

**THE ROYAL KING, AND  
LOYAL SUBJECT. A  
WOMAN KILLED WITH  
KINDNESS. TWO PLAYS**

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The Royal King, and Loyal Subject. A Woman Killed with Kindness. Two Plays by Thomas Heywood & J. Payne Collier

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THE  
ROYAL KING, AND LOYAL SUBJECT.

A WOMAN KILLED  
WITH KINDNESS.

TWO PLAYS

BY THOMAS HEYWOOD.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY

J. PAYNE COLLIER, ESQ.



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OF  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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The first of the two plays by Thomas Heywood, now issued to the Members of the Shakespeare Society, has not been reprinted since the publication of the old edition in 1637. Whether the poet then authorized the appearance of it in type is not stated; probably not, or he would have preceded it, as in most cases when he was a consenting party, by a dedication to some friend or patron, or by a brief address to the reader.

The preliminary matter consists only of a "Prologue to the Stage," which was, most likely, recited when the drama was originally acted: the "Epilogue to the Reader," which was not intended for an audience, shows that the drama had been written many years before it came from the press: indeed, the form and style of composition bears evidence of considerable antiquity; and Heywood himself remarks upon his frequent introduction of rhymes—a practice that prevailed, as most persons acquainted with the productions of our early stage are aware, in the comparative infancy of our theatres, when a successful effort was made, by a mixture of blank-verse and



rhyme, and by the employment of "strong lines," to compensate for the partial absence of that constant jingle to which the ears of popular spectators had been accustomed. Heywood tells us—

"We know (and not long since) there was a time  
Strong lines were not look'd after, but if rhyme,  
Oh! then 'twas excellent."

So that we have the testimony of the author to establish, that his "Royal King, and Loyal Subject" was written "not long since" the period when rhyme was in general use on the stage. It has been ascertained that the great, original genius, Marlowe, was the earliest dramatist who, in his "Tamberlaine the Great," (printed in 1590, and written, perhaps, two or three years earlier) had endeavoured to wean the town from what he calls

"The jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits."

Were we to venture a conjecture as to the date when "The Royal King, and Loyal Subject" was produced, we should say, that it was shortly before the year 1600; and Heywood adds, in his Epilogue, that it was when

—"doublets with stuff'd bellies and big sleeves,  
And those trunk hose which now the age doth scorn,  
Were all in fashion."

It would be out of place here to enter into any discussion on the construction of the plot, or on the delineation of the characters; but we may observe that the first is remarkably simple, and the last somewhat feeble and deficient in variety, faults in some

degree indicative of youth and inexperience. The purpose of the author was to exhibit the triumphant loyalty of a subject towards a "King of England," (we are not told his name, nor when he reigned) who was himself of the most magnanimous nature, and who made use of unconscious instruments, chosen from among his subservient and envious courtiers, in order that the generosity and fidelity of one nobleman might shine forth, after the severest trials, with the brightest lustre and the utmost purity. It is necessary to bear this fact in mind; or some of the incidents, as in "Patient Grissell," (which was founded by Dekker and his two coadjutors on a similar principle) will appear violent and unnatural.

The second drama in our present volume was extremely popular in its own day, and in ours it has been included in various impressions of "Dodsley's Old Plays," as well as in some other collections of the same kind. It is remarkable that the only known ancient copies purport to be "the third edition," and are dated in 1617: it must therefore have been printed twice before that date; and we can ourselves bear witness to having many years ago seen a copy of "A Woman Killed with Kindness," dated 1607, upon the shelves of an eminent book-auctioneer. It strangely disappeared from sight before the sale came on; and we know that several persons, besides ourselves, were thus disappointed of a competition for the purchase of the interesting, and perhaps unique curiosity. There was a mark in it by which we should know it again; and whoever may have it now

in their hands (if it still exist) can congratulate themselves only on a very unsatisfactory possession. No discredit may attach to them: they may have come very properly by it; but the probability seems to be, that it still remains in the close custody of the party who was instrumental in obtaining it, or we should have heard of it again in the course of more than a quarter of a century.

The date when "A Woman Killed with Kindness" was originally brought out, is ascertained with unusual precision from "Henslowe's Diary," as printed by our Society in 1845, pp. 249, 250, where the following entries occur: those who wish to see the ignorant spelling of the old manager, or of his scribe, can refer to our impression from the original manuscript; but we quote the words here without those disfigurements:—

"Paid, at the appointment of the company, the 6th of March, 1602, unto Thomas Heywood, in full payment for his play, called A Woman Killed with Kindness, the sum of..... £3."

"Paid, at the appointment of Thomas Blackwood, the 7th of March, 1602, unto the tailor which made the black satin suit for the Woman Killed with Kindness, the sum of..... 10s."

The play, therefore, was finished when Henslowe paid £3 for it; and we may conclude, perhaps, that the "black satin suit" was worn by the hero after the fall of his wife, and when she was dying, in consequence of the undeserved tenderness with which she had been treated by her forgiving husband. Nothing can be more tragically touching than the whole of this part of this fine moral play, and we are not