A STUDY

-- of --

THE PROSE-WORKS

-- of --

THOMAS DEKKER.

F. P. Wilson,

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PREFACE.

I do not think that any apology is needed for writing on such a subject as Dekker's Prose-Works. Even supposing that they had no literary value in themselves, a study of them would be profitable in that it would enable us to appreciate more fully the great masterpieces of the time. But apart from their value to the student of social life, many of the works contain that measure of literary art which one would expect from a man of Dekker's genius.

The bibliographical side of the subject has been dealt with rather fully chiefly because this important branch of the subject has been hitherto neglected. In reproducing title-pages, and quotations, no attempt has been made to reproduce different kinds of type. I have adopted the modern use of the letters s, u and v, and have not reproduced the superscribed m and n. When in reproducing title pages of editions after the first, certain words have been omitted, they may be taken to be the same as in the edition previously described (except for unimportant variations in spelling and spacing). Dates are always given in the new style. The date affixed to the name of a book signifies the year in which the book was printed, unless otherwise stated. I have worked with and quoted from the original editions in almost every case. References have been added to the only modern reprint of the prose-works - that of A. B. Grosart in five volumes for the Huth Library

(1884-6) (1). In the case of the plays, I have referred to John Pearson's edition in four volumes (1873) (2). In so far as I have made any collation of the latter text with the original editions, I have found it to be very accurate. Any text which has been produced under the superintendence of Grosart is justly regarded with suspicion. But it must be confessed that his edition of Dekker's prose is, for the most part, very accurate. There are many variations from the originals, but they are mostly trivial. More serious defects in his editorial work lie in the frequent choice of a wrong basis for his text, in the inadequate description and collation of the basis which he has chosen, and in his neglect of the bibliographical side of the subject. Moreover the value of his edition would have been greatly enhanced if the preparation of the index had been undertaken with anything like proper care and thoroughness. Nevertheless students are greatly indebted to him, in that he has placed within their reach texts which would otherwise have been inaccessible.

A bibliography of modern works upon the subject would be of very little value for the reason that most of these works are now out of date. I will mention a few of the most important here.

Grosart's "Memorial-Introduction" in the fifth volume of his edition is of very little value. The style is very "woolly", and the preface is not free from grave errors.

Swinburne's essay on Dekker in his "Age of Shakespeare" is

(1) Referred to as G.

(2) Referred to as P.

very frothy and unbalanced. He either paints Dekker's works very black, or lauds them up to the skies.

"When they are good they are very very good,
And when they are bad they are horrid."

Yet it is very pleasing to read praises of the work of a man one has learnt to love, even when one feels that such praises are undeserved.

The best short account of Dekker's life and works is A. H. Bullen's article on him in the Dictionary of National Biography (1). It is inaccurate or deficient in several details, but in the main forms an excellent summary of Dekker's career. I have also found Fleay's "Bibliographical Chronical of the English Drama" very useful.

Quite recently a Study of Thomas Dekker by Dr. Mary Hunt has appeared at the Columbia University Press, the book being a thesis presented by her for the Ph. D. of that University. Her consideration of Dekker's plays is very thorough, but her treatment of his prose-works is at times very superficial (2). She has a tendency to set Dekker on a pedestal, and suffers from an inability to see anything evil in the hero she has set up. Her work suffers, too, from the fact that the original editions of Dekker's works were inaccessible to her.

Very little of any value has been written on Dekker's prose-works. The best literary appreciation of his pamphlets is that by

(1) Referred as "D. N. B.".

(2) e.g. She leaves unmentioned the debt of "The Belman Of London" to Rowlands, Greene and "Mihil Mumchance".

H. V. Routh in the Cambridge History of English Literature (Vol. IV, chap. 16).

Of books useful for special aspects of Dekker's works, I will mention two. Mr. Greg's edition of Henslowe's Diary I have found extremely useful in discussing the period of Dekker's life which the Diary covers. Mr. F. W. Chandler's "The Literature of Roguery" in two volumes (1907) has also proved very useful in my work on Dekker's rogue pamphlets. Mr. Chandler has not worked out fully Dekker's debt to his predecessors, - the scheme of his work would not permit of his doing so. He has also omitted to note many of Dekker's borrowings. But his account of the relationship of English rogue-literature to foreign literature is extremely useful.

In conclusion, I should like to apologise for the length of this work. I would hint that the perusal of the third chapter may be omitted without detriment to the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF THOMAS DEKKER.

1. Birthplace and Date of Birth.

As was only appropriate in the case of one whose life and works were so intimately bound up with the town, Dekker, like so many other great literary men of the time, was born in London. Throughout his life he gave to his birthplace the affection due to a mother. This great town, seething with life in all its forms, - poverty and riches, grossness and purity, cowardice and heroism, - touched him at all points. He saw the glamour and romance, just as he saw the squalor and misery of her streets. He rejoiced in her virtues even as he lamented her vices. "O thou beawtifullest daughter of two united Monarchies! from thy womb received I my being, from thy brests my nourishment; yet give me leave to tell thee, that thou hast seven Divels within thee" (1). And again, nearly twenty years later, he writes, "O London! (thou Mother of my life, Nurse of my being) a hard-hearted sonne might I be counted, if here I should not dissolve into teares, to heare thee powring forth thy passionate condolements." (2).

When we come to the question of the date of Dekker's birth, we are on more debatable ground. In a tract called "Warres, Warres, Warres" (1628), now lost, but the dedication to which is quoted

(1) G., II, 13.

(2) G., IV, 285.

by J. P. Collier, Dekker says,

"For my heart danceth sprightly, when I see
(Old as I am) our English gallantry."

In the Dedication to "Match Mee in London" (1631), he says, "I have beene a Priest in Apollo's Temple, many yeares, my voyce is decaying with my Age". Again, in 1610, Samuel Rowlands in "Martin Mark-All,Beadle of Bridewell", speaking of the Bellman of London, says: "I have thought good to shew his errour in some places in setting downe olde wordes used fortie yeeres agoe before he was borne". In "English Villanies" (1632) (1) Dekker writes, "I preach without a pulpit: this is no Sermon, but an Epistle Dedicatory, which dedicates these discoveries, and my threescore yeeres devotedly."

This last passage would give as the date of Dekker's birth the year 1572. Dekker, of course, may have been speaking in round numbers, but taking this passage in conjunction with the others, we shall be near the mark in fixing the date of Dekker's birth between the years 1570 and 1574, and probably nearer to the year 1572.

2. Early Years.

Of Dekker's childhood and education, we know nothing. Collier

(1) A reprint of the edition of 1632 came out in 1638. Recent writers on Dekker, including Fleay, Grosart, Bullen and McKerrow, have failed to find a copy of the 1632 edition. Fleay assumed (correctly as it happens) that the 1638 edition is a reprint of that of 1632. The other writers thought that the words in the Dedication first appeared in 1638. Such a supposition would place the date of Dekker's birth in 1578 and his death some time after 1638. But, as a matter of fact, the words quoted are to be found in the 1632 edition, a copy of which is included in the Dyce collection at South Kensington (see Chapter V).

in his 'Memoirs of Actors' (XVI-XVII) notes from the Registers of St. Saviour's, Southwark, that the person who probably was Dekker's father was buried there in 1594,"leaving a widow who was living in Maid Lane, Southwark, in 1596." In the parish register of St. Giles', Cripplegate, occur the entries:-

"Christened, Dorcas, daughter of Thomas Dycker, gent., 27 Oct., 1594.

" Anne, daughter of Thomas Decker, yeoman, (1), 24 Oct.1602.

A daughter 'Elizabeth' was buried there on 29th.of November, 1598.

The parish register of St. Botolph's, Cripplegate, records that a "Thomas Diccars" was buried there on 19th.of April, 1598.

Some of the above entries may or may not refer to the dramatist and his relatives. The name of Dekker was fairly common in Elizabethan London.

On the title page of the British Museum copy of "Troia - Nova Triumphans'(2),an account written by Dekker of the Lord Mayor's pageant of 1612, are written,above Dekker's name, the words "Marchan tailor". Research has failed to confirm these words. The writing certainly seems contemporary, and the words, placed as they are almost on a level with Dekker's own signature, are certainly meant to apply to Dekker. Nevertheless, Dekker's words, in his Dedication to Sir John Swinerton, referring to the Merchant-Taylors' Company, by whom the cost of the pageant was defrayed, do not bear out the suggestion that he was a member of that "Noble Fellowship and Society". He says, "The Colours of this Peece are mine owne;

(1) The epithet 'yeoman' makes it unlikely that this entry refers to the dramatist.

(2) C.33. e. 7. (17).

the Cost theirs: to which nothing was wanting, that could be had, and every thing had that was required. To their Lasting memory I set downe This; And to your Noble Disposition, this I Dedicate." (1). It must, then, be considered as, at the least, very doubtful whether Dekker was ever a member of the Merchant-Taylors' Company.

The poet does not seem to have been a member of either of the Universities. Like Shakespeare, he seems to have graduated only in the university of life. Apart from his knowledge of contemporary affairs, he managed to acquire a considerable amount of learning. His writings abound in quotations from Latin authors; at one time he began to translate into English verse a poem in Latin elegiacs (2). His translation of "Les Quinze Ioyes de Mariage" shows that he also possessed a knowledge of French. In his plays his characters are frequently made to speak Dutch.

It may be mentioned here that Dekker's latest biographer (3) has suggested that the poet, at one time or other, fought in the wars then waging in the Netherlands. She bases her assumption upon the numerous references to military affairs contained in Dekker's works. It was, indeed, a common practice for poverty-stricken men, or men wanted by the law, to go and fight in the Netherlands for a time until the eagerness with which the authorities

(1) P., III, 238.

(2) "Grobianus" by Frederick Dedekind.

(3) Dr. Mary Hunt.

searched after their person had somewhat abated. (1). But there is not a tittle of evidence to support the supposition that such a thing happened in the case of Dekker. References to martial matters are contained in the works of authors who have never been suspected of fighting in the Low Countries. Such things were in the air in those stirring times. Moreover, the authors of the "Run-awayes Answer", a pamphlet written in confutation of Dekker's "A Rod for Run-awayes", remark "He would make us beleeve he has been a Soldado by his termes of Warre", and in the margin is the sarcastic remark, "He has seene Finsbury fields mustering."

So far we have been concerned with suppositions. The first certain reference to Dekker in history is to be found in the Diary, or rather account-book, of Philip Henslowe, an Elizabethan pawn-broker, usurer, and theatrical manager.

3. The Henslowe Period, 1598-1602.

The folio manuscript which has come to be known as Henslowe's Diary, originally belonged to John Henslowe, who from 1576 to 1581 used it to record his forestry accounts. After 1581 the book was put aside, and we next find it used by Philip Henslowe in 1592. In it he inserted accounts (2) of his extensive business as a pawn-broker, personal memoranda upon such matters as family business, legal expenses, accounts for the building or repair of private

(1) Cp. Greene's 'The Blacke Bookes Messenger', in which Ned Browne remarks, "having done villany in England, this was alwaies my course, to slip over into the Low Countries, and there for a while play the souldiour".

(2) See Greg. Henslowe's Diary Part I. p. XXI.

houses, rent returns, a series of astrological formulae, charms, receipts, and the like, with a few scattered notes of the same sort, and miscellaneous memoranda, notes, bonds, etc.

But the portion of the diary which gives to it its unique interest and value is that which contains records of Henslowe's connection with the stage. These records may be divided into three classes according as they give Henslowe's receipts from the theatre, expenditure upon the theatre, and his miscellaneous entries and memoranda relating to dramatic affairs. The first of these kindsof entries does not concern us here. These entries merely record the receipts from the playhouses. They extend from February 19th, 1591-2, when Henslowe first used the diary, until November 5, 1597. It was on October 21, 1597, that Henslowe first began to record his expenditure for the Lord Admiral's Company, and these accounts continue with many breaks down to March 16, 1602-3.

The first entry which contains the name of Thomas Dekker, (1) occurs on January 8, 1598 (2).

> Lent unto thomas dowton the 8 of Jenewary 1597)
> twenty shillinges to by a boockes of mr. dickers lent) }xx^s

In this year Dekker's name is mentioned no fewer than twenty-seven times, in 1599 twenty-four times, in 1600 eleven times, in 1601 three times, in 1602 twenty times, and once in 1604. In all, Dekker's name is mentioned in connection with some forty-four plays.

(1) The entry on Dec. 20, 1597, recording payment to Dekker "for adycyons to ffostus twentie shellinges and fyve shellinges more for a prolog to Marloes tambelan" has been proved to be a forgery.

(2) Henslowe, I, 83.

Of ten of these, he would appear to have been the sole author. In writing the others, he collaborated with Chettle, Drayton, Wilson, Munday, Jonson, Haughton, Day, Hathway, Middleton, Webster, Heywood and Smith.

The question as to when Dekker first began writing for the stage is as interesting as it is obscure. We have no conclusive evidence that Dekker began his career as a dramatist before Jan. 8, 1598, but as Mr. W. W. Greg points out, (1) it would have to be regarded as something of a coincidence that Dekker began to write for the theatres almost at the very moment that Henslowe began to record the names of the authors. Fleay put forward the theory that Dekker began writing for the Admiral's Company before their dispersion in 1591. He bases this assumption upon the fact that many of the titles of these early plays suggest a connection with plays published as Dekker's later in his career. Fleay cites three plays which he thinks contain work of Dekker's anterior to 1591 - "Doctor Faustus," "Fortunatus," and the "French Doctor." Mr. Greg shows, I think conclusively, that in no case need we suppose Dekker's work in these to be earlier than 1594.

To sum up, it is unlikely that Dekker first began his career as a playwright in 1598, and probable that he made a start by touching up old plays for the Admiral's Company, either from the time they settled at the Rose in June 1594 after their two and a half years' wandering, or soon after. The facts that he is mentioned

(1) Henslowe, Part II, p.257.

in Meres's "Palladis Tamia" (1598) as among "our best for Tragedie", and that in 'England's Parnassus' (1600) -an anthology of "The choysest Flowers of our Moderne Poets", chosen by R. Allott - nineteen quotations are taken from his work, go to strengthen the belief that Dekker had served his apprenticeship in the dramatic art before his name first appears in Henslowe's diary.

In January, 1598, two entries are made with reference to Dekker. The first, recording a payment to him of twenty shillings, is afterwards crossed out. The other records that on the 15th of January Dekker received £4 for Phaeton.

The next entry which concerns us throws a pathetic side-light upon the chequered sort of existence Dekker must have led.

> lent unto the companey the 4 of febreary 1598 to dise charge mr. dicker owt of the cownter in the powltrey the some of fortie shillinges Isaye dd to thomas dowton . . . (1). } XXXX^{S}

Passing over a number of payments to Dekker and his collaborators for some sixteen plays which are no longer extant, we find the following interesting but baffling entry:- (2)

> "Lent unto Thomas downton the 30 of Janewary 1598 to descarge Thomas dickers from the a reaste of my lord chamberlens men I saye lent . . . } IIj ^{11}X ^{s}

It is unfortunate that we do not know how Dekker became complicated with the company for which Shakespeare wrote his plays.

(1) Henslowe, I, 83.

(2) Henslowe, I, 101.

The dissension could not have been very serious, for we find Dekker on good terms with the company in just over two years from this time.

In April Dekker and Chettle are given £3 in part payment of "ther boocke called Troyelles and cresseda". (1)

On July 15 of the same year, Dekker received £3 for his "gentle Craft". (2) This "pleasant comedy", one of the freshest of Dekker's plays, was printed in the following year.

In August, Henslowe lent Dekker twenty shillings, a loan which is acknowledged by Dekker (3) as a private debt, as was the loan recorded above which enabled him to depart from the Counter in the Poultry. On Nov. 9, (4) Dekker received £2 for "the hole history of ffortunatus", £3 more on Nov. 24, and £1 on Nov. 30. On Nov. 31 (sic) (5), he received twenty shillings for altering the book, and on Dec. 12 occurs the entry, (6)

"pd. unto mr. deckers the 12 of desembr 1599 for the eande of fortewnatus for the corte at the a poyntment of Robarte shawe the some of	XXXX^{s}

Old Fortunatus was published in 1600.

On 19 and 26 Dec., (6) Dekker, Chettle and Haughton received

(1) Henslowe, I, 104.

(2) Henslowe, I, 110.

(3) Dekker's acknowledgement was cut out of the Diary by some hand, and is now among the manuscripts at the British Museum.

(4) Henslowe, I, 114.

(5) Henslowe, I, 115.

(6) Henslowe, I, 116.

£9 for Patient Grissel, and on 28 Dec., Dekker had five shillings more. The play was not published until 1603.

In 1600, payments are fairly continuous down to June 14, after which the next entry is on Sept. 6. There is another gap only broken on December 14. Of the plays mentioned in this year none has survived in its original form. It was conjectured by Fleay, that "Truth's Supplication to Candlelight", for which Dekker received payment on 18 and 30, January, is the same play as the "Whore of Babylon", entered S.R. 20 April 1607, and printed in the same year. Greg regards the identification as practically certain. On 14 and 22 Dec., (1) Dekker received £2 for altering Phaeton for the court. This play was almost certainly the original form of the "Sun's Darling", licensed for the Cockpit 3 May, 1624, as by Dekker and Ford, but not printed until 1656.

In 1601 Dekker's name occurs only three times, 18 April, 16 and 22 May, (2), when Dekker and Chettle received some £6 in payment for their play "King Sebastian of Portugal". Then Dekker's name disappears from the diary for almost eight months, the next entry being on 12 January, 1602. During the interval Dekker wrote "Satiromastix".

Much has been written of the quarrel of Jonson and Dekker. Indeed until the time of Malone, the knowledge of Dekker possessed by writers on the Elizabethan drama was almost confined to the fact that "he had a contention with Mr. Benjamin Johnson for the Bays"(3).

(1) Henslowe, I, 122 and 125.

(2) Henslow, I, 136-137.

(3) See Langbaine's "Account of the English Dramatick Poets."

In September 1599, Jonson had collaborated with Dekker and Chettle in writing 'Robert II, King of Scotland.' But in "Every man out of his Humour' (1600), Dekker is attacked, and in "Cynthia's Revels" (1600), is ridiculed as Anaides, the friend of Hedon or Marston. In 1601, Jonson produced the 'Poetaster', in which Marston is satirised as Crispinus, Dekker as "one Demetrius, a dresser (i.e. decker) of plays about the town here," and in which Jonson himself appears as Horace. Dekker wrote 'Satiromastix' in reply to Jonson's play; in it he keeps to the names of Jonson's characters, presenting Horace as a boastful and pedantic poet. Satiromastix was never reprinted, but Jonson included the 'Poetaster' in the folio edition of his works. In 1619, moreover, he told Drummond that Dekker was a knave.

Satiromastix was entered in S.R. Nov. 11, 1600, and was printed for Edward White the next year, "As it hath bin presented publikely, by the Right Honorable, the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants; and privately, by the Children of Paules." (1)

In January, 1602, Dekker is again writing for the Earl of Nottingham's men, and continues to do so until July of that year. From August, 1602, down to the end of the diary, except for alterations in 'Tasso', Dekker sells his plays to Worcester's men. They are produced now at the Rose Theatre, and not at the Fortune. Dekker wrote a great deal for them down to Nov. 23. On 15 and 21 Oct., (2) Dekker, Chettle, Heywood, Smith and Webster receive

(1) P., I, 177.

(2) Henslowe, I. 183.

money for '1 Lady Jane' and on 27 Oct., (1) Dekker alone is mentioned as the author of '2 Lady Lane'. There is little doubt that these two plays go together to form 'Sir Thomas Wyat', (2) printed, without entry, in 1607, as the work of Dekker and Webster, "As it was plaied by the Queens Maiesties Servants." On Dec. 4, occurs the notice of payment of £1 to Dekker for altering Tasso (see above), after which there is no mention of his name until some time in 1604 before 14 March, when we find the following entry:- (3)

"Lent unto the company to geve unto Thomas deckers and midelton in earneste of ther playe Called the pasyent man and the onest hore the some of . . 1604 . . } v^{ll}

This play was entered S.R. Nov. 9, 1604, and printed in the same year.

At this point Henslowe's diary ceases to give us information as to Dekker's activities. In the five years which the diary covers, we see how well he merited the epithet "industrious", applied to him some years later by a friend. And yet even in these busy years he twice has acquaintance with the inside of a prison.

In 1603 Dekker began to write in prose, still continuing his work as a playwright, and from this date except for the one entry

(1) Henslowe, I, 184.

(2) P., III, 81.

(3) Henslowe, I, 175.

on March 14, 1604, in the Diary, we go for our knowledge of Dekker's life to the numerous pamphlets and plays which poured from his fluent pen.

4. Prose and Drama, 1603-1613.

Before proceeding to deal with Dekker's first prose works, it will be convenient to mention here certain poetical works which really belong to the period dealt with in the last section.

In 1598 appeared the first edition of a verse-pamphlet entitled "Canaans Calamitie Jerusalems Misery, Or The dolefull destruction of faire Jerusalem by Tytus, the Sonne of Vaspasian Emperour of Rome, in the yeare of Christs Incarnation 74." (1) The edition of 1598 cannot now be found, but, being allegorical, the poem was very popular and was reprinted (according to Hazlitt) in 1604, 1617, 1618, 1625 and 1677. It was entered in S.R. on Jan. 5, 1598, and on 16 Nov., 1638, the rights of Thomas Purfoot in it were assigned over to Stevens and Meredith. The poem is dedicated to Mr. Richard Kingsmill, a Justice of the Peace of the "pleasant Lordship of High-Cleere:", and is signed "T. D.". Mr. F. O. Mann who has recently produced an edition of Thomas Deloney's Works for the Clarendon Press, attributes 'Canaans Calamitie' to Deloney, basing his claim on the facts that High-Cleere is only six miles south of Newbury, that Deloney and the Kingsmills were both strong Protestants, and that in 'Jacke of Newberie' there is a reference to Will Summers "breaking his face in Master Kingsmill's seller". We

(1) G.,I, 3.

should be very glad to believe that Dekker could be acquitted of any share in the authorship of this pedestrian piece of verse. (1)

In 1598, he is grouped by Meres, in his 'Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury', with such men as Marlowe, Peele, Watson, Kid, Shakespeare, Drayton, Chapman and Jonson, as "our best for Tragedie".

Two years later, R. Allot in an anthology containing "The choysest Flowers of our Moderne Poets" includes no fewer than nineteen quotations from Dekker's works. Verses of his are to be found in 'The Third and Last Part of Palmeim of England' (1602), in N. Coeffeteau's 'Maiden of Confolens' and in Anthony Munday's 'History of Confolens' (1603).

During the period which elapsed between the last entry and the last but one in Henslowe's Diary, Dekker was not idle. His energies were only turned into other channels. In these few months many events had taken place. On 23 March, 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, in the seventieth year of her age, and the forty-sixth of her reign. She was succeeded by James VI of Scotland, but the rejoicings consequent upon his accession were cut short by the most deadly of the numerous plagues that London had experienced. These events Dekker records in a pamphlet describing the events of what he truly calls 'The Wonderfull yeare'. Earlier in the year he had produced a translation from the French under the title of

(1) Mr. McKerrow has pointed out that this poem contains certain lines which strongly resemble passages in 'Christs Teares over Jerusalem'. This, he thinks, is due merely to the use of the same source.

'The Batchelars Banquet', and he was responsible for a portion of the entertainment given to King James, Queen Anne and Prince Henry on March 15th, 1604, at their triumphant entry into and passage through the City.

It is probable that 'Westward Ho' belongs to the latter part of this year. (1604) It was entered S.R. March 2, 1605, and was printed in 1607, "As it hath beene divers times Acted by the Children of Paules. Written by Tho: Decker, and John Webster." (1) It is a wonderfully realistic portrait of Elizabethan middle-class life, and at the same time a description of the love of pleasure, display and extravagance which possessed the citizens of London and their wives. Yet with all its grossness the play is a merry one, and exceedingly good tempered. It was immediately followed by the "Eastward Ho" of Chapman, Marston and Jonson, in the prologue to which the authors are very careful to state that their play is not written in envy, imitation or contention. "Northward Ho", which may be regarded as a reply to "Eastward Ho", was registered August 6, 1607, and printed in the same year, "Sundry times Acted by the Children of Paules. By Thomas Decker, and John Webster"(2). As Chapman is satirised in the play as Bellamont, it seems probable that the play was produced soon after "Eastward Ho", and, if so, it would belong to the year 1605. Like "Westward Ho", it is a comedy of intrigue. The plot is of a very gross description, Mistress Maybery being the only respectable character among a host of foul-tongued and prurient persons. The lowering

(1) P., II, 279.

(2) P., III, 1.

in the moral tone of this and the previous play, as contrasted with the healthiness of the earlier plays, may be traced to the influence of Middleton.

In 1606 and during the next few years (1) Dekker's facile pen was engaged in writing prose pamphlets, an occupation in which his pen had, as far as we know, first been employed in 1603, when the theatres were closed owing to the plague.

In 1606 (2) appeared "Newes From Hell; Brought by the Divells Carrier", a work in which Dekker follows in the train of Nashe.

The tract was reprinted in the following year as "A Knights Conjuring". It is a significant fact that in both these works references to players and to dramatic affairs are couched in anything but complimentary terms.

(1) There were printed in 1606 "The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyat . . . . As it was plaied by the Queens Maiesties Servants. Written by Thomas Dickers, And John Webster", and also "The Whore of Babylon. As it was acted by the Princes Servants . . . . Written by Thomas Dekker." There is evidence to lead one to suppose that both these plays had been written earlier, and were now printed under a different title, and in a revised form.

(2) "The Double P.P. A Papist in Armes. Bearing Ten severall Sheilds. Encountred By the Protestant. At Ten severall Weapons." was entered S.R. Dec. 9, 1605, and printed in the next year. The work is mostly in verse, and is tedious stuff. It has been ascribed to Dekker on the authority of Collier who said that a copy of it was in existence with his autograph on presenting the work to a friend. I have not seen the copy. "The Double P.P." is to be found in Grosart, II, 157-191.

On Oct. 6, was entered in the Stationers' Register "A Book called The Seven deadly synnes of London drawen in 7 severall coaches throughe the 7 gates of the city." The title-page bears the significant motto "Opus septem Dierum." It was printed in the same year.

"Jests to make you Merie" was entered S.R. Oct. 6, 1607, and printed in that year as "Written by T.D. and George Wilkins." "The Dead Tearme" was written before Nov. 3, on which date it was registered. It is of a similar character to the "Seven Deadly Sinnes", but not quite up to the same level of humour and interest. It was printed in 1608.

In 1608 Dekker devoted his energies to preparing two tracts upon the rogues and gypsies who pestered Elizabethan towns and highways. The "Belman of London" was registered to print on March 14, 1608, and "Lanthorne and Candlelight" on Oct. 25, 1608. In both these pamphlets Dekker is considerably indebted to his predecessors in this field, notably Harman, Greene and Rowlands.

Between these two tracts Dekker probably (1) wrote the "Ravens Almanacke" which was registered to print July 7, 1608. It is a skit on the Moores and Zadkiels of the day, "they that lye all the yeare long " (2), and is rounded off by several stories told in Dekker's raciest manner.

(1) One cannot assume of course that a pamphlet was written immediately before it was entered in S.R. But such a supposition is much more likely to be true in the case of prose works than in the case of plays, where there are various reasons for withholding a work from the press.

(2) G., IV, 179.

In 1609 appeared three works none of which are entered in the Stationers' Register. "The Guls Hornbooke" is perhaps the most famous of Dekker's prose works. "Worke for Armorours" is an allegorical description of the rising of poverty against wealth, in which Dekker's sympathies are evidently on the side of poverty. The "Foure Birds of Noahs Arke" is different in character from Dekker's other works. It is a devotional work, containing some prayers couched in very beautiful English.

In the following year we find Dekker again seeking fame and money as a playwright. Now, however, Webster is no longer his fellow-worker, but Middleton. According to Henslowe's Diary Dekker and Middleton had collaborated in writing the "Honest Whore", but the latter's share in this masterpiece was probably a small one. To Middleton, however, belongs the larger part of the "Roaring Girle",(1) a play probably written in 1610, and printed in 1611, "As it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortune-stage by the Prince his Players. Written by T. Middleton and T. Dekkar." Prefixed to the play as printed, is an amusing and flippant address (2) by Middleton in which he compares the change in the character of plays to the change in apparel. Formerly men loved "huge bombasted plaies, quilted with mighty words . . . Now in the time of sprucenes, our plaies followe the niceues of our Garments, single plots, quaint conceits, letcherous iests, drest up in hanging

(1) P.,III, 131.

(2) Not in Pearson's Edition.

sleeves, and those are fit for the Times, and the Tearmers: Such a kind of light-colour Summer stuffe, mingled with diverse colours, you shall finde this published Comedy, good to keepe you in an afternoone from dice, at home in your chambers; and for venery you shall find enough, for sixepence, but well coucht and you marke it." The play presents to us the character of that heroine of the Elizabethan populace, Moll Cutpurse. She is treated as a masculine, rough, yet withal large-hearted woman. "Worse things I must needs confesse the world has taxt her for, then has beene written of her;" writes Middleton, "but 'tis the excellency of a Writer, to leave things better then he finds them". Mary Fitzallard, the other heroine in the play,forms a fine contrast to Moll. Lacking Moll's physical strength, she is yet strong in her own courage, and in her love for Sebastian. Much of the excellency of the construction is due to Middleton, and of the tenderness and delicacy of many of the scenes to Dekker. The result is a well-woven play, as healthy and invigorating as a breath of spring air.

For "If It Be Not Good, The Divel is in it " Dekker alone is responsible. It was printed in 1612 as "A New Play, As It Hath Bin lately Acted, with great applause, by the Queenes Maiesties Servants: At the Red Bull." (1) The play contains a dedication - significant of Dekker's financial position at this period - "To my Loving And Loved Friends and fellowes, the Queenes Maiesties

(1) P.,III, 259.

servants.

. . . Bookes had wont to have Patrons, and (now,) Patrons have Bookes. . . . the World hath an Ill Eare, when no Musick is good, unles it Strikes-up for Nothing. I have Sung so, but wil no more . . . Lords look wel: Knights Thank well; Gentlemen promise well; Citizens Take well; Gulles Sweare well: but None Give well. I leave therefore All for You. And All that This can be to You. Not in hope to Have; but in Recognition of What I Have (as I think) Already (your Loves)."

The play is different in character from any of this which had preceded it. It contains many passages of biting irony. A Devil, Lurchall, fails in his attempt to teach Barterville villany, and has to confess that he is but a novice in devilry compared with the merchant. Scumbroth, a servant, remarks "I thought to my selfe, what a happy fellow that man in the moone was, to see so many fooles and knaves here below, and yet never to be troubled with 'em, nor meddle with 'em"; (1) and again as he watches the devils in hell embrace, - "Sure these are no Christian Divels, they so love one another." (2) The bitterness of many of the scenes is not relieved by any beauty in the verse.

"Much Labour, Art, and Wit, make up a Play" Dekker writes in the Epilogue, but these three commodities are not much in evidence in this composition.

Before Oct. 4, Dekker wrote some verses for Taylor's "Sculler".

(1) P., III, 311.

(2) P., III, 326.

In 1612, Dekker added several chapters to "Lanthorne and Candle-light," republishing it under the title of "O per se O". Later in the year Dekker wrote the Lord Mayor's Pageant "Troja Nova Triumphans", Sir John Swinerton being received into the City Oct. 29, 1612. (1) He then turned his versatile pen to the composition of another prose tract, the "Strange Horserace", entered S.R. Jan 21, 1613, and printed in the same year. It is a strange hotch-potch; the author apologises in the dedication for the character of the work.

"If I put into your hands a homely peice of Worke (neither so good as you deserve, nor so rich as I do wish it) I must entreat you to blame the vanitie of our times,which are so phantasticall, that theycovet Stuffes, rather slight, to feede the eye with shew, then Substantiall for enduring." (2)

We see the same undercurrent of poverty and of criticism of the prevailing tastes of the day as is evident in "If It Be Not Good". In the Address to the Reader Dekker writes, "The Title of this booke is like a Iesters face, set (however he drawes it) to beget mirth; but his ends are hid to himselfe, and these are to get money." (3)

The poverty which had dogged Dekker's footsteps throughout his life, had now overtaken him. By his industrious pen, he had

(1) The pamphlet was entered S.R. Oct. 21, eight days before the event.

(2) G.,III, 309.

(3) G.,III, 312.

managed hitherto to keep her from his doors, but now the tragedy of his life was to be played out, and for the next seven years he was to drag out a miserable existence in that hell upon earth, the Elizabethan prison.

5. 1613-1619.

In Prison.

It will be remembered that Dekker made acquaintance with the inside of a prison twice within the short period of five years which Henslowe's Diary covers. These experiences he never forgot, and both in his plays and in his prose works we find continual references to the misery of a prison and the cruelty of jailors.

The prison in Elizabethan times was regarded, not as now as a place of reformation, but simply as a place of detention. Political offenders and debtors formed the great majority of prison population, and together with these were criminals waiting for their trial at which they would be acquitted or sentenced to death. The prison was not the abode of crime, but of misery. This misery was caused, immediately by the attitude of the jailor, but, at bottom, by the conditions under which the jailor was appointed. The cost of the upkeep of the prisons fell on the rates, but the magistrate, wishing to lessen the cost to the community, in reality appointed a jailor to carry on the business by victimising the prisoners. A rich prisoner, then, was a persona grata to the jailor. He was allowed a great deal of liberty, and fared as daintily as his purse would allow him.(1) Very different was the lot of the poor prisoner. The jailor, who made no profit out of him, regarded him with hatred,

1) Cp. Antony Nixon's "Scourge of Corruption" - "Cut-purses, and men of hat quality that wanted no money, were debarred of no liberty; the rchard to walke in, the Gardain to shoot or bowle in".

and made his life miserable with blows, foul food and fouler lodging. Dekker, with the sympathy he ever felt for those who were oppressed or afflicted, frequently inveighs against the cruelty of Creditors, or of Jailors. Take this passage, (1) written "Against cruell Creditors." "You have another cruelty in keeping men in prison so long, til sickness and death deal mildely with them, and (in despite of al tyranny) baile them out of all executions. - - - The miserable prisoner is ready to famish, yet that cannot moove you, the more miserable wife is readye to runne mad with dispaire, yet that cannot melt you: the most of all miserable, his Children lye crying at your dores, yet nothing can awaken you to compassion".

The "Foure Birds of Noahs Arke" contains "A Prayer for a Prisoner" (2) in which he prays that though he be "an outcast amongst men," he may be "a free-denizen in the citie of Heaven."

"Jests to make you Merie" has a long description of "The Miseries of a Prison, and a Prisoner ". (3)

"Oh sacred libertie! with how little devotion doe men come into thy temples when they cannot bestowe upon thee too much honour! Thy embracements are more delicate then those of a yong bride with her Lover, and to be devorced from thee is halfe to be damned! For what else is a Prison but the very next doore to hel? - - - It is the cave where horror dwels, it is a bed of terror: no, no, it stands not next doore to hell but it is hell itselfe: for soules

(1) G.,II, 72.

(2) G.,V, 35.

(3) G.,II, 340-341.

lye languishing and cannot dye."

It was in such a hell that Dekker was compelled to languish for seven long years.

In a MS. note to Langbaine's "Account of the English Dramatick Poets" (1691), Oldys remarks,

"He was in the King's Bench Prison from 1613 to 1616, and how much longer I know not."

Where Oldys obtained this information I do not know, but we gain a clue as to "how much longer" Dekker was imprisoned, from the pamphlet "Dekker his Dreame", in the dedication to which he remarks,(1)

"If you are angry, that I thrust into your hands a Subject of this Nature; O good Sir, take me thus far into your pardon; that it was impossible for me to beget a Better; For, the Bed on which seven years I lay Dreaming, was filled with thornes instead of fethers, my pillow a rugged flint, my Chamberfellowes (sorrowes that day and night kept me company) the very, or worse than the very Infernall Furies."

And again, in the address to the Reader, (2)

"Out of a long Sleepe, which for almost seven yeares together, seized al my sences, drowning them in a deep Lethe of forgetfulnesse, and burying mee to the World, in the lowest grave of Oblivion: Meeting in that drowzy voyage with nothing but frightfull Apparitions, by reason (as now I guesse) of the place in which I lay, beeing a Cave strongly shut up by the most Divellish and dreadfull

(1) G.,III, 7.

(2) G.,III, 11.

Enchantments; - - -" .

No wonder that when he waked,
"my Haire turn'd white
More through the Ghastly Objects of this Night,
Then with the Snow of Age:" (1).

That Oldys was right in ascribing the King's Bench Prison as the place of Dekker's incarceration may be seen from two letters (2) written by Dekker from that place to "my worthy and wor^{ll}: freind Edw: Allin esquier at his house in Dullidge." The first one is dated "King's Bench, Sept. 12, 1616", and incloses a poem (not now extant) commemorating the founding of the College of God's Gift at Dulwich by Alleyn about 1614.

"And it best becomes mee to Sing any thing in praise of Charity, because albeit, I have felt few handes warme, thorough that complexion, yett imprisonment may make me long for them. Yf any thing in my Eulogium (or Praise) of you and yor Noble Act, bee offensive, lett it be excused, because I live amongst the Gothes and Vandalls, where Barbarousnes is predominant".

The other letter, which is undated, thanks Alleyn "for the last remembrance of yor: love", and commends to his notice and service a young man "of good parts, both of bodie and mynd: I knowe you respect such a one, and I would not (upon that reputacōn I hold with.you) offer a servant to bee unworthie of yo^{r}: attendance."

(1) G., III, 60.

(2) Reprinted by Mr. W. W. Greg in Henslowe Papers", p. 92.

He signs himself,

"Yo^{r}: lovinge freind

Tho: Dekker."

Even amongst the hardships and squalor of prison life, Dekker still continued to produce work, though not so voluminously as before.

On November 29, 1615, "a poeme called The Artillery Garden by Thomas Dekker" was entered in the Stationers' Register. Hazlitt (1) describes it as "The Artillery Garden, a Poem dedicated to the Honour of those Gentlemen who there practize Military Discipline, London, 1616. 4^{o}." No copy of it appears to have been found, and I do not know where Hazlitt obtained the description quoted above, We may be sure that the poem was a patriotic one, and on such a theme as is to be found in Henry Farley's "The Complaint of Paules", published in the same year.

"Goe to the garden call'd Th' artilarie,
Passe by the pikes and muskets, and be bold,
That honourable action to behold:
And I am sure if backe thy newes thou bring,
Thou wilt protest it is a worthy thing,
That men of note their times and coine should spend,
To practise Armes, their Country to defend,
And voluntarily themselves incline,
To learne the rules of Martiall discipline." (2)

(1) Handbook, p. 151.

(2) Sign.B3 verso.

In 1616 also appeared "Villanies Discovered by Lanthorne and Candle-light", a reissue of "O per se O" (1612), which was itself an amplification of the earlier "Lanthorne and Candle-light." To "Villanies Discovered" Dekker added several chapters, three of them, significantly enough, being on such subjects as "Of prisoners", "Of choyce of company in a Prison", and "Of Jaylors".

Dekker regained his liberty some time before Oct. 11, 1619, on which date "Dekker his Dreame" was entered on the Stationers' Register (1). But the miseries he had suffered left an indelible impress upon so tender-hearted a spirit, and in the last work which came from his hands, he writes in these terms of prisoners:-

"The cry of these men is loud, it is heard above the Starres; the cry is great, it incompasseth in two Cities; it is the cry of Sicknesse, of Melancholy, Madnesse, Hunger, Cold, Thirst, Nakednesse, Penury, Beggery, Misery.

It is the cry of Church-men, Tradesmen, Husbandmen, Men undone: of Schollers, Souldiers, all Pennilesse, all Prisoners." (2)

And then comes a reference to that which makes the misery and the sorrow even more bitter - the thought of the suffering caused to one's family, a suffering which the prisoner has no power to alleviate. A similar thought occurs in a passage (quoted above) from the "Seven Deadly Sinnes", and the two passages would tend to prove that Dekker had depending on him a wife and children. "Remember, O cruell man," he cries to the creditor,

(1) It was printed in 1620.

(2) "English Villanies" (1632), Chap. 12.

"Remember, O cruell man, thy Prisoner pines in a Jayle, his Wife at home, his children beg, servants starve: his goods are seized on, reputation ruin'd, his name forgotten, health shaken, his wits distracted, his conversation blasted, his life miserable, his death contemptible." (1)

6. 1619-1632.

Last Years.

After the publication of "Dekker his Dreame" in 1620, Dekker turned his hand once more to play-writing, but this time in collaboration with other dramatists. John Day, his old friend who had addressed commendatory verses to him in 1608, (2) assisted in writing the "life and death of Guy of Warwicke" (3) and "A French Tragedy of the Bellman of Paris", (4) neither of which plays is extant. Massinger's name is coupled with Dekker's on the title-page of the "Virgin Martir", printed in 1622, "As It Hath Bin Divers times publickely Acted with great Applause, By the servants of his Maiesties Revels." (5) Sir George Buc mentions the play on October 6, 1620, as being reformed for the Red Bull where the Queen's men were then playing. It is probable that the play

(1) "English Villaines" (1632), Chap. 12.

(2) In "Lanthorne and Candle-light".

(3) S.R. Jan. 15, 1620.

(4) Licensed by Sir Henry Herbert, 30 July, 1623. Not printed.

(5) P., IV, 1.

was written by Dekker before his imprisonment, (1) and that Massinger revised the play later. In any case, critics are unanimous in ascribing to Dekker the ethereal scene between Dorothea and her page Angelo, which called forth Lamb's well-known remark, "Dekker . . had poetry enough for anything. The very impurities which obtrude themselves among the sweet pieties of this play (like Satan among the sons of heaven) . . . have a strength of contrast, a raciness, and a glow in them, which are above Massinger. They set off the religion of the rest, somehow as Caliban serves to show Miranda."

Dekker, Ford, Rowley and others had a "finger" in the composition of the "Witch of Edmonton", a play written some time in 1621, but not printed till 1658. The sympathetic treatment accorded to the witch Mother Sawyer, we owe no doubt to the hand of Dekker; to him also is due the sweet, pathetic and graceful light in which the character of Susan is shown.

Ford was also associated with Dekker in writing the "Fairy Knight", licensed June 11, 1624, for the Prince's company at the Red Bull, as a new play, and "The Bristow Merchant", licensed Oct. 22, 1624,

(1) Fleay conjectured that the play is a refacimento by Massinger of an old Dekker play. He identifies it with Diocleslan, a play which was new in 1594. Mr. Greg's objection (1) to this identification on the ground that there is in the play a passage ridiculing the hexameter craze, and that consequently the play cannot have been written later than the year 1590, is hardly convincing, for a similar passage is to be found in Marston's "Antonio and Mellida", which is certainly later than 1590. A more tenable objection to the identification of these two plays would be the comparatively small part taken by Diocleslan in "The Virgin Martyr."

(1) Henslowe, II, 257.

for the Palsgrave's men at the Fortune. Ford also revised Dekker's old play "Phaeton", some time before Mar. 3, 1624, (1) but it was not printed until 1656, when it appeared as "A Moral Masque: As it hath been often presented by their Majesties Servants; at the Cock-pit in Drury Lane, with great Applause."

In 1625, Dekker is again making capital out of a topical subject, and in "A Rod for Runawayes" he returns to a theme which he had treated so vividly some twenty years before - the description of London in time of plague. Three years later appeared a military effusion by him called "Warres, Warres, Warres", (2) in which he speaks of himself as an old man (see above p. 2).

Dekker wrote the Mayoralty pageants for 1627, 1628 and 1629. No copy of the first of these has come down to us, but the other two were printed under the titles of "Brittannia's Honor", and "Londons Tempe, Or, The Feild of Happines." In the Dedication to the latter Dekker speaks of himself and his work in these disparaging terms, ".. I (the least part of this Triumphant day) spend such sand as I have to helpe to fill up the houre glasse " (3). Mr. McKerrow thinks that the fact that the composition of the Lord Mayor's Pageants was entrusted to Dekker in these two years, augurs well for his financial position, as such work seems generally to have

(1) When it was licensed by Herbert.

(2) This tract is now lost. It is described by Collier in his "Bibl. account". Judging from the extracts which he quotes, we have not suffered very much from the disappearance of the pamphlet.

(3) P., IV, 116.

been given to men of recognised standing. But it must be remembered that Dekker wrote a Lord Mayor's Pageant in 1612, and a few months later he was imprisoned for debt.

In 1630 Dekker wrote "Penny-Wise Pound Foolish" (1), a book which the title page tells us is "Profitable for Married men, pleasant for young men, and a rare example for all good Women." It relates the intrigues of a "Bristow" Merchant with a courtezan, and his final delivery from her wiles through the love of the wife he has so shamefully abused. It contains a Preface written in Dekker's charactertistic style, half bantering, half serious.

In 1631 (2) was printed "A Tragi-Comedy: Called, Match Mee in London. As it hath beene often Presented; First, at the Bull in St. Johns-street; And lately, at the Private-House in Drury-Lane, called the Phoenix. - - - Written by Tho: Dekker." The play belongs to Dekker's earlier years, (3) but contains a new Preface addressed to Lodowick Carlell, Esquire, written in a cheerful and serene tone and containing the beautiful words,

"I have beene a Priest in Apollo's Temple, many yeares, my voyce is decaying with my Age, yet yours being cleare and above mine, shall much honour mee, if you but listen to my old Tunes." (4)

(1) S.R. Dec. 17, 1630. Printed in 1631. Not in Grosart's edition, but reprinted by Prof. Bang in his "Materialen" (Band XXIII).

(2) S.R. Nov. 8, 1630.

(3) It was mentioned by Herbert Aug. 21, 1623, as an old play which had previously been licensed by Sir George Buc. Fleay identified it with the "Set at Maw" mentioned by Henslowe in Dec., 1594.

(4) P., IV, 133.

On May 16, 1631, two plays were entered in the Stationers" Register as by Dekker. One, "a Tragedy called The noble Spanish Souldier", was again entered on Dec. 9, 1633, and printed in 1634 under the title of "The Noble Souldier, or a Contract Broken Justly Reveng'd. A tragedy, written by S.R. "(i.e. Samuel Rowlands). Several passages reappear again in Day's "Parliament of Bees" (1641), a play which also contains passages from Dekker's "The Wonder of A Kingdome", the other play of Dekker's registered on May 16, 1631,(1) but not printed until 1636. "The Wonder of A Kingdome", like "Match Mee in London", belongs to Dekker's earlier years. It has been identified by Fleay and by Greg with "The Mack", performed by the Admiral's men, as a new play, Feb.21, 1595. Langbaine took it to be "a very diverting old Play".

In 1632, Dekker produced yet another edition of "Lanthorne and Candle-light" under the title of "English Villanies Six Severall Times Prest to Death by the Printers", in the Dedication to which he mentions his "threescore yeares". (2)

Early in this year, Dekker subscribed some verses to Brome's Comedy of the "Northern Lasse". (3) The verses are addressed "To my Sonne Broom and his Lasse", and refer to that Dramatist as "my Sonne and Friend". These cheerful verses form the last certain intimation that Dekker was alive, and the fact that we no longer

(1) A play, with a somewhat similar title, "Come See a Wonder", had been licensed by Herbert, Sept., 18, 1623, as the work of Day.

(2) See note on p. 2.

(3) S.R. Mar. 1632. Printed in the same year.

hear (1) from a Muse which had been so prolific is almost certain evidence that his death occurred soon after, probably in 1632.

(1) The "Jew of Venice" was entered S.R. Sept. 9., 1653, but not printed.
"Jocondo and Astolfo" a comedy, and the "King of Swedland" a historical play were both entered S.R. June, 29, 1660, but never printed. We owe their loss to the carelessness of Warburton and the ignorance of his cook.

To write a biography of Dekker must necessarily be a somewhat unsatisfactory task. Our knowledge of the man himself and of the conditions under which he lived and worked is so fragmentary. Moreover, the little knowledge we have has already been gleaned, and it is very difficult for any one now to add any wisps to the sheaf. Popular dramatist, poet and pamphleteer as he was, it is somewhat surprising that his contemporaries have not given us more descriptions of his character. That he was "industrious" the number of his works enumerated above testifies just as does the poem by H. C. prefixed to "Lanthorne and Candle-light". (1) Heywood (2) informs us that he was usually called "Tom". Jonson, alone, passes an unfavourable verdict upon his character. He told Drummond "That Sharpham, Day, Dicker, were all rogues; and that Minshew was one," but Jonson's evidence being that of a prejudiced party is invalid.

We are left then to form our estimate of his character from his numerous plays and pamphlets and chiefly from the dedications and addresses which are usually prefixed to them. These, no less than the two charming, if pathetic, letters addressed to his friend and benefactor Alleyn, cannot fail to leave the impression that Dekker must have been one of the most winning and lovable of men. William Hazlitt referred to him as "old honest Dekker", and it is in these

(1) Webster, also, in his Dedication to the"White Devil" praises Dekker, Shakespeare and Heywood for "right happy and copious industry."

(2) In his "Hierarchie of Angels" (1634).

words that we would think of him. They express, better than any others, not only the feeling of respectful familiarity and friendliness with which we approach him and his work, but also the tender and gracious personality which he retained untainted and unspotted during such trials and sufferings as would have soured or broken many another spirit.

CHAPTER II.

"THE BATCHELARS BANQUET."

1. Bibliography.

Entry in the Stationers' Register: none.

Editions.

(1) 1603 (= Q').

The / Batchelars / Banquet: / Or / A Banquet for Batchelars: Wherein is prepa- / red sundry dainties dishes to furnish their / Table, curiously drest, and seri- / ously served in. / Pleasantly discoursing the variable humours of Wo- / men, their quicknesse of wittes, and unsearch- / able deceits. / View them well, but taste not, / Regard them well, but waste not. / [Device] / London / Printed by T.C. and are to be solde / by T.P. 1603.

The Device is that of Thomas Creede - a figure of Truth crowned but stripped, being beaten with a scourge held by a hand issuing from the clouds: motto "Viressit Vulnere Veritas", and letters "T.C.".

This copy is in the Bodleian (Malone 1005). No colophon. Quarto. Unpaged.

Collation: (A1) Title-page, verso blank. A2-K3^{v} "The Batchelars Banquet," Black Letter. R-T. "The Batchelars Banquet."

Marginal remarks (in Roman) on Signatures A4^{v}, B^{v}, C4 (two), D^{v}, D4^{v}, E2, E2^{v}, E4^{v}, F, F3^{v} (three), F4 (three), F4^{v}, H3 (two), H4^{v} (two), I (two), I^{v}, I2^{v} (two), I4, K, K2, K2^{v} (two).

Signatures C and K are misprinted B and L. Fourth leaves unsigned

except A4.

(II) 1603 (= Q^2).

Title-page as above, except that "daintie" is printed for "dainties".

Collation as above. But marginal remarks on signatures $A4^v$, H3, $H4^v$, I, I^v, $I2^v$, I4, K, K2, $K2^v$ are omitted. Signatures C and K correctly printed. Signatures H ii, H iii, I ii, I iii, K ii, K iii in roman, the others in arabic numerals. Fourth leaves unsigned.

This copy is in the British Museum (George Steevens's copy).

It has hitherto been supposed that only one edition of the "Batchelars Banquet" was printed in 1603, but the above are two distinct editions. I venture to think that the Bodleian copy (Q^1) is the earlier of the two. In the Museum Copy (Q^2), Chap. XIIII is misprinted for Chap. X, and there are several more paragraphs than in Q^1. Moreover Q^2 omits some fifteen marginal comments. These comments are much too shrewd and opposite to have been inserted by the printer.

Were we then to assume that the Museum Copy was the earlier edition, we should also have to assume that the author made a special point of inserting these additional remarks in this edition - a very unlikely supposition. As additional evidence, we have the fact that the next edition (also printed by Thomas Creede) was set up from the Museum edition and not from the Bodleian - a fact in accordance with the generally observed custom of Elizabethan printers of taking as their base, not the earliest edition, but the

one last printed. (1)

It remains to mention the possibility that the earliest edition of this work may have perished. (2)

(iii) 1604 (=Q^3).

The / Bachelers / Banquet: / - - - - / London / Printed by T.C. and are to be solde/by T. Pavier, 1604.

In Bodleian (4°.K. 37. Th. BS). Also in Museum. Quarto. Unpaged.

Collation: (A1) Title-page, verso blank. A2-K3^v "The Batchelars Banquet", Black Letter. R-T. "The Batchelars Banquet" or "The batchelars banquet."

Signatures in arabic numerals, fourth leaves not signed.

In Q3 Chap. XIIII is misprinted for Chap. X. (as in Q2), and Chap. IX for Chap. XI.

That the compositor used Q2 in setting up his type, the following instances go to prove:-

Q^1		Q^2 and Q^3
although he doth dayly see	(G., I, 154.)	although he dayly see
and taking such	(G., I, 154.)	and takes such
of any of the other	(G., I, 227.)	of any other
which by this meanes	(G., I, 267.)	which this meanes
them, but not shewing	(G., I, 270.)	them, but shewing

(1) e.g. the Fourth Folio of Shakespeare was printed from the Third and the Third from the Second. In the present instance, the text of 1630 is taken from that of 1604, and that of 1651 from that of 1630.

(2) See note at end of this section.

The paragraph arrangement in Q^3 differs from that of Q^2, there being some 108 paragraphs in the former as compared with 31 in the latter.

Q^3 contains all the marginal comments to be found in Q^2, and an additional one (1) on $A4^v$, to be found on the same page in Q^1. One would infer, then, either that the compositor referred to Q^1 for this, or, what is more likely, that some copies of Q^2 were printed without the remark, and others with it, and that Q^3 was set up from a quarto which happened to contain this remark. It is unlikely that any edition other than Q^2 (perhaps now lost) was used, as the resemblances between Q^2 and Q^3 are so very numerous.

One instance, however, in which Q^3 differs both from Q^2 and Q^1, is sufficiently interesting to record here.

On G^2, Q^1 and Q^2 both read,

"that he cares not for all their words:" (2).

Q^3 however reads

" that he cares not for all their frivolous words."

It is very improbable that the author made a journey or sent a message to the printing house in order to insert this solitary word, and the only reasonable conjecture left is that the compositor inserted the word for reasons of spacing. (3)

(1) "Not she for /twentie pound /good woman". Grosart, who follows Q^2, does not print this. It would come opposite I, 162, 11.10-13 in his edition.

(2) G., I, 231. The catchword in both cases is "their". In Q^3 it is "(Iang-) lings,".

(3) In Q^3 a new paragraph begins after "words", and without the insertion of the word "frivolous", the printed matter would cover just half the line, the rest of the line being, of course, blank.

On Aug. 4, 1626, the following entry occurs in the Stationers' Register:-

Edw. Brewster
Rob. Birde

Assigned over unto them by Mistris Pavier and Consent of a full Court of Assistantes all the estate right title and Interest which Master Thomas Pavier her late husband had in the Copies here after mencioned - - - - - - - - - - XXVIII^{s}.

[Here follows a list of books.]

The garland of good will 3 pts.

The bachelors banquett in 3 parts.

The "Batchelars Banquet" is of course not in three parts. The mistake is that of the clerk of the company. (1) The mention of "3 pts." in the line above (2) probably confused him. The fact that Robert Birde, one of the assignees in the above quotation, printed the "Batchelars Banquet" some three or four years later, makes it practically certain that the above entry refers to this work.

(IV). 1630 (= Q^4).

The / Batchelers / Banquet: / - - - - / [Device.(3)] / London, / Printed for Robert Bird, and are to be sold at his shop in Cheapside, / at the Signe of the Bible. 1630.

(1) I have verified the entry in the Register, and find Arber's Transcript quite correct.

(2) Quite correctly in that instance, for Thomas Deloney's collection of songs and ballads <u>is</u> in three parts.

(3) The Device is that of Simon Stafford, with the motto "Aut nunquam, aut nunc."

This edition is in the British Museum and also in the Bodleian. Quarto. Black Letter. 39 leaves.

The text is not nearly so good as that of the earlier editions, and the workmanship is distinctly inferior.

The text is taken, as one would expect, from Q^3. As a proof of this, and as what are in themselves very interesting facts, let us take the following.

In Q^3 there are, both in the Bodleian copy and also in the Museum copy, (1) some six erasures made with ink which is undoubtedly ancient. In each case the words erased are omitted in Q^4. I give a list of the readings of Q^1 Q^3 and Q^4. (2)

	Q^1	Q^3	Q^4
$A_2{}^v$	which is commonly in the bed,	which is commonly (-),	which is commonly, the
	the gardaine of love, (3)	the gardaine of love,	gardaine of love,
	would prosecute his	would (-),	would fulfill
	desired pleasures, (4)		his desir o,
$A_3{}^v$	Jesus God (saith she) (5)	(-) (saith she)	Goodly, goodly (saith she)
A_4.	no by cocks body, for (6)	no (-) for	no byr-lady, for

(1) In the Museum copy, the ink of five out of the six erasures has been removed, presumably by some chemical means and in modern times. A slight stain remains over the words which had been erased.

(2) The brackets represent the words erased.

(3) G., I, 156.

(4) G., I, 156.

(5) G., I, 158.

(6) G., I, 159.

Q^1	Q^3	Q^4
; be of good cheare,	yet be of good cheare,	yet be of good cheare,
i turne to me, and I (1)	(-), and I	and I
y for Gods sake let	Nay (-) I have	Nay, I have
alone, I have (2)		

On analysing these erasures, we find three of them might conceivably be regarded as indecent, and the other three are oaths. But the statute prohibiting the printing of oaths in books was not enforced until James had been on the throne for three years. These two copies may have been unsold copies, and the passages erased by the publisher before selling them. Or again, the book may have been ante-dated. Both conjectures seem very unlikely. But in any case, the censor, or publisher, or printer's devil, or whoever was responsible for the erasures performed his task very perfunctorily, for he has left untouched passages quite as indelicate, and pages which are simply sprinkled with oaths. I leave the solution to one more versed in problems of Elizabethan printing than I am.

(V) 1631.

"The Batchelers Banquet, - - - - Woodcut of men round a table . Printed for Robert Bird, and are to be sold at his shop in S. Laurence Lane at the signe of the Bible, 1631.

(1) G., I, 159-60.

(2) G., I, 160.

This copy was in the Huth Library, and was sold at Sotheby's Sale in 1911. I have not seen the copy, but quote from Sotheby's Catalogue.

Small Quarto. Black-Letter. A - I 3 in fours.

On Feb. 22, 1639, the rights of Abigail Wright, widow, (which formerly belonged to Cuthbert Wright her late husband) in "The Bachelors Banquett" were assigned over to Andrew Kembe. I find no entry recording when the rights of Robert Birde in the above were assigned over to Cuthbert Wright.

VI. 1651.

The Batchelers Banquet, / - - - / [Woodcut.] / London, / Printed by R.C. and are to be sold by Andrew Kembe, at his shoppe at / Margarets Hill, in Southwarke. 1651.

This copy is in the British Museum. Quarto. Black-Letter. The Woodcut represents three couples in conversation, Cupid with his bow being on the extreme right.

It has the chapter numbers correctly. It does not contain passages erased in Q^3, so was based either on Q^4 or on the edition of 1631.

Certain passages are modernised. A comparison of the following passage with that on G.,I, 157, (1) gives us an interesting note upon the change of fashions which had taken place during the years 1603-1651.

"Surely good Husband (saith she) the meanest that was there, being but of my degree, was in her loose Gown, with hanging sleeves,

(1) Quoted in Sec. No. 6, p. 68.

her French Roses, her Silk Grograine Kirtle, her Bever Hat, with a Gold Band, and these with the rest of her attire, made of the newest fashion which is known the best". (1).

VII. 1660.

"The Batchelers Banquet, - - - - [Woodcut.] London, Printed by H. Bell, and are to be sold by Andrew Kembe, at his shop at Margarets-hill in Southwark, 1660."

This edition is described by Corser in his "Collectanea". I have not seen it. It differs from preceding editions (2) in having three six-lined stanzas upon the verso of the title-page, from which it appears that the price of the book was six-pence -

"Our Ordinary is but six pence price,
Variety of dishes, be not nice."

Quarto. Black-letter. 68 pages.

A copy of this edition was sold at the Huth Sale in 1911.

There is a woodcut on the title-page of Cupid seated at a desk with a book before him, discoursing to three couples who are standing around him.

VIII. 1661.

Mentioned by Hazlitt, and again by Bullen. I have not traced it.

IX. 1667.

Mentioned by Bullen in his article on Dekker in the "D.N.B."

(1) I quote from the edition of 1677. It is as in 1651 with the exception that the spelling is more modern.

(2) Unless it be that of 1631.

I have not seen it, neither have I heard of its existence elsewhere.

X. 1677.

The Batchellors Banquet /- - - - -/[Woodcut.]/London, /Printed for Edward Thomas at the Adam and Eve in /Little-Brittain, 1677.

The above is in the British Museum. It contains the same woodcut and verses as are in the edition of 1660.

XI. 1679.

Mentioned by Collier in his "Bibliographical Account". I have not traced it.

XII. 1884.

Printed by Grosart in his edition of Dekker's Non-Dramatic Works in the Huth Library (I, 149-275). The text is that of Q^2, and is in the main accurate. The variations from Q^2 are as a rule trifling.

Here is a collation of K_3 of Q^2 (chosen at random) with Grosart's text (I, 272-274).

Q^2	G.
hats	hates
comit	comit
besure	be sure
every my daughters match	ever my daughter matcht
saith another	saith another,

NOTE.

The "Batchelars Banquet" may, of course, have been printed several years before the earliest edition now extant. Such a popular tract would be most likely to perish just because of its

popularity. (1)

A case might be made out for the conjecture that the "XV ioyes of mariage", mentioned in S.R. Feb. 5, 1599, was the first draft of the "Batchelars Banquet".(2) After it had been burnt, Dekker might have omitted the objectionable passages (see later, p. 68), and altered the title.

The fact that these are several points of correspondence in phraseology, in dramatic situation, and in sentiment between the "Batchelars Banquet" and "Patient Grissil" (written a short time before October, 1599) would be additional evidence in favour of either of these conjectures.

The conduct of Gwenthian in refusing to feed her husband's guests, (3) and indeed her behaviour throughout the play is strongly reminiscent of that of "the woman that strives to master her husband."(4) Among the fairly uncommon words which occur in both works are the following:-

"cassierd" - G., I, 247 and V, 161 and 168. (5)

"abillements" - G., I, 155 and V, 125, 185 and 224.

"baggage" (applied to a saucy woman) - G., I, 182 and V, 204. (6)

"Jack an apes" - G., I, 255 and V, 145 (Also II, 221.).

(1) Compare Deloney's "Garland of Good Will". We know that there were editions of it before 1596 (when it was mentioned by Nashe), and in 1604. The earliest extant edition is that of 1631, and of this only one copy exists, viz. that in the Bodleian.
(2) The relation of the "Batchelars Banquet" to "Les Quinze Ioyes de Mariage" is worked out in Section 5.
(3) G., V, 198. (4) G., I, 210. (5) Cp. also II, 103.
(6) Cp. P., IV, 257.

The formula "therupon I drinke to you" (1) (G., I, 177.) is also to be found in Patient Grissil (V, 200) in the form "upon that I drinke to you".

Many of the utterances of Julia are distinctly in the spirit of the "Batchelars Banquet": such, for instance, as "to be married is to live in a kind of hell", (2) or "marriage is nothing else but a battaile of love, a friendly fighting, a kinde of favourable, terrible warre", (3) or

"amongst this company, I trust, there are some mayden bachelers, and virgin maydens: those that live in that freedome and love it, those that know the war of mariage and hate it, set their hands to my bill; which is, rather to dye a mayde, and leade Apes in hell, then to live a wife, and be continually in hell." (4)

Compare also these sentiments, put into the mouth of Sir Owen:- "were petter be hang'd and quarter then marry widdowes," (5) and "Sir Owen would hang before her marrie once more, if I were another Patcheler " (6).

But this, after all, is pure conjecture. There is no evidence to connect Dekker with the "XV ioyes of mariage" which was "disorderly" printed in 1599, or to show that any edition of the "Batchelars Banquet" was published before 1603.

(1) I have not met with this elsewhere in Dekker.

(2) G., V, 145. (3) G., V, 146.

(4) G., V, 231. (5) G., V, 176. Cp. I, 263.

(6) G., V, 212.

2.

Popularity of Satires on Women in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in particular of "Les Quinze Ioyes de Mariage".

Satires at the expense of women have been spoken, or written, or perhaps only conceived, from time immemorial. Their vogue may be said to date from the thirteenth century, and, at first, was largely due to monastic influence. A MS. of the 13th century describes women as "necessarium malum, naturalis temptatio, desiderabilis calamitas, domesticum periculum, delectabile detrimentum." (1) French Satirists of the 14th and 15th centuries took over this view, and as a result we have such brilliant works as "Les Quinze Ioyes de Mariage" and "Les souhaits des hommes, et les souhaiz et beautés des dames".

English popular satires on women were greatly influenced by these and other French tracts. Thus the "Schole-howse of Women" (printed by R. Wyer, n.d. Reprinted by J. King in 1560) borrows freely from "Les Quinze Ioyes". Many satires were written upon the desire of women for the breeches, their extravagance, and the "yre immoderate, the wrath and great lewdness of wymen." (2) Of those satires which deal with the "humor of a woman that strives to master her husband", (3) here are a few:-

(1) See Cambridge History of English Literature, (III. 485,) to the bibliography of which I am indebted in this section.

(2) See a chapter in Barclay's Ship of Fools (1509).

(3) "Batchelars Banquet", G., I, 210.

"The Merry Ieste of a Shrewde and Curste Wyfe lapped in Morelles skin" (1560-70?).

"A Commysion unto all those whose wyves be theyre masters." (1564-5)

"The boke of Mayd Emlyn" (n.d.) and "Widow Edyth" (1525) satirise the wantonness of women, as also does "A Treatise shewing and declaring the Pryde and Abuse of Women now-a-dayes " by C. Bansley (1540-50).

Diatribes against marriage are also very numerous. See for example the

"Complaynt of them that be to soone maryed." W. de Worde, 1535.

"Complaynt of them that ben to late maryed." " "

"The Payne and Sorowe of Evyll Mariage." " "

The controversy still waged hot through the reigns of Elizabeth, James and Charles, and, though not ceasing in the time of the Commonwealth, it burst forth with renewed vigour at the Restoration. It must be confessed that the satirists had ample material upon which to work. Take this description of the extravagance of Elizabethan women, written by Frederick, Duke of Wirtemberg in 1602:-

"The women . . . go dressed out in exceedingly fine clothes, and give all their attention to their ruffs and stuffs, to such a degree indeed, that, as I am informed, many a one does not hesitate to wear velvet in the streets, which is common with them, whilst at home perhaps they have not a piece of dry bread." (1)

(1) See "England as seen by Foreigners" - W. B. Rye (1865).

Of the liberty which the woman enjoyed, and of their love of all kinds of pleasures, the following passage, written by Emanuel Van Meteren (a resident in London) some time before his death in 1612, is sufficient witness:-

"The woman . . have the free management of the house or housekeeping . . . . They go to market to buy what they like best to eat. They are well-dressed, fond of taking it easy, and commonly leave the care of household matters and drudgery to their servants. They sit before their doors, decked out in fine clothes, in order to see and be seen by the passers-by. In all banquets and feasts they are shown the greatest honor . . . . All the rest of their time they employ in walking and riding, in playing at cards and otherwise, in visiting their friends and keeping company, conversing with their equals (whom they term "gosseps") and their neighbours, and making merry with them at child-births, christenings, churchings, and funerals, as such is the custom." (1)

Such demeanour called forth a host of pamphlets from men anxious to reform the ways of women or merely desirous of earning notoriety or money. Amongst such pamphlets one may mention Stephen Gosson's "Quippes for Upstart Newfangled Gentlewomen" (1595), Sir Hugh Plat's "Delights for Ladies" (1609), and Joseph Swetnam's "The Arraignment of Women" (1615).

Such a controversy also reveals itself in books not confessedly written for that purpose. Take these three parentheses for example.

(1) Rye.

The first from "A Briefe Description of The Notorious Life of John Lambe, ... Printed in Amsterdam. 1628." A woman enquires of some news - "as Gentlewomen are often inquisitive and very earnest especially to know such rarieties". And again, in "Tarlton's News", the phrase, "Lisetta, as all women be desirous of novelty" (1). And this from Thomas Deloney's "Gentle Craft" - "His Wife hearing him (2) say so, was inflamed with the desire thereof, as women are for the most part very covetous".

"Les Quinze Ioyes de Mariage" was put into English verse early in the sixteenth century, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1509, under the title of "Demaundes Ioyous". It next appeared, so far as we know, in 1599. On Feb. 5 of that year, the following entry occurs in the Stationers' Register:-

dam Islip Yt is Ordered that he shall pay ii^{s}vj^{d} for a fine for printinge
5 Ioies of booke disorderly . . . ij^{s}vj^{d} paid 2 Aprilis [1599]
ariage And all the leaves printed to be Confiscat to the house accordinge to the confirmed ordonnances.

Under the date June 4th, 1599, is written in the Stationers' Register the edict of John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, that "noe Satyres or Epigrams be printed hereafter", that Histories and Plays must be "allowed" before being printed, that the books of Nashe and Harvey were to be taken and no more printed, and that no book of like nature should be

(1) Cp. "Batchelars Banquet", G., I, 155, "for generally women do affect novelties".

(2) Simon Eyre.

printed "untill the master or wardens have acquainted the said Lord Archbishop, or the Lord Bishop with the same to know whether it be theire hand or no".

The "foresaid Commaundementes" were published at Stationers' Hall to the Company and especially to fourteen printers - the unprivileged printers of the day from whose press such books as were prohibited above were most likely to proceed (1). A list of books burnt in the hall is appended and includes the satires of Hall, Marston and Guilpin, the epigrams of Davies, "the booke againste woemen viz, of marriage and wyvinge", and "The XV ioyes of marriage".

The "Batchelars Banquet" appeared for the first time in print, as far as we know, (2) in 1603. That it was extremely popular will be evident from the numerous editions of it which appeared during the seventeenth century. It was not the only rendering of "Les Quinze Ioyes". But later versions keep much more closely to the original and do not display the reticence, delicacy and artistry in words which are so noteworthy a feature of the "Batchelars Banquet". One translation, appeared in 1682, under the title "The XV Comforts of Rash and Inconsiderate Marriage, Or Select Animadversions Upon The Miscarriage Of A Wedded State. Done out of French.", (3) and as late as 1721 there was printed "The Fifteen Comforts of

(1) Among these printers were Adam Islip, Richard Field, Thomas Creed, Edward Allde, and Valentine Symes.

(2) As to the probability of there being an edition of the work prior to 1603, see note at end of Section I.

(3) This was soon followed by a reply entitled "The Womens Advocate: Or, Fifteen Real Comforts Of Matrimony, Being in requital of the late Fifteen Sham-Comforts. ... Written by a Person of Quality of the Female Sex". A second edition of this work was published in 1683.

Matrimony ... wherein the various miscarriages of the Wedded State . . . . are laid open."

3. Authorship.

To none of the editions of the "Batchelars Banquet" is the name of any author appended. I have not yet been able to discover who first attributed the tract to Dekker, or upon what evidence (if any) that attribution was based. Malone (so far as I know) never attributed the work to the dramatist (1). Nott in the introduction to his edition of the "Guls Horne-booke" (1812) regards the work as being by Dekker (2). Dr. Watt's edition of the "Bibliotheca Britannica" (1824) makes no mention of the work. In H. G. Bohn's edition of Lowndes (1858), it is set down as Dekker's: and Collier in his "Bibliographical Account", in describing the edition of 1630, remarks:-

"This tract has usually been attributed to Dekker, and from internal evidence it may be assigned to him".

Corser (3) speaks of the question of the authorship of the tract in an equally vague and equally unsatisfactory manner:-

"Although Dekker's name does not appear in any part of this tract, it has been usually attributed to him, and from internal

(1) In a copy of Dekker's works which Malone possessed, and which is now in the Bodleian, there is a list drawn up by him of the works which he considered were written by Dekker. The "Batchelars Banquet" is not amongst them, though he possessed the edition of 1630.

(2) But Nott also assigns to Dekker "Thomas of Reading" a tract of Thomas Deloney's, and "Grievous Grones for the Poore" almost certainly not Dekker's.

(3) In his "Collectanea" (1873).

evidence may be safely pronounced to proceed from his pen. Mr. Heber indeed, whose judgment was generally correct in such matters, felt rather doubtful on this point, simply from his popular name not appearing on the title page. But this omission will hardly be thought a sufficient reason for refusing our assent to the claim of Dekker as its author."

This view has been accepted by all succeeded writers on Dekker, including Fleay, Swinburne, (1) Ward, Bullen, and McKerrow. They all seem to regard the question of the authorship as practically settled, but advance no evidence to uphold their view.

In dealing with the question, we will take first those points which might be urged in opposition to the view that Dekker was the author of the "Batchelars Banquet". Mr. Heber objected to this view on the ground that the tract was published anonymously. It was, indeed, the custom of the author (and the publisher) to affix his popular name to his pamphlets, but it so happens that a prose-tract which is undoubtedly his, was published within a year of this and without any name affixed. So far then from being evidence against the attribution of the "Batchelars Banquet" to Dekker, the fact that his name was not affixed to it might be adduced as evidence in favour of the view that he wrote that tract. Again it might be urged that there are in it none of those characteristic passages we look for in one of his works - there are no Latin tags, no mention of the poverty of scholars, no metaphors derived from

(1) Neither Swinburne nor Ward seem to have been aware of the debt the "Batchelars Banquet" owes to "Les Quinze Ioyes".

things nautical or theatrical. In answer to this, it must be remembered that we are concerned with a tract which differs from Dekker's other works in that it is not original, but an adaptation, and consequently not so likely to contain the personal opinions or idiosyncrasies of the author. A weightier objection would be that Dekker was unlikely to have had such an intimate knowledge of the French language as the author of the "Batchelars Banquet" had. But, seeing our lamentable ignorance about Dekker as a man, this argument can scarcely hold (1). There is then no evidence worthy of the name against the view that Dekker wrote the "Batchelars Banquet".

Unfortunately, however, there is almost as little evidence in favour of regarding Dekker as the author of the "Batchelars Banquet". Treating of Dekker's plays first (2), we find in them certain situations which may have been suggested by the "Batchelars Banquet": in Westward Ho, for instance, Justiniano's wife reminds her husband that she might have made a better marriage (cf. Chaps. I and V) the device of visiting a sick child as a pretext to get away from home is adopted (cf. Chap. II), and the Earl watches Mistress Justiniano, with whom he is in love, as she is in Church. But all these situations are fairly common in the Elizabethan drama. Moreover Dekker might have read "Les Quinze Ioyes" or the translation

(1) Dekker occasionally uses French phrases in his works, and his French Doctors use the ordinary French jargon of the Stage. In "Brittannia's Honor" a short speech in French is addressed to Henrietta Maria, though of course this may not have been written by Dekker.

(2) I have already dealt with the resemblance of "Patient Grissil" to this work. In quoting from the plays of which Dekker is not the sole author, I do not quote, of course, from scenes which critics agree in allotting to his collaborators.

of it made in 1599 without being responsible for the "Batchelars Banquet".

It remains to give certain parallels which may or may not be significant, between the "Batchelars Banquet" and Dekker's later work. Taking the year 1603 as witnessing the first appearance of the work, we should suspect to find resemblances between it and that prose-work which immediately followed it, viz., the "Wonderfull yeare". I give some parallel passages:-

"The Wonderfull yeare"	"The Batchelars Banquet" (1)
by his ten bones (G., I, 144)	by these ten bones (G.,I,179) (2)
n King Henry went to Bulloigne. (p.138)	at the siege of Bullen: (p.193) (3)
the case was altered (p.135)	the case (as Ployden sayth) cleane altered, (p.235) (4)

In addition we may note the words "Gib" (p.169) (5) and "gruntling" occur also in the "Roaring Girle" (6), and the word "nusling" (p.161) in "Jests to make you Merie" (II. 306): "Sallet" (7) (p.176) and "grograin" (p.157) are both to be found in the "Guls Horne-booke" (II,229 and 232), and "suckets" (p.174) in "A Strange Horse-Race" (III, 371). The proverb "the still sowe

(1) The quotations given here from the "Batchelars Banquet" are not of course in "Les Quinze Ioyes": otherwise their value as evidence would be nil.
(2) This expression does not occur elsewhere in Dekker.
(3) Compare "with Henrie the eight at Bulloigne" Seven Deadly Sinnes, G., II, 57.
(4) Dekker seems to have been fond of this proverbial expression, which gave Ben Jonson the title of one of his plays. The expression occurs again on the title page of the "Roaring Girle" by Middleton and Dekker. See also "Penny-Wise Pound Foolish" - "in these dayes the case is altred (quoth Ployden;)".
(5) Grosart misprints "Cib". (6) P., III,203 and 218.
(7) This word occurs only once in Shakespeare - in Henry VI, pt. 2, Act IV, Sc. 10.

eates up all the draffe" (p. 176) is also in the "Ravens Almanacke" (IV. 244). The banquet of "Sugar, Biskets, Comphets and Carowayes, Marmilade, and martchpaine" prepared for the gossips (p. 174) closely resembles that enumerated by Folly in the "Suns-Darling" (1) -

"Comfits and Carawaies, Marchpaines and Marmalades
Suger-plums and Pippin-pies, gingerbread and Walnuts ".

The substitution of "Lobs pound" for "la nasse" would be characteristic of Dekker. "Lobs pound"was a London prison on the North side of the river, and is mentioned by Dekker in his "English Villanies . . . 1632."

Finally the phrase "Batchelars Banquet" instead of "Fifteen Ioyes of Mariage" would exemplify Dekker's love of quaint and somewhat far-fetched titles (2). This one would seem to be re-echoed in the title of the last section of his "Strange Horse-Race" - viz., "The Bankrouts Banquet". (3)

There are in many of Dekker's plays passages the spirit of which reminds us of the "Batchelars Banquet", and shows us that if anyone had the genius to write such a satire, it was Dekker. I will instance but a few of these passages.

In the "Whore of Babylon", Plaine-dealing remarks, "citizens fine wives undo their husbands (by their pride) within a yeare

(1) P., IV, 332.

(2) "The promising titles of new books,
Writ merrily." P., III, . Compare also G.,III,311-3

(3) G., III, 369.

after they are married; and within halfe a yeare after they be widdowes, knights undo them". (1)

In "West-Ward Hoe", Mistress Birdlime remarks that ladies are able "to awe their Husbands, to check their Husbands, to controule their husbands; nay, they have the tricke ont to be sick for a new gowne, or a Carcanet, or a Diamond or so": (2) and in the same play, Clare remarks,

"the Jest shal be a stocke to maintain us and our pewfellowes in laughing at christnings, cryings out, and up-sittings this 12. month"(3).

The following lines spoken by Moll Cutpurse recall the spirited utterance in Chap. V of the "Batchelars Banquet" (G., I, 199):-

"How many of our sex, by such as thou
Have their good thoughts paid with a blasted name
That never deserved loosly or did trip
In path of whooredome, beyond cup and lip.
But for the staine of conscience and of soule,
Better had woman fall into the hands
Of an act silent, then a bragging nothing". (4)

In the prose-work, the man who is in subjection to a woman, is continually spoken of as being in prison (cp. G., I, 218 and 263-4). See also the reply of Jacomo Gentili on being counselled to take to him a wife:-

(1) P., II, 242.

(2) P., II, 282.

(3) P., II, 346.

(4) P., III, 172.

"All this world's a prison,
Heaven the high wall about it, sin the jalour,
But the iron-shackles waying down our heeles,
Are onely women". (1).

To sum up, there is no satisfactory evidence to bring forward against the attribution of the "Batchelars Banquet" to Dekker. Although the evidence in favour of regarding him as the author is not so strong as we would like, yet there are a sufficient number of parallels between this and his accepted works to justify us in regarding this attribution of the authorship as extremely likely. That he had the necessary gifts of humour no one who has read the "Guls Horne-booke" or the "Shoo-makers Holyday" or many others of his works can doubt. To no other Elizabethan writer can the work be attributed with greater likelihood, and until evidence to the contrary be forthcoming, we shall continue to attribute this brilliant satire to the genius of Thomas Dekker.

4.

"Les Quinze Ioyes De Mariage".

"Les Quinze Ioyes De Mariage" dates from the middle of the fifteenth century. It probably hails from Picardy as it is in that dialect that the work is written. It became exceedingly popular, and must have been frequently transcribed. Only one manuscript

(1) P., IV, 235.

of it, however, has come down to us: it bears the date 1464, and is now preserved in the "Bibliothèque publique" at Rouen. This manuscript contains the completest and most correct text of the satire.

The work was first printed in the decade 1480-1490, at Lyons, and again before the close of the century. It was printed with slightly varying texts

I by Jehan Treperel, at Paris, in 1499 or later.

II by Francois Rosset at Paris, in 1495. This is the best of the printed texts, and (with the exception of the prologue) keeps closely to the manuscript on which it is based. This text was reprinted by Raphael du Petit Val, at Rouen in 1596 (twice), by P. Rigaud, at Lyons, in 1607, and at Paris in 1621. The best modern edition of "Les Quinze Ioyes" is that of P. Jannet, printed at Paris in 1853. The text is founded on that of the Rouen manuscript, and the book contains an excellent introduction and notes.

No author's name was affixed to any of the ancient editions. In 1830, M. André Pottier, the Librarian at Rouen, called attention to an enigmatical verse on the last page of the MS. contained in that town, the answer to which resulted in the three words la, sa, le. From this he assumed that the author of this satire was Antoine de La Sale, hitherto known as the author of "Petit Jehan de Saintré" (1459). This author was a native of Picardy, was writing when the satire was produced, and had a hand in thecomposition of the "Cent Nouvelle nouvelles", which distinctly refers to "Les Quinze Ioyes". Modern scholarship is almost unanimous in ascribing to Antoine de La Sale the honour of being the author of so brilliant

a satire.

"Les Quinze Ioyes" begins with a Preface stating the aim of the writer - viz. to set forth the folly of men, who wilfully abandon their liberty, and become enmeshed in the toils of matrimony. Even as certain religious people have conceived of fifteen joys which the Virgin Mary had during the holy mysteries which were in the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Ascension, etc., (1) so he, although it has pleased God to allow him to remain free, has conceived of marriage as consisting of fifteen joys.

"Mais selon tout bon entendement, celles Quinze Ioyes de Mariage, sont à mon advis les plus grands tourmens, douleurs, tristesses et malheuretez qui soient en la terre." (2)

And yet, proceeds the writer in a vein of irony as delicate as it is biting, perhaps, after all, men are justified in getting married, for we are in this world to do penitence, to suffer affliction, and to mortify the flesh.

"Et certes il semble l'homs ne se peut mettre en plus aspre penitence, que d'estre es peines et tourmens cy apres contenus. Mais ie doute d'une chose, que puis qu'ils prennent ses tourmens icy pour ioyes et liesses, et y sont adurez comme asnes à somme, et semble voir qu'ils en soient fort aises, qu'ils ne leur soient imputez a nul merite."

The work is divided into fifteen chapters, each describing the

(1) Cp. "Les quinze effusions du sang de nostre Seigneur" a book in the Huth Library.

(2) I quote from Rosset's edition of 1495, reprinted by Rolet Boutonné at Paris in 1621.

character of a different kind of woman, and the corresponding "loye" of her husband. The work reveals the hand of a master of satire and irony. The character-drawing is brilliantly done, each woman being differentiated and drawn not so much as a type but as an individual. The dialogue is colloquial and delightfully natural. The work abounds in dramatic situations, both humorous and pathetic. The refrain which appears at the close of each chapter is a stroke of genius. It not only tends to bind together a work which might otherwise have degenerated into a series of chapters each isolated from the others, but also to intensify the feeling which it is the chief aim of the writer to convey - that the state of the married man is the most miserable in this world.

In the Epilogue the author makes his "amende honorable". He protests that his book is all to the praise and honour of women, and was written at the request of certain ladies. He concludes by acknowledging

"les grands torts, griefs, & oppressions que les hommes sont aux femmes en plusieurs lieux generalement par la force & sans raison, par ce qu'elles sont foibles, & leur nature est sans defenses, & sont tousiours prestes à obëir & servir, sans lesquelles ils ne pourroient ny scauroient vivre."

The tone of the work is mainly humorous and satirical, and such a tone heightens the touches of tragic feeling which sometimes come to the surface. The picture of the husband, who, after discovering his wife's unfaithfulness, "n'a beu, ny mangé, ny reposé ... et toute la iournée et la nuitée ne iette que sanglots" is all the more pathetic because it is drawn before women who

"se raudent, rient & mocquent du bon homme." (1) The satirical nammer in which women are usually spoken of in the work is heightened by references to the excellence (but alas! the rarity) of good wives. The following passage, where the husband refuses to believe evil tales about his wife is finely written, and covers a multitude of satirical remarks:-

"le bon homs qui est à la bonne foy et du bon cresme, oüyt iurer à plusieurs bonnes gens que ce furent mauvais langages, controuvez mauvaisement et sans cause contre la bonne Demoyselle ou bourgeoise, comme plusieurs sont blasmez a grand tort, Dieu le scait bien, par les ioletrins, allans et venans par les rues qui parlent des bonnes preudefemmes, quand autre chose n'en peuvent avoir." (2)

As a short statement of the genius of this work, M. Jannet's eloquent criticism could not be excelled. He writes,

"Ce n'est ni une satire froide et railleuse, ni un tissu d'invectives et d'obscénités; c'est une étude approfondie du coeur humain, une analyse patiente et délicate, un tableau achevé, dont toutes les nuances sont fondues avec harmonie. C'est l'oeuvre d'un maître, . . . Que d'art il lui a fallu pour arriver a ce ton de douce philosophie, de résignation inébranlable, qui règne dans tout son livre! . . . Et cet art est si bien deguisé sous les négligences de style, les répétitions recherchées, les naïvetes séduisantes, qu'on seroit tenté de le nier, n'étoit la combinaison

(1) G., I, 271.

(2) See G., I, 199, where the sentiments are put even more strongly.

savante, l'observation d'une poétique particulière, evidemment indiquée surtout par la répétition constante de cette ritournelle originale et désespérante qui termine chacune des Quinze Ioies."

5.

"The Batchelars Banquet" and its relation to "Les Quinze Ioyes."

It was to such a brilliant piece of work that Dekker turned in his search for material, and the resultant work, "The Batchelars Banquet", pays tribute to the genius of its original by the closeness with which it keeps to the French satire.

The "Batchelars Banquet" is made up of fifteen chapters, each of which corresponds in subject and in arrangement to the fifteen chapters in "Les Quinze Ioyes", the English work, however, containing no adaptation of the prologue and epilogue (1) to be found in the French satire. The expression "Les Quinze Ioyes" is dropped, and each chapter is headed, in Jonsonian manner, by the words "The humour of a woman ..." etc. As one among many instances in which the translator keeps very closely to his original, take this passage which occurs in the chapter on the "Humour of a woman that hath a charge of children."

"Surely for my part that God sends such adversitie and distresse to those only whose good and mild nature, he knowes to be such, that they will take al things in good part." (2)

(1) The omission of these two sections is, at first sight, somewhat puzzling. Dekker must have recognised their humour. Perhaps they were not contained in the copy which Dekker used, or, more likely still, the R. Catholic tinge of many of the passages in them prohibited their publication in a Protestant country.

(2) G., I, 194.

And in the French,

"Et quand a moy ie cuida que Dieu ne donne adversité aux homme, sinon selon ce qu'il les sçait francs, et cognoist debonnaires pour patiemment endurer, et souffrir".

Or, again, the humorous picture of the husband making broth for his wife,

"then trudgeth he into the kitchen, there plaies he the Cooke, burning and broiling himselfe over the fire, having his eies readie to be put out with smoake, while he is busie in making the broath: what time he chides with his maids, calling them beastes and baggages that knowes not how to do any thing" (1).

In the French, the passage runs,

"Lors se mettra le bon homme en la voye, est cuisinier, et est bruslé à faire le broët, ou eschaudé pour le garder de fumer, et tance ses gens, et dit qu'ils ne sont que bestes, et qu'ils ne scavent riens faire."

The resemblance is kept up even to the repetition of the quaint refrains at the end of each chapter, the expressions "est entré en la Nasse" and "finira miserablement ses iours" being rendered "up to the eares in"(or "plunged into") Lobs-pownd" and "miserably ends his dayes."

(1) G., I, 181-182.

6.

The Originality of "The Batchelars Banquet."

Most of the merit of the "Batchelars Banquet", then, must be attributed to the author of "Les Quinze Ioyes". To him was due the inception of the work, the humorous situations so dramatically conceived, and the tone of delicate irony and philosophical resignation which raises this satire above the cheapness and nastiness of the majority of works of this kind.

Having recognised the great debt which the "Batchelars Banquet" owes to "Les Quinze Ioyes", we proceed to deal with those passages which entitle the former work to be regarded as an adaptation rather than as a translation of the latter.

There are many passages in "Les Quinze Ioyes" which, acceptable to French readers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, would be out of place in a work destined to appeal to an English Jacobean audience. All these passages are either omitted or altered. Thus the strong Catholic flavour which tinges "Les Quinze Ioyes" is wholly eliminated. The oaths "par Sainet Jean", and "Ave Maria" are rendered "by cocks body" and "Now God for his mercy"; and an

equivalent to "par le sacrement Dieu" is omitted. In "La Cinquiesme Ioye" the wife goes to Church "dire ses heures" (1).

In "La Huictiesme Ioye de Mariage", the good man, in his anxiety for the safety of his wife at childbirth, "la voue aux saints et saintes, et aussi elle se voue à nostre Dame du Puy en Auverngne, ou nostre Dame de Rochemadour, et en plusieurs autres lieux." On her recovery she urges upon her reluctant husband the necessity of making a pilgrimage to these places (2). The rich dames there buy "patenostres de coural". (3) In "La Quinziesme Ioye", the mother has a Confessor "qui a pension chacun an pour absoudre". Many other similar instances could be adduced.

In "La Douziesme Ioye de Mariage", the hen-pecked husband is perhaps taken prisoner in war-time and has to pay a large ransom. Or if he has a castle he retires into it and has to creep to his house at night. None of these details, which smack of medieval times, appear in the "Batchelars Banquet".

In some cases, passages in "Les Quinze Ioyes" are not simply passed over in silence, but are altered and brought up to date in the English version. In the French satire the "newest fashion" is "robbe neufne d'escarlate, on de Maalingnes, ou de bon fin verdgay, fourree de bon gris, ou de menu ver, à grands manches, ou à queuë, et chaperon à l'advenant, avec un tissu de soye rouge trainant à terre, et tout fait à la nouvelle guise."

(1) In the English, she is "at her prayers". Yet notice the expression "her devotion is bent to the service of another Saint". G., I, 204.

(2) Contrast the chapter (VIII) in the English. G., I, 227-233.

(3) Cp. G., I, 231.

In the English is described the typical Elizabethan dress of the extravagant citizen's wife, - "her gowne with trunck sleeves, her vardingale, her turkie grograin kirtle, her taffety hat with a gold band, and these with y^{e} rest of her attier, made of y^{e} newest fashion, which is knowne the best" (1).

The sword which in "Les Quinze Ioyes" was won "a la bataille de Flandres" in the English satire "was found under a hedge at the siege of Bullen". (2).

Certain details, which are essentially French, are anglicised in the adaptation. In "La Cinquiesme Ioye", the nurse (who is called Jeanne) goes "a la fontaine": in the English she is not named, and goes to market (3). In "La Septiesme Ioye" the wife wonders whether any of her husband's friends have been "pris des Anglois": in the English this is rendered by "taken by the Spanyardes." (4)

In addition, it must be mentioned that several passages of an indecent character are omitted in the "Batchelars Banquet", whether by reason of the good taste of the adaptor, or by reason of his fear of prosecution (5). Thus a long passage in "La Cinquiesme Ioye", representing fifteen pages in the edition of 1621, is left out in the English version, and shorter passages are omitted in Chapters VI, VII, XI and XIV.

(1) G., I, 193.

(2) G., I, 201.

(3) G., I, 223.

(4) It must be remembered that a book called the "XV Joyes of marriage" was burned at Stationers' Hall on June 4, 1599. It may be conjectured that this earlier translation contained the objectionable passages referred to.

(4) G., I, 157.

But apart from these more obvious variations from the original, Dekker has evinced his freedom as an artist and his emancipation from mere servile translation by the free manner in which he has rendered and in most cases improved upon the original. A study of such variations brings out in a most interesting manner the freshness and the picturesqueness of Elizabethan English. How much more effective than "combien qu'elle ait bien dormy" is the English equivalent "when God knowes she never slept more soundly in all her life." (1) In the French "la dame entre en sa chambre", in the English "she in a fume flings up into her chamber". (2) The widow in "Les Quinze Ioyes" is "une femme qui sçait moult de choses": in the "Batchelars Banquet" she is "of a middle age, and much experience" (3), - a description which sounds much more formidable. Nothing in the French corresponds to the richness of the phrase "this overgorgious wantoning" (4). And what a master is the English writer of the use of present participles. Here are a few examples - the "young wife new married" "pouting and lowring all the day," (5) ("sera tout le jour mauvaise chere") or "gruntling and nusling under the sheets" (5); the gossips in Chap. VIII, "bobbing and quibbing" (6) the poor husband, or the man in Chap.III "burning

(1) G., I, 183.

(2) G., I, 213.

(3) G., I, 263.

(4) G., I, 171.

(5) G., I, 161.

(6) G., I, 231.

and broiling himselfe over the fire" (1). All of these expressions are due to the sense of artistry in words, the predilection for "le mot juste", which the author of the "Batchelars Banquet" possessed.

There are features, again, in the English work which find no counterpart in the French. The only marginal notes in "Les Quinze Ioyes" (2) are exegetical notes upon obsolete words. There are none of those shrewd hard-hitting remarks which display such a wealth of worldly wisdom in the margins of the "Batchelars Banquet".

Occasionally the adaptor has severed himself from the French and introduced passages which fall in no way beneath the level of the original. Indeed, one of the most brilliant, humorous, and natural passages in the book - that in Chap.III which permits us to be overhearers of the feast of scandal enjoyed by the gossips who had gathered round the "woman lying in Child-bed" - is entirely the work of the Englishman. We have many Satires upon the Elizabethan women's love of gossip, dress, and scandal, but surely none more effective or more natural than this one:-

"They begin thus one with another to discourse; Good Lord neighbor, I mervaile how our gossip Free: doth, I have not seen the good soule this many a day. Ah God help her quoth another, for she hath her hands full of worke, and hir heart full of heavinesse: While she drudges all the weeke at home, her husband like an unthrift never leaves running abroad, to the Tennis court, and Dicing houses, spending all that ever he hath in such lewd sort:

(1) G., I, 181. In the French merely "est bruslé".
(2) i.e. in the edition of 1621.

yea, and if that were the worst it is well: But heare ye Gossip, there is another matter spoiles all, he cares no more for his wife, then for a dog, but keepes queanes even under her nose. Jesu sayth another, who would thinke he were such a man, he behaves himselfe so orderly and civilly, to all mens sightes. Tush, holde your peace Gossip (sayth the other) it is commonly seene, the still sowe eates up all the draffe, hee carries a smooth countenance, but a corrupt conscience: (1) That I know F. well enough, I will not say he loves mistresse G. goe-too gossip I drink to you. ... but I pray you tell me one thing, when saw you our friend mistresse C. ? now in good soothe she is a kind creature, and a very gentle Peat: I promise you I saw her not since you and I dranke a pinte of wine with her in the fish market. (O gossip saith the other) there is a great change since that time, for they have bene faine to pawne all that ever they have, and yet God knowes her husband lies still in prison. O the passion of my heart (saith another is all their great and glorious shew come to nothing? good Lord what a world is this. (Why gossip saith another) it was never like to be otherwise, for they loved ever to goe fine, and fare daintily, and by my fay gossip, this is not a world for those matters, and therupon I drinke to you."

To sum up, greatly indebted as the Englishman was to the genius of the French Satire, he is yet entitled to great praise, not only because of the passages which are from his own pen, but also because of the brilliant way in which he has adapted the original to English thought and to the English tongue. Those only who have

(1) Misprinted "countenance" in Q^1.

themselves endeavoured to translate a work of one language into another language know how exceedingly difficult it is to do so at all satisfactorily, When a man, in accomplishing the task, succeeds in producing a work as alive, as brilliant, as homogeneous, and as idiomatic in the new language as it was in the old, he deserves almost all the credit which one would give to the artist at work on original material. Such credit is due to the man - whether he be Dekker or not - who produced the "Batchelars Banquet".

CHAPTER III.

"THE WONDERFULL YEARE".

1. Bibliography.

Entry in the Stationers' Register:

5^to Decembris [1603]

master Linge
John Smithick
John Browne

Yt is ordered that they shall pay X^s A pece for their fines for printinge a booke called the wonderfull yere without Aucthoritie or entrance. contrary to thordonnances for pryntinge Also that they shall forbeare and never hereafter entermedle to printe or sell the same book or any parte thereof Also that they shall presently bringe into the hall to be used accordinge to thordonnance in yat behalf so many of the said bookes as they or any to their use have left in their handes And their ymprisonment for this offence is respited till further Consideracon and order herein be had . . . . . XXX^s

paid by Smithick and Browne V^s A pece. 7 Aprilis 1605

An entry under date Oct., 1, 1604, records that Ling paid 10s.

"The Wonderfull yeare" was printed with the following title-page:-

The / Wonderfull yeare./ 1603./ Wherein is shewed the picture of London, ly- / ing sicke of the Plague. / At the ende of all (like a mery Epilogue to a dull Play) cer- / taine Tales are

cut out in sundry fashions, of purpose / to shorten the lives of long winters nights, / that lye watching in the darke for us. / Et me rigidi legant Catones. / [Device.] / London / Printed by Thomas Creede, and are to be solde / in Saint Donstones Church-yarde / in Fleet-streete.

This copy is in the Museum (E. 1940. (3)). The title-page of the Bodleian copy (Malone 602) is mutilated.

No colophon. Quarto. Unpaged.

Collation: (A_1) Title, verso blank. A2 and verso "To His Wel-Respected Good friend, ... "capitals. A3 - A4 "To the Reader" in Roman. A4 verso "Reader" in italics. B - F4 "The Wonderfull yeare." in Black-Letter. F4 verso blank.

$A2^v$ R-T. "The Epistle Dedicatorie." $A3^v$ and A4 R-T. "To the Reader." B^v - F4 R-T. "The wonderfull yeare."

The device is that of Nicholas Ling - ling and honeysuckle intertwined, with the letters N.L.

In the entry in the Stationers' Register, it is stated that Ling, Smethwicke and Browne were fined "for printinge a booke called the wonderfull yere". The above copy is printed by Thomas Creede, but the quotation may mean that the booksellers were fined for causing the book to be printed. The facts that Ling's device is on the title page, and that the book is "to be solde in Saint Dunstones Church-yarde in Fleet-streete" (1) render it almost certain that the entry in the Register on Dec. 5, 1603 referred to the edition which we have described. From the fact that Creede seems

(1) Where Ling then was. Creede's address in 1603 was at the Eagle and Child in the Old Exchange.

to have escaped without being fined, we might infer that the responsibility for a book rested with the publisher or book-seller, and not with the printer. Yet earlier in the year (April 14), Edward Allde who had "disorderly printed" a second impression of the "Basilikon Doron" (1) was fined 3s. 4d., together with thirteen booksellers (2). We may explain this by supposing that Edward Allde also sold some of the copies, whereas, in the case of the "Wonderfull yeare", Creede was merely responsible for the printing of the tract (3).

Collier remarks in his "Bibliographical Account" (I. 196): "This tract is very rare, and perhaps it became so because the copies sent in by the three booksellers were destroyed."

This is not in accordance with the facts. There are more copies extant of this work than of most of Dekker's. There are copies in the Bodleian, in the British Museum, in the Huth Library, in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington, and in the Guildhall Library, and probably in several other public and private libraries. We may explain this fact by supposing either that the three booksellers had got rid of a large number of copies before they were fined, or that the copies confiscated were not destroyed, but were sold, after the work had been entered and had received

(1) The first impression of King James's essay had been printed in 1599. In reprinting it, Allde and the 13 booksellers were infringing copyright.

(2) Edward White who had sold 500 copies of the book so that they could not be recovered, was fined £6. 10s. 4d.

(3) Creede, whose workmanship is much superior to that of most of his contemporaries, was employed by some of the largest Elizabethan publishers, notably William Ponsonby. He printed several of Shakespeare's plays.

"Aucthoritie". (1)

The "Wonderfull Yeare" was reprinted in Morgan's "Phoenix Britannicus, 8vo, 1732 (Vol. I, p. 27), and by Grosart in his edition of Dekker's Non-Dramatic Works (Vol. I, p. 73).

2. Authorship and Date of Composition.

"The Wonderfull yeare" was printed anonymously, but Dekker claims the work as his in a later pamphlet - the "Seven deadly Sinnes", when in addressing London he refers to "that Wonderfull yeere, when these miserable calamities entred in at thy Gates". A marginal note to the phrase "Wonderfull yeere", reads:-

"A Booke so called, written by the Author, describing the horror of the Plague in 1602, when there dyed 30578. of that disease." (2)

We first hear of the work on Dec. 5, 1603, before which date it had been printed by Allde. It is probable that the work was confiscated soon after it had left the printer's hands. He, of course would expedite its publication, since such a topical tract would have everything to lose if it were delayed. We may conjecture, then, that Dekker was engaged upon the work during the autumn of the year, and gave it to Creede in October or early November.

(1) There is no record of the work being authorised, but as Mr. C. R. Rivington says, "the Registers are practically in their original intention the Subsidiary Cash Books of a London Guild; they were never intended as a record of the entire authorized literature."

(2) G., II, 12. The plague began in March, "1602", in modern reckoning, 1603.

3. Description of the Work.

The year 1603 must have been a great boon to the hack-writers of Elizabethan London in search of material with which to scrape together a new pamphlet. It even surpassed in crowded excitement the year of the Armada (1). For in this one year occurred the death of Queen Elizabeth (March 24th), the accession of James, and one of the most devastating plagues which London during its chequered and disease-stricken existence, had ever suffered. The hack-writers were not slow to seize the golden opportunity presented to them, and pamphlets and ballads deploring the disease of the late Queen, hailing with delight the accession of the new King, or bewailing the miseries of the plague (2), poured from the press. Well might Dekker exclaim of the year, "It is able to finde ten Chroniclers a competent living, and to set twentie Printers at worke." (3)

"The Wonderfull yeare" is Dekker's quota to this stream, and although in grouping it with such ephemeral trash, we may be a little unfair to him, yet it does present many characteristics of the potboiler, (4) a thing we accept with resignation from a hackster but deplore when it proceeds from the pen of a genius.

(1) Cp. G., I, 94.

(2) Cp. S.R. July 15, 1603, when was entered to Thomas Pavier a ballad called "Englandes Lamentacon but specially London for the great infection of the plague". This is only one among many such entries.

(3) G., I, 95.

(4) Note the commercial tone of the title: the inclusion of "certaine Tales" "like a mery Epilogue to a dull Play" being calculated to attract more buyers than a mere "picture of London, lying sicke of the Plague."

And yet, even here, we may light upon a few passages of rich humour and of brilliant satire, or some contemporary allusion which will give us more insight into the condition of London during the Plague, than many a learned treatise upon the subject.

The work is prefixed by the customary epistles to a patron and to the Reader. In the present instance, the work is dedicated "To His Wel-Respected Good friend M. Cutbert Thuresby, Water-Bayliffe of London", (1) who is requested to bid it welcome, in that it brings to him a great quantity of the author's love. The Dedication closes by pointing out that "mirth is both Phisicall, and wholesome against the Plague," and that there is no "gall in mine Incke". (2)

The Address "To the Reader" is written in Dekker's delightfully whimsical mood, characteristic of most of his Addresses. He points out the dangers a man runs by being an author.

"Neither the stinking Tobacco-breath of a Sattin-gull, the Aconited sting of a narrow-eyd Critick, the faces of a phantastick Stage-monkey, nor the Indeede-la of a Puritanicall Citizen, must once shake him." (3)

In his independent way, he refuses to copy the example of authors who intreat the public to forbear to hiss their book, "or to dam it perpetually to lye on a Stationers stall". He gives us a slashing condemnation of the poetasters and penny-a-liners of the

(1) G., I, 75.

(2) p. 76.

(3) p. 78.

day, "thin-headed fellowes that live upon the scraps of invention, and travell with such vagrant soules, and so like Ghosts in white sheetes of paper, that the Statute of Rogues may worthily be sued upon them, because their wits have no abiding place, and yet wander without a passe-port." (1)

At the close of the Address, there is a note to the effect that the tales at the end of the tract were received only by "flying Report". He apologises for any errors, and again insists that he has not "set down aught in malice". (2)

The work begins with a description of the Spring of 1603 - a description which is a curious mixture of the conventional and the unconventional. It is conventional in the use of the well-worn personification used to represent the Spring, unconventional in the grotesque, mock-heroic manner in which this personification is used. James "made a very mannerly lowe legge", (3) "the skie got a most cleare complexion, lookte smug and smoothe, and had not so much as a wart sticking on her face", (4) "the Cuckooe (like a single sole Fidler, that reeles from Taverne to Taverne) plide it all the day long" (5). The whole passage reads like a burlesque.

(1) p. 79.

(2) p. 82, "nothing is set downe by a malitious hand."

(3) p. 83.

(4) p. 84.

(5) p. 84. For the epithet "single sole" (= mean, poverty-stricken), cp. "Guls Horne-booke", G., II, 212, "all you that love to walke upon single and simple soules".

When "all was more calme than a still water, all husht," (1) news of the Queen's sickness is brought, and later of her death. "She dyed, resigning her Scepter to posteritie, and her Soule to immortalitie". (2) "She came in with the fall of the leafe, and went away in the Spring". (3)

The sorrow at her death is described with absurd conceits and much rhetorical bombast. A poem of his, which, he says, had been in private presented to the King, is here inserted. The first lines condemn the

"catch-polls of poesy,
That feed upon the fallings of hye wit"

in much the same spirit as the Dedication. The remainder of the poem commemorates in undistinguished verse the death of the Queen, and the terror and disorder created by it. The poem is followed by three Epigrams written in a manner full of "conceits" worthy of the worst specimens produced by the worst poets of the "Metaphysical" School.

In a turgid and conventional strain, in which there is not a little book-making, he describes the virtues of James and the "ioyes that followed upon his proclayming." He takes the opportunity of inserting some more verse, in which he yet again gibes at those who had "small wit, lesse iudgement, and least Art".

(1) p. 86.

(2) p. 86.

(3) p. 92.

In describing the bustle and stir upon the accession of James, he does attain, for a time, something of that zest and descriptive power which we are accustomed to ascribe to his pen. There was "mirth in every mans face, the streetes were plum'd with gallants, Tobacconists fild up whole Tavernes: Vintners hung out spick and span new Ivy bushes (because they wanted good wine) and their old raine-beaten lattices marcht under other cullors, having lost both company and cullors before." (1)

This joy was shortlived. As Dekker puts it in a sentence which shows him to be an incorrigible humourist,
"Night walks at the heeles of the day, and sorrow enters (like a taverne-bill) at the taile of our pleasures". (2)

And now he leaves the perfunctory and conventional adulation of royalty for the richer and more suggestive theme of the ravages wrought by the plague. And although his sentences even here are overloaded with empty rhetoric and absurd metaphors, yet he does occasionally attain to a vivid and realistic manner worthy of Defoe. (3)

"he that durst (in the dead houre of gloomy midnight) have bene so valiant, as to have walkt through the still and melancholy streets, what thinke you should have bene his musicke? Surely the loude grones of raving sicke men: the strugling panges of soules departing: In every house griefe striking up in Allarum: Servants

(1) p. 101.

(2) p. 102. Dekker is very fond of these sly parentheses.

(3) Defoe may have read this tract. He resembles Dekker in not a few qualities - notably in that of ductility.

crying out for maisters: wives for husbands, parents for children, children for their mothers: here he should have met some frantickly running to knock up Sextons; there, others fearfully sweating with Coffins, to steale forth dead bodies, least the fatall hand-writing of death should seale up their doores. And to make this dismall consort more full, round about him Bells heavily tolling in one place, and ringing out in another: The dreadfulnesse of such an houre, is in-utterable" (1).

Then he mentions the "runawayes" (2) of whom he was to treat more fully twenty years later. Even they are not immune from the plague. Only Sextons, Herb-wives and Gardeners thrived. He describes the cowardice of the Physicians - "they hid their Synodicall heads aswell as the prowdest" (3).

The remainder of the book consists of a series of stories about the plague, told in Dekker's raciest manner, with the same grotesque medley of humour and tragedy which runs all through the pamphlet - "some of them yeelding Comicall and ridiculous stuffe, others lamentable: a third kinde upholding rather admiration then laughter or pittie."

These stories with their realistic if somewhat crude portraiture remind us that Dekker was a dramatist endowed with a genius for characterisation, and also that he possessed two other qualities

(1) p. 105.

(2) p. 111.

(3) p. 116.

innate in a great dramatist - instinctive depth of sentiment and a rich gift of humour. The stories are told in a breathless, somewhat inchoate English, very different from the natural, colloquial speech of the "Batchelars Banquet". The style, no less than the tendency towards caricature, displayed in these sketches show the influence of Thomas Nashe (1). Take this spirited account of the terror of an Inn-keeper and his servants when a plague-stricken Londoner raps at their door for help.

"presently the doores had their woodden ribs crusht in peeces, by being beaten together: the casements were shut more close then an Usurers greasie velvet powch: the drawing windowes were hangd, drawne, and quartred: not a crevis but was stopt, not a mouse-hole left open, for all the holes in the house were most wickedly dambd uppe: mine hoste and hostesse ran over one an other into the backeside, the maydes into the orchard, quivering and quaking, and ready to hang themselves on the innocent plumb-trees, (for hanging to them would not be so sore a death as the plague, and to die maids too! O horrible!) As for the Tapster, he fled into the Cellar, rapping out five or sixe plaine countrey oathes, that he would drowne himselfe in a most villainous Stand of Ale, if the sick Londoner stoode at the doore any longer." (2)

What is perhaps the best story yielding "Comicall and ridiculous stuffe," is that which relates the events following on the sudden

(1) See Chapter VI, for Nashe's influence on Dekker.

(2) p. 123.

decease of a Londoner in a Countrey Ale-house. The portrait of mine Host - "a goodly fat Burger he was, with a belly Arching out like a Beere-barrell, which made his legges (that were thicke and short like two piles driven under London-bridge) to stradle halfe as wide as the toppe of Powles," (1) is drawn in a style typical of Thomas Nashe. The details as to the Host's nose -

"the Hamburgers offered I know not how many Dollars, for his companie in an East-Indian voyage, to have stood a nightes in the Poope of their Admirall, onely to save the charges of candles" - would seem to show that Dekker had made the acquaintance of Bardolph. (2)

The terror of the Host and his servants upon finding that the Londoner has died of the plague, is brought out in the same spirit. Who will bury the corpse? No volunteers are forthcoming, despite the fact that a reward of forty shillings is offered, "with the love of the Churchwardens and Sidemen during the terme of life." (3) By good fortune, an "excellent egregious Tinker" comes "sounding through the towne". He is "none of those base rascally Tinkers, that with a ban dog and a drab at their tailes, and a pike-staffe on their necks, will take a purse sooner then stop a kettle", but "a Musicall Tinker, that upon his kettle-drum could play any country

(1) p. 138.

(2) Cp. Henry IV, Pt. 1, III, 3, "thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop, but 'tis in the nose of thee".

(3) p. 142.

dance you cald for". (1)

They prevail upon him to bury the corpse for an angel, and as he finds seven pounds on the dead Londoner, he is well contented and marches away through the village crying aloud "Have ye any more Londoners to bury, hey downe a downe dery, have ye any more Londoners to bury". (2)

This pamphlet, with its strange medley of incidents, gives us a good idea of the ephemeral nature of much of Dekker's work. That he himself perceived the character of the work, the following sentence shows:-

"I could fill a large volume, and call it the second part of the hundred mery tales, onely with such ridiculous stuffe as this ... , but ... I have better matters to set my wits about". (3)

The work is marred by conventional and florid eulogy, by a turgid and careless style, and by an utter lack of selection. Its redeeming features are the few passages of realistic and forceful portraiture and of really humorous writing contained in it, and the many interesting contemporary allusions which give us authentic glimpses of the plague of 1603.

(1) p. 142.

(2) p. 145.

(3) p. 147.

4. The Plague of 1603.

The commencement of the plague coincided exactly with the death of Elizabeth and the accession of James. Its mortality was greater than that of any previous plague which London had experienced, the total deaths amounting to 30,578 (1). It began in March in the parish of Stepney, and the bustle and stir consequent on the accession of James (2) undoubtedly increased the rate of mortality. The plague rapidly spread from the East to the City, and so to the Liberties. It is said that at the time of the Coronation (July 18) the deaths from the plague were nearly a thousand a week. It was not until the end of December that they dropped below forty a week. (3)

Of the panic which took possession of men's minds and the cruelty and selfishness displayed then, as ever, by an undisciplined mob when lives are endangered, the descriptions in the "Wonderfull Yeare" are sufficiently vivid. The Magistrates fled, so did the

(1) So Dekker in the "Seven Deadly Sinnes" (G., II, 12). In a "Rod for Runnawayes" (G., IV, 281) he gives as the total of those who died of the plague within London and the Liberties the number 35,578, the greatest weekly total being 3035. Greg (Henslowe Papers, p. 59) gives the number of deaths as 30,561. Creighton in "Social England" (p. 205) gives the number 33, 347. The mortality for the whole year was 42,945 (Cp G., I, 103 "more (by many) then 40,000."). The plague was not over at the end of the year, - cp. IV, 281 "a dead march a twelve-moneth long," - and did not actually die out for several years.

(2) Cp G., I, 99 "Trades that lay dead and rotten, and were in all mens opinion utterly dambd, started out of their trance."

(3) The playhouses were not allowed to open if the deaths from the plague were over 30 a week. It was on account of this close-time, perhaps, that Dekker tried his hand at writing prose.

Physicians (except Thomas Lodge and a few other brave men). The minister of St. Olave's was one of the few parish clergy who had the courage to stay with their flock. All but the very poor threw themselves upon the tender mercies of the county "Hobbinols", from whom they received but a cold welcome. (1)

The only people who reaped any benefit from the plague were Sextons, Herb-wives, gardeners, and Empirics. (2)

The sextons reaped a golden harvest. The bodies came in too fast for ceremony, and were thrown into the earth with little or no ceremony. (3)

Amongst those who, for various reasons, were compelled to remain in the City, various remedies and disinfectants were popular: Methridatum and Dragon-water (4), Rue and Worm-wood (5); and flowers, herbs and garlands (6) were sold in great quantities. The remedies of the Physicians "with their Phlebotomies, Losinges, and Electuaries, with their Diacatholicons, Diacodions, Amulets, and Antidotes" (7) were also in demand, as were also the even less health-giving concoctions of the quacks who swarmed in the streets of London at

(1) G., I, 116 "the sight of a flat-cap was more dreadfull to a Lob, then the discharging of a Caliver". The same thing happened in the still deadlier plague of 1625. See Dekker's "Rod for Run-awayes."

(2) G., I, 114.

(3) G., I, 107. Cp. also V, 283.

(4) p.112.

(5) p. 113.

(6) p. 114. Rosemary, Dekker says, rose in price from twelve pence an armful to six shillings a handful.

(7) p. 116.

the time.

As a warning to the ignorant people of these impostors, Thomas Lodge issued his "Treatise of the Plague" in August 1603 (1), at a time when the plague was raging hotly all round him. This book differs from the "Wonderfull yeare" in that it is written from the stand-point of the physician and not that of the littérateur. It supplements admirably Dekker's description of the plague, and with an account of this noble work, we will conclude this section.

Lodge was one of the few members of his profession, who braved the terrors of the plague, and one feels that he wrote this treatise not to exhibit the graces of a literary style, but in order to be of some service to his plague-stricken countrymen by conferring upon them the benefit of his learning and experience. The spirit of compassion which breathes throughout this book gives it a charm far superior to that derived from an euphuistic style.

The tract is also interesting from the light it throws upon the state of the most advanced medical knowledge of the time. We find Lodge quoting with all reverence from the writings of Galen, Hippocrates and Avicen (2). He recommends the wearing of a jewel near the heart: it quickens the vital spirits. If a man be "Sanguine, full in love, and youthfull in yeares," he should be "let blood after a competent manner". There are lists of purges to be administered to men of other humours, "but with this Proviso

(1) "From my house in Warwicke Lane, this 19. of August."

(2) Cp. G., I, 116.

alwayes, that the direction be taken from a learned and diligent Phisitian, and not according to the fancie of foolish chare-women, and ignorant practizers."

He discountenances "the superstitious and vaine opinions, of the unicornes horne (1), of which the common sort make so great reckoning." It is folly to believe that the pieces of horn which quacks carry about with them belong to the unicorn, "for it is a beast so rare to be seene, and in places so strange, that scarcely Alexander the great could recover one to his great charge and expence, ... neither may it be taken alive, for that it liveth in places desart and solitary in the extreamest parts of India and the East."

But some of the advice given in chapter IV, under the heading "A Rule and instruction to preserve such as be in health, from the infection", is very sound. "The first and chiefest remedie is to chaunge the place, flie farre and returne late", and we find that the "runawayes" of whom Dekker wrote so bitterly were unwittingly taking the advice of Galen and Hippocrates.

He recommends those who have to visit the infected city "(either to be assistant to our friends, or otherwise:)" to make good fumes in the house, "of sweet and wholesome wood, as Rosemarie, Juniper, and Laurell, or Bayes". But, he adds, "to live in repose of spirit, in al joy, pleasure, sport and contentation amongst a mans friendes, comforteth heart and vitall spirits, and is in this time more requisite then any other things", advice with which

(1) Cf G., I, 99. See also II. 221 - "the Unicorne, whose horne is worth halfe a City".

Dekker heartily concurred. (1) As a parting word of advice, he writes,

"Fly the narrow wayes and streets where are dunghills: hant no vaine assemblies of feasts, but if thy meanes be to follow Hippocrates rule Fuge longe, cito, Tarde: or if thou must stay, be temperate, advised and devout, and God shall bless thee, to whose mercy, and thy harty praiers I humbly commend me."

(1) See p. 76 "mirth is both Phisicall, and wholesome against the Plague".

CHAPTER IV.

"THE BELMAN OF LONDON."

1. Bibliography.

Entry in the Stationers' Register:

14 Marcii [1608]

thanael But- Entred for his copie under thandes of Master Wilson and
r. Thwardens A thinge called the Bellman of London . . . vj

Early Editions:-

I (a)

The Belman / Of London. / Bringing to light the most notorious / villanies that are now practised / in the Kingdome. / Profitable for Gentlemen, Lawyers, Merchants, Citizens, Farmers, / Masters of Housholds, and all sortes of servants, to marke, / and delightfull for all men to Reade./ Lege, Perlege, Relege. / [Woodcut.] / Printed at London for Nathaniel Butter. 1608.

In British Museum (C.40.c.20.). Quarto. 34 leaves.

Collation:

(A_2) Title, verso blank. A_3 "The Poore Belman / Of London. / To all those that either by Office are / Sworne to punish, or in their owne / love to vertue, wish to have the dis- / orders of a State amended, / humbly Dedicate these / his Discoveries." in large Roman.

$A3^{V}$ and (A4) R-T. "The Bel-mans Epistle." $A4^{V}$ "A Table of the principall matters contained in this Booke" in Capitals and Roman. B-13^{V} "The Bel-Man Of London, ... "Black Letter. R-T. "The Bel-man of London."

I. (b).

The Belman of London: / .... / [Woodcut.] / Printed at London for Nathaniel / Butter. 1608.

In Dyce Collection (2869). Also in Huth Library. Quarto. 33 leaves.

Collation:-

(A2) Title, verso blank. A3 "The poore Belman of London. ...." $(A4)^{V}$ "A Table of the Principall matters ...."

B-I_2 "The Bel-Man Of London. ..." I_2^{V} blank.

II.

The Belman of London. / ..... / The second Impression. / [Woodcut.] / Printed at London for Nathaniel Butter. 1608.

In the Bodleian (Art. 4°. G. 8. BS). Quarto. 34 leaves.

Collation:-

(A_1) Title, verso blank. A_2 and verso blank.

A_3 "The Belmans Epistle." in Roman. R-T. "The Belmans Epistle."

$(A_4)^{V}$ "A Table of the principall matters ...."

B-1_2 "The Belman of London." in Black Letter. R-T. "The Bel-man / Of London" I_2^{V} blank.

III

The Belman of London./ ...../ The third impression, with new aditions. / [Woodcut.] / Printed at London for Nathaniell Butter. 1608.

In the Guildhall Library, London. Quarto. 35 leaves.

Collation:

(A_1) Title, verso "A Table of the principall matters ...." .

A_2 "The poore Belman of London, ..." A_3 - $\mathbf{1}_4$ "The / Bel-man of London. / ..." in Black Letter.

IV

The Belman of London. / ..... / The Fourth impression, with new additions. / [Woodcut.] / Printed at London for Nathaniell Butter. 1616.

The Bodleian has two copies (Malone 603 and Wood 371).

Also in Museum. Quarto. 36 leaves.

Collation:

(A_1) Title, verso "A Table of the Principall matters ..." in Roman and Italics.

A_2 "The poore Belman of London, ..." in Roman and Italics. R-T. "The Belmans Epistle." A_3-1_4^v "The Belman of London." in Black Letter. R-T. "The Bel-man / of London."

Fourth leaves and 3 not signed.

V.

The / Belman / Of London. / .... / The fift Impression, with new additions. / [Woodcut.] / Printed at London by Miles Flesher. 1640.

In the British Museum (C.27.b.26). Quarto. 34 leaves.

Collation:

(A_1) Title, verso "A/ Table of the Principall matters ...." A_2 "The poore Belman of London ...." A_3-$I_4{}^V$ "The Belman of London."

Modern Editions:-

I 1885.

Reprinted by Grosart in his edition of Dekker's Non-Dramatic Works in the "Huth Library" (1884-1886). Vol.III, pp. 63-169. Grosart bases his text on I (b).

VII. 1904.

Edited by Oliphant Smeaton, M.A.,for Dent's Temple Classics (pp. 67-158), and reprinted together with the "Guls Horne-booke" and "Lanthorne and Candle-light". This edition follows I (b) (probably second-hand through Grosart). Yet the facsimile of the title-page printed as a frontispiece is that of I (a).

2. Notes on the Early Editions.

I (a) and (b).

The fact that 1 (a) and (b) are two separate editions has not hitherto been noticed. The main difference between the two editions is that the Museum copy contains an additional leaf, (I_2-$I_3{}^V$) with the title,

"Operis Peroratio. / A short Discourse of Canting, which is the / Language spoken by all the Ragged Regi-/ ment, that serve under the colours / of the Belman."

In this additional section a promise of a second part to the book is held out, and as a foretaste of what is to come the author

appends a Dialogue between an Upright-man and a Rogue in the Canting tongue. (1)

The following are three interesting variants between the two editions:-

Museum Copy (I (a))	Dyce Copy. (I (b))
licate musicke to it. (G., III,87.)	delicate musicke of it.
the Prancer before: these wicked ders, (G.,III,145.)	or the Prancer before these wicked Elders,
ve beene here mustred together? .,III, 168.)	have beene here ministred together?

In each case, it will be noticed, the Museum Copy contains the correct reading. It probably is the first edition. The errors in the Dyce copy (especially the second) are such as might easily be made by a compositor in setting up from a previous copy. It is a more likely conjecture than to suppose that the Museum Copy is the second edition, in which the errors of the first are corrected.

II.

This is really the third Impression, not the second as stated in the title-page. The error was continued in the three later editions.

This edition is a reprint of I (b) and follows that edition in each case that it differs from I (a).

(1) Taken from Harman (cf. Section 5). Grosart does not print the "Operis Peroratio", as he bases his copy on I (b).

III.

This edition differs from previous ones in that the Table of Contents is on the verso of the title. As the title points out, this edition contains some "new aditions."

The additions consist of a philosophical comparison, of little interest, of the world with man. The book begins,

"The world at the first was made of nothing and shal at the last bee consumed to nothing." It is round and the Creator's masterpiece.

In this world did he set a little world called man. Man is made up of four complexions, just as the world is made up of four elements. The world is circular, so is man! Man has four ages - Infancy, Childhood, Youth and old age. So has the earth - the Golden, Silver, Brazen and Iron Ages.

These reflections take up sheets A_3, (A_4) and B. The last line of B verso is, "Entring therfore into a contemplation", which forms the beginning of previous editions. This edition contains the "Operis Peroratio" (I_3^V- I_4^V).

IV and V.

These two editions follow the text of III.

A Note on the Woodcuts of these Editions.

The impressions in I (a) and (b), II, III, IV are all taken from the same woodcut. They represent the bell-man with a bell in his right hand and a lantern in his left, carrying over his left shoulder a staff with a pike at one end, and followed by a dog (1). Collier says, à

(1) Cp. G., III, 113-114, "a man with a lanthorne and candle in his hand, a long staffe on his necke, and a dog at his tayle".

propos of this woodcut, "It is singular that, after the lapse of more than 200 years, the very wood-cut from which the impression was made in 1609 (sic) should have been preserved, and used as a headpiece to a ballad which we bought in St. Giles' in 1836."

I do not know what reliance is to be placed on this statement.

The edition of 1640 contains what is probably the same impression as that in "Villanies Discovered ... 1616".

3. Authorship and Date of Composition.

Dekker's name is to be found in none of the six editions of this tract. But Dekker signs his name (1) to "Lanthorne and Candle-light", a tract which may be regarded as a sequel to this one (2). Dekker may have withheld his name because of the numerous plagiarisms which are to be found in the book. Additional evidence that the "Belman Of London" is Dekker's may be gathered from two contemporary references:-

(1) in William Fennor's "The Compter's Commonwealth" (1617), in which occurs the passage,

"the most wittiest, elegantest and eloquentest Peece (Master Dekkers, the true heire of Apollo composed) called The Bell-man of London, have already set foorth the vices of the time so lively, that it is unpossible the Anchor of any other mans braine can sound the sea of a more deepe and dreadfull mischeefe."

(1) G., III, 180.

(2) Cp. the words in "Operis Peroratio" (see Section I, editions Ia, III, IV and V) which promise to give "a taste of that which in a second part of this booke shall (God willing) be more amply discovered." This book was then "but in the shell".

(ii) a distich in a copy of Verses prefixed to H. Miles's "Nights Search". Lond. 1640.

" - Decker deckt with discipline and wit
Gaind praises by the Bellman that he writ."

The work was probably written in the early part of 1608, some time before Mar. 14, when it was entered in the Register.

4. The Rogue-Pamphlet before Dekker.

The first English book which may be said to belong to the "Genre" of the rogue-pamphlet (1) is "The hye way to the Spyttell hous" (2), "Enprynted at London in the Fletestrete at y^{e} Rose garland, by Robert Copland."

Copland, the printer, who is also the author of this book, relates how he takes shelter from a shower under the porch of a "Spyttell hous".

"For it had snowen and frosen very strong
With great ysesycles on the eves long
The sharp north wynd hurled bytterly
And with blacke cloudes darked was the sky".

While there, he enters into conversation with the Porter, and the rest of the tract is put into the form of a dialogue

(1) We are not here concerned with the picaresque novel such as Nashe's "Unfortunate Traveller" (written in 1593), or "Piers Plainnes seaven yeres Prentiship" (1595), the latter of which is certainly indebted to the Spanish romance "Lazarillo de Tormes" (1554). Neither have we to do with the biographies of Rogues, such as "Cocke Lorelles Bote", or "The Life and Death of Gamaliel Ratsey " (1605).

(2) In the British Museum (C. 57. b. 30). Black Letter. Quarto. A-E4^{v}. Printed before 1535.

between the author and the Porter. They discuss the various people who come to the gate,

"People as me thought of very poore estate
With bad and staf both croked lame and blynde ...
Boyes gyrles and luskysh strong knaves
Dydderyng and dadderyng leaning on their staves."

Copland questions the Porter about all the different types who seek admittance to the Hospital. "Losels mighty beggers and vacabonds" do not enter here. They have houses of their own in the Barbican, in Turnmill St, in Houndsditch and behind the Fleet, "Where they make revell and gaudy chere". Yet here come men who have been soldiers, but now have turned beggars and say

"good maysters of your charyte
Helpe us poore men that come from the sea
From the Bonaventure we were cast to lande".
They will not accept bread, drink, potage, nor meat
"But very whyte threde to sewe good ale".

Pardoners come this way, as do Priests and clerks that live viciously, and young heirs

"Spendyng up theyr patrymony
Whiles they be yong, and use dyssolute playes ....
Rufflers and masterles men that can not werke
And slepeth by day and walketh in the derke ....
They that do make to moche of theyr wyves ....
Letyng them have overmoche of theyr wyll ....

And gyveth them all the soveraynte

Must nedes come this way".

Borrowers come here, and extravagant persons

"Makyng a great porte, and be lytell worth".

So do Applesquires, Swearers and Drunkards.

The Porter, a hopeless misogynist, again commences to make more satirical remarks about women, but Copland beseeches him to show him other matters,

"For agaynst women I love no iestes ....

Come none of these pedlers this way also

With pak on bak with theyr bousy speche

Jagged and ragged with broken hose & breche"?

The Porter answers that many of them come "with theyr pedlyng frenche", and gives Copland a specimen of their dialect. Here also come the XXIV. Orders of Knaves, but chiefest of all

"The ordre of fooles, that be without nombre",

The shower is now over, and Copland takes his leave.

In its way, this little poem is a masterpiece. The satire is searching, but has that touch of humour which saves it from being mere invective. The setting of the poem, with the opportunities which it affords for describing all sorts and conditions of men, is brilliantly conceived, and the motley array of humanity that crowds at the gate of the "Spyttell hous", is graphically drawn. The poem is not wanting either in artistic effect: the "Exhortacion of the compyler" and the little nature picture at the beginning of the poem, come from the pen of a poet.

In 1561 and 1565 appeared two pamphlets similar in character, both treating of the vagabonds by whom Elizabethan England was overrun. Neither of them are to be compared with Copland's tract either in realistic portraiture or in artistic conception; but both were to exert a great influence upon the development of the rogue pamphlet during the next fifty years.

In 1561 (1) was printed

"The Fraternitie of vacabones, as wel of rufling vacabones, as of beggerly, as wel of women as of men, and as wel of gyrles as of boyes, with their proper names and qualityes. Also the XXV orders of knaves, otherwise called A quartten of knaves. Confirmed this year by Cocke Lorel. Imprinted at London by John Awdeley, 1565."

From three stanzas addressed "The Printer to the Reader", it appears that the printer is also the author of this work.

The tract(which is in prose as are succeeding works of this kind) is divided into parts. The latter part describing "The XXV. Orders of Knaves" does not concern us here. In the former part, Awdeley describes some twenty-two members of "The Fraternitie of Vacabondes", such as "An Abraham Man", "A Ruffeler", "A Prygman", "A Quire bird", "An Irish toyle", "A Kitchen Co" and so on. The

(1) The edition of 1561 seems now to have disappeared. The tract was licensed in that year. It was reprinted in 1565, 1575 (which edition I have used), and 1603. To this edition of 1575 is added "a description of the crafty company of Consoners and Shifters." The title-page quoted above is that of 1565 (as given by Hazlitt in his "Handbook").

descriptions are very brief[1] and do not aim at the graces of a literary style. As an example I quote the description of "A Quire bird".

"A Quire bird is one that came lately out of prison, & goeth to seek service. He is comonly a stealer of Horses, which they terme a Priggar of Paulfreys."

Mr. F. W. Chandler (2) points out that there can be no doubt that Awdeley and his successor Harman were influenced by the earliest German beggar-book, the "Liber Vagatorum" (1510-16). "The aim and scope of their beggar-books and the three-fold arrangement of material are similar, and although the catalogued orders do not correspond so precisely with the German as do those of "Il Vagabondo", yet the number of classes remains about the same and many tricks are identical."

In 1566, Thomas Harman produced his "Caveat For Commen Cursetors Vulgarely Called Vagabones" (3). The work is dedicated to Elizabeth Countess of Shrewsbury. In the Dedication he mentions Awdeley's tract as giving "a glymsinge lyghte not sufficient to perswad of their pewyshe peltinge and pickinge practyses, but well

(1) In the 1575 edition, the text only occupies 9 leaves (A ii - C i).

(2) In his "Literature of Roguery", Vol. I, Chap. III.

(3) The first edition of this has perished. The second edition was printed in 1567, "Augmented and inlarged by the fyrst author here of." The third edition "Newly agmented and Imprinted", was printed on Jan. 8, 1568. Yet another edition was printed in 1573.

worthy of prayse."

As may be seen from these words, Harman deals much more fully than did Awdeley with the "drowseye demener, and unlawfull languag, pylfring pycking, wily wanderinge, and lyking lecherye" of the vagabonds.

In the second edition of the work, Harman apologises for the poverty of his style. "I never was acquaynted with the muses, ... But accordinge to my playne order, I have set forth this worke symply and truelye".

Harman's tract, like that of Awdeley, deals with the various degrees of vagadonds. Sections on "A Prygman", "A Curtall", "An Irish toyle", "A washman", "A Kitchen Co", and a "A Kitchen Mortes" and the three "kinds of "Cousoners and Shifters" all described by Awdeley are omitted by Harman. In Harman, however, there are several kinds of vagabonds not described by Awdeley. Moreover Harman deals with the subject much more fully and intimately than does Awdeley, and at the end of most sections gives us the experiences which he himself has had with these outcasts. Nowhere is Harman more delightful than in these personal anecdotes. See, for instance, how his cauldron was stolen and found again long after, how his best gelding was stolen from his pasture "while this boke was first a printing", how he and a Surgeon cured a "Dommerar" of dumbness, or the account of the "walking Morte"he had met "last summer Anno Domini 1566", and the tale she told him after he had sworn never to disclose it to any one else (an oath which he broke without scruple).

He closes the book with a vocabulary of the canting language,

and a few exercises in that tongue.

Harman evidently knew a great deal about these interesting people (1), and he possessed the gift of telling what he knew in an interesting manner.

In 1592 appeared "The Groundworke of Conny-catching, the manner of their Pedlers - French, and the meanes to understand the same, with the cunning slights of the Counterfeit Cranke." This work has been attributed by some to Greene, by others to Dekker, though there is not the slightest evidence to connect either of these men with the work. In any case, "The Groundworke" is merely a reprint of Harman's tract, with the addition of a Preface, and articles on "The Visiter" and "A Shifter".

The year 1592 also saw the appearance of Greene's cony-catching (2) pamphlets, no less than five of such works coming from his pen in that one year. The series of "confession" pamphlets formed the bridge between this kind of writing and the euphuistic novels for which his pen first became famous.

The first of these pamphlets was "A Notable Discovery of Coosenage. Now daily practised by sundry lewd per-sons, called Connie-catchers, and Crosse-byters. .... With a delightfull discourse of the coosenage of Colliers. Nascimur pro patria.

(1) He encouraged them to come to his house, and to talk to him. He also learnt about them in exercising his office of Justice of the Peace.

(2) The "conny-catching" pamphlets of Greene and his imitators are quite different from the beggar-books of Awdeley and Harman. The latter were more concerned with the vagabonds and nomads which the Elizabethan Poor Laws tried to exterminate. The former expose the vices and tricks of the sharpers who haunt all great towns, and trade upon the folly of ignorant people.

By R. Greene." (1)

In a lengthy address to the Reader, Greene describes the deceits of the Card-sharpers and calls upon the Justices to weed out such worms. He closes the address with a detailed account of "Barnardes lawe".

The work itself consists of an account of "The Art of Conny-catching" in robbing men of their money by cheating at cards. The account is exceedingly well written, the dialogue being delightfully natural, and evidently just that which one might have heard in the streets and taverns of those days.

Greene adds a table of "the eight Lawes of villany leading the high way to infamy", together with the persons who take part in them. This is followed by a bitter article on "The Art of Crosse-biting", and "A pleasant Discoverie of the coosenage of Colliers."

"A Notable Discovery" was soon followed by "The Second and last part of Conny-catching. With new additions containing many merry tales of all lawes worth the reading, because they are worthy to be remembred. Discoursing straunge cunning in Coosnage, which if you reade with-out laughing, Ile give you my cap for a Noble. .... R.G."

In the Epistle Greene remarks that some people have complained that in "A Notable Discovery" he has shown "no eloquent phrases,

(1) Another edition was printed in the same year. It has on the title-page the words "By R. Greene, Maister of Arts."

nor no fine figurative conveiance". This Greene says is due to decorum. A high style would go ill with a base subject.

This tract contains full accounts of "Prigging Law, or nature of horse-stealing", "vincents Law, with the discovery therof", "A discourse, or rather a discovery of a Nip and the Foist, laying open the nature of the Cutpurse and Pickpocket", "The discovery of the Lifting-Law", "The discovery of the courbing law", and "The Discoverie of the blacke Art." The knowledge which Greene shows of the wiles of these rogues is astounding, and they must have been greatly disconcerted at the publication of these tracts. There is more than humorous exaggeration or vanity in the reference to the Countryman who, on being asked by some Cony-catchers to play a game at cards, refuses to do so, replying "Maisters, I bought a book of late for a groat, that warnes me of Card-play".

The next "last Part of Conny-catching" appeared in the same year (1592) "With The New Devised Knavish Art of Foole-taking. The like Cosenages and Villenies never before discovered."

This pamphlet differs from Greene's preceding efforts in this line in that it consists entirely of anecdotes. These anecdotes relate the manner in which "Foole-takers" cozen their victims, one of the most interesting of the ten stories being, perhaps, that "Of a yoong Nip that cunningly beguiled an antient professor of that trade, and his queane with hym, at a play."

The originality of treatment which is exemplified in the above works of Greene is continued in two more works which appeared in the same year. These two pamphlets differ from previous ones, in that Greene, for the sake of variety and greater picturesqueness, puts the exposures into the mouths of the rogues themselves, one of the

pamphlets being written in the form of a dialogue and the other in the form of an autobiography.

The titles of these works sufficiently indicate their contents. The first runs,

"A Disputation, Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher, and a Shee Conny-catcher, whether a Theefe or a Whoore, is most hurtfull in Cousonage, to the Common-wealth. Discovering The Secret Villanies of alluring Strumpets. With the Conversion of an English Courtizen, reformed this present yeare, 1592. Read, laugh, and learne." (1)

The title of Greene's last cony-catching pamphlet reads,

"The Blacke Bookes Messenger. Laying open the Life and Death of Ned Browne one of the most notable Cutpurses, Crosbiters, and Conny-catchers, that ever lived in England. Heerein hee telleth verie pleasantly in his owne person such strange prancks and monstrous villanies by him and his Consorte performed, as the like was yet never heard in any of the former bookes of Conny-catching." (2)

The way in which Greene was able to keep the interest up to the same high level in these hastily-written tracts is very surprising. His experience of London low-life must have been very extensive. Yet it is noteworthy that all these pamphlets are written (or, at the least, make the pretence of being written) from

(1) Reprinted in 1615 (and again in 1617) with the title "Theeves falling out, True-men come by their Goods: Or, The Belman wanted a Clapper." Nan, the "Traffique" has the better of the "Disputation," for, as she says, "you men theeves touch the bodie and wealth, but we ruine the soule".

(2) In the Preface "To the Curteous Reader" Greene apologises for the non-appearance of his "Blacke Booke", which he had promised in the previous work, "and which I had many daies since finished, had not sickenes hindered my intent". But Greene did not live to fulfil his promise. A tract bearing this title was printed in 1604, as by "T.M.", initials which have been taken, on somewhat slender evidence, to be those of Thomas Middleton.

a high moral motive. This is evident from the mottos which he affixes to his title-pages - "Nascimur pro patria", or "Mallem non esse quam non prodesse patriae" (1).

His style is colloquial, and delightfully natural, and much more readable than the "eloquent phrases" and "fine figurative conveiance" to be found in his more ambitious works.

Among the works on Cony-catching which appeared during the sixteen years between the date of Greene's death and that in which Dekker turned his attention to this kind of writing, we will mention two.

In 1597 appeared "Mihil Mumchance, His Discoverie of the Art of Cheating in false Dyce play, and other unlawfull games: With a Discourse of the Figging Craft: And also of divers new devises of Cosenages practised commonly at Fayers and Markets".

The work has been attributed to Greene, but is inferior in interest to the latter's work. It is mainly concerned with the "Cosenages" of Dice-players, and shows a highly technical knowledge of the different sorts of false dice. The description of Barnards Law" at the end of the tract is pilfered from Greene's "Notable Discovery".

In 1602 appeared

Greenes Ghost Haunting Cony-Catchers: Wherein is set downe The Art of Humouring. The Art of carrying Stones. ... Ten times

(1) In the euphuistic works produced earlier, Greene's "poesie" was "Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci."

more pleasant than any thing yet published of this matter."

The Preface is signed "S. R.", initials which may be taken to be those of Samuel Rowlands. The tract, the author says, came into his hands by a chance, and he has added to it "somewhat of mine owne knowledge".

He has also added a considerable amount of Greene's knowledge, for there are extensive borrowings from the latter's "A Notable Discovery" and "The Blacke Bookes Messenger".

There are, however, interesting passages, which have a curiously modern flavour, upon the rudeness of Prentices to Gentlewomen who go shopping, and the incivility of the Watermen upon being tendered only their legal fare. Rowlands also quotes copiously from the "Shepherds' Calendar".

5. Dekker's Debt to his Predecessors.

In this section we shall treat of those passages in the "Belman Of London" which are not original, and shall indicate the source of these passages.

To "The hye way to the Spyttell hous" "The Belman Of London" owes nothing. It may be noted that Copland makes mention of "Rufflers", "Applesquyers" and "pedlyng frenche" (1), but for these terms Dekker is indebted to other authors.

There are several passages in Awdeley, which are to be found in Dekker, but not in Harman, notably those describing "A Quire bird"

(1) Cp. G., III, 94, 152 and 84.

(p. 100) (1), "An Irish toyle" (p. 104), and "A Kitchen Co" (p. 105). Occasionally Dekker combines the two accounts. Thus in the description of "An Abraham-man" (p. 101), Awdeley alone mentions that he "nameth himselfe poore Tom", Harman alone mentions his predilection for poultry. The same thing may be seen also in the sections on "An Upright-man" (p. 92), "A Frater" (p. 100), "A Whipiacke" (p. 102) "A Jack-man and a Patrico" (p. 103) and "A Swigman" (p. 105) (2). Yet even in these sections Dekker owes much more to Harman than to Awdeley and in the sections on pp. 92-110 which have not been mentioned Dekker is solely indebted to Harman.

Occasionally Dekker incorporates a passage of Harman's into his text without change (3), but more frequently the language is altered although the details remain the same.

From Harman also were taken the account of "Stalling of the Rogue" (pp. 83-84), the particulars as to the localities which they frequent (pp. 110-111), and the Dialogue between an Upright-man and a Rogue in "Operis Peroratio." (4)

(1) The numbers here and elsewhere in this and the following sections refer to Vol.III in Grosart's edition.

(2) The names "Jack-man" and "Swigman" are from Awdeley. Harman has "Jarke man" and "Swadder".

(3) Compare, for example, this description which Harman gives of the "Angglear" with that on G., III, 94-95.
".. they commenly go in frese ierkynes and gally slopes ... they customarily carry with them a staffe of V. or VI. foote long, in which within one ynch of y^{e} tope thereof is a little hole bored through in which hole they putte an yron hoke and with the same they wyll plucke unto them quicly any thing y^{t} they may reche ther with".

(4) Not reprinted by Grosart. Curiously enough, Dekker does not print the conclusion of the Dialogue in "The Belman Of London "; he reserved that for "Lanthorne and Candle-light" (p. 198). In both cases the translation is Harman's, as well as the Dialogue.

It is to be noted that Dekker omits the many personal touches and reminiscences with which the worthy Harman enlivens his discourse.

We may mention here that Dr. Hunt (1) suggests that Dekker "quite as likely used 'The Groundwork of Cony-Catching'" in compiling "The Belman Of London." The fact that Dekker left untouched three "sleights" related in "The Groundwork" and not in Harman, seems to me to make it much more likely that he made use of the older work.

In the first half of "The Belman Of London" (to page 112), which is concerned with the "idle Vagabonds" of the country, Dekker has been indebted only to Awdeley and Harman. In the latter half of the tract (p. 112 to the end), which describes the "conny-catchers" as opposed to the "beggars", Dekker is indebted to the author of "Mihil Mumchance", Samuel Rowlands, and above all Robert Greene. I have already pointed out the difference between the two types of "exposure". The distinct cleavage which is apparent between the two halves of "The Belman Of London" results from this difference.

The fact that Dekker borrowed freely from Harman is very generally known. It is not so generally known, however, that he borrowed much more extensively from Greene, "Mihil Mumchance" and Rowlands.

(1) In her Study of Dekker, p. 137. Hazlitt in his "Handbook" asserts as a fact that Dekker used the "Groundwork".

Of Greene's five "conny-catching" pamphlets, Dekker is only indebted to the first three, and especially to the first two (1).

From the "Notable Discovery" he takes almost the whole of the account of "Barnards Law" (pp. 124-132) (2), together with the "dramatis personae" on pp. 151, 152, 154 and 154-155.

Dekker's borrowings from "The Second and last part of Conny-catching" are even more extensive. From that tract, he "lifts" almost bodily the accounts of "Vincents Law" (pp. 132-136) (3), of "The Blacke Art" (pp. 137-138) (4), of "The Courbing Law" (pp. 139-140) (4), of "The Prigging Law" (pp. 141-145) of "The Lifting Law" (pp. 146-147 and the last paragraph) (5), and of "The Figging Law" (pp. 155-161) (6).

Again we may note Dekker does not reproduce the anecdotes with which both Harman and Greene fill up their pages. Consequently

(1) A reference to the fact that Dekker did not use "A Disputation, Betweene a Shee Conny-catcher, ..." may be contained in the title of the second edition of that work printed in 1615 - "The Belman wanted a Clapper. A Peale of new Villanies rung out". A passage on p. 131 mentioning some new terms empliyed in "Barnards Law" is to be found in "The Blacke Bookes Messenger", but Dekker takes it from "Greene's Ghost". In Greene "The wine to be called" is "the Limetwigs" not "the Strap". Rowlands has the passage as in Dekker.

(2) Except the first two paragraphs, hints of which are to be found in "Mihil Mumchance", and the penultimate paragraph which is from "Greenes Ghost".

(3) With the exception of the first paragraph, which is Dekker's own, and the last paragraph which is the amplification of a hint in "Mihil Mumchance".

(4) The first paragraph is again original. It is merely padding.
(5) Of the three paragraphs before the last, the first and third are from "Greenes Ghost" and the second perhaps suggested by Awdeley.
(6) The account of "Cloyers" and "Snappage" (p. 159), however, is taken from "Greenes Ghost".

we do not find so many borrowings from "The Thirde and last Part of Conny-catching" which is made up entirely of such anecdotes.

The originals of the third and fourth "Jumps at Leapfrog" (pp. 164-166) are to be found in the above tract. But Dekker has condensed the original accounts very much, and in some cases much altered the setting.

For example, instead of "a stranger" whom Dekker mentions in the "third Jump" (p. 164), Greene has the more picturesque "Two young men of familiar acquaintaunce, who delighted in musicke, because themselves therin were somewhat expert, as on the virginals, Bandora, Lute and such like".

Although there are a few passages in the sections mentioned above which come from Dekker alone, it must be confessed that they are by no means the best. All the details are taken from Greene, and most of the picturesque phrases. The picture of the "Rutter", for instance, who is so quarrelsome that he will even begin "a fray with his owne shadow" (p. 126) is from Greene. Moreover, when Dekker alters or omits, he frequently spoils some of Greene's most interesting passages (1). The account of the Maid servant, for instance, in the fourth "Jump at Leapfrog" (p. 166) includes no mention of the maid attending her master and mistress" to the garden in Finsbury fields, to regard the children while they sported about": or of the mistress, on the maid's supposed kinsman coming to supper, setting "all her plate on the Cubboorde for shewe," and beautifying

(1) They would not have been so interesting to a contemporary, perhaps, because to him they would be descriptions of ordinary everyday life.

the house "with Cusheons, Carpets, stools and other devises of needle worke": or again of the Apprentices at night bringing up the keyes of the street door and leaving them "in their maisters chamber as they were woont to do", and retiring to bed "in a Garret backward over their maisters chamber." These details give us more of the flavour of Elizabethan life than reams of trite moralisings or allegorical treatises.

From "Mihil Mumchance" Dekker derived his account of "chaating Lawe" (pp. 116-124). "The Names of false Dyce" (pp. 118-119) are to be found on the title-page of that work. The paragraph beginning "A Langret is a Dye" (p.119), and the next two paragraphs are literary transcribed from "Mihil Mumchance", as are several of the others.

The borrowings from "Greenes Ghost" are only less servile. In addition to those mentioned above,Rowlands supplies the account of the "Batfowler" (pp. 147-148), of the "counterfeit Blewcoat" (p. 149,but much altered in Dekker), a detail or two about "Bootehalers" (p. 157), the reference to "Whittington Colledge" (1) (p. 161), and the first, second, fifth, and part of the third "Jumps at Leapfrog".

(1) i.e. Newgate.

Dekker was guilty of gross plagiarism in writing "The Belman Of London". It surely is not sufficient to say, with Dr. Hunt, "He was no more conscious of dishonesty than when he selected the incidents from Deloney's "Gentle Craft" for a play". ... There is all the difference in the world - almost the difference between "Antony and Cleopatra" and North's Plutarch - between the "Gentle Craft" and Deloney's prose work. But "The Belman Of London" is in parts merely a transcription, and many of the alterations are scarcely for the better (1). Neither can Dekker be excused on the ground that plagiarism was rife in the Elizabethan age. There were plenty of plagiarists, and Dekker was one of the authors who suffered from their depredations (2). But the opinions of contemporary writers, Dekker amongst them, leave no shadow of doubt that the people who lived "upon the scraps of other mens invention" were regarded as being beneath contempt as men of letters. It is all the more to be regretted, then, that Dekker, whose genius should have placed him above such men, should have laid himself open to the imputation of plagiarism, of which his enemies were not slow to avail themselves.

(1) It may be mentioned, in defence of Dekker, that he seems to confess that the wares of, at any rate, the latter part of "The Belman", are not his in the words, "I learnt much by the Bell-mans intelligence .... what merchandise I stored my selfe with by both y^e^ Voiages here doe I unlade, ... the Lading was of sundry commodities" (G., III, 116). See also "Give thankes to The Bel-man of London, if either profit or pleasure bee gained by the Discoverie."

(2) To take an instance that, I think, has not before been noticed, almost the whole of the Dedication to "A Strange Horse-Race" and part of the Address to the Reader (G., III, 309-311) is to be found in Anthony Nixon's "Scourge Of Corruption" (1615). It is somewhat surprising that Nixon should have taken his "condimenta" from such a popular author as Dekker. Nixon also pilfers an anecdote from Greene's "The Third and last Part of Conny-catching."

6. Dekker's share in "The Belman of London." (1).

It remains to give some account of that part of "The Belman of London" - some one-third of the tract - which is directly from Dekker's pen. The Preface of course is his, so are the exordium and peroration (pp. 69-92 (2) and pp. 167-169) and the connecting link between accounts of the beggars and the cony-catchers (pp. 111-116).

The opening of the work with the "praise of the Country life", is delightfully fresh. "How happy, (how thrice happy) is hee that not playing with his winges in the golden flames of the Court, nor setting his foot into the busie throngs of the Cittie, nor running up, and downe, in the intricate mazes of the law, can bee content in the winter to sit by a country fire, and in the summer to lay his head on the greene pillowes of the earth? where his sleepe shall be soft slumbers and his wakings pleasant as golden dreames." (3)

The descriptions of the "Plants of the Field, and ... Flowers of the Garden! (Natures Apothecaries, & Earths Chirurgions!", of the summer-house "paved all over with yellow field-flowers, and with white & red dazies", and of the "melodie which the birdes made, and the varietie of all sorts of fruits which y^{e} trees promised, with y^{e} prettie & harmeles murmuring of a shallow streame

(1) A play of this name was written by Robert Daborne in August 1613. Greg thinks it was founded on Dekker's tract and its sequel (Henslowe Papers, p. 75).

(2) With exception of the account of the "Stalling of the Rogue" (pp. 83-84), which is from Harman.

(3) G., III, 71.

running in windings through y^{e} middest of it (whose noyse went like a chime of bels, charming the eyes to sleepe)" show that Dekker, primarily the artist of London life, had also the poet's eye for the beauties of nature.

The description of the cooking operations in preparation for the beggars' feast is done in Dekker's most spirited and humorous manner: "There was such chopping of hearbes, such tossing of ladels, such plucking of geese, such scalding of pigges, such singing, such scolding, such laughing, such swearing, such running too and fro, as if Pluto had that day bidden all his friendes to a feast, and that these had beene the Cookes that drest the dinner."

No less amusing are the descriptions of the "old nymble-tongd beldam" and of the Bellman. At the conclusion of the pamphlet Dekker, characteristically enough, employs a metaphor from war, and, like Greene, calls upon the people in authority to stamp out "these Savages".

Finally it must be remembered that the fiction which Dekker has used to narrate the impostures is his own. By means of the "nymble-tongd beldam" and of "The Belman of London", he is able to gather into one narrative the work of his predecessors in the literature of roguery.

If there is any justification to be found for his plagiarisms, it lies in the composite nature of the resultant work.

CHAPTER V.

"LANTHORNE AND CANDLE-LIGHT."

1. Bibliography.

Entry in the Stationers' Register:-

25 Octobris 1608

John Bushby Junior — Entred for his Copy under thandes of Master Willson and master warden Hooper a booke called Lanthorne and Candleli[illegible] or the second parte of the bellman . . . . . VI[d]

Early Editions:-

I. 1608.

Lanthorne / and Candle-light. / Or / The Bell-mans second Nights walke. / In which / Hee brings to light, a Broode of more strange Villanies, / then ever were till this yeare discovered. / - Decet novisse malum; fecisse, nefandum. / [Woodcut.] / London / Printed for John Busbie, and are to be sold at his shop in / Fleet-street, in Saint Dunstans Church-yard. / 1608.

This copy is in the Bodleian (Malone B. 93). I have also seen copies in the British Museum and in the Guildhall Library, the latter being Bright's copy.

Quarto. Unpaged. 43 leaves.

Collation:

(A_1) Title, verso "A Table of all the matters, that are conteined in this Discourse." A2 "To the very worthy Gentleman... " R-T. "The Epistle Dedicatory." A3 "To my owne Nation..." R-T.

"To my owne Nation." A4 and verso "To the Author..." B-L^{V} "Lanthorne and Candle-light, ..." Black Letter. R-T. "Lanthorne and Candle-light."

Leaves B and G3 are signed A and G5. Between B4 and C come two leaves signed C and B2. Fourth leaves unsigned except B4.

The divisions into Chapters 4 (D4), 5 (F3^{V}), 6 (F2^{V}), 7 (F3^{V}), 8 (G2^{V}), 9 (G4^{V}), 10 (H3), and 12 (K3) are omitted.

II. 1609.

Lanthorne / and Candle-light. / . . . . / The second edition, newly corrected and amended / [Woodcut.] / London / Printed for John Busby, and are to be solde at his shop in / streete [sic], in Saint Dunstanes Church-yard. 1609.

In the British Museum (C. 27. b. 27.). Quarto. Unpaged. 43 leaves.

Collation:-

(A1) Title, v. blank. A2 "A Table of all the matters ...." v. blank. A3 "To the verry worthy Gentleman ...." R-T. "The Epistle Dedicatory." (A4) "To my owne Nation." R-T. "To my owne Nation." B "To the Author." B2-L3^{V} "Lanthorne and Candle-light, ..." Black Letter. R-T. " Lanthorne and Candle-light."

Leaves I3 and L3 and fourth leaves not signed. Headings to Chapters 4 (E3), 6 (G^{V}), 7 (G2) and 12 (L) are included; otherwise as in edition of 1608.

III. 1609.

Hazlitt (in his "Handbook") and Bullen (in his article on Dekker in the "D. N. B.") mention another edition of 1609. I have not met with it as yet. On a leaf opposite the title page of

the Bodleian "English Villanies ... 1638." (Malone 603), Malone has written:

"There was an edition of this tract in 1610". Malone may have been mistaken in making this statement, or perhaps the edition of "1609" may belong to the early part of 1610.

IV. 1612.

O per se O. / Or / A new Cryer of Lanthorne and / Candle-light./ Being an Addition, or Lengthening, of the Bell- / mans Second Night-walke. / In which, are / Discovered those Villanies, which the Bell-man (because hee went / i'th darke) could not see: now laid open to the world. / Together / With the shooting through the arme, used by counterfeit Souldiers: / The making of the great Soare, (commonly called The great Cleyme:) The / Mad-mens markes: Their phrase of Begging: The Articles and / Oathes given to the Fraternitie of Roagues, Vagabonds, and / sturdy Beggers at their Meetings. / And last of all, / A new Canting-Song. / [Woodcut.] / Printed at London for John Busbie, and are to be sould at his shop / in S. Dunstans Church-yard in Fleete-street. 1612.

In the Bodleian (Art. 4°. G. 8. BS). This is Robert Burton's copy. Heber's copy is in the British Museum. There is also a copy at the Guildhall.

Quarto. Unpaged. 55 leaves.

Collation:-

(A1) Title, v.blank. A2 "To my owne Nation. ...." $A2^{V}$ "A Table of all the matters ...." A3-$K4^{V}$ "Lanthorne and Candle-light. Or The Bel-mans second nights walke." Black Letter. R-T. "The

Bel-mans night-walkes, / wherunto is added O per se O."

Sheet L is the title-page to "O per se O", which runs, [Ornament] / O per se O. / [Woodcut] / London: / Printed for John Busbie, and are to be sould at his shop in / Fleetestreet in S. Dunstans Church-yard. / 1612.

Collation:-

L Title, v. blank. L2-O3 "O, per se O." Black Letter. R-T. "O per se O." $O3^{v}$ is blank.

Leaves B2 and B3 are signed C2 and C3. Leaf L is missing in the Bodleian copy. It is contained in the two other copies mentioned above.

V. 1616.

Villanies / Discovered by Lanthorne and / Candle-light, and the helpe of a New / Cryer called O per se O. / Being an addition to the Belmans second Night-/walke: and a laying open to the world of those / Abuses, which the Bel-man (because he / went i' th darke) could not see. / With Canting Songs never before printed. / [Woodcut.] / London, / Printed for John Busby, and are to be sold at his shop in / St. Dunstanes Church-yard in Fleetstreete. / 1616.

This copy is in the Bodleian (Douce D. 204). Quarto. Unpaged. 60 leaves.

Collation:-

(A1) Title, verso "The Bel-mans Cry." A2 "To the Reader." verso "A Table of all the matters...." A3-$M4^{v}$ "The Bel-Mans Second Nights Walke." N-P4 "And now to our Discourse of O per se O, ..." in Black Letter. R-T. "The Bel-Mans night walkes. / Wherunto is added O per se O."

On Sept. 19, 1619, the following entry occurs in the Stationers' Register:-

gustine Assigned over unto him by John Busby and Consent of master
thewes Jaggard warden a booke called O per se O or the belman of London
. . . . . vi[d]

VI. 1620.

Villanies / Discovered By / Lanthorne and Candle-light, /..../ With Canting Songs, and other new conceits / never before Printed. / Newly corrected and enlarged by the Author. / [Woodcut.] / London,/ Printed by Aug. Mathewes dwelling in St. Brides lane / in Fleet-streete in the Parsonage house. 1620.

In the British Museum (C. 27. b. 7). Also in the Bodleian (1).

Quarto. Unpaged. 58 leaves.

Collation:-

(A1) Title, verso "The Bel-mans Cry." A2 "To the Reader." verso "A Table of all the matters...." . B-P4[v] "The Bel-Mans Second Nights Walke. With his O per se O." Black Letter. R-T. "The Bel-mans night-walkes, / Whereunto is added O per se O."

VII. 1632.

English Villanies / Six Severall Times / Prest to Death by the

(1) In the Bodleian Library, it is catalogued "1630". The lower half of the date has been cut away, but the edition is that of 1620, and agrees with the Museum copy in all particulars.

Printers; But / (still reviving againe) are now the seventh / time (as at first) discovered by Lanthorne / and Candle-light, And / The helpe of a New Cryer, called / O Per-Se-O: / Whose lowd voyce proclaimes to all / that will heare him, Another Conspiracie of / Abuses lately plotting together, to hurt the peace / of this Kingdome; which the Bell-man (because / hee then went stumbling i'th darke) could / Never see, till Now. / And because a Company of Rogues, cunning / Canting Gypsies, and all the scumme of our / Nation fight here under their owne / Tottered Colours: / At the end is a Canting Dictionary, to teach their / Language: with Canting Songs. / A Booke to make { Gentlemen Merry. / Citizens Warie. / Countreymen Carefull. Fit for all Justices to Reade over, because it is a Pilot, / by whom they may make Strange Discoveries. / London, / Printed by Augustine Matthewes, / and are to bee sold by John Grismond, at the Signe of the Gunne / in Ivie Lane. 1632.

In the Dyce Collection at South Kensington (2873).

Quarto. Unpaged. 56 pages.

Collation:-

(A1) Title, v. "The Bellmans Cry." A2 and verso "To the Glory of Middlesex, ..." A3 and verso "To the Reader." A4 and verso "A Table of all the matters ...." B-O4. "The Bel-Mans Second Nights Walke. With his O-Per-se-O." in Black Letter. R-T. "The Bel-mans Night-walkes. / Whereunto is added, O per se O." VIII. 1638.

English Villanies / Seven Severall Times / Prest to Death by the Printers; But (still / reviving againe) are now the eighth time,

...../ London, / Printed by M. Parsons and are to be sold by James Becket, at the / Inner-Temple Gate in Fleet-street. 1638.

Two copies of this edition are in the Bodleian - Malone 603, and Wood 371. The latter is uncut. There are also copies in the British Museum, in the Library at Trinity College, Cambridge and in the Huth Library.

Quarto. Unpaged. 56 pages.

Collation:- as in the edition of 1632.

IX. 1648.

English / Villanies, / Eight severall times Prest to Death by / the Printers; But still reviving againe) / are now the ninth time..... / London, / Printed by E.P. for Nicholas Gamage, and are to be / sold at his shop at the signe of the three Bibles on / London-Bridge, next the Gate. / 1648.

In the Bodleian (Wood 609). Also in the Museum.

Modern Editions:-

I. 1885.

That of Grosart, Vol.III, pp. 173-303. The text is that of the second edition of 1609 (see above II).

II. 1904.

That in Dent's "Temple Classics" pp. 161-273. The text is as in Grosart, except that the marginal Latin comments are omitted.

2. Notes on the Early Editions.

I. 1608.

Of the three friends to address commendatory verses to Dekker, "E. G:" and "M: R:" are unidentified. "Io: Da:" are the initials

of the dramatist John Day, with whom Dekker collaborated in the production of several plays. For the passage in the address to the Reader referring to Rowlands, see later, Section 5 .

II. 1609.

The text is as in 1608, except that, what in 1608 was represented by a dash, is in 1609 printed in full "Pamersiell" (1).

IV. 1612.

In his "Handbook", Hazlitt says, "This is the Belman of London, with 14 leaves at the end added, called O per se O." The error has been repeated by several later writers. "O per se O" is, of course, a reprint of "Lanthorne and Candle-light", with many omissions and additions.

In comparing this tract with "Lanthorne and Candle-light", we may notice that the Dedication to "Mr. Francis Mustian, of Peckam" is omitted, together with the commendatory verses upon Dekker. The latter's name nowhere appears in this tract. The Table of Contents is placed after the Address to the Readers. Otherwise the tract is the same.

A Title page and 14 leaves of new matter are added at the end, under the title "O per se O."

"O per se O" (2) begins with some rather slighting remarks

(1) G., III, 216.

(2) "O per se O" seems to have been a lewd Canting Song, of which the first few lines are given. Yet cf. the edition of 1616 (sign N) - "O per se O, under which name, the Author disguising and shaddowing himselfe". Mr. Chandler suggests the title may be an allusion to "It is I, I per se I, Robert Greene," in "Greenes Newes both from Heaven and Hell".

upon the Bellman's power of vision. Moreover it corrects two errors made by the Bellman "in his privie search". It is worthy of notice that Dekker's name is not affixed to this edition. The additions may belong to another hand - cf. the phrase "A new Cryer of Lanthorne and Candle-light." Yet Dekker incorporates the section in later editions.

"O per se O" treats entirely of beggars and not of cony-catchers. It gives new particulars as to the fairs they inhabit, and their reasons for haunting such places. It proposes to "shew those abuses naked to the world, which hee the Bellman never discovered", and gives new details about Abram-men, Counterfeit Soldiers, Dommerars and Clapperdogeons.

The chapter closes with a Canting Song "not fained or composed as those of the Bel-mans were, out of his owne braine [!] , but by the Canters themselves, and sung at their meetings."

V. 1616.

On the verso of the title, under the heading "The Bel-mans Cry" appear some doggerel verses beginning

"Men and Children, Maides and Wives,
Tis not too late to mend your lives".

The Address "To the Reader" is abbreviated, the passage-at-arms with Rowlands being omitted. Dekker mentions that he "(doth in a fourth set Battaile) once againe bravely advance forward, in maine Battalia. The day of encounter is appointed to be in this Easter Terme, & Trinitie Terme" (1).

(1) In previous editions "this Michaelmas Tearme." G., III, 182.

The chapter on "Canting" is placed last instead of first. Chap. I begins "It was Terme-time in Hell", see p. 205. From here the matter is the same to the words (p. 302) - "Of all which the Bel-man drawing foorth a perfect Map, they parted." The edition of 1616 proceeds, "But calling to minde the particular points of his commission: of which a principall one was, that hee should visite prisons, (in his Progresse,) Into a Jayle our infernall Catchpoll, the next morning convaid himselfe."

There follow six new chapters, with the headings "Certaine Discoveries of a Prison." , "Of Prisoners", "Of Creditors.", "Of choyce of company in a Prison.", "Of Visitants.", and "Of Jaylors.". Then comes the chapter on "Canting" (see pp. 187-204), followed by "O per se O" as in 1612, but with the addition of three more songs.

The marginal Latin comments of the previous editions are omitted in this and subsequent editions.

VI. 1620.

It has hitherto been supposed that this edition is the same as that of 1616. But on sign.C3^{v} of the edition of 1620 is inserted a lengthy passage (1) concerning the doings of "the Imposter", a very unmannerly person who haunts Ordinaries - "he cares not on whome hee spits, whose Clooke he teares with his Spurs, nor whose name he durties with foule reproches". He takes as his protégé some wealthy youngster, and fleeces him of his money. There is also a description of the "deluder", who has "a most excellent

(1) In Grosart's edition it would come after the end of the first paragraph on p. 227.

hatcht Silver Rapier" for a looking-glass when playing cards.

VII. 1632.

The verses on the verso of the title are as in 1616, with six lines omitted. The Dedication "To the Glory of Middlesex, The Honourable and worthily deserving Gentlemen, His Maiesties Justices for the Peace in that populous Countie." is wholly new. It contains the well-known reference to his "threescore yeeres". The Address to the Reader is also new. It begins, "It is now about 18. yeeres past, (1) since a bed of strange Snakes were found".

The prison sections of 1616 and 1620 are omitted. In their place are chapters on "The Abuses done to Prisoners, by over-cruell Creditors.", "The Villanies and abuses committed by Politicke Banck-rupts.", "The Prisoners Supplication.", "The Abuses of Keepers, Nurses, or Chare-women.", and "The abuses of Ale-houses.". The chapter on "Abuses in the Suburbs by common Strumpets, &c." mentioned in the Table of Contents is not given in the text (2).

VIII. 1638.

The edition of 1638 is a reprint of that of 1632. After the word "FINIS", however, occur the words

Febru. 27. Recudatur

1637. [i.e. 1638] Matth. Clay.

(1) In 1638 - "twenty yeeres past". What "bed of strange Snakes" was found in 1614 or in 1618? The brood of "witty Cheators, Tame Cony-catchers, and suttle Crosse-biters" to which he refers was discovered forty years past.

(2) There is no space to devote a section to the prison chapters of 1616 and 1632. A consideration of the relation which these chapters bear to Geffray Mynshul's "Essayes and Characters" (1618) and to William Fennor's "The Compters Commonwealth" (1617) and of the debt which these two books owe to "Villanies Discovered" forms a very interesting problem.

IX. 1648.

This is a reprint of the edition of 1638. It lacks the colophon quoted above.

3. Sources.

"Lanthorne and Candle-light" contains much more of Dekker's original work than does its predecessor. The borrowings are almost all to be found in the first chapter, and are nearly all taken from the early beggar-books.

From "The hye way to the Spyttell hous", Dekker takes the Canting song beginning "Enough - with bowsy Cove maund Nace" (1). In Copland's tract, these words are spoken by the Porter, and the first word "Enough" represents the "Inow. ynow" by which the Porter cuts off Copland's question as to whether any pedlers come that way to the "Spytell hous". (2)

From Harman Dekker takes the list of the "Wild-men" (3) (pp. 192-193), the information as to the fate of the first inventor of Canting (p. 193), the particulars about Canting on pp. 195-196, the speech of "A Canter in prose" and the translation thereof (p.198), and "The Canters Dictionarie" (199-202). It is interesting to mark that most of these borrowings were noted by Robert Burton in his copy of "O per se O" (now in the Bodleian).

The allusion to the monosyllabic character of the English language (p. 188) may have been suggested by the well-known passage

(1) G., III, 197.

(2) In Dekker, "thus he a Canter singes (uppon demaund whether any of his owne crue did come that way)".

(3) The order is that of Harman, not that of the "Belman Of London."

in Nashe's "Christs Teares Over Jerusalem" (1594), although such allusions are fairly common.

The practice of rubbing horses' teeth with tallow in order to take away their appetite (pp. 298-299) is referred to in Robert Wilson's play, "The Three Ladies of London" (1584). See also "A Wonderfull, strange and miraculous, Astrologicall Prognostication for this year of our Lord God. 1591.", attributed by some to Nashe. On Sign. C4 occur the words, "But take heed, O you generation of wicked Ostlers, that steale haie in the night from gentlemens horses, and rub their teth with tallow, that they may eate little when they stand at livery".

But only the idea of the incident is borrowed. The vivid description of it is all Dekker's own.

4."Lanthorne and Candle-light."

The first chapter is in the nature of an introduction to the book. "The Bel-Mans Second Nights walke" really begins at Chap.II. This chapter describes the fiction which Dekker uses in order that the villanies which he has to expose may be set forth in some connected fashion.

The scene is Hell at "Terme time" (1). News arrives of the great harm "a common Night-walker," the Bellman of London, had done to the Devil's followers by his exposures. They discuss various methods of stopping this sort of thing. In the end they determine to send one of their own number to earth to work and win people

(1) G., III, 205. Cp. Newes from Hell, II, 126, "it was quarter Sessions in Hell". The description of the lower regions in "Lanthorne and Candle-light" was evidently suggested by his "Newes from Hell", which had appeared some two years before.

"by all possible meanes to fight under the dismall and blacke collours of the Grand Sophy, (his Lord and Master)" (1). The Messenger departs for earth, with the counsel, "If thou meetst a Dutchman, drinke with him: if a Frenchman, stab: if a Spaniard, betray: if an Italian poyson: if an Englishman doe all this." (2)

On reaching London, he meets with "Pride, drest like a Marchants wife" (3). She counsels him to dress himself well, "for that here, men were look'd uppon onely for their outsides". He thereupon transforms himself into a gallant, with "a fether for his head, gilt rapier for his sides, and new boots to hide his polt foote", and betakes himself to an Ordinary, "the only Rendevouz for the most ingenious, most terse, most travaild, and most phantastick gallant". (4)

The remainder of the tract consists of a narration of the villanies witnessed by the "divels intelligencer" in his wanderings. Perhaps the most interesting to modern eyes is the account of the deceits of "Falconers."

These Falconers are authors who dedicate their books to several Knights and Gentlemen, so that "One booke hath seaven score patrons", "y^{e} epistles Dedicatory being all one, and vary in nothing but in the titles of their patrons." (5) There are men that use even "stranger Quaile-pipes: . . . that buying up any old Booke

(1) G., III, 215.

(2) G., III, 216.

(3) Cp. Nashe's "Pierce Penilesse" sign. B3^{v} for a section on "The pride of Marchants wives".

(4) G., III, 221.

(5) G., III, 244.

(especially a Sermon, or any other matter of Divinity) that lies for wast paper, and is clean forgotten, ad a new-printed Epistle to it, and with an Alphabet of letters which they cary about them, being able to print any mans names (for a Dedication) on the suddaine" (1).

After a rhetorical condemnation of this "Base-broode" Dekker attends "The true picture of these Falconers" "though it were drawne to be hung up in another place". Here, as in so many of his works, he evinces his contempt for the poetasters,

"Mechanicke knaves,

Whose wits lye deeper buried then in graves".

After the revelation of many other villanies, the Devil's messenger falls in with the Bellman, and taking him for some "churlish Hobgoblin", the"Mariner of hell" reveals his discoveries to him. "Of all which the Bell-man drawing forth a perfect Map, they parted: which Map he hath set out in such collors as you see, tho not with such cunning as he could wish" (2).

It must be confessed that "Lanthorne and Candle-light" drags somewhat. There is a considerable amount of bookkeeping in the tract. Moreover it is not so replete with human interest as are those of Robert Greene's. More emphasis is laid upon the technicalities of the fraud than upon the personality of the defrauder.

(1) G., III, 245-6. It has not, I think, been noted that Dekker's Newes from Hell" (1606) is dedicated to two patrons. In the Bodleian copy, it is dedicated "To the very Worthy Gentleman, Sir John Hamden Knight.", in the British Museum copy "To my most respected, loving, and Iuditious friend Mr. John Sturman Gentleman." It is not necessary, however, to accuse Dekker of having been guilty of the practice which he condemned so vigorously.

(2) G., III, 302.

It is only at the close that the book gets to the bedrock of life, and the pages which describe the "couzning Bankrupts", "certaine Murderers and Theeves", the slinking Ostler, running Mid-wives, and plague-stricken or dishonest servants are the most vivid and most interesting in the book.

5. The Dekker-Rowlands Quarrel.

In the Address to the Readers of "Lanthorne and Candle-light" there is the following passage:-

"There is an Usurper, that of late hath taken uppon him the name of the Bel-man, but being not able to maintaine that Title, hee doth now call himselfe the Bel-mans brother: his ambition is (rather out of vaine glorie then the true courage of an Experienced Soldier) to have the leading of the Van, but it shall be honor good enough for him (if not too good) to come up with the Rere. You shall know him by his Habiliments, for (by the furniture he weares) hee will bee taken for a Beadle of Bridewell. It is thought he is rather a Newter than a friend to the cause: and therefore the Bel-man dooth heere openly protest that he comes into the field as no fellowe in armes with Him." (1)

In "Martin Mark-All, Beadle Of Bridewell; His defence and Answere to the Belman of London." (2) Samuel Rowlands took Dekker's words to apply to himself.

With the body of the tract we are not concerned. Rowlands

(1) G., III, 182.

(2) S.R. Mar. 31, 1610. Printed in the same year.

describes the "Convocation of Canting Caterpillars", called together to protest against the exposures of "the good old Bel-man of London". One of their number "gives them al to know, that this invective was set foorth, made, and printed above Fortie yeeres agoe. And being then called, A caveat for Cursitors, is now newly printed, and termed, The Bel-man of London".

Unfortunately they do not know the Bellman's name, "all because the spightfull Poet would not set too his name."

Upon the appearance of another pamphlet from his pen, the fury of the assembly knows no bounds. Their commander makes a speech, in which he points out that "two malitious and iniurious Pamphlets: concerning us and our whole course of life" have lately been written by "an upstart pamphlet maker and a most iniurious and Satiricall Libeller...you shall not need to enquire and search for the Author, or his name of this invective, for he is knowen. And in his second Round as he calles it, hath set to his name". (1)

Later in the tract, Rowlands writes,

"because the Belman entreateth any that is more rich in canting, to lend him better or more with variety (2), he will repay his love double: I have thought good not only to shew his errour in some places in setting downe olde wordes used fortie yeeres agoe before he was borne; for wordes that are used in these dayes (although he is bold to call me an usurper (3) (for so he doth in his last round)

(1) "The Belman of London" was published anonymously. Dekker signed his name to "Lanthorne and Candle-light".

(2) G., III, 202 - "if any that is more rich in this Canting commodity will lend him any more, or any better, hee will pay his love double".

(3) G., III, 182.

and not able to mayntayne the title) But have enlarged his Dictionary (or Master Harmans) with such wordes as I thinke he never heard of (and yet in use too) ... it shall be honour good enough for him (if not too good) to come up with the Reare (1) (I doe but shoote your owne arrow backe againe) and not to have the leading of the Van as he meanes to doe".

After giving a revised Dictionary and a few Canting songs, Rowlands closes the subject with the words,

"And whereas he disclaims the name of Brother-hood, I here utterly renounce him & his fellowship, as not desirous to be resolved of anything he professeth on this subject, knowing myselfe to be as fully instructed herein as ever he was. But hereof enough; if not more than enough".

Collier (2) says of the above passages:-

"Samuel Rowlands, in his "Martin Mark-All", accuses the unknown author of the "Belman of London" of stealing from Harman's book. ... This exposure roused the ire of Dekker in his "Lanthorne and Candle-light", but he made no sufficient reply."

This statement is manifestly incorrect. Rowlands distinctly refers to and quotes from"Lanthorne and Candle-light"in "Martin Mark-All". Moreover Dekker's tract was printed two years before that of Rowlands. "Martin Mark-All" could not then, have been the tract that called forth Dekker's remarks.

(1) G., III, 182 - "it shall be honor good enough for him (if not too good) to come up with the Rere."

(2) Furnivall and several other writers on the subject have followed Collier.

It is evident that some rogue pamphlet by Rowlands had appeared between the publications of the "Belman of London" and "Lanthorne and Candle-light", in which Rowlands claims kinship with the Bellman, a kinship which Dekker indignantly repudiated. The work which called forth this repudiation has perished.

From Dekker's sarcastic remark "(by the furniture he weares) hee will bee taken for a Beadle of Bridewell" -, it seems probable that in the lost tract, Rowlands adopted the pseudonym "Beadle of Bridewell", in imitation of Dekker's "Belman of London". He still clings to the phrase in "Martin Mark-All, Beadle of Bridewell".

There are one or two rather mysterious points in this controversy. Rowlands accuses Dekker of purloining Harman's goods. Why does he make no mention of Dekker's numerous plagiarisms from his own tract "Greenes Ghost Haunting Cony-Catchers"? Again he must have recognised the many borrowings from Greene's cony-catching pamphlets. The reason for this silence may be,as Mr. Chandler points out, (1) that no doubt he realised that by calling attention to his rival's excerpts he would inevitably expose his own!

(1) In his "Literature of Roguery", vol. I, chap. III.

CHAPTER VI.

Dekker's Prose-Works.

1. The value of Dekker's Prose-Works as revelations of the social life of the times.

The Elizabethan age was an age in which life was lived at high pressure. The flooding of the country with Renaissance ideas and the discovery of a New World beyond the seas enlarged the vision and imagination of men. Life became a full-blooded and joyous matter, crowded with adventure. Whether one sailed into the sea of thought or into the sea of the Western Ocean, the voyage was fraught with great possibilities. Art, which is the expression of life, expressed this rich and manifold life in rich and manifold ways in the efflorescence of poetry, belles-lettres, and, above all, of the drama of what we are accustomed to call the Golden Age of English literature. It was Dekker's good fortune to be born in these "spacious days", and to begin his career at the outset of this great outburst of achievement. Dekker was a man alive to life at many points, and, living as he did, in a town bustling with energy and gaiety, his mind became stored with the customs and characters of a variety of men and women. He drew upon this storehouse of his mind in writing his pamphlets, and the consequence is that they picture, perhaps better than the works of any other man, the life of Elizabethan London. They do, in truth, show "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

As in the case of so many other pamphleteers, many of the authentic glimpses we have of the life of the times are couched in the form of satire. Dekker's satire has not the "sharpe and Satyricall spirit" of "ingenious, ingenuous, fluent, facetious, T. Nash" (1), but his gifts of humour, of sarcasm and of observation make his satire sufficiently formidable, and save it from degenerating into invective.

It is the aim of the satirist to lash those things in the life around him which he considers wrong, and desires to see reformed or removed. In Elizabethan times the manner in which certain persons or certain defects in administration are satirised, time and again, by different hands, is very remarkable. It points not so much to lack of originality among the satirists, as to the glaring and irksome nature of the things satirised. Usury, Politic Bankruptcy, Immorality, the extravagance and flippancy of women, the effeminacy of men, Tobacco-smoking, these and many other vices are pilloried, again and again, in the pages of Elizabethan satirists. They occur in the pamphlets of Dekker, but, with this difference, that there they are treated with more vigour, with more insight, and with more literary art than in the works of most of his contemporaries. Let us glance at his treatment of some of the abuses of the time.

As an example of the comprehensive nature of his satire, take his description of the crowd awaiting the arrival of Charon's boat to take them over to Hell:-

"Amongst whom there were Courtyers, that brought with em whole trunks of apparell, which they had bought, and large pattents for

(1) G., II, 103.

Monopolyes, which they had beg'd: Lawyers loaden with Leases, and with purchased Lordships, Cleargy men, so pursy and so windlesse, with bearing three or four Church livings that they could scarce speake: Merchants laden with baggs of gold, for which they had robd their princes custome; Schollers with Aristotle and Ramus in cloake-bags, (as if they ment to pull downe the Divell in disputation, being the subtillest Logician, but full of Sophistry: Captayns, some in guilt armor (unbattred,) some in buffe Jerkins, plated o're with massy silver lace, (rayzd out of the ashes of dead pay,) and banckrupt citizens, in swarmes like porters sweating basely under the burdens of that, for which other men had sweat honestly before" (1).

All sorts and conditions of men come under the lash of his satire - Popes, Lords, Aldermen, Ladies, Lawyers, Soldiers and Players. But it is upon the Usurer especially, that he pours the vials of his wrath.

The Usurer is a typical figure in Elizabethan satire. The accumulation of wealth, and especially of wealth in the shape of money, which was so noteworthy a feature of the age of Elizabeth, increased the desire to lend at interest. The law, though professing to condemn the practice, shut its eyes to the abuse, and in practice limited its efforts to keeping the rate of interest reasonably low. (2) It was not very successful, however, and the exorbitant demands and miserly habits of the usurers aroused the wrath of satirists, many of whom derived their knowledge of the cruelty and obduracy of these creatures from bitter experience. Dekker calls them "the Divels Ingles," that "dwell in the long

(1) G., II, 118.

(2) In Elizabethan times, the usual rate seems to have been thirty per cent. The Usurer in "Newes from Hell" is called "Sir Timothie, Thirtie per Centum" G., II, 137.

lane of hell" (1), and when in "Newes from Hell" he describes the lower regions, one of the most pitiable objects to be found there is "Mounsieur Mony-monger", an Usurer. In "The Ravens Almanacke", the villanies and the cruelty of an Usurer are shown in a particularly unfavourable light (2); and in "Worke For Armorours", he says of the Usurer, -

"There is more Conscience in him then in Taverne faggots, yet yong gentlemen pray for him daily that he may be fetched quick to hell. - - - - He is the Divels Tole-taker, and when he dies, lies buried with his ancestors in the widest vault of hell." (3)

Both the Usurer and the Broker are usually represented as being extremely covetous and miserly, vices which sorted ill with Dekker's open and generous nature. Here is the picture of Covetousness, drawn in "Worke For Armorours" (IV, 128):-

"Covetousnesse was an old wretched leane fac'd fellow, that seldom sleep'd: for his eyes (though they were great, and suncke at least two inches into his head) never stood still, but rolled up and downe, expressing a very envious longing greedinesse to enioy every thing that they looked upon. - - - - Hee kept not so much as a Barber, but shaved his owne head and beard himselfe, and when it came to wey a pound, hee sold it to a Frenchman to stuffe tennis balles. - - - - Yet was he well beloved of the best Citizens, and never rode through the city but he was staied, and feasted by many Aldermen, and wealthy Commoners: few Courtiers loved him heartily, but onely made use of him, because he was great, and could do much with Money (their empresse.)" (4).

"Politick Bankruptisme" is another of Dekker's bugbears. It is the first of the "Seven deadly Sinnes" of London. The wiles

(1) G., I, 87. Long Lane, which came out of Aldersgate Street by the Barbican and led to West Smithfield, was famous for Usurers and Brokers. Dekker again refers to the "brokers of Long Lane" in "Newes from Hell" II, 137, and in the "Ravens Almanacke",IV, 175.

(2) G., IV, 229-242 - "An excellent dyet for an Usurer, when his conscience is starved."

(3) G., IV, 132.

(4) Cp. the companion picture of "Parsimonie" - IV, 133.

of the Bankrupt are described in these terms:-

"after he hath gotten into his hands so much of other mens goods or money, as will fill him to the upper deck, away he sayles with it, and politickly runnes himselfe on ground, to make the world beleeve he had suffered shipwrack." (1)

After hiding from his Creditors for some time, he comes marching back again to the City with spread colours,

"advances in the open streete as he did before; sels the goods of his neighbor before his face without blushing: he iets up and downe in silks woven out of other mens stocks, feeds deliciously upon other mens purses, rides on his ten pound Geldings, in other mens saddles, & is now a new man made out of wax, thats to say, out of those bonds, whose seales he most dishonestly hath canceld. O velvet-garded Theeves! O-yea-and-by-nay Cheaters! O Civill, O Grave and Right-Worshipfull Conzeners."

In the last tract Dekker wrote, he includes a chapter on "The Villanies and abuses committed by Politicke Banck-rupts", in which he calls this sort of creature "a voluntary Villayn, a devouring Locust, a destroying Caterpiller, a golden theefe." (2)

Of the more general vices of the community, Dekker is an equally censorious critic. The immorality, extravagance, foppishness, sloth, and cruelty of the times are all condemned in many a searching passage. Of these vices perhaps the most noticeable was the extravagance and the increasing effeminacy rife among all classes of that day. William Harrison lamented this vice some years before Dekker began to write. "O how much cost is bestowed nowadays upon our bodies, and how little upon our souls. - - - -

(1) G., II, 22.

(2) "English Villanies" (1632).

when our houses were built of willow, then had we oaken men; but, now that our houses are come to be made of oak, our men are not only become willow, but a great many through Persian delicacy crept in among us altogether of straw: which is a sore alteration."

Dekker includes among the "Seven deadlie Sinnes" of London that of "Apishnesse", and satirises the custom of running after foreign fashions in much the same manner as do Shakespeare and many others -

"an English-mans suite is like a traitors bodie that hath beene hanged, drawne, and quartered, and is set up in severall places: his Codpeece is in Denmarke; the collor of his Duble, and the belly in France: the wing and narrow sleeve in Italy: the short waste hangs over a Dutch Botchers stall in Utrich: his huge sloppes speakes Spanish: Polonia gives him the Bootes: the blocke for his heade alters faster than the Feltmaker can fitte him, and thereupon we are called in scorne Blockheades. And thus we that mocke everie Nation, for keeping one fashion, yet steale patches from everie one of them, to peece out our pride, are now laughing-stocks to them, because their cut so scurvily becomes us" (1).

He is equally severe upon the growing effeminacy of the age. He puts into Charon's mouth the words,

"whereas in the olde time, men had wont to come into his boate all slasht, (some with one arme, some with never a leg, and others with heads like calves cleft to their shoulders, and the mouths of their very wounds gaping so wide, as if they were crying A boat, a boat,) now contrariwise, his fares are none, but those that are poysoned by their wives for lust, or by their heires for living, or burnt by whores, or reeling into hell out of caverns: or if they happen to come bleeding, their greatest glory is a stab, upon the giving of a lye." (2)

Leaving Dekker's satire, and turning to his tracts for the descriptions of everyday life that he gives us, we shall be struck by the way in which he keeps to the streets of London. It is true that Dekker, like all Poets, loved the Flowers of the Country, and

(1) G., II, 59-60. See also "Newes from Hell", II, 114, and "Dekker his Dreame" - III, 49, the "Pride of woman (and in that the effeminacy of men in this age)".

(2) G., II, 123. The passage may be found versified in "If It Be Not Good", P., III, 266.

it is true that there is a passage at the commencement of "The Belman Of London", already quoted in another connection, in which he praises the Country life at the expense of the life of the City. But it is significant that this mood does not last long, and that after further acquaintance with the country-life he says,

"I began to hate it worse than (before) I loved it, I fell to dispraise it faster than ever I did commend it. For I found it full of care, and full of craft; full of labour, and yet full of penury; - - - I had heard of no sinne in the Cittie, but I met it in the village" (1).

Dekker was a Londoner by birth. His whole life was bound up with the City, and, despite her hard usage of him, she had a strong hold on his affections until the end. His works teem with references to the everyday sights and sounds of London streets, and contain an almost unworked mine of material for the student of Jacobean Society. There one may find information upon almost every familiar figure of Elizabethan London - the Lord and his Lady, the gallant, the merchant, the lawyer, the soldier, the Jailor, the Courtesan, the Thief, the Player, the Poet and the Ballad-maker, to mention only a very few. No occupation, however humble, seems to have escaped his observation. As an example, take the numerous references in his pamphlets to the fiddlers - the Elizabethan substitutes for German bands and barrel-organs.

The love of music was much more widespread in Elizabethan days than it is to-day, and the Elizabethan knew much more about it than

(1) G., III, 112-113.

the average man of to-day (1). The fiddler was a familiar figure in the taverns and streets of Jacobean London. It is only to be expected, then, that he should frequently appear in Dekker's pages. In "The Wonderfull yeare" Dekker speaks of "a single sole Fidler, that reeles from Taverne to Taverne" (2). Of the poverty of these people he speaks in the phrase "Fidlers that scrape for a poore living both day and night" (3), and in the "Whore of Babylon" when he likens Art to

"common Fidlers, drawing downe others meate
With lickorish tunes, whilst they on scraps do eate." (4)

He refers to their importunity in "Newes from Hell" when he says that the Devil's acquaintance "is more cheape, then a common Fidlers", and again "a fiddler heares not the creeking of a window sooner." (5) In "If It Be Not Good" mention is made of "seven score Noise of english fidlers - - - - they are able to eate up a citie in very scraps." (6) In "The Belman Of London" he speaks of "those terrible Noyses, (with thred-bare cloakes) that

(1) As an instance, see "The severall Notorious and lewd Cousnages of John West, and Alice West" sign. C2. The woman goes to a Grocer's shop "to cheapen a Sugar-loafe." She leaves her bastard there saying that she will soon be back; "the Grocer Suspecting nothing lets her goe quite a way with the Sugar-loafe: and takes his Lute, for hee much delighted in that Instrument, and played" in order to amuse the child.

(2) G., I, 84.

(3) "The Seven deadly Sinnes" II, 42.

(4) P., II, 225.

(5) G., II, 96 and 121.

(6) P., III, 288.

live by red lattises and Ivy-bushes, having authority to thrust into any mans roome, onely speaking but this, Will you have any musicke?" (1)

And he refers to all these characteristics in this passage from "The Ravens Almanacke" (IV, 193) -

"O you common Fidlers - - - that scrape out a poore living out of dryed Cats guts: I prophecie that many of you shall this yeare be troubled with abhominable noises and singing in your heads: insomuch that a great part of you shall dye beggers, and those that survive shall feede uppon melody for want of meate, playing by two of the clock in a frostie morning under a Window, and then bee mock'd with a shilling tyed (through a hole) to a string, which shall be throwne to make it Jingle in your ears, but presently be drawn up againe, whilst you rake in the dust for a largesse."

Some of the most interesting and illuminating hints he gives us about the life of the day are mere chance remarks. It may be the "common Fidlers", the Captain at dicing ordinaries, the young country gentleman at cock-pits, the shopkeeper "at a bowling alley in a flat cap", the white frocks of Porters, the gallants at the Tobacco-shop in Fleet Street, the Swans that in Shakespeare's day swam up and down the Thames, or "the smoky sailes of westerne barges". Nothing seems too trivial for his notice, and he never fails to invest what he touches with some degree of interest.

Dekker's pamphlets are also the source of much of our information about the Elizabethan theatre. The locus classicus is of course the sixth chapter of "The Guls Horne-booke", but as we should expect from so prolific a playwright, his prose-works are crowded with allusions to or similes drawn from the theatre. In

(1) G., III, 81. See also "The Guls Horne-booke" II, 258 - "Fidlers (who by the statute have as much libertie as Roagues to travell into any place, having the passport of the house about them).

"The Wonderfull yeare" alone there are over fourteen references to dramatic affairs. He refers there to the boy-actors of the day, and to the practice of touring abroad -

"The worst players boy - - - swearing tragicall and buskind oaths, that how villanously soever he randed, - - - he would in despite of his honest audience, be half a sharer (at least) at home, or else strowle - - - with some notorious wicked floundring companie abroade." (1)

Here is a sketch of an afternoon performance at one of the London theatres -

"their i.e. the Players' houses smoakt every after noon with Stinkards who were so glewed together in crowdes with the Steame of strong breath, that when they came foorth, their faces lookt as if they had beene per boylde: And this Comicall Tearme-time they hoped for, at the least all the summer, because tis given out that Sloth himselfe will come, and sit in the two-pennie galleries amongst the Gentlemen, and see their Knaveries and their pastimes." (2)

Or take this more brilliant picture, -

"when at a new play you take up the twelve-penny roome next the stage; (because the Lords and you may seeme to be haile fellow wel-met) there draw forth this booke, read alowd, and play the Antickes, that all the garlike mouthd stinkards may cry out, Away with the fool." (3)

In addition we find mention of the custom of flying flags whenever there was to be a performance (IV, 96), of the trap-doors by which the Players went down to "Hell" (II, 92), of the custom of clapping down the windows at a private Playhouse when a Tragedy was to be played (II, 41), or of the "foysts" that crowd round the playhouse door at a new play (II, 327).

(1) G., I, 100. (2) G., II, 53.

(3) G., II, 203. Cp. also "The Ravens Almanacke", IV, 194 - "the basest stinkard in London, whose breth is stronger then Garlicke, and able to poison all the 12-penny roomes".

Dekker twice refers to the good houses which a new play drew. The people crowd around Charon's boat "as if it had beene at a new Play". Men crowd around the entrance to hell

> "As at some direfull Tragoedy (before
> Not Acted), men prease round about the dore
> Crowding for entrance, yet non entrance have,
> But (like toss'd billowes) this and that way Wave" (1).

Other examples could be quoted to show his knowledge of Law, of the Plague of Prisons and of the innumerable trades and professions of the day. We will quote in conclusion two brilliant pen-pictures - one of London by day, the other of London by night.

London by day, then as now, was noted for the bustle of its streets. Frederick, Duke of Wirtemberg remarked "London is a very populous city, so that one can scarcely pass along the streets, on account of the throng." I know of no passage so vigorous or so realistic as this one which describes the freedom, freshness and bustle of the streets of Elizabethan London at midday:

"in every street, carts and Coaches make such a thundring as if the world runne upon wheeles: at everie corner, men, women, and children meete in such shoales, that postes are sette up of purpose to strengthen the houses, least with iustling one another they should shoulder them downe. Besides, hammers are beating in one place, Tubs hooping in another, Pots clincking in a third, water-tankards a running at tilt in a fourth: heere are Porters sweating under burdens, there Marchants-men bearing bags of money, Chapmen (as if they were at Leape-frog) skippe out of one shop into another: Tradesmen (as if they were dauncing Galliards (are lusty at legges and never stand still: all are as busie as countrie Atturneyes at an Assises" (2).

So much for London by day. In the same pamphlet, we shall find an equally brilliant picture of London in the gloaming, or,

(1) G., III, 35.

(2) G., II, 50-51.

as Dekker puts it, at the approach of Candlelight.

"No sooner was he advaunced up into the moste famous Streetes, but a number of shops for ioy beganne to shut in: Mercers rolde up their silkes and Velvets: the Goldsmithes drew backe their Plate, & all the Citty lookt like a Private Play-house, when the windowes are clapt downe, as if some Nocturnal, or dismall Trogedy were presently to be acted before all the Trades-men. But Cavaliero Candle-light came for no such solemnitie: No he had other Crackers in hand, to which hee watcht but his houre to give fire. Scarce was his entrance blown abroad, but the Banckrupt, the Fellon, and all that owed any mony, and for feare of arrests, or Justices warrants, had like so many Snayles kept their houses over their heads al the day before, began now to creep out of their shels, & to stalke up & down the streets as uprightly, & with as proud a gate as if they meant to knock against the starres with the crownes of their heads." (1)

These two companion pictures illustrate the peculiar value which Dekker's tracts have as revelations of the social life of the period. For in his pages you may see

"in one and the same ranke, yea, foote by foote, and elbow by elbow, - - - the Knight, the Gull, the Gallant, the upstart, the Gentleman, the Clowne, the Captaine, the Appel-squire, the Lawyer, the Usurer, the Cittizen, the Bankerout, the Scholler, the Begger, the Doctor, the Ideot, the Ruffian, the Cheater, the Puritan, the Cut-throat, the Hye-men, the Low-men, the True-man, and the Thiefe: of all trades & professions some, of all Countreyes some" (2).

2. The value of Dekker's Prose-Works as Literature.

In this thesis we are discussing only one side of Dekker's work. His versatility, like that of many contemporary writers, is very astonishing. In drama some of his work is equal to that of any other playwright except Shakespeare. He was the conceiver of Simon Eyre, of Bellamont, of old Friscobaldo, and of Dorothea.

(1) G., II, 41.

(2) G., IV, 51.

He wrote some of the tenderest and most beautiful lyrics in the English language. Indeed in the divine gift of tenderness he comes very near to rivalling the Shakespeare. Witness the well-known words of manly piety put into the mouth of Candido the linen-draper, (1) or that most beautiful of cradle-songs - the "sweet-tunde" lullaby sung by Janiculo to "charm the eyes" of Grissill's babies (2). "Dekker had poetry enough for any thing". His work has in it "those brave translunary spirings" which make this age so marvellous in achievement. Then again there comes from his pen a book of prayers written in remarkably beautiful English, and quite apart from the remainder of his work. And lastly we have the numerous pamphlets in which he satirises or describes the people and customs of his day. We are here concerned only of the prose-works, but it is only by remembering his work in the drama, in poetry, and in devotional literature that we shall be able to arrive at any true estimate of the man and his work.

Before proceeding to discuss the literary value of Dekker's prose-works, it will be as well to say something of the influence of his predecessors. It is characteristic of one whose works are replete with a fine and healthy patriotism that he should take a keen interest in the literary history of his country. He shows this interest in the fine passage in "A Knights Coniuring" (3) in which he describes the abode of the poets in the "Insulae

(1) P., II, 90.

(2) G., V, 193.

(3) Not reprinted by Grosart. It was edited for the Percy Society by E. F. Rimbault in 1842.

Fortunatae".

"Full of pleasant Bowers and queint Arboures is all this Walke. In one of which, old Chaucer, reverend for prioritie, blythe in cheare, buxsome in his speeche, and benigne in his haviour, is circled a round with all the Makers or Poets of his time - - - Grave Spencer was no sooner entred into this Chappell of Apollo, but these elder Fathers of the divine Furie, gave him a Lawrer & sung his welcome: Chaucer call'de him his Sonne, and plac'de him at his right hand. All of them - - - closing up their lippes in silence, and tuning all their eares for attention, to heare him sing out the rest of his Fayrie Queenes praises.

In another companie sat learned Watson, industrious Kyd, ingenious Atchlow, and (tho hee had bene their Lover, and a Register to the Muses, Inimitable Bentley: - - - Marlow, Greene, and Peele had got under the shades of a large vyne, laughing to see Nash (that was but newly come to their Colledge,) still haunted with the sharpe and Satyricall spirit that followd him heere upon earth".

For the genial Chaucer Dekker had a great regard. He loved the homely realism and worldly wisdom of the "Canterbury Tales" (1). But the influence of Spenser, Marlowe, Kyd and Peele is more visible in his plays and in his poetry than in his prose-works. "Euphues" and the "Arcadia" seem to have affected him very little. In the "Guls Horne-booke" he speaks with comtempt of "the Arcadian and Euphuizd gentlewomen". But Greene and Nashe are the writers who perhaps exercised the strongest influence upon his prose style. Dekker did not learn so much from Greene's romantic tales, but the cony-catching pamphlets and the series of confessions all dealing with London life influenced him greatly both in subject and in style. That he borrowed from Greene freely we have already pointed out. He also learnt from Greene not only the power of making his

(1) He quotes Chaucer in "A Strange Horse-Race" (G., III, 336-337), alludes to his "Kentish tales"in "A Rod for Run-awayes" (G., IV, 302), and mentions the "Canterbury Tales" in "North-Ward Hoe" (P., III, 52).

characters live in the eyes of the reader, but also the power of making them speak in the vivid and picturesque language of everyday life.

Dekker's debt to Nashe is even greater than his debt to Greene. If Dekker could be said to be any man's disciple, he is Nashe's. In "Newes from Hell", he speaks of thatauthor in the well-known words,

"ingenious, ingenuous, fluent, facetious, T. Nash: from whose aboundant pen, hony flow'd to thy friends, and mortall Aconite to thy enemiees: thou that madest the Doctor a flat Dunce, and beat'st him at two sundry tall Weapons, Poetrie, and Oratorie: Sharpest Satyre, Luculent Poet, Elegant Orator" (1).

And in "A Knights Coniuring" he calls Nashe "a mad Greeke that had drunk of the Holy Water, and was full of the Divine Furie".

"Newes from Hell" is a sequel to Nashe's "Pierce Penilesse", and, as we should expect, contains many reminiscences of that work. But Nashe's influence is not confined to one work. The exuberant and breathless style, the wealth of vocabulary, the love of compound words, the eloquent energy, and the tendency towards caricature shown in so many of Dekker's pamphlets are all the result of his being sealed of the tribe of Thomas Nashe.

Yet when all has been said about the influence of his predecessors, Dekker's style remains singularly his own. He is best, indeed, when he is just expressing his own personality. He possessed in a marked degree the power of expressing what he had to say in clear, idiomatic English. The pages of the "Batchelars Banquet" or of the "Guls Horne-booke" bear witness of this.

(1) G., II, 103.

He is most successful, perhaps, when he is least striving after effect. Too frequently he lapses into a style of empty and florid rhetoric, or of involved and turgid periods which is very different from the limpid and colloquial language of his best work. His style is, indeed, remarkable for its cameleonic qualities, and takes its colour from the subject which it is expressing. When it is describing the deeds of "Pierce Penilesse", it resembles the breathlessness of Nashe: at other times it is an exact replica of the language of the streets and taverns of the day: frequently it is high-flown and rhetorical: or yet again imitates the language of the Bible and of the prayer-book. The influence of the Bible is particularly noticeable, of course, in "The Foure Birdes of Noahs Arke". But his mind, steeped in the reading of the Scriptures, frequently finds appropriate expression in language closely akin to that of the Scriptures.

The numerous apostrophes to London in "The Seven deadly Sinnes" are written in the style of the old prophets - "O thou beautifullest daughter of two united Monarchies! - - - the Arrowes of Pestilence will fall upon thee by day, and the hand of the Invader strike thee by night. The Sunne will shine, but not be a comfort to thee, and the Moone looke pale with anger, when she gives thee light." (1)

One of the most striking features of his style is its figurativeness. His works are pranked with quaint conceits and full of striking imagery. They are also rich in metaphors and similes drawn from the common life of the day, which give them an inimitable

(1) G., II, 13-14. Cp. also II, 340 - "Thy dayes have gone over thee like the dreames of a foole, thy nights like watchings of a mad man: - - - - ".

raciness, all their own. Many of the quotations given in the previous section to illustrate his treatment of the things of the common day occur in the form of similies and metaphors.

From his use of these figures of speech we obtain an excellent idea of the tastes of the man. It is significant that he draws chiefly upon the Theatre, and martial and legal matters. Indeed his references to these three phases of life are so frequent as almost to amount to a mannerism. Another trick of his style is shown in his love of working out at some length the resemblances between what are at first sight very different things . Dekker loved to lose himself in a comparison. Thus in the third impression of "The Belman of London" he exercises his ingenuity in showing the points of resemblance between the world and man, and in "The Seven deadlie Sinnes" there is a lengthy passage pointing that man carries about him "certaine Watches with Larums - - -, that are ever striking" (1)

We have discussed in the previous section the objects of Dekker's satire. Though his satire could be very trenchant, for the most part it is quite good-humoured. He says in the Dedication to "The Wonderfull yeare"

"If you did but once imagine, there were gall in mine Incke, I would cast away the Standish, and forsweare medling with anie more Muses" (2) and again

"nothing is set downe by a malitious hand." (3)

(1) G., II, 49.

(2) G., I, 76.

(3) G., I, 82.

This idea crops up again and again in his works. In the address to the Reader in "Jests to make you Merie" he writes,

"some - - - finde no sweetnesse but in drawing blood. Of those sharp-toothed dogs you shall finde are none. I hould no whip in my hande, but a soft fether, and there drops rather water then gall out of my quill." (1)

One can imagine nothing so far removed from the spirit of Nashe's "snarling" satires. Dekker was incapable of the fierce invective which Nashe hurled at the heads of his enemies. Dekker's satire is much more impersonal. He attacks institutions and types, not individuals. Hence his satire is much more interesting to modern readers who are not under the necessity of piercing through the veil of obscurity which time has drawn over these personages.

Dekker's satire is more impregnated with the spirit of humour than is Nashe's. This saving grace prevented him from merely hurling wild and whirling invective abuses which he attacked. He saw that ridicule and humour were much more effective weapons. It is just because of its brilliant humour that the following passage is so effective in disposing of the poetaster:-

"If you be a Poet, and come into the Ordinary (though it can be great glory to be an ordinary Poet) order yourselfe thus. Observe no man, doff not cap to that Gentleman to day at dinner, to whom, not two nights since, you were beholden for a supper; but, after a turne or two in the roome, take occasion (pulling out your gloves) to have some Epigram, or Satyre, or Sonnet fastened in one of them, that may (as it were vomittingly to you) offer it selfe to the Gentlemen: they will presently desire it: but, without much from them, and a pretty kind of counterfet loathres in yourselfe, do not read it; and though it be none of your owne, sweare you made it. Mary, if you chaunce to get into your hands

(1) G., II, 272.

any witty thing of another mans, that is somewhat better, I would councell you then, if demand bee made who composed it you may say: faith, a learned Gentleman, a very worthy friend. And this seeming to lay it on another man will be counted either modestie in you, or a signe that you are not ambitious of praise, or else that you dare not take it upon you, for feare of the sharpnesse it carries with it." (1)

This same spirit of satirical humour may be seen in "The Batchelars Banquet" in the dialogue between Mercury and Charon in "Newes from Hell" (II, 145), and in innumerable other passages.

Closely allied to humour by reason of its sympathetic element is pathos, and the two are often found in close juxtaposition in Dekker's works. Witness several of the plague-stories in "The Wonderfull yeare" and the tale in "The Ravens Almanacke" "How in a houshold civell warre, a woman may be safe from a cruell husband." (2)

Dekker had infinite compassion for all that was weak and defenceless. In "Worke For Armorours" and in "A Rod for Runawayes" his sympathies are wholly on the side of the poor. His descriptions of the miseries of prison life are full of a love for his fellow-men. He shows considerable insight by pointing out the folly of punishing the poor instead of relieving them:-

"Thou setst up posts to whipt them when they are alive: Set up an Hospitall to comfort them being sick, or purchase ground for them to dwell in when they be well, and that is, when they be dead." (3)

In his care for animals, he is far and away ahead of his time. He condemns the popular sport of bear-baiting, and calls Paris Garden "an Image of hell."

(1) G., II, 240-241.

(2) G., IV, 243.

(3) G., II, 78.

"At length a blinde Beare was tyed to the stake, and instead of baiting him with dogges, a company of creatures that had the shapes of men, & faces of christians (being either Colliers, Carters, or watermen) tooke the office of Beadles upon them, and whipt monsieur Hunkes, till the blood ran downe his old shoulders: - - - - yet methought this whipping of the blinde Beare, moved as much pitie in my breast towards him, as y^e^ leading of poore starved wretches to the whipping posts in London (when they had more neede to be releeved with foode) ought to move the hearts of Cittizens, though it be the fashion now to laugh at the punishment." (1)

The same power of piercing through external trappings and seeing into the heart of a subject is seen again and again in his works. Take, for example, the insight of such a passage as the following:-

"No, no, hee is not slothfull, that is onely lazie, that onely wastes his good houres, and his Silver in luxury, & licentious ease, or that onely (like a standing water) does nothing, but gather corruption: no, hee is the true Slothfull man that does no good."(2)

Literary hack and penny-a-liner as Dekker's circumstances often forced him to be, there can be no doubt, I think, that he was actuated by a sincere desire to improve the morality and social welfare of his country. In his search for life in all its forms, he is often taken into strange places. His language is often very plain-spoken. Yet his works are always healthy and wholesome, and, in all cases, he makes vice look like vice, and never seeks to cloak its ugliness.

He is no believer in a cloistered virtue. As he himself says,

"There is a Hell named in our Creede, and a Heaven, and the Hell comes before; If we looke not into the first, we shall never live in the last. Our tossing up and down (here) is the Sea, but

(1) G., IV, 98-99.

(2) G., II, 53.

the land of Angels is our Shoare. - - - - Bookes are Pilots in such voyages: would mine were but one point of the Compasse, for any man to steere well by." (1)

What he says of "A Knights Coniuring" applies also to the rest of his work:-

"If you please to read me over, you shall finde much morall matter in words merily set down".

Yet it is not for moral discourses and excellent sermons that Dekker's prose-works are chiefly valuable. These we can obtain elsewhere. But the picture of Elizabethan London cannot be found so vividly and so accurately drawn in the pages of any other writer.

Dekker was the first great artist of London life, the first writer to see the glamour and the fascination of her streets. He was gifted with great powers of observation, and he had the power of presenting what he observed with graphic portraiture (2).
He had the art to pick out the really picturesque thing, or rather the much rarer art of showing the picturesqueness and the fascination of the things of the common day. By reason of the bent of his genius towards the representation of the life around him in London, as well as of the humorous kindliness of his way of looking at that life, his vein of sentiment and his eye for odd characters,

(1) G., III, 8.

(2) For an example of this power of making his characters live, see some of the stories in "The Wonderfull yeare" or in "The Ravens Almanacke". See also the picture of brave William Eps in "Newes from Hell" - "In his countenance there was a kinde of indignation, fighting with a kinde of exalted ioy, which by his very gesture were apparently decipherable, for he was iocond, that his soule went out of him in so glorious a triumph" (G., II, 148).

Dekker has been styled the Dickens of the Elizabethan period. We would prefer to liken him to a man whose work possessed all these characteristics, and who also possessed a personality as loveable and a temperament as quaint and whimsical as the dramatist's - we mean Charles Lamb. More, perhaps, than any others, these two men felt the fascination and saw the beauty of London streets -

"The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; - - - the very women of the Town; the watchmen, drunken scenes - - - life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, - - - - The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life."

With the rich and wonderful gifts with which Nature had undoubtedly endowed Thomas Dekker, how comes it that his life as an artist was, comparatively speaking, a failure? How comes it that, instead of taking the high place in Elizabethan literature to which his gifts would seem to entitle him, he has become, except for one or two of his works, a "forgotten worthy"?

The answer lies partly, perhaps, in the ephemeral nature of much of his writing. Had he been born at a later period, his genius for characterisation and for the graphic portraiture of London life might have found its expression in the literary essay or in the novel. Literature had not yet evolved a special medium for their representation, and his genius found expression only in ephemeral pamphlets cast off at the heat of the moment, and too many

of them betraying the hand of the professional writer. It was perhaps the fluency of the man that was so fatal. He seems to recognise this in the verses at the end of "A Strange Horse-Race", a pamphlet which is itself an excellent example of the rubbish which he was led to produce:-

"My Muse that art so merry,
When wilt thou say th'art weary?
Never (I know it) never,
This flight thou couldst keepe ever:
Thy shapes which so do vary,
Beyond thy bownds thee cary.
Now plume thy ruffled wings,
Hee's hoarse who alwayes sings." (1)

This fatal ductility, the fact that "Hee's hoarse who alwayes sings" is one of the reasons why his work so frequently falls short of those standards of excellence which, when he wished, he knew so well how to attain. That he had a deep regard for scholars and for all scholarly work, many a passage in his works testifies. See, for example, the phrase "his friend loving him (not because he was poore (yet he was poore) but because he was a scholler" (2). He is continually lamenting the poverty of scholars and the contempt with which the world regards learning, - "how is Arte curs'd?

Shee ha's the sweetest lumbes, and goes the worst" (3).

That he had an adequate ideal of the standards of dramatic writing this wonderful passage shows:-

(1) G., III, 378.

(2) G., I, 119.

(3) P., II, 224.

"Give me That Man,
Who when the Plague of an Impostumd Buaynes
(Breaking out) infects a Theater, and hotly raignes,
Killing the Hearers hearts, that the vast roomes
Stand empty, like so many Dead-mens toombes,
Can call the Banishd Auditor home, And tye
His Eare (with golden chaines) to his Melody:
Can draw with Adamantine Pen (even creatures
Forg'de out of th' Hammer, on tiptoe, to Reach up,
And (from Rare silence) clap their Brawny hands,
T'Applaud, what their charmed soule scarce understands." (1)

Unfortunately Dekker did not always write his dramas and prose-works with this noble ideal in his mind. He seems to have lacked that seriousness, that intense belief in his Art which every true artist has. He so often throws to the winds his better instincts in order to pander to the tastes of "Impostumd Braynes".

Yet when we remember the circumstances under which Dekker wrote, we cannot condemn him too harshly. The tenor of his life may be well summed up in Dr. Johnson's famous line -

"Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail".

Spenser wrote

"The vaunted verse a vacant head demaundes,
Ne wont with crabbed care the Muses dwell",

and if we take into consideration the chequered nature of Dekker's career, we shall be surprised at the amount of enduring literature which he gave to the world. Even in the hastiest of his productions we are frequently repaid for our labours in reading through so much that is worthless by a happy phrase, a humorous thought, a brilliant piece of characterisation, or a passage instinct with

(1) P., III, 263-4.

with tender sympathy. When all the padding, all that is merely superficial and ephemeral in his work, have been taken away, there still remains a sufficient volume of work stamped with the hall-mark of genius to warrant us in giving to him a high place in Elizabethan literature. Notwithstanding their many blemishes, his works will continue to be read and valued for their genial humanity, their kindly and tender sentiment, their cordial humour, their authentic inspiration of poetic feeling, and for the realistic and graphic portrait they afford of the life of his times.