

## The Dramatic Works of Sir William D'avenant, Vol. 2: With Prefatory Memoir and Notes (Classic Reprint)

William D'avenant

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Excerpt from The Dramatic Works of Sir William D'avenant, Vol. 2: With Prefatory Memoir and Notes

In one of the amusing letters, addressed by James Howell to his friend Philip, afterwards Sir Philip, Warwick, who was then residing in Paris, dated from Westminster, the 3d June 1634, he gives him all the scandal of the Court, and mentions that there were "little news at present, but that there is a Love call'd Platonick Love which much sways there of late. It is a Love abstracted from all corporeal, gross impressions and sensual appetite, but consists in contemplations, and ideas of the mind, not in any carnal fruition. This Love sets the Wits of the Town on work, and they say there will be a Masque shortly on it, whereof her Majesty and her Maids of Honour will be a part."

Although the name of D'Avenant is not given, it may be inferred that this intended Masque was no other than the Temple of Love, in which, as has already been shewn, the Queen and the Ladies of her Court appeared as Masquers, the entertainment itself being given at their own charge. The subject of the Masque is Platonic Love, of which one of the characters thus treats:

"They raise strange doctrines, and new sects of Love, Which must not woo. or court the person, but The mind; and practice generation not Of bodies but of souls."

The present comedy of "The Platonic Lovers," represented two years afterwards, evidences the fact that this ideal passion was then still popular.

The duodecimo edition of the Platonic Lovers, printed in 1665, is merely a reprint of the preceding edition, with the dedication. It forms the second of "Two Excellent Plays; The Wits, a Comedic; The Platonick Lovers, a Tragi-Comedie. Both presented at the Private House in Black-Friers by His Majesties Servants." Each of these has a separate title-page, but the pagination is continuous throughout.

The dedication is: - "To the most noble Mr Henry Jermyn.

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