

**HONOUR TRIUMPHANT AND A LINE OF
LIFE TWO TRACTS BY JOHN FORDGE,
THE DRAMATIST, UNKNOWN TO THE
EDITORS OF HIS WORKS, AND NOW
FIRST REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL
COPIES PUBLISHED IN 1606 AND 1620**

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INTRODUCTION.

The two following tracts are by the celebrated dramatist, and contemporary of Shakespeare, John Forde, whose works have gone through two modern impressions, besides the ancient editions. The first tract is altogether unknown, and has escaped the researches of every literary antiquary: the last is mentioned in the Stationers' Register, under the date of October 10, 1620; and the late Mr. Gifford, (*Ford's Works*, i., xiii.) presumed that it was a lost play. The reader will find that it has nothing dramatic in its form, subject, or composition; but, as the production of so distinguished a stage-poet, and as it importantly illustrates the life and character of its author, independently of any literary claims, it was clearly worthy of preservation, and no apology can be necessary for reprinting it from the sole existing copy.

Mr. Gifford also mistakenly terms Luke Hutton's "Black Dog of Newgate" a play. That there was a drama with this title cannot be doubted: it is mentioned in Henslowe's Diary as the authorship of R. Hathway; but Hutton's tract is quite of a different character, being an attack, in prose and verse, chiefly upon the

vices prevalent in London. The supposed author was hanged at York in 1598 for robbery, so that "The Black Dog of Newgate" must have appeared about that date; and we may presume that it was not penned by Hutton, but by some pamphleteer of the time, who wished to take advantage of the highwayman's notoriety. It was reprinted in 1638, with various changes and some additions, in order to give the work the appearance of novelty. An account of this impression is inserted in the "Bridgewater Catalogue," 4to, 1837, p. 149, and a copy of the original edition is in the British Museum.

"Honour Triumphant, or the Peer's Challenge, by Arms defensible, at Tilt, Turney, and Barriers," bears the date of 1606, and it was written in consequence of the royal celebrations on the arrival of the King of Denmark in London on the 17th July in that year: it must have been penned and printed with great speed, as his Danish majesty did not remain in England quite a month, having taken his departure, according to Camden, on the 14th August.

Forde was at this date not twenty-one, having been born in April, 1586: "Honour Triumphant" preceded his "Fame's Memorial," on the death of the Earl of Devonshire in 1606, so that we are entitled to consider it Forde's earliest work. It consists of four essays, or, more properly, orations, in support of four positions of chivalry, and the eloquent prose is intermixed with poetry. At the end are separate poems in honour of the Christian IV., obviously hasty efforts, intended perhaps to gratify the ear of James I., and to

secure patronage to the author, who had been admitted a student of Gray's Inn in 1602.

His object in writing his "Line of Life," fourteen years afterwards, is not very evident; since it is of a much graver character than might be looked for from the author of the plays Forde had then unquestionably produced. It is written in a high moral tone; and the characters, inserted in the course of it, of the Earl of Essex, beheaded by Queen Elizabeth, and of Sir Walter Raleigh, executed by James I. so short a time before the tract was published, are very remarkable. It concludes with a flattering tribute to the king.

It may be right to add that "Honour Triumphant" was published in 4to, and the "Line of Life" in 12mo.

In order to render all that relates to so distinguished an author complete, we have added on the next page some commendatory poems upon Forde and his "Fame's Memorial:" they are omitted by Mr. Gifford, because perhaps, as they are on a separate leaf, the copy he used of this very rare production did not contain them. They are in themselves of little worth.