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Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, Vol. I 1605-1650

By J. E. Spingarn

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INTRODUCTION
ORMAL criticism in modern Europe has its origins in the Italy of the later Renaissance, where the discussion of literary problems was merely one phase of that intellectual casuistry which arose out of the Catholic Reaction. On the basis of an ancient literary heritage the Italians developed a definite outlook on literature, a body of rules and theories, and the tentative beginnings of a critical method. They introduced the England of Sidney's age to the formal study of literature, and English criticism began. How these materials were altered to the needs of English taste, how ancient rule was adapted to modern practice, in a word, how the critical spirit of Sidney and Puttenham was transmuted into that of Dryden, Rymer, and Temple, is the subject of this inquiry. I. The Jacobean Outlook: Bacon And Jonson Bacon and Jonson are the representative critics of...



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