

THE SATIRES OF DRYDEN

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The Satires of Dryden by J. Dryden & John Churton Collins

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J. DRYDEN & JOHN CHURTON COLLINS

**THE SATIRES OF
DRYDEN**

THE
SATIRES OF DRYDEN

EDITED WITH
MEMOIR, INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES

BY
JOHN CHURTON COLLINS

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1893

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THE SATIRES OF DRYDEN.

of
Macmillan and Co.

PREFACE.

A GRATEFUL confession of immense indebtedness to the labours of Sir Walter Scott and Mr. W. D. Christie is, and always must be, incumbent on any Editor of the Satires of Dryden. My own indebtedness to them is too great to be specified in detail, and I must therefore satisfy myself with this general acknowledgment. But if they did much they have also left much to be done. Those who have made Dryden a subject of special study will see that I have contributed something, in addition to what I have derived from those excellent commentators, towards the elucidation of obscure passages, and something also in the way of new illustrations and parallels. With two or three deviations Mr. Christie's text is adopted throughout, and as this edition is designed rather for students of literature and students of history than for those who are interested in textual criticism, I have not thought it necessary either to discuss or mark various readings. Dryden is not a classic in whose style minutiae of this kind are of importance.

The notes on the Second Part of *Absalom and Achitophel* have been designedly curtailed; it would

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be absurd to suppose that the rubbish of Tate would find critical readers now, but as Tate's contribution is interesting historically it has been reprinted in its entirety, and the historical references have been explained.

To prevent possible misunderstanding I ought perhaps to add, that in the Memoir and General Introduction I have incorporated, here and there, a few sentences from an article on Dryden contributed by me some years ago to the *Quarterly Review*.

MEMOIR OF DRYDEN.

JOHN DRYDEN, one of the most distinguished among poets of the secondary rank, the founder of an important dynasty of English poets, and the father of English criticism, was born at Aldwinckle, a village near Oundle in Northamptonshire, on the 9th of August, 1631. His family, though not noble, was eminently respectable. His paternal grandfather, Sir Erasmus Dryden, was a baronet, and through his mother, Mary Pickering, he was at once the great-grandson of one baronet, Sir Gilbert Pickering, and the first cousin of Sir Gilbert's namesake and immediate successor. In the great revolution of the 17th century both the Drydens and the Pickerings were on the side of the Parliament. And when, many years afterwards, Dryden became the champion of the Court Party and the Roman Catholics, he was reminded, with taunts, that one of his uncles had turned the chancel of the church at Canons Ashbey into a barn, and that his father had served as a Committee man.

Of his early youth little is known. If the inscription on the monument erected by his cousin, Mrs. Creed, in Tichmarsh Church be trustworthy, he received the rudiments of his education some-

where in that village. From Tichmarsh he passed to Westminster School, probably about 1642. We have now no means of knowing the exact date of his entering Westminster, nor do we know why this particular school was selected. But the choice was a wise one. Richard Busby had, some three years before, succeeded Osbolton in the headmastership. Under Osbolton the school had greatly declined, but it was now, in Busby's hands, rapidly rising to the first place among English schools of that day, and Dryden had the inestimable advantage of being the pupil of a man who was destined to become the king of English schoolmasters. "I have known great numbers of his scholars," writes Steele, "and am confident I could discover a stranger who had been such with a very little conversation. Those of great parts who have passed through his instruction have such a peculiar readiness of fancy and delicacy of taste as is seldom found in men educated elsewhere, though of equal talents." Among Busby's pupils were the poets Lee, Prior, King, Rowe, Duke, and the learned Edmund Smith, the philosopher Locke, the theologians South and Atterbury, the most illustrious of English financiers, Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax; the poet-diplomatist, George Stepney; the most accomplished of physicians, John Friend; the wits and scholars, Robert Friend and Anthony Alsop; the distinguished classical scholar, Mattaire; while he could boast that eight of his pupils had been raised to the bench, and that no less than sixteen had become bishops. Busby's influence on Dryden was undoubtedly great. He saw and encouraged his peculiar bent. He appears to have

allowed him to substitute composition in English for composition in Latin and Greek, and he encouraged him to turn portions of Persius and other Roman poets into English verse. Despairing, probably, of ever making him an exact verbal scholar, he was satisfied with enabling him to read Latin, if not Greek, with accuracy and facility. Dryden never forgot his obligations to Busby. Thirty years afterwards, when the Westminster boy had become the first poet and the first critic of his age, he dedicated, with exquisite propriety, to his old schoolmaster his translation of the Satire in which Persius records his reverence and gratitude to Cornutus. From Westminster he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge. He was entered on the 18th of May, 1650; he matriculated in the following July, and on the 2nd of October in the same year he was elected a scholar on the Westminster foundation. Of his life at Cambridge very little is known. Like Milton before him, and like Gray, Wordsworth, and Coleridge after him, he appears to have had no respect for his teachers, and to have taken his education into his own hands. From independence to rebellion is an easy step, and an entry may still be read in the Conclusion-book at Trinity, which charges him with disobedience to the Vice-Master and with contumacy in taking the punishment inflicted on him. It would seem also from an allusion in a satire of Shadwell's that he got into some scrape for libelling a young nobleman, which, had he not anticipated condemnation by flight, would have ended in his expulsion from the University. But as this is without corroboration of any kind and rests only on the authority of