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Scanner model OS 15000

Scanning system software Omniscan v.12.4 SR4 (1947) 64-bit

Optical resolution 600 dpi

Color settings 24 bit color

File types tiff

Source information

Source type text book

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ENGLISH BOURGEOIS TRAGEDY
FROM 1576 TO 1642

by

Honora
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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the

GRADUATE SCHOOL

of the

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

1915

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Introduction

What is English bourgeois tragedy? What forces produced it, and what is its significance in the first great period of English drama?

It is the purpose of this dissertation to answer these questions by a detailed study of bourgeois tragedy as it existed in England between 1576 and 1642, the dates of the building of the first London play-house and of the closing of the theaters by the puritans. Our investigation includes the following points: a historical study of the influence of social, political, and religious conditions upon bourgeois tragedy in its rise, its flourishing, and its decline; an analysis of the basic conceptions which differentiate bourgeois tragedy from the main body of contemporary tragedy, constituting it a special and significant type; a study of its relations, through secondary and stylistic qualities, to antecedent English drama, to the contemporary English drama, and to other literary types. Since we are here concerned with individual plays only so far as they enable us to arrive at a definite, balanced, unified conception of bourgeois tragedy as a dramatic type, special problems of technique, authorship, and source which are significant for single plays only, are omitted because, on account of their limited application, they tend to blur rather than to

emphasize the distinct outlines of the type.

Before we can select plays as a working basis for the examination of bourgeois tragedy, the meaning of our terms must be made entirely definite. First, bourgeois is a word of vague signification. For the purpose of this dissertation, it is used to designate the whole body of the English middle-class, — gentlemen, merchants, tradesmen, and yeomen, — in a word, the great body of English society between the nobility on the one hand and menials and vagabonds on the other.⁽¹⁾ In Elizabeth's time, caste lines were by no means rigidly drawn; gentlemen became merchants, and merchants and yeomen became gentlemen. The whole middle-class, the majority of Englishmen both in town and country, were practically homogeneous in tastes and interests. Consequently, bourgeois tragedy draws its characters indifferently from the ranks of the country gentry — as in the case of Arden⁽²⁾ and of Frankford⁽²⁾, — the London merchant — as in the case of Matthew Shore⁽³⁾, — and the yeomanry, — as in the case of Frank Thorney.⁽⁴⁾

We have still to make clear the sense in which we use the word tragedy. We are not here concerned with a philosophical analysis of the nature and sources of tragic effect, but it is necessary to establish a practical, working distinction between tragedy and comedy which will serve to determine, for the purpose of our discussion, whether any given play is to be ad-

(1) This is the make-up of the middle-class as defined in the Cambridge History, V, 381.

(2) See Arden of Feversham and A Woman Killed with Kindness.

(3) King Edward IV.

(4) The Witch of Edmonton.

mitted to the group of bourgeois tragedies. We may disregard the subtler shades of distinction, admitting that the contrast between comedy and tragedy is relative, not absolute. We shall content ourselves with distinguishing the typical aspect of tragedy from that of comedy, and testing our plays by **their** approximation to the type.

Where shall we find this standard? By applying tragedy to dramas of middle-class life, we have already disregarded the classical distinction of subject-matter, which confined tragedy to the deeds of princes and heroes, relegating the lives of humble folk to the domain of comedy. We may disregard, too, the superficial requirement, never **strictly** observed in practice, that a tragedy must end unhappily, usually in death. Our emotional reaction to a situation is not conditioned by its outcome merely. If this were the case, the only moment of tragic effect would be the last moment of the play. Neither can we differentiate tragedy from comedy on the basis of situation, for the same situation may produce either a comic or a tragic effect. To take an extreme example, compare Johan Johan with Arden of Feversham. The situation in which the unfaithful wife and her paramour goad the unhappy husband, who sees his dishonor but cannot end it, is practically the same in both; but the effect is radically different.

The fundamental difference between comedy and tragedy is not a difference in subject-matter, situation, or solution; it is a difference of mood or point of view. It is not enough, however, to say that tragedy is serious, and comedy gay; for although tragedy is always serious, comedy is sometimes serious too, and still the difference is there.

The really typical aspect of comedy is its objectivity, its impersonality of attitude. Comedy intellectualizes a situation, abstracting from it its emotional content, or at any rate involving only very superficial forms of feeling. The judgements which it induces are external appraisals of the wisdom or folly of certain types of action, not appreciations of the positive human value destroyed or threatened. Comedy presents character in the light of its contrast with the norm. Since we naturally identify ourselves with the norm or standard, comedy, in emphasizing the variation from it, emphasizes the aspect of unlikeness between ourselves and the persons of the play, and so weakens the bond of sympathy between us and them that we are not deeply touched by their sufferings.

The typical mood and method of tragedy are precisely the converse. Tragedy is personal. It appeals to the intellect only through the medium of the emotions. It brings home to our consciousness a profound recognition of the essential human likeness between ourselves and the tragic character,

rousing us to a sympathetic participation in his sufferings and a regret for the destruction in or through him of some element that makes life significant and worthy. This regret for the destruction of some element of positive value to human life is always present in tragedy, even in those plays which end happily. To take an instance from the best known of the bourgeois tragedy group, A Woman Killed with Kindness, Frankford, although he suffers much through the falseness of his wife and his friend, is not carried down to destruction. He triumphs over adverse circumstances; nevertheless, his terrible experience scars him. We are left with the feeling that all that made his life beautiful was destroyed with his broken ideal of wifeness and of friendship. Even when the tragic protagonist is criminal in his deeds, our sense of likeness to him persists. We are oppressed by a terrible sense of kinship between the weaknesses we know in our own natures and the moral perversion of the evil-doer.

To sum up in a few words, the basic difference between the typical comedy and the typical tragedy is this: Comedy is impersonal, outside the realm of sympathy; its effect is dependent on our perception of differences between the comic character and ourselves, and a consequent sense in us of superiority to him. Tragedy is personal, emotional; it affects us by arousing in us a sense of our kinship with the

tragic protagonist, a sense of kinship which involves an appreciation of his virtues as well as of his faults, and a deep sense of pain at his sufferings.

This is the typical distinction between comedy and tragedy. It is, of course, subject to almost infinite modification. In comedy there are gradations of feeling which shade into one another so gradually that ultimately it is not always possible to say with certainty precisely where comedy ends and tragedy begins.

The distinction which we have set up allows us to establish, at least, a preliminary definition, on the basis of which we shall admit plays to the bourgeois tragedy group. We shall classify as bourgeois tragedies all plays dealing with painful complications in middle-class life which arouse us to sympathetic participation in the struggle of the protagonist, and to regret for the destruction or maiming through this struggle of something worthy or beautiful in human nature. The end may or may not be complete disaster, so long as the final reconciliation does not appear to compensate for the suffering and destruction consequent on the earlier action.

The following is a complete,⁽¹⁾ chronological⁽²⁾ list of

-
- (1) This list includes, so far as I am aware, all except four plays which have ever been associated with the bourgeois tragedy group. I exclude The Merchant of Emden because it was a romantic adventure play; I exclude The London Prodigal because its predominant note is comic; I omit The Yorkshire Gentlewoman and her Son, registered in 1660, because there is no evidence that it was written before 1642. I omit The Black Dog of Newgate, which is listed by Mr. Tucker Brooke as a murder play, and by Professor Schelling as a possible bourgeois drama, because I have found no evidence to indicate that it was a tragedy.
- (2) The dates given are the earliest ones to which the plays may with probability be assigned. Full information concerning chronology will be found in chapter IV. In that chapter, too, will be found our sources of knowledge concerning non-extant plays.

the known bourgeois tragedies, according to our definition, and such lost plays as can reasonably be supposed to belong to the type between 1576 and 1642. The non-extant plays are indicated by asterisks, and the evidence which supports their classification is given in the footnotes. It may be well to explain here the principle on which non-extant plays are admitted to the list. Our definition is, of course, derived from a careful analysis of extant plays, and the body of our discussion is based upon these plays. For the sake, however, of the greatest possible degree of completeness we include: (1) Those non-extant plays whose content is known to us from outside sources, and whose classification is thus made sure. (2) Those non-extant plays of whose subject-matter we have no certain knowledge, but whose titles, by their similarity to others among the known plays, suggest that their content is of the bourgeois tragedy sort. In very few cases have I included in my list non-extant plays which have not before been conjecturally associated with the group. The table of authors is given only for the sake of its confirmatory evidence in the classifying of doubtful plays. The association, for instance, of Dekker's name with a possible bourgeois tragedy would tend to confirm our belief that the play belonged to our group, since Dekker is the author of known plays in the group. With conjectures in regard to disputed authorship, I expressly disclaim all concern. It is not vital for our un-

derstanding of the type that we should determine the author of any given play.

Date	Play	Author
1578	<u>The Cruelty of a Stepmother</u> *(1)	?
1579	<u>Murderous Michael</u> *(1)	?
1585	<u>Arden of Feversham</u>	?(2)
1592	<u>Friar Francis</u> *(3)	?
1594	<u>Two Lamentable Tragedies</u>	Robert Yarrington
1597	<u>The Witch of Islington</u> *(4)	?
1597	<u>A Warning for Fair Women</u>	?
1598	<u>Black Bateman of the North</u> , Two Parts*(5)	Chettle, Wilson, Dekker (?)
1599	<u>King Edward IV. Two Parts</u> *(6)	Thomas Heywood
1599	<u>Page of Plymouth</u> *(7)	Dekker and Jonson
1599	<u>The Stepmother's Tragedy</u> *(8)	Chettle and Dekker

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- (1) Collier, Schelling, and Symonds mention these as probable murder plays. Singer includes them in his list. Collier first made the suggestion, since adopted by others, that Murderous Michael may be an earlier version of Arden of Feversham. This conjecture is probable, but proof is impossible.
- (2) The play has been ascribed, on insufficient grounds, to Shakespeare. Fleay (II, 29) ascribes it to Kyd, and Crawford (Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XXXIX) attempts to prove that Kyd wrote it. The evidence which he produces is the reverse of convincing.
- (3) Professor Schelling (I, 345) considers it a probable murder play. Mr. Singer omits it from his list, but the play certainly belongs to our group. See chapter III.
- (4) The nature of this play is wholly conjectural. I list it here because of its similarity in title to The Witch of Edmonton.
- (5) Mentioned as a murder play by Symonds, Singer, and Schelling. Schelling (I, 349) suggests that its subject may be that of The Vow Breaker, a suggestion that seems highly probable.
- (6) King Edward IV. is usually classified as a chronicle play. I include it here because its main interest is in the Shore plot, which is precisely that of a bourgeois tragedy.
- (7) The content of the play is known to us through pamphlets and ballads on the subject. See chapter III.
- (8) Symonds, Schelling, Singer, and others consider this a murder play. The fact that it was written by Chettle and Dekker, both of whom had a hand in known bourgeois tragedies, confirms this supposition.

Date	Play	Author
1599	<u>Cox of Collumpton</u> *(1)	Day and Haughton
1599	<u>The Tragedy of Merry,</u> <u>or Beech's Tragedy</u> *(2)	Day and Haughton
1602	<u>The Bristow Tragedy</u> *(3)	Day
1602	<u>Baxter's Tragedy</u> *(4)	?
1602	<u>William Cartwright</u> *(5)	Haughton
1602	<u>How a Man May Choose a</u> <u>Good Wife from a Bad</u>	Joshua Cooke(?)
1603	<u>A Woman Killed with Kindness</u>	Thomas Heywood
1604-1608	<u>The Honest Whore, Two Parts</u> (6)	Dekker and Middleton
1604	<u>The Fair Maid of Bristow</u>	?
1605	<u>The Miseries of Enforced</u> <u>Marriage</u>	Wilkins
1605	<u>The Yorkshire Tragedy</u>	? (7)
1620	<u>The Vow Breaker</u>	William Sampson

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- (1) Collier, Prölss, Singer, and others classify Cox of Collumpton as a murder play. Its title is analogous to Arden of Feversham and Page of Plymouth.
- (2) The content of the play is known through Two Lamentable Tragedies, and through the long, descriptive titles of pamphlets and ballads. See chapter III.
- (3) The title suggests an analogy with The Yorkshire Tragedy. It is listed by Schelling as a murder play, and included in Singer's list. Collier identifies it, probably incorrectly, with The Fair Maid of Bristow.
- (4) By analogy with Beech's Tragedy, this title would suggest the murder of Baxter. Singer lists it as a bourgeois tragedy; see, however, Fleay (Chron. of Eng. Drama, II, 81, 380), who identifies the play with The Insatiate Countess. Greg (op.cit. II, 221) speaks of Warner's suggestion that it is the same as The Bristow Tragedy. All this is mere conjecture.
- (5) Singer and Schelling classify it as a murder play. It was written by Haughton, who had a hand in one play that is manifestly a murder play, The Tragedy of Merry.
- (6) The first part is almost entirely comic. It is included because of its connection with the second part.
- (7) The play was first published with Shakespeare's name on the title page. Some critics consider the ascription authentic, but the balance of critical opinion is against it.

Date	Play	Author
1621	<u>The Witch of Edmonton</u>	Dekker, Ford, and Rowley
1624	<u>The Late Murther of the</u> <u>Son upon the Mother</u> *(1)	Ford and Webster
1624	<u>The Bristow Merchant</u> *(2)	Ford and Dekker
1633	<u>The English Traveller</u>	Thomas Heywood

In classifying the plays of bourgeois life, we can say with certainty that the majority of those which we include in our list embody the typical tragic spirit. In the case of a few plays which lie close to the boundary line, and which usually have been called comedies, we must be frankly arbitrary in the application of our test, including How a Man May Choose a Good Wife, The Honest Whore, and The Fair Maid of Bristow among the tragedies in spite of this large comic element, because, on the whole, they do arouse our sympathy with the main characters, and they do involve the destruction, or at least the maiming of worthy elements important for a completely successful and happy human life.

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- (1) The title is almost sufficient to establish the play as a bourgeois tragedy. Ward, Schelling, and Singer classify it as a murder play.
- (2) The authorship of Ford and Dekker is suggestive, for they had recently written a murder play in collaboration. This play is in Singer's list. Ward thinks it a domestic (bourgeois) drama, and suggests (English Dramatic Literature, III, 75) that it may have been founded on an earlier play. I suppose that he refers to The Bristow Tragedy

Despite the fact that it is a distinct, if not an extremely prominent, new dramatic genre in the Elizabethan age, a period which has been the subject of much careful research, bourgeois tragedy has been neglected, although not wholly over-looked by historians of English drama. Certain conspicuous plays have attracted some attention, and their surface characteristics -- their realism and their basis on sensational contemporary incident -- have been pointed out; but no analysis of the type -- its basic conceptions, its significance as a reflection of the problems of its age, its relation to contemporary literature -- has been made. Neither has it been accounted for historically through a study of its rise and its decline. Before entering upon our detailed investigation of the type, it may be well to give a brief survey of such criticism of it as has already been made.

The first reference which I have been able to find is a casual one in Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature, given at Vienna in 1808. In referring to Shakespeare's contemporaries, he refers to Heywood, especially to his A Woman Killed with Kindness. This he characterizes as a 'familiar tragedy'.⁽¹⁾ With true philosophic insight he grasps the essentially moral purpose inherent in the type, observing that here the demands of morality and dramatic art coincide, and condemning the vitiating sentimentalism introduced by Kotzebue into familiar tragedy.

J. Payne Collier, the English pioneer in the field of Elizabethan drama, is the first to recognize the existence of bourgeois tragedy as a new and distinct type in the drama of the late sixteenth century, but his recognition is only par-

(1) Schlegel, A.W., Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature
459.

tial. His attention is attracted to the plays which deal with contemporary crimes. To these he devotes a page or two of his three volume History of English Dramatic Literature, calling them 'domestic tragedies',⁽¹⁾ and characterizing them uncritically as plays dealing with recent known occurrences in England. By 'domestic tragedy' he means merely murder play, as the five plays he mentions show.

While Collier deserves credit for being the first to discover a group of plays constituting a distinct new species, his brief discussion has done more to obscure the subject than to clarify it. His unfortunately chosen term, domestic tragedy, is ambiguous. It belongs properly only to the tragedies of family life, while it does not necessarily exclude heroic tragedy; indeed, Othello and King Lear are truly domestic tragedies. Collier, of course, uses domestic in its secondary sense of national, but retains the implication that it refers to private life. All subsequent English and American writers who refer to the subject use Collier's terminology, except Mr. Tucker Brooke, who discusses some of the plays of our group under the caption 'drama of contemporary incident'.

The first to follow Collier in the use of the term domestic tragedy, so far as I have been able to learn, is Ward. Writing in 1875, he recognizes that Collier has too much limited the scope of the new species, and he groups as domestic tragedies all serious realistic treatments of English private life, including in addition to the murder plays, A Woman Killed with Kindness, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, and even The London Prodigal.⁽²⁾ In the Cambridge History (1910), he again refers to domestic tragedy.⁽³⁾ In every

(1) Collier, J.P., History of English Dramatic Literature, III, 49.

(2) Ward, A.W., Eng. Dramatic Lit., II, 586.

(3) Ward, A.W., Cambridge History, V, 419; VI, 107-108.

case he means precisely what we mean by bourgeois tragedy, although he notes only one primary characteristic, its serious treatment of middle-class persons.

Prölss, writing in 1882, follows Collier's lead, although he seems also familiar with Ward's discussion.⁽¹⁾ He translates domestic, bürgerlich, a much more accurate term, but he uses it to imply merely serious realistic plays, based on real events, usually crimes, in England.

John Addington Symonds devotes a chapter of Shakspeare's Predecessors (1883) to domestic tragedy, but his discussion presents nothing new except a somewhat confused list of non-extant plays. He regards as the distinguishing mark of the type, realistic style, and he reiterates Collier's statement, 'The plays of this class were all founded upon recent events in real life'.⁽²⁾ His practice is a bit better than his theory, for, probably because of Ward's discussion, he calls A Woman Killed with Kindness a domestic tragedy, although it is not based on a real event.

Mr. H. W. Singer's dissertation, Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England (1801) is, so far as it goes, decidedly the most helpful piece of work which has been done on bourgeois tragedy. He defines bürgerliche trauerspiel as 'those tragedies which present to us persons in England who have no historical significance'.⁽³⁾ His dissertation is chiefly concerned with naming the plays, giving all available sources or parallels, and giving accounts of the plots. He notes the moral, especially the social purpose of bourgeois tragedy, its lack of characterization, and its looseness of

(1) Prölss, Geschichte des Neueren Dramas, 62.

(2) Shakspeare's Predecessors in the English Drama, 414.

(3) Singer, Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England, 6.

organization, but his brief critical discussion is marred by the false distinction which he tries to establish between the nature of 'the tragedy of the imagination' and 'the tragedy of experience', an unwarranted extension of the distinction between romantic and realistic drama. Mr. Singer's list is the fullest and the best authenticated which I have found, although he does not make entirely clear the basis of his selection.

Two years later, Creizenach in his scholarly Geschichte des Neueren Dramas refers to the 'bürgerliche trauerspiel' as an early manifestation of serious dramatic realism. He notes its special significance in making the common man the subject of tragedy, but his notice is particularly attracted to the murder plays, of which he says, not quite accurately, 'Diese Kriminaldramen blieben für längere zeit die einzigen Stücke, in denen vor Zuschauern Menschen von ihrereigenen Art aus (1) ihrer eigenen Sphäre in tragischen Situationen erschienen'.

In 1895, Morley in speaking of plays which have been connected with the name of Shakespeare goes back to the most external and uncritical conception of domestic tragedy, which, he says, 'before the days of newspapers dealt with contempor- (2) ary deeds of homicide in domestic circles'.

Mézières, in his Prédécesseurs et Contemporains de

(1) Creizenach, Geschichte des Neueren Dramas, IV, 242.

(2) Morley, H., English Writers, XI, 278-84.

Shakespeare, (1905) seems to depend on Collier's statement. At least, he too is impressed by the fact that certain plays deal in realistic fashion with contemporaneous events. These he calls bourgeois tragedies. He makes no mention of the further significance of the plays and his list of them is the same as Collier's.⁽¹⁾

In his book called Tragedy, (1908) Professor Thorndike makes a casual and rather misleading reference to domestic tragedy.⁽²⁾ He notes that it is original in dealing with 'actual events, contemporary society, and humble persons', but he speaks as if it did not appear before the beginning of the 17th century, and as if all the plays except A Woman Killed with Kindness were murder plays.

Professor Schelling discusses the plays of our group under two headings, domestic drama⁽³⁾ and vernacular⁽⁴⁾ drama, both of which mean for him drama which represents common life realistically. His discussion is suggestive, but it lacks definiteness as well as comprehensiveness because the purpose of Professor Schelling's work causes him to discuss together as indications of a taste for contemporary realism domestic tragedy and domestic comedy, and to limit his treatment to their common qualities.

Finally, Mr. Tucker Brooke, in Tudor Drama (1911)

(1) Mézières, Prédécesseurs et Contemporains de Shakespeare, 93.

(2) Thorndike, A., Tragedy, 138, 140.

(3) Schelling, F.E., Elizabethan Drama, I, 309-366.

(4) Schelling, F.E., English Literature during the Lifetime of Shakespeare, 172-190.

(1)
 writes at some length of the murder plays. He is interested in them only as dramas of contemporary incident, and so does not discuss other aspects of the species, but he notes the relation of the murder plays to such dramas as The Miseries of Enforced Marriage and A Woman Killed with Kindness. He calls attention to the fact that these plays of crime enriched the drama by drawing the playwrights to present aspects of the life about them.

This completes the criticisms of English bourgeois tragedy, so far as I have been able to trace it. The majority of the critics have given it only casual mention, and have followed Collier's uncritical distinction, confining their attention to the murder plays and failing to note their broader relations. A few have pointed out that the real significance of the group lay in its giving tragic treatment to middle-class life, but no one has attempted a complete analysis of the type. For this discussion I have discarded the usual but ambiguous term domestic tragedy for the more accurately descriptive bourgeois tragedy - the exact meaning of which I have already explained.

(1) Brooke, C.F.T., Tudor Drama, 352-368

On the basis of the plays selected as bourgeois tragedies in accordance with the preliminary definition which we previously set up, we are now in a position to make a more complete general statement in answer to the question, What is bourgeois tragedy? We shall content ourselves at present with a bare statement, the points of which will be fully discussed later.

The distinctive qualities of bourgeois tragedy, as we formulate them from a study of the extant plays of the list given above, fall into two divisions: (1) the fundamental qualities, which constitute the peculiar essence of the type, and which are, therefore, equally present in all the plays; and (2) the secondary qualities, which are characteristic of the group as a group, but which vary considerably in the individual plays. They are stylistic or technical qualities, fairly constant, but not indispensable. The fundamental qualities of bourgeois tragedy are: (1) its peculiar type of situation — some painful or disastrous situation which is potentially present in the social organization governing the relations of contemporary middle-class life; (2) its uncompromising moral tone and instructive purpose. The secondary qualities of bourgeois tragedy are: (1) basis in fact, a characteristic of the majority of the plays, chiefly those which deal with recent crimes, and which always implies a considerable

degree of sensationalism; (2) narrative structure; (3) realism of treatment, a quality which varies considerably in the different plays, but which characterizes them all. This realism is a necessary result of the effort of bourgeois tragedy to give a convincing picture of some condition in contemporary life.

English bourgeois tragedy is a significant type in Elizabethan and Stuart drama not so much for the absolute value of the plays as for their reflection of the new social organization of the age and their opening the way for a widening of the field of tragedy. Bourgeois tragedy was not a predominant species in the age when it first appeared; it was not even a very prominent one. Neither can we claim for it, except in a few instances, any high degree of artistic merit. The majority of the plays are murder plays, sensational in subject-matter and crude in organization. We may, indeed, grant that bourgeois tragedy was below, rather than above, the artistic standard of contemporary drama. Nevertheless, its importance for criticism can hardly be overestimated; it furnishes a remarkable illustration of the close relation between popular drama and the life of the people. It is significant, first, as a reflection of an aspect of Elizabethan life, the essential moral-mindedness of the common people, which appears in the non-dramatic literature of the time, but is rather obscured in drama. The really vital significance of bour-

geois tragedy, however, lies in the fact that it shows the immediate connection between the rise of the middle-class to a position of importance in the state, and the birth of our modern conception of tragedy. It is the first revolt against that mediaeval tradition, inherited from the classics, which held 'calamities and miserable ends of kings, princes, and great rulers,'⁽¹⁾ to be the only fitting subject-matter of tragedy. In the bourgeois tragedies of the end of the fifteenth century, for the first time in the history of the drama, the doings and sufferings of ordinary citizens were accorded tragic treatment.

We are accustomed to think of the Elizabethan age as predominantly romantic in its interests. It is the peculiar originality of the bourgeois tragedies that, in an age specially characterized by enthusiasm for the lofty, the remote, and the strange, they show the awakening of the opposite spirit, - the appreciation of the worth and interest of the homely, the near at hand, and the familiar. Even in their crudity they make manifest a truth which we are only now coming fully to realize, - that no fantastic tale of the disasters of a far away prince is so moving as the simple truth about one's neighbor, and no tragedy so heart-shaking as that which shatters the ordered routine of the commonplace.

Because they reveal the tragic potentialities of every-day

(1) Northbrooke, O. Shak.Soc., 16.

life, the bourgeois tragedies represent the most indisputably original element in Elizabethan drama. (1)

In our study of the essential nature of bourgeois tragedy, the following order is observed: The first chapter is devoted to an investigation of the genesis of bourgeois tragedy, with special reference to its possible debt to antecedent drama, and to the political, social, and religious conditions of the age which produced it. (2) The second chapter analyzes all the extant plays, for the purpose of making clear the basic principles of the type as they are manifested in its handling of middle-class problems. The third chapter discusses the secondary characteristics of bourgeois tragedy, using them to illustrate its relations to contemporary English literature, both dramatic and undramatic. The fourth and fifth chapters give a chronological account of the plays, for the purpose of making clear the development of bourgeois tragedy. The last chapter explains the causes of the decline of the type.

(1) The direct influence of bourgeois tragedy on later drama lies beyond our special field. Some evidence, however, of the existence of such an influence, and some indication of the manner in which it was exerted, will be found in Appendix A.

(2) I have not included a study of the relation of bourgeois tragedy to foreign literature, especially to drama, because, so far as an initial or compulsive influence on the type as such is concerned, the results of such a study are entirely negative. The plays which established the type are conspicuously free from any touch of foreign influence; English conditions fully and satisfactorily explain their origin.

Chapter I: The Genesis of Bourgeois Tragedy

Part I: The Influence of Antecedent English Drama

It is a commonplace of criticism that no absolutely new literary species springs suddenly into being. However original, however peculiarly the product of its own age a type may be, it must have its roots in the past. Of bourgeois tragedy this is demonstrably true. A distinctly new genre of the Elizabethan age, some of its embryonic beginnings, investigation shows, are to be found in antecedent English drama. Its salient qualities are these: 1) A serious plot concerning middle-class persons, the situations always sensational and usually bloody, often being based on actual events of recent occurrence; 2) a stark realism of effect, secured both by localization in a setting familiar to the audience and by the introduction of minute details; 3) a narrative structure, giving emphasis to plot rather than to character; 4) and a severely moral tone, often didactically enforced. It is the purpose of this chapter to begin the investigation of the genesis of bourgeois tragedy by determining to what extent its fundamental characteristics are derived from earlier dramatic types.

I. First, let us consider the plot material. A careful study of the earlier English drama, — of the miracle plays, the moralities, the secular interludes, and the English adapt-

ations of Seneca, — shows that among them no serious plays derive their plots from sensational events in contemporary middle-class life. There are, however, certain plays which do contain suggestions of the characters or the situations of bourgeois tragedy. The first of these are the miracle plays. In them, the personages of sacred story are not invested with the dignity and august remoteness which, to modern readers, seems in keeping with their religious significance. On the contrary, these characters seem in all respects every-day English peasant folk. Abraham is a simple shepherd, Noah a pious craftsman afflicted with a shrewish wife. Consequently, although the place names are not English, the total effect of the plays is that of a transcript of the rustic life of fifteenth-century England. It is this effect of contemporaneity which constitutes the resemblance of the miracle plays to bourgeois tragedy. The resemblance is, however, superficial rather than significant. A distinctive note of bourgeois tragedy is its conscious effort to present faithfully the middle-class life of its own day; while in the miracle plays neither writer nor spectator was aware that the sacred personages were being presented in distinctively English guise. The translation of sacred story into terms of familiar life, so startling when we encounter it in a modern play like The Terrible Meek, is in the miracle plays merely the expression of

the unconscious realism which, before the development of our modern historical point of view, did not recognize the differences between people of different races, lands, and times. The material it touched was not consciously or deliberately anglicized and modernized by this naive realism. There is a sense in which we may call the early dramatization of the Cain and Abel story the first murder play, and the Hegge Return of Joseph the first tragedy of common life; for Cain is, after all, no more than a sullen English country-man who slays through envy his prosperous brother, and Joseph the industrious old village carpenter who goes away from home to find work, and learns on his return that his pretty young wife has betrayed him. We must remember, however, that Cain and Joseph and the rest would seem characteristically middle-class English folk only to the sophisticated modern reader, who has been taught to make historical and national distinctions impossible to the naive fifteenth century. Since, moreover, the historical sense of the sixteenth century was little more developed than that of the fifteenth, the characters in the miracle plays would not have seemed modern Englishmen to the playwrights of the Elizabethan age, and so could scarcely have furnished a precedent for the presentation of contemporary bourgeois characters.

In plays of the pure morality type we find the central figures similar to those of bourgeois tragedy. The

moralities, like the bourgeois tragedies, were written for a general, middle-class audience. They, consequently, directed their appeal to every man by a graphic representation of the soul experiences with which any one might be familiar in his own life. Their protagonist, therefore, was a representative of common humanity — Everyman, Humanum Genus, Mankind — in whom each man might see himself. Mankind was actually shown as a tiller of the soil. This activity of his may have been intended as a reminder of the penalty of Adam, but it must also have had the effect of making him seem to his rustic auditors very closely akin to themselves. Then, too, of the spiritual moralities only one, The Pride of Life, represents a king as the central figure. The authors of the early moralities seem to have realized the psychological truth that man is most affected by the representation of experiences either actually or potentially his own. While the point must not be overstressed in regard to direct influence on bourgeois tragedy, it is safe to say that the moral plays mark the beginning of the serious treatment of common folk in the drama.

There is a similar significance in the fact that in the controversial moralities aimed at social and political conditions, there emerges a serious figure which typifies the middle class. Such a figure is People in Respublica, and such

are the merchant and John the Commonweal in Lyndsay's Satire of the Three Estates. They are not men; they are merely allegorical representatives of a class of society, and they seem to have had no direct effect on dramatic development, but they suggest at least a reflection in the drama of the rise of the common people to importance, and a growing tendency to regard their rights as worthy of serious consideration.

Scenes from common life found a place in the drama before the rise of bourgeois tragedy. Such scenes were introduced through the secularization of the morality and the humanizing of its abstract characters. This secularization was probably promoted by the fact that the moralities early fell into the hands of traveling companies which depended for support on the generosity of their audiences. Since man has never been disposed to listen patiently to solemn dissertations on his own weaknesses, an element of amusement had to be introduced to insure the popularity of the plays. This element was supplied by bringing humorous realism into the temptation scenes. The vices ceased to be psychological abstractions representing the native weaknesses that beset the soul, and became instead the boon companions of man, inviting him to

join them in roistering at taverns, and telling merry tales of their escapades and their narrow escapes from prison and gallows. They were no longer theological symbols; they were the red-blooded 'sturdy vagabonds' who formed such a disturbing part of the life of the day. The tavern scenes in particular became a stock feature of the moralities, and these scenes, representing a phase of life well known to every Londoner at least, grew constantly more realistic. Such a scene is to be found before the beginning of the sixteenth century in the Digby Mary Magdalene.⁽¹⁾

The development of the secular drama of common life from the moralities was advanced by the influence on English drama of the school plays of the prodigal son type which were popular on the continent in the early sixteenth century. The most interesting English example of the type is Ingelend's Disobedient Child, written about the middle of the sixteenth century. It is based on a contemporary Latin dialogue, but all the life and color of the play are the contributions of the English adapter. It represents the prodigal son in the guise of a headstrong lad who refuses to go to school, but prefers to marry and lead a life of pleasure. His happiness is of short duration. His money is soon spent; his wife proves a shrew; and his stern but just father refuses to help him. The youth's distress in the wretched situation to

(1) Digby Plays, Mary Magdalene, Part 1, sc. 9. New Shakespeare Society Publications, VII, 1.

which he has brought himself gives the play ^atragic note. Although it contains a considerable degree of comedy, and the characters and situations are typical rather than real, the Disobedient Child seems actually an embryonic bourgeois tragedy. Its promise, however, was abortive. A serious treatment of the prodigal son motif did not appear on the popular stage until after bourgeois tragedy had been some years flourishing.

The prevailing tendency of the native drama as it came closer to life was to lose its seriousness. The humorous scenes introduced into the moralities were so popular that they determined the development of the drama in the direction of realistic comedy. When this tendency was once established, facetious presentations of scenes from family life came into high favor. Although such plays as Johan Johan, the most famous example of early comedy, owe their immediate inspiration to French farce, they introduce no elements really novel to English drama, and they serve to illustrate the fact that bourgeois tragedy is not a direct development from the interlude. They represent domestic situations as grave as those of genuine bourgeois tragedy, but their tone is that of superior amusement at the absurdity of such situations. Their handling of the misfortunes of the middle-class man is derisive, not sympathetic. Obviously it was not from such plays

as these that the moralized play dealing with disastrous situations in common life was derived.

The sensationalism of bourgeois tragedy is a direct reflection of the spirit of the time; it is not derived from any antecedent dramatic type. The prominence given to acts of crime may be due in part to the tradition that tragedy connotes violent death, but without question it is chiefly due to the semi-barbarous nature of the English people, whom Harrison, a contemporary of Holinshed, characterizes as 'prodigal of life and blood'.⁽¹⁾ Their interest in the drama was closely akin to their interest in bear-baiting and cock-fighting. They demanded striking, vigorous action involving physical suffering that gave even their strong nerves a thrill. It is sometimes loosely stated that stage presentation of violence and horror came to English tragedy as a legacy from Seneca. The truth is that Seneca became popular with the English public because his plays gratified their native taste for sensationalism. So far as actual dramatic precedent is concerned, scenes of physical violence long antedate English Seneca and the fantastic horrors of the derivative 'tragedy of blood'. An audience whose earliest interest in the drama had been nourished on the harrowing representations of the Slaughter of the Innocents and the Crucifixion would find no novelty in the death of Medea's children or in the agonies

(1) Harrison, Description of England, II, XI, 221. New Shakespeare Society Publications, series 6; number 5.

of Hercules.

II. Turning from plot to manner of treatment, we repeat that naive realism due to a lack of historic sense cannot be regarded as influencing the drama toward the portrayal of distinctly English life. True forerunners of bourgeois tragedy are to be found only in those plays that sound some note of conscious realistic purpose. One of the surest evidences of this type of realism is the localizing of the scene in England, a practise which was foreign to the miracles, but was becoming characteristic of the moralities as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century. It commonly manifested itself, in such plays as Hyckescorner and The World and the Child, by references to English, especially London, localities, — Tyburn, Newgate, St. Thomas a Watring's, St. Giles in the Fields, and various well-known inns like the Swanne and the Pope's Head. It is clear that such references were introduced for the purpose of giving an air of familiar example to the moral lesson which these plays enforced on the consciences of the spectators.

A different sort of realism appears in the controversial moralities of the mid-century, plays like Respublica and The Satire of the Three Estates, which pictured graphically, although in general terms, the social and political evils of the day. The fencing of common lands, the spread of sheep

pasturage, and the debasing of the currency,—public evils which particularly threatened middle-class prosperity, — these were the themes of the social moralities.

We may conclude, then, that as soon as moralities began to be secularized, an element of **intentional** realism was introduced. We do not, however, find in them a consistent, detailed picture of London or English life. Localization is merely suggested by the frequent use of place names; and characteristic aspects of the life of the day are mentioned, not represented. It is, nevertheless, safe to assert that although realism in the moralities and interludes was usually suggested rather than attained, and although it was nearly always adapted to comic ends, yet by presenting contemporary conditions and familiar places as a setting for drama, it prepared the way for the remarkable definiteness of localization and the detailed presentment of daily life which are inseparable characteristics of bourgeois tragedy.

III. In its narrative structure, with its emphasis on incident and its consequent weakness of characterization, bourgeois tragedy resembles all the earlier romantic tragedy. This episodic structure is probably in part the common legacy of the native drama from the miracle cycles, but it is certainly due in large measure to the nature of an Elizabethan popular audience, which took no great interest in psychologic-

al subtleties. Their pleasure in plays was closely akin to their pleasure in bear-baiting and cock-fighting, not remote from their pleasure in public executions. They were interested in the drama primarily as a spectacle, not as a philosophy of life.

These explanations, however, are not sufficient; for by the time that the earliest extant bourgeois tragedies were written, romantic tragedy was already learning the art of adequately motivated action. This lesson was not readily assimilated in the tragedies of common life and in the chronicle-histories. The fact that episodic structure was most persistent in plays based on real events suggests the probability that this type of organization was not altogether the result of crude technique, but was dictated by the material with which the dramatist worked, and that the resemblance to the miracle play was due to similar conditions rather than to imitation. The playwright who set forth for pious edification and instruction the events of Biblical history felt himself to be dealing with material too true and too sacred to permit any freedom of invention, so far at least as the main personages were concerned. Interest was centered on what the holy men were known to have done; what they were, might be taken for granted. The attitude of the playwright who drew his material from chronicle and pamphlet accounts of recent events in

private life was very similar; it lacked only the reverence. Moreover, the writer of bourgeois tragedy was dealing with incidents which might lie within the actual experience of his audience, and he felt himself the more bound to a rigid adherence to fact. Then, too, he was avowedly a realist. To him nothing that was true was trivial; and he was always ready to sacrifice art to actuality. In turning to fact for his plot, he was ready to accept the limitations which his source imposed. Since that source was a record of successive events, and not of the development or decadence of a character, he subordinated poetic truth to historic fact. These generalizations are not, of course, equally true of all the bourgeois tragedies based on real events, but even Arden of Feversham, which is unusually well motivated, is not always consistent, and there is a tiresome superfluity of episodes.

The belief that this emphasis on incident is due to a regard for literal truth rather than to the following of a popular dramatic precedent is supported by the fact that bourgeois tragedy, unlike romantic tragedy, does not follow the practice of the miracle plays in their mixture of comic with tragic matter. The almost complete absence of the popular comic scenes, especially in the plays which are based on real events, is due, I believe, to the playwright's rigid adherence to the truth as he saw it, and his scorn of foisting in

'filed points' to make it 'gratious' to the audience.

IV. We have noted that ethical purpose, often didactically enforced, is a distinctive quality of the tragedy of common life. Its painful story is portrayed in all its naked sordidness of detail for the sake of the moral lesson that may be derived from it, and usually the dramatist states that lesson in no uncertain terms. The direct moral appeal is entirely absent from antecedent and contemporary secular tragedy; and it is absent, too, from the miracle plays. Many of the early sixteenth century moral interludes are didactic, but their lesson is one of worldly prudence; they exhort man to eschew folly that his days may be long in the land. The immediate appeal to conscience is to be found only in those earliest moralities that assert with uncompromising plainness that 'the wages of sin is death'.

It is open to question, however, whether the writers of bourgeois tragedy, themselves usually slightly educated sons of the middle class, drew their didacticism from the example of a long extinct type. It seems inherently more probable that in holding up their grim warnings against the sins which they saw existent in the life about them, they represent the characteristic sentiment of a middle class already inclining to the Puritan belief in the natural sinfulness of man, although not yet convinced that the drama is of

diabolical origin and effect. This interpretation of the moral tendency of bourgeois tragedy is confirmed in undramatic popular literature by the numerous pious pamphlets which followed the conviction of every notorious evil-doer. Such are Anthony Munday's 'A view of examples meete to be perused of all faythfull Christians' ⁽¹⁾ and Golding's 'A briefe discourse of the late murther of master George Sanders'. ⁽²⁾ The relation of bourgeois tragedy to such pamphlets will be discussed later. ⁽³⁾

This includes our examination of earlier English drama for possible influences which might explain the genesis of the tragedy of common life. It may be observed, in the first place, that unless we include such purely conventional element as the five act division and the use of blank verse as a medium our conclusion; in regard to the influence of secular tragedy on the rise of bourgeois tragedy are negative. That is not to say that no bourgeois tragedy shows the influence of heroic tragedy, but we are not here concerned with the special resemblances of some of our plays to Senecan or pseudo-Senecan tragedy. These special resemblances have no significance for the type.

Our study shows that although bourgeois tragedy resembles the miracle plays in structure and in sensationalism, these resemblances are not due to imitation. The similarity of structure is to be attributed to the fact that both deal with historical subject matter familiar to the audience, and

(1) Old Shakespeare Society Publications, 11.

(2) Simpson, R. The School of Shakespeare, 220-239

(3) Chapter III.

that both appeal to a taste which preferred action to analysis. The similarity in regard to sensationalism is due to the primitive appetite of the English people for physical horrors.

The moral teaching of bourgeois tragedy is comparable to that of the spiritual moralities, but there seems to be no reason for inferring a direct connection. The ethical purpose of bourgeois tragedy is rather to be ascribed to that growing interest in moral problems which was the result of the rise of middle-class puritanism.

There is one clear debt which the tragedy of common life owes to the past. That is its debt to the **later** moralities and interludes, plays which introduced for the first time into English drama the consciously realistic portrayal of contemporary life.

Bourgeois tragedy shows its relation to earlier English dramatic types through the qualities which it has in common with them. These qualities, however, do not belong to it as the result of literary inheritance or of conscious eclecticism; they are the natural reflection in drama of native characteristics of the English people. The investigation of antecedent drama offers some suggestive parallels, but it completely fails to account for the rise, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, of serious drama dealing with situations drawn from middle-class life. The initial impulse toward bourgeois

tragedy must be sought in a study of the social conditions of the age which produced it.

Part II: The Influence of Social Conditions

To live as a popular institution, the drama must always reflect the tastes and ideas of the public to which it is addressed. If it is to be anything more than the medium of a literary cult - like the Areopagus group's academic adaptations of Garnier - it must be the mirror of public interests. For illustration we have only to note on the modern American stage the recent popularity of dramas of high finance, political chicanery, and social corruption. The successful new play, unless, like Kismet, it be one which succeeds through its brilliant, sensuous appeal to man's inherent and unchanging love of the marvelous and the romantic, is the play which presents a problem of immediate modern significance. To be popular, a play need not be good; it must be opportune.

What is true today was equally true of the age of Elizabeth. It was an age not so self-conscious as our own, and not so concerned with problems; but its interests were as manifold and as vivid, and its stage, because of the constant production of new plays was in immediate touch with those interests. That it very early concerned itself with questions of immediate public interest is shown in the previously-men-

tioned controversial moralities.⁽¹⁾ The government's recognition of a danger in this very appositeness is shown, in 1559, in a statute of Elizabeth's which forbade the licensing of those plays 'wherin either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commō weale shalbe handled or treated'.⁽²⁾ A similar uneasiness at the freedom of the stage in its reflection of public interests is shown in the suppression of the Marprelate plays, which dealt with the controversy between the puritans and the church, and the suppression in 1597 of Nash's supposedly seditious Isle of Dogs.⁽³⁾ A more significant and less dangerous expression of the drama's response to popular interest is to be seen in the rise of the chronicle-history play as a result of the intensifying of national feeling through the war with Spain.

The great variety of types embraced in the drama of the last years of the sixteenth and the early years of the seventeenth century is due to the fact that the dramatic activity of the day was a genuinely popular movement inspired by that age of innovation and experiment, and unchecked by any established code of rules. The extant plays of that period, with the exception of pieces known to have been written for the court and obviously unsuited for public presentation, are the plays which delighted the people of London. Their popularity is sufficiently attested by the

(1) Chapter II, part 1.

(2) Gildersleeve, Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama, 15.

(3) Ibid., 97.

puritan laments over the great crowds which frequented the play-houses.⁽¹⁾ In their diversity of subject matter, ranging through Italian romance, English history, sea conquest, domestic life, native magic, foreign commerce, travel and adventure, they indicate the manifold interests which made the life of the time so stirring and so fascinating.

In that age, so faithfully represented by its drama, arose the new species with which we are concerned, bourgeois tragedy. How prominent a type it was, we cannot say with certainty. By its very nature it could not long survive on the Stuart stage. Then, too, since the publication of their play-books was opposed by the actors, and especially since the tragedies of common life were not written by the great dramatists whose works were profitable to the publisher, it is to be inferred that many bourgeois tragedies were included in the large number of Elizabethan popular dramas which never came to print, and of which even the titles have perished.⁽²⁾ Consequently, we have only Henslowe's records and a mere handful of surviving plays from which to judge. That it was not an abortive type, however, but did really interest the London audience may certainly be inferred from the fact that the thrifty Henslowe bought for his theaters between the years 1593 and 1603 at least ten such plays.⁽³⁾ His entries of shares received from plays given between December 27 and February 6,

(1) Northbrooke, O.Shak.Soc.Pub., XVI, 82,85.

Stubbes, N.Shak.Soc.Pub., Ser. 6, No. 6, 144.

(2) Schelling, F.E., Elizabethan Drama, II, 371-373.

(3) Greg, W.W., Henslowe's Diary, I. These are the plays: Friar Francis, Black Bateman of the North, Parts 1 and 2, Page of Plymouth, Cox of Collumpton, The Tragedy of Merry, The Bristol Tragedy, Cartwright, A Woman Killed with Kindness. There are half a dozen others whose titles indicate that they belong to the same class.

1593, show that bourgeois tragedy was profitable.⁽¹⁾ There it appears that of eleven plays in the repertoire of Sussex's men, only two, George a Green and Titus Andronicus, yielded more profit than did Friar Francis, the only bourgeois tragedy in the list. Even in these cases the difference is balanced by the fact that George A. Green was played five times and Friar Francis only three; while Titus Andronicus is noted as a new play, for which, according to Kiechel, a double fee was charged.⁽²⁾

We are justified, I believe, in concluding that although bourgeois tragedy was not one of the most prominent dramatic types of the age in which it arose, it was numerous and popular enough to be a significant expression of the interests of the time. We have found it to be essentially independent of influences from the drama of the past. It should, then, be possible to explain its rise in terms of the social organization of the age.

Since, as we previously determined, the distinguishing characteristics of bourgeois tragedy are its serious treatment of middle-class life and its predominantly moral purpose, its rise would indicate the existence of a theatrical public sympathetically inclined toward the middle class, and sufficiently moral minded to tolerate didacticism. Its decline would suggest either the decrease in the importance of the middle class,

(1) Greg, W.W., op. cit., I, 16.

(2) Furnivall, Foreword to Harrison's Description of England, N. Shak. Soc., Ser. 6, No. 1, p. lxxx.

and a weakening of moral fibre, or possibly the divorce of the drama from the moral-minded, middle-class audience. To understand the position of the common people in the later Elizabethan period, we must examine, however briefly, the change in economic, political, and social conditions which had come about since the time of Henry VII.

The gradual rise of the English middle-class to power and importance is coincident with the reign of the Tudor family, under whom began the reorganization of society after the breakdown of feudalism.⁽¹⁾ This reorganization took the form of commercialism, and the rise of the people is due in great measure to the economic policy of the rulers. Increase in wealth brought to the middle class increase in power and increase in prestige. The Tudors encouraged the commercial spirit by protecting manufactures and trade. By defending the middle class against the oppression of the great barons, who had been wont to use their power to pillage the Commons, Henry VII inaugurated the policy which became traditional with his house.⁽²⁾ Henry VIII enriched the upper middle class by the distribution of monastic holdings. The troubled, controversial days of Edward VI. and of Mary were more favorable to the growing independence of thought than to commercial prosperity, but Elizabeth, by avoiding foreign and domestic wars, and by legislation for the development of trade, was able to place

(1) Traill, H. D., Social England, III, 478-479.

(2) Gardiner, S.R., History of England, I, 5-6.

England on a firm financial basis.⁽¹⁾ By issuing a new coinage in place of the debased money in circulation; by the Statute of Apprentices, the first government attempt to organize industries, in which were regulated the conditions of apprenticeship, the wages to be paid, the length of a day's labor, and the different trades to which one might be admitted; by the formation of trading companies, with monopoly privileges which assured high prices and promoted the opening of new markets; by discrimination in favor of English goods and English ships; and, finally, by an economical administration, Elizabeth enabled both merchants and manufacturers to reach a high degree of prosperity. The Spanish invasion of the Low Countries was also favorable to England. English manufactures were stimulated by the immigration of skilled workmen from Flanders; and a great impetus was given to English commerce by the sacking of Antwerp in 1585, in consequence of which much of the business of this great trading center was transferred to London. An evidence of the early response of English business to favorable conditions is to be seen in the fact that, when in 1569 the government wished to borrow a considerable sum, it was able for the first time to raise the loan at home.⁽²⁾ It was naturally the middle class, especially the London merchants, who profited most from the great development of commerce.⁽³⁾

The political rise of the middle class likewise began

(1) Innes, A.D. England under the Tudors, 419.

(2) Traill, H.D., op. cit. III, 489-505.

(3) Gardiner, S.R., op. cit. I, 6-7.

with the first Tudor. The power which this class had begun to acquire before the Wars of the Roses had been practically lost during that long period of unrest. At the end of these wars, however, the weakening of the baronial ranks made it possible for Henry VII. to render himself supreme by winning the support of the common folk. He ruled with almost despotic authority, but his ability to do so rested on the good will of the people, so that, although their parliamentary power was yet small, the middle class actually had a strong influence upon the government. Although under Henry VIII. the House of Commons remained the king's tool, its formal authority was considerably increased. Henry VIII's most important contribution to middle-class power was the Reformation, but its political influence hardly manifested itself until the seventeenth century. In spite of the fact that the English Reformation concerned the church, it was not the outgrowth of protestant free thought; it was a move in state-craft which the king was able to carry out because the national pride of the people and their opposition to any sort of foreign domination supported him in it.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, the Reformation did necessarily initiate individual thinking on religious questions, and, in contact with the more advanced protestantism of the continent, resulted in that freedom of thought in religion which manifested itself in puritanism. The breakdown of the pope's authority inevitably

(1) Traill, H.D., op. cit., 41 - 43.

led men to question the validity of all merely traditional authority. This growing independence occasioned church difficulties throughout the reigns of Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth. Finally, when the unpopular Stuarts were ruling, it assumed a political color, and ultimately it resulted in the revolution of 1642. The parliamentary power of the middle class steadily increased under Henry VIII's successors. Under Mary, who was obliged to call five Parliaments during her five years' reign, the Lower House so rapidly developed in strength that it became really the dominant body.⁽¹⁾ The power of the people in Elizabeth's time is shown by the fact that the government of London, the most important center in England, was in the hands of aldermen elected from among themselves by the property holders of the city.⁽²⁾ The queen's recognition of the power of the people is shown throughout her reign in her policy of conciliating the Commons, especially in regard to subsidies. It is significant that in 1601 their protests were sufficient to force her to yield in the matter of monopolies.⁽³⁾ We may be sure that by the latter part of her reign, at least, the Lower House was really representative of the middle class; for according to Harrison it was the citizens - who were mainly merchants - who were eligible to serve in it.⁽⁴⁾

The social rise of the people is closely connected with its increased wealth. This rise was inaugurated by Henry VIII.

(1) Hinds, A.B., The England of Elizabeth, 121, 143.

(2) Harrison, W., Description of England, I, 130. N. Shak. Soc. Pub., Ser. 6, No. 1.

(3) Traill, H.D., op.cit. III, 743.

(4) Harrison, W., op. cit., I, 130-131, N. Shak. Soc., Ser. 6, No. 1,

when he filled the ranks of the nobility from the upper middle-class, which he had enriched by gifts of monastic property. By thus breaking down the barriers of hereditary rank, he established the principle that 'it was no longer race, but wealth, that made the gentleman'.⁽¹⁾ This principle, which is the natural outgrowth of commercialism, was constantly practiced in the later reigns. Harrison gives sufficient testimony that it was in operation in Elizabeth's day. Throughout his description of the degrees of the people of England⁽²⁾ he notes the importance of wealth for advancement in rank; he remarks on the fact that merchants and yeomen's sons easily become gentlemen, and he explains that anyone can be a gentleman who can pay the charge and live without manual labor.⁽³⁾

Our sketch of political, economic, and social changes from Henry VII. to Elizabeth shows that in the Tudor period the merchant class constantly grew, not only in numbers, but in wealth, political power, and social importance. By the latter half of Elizabeth's reign, consequently, the middle class was the dominant force in English life. Its strength was perhaps the greatest in London, the great commercial center of the realm. London society was a middle-class society. We see, then, that natural developments in the national life had created in Elizabethan London precisely the sort of public which, as we previously determined, would foster the growth of bourgeois

(1) Traill, H.D., op. cit., III, 86.

(2) Harrison, W., op. cit., I, 105-141.

(3) Ibid., 128-129.

tragedy, — a public which would find its own interests reflected in the serious presentation of disastrous situations in middle-class life.

It was, indeed, under the patronage of this London public that bourgeois tragedy came into being. The tastes of the London public, however, did not exert a formative influence on the drama until the establishment of public theaters made plays the great common amusement of the citizens. For the development of the popular drama, and especially for bourgeois tragedy, the importance of the founding of permanent theaters easily accessible to London but beyond the jurisdiction of the city authorities can hardly be overestimated. According to Symonds, 1576 may be regarded as 'the birth year of the English Drama'. (1) This statement may sound somewhat overdrawn in the face of our knowledge of the old love of the English people for dramatic performances, and the fact that not only had dramatic companies been wont to play in the yards of such inns as the Bell Savage, the Cross Keys, and the Red Bull, but that they continued to do so at intervals for nearly ten years after the building of the playhouses. The change inaugurated by the founding of permanent theaters was, however, greater than these facts suggest, and Symonds' statement is hardly an exaggeration. Even as early as 1543 the players had met with stubborn hostility from the London authorities. (2) Often they would not have

(1) Symonds, J.A., Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama, 221.

(2) Gildersleeve, V.C., Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama, 151.

been permitted to act at all without the intervention of the Privy Council and sometimes of the queen herself. Even when permission was finally granted, the acting companies were subject to difficult conditions and extortionate exactions, and they were liable to suppression on slight pretexts. Thus their tenure in London was hazardous in the extreme. In the provinces they were usually welcomed, but traveling was expensive, and audiences were too small to be profitable. Although there were, prior to 1576, excellent companies of actors who entertained the queen and the court, and played in the city whenever they could get permission to do so, conditions before the establishment of the public theaters were not favorable to the development of drama specially adapted to the taste of the middle class. When playhouses were built in the Liberties, the conditions which inhibited the growth of a genuine drama of the people were removed. Able men like Burbage and Henslowe managed the theaters; a few more or less permanent companies like the Lord Chamberlain's and the Lord Admiral's, which established themselves in these theaters, were reasonably secure from interference, except in time of plague, and were certain of being constantly able to reach large popular audiences.

There are several ways in which the establishment of playhouses as a permanent institution in London favored the production of bourgeois tragedy. Naturally, since popular

drama must deal with popular interests, the building of the theaters led to the production of plays which reflected the interests of the London public - a predominantly middle-class public. It is true that the wealthy citizens who governed the city opposed plays, largely on grounds of expediency, but until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the lesser merchants and the artificers and 'prentices did not in any considerable number share the prejudices of their more conservative fellow citizens.

It was these lesser middle-class folk who filled the playhouses, stirred to see the fate of the London merchants, Saunders and Merry. The establishment of the London theaters was a necessary condition for the genesis of bourgeois tragedy. These public playhouses brought within reach of the players large audiences chiefly composed of men of the middle class and those of middle-class sympathies - for the laborers and artificers naturally shared many of the interests of their masters. These constituted precisely the sort of audience which responded to the immediate appeal of the tragedy of common life. The pleasing representation of middle-class virtues in such plays as Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and his George a Green, Dekker's Shoemaker's Holiday, and Rowley's New Wonder, and in the siege of London scenes of Heywood's Edward IV, shows, on its lighter side, a further instance of the fact that the drama

of that age, when the middle class was just coming into the realization of its strength and its dignity, did appeal to the citizen and yeoman class by holding up to it a mirror. Such plays could flourish only when the people were the chief patrons of the stage.

The establishment of the theaters not only promoted the growth of bourgeois tragedy by creating an audience whose interests were in problems of common life; it did more. It brought to the writing of plays men whose own experience made it natural for them to handle such problems seriously and sympathetically. The more assured position of the players naturally reacted on the playwrights by instituting a great demand for new plays. The amazing fecundity of the drama of the late Elizabethan period is to be attributed to the rapid increase in the number of places where dramatic performances took place almost daily. One of the immediate effects of the growing demand for new plays was a considerable increase in the number of persons who devoted themselves to the writing of plays. Previously play writing had been, for the most part, a pursuit of scholars and courtiers; now it became an occupation, we might almost say a trade, which attracted many unlearned middle-class men. Shakespeare is the most famous example; he is unique only for his genius. To this group belong Henslowe's hacks, some really able artists like Dekker, and, no doubt, the authors of

the crude but powerful realistic dramas that remain anonymous. Many of these men were probably neither able nor inclined to seek out romantic matter in foreign literatures. But they were able to bring upon the stage graphic pictures of the London life they knew so well. It was by men of this class that the tragedies of common life, so far as we know their authorship, were written. Only by men who themselves shared the experiences and emotions of the people they portrayed could such sordid situations be movingly presented. Thus bourgeois tragedy, like much of the drama of the time, was truly the product of the popular taste of its age, because it was written, not only for the common people, but by them.

One more way in which the growth of the London theaters fostered bourgeois tragedy remains to be mentioned. This influence is of an external and accidental sort, and depends for its validity on the existence of a large play-going public which was vitally interested in events in the lives of ordinary men. Since the plays ran a very short time, the demand for new ones was constant and pressing. The dramatists, often mere hack-writers, had little time, if they had the inclination, for the invention and elaboration of plots. Their haste forced them to dramatize any material of inherent popular interest. (1) Such material they found at hand in the pamphlets previously mentioned, (2) which followed every notorious crime, and which,

(1) Brooke, C.F. Tucker, Tudor Drama, 300.

(2) See above, Chapter I, part I.

from their number as indicated in The Stationers' Registers seem to have been in unfailing demand. This may account in part for the number of murder plays that were presented.

We must conclude that the founding of permanent London theaters had a threefold influence on the genesis of bourgeois tragedy: (1) It created a large middle-class public to which the appeal of tragic situations in common life would naturally be strong; (2) it produced middle-class playwrights who alone could write such plays; (3) it so increased the demand for new plays that writers dramatized any popular stories which reached their hands, among them stories from bourgeois life.

In defining bourgeois tragedy, we noted that it not only presents seriously situations from middle-class life, but that it does so always with a distinct moral purpose, often didactically enforced. If the rise of bourgeois tragedy is due, as now seems evident, to the dependence of the theater on a public vitally interested in the problems of the common man's life, the didactic purpose of the type must be attributable to the temper of Elizabethan middle-class society. If, however, the moralizing of the tragedy of common life is due to the temper of the public to which it appealed, there arises the difficulty of explaining why other types of tragedy which we know were even more popular, have no trace of this moralizing.

That bourgeois tragedy is in fact the dramatic reflection of the attitude of the middle class toward persons like

themselves and problems like their own, seems to me to account for its moralizing. This explanation suggests, too, that the absence of that moralizing in the even more popular pseudo-Senecan and Italian-romantic tragedies is to be explained by the difference in subject matter. The romantic tragedies affected their audiences by the powerful stirring of the imagination and the emotions. These plays were not a possible medium for direct moral teaching, because their characters and situations were too remote from the experience of the spectator for him to incorporate them in his own life, and apply to them his own standards of private morality. It is an evidence of the wholesomeness of public taste that, even in the plays whose remoteness of theme and elevation of treatment remove them from the working-day day, vice is never made attractive. The romantic tragedies, however, do not direct their appeal to the moral judgement. Bourgeois tragedy, on the contrary, presented with grim realism for a middle-class audience, situations and problems which might be their own, and men like themselves, meeting and yielding to or conquering temptations which were familiar to their own experience. Inevitably they identified the characters of the play with themselves; inevitably their consciences were touched. And since the English common people were essentially moral minded, they were pleased to see the inevitable failure of sin, and to accept the enforcement of the

lesson.

The moral wholesomeness of the people is discernible to any student of Elizabethan life. Although the age was coarse, it was not evil.⁽¹⁾ Among the people, the leaven of puritanism had been working almost ever since the Reformation. As men learned to read the Bible for themselves, and to think for themselves on religious questions, and especially as they came into contact with the protestantism of the continent, they came more and more to take a moral view of life, to believe in the natural sinfulness of man. The working of this spirit, which in the next century came to look upon all pastimes as a mere pandering to the natural depravity of the human spirit, manifested itself in extreme form in sporadic utterances of preacher and pamphleteer throughout Elizabeth's reign. It gained ground slowly, however, with the class to whom bourgeois tragedy appealed; and it was not triumphant among them until it was re-inforced by political reasons. It had, nevertheless, sufficient influence to make the popular standard of literary and dramatic criticism the moral standard. According to Miss Sheavyn, 'The aim of the English puritan was to subordinate artistic purpose to the conveying of moral instructions'.⁽²⁾

This point of view is obviously that of the middle-class playwrights who wrote the tragedies of common life, and it is definitely stated by one of them, Heywood, in his Apology for

(1) Symonds, J.A., op.cit., 26.

(2) Sheavyn, P., The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age.

Actors: 'If we present a tragedy, we include the fatal and abortive ends of such as commit notorious murders, which is aggravated and acted with all the art that may be to terrify men from the like abhorred practices.'⁽¹⁾ The same purpose is expressed repeatedly in the plays themselves. It seems reasonable, then, to conclude that the strong didactic note of bourgeois tragedy is the dramatic expression of one characteristic of the middle-class life of the time, that moderate puritanism which took a moral view of life, but which, seeing in the drama a possible medium for instruction, had not yet come to condemn the theater as an evil institution.

This brings us to the end of our investigation of the genesis of bourgeois tragedy. By analyzing the antecedent dramatic types and by making a study of the organization of English life in the latter half of Elizabeth's reign, we have arrived at certain definite conclusions in regard to the influences which conditioned the rise of the type. In earlier drama are to be found traces of all the salient qualities of bourgeois tragedy: its sensationalism, its realism, its narrative structure, its moral tone, and even, in a very slight degree, its serious treatment of middle-class interests. We have seen, however, that bourgeois tragedy did not have these qualities as a direct heritage from the drama of the past, and that the type did not arise through the mere unfolding of

(1) Heywood, Thomas, An Apology for Actors, 53. O.Shak.Soc. Pub. 16.

tendencies already present in the earlier drama. On the contrary, the main tendencies of the early Elizabethan drama were toward two types utterly alien to the spirit of bourgeois tragedy: realistic comedy of manners on the one hand, and romantic tragedy of the heroic type on the other. Obviously, without the operation of some influence outside the drama itself, bourgeois tragedy could not, in that age, have come to birth. The vital force which begot the new type was not in literature, but in the new social organization of the time. The commercial prosperity of England, fostered by the Tudors and reaching its height under Elizabeth, made the middle class a dominant force in England, especially in London. The gradual spread of the puritan attitude toward life disposed the great body of the common people to take the moral point of view of anything which closely touched their own lives. Through the building of permanent theaters accessible to the city, this moral-minded, middle-class public was brought into immediate, daily contact with the stage. The people became the true patrons of the drama. The founding of permanent theaters also turned to play-writing a considerable number of men, themselves middle-class Londoners, whose experience and education made it natural for them to treat seriously and sympathetically the disastrous situations which they saw in the life about them. Since the age when the middle-class became a dominant factor in the national life was a time which was most articulate in the

drama, and since, as a result of the building of theaters, the playwrights as well as the audiences were of the common people, it was inevitable that the new consciousness of middle-class worth and dignity should be reflected in plays which presented middle-class persons as the protagonists of tragic actions.

Chapter II: Internal Characteristics of Bourgeois Tragedy

Indicated by a Classification According to Theme.

The distinguishing marks of bourgeois tragedy, as we have already noted, may be divided into two groups: internal qualities and external qualities. By internal qualities, I mean those elements which are, by definition, involved in the very conception of tragedy dealing with contemporary middle-class life. These are the touchstone of the species; the absence of one of them excludes a play from consideration as a bourgeois tragedy. Moreover, internal qualities constitute the peculiar milieu and the tone of the type, through which it is differentiated from contemporary drama. By external qualities, I mean those qualities of style and technique, which are common to most of the plays, but no one of which is to be regarded as an invariable characteristic of the type. These are the qualities which indicate the relations of bourgeois tragedy to other literary types. This chapter deals with the first group.

The distinctly internal characteristics of bourgeois tragedy are two in number: 1) its situations are those which bring disaster in middle-class life; 2) its purpose is undeniably moral. The precise nature of the subject matter, and the manner of its use as a moral instrument may best be

made clear by a classification of the plays according to special social problems which they present. The bourgeois tragedies deal with these problems: 1) The destruction of the family through the infidelity of husband or of wife; 2) the evil consequences of enforced marriage; 3) unnatural relations between parents and children; 4) the bourgeois vice of avarice; 5) the wretchedness of the courtesan's life; 6) witchcraft as a social problem. This classification is necessarily somewhat arbitrary. The nature of the material is such that the divisions cannot, in all cases, be made mutually exclusive. For instance, groups 2 and 4 overlap where enforced marriage is due to avarice, as in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage. In every case, however, I have classified the play according to the main theme, which is easily distinguishable, and I have noted the relations of each play which is connected with more than one group.

The largest, and in many ways the most significant, group is that made up of the plays which deal with the destruction of the family through the infidelity of husband or of wife. This group falls naturally into two divisions: 1) those plays which center about the unfaithful wife; 2) those which center about the unfaithful husband. To the first division belong Arden of Feversham, Friar Francis, A Warning for Fair Women, A Woman Killed with Kindness, and The English Traveller. In these, the character and motive of the guilty wife vary widely.

In Arden, and probably in Friar Francis, she is inspired by passion, and acts with decision and resolution; while in A Warning, A Woman Killed with Kindness, and The English Traveller, she falls through sheer weakness, drifting passively into sin.

The faithless wife as the destroyer of the family is graphically portrayed in Arden of Feversham. Arden is a wealthy country gentleman, a weak and avaricious person, who is jealously aware of his wife's guilty passion for Mosbie, a tailor turned gentleman's steward. Hoping that his absence will convince his wife of her folly and restore her affections to him, Arden allows himself to be persuaded by a friend to make a visit to London. When he makes known his intention to his wife, Alice, she can hardly conceal her joy, and she instantly resolves that he shall not return alive to Feversham to balk her happiness. As instruments to achieve her purpose, she uses Michael, a servant; Clark, a painter with a rare knowledge of poisons; and Greene, a man defrauded by Arden, who hires two London cut-throats, Black Will and Shakbag, to commit the murder. The body of the play consists of a series of abortive attempts to take Arden's life. Finally, he is strangled and stabbed while he sits in his own house, amicably playing at tables with Mosbie. His body is secretly carried away from the house and left behind the Abbey. But searchers

trace the bearers by their footsteps in the snow; the crime is revealed; and the criminals brought to trial. Alice is condemned to be burned, — the punishment which Harrison tells us was reserved for wives who procured their husbands' deaths. Mosbie, Michael, and several more innocently involved persons are sentenced to be hanged, and the epilog tells of the violent ends of the two cut-throats. We do not need the statement of the title page that in the play 'is shewed the great mallice and dissimulation of a wicked woman, the insatiable desire of filthie lust and the shamefull end of all murderers', to impress us with **the** moral purpose of the play. The ugliest aspects of human character, lust, selfish cowardice, revenge, and violence, with their ultimate punishment, are boldly and convincingly shown. The dominant figure is, of course, Alice Arden. Throughout we have a vivid impression of her great will striving, through various instruments and in spite of all obstacles, to attain its purpose. In spite of her criminal passion, she maintains some hold upon one's sympathies. She is not wholly conscienceless, not altogether unwomanly. The conflict in her soul — her mourning for her lost innocence, and her desperate attempt to free herself from the bond that is dragging her down — is shown in an interview with Mosbie.⁽¹⁾

(1) Arden of Feversham, III, 5, 66 - 75.

Ales. - I pray thee, Mosbye, let our springtime wither,
 Our harvest els will **yeald** but lothsome weeds,
 Forget, I pray thee, what has past betwix us,
 For now I blushe and tremble at the thoughts.

Mos. - What? are you changde?

Ales. - I, to my former happy lyfe againe,
 From tytle of an odious strumpets name
 To honest Ardens wife, not Ardens honest wife.
 Ha, Mosbye, tis thou hast rifled me of that
 And made me **slaundrous** to all my kin.

The very fact that Ales Arden is not without impulses toward repentance, makes the play the more effective as a moral lesson, for it shows the more plainly the danger to the family of a wicked passion dominating a character not otherwise disposed to evil, and so not beyond the sympathies of the audience. Her terrible fate, too, is a more solemn warning because it points the outcome of sin instead of merely satisfying one's sense of justice in the punishment of the sinner.

Of Friar Francis there is little that can be said with certainty. It was not a new play, although apparently a popular one, when it was given under Henslowe's management in 1593.⁽¹⁾ Our information in regard to its content comes through a reference in Heywood's Apology for Actors, in which he defends plays on the ground of their moral effectiveness. He describes Friar Francis as a play 'presenting a woman who, insatiately doting on a yong gentleman, (the more securely to enjoy his affection) mischievously and secretly murdered her

(1) See above, Chapter I, 37.

husband.' Its moral tone is made evident through Heywood's account of its effect in bringing to confession and expiation a woman who had committed a like crime.⁽¹⁾ Even these somewhat meager facts are sufficient to identify the play as a bourgeois tragedy and to classify it with the unfaithful-wife group.

A Warning for Fair Women likewise deals with a wife's fall, her share in her husband's death, and her ultimate detection, repentance, and death. Mrs. Sanders, the contented wife of a city merchant, and the affectionate mother of his children, is seduced by George Browne with the assistance of a crafty procuress, Mrs. Drury. Ann Sanders shows no special inclination toward Browne, but she is a passive victim of her own inability to resist a temptation strongly urged. First induced by Mrs. Drury, through a pretence of palm reading, to believe that Browne is to be her second husband, she comes by degrees to accept him as her present lover, and finally to consent, although never whole-heartedly, to his plot, twice thwarted before it is accomplished, to murder George Sanders. The crime is discovered, and the paramours, already repentant, are brought to trial. Browne shows one spark of nobility in his desperate effort to clear his mistress of complicity in the crime, and his willingness to risk his soul's salvation for her sake by his refusal to confess that she was in the plot. Ultimately, however, she too is brought to confession, and dies

(1) Heywood, An Apology for Actors, O. Shak. Soc. 16, 55. This is curiously confirmed, although the play is not named, in A Warning for Fair Women, II, 1077 - 1086, a play acted 13 years before the treatise was written.

on the scaffold, together with Mistress Drury and her servant.

The whole emphasis of the play is on the inevitable failure of criminal love and the certain ruin which overtakes all who promote it. To this end the artistic motivation of the action is neglected and the early part of the play so compressed as to be barely intelligible, in order that more time may be given to the prison scenes and the edifying speeches and exhortations of the repentant criminals.

A Woman Killed with Kindness, called by Symonds 'the finest bourgeois tragedy of our Elizabethan literature,' (1) is another tragedy which takes its root in the moral weakness of a woman not naturally inclined to evil. The play opens with the marriage feast of Master Frankford, a country gentleman, and shows his joy and pride in his wife. This joy is doomed to destruction when the hospitable Frankford makes welcome to his home Wendoll, a young gentleman of small fortune on whom he generously showers benefits. Wendoll conceives for Mrs. Frankford a passion which he tries to suppress through loyalty to his friend. Ultimately it is too strong for him, however, and he ignobly yields to the desire to woo his benefactor's wife. She offers but feeble resistance, although she seems swayed merely by a strong plea and not at all by her own inclination, and takes no joy in her transgression. The lovers are betrayed to the unsuspecting husband by Nicholas, his de-

(1) Symonds, J.A., Thomas Heywood, Mermaid Series, XVI.

voted servant. The high point of the play is Frankford's unexpected return home by night to find his trusted friend and his wife false to him, and his magnanimous refusal to take vengeance on them. Preferring Christian charity to primitive justice, he contents himself with banishing his wife from his presence and from the company of her children. His mercy brings her to a full sense of the wrong she has done. She pines away and dies of grief for her sin, receiving on her deathbed the forgiveness of her husband.

This play is much less didactic in form than those which we have been discussing. There is only one passage of direct exhortation in it, the cry of the repentant wife when her husband's magnanimity overwhelms her with a sense of her own sin:

O women, women, you that yet have kept
Your holy matrimonial vow unstained,
Make me your instance: when you tread awry
Your sins, like mine, will on your conscience lie. (1)

The effectiveness of the play in driving home the conviction of the failure and misery of sin is enforced rather than weakened because the lesson is artistically implied rather than directly expressed. The moral is more convincing, too, because the catastrophe appears as the inevitable outcome of the interaction of the characters themselves, without the intervention of an outside power like the hand of the law. The

(1) A Woman Killed with Kindness, IV. 5, 104 -107.

denouement, the husband's forgiveness of the dying wife, has been criticized as unwholesomely sentimental. Such a criticism can only spring from a misconception of the character of Frankford, the gentle, sincere, manly Christian gentleman who can pardon the repentant sinner without condoning the sin. The audience which witnessed that moving last scene must have realized with Nan Frankford herself that in her weak yielding to an illicit love she alone is responsible for her own fate and for the destruction of her family.

The situation upon which The English Traveller is based is very similar to that in A Woman Killed with Kindness, but it is made peculiarly complex by the introduction of the honorable lover in addition to the injured husband, the perfidious friend, and the false wife. Young Geraldine, the English traveller, returns from his journeyings to find his betrothed married to Old Wincott. The husband makes the young man a welcome guest in his house, allowing him every liberty. Both wife and friend are faithful in thought and deed to the trust reposed in them. They renew their old vow, however, resolving to wed when the course of years brings Old Wincott's death, an event which they do not desire, but know must come. Geraldine learns through his supposed friend Delavill that his freedom in Wincott's house is giving rise to scandalous rumor, and he resolves not to go there again. He is, however,

summoned by the old man to come at night to explain his unfriendly absence. During this visit he learns to his horror that Mrs. Wincott has betrayed both her husband and himself in her relations with Delavill. Like Frankford, he restrains his first impulse for vengeance, and he determines to fly from the country 'To seek out place where no two such can live.'⁽¹⁾ Before his departure he is invited by Old Wincott to a farewell feast given in his honor. There he must meet his doubly false lady. When she, believing her fault undetected, reproaches him for leaving her, he confronts her with proofs of her duplicity. She sees herself as she really is, and is so overwhelmed with grief for her sin that she swoons, and dies almost at once.

The bourgeois tragedies which represent the husband's transgression as a source of grave danger to the security of the family are these: How a Man May Chuse a Good Wife from a Bad, The Fair Maid of Bristow, The Yorkshire Tragedy. The last of these stands somewhat apart from the others because it is more grim and terrible in plot and treatment. The explanation of its peculiar quality will be given in connection with The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, which is based upon the same source.

How a Man May Chuse a Good Wife and The Fair Maid of Bristow are closely connected with a much larger group of what have been called 'prodigal-son plays', and which bear some relation to Dutch Humanistic drama, such as Acolastus.⁽²⁾ By the

(1) The English Traveller, IV, 9.

(2) Schelling, F.E., Elizabethan Drama, I, 63 - 64, 331.
Herford, C.H., Relations between England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century, 154-55.

very nature of the parable which may be regarded as their ultimate source, the prodigal-son plays are reconciliation dramas, and are, consequently, often comic rather than tragic in conception. The line which separates comedy from tragedy must in such cases be somewhat arbitrarily drawn, and it is only a slight difference in treatment of a theme essentially the same, -- a suppression of the more painful aspects of the situation, a making prominent of comic scenes, a slighter appeal to sympathy, and an emphasis on the happy outcome, -- which excludes from our group plays like The London Prodigal and The Dutch Courtesan.

How a Man May Chuse a Good Wife presents a roistering young husband, Master Arthur, who has tired of his loyal and unfailingly affectionate wife, and, heedless of all advice, has become so infatuated with a courtesan that he flaunts her in his wife's very home. This indignity the wife endures with patience, resisting the advances of a lover and refusing to complain of the ill-treatment she receives. Finally, Master Arthur poisons her and marries the courtesan. She makes his home a scene of riot and his life a misery until at last she **turns him over to the law** for the murder of his first wife, whose death he has learned bitterly to repent. It turns out, however, that the supposed poison was only a sleeping draught, **and the wife, who has been rescued from her tomb and has**

been living in seclusion that her husband may be happy, re-appears just in time to save him from execution for her murder. Husband and wife are reconciled, and he, having learned his lesson, exhorts all men to profit by his example and seek virtuous wives.

The situation in The Fair Maid of Bristow is, as Mr. Quinn has pointed out,⁽¹⁾ remarkably like that in the play just discussed, but the plot is differently developed. Vallenger, a young rake, wins away his friend's sweetheart, tires of her as soon as she is wed, deserts and abuses her for love of a courtesan, and plots her death and that of his mistress' lover. His murderous designs are not carried out by the agent he selects, but he is cast off by the courtesan when he falls into misfortune, and he becomes so involved in suspicion that he is saved from execution as a murderer only by the desperate effort of his faithful wife. We are left to hope that his expressions of contrition come from his heart and betoken a permanent amendment of his life.

The Yorkshire Tragedy shows also the disaster wrought by a husband's licentiousness, but it differs from the other two plays of this group in that it is not a reconciliation drama. In it no outside power averts the fatal consequences of the forces set in motion by Walter Calverly's dissolute life. The play is one short act which shows us the culmina-

(1) Quinn, Arthur Hobson, The Fair Maid of Bristow, Publications of the U. of Penna., Ser. in Philology and Literature, VIII, 1, 11.

tion of his desperate career. He has gambled away his own patrimony and that of his brother; he abuses his wife and forces from her her dowry that he may spend it at dice. He is reckless, violent, suspicious. Realizing the complete ruin of the family fortune through what he has done, he is turned not to repentance but to the destruction of those who bear his name. With his own hand he murders his two children and is only prevented from injuring his wife by the efforts of a faithful servant. He then flings off to seek his youngest child, which is out at nurse. His horse throws him, and he is captured by those who follow to prevent the last crime. He is condemned to die. He remains stubborn in his wickedness until on the way to prison he passes his own house and encounters his wife. When, in spite of her injuries at his hands, she laments for him, his hard heart is softened. He repents his evil life and weeps over his children, crying out,

Let every father looke into my deedes,
And then their heirs may prosper, while
mine bleeds.(1)

As it stands, the play seems only a fragment, a brief study of murderous passion; its real significance is to be seen in connection with The Miseries of Enforced Marriage.

II. In the age of Elizabeth it was no ~~it was no~~ uncommon thing for parents or guardians to ~~compel their reluctant~~ wards

(1) A Yorkshire Tragedy, I, 9, 62 - 63.

to enter into loveless unions based on pecuniary or social advantage. Many of the comedies of the time⁽¹⁾ portray the cleverness of young lovers in circumventing their mercenary scheme and securing their own happiness. That these enforced unions are an actual social danger is shown in three plays: Page of Plymouth, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, and The Witch of Edmonton.

Page of Plymouth, written by Dekker and Jonson for the Admiral's men in the summer of 1599,⁽²⁾ is not extant, but the existence of a pamphlet and of several ballads dealing with the event on which it is based makes its classification certain. The title of a ballad, 'The Lamentation of Mr. Pages Wife of Plimouth, who, being forc'd to wed him consented to his Murder, for the love of G. Strangwidge: for which they suffered at Barnstable In Devonshire',⁽³⁾ may be taken as an outline of the plot. A pamphlet which was published just after the murder supplies the information that Eulalia Glandfield, the daughter of a wealthy shop-keeper, loved George Strangwidge, an excellent young man who was her father's business manager. Her parents, however, arranged a marriage for her with Mr. Padge of Plymouth, a widower and 'one of the cheefest inhabitants of that town'. The daughter yielded to persuasion. She kept up, however, her communication with Strangwidge, and they two agreed to murder Padge. After several unsuccessful attempts, she pro-

(1) Wily Beguiled is a good example.

(2) Greg, Henslowe's Diary, I, 180, II, 205.

(3) Ballad Soc. Pub. 6, 553.

cured his death by having him murdered by servants. The facts became known, and all who were concerned in the crime were brought to confession and execution.⁽¹⁾

The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, as its title indicates, shows the inevitable wretchedness and far-reaching evil results of loveless marriages. It is closely connected with the prodigal-husband group, for it deals at length with the spendthrift, wanton career of William Scarborough, and the consequent unhappiness of his brothers and sister, as well as of his wife and children. His evil life, however, is not due to mere caprice, as is Vallenger's, but to the fact that he has been coerced by his guardian, on the threat of confiscation of all his property, into deserting the girl to whom he was betrothed, for a bride who has been chosen for him. His abandoned sweetheart takes her own life. When he hears of her death, he plunges into a wild dissolute career, squandering in licentious living his own portion and that of his younger brothers and sister. The announcement of the birth of his children only makes him the more desperate. Finally he realizes that he has ruined himself and all that bear his name, but the realization serves only to embitter him and to increase his hatred of the woman whom he refuses to call wife. He is only prevented from murdering his wife and children by the arrival of a message announcing that his guardian who caused this unhallowed union is

(1) Publications of the Old Shakespeare Society, 18, 79 - 85.

dead, and that in recognition of the harm he did, he has left Scarborough all his property. The revulsion of feeling that comes with the knowledge that his riotous life has not utterly ruined his family is sufficient to turn Scarborough from his desperation. He seeks reconciliation with his brethren, and has no more hard words for his wife. Thus what so narrowly escaped being a stupendous catastrophe of mismatched lives ends peacefully, but it leaves behind it the impression of irreparable harm done in the blighting of Scarborough's young idealism, the death of his betrothed, the embittering of life for his brothers and sister and the inflicting of years of agony upon his wife.

We noted above that The Yorkshire Tragedy bears a close relation to The Miseries of Enforced Marriage. It is, in fact, based on the same man's career, and carries out the actual course of events instead of averting the catastrophe by an unconvincing reconciliation. As it stands, it presents a picture of quite unmotivated license and brutality, culminating in murder and a belated penitence. Its real significance appears in the fact that Walter Calverly was a man who was forced into a loveless marriage, and who gave vent to his despair in the wild and desperate career which the play shows.

The Witch of Edmonton has a double plot, both parts of which must be taken into account as dealing with themes of

bourgeois tragedy. For the present we are concerned with the domestic plot. The lesson which it is to teach is stated in the first line of the introductory distich, which might serve as a motto for all the plays of the group: 'Forced marriage, murder; murder blood requires.' The story turns on the weakness of one, Frank Thorney, who, being secretly married to one wife, yields to his father's insistence and weds a second. While a servant in the house of Sir Arthur Clarington, the youth first seduces and then marries Winnifred, a fellow servant. He wishes to keep the union a secret until he can gradually overcome his father's opposition. In the meantime his father has arranged for him a marriage with Susan Carter, the daughter of a wealthy neighbor. On Frank's return home, the father tells him that the only way to retrieve the family from a load of debt is for him to marry Susan. Too cowardly to confess that he is already married, and unable to refuse the match which his father urges, the wretched boy permits the new marriage to take place. Susan's affection for him makes his torment of conscience the more unbearable. Faithful to Winnifred in his heart, he resolves to take his ill-won gold and go away, pretending that he is only going on a journey. Winnifred goes with him in the disguise of a boy. Susan walks with them a little way, and her reluctance to let him go so irritates the half-maddened Thorney that he, obeying a diabolical impulse,

kills her to destroy the bond that weighs so heavily on him. He attempts to forestall detection by binding himself and inflicting wounds upon his body, so that his tale of having been set upon by two murderers finds ready credence. While he is being nursed in his father-in-law's house, his bloody knife is discovered, and the whole crime is brought to light. Detection brings with it repentance, and on the eve of his execution Thorney is forgiven by all whom he has wronged.

III. Concerning the plays which are based upon unnatural relations between parents and children it is impossible to speak with certainty. The three plays which apparently belong to this group are: The Cruelty of a Stepmother, The Stepmother's Tragedy, and The Late Murder of the Son upon the Mother. Since none of them is extant, any comment upon them must be merely conjectural. Of the first, all that we know is that it was played at court by the Lord Chamberlain's men 'on Innocentes daie at night' in the year 1578-79. The Stepmother's Tragedy was written for the Admiral's men by Chettle and Dekker in the summer of 1599. In accordance with the common Elizabethan use of the word tragedy, and by analogy with The Tragedy of Merry, we may infer that its theme was a murder committed by a stepmother. The Late Murder, according to an entry for Sept., 1624, in Herbert's manuscript diary, was at

{1} Materialien sur Kunde, 26, 286.

{2} Greg, W.W., Henslowe's Diary I, 178; II, 204.

that time a new play, and was written by Ford and Webster. (1)
 The authorship, in conjunction with the forbidding title, indicates a grim tragedy, but the motive of the crime remains shrouded in mystery. Although our information concerning all of these plays is so meager, it is sufficient to suggest that bourgeois tragedy did not fail to portray the unnatural horror of fatal opposition between parents and children, a sort of situation not unknown to the life of the time, as ballads and pamphlets testify in such titles as these:

August 18, 1578. 'A pamphlet of the mother that murdered hir children at Klyborne.' (2)

June 8, 1603. 'A Cruel Stepmother that sought the destruction of her Husband's Children, in Kent.' (3)

Undated. 'The Woeful Lamentation of Wm. Purcas, who for murthering his mother at Thaxted in Essex was executed at Chelmsford.' (4)

An example of the non-tragic use of such a theme in drama is to be found in one of the incidents in Fortune by Land and Sea, a drama of adventure by Heywood. In it a wealthy farmer's eldest son, who has married without his father's consent, is compelled to become a mere drudge in the paternal household, and he and his wife are there subjected to brutal treatment by unnatural relatives until the father's sudden death brings his wretched son into his inheritance.

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- (1) Singer, H.W., Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England, 56.
 (2) Registers of the Stationer's Company, Pub. of the Old Shakespeare Society, 19, 61.
 (3) Ballad Society Publications, 37, XIX.
 (4) Ibid., 13, 28 - 35.

IV. The courtesan's profession, the world-old menace to domestic security which was one of the great social problems of Elizabethan life, appears repeatedly in the drama of the time. Often it appears as a comic theme, but it also finds a place in bourgeois tragedy. In the plays of the unfaithful-husband group, the contrast between the conduct of the wife and the courtesan is emphasized to point the lesson of domestic morality. In them the defeat and downfall of the courtesan are only incidental. There are, however, plays which approach the question on the other side to show the actual wretchedness of the prostitute's life, the hollowness of its rewards, and the almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of reform. The two plays of this group are Heywood's Edward IV and Dekker's The Honest Whore.

Edward IV. combines five threads of plot, of which the most important is that which admits the play to the category of bourgeois tragedy, the king's seduction of a citizen's wife. The first part of the play shows against the background of the successful defense of London against the bastard Faulconbridge, the king's meeting with Jane Shore, the wife of the goldsmith, Matthew Shore, who has just distinguished himself in the king's defense. Edward is immediately infatuated with the citizen's beautiful wife, and he comes again and again in disguise to the shop to woo her. At last, in spite of her assur-

ances to her troubled husband, dazzled by the eminence of her suitor's position and influenced, no doubt, by her neighbor's advice, Jane yields to the king's solicitations. The last scene of the bourgeois plot shows a moving encounter between Matthew Shore, who is leaving England and his dishonor behind him, and his erstwhile wife. Jane, in rich attire, appears engaged in listening to petitioners for the king's favor. When she recognizes Shore, she addresses him in an agony of repentance, begging to be permitted to go with him as his servant, not his wife. When he refuses, she entreats him to let her use her power with the king to make him prosperous, but he scorns such a bargain. In the second part of the play, Jane is scarcely seen in prosperity. She is forced to an interview with the wronged queen, who is so touched by her penitence and humility that she treats her with friendship. Edward dies, and Richard, who succeeds him, hunts her down, proscribing those who give her shelter or relief. As a crowning humiliation she is forced to go, attired in a sheet, barefoot, from Temple to Aldgate. In the depths of her suffering she acknowledges the justice of her punishment.

'Whoso knew me, and doth see me now
May shun by me the breach of wedlock's vow.' (1)

When she is almost dead of exposure and grief, Matthew Shore, who has not previously revealed himself but has pitied

(1) Edward IV, IV, 3, 171.

her torment, comes to her and brings her his forgiveness, calling her his wife again. The shock of joy after all her woes is too much for her, and she dies with his kiss of pardon on her lips. He does not survive her.

The necessity of representing a fallen woman is such a fashion as to engage the sympathies of the audience and at the same time to avoid glozing the heinousness of her fault presents a difficulty which Heywood did not completely overcome. On the whole, the play is ethically sound, but in its presentation of a naturally virtuous woman won to sin after long solicitation, by its omission of any scenes between Jane and the king after her fall, and by the detailed representation of her suffering, which shows her somewhat in the light of a martyr, it comes dangerously close to sentimentalism. It is saved by Jane's own poignant consciousness that she is reaping the reward of her own wrong-doing, and by the constant prominence of the admirable Matthew Shore, which reminds us that he, after all, is the one who has been wronged.

In spite of its sentimental taint, the close of the play recalls in Shore's forgiveness of the wife who wronged him the close of A Woman Killed with Kindness. In many ways the problem dealt with in Jane Shore's story is like that of the unfaithful-wife group of plays and might be classified with them. Since, however, she yields neither through passion nor

through mere passivity, but sells herself for wealth and power, the play belongs rather with that other presentment of miseries of the repentant prostitute, The Honest Whore.

The Honest Whore is a play in two parts. The first part is comic in the main, but it opens the story of the redemption of a common courtesan, Bellafronte, through the reproaches of a man who has touched her fancy. Stung by his harsh words and conscious of their truth, she turns her back squarely on her old life, beginning her effort for decency by marriage with the reluctant scoundrel who was responsible for her fall. In spite of numerous comic scenes, the second part of the play is of the essence of bourgeois tragedy. It shows Bellafront's patient endurance of her husband's ill treatment and of the scorn of others, as the deserved punishment for her old life; it shows her steadfastness against temptation to return to evil-doing, even when it comes from the man whose disapprobation was sufficient to work her reform, and when the temptation is reenforced by the pressure of actual poverty; and it shows persistence in well doing when no one, even her father, seems to have any faith in her. The play ends with her final reconciliation with her father, who, in spite of his apparent harshness, has been watching over her; but it promises little for any domestic happiness with her husband, the weak, roistering, knavish Matheo.

The Honest Whore differs from all the other bourgeois tragedies in that its scene is not England, but Milan. The situation, however, is perhaps more characteristically English than Italian, and the life portrayed is London life, from the linen draper's shop to the courtesan's lodgings, and to Bellafronte's bare little house. The play presents a picture of the most sordid side of city life, and the least admirable traits of human character, against which the honest repentance and desperate struggle of Bellafronte, and the whimsical roughness and tenderness of Friscobaldo appear in contrast. In spite of its unpromising title and the unpleasant nature of its subject matter, The Honest Whore is clean in conception and wholesome in effect. In arousing sympathetic interest in Bellafronte, there is no sentimental glozing and excusing of vice, neither is it intellectualized and held up to laughter. The moral judgement is active and the emotions are engaged. The final impression left by the play is that the sinner who turns from his wickedness shall live, but that repentance does not save him from the suffering consequent upon his old transgressions.

V. That avarice, the typical bourgeois vice according to the moralities, might lead to desperate acts dangerous to the security of the social order has been indicated already in

several plays. In Arden of Feversham, Arden's selfish greed in taking up the Abbey lands made Greene his enemy, and so, in a measure prepared his own death; in Page of Plymouth, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, and The Witch of Edmonton, the desire of guardian or parent to arrange wealthy marriages led to crime and wretchedness. In these plays, however, the avarice motif is subsidiary to other social problems. It is the main theme in four plays: The Tragedy of Merry, Two Lamentable Tragedies, Black Bateman, and The Vow Breaker.

Of Thomas Merry, or Beech's Tragedy, we have no knowledge except from entries in Henslowe's Diary.⁽¹⁾ These inform us that it was written for the Admiral's men by Day and Houghton, who had just completed another murder play, Cox of Collumpton, in the latter part of 1599. It must unquestionably have dealt with the killing of Master Robert Beech and his servant by Thomas Merry, a crime which took place in 1594, and which evidently attracted much public interest, for within two weeks there were five ballads and one pamphlet on the subject entered in The Stationers' Registers.⁽²⁾ The motive of the murder is made clear in Yarrington's Two Lamentable Tragedies, which deals with the same story.

(1) Greg, W.W., Henslowe's Diary, I, 57, 114, 115, 117; II, 208.

(2) Arber, E., Reprint of the Stationers' Registers, II, 658, 659.

August 29, 'A true discourse of a most cruell and barbarous murther committed by one Thomas Merry, on the persons of Roberte Beeche and Thomas Winchester, his servant, on ffridaie night the 23th of August, being Bartholomue Eve, 1594. Together with the order of his arraignment and execusion.'

Sep. 3, 1594, 'The Wofull murder.'

Sep. 7, 1594. 'Pitifull lamentacion of Rachel Merry whoo suffred in Smithfield. the VIth of Sep. 1594'

'The Lamentable end of Thomas Merrye.'

Sep. 9, 1594. 'The said lamentacon of Thomas Merrye.'

That the purpose of Two Lamentable Tragedies is to show the fatal results of a passion for gold is made clear in the Induction, which is played by Homicide, Avarice, and Truth. Homicide is discontented at the peaceful, law-abiding lives of the people, but Avarice makes her happy by promising to glut her desire for bloody deeds, and Truth serves as a Prolog in announcing the horrible events which, inspired by Avarice, are to be shown upon the stage. The avarice motif, moreover, is emphasized throughout the play by reflections put into the mouths of the characters. The plot with which we are concerned⁽¹⁾ turns upon the covetousness of Thomas Merry, and the destruction which it brings upon him and upon all who are connected with him.

The respected proprietor of a small inn, he lives in comfort, but he is discontented with his slow profits and eager for wealth. When he hears Beech, who comes in friendly fashion to drink at his house, say that he has a score of pounds laid away, the demon of greed awakes in Merry's heart. He determines to have the money, even at the cost of murder.

I will invent some new found stratagem
To bring his coyne to my possession.
What though his death relieve my povertie? (2)
Gaine waites on courage, losse on cowardice,

he cries before the friendly unsuspecting Beech is fairly out of the house. The power of the passion for gold to deafen a

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- (1) In the account of the plot, I shall concern myself with the Merry plot only, which is thus described on the title page of the 1601 edition: 'The one, of the Murther of Maister Beech A Chaundler in Thames-streete, and his boye, done by Thomas Merry. The other plot, which so far as the story is concerned has no connection with this one, does not come within the field of this dissertation.
- (2) Two Lamentable Tragedies, I, 1, 13 - 14.

man to conscience and drive him to the most desperate deeds is shown in his soliloquy as he hastily plans the crime:

My conscience saith it is a damned deede
To traine one foorth, and slay him privily.
Peace, conscience, peace, thou are too scripulous;
Gain doth attend this resolution.
Hence dastard feare! I must, I can, I will,⁽¹⁾
Kill my best friend to get a bag of gold.

He plans rashly and executes his crime clumsily. First he entices Beech to his house and kills him brutally with a hammer. Then he realizes to escape detection he must kill Winchester, Beech's boy, who knows where his master went. Him too he kills with the hammer, but the boy, although fatally hurt and past speech, lingers some days to frighten him. Because Winchester's groans arouse the neighborhood, Merry is unable to secure the money for which the murders were done. He is now full of remorse for what he has done, but he has no thought of confession. With the aid of his loyal sister, Rachel, who abhors his deed but helps him to conceal it, he dismembers and carries away the body of Beech. In the investigation which takes place, he escapes suspicion, but Williams, his former servant, who has sworn secrecy, is so oppressed by his horrible knowledge that he inadvertently betrays it to a friend, who at once makes the facts known to the authorities. Merry is accordingly apprehended and brought to the gallows. He dies declaring that not hatred of Beech but desire

(1) Two Lamentable Tragedies, I, 3.

for money has brought him to this end, and professing faith that his soul is saved by repentance. Rachel shares his punishment because she concealed his crime, and the servant, Williams, escapes only by claiming benefit of clergy. The executions, like all the other acts of violence in the play, take place on the stage. Truth, Avarice, and Homicide comment on what has taken place, and Truth draws the moral:

See here the end of lucre and desire
Of riches, gotten by unlawfull meanes.
What monstrous evils this hath brought to passe,
Your scarce drie eyes give testimoniall.(1)

Of Black Bateman all that can be said with any approach to certainty is that it was written for the Admiral's men in the summer of 1598 by Chettle, Dekker, Drayton, and Wilson. (2) Our classing it with the present group rests upon the supposition, suggested by its name, that it was based upon the ballad called Bateman's Tragedy, (3) and that its plot was approximately that of The Vow Breaker, to be discussed below.

The Vow Breaker, or The Fair Maid of Clifton, certainly derives its main plot from the ballad just mentioned, a part of the ballad being actually quoted in the play. It adds, however, some details to the story, and it adds also a slightly connected minor action concerning the siege of Leith, for which the material is drawn from Holinshed. (4) The bourgeois tragedy plot is that derived from the ballad. Anne Boote, a young

(1) Two Lamentable Tragedies, V, 2, 95.

(2) Greg, W.W., Henslowe's Diary, I, 134; II, 193.

(3) Ballad Soc. Pub., 13, 193-197. 'A Warning for Maidens, or Young Bateman'. (Roxb. Ballads.)

(4) Materialien zur Kunde, 42, 19-27.

girl of Clifton, plights her troth to Young Bateman. Despite the opposition of her father, who wishes her to make a wealthier marriage, she swears solemnly to her lover that she will give her hand to none but him. They seal their betrothal oath by breaking a coin together before he goes away to the wars in Scotland. In his absence she quickly forgets her love, tosses her pledge aside, and promises to marry Old German, the husband whom her father has selected for her. That she freely consents to the match because she is attracted by the money and social position that it will bring her is made certain by the explanation of her motives which she gives to her cousin:

German is wealthy and by him I gaine
 Recourse amongst the modest sages dames
 Wealth has a priviledge that beauty cannot,
 Bateman is young, embellished with a naturall,
 Active, and generous, unspotted beauty:
 German is old, indebted much to age,
 Yet like old Aeson, gold can make him young.
 Gold like a second nature can elixate,
 Make the deformed faire, the faire seem fowle,

 Maidens that love young men gaine their loves
 by stealth,
 We that love old men, wed not man but wealth. (1)

On the very day of her wedding, Bateman returns. She greets him with scorn, promising mockingly that if he will wait, he shall be her second husband. Her callousness and falsehood madden him, and he repeats to her as a sinister warning the words he spoke six months before as a lover's promise:

(1) The Vow Breaker, I, IV, 43 - 51, 55 - 56.

'Alive or dead I will enjoy thee'. Unable to bear his grief he hangs himself on a tree before her door. Anne can stand in the window and laugh at his wretched father when he comes for his son's corpse, but from that night her laughter is done. Whether she wakes or sleeps, Bateman's spirit haunts her, and his last words ring in her ears as a ghastly prophecy. She is tormented by the twin plagues of terror and conscience. Until after the birth of her child, the ghost can only threaten, but the night after the baby is born, Anne is carried off while her attendants drowse. When they seek her, they find her body on the river bank.

The moral of this story of the fatal consequence of breaking a solemn promise for the love of gold scarcely needs to be pointed out, but to make it unmistakably the tormented Anne cries:

You that are Lovers, by me you may perceive
What is the burden of a troubled mind;
Take heed of vows, and protestations
Which wantonly in dalliances you made
The eye of Heaven is on you, and your oaths
Are registered.⁽¹⁾

VI. In an age when everyone believed in magic, when there were reputed witches in every village, and when the often recurring witch trials kept the idea in the public mind, it was inevitable that witchcraft should have a part in plays. Harm-

(1) The Vow Breaker, III, 1, 51 - 56.

less 'wise women' like Mother Bombie and the Wise Woman of Hogsdon enliven comedy, and mysterious, uncanny spirits of evil add a sinister element to romantic tragedy, but the familiar figure of the malevolent witch as an immediately present social problem in village life naturally finds place in bourgeois tragedy alone. There is only one such play, or, at most, two: The Witch of Edmonton, and, possibly, The Witch of Islington. Of the second, nothing is known beyond the fact that it was played by the Admiral's men in July, 1597.⁽¹⁾

The main plot of The Witch of Edmonton has already been discussed.⁽²⁾ In rather slight connection with it is a remarkable witch plot. Indeed, it can hardly be called a plot; it is rather a psychological and sociological⁽³⁾ study of witchcraft presented in a series of scenes from the life of a wretched old woman, Elizabeth Sawyer. We see her first a friendless old crone whose only offense is her misery. She is harshly abused and harried as a witch by her heartless neighbors, against whom in her helplessness she can only hurl impotent curses. Their cruelty drives her to such desperation that she, being already supposed a witch, is willing to become one to obtain vengeance. Her wish is gratified. She receives as a familiar a black dog, which carries out her designs against her neighbors until they are aroused to deadly fury. Then he deserts her; she is brought to trial, and sentenced to execution. She recognizes her mis-

(1) Greg, W.W., Henslowe's Diary, I, 54; II, 185.

(2) See above.

(3) Although these terms are modern, not Elizabethan, they precisely represent Dekker's attitude toward his subject.

take and dies penitent, warning others not to be cheated by the devil.

These scenes, which are ascribed to Dekker,⁽¹⁾ are remarkable for their social point of view and for their impartial tone. Witchcraft itself is represented as a real and terrible fact. The witch is a real menace to the society she lives in, but — and here is the point — that society is itself responsible for the fact that old women are driven to become witches. Elizabeth Sawyer voices the poet's own conviction when she cries in self-defense,⁽²⁾

If every poor old woman
Be trod on thus by slaves, reviled, kicked, beaten,
As I am daily, she to be revenged
Had need turn witch.

She defends herself fairly, too, when in her trial she rails against those flourishing members of society who do more harm than witches but are allowed to live in prosperity, while every poor, ugly old woman is reviled as every man's enemy. In spite of her revolting malice, which in the end is the source of her own destruction, Elizabeth Sawyer is a really tragic figure, and her evil life and death are a terrible indictment of the stupid cruelty of society.

In connection with the treatment of witchcraft as a social problem, The Late Lancashire Witches deserves mention, especially since it is based on actual witch trials which took

(1) Rhys, E., Thomas Dekker, Mermaid edition, 388.

(2) The Witch of Edmonton, IV, 1.

place in 1633.⁽¹⁾ Although it for the most part suppresses the more serious phases of the theme and takes the tone of fantastic comedy rather than of tragedy, in one situation it presents witchcraft as a destructive social force. It destroys the married happiness of Master Generous, a prosperous and kindly country gentleman. He discovers with horror that his wife has sold her soul to the devil and practises witchcraft, but upon her apparent grief and her solemn promises of amendment, he forgives her. Her penitence, however, is merely feigned. She continues to frequent the meetings of witches and to take part in their frolics until she is again detected. Her unhappy husband no longer attempts to protect her, but gives her up to the sentence of the law.

There remain several plays which it is impossible to classify because of our ignorance of their plots.⁽²⁾ Those plays which we know, either through the plays themselves or through other sources of information, we have found it possible to classify in six groups, according to the particular aspect of middle-class life with which they deal. Of course not all of the characteristic situations to be found in bourgeois tragedy are peculiar to it; but because they are here represented in a middle-class setting, they have a special poignancy for the audience, to whose experience they come very close. We may repeat that classification here. The major themes of

(1) Schelling, F.E., Elizabethan Drama, I, 363.

(2) Murderous Michael, Cox of Collumpton, The Bristol Tragedy, William Cartwright. Baxter's Tragedy, The Bristow Merchant.

bourgeois tragedy are these: 1) the destruction of the family through the infidelity of husband or of wife; 2) the evil consequences of enforced marriage; 3) unnatural relations between parents and children; 4) the wretchedness of the courtesan's life; 5) the evil to society which may result from avarice; 6) witchcraft as a social problem. As we noted before, the scheme is artificially simple, and, as in real life, the situations in some of the plays combine several of these motifs.

In addition, there are at least two minor themes, themes which are not the center of any plot, but are to be found recurring in the plays. The first of these is that of the faithless friend. In A Woman Killed with Kindness and The English Traveller, domestic happiness is destroyed by a man who has been received as a privileged guest. In the Fair Maid of Bristow, Vallenger begins his selfish, dissolute career by wooing and marrying his friend's betrothed. In Edward IV, the king's seduction of Shore's wife seems the more shameful because of the loyal service which Matthew Shore has so recently rendered him. Another theme which is to be found in some of the plays, although it is given prominence in none of them, is that of the insecurity of a marriage in which there is any considerable disparity of age. It is an idea certainly present in the consciousness of the time; it appears early in the drama in the Joseph and Mary scenes of the miracle cycles. In The English

Traveller and The Vow Breaker it is not the fact that the husband is much older than his wife which precipitates tragedy, but this motif is at least suggested in both plays by the wife's feeling of the impermanence of her marriage. Of Page of Plymouth we cannot speak certainly, but it is fairly safe to conjecture that Eulalia Glandfield's repugnance to the marriage arranged for her was intensified by the contrast between the withered age of the man chosen by her parents and the fresh youth of her own accepted lover.

Although by definition bourgeois tragedy may deal with any serious situation in middle-class life, those plays which we have examined deal, as a matter of fact, with only one side of that life, its social aspect. Their problems are social problems in the restricted sphere of a man's individual relations with his family and his neighbor. Furthermore, the majority of these plays, including all those which still possess for us a tragic appeal, are domestic tragedies, dealing with conditions which directly affect the institution of the family. The reason for this limitation of theme is to be found in the fact that the less private and personal aspects of the middle-class man's life, — his political activities, for instance, — are necessarily so limited in their scope and so special in their interest that they do not furnish a vital theme for tragedy. In this respect bourgeois tragedy differs markedly from heroic

tragedy, in which the political career of the protagonist, as in Macbeth, is free enough from external compulsion to be expressive of his character, so that the catastrophe is seen to be the outcome of the nature of the man. It is this very limitation of the tragedy of common life, however, which constitutes its peculiar strength; for it is forced to seize upon the one theme that is never stale. Since every man is, before all else, a member of a family, and most vitally affected by anything which threatens domestic security, the bourgeois tragedies of family life present the one eternally tragic possibility which is common to all men in all ages, and which is as moving in the life of a merchant as in the life of a king. Obviously, the tragedy of family relations is not confined to the bourgeois group, — we have only to remember King Lear and Othello, — but it is only in the sphere of middle-class life, where the situation is presented nakedly without the glamour of rank and romantic setting, that it comes home with full force to the average man.

In our discussion of the individual plays we have had something to say of the sort of lesson conveyed by each. The tragedies of common life are not all didactic, and some are less heavily weighted than others with moral purpose. Nevertheless, they all do contain wholesome lessons which could hardly have failed to be impressed upon the spectator. The sort of lesson

which they teach is, however, one specially appropriate for a middle-class audience. It is not merely that they usually satisfy the popular desire for poetic justice, the punishment of vice and the reward of virtue. It is rather that this lesson may almost be called legal rather than ethical; for although they teach the good Christian doctrine of the redemption of even the most sinful soul through penitence, (1) they emphasize yet more strongly the certain worldly failure of wrong doing, the social reaction against crime. In at least ten of the plays which we have been considering, the law of the land is the instrument through which the moral order vindicates itself.(2) The sins of Alice Arden, Frank Thorney, and the rest, are regarded primarily as sins against the social order, and they are most fittingly punished by the power which is organized for society's defence. This identification of legal with moral right is peculiar to bourgeois tragedy. In heroic tragedy, not only are the protagonists above the jurisdiction of any merely human legal code, but the very problems which they have to face are sometimes those of conflict between law and morality.(3) The bourgeois protagonist, however, lives, like the audience which identifies itself with him, in a society whose safety demands that the law of the land be regarded as the ultimate authority. In such plays it is natural that the law should seem an incarnation of 'the power that makes for righteousness.' To show a middle-class protagonist in a situation

(1) In the murder plays, all the criminals who expiate their faults on the scaffold die confident in their hope of Heaven.

(2) Creizenach, W., Geschichte des Neueren Dramas, IV, IV, 242.

(3) Cf. the opposition of duties which constitutes Antigone's problem.

which compelled a choice between the warring claims of legal right and moral duty, as in Hamlet and Antigone, would be to introduce a dangerous suggestion of anarchy into the social organization.

Chapter III. External Characteristics of Bourgeois Tragedy, and the Literary Affiliations which they Indicate

In earlier chapters it has been necessary, for the sake of clearness, to isolate bourgeois tragedy, establishing for it definite limits and emphasizing the qualities which differentiate it from other species of drama. Bourgeois tragedy is not, however, as the foregoing discussion may have seemed to indicate, an unrelated type. It is the purpose of this chapter to show some of the most important relations borne by the tragedy of common life to the literature of the time. The bourgeois tragedies must indubitably have points of contact, common qualities, with much of the great body of the drama of the age, for they were not the work of a self-conscious literary *coterie* but were written for the public stage in a time of great dramatic activity, and by practical playwrights who were at the same time trying their hands at all the popular types of plays. Since, too, bourgeois tragedy is an indigenous type which grew out of special popular interests, it must be in some degree akin to non-dramatic literary forms which are likewise mediums for the public expression of popular interest. We shall ^{here} have nothing to say of **mutual influences**, the inevitable action and reaction of diverse contemporary dramatic types upon one another. So far as such reactions affected the development

of bourgeois tragedy as a type, they will find place in the next chapter; but, for the most part, such influences are of the special and subjective sort, due not to any inherent relation between the types affected, but to the bent of the individual dramatist, and confined to his work alone. They are significant for single plays, but they do little to modify the primary characteristics of **a genre** or to indicate its **natural** affiliations.

In this chapter we shall consider only the fundamental relations of bourgeois tragedy to other literary types. These types, not all of which are dramatic, have a common basis in their appeal to the same popular interest. Their relations are to be seen in those external, but none the less important, elements of style and matter which we have previously mentioned. These characteristics which serve as connecting links are: realism, source in fact, and narrative technique.

The realism of bourgeois tragedy is, as we have said before, to be distinguished from the naive realism which arises from a lack of historical sense. The realism of bourgeois tragedy arises from the author's attempt to reproduce exactly an actual situation of which the details are known. It is the realism which results from a conscious effort to give an absolutely faithful picture of some aspect of contemporary life. Consequently it is the impartial realism of a photograph. This

realism, which we may call actualism, manifests itself through the definite and careful localization of scenes and the painstaking attention to minute detail which are characteristic, in some degree, of all the bourgeois tragedies, but which are particularly noticeable in the murder plays.⁽¹⁾ We are made less acquainted with the characters and motives of the persons than with the trivial details of their surroundings and their habits of life. From Two Lamentable Tragedies we learn that Williams, when he flies in horror from Merry's house, goes to lodge at the Three Cranes, that Beech lived 'neare Lambert Hill', and that his body is carried piece-meal to 'Paris-garden ditch' and to 'Bainerdes Castle', near the waterman's stairs. In Arden of Feversham we are made aware of the precise location of Arden's London lodging; we see him come forth from walking in Paul's; we learn at what inn he dines and how much he pays for his meal. We know, too, what road he takes from London to Feversham, and at what point the assassins wait for him. In Edward IV. scenes take place at the Marshalsea, at 'the Flower de Luce Inn in Lombard Street', at the Guildhall, and in other familiar corners of London. In A Warning for Fair Women it is made clear that Sanders' shop is 'against Saint Dunstan's Church near Billingsgate', not near 'Saint Dunstan's in Fleet street', and that on his return from Greenwich Sanders lands at the Lion quay, not at Billingsgate. For the Elizabethan

(1) The Yorkshire Tragedy is a partial exception; in it there is no attempt at localization beyond the indefinite statement that the scenes are in London and at Coverley Hall.

audience, this careful localizing of the scenes of the plays in definite, familiar London places must have created a strong illusion of reality.

The small details of private life were not less carefully portrayed. In A Woman Killed with Kindness, the whole organization of the household, down to the very serving of the meals, is shown. In A Warning, as Anne Sanders sits in the shop door with her little son, we hear the inconsequential, pleasant family chatter of supper, and school, and new apparel. It would be easy to multiply examples. All the irrelevant minutiae of daily life are brought upon the stage. That this portrayal of the immaterial is not due to crudity of technique, but is rather a conscious device on the part of the author, in accordance with a definitely conceived realistic creed, is shown by numerous passages from the plays. The epilog to Arden of Feversham is typical:

Gentlemen, we hope youle pardon this naked Tragedy,
Wherein no filed points are foisted in
To make it gracious to the eare or eye;
For simple trueth is gracious enough,
And needes no other points of glosing stuffe. (1)

Through this quality of contemporary realism, bourgeois tragedy is related to two contemporary comic types: simple vernacular comedy, and the comedy of manners. The two types constitute bourgeois comedy. By vernacular comedy, I mean those plays which give a faithful picture of the life of the time

(1) Arden of Feversham, V, epilog, 14-18. Other passages in point are these: the prologs to A Woman Killed with Kindness, The English Traveller, and A Warning for Fair Women, I, 86-89; II, 1697-1706.

regarded through middle-class eyes from an entirely **unmoral**, humorous point of view. Of this type of comedy, the direct outgrowth of the humorous scenes in the moralities and the homely fooling of Gammer Gurton's Needle, Dekker's Shoemaker's Holiday and The Wise Woman of Hogsdon, sometimes attributed to Heywood, are typical examples. The comedy of manners is a slightly later development from vernacular comedy, differing from it chiefly in its somewhat satirical tone; its amusement is tinged with a touch of scorn for the **weaknesses of the class** represented. Of this 'careless, witty, conscienceless, satirical comedy',⁽¹⁾ Middleton's plays are typical. Both vernacular comedy and the comedy of manners are like bourgeois tragedy in **their** contemporary realism. They are definitely localized, usually in London, and they, too, are filled with the bustle of Elizabethan daily life. Moreover, they, too, often deal with middle-class life **on** its seamy side, and sometimes with situations similar to those of bourgeois tragedy. The situation in The Wise Woman of Hogsdon is not unlike that in The Fair Maid of Bristow, and The London Prodigal affords an even closer parallel. The difference between bourgeois tragedy and bourgeois comedy — and it is a fundamental one, made particularly striking by their similarity of setting — is the difference in point of view. Bourgeois comedy intellectualizes the complications of life, seizing upon their su-

(1) Schelling, F.E., English Lit. during the Lifetime of Shakespeare, 107.

perfidiously amusing aspects, and avoiding or making light of their moral implications. In the case of the comedies of manners, the contrast is especially marked because these comedies are frequently given to the vulgar handling of vice and immorality, without the saving grace of clean humor or the redeeming touch of moral purpose. They are viciously sophisticated, lacking the naive joyousness of simple vernacular comedy and the equally naive moral-mindedness of bourgeois tragedy.

It is clear that while bourgeois tragedy is unmistakably related to bourgeois comedy, in that both are an expression of the new, Elizabethan middle-class consciousness, and the resulting satisfaction of the people in seeing folk like themselves upon the stage, the relation is not due to the influence of one type upon the other. Bourgeois comedy is the expression of the Elizabethan's characteristic sense of humor, which was broad enough for him to laugh at himself; bourgeois tragedy is the expression of his equally characteristic moral view of life.

Bourgeois comedy and bourgeois tragedy unite in giving an unrivalled picture of the life of the time. They have in common an implied realistic creed which is best expressed in a very limited interpretation of Hamlet's statement that the purpose of a play is 'to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the

very age and body of the time his form and pressure.'⁽¹⁾

The nature of bourgeois tragedy is significantly affected by the fact of its close relation to actual contemporary history. Of the twenty-four tragedies of our list, at least twelve,⁽²⁾ probably more, are based on real events of comparatively recent occurrence. These include the earlier plays, which established the standards for the type. The events which furnished the material for the plays were sensational crimes which so aroused public interest that all their details were set forth at length in pamphlets and even in the chronicles. These accounts were circumstantial to the last degree. They began as far back as possible in the lives of the persons concerned, traced all events up to the commission of the crime, and all subsequent events up to the actual execution of legal sentence. Consequently, when the dramatist took such a crime for a subject, he was dealing with matter already familiar to his public. Much of the effectiveness of such plays for an Elizabethan audience was dependent on their being true, a quality often emphasized in the prolog's appeal for a sympathetic hearing. The people would not tolerate a tampering with what they knew to be the facts, much as a child will not tolerate any change, however slight, in the telling of a familiar story.

Consequently, the writer of these true tragedies of com-

(1) Hamlet, III, 2, 21-24.

(2) Arden of Feversham, A Warning, Yorkshire Tragedy, Miseries of Enforced Marriage, Witch of Edmonton (Witch plot), Page of Plymouth, Edward IV, Tragedy of Merry, Two Lamentable Tragedies, Cox of Collumpton, Cartwright, The Late Murther.

mon life was constrained to follow with slavish accuracy the precise details of the occurrence which furnished his plot. He was thus led to represent incidents which were only accidentally connected with his theme, and which, while strengthening the realistic effect, detracted from the tragic significance of the play. That the dramatists who accepted these limitations of fact sometimes found the demands of scrupulous fidelity to the actual somewhat irksome is shown in the epilog of A Warning for Fair Women. The author craves indulgence for the faults of his play by saying,

Now of truth I sing,
And should I adde; or else diminish aught,
Many of the spectators then could say,
I have committed error in my play. (1)

This faithful adherence to the mere facts of the case vitally affected the organization of the bourgeois tragedies. ✓ Their characteristic technique is dictintly^{ly} narrative rather than dramatic. (2) They are made up of a series of episodes whose chief connection is their chronological sequence in the lives of a particular group of persons. The connection between the incidents is of an accidental sort; many of them might be omitted -- as, for instance, several of the attempts on the life of Arden or of Sanders -- without injuring the intelligibility of the plot. In a story, incidents are legitimately included which are associated through their time-sequence only. 'What happened next?' is a question which may properly be an-

(1) A Warning for Fair Women, II, 1700-1703.

(2) This narrative organization is, in part, a heritage from the miracle cycles, and, in part, the result of the Elizabethan love of sensation and rapid action. Its persistence, however, in bourgeois tragedy at a time when dramatic principles were already being worked out in heroic tragedy, is certainly due to the nature of the subject matter.

swered. For tragedy, the vital question is, 'Why did it happen so?' Only those incidents belong to the plot which are logically related through **their** significance as an expression of character. ⁽¹⁾ In bourgeois tragedy, the over-emphasis on incident results in a weakness of characterization. These plays do not effect an organic union of the two elements of drama: plot and character. They represent a succession of sensational episodes; they do not successfully portray character in action. They show a series of events through which certain persons come to their ruin, but there seems to be no necessary and vital connection between the doer and his deed. They show clearly enough the dangers of certain types of action, but they do not show the dangers of certain types of character. For instance, so far as their characters are revealed, there is nothing in Mistress Arthur to differentiate her from Anne Sanders; yet the one is steadfastly virtuous through many trials, while the other falls easily into temptation. Their fates seem more the outcome of circumstances than of their own natures. They are only pegs on which to hang the plot. Since in bourgeois tragedy character is so definitely subordinated to plot, there is no character development. The persons are static, all of a piece; it is events that move.

This over-emphasis on events, with the consequent weakness of characterization, is not to be found in all bour-

(1) See in this connection, Fairchild, A.H.R., The Making of Poetry, 85-91.

geous tragedies to an equal degree. Even in the best of them, however, there is superfluity of incident and incompleteness of motivation. In A Woman Killed with Kindness, all that Frankford does is comprehensible as the natural expression of a character which we understand; but Mrs. Frankford is merely a puppet. Because her inner nature is never revealed, her action is inexplicable. In Arden of Feversham, Alice Arden's deed is the expression of her personality, but the other persons are related only mechanically to the plot. The emphasis of the play, moreover, is not on the development in Alice Arden's soul of a murderous purpose fostered by overmastering passion; it is on the long series of attempts on Arden's life, which are thwarted by accidents which have no importance for character, but which intensify suspense and concentrate attention on the physical, rather than the spiritual, significance of the deed. In The Witch of Edmonton, Frank Thorney is a victim of events rather than an active agent in shaping circumstances. Although he commits a dastardly crime, at no time does he manifest any criminal impulse in his own nature. His fatal deed is no real part of him. A Warning for Fair Women furnishes an even clearer example of the subordination of character to story. The decline of Anne Sanders' character — her gradual degradation from innocent wifehood to illicit love and passive acquiescence in murder — is properly

the core of the tragedy. The play, however, relegates to allegorical dumb-show Anne's gradual yielding to evil promptings, in order to reserve the main action for a detailed representation of the attempts on Sanders' life, and the sentencing and execution of the murderers.

Through their episodic plots, their heaping up of events which merely adhere without necessary connection, the murder-play group, and, to some extent, the other tragedies of common life, fall short of that ideal unity which Aristotle postulates of tragedy.⁽¹⁾ None has organic wholeness. They do not, like a plant, grow by development from within; they grow like a snowball, by accretion from without.

The fact that bourgeois tragedy draws its material from real events in English life indicates one important aspect of the very close relation of the type to the chronicle-history plays. This relation is emphasized by the narrative structure which is characteristic of both types, and it is made unmistakable by other similarities which we shall discuss later.

The chronicle-histories draw their plots from circumstantial accounts of real events, as do some of the bourgeois tragedies. Their emphasis on truth often leads them into a similar sort of realism, and their intent to portray the real course of events leads them to center the interest on action. Their characteristic looseness of organization is indicated in such a title

(1) Butcher, S.H., Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art: Poetics, VIII, XXIII, 1-3. Butcher's whole essay on Poetic Truth is in point here.

as the following: The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the first, sirnamed Edward Longshankes, with his return from the holy land. Also the life of Llevellyn rebell in Wales. Lastly the sinking of Queene Elinor, who sunck at Charing-crosse, and rose againe at Potters-hith, now named Queene-hith. Such titles too, as The Life and Death of Jack Straw, The Famous Victories of King Henry V., and the more detailed First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey: And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the tragicall end of the proud Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Jack Cade. And the Duke of Yorkes first claim Unto the Crowne, suggest, as the reading of the plays confirms, that the chief purpose of the chronicle play was 'the scenic representation of history', and that it followed the method of history in its emphasis on events, and in its arrangement of them according to the chronological, rather than the dramatic, sequence. Even in the hands of Marlowe and of Shakespeare, the chronicle-play retained its narrative technique, although it was freed of its cumbrous irrelevancy. Our interest in Edward II. is primarily in the march of events from the accession of Edward to the death of Mortimer. Richard II is, indeed, a tragedy, but Henry V. is a panorama of events not connected in themselves, and unified only by the fact that

through them all moves the commanding figure of the king.

The similarity of technique between bourgeois tragedy and chronicle-history serves to call attention to a much more extensive parallel between the types. Not only are they both based on fact and both narrative in technique, but they are both indigenous English types which grew up in the same age, as a result of the same influences, and which flourished and died out together; they were played, for the most part, by the same companies; they were written by the same men; they were similar in purpose.

The remarkable resemblance between bourgeois tragedy and chronicle-history is not due to the influence exercised by one type upon the other. It is due to the fact that they both express, through different mediums, the same popular interests. The most salient characteristic of both is their distinctively English spirit. They express two complementary phases of the new national self-consciousness. As a result of the great tide of patriotism which swept over England in the reign of Elizabeth, and which reached its flood after the defeat of the Armada, a new interest in the national past was aroused among the people. This interest is reflected in the chronicle-histories. Likewise, under Elizabeth, the forces which strengthened national feeling also fostered the allied feeling of middle-class strength and importance. This is the feeling which

made possible the tragedy of common life.

Both types came to being at about the same time. Their rise was certainly due in part to the founding of public theaters, which brought to the drama a large London public and created a demand for new plays most easily met by the dramatizing of familiar material of sure popular appeal. There were some semi-historical moralities of the mid-century, but the chronicle-history as a distinct species does not appear before 1586 or 87.⁽¹⁾ Arden of Feversham, which, although it is not the first attempt at bourgeois tragedy, is surely the play which really established the type, was written about the same time.⁽²⁾ According to Professor Schelling, from 1588 to a year or two after the close of Elizabeth's reign is the period in which the chronicle-history flourished. These dates also set approximate limits for bourgeois tragedy. Between 1608 and 1642, there are only four plays which belong to this group. The Stuart regime brought with it a decline of fervid nationalism and a growing public hostility toward the theaters, which caused the certain decline of types so essentially of the people as were the chronicle-history and bourgeois tragedy.

From Henslowe's Diary we learn that Heywood, Dekker, Chettle, Day, Ford, Wilson, and even Webster and Jonson, wrote both chronicle-histories and bourgeois tragedies; and that the

(1) Schelling, F. E., Elizabethan Drama, I, 257.

(2) See below, Chapter IV.

same companies, notably the Admiral's, played them.⁽¹⁾

The tragedies of common life and the history plays are not alike in external characteristics only. They are similar, too, in purpose. They do not bring upon the stage stirring events in national history or tragic deeds in private life merely to afford the groundlings an hour's entertainment. They both inculcate the virtues of citizenship. In the chronicle-histories, the public duty of patriotism is taught. As Heywood puts it: 'Plays are writ with this aim, and carried with this method, to teach their subjects obedience to their King, to show the people the untimely ends of such as have moved tumults, commotions and insurrections, to present them with the flourishing estates of such as live in obedience, exhorting them to allegiance, dehorting them from all traitorous and felonious stratagems.'⁽²⁾ In the bourgeois tragedies, on the other hand, the private virtues are taught by showing the certain downfall of vice.

(1) Greg, W. W., Henslowe's Diary, passim.

(2) Heywood, Thomas, An Apology for Actors, O. Shak. Soc., 16, 52-53.

✓ The fact that a considerable number of the bourgeois tragedies derive their plots from recent events in English life indicates the very significant relation of the type to two popular, non-dramatic literary forms, the pamphlets and the ballads on events of popular interest. Since these pamphlets and ballads are identical in purpose and in subject matter, the same events being recounted in both, it is possible to discuss them together. A somewhat extended account of the nature of these pamphlets and ballads is necessary before their really vital connection with bourgeois tragedy can be shown.

An examination of The Stationers' Registers shows that every striking occurrence, from a witch trial or the burning of a market-town to the victory over the Invincible Armada, brought forth a cloud of pamphlets and ballads which related ✓ the facts in detail. ~~After~~ **T**hey were registered for publication within a day or two after the event of which they tell. They were, indeed, practically the newspapers — we might say, the yellow journals — of the age. Of these pamphlets catering to public curiosity, a very large number was naturally devoted to reporting sensational crimes, giving in detail the circumstances of the crime, the detection of the criminal, his trial, and his execution. The ballads were almost equally detailed in their accounts, and they sometimes acquired an additional, somewhat morbid interest by purporting to be the con-

fessions and lamentations of the criminals, written by themselves immediately before their execution. Their topical interest is, however, only one aspect of the pamphlets and ballads. It is easy to over-estimate their merely journalistic quality. They combined the function of the newspaper with that of the sermon. They are unfailingly didactic. The people who believed the plague to be a visitation of God's wrath were ready to give a religious interpretation to any untoward occurrence, and must have received with pious joy the morals drawn from heinous crimes, and the exhortations of murderers to profit by their evil example. Indeed, a reading of these pamphlets on recent crimes carries the conviction that their purpose was not so much to convey the news as to take advantage of an opportunity to point by immediate and striking illustration Heaven's punishment of sin.

The closing words of The Murder of John Brewen, a pamphlet which was published very soon after the detection and punishment of the murderers, are entirely typical of the pamphlet tone and method.

The Lord give all men grace by their example to shunne the hateful sinne of murder, for be it kept never so close, and done never so secret, yet at length the Lord will bring it out; for bloude is an incessant crier in the eares of the Lord, and he will not leave so vilde a thing unpunished. (1)

The introduction to another murder pamphlet, the one presumably written by the minister who converted the murderers

(1) Boas, F. S., Works of Thomas Kyd. p. 2

of George Sanders, shows definitely that such things were written more to point a moral lesson than to glut vulgar curiosity:

While some do justly detest the horribleness of the ungratious facte, some lament the greevous losse of their deare friends, some rejoyce at the commendable execution of upright justice, the godlye bewayle the unmeasurable inclination of humane nature to extreame wickednesse, and therewith magnifie God's infinite mercie in revoking of forlorne sinners to finall repentance, many delight to heare and tell newes, without respect of the certentie of the truth, or regarde of dewe humanitie, every man debating of the matter as occasion or affection leades him, and few folke turning the advised consideration of God's open judgements to the speedie reformation of their owne secrete faults: It is thought convenient (gentle reader) to give thee a playne declaration of the whole matter.....that thou mayst knowe the truth to the satisfying of thy mind, and the avoyding of miscredite, and also use the example to the amendment of thy life. Notwithstanding thou shalt not look for a full discoverie of every particular bymatter appendant to the presente case, which might serve to feede the fond humor of such curious appetites as are more inquisitive of other folkes offenses than hastie to redresse their owne; for that were neyther expedient nor necessarie.(1)

The fact that many of the pamphlets which contain accounts of murders were not written until years after the commission of the crimes, and after other pamphlets on the subject had long been in circulation, shows that their purpose was not

(1) Simpson, R., School of Shakespeare, II, 221.

primarily to disseminate news. An anonymous pamphlet published by Thomas Scarlett in 1590 tells of murders committed nearly twenty years before. Anthony Munday's View of Sundry Examples takes its illustrations from crimes committed within the previous seven years, on most of which pamphlets and ballads had already been written. It is a particularly good example of the didactic intent of the pamphlets, as its very title shows: 'A view of Examples, meete to be perused of all faythfull Christians.' It opens with a quotation from the Bible; quotes numerous examples of the great wickedness of man, commenting upon them and applying the Scriptures; and closes by drawing the attention of London to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, and by exhorting to penitence and prayer.⁽¹⁾

The ballads are equally given to moralizing on the great sins of which they give account. One completely typical example is, perhaps, sufficient. The following stanzas are quoted from the Lamentation of Master Page's Wife of Plimmouth,⁽²⁾ a ballad supposed to be written by her own hand immediately before her execution for the murder of her husband:

My loathed life too late I doe lament;
My hatefull deed with heart I doe repent;
A wife I was that wilfull went awry,
And for that fault am here prepar'd to die.

(1) C. Shak. Soc. Pub., 11, 67-103.

(2) Ballad Society Publications, 6, 555-556. Stanzas 2, 11, and 12.

Methinkes that heaven cries vengeance for my fact;
 Methinkes the world condemns my monstrous act;
 Methinkes, within, my conscience tells me true,
 That for that deed Hell fier is my due.

My pensive life doth sorrow for my sinne;
 For this offence my soule doth bleed within;
 Yet mercy, Lord! for mercy doe I cry!
 Save thou my soule, and let my body dye!

From these quotations, which might be reenforced by many more, it is clear that the pamphlets and ballads which give account of recent events, usually notable crimes in English middle-class life, are akin to bourgeois tragedy not only in the nature of their subjects, but in their definitely moral purpose as well. (1) The parallel is especially remarkable because the three forms deal not only with the same type of subject, but actually with precisely the same incidents. This fact suggests the possibility of immediate dependence between them. The following table gives all the known data in regard to bourgeois tragedies, pamphlets, and ballads on the same subjects. From it we shall draw definite conclusions in regard to the exact nature of their relations.

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- (1) The murder pamphlet and the murder ballad are still living types. A modern instance is to be found in the chap-book and the ballads on the murder of the Meeks family near Browning, Missouri, in 1894. (See The Mid-West Quarterly, January, 1914. 'A Study in Contemporary Balladry', by Professor H.M. Belden of the University of Missouri.) A comparison of the modern vulgar ballads with the Elizabethan ones shows that the twentieth century is as avid for morbid details as was the sixteenth, but that it has lost its taste for moralizing. The Meeks ballads contain conventional and rather canting allusions to the direction of Heaven and Providence, but they lack the note of conviction that we find shining through the cheap doggerel of the Elizabethan murder ballad.

PLAYS

PAMPHLETS

BALLADS

ARDEN OF FEVER-SHAM, 1585-92.'A cruell murder donne in
Kent.' (1) 1577.'The complaint and lam-
entation of Mistresse
Arden of Feversham in
Kent, who, for the love
of one Mosbie, hired
certaine Ruffians and
Villaines most cruelly
to murder her Husband;
with the fatall end of
her and her associats.' (2)
1633(?)TWO LAMENTABLETRAGEDIES, (3)

1594-1601

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- (1) There is no sure ground for supposing that this pamphlet actually recounted the murder of Arden. It is merely a possible conjecture, not susceptible of proof. The fact, however, that we do not know definitely that there were pamphlets on the subject does not by any means justify the assumption that there were none. Neither does the fact that the play follows rather closely the account in Holinshed's Chronicle (In the first edition, 1703-08, under the date 1552. An. reg. 5. It is quoted at length in Bullen's edition of the play.) prove that the play was based directly on the Chronicle. On the contrary, the presence of a long, elaborately detailed account of a crime committed in 1551 in a chronicle not printed until 1578 (The Stationers' Registers, II, 329) almost forces the conclusion that the Chronicles' version is based on a contemporary account of the crime. That it was the practise of chroniclers to draw their statements from such pamphlets is proved by the fact that both Holinshed's and Stow's accounts of the murder of George Sanders, a crime of the comparatively recent date of 1573, are merely abridged from Clarke's or Nowell's pamphlet, retaining in many passages the exact phraseology. This practise leads us to believe that there were pamphlet accounts of the murder of Arden, and it is entirely possible that the differences in detail between the play and the chronicle are due to the fact that different pamphlets were used as sources.
- (2) Roxburghe Ballads, III, 156. Ballad Soc. Pub., 34, 46-53. The ballad is in two parts. It is almost certainly the ballad, entitled 'The complaint of Mistresse Arden' which was entered in The Stationers' Registers, July 8, 1633, to Cuthbert Wright. (Arber op.cit. IV, 299.) It is one of a long list of ballads, most of them old.
- (3) See The Tragedy of Merry.

PLAYS

PAMPHLETS

BALLADS

A WARNING FORFAIR WOMEN,

1597-99.

'A briefe discourse of the late murther of master George Sanders a worshipfull Citizen of London: and of the apprehension,arraignment and execution of the principall and accessaries of the same.'(1) 1573.

'George Sanders.'(4) 1624(?)

'A View of Sundry Examples. Reporting all memorable murthers since the murther of Maister Saunders by George Browne.'(2) 1580. Anthony Munday.

'Sundry strange an inhuman murders lately committed.....wherein is described the odiousness of murther, with the vengeance which God inflicteth on murtherers.'(3) 1591.

BLACK BATEMAN,(5)

1598.

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- (1) The pamphlet is reprinted in Simpson's School of Shakespeare, II, 220-239. Simpson attributes the pamphlet to Clarke or Nowell. Singer says that it is Golding's (Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel, 21).
- (2) O. Shak. Soc. Pub., II, 67-103.
- (3) I have not seen this. It is mentioned by Singer and by Simpson.
- (4) Arber, E., Stationers' Registers, IV, 151. Simpson says that no ballads on the subject are known, but 'George Sanders' is entered as one of a group of old ballads on Dec. 14, 1624.
- (5) See The Vow Breaker.

PLAYS

PAMPHLETS

BALLADS

EDWARD IV, 1599.

'The abuse of beautye
represented under the
title of SHORE'S
wife.'(1) 1593.

'Ye Lamentacon of Mistres
Jane Shore.'(2) 1603.

'The woefull Lamentation
of Mrs. Jane Shore, a
goldsmith's wife in Lon-
don, sometime King Edward
The Fourth's Concubine,
who for her Wanton Life
came to a Miserable End.
Set forth for the Example
of all wicked Livers.'

'The second part of Jane
Shore, wherein her sor-
rowful husband bewaileth
his own Estate and Wife's
Wantoness, the wrong of
Marriage, the Fall of
Pride; being a Warning
for Women.'(3)

PAGE OFPLYMOUTH, 1599.

'Sundry strange and in-
humaine Murthers lately
committed....The second
of Master Page of Ply-
mouth murthered by the
consent of his owne
wife.'(4) 1591.

'The Lamentation of Master
Page's wife of Plimmouth,
who being enforced by her
parents to wed him against
her will, did most wickedly
consent to his murther, for
the love of George Strang-
widge; for which fact she
suffered death at Barn-
staple in Devonshire.
Written with her owne hand
a little before her
death.'(5) 1591.

(1) Arber, E., op.cit., II, 632.

(2) Ibid., III, 237.

(3) Roxburghe Ballads, I, 162, 163. Ballad Soc. Pub., 6, 479-492. The editor identifies this ballad with that entered on the Stationers' books in 1603. The version here printed is as late as the middle of the seventeenth century. The first part is ascribed to T. Deloney

(4) O. Shak. Soc. Pub., 7, XXXIII, title; 18, 79-85 - reprint of part dealing with Page. The pamphlet was printed in 1591, without being registered.

(5) Roxburghe Ballads, I, 182. Ballad Soc. Pub., 6, 554-558. The earliest edition was printed by Thomas Scarlett, who was also the publisher of the pamphlet.

PLAYS

PAMPHLETS

BALLADS

PAGE OFPLYMOUTH

(Continued)

'The Lamentation of George Strangwidge, who, for consenting to the death of Master Page of Plimmouth, suffered death at Barnstable.' (1)

'The sorrowful complaint of Mistris Page, for causing her husband to be murdered for the love of George Strangwidge, who were executed together.' (2)

'Page of Plimouth.' (3)

THE STEPMOTHER'STRAGEDY, 1599.

'The most cruell and tyranous murther committed by a mother in lawe upon a child of Seaven yeres of age in Westminster in this yere.' (4)
1588.

THE TRAGEDY OFMERRY, 1599.

'A true discourse of a most cruell and barbarous murther committed by one THOMAS MERRY on the persons of ROBERT BEECHE and THOMAS WINCHESTER his servaunt on ffrideaie night the 23th of August, beinge Bartholomue Eve. 1594. Together with

'BEECHE his ghoste. complayninge on ye wofull murder committed on him and on THOMAS WINCHESTER his servaunt.' (5)

'A lamentable ballad describing the wofull murder of ROBERT BEECHE.' (6)
'The pitifull lamentacon of Rachell Merrye who

(1) Roxburghe Ballads, I, 183, 558-560.

(2) Ibid., I, 183, 561-563.

(3) Arber, E., op.cit., IV., 131. It is entered with a group of old ballads, Dec. 14, 1624.

(4) Arber, E., op.cit., II, 486. It is by no means certain that the ballad was based on the same event as the non-extant play. Its title, however, is suggestive.

(5) Arber, E., op.cit., IV, 658. August 29, 1594.

(6) Ibid., IV, 659. September 3, 1594.

PLAYS

PAMPHLETS

BALLADS

THE TRAGEDY OF
MERRY.

the order of his ar-
raygment and execu-
con.' (1)

suffred in Smithfield
with her brother Thomas
Merrye the Vjth of Sep-
tember 1594.' (2)

(Continued)

'The lamentable ende of
THOMAS MERRYE and RACHELL
his sister.' (3) 1594.

'The lamentacon of THOMAS
MERRYE.' (4)

WILLIAMCARTWRIGHT,

1602.

(5)
'Three bloodie murders.'
1613.

'Francis Cartwright's
publique repentance
for his bloody sinne.' (6)
1621.

THE MISERIESOF ENFORCEDMARRIAGE, (7)

1605-1607

(1) Arber, E., op.cit., II, 658. August 29, 1594.

(2) Ibid., II, 659. September 7, 1594.

(3) Ibid., II, 659. September 7, 1594.

(4) Ibid., II, 659. September 9, 1594.

(5) I have not seen this. Singer (Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel, 34)

states that it contains the story of the murder.

(6) Arber, E., op.cit., IV., 54.
Greg (op.cit., II, 224) quotes Collier as saying that the play
was founded on the murder of a clergyman named Storr by Cartwright.
This statement Greg questions, pointing out that the murderer's
name was Francis, not William. The discrepancy of names does not
seem to me an insuperable difficulty, especially since Henslowe
was far from accurate in regard to names. It is quite possible
that in entering the play he set down by mistake the familiar
name of the Admiral's players, William Cartwright, whose name ap-
pears elsewhere in the Diary, instead of the correct title,
Francis Cartwright.

(7) See The Yorkshire Tragedy.

PLAYS

PAMPHLETS

BALLADS

THE YORKSHIRETRAGEDY,

1605-1608

'Twoo unnaturall Murthers. the one practiced by master COVERLEY a Yorkshire gentleman uppon his wife and happened on his children the 23 of Aprilis' (1) 1605.

'A Lamentable Murther Donne in Yorkshire by a gentleman uppon 2 of his owne children sore woundinge his Wyfe and Nurse.' (2) 1605.

'The Arraignment Condempnacon and Execucon of Master COVERLY at Yorke in Auguste 1605.' (3)

THE WITCH OFEDMONTON,

1621-58

'The Wonderfull Discovery of Elizabeth Sawyer a witch late of Edmonton. Henry Goodcole. (4) 1621.

THE LATE MURDEROF THE SONNEUPPON THE MOTHER,

1624

'A most bloudy unnaturall and unmatched murther committed in Whitechappell by NATHANAELL TINDALL uppon his owne mother.' (5) 1624.

'The Repentance of NATHANAELL TINDALL that killed his mother.' (6)

(1) Arber, E., *op.cit.*, III, 292. June 12, 1605.

(2) *Ibid.*, III, 295. July 3, 1605.

(3) *Ibid.*, III, 299. August 24, 1605.

(4) *Ibid.*, IV., 55. April 27, 1621.

(5) *Ibid.*, IV., 123. September 16, 1624. Both this entry and the following one are only conjecturally related to the play. Tindall's crime was committed in the summer of 1624, and in September, the play was on the stage. In Munday's *View of Sunday Examples*, there are mentioned two similar crimes: 'Example of Thomas Hil, at Feversam, who kild his owne mother', and 'example of Quernby, who kild his Mother.' If, however, the play was concerning one of these murders, the word *late* is used with considerable license.

(6) *Ibid.*, IV., 120. July 2, 1624. There was also a ballad, 'Purchas yat killed his mother,' entered Dec. 14, 1624, which may have had some relation to the subject of the play.

PLAYS

THE VOW BREAKER,
1620-1636.

PAMPHLETS

'Bateman's Tragedy: Or,
the Perjured Bride justly
Rewarded. Being the His-
tory of the Unfortunate
Love of German's Wife and
Young Bateman.' (1) 1710.

BALLADS

'A Warninge for fayre
maides by The example
of Jarman's wife.' (2)
1608.

'Bateman.' (3) 1624

(1) Greg, W.W., Henslowe's Diary, II, 193.

(2) Ibid., III, 236. June 8, 1603.

(3) Ibid., IV, 130. The ballad is entered with a number of others, most of them old. This is probably a reprint of the ballad entered in 1603. It appears in an undated version (Ballad Soc. Pub., 13, 193-197) as 'A Warning for Maidens: or, Young Bateman'. In the Pepys and Bagford Collections it has this fuller title: 'A godly warning for all maidens, by the example of God's judgement shewed on one Jermain's wife of Clifton, in the County of Nottingham, who, lying in child-bed, was born away, and never heard of after.' The editor notes that this is the ballad referred to as 'The Devil and ye dainty dames' in Fletcher's Monsieur Thomas, III, 3. Wallrath, in his edition of the play, transcribes the ballad under the title of Bateman's Tragedy, from Ritson's Ancient Songs and Ballads.

Our table does not, of course, contain an absolutely complete record of the parallel cases of plays, pamphlets, and ballads based on recent events in English middle-class life. There were, no doubt, pamphlets, ballads, and plays of which no record survives. Many plays which were never printed appeared on the popular stage, as Henslowe's Diary shows; many pamphlets and ballads were printed which were not registered, as the existence of 'Sundry strange and inhuman murders' and the ballads on the murder of Beech testifies. Nevertheless, we have a sufficient body of evidence from which to determine the relations of the type.

From the table we learn that for all the fourteen plays based on real events there were corresponding pamphlets or ballads, usually both, and sometimes several of each. Of these plays, we can be sure in the case of one only that it was based directly on a pamphlet. That is A Warning for Fair Women, which was written more than twenty years after the crime of which it tells. It is highly probable, too, that the ultimate source of Arden of Feversham was a pamphlet, and that Page of Plymouth, which was written eight years after the murder, drew its details from a pamphlet or a ballad. In the case of Two Lamentable Tragedies, The Witch of Edmonton, A Yorkshire Tragedy, and The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, the plays are close enough to the events of which they tell to make the assumption of a pamphlet or ballad source unnecessary. The Tragedy of Merry was probably derived from Two Lamentable Tragedies. The Vow Breaker is the only play which is certainly based on a ballad. The proof of its dependence is its quoting of some lines from the ballad of

Bateman. In the case of Cartwright and The Vow Breaker, the only pamphlets we know of are later than the plays, and it seems not improbable that in these cases the plays inspired the pamphlets. The play of Edward IV. was later than the pamphlet given in our table, but that pamphlet was probably inspired by the old Tragedy of Richard III., which has some scenes in which Shore's wife appears. There is no reason for assuming dependence between pamphlet and play. The Jane Shore ballads of which we have record are later than the play and were no doubt published because of the interest which the play aroused, but the subject of Edward's love for the goldsmith's wife was a theme which, like his encounters with the Tanner of Tamworth, was probably treated in earlier ballads. The ballad on the murder of Arden of Feversham is in its present form certainly based on the play, although there may have been earlier ballads. The ballad of Bateman is later than the play of Black Bateman, but there is no certain dependence.

We see, then, that plays sometimes drew their details directly from pamphlets or ballads; and that, on the other hand, pamphlets and ballads were sometimes based on plays; while in other cases there is probably no dependence between them. Indeed, the very fact that the same event gave rise to both pamphlets and ballads which were entirely independent responses to the same stimulus of public interest, suggests the probability that bourgeois tragedy may well have been

equally independent.

It is distinctly not true to say that bourgeois tragedy is an outgrowth of the Elizabethan topical pamphlets and ballads, as modern plays are sometimes the outgrowth of popular novels, and as some eighteenth century bourgeois tragedies were the outgrowth of novels of middle-class family life. The bourgeois tragedy, the pamphlet, and the ballad are three alternative forms which popular interest in sensational events susceptible of moral interpretation took in the sixteenth century. The pamphlet and ballad-writing actively began earlier only because the drama could not respond immediately to the tastes of the people until after the establishment of public theaters. There are, as would be natural under the circumstances, some individual examples of direct dependence between the types, but these relations are reciprocal. Bourgeois tragedy as a type is in no sense derived from the pamphlet and the ballad.

Chapter IV: A Chronological List of the Bourgeois Tragedies,
with Authorities for the Dates Given

The following list is an attempt to establish, so far as possible, the chronology of bourgeois tragedy. The chief sources are Henslowe's Diary and The Stationers' Registers. Absolute certainty as to when plays were written or first acted, except in the case of those bought by Henslowe while they were in course of composition, is not possible. The fact that plays are known to have been printed or registered for publication at a certain date is by no means a sure indication that those plays were new. On the contrary, actors tried to keep from print their dramas which were new on the stage.⁽¹⁾ In the case of plays which are based on known events, two dates are given; the date of the event is given as a terminus a quo, and the date of printing as a terminus ad quem, with any available data which give a more exact indication of date. Similar provision is made for plays concerning which any sort of evidence indicates a date earlier than that of printing.

(1) An illustration is to be found in the case of A Woman Killed with Kindness, which was sold to Henslowe early in 1603, but was not printed until 1607.

1578. The Cruelty of a Stepmother

The only mention of this play is to be found in the Accounts of the Revels at Court, which include a list of plays given before Queen Elizabeth between Christmas and Twelfth Night, 1578-79. This is the entry: 'An history of the creweltie of A Stepmother shewen at Richmond on Innocentes daie (Dec. 28) at night enacted by the Lord Chamberlaynes servauntes.' (1)

1579. Murderous Michael

This play, also, is found only in the Revels Accounts. 'The history of Murderous Mychaell shewen at Whitehall on shrovetuesdaie (March 3) at night enacted by the Lord Chamberlaynes servauntes.' (2)

1585-92. Arden of Feversham

The Stationers' Registers show that on April 3, 1592, Edward White entered 'the tragedie of ARDEN of Feversham and BLACKWALL (Black Will)'. (3) The actual date of the first performance of the play is uncertain. Collier dates it between 1590 and 1592. (4) Fleay makes out a very good case for dating Arden as early as 1585 through references to Black Will in the old Richard III. (5) Richard III, however, was not printed until 1594, and the only reason which Fleay gives for dating it 1585 is the insufficient one that a ballad concerning Richard

(1) Materialien zur Kunde des Älteren Englischen Dramas, XXI, 286.

(2) Ibid., XXI, 303.

(3) Arber, A Transcript of the Stationers' Registers, II, 607.

(4) Collier, J.P., A History of English Dramatic Poetry, III, 54.

(5) Fleay, F.G., Chronicle of the English Drama, II, 28.

III was entered in The Stationers' Registers in August, 1586. Murray, however, without referring to Fleay, says that Richard III was played by the Queen's men as early as 1585-86.⁽¹⁾ If this date is certain, there can be no doubt that Arden was on the stage in 1585. Professor Schelling gives 1586-92 as possible dates.⁽²⁾ Mr. C. F. Tucker Brooke considers 1590 the earliest probable date.⁽³⁾ The play itself contains no evidence which assists in dating it, unless it be the negative evidence afforded by the absence of any authentic trace of influence from ⁽⁴⁾ Tamberlaine and The Spanish Tragedy, the two plays which were most strongly influencing the tragedy of the early nineties. The absence of such influence may indicate, but does not prove, the early date of Arden.

1592. Friar Francis

The play must have been on the stage before January 7, 1593, when the profits from its performance, not as a new play, are noted in Henslowe's Diary.⁽⁵⁾

1594-1601. Two Lamentable Tragedies

The play was printed without registering in 1601, with the following title-page: 'TWO LAMENTABLE TRAGEDIES. The one, of the Murther of Maister Beech A. Chaundler in Thames-streete, and his boye, done by Thomas Merry. The

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- (1) Murray, J. T., English Dramatic Companies, 8.
 (2) Schelling, F. E., Elizabethan Drama, II, 543.
 (3) Brooke, C. F. T., Shakespeare Apocrypha, xiii.
 (4) The parallels which have been pointed out to indicate a relation to Kyd are of the commonplace sort which prove nothing as to influence or authorship.
 (5) Greg, W. W., op.cit., I, 16.

other of a Young childe murdered in a Wood by two Ruffins, with the consent of his Uncle. By ROB YARRINGTON.⁽¹⁾ Professor Schelling identifies Two Tragedies with The Tragedy of Merry, which is recorded in Henslowe's accounts of 1599.⁽²⁾ Fleay⁽³⁾ and Greg⁽⁴⁾ take 1601 as the true date, considering the play to be a combination of The Tragedy of Merry with The Orphan's Tragedy, which is mentioned immediately after it twice in Henslowe.⁽⁵⁾ The earlier date, 1594, is that of the crime on which the plot with which we are concerned is based.⁽⁶⁾ Bullen judges from internal evidence — the baldness of the language and the extreme crudity of the stage directions — that the play was written some years earlier than 1601.⁽⁷⁾ Although judgements based on crudity of technique are not final, because such crudity may indicate the weakness of the author rather than the early date of his work, I am disposed to think it inherently more probable that Two Tragedies followed hard upon the crime of 1594, Merry being a later expansion and re-working of the same material. The general resemblances to A Warning for Fair Women, especially in the Induction, may as easily be due to imitation by the author of A Warning as to imitation by Yarrington.

(1) Bullen, A.H., Old Plays, IV, 5.

(2) Schelling, F.E., op.cit., I, 346, note 4.

(3) Fleay, F.G., op.cit., II, 285-86.

(4) Greg, W.W., op.cit., II, 208-209.

(5) Greg, W.W., Ibid., I, 57, 114.

(6) Arber, E., op.cit., II, 658. (The title of a tract which dates the murder August 23, 1594.)

(7) Bullen, A.H., op.cit., IV, 2.

1597. The Witch of Islington

It was performed as an old play by the Admiral's men on July 14 and 28, 1597.⁽¹⁾

1597-99. A Warning for Fair Women

The first mention of the play is the entry in The Stationers' Registers for November 17, 1599, of 'A Warnynge for fayre women'.⁽²⁾ The title page of this edition states that the play 'hath beene lately diverse times acted by the right Honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his Servantes'.⁽³⁾ Fleay dates it 1598-99.⁽⁴⁾ Professor Schelling gives 1598 as the probable date of composition.⁽⁵⁾ Ward thinks that it must have been performed 'much earlier than 1599', but apparently only because the occurrence on which it is founded happened in 1573.⁽⁶⁾ Bullen is disposed to date it earlier than Arden of Feversham.⁽⁷⁾ Dr. R. Sachs states that it was written soon after 1590, but he gives no evidence in support of the date.⁽⁸⁾ Such internal evidence as there is for the dating of the play is to be found in the Induction, which shows that the play was not written before the vogue for revenge tragedies and for chronicle-histories was well established. Simpson and Ward see in it references to Richard III, but such references are not conclusive; for the 'damnd tyrant' who 'to obtain a crown

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- (1) Greg, W.W., op.cit., I, 54. (2) Arber, E., op.cit., III, 151.
 (3) Simpson, Richard, The School of Shakespeare, II, 209.
 (4) Fleay, F.G., Chronicle of the English Drama, II, 54.
 (5) Schelling, F.E., Elizabethan Drama, II, 619.
 (6) Ward, A.W., English Dramatic Literature, II, 164.
 (7) Bullen, A.H., op.cit., IV, 2.
 (8) Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XXVII, 196.

Stabs, hangs, impoisons, smothers, cutteth throats' (1)
 is by no means peculiar to that play. There is, however,
 in the Induction an unmistakable reference to Lochrine:

Then, too, a filthy whining ghost,
 Lapt in some foul sheet or a leather pilch,
 Comes screaming like a pig half stick'd, (2)
 And cries, Vindicta! — Revenge, Revenge!

In Lochrine, the ghost of Albanact appears, crying,
 'Revenge! revenge for blood'. (3) It does not speak
 again until it disappears, shrieking, 'Vindicta, vin-
 dicta'. (4) In A Warning, also, the use of dumb-shows
 which are interpreted by Tragedy as chorus is very
 similar to the use of dumb-shows interpreted by Ate in
Lochrine. Such a use was not common on the popular stage.
 These resemblances, then, are sufficient to show that,
 on internal evidence, the earliest possible date assign-
 able to A Warning for Fair Women is after 1591, the
 earliest date for Lochrine, according to Professor Cun-
 liffe. (5) It seems to me highly improbable, however,
 that A Warning could have been written so early. Even
 the license of the publisher would hardly prompt him
 to speak in 1599 of a play of eight years earlier as
 'lately acted'. Moreover, until after Shakespeare's
 histories, the vogue of the history play was not so well
 established as to warrant the references in the Induc-
 tion. I give 1597 as the earliest probable date, be-

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- (1) A Warning for Fair Women, Induction, 43-44.
 (2) Ibid., 47-50.
 (3) Lochrine, III, 6, 41.
 (4) Ibid., III, 6, 54.
 (5) Cambridge History, V, 98.

cause in that year there was again, after a year's lapse, a company known as the Lord Chamberlain's.⁽¹⁾ It is not necessary to put the date so late as 1599 (the date when the Chamberlain's men first occupied the Globe) on account of the reference to the theater as 'round',⁽²⁾ for, according to Ordish, both the Theater and the Curtain were probably circular.

1598. Black Bateman of the North, Parts I and II
The first part, by Chettle, Dekker, Drayton, and Wilson, was completed in May, 1598.⁽³⁾ The second part, by Chettle and Wilson, was written in June and July of the same year.⁽⁴⁾

1599. Edward IV, Parts I and II
The first definite mention of the play, which is probably Heywood's, is in The Stationers' Registers, August 28, 1599, where it is thus entered to John Oxenbridge and John Busbie: 'The ffirst and Second parte of Edward the IIIIJ and the Tanner of Tamworth With the history of the life and death of master Shore and Jane Shore his Wyfe as it was lately acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Derbye his servantes.'⁽⁵⁾ The first dated extant edition is that of 1600. Barron Field, in his edition of the play for the Old Shakespeare Society, says that the edition of 1600 is the earliest edition,

(1) Maas, Hermann, Äussere Geschichte der Englischen Theatertruppen, 80, Materialien zur Kunde, XIX.

(2) A Warning for Fair Women, I, 88.

(3) Greg, W.W., op.cit., I, 87.

(4) Ibid., I, 89. See also Old Shak. Soc. Pub., 7, 276-277. (Admiral's Inventories).

(5) Arber, E., op.cit., III, 147.

and says that the Biographia Dramatica is wrong in supplying 1599 as the date of an edition which it cites. He is inclined to call into question the accuracy of the Biographia's quoting of the entry in The Stationers' Registers for August 28, 1599, which, beginning with 'The Life and Death of Master Shore', is an exact citation.⁽¹⁾ The 1600 edition may well be a second edition. It was issued by Oxonbridge and Lownes, to whom Busbie transferred his claim in February, 1600.⁽²⁾ Greg believes that the play was acted after Easter, 1599, probably at the Curtain.⁽³⁾ Professor Schelling gives 1594 as the probable date of acting.⁽⁴⁾ He even queries whether The Siege of London may not be Heywood's Edward IV.⁽⁵⁾ This identification is scarcely tenable, for The Siege of London belonged to the Admiral's men, and was played by them from 1594 to 1596,⁽⁶⁾ while Edward IV belonged to Derby's men. There is no sufficient reason for dating the play earlier than 1599, since it is specifically stated to have been lately acted by Derby's men, and there was no such company between 1594 and 1599.⁽⁷⁾ It is more probable that early in 1599 Heywood reorganized material already familiar to him in the old Tragedy of Richard III and The Siege of London,

(1) O. Shak. Soc. Pub., I, VIII-IX.

(2) Arber, E., op. cit., III, 147.

(3) Greg, W.W., op. cit., II, 285.

(4) Schelling, F.E., The English Chronicle Play, 280.
Elizabethan Drama, II, 561.

(5) Ibid., II, 607.

(6) Greg, W.W., op. cit., I, 21, 22, 25, 27, 42; II, 173.

(7) Fleay, F.G., A Chronicle History of the London Stage, 369.

giving special emphasis to the bourgeois tragedy element which already held a prominent place in popular drama.

1599. Page of Plymouth

The play is known only through **entries** in Henslowe's Diary of payments to Dekker and Jonson. It was written between August 10 and September 2, 1599. ⁽¹⁾

1599. The Stepmother's Tragedy

Henslowe's Diary gives the only record of the play. It was written between August and October, 1599, by Chettle and Dekker. ⁽²⁾

1599. Cox of Collumpton

This play also is known only through Henslowe's Diary, where it is variously referred to as John Cox, Cox of Collumpton, and Cox of Collinster. It was written by Day and Haughton in November, 1599. ⁽³⁾

1599. The Tragedy of Merry

From Henslowe's Diary we learn that The Tragedy of Merry was written by Day and Haughton between November 27 and December 6, 1599. ⁽⁴⁾ Under the title of Beech's Tragedy, it was licensed by the Master of Revels, January 10, 1600. ⁽⁵⁾

1602. The Bristow Tragedy

Henslowe records two payments to Day in May, 1602. ⁽⁶⁾

(1) Greg, W.W., op.cit., I, 110, 111.

(2) Ibid., I, 110, 111, 113.

(3) Ibid., I, 59, 113, 114.

(4) Ibid., I, 57, 114, 115.

(5) Ibid., I, 117.

(6) Ibid., I, 165, 167.

1602. Baxter's Tragedy

The play is said by Singer to be referred to in Halliwell's Dictionary of Old Plays, 28.⁽¹⁾

1602. William Cartwright

Henslowe records one payment to Houghton for this play on September 8, 1602.⁽²⁾

1602. How a Man May Choose a Good Wife from a Bad

The date is that on the title page of the earliest extant edition. It was printed without registration.⁽³⁾

1603. A Woman Killed with Kindness

The play, which is by Heywood, was finished by March 6, 1603, the date on which Henslowe paid for it in full.⁽⁴⁾ It was under way by Feb. 5, for Henslowe was already buying costumes for it.⁽⁵⁾ It was printed without registration in 1607.

1604-1608. The Honest Whore, Parts I and II

Before March 14, 1604, Henslowe paid to Dekker and Middleton 5 pounds for 'the pasyent man and the onest hore'.⁽⁶⁾ The Stationers' Registers show that on Nov. 9, 1604, Thomas Man, the younger, entered 'The humours of the patient man, the Longinge wyfe, and the honest Whore',⁽⁷⁾ which is indubitably the first part of the play. The second part may have followed immediately upon the first. It was certainly played before April 29, 1608, for on that date was entered, also to Thomas

(1) Singer, H.W., Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England, 33.

(2) Greg, W.W., op.cit., I, 170.

(3) Hazlitt, W.C., Dodsley's Old English Plays, IX, 2.

(4) Greg, W.W., op.cit., I, 189.

(5) Ibid., I, 188.

(6) Ibid., I, 110

(7) Arber, E., op.cit., III, 275.

Man, the younger, 'The second parte of the converted courtesan or honest Whore'. (1) This 1608 entry seems to have been overlooked by Mr. W. Macneile Dixon (2) and by Mr. Rhys, (3) both of whom say that the second part was not published until 1630. The play was again entered for publication in July of that year. (4) The early date of the second part is important because the tone of the play is more Elizabethan than Stuart.

1604-1605. The Fair Maid of Bristow

The play was entered in The Stationers' Registers on Feb. 8, 1605, as having been 'played at Hampton court by his Maiesties players'. (5) Mr. Quinn notes from Fleay that the king was at Hampton Court early in October, 1604, and infers that the first performance took place at that time. (6)

1605-1607. The Miseries of Enforced Marriage

The play was registered for publication on July 31, 1607. (7) The event on which it was based happened in the summer of 1605. (8) The play may have been written at any time between these dates.

1605-1608. The Yorkshire Tragedy

The Stationers' Registers for May 2, 1608, record the entry of 'A Yorkshire Tragedy, written by Wylliam Shakespeare'. The play is based on the events which

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- (1) Arber, E., III, 376.
 (2) Cambridge History, VI, 60.
 (3) Rhys, E., Thomas Dekker, Mermaid Edition, 90.
 (4) Arber, E., op.cit., IV, 238.
 (5) Arber, E., op.cit., III, 283.
 (6) Quinn, A.H., The Faire Maide of Bristow, Pub. of the U. of Penna., series in Philology and Literature, VIII, I, 8.
 (7) Arber, E., op.cit., III, 357.
 (8) Ibid., III, 292, 299.

furnished the material for The Miseries of Enforced Marriage. It is uncertain which was the earlier.

The fact that The Yorkshire Tragedy adheres much more closely to the details of the story may indicate that it is closer to the event in point of time.

1620-1636. The Vow Breaker, or The Fair Maid of Clifton

The play was printed without registration in 1636. The title-page of that edition states the play 'hath been divers times Acted by severall Companies with great applause'.⁽¹⁾ This is hardly the language which would be used of a new play. On June 8, 1603, a ballad called 'A warninge for fayre maides by the example of Jarman's wife' was entered in The Stationers' Registers.⁽²⁾ This is unquestionably the ballad on which the bourgeois tragedy plot of the play is based, and which is quoted in the play itself. Since Sampson was not born until 1600,⁽³⁾ we are not justified in assuming that the play was written before 1620. It is a plausible conjecture that the 1624 edition of the ballad⁽⁴⁾ may have been printed as a result of the popularity of the play.

1621-1658. The Witch of Edmonton

Although it was not printed until 1658, the play must have been written and acted much earlier. The terminus a quo is fixed by a pamphlet, 'The Wonderfull Discovery

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- (1) Wallrath, Hans, William Sampson's Vow Breaker, Materialien zur Kunde, 42.
 (2) Arber, E., op.cit., III, 236. (This entry has not, I think, been previously noted.)
 (3) Wallrath, Hans, op.cit., 5.
 (4) Arber, E., op.cit., IV., 130.

of Elizabeth Sawyer a witch late of Edmonton', which was entered for publication on April 27, 1621.⁽¹⁾

Fleay fixes the date about July, 1621, on the incorrect assumption that the play must have followed hard upon the event.⁽²⁾ Rhys is probably more near the truth in giving the date 1623.⁽³⁾

1624. The Late Murther of the Son upon the Mother

Mr. Singer quotes from Herbert's diary, September, 1624, 'a new Tragedy called a Late Murther of the Son upon the Mother written by Forde and Webster'.⁽⁴⁾ Professor Schelling gives The Stationers' Registers as authority for dating it 1624,⁽⁵⁾ but I find no entry to support the statement. The only entry at all similar is that of September 16, 1624, of 'A most bloudy unnaturall and unmatched murther Comitted in Whitechappell by NATHANAELL TINDALL upon his owne mother', and it is said to have been written by John Morgan.⁽⁶⁾

1624. The Bristow Merchant

Mr. Singer quotes from Herbert's diary under the date of October 22, 1624, 'a newe play called the Bristowe

(1) Arber, E., op.cit. III, 53.

(2) Fleay, F.G., Chronicle of the English Drama, I, 231. Numerous entries in Henslowe's Diary show that such plays were often not written until several years after the event.

(3) Rhys, E., Thomas Dekker, Mermaid Edition, 388. Mr. Rhys, in quoting from Caulfield's 'Portraits, Memoirs, and Characters of Remarkable Persons', 1794, refers to the pamphlet noted above, but he speaks of 'Elizabeth Sawyer, late of Islington, instead of Edmonton.

(4) Singer, H.W., Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England, 56.

(5) Schelling, F.E., Elizabethan Drama, II, 581.

(6) Arber, E., op.cit., IV, 123.

Merchant, written by Forde and Dekker'. (1)

1633. The English Traveller

On July 15, 1633, 'a comedy called the Traveller by master Heywood' was entered for publication. (2) There is no further evidence concerning the date.

(1) Singer, H.W., op.cit., 56.
(2) Arber, E., op.cit., IV, 300.

Chapter V: An Analysis of the Implications of the Chronological
List in Regard to the Development of
Bourgeois Tragedy

From our investigation of the chronology of bourgeois tragedy, we establish 1578 and 1633 as the terminal dates for the type as it existed in our period. Within these fifty-five years, we find record of twenty-seven plays⁽¹⁾ which may, with reasonable certainty, be identified as bourgeois tragedies. In regard to them, our main sources of information are three:

(1) The Revels Accounts; (2) The Stationers' Registers; (3) Henslowe's Diary. A brief explanation of the nature of these sources may be made here. The Revels Accounts are the lists of expenditures for plays given at court between 1559 and 1589. They mention none but court performances, and even here they are incomplete for our purpose, since the usual form of entry does not give the titles of the plays. The Stationers' Registers cover our whole period. They mention, however, only those plays which were properly registered for publication. The requirement that plays as well as other matter should be licensed before being published seems not to have been rigidly enforced, especially in the reign of Elizabeth. Henslowe's Diary is the day-book in which Philip Henslowe, play-house owner and manager, recorded his financial transactions connected with the

(1) Counting as one, plays in two parts.

theater. It contains an account of his daily share of profits from performances in his theaters between February, 1592, and November, 1597. It contains also a record of his expenditures on behalf of the companies playing under his management between October, 1597, and March, 1604.⁽¹⁾ The plays mentioned by Henslowe did not constitute the whole repertoire of the companies to which they are assigned. This is clear enough in the case of companies like Pembroke's and Worcester's, which occupied Henslowe's play-houses for brief periods only. It is true, too, of the Admiral's men, who occupied Henslowe's theaters pretty constantly from 1594 to 1604 (in the last year, as Prince Henry's men). They usually bought their plays through Henslowe, but they did not invariably do so.⁽²⁾ In addition to the bourgeois tragedies mentioned in the three sources just discussed, we know of four others from their mention in other sources, and we yet have three others not mentioned in any of these, which are still extant.

A comparison of the amount of information received from

(1) Mr. Greg says in his introduction to the Diary (I, XXII) that these records of expenditure for the companies begin October 21, 1597, and continue to March 6, 1603. This statement is inaccurate. In the Diary itself there are at least two entries of payments for plays made by Henslowe on behalf of the companies subsequent to March 6, 1603. One is the payment to Chettle and Day for Shore's Wife, on May 9, 1603 (I, 190). The other is the payment to Dekker and Middleton for The Patient Man and the Honest Whore. It is entered just before a statement of account, with which it appears to have some connection, which is dated March 14, 1604. (I, 175) In vol. II, Mr. Greg mentions both these entries, which he has apparently overlooked in his introduction.

(2) Greg, W.W., op.cit., II, 124-126.

the various sources may help us to realize their comparative value and to interpret the facts we glean from them.

Plays known from one source only

<u>The Revels Accounts</u>	2
<u>The Stationers' Registers</u>	0
<u>Henslowe's Diary</u>	8
Extant Prints	3
Other Sources	4

Plays known from two sources

<u>The Stationers' Registers</u>	
and	7
Extant Prints	

<u>Henslowe's Diary</u>	
and	1
Extant Prints ⁽¹⁾	

<u>Henslowe's Diary</u>	
and	1
Another Source ⁽²⁾	

Plays known from three sources

<u>The Stationers' Registers</u>	
<u>Henslowe's Diary</u>	1
Extant Prints ⁽¹⁾	

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- (1) It is not surprising that only two of the Henslowe plays are known to have been printed, for Henslowe and his companies tried to protect their plays from publication. This fact is illustrated by an entry in the Diary for March 18, 1599, (1600) in which is recorded the loan of forty shillings to Robert Shaw, the Admiral's player, to give unto the printer to stave printing of patient gresell'. Patient Grissel was a play which was bought for the Admiral's men in December of the preceding year.
- (2) Heywood's Apology for Actors, which refers to Friar Francis

From these figures it appears that of the twenty-seven bourgeois tragedies, twelve are extant. Of those which have perished, fourteen are known from a single source, eight of them being Henslowe's plays.

Let us turn now to the plays themselves. We have said that there were twenty-seven of them within fifty-five years. From their distribution within this period we should be able to make some deductions in regard to the growth of the type, its period of greatest popularity, the archetypal situation, and the direction in which it tended to develop and to modify itself. It is necessary, however, to be sure that what appear on the surface to be the facts truly represent conditions. For convenience we may divide the period into four divisions, indicating the number of plays known to belong to each.

1578 - 1592	2 plays
1592 - 1602	11 plays ⁽¹⁾
1602 - 1612	9 plays ⁽²⁾
1612 - 1633	5 plays

At first glance, it appears from this list that during the decade between 1592 and 1602, bourgeois tragedy was at the height of its popularity, that after 1612, it declined suddenly, and that after 1612 it can no longer be reckoned anything more than a survival. We are left, however, with the puzzling task of explaining the long blank between 1578 and 1592, re-

(1) This number includes Arden of Feversham, which probably was on the stage much earlier.

(2) All these were written by 1608.

membering that the two plays which belong to this time were played within a few weeks of each other at the very beginning of the period. If our conclusions in regard to the influences which conditioned the genesis of bourgeois tragedy are valid, how are we to account for the fact that the type apparently underwent a long dormant period just at the time when the English popular drama was beginning to pulse with life? The explanation lies in the fact that, as our analysis of sources shows, the testimony of dates as we have them is not to be taken at its face value.

It seems to me almost certain that the puzzling gap between 1578 and 1592 is due to the incompleteness of our data; it is not a real break in the series of bourgeois tragedies. There are only two ways in which a play of that period might become known to us, unless through the unlikely accident of its being referred to in a surviving treatise. It must have been printed, or it must have been played at court.

If it were printed, it might be entered in The Stationers' Registers, although publications were frequently not so entered, and pirated editions of plays then on the stage would be most unlikely to be licensed. It is to be remembered that throughout the fifty-five years, no bourgeois tragedy is known to us from The Stationers' Registers alone. If the play appeared as an unlicensed print, it might perhaps survive; it

might as easily perish. In point of fact, a very small number of all the plays which were on the public stage in the decade before 1590 have survived, probably because in that period just after the establishment of public theaters, there was a greatly increased demand for plays, and a corresponding effort on the part of acting companies to protect their play-books from the printer.

If, although not printed, a bourgeois tragedy of the period prior to 1589 had been played at court, we might have a record of it. Again, we might not. In The Revels Accounts, the regular form of entry gives no definite information concerning the plays presented. It is exceptional for a play to be entered by its title, or with any explanatory note which makes possible even a guess at its identity.

From these facts it is evident that the chances are against our knowing anything about the bourgeois tragedies which may have been presented between 1578 and 1592. In the absence of positive evidence, it is impossible to do more than to advance a hypothesis. It seems, however, highly probable that after the public drama was fairly established,⁽¹⁾ there were on the popular stage dramas of common life which, never coming to print or being performed at court, perished, leaving not even their titles behind. In support of this idea, we may

(1) Fleay (Chronicle History of the London Stage, 379) gives 1583 as the real beginning of public drama; this is the date when the Queen's company was organized.

note that Arden of Feversham was probably acted as early as 1585. There is no adequate reason for believing that in 1592 bourgeois tragedy suddenly appeared again upon the stage after a lapse of thirteen years.

The evidence of the chronological list that the period between 1592 and 1602 was the time when bourgeois tragedy was at the height of its popularity, is not to be gainsaid. This conclusion is precisely what we should expect, for the period is, roughly, that when all Elizabethan popular drama was at high tide. Our list, however, hardly makes it possible for us to judge the actual importance of bourgeois tragedy at this time. The eleven plays of which we know are very few indeed in comparison with the great number of plays which the period produced. It is not, indeed, to be supposed that bourgeois tragedy was at any time one of the most important and numerous types, but it probably filled a larger place than these eleven plays would indicate. 1592 to 1602 is the period covered by Henslowe's Diary, and eight of the eleven plays are to be found in Henslowe alone. The fact that this one document, which contains, with the exception of a few other entries, only a partial list of the plays in the repertoire of one company, the Admiral's men. — increases by more than half the number of plays which we know from other sources, shows the real incompleteness of our data. We have almost no information

concerning the plays belonging to the other great companies. We know that competition was keen, and that no company had a monopoly on any one popular sort of play. If it was profitable to the Admiral's men to present bourgeois tragedies, it was obviously necessary for their rivals to meet them on their own ground by playing bourgeois tragedies also. We know, indeed, that they did so, for a few title pages of extant prints show that Worcester's men and the Lord Chamberlain's (afterward the King's) men, had such plays. We have, however, no way of knowing to what extent bourgeois tragedy figured in their repertoires. Assuming that the Admiral's men catered more especially to the plebeian taste, and that, consequently, they had more bourgeois tragedies than did the other companies, we might at least double our eleven bourgeois tragedies and still reach a conservative estimate of the number of such plays that was acted between 1592 and 1602.

The fact that the Admiral's men suddenly acquired five new murder plays in the late summer and the fall of 1599 challenges curiosity. It certainly seems to indicate that the type had a special vogue about that time. There may be some confirmation for this idea in the fact that A Warning for Fair Women was printed in the fall of 1599 as 'lately acted' by the Lord Chamberlain's men. This company began to act at the Globe in 1599.⁽¹⁾ It is not improbable that these rival com-

(1) Fleay, Chronicle History of the London Stage, 134.

panies in their neighboring theaters(1) tried to outdo each other in popular favor through sheer sensationalism. This is, however, mere conjecture. It seems almost equally probable that the Admiral's men produced a series of murder plays at this time in an effort to meet with bloody horrors in the sphere of middle-class life the new popularity of the revenge plays, which began in 1599 with the acting by Paul's boys of Marston's Antonio and Mellida and Antonio's Revenge. (2)

Between 1602 and 1612, only nine bourgeois tragedies are known to have been written. Our information for this period is even less complete than for the preceding decade, being dependent almost entirely on the extant prints and the confirmatory testimony of The Stationers' Registers. It is highly probable that more than nine plays were on the stage during this decade. It is to be noted, however, that all eight of the known plays were on the stage by the spring of 1608, and there is no reason for supposing that the early plays of the period would be preserved and the later ones lost. It is more reasonable to believe that the decline of bourgeois tragedy began about 1608. The five plays which are known to have been written after this date were scattered over a quarter of a century. They were merely survivals of an obsolete type. That bourgeois tragedy should practically disappear from the stage after 1608 is precisely what we should expect in the case of a dramatic type which owed its existence to the

(1) The Admiral's men were then acting at the Rose.
 (2) Schelling, F.E., Elizabethan Drama.

patronage of the middle-class. By 1608, the social and political influences set in motion soon after the accession of James had begun to react upon the drama. The effect of the Stuart regime on bourgeois tragedy will be discussed in the next chapter.

Our chronological grouping of the plays shows that while bourgeois tragedy is not wholly static in situation and in conception of what constitutes tragedy, there is in it no evidence of consistent development in a single direction. There are, indeed, certain well marked variants of the archetypal situation — that of the murder play — and consequently different conceptions of the tragic character and the tragic conflict. These variants are comparatively late in the time of their appearance, but they are not out-growths of the original type; they are, like it, experiments in the tragic handling of middle-class situations. It is not true to say that in 1592 the conception of bourgeois tragedy was one thing, and that, having passed through certain intermediate stages, in 1633 it was another. The variant types are not produced directly from the primitive type. It seems, rather, that the existence of murder plays based on middle-class situations suggested to dramatists less inclined to the sensational, the possibility of tragic treatment for other middle-class situations. The resulting variant types do not crowd out the

original type or in any way supplant it; all the types exist side by side. If a metaphor from organic life may be permitted to illustrate a process only remotely analagous to biological processes, we may say that the relation of the types of bourgeois tragedy is not that of bud, blossom, and fruit, but rather that of three blossoms on one stalk.

There are, indeed, some instances in which the influence of contemporary dramatic types is to be seen in the chronological sequence of the bourgeois tragedies. These instances will be pointed out after we have highly analyzed the situations and the types of character which are represented as tragic in the three distinguishable groups of bourgeois tragedies.

First in point of time and in point of numbers stand the murder plays. These present what we have called the archetypal situation in bourgeois tragedy. In them a criminal risks and loses all in his effort to realize an evil purpose. The tragic conflict is between the force of evil, as embodied in a single person, with, perhaps, a group of accomplices, and the force of good, usually represented under the guise of the law. Evil triumphs up to the point where the crime is committed; then the opposing force begins to work, and the play culminates in the final triumph of the social order through the destruction of the anti-social individual. In these plays

the conception of tragedy is nearly always physical. The fall of the criminal protagonist to actual destruction through the operation of worldly forces against which he has arrayed himself constitutes the tragedy. The conflict is almost wholly an external one. Where there is also an internal conflict, as in Alice Arden's self-reproaches and Frank Thorney's hesitation, the spiritual tragedy is subordinated to the physical one. To this group belong not only the plays of crime, but Edward IV, in which Jane Shore, identifying herself with evil rather than virtue, comes to her ruin, and The Vow Breaker (probably Black Bateman also) in which the avenging ghost represents the outraged social order.

This primitive type, with its evil protagonist, and its emphasis on the physical tragedy persists throughout our period, and is, indeed, the most truly representative of the conception of bourgeois tragedy.

A second type of bourgeois tragedy situation is to be found in those plays which we have previously called reconciliation dramas. In them the protagonist, a person not wholly evil, but swayed by bad influences, identifies himself with the forces of evil. In the conflict which ensues, evil triumphs until the protagonist seems to have committed irreparable fault. Then the reversal comes. The protagonist undergoes suffering for his evil deeds, comes to the point of

being utterly crushed; but he is ultimately saved and converted to the side of good. Here the social order triumphs not in the destruction, but in the conversion, of the offender. The tragedy consists in the actual danger of the situation, and the amount of retributive suffering which it involves. To this group belong : How a Man May Choose, The Fair Maid of Bristow, The Honest Whore, (1) and The Miseries of Enforced Marriage.

The third type shows a strong and a good character suffering, but not crushed, through the agency of some element of evil in his environment. The turning point comes when he discovers the presence of a destructive influence in his life. Ultimately he triumphs, though at great cost to himself; those persons through whom he suffered, are destroyed, but not by any violent act of his. It is the Antigone situation, but without the crushing of the protagonist. This type, by its emphasis on the strength and worth of the main character, so lessens our sense of his suffering that it fails of full tragic effect. Heywood's A Woman Killed with Kindness and The English Traveller are plays of this type.

Our chronological grouping of the plays enables us to see something of the influence which was exerted on bourgeois tragedy by changes in the current dramatic inter-

(1) In this play, the emphasis is on the conversion, with its attendant suffering, rather than on the initial fault.

ests and conceptions.

The representative bourgeois tragedy is, of course, the murder play. It is thoroughly Elizabethan in spirit. Its representation of physical horrors is an expression of the Elizabethan love of the sensational, and it is in line with the practice of all the tragedy of that period. In its unfailing moral purpose and its didactic method, bourgeois tragedy stands apart from the contemporary tragedy, but it is nevertheless characteristic of the Elizabethan spirit. The murder play persisted, in some degree, so long as bourgeois tragedy remained on the stage, but after the accession of James, and the accompanying reaction on the drama, its popularity soon waned. After 1603 there are only three murder plays. One of them, The Yorkshire Tragedy, was written early enough to have felt something of the Elizabethan influence. Another, Ford's The Late Murthers of the Son upon the Mother, suggests at least by its title the reaction of a Jacobean conception of tragedy on the murder play. It seems to me probable that the subject was chosen less for the purpose of representing tragedy in middle-class life — an already obsolete idea — than for the opportunity it offered for the piling up of horror through the violation of the most sacred human relations. This method of securing the effect of terror through the perversion of the deepest human feeling

by passion is a favorite one in Stuart tragedy, and is used by Ford, the author of this play, in such tragedies as Love's Sacrifice and Tis Pity.

Seventeenth century comedy also influenced bourgeois tragedy. This influence appears in the reconciliation plays, four of which were on the stage by 1607.⁽¹⁾ In them, as in the murder plays, the protagonist's action precipitates a situation which seems certain to involve him and all those associated with him in complete ruin. Just as the blow is ready to fall, however, it is averted; the evil-doer repents; all ends happily. These plays, in their softening of the fatal consequences of sin, with the consequent blurring of the moral effect, in their tendency to suppress scenes of suffering, and to give prominence to comic passages, as well as in their happy ending, show strongly the influence of the comedy of London life, often involving pathetic situations, which was prominent on the stage in the early years of the seventeenth century.

Stuart influence is manifested in two of the late bourgeois tragedies. The first of these is The Witch of Edmonton. The witch plot shows that popular superstition had been greatly stimulated and given a sinister color by the king's active interest in witch-craft. The murder plot is less localized than were the plots of the bourgeois trage-

(1) How a Man May Choose a Good Wife; The honest Whore; The Fair maid of Bristow; The Miseries of Enforced Marriage.

dies of the preceding century, and in its complexity of situation, its note of fatalism, and particularly in Winifred's disguising as a page, it shows the influence of romantic tragic-comedy.

The other bourgeois tragedy which has taken the tinge of Stuart drama is The English Traveller. It is too thoroughly characteristic of Heywood to be other than wholesome in tone. It shows, however, a touch of romantic extravagance and a suggestion of Stuart ethics in the over-complex and almost fantastic situation which it represents. The situation in Love's Sacrifice, Ford's play of about the same date, is very similar. Ford, however, enlists our sympathy for the lover who seeks to dishonor his friend. Heywood saves the situation by drawing Geraldine as the lover of his friend's wife, and yet not disloyal to his friend. His honor is not really rooted in dishonor, but the distinction is so fine, the balance so delicate, that its exposition approaches casuistry. Heywood accomplishes the almost impossible task of producing an ethical effect through the representation of an essentially unethical relation.

Chapter VI: The Decline of Bourgeois Tragedy.

After the accession of James I., bourgeois tragedy rapidly declined. Between the death of Elizabeth and the year 1642, we have record of only nine tragedies of common life.⁽¹⁾ Of these, four were already in print by the spring of 1608, so early in James' reign that they were evidently written under Elizabethan, rather than Jacobean, influences. The rise of bourgeois tragedy, as we have seen, was due to the fact that in the latter years of Elizabeth's reign the typical London audience was distinctly a middle-class audience, with a sturdy middle-class satisfaction in the punishment of vice. The marked decline of bourgeois tragedy under James, and its virtual disappearance before the closing of the theaters, is to be explained by the complete transformation of the theatrical public under Stuart rule. In that period, through the operation of social, political, and religious causes, aristocratic and metropolitan society was brought, as never before, into immediate touch with the public stage; while, on the other hand, the common people, who had been great patrons of the playhouses, withdrew their support from the theaters. The change in the audience was reflected in the drama. Such plays as the comedy of manners, tragic-comedy, and the decadent romantic tragedy, which represented

(1) See Chapter IV., Chronological List.

the interests and the unwholesome ethical bias of the aristocracy, came into vogue. Bourgeois tragedy, and other dramatic types which represented the distinctively middle-class point of view, disappeared from the stage.

This change in the theater audience, and, consequently, the change in the tone of the drama, is due to two correlative causes: the king's activity in the regulation and protection of the stage, and the growth of strict puritanism in the middle and lower classes.

It was the policy of James I. to concentrate the management of the stage under royal control. In the first month of his reign, he issued to the Chamberlain's men a patent as the King's men.⁽¹⁾ In the next year, he deprived the nobles of their authority to license companies, centering that power in the Crown.⁽²⁾ Within a short time, all the prominent companies were issued licenses in the name of some member of the royal family. The theaters themselves also operated under special license from the king.⁽³⁾ The Master of the Revels, a servant of the Crown, issued licenses to companies to travel,⁽⁴⁾ licensed plays for printing,⁽⁵⁾ and censored plays to be acted.⁽⁶⁾ Under this direct and immediate patronage by the king, the theaters rapidly became fashionable. They were frequented by the court and by the wealthy citizens who aspired to social eminence.⁽⁷⁾ Interesting testimony of the

(1) Gildersleeve, V.C., Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama, 36.

(2) Ibid., 28.

(3) Ibid., 43, 197.

(4) Ibid., 69, 70.

(5) Ibid., 64.

(6) Ibid., 76.

(7) Ibid., 216. Cambridge History, V, 451.

aristocratic audiences which the Jacobean theaters attracted is to be found in the petition presented in 1619 to the municipal authorities by the citizens of Blackfriars.⁽¹⁾ One of the chief grievances which the petition cites is the 'soe great multitude of coaches', which crowd the streets and endanger the passers-by.

The king's regulation of the theaters, which increased their popularity with the wealthy and the fashionable, was one of the causes which alienated the middle-class from the drama. It is true that the initial steps toward royal control of the play-houses had been taken in Elizabeth's reign. At that time, however, when public zest for the drama was keenest, and the court and the people were in accord, government regulation of the stage had not offended the people or in any way affected the national character of the drama. But under the unpopular Stuarts, in a time when religious scruples were already seriously weakening the hold of the stage on the support of the people and when the opposition between the interests of the court and those of the Commons was becoming defined, the King's control of the theaters certainly increased the people's hostility to them. More and more pronounced during the Stuart period grew the feeling that the drama was a cavalier diversion, a court folly to be opposed by the people. That the theater did completely ally itself with the court is shown by the fact

(1) Gildersleeve, V. C. op. cit., 201 - 202.

that when the revolution came, the actors, almost to a man, enlisted in the King's service.⁽¹⁾ This identification of the interests of the stage with those of the court party came about, of course, gradually. It was already well begun, however, under James, and it was certainly a contributory cause of the falling away of middle-class support from the play-houses.

The root cause, however, of the withdrawal of the people from the theaters, and, consequently, the cause of the decline of bourgeois tragedy, was the development of the strict puritan spirit among the middle class. The fact that there was a puritan majority in James' first Parliament shows that the puritan spirit had already pretty thoroughly permeated England.

It is not necessary to enter here into a detailed analysis of the nature of puritanism. Suffice it to say that it was characterized by an essentially moral view of all the details of life. It regarded man as a creature sinful by nature, one only to be redeemed by the constant mortification of all instincts toward pleasure, by the denial of 'the lust of the eye and the pride of life'. The ascetic puritan spirit abhorred all amusements as snares of the devil to draw the soul from the path of salvation. It was this spirit which fell like a pall upon 'Merry England'. It is obvious that the

(1) Histria Histrionica, Dodsley's Old Plays, XV, 409.

triumph of a puritanism which unqualifiedly condemned all pastimes and amusements meant the withdrawal from the playhouses of the class of persons to whom bourgeois tragedy appealed.

The puritan spirit was already at work in Elizabeth's time, but its influence on the stage was then regulative rather than destructive. To it was due, as we have said, the moralizing note of bourgeois tragedy. In the seventeenth century this moderate puritanism gave way to a more severe type. The rapid growth of middle-class puritanism under James was no doubt considerably hastened by political developments. Miss Gildersleeve says:

As it (puritanism) intensified to a rather extreme type, and the line between the court and the popular party became more sharply drawn, its adherents were found chiefly among the middle-class and the poor — the tradesmen in towns and the small proprietors in the country. In these sections of society it spread with rapidity and strength, so that early in James' reign it was probably the temper of the majority of Englishmen. (1)

The withdrawal of the common people from the support of the theaters came, of course, gradually. In London it is hard to trace, because when the playhouses became fashionable as a result of this connection with the court, the rich bur-

(1) Gildersleeve, V.C., op.cit., 215.

gesses — real bourgeois snobs — relaxed their opposition to them.⁽¹⁾ Consequently municipal protests against the London theaters, which had been so frequent in the preceding reign, no longer were heard. There were some formal literary attacks, notably Prynne's Histrio-Mastix, — but the middle and lower classes were for the most part, inarticulate. Since the theaters prospered under the patronage of the court and the wealthy citizens, it appears on the surface that opposition to the stage had actually relaxed. As a matter of fact, it was gaining strength daily.⁽²⁾ The real strength of the opposition may be measured by the rapid dying out of plays in the provinces, where there was neither court nor metropolitan society to foster them. Miss Sheavyn gives as an illustration the records of the town of Stratford, which, since Shakespeare was an influential citizen, was probably less hostile than many other places. In 1568, two companies of players were entertained by the Corporation. Between 1569 and 1587, twenty-four troupes performed there. In 1602, however, the town council placed a ten-shilling fine on the acting of a play in the guild-hall; and in 1612, the fine was increased to the prohibitive sum of ten pounds.⁽³⁾ The popular opposition to the stage naturally reacted early on the drama which was distinctively middle-class in its appeal.

As a result of royal patronage, the play-houses were

(1) Gildersleeve, V.C., op.cit., 216.

(2) Thompson, E.N.S., The Puritans and the Stage, Yale Studies in English, 20, 146.

(3) Sheavyn, Phoebe The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age, 55-56.

more and more frequented by the aristocratic and fashionable classes; while, in precisely the same period, as a result, in part, of political hostility, but chiefly because of the growth of puritan spirit, the middle-class patrons of the theater were turning away from plays. Consequently, the drama, reflecting, as always, the interests of its public, lost its national and popular tone. Because there was no longer a moral-minded middle-class audience to be stirred by the representation of middle-class disasters, bourgeois tragedy disappeared from the stage.

Conclusions

A careful study of English bourgeois tragedy within the period between 1576 and 1642 results in the following conclusions:

- I. In regard to the genesis, the flourishing, and the decline of the type.
 1. Bourgeois tragedy is an indigenous English dramatic type which came into being during the latter half of Elizabeth's reign. It was the direct result of the rise of the middle class to political and social importance, and consequently to a new consciousness of the worth and dignity of the common man. The immediate impulse to bourgeois tragedy was supplied by the establishment of the public theaters, by means of which the common people became the chief patrons of the stage.
 2. The period of the greatest popularity of bourgeois tragedy was approximately from 1592 to 1608. The earliest known bourgeois tragedy was played in 1578, the latest (in our period) in or before 1633.
 3. The decline of the type, like its rise, was due to social changes. There were two correlative causes: (1) royal protection of the stage, which made the theaters fashionable, with the court and the wealthy burgesses, but antagonized the common people; (2) the growth of puritanism, which caused the middle class to forsake the play-houses.

II. In regard to distinguishing characteristics.

1. Internal qualities. The internal qualities of bourgeois tragedy are those qualities which are inseparably involved in the conception of the type, and which differentiate it from other dramatic types. These qualities are: (1) its typical situation, a painful or disastrous complication in contemporary middle-class life; (2) its moral purpose, the moral conveyed being often of a social rather than of a spiritual sort.
2. External qualities. The external qualities of bourgeois tragedy are those qualities which are common to most of the plays, but which are not necessarily present in each individual play. These qualities are: (1) an atmosphere of contemporary realism, which is secured by careful localization and by the use of elaborate detail; (2) basis in fact, usually a recent crime; (3) narrative technique, with a consequent emphasis on incident rather than on character.

III. In regard to literary relations.

1. Antecedent English drama.
 - a. Through structure and sensationalism, bourgeois tragedy is akin to the miracle plays and to the early secular drama.
 - b. In didactic tone and purpose, it is akin to the early moralities.

- c. In contemporary realism, it is akin to the moral interludes.
2. Contemporary literary forms, both dramatic and undramatic.
- a. Through realism, bourgeois tragedy is related to vernacular comedy and to the comedy of manners.
 - b. Through plots drawn from recent crimes, and through its didacticism, it is related to murder pamphlets and ballads. There is sometimes direct dependence between the types.
 - c. Through basis in fact, structure, and purpose, bourgeois tragedy is akin to the chronicle-history play. This is its most significant dramatic relation. The parallel is especially striking because the two species owe their origin to the same impulse, and their period of greatest popularity is approximately the same.

Appendix A: A Note on Bourgeois Tragedy after 1642

The development of English bourgeois tragedy after 1642 is properly beyond the scope of this dissertation. I shall make no attempt to trace it in detail here, or to do more than to show that, although bourgeois tragedy disappeared for a time from the English stage, it was not an extinct type, and to suggest possible influences which it appears to have exercised upon later literature, both English and foreign.

Mr. Singer names seventeen English bourgeois tragedies which were written in the eighteenth century, most of them after 1730. It is confirmatory of our previously established position that the tragedy of middle-class life can flourish only in an age when the stage depends upon the favor of the people, that after the Restoration bourgeois tragedy was not revived until, because of the accession of a foreign king, the court ceased to be the focus of literary and dramatic activity

The plays mentioned by Mr. Singer belong unquestionably to the same series as the Elizabethan bourgeois tragedies. They are not a new creation. At least two of them are re-workings of Elizabethan plays; The Fatal Extravagance is a new version of The Yorkshire Tragedy, and Arden of Feversham is an eighteenth century sentimentalized version of the

(1) Singer, H.W., Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England.

powerful Elizabethan murder play. Other eighteenth century bourgeois tragedies are based on real events, as in the case of The Fair Parricide, or on ballads, as in the case of Fatal Curiosity and George Barnwell. A brief account of the best known of these plays, Lillo's George Barnwell, or The London Merchant, may serve as a typical example.

George Barnwell is a murder play with a moral. Its material is drawn from an early seventeenth century ballad, which was probably based on a real event. The play shows the sad fate of a well-meaning but weak and susceptible young apprentice who is led by a courtesan's wiles to rob his kind master, to desert his friends, and finally to murder his own indulgent uncle. After Barnwell has committed the murder, the courtesan, Millwood, heartlessly delivers him over to justice. Her role as instigator of the crime is discovered, and both are publicly executed. Before his death, Barnwell receives the forgiveness of his injured master and friend, and he dies assured of eternal salvation.

This play, which enforces the rather obvious moral at every possible point, was first acted in London in 1732.⁽¹⁾ It created a sensation on the night of its first production. It was, as one might expect, extremely popular with the London merchants, and it was often given at holiday seasons as an entertainment especially profitable for prentices. The moral

(1) Davies, Thomas, Lillo's Dramatic Works, I, 7.

purpose of the play is explained by the author, in a dedicatory note to Sir John Eyles. He maintains that 'the more extensively useful the moral of any tragedy is, the more excellent that piece must be of its kind'.⁽¹⁾ The prolog, containing the lines,

Forgive us then, if we attempt to show,
In artless strains, a tale of private woe,

recalls similar Elizabethan apologies for humble subject and barren presentation.

In addition to George Barnwell, Lillo, who was a London jeweller wrote two other bourgeois tragedies, Fatal Curiosity, and Arden of Feversham. The Arden, which was probably written before 1736, is significant because it proves beyond the possibility of doubt that Lillo certainly knew Elizabethan bourgeois tragedy, and that his plays are not, as has sometimes been said, spontaneous creations of a new type, but are based on model and precedent.

It is necessary to emphasize the relation of Lillo's bourgeois tragedies to the Elizabethan bourgeois tragedies because that relation has not been generally recognized. Davies, who edited Lillo's plays in 1775, says in a letter to Garrick, 'The world is indebted to this writer (Lillo) for the invention of a new species of dramatic poetry, which may properly be termed the inferior or lesser tragedy'.⁽²⁾ And again, 'No writer has ventured to descend so low as to introduce the character of a merchant or his

(1) Davies, Thomas, op.cit., I, 147.

(2) Ibid., I, 1.

clerk into a tragedy'.⁽¹⁾ The incorrectness of these statements is obvious. A similar error is made by Bosanquet, who speaks of The London Merchant as 'the first English middle-class tragedy'.⁽²⁾ Lillo is not significant as an original force, but his work is important as the medium through which the influence of Elizabethan bourgeois tragedy was communicated to modern literature.

The effect of the eighteenth century revival of English bourgeois tragedy is greater for French and German drama than for English drama. Lillo's work, especially George Barnwell, strongly influenced German drama through Lessing, as both his dramatic criticism and practice show. It also influenced French drama through Diderot, giving the initial impulse to a new school of criticism and to the tragedie bourgeoise of the latter years of the century.⁽³⁾

In England, the important influence of bourgeois tragedy through Lillo was not upon the drama, which was no longer the chief literary expression of popular interest, but upon the new literary species which came into prominence a little before the middle of the century, the realistic novel of middle-class life. Into the details of that influence it is not possible to inquire here. It is sufficient to recall that Richardson's Pamela was written at the time when George Barnwell still held the popular stage, and that Fielding was the theatrical manager who produced Lillo's plays,

(1) Davies, Thomas, op.cit., I, 8.

(2) Bosanquet, B., History of Aesthetic, 232.

(3) These relations are mentioned by Schlegel (Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature, 486) and Ward (Dict. of National Biography, article on Lillo). For a fuller discussion, see Eloesser, Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel. Seine Geschichte im 18 und 19. Jahrhundert.

(1)
and that he professed himself an admirer of them.

Ward, in concluding his introduction to A Woman Killed with Kindness, draws a parallel between it and Clarissa Harlowe, but remarks that Heywood was probably unknown to Richardson. Whether or not Richardson knew Heywood's play, he unquestionably knew George Barnwell, which appeals to precisely the same interests and emotions. It is difficult to escape the supposition that in his treatment of the same class of society, in the same manner, and with the same moral purpose, Richardson was indebted for his initial impulse to bourgeois tragedy. It is probable that future investigation may make it clear that the influence of the realistic novel on drama is really only a transmission of the original influence of bourgeois tragedy.

(1) Davies, Thomas, op. cit., 11-13, 28, 32.

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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

May 15, 1915.

Professor Walter Miller,
Dean of the Graduate School,
University of Missouri,
Columbia, Missouri.

My dear Professor Miller:

I have pleasure in submitting to you and the Graduate Faculty my approval of the thesis, "English Bourgeois Tragedy from 1576 to 1642", by Miss Vivian H. Bresnehen, A.M.; who is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Miss Bresnehen has done an eminently satisfactory piece of work in a field which has hitherto not been treated in any comprehensive and thorough way. She has executed her task with scholarly accuracy and thoroughness, with discrimination and judgment, and with a fine sense of literary values. I am pleased to say that this work conforms, in my judgment, to what I believe to be the standards upheld by our Graduate School, and I recommend it for acceptance as fulfilling in part the requirements for the Doctor's degree, confident that it will reflect only credit upon us.

Very respectfully yours,

A. H. Fairchild

University of Missouri
Columbia

May 21, 1915.

Professor Walter Miller,
Dean of the Graduate School,
University of Missouri.

My dear Professor Miller:--

I have read with care Miss Vivian Bresnehen's dissertation on "English Bourgeois Tragedy" and am glad to recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

The thesis gives ample evidence of trained thought, sound literary judgment, a fine sense of composition, and the ability to handle independently an original piece of scholarship. I consider it a genuine contribution to our knowledge of the English drama.

I assume that Miss Bresnehen will appreciate comments from those who have had the opportunity of reading her paper before its publication, and venture the following observations:

1. A complete bibliography will increase the value of her treatise for students.
2. She will do well to extend the discussion of the points of contact between the broadsides or pamphlets and the plays based on them. A comparison of the internal workmanship of the pamphlets with that of the tragedies will demonstrate more conclusively the debt, whether great or small, of the latter to the former. The question as to whether bourgeois tragedy would have come into being as a special type if the pamphlets had not preceded it ought to receive as definite an answer as possible. To the casual observer, it would seem that the various dramatic genres were developed at that time in England largely on the basis of existing plots and subject-matter found in other branches of literature.
3. I cannot help thinking that a review of the career of contemporary bourgeois comedy would contribute something of importance to the understanding of bourgeois tragedy.
4. The rise of bourgeois tragedy as an indigenous English production would, I feel, become clearer through a summary exposition of the trend of the drama of the day in the principal continental countries.
5. Some qualification might, perhaps, be made with advantage in the argument that social conditions mainly explain the appearance of bourgeois tragedy, since, in the very period in which it flourished, other forms of the drama,--the romantic, for instance,--were, if I am not mistaken, even more popular.

Very respectfully yours,

J. H. Shaw.

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