

5.

“ The birds awakte her with their morning song,
 Their warbling musicke pearst her tender eare,
 The murmuring brookes and whistling windes among
 The ratling boughes, and leaues, their parts did beare;
 Her eies vnclos'd beheld the groues along
 Of swaines and shepherd groomes, that dwellings weare;
 And that sweet noise, birds, winds, and waters sent,
 Prouokte againe the virgin to lament.

6.

“ Her plaints were interrupted with a sound,
 That seem'd from thickest bushes to proceed,
 Some iolly shepherd sung a lustie round,
 And to his voice had tun'd his oaten reed;
 Thither she went, an old man there she found,
 (At whose right hand his little flock did feed)
 Sat making baskets, his three sonnes among,
 That learn'd their fathers art, and learn'd his song.

7.

“ Beholding one in shining armes appeare
 The seelie man and his were sore dismaid;
 But sweet Erminia comforted their feare,
 Her ventall vp, her visage open laid,
 You happie folke, of heau'n beloued deare,
 Work on (quoth she) vpon your harmlesse traid,
 These dreadfull armes I beare no warfare bring
 To your sweet toile, nor those sweet tunes you sing.

8.

“ But father, since this land, these townes and towres,
 Destroyed are with sword, with fire and spoile,
 How may it be unhurt, that you and yours
 In safetie thus, applie your harmlesse toile?
 My sonne (quoth he) this pore estate of ours
 Is euer safe from storme of warlike broile;
 This wilderness doth vs in safetie keepe,
 No thundring drum, no trumpet breakes our sleepe.

9.

“ Haply iust heau'ns defence and shield of right,
Doth loue the innocence of simple swains,
The thunderbolts on highest mountains light,
And seld or neuer strike the lower plaines :
So kings haue cause to feare *Bellonaes* might,
Not they whose sweat and toile their dinner gaines,
Nor ever greedie soldier was entised
By pouertie, neglected and despised.

10.

“ O pouertie, chefe of the heau'nly brood,
Dearer to me than wealth or kingly crowne !
No wish for honour, thirst of others good,
Can moue my hart, contented with mine owne :
We quench or thirst with water of this flood,
Nor fear we poison should therein be throwne :
These little flocks of sheepe and tender goates
Giue milke for food, and wooll to make us coates.

11.

“ We little wish, we need but little wealth,
From cold and hunger vs to cloath and feed ;
These are my sonnes, their care perserues from stealth
Their fathers flocks, nor servants moe I need :
Amid these groues I walke oft for my health,
And to the fishes, birds and beastes giue heed,
How they are fed, in forrest, spring and lake,
And their contentment for ensample take.

12.

“ Time was (for each one hath his doting time,
These siluer locks were golden tresses than)
That countrie life I hated as a crime,
And from the forrests sweet contentment ran,
To Memphis stately pallace would I clime,
And there became the mightie Caliphes man,
And though I but a simple gardner weare,
Yet could I marke abuses, see and heare.

13.

“ Entised on with hope of future gaine,
I suffred long what did my soule displease ;
But when my youth was spent, my hope was vaine,
I felt my native strength at last decrease ;
I gan my losse of lustie yeeres complaine,
And wisht I had enjoy'd the countries peace ;
I bod the court farewell, and with content
My later age here have I quiet spent.

14.

“ While thus he spake, Erminia husht and still
His wise discourses heard, with great attention,
His speeches graue those idle fancies kill,
Which in her troubled soule bred such dissention ;
After much thought reformed was her will,
Within those woods to dwell was her intention,
Till fortune should occasion new afford,
To turne her home to her desired Lord.

15.

“ She said therefore, O shepherd fortunate !
That troubles some didst whilom feele and proue,
Yet liuest now in this contented state,
Let my mishap thy thoughts to pitie moue,
To entertaine me as a willing mate
In shepherds life, which I admire and loue ;
Within these pleasant groues perchance my hart,
Of her discomforts, may vnload some part.

16.

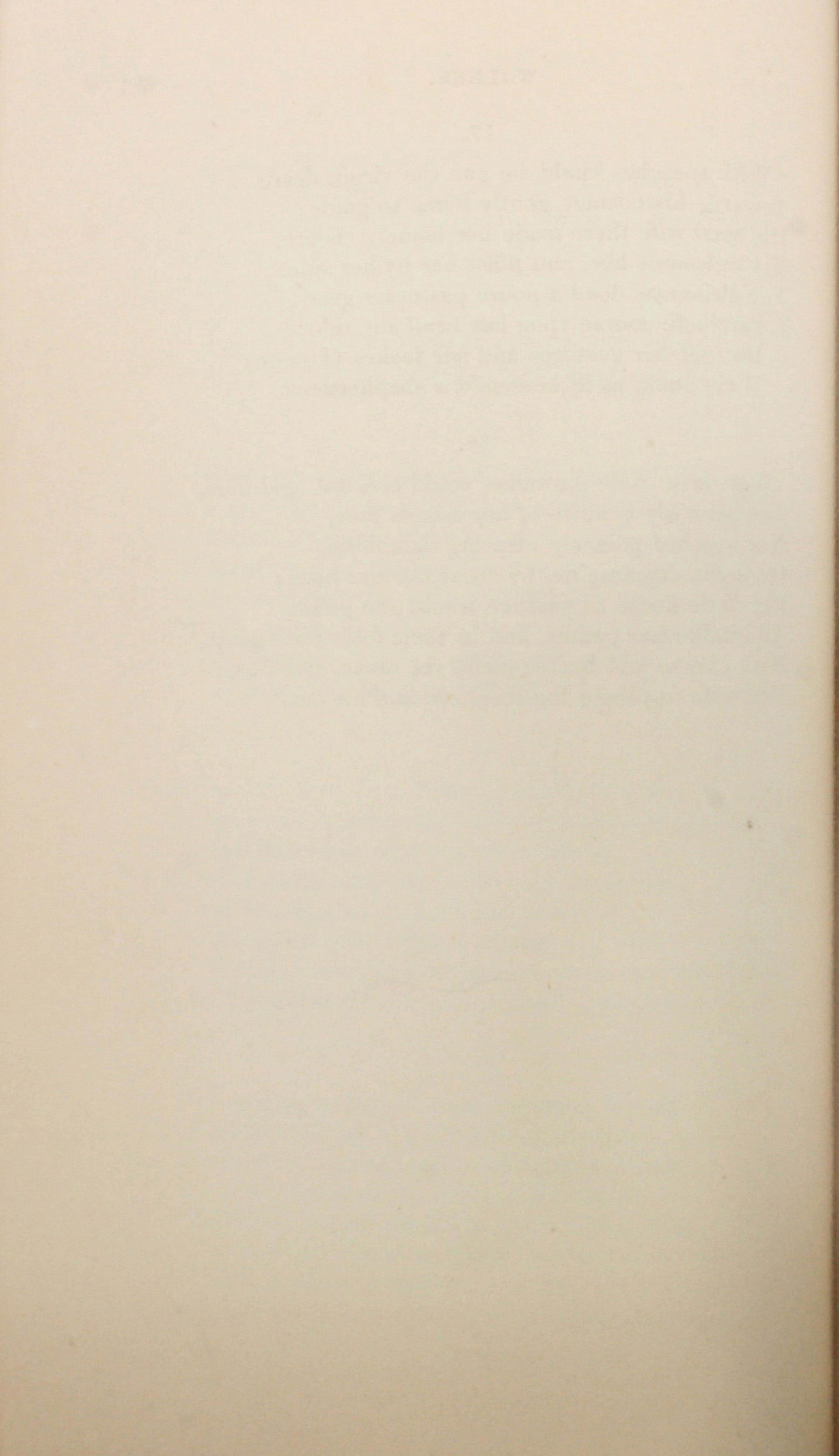
“ If gold or wealth of most esteemed deare,
If iewels rich, thou diddest hold in prise,
Such store thereof, such plentie haue I seen,
As to a greedie minde might well suffice :
With that downe trickled many a siluer teare,
Two christall streames fell from her watrie eies ;
Part of her sad misfortunes than she told,
And wept, and with her wept that shepherd old.

17.

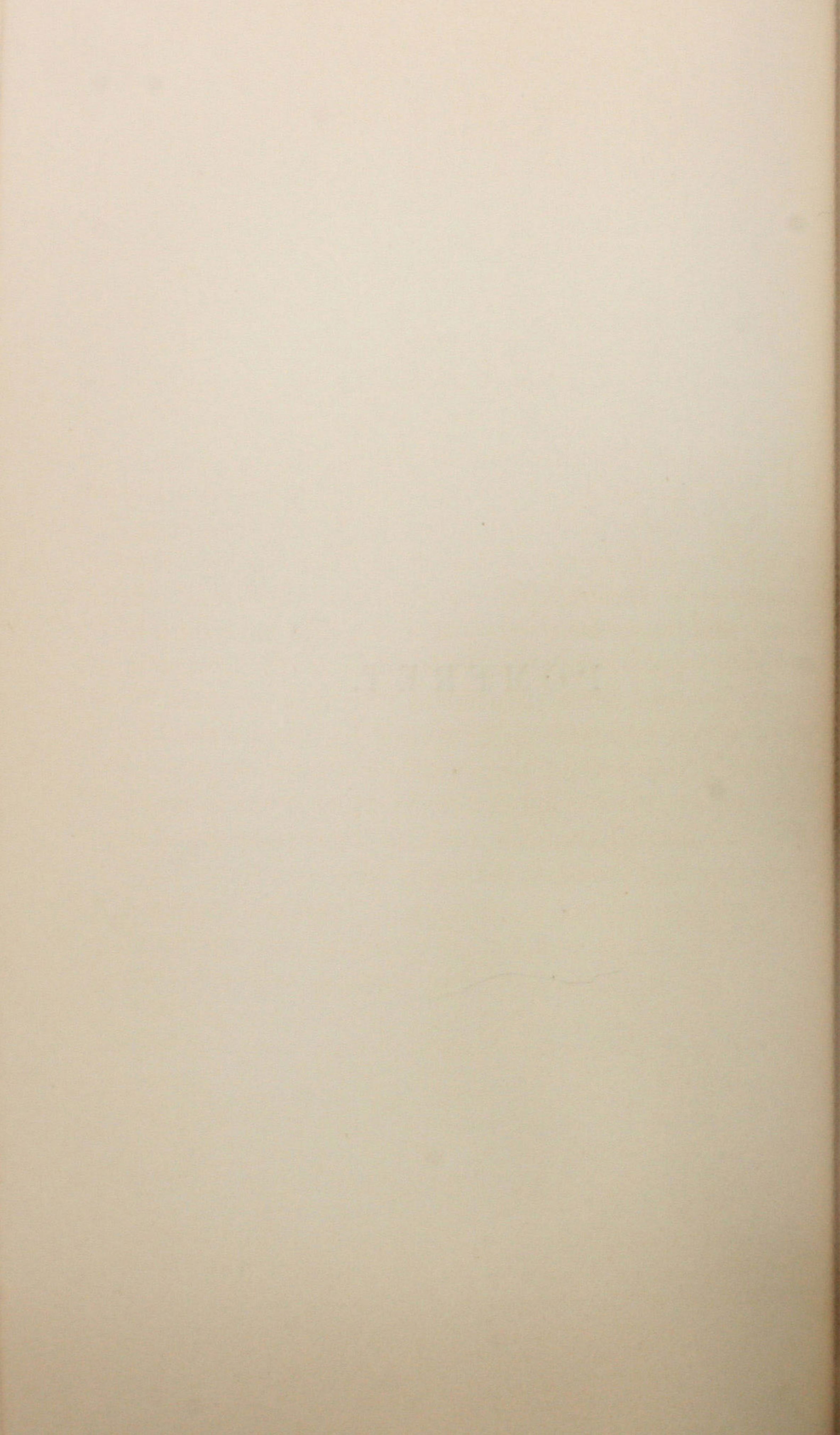
“ With speeches kinde, he gan the virgin deare
Towards his cottage gently home to guide ;
His aged wife there made her homely cheare,
Yet welcomde her, and plast her by her side.
The Princesse dond a poore pastoraes geare,
A kerchiefe course vpon her head she tide ;
But yet her gestures and her lookes (I gesse)
Were such, as ill beseem'd a shepherdesse.

18.

“ Not those rude garments could obscure, and hide,
The heau'nly beautie of her angels face,
Nor was her princely offspring damnifide,
Or ought disparag'de, by those labours bace ;
Her little flocks to pasture would she guide,
And milke her goates, and in their folds them place,
Both cheese and butter could she make, and frame
Her selfe to please the shepherd and his dame.”



POMFRET.



P O M F R E T.

OF Mr. John Pomfret nothing is known but from a slight and confused account prefixed to his poems by a nameless friend; who relates, that he was the son of the Rev. Mr. Pomfret, rector of Luton in Bedfordshire; that he was bred at Cambridge,¹ entered into orders, and was rector of Malden in Bedfordshire, and might have risen in the Church; but that, when he applied to Dr. Compton, bishop of London, for institution to a living of considerable value, to which he had been presented, he found a troublesome obstruction raised by a malicious interpretation of some passage in his "Choice;" from which it was inferred, that he considered happiness as more likely to be found in the company of a mistress than of a wife.

This reproach was easily obliterated: for it had happened to Pomfret as to almost all other men who plan schemes of life; he had departed from his purpose, and was then married.

The malice of his enemies had however a very fatal consequence: the delay constrained his attendance in London, where he caught the small-pox, and died in 1703, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

He published his poems in 1699; and has been always

¹ He was of Queen's College, Cambridge, and by the University Register, appears to have taken his Bachelor's degree in 1684, and his Master's in 1698. P. CUNNINGHAM.

the favourite of that class of readers, who, without vanity or criticism, seek only their own amusement.¹

His "Choice" exhibits a system of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations; such a state as affords plenty and tranquillity, without exclusion of intellectual pleasures. Perhaps no composition in our language has been oftener perused than Pomfret's "Choice."

In his other poems there is an easy volubility; the pleasure of smooth metre is afforded to the ear, and the mind is not oppressed with ponderous or entangled with intricate sentiment. He pleases many, and he who pleases many must have some species of merit.

¹ Lowndes observes that during the eighteenth century no other volume of poems was so often reprinted, or held in such popular estimation. The 10th edition was published, 1740.

DORSET.

DORSET.

OF the Earl of Dorset the character has been drawn so largely and so elegantly by Prior,¹ to whom he was familiarly known, that nothing can be added by a casual hand; and, as its authour is so generally read, it would be useless officiousness to transcribe it.

Charles Sackville was born January 24, 1637. Having been educated under a private tutor, he travelled into Italy, and returned a little before the Restoration. He was chosen into the first parliament that was called, for East Grinstead in Sussex, and soon became a favourite of Charles the Second; but undertook no publick employment, being too eager of the riotous and licentious pleasures which young men of high rank, who aspired to be thought wits, at that time imagined themselves intitled to indulge.

One of these Frolicks has, by the industry of Wood,² come down to posterity. Sackville, who was then Lord Buckhurst, with Sir Charles Sedley and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock in Bow-street by Covent-garden, and, going into the balcony, exposed themselves to the populace in very indecent postures. At last, as they grew warmer, Sedley stood forth naked, and harangued the populace in such profane language, that the publick indignation was awakened; the crowd attempted to force the

¹ In the Dedication of his *Poems* to the Earl of Dorset's son. Ald. Prior, vol. i. p. 3.

² Wood, ed. Bliss, 1848, p. 137.

door, and, being repulsed, drove in the performers with stones, and broke the windows of the house.

For this misdemeanour they were indicted, and Sedley was fined five hundred pounds : what was the sentence of the others is not known. Sedley employed Killigrew and another to procure a remission from the king ; but (mark the friendship of the dissolute !) they begged the fine for themselves, and exacted it to the last groat.

In 1665, Lord Buckhurst attended the Duke of York as a volunteer in the Dutch war ; and was in the battle of June 3, when eighteen great Dutch ships were taken, fourteen others were destroyed, and Opdam the admiral, who engaged the Duke, was blown up beside him, with all his crew.

On the day before the battle, he is said to have composed the celebrated song, "To all you Ladies now at land," with equal tranquillity of mind and promptitude of wit.¹ Seldom any splendid story is wholly true. I have heard from the late Earl of Orrery, who was likely to have good hereditary intelligence, that Lord Buckhurst had been a week employed upon it, and only retouched or finished it on the memorable evening.² But even this, whatever it may subtract from his facility, leaves him his courage.

He was soon after made a gentleman of the bedchamber, and sent on short embassies to France.

In 1674, the estate of his uncle James Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, came to him by its owner's death, and the title was conferred on him the year after. In 1677, he became, by the death of his father, Earl of Dorset, and inherited the estate of his family.

¹ See the Dedication of Prior's *Poems*, Ald. Prior, vol. i. p. 9.

² The song is printed (for the first time, I believe, in any collection of poems) in Linton's *Miscellany Poems*, 8vo. 1712, and is there called *A Song written at Sea by the late Earl of Dorset, in the first Dutch War*.

In 1684, having buried his first wife, of the family of Bagot, who left him no child, he married a daughter of the Earl of Northampton, celebrated both for beauty and understanding.

He received some favourable notice from King James; but soon found it necessary to oppose the violence of his innovations, and with some other Lords appeared in Westminster-hall, to countenance the Bishops at their trial.

As enormities grew every day less supportable, he found it necessary to concur in the Revolution. He was one of those Lords who sat every day in council to preserve the publick peace, after the king's departure; and, what is not the most illustrious action of his life, was employed to conduct the Princess Anne to Nottingham with a guard, such as might alarm the populace, as they passed, with false apprehensions of her danger. Whatever end may be designed, there is always something despicable in a trick.

He became, as may be easily supposed, a favourite of King William, who, the day after his accession, made him lord chamberlain of the household, and gave him afterwards the garter. He happened to be among those that were tossed with the King in an open boat sixteen hours, in very rough and cold weather, on the coast of Holland. His health afterwards declined; and on Jan. 19, 1705-6, he died at Bath.

He was a man whose elegance and judgement were universally confessed, and whose bounty to the learned and witty was generally known. To the indulgent affection of the publick, Lord Rochester bore ample testimony in this remark: *I know not how it is, but Lord Buckhurst may do what he will, yet is never in the wrong.*¹

If such a man attempted poetry, we cannot wonder that

¹ *Poems, Ald. Prior*, vol. i. p. 12.

his works were praised. Dryden, whom, if Prior¹ tells truth, he distinguished by his beneficence, and who lavished his blandishments on those who are not known to have so well deserved them, undertaking to produce authors of our own country superior to those of antiquity, says, *I would instance your Lordship in satire, and Shakspeare in tragedy.* Would it be imagined that, of this rival to antiquity, all the satires were little personal invectives, and that his longest composition was a song of eleven stanzas?

The blame, however, of this exaggerated praise falls on the encomiast, not upon the author; whose performances are, what they pretend to be, the effusions of a man of wit; gay, vigorous, and airy. His verses to Howard shew great fertility of mind, and his "Dorinda" has been imitated by Pope.

¹ Ald. *Prior*, vol. i. p. 14.

² *Essay on Satire*, addressed to Charles, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex. *S. S. D.* vol. xiii. p. 14.

STEPNEY.

STEPNEY.

GEORGE STEPNEY, descended from the Stepneys of Pendegrast in Pembrokeshire, was born at Westminster in 1663. Of his father's condition or fortune I have no account. Having received the first part of his education at Westminster, where he passed six years in the College, he went at nineteen to Cambridge,¹ where he continued a friendship begun at school with Mr. Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax. They came to London together, and are said to have been invited into publick life by the Duke² of Dorset.

His qualifications recommended him to many foreign employments, so that his time seems to have been spent in negotiations. In 1692 he was sent envoy to the Elector of Brandenburg; in 1693 to the Imperial Court; in 1694 to the Elector of Saxony; in 1696 to the Electors of Mentz and Cologne, and the Congress at Francfort; in 1698 a second time to Brandenburg; in 1699 to the King of Poland; in 1701 again to the Emperor; and in 1706 to the States General. In 1697 he was made one of the commissioners of trade. His life was busy, and not long. He died in 1707; and is buried in Westminster-Abbey, with this epitaph, which *Jacob*³ transcribed.

¹ Stepney matriculated pensioner of Trinity College, 15 Dec. 1682, he took his B.A. as 4th Wrangler in 1685-6, M.A. 1689, and was elected Fellow of Trinity in 1687.

² This is, of course, a mistake for "Earl."

³ *Giles Jacob in The Poetical Register: or, the Lives and Characters of all the English Poets.* London, 1719-1723. 8vo. 2 vols.

H. S. E.

GEORGIUS STEPNEIUS, Armiger,
Vir

Ob Ingenii acumen,
Literarum Scientiam,
Morum Suavitatem,
Rerum Usus,

Virorum Amplissimorum Consuetudinem,
Linguae, Styli, ac Vitae Elegantiam,
Præclara Officia cum Britanniae tum Europæ
præstita,

Sua ætate multum celebratus,
Apud posteros semper celebrandus ;

Plurimas Legationes obiit
Ea Fide, Diligentia, ac Felicitate,
Ut Augustissimorum Principum
Gulielmi & Annæ
Spem in illo repositam
Numquam fefellerit,
Haud raro superaverit.

Post longum honorum Cursum
Brevi Temporis Spatio confectum,
Cum Naturæ parum, Famæ satis vixerat,
Animam ad altiora aspirantem placide efflavit.

On the Left Hand :

G. S.

Ex Equestri Familia Stepneiorum,
De Pendegrast, in Comitatu
Pembrochiensi oriundus,
Westmonasterii natus est, A.D. 1663.

Electus in Collegium
Sancti Petri Westmonast. A. 1676.
Sancti Trinitatis Cantab. 1682.
Consiliariorum quibus Commercii
Cura commissa est 1697.

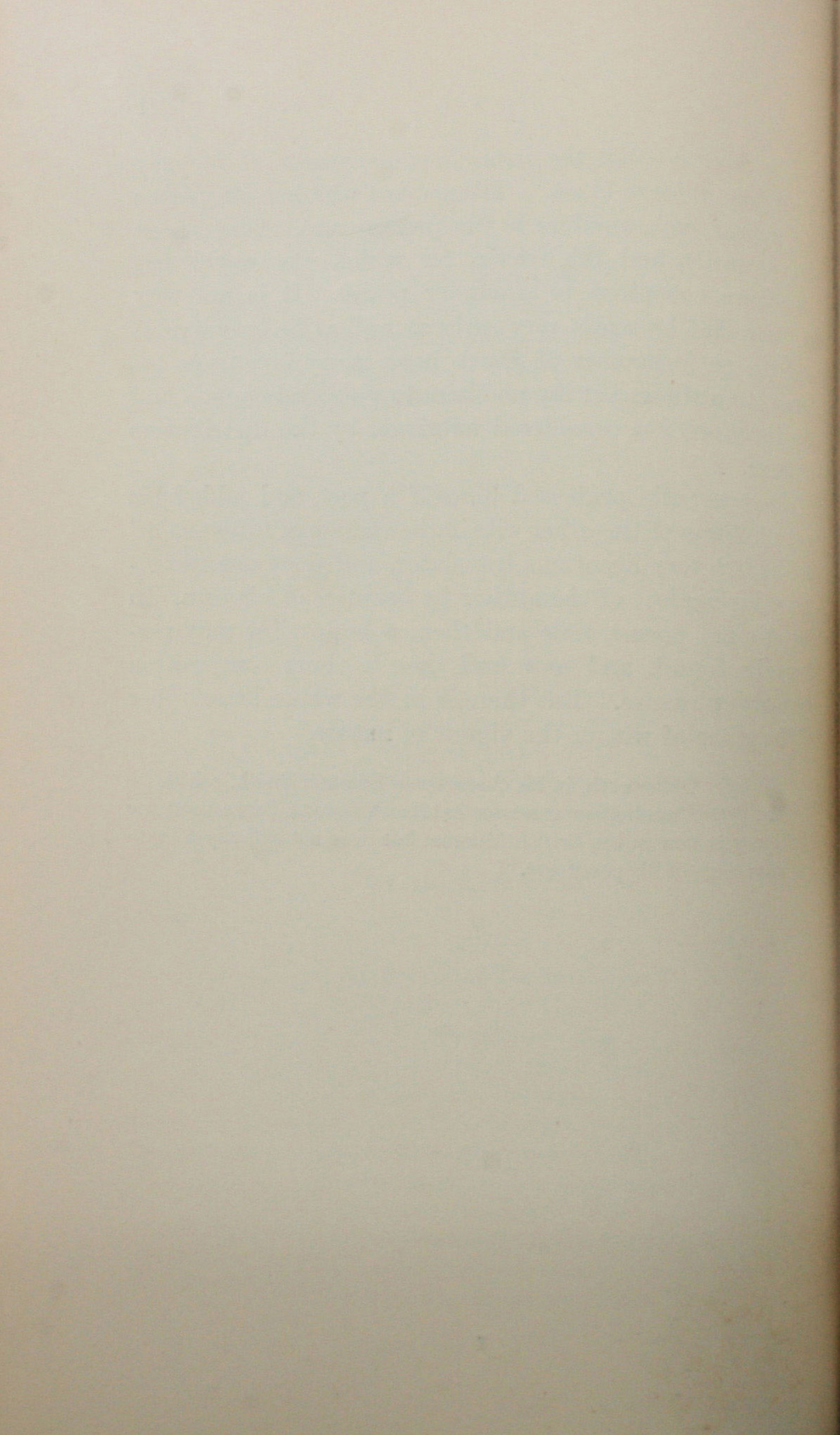
Chelseiæ mortuus, & comitante
Magna Procerum
Frequentia, huc elatus, 1707.

It is reported that the juvenile compositions of Stepney *made grey authors blush*.¹ I know not whether his poems will appear such wonders to the present age. One cannot always easily find the reason for which the world has sometimes conspired to squander praise. It is not very unlikely that he wrote very early as well as he ever wrote; and the performances of youth have many favourers, because the authors yet lay no claim to publick honours, and are therefore not considered as rivals by the distributors of fame.

He apparently professed himself a poet, and added his name to those of the other wits in the version of "Juvenal;" but he is a very licentious translator, and does not recompense his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a short composition may give pleasure. But there is in the whole little either of the grace of wit, or the vigour of nature.²

¹ *vid. infr.* Oldisworth, in his character of Edmund Smith, vol. ii.

² Mr. Peter Cunningham remarks that the Diplomatic Correspondence of Stepney is now in the British Museum but does not add anything to our knowledge of his poetic life.



J. PHILIPS.

J. PHILIPS.

JOHN PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December, 1676,¹ at Bampton in Oxfordshire; of which place his father Dr. Stephen Philips, archdeacon of Salop, was minister. The first part of his education was domestick, after which he was sent to Winchester, where, as we are told by Dr. Sewel, his biographer,² he was soon distinguished by the superiority of his exercises; and, what is less easily to be credited, so much endeared himself to his schoolfellows, by his civility and good-nature, that they, without murmur or ill-will, saw him indulged by the master with particular immunities. It is related, that, when he was at school, he seldom mingled in play with the other boys, but retired to his chamber; where his sovereign pleasure was to sit, hour after hour, while his hair was combed by somebody, whose service he found means to procure.

At school he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

¹ The entry in the Register of Baptisms at Bampton is: "1677, Jan. 7. John Phillips filius Stephani," and therefore the date given for his birth is probably correct. It is a singular fact that he did not go to Winchester till 1691, when he was 15, although registered there as "11," and he did not matriculate at Oxford till 1697, when he was registered as "15" instead of 21.

² John Phillips, late Student of Christchurch, Oxon. *Whole Works: with Life* by Mr. Sewell. Lond. Tonson. 1708. Many times republished.

“Henceforth
 Thy *patron* he, whose diadem has dropt
 Yon gems of heaven; Eternity thy prize;
 And leave the racers of the world their own.”

The Fourth “Night” was addressed by “a much-indebted Muse” to the Honourable Mr. Yorke, now Lord Hardwicke; who meant to have laid the Muse under still greater obligations, by the living of Shenfield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

The First “Night” concludes with this passage—

“Dark, though not blind, like thee, Meonides;
 Or Milton, thee. Ah! could I reach your strain;
 Or his who made Meonides our own!
 Man too he sung. Immortal man I sing.
 Oh had he prest his theme, pursued the track
 Which opens out of darkness into day!
 Oh had he mounted on his wing of fire,
 Soar’d, where I sink, and sung immortal man—
 How had it blest mankind, and rescued me!”

To the author of these lines was dedicated, in 1756, the first volume of an “Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope,” which attempted, whether justly or not, to pluck from Pope his “Wing of Fire,” and to reduce him to a rank at least one degree lower than the first class of English poets. If Young accepted and approved the dedication, he countenanced this attack upon the fame of him whom he invokes as his Muse.

Part of “paper-sparing” Pope’s Third Book of the “Odyssey,” deposited in the Museum, is written upon the back of a Letter signed *E. Young*, which is clearly the handwriting of our Young. The Letter, dated only May the 2d, seems obscure; but there can be little doubt that the friendship he requests was a literary one, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope. The request was a prologue, I am told.

“Dear Sir,

May the 2d.

“Having been often from home, I know not if you have done me the favour of calling on me. But, be that as it will, I much want that instance of your friendship I mentioned in my last; a friendship I am very sensible I can receive from no one but yourself. I should not urge this thing so much but for very particular reasons; nor can you be at a loss to conceive how a *trifle of this nature* may be of serious moment to me; and while I am in hopes of the great advantage of your advice about it, I shall not be so absurd as to make any further step without it. I know you are much engaged, and only hope to hear of you at your entire leisure.

“I am, Sir, your most faithful,

“and obedient servant,

“E. YOUNG.”

Nay, even after Pope's death, he says, in “Night” Seven :

“Pope, who could'st make immortals, art thou dead?”

Either the “Essay,” then, was dedicated to a patron who disapproved its doctrine, which I have been told by the author was not the case; or Young, in his old age, bartered for a dedication an opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he must have been best able to form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in “Night” Four, should not be excluded. They afford a picture, by his own hand, from the study of which my readers may choose to form their own opinion of the features of his mind, and the complexion of his life.

“Ah me! the dire effect

Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;

Si Ingenium nescias, ipsius Opera consule ;
 Si Tumulum desideras,
 Templum adi *Westmonasteriense* :
 Qualis quantusque Vir fuerit,
 Dicat elegans illa & preclara,
 Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat
 Inscriptio.

Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius & officiosus,
 Testetur hoc saxum

A MARIA PHILIPS Matre ipsius pientissimâ,
 Dilecti Filii Memoriam non sine Lacrymis dicatum.

His Epitaph at Westminster :¹

Herefordiæ conduntur Ossa,
 Hoc in Delubro statuitur Imago,
 Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama
 JOHANNIS PHILIPS:
 Qui Viris bonis doctisque juxta charus,
 Immortale suum Ingenium,
 Eruditione multiplici excultum,
 Miro animi candore,
 Eximiâ morum simplicitate,
 Honestavit.

Litterarum Amœniorum sitim,
 Quam Wintoniæ Puer sentire cœperat,
 Inter Ædis Christi Alumnos jugiter explevit,
 In illo Musarum Domicilio
 Præclaris Æmulorum studiis excitatus,
 Optimis scribendi Magistris semper intentus,
 Carmina sermone Patrio composuit
 A Græcis Latinisque fontibus feliciter deducta,
 Atticis Romanisque auribus omnino digna,
 Versuum quippe Harmoniam
 Rythmo didicerat.
 Antiquo illo, libero, multiformi
 Ad res ipsas apto prorsus, & attemperato,
 Non Numeris in eundem ferè orbem redeuntibus,
 Non Clausularum similiter cadentium sono
 Metiri :

¹ *vid. supr. Life of Milton, p. 158.*

Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltoño secundus,
 Primoque pœne Par.
 Res seu Tenuēs, seu Grandes, seu Mediocres
 Ornandas sumserat,
 Nusquam, non quod decuit,
 Et videt, & assecutus est,
 Egregius, quocunque Stylum verteret,
 Fandi author, & Modorum artifex.

Fas sit Huic,

Auso licet à tuâ Metrorum Lege discedere
 O Poesis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor, Chaucere,
 Alterum tibi latus claudere,

Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique stipantium
 Non dedecebit Chorum.

SIMON HARCOURT Miles,

Viri benè de se, de Litteris meriti

Quoad viveret Fautor,

Post Obitum piè memor,

Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.

J. PHILIPS, STEPHANI, S. T. P. Archidiaconi

Salop, Filius, natus est Bamptoniæ

in agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.

Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips has been always praised, without contradiction, as a man modest, blameless, and pious; who bore narrowness of fortune without discontent, and tedious and painful maladies without impatience; beloved by those that knew him, but not ambitious to be known. He was probably not formed for a wide circle. His conversation is commended for its innocent gaiety, which seems to have flowed only among his intimates: for I have been told, that he was in company silent and barren, and employed only upon the pleasures of his pipe. His addiction to tobacco is mentioned by one of his biographers, who remarks that in all his writings, except "Blenheim," he has found an opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fume. In common life he was probably one of those who please by not

offending, and whose person was loved because his writings were admired. He died honoured and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had disgraced him.

His works are few. The "Splendid Shilling" has the uncommon merit of an original design, unless it may be thought precluded by the ancient "Centos."¹ To degrade the sounding words and stately construction of Milton, by an application to the lowest and most trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration; the words and things are presented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of such performances begins and ends with the first author. He that should again adapt Milton's phrase to the gross incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, must yet expect but a small part of the praise which Philips has obtained; he can only hope to be considered as the repeater of a jest.

"The parody on Milton," says Gildon, "is the only tolerable production of its author." This is a censure too dogmatical and violent. The poem of "Blenheim" was never denied to be tolerable, even by those who do not allow its supreme excellence. It is indeed the poem of a scholar, *all inexpert of war*; of a man who writes books from books, and studies the world in a college. He seems to have formed his ideas of the field of "Bleinheim" from the battles of the heroic ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehension of the qualities necessary to the com-

¹ These medleys or patchwork poems, made up of lines from Homer, Virgil, &c., were in fashion when Latin literature had sunk very low. There is an account of them in Borgen's *De Centoribus Homericis et Vergilianis.* Copenhagen, 1628.

position of a modern hero, which Addison has displayed with so much propriety. He makes *Marlbrough* behold at distance the slaughter made by *Tallard*, then haste to encounter and restrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headless by his sword.

He imitates Milton's numbers indeed, but imitates them very injudiciously. Deformity is easily copied; and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wishes away, all that is obsolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verse was harmonious, in proportion to the general state of our metre in Milton's age; and, if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reasonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleasing modulation of numbers into his work; but Philips sits down with a resolution to make no more musick than he found; to want all that his master wanted, though he is very far from having what his master had. Those asperities, therefore, that are venerable in the "*Paradise Lost*," are contemptible in the "*Blenheim*."

There is a Latin ode* written to his patron St. John, in return for a present of wine and tobacco, which cannot be passed without notice. It is gay and elegant, and exhibits

* This ode I am willing to mention, because there seems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in the last. They all read;

"Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
O! O! labellis cui Venus infidet."

The author probably wrote,

"Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
Ornat; labellis cui Venus infidet."

JOHNSON.¹

¹ Mr. Cunningham notes this as a remarkable instance of sagacious criticism. The first edition of the ode reads *Ornat*.

several artful accommodations of classick expressions to new purposes. It seems better turned than the odes of Hannes.¹

To the poem on "Cider," written in imitation of the "Georgicks," may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of science. This I was told by Miller,² the great gardener and botanist, whose expression was, that *there were many books written on the same subject in prose, which do not contain so much truth as that poem.*

In the disposition of his matter, so as to intersperse precepts relating to the culture of trees, with sentiments more generally alluring, and in easy and graceful transitions from one subject to another, he has very diligently imitated his master; but he unhappily pleased himself with blank verse, and supposed that the numbers of Milton, which impress the mind with veneration, combined as they are with subjects of inconceivable grandeur, could be sustained by images which at most can rise only to elegance. Contending angels may shake the regions of heaven in blank verse; but the flow of equal measures, and the embellishment of rhyme, must recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redstreak* and *pearmain*.

What study could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficiency cannot be supplied. He seems not born

¹ Dr. Edward Hannes was admitted on the foundation at Westminster in 1678, elected to Christchurch, Oxford, in 1682, Public Professor of Chemistry in 1690. He was afterwards physician to Queen Anne, and knighted. He was the author of several poems in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, and left £1,000 towards completing the quadrangle at Christchurch.

² Miller, Philip (1691-1771). Author of the *Gardener's Dictionary*, which may be said to have laid the foundation of all the horticultural taste and knowledge in Europe. He was gardener to the Company of Apothecaries at Chelsea, as his father had been before him.

to greatness and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often surprise with unexpected excellence; but perhaps to his last poem may be applied what Tully said of the work of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius.*¹

The following fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been transcribed from the Bodleian manuscripts.

“A prefatory Discourse to the Poem on Mr. Philips, with a character of his writings.”

“It is altogether as equitable some account should be given of those who have distinguished themselves by their writings, as of those who are renowned for great actions. It is but reasonable they, who contribute so much to the immortality of others, should have some share in it themselves; and since their genius only is discovered by their works, it is just that their virtues should be recorded by their friends. For no modest men (as the person I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyricks; and it is very hard that they should go without reputation, only because they the more deserve it. The end of writing Lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the duke of Marlborough; we must be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and social virtues are more easily transcribed. The ‘Life of Cowley’ is more instructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wished, since Mr. Philips had so many of the good qualities of that poet, that I had some of the abilities of his historian.

“The Grecian philosophers have had their Lives written,

¹ Cicero, *Epistolæ ad Fratrem*, vol. ii. p. 11. The reading is, however, said to be doubtful. See Munro's *Lucretii Cari.*, p. 313, 3rd ed.

their morals commended, and their sayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which most of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

“The French are very just to eminent men in this point; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe must be acquainted with his accomplishments. They give praise and expect it in their turns: they commend their Patru’s and Molière’s as well as their Conde’s and Turenne’s; their Pellisons and Racines have their elogies as well as the prince whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praises of the learned.

“I am satisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him; had they one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius, he had been an example to their poets, and a subject of their panegyricks, and perhaps set in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to submit.

“I shall therefore endeavour to do justice to his memory, since nobody else undertakes it. And indeed I can assign no cause why so many of his acquaintance (that are as willing and more able than myself to give an account of him) should forbear to celebrate the memory of one so dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work intirely belonging to me.

“I shall content myself with giving only a character of the person and his writings, without meddling with the transactions of his life, which was altogether private: I shall only make this known observation of his family, that there was scarce so many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of which three are still living), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius. So that their fruitful

mother, like the mother of the gods, seems to have produced a numerous offspring, all of different though uncommon faculties. Of the living, neither their modesty nor the humour of the present age permits me to speak: of the dead, I may say something.

"One of them had made the greatest progress in the study of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly mastered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorf. He could refute Hobbes with as much solidity as some of greater name, and expose him with as much wit as Echard. That noble study, which requires the greatest reach of reason and nicety of distinction, was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loss to be deprived of one who understood a science so necessary, and yet so unknown in England. I shall add only, he had the same honesty and sincerity as the person I write of, but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert: one employed his reason more; the other his imagination: the former had been well qualified for those posts, which the modesty of the latter made him refuse. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, composed several very agreeable pieces. In all probability he would have wrote as finely, as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offspring. This had not been so fit to describe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place; and while his brother was writing upon the greatest men that any age ever produced, in a style equal to them, he might have served as a panegyrist on him.

"This is all I think necessary to say of his family. I shall

proceed to himself and his writings ; which I shall first treat of, because I know they are censured by some out of envy, and more out of ignorance.

“The ‘Splendid Shilling,’ which is far the least considerable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the rest. The style agreed so well with the burlesque, that the ignorant thought it could become nothing else. Every body is pleased with that work. But to judge rightly of the other, requires a perfect mastery of poetry and criticism, a just contempt of the little turns and witticisms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect understanding of poetical diction and description.

“All that have any taste of poetry will agree, that the great burlesque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much easier to make a great thing appear little, than a little one great : Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former ; but Philips, Garth, and Boileau, only the latter.

“A picture in miniature is every painter’s talent ; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a master’s hand.

“It must still be more acceptable than the low burlesque, because the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itself entirely unknown to all men of good breeding. The style of Billingsgate would not make a very agreeable figure at St. James’s. A gentleman would take but little pleasure in language, which he would think it hard to be accosted in, or in reading words which he could not pronounce without blushing. The lofty burlesque is the more to be admired, because, to write it, the author must be master of two of the most different talents in nature. A talent to find out and expose what is ridiculous, is very different from that which is to raise and elevate. We must read Virgil and Milton for the one, and

Horace and Hudibras for the other. We know that the authors of excellent comedies have often failed in the grave style, and the tragedian as often in comedy. Admiration and Laughter are of such opposite natures, that they are seldom created by the same person. The man of mirth is always observing the follies and weaknesses, the serious writer the virtues or crimes of mankind; one is pleased with contemplating a beau, the other a hero: Even from the same object they would draw different ideas: Achilles would appear in very different lights to Thersites and Alexander. The one would admire the courage and greatness of his soul; the other would ridicule the vanity and rashness of his temper. As the satyrist says to Hannibal:

“ — I curre per Alpes,
Ut pueris placeas, & declamatio fias.”¹

“The contrariety of style to the subject pleases the more strongly, because it is more surprising; the expectation of the reader is pleasantly deceived, who expects an humble style from the subject, or a great subject from the style. It pleases the more universally, because it is agreeable to the taste both of the grave and the merry; but more particularly so to those who have a relish of the best writers, and the noblest sort of poetry. I shall produce only one passage out of this poet, which is the misfortune of his Galligaskins:

“ My Galligaskins, which have long withstood
The winter’s fury and encroaching frosts,
By time subdued (what will not time subdue!).”

This is admirably pathetic, and shews very well the vicissitudes of sublunary things. The rest goes on to a prodigious height; and a man in Greenland could hardly have made a more pathetick and terrible complaint. Is it not surprising that the subject should be

¹ Juv. *Sat.* x. 166, 167.

so mean, and the verse so pompous; that the least things in his poetry, as in a microscope, should grow great and formidable to the eye? especially considering that, not understanding French, he had no model for his style? that he should have no writer to imitate, and himself be inimitable? that he should do all this before he was twenty? at an age, which is usually pleased with a glare of false thoughts, little turns, and unnatural fustian? at an age, at which Cowley, Dryden, and I had almost said Virgil, were inconsiderable? So soon was his imagination at its full strength, his judgement ripe, and his humour complete.

“This poem was written for his own diversion, without any design of publication. It was communicated but to *me*; but soon spread, and fell into the hands of pirates. It was put out, vilely mangled, by Ben Bragge; *and impudently said to be corrected by the author*. This grievance is now grown more epidemical; and no man now has a right to his own thoughts, or a title to his own writings. Xenophon answered the Persian, who demanded his arms, ‘We have nothing now left but our arms and our valour; if we surrender the one, how shall we make use of the other?’ Poets have nothing but their wits and their writings; and if they are plundered of the latter, I don’t see what good the former can do them. To pirate, and publickly own it, to prefix their names to the works they steal, to own and avow the theft, I believe, was never yet heard of but in England. It will sound oddly to posterity, that, in a polite nation, in an enlightened age, under the direction of the most wise, most learned, and most generous encouragers of knowledge in the world, the property of a mechanick should be better secured than that of a scholar; that the poorest manual operations should be more valued than the noblest products of the brain; that it should be felony to rob a cobbler of a pair of shoes, and no crime to de-

prive the best author of his whole subsistence ; that nothing should make a man a sure title to his own writings but the stupidity of them ; that the works of Dryden should meet with less encouragement than those of his own Flecknoe, or Blackmore ; that Tillotson and St. George, Tom Thumb and Temple, should be set on an equal foot. This is the reason why this very paper has been so long delayed ; and while the most impudent and scandalous libels are publickly vended by the pirates, this innocent work is forced to steal abroad as if it were a libel.

“Our present writers are by these wretches reduced to the same condition Virgil was, when the centurion seized on his estate. But I don't doubt but I can fix upon the Mæcenas of the present age, that will retrieve them from it. But, whatever effect this piracy may have upon us, it contributed very much to the advantage of Mr. Philips ; it helped him to a reputation, which he neither desired nor expected, and to the honour of being put upon a work of which he did not think himself capable ; but the event shewed his modesty. And it was reasonable to hope, that he, who could raise mean subjects so high, should still be more elevated on greater themes ; that he, that could draw such noble ideas from a shilling, could not fail upon such a subject as the duke of Marlborough, *which is capable of heightening even the most low and trifling genius*. And, indeed, most of the great works which have been produced in the world have been owing less to the poet than the patron. Men of the greatest genius are sometimes lazy, and want a spur ; often modest, and dare not venture in publick ; they certainly know their faults in the worst things ; and even their best things they are not fond of, because the idea of what they ought to be is far above what they are. This induced me to believe that Virgil desired his work might be burnt, had not the same Augustus that desired him to write them, preserved them from destruction. A scribbling

beau may imagine a Poet *may* be induced to write, by the very pleasure he finds in writing; but that is seldom, when people are necessitated to it. I have known men row, and use very hard labour, for diversion, which, if they had been tied to, they would have thought themselves very unhappy.

“But to return to ‘Blenheim,’ that work so much admired by some, and censured by others. I have often wished he had wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty criticks, who could have as little understood his meaning in that language as they do his beauties in his own.

“False criticks have been the plague of all ages; Milton himself, in a very polite court, has been compared to the rumbling of a wheel-barrow: he had been on the wrong side, and therefore could not be a good poet. *And this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips’s case.*

“But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occasion of their dislike. People that have formed their taste upon the French writers, can have no relish for Philips: they admire points and turns, and consequently have no judgement of what is great and majestick; he must look little in their eyes, when he soars so high as to be almost out of their view. I cannot therefore allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of Blenheim, nor any who takes Bouhours for a compleat critick. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients; he takes those passages of their own authors to be really sublime which come the nearest to it; he often calls that a noble and a great thought which is only a pretty and fine one, and has more instances of the sublime out of Ovid de Tristibus, than he has out of all Virgil.

“I shall allow, therefore, only those to be judges of Philips, who make the ancients, and particularly Virgil, their standard.

“But, before I enter on this subject, I shall consider what is particular in the style of Philips, and examine what ought to be the style of heroick poetry, and next inquire how far he is come up to that style.

“His style is particular, because he lays aside rhyme, and writes in blank verse, and uses old words, and frequently postpones the adjective to the substantive, and the substantive to the verb; and leaves out little particles, *a*, and *the*; *her*, and *his*; and uses frequent appositions. Now let us examine, whether these alterations of style be conformable to the true sublime.”¹

* * * * *

¹ Smith's poem on Philips to which this “Discourse” was prefixed, was published in folio by Lintot, without date. *Vid. infr. Life of Edmund Smith*, vol. ii.

W A L S H.

W A L S H.

WILLIAM WALSH, the son of Joseph Walsh, Esq , of Abberley in Worcestershire, was born in 1663, as appears from the account of Wood ; who relates, that at the age of fifteen he became, in 1678, a gentleman commoner of Wadham College.

He left the university without a degree, and pursued his studies in London and at home ; that he studied, in whatever place, is apparent from the effect ; for he became, in Mr. Dryden's opinion, *the best critick in the nation*.¹

He was not, however, merely a critick or a scholar, but a man of fashion, and, as Dennis remarks, ostentatiously splendid in his dress. He was likewise a member of parliament and a courtier, knight of the shire for his native county in several parliaments ; in another the representative of Richmond in Yorkshire ; and gentleman of the horse to Queen Anne under the duke of Somerset.

Some of his verses shew him to have been a zealous friend to the Revolution ; but his political ardour did not abate his reverence or kindness for Dryden, to whom he gave a Dissertation² on Virgil's Pastorals, in which, however studied, he discovers some ignorance of the laws of French versification.

In 1705, he began to correspond with Mr. Pope, in whom he discovered very early the power of poetry. Their letters

¹ See Dryden's Postscript to Virgil.

² This was written, not by Walsh, but by Dr. Knightly Chetwood. *Malone's Dryden*, vol. iv. p. 547.

are written upon the pastoral comedy of the Italians, and those pastorals which Pope was then preparing to publish.

The kindnesses which are first experienced are seldom forgotten. Pope always retained a grateful memory of Walsh's notice, and mentioned him in one of his latter pieces among those that had encouraged his juvenile studies :

“——Granville the polite,¹
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write.”²

In his *Essay on Criticism*³ he had given him more splendid praise, and, in the opinion of his learned commentator,⁴ sacrificed a little of his judgement to his gratitude.⁵

The time of his death I have not learned. It must have happened between 1707, when he wrote to Pope ; and 1721, when Pope praised him in his *Essay*. The epitaph⁶ makes him forty-six years old : if Wood's account be right, he died in 1709.⁷

¹ George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne, known for his poems, most of which he composed very young, and proposed Waller as his model. Pope's note to *Granville's Moving Lays*, first pastoral, l. 46, *E. C.* vol. i. p. 270.

² *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. *E. C.* vol. iii. p. 251. Ald. *Pope*, vol. iii. p. 7.

³ “Such late was Walsh, the Muse's judge and friend,
Who justly knew to blame or commend,
To failings mild, but zealous for desert,

* * * * *

The clearest head, and the sincerest heart,” &c.

Essay on Criticism, part iii. Ald. *Pope*, vol. ii. p. 38.

⁴ Warton's *Essay on Pope*, vol. i. p. 205, 4th edition.

⁵ About fifteen I got acquainted with Mr. Walsh. He used to encourage me much, and used to tell me that there was one way left of excelling, for though we had several great poets, we never had one great poet that was correct ; and he desired me to make that my study and aim. Pope in *Spence ed. Singer*, p. 280.

⁶ On a flat stone in the church of Abberley, in Worcestershire.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

⁷ He died without issue at Marlborough, Wiltshire, 15th March, 1707-8.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

He is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himself.

His works are not numerous. In prose he wrote "Eugenia, a defence of women;"¹ which Dryden honoured with a Preface.

"Esculapius, or the Hospital of Fools," published after his death.

"A collection of Letters and Poems, amorous and gallant," was published in the volumes called Dryden's "Miscellany,"² and some other occasional pieces.³

To his Poems and Letters is prefixed a very judicious preface upon Epistolary Composition and Amorous Poetry.

In his "Golden Age restored," there was something of humour, while the facts were recent; but it now strikes no longer. In his imitation of Horace, the first stanzas are happily turned; and in all his writings there are pleasing passages. He has however more elegance than vigour, and seldom rises higher than to be pretty.⁴

¹ *A Dialogue Concerning Women, being a Defence of the Sex*, 1691. A letter on this dialogue from Dryden to Walsh, is one of the five letters given in Mr. Robert Bell's *Life of Dryden*.

² *Miscellany Poems*: containing a variety of New Translations of the ancient Poets: together with several original Poems. By the most eminent Hands. Publish'd by Mr. Dryden. 1684. 6 vols.

³ Mr. E. Gosse observes (Ward's *Sel. Eng. Poets*, vol. iii. p. 7) that Walsh is the author of the only sonnet written in English between Milton's in 1658, and Warton's about 1750.

⁴ Boswell gives, with a long note, some verses from Walsh's *Retirement*, quoted by Johnson "with great pathos." The whole passage is interesting as an exhibition of Johnson's fine memory, and his peculiar method of dealing with quotations. See Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. ii. pp. 130, 131.

DRYDEN.

PREFATORY NOTE.

[Dryden's works, of different dates, were collected and published in the poet's life-time (1695). Of the various editions which have since appeared, the most important are—Malone's edition of the *Prose Works* in 1800, on account of the Life which he prefixed, and which is still the standard authority; and Sir Walter Scott's, in 18 vols., 1808, of which a new edition by Mr. Saintsbury is not yet completed.

The contractions used in the present notes to this Life are as follows:—

S. S. *D.* Saintsbury's edition of Scott's *Dryden*, extending to vol. xiii.

S. *D.* The five last volumes of Scott's edition, namely, those which have not yet been republished.

Ald. *D.* The Aldine edition of Dryden.

E. C. Elwin and Courthope's edition of Pope.

Malone. The *Life of Dryden* prefixed to Malone's edition of the *Prose Works*, 1800.]

DRYDEN.

OF the great poet whose life I am about to delineate,¹ the curiosity which his reputation must excite, will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they revered his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.²

JOHN DRYDEN was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwinkle near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden of Tichmersh; who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Ashby.³ All these places are in Northamptonshire; but the original stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

¹ See Boswell's *Johnson on the Life of Dryden*, with various readings, vol. iv. pp. 8-10.

² Mr. Cunningham remarks that since Johnson wrote the industry, or, as Scott more happily calls it, the "pious enthusiasm" of Malone, has discovered so much about Dryden that we now know more of him than of any other author of his age. See the *Life of Dryden*, prefixed to Malone's edition of his prose works, published 1800.

³ The poet was the eldest of fourteen children. His mother was Mary, daughter of Henry Pickering, rector of Aldwinkle. The precise date of his birth is uncertain. The inscription on the monument in Westminster Abbey, erected to his memory by Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, has "Natus 1632. Mortuis May 1. 1700." His parents were married October 21, 1630, and as it has lately been discovered that his grandfather became Rector of Aldwinkle, All Saints, in 1597, the tradition that he was born in the parsonage house of that village is in all probability correct. Mr. Christie, in his *Life of Dryden*, gives the latest discoveries on these points. *Globe ed. Dryden*, p. xvi.

He is reported by his last biographer,¹ Derrick, to have inherited from his father² an estate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given.³ Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him; or if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waste of his patrimony. He was indeed sometimes reproached for his first religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Westminster School, where he was instructed as one of the king's scholars by Dr. Busby,⁴ whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge.⁵

¹ This was the Samuel Derrick for whom Johnson had "a great kindness," and who was Boswell's first tutor in the ways of London. Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. i. p. 86. His *Life of Dryden* was prefixed to an edition of the *Miscellaneous Works*, 1760. 4 vols. 8vo.

² Malone shows that the poet's father died in 1654, and that this inheritance was two-thirds of a small estate near Blakesley, in Northamptonshire, worth in all about £60 a year, the remaining third becoming the property of Dryden at his mother's death in 1676.

³ Malone gives several quotations from lampoons, &c., which seem to show a general impression that Dryden was brought up among "the persuasions then so numerous and so rife."

⁴ Dryden inscribes the Fifth Satire of Persius to the Rev. Dr. Busby, "to whom I am not only obliged myself for the best part of my own education and that of my two sons; but also have received from him the first and truest taste of Persius. May he be pleased to find in this translation the gratitude, or at least some small acknowledgment of his unworthy scholar, at the distance of forty-two years from the time when I departed from under his tuition. Ald. D. vol. v. p. 195.

⁵ Dryden matriculated pensioner of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Of his school performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Hastings,¹ composed with great ambition of such conceits as, notwithstanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley still kept in reputation. Lord Hastings died of the small-pox, and his poet has made of the pustules first rosebuds, and then gems ; at last exalts them into stars ; and says,

“No comet need foretell his change drew on,
Whose corps might seem a constellation.”

At the university he does not appear to have been eager of poetical distinction, or to have lavished his early wit either on fictitious subjects or public occasions. He probably considered that he who purposed to be an author ought first to be a student. He obtained, whatever was the reason, no fellowship in the College. Why he was excluded cannot now be known,² and it is vain to guess ; had he thought himself injured, he knew how to complain. In the Life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the College with gratitude ; but in a prologue at Oxford, he has these lines :

“Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
Than his own mother-university ;
Thebes did his rude unknowing youth engage ;
He chooses Athens in his riper age.”³

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a public candidate for fame, by publishing “Heroic

July 6th, 1650, and took his B.A. in 1653-4. The M.A. degree was conferred on him in 1668 at the king's request.

¹ This was one of the ninety-eight poems in *Lachrymæ Musarum*, the Tears of the Muses, exprest in elegies, &c., &c., set forth by R(ichard) B(ernard) Lond. 1650. Ald. *D.* vol. i. p. 1.

² See S. S. *D.* vol. i. p. 22, and Malone, p. 16.

³ Ald. *D.* vol. iii. p. 95. This is from one of the prologues to the University of Oxford, the date of which is not certainly known, but it was probably 1681. S. S. *D.* vol. x. p. 386.

Stanzas on the late Lord Protector;”¹ which, compared with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion, were sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

When the king was restored, Dryden, like the other panegyrists of usurpation, changed his opinion, or his profession, and published “*Astrea Redux*,² a poem on the happy restoration and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second.”

The reproach of inconstancy was, on this occasion, shared with such numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor disgrace; if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raised him enemies.

The same year he praised the new king in a second poem on his restoration.³ In the “*Astrea*” was the line,

“ An horrid *stillness* first *invades* the ear,
And in that silence we a tempest fear,”

for which he was persecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deserved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, so considered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewise certainly is *darkness*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refused the right of ascribing effects or agency to them as to positive powers. No man scruples to say that *darkness* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is also privation, yet who has made any difficulty of assigning to Death a dart and the power of striking?

In settling the order of his works, there is some difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally

¹ Ald. D. vol. i. p. 6. S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 10.

² Published 1660. Ald. D. vol. i. p. 13; S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 27.

³ *To his Sacred Majesty, a Panegyric on his Coronation.* Ald. D. vol. i. p. 26.

⁴ *Vid.* chronological table, *infr.* p. 496.

offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publishing is not always the same; nor can the first editions be easily found, if even from them could be obtained the necessary information.

The time at which his first play¹ was exhibited is not certainly known, because it was not printed till it was some years afterwards altered and revived; but since the plays are said to be printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of some, those of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected that in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the stage; compelled undoubtedly by necessity, for he appears never to have loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas.

Of the stage, when he had once invaded it, he kept possession for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who sometimes prevailed, or the censure of criticks, which was often poignant and often just; but with such a degree of reputation as made him at least secure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the public.

His first piece was a comedy called the "Wild Gallant." He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was so much disapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears, and which is yet sufficiently defective to vindicate the criticks.

I wish that there were no necessity of following the progress of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatick performances; it will be fit however to enumerate them, and

¹ The *Wild Gallant* was brought on the stage February 5th, 1662-1663, and published 1669. 4to. Pepys mentions that he saw it performed February 23, 1663. "It was ill acted, and the play so poor a thing as ever I saw in my life." S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 24.

to take especial notice of those that are distinguished by any peculiarity intrinsick or concomitant; for the composition and fate of eight and twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664 he published the "*Rival Ladies*,"¹ which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and a statesman. In this play he made his essay of dramatick rhyme, which he defends in his dedication, with sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.²

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the "*Indian Queen*,"³ a tragedy in rhyme. The parts which either of them wrote are not distinguished.

The "*Indian Emperor*" was published in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to Howard's "*Indian Queen*." Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the door; an expedient supposed to be ridiculed in the "*Rehearsal*,"⁴ when Bayes tells how many reams he has printed, to instill into the audience some conception of his plot.

In this play is the description of Night,⁵ which Rymer⁶

¹ 4th August, 1664. "To a Play at the King's house. *The Rival Ladies*, a very innocent and most pretty witty play. I was much pleased with it."—PEPYS.

18th July, 1666. "Walked to Woolwich, reading the *Rival Ladies* all the way."—PEPYS.

² His chief works were *Parthenissa*, a romance, 1650; *Mr. Anthony*, a comedy, 1690; *The Art of War*, 1677, &c., &c. His state letters were published with his *Life*, 1742.

³ 27th January, 1663-1664. "To Covent Garden . . . in the way observing the street full of coaches at the new play of the *Indian Queen*, which for show they say exceeds *Henry VIII.*"—PEPYS.

⁴ The Duke of Buckingham's farce, see p. 50.

⁵ *The Indian Emperor*, act iii. sc. 2. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 321. These lines are styled by Wordsworth, "vague, bombastic, and senseless." Supp. to Preface. *Works*, ed. 1857, vol. iii. p. 333.

⁶ Thomas Rymer (1638-1713), antiquary and critic. *Historio-*

has made famous by preferring it to those of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced soon after the Restoration, as it seems, by the earl of Orrery,¹ in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taste by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote, only to please, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of versification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his master's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramattick rhyme,² in confutation of the preface to the "Duke of Lerma," in which Sir Robert Howard had censured it.

In 1667, he published "Annus Mirabilis," the "Year of Wonders,"³ which may be esteemed one of his most elaborate works.

It is addressed to Sir Robert Howard⁴ by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interspersed many critical observations, of which some are common, and some perhaps ventured without much consideration. He began, even now, to exercise the domination of conscious genius, by recommending his own per-

grapher to William III. His chief works are the *Fœdera* in fifteen volumes folio, being a collection of the public conventions, treaties, &c., of Great Britain with other Powers; *The Tragedies of the last age considered*, 1678. 8vo; and *A short view of Tragedy of the last age*, 1693. 8vo. He also wrote some worthless tragedies. Macaulay called him "the worst critic that ever lived" in his essay on Boswell's *Johnson*.

¹ John Boyle, Earl of Orrery. See his *Letters*, p. 65.

² S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 291.

³ 1666, an historical poem, published 1667. S. S. D. vol. ix. p. 99.

⁴ Dryden subsequently married Sir Robert's sister Elizabeth.

formance: "I am satisfied that as the Prince and General [Rupert and Monk] are incomparably the best subjects I ever had, so what I have written on them is much better than what I have performed on any other. As I have endeavoured to adorn my poem with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution."

It is written in quatrains, or heroick stanzas of four lines; a measure which he had learned from the "*Gondibert*"¹ of Davenant, and which he then thought the most majestick that the English language affords. Of this stanza he mentions the encumbrances, encreased as they were by the exactness which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his custom to recommend his works, by representation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have sufficiently considered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praise.

There seems to be in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other,² something that is not now easily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the earl of Orrery, had defended dramatick rhyme;³ and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays,⁴ had censured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himself in his "*Dialogue on Dramatick Poetry*;"⁵ Howard, in his Preface to the "*Duke of Lerma*,"⁶ animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a Preface to the "*Indian Emperor*,"⁷ replied to the Animadversions with great asperity,

¹ *Gondibert*, an heroick poem, 1651. 12mo. By Sir William Davenant, *vid. supra*, p. 138 n. Scott thinks "few poems afford more instances of vigorous conception and even felicity of expression, than the neglected *Gondibert*." S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 102.

² See Malone, vol. i. p. 91.

³ In 1664, S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 129.

⁴ Published 1665.

⁵ Published 1667. S. S. D. vol. xv. p. 283.

⁶ Published 1668.

⁷ Published also 1668, but later in the year. See S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 321.

and almost with contumely. The dedication¹ to this play is dated the year in which the "Annus Mirabilis" was published. Here appears a strange inconsistency; but Langbaine affords some help, by relating that the answer to Howard was not published in the first edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted;² and as the "Duke of Lerma" did not appear till 1668, the same year,³ in which the Dialogue was published, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now so much distinguished, that in 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat.⁴ The salary of the laureat had been raised in favour of Jonson, by Charles the First, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce of wine; a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniencies of life.

The same year⁵ he published his Essay on Dramatick Poetry, an elegant and instructive dialogue; in which we are told by Prior, that the principal character is meant to represent the duke of Dorset.⁶ This work seems to have given Addison a model for his Dialogues upon Medals.

"Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen," is a tragi-comedy.⁷

¹ To Anne, Duchess of Monmouth, Oct. 12, 1667. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 285.

² See "Defence," S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 291.

³ This should be "the year after."

⁴ Dryden was not appointed till August, 1670. Malone gives the patent, which is expressed in the most honourable terms. Dryden was at the same time appointed Historiographer Royal, the salary of the two offices being £200 a year.

⁵ This should be "the year before."

⁶ "Duke" is a slip. It should be Earl of Dorset. *Vid. supr. Life of Dorset*, p. 314.

⁷ Acted 1667. Published 1668. For an interesting account of this play, and of Nell Gwynn's acting in it, see Mr. Saintsbury. S. S. D. vol. ii. p. 416.

In the preface he discusses a curious question, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions: and determines very justly, that, of the plan and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in those parts where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.

“Sir Martin Marall” is a comedy, published¹ without preface or dedication, and at first without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like most of the rest, with plagiarism; and observes that the song is translated from Voiture, allowing however that both the sense and measure are exactly observed.

“The Tempest”² is an alteration of Shakspeare’s play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, “whom,” says he, “I found of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him in which he could not suddenly produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising; and those first thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always the least happy; and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other, and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man.”

The effect produced by the conjunction of these two powerful minds was, that to Shakspeare’s monster Caliban is added a sister-monster Sicorax; and a woman, who, in

¹ 1667. This play, which was partly written by the Duke of Newcastle, is said to be an imitation of Molière’s *L’Etourdi*. See S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 2.

² Acted November 7th, 1667. It is in the prologue to this play that the lines occur:—

“But Shakspeare’s magic could not copied be
Within that circle none durst walk but he.”

the original play, had never seen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman.¹

About this time, in 1673, Dryden seems to have had his quiet much disturbed by the success of the "Empress of Morocco," a tragedy² written in rhyme by *Elkanah Settle*;³ which was so much applauded, as to make him think his supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but, in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface⁴ of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.⁵

Dryden could not now repress these emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.⁶

¹ Mr. Peter Cunningham here transposes several pages and paragraphs to suit the dates of the plays referred to, but it seems more proper to leave the text as Johnson left it, apprising the reader that true dates are given in the notes, wherever they have been corrected since Johnson's time, as well as a chronological table. *Vid. infr.* p. 496.

² Published 1673. 4to. Beside the offences mentioned by Johnson, the price was two shillings, being double the ordinary charge, and the title announced *Elkanah Settle, Servant to His Majesty*, an addition more properly belonging to Dryden.

³ "We have no city-poet now: that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was *Elkanah Settle*. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so queer, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden, in preference to *Elkanah Settle*, from the names only, without knowing their different merits." Wilkes in Boswell's *Johnson*, vol. iii. p. 115.

⁴ The sneers of Dryden were in a dedication, not a preface.

⁵ The Earl of Mulgrave contributing a Prologue on the first occasion, and the Earl of Rochester a Prologue on the second occasion of its being acted at court.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

⁶ For an amusing account of these feuds and of *Elkanah Settle*, by Dennis, see *S. S. D.* vol. i. p. 156, and *Idler*, No. 12.

Of Settle he¹ gives this character. "He's an animal of a most deplored understanding, without conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has, is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express any thing either naturally or justly!"²

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticism prevails most over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of him. His King, his two Empresses, his villain, and his sub-villain, nay his hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father—their folly was born and bred in them, and something of the Elkanah will be visible."³

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the first act, he says, "To conclude this act with the most rumbling piece of nonsense spoken yet,

"To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles conform,
Which back'd with thunder do but gild a storm."

"Conform a smile to lightning, make a smile imitate lightning, and flattering lightning: lightning sure is a threatening thing. And this lightning must gild a storm. Now if I must conform my smiles to lightning, then my smiles

¹ "Dr. Johnson ascribes the whole of this piece to Dryden, and does not seem to have been apprized that a great part of it was written by Shadwell and Crowne." Malone, vol. ii. p. 273.

² Remarks on the *Empress of Morocco*, S. D. vol. xv. p. 403.

³ S. D. vol. xv. p. 404.

...gild a storm too: to *gild* with *smiles* is a new invention of gilding. And gild a storm by being *backed with* Thunder. Thunder is part of the storm; so one part of the storm must help to *gild* another part, and help by *backing*; as if a man would gild a thing the better for being *backed*, or having a load upon his back. So that here is *gilding* by *conforming*, *smiling*, *lightning*, *backing*, and *thundering*. The whole is as if I should say thus, I will make my counterfeit smiles look like a flattering stone-horse, which, being backed with a trooper, does but gild the battle. I am mistaken if nonsense is not here pretty thick sown. Sure the poet writ these two lines aboard some smack in a storm, and, being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump of clotted nonsense at once."

Here is perhaps a sufficient specimen; but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not easily to be found, it may gratify curiosity to quote it more largely.

"Whene'er she bleeds,
He no severer a damnation needs,
That dares pronounce the sentence of her death,
Than the infection that attends that breath."

"That attends that breath.—The poet is at *breath* again; *breath* can never 'scape him; and here he brings in a *breath* that must be *infectious* with *pronouncing* a sentence; and this sentence is not to be pronounced till the condemned party *bleeds*; that is, she must be executed first, and sentenced after; and the *pronouncing* of this sentence will be *infectious*; that is, others will catch the disease of that sentence, and this infecting of others will torment a man's self. The whole is thus; *when she bleeds, thou needest no greater hell or torment to thyself, than infecting of others by pronouncing a sentence upon her*. What hodge-podge does he make here! Never was Dutch grout such clogging,

thick, indigestible stuff. But this is but a taste to stay the stomach; we shall have a more plentiful mess presently.

“Now to dish up the poet’s broth, that I promised:

“For when we’re dead, and our freed souls enlarg’d,
Of nature’s grosser burden we’re discharg’d,
Then gently, as a happy lover’s sigh,
Like wandering meteors through the air we’ll fly,
And in our airy walk, as subtle guests,
We’ll steal into our cruel fathers breasts,
There read their souls, and track each passion’s sphere:
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here.
And in their orbs view the dark characters
Of sieges, ruins, murders, blood and wars.
We’ll blot out all those hideous draughts, and write
Pure and white forms; then with a radiant light
Their breasts encircle, till their passions be
Gentle as nature in its infancy:
Till soften’d by our charms their furies cease,
And their revenge resolves into a peace.
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,
Whom living we made foes, dead we’ll make friends.”

“If this be not a very liberal mess, I will refer myself to the stomach of any moderate guest. And a rare mess it is, far excelling any Westminster white-broth. It is a kind of gibblet porridge, made of the gibblets of a couple of young geese, stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track, hideous draughts, dark characters, white forms, and radiant lights*, designed not only to please appetite, and indulge luxury; but it is also physical, being an approved medicine to purge choler: for it is propounded by Morena, as a receipt to cure their fathers of their choleric humours: and were it written in characters as barbarous as the words, might very well pass for a doctor’s bill. To conclude, it is porridge, ’tis a receipt, ’tis a pig with a pudding in the belly, ’tis I know not what: for, certainly, never any one that pretended to write sense, had the impudence before to

such stuff as this, into the mouths of those that were
 speak it before an audience, whom he did not take to be
 fools; and after that to print it too, and expose it to the
 censure of the world. But let us see, what we can
 do of this stuff:

“For when we’re dead, and our freed souls enlarg’d—”

Here he tells us what it is to be *dead*; it is to have *our*
souls set free. Now if to have a soul set free is to be
 then to have a *freed soul* set free, is to have a dead
 die.

“Then gentle, as a happy lover’s sigh—”

They two like one *sigh*, and that one *sigh* like two wander-
 meteors,

“—shall flie through the air—”

That is, they shall mount above like falling stars, or else
 they shall skip like two Jacks with lanthorns, or Will with
 a whip, and Madge with a candle.”

And in their airy walk steal into their cruel fathers breasts,
 the subtle guests. So “that their fathers breasts must be in
 an airy walk, an airy walk of a flier. And there they will
 track their souls, and track the spheres of their passions. That
 these walking fliers, Jack with a lanthorn, &c. will put
 on his spectacles, and fall a reading souls, and put on his
 wings and fall a tracking of spheres; so that he will read
 and run, walk and fly at the same time! Oh! Nimble
 Jack. Then he will see, how revenge here, how ambition there—
 the birds will hop about. And then view the dark characters
 of shapes, ruins, murders, blood, and wars, in their orbs: Track
 the characters to their forms! Oh! rare sport for Jack.
 There was place so full of game as these breasts! You
 cannot stir but flush a sphere, start a character, or un-
 cover an orb!”

Metastaseus is said to have been the first play embellished

with sculptures; those ornaments seem to have given poor Dryden great disturbance. He tries however to ease his pain, by venting his malice in a parody.

“The poet has not only been so impudent to expose all this stuff, but so arrogant to defend it with an epistle; like a saucy booth-keeper, that, when he had put a cheat upon the people, would wrangle and fight with any that would not like it, or would offer to discover it; for which arrogance our poet receives this correction; and to jerk him a little the sharper, I will not transpose his verse, but by the help of his own words trans-non-sense sense, that, by my stuff, people may judge the better what his is:

“Great Boy, thy tragedy and sculptures done
From press, and plates in fleets do homeward come:
And in ridiculous and humble pride,
Their course in ballad-singers baskets guide,
Whose greasy twigs do all new beauties take,
From the gay shews thy dainty sculptures make.
Thy lines a mess of rhiming nonsense yield,
A senseless tale, with flattering fustian fill'd.
No grain of sense does in one line appear,
Thy words big bulks of boisterous bombast bear.
With noise they move, and from players mouths rebound.
When their tongues dance to thy words empty sound.
By thee inspir'd the rumbling verses roll,
As if that rhyme and bombast lent a soul:
And with that soul they seem taught duty too,
To huffing words does humble nonsense bow,
As if it would thy worthless worth enhance,
To th' lowest rank of fops thy praise advance;
To whom, by instinct, all thy stuff is dear;
Their loud claps echo to the theatre.
From breaths of fools thy commendation spreads,
Fame sings thy praise with mouths of loggerheads.
With noise and laughing each thy fustian greets,
'Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits,
Who have their tribute sent, and homage given,
As men in whispers send loud noise to heaven.'

Thus I have daubed him with his own puddle: and now we are come from aboard his dancing, masking, rewarding, breathing fleet; and as if we had landed at Gotham,¹ we meet nothing but fools and nonsense."²

Such was the criticism to which the genius of Dryden could be reduced, between rage and terrour; rage with little provocation, and terrour with little danger. To see the highest minds thus levelled with the meanest, may produce some solace to the consciousness of weakness, and some mortification to the pride of wisdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are first levelled in their desires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happiness in the claps of multitudes.

The "Mock Astrologer,"³ a comedy, is dedicated to the illustrious duke⁴ of Newcastle, whom he courts by adding to his praises those of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his studies. It is unpleasing to think how many names, once celebrated, are since forgotten. Of Newcastle's works nothing is now known but his treatise on horsemanship.⁵

¹ Gotham is a village in Nottinghamshire, whose inhabitants, in the time of King John, made a pretence of being fools to avoid fine and punishment. The amusing legend is given in Thoroton's *Hist. Notts.* vol. i. p. 42.

² S. D. vol. xv. p. 407. Scott, like Malone, gives only the preface and postscript, believing that Dryden did no more than revise the pamphlet and write these.

³ *An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer*, acted and published 1668, S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 257.

⁴ William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, who distinguished himself in the civil wars of Charles I.

⁵ A splendid folio with engravings, in which, after his grace has been represented in every possible attitude and dress, he is at length depicted mounted on Pegasus, and in the act of ascending from a circle of bayhounds, kneeling round him in the act of adoration. S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 230.

The Preface seems very elaborately written, and contains many just remarks on the Fathers of the English drama. Shakspeare's plots, he says, are in the hundred novels of *Cinthio*; those of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spanish Stories; Jonson only made them for himself. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of some of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to say, that he was not the first nor perhaps the greatest offender. Against those that accused him of plagiarism, he alleges a favourable expression of the king: "He only desired that they, who accuse me of thefts, would steal him plays like mine;" and then relates how much labour he spends in fitting for the English stage what he borrows from others.

"*Tyrannic Love, or the Virgin Martyr*,"¹ was another tragedy in rhyme, conspicuous for many passages of strength and elegance, and many of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the sport of criticism;² and were at length, if his own confession may be trusted, the shame of the writer.

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in seven weeks. Want of time was often his excuse, or perhaps shortness of time was his private boast in the form of an apology.

It was written before the "*Conquest of Granada*, but published after it. The design is to recommend piety. "I considered that pleasure was not the only end of poesy, and that even the instructions of morality were not so

¹ *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*, acted 1669, published 1670. See S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 369.

² "I remember some verses of my own, *Maximin and Almanzor*, which cry vengeance on me for their extravagance, and which I wish heartily in the same fire with *Statius and Chapman*." Dryden's Ded. to *Spanish Fryar*, S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 406.

wholly the business of a poet, as that precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose.”¹ Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not shew his malice to the parsons.

The two parts of the “Conquest of Granada”² are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatick wonders; to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestick madness: such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often revered, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.³

In the Epilogue⁴ to the second part of the “Conquest of Granada,” Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written in the

¹ Preface to *Tyrannic Love*, S. S. D. vol. iii. p. 376.

² This drama was brought out 1669-1670, but not printed till 1672. S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 6.

³ Nell Gwynne acted the character of Almahide, and spoke the Prologue in the famous broad-brimmed hat, which convulsed the king with laughter almost to suffocation. Ald. D. vol. i. p. xxx.

⁴ Ald. D. vol. iii. p. 51.

dramatick, epick, or lyrick way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramatick writers, he has given us in his prefaces, and in this postscript, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shews faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew down upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the criticks that attacked it was *Martin Clifford*,¹ to whom *Sprat* addressed the "Life of Cowley," with such veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instruction from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. *Percy*,² were at last obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In the first Letter his observation is only general: "You do live," says he, "in as much ignorance and darkness as you did in the womb: your writings are like a Jack-of-all trades shop; they have a variety, but nothing of value; and if thou art not the dullest plant-animal that ever the earth produced, all that I have conversed with are strangely mistaken in thee."

In the second, he tells him that *Almanzor* is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Pistol. "But I am," says he, "strangely mistaken if I have not seen this very *Almanzor* of yours in some disguise about this town, and passing under another name. Pr'ythee tell me true.

¹ Martin Clifford (died 1677), Master of the Charterhouse. He assisted the Duke of Buckingham in the production of the *Rehearsal*. The four letters containing his attack on Dryden were published in 1687. His portrait appears in the 8vo. ed. of Cowley's *Works*.

² Dr. Percy (1728-1811), Dean of Carlisle and subsequently Bishop of Dromore. In 1765 he published his celebrated *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.

was not this Huffcap once the *Indian Emperor*, and at another time did he not call himself *Maximin*? Was not *Lyndaraxa* once called *Almeira*? I mean under *Montezuma* the Indian Emperor. I protest and vow they are either the same, or so alike that I cannot, for my heart, distinguish one from the other. You are therefore a strange unconscionable thief; thou art not content to steal from others, but dost rob thy poor wretched self too."

Now was *Settle's* time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication¹ of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes reprisals upon his enemy. To say that his answer is equal to the censure, is no high commendation. To expose Dryden's method of analysing his expressions, he tries the same experiment upon the description of the ships in the *Indian Emperor*, of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to shew, that by studied misconstruction every thing may be equally represented as ridiculous. After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of *Settle's* should be exhibited. The following observations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:

" 'Fate after him below with pain did move,
And victory could scarce keep pace above.'

"These two lines, if he can shew me any sense or thought in, or any thing but bombast and noise, he shall make me believe every word in his observations on "*Morocco*" sense.

"In the '*Empress of Morocco*' were these lines:

" 'I'll travel then to some remoter sphere,
Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there.'

¹ *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco, revised, with some few errata, to be printed instead of postscript with the next edition of the Conquest of Granada*, London, 1674, 4to. Re-issued in 1687 with a second title-page *Reflections on several of Mr. Dryden's Plays, particularly the first and second parts of the Conquest of Granada*. By E. Settle, gent., London, 4to.

“On which Dryden made this remark :

“ ‘ *I believe our learned author takes a sphere for a country : the sphere of Morocco, as if Morocco were the globe of earth and water ; but a globe is no sphere neither, by his leave.* ’ &c. So *sphere* must not be sense, unless it relate to a circular motion about a globe, in which sense the astronomers use it. I would desire him to expound those lines in ‘ Granada : ’

“ ‘ I’ll to the turrets of the palace go,
And add new fire to those that fight below.
Thence, hero-like, with torches by my side,
(Far be the omen tho’) my Love I’ll guide.
No, like his better fortune I’ll appear,
With open arms, loose vail and flowing hair,
Just flying forward from my rowling sphere. ’

I wonder, if he be so strict, how he dares make so bold with *sphere* himself, and be so critical in other men’s writings. Fortune is fancied standing on a globe, not on a *sphere*, as he told us in the first Act.

“Because *Elkanah’s* ‘ Similies ’ are the most unlike things to what they are compared in the world, I’ll venture to start a simile in his ‘ Annus Mirabilis : ’ he gives this poetical description of the ship¹ called the ‘ London : ’

“ ‘ The goodly London in her gallant trim,
The Phenix-daughter of the vanquisht old,
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.
Her flag aloft spread ruffling in the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem’d the flood to fire :
The weaver, charm’d with what his loom design’d,
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

¹ “ The old ship the ‘ London,’ one of the many of the Commonwealth, had been destroyed by fire, and the city of London now presented the king with a new ship, called ‘ The Loyal London.’ This second ‘ London ’ was burnt before the end of the war, when the Dutch surprised Chatham in 1667.”—A. MILNES.

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.'

"What a wonderful pother is here, to make all these poetical beautifications of a ship! that is, a *phenix* in the first stanza, and but a *wasp* in the last: nay, to make his humble comparison of a *wasp* more ridiculous, he does not say it flies upon the waves as nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it seemed a *wasp*. But our author at the writing of this was not in his altitudes, to compare ships to floating palaces; a comparison to the purpose, was a perfection he did not arrive to, till his 'Indian Emperor's' days. But perhaps his similitude has more in it than we imagine; this ship had a great many guns in her, and they, put all together, made the sting in the wasp's tail: for this is all the reason I can guess, why it seem'd a *wasp*. But, because we will allow him all we can to help out, let it be a *phenix sea-wasp*, and the rarity of such an animal may do much towards the heightening the fancy.

"It had been much more to his purpose, if he had designed to render the senseless play little, to have searched for some such pedantry as this:

" 'Two ifs scarce make one possibility.
If justice will take all and nothing give,
Justice, methinks, is not distributive.
To die or kill you, is the alternative,
Rather than take your life, I will not live.'

"Observe, how prettily our author chops logick in heroick verse. Three such fustian canting words as *distributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man but himself would have come within the noise of. But he's a man of general learning, and all comes into his play.

" 'Twould have done well too, if he could have met with a rant or two, worth the observation: such as,

“Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,
Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race.”

“But surely the Sun, whether he flies a lover's or not a lover's pace, leaves weeks and months, nay years too, behind him in his race.

“Poor Robin,¹ or any other of the Philomathematicks, would have given him satisfaction in the point.

“If I could kill thee now, thy fate's so low,
That I must stoop, ere I can give the blow.
But mine is fixt so far above thy crown,
That all thy men,
Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.”

“Now where that is, Almanzor's fate is fixt, I cannot guess; but wherever it is, I believe Almanzor, and think that all Abdalla's subjects, piled upon one another, might not pull down his fate so well as without piling: besides, I think Abdalla so wise a man, that if Almanzor had told him piling his men upon his back might do the feat, he would scarce bear such a weight, for the pleasure of the exploit; but it is a huff, and let Abdalla do it if he dare.

¹ “Poor Robin” is a pseudonym which has been used by different writers. The allusion here is to William Winstanley's *An Almanack after a new fashion written by Poor Robin, Knight of the Burnt Island, a well wisher to the Mathematicks, &c.*, 1677, 8vo., and *Poor Robin's Book of Knowledge, showing the effects of the Planets, Receipts for Curing Distempers, &c. &c., by the Study of 21 years of Poor Robin, a Well-wisher to the Mathematicks*. Will. Winstanley was a barber in the time of Charles I. and II. and James II. He is best known from his *England's Worthies, Select Lives of the most eminent persons from Constantine the Great to the death of Oliver Cromwell, late Protector*. He republished this book in 1687, revised and curiously altered to suit the times. This is a wretched compilation, and, according to Chalmers, is largely borrowed from the *Theatrum Poetarum* of E. Philips; but there is a very curious copy of it in the British Museum, interleaved and full of MSS. notes by Philip Bliss, Dr. Percy, and J. H., interspersed with newspaper cuttings, advertisements, &c., &c.

“ ‘The people like a headlong torrent go,
And every dam they break or overflow.
But, unoppos’d, they either lose their force,
Or wind in volumes to their former course.’

-A very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense or reason. Torrents, I take it, let them wind never so much, can never return to their former course, unless he can suppose that mountains can go upwards, which is impossible: nay more, in the foregoing page he tells us so too. A trick of a very unfaithful memory,

“ ‘But can no more than fountains upward flow.’

-Which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid stream, is much more impossible. Besides, if he goes to quibble, and say that it is possible by art water may be made return, and the same water run twice in one and the same channel: then he quite confutes what he says; for, it is by being opposed, that it runs into its former course: for all engines that make water so return, do it by compulsion and opposition. Or, if he means a headlong torrent for a tide, which would be ridiculous, yet they do not wind in volumes, but come fore-right back (if their upright lies straight to their former course), and that by opposition of the seawater, that drives them back again.

“And for fancy, when he lights of any thing like it, ’tis a wonder if it be not borrowed. As here, for example of, I find this fanciful thought in his ‘Ann. Mirab.’¹

“ ‘Old father Thames raised up his reverend head;
But feared the fate of Simoeis would return;
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed;
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.’

-This is stolen from Cowley’s ‘Davideis,’ p. 9.

¹ Line 926, Ald. *D.* vol. i. p. 93.

“ ‘ Swift Jordan started, and strait backward fled,
Hiding amongst thick reeds his aged head.
And when the Spaniards their assault begin,
At once beat those without and those within.’

“ This Almanzor speaks of himself ; and sure for one man to conquer an army within the city, and another without the city, at once, is something difficult ; but this flight is pardonable, to some we meet with in ‘ Granada.’ Osmin, speaking of Almanzor :

“ ‘ Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,
Made a just battle, ere the bodies joined.’

“ Pray what does this honourable person mean by a *tempest that outrides the wind* ! A tempest that outrides itself. To suppose a tempest without wind, is as bad as supposing a man to walk without feet ; for if he supposes the tempest to be something distinct from the wind, yet as being the effect of wind only, to come before the cause is a little preposterous : so that, if he takes it one way, or if he takes it the other, those two *ifs* will scarce make one *possibility*.”
Enough of Settle.

“ Marriage Alamode ”¹ is a comedy, dedicated to the Earl of Rochester ; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The earl of Rochester therefore was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always represents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disrespect in the preface to “ Juvenal.”²

“ The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery,”³ a comedy, was driven off the stage, *against the opinion*, as the author

¹ First acted and printed 1673. See S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 249.

² S. S. D. vol. xiii. p. 5.

³ Acted in 1672. Printed in 1673. S. S. D. vol. iv. p. 365.

says, of the best judges. It is dedicated, in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley;¹ in which he finds an opportunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censure.

"Amboyna"² is a tissue of mingled dialogue in verse and prose, and was perhaps written in less time than "The Virgin Martyr;"³ though the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not less destructive than that by which Tyrtæus⁴ of old animated the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war in 1673.

"Troilus and Cressida,"⁵ is a play altered from Shakespeare; but so altered that even in Langbaine's opinion, *the last scene in the third act is a masterpiece*. It is introduced by a discourse on *the grounds of criticism in tragedy*; to which I suspect that Rymer's book⁶ had given occasion.

The "Spanish Fryar" is a tragi-comedy,⁷ eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the

¹ Sir Charles Sidley (as Malone says the name was then written) was one of "the three most eminent wits of that time" (1668). Burnet, *Hist. of his Own Time*, vol. i. p. 368, 8vo, 1753.

² Acted and printed 1673. *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 1.

³ This should be *The Royal Martyr*.

⁴ See Grote's *Hist. Greece*, vol. ii. p. 138.

⁵ Published 1679. S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 241.

⁶ *Tragedies of the last age considered and examined*, Lond. 1678, 8vo.

⁷ This was the only drama prohibited by James II. after his accession; and singularly enough, it was the first play represented by order of Queen Mary after the Revolution, and honoured with her presence. It was brought out in 1681. S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 393, Ald. D. vol. i. p. xlviii.

popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the publick.

It was Dryden's opinion, at least for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comick and tragick scenes, and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions. "Whoever," says he,¹ "cannot perform both parts, is but half a writer for the stage."

The "Duke of Guise,"² a tragedy written in conjunction with Lee,³ as "Oedipus" had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him; though at last he seems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play; and *he happened*, says Dryden, *to claim the promise just upon the finishing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite.*—Two thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the first half or somewhat more of the fifth.⁴

This was a play written professedly for the party of the duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and

¹ S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 410.

² Acted and printed 1683. S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 1.

³ Nathaniel Lee (1657-1692), a dramatic poet, of whose thirteen tragedies *Alexander the Great* is the best known.—MATT. ARNOLD.

⁴ *Vindication of the Duke of Guise*, pub. 1683, S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 149. The poem Dryden speaks of "finishing" is supposed to have been the *Religio Laici*, pub. Nov. 1682.

the Covenanters of England; and this intention produced the controversy.

"Albion and Albanus"¹ is a musical drama or opera, written, like the "Duke of Guise," against the Republicans. With what success it was performed, I have not found.

"The State of Innocence and Fall of Man" is termed by him an opera:² it is rather a tragedy in heroick rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot decently be exhibited on the stage. Some such production was foreseen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

"Or if a work so infinite be spann'd,
Jealous I was least some less skilful hand,
Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill-imitating would excel,
Might hence presume the whole creation's day,
To change in scenes, and show it in a play."³

It is another of his hasty productions; for the heat of his imagination raised it in a month.

This composition is addressed to the princess of Modena, then dutchess of York, in a strain of flattery which disgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words, could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroick verse, and poetick licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of bold fictions and ambitious figures.

¹ This play was being performed for the sixth time June 13th, 1685, when an express brought the news of Monmouth's landing. It was printed in the same year. S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 221.

² Pub. 1674. It has been supposed that the origin of this play was the Italian mystery, the *Adamo of Andreini*. See Masson's *Milton*, vol. vi. bk. iii. ch. ii.

³ On *Paradise Lost*, line 17. Grosart's ed. *Marvel*, 1872, vol. i. p. 146.

The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be overpassed: "I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent, and every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me."¹ These copies as they gathered faults were apparently manuscript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not seek an apology in falsehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

"Aureng Zebe"² is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their criticks upon the transactions of the English stage. If he had known and disliked his own character, our trade was not in those times secure from his resentment. His country is at such a distance, that the manners might be safely falsified, and the incidents feigned; for remoteness of place is remarked by Racine, to afford the same conveniences to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme; and has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas. The personages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domestick, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life³ is celebrated,

¹ S. S. D. vol. v. p. 111.

² *Aurung Zebe, or the Great Mogul*, was acted 1675 and printed 1676.

³ "When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat:
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possess."

S. S. D. vol. v. p. 258. Quoted by Boswell, vol. iv. p. 222.

and there are many other passages that may be read with pleasure.

This play is addressed to the earl of Mulgrave, afterwards duke of Buckingham, himself, if not a poet, yet a writer of verses, and a critick. In this address Dryden gave the first hints of his intention to write an epick poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as, he says, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to "Juvenal." "The design," says he,¹ "you know is great, the story English, and neither too near the present times, nor too distant from them."

"All for Love, or the World well lost,"² a tragedy founded upon the story of "Antony and Cleopatra," he tells us, *is the only play which he wrote for himself*; the rest were given to the people. It is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantick omnipotence of Love, he has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious, and the bad despised as foolish.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topicks of malicious and ignorant criticism, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deservedly celebrated for their elegance and spriteliness.

"Limberham, or the kind Keeper,"³ is a comedy, which,

¹ S. S. D. vol. v. p. 196.

² Acted and printed 1678. S. S. D. vol. v. p. 305. The title is noteworthy, *All for Love; or the World well Lost, a Tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre Royal, and written in imitation of Shakespeare's style.* By John Dryden, servant to his Majesty.

³ S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 1.

after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author says, altered or omitted. Dryden confesses that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because *it so much exposed the keeping part of the town.*

“Oedipus”¹ is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, and composed the first and third acts.

“Don Sebastian”² is commonly esteemed either the first or second of his dramatick performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents; and though it is not without sallies of frantick dignity, and more noise than meaning, yet as it makes approaches to the possibilities of real life, and has some sentiments which leave a strong impression, it continued long to attract attention. Amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empire, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for comick; but which, I suppose, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, passages of excellence universally acknowledged; the dispute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramatick poetry.

“Amphitryon”³ is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance; and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

“Cleomenes”⁴ is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occa-

¹ Acted 1678, printed 1679. S. S. D. vol. vi. p. 120.

² Acted and printed 1690. S. S. D. vol. vii. p. 285.

³ Acted and printed 1690. S. S. D. vol. viii. p. 1.

⁴ Acted and published 1692. S. S. D. vol. viii. p. 202.

sioned an incident related in the "Guardian" (No. 45), and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by some airy stripling: *Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan.* That, Sir, said Dryden, *perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero.*

"King Arthur" is another opera.¹ It was the last work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited; and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage.² In the dedication to the marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life. When this was first brought upon the stage, news that the duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre, upon which the company departed, and "Arthur" was exhibited no more.³

His last drama was "Love triumphant," a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the earl of Salisbury he mentions *the lowness of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himself, and of which he has no reason to be ashamed.*

This play appeared in 1694.⁴ It is said to have been unsuccessful. The catastrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confessed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramattick labours with ill success.

From such a number of theatrical pieces it will be supposed, by most readers, that he must have improved his

¹ Acted and published 1691. S. S. D. vol. viii. p. 123.

² This clause of the sentence is evidently printed by mistake.

³ Mr. P. Cunningham points out that this circumstance is related by Johnson of the wrong play. It occurred during the representation of *Albion and Albanus* (1685). See Downes' *Roscius Anglicanus*, 12mo, 1768, p. 40.

⁴ See Evelyn's *Diary*, Jan. 11, 1693-4.

fortune; at least, that such diligence with such abilities must have set penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation which it has now obtained. The playhouse was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had for a long time but a single night. The first that had two nights was *Southern*,¹ and the first that had three was *Rowe*.² There were however, in those days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practise; and a play therefore seldom produced him more than a hundred pounds.

¹ Born 1660, was only twenty-two when his first play was acted. He wrote, to support the court party, *The Loyal Brother*, intended to be taken as a compliment to the Duke of York. Cf. p. 30, l. 5, where Dryden addresses him as "Young man." He it was who finished *Cleomenes* for Dryden; and in 1696 he wrote *Oroonoko*, a play founded on the novel of the same name by Afra Behn, and intended as an attack on slavery.—A. MILNES.

Southerne was Pope's

"Tom, whom heaven sent down to raise
The price of Prologues and of Plays."

Globe ed. *Pope*, p. 501.

² Shadwell received £130 for the *third day* of the *Squire of Alsatia* (Downes, p. 41), who adds, "which was the greatest receipt they ever had at Drury Lane at single prices." *Southerne*, in his dedication to *Sir Antony Love* (1691), records his interest in the third and sixth representations. Farquhar, in the preface to his *Inconstant* (1702), speaks of his sixth night; and Pope commemorates in the *Dunciad* "warm third days," and "thin third days." A "warm" third night cleared about sixty guineas. The "Dedication" seldom brought more than the customary fee of twenty guineas, and the highest copy money for a play received by Dryden appears to have been thirty guineas. This he had in 1692 for *Cleomenes*.—P. CUNNINGHAM.

by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism; a kind of learning then almost new in the English language, and which he, who had considered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to distribute copiously as occasions arose. By these dissertations the publick judgment must have been much improved; and Swift, who conversed with Dryden, relates¹ that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being asked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three; *Not, said he, young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.*

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramattick, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged, by contract, to furnish four plays a year.²

It is certain that in one year, 1678, he published "All for Love," "Assignment," two parts of the "Conquest of

¹ On this passage, and for the relationship between Dryden and Swift, see Malone's *Life of Dryden*, vol. i. pp. 238-240.

² From the *Memorial from the King's Players*, given by Malone, pp. 73-75, it seems the contract was for three plays a year, and even this he did not fulfil.

Granada," "Sir Martin Marall," and the "State of Innocence," six complete plays;¹ with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiarism should be allowed, shews such facility of composition, such readiness of language, and such copiousness of sentiment, as, since the time of Lopez de Vega,² perhaps no other author has possessed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had criticks to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the duke of Buckingham and earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterised him in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the "Rehearsal;"³ a farce which he is said to have written with the assistance of Butler the author of "Hudibras," Martin Clifford⁴ of the Charterhouse, and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands employed upon this performance; in which, though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find any thing that might not have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

To adjust the minute events of literary history, is

¹ These plays, as we have seen, were most of them written many years previously. *All for Love* was the only one of them published for the first time in 1678.

² Lopez de Vega, the famous Spanish poet (1562-1635), who wrote more than 1,500 dramas, one hundred of which were said to be composed in as many days.

³ *The Rehearsal*, as it was acted at the Theatre Royal, London, 1672. Five editions of this play appeared in the author's lifetime. Mr. Arber states that a comparison of these shows a general permanence of the text, with here and there additions and alterations, instigated by the appearance of fresh heroic plays. See Arber's reprint of the first edition.

⁴ *Vid. supr.* p. 370.

tedious and troublesome; it requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The "Rehearsal" was played in 1671, and yet is represented as ridiculing passages in the "Conquest of Granada" and "Assignment," which were not published till 1678, in "Marriage Alamode" published in 1673, and in "Tyrannick Love" of 1677. These contradictions shew how rashly satire is applied.¹

It is said that this farce was originally intended against Davenant,² who in the first draught was characterised by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a soldier and an adventurer.

There is one passage in the "Rehearsal" still remaining, which seems to have related originally to Davenant. *Bayes* hurts his nose, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruise; how this affected Dryden, does not appear. Davenant's nose had suffered such diminution by mishaps among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

¹ On this passage Malone remarks, "In truth there is no contradiction whatsoever: for these seeming difficulties all arise from his (John-son's) having confided in Langbaine's erroneous account of the dates of our author's plays, and his not knowing that various alterations and additions were made to *The Rehearsal* after its original publication. *Malone's Life*, p. 100.

² Sir William Davenant (1605-1668) had been an adherent of the Royalist party, and was living in Paris when he resolved to sail for Virginia, carrying with him his unfinished poem *Gondibert*, on which he had already published a Discourse, addressed to Thomas Hobbes. His vessel was taken by one of the Parliamentary ships, and *Gondibert* was continued by its author in his prison at Cowes Castle, Isle of Wight. At the Restoration he obtained his release, and proceeded to write for the stage various dramas, as the *Siege of Rhodes*, &c. &c. The metre of *Gondibert* was not invented by Davenant. It had already been used by John Davies (1570-1626) in his *Nosce Teipsum*.—A. MILNES.

It is said likewise that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost or obscured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dress, and mimicked the manner¹ of Dryden; the cant words which are so often in his mouth may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases, or customary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged: this, as Lamotte² relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the "Rehearsal" by which malice was gratified: the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volscius* in a single boot,³ is said to have alluded to the misconduct of the duke of Ormond, who lost Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a mistress.

The earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to persuade the publick that its approbation had been to that time misplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation: his "Empress of Morocco," having first delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the highest; the next moment began its fall. Rochester with-

¹ "It is incredible what pains Buckingham took with one of the actors, to teach him to speak some passages in *Bayes*' part in the *Rehearsal* right." Dean Lockier in *Spence's Anecdotes*, p. 63, ed. 1820.

² Mr. Milne states that he has searched diligently, but in vain, for this passage in Charles Lamotte's *Essay on Poetry and Painting with relation to History*, 1730.

³ This is an allusion to a comical scene in *The Rehearsal*, act iii. sc. 2, in which Prince *Volscius* falls in love while pulling on his boots. After debating whether he should yield to the commands of honour, and put on both boots, or to love, urging him to put on neither, he finally hops away in one. See Arber's Reprint, p. 87.

draw his patronage; seeming resolved, says one of his biographers, *to have a judgement contrary to that of the town.* Perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himself contributed to raise it.

Neither criticks nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment give reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure; but he lessens the smart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamant confidence.

The perpetual accusation produced against him, was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any rigorous defence; for, though he was perhaps sometimes injuriously censured, he would by denying part of the charge have confessed the rest; and as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power against facts, wisely left in that perplexity which generality produces a question which it was his interest to suppress, and which, unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to sixty-three, may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied by the composition of eight and twenty pieces for the stage, Dryden found room in the same space for many other undertakings.

But, how much soever he wrote, he was at least once suspected of writing more; for in 1679 a paper of verses, called "an Essay on Satire,"¹ was shewn about in manuscript, by which the earl of Rochester, the dutchess of Ports-

¹ Vid. *infr.* vol. ii. *Life of Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire*, who was the author of the verses, and who intrusted to Dryden the task of revising them. Ald. *D.* vol. i. xlv.

mouth, and others, were so much provoked, that, as was supposed, for the actors were never discovered, they procured Dryden, whom they suspected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the duke of Buckinghamshire, the true writer, in his "Art of Poetry;" where he says of Dryden,

"Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes,
His own deserves as great applause sometimes."

His reputation in time was such, that his name was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the "Life of Polybius" to the translation of Sir Henry Sheers;¹ and those of Lucian and Plutarch to versions of their works by different hands. Of the English "Tacitus" he translated the first book; and, if Gordon be credited, translated it from the French.² Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation; but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred that Dryden wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of "Tacitus," as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the publick; and writing merely for money, was contented to get it by the nearest way.

In 1680, the "Epistles of Ovid" being translated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was

¹ *The History of Polybius the Megalopolitan*, prefixed to Sheers' translation, 1693. Sir Henry Sheers is said by Malone to have been a soldier.

² "Dryden has translated the first book: but has done it almost literally from M. Amelot de la Houssaye, with so much haste and little exactness that, beside his many mistakes, he has introduced several Gallicisms."—"at best it is only the French translator ill-translated or ill-imitated." *Trans. Tacitus*, T. Gordon, Dublin, 1728, pp. 2-3.