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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

Advice to a Lady.

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May you, my friend, by his example taught,
 View all the giddy scene with sober thought ;
 Undazzled every glitt'ring folly see,
 And in the midst of slavish forms be free ;
 In its own center keep your steady mind ;
 Let Prudence guide you, but let Honour bind ;
 In show, in manners, act the Courtier's part,
 But be a Country-gentleman at heart.



A D V I C E to a L A D Y.

By the Same. 1731.

THE counsels of a friend, Belinda, hear,
 Too roughly kind to please a Lady's ear,
 Unlike the flatt'ries of a lover's pen,
 Such truths as women seldom learn from men.
 Nor think I praise you ill, when thus I shew
 What female Vanity might fear to know :
 Some merit's mine, to dare to be sincere,
 But greater your's, sincerity to bear.

Hard is the fortune that your sex attends ;
 Women, like Princes, find few real friends :
 All who approach them their own ends pursue :
 Lovers and Ministers are seldom true.

Hence

Hence oft from Reason heedless Beauty strays,
 And the most trusted Guide the most betrays :
 Hence by fond dreams of fancy'd pow'r amus'd,
 When most you tyrannize you're most abus'd.

What is your sex's earliest, latest care,
 Your heart's supreme ambition ? To be fair :
 For this the toilet ev'ry thought employs,
 Hence all the toils of dress, and all the joys :
 For this, hands, lips, and eyes are put to school,
 And each instructed feature has its rule :
 And yet how few have learnt, when this is giv'n,
 Not to disgrace the partial boon of heav'n ?
 How few with all their pride of form can move ?
 How few are lovely, that were made for love ?
 Do you, my fair, endeavour to possess
 An elegance of mind as well as dress ;
 Be that your ornament, and know to please
 By grateful Nature's unaffected ease.

Nor make to dang'rous Wit a vain pretence,
 But wisely rest content with modest Sense ;
 For wit, like wine, intoxicates the brain,
 Too strong for feeble women to sustain ;
 Of those who claim it, more than half have none,
 And half of those who have it, are undone.

Be still superior to your sex's arts,
 Nor think Dishonesty a proof of Parts ;
 For you the plainest is the wisest rule,
 A CUNNING WOMAN IS A KNAVISH FOOL.

Be good yourself, nor think another's shame
 Can raise your merit, or adorn your fame.
 Prudes rail at whores, as statesmen in disgrace
 At ministers, because they wish their place.
 Virtue is amiable, mild, serene,
 Without all beauty, and all peace within :
 The honour of a prude is rage and storm,
 'Tis ugliness in its most frightful form :
 Fiercely it stands defying gods and men,
 As fiery monsters guard a giant's den.
 Seek to be good, but aim not to be great :
 A woman's noblest station is Retreat ;
 Her fairest virtues fly from publick fight,
 Domestick worth, that shuns too strong a light.
 To rougher man Ambition's task resign :
 'Tis ours in Senates or in Courts to shine,
 To labour for a sunk corrupted state,
 Or dare the rage of envy, and be great.
 One only care your gentle breasts should move,
 Th' important business of your life is Love ;
 To this great point direct your constant aim,
 This makes your Happiness, and this your Fame.
 Be never cool reserve with passion join'd ;
 With caution chuse ; but then be fondly kind.
 The selfish heart, that but by halves is giv'n,
 Shall find no place in Love's delightful heav'n ;
 Here sweet extremes alone can truly bless.
 The virtue of a lover is excess.

A maid



A maid unask'd may own a well-plac'd flame,
Not loving *first*, but loving *wrong* is shame.

Contemn the little pride of giving pain,
Nor think that conquest justifies disdain ;
Short is the period of insulting Pow'r ;
Offended Cupid finds his vengeful hour,
Soon will resume the empire which he gave,
And soon the Tyrant shall become the Slave.

Blest is the maid, and worthy to be blest,
Whose soul entire by him she loves possess'd,
Feels ev'ry vanity in fondness lost,
And asks no pow'r, but that of pleasing most :
Her's is the bliss in just return to prove
The honest warmth of undissembled Love ;
For her, inconstant man might cease to range,
And Gratitude forbid Desire to change.

But lest harsh Care the lover's peace destroy,
And roughly blight the tender buds of joy,
Let Reason teach what Passion fain wou'd hide,
That Hymen's bands by Prudence should be ty'd.
Venus in vain the wedded pair would crown,
If angry Fortune on their union frown :
Soon will the flatt'ring dream of bliss be o'er,
And cloy'd imagination cheat no more.
Then waking to the sense of lasting pain,
With mutual tears the nuptial couch they stain ;
And that fond love, which should afford relief,
Does but increase the anguish of their grief ;

While

While both could easier their own sorrows bear,
Than the sad knowledge of each other's care.

Yet may you rather feel that virtuous pain,
Than sell your violated charms for gain;
Than wed the wretch whom you despise, or hate,
For the vain glare of useles wealth or state.
The most abandon'd prostitutes are they,
Who not to Love, but Av'rice fall a prey:
Nor aught avails the specious name of WIFE;
A maid so wedded, is a WHORE FOR LIFE.

Ev'n in the happiest choice, where fav'ring Heav'n
Has equal love, and easy fortune giv'n,
Think not, the husband gain'd, that all is done;
The prize of Happiness must still be won;
And oft, the careless find it to their cost,
The *Lover* in the *Husband* may be lost;
The *Graces* might alone his heart allure;
They and the *Virtues meeting* must secure.

Let ev'n your *Prudence* wear the pleasing dress
Of care for *him*, and anxious *tenderness*.
From kind concern about his weal, or woe,
Let each domestick duty seem to flow;
The *HOUSEHOLD SCEPTRE* if he bids you bear,
Make it your pride his *servant* to appear;
Endearing thus the common acts of life,
The *Mistress* still shall charm him in the *Wife*;
And wrinkled age shall unobserv'd come on,
Before his eye perceives one beauty gone:

Ev'n

