

**THE FRENCH TRAGI-
COMEDY, ITS ORIGIN AND
DEVELOPMENT FROM
1552 TO 1628**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649269778

The French tragi-comedy, its origin and development from 1552 to 1628 by Henry Carrington Lancaster

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

HENRY CARRINGTON LANCASTER

**THE FRENCH TRAGI-
COMEDY, ITS ORIGIN AND
DEVELOPMENT FROM
1552 TO 1628**

THE FRENCH TRAGI-COMEDY

Its Origin and Development from
1552 to 1628

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

BY

HENRY CARRINGTON LANCASTER

HL 16-15

BALTIMORE
J. H. FURST COMPANY
1907

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
L. J. FURST COMPANY

TO MY MOTHER.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.....	ix
Scope of the Dissertation (ix)—Sources of Information (xi)—Critical Opinions of the Tragi-Comedy (xi)—Definition of the Tragi-Comedy (xxiv).	
CHAPTER I—THE SOURCES OF THE FRENCH TRAGI-COMEDY.....	1
Its relation to the Medieval Drama (1)—to the Drama of Greece and Rome (16)—to the Tragi-Comedy of Other European Nations: A. The Earliest Tragi-Comedies (24); B. Non-French Tragi-Comedies from 1515 to 1582 (27)—Conclusions (35).	
CHAPTER II—THE FRENCH TRAGI-COMEDY OF THE XVI CENTURY...	56
The <i>Moralité</i> as Tragi-Comedy (57)—the <i>Mystère</i> of Biblical Plot as Tragi-Comedy (48)—the <i>Mystère of Romanesque</i> Plot as Tragi-Comedy (61)—the Farce as Tragi-Comedy (70)—the Pastoral and Foreign Play as Tragi-Comedy (72)—General Characteristics (73).	
CHAPTER III—THE TRAGI-COMEDY IN THE XVII CENTURY BEFORE ROTROU AND CORNEILLE (1600-1628).....	84
The <i>Non-Romanesque</i> Tragi-Comedy: Analyses and Divisions (85); Characterization (94)—The <i>Romanesque</i> Tragi-Comedy: Analyses and Sources (102); Characterization (132).	
CHAPTER IV—SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE TRAGI-COMEDY.....	148
The Period from 1628 to 1636 (148)—Decline of the Tragi-Comedy (151)—Reasons for its extinction (152)—Conclusions.	
APPENDIX A—NON-FRENCH TRAGI-COMEDIES WRITTEN BEFORE 1582.	155
APPENDIX B—FRENCH TRAGI-COMEDIES FROM 1552 TO 1636:	
I The Sixteenth Century.....	163
II The Seventeenth Century Before Rotrou (1628).....	168
III From Rotrou's First Tragi-Comedy to the <i>Cid</i> (1628-1636).....	178
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	182
LIFE.....	191

NOTE:—The few abbreviations used for the titles of books cited in the following pages are explained by reference to their authors, listed in the Bibliography.

In quoting names, titles, and passages from French authors, I have endeavored as far as possible to reproduce the original orthography, accentuation, etc., rather than to use the system current in contemporary French.

INTRODUCTION.

Toward the middle of the sixteenth century there developed in France a variety of the *drame libre* that represented, in a classical form, the essential qualities of the medieval drama. Under the term *tragi-comédie* it included types as various as the medieval *genres* from which they sprang, united by the common possession of a happy *dénouement*, a classical form and name. After a period of confusion, which lasted throughout the sixteenth century, came the predominance of the *romanesque* tragi-comedy, which grew to be, not only the leading type of the *genre*, but the most popular dramatic kind at Paris, so continuing till succeeded in the public favor by the classical tragedy and comedy. The tragi-comedy continued for some years to be written, but toward 1672, after an existence of one hundred and twenty years, came to an end as an independent *genre*.

It had been as M. Faguet describes it, "tout un genre, et un genre très important et précieux."¹ It had formed an integral part in the evolution of the French drama, filling the stage between the sixteenth century dramatists and Pierre Corneille. For forty years the chief expression of the form of dramatic art that is popular in its appeal, it must be studied for any complete history of the French people or their stage. By such study can be seen both how the scholastic drama of the sixteenth century became popularized, and whence Corneille drew his practical knowledge of the stage. The history of the tragi-comedy shows that the French had for a long period cultivated a type of dramatic composition akin to that which reached such perfection in England and Spain, so that their failure to produce a Shakspeare, or Lope, is not assignable, as many have intimated, to the repressing influence of classical rules.

The tragi-comedy, furthermore, deserves study as giving an

¹ *La Tragédie française au XVI^e siècle*, 233.

excellent example of the *évolution des genres*, about which the late M. Brunetière wrote so suggestively.¹ In its development may be observed the creation of the *genre* out of other dramatic forms, its early inclusion of a number of rudimentary types, the survival and predominance of the *romanesque* as the fittest of these, the growth of this successful form in the hands of Hardy and his contemporaries with occasional reversions to the older types, its literary culmination in the *Cid*, later decline, loss from the depredations of nearly related forms and final extinction. This evidences a whole cycle of literary evolution, which repays investigation, not only for its own sake, but for that of other *genres* in which the process may be equally true, but less apparent.

It is my purpose to trace this evolution as far as the year 1628, which marks the end of the development of the tragi-comedy and the beginning of the twenty years in which its greatest successes lie. It is the year in which Hardy completed the publication of his extant plays, while Rotrou brought out his first tragi-comedy and a comedy that started the French imitation of the Spanish drama. In the following year, moreover, Corneille began his dramatic career and Scudéry composed his first tragi-comedy. Thus 1628 dates, in a way, the end of one generation of tragicomic authors and the beginning of another. As the first period (1552-1628) includes the beginnings of the *genre* in France and the development of its various dramatic qualities, so the second period (1628-1672) covers years of popularity, in which the causes of its subsequent decay may be detected, and years of disintegration, which resulted in the absorption of the *genre* by the tragedy and the comedy.

At some time I hope to treat the second of these periods, but at present I confine myself to the first. The following pages will therefore be devoted to an investigation of the sources of the tragi-comedy, as they are found in France and other parts of Europe, to the development of the *genre* in the former country, and to a study of the tragi-comedies written from 1552 to 1628, in order to show their authorship, structure, sources, treatment of subject, character, and incident.

¹ Especially in *L'Évolution des Genres*.

In this investigation I have relied chiefly on the plays themselves, extant at Paris in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal. I have also used various catalogues of plays, of which the chief are those by La Croix du Maine, du Verdier, Beauchamps, Frères Parfaict, Lérès, Allacci, Riccoboni, La Vallière, Soleinne, and Brunet.¹ Of these the last three have been of especial value to me from the extent and comparative reliability of their information. Other catalogue-writers, those named above as well as those of lesser importance mentioned in my bibliography, have been consulted with caution.

My indebtedness to other authors, chiefly for general accounts of the period, or the history of other dramatic *genres*, is indicated in my bibliography. Among the works that have been of greatest assistance to me may be mentioned the enlightening criticisms of M. Brunetière and M. Lanson, the excellent treatises of M. Rigal on Alexandre Hardy and the contemporary theater, and the valuable historical researches of MM. Fagnet, Petit de Julleville, Creizenach, Marsan, Ebert, Fournel and Chasles.²

Not only does no special treatment of the tragi-comedy exist, but literary historians of the period have assigned it only a few pages at most, usually only a few lines. Certain plays, it is true, have received much attention, as those of Hardy, Mairet, Scudéry, and Rotrou, the *Bradamante* of Garnier, and the *Tyr et Sidon* of Schelandre.³ But minor authors have been neglected, and no comprehensive account of the whole field has been presented. Criticism, in fact, has been largely reduced to a matter of definition, which in some cases is based on scant acquaintance with extant forms of the *genre*, though in others it is both apt and suggestive. Before beginning an historical investigation of the plays, I must turn to those definitions that are of importance.

The Frères Parfaict³ hold that the tragi-comedy is "une action singulière qui se passe entre des personnes d'une naissance distinguée, même entre des Rois et des Princes, dans laquelle il n'y a aucun danger pour la vie des principaux Personnages."³ They

¹ For titles of works, dates, etc., see *Bibliography*.

² For references, cf. the *Bibliography*.

³ *Histoire du Théâtre français*, III, 455.