
Dryden John

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Clarendon Press Series

DRYDEN

STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROMWELL
ASTRÆA REDUX; ANNUS MIRABILIS
ABSAalom AND ACHITOPHEL
RELIGIO LAICI; THE HIND AND THE PANTHER

EDITED BY

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Trinity College, Cambridge

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Editor of this volume has published within the last twelvemonth an edition of Dryden's Poems,—one of Messrs. Macmillan's Globe Series,—with a carefully revised text, the result of a labour of some duration. The Globe edition of Dryden's Poems contains more than a hundred corrections of the text as presented in Sir Walter Scott's edition, or that of Mr. Robert Bell in his series of the English Poets. In the portion of Dryden's Poems published in this volume the text is the same as that of the Globe edition; and there are some forty corrections within the compass of these Poems. The Notes to this volume contain a suggestion of one new correction which I have not embodied in the text, not feeling absolutely sure about it; but I think it probable that the words Caledonian and Caledon, which have come down to us from Dryden in 'The Hind and the Panther' (Part I. line 14, and Part III. line 3), were intended by him to be Calydonian and Calydon.
PREFACE.

The Biography prefixed to this volume is of necessity in much part a repetition of the longer Memoir at the beginning of the Globe edition. Since the publication of the latter I have satisfied myself by additional information obtained from Trinity College, Cambridge, that the story of Dryden’s continued residence at Cambridge till 1657 is a mistake, and that he ceased to reside there in 1654 or early in 1655.

W. D. C.

32 DORSET SQUARE, LONDON,

February 1871.

In this second edition I have been able to make an interesting addition to the note at p. xvi. as to Dryden at Trinity College.

W. D. C.

October, 1873.
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**THE HIND AND THE PANTHER. A POEM IN THREE PARTS.**

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BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

The poetry and authorship of Dryden cover a period of more than half a century. His first poem was written in youth, within a few months after the execution of Charles the First, and his last a few days before death, within not many months of the death of William the Third and the accession of Anne to the throne. ‘Glorious John Dryden,’ or ‘Glorious John,’ as Sir Walter Scott christened him, is the great literary figure of the forty years that follow the Restoration. Dryden was born only fifteen years, and his first poem was written only thirty-three years, after the death of Shakespeare. It is strange to find Dryden deliberately writing in 1672 that the English language had been so changed since Shakespeare wrote, that any one then reading his plays, or Fletcher’s, or Jonson’s, and comparing them with what had been written since the Restoration, would see the change ‘almost in every line.’ There are frequent careless statements and hasty generalizations in Dryden’s critical dissertations, which were mostly composed rapidly for particular occasions, and there may be exaggeration in this assertion, but it probably contains more truth than exaggeration. Milton, born eight years before Shakespeare’s death, was Dryden’s senior by twenty-three

a Defence of the Epilogue to the Second Part of ‘The Conquest of Granada.’
years, and ‘Paradise Lost’ was published in 1669, the year before that in which Dryden received the appointment of poet laureate, succeeding Davenant, the author of ‘Gondibert,’ and Dryden’s co-operator in a versified abridgment and debasement of ‘Paradise Lost.’ Milton died in 1674, unhonoured by the multitude, when Dryden was at the height of his dramatic popularity, and is spoken of as ‘the good and famous poet’ by the cultivated Evelyn. A quarter of a century later Dryden had a splendid public funeral. Cowley, who was Dryden’s superior in the imaginative faculty, and who, like Dryden after him, had had a fame unjustly superior to Milton’s during his life, had died in 1667. The poetry of Cowley had been a favourite reading of Dryden’s youth. He speaks of Cowley, in several passages of his prose writings, with the respect due to a master, and says on one occasion that his authority is ‘almost sacred’ to him.

Before the end of the seventeenth century, the popularity of Cowley had disappeared, and no traces of the influence of his metaphysical style are to be discovered in any of Dryden’s poems later than the ‘Annum Mirabilis’ of 1666. Denham and Waller, two poets of humbler order, had, while Dryden was young, produced smooth and harmonious poems, and contributed to the improvement of verse; and it remained for Dryden to advance this work, and bring metrical harmony to perfection in his own poems, and, during forty years after the Restoration, of various writing in prose and in verse, to give precision and purity and new wealth and capability to the English language.

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b Evelyn’s Diary, June 27, 1674.
c Essay on Heroic Plays, prefixed to the First Part of ‘The Conquest of Granada.’
d In the Preface to the ‘Fables,’ written in 1699, Dryden wrote of Cowley: ‘Though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth; for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, “Not being of God, he could not stand.”'
John Dryden was born on the 9th of August, 1631, at Aldwincle, a village in Northamptonshire, which was also the birthplace of the Church historian, Thomas Fuller. Both his parents belonged to Northamptonshire families of distinction. His father, Erasmus Dryden, the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Ashby, was a Justice of the Peace for Northamptonshire. The Drydens were all Puritans and Commonwealths. Sir Erasmus Dryden, who died in 1632, the year after the birth of his celebrated grandson, was sent to prison, but a few years before his death in old age, for refusing to pay loan-money to Charles the First. To this event Dryden refers in his Epistle to his cousin John Driden of Chesterton, Member for Huntingdonshire, whose public spirit he compares with their common grandfather's:

'Such was your generous grandsire, free to grant
In Parliaments that weighed their Prince's want,
But so tenacious of the common cause;
As not to lend the king against his laws;
And in a loathsome dungeon doomed to lie,
In bonds retained his birthright liberty,
And shamed oppression till it set him free.'

The old man was liberated on the eve of the general election for Charles the First's third Parliament in 1628. Sir John

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* The year of Dryden's birth is incorrectly given as 1632 in the inscription on the monument in Westminster Abbey.

* Malone and some other biographers have said much about the spelling of Dryden's name, and represented that he early in life deliberately changed the spelling from Driden to Dryden; and Malone has made a statement, which appears to be totally without authority, that the poet gave offence to his uncle, Sir John, by this change of spelling. The spelling of names was very variable in Dryden's time, and I believe there is nothing more than accident in the variations of spelling of his name: Dryden, Driden, and also Dryden and Dreadon occur. Dryden's name is spelt Driden on title-pages of his works after the Restoration, and in one instance ('Astraea Redux') as late as 1688. I follow other biographers and editors in preserving the spelling Driden for the name of his cousin John, to whom he addressed the beautiful poetical epistle, on account of convenience of distinction.
Dryden, successor to Sir Erasmus, and Dryden's uncle, inherited the Puritan zeal. Dryden's mother was Mary, daughter of the Reverend Henry Pickering, rector of Aldwincle All Saints from 1597 till his death in 1637. The Pickerings were near neighbours of the Drydens, and the two families were connected by marriage before the union of the poet's parents, a daughter of Sir Erasmus Dryden having married Sir John Pickering, Knight, the elder brother of the rector of Aldwincle. Sir Gilbert Pickering, the son and successor of Sir John, was thus doubly related to Dryden. Sir Gilbert, having been made a baronet by Charles the First, became a Cromwellite, and held high office during the Protectorate; he was Chamberlain to Oliver Cromwell, and High Steward of Westminster, and one of the so-called peers of Cromwell's second Chamber of 1658, and afterwards one of Richard Cromwell's chief advisers.

The marriage of Erasmus Dryden and Mary Pickering took place on the 21st of October 1630, in the church of Pilton, a village near Aldwincle. The poet was their first child, the eldest of a family of fourteen. A room in the parsonage-house at Aldwincle All Saints is shown as his birthplace. This tradition, which has been maintained uninterruptedly from Dryden's time till now, is unsupported by positive evidence, but as it necessitates only the probable supposition that his mother was on a visit to her parents at the time of the birth of her first child, there is no reason for not accepting it.

Of the early life of Dryden very little is known. His father possessed a small property at Blakesley in the neighbourhood of Canons Ashby, the seat of the Drydens, and of Tichmarsh the seat of the Pickerings. A monument erected in Tichmarsh church to his memory, by his cousin Mrs. Creed, has an inscription which boasts that 'he was bred and had his first learning here.' But the best part of his education was obtained at Westminster, under Dr. Busby. He entered the school as a King's Scholar, but in what year is not known. He retained through life a pleasant remembrance of his Westminster days, and a great respect for Dr.