THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. JOHN FLETCHER: A STUDY IN DRAMATIC METHOD

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The University of Chicago. John Fletcher: A Study in Dramatic Method by Orie Latham Hatcher

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. JOHN FLETCHER: A STUDY IN DRAMATIC METHOD

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JOHN FLETCHER

A STUDY IN
DRAMATIC METHOD

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERA-
TURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH)

BY
ORIE LATHAM HATCHER

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PREFACE.

A word is needed as to the topics chosen for dicussion and the order of their arrangement.

The study makes no attempt at being exhaustive in its range of topics, but aims to bring into prominence certain of Fletcher's traits as a dramatist which deserve more attention than they have yet received. His poetical gifts, metrical qualities, and diction, have been fully and frequently treated elsewhere, and for this reason are not given a large share of attention here.

The investigation into Fletcher's *Choice and Treatment of Sources* and the discussion of his *Mastery of Stagecraft* are properly both parts of Chapter V on *General Dramatic Method,* but on account of their bulk and significance, each has been given a separate chapter, the one serving as an introduction and the other as a conclusion to the main chapter.

The last chapter, on *Spirit of the Comedies,* may be open to criticism as being beyond the limits laid down by the subject. It is included, however, because an understanding of Fletcher's characteristic mood and attitude has seemed a prime necessity to any full comprehension of his methods of work.

Among those who have helped me in the preparation of this study, Professors A. H. Tolman and R. M. Lovett, of the University of Chicago, and L. T. Damon, of Brown University, have been exceedingly kind and helpful in the way of criticism and suggestion, and Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, formerly of the University of Pennsylvania, has rendered me a valuable service in placing in my hands his study—still unpublished—of the sources of the Beaumont-Fletcher plays. To Prof. A. H. Thorndike, of Northwestern University, also I am very greatly indebted, not only for his cordial courtesy to a stranger in consenting to read the proof sheets, but for very helpful comments, especially in connection with the last chapter. To Prof. F. I. Carpenter, of the University of Chicago, however, my most grateful acknowledgment is due. He suggested the undertaking, placed at my disposal the Beaumont-Fletcher folios and other rare books needed, and at every turn has stimulated and guided my work.

ORIE L. HATCHER.

Bryn Mawr College, May, 1905.

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I.

INTRODUCTION: PROBLEMS OF AUTHORSHIP IN THE BEAUMONT-FLETCHER PLAYS.

The history of opinion as to the authorship of the Beaumont-Fletcher plays shows the gradual re-emergence of two identities from the close literary partnership with which the names are associated in the popular mind. That some distinction was made between the two dramatists in their own day is to be inferred from the fact that each is known to have written separately during the period of their collaboration,[1] and also from the documentary evidence which indicates that many of the plays commonly attributed to both were not produced until after Beaumont's death.[2]

It is obvious, however, that the lines of demarcation between the two early became confused; for already in 1618-19 Drummond reports Jonson as saying that "Flesher and Beaumont, ten yeers since, hath written *The Faithfull Shipheardesse*, a tragicomedie well done,"[3] whereas both Jonson[4] and Beaumont[5] had already addressed lines to Fletcher in commendation of his pastoral; nor is Jonson's other reported comment that "next himself only Fletcher and Chapman could write a masque"[6] easy to understand in view of the fact that the only independent masque in the Beaumont-Fletcher plays has, from quite early

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[1] *The Faithful Shepherdess*, by Fletcher, and *The Masque of the Inner Temple* and minor poems by Beaumont.

See also the lines of Jasper Maine:

> "For that you could write singly we may guess
> By the divided pieces which the press
> Hath severally sent forth."
>
> *Commendatory Verses*, 1647 Folio. See Dyce ed., I, p. 75.

and that of Cartwright referring to Fletcher:

"'Tis known that sometimes he did stand alone." Ibid., p. 76.

Humphrey Moseley also in his *Stationer to the Reader* of the same folio declares:

"It was once in my thoughts to have printed Master Fletcher's works by themselves because singly and alone they would make a just volume."

[2] Records of Sir Henry Herbert as Deputy and Chief Master of the Revels: See Malone's Shakespeare, ed. Boswell, 111. pp. 224-243.

[3] *Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden.* Sh. Soc., 1846, p. 17.

[4] Lines prefixed to *The Faithful Shepherdess.*

[5] Ibid.

[6] See Note 3.