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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

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Fashion: a Satire.

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FASHION: A SATIRE.

Honestius putamus, quod frequentius; recti apud nos locum tenet error, ubi publicus factus. SENECA.

YES, yes, my friend, disguise it as you will,
To right or wrong 'tis Fashion guides us still:
A few perhaps rise singularly good,
Defy, and stem the fool-o'erwhelming flood;
The rest to wander from their brethern fear,
As social herrings in large shoals appear.
'Twas not a taste, but pow'rful mode, that bade
Yon' purblind, poking peer run picture mad;
With the same wonder-gaping face he stares
On flat DUTCH dawbing, as on GUIDO's airs;
What might his oak-crown'd manors mortgag'd gain?
Alas! five faded landscapes of [a] LORAINE.
Not so GARGILIUS —— sleek voluptuous lord,
A hundred dainties smoak upon his board;
Earth, air, and ocean's ransack'd for the feast,
In masquerade of foreign OLLIO's dress'd;
Who praises, in this sauce-enamour'd age,
Calm, healthful temp'rance, like an INDIAN sage:

[a] *Claude Loraine.*

But

But could he walk in publick, were it ſaid,
" GARGILIUS din'd on beef, and eat brown bread ?"
Happy the grotto'd hermit with his pulſe,
Who wants no truffles, rich ragouts—nor [b] HULSE.
How ſtrict on Sundays gay LÆTITIA's face !
How curl'd her hair, how clean her Bruſſels-lace !
She lifts her eyes, her ſparkling eyes to heav'n,
Moſt nun-like mourns, and hopes to be forgiv'n.
Think not ſhe prays, or is grown penitent———
She went to church—becauſe the pariſh went.
Cloſe CHREMES, deaf to the pale widow's grief,
Parts with an unſun'd guinea for relief;
No meltings o'er his ruthleſs boſom ſteal,
More than fierce Arabs, or proud tyrants feel;
Yet, ſince his neighhours give, the churl unlocks,
Damning the poor, his triple-bolted box.
Why loves not HIPPIA rank obſcenity ?
Why would ſhe not with twenty porters lie ?
Why not in crowded Malls quite naked walk ?
Not aw'd by virtue—but " The world would talk."—
Yet how demurely looks the wiſhing maid,
For ever, but in bed, of man afraid !
Thus [c] HAMMON's ſpring by day feels icy-cool,
At night is hot as hell's ſulphureous pool.
Each panting warble of VESCONTI's throat,
To DICK, is heav'nlier than a ſeraph's note;

[b] *The Phyſician.*
[c] *Lucretius, lib.* 6. 848.

The thrills, he ſwears, ſoft-ſtealing to his breaſt,
Are lullabies, to ſooth his cares to reſt;
Are ſweeter far, than LAURA's luſcious kiſs,
Charm the whole man, and lap his ſoul in bliſs:
Who can ſuch counterfeited raptures bear,
Of a deaf fool who ſcarce can thunders hear?
CROWDERO might with him for FESTIN paſs,
And touching HANDEL yield to trifling HASSE.

But curd-fac'd CURIO comes! all prate, and ſmile,
Supreme of beaux, great bulwarks of our iſle!
Mark well his feather'd hat, his gilt cockade,
Rich rings, white hand, and coat of ſtiff brocade,
Such weak-wing'd May-flies BRITAIN's troops diſgrace,
That FLANDRIA, wond'ring, mourns our alter'd race:
With him the fair, enraptur'd with a rattle,
Of VAUXHALL, GARRICK, or PAMELA prattle:
This ſelf-pleas'd king of emptineſs permit
At the dear toillette harmleſsly to ſit;
As mirthleſs infants, idling out the day,
With wooden ſwords, or toothleſs puppies play:
'Tis meaner (cries the manling) to command
A conquering hoſt, or ſave a ſinking land,
Than furl fair FLAVIA's fan, or lead a dance,
Or broach new-minted FASHIONS freſh from FRANCE.

O FRANCE, whoſe edicts govern dreſs and meat,
Thy victor BRITAIN bends beneath thy feet!
Strange! that pert graſshoppers ſhould lions lead,
And teach to hop, and chirp acroſs the mead:

Of

Of fleets and laurel'd chiefs let others boaſt,
Thy honours are to bow, dance, boil and roaſt.
Let ITALY give mimick canvas fire,
Carve rock to life, or tune the lulling lyre;
For gold let rich POTOSI be renown'd,
Be balmy-breathing gums in INDIA found;
'Tis thine for ſlaves to teach the ſhantieſt cuts,
Give empty coxcombs more important ſtruts,
Preſcribe new rules for knots, hoops, manteaus, wigs,
Shoes, ſoups, complexions, coaches, farces, jigs.
MUSCALIA dreams of laſt night's ball till ten,
Drinks chocolate, ſtroaks FOP, and ſleeps agen,
Perhaps at twelve dares ope her drowſy eyes,
Aſks LUCY if 'tis late enough to riſe;
By three each curl and feature juſtly ſet,
She dines, talks ſcandal, viſits, plays picquette:
Meanwhile her babes with ſome foul nurſe remain,
For modern dames a mother's cares diſdain;
Each fortnight once ſhe bears to ſee the brats,
" For oh they ſtun one's ears, like ſqualling cats!"
Tigers and pards protect, and nurſe their young,
The parent-ſnake will roll her forked tongue,
The vultur hovers vengeful o'er her neſt,
If the rude hand her helpleſs brood infeſt;
Shall lovely woman, ſofteſt frame of heav'n,
To whom were tears, and feeling pity giv'n,
Moſt faſhionably cruel, leſs regard
Her offspring, than the vultur, ſnake, and pard?

What art, O FASHION, pow'r ſupreme below!
You make us virtue, nature, ſenſe, forego;
You ſanctify knave, atheiſt, whore, and fool,
And ſhield from juſtice, ſhame, and ridicule.
Our grandames modes, long abſent from our eyes,
At your all-powerful bidding duteous riſe;
As ARETHUSA ſunk beneath the plain
For many a league, emerging flows again;
Now [d] Mary's mobs, and flounces you approve,
Now ſhape-diſguiſing ſacks, and ſlippers love:
Scarce have you choſe (like Fortune fond to joke)
Some reigning dreſs, but you the choice revoke:
So when the deep-tongu'd organ's notes ſwell high,
And loud HOSANNAHS reach the diſtant ſky,
Hark, how at once the dying ſtrains decay,
And ſoften unexpectedly away.
The peer, prince, peaſant, ſoldier, ſquire, divine,
Goddeſs of Change, bend low before your ſhrine,
Swearing to follow, whereſoe'er you lead,
Tho' you eat toads, or walk upon your head.
'Tis hence belles game, intrigue, ſip citron-drams,
And hide their lovely locks with [e] heads of rams;
Hence girls, once modeſt, without bluſh appear,
With legs diſplay'd, and ſwan-ſoft boſoms bare;

d *Mary queen of Scots mobs, much worn by the ladies.*
e *Tête de Mouton, literally tranſlated.*

Hence

Hence ſtale, autumnal dames, ſtill deck'd with laces,
Look like vile canker'd coins in velvet caſes.
Aſk you, why whores live more belov'd than wives,
Why weeping virtue exil'd, flattery thrives,
Why mad for penſions, BRITONS young and old
Adore baſe miniſters, thoſe calves of gold,
Why witling templars on religion joke,
Fat, roſy juſtices, drink, doze, and ſmoak,
Dull criticks on beſt bards pour harmleſs ſpite,
As babes that mumble coral, cannot bite,
Why knaves malicious, brother-knaves embrace,
With hearts of gall, but courtly-ſmiling face,
Why ſcornful FOLLY from her gawdy coach,
At ſtarving houſeleſs VIRTUE points reproach,
Why AV'RICE is the great all-worſhip'd God?
Methinks ſome DÆMON anſwers—" 'Tis the mode!"
At this CORRUPTION ſmiles with ghaſtly grin,
Preſaging triumphs to her mother, SIN;
Who, as with baneful wings aloft ſhe flies,
" This falling land be mine!"—exulting cries;
Grim TYRANNY attends her on her way,
And frowns, and whets his ſword that thirſts to ſlay.
Look, from the frigid to the torrid zone,
By cuſtom all are led, by nature none.
f The hungry TARTAR rides upon his meat,
To cook the dainty fleſh with buttock's heat:

f *The following facts are taken from the accounts of different countries.*

The CHINESE complaiſantly takes his bed
With his big wife, and is with cawdle fed.
How would our tender Britiſh beauties ſhriek,
To ſee ſlim beaux on bulls their lances break!
Yet not LUCINDA, in heroic SPAIN,
Admits a youth, but who his beaſt has ſlain.
See, wond'rous lands, where the fell victor brings,
To his glad wives, the heads of ſlaughter'd kings,
The mangled heads!——o'er which they ſing and laugh,
And in dire banquets the warm life-blood quaff;
Where youths their grandſires, age-bent, trembling, grey,
Pitying their weary weakneſs, kindly ſlay:
Where ſainted BRACHMANS, ſick of life, retire,
To die ſpontaneous on the ſpicy pyre;
Where (ſtranger ſtill!) with their wild dates content,
The ſimple ſwains no ſighs for gold torment.
How fondly partial are our judgments grown,
We deem all manners odious, but our own!
O teach me, friend, to know wiſe NATURE's rules,
And laugh, like you, at FASHION's hoodwink'd fools;
You, who to woods remov'd from modiſh ſin,
Deſpiſe the diſtant world's hoarſe, buſy din;
As ſhepherds from high rocks hear far below,
Hear unconcern'd loud torrents fiercely flow;
You, tho' mad millions the mean taſte upbraid,
Who ſtill love VIRTUE, fair, forſaken maid;
As BACCHUS charming ARIADNE bore,
By all abandon'd, from the loneſome ſhore.

NA-