

**ONE HUNDRED LECTURES ON THE ANCIENT
AND MODERN DRAMATIC POETS, THE
HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY, ORATORY AND
ELOCUTION
DOWN TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY,
COMMENCING WITH THESPIS, THE FOUNDER
OF THE DRAMATIC ART, SIXTH CENTURY B.C**

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One hundred lectures on the ancient and modern dramatic poets, the heathen mythology, oratory and elocution down to the nineteenth century, commencing with Thespis, the founder of the dramatic art, sixth century B.C by B. C. Jones

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B. C. JONES

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BY

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PREFACE.



WE do not expect men in affluent circumstances to trouble themselves much in devoting their time to produce literary works. Some few exceptions there are to this rule, and posterity will not forget to honour the names of those who may thus labour for the benefit of society. Not finding many of this class of writers, we necessarily look to those requiring our support for their exertions to enlighten us. This being the case (and public support being essential), I venture to throw my humble labours into the scale of public opinion, anticipating nothing but a just balance of public favour. I am not vain enough to imagine that I shall immortalise myself by my attempt to eclaircise the drama and dramatic poets to your capacities, but I am ambitious enough to seek the praise and approbation of my fellow-men; therefore, if I can produce anything of merit deserving your good opinion, accord it freely, or if I twaddle and waste good paper, why! deal with me in the same spirit. If the food I produce is worth your feeding upon, digest

it well and I will afford you a fresh repast every week; or if it does not agree with your taste, you can eschew it altogether. I must confess I'd rather have your support than otherwise, for it will encourage me to exert my genius and to try if I cannot be agreeably useful to my fellow citizens; and, furthermore, if I do succeed, how glorious it will be to think I shall not be altogether forgotten to posterity. 'Tis the natural vanity of mankind to desire this: life, 'tis said, is all vanity—some people add that a little vexation of spirit is sometimes commingled with it. How generous then, my friends, it will be on your part to encourage my vanity by making me believe I am amusing and enlightening you, and how gratifying it will be to you to know you are not occasioning me any vexation of spirit in not disappointing my hopes. I candidly confess and freely admit that I want your support—how else will I be incited to proceed to the issue of what I contemplate? This will depend upon the extent of support I receive: by that I will have to decide if I venture to issue these numbers, which I ask you to purchase to edify yourselves and replenish my exchequer or not. “Money's the thing,” they say, “that makes the mare to go,” and as the song says, “I want money, I want money;” spend a little of your spare cash, and don't despair of an adequate requital. *Quid sit futurum cras fuge querere carpe diem*—this being my motto, I will proceed now to tell you what I purpose offering you. I propose to collect all the information in my power and render it unto you, relative to

the dramatic poets and dramatic productions of all ages, but you must not expect from me impossibilities—all the talent that ever existed is not within my reach. I am already in possession of sufficient material to write upon for the next year or two, therefore if you as vividly grasp at the enlightening flashes that I purpose electrifying you with, as I cause them to appear, I'll promise you not to disorganise your gastric capacities, but give you such food as you shall digest with pleasure; yet you must not expect from me too much, lest I disappoint you and bring your maledictions on to my own unfortunate noddle. Let us go on smoothly; be you moderate in your demands and I'll be as prolific in my effusions as nature will allow me.

The first series of my lectures, will be upon the Greek tragedies. I purpose going through the whole of the works of the three great masters, Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, "whose characters appeared bathed in tears, with murderous weapon in hand, terror and pity on either side, preceded by despair and followed by woe." After these my province will be to search for more material of same character by other hands and to be followed by the comedies which were produced about same period. My present plan is to finish these two series with Seneca, whose birth took place the same year as the Christian Era commenced. I will then collect what matter I can for you that was produced in this era previous to Shakspeare's time (some I have already in my possession of rather an interesting character),

and when I come to the great poet himself, I hope to lay before you such lucid definitions of his various impressions as may, perhaps, gain me your confidence and entitle my works to your regard with favour and esteem. The works of the great poet last named to you may be fairly considered as forming a part of the riches of the kingdom, traditional and everlasting—it has been said that “they are her estate in fame, that fame which letters confer upon her; the worth and value of which or sinks or raises her in the opinion of foreign nations, and she takes her rank among them according to the esteem which these are held in.” Talk of enthusiasm in favour of our Shakspeare! this, I think, beats all the rest hollow—it actually goes so far as to say that the whole world judge the standard of our position in the scale of nations as is only to be balanced by those who can produce a poet of equal merit; or another interpretation of it may be that in accordance with the estimation this poet is held in by the various nations of the earth, so is the worth and greatness of our nation esteemed by them. I revere the genius and memory of our sweet bard as much as any one in the world, but I cannot go quite so far as “Capell” does, particularly whilst we know that there are nations in the world (yea! and civilised nations to) that know very little about Shakspeare at all, and the little they are acquainted with of him they scarcely comprehend. We know very well that his works have been translated into almost every living language, but whilst we are aware that the whole of Shak-