

**THE SELECT  
DRAMATIC WORKS  
OF JOHN DRYDEN**

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The select dramatic works of John Dryden by James Lockwood Seton

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**JAMES LOCKWOOD SETON**

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SELECT DRAMATIC WORKS.

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OF

JOHN DRYDEN.

EDITED BY

JAMES LOCKWOOD SETON.

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1877.

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## EDITORIAL PREFACE.

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THERE not having been an issue of Dryden's Plays since 1821, when Sir Walter Scott brought out an edition of the poet's whole works in eighteen volumes, an apology for the present publication is scarcely necessary, except indeed, on the score of the limited character of the selection. Our intention was to give a considerable number of the Plays, but, on after consideration, the others were dropped from the list, as probably unsuitable to the tastes of the present time, thus confining selection to two—the two best in various respects. Indeed, as regards the comparative merits and purity of the various Plays, there seems to be but one opinion among Dryden's numerous biographers and critics—all appear to agree in giving the two in question the first place.

In judging of Dryden's dramatic writings, as compared with his other works, it might be well to bear in mind that neither the object for which they were composed—in great part a pecuniary one—nor the tastes of the period, were calculated to prove strikingly elevating or inspiring in their influences. In the course of two hundred years, society has made great advances in many respects, and probably in no section is this more marked than in that of the theatre and its relationships. It may



be interesting to admirers of Dryden to have a specimen of his dramatic writings; even although these writings have never attained a position approaching that of what may be more strictly designated his poetical works, they nevertheless bear all the marks of an extraordinary mind, and have been greatly admired by many prominent literary men.

During the last and preceding centuries various editions of the Plays were published, but these are now rarely to be seen, and command high prices. Of late years, through the system of reprints, now so common, many dramatic writers of less note have been brought within the reach of all interested in this department of literature; but as yet Dryden has not been included in any of the series of the old dramatists at present before the public, partly, perhaps, on account of his dramatic writings being so voluminous, and many of the respective Plays likewise being of very considerable length.

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