

## INTRODUCTION

**F**ORMAL criticism in modern Europe has its origins in the Italy of the later Renaissance, where the discussion of literary problems was merely one phase of that intellectual casuistry which arose out of the Catholic Reaction. On the basis of an ancient literary heritage the Italians developed a definite outlook on literature, a body of rules and theories, and the tentative beginnings of a critical method. They introduced the England of Sidney's age to the formal study of literature, and English criticism began. How these materials were altered to the needs of English taste, how ancient rule was adapted to modern practice, in a word, how the critical spirit of Sidney and Puttenham was transmuted into that of Dryden, Rymer, and Temple, is the subject of this inquiry.

### I. THE JACOBEOAN OUTLOOK: BACON AND JONSON

Bacon and Jonson are the representative critics of the Jacobean period. Both alike inherited the traditions of Elizabethan culture, and modified or transformed them. The imaginative element in Sidney's theory of poetry was carried on by Bacon, who added historic and scientific factors not in the Elizabethan scheme. The classical side of Sidney's theory was developed by Jonson, who gave a new and increased prestige to the rules formulated by the Italians, and shifted the interest of criticism to the external and objective side of literary art.

Bacon touches the subject of criticism but lightly, yet his utterances have a high significance in its history. His judgements of concrete literature are casual and few in