The Crown Prince of Dullness.

By Dryden, John .

All human things are subject to decay,

And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey:

This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young

Was called to empire, and had governed long:

In prose and verse was owned without dispute,

Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.

This aged Prince now flourishing in peace,

And blest with issue of a large increase,

Worn out with business, did at length debate

To settle the succession of the State:

And pondering which of all his sons was fit

To reign, and wage immortal war with Wit,

Cried, ' 'Tis resolved; for Nature pleads that he

Should only rule who most resembles me:

Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,

Mature in dullness from his tender years.

Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he

Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,

But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

Some beams of Wit on other souls may fall,

Strike through, and make a lucid interval;

But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,

His rising fogs prevail upon the day:

Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,

And seems designed for thoughtless majesty:

Thoughtless as monarch oaks, that shade the plain,

And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.'