The aim of this thesis is to study the dramatic achievement of Dekker and Heywood in the genre, the Domestic drama. The scope of the work is limited to the undisputed domestic plays of these two dramatists, though their other works are touched upon wherever relevant and necessary. The Domestic drama has not received the critical attention it deserves even though it is of pure native origin and is considered by critics like Allardyce Nicoll to be 'the one unquestioned contribution of the English stage to the dramatic form in general'. The work is restricted to the study of the two major playwrights, Dekker and Heywood, for their real dramatic achievement lies in this field.

The entire thesis is divided into nine chapters. In the first chapter an attempt is made to show how various literary and social factors of the time contributed to the birth as well as the growth of the Domestic drama and the second chapter is devoted to a critical study of the form. The third section is mainly intended as an analytical study of the domestic plays of Dekker and Heywood. To get an idea of the importance of the work of these two dramatists, the work of the pioneers, mostly anonymous, in the field is briefly sketched.

The following three chapters are devoted to the study of some specific aspects of the domestic plays of Dekker and Heywood. The fourth chapter is a study of the institution of
family and home and some of the common domestic problems as depicted in the plays of Dekker and Heywood. The fifth chapter deals with the middle-class morality and the ethics of civility and the pragmatic virtues advocated in these plays. The sixth chapter is intended to trace the popular theological beliefs which served as a frame of reference to these authors, and constituted the general world picture.

In the final chapters, I have tried to show that Dekker and Heywood are conscientious dramatic craftsmen who worked with definite ideals and theories. They adopted certain techniques of writing, not without critical awareness of what they are doing.

While discussing the anonymous plays and the plays attributed to Dekker and Heywood, the dispute over the authorship is briefly indicated in the footnotes. It is beyond the scope of this work to offer any opinion on the problems of authorship, collaboration and chronology. In cases where these issues are involved the widely accepted views are followed.

My indebtedness to scholars and critics who have written on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama is evident almost in every page. My desire to avoid distortion of views, as far as possible, explains the frequency of quotation.

My debt to my Professor and my guide, Dr. M.V. Rama Sarma, is
many-sided and too large for acknowledgment. But for his constant encouragement, care and guidance, I would not have been able to complete this work.

G.N.R.

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