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IV - Second Edition

Allardyce Nicoll

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A HISTORY OF
ENGLISH DRAMA
1660-1900

BY
ALLARDYCE NICOLL
*Formerly Professor of English Language and Literature
in the University of Birmingham*

VOLUME IV
EARLY NINETEENTH
CENTURY DRAMA
1800-1850

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P R E F A C E

In this volume I have endeavoured to bring up to date the study of early nineteenth-century English drama originally issued, in two volumes, in 1930. For the most part, the pages of the main text have been left standing, but numerous small corrections or modifications have been made throughout: supplementary notes provide references to books and articles published on the theatre of this period during the past twenty years.

The chief contributions recently made to dramatic history during this half-century have been concerned with identifying authors of dramas which I had listed as anonymous and with adding titles not recorded; and as a result in the Hand-list of Plays I have been forced to fall back on a compromise. Both from new material which I personally have gathered and from the contributions of others many alterations are here introduced into the Handlist itself, and at the same time nearly a hundred pages of supplementary information have been added.

In the preparation of this supplementary information and in correcting the main Hand-list some dozen articles have proved particularly useful. One or two of these are concerned with the work of individual authors, such as James Sandoe's study of the plays written by T. J. Dibdin (*University of Colorado Studies*, 1940, i, 205-20) and W. P. Bowman's study of the plays written by George Soane (*Modern Language Notes*, 1939, liv, 278-9). The majority, however, are more generally devoted to correcting or adding to the Hand-list. Among these, the most important are the several contributions made by Allan Wade and Sir St Vincent Troubridge in *Theatre Notebook*. To Sir St Vincent I am also greatly indebted for his kindness and courtesy in offering me the use of his additional extensive collection of card entries: the supplementary notes in this volume owe a very great deal to the information he has provided. Of considerable value, too, have been the two

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articles by R. Crompton Rhodes on 'The Early Nineteenth-century Drama' (*Library*, 1935-6, xxi, 91-112 and 210-31), where special attention is given to the standard collections of printed texts. On one such collection M. W. Stone has some notes in 'Unrecorded Plays Published by William West' (*Theatre Notebook*, 1946, i, 33-4); other notes on the "juvenile drama" appear in the same journal by Stone (1946, i, 41; 1947, i, 80), T. Walton (1949, iii, 64-6) and H. D. Spencer (1950, iv, 37-8), while George Speaight has issued a book, *Juvenile Drama* (1946), on this subject.

Among other lists particular reference may be made to Majl Ewing's 'Notes on Nicoll's *Hand-list* for 1800-1850' (*Modern Language Notes*, 1943, lviii, 460-4) and 'The Authorship of Some Nineteenth-century Plays' (*id.* 1942, lvii, 466-8); J. E. Tobin's 'Early Nineteenth-century Drama' (*Notes and Queries*, April 21 and May 5, 1945) and 'More English Plays: 1800-1850' (*Philological Quarterly*, 1944, xxiii, 320-32); and Arnold Biella's 'Additions and Corrections to the Bibliography of Nineteenth Century British Drama' (*Philological Quarterly*, 1942, xxi, 298-332).

An indispensable tool has now been provided by Dougald MacMillan in his *Catalogue of the Larpent Plays in the Huntington Library* (San Marino, California, 1939). Further notes on individual plays in this collection are provided by L. F. Peck ('M. G. Lewis and the Larpent Catalogue', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 1941-2, v, 382-4) and Ethel Pearce (*id.* 1942-3, vi, 491-4). For the study of operas during the period equally indispensable is Alfred Loewenberg's *Annals of Opera, 1597-1940* (Cambridge, 1943).

In the supplementary notes several contractions and symbols have been used in order to save space. Under the names of individual authors the symbol "[+from *UA*...]" indicates titles of plays in the Unknown Authors section which may certainly or probably be assigned to these playwrights. In the Unknown Authors section corresponding references are given, with an "=" sign preceding the authors' name. Any titles added in the supplementary notes to those mentioned in the *Hand-list* are preceded by a "+" sign, and a

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similar sign is placed before the names of authors not elsewhere recorded. The abbreviation "L", followed by an appropriate number, refers to the entries in Dougal MacMillan's Larpet catalogue, and "LND" refers to the Hand-list which forms part of *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama*.

It should be observed that I have not included all the material enumerated in the articles cited above. Occasionally the information did not correspond with my own findings, and on occasion, too, the sources of this information did not seem to me sufficiently trustworthy to warrant its acceptance. It must fully be realised, in dealing with the early nineteenth-century drama, that quite frequently attributions of plays to particular authors which appear in one contemporary source conflict with attributions given in another source, that often the minor theatres advertised as "new" dramas which had already been elsewhere on the boards and that often the same title was given to entirely different plays. For these reasons alone it is obvious that a very long time must elapse before a definitive record can be made of all productions and publications of dramas between 1800 and 1850: the present Hand-list and the supplementary notes are to be regarded merely as a contribution towards that record.

Owing to the fact that this volume consists partly of the text presented first in 1930 and partly of supplementary material, there is a certain inevitable inconsistency in the citing of the earlier volumes of *A History of English Drama* and of the volume which follows. Thus references appear both to *A History of Late Eighteenth Century Drama* and to *A History of English Drama*, vol. iii, while sometimes *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama* appears under its full title and sometimes (to save space) under the contraction 'LND'. As will be realised, such inconsistencies, in view of the composition of this book, have proved unavoidable.

A.N.

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