

**A DEFENCE OF  
POETRY, MUSIC,  
AND STAGE-PLAYS**

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A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage-Plays by Thomas Lodge

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**A DEFENCE OF  
POETRY, MUSIC,  
AND STAGE-PLAYS**



A DEFENCE OF POETRY, MUSIC,  
AND STAGE-PLAYS,

BY THOMAS LODGE,  
OF LINCOLN'S INN.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED, BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

AN ALARUM AGAINST USURERS;

AND

THE DELECTABLE HISTORY

OF

FORBONIUS AND PRISCERIA.

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.



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PRINTED FOR THE SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY.

1853.

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OF  
THE SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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As the present volume has only a partial reference to dramatic performances, it may very probably disappoint the expectations of some Members of the Shakespeare Society. It was however most desirable that the suppressed tract of Lodge, in answer to Gosson's "School of Abuse," should be preserved in an accessible form; and, as it was too inconsiderable in bulk to appear by itself, it is accompanied with an accurate reprint of the earliest of the same author's numerous publications, in which he protests against "the unjust slander" with which he had been assailed by Gosson, in his later work, "Playes confuted in Five Actions," without date, but printed about the year 1582. This treatise, "An Alarum against Usurers," is in other respects not unworthy of notice, as it exposes the craft and subtlety of a class of men who are found in most countries, delineated by the author from his own observation, or, as his words might infer, his personal experience. It also furnishes an early specimen of that conversational style which De Foe has employed so effectively in his various fictitious narratives.



Having obtained the use of the curious little volume of tracts relating to Stage Plays, which contains Lodge's Reply to Gosson, and which was purchased at Heber's sale (Part IV., No. 2,334) by the late William Henry Miller, Esq., of Craigentenny, with permission to have it transcribed for the use of the Shakespeare Society, I was led, somewhat incautiously, to undertake the editing of the present volume, instead of leaving it wholly in the more competent hands of Mr. Payne Collier, a gentleman to whom the Society is under such manifold obligations; but with his friendly assistance, the task has not proved very arduous.

The increasing attractions of theatrical entertainments during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, were attended with serious abuses. The crowds, in particular, which flocked on the Sundays to places of popular amusement, occasioned loud complaints and remonstrances on the part of the Puritan ministers. As dramatic performances were however encouraged and patronized by the Queen herself and many of the nobility, the denunciations in sermons preached at Paul's Cross, and even the prohibition of the Mayor and Aldermen of London, which prevented the erection of a theatre within the bounds of the City, had no effect in checking the evil.

Two years after the appearance of Northbrooke's "Treatise against Dicing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes, with other idle Pastimes," Stephen Gosson, who had himself been a writer for the Stage, published his "School of Abuse." Both these works

have been reprinted in the series of the Society's publications, and edited by Mr. Collier, with his usual fidelity. In the same year, 1579, Gosson published another work, entitled "The Ephemerides of Phialo," at the end of which he annexed "A short Apologie of the School of Abuse; against Poets, Pipers, Players, and their Excusers." In this Apology Gosson tells us that the Players, having in vain applied to some members of the Universities to answer his former publication, they at length "had found one in London to write certain honest Excuses, for so they term it, to their dishonest Abuses which I revealed." To what individual he alludes, cannot be ascertained. Mr. Collier, I think rather inadvertently, says this "alludes to Thomas Lodge the dramatist, who very soon afterwards published his reply to Stephen Gosson." It is however by no means clear that this was the case, when we consider his words. "Our players," (he says) "since I set out the *Schole of Abuse*, have travailed to some of mine acquaintance of both Universities, with fayre profers, and greater promises of rewardes, if they woulde take so much paines as to write against mee; at last, like to Penelopee's suters, which seeing themselves disdained of her, were glad to encroch with some of her maides, when neither of both Universities would heare their plea, they were driven to flie to a weake hedge, and fight for themselves with a rotten stake.....It is tolde mee that they have got one in London to write certaine *Honest Excuses*, for so they tearme it, to their dishonest Abuses which I revealed.

.....I stave my hande till I see his booke; when I have perused it, I wil tel you more." As Lodge's tract makes no mention of this Apology, the two sheets of which it consists may have already been in the printer's hands; and before being corrected, when the usual license for publication was refused, only a few copies may have been thrown off. But Gosson's distinction, "one in London," in contrast with some persons in both Universities, will not apply to Lodge, although at that time he probably resided in London. It is at least evident that they had no personal acquaintance, although they were students at Oxford at the same time, and took their degree of Bachelor of Arts within seven months of each other. When Lodge's tract came into Gosson's hands, as something unexpected on his part, he expressly states, this was "one whole yeere after the privy printing thereof;" and consequently, several months subsequent to the publication of his "Ephemerides."

This, after all, is a matter of no importance, and it is therefore scarcely necessary to remark, that a tract issued under such circumstances was not likely to be the one specially written in favour of the Players at the time, when, in consequence of "his Defiance unto Players," Gosson says he "*was mightely besett with heaps of adversaries.*" Of these productions he has preserved the outline of one named "The Play of Plays,"<sup>1</sup> "written in their owne defence," which was brought on the Stage, but probably never printed. Another

<sup>1</sup> In his "Playes Confuted," sign. F., 1-3. See also Collier's *Annals of the Stage*, vol. ii., p. 275.