

PHILIP MASSINGER:

THE MAN AND THE PLAYWRIGHT.

by

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Being a Thesis presented for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the University
of Edinburgh.

May, 1952.

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CHAPTER V.

Massinger's criticism of life.

From time to time in the other chapters of this study I have referred briefly to Massinger's didacticism. I must now examine it in more detail and try to determine his central convictions in the moral, social, and political fields.

Massinger himself was certainly aware of the moral purpose of his plays. He always speaks of his art in serious terms, if sometimes with conventionally modest self-depreciation. In the second, or 'Court' Prologue to The Emperor of the East he lays emphasis upon his 'grave matter'; and in the Dedicatory Epistle to The Roman Actor he writes;

'If the gravity and height of the subject distaste such as are only affected with jigs and ribaldry (as I presume it will), their condemnation of me and my poem, can no way offend me.' ①

He was struck, too, with the moral seriousness and propriety of the dramatic work of one or two of his contemporaries, as his commendatory verses on Shirley's The Grateful Servant show. He praised that play because there was in it,

'no believed defence
To strengthen the bold Atheist's insolence;
No obscene syllable, that may compel
A blush from a chaste maid.' ②

That his work was imbued with a didactic purpose, that it was designed more to instruct than to delight, was recognised by his contemporaries. W.B. says in his commendatory poem on The Duke of Milan;

'Here may the puny wits themselves direct,
Here may the wisest find what to affect,
And kings may learn their proper dialect.' ③

① Gifford, ii., 329. ② Ibid., iv., 594. ③ Ibid., i., cxlviii.

But Massinger's own view of the purpose of his drama is best expressed in the vehement speech he puts into the mouth of Paris in The Roman Actor, Act I., scene iii., using an argument which had been brought to the defence of the stage against its detractors since long before Sidney ① :

'If, to express a man sold to his lusts,
 can deserve reproof;
 Why are not all your golden principles,
 Writ down by grave philosophers to instruct us
 To choose fair virtue for our guide, not pleasure,
 Condemned unto the fire?
 Or if desire of honour was the base
 On which the building of the Roman empire
 Was raised up to this height; if, to inflame
 The noble youth with an ambitious heat
 T'endure the frosts of danger, nay, of death,
 To be thought worthy the triumphal wreath
 By glorious undertakings, may deserve
 Reward, or favour from the commonwealth;
 Actors may put in for as large a share
 As all the sects of the philosophers:
 They with cold precepts (perhaps seldom read)
 Deliver, what an honourable thing
 The active virtue is: but does that fire
 The blood, or swell the veins with emulation,
 To be both good and great, equal to that
 Which is presented on our theatres?
 But, 'tis urged
 That we corrupt youth, and traduce superiors.
 When do we bring a vice upon the stage
 That does go off unpunished? Do we teach,
 By the success of wicked undertakings,
 Others to tread in their forbidden steps?
 We show no arts of Lydian panderism,
 Corinthian poisons, Persian flatteries,
 But mulcted so in the conclusion, that
 Even those spectators that were so inclined,
 Go home changed men.'

① As in William Bavand's translation, 'A Woorke of .. Mantuanus touchynge the good orderynge of a common weale (1559), Bk. V., chap. 8., and Lewis Wager's Life and Repentance of Marie Magdalene (pub. 1566, but written earlier). See also the pamphlets following Gosson's Schoole of Abuse (1579) in particular Lodge's Honest Excuses (1579). Sidney's Apology was not published until 1595. Massinger undoubtedly got to know Heywood during the period, 1624-6, when they were both writing for the Queen's Men. Most of Paris's matter comes direct from Heywood's Apology for Actors (1612).

If the sins of great men are shown upon the stage, the fault lies in the great men, not in the actors; and indeed, Massinger implies that both the actors and the playwrights are to be praised for publishing to the world the 'secret crimes' of the great.

That Massinger endeavoured to carry out in practice this theory of the moral purpose of the drama is evident even in the most cursory reading of the plays; and it becomes the more evident the more closely they are examined. I have already indicated how his endeavour to point a moral controlled his plotting ①; how his desire to impress his own opinions upon his audience affected his dialogue ②; and how his moral attitude tended to make him draw his characters in blacks and whites ③.

The plays are not, alas, intended as mere entertainments. In the first place, as I have already had occasion to remark, Massinger is the unswerving champion of poetic justice. It cannot be said of him, as Dr Johnson said of Shakespeare, that 'he sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct that he seems to write without any moral purpose . . . he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance' ④. Whether this is true of Shakespeare is not my concern. But I quote it because the very

① See Chapter II., p. 109. ② See Chapter III., p. 149. ③ See Chapter IV., p. 196 ff. ④ Preface, 1765. (Johnson on Shakespeare, 21.)

opposite is so palpably true of Massinger. In him virtue triumphs with monotonous regularity over wickedness. That is why he is not capable of truly cathartic tragedy. Most of his tragic protagonists deserve their catastrophes. If they do not all without exception receive condign punishment ① it is because there is a limit to what even a tendenzdramatiker can do in making an imitation of life illustrate poetic justice. Besides, it may be very reasonably maintained that when Massinger sacrifices the innocent he gets a quid pro quo in a more impressive sanction for his moral lesson. It may be good that one good man or woman should die for the good of the moral. In any case, not tragedy but tragicomedy is Massinger's sphere of action. For, to adapt Miss Prism's words in The Importance of Being Earnest, 'The good end happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Tragicomedy means' ② .

In the second place, each of Massinger's plays has a particular moral area and moves about a particular moral focus. The foci of the fifteen plays Massinger wrote unaided are:- the parent-child relationship (The Unnatural Combat); jealousy and pride (The Duke of Milan); the antithesis of slavery and liberty (The Bondman); religious renegadism and conversion (The Renegado); the code of courtly love and its 'modern vices' (The Parliament of Love); the religious vows of chastity (The Maid of Honour); the effect of a lustful nature both upon the state and upon personal relationships (The Roman Actor); the moral problems of widowhood (The Great Duke of Florence); the interaction of jealousy and

① E.g. Antiochus in Believe As You List, whose fate is left very vague (Possibly because Massinger did not know the fate of Antiochus's modern prototype, Sebastian of Portugal). We may also include in this class such men as Luke Frugal and Sir Giles Overreach. ② Act II.

uxoriousness (The Picture); the royal office (The Emperor of the East); adherence to principle in the face of temptation and torture (Believe As You List); hypocrisy and pride (The City Madam); wickedness deceived by trickery (A New Way to Pay Old Debts); fidelity and honour (The Guardian); and virtue endangered (The Bashful Lover).

In the third place each play has a specific main lesson which the action is designed to illustrate and drive home ① . It is usually summed up in one or more moral tags or pronunciamentos towards the end of the play:

'May we make use of
This great example, and learn from it, that
There cannot be a want of power above,
To punish murder, and unlawful love!' The Unnatural Combat.

'... learn from this example, There's no trust
In a foundation that is built on lust.' The Duke of Milan.

'He that truly loved
Should rather bring a sacrifice of service
Than raze it [i.e. the goodness of his mistress] with the
engines of suspicion.' The Bondman.

'... .. we purpose,
To give encouragement, by reward, to such
As with their best nerves imitate that old goodness;
And, with severe correction, to reform
The modern vices.' The Parliament of Love.

'... .. May she [i.e. Camiola] stand,
To all posterity, a fair example
For noble maids to imitate! Since to live
In wealth and pleasure's common, but to part with
Such poisoned baits is rare.' The Maid of Honour.

① Cf. E.C.Morris: On the date and composition of 'The Old Law'. (PMLA. XVII. 1902. 27.): 'There is clearly a didactic purpose'; and S.R. Gardiner: The Political Element in Massinger (Contemporary Review. 28. 495.): 'The main intention of his work is moral'.

'Good kings are mourned for after life; but ill
And such as are governed only by their will,
And not their reason, unlamented fall;
No good man's tear shed at their funeral.' The Roman Actor.

'... to all married men, be this a caution,
Which they should duly tender as their life,
Neither to dote too much, nor doubt a wife.' The Picture.

'May my story
Teach potentates humility, and instruct
Proud monarchs, tho' they govern human things,
A greater power does raise, or pull down, kings.' Believe As
You List.

'... .. instruct
Our city dames, whom wealth makes proud, to move
In their own spheres; and willingly to confess,
In their habits, manners, and their highest port,
A distance 'twixt the city and the court.' The City Madam.

'Here is a precedent to teach wicked men,
That when they leave religion, and turn atheists,
Their own abilities leave them.' A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

'.. virtue, in the end,
Is crowned with laurel.' The Bashful Lover.

In one or two plays the main lesson is not crystallized in so many words; but it is just as unmistakeable. Thus in The Renegado the lesson may be summed up as 'Trust in God, and do the right'; in The Great Duke of Florence as 'Deception does not pay'; in The Emperor of the East as 'If you are a ruler, do not let your passion sway your reason in the carrying-out of your divine office'; and in The Guardian as 'Honour and fidelity will always gain their reward'. In some plays there are one or more secondary lessons as well, which may be likewise provided with moral pointers or which, if not so tagged, are equally clearly indicated. Thus, a warning against uxoriousness is given in The Duke of Milan, The Bondman, The Roman Actor, and The Emperor of the East, as well as in The Picture; the duties of a wife and the obligation of a ruler to accept advice are

stressed in The Emperor of the East; the reforming virtues of the drama are pointed out in The Roman Actor (though the example we are given of these virtues in action show them to be not nearly as efficacious as Massinger would have us believe); that devoted service to a lover will eventually be rewarded is a theme of The Bondman, The Parliament of Love, The Great Duke of Florence, The Guardian, and The Bashful Lover; that a sexual relationship outwith the marriage bond is wrong and sinful is part of the lesson of The Duke of Milan, The Bondman, The Renegado, The Parliament of Love, The Picture, and The Guardian; and so on.

Finally, many of the speeches and much of the dialogue in every play are, as in Racine, in the nature of moral dialectic. Massinger's characters are largely given to moral pros and cons ① . Besides their more integral moralising, there occur here, there, and everywhere, incidental moral comments on a great variety of issues, grave and important or more everyday and vernacular, such as remind us of the author of The Rambler.

What I have just said will need a little subsequent qualification in view of the fact that Massinger's purpose did not always show itself in an end-product which can be accepted as moral and sans reproche by modern standards ② . All that I wish to emphasise at present is that his own intention in all his works was moralistic; that the didactic ran all through it; that it is all carefully considered for edifying ends, rather than 'inspirational'; and that its content is intellectual-moral rather

① Cf. Sir Leslie Stephen: Hours in a Library, ii., 154.: 'Massinger is a man of much real feeling and extraordinary facility of utterance, who finds in his stories convenient occasions for indulging in elaborate didactic utterances upon moral topics'. ② See below, p. 302^{ff.}

than emotional. As Chelli says, 'Les meilleures pièces de Massinger, lues isolément, nous frappent déjà comme étant chargées de pensée' (1) . The less good are no less 'chargées de pensée' of a predominantly ethical character. And it is only necessary for us to add the inability of Massinger to take a comic, or in fact neutral, view of life, his fundamental gravity and sense of responsibility, to arrive at that view of the plays which Swinburne expressed in his sonnet on the dramatist:

'... .. sad and wise,
The spirit of thought that moved thy deeper lays'. (2)

Varied as is Massinger's moral commentary on life, he concentrated on three main topics:- (I.) the man-woman relation, (II.) politics, and (III.) religion. Perhaps I may define them more precisely thus:

- I. The relation between man and woman in courtship and in marriage, in attraction and repulsion, in trust and suspicion; and the way in which this one-one relation affects the parties, especially the man, with respect to their intercourse with others, the world of affairs in which their lot is cast, and their spiritual life.
- II. The place of man (or woman) in an ordered society; his political obligations as a ruler or as a subject and his political rights; and his duties as a Christian in the civitas terrena.
- III. The relation of man to God and to an ethical best; and man's religious convictions as permeating and affecting his general conduct.

It may be noted that Massinger's trifocal ethics anticipate in a way Milton's championship of the 'three species of liberty which are

(1) Drame, 307. (2) Philip Massinger. 1882.

essential to the happiness of social life -- religious, domestic, and civil' ① , and it will be seen at once that these three topics are closely linked in a nexus of moral obligations -- domestic, or (if the word may be used in the comprehensive sense) sexual, obligation, social obligation, and religious obligation, in that ascending order of importance, though not of frequency, in the Massinger canon -- and that they are so interwoven as not to be entirely separated the one from the other. Thus, for example, it is impossible to discuss Massinger's idea of kingship in The Emperor of the East without at the same time considering how the sexual relation as operative in Theodosius's doting love for, and subsequent jealousy of, Eudocia affect the monarch's performance of his royal duties and without noting the integrated Christian view of life which involves the ruler no less than the ruled. Similarly in The Bondman the questions of man's spiritual as well as his physical freedom, of his moral obligations as well as his political rights, of the duties of a wise and just ruler, of the evils of a wicked plutocracy, and of the status of woman in the sexual relationship are all inextricably intertwined; and in The Maid of Honour, although religious interests dominate, concerned as the play is with such questions as chastity and the sanctity of holy vows, we also find varying degrees of emphasis laid upon such topics as, the duty of a ruler to govern justly, honour in warfare, and that upwelling of passionate desire which can overwhelm justice and reason in a ruler. The triple bond of Massinger's thought comes into all his plays, with the balance adjusted delicately between them so that sometimes the first,

① Defensio Secunda.

sometimes the second, and sometimes the third strand predominates. Thus the sex-relationship is the central topic in The Picture, The Duke of Milan, and The Parliament of Love; the politics of kingship in The Roman Actor and The Emperor of the East; and religion in The Renegado and The Maid of Honour; but whatever the main concern of the three in a play, the other two are always more or less strongly underlined. Other topics undoubtedly crop up. Some of them are for their occasion of great prominence and importance, as for example the high moral value of the drama and the actor in The Roman Actor. Some with less emphasis in any one play are nevertheless recurrent in several, as, for example, society's treatment of the ex-soldier, patriotism, duelling, over-indulgence in gaudy raiment, drunkenness^s, and the demoralising effect of imprisonment. But these secondary topics are after all, when they are not the common subjects of Jacobean and Caroline dramatic satire, only aspects of the primary three.

It is remarkable how consistent Massinger is in the ruling ideas expressed throughout his career. The view of life expressed in The Duke of Milan, for example, is very similar to that he expressed twenty years later in The Bashful Lover, though in the latter play it is perhaps weakened by feebler subject matter. Certainly the plays of undivided authorship all belong to the last twenty years of Massinger's life, from his late thirties to his late fifties. But the consistency is not merely that of a man set in his ways by the coming of middle life. Massinger was naturally a methodical person; and it is as certain as such things can be that he made from the first towards what he early acquired and

consistently held, a systematic, coherent, and almost dogmatic philosophy of life. It is indeed much more than a few working principles and a few beliefs strung tenuously together. On the contrary, it is a precise scale of values, a set of four-square principles of action, and an ordered system of clear ideas of right and wrong, which he himself had deliberately chosen, by which he consciously governed the operations of his judgement, and to which he gave considered expression in his plays. Though Chelli makes any real attempt to elaborate or define Massinger's philosophy, he would have agreed with what I have just said. 'À mesure que nous avançons dans la connaissance de son oeuvre,' he says, 'Certaines séries d'idées se dessinent, formant des systèmes dogmatiques' (1).

The systematic nature of Massinger's thought does not, of course, make it any easier to outline it. He has left no treatise in which he has expounded his credo, and it goes without saying that it has to be extricated or deduced article by article from its bedding or matrix in what are primarily and principally plays.

Massinger's thought can be described broadly as at once realistic, reasonable, and idealistic. It is realistic in that describes men as they are, or at least as a shrewd and peculiarly unsentimental observer of considerable experience has found them to be in the seventeenth century. This statement is not, in my opinion, at variance with what I have said on Massinger's defects and limitations in respect of lively characterisation. I am speaking here, not of his characterisation, but

(1) Drame, 307.

of his systematised conclusions on humanity. I have already likened him to Dr Johnson in The Rambler. Well, Johnson himself was a masterly observer of and abstractor from life, though like Massinger he was not very good as a creator of character in action. In taking a balanced view of life Massinger compares more than favourably with most of his dramatic contemporaries. He does not overdo the knavery and folly like Jonson; he does not sentimentalise like Heywood and Dekker; he does not disrealise like Beaumont and Fletcher. Though Massinger's philosophy of life sees men pretty much as they are, it aspires

'.. with severe correction, to reform
The modern vices.'

①

Hence it is idealistic, assuming that there is an ideal of human betterment. And finally, as I say, it is reasonable, in that the ideal it aspires to is not impossible of human attainment.

Like the methodical man he was, and like not a few who have set up as moral philosophers, Massinger starts with a simple, indeed an all-too-simple, notion of the make-up of man. It was drawn proximately from the Romans and ultimately from the Greeks, especially Aristotle, and the cultures of the Hellenised East. According to it the 'passions' are part of the baser or animal side of man's nature, prone to make him choose a wrong course of action, if indeed they are not in themselves evil, and they may take possession of the 'will' which is in itself neither good nor bad, higher nor lower; while the higher and more spiritual side of man's nature is the 'reason', which distinguishes him from the beasts and whose

① Parliament of Love, V., i.

almost divine function is to control the passions and lead man to will the right. This basic idea is given explicit expression frequently in the plays. In The City Madam, Act I., scene iii., the passions are described as 'rebels unto reason'. In The Renegado, Act I., scene i., they are called,

'those tyrants which
We arm against our better part, our reason.'

The moral of The Roman Actor, given in Act V., scene ii., tells us that,

'Good kings are mourned for after life; but ill,
And such as are governed only by their will,
And not their reason, unlamented fall;
No good man's tear shed at their funeral.'

The idea of the conflict between the reason and the passions is admirably expressed by Romont in The Fatal Dowry, Act V., scene ii., (a passage by Massinger) in these words:

'The glory got
By overthrowing outward enemies,
Since strength and fortune are main sharers in it,
We cannot, but by pieces, call our own:
But when we conquer our intestine foes,
Our passions bred within us, and of those
The most rebellious tyrant, powerful love,
Our reason suffering us to like no longer
Than the fair object, being good, deserves it,
That's a true victory!

①

There is another fundamental assumption in Massinger's ethics, that of man's free-will. His plays are built on choice: they do not merely show an occasional operation of choice, but they turn on men and women choosing and doing. That is scarcely surprising. For, though the

① See Chapter IV. for more on the conflict between the reason and the passions as it affects Massinger's characterisation.

metaphysical and theological discussion of free-will was as old as Plato's Republic, certainly all creative literature of the narrative and dramatic kinds was deliberately or instinctively libertarian. It never occurred to the classical dramatists, to the author of Beowulf or the mediaeval romances, to Dante, Boccaccio, or Chaucer, to Spenser or Shakespeare, to make their characters anything but free, however much Fate or Wyrd, Chance and the stars operated in the background. Or if it occurred to them as a speculation, it emphatically did not shape their imitations of life.

'Men at some time are masters of their fate:'

says Cassius for Shakespeare the dramatist,

'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.'

①

And Edmund dismisses in his own terms a hypothesis that Shakespeare had so little use for:

'This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, -- often the surfeit of our own behaviour, -- we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting-on; an admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star!'

②

It is certain that Massinger was aware of the problem of reconciling God's foreknowledge with man's free will (the aspect of the general antithesis of liberty and necessity which had been most discussed

① Julius Caesar, I., ii. ② King Lear, I., ii.

from the Stoics to St Augustine and from St Augustine to Calvin). But he both ignored it in casual reference and, as I have said, built his plays on the choices expressed by his characters. ①

Bearing these fundamental assumptions in mind, I now turn to a more detailed consideration of Massinger's attitude in respect of his three major moral concerns, and deal first with his presentation of men and women.

What he calls Massinger's 'feminism' has been treated at some length by Chelli ② . But I feel that, writing as he did, in the period from 1907 to 1913, when questions of women's rights were very much in the air, he tends to exaggerate the importance of this feminism in the plays. After all, a country which looked back to the forty-five years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth as to a golden age, and in which there had been recently and still were many great and learned ladies like 'Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother' and Donne's Countess of Bedford, could hardly be said to be unaware of the general competence of women and of their

① It may be noted that, while problems of free-will and determinism were very much in the air during Massinger's life-time, English ethical thought proper (as distinct from certain thinkers in the realm of revelational theology and certain extreme theologians who accepted predestination as an article of faith) did not start developing until the seventeenth century, and had hardly dared as yet to face the question squarely. Bacon's ethics in his Advancement of Learning (1605) are very lightly sketched, and Hobbes, in whose philosophy there was latent a certain amount of determinism, did not publish The Leviathan until 1651. See Sidgwick's History of Ethics, Chapter IV., for further information both on this point and on the decline of Aristotelianism in England. ② Drame, 308 et seq.

ability to rank with men in the moral and intellectual spheres. Such a degree of feminism as Massinger exhibits was not out-of-the-ordinary and would not have excited any surprise at the time. If Ben Jonson had what Dr Johnson attributes to Milton, 'a Turkish contempt for women' ⁽¹⁾, he manifested his own idiosyncrasy, not the age's, Shakespeare and Fletcher, Heywood, Webster, and Dekker, to name no others, as well as Massinger, could each be said to be, like Chaucer, 'wemenes friend'.

Certainly there are women in Massinger's plays who are every bit a match for the men in personality:- the suddenly decisive and imperial Donusa in The Renegado, the high-spirited and independent Camiola in The Maid of Honour, or the patriotic and eloquent Cleora in The Bondman, and several others. It is Cleora who, when Timoleon has failed to infuse some warlike spirit into the cowardly and idly rich Syracusans, rises to the occasion;

'If a virgin,
Whose speech was ever yet ushered with fear;
One knowing modesty and humble silence
To be the choicest ornaments of our sex,
In the presence of so many reverend men
Struck dumb with terror and astonishment,
Presume to clothe her thought in vocal sounds
Let her find pardon;'

and upbraids the assembly to some purpose for its lack of honour and lack of a love of liberty. Of course, not all Massinger's women are, in the seventeenth-century rather than in the contemporary sense, viragoes. He has women less dynamic and more gentle and reserved, as for example, Lidia in The Great Duke of Florence, Matilda in The Bashful Lover, and

⁽¹⁾ The Life of Milton.

Theocrine in The Unnatural Combat. But his feminism, if we are to call it that, is as apparent at the one end of his gamut of women as at the other. He takes women seriously; he presents them fairly (if, as I indicated when dealing with his characterisation, not very life-likely); he assigns to them an important place in the forefront of his stage and in the development of his actions; he gives them as rich an intellectual background, as much power of argument, and as much eloquence as his men. Moreover, his men all treat his women with outward respect, even if they have to kill them; and his women, even the courtesans and seducers, are dignified.

Massinger, however, does poke (rather ponderous) satirical fun at the Englishwomen of his time. In The Renegado, Act I., scene ii., for example, Donusa has asked Carazie, her eunuch, an English slave, to describe the status of women in England. He replies:

'.. women in England

For the most part, live like queens. Your country ladies
Have liberty to hawk, to hunt, to feast,
To give free entertainment to all comers,
To talk, to kiss; there's no such thing known there
As an Italian girdle. Your city dame,
Without leave, wears the breeches, has her husband
At as much command as her prentice; and, if need be,
Can make him cuckold by her father's copy.

Donusa. But your court lady?

Carazie. She, I assure you, madam,
Knows nothing but her will; must be allowed
Her footmen, her caroch, her ushers, pages,
Her doctor, chaplains; and, as I have heard,
They're grown of late so learned, that they maintain
A strange position, which their lords, with all
Their wit, cannot confute.

Donusa. What's that, I prithee?

Carazie. Marry, that it is not only fit, but lawful,
Your madam there, her much rest and high feeding
Duly considered, should, to ease her husband,
Be allowed a private friend: they have drawn a bill
To this good purpose, and, the next assembly,
Doubt not to pass it.'

Such a satirical passage as this, and the presentation in the same vein of Lady Frugal and her daughters in The City Madam, do not, however, invalidate what I have said on Massinger's general attitude to women and their importance. Some of them are merely coming in for such comment and rebuke as he metes out to some men.

A married woman, in Massinger's view, has a wifely duty which is not incompatible with her right as a free individual. This is an obligation in the feudal sense, a duty to respect and love her husband, to obey his familial injunctions, to be a faithful spouse, and to behave towards her husband ⁿand others with the conduct of what I have called 'the woman of virtue' ① . But her mind is free, or, in the Prayer-Book paradox, her wifely service is a perfect freedom. For she owes such conduct as much to herself as to her husband -- to the categorical imperative of marriage. Her husband has a reciprocal duty to her, to respect her independence of mind and spiritual liberty, to honour and trust her integrity and virtue, to be himself faithful and loving. He is not an absolute lord and master, and she is anything but a shadow, echo, or chattel. Charalois in The Fatal Dowry, for example, imagines that he is entitled to pass judgment upon his wife's actions and meets his tragic end as a result. Mathias in The Picture is brought severely to task by his wife for doubting her fidelity. Marcelia in The Duke of Milan is a particularly interesting case. She had trusted Sforza as she thought he had trusted her. Their matrimonial contract has been one of mutual obligation as between equal partners. Wheⁿ she thinks that he has sought

① See above, Chapter IV.

her death, she exclaims,

'Sforza is false,
False to Marcelia!'

①

and when later she learns that a (highly improbable and purely surprise-melodrama) consideration for her honour had prompted his order for her execution in the event of his own death, she indignantly expostulates:

'But that my lord, my Sforza, should esteem
My life fit only as a page, to wait on
The various course of his uncertain fortunes;
Or cherish in himself that sensual hope,
In death to know me as a wife, afflicts me;
Nor does his envy less deserve mine anger,
Which though, such is my love, I would not nourish,
Will slack the ardour that I had to see him
Return in safety.'

②

As revealing of Massinger's sense of a woman's right to be herself is Marcelia's question in Act IV., scene ii.:

'Was I born
To observe his humours? or, because he dotes
Must I run mad?'

Just because she adheres so uncompromisingly and, as the event turns out, too rashly to the wifely conviction of her right to object to Sforza's jealousy and will not let her love as a wife govern her pride as a woman, she herself precipitates the violent moment in which the wrought-up Sforza stabs her.

'Oh! I have fooled myself
Into my grave,'

③

she cries, in a phrase that contains a world of Massingerian meaning. She recognises herself as having contributed to the tragedy. But though she dies, it is Sforza who will be the more ^{severely} punished for his more serious

lack of trust; and Marcelia goes on from the last quotation to say,

' I only grieve for that
Which, when you know you've slain an innocent,
You needs must suffer.'

The punishment which falls on Sforza is that which falls on nearly all Massinger's jealous protagonists. Jealousy is a crime against the marriage bond and against reason: it is punished by a loss of reason. Sforza goes mad, and when in Act V., scene ii., he himself lies poisoned by the revengeful Francisco and dying, he recognises in a last flash of sanity what his crime -- not against Francisco for the wrong done before the play opens to his sister, but against his own wife -- has been. To his mother's asking him how he feels, he replies,

'Like one
That learns to know in death what punishment
Waits on the breach of faith.'

This interaction between the sexes on a footing of equality, this mutual obligation of trust and respect is demanded not only from married couples in Massinger's plays. Though the husband-wife relation figures more prominently, in no less than eight of them, the obligation is recognised as being just as strong between unmarried couples, betrothed or lovers, such as Donusa and Vitelli in The Renegado, Camiola and Bertoldo in The Maid of Honour, and Cleora and Leosthenes in The Bondman. Leosthenes, to take an example of a lover who betrays this trust, is so madly jealous that he is eventually rejected by his mistress. As Cleora herself says in Act IV., scene iii.,

'A greater injury cannot be offered
To innocent chastity, than unjust suspicion.'

He is supplanted by Marullo/Pisander whose virtue and knightly service as a lover have been proved by his refusing to injure Cleora when she was a captive and at his mercy. In Act V., scene iii., in which both Leosthenes and Marullo plead in open court for Cleora's hand in marriage, Leosthenes loses his temper and again displays his jealous nature. When it comes to be Marullo's turn to speak, he says, in refutation of Leosthenes and in sentiments that square perfectly with Massinger's own ars amatoria:

'I dare rise up,
And tell this gay man to his teeth, I never
Durst doubt her constancy, that, like a rock,
Beats off temptations, as that mocks the fury
Of the proud waves; nor, from my jealous fears,
Question that goodness to which, as an altar
Of all perfection, he that truly loved
Should rather bring a sacrifice of service,
Than raze it with the engines of suspicion:
Of which, when he can wash an Ethiop white,
Leosthenes may hope to free himself;
But till then, never.'

Thus, before ever he has revealed his identity as a prince in disguise and not a slave, or disclosed the fact that Leosthenes is already in a sense pre-contracted to Statilia, Marullo has shown himself as worthy of that full obligation of trust which marriage will bring.

Two things should be remarked here. The first is that except Heywood, none of the sixteenth or seventeenth-century dramatists so frequently puts the marriage-relationship into the front and middle of his plays. And the second is that Massinger recognised to the full the third of the Prayer-Book's 'causes for which Matrimonie was ordeined', namely 'for the mutuall societie, helpe, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperitie and adversitie', but does not

explicitly or implicitly show any interest in the first, 'for the procreation of children to bee brought up in the feare and nurture of the Lord, and praise of God' ① . The concentration on the husband-wife relation and the neglect of the family is highly significant ② .

So far I have been considering the mutual obligation of men and women in marriage and in love and the jealousy or infidelity which disrupts it. All this is the affair only of the two people involved; and breaches of the contract are visited directly and limitedly upon the heads of the contracted parties. But there are situations of great interest to Massinger in which a particular kind of infringement of the man-woman or husband-wife relationship occurs -- an infringement which opens horizons far beyond the walls of the private apartments. These are situations in which doting fondness or uxoriousness (of which, to be sure, jealousy is a frequent accompaniment or obverse manifestation) is the core. For, while such uxoriousness makes the doting partner demand too much from the other and can easily pass into a lack of trust that may threaten or even destroy a union, it can also, when the husband is a ruler, disrupt the state. The ruler has a social obligation which, in the Massingerian scheme of things, is higher than the amatory, sexual, or matrimonial, and his devotion to a woman should not take from his duty as a prince. For Massinger any kind of excess was bad; and uxoriousness, besides being excessive, was both a negation of the doter's individuality and a sin of presumption which placed the loved one above common mortality and social obligation.

① I quote these passages from a Prayer-Book of 1630. ② But see Chapter I., p. 67.

Massinger shows his interest in such situations in the following plays: The Emperor of the East, The Picture, The Roman Actor, and The Duke of Milan. It is in the first two that he is most explicit.

The Picture contains in Act I., scene ii. a detailed representation of the state of affairs in a court in which a ruler (Ladislaus) dotes on his wife (Honorio). As the courtier Ubaldo says,

'At this very instant,
When both his life and crown are at the stake,
He only studies her content, and when
She's pleased to show herself, music and masques
Are with all care and cost provided for her.'

And the rest of the scene is almost entirely taken up with a demonstration of Ladislaus's infatuation and with the objections of the wise and outspoken Eubulus. The latter is so outspoken that he can use parabolically the legend of Ninus and Semiramis in expostulation with the king and can address him thus:

'I have no suit to you, nor can you grant one,
Having no power: you are like me, a subject,
Her more than serene majesty being present,
And I must tell you, 'tis ill manners in you,
Having deposed yourself, to keep your hat on,
And not stand bare, as we do, being no king,
But a fellow-subject with us. Gentlemen-ushers,
It does belong your place, see it reformed;
He has given away his crown, and cannot challenge
The privilege of his bonnet.'

In the end of the play Ladislaus is lessoned in the putting of his regal duties above his spousal and in the recognition that there must be measure even in love; and Honorio, who is self-willed and exigent, learns the proper sphere of a wife's authority and influence and the impropriety of her husband's aberration.

In The Emperor of the East, on the contrary, Massinger makes the young Empress Eudocia refuse the illegitimate exercise, even in a good cause but one outside her sphere, of a power over her husband which his fondness has put in her hands. She replies thus to Pulcheria, the Emperor's managing elder sister, who has been urging her to use her 'saving counsels' as a wife to curb her husband's prodigality:

'Do you think
Such arrogance, or usurpation rather,
Of what is proper and peculiar
To every private husband, and much more
To him, an emperor, can rank with the obedience
And duty of a wife?
.. .. . 'cause he loves me
With a kind impotence, must I tyrannize
Over his weakness, or abuse the strength
With which he arms me, to his wrong? or, like
A prostituted creature, merchandize
Our mutual delight for hire, or to
Serve mine own sordid ends?'

①

As in The Picture, the ruler, in this case the Emperor Theodosius II, comes to a realisation of how he has transgressed in fondness and neglected his high office. It is possible that under a Byzantine story Massinger was cautiously mirroring the situation, as he saw it from a distance, at the court of Charles I, whose prodigality and uxoriousness were not unmarked by his more serious-minded subjects.

To sum up what I have so far said as regards the married relationship in Massinger's plays:- There is in this relationship a reciprocal obligation. A wife must serve and be faithful to her husband; a husband must trust and honour his wife. But, since a duty to society is higher

① III., ii.

than the sexual obligation, and the passions must be controlled by reason, a man must not dote upon his wife to the detriment of his capacity for conducting his affairs or performing his social duties, and a wife must know her place and not presume to impose her will upon her husband's in the conduct of affairs.

As regards the sexual act itself Massinger has quite a lot to say. In fact, none of his contemporaries has more; and some of what he says is extremely broad, not to say obscene. But one has to distinguish here between what Massinger permits his men- and women-of-the-world to say, often for so-called 'comic' purposes, and what he puts into their mouths or the mouths of other more appropriate characters in order to express his own proper sentiments. These sentiments in this regard are uncompromising. Thus he takes a strongly condemnatory line on sexual indulgence without the sanction of marriage. This is how Eugenia in The Duke of Milan, long before seduced by Sforza, receives the news of Marcelia's death at the hands of her husband Sforza:

'She had discretion
 Not to deliver up her virgin fort,
 Though strait besieged with flatteries, vows, and tears,
 Until the church had made it safe and lawful.
 And had I been the mistress of her judgment
 And constant temper, skilful in the knowledge
 Of man's malicious falsehood, I had never,
 Upon his hell-deep oaths to marry me,
 Given up my fair name, and my maiden honour,
 To his foul lust; nor lived now, being branded
 In the forehead for his whore, the scorn and shame
 Of all good women.'

①

Again, in The Parliament of Love even the desire, without the accomplishment,

① V., i.

of seduction before marriage is severely condemned.

'I confess,'

says the now-repentant Cleremond,

'After you promised marriage, nothing wanting
But a few days expired, to make me happy,
My violent impatience of delay
Made me presume, and with some amorous force,
To ask a full fruition of those pleasures
Which sacred Hymen to the world makes lawful,
Before his torch was lighted; in this only,
You justly can accuse me.'

But Leonora replies to this not ignoble apology:

'Dar'st thou think
That this offence can ever find a pardon,
Unworthy as thou art!'

①

Other passages in the plays, and still more the working-out of several plots (including The Duke of Milan with its revenge-for-seduction catastrophe, and the similar, though less serious, theme in The Bashful Lover) witness to Massinger's regard for pre-marital chastity both for women and for men. Those who have erred, it is true, are sometimes allowed by a marriage post copulam to do what they can to restore their virtue. Leosthenes marries Statilia in The Bondman after his rejection by Cleora, and Alonzo marries Maria in The Bashful Lover. Another seduced lady, Eugenia in The Duke of Milan, is committed by the dying Sforza to a convent, because with his death she cannot be made 'an honest woman'. But in spite of such ways of escape from the moral dilemma, ways long-sanctioned by civil and religious custom, Massinger makes it quite clear that the original offence is no

less a sin. Those who attempt adultery are no less severely dealt with. Ubaldo and Ricardo in The Picture are tricked and made laughing-stocks by Sophia. Perigot and Novall in The Parliament of Love are likewise frustrated and punished; and in the same play the sanctity of marriage is preserved by the time-honoured device of making Clarindore sleep with his own wife instead of with Bellisant as he had intended. When adultery has actually been committed, as in The Fatal Dowry, a tragic catastrophe follows; and in The Roman Actor, though there is technically no adultery, death falls on Domitian for stealing a wife by a forced-on divorce, Domitia for consenting and for her infidelity (in desire if not in deed) to her second husband, and even upon Paris for being the more or less innocent second party to that uncompleted adultery. No, Massinger is no condoner of sexual irregularity, no-easy-going admirer of the gay young men and the light young ladies of Fletcher.

Within marriage itself, sexual love, according to Massinger, ever true to his ὑπερὸν ἄγαθον, should be indulged with moderation. Thus Marcelia in The Duke of Milan, the most signal victim in the plays of immoderate love, talks admonishingly to her husband of

'The pleasures
That sacred Hymen warrants
Of which, in troth, you are too great a doter.'

①

And she goes on to say in stronger terms:

'And there is more of beast in it than man.
Let us love temperately; things violent last not,
And too much dotage rather argues folly
Than true affection.'

The same insistence on sexual moderation in marriage occurs in The Picture, when Mathias, on taking leave of his wife, says,

'We have long enjoyed the sweets of love, and though
Not to satiety or loathing, yet,
We must not live such dotards on our pleasures,
As still to hug them, to the certain loss
Of profit and preferment.'

①

This same scene, which was commended by Lamb ②, gives better than any other single passage Massinger's idea of a happy marriage:

'You have been an obedient wife, a right one;
And to my power, though short of your desert,
I have been ever an indulgent husband ...
... .. 'Tis for thee
That I turn soldier, and put forth, dearest,
Upon this sea of action, as a factor,
To trade for rich materials to adorn
Thy noble parts, and show them in full lustre.
... .. therefore, Sophia,
In few words know my pleasure, and obey me,
As you have ever done. To your discretion
I leave the government of my family,
And our poor fortunes; and from these command
Obedience to you, as to myself.'

The wife has been dutiful; the husband considerate. Their love has been deep but temperate; and the husband has not neglected his proper duty of providing 'competent means' for his wife and household. But with a recall of what I have previously said, it should be noted that, although Mathias and Sophia have been married for years, they have 'as yet no charge of children'.

① I., i. ② Specimens of English Dramatic Poets (1808): 'The good sense, rational fondness, and chastised feeling of this dialogue, make it more valuable than many of those scenes in which this writer has attempted a deeper passion and more tragical interest.' (Bohn. Edn. 1854. 364.)

It is perhaps appropriate to conclude this section of my present chapter by contrasting briefly Massinger and Shakespeare in the matter under discussion. Nearly all Massinger's plays deal in some measure with the premarital, marital, or extra-marital relationship of men and women. They all raise problems which he takes seriously and, indeed, round which the actions of quite a number of the plays rotate. In five (The Duke of Milan, The Picture, The Emperor of the East, The Roman Actor, and The Guardian, not to mention The Fatal Dowry) we are directly concerned with problems of the married relationship; and in four (The Bondman, The Parliament of Love, The City Madam, and The Great Duke of Florence) these problems enter indirectly but importantly. That is, in more than half of his plays Massinger is dealing, as one of his prime interests, with the man-woman relationship in marriage; and, of the remaining six plays, four (The Unnatural Combat, The Renegado, The Maid of Honour, and The Bashful Lover) deal with the sexual relationship in other respects in which the question of marriage looms large. Shakespeare, on the other hand, does not in general concentrate so exclusively anywhere on the purely sexual relationship. Problems of marriage, for example, are rarely Shakespeare's specific concern, except in Othello, and perhaps also in Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale, though of course they make incidental appearances, sometimes as background matter and sometimes of importance in the foreground, elsewhere, as in Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra, Macbeth, King Lear, and Pericles. However, Shakespeare's treatment of the subject is not, as in Massinger, of a nature which almost excludes everything else, and consequently it is all the more true-to-life. Hence the difference between Shakespeare and Massinger is not, as might appear

on casual inspection, in the amount of interest, but in the kind.

Massinger's interest is that of the theorist and social problematist: Shakespeare's is that of the mirrorer of life. As is to be expected of his genius, Shakespeare presents the truer picture. Yet there is something to be said for Massinger. He views marriage in a graver light, with more attention to detail, and with more regard to its social and religious implications. Marriage is to him more than a goal to be attained after which it can be assumed that life will proceed smoothly and happily, more than an uneasy yoke to be borne with good-humoured tolerance. It is a state which has to be maintained with rigour, with perseverance, and according to principles of moral virtue. But it is, nevertheless, a state which is essential to the happiness of man. As Lord Lovell says in A New Way to Pay Old Debts,

'I know,
The sum of all that makes a just man happy
Consists in the well choosin g of his wife.'

①

In his political thought Massinger has two main concerns. The first of these is liberty, and the second, which is indissolubly linked with the first, is wise and just government. Inevitably, Massinger sees these, except perhaps in The Bondman, in a monarchical field of reference. But there is in him a Whiggism before the Whigs and a foreshadowing of that academic republicanism which crops out in eighteenth-century Whiggism

① IV., 1.

as a sentiment rather than as practical politics and which at last became a doctrine with Tom Payne, Godwin, and Horne Tooke.

Political liberty for Massinger is founded on an ethical conception of the liberty of the individual soul. We have already seen the place of the latter in the private bond of man to wife and wife to man. But it is likewise not to be infringed by the social bond of subject to state or subject to prince. The liberty of the individual soul can be attained only when reason, and consequently right thinking and conduct, prevail in the individual over the baser passions. As we shall see, Massinger maintains, through Timoleon in Act I., scene iii. of The Bondman, that only the virtuous deserve freedom. The body may owe a duty to an overlord, but the mind of the good subject is free.

'Though the king may
Dispose of my life and goods, my mind's my own,'

exclaims Camiola in Act II., scene ii. of The Maid of Honour; and in Act IV., scene v. she again puts forward the same idea, along with a distinction between a legitimate or just ruler and a tyrant and between even a legitimate ruler's virtues, which rightly demand loyalty, and his vices, which do not:

'Twas never read in holy writ, or moral,
That subjects on their loyalty were obliged
To love their sovereign's vices;
.. .. Tyrants, not kings,
By violence, from humble vassals force
The liberty of their souls.'

Cleora, another of Massinger's freedom-loving heroines, considers in Act I., scene iii. of The Bondman that this high liberty of soul which can be rated as on a par with honour is worth the surrender of all riches and worldly goods:

'Think you all treasure
 Hid in the bowels of the earth, or shipwrecked
 In Neptune's watery kingdom, can hold weight,
 When liberty and honour fill one scale,
 Triumphant Justice sitting on the beam?'

The Bondman is, of course, the play above all others in which political liberty is most fully dealt with. The action of the play concerns a rising of the oppressed slaves of Syracuse during the absence of their masters at the war against Carthage. But even before the rising has been hinted at in the play, Timoleon, the Corinthian general who has been called in to take charge of the Syracusan army, gives us in the very first words he speaks on his entrance in the Senate in Act I., scene iii., what is the main issue of the plot:

'I have ever loved
 An equal freedom, and proclaim all such
 As would usurp on others' liberties,
 Rebels to nature, to whose bounteous blessings
 All men lay claim as true legitimate sons:
 But such as have made forfeit of themselves
 By vicious courses, and their birthright lost,
 'Tis not injustice they are marked for slaves,
 To serve the virtuous.'

On the other hand, Marullo, who leads the rising of slaves, speaks with great indignation in Act IV., scene ii. of the treatment the slaves had had to endure from their cruel masters:

'. . . . tyranny
 Drew us from our obedience. Happy those times
 When lords were styled fathers of families,
 And not imperious masters!
 Humanity then lodged in the hearts of men,
 And thankful masters carefully provided
 For creatures wanting reason.
 but man to man more cruel
 Appoints no end to the suffering of his slave;

Since pride stepped in an^d riot, and o'erturned
 This goodly frame of concord, teaching masters
 To glory in the abuse of such as are
 Brought under their command; who, grown unuseful,
 Are less esteemed than beasts.'

And in Act II., scene iii. Marullo proclaims in surprisingly democratic terms the natural equality of men:

'Equal Nature fashioned us
 All in one mould. The bear serves not the bear,
 Nor the wolf the wolf; 'twas odds of strength in tyrants,
 That plucked the first link from the golden chain
 With which the Thing of Things bound in the world.
 Why then, since we are taught, by their examples,
 To love our liberty, if not command,
 Should the strong serve the weak, the fair, deformed ones?
 Or such as know the cause of things, pay tribute
 To ignorant fools? All's but the outward gloss,
 And politic form, that does distinguish us.'

In The Bondman, however, Massinger has found himself in a dilemma. The egalitarian declaration I have just quoted and the sympathetic account of the rising of the slaves would seem to demand that the slaves should be victorious. Yet, because Massinger is an anti-revolutionary and holds by political stability, the slaves have to be defeated. He extricates himself from his difficulty by a somewhat dubious juggling with our sympathies. He glosses over as well as he can the defeat of the slaves and the consequences thereof to them, and asks, in the expectation of a favourable answer, whether the brave citizens of Syracuse who have returned from the foreign war have done their patriotic duty, vindicated their honour, and justified their positions as lords and masters. It was the cowardly citizens who had remained at home that had maltreated their slaves and suffered defeat in the rising. So the slaves, victorious over the worthless and defeated by the worthy, are dealt with leniently and

presumably enjoy thereafter a happier condition and the redress of their grievances. Just to tie everything up nicely, even the bad stay-at-homes undergo a reformation as a direct result of the rising.

But otherwise, and despite the ambiguous issue of The Bondman, Massinger holds fast by his love of liberty. It is perhaps significant that two of his favourite words are 'bondman' and 'bondwoman' and that they occur repeatedly in almost all the plays in the canon, always with an explicit or implicit condemnation of slavery or serfdom (except when they are used semi-metaphorically to connote the duty of spouse to spouse or lover to lover).

His insistence on political liberty and his democratic statements on kingship and the relation between ruler and law led Coleridge to call him a Whig. 'Massinger,' he said, 'is a decided Whig; Beaumont and Fletcher high-flying, passive-obedience Tories' ① . And in another place, speaking of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods generally, he observed that 'Stage, pulpit, law, fashion -- all conspired to enslave the realm. Massinger's plays breathe the opposite spirit' ② .

Questions about rule and government, and in particular the function and character of the prince or ruler receive special attention from Massinger in The Roman Actor, and The Emperor of the East. But they also get more incidental consideration in a number of other plays, notably The Maid of Honour, The Bondman, and The Great Duke of Florence.

① Miscell. Crit. (Raysor), 77. ② Ibid., 85.

The divine right of kings, which was one of the political common-places of the day (1), is accepted by Massinger, but with his own implications. Kings are divinely called and justified only when they exercise their functions wisely and with justice. A ruler becomes a tyrant whenever he places his personal interests and caprices above the moral law and before the interests of his subjects. Evil rulers, the moral of The Roman Actor tells us,

'And such as are governed only by their will,
And not their reason, unlamented fall.'

As Chelli says, 'Le souverain déchoit du moment où il oublie sa mission pour suivre son caprice' (2).

The Maid of Honour provides a good illustration of momentary or isolated caprice on a ruler's part. King Roberto of Sicily commands Camiola to marry his favourite, Fulgentio. She refuses. Without her knowledge or approval Adorio, who loves her, fights a duel with Fulgentio over the matter. The King then demands an explanation from Camiola and accuses her of setting her man on to murder Fulgentio. This is her protest in reply:

'With your leave, I must not kneel, sir,
While I reply to this: but thus rise up
In my defence, and tell you, as a man,
(Since, when you are unjust, the deity,
Which you may challenge as a king parts from you)
'Twas never read
That subjects were obliged
To love their sovereign's vices.'

(3)

(1) On this, see particularly the second and third of Lord Radcliffe's Reith Lectures on Power and the State (The Listener. 1951. 827-9, 877-9).
 (2) Drame, 319. (3) IV., v.

And when Roberto in the end admits her innocence of the charge he had made against her, she declares,

'Ay, now you show whose deputy you are:
If now I bathe your feet with tears, it cannot
Be censured superstition.'

In the last couplet of the scene she sums up the political message of the play:

'Happy are subjects, when the prince is still
Guided by justice, not his passionate will.'

The trouble in The Maid of Honour came from an isolated interference of the prince with a subject's liberty of choice as regards marriage, in which sphere the law gave him no authority; but Roberto was otherwise a good ruler, open to argument and ready to admit his mistake. In The Roman Actor, on the other hand, Domitian is practically everything that a ruler should not be, arbitrary, unjust, self-willed, capricious, and cruel. For in the mysterious operations of Providence the semi-divine office of ruler sometimes falls to unworthy persons. As Malefort (one of Massinger's bad men, to be sure, but one not without characteristics that his creator respected) says, when called on to drink a health to 'the worthiest of women',

'I will not choose a foreign queen's,
Nor yet our own, for that would relish of
Tame flattery; nor do their height of title,
Or absolute power, confirm their worth and goodness,
These being heaven's gifts, and frequently conferred
On such as are beneath them.'

①

Domitian, to return to The Roman Actor, is too bad to be reformed like

① The Unnatural Combat, III., iii.

Roberto, and fit only for the extreme punishment of death. It comes to him from a conspiracy of six of his chief victims. The wicked ruler is punished in accordance with the prophecy generally denounced against all such in Act III., scene 1.:

'The immortal Powers
Protect a prince, though sold to impious acts,
And seem to slumber, till his roaring crimes
Awake their justice.'

The phrasing deserves close attention in view of Chelli's declaration that Massinger is 'anti-tyran, jusque -- à le prendre au mot -- jusqu'au tyrannicide' ①. On the contrary, however, the lines just quoted are not a simple justification of tyrannicide but an affirmation of faith in the working of the moral law. Indeed, the prophecy goes on to say that the 'immortal Powers',

'looking down,
And with impartial eyes, on his contempt
Of all religion and moral goodness,
They in their secret judgments, do determine
To leave him to his wickedness, which sinks him,
When he is most secure.'

If Massinger makes a character say,

'I am confident he deserves much more
That vindicates his country from a tyrant,
Than he that saves a citizen;' ②

he must not be understood to mean by 'vindicate' 'assassinate'. Rather Massinger's position is covered by the Gospel words, 'It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man [tyrant and tyrannicide impartially] by whom the offence cometh' ③. So Domitian --

'... was our prince,
However wicked;' ④

① Drame, 319. ② The Roman Actor, III., i. But the same idea in almost the same words occurs several times in Massinger. ③ Matthew, xviii, 7. ④ V., ii.

says the tribune who breaks in and arrests the murderers;

'.. and, in you, this murder, --
Which whosoe'er succeeds him will revenge;
Nor will we, that served under his command,
Consent that such a monster as thyself,
(For in thy wickedness Augusta's title
Hath quite forsook thee) thou, that wert the ground
Of all these mischiefs, shall go hence unpunished.
Lay hands on her, and drag her to her sentence. --
We will refer the hearing to the senate,
Who may at their best leisure censure you.'

Thus Massinger recognises that some sort of divinity doth hedge even a wicked prince and implies that tyrannicide is never justifiable. But the same tribune cannot leave us there: he finishes his speech and the play on the distinction between good kings who are mourned after their deaths and the arbitrary and tyrannical who die unlamented:

'He in death hath paid
For all his cruelties. Here's the difference;
Good kings are mourned for after life; but ill,
And such as, governed only by their will,
And not their reason, unlamented fall;
No good man's tear shed at their funeral.'

If Massinger gives surprisingly bold lessons to rulers, that is to say James I and Charles I, he also condemns those of their subjects whose deference was a dangerous incense and sycophancy. In The Emperor of the East he actually puts a heartfelt protest into the mouth of the jealousy-tortured Emperor Theodosius himself, the sincerity of which as an expression of Massinger's belief is not impaired by the obvious debt to Othello and The Merchant of Venice;

'Wherefore pay you
This adoration to a sinful creature?
I am flesh and blood as you are, sensible
Of heat and cold, as much a slave unto
The tyranny of my passions, as the meanest
Of my poor subjects. The proud attributes,

By oil-tongued flattery imposed upon us,
 As sacred, glorious, high, invincible,
 The deputy of heaven, and in that
 Omnipotent, with all false titles else,
 Coined to abuse our frailty, though compounded,
 And by the breath of sycophants applied,
 Cure not the least fit of an ague in us.
 We may give poor men riches, confer honours
 On undeservers, raise, or ruin such
 As are beneath us, and, with this puffed up,
 Ambition would persuade us to forget
 That we are men: but He that sits above us,
 And to whom, at our utmost rate, we are
 But pageant properties, derides our weakness:
 In me, to whom you kneel, 'tis most apparent.
 Can I call back yesterday, with all their aids
 That bow unto my sceptre? or restore
 My mind to that tranquillity and peace
 It then enjoyed? -- Can I make Eudocia chaste,
 Or vile Paulinus honest?'

There is another equally emphatic rebuke in the same play, administered by Pulcheria to the projectors and other parasites about the Court, who, for their own base ends, flattered the monarch in order to lure him to unjust and arbitrary exactions:

'You roar out,
 All is the king's, his will above his laws;
 And that fit tributes are too gentle yokes
 For his poor subjects: whispering in his ear,
 If he would have their fear, no man should dare
 To bring a salad from his country garden,
 Without the paying gabel; kill a hen,
 Without excise: and that if he desire
 To have his children or his servants wear
 Their heads upon their shoulders, you affirm
 In policy 'tis fit the owner should
 Pay for them by the poll; or, if the prince want
 A present sum, he may command a city
 Impossibilities, and for non-performance,
 Compel it to submit to any fine
 His officers shall impose. Is this the way
 To make our emperor happy? can the groans
 Of his subjects yield him music? must his thresholds
 Be washed with widows' and wronged orphans' tears,
 Or his power grow contemptible?'

①

These are two striking passages in view of the period for which they were written. Massinger writes more briefly in the same vein in The Great Duke of Florence, Act I., scene i., when the noble and conscientious tutor of Prince Giovanni tells the Duke's secretary that princes

'being men, and not gods, Contarino,
They can give wealth and titles, but no virtues;
That is without their power.'

The very humanity of the ruler, however, claims for him a larger tolerance in minor matters than ordinary men can expect:

<u>Charomonte.</u>	Are not these
<u>Alphonso.</u>	Strange gambols in the duke!
<u>Hippolito.</u>	Great princes have Like meaner men, their weakness.
<u>Contarino.</u>	And may use it Without control or check. 'Tis fit they should; There privilege were less else, than their subjects'!

And Massinger realises that, even so, the princely office is no blessing^① but an exalted servitude:

'Greatness, with private men
Esteemed a blessing, is to me a curse;
And we, whom, for our high births, they conclude
The only freemen, are the only slaves.'^②

In Massinger's plays not only is the ruler isolated from the ordinary run of his subjects, but he is absolutist in his methods.

'We stand not bound to yield account to any,'
says Duke Cozimo in Act I., scene iii. of The Great Duke of Florence,

'Why we do this or that (the full consent
Of our subjects being included in our will)'

① V., ii. ② I., i.

He and other rulers in Massinger have counsellors, some of whom, like Eubulus in The Picture and Pulcheria in The Emperor of the East, are frank enough in their advice and comments. The good advice of such counsellors is not to be spurned. As Theodosius says in The Emperor of the East,

'He never learned
The right way to command that stopped his ears
To wise directions;'

①

-- a significant and directed remark perhaps, in view of the fact that the play received a special Court performance before Charles and Henrietta Maria. Cozimo also in The Great Duke of Florence, Act I., scene ii., expresses the same sentiment:

'We are not grown so proud
As to disdain familiar conference
With such as are to counsel and direct us.'

But wise counsel is accepted only because it is wise and for no other reason, the ruler being the judge and exercising his reason in deciding. For his counsellors have no standing as official representatives of a parliament; and there are no intermediaries, except minor executive officers, between the ruler and the ruled. The ruler himself is omnipotent -- the great first cause in the state. He reigns and rules. In so far as he considers his subjects' best interests he does so as one obedient to God, but not answerable to men. The ruler, however, ought to hear his people's grievances directly. Theodosius states this kingly duty in Act III., scene ii. of The Emperor of the East:

① I., ii.

'Since that dread Power by Whom we are, disdains not
 With an open ear to hear petitions from us;
 Easy access in us, His deputies,
 To the meanest of our subjects, is a debt
 Which we stand bound to pay.'

And he is shown as graciously hearing an old countryman and receiving from him the simple (but as it turns out, fateful) gift of an apple. This is, however, one of the few occasions on which a monarch is shown in juxtaposition to his humbler subjects, apart from palace domestics. Otherwise Massinger's rulers live, move, and have their being in a society of nobles, courtiers, favourites, and advisers -- no doubt more because of the ingredients and exigencies of the kind of play Massinger was writing than from any inference as to kingship that he meant his audience to draw.

Such absolutism, then, as I have been illustrating from Massinger makes it hard to accept without serious qualification Coleridge's description of him as 'a democrat' ① .

To sum up:- A king or ruler, in Massinger's politics, has a twofold duty, to God who has created him both man and monarch, and to his subjects. He can carry out this double duty only if he rules, not according to mere man-made law, but according to that Moral Law or Justice which is an attribute of God Himself ② . If the ruler allows his passions or caprice to rule his reason, he is ipso facto a tyrant and sooner or later, unless he repents and reforms, will be brought to book for his evil or foolish actions. The whole duty of a king is to

① Miscell Crit. (Raysor), 69. ② Cf. The Bondman, III., iii. : 'Thou art just, Thou all-creating Power!'

rule his people disinterestedly, wisely, and justly, not with harshness, but with sympathy and with that

'saving mercy

Which sets off
 A prince, much more than rigour.
 And becomes him,
 When 'tis expressed to such as fell by weakness,
 That being a twin-brother to affection,
 Better than wreaths of conquest.'

①

Massinger's political ideas cannot be left without fuller reference than I have yet made to their bearing on and his allusions to contemporary affairs. Surprisingly enough, except for occasional footnotes in Gifford the dramatist's relation to political situations under James I and Charles I received no attention till S.R.Gardiner broached it in an article in The Contemporary Review for August, 1876 ② . It was his opinion that 'in many of Massinger's plays we have a treatment of the politics of the day so plain and transparent, that anyone who possesses only a slight acquaintance with the history of the reigns of the first two Stuarts can read it at a glance' ③ . One may be permitted to doubt if such a 'slight acquaintance with the history of the period is as adequate as Gardiner supposed. But undoubtedly the plays amply reveal Massinger as a close, thoughtful, and outspoken observer of the first two Stuart kings and their government.

It is perhaps not necessary to go into these matters in great detail here since they have been dealt with at such length by Gardiner. But

① The Roman Actor, V., iii. ② The Political Element in Massinger. Repr. Trans. New Sh. Soc. I. 1875-6 ③ P. 495.

some comment is certainly called for. Many of the allusions in The Bondman, The Maid of Honour, and The Great Duke of Florence, are directed against George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the dissolute and arrogant favourite of Charles. Two quotations will suffice to show how pointed these passages can be ①. In Act I., scene i. of The Bondman he is the prototype of the admiral of the Carthaginian fleet:

'Gisco's their admiral,
And 'tis our happiness; a raw young fellow,
One never trained in arms, but rather fashioned
To tilt with ladies' lips, than crack a lance;
Ravish a feather from a mistress' fan,
And wear it as a favour. A steel helmet,
Made horrid with a glorious plume, will crack
His woman's neck.'

In The Maid of Honour he appears on the stage thinly disguised as Fulgentio, favourite of King Roberto of Sicily. In Act I., scene i. he is described as

'A gentleman, yet no lord. He hath some drops
Of the king's blood running in his veins, derived
Some ten degrees off. His revenue lies
In a narrow compass, the king's ear; and yields him
Every hour a fruitful harvest. Men may talk
Of three crops in a year in the Fortunate Islands,
Of profit made by wool; but while there are suitors,
His sheepshearing, nay, shaving to the quick,
Is in every quarter of the moon, and constant.
In the time of trussing a point, he can undo,
Or make a man: his play or recreation,
Is to raise this up, or pull down that; and, though
He never yet took orders, makes more bishops
In Sicily, than the pope himself.'

Gardiner suggests that these anti-Buckingham passages were

① For other Buckingham allusions, see: Duke of Milan, IV., i.; Bondman, I., iii.; and Great Duke of Florence, I., i., and the two scenes quoted above passim. For other direct political allusions, see: Great Duke of Florence, I., i., II., i.; Renegado, II., i.; Maid of Honour, III., iii.; and Emperor of the East, I., i.; and perhaps also Believe As You List, passim (See Gardiner, *loc. cit.*).

inserted by Massinger to manifest his adherence to the party of opposition which included the Herberts. It is, however, perhaps too easy to exaggerate Massinger's partisan tendencies on the strength of a few passages critical of Buckingham. There were, after all, many other people in the period from 1625 to 1627 who were equally critical of Buckingham. I am inclined to think that Massinger owed little political allegiance to the cause of the Herberts, or of anyone else for that matter, but criticised what he saw and condemned what he disapproved of, honestly, as was his custom. He looks at politics as a moralist, not as a politician or a partisan.

In such early plays as The Bondman, The Maid of Honour, and The Great Duke of Florence, his political comment on current affairs was admittedly personal. But after the assassination of Buckingham in 1628, though his commentary has occasional personal applications, it becomes more general and takes up in greater detail than before the question of ruler and ruled. The ruler of course to whom Massinger directed his scrutiny was Charles I. He had already subtly praised him as Prince Giovanni in The Great Duke of Florence ①, especially in the lines in Act I., scene 1:-

'... my noble charge,
By his sharp wit, and pregnant apprehension,
Instructing those that teach him; making use,
Not in a vulgar and pedantic form,
Of what's read to him, but 'tis straight digested,
And truly made his own. His grave discourse,
In one no more indebted unto years,

① This play was licensed in 1627, but from internal evidence was almost certainly written before the accession of Charles. See above, Chapter I., p. 22, and p. 42.

Amazes such as hear him: as for knowledge in
 Music, he needs it not, it being born with him;
 All that he speaks being with such grace delivered,
 That it makes perfect harmony.
 ...And that there may be nothing wanting that
 May render him complete, the sweetness of
 His disposition so wins on all
 Appointed to attend him, that they are
 Rivals, even in the coarsest office, who
 Shall get precedency to do him service;
 Which they esteem a greater happiness,
 Than if they had been fashioned and built up
 To hold command o'er others;'

and the joy in London on Charles's return from Spain inspired the account
 of Giovanni's arrival in Florence in Act III., scene i.:

'Being, as you are, received for the heir apparent,
 You are no sooner seen, but wondered at;
 The signiors making it a business to
 Enquire how you have slept; and, as you walk
 The streets of Florence, the glad multitude
 In throngs press but to see you; and, with joy,
 The father, pointing with his finger, tells
 His son, This is the prince, the hopeful prince,
 That must hereafter rule, and you obey him --
 Great ladies beg your picture, and make love
 To that, despairing to enjoy the substance --
 And, but the last night, when 'twas only rumoured
 That you were come to court, as if you had
 By sea past hither from another world,
 What general shouts and acclamations followed!
 The bells rang loud, the bonfires blazed, and such
 As loved not wine, carousing to your health,
 Were drunk, and blushed not at it.'

When Charles had been some years on the throne, Massinger wrote The
 Emperor of the East for his monarch 'throned by the west' ⁽¹⁾ . The
 Court Prologue directly addresses it to the King:

'As ever, sir, you lent a gracious ear
 To oppressed innocence, now vouchsafe to hear
 A short petition. At your feet, in me,

⁽¹⁾ A Midsummer-Night's Dream, II., ii. 158.

The poet kneels, and to your majesty
Appeals for justice. What we now present,
When first conceived, in his vote and intent,
Was sacred to your pleasure.'

The play may seem to us in some ways so critical of Charles that we may wonder how Sir Henry Herbert passed it for performance at all, let alone for performance at Court. Undoubtedly in it Massinger warned Charles against his uxoriousness, prodigality, and lack of grip ^①. But what is clear enough today might well escape Charles's awareness of its similarity to his own circumstances. He probably approved of many of the political sententiae as echoing his own conception of his position and took pleasure in the ideal monarch which it presented, not in Theodosius but abstractly, and which he imagined himself to resemble. For in its fundamental principles the play is undeniably royalist and devoted to the throne, and any salty flavour of specific admonishment might well be counteracted and washed away by the patently tragicomic ending. Very different was Charles's attitude in 1638 to a play by Massinger called The King and the Subject which is now lost. 'readinge over theplay at Newmarket,' says Sir Henry Herbert ^②, the King took royal objection to a passage in it, and, 'set his marke upon the place with his owne hand, and in thes words: "This is too insolent, and to bee changed."' But other things had already changed and the sky had darkened by 1638; and Massinger may have been less discreet in masking cautiously the contemporary application, while Charles himself was probably more aware of

^① See the quotations given above from this play. Pp. 236, 250, 251, 254, & above. ^② This passage is given in full in Chapter I., p. 63.

public opinion and of the pointedness of such oblique allusiveness. Nevertheless, in spite of his well-intentioned political animadversions, Massinger remained definitely a King's man. Had he lived until the Civil War he would probably have been a member of the conservative group who, after disapproving of many of Charles's actions that brought the War about, fought for him unhesitatingly as their divinely-appointed ruler. He would have subscribed, perhaps more heartily than their author, certainly with a more single-minded royalism, to these words:-

'Upon considering all, I think the cause was too good to have been fought for. Men ought to have trusted God -- they ought to have trusted the King with the whole matter. The arms of the Church are prayers and tears, the arms of the subject are patience and petitions. The King himself being of so accurate and piercing a judgement would soon have felt where it stuck. For men may spare their pains when Nature is at work, and the world will not go the faster for our driving. Even as his present Majesty's happy Restoration did itself, so all things else happen in their best and proper time, without any heed of our officiousness.' ①

It is quite impossible to particularise Massinger's attitude to religion as I have tried to do with the other two recurring topics of his commentary on life. But as far as I can, I shall try to define his elusive but all-pervasive religious prepossession. I deliberately so describe it, for it pervades and interpenetrates all his work and thought. Alone of all the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists he displays a hardly intermitted religious bias. His gravitas is only equalled by his pietas (in the religious sense). 'His view of life,' says Sir Leslie Stephen,

① Andrew Marvell: The Rehearsal Transposed.

'is not only grave, but has a distinctly religious colouring' ① .

An examination of the plays, however, reveals no particularly individual religious ideas, nor indeed anything religiously eccentric. Massinger's religion, as far as doctrine goes, was central and orthodox. I cannot think that this was a mere playing for safety: it was the result of solid convictions and a natural conservatism. Massinger can be outspoken; but it is with the candour of a traditionalist, never the empressement of the innovator. His standpoint in all his plays is that of a morality unquestioned and venerable, and behind all his morality lie the generally unstated but undeniable sanctions of Christianity. His good characters are always devout, even where, as in The Bondman, Believe As You List, or The Renegado, the creed they hold is pagan or Muslim, not Christian. The wicked characters are always presented as breakers of 'the laws of Heaven'.

The play which deals most closely and most representatively with religious issues is The Renegado, not of course in such a controversial way as would have brought the jealous authorities of Church and State down on it. ②. It presents, more sophisticatedly than Heywood's not wholly unsimilar Fair Maid of the West, the opposition, not of two Christian denominations, but of Christianity and Islam. The Christians are in the right and the Muslims are in the wrong and are, of course, eventually foiled, one of them, Donusa, being (somewhat improbably)

① Hours in a Library, II. 153. ② The Virgin Martyr must, for my purposes, be ruled out of court since it is impossible to determine how much of its religious element was already present before Massinger came to handle it.

converted and Grimaldi the Renegado being re-converted. As the Christians are Italians, there is good reason for making them Roman Catholics. Whether there was another reason in Massinger's own religious adherence I shall discuss later. The fact to notice is that the play might be described as undenominationally Christian. As in the other plays, religion is the crown of Massinger's philosophy, religious duty being paramount above all others. The particular issue here is that of religious versus amatory obligation. Vitelli is torn between his sincere desire to act virtuously and according to Christian principles and his passionate love for the seductive Mohammedan princess Donusa. It is in effect Massinger's frequently refaceted conflict of reason and the passions.

At the very beginning, before Vitelli has seen Donusa or knows of her existence, he is seen being schooled by his bonus angelus, Francisco, in the general conquest of the passions.

'O welcome sir!'

exclaims Vitelli on seeing Francisco.

'Stay of my steps in this life,
 And guide to all my blessed hopes hereafter.
 What comforts, sir? Have your endeavours prospered?
 Have we tired Fortune's malice with our sufferings?
 Is she at length, after so many frowns,
 Pleased to vouchsafe one cheerful look upon us?' (1)

In Francisco's reply there is a most fatherly rebuke:

'You give too much to fortune and your passions,
 O'er which a wise man, if religious, triumphs.
 That name fools worship; and those tyrants which

(1) I., i.

We arm against our better part, our reason,
 May add, but never take from our afflictions.'

Vitelli attempts to excuse himself;

'Sir, as I am a sinful man, I cannot
 But like one suffer.'

But Francisco continues in his admonishing vein;

'I exact not from you
 A fortitude insensible of calamity,
 To which the saints themselves have bowed and shown
 They are made of flesh and blood; all that I challenge
 Is manly patience. Will you, that were trained up
 In a religious school, where divine maxims,
 Scorning comparison with moral precepts,
 Were daily taught you, bear your constancy's trial,
 Not like Vitelli, but a village nurse,
 With curses in your mouth, tears in your eyes? --
 How poorly it shows in you.'

Of course, such an emphasis on rational control of the passions is to set the tone and prepare the audience.

Thereafter throughout the play Francisco exhorts Vitelli to live the life of a good Christian. Vitelli is indeed seduced by Donusa and sins, not so much through having fallen in love with an infidel as through having succumbed to the temptations of the flesh. Chastity is somehow or other practically equated with the Christian way of life. When Vitelli resists the further allurements of Donusa in Act III., scene v. and rebukes her and condemns himself for the sin they have committed, she asks him,

'Whom do you fear?'

And he replies;

'That human frailty I took from my mother,
 That, as my youth increased, grew stronger on me;
 That still pursues me, and, though once recovered,
 In scorn of reason, and, what's more, religion,
 Again seeks to betray me.'

As the play advances, Vitelli becomes something more than a true Christian who has repented his first lapse and resisted further temptation: encouraged by Francisco, he aspires to martyrdom for the Faith.

'What punishment
Soe'er I undergo, I am still a Christian!'

he cries in Act III., scene v., after his intrigue with Donusa has been discovered and he has been seized by her guardians; and in Act IV., scene iii. in prison he reveals his ambition to Francisco:

'I grant, to have mastered
The rebel appetite of flesh and blood,
Was far above my strength; and still owe for it
To that great Power that lent it: but, when I
Shall make't apparent the grim looks of Death
Affright me not, and that I can put off
The fond desire of life (that, like a garment,
Covers and clothes our frailty), hastening to
My martyrdom, as to a heavenly banquet,
To which I was a choice invited guest;
Then you may boldly say, you did not plough,
Or trust the barren and ungrateful sands
With the fruitful grain of your religious counsels.'

With eloquent and burning faith he continues;

'I would now
Pluck out that wicked tongue, that hath blasphemed
The great Omnipotency, at whose nod
The fabric of the world shakes. Dare you bring
Your juggling prophet in comparison with
That most inscrutable and infinite Essence,
That made this All, and comprehends his work! --
The place is too profane to mention Him
Whose only name is sacred.'

It is not impossible that Massinger meant a double entente in the last two lines -- the prison at Tunis and the stage on which the Act of May 27th 1606 'to Restraine Abuses of Players' had made it an indictable offence 'jestingly or prophanely [to] speake or use the holy Name of God or of Christ Jesus or of the Holy Ghoste or of the Trinitie; which

are not to be spoken but with feare and reverence'. And it is also possible that, so far from Massinger regarding this as a restriction, he may have reverently acquiesced in its propriety.

After The Renegado the play in which the religious strand is most obvious is The Maid of Honour. In this play, however, notwithstanding the elevated symbolic interpretation of Camiola's renunciation of the world which has been suggested by Chelli ①, I cannot but feel that a great deal of the religious element is part and parcel of, is indeed demanded by the exigencies of, the drama of surprise. Much of the story seems to centre on the lack of serious regard which Bertoldo, the hero, has for his vows as a Knight of Malta. When, in Act I., scene ii., Camiola refuses to marry him, after describing the difference in their rank which is a barrier to their marriage, she goes on to say,

'... the stronger bar,
Religion, stops our entrance: you are, sir,
A knight of Malta, by your order bound
To a single life; you cannot marry me;
And, I assure myself, you are too noble
To seek me, though my frailty should consent,
In a base path.'

To this Bertoldo protests,

'A dispensation, lady,
Will easily absolve me;'

And The Maid of Honour rounds on him with,

'O take heed, sir!
When what is vowed to heaven is dispensed with,
To serve our ends on earth, a curse must follow,
And not a blessing.'

① Drame, 332-5.

Bertoldo acquiesces in her 'determinate sentence' and goes off to fight against the Duchess of Sienna and relieve the besieged Duke of Urbino. However, he is defeated and taken prisoner by the Duchess's general, Gonzago, a fellow Knight of Malta. When the latter recognises his captive we learn of another way in which Bertoldo has broken his vows

'The brave Bertoldo!
A brother of our order! By Saint John,
Our holy patron, I am more amazed,
Nay, thunderstruck with thy apostasy,
And precipice from the most solemn vows
Made unto heaven, when this, the glorious badge
Of our Redeemer, was conferred upon thee
By the great master, than if I had seen
A reprobate Jew, an atheist, Turk, or Tartar,
Baptized in our religion.'

①

And Gonzago goes on;

'Fellow-soldiers,
Behold this man, and, taught by his example,
Know that 'tis safer far to play with lightning,
Than trifle in things sacred. In my rage (Weeps.
I shed these at the funeral of his virtue,
Faith, and religion.'

Then, for his crime in taking arms against a woman, he tears the cross of St John from Bertoldo's breast.

This is, however, almost all we hear of Bertoldo's vows. The religious bar to their marriage, about which Camiola had been so adamant in Act I., scene ii. has seemingly ceased to trouble her by Act III., scene iii. when, on hearing of her suitor's captivity, she arranges to ransom him on condition that he takes an oath to marry her on his return to Sicily. Certainly she does not mention the religious bar to their marriage, although she deals very fully with her original first objection,

namely that difference in their rank which has been levelled out by the miserable state to which his imprisonment and the anger of his ruler have brought him. Nor does she make any comment in Act V., scene ii. when the Duchess Aurelia, having resigned her claim to Bertoldo, hands him over to her, saying,

'The dispensation procured by me,
Freeing Bertoldo from his vow, makes way
To your embraces.'

①

The reason for the neglect of this theme in the latter part of the play is, of course, that the matter of Bertoldo's religious vows is not really Massinger's main concern but merely provides an excuse for his favourite theme of the conflict between reason and the passions, in this case in a woman, in Camiola, the woman who gives the play its title. It is she who is the main focus of our interest. It is she who, when in Act I., scene ii. Bertoldo is announced, exclaims,

'Camiola, if ever, now be constant:
This is, indeed, a suitor, whose sweet presence,
Courtship, and loving language, would have staggered
The chaste Penelope; and, to increase
The wonder, did not modesty forbid it,
I should ask that from him he sues to me for:
And yet my reason, like a tyrant, tells me
I must nor give nor take it;'

and who, when he leaves her, sobs,

'How soon my sun is set, he being absent,
Never to rise again! What a fierce battle
Is fought between my passions!'

It is she who succumbs to these passions and, ignoring Bertoldo's religious

① This dispensation is mentioned in Act IV., scene iv. where Aurelia says, 'A dispensation shall meet with us'. The Duchess seems to be partial to dispensations, since, earlier in Act V., scene ii. she has suggested that the solemn contract between Bertoldo and Camiola may be dispensed with.

obligations, resolves to marry him. It is she to whom Bertoldo is unfaithful. It is she who discerns clearly the flaw in his character, that inconstancy which had made him unfaithful to her in much the same way as he had been heedless of his religious vows, and it is she who weeps for him:

'When good men pursue
The path marked out by virtue, the blest saints
With joy look on it, and seraphic angels
Clap their celestial wings in heavenly plaudits,
To see a scene of grace so well presented,
The fiends, and men made up of envy, mourning.
Whereas now, on the contrary, as far
As their divinity can partake of passion,
With me they weep, beholding a fair temple,
Built in Bertoldo's loyalty, turned to ashes
By the flames of his inconstancy, the damned
Rejoicing in the object.'

①

It is she who, when the full force of Bertoldo's disloyalty touches her pride, cries, still very much under the influence of her passions,

'You, perhaps,
Expect now I should seek recovery
Of what I have lost, by tears, and with bent knees
Beg his compassion. No; my towering virtue,
From the assurance of my merit, scorns
To stoop so low. I'll take a nobler course,
And, confident in the justice of my cause,
The king his brother, and new mistress, judges,
Ravish him from her arms.
He shall be, then, against his will, my husband.'

②

It is she who lessons Bertoldo, restores him to 'the path marked out by virtue', and who, having done this, surrenders herself in an escape from her passions into the hands of the Church. Of course, Bertoldo is not an insignificant character. But the play is Camiola's: it is not his play. There is almost no conflict in his mind and he worries little

about his own moral shortcomings. He is aware that he has broken his vows in going to war against a woman and is in abject misery in his imprisonment; he has a momentary qualm about breaking his word to Camiola, a qualm that is immediately suppressed by his ambition to gain a crown; and in the end he is chastened and returns to his holy brotherhood. That is all. The breaking of his religious vows means little to him, and, to be honest, it seems to mean little to Camiola either since she can so easily ignore it. It is, in fact, largely little more than a piquant ingredient of a typical 'surprise' plot, and treated with comparative inconsequentiality by Massinger, with really only an implied censure, almost as a light matter.

Yet, nevertheless, this matter of the breaking of religious vows does have a contribution to make towards Massinger's end, an end which shows the triumph of virtue. This end is, as in The Renegado and elsewhere, an assertion of the supremacy of the good, the religious, the Christian, way of life.

The second religious strand in the play is a quite blatant 'turn' of the drama of surprise. And in this case it really is a surprise. I am referring to Camiola's suddenly announced decision to renounce the world, divide up her property, and enter a convent. The first indication of this comes at the end of Act V., scene i., only some twenty-five lines after the militant speech of hers which I have last quoted:

'I will
 attire myself
 Like a virgin bride; and something I will do,
 That shall deserve men's praise, and wonder too.'

Camiola has certainly taken her resolve a little too quickly for probability. It must be remarked, however, that this would not be at all apparent to the audience in a theatre. The foolish Signior Sylli imagines that she is going to marry him; the audience, on the other hand, imagines that she is at last going to marry Bertoldo. In the source ⁽¹⁾ she refuses to marry Bertoldo and resolves to live chaste for ever after, but such an ending is not enough for Massinger. Almost to the last he deceives us:- Bertoldo's iniquities have been made public; Aurelia has surrendered him, as we might well think, to Camiola's embrace; and when a priest, Father Paulo, appears it is presumably to perform the marriage ceremony. But there is no marriage. In a rhyming jingle (strangely reminiscent of an inferior version of Il Penseroso) the priest receives her for the Church. That Massinger should invent such an incident is not to be wondered at since it is a sudden and surprising turn of events which accords well with the drama of surprise, however ludicrous it might appear to us today. But it also accords well with Massinger's seriousness of purpose, a heavy underlining at the end of what could well be a lighter play, which tells us that while one way out, one way of life, may be pleasant, there is only one way that is right, in this case and for Camiola, the life of religious contemplation. It is after the priest has ended his stern harangue that Massinger himself seems to peep out, endowing Camiola's words with something of his own conviction and devotion

'This is the marriage! this the port to which
My vows must steer me! Fill my spreading sails

(1) Painter, II., 32, after Boccaccio, De Mulieribus Claris, CIII.

With the pure wind of your devotions for me,
 That I may touch the secure haven, where
 Eternal happiness keeps her residence,
 Temptations to frailty never entering!
 I am dead to the world, and thus dispose
 Of what I leave behind me.'

This is, I feel, almost the only truly religious note in the play -- this and the grave religious resolution of the intrigue which is so typical of Massinger's work as a whole. Yet, when all is said and done, this ending together with with the few quotations I have made from earlier in the play, demonstrate clearly the prominence in The Maid of Honour of religious issues, however little we may catch a glimpse of Massinger's own religious convictions. He does, however, as is always his way, make his message clear in the concluding motto:

'She well deserves
 Her name, The Maid of Honour! May she stand,
 To all posterity, a fair example
 For noble maids to imitate! Since to live
 In wealth and pleasure's common, but to part with
 Such poisoned baits is rare.'

Outside the two plays just discussed, The Renegado and The Maid of Honour, Massinger does not put religion in the forefront of a play. That does not mean that it is not strongly operative. On the contrary, Massinger is never beyond its gravitational pull. Not only does he scatter pious sayings and phrases, 'divine maxims, scorning comparison with moral precepts' ①, throughout them, but he sees life always with the grave regard of a deeply religious and sincere Christian. His Christianity rules his morality, social, marital, and sexual, and

① The Renegado, I., i.

determines the lines of all his thinking on politics and kingship.

I have so far avoided a full mention of the question of Massinger's alleged Roman Catholicism, but I must now take it up and give my own conclusions. It was Gifford who first opened the question and declared that 'A close and repeated perusal of Massinger's work has convinced me that he was a Catholic: The Virgin Martyr, The Renegado, The Maid of Honour, exhibit innumerable proofs of it; to say nothing of those casual intimations which are scattered over his remaining dramas' ① . In his opinion Massinger may have been converted to Roman Catholicism while he was at Oxford; and thus, the surmise goes on, he lost the patronage of Pembroke. As discussed at the beginning of this thesis ② , it is not clear why Gifford made Oxford the locus; conversions could and did occur anywhere, as for example Ben Jonson's in prison. Secondly, there is no evidence that Massinger ever lost the patronage of Pembroke, or indeed that he ever had it, or enjoyed any from anybody until he began to dedicate plays to patrons, including Philip, Earl of Montgomery and Robert, Earl of Carnarvon, both of the Herbert clan. On the other hand, Gifford's general statement as to the Roman-Catholic colouring of the plays deserves the most careful consideration. Gifford was a first-rate editor by the standards of his time and an acute student of the older dramatists he edited. The results of 'close and repeated perusal' by such a man are not to lightly set aside. By 'innumerable proofs' in The Virgin Martyr, The Renegado, and The Maid of Honour and 'casual

① Introduction, xliv. ② Chapter I., p. 72-3.

intimations' elsewhere he does not of course mean overt declarations. In the nature of the case, a Roman Catholic (alleged) writing for a pretty precarious living, for theatrical companies that knew on which side their bread was buttered, for an audience overwhelmingly Protestant, under the eyes of a very watchful Master of the Revels, to say nothing of higher authorities in Church and State -- in the nature of such a case manifestoes of Romanism were impossible. What are to be looked for are rather accidental or unguarded hints and clues which are cumulatively impressive.

The first person after Gifford to have much to say on the matter was Hartley Coleridge ①. He took his text from Gifford without acknowledgement and his biographical facts, such as they were, likewise; but he comes down hard on Gifford's suggestion of Massinger's Roman Catholicism. It would be interesting to know if Hartley Coleridge had ever heard his father on the subject. At any rate, what he has to say is more vigorous than illuminating.

Since Hartley Coleridge's time, most of the students of Massinger have made some reference to his possible Roman Catholicism, but rather inconclusively. The most recent of them, Professors Boyle, Koeppel, Chelli, and Cruickshank leave the matter still open for want of any positive external evidence. If Koeppel is impressed by the 'marked predilection for the religious observances of the papal church' ② and by Massinger's departure from his source for The Maid of Honour in order

① His edition of the plays was first published in 1839 (It actually appeared in 1840. See Bibliography.). ② C.H.E.L. VI., 150.

to make his saintly Camiola decide on the discovery of her lover's faithlessness to take the veil; Chelli comes down on the whole on the negative side. 'Autant il est difficile,' he says, 'De prouver chez lui une conversion formelle, autant il est aisé de concilier des sympathies romaines avec l'adhésion générale à l'Église établie d'Angleterre' ① .

I want, as a contribution to the argument, to present evidence from a play which has not been discussed in this connection before, The City Madam. It seems highly significant to me that in this play on life and manners in contemporary London Massinger should have introduced many Roman-Catholic features or details. Such features or details can perhaps be largely explained away in plays set in Italy or Bohemia or France as part of the local colour, which, apart from the religious persuasion of the countries, Massinger did undoubtedly try to suggest ② . But this explanation can hardly be given for The City Madam. Surely it was very unusual and highly untypical for a London merchant in the time of James I to be a Roman Catholic. Yet Sir John Frugal undoubtedly is. So is his hypocritical brother Luke, and so are his wife and daughters. In Act III., scene ii. we are told that Luke Frugal

'is much given

To his devotion.

And takes time to mumble

A paternoster to himself;'

and that Sir John Frugal

① Drame, 337. ② Massinger always took great pains indeed with his background. To take only one example, The Renegado, the oriental and Mohammedan colouring, as well as certain suggestions for the story, were taken from a diligent study of contemporary travel accounts by Lavender, Sandys, and Knolles. See Professor W.G.Rice: The sources of Massinger's 'The Renegado'. (PQ. XI. 1932.)

'is retired into a monastery
Where he is resolved to end his days.'

Lord Lacy

'...saw him take post for Dover, and the wind
Sitting so fair, by this he's safe at Calais,
And ere long will be at Louvain.'

Louvain, be it noted, one of the chief seminaries for the despatch of Jesuit priests to England and a centre to which many English Catholics fled ⁽¹⁾ ! And Luke Frugal avows that the money which has suddenly been entrusted to him is

'A curse I cannot thank you for; and, much less,
Rejoice in that tranquillity of mind
My brother's vow must purchase. I have made
A dear exchange with him: he now enjoys
My peace and poverty, the trouble of
His wealth conferred on me.'

Perhaps we are not entitled to say that Luke's undertaking in the next scene to convert three American Indians (really Sir John Frugal, Sir Maurice Lacy, and Mr Plenty in disguise) is a more Roman Catholic than Anglican activity, even though at the time the Roman Church was much more vigorous in proselytizing the heathen. But Luke's rejoicing over his apparent success in life has several phrases that would come oddly from a Protestant:

⁽¹⁾ Canon David Mathew says (The Age of Charles I. 1951. P. 135.); 'It was a simple matter for members of such families [i.e. recusants] to enter the English convents in France and the Low Countries. There was a recognised, if illegal line of travel'; and in a footnote on the same page he quotes two examples culled from the State Papers of 1633 and 1634 of men accused of transporting across the sea to Dunkirk people who were making for Louvain.

'Continue this felicity, not gained
 By vows to saints above, and much less purchased
 By thriving industry; nor fallen upon me
 As a reward to piety, and religion,
 Or service to my country: I owe all
 This to dissimulation, and the shape
 I wore of goodness. Let my brother number
 His beads devoutly, and believe his alms
 To beggars, his compassion to his debtors,
 Will wing his better part, disrobed of flesh,
 To soar above the firmament.'

①

And Lady Frugal's penitent address to her husband's portrait later in the same scene is that of a Roman Catholic wife on a Roman Catholic husband:

'My kind husband,
 (Blessed in my misery) from the monastery
 To which my disobedience confined thee,
 With thy soul's eye, which distance cannot hinder,
 Look on my penitence. O, that I could
 Call back time past! Thy holy vow dispensed,
 With what humility would I observe
 My long-neglected duty!'

Massinger was accustomed, as I have noted, to give local colour in his other plays; and, it must be remarked, there is nothing savouring of popery in the other play set in contemporary England, A New Way to Pay Old Debts. However, in The City Madam Massinger has gone out of his way to misrepresent the local circumstances. If, in some hypothetical source, the story was set in a Roman Catholic milieu, say in Italy or in Spain, there is no reason why Massinger, in transposing the plot, should not have taken more pains to make it accord better with the actualities of Protestant London. But, in fact, there is no known source for The City Madam, and the discovery of a source in a work by a Roman Catholic

① V., iii.

would not suffice to explain Massinger's handling of it. In any case, Massinger at other times took such liberties as he pleased with his sources.

Two of these deserve some notice in the present connection. The first, The Maid of Honour, has already been referred to in Koepfel's notice of Massinger's gratuitous departure from the source (a novella, after Boccaccio, in Painter's Palace of Pleasure) in making his heroine renounce the world and take the veil. The setting in Sicily and the Siennese, which is taken over from Painter, make this appropriate enough. But the fact that Bertoldo is a Knight of Malta and the moral issues depending thereon, as well as the device of making Camiola enter a nunnery at the end of the play, are introduced by Massinger. In particular, the whole tone of the passage in which Camiola renounces the world and, as in many other plays by Massinger, much of the phraseology, referring as it so often does to saints, guardian angels, the penitential system, purgatory, and so on ⁽¹⁾, can hardly be attributed to one who was not definitely sympathetic with, if not committed to, the Roman Catholic habitude. Here, as elsewhere, 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Some examples of Massinger's characters using such phrases to be found in The City Madam are II., iii.: 'Though saints and angels were their physicians;' and V., iii.: '... not gained by vows to saints above'; and for some of the multitudinous examples in other plays, see: Duke of Milan II., iii.; Unnatural Combat, III., iii., V., i., & V., iii.; Maid of Honour, V., i.; Picture, I., i. (3 examples); Guardian, II., v.; Believe As You List, IV., ii.; and Bashful Lover, II., iv., III., iii., and IV., i. ⁽²⁾ Matthew, xii., 3.

'Tis forgiven:

I with his tongue, whom, in these sacred vestments,
With impure hands thou didst offend, pronounce it.'

Now, one might point out that the stage direction 'in a cope, like a Bishop' does not say that he is a bishop, and in any case is only a direction for the actor and producer. Not one in ten, probably not one in a hundred, of Massinger's audience had ever seen mass celebrated, by bishop or priest. All that they did have was a hazy notion that Roman Catholic clergy celebrated in gorgeous vestments ①, and all that was needed to provide them with an impressive stage-picture was 'a cope, like a Bishop's'. In addition, however, one might point out, in direct contradiction to Chelli, that a Jesuit Bishop is not, after all, such a 'chose monstrueuse'. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen points out in his essay on the founders of the Jesuit order ② that '... every Jesuit was to bind himself to reject all secular or ecclesiastical dignities, except such as the society itself might have to bestow. But it was provided that if the Pope should constrain any member to accept a bishopric, he would, in that capacity, give heed to the advice of his General.' The Pope, then, could constrain a Jesuit to accept a bishopric -- though it must be admitted that such an event has never been common. Massinger may have been aware of this fact and not at all ignorant of Roman Catholic practice. Still, the evidence is inconclusive, and it is open to question whether the cope is merely a piece of playhouse mummery induced

① Whereas in the Anglican Church, from Archbishop Parker's Advertisement of 1566 to secure uniformity in the matter of clerical robes (confirmed by the canons of 1603 under Archbishop Whitgift), the vestments were much simpler. Except in cathedrals and collegiate churches the surplice was the only vestment in use; and soon even in the cathedrals and collegiate churches the permissive cope was added only on occasions of high ceremony. ② Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography. London, 1849. Vol. I. P. 180.

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by Massinger's ignorance or whether he really did know that under some circumstances a Jesuit could also be a bishop.

Much more evidential are certain features not in the source:- the undeniable sympathy with persons governed by Roman Catholic motives and outlook and with the appropriate devotional practice; the making of Francisco a Jesuit, in Massinger's day a particularly odious kind of Romanist; the scene of the conversion and baptism of Donusa; and the discussion of the lawfulness and efficacy of lay baptism ① .

Chelli's own conclusion, if conclusion it can be called, is as follows:-

'Autant il est difficile de prouver chez lui une conversion formelle, autant il est aisé de concilier des sympathies romaines avec l'adhésion générale à l'Église établie d'Angleterre. D'abord, il exista de tout temps, au sein de l'anglicanisme, une tendance vers le mysticisme ritualiste, en même temps que cette impulsion inverse du côté du calvinisme plus strict et plus froid. Laud, Charles Ier. lui-même, ne furent-ils pas soupçonnés d'affinités papistes? L'époque de Massinger est celle aussi de G. Herbert et de Nicholas Ferrar. Les trente-neuf articles souffrirent les interprétations les plus diverses.' ②

This seems to me to be very much an opinion ab extra, the opinion of a foreigner who has not caught the English religious idiom. The reference to the different interpretations put on the Thirty-Nine Articles and the reading of seventeenth-century Anglicanism are coloured by a knowledge of Tractarianism and Tract XC. Massinger is fond of ritual all right -- not merely associated with religious observance, but

① The remarks on lay baptism were perhaps suggested to Massinger by another Cervantes' passage, Don Quixote, I., chapter xxxvii. ② Drame, 337.

also in the formalities of polite intercourse. But what he shows as regards religious ritual is not at all ritualistic mysticism. There is nothing mystical about his religion. It is, on the contrary, declaratory practical, defined. His mind, one can say quite definitely, is non-mystical. The impression of Roman Catholicism which it conveys is not as elusive as Chelli's words suggest: it comes on the one hand from a ready and frequent resort to the terminology of Roman Catholic usage and on the other from the way of presenting Roman Catholic characters in action. All this is quite different from the true ritualistic mysticism of Nicholas Ferrar or from the centrally Anglican devotion of George Herbert, and quite different from what led the ultra-Protestant to apply 'Catholic' and 'papist' opprobriously to Charles I and Laud. It is rather the familiarity and sympathy with Roman Catholicism of one speaking from inside the Roman fold.

As for the Anglican establishment, Massinger provides no hint of his attitude. It would be quite unreasonable to read anything into the slight sketch of the compliant Parson Willdo, Overreach's chaplain in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. Again, Massinger's plays are singularly free from attacks on Puritans, either those within the Church of England or the Presbyterians and others outside. No Puritan himself, he never satirises and only occasionally even mentions them ⁽¹⁾. Even in defending the stage and actors in The Roman Actor, he keeps Paris much

⁽¹⁾ The only examples I can find occur in Renegado, I., i., Unnatural Combat, III., i., Duke of Milan, I., i., A New Way to Pay Old Debts, I., i.

more to apology than to attack on detractors (whom, if he had attacked them, his audience would have understood to be Puritan theatrophobes). It was common form in other dramatists to present Puritans as canting hypocrites. But Massinger's chief hypocrite, Luke Frugal, is in fact a Roman Catholic.

While I have inclined more to the view that Massinger had Roman Catholic sympathies, probably to the degree of being a Romanist, yet I quite admit that the question is still arguable. But however it may go, I would say this, that, Anglican or Roman Catholic, Massinger had a respectful tolerance in matters of faith rare in his century. He was never polemical or satirical or flippant where religion was concerned. He respected piety, devotion, and sincerity; he abhorred impiety, blasphemy, and sham.

In the last section of the present chapter I should like to develop certain topics which are important for a study of Massinger's thought, but which, in order to retain a fairly simple structure and a proper perspective, I had to deal with only briefly or else defer altogether till now.

The first is his relation to Stoicism. I would approach it through what I venture to call his ethical psychology. As I have pointed out, both in this and in previous chapters, the tension between the reason and the passions profoundly interested him. In fact, methodical man that he was, he largely built his characterisation on

it and his plotting round it. Moreover, incidental references or allusions to it are continually cropping up. It colours his conception of the relationship between the sexes on the one hand and his conception of the ideal ruler on the other. And everywhere, in regard to sex of love, politics and rule, and religion, the paramount importance of the reason is expressed or assumed. Massinger's characters (at least all those he respects, and some of the others as well) are reasoners more or less at odds with passions.

The dichotomy in the soul which so impressed him, or something like it, is of course implicit in St Paul's confession and cry:

'For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.' (1)

And it might be regarded as a diffusive commonplace in practical ethics. But Massinger held his belief in it much more deliberately, and he was scholarly moralist enough to be aware, in some measure at least, of its ancient source in Stoicism (2) .

He owed, however, much more than his psychological principles to Stoicism, and it is a debt that is constantly apparent. Many of the cardinal principles of Stoicism are implicit in his plays, and there are numerous places in which he quotes its dogma with evident approval. A brief statement of a few of these principles (excluding the Stoic view

(1) Romans, vii., 19 & 23. (2) There were anticipations in Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics and De Anima and in the Socratic-Platonic conception of the tripartite soul allegorised in the Phaedrus as the charioteer and his two horses.

of the mind, with which I have dealt adequately above) will perhaps best show, when compared with the aspects of his thought which I have discussed earlier in this chapter, the full extent of Massinger's debt. According to the Stoic view, the universe is governed by one good and wise God who exercises a moral government. Human beings must raise their minds to comprehend this government by universal law and must enter into the views of a Creator who, divinely just, regards all interests equally. The interests of the whole world are infinitely greater than those of a single created being. Good exists in the world, and consequently also evil, and man is free to choose between them. Man has contact with the Deity through the higher, more intellectual, part of his nature, and his endeavour ought to be to advance constantly in virtue. The pains which are met with in life are an evil, but with the aid of the discipline of the will, they may be triumphed over. There are, in addition, numerous associated ideas, all of which we likewise meet in Massinger:- the universal brotherhood of mankind is stressed and kindness to slaves is encouraged; the ideal 'Wise Man' is praised and the duties of active citizenship are urged upon all men; the four virtues, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, are continually praised, with Justice, as the social virtue, placed above the rest ⁽¹⁾; morality is based on piety, on duty to God, and the idea of obligatory Duty in general is inculcated. Even Massinger's 'feminism' is found to have its antecedent in Seneca ⁽²⁾. I have here presented, in their simplest form, merely some of the facets

⁽¹⁾ See in particular, Cicero, De Officiis. ⁽²⁾ 'Feminism, that most modern of all modern topics, offers the most fruitful field for Seneca's reform ideas'. R.M.Gummere: Seneca the Philosopher and his Modern Message. London, 1922. 72.

of Stoic thought, some which are most obvious in Massinger. To have done more, to have entered, say, into a philosophical analysis of Stoicism, would have carried me far from the main thread of this chapter.

It is obvious that the Stoic ethic is, of all classical thought, the feature most easily reconcilable with Christianity. Indeed, as R. M. Gummere says '... Stoicism was the porch to Christianity. Then, as now, it was the thought-force that lay nearest to our inspirational religion' ① . St Paul, who did so much to direct the development of Christian ethic, was like that later Zeno ② , himself a native of Tarsus, and was unquestionably familiar with Stoicism; and the Early Church, in the two areas where Stoic thought was most active, Asia Minor and Rome, found much of the Stoic doctrine congenial and assimilable. Indeed, the ethical philosophy of the Church from St Augustine and earlier to St Thomas Aquinas and later (including the work of St Ambrose who reconciled the four cardinal virtues of pagan philosophy with the ecclesiastical triad of Faith, Hope, and Charity) was profoundly influenced by at least a disseminated Stoicism. No doubt, Christian ethical thought drew most of what it took from Stoicism within the Patristic period; and the direct recourse to the original title deeds of Stoicism, except Seneca whose moral prose (not his plays) were well known and highly valued ③ , became progressively fewer as the dark and middle ages passed on. But at the very beginning of the first age after

① Op. cit., 54. ② It is more than likely that Zeno was, if not of Jewish blood, at least of Semitic. ③ Seneca, like Statius, was believed to have been a Christian; and the spurious 'correspondence with St Paul' was accepted as genuine (by St Jerome, John of Salisbury, Vincent of Beauvais, etc.). See Gummere, op. cit.

the Fathers stands one of the most influential figures for religio-ethical thought in the west, Boethius. He was, both by temper and by the pressure of his intellectual environment, an eclectic and reconciler, not only of Plato and Aristotle and neo-Platonism and Stoicism, but of pagan and Christian. A Christian himself, he deliberately chose to write his De Consolatione Philosophiae on the basis of a natural religion indebted mainly to neo-Platonism and Stoicism. The quality of the work itself, the semi-martyrdom of its author, and possibly the working of that Chance in literary survival which no one can predict, conspired to make the De Consolatione one of the chief philosophical manuals till at least the revival of learning. The manuscripts of it are very numerous and widely diffused; and the translations into many European languages (including three in English -- Alfred's, Chaucer's, and Queen Elizabeth's) the commentaries, the imitations, and the debts large and small are literally beyond computation. From Boethius in particular then, and from the Fathers also of course, the centuries till the Renaissance drew most of their (somewhat indirect) Stoicism, with Seneca providing the rest more directly. As for Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, they were unknown to all intents and purposes in the Greekless West.

The coming of the classical revival brought a fresh curiosity about Stoicism, as about things classical in general, and a return to the Stoic documents which had been in abeyance, the Greek of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus and the Latin of the tragedies that go (probably correctly, except for the Octavia) under Seneca's name. The fashion in Stoicism was perhaps not so captivating to the Renaissance mind as was Platonising

Nevertheless, especially in the years after 1600, it had its adherents. I would instance the reflective poetry of Daniel and Ben Jonson and The Characters of Virtues and Vices by Joseph Hall. But long before that, Stoicism, in the shape of Senecanism, invaded the drama and was one of the chief factors from Corboduc onwards, not only in separating out a serious and dignified drama from the heterogeneous conglomerate of the mid-sixteenth-century story-plays and semi-moralities, but also in providing it with much of its δράματα, its tragic commentary on life, and its fatalism.

As with Plautus and Terence, the Elizabethan dramatists were pre-disposed to Seneca because he was Latin, not Greek. Like Plautus and Terence, he was familiar to the dramatists and to many of the spectators from being a regular author in the school curriculum, whereas Greek drama, tragic and comic, was known to comparatively few persons. The dramatists could and did quote Seneca in the original ①, with a fair chance of being understood, even in the public theatre -- to say nothing of the abundance of Senecanised sentiments interlarding the dialogue in English.

But there were other, more compelling, reasons for his appeal. In the first place there was his rhetoric and its concomitant, melodrama. The Elizabethans fell for both. They were, to begin with, great lovers of language for its own sake and fascinated by linguistic bravura. In

① Hieronimo in The Spanish Tragedy, III., xiii., enters with Seneca's plays in his hand (Cf. Massinger's The Maid of Honour, IV., iii.).

their verbal enthusiasm they easily ran to excess, declamation, and bombast. But unlike Seneca himself, they were still at the adolescent, unsophisticated stage when sophisticated rhetoric is quite irresistible. They had the first delight of exuberant youth in words, not like Seneca's original audience the desire of the blasé for a new fillip. As for the appeal of the melodramatic in Seneca, melodrama is not contrary to drama. It is drama, only more so, as it were; just as the rhetorical is style, only more so. And a young, vigorous, and undisciplined people like the Elizabethans are peculiarly liable to the melodramatic wherever they become consciously serious and solemn.

There is another major reason for Seneca's appeal to or usefulness for the dramatists. Vitally interested as the Elizabethans were in religion, the Elizabethan theatre was practically forbidden to show such an interest. From as early as 1559 the dramatists were forbidden to touch on religion^①, and from 1606 even to use the name of God^②. Of course, it would be absurd to say that the resulting drama was without religious quality or implications. Nevertheless the governmental restrictions imposed a serious handicap on the tragic dramatists. Though they did not cease to write as Christians, they could not introduce Christian motivation and, still less, articulate Christian sentiments, as easily and naturally as they should have done and as the contemporary Spanish dramatists did. In consequence, they largely resorted to Senecan Stoicism as a substitute and as a tragic makeweight.

① Cf. E.K. Chambers: The Elizabethan Stage, I., 276. ② Ibid., I., 303.

Lastly, Seneca appealed to the Elizabethan dramatists because he had already appealed to the Italians and French. Just as with the influence of classical comedy, so with that of classical tragedy. It came both directly from the Latin and indirectly from Renaissance Latin plays and vernacular imitations in Italian and French ① .

It is unnecessary here to go at length into the history of English dramatic Senecanism, outlining its sudden development first in Latin and then, with Sackville and Norton's Gorboduc in 1561, in English, on the academic and scholastic stage. By the 1580's, after Newton's collection of the plays of Seneca ② had been published (a collection comparable in its influence on the drama to that of North's Plutarch, Painter's Palace of Pleasure, and Holinshead's Chronicle), the centre of Senecan interest had shifted from the high-brow stage of the Inns-of-Court to the popular stage of the University Wits. The high-brow Senecanism persisted, in the universities generally but not always in Latin ③ , and in the circle of the Countess of Pembroke and in the work of others, Daniel and Sir William Alexander among them ④ , all writing in English, but not for presentation. The University Wits and Kyd

① Some Italian Senecanisers in the sixteenth century were: Antonio Cammelli, Galeotto del Carretto, Gian Giorgio Trissino, Gianbattista Giraldi Cinthio, Lodovico Dolce; and among the French were Etienne Jodelle and Robert Garnier. For humanist dramas in Latin, see George Buchanan's Jephtes, and Baptistes (c.1540) and Theodore de Beza's Abrahami Sacrificium (c. 1550). ② Seneca His Tenne Tragedies translated into English. 1581. ③ Cf. the Countess of Pembroke: The Tragedy of Antony (1590); Samuel Daniel: Cleopatra (1594) & Philotas (1605); Fulke Greville: Mustapha (1609); Sir W. Alexander: Darius (1603), Croesus (1604), The Alexandrian (1607) & Julius Caesar (1607). ④ Ben Jonson's Sejanus and Catiline were for performance. They stand halfway between academic and popular Senecan.

were classically trained and duly impressed by Seneca at school or university. Proud of their scholarship and contemptuous of the current fare in the popular theatre, they had nevertheless to make their living by that theatre. And what they did was to effect a conscience-saving reconciliation of the politic and the popular. They tackled both comedy (or at least the romantic play with a happy end) and tragedy. In their tragedies, and indeed all their plays involving serious issues, they grafted on the popular drama more or less of Senecanism, direct from Seneca or from the Elizabethan translations thereof and indirectly from the legal and academic Senecanisers and, (at least in the time of Kyd) from the French dramas of Robert Garnier. What they got from one or other or several of these quarters were, to put the count briefly:- more of an artistic conscience, a standard of dignity and dramatic decorum, a feeling for the tragic mood, the more appropriate vehicle of blank verse, the weight of philosophical or gnomic reflection and aphorism, an elaboration of descriptive expatiation, abundance of classical allusion, the crime-and-revenge motif, the ghost and his accessories, sensational and melodramatic -- not to say abnormal -- horrors and thrills, and strong passions and the accompanying rhetoric and rant.

It would of course be absurd to suggest that Seneca and Stoicism were the only sources of the Elizabethan dramatists, and after them of the Jacobean and Caroline, for διδάσκαλος and for ethical comment. Of course they were not. The tributaries and trickles are innumerable, from Plato to Montaigne, from the Book of Proverbs to the latest pupil of Machiavelli, let alone the springing fountain of original (so far as

anything is original) ideas of the dramatists themselves. But Stoicism after the Senecan style had a kind of focal or radiating function in the drama. As has been said, 'the frequency with which a quotation from Seneca, or a thought or figure ultimately derived from Seneca, is employed in Elizabethan whenever a moral reflection is required, is too remarkable to be ignored; and when an Elizabethan hero or villain dies, he usually dies in the odour of Seneca' ① .

It was, then, into a dramatic tradition which had absorbed Senecan Stoicism -- which held it in suspension, as it were -- that Massinger came. He breathed the Senecan aroma in the very air of the theatre. All the same, it would appear that Massinger was not content merely with the tradition: he took to Stoicism also afresh and on his own because of something in it congenial to himself, fusing it easily with his naturally austere Christian ethic. His Stoicism shows more familiarity with Stoic doctrine than is common and has less the appearance of echoed maxims.

That he had some slight knowledge of Greek may be possible. ② Whether it was enough to read Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius in the original scarcely matters. Both were available in the bilingual (Greek-Latin) editions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and he had no need except laziness or haste to resort to such English translations as there were -- the Manual of Epictetus in the version of James Sandford (1567),

① T.S.Eliot: Pref. to Seneca His Tenne Tragedies translated into English Edited by Thomas Newton. Anno 1581. vol 1., xliii. (See Selected Essays)

② See Cruickshank, Philip Massinger, Appendix II.

and of John Healey (1610, 1616, and 1636). It is, however, much more probable that it was Seneca in the original to whom Massinger resorted for ethical hint and maxim. Thomas Lodge's Workes of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Both Morall and Naturall, with a life of Seneca by Lipsius, was at hand from 1614 and was reprinted in 1620 and 1632 (There can be no question but that Massinger knew this work very well indeed), in addition to the translations of the plays, [redacted] and a few other translations of separate works, if Massinger wanted to take the ready and easy way. ①

It would of course be impossible to disentangle Massinger's debts to Stoicism and to Christian tradition, even if that tradition itself owed nothing to the Stoic tributaries. He could not possibly have done so himself. Nevertheless, as I have implied, there are many passages in which Massinger's ideas have the air of being classically derived without benefit of clergy -- the least we should expect from an age which was returning to the classical documents of antiquity and which, especially from the time of the tergiversating Lipsius, was witnessing a revival of Stoicism. These passages seem to be 'neat' Stoicism, or at least comparatively unqualified by the sanctions of Christian doctrine as that had been unfolded in the course of sixteen hundred years. They go far towards giving a Latin colouring to his ethic and impressing a classical seal on the pattern of his thought.

① See CBEL. i. 807. for works by Robert Whittington, Arthur Golding, and Sir Ralph Freeman.

The classical quiddity in his thought-pattern is of course not something unique in his period. Most of his contemporaries in the quality were after all still giving expression in serious drama to 'that vein of talent which Shakespeare has christened 'Ercles vein'' ① -- that evolving and changing derivative from the drama of Seneca which passed through many phases, fashions, and degrees from the time of Gorboduc on to the closing of the theatres. But more than most (Ben Jonson who was the best classical scholar among the dramatists, Chapman the second best, and probably also Marston, being the only exceptions), Massinger seems to have studied things Roman, republican history and the Romano-Stoic attitude in particular, and to have infused something of the austere Roman mood into his own work. This spirit is not a mere matter of allusion and reference, plentiful as both are ② . As a matter of fact, though not a few of the allusions and references are sufficiently out-of-the-way to show Massinger as moving freely about the field, the general tendency is rather to the more banal and demonetised kind. It is much more significant that what Massinger borrowed from the authors he read was the idea, the thought behind the statement; very much in the same way as he borrowed an idea or sentiment from Shakespeare and in doing so deprived it of its emotional quality by reclothing it in grey, abstract words ③ . So an interesting light is cast on the nature of Massinger's mind and his concern with abstract ideas more than emotions by the fact that, whereas other dramatists

① H.W.Garrod: The Profession of Poetry. Oxford, 1929. 227. ② Chelli has made a long and comprehensive collection and has supplied the sources. Collaboration, 187-213. ③ See below, pp. 311ff., 390ff.

like Webster and Marston seized on the outward symbols of Seneca, he extracted little of the features that go to make up what is known as theatrical Senecanism (though he has some of its horrors) and peered behind the melodrama at the thought-content. To put it another way: instead of being merely buttressed with Senecanism, his plays are erected from their very foundations, upon a skeleton of Stoicism.

It is not surprising that they are so. Stoicism, at least on its ethical side, was bound to appeal to Massinger, since it was meant to be a lofty but practical work-a-day philosophy of life, combining an ethical idealism with a regard for the world of affairs. Seneca's thought in particular, whether it came to him direct from the Latin or from the intellectual climate of his day and Renaissance writers, appealed to him, as it had appealed to hundreds of distinguished thinkers from Petrarch onwards, to say nothing of those before, because of its practical common sense, a commodity of which Massinger had a considerable store.

Seneca himself is more than casually mentioned by Bertoldo in The Maid of Honour. The imprisoned Bertoldo enters in Act IV., scene iii. with a volume of Seneca in his hand, and in a despairing soliloquy rejects the philosophy as inadequate for his circumstances. But it is obvious that Massinger disapproves of Bertoldo's womanish abandonment to despair and self-pity, and by implication subscribes to the Senecan impassivity.

His subscription to Senecan Stoicism is still more obvious in The Roman Actor. In Act III., scene ii. two of the chief representatives of the good cause and so the foci for our sympathies, Junius Rusticus and Palphurius Sura, express some of Seneca's central tenets. When they are being tortured by the executioners, the Emperor bids them;

'Tremble to think how terrible the dream is
After this sleep of death.'

To this Rusticus boldly replies,

'To guilty men
It may bring terror; not to us, that know
What 'tis to die, well taught by his example
For whom we suffer. In my thought I see
The substance of that pure untainted soul
Of Thræsea, our master, made a star,
That with melodious harmony invites us
(Leaving this dughill Rome, made hell by thee)
To trace his heavenly steps, and fill a sphere
Above yon crystal canopy.'

Domitian himself refers to Seneca in the taunt:

'So, take a leaf of Seneca now, and prove
If it can render you insensible
Of that which but begins here. Now an oil
Drawn from the Stoic's frozen principles,
Predominant over fire, were useful for you.'

When the tortured men show no sign of relenting, Domitian demands,

'Are they not dead?
If so, we wash an Ethiop.'

Sura defies him with a Stoical, 'No; we live'; and his more vocal brother in suffering, Rusticus, adds,

'Live to deride thee, our calm patience treading
Upon the neck of tyranny. That securely
As 'twere a gentle slumber, we endure
Thy hangman's studied tortures, is a debt
We owe to grave philosophy, that instructs us
The flesh is but the clothing of the soul,
Which growing out of fashion, though it be
Cast off, or rent, or torn, like ours, 'tis then,
Being itself divine, in her best lustre.

But unto such as thou, that have no hopes
 Beyond the present, every little scar,
 The want of rest, excess of heat or cold,
 That does inform them only they are mortal,
 Pierce through and through them.'

While these are the only two passages of some length in which Massinger manifests his Stoic sympathies and his debt to Seneca, that debt is in reality diffused throughout his work.

Whatever may be the debt to Stoicism, Massinger shows no attraction to the ethics -- and as I have all along implied, ethics, not metaphysics was his philosophical concern -- of either Plato or Aristotle. That Plato should have no appeal excites no surprise. The mind of Massinger was, as I have said, unmystical, if not indeed anti-mystical. And though a neo-neo-Platonism was in the Renaissance air, the rhapsodies of Ficino, the speculations of Bruno, and the Platonised Christianity of Spenser's Hymns could not have been to his severely practical taste.

But Aristotle is practical enough in his ethical teaching. Moreover, a very much mediated and scholastic Aristotelianism was still deeply entrenched in the Universities. By the early 1600's, however, the hold of Aristotle on the human mind was here and there weakening; although, to be sure, while his authority in certain fields (for example, metaphysics and physics) was losing its effect, his authority in poetics and rhetoric was only beginning, so far as the modern world is concerned, and, of course, his authority in logic remained unchallenged. Naturally Massinger could not have escaped at Oxford from the academic Aristotelianism which a few years before had annoyed Bacon with the sister university. But apart from what of Aristotelian origin in the ethical

field was warp and woof of Western thought, so interfused as not to be separable and therefore so much a common factor as to have no special interest in a study of Massinger's mind, he mentions Aristotle only twice: both times as a logician ①, and on anything like the conscious level of indebtedness as regards ethics Massinger owes little to his teaching. He pays little or no regard, for instance, to the peculiarly Aristotelian concept of virtue, and rarely deals with such important Aristotelian themes as Courage, Liberality, Magnificence, Reputation, Gentleness, or Friendliness. Of course, such elements of Aristotelian thought as had passed into Stoicism are represented. Massinger's view of Justice, for example, is of the practical Stoic virtue, far removed from the somewhat rarified δικαιοσύνη of Aristotle, let alone that of Plato. Similarly, the Aristotelian doctrine of the Golden Mean is reduced to the more limited Stoic idea of Temperance. The very phrase, 'Golden Mean', occurs only once, and then in a context that shows that Massinger is resorting to a cliché ②.

No, Massinger's view of life is a simple reconciliation or fusion

① The Emperor of the East, II., i., in which the logical element of the Greek national temperament, in the person of Aristotle, is rejected by Theophilus; and The Unnatural Combat, IV., ii., where Belgarde, Massinger's metaphysical Captain, is conducting an academic disputation in the street. ② Great Duke of Florence, I., i.:

'Happy the golden mean! Had I been born
 In a poor sordid cottage, not nursed up
 With expectation to command a court,
 I might, like such of your condition, sweetest,
 Have ta'en a safe and middle course

of practical Christianity and Roman Stoicism. Chelli, the only writer on Massinger who has dealt at all fully with his thought, has failed completely and remarkably to appreciate this fact; and in general others who have written on the Senecan influence on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama have concentrated on the mechanics, rhetoric, and theatrical devices and have entirely ignored in Massinger a unique example of a playwright whose whole system of thought, as distinct from style and dramaturgy, is deeply influenced by the classical master. Perhaps it is this fundamental gravity, this concern with moral problems as they affect human conduct, which made Massinger one of the leading figures in the theatre in the sixteen twenties and thirties. The Jacobean-Caroline period was, after all, a serious age. As Professor F.P.Wilson has said;

'Readers whose knowledge of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature is confined to anthologies of poetry -- the sonnet, the erotic poem, the pastoral, the secular lyric -- may be surprised at the statement that the main preoccupations of Elizabethans and Jacobeans alike were with religion, theological controversy, and what may be called compendiously if loosely moral philosophy; yet it was so. What distinguishes the Jacobean age from the Elizabethan is its more exact, more searching, more detailed enquiry into moral and political questions and its interest in the analysis of the mysteries and perturbations of the human mind.' ^①

It was to this very interest in his age that Massinger's plays appealed; and I would venture to suggest that this feature of his work is the one which retains the most interest for the student today.

① Elizabethan and Jacobean (Alexander Lectures in English, 1943.). Oxford, 1945. 19-20.

As might be expected of a moralist with an expressed intention to 'reform the modern vices', Massinger was also something of a satirist. Not that a satiric purpose governs any of his plays as such a purpose rules the bitter comedies of Ben Jonson. The satiric in them is limited to incidental comments and occasional extra-dramatic passages of some length. In these he does allow himself a kind of Malvolio smile. Otherwise he is too much in earnest to treat the human tragedy or tragic-comedy any way but seriously. No doubt a case might be made out for describing some of his type characters, especially the more single and homogeneous ones, whether with or without ticket-names, as satiric or semi-satiric. But it seems to me that characterisation by types in Massinger is more a dramaturgical method than an act of moral condemnation. His characters are at least trying to be real people, and they occupy a middle place between Jonson's farcical 'humours' or the 'characters' of Hall and Earle and the well-rounded vraisemblances of Shakespeare. In short, they incline more towards the Shavian or the Dickensian than to the Jonsonian.

I shall have occasion in the next chapter to comment again on the extra-dramatic satiric inserts which are to be found in Massinger; but it is convenient to notice here that there are certain recurring themes which never fail to rouse his ire or contempt. The contemporary state of England and her unpreparedness for war is a frequent subject. It comes, by analogy, into Timoleon's long arraignment of the supine state of Syracuse in Act I., scene iii. of The Bondman and in many of the passages aimed at Buckingham to which I have already referred in this

chapter ① . The theme is sometimes, as in Cleora's speeches in Act I., scene iii. of The Bondman and Bertoldo's in Act I., scene i. of The Maid of Honour, coupled with a fervent patriotic outburst. Again the debauched state of the court in which the play happens to be set (but which all the audience would understand to represent the court at Westminster), its nepotism and favouritism, its prodigally expensive masques, and its courtiers' extravagances, especially in dress, are often lashed, as in The Duke of Milan, Act II., scene i., and Act IV., scene i., The Renegado, Act II., scene i., and Act III., scene iv., The Maid of Honour, Act III., scene iii., The Picture, Act II., scene ii., and The Great Duke of Florence, Act I., scene i., and Act III., scene ii. On the other hand, Massinger introduces satire of country life in Act II., scene ii. of The City Madam, and the relation between the city and the court is satirically presented in Act IV., scene iii. of The Parliament of Love.

There was one subject on which Massinger grew particularly heated. So much indeed does indignation sound in his lines on this theme that I am inclined to surmise that he was speaking with the bitter memory of an unhappy personal experience. I am thinking of his denunciations of the treatment meted out to the ex-serviceman. It makes up practically the whole of the interpolation, as it might be called, of Belgarde in The Unnatural Combat, including his set speeches, almost in the manner of an academic exercise, in Act III., scene iii. The subject is

① See above, pp. 255-257.

taken up again from the same point of view in Act III., scene i, of The Duke of Milan. But perhaps the best display by Massinger on this theme is the long speech of Eubulus in Act II., scene ii. of The Picture:

'What wise man,
That, with judicious eyes, looks on a soldier,
But must confess that fortune's swing is more
O'er that profession, than all kinds else
Of life pursued by man? They, in a state,
Are but as surgeons to wounded men,
E'en desperate in their hopes: While pain and anguish
Make them blaspheme, and call in vain for death,
Their wives and children kiss the surgeon's knees,
Promise him mountains, if his saving hand
Restore the tortured wretch to former strength:
And when grim Death, by Aesculapius' art,
Is frightened from the house, and health appears
In sanguine colours on the sick man's face,
All is forgot; and, asking his reward,
He's paid with curses, often receives wounds
From him whose wounds he cured: so soldiers,
Though of more worth and use, meet the same fate,
As it is too apparent. I have observed,
When horrid Mars, the touch of whose rough hand
With palsies shakes a kingdom, hath put on
His dreadful helmet, and with terror fills
The place where he. like an unwelcome guest,
Resolves to revel, how the lords of her, like
The tradesman, merchant, and litigious pleader,
And such-like scarabs bred in the dung of peace,
In hope of their protection, humbly offer
Their daughters to their beds, heirs to their service,
And wash with tears their sweat, their dust, their scars:
But when those clouds of war, that menaced
A bloody deluge to the affrighted state,
Are, by their breath, dispersed, and overblown,
And famine, blood, and death, Bellona's pages,
Whipt from the quiet continent to Thrace;
Soldiers, that, like the foolish hedge-sparrow,
To their own ruin, hatch this cuckoo, peace,
Are straight thought burthensome; since want of means,
Growing from want of action, breeds contempt:
And that, the worst of ills, falls to their lot,
Their service, with the danger, soon forgot.'

There is truth in the remark of Professor Cruickshank, at least if

it be taken as referring to the more self-expressive passages in the plays, that 'Honest indignation is perhaps the emotion which he [Massinger] handles best. The uncontrollable anger which meanness and unworthiness provoke expresses itself in lofty language' ① . This honest indignation, manly as it is, inclines to the solemn and for that reason perhaps takes from Massinger's talent as a satirist. By giving rein to his anger, he throws away that most formidable weapon in the armoury of the satirist, the rapier of cool and bitter incisiveness of which Pope is such a masterly wielder. Indignation and denunciation are not enough for satire, that most stimulating and dissimulating of the literary kinds. I feel that Massinger was both too honest and too single-minded, and perhaps too humane, to be a really telling satirist. He disliked without disguise and he condemned without qualification -- no more. He lacked the wit and still more the humour, the poise, the assumption of cool contempt, the command of detached and damaging ridicule without which the sophisticated art of satire is too like mere invective.

In the course of this chapter I have spoken at some length of Massinger's morality and moral intention. I do not, however, want to leave the impression that the plays belong to a species of dramatic sermon. They are very far from that, heavily larded as they are with moralising.

Professor Cruickshank tried both to sum up and to dismiss the matter when he said, 'Massinger, in his grasp of stagecraft, his

① Philip Massinger, 34-5.

flexible metre, his desire in the sphere of ethics to exploit both vice and virtue, is typical of an age which had much culture, but which, without being exactly corrupt, lacked moral fibre' ① . Into this pantechnicon sentence the author has crammed somewhat unrelated ideas. It is difficult to see why the 'grasp of stagecraft' and the 'flexible metre' are 'typical of an age which lacked moral fibre'. Be that as it may, the sentence, even without these phrases, requires elucidation, though hardly the sophisticated elucidation it receives from Dr T.S. Eliot ② . According to Professor Cruickshank, Massinger wanted to exploit both vice and virtue. With this (so far as I understand it) I disagree. I feel that Professor Cruickshank should have contented himself with saying that many things in Massinger's plays reflect the taste of his time and that much in his plays to which we take moral exception or which we find morally unpalatable can be excused on the score of the public for whom he wrote. It was an audience demanding that its plays should be liberally spiced with sexual 'danger', sexual obliquity, ambiguity, and pregnancy; an audience which 'sought from tragedy, not its proper satisfaction, but every kind of satisfaction' ③ ; an audience largely of the court and its hangers-on, all drawn more to dalliance in the antechamber than to danger on the battlefield (a preference which Massinger was never slow to point out); an audience which enjoyed the thrill of virtue tempted and got an equal excitement from its triumph or its fall. As Coleridge said, speaking of the typical

① Philip Massinger, 19. ② In a review of Professor Cruickshank's book, printed in Selected Essays. London, 1932. ③ H.W. Garrod (after Aristotle): The Profession of Poetry. Oxford, 1929. 232.

plays of this period, love 'in Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher really is on both sides little better than sheer animal desire. There is scarcely a suitor in all their plays, whose abilities are not discussed by the lady or her waiting-woman' ① . There is, however, a very marked difference between Massinger on the one hand and Beaumont and Fletcher on the other. They have a lubricity probably greater than the average of their audience -- an even more slippery ethic: they presented rather what the audience tended to and would liked to have indulged, but were inhibited from. But Massinger had something of the puritan in him, at once fascinated by sin and censorious of it. He shared the interest of his audience; but he recommended a more excellent way. As Professor Cruickshank says (and here I cannot but agree with him), 'unlike some of his literary contemporaries, Massinger wishes to show Virtue triumphant and Vice beaten. Vice is never glorified in his pages, or condoned' ② . Or as S.R. Gardiner puts it, 'He never descends to paint immoral intentions as virtuous because it does not succeed in converting itself into vicious act' ③ . There is nothing of the essential immorality of Fletcher or perversion of moral standards of Ford.

He never forgot, however, even in his most moralistic vein, that he was writing plays. Had he written in a constantly sermonising strain his work would not have gained the favour it did both in the public theatres and at Court. He dramatised his morality as much as Ibsen or Strindberg did theirs, if without the subtlety that they owed as much to their later age as to their peculiar geniuses.

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① Table-Talk & Omnia. (Oxford Edn.) 232. ② P.M., 34. ③ Op. cit. 495.

CHAPTER VI.

Style.

At the outset of an examination of Massinger's style we have to recognise that he was writing during a period of poetic and stylistic transition, and to remember that 'he must be considered as much at the beginning of one period as at the end of another' ① . To say this is, of course, to lay oneself open to the charge of subscribing to the old-fashioned, text-bookish view of literary history which inclines to a division of literature into watertight compartments, a kind of historical Dewey system with the concomitant claptrap of 'schools', 'periods', 'influences', and writers who, it is alleged, were 'in advance of their times', or perhaps 'survivors from a past age'. While I do not wish to bring this charge down on my head, I must admit to the convenience of of such categorising in general and make the point that the seventeenth century in particular is peculiarly suitable for such an analytic interpretation. The maturing of Renaissance ideas, and the political, scientific, moral, and philosophical upheavals make this century present a welter, a veritable maelstrom of cross-currents (That word is indeed used by Sir Herbert Grierson in the title of his most notable book on the period ②) to which it is tempting to apply some method of historical-analytical simplification. And I am not at all sure that, proper allowance having been made for exceptions and qualifications, such a view is misleading, if it is considered merely as a kind of literary trial-balance and if not too much reliance is placed on the final reading. Certainly so much of the work of Philip Massinger can be most easily explained and understood in terms of a simple historical schematisation that I

① T.S.Eliot: Philip Massinger. (Selected Essays. 210.) ② Cross Currents in English Literature of the XVIIth Century. London, 1929.

should be foolish to refuse its help. The nature of this schematisation must then form the subject of some introductory remarks.

This consideration of Massinger's style is based on the commonly accepted view that in this country during the seventeenth century a broad change took place in poetic method, an alteration in the way in which poets approached expression and handled their verbal raw material. Although this change is not in itself very easily to be explained, it manifests itself in a series of clearly-definable phenomena in the style, especially in the diction, the figures, and the imagery. So far as the diction in particular is concerned, I would add from my personal observation a fact that has not been pointed out before, namely that in the case of Massinger at least (and possibly also in the case of Milton and a few others) the sentence-structure was also profoundly affected.

Perhaps the best way to appreciate the justification for this view of seventeenth-century poetry is to examine the peak of Elizabethan-Jacobean poetic production as shown in, say, the work of Shakespeare or Donne, and then to jump a hundred years forward to the typical verse of the early eighteenth century. It will be seen at once that a tremendous change in style, quite apart from substance, has taken place between these two periods. The older school of literary historians, such as Saintsbury, Stopford Brooke, and Gosse, attached to these two periods some such convenient labels as the 'Age of Shakespeare' and the 'Age of ~~English~~ Dryden', and, always excepting Milton, tended to consider the interregnum as a somewhat flat passage between two peaks. It will be noted that I have implied that this

was merely a tendency, for it would be an insult to their memory to attribute to them without much qualification such a naïve, or indeed such a straightforward, view. Nevertheless, as far as the period with which I am chiefly dealing in this study is concerned, I think it is fair to say that, perhaps swayed by the overwhelming dominance of Shakespeare, these literary historians tended to consider the drama from Shakespeare's death until the closing of the theatres as a period of poetic decadence. Decadence or not, it is, I think, universally agreed that this period, the period in which Massinger's work appeared, is one in which the poetic quality of the plays produced falls far below the level of that which immediately preceded it.

It would perhaps be pointless to mention anything so obvious were it not for the fact that during the past thirty years or so a great deal of ink has been spilt in a rather sophisticated attempt to describe this change, to adduce reasons for it, and to narrow down the period of time in which it took place by finding literary scapegoats on whom the blame for the change can be laid. I would remark in passing that it is not possible to deal in ^{very} precise terms with 'literary trends' which are, after all, developments in man's intellectual history, and that it is unwise to attach blame to the unconscious contributors to a literary development. The idea of this development or change has in recent years been propounded chiefly by Dr T.S. Eliot ⁽¹⁾, and it is a mark of the great difficulty which attaches to speaking and thinking in such wide terms that it is almost impossible to discover exactly what Dr Eliot means by the various expressions he has

⁽¹⁾ Cf. his Selected Essays, in particular the essays entitled The Meta-physical Poets and Philip Massinger.

coined ① , and, indeed, to discover what he is meaning at all. Therefore, when in the course of this chapter I make certain general propositions which have perhaps been suggested to me by my reading of Dr Eliot and proceed to apply them to the particular case of Massinger, or if what I have to say about Massinger perhaps seems to cast some sidelights on Dr Eliot's theories ② , it must be understood that I am attempting an interpretation of Massinger, not of Dr Eliot.

It can be postulated, then, that a change did come over English poetry, starting at the beginning of the seventeenth century (although there are traces, and more than traces, of it earlier) and becoming complete in the literature of the Augustan Age. What I am referring to in respect of Massinger, in whose poetry certain features of the change can be clearly seen, will, I hope, become plainer in the course of this chapter. At the moment it is perhaps best to describe the change in general terms by saying that by reason of a complex of as yet unexplained causes (though certainly the rationalistic-scientific wave of the Renaissance had something to do with it) there took place in our poetry a split between Intellect and Feeling. This split showed itself chiefly in the diction and the imagery, in that the intellectual content of words began to outweigh their sensuous, and consequently to a great extent their emotional, potencies. The

① He himself, in an aside, speaks of 'two or three phrases of my coinage which have had a success in the world astonishing to their author'. (Milton. Proc. Brit. Acad. xxxiii. 7.). The most interesting examination of one of these phrases, the best known and perhaps least understood, as well as perhaps the most valuable contribution to the literature on the theory discussed above, is F.W. Bateson's 'Dissociation of Sensibility' in Essays in Criticism for July, 1951 (Vol. 1. No. 3. 302.). ② It would appear from his lecture on Milton (vide note 1., supra.) that Dr Eliot has in recent years considerably modified his opinions.

denotations of words asserted themselves and claimed the first place in the poet's attention; and yet the style as a medium of stimulus and suggestibility became less, instead of more, alive. Not only were the words more or less divorced from sensuous and emotive purposes and chosen rather for the meaning they conveyed than for their sensuously evocative 'inscape', but the direct expression of Feeling was ousted by the more oblique workings of the abstracting and generalising Intellect. The net result of this was that many poets (though not all by any means) tended to express themselves in generalisations; to lose force inasmuch as their work delivered a reduced emotional impact; to convey their meanings more prosaically and clearly, perhaps more logically ⁽¹⁾, but certainly less imaginatively and concretely; and to lose the condensation and highly-compressed and image-provoking texture of, say, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Webster. The whole complexion and hue of poetry became drier and greyer; clichés of general and vague import, instead of specific and vital ad hoc phraseology, became a feature of writing; poets wrote of life's ciphers, not life itself -- prose concepts, instead of poetic images; and their phrases had the savour of prose rather than of poetry.

Now this statement of what happened to poetry during the seventeenth century is a generalisation; and it remains a generalisation whether we attach to it (as Dr Eliot has done) such phrases as 'dissociation of sensibility' or merely content ourselves by saying that there was a fall in the poetic temperature, a decline from the intensity of poetic mood which distinguishes the Elizabethan-Jacobean creative peak. It is very difficult

⁽¹⁾ But see below, p. 354 .

to break away from such generalisations; but when we come down to consider specific matters of style, the words a poet uses (diction) and the way in which he arranges these words (syntax), it is possible to particularise certain features in which the shift away from the Elizabethan-Jacobean poetic method can be more clearly seen, features symptomatic of a falling-off in poetic tension and intensity. It is those features in particular that I propose to examine in Massinger's style, by comparing and contrasting his work with that of earlier writers, especially Shakespeare.

The comparison of Massinger with Shakespeare is particularly significant. As I have noted before ⁽¹⁾, Massinger's work belongs both in spirit and by subject-matter to the romantic school of Shakespeare and Fletcher (Though, to be sure, its moralistic aim and serious intention owe not a little to the contrasting school of Ben Jonson). In his plays, as in those of Webster, Tourneur, Fletcher, and others, there are, however, constant echoes and reminiscences of Shakespeare of a different kind.

As for the reminiscences, by which I mean imitations of plot, motif, or incident, they occur more or less unmistakably in nearly every play. As they do not concern Massinger's stylistic relation to Shakespeare, I need mention here only a few of the more striking. The story of The Duke of Milan, for example, in which a husband is convinced of the adultery of his innocent wife by a man whom he trusts but who is in reality an

⁽¹⁾ See above, Chapter I., p. 77.

enemy waiting for an opportunity of revenge, is a sort of traduction raisonnée of Othello, with an attempt in it to supply the traitor with an unequivocal motive. In The Fatal Dowry a new, and not unsuccessful, twist is given to a similar plot by creating a situation in which a loyal and disinterested friend, not an enemy this time, has the unpleasant task of persuading a husband that he is indeed married to an adultress. In A New Way to Pay Old Debts there are striking correspondences to The Merchant of Venice; the extortioner, Overreach, closely resembles Shylock; the stolen marriage between Margaret Overreach and young Allworth is exactly parallel to that between Jessica and Lorenzo; and Lady Allworth, Lord Lovell, and Wellborn may be likened to Portia, Antonio, and Bassanio. Many other instances of similarity in situation could be quoted:- the scenes in the forest in The Guardian recall As You Like It and A Midsummer-Night's Dream; Beaupré's passing the night as the mistress of her own husband in The Parliament of Love recalls the similar device in All's Well That Ends Well and Measure for Measure; and, as an example of a lesser reminiscence, Sir Giles Overreach in A New Way to Pay Old Debts is carried away to 'some dark room' like Malvolio in Twelfth Night.

There are, however, even more striking echoes; that is to say, verbal or phrasal recalls and parallels in thought and image. They are so common as to be one of the Massingerian stigmata and lead us to the ^{inevitable} conclusion that Massinger must have been a very close student indeed of Shakespeare's work, either as presented on the stage or as read in the quartos and First Folio. These echoes are of varying degrees of clarity, as it were, but frequently they border on direct quotation. And they vary in another

way, from echoes of mere turns of phrase, which in themselves make no contribution to the thought all the way to transfers of Shakespearian δράματα.

Professor Cruickshank has given ① a selection of Shakespearian echoes in Massinger, chosen at random from his plays. But I feel that, as a complete list is out of the question, it might be more revealing to present in the first instance the more obvious examples (not all) in one play. I have chosen as a representative play for this purpose The Duke of Milan. When this play was actually written is not known; but there is much internal evidence for 1620-21 ②. In any case, as it was published for the first time in 1623, the knowledge it displays of a familiarity with Shakespeare could hardly have come from a last-minute reading of the First Folio.

In the first scene of the play Graccho, Julio, and Giovanni enter drinking in celebration of the Duchess's birthday. In the course of the conversation, which is reminiscent of such alcoholic occasions in Shakespeare as those in 1 Henry IV, Twelfth Night, and especially Othello, because in both it and The Duke of Milan the occasions are festal ③, Graccho declares;

'It is capital treason (i.e. to be found sober.)
Or, if you mitigate it, let such pay
Forty crowns to the poor; but give a pension
To all the magistrates you find singing catches,
Or their wives dancing; for the courtiers reeling,
And the duke himself, I dare not say distempered,
But kind, and in his tottering chair carousing,
They do the country service

① Philip Massinger, 78-80, and Appendix IV. ② See T.W. Baldwin's edition. Lancaster, Pa., 1918. ③ Othello was first published in 1622. Twelfth Night did not appear in print before the First Folio of 1623.

... .. We've nought else to think on.
 And so, dear friends, copartners in my travails,
 Drink hard; and let the health run through the city,
 Until it reel again, and with me cry,
 Long live the duchess!'

And a few lines later he adds;

'Your lord, by his patent,
 Stands bound to take his rouse.'

It can hardly be doubted that when Massinger wrote these lines he had in mind quite naturally Hamlet's contemptuous description of the revelry at Elsinore;

'The king doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
 Keeps wassail and the swagg'ring upspring reels.' (1)

Another slighter parallel to Hamlet occurs in Act I., scene iii. when the birthday celebrations are once again the topic of conversation. 'There's a masque,' says the Third Gentleman, adding a question that recalls Claudius's suspicious query,

'Have you heard what's the invention?'

In the same scene the Duke abruptly ends the birthday celebrations on hearing the news of the military disaster by saying,

'Silence that harsh music;
 'Tis now unseasonable: a tolling bell,
 As a sad harbinger to tell me, that
 This pampered lump of flesh must feast the worms,
 Is fitter for me.'

These lines, besides a possible subsidiary echo of Donne's famous passage in the Devotions upon Emergent Occasions (2), recall Orsino's order in Twelfth Night;

(1) Hamlet, I., iii. (2) The Bell. (Oxford Book of English Prose, No. 116.) The 'bell' and 'worm' figures are, of course, constantly recurring in Donne. (Cf. in particular, Donne's Last Sermon. Pearsall Smith: Donne's Sermons. 1920. No. 155.)

'Enough! no more:
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before;'

and may owe something as well to Northumberland's,

'Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news
Hath but a losing office, and his tongue
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell,
Remembered knolling a departing friend;'

in 2 Henry IV ① . The word 'pampered' in the Massinger passage occurs elsewhere in 2 Henry IV where it is quoted as a catchword from Tamburlaine ②

Rather more positive proof that 2 Henry IV, however different it might be thematically, was floating in Massinger's mind when he was engaged on The Duke of Milan is provided by the Emperor Charles's exoneration of Sforza:

'Thou didst not borrow of vice her indirect,
Crooked, and abject means.'

③

The Shakespeare suggestion is in King Henry's speech to Prince Hal in Act IV, scene v. of 2 Henry IV .:

'God knows, my son,
By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways
I met this crown.'

A closer imitation than anything I have yet cited is found in Act II., scene i. of the play. The Duke's mother and sister are baiting his very much indulged and adored wife during his absence at the Emperor's court. An open quarrel develops, and in the course of it the following phrases are bandied about:

'For you, puppet ----'
'What of me, pine-tree?'

①. I., i. ② 2 Henry IV, II., iv. : 'And hollow pampered jades of Asia'. Cf. Tamburlaine, 3980 : 'Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia'. ③ III., i.

'... .. Little you are, I grant,
 And have as little worth, but much less wit;'
 '... .. O that I could reach you!
 The little one you scorn so, with her nails
 Would tear your painted face, and scratch those eyes out.'
 '... .. Where are you,
 You modicum, you dwarf!'
 'Here, giantess, here.'

The interchange is clearly imitated from the quarrel of Hermia and Helena in Act III., scene ii. of A Midsummer-Night's Dream:

'Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet you!
 'Puppet! why, so: ay, that way goes the game.
 Now I perceive that she hath made compare
 Between our statures: she hath urged her height;
 How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
 How low am I? I am not yet so low
 But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.'
 '... .. Get you gone, you dwarf;
 You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
 You bead, you acorn!'

I would note in particular Massinger's repetition of Shakespeare's 'dwarf' and 'puppet' and his substitution of 'pine-tree' and 'modicum' for Shakespeare's 'maypole' and 'minimus', to say nothing of his referring, like Shakespeare, to 'scratching eyes' and a 'painted face'.

Other Shakespearian echoes in the play are much slighter. Thus, 'She's walking in the gallery,' in Act III., scene ii. seems to recall the lobby Hamlet frequented; 'Stands prepared for either fortune' in Act III., scene i. recalls Hamlet's description of the man 'who is not passion's slave' ①; the use of the verb 'mewed up' in Act IV., scene iii. has a Shakespearian ring about it ②; 'let my head answer it if I offend' in the

① But see below, p. 392 for a closer parallel to this Hamlet passage taken from The Bondman, III., iii. Cf. also Believe As You List, I., i. ② Cf. Shrew, I., i. 187., and K. John, IV., ii. 57.

same scene recalls Polonius's 'Take this from this, if this be otherwise'; Graccho's 'plummet that may sound his deepest counsels' in Act IV., scene i. recalls faintly Prospero's farewell to his book; and editors have been so influenced by Shakespeare as always to print Massinger's 'discourse or reason' in Act III., scene ii. as 'discourse of reason' ① . Among other echoes of Hamlet which may be found in the play are 'fright the wicked or confirm the good' in Act I., scene iii., and ''Tis wormwood, and it works' and 'creatures wanting reason' in Act II., scene i.

I have given only such striking correspondences to Shakespeare as I have detected in one representative play by Massinger. I know that there are others, and I assume that a Shakespearian with a better verbal memory than I have would find still more.

But the subject of Massinger's Shakespearian recalls demands further consideration. Their number is one thing. But what about their origin? How far were they consciously recalled? It is clear, to begin with, that Massinger knew Shakespeare's plays well. So well, indeed, that he could not have escaped involuntary recalls even if he had wanted to, any more than Hazlitt could. The very nature of many of the echoes pretty well precludes the possibility of conscious recall. They are merely turns of insignificant phrase -- I mean phrases which are peculiarly Shakespearian, not merely Elizabethan-Jacobean common form, but which are little or no more than expletive, or, if more, quite fragmentary. Such phrases are not the least revealing. On the other hand, there are plenty of echoes of

① For a further note on this, see Professor Baldwin's Edition, p. 162.

Shakespeare which, if Massinger himself did not realise he was making them, his audience certainly would. Such, for example is;

'I once observed,
In a tragedy of ours, in which a murder
Was acted to the life, a guilty hearer,
Forced by the terror of a wounded conscience
To make discovery of that which torture
Could not wring from him.'

①

But the assumption is, however, that in this and similar cases, Massinger knew quite well what he was about. Indeed, it could scarcely be otherwise. Often, of course, the situation with which he was dealing had a certain similarity to another in Shakespeare and so helped the recall. But perhaps more often the contexts in Shakespeare and Massinger are quite different and the reasons for his echoing of this or that passage must remain obscure -- a matter of Massinger's now irrecoverable private associations. That Massinger had seen many or all of Shakespeare's plays acted, perhaps many times, may be taken for granted; and in days when memories were better than they are today and when to assist their memories men, especially men with literary interests, were in the habit of jotting down memoranda from sermons and plays and familiar conversation, a man of the theatre like Massinger must have accumulated Shakespeareana. As I have said elsewhere, however, Massinger was nothing if not methodical, and it is certain that he was a reader of such published plays of Shakespeare as he could get hold of, and that sometimes at least he seems to have been working from a Shakespeare text. In this connexion it is interesting to notice that in The Duke of Milan there are at least two notable 'borrowings' from writers other than

① The Roman Actor, II., i. See below, p. 390.

Shakespeare, one from Jonson's Catiline and one from Tourneur's Revenger's Tragedy, and the balance of probability is that they were made from the published texts of the plays ① .

However, as I have said, Massinger did sometimes indulge in patently memorial rearrangement, and the way in which he managed this memorial rearrangement on an apparently conscious level while other half-conscious recalls floated into his mind can be illustrated from The Emperor of the East. It is a play in which a uxorious husband falls into jealousy. As Massinger approached the motif of jealousy he inevitably remembered Othello. The first sign is Theodosius's,

'Methinks I find Paulinus on her lips;' ②

with its nearly verbatim repetition of Othello's

'I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.' ③

Then, in Act V., scene ii. the jealous husband exclaims;

'Can I call back yesterday, with all their aids
That bow unto my sceptre? or restore
My mind to that tranquillity and peace
It then enjoyed? -- Can I make Eudocia chaste,
Or vile Paulinus honest?'

- /blood,
- ① Duke of Milan, II., i. : 'For with this arm I'll swim through seas of
Or make a bridge, arched with the bones of men.'
Cf. Catiline, III., ii.: 'I would not go through open doors, but break 'em
Swim to my ends through blood; or build a bridge
Of carcasses.'
- Duke of Milan, V., ii. : 'and good angels
Clap their celestial wings to give it plaudits.'
Cf. Revenger's Tragedy, II., i.:
'O angels, clap your wings upon the skies,
And give this virgin crystal plaudits.'
- Cf. also Maid of Honour, V., i. : 'seraphic angels
Clap their celestial wings in heavenly plaudits.'
- ② IV., v. ③ Othello, V., ii.

It is impossible to doubt that these lines in the given situation were inspired by Iago's

'Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever med'cine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday;'

①

and blended with the recurring motif of 'honesty' which we find in Othello ②. But the suggestion from Iago's speech has been fused to another from Othello's cry fifteen lines on;

'O, now for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind; farewell content.'

And it has also, by some unconscious operation of Massinger's mind been blended with another exclamation from Richard II ;

'O, call back yesterday, bid time return.'

③

It will be seen from this that the process has not been one of single and straightforward borrowing from Shakespeare, since several threads, two of them, very naturally in the circumstances, from a play dealing with jealousy, have been intertwined. Another echo from Othello comes in Act V., scene iii., only a hundred lines later:

'Her greater light as it dimmed mine, I practised
To have it quite put out;'

though Massinger supplies a different emotional context.

All the other plays of Massinger would exemplify just as well as The Duke of Milan or The Emperor of the East his indebtedness to Shakespeare --

① Othello, III., iii. ② For a detailed treatment of the use of this word in Othello, see, William Empson: The Structure of Complex Words. London, 1951. ③ Richard II, III., ii.

an indebtedness greater than that of any other dramatist with the possible exception of Webster. But a full exploration of the subject would justify another thesis devoted to it alone. I have myself counted over seventy really important reminiscences of Shakespearian passages in the fifteen plays Massinger wrote alone, to say nothing of a multitude of others less striking. These correspondences, it must be remembered, are only those which were immediately obvious to me in what has been a study of Massinger for a broader purpose than to track him in Shakespeare's forest primeval. Undoubtedly there must be many more than either I myself or the recent editors of Massinger have noted. The important thing for me to note in this chapter on Massinger's style is that on an average every play of Massinger's contains at least five resounding echoes from Shakespeare and that such a Shakespearian habitude constitutes a stylistic idiosyncrasy.

The plays of which he shows certain knowledge are:- A Midsummer-Night's Dream, As You Like It, The Merchant of Venice, Measure for Measure, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing, All's Well that Ends Well, Romeo and Juliet, The Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Richard II, Richard III, Macbeth, King Lear, Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, as well as Henry VIII. But the two plays which, to judge by the number of times they are echoed, were Massinger's favourites are Hamlet and Othello. Something like 40% of the echoes derive from them

① . The reasons for these preferences are not far to seek: Hamlet was,

① In case it should be objected that the high percentage is due to my closer knowledge of these two plays, I would add that an examination of the reminiscences given by Cruickshank gives an almost identical result.

then as now, probably the best known play by Shakespeare on the stage; and the husband-wife relationship and the motif of jealousy and alleged infidelity of Othello would be enough to give it a special place in Massinger's esteem ⁽¹⁾ .

So far I have concerned myself with Massinger's debts to Shakespeare both for their own interest and as affording a basis for the discussion of Massinger's style in relation to his master. Before going on to treat his style in greater detail, however, I must refer to a feature which is not altogether unrelated to his imitation of Shakespeare. This might be described as Massinger's imitation of Massinger. Just as he took good things from Shakespeare, so he economically repeated himself. Or at least he had a large store of Massingerian clichés.

The recurrence of favourite words, and the repetition of phrases, sentences, and ideas in Massinger is so frequent as to constitute an abnormality. Shakespeare, of course, seems to have an inexhaustible supply of words and ideas; and the mark of his style is variety and perpetually specific aptness. While Massinger is not wanting in aptness, his thoughts move within a more conventional orbit and his expression of them runs to the rhetorical cliché. If it is perhaps unfair to contrast him with

⁽¹⁾ And not only in Massinger's esteem. As Professor H.W.Wells says (Elizabethan and Jacobean Playwrights. N.Y. 1939. 61.), 'the romantic narrative, the aristocratic setting, ... the portrait of physical passion represented in Othello much attracted the Cavalier mind. Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford, Massinger, and Shirley ... imitate this play far more often than any other work by the master dramatist'.

Shakespeare in his plenitude, it is not so to measure him against, say, Fletcher or Shirley or Ford; and when this is done, one comes away with the impression that Massinger's style was much less flexible and much more reduplicating than perhaps any of his contemporaries. His style was more appliqué than organic; and the recurrence of counters is merely one of the consequences. Just how pervasive and constant this self-repetitiveness is can be realised from the list Miss E.W. Bryne has compiled from a single play, The Maid of Honour, of phrases and expressions which Massinger had already used in earlier plays or was to repeat in later. This list, with the parallels alongside in another column, runs to thirty pages of close print ① .

Many of Massinger's repetitions are of favourite words and phrases. Thus the unusual word apostata occurs thrice in both The Virgin Martyr ② and Believe As You List ③ , and twice each in The Unnatural Combat ④ and The Renegado ⑤ ; and the corresponding abstract apostasy figures in The Bashful Lover ⑥ and The Maid of Honour ⑦ . Another word, rare at the time (especially in a figurative sense), is embryon. It is found at least five times in Massinger, always in a figurative use, the plays being:- Believe As You List ⑧ , The Bashful Lover ⑨ The Great Duke of Florence ⑩ , The Guardian ⑪ , and The Picture ⑫ .

① Printed in her edition of The Maid of Honour, London, 1927. ② III., i., IV., iii., and V., ii. (All Massinger scenes.) ③ II., ii. (twice), and V., i. ④ I., i. (twice). ⑤ I., i., and IV., iii. ⑥ III., iii. ⑦ II., v. The word is not used at all by Shakespeare. ⑧ I., ii. ⑨ IV., i. ⑩ III., i. ⑪ II., iii. ⑫ II., ii. Cf. also, Thierry and Theodoret, II., iii., and The Double Marriage, V., iii.

Other favourite expressions are:- nil ultra ① , frontless impudence ② , star-crossed ③ , phoenix ④ , sail-stretched wings ⑤ , to wash an Ethiop ⑥ , and a whole host of references to angels (especially guardian angels) and saints ⑦ .

To come now to repeated thought and images. Again and again when a battle is toward Massinger makes one of the characters use the same image to suggest doubt as to the outcome:

- ① Bashful Lover, I., i.; Guardian, V., iv.; Maid of Honour, IV., iii.; Parliament of Love, II., iii.; Renegado, IV., iii.; Unnatural Combat, II., iii.; and New Way to Pay Old Debts, IV., i. Cf. also, The Prophetess, IV., vi.
- ② Believe As You List, IV., iv.; Duke of Milan, II., i.; Guardian, IV., i.; Parliament of Love, V., i.; Unnatural Combat, V., i. Cf. also Cupid's Revenge, II., ii.; Jonson's Volpone, IV., v.; and Chapman's Odyssey, I, 425.
- ③ Believe As You List, IV., ii.; Emperor of the East, V., i.; Great Duke of Florence, V., iii.; also in the poem Sero Sed Serio, line 6. (Gifford, iv., 596.) Cf. also, Romeo and Juliet, Prologue.
- ④ Emperor of the East, I., ii.; Picture, I., ii.; Great Duke of Florence, III., i.; Maid of Honour, IV., iii. and V., ii.; Parliament of Love, III., iii.; and Unnatural Combat, II., iii. Cf. also, The False One, II., i.; Henry VIII, V., v.; and Fletcher's Valentinian, I., i., I., ii., and III., i.
- ⑤ Believe As You List, III., iii.; Bondman, I., iii.; Unnatural Combat, I., i. Cf. also, The Prophetess, II., iii., and see Gifford's foot-note, vol i., p. 141.
- ⑥ Bondman, V., iii.; Parliament of Love, II., ii.; Roman Actor, III., ii. Cf. also, The False One, I., ii.; Fletcher's The Woman's Prize, III., ii.; and Beaumont's Love's Cure, II., ii.
- ⑦ There are over sixty references to angels alone in the plays.

'And, it being in suspense, on whose fair tent
Winged Victory will make her glorious stand.' ①

'Till plumed Victory
Had made her constant stand upon their helmets.' ②

'.... it continuing doubtful
Upon whose tent plumed Victory would take
Her glorious stand.' ③

'.... plumed Victory
Would make her glorious stand upon my tent.' ④

Along with this list may be taken the following in which also Victory is
imagined as winged:

'.... plumed Victory
Is truly painted with a cheerful look.' ⑤

'.... to hug the mistress,
He doted on, plumed Victory.' ⑥

'And Victory sit ever on your sword!' ⑦

'But Victory still sits upon your sword.' ⑧

The examples of the same image in The False One;

'The sword which, in civil wars,
Appoints the tent on which winged Victory
Shall make her certain stand;' ⑨

and The Prophetess;

'Winged Victory shall take stand on thy tent;' ⑩

are in themselves good indications that the passages in these collaborations
with Fletcher were written by Massinger.

To exemplify further Massinger's self-repetitions of thoughts and

① Duke of Milan, I., i. ② Unnatural Combat, II., i. ③ Picture, II., ii.
④ Maid of Honour, I., ii. ⑤ Bondman, III., iv. ⑥ Parliament of Love,
III., iii. ⑦ Parliament of Love, I., v. ⑧ Parliament of Love, IV., ii.
⑨ I., i. ⑩ II., ii.

images without attempting anything like completeness, I choose three other apparently favourite ideas. The first is the unsavoury one in The Duke of Milan;

'These sponges, that suck up a kingdom's fat,
Battening like scarabs in the dung of peace;' ①

so closely repeated in The Picture;

'The tradesman, merchant, and litigious pleader,
And such like scarabs bred in the dung of peace.' ②

The second appears in very similar terms in The Duke of Milan;

'There are so many ways to let out life,
I would not live for one short minute his;' ③

and The Parliament of Love;

'There are a thousand doors to let out life;
You keep not guard of all;' ④

and again in A Very Woman, which, although in the first place written by Fletcher, was extensively revised by Massinger;

'Death hath a thousand doors to let out life,
I shall find one.' ⑤

The third idea occurs in no less than four plays:

'With your continued wishes, strive to imp
New feathers to the broken wings of time;' ⑥

'Could I imp feathers to the wings of time;' ⑦

'Imp feathers to the broken wings of time;' ⑧

'Your too much sufferance imp the broken feathers
Which carry her to this proud height.' ⑨

① III., i. ② II., ii. ③ I., iii. ④ IV., ii. ⑤ V., i. ⑥ Renegado, V., viii. ⑦ Roman Actor, V., ii. ⑧ Great Duke of Florence, I., i. ⑨ Emperor of the East, III., ii. The phrase 'imp feathers', drawn from falconry, appears in the Prologue (which may be by Massinger) to The Little French Lawyer. Shakespeare uses a similar expression in Richard II, II., i. (292): 'Imp out our drooping country's broken wing'.

These and similar evidences of Massinger's frequent resort to his conscious and unconscious memory of Shakespeare and of the tendency of his mind to run to favourite clichés afford valuable secondary clues to Massinger's share in certain plays in which he only collaborated or which he revised. As such they have been used by those whose chief aim was the detection of Massinger's hand or that of another (Fletcher, Field, Dekker, Daborne, or others) and its disengagement.

But their interest for me is the light they throw on the nature and temper of Massinger's mind in relation to his style. I think we should be justified in coming to the conclusion that a man with such habitudes or mannerisms exhibits a curious rigidity of mind, a tendency to think in what I have called clichés and counters, and to choose very often the line of least resistance in expressing an idea. Such a tendency, of course, manifests itself in Massinger in other ways, as, for example, in the frequency with which he expresses a moral idea in a moralistic tag and in his irritating gift for stating the obvious. I may say incidentally, and taking a wider sweep, that Massinger's mind tended to run in grooves not merely in respect of the features I have been discussing but also in plots, motifs, situations, and characterisation. However, repetitiveness in these fields is discussed in other chapters.

To keep within the subject of style -- Massinger's rigidity, as I have called it, is not that of the lazy mind. His style exhibits, on the contrary, a kind of dogged and painstaking muscularity, as does his work in other respects as well. Its inelasticity is that of the man temperamentally humourless, lacking in the warm fire of the sensuous imagination and

sicklied o'er with pale cast of convention and abstraction. His mind is deficient in that enterprising enthusiasm and intense energy which is required for the poetic effort and for the unpredictable power of poetry

'To haunt, to startle, and waylay.'

Naturally such a man, conscientious rather than inventive, scrupulous to the degree of pedantry, was likely to fall into set ways of expression and to repeat what he himself, or another, had said well before. The more so with Massinger, since his situations, characters, motifs, and points of view are all recurring. His self-repetitions and his echoes and borrowings from Shakespeare (and how wan and drooping these become when transplanted) or others, were, in the same way as his characters, extracted from the pigeon-holes where they had lain awaiting use and re-use. They are, of course, symptomatic of the falling-off from the Elizabethan-Jacobean exuberance I have already mentioned.

After this examination of two of Massinger's mannerisms, an examination which has underlined his poetic aridity, I must turn to the other features of his stylistic idiosyncrasy.

I have already mentioned briefly, without going further, one very important feature of Massinger's style, namely the tendency to periodic, suspended, and parenthetical syntax. It is a feature which has received little attention, certainly far less than it deserves, from the students of all our major poets. When I spoke of this marked feature of Massinger's

style in the chapter on his stagecraft ① I was for the time being concerned with the elocutionary demands made on the actors in his plays and the corresponding difficulties of the audience in following such involved sentences. On the other hand, when I referred to the same involution in the chapter on his characterisation ②, I was particularly interested in the question of the verisimilitude of the dialogue, or rather, of its lack of verisimilitude. It is now the occasion to examine this tendency more specifically as a syntactical phenomenon.

When we read a play by Massinger, even in a modernised text with all the aids that modern logical or grammatical punctuation affords, we are struck by the over-all slowness of our reading and by the number of times we stumble or are forced to pause. On retracing our steps, perhaps by going back to the beginning of the sentence, sometimes by having also to cast our eyes back a speech or two, and re-reading the knotted and labyrinthine sentences, we do get the meaning, if not immediately, then by a little in the way of general analysis. Here are some examples, chosen more or less at random from a much longer list, of the passages which have given me most trouble to disentangle:-

'Can he tax me,
That have received some worldly trifles from him,
For being ungrateful; when he, that first tasted,
And hath so long enjoyed, your sweet embraces,
In which all blessings that our frail condition
Is capable of, are wholly comprehended,
As cloyed with happiness, contemns the giver
Of his felicity; and, as he reached not
The masterpiece of mischief which he aims at,
Unless he pay those favours he stands bound to,
With fell and deadly hate!'

③

① Chapter III., p. 147. ② Chapter IV., p. 209. ③ The Duke of Milan, II.,
i.

'I, that have read
 The copious volumes of all women's falsehood,
 Commented on by the heart-breaking groans
 Of abused lovers; all the doubts washed off
 With fruitless tears, the spider's cobweb veil
 Of arguments alleged in their defence,
 Blown off with sighs of desperate men, and they
 Appearing in their full deformity;
 Know that some other hath displanted me,
 With her dishonour.'

①

'How I have loved, and how much I have suffered,
 And with what pleasure undergone the burthen
 Of my ambitious hopes, (in aiming at
 The glad possession of a happiness,
 The abstract of all goodness in mankind
 Can at no part deserve) with my confession
 Of mine own wants, is all that can plead for me.'

②

'Who brings Gonzago's head, or takes him prisoner,
 (Which I incline to rather, that he may
 Be sensible of those tortures, which I vow
 To inflict upon him for denial of
 His daughter to our bed) shall have a blank,
 With our hand and signet made authenticall,
 In which he may write down himself, what wealth
 Or honours he desires.'

③

'Imperious Love,
 As at thy ever-flaming altars Iphis,
 Thy never-tired votary, hath presented,
 With scalding tears, whole hecatombs of sighs,
 Preferring thy power and thy Paphian mother's
 Before the Thunderer's, Neptune's or Pluto's
 (That, after Saturn, did divide the world,
 And had the sway of things, yet were compelled
 By thy inevitable shafts to yield,
 And fight under thy ensigns) be auspicious
 To this last trial of my sacrifice
 Of love and service!'

④

'I, [that] have stood
 The shock of fierce temptations, stopped mine ears
 Against all Syren notes lust ever sung,
 To draw my bark of chastity (that with wonder

① Renegado, III., i. ② Bondman, V., iii. ③ Bashful Lover, II., v.
 ④ Roman Actor, III., iii.

Hath kept a constant and an honoured course)
 Into the gulf of a deserved ill-fame,
 Now fall unpitied; and, in a moment,
 With mine own hands, dig up a grave to bury
 The monumental heap of all my years,
 Employed in noble actions.'

①

'But when I heard her say,
 all favours
 That should preserve her in her innocence,
 By lust inverted to be used as bawds;
 I could not but in duty (though I know
 That the relation kills in you all hope
 Of peace hereafter, and in me 'twill show
 Both base and poor to rise up her accuser)
 Freely discover it.'

②

It may be said that the meaning never actually fails to yield itself. For it is characteristic of Massinger that he is painfully anxious to supply every verbal counter with pedantic fullness. He has no short-cuts to his meaning -- 'no mitigation or remorse of voice'. Like the Prologue to The Mousetrap, he cannot keep counsel; he tells all'. What gives us pause is not the ambiguities and condensations, the metaphors dissolving into metaphors, the implications and meanings between the lines, the imaginative daring and the emotional overtones which at once fascinate and baffle us (and the commentators) in Shakespeare. Nor are there the verbal and textual corruptions which produce the Shakespearian cruces. The grammar is correct and the constructions intact, barring frequent ellipses. That is, every sentence says what it means to say and says it with a regard for verbal usage and grammatical and syntactical orthodoxy. Nevertheless, sentences may be correct without being good, and accurate without being idiomatic. As Blair says: '... be the subject what it will, if the

① The Renegado, I., iii. See Gifford's foot-note, vol ii., p. 148.

② The Duke of Milan, IV., iii.

sentences be constructed in a clumsy, perplexed, or feeble manner, it is impossible that a work, composed of such sentences, can be read with pleasure, or even with profit' ① . Such Massinger's sentences too often are. They do indeed tend to 'be constructed in a clumsy, perplexed, or feeble manner'; at least, if 'feeble' in this context be interpreted as meaning 'labouring and overburdened'. They are not 'feeble' in the sense of 'lacking muscularity'. But it is a muscularity without grace or ease. His sentences do not possess that great advantage of the periodic form which, as Genung says, 'lies in the fact that it keeps up and concentrates the reader's attention' ② . On the contrary, 'the number and intricacy of the suspensive details are a draft on the reader's interpreting power' ③ . How much more difficult, then, for an audience in the theatre. In some kinds of poetry, and particularly in poetry to be read, the poet may take large liberties, trusting his subtleties and complexities to a reader who can turn back the page. But that was certainly not what Massinger was trying to provide. Nor was it Shakespeare's kind. Admittedly, Shakespeare's style can be very difficult. As Matthew Arnold said,

'his gift of expression leads him astray, degenerating sometimes into a fondness for curiosity of expression, into an irritability of fancy, which seems to make it impossible for him to say a thing plainly, even when the press of the action demands the very directest language, or its level character the very simplest. Mr Hallam ... has had the courage ... to remark how extremely and faultily difficult Shakespeare's language often is. It is so: you may find main scenes in some of his greatest tragedies, King Lear for example, where the language is so artificial, so curiously tortured, and so difficult, that every speech has to be read two or three times before its meaning can be comprehended.

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- ① Hugh Blair: Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres. London, 1837. 131.
 ② J.F.Genung: The Working Principles of Rhetoric. New York, 1900. 350.
 ③ Ibid., 351.

This over-curiousness of expression is indeed but the excessive employment of a wonderful gift -- of the power of saying a thing in a happier way than any other man; nevertheless, it is carried so far that one understands what M. Guizot meant when he said that Shakespeare appears in his language to have tried all styles except that of simplicity.' ①

But it is to be noticed in the first place that these opinions of Arnold, Hallam, and Guizot are separated by more than two hundred years from Shakespeare's idiom, by the Great Divide which is 'dissociation of sensibility', and in Guizot's case by a difference of native language. Secondly, what these three critics of Shakespeare's style are speaking about (as, indeed, are most critics when they speak about 'style' -- Coleridge not excepted) is his diction, phraseology, and imagery. They are not concerned with his syntax. And however difficult Shakespeare's style may be by reason of the diction, phraseology, and imagery, it is always a speakable style in a strictly elocutionary sense. I shall be returning to a consideration of this matter later in this chapter, but for the moment the syntactical aspects of Shakespeare's style can be summed up briefly as a kind of poetically inspired and transformed colloquialism. The thought-elements of it come in an order that is faithful to that of unpremeditated utterance. It observes familiar and colloquial syntax; it runs to principal clauses or their phrasal equivalents, to loose and accumulative rather than to periodic sentences, and to simple constructions; and it resorts little to suspensions, parentheses, and inversions -- or, at least, only to such as have a colloquial sanction. It should perhaps be added that, whereas Massinger's style is all-but-invariable for every character and every purpose, Shakespeare's is infinitely and sinuously adjustable.

① Preface to Poems. 1853. (English Critical Essays: XIX Century. (World's Classics.) Oxford, 1916. 369-370.)

Before I proceed further, I should perhaps try to discriminate between the terms 1. period or periodic sentence; 2. suspension; and 3. parenthesis. These three rhetorical phenomena overlap and blend. Nevertheless they can be analytically discriminated.

The period is a simple or a complex sentence in which the principal clause is not complete until the last word (or, not to be too rigorous, until practically the last word). Periodicity in the rhetorical sense, then, is and can only be manifested in and by a total sentence. Its opposite is the loose sentence, which reaches a completeness of statement long before its end, but goes on to add phrases or clauses. Compound sentences, by their very nature, are loose in this sense; but simple and complex may likewise be loose. A period need not display suspension or parenthesis. Thus a sentence, made up of a string of preliminary hypotheses and concluding with an apodosis as the principal clause, is a period. And the presence of suspension or parenthesis does not by any means necessarily produce a period. It is, however, fair to say that the suspension of the total sense which is inherent in the period tends to attract to it a fair amount of rhetorical suspension.

A suspension is a hold-up or interposition between words in close grammatical relationship, as for example, between a subject and its verb, a verb and its object, a preposition and its noun, and so on. In a strict interpretation any such intervention is a suspension. But in practice the term is generally reserved for such gaps as are considerable and truly suspensive. It should be noted that the interrupting matter is not subtractable without loss to the sentence as a Gestalt; it is integral to the sentence, and requires a grammatical adjustment of the rest of the sentence.

It is of such suspensions that Blair is speaking in this passage: 'When a circumstance is interposed in the middle of a sentence, it sometimes requires attention how to place it, so as to divest it of all ambiguity' ① .

A parenthesis is akin to a suspension in so far as it interrupts. But for one thing it does not generally intervene between words in close grammatical relationship; it comes rather at the internal joins of a sentence, between phrasal groups or between clauses. Secondly (and this is its chief differentia), a parenthesis is like a footnote comment or marginalium slipped into the text. It has, as it were, its own grammatical independence and may indeed itself be a complete sentence. It can be dropped without loss to the sentence to which it is parasitic. Blair's rules for the preserving of sentence-unity include the recommendation 'to keep clear of all parentheses for the most part, their effect is extremely bad; being a sort of wheel within wheels; sentences in the midst of sentences; the perplexed method of disposing of some thought which a writer wants art to introduce in its proper place' ② .

I do not say that it might not be difficult in many cases to decide whether an interruption is a suspension or a parenthesis. But I have advanced a notional difference which is also real enough for most purposes. I may say that the use of fore-and-aft commas, brackets, or dashes to indicate suspensions or parentheses is at the writer's discretion.

That these devices have their uses is undeniable; and that they can

① Lectures, 133. For suspension in general, see Genung, op. cit., 279-287.

② Ibid., 140.

be used so as to help the reader is as certain. But there are limits beyond which they cannot be carried except at the cost of defeating their own end. Moreover, they are, especially the period, more appropriate to prose than to poetry, and to prose for reading not for oral delivery at that. Their psychological temperature is below the blood-heat of poetry. They imply a prospectiveness of mind and a cool detachment from the subject that are foreign to inspirational utterance.

All three of these devices, the period, the suspension, and the parenthesis, are amply illustrated in the passages I have quoted from Massinger's plays. Massinger has no hesitation in burdening both the actor and the hearer, not to mention the reader, with a mass of preparatory and subordinate matter before he releases them by completing a principal clause. His periods run to as much as thirteen or fourteen lines and eighty or ninety words. They are made the more involved by suspension after suspension (very often interrupting the subject, either of a subordinate clause or of the principal clause, by, as in one example I have given, as many as eleven lines) and by parentheses, and parentheses within parentheses, and parentheses within suspensions. I think it may be said without hesitation that no dramatist of his age comes near Massinger in syntactical complexity.

I shall examine this assertion in much greater detail later in this chapter, but here, however, as partial confirmation of what I have said and to prove the frequency of these involutions in Massinger, I present a characteristic passage from an early play, The Unnatural Combat. It is the conversation between Montreville and Theocrine in Act I., scene i. down to the entrance of Beaufort Junior and Belgarde. It extends to 82 lines:-

- 'Montr. Now to be modest, madam, when you are
A suitor for your father, would appear
Coarser than boldness: you awhile must part with
Soft silence, and the blushings of a virgin:
Though I must grant, did not this cause command it, (5)
They are rich jewels you have ever worn
To all men's admiration. In this age,
If, by our own forced importunity,
Or others purchased intercession, or
Corrupting bribes, we can make our approaches (10)
To justice, guarded from us by stern power,
We bless the means and industry.
- Usher. Here's music
In this bag shall wake her, though she had drunk opium,
Or eaten mandrakes. Let commanders talk (15)
Of cannons to make breaches, give but fire
To this petard, it shall blow open, madam,
The iron doors of a judge, and make you entrance;
When they (let them do what they can) with all
Their mines, their culverins, and basiliscos,
Shall cool their feet without; this being the picklock (20)
That never fails.
- Montr. 'Tis true, gold can do much,
But beauty more. Were I the governor,
Though the admiral, your father, stood convicted
Of what he's only doubted, half a dozen (25)
Of sweet close kisses from these cherry lips,
With some short active conference in private,
Should sign his general pardon.
- Theoc. These light words, sir,
Do ill become the weight of my sad fortune;
And I much wonder you, that do profess
Yourself to be my father's bosom friend, (30)
Can raise mirth from his misery.
- Montr. You mistake me;
I share in his calamity, and only
Deliver my thought freely, what I should do
For such a rare petitioner: and if (35)
You'll follow the directions I prescribe,
With my best judgment I'll mark out the way
For his enlargement.
- Theoc. With all real joy
I shall put what you counsel into act,
Provided it be honest.
- Montr. Honesty (40)
In a fair she client (trust to my experience)
Seldom or never prospers; the world's wicked.
We are men, not saints, sweet lady; you must practise
The manners of the time, if you intend
To have favour from it: do not deceive yourself, (45)
By building too much on the false foundations

- Of chastity and virtue. Bid your waiters
Stand further off, and I'll come nearer to you.
- First Wom. Some wicked counsel on my life.
- Second Wom. Ne'er doubt it,
If it proceed from him.
- Page. I wonder that
My lord so much affects him. (50)
- Usher. Thou'rt a child,
And durst not understand on what strong basis
This friendship's raised between this Montreville
And our lord, monsieur Malefort; but I'll teach thee:
From thy years they have been joint purchasers
In fire and water works, and trucked together. (55)
- Page. In fire and water works!
- Usher. Commodities, boy,
Which you may know hereafter.
- Page. And deal in them,
When the trade has given you over, as appears by
The increase of your high forehead.
- Usher. Here's a crack!
I think they suck this knowledge in their milk. (60)
- Page. I had an ignorant nurse else. I have tied, sir,
My lady's garter, and can guess ---
- Usher. Peace, infant;
Tales out of school! take heed, you will be breeched else.
- First Wom. My lady's colour changes.
- Second Wom. She falls off too.
- Theoc. You are a naughty man, indeed you are; (65)
And I will sooner perish with my father,
Than at this price redeem him.
- Montr. Take your own way,
Your modest, legal way: 'tis not your veil,
Nor mourning habit, nor these creatures taught
To howl and cry when you begin to whimper; (70)
Nor following my lord's coach in the dirt,
Nor that which you rely upon, a bribe,
Will do it, when there's something he likes better.
These courses in an old crone of threescore,
That had sevsn years together tired the court (75)
With tedious petitions, and clamours,
For the recovery of a stragglng husband,
To pay, forsooth, the duties of one to her; --
But for a lady of your tempting beauties,
Your youth, and ravishing features, to hope only (80)
In such a suit as this is, to gain favour,
Without exchange of courtesy - you conceive me -
Were madness at the height.'

more obviously a suspension. For Theocrinus catches up the ideas and imagery of Montreville broken in on, so far as the audience is concerned, by the Usher nine lines before. I am quite aware that Elizabethan-Jacobean dramatists frequently made one or more characters overhear and remark on the dialogue and actions of another group. But they generally managed such interruptions more plausibly, keeping the interrupting comments brief or interpolating them at gaps, and not continuing the interrupted dialogue as if nothing had happened. I would not press this point too far, however, since these interruptions are not the grammatical interpolations I am specifically considering here. They are, nevertheless, related, exemplifying Massinger's predisposition to indulge in^a lengthy 'carry-over' of his material without regard to either actors or audience, and I would refer to this as having some bearing on his practice in managing interruptions and asides which I have already discussed in the chapter on his stagecraft (1) .

The Unnatural Combat is an early play by Massinger, probably the first he wrote unaided. But in the matter of his syntax it is entirely characteristic; and Massinger's style shows no change first and last.

At the risk of tediousness but because the fact is important, I venture to illustrate the involuting habit still further by examples arbitrarily drawn from the first scenes of the last acts of every uncollaborated play in the canon. Each of the sentences quoted comes quite early in the scene, and, indeed, some of them are the opening sentences:-

(1) See Chapter III., p. 128ff.

'Why, couldst thou think, Eugenia, that rewards,
Graces, or favours, though strewed thicke upon me
Coul ever bribe me to forget mine honour?' ①

'Were his honours
And glories centupled, as I must confess,
Leosthenes is most worthy, yet I will not,
However I may counsel, force affection.' ②

'Should I spare cost, or not wear cheerful looks
Upon my wedding day, it were ominous,
And showed I did repent it; which I dare not,
It being a marriage, howsoever sad
In the first ceremonies that confirm it,
That will for ever arm me against fears,
Repentance, doubts, or jealousies, and bring
Perpetual comforts, peace of mind, and quiet
To the glad couple.' ③

'The relation
That you have made me, Stephanos, of these late
Strange passions in Caesar, much amze me.' ④

'Yet take heed,
Take heed, lord Philanax, that, for private spleen,
Or any false-conceived grudge against me,
(Since in one thought of wrong to you I am
Sincerely innocent) you do not that
My royal master must in justice punish,
If you pass to your own heart thorough mine,
The murder, as it will come out, discovered.' ⑤

'A desire too
Of the recovery of our own, kept from us
With strong hand, by his violent persecutor,
Titus Flaminius, when he was at Carthage,
Urged us to seek redress.' ⑥

'This devil, whose priest I am, and by him made
A deep magician (for I can do wonders)
Appeared to me in Virginia, and commanded,
With many stripes, for that's his cruel custom,
I should provide, on pain of his fierce wrath,
Against the next great sacrifice, at which
We, grovelling on our faces, fall before him,
Two Christian virgins, that with their pure blood,

① The Duke of Milan. ② The Bondman. ③ The Renegado. ④ The Roman Actor. ⑤ The Emperor of the East. ⑥ Believe As You List.

Might dye his horrid altars; and a third,
 In his hate to such embraces as are lawful,
 As an oblation unto Hecate,
 And wanton Lust, her favourite.'

①

'But how, I Olante,
 You that have spent your past days, slumbering in
 The down of quiet, can endure the hardness
 And rough condition of our present being,
 Does much disturb me.'

②

'You need not doubt, sir, were not peace proclaimed
 And celebrated with a general joy,
 The high displeasure of the Mantuan duke,
 Raised on just grounds, not jealous suppositions,
 The saving of our lives (which, next to heaven,
 To you alone is proper) would force mercy
 For an offence, though capital.'

③

As regards the examples I have offered, it cannot of course be maintained that they are all manifestations of an absolute viciousness of style, either through unintelligibility, unwieldiness or inelegance; however relatively inappropriate they may be as a feature of an idiom that was intended to be a poetic-dramatic approximation to the speech that men do use. Nevertheless, it is worth while to point out that of the sixteen examples of single sentences I have given ④, three are very difficult to grasp without analysis or resolution by means of simpler equivalents; five others require ^{at least} close and unremitting attention; three of the rest are awkward; and almost all of them, besides being more or less clumsy, could have been more naturally and better expressed in a looser order.

Another feature of Massinger's style which causes some difficulty,

① The City Madam. ② The Guardian. ③ The Bashful Lover. ④ On pages 329, 330, 331, 341, and above. That is, excluding the passage from The Unnatural Combat.

especially when conjoined with those I have just discussed, is the number of grammatical ellipses. Though I have not worked out the percentages (it would be scarcely possible to do so), I am making no hazardous generalisation when I say that Massinger's percentage is considerably higher than the normal for his age -- though perhaps not so high as Milton's. Allied to this feature is the compression which the inversions and high degree of subordination native to the periodic style make necessary. We are today much less given to or tolerant of the elliptical, and have dropped the use of many elliptical constructions, at least in prose, that were once fairly regular. Many of the more difficult passages in Massinger can be understood only by supplying the thats (conjunctival or relative-pronominal) or whos or whoms or whichs, or by expanding the condensed constructions. In many of the cases the ellipses are permissible, even by modern usage. Such are the thats indicating indirect speech which are understood in such constructions as, 'But when I heard her say \wedge all favours that should preserve her' ①, and 'This devil commanded \wedge I should provide two Christian virgins' ②. Perhaps permissible also is the ellipsis of pronouns in 'Take heed that you do not that \wedge my royal master must punish' ③, and 'I, \wedge have stood the shock of fierce temptations, $\wedge \wedge$ stopped mine ears against all Syren notes \wedge lust ever sung, now fall unpitied' ④. Ellipsis, however, becomes a little more complicated when we find as instead of as if in 'He, as \wedge cloyed with happiness, contemns the giver

① Page 331, example 2. ② Page 342, example 1. ③ Page 341, example 5. (which elided). ④ Page 331, example 1. (that that have that elided).

of his felicity' ① . Semi-elliptical constructions add to the difficulty, as, for example, in the rendering of subordinate conditional clauses by the simple inverted subjunctive in 'Were not peace proclaimed' ② (instead of 'If peace were not proclaimed'.), or in the knotty example, 'Should I spare cost, or not wear cheerful looks upon my wedding day, it were ominous, and showed I did repent it' ③ , which (presumably) has to be translated as 'If I should spare cost or not wear cheerful looks upon my wedding day, it would be ominous and would show that I did repent it'. Especially pernicious is the Latinate participial phrase coming in the middle of an extended subordinate clause (which may already form a suspension of the principal clause), as in 'This devil commanded I should provide ... against the next great sacrifice, at which we, grovelling on our faces, fall before him, two Christian virgins' ④ . As with the other features of his style I have been discussing, none of these constructions can be totally condemned, but, coming as they do in the midst of sentences already highly involuted, their effect is to make complexity double confusing.

Massinger's frequent resort to ellipses is partly attributable to his precise observance of the metre. So also are his inversions, which are not always for some emphasis or for the better correlating of elements in the sentence, but rather to make the lines scan. But perhaps Massinger is not more given to occasional inversions than are his contemporaries. In fact, what he inverts is not so much the order of words, as the order of the clauses, in the interest of his already-discussed sentence-periodicity.

① Page 329, example 3. ② Page 342, example 3. ③ Page 341, example 3.

④ Page 342, example 1.

I have referred more than once already, in this chapter and elsewhere, to the unsuitability of Massinger's style for the stage. I cannot, however, leave the subject without a further pointing of my remarks. In evaluating any dramatist his theatrical effectiveness is, properly understood, the prime consideration. He may have many other virtues, but if he fails theatrically he is a poor dramatist. The theatre is, as I have suggested previously, the final court of appeal. No doubt theatrical effectiveness is a resulting complex of many factors. But one of them, and not the least important, is the mechanism through which the others must act; that is to say, the dialogue. If it is clogged and contorted, if it cannot say much in little, if it constantly employs sledge-hammers to crack nuts, if it labours to bring forth a mouse, if it tries to untie Gordian knots instead of slicing through them with the razor of wit, then it is not only bad in itself but obstructive for all the rest.

Herein lies Massinger's greatest stylistic weakness. For, were his periods faultlessly turned and of impeccable clarity and precision (as they decidedly are not), they would still not be, except for certain very limited uses in set speeches, a vehicle, flexible, appropriate, or even valid, for dramatic dialogue. The periodic style, complex, concentrated, and highly organised, has great advantages for the writer of certain kinds of prose. Without it, Sir Thomas Browne could not accomplish his musical incantations; Jeremy Taylor and Burke, their emotional intellection; Gibbon, the economic manipulation of details and comments; or Pater, his sinuous and seductive subtlety. But the periodic is a cumbrous instrument for the poet, especially the poet-dramatist. When it is used as the staple of dramatic dialogue,

it is too slow, too ponderous, too considered, and too inflexible to give that heightened echo of human speech at which poetic drama aims. Human beings on the spur of the moment just do not speak in periods, the less and less so the more and more they are caught up by passion and feeling; and the dramatist who makes his characters, all of them with insignificant exceptions speak so is defeating his own end more thoroughly than by lapses in vraisemblance, plot, or characterisation. Awkwardnesses in plot are not very apparent in a performance, especially if the producer knows his business. And the personality of the actor can carry off unreal characterisation. But there is no escape from the syntax of the dialogue. It 'winna ding'.

Of course, in the circumstances of heightened emotion or feeling which are the frequent concern of the poetic dramatist, especially a dramatist like Massinger of cloak-and-dagger romance, we could not endure the incoherences with which real people confront a crisis; and the less emotional passages likewise demand something more than the sermo pedestris of unpremeditated speech with its long-windedness, solecisms, inconsistencies, corrections and second thoughts, pauses, illogicalities, truncations, half-thoughts and oral shorthand, ejaculations, and anacolutha. The dialogue of poetic drama has to be intensified and raised above a level imitation of life. With Coleridge, we can adduce as a reason 'the high spiritual instinct of the human being impelling us to seek unity by harmonious adjustment, and thus establishing the principle, that all the parts of an organized

whole must be assimilated to the more important and essential parts' ① . Nevertheless, there are ways and ways of harmonising a heightened imitation of human speech with a heightened imitation of human action and life. And Massinger's is not the way. A dialogue made up in effect of set speeches, for which each sentence in all its elaborate subordination has been carefully thought out, is not the way to deal with the difficulty. Massinger's characters always speak the same parlance: the voice is the voice of Cleora, or Donusa, or Sophia, or Grimaldi, or Sforza, or Wellborn; but the syntax is the syntax of Massinger. So, in fact, is everything in the dialogue. The style is invariable and the characters have learned to speak parrot-fashion. Whether Massinger might have achieved a more adaptable style if he could have been released from the Procrustean bed of his own syntax is doubtful. But certainly his syntax, second nature as it had become, constricted every speech and stereotyped the utterance of every character.

The other dramatists of Massinger's generation and the generation before had also to find modes of dialogue for poetic drama. Naturally there are as many solutions as there are dramatists. But none of them, with the partial exception of Chapman, resorted for a basis to what was a Ciceronian, literary-prose style, as Massinger did. They knew instinctively, if not consciously, that 'there are modes of expression, a construction, and an order of sentences, which are in their fit and natural place in a serious prose composition, but would be disproportionate and heterogeneous in metrical poetry' ② . The basis of their dialogue, so far as syntax at

① Biographia Literaria (Ed. Shawcross), II., 56. ② Ibid., II., 49.

least is concerned, is the loose and cumulative sentence-structure of colloquial speech. I say that such remains their syntactical basis, however much the broken and wasteful idiom is displaced by a more consecutive and purposive one.

By this time, then I hope that I have established my first precise and valid ground for a comparison of the style of Massinger with that of Shakespeare. It is this fundamental difference in respect of syntax -- something which seems simple and not important at the first glance, but which is on the contrary, as I have implied, of far-reaching significance.

It is easy enough to establish the broad difference. But for a number of reasons it is difficult to apply to it the statistical methods which can be used, with due caution, in the matter of versification. The readiest statistical line would be to count the number of principal clauses in, say, half-a-dozen scenes of some length from the same number of plays from Shakespeare, to express the result as a percentage, and to set it against the result of a similar investigation of Massinger's sentences. The comparison would be extremely laborious; the percentages arrived at would, in the nature of the case, only approximate to scientific accuracy; and the cold inhumanity of such statistics would add not one jot or tittle to our true understanding of either Shakespeare or Massinger. Such pedantical numbers can, like Humpty-Dumpty's words, be interpreted to mean what one chooses them to mean, and the temptation is always to make them add up to

'a nice knock-down argument' ① .

I have, therefore, chosen to assume that the argument is largely self-evident, and to present, in lieu of a statistical table, a few short passages from Shakespeare and from Massinger, set out in such a way as will make the difference plain. Here, then, are several passages from Shakespeare, at once familiar and typical, and not too far removed in subject matter and emotional tone (reflective, expository, argumentative, or exhortatory) from the equally typical passages I have chosen from Massinger. For a variety of reasons it has not proved possible to display these Shakespeare passages in the diagrammatic form I later use for those from Massinger. Instead, they are presented, not as lines of verse, but in consecutive lines each of which comprises one thought- or rhetorical-unit. By thought- or rhetorical-units I mean either groups of words which combine closely together to form an integral idea, or single words which have such a pregnancy of meaning in the context as to be unitary ideas in themselves. That is to say, a unit is not by any means ^{necessarily} a sentence -- a statement with the grammatical status of a sentence -- or even always a subordinate clause. Regarded from the elocutionary angle, the units are the phrases into which an actor divides the speech according to interrelation between his supply of breath and the emotive line. That no two actors will speak the speech identically is admitted: there will be variations in interpreting the same matter. But, as in the various interpretations by a musician or a singer of a piece of music, there is a notional norm or average towards which all the

① Through the Looking-Glass, Chapter VI.

interpretations approximate, even though the notation supplied to the actor by the conventions of punctuation, either Shakespearian or modern, is so much less helpful than that devised for the musician or singer. It is into this rhetorical pattern that the Shakespearian speech has to be resolved, and it is in this rhetorical pattern that forms its basis, a very different thing from the grammatical pattern of general analysis into which the Massingerian speech may (and indeed must) be resolved. I cannot, of course, expect that my division of the Shakespearian passages into such units will necessarily be acceptable to anyone else. But that does not matter: the point is that, however divided into units, the sequence of the units remains the same and is simple because, with rare exceptions, it is a sequence psychologically and emotively true to the 'syntax' of the human mind, not one adjusted to the conventions of an artificial and purely logical syntax.

'She should have died
 Hereafter;
 There would have been a time for such a word.
 Tomorrow,
 And tomorrow,
 And tomorrow,
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
 To the last syllable of recorded time;
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death.
 Out,
 Out,
 Brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow,
 A poor player,
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more;
 It is a tale
 Told by an idiot,
 Full of sound and fury,
 Signifying
 Nothing.!

①

'Once more unto the breach,
 Dear friends,
 Once more;
 Or close the wall up with our English dead!
 In peace
 There's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility;
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
 Then
 Imitate the action of the tiger;
 Stiffen the sinews,
 Summon up the blood,
 Disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage;
 Then lend the eye a terrible aspect.'

①

'Friends,
 Romans,
 Countrymen,
 Lend me your ears;
 I come to bury Caesar,
 Not to praise him.

The evil that men do
 Lives after them,
 The good
 Is oft interred with their bones;
 So let it be with Caesar.

The noble Brutus hath told you
 Caesar was ambitious;
 If it were so,
 It was a grievous fault;
 And grievously hath Caesar answered it.'

②

'The quality of mercy is not strained,
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath:
 It is twice blessed;
 It blesseth him that gives
 And him that takes:
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest;
 It becomes the throned monarch better than his crown;
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
 It is enthroned in the heart of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself,
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice.'

③

① Henry V, III., i. ② Julius Caesar, III., ii. ③ The Merchant of Venice, IV., i.

'Our revels now are ended.
 These our actors
 As I foretold you
 Were all spirits
 And are melted into air,
 Into thin air:
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The clou-capped towers,
 The gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples,
 The great globe itself,
 Yea
 All which it inherit,
 Shall dissolve
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind.
 We
 Are such stuff as dreams are made on,
 And our little life is rounded
 With a sleep.'

①

'It is the cause,
 It is the cause, my soul:
 Let me not name it to you,
 You chaste stars!
 It is the cause.
 Yet I'll not shed her blood,
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
 And smooth as monumental alabaster,
 Yet she must die,
 Else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light,
 And then
 Put out the light:
 If I quench thee,
 Thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore should I repent me;
 But once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat that can thy light relume.
 When I have plucked the rose I cannot give it vital growth again,
 It needs must wither:
 I'll smell it on the tree.
 O balmy breath
 That dost almost persuade Justice to break her sword!

One more,
 One more.
 Be thus when thou art dead,
 And I will kill thee,
 And love thee after.
 One more,
 And this the last:
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal.
 I must weep,
 But they are cruel tears;
 This sorrow's heavenly,
 It strikes where it doth love.'

①

'For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings:
 How some have been deposed,
 Some slain in war,
 Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,
 Some poisoned by their wives,
 Some sleeping killed;
 All murdered:
 For within the hollow crown that rounds the mortal temples of a
 Keeps Death his court, /king
 And there the antick sits,
 Scoffing his state
 And grinning at his pomp;
 Allowing him a breath,
 A little scene,
 To monarchize,
 Be feared,
 And kill with looks,
 Infusing him with self and vain conceit
 As if this flesh which walls about this life
 Were brass impregnable;
 And humoured thus
 Comes at the last,
 And with a little pin
 Bores through his castle wall,
 And
 Farewell king!'

②

It will be seen from the seven examples I have given from Shakespeare that in each of them the matter is expressed in quite brief thought-units or rhetorical-units, following each other in a sequence of straightforward

① Othello, v., i. ② Richard II, III., ii.

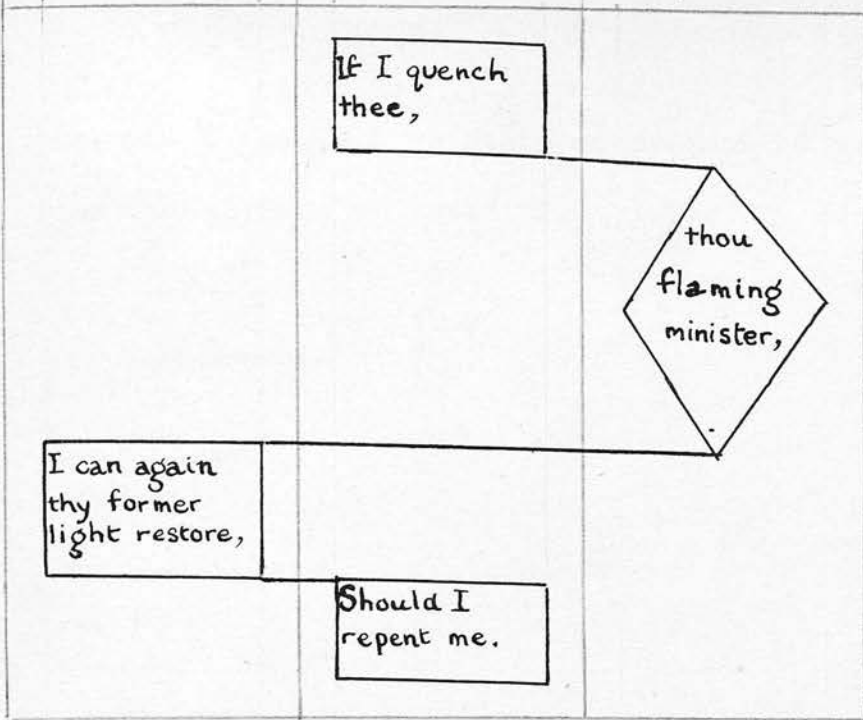
simplicity. The statements drop down one after the other like pearls on a string. It is true that Shakespeare has a fair number of ellipses and inversions. But if some of the ellipses might set a grammarian problems in general analysis, they seldom give the ordinary reader or hearer, especially one with the slightest familiarity with Elizabethan-Jacobean idiom, any trouble; and his inversions for special effect or emphasis (not metri causa) are not of the forced and non-colloquial kind. On the whole, Shakespeare's sentences (and by no means all that is said is said in sentences) are short. Whether they are themselves also units such as I have just described or combinations of several units, and whether they are short or long, they are for the most part syntactically uncomplicated. They tend to be simple in the technical sense, or compound and made up of co-ordinate principal clauses or complex only to a minor degree of subordination. They are generally loose, with a complete statement achieved quite early in their progress; and subordinate matter, in clauses or in phrases, usually comes after rather than before the principal clauses and allows other full closes to the sense. Thus, in short, Shakespeare has an inherent simplicity of sentence-structure with the spontaneity of life, and an order which is dictated by natural logic or, if I may use the term, psychologic, an order in which the ideas would occur to a speaker and could be communicated to a hearer according to the long-established conventions of colloquial English syntax. But I may be thus far statistical in support of it:- in the 90 lines which I have quoted from Shakespeare's plays, there are no less than 76 principal statements, the majority of which are in the form of principal clauses and the

remainder in the form of independent phrases; in the same 90 lines there are only five suspensions (one of them formed by a brief parenthesis) three of which are less than four words long; there are only four clauses which are subordinate to subordinate clauses; and there are only five subordinate clauses which precede their principal clauses, and these are all, as might perhaps be expected, conditional adverbial clauses.

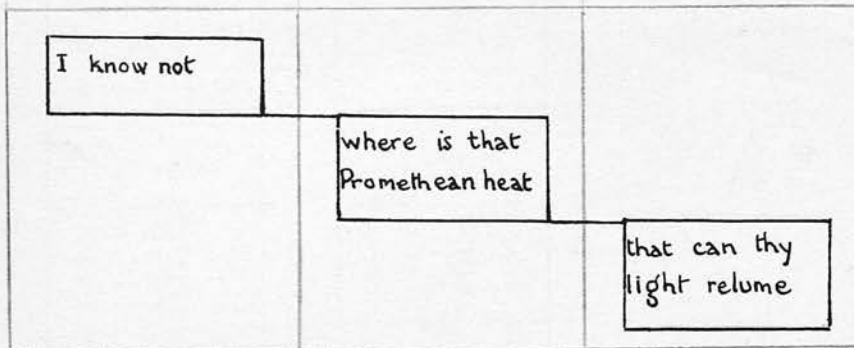
A diagrammatic lay-out of typical Shakespearian sentences will make their syntactical simplicity even more apparent. The scheme which I use has three columns, the first for principal clauses (or statements), the second for subordinate clauses (or statements), and the third for clauses which are subordinate to subordinate clauses. The clauses are written in squares (clauses broken by suspension in broken squares the sides of which are linked by dotted lines); and the lines joining the nearest angle of square and square represent the delivery line, not the syntactical relationship, of the sentences. Parenthetic, as distinct from subordinate, matter is put in one or other of the columns for subordinate matter, but in a diamond instead of a square. I have added in square brackets [] such words and phrases as seemed necessary to complete shortened or elliptical constructions. The sentences as thus squared and diamonded have to be read in a downward zigzag. Thus the sentence;

'If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me;'

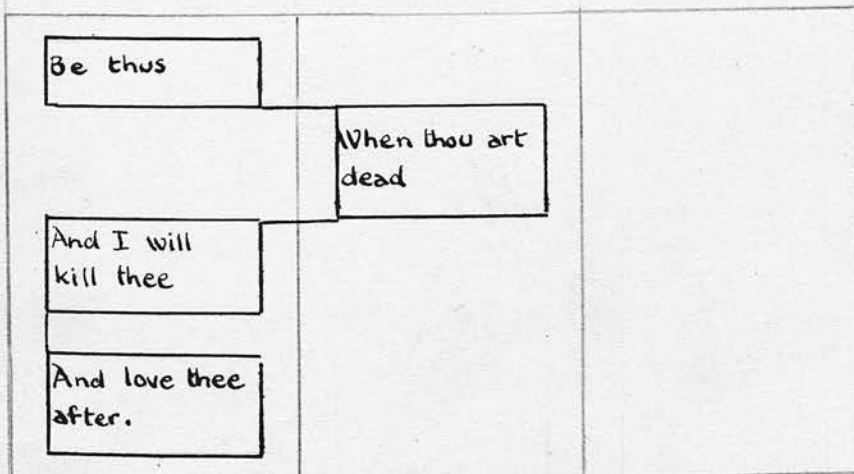
can be represented thus:



That first example, though really simple enough, is in fact more complicated than most. Only occasionally does Shakespeare make an excursion into the third column, to speak in diagrammatic terms:



And that structure is hardly what could be called complicated. As a rule Shakespeare's sentences have an even simpler shape, however:



More often than not we get a succession of principal statements, connected by conjunctions, or appositionally, or by counterparting:

One more		
and this the last.		
So sweet was ne'er so fatal.		
I must weep		
But they are cruel tears		
This sorrow's heavenly		
It strikes		
	where it doth love.	

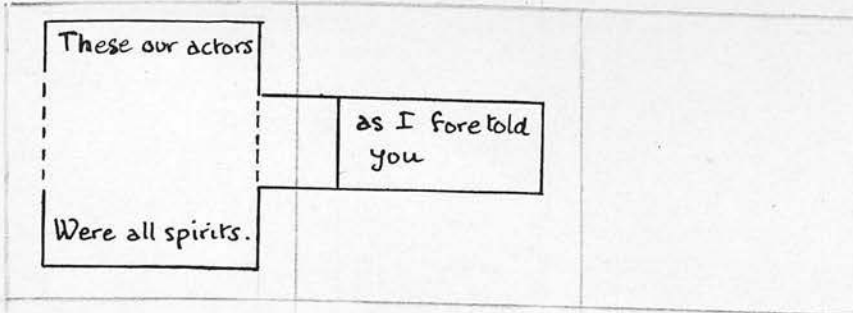
As for Shakespeare's suspensions, they are of the briefest and simplest sort. Thus such Shakespearian suspensions as:

'These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits;'

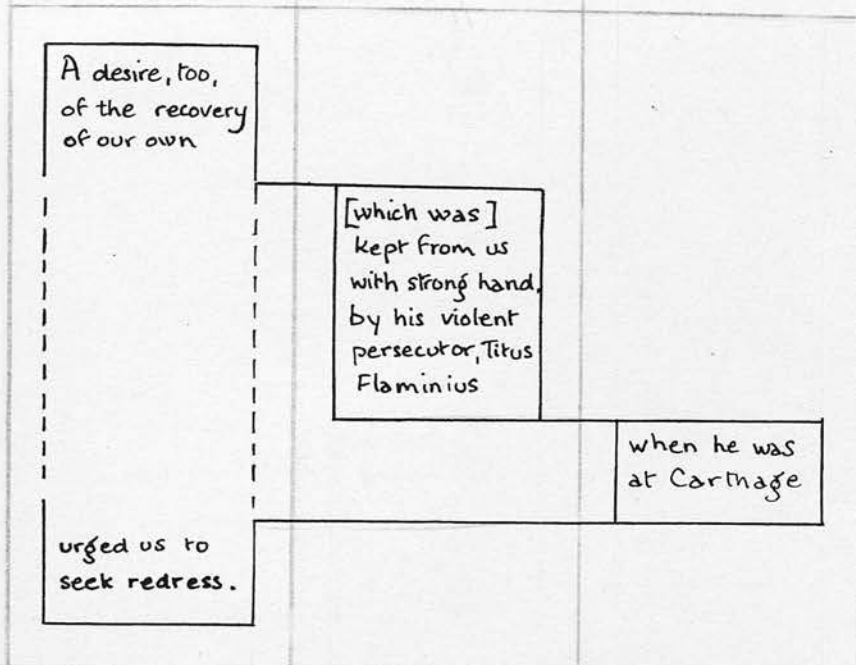
and,

'The evil that men do lives after them;'

can be represented thus simply:-



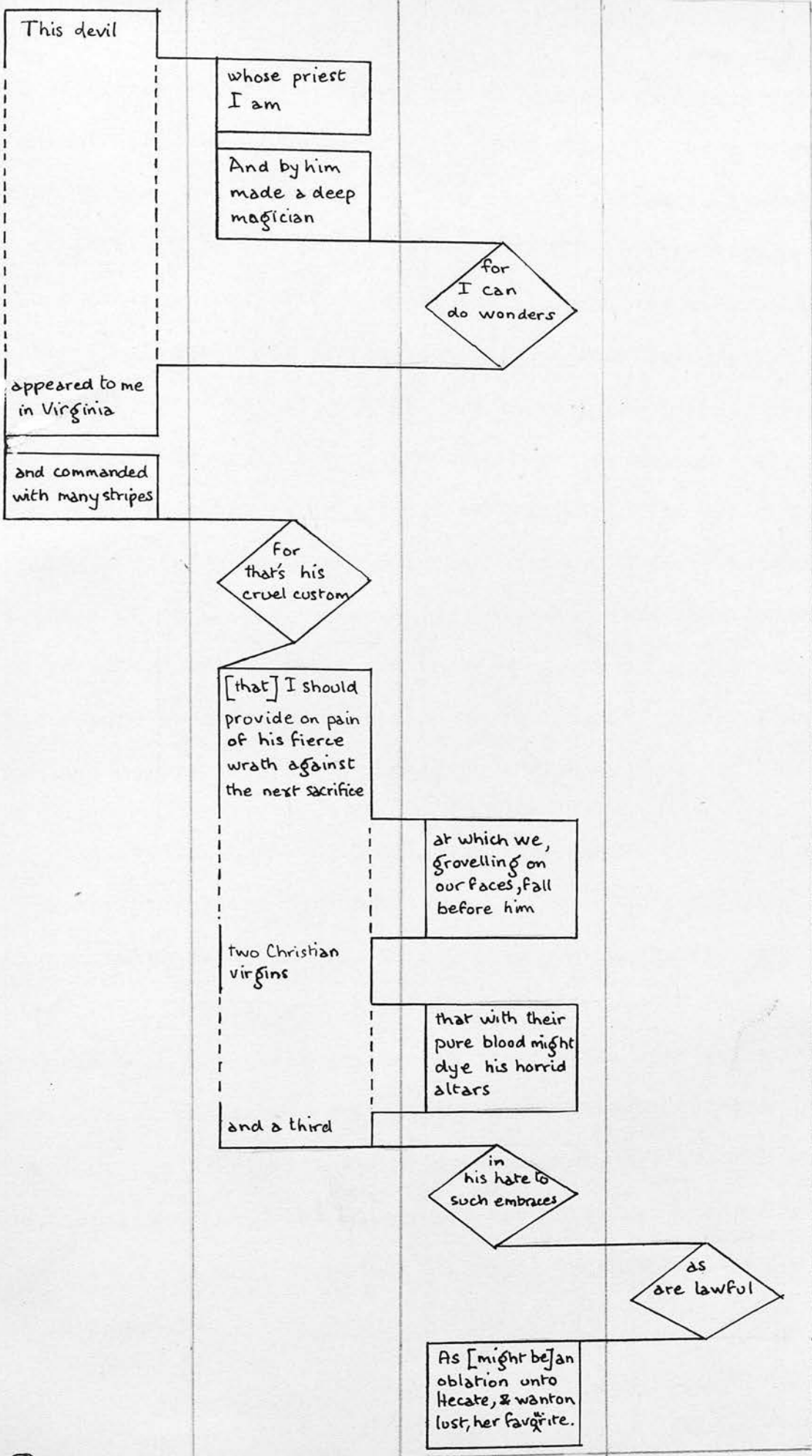
As soon as we turn to Massinger, we are faced with sentences of great diagrammatic complexity. Here are diagrams for two of his sentences I have already quoted. The first shows a lengthy suspension in what is really a comparatively short sentence:



①

The second shows how the complexities increase with the length:-

① Believe As You List, V., i.



It should be noted that 'for I can do wonders' and 'for that's his cruel custom' are true parentheses. I think, though others might disagree, that 'in his hate to such embraces as are lawful' is likewise parenthetical - is indeed a parenthetical phrase within a subordinate clause. Then, again, there is suspensive matter additional to what the diagram as it stands actually gives. The phrases 'on pain of his fierce wrath', 'grovelling on our faces', and 'with their pure blood', are phrasal suspensions. To have set these apart would have been a refinement on the diagrammatic analysis of sentences that would have impaired its usefulness by complicating something complicated enough already. Nevertheless, it is a feature of Massinger's complexity that even subordination can be suspended by an interpolated phrase and that he should choose to say 'that, with their pure blood, might dye his horrid altars', rather than 'that might dye his horrid altars with their pure blood'.

However, in the following examples, selected pretty much at random from the plays, the syntax requires a fourth or even a fifth column in the diagrammatic lay-out. As I indicated previously, I have thought it advisable, in dealing with interpolated matter, to supply such pronouns and verbs as the sense demands in association with certain very long participial phrases. Even with such additional mechanism, I have had considerable difficulty with some sentences, not because the diagrammatic method is at fault, but either because Massinger was not clear in his own mind as to what he wanted to say or because he says it so badly as to be ambiguous:-

If I free
not myself

and [if I free
not] in myself
the rest of my
profession from
these false
imputations

and I prove

that they make
that a libel

which the poet
writ for comedy

[and which was]
so acted too

It is but justice

that we undergo
the heaviest
censure.

Are you on
the stage

you talk so
boldly?

(This example is continued on the next page.)

The whole world being one

this place is not exempted;

and I am so confident in the justice of our cause

that I could wish

[that] Caesar

in whose great name all kings are comprehended

sat as judge to hear our plea & then determine of us.

If to express a man

[who is] sold to his lusts

[& who is] wasting the treasure of his time in wanton dalliance

and [if to express]

to what sad end a wretch

that's so given over

does arrive at

[& if the] deterring [of] care-less youth by his example from such licentious courses

[& if the] laying open [of] the snares of bawds & the consuming arts of prodigal strumpets can deserve reproof

why are not all your golden principles

[which have been] writ down by grave philosophers to instruct us to choose fair virtue for our guide, not pleasure

condemned unto the fire?

①

To show that such involuted sentences are by no means rare in Massinger, I give the very first sentence that met my eye on opening The Unnatural Combat at random. It is an uncompleted sentence spoken by Theocrine in Act V., scene i. I shall not declare that she could never have completed it; but I very much doubt whether anyone could understand it at one hearing or any reader analyse it satisfactorily. Here, however, is what I make of it:

(This example is given on the next page.)

Ribald, thou darest not.

And if
thou but consider

(& with a fever to thy soul)

that I have a father

and such a father, as

when this arrives at his knowledge

as it shall

the terror of his vengeance

which
must follow

as sure as fate

will make thee curse the hour

in which lust brought thee to nourish these bad hopes —

and 'tis my wonder

[that] thou darest forget

how tender he is of me

& that each shadow of wrong done to me will raise in him tempest

[that is] not to be but with thy heart-blood calmed

this

when I see him

As will be seen, Massinger never reaches the second principal clause of his compound-complex sentence. He is tied up in subordination and subordination to subordination, and subordination to subordination to subordination, in suspensions and suspensions doubly or trebly suspended, and in parentheses, themselves involving subordination or suspension. Verily, such a sentence is worse than Coleridge's worst, which, when he sighed for Southey's terseness and crispness, he likened to 'Surinam toads with young ones sprouting and hanging about them as they go' ① . Another remark of Coleridge on poetic style in general is here apt: 'The great thing in poetry is, quocunque modo, to effect a unity of impression upon the whole; and a too great fullness and profusion of points in the parts will prevent this' ② . Massinger is indeed guilty of a too great fullness of syntactical morticing and profusion of interlocking points.

As a second ad aperturam example, I give the following from Act III., scene ii. of The Parliament of Love:

(On next two pages.)

① Saintsbury: History of Criticism. (London, 1900-04.) III. 218, note
 ② Table Talk & Omniana, 256.

Cleremond pass by
me as a stranger!

at a time too when
I am filled with
such excess of joy

& am] so swollen &
surfeited with true
delight

that

in their abundance
they would force
& passage

& let out life
together

had I not found
out a friend

to whom I
might impart
them

and so give
them vent

Prithce, bear

& part of that
sweet burden

for
friendship's
sake

which I shrink
under

and when thou
hast read fair
Bellisant sub-
scribed

so
near my
name too,
observe but
that

thou must with
me confess

there cannot be
room in one
lover's heart

capacious enough
to entertain such
multitudes of
pleasures.

I joy with you.

Let that suffice,

& envy not your
blessings.

May they increase!

Farewell, friend.

How! No more?

By the snow-white hand

that writ these characters

it is a breach to courtesy & manners so coldly to take notice of his good

whom you call friend!

See further :

here she writes

that she is truly sensible of my sufferings

& not alone vouchsafes to call me servant

but [vouchsafes] to employ me in a cause

that much concerns her in her honour;

there's a favour!

Are you yet stupid?

and that two hours hence she does expect me in the private walks

neighbouring the Louvre.

Cannot all this move you?

I could be angry.

A tenth of these bounties but promised to you from Leonora

to witness my affection to my friend in his behalf

had taught me to forget all mine own miseries.

The diagrammatic analysis of Massinger's sentences could be continued indefinitely to lend weight to my case, were that needed. But I scarcely think that it is or that anyone giving a glance or two through a few pages of Massinger's plays will say that I have overstated my case. I should add that in the 84 lines of Massinger's verse that I have analysed there are only 25 principal clauses, no less than 19 suspensions, and 10 parentheses (three of them within suspensions), all of considerable, and some of great length. Thus, as compared with Shakespeare ①, Massinger has only about one third as many principal clauses and four times the number (much more than four times the amount) of suspensions; and his sentences tend to be from three to four times as long.

The length of Massinger's sentences leads on to the length of the speeches he assigns to his characters. The average has been computed by Professor Baldwin to be 3.54 lines ②. At first sight this may not seem out-of-the-ordinary. But in fact we shall realise that it is really quite long, when we take into account how great a proportion of any play, even a play in verse, is of necessity taken up with brief questions and answers, asides, interjections, exclamations, and trivial interchanges between character and character. A comparison of the speech-length average of Massinger with that of any of his contemporaries will be a further corrective. By a count I have made specially for this

① See above, pp. 354-5. ② In the statistical table in his edition of The Duke of Milan. Lancaster, Pa., 1918.

purpose I got the following figures:- Webster's Duchess of Malfi : 2.8 lines; Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster : 3.0 lines; Shakespeare's Coriolanus : 3.04 lines, and Macbeth : 3.22 lines; and Heywood's A Woman Killed with Kindness : 3.49 lines. Undoubtedly the ordinary reader of the plays, ignorant of these statistics, must get the impression that Massinger's characters, especially the more important, are longer in the wind than the more important characters of other dramatists ① . Massinger himself seemed to realise that in their more or less set speeches and tried to disguise the length of them by artificial breaks at which the bystanders give voice in comment ② .

It is of course difficult to particularise about the shorter speeches or to treat them in the same way as the longer speeches with which I have been dealing in so much of this chapter: short speeches in sentence-form are made in much the same way by all dramatists and offer less variety. I should like, however, to make one or two general observations about Massinger's shorter speeches, in addition to the already-noted fact that he has fewer than other playwrights of his age have. The first point is that Massinger prefers his characters to

① Most important of all in creating this impression is, however, the length of individual sentences. Long sentences and periodic and suspensive structure tend to go hand in hand. From my own observation (though I have not investigated the matter exhaustively) I should say that Shakespeare in his last plays tends to use longer sentences (with a corresponding increase in periodicity and suspension) and to give longer speeches to his characters irrespective of their importance. Ben Jonson, on the other hand, whose characters as a whole tend to speak at great length, uses fairly short sentences in the comedies -- although, perhaps significantly, he uses more complex sentences in the two Roman tragedies. ② See above, p. 340., and Chapter III., p. 154.

speaking complete sentences: phrases without finite verbs are rare as separate speeches, and single word speeches are rarer still. Even when he is writing what he means to be a lively interchange of sallies, he makes nearly every speech a sentence fully-dressed:

'Olympia. I offered myself twice, and yet the churl
Would not salute me.
Corisca. Let him kiss his drum!
I'll save my lips, I rest on it.
Olympia. He thinks women
No part of the republic.
Corisca. He shall find
We are a commonwealth.
Cleon. The less your honour.'

①

'Perigot. 'Twas prince-like entertainment.
Chamont. You o'erprize it.
Dinant. Your cheerful looks made every dish a feast,
And 'tis that crowns a welcome.
Lamira. For my part,
I hold society and honest mirth
The greatest blessing of a civil life.'

②

These passages, which could be infinitely supplemented, show Massinger's partiality for ending a speech and beginning the next somewhere within the line. He is always, be it noticed, careful to complete each line metrically. Again, as I have had occasion to point out elsewhere ③, two consecutive brief speeches are often made one grammatically; that is, they are either linked by conjunctions or the second speaker catches up and completes a sentence that the first had begun:

① The Bondman, I., iii. ② The Parliament of Love, III., i.
③ Cf. above, pp. 339-340, and see Chapter III., p. 153.

- 'Clarindore. It is their pride.
'Bellisant. Or your unworthiness.' (1)
- 'Vitelli. You shall see me act
This last scene to the life.
'Francisco. And though now fall,
Rise a blessed martyr.' (2)
- 'Asambeg. How he eyes her!
'Mustapha. As if he would look through her.
'Asambeg. His eyes flame too,
As threatening violence.' (3)
- 'Timagoras. 'Twas a deed
Deserving rather trophies than reproof.
'Leosthenes. And will be still remembered to your honour
If you forsake not us.' (4)
- 'Olympia. Were he a courtier
I've sweetmeat in my closet shall content him,
Be his palate ne'er so curious.
'Corisca. And, if need be,
I have a couch and a banqueting-house in my orchard,
Where many a man of honour has not scorned
To spend an afternoon.' (5)

Though long suspensions and parentheses are impossible in briefer sentences, Massinger has short ones even there; and he tends in them to his usual periodic structure.

The results of my investigation into Massinger's sentence-structure may be briefly summed up as follows:- Massinger uses with a high frequency long sentences of a predominantly periodic kind with involved subordination and many suspensions and parentheses to the detriment of the clarity and the ruin of the colloquial naturalness. That this type

(1) The Parliament of Love, I., v. (2) The Renegado, V., i. (3) Ibid., IV., iii. (4) The Bondman, I., iii. (5) Ibid., I., iii.

of sentence and this syntactical involution, though not of course new in English prose, constitute in Massinger a departure from the dramatic verse-idiom of his fellow-dramatists has been underlined and illustrated by a comparison with Shakespeare's practice; and I have maintained that such a syntax is not suited to dramatic purposes in English, or, for that matter, in any (at least any uninflected) language.

Certain conclusions remain to be drawn, in all fairness, from Massinger's practice in this matter. The first is an amplification of ideas as to Massinger's personality that we have already suggested. The mind which chooses to express itself (In Massinger's case there can be no question of his expressing his characters) in periodic and involved sentences displays a logical and methodical turn, a necessity to get everything cut-and-dried, a vein of pedantry. It is an inelastic mind as likely to adopt and adhere to certain principles and attitudes and points of view as to fall into the syntactical habitude in question. The periodic and involved sentence is a work of deliberation; and its mould, like a gyroscopic pilot, always tends to bring things back to a predetermined course. It acts as a snaffle upon a mind which, if it could have expressed itself in a loose, aggregative sentence, would have felt free to pause, or alter, or entirely change its direction. After all we have learned about Massinger's mind from other manifestations of its operation, it seems natural that he should have deliberately chosen his peculiar manner of expression.

That he did so deliberately is my second conclusion. No English writer, however he may have been biassed, like Massinger, by a classical

and largely rhetorical education, expresses himself in involved periods because he cannot help it; though of course there will come a time when after long practice such a manner will become second nature. That is to imply that at some stage the practitioner of periodic involution makes a conscious choice. The Ciceronian period, if I may adopt the term as a convenient label, is not native to English, however important a part it has played in the development of English prose. The native tradition in prose,

'... going back to mediaeval times, is based on the simple colloquial or aggregative sentence, with sprawling members, loosely connected by temporal and co-ordinating conjunctions, unemphatic in effect. It uses the simplest kind of amplification -- cataloguing, the heaping of synonyms, words of similar meaning, or phrases of similar construction; for oral ornament it employs alliteration and synonymous word-pairs.'

①

and,

'The Ciceronian manner of writing in comprehensive periods requires an implicated style; but such a style is dependent upon a complex suspended syntax which imposes the greatest difficulties upon an uninflected language.'

②

Period involution is, in fact, a deliberately chosen and artificial mode of expression.

'The loose mode of structure is the early and natural way of writing; the periodic is later and the result of art. ... Basically, the period is not a form of thought ... but a form of composition or expression, an arrangement of words.'

③

Now, this is not the place to go at any length into the problematic history of English prose at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

① George Williamson: The Senecan Amble. London, 1951. 26. (After G.P. Krapp: The Rise of English Literary Prose. 1915.) ② Ibid., 55.
③ Ibid., 44.

It is extremely debatable territory, a stamping-ground for some professors and a lists for others; and it would be a rash junior who ventured far into such country without a formidable battery of theories and counter-theories about the sundry isms (Euphuism, Gongorism, Marinism, Ciceronianism, Anti-Ciceronianism, Senecanism, Taciteanism, Atticism, Laconicism, Asianism, Isocraticism, and so on) which beset this battlefield ① . Who shall decide when doctors disagree diametrically, for example, on Milton, Professor Williamson rating him as a Ciceronian ② and Professor Hightet as an Anti-Ciceronian ③ ?

Massinger has not hitherto figured in discussions of prose style, for the good reason that the amount of his prose is negligible. Nevertheless, his employment of the Ciceronian period links him to contemporary views regarding prose style. It may be broadly said that, while there were many prose stylists in practice, as many as there were prose writers, those who were conscious shapers of their styles thought of themselves as either Ciceronian or Anti-Ciceronian; and the Anti-Ciceronians generally set up, as their Latin rival to Cicero, Seneca.

As I have shown in another chapter, Massinger was Stoically inclined and drew largely on Seneca for his moral philosophy. One may,

① In this respect, see particularly Williamson, op. cit.; various articles by Prof. Morris W. Croll, such as, Attic Prose in the Seventeenth Century (Studies in Philol. 18(1921), 2. 79-128.), Muret and the History of Attic Prose (PMLA, 39(1924), 254-309.), and The Baroque Style in Prose (Studies in English Philology ... in honour of Frederick Klaeber, ed. Malone and Rund, Minneapolis, 1929); various articles by Prof. R.F.Jones, repr, in The Seventeenth Century (Stanford, Cal. 1951); and Gilbert Hightet: The Classical Tradition (London, 1949.), Chapter 18.

② The Senecan Amble, pp. 209-211. ③ The Classical Tradition, 325.

then, perhaps express a little surprise that he does not display in his style, to any extent at least, the stylistic features commonly associated with Stoicism and in particular with that mentor -- the curt, pointed sentence, with its epigrammatism, its antithetic edge, and its economy and memorableness. If he had known, as is not at all improbable, the Manductio ad Stoicam Philosophiam of Justus Lipsius, published in 1604 when Massinger was presumably still at Oxford and widely disseminated soon after publication, he could not have failed to note the anti-Ciceronian, pro-Senecan strictures on style contained therein ① .

It must be remembered, however, that although the periodic structure or Ciceronianism is necessarily a deliberate choice, it was not in the earlier seventeenth century such a self-conscious innovation as was Senecanism. That is to say that, while its opponents from the time of Erasmus's Ciceronianus ② and more particularly its opponents in Massinger's own day, such men as Ben Jonson ③ and Bacon ④ , knew exactly what they objected to and were extremely self-conscious in their studied Senecanism, those authors who were Ciceronian in practice (Hooker, Raleigh, Sidney, North, Camden, Hakluyt, and so on) were not at all quick to spring to a theoretical justification or counter-attack. The reason is simply that they did not feel the need to do so.

① Cf. Williamson, *op. cit.*, 111. ② 1528. See also Vives: De Tradendis Disciplinis (Trans. Foster Watson: Vives on Education, 1913) and Ramus. For early English anti-Ciceronian pronouncements, see John Jewell: Oratio contra Rhetoricam (c. 1548), and Gabriel Harvey: Ciceronianus (1577). ③ In Discoveries and elsewhere. ④ Who attacked the Ciceronians in the first edition of The Advancement of Learning (1605)-- though of course, as exemplified in the successive editions of the Essays, he moved gradually away from the extremist Senecan position until in the edition of 1623 (De Augmentis) he is attacking it too.

Ciceronianism had got in on the ground storey of Renaissance education; the schoolmasters and the dons who did not model their own and their pupils' Latinity on Cicero were quite exceptional.

Massinger could hardly be in theatrical circles in London without encountering Ben Jonson in propria persona and hearing his innovating views on style. Yet in spite of this (or perhaps even because of this) the conservative Massinger chose to write in the English equivalent of the style he had been brought up in. In general, then, his style (though not, of course, absolutely Ciceronian, since poetic drama never could be) is basically a periodic one, 'the clauses of which are suspended on the voice of the speaker till the whole is completed by the last clause' ① . With his preference for the long sentence he is diffuse and non-epigrammatic rather than curt and pointed. He ignores the balance and ~~antithesis~~ antithesis which marks the Euphuistic development of Ciceronianism in the Senecan direction. And he strives after fullness and completeness ('clarity' would be a misleading word in connection with a style that so taxes the attention), rather than a somewhat cryptic wit. If Lyly and Bacon have the smallest amount of subordinate matter amongst English writers since the Renaissance ② , Massinger must be among those who have the most. And, as I said earlier, no contemporary dramatist rivals him in this. It was, says

① St Augustine: De Doctrina Christiana, IV., 7. ll. ② R.R.Aurner: The History of Certain Aspects of the English Sentence (PQ. 2(1923), 187-208.), and Caxton and the English Sentence (Wisconsin Studies in Lang. and Lit. No. 18. 1923. 50.). See Williamson, op., cit., 39-40.

Professor Williamson, 'the abuse of sub-dependence that made sixteenth- and seventeenth-century periods heavy, and the influence of Ciceronian Latin provoked the excess of subordination' ① . It might have been of Massinger that Sir William Cornwallis was writing when he said,

'How shall a man hope to come to an end of their works, when he cannot with two breathes saile through a period, and is sometimes gravelled in a parenthesis?' ②

Later writers in the seventeenth century, who were working towards that purgation and pruning of prose which the Royal Society desiderated and which produced the easy elegance of Dryden, Temple, and Addison, might have been more severe. Here is Hobbes on the contrast between what is suitable for oral delivery and what is allowable in matter for reading:

'For words that pass away (as in public orations they must) without pause, ought to be understood with ease, and are lost else: though words that remain in writing for the reader to meditate on, ought rather to be pithy and full.' ③

Here is Fuller's account of the Ciceronian periods of Hooker:

'His style was long and pithy, driving on a whole flock of several clauses before he came to the close of a sentence. So that when the copiousness of his style met not with proportionate capacity in his auditors, it was unjustly censured for perplexed, tedious, and obscure.' ④

And here Bishop Burnet on the periodic style for sermons which, like plays, have to be taken in by the ear:

'All long Periods, such as carry two or three different Thoughts in them, must be avoided; for few Hearers can follow or apprehend these.' ⑤

If a periodic and involved style is generally unsuitable for

① Op., cit., 107, note 3. ② In his essay, Of Vanity (1601).

③ English Works, Ed. Molesworth. London, 1843. Vol. viii., p. xxxi.

④ Church History of Britain, ed. Nichols. III., 141. ⑤ A Discourse of the Pastoral Care. London, 1692. 108.

dramatic dialogue, it is made still more so when coupled with a blank verse that has too much freedom and too little discipline. Marlowe is one of the more periodically given of the dramatists; but his variety of blank verse saved him:

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

①

Here the corsetting is provided by a line-by-line or end-stopped versification: the mechanism of the verse prevents subordination, suspension, and involution from getting out of hand. Massinger, however, came after the drumming decasyllabon had been loosened and stretched by much exercise at the hands of many practitioners, notably Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher. Although his blank verse is remarkably regular in the number and placing of the stresses in the line and in the number of syllables, with a lower percentage of hypermetric syllables than was becoming normal in the rapid disintegration of blank verse from 1601 on, Massinger is far from being end-stopped. His lines spill over one into the other endlessly and according to no determinable laws of ear or mind. He puts his rests as far as possible within the line: phrases, clauses, sentences, and speeches generally begin and end there at a widely variable caesura. Massinger is, in

① Tamburlaine I., 869.

fact, a palmary example of that sort of seventeenth-century poet of whom Bishop Atterbury wrote:

'...their verses ran all into one another; and hung together, throughout a whole copy. There was no distinction of parts, no regular stops, nothing for the ear to rest upon; but, as soon as the copy began, down it went, like a larum, incessantly, and the reader was sure to be out of breath, before he got to the end of it.' ①

From such a versification he got no help in disciplining and limiting his periods.

But it is very doubtful if he would have desired any such helpful restriction. With him verse has no emotive quality, no dramatic power, no poetic value in itself. This, I maintain, in spite of Coleridge's assertion that Massinger's blank verse is 'perhaps ... even still nobler' than the 'very masterly and individual' blank verse of Ben Jonson ②. It is merely the vehicle prescribed by an unwritten law of the seventeenth-century theatre for serious romantic plays. As such it had in his hands to bend and adjust itself to the complexity of his sentences. His periodic thought had the right-of-way and the prior claim. It is reasonable to assume that if the serious drama in prose had existed in Massinger's day, alongside blank-verse drama, he would have used prose.

That could never be said of Milton, however syntactically complex he too may be. The Miltonic verse is always essential, never accidental. The potency of the Miltonic magic lies as much in the incantatory character of the verse as in anything else. I do not say that Milton's

① Preface to Waller's Poems, 1690. ② Table-Talk and Omnia (Oxford Ed. 1917), 295.

blank verse is particularly dramatic or very suitable for dialogue. But then, except in Comus, it was not used by him for stage-dialogue. The speeches in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are epical and for reading, and it was likewise only for reading that Milton wrote Samson Agonistes. Nevertheless, just because Milton is a metrical master and realises to the full the value and beauty of verse, he can make complicated syntax more acceptable than Massinger can to both reader and hearer.

There is indeed one virtue which Massinger's style owes largely to its periodic structure. That is its dignity and eloquence. 'Statelyness,' says Demetrius, 'is ... produced by adopting a rounded period' (1). And Massinger must have valued himself on his eloquence because he so often provides opportunities for its display in set speeches, forensic, deliberative, and epideictic, not to mention the numerous scenes of pleading and expostulation with which his plays are punctuated. Indeed, it might be said that Massinger's dramaturgy is largely determined by his desire to function as continuously as possible as a rhetorician. While I admit that the result of this desire, coupled with his periodicity and involution in general, is to spread a uniform, and, let it be admitted, monotonous eloquence everywhere and with even hand among practically every character; and while such a pompous idiom is often incongruously out-of-place in recording the lighter moments of life; yet there can be no doubt that it lends a peculiar and impressive gravity elsewhere.

(1) On Style, 45. (Everyman Edn. p. 212.)

The most unqualified praise of Massinger on this score is perhaps Nathan Drake's. He speaks of Massinger's 'spirit of commanding eloquence, a dignity and force of thought, which, while they approach the precincts of sublimity, and indicate great depth and clearness of intellect, show, by the nervous elegance of language in which they are clothed, a combination and comprehension of talent of very unfrequent occurrence' ① . I am prepared to admit, with modified rapture, most of this tribute, boggling principally at the reference to 'nervous elegance of language' and questioning whether a 'clearness of intellect' that does not command clearness of expression is of much use.

A much later judgement by Whipple, though uncomplimentary to Massinger the poet, attributes to him as a rhetorician certain qualities only some of which I would concede:- 'Massinger's style, though it does not not evince a single great quality of the poet, has always charmed English readers by its dignity, flexibility, eloquence, clearness, and ease' ② . I would comment in Mrs Browning's words on Massinger: 'He is too ostentatiously strong for flexibility, and too heavy for rapidity' ③ . His 'ease' is as conspicuous by its absence as are his elegance and his clarity.

In my attempt to define and delineate Massinger's style I have travelled a considerable distance in an examination of only one aspect

① Shakespeare and His Times. 1817. II., 561. ② E.W.Whipple: The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth, 182. ③ The Book of the Poets.

of it, his sentence-structure. But I have not, I think, gone too far in this examination, having regard both to the neglect which the matter of syntax, in poetry at least, has been accorded in all previous discussion of style, and to the almost overwhelming importance which attaches to such matters in the style of Massinger in particular. I have held over certain general conclusions until later in this chapter. In the meantime, however, I must turn to a consideration of Massinger's diction and imagery, that is, to a consideration of his language, using the word comprehensively to denote both the words he uses and their arrangement to form images and figures of speech.

The characteristics of Massinger's diction and the way in which it differs from the diction of his dramatic predecessors and contemporaries can be fairly easily appreciated without recourse to the highly complex terminology introduced into such discussions by the Cambridge school of Professor I.A.Richards, Dr C.K.Ogden, and Mr William Empson. My difficulty will not be so much in expressing the quality of Massinger's diction as in trying to adduce reasons for that quality.

In respect of the quality of the diction, then, every reader of Massinger will at once be aware that he is in a different world from that which he moved in when reading Marlowe, Greene, Kyd, Shakespeare, Webster, Tourneur, Dekker, Beaumont, and even Jonson and Fletcher. He is in a world from which sense perceptions have been to a large extent extracted and the vivid, graphic, or otherwise sense-stimulating image has been largely banished. The colourless and non-sensuous aridity

will be the more apparent if Massinger has been approached, as he should be if he is to be set in his proper context in a century of change, through the 'gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful' poetry of the Elizabethans than if he is gone back to from the drabber verse of the Augustans. Accordingly, I propose, as I have already done with Massinger's syntax, to examine his diction with constant reference to and comparison with that of Shakespeare.

As quick a way as any to get at the quality of Massinger's diction is to make a list from any randomly-chosen passage (In Massinger the random is always the typical.) from any of the plays of the words which carry the weight of the sense, that is, all those presentive (1) words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs) which have more than a merely grammatical or symbolic (2) function. It will be as well to keep nouns and their associated adjectives together and also such groups of words as form a unity. This may seem a naive, or even clumsy method of dealing with such fragile matter as diction provides -- rather like dismantling a watch with a sledge-hammer -- but notwithstanding the Cambridge school, there are as yet no instruments devised for the dissection of diction, and I have to fall back upon the brutal and effective method of tearing the words apart one from the other.

(1) 'The Presentive [words] are those which present an object to the memory or to the imagination; or, in brief, which present any conception to the mind'. John Earle: The Philology of the English Tongue. Oxford, 1871. 195. (2) 'The Symbolic words are those which by themselves present no meaning to the mind, and which depend for their intelligibility on a relation to some presentive word or words'. Ibid., 195.

My first list is compiled from the last 70 lines of Act IV., scene iii. of The Duke of Milan, the scene in which Sforza murders his wife Marcelia:-

monster - walking tree of jealousy - dreamer - horned beast - commandment - allowance - basely used - virtues - labours - services - cares - to please - suspicious - unthankful - blush - mine own trumpet - barbarous course - seal of shame - impudence - ugly - whore - blood - honest blush - intent ... act (sexual) - dishonour - deserv't - common lecher - chief minion - chosen favourite - wooed (adj.) Francisco - wretch - dead - by my hand - bloodier villain - wondered - love - object (sb.) - killed - profess - loved - thousand queens - rivals - to thy teeth - dares - dares - jealous fool - murderer - mischief - justice - fooled into my grave - grieve - slain - innocent - suffer - innocent - lives - vile creature - justify - falsehood - whorish flatteries - tempted - stale - bawd - property - wantonness - took horse - ports - abused - undone - death - obey - tempted - tempter - to win - warrant you signed - death - believe - believe - innocent - contemned - upon his knees - tears - beseech - reveal - soft-hearted fool - judging - true penitence - won - unkindness - sentenced - guilty - seeming anger - heaven forgive - sweet soul - beauteous prison (body) - motion - grief - stopped the organ of his speech - body - physicians - heart-strings.

It is possible to analyse this list in different ways. We could, in the first place imagine it a list prepared by someone else from a passage we had not ourselves read. Then from a reading of the list alone we should quite easily gather something about the passage from which it is extracted. From the number of words like suspicion, shame, dishonour, villainy, impudence, and so on, commonly associated with a self-regarding or egotistical and unsympathetic diathesis; from the terms of denunciation; from those of sexual connotation; and from words referring to death, crime, punishment, repentance, and impenitence, we could deduce that the total passage almost certainly dealt with an unhappy situation involving indignation, recrimination, and the infliction after a moral judgement of a punishment that bordered on or descended to the violent and flagitious. This amounts to no more than

saying that the author has apparently expressed what he wanted to express. For it would be impossible to present an accusation, a crescendo of indignation, a murder, and a remorseful revulsion without the use of such words as are used.

On the other hand, what we must also examine in the list is not the bare denotations of the words but their quality, and, since the list has been compiled from what purports to be a passage of poetry, that overplus of significance, implication and imaginative potency which ought to raise the passage above the level and temperature of common speech.

Whenever we do this, we are sadly disappointed. There is indeed little to suggest that the list comes from a passage of poetry at all. And this prosaicness is only confirmed when, putting aside the mere list of words for a moment, we examine the passage as a whole. There is in it no heightened simile, no imagination-releasing comparison or image, and no more of the metaphorical than might be used in making a purchase or in any of the more everyday conversational exchanges. To return to the words: the terms of abuse (monster, chief minion, chosen favourite, wretch, bloodier villain, jealous fool, vile creature) are commonplace; and equally so are those relating to sexuality (horned beast, whore, act, common lecher, whorish, stale, bawd, property), death (dead, killed, murderer, grave, slain, death), and the body (blush, blood, by my hand, to thy teeth, upon his knees, tears, organ of his speech, body, heart-strings). They are like coins that have been worn flat --

' 'tis something; nothing;

' 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.'

They have almost no freshness of power over and above their conventionally delimited meaning. Moreover, they beget in the mind no image that is not so conventional as to have lost all virtue. There is no appeal to the senses of sight or sound, no recall of smell or taste, no touch of touch, no stimulus of the muscular sense. Nor is there any incantatory onomatopoeic effect. In short, the words are grey and devitalised and the lines present a smooth and textureless surface. Though the context is a scene of violent agitation and physical action, the words themselves have nothing physical about them. They are no more than words descriptive of mental or moral states or processes of the most generalised sort, and colourless terms for mental or moral attributes, qualities, and relationships. Thus, 62 out of the 102 words in the list are just such words denoting abstract qualities or non-physical processes, as, for example, jealousy, commandment, virtues, services, labours, shame, impudence, falsehood, justice, penitence, innocent, anger, mischief, grieve, wantonness, dishonour, dare, and so on.

There is in fact only one phrase in the whole passage with the slightest spark of life or vitality in it. Thus the metaphor walking tree of jealousy is an unusual term of abuse. But even so, with its recall of the Biblical 'I saw men as trees walking' ①, it hardly seems to me to be an apt description for a jealous man, even if we are to understand by a rather forced interpretation that Sforza had as many horns or antlers as a tree has branches.

① St Mark, viii., 24.

So we have dipped our net into Massinger's diction with results that are revealing but hardly as regards a high poetic freshness and cutting-edge.

To underline the conventionality of it, let us make another list taken from a similar or parallel passage in Shakespeare, Act V., scene ii. of Othello down to line 71, in which the mind of the hero is in a tumult of tender anguish and stern resolve:-

cause - cause - soul - name (vb.) - chaste stars - cause - shed blood - scar (vb.) - whiter skin than snow - smooth as monument-
:al alabaster - die - betray - light - light - quench - flaming
minister - former light restore - repent - put out thy light -
cunning'st pattern of excelling nature - Promethean heat - light
relume - plucked - the rose - vital growth - wither - smell (vb.) -
tree - balmy breath - persuade Justice to break her sword - dead -
kill - love - the last - so sweet - so fatal - weep - cruel tears -
this sorrow's heavenly - sorrow strikes - doth love - wakes - bed -
prayed - bethink - unreconciled - heaven - grace - solicit - brief -
walk - kill - unprepared spirit - heaven forfend - kill thy soul -
killing - heaven have mercy - Amen - heart - kill - fear (vb.) -
fatal - eyes roll - fear (vb.) - guiltiness - I feel I fear - sins -
loves - bear (vb.) - diest - death - unnatural - kills - loving -
gnaw your nether lip - bloody passion - frame - portents - hope (vb.)
hope (vb.) - point (vb.) - peace - still - loved - life - soul -
sweet soul - perjury - death-bed - to die - confess - sin -
deny each article - oath - choke - strong conception - groan (vb.) -
to die - Lord - mercy - Amen - mercy - offend - general warranty of
heaven - love - token - perjured - stone my heart - murder -
sacrifice - used (sexual) - unlawfully - mouth is stopped.

An analysis of this passage in detail would be almost impossible, not to say sacrilegious. But I venture to make some (necessarily brief) analytic suggestions. In the first place, the words are more profoundly integrated and more psycho-emotively inter-related than those in the list from The Duke of Milan. The ideas and images come in associated clusters. Thus blood and scar suggest skin. Desdemona's skin is white and smooth, and the idea of whiteness leads to light and

flame. Othello's purpose easily gives these words a secondary significance, that of the flame of life which he is about to quench. But Desdemona's beauty is still before him, and this beauty, together with the physical motion which the action of quenching a light suggests, still dominated by his awareness of how he is about to destroy life, brings him (not Shakespeare speaking through Othello but as Othello, a living human being who is not Shakespeare) to the idea of plucking a rose. The rose in its turn suggest growth and living fragrance -- both its own and Desdemona's 'balmy breath' -- as contrasted with death.

This momentary picking-up of merely one thread in the first fifteen lines of the Othello scene must seem, I am aware, in the very nature of the great poetry of whose pattern this thread is only a tiny part, presumptuous, perfunctory, and casual. But the very act of admitting that such treatment is merely scratching at the surface of the top layer of Shakespeare's multi-stratumed meaning, will suffice to show a close-packed significance which is quite unlike anything we can find anywhere in Massinger. Such a passage cannot be analysed: it can only be experienced. And it yields a meaning on infinitely-receding planes, a meaning in depth, as contrasted with the immediately apparent meaning of the passage from The Duke of Milan.

However, unlike Massinger's words, which do little more than express a bare meaning, Shakespeare's manage also to convey a feeling, and to reproduce in us much of the actual physical, emotional, and spiritual experience of the hero. Almost every presentive word in the passage is strong and echoing and is so by virtue of the poetic and

imaginative intensity and absolute singularity. Language, instead of being so many dead counters, is vibrant with life and unexpected but inevitable aptness. And this it is, not only (though of course mainly) by the total imaginative-dramatic texture they build up, but by their mere power as isolated words and phrases. They express life and its sense-experience and its emotions and its spiritual alacrity. Justice breaking her sword is an image, a picture which deepens and quickens the meaning and emotional significance of the statement. The sense of sight is awake to whiter skin than snow and both sight and touch to smooth as monumental alabaster. The verbs are not inert but such as make an imaginative impact on the senses and suggest physical activity :- scar, smell, gnaw, roll, weep, strike, sacrifice, groan, relume, wither. In addition, the words in the Shakespeare passage which refer to things spiritual (mercy, sin, spirit, Amen, oath, confess, grace, heaven, and so on) are, because of the way in which they are associated with and integrated into the human experience of worship, very different from Massinger's generalised abstractions (honesty, jealousy, honour, innocence, mischief, justice, falsehood, wantonness, temptation, anger, belief, unkindness, grief) which do not come out of a vital experience at all but out of a moralistic detachment and the pages of books. Simile, personification -- all the figures of speech -- occur in Shakespeare as in the intense language of real passion, and the amount of metaphor is impossible to estimate since practically the whole of the opening of the speech is metaphorical -- metaphorical, too, in an untranslatable way. The thought is metaphor and the metaphor is thought

The two passages I have contrasted with regard to their poetical

quality handle a similar situation. But they do not, as it were, overlap. Massinger has avoided, or at least not given anything more than a general parallel: there are no verbal or phrasal approximations to Shakespeare. On the other hand, it is possible to exhibit the same contrast in quality by a shorter parallel in which Massinger is actually competing against Shakespeare in a rewording of him.

The Massinger quotation is from Act II., scene i. of The Roman Actor:

'I once observed,
In a tragedy of ours, in which a murder
Was acted to the life, a guilty hearer,
Forced by the terror of a wounded conscience,
To make discovery of that which torture
Could not wring from him.'

And the Shakespearian original is in Act II., scene ii. of Hamlet:

'I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions.'

Now of course Massinger has, to borrow the slang phrase, cashed in on the Shakespearian quality: he is living on the Shakespearian capital. But he does not add to it. Here are the words and phrases of the two dramatists set down side by side:

<u>Hamlet</u>	<u>The Roman Actor.</u>
I have heard	I once observed
play	tragedy
have by the very cunning of	in which a murder was acted to the
the scene	life
guilty creatures	a guilty hearer
been struck so to the soul	forced by the terror of a wounded conscience
they have proclaimed	to make discovery
their malefactions	that which torture could not wring from him.

Obviously Massinger's version is diffuser and greyer. He employs 40 words to Shakespeare's 31; and they include 9 disyllables against Shakespeare's 6, and two trisyllables against Shakespeare's one (1) . And the quality is weaker. I once observed is weaker than I have heard guilty hearer than guilty creature; forced by the terror of a wounded conscience than struck so to the soul; make discovery than proclaimed; and that which torture could not wring from him is a feeble periphrasis, almost a pointless euphemism, for malefactions.

At first sight this second example has revealed a difference in quality which is not quite the same as that which was shown by the comparison between the passages from The Duke of Milan and Othello. It has indeed shown as before a diffuseness and a flaccidity in Massinger which is all the more obvious because of the close parallel in ideas: it has, like a photograph of a photograph, less 'contrast' and a more compressed tonal range, if I might be permitted to use these technical terms. But that is not the same as a difference in sensuous impact. The reason is that Massinger is in the second example, as I have said, 'translating' a Shakespearian statement into other words. It is therefore less typical of Massinger. Comparison is in fact more impressive when Massinger is originating and expressing in his own characteristic manner ideas that can be more or less paralleled in Shakespeare or are perhaps drawn from Shakespeare but without the verbal and phrasal

(1) Although Shakespeare's presently, with its weak final syllable is not so lengthy as either of Massinger's trisyllables. A singularly fine effect is given by the weight of Hamlet's polysyllabic malefactions coming at the end of the statement, as contrasted with the monosyllabic weakness and anti-climax of Massinger's could not wring from him.

echoes. This is the method Dr Eliot used when he first pointed out the essential difference between Massinger's and Shakespeare's diction.

'Can I call|back yesterday, with all their aids
That bow unto my sceptre? or restore
My mind to that tranquillity and peace
It then enjoyed?' ①

②

is a sensuously pallid recollection of,

'Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owd'st yesterday.' ③

③

As Dr Eliot says of this parallel, 'Massinger's a general rhetorical question, the language just and pure, but colourless. Shakespeare's has particular significance; and the adjective 'drowsy' and the verb 'medicine' infuse a precise vigour' ④ . In Massinger virtue has gone out of the expression. The same may be said of,

'Happy are those,
That knowing, in their births, they are subject to
Uncertain change, are still prepared, and armed
For either fortune;' ⑤

⑤

as compared with,

'A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hath ta'en with equal thanks; and bless'd are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please.' ⑥

⑥

Yet perhaps the diffuseness and watering-down seen in Massinger's direct and almost direct translation from Shakespeare, is really the same thing as the filming-over of the hue of life and the diminished

① Philip Massinger. (1920) (Cf. Selected Essays.) ② Emperor of the East, V., ii. ③ Othello, III., iii., 331. ④ Selected Essays, 207. ⑤ Bondman, III., iii. ⑥ Hamlet, III., ii.

sensuous vitality of which I spoke before. Both are indicative of a talent which is not 'immediately at the tips of the senses' (1). In the case of his direct translations Massinger is not expressing something he has experienced himself but is merely repeating the words of another. In the case of his own original statement, as in The Duke of Milan passage, Massinger may be expressing something he has experienced himself (or, to be more precise, the recreation of Sforza's experience in himself) but he is expressing it in a way which indicates that it is recollected, or rather generalised, in tranquillity; that is to say, while he is writing his characters' speeches he is not himself experiencing the sensations and emotions fully-rounded characters like Shakespeare's are experiencing and which Shakespeare himself must have experienced in his writing, but is standing, as it were, at one remove from reality and writing about his characters rather than as his characters. In both cases, in direct translation and in original statement, what is missing from the expression is life itself. This shows itself in what the characters say. Shakespeare's characters (Othello, for example) speak for themselves and live and breathe as human beings, experiencing emotions and responding to sensory stimuli as do real human beings. Massinger's characters, on the other hand, do not seem to feel at all, however much they may talk about such feelings as grief, pain, jealousy, love, or anger. They do not use words which express directly any of these feelings, sensations, or emotions, but content themselves with a generalised description of them.

(1) T.S.Eliot, op. cit., 210.

The differences between Massinger and Shakespeare as regards their diction might be summed up briefly in general terms as follows:- Where Shakespeare is precise, Massinger is vague. Where Shakespeare is tense, Massinger is slack. Where Shakespeare is terse, Massinger is diffuse. And where Shakespeare is concentrated, Massinger is dilute. That is the crux of the matter. In Massinger the high degree of condensation, the packed significance and suggestiveness, we know from Shakespeare and expect from many of his lesser brethren, is gone, and the effect of his verse upon the reader or audience is of a considerably reduced impact. We can, in fact, apply to him (and with more justice) what Garrick said of Dr Johnson; 'All that he writes comes from his head. Shakespeare, when he sat down to write, dipped his pen in his heart' ⁽¹⁾. That which comes from the head is organised, rationalised, and, in order that all its parts may be seen clearly, is thinly spread: that which comes from the heart is poured out undiluted, and though it is perhaps to be apprehended rather than comprehended, it speaks to us more directly. The lack in Massinger is a lack of just this sort of concentrated directness, this unifying totality of experience, which we find in Shakespeare.

It is, of course, impossible to describe adequately what is lacking in Massinger's diction by any quotation from Massinger. I can only direct the reader to Massinger's verse itself taken as a whole, and in particular to the lack in it of words with sensuous connotations

⁽¹⁾ Margaret Barton: Garrick. (London, 1948) 204.

or overtones. To take only one small example: in the first scenes of the first acts of eight of the plays (The Great Duke of Florence, The Bondman, The Renegado, The Roman Actor, The City Madam, The Guardian, The Bashful Lover, and The Emperor of the East) I can only find four occasions on which Massinger uses words which call up, however faintly, the impression of some colour. Thus, in The Great Duke of Florence we have 'golden mean', a phrase which (to me, at least) has only the faintest tinge of the colour of gold; in The Renegado we have 'a green apron', an object Massinger refers to merely to show his knowledge of the Muslim sacred colour; and in The Guardian we have 'the roses frighted from your cheeks' and 'my tenants' nut-brown daughters', both uses of colour words so conventional as to be almost completely unevocative. The monochromatic rendering of the world of which this is only a sample contrasts strangely with Shakespeare's panchromatic presentation.

I have, however, indicated merely one way in which an examination of the poetic quality of Massinger's verse can be conducted, by comparing the words in isolation in certain passages and in their specific parallels in Shakespeare. I should like now to continue the examination of Massinger's style more discursively, though still with an eye to comparison with Shakespeare.

Let me begin with Giovanni, the young hero of The Great Duke of Florence, declaring his love for the first time to Lidia:

'O Lidia,
Of maids the honour, and your sex's glory!
It is not fear to die, but to lose you,
That brings this fever on me. I will now
Discover to you, that which, till this minute,
I durst not trust the air with. Ere you knew

What power the magic of your beauty had,
 I was enchanted by it, liked, and loved it,
 My fondness still increasing with my years;
 And, flattered by false hopes, I did attend
 Some blessed opportunity to move
 The duke with his consent to make you mine:
 But now, such is my star-crossed destiny,
 When he beholds you as you are, he cannot
 Deny himself the happiness to enjoy you,
 And I as well in reason may entreat him
 To give away his crown, as to part from
 A jewel of more value, such you are.'

①

This is artificiality indeed, but not the sparkling, jewelled artificiality of the early Shakespeare, the artificiality which enchants by a shimmering illusion of life, which for all its legerdemain is shot through and through with life and sense. Massinger's is an artificiality approaching the factitious and the listless. The young lover who speaks is described at the very beginning of the play ② as having a 'sharp wit and pregnant apprehension';

'All that he speaks being with such grace delivered,
 That it makes perfect harmony.'

We have to take Massinger's word for that. Certainly, his use of 'star-crossed', adopted from the prologue to Romeo and Juliet, bears out the assertion that he makes use

'Of what's read to him, but 'tis straight digested,
 And truly made his own.'

Yet I am of the opinion that if Romeo had spoken with such pedestrian ardour to Juliet the Capulets had never lost her.

Next I take a passage from the play of Massinger's which has the most of passionate excitement in it, The Unnatural Combat. Here is

① V., iii. ② I., i.

Malefort confronted with the ghosts of his dead wife and son:

'Ha! is't fancy?
 Or hath hell heard me, and makes proof if I
 Dare stand the trial? Yes, I do; and now
 I view these apparitions, I feel
 I once did know the substances. For what come you?
 Are your aerial forms deprived of language,
 And so denied to tell me, that by signs
 You bid me ask here of myself? 'Tis so:
 And there is something here makes answer for you.
 You come to lance my seared-up conscience; yes,
 And to instruct me, that those thunderbolts,
 That hurled me headlong from the height of glory,
 Wealth, honours, worldly happiness, were forged
 Upon the anvil of my impious wrongs,
 And cruelty to you! I do confess it;
 And that my lust compelling me to make my way
 For a second wife, I poisoned thee; and that
 The cause (which to the world is undiscovered)
 That forced thee to shake off thy filial duty
 To me, thy father, had its spring and source
 From thy impatience, to know thy mother,
 That with all duty and obedience served me
 (For now with horror I acknowledge it)
 Removed unjustly: yet, thou being my son,
 Wert not a competent judge marked out by heaven
 For her revenge, which thy falling by
 My weaker hand confirmed. --- 'Tis granted by thee.
 Can any penance expiate my guilt,
 Or can repentance save me? ---

They are vanished!'

①

The situation bears a general resemblance to others in Julius Caesar,
Hamlet, and Macbeth. But how utterly different! This is a spurious
 supernaturalism and as spurious an encounter with it. Massinger's
 apparitions come, 'use various gestures' like mute puppets, and then
 disappear. They are attended with no mystery or awe. They shake no
 gory locks: they wave with no courteous action to a more removed ground:
 they neither speak cryptic warning of a Philippi nor

'a tale unfold whose lightest word
 Would harrow up the soul.'

Malefort encounters them as he would any physically substantial

character and is inspired with no 'thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls'. After a (very cool) doubt as to the reality of the apparitions and a query as to their coming which compares weakly indeed with Hamlet's awe-struck and awe-inspiring

'Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable

①

--- after a weak beginning, Malefort proceeds to a speech of such businesslike discourse as was never, outside laboratories for the investigation of paranormal psychology and E.S.P., addressed to disembodied spirits. Whereas Malefort asks 'For what come you?' in a question that has no spread beyond the immediate situation, Hamlet takes us by his adjuration behind and beyond the situation and makes us see another scene which, although itself outside the play, casts an illuminating flash on it:

'but tell
 Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurned,
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again.'

②

As a result Malefort communicates scarcely a ripple to us, whose response to the supernatural is conditioned as indirectly by its impact on him as directly by its impact on us. He presents us with a problem to disentangle, a problem of generalised words, unbedded in psycho-physical reality, and of elaborately suspended syntax. The words, figures, and images are not linked by any sort of 'unified

① Hamlet, I., iv. ② Hamlet, I., iv.

sensibility'. And, it might be added, our puzzlement is made the more complete by our being given in this speech the only answer we ever receive to one of the enigmas of the play -- why did Malefort and his son quarrel?

Examples of this inferiority in poetic quality in Massinger could be doubled and redoubled. The important thing to notice is that this is not only an inferiority to Shakespeare, though I have chosen Shakespeare as an example of the supreme in poetic quality of expression but it is also an almost absolute lack of poetical quality, a lack of what, in Keats's words (1), we must term the 'poetical character'. Little more remains to be said on the subject.

I have, however, not yet mentioned Massinger's use of figures of speech. Indeed, he uses them sparingly -- and then only in the most ordinary and everyday way. The most important of these figures is metaphor. Now, it would of course be untrue to say that Massinger never uses metaphor, though he uses it seldom. For it might be said that just as any use of language is elliptical, so it is metaphorical. Language, or at least expression, is inevitably metaphorical -- from the covert to the overt, from the dead (2) to the living.

Shakespeare's use of metaphor is rarely conscious and deliberate. Yet he is one of the most richly, variously, and vitally metaphorical of any writer in the world's literature. And surely Aristotle is

(1) See above, Chapter IV., p. 203. (2) Which, however, as H.W.Fowler says (A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, 349.), may be at times galvanised into activity again.

right in saying that: 'Much the most important thing is to be able to use metaphors, for this is the one thing that cannot be learned from others; and it is also a mark of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilarity' (1). I would underline Aristotle's intuitive. For that is what characterises Shakespeare in his metaphors. He does not, except rarely and for particular reasons of appropriateness to a speaker and his momentary occasion, take thought about his metaphors. They are his willing and absolute slaves crowding to do his service -- to carry his ideas. But even that does not convey adequately what I want to say. It is rather that the whole language in Shakespeare's hands is charged with the most potent metaphorical electricity and magnetism; and the words which are all but inert by comparison in others' hands combine and recombine like the most stubborn elements in the electro-magnetic intensity of the sun. Shakespeare's style is a shot-silk texture of metaphor. Metaphor dissolves into metaphor. As soon as a metaphor has, like a note or chord in music, contributed its iota, it ceases to be. There is no metaphorical economy, no eking out a limited supply. 'A cistern contains,' says Blake: 'a fountain overflows'. And Shakespeare is a never-failing fountain.

On the other hand, Massinger is a much more conscious, deliberate, and parsimonious user of metaphor. He does not use it with the intuitive spontaneity of the genius, but with the precise pedantry of the rather literally-minded student of rhetoric. He says to himself,

(1) The Rhetoric. III., x.

'Go to, I will here bring in a metaphor'. His metaphors, therefore, tend either to give the impression of verbal appliqué work and of something not absorbed into the speech or to swell out and take charge of what is being said, the completion and elaborate carrying-out of the metaphor becoming an end in itself rather than a means to an end.

Here is a passage which demonstrates the first, or unassimilated use. Sanazarro, in Act I., scene ii. of The Great Duke of Florence, has brought news of a sea-victory to Duke Cozimo. Cozimo exclaims:

'Still my nightingale,
That with sweet accents dost assure me, that
My spring of happiness comes fast upon me!
Embrace me boldly.'

And a few lines later the Duke says, still speaking of Sanazarro;

'we have not
Received into our bosom and our grace
A glorious lazy drone, grown fat with feeding
On others' toil, but an industrious bee,
That crops the sweet flowers of our enemies
And every happy evening returns
Loaden with wax and honey to our hive.'

Both those metaphors are patently 'stuck on' as ornamentation. Sanazarro is first of all a nightingale and then an 'industrious bee'; and in any case a bee, industrious or otherwise, in his bosom would create an effect upon the Duke, very different from that Massinger is wishing to express ⁽¹⁾. The metaphors here are both inappropriate and, if not dead or moribund, at least dormant, and, given no life by Massinger, spring from no life in Cozimo's speech.

⁽¹⁾ 'A bee in a bosom' in this particular context is almost an example of what Fowler calls (Modern English Usage, 350.) a 'battle of dead metaphors'.

The second of the two metaphors I have quoted is quite long, but has not yet swollen quite enough to appear of more importance than its context. Here, to demonstrate the second faulty use of metaphor by Massinger, is a passage from Act III., scene i. of A New Way to Pay Old Debts showing the inflated metaphor -- the usurping cuckoo-in-the-nest. Young Allworth is describing Margaret Overreach to his master, Lord Lovell:

Allworth. Were you to encounter with a single foe,
The victory were certain; but to stand
The charge of two such potent enemies,
At once assaulting you, as wealth and beauty,
And those too seconded with power, is odds
Too great for Hercules.

Lovell. Speak your doubts and fears,
Since you will nourish them, in plainer language,
That I may understand them.

Allworth. What's your will,
Though I lend arms against myself, (provided
They may advantage you) must be obeyed.
My much-loved lord, were Margaret only fair,
The cannon of her more than earthly form,
Though mounted high, commanding all beneath it,
And ramm'd with bullets of her sparkling eyes,
Of all the bulwarks that defend your senses
Could batter none, but that which guards your sight.
But when the well-tuned accents of her tongue
Make music to you, and with numerous sounds
Assault your hearing (such as if Ulysses
Now lived again, howe'er he stood the Syrens,
Could not resist), the combat must grow doubtful
Between your reason and rebellious passions.
Add this too; when you feel her touch, and breath
Like a soft western wind, when it glides o'er
Arabia, creating gums and spices;
And in the van, the nectar of her lips,
Which you must taste, bring the battalia on,
Well armed, and strongly lined with her discourse,
And knowing manners, to give entertainment; --
Hippolytus himself would leave Diana,
To follow such a Venus.'

Lovell. Love hath made you
Poetical, Allworth.'

One may take leave to doubt Lord Lovell's last remark and, having

regard to Allworth's syntax, question whether he has indeed expressed his doubts and fears 'in plainer language'. Be that as it may, the extended metaphor from warfare that is my concern at the moment is laboriously excogitated and tediously drawn-out. Stale as it is, Massinger doubtless thought it an appropriate one to introduce in a conversation between a man of military experience and a would-be soldier. But that is just the trouble. It has been dragged in. And like the periodic syntax it has been imposed ab extra.

What I have said about Massinger's use of metaphor applies with equal vigour to his use of simile, with the added comment that, since a simile of more than minimum content always has the air of being deliberately inserted as a sort of poetical grace-note or parenthetical embellishment, its defects tend to be even more apparent.

' [He] breaks through all law-nets, made to curb ill men,
As they were cobwebs;' ⁽¹⁾

is a simile that is allowable since it is both appropriate and brief. More often than not, however, Massinger's similes are not brief. They tend, that is to say, like the second type of metaphor I have described above, towards the inflated. Here is an example of two such similes occurring in the space of a few lines from Act V., scene iii. of The Bondman:

'But if that pure desires, not blended with
Foul thoughts, that, like a river, keeps his course,
Retaining still the clearness of the spring
From whence it took beginning, may be thought
Worthy acceptance; then I dare rise up,

(1) New Way to Pay Old Debts, II., ii.

And tell this gay man to his teeth, I never
 Durst doubt her constancy, that, like a rock,
 Beats off temptations, as that mocks the fury
 Of the proud waves.'

The most important flaw in Massinger's use of figures of speech, however, is that when he uses them he sprinkles them indiscriminately through his speeches, not only unassimilated, as I have suggested, but also quite unrelated one with the other. Thus we might note that in the long metaphorical passage which I have quoted from A New Way to Pay Old Debts ① there are two lengthy similes introduced, either of which might be quite pleasant in itself, but which are singularly inappropriate when set in the midst of the sustained military imagery of the rest of the statement. Similarly, the passage I have quoted above from The Bondman continues;

'nor, from my jealous fears,
 Question that goodness to which, as an altar
 Of all perfection, he that truly loved
 Should rather bring a sacrifice of service,
 Than raze it with the engines of suspicion:
 Of which, when he can wash an Aethiop white,
 Leosthenes may hope to free himself;
 But, till then, never.'

The barbola-work effect which results from applying on top of a statement a collection of improperly articulated and quite unrelated figures of speech of different types is shown in these lines from Act V., scene viii. of The Renegado:

'Excuse me, Mustapha, though this night to me
 Appear as tedious as that treble one
 Was to the world, when Jove on fair Alcmena
 Begot Alcides. Were you to encounter
 Those ravishing pleasures, which the slow-paced hours
 (To me they are such) bar me from, you would

① P. 402.

With your continued wishes, strive to imp
 New feathers to the broken wings of time,
 And chide the amorous sun, for too long dalliance
 In Thetis' watery bosom.'

Far from this rag-bag method of throwing figures together being exceptional, it is Massinger's almost invariable practice and is still another indication of the lack of investing emotion in his work.

I may be thought to have found little so far to commend in Massinger as a poetic stylist; and perhaps I should in fairness ask whether Massinger's poetry is all bad, whether there are not indeed occasions upon which he rises above the level of involved and colourless mediocrity I have illustrated at considerable length. My answer to this question will be a somewhat qualified one.

When he does manage to produce verses with some fire and warmth in them is when he himself happens to be deeply moved by the particular idea and sentiments expressed. This does not mean, however, that the passages ring quite true. If Massinger himself is moved, the character is not. Or rather, the character's identity is forgotten and Massinger speaks to us directly -- a bad flaw in a dramatist attempting an approach to an imitation of life. Such passages are set speeches and many of them have the air of being complete poems or tirades written by Massinger separately from the play in which they appear, and introduced by him ex gratia to 'make the gruel thick and slab'. I have already given several specimens of this extra-dramatic matter when speaking of Massinger's satire ^①. But perhaps I may

^① Above, Chapter V., p. 299 ff.

give here other examples of the kind of thing I mean. The first is spoken by Lady Allworth to her stepson in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. There is no pretence here that the sentiments are those of the speaker: they are offered as a father's charge to his son, not given directly as surely such a charge would be, but indirectly by the stepmother to whom they had been entrusted:

'These were your father's words: "If e'er my son
Follow the war, tell him it is a school,
Where all the principles tending to honour
Are taught, if truly followed: but for such
As repair thither, as a place in which
They do presume they may with license practise
Their lusts and riots, they shall never merit
The noble name of soldiers. To dare boldly
In a fair cause, and, for their country's safety,
To run upon the cannon's mouth undaunted;
To obey their leaders, and shun mutinies;
To bear with patience the winter's cold,
And summer's scorching heat, and not to faint,
When plenty of provision fails, with hunger;
Are the essential parts make up a soldier,
Not swearing, dice, or drinking," '

①

The fact is that Massinger himself was very much the militarist, the soldier's advocate, and the panegyrist of martial courage and bearing; and he made opportunities to express such sentiments.

The second example is from a speech of Bertoldo in The Maid of Honour to rouse the sluggish Sicilians to warlike ire. The rest of the speech has a dramatic relevance; but the following lines could be quite easily detached from the context without harming the dramatic flow or purpose in the least:

'If examples
May move you more than arguments, look on England,

The empress of the European isles,
 And unto whom alone ours yields precedence:
 When did she flourish so, as when she was
 The mistress of the ocean, her navies
 Putting a girdle round about the world?
 When the Iberian quaked, her worthies named;
 And the fair flower-de-luce grew pale, set by
 The red rose and the white? Let not our armour
 Hung up, or our unrigged armada, make us
 Ridiculous to the late poor snakes our neighbours,
 Warmed in our bosoms, and to whom again
 We may be terrible; while we spend our hours
 Without variety, confined to drink,
 Dice, cards, or whores. Rouse us, sir, from the sleep
 Of idleness, and redeem our mortgaged honours.'

①

It is Massinger the patriotic Englishman who has displaced Bertoldo for the time being.

Still more obviously inset and interrupting to the action is the 'lively rhodomontade', as Gifford calls it ②, of Durazzo's description of country sports in The Guardian, almost the only passage on nature and its wild life in Massinger:

'In the afternoon,
 For we will have variety of delights,
 We'll to the field again, no game shall rise
 But we'll be ready for't: if a hare, my greyhounds
 Shall make a course; for the pie or jay, a sparrowhawk
 Flies from the fist; the crow so near pursued,
 Shall be compelled to seek protection under
 Our horses' bellies; a hearn put from her siege,
 And a pistol shot off in her breach, shall mount
 So high, that, to your view, she'll seem to soar
 Above the middle region of the air:
 A cast of haggard falcons, by me manned,
 Eyeing the prey at first, appears as if
 They did turn tail; but with their labouring wings
 Getting above her, with a thought their pinions
 Cleaving the purer element, make in,
 And by turns bind with her; the frightened fowl,

① I., i. ② Volume iv., 142.

Lying at her defence upon her back,
 With her dreadful beak awhile defers her death,
 But by degrees forced down, we part the fray,
 And feast upon her. ... Then, for an evening flight,
 A tiercel gentle, which I call, my masters,
 As he were sent a messenger to the moon,
 In such a place flies, as he seems to say,
 See me, or see me not! the partridge sprung,
 He makes his stoop; but wanting breath, is forced
 To cancelier; then, with such speed as if
 He carried lightning in his wings, he strikes
 The trembling bird, who even in death appears
 Proud to be made his quarry.'

①

In these and a few other passages, Massinger pleases us by expressing with a certain extra vigour a sentiment that came from his own heart or a first-hand physical experience. The trouble is that, like a new patch on old clothes, they show up the overall drabness of their contexts. Besides, all told they are rare; and such as there are are generally powerful, even eloquent, expression of one of Massinger's intellectual or moral conclusions and convictions rather than of his response to some experience lived and felt in blood and bone.

At the beginning of this chapter I expressed the opinion that Massinger's stylistic idiosyncrasy is an illustration of the so-called 'dissociation of sensibility' which is now pretty generally accepted as a true diagnosis of the change that spread like a sclerosis in seventeenth-century poetry.

① I., i.

As to the diction and imagery, the case for placing Massinger in the long succession leading to the aridity and lack of sensuous and emotional content of much eighteenth-century diction is self-evident, and has been so ever since Dr Eliot first broached the subject. Indeed in the colourlessness of his poetry in general, Massinger has the air of being, instead of almost contemporaneous with Shakespeare, removed in time by almost a century from him.

It is true, of course, that Massinger displays an innate lack of that sensory awareness so noticeable in Shakespeare. Shakespeare was, after all, as Dryden tells us, 'the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too' ⁽¹⁾. Shakespeare makes us feel; perhaps luckily, as Dryden suggests, but certainly because he too could feel as well as build the lofty rhyme. With Massinger we do not ever know whether he felt or not, so devoid of the sense-element and so imbued with intellectual abstraction is his diction. No 'pure and eloquent blood' speaks in his verse, and none could suggest that, like Shakespeare's, his 'body thought'. But we must remember that Shakespeare himself (though, to be sure, he never lost his capacity for feeling and expressing feeling) was profoundly influenced in his last plays by changing conditions of theatrical production and a changing attitude in his audience, and that these changes had become still more complete by

⁽¹⁾ Essay of Dramatic Poesy. (Ed. Arnold. Rev. Edn., 1939. 67.)

the time of Massinger's greatest output. In addition, we must remember that, whereas Shakespeare came to manhood in the optimistic and exuberant Elizabethan years, Massinger developed in the pessimistic and more reserved times of James, when the political shadows were beginning to lengthen and thought was coming to concentrate with increasing gravity and seriousness on moral, philosophical, and social topics. I would myself consider these last influences as paramount, acting, as they did in Massinger's case, upon a mind already inclined to be over-serious. It is not, then, that Massinger cannot feel. Such a failing is a manifest impossibility in a human being. Rather, I would say, he does not choose to feel, since his interest, and consequently his ability, is not, as in Shakespeare, centred upon the human soul as it is and on man living, breathing, feeling, and suffering, but upon the outward appearance of man as a social animal, acting according to some idealised code of conduct, upon what man should be rather than what man is. It must be recognised also, that what we have found in Massinger's diction is already present, though not to the same extent, in his master, Fletcher, and that it was the Fletcher-Massinger genre of romantic tragi-comedy that was picked up and developed at the Restoration after the hiatus caused in production by the closing of the theatres.

The one circumstance whose pressure no author can resist is that of the state of the language which prevails at the time in which he is writing. And one development of language is sufficient to account both for the phenomena of Massinger's diction and for the phenomena of eighteenth-century so-called 'poetic diction'. This development was

clearly appreciated by Macaulay, when, writing a hundred years before Dr Eliot, he summed up the reasons for the change in seventeenth-century poetry and provided an analysis of the situation which has not since been superseded, even although it has perhaps been forgotten or overlooked. According to Macaulay's view, imagination is at its greatest potency in the primitive mind. At this stage the mind is not able to give expression to its imagination in poetry since it possesses no language adequate for the purpose and cannot clothe its imaginative experience in words. As the mind develops (argues Macaulay) its 'reasoning powers are improved at the expense of the imagination', but it reaches a point of equilibrium where it possesses both an adequate language and a residue of the primitive potency of the imagination which, taken together, are sufficient to produce a poetry that is truly great -- that is, creative, imaginative, poetry. In time, Reason and its handmaid, Language, develop still further and the power of the imagination declines. Then the poetry which is produced is what Macaulay calls 'critical poetry', dominated by reason at the expense of the imagination. Can this, I wonder, be what Dr Eliot means when he says that 'a feeling for language ... outstripped .. a feeling for things' (1) ? Here, at any rate, is Macaulay's statement of his case; more naive than Dr Eliot's perhaps, but as much to be respected:-

'In process of time, the instruments [i.e. words] by which the imagination works are brought to perfection. Men have not more imagination than their rude ancestors. We strongly suspect that they have much less. But they produce better works of imagination. Thus, up to a certain period, the diminution of the poetical powers

(1) Selected Essays, 209.

is far more than compensated by the improvement of all the appliances and means of which these powers stand in need. Then comes the short period of splendid and consummate excellence. And then, from causes against which it is vain to struggle, poetry begins to decline. The progress of language, which was at first favourable, becomes fatal to it, and, instead of compensating for the decay of the imagination, accelerates that decay, and renders it more obvious. ... At first it calls up a world of glorious illusions; but, when it becomes too copious, it altogether destroys the visual power.

As the development of the mind proceeds, symbols, instead of being employed to convey images, are substituted for them. Civilised men think as they trade, not in kind, but by means of a circulating medium. In these circumstances, the sciences improve rapidly, and criticism among the rest; but poetry, in the highest sense of the word, disappears. Then comes the dotage of the fine arts, a second childhood, as feeble as the former, and far more hopeless. This is the age of critical poetry, of poetry by courtesy, of poetry to which the memory, the judgement, and the wit contribute far more than the imagination.' ^①

Turning now to Massinger's syntax, I would remind the reader that at the beginning of this chapter I affirmed that this subject was not unrelated to the matter of 'dissociation of sensibility'. I would not, of course, affirm that the tendency towards syntactical complexity which we have uncovered in Massinger appears in the final product of the seventeenth-century 'change'. Nevertheless it had its part to play in the process. In Milton, for example, and in some of the eighteenth-century blank verse writers who followed him, the same tendency is present; and in the final event, the couplet discipline, itself an intellectual form or imposition upon natural order, is in certain respects a reaction against, or an endeavour to reform, just such stylistic aberration. The two extremes, the curt couplet and the sprawling period, are part of the same process of intellectual

① An essay entitled, John Dryden, in The Edinburgh Review, January, 1828. (Repr. The Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches of Lord Macaulay. London, 1900. 113.)

sophistication, just as in the development of prose the Senecan and Ciceronian extremes are manifestations of the same tendency towards intellection. After the process was completed, the couplet emerged dominant, but this is not to discount syntactical complexity as one of the 'growing pains' (or perhaps 'arthritic twinges' describes it better) poetry had to experience to reach this state. The two features are involved in the same process.

It will, I hope, be plain from what I have adduced that Massinger's syntax, especially his propensity towards involution, relates itself to this process. His syntax is much more a product of Intellect than of Feeling, or, to use his own terms, it springs much more from Reason than from Passion. It is, in short, part of the same process of intellection which abstracted sensuous significance from his diction, and takes the form of his thinking too much both about what he wishes to say and about how he is to say it. That is, the things said are too intellectually excogitated and the saying of them is too ratiocinatively considered. As a result, the speech of his characters lacks immediacy and spontaneity: it has been put into their mouths rather than appearing as an unpremeditated response or product of themselves. The author steps between us and the characters. Or, to put it more precisely, an involved intellectual process has come between the author's vision of life and his presentation of it; between, if you like, his first intuition and his final expression. This intrusion of the intellect

between the feeling and the expression, to such an extent as to subdue rather than merely to transmute the former, is what I understand Dr Eliot to mean by 'dissociation of sensibility'. And my contention is that it occurs as much when the organising intellect changes the order of natural psychologic (loose and processional) into the logic of the periodic style (ordered and articulated, but withal sophisticated), as when it changes the diction and imagery, which were Dr Eliot's area of attention, from the particularised, concrete, and sensuous into the generalised, abstract, and emasculated.

Perhaps Dr Eliot himself best described in The Hollow Men

what happened:

'Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow.'

--oo0oo--

For the sake of completeness, in a discussion of Massinger's style, mention must be made of two mannerisms in which he frequently indulges, mannerisms which, while they are not of any particular significance, are typical and may on occasion be used in determining the authorship of certain passages in collaborated plays.

The first is Massinger's liking for appositional phrases. Here are some examples:

- 'Patience, the beggar's virtue,
Shall find no harbour here.' ①
- 'The fury of the many-headed monster,
The giddy multitude.' ②
- 'the parent of security,
Long-absent peace.' ③
- 'A wooden dish, the beggar's plate.' ④
- 'my prayers,
The beggar's satisfaction.' ⑤
- 'pity,
The poor man's orisons.' ⑥
- 'profusenssss of expense, the parent
Of wretched poverty, her fatal daughter.' ⑦
- 'The beggar's cure, patience.' ⑧

The fact that so many of these examples refer to poverty and beggars, while one further indication of Massinger's Plautine habit of repeating himself, may be no more than a coincidence. In form, however, they are typical, and might be described as a sort of condensed moral aphorism -- indeed, the nearest that Massinger ever gets to condensation and terseness of phrase.

① New Way to Pay Old Debts, V., i. ② Unnatural Combat, III., ii.
 ③ Bashful Lover, IV., iii. ④ Ibid., III., iii. ⑤ City Madam, I., i.
 ⑥ Ibid., IV., iii. ⑦ Ibid., II., iii. ⑧ Renegado, II., v.

The second, and very individual mannerism, is the habit he has of reduplicating a word, as in the following examples:

- 'My, pride, my pride' ①
- 'You are wide,
Wide the whole region.' ②
- 'but, if lessened, then,
Then my poor heart-strings crack.' ③
- 'thus, thus I pierce it.' ④
- 'For 'tis a deed of night, of night, Francisco.' ⑤
- 'my wife, my wife, Pescara,
Being absent, I am dead.' ⑥

To show how such a mannerism can be of value as contributory evidence of authorship here are three examples from Massinger scenes in The Virgin Martyr:

- 'Oh, mine own,
Mine own dear lord!' ⑦
- 'tell her I have worn,
In all the battles I have fought, her figure,
Her figure in my heart.' ⑧
- 'but take heed,
Take heed, my lord.' ⑨

As will be seen, the repetition of the phrase, occurring as it does so often between one line and the next, is usually no more than a device for filling out the metre, not for dramatic or rhetorical effect. Fletcher, who also has a trick of repeating phrases, does so in a slightly more elaborate way that indicates that he on the other hand

① Guardian III., vi. ② City Madam, III., ii. ③ Roman Actor, II., i.
④ Renegado, V., vii. ⑤ Duke of Milan, I., iii. ⑥ Ibid., III., i.
⑦ I., i. ⑧ I., i. ⑨ V., ii.

is striving after some particular pathetic or dramatic effect:

'But through the world, the wide world, thus to wander,
The wretched world alone, no comfort with me;' ①

an example which also exhibits Fletcher's tendency to alliteration, a tendency almost completely absent in Massinger.

The features of Massinger's versification, while they are chiefly of interest in disengaging his hand from that of other writers, may be summarised very briefly as follows:-

I. Regarded purely on a numerical basis, Massinger constructs his verses very regularly; that is, he has the correct number of syllables and stresses in each line, according to a fairly rigid iambic pattern.

II. He makes a large use of run-on lines -- about 40% as compared with Fletcher's 15-20% ② .

III. As compared with Fletcher's combination of the double-stressed ending and the end-stopped line (a combination found in no other Elizabethan-Jacobean author) Massinger has, together with his run-on lines, many light and weak endings; that is, he often ends his lines with words that cannot be grammatically separated from the next line. Unlike Fletcher, he rarely accents the hypermetric or eleventh syllable.

IV. The pauses in his lines are very freely distributed.

V. The number of his speeches which end in the middle of a line is sometimes as high as 80%, whereas a similar percentage of Fletcher's speeches finish at the end of a line ③ . Massinger always completes his metrical line with the opening of the next speech.

VI. He rarely uses rhyme, except at a scene or act ending ④ .

VII. He rarely uses prose ⑤ .

① Fletcher: Women Pleased. Quoted by Oliphant, Engl. Studien. XIV.

② Baldwin's Edition of The Duke of Milan, and Boyle, Engl. Stud. V.

③ Oliphant, loc. cit. ④ See above, Chapter III., p. 123. ⑤ Examples occur in City Madam, II., ii.; Renegado, I., iii.; Bashful Lover, III., iii. (Gothrio); and Emperor of the East, IV., iv.

VIII. His verse is more even than Fletcher's; that is its metrical pattern is not so apparent.

There are, however, certain respects in which a poet's versification is of interest in a consideration of his style. These respects tend to resolve themselves into an examination of the efficiency with which the verse acts as a conductor of the style. Viewed from this angle, Massinger's verse is an extremely efficient channel, offering a very low resistance to the matter it has to transmit. It flows easily. The linkage of the run-on lines carries the weight of the subordination lightly, really too lightly, and slips easily from the pen of one who, as Chelli says, 'révèle une oreille qui aime à enchaîner les mètres par le sens' (1). But this, as I have suggested before, is its great fault. The function of versification is indeed to act as a medium for the style, but it must at the same time set bounds to the style, keeping it within its channel, and exercising a unifying restraint upon, and applying an artistic mould or form to, the material. Otherwise there is little purpose to verse at all -- apart from the muttered undertone provided by the regular metre. It is this controlling and unifying capacity that is lacking in Massinger's verse. In fact, the slack rhythms and lack of restraint of his verse approach very close to those of prose.

Here, for example, is a passage from Massinger:

(1) Drame, 119.

'If you think them unworthy to taste of these cates you feed on or wear such costly garments, will you grant them the privilege and prerogative of great minds which you were born to? Honour won in war and to be styled preservers of their country are titles fit for free and generous spirits and not for bondmen. Had I been born a man and such never-dying glories made the prize to bold heroic courage by Diana, I would not to my brother, nay, my father, be bribed to part with the least piece of honour I should gain in this action.'

There is almost nothing in this passage, written out as prose, to indicate that it is really verse -- Massinger's 'verse'. In fact, it is part of Cleora's speech in Act I., scene iii. of The Bondman.

Here is another example:

'How much I must acknowledge myself bound
For your so many and extraordinary favours
Conferred upon me, as far as is in my power,
Posterity shall notice. I, myself,
Were most unworthy of such noble friends,
If I should not, with heart-felt thankfulness,
Profess and own them.'

In this case I have written, with the minimum of addition, the first two sentences of the prose Dedicatory Epistle to The Roman Actor as if they were verse. One accustomed to Massinger's verse could not be blamed if he accepted these lines as true coin.

The truth of the matter is, as Coleridge said, that '... in Massinger the style is differenced, but differenced in the smallest degree possible, from animated conversation by the vein of poetry' (1) . His verse, according to Professor Morris, 'would make good rhythmical prose' (2) ; and Fleay speaks of the 'Massinger weak line, which often is

(1) Table Talk, 212. (2) On the Date and Composition of 'The Old Law'.
(PMLA. XVII. 1902. 28.)

as hard to distinguish from measured prose as the iambics of Dickens or Musaeus are from Thalaba or Queen Mab verse' ① . And even Professor Cruickshank, always ready to spring to Massinger's defence, admits that his style 'is constantly on the border-line of prose'; and adds that 'Massinger thought in blank verse because he was a dramatist rather than because he was a poet' ② . Mr Harley Granville-Barker, discussing the decline of blank verse at the time of Massinger and Shirley, although he is inclined to forgive what he calls 'the loose freedoms of the metre', touches the crux of the matter when he says; 'What was wrong was the lack of compelling emotion. As it was not poetry it should not have been framed in verse at all. The discipline of prose would have been fitter' ③ .

Massinger, in short, is not a poet. Only rarely is there any 'compelling emotion' behind his work. His periodic structure is a prose-form. His ideas are prose-concepts, springing not from Feeling but from Intellect, and 'prose is,' as Professor Highet remarks, above all 'the language of the intellect' ④ . Perhaps, then, it is only natural that his verse also should be attached by the merest threads to the implement that Shakespeare and Marlowe and the greatest poets have used. 'Tout ce qui n'est point vers est prose.' And we can imagine Massinger exclaiming with Monsieur Jourdain, 'Par ma foi! Il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien' ⑤ .

--oo0oo--

① Chronicle History, 256. ② Philip Massinger, 34. ③ On Dramatic Method. (The Clark Lectures, 1930.) London, 1931. 64. ④ The Classical Tradition, 322. ⑤ Molière: Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, II., iv.

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APPENDIX I.

List of plays with which Massinger's name can be definitely linked (from internal evidence of style) as a collaborator. ①

About 1613	: <u>The Bloody Brother.</u>	With Fletcher, Field, and Daborne ② .
Late 1617	: <u>Thierry and Theodoret.</u>	With Fletcher and Field.
Before 1619	: <u>The Knight of Malta.</u>	With Fletcher and Field.
1617 or 1618:	<u>The Queen of Corinth.</u>	With Fletcher and Field.
Aug. 1619	: <u>Sir John van Olden Barnavelt.</u>	With Fletcher.
About 1619	: <u>The Custom of the Country.</u>	With Fletcher.
About 1619	: <u>The Fatal Dowry.</u>	With Field. ③
1619-20	: <u>The Little French Lawyer.</u>	With Fletcher.
About 1620	: <u>The False One.</u>	With Fletcher.
Before 1622	: <u>The Beggars' Bush.</u>	With Fletcher ④ .
May 1622	: <u>The Prophetess.</u>	With Fletcher.
Oct. 1622	: <u>The Spanish Curate.</u>	With Fletcher.

APPENDIX II.

List of plays with which Massinger may be associated as a reviser:

<u>King Henry VIII.</u>	Possibly Shakespeare and Fletcher revised by M. (?)
<u>The Virgin Martyr.</u>	Dekker and (possibly) another, revised by M. 1620. (M.:- I., III., i. & ii., V. ii.)
<u>The Lws of Candy.</u>	Beaumont revised by M. ca. 1620. (M.:- I. & V.)
<u>The Sea Voyage.</u>	Fletcher lightly revised by M. (lic. 1622).
<u>Love's Cure.</u>	Beaumont revised by M. Mid-1620's. (Possibly some touches of Fletcher as well.)
<u>The Fair Maid of the Inn.</u>	Fletcher very extensively revised by M. and Rowley. (Jan. 1626.).
<u>The Lover's Progress.</u>	Fletcher extensively rewritten by M.
<u>A Very Woman.</u>	Fletcher extensively revised by M. (lic. 1634.).
<u>The Coxcomb.</u>	Beaumont & Fletcher revised by M. (ca. 1636.).
<u>The Elder Brother.</u>	Fletcher revised by M. (1637).
<u>The Double Marriage.</u>	Fletcher revised by M. (After Fletcher's death).

There seems to be no reason for associating Massinger with any of the following plays:

The Captain, Cupid's Revenge, The Honest Man's Fortune, Love's Pilgrimage, Two Noble Kinsmen, The Faithful Friends, The Island Princess, The Old Law, or A Cure for a Cuckold.

① Compiled from evidence presented by Chelli in his Collaboration.

② Possibly the play mentioned in the Tripartite Letter. ③ The only play in the list definitely associated with Massinger during his lifetime. ④ Possibly revised by a later hand.

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① This is the edition I have used throughout the text for quotations from all the plays, except Believe As You List. The First Edition was published in 1805. ② This is a reprint of Gifford's text with the addition of Believe As You List. All quotations from this play are given as in this edition.

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to a Thesis entitled:

PHILIP MASSINGER:

THE MAN AND THE PLAYWRIGHT.

by

Thomas A. Dunn, M.A.

Submitted to The University of Edinburgh. 1952.

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NOTE: Major references to the dramatist and his work will be found ~~INDEX~~ arranged under Main-Headings, viz., Characters, Massinger, and Plays.



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