

For I'll convey my soul from Cæsar's reach,
And lay down life myself. 'Tis time the world
Should have a lord, and know whom to obey.
We two have kept its homage in suspense,
And bent the globe on whose each side we trod,
Till it was dinted inwards. Let him walk
Alone upon 't: I'm weary of my part.
My torch is out; and the world stands before me,
Like a black desert at th' approach of night:
I'll lay me down, and stray no farther on. (276 ff.)

It remains to consider several critical questions which arise in connexion with Dryden's play. First, and most obvious, comes the comparison with Shakespeare, a comparison inevitable indeed but not much to the purpose. The imperial machinery and its remorseless crushing is visible in the larger scale of *Antony and Cleopatra* but hardly so in *All for Love*. Nor is the character-drawing of Dryden to be compared with that of Shakespeare. Shakespeare's Cleopatra is really unique, unique in the proper sense of the word:—

I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street;
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

(*A. and C.* II 2.)

So speaks Enobarbus, but no such thing is imaginable of Dryden's Cleopatra. With him the whole story is more ordinary; it is dignified but not gigantic. Nor is this the only difference; much more might be said on these lines.