

Dutch

Citizen Play
Lower reaches of society : Thomas Dekker.
Shoemaker's Holiday

The Elizabethan age was rich in literary productions of all kinds. Shakespeare remained to his contemporaries a popular playwright. He represented all the elements of the Elizabethan thought and immortalized the aspirations of great nation. The bulk of Shakespearean dramas are filled with comic ~~scenes~~ scenes of common life. Shakespeare established norms and ideals on which the dramatist of the subsequent generation had to play upon. He with the death of Queen Elizabethan I, the whole nation had to experience the gloom of financial crisis. The period of career life was over and the whole nation ~~had to~~ ^{was} witness the period of greatest economic confusion in English history.

plot [Like a true creative artist Dekker could not remain a mute observer. He observed things with utmost care, sympathy and thus patronized in literature, particularly drama a type of play which was almost unthought citizen play. Dekker's plays have a reference to contemporary customs, habit, dress and character of workaday types. The citizen dramas were mirrors of contemporary life, and no other writer has displayed it with as much faithfulness as Thomas Dekker. Ben Jonson's readiness to modify the classical theories led to a clash between older and newer forms of dramas portraying mainly the new emerging middle class. Dekker as a dramatist excelled Jonson because of his giving identity to men neglected for centuries. In "The Shoemaker's Holiday" the class of shoemakers occupies the same position as has been occupied by aristocracy in Shakespeare or by the middle class in Ben Jonson. The Elizabethan perhaps ignored the men of the street. Dekker, however, chose and reveals himself as one who is thoroughly familiar with the life of the social evolution of his times in a period of great confusion particularly economic.]

'A Shoemaker Holiday' is a perfect example of Dekker's sympathy and understanding for the lower strata of society. He presents the realistic picture of the gentle craft without exaggeration and without sacrificing of Prosaic fact. In this play we are confronted with shoemaker's working in Simon Eyck's establishment, they are common people of artisan class and talk common language, the characters have been described with this discipline propriety and humour, they speak intelligible language of the town street, work shop, they move and live in its atmosphere are hably of it and interpret life around them in terms of it canons and poses. There is frequent reference to their tools with which they work, work with minute details. Dekker is of the opinion that rich should be fair and charitable. The poor should be contented with what they have. The honest workman should be within his limits, Dekker wants that common strata of people should not be deprived of his right and opportunity. One should be given full chance to exploit and show or reveal his talent. These ~~the~~ ^{is} the moral code framed by Dekker for the people of all society. Dekker dealing with the lower strata has exploited all the salient features of whatever tradition he had for citizen play.

Plot [Most of the contemporaries writing plays on city life painted lively picture but the satirical note was also there. Moreover, Jonson displayed the view, Beaumont made fun of the unsophisticated ignorance of the citizen of the town but Dekker is almost ~~is~~ alone in his sympathy for the world of the craftsman of the street. Although there is apparently a satire in this play, even if their pur-

prose is always corrective without interfering
 the spirit of pure comedy. Dekker narrates the
 affair of day to day life with which one natura-
 lly comes across, but to which one ~~plays~~^{pays} little or
 no attention. Even more than satire he is more
 concerned with realism depicting the continuous
 sense of joy, love for things and people, sensate
 and experience which give to the play a true
 citizen spirit. It is true however, that the elements
 of citizen play came to be traced in London seem
 of Shakespeare's King Henry IV part I, but Shakesp-
 are either lacked the experience of the people of
 the lowest order of society or he dare not to present
 them on the stage. Dekker seems to have both these
 things. Dekker's preference to write on such people
 about whose daily routine etc, very little is
 known, gives his plays ~~the~~ full flavour.

plot [The elements of realism shows more
~~human~~ understanding and sympathy for the comm-
 on ~~people~~^{people} of Dekker's time. The class of unattractive men
 being given a place in drama is taken ~~of~~^{at} Dekker's
 boldness and his quality of making them attra-
 ctively human. He presented them with intrigue,
 for fantasy, gloom and gaiety. Narrating the story of
 Simon Eyre, the glorious shoemaker of the reign of
 Henry IV, who from mere apprentice rises to the ear-
 nence of a Lord Mayor, builds a leather market in
 London Hall. The Hero takes us into the workshop
 and introduces us to his wife and workman, etc.
 The picture of the shoemaker's establishment with
 men actually at work has a realistic framework
 because of the natural description of the activities
 of the day, its gossip familiarity, its sincerity
 and its sentiments all represent the true picture of the

common people of the society to which Dekker belonged. It is an atmosphere in which the more familiar things are leather and grease which vividly reflect their real life. Dekker has not left out their quarrels, dances and songs and drinks. The glory of the month of May is ~~revealed~~ revealed in Dutch song sung by Hans. Hans reflect the consciousness of this innocent folk. Dekker finds beauty and mirth in such life. He exalts the lowly people of his days and makes them types of Jolly human nature.]

Dekker's praise is note-worthy but he is partial in the sense that even in the life of the shoemakers he describes aspects ~~which~~ of upper class of men. Dekker leaves out things that are obscene and ugly. The wretchedness of the heavily populated area of the city, the quarrels over drinks, cracks, thieves, criminals and other vicious people are left out. But inspite of all this, it is an experience, a depiction, which deserves the credit of giving a new direction to the English drama in 17th century. More over the success of such comedy indicated a liking for the representation of people on the streets, who normally hailed each other as citizen. It presents a realistic picture a realism that is not hard, nor cynical, nor it is charged with extravagant romanticism. ①

Keberg in view the foresaid qualities are surely comes to the conclusion that 'The shoemakers Holiday' is a citizen play fascinatingly realistic, full of fun, realism of lower strata of society, romance gaiety and innocence.

①. No one could better understand the middle class life with its ups and down, its aspirations its compromises better than Dekker, and no one rank higher among the artist of every day things.