

But there is character-drawing among the lesser personages in *All for Love*, in the futile subtlety of Alexas, in the well-meant blundering of Ventidius, and in the conflict in Dolabella's mind between love and honour, a conflict naturally felt—not conventionally represented, as it had been in *The Conquest of Granada*.

The plot, as I have more than once indicated in the preceding analysis, is well-constructed. Mr Noyes' criticism seems to me very severe. He writes (*Introd.* p. xlix) 'The action, despite its confinement within a single day, is, as Aristotle would call it, "episodic"; like that of *The Conquest of Granada*, it deals with successive adventures in the life of one man, not with a central crisis.' To discuss here¹ what Aristotle calls 'eepisodic' and what he means by 'Unity of Action' would take us too far afield; the essential thing is that the plot 'must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed' (Aristotle's *Poetics*, Ch. viii). In Dryden's play, the sequence of scenes is not perhaps *necessary*, but it is probable, and I do not feel that it can justly be described as 'episodic.'

Then we come to Dryden's own objection concerning the introduction of Octavia:—

The greatest error in the contrivance seems to be in the person of Octavia; for, though I might use the privilege of a poet, to introduce her into Alexandria, yet I had not

¹ See above, p. 127.