PHILIP MASSINGER:

THE MAN AND THE PLAYWRIGHT.

by

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ABBREVIATIONS.

For quotation from Massinger's plays I have used W.Gifford's The Plays of Philip Massinger, Second Edition (1813) (abbr. Gifford.), and for quotation from Believe As You List, which does not appear in Gifford, I have used the text given in Francis Cunningham's The Plays of Philip Massinger (1871) (abbr. Cunningham.). Other abbreviations used are as follows (for fuller particulars, see Bibliography.):-

BCED.	- F.G.Fleay: Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama. 2 vols. 1891.
Bentley.	- G.E.Bentley: The Jacobean and Caroline Stage. 2 vols. 1941.
Bywater.	- I. Bywater: Aristotle on the Art of Poetry. 1929.
C.B.E.L.	- The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. 4 vols. 1940.
C.H.E.L.	- The Cambridge History of English Literature. 15 vols. 1932 Edition.
Collaboration.	- M. Chelli: Étude sur la Collaboration de Massinger avec Fletcher et son Groupe. 1926.
Drame.	- M. Chelli: Le Drame de Massinger. 1924.
E.K.C.	- E.K.Chambers: The Elizabethan Stage. 4 vols. 1923.
H.Coleridge.	- The Dramatic Works of Massinger and Ford. Introd. Hartley Coleridge. 1839.
Herbert.	- The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert. Ed. J.Q.Adams. 1917.
Monck Mason.	- The Dramatick Works of Philip Massinger. Ed. J. Monck Mason. 4 vols. 1779. (For Thos. Davies' Short Essay on the Life and Writings of Massinger.)
Philip Massinger.	- A.H.Cruickshank: Philip Massinger. 1920.
Raysor: Misc. Crit.	- Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism. Ed. T.M. Raysor. 1936.

Titles of periodicals, etc. are abbreviated as in C.B.E.L. The following are those most commonly used:

MLN.	- Modern Language Notes.
MLR.	- Modern Language Review.
PQ.	- The Philological Quarterly.
RES.	- The Review of English Studies.
TLS.	- The Times Literary Supplement.

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PREFACE.

Little apology is necessary by way of preface to a critical study of Massinger. No full-length, detailed study of the playwright has eve appeared in English. All that we have of what might be called 'book length' is a very brief work by Professor Cruickshank that was published over thirty years ago, and this can scarcely now be considered adequate. Even critical essays on Massinger are rare, and comments and asides on the playwright which have appeared in the more general studies of the Jacobean-Caroline period have not usually been notable either for their perspicacity or for the knowledge they reveal of his work. It is in some measure as an attempt to fill this gap that this thesis has been written.

I have not, however, attempted to claim for Massinger a position or an importance that does not accord with his worth. He is not, it must be admitted, a great, or even always a very good, dramatist. Nevertheless, his plays are of considerable interest as samples of the romantic tragi-comedies that held the stage after the death of Shakes-:peare. In addition, it must be remembered that Massinger was the principal writer for the public theatres from 1625 to 1640 -- a fact that in itself argues for his claim to closer examination. Thus the first object of this thesis has been an examination and appraisal of certain aspects of Massinger's dramatic technique.

Of additional, and perhaps in some respects even greater, interest, however, is the character of Massinger himself; a character that emerges with extraordinary clarity and precision of detail from a reading of his plays. Therefore, my second object has been to reveal or deduce something of the nature of Massinger's mind and character; to attempt, if you like, to see Massinger plain. Both of these objects are comprehended in the title of this thesis.

Perhaps something of the eclipse which Massinger's work has undergone amongst students can be explained by the fact that he is deeply involved in the tangled undergrowth of collaboration which surrounds the Beaumont-Fletcher corpus. The reader will find little discussion of such matters in this thesis. Many scholars have laboured on the problems of the Jacobean collaborators, and their work forms an extensive literature in itself, embracing studies in Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, Field, Shirley, Heywood, and practically every other writer of the period as well as the vast mass of documentary material pertaining to the stage of the times. I have felt, then, that to deal adequately with such material would have called for a preliminary volume quite away from my immediate purposes, and that the consideration of such problems here would have confused the reader and obscured the object of my study, Massinger himself. It has seemed to

me preferable to approach the Jacobean situation from the other end, and, by considering Massinger in the plays which are definitely his, to make my work absolute as far as he is concerned, but at the same time make it a ground-work to the wider study of the dramatic collaboration of Fletcher and his group by establishing the Massingerian technique and method of approach. It follows, therefore, that the plays with which I am almost solely concerned in this thesis are the fifteen plays which Massinger wrote on his own.

Of course, in a general critical study of any playwright as prolific as Massinger, it is essential, in order to contain the subject within reasonable bounds, that a certain amount of material should be allowed to go by the board. This is perhaps rather a negative way of saying that I have consciously and deliberately dealt only briefly with one or two topics which are sometimes considered important in a study of a playwright. My deliberate intention in this respect will be better understood when I say that I consider such topics as jetsam rather than as flotsam. My dismissal of questions of collaboration and attribut-:ion has already been explained. Similarly, I have considered that questions of the sources of Massinger's plays have already been exhaustively covered by the industrious researches of German scholars at the beginning of this century, and that the more technical aspects of versification are, in Massinger's case, of interest chiefly in connexion with problems of collaboration. I have chosen to concentrate chiefly (though not by any means exclusively) on matters which have become prominent largely within the last thirty or forty years -- such matters as stagecraft, dramatic structure, the dramatist's view of the world, and blank-verse style. I have endeavoured to deal with such matters in ways that, while they have become commoner in studies of Shakespeare, have not yet been applied at all extensively to other writers -- and have certainly never been applied to Massinger before. I have also endeavoured to suggest new methods of approach (in particular in respect of matters of style) which might be applied with profit to other Jacobean dramatists. Throughout the thesis I have constantly compared and contrasted Massinger with Shakespeare; with Shakespeare, that is to say, both as a yardstick of dramatic excellence whose work is universally known and admired, and as the only other writer of the period with whom Massinger can be fully and fairly contrasted. In addition, in the general biographical introduction which comprises my first chapter I have re-examined and re-assessed the many conjectures and speculations which surround the facts of Massinger's life and have added some new facts and deductions of my own.

It is perhaps not out of place here to make a plea for a full and modern edition of the plays of Massinger. Gifford's edition, which I have had perforce to use for this thesis, is a remarkable piece of work for its period but is now quite out-of-date and hopelessly inadequate. Several of the plays have been published in individual

and fairly modern editions (See Bibliography), but this is not sufficient. What is required is a complete edition which will give the reader (I am not so concerned for the student of textual or bibliographical matters) a text which he can both study and enjoy and from which the scholar can draw his line-references, similar to those which we now possess for Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. Of course, such an edition would have to be part of a wider plan which embodied an edition of all the Beaumont and Fletcher plays. At the moment it is not possible to obtain Beaumont and Fletcher in an edition which is either convenient or reliable. Such an edition, the Variorum Edition, under the general editorship of A.H.Bullen, was started in 1904, but for some reason or other only four volumes of the projected twelve appeared. Scholars will never be able to start properly on all the problems of the Jacobean theatre until such editions become generally available. Until then, there must remain much research into this interesting period of the drama which it will be difficult, or even impossible, to carry out.

I should like to acknowledge the kind and generous help given to me by the Trustees of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and of the Cross Trust; the assistance rendered by Mr C.W. Pugh, M.B.E., Honorary Secretary of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, during my visit to Wiltshire; and the courtesy and politeness of many members of Library staffs, in particular those in the Library of the University of Edinburgh. I can best acknowledge my debt to other scholars, especially those authors of books on Shakespeare and the Elizabethan-Jacobean period in general, by referring the reader to the Bibliography at the end of the thesis. To those few people who have been most closely associated with me during this work I can only offer my gratitude and thanks, and know that they will appreciate how much I mean by those bare words.

Thomas A. Dunn.

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CHAPTER I.

Biography.

The ascertained facts concerning the life of Philip Massinger form as slight a biography as we possess of any of his contemporaries, possibly slighter. Apart from the dates of his baptism, his matriculation at Oxford, and his death, all that we know of him must be deduced from a handful of verses and dedications addressed to patrons, two or three contemporary documents, some commendatory poems written by friends, and the chronology of his plays, some of which are now lost. Hartley Coleridge spends twelve pages of the introduction to his edition of the plays (1.) in bemoaning this dearth of material, and in the process forgets to give us, or misrepresents, some of the facts which are indisputable. In this he is typical of a long succession of writers on Massinger, who, since a dearth of tangible evidence breeds a wealth of conjecture, have each added their own little bit of guess-work to the fabric of the biography, in many cases accepting with an uncritical lack of reserve the statements of earlier writers, and have each contributed towards that process of accretion which culminated in the assertive fantasia of Phelan (2.) .

In this biographical chapter I have tried in the first place to avoid the worst faults of the 'accretional approach' by going back (as has not apparently been done before) as much as possible to the original sources, in book or manuscript, for the verification of my material. In addition, I have explored, as far as has been practicable in the time at my disposal, the likeliest sources of new information. Of course, there must remain many new facts which are still undiscovered, since the wealth of manuscript material available in this country is only now beginning to yield up its

(1.) London, 1839. (2.) The Life of Philip Massinger. (Anglia. II. 1879.) See below, p. 11.

treasures. I have, however, derived a real satisfaction from having personally examined all these sources, both acknowledged and unacknowledged. I have, moreover, done something that, so far as I am aware, has not been done since the time of Aubrey -- that is, I have gone to Wiltshire and examined all the material now at the disposal of the Wiltshire Archaeologic-:al and Natural History Society in their collection at Devizes. From this quarry I can present evidence supporting my contention that the Massingers were a family long established in Wiltshire, and also the item concerning the churching of Massinger's mother after his birth which has never before been noted in accounts of the playwright's life. These results perhaps hardly do justice to the long hours of searching through the parish records of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire; but here again I must plead that sources which have not before been examined in this connection have for the first time received adequate treatment. So much for the incontestable facts.

Secondly, I have attempted to fill in the story of Massinger's life in the light of the accumulations of modern knowledge, by a re-examination and reassessment of the more conjectural suggestions, both those I have inherited and those I advance as part of my own contribution. In particul-:ar I have taken advantage of the many clues to his life which Massinger has dropped in dedications, prologues, and epilogues, clues which have hitherto been completely ignored by his biographers. This task was long overdue, since, with the exception of a brief chapter in the study of the Frenchman, Maurice Chelli (1.) , the inferential biography, like the demon-strable, has remained almost untouched during the past seventy years.

(1.) Paris, 1924.

I would remark, however, that the biography of a playwright does not end with the bare facts of his life, but is writ large in his plays. Accordingly, throughout the critical examination of the plays which forms the main part of this thesis, I have tried as much as possible to refer my conclusions as to Massinger the playwright to the gradually-accumulating portrait of the writer's character which reveals Massinger the man.

On the 24th of November, 1583 Philip Massinger was baptised in the parish church of St. Thomas's at Salisbury. The entry in the register reads:

> 'November, 1583. Philip Messanger, the son of Arthur, baptised the 24th.'

Since this entry was recorded in Hoare's History of Modern Wiltshire as early as 1843 (1.) , it is surprising that until quite recently his birthdate has been given tentatively as 1584.

It has been suggested (2.) that he was born at Wilton, the seat of the Earl of Pembroke, his father's employer and patron. There is no reason, however, to suppose that he was born anywhere other than in the parish of St. Thomas's. Wilton is indeed only some three miles from Salisbury; but even so, had he been born there it would have been very unusual for him not to be baptised there also, and it was largely a desire to give Massinger a famous and romantic godfather in the person of Sir Philip Sidney that led his biographers to speculate wrongly as to his birthplace. A very brief

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(1.) Sir R.C.Hoare. Pp. 619-23. (2.) E.g. by H. Coleridge, xx.

search through the records of St. Thomas's would have revealed to any interested student, as it revealed to me, not only the baptismal entry but also the further entry under 1583:

> 'Mr Messenger's wiffe churched the xvi of December, her crisom xiid.' (1.)

Unless, therefore, some substantial evidence can be produced to the contrary, it must be assumed that Massinger's parents lived in Salisbury itself and that he was born there.

The name of Massinger (usually spelled Messager or Messenger) is prominent in the records of Gloucester and Gloucestershire. For example, against the north wall of the church at Painswick, six miles south of Gloucester, there are several memorials of a Massinger family (2.). A Thomas Messenger was sheriff and mayor of Gloucester at the beginning of the sixteenth century; in 1553 a William Messenger was a Member of Parliament and afterwards mayor of the city; and the name continues to appear in connection with Gloucester after that date.

It is not necessary, however, to look outside Wiltshire for Massinger's forebears. The name is found in that county from quite early times. It is particularly common in the north, the stretch of country bounded by the triangle which may be imagined as drawn between Swindon, Malmesbury and Cirencester producing many. In 1371 a Thomas Messager was a witness in a case at Swindon (3.). Another Thomas Mesynger was one of the

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(1.) Printed in The Chrysom Book of St. Thomas, New Sarum. Ed. E.R.Nevill. (Wilts. Notes & Queries. VI. 1908-10. 304.) (2.) Article by G.W.Messinger of Boston in The New England Historical & Genealogical Register. XIV. 75-6. Boston, 1860. (3.) Abstracts of Wilts. Inquisitiones Post Mortem. Edw. III. Ed. E. Stokes. London, 1914.

marginal signatories to the deed of surrender of Bradenstoke Priory in 1538-9 (1.) ; a John Messynger is recorded as being 'of Purton' in 1539 (2.) ; a Thomas Messenger was part-owner of some lands in Cricklade, Chelworth, and Calcote in 1562 (3.) ; an Elizabeth Messenger was married in Purton in 1568 (4.) , and a John Messenger is mentioned as being of that parish in 1569 (5.) . Messengers were still in this district in the seventeenth century. Richard and William Messenger were among a number of men who got into trouble for trespassing in Braydon Forest in 1625 (6.) , and a 'Joane Messenger' married a 'Jeriemia Keyt' at Lea in 1668 (7.) . A widow, Mary Messenger, was living in Calne in 1695 (8.) .

Further south, near Marlborough, we have notice of a Richard Massager and his wife, Alice, in 1352 (9.) . Their descendants, or some of them, seem to have stayed in that district, since from 1638 onwards the name occurs very frequently in the parish records of Preshute (which describe the bearers of the name as being 'of Manton') (10.) .

Moreover Massingers appear in Salisbury itself. At the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries Ralph Messenger and his wife Olive were leaseholders of a considerable extent of land near Amesbury (11.) . It can safely be assumed that they were the parents, or

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(1.) Wilts. N. & Q. IV. 220. (2.) Musters in Wilts. 30 Hen. VIII. (B.M. TAB 436b.8.(18).) (3.) A Calendar of Feet of Fines for Wilts. Ed. E.A.Fry. (Wilts. N.& Q. Vii. 319.) (4.) Wilts Parish Registers. Ed. W.P.W.Phillimore. VII. 1908. 101. (5.) A Book of Musters in Co. Wilts., being an unpublished MS. at Longleat. (Wilts N. & Q. II. 2.) (6.) J. Sadler's MS. Extracts & Notes on Wiltshire Documents and Genealogy. The Museum, Devizes. Vol. Bradenstoke-Buttermere. .49-50. (7.) Transcript of Lea Marriage Register from a sheet headed, 'Mannor of Lea & Cleverton'. Sadler Papers. The Museum, Devizes. 107. (8.) A Rate Made in August 1695 for the Upkeep of Calne Church. (Wilts. Arch. Mag. XLVII. 1935-7. 340. (9.) Inquisitiones Post Mortem. Edw. III. (10.) Sadler MS Extracts. Vol. Patney-Rashall. 103, 109, 110, 112. (11.) Calendar of Antrobus Deeds before 1625. Ed.R.B.Pugh. Devizes, 1947.

at least, near relations, of the most notable of the early Wiltshire Massingers. This was Walter Messager, who lived in Salisbury, at Fisherton Anger. He was a Member of Parliament for Old Sarum in 1427 and again in 1430-1. He seems to have been a legal man or attorney of sorts and is mentioned in many legal transactions from 1417 to 1460 (1.) . Before 1428 he married Isabel Saucer, daughter of a prominent Salisbury citizen, and they had only two children, a son, John, who became a priest and was still living towards the end of the century, and a daughter, Ede, who died without issue (2.) . It seems fairly certain therefore, that Philip Massinger was not descended directly from Walter Messager of Salisbury. However, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Walter had brothers. In 1415, for example, a Thomas Messagier occupied a tenement in St Martin's Street in Salisbury (3.) . Certain it is that the family were of considerable position in the town, and when, only a hundred years after Walter, we find Philip's father, Arthur Massinger, not only performing the same sort of legal work as Walter, but also possessed of a brother likewise called Walter, a student at the same Oxford college, it would be rash to ignore the probable connection or to seek in Gloucester, as Phelan did (4.) , for the dramatist's parentage. Again, had his father come from Gloucester originally and been employed by the Earl of Pembroke, it seems likely that he would have lived at Wilton instead of in Salisbury as the baptismal evidence suggests.

(1.) The Tropenell Cartulary; the contents of an old Wilts. muniment chest. Ed. J.S.Davies. Devizes, 1908. 2 vols. (2.) Antrobus Deeds. Item 76. (A genealogical tree of the Saucer family.) (3.) Wilts. N. & Q. V. 1905-7. 497. See also Notes and Queries, Series V. X. 465. (4.) For a discussion of Phelan's article, see below, pp. 11-16.

In the baptismal entry, in accordance with custom, the name of the child's mother is not recorded. As far as we are concerned, although the unusually large sum (probably worth about twenty shillings expressed in present-day value) she made as an offering at her churching is indicative of her husband's financial position, she must remain 'Mr Messenger's wiffe', and we have no means of knowing who she was. There is no record of Arthur Massinger's marriage in any of the extant parish registers of Salisbury. The name does not appear under marriages in the extant registers of St. Thomas, St. Martin, St. Edmund, or the Cathedral. These registers are not, of course, complete, but (especially when it is remembered that a man goes to his fiancée's parish to be married as a rule), in the absence of any clues pointing in a definite direction, there is little point in looking elsewhere. I have not come across Arthur Massinger's name in any of the many marriage registers I have examined from Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, or London. It should be added that there is no record in Salisbury of any other children born of the marriage (1.) .

By reason of his position as an important member of the household of the Earl of Pembroke we know a great deal about Philip's father. In fact, we know a great deal more about the father than we know about the son.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the idea prevailed that the father's name was Philip. Langbaine, Wood, and Davies give it so. The error arose, as Gifford showed (2.) , from the fact that the name is printed as 'Philip' in the dedication to the second (1638) edition of

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(1.) But see the discussion on Phelan's article. (2.) xxxvii.

The Bondman (1.) . This edition, however, is full of mistakes, and in any case the name is given correctly in the first (1624) edition. Davies had persisted in giving the name as Philip in spite of Oldys's correction (2.) . It can only be assumed that Oldys is the only one of those older authorities who had seen the first edition of this play.

Arthur Massinger is probably the undergraduate of that name of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, who graduated B.A. in 1571, was elected a Fellow of Merton College in 1572, and graduated M.A. in 1577 (3.) . In 1572 there was also a Walter Messenger, presumably a brother of Arthur, who was likewise a student in St. Alban's Hall (4.) . That those two men were the father and the uncle of the dramatist is made extremely likely by the fact that when Philip in his turn went up to Oxford he too matriculated at St. Alban's Hall.

In 1578 Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed on a voyage to 'discover and possess' remote 'heathen lands not actually possessed of any Christian prince or peoples'. This voyage failed of its purpose since, after many difficulties with his crews, Gilbert had finally to abandon it and return to Plymouth, having achieved no more than a brief skirmish with the Spaniards off Cape Verde. Mr Mark Eccles has pointed out (5.) that after

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(1.) See below, p.17 for the text of this dedication. (2.) G. Langbaine: An Account of the English Dramatick Poets. 1691. Copy with MS. notes by W. Oldys in the British Museum (C.28.g.1.). Davies (Monck Mason, li, footnote) 'cannot guess from what information Oldys ... gives the Christian name of Arthur to Massinger's father'. (3.) Foster: Alumni Oxoniensis. 1004. (4.) Ibid., loc. cit. (5.) Letter in TLS., 16 July 1931. Cf. C.S.P. Dom. Eliz. 126/49.

Gilbert's first attempt to sail, when some of his company refused to put to sea again, one of the 'asured friends' who continued with him (and the list includes Sir Walter Raleigh) was a certain 'Arthure Messinger, gent'. This is almost certainly the man with whom we are dealing, since of the three Arthur Massingers who are recorded as living in England at that time, he is the only one for who we can find definite connections with the nobility and with the courtly circles which planned such ventures.

Arthur Massinger was a servant at Wilton to Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, and, on the latter's death in 1601, to his son, William, the third Earl, the man who, with his brother, later shared the honour of the dedication of the First Folio of Shakespeare. Numerous writers have been at some pains to make it quite clear that this service was not in any menial capacity. It is hardly necessary to enlarge upon this fact. Arthur Massinger's University qualifications and the business we find him transacting about the court of Queen Elizabeth are sufficient to clear us of any doubts we might have regarding his social status. Langbaine describes him as 'a gentleman belonging to the Earl of Montgomery' (1.). In a letter written by the Bishop of Salisbury to Cecil on 15 April 1596 he is described as 'Mr Messenger, the Earl's solicitor' (2.). He could, perhaps, be best described as house-steward and agent to the Earl, entrusted by him with business of a most confidential and important nature.

(1.) Op. cit., 352. It should be noted that Langbaine was wrong in styling Henry Herbert 'Earl of Montgomery'. This title was first conferred upon his second son, Philip, in 1605. (2.) See, Eccles, loc. cit. Cf. Calendar of Mss. of Marquis of Salisbury.

There are about a score of references to him in various collections of State Papers and official documents (1.) . These references are sufficient to demonstrate the kind of duties he performed and the high trust in which he was held by the Earl. For example, in 1587, Pembroke asked Burghley to grant Arthur the position of Examiner to the Council of the Welsh Marches. In 1590-1 he had to report to the Privy Council on Pembroke's behalf details concerning a suspected conspiracy involving Sir Henry Berkeley, and this report by Arthur Massinger, comprising some notes 'of Sir Henry Berkeley's manner of dealing', delivered to the Earl at Wilton on 18th April 1591. is now in the British Museum (2.) . In this report he describes himself modestly as 'being the most unworthy of many' for the position of one of the deputy lieutenants of Pembroke. Yet he must have proved himself worthy of Pembroke's confidence, for, in 1598, he was engaged in the nego-:tiations for the marriage of Pembroke's son and Burghley's grand-daughter. He journeyed with confidential despatches to present before the Privy Council, with letters to Cecil and to the Queen, and we see him busying himself with his duties connected with the Council in the Marches, raising levies and receiving monies from the Privy Council. He was Member of Parliament for Weymouth in 1588-9 and again in 1592-3, and for Shaftesbury in 1601. There is no record of any of his activities as an M.P. Both his seats were reasonably near to Wilton, and it may be presumed that they were in the control of the Earl of Pembroke.

(1.) See, for example, Lansdowne MSS. No. 63/74 & 77; No. 67/8-9; C.S.P.Dom. Eliz. under dates 28 Mar. 1587; 16 Aug. 1597; 3 Sept. 1597.; Cal. of MSS. of Marquess of Salisbury. Pts. 6, 8, 11, 12.; Sidney Papers. II., 93.; Acts of the Privy Council, passim. See also: Eccles, loc. cit.; R.H.Ball: Massinger and the House of Pembroke. (MLN. XLVI. 1931. 399-400.)

(2.) Lansdowne 67/9.

In an article in Anglia (1.) Phelan gave an extremely elaborate account of the identity and genealogy of Arthur Massinger, and since this article has never been adequately discussed in seventy years, and since one of Phelan's statements which has a direct bearing on the career of Philip Massinger has been put forward with authority as recently as 1931 (2.), it is necessary that the matter should be dealt with here.

Phelan found three Arthur Massingers living in England at the end of the sixteenth century. The first was the Salisbury Arthur whom we can definitely identify with the father of the playwright. The second was a Gloucester Arthur. This Arthur is identified (3.) by a memorial inscription in Gloucester Cathedral to an Ann Massinger, 'wife and widow of Arthur Massinger of this city, Gent., aged 52 years. She departed this life October 21st. 1636. Aetatis suae 70.' Also buried in Gloucester Cathedral is an 'Elisabeth, daughter of Arthur Messinger, Gent., who departed this life A.D. 1665. Aetatis suae 73.' The third Arthur Massinger was one who died in London, and was buried in St. Dunstan in the West, 'out of Shere Lane', on 4th June 1603; his nuncupative Will (4.) having been made two days before. In this same church were baptised three daughters of 'Arthur Messenger Esquier'. Susan was baptised on 13th January 1594, Catharine on 23rd December 1596, and Barbara on 3rd January 1599.

According to Phelan, Arthur Massinger was born about 1551 in Gloucester, of a family well-known in the town; served the Pembrokes,

(1.) Vol. II. 1879. (2.) The nuncupative Will of the London Arthur Massinger has been presented by Eccles (loc. cit.) as that of Philip's father. (3.) Phelan is here quoting the article by G.W.Messinger (See above, p. 4., note 2.) in which the latter quotes Sam. Rudder's New History of Gloucestershire. Cirencester. 1779. 173. (4.) P.C.C. 5. Harte.

living both at Wilton and in London (1.) ; and had a son Philip born in Salisbury in 1583 (2.) , a daughter Elisabeth born about 1592, and three other daughters born respectively in 1594, 1596, and 1599/1600. He had married his wife, Ann, presumably when she was about sixteen; and after his death and burial in London in 1603 at the age of 52, she had returned to Gloucester and spent the rest of her days there with an unmarried daughter.

There is, of course, a possibility that those three Arthurs are one and the same man, though no one now would present such adventurous and conjectural material with the bland confidence and authority displayed by Phelan. We may indeed exclaim with Mrs Malaprop; 'You are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?' (3.) ; and sympathise with Furnivall when he protests (4.) . However attractive I find the idea of the three men being one, I can only agree with Furnivall when he states; 'The fair presumption is, that the three men are three distinct persons, with three distinct families. At least, they must be so treated till they can be proved to be identical' (5.) .

In a reply to Furnivall, Phelan attempted to support his contentions (6.) but he merely succeeded in showing them to be still more suppositious. He repeats the categorical statements of his first article, and demonstrates the dubiousness of his arithmetic when he states that Ann Massinger must have been 'about nineteen' when she married Arthur. I have already

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(1.) The three children baptised in London were baptised during the winter when, presumably, the Pembrokes were in residence there. (2.) Phelan did not know the baptismal entry, and gives Massinger's birthdate as 1584. (3.) The Rivals, IV., ii. (4.) F.J.Furnivall: A Couple of Protests. (Anglia. II. 1879. 504.) (5.) Pp. 505-6. (6.) In Anglia III. 1880. 361.

corrected this error silently in a previous paragraph. However, there are one or two remarks which may be made before leaving Phelan's article.

These three men cannot be proved to be different. Nor, it might be added, can they be proved to be the same. The discovery of the name of the wife of either the Salisbury Arthur or the London Arthur would be probably the best and most easily-found evidence. The baptismal and churching entries do not give a name to the Salisbury Arthur's wife. The Will does not give a name to the London Arthur's wife, although she is named as legatee. Were the name of either discovered, then there might be a positive argument for or against part at least of Phelan's case.

In the comparison of the Gloucester with the London Arthurs the following points must be noted. Apart from the inscription in the Cathedral, I have so far found no record of the activities of any Arthur Massinger in Gloucester during the period. He does not seem to have died or been buried there; in fact, his widow's memorial inscription, giving the gratuitous information that he was 'aged 52 years', is perhaps a little unusual and would seem to suggest that he was buried elsewhere. The birthdates of the daughter buried in Gloucester and of the three girls baptised in London fit together neatly and accord with what we know Ann's age must have been. Thus far, then, the facts do not preclude the identity of these two Arthurs. But the London Arthur had a brother called Richard who, according to the Will, was standing by his death-bed in 1603, and there is no record of any Richard Massinger in Gloucester. In addition, the memorial inscription says that Arthur Massinger was 'of this city' (i.e. of Gloucester) and it seems unlikely that either the London or the Salisbury

Arthurs should be so described. It would also seem reasonable to assume either that Ann Massinger was a native of Gloucester or that her husband had a house there; otherwise she would not have settled down and eventually been buried there. The London Arthur, we know, had a house in the parish of St. Dunstan's in the West; and it would seem natural for his widow to stay on there in London, especially since she had a brother-in-law already living in the city, to say nothing (if we add the third Arthur Massinger) of a son who was reaching an age where he would have to make his own way in the world. It is also perhaps interesting, if we take the families of the Gloucester and the London Arthurs together, to notice that out of four daughters none is called after her mother.

If we compare the Gloucester and the Salisbury Arthurs, we may note that, while there are no such close correspondences between them as there are between the Gloucester and London families, there is also an absence of negative evidence. The Salisbury Arthur might have been born in Gloucester and married a girl in that city. The question is open; and the only fact that does not quite accord with this identification is the gap of nearly ten years between the birthdates of Philip and Elisabeth.

We have the same gap to account for if we attempt to combine all three Arthurs, with the added difficulty that we have to explain why Ann Massinger, who had a son when she was seventeen or thereabouts, had no more children until she was twenty-six and then had four in succession. Unless Arthur Massinger married first Philip's mother, and then after her death a Gloucester woman, there seems no explanation for this gap in

childbearing -- although, to be sure, there might be children between Philip and Elisabeth whose names have not come down to us. Certainly it is true that, in his post as Examiner to the Council in the Welsh Marches, the Salisbury Arthur may have been in Gloucester often enough. He might even have had a house there and thus been entitled to the description 'of this city'.

But there is no end to the amount of conjecture that can be indulged in on this score. The point to note is that it is conjecture, not fact as Phelan suggested, and there is not one atom of evidence linking the three men. I would myself hazard the guess that the Arthur in Salisbury and the Arthur in Gloucester are quite different persons; the balance of probability, in my opinion, being swayed by the fact that there were already families of Massingers in each city, in Salisbury as well as in Gloucester.

However, for the purposes of the biography of Philip Massinger, the London and the Salisbury Arthurs are the prime consideration. If they were the same man, then we should have a perfectly reasonable explanation for Philip's leaving Oxford without taking a degree and not have to resort to the fanciful one of his alienating a hypothetical patron by being converted to Roman Catholicism (1.) . The identification of the London with the Salisbury Arthur seems the likeliest part of Phelan's case, even if it means allowing for the long gap between the birth of Philip and the birth of a second child, and endowing Arthur with a brother called Richard who, unlike Walter, did not attend Oxford. We know that the Salisbury Arthur

(1.) See below, p. 71 .

spent a great deal of his time in London, and we know that William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke, who succeeded to the title on the death of his father in 1601, hardly ever left London. These would have been sufficient reasons for the fact that by 1603 Arthur Massinger had a permanent residence in the city. There, for want of evidence (though it is almost certain that positive evidence must exist somewhere), the matter must rest.

Sufficient has been said of Massinger's family to indicate that his background was certainly not humble or lowly, as was that of many of his fellow dramatists. Yet it was not courtly. It was rather that of the professional class, a vantage-point from which to view both the Court and the City, a betwixt-and-between position. This factor of family background, when taken along with the classless, and consequently 'social-climbing', position of the professional playwright, goes a long way to explain the range of the social interest and the social preferences and prejudices involved in the plays. The society presented is that of the Court, even although it is a sort of bourgeois Court; the City and 'trade' in general is scorned and the lower classes are very sketchily presented; and the general impression is of a playwright almost, but not quite, in the upper classes and resenting his ambiguous position. It is well to remember, however, that throughout his career Massinger seems to have been treated with a certain amount of social consideration, as, for example, when he is referred to in Sir Henry Herbert's Office Book as 'Mr.' Massinger, a term of address not commonly used by the Master of the Revels in describing a

mere playwright (1.) .

Of his childhood there is nothing known without a peradventure. A number of writers have suggested that he received his education as a page in the service of the Countess of Pembroke. Cunningham finds in the plays a great number of allusions to the position and duties of pages. But I cannot think that he was ever in service with the Countess. In the Ded-:ication to The Bondman (1624), which is addressed to Philip, Earl of Montgomery, the younger son of his father's patron, Massinger says:

> 'However I could never arrive at the happiness to be made known to your lordship, yet a desire, born with me, to make a tender of all duties and service to the noble family of the Herberts, descended to me as an inheritance from my dead father, Arthur Massinger. Many years he happily spent in the service of your honourable house, and died a servant to it; leaving his to be ever most glad and ready, to be at the command of all such as derive themselves from his most honoured master, your lordship's most noble father.' (2.)

Massinger, then, could hardly have been a page in the Pembroke household without having met Philip, especially when it is remembered that they were of an age; and certainly so experienced a writer of wheedling dedications would not have failed to mention the fact that he himself had been in service with his prospective patron's family.

He received his early education, we may assume, in Salisbury, prob-ably at the grammar-school; and during that period he would have plenty of opportunity of observing, but from a distance, both the Pembrokes and the large circle of literary celebrities grouped around the Countess.

(1.) Herbert, 26 and 41: 'The Noble Bondman: written by Philip Messenger, gent'; and 54: 'The Guardian, a play of Mr. Messengers.' The title page of The Duke of Milan, the first of the uncollaborated plays published (1623), describes it as 'written by Philip Massinger Gent.' (2.) Gifford, ii. 3.

It is likely that it was while he was in Salisbury that he received his first taste of the theatre through the Earl of Pembroke's Men, who played at Wilton, and in whom naturally both he and his father would take an interest. Hartley Coleridge even goes as far as suggesting that Philip played with them (1.) . Bit it is more likely that merely seeing them gave him an original hankering which was strengthened when he arrived at manhood in the golden days of Elizabethan drama.

Education he did receive, since on the 14th of May, 1602, he matriculated at St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, styling himself the son of a gentleman -- 'Sarisburiensis, generosi filius' -- and from Salisbury, not, be it noted, from London or Gloucester. What he did at Oxford we do not know. Wood says (2.) that he spent more time on poetry and romances than on logic and philosophy; Langbaine says (3.) , 'he closely pursued his studies in Alban Hall, for three or four years space'; and what Langbaine says is not contradicted by Oldys. None of those older authorities is at all reliable, though Wood is probably more so than Langbaine since he did at least attempt to find out some of his facts, whereas Langbaine contented himself with his knowledge of books, dedications, and the like, producing in consequence such nonsense as the startling statement that Massinger was born 'in the reign of King Charles the First'!

It is not known how long Massinger was at Oxford, since he left without taking a degree and there is no other evidence as to his stay. Chelli states (4.) , on what authority I do not know, that he left Oxford in

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(1.) P. xxiv. (2.) Athen. Oxon. (Ed. Bliss) II. 654. (3.) Account, 352.
(4.) Drame, 43.

1608. According to Langbaine, he was at Oxford for 'three or four years space' (1.), and Wood says that he was there 'for about four years or more'. (2.) Hartley Coleridge suggests (3.) that he probably left Oxford in 1606; and this account has been followed by Chambers when he states (4.) that Massinger left Oxford without taking a degree in 1606. It is reasonable to suppose that he was financed in his studies by his father, and not by Pembroke. Wood seems to imply that he was supported by Pembroke and that the latter withdrew his help when he discovered that his protégé was spending more of his time on poetry than upon logic and phil osophy. At Oxford, Wood says,

> 'tho' encouraged in his studies by the earl of Pembroke, yet he applied his mind more to poetry and romances for about four years or more, than to logic and philosophy, which he ought to have done, and for that end was patronized.' (5.)

It seems hardly likely that the third Earl of Pembroke, a renowned patron of the arts, should have withdrawn his support from a promising lad for such a reason. I can myself see no reason at all why he should not have been supported at the University by his father. Langbaine (admittedly not a good authority) says that Arthur Massinger

> 'bestowed a liberal education on our author, sending him to the University of Oxford, at eighteen years of Age.' (6.)

Certainly, from what we can guess as to Arthur Massinger's circumstances, he could well afford to support a son at Oxford. In this connection it is interesting to notice a statement made by Cleremond in The Parliament of Love which, presenting a typical attitude of Massinger's to matters of lineage, has a somewhat autobiographical flavour:

(1.) Account, 352. (2.) Ath. Ox. II., 654. (3.) P. xxxi. (4.) Elizabethan Stage, III., 436. (5.) Loc. cit. (6.) Loc. cit.

'My birth
Was noble as 'tis ancient, nor let it relish
Of arrogance, to say my father's care,
With curiousness and cost, did train me up
In all those liberal qualities that commend
A gentleman.' (1.)

If he were financed by his father, as seems to be natural, then lack of money on Arthur Massinger's death, whenever that occurred, would in a very short time be sufficient reason to force him to give up his studies and seek his fortune in London. Of course, if his father was indeed the man who died in London in 1603, less than a year after Philip had entered Oxford, and if Philip continued in residence until 1606, then he must have received assistance from someone. But it is certain, as seems clear from other evidence that I shall mention later (2.), that he got no help from Pembroke, and it seems only reasonable to suppose that he was supported by some member of his own family -- by his mother, or by an uncle.

Little or nothing as to the length of his stay at Oxford can be inferred from his work. His knowledge of the classics, although he moves about quite freely in the somewhat restricted space of his allusions to classical mythology and Roman and Greek history, could have been gathered by anyone from a reading of Golding's Metamorphoses, North's Plutarch or Lodge's Seneca, not to mention many other store-houses of classical inform-:ation. His probable ability to read both French and Spanish is evidence of some learning, but certainly not very much more than would be acquired by any intelligent young man-about-town who had never been at a university, and of course neither Oxford nor Cambridge at that time taught modern

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(1.) V., i. (2.) See below, p. 33.

languages. As for his dry, legalistic, and argumentative mind, it is a trait of character rather than a demonstration of an academic training. His use of the forms and terms of logic, however, his obvious concern with moral problems as subject for debate and didacticism, and the somewhat 'bookish' inspiration which lies behind much of his view of life and colours his terms of reference, incline me to the opinion that he certainly spent more than a few bare months at Oxford. On the other hand, if we remember the wide knowledge of literature and the classics displayed by the self-educated Ben Jonson (or even by Shakespeare, for that matter), we are bound to admit that such evidence may be very deceptive. If he did stay up at Oxford for several years, as seems likely, there is no necessity to attach much significance to the fact that he did not take a degree. The possession of a degree did not have then the importance that is attached to it now. It was not an essential preliminary to any profession, except possibly to that of the Church, and Massinger seems to have had too much practical hard-headedness and independence of spirit, in spite of a pro-:nounced interest in matters theological and ecclesiastical, to attach himself to such a calling. It is certainly not necessary to adduce, as Gifford did, a hypothetical conversion to Roman Catholicism as a reason for his leaving Oxford prematurely.

In short, then, there is no documentary evidence at all which gives us any idea of Philip Massinger's life between 1602 when he matriculated at Oxford and 1613 when he was working (or rather, not working, for he was in prison at the time) as one of Henslowe's hacks.

There is, however, one interesting conjecture about this period, made by Meissner (1). It is that Massinger went to Germany in the company of English comedians who played there under John Greene.

This English company was performing in Graz from February 6th to 20th, 1608, during the celebrations marking the betrothal of the Archduchess Maria Magdalena to the young Cosimo de Medici. In a letter to her brother, describing the performances that had taken place, the Archduchess includes the following piece of information:

> 'Am Montag von ein[en] Herzog von Florenz, der sich in eines Edelmanns tochter verliebt hat.'

This description, brief as it is, certainly bears a superficial resemblance to Massinger's The Great Duke of Florence. I think, however, that Meissner is taking too much for granted when he assumes from this that Massinger must have been one of Greene's company. Massinger's The Great Duke of Florence was licensed for the Queen's Men on July 5th 1627 (2). Internal evidence would suggest that it was written in 1624, that is about the same time as Massinger wrote The Bondman, The Renegado, and The Parliament of Love for the Queen's Men -- certainly before the death of James I and after the return of Charles from his visit to Spain. There are no signs in the play of any other hand than Massinger's, and far from being prentice work it seems to have been rather carefully written. The hold-up in the production of the play can easily be accounted for if we remember the upset following the King's death and the reorganisation of the theatrical companies at this

(1) Die Englischen Komoedianten zur Zeit Shakespeares in Oesterreich, von J. Meissner. (Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur.) Wien, 1884. Pp. 42-3; 100-02. (2) Herbert, 31.

time, the ravages of the plague in 1625, and the return of Massinger, who was writing for the Queen's Men for a year or so before 1625, to the King's Men. In addition, it may be noted that Massinger displays no knowledge of German anywhere in his work, nor does he show any understanding of the German character other than the conventional English view that the Germans were rather stupid men who drank too much.

Miss Janet M. Stochholm, the most recent editor of The Great Duke of Florence (1), has conjectured a link between the German play, the anonymous A Knack to Know a Knave (1594) which is certainly one of the sources of Massinger's play, and a lost play, mentioned by Henslowe, on Cosmo (1592-3). She suggests that Greene returned to England in about 1619-20 on the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, during this spell in London he became friendly with Massinger, and that it was then that Massinger adapted the play. In view of my later discussion on Massinger's religious faith, it is perhaps interesting to note that Greene was very probably a Roman Catholic. In any case, Greene's company were acting at the court of Saxony in Dresden between June and December, 1626, and among the plays they produced, as well as a play on the Duke of Florence, was 'eine Tragödia von der Märtherin Dorothea' which seems from its title to be a version of Massinger and Dekker's The Virgin Martyr. The suggestion is that Greene gave the idea of The Great Duke of Florence to Massinger, and took The Virgin Martyr, a very attractive play from the theatrical point of view, back to Germany with him. While agreeing that The Great Duke of Florence certainly owes

(1) (Th.PhD. Bryn Mawr, 1929.) Baltimore, 1933.

something to A Knack to Know a Knave, I can see no reason at all for connecting the other two plays with Massinger, and would certainly affirm that there are no traces of any earlier form or any earlier hand in the play.

On the whole, then, I feel that any connection between Massinger and Greene's company in Germany must be discounted, and until any evidence turns up pointing in some specific direction, what Philip Massinger was doing between the ages of twenty and thirty must remain a matter for our imaginations. The nature of his many allusions to soldiering, his minute knowledge of the military craft, and his frequent defence of that despised profession, might suggest that he had some practical experience under arms, but I feel that point cannot be pressed in the absence of anything other than internal evidence. Five years of idling and doing odd jobs about London would fill the gap easily and would be more than sufficient to bring him into Henslowe's grasp.

Our first definite sight of Massinger shows him in somewhat miserable circumstances. This is in the famous 'Tripartite Letter', a mendicant epistle, addressed to Henslowe by Daborne, Field and Massinger from prison. (The prison is not known.)

> 'Mr. Hinchlow
> You understand our unfortunate extremitie, and I doe not thincke you so void of christianite, but that you would throw so much money into the Thames as wee request now of you; rather then endanger so many innocent lives; you know there is xl. more at least to be receaved of you, for the play, wee desire you to lend us vl. of that, which shall be allowed to you without which wee cannot be bayled, nor I play any more till this be dispatch'd, it will loose you xxl. ere the end of the next weeke, beside the hinderance of the next new play, pray Sir consider our cases with humanitie, and now

give us cause to acknowledge you our true freind in time of neede; wee have entreated M. Davison to deliver this note, as well to wittnesse your love as our promises, and allwayes acknowledgment to be ever

Your most thanckfull; and loving freinds,
Nat: Field.'

'The mony shall be abated out of the mony remayns for the play of Mr Fletcher & ours

Rob: Daborne.'

'I have ever founde you a true loving freinds to mee & in soe small a suite it beeinge honest I hope you will not fail us.

Philip Massinger.'

The letter is addressed, 'To our most loving friend, Mr Philip Hinchlow, esquire, These.' (1.)

If we forgo the sorrowful headshakes which biographers are wont to give on presenting this letter (after all, debt and imprisonment were almost the common lot of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights), there are one or two facts about Massinger's life which emerge (2.). The letter shows that by 1613, ten years before any play was licensed under his name as sole author, he was established as a writer for Henslowe, working with Daborne and Field, and, as Daborne's note suggests, with Fletcher also. During this period he was engaged in the melancholy and unremunerative task of collaborating with other authors and in cobbling and writing new scenes for old plays. He was poor, as all such writers were poor, and the undertone of poverty and complaint which runs through all his plays and begging dedications had already been sounded. On the occasion of the imprisonment, presumably for debt, Henslowe, according to a receipt signed

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(1.) See W.W.Greg: Henslowe Papers: Article 68. The transcript given by Gifford (p.xlix.) is most inaccurate. There is also a photograph of this letter in Cruickshank's Philip Massinger, opp. p.4. (2.) It might be added that the letter also shows that Massinger spelled his name with an 'e'. The participial phrase, 'it beeinge honest' is a typical Massingerian interpolation. Cf. below, Chap. VI., passim.

by Davison, lent them the money asked for. But two years later two of the trio at least were still impoverished, still in the clutches of the astute businessman of the theatre, for on the 4th July, 1615 Massinger and Daborne gave a joint bond to him for £3.

Henslowe's manner of dealing with his writers and the poverty in which they lived are demonstrated in a remarkable series of letters to him by Daborne (1). In one of them, probably written in 1613 or 1614, Massinger is mentioned:

'Sir,

I did thinke I deservd as much mony as Mr Messenger, although knowinge your great disbursments I forbour to urdge you beyond your own pleasure; but my occations press me so neerly, that I cannot but expect this reasonable curtesy, consydering I pay you half my earnings in the play besyds my continuall labor and chrdge imployd only for you; which if it prove not proffitable now, you shall see I will give you honnest satisfaction for the utmost farthinge I owe yow, and take another course. Whearfore this being my last, I beseech you way my great occation this once, and make up my mony even with Mr Messengers, which is to let me have xs. more. I am sure I shall deserv it, and you can never doe me a tymelyer curtesy, resting at your commaund.

Robt. Daborne.' (2).

Massinger must have served a hard apprenticeship, living on advances and the favour of Henslowe, and dependent upon the charity of influential friends. Apprenticeship he did serve, and the veil which covers this period of collaboration and hack-work covers also a deal of labour, during which his verse, his technique, and his stagecraft developed. When the period of the plays of undisputed and one-man authorship came in the 1620's his style had crystallised and was mature, showing the firm touch of the experienced and long-trained craftsman.

(1.) Printed by Swaen. Anglia, XX. 1897-8. (2.) Anglia, XX. 171.

How he managed to survive during this period on what he earned by working for the players will never be known, but a hint is given in the dedications to several of the printed plays. The Dedicatory Epistle to The Unnatural Combat, for example, addressed to 'My Much Honoured Friend, Anthony Sentleger, of Oakham in Kent, Esq.,' runs:

'Sir,

> That the patronage of trifles, in this kind, hath long since rendered dedications and inscriptions obsolete and out of fashion, I perfectly understand, and cannot but ingenuously confess that I, walking in the same path, may be truly argued by you of weakness or wilful error: but the reasons and defences for the tender of my service in this way to you are so just, that I cannot (in my thankfulness for so many favours received) but be ambitious to publish them. Your noble father, Sir Warham Sentleger (whose remarkable virtues must be ever remembered), being while he lived a master for his pleasure in poetry, feared not to hold converse with divers whose necessitous fortunes made it their profession, among which, by the clemency of his judgment, I was not in the last place admitted. You (the heir of his honour and estate) inherited his good inclinations to men of my poor quality, of which I cannot give any ampler testimony, than by my free and glad profession of it to the world. Besides (and it was not the least encouragement to me) many of eminence, and the best of such, who disdain-:ed not to take notice of me, have not thought themselves disparaged, I dare not say honoured, to be celebrated the patrons of my humble studies. In the first file of which, I am confident, you shall have no cause to blush to find your name written. I present you with this old tragedy, without prologue or epilogue, it being composed in a time (and that too, peradventure, as knowing as this) when such by-ornaments were not advanced above the fabric of the whole work. Accept it, I beseech you, as it is, and continue your favour to the author,
>
> Your servant,
> Philip Massinger.' (1.)

This epistle, then, written in 1639, the last year of his life, suggests not only that Massinger was already indebted to the St. Legers, father and son, and to numerous other patrons, but also that he was hopeful of continuing patronage. In other words, at the end of his long career he had not succeeded in gaining a competence. Significant, too, is the

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(1.) Gifford, i., 125.

description of 'divers whose necessitous fortunes' made playwriting their profession, which implies that writers were driven to their trade merely by want. One would never, for example, find a lawyer describing his profession thus. But in spite of the implication that Massinger considered that he was made for worthier things, we must remember that playwrights, in the seventeenth century at least, were ever a mendicant crew, knowing only beggary, never luxury, and rarely comfort; and in view of Massinger's frequent expression of the serious purpose of his calling perhaps we must not conclude too much from his depreciatory comment in this one case. Nevertheless, he does speak of 'men of my poor quality', thus acknowledging himself one with all other playwrights, in poverty as in profession (1).

The phrase occurs again in a dedication which gives us the name of another man who had been Massinger's patron. This is the Dedicatory Epistle to The Great Duke of Florence, addressed in a less comradely, more submissive way than that to The Unnatural Combat, to 'The truly honoured, and my noble Favourer, Sir Robert Wiseman, Knt., of Thorrel's-Hall in Essex':

> 'Sir,
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> As I dare not be ungrateful for the many benefits you have heretofore conferred upon me, so I have just reason to fear that my attempting this way to make satisfaction (in some measure) for so due a debt, will further engage me. The most able in my poor quality have made use of Dedications in this nature, to make the world take notice (as far as in them lay) who and what they were that gave supportment and protection to their studies, being more willing to publish the doer than receive a benefit in a corner. For myself, I will freely, and with a zealous thankfulness, acknowledge, that for many years I had but

(1) See below, p. 74 for further discussion of this phrase.

faintly subsisted, if I had not often tasted of your bounty ... ... Accept, I beseech you, the tender of my service, and in the list of those you have obliged to you, contemn not the name of

Your true and faithful honourer,
Philip Massinger.' (1.)

In two other dedications Massinger took the liberty of combining the names of more than one friend. Thus, The Roman Actor is addressed to 'My much honoured and most true Friends', Sir Philip Knyvet, Sir Thomas Jeay (the poet (2.)), and Mr Thomas Bellingham, and Massinger says:

'How much I acknowledge myself bound for your so many and extraordinary favours conferred upon me, as far as it is in my power, posterity shall take notice; I were most unworthy of such noble friends, if I should not, with all thankfulness, profess and own them. In the composition of this Tragedy you were my only supporters, and it being now by your principal encouragement to be turned into the world, it cannot walk safer than under your protection. It hath been happy in the suffrage of some learned and judicious gentlemen when it was presented, nor shall they find cause, I hope, in the perusal, to repent them of their good opinion of it. ... ... I ever held it the most perfect birth of my Minerva; and therefore in justice offer it to those that have best deserved of me; who, I hope, in their courteous acceptance will render it worth their receiving, and ever, in their gentle construction of my imperfections, believe they may at their pleasure dispose of him, that is wholly and sincerely

devoted to their service,
Philip Massinger.' (3.)

And in the dedication to The Maid of Honour, Massinger gives reasons for bracketing his two patrons, Sir Francis Foljambe (4.) and Sir Thomas Bland:

'That you have been, and continued so for many years, since you vouchsafed to own me, patrons to me and my despised studies, I cannot but with all humble thankfulness acknowledge: and living, as you have done, inseparable in your friendship, ... I held it as impertinent as

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(1.) 1636. Gifford, ii., 429. (2.) See below, p. 56 . (3.) 1629. Gifford, ii., 329. (4.) There is a short poem addressed by Massinger to Foljambe on this occasion. See facsimile, Gifford, iv., 592. (Copy, B.M. Addit. 1854-75. 28.655 ff., 194b.)

absurd, in the presentment of my service in this kind, to divide you. A free confession of a debt in a meaner man is the amplest satisfaction to his superiors; and I heartily wish, that the world may take notice, and from myself, that I hab not to this time subsisted, but that I was supported by your frequent courtesies and favours.' (1.)

It is convenient to mention the other dedicatory epistles here. None of them, with the exception of that to The Bondman, from which I have already quoted (2.), contains the biographical juice which I have squeezed from those I have just been discussing. These dedications comprise:- The Duke of Milan (1623), addressed to Lady Katherine Stanhope (3.); The Renegado (1630), addressed to George Harding, twelfth Lord Berkeley; The Picture (1630), addressed to the 'Noble Society of the Inner Temple'; The Emperor of the East (1632), addressed to John, Lord Mohun; and A New Way to Pay Old Debts (1633), addressed to Robert, Earl of Carnarvon, the Catholic son-in-law to Philip Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery (4.). In every case so far, the dates I have given are the dates of publication, not the dates of the writing of the play.

The dedication of The Emperor of the East is perhaps of interest. After some fifteen or sixteen highly-flourished lines of conventional address to Lord Mohun, Massinger goes on to say:

'My worthy friend, Mr. Aston Cockayne, your nephew, to my extraordinary content, delivered to me that your lordship, at your vacant

(1.) 1632. Gifford, iii., 3. (2.) See above, p. 17. (3.) There is a poem addressed to her by Massinger (presumably on this occasion) in a 17th Century MS. in the library of Trinity College, Dublin (G.2.21. pp. 557-9.). It is entitled: 'A New yeares Guift presented to my Lady and M:rs the then Lady Katherine Stanhop now Countesse of Chesterfield. By Phill: Messinger.' It is printed by Grosart: Engl. Studien, xxvi., and by A.H. Cruickshank: Philip Massinger, Appendix XVII. 208-11. (4.) See below, p. 72.

> hours, sometimes vouchsafed to peruse such trifles of mine as have passed the press, and not alone warranted them in your gentle suffrage, but disdained not to bestow a remembrance of your love and intended favour to me.' (1.)

This dedication is chiefly interesting for the evidence it provides, from Massinger's side, for a friendship between him and Cokaine; whereas the unsupported statement of the latter, who was perhaps somewhat prone to claim an excessive acquaintance with the poets, might not be sufficient (2.). The remaining dedications are complimentary addresses or formal appeals for assistance and 'protection', and since, as Dr Johnson said, 'The known style of a dedication is flattery' (3.), they are rather courtly flourishes than expressions of genuine feeling. Thus Massinger could address Lady Katherine Stanhope in 1623 in almost the same terms as he used ten years later in addressing the Earl of Carnarvon (4.).

The patrons, then, whom we know for certain, from statements in the dedications, gave Massinger some assistance are:-

Thomas Bellingham.
Sir Thomas Bland.
Aston Cokaine (probably) (5.).
Sir Francis Foljambe.
Sir Thomas Jay.
Sir Philip Knyvet (6.).
John, Lord Mohun.
Anthony St. Leger. (Later Sir Anthony.)
Sir Warham St. Leger.
Sir Robert Wiseman.

(1.) Gifford, iii., 242-3. (2.) See below, p.65 . (3.) Boswell: Tour to the Hebrides. 4 Oct. 1773. (4.) Cf. Gifford, i., 235, and iii., 491. (5.) Cokaine was not knighted until 1641. (6.) Cf. B.M. Harl. MS. 6918 (fol.52r. to 54r.) which is a poem of 138 lines, entitled The Virgin's Character and signed 'P.M.'. From line 35 it is apparent that it was addressed to 'Knevets first daughter' (i.e. Dorothy Knyvet, born 1611) and the context makes it likely that it was written some time in the years 1625-30 when this girl was unmarried but of a marriageable age. Printed by A.K.McIlwraith, RES. IV. 1928. 64-8. The poem is undoubtedly by Massinger.

And if we add the numerous members of the Inner Temple whom Massinger mentions but does not name in the dedication to The Picture, and remember how often 'frequent bounties' are mentioned, it will be realised how large a part of Massinger's income must have been made up of such gratuities -- and that in days when a man could be passing rich with a great deal less than 'forty pounds a year'. While none of these men could be called 'grand patrons' of the arts, they were all wealthy men and sincere amateurs. Seven of these men (in addition to an unknown number of members of the Inner Temple) are specifically named by Massinger as his 'friends', and from this we can get an idea of the circles, professional and literary, in which he liked to move. There is no means of knowing how much support he received or on what terms he existed with these men or with the more noble patrons to whom his other plays are dedicated.

The question of Massinger's relationship with the Herberts, however, merits closer and more realistic attention than it has received so far.

Undoubtedly Massinger remembered with affection the establishment of the Herberts at Wilton. In A New Way to Pay Old Debts he gives Lord Lovell, the model of noble chivalry, the following speech:

> 'Nor am I of that harsh and rugged temper
> As some great men are taxed with, who imagine
> They part from the respect due to their honours,
> If they use not all such as follow them,
> Without distinction of their births, like slaves.
> I am not so conditioned: I can make
> A fitting difference between my footboy,
> And a gentleman by want compelled to serve me.' (1)

(1) III., i.

And in The Bondman, in whose dedication to the Earl of Montgomery he speaks of the 'many years' that his father had 'happily spent' in the service of the honourable house of Herbert, he makes Marullo say:

> 'Happy those times
> When lords were styled fathers of families,
> And not imperious masters! When they numbered
> Their servants almost equal with their sons,
> Or one degree beneath them! ... ...
> ... . All things ordered
> With such decorum, as wise lawmakers,
> From each well-governed private house derived
> The perfect model of a commonwealth.' (1.)

From the information that has been handed down to us we can be sure that this is not merely a flattering description of the modus vivendi at Wilton under the second Earl of Pembroke.

In addition, in some of the early uncollaborated plays, notably The Bondman and The Maid of Honour, Massinger's criticism of Buckingham and of the foreign policy of James I was almost certainly conditioned to a certain extent by his adherence to the party of opposition, among whom William, the third Earl of Pembroke, figured prominently (2.) .

As I have suggested previously, it is not likely that Massinger was supported at Oxford by Pembroke. À propos his leaving Oxford, Gifford says that it was 'not .... on account of the Earl of Pembroke withholding his assistance, for it does not appear that he ever afforded any' (3.) ; and he goes on to remark,

> 'Why the earl of Pembroke, the liberal friend and protector of literature in all its branches, neglected a young man to whom his assistance was so necessary, and who, from the acknowledged services of his father, had so many and just claims on it; one, too, who would

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(1.) IV., ii. (2.) See Chapter V., p. 255ff for a fuller discussion of this matter. (3.) xliii.

> have done his patronage such singular honour, I have no means of ascertaining: that he was never indebted to it is, I fear, indisputable; since the Poet, of whose character gratitude forms a striking part, while he recurs perpetually to his hereditary obligations to the Herbert family, anxiously avoids all mention of his name.'

Gifford then makes the conjecture that this alienation was due to Massinger's having been converted to Roman Catholicism. I discuss this suggestion more fully later (1), but at the moment it is sufficient to comment that such a conversion would be likely to alienate Massinger just as much from Montgomery, Pembroke's younger brother, and it seems to be a fact that Montgomery did offer Massinger some patronage.

Massinger did, as we now know, approach William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke, for assistance. The evidence for this rests in 'a Letter written upon occasion to the Earle of Pembroke Lo: Chamberlaine', a begging poem of which a copy exists in manuscript at Trinity College, Dublin (2). This poem, written in miserable rhyming couplets, seems to have been composed probably some time in the late 1610's, or at least before Massinger had published anything on his own account, since in it he says:

> 'If the most worthy then, whose pay's but praise
> Or a few spriggs from the now withering bayes
> Grone underneath their wants what hope have I
> Scarce yet allowed one of the Company
> Of better fortune.' (3.)

And a little later he exclaims, with a very characteristic independence and and spirit, after he has stated that he would never write pretty poems just

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(1.) See below, p. 71 . (2.) The same MS. (G.2.21.) as the poem to Lady Katherine Stanhope (See above, p. 30, note 3.), pp. 554-7. This MS. is a copy, not in Massinger's own hand. Printed by Grosart: Engl. Studien. XXVI., and by Cruickshank, Philip Massinger, 208-11. (3.) Lines 13-17.

to please patrons, and ignore them when they refused to give any money,

> 'I would not for a pension or A place
> Part soe with myne owne Candor, lett me rather
> Live poorely on those toyes I would not father
> Not knowne beyond A Player or a Man .....
> Ere soe grow famous.' (1.)

He does not, nevertheless, seem to have received any help from William Herbert. There is no other document which connects him with the noble Lord no play is dedicated to him; and he is not mentioned in the dedication of The Bondman.

With William Herbert's younger brother, Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery and later fourth Earl of Pembroke, however, there is positive evidence of patronage. It is clear, from a passage that I have quoted previously (2.), that Montgomery was not Massinger's patron before the publication of The Bondman in 1624. Doubtless, however, the anti-Buckingham passages in the play attracted Montgomery's favourable attention, since Massinger says in the dedication:

> 'When it was first acted [i.e. in December, 1623], your lordship's liberal suffrage taught others to allow it for current, it having received the undoubted stamp of your lordship's allowance.' (3.)

Perhaps, as a result of the anti-Buckingham passages, Montgomery sent a gift of money backstage for the author along with his commendations. This might even have been Massinger's intention from the very first. At any rate, we can be sure that the similar expression of the 'party-line' in The Maid of Honour would also have a beneficial effect upon Massinger's purse. Montgomery's patronage seems to have continued, since at the

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(1.) Lines 40-45. (2.) See above, p. 17. (3.) Gifford, ii., 3.

beginning of 1636 we find Massinger sending him a poem, Sero sed serio (1.), condoling with him on the death of his eldest son, Charles, who died of smallpox in Florence a year and a half after his early marriage. Apologising for not having offered a poem on the occasion of the wedding, Massinger says:

> 'I curs'd my absence then
> That hindered it, and bit my star-cross'd pen,
> Too busy in stage-blanks, and trifling rhyme,
> When such a cause call'd, and so apt a time
> To pay a general debt; mine being more
> Than they could owe, who since, or heretofore,
> Have labour'd with exalted lines to raise
> Brave piles, or rather pyramids of praise
> To Pembroke and his family.' (2.)

The 'Pembroke' mentioned here is, of course, Massinger's patron, who had succeeded to the title on the death of his brother in 1630. It might be added that the poem is addressed to 'the Right Honourable my most singular good Lord and Patron, Philip Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery'. Even if we consider that Massinger's omitting to raise a 'hymenaeal song' at the marriage of Charles, Lord Herbert, was a somewhat tactless error on his part, it must be admitted that there is ample evidence here that he was in fact quite considerably beholden financially to Pembroke. We can, then, safely assume that the 'patron' referred to in the Prologue to the revision of A Very Woman (licensed 1634) was also Pembroke:

> 'By command,
> He undertook this task, nor could it stand
> With his low fortune to refuse to do
> What by his patron he was called unto.' (3.)

And there is no reason at all to doubt the statement of Aubrey that

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(1.) B.M. King's Library MSS. 18.A.xx. Printed by Gifford, iv., 596-8.
(2.) Lines 5-13. (3.) Gifford, iv., 239.

Pembroke paid Massinger a pension of twenty or thirty pounds a year (1.). Although Aubrey was described by Wood as 'magotieheaded', he was a Wiltshire man and did go to considerable trouble to find out about his subjects, and it seems highly probable that what he has to say on this point is quite correct.

After this examination of Massinger's patrons, it is now necessary to return to the main stream of Massinger's life, and to where we left him in Henslowe's workshop.

To this period of drudgery belong certain plays in which Massinger's hand has been traced, plays in which he collaborated with Fletcher and others, or which he revised. Many of these plays were ultimately published in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647 and others were published separately. None of these plays, collaborations and revisions alike, produced over a considerable number of years, is credited to his pen in editions published during his lifetime, with the exception of The Virgin Martyr (pub. 1622) under his name and Dekker's, and The Fatal Dowry (pub. 1632), in which his initials are coupled with those of Field. In addition, two plays are attributed to him in editions published after his death: A Very Woman (pub. 1655), a Massinger revision of a Fletcher play, and The Old Law (pub. 1657), in which, although published under the names of Massinger, Middleton, and Rowley, there is barely a trace of Massinger's hand.

(1.) Natural History of Wiltshire. (Ed. J. Britton. 1847.) II., iii., 91.

To summarise the situation briefly as regards Massinger's total output: there are twelve plays extant in which his hand can be traced as a collaborator; eleven plays in which he was a reviser; and fifteen plays which he wrote alone. In addition, there are attributed to him, either in Herbert's Office Book or in Warburton's List, fifteen plays of which we can no longer find any trace. Some may be revisions or known to us under other titles; some may be lost; and some (in the case of Warburton's List at any rate (1.)) may never have existed. In all, as near as can be estimated, Massinger had to do with some 53 plays in (at a generous estimate) thirty years of work for the theatre. From these figures it will be seen that Massinger, though perhaps not so industrious as Heywood, was certainly among the more industrious of the playwrights.

As I have already explained (2.) , I do not intend to go in detail into the question of this work of collaboration and revision, involving as it does a large proportion of the Jacobean dramatic output (3.) . The object of this present study is to see Massinger plain, and although his hand is probably the easiest of all Jacobean playwrights' to detect, a full con-:sideration of the problems of Jacobean dramatic and theatrical collaborat-:ion would have led me very far away from those issues which are my main concern. Nevertheless, the very bulk of the work that Massinger did in collaboration or revision must be recognised. Writing a part of a play meant being paid for only part of a play, and revising another man's play was to be only one tenth an author; both of which facts must have profoundly

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(1.) See, W.W.Greg: The Bakings of Betsy. (Library. 3rd Series, II., 1911.)
(2.) Introduction, p. iii. (3.) For convenience a list of collaborated plays is given in Appendix I. p. 422.

affected both Massinger's way of life and his style.

Although, as I have said, Massinger's hand is fairly easy to detect, the evidence we have for his collaborating with other playwrights, in particular for his collaboration with Fletcher, is not confined to internal evidence of style and versification. From the Tripartite Letter we might quite reasonably deduce that as early as 1613 Massinger was already engaged in such work. He himself makes an admission to this effect in the poem to the third Earl of Pembroke which I have already quoted:

> 'lett me rather
> Live poorely on those toyes I would not father ....'

And in a poem prefacing the first edition (1636) of The Great Duke of Florence, George Donne remarks to Massinger that poetry would have

> 'Withered into a dullness of despair,
> Had not thy later labour (heir
> Unto a former industry) made known
> This work, which thou mayst call thine own.' (1.)

But it is to Massinger's friend, Aston Cockaine, that we have to turn for confirmation of the partnership of Massinger and Fletcher. In a 'poetical' epistle addressed to his cousin, Charles Cotton, Cokaine says:

> 'I wonder (Cousin) that you would permit
> So great an injury to Fletcher's wit,
> Your friend and old Companion, that his fame
> Should be divided to another's name.
> If Beaumont had writ those plays, it had been
> Against his merits a detracting Sin,
> Had they been attributed also to
> Fletcher. They were two wits, and friends, and who
> Robs from the one to glorifie the other,
> Of these great memories is a partial Lover.
> Had Beaumont lived when this edition came
> Forth, and beheld his ever living name

(1.) Gifford, i., clvii.

Before Plays that he never writ, how he
Had frown'd and blush'd at such Impiety?
His own Renown no such Addition needs
To have a Fame sprung from anothers deedes.
And my good friend Old Philip Massinger
With Fletcher writ in some that we see there.....' (1.)

And in another poem, addressed to Humphrey Moseley and Humphrey Robinson, publishers of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio, he says:

'In the large book of Playes you late did print
(In Beaumonts and in Fletchers name) why in't
Did you not justice? give to each his due?
For Beaumont (of those many) writ in few:
And Massinger in other few; the Main
Being sole Issues of sweet Fletchers brain.
But how came I (you ask) so much to know?
Fletchers chief bosome-friend inform'd me so.
Ith'next impression therefore justice do,
And print their old ones in one volume too:
For Beaumonts works, and Fletchers should come forth
With all the right belonging to their worth.' (2.)

In the Folio of 1647 there are actually eight plays in which Massinger collaborated -- The Beggar's Bush, The Custom of the Country, The False One, The Knight of Malta, The Little French Lawyer, The Prophetess, The Queen of Corinth and The Spanish Curate -- and another seven in which his hand can be traced, probably as a reviser -- The Coxcomb, The Double Marriage, The Fair Maid of the Inn, The Lws of Candy, Love's Cure, The Lovers' Progress, and The Sea Voyage. So it will be seen that Cokaine was doing no more than claiming for Massinger what was his due. It is an open question who is Fletcher's 'chief bosome-friend' referred to by Cokaine. It might have been his cousin, Charles Cotton, whom he addresses in the first poem as if Fletcher were his 'friend and old companion'. On the other hand, it might have been Philip Massinger, from whom he might have obtained much information about the collaborations. It is not likely that it was Fletcher himself.

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(1) Small Poems of Divers Sorts. London. 1658. Letters to Divers Persons, 7.
(2) Ibid. Epigrams. 2nd Book, 35. (misnumbered for 52. On p. 117.)

Cokaine did not know Fletcher, or we can be sure that he would have told us about it at great length (1). Anyway we can be sure that Cokaine did know that Massinger had a hand in these plays. It is perhaps rather surprising that James Shirley, who edited the Folio, makes no mention in his introduction, 'To the Reader', of Massinger. Shirley and Massinger could not have been very close friends, otherwise it must be thought that he would have made some recognition of Massinger's share. Indeed there is no need to presuppose any close friendship between the two playwrights since the prefixing of verses by Shirley to The Renegado can be sufficiently explained by the fact that in the same year, 1630, Shirley's The Grateful Servant appeared with a commendatory poem by Massinger (2).

That Massinger, then, did collaborate and revise is an important biographical fact which may be recognised without going at length into controversial problems of authorship and chronology. For purposes of this biographical sketch, however, I must note that Massinger's name first appears in a contemporary attribution on 7th December 1621, when an entry for 'A tragedy called The Virgin Martir' appeared in the Stationers' Register (3). Thereafter his biography is largely an account of the production, performance, and publication of his plays.

The Virgin Martyr, a revision by Massinger of a play by Dekker, was produced, as the title-page of the 1622 edition shows, 'by the servants of His Majesty's Revels', probably at the Red Bull. The other play in which

(1) Cf. below, p.65 . (2) Printed by Gifford, iv., 594. (3) Arber, iv., 62.

Massinger was an acknowledged collaborator, The Fatal Dowry, which, although not published until 1632 was certainly written by 1620, in which year Massinger's partner in the writing, Nathaniel Field, died, was also written for the King's Men. The two earliest plays of what might be called the 'accepted' canon, The Unnatural Combat (probably written 1620-1) and The Duke of Milan (written before 1623 when it was published) were also produced at the Globe or the Blackfriars. After this Massinger seems to have been writing for the Queen's Men for a year or two. According to what we can gather from Herbert's Office Book, The Bondman (licensed December, 1623), The Renegado (lic. April, 1624), and The Parliament of Love (lic. November, 1624), were all written for this company (1.) and produced at the Cockpit, Drury Lane, afterwards called the Phoenix. Three other plays can be fairly confidently assigned to this period of writing for the Queen's Men. The Great Duke of Florence (lic. July, 1627), as I have explained previously (2.), was probably written in 1624 or early in 1625. A New Way to Pay Old Debts, although it does not appear in Herbert's Office Book, has internal evidence which suggests that it was written in late 1625 (3.). The Maid of Honour, credited to the Queen's Men on the title-page of the first (1632) edition, also does not appear in the Office Book, under that title at least, (although a play called The Honour of Women was licensed for the King's

(1.) The history of the theatrical companies at this time is very confused, and it is impossible from the evidence we now have to decide which of Massinger's plays written during this period were written for the Lady Elizabeth's Company (latterly known as the Queen of Bohemia's) and which for Queen Henrietta's. While the latter company was not quite a continuation of the former, the manager, Beeston, formed a strong link between the two. On this, see Bentley, 219. (2.) See above, p. 22. (3.) Professor A.K.McIlwraith has half-heartedly suggested an earlier dating. (On the date of A New Way to Pay Old Debts. MLR. XXVIII. 1933. 431.)

Men in 1628), but the play's most recent editor (1.) has little hesitation in assigning it to the same period as The Great Duke of Florence.

The earliest plays which Massinger wrote on his own might therefore be placed in the following tentative order of writing:-

1620:	The Unnatural Combat.	(Pub. 1639.)
1621:	The Duke of Milan.	(Pub. 1623.)
Mid-1623:	The Bondman.	(Pub. 1624.)
Early 1624:	The Renegado.	(Pub. 1630.)
Mid-1624:	The Parliament of Love.	(Pub. 1805. (2.))
Late 1624:	The Great Duke of Florence.	(Pub. 1636.)
Early 1625:	The Maid of Honour.	(Pub. 1632.)
Late 1625:	A New Way to Pay Old Debts.	(Pub. 1633.)

While this list cannot be said to be authoritative, it is based on my own personal opinion reached after a study of the opinions of the most recent editors of the plays. It forms in any case a reasonable and practicable basis for a study of the plays, and as such will be used throughout the rest of this thesis.

Why Massinger went over to the Queen's Company in or about 1623 can only be guessed. Probably as an ambitious author who had just written two plays on his own, he altered his allegiance as a result of an attractive offer from Beeston. The King's Company, after all, would not worry very much since they still had Fletcher writing for them. It is easier to see why he returned to the King's in 1626. The reorganisation of the theatrical companies following the death of James I and the consequent general post in which most of the playwrights seem to have been indulging around 1625-6, coupled (above all) with the death of Fletcher in the plague of 1625, are

(1.) Eva A.W.Bryne: The Maid of Honour. (Th. Bryn Mawr.) London, 1927. (2.) By Gifford. Volume ii.

satisfactory enough reasons. In addition, the return to the Blackfriars from the Cockpit, would mark if anything an upward step professionally. In any case, from 11th October 1626, when The Roman Actor was licensed (1), all Massinger's own plays, as well as very probably some at least of his revisions of Fletcher's work, were written for the King's Men and produced either at the Globe or at the Blackfriars.

The plays with which Massinger can be associated in this period of writing for the King's Men during the last fourteen years of his life can be tabulated as follows:-

Suggested Dating.	Title.	Licensed.	Published.
Early 1626:	The City Madam.	25 May 1632.	1658-9.
Mid-1626:	The Roman Actor.	11 Oct 1626.	1629.
Early 1627:	The Judge.	6 Jun 1627.	----------
Early 1628:	The Honour of Women.	6 May 1628.	----- (2)
Early 1629:	The Picture.	8 Jun 1629.	1630.
Mid-1629:	Minerva's Sacrifice.	3 Nov 1629.	----------
Late 1630:	Believe As You List.	11 Jan 1631.	Rejected. (3)
		7 May 1631.	1848.
Early 1631:	The Emperor of the East.	11 Mar 1631.	1632.
Early 1631:	The Unfortunate Piety.	13 Jun 1631.	----------
Mid-1633:	The Guardian.	31 Oct 1633.	1655.
Early 1634:	The Tragedy of Cleander.	7 May 1634.	----------
Early 1634:	A Very Woman (a revision).	6 Jun 1634.	1655.
Late 1634:	The Orator.	10 Jan 1635.	----------
Early 1636:	The Bashful Lover.	9 May 1636.	1655.
Early 1638:	The King and the Subject. (The Tyrant?)	5 Jun 1638. after reformation.	----------
Mid-1639:	Alexius, or The Chaste Lover.	25 Sep 1639.	----------
Late 1639:	The Fair Anchoress of Pausilippo.	26 Jan 1640.	----------

(1) Herbert, 31. (2) This play is included (although Herbert does not attribute it to Massinger) since many scholars have equated it with The Maid of Honour. See above, p. 42, and below, p. 45. (3) See below, pp. 82-3 .

Of this list, as may be seen by the publication dates, eight plays have survived. Seven of these eight are by Massinger alone, and the remaining play, A Very Woman, is a revision of a Fletcher play. What has happened to the remaining nine plays we do not know, and there is little point in entering here into the complex arguments which surround this question. It should be noted, however, that some of the titles may merely indicate 'reformation' of earlier plays. Thus Fleay has suggested that The Judge is an alteration of The Fatal Dowry (1.) ; that Minerva's Sacrifice was an alteration of The Queen of Corinth (2.) ; that The Unfortunate Piety was an alteration of The Double Marriage (3.) ; that Cleander was an alteration of The Lovers' Progress (4.) ; and that The Orator was an alteration of The Elder Brother (5.) . The whole matter is additionally complicated by certain 'blocking entries' under double titles (some of which seem to represent two different plays) made in the Stationers' Register by Humphrey Moseley in September, 1653 (6.) , and by Warburton's famous (and perhaps spurious) 'List' of the plays in his possession which had been destroyed by his cook. The bibliographical tangle is almost impossible of resolution. In connection with the above list, however, it may be stated that The Honour of Women is almost certainly not The Maid of Honour but a play by Richard Brome, Jonson's servant, called The Love-sick Maid (7.) ; and the play called The King and the Subject, of which Herbert gives us a sample (8.) , can probably be equated with The Tyrant, a play which was entered in the Stationers'

(1.) BCED, i., 208, 223. (2.) Ibid., i., 32, 206. (3.) Ibid., i., 210-11, 225. (4.) Ibid., i., 219; ii., 156. (5.) Ibid., i., 228. (6.) See Herbert, passim. (7.) Herbert, 32, under date 9 February, 1629. (8.) See below, p. 63. Cf. Heywood's The Royal King and the Loyal Subject.

Register on 29th June, 1660, appears in Warburton's List, was sold at his sale in 1759, but has since disappeared (1). I can see no reason myself why all the other plays which have been lost should not be original plays by Massinger, rather than, as Fleay suggests, mere revisions. But with the example of A Very Woman before us, credited to Massinger by Herbert, published posthumously as Massinger's, and yet patently largely Fletcher's work, it is impossible to generalise on this score. If any of this group of plays have to be dismissed as 'reformations', I would personally conjecture that Minerva's Sacrifice (for the un-Massingerian ring of its title), and The Unfortunate Piety (both for the same reason and for a reason I shall have occasion to mention later), should be the only ones. The other missing plays at least sound genuine (for what that hazard is worth), and their dates seem to accord well with Massinger's rate of production.

It will be noticed that I have placed The City Madam first in the sequence, although it was not licensed until 1632. The most recent editor of the play, Mr Rudolf Kirk (2), produces convincing evidence from within the play that it was written probably not later than 1626. I find his argument reasonable, and for me the dating of this play as early as 1626 has the great advantage of bringing it immediately after A New Way to Pay Old Debts, a play to which it has very close affinities in style, tone, and spirit. Of course, The City Madam may have received some alterations before the 1632 licensing, but if so there is little evidence of this in the play as we have it now. In addition, the percentage of run-on lines in

(1) Herbert, 38, note 2. (2) The City Madam. (Princeton Studies in English. 10.) Princeton, 1934.

the play accords well with the period of The Roman Actor (1.), not with the later date. The 1632 licensing was probably merely a regularising of an irregular state of affairs.

The foregoing paragraphs, which have done little more than skim the surface from what is in effect a large field of study in its own right, are sufficient to set in their chronological and theatrical context the plays with which I shall be chiefly dealing in this study. It will be seen that, especially when we allow for his early collaborations and his later revisions, Massinger led a reasonably busy life, though perhaps not busier than Fletcher, and that, even allowing for a certain amount of revisionary work, his rate of production seems to have fallen off a little during the last eight or nine years of his life. Doubtless, like most writers, he wrote no more than was necessary to keep himself comfortably, and it must always be remembered that he was probably also receiving assistance from Pembroke. Fletcher was dead, and his position was reasonably secure.

However, Massinger's career was not without its checks. The most important of these seems to have come in the two years preceding 1633. In that year, in the Prologue to The Guardian, there is a mention of two plays which had failed on the stage:

(1.) Professor T.W.Baldwin, in his edition of The Duke of Milan (Lancaster, Pa. 1918.) has presented an interesting table of Massinger's metrical peculiarities showing (among other features) how the percentage of run-on lines in the plays tends to increase. The chronology of the plays in the table is wrong, and much of the data is perhaps open to question, but Baldwin has not noticed that, on his own theory, The City Madam, with 39.4% run-on lines is closer to The Roman Actor (38.7%) than it is to Believe As You List (52.4%).

'After twice putting forth to sea, his fame
Shipwrecked in either, and his once-known name
In two years silence buried, perhaps lost
In the general opinion; at our cost
(A zealous sacrifice to Neptune made
For good success in his uncertain trade)
Our author weighs up anchors, and once more
Forsaking the security of the shore,
Resolves to prove his fortune.' (1.)

Two plays, then, had failed, and Massinger had been persuaded to write again only by some financial inducement ('at our cost') offered to him by the players. Even if we allow for some of the conventional modesty and self-depreciation which is common in prologues, this check seems to have been a serious one. The Prologue goes on to say:

'He submits
To the grave censure of those abler wits
His weakness; nor dares he profess that when
The critics laugh, he'll laugh at them again.
(Strange self-love in a writer!) He would know
His errors as you find them, and bestow
His future studies to reform from this,
What in another might be judged amiss.
And yet despair not, gentlemen; though he fear
His strengths to please, we hope that you shall hear
Some things so writ, as you may truly say
He hath not quite forgot to make a play,
As 'tis with malice rumoured; his intents
Are fair; and though he want the compliments
Of wide-mouthed promisers, who still engage,
Before their works are brought upon the stage,
Their parasites to proclaim them: this last birth,
Delivered without noise, may yield such mirth,
As, balanced equally, will cry down the boast
Of arrogance, and regain his credit lost.'

Massinger, it may be gathered, had been accused of 'arrogance' and 'self-love' by a certain group of critics, among whom must be numbered some other playwright.

The fact that one (at least) of Massinger's plays had not succeeded

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(1.) Gifford, iv., 125-6.

is supported by a poem by Henry Parker (1.) entitled 'To his honoured frend Mr. Phillip Massinger, having not had that just applause for one of his playes which was due to him'. Since Mr G. Thorn-Drury's book, in which the poem has been printed (2.), is not easily come by, I have taken the liberty of reproducing this poem in full:

'Canst thou be troubled at the hissing croude?
tush: let them stretche theire neckes, and hisse as lowde
At that which doth transcend their valuacon,
as that which is belowe, theire estimacon.
The moone hath power to worke upon the mayne
but is not wrought upon by that againe:
Soe thou should'st all new votes and passions swaye,
but should'st not learne thy selfe howe to obeye:
What if the gallants like not? What if hee
which hath a Clearer judgment censure thee?
haveing soe ponderous a masse of Fame,
one grayne diminisht will not wronge thy name.
That little stayne, that blur'd the rosy face
of Cytherea, rather added grace
then spoyl'd her beautie: yet it was a stayne
and in a rude aspect had caus'd disdaine
Soe that dislike which may procure some scorne
to meaner witts, may justly thine adorne.
Besides in sevrall workes of Poetrie
'tis not as 'tis in Nature Symetrie
For if one play dislike, it doth not cast
Dislike upon that play which pleased last
If in a fragrant vineyard wee espie
one withered grape which wants maturitie,
Wee do not blame the soyle, or els impute
that small defect unto the Noble roote.
Soe if the raptures of thy sacred muse
take us not all alike, 'tis thy Excuse:
Thy muse is still the same, and fortune maye
in all things eether add or take awaye.

Henerie Parker.'

(1.) This is probably the Henry Parker (1604-52) recorded in the Dictionary of National Biography as an M.A. (1628), barrister in Lincoln's Inn, and later a parliamentarian and publisher of various controversial pamphlets. Massinger must have had many friends among the young men-about-town who were members of the Inns of Court; indeed, he makes reference to his many legal acquaintances in the dedication of The Picture (1630). (2.) A Little Ark. 1921.

It is perhaps pertinent at this point to digress to consider which were the two plays that failed.

There can, I think, be no doubt that one of them was The Emperor of th East, which was licensed on 11th March, 1631 (1). As has been convincingly argued by Professor A.K.McIlwraith (2), this play was revised extensively by Massinger before its presentation at Court. The prologue spoken at this performance at Court is extant, and makes it quite clear that the play had failed when it first appeared. After a humble address to the King, commending the play to him as 'fashioned and formed' with the 'best of fancy, judgment, language, art', Massinger goes on to say:

> 'And yet this poor work suffered by the rage
> And envy of some Catos of the stage:
> Yet still he hopes this Play, which then was seen
> With sore eyes, and condemned out of their spleen,
> May be by you, the supreme judge, set free,
> And raised above the reach of calumny.' (3)

The Emperor of the East, then, was definitely one of the two plays mentioned in The Guardian prologue as having been a public failure.

It is not quite so easy to determine which was the other failure. The City Madam, which was licensed in May 1632, was written and performed long before. Indeed, the argument that The City Madam was not produced until the middle of 1632 can be discounted if we take only Massinger's own statement in The Guardian prologue that his name had been 'in two years silence buried', without troubling to look for internal evidence for dating the play. The lost play, The Unfortunate Piety, gives us another possible claimant for the doubtful distinction. I feel sure that this play was a

(1) Herbert, 33. (2) Did Massinger Revise 'The Emperor of the East'? (RES. V. 1929.) (3) Gifford, iii., 245.

revision (possibly of The Double Marriage, as Fleay suggests), since, judged by his normal rate of output, Massinger would have little time for anything else during the first half of 1631. By March of that year The Emperor of the East had been written, and it was probably altered considerably shortly after its first production. Believe As You List had been written by January of the same year, and by 7th May had, as the original manuscript shows (1), been completely rewritten. Massinger would not have had time by the beginning of June to write another brand-new play. In my opinion, then, the second play that failed was Believe As You List. It did not finally reach the boards until two months after The Emperor of the East. There is, indeed, an allusion to the attack of the critics in the opening of the Prologue to Believe As You List, a prologue which was obviously written for the revised version of the play:

> 'So far our author is from arrogance
> That he craves pardon for his ignorance
> In story.' (2)

In The Guardian prologue Massinger makes specific mention of two plays as having failed -- presumably those two last produced. We know that The Emperor of the East failed, and we know that Believe As You List was produced after this. The balance of probability, then, is that it was the second failure.

That this period of criticism, which had serious results in the failures of 1631 and in Massinger's subsequent silence until 1633, was still

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(1) B.M. MS. Egerton 2828. Tudor Facsimile Texts. London, 1907. The Ms. is fully discussed by Professor C.J.Sisson in his edition (Malone Soc. Repr. 1927), Oxford, 1928. See below, p.82. (2) Cunningham, 595.

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rankling in his mind three years later is shown by the prologue to The Bashful Lover (1636). In this he adopts a pseudo-humble tone of voice, and turns round upon his detractors the accusations they had earlier levelled at him:

> 'This from our author, far from all offence
> To abler writers, or the audience
> Met here to judge his poem. He, by me,
> Presents his service with such modesty
> As well becomes his weakness. 'Tis no crime,
> He hopes, as we do, in this curious time,
> To be a little diffident, when we are
> To please so many with one bill of fare.
> Let others, building on their merit, say
> You're in the wrong, if you move not that way
> Which they prescribe you; as you were bound to learn
> Their maxims, but uncapable to discern
> 'Twixt truth and falsehood. Our's had rather be
> Censured by some for too much obsequy,
> Than taxed of self opinion.' (1.)

This meek tone is also obvious in the only other prologue which has survived from the period following The Guardian, that to A Very Woman (1634), in which the author 'with becoming modesty (for in this kind he ne'er was bold)' defends himself for adapting an old play.

Massinger had, however, already been the object of an attack before The Emperor of the East. In the first prologue to the play, given at the performance at the Blackfriars, we read:

> 'But that imperious custom warrants it,
> Our author with much willingness would omit
> This preface to his new work. He hath found
> (And suffered for't) many are apt to wound
> His credit in this kind: and whether he
> Express himself fearful, or peremptory,
> He cannot 'scape their censures who delight
> To misapply whatever he shall write.
> 'Tis his hard fate.' (2.)

(1.) Gifford, iv., 353. (2.) Gifford, iii., 244.

This suggests that something Massinger had written in a prologue had given given offence. What it was we do not know. The Judge is lost, and there are no prologues to either The Picture or The Roman Actor extant. Possibly the accusation of arrogance had been growing against Massinger since The Roman Actor was produced in 1626. We know that he thought highly of this play, since in the Dedication he says that he had 'ever held it the most perfect birth of his Minerva', and it is possible that he said even more to this effect in a now-lost prologue. There was, to be sure, one playwright living in England who would be almost certain to snarl at the extravagant poetic encomiums heaped upn this play on its publication in 1629, but I shall return to him later.

Massinger's troubles with critics in the early 1630's are reflected in statements made in some of the commendatory verses prefixed to those of the plays published during this period. Prefacing The Emperor of the East, John Clavell (1603-42), reprieved highwayman turned author and poet, says:

> 'Your Muse hath been
> Most bountiful, and I have often seen
> The willing seats receive such as have fed,
> And risen thankful; yet were some misled
> By NICETY, when this fair banquet came,
> (So I allude) their stomachs were to blame,
> Because that excellent, sharp, and poignant sauce,
> Was wanting, they arose without due grace,
> Lo! thus a second time he doth invite you:
> Be your own carvers, and it may delight you.' (1.)

And that Massinger's detractors, or one of them at least, also indulged in playwriting is perhaps suggested by the poem prefixed to the same play by William Singleton, who describes himself as a 'Kinsman' of Massinger's:

(1.) Gifford, i., clxii.

'I take not upon trust, nor am I led
By an implicit faith: what I have read
With an impartial censure I dare crown
With a deserved applause, howe'er cried down
By such whose malice will not let them be
Equal to any piece limn'd forth by thee.
Contemn their poor detraction, and still write
Poems like this, that can endure the light
And search of abler judgements. This will raise
Thy name; the others' scandal is thy praise.
This, oft perused by grave wits, shall live long,
Not die as soon as past the actor's tongue,
The fate of slighter toys.' (1.)

A hint of the contoversy is dropped even earlier by the verses prefixed to the 1630 edition of The Renegado by Daniel Lakyn:

'I did ever glory
To behold virtue rich; though cruel Fate
In scornful malice does beat low their state
That best deserve; when others, that but know
Only to scribble, and no more, oft grow
Great in their favours, that would seem to be
Patrons of wit and modest poesy:
Yet, with your abler friends, let me say this,
Many may strive to equal you, but miss
Of your fair scope; this work of yours men may
Throw in the face of envy, and then say
To those, that are in great men's thoughts more blest,
Imitate this, and call that work your best .....
... If I should say more, some may blame me for't.' (2.)

And a possible quarter from which criticism might come is mentioned by Joseph Taylor (1586?-1653?), the famous actor in the King's Men and the first to play the part of Paris in The Roman Actor, when, in lines prefacing the 1629 edition of that play, he says;

'If that my lines, being placed before thy book,
Could make it sell. ....
Or could I on some spot o'the court work so,
To make him speak no more than he doth know;
Not borrowing from his flatt'ring flatter'd friend
What to dispraise, or wherefore to commend:

(1.) Gifford, i., clxiii. (2.) Ibid., cliii.

Then, gentle friend, I should not blush to be
Ranked 'mongst those worthy ones which here I see
Ushering this work.'

(1.)

It is tempting to try to name the cource from which this criticism of Massinger and his work sprang. I think it can with reasonable certainty be ascribed to Ben Jonson and his circle. Jonson was at his most quarrelsome and pugnacious in 1630, the year after the disastrous failure of The New Inn, and the time of his row with Inigo Jones over the production of the masque, Chloridia.

In the material I have so far presented the hints which seem to point to Jonson as the fons et origo for the criticism directed against Massinger may be detailed as follows:

I. If Massinger's high opinion of The Roman Actor did in fact bring down charges of self-esteem and arrogance, Jonson, grown more rigid in classicism with age, was the man most likely to condemn the play for the Shakespearean freedom with which it treats classical history.

II. In his condoling poem, Parker speaks both of the 'gallants' and of 'hee which hath a Clearer judgment'.

III. The Emperor of the East, the Court Prologue tells us, 'suffered by the rage and envy of some Catos of the stage' who saw the play 'with sore eyes, and condemned out of their spleen'. This sounds uncommonly like the Jonson of 1631.

IV. The prologue to The Bashful Lover speaks of other writers who, 'building on their merit, say you're in the wrong if you move not that way which they prescribe you; as you were bound to learn their maxims'. Clavell, in his poem on The Emperor of the East, speaks of the play as having offended because of its lack of what he calls 'NICETY'. Presumably by this he means a lack of conformity to a set code or prescribed rules of playmaking. Jonson considered himself the Grand Prescriber in things dramatic and liter-:ary for his age.

V. Lakyn, in his poem on The Renegado, written in 1630, speaks of a

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(1.) Gifford, i., clvi.

writer who is 'in great men's thoughts more blest' than Massinger, and who is in receipt of more patronage. That was certainly true of Jonson, who, as well as receiving money from Pembroke, Massinger's own patron, had a consid-:erable official pension and a chief share of the royal patronage.

VI. The 'flattering flattered friend' to the 'spot o'the court' described by Taylor, might be an unflattering description of Jonson in 1629.

Additional evidence which I have not yet presented comes in 1630, when, in a poem prefixed to The Renegado, James Shirley says:

'I must confess I have no public name
To rescue judgment, no poetic flame
To dress thy Muse with praise,
And Phoebus his own bays;
Yet I commend this poem, and dare tell
The world I liked it well;
And if there be
A tribe who in their wisdoms dare accuse
This offspring of thy Muse,
Let them agree
Conspire one comedy, and they will say,
'Tis easier to commend, than make a play.' (1)

This stanza by Shirley points, if not directly at Jonson himself, at least at that group of writers and courtiers who surrounded him.

Finally, that the trouble, blowing up in 1630, was in some way connected with Jonson, seems to me to be made certain by the suggestions in the solitary poem which ushered in the 1630 edition of The Picture. This poem, written by Sir Thomas Jay, a minor society poet of some pretensions but little ability, opens with conventional lines praising the play and the author. Then Jay, for no apparent reason, adopts a more admonishing tone:

'Yet whosoe'er beyond desert commends,
Errs more by much than he that reprehends;
For praise misplaced, and honour set upon
A worthless subject is detraction.

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(1) Gifford, i., cl.

I cannot sin so here, unless I went
About to style you only excellent.'

Licet. So far so good. But Jay continues:

'Apollo's gifts are not confined alone
To your dispose, he hath more heirs than one,
And such as do derive from his blest hand
A large inheritance in the poets' land,
As well as you; nor are you, I assure
Myself, so envious, but you can endure
To hear their praise, whose worth long since was known
And justly too preferr'd before your own.
I know you'd take it for an injury,
(And 'tis a well-becoming modesty)
To be parallel'd with Beaumont, or to hear
Your name by some too partial friend writ near
Unequall'd Jonson; being men whose fire,
At distance, and with reverence, you admire.'

Thus far the poem may be interpreted either as praise or as a veiled rebuke. There is, however, no mistaking the tone of admonishment contained in the last lines:

'Do so, and you shall find your gain will be
Much more, by yielding them priority,
Than with a certainty of loss, to hold
A foolish competition: 'tis too bold
A task, and to be shunn'd.' (1.)

These lines can, I think, be taken only as a warning to Massinger -- either to 'ca' canny' in some dispute in which he was already engaged or to restrain his self-vaunting. They certainly seem to have a purpose quite divorced from their task of commending The Picture.

If Jonson had been challenged or provoked in any way, he would certainly have made his opponent smart. He was the only rival of Massinger with sufficient authority and a large enough claque to have had The Emperor of the East hissed off the stage. Neither Heywood nor Dekker would have

(1) Gifford, i., clix-clx. Davies (Monck Mason, p. cvii, note.) is the only previous writer to have remarked on the peculiar tone of this 'eulogy'.

troubled to chide, and both were in general more inclined to praise. Marston had long abandoned the stage. Shirley, as we have seen, was ranged on Massinger's side, and both he and John Ford (also a writer of commendatory poems on Massinger's plays (1.)) were still at the beginning of such estimat-:ion as they were to enjoy. And there is no other regular and professional playwright, as distinct from the occasional and amateur ones, to be accounted for. So by a process of elimination we come back to Jonson.

It may be urged that Jonson does not mention Massinger by name anywhere in his plays, non-dramatic verse, or in his prose. On the other hand, many of Jonson's shafts were without label, not because they were shot into the air, but because his contemporaries and in particular his initiates knew perfectly well for whom they were meant. I have, however, not been able to detect any such references -- though a sarcastic remark in The Staple of News (1625), may be a hit at the Fletcher-Massinger method of manufacturing characters (2.) . But in any case, Jonson was so liberal in his censure (and we must suppose that his oral censure was even more extensive than his written) that Massinger, one of the leading dramatists of the day, is very unlikely to have escaped. I have felt compelled, by the evidence I have been able to collect, to come to the conclusion that the disgruntled Jonson was indeed the instigator of a sort of anti-Massinger Flüsterndpropaganda.

Massinger himself mentions Jonson only once by name. This is in the poem addressed to William, the third Earl of Pembroke, the patron of Jonson's library:

(1.) Though it is just possible that these verses were not written by the playwright but by one of the other Fords of whom we have notice at this time.
(2.) Quoted below, Chapter IV., p. 200.

'I know
That Johnson much of what he has does owe
To you and to your familie, and is never
Slow to professe it.'

(1.)

But it would be unwise to read a sly dig into these lines, since, after quoting other instances of patronage, Massinger goes on to say,

'Those are Presidents [i.e. 'precedents']
I cite wth reverence.'

(2.)

It was suggested by Davies (3.) that Massinger fell foul of Jonson long before 1630. In 1623, a certain 'W.B.' prefixed verses to the first edition of The Duke of Milan which might be interpreted as containing an attack on Jonson. Calling Massinger's play a 'Work', W.B. says:

'I am snapt already, and may go my way;
The poet-critic's come; I hear him say
This youth's mistook, the author's work's a play.

He could not miss it, he will straight appear
At such a bait; 'twas laid on purpose there,
To take the vermin, and I have him here.

Sirrah! you will be nibbling; a small bit,
A syllable, when you're in the hungry fit,
Will serve to stay the stomach of your wit.

Fool, knave, what worse, for worse cannot deprave thee;
And were the devil now instantly to have thee,
Thou canst not instance such a work to save thee,

'Mongst all the ballets which thou dost compose,
And what thou stylest thy Poems, ill as those,
And void of rhyme and reason, thy worse prose:

Yet like a rude jack-sauce in poesy,
With thoughts unblest, and hand unmannerly,
Ravishing branches from Apollo's tree;

Thou mak'st a garland, for thy touch unfit,
And boldly deck'st thy pig-brain'd sconce with it,
As if it were the supreme head of wit.

(1.) Dublin MS. Lines 49-52. (2.) Ibid., 63-4. (3.) Monck Mason, xcix, note.

The blameless Muses blush; who not allow
That reverend order to each vulgar brow,
Whose sinful touch profanes the holy bough.

Hence, shallow prophet, and admire the strain
Of thine own pen, or thy poor cope-mate's vein;
This piece too curious is for thy coarse brain.' (1.)

And in the following year, at the end of his poem commending The Bondman, the same writer says:

'in the way of poetry, now-a-days,
Of all that are call'd works, the best are plays.' (2.)

It seems to me, however, that far from being a criticism of Jonson, these verses could just as easily be interpreted as being a check to Jonson's opponents who had derided him for calling his plays Works. At any rate, as the 'rude jack-sauce' is specifically described as a poet and prose-writer, not a dramatist, the odds are rather against Jonson's being the object of the attack. Moreover, I think it is unlikely that Massinger would have allowed the first published play from his own unaided hand to go forth with a gratuitous insult to the powerful Jonson in the forefront

My own tentative suggestion is that the poet criticised by W.B. may have been George Wither. He had drawn a very unflattering picture of Jonson and his tavern-cronies in Abuses Stript and Whipt; and for that and perhaps for later offences Jonson pilloried him as Chronomastix in Time Vindicated (performed 19th January 1623). Wither was garrulous and indiscreet. He had twice landed himself in prison, the first time for the ostensibly general satire in Abuses Stript and Whipt and the second for offence given either by Wither's Motto (1621) or his Juvenilia (1622). It

(1.) Gifford, i., cxlvii. (2.) Ibid,, i., cl.

is possible that the second imprisonment was referred to in The Duke of Milan itself when in Act III., scene ii. the Prison Officer who has whipped the toadying Graccho says:

> 'I have had a fellow
> That could endite, forsooth, and make fine metres
> To tinkle in the ears of ignorant madams,
> That, for defaming of great men, was sent me
> Threadbare and lousy, and in three days after,
> Discharged by another that set him on, I have seen him
> Cap a pié gallant, and his stripes washed off
> With oil of angels.'

Wither fits the picture we may deduce from W.B. exactly. He was very self-assured and conscious of his own merit. His poems had been surreptitiously published in 1620, under the title, The Workes of Master George Wither, of Lincolns-Inne, Gentleman, etc., and so qualify him still further for consider-:ation in this respect. Satirised by Jonson, made the butt of Massinger's sally, Wither was fair game for anyone who would hit him (not that, in his uninspired way, he was incapable of reply), and he seems to be the likeliest target for W.B.'s poem.

That 'W.B.' was not, as suggested by Davies (1), William Browne of Tavistock necessarily follows, if Wither was W.B.'s target. For Browne and Wither, the Willy and the Roget of The Shepherd's Hunting, were close friends and collaborators. The lines in question and the lines signed W.B. before The Bondman were included by Gordon Goodwin in his edition of Browne (2) but with the comment that they 'have been also assigned to William Basse' (3). It seems to me unlikely that they were written by Basse (4). It may be

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(1) Monck Mason, xcix, note. (2) The Poems of William Browne of Tavistock. (Muses Library). 1894. ii., 314-16. (3) By Gifford. (i., cxlix, note.) (4) Although R.W.Bond, the editor of Basse (The Poetical Works of William Basse. London, 1893.) considers they are his work.

remarked that the initials 'W.B.' are attached to several publications in the second, third, and fourth decades of the seventeenth century, and there are many other writers bearing names which would yield these same initials.

The diligent enquiries of Professor A.K.McIlwraith have, in fact, revealed another 'W.B.' who is known to have been a friend of Massinger's. This is 'William Bagnall of London, gent', so named in a Chancery Bill in the Public Records Office dated 6th November, 1624, in which he is coupled with Massinger as fellow plaintiff (1). All that we know of Bagnall is that he did write verses. He contributed a commendatory poem to Barkstead's Mirrha, the Mother of Adonis (1617), and the induction to Certaine selected Psalmes of David, an item in a Crane transcript in the Bodleian (2), is signed by him. Significantly enough, the next item in this manuscript, a poem of 206 lines on the 1625 plague, entitled London's Lamentable Estate and signed with the initials 'Ph. M.', may be by Massinger (3). The definite coupling of this William Bagnall with Massinger shortly after the publication of The Duke of Milan and The Bondman makes it very probable that he was indeed the 'W.B.' of the commendatory poems.

Of course, Massinger had his brushes with the official censorship as well as with the unofficial. On 11th January, 1631, a licence was refused for Believe As You List, Sir Henry Herbert recording the matter in his Office Book thus:-

'This day being the 11 of Janu. 1630 (-1), I did refuse to allow

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(1) Cf. RES. IV. 1928. 326-7. (2) MS. Rawl. poet. 61. (fol. 6r.) (3) Cf. F.P. Wilson: Library. VII. 1926. 199.

of a play of Messinger's because itt did contain dangerous matter, as the deposing of Sebastian king of Portugal, by Philip the (Second,) and ther being a peace sworen twixte the kings of England and Spayne. I had my fee notwithstandinge, which belongs to me for reading itt over, and ought to be brought always with the booke.' (1.)

The play was revised, as the manuscript shows (2.), was resubmitted, and duly received a licence on 7th May (3.).

Eight years later another play by Massinger came under the disapproving eye of no less a person than King Charles himself. Herbert records the trouble as follows:-

'Received of Mr. Lowens for my paines about Messinger's play called The King and the Subject, 2 June, 1638, Il.0.0.

'The name of The King and the Subject is altered (4.), and I allowed the play to bee acted, the reformations most strictly observed, and not otherwise, the 5th of June 1638.

'At Greenwich the 4 of June, Mr. W. Murray, gave mee power from the king to allowe of the play, and tould me that hee would warrant it.

''Monys? Wee'le rayse supplies what ways we please,
And force you to subscribe to blanks, in[illegible] which
We'le mulct you as wee shall thinke fitt. The Caesars
In Rome were wise, acknowledginge no lawes
But what their swords did ratifye, the wives
And daughters of the senators bowinge to
Their wills, as deities,' &c.

'This is a peece taken out of Phillip Messingers play, called The King and the Subject, and entered here for ever to bee remembered by my son and those that cast their eyes on it, in honour of Kinge Charles, my master, who readinge over the play at Newmarket, set his marke upon the place with his owne hand, and in thes words:
"This is too insolent, and to bee changed."

'Note, that the poett makes it the speech of a king, Don Pedro, king of Spayne, and spoken to his subjects.' (5.)

(1.) Herbert, 19. (2.) See above, p. 51, note 1. (3.) Herbert, 33. (4.) Possibly to The Tyrant. See above, p. 45. (5.) Herbert, 22.

The poet who could write such verses at such a time was certainly not lacking in courage; and it might be remarked in passing that they are not the lines of a Catholic Royalist. When it is considered, however, that some of his plays contain political allusions even more pointed than this, it might be though remarkable that Massinger did not meet with official opposition more often than is recorded (1).

Massinger seems to have been well liked by his friends. According to Langbaine, 'he was extreamly belov'd by the Poets of that age, and there were few but what took it as an honour to club with him in a play: witness Middleton, Rowley, Field, and Decker .... nay, further, ... the ingenious Fletcher' (2). Langbaine, as I have said before, is not a reliable authority where Massinger is concerned, and collaboration in the Jacobean theatre was a matter of necessity rather than of choice. Nevertheless, there is ample testimony in commendatory poems and dedications of the number of our playwright's friends and of the regard in which they held him. Joseph Taylor the actor, who played Paris in The Roman Actor (3), addresses Massinger as 'his long-known and loved Friend', and says that he (Taylor) writes his poem both to praise a good tragedy and 'to profess our love's antiquity' (4). W.B., whoever he may be, calls Massinger 'his beloved friend' (5); and an equally problematical 'T.J.' (Sir Thomas Jay?) calls him 'his dear friend' (6). To the ubiquitous George Donne he is his 'much-esteem'd friend' (7); and to Thomas May he is 'his deserving friend' (8).

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(1) For a discussion of Massinger's political views, see Chap. V., p.255. (2) Account, 352. (3) See Bentley, 590-8. (4) Gifford, i., clvi. (5) Ibid., cxlvii. (6) Ibid., cliii. (7) Ibid., clvii. (8) Ibid., cliv.

There is no indication of friendship or of more than a slight acquaintanceship in John Ford's commendatory poems for The Roman Actor and The Great Duke of Florence. Shirley, too, as I have mentioned before, does not seem to have been very close to Massinger, and addresses him somewhat stiffly as 'my honoured friend' in the verses before The Renegado. In return, in his commendation of The Grateful Servant, Massinger calls Shirley his 'judicious and learned friend the Author' (1). Other friends of Massinger whom I have not yet named in this chapter are Thomas Goffe (1591-1629), preacher and tragedian, who addressed some Latin verses to Massinger on the occasion of the publication of The Roman Actor; James Smith (1605-67), churchman and lewd poet, whom Massinger addressed in the heading to a poem (2), more Jonsoni as 'his son'; and, of course, Fletcher himself. As might be expected, the majority of Massinger's friends were either writers by profession or men-of-letters by inclination.

The most loquacious of these friends is undoubtedly Aston Cokaine (later Sir Aston Cokaine). Cokaine (1608-84) was a somewhat dissolute litterateur and gentleman-poet, a hanger-on to the fringes of the literary world. He seems to have been inordinately proud of knowing a few poets and writers, and so perhaps his words and their implications should not be relied on too much. He was the type of man who would assume a familiarity or take a liberty in describing such acquaintanceship in order to gratify his vanity. His scalp-hunting may be gathered from some lines to his cousin, Charles Cotton:

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(1) Gifford, iv., 594. (2) Ibid., 595.

'Donne, Suckling, Randolph, Drayton, Massinger,
Habbington, Sandy's, May, my Acquaintance were:
Johnson, Chapman, and Holland I have seen,
And with them too should have acquainted been.' (1.)

However, Cokaine does seem to have been on intimate terms with Massinger, and his garrulity is worth much more than the speculations of later writers, none of whom knew Massinger personally.

We have no very definite evidence that Massinger had a wife or family. But according to Aubrey, the pension paid by Pembroke was continued after Massinger's death to his widow, He says, 'his wife dyed at Cardiffe in Wales, to whom the earl of Pembroke payd an annuity' (2.). I feel that this statement is too precise to be ignored, or even disputed. It would after all, have been unusual if Massinger had not been married. Even if we had no evidence at all, his plays, many of which deal with the relationship between married couples, are not what we should expect from a bachelor. It is Lord Lovell who speaks, but Massinger who has written, the words:

'I know,
The sum of all that makes a just man happy
Consists in the well choosing of his wife.' (3.)

And the dialogue between Sophia and Mathias which opens The Picture shows too much understanding of the sort of conversation a man holds with his wife to have been written by a man who never had one. In any case, such specul-:ation being left aside, there is no reason to doubt Aubrey's account. He was a diligent enquirer. He had taken the trouble to visit the house on

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(1) Small Poems. Epigrams. II. 99. Cokaine's prefatory verses to The Emperor of the East and The Maid of Honour are in the same volume.(Encomiastic Verses Nos. 2 and 3. (2) Brief Lives. ii., 54. (3) A New Way to Pay Old Debts, IV., i.

the Bank-side in which Massinger had lived; and though the visit was admittedly some thirty odd years after Massinger's death, there was less moving-about of population then than there is today and the information as to the dramatist's having been married or single was just of the kind to be recalled. What the name of the 'not impossible she' was is, of course, still to seek. But one of the panegyrists of The Emperor of the East, William Singleton, calls Massinger his 'true Friend and Kinsman'. The name Singleton does not commonly occur in Wiltshire. It is indeed not a common name anywhere. A Hugh Singleton published Spenser's Shepheards Calender in 1579, and an Isaac Singleton wrote The Downfall of Shebna: with an application to the bloudie Gowrie of Scotland in 1615. I have been unable to trace William Singleton in any of the many registers I have examined, but I throw out the suggestion that his kinship to Massinger may have been by marriage.

As for the possibility of children born to Massinger, Aubrey does not mention any. But such a negative proves nothing either way. Similarly, too much should not be deduced from the fact that Mathias and his wife Sophia in The Picture have 'as yet [after many years of marriage] no charge of children' on them. There are in fact no children in any of Massinger's plays, and, so far as The Picture in particular is concerned, Mathias's statement was to let Massinger avoid the complications that the existence and appearance of children would have added to the lengthy domestic scenes. On the whole in Elizabethan-Jacobean plays other than Massinger's, children rarely appear gratuitously. If they appear, it is because they contribute

to the plot, as in Richard III or The Winter's Tale, or even Macbeth (1.) . Frankford and Anne in A Woman Killed With Kindness, in order to reinforce the pathos are endowed by Heywood with 'pretty babes' and he makes much of their existence; but he does not bring them on. The inference I would draw, then, is that Massinger may quite well have had children, though he introduces none in his plays. Certainly, an entry in The London Magazine for 4th August, 1762, records the death of 'Miss Henrietta Massinger, a descendant of Massinger, the dramatic poet' (2.) . If we are to take this statement at its face value (and there is no reason why we should not) Massinger must have had children. The name is found frequently in London records in the early seventeenth century; but perhaps the likeliest candidates for consideration as Massinger's children are a 'Katheren Messinger' who was married in the church of Allhallows-in-the-Wall on 6th May, 1633 (3.) , and a 'Thomas Messenger, Gent of St Sepulchres, Widower aged 29' who married a 24-year old girl called Jane Underwood at St Peter's, Paul's Wharf, on 24th January, 1636/7 (4.) . These two names are put forward speculatively out of several I have found in the records as the likeliest to be those of Massinger's own children. I might add that in Wiltshire I found that a Mr Messenger had been Clerk of Works for Salisbury Cathedral until quite recently, a fact which may point to there still being collaterals, if not lineal descendants, of the dramatist in his own birthplace.

(1.) i.e. Macduff's young son. The lack of heirs to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is a cardinal point in the plot. (2.) Vol. xxxi., 449. (3.) The Registers .... of Allhallows, London Wall .... 1559 to 1675. London, 1878. (4.) Allegations for Marriage Licences issued by the Bishop of London. 1520-1650. (Chester and Armytage) London, 1887. ii., 306.

Massinger died in March 1639/40, and was buried, according to the extant register of the church of St Saviour (now Southwark Cathedral) on the 18th of that month. The entry reads:

'Philip Masenger Strang, in ye church. G - £2. 0. 0.'

and means that he was a stranger to the parish, that he was interred in the church itself, and that the fee for the burial was £2. The fee was considerable doubtless because of the place of interment. Why, if he lived on the Bank-side, he was considered a stranger to the parish I do not know.

Sir Aston Cokaine has an elegy on the playwright, entitled, 'An Epitaph on Mr John Fletcher, and Mr Philip Massinger, who lie buried both in one Grave in St Mary Overie's Church in Southwark'. In this poem Cokaine says:

> 'In the same Grave Fletcher was buried here
> Lies the Stage-Poet Philip Massinger:
> Playes they did write together, were great friends,
> And now one Grave includes them at their ends:
> So whom on earth nothing did part beneath
> Here (in their Fames) they lie, in spight of death.' (1)

It should be remarked that 'St Mary Overy's' was the popular name given to St Saviour's church.

Now, Cokaine was a personal friend of Massinger and was probably present at the funeral, therefore there is no reason for us to doubt his statements on the matter of the burial. In saying that Massinger was buried in the church, he is, as the Register entry shows, quite correct. He is also correct in the case of Fletcher, since the entry in the Register says that

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(1) Small Poems. Epigrams. I. 100.

he, too, was buried 'in the church'. His exaggeration of the friendship between Massinger and Fletcher is perhaps a piece of justifiable poetic licence.

Aubrey and Wood, however, tell a slightly different story of the burial. Aubrey's account is given in an entry under 31st January, 167$\frac{3}{4}$:-

> 'This day I searched the register of St. Saviour's, Southwark, by the playhouse then there, vulgo St. Mary's Overy's; and find Philip Massinger buryed March 18th, 1639. I am enformed at the place where he dyed, which was by the Bankes side neer the then playhouse, that he was buryed about the middle of the Bullhead-churchyard -- i.e. that churchyard (for there are four) which is next the Bullhead taverne, from whence it has its denomination. He dyed about the 66th yeare of his age: went to bed well, and dyed suddenly -- but not of the plague.' (1.)

Aubrey should be given priority to his mere repeater, Wood. The latter's account reads:

> 'As for our author Philip Massinger, he made his last exit very suddenly, in his house on the Bank-side in Southwark, near to the then playhouse, for he went to bed well and was dead before morning. Whereupon his body, being accompanied by comedians, was buried about the middle of that churchyard belonging to St. Saviour's church there, commonly called the Bull-head churchyard, that is, in that which joynes to the Bull-head tavern (for there are in all four yards belonging to that church) on the 18 day of March in sixteen hundred and thirty nine.' (2.)

The statements of Aubrey and Wood are probably reliable as to the manner of Massinger's death, but in view of the Register, they cannot be correct as to the site of the grave.

In my opinion, there can be no doubt that Cokaine's account is to be preferred to that of Aubrey and Wood. I am inclined also to think that he is correct when he says that they were buried in a common grave. That they were both buried actually within the church makes this even more likely.

(1.) Brief Lives, ii., 54. (2.) Ath. Ox. (Bliss), ii., 654.

If, for example, Fletcher had been buried in the churchyard it might not be so easy to believe in the common grave, since graves in those days were not purchased in perpetuity but were dug over again as the necessity arose, and after a lapse of fifteen years it might have proved rather difficult to locate Fletcher's grave again. Although Massinger was not such an intimate of Fletcher as Beaumont was, on the occasion of Fletcher's funeral he might very well have given instructions as to the disposal of his own body, and it is possible that the large amount charged for his burial was in part due to this request. (1.)

The question of Massinger's religion is still another biographical detail that will probably never be settled. That Massinger was converted to Roman Catholicism while still at Oxford and was in consequence estranged from William, Earl of Pembroke, was first suggested by Gifford (2.). He supported his case from the plays, many of which deal in a sympathetic way with Roman-Catholic beliefs and practices. I may say at this point that my own close study of the plays inclines me to support Gifford's suggestion, at least in respect of Massinger's Roman-Catholic sympathies. When Massin-:ger was converted, if he ever was, and with what results to his prospects, I hesitate to say. And I have reserved my discussion of the internal

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(1.) We find the 'common grave' idea in The Duke of Milan, I., iii.:-

'I ... desire,
When you are sated with all earthly glories ....
.... That one grave may receive us.'

(2.) i., xliii-xliv.

evidence for the possible conversion till a later chapter (1.) .

But I can point out here that the external evidence is negligible. Some of his friends were undoubtedly Roman Catholics. But that does not mean much. Shirley was a convert (probably in 1622). Cokaine, if he was perhaps not actually a Roman Catholic himself, at least married a Roman-Catholic lady. And Ben Jonson was a Roman Catholic for a time. The dedication of A New Way to Pay Old Debts to the Roman-Catholic Earl of Carnarvon signifies, if possible, even less. Carnarvon, besides being a nobleman and hence fair game for dedicators whatever his religion, was ward and later son-in-law of Pembroke, Massinger's patron, who was himself a stout anti-Laudian Protestant and, in the Civil Wars, a Parliamentarian. The instance of the Protestant Pembroke's having the Roman-Catholic Earl of Carnarvon as son-in-law shows how, then as now, friendships were not made or divided by religion, at any rate outside of Puritan and bourgeois circles. It would have been difficult for a man in Massinger's position in and around the theatres, which were all but court-purlieus, not to have had Roman-Catholic friends. The other side of the picture is that the majority of Massinger's friends and patrons were in fact Protestants, including in their number two Anglican clergymen, Goffe and James Smith.

Gifford suggests that Massinger left Oxford without taking a degree because he had 'during his residence at the University, exchanged the religion of his father, for one, at this time, the object of persecution, hatred, and terror' (2.) . While agreeing that young men of university age

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(1.) See below, Chapter V., pp. 272-282 (2.) i., xliii.

are perhaps more liable to sudden religious conversion than their elders and betters, I can see no reason for making the locus of this hypothetical conversion at Oxford. The agents of the Counter-Reformation were at that time no more active in Oxford than they were in Cheapside or Aldgate. Anyway, I am sure that had a conversion to Roman Catholicism caused Massinger to leave the university Aubrey and Wood would have had some wind of it.

It was Phelan's idea that the sum spent on Massinger's funeral was so large because it was conducted with Roman-Catholic rites (1). How unlikely it would be that the clergy of St Saviour's, to say nothing of higher legal and ecclesiastical authorities, would allow such a ceremony! This suggest-:ion may serve as a sample of Phelan's speculative scholarship but it hardly merits further consideration. The £2 recorded in the St Saviour's Register was not for the funeral but for the burial, and it was high because it was in the church itself (a privileged position) and may have involved some extensive masonry-work or removal and replacement of pews.

Massinger's personal attitude to his profession is of some interest in the story of his life, In a passage I have already quoted, addressed to William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, he exclaims that sooner than surrender his personal and artistic integrity to the necessity for flattering a patron he would rather

> 'Live poorely on those toyes I would not father
> Not known beyond a Player or a Man .....' (2).

(1) Anglia, ii., 37. (2) Dublin MS. Lines 40-1.

The use of the word 'toyes' here is no more than a poet's conventional depreciation of his work, equivalent to the word 'trifles' which Massinger similarly uses in describing The Unnatural Combat (1.) and other of his plays. More interesting is his description of himself as 'a Player and a Man'. It is not safe, however, to assume from this that Massinger was himself an actor. In the dedication to The Unnatural Combat he speaks of 'men of my poor quality', and while the word 'quality' is rather specially reserved for the profession of acting (2.), it is clear from the dedication of The Great Duke of Florence, in which he speaks of 'the most able in my poor quality', that Massinger uses the word to embrace not only actors but also all those men who wrote for the stage. The self-descriptive phrase might therefore be translated as 'a Playwright and a Man', and it is from these two aspects, the professional and the personal, that I have chosen to consider Massinger throughout this thesis.

As a playwright, in spite of his complaints of the poverty of his profession and his pessimistic description of 'the dejected spirits of the contemned sons of the Muses' (3.), Massinger abviously took himself very seriously and considered his vocation as of some importance. The dedication of The Roman Actor displays his serious intent, as well as a certain 'high disdain, from injured sense of merit':

> '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: my reason teaching me, such malicious and ignorant detractors deserve rather contempt than satisfact-:ion.' (4.)

(1.) Dedication (Gifford, i., 125.) (2.) Cf. N.E.D. The word is elsewhere used in this special sense by Massinger. Cf. The Roman Actor, I., iii.: 'In thee as being the chief of thy profession, I do accuse the quality of treason'. (3.) The Renegado, Dedication (Gifford, ii., 123.) (4.) Gifford, ii., 329.

And the defence of the stage which we find in the same play, although perhaps a little trite, is more than the argument of a man who is merely concerned for his means of livelihood. Yet withal, his estimate of his own attainments is, in general, modest, although perhaps self-assured. 'Some worke I might frame,' he wrote to the third Earl of Pembroke, 'That should nor wrong my duty nor your Name' (1.), and in 1536 he wrote, 'It is above my strength and faculties ....to rebuild the ruins of demolished poesie' (2.). It is indeed difficult to reconcile what we know of Massing-:er's modest nature with the accusations of 'self-love' and 'arrogance' which we find surrounding him in 1630. Perhaps it was that, with Fletcher dead and Shirley hardly yet in the full flood of his production, for a brief period he allowed himself to feel, quite justifiably, cock of the theatrical walk. He seems somewhat chastened on his return to the stage in late 1633, and there is perhaps some significance in the fact that after this date, although still only in his early fifties, we find him referring to himself as 'a strange old fellow' (3.) and saying that 'he grows old' (4.)

To discover more about Massinger the Man it is to the plays that we have to turn, for it is there that his real biography is written. There, he has revealed his mind, his scale of values, his interest, and his attitude to life and the world, more completely perhaps than do any of his fellow-dramatists in their works.

(1.) Dublin MS. Lines 65-66. (2.) The Great Duke of Florence, Dedication. (3.) The Bashful Lover, Epilogue. (4.) The Guardian, Epilogue. As we have seen, Cokaine speaks of 'Old Philip Massinger' (Above, p.40.)

Apart from references in the commendatory verses, there is one critical allusion to Massinger which has come down to us from his lifetime. This has been quoted in accounts of Massinger's life since the time of Langbaine, and heretofore the source of the quotation has always been given as some verses entitled 'On the Time-Poets' which appeared in 1656 in Choyce Drollery (1). The whole poem of which these verses form merely a part has now been discovered by Mr G.C. Moore Smith. They are from an Elegy on Randolph's Finger written by William Hemminge, Randolph's school-fellow and friend and the son of the Hemminge of the First Folio (2). Randolph's little finger was cut off in a duel somewhere about the years 1630-32 and Hemminge's humorous elegy can therefore be dated about the same period, that is, to well within Massinger's lifetime. The lines referring to Massinger are:

> 'Ingenious Shakespeare, Messenger that knowes
> the strength to wright or plott in verse or prose:
> Whose easye pegasus Can Ambell ore
> some threscore Myles of fancye In an hower.' (3).

In a commendatory poem which appears before Shakerley Marmion's long narrative of Cupid and Psyche, published in 1637, Francis Tuckyr wrote:

> 'how 'nlike art thou to those,
> That tire out Rime, and Verse, till they trot Prose:
> And ride the Muses Pegasus, poor jade,
> Till he be foundred; and make that their trade:
> And to fill up the sufferings of the beast,
> Foot it themselves three hundred miles at least.
> These have no mercy on the paper rheames,
> But produce plaies, as Schole-boys do write theames.'

It is tempting to find a connection between these lines and those applied to Massinger in Hemminge's Elegy. Certainly the criticism explicit in

(1) Repr. Ed. J.W.Ebsworth. Boston, Lincs. 1876. (2) William Hemminge's Elegy on Randolph's Finger. Ed. G.C.Moore Smith. Oxford, 1923. (3) The second line has formerly been given, following Choyce Drollery, as 'The strength of Plot to write in verse and prose'. Passage now given in spelling of MS. (55-58.)

Tuckyr's lines could with perfect justice be applied to him. If my conjecture is correct then we have a second critical comment, this time an adverse one, coming from within Massinger's lifetime.

Apart from Langbaine's Account there is no other seventeenth-century critical comment on Massinger. His name appears among the jury of poets in The Great Assises holden in Parnassus by Apollo and his Assessors, an anonymous poem published in 1645 (1), but he is given nothing to say. Wit and Fancy in a Maze, an anonymous 'mock romance' published in 1656, contains a description of an imaginary battle between two poetic factions. In the fray Massinger is ranged with the opponents of Jonson -- 'Shakespear and Fletcher surrounded with their Life-Guards, Viz. Goffe, Massinger, Decker, Webster, Sucklin, Cartwright, Carew, &c.'. However, the passage, which may give the reader wrongly the idea that Swift owed something to the romance for The Battle of the Books, is quite incidental and has no foundation whatever in actual facts, and no serious critical intention beyond the recognised division of the playwrights into the classical school of Jonson and the romantic of Shakespeare.

The fluctuations in Massinger's reputation since the seventeenth century, covering among other phases a brief revival in the eighteenth century which produced a number of adaptations of the plays and the editions of Coxeter and Monck Mason and a somewhat uncritical enthusiasm provoked in

(1) Repr. Luttrell Reprints. No. 6. Introd. Hugh Macdonald. Oxford. 1948.

the early nineteenth century by Gifford's edition, are beyond the scope of my thesis. It can be stated, however, that there has been virtually no important or significant criticism of Massinger during the past thirty years. I do not regard as important or significant the anonymous article which appeared in The Times Literary Supplement in 1940 on the occasion of the tercentenary of Massinger's death (1.) . It displayed such a complete ignorance and lack of understanding as to call forth a well-deserved rebuke from Dr Clifford Leech (2.) . It is my hope to have done something by this thesis towards asserting Massinger's right to a serious reconsideration, if not as a dramatist of major importance, then at least as one of real interest.

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(1.) Philip Massinger. 1583-1640. TLS. 16 March, 1940. (2.) TLS. 23 March, 1940. 147.

CHAPTER II.

Plotting.

The critics of Massinger's plays from the time of Hemminge have generally praised his skill in plotting. In this, the ordering and presentation of his material in a carefully articulated whole he has been pronounced pre-eminent. Koeppel praises him in these terms: 'The most striking feature of Massinger's individual art, undoubtedly, is to be found in his great constructive power. The structure of his best plays is admirable in the severity of its lines and in the wise economy shown in the use of his materials .... Massinger's best plays convey the impression of being well-built and ample halls, in which we move with a feeling of perfect security' (1). Professor Cruickshank, as the principal of the three features of the plays which he selects for special praise, commends Massinger's 'stagecraft', and his context makes it clear that he means by this word what I would describe more specifically as plotting. 'His command of stagecraft has been universally conceded,' he says, and goes on to describe certain of the plays using such phrases as 'admirably proportioned and dignified', and 'bien charpenté' (2). Maurice Chelli, a more voluble critic than Cruickshank, says that,

> 'Massinger est donc un homme a l'esprit duquel le mot drame représentait un tout déterminé et cohérent en ses parties, un organisme où l'équilibre était nécessaire,' (3)

and concludes that,

> 'Une pièce de Massinger, même mauvaise, est méthodique; jusque dans l'extrême romanesque, il nous présente des faits qui se suivent, il prépare un dénouement, il assure un équilibre, il fait oeuvre de bon artisan. .... Massinger était avant tout un esprit d'ordre'. (4)

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(1) C.H.E.L. VI., vi., 153. (2) Philip Massinger, 26. (3) Drame, 183. (4) Ibid., 341.

But it must be realised that such praise is purely relative. Admittedly Massinger, compared with, for example, Fletcher, contrives plots which appear structurally sound and solid; and indeed, few of his contemporaries -- Shakespeare (if indeed he can be regarded as a contemporary), Ben Jonson, Middleton, and Beaumont being the chief exceptions, with Fletcher, Ford, and Shirley as others on a lower level of skill -- can enter into comparison with him on this score at all. In practically all Massinger's contemporaries, other than those named, plotting is careless and loose, or worse. On the other hand, his plotting appears mechanical and artificial beside the work of dramatists today, such as Shaw and Maugham, who operate within the more flexible and naturalistic conventions deriving from Ibsen. Taken, however, in its proper context of the Jacobean theatre, Massinger's plotting is remarkable for its adroit handling of its raw material, improbable, melodramatic, not to say incredible, as much of that was, and its dexterous adaptation of that to the limitations of the prevailing theatrical conventions. In short, for their time and kind, Massinger's plots are very carefully considered and precisely jointed and deserve to the full the praise they have received.

The close dove-tailing of his plots and the cold calculation expended on the contraction, expansion, and emphasising of the events is, to be sure, only one result of the care and thought Massinger bestowed on every feature of his dramaturgy. He has left on record that he was conscious of pondering seriously the problems of his craft as a playwright. Thus in the first (or Blackfriars) prologue to The Emperor of the East he says:

'though he cannot glory
In his invention, (this work being a story
Of reverend antiquity) he doth hope,
In the proportion of it, and the scope,
You may observe some pieces drawn like one
Of a steadfast hand;' (1)

And in the commendatory verse he wrote for Shirley's The Grateful Servant (1630) he praises virtues in that play which presumably he would have liked his own work to display. In The Grateful Servant he saw

'all so well
Expressed and ordered, as wise men must say
It is a grateful poem, a good play.' (2)

That is to say, the poetic excellence lay in the expression and the dramatic in the plotting. Massinger, then, set some store by good plotting, and was altogether conscious of its importance.

Fortunately for the study of his practice there exists a manuscript of one play from which more can be deduced than the printed copies of the others disclose. I refer to the manuscript of Believe As You List (3), one of the few examples of a holograph play from the seventeenth century. It is regrettable that what the manuscript supplies is not the first version of the play. But it is the next best thing, a revision by the author himself before production. In order to meet the objections of Sir Henry Herbert who had refused to license the play as it stood because of its topicality (4), Massinger transcribed it, altering as he did so the scene from Europe to Africa and Asia (apart from a scene in Sicily), the date from the recent past to classical times, and the characters' names

(1) Gifford, iii., 244. (2) Gifford, iv., 594. (3) B.M. MS. Egerton 2828. Tudor Facsimile Texts, London, 1907. The MS. is fully discussed by Prof. C.J.Sisson in his edition, (Malone Soc. Repr. 1927.) Oxford, 1928. (See also, Sisson: RES. 4. Oct. 1925.) (4) Herbert, 19.

from Portuguese and Spanish to Roman, Greek, and Carthaginian. This manuscript was evidently used as a prompt copy, after it had been carefully edited by the theatre book-keeper or another in the company's employment who altered Massinger's somewhat literary stage-directions in conformity with the actual theatrical arrangements and added notes concerned with the casting and the giving of guidance in the stage-calling of the actors and the properties.

From this manuscript it is clear that Massinger conceived and constructed his play in acts and scenes. That this was a literary rather than a theatrical practice is shown by the fact that the reviser erased all Massinger's act- and scene-headings, merely marking the entrances of the characters and keeping the word Act only in the sense of an interval or pause between the separate parts of the play.

This conception and construction of his plays in acts with scene subdivisions may have been a habit acquired during his apprenticeship as a collaborator (1.), a division of labour according to acts being a very likely procedure in collaboration (2.). In fact, an analysis of his plays shows that he relates the several parts of his plots very strictly to a five-act division. His normal practice is to select the five most effective moments in his story and make each supply the high-light of an act. The first act

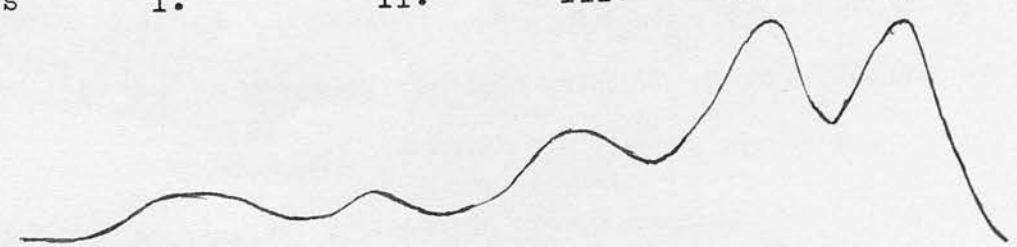
(1.) But of course the Horatian injunction as to five acts, neither more nor less (De Arte Poetica, 189.), and the Senecan precedent, were unquestioned. See J.Dover Wilson (RES. 12. Oct. 1927. 390): 'The academic tradition [i.e. of writing in acts] seems to have been followed occasionally if not always from the very beginning, in at least one popular London playhouse, viz. the Rose theatre, owned by ... Henslowe'. (2.) Cf. E.N.S.Thompson: Elizabethan Dramatic Collaboration. (Eng. Stud. XL. 1909) But see also in this connection Miss O.L.Hatcher: Fletcher's Habits of Dramatic Collaboration (Anglia. 33. 219.) and L.Wann: The Collaboration of Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger. (Shakespeare Studies. University of Wisconsin. 1916. Chap. VII.)

covers the exposition and leads to the initial situation, dilemma, or dramatic paradox from which the rest of the play evolves. The second act is of a bridging or transitional kind between the greater tensities of Acts I and III. This second act is indeed invariably the quietest and least accented of the five. Nevertheless it has its own minor climax and it complicates matters by the addition of new threads. In the third act comes as a rule the second most important moment in the play, the action being thereby given its final direction; though the actual end is not immediately foreseeable. Act IV is generally like Act II in being mainly a linking one; but always in the course of it there is a considerable amount of business, sometimes in the nature of apparently greater entanglement, but sometimes in a partial resolut-:ion. Act V works up to the comprehensive dénouement and grand finale. Thus diagrammatically the line of a Massinger play is:

Acts I. II. III. IV. V.

While something like this is the normal disposition, there are plays in which the major climax (and with it the dénouement and conclusion of the main plot interest) falls in the fourth act. These plays can be represented diagrammatically thus:

Acts I. II. III. IV. V.



The fifth act of such plays appears rather anticlimactic, but, as I shall show, Massinger always tries to keep back enough to justify the extension into a fifth act with a secondary main climax.

A consideration of Massinger's best known play, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, before I go on to a more detailed examination of his plotting, will illustrate what I have just said.

In the first act most of the principals are prominently introduced:-

I. Wellborn, the hero, reduced to poverty by his own generosity and prodigality and by the machinations of
II. his uncle by marriage, the villainous extortioner Sir Giles Overreach (these two are the focal and moral opposites about which the play rotates);
III. Lady Allworth;
IV. her stepson, young Allworth; and
V. Justice Greedy, who, though unimportant as an agent, is prominent as a provider of comic relief in a very unsmiling comedy.

The only exception is Marrall, Overreach's unscrupulous clerk; but even he makes at least his appearance and speaks a couple of lines. The characters who do not appear in Act I are dramatically of only secondary importance.

The exposition is pretty well confined to the exhibition of the hero's reduced fortunes. The play is to deal with his restoration and the ruin of his despoiler. The action, therefore, is a counterparted one. From the hero's natural resentment the plot against Overreach begins to take shape. Before the end of Act I, though the spectator is still in ignorance of how it is to proceed, he has seen the hero accepted by Lady Allworth as a welcome guest in spite of his rags and is aware that this is only the first step in a promising scheme of just revenge. But the act also introduces

the love of young Allworth for Margaret Overreach, without doing more than stating it through Allworth's confession of it to Wellborn.

Act II brings the anti-Overreach conspiracy well on its way. For Marrall has been deceived by the evidence of his own eyes into believing that Lady Allworth is in love with and intends to marry Wellborn; and this report he carries to the incredulous Overreach. Overreach's brutal beating of Marrall for lying to him, and still more the latter's muttered threats, are a preparation for an unexpected turn later. As the whole action of the play is 'The Tricker Tricked' (1.), Massinger has to show Overreach the Machiavel himself in operation and not merely a tricker in the past, the unconscious dupe of his victims now. This he does at the beginning of the act with the disclosure of Overreach's ambitions to marry his daughter into the peerage. These two disclosures -- young Allworth's love for Margaret Overreach in Act I, and Sir Giles's very different purpose for his daughter in Act II -- are leads up to the secondary plot of young Allworth and Margaret which properly begins in Act III.

In Act III Wellborn's scheme so far advances that Overreach, having had similar ocular evidence to Marrall's that Wellborn is in Lady Allworth's very good graces, is eager to be reconciled to his victimised nephew and to lend him money -- with, of course, a sinister intention. At the same time the secondary plot of young Allworth and Margaret begins to move with the confession to Lord Lovell and his promise of help; Overreach, in his ambition to marry his daughter to a lord, seizes the chance offered by Lord

(1) For a discussion of the relationship of A New Way to A Trick to Catch the Old One (1607) by Middleton, see the separate editions of the play listed in the Bibliography.

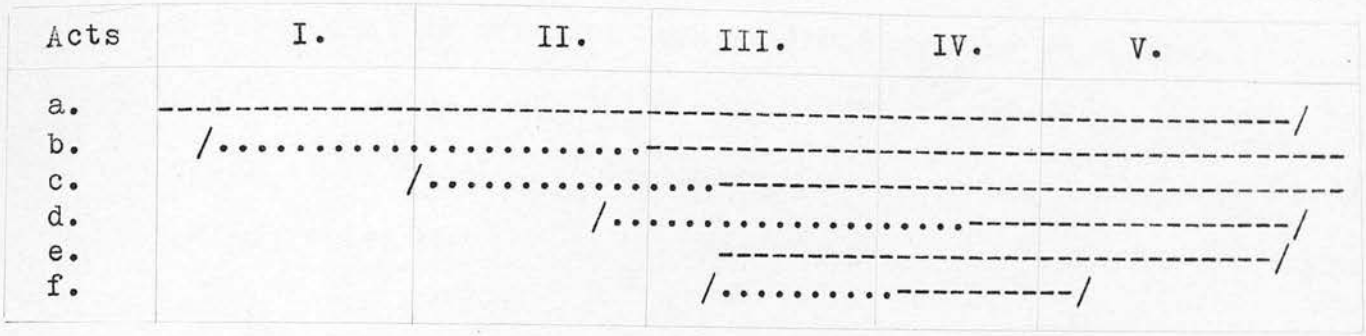
Lovell's visit to his house, and his very eagerness not only horrifies his daughter in what is perhaps the most powerful scene of the play, but plays into the hands of those determined to frustrate it. Nor does Massinger forget to keep before us Marrall's bitter resentment and longing for an opportunity for revenge and to let us anticipate the match to be made up between Lord Lovell and Lady Allworth.

From this still-developing, multiple situation at the end of Act III, the plot moves towards the resolution, but not an immediate one. In Act IV the lines only converge towards Overreach's complete frustration and defeat. He indeed appears to himself to be winning on every front, with his daughter all but married to Lord Lovell and with his nephew enabled to marry Lady Allworth and so provide a richer prey for a second and more drastic fleecing. The audience sees the situation quite otherwise, with Wellborn informed by the vindictive Marrall of a table-turning trickery that will foil Overreach's and with the marriage of his daughter and young Allworth almost completed by his own unwitting furtherance of it. The background plot -- admittedly a very minor one -- of Lady Allworth and Lord Lovell also progresses uninterruptedly.

Act V is a comprehensive finishing-off. First comes the betrothal of Lady Allworth and Lord Lovell; then the triumph of Wellborn and the discomfiture of Overreach in that direction when the deed upon which he had built his villainy against his nephew proves, by Marrall's agency, to be a letterless and sealless parchment; and finally -- the secondary plot quoad the hero being the main plot quoad the villain -- the catastrophic disappointment of Overreach when he hears of his daughter's marriage to

Allworth and his apoplectic seizure and collapse.

The six strands of the plot may, therefore, be represented thus:-



a. The rehapbilitation of Wellborn and his retaliation on Overreach.
b. Allworth's love for Margaret Overreach and the outwitting of her father.
c. The frustration of Overreach's design to marry Margaret to Lord Lovell.
d. The vengeance of Marrall.
e. The failure of Overreach's machination against Wellborn.
f. The mutual attraction of Lord Lovell and Lady Allworth.

The six-strand plot gives in retrospect an impression of inevitability. But so to order it that it gives that very impression, and, well-timed and well-proportioned, never disclosing any point too soon, never flagging nor losing the audience's interest, but advancing in a growing complexity and purposefulness to the grand climax in which Sir Giles and the evil he repres-:ents are brought to naught -- that is a structural feat of which Massinger might well have been proud. Massinger has done more than tell a simple story well: he has told a far-from-simple story surpassingly well.

After these general remarks on his plotting and the examen of A New Way to Pay Old Debts as an illustration, I want to go on to a more detailed consideration of certain features of his dramatic architecture.

Naturally the first act of a play presents special difficulties and requires special attention. By it the audience has to be put into possession of all the immediately relevant information about the chief characters and their inter-relations. In it the motivating situation, the raison d'être of the whole play, has to be introduced; and by it the appropriate atmosphere has to be suggested and the right tempo struck. As Professor Allardyce Nicoll says:-

> 'It is a commonplace of dramatic criticism that a successful exposition is the most difficult thing of all to achieve, and the reason of the difficulty lies precisely in the fact that in the exposition the audience has to be provided artistically with such information regarding the characters as is necessary for an understanding of the play. An audience gets bored when information of this kind is provided for it by direct enunciation; unconsciously the spectators feel that here a departure is being made from the sphere of drama, which is action, to the sphere of ordinary narrative.' (1.)

If Massinger's expositions (2.) are never as subtle and masterly as Shakespeare's in Hamlet or Macbeth, they are never makeshift protases like Prospero's address to Miranda in Act I., scene ii. of The Tempest (3.). His skill indeed in solving his expository difficulties is uniformly very considerable, and how much is done for the spectator or reader can be to some extent judged by the negative examples of The Parliament of Love and Believe As You List, in both of which the greater part of the first act is missing. As in his collaboration with Fletcher and others Massinger seems frequently to have been assigned the first acts as part of his share (4.), it is

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(1.) The Theory of Drama. London, 1931. 76. (2.) I take Mis U. Ellis-Fermor's interpretation of the meaning of this word: '.. that part of a play which serves to introduce us to the chief characters, to let us grasp the main facts upon which their relations and the subsequent action depend and see the action set going'. (The Jacobean Drama. 1936. 31.) (3.) Though the late Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch thought otherwise about this scene.(Tempest. New Camb. Sh.) (4.) But see L.Wann: loc. cit. (Above, p. 83, note 2.)

reasonable to assume that his special competence in dramatic exposition was recognised by his contemporaries.

It is Massinger's frequent practice to begin a play (and indeed most of his later scenes) in the middle of a conversation (1). The participants in it do not give the impression of just initiating their conversation as they walk on. They are already well launched into it and the audience is plunged right into the middle of it. But the dialogue is so managed that the audience quickly and easily catches up with it. A good example of this naturalistic continuum is the opening of The City Madam. The entrants are Sir John Frugal's two apprentices, Goldwire Junior and Tradewell Junior:

'Gold. The ship is safe in the Pool then?
Trade. And makes good,
In her rich fraught, the name she bears, The Speedwell:
My master will find it; for, on my certain knowledge,
For every hundred that he ventured in her,
She hath returned him five.
Gold. And it comes timely;
For, besides a payment on the nail for a manor
Late purchased by my master, his young daughters
Are ripe for marriage.
Trade. Who? Nan and Mall?
Gold. Mistress Anne and Mary, and with some addition,
Or 'tis more punishable in our house
Than scandalum magnatum.
Trade. 'Tis great pity
Such a gentleman as my master (for that title
His being a citizen cannot take from him)
Hath no male heir to inherit his estate,
And keep his name alive.
Gold. The want of one
Swells my young mistresses, and their madam-mother,
With hopes above their birth and scale: their dreams are
Of being made countesses; and they take state,
As they were such already.'

(1) See below, Chapter III., p. 118 .

Within these twenty lines, we have learned, without the information appearing to be too obviously handed out:- that Goldwire and Tradewell are apprentices to a rich and worthy London merchant of good family, Sir John Frugal; and that he is not altogether happy in his marriage, having no son to succeed him and having a haughty wife and two proud and ambitious daughters, Anne and Mary. The next twenty lines just as painlessly make us aware of the ruinous extravagance of Lady Frugal and her daughters, of their aping of court manners, of Sir John's tolerance of all this, and of his brother, Luke, who has been redeemed by Sir John from a debtors' prison and who, although a scholar and a traveller, is treated with contempt by his sister-in-law and nieces as 'an under-prentice or a footman' who sits below the salt. That is, in some forty lines Massinger has provided us with the 'apperceptive mass', to take a term from educational psychology -- the minimal information which we must possess before the plot can get going, a plot which is to be a lesson to

> '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'. (1.)

It only remains for us to meet the principal characters in person (we already know a good deal about them from the apprentices' conversation), and this is done coincidentally with the first moves of the plot. Well before the end of the act the process is complete and the audience au fait with the situation and the inter-relationships.

An examination along the same lines of the opening of any of the other

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(1.) IV., iii.

plays, early or late, will show Massinger pursuing the same technique. The full exposition of a play is not, of course, completed in the first scene. Nevertheless, a first scene is from the expository angle always the most important, and Massinger comes as near as any playwright can to confining all the expository essentials in his. What may be called the bearing-lines or status quo ante actionem are sketched in swiftly with a few skilful strokes; the inter-relationships of character and character, at least in respect of the main plot-interest, are outlined; the immediate domestic background, and, if it is relevant, the larger political one, are indicated; together with the locus and the date of the action; and the motif-to-be is insinuated.

It may be useful to illustrate this matter further but more briefly from one or two other plays. Thus The Renegado opens, apparently casually, with a brief comic interchange, reminiscent of the more modern playwright's trick of filling in the first few minutes with inconsequential material to let the audience settle down and attune their ears to the actors' voices. But Massinger is not merely putting off time for such a purpose. He sees to it that the leit-motiv of the whole play, religion and renegadism, is brought to the front of our minds. In this semi-comic passage and in the rest of the not-long first scene we realise that the scene is Tunis and that Vitelli and his man, Gazet, have come there from Venice, ostensibly as merchants, under the direction of Father Francisco, to rescue Vitelli's sister, Paulina, who has been abducted by the piratical Grimaldi, the Renegado of the play's title.

The Duke of Milan opens on a note of broader buffoonery, which, however, is explained before it makes a deeper impression than Massinger needs by the commentating Tiberio and Stephano as part of a general merry-making. The Court of Milan is celebrating the Duchess Marcelia's birthday in the midst of a political situation fraught with disaster for the Duke of Milan if the King of France, on whose side he has ranged himself, is defeated by the Emperor Charles.

The Unnatural Combat exemplifies a favourite gambit with Massinger -- the dropping of the essential initial information by a group of characters waiting to present or to hear presented a petition to some nobleman or a case to a court of justice, or for some similar purpose. The device is used again, for example, in The Fatal Dowry (1.) , The Maid of Honour, and The Emperor of the East.

Generally the expository minima are entrusted to minor characters, possibly because what the great ones are and do is more easily conveyed in the gossip of the not-so-great. But sometimes, as in The Renegado and A New Way to Pay Old Debts, a principal character is also one of the expositors. In The Picture Massinger has a successful exposition by the difficult means of a conversation between two of the principals. By choosing them as the expository agents he denied himself the useful chance of preparing the audience for them by describing them through the mouths of secondary persons. Mathias and Sophia in that play, then, have not only to disclose the initial

(1.) The fact discussed later (p. 96 .) that this expository passage has got attached to the wrong play is for the moment irrelevant.

situation but to reveal at least some traits of their own characters.

So much, then, for the minimal exposition, as I have called it, which is largely, if not entirely, covered by the first scene. As the first act proceeds beyond that point and one after another the principal characters are introduced (Massinger, as I have said, is fond of a court, a trial, a pleading scene, or some similar focal point), for some adequate reason the characters pass from being to doing, in the dramatic, not necessarily physical, sense, and the forces of attraction and repulsion, of egoism and reaction thereto, of desire or ambition or revenge, begin to gather towards the climax of the first act. Good illustrations of this are, among others, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, The City Madam, The Guardian, The Great Duke of Florence, The Duke of Milan, and The Bondman.

But in some plays it is here or hereabouts that Massinger begins to show defects in his plotting. These defects are almost always due to his endeavouring to plot in accordance with his moral or thematic purpose, rather than in accordance with his story. In these defectively plotted plays the thematic purpose and the action are not properly involuted.

Such a play is The Roman Actor, though Massinger pronounced it in his dedicatory epistle as 'the most perfect birth of my Minerva', an opinion whic his admiring friends seem largely to have shared. By the end of Act I two leit-motiven have been introduced:- the nature of tyranny, manifested in Domitian's desire to be regarded as divine and above law and in his appropriation of Domitia from her husband Aelius Lamia; and the value of the actor's profession maintained by Paris. But there is little or no indication of the direction the action is likely to take or of the involution

of the one leit-motiv with the other. The only link with what Massinger intends to be one of the main thematic concerns of the play, a tyrant's downfall through a woman -- not, be it noted, through the outraged Lamia's revenge -- occurs in Lamia's prayer at the end of Act I., scene ii:

> 'To the gods
> I bend my knees (for tyranny hath banished
> Justice from men), and as they would deserve
> Their altars and our vows, humbly invoke them,
> That this my ravished wife may prove as fatal
> To proud Domitian, and her embraces
> Afford him in the end as little joy
> As wanton Helen brought to him of Troy.'

As for the other and more prominent main thematic concern, the actor Paris's dignity and worth provoking the new Empress's fatal passion for him, there is neither hint nor preparation for this in the first act. Even in Act II, which consists of one long and theatrically quite effective scene illustrating further Domitian's arbitrary will, there are few seeds of further action sown and the main complex appears to have been brought no nearer. It is only in Act III that something like dramatic dove-tailing is effected. But even so the play is more episodic than Massinger's usual skill would lead us to expect. The sequence is that of a series of striking situations, and the comparative incoherence is inevitably worsened by the insetting of three playlets within the play, even though they have a certain dramatic or thematic relevance (1.) . The fact is that Massinger had adopted two competing rather than easily co-ordinatable themes. Domitian, the tyrant of arbitrary lust whose uxoriousness to a woman corrupted both by himself and

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(1.) I would agree with Professor Cruickshank when (Philip Massinger, 126.) he praises 'the dexterity with which three smaller plays are introduced into the action', but cannot agree when he adds that they are introduced 'without in the least confusing the construction'.

by the imperial dignity leads to his humiliation and ruin, is the initiating or active focus of the play. Paris is only the more passive focus. On the other hand, he is made the more prominent personage, a role obviously designed to give a leading actor a whole string of opportunities. As such, the play has much to offer in the way of histrionic and dramatic variety. But Massinger found it impossible also to make the variety contribute to a unity.

The Fatal Dowry may also be taken to illustrate Massinger's occasional defects in unified plotting, with the proviso that, as this is a play in which Nathaniel Field had a considerable share, the weaknesses, or some of them, may be due to him, or at least to the dual control. It is unique among the plays of the Massinger canon in being both weak in plotting and strong, unusually so, in characterisation. I incline to the view that the strength of the characterisation is due to Field and the weakness of plot due to Massinger, but the exact nature of the collaboration is so doubtful a quantity that I would hesitate here to apportion the praise or the blame in either respect to either of the writers. Since this is a collaborated play it cannot, it is true, be admitted as an example of Massinger's individual practice, but as an excellent and very obvious example of that failure in plotting I have been describing I do not consider it out of place to mention it here.

The introduction, as I have indicated above, is gripping and powerful. But it introduces only the first part of the play, which may be said to break nearly cleanly in two at the end of Act II. The first part is concerned with the reduced estate of Charalois who has nobly impoverished

himself to pay his distinguished soldier-father's debts, the appeal to Rochfort whose munificence re-establishes Charalois's fortunes, and the bestowal in marriage on Charalois of Beaumelle, Rochfort's daughter. This is a self-contained and all-but-rounded-off action. It is a play in itself, even though it is more rhetorically than dramatically interesting. The bits that are in excess, as it were, of the requirements look like accidental intrusions, rather than growing buds. The more dramatic sequel presents the story of a guilty Desdemona (Beaumelle) and Cassio (Novall Junior), a truly honest Iago (Romont), and a really not-too-soon-made-jealous Othello (Charalois). This occupies Acts III and IV and concludes quite as finally as Act V of Othello. But Massinger goes on to his fifth act which, while it is admittedly better linked to the fourth than the third is to the second, has a purpose which is more moral than dramatic -- to introduce results consequential to those in Act IV which underline the chosen moral that justice should be left to Heaven and that no individual should take the law into his own hands. It is worth pointing out that Nicholas Rowe recognised the fracture between Acts II and III and economised by beginning his adaptation of the play, The Fair Penitent (1703), with Act III.

On the other hand, C.L.Lockert who is the most recent editor of the play (1.) takes it to be not nearly so disunited as I have suggested. He finds the seeds of the second or middle section in the first, in that Beaumelle, married to Charalois against her will, is unchaste in heart, if not in deed. This, however, is not made clear in Acts I and II. Beaumelle

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(1.) Lancaster, Pa. 1918.

certainly has a serving-maid who talks with a loose freedom, and she has been wooed by Novall Junior before there is any word of her marriage to Charalois. But the passage in which Rochfort offers and Charalois accepts her could leave no impression on the spectator but of her virtue and of her full consent:

'Charalois. Fair Beaumelle, can you love me?
Beaumelle. Yes, my lord.' (1.)

All that is of a sinister note comes in the coda to Act II which begins with the entry of Novall Junior and his friends. Lockert would exonerate Massinger and Field by throwing the flaw back to the story, probably of Spanish origin, from which the plot is taken. But surely if Massinger and Field did find such a flaw, they did not need to take it over into their play. Lockert goes on to justify his authors by the alternative excuse that they could ignore the requirements of unity by presenting their action as 'a cross-section of life'. It is an ingenious explanation. But I can only say that the idea of presenting any action as a 'cross-section of life' in the manner, let us say, of Mr Somerset Maughan or Mr John Van Druten, is most unlike Massinger or Field or, for that matter, any dramatist till the present day (2.). Massinger and Field seem to have had some realisation of the fissure and to have tried to disguise or remove it. But they did not have much success, and the reader, and probably the spectator, will not find that unifying interaction of part with part which characterises a really well-balanced dramatic machine.

(1.) II., ii. (2.) Although Ben Jonson, in Bartholomew Fair, was perhaps moving towards that idea.

As I have already said, Massinger's usual design is one in which, while each act has its own particular climax, the climax of the total play is in the fifth act and is followed by a swift concluding resolution; but sometimes the climax of the fourth act is the climax of the whole play, the one in the fifth being secondary.

The Duke of Milan is of this latter type. Its fourth act rises to Sforza's murder of his wife, Marcelia, and closes on his swift realisation that she is after all innocent. The whole scene is a theatrical masterpiece moving, and yet economical and remarkably retrained (1). Sforza's final cry of anguish could provide one of the most effective tragic endings in English drama and no modern dramatist would ever dream of going beyond it. But Massinger could not leave well alone, ruled as he was by the five-act convention and, what was even more operative, his moral purpose. Sforza must meet his tragic end -- be punished for his last as for his earlier sins (not all of which, we discover, have yet been disclosed); and the moral that

> 'There's no trust
> In a foundation that is built on lust;' (2.)

must be pointed. So a rather anti-climactic fifth act is inartificially tacked on (3). To make matters worse (in more senses than one), Massinger introduces what, since he has not made anything like adequate preparation for it, appears to be entirely new action. So we learn that the villainous

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(1.) It is not, however, possessed of much poetry (See below, Chap. VI. p.384.)
(2.) V., ii. (3.) Professor Cruickshank (Philip Massinger, 136.) thought the play 'skilfully constructed', and Professor H.W.Wells (Elizabethan and Jacobean Playwrights. New York, 1939. 65.) says, surprisingly enough, that 'like so many of its author's plays, it tells a simple story uncommonly well'.

Francisco, through whose machinations Sforza has killed his wife, was not acting, as we might reasonably have concluded from the earlier scenes, from a motiveless malignity but in revenge for Sforza's betrayal of a sister, Eugenia, who only now makes a very belated appearance. The last scene, adapted rather than imitated from Act V., scene ii. of The Second Maiden's Tragedy with its disguises, the painting of the dead Marcelia's face to give an appearance of life, and the device of the poisoned lips, makes a finale which, quite apart from any question of the mere plotting, is to the modern reader ludicrously melodramatic, and appears all the more bathetic after the subtlety of the earlier scenes (e.g. Act II., scene i.) between Marcelia and Francisco.

The Roman Actor, already discussed in another relation, provides another grand climax in the fourth, not in the fifth, act and a resulting disintegration in the fifth. By the end of Act IV Paris, after whom the play is named and whose first-ranking prominence is unquestionable, is dead and the Empress Domitia, whose infatuation for him has led to his death, has been imprisoned by her husband. But we discover to our amazement in Act V., scene i. that she has been restored to the Emperor's favour, and we have to jump the gap as best we may. I suppose that Massinger discovered that he could not possibly spin out the inescapable fifth act without her, and, as I mentioned before, the peculiar dichotomy of the plot made it necessary for Domitian to meet his just end.

The Picture also could very well finish, after some slight re-arrangement, with its fourth act. For all the vital action has ended, and the remainder of this ridiculous play has to consist of clearing up what well

might have been left to the audience's intelligence; in which apparently, as I shall have occasion to remark again, Massinger did not have very high confidence. The uxoriousness of Ladislaus has been lessoned, and all that remains is that the jealousy of Mathias should be cured, something which, for dramatic effectiveness would have been better if more closely coupled to the other incident. As a result Massinger fills most of his fifth act with mere facile superfluity, and is forced to stretch his cloth to fit his coat.

The Unnatural Combat rises to a magnificent climax in the first scene of Act IV. Malefort, a character deliberately invested up to that point with mystery, first reveals in a soliloquy his incestuous passion for his daughter, Theocrine, then has a tense interview with her in which his tortured soul would declare his lust and yet is held back, and lastly makes a confidant of Montreville. Instead of sweeping straight on to the catastrophe, Massinger introduces in the next scene an episode of serio-comic semi-buffoonery concerned with the impecunious Captain Belgarde whom he was using as a means of praising the military profession and rebuking the ingratitude and neglect too often meted out to it. But Belgarde's reappearance at this point involves an interruption, an abrupt interruption, of an intense tragic ascent. This is a grave example of that fault of 'the mingled drama' which Dr Johnson so ably defended for all time. It is an example of the fault which the wise Doctor himself described when he said that:

'by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and .... the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry.' (1.)

Obviously in this case Massinger uses Belgarde and his affairs merely in order to fill out the play to the required length. He is really a dramatise character-sketch of The Discontented Soldier. His fortunes do not constitut a story and so do not supply a sub-plot.

Massinger, of course, came to play-plotting in the years when the current taste was for the surprise drama of melodramatic tragedy, comedy, and tragi-comedy. Surprise and melodrama were not wanting in the drama before Beaumont and Fletcher began, but it might be said that in, for example, The Spanish Tragedy or Antonio's Revenge the end to which the play moves is inevitable, given the premisses and the characters, as in Shakespeare 'the end of the play is the end of expectation' (2.). Such surprise as there is concerns only the means and often proves surprising more to the characters than to the audience. The characters, even in their most melodramatic decisions, do not run counter to their own natures. Their actions might be highly exceptional, but they do not involve psychological incredibilities. However, in the drama of the Fletcher school to which Massinger belonged, surprise for the audience was more sought after, and the readiest way to achieve it was to make characters run counter to all that they had appeared to be; to make them be swayed by whim or momentary impulse from the bias of their being; to discover suddenly a remote motive; to be converted or

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(1) Preface to Shakespeare (1765). (Johnson on Shakespeare. Ed. Sir. W. Raleigh. London, 1916. 16-17.) (2.) Ibid., 25.

perverted by inadequate steps; to be motivated paradoxically and to accept a situation in a way not in accord with their characters.

Credibility is, of course, not something that we are inclined to demand, except in moderation, from our plays, and flaws in credibility or an excess of incredibility show themselves more clearly in an examination of a playwright's legends and characterisation than in an examination of his plot-structure. No one, for example, could hold any brief for the credibility of the legends of Othello or King Lear. Yet there can come a point in a play in which the weight of accumulated incredibility can topple the most rigid structure. This point, due to Massinger's enslavement to the drama of surprise usually comes in the concluding scenes, and while it is not directly a matter of plot-structure it is a result which which could have been averted or mitigated by more skilful plotting earlier in the play. Thus, the elaborate theatricality of the final act of The City Madam, which up to that point is one of the better -- and if anything, more credible -- plays, ruins it. Sir John Frugal, Sir Maurice Lacy and Mr Plenty have been received by Luke as American Indians. They promise him untold wealth by magic means if he will deliver as sacrifices to the Devil, their master, two virgins, and another woman. Luke, who, it must be remembered, is for all his avarice 'a scholar well read and travelled', swallows this balderdash and agrees to hand over Sir John's wife and daughters. A birthday banquet is prepared for him, supposedly by magic means, by the 'Indians'; and in the course of it a masque of Orpheus and Eurydice is presented; and then he is confronted with what he honestly believes to be the spirits of his servants, his debtors, and others he has wronged. The idea is to move him to repentance for his

crimes and his avarice in much the same way as an attempt was made to refor Philargus by the masque of 'The Cure of Avarice' in The Roman Actor; and like Philargus Luke remains unmoved. To pile wonder on wonder it has been contrived that young Lacy and Plenty have taken the place in the frames of their own portraits (Gifford remarks (1.) that 'there is some difficulty in understanding the mechanism of this scene'.); and the supposed 'spirits' of Lady Frugal and her daughters are introduced, ostensibly to take leave of the portraits of the former suitors and the portrait of Sir John, which, although there is no direct mention of it in the play, was presumably hanging at the back of the room also. On their knees they proclaim their repentance for their earlier presumption. Luke is still unmoved, but says.

'If by your magic art,
You can give life to these, or bring him hither
To witness her repentance, I may have,
Perchance, some feeling of it.' (2.)

The scene continues:

'Sir John. For your sport
You shall see a masterpiece. Here's nothing but
A superficies; colours and no substance.
Sit still, and to your wonder and amazement,
I'll give these organs. This the sacrifice
To make the great work perfect.
(Burns incense, and makes mystical gesticulations.
Sir Maurice Lacy and Plenty give signs of animation.)
Luke. Prodigious!
Sir John. Nay, they have life, and motion.
Descend!
(Sir Maurice Lacy and Plenty descend and come forward.)
And for your absent brother -- this washed off,
Against your will you shall know him. (Discovers himself.)'

Luke is defeated; the fact that his soul is immutably ingrained with his

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(1.) iv., 115, note. (2.) V., iii.

wickedness is demonstrated; and he speaks only two more lines before the end of the scene. The audience which, earlier in the play, accepted without question the disguising of the conspirators as Indians, will not be so ready to accept the new-found gullibility with which Luke confronts the pseudo-supernatural staginess of the finale. The element of surprise has undermined and brought tumbling down the carefully planned edifice of the plot.

Again, to mention another example, Camiola's sudden renunciation of the world at the end of The Maid of Honour, which admittedly underlines the moral purpose, is sprung on us like a Jack-in-the-box, and appears too much like a cutting of the Gordian knot of the plot's difficulties.

This impression is often given by the endings of many of the other plays. They tend to be too abrupt. While this is perhaps not a matter in which Massinger can be too much blamed, since dramatists from Shakespeare to Shaw have often had difficulty in concluding their plays satisfactorily, it is one which is of importance, since the ending can decide whether the audience leaves the theatre satisfied or dissatisfied. Everything is just huddled away in The Bashful Lover, and the audience is left to piece together the story and round off the plot by surmise. And at the end of The Guardian, a play which contains more action and still more improbability than the majority, there is too much to clear up with the result that the denouement is badly cramped. The Renegado finishes with incredible rapidity in a series of short scenes, and is remarkable in that it concludes with only two minor characters and their silent attendants on the stage. Whereas usually there is a full-stage finale, this play ends upon a dying fall with Asambeg saying:

'I will hide
This head among the deserts, or some cave
Filled with my shame and me; where I alone
May die without a partner in my moan.'

As a 'dying fall' it is quite effective, but I cannot but feel that it would have been better if Massinger had brought down his baton more firmly in a full-close.

There remain two plays, not so far mentioned, in which there are flaws due to rather unusual circumstances.

In The Parliament of Love Massinger does something which he does not so obviously attempt anywhere else. Normally he handles an action in which though there may be several threads as in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, all of them are subordinated and contributory to a controlling and over-arching main purpose (1). Only the occasional episodes of (rather stolid) comic relief stand apart; and they do not amount to the status of sub-plots. Moreover, there is normally such close integration in Massinger's plots that the various sub-plots are reciprocally helpful and interacting. But in The Parliament of Love there are three plots of equal importance and integrity: the plot of Clarindore and Bellisant, the plot of Novall and Perigot, and the plot of Cleremond and Leonora. The play is not satisfactory, and even Professor Cruickshank, in whose eyes Massinger can do little wrong, seems not to like it. The weakness of course is that the

(1) As Koeppel says (C.H.E.L. VI., vi., 153.); 'The mixture of plots which many of his brother poets preferred ... seems to have had no attraction for a dramatist whose intellect favoured clearness above all other poetical charms.' Note also that in his collaboration with Fletcher Massinger seems to have concentrated upon the main story and left the sub-plots to his fellow-dramatist. See, L. Wann, loc. cit.

three practically equipollent plots are not closely enough related. The idea of a Court of Love in which all lovers' wrongs are to be adjudge and righted is by itself too loose a link to bind the three stories with three sets of characters into a play. Though the result is an agreeable entertainment, the only reason I can give for Massinger's persisting with such recalcitrant material is that he got pleasure from trying the impossible task of making it into a unity. But probably he had no very high opinion of the finished play, for he never printed it. Possibly it was not very successful when it was produced, or possibly, having returned to the King's Men, he lost control over the manuscript.

A play we know to have been a failure, The Emperor of the East, which is full of talk and disputation but has little real action, leaves a very unsatisfactory impression. It seems in an indefinable way to lack unity of purpose. However, examination of the play shows that this is not due to any real flaw in plotting, but is undoubtedly caused by the fact that, as Professor A. K. McIlwraith has so convincingly argued from textual evidence (1.), the play was originally written as a tragedy and between its failure on the public stage and its presentation at Court was changed into a comedy by the rewriting of the fifth act. Although the play is important for the reflections it utters upon the office of a ruler (2.), it forms indeed a most lamentable comedy.

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1. Did Massinger Revise 'The Emperor of the East'? (RES. V. 1929.)
2. See below, Chapter V., p. 259.

Such an examination of Massinger's play-structure as I have given may seem to give the lie to the common acceptance of his skill as a plotter. But that his plotting seems weak when examined in the study is not, of course, to suggest that the weaknesses would always appear obvious in the theatre. Good acting and good direction will go far to mask even major imperfections in any dramatist; and in any case, it is a critical error to get, as it were, at closer grips with any work of art than the artist designed it for. A picture or a statue is painted or carved to be seen not nearer than such-and-such a distance; there are certain mathematical limitations imposed by optical conditions upon the correct viewing distance for a photograph in order that perpspective might not be distorted. Likewise a play has the right to be judged in the theatre. The study may be the court of first instance, but the theatre is always the court of appeal. So it is with Massinger. It may be said of him with equal justice what Dr Johnson said of Shakespeare:

> 'His plan has commonly what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequences.' (1.)

His plays in general are firm and muscular; they move swiftly and develop along a carefully planned route with properly timed and regulated climaxes and dénouements.

Where he does most strikingly fail in plotting, it is almost always due to something at which I have already hinted and to which I shall have many occasions to refer later in this study. That something is a

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(1) Johnson on Shakespeare, 25.

fundamental principle which seems to have governed every aspect of his work, a certain trait in his character which makes it absolutely necessary for him to introduce the moral view-point at no matter what cost to anything else. For him, artistic conscience always succumbs to the conscience of the moralist.

Even in the poem on Shirley's The Grateful Servant which I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, he places emphasis upon the moral attitude. In Shirley's play, he says, is

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

Somewhat similar statements occur throughout his prologues, but even if they did not, his attitude could be superlatively easily deduced from his practice. Every play, for example, has its moral -- usually expressed explicitly or implicitly at or near the end of the last act. It may be that jealousy or uxoriousness or unchastity are deadly sins, or that vengeance belongs to God alone, or it may be a lesson against pride as shown by the city ladies' courtly ambitions; but whatever the moral is, it is always there.

It is when this moral is imperfectly assimilated to the story that trouble arises. Then Massinger will use every means he can, in plotting and otherwise, to twist an unsuitable story to fit. Thus arise the imperfect-:ions I have discussed in The Roman Actor, The Duke of Milan, The Picture and The City Madam. In this last play we see the trouble at its very worst. The intended theme or motif, as is clear from the very title of the play, is the just humiliation of the proud women, wife and daughters of

the city merchant; but gradually the character of Luke takes charge of the play, and the audience is more interested in his rise and fall than with anything else. It has become the theme of the play, and the attempt made at the end to bring us round to the displaced original theme is clumsy. This confusion as to the theme of The City Madam and the similar muddle discussed above in The Roman Actor are plotting errors of the profoundest sort, and are entirely due to Massinger's placing a particular moral view-point above theatrical and dramatic interest.

But perfection is a rare commodity, in the dramatic plotting of the Jacobean and Caroline playwrights as elsewhere. And, as I have suggested, too much weight should not be given to the results of an examination of a play in cold blood. It is for the theatre that a dramatist writes and in the theatre that his works should be experienced and judged. The printed word is cold and flat: the spoken word is warm and alive. In the theatre at a performance of, say, Hamlet, the spectator, even although he be a student of dramaturgy, is carried on the emotional crest of Shakespeare's words and action; and the problems over which the student may have passed sleepless nights in his study are either resolved or shown to be imaginary. The vast machine of the plot, which seemed so unconvincing and even unworkable when he studied it in print and turned back to compare page with page, has been set in motion and its whole aspect is changed. 'E pur si muove!' he is forced to cry. If it did not move it would never have appeared on the stage.

Unfortunately, due to a change in public taste (and not to any inherent unworkability of the plots) it is not possible to see more than a very

occasional performance of a Massinger play in the theatre. But it is possible to keep in mind that his are plays written for performance, and to examine them from the point of view of the producer, the actor, and the audience. It is to a consideration of such matters that I turn in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER III.

Action-mechanics and dialogue mechanics: Aspects of Massinger's stagecraft.

In the chapter on Massinger's plotting I showed that he had a stock method of handling his plots. But he carries stock methods much further than that. In his writing of plays he was a slave of habit. There was something inelastic and mechanical in him which made him repeat himself again and again, not only in his plotting, but in his stories, his characterisation, his situations, his sentiments, his allusions, his phraseology, and his vocabulary. This self-repetition characterises likewise his stagecraft, which side of his technique must now claim my attention.

By stagecraft, as something distinct from plotting, I mean the mechanics of the playwright in the management of his stage business:- the manipulation of the characters on the stage; the way in which he 'dresses' the stage and groups his characters; the number of persons on the stage at any one time; the management of exits and entrances; the arrangements he makes for casting and for doubling; spectacle; situation; the way in which he uses his dialogue; the assignment of speeches; the use of monologues, soliloquies, asides, interruptions; choral and commenting passages; rhyming couplets as a rhetorical-dramatic device, and so on; in fact, all those features of dramatic handwriting which cannot be fairly be grouped under the heading of plotting or plotting-devices on the one hand, or under that of style on the other. I should consider as 'stagecraft' all the purely technical means and conventions which the playwright adopts for the telling of a story in a dramatic form -- perhaps for the transfer of a story from a narrative to a dramatic form.

Such mundane, practical matters are all too often ignored by students of our older dramatists, inasmuch as their approach still tends to be from the literary, instead of from the theatrical, angle. I submit that the virtual omission of stagecraft from their consideration is mainly due to a lack in the critics who have mostly shaped our dramatic criticism -- Harley Granville-Barker being a notable exception (1) -- of that practical experience of the theatre which only one who has himself acted can have; and I believe that the ignorance or the ignoring of dramatic mechanics is a real weakness. After all, it is with such matters that the playwright, having plotted his story, is chiefly and most immediately concerned, and the student of the drama who neglects them misses something vital to a true estimate of an author as a dramatist. Perhaps the study of closet-dramas (by which I mean not all plays which for one reason or another have never been acted, but rather plays never intended for the stage) demands no reference to stage-craft. Stagecraft is really an irrelevant consideration with respect to Prometheus Unbound or Manfred or Festus. But a true drama is conceived in terms of the stage, such as that happens to be at the time of the drama's composition. It is a story designed to be taken in by the eye, through the comings, goings, groupings, and action of characters; and by the ear, through dialogue, monologue, soliloquy, and the like -- that is, through words spoken by the characters. The narrator's running comments and explanations are not for the dramatist. If he has comments or explanations to make, he

(1) The work of G.Wilson Knight in his Principles of Shakespearean Production (Edition of 1949.) is perhaps eclipsed by the general disfavour in which his other work is held. Of recent years more interest has been displayed in matters of stagecraft (See Bibliography for works by S.L.Bethell, B.L.Joseph, M.C.Bradbrook, etc.), but it is to be regretted that more men of the theatre, such as Mr Tyrone Guthrie, have not as yet given us the benefit of their experience in a permanent form.

has to convey them otherwise than in propria persona. It is of the first importance to remember that a true drama is just as much something to be seen as something to be heard. From that remark it will be gathered that stagecraft has a dual character: the action-mechanics, and the dialogue-mechanics.

As a playwright for a stage which derived from the mediaeval freedoms in respect of action, place, and time, Massinger pays little attention to the so-called unities. My discussion of his plotting, in which he never is concerned with a single uncomplicated plot-thread, will have shown how little attention he pays to the unity of action. As regards the scenic unities, the treatment of which is more a concern of the stagecraftsman, he shifts his scene to suit himself, sometimes over wide areas, as for example in Believe As You List which has scenes in Carthage, Bithynia, and Syracuse, and even in plays of less spatial range, such as The Unnatural Combat, the actual localities may be many; and he is as liberal as regards time, sometimes keeping to a fairly compact period, as in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, but often spreading his action over a number of weeks, as in The Picture and The Parliament of Love. There is nothing in any way peculiar in all this. It is the common form of the Jacobean-Caroline stage, except in Ben Jonson and in a few plays which by accident or design observed the unities for the nonce.

In respect of many things in stagecraft, of course, Massinger cannot be sharply distinguished from other dramatists, in his own day or indeed at other times. Characters have to be moved on to, about, and off the stage pretty much in the same way by all dramatists. And characters must use

words to convey statements and their emotional tones in ways which, while they vary not a little from age to age, from Shakespeare to Shaw, from one dramatic convention to another, are nevertheless variable only within limits -- the inescapable limits imposed by the nature of drama.

In some ways, the drama, not excepting the most apparently realistic, slice-of-life variety, is a distorting (as well as highly selective) mirror. It is largely convention which makes its representation of human action on the stage acceptable or vraisemblable. The degree of distortion, or if that word is too strong, adjustment, certainly varies as between different dramatic kinds.

But the representation was particularly distorted on the Jacobean-Caroline stage for which Massinger wrote. The fashion, as I have said earlier, was for the more or less romantic melodrama (generally tragicomic in issue, but not seldom tragic, and fairly often comic) of what I have called psychological surprise. Such a drama made particular demands on the playwright, as I shall attempt to show. Complicated plots necessarily breed complicated stagecraft, and the heightening, or indeed, falsification, of life required all the skill and ingenuity of the dramatist to make the implausible plausible.

I should like to begin my more detailed consideration of stagecraft with entrances and exits. They deserve more attention than they normally get. The musical composer has to concern himself with something very similar -- the introduction of a new subject, the entrance of a new instrument,

the resolution of a suspension, and the merging of a solo instrument into a tutti. These are musical entrances and exits. Both dramatist and composer have to expend very considerable thought on just such comings and goings if they are to secure their proper effects.

Entrances and exits were by no means easy to manage in the Jacobean-Caroline theatre. It had an open stage, and accordingly (with a minor exception which I shall mention immediately), all the actors had to come 'on' and either go 'off' or be carried 'off'. They could not be left on-stage at the end of a scene or act. Nor could they be already on at the beginning of one, unless they were 'discovered' on the inner stage by the withdrawing of a curtain hiding it. For some reason or other, the dramatists of Massinger's period do not seem to have been very fond of this 'discovery'. Perhaps they avoided it because of the objections of the actors, who may have felt that they could not be heard well when they spoke from the inner stage. Certainly the aforesaid 'discovering' method lost to the actor the valuable second or two during which, as he walked on, the audience could prepare for his first words.

Massinger did, however, use the device of 'discovering' very skilfully in the unusual opening of scene vi. of Act III of The Guardian. It opens with a soliloquy by Iolante. According to the stage-direction, she 'is heard speaking behind a curtain'. When she, heard but still unseen, has finished, 'Enter Severino before the curtain' in a straightforward walking-on entrance. He has heard the last few words, imagines that the 'poor turtle' is at her prayers, and drawing the curtain, 'discovers Iolante seated, with a rich banquet, and tapers, set forth'. The technical difficulties of this

scene were, of course, easily coped with, since the play was written for indoor performance at the Blackfriars. In a darkened house with candles partly showing their light, the audience's attention was easily held by the opening speech, and one can imagine the rustle of anticipation which ran through the theatre when Severino, the last person Iolante expected or wished to see, entered on the darkened forward stage. In this scene which shows every sign of having been carefully thought out from a technical point of view, Massinger has managed to make the 'discovering' of Iolante on the inner stage seem not only natural but also dramatically effective.

Of course, few of his scene-opening or entrances are so elaborated as this. As I have noted elsewhere (1), a great many scenes begin with two or more persons walking on together and already well launched into the theme of a conversation. In The City Madam, for example, fourteen of the sixteen scenes in the play begin in this way; in The Picture there are eleven openings of this type in seventeen scenes; The Emperor of the East has eleven mid-conversation openings in fifteen scenes (2); and many of the entrances within the scenes of these and all the other plays are likewise made by characters already engaged in speech with each other. Thus, in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, of the ten entrances made in the course of the first act, four are made by single characters and, of the remaining six, four are made by characters already engaged in conversation. The device makes for flow and pace and naturalness, and certainly Massinger

(1) Above, p. 90. (2) It is not always easy to tell when an entrance is of this nature. I have taken as a criterion in this respect the passage quoted earlier (p. 90.) which forms the opening of The City Madam, where the nature of the early remarks shows clearly that the conversation has been in progress before the speakers' entrance.

regularly uses it with effect. Perhaps I might add that while Shakespeare occasionally introduces his characters in this way, it is not nearly so common in him as in Massinger. It is commoner for Shakespeare's characters to come to an action already in process on the stage; whereas Massinger likes to make entering characters bring the action on with them.

Naturally the first entrance of a major character in a play is always prepared for well in advance by discussion on the stage, usually in the early, expository section. We already know something about the characters before we see them; they are made known to us by anticipation. This is perhaps a matter for consideration more properly as an aspect of plotting, and I have in fact mentioned it already in that connexion(1). More direct, however, and more a matter of elementary stagecraft is the preparation which is frequently made just before a character's entrance, at any point of the play. The entrance is anticipated in the dialogue so that the audience are warned to expect it and are not surprised -- though the characters themselves already on the stage frequently are.

At its simplest, the whole scene may be one of expectation of the arrival of an important personage, as in Act I., scene iv. of The Roman Actor where the women are gathered together to await the triumphal entry of Domitian to the Capitol, or as in Act I., scene iii. of The Bondman where the lords of Syracuse are awaiting in the senate house the arrival of Timoleon.

But the device is frequently used more subtly than that. Very

(1) See above, p. 93.

effective is the preparation for the entry of Antiochus near the end of Act I., scene ii. of Believe As You List. The audience is aware that Antiochus is still alive; but the merchants, to whom he is about to make his appearanc believe that he has been dead for twenty years. Dramatically he enters jus as they are vociferously wishing that he had not been, as they suppose, killed. Again, in The Maid of Honour, Act II., scene ii., Adorni soliloquises at some length on his resentment against Fulgentio, his difficulty in attacking him, and his resolve to seize a likely opportunity there and then. At the words,

'Ha! 'tis he: my fate
Be ever blessed for't!'

Fulgentio enters. Similarly, the entrance of Francisco in The Duke of Mila Act IV., scene ii. is prepared by a long conversation in which Stephano and Tiberio discuss his character. Calandrino, the buffoon in The Great Duke o Florence, has an entrance in Act IV., scene i. which is prepared by one of the servants saying,

'If we had
Our fellow Calandrino here, to dance
His part, we were perfect.'

But examples of such preparation are too numerous in all the plays to quote (1). They display Massinger as the careful craftsman, considering his audience, and lubricating the movement of his play by a simple technical means.

There is little that is remarkable in the rest of Massinger's

(1) Cf. the entrance of Edgar in King Lear, I., ii. Edmund names him, 'and pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy'.

entrance-technique. Single characters enter and are recognised and are smoothly drawn into the dialogue; characters enter and interrupt action or enter and overhear matter they are not supposed to hear; characters enter unexpectedly (as does Severino in the passage from The Guardian I have discussed above); and groups of characters, as a Court or a royal retinue, enter and the principal takes the chair of state. There is nothing here that was not the common stock of all playwrights -- the presence of a character or group of characters is demanded by the plot and he or they have to be on the stage to make his or their particular contribution.

Scene endings and exits (a simpler matter than entrances) may be considered together. Scenes end, of course, when the stage is cleared of characters, this frequently beginning a lapse of time before the action of the following scene or being necessary if there is to be a change of location. There is nothing particularly individual in Massinger's way of removing his characters from the stage; unless it be that he is fond of taking most of them off in a body and making one left behind exit on a soliloquy which contains some adumbration of the course of the future action; or making a character exit on an aside which, in a typically Massingerian way, underlines the moral lesson he wishes the closing episode to convey. The soliloquy ending can be illustrated by the two separate soliloquies by Grimaldi and Francisco closing Act IV., scene i. of The Renegado, or by Timandra's closing Act V., scene i. of The Bondman. As for the aside-exit, A New Way to Pay Old Debts supplies two characteristic examples: thus in Act IV., scene ii., Tapwell, who had made an ungrateful return for Wellborn's early prodigality and is rejected when Wellborn's fortunes are restored, goes off-stage with the muttered tag,

'Unthankful knaves are ever so rewarded;'

And when in Act V., scene i. it comes to Marrall's turn to be dismissed without reward for his disclosure of his knavery which had restored Wellborn and overreached Overreach, he leaves the stage with the words,

'This is the haven
False servants still arrive at.'

A reader of Massinger's plays will notice how rarely it is that he uses rhyme. He uses it very occasionally to mark a sentiment within a speech or at the ends of speeches within the scene, but he uses it more frequently, as was the custom of dramatists at the time and earlier, to mark scene- or act-endings. Yet even here he seems a little reluctant to use it. An examination of any of the plays will make this plain. The Bondman contains eighteen scenes, but of the nine which end on rhyming couplets, four occur at the ends of acts and two mark the ends of soliloquies as well as the ends of scenes, leaving only three rhymed scene-endings in dialogue; The Maid of Honour with seventeen scenes has eight rhymed endings, three of them at the end of acts and three of them marking ends of soliloquies; The Great Duke of Florence has eleven scenes, but of the three which have rhymed endings, two are at the ends of acts and one ends a soliloquy. To choose an early play, The Unnatural Combat, with twelve scenes, has five which end on a rhyme and four of these are act-endings; and to choose a much later play, The Guardian has twenty scenes and only one, the last scene in the play, has a rhymed ending. That is to say, counting all types of ending, whether reinforced by being at the end of an act or a soliloquy or not, Massinger does not seem to have had any rigid rule for ending scenes on a couplet. The only rule which is invariable is that each play should end

on a couplet. Yet even so, about one third of the scenes (this figure holds good for any of the plays) do end on a couplet. So Massinger does seem to have taken some account of the convention. It should be remarked that it is not just easy for an actor to round off with a rhyme. To give a couplet its full effect, one has to speak it while still in mid-stage and more or less fronting the audience, not throw it over the shoulder at the last minute before stepping off as is the half-apologetic way in so many modern productions of Shakespeare. There is bound in the circumstances to be a slight hiatus as the actor walks away, which may or may not be filled with applause. In any event, through the awkwardness of the actor, a scene with a couplet-ending often does not snap shut as it should. Nevertheless, on a stage lacking a proscenium curtain there was a great advantage in the rhyming tag to indicate a close firmly and decisively. Massinger seems to have recognised this, and while he does not use this method invariably, he does use it frequently; and, of course, there was one use of the closing couplet that appealed to him; as will be noticed from these examples it is generally of a moral-aphoristic kind:

'Let mountains of afflictions fall on me,
Their weight is easy, so I set them free.' (1.)

'Entreaties fit not me; a man in grace
May challenge awe and privilege, by his place.' (2)

'There cannot be a want of power above,
To punish murder, and unlawful love.' (3.)

'Or let mankind, for her fall, boldly swear
There are no chaste wives now, nor ever were.' (4.)

(1) Great Duke of Florence, IV., i. (2) Maid of Honour, II., i. (3) Unnatural Combat, V., ii. (4) Roman Actor, IV., i.

Instead of merely rhyming the last two lines of an act, as Shakespeare does, Massinger gives them added weight by turning them into moral comments.

There is one feature of Shakespeare's plays related to stagecraft which is practically absent from Massinger's. That is the 'scenic-descriptive'. It has been said with at least some truth that Shakespeare supplies the scenic deficiencies of his theatre by verbal description. Obvious examples are:- Duncan's description of Glamis:

> 'This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses.' (1)

And such passages descriptive of atmospheric circumstance as Pucks,

> 'night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast
> And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;' (2)

or Romeo's,

> 'Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.' (3)

But in Massinger, and indeed in the Fletcherian school as a whole, this verbal description of locale is noticeably lacking -- if one excepts such a special case as Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess. No moonlight sleeps upon any of Massinger's banks and the floor of heaven is ignored. Almost never is the scene directly described. And what is more remarkable is the fact that the atmospheric conditions -- heat or cold, freshness or sultriness sunshine or shade, moonlight or darkness, calm or storm, even the times of the day or night -- are rarely indicated or even implied. The Guardian, in which much of the action takes place at night, provides practically the

(1) Macbeth, I., vi. (2) A Midsummer-Night's Dream, III., ii. (3) Romeo and Juliet, III., v.

only instance, and that because the plot turns on the confusions of identity that occur in the dark. But otherwise the elements take no part in his plays and contribute not at all to the dramatic effect as they do, say, in King Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, The Tempest, and As You Like It.

Massinger's characters are apparently not sensuously aware of the conditions about them and are never heated by the sun or the chase, wet by the rain or by sweat, pleased or disgusted by perfumes or smells, hungry, tired. Their only reference to things in nature are by way of simile and metaphor, but never to convey anything about their immediate surroundings. In Massinger's case, familiar as he is with the terms of falconry and venery, as can be seen from Durazzo's elaborate description of the joys of hawking in Act I., scene i. of The Guardian, this ignoring of the natural world of his action is undoubtedly partly due to a sensuous aridity in himself; but it is also, as I hinted, partly a defect of his whole school. They were, in this and other things, men of the theatre; and conceiving their plays purely as plays acted on the bare boards and against the routine backcloth of the Blackfriars, the Phoenix, or the Globe, their sensuous imaginations had atrophied. They did not imagine their people living in and responding fully to a conditioning world. Or, to put it in a way more favourable to their aim, they were more concerned with people talking than with people being -- with a strictly ad hoc existence and activity. This is not less, but more, true of Massinger than perhaps any dramatist of his school.

To such a degree is it true that, except for a minimum of reference to the semi-historical background of most of his plays (purely factual as it were, however, not descriptive or suggestive), it is seldom or never

important beyond an irreducible minimum whether a play is set in contemporary London or the Syracuse of Timoleon, the Constantinople of Theodosius II and his sister Pulcheria, or the Nottinghamshire of 1620. Massinger does take some trouble about such things as, the names appropriate to sixteenth-century Italy or Dijon or imperial Rome, the offices of certain characters, the few places mentioned, the oaths used, the coinage, and the like. But beyond that he does not go. It is often not clear from the dialogue (though the scene-headings make it clear enough to the readers of the plays) where a scene is laid. Of course, many scenes are immediately localised by the static characters, such as house-servants, who appear in them; but many are not, and it must be deduced from all this that Massinger relied upon the property-men and upon costuming to help.

For Massinger's drama is, as I have said, a drama of words. He is essentially the rhetorician-dramatist. From his constant use of the technical terms of rhetoric, such as 'rhetoric' itself, 'solecism', 'argument', 'discourse and reason', 'logic', 'tropes', 'figures', 'elench', 'fallacy' and 'syllogism', it is obvious that he must have studied it academically -- as indeed he would when he was at Oxford. And in The Unnatural Combat, Act III., scene ii., the witty young Page says,

> 'I have heard my tutor
> Prove it by logic, that a servant's life
> Was better then his master's;'

and thereupon he proceeds to prove it in what is virtually a rhetoric exercise on a typical rhetorical paradox of the schools:

'Well then; and first to you, sir: you complain
You serve one lord, but your lord serves a thousand,
Besides his passions, that are his worst masters;
You must humour him, and he is bound to sooth
Every grim sir above him: if he frown,
For the least neglect you fear to lose your place;
But if, and with all slavish observation,
From the minion's self, to the groom of his close-stool,
He hourly seeks not favour, he is sure
To be eased of his office, though perhaps he bought it.
Nay more; that high disposer of all such
That are subordinate to him, serves and fears
The fury of the many-headed monster,
The giddy multitude: and as a horse
Is still a horse, for all his golden trappings,
So your men of purchased titles, at their best, are
But serving-men in rich liveries.'

Of course his rhetorical turn is not exactly exceptional. But whereas Marlowe and Chapman use rhetoric lyrically or in soliloquy, for its impression on the audience rather than on the other characters, Massinger, who can also do so, uses it more forensically in dialogue and set speech, to produce an effect on the characters within the play. His is the drama of men and women relating themselves to and working on men and women by words -- conversation, discussion, argument, persuasion, dissuasion, pleading, self-justification, self-expression, self-concealment, confidences, consultations. It is the drama of verbal interplay. There is hardly a play without a pleading or a temptation scene or without an opportunity for a leading character to urge a case or plead a cause. Again and again -- and this is typical of his bias to rhetoric -- he makes the whole play, not to mention the whole trend of an apparently established character, swing over by means of a character's words. Lady Allworth is won to acceptance of Wellborn by his verbal persuasion in Act I., scene iii. of A New Way to Pay Old Debts; in Act V., scene iv. of The Guardian, Severino, in his capacity as chief of a gang of banditti, is persuaded by a

ridiculous tale of woe from the disguised King of Naples to part with all his store of treasure. Examples could be given from every one of the plays of the canon, and I discuss this matter more fully elsewhere (1) ; but the point I wish to make is that it is particularly important in a playwright such as Massinger, whose work is so rhetorical in nature, to pay attention to the aspects of his stagecraft which come under the heading of the technical manipulation of his dialogue, what I called at the beginning of this chapter the 'dialogue- mechanics'.

One of the commonest devices of Massinger's dialogue-mechanics is the aside. He uses it more than any other dramatist in English. The number of asides in individual plays varies greatly; from only two in The Emperor of the East, five in The Bashful Lover, eight in The Roman Actor, nine in The Renegado, and twelve in each of The Bondman and The Guardian, it rises to as high as sixteen in The Picture, and to twenty-one in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. This is a count of the marked asides. There are, of course, as I remark below (2) , many passages in every play of an 'aside' nature which are not so marked, this fact often doubling, or even trebling, the real number of asides in a play. This figure is quite high when it is considered that, according to Professor Baldwin's estimate (3) , a Massinger play has on the average about 650 speeches. It is true that a similar count of some plays selected at random from the work of Beaumont and Fletcher will give very similar figures --- The Knight of the Burning Pestle has two, Bonduca and The Wild-Goose Chase have four each, A King and

(1) See below, Chapter IV., p.205. (2) P.132 . (3) T.W.Baldwin: The Duke of Milan. Lancaster, Pa., 1918.

No King has eleven, and The Maid's Tragedy has thirteen -- but the figures cannot really be compared. In the Beaumont and Fletcher plays the asides rarely exceed four or five words in length, and are of a brief ejaculatory type which could quite often be easily dispensed with. Massinger thinks nothing of quite long asides. For example, in The Unnatural Combat, Act I., scene i., Malefort has an aside of six lines;

> 'Thou searcher of men's hearts,
> And sure defender of the innocent,
> (My other crying sins - awhile not looked on)
> If I in this am guilty, strike me dead,
> Or by some unexpected means confirm
> I am accused unjustly!' (1)

But in general the asides average about three lines in length, as in Wellborn's aside in Act II., scene iii. of A New Way to Pay Old Debts where he is commenting on the change of attitude in Marrall now that it seems as if fortune is smiling upon the prodigal:

> 'Is not his a true rogue,
> That, out of mere hope of future cozenage,
> Can turn thus suddenly? 'Tis rank already.'

Even three lines is a considerable interruption of the flow of the dialogue; and the whole stage action, as well as the audience, must wait until the characters get these asides out.

Of course, an aside of three or even more lines is manageable enough if, for one reason or another no stage business or continuity is interrupted. A soliloquy is at its simplest (2) little more than an aside deprived of some of its complications by removing other characters from the stage. However, a comparison with Shakespeare's use of the aside is perhaps

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(1) Other examples of long asides are given later in this chapter. See pp. 131 - 136. (2) But see below, p. 136.

profitable here. When, for example, Hamlet ejaculates, 'Wormwood, wormwood,' he is behaving realistically, not conventionally, and far from interrupting the action he is helping it on, speeding it, and making a valid contribution to it, not acting as a sort of vocal programme-note or a mere link to bind The Murder of Gonzago to the Court of Elsinore. When, to take an example of a slightly different kind, Macbeth delivers several lengthy asides on his elevation to the Thaneship of Cawdor in Act I., scene iii. of Macbeth, Shakespeare is at pains to draw him into the scene by making Banquo remark on his standing 'rapt', and the aside, far from interrupting the action, becomes the action itself. Almost always Shakespeare's asides are in this way really dramatic and integrated. Massinger's seldom are.

There are, of course, two types of aside. An aside may be either a remark made in a stage whisper by the speaker to be heard by one or more characters, or a brief, generally semi-exclamatory, comment made by the speaker to himself. The first type seems to me to be perfectly legitimate, especially when it is made on a fairly full stage when other characters not intended to hear can be engaged in conversation or otherwise occupied.

An example of this occurs in Act V., scene iii. of The Picture where Sophia, angry with her husband at his mistrust and attempted betrayal of her, has to greet him in the presence of the King and Queen of Hungary. The Queen and Sophia have kissed on meeting, and as she returns to her place she says to her husband, Mathias,

> 'Do you hear, sir?
> Without a magical picture, in the touch
> I find your print of close and wanton kisses
> On the queen's lips.'

And he replies,

> 'Upon your life be silent:-
> And now salute these lords.'

Sophia answers,

> 'Since you will have me,
> You shall see that I am experienced at the game,
> And can play it tightly.'

She then turns to greet the courtiers in turn. On a full stage, and with the bustle of the arrival of the royal party and the interchange of courtes-:ies, such aside-passages are easily managed.

More difficult examples of this type of aside occur in scenes of eavesdropping in which an action going on on the front stage is watched by one or more characters from behind or above. From time to time comment is made by the watchers, often at considerable length. Examples of this are very common in Massinger since it is one of his stock situations; but such passages are perhaps too lengthy to quote in extenso. I would, however, instance scene v. of Act III of The Renegado. Here Asambeg, the viceroy of Tunis, and Mustapha, a basha of Aleppo, are watching Donusa and Vitelli, the Christian she is trying to seduce, from above. The dialogue on the front stage must be imagined to be flowing quite smoothly; but to the fourteen lines which Donusa and Vitelli speak while Asambeg and Mustapha are watching them there are six lines spoken in three asides from above which they must affect not to hear. In The Great Duke of Florence, Act II., scene iii., Charomonte watches Sanazarro courting Lidia and makes several comments (since he is unaccompanied his comments properly belong to the second type of aside). And there is likewise a notable example in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Act III., scene ii., where Sir Giles Overreach

attempts to overhear the conversation between his daughter and Lord Lovell and is interrupted in his eavesdropping by Justice Greedy's complaining that it is time for dinner. There are twenty aside lines in this last scene, during which Lovell and Margaret must be supposed to be talking in low tones in a corner. But Massinger seems to have tried to make the situation a little more plausible and realistic (1) by having Lord Lovell say,

'Hah! I heard some noise.' (2)

The second type of aside, that made by a speaker to himself, is of more doubtful validity. Used with judgement and discretion it can be dramatically effective, as in Hamlet's 'Wormwood, wormwood', for, after all, human beings do comment sotto voce. In The Bondman, Act V., scene i., for example, Timandra, who loves Leosthenes, listens to Timagoras persuading him that he need not really marry Cleora if he doubts her fidelity, and she murmurs to herself,

'This argues for me.'

And Gothrio, the Caliban-like servant of Octavio in Act III., scene i. of The Bashful Lover, makes quite plausible asides to the 'bottle of immortality' he steals.

But too often the device is resorted to, not for the drama's sake, but for the moral's sake. It becomes a dry and highly artificial convention,

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(1) Other examples of Massinger's making an aside seem more realistic by having some character on the stage recognise that something has been said occur in The Duke of Milan, V., i. where Francisco indicates that he has heard Graccho make an aside, and A New Way, II., iii. Overreach recognises an aside made by Marrall. (2) None of the examples I have given in this paragraph are marked as asides. Eavesdropping asides seldom are.

used, as underlining was by Queen Victoria and exclamation marks by women generally, as a means of emphasis -- the pointing of a marginal finger to a sentiment or information which Massinger wants his audience not to miss:

'He begins to waver.' — The Picture, III., v.

'There's a cooling
For his hot encounter!' — The Renegado, III., i.

'Here's a second show
Of the family of pride! — The Bondman, II., ii.

'This is but devilish doctrine! — A New Way, III., i.

Such asides bear witness to the fact that Massinger never trusts his audience very much, as I remark elsewhere (1), and never leaves anything to chance if he can possibly illuminate the half-obvious with a more obvious comment.

Occasionally in Massinger an aside may be more important and indeed functionally dramatic. For example, in The Duke of Milan, Act V., scene i., Graccho enters with an aside:

'Now for my whipping!
And if I now outstrip him not, and catch him,
And by a new and strange way too, hereafter
I'll swear there are worms in my brains.'

It is an anticipatory aside, to warn the audience of what he is about to do and say. It tells us nothing we do not already know about the speaker, but it helps the action along.

There is a very similar example of the same sort of thing earlier in the play. In the complicated romantic melodrama of psychological surprise, the audience is sometimes, and the characters within the play are often,

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(1) See below, p.147.

deliberately misled as to motive and intention with a view to surprise effects later. So here, in The Duke of Milan, the audience has been led to believe in Act III., scene iii. that Francisco's attitude to Marcelia has changed. But as Massinger, despite his loyalty to the drama of surprise, also wants to make sure his audience is properly alive to what is going on, he assigns to Francisco an aside which both corrects any false impression about him and gives a warning or pointer. As he exits, he says,

'It is enough;
Nay, all I could desire, and will make way
To my revenge, which shall disperse itself
On him, on her, and all.'

I have mentioned the length of Massinger's asides before, but I have hardly yet dealt fully with the great technical difficulties which the actor must find in delivering such asides when they occur (as they very often do) as integral parts of the dialogue, in the full flight of conversation between one or more characters. It is difficult for us nowadays to imagine just how the actors, both those speaking and those pretending not to hear, behaved. Frequently such asides in Massinger are astonishingly artificial. Here is an example from The Maid of Honour, Act IV., scene iv:

The occasion is the presentation by Gonzago of the misrepresented Bertoldo to Aurelia, Duchess of Sienna. She and others are already on the stage, halfway through the scene, waiting for Bertoldo's entrance. As he comes towards here, 'richly habited' and ushered by Gonzago and Adorni, she 'asides' to let us know she is more than favourably impressed by his manly appearance and bearing;

'This is he, sure.
How soon mine eyes had found him! What a port
He bears! How well his bravery becomes him!

A prisoner! Nay, a princely suitor, rather!
But I'm too sudden.'

Gonzago's brief speech which follows is by way of introduction of Bertoldo:

'Madam, 'twas his suit,
Unsent for, to present his service to you,
Ere his departure.'

Aurelia thereupon has another aside to the same general purpose as before. The following speech by Astutio, who is no friend to Bertoldo,

'The devil, I think, supplies him.
Ransomed, and thus rich too!'

is not marked as an aside but in effect it is one, possibly addressed to his faction on the stage, but certainly supposed not to be audible to Aurelia, Bertoldo, Gonzago, and Adorni. Only now does Aurelia address Bertoldo:

'Aurel. You ill deserve
(Bertoldo kneeling, kisses her hand.)
The favour of our hand ---- we are not well,
Give us more air. (Descends suddenly.)
Gonz. What sudden qualm is this?
Aurel. ---- That lifted yours against me.
Bert. Thus, once more,
I sue for pardon.
Aurel. Sure his lips are poisoned,
And through these veins force passage to my heart,
Which is already seized on. (Aside.)
Bert. I wait, madam,
To know what your commands are; my designs
Exact me in another place.'

It will be seen that two of the asides (there are four in 25 lines) contain 33 and 19 words respectively. It is hard to see how such protracted asides, during which the other characters have to be suspended, could be anything but slightly ludicrous. I should add that, so far from the passage from The Maid of Honour being exceptional in respect of the asides in it, there are many other passages throughout the plays just as bad; or, if one cannot quite condemn them on this score, they are at the very least very 'difficult' for the actors. It is when we come to consider such passages

with the close scrutiny we should have to give them in rehearsal, breaking them up into speeches, even words, and trying to work out just how and from what position an actor should take certain lines and just how every other character on the stage should react, that we really come to grips with the fundmanetal problems of stagecraft. "Can such a thing be done?" is the first question the dramatist and then in his turn the actor or producer asks himself. Then he goes on to ask, "If it is done, will it have the desired effect upon the audience?" When we apply such questions to much of Massinger's aside-technique the answer, for the modern audience certainly must be in the negative; and most probably the same holds good for the audi-:ence of his own day and times, since, although its taste was perhaps artificial, it could never be called naive(1). Massinger has carried what, properly handled, could be a useful convention to extremes and the convention breaks down into absurdity in the process.

It is possible to regard the aside, at least as spoken by a character to himself, as a brief soliloquy, or the soliloquy as a glorified aside. But that is rather a superficial equation. The aside is by its nature only incidental or parenthetic. When it occurs it plucks the attention (notionally, only for a moment) off the stage situation as a whole, to which, however, the attention immediately returns when the aside is done. On the other hand, the soliloquy, not merely because of its greater length, but because of its very nature, is the stage situation for the time being and it demands the undivided attention of the audience. I do not say that a minor

(1) Cf. H.S.Bennet: Shakespeare's Audience. (Proc. Brit. Acad. XXX. 1944.)

character never soliloquises, but on the whole soliloquy is for those who are protagonists or at least characters of some importance dramatically (1). Just because a character generally soliloquises only when alone on the stage, there is little or no difficulty about the management of such speeches, however artificial the whole convention may be.

Naturally Massinger resorted to it quite often, without being noticeably more given to it than were his contemporaries. His peculiarities in respect of it are not a matter of frequency in use. His most important reason for soliloquy is to make a character tell us something bearing on the course of the future action of himself or others. Here again a comparison with Shakespeare's practice is interesting. Shakespeare often uses the soliloquy, but only occasionally, as in the cases of Edmund and of Iago, to advance the plot. More often it is used as a help to the characterisation which makes us party to the minds and tumultuous souls of his heroes or his villains. Massinger uses the soliloquy less often to reveal character than as a device to speed the action and to explain the motives in gobbets throughout the play. Such soliloquies are that of Francisco in The Duke of Milan, Act II., scene i., where, having failed to seduce Marcelia with his lies, he resolves that he must gon with his plans for revenge (for some wrong as yet unspecified); or that of Hortensio at the opening of Act III., scene iii. of The Bashful Lover, where he decides that, having failed to make himself worthy of Matilda's love by his success in

(1) The characters who soliloquise most in Massinger are those, such as Adorni in The Maid of Honour, Hortensio in The Bashful Lover, and Malefort in The Unnatural Combat, whose motives are most complex and difficult of expression by means other than this artificial, although hallowed, convention.

in battle, he will withdraw from the world and live as a simple shepherd. These are prospective soliloquies. They look forward to future action. More retrospective than prospective is the powerful soliloquy of Malefort at the beginning of Act IV., scene i. of The Unnatural Combat. It dissolves Malefort's mystery and explains his violent capriciousness; but it has of course an anticipatory tendency as well in that the speaker has worked himself into a decision.

Massinger, then, is not given to the musing kind of soliloquy such as Henry VI's at the Battle of Towton (1) , or Henry V's during the night before the Battle of Agincourt (2) ; or to the soliloquy[1] of character-display alone, such as Justice Overdo's at the beginning of Act II of Bartholomew Fair. The character-revelation in Massinger's soliloquies is always only incidental or indeed implicit. If he makes a character muse, it is in order to get across his own moral reflections, not the character's stream of consciousness. For example, Iolante in The Guardian, Act III., scene vi. is made to speak about herself as no character would when she says:

> 'I am full of perplexed thoughts. Imperious blood,
> Thou only art a tyrant; judgement, reason,
> To whatsoever thy edicts proclaim,
> With vassal fear subscribe against themselves .....
> .. .. I, that did deny
> My daughter's youth allowed and lawful pleasures,
> And would not suffer in her those desires
> She sucked in with my milk, now in my waning
> Am scorched and burnt up with libidinous fire
> That must consume my fame.'

She is merely Massinger's mouthpiece, and he is emphasising the moral lesson he would teach us by the play and its situations.

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(1) Henry VI, Part 3., II., v. (2) Hen. V. IV., i.

So given to edification is he that he will use the soliloquy for casual lessoning. I mean by this for lessons not arising from and reinforcing those of the action. Such is the use of Bertoldo's soliloquy in Act IV, scene iii. of The Maid of Honour. He enters reading Seneca and passes to audience some quite gratuitous moral criticism on Stoicism and suicide (favourite topics of Massinger's (1)). It is true that, when he has disposed of Seneca, Bertoldo goes on to a To-be-or-not-to-be imitation of Hamlet. But though he is in prison, he has not the motive and the cue for passion Hamlet has, and all that he says comes more truly from Massinger's moralistic bias than from his own character or situation. The soliloquy is in fact one of the many extra-dramatic insertions which I discuss in another context (2), and the audience had to treat it as such. They were no doubt quite ready to do so. For, after all, one of the secondary functions of the more literary type of drama in the seventeenth century (a function not sufficiently recognised today) was to provide miscellaneous ideas and topics. There would, of course, be no objection lodged by the actor soliloquising, for any kind of soliloquy is for him an opportunity for histrionics to be seized and made the most of.

Such is the nature of the soliloquy in Massinger that I have had perforce to widen my discussion of it beyond mere considerations of stagecraft. But the purpose of soliloquies in the plays (to speed the action, to convey information to the audience, to act as sort of dramatic shorthand)

(1) For Massinger and Stoicism, see Chapter V. Other passages in which his condemnation of suicide may be found are: The Duke of Milan, I., iii., The Maid of Honour, II., iv., The Parliament of Love, IV., ii., Believe As You List, IV., ii., and The Bashful Lover, II., vi. See also, Cruickshank, Philip Massinger, 106, footnote. (2) See below, Chapter V., p. 299.

is not without relevance when we come to consider how they were delivered by the actors. They were regarded by actors and audience alike as histrionic highlights, special opportunities for the display of the craft of oratory undisturbed by the movement or reaction of other characters. As they are generally delivered on an empty stage, they tend to come either at the beginning (1) or at the end (2) of a scene. Even when they come in the middle of a scene, the stage has generally been emptied to make room for them and what follows them at the entry of others to the soliloquiser is virtually a new scene (3) . At the beginning a soliloquy is a prelude to the fugal dialogue which may follow; at the end it is a subsiding coda. Rounded off with a rhyming couplet, as it very often is when it forms the end of a scene, it gives a sense of episodic completeness and may well mark a pause in the action. From a purely practical point of view, soliloquies allow the rest of a cast to make any necessary changes in costume. Such (at least partly) time-making soliloquies are those by Francisco at the end of scene ii., Act IV., of The Duke of Milan, and by Adorni at the ends of scene iii., Act III., and scene v., Act IV. of The Maid of Honour.

The fact that in Massinger dramatic action is more verbal and

(1) As, for example, in Parliament of Love, III., ii.; Picture, III., i.; Great Duke of Florence, II., iii.; City Madam, III., iii. (2) Renegado, II., v.; Picture, II., i.; Guardian, II., iii.; Bondman, V., i., & IV., iii.; Parliament of Love, II., ii., & IV., ii. (3) Renegado, IV., i.; Bondman, V., i.; Great Duke of Florence, III., i.; Picture, I., i. & II., i.

psychological than physical springs not from any bent towards the classical drama and the neo-classic rules, with which like any university-bred man of the time he had some acquaintance, but from a fundamental and individual interest in the verbal manifestation of life. Perhaps the period when the aim of dramatists and stage-managers was most directed to the spectacular (even if, by reason of the equipment available, the achievement did not always follow) was the twenty years or so from the late 1580's to about 1610 the time which saw Tamburlaine riding in triumph to Persepolis and a thin company,

> 'with three rusty swords,
> And help of some few foot and half-foot words,
> Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars;' (1)

when processions, coronations, dethronements, shipwrecks, mob-scenes, dumb-shows and the like frequently filled the stage -- and the pit. But the influence of the contemptuous Ben Jonson on the one hand and of the sophisticated Beaumont and Fletcher on the other led to appeals less spectacular This suited Massinger's book perfectly.

It will be noticed in the first place that Massinger rarely has many people on the stage at once, and their presence is hardly ever for visual or spectacular effects. There are no crowd scenes at all. The densest stages (and that does not mean much in his case) are for courts of justice, and they figure more for the forensic opportunities they afford than for their picturesqueness. I would instance here as typical examples of this type of scene, Act I., scene ii. of The Fatal Dowry and Act I., scene iii. of The Roman Actor. As for battles, they are frequently reported, as in

(1) Jonson: Every Man in His Humour, Prologue.

The Duke of Milan, Act I., scene i., and The Maid of Honour, Act II., scene iii. In Act II of The Bashful Lover, where the confusions of a battle have a part to play in the plot, Massinger is forced to show some incidents on the field, but only on the periphery; and as the required effects could be produced by no more than the number of speaking characters, they are in no sense spectacular. In only one of the five scenes in this act connected with the battle are there more than four characters on the stage at any one time. Though so many of the plays are court-dramas, the processional and ceremonial side is almost non-existent; it is the private life of the emperors, kings, and grand dukes that is Massinger's more constant concern. Not a few of his plays have deaths coram populo, assassinations, sudden death, and fatal duels, as in The Roman Actor, The Duke of Milan and The Unnatural Combat. But unlike Shakespeare in Hamlet, Othello, Lear, or Antony and Cleopatra , unlike Webster in The White Devil or The Duchess of Malfi, Massinger is positively perfunctory in getting them over with the minimum of fuss and a minimum of interruption of -- the words, words, words. Domitian is despatched in The Roman Actor very swiftly, and the play ends completely some twenty lines later. When Paris is killed earlier in the play, he exclaims,

'Oh! I am slain in earnest!'

and his body is removed after a twenty-five line oration by Domitian explaining the suddenness of his action. Beaumelle in Act IV., scene iv. of The Fatal Dowry is stabbed suddenly in the midst of a scene which is a grim parody of a legal trial, and after her death the welter of words and quibbling about the murder continues for most of the rest of the play. It is the words for which the plays exist. The physical action, especially

the killings, are mere necessary evils. Such physical action is always telescoped into as little space as possible.

Secondly, it is surprising how much vital action in his plays takes place off-stage. This is often for a good, practical reason. Thus the improbability of the sudden love of Aurelia and Bertoldo in The Maid of Honour, Act IV., scene iv., is skilfully masked by taking the principals off. When they return, a compact has been concluded between them, the audience having been well conditioned to swallow this by the comments of the other characters marking time on the stage during their absence. This is by no means a solitary instance of his dodging a difficulty by taking it off-stage. A particularly blatant example occurs in Domitian's surprising forgiveness of his wife which takes place in the interval after Act IV of The Roman Actor and is presented to the audience at the beginning of Act V as a fait accompli. What has taken place during the act-pause is here a vital, if somewhat awkward, part of the action.

Inevitably, his dramas being what they were in respect of action before the audience, Massinger has a good deal of recourse to the classical nuntius-device. The courier in Act I., scene i., of The Duke of Milan serves as nuntius; but he does it in a bald and purely functional way, not with the expatiation of Queen Gertrude on the death of Ophelia (1) or the Bleeding Sergeant on the defeat of the Norsemen and Macdonwald, Thane of Cawdor (2). Amble in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Act II., scene ii., describes the dinner at Lady Allworth's house. And frequently a

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(1) Hamlet, IV., vii. (2) Macbeth, I., ii.

soliloquist acts the part of nuntius. So it is that Hortensio, in Act III. scene iii. of The Bashful Lover, describes the reconciliation of Maria and her father, Octavio.

While Massinger uses the nuntius, he never uses a preluding or inter-act chorus, as Shakespeare does in Romeo and Juliet, Henry V., or The Winter's Tale -- let alone the formal neo-classic chorus which Ben Jonson alone of all the dramatists for the public stage ever ventured to bring on. The need for such informative, imagination-stimulating, or time-bridging, devices scarcely concerned Massinger, whose plays are too closely integrated in the events and limited in their range to require them.

But there are certain choral functions, in a broad sense, that he wanted to preserve. For example, there is the function of a confidant to a principal, which the Greek tragic chorus performed to the protagonist, and which Seneca transferred to a character like Medea's nurse in the action proper. The confidant of the Senecan type is a frequent figure in the English drama before Massinger. Such, for example, are Horatio in Hamlet and Nerissa in The Merchant of Venice; though Shakespeare prefers a confidant like Lady Macbeth, Iago, and Mercutio who is more absorbed, as it were, into the action and less a mere passive functionary. The confidant who is that and little more also figures in Massinger (as indeed he does in Fletcher), as for example Bellapert to Beaumelle in The Fatal Dowry, Beaupré/Calista to Bellisant in The Parliament of Love, and Parthenius to Domitian in The Roman Actor. But there are plenty of the more active type as well:- Marrall to Overreach and young Allworth to Wellborn in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Romont to Charalois and Pontalier to Novall Junior in The Fatal

Dowry, Timandra to Cleora in The Bondman, and Durazzo to Caldoro in The Guardian.

Of course in such a drama of moves and counter-moves, motives and counter-motives, of conspiracies, 'close designs and crooked counsels', as Massinger wrote, consultations and the exchange of confidences, half-confidences, and pretended confidences make up a good part of each play. Needless to say, the confidences are often ill-placed, from the point of view of the confider. But in a drama of surprise, however free and offhand a confider tells his story, he is not unlikely to 'keep something to himsel' he darena tell to ony', or that it is expedient for the dramatist of surprise to reserve.

One of the least legitimate of Massinger's dodges in the business of confidences is his not uncommon trick of making the confider entrust part or all of his secret in a whisper unheard by the audience. Thus, in Believe As You List, Act IV., scene i., Metellus whispers to Flaminius his plan for working Antiochus to a confession by tempting him with a courtesan; and the audience is kept in the dark. In A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Act I., scene iii. , Wellborn whispers to Lady Allworth his plan for deceiving Sir Giles Overreach, or at least, his request that she should pretend to be in love with him. Not a small matter to pack into a short whisper! In Act II., scene iii., of the same play the whispering device is managed much more gracefully. Lovell and Margaret are holding a long whispered conversation and Sir Giles is trying to overhear them. But Justice Greedy enters, and by introducing some comic business between Greedy and Sir Giles Massinger distracts the audience's attention from the whisperers.

The commenting function which belonged to the Greek, not the Latin, tragic chorus is effected by Massinger, as it had been and was by his English predecessors and contemporaries, through the agency of commenting persons. With his distrust of his audience's intelligence, or, if one prefers, his pedantic way of leaving nothing to chance, Massinger makes a more extensive use of such persons than was customary. There is always someone, like the Page in The Unnatural Combat, Eubulus in The Emperor of the East, Gracculo in The Renegado, and Calipso in The Guardian, who, really for the benefit of the audience, however the dramatic pedagogy is disguised, discuss or remark on either the plot or what is happening on the stage. Their observations are direct comments on the action; not the oblique comments on life or some great moral or speculative topic which we get from Shakespeare's Jaques or Hamlet or Edmund, but something much more naive, almost often a sort of incorporation into the dialogue of stage-directions. I have mentioned before in another connection (1) the commentary of Tiberio and Stephano in The Duke of Milan, Act I., scene i. These persons are part of the mechanics or stagecraft of the play, almost stage-properties, not real characters or agents at all: they are only there to provide information about what has preceded the action or about what is doing at the moment. To take another example, from The Guardian, Act II., scene i., of these commentaries which are found scattered throughout the plays:-

Calipso says to Iolante on the entrance of Laval,

'Is he not, madam,
A monsieur in print? What garb was there! O rare!

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(1) See above, p. 93.

Then, how he wears his clothes! And the fashion of them!
A main assurance that he is within
All excellent: by this, wise ladies ever
Make their conjectures.'

Sometimes it would appear as if Massinger could not trust his audience to see what is going on before their very eyes. Thus in The Maid of Honour, Act I., scene i., after Bertoldo's exhortation to the King of Sicily to wage war on the Duchess of Sienna, some of the courtiers who are standing round remark on what must have been obvious to the youngest groundling, providing that the actors performed adequately:

'Adorni. In his looks he seems
To break ope Janus' temple.
Astutio. How these younglings
Take fire from him!
Adorni. It works an alteration
Upon the king.'

Surely the audience could see the indecision on the King's face and hear the murmurs of assent from the warmongers. When Shakespeare makes Hamlet interject at the play scene; "Begin, murderer. Pox! leave thy damnable faces and begin! Come -- 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge'", the comment is not to direct our attention to the grimaces of 'one Lucianus', but to manifest the impatience of Hamlet, himself the croaking raven bellowing for revenge.

Of course, the explanation is simple. Not only did Massinger distrust his audience, but he did not really trust the actors, in spite of his elaborate defence of the quality in The Roman Actor. As far as we know, and in spite of Hartley Coleridge's opinion to the contrary, he never acted himself (1). That may in part account for the periodic and parenthetic

(1) See above, pp. 18 and 74.

syntax of his style (1) , which he admittedly did entrust to the actors but which, if he had once tried himself to put it across in the theatre, he would have realised made very heavy demands on their intelligence and skill. On the other hand, to a man of his pedantic and conscientious nature, it was of prime importance that what he had to say should reach the ears of the auditory without ambiguity (though as I have remarked the elocutionary difficulties he created for his actors never seem to have occurred to him) and that what he made his actors do should not be missed or go by default on his part. Though naturally modest, he obviously took himself and his playwriting very seriously; and like all solemn people, he did not want what had cost him care and thought to lose its effect. There is nothing of Shakespeare's splendid plethora. Massinger is a dramatic economist: he takes strict account of every penny. His plays are works of deliberation, rather than inspiration. Everything, in his stagecraft as in his plotting, has been carefully worked out so that the moral aim can be unmistakeably realised. Such a man, I feel, could never have entrusted the conveyance of his strong convictions and opinions (how strong I try to show in a later chapter (2)) to a company of actors, inexperienced boys and semi-literate men, without taking precautions, right down to these prudential minutiae of stagecraft which I have touched on, to make as sure as was humanly possible that the actors 'suited the action to the word, the word to the action' and the audience caught every hint and moral.

In addition to the precautionary comments on the action that I have

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(1) See below, Chapter VI. (2) Chapter V.

just been considering, there are also, as I have implied, the moralistic comments -- what Aristotle would include under the term of διάνοια. They were not by any means the peculiar province of the chorus in Greek tragedy: indeed Aristotle seems to have regarded διάνοια as rather an element in the dialogue and, he rather confusingly says, in the action (1). In any case, commentary of this sort with a more or less tenuous or incidental connexion with the action is common in Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline drama, sometimes assigned to persons whose function is little more than commenting, otherwise given to any character as the occasion seemed to demand. It goes without saying that such reflections, moral, religious, political, and what not, are of the utmost importance in Massinger. The dialogue is largely made up of them, overtly or obliquely. But for fairly obvious reasons, it will be better after this brief mention to reserve them for a fuller discussion in the chapter on his Thought (2).

If Massinger did not trust his actors or see the business of acting quite from the professional point of view, he was not blind to other very practical acting considerations. His casts are never very large, and all his plays seem to have been judiciously cast for a company of some sixteen or seventeen players, including four, or possibly five, who specialised in female impersonation; provided of course that some minor parts were doubled (3) and some of the attendants and servants were not required to speak (4).

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(1) Poetics (Ed. Bywater), Chapters 6 and 19. (2) Chapter V. (3) A study of the MS. of Believe As You List will show how the playhouse book-keeper has arranged for certain parts to be doubled. (4) There is an interesting essay on 'mutes' in Those Nut-Cracking Elizabethans by W.J.Lawrence. London, 1935.

The number of allusions made in the plays to the small stature of one or other of the women characters points, as Professor Cruickshank notes (1), to Massinger's keeping an actual company in mind as he casted (2). In a more general regard for the fact that boys played the female parts, Massinger may have sometimes conveniently disguised his women as boys (for example, Eugenia in The Duke of Milan and Maria in The Bashful Lover); but that suggestion can hardly be pressed, since he had inherited the woman-as-man disguise from many dramatic predecessors. On the other hand, he certainly was remembering with a kindly thought an actual performer when he made the epilogue to The Emperor of The East an apology for the necessarily youthful actor who had to sustain the role of Theodosius:

> 'We have reason to be doubtful, whether he,
> On whom (forced to it from necessity)
> The maker did confer his emperor's part,
> Hath given you satisfaction, in his art
> Of action and delivery; 'tis sure truth,
> The burthen was too heavy for his youth
> To undergo: -- but, in his will, we know,
> He was not wanting, and shall ever owe,
> With his, our service, if your favours deign
> To give him strength, hereafter to sustain
> A greater weight.' (3)

He might just as appropriately have said a word in the proper place for the boys who had to act Beaumelle in The Fatal Dowry, Camiola in The Maid of Honour, Donusa in The Renegado, or Marcelia in The Duke of Milan, since his women are frequently complex, or at least anything but straightforward, and are not infrequently morally sophisticated or debased. There is one explicit reference to casting, within an actual play. This is, most suitably, in The Roman Actor, where, for some not obvious reason, Domitilla

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(1) Philip Massinger, Appendix I. (2) Cf. Shakespeare. (3) Gifford, iii., 349.

plays the part of Anaxarete in the masque of Iphis and Anaxarete in Act III., scene ii. It is explained that she is forced to do this in order to humble her. But in point of fact, Massinger probably knew that the supply of actors for female parts would not allow him to do anything else.

Massinger does, however, consider the actors inasmuch as he probably distributes his histrionic opportunities among a proportionately larger number of his cast than do Fletcher and Beaumont. Certainly the number of characters, in addition to the protagonist or protagonists of the main plot, who are spot-lighted is remarkably high. Thus in The Picture, Mathias and Sophia are the principal characters with Ladislaus and Honoria coming close behind; but there are also what actors would call 'good' parts for Eubulus, the Polonius-like counsellor, Ubaldo and Ricardo, the wild courtiers, and Hilario, Sophia's servant. In The Parliament of Love nearly every actor has a good part; and, as far as acting opportunities go, there is little to choose between Bellisant, Leonora, Clarinda, and Lamira, among the women, and Clarindore, Cleremond, Montrose, Perigot, and Novall, among the men, while in addition the parts of Chamont and Dinant are not to be spurned. To take an earlier play:- in The Unnatural Combat, while Malefort has by far the most important part, Theocrine, Montreville, Belgarde, and Malefort Junior share quite a lot of the lime-light with him.

A passing reference must be made here to the frequent use Massinger makes of figures of speech drawn from the theatre. Such figures must, of course, drop naturally from the pen of any dramatist; but in Massinger they are particularly common. Nearly every play will furnish at least one example. In Believe As You List, Act III., scene i., Flaminius says.

'I am on the stage,
And if now, in the scene imposed upon me,
So full of change -- nay, a mere labyrinth
Of politic windings -- I show not myself
A Protean actor, varying every shape
With the occasion, it will hardly poise
The expectation.'

The Roman Actor is, naturally enough, full of figures of speech and allusions to things theatrical. But so are many of the other plays which do not have the theatre itself as one of their main themes. There is quite an extended example in The Parliament of Love, Act IV., scene iii., where Dinant, the court physician, discusses with Chamont the best way of paying out Perigot and Novall who have been attempting to seduce their wives;

'Dinant. .. .. I would your lordship
Could be a spectator.
Chamont. It is that I aim at:
And might I but persuade you to dispense
A little with your candour, and consent
To make your house the stage, on which we'll act
A comic scene; in the pride of all their hopes,
We'll show these shallow fools sunk-eyed despair,
And triumph in their punishment.'
Dinant. My house,
Or whatsoever else is mine, shall serve
As properties to grace it.'

Contemporary theatrical manners are described in The City Madam, Act I., scene ii., where among Anne Frugal's marriage demands of Sir Maurice Lacy are:-

'A friend at court to place me at a masque;
The private box ta'en up at a new play,
For me and my retinue; a fresh habit,
Of fashion never seen before, to draw
The gallants' eyes, that sit on the stage, upon me.' (1)

(1) As some further examples of theatrical allusions or figures in Massinger, see, Guardian, I., i (Gif. iv.137), and I., ii. (G. iv., 148), Believe As You List, V., ii. (622b.), A New Way, IV., iii. (G. iii., 578), Parliament of Love, III., iii. (G. ii., 282), and Fatal Dowry, IV., iii. (G. iii., 441).

I have already alluded to Massinger's wide distribution of 'good' (in a histrionic sense) matter among his characters. The distribution of his dialogue has to be considered from another angle. In the passage I have already quoted from The Maid of Honour, Act I., scene i.:-

'Adorni. In his looks he seems
To break ope Janus' temple.
Astutio. How these younglings
Take fire from him!
Adorni. It works an alteration
Upon the king;'

it will be noticed that what is said, though it could easily have been given to one man, is broken up between two speakers and three speeches. This is very typical of Massinger. It is part of his use of 'choral' commentaries. But also he seems to dislike to give longish speeches to minor characters when his principal are on the stage. Perhaps he felt that the speeches of his principals were themselves long enough and that a little variety could be introduced and the tempo quickened if the subsidiary dialogue were broken up. Or perhaps he merely liked to give the characters who were standing around something to say to keep them occupied. Whatever, the reason, such passages are almost invariably fragmented between two or more speakers; very often, too, with one speaker running his speech grammatically on from the one before, as in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Act I., scene iii., where the servants comment upon Lady Allworth's reaction to Wellborn's mentioning her 'late noble husband',

'Order. How she starts!
Furnace. And hardly can keep finger from the eye,
To hear him named.'

Even when the passage is not of a directly commenting kind, Massinger seems to make it a rule to break it between his minors. Thus in Act II., scene

i., of The Bashful Lover, in a passage very reminiscent of that in Act II., scene iv. of Twelfth Night, in which Viola speaks of her own woes as those of an imaginary sister, Matilda's servants (Beatrice, First Woman, and Second Woman) discuss with her the disappearance of the page, Ascanio, who later turns out to be a girl disguised as a boy:-

'Beatrice. An't please your excellence, I have observed him
Waggishly witty; yet, sometimes, on the sudden,
He would be very pensive; and then talk
So feelingly of love, as if he had
Tasted the bitter sweets of it.
First Wom. He would tell, too,
A pretty tale of a sister, that had been
Deceived by her sweetheart; and then, weeping, swear
He wondered how men could be false.
Second Wom. And that
When he was a knight, he'd be the ladies' champion,
And travel o'er the world to kill such lovers
As durst play false with their mistresses.'

Undoubtedly all that is said could easily have gone to one speaker. But from the point of view of stagecraft, or rather stage effect, it would have been less effective, slower in tempo, and more boring. Nevertheless, the division is a somewhat artificial device when we examine it in the study, an attempt of an uncolloquial dramatist to be colloquial in a pseudo-conversat-:ional exchange.

For a similar reason Massinger feels that he has always to break up long harangues and passages of sustained rhetoric with interspersed comments or remarks by the standers-by, which have little dramatic and only a slightly choral function. Massinger loves an occasion for a set speech. But he rarely lets a character run on without a pause or rather a commenting interruption for more than about twenty-five lines. Sforza's speech before the Emperor Charles V in Act III., scene i., of The Duke of Milan, for example, is broken by interruptions into four speeches of about

twenty-two lines each(1). One of the longest speeches which occurs in the dialogue of any of Massinger's plays is the famous defence of his profession by Paris in Act I., scene iii. of The Roman Actor. It runs to 100 lines in all, but it is broken up into four sections of increasing length by such remarks as this:-

'Aretinus. Are you on the stage
You talk so boldly?'

'Sura. There's spirit in this.'

'Rusticus. He has put
The consuls to their whisper.'

'Latinus. Well pleaded, on my life! I never saw him
Act an orator's part before.'

No doubt Paris was acting an orator's part in the high Roman fashion. And no doubt he used the stylised gestures which 'developed through the centuries for the specific purpose of swaying all kinds of mixed audiences, many of whose members could not even understand everything they heard'(2). But, as is clear from his regular practice, Massinger did not rely on the gripping power of an unbroken harangue. He felt compelled to introduce some relief or movement, even if only the movement of interjection, into the comparative immobility of his set speeches. His, as we saw, was a drama of words in any case: he had to give at least the illusion of movement by passing the words from mouth to mouth. The matter is important from the actor's point of view. It is the most difficult thing which an

(1) Speeches in Massinger are rarely longer than this (though this is indeed long enough). Thus the speeches in the dialogue between Francisco and Marcelia earlier in the same play (II., i.) seem long, but actually average about 16 lines. (2) B.L.Joseph: How the Elizabethans Acted Shakespeare. (Listener, 5 Jan. 1950. Cf. Joseph: Elizabethan Acting. London, 1951.

actor can be called on to do on the stage -- not to be doing at all and yet to contrive to contribute something in and by silence.

My conclusion, then, is that the thought and care which Massinger, 'the stage-poet' as Sir Aston Cokaine aptly calls him (1), expended on everything he did is amply evidenced in his stagecraft. Though he can hardly be said to have initiated any new developments, he practised the devices of his day, not haphazardly, but carefully and for the most part competently and skilfully, with respect to the particular kind of polite melodrama in vogue. Shakespeare and Fletcher may be more poetical; but more practical and painstaking they cannot be.

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(1) Small Poems. Epigrams. I., 100. 'Epitaph on ... Fletcher and ..... Massinger'.

CHAPTER IV.

Characterisation.

It is impossible to approach questions of Massinger's characterisation in the way which Bradley approached Shakespeare's; for, as Coleridge, perhaps the pioneer in this variety of psychological criticism, admitted, (1) 'Massinger's characters have no character' (2) . Critics of the Bradley school looked for naturalness or convincingness of character and went so far as to praise or condemn a work on this score alone, producing such statements as, 'The permanent value of a play rests on its characterisation ... ... For ultimate convincingness no play can rise above its characterisation' (3) . But it has become more and more recognised that this is certainly not the correct approach to most of our older drama, however proper it may be in respect of modern plays written under the influence of Tchekov. While the criterion of 'convincingness', of truth to life, might hold good for many plays from 1890 onwards and can even produce important results when applied to the exceptional work of Shakespeare (4) , it is definitely misleading when applied indiscriminately to all the dramatists of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. Characters, after all, as Dr Johnson seems to have recognised (5) , have no existence apart from the play in which they appear (unless as historical or legendary persons whose characters are already more or less laid down). They are counters moved by the playwright across the chequer-board of his design, beings whose reality is drawn from the action in which he uses them.

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(1) Although, of course, there had been adumbrations and more than adumbrations in the work of Morgann, Whately, William Richardson, and even Johnson. (2) Lectures on Shakespeare and the Poets. Ed. Ashe. 1883. 405. (3) G.P.Baker: Dramatic Technique. London, 1922. (4) See, for example, J.I.M.Stewart: Character and Motive in Shakespeare. London, 1949. (5) 'The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players.' (Preface to Shakespeare. 1765.) This awareness of the fundamental artificial convention of the drama appears to me to be a definite hint in this direction.

It has been demonstrated admirably and in detail by some modern scholars, notably Miss M.C. Bradbrook (1), that the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists worked within a convention in which drama was grounded in action rather than in character, and that their characters largely conformed to a convention of types. Ben Jonson with his 'humours', which are variations on and developments from the Plautine and Terentian categories in accordance with a seventeenth-century satirical purpose, and other practitioners of the comedy of 'humours' are only the more obvious exponents of type characterisation; much of the characterisation outside of the drama of humours also adheres to the type conventions. And the popularity from the last decade of the sixteenth century and earlier, a popularity which lasted for the best part of a century, of character sketches after the Theophrastan model by Overbury, Hall, Earle, and many others, shows that the categorisation of human types was in the air. Characterisation by types was in fact a psychological simplification and a methodising of human nature that had a strong appeal for the Renaissance mind. It survived vigorously into the eighteenth century with its strong formalising tendency. However, the increasing diversification of life on the one hand and the increasing awareness of its complexity on the other have rendered the present age less ready to accept or to be interested in the neater methods of a simpler age.

But characterisation according to types was even more that a Renaissance habit of mind to the writers practising the drama of surprise,

(1) Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy. Cambridge, 1935.

especially to those writing from about 1610 onwards in whose work the surprise element is particularly prominent. This method of character-:isation by types was forced upon them by the nature of the plays they were writing. A play is, after all, a 'narrow plot of ground'; it is a very small jug when compared, say, with the novel. It will only hold a certain amount of material, and when most of this material is, as in the drama of surprise, incident or action, there is little room left for a characterisation which is naturalistic or convincing. As Dryden said, 'The manners can never be evident where the surprises of fortune take up all the business of the stage, and where the poet is more in pain to tell you what happened to such a man than what he was' (1).

As I have said before, it is to the drama of surprise that Massinger's plays belong. They belong to a convention where 'variety of incident ... the romantic interest of situation ... was aimed at' (2). Naturally enough in such a drama, the characters tended to become by necessity mere agents and by convenience mere types. Jonson, who was not of course writing a drama of surprise, carried the method deliberately to an extreme from satiric motives; but it is seen in its normal working in the romantic drama of Beaumont and Fletcher where it has been adopted not consciously or deliberately as in Jonson but rather faute de mieux. In the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher the majority of the characters at least pretend to be real and three-dimensional, but in fact they are often no more than two-dimensional tokens or types. The love-lorn maiden and the romantic young man of Beaumont, the lustful

(1) Preface to Troilus and Cressida. 1679. (Dramatic Essays by John Dryden (Everyman Edn.) 136.) (2) G.C.Macaulay: Beaumont and Fletcher. C.H.E.L. VI., v. 110.

monarch, the Plautine blunt soldier, the witty young gallant and his female partner, of Fletcher are no more real people than Jonson's labelled 'humours'. When I say that they are not 'real' people, I do not suggest that they are unnatural, but rather that they have not humanity to spare, and that their minds are unlike the minds of Shakespeare's characters which, as our greatest living authority on Shakespeare has recently reminded us, appear 'to contain many thoughts over and above those which their creator permits the audience to overhear' (1). They ar merely adequate, possessing the low-relief of a frieze as compared with the roundness of Shakespeare's sculptures.

Massinger, however much he owed to Shakespeare in other ways, went mainly to Fletcher for his characterisation. He took over or modified many of the Fletcher types and added some of his own; and almost without exception he rang the changes upon the resulting group of types throughout his dramatic career.

There are, of course, certain corollaries to this proposition of Massinger's characterisation according to types. But I shall postpone a consideration of them until I have illustrated the proposition itself by references to certain of the actual characters. I shall divide them into common-type groups, recognising however that the classes are not self-contained and that some characters combine the features of more than one class.

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(1) J. Dover Wilson: Titus Andronicus. (New Camb. Sh.) Cambridge, 1948. Introduction, p. xxvi.

As might be expected of plays which, like those of Fletcher, Shirley and other contemporaries, deal with the relationship of the sexes, with passionate and romantic intrigue, the most common emotion suffered (or perhaps enjoyed) by Massinger's characters is that of jealousy. This gives rise to the commonest Massingerian type, that of the jealous husband or lover. It is not sufficient, however, to describe such characters simply as jaloux. They are more complex than that, and their jealousy is only one manifestation of a particular cast of mind. They are what Chelli describes as faibles:- 'On peut dire que l'homme faible a été un sujet de prédilection chez Massinger' (1). But this faiblesse is largely in respect of their relations with the opposite sex, since they are often competent men of affairs, like Sforza in The Duke of Milan or Charalois in The Fatal Dowry, or warriors, like Mathias in The Picture or Leosthenes in The Bondman.

Their faiblesse is, in fact, precisely that of Othello, for they may be bracketed with him as representative of the commonest type of hero in the Elizabethan drama, the man of passion. In the drama, particularly the tragic drama, of our greatest age, as Professor Schücking has said, '.... the extremely passionate individual is chosen for representation, the exhibition of unrestrained passion being the climax of Elizabethan tragedy' (2). But Sforza, Mathias, Ladislaus, Leosthenes, and Charalois are pale shadows of the great Elizabethan baroque heroes, of Othello,

(1) Drame, 270. (2) L.L.Schücking: The Baroque Character of the Elizabethan Tragic Hero. (Annual Shakespeare Lecture of the British Academy, 1938) Proc. Brit. Acad. XXIV. London, 1938. 8.

Macbeth, Tamburlaine, or Hieronimo. Sexual passion is almost their only dynamic; and, as exemplifying the blurring of the distinction between tragedy and romantic comedy which occurred in the drama of surprise, they appear not only in tragedies, as in The Duke of Milan and The Fatal Dowry, but also in the tragi-comedies, as in The Picture, The Bondman, and The Emperor of the East.

As men of great passion they are often extravagant in their statements about the object of their affection. Thus Sforza, probably the best representative of his type in Massinger, indulges in a typical extravagant outburst in Act I., scene iii. of The Duke of Milan:

> 'Such as are cloyed with those they have embraced,
> May think their wooing done: no night to me
> But is a bridal one, where Hymen lights
> His torches fresh and new; and those delights
> Which are not to be clothed in airy sounds,
> Enjoyed, beget desires as full of heat,
> And jovial fervour, as when first I tasted
> Her virgin fruit -- Blest night! and be it numbered
> Amongst those happy ones, in which a blessing
> Was by the full consent of all the stars,
> Conferred upon all mankind.'

And even in Act IV., scene iii., when he is at last convinced of Marcelia's adulterous intentions, he can still bestow hyperbolic praise upon her;

> 'I do believe, had angels sexes,
> The most would be such women and assume
> No other shape when they were to appear
> In their full glory.'

As in real life (and this is almost the only occasion I shall have to use such a phrase about any of Massinger's characters), the jaloux is sometimes fundamentally unsure of himself. In The Picture, for example, we are confronted from the outset with a husband (Mathias) who so doubts

himself that he can remind his wife that she is of superior birth and who is conscious of the fact that he has not been able to maintain her in a style befitting her birth.

All these men are excessively uxorious or possessive, doting upon their wives to an almost insane degree, and in Theodosius in The Emperor of the East this passion rises to a pitch where he neglects his duties as a ruler. Even Sforza, a man of 'strong judgement', who has been a brave and courageous leader of his people, can be described by one of his courtiers in these terms;

> 'It is the duchess' birthday ... ...
> In which the duke is not his own, but her's:
> Nay, every day, indeed, he is her creature,
> For never man so doted; -- but to tell
> The tenth part of his fondness to a stranger,
> Would argue me of fiction.' (1)

It is worth noting that in The Picture the two attributes, jealousy and uxoriousness are divided between two characters; Mathias is jealous and Ladislaus is uxorious.

These heroes, in a parallelism to their passionate uxoriousness, tend to be credulous as regards the infidelity of their partners and will believe any absurd story, no matter who produces it. But in this respect Charalois in The Fatal Dowry is a notable exception and requires a long time and more than mere allegation to believe that Beaumelle is unfaithful to him. The reason is that in this play the normal situation in which a credulous husband accuses an innocent wife is laid aside, and Beaumelle, unlike Marcelia, Eudocia, Sophia, and Domitia (2), really is guilty.

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(1) Duke of Milan, I., i. (2) Domitia is, however, at least guilty in intent. See below, p. 170.

As men of passion, Massinger's protagonists are given to sudden and violent action. The murder of Marcelia by Sforza and the execution of Philargus by Domitian in The Roman Actor are typical samples of sudden and violent action taken by passionate men. Often indeed, as in the pseudo-judicial murder of Beaumelle in The Fatal Dowry, where Charalois forces her father to pronounce her doom in accordance with the laws of justice but in contradiction to the laws of nature, they act outrageously. I cannot, however, quite agree with Professor Cruickshank when he claims that the explanation is that 'the faults which Massinger loves to portray and censure are such as show themselves in outrageous ways -- such as anger, pride, impotence in the Latin sense, uxoriousness, and above all jealousy' (1). It is rather that the drama of surprise in the Jacobean period, like the melodramatic Senecan drama in the Elizabethan, demanded such outrageous action, and indeed, demanded characters whose nature was that they should so act. The jealousy and impetuosity of these characters is an outcome of their very natures, wayward and hectic, and it can be remarked that they are as prone to forgiveness (witness Domitian's forgiveness of his wife between Acts IV and V of The Roman Actor) or to repentance (witness Sforza's sudden repentance within a minute of murdering Marcelia) as sudden and violent as their actions.

There then is the jaloux in Massinger. He is fundamentally a man of too excessively passionate a nature, prone to violent action or revulsion, possessive and doting, and flamboyant in speech and gestures.

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(1) Philip Massinger, 72.

He is, in fact, distantly related to Hamlet, or Lear, or Othello, or Macbeth, but he is drawn to a pattern and lacks the essential vitality of his great archetypes. Such characters are, as Chelli suggests, 'visiblement des natures inférieures, on dirait peut-être, des dégénérés, ① , at best unstable persons and at worst a sort of manic-depressive like Domitian with an emotional graph that is jagged with departures from the norm. As Hazlitt says,

> 'His impassioned characters are like drunkards or madmen. Their conduct is extreme and outrageous, their motives unaccountable and weak; their misfortunes are without necessity, and their crimes without temptation, to ordinary apprehensions.' ②

It is only fair, however, to remark that Massinger fully realised the weakness of such characters and always arranges for an unfavourable impression of them to be left upon the minds of the audience: Sforza goes mad, Domitian dies a cowardly death, Leosthenes is humiliated in the Senate, and Mathias is mastered by his wife. They even recognise their own faults and pass judgement upon themselves. In Act V., scene i. of The Bondman, for example, Leosthenes says,

> ''Tis my fault:
> Distrust of others springs, Timagoras,
> From diffidence in ourselves: but I will strive
> To kill this monster, jealousy.'

And Sforza, who has been described by Francisco as 'rash and violent' ③, perhaps sums up all these characters as well as himself when, with his dying breath, he says,

> 'My whole life was a frenzy.'

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① Drame, 270. ② Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. Lecture IV. (Bohn Edn. 1897. 132.) ③ The Duke of Milan, IV., ii.

Charalois in The Fatal Dowry alone of all these men conveys, in spite of his rash action in murdering his wife, the impression of a nobility still greater than his weakness. He alone has had some real justification for his action, and, as he says when he lies fatally wounded, he ---

> 'dies as he hath lived,
> Still constant and unmoved: what's fallen upon me
> Is by heaven's will, because I made myself
> A judge in my own cause, without their warrant;
> But He that lets me know thus much in death,
> With all good men -- forgive me.'

There are no jealous heroines in Massinger. It might be possible to suggest that jealousy is part of the motive of Sophia's renunciation of chastity in The Picture, but closer examination will reveal that her motives are not so much jealousy as pride and resentment at her husband's supposed infidelity. The positive right of a woman to be jealous, along with certain other sexual rights, has rarely been recognised in our literature until comparatively modern times. However, although jealousy is not recognised as a feminine motive in Massinger, as might be expected, the woman of passion does figure considerably in his plays.

His women operate as a rule in a more restricted sphere than his men. They do not, of course, have a profession as the men have. Their sphere of operations is rather the narrow domestic one of the presence-chamber and the boudoir than the wider world of affairs, and, naturally enough, most of them direct their attention and energies towards matters amorous. It is in this relation that we find the female counterpart of the man of passion. She is the passionate woman who falls in love at first sight and sets about seducing the object of her affection as soon

as possible. Donusa is suddenly struck with love for Vitelli in The Bondman, Domitia with Paris in The Roman Actor, Aurelia with Bertoldo in The Maid of Honour, and Iolante with Laval in The Guardian. Even in A Very Woman, written by Fletcher and revised by Massinger, there is the case of Almira who, having rejected the Prince of Tarent as a suitor, falls suddenly in love with him when he is disguised as a slave. Another variety of the same type of woman in violent love, though usually not a character of the first importance, is the woman pursuer of a man who may or may not be a former lover that has rejected her. In The Bondman, Statilia is pursuing Leosthenes; in The Great Duke of Florence, Fiorinda Duchess of Urbin is pursuing Sanazarro; and in The Guardian, Mirtilla is pursuing Adorio. These young women are usually very enterprising and persistent. They remind us of Fletcher's Celia, Oriana, and Alinda.

Massinger's passionate women may be maids, as are Donusa and Aurelia, or matrons, as are Domitia and Iolante. The fact of marriage makes little difference to their passion, and indeed, such is the equivocal morality of his plays (which they share with almost all the plays of the late Jacobean convention), there is often a special interest taken in the fact that they are married.

Unlike the man of passion, the woman of passion is most definitely not a faible. She is both positive and resourceful, often operating as a fons et origo of the action, and she tends to be more active (in a particular sense) than the more passive male who is her goal. This is particularly noticeable in those scenes of sexual tension so favoured by

Massinger which usually take the form of a passage in which a man is tempted by a woman. It is indeed quite remarkable how often in the play there is an episode in which a woman of this type woos, tempts, or seduces her male opposite. Aurelia in The Maid of Honour, like her namesake in The Prophetess ① , falls suddenly in love; but Massinger, perhaps in deference to her rank as Duchess of Sienna, takes her and Bertoldo off-stage before the temptation begins ② . Donusa tempts and seduces the reluctant Vitelli in Act II., scene iv. of The Renegado, and in Act IV., scene ii. of The Roman Actor, Domitia attempts to overcome the scruples of the actor, Paris. When Paris pretends not to understand what Domitia means she has to come straight to the point;

> 'Come, you would put on
> A wilful ignorance, and not understand
> What 'tis we point at. Must we in plain language,
> Against the decent modesty of our sex,
> Say that we love thee, love thee to enjoy thee;
> Or that in our desires thou art preferred,
> And Caesar but thy second?'

And when he still demurs, this blunt lady goes on,

> 'You are coy,
> Expecting I should court you. Let mean ladies
> Use prayers and entreaties to their creatures
> To rise up instruments to serve their pleasures;
> But for Augusta so to lose herself,
> That holds command o'er Caesar and the world,
> Were poverty of spirit. Thou must -- thou shalt:
> The violence of my passion knows no mean,
> And in my punishments, and my rewards,
> I'll use no moderation.'

Such scenes of outspoken female sensuality are typical of the behaviour of the woman of passion, and one cannot avoid the suspicion that such

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① By Fletcher and Massinger. There is also a wanton Duchess Aurelia in Marston's The Malcontent (Acted 1601). ② See Chapter III., p. 143.

characters are introduced into the plays merely to provide an opportunity for such scenes.

Honoria in The Picture is a temptress for rather different reasons from her sisters in Massinger's other plays. She attempts in Act III., scene v. to seduce Mathias; but she intends to deny him once he has succumbed and is all the time acting from an ambitious pride to be thought 'the only wonder of the age', an emotion which is passionate in degree with her but not sexual in origin.

The Fatal Dowry, in this as in other respects already noted, presents a difference in the matter of the temptress's guilt. Domitia and Iolante, not to mention Honoria, all of whom are married, do not reach the point of committing adultery in deed, whatever their guilty intention may have been (1). Beaumelle, however, is in fact an adulteress and continues after marriage the intrigue into which she had seduced Novall Junior before. Though Massinger (and Field, but principally Massinger) have done something to sway our sympathy to her, the nobility of the husband she wrongs makes her offence the greater. It should perhaps be added here that, despite the brevity of the speaking part assigned to her, Beaumelle stands out as one of the most three-dimensional of Massinger's women.

Though the passionate woman is the counterpart of the passionate man in Massinger, the latter is himself generally matched with the

(1) As Sforza says (Duke of Milan, IV., iii.), echoing a Senecan sentiment, 'Intent ..... It does include all fact.'

woman of virtue. She is the type of woman who appears in almost every one of the plays (1), typical representatives being Cleora in The Bondman, Camiola in The Maid of Honour, Eudocia in The Emperor of the East, Sophia in The Picture, and Bellisant in The Parliament of Love. Phrases descriptive of her abound. She is constantly being called 'the only wonder of the age', a 'phoenix', 'unparalleled', 'rare', a 'better angel', 'the excellence of nature'. If she is unmarried she is 'a fair example for noble maids to imitate'; and if she is married, she is likened to 'chaste Penelope'.

While the woman of virtue is not usually passionate in the ordinary sense, her virtue is in itself often a passion, an idealistic passion. This virtue is, strangely enough, very self-conscious and self-expressive. As Chelli says, 'Si elle se contentait d'un ton un peu moins pompeux, de principes moins sonores, elle nous attacherait davantage' (2). She is indeed for ever proclaiming her own virtue. For example, Cleora in Act V., scene iii. of The Bondman says,

> 'Since I had ability of speech,
> My tongue has been so much inured of truth,
> I know not how to lie.'

And Marcelia, who is very fond of speaking about her 'unspotted honour', when she is accused by Sforza of infidelity and put under guard by him in Act IV., scene iii. of The Duke of Milan, does not hesitate to say,

> 'Which of my virtues,
> My labours, services, and cares to please you,
> For, to a man suspicious and unthankful,
> Without a blush I may be mine own trumpet,
> Invites this barbarous course?'

(1) Notable exceptions being The City Madam and The Roman Actor. (2) Drame, 275.

These women are often their own panegyrists, and like the heroines of Fletcher, from whom they derive rather than from those of Beaumont, they show a surprising knowledge of the evils of the flesh which they are resisting so strenuously, and their speech is frequently (to our taste) immodest. When Shakespeare's heroines talk broadly, there can be no doubt that they are chaste women, however free of speech. No one, for example, could suspect the chastity of Beatrice. But there is in Massinger an unhealthy preoccupation with the more smutty side of sexual matters which comes out in the speech of even his chastest heroines, even when they are not trying to be witty or humorous. In fact, some of their remarks smack more of the water-closet or the four-ale bar than of the Court. Marcelia brawls with her sister-in-law and mother-in-law in the manner of a bawdy serving-wench; Honoria, who is as much a woman of virtue as a woman of passion, is extremely forthright in the way in which she attempts (or pretends to attempt) to seduce Mathias; and even Camiola, herself 'the Maid of Honour', is not entirely free from such obscenities in her dealings with the foolish Signor Sylli.

Moreover, the purest of Massinger's good women do not always act in accordance with their high pronouncements, and, being too much taken up with their own virtue, they seldom display much of the milk of human kindness. So it is that we find Camiola's unkind rejection of the foolish, but harmless, Sylli not in full accord with her character as a good woman, and we feel that the convenient way in which she finally ignores Bertoldo's vows of chastity and ransoms him in order to marry him, while it is a typical 'turn' of the drama of surprise, is in direct contradiction of her advertised virtue.

The virtue of these heroines is, as I have implied, largely concentrated on their chastity. The matrons are pre-eminently faithful: the virgins are resolute in defending their honour and proclaiming their purity. The matrons even insist on the chastity of moderation being practised within the marriage vows. Marcelia, for example, in Act III., scene iii. of The Duke of Milan says to her husband,

> 'Let us love temperately; things violent last not,
> And too much dotage rather argues folly
> Than true affection.'

Usually these women are balanced against a jealous husband or lover who wrongly believes that they have been unfaithful. Thus in The Bondman Cleora is matched with Leosthenes, and in The Duke of Milan Marcelia with Sforza. Chastity and fidelity are confronted with jealousy or unjust suspicion. In plays with tragic endings jealousy in full measure is the motif. Part of Marcelia's tragedy is that she does not realise just how strong are the forces gathering against her nor how deep the jealousy which has been aroused in her husband. Imagining the situation to be less serious than it really is, she meets her husband's jealousy with an angry resentment that seals her own doom. Sometimes, however, Massinger's heroines are confronted merely with a degree of distrust, not amounting to a jealousy of the magnitude and force of Sforza's. This is usual in the comedies, and in them, the suspected ladies, unlike Desdemona, respond vigorously and angrily. Sophia in The Picture is the most notable example of a faithful and virtuous wife responding so angrily to her husband's suspicion as to renounce her chastity in a passage in Act III., scene vi. which cannot but strike us as melodramatic

and unreal. It is to be noted that Sophia, in common with other of the virtuous heroines, notably Eudocia in The Emperor of the East, is not by any means without fault. Both she and Eudocia are proud and haughty women, but their chastity cannot be impugned.

Perhaps the most amazing example of the woman of virtue in Massinger is Bellisant in The Parliament of Love. In Act I., scene iv., she is advised by her guardian, Chamont, that in her situation she ought to marry in order to preserve her reputation. When she says that she does not want to marry yet, Chamont answers that she must in the circumstances lead a retired life and not risk the keeping of so much company. To this the proud young lady replies with this surprising speech:

'What proof
Should I give of my continence, if I lived
Not seen, nor seeing any? Spartan Helen,
Corinthian Lais, or Rome's Messaline,
So mewed up, might have died as they were born,
By lust untempted: no, it is the glory
Of chastity to be tempted, tempted home too,
The honour else is nothing! I would be
The first example to convince for liars,
Those poets, that with sharp and bitter rhymes
Proclaim aloud, that chastity has no being,
But in a cottage: and so confident
I am in this to conquer, that I will
Expose myself to all assaults; see masques,
And hear bewitching sonnets; change discourse
With one that, for experience, could teach Ovid
To write a better way, his Art of Love:
Feed high, and take and give free entertainment,
Lend Cupid eyes, and new artillery,
Deny his mother for a deity;
Yet every burning shot he made at me,
Meeting with my chaste thoughts, should lose their ardour;
Which, when I have o'ercome, malicious men
Must, to their shame, confess it's possible,
For a young lady (some say fair), at court,
To keep her virgin honour.'

Chamont, presumably a very lenient guardian, gives way tamely:-

'May you prosper
In this great undertaking!'

From the very outset this flirtatious project undermines our confidence in the young coquette's very vocal 'virtue'; and little that she does later can restore it.

The important thing to notice is that a similarly unreal code, adapted to the exigencies of the plot rather than to character, lies behind many of the actions of Massinger's virtuous women. When we find, for example, a devoted wife, who, on the slightest hint of unfaithfulness on her husband's part, exclaims, as Sophia does in Act III., scene vi. of The Picture;

'Chastity,
Thou only art a name, and I renounce thee!
I am now a servant to voluptuousness.'

we realise that this publicised virtue is a matter of plot-convenience, and indeed is often introduced merely to make possible the titillating spectacle of temptation.

Of course, there are some representatives of this type of heroine whose virtue is not entirely absorbed by chastity. Cleora in The Bondman, for example, has moral ideas that take in another ethical area. She is unique among Massinger's heroines in having a long speech expressing reflections on a theme which is not strictly dramatically relevant and which is really the unqualified opinion of the dramatist himself. This is the passage in Act I., scene iii, in which Cleora harangues the Senate on patriotism, a speech which had a very pointed reference to the affairs of England in 1623. Usually Massinger chooses a male character

as his mouthpiece for such extra-dramatic matter as this; but by assigning it on this occasion to a woman he not only departs from his normal practice but suffuses the character of Cleora from the outset with a distinguishing colour. Her patriotic fervour gives a peculiar strength and confirmation to her general virtue, much as religious zeal strengthens and distinguishes that of Camiola in The Maid of Honour. In a similar way the virtue of Pulcheria, sister of the Emperor Theodosius in The Emperor of the East, is not, as it were, orbited by chastity, but is an abstract passion for the general good and a desire to govern wisely and well which provides the motif of the whole play.

As still other representatives of the wholly good heroine in Massin-:ger there are women of a specially rarified virtue. Such are Lidia in The Great Duke of Florence (praised by Professor Cruickshank) and Matilda in The Bashful Lover (as much praised by Chelli). To these I would add Theocrine in The Unnatural Combat and Paulina in The Renegado, at the same time remarking that the dead wife of Duke Cozimo of The Great Duke of Florence must have been another such woman. They remind us of Fletcher's Lucina, Evanthe, and Ordella, so supranormal is the virtue with which Massinger has endowed them. But he has hardly given them any life. Their virtue is mechanical and automatic, not human and a matter of human choice. They are puppets, and, unlike most of Massinger's women, are mere passive functionaries in the plot. The very descriptions of them are remarkable. Matilda, for example, has such beauty that it continually provokes hyperbolic comment; she is divine, she is like the sun or brighter than a comet --

'Her beams of beauty made the hill all fire.' ①

In spite of the beauty of their bodies and of their souls, however, such actions as these women have to perform in give them little or no personality.

Where the woman of virtue is common in Massinger, the corresponding man of virtue is rare, at least in the leading role. I mean the man whose primary concern is the pursuit of a self-conscious virtue-ideal. The nearest Massinger comes to such a type is the virtuously Stoical (but tediously pessimistic) Antiochus, the hero of Believe As You List. In general, however, Massinger's men, such as both fill leading roles and are meant to engage our sympathies, cannot be practising idealists, pure and simple, like his virtuously chaste women, in that they have other involvements. They have parts to play in the wider world of government and war: they have their professions to practise and their official duties to perform. And it is in these external spheres of action, rather than in the more domestic and unofficial domain ② , that the masculine virtues in which Massinger is interested are to be found.

The heroes whom Massinger wishes us to admire have the public virtues of courage, sensitive honour, candour in word and deed, sense of duty, decision. The noblest of them are all, appropriately, soldiers -- in effect, exponents of the knightly virtues. But in addition Massinger's heroes are men of definite competence in their station and office: if

① Bashful Lover, III., ii. ② Male chastity provides only an incidental motif in the resistance (somewhat vacillating) of Mathias in The Picture and Vitelli in The Renegado.

their ends are tragic, their hamartia is never official ineffectiveness. Thus Sforza is an efficient prince and an able and successful advocate with his sovereign, the Emperor Charles; and Leosthenes is not only a brave warrior, but a master of the art of war.

But the good qualities in these characters can be defeated, temporarily or altogether, by passion, violence, and rashness. The overwhelming of virtue by such intemperance provides a tragic interest in The Duke of Milan and The Fatal Dowry. In plays such as The Picture, The Renegado, and The Maid of Honour, in whic the principal male character emerges from the conflict of his good qualities with his passion, the interest lies precisely in the conflict.

Virtue in Massinger's other male characters, that is to say those not protagonists, is either that generalised goodness of such more or less colourless agents as Father Francisco in The Renegado or Paulinus in The Emperor of the East, or the purely professional merit of the wise and efficient Emperor Charles in The Duke of Milan, of the great leader Timoleon in The Bondman, of the skilful Surgeon in The Emperor of the East, or of the brave soldiers Romont and Pontalier in The Fatal Dowry. Occasionally the virtuous male characters are assigned no real part in the action. They appear in the plays only to give expression to some point of view which Massinger cannot otherwise introduce. Thus Belgarde in The Unnatural Combat speaks for the despised ex-servicemen, and Eubulus in The Emperor of the East is the voice of criticism of the actions of Theodosius, and perhaps indirectly the voice of criticism of Charles I (1) .

(1) See below, Chapter V., p. 259 .

Two characters, not protagonists, but still of great importance in the plot, are of interest while we are considering Massinger's good men, not because their virtue is out of the ordinary, though it is steadfast enough, but because their characters are unusually clearly defined and attractive. The first, Romont in The Fatal Dowry, is the truly honest Iago of the play put into the unenviable position of having to make known his suspicions regarding Beaumelle to Charalois, her husband and his friend; and the second is Adorni in The Maid of Honour, who is in love with Camiola and has the task of ransoming for her his rival Bertoldo. Both of them are men in awkward sitauations; and perhaps that is why Massinger has had to go to greater lengths than usual with him to explain their varied motives and emotions, with the result that in them at least he has created characters who remain in our memories.

Other minor male and female characters may be cleared out of the way at the same time, since, for the most part, they have no special features and are as much stage-properties as are tables and chairs. Servants, courtiers, ladies-in-waiting, messengers, pages, and other lesser mortals we expect to be no more than puppets. But there are also in Massinger 'property' kings and rulers, such as Charles VIII in The Parliament of Love, and noble relatives, such as Domitilla in The Roman Actor.

A few of the minor characters, however, some of them already referred to in other connections, are more clearly defined and tend to arrange themselves into type-groups. For example, the 'blunt soldier', familiar to us from Shakespeare's Falconbridge, Enobarbus, and Hotspur, and

Fletcher's Memnon and Leontius, appears in Belgarde in The Unnatural Combat and Pontalier in The Fatal Dowry, not to mention in the more important roles of Timoleon in The Bondman, Romont in The Fatal Dowry, Pescara in The Duke of Milan, and Gonzago in The Maid of Honour. The romantic young lovers, reminsicent of Beaumont's Philaster and Euphrasia or Amintor and Aphrasia or of Shakespeare's Lorenzo and Jessica, appear in Young Allworth and Meg Overreach in A New Way to Pay Old Debts and Giovanni and Lidia in The Great Duke of Florence. The Dolonius-like courtier figures in Eubulus in The Picture and Charomonte in The Great Duke of Florence. The spurned and revengeful woman who is pursuing her lover is represented by Maria/Ascanio in The Bashful Lover and Eugenia in The Duke of Milan, and the spurned woman who in disguise has become the servant of her lover's new mistress, by Statilia in The Bondman and Beaupré in The Parliament of Love. Other types that appear frequently in the plays are:- the worldly young man, an active or a reformed rake, such as Adorio in The Guardian; the wild courtier, such as Ubaldo and Ricardo in The Picture and Novall and Perigot in The Parliament of Love, all corresponding more or less to Fletcher's wits and gallants (Don John, Mirabel, Valentine, Monsieur Thomas), as generous and good-hearted and profligate as much from fashion as from vice; the older man of the world, such as Durazzo in The Guardian; and the doting lover, such as Hortensio (a minor character, though a major agent) in The Bashful Lover and Caldoro in The Guardian.

One could go on grouping and re-grouping the minor characters into types under such headings as temperament, circumstances, or even professions; but this would avail us nothing since it is obvious, on the barest

reading of the plays, that these characters are just extracted from convenient pigeon-holes.

It is perhaps more interesting to note some types altogether missing from Massinger's list. In view of his own devotion to the theatre and his faith in its moral benefits, it is remarkable that he has no characters that can be regarded as satirical of the puritan opposition. Again, the clergy of any persuasion are, if not unrepresented, rare. Parson Willdo in A New Way to Pay Old Debts is hardly on the stage before he is off again, and the same applies to Father Paulo, the deus ex machina of The Maid of Honour. Much more important is Father Francisco, the Jesuit in The Renegado, whose surprisingly sympathetic presentation I shall consider in another chapter and connection. But he is the only cleric of any consequence in a Massinger play. Another notable fact is that there are no really old people, men or women, far less dotards. Nor are there any children. Massinger has a few quite young men and women just past their adolescence. But for the most part his men and women -- Wellborn and Lady Allworth in A New Way to Pay Old Debts spring to mind immediately -- are not merely fully adult but past their first youth. They are in their thirties and forties.

So far I have said nothing of the characters on whom so much of Massinger's reputation is founded, the criminal types, those positively evil as distinct from those merely weak and overcome by temptation. The chief examples are, of course, Sir Giles Overreach in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, Luke Frugal in The City Madam Malefort in The Unnatural Combat, and, perhaps, Domitian in The Roman Actor (though he partakes

more of the characteristics of the man of passion than of the straight criminal), with, on a much lower plane of effectiveness, Flaminius in Believe As You List, Francisco in The Duke of Milan, Marrall in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, and Montreville in The Unnatural Combat. All of them, the greater criminals and the less, represent slightly different aspects of evil. Overreach is a ruthless man with an abnormal, inhuman, power complex. Luke Frugal is a schem ing and self-seeking hypocrite. Francisco is a vindictive and plotting coward. Malefort is the villain hero, not without an impressive strength and even nobility. And Domitian is the despot, sinning, but also sinned against. While they could not be changed from play to play as many of the good characters could, there is much that is common to the make-up of them all. They are all positively and consistently evil and all instigate evil actions. They all have, with the exception of Malefort, natures as single-minded as Massinger's good characters, but turned inside-out so to speak so that like Milton's Satan they have made evil their good. They are not the feeble butts of fortune or the helpless victims of an irresistible passion. They are well aware of what they are doing and can give reasons adequate in their estimation for their wickedness. They have, again with Malefort as an exception and possibly this time Domitian as a partial exception, no mitigating characteristics, any more than Iago or Edmund. They are brought to book by the countermeasures or parallel machinations of others, arousing in us no sympathy and only repulsion and detestation. And all in the end are dismissed or disposed of with punishments which, if sometimes light enough, are always poetically just.

They do, however, vary somewhat within that broader uniformity; and so, although I shall have to glance at them again in connection with the morality-play aspect of Massinger's characterisation, a brief considerat-:ion of some of the principals is appropriate here.

Sir Giles Overreach is by far the most famous of Massinger's characters; indeed, except some of Shakespeare's, there is probably no character in the drama of the period so well known and none that has been represented so often on the English stage. While part of this fame is certainly due to the remarkable performances given by Kean and later actors (including several in America) and to the histrionic chances the role offers to those actor-managers who for so long dominated our theatres there is a largeness, an almost portentous enormity, about him which overwhelms the reader or spectator and silences criticism. As Hazlitt says

> '.... he has strong, robust points about him that repel the impertinence of censure, and he sometimes succeeds in making us stagger in our opinion of his conduct, by throwing off any idle doubts or scruples that might hang upon it in his own mind, 'like dew-drops from the lion's mane'. His steadiness of purpose scarcely stands in need of support from the common sanctions of morality, which he intrepidly breaks through, and he almost conquers our prejudices by the consistent and intrepid manner in which he braves them.' (1)

Hazlitt's lengthy and masterly description of Sir Giles has never been surpassed, and it is doubtful if it ever will be. He sees him as,

> 'A character of obdurate self-will, without fanciful notions or natural affections; one who has no regard to the feelings of others, and who professes an equal disregard to their opinions. He minds nothing but his own ends, and takes the shortest and surest way to them. His understanding is clear sighted and his passions strong-nerved. Sir Giles is no flincher and no hypocrite; and he gains

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(1) New Writings by William Hazlitt: Second Series. Collected by P.P.Howe. London, 1927. 119-120.

almost as much by the hardihood with which he avows his impudent and sordid designs as others do by their caution in concealing them. He is the demon of selfishness personified; and carves out his way to the objects of his unprincipled avarice and ambition with an arm of steel, that strikes but does not feel the blow it inflicts.' (1)

But Hazlitt perhaps overemphasises the element of avarice in Sir Giles's nature. He is not a conventional miser as is Philargus in The Roman Actor or even Shylock or Barabas. He is not niggardly or mean. He is indeed lavish and ostentatious and lives in princely style. As Furnace says in Act II., scene iii.,

'To have a usurer that starves himself,
And wears a cloak of one and twenty years
On a suit of fourteen groats, bought of the hangman,
To grow rich, and then purchase, is too common:
But this sir Giles feeds high, keeps many servants,
Who must at his command do any outrage;
Rich in his habit, vast in his expenses;
Yet he to admiration still increases
In wealth and lordships.'

Sir Giles's lust is not for money in itself but for power; and this lust concentrates itself in an ambitious snobbery so tremendous as to shoot beyond the ridiculous:

'All my ambition is to have my daughter
Right honourable, which my lord can make her:
And might I live to dance upon my knee
A young lord Lovell, born by her unto you,
I write nil ultra to my proudest hopes.' (2)

The snobbery of Overreach is almost his only understandably human motive, and it is thrown all the more into an incongruous but striking relief by the absolute inhumanity of the rest of his nature. A desire for his daughter's advancement which can make him urge her to let herself be debauched in order to catch Lord Lovell as a husband is actuated by

(1) Op. cit. 120. (2) IV., i.

nothing remotely resembling kindness or parental affection. It is all part and parcel of his colossal selfishness. He is in fact, as Hazlitt says, 'the demon of selfishness personified'. We do not and cannot have any feeling for him save an awful detestation and disgusted revulsion. It would seem that Massinger has deliberately tried to let no spark of pity, to say nothing of extorted admiration, kindle in our minds. The contrast with Shakespeare's Shylock, to whom Sir Giles bears a distinct resemblance, is illuminating. Though Shakespeare has sometimes been condemned for the treatment meted out to Shylock, it has only been by those who failed to realise that their resentment was Shakespeare's intention and could only be aroused by an indignity done to a dignity. Shakespeare has given Shylock a case, has swung some at least of our sympathy over to him, and in so doing has perhaps -- in a sense at least -- diminished his stature. But at the same time by making Shylock pitiable Shakespeare has drawn his superhuman malefactor back into the fold of a common humanity. Massinger in my opinion is more chargeable, morally and aesthetically, for keeping Overreach outside of it. He is a monster, undoubtedly impressive, but as lacking as Count Cenci in the 'senses, affections, passions' of even sinful humanity. As he is led away to Bedlam, only one voice can be heard in pity for him.

'O my dear father!' ①

exclaims the daughter he had used as a pawn. But this single phrase is not meant to release any pity in others and is inserted probably to give a little depth to Margaret Overreach's otherwise thin enough part. Sir

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① V., i.

Giles loses nothing of his monstrous stature thereby. He, the first in literature to be called 'a bold, bad man' (1), never cringes. Like Iago he ends as he begins. But there is this vital difference. A New Way to Pay Old Debts, though not nominally a tragedy, is really an example of Aristotle's third category of unsatisfactory tragic plots -- 'an extremely bad man ... falling from happiness into misery. Such a story,' Aristotle goes on, 'May arouse the human feeling in us, but it will not move us to either pity or fear; pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves; so that there will be nothing either piteous or fear-inspiring in the situation' (2). The 'human feeling' in question is merely a moral satisfaction at poetic justice. On the other hand, important as Iago is and morally satisfied as we may be at his down fall, the play is not his tragedy and our fear and pity are respectively roused and discharged for beings 'like ourselves'. Similarly in King Lear, Goneril, Regan, and Edmund do not provide the tragic or impair the pity and fear.

> 'Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites are ours,
> And they must have their food,'

says Wordsworth (3). So long as the serious drama provides an outlet for our emotions of pity and fear, the monstrosity or inhumanity of a character below the level of the protagonist causes no discomfort, as it were. There is, however, this very kind of discomfort in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. For nothing can alter the fact that Overreach is the protagonist -- the very cynosure and focus of the play. Undoubtedly in

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(1) IV., i. (2) Aristotle on the Art of Poetry. A Revised Text by I. Bywater. 35. (3) The Prelude, Book 5., ll. 506-7

his magnificent self-sufficiency and self-consistency he bestrides his narrow world like a colossus. Sane (if sane at any time he can be called) and unremittingly resolute, or mad and unflinchingly repentant, he is overwhelmingly impressive.

To turn from Sir Giles Overreach to Luke Frugal in The City Madam is to descend. Luke has the same heartlessness and lack of feeling for others, but is not drawn on anything like the same impressive scale, and compared with the superhuman and Machiavellian Overreach he appears like a petty and mean trickster. It is difficult to know just what gives this impression of meanness since he has many passages of magnificent rhetoric assigned to him, equal to any given to Overreach; but I suggest that it is caused by two attributes which are lacking in the character of Sir Giles, namely avarice and hypocrisy. Avarice can sometimes be actually dignified when it is grandly and imaginatively expressed, as by Barabas in The Jew of Malta or even by Sir Epicure Mammon in The Alchemist. But, however much Massinger has tried by means of high-flown rhetoric, as in the soliloquy at the opening of Act III., scene iii., to elevate the avarice of Luke into something tremendous, he does not really succeed in making it more than the greed of a mean wretch. And this ignobility is doubled by the accompanying base hypocrisy. In short, Luke Frugal is despicable, whereas Overreach is hateful. Professor Cruickshank says that 'Luke in The City Madam is perhaps the most skilfully drawn example of a development of character' (1). With this comment I cannot agree. All the

(1) Philip Massinger, 73.

elements in Luke's character are present from the very beginning of the play, though by his hypocrisy he presents another aspect than the authentic one. The process in the play is a revelation of character, not a development. He is, in fact, an example of that type of character in sixteenth-seventeenth-century drama who conceals his true nature by a behaviour and speech which make him seem the very opposite of what he really is (1). Massinger, I feel, has handled him somewhat clumsily, in that he has dropped too few indications of Luke's real nature early in the play. So when his true nature does become apparent, we feel less the wonder proper to the drama of surprise than bewilderment by being misled. The opening of the play would lead us to believe that Luke is the innocent and wronged defender of the down-trodden, the unworthily-treated dependant of his extortionate brother, Sir John, when in reality the very reverse is the case. It is perhaps this play that led Arthur Symons to remark that 'the good or bad person at the end of a play is not always the good or bad person of the beginning' (2).

Malefort in The Unnatural Combat, the most tortured and complex of all Massinger's characters, is more worthy to be placed alongside Overreach. Like Sir Giles, who may have been suggested to Massinger by the infamous Sir Giles Mompesson (3), Malefort has perhaps an historical prototype in Francesco Cenci. But Malefort's villainy is very different from that of either Overreach or Luke Frugal. Both of these villains are

(1) Cf. B.L.Joseph: Elizabethan Acting. London, 1951. 106. (2) Mermaid Edn. of Massinger. Introd. xviii. (3) For a discussion of the relationship between Overreach and Mompesson see A.H.Cruickshank: A New Way to Pay Old Debts. Oxford, 1926.

completely single-minded. Not so Malefort. He is a man of mystery through the greater part of the play. It appears eventually that the (at first) unexplained enmity to him of his own son, an enmity the more mysterious because of the high respect and general esteem which Malefort enjoys, is due to Malefort's having poisoned his first wife, the mother of his son before the action of the play begins in order to be free to marry the lady he had stolen from Montreville. During the action of the play he kills his son, not in error or by accident, but remorselessly and in open combat, to close the mouth of the sharer of his secret. But also during the action of the play another protracted mystery is exposed: Malefort's strange moods and dark hints adumbrate the incestuous passion he has conceived for Theocrine, his daughter by his second marriage. The disclosure does not come until the first scene of the fourth act. Until then we had seen only the effects, not the cause. In spite of his unnatural crimes, committed or intended, he is not a defiant contemner of the laws of God and man. He has a real nobility of bearing and speech, however tortuous the ways into which his passions have harried him. He repents in his own harsh way for what he has done: he is horrified by what he may do, and it is his own resolve to make this impossible by giving his daughter into the hands of the implacable but deceptive Montreville that brings about the deaths of himself, his daughter, and his victim-victor Montreville. Overreach is several times denounced as an atheist and so is Luke Frugal. But Malefort, like Shakespeare's Claudius or Macbeth, has religious visitings and compunctions. In Act I., scene i., when he is wrongly accused of conspiring with his son to harry the state, he prays thus, very much in character:

'Thou searcher of men's hearts,
And sure defender of the innocent,
(My other crying sins -- awhile not looked on)
If I in this am guilty, strike me dead;'

And as he dies, he recognises to the full his sin;

'Can any penance expiate my guilt,
Or can repentance save me?'

It is the conflict in him, the war in his members, which makes Malefort so interesting. Other characters in Massinger also endure conflict; but in none is the struggle so intense or convincing. If his state of soul is pathological, nevertheless it is not like the portentous Overreach's, or, for that matter, like the Shelleyan Cenci's, inhuman.

In depicting Malefort's conflict Massinger has added many subtle touches of psychological truth. His interest in his daughter is perhaps aroused by memory of his dead wife. As he says in Act II., scene iii., in extravagantly passionate terms that remind one of Sforza's in The Duke of Milan;

'looking on the daughter,
I feast myself in the imagination
Of those sweet pleasures, and allowed delights,
I tasted from the mother, who still lives
In this her perfect model; for she had
Such smooth and high-arched brows, such sparkling eyes,
Whose every glance stored Cupid's empty quiver,
Such ruby lips, - and such a lovely bloom,
Disdaining all adulterate aids of art,
Kept a perpetual spring upon her face,
As Death himself lamented, being forced
To blast it with his paleness.'

The first awakening of his passion for his daughter is fraught with misgiving:

'I nourish strange thoughts, which I would
Most willingly destroy.' (III., iii.)

The direct revelation of his incestuous passion in the soliloquy at the beginning of Act IV., scene i., shows his mind desperately resisting temptation, and although, as Gifford pointed out (1), the passage is a near-translation from Ovid (2), Massinger presumably selected it because it expresses so admirably Malefort's dilemma. Right triumphs and he resolves to send his daughter away, but his resolution falters on seeing her.

> 'I
> Have reason to discern the better way,
> And yet pursue the worse!' (3)

he cries, and the torment of his soul carries us as sympathetically with him as we are when the red-handed Macbeth and his fierce wife are startled by the knocking on the gate. That, I think, is the key to the greatness of the character of Malefort. For once Massinger has created a hero, and a villain hero at that, who succeeds in gaining our sympathy. He has taken a dignified criminal, and, by endowing him with the passion of a sforza, the doting nature of a Theodosius, and the vacillation and moral awareness of a Vitelli or a Mathias, has made a dark, but human, creature more in the style of Webster or Ford than of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Domitian in The Roman Actor I have already discussed as a man of passion. His villainy is of a more conventional kind and is drawn from Massinger's historical source (4). He is a despot of the cruel and lustful type, akin to Fletcher's Valentinian, Antigonus, and

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(1) i., 191, footnote. (2) Metam. IX., 456. (3) IV., i. (4) See the introduction by W.L.Sandidge to his edition of the play (Princeton Studies in English. 4.). Princeton, 1929.

Frederick, but for all his evil and his killing of human beings, as he killed flies, 'for sport', he is closer to Sforza, Theodosius, and even Mathias, than to Overreach or Malefort.

The other bad men in Massinger are in varying degrees less important in the plays in which they figure. The two most villainous are the long-term hypocrites, Francisco in The Duke of Milan and Montreville in The Unnatural Combat. They belong to the revenger type which had so many avatars, particularly in the Seneca-derived thrillers of the fifteen-nineties and the sixteen-hundreds. In the earlier examples, the bloodiest methods and the direst catastrophes were offered and no questions as to the propriety of revenge asked or suggested. In Hamlet the delay in effecting revenge, which delay was at least as old as The Spanish Tragedy and probably the Ur-Hamlet, was made the more profoundly interesting and moving by being mainly due to the operation of unconscious moral scruples and moral disgust in the mind of the character on whom the 'duty' of revenge had fallen. The Prince of Denmark is by proverbial testimony very much the protagonist of Hamlet. That is to say, the revenger is still the principal. But in the seventeenth century, though plays with revengers as protagonists -- protagonists with whose violent taking of the law into their own hands our approval is assumed -- were written according to the older recipe, as for example Chapman's Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, nevertheless two changes became apparent. The one is the moral proscription of the revenger, as for example in Tourneur's The Atheist's Tragedy, in The Revenger's Tragedy (perhaps also by Tourneur), and, in so far as they contain a revenge motif, Webster's The Duchess of Malfi and The White Devil. Webster's pair likewise

illustrate the other change I have alluded to, the removal of the revenge motif as a foreground interest and so the reduction of the revenger to a role less than that of a protagonist. Such was the variety of revenge play taken over by Massinger and such the diminished stature of his revengers.

Other evil agents in Massinger are: Marall, who in A New Way to Pay Old Debts is the jackal or inferior devil to Overreach; Flaminius, who, not unsimilarly, is the obedient instrument of the Roman state in the persecution of Antiochus in Believe As You List; and, if he may be mentioned here, Novall Junior, the seminal shadow of Rowe's Lothario, who, in The Fatal Dowry, is not much more than a worthless and rakish tempter. There are no such criminal women in Massinger as Fletcher's Lelia, Brunhalt, and Hippolyta (though the last two admittedly appear in plays in which he had at least a revising hand) or Webster's Vittoria. But he has a number of immoral women, such as Corisca in The Bondman (1), in minor capacities of an allegedly comic nature.

Massinger's so-called 'comic' personages are scarcely worth consid-:eration as characters. Certainly they cannot be compared with the nimble and sprightly creatures of Fletcher's plays, or even with the more solid and heavily satirical ones of Jonson's. They are mostly crude clowns and coarse buffoons -- a few type-grotesques excepted -- and, even more than with similar characters in Shakespeare, one cannot understand

(1) Corisca is paralleled closely by Borachia in A Very Woman, by Fletcher, revised by Massinger.

how the courtly principals could tolerate their presence on the same stage. It is perhaps significant that in Massinger's most courtly play, his only romantic comedy, The Great Duke of Florence, there is a notice-:able lack of the lower clowning. Hilario in The Picture is a feeble and somewhat nauseating jester if we consider him as an attempt at a Feste or a Touchstone. Signor Sylli in The Maid of Honour is a pale shadow of Jonson's Sir Amorous La Foole. We can hardly bring ourselves to laugh at Corisca in The Bondman who seduces her own stepson Asotus, or at the bawdy serving-wenches, Calipso in The Guardian or Bellapert in The Fatal Dowry, any more than we can laugh at Hircius and Spungius who are the foul-minded and foul-mouthed clowns (perhaps by Dekker) of The Virgin Martyr. Even the evil tempters of The Picture, Ricardo and Uberti, who are severely trounced and become objects of fun and ridicule, almost buffoons, leave and acrid taste in the mouth. That which Massin-:ger intends to be humorous is heavy, lumbering, and very often as obscene without being funny as anything in the drama of his age. Ben Jonson can be as grossly bawdy; but it is obvious that in him this is only the free-spoken robustness and realism of a satirical moralist and that it is caught up and integrated into the broad satirical-moral purpose. When Massinger tries something comparable, as in A New Way to Pay Old Debts and The City Madam, the results are singularly unsmiling. Elsewhere, as in the scene of the Projectors in The Emperor of the East (1), he introduces mere scenes of alleged humour, without dramatic relevance but with a satirical-moral aim. On the other hand, in any

(1) I., ii.

play he may indulge in merely gratuitous bawdry. It is always stodgy and incapable of raising a laugh, except among those who think any refer-:ence whatever to sexual acts or organs are ipso facto funny. These heavy-handed and serious endeavours at humour seldom relax for a moment or encourage us to sit back and laugh at and with the minor follies of human nature or the humorous expansion of a richly comic soul. There are no Bottoms or Dogberrys in his world, no Sir Tobys or Sir Johns. But then a true humo rist like Shakespeare loves his comic characters. Massinger does not. Only occasionally does a character stir -- faintly stir -- our risibles: the esurient Belgarde once or twice in The Unnatural Combat; the not-unsimilar Justice Greedy in A New Way to Pay Old Debts (a 'humour' in the Jonsonian sense, offering greater acting opportunities than a mere reading of the play would indicate); and the facetious Durazzo in The Guardian. Apart from these, the characters in Massinger who are meant to provide incidental humour are obseene and unfunny buffoons, while those more serious characters who are meant to be sprightly can be just as unfunny and obscene. The conclusion we must inevitably come to is that Massinger was a fundamentally serious man trying to be funny, and resorting, as is the regular resort of those who joke with difficulty, to the standby of the obs cene.

This examination of Massinger's characterisation by types may, by reason of my detail in the consideration of some of the examples, indicate that I find them more life-like than in fact I do. Few indeed of them seem to me to attain to individuality, at least to the kind of

individuality we find in life, however impressive they may sometimes be. Massinger was not interested in and capable of rendering the infinite varieties and unexpectednesses of life. He had none of what Keats called 'Negative Capability, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' ①. He was a born moralist, shaping life to a predetermined end, and a born schematiser of human diversity into categories. Dominated by his moral purpose, he makes the dramatic conflicts in his plays an opposition of passional forces or points of view, not, as in a dramatist like Shakespeare intimately concerned with the manifold, various and incalculable soul of man, an opposition of characters. Moreover, whereas even the characters of Shakespeare are opposed (perhaps the less emphatic word 'related' would be better) in all sorts of obliquities, deflexions, and degrees in addition to the occasionally direct and face-to-face, Massinger's opposites are clear-cut and absolute. He begins from an abstract conception of the conflict and uses his schematised characters primarily as mouthpieces of the thesis and antithesis.

This is precisely, as I have already suggested, the method of the morality plays. In them, most obviously in the moralities written before more secular and pedagogic morals supplied the themes, the conflict was always the same -- the conflict of good and evil. That is, of course a basic antagonism, for human life is polarised to good and evil. And

① To George and Thomas Keats, December 22, 1817. (Colvin: The Letters of John Keats. London, 1925. 48.)

it remains the one recurring conflict in Massinger. It may be ethically accented, which much more often than not means for him the ethics governing the sexual relation with such aspects as fidelity and infidelity, moderation and excess, uxoriousness and jealousy. Or it may have a political accent, with justice and injustice, freedom and despotism, good government and bad, as the aspects; or else a religious one, with faith and unbelief, conversion and renegadism, self-dedication and worldliness. Within the one play there may be two or more manifestations, crossing or parallel, of the conflict of good and evil. Each of these is made as explicit as the conflict in the morality plays, by their careful presentation and development and usually also by a summarising moral tag or two. No spectator could ever be in doubt what lesson Massinger meant him to carry away -- and he always did mean to lesson his audience. Poetic justice is always done: the forces of good prevail; the forces of evil are routed. In the comedies or tragicomedies this is acceptable enough, if a little too ingenuous. In the tragedies 'the pity of it' is more than a little diminished by Massinger's generally reserving disastrous ends only for those whose hamartia is so grave as to forfeit most of our sympathy (1).

Sometimes, as in A New Way to Pay Old Debts and The City Madam, the conflict is externalised: the two opposed forces are embodied in two opposed groups. In other plays, the conflict is in part at least internal: the clash is in the protagonist's mind and soul. In such

(1) Paris, in The Roman Actor, is an exception.

cases it is always a war in the members -- a conflict between the reason and the passions. As Chelli says, 'L'homme est susceptible, à peu près également, d'être entraîné par ses appétits et convaincu par la raison' (1). The characters in whom an internal conflict wages, as for example Vitelli in The Renegado, Sforza in The Duke of Milan, and above all Malefort in The Unnatural Combat, are much the most individual and real of all Massinger's creatures. They have something more like the three-dimensional tension and reverberation of life, something more like its incalculability, as they argue with themselves for and against the dictates of passion or of reason, swaying and vacillating this way and that, strengthened and weakened by their friends and confidants. But always beside the internal conflict in the protagonist, there is an external conflict, or perhaps more than one, exemplified in some active opposing force of evil. In The Duke of Milan it is the feebly-motivated figure of Francisco; in The Unnatural Combat it is Montreville; and in The Picture it is the courtiers, Ubaldo and Ricardo. The most obvious manifestation of this conflict, however, though of course not the only one and sometimes only episodic in a broader issue, is a manifestation which is also a characteristic feature of the moralities -- a temptation scene. This is not surprising since in such scenes the internal and external conflicts tend to show themselves in their closest juxtaposition. There is indeed scarcely a play of Massinger's in which at least one such scene does not occur:- Marrall tempting Wellborn and Overreach his own daughter in A New Way to Pay Old Debts; Donusa Vitelli in The Renegado; Honoria

(1) Drame, 268.

Mathias and the courtiers Sophia in The Picture; Francisco Marcelia in The Duke of Milan; and so on. A counterparted situation in which one character, like the Bonus Angelus of the moralities, confirms another character in the right way is also exemplified in Father Francisco's ministrated advice to Vitelli in The Renegado, in Pulcheria's admonitions to Theodosius in The Emperor of the East, in Eubulus's frank statements to Ladislaus in The Picture, and elsewhere.

The likeness of Massinger's characterisation to that of the moralit-:ies is specially clear in the two plays which come nearest to them in theme and development (1), A New Way to Pay Old Debts and The City Madam. The characters in them seem even more than usually drawn in blacks and whites. In A New Way to Pay Old Debts Overreach is Anti-Christ, the principle of evil personified; and he speaks of himself as a morality character might, but hardly as a real person would:

> 'I would be worldly wise; for the other wisdom,
> That does prescribe us a well-governed life,
> And to do right to others as ourselves,
> I value not an atom.' (2)

His henchman Marrall is Accessory Wickedness, a minor devil; and his hanger-on Justice Greedy is the deadly sin of Gluttony, as conceived in allegorical art and literature for centuries. Similarly in The City Madam, Luke Frugal is Hypocrisy; Lady Frugal and her two daughters Anne and Mary respectively Pride, Extravagance, and Vanity (3); and Sir John Frugal Misrepresented Worth, and, in the latter part of the play,

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(1) The Virgin Martyr, which bears closer resemblances to the moralities than any other play of its period must be excluded as certainly not orig-:inating with Massinger. (2) II., i. (3) Mr Plenty significantly observes after a display by the mother and daughters: 'I have read of a house of Pride, now I have found one'. (II., ii.)

Justice Delayed. And without too much ingenuity we could give names to most or all of the characters comparable to those im the moralities and interludes:- New Guise, Now-a-days, Lust and Liking, Honest Recreation, Worldly Shame, Private Wealth, Sensual Appetite.

In Massinger's other plays the morality-like characterisation is less patent perhaps. But it is there, and from time to time, especially in passages in which the moral tension is greatest, the characters tend to shed their variations and disclose their theme. I mean to say that they become more like personified abstractions and less like complex indiviuals.

The use of ticket names, on which the possessors of them as in the moralities often pun, is another indication of Massinger's tendency in characterisation. Practically all the persons in A New Way to Pay Old Debts and The City Madam display ticket-names; and many others in other plays, generally but not always minor figures, are similarly labelled, as for example, Astutio, Signor Sylli, Malefort, Beaufort, Belgarde, Asotus, Philamour, Philargus, Eubulus.

It is possible that Ben Jonson may have thrown a side-glance at Massinger's characters in the exchange between Tattle and Mirth at the end of Act II of The Staple of News (1626):

> 'Tattle. .. .. I would not give a rush for a Vice, that has not a wooden dagger to snap at everybody he meets.
> Mirth. That was the old way, gossip, when Iniquity came in like Hokos Pokos, in a juggler's jerkin, with fake skirts, like the knave of clubs; but now they are attired like men and women of the time, the vices male and female.'

Massinger's virtues, as well as his vices, are indeed 'attired like men and women of the time'.

The mention of Ben Jonson suggests, as I have indicated before, a parallel nearer in time than the moralities, that of the comedy of 'humours'. In oft-quoted words Jonson defines a 'humour' in his conception:

> '... ... ... thus far
> It may, by metaphor, apply itself
> Unto the general disposition:
> As when some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
> In their confluxions, all to run one way,
> This may be truly said to be a humour.' (1)

Jonson had in mind a didactic-satirical comedy as a stage for the remedial display of his 'humours', and the actions of his comedies were devised, not as generally in Massinger for the broad inculcation of one or at any rate only a few moral lessons, but to provide as many opportunities as possible for the display of as many 'humours' as possible. When Massinger aims at comic effects, he clearly has Ben Jonson as his master in 'humours'. But they are comparatively rare. And it is important to recognise, as has not been done, that Massinger, whether consciously or not, was mainly a dramatist of serious 'humours' -- characters operating in serious plays and not pour rire, who were conceived in the same insulating and simplifying way as Ben Jonson's and his own comic 'humours'.

Just because Massinger is more intent on directing his actions to a predetermined moral purpose than on 'imitating' life, he never gives his

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(1) Every Man Out of His Humour, Induction.

characters a chance to shape the plot. As Brander Matthews says, 'The plots are not the result of the characters, but the work of the playwrigh ① . Professor Cruickshank similarly recognises as 'Massinger's great fault [that] the characters do not develop the plot so much as adjust themselves to its requirements' ② ; and E.C.Morris 'cannot help feeling that the previously prepared outline of the plot was more keenly in his mind than the characters' ③ .

Since his plays are grounded in ideas rather than character, it is not surprising that, as I have already shown, he planned the actions that were to be the vehicles of the ideas very carefully. But he did not therefore neglect characterisation. That is not the trouble. On the contrary, he devoted a similar, and indeed, excessive, care to the planning of his characters. But thereby he prevented them from having anything but a very intermittent life. Coleridge wisely remarked that 'the characters (unlike Shakespeare's) do not have a life of their own. They are planned <u>each by itself</u>' ④ . They are hewn out of some unmalleable material, inserted into their appropriate niches in a prepared plot, and presented to us complete, instead of growing to life before our eyes, stepping down from their pedestals, and snatching control of the action.

It is this subordination of character to plot (the plot itself being subordinated to moral purpose) that is the root cause of our dis-:satisfaction with Massinger's characterisation. The improbabilities

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① <u>Representative English Comedies</u>, vol. III. New York, 1914. 312. ② <u>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</u>, Introd. xvi. ③ <u>On the Date and Composition of The Old Law</u>. <u>PMLA</u>. XVII. 1902. ④ <u>Miscell. Crit.</u>(Raysor), 95.

inherent in the drama of surprise are immediately visited upon the char-:acters with the result that many of their actions are psychologically incredible. Shakespeare also handled plots involving improbabilities. That Portia's father left his heiress to be disposed of by an elaborate thimble-rigging; that King Lear was ready to divide his kingdom in accordance with oral protestations of love; that Othello proceeded from faith to suspicion, suspicion to assurance and assurance to murder without examining the principal witness for the defence; and that Hermione's existence was kept secret for sixteen years from the curious impertinent Leontes -- these are improbable. But Shakespeare had such an infallible and intuitive knowledge of the human heart that all the accompanying psychological and emotive reactions of the characters are convincing in themselves and make plausible the very improbabilities they enact -- or make them not matter, which is just as good. But Massinger was left with surprise plots, far more dependent on surprise than those which Shakespeare normally used, and had not the necessary 'poetical Character'① as Keats called the gift, to create the illusion of life.

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① To Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818. (Colvin: Letters, 184.): 'As to the poetical Character (I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member .....) it is not itself -- for it has no self -- It is everything and nothing --It has no character -- it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated--It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things, any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no Identity -- he is continually in for and filling some other body.'

All this is not to say that characters must be consistent with common experience. Characters in plays seldom are, at least in the poetic and romantic drama. But we have a right to expect them to be self-consistent, even if their consistency is what Aristotle calls being 'consistently inconsistent' (1). Massinger's characters, however, often are not -- not so much the subsidiary characters who in fact are 'flat' and run all too true to type, but the principals. The plays are full of scenes in which the whole direction of a character is suddenly, violently, and for unlikely or inadequate reasons changed. Such abrupt and unexpected changes -- lapses from virtue or loyalty, love suddenly supervening on indifference or hate or the converse, precipitate conversions, and hasty repentances -- are of course common form in the two hours traffic of the drama of surprise. But perhaps no dramatist of the time can show as many and as inadequately motivated as Massinger. This is probably what Coleridge meant when he said that in Massinger's characters there seems to be a 'lack of guiding point' and that we 'never know what they are about' (2).

Occasionally, it must be admitted, Massinger can manage such changes very skilfully. In some of his best scenes, as Professor Cruickshank says, the features are 'change of mood and vacillation of purpose, under the stress of temptation, or due to the conflict of contrary impulses' (3), as, for example, the vacillations of the love-sick Caldoro in Act I., scene i. of The Guardian under the abuse of

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(1) Art of Poetry (Bywater), 193. (2) Miscell. Crit. (Raysor), 95.
(3) Philip Massinger, 74.

Durazzo, or the subtle changes of mood in Vitelli between religious asceticism and surrender to his mistress throughout The Renegado. In admitting this, I cannot however agree with Professor Cruickshank's assertion that Massinger 'sets himself at times to represent growth, or at any rate, change of character. Even Shakespeare seldom tries to do this' (1). But, again to quote Professor Cruickshank, 'As a rule .. ... the changes are too rapid' (2). Moreover, they are too facile; charact-:ers suddenly change from inadequate reasons or on unconvincing evidence. Very often the trouble is that, apart from the exigencies of the surprise drama, Massinger in Professor Cruickshank's excellent phrase 'overvalued the persuasiveness of rhetoric' (3). That is to say, a character is quickly talked by himself or herself or by another into an entirely different course. From the dozens of examples in the plays I would cite only the following:- Lady Allworth's sudden change of attitude to Well-born in Act I., scene iii. of A New Way to Pay Old Debts (all the more unconvincing because Wellborn's rhetoric is a whisper inaudible to the audience); the conversion of Donusa, whose thoughts had not that way tended, by Vitelli in Act IV., scene iii. of The Renegado; Aurelia's sudden succumbing to the love-pleas of Bertoldo in Act IV., scene iv. of The Maid of Honour and her equally sudden persuasion of herself to surrender him in Act V., scene ii.; the devoted Sophia's ridiculous credulity in believing on the mere assertion of two complete strangers the infidelity of her husband in Act III., scene vi. of The Picture and her immediate self-persuasion in the same scene to abandon her chastity;

(1) Philip Massinger, 73. (2) Ibid., 74. (3) Ibid., 76. There is an excellent chapter on this feature of the surprise drama in Professor Hardin Craig's The Enchanted Glass (Oxford, 1950.).

and Adorio's inartfully managed change from indifference to love in Act II., scene iii. of The Guardian and Iolante's sudden lust for Laval in Act II., scene i. of the same play.

By a directly contrary improbability, Massinger in his shackling by his own plot once or twice deliberately refuses to let a character be persuaded by the patent truth and makes him impervious to rhetoric, as when Charalois in Act III., scene i. of The Fatal Dowry rejects Romont's well-substantiated allegations against Beaumelle, or when Eudocia in Act III., scene ii. of The Emperor of the East rejects Pulcheria's wise counsels. For incredulity and credulity are equally useful to the drama-:tist of surprise. As Professor Cruickshank says, 'when people are soon persuaded, the play gets on' (1), and I would add that when the incredul-:ous man is at last convinced the anagnorisis is the more overwhelming.

As I have implied, the psychological improbabilities which run all through Massinger's plays and are not by any means confined to . : persu-:adability (or unpersuadability) are as much a convention of the melo-drama of surprise as they are a consequence of his limitations in charact-:erisation. Without Honoria's improbable descending to seduce Mathias in The Picture, there would be no play at all and so no lesson taught. Grimaldi's reformation in The Renegado is not really a development of character but it is necessary to accept this if we are to accept the play, and we do accept it, as we accept (if the acclaim accorded the recent production is anything to go by) Hermione's long period in hiding in The

(1) Philip Massinger, 74.

Winter's Tale. But less acceptable is the manipulated psychology that often goes with such scenes. It is difficult, for example, to accept as credible the passages in The Bashful Lover where Hortensio is so singul-:arly, and conveniently, incurious about the wrong done to Ascanio by Alonzo. Ascanio, who is a girl disguised as a page, has asked Hortensio in Act II., scene ii. to avenge some unnamed wrong done by Alonzo should the two chance to meet in the battle. Hortensio has not enquired the nature of Alonzo's crime, yet when he meets him upon the field in the next scene he is perfectly prepared to slay him, and risk his own life in so doing, on the mere word of a youth, and, having overcome him in combat, is just as surprisingly prepared, again at Ascanio's request, to let him go free without the slightest hint of a question.

The fact is that there is a quickly reached limit of probability in the matter of surprise; or, to put it otherwise, dramatists who make surprise their chief aim can keep it up only by trespassing into more and more improbability, and their standards of probability are more and more impaired. But Massinger and his audience were not bothered by scruples on this score. He and they judged, not by real life, but by standards drawn from other plays of the same type, as the modern filmgoer judges films only by other films -- from standards drawn from within the conven-:tion. They had agreed on a convention of dramatic entertainment in which improbable surprises were all part of the game. Renounce them and you renounce the whole convention.

However, the net effect on a critical modern reader of Massinger's plays, a critic who looks at them from outside the convention, is that he

tends to lose all faith in the characters; he cannot see any real individuality in them at all. They are all, in Caldoro's words in Act IV., scene i. of The Guardian,

> 'the balls of time, tossed to and fro,
> From the plough unto the throne and back again:
> Under the swing of destiny .. .. ..'

Professor Cruickshank's assertion, which I have quoted before, that Massinger 'sets himself at times to represent growth, or at any rate, change of character .. .. even Shakespeare seldom tries to do this' claims for Massinger what probably never entered his head and could only have been made by one who had forgotten the development of such characters as Juliet, Richard II, Prince Hal/Henry V, Antony, Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, and Leontes. Massinger's characters are changeable enough. But they do not grow or develop, for they have no independent life. They are glove-puppets held in the grip of a rigid and purposeful puppet-master.

Their only voice is his voice. Except for a few of the grotesques, they all speak the same rhetoric. There is no differentiation of dialogue between the characters: commoners and kings, courtesans and queens, men and women, all speak alike, at the same high oratorical level. The dialogue is in consequence, despite the passions, seductions, conversions, treasons, crimes, and what not, curiously lifeless. It is never spontaneous or colloquial. It is all a sort of verbal emotion recollected in tranquillity -- a post-emotional reconstruction of speech, intellectualised and devitalised phraseology in the mouths of lay figures. It is the uniform mannerism of the professional provider of speeches for

all occasions, of a seventeenth-century Allen M. Laing.

Massinger was obviously a diligent student of rhetoric. I have already drawn attention (1) to the academic exercise which he introduces into Act III., scene ii. of The Unnatural Combat on the thesis that a servant's life is better than his master's, comparable to Milton's Latin ones in prose and verse. Hence a frequent debate-like quality marks his dialogue. Professor E.C.Morris has noticed that the speeches of Franc-:isco and Marcelia in Act II., scene i and Act IV., scene ii. of The Duke of Milan are like what 'two disinterested persons might use if they were debating the opposite sides of the question' (2) . But he does not realise how pervasive this debating rhetoric is. Chelli comes nearer the whole truth when he says that Massinger's characters 'sont impregnés de raison, raisonnables, et même raisonneurs. Toute conversation avec eux prend le tournure d'un débat, et il faut leur rendre argument pour argument, si l'on ne veut pas se réduire au silence' (3) .

While the dialogue is never just on the bull's eye -- never sur-:prises and delights us with unexpected aptness, there are times when it is blatantly inappropriate. The following passage of verse rhetoric, for example, occurs in Act IV., scene ii. of Believe As You List:

> '.. .. I, as your better genius,
> Will lead you, from this place of horror, to
> A paradise of delight, to which compared
> Thessalian Tempe, or that garden, where

(1) See above, Chapter III., p. 127. (2) Loc. cit., p. 31. (3) Drame, 274.

Venus with her revived Adonis spend
Their pleasant hours, and make from their embraces
A perpetuity of happiness,
Deserve not to be named. There, in an arbour,
Of itself supported o'er a bubbling spring,
With purple hyacinths and roses covered,
We will enjoy the sweets of life; nor shall
Arithmetic sum up the varieties of
Our amorous dalliance. Our viands such,
As not alone shall nourish appetite,
But strengthen our performance. And, when called for,
The choristers of the air shall give us music:
And when we slumber, in a pleasant dream
You shall behold the mountain of vexations
Which you have heaped upon the Roman tyrants
In your free resignation of your kingdom,
And smile at their afflictions.'

Taken from its context, the speech might be supposed to be that of a princess to her royal lover. But it is not. It is spoken by a courtesan of the lower sort to the exiled Antiochus. Again, the sophisticated pronouncement on chastity in Act I., scene iv. of The Parliament of Love (1) makes Bellisant say about herself what no woman, let alone Bellisant, would conceivably say about herself. Massinger put it into her mouth because he was determined to have it said somehow. Similarly, Sir Giles Overreach in Act IV., scene i. of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, as Sir Leslie Stephen pointed out (2), has to outline his own character as only other people would think about him. 'It is a description of a wicked man from outside'.

Even when the point of view is true enough, Massinger makes his characters talk about what they feel rather than talk what they feel. The emotion, passion, sentiment, or degree of feeling whatsoever never

(1) See above, p. 174. (2) Hours in A Library, ii., 165-7.

speaks itself. That is Massinger's great flaw in characterisation. It is true, in Professor Morris's words, that in his plays 'attention to details of plot killed spontaneity .. .. besides trying to say what they feel, the characters are burdened with the plot' (1) , but I am sure that even had Massinger not had this didactic-moralistic bias, his rigidly critical attitude to life and somewhat stiff and unbending turn of mind would always have prevented him from relinquishing to his characters the right to speak for themselves.

These then are Massinger's characters: types, partaking of some of the features of the figures in the mediaeval Moralities, tending to be personifications of abstractions rather than organic individualities, the slaves of the plot rather than its creators, often improbable or even incredible, melodramatised, and incapable of individual speech. That they, poor puppets, do not appeal to us is not their fault. It is not entirely Massinger's fault either, since he was writing within a convent-:ion in which the whole temper of his mind tended to exaggerate certain features. It is, after all, only once in a civilisation that a Shake-speare appears, and it is perhaps unfair to judge Massinger's character-:isation by Shakespeare's, though I have myself done so. For what it was, it was, I suppose, adequate. To Massinger his characters were merely the means to an end, the end of putting across to the public certain ideas in a dramatic form, and as far as that end goes they ful-filled their function.

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(1) Loc. cit., 32.