

**JOHN WEBSTER AND
THE ELIZABETHAN
DRAMA**

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John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama by Rupert Brooke

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RUPERT BROOKE

**JOHN WEBSTER AND
THE ELIZABETHAN
DRAMA**

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COLLECTED POEMS
of
RUPERT BROOKE

WITH A
PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT
of the AUTHOR

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JOHN WEBSTER *and the*
ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

By **RUPERT BROOKE**

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NOTE

This book was written in 1911-12, and was the 'dissertation' with which the author won his Fellowship at King's College, Cambridge, in 1913.

The page-references are to Dyce's one-volume edition.

E. M.

PREFACE

I HAVE tried to write a small book about John Webster. That is to say, I have tried to say the truth about him, as much of it as is necessary to enable anyone who reads him to understand him. I have not tried to explain him entirely to anyone who has not read him, though I hope that any person in that condition may get a rough idea of him from this book.

I have tried to explain Webster for a reader, but not to explain him away. So I have endeavoured to keep to my own province, and not to trespass on ground reserved for worthier feet—Webster's. I conceive that there is much that he can explain better than I. So I have, at least, abstained from paraphrasing.

To explain Webster's writings it is first necessary to determine what he wrote, and also such smaller questions as when he wrote it, and how he came to write it. Such questions, the questions of "scientific" literary criticism, I deal with in the Appendices. I have taken some care to get the most probable answers in each case; for there is such a lot of bad logic and fudging on

such points in modern literary science, that one always has to go over the whole ground completely for oneself.

When these points are settled, with as much certitude as possible, there are still other points on which it is necessary to have right opinions in order to understand Webster. One must know what a play is; one must know how the Elizabethan drama arose; and one must know what the Elizabethan drama was. I have given a chapter to each of these points; not pretending to cover the whole ground, or to do the work of a whole book; but endeavouring to correct some of the more misleading wrong ideas, and to hint at some of the more important right ones. These chapters, of course, though nominally not about Webster, should be even more important to any understanding of him than the Appendices. And I have given two long chapters to the more direct consideration of what Webster wrote, and what its more usual characteristics are.

The Bibliography is, I think, fairly complete with regard to Webster. I did not think it necessary to make a bibliography of books on the wider subjects.

It may seem, in some cases, as if I contradicted myself in different parts of the book; as, for instance, when I say that it is impossible to
