III.,' 'Henry IV.,' 'Every Man in His Humour.' The hon. secretary (Mr. L. M. Griffiths, 9 Gordon Road, Clifton) will be grateful for any magazine articles, newspaper scraps, or anything else to add to the society's library.
MEETINGS OF SOCIETIES.

ELIZABETHAN LITERARY SOCIETY. -

(Wednesday, October 3.)

W. R. Cawse, Esq., in the chair. - A paper was read on Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine the Great,' by Mr. Frederick Rogers. 'It is not often,' said Mr. Rogers, 'that a new development in literary art is ushered in by the applause of the common people. But 'Tamburlaine the Great' was a popular as well as a epoch-making play. Popular in the best, as well as in the worst, sense; popular because it reflected alike the chivalry and the cruelty of the age in which it was written; epoch-making because it was the first play acted in England that was written in blank verse, and having seen it men could go back to the old forms no more. But the popular audiences who applauded 'Tamburlaine' were utterly unconscious that the play which was effecting a revolution in dramatic and literary art, and the furies of it, which lie so near the surface for us, were not faults, but rather merits to them. They would understand the passion, and in a sense, half unconscious way, would understand the poetry of it, but the "great and thundering speech" of Tamburlaine would appeal to them more, and would stir the same emotions and win the same applause that a noisy and sensational player wins from the gallery of today. It is in a young man's play - a young man who came out of the ranks of the people, and not from among its leaders, and who, therefore, had within him many popular sympathies and popular prejudices, which his education at Cambridge might modify but would not entirely destroy. He had within him a superstitious and childish belief in the mone of Tamburlaine. Tremendous energy, almost superhuman power, put forth for no higher purpose than the "sweet fruition of an earthly crown." But we find also in the play such a picture of
the vicissitudes and misfortunes attending upon royal power and material splendour as had surely never been presented in English dramatic literature before. An epoch-making play indeed, for it showed the men of that age that all the things they were adoring and worshipping - kings, queens, titles, thrones, even nations and kingdoms - were mere pawns to be moved hither and thither upon the chessboard of the world by any man whose supreme genius and determined will had conquered the rules of the game. A dangerous truth this, if they had been capable of understanding it, which the stage had never taught them before. Tamburlaine, notwithstanding his cruel nature, has a full share of the indomitable spirit which marked the heroes of the Elizabethan age, and is more than Elizabethan than a mediaeval conqueror. There is an undercurrent of contempt for the trumpery trinkets which are the highest prizes the world can offer, and in the lulls of warfare he finds time to muse on the great spiritual realities. As compare kings, and give that time to his inferior officers. The pleasure that he values is that which comes from the exercise of his all-conquering power. The whole play is full of a profound contempt for royalty. The tributary kings are mere accessories to the mighty conqueror. There is an undercurrent of contempt for the trumpery trinkets which are the highest prizes the world can offer, and in the lulls of warfare he finds time to muse on the great spiritual realities. A gaoler who is false to his trust is made a king; kings are harnessed to chariots and made to do the word that slaves sometimes did in Egypt and Rome, are led about by common soldiers, beaten with whips, kept in cages, used as footstools; and the kings of Natolia and Jerusalem are described as "two spare kings," who are kept as men keep post horses - to be used when the other kings are tired. All this, said Colonel Cunningham, is "glorious rant." So no doubt it is, and it makes us laugh when it is not meant to; but, in an age when royalty was worshipped, was ever royalty so satirised before? But Tamburlaine is himself a king - a king of kings! Yes, but, by virtue of no divine right, but by his splendid energy and his intellectual power. With all its imperfections on its head, "Tamburlaine" remains for us a great English play, for in it are revealed in all their strange distorted splendour the romantic hopes and fancies of a poet who was filled with the spirit of a romantic age. Half a pagan, yet blind to the spiritual beauty of the creed of Christ, Kit Marlowe played with the objects of men's reverence and worship as children play with toys. But because he was without reverence for the things worthy of it, but because he saw that neither the secrets of nature, nor the forces and motives which govern the action of men, were in the
keeping of kings or of churches, but were ready to become
the servants of any man who had learned the secrets of
control. Not for him was any such mighty task, for
he had not learned the initial secret of all—how to
control himself! Like his Tamburlaine, he was a giant in
his aspirations, but a headstrong boy in his actions.1

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), poet and critic,
found in Marlowe a kindred spirit. He could be both per-
spective and savage as a critic, though these selections
hardly show these qualities.

(a) From "The Works of George Chapman: Poems and Minor
Translations" (1875), I:1-2a, I:9-10.

The name of Chapman should always be held great; yet must
it always at first recall the names of greater men. For
one who thinks of him as the author of his best play or
his loftiest lines of gnomic verse a score will at once
remember him as the translator of Homer or the continuer
of Shakespeare's sonnets. The noblest work of his life,
which was full of daring aspiration and arduous labor
was that of resuming and completing the "mighty line"
of "Hero and Leander." For that poem stands out alone
among all the wide and wild poetic wealth of his seething
and turbulent age, as might a small shrine of Parian
sculpture amid the rank splendour of a tropic jungle.

But no metaphor can aptly express the rapture of relief
with which you come upon it amid the poems of Chapman,
and drink once more with your whole heart of that well
of sweet water after the long draughts you have taken
from such brackish and turbid springs as gush up among
the sands and thickets of his verse. Faultless indeed
this lovely fragment is not; it also bears traces of the
Elizabethan barbarism, as though the great queen's ruff
and farthingale had been clapped about the neck and waist
of the Medicean Venus; but for all the strange costume we
can see that the limbs are perfect still. The name of
Marlowe's poem has been often coupled with that of the
'first bell' of Shakespeare's '题主'... with all... reverence to the highest name in letters... be it said, the comparison is hardly less absurd than a comparison of 'Tamburlaine' with 'Othello.' With all its overcrowding... beauties of detail, Shakespeare's first poem is on the whole a model of what a young man of genius should not write on such a subject; Marlowe's is a model of what he should. Shortly the art of Titian at its highest, and surely not the art of Shakespeare at its dawn, could have... involved in the attempted violation by a passionate woman of a passionless boy, the part of a Joseph, as no less a... author than Henri Beyle has observed in his great work on 'Love,'... of a beautiful but faultful poem can justly be charged on the... and... from the sweet and limpid loveliness of its style is not more noticeable than the absence of such other and possibly such graver flaws as deform and diminish the undeniable charms of 'Venus and Adonis.' With leave or without leave of a much lauded critic who could see nothing in the glorified version or expansion by Marlowe of Musaeus'... sense, whatever it be, which would enable me to discern more offence in that lovely picture of the union of two lovers in body as in soul than I can discern in the parting of Romeo and Juliet. And if... the poet was...
not alive, among all the mighty men then living, who could
worthily have completed the divine fragment of Marlowe.
Not he, but he who in the very opening lines of his
play 'The Tragedy of the Jews' says: 'I know no worthy
reason for us the sons of the House of Israel -
'theSeed of Beauty,' as Marlowe said when lying at his
feet strikes to death, 'take heed to hands, and cannot help us.'
Nor of narrative poets there were none in that generation
of any note but Drayton and Daniel; and though these might
have been of Marlowe's limpid sweetness and purity of
style, yet for all that they lacked the force and weight of
Chapman. Nor is the continuation by any means altogether
such as we might have expected it to be - a sequel by Marlowe to the song
of Apollo....

In Marlowe the passion of ideal love for the ultimate
idea of beauty in art or nature found its perfect and
unforced expression, faultless and unforced. The radiant
ardour of his desire, the light and the flame of his
aspiration, diffused and shed through all the forms of
his thought and all the colours of his verse, gave them
such shapeliness and strength of life as is given to the
apotheosis of the greatest poets alone. No, far rather than
Chaucer or Spenser, whose laudanum were first fed by the
dews and sunshine of Italy and France, whose songs were
full of memories and sweet tradition from oversea, of
notes which 'came mended from their tongues;' - he alone
was the true Apollo of our dawn, the bright and morning
star of the full midsummer day of English poetry at its
highest. Chaucer, Wyatt, and Spenser had left our lan-
guage as melodious, as fluent, as flexible to all pur-
poses of narrative or lyrical poetry as it could be made.
But the aim of poetry was then as of all times.
While the supreme note of its possible
music was reserved for another to strike. Of English
blank verse, one of the few highest forms of verbal
harmony or poetic expression, the genius of Marlowe was
the pioneer and divine creator. By mere gift of origin-
nal and godlike instinct he discovered and called into
life, and at his untimely and unhappy death, was thrown
away without due fruit. Historical allusion would not
be the marvellous instrument of his invention so
nearly perfect that Shakespeare first and afterwards
Milton came to learn of him before they could vary or
improve on it. In the changes rung by them on the keys
first tuned by Marlowe we trace a remembrance of the
touch of his hand; in his own cadences we catch not a
sound of any other man's. This poet, a poor scholar of
humblest parentage, lived to perfect the exquisite metre
invented for narrative by Chaucer, giving it (to my ear
at least) more of weight and depth, of force and full-
ness, than its founder had to give; he invented the
highest and hardest form of English verse, the only
instrument since found possible for our tragic or epic
poetry; he created the modern tragic drama; and at the
age of thirty he went

Where Orpheus and where Homer are.

Surely there are not more than two or three names in any
literature which can be set above the poet's of whom this
thing has been said, and of whom no record exists of his living
likeness; if his country
should ever have men worthy to raise a statue or monu-
ment to his memory, he should stand before or without some-
thing that will not be expressed or attained, nor pass
into the likeness of any perishable life; but though all
were done that all poets could do,

Yet should there hover in their restless heads,
One thought, one grace, one marvel, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest.

No poet ever came nearer than Marlowe to the expression
of this inexpressible beauty, to the incarnation in actual
form of ideal perfection, to the embodiment in mortal
music of immortal harmony; and he it is who has left on
record and on evidence to all time the truth that no poet
can ever come nearer.

(b) The Prologue to 'Doctor Faustus' for William Poel's
production of 1896; text from 'The Tragical History of
Doctor Faustus ... as revived by the Elizabethan Stage

Light, as when dawn takes wind and summons the son,
Shakespeare when his day made Marlowe he.
No fire so keen had thrilled the clouds of time
Since Dante's breath made Italy sublime.
Earth, bright with flowers whose dew shone soft as
tears.
Through Chaucer cast her charm on eyes and ears:
The laud'st lambent of the love-lit earth
Rang, leapt, and lighted in his might of mirth.
Deep moonlight, hallowing all the breathless air,
Made earth and heaven for Spenser faint and fair.
But song might bid not heaven and earth be one
Till Marlowe's voice gave warning of the sun.
Thought quailed and fluttered as a wounded bird
Till passion fledged the wing of Marlowe's word.
Faith born of fear bade hope and doubt be dumb
Till Marlowe's pride bade light or darkness come.
Then first our speech was thunder: then our song
Shot lightning through the clouds that wrought us wrong.
Blind fear, whose faith feeds hell with fire, became
A moth self-shrivelled in its own blind flame.
The speech of storms, the thunder of the soul,
Man's passions clotted with all the woes they wrought,
Shone through the fires of men's transfiguring thought.
The thirst of knowledge, quenched at her springs,
Addition, fire that changes the throne of kings.
Love, light that makes of life one lustrous hour,
And song, the soul's chief crown and throne of power,
Made music high as heaven and deep as fate.
Strange pity, scarce half scornful of her tear,
In Berkeley's vaults bowed down on Edward's bier.
But higher in fierce flight of song than all
The soul of man, its own imperious thrall,
Rose, when his royal spirit of fierce desire
Made life and death for man one flame of fire.
Incarnate man, fast bound as earth and sea
Spake, when his pride would fain set Faustus free.
Eternal beauty, strong as day and night,
Shone, when his word bade Helen back to sight.
Fear when he bowed his soul before her spell,
Thundered and lightened through the vaults of hell.
The music known of all men's tongues that sing,
When Marlowe sang, bade love make heaven of spring;
The music none but English tongues may make,
Our own sole song, spake first when Marlowe spake;
And on his grave, though there no stone may stand,
The flower it shows was laid by Shakespeare's hand.

(c) From 'The Age of Shakespeare' (1908) 1-14.

The first great English poet was the father of English tragedy and the creator of English blank verse. Chaucer and Spenser were great writers and great men: they shared between them every gift which goes to the making of a poet, in the proper sense of the word, great. Neither pathos nor humour nor fancy nor invention will suffice for that; no poet is great as a poet whom no one could ever pretend to recognise as sublime. Sublimity is the test of imagination as distinguished from invention or from fancy, and the first English poet whose powers can
be called sublime was Christopher Marlowe.

The majestic and emphatic excellence of various lines and passages in Marlowe's first play must be admitted to relieve, if it cannot be allowed to redeem, the stormy monotony of Titanic truculence which blusters like a gale through the noisy course of its ten fierce acts. With many and heavy faults, there is something of genuine greatness in "Tamburlaine the Great"; and for two grave reasons it must always be remembered with distinction and mentioned with honour. It is the first poem ever written in English blank verse, as distinguished from mere rhyming decasyllabics; and it contains one of the select passages, perhaps indeed the subject in the literature of the world, ever written by one of the greatest masters of poetry in loving praise of the glorious delights and sublime submission to the everlasting limits of his art. In its highest and most distinctive qualities, in unfaltering and infallible command of the right note of music and the proper tone of colour for the finest touches of poetic execution, no poet of the most elaborate modern school, working at ease upon every command of language and learning and leisurely refinement, has ever excelled the best and most representative work of a man who had literally no models before him, and probably or evidently was often, if not always, compelled to write against time for his living.

The just and generous judgment passed by Goethe on the "Faust" of his English predecessor in tragic treatment of the same subject is somewhat more than sufficient to counterbalance the slighting or the sneering references to that magnificent poem which might have been expected from the ignorance of Byron or the incompetence of Hallam. And the special note of merit observed, the special point of the praise conferred, by the great German poet should be no less sufficient to dispose of the vulgar misconception yet lingering among sciolists and pretenders to criticism, which regards a writer than whom no man was ever born with a finer or a stronger instinct for perfection of excellence in composition as a mere barbarian, a rough self-taught sketcher or scribbler of crude and rude genius, whose unhewn blocks of verse had in them some veins of rare enough metal to be quarried and polished by Shakespeare. What most impressed the author of "Faust" in the work of Marlowe was a quality the want of which in the author of "Manfred" is proof enough to consign his best work to the second or third class at most. "How greatly it is all planned," the first requisite of all great work, and one of which the highest genius possible to a greatly gifted beholder
could be no possibility understood the nature or conceive
the existence. That Goethe 'had thought of translating
it' is perhaps hardly less precious a tribute to its
greatness than the fact that it has been actually and
admirably translated by the matchless translator of Shake-
speare - the son of Victor Hugo; whose labours of love may
then be said to have made another point in common, and
forged as it were another link of union, between Shake-
speare and the young master of Shakespeare's years. Of
all great poems in dramatic form it is perhaps the most
remarkable for absolute singleness of aim and simplicity
of construction; yet is it wholly free from all possible
imputation of monotony or aridity. 'Tamburlaine' is mono-
tonus in the general roll and flow of its recitative and
oration verse through a noisy wilderness of perpetual
blasphemy and slaughter; but the unity of time and purpose
in 'Doctor Faustus' is not ministered to by change of manner
and variety of incident: The comic scenes, written with
no less skill and simplicity than the tragic, are for the
most part merely more than transcripts, thrown into the
form of dialogues, from a popular prose 'History of Doctor
Faustus'; and therefore should be not done as little to
the discredit as to the credit of the poet. Few master-
pieces of any age in any language can stand beside this
tragic poem. It has hardly the structure of a play - for
the unity of the plot is more than transcribed, more than
purpose and sublimity of tone. In the vision of Helen,
for example, the intense perception of loveliness gives
actual sublimity to the sweetness and radiance of mere
beauty in the passionate and spontaneous selection of
words the most choice and perfect; and in like manner the
sublimity of simplicity in Marlowe's conception and
expression of the agonies endured by Faustus under
the immediate imminence of his doom gives the highest
note of beauty, the quality of absolute fitness and propriety,
to the sheer straightforwardness of speech in which his
agonising terror flits vast over mere and more terrible
from the first to the last equally beautiful and fearful
verses of that tremendous monologue which has no parallel
in all the range of tragedy.

It is now a commonplace of criticism to observe and
regret the decline of power and interest after the opening
acts of 'The Jew of Malta.' This decline is undeniable,
though even the latter part of the play is not wanting in
vigour and a coarse kind of interest; but the first
two acts would be sufficient foundation for the capable
skilful production of a drama which would give
pleasure to the most fastidious of audiences, who perhaps was hardly less indebted to Shake-
speare was before him to Marlowe as the first English
master of word-music in its grander forms, has the glory of the melody of passages in the opening soliloquy of Barabas been possibly surpassed. The figure of the hero, before it degenerates into caricature in an equally tragic way at the end, is as finely touched as the poetic execution is excellent; and the rude and rapid sketches of the minor characters show at least some vigour and vivacity of touch.

In 'Edward the Second' the interest rises and the execution improves as visibly and as greatly with the course of the advancing story as they decline in 'The Jew of Malta.' The scene of the king's deposition at Kenilworth is as much finer in tragic effect and poetic quality as it is shorter and less elaborate than the corresponding scene in Shakespeare's 'King Richard II.' The terror of the death-scene undoubtedly rises into horror; but this horror is with skilful simplicity of treatment preserved from passing into disgust. In pure poetry, in soliloquy and soliloquy imagination, this tragedy is as surely excelled by 'Doctor Faustus' as it is by any other work of Marlowe. Its positive improvement of natural effect it is as certainly the masterpiece of Marlowe. It was almost inevitable, in the hands of any poet but Shakespeare, that none of the characters represented should be capable of securing or even exciting any finer sympathy or more serious interest than attends on the mere evolution of successive events or the mere display of emotions (except always in the great scene of the deposition) rather animal than spiritual in their expression of rage or tenderness or suffering. The exact balance of mutual effect, the final wave of scenic harmony between ideal conception and realistic execution, is not yet struck with perfect accuracy of touch and security of hand; but on this point also Marlowe has here come nearer by many degrees to Shakespeare than any of his other predecessors have ever come near to Marlowe.

Of 'The Massacre at Paris' it is impossible to judge fairly from the garbled fragment of its genuine text which is all that has come down to us. To Mr. Collier, among numberless other obligations, we owe the discovery of a striking passage omitted in the piratical edition which at least almost, if not entirely, attains the dignity and value which, it must be allowed, contains nothing of quite equal value. That it is not in Marlowe's version which, in a sketch of the time, has a typical quality which is itself a typical quality of Marlowe's, is due to the fact that a complete edition is indeed the only way of securing a true and rugged chiselled which chiselled and stelled sharpened from the death of Queen Dama of Navarre to the murder of the last Valois. It is possible to conjecture
what it would be fruitless to affirm, that it gave a hint
in the next century to Nathaniel Lee for his far superior
and really admirable tragedy on the same subject, issued
ninety-seven years after the death of Marlowe.

The tragedy of 'Dido, Queen of Carthage,' was probably
completed for the stage after that irreparable and incal-
culable loss to English letters by Thomas Nash, the
worthiest English precursor of Swift in vivid, pure, and
passionate prose, embodying the most terrible and splendid
qualities of a personal and social satirist; a man gifted
also with some fair faculty of elegiac and even lyric
verse, but to no wise qualified to put on the buskin left
behind him by the 'famous gracer of tragedians,' as Mar-
lowe had already been designated by their common friend
Greene from among the worthiest of his fellows. In this
somewhat thin-spun and evidently hasty play a servile
fidelity to the text of Virgil's narrative has naturally
resulted in the failure which might have been expected
from an attempt at once to transcribe what is essentially
inimitable and to reproduce it under the helplessly alien
conditions of dramatic adaptation. The one really noble
passage in a generally feeble and incomposite piece of
work is, however, uninspired by the unattainable model to
which the dramatists have been only too obsequious in
their subservience.

It is as nearly certain as anything can be which
depends chiefly upon cumulative and collateral evidence
that the better part of what is best in the serious scenes
of 'King Henry VI.' is mainly the work of Marlowe. That
he is, at any rate, the principal author of the second and
third plays passed under that name among the works of
Shakespeare, but first and imperfectly printed as 'The
Contention between the two Famous Houses of York and Lan-
caster,' can hardly be now a matter of debate among com-
petent judges. The crucial difficulty of criticism in
this matter is to determine, if indeed we should not
rather say to conjecture, the authorship of the humorous
scenes in prose, showing as they generally do a power of
comparatively high and pure comic realism to which nothing
in the acknowledged works of any pre-Shakespearean drama-
tist is even remotely comparable. Yet, especially in the
original text of these scenes as they stand unpurified by
the ultimate revision of Shakespeare there are tones and
touches which recall rather the clownish horseplay and
homely ribaldry of his predecessors than anything in the
lighter interludes of his very earliest plays. We find
the same sort of thing which we find in their writings,
only better done than they usually do it, rather than such
work as Shakespeare's a little worse done than usual. And
even in the final text of the tragic or metrical scenes the highest note struck is always, with one magnificent and unquestionable exception, rather in the key of Marlowe at his best than of Shakespeare while yet in great measure his disciple.

It is another commonplace of criticism to affirm that Marlowe had not a touch of comic genius, not a gleam of wit in him or a wrinkle of humour; but it is an inexplicable fact that he had. In 'The Massacre at Paris,' the soliloquy of the soldier lying in wait for the minion of Henri III. has the same very rough but very real humour as a passage in the 'Taming of the Shrew' which are attributable to the reviser. The same hand is unmistakable in both these broad and English outbursts of unseemly but unembarrassed fun and if we might wish it rather less indiscreet, we must admit that the tradition which declares all sense of humour and all Sign of it to be the first great poet of England is as unaccountable as comic genius to Shakespeare. The same note is unmistakable in both these broad and boyish outbreaks of unseemly but undeniable fun: and if we might wish it rather less indecorous, we must admit that the tradition which denies all sense of humour and all instinct of wit to the first great poet of England is no less unworthy of serious notice or elaborate refutation than the charges and calumnies of an informer who was duly hanged the year after Marlowe's death. For if the same note of humour is struck in an undoubted play of Marlowe's and in a play of disputed authorship, it is evident that the rest of the scene in the latter play must also be Marlowe's. And in that unquestionable case the superb and savage humour of the terribly comic scenes which represent with such rough magnificence of realism the riot of Jack Cade and his ruffians through the ravaged streets of London must be recognisable as no other man's than his. It is a pity we have not before us for comparison the comic scenes or burlesque interludes of 'Tamburlaine' which the printer or publisher, as he had the impudence to avow in his prefatory note, purposely omitted and left out.

The author of 'A Study of Shakespeare' was therefore wrong, and utterly wrong, when in a book issued some quarter of a century ago he followed the lead of Mr. Dyce in assuming that because the author of 'Doctor Faustus' and 'The Jew of Malta' 'was as certainly' - and certainly it is difficult to deny that whether as a mere transcriber or as an original dealer in pleasantry he sometimes was 'one of the least and worst among jesters as he was one of the best and greatest among poets,' he could not have had a hand in the admirable comic scenes of 'The Taming of a Shrew.' For it is one, I should hope, unnecessary to state that in his own work Marlowe's handling of the comic scenes and his readers may so great a duty was ever happy in conceiving and asserting that he was a poet 'to whom, we have reason to believe, nature had denied even a moderate talent for the humane.' The serious or would-be
poetical scenes of the play are as unmistakably the work of an imitator as are most of the better passages in 'Titus Andronicus' and 'King Edward III.' Greene or Peele may be responsible for the bad poetry, but there is no reason to suppose that the great poet whose mannerisms he imitated with so stupid a servility was incapable of the good fun.

Had every copy of Marlowe's boyish version or perversion of Ovid's 'Elegies' deservedly perished in the flames to which it was judicially condemned by the sentences of a brace of prelates, it is possible that an occasional bookworm, it is certain that no poetical student, would have deplored its destruction, if its demerits—hardly relieved, as his first competent editor has happily remarked, by the occasional incidence of a fine and felicitous couplet—could in that case have been imagined. His translation of the first book of Lucan alternately rises above the original and falls short of it; often inferior to the Latin in point and weight of expressive rhetoric, now and then brightened by a clearer note of poetry and lifted into a higher mood of verse, its terseness, vigour, and purity of style would in any case have been prodigiously, but are nothing less than admirable, if not wonderful, when we consider how close the translator has on the whole (in spite of occasional slipshod incorrectness kept himself to the most rigid limit of literal representation, phrase by phrase and often line by line. The really striking force and felicity of occasional verses are worthier of remark than the inevitable stiffness and heaviness of others, when the technical difficulty of such a task is duly taken into account.

One of the most faultless lyrics and one of the love-liest fragments in the whole range of descriptive and fanciful poetry would have secured a place for Marlowe among the memorable men of his epoch, even if his plays had perished with himself. His 'Passionate Shepherd' remains ever since unrivalled in its way—a way of pure fancy and radiant melody without break or lapse. The original fragment, on the other hand, has been very closely rivalled, perhaps very happily imitated, but only by the greatest lyric poet of England—by Shelley alone. Marlowe's poem of 'Hero and Leander,' closing with the sunrise which closes the night of the lovers' union, stands alone in its age, and far ahead of the work of any possible competitor between the death of Spenser and the dawn of Milton. In clear mastery of narration and presentation, in melody and comeliness of style, it is set less prostrate than in the abridgment

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and impeccable perfection of separate lines or passages. The place and the value of Christopher Marlowe as a leader among English poets it would be almost impossible for historical criticism to over-estimate. To none of them all, perhaps, have so many of the greatest among them been so deeply and so directly indebted. Nor was ever any great writer’s influence upon his fellows more simply and unmixedly an influence for good. He first, and he alone, guided Shakespeare into the right way of work; his music, in which there is no echo of any man’s before him, found the one echo in the more prolonged but hardly more exalted harmony of Milton. He is the greatest discoverer, the most daring and inspired pioneer, in all our poetic literature. Before him there was neither genuine blank verse nor genuine tragedy in our language. After his arrival the way was prepared, the paths were made straight, for Shakespeare.

53. THE MARLOWE COMMEMORATION: HENRY IRVING AND OTHERS

1891

Henry Irving (1838-1905) was the most conspicuous actor-producer of his time. His elaborate staging and mannered acting produced both applause and controversy. On 16 September 1891, he unveiled the Marlowe memorial at Canterbury.

From the ‘Saturday Review’ (19 September 1891).
happily realized in Mr. ONSLOW FORD's admirable work. They were met, as Mr. IRVING remarked, to honor a great memory and to repair a great omission. The meeting was admirably successful, as its object was eminently worthy of recognition. Other great names there are among English poets - sufficiently numerous, indeed, to inspire the enthusiasm of extensive readers and the skill of sculptors for many a year - that may justly claim the like honors that has been accorded to Marlowe. But of all Marlowe's illustrious peers, the greatest is CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. He was the first, the only, herald of SHAKESPEARE. Of the latter, Mr. IRVING's family of English dramatic poets, and a lyrical poet of the first order among Shakespeareans. He was the first poet, as Mr. IRVING happily remarked, "who employed with a master hand the greatest instrument of our literature." The blank verse of 'Tamburlaine' seems to us the triumph of blank verse, and the 'Jew of Malta,' of SHAKESPEARE, is an individual as that of SHAKESPEARE, if not of JOHNSON. The muse of the 'Muses' held us, just as it held JOHNSON. The productions of successive masters of blank verse during two centuries have in no sense weakened our impression of the splendor of color and power and music that distinguish the verse of MARLOWE. This peculiar claim to eminence was rightly enlarged upon by Mr. IRVING in his eloquent address. "MARLOWE it was who 'first wedded the harmonies of the great organ of blank verse,' and he it was who 'first captured the majestic rhythms of our tongue.' The majestic rhythms of which Mr. IRVING spoke are not only of MARLOWE's making, but they have remained with us to this day. If his blank verse is something vitally distinct from all other, the rhymed verse of his 'Hero and Leander' is not less identified as his own. "The 'Muses' story' does not differ from CHAPMAN'S more completely than it differs from all other examples of rhymed heroic verse in English poetry. But this, of course, is but a truism to all true ears, though perhaps not altogether explicit to 'Times,' for example. It seems that the versification of KEATS'S 'Endymion' was directly derived from MARLOWE'S 'Hero and Leander.' Mr. IRVING, however, judiciously abstained from dwelling on such persuasive signs of the awakened public interest in the poetic works of MARLOWE. With regard to the stage writings of the Canterbury poet, Mr. IRVING was proud to remember that MARLOWE'S work, like SHAKESPEARE'S, was written primarily for the stage, and that there is no better ground for supposing the author of ' Tamburlaine' to have been himself an actor. But Mr. IRVING did not
promise a revival of "Edward II." or the 'Jew of Malta.' He was very guarded in expressing his opinion of the dramatic qualities of Marlowe's plays, and he was provocatively silent concerning the total banishment of those plays from the stage. To a student of Shakespeare and an actor of Mr. Irving's eminence, these questions must have proved tempting. The occasion might be held to warrant if not a confession of faith in the present times, some candid comparative criticism. From Marlowe to Massinger, all the successful dramatists were poets, and no one so much dreamed that matters dramatic would ever be otherwise. Mr. Irving did not attempt to show how far it has differed the stage to be ministered to by dramatists who are not poets. He was content to leave unthought this delicious theme. Graceful reference was made by Mr. Gosse, in sketching the origin and progress of the Marlowe Memorial Fund, to the support the movement received from actors. They were from the first most helpful and hopeful in the cause. Mr. Irving's speech at Canterbury was the last, though by no means the least, of his many valuable services, and fully summed the successful efforts of the Committee. Mr. Frederick Rogers, the secretary to the Fund, and one of the originators of the Memorial, spoke in appropriate terms of the distinctive qualities of Marlowe's work. He rightly recognized in the poet something more than the precursor of Shakespeare. In his short career, as Mr. Rogers observed, Marlowe inspired a new spirit into English poetry. His verse is charged with that 'fine madness' which, as Drayton says, 'rightly should possess the poet's brain.' The ancient theory of 'possession' was justified in him. We do not require to be told that he was one of the poets who 'never blotted,' and his verse defies the over-busy toil of those who would analyse the secret sources of its influence. Few poets there are whose work is so little suggestive of the Jonsonian maxim, 'A good poet's made, as well as born.' Some dissatisfaction has been expressed with regard to the site chosen for the Memorial. But the grounds for discontent seem to us to be entirely unfounded. In this matter, as in the selection of their Committee, and the choice of their sculptor, the subscribers are sincerely to be congratulated.
We are most of us apt to take a somewhat erroneous view of the Elizabethan drama. It is so obviously Shakespeare who is the chief representative of that age, that we tend to overlook the claims of those lesser lights who cluster around him, less brilliant perhaps, but certainly not insignificant. Among these none presents a more striking figure than Christopher Marlowe, in the first place because, chronologically, his work precedes Shakespeare's, and thus makes him the earliest dramatist of the Elizabethan age; and secondly, because his genius is of almost unparalleled, though of unequal, excellence. And when we remember that 'Tamburlaine the Great,' his first play, was written in 1587 when the author was only twenty-three, and that he died in 1593, at the age of twenty-nine, we feel that we cannot adequately gauge how great the loss to our national drama has been in his premature death.

Soon after 'Tamburlaine,' probably in 1588 or 1589, appeared his second play, 'The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus.' The merits of this play have as yet received but scanty recognition, though in technical skill, interest of plot and masterly handling, it is scarcely, if at all, inferior to the better known 'Edward II.,' and is certainly more advanced than Shakespeare's earlier plays. The general outlines of the story are well known to English readers, if not through Marlowe, at least through Goethe. The figure, however, Margaret, which was an invention of Goethe's own, cannot, of course, appear in Marlowe's 'Faust.' It is well known how highly the later author thought of Marlowe's work; how he contemplated translating it into German; how he exclaimed, on hearing it referred to, 'how grandly is it all planned.' Our only wonder is that such admiration has not been more universal.

The reason is partly due to the fact that it is the edition published in 1616 and other editions of a later date that have been more commonly reprinted than the earlier and original edition of 1604. And the later editions may well worry and disgust modern readers, owing to the prevalence of the so-called 'comic interludes,'
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about which so much has been said, and so little decided.

But the state of the case is really some clearer enough. Marlowe, we know, founded his play on the prose
history of the 'Damnable Life and deserved Death of Dr.
Faustus,' which was translated into English in 1587.

This work contains the foundation of the comic interludes
which appear in the 1616 edition. But the 1604 edition
omits many of these. We conclude that Marlowe did not
introduce them into the original play, but that they were
added by later hands. And the reason why they were added
appear equally obvious. We know the kind of humour that
was then in fashion; it consisted mainly of horse-play, partly of indecency. Marlowe's 'Faust' was found to
be somewhat lacking in this quality; we may suppose that
the pit was not so full as the manager desired - his obvi-
ous course was to insert passages that would be a safe
hit, and he got some playwright to interpolate these inci-
dents, for which there was certainly authority, and the
same authority as the author himself had used, namely, the
prose history of 1587.

There was, perhaps, another reason for the introduction
of these passages, which we believe has hitherto escaped
observation. It is at any rate noticeable that in almost
all cases they precede a change of scene, and that two or
three characters only appear in them. It seems, there-
fore, not unlikely that they were inserted to fill up the
interval necessary for this change of scene, and were
acted in front of a drop scene, which would leave a narrow
strip in front of the stage sufficient for the action of
the few characters who appeared.

If, then, we want a true idea of the play as Marlowe
conceived it, we must turn, not to the edition of 1616
and those subsequent to that date, but to the earlier form
in which it appeared in 1604.

The curtain is raised to Faust in his study - a
thoroughly dramatic method of introducing him to the
audience, which Goethe also follows. He reviews anal-
tics, medicine, law, but feels that he has grasped the
utmost they can give, and finally opens Jerome's Bible,
in which he reads, 'The reward of sin is death.' 'If
we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the
truth is not in us. Why then, belike we must sin, and
so consequently die. Ay, we must die an everlasting
death.'

He may well be puzzled, for he is essentially the
intellectual as opposed to the inspired man; he draws a
logical conclusion - shuts up his Bible, and turns to his
books of magic.

There could hardly be a more perfect introduction to
We have the whole man as he was before he meddled with magic, a perfectly-trained mind, which yet desires more than mere learning can give it. Marlowe is fond of this kind of character; Tamburlaine is only another phase of Faustus. He shares the same boundless ambition, the same taste for empire, though he tries to realise his dreams, not by the aid of magic, but of armies. Like Faustus too, there lies behind his concrete ambition a desire for something unattainable, something he can only vaguely indicate.

Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres
Will us, to wear ourselves and never rest
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all.

This intense life, this vivid ambition, is what lends such an immense interest to Marlowe's heroes. We share his engrossing sympathy with his main characters, because we feel how strongly the personal element comes in. Now in all these figures we see the author himself. The character is so strongly and truthfully sustained throughout the play, that we feel Marlowe must have known Tamburlaine and Faustus from the inside, as it were. But this extreme sympathy with the hero, which is certainly one of Marlowe's chief merits, carries with it, almost of necessity, one of his chief defects. Bound up as he is in the principal character, he has not enough interest in the minor parts, and they tend to degenerate into lay figures, put on the stage merely to fill the scene, or as dummy figures for the hero to operate upon. There is no following up of separate threads; one thread is pursued throughout the play, the others are reluctantly cut in order to trace its passages more clearly. "Tamburlaine" is full of such lay figures; he himself is absolutely the only really important character. In "Faustus" the nature of the plot, which Marlowe received ready made, necessitated, what in his hands became one of the most striking figures in the whole of English drama. But if Mephistopheles had not been, by the nature of the plot, indissolubly bound up with Faustus, we suspect that he would have been as much a lay figure as half of those whose names appear among the dramatis personae.

This impatience of detail and background is also responsible for the second of Marlowe's defects. He shows a
marked inability to trace change. He can register change, when the change is there, with extreme brilliance and vivid colouring, but his weakness lies in his being either unwilling or unable to trace the process. The effect is the same as a disregard of 'values' in a picture — the absence of gradation not only makes the lines unpleasantly sharp, but positively detracts from the strength of the high lights and deep shadows. Instead of the eye being led up a lane of light to the dazzling streak from which it proceeds, it is suddenly dropped upon a splash of red or orange, that seems comparatively meaningless.

In Faustus. We appreciate the intense force and truth shown in the first soliloquy in his study and in his last soliloquy just before the end, but we cannot help feeling how much more forcible they would both have been if Marlowe had traced the course by which, from a learned doctor, he became the devil's due. As it is, we feel none of the retarding force of old traditions, no remembrances of childhood (for the allusions to childhood and hearing the clock strike ten were not hackneyed in Marlowe's day): he has no longings, no regret for the 'days that are no more.' All he feels is a direct passion and a direct pull back, it is all check and checkmate without any manoeuvring; there is no complicated network of feelings and surroundings, such as all those, and especially those who are highly educated and discriminating, must feel about any momentous decisions. This fault is particularly characteristic of Marlowe. In the 'Jew of Malta' we observe precisely the same defect. Some allowance must, of course, be made for the uniformly contemptible character of Barabas, but in spite of this, one cannot help feeling that a man who killed his daughter, brought on a duel between his two intending sons-in-law, poisoned a servant and a friend, two monks, and an entire nunnery, and finally betrayed Malta, and dies in an unsuccessful attempt to murder Calymath, could have been entirely free from any scruple or misgiving throughout. This fact would probably have disappeared if Marlowe had lived; the same defect is painfully apparent in Shakespere's early plays. But we should remember that Marlowe died before he was thirty, and that his manner of life was not eminently conducive to study and careful writing. No other writer, perhaps, gives us such clear evidence of having thrown his compositions off at white heat, without correction or revision: a speech begun at one tavern would be continued at another, and finished
The next day when the author had slept off the fumes of drink, Marlowe’s attempts at humour, as illustrated by these comic interludes that do appear in the 1604 edition, are almost always coarse, and never funny. It was reserved for Shakespeare alone of that age to be funny without being coarse, and even he is not always successful. And such humour is exceptionally out of place in Faustus. The savant of the world, after rejecting all serious studies as being too elementary for him, sells his soul to Mephistopheles, in order, apparently, to achieve practical jokes which one would have thought were too elementary for anyone else. He takes away the Pope’s dinner, breaks his ears for crossing himself, throws squibs among the monks, and gives a wrinkled horse-dealer a ducking in the Rhine. It is a far cry from the dull, staid, middle-aged man of the world that many of us would much rather sell our souls to avoid such. Mephistopheles, indeed, avowed his grim describers, but among all his gifts he cannot impart a sense of humour.

We must of course make some allowance for the spirit of the times. Marlowe probably had a fair idea of the kind of joke the mass would appreciate. It is always difficult to raise our standard of wit above that of our age. Genius, unluckily, too often coupled with bitterness. The very rarity of it makes its possessor feel lonely and companionless. It was the unusual combination of genius with geniality that made Shakespeare what he was, and it is this bitterness that lies deeper than mere cynicism, that makes Faustus so terribly hopeless, so despairing of salvation, and in which we see one of the most striking figures in all drama, namely, Mephistopheles.

Throughout the play Marlowe relies solely on moral, not on material horror: the atmosphere in which he moves is all ‘air and fire.’ This entire absence of material horror is a serious defect; it is not merely that Marlowe did not seek to conjure up scenes of physical torture. But Marlowe will have none of this. Mephistopheles is the spirit of hopeless despair, of lost opportunities and bliss forgone. He cannot even describe the tortures that he undergoes in hell; hell, on the contrary, is everywhere where he is, he cannot get out of it; it is his own environment.
Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place, for where we are is hell,
And where hell is there we must ever be.

It is impossible to speak too highly of this awful
pregnant reticence, the utter horror of it lies not in
what is said, so much as what is left unsaid. It is
noticeable that in the original edition, Faustus learns
nothing of hell, except that a great gulf separates it
from God, and that there is no hope evermore for those
who have entered it, while in the later edition, the Evil
Angel spoils the unity and the impressiveness of the last
scene by showing him a vision ‘of the damned souls on
burning forges,’ ‘of the live quarters broiling on the
coals.’ This sort of course be placed in the same cate-
gory as the later comic interludes. The pit and gallery
would no doubt revel in such unsavoury details, the more
realistic the better; and the same reason accounts for
the appearance of the scholars after Faustus’ death, who
find his ‘limbs all torn asunder by the hand of death.’
These two incidents are entirely parallel to the comic
interludes, though on different lines.

There is a certain system in the wanderings of Faustus
which we believe has not yet been noticed. As his end
draws nearer, Faustus requires more engrossing pursuits,
which will make him tend to forget his ultimate fate.
Thus at first the very studies which were too tedious for
him, are considered satisfactory; he asks Mephistopheles
a quantity of questions about astronomy, which, as he
says, are ‘just freshmen’s suggestions.’ Then he
travels, and enters upon a course of practical jokes in
a graduated scale; each joke being more emphatically
practical than the preceding, and finally he asks Mephis-
topheles for a boon ‘to glut the longing of his heart’s
desire,’ his love for the phantom Helen, whom he had
raised to satisfy the scholars. The beauty of this Helen
episode is well known; for melody and perfect rhythm it
ranks with anything in Shakespeare; indeed, in ‘Troilus
and Cressida,’ Shakespeare has obviously made most of
the opening lines. The subject of the play would naturally
not give many other opportunities for melodious or pretty
lines, but how perfect a master Marlowe really was of the
poetry that appeals more directly to the ear, we can
verify in his ‘Hero and Leander’ and the Song of the
Passionate Shepherd to his Love.

In the last scene Marlowe appears at his best, in his
wonderful power of forcibly rendering a momentary scene.
The time for repentance is past, Faustus dare not bring
his worthless, withered soul to God for fear of the devil,
where he lay; the struggle is over; it only remains to wait for the inevitable end. He reaches the height of pathos and the depth of hopelessness. 'Oh, my God,' he cries, 'I would weep, but the devil draws in my tears; I would lift my hands, but they hold them, they hold them.'

Art and genius seem to try to rival each other in Faustus' last soliloquy. The art is perfect — Faustus, in his dead and terror, praying that this one hour remaining to him may be lengthened somehow to 'a year, a month, a week, a natural day.' By an exquisite touch of nature, as F. A. Symonds has remarked, he cries aloud the line, which Ovid whispered in Corinna's ear:

0 lente, lente, currite noctis equi!

The genius is perfect. It is almost impossible to quote, when all is so marvellous. But there is one passage where Marlowe surpasses himself, where his genius rises to almost supernatural inspiration; it is in these three lines:

See where Christ's blood streaming in the firmament,
One drop would save my soul — half a drop, ah, my Christ!
Ah', rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!

It is the last hopeless cry of one who knows where he could find safety but knows that it is out of his reach. Of Marlowe's life, unfortunately, or fortunately, we know but little, enough a few bare outlines of personal

As a dramatist, he seems to have achieved an immediate success, if we may judge from the rapid editions of his plays that were issued; and the praise showered on him by the critics and the public, by the rich and the poor. His popularity he enjoyed, not only from the theatregoing public, but from the critics. In those days it was exactly Marlowe's style that would be appreciated. Never has a nation been so full of life, or so eager to learn.
The Reformation and the Renaissance had granted the people a freedom from a double slavery, from a corrupt system of religion on the one hand, on the other, from ignorance.

In religion there was no half-heartedness allowed, no gradations were recognised between a violent Protestant and a profane pagan: while Sir John Cheke, Colet, Ascham, on their return from Italy were kindling the spark of the new intellectual movement, and Elizabeth bemoans that her Greek is growing rusty. Then came the final impulse for the love of adventure and life in the discovery of America. "More men will not give one doit to relieve a lamebeggar, they will pay ten to see a dead Indian," says Trinculo in the 'Tempest.'

Such are Marlowe's times, and such of necessity are Marlowe's works, for in those days there were no conventional standards of taste, to which the author must conform, and thus obscure his own identity. Exactly the opposite is seen in the eighteenth century, for almost any of the writers of that period might have been the author of any given production, since individuality is completely dominated by conventional rules of what is allowable in composition and what is not.

It is impossible that Marlowe will ever receive just recognition. He is in the unfortunate position of the morning star, which invariably gets quenched by the rising sun. With most English readers it will probably be Shakespeare first, and the rest nowhere; but we cannot help thinking that such a verdict is hasty and unfair, and one against which any reader of Marlowe would give his unquestioning vote.

Note

10. 0 run slowly, you horses of the night!' (From Ovid, 'Amores,' I, viii, 40.)

W. J. COURTHOPE
1895

William John Courthope (1842-1917) was a civil servant and literary critic. He was editor of the later volumes in the (then) standard edition of Pope's works. His
His plays have of late years been frequently considered mainly on their technical side, and everywhere the vast effect produced on the English poetical drama by Marlowe's adoption of blank verse, this is not unnatural. As regards his own genius, however, it is not the right way of judging for it is plain enough that he made his technical innovation because blank verse was the only vehicle of poetical expression adequate to the character of his thought; we see from 'Tamburlaine' that he regarded eloquence as a means to a practical end; and the style of his dramas therefore cannot be fully appreciated without a full comprehension of the intellectual and imaginative motive which inspired his composition. What was this? Mr. Symonds says it may be described by the phrase 'L'Amour de l'Impossible.' In one sense, measuring the vastness of Marlowe's conceptions and his exaggerated manner of expression, this is true; but in another sense, looking to his philosophy, to his ideas of dramatic creation, and to his view of rhetoric, it is the exact opposite of the truth. Marlowe composed on a principle which was simple, direct, and consistent with itself, but which was distinct from every principle which had hitherto inspired tragic conception, though some approach to it had been made in the tragedies of Seneca. In Marlowe's plays there is no trace of the hereditary curse of sin, which elevates the tone of Sophocles and Aeschylus; there is no trace of the doctrine of physical Necessity, which is the ruling thought of Seneca; there is no trace of the conflict between good and evil, conscience and passion, which permeates the Miracle Plays and Morallities. What we do find in Seneca's elevation of the freedom of the human will, dissociated from the idea of Necessity, and joined with Machiavelli's principle of the excellence of virtù. This principle is represented under a great variety of aspects in Marlowe's plays; sometimes in the energy of a single heroic character, as in 'Tamburlaine'; sometimes in the pursuit of unlawful knowledge, as in 'Faustus'; again, in 'The Jew of Malta,' in the boundless hatred and revenge of Barabas; in Guise plotting the massacre of the Huguenots out of cold-blooded policy; and in Mortimer planning the murder of Edward II. from purely personal ambitions. Incidentally,
no doubt, in some of these instances, the indulgence of
unrestrained passion brings ruin in its train; but it is
not so much for the sake of the moral that Marlowe com-
posed his tragedies, as because his imagination delighted
in the exhibition of the vast and tremendous consequences
produced by the determined exercise of will in pursuit of
selfish objects. So far from loving grandiosity and
extravagance for their own sake, the violence of his con-
ceptions springs from a belief of what is possible to the
resolved and daring soul.

His dramas are very ill-constructed. He cares nothing
for the development of plot and concentrates his whole
attention on the exhibition of an abstract principle,
embodied for the moment in a single character. When he
has placed his leading personage in a situation where his
ruling purpose - be it desire of conquest, as in Tambur-
laine; revenge, as in Barabas; ambition, as in Mortimer or
Guise - can have full play, he is satisfied. His inven-
tion occupies itself with finding means to remove the
obstacles that oppose the achievement of this central
purpose, and up to a certain point his method produces
interesting dramatic situations: the first two acts, for
example, of the 'Jew of Malta' are excellent. But after
a time the action drags through want of complexity; and
then the exhibition of character becomes mechanical and
monotonous.

Again, Marlowe's theory of dramatic action is contrary
to the constitution of human nature: it eliminates the
factor of Conscience. Following Machiavelli in counting
'religion but a childish toy,' and in holding that there
is 'no sin but ignorance,' he exalted 'resolution' as
the highest of human virtues. But this is a principle
better suited for melodrama than for tragedy. If there
is something fascinating in the steady purpose of even a
savage like Tamburlaine, or of a villain like Barabas,
how infinitely inferior in dramatic interest is such a
representation, to the portrayal of that complexity of
motives and circumstance which produces the entanglements
of human conduct! How ill does it compare, for example,
with the situations produced by the irresolution
of Hamlet and Macbeth, or by the senile folly of Lear?

Shakespeare was not less keenly alive than Marlowe to the
dramatic value of resolute will as a principle of action:
he has represented it in the character of Iago, working on
the credulous weakness of Othello; but he has constructed
the complex action of his tragedy in such a way that the
spectators are never left for a moment in doubt as to the
moral judgment they ought to pass on the various charac-
ters. For the same reason 'Faustus' is Marlowe's greatest
and most interesting play, because in that alone does he
give a sustained representation of the state of a human
soul torn between the conflicting principles of good and
evil.

More were. The narrowness of Marlowe's conception of
Man and Nature is seen in his representations of female
character. As his tendency was to make everything in his
plays bow before the march of some supreme irresistible
will, the weaker feminine element in Nature was neces-
sarily thrust by him into a subordinate position. Mar-
lowe, like Greene, can represent only one type of woman
- a being who becomes the devoted, but almost passive,
instrument of masculine resolve: Demosthenes, Angelic,
Jakes, and (strange to say) Katherine de Medicis, all of
them cast in this mould, are the only creations he can
serve against the endless varieties of female character
depicted in the dramas of Shakespeare.

Considering these features in Marlowe's drama, we
cannot fail to be struck with the contrast between his
genius and the genius of men like Sidney and Spenser.
The two latter reflect the chivalrous element that was
still strong in English society, the high principle of
honour, the elevation of sentiment, the sense of duty and
religion. From all these restraining principles in the
conscience of the nation Marlowe cut himself off; and by
his exaltation of the Machiavellian principle severed his
connection, not only with Puritanism, but with whatever
was most lofty and noble in the history of England. On
the other hand, his imagination was borne along, as
Spenser's and Sidney's never was, on the full stream of a
great national movement. His dramas were produced just
before, and just after, the defeat of the Spanish Armada
- that is to say at the moment when the people were awaken-
ing to the full consciousness of greatness in their dan-
gers and their destinies.

56. G. B. SHAW

1896

Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), playwright and critic, in the
earlier stages of his career contributed a series of
important reviews of contemporary theatre productions to
the "Saturday Review", from 1895 to 1898. The productions
of William Poel (1852-1934) were most influential in the formation of techniques and attitudes in the modern theatre. For the references to 'Mr. G. B. Shaw', Lamb and Swinburne, see Introduction pp. 11 and 11, and Nos 27 and 27.

This review, published 11 July 1896, speaks not only for Shaw but for any surfeited with the kind of comment reproduced in the present collection.

From 'Dramatic Opinions and Essays' (New York, 1909), 24-43.

THE SPACIOUS TIMES

'Doctor Faustus.' By Christopher Marlowe. Acted by members of the Shakespeare Reading Society at St. George's Hall, on a stage after the model of the Fortune Playhouse, 2 July, 1896.

Mr. William Poel, in drawing up an announcement of the last exploit of the Elizabethan Stage Society, had no difficulty in citing a number of eminent authorities as to the superlative merits of Christopher Marlowe. The dotage of Charles Lamb on the subject of the Elizabethan dramatists has found many imitators, notably Mr. Swinburne, who expresses in verse what he finds in books as passionately as a poet expresses what he finds in life. Among them, it appears, is a Mr. G. B. Shaw, in quoting whom Mr. Poel was supposed by many persons to be quoting me. But though I share the gentleman's initials, I do not share his views. He can admire a fool: I cannot, even when his folly not only expresses itself in blank verse, but actually invents that art form for the purpose. I admit that Marlowe's blank verse has charm of color and movement; and I know only too well how its romantic march caught the literary imagination and founded that barren and horrible worship of blank verse for its own sake which has since desolated and laid waste the dramatic poetry of England. But the fellow was a fool for all that. He often reminds me, in his abysmally inferior way, of Rossini. Rossini had just the same trick of beginning with a magnificently impressive exordium, apparently pregnant with the most tragic developments, and presently lapsing into arrant triviality. But Rossini lapses amusingly; writes 'Excusez du peu' at the double bar which separates the sublime from the ridiculous; and is gay, insipid and clever in his frivolity. Marlowe, the moment the exhaustion of the imaginative fit departs him of the power of raving, becomes childish in thought, vulgar and
wooden in humor, and stupid in his attempts at invention. He is the true Elizabethan blank-verse beast, lusting to frighten other people with the superstitious terrors and cruelties in which he does not himself believe, and wallowing in blood, violence, melodramatics of expression and strenuous animal passions as only literary men do when they become thoroughly degraded by solitary work, sedentary composure, and starvation of the sympathetic centres. It is not surprising to learn that Marlowe was stabbed in a tavern brawl; what would be his having succeeded in stabbing any one else. Do you suppose the whole obscene crew of these blank-verse rhetoricians could without lecter himself? Nature can produce no murderer crude enough for Webster, nor any hero bully enough for Chapman, devout disciples, both of them, of Kit Marlowe. Yet you do not believe in their martial ardor as one might call the Elizabethan dramatics imaginative, as one might say the same of a man in delirium tremens; but even that flatters them; for whereas the drinker can imagine rats and snakes and beetles which have some sort of resemblance to real ones, your typical Elizabethan hero of the mighty line, having neither the sense to see nor anything real except his own drunken delusions, could no more conceive a natural or convincing stage figure than a blind man can conceive a rainbow or a dead one the sound of an orchestra. Such success as they have had is the success which any fluent braggart and liar may secure in a pothouse. Their swagger and insolence, and their essays of Cicero and Aristotle, passed for prettily invented in their own day because their readers enjoyed a copy of their stories, and, without having by any means been this advantage, they enjoy in addition the satisfaction of their delusions, and, above all, the splendor of the light reflected on them from the reputation of Shakespeare. Without that light they would be as invisible as they are insufferable. In condemning them indiscriminately, I merely point out the connexion between the real Marlowe, who wrote the tragedies, and the poet Marlowe, who wrote flower stories. On the contrary, I am quite aware that they did not get their reputations for nothing; that there were degrees of badness among them; that Greene was really amusing, Marston spirited and silly-tongued, Cyril Tourneur able to string together lines of which any couple picked out and quoted separately might pass as a fragment of a real organic poem, and so on. Even the brutish pedant Jonson was not heartless, and could turn out prettily affectionate verses and foolishly affectionate criticisms; whilst the plausible firm of Beaumont and Fletcher, humbugs as they were, could produce plays which were, all things considered, good enough for a father of the English stage.
considered, not worse than 'The Lady of Lyons.' But these distinctions are not worth making now. There is nothing more to do with Marlowe now; there is no more to be done with it, but we throw it indiscriminately into the 'destructor' for all that. There is only one use left for the Elizabethan dramatists, and that is the purification of Shakespeare's reputation from its spurious elements. Just as you can cure people of talking patronizingly about 'Mozartian melody' by showing them that the tunes they imagine to be his distinctive characteristics were the commonplaces of his time, as it is possible, perhaps, to cure people of admiring, as distinctively characteristic of Shakespeare, the false, forced rhetoric, the callous sensationalism-wielding in murder and lust, the ghosts and combats, and the vocal expenditure of all the treasures of his genius on the bedizenment of plays which are, as wholes, stupid toys. When Sir Henry Irving presently revives 'Cymbeline' at the Lyceum, the numerous descendants of the learned Shakespearean enthusiast who went down on his knees and kissed the Ireland forgeries will see no difference between the great dramatist who changed Imogen from a mere name in a story to a living woman, and the manager-showman who exhibited her with the gory trunk of a newly beheaded man in her arms. But why should we, the heirs of so many greater ages, with the dramatic poems of Goethe and Ibsen in our hands, and the music of a great dynasty of musicians, from Bach to Wagner, in our ears - why should we waste our time on the rank and file of the Elizabethans, or encourage foolish modern persons to imitate them, or talk about Shakespeare as if his moral platitudes, his jingo claptraps, his tavern pleasantries, his bombast and drivel, and his incapacity for following up the scope of philosophy he tried as sparsely, were as admirable as the mastery of poetic speech, the feeling for nature, and the knack of character-drawing, that, and heart wisdom which he was ready, like a true son of the theatre, to prostitute to any subject, any occasion, and any theatrical undertaking? The fact is, we are growing out of Shakespeare. Byron declined to put up with his reputation at the beginning of the nineteenth century; and now, at the beginning of the twentieth, he is nothing but a household pet. His characters still live; his word pictures of woodland and wayside still give us a Bank-holiday breath of country air; his verse still charms us; his sublimities still stir us; the commonplaces and trumperies of the wisdom which age and experience bring to all of us are still expressed by him better than by anybody else; but we have nothing to hope from him and nothing to learn from him - not even how to write plays, though he was
Kit Marlowe, however, did not bore me at St. George's Hall as he has always bored me when I have tried to read his without skipping. The more I see of these performances by the Elizabethan Stage Society, the more I am convinced that their method of presenting an Elizabethan play is not only the right method for that particular sort of play, but it is also the right method for the presentation of any modern play. The audience gets closer home to its heroes than when it is presented as a picture framed by a proscenium. Also, that we are less conscious of the artificiality of the stage when a few well-understood conventions, ably handled, are substituted for attempts at an impossible scenic verisimilitude. All the old-fashioned tale-of-adventure plays are done by the Elizabethan Stage Society, and all the new problem plays, with their intense intimacy, should be done in this way.

The E.S.S. made very free with "Doctor Faustus." Their devils, Beliol and Belcher to wit, were not theatrical devils with huge papier-mâché heads, but pictorial Temptation-of-St.-Anthony devils such as Martin Schongauer or Martin Van Velsen drew. The angels were Florentine fifteenth-century angels, with their draperies sewn into Botticellian folds and tucks. The Emperor's bodyguard had Maximilianesque uniforms copied from Holbein. Mephistophilis made his first appearance as Mr. Joseph Pennell's favorite devil from the roof of Notre Dame, and, when commanded to appear as a Franciscan friar, still proclaimed his modernity by wearing an electric bulb in his cowl. The Seven Deadly Sins were tout ce qu'il y a de plus fin de siècle, the five worst of them being so attractive that they got rounds of applause on the strength of their appearance alone. In short, Mr. William Poel gave us an artistic rather than a literal presentation of Elizabethan conditions, the result being, as always happens in such cases, that the picture of the past was really a picture of the future. For which result he is, in my judgment, to be highly praised. The performance was a wonder of artistic discipline in this lawless age. It is true, since the performers were only three or four instead of fifty times as skilful as ordinary professional actors, that Mr. Poel has had to give up all impetuosity and spontaneity of execution, and to have the work done very slowly and carefully. But it is to be noted that even Marlowe, treated in this thorough way, is not ordinary. What Shakespeare, restless and too much applause through in the ordinary professional manner, all but kills the
audience with tedium. For instance, Mephistophilis was as joyless and leaden as a death need be. It was clear that no stage-manager had ever exhorted him, like a lagging horse, to get the long speeches over as fast as possible, old chap — and yet we never for a moment bored us as Prince Hal and Poins bored us at the Haymarket. The actor who hurries reminds the spectators of the flight of time, and they remember that the representation at St. George's Hall went without a hitch from beginning to end, a miracle of diligent preparedness. Mr. Mannering, as Faustus, had the longest and the hardest task, and he did it conscientiously, punctually, and well. The others did no less with what they had to do. The relief of seeing actors come on the stage with the simplicity and abnegation of children, instead of bounding on to an enthusiastic reception with the "Here I am again" expression of the popular favorites of the ordinary stage, is hardly to be described. Our professional actors are now looked at by the public from behind the scenes; and they accept that situation and glory in it for the sake of the 'personal popularity' it involves. What a gigantic reform Mr. Poel will make if his Elizabethan Stage should lead to such a novelty as a theatre to which people go to see the play instead of to see the cast!}

Note
1 All those most in the style of our time.
The following is a select list of books and articles containing material, or discussions of material, relevant to the study of Marlowe's reputation up to 1900.


LEE, SIDNEY, article on Marlowe in the 'Dictionary of National Biography', 1893. Essential for the state of Marlowe scholarship at the time.


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