THE POEMS AND FABLES OF
JOHN DRYDEN

EDITED BY
JAMES KINSLEY
This text of this edition is reprinted from the complete collection of Dryden's poetry published by the Clarendon Press in 1958. It contains all the original poems; poems of which Dryden was part author; prologues, epilogues, and songs from plays in which he collaborated with others; a few pieces ascribed to him on good if inconclusive evidence; and the complete text of Fables Ancient and Modern. Much of Dryden's finest verse, in his translations of Virgil, Juvenal and Persius, Ovid, Horace, and other classical poets, has had to be set aside; but it is hoped that this selection will meet the needs of students as far as they can be met in the compass of a single volume without sacrificing readability.

Copy-text chosen for each poem is normally the first edition, collated with all subsequent editions published in Dryden's lifetime and with contemporary transcripts and miscellany reprints. Apparently authoritative variants from these have been admitted, and silently brought into conformity with the style of the copy-text. The text has been prepared mainly from copies in the Bodleian Library, the library of Worcester College, and the editor's collection. The typography of titles is standardized, and for short poems originally printed in italics the type has been reversed. Errors of spacing and numbering, turned letters, wrong founts, obvious misprints, and irregularities in the use of 'a' and 'a' in classical names and quotations have been silently corrected; the distinction between italicized plurals in —'s and possessives in roman —'s has been regularized; proper names in roman type have been italicized in appropriate contexts; and corrections made on errata slips have been silently incorporated.

In the Clarendon Press edition the apparatus recorded significant changes in the accidentals of the copy-text and all substantive variants from other early printings. In this edition the apparatus has been restricted to a record of substantive departures from the copy-text. It does not record rejected readings from unauthorized texts or from reprints, which are of merely historical interest, except in a few places where the rejected source is nearly contemporaneous with the copy-text and is not related to it as immediate ancestor or descendant. The complete record of editions collated for each text is not reprinted here from the Clarendon Press edition; printings and manuscripts are given in the textual head-note to a poem only when variants from them have been admitted to the text or apparatus.

J. K.

University College of Swansea
April 1961

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A cursed Critick as e’re damn’d a Play.
Good salvage Gentlemen your own kind spare,
He is, like you, a very Wolf, or Bear;
Yet think not he’ll your ancient rights invade,
Or stop the course of your free damning trade:
For he, (he vows) at no friends Play can sit
But he must needs find fault to shew his Wit:
Then, for his sake, ne’er stint your own delight,
Throw boldly, for he sets to all that write;
With such he ventures on an even lay,
For they bring ready money into Play.
Those who write not, and yet all Writers nick,
Are Bankrupt Gamesters, for they damn on Tick.

SONG

I feed a flame within which so torments me
That it both pains my heart, and yet contents me:
'Tis such a pleasing smart, and I so love it,
That I had rather die, then once remove it.
Yet he for whom I grieve shall never know it,
My tongue does not betray, nor my eyes show it:
Not a sigh nor a tear my pain discloses,
But they fall silently like dew on Roses.
Thus to prevent my love from being cruel,
My heart’s the sacrifice as ‘tis the fuel:
And while I suffer this to give him quiet,
My faith rewards my love, though he deny it.
On his eyes will I gaze, and there delight me;
While I conceal my love, no frown can fright me:
To be more happy I dare not aspire;
Nor can I fall more low, mounting no higher.

PROLOGUE

FOOLS, which each man meets in his Dish
Are yet the great Regalios of a Play;
In which to Poets you but just appear,
To prize that highest which cost them so dear:
Fops in the Town more easily will pass;
One story makes a statutable Ass:
But such in Plays must be much thicker sown,
Like yolks of Eggs, a dozen beat to one:
Observing Poets all their walks invade,
As men watch Woodcocks gliding through a Gro.
And when they have enough for Comedy,
They stow their several Bodies in a Pye:
The Poet’s but the Cook to fashion it,
For, Gallants, you your selves have found the
To bid you welcome would your bounty wrong
None welcome those who bring their cheer alo

EPILOGUE

As Country Vicars, when the Sermon’s done
Run huddling to the Benediction;
Well knowing, though the better sort may
The Vulgar Rout will run unblest away:
So we, when once our Play is done, make haste
With a short Epilogue to close your taste.
In thus withdrawing we seem mannerly,
But when the Curtain’s down we peep,
A Jury of the Wits who still stay late,
And in their Club decree the poor Plays fate.