

**THE PILGRIMAGE TO
PARNASSUS WITH THE
TWO PARTS OF THE
RETURN FROM PARNASSUS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649011063

The pilgrimage to Parnassus with the two parts of The return from Parnassus by W. D. Macray

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W. D. MACRAY

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The Pilgrimage to Parnassus

WITH

The Two Parts of

The Return from Parnassus

London
HENRY FROWDE



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS WAREHOUSE
AMEN CORNER, E.C.

Pilgrimage to Parnassus



*THE PILGRIMAGE TO
PARNASSUS with THE
TWO PARTS OF THE
RETURN FROM PARNASSUS.
Three Comedies performed in ST.
JOHN'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE
A.D. MDXCVII-MDCI. Edited
from MSS. by the REV. W. D.
MACRAY, M.A., F.S.A.*

OXFORD AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

MDCCCLXXXVI

PR2411

P5

1886

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PREFACE.

THE present volume contains a trilogy of dramas which, although known to have once existed, has lain *perdu* to the world from the time of its composition, except with regard to the third part. That third part was twice printed in 1606, rather more than four years after the date of its first representation; was reprinted in the last century; was included a few years ago in Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt's edition of Dodsley's *Select Plays*; and in 1879 obtained a place in Prof. Arber's *English Scholar's Library*. But why this third part should alone have been published by its author does not clearly appear; it was described by its eighteenth-century editor, Thos. Hawkins, in somewhat exaggerated terms, as being 'perhaps the most singular composition in our language,' but its singularity of design and character is shared equally by the earlier parts, which display also as much humour and are fuller of illustrations of the academic life of the period. They have, unhappily, as much too of that coarseness which is such a blot on the popular literature of the time, but they have no such pages of repulsive rant as are assigned at the close of the third part to the extravagant characters *Furor Poeticus* and *Phantasma*. Probably the secret of the greater popularity of the third part may be found in the personal satire expressed in the character of the *Recorder*. In him is personified Francis Brackyn, who in his office as Recorder of Cambridge incurred extreme unpopularity in the

University by maintaining the right of the Mayor to precedence over the Vice-Chancellor in certain cases.¹ He had already been satirized in *Club-Law*, a play acted at Clare Hall in 1597-8; and it is possible that he may also be the lawyer who at a later date figures as *Ignoramus* in Ruggles' famous comedy. It may well be that it was on this account that the last part of our trilogy won the greater popularity amongst the academic auditors to whose sympathies it appealed; and the prominence given through its second title, *The Scourge of Simony*, to that portion of the play which represents the lawyer's co-operation with a patron in the sale of an ecclesiastical benefice, makes it also probable that the latter greedy reprobate, called by the different names of Sir Frederick, Sir Raderick, and Sir Randall, may have been some other easily recognised and notorious character of the time. It was only some twenty-five years before that a statute had been passed (13 Eliz. *cap.* 6) forbidding the taking money for presentation to a vacant benefice, and making that an offence by civil law which had before been only cognizable under canon law, but no doubt unscrupulous patrons and lawyers had already begun to find ways for driving the proverbial coach and horses through the technicalities of the enactment.

The first two comedies are now printed from a MS. preserved in one of Thomas Hearne's volumes of miscellaneous collections in the Bodleian Library. With a true sense of the possible value to others, if not to himself, of all remnants of earlier times, of the very rags of writings, Hearne (who, in the words of his self-written epitaph, 'studied and preserved antiquities' in a way for which we of the later generations can never be too grateful) stored up

¹ See Mr. James Bass Mullinger's *University of Cambridge 1535-1625*, published in 1884, p. 526. An abstract of the third play is there given at pp. 522-526.

all kinds of papers, binding them together just as they came to his hands, in most admired confusion. His MSS. now form part of Dr. Richard Rawlinson's vast collection; and there, in one of his mixed volumes numbered Rawlinson D 398, I met with these lost plays. The MS. consists of twenty folio leaves (besides one outside leaf) written evidently by a copyist, who, as evidently, has sometimes been unable to read, or too careless to read, his original correctly. The stage directions are written in pale red ink. There is a curious peculiarity in the scribe's spelling, which may perhaps help to determine his provincial locality; words ending in *ce*, such as 'once,' 'fence,' 'hence,' are written without the final *e*, 'onc,' 'fenc,' 'henc.' And 'they' is frequently used for 'the.' On the outside leaf is written, as an owner's name, 'Edmunde Rishton, Lancastrensis.' It is possible that, as the plays were acted at St. John's College, this person was a member of the College; but as unfortunately the registers there only reach back to the year 1634 (as I am informed by Mr. J. B. Mullinger), there are no means of tracing him through College records. Nor has Mr. J. Eglinton Bailey, whose knowledge with respect to the families and worthies of Lancashire is extensive and well known, been able to identify him by this his short local description of himself. And while this mark of ownership connects this MS. with a northern county, it is worthy of notice that the second MS., to be described further on, came to its present possessor's hands from a library in the north.¹ We should be prepared therefore to look thither for the author; and in the prologue to the second play we seem to find some evidence that he was a native of Cheshire. The two lines in the professed description of the author,

'Hee never since durst name a peece of cheese,
Though Chessire seems to priviledge his name,'

¹ The provincial philologist will, I believe, find words of northern use not infrequent; e.g. 'sooping.'