

Preface

I HAVE tried to write a small book about John Webster. That is to say, I have tried to say the truth about him, as much of it as is necessary to enable anyone who reads him to understand him. I have not tried to explain him entirely to anyone who has not read him, though I hope that any person in that condition might get a rough idea of him from this book.

I have tried to explain Webster for a reader, but not to explain him away. So I have endeavoured to keep to my own province, and not to trespass on ground reserved for worthier feet—Webster's. I conceive that there is much that he can explain better than I. So I have, at least, abstained from paraphrasing.

To explain Webster's writings it is first necessary to determine what he wrote, and also such smaller questions as when he wrote it, and how he came to write it. Such questions, the questions of "scientific"