

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
STUDIES IN ENGLISH.
ENGLISH TRAGICOMEDY:
ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY**

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FRANK HUMPHREY RISTINE

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BY

FRANK HUMPHREY RISTINE, Ph.D.



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This Monograph has been approved by the Department of English in Columbia University as a contribution to knowledge worthy of publication.

A. H. THORNDIKE,
Secretary.

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PREFACE

This work is an attempt to present a comprehensive survey of a relatively unexplored field in English drama. In spite of the study and research lavished upon other phases of dramatic literature, the subject of tragicomedy has been consistently neglected in literary history and has almost escaped the attention of the critical investigator as well. The only special monograph in the field, Dr. H. C. Lancaster's study of "The French Tragi-Comedy: Its Origin and Development from 1552 to 1628", deals, as the title proclaims, with a foreign aspect of the subject; and so far as England is concerned, the only important critical matter bearing directly on tragicomic drama is embodied in the researches of Professor A. H. Thorndike in the Beaumont-Fletcher plays and in a chapter of Professor F. E. Schelling's work on "Elizabethan Drama." The present study has presumed to cover somewhat discursively the entire field of the subject in England and to determine, if possible, its position and importance in the drama of which it is a part.

Naturally such an undertaking has been made possible only by taking advantage of the work of predecessors at every step. Apart from particular cases of indebtedness indicated throughout the discussion and the aid received from the works listed in the appended Bibliography, certain obligations call for special acknowledgment, particularly those incurred from the above mentioned studies. Wherein the plan and scope of the present work has necessitated retracing some of the ground already covered by Dr. Lancaster's dissertation, adequate acknowledgment, I trust, has been made, though I am conscious of other obligations to that able thesis which can not always be readily traced. Professor Schelling's monumental history of the Elizabethan drama has been of constant assistance, as it must be to all who work in that field. But my most personal obligations are to Professor Ashley H. Thorndike. To at-