

subject be considered in such great detail. The origins and early trends are naturally of utmost importance, and moreover the principles of dramatic construction and the working principle of much that is brought home by the application of this method to the past, were fixed prior to the decadence in the time of Charles II. There is a natural division in the work which is fixed by history and accepted by competent critics. This division breaks up the field into two sections, one of which covers the ground from the genesis of the English drama in the liturgical plays to the closing of the theatres in the time of Oliver Cromwell. The other dates from the Restoration to the modern era of Phillips, Pinero and Bernard Shaw. The first era is characterized by an uncertainty that makes the claims of so-called authoritative text-books seem preposterous: it is, however, a period of the greatest interest and productivity from the standpoint of study and research. The development of the national drama from its origin in the troubadours and the early liturgy of the Catholic Church, and all those live conditions besetting and moulding it—are traced minutely (by means of the most reliable authorities obtainable, and by critically examining documents and commentaries of varying degrees of authenticity, antedating Holinshed, Thomas Heyward and Richard Henslowe's diary . . . to Brandl, Dowden and Brander Mathews of the present day) through the York, Coventry, Townley and Chester plays of the middle 14th century—through the secularization of the plays by the guilds, the real beginnings of comedy and burlesque in such performances as Noah, Cain—and of tragedy in those of Abraham and Isaac,—down through the \*Senecan influence of 1560-70, the romance legends and poetry of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Dante . . . and other renascent classical and romantic currents of 1550-1600, which gave form and structure to the dramatic substance and further enriched its material—until finally the period 1601-1613 is reached, when Shakespeare's art became matured, and fixed forever the essential laws which govern dramatic interpretation. The period declines only in grandeur with Ben Johnson, Beaumont, and Fletcher. The chief interest centres about the classical and popular schools of playwriting, which for a time ran parallel until merged into the

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\*The plays of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, 8 B.C.-65 A.D., tutor of the Emperor Nero, philosopher, courtier and tragedian, were translated into English—*Hercules Furens* in 1561, *Octavia* 1566, *Hypollitus* 1567, etc., and made a direct appeal to the English populace. The powerful tragedies of Aeschylus and Euripides were too local in spirit to meet the demands of 1550-70: the first good translation of the Greek dramatists appeared in 1649 and the first complete editions not until 1800. Seneca wrote when Rome was mistress of the known world and almost merged in it—at a time of sceptical ferment and introspection. England, under Elizabeth, bore a striking analogy to the Rome of 60 A.D. The cosmopolitan spirit of the Roman poet, his sensationalism, and his treatment of human affection appealed to the people, while the style attracted the attention of the universities. Seneca contributed the 5th act, the chorus, the ghost and other physical features to the English drama. The Senecan spirit was met half way by the English populace, or it would never have obtained a lodgment. The same condition holds good with regard to any renascent or foreign suasion, such as the Gothic revival, the continental influence of Boileau and the French academies—the Romance trends of 1550 and 1740-1840, etc.—R.L.