

**EXHIBITIONS OF FIRST  
AND OTHER EDITIONS  
OF THE WORKS OF JOHN  
DRYDEN (1631-1700)**

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Exhibitions of First and Other Editions of the Works of John Dryden (1631-1700) by Various

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**VARIOUS**

**EXHIBITIONS OF FIRST  
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DRYDEN (1631-1700)**



Exhibition of First and  
other editions of the  
Works of John Dryden  
(1631-1700), together with a  
few engraved portraits and  
two oil paintings—commem-  
orative of the two hundredth  
anniversary of his death \* \*



Exhibited at

The Grolier Club

Twenty-nine East Thirty-second Street, New-York

March 8th to 24th, 1900



## INTRODUCTION

**J**OHN DRYDEN, Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal to King Charles II and King James II, will ever hold high rank among the great names in English Literature. Few among his contemporaries possessed such versatility of intellect, and none, except Milton, his wonderful powers of versification. Of wide learning and correct literary judgment, he also excelled as a critic, and possessed an excellent prose style. Many of his prefaces and introductions are justly admired for their strong, vigorous English. His example did much to form and settle the prose of his day and pave the way for Steele and Addison in the "Tatler" and "Spectator." Dr. Johnson does not hesitate to write, "What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry, embellished by Dryden, 'Lateritiam invenit,

marmoream reliquit' (he found it brick and he left it marble)."

A distinguished critic of the present day, Mr. Edmund Gosse, in his "Modern English Literature," says: "Dryden's exuberant vivacity, his solidity of judgment, his extraordinary command of all the artifices of poetry, pointed him out as a leader of men, and should prepare us to find his influence the dominant one in all verse-writing in England for a hundred years after his death." It is to be regretted that many of his plays reflect the low standard of morals which unfortunately was introduced into England with the restoration of the monarchy. The fault, however, is more of the time than of the man, and in his old age he virtually admitted the justness of Jeremy Collins' attack on the immorality and profaneness of the English stage. But it is not on his plays that Dryden's fame as a poet rests; it is rather on his achievement as a writer of satire, in which he so far excelled as to merit the distinction of being called "the greatest satirist of British Poetry." He is, moreover, unrivaled as a reasoner in verse. To quote Dr. Johnson once more, "Though Davies had reasoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he was the first who joined argument and poetry." His two odes for St. Cecilia's Day, especially the second, "Alexander's Feast," are

among the greatest in our literature, and many of his lyrics and shorter occasional verses are justly celebrated for the beauty of their language and harmonious versification.

No bibliography of John Dryden has ever been attempted, though considerable material exists in Sir Walter Scott's editions of his works, and still more in the excellent edition, in one volume, edited by Mr. W. D. Christie in 1870. The catalogue of the present exhibition of the works of John Dryden does not profess to be complete, except so far as to record the first editions of his works published during his lifetime, and, so far as was possible, the volumes by other authors to which he contributed. Of his original volumes of poetry, it is believed all will be found in the present exhibition, except the poem, "To My Lord Chancellor," 1662. This the committee has been unable to discover in the remarkably complete collections belonging to members of the Grolier Club. First editions of two of his plays are also missing, "Secret Love," 1668, and "The State of Innocence," 1676. To these must be added "The Secular Masque," his last work, contributed by him to "The Pilgrim," when performed for his benefit shortly before his death. The more important of his translations will be found in the exhibition, together with a considerable number of satires



and attacks upon him brought out in answer to his political satires.

It is to be regretted that Dryden lived at a time when good printing was almost unknown in England. His books are not attractive in appearance, which may account for the fact that few collectors have made much effort to gather together complete sets of first editions.

As has been usual in similar exhibitions, the more important engraved portraits have been included. It is singular that, so far as known, no engraved portrait of Dryden was published during his lifetime.

The committee is exceedingly pleased to be permitted to exhibit two portraits in oil—both attributed to the celebrated court painter, Sir Godfrey Kneller. They possess very great interest, and will no doubt be an attractive feature in this commemoration of the two hundredth anniversary of the death of "Glorious John Dryden."



## I. Original Works.

1. Three | Poems | Upon the Death of his  
late | Highnesse | Oliver | Lord Protec-  
tor | Of | England, Scotland, and | Ire-  
land. | Written |

By { M<sup>r</sup> Edm. Waller,  
M<sup>r</sup> Jo. Dryden,  
M<sup>r</sup> Sprat, of Oxford. | London, |  
Printed by

William Wilfon, and are to be sold in  
| Well-yard neer Little St. Bartholomew's  
| Hospitall, 1659.

Quarto. First edition.

One leaf without signature; B-F 2, in fours.

B 1 to C 1 (verso blank) are occupied by Dryden's  
" Heroique Stanzas, Consecrated to the Glorious Mem-  
ory of his most Serene and Renowned Highnesse Oliver  
Late Lord Protector of this Common-Wealth, &c.

WORKS OF JOHN DRYDEN.

Written after the Celebration of his Funerall." This, Dryden's third poem but his first important poetical production, was written upon the death of Cromwell, September 3, 1658. It was first published about the beginning of 1659, either in the present form or separately (see the following number). W. D. Christie, the editor of the best modern edition of Dryden's poetical works (London, 1870), thinks that the separate edition was the later of the two. "This edition," he says, "was probably revised by Dryden and may be presumed to be later than the other, as the spelling is more modern. There is no difference between the two, except of spelling and punctuation." In 1682 the "Three Poems" edition of 1659 was reprinted, without variation, save that "late Usurper" was substituted in the title for "late Highness," etc. This reprint, which was inspired by one of Dryden's political enemies, was followed in the same year by a reprint of the separate form of the "Heroique Stanzas," with this title:

An | Elegy | On The | Usurper O. C. | By The | Author | Of | Absalom and Achitophel. | Published to shew the Loyalty and Integrity of the Poet. | Reprinted in the Year MDCLXXXII.

Another reprint of the separate form, the title again varying, appeared in 1687 (see No. 4). The "Three Poems" were also reprinted in 1689 in "Poems on Affairs of State" (see No. 5).

2. A | Poem | upon the | Death | of | His Late Highness, | Oliver, | Lord Protector of | England, Scotland, & Ireland | Written by Mr. Dryden, | London, | Printed for William Wilfon; and are to be sold