

AN
APOLOGY FOR ACTORS.

IN THREE BOOKS.

BY
THOMAS HEYWOOD.

FROM THE EDITION OF 1612, COMPARED WITH THAT OF
W. CARTWRIGHT.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.



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A

INTRODUCTION.

IN the cursory sketch of the various publications for and against the Stage, between the years 1578 and 1633, which precedes our reprint of Gosson's "School of Abuse," we had occasion to mention Thomas Heywood's "Apology for Actors." It is not only the most complete, but the latest regular defence of the profession, prior to the closing of the theatres on the breaking out of the Civil War. There was a pause in the literary contest subsequent to the appearance of Dr. Rainolde's "Overthrow of Stage Plays," 1599, (some copies bear the date of "Middleburgh, 1600,") and the immediate motive for the publication of Heywood's "Apology for Actors" in 1612 is not stated in the tract itself, nor elsewhere. Sir Edward Coke, indeed, in his "Charge at Norwich" in 1607, (printed by N. Butter in that year) had complained of the manner and degree in which "the country was troubled with stage-players," and denounced them from the bench; but his reference was to actors in the provinces, who had no "commission" from the crown, nor license under the hands of any of the nobility; and it may be asserted that for some years before Heywood's "Apology" came out,