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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

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Honour. A Poem. By the Rev. Dr. Brown.

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H O N O U R. A P O E M.

By the Rev. Dr. B R O W N.

Inscribed to the Right Hon. the Lord Visc. LONSDALE.

Hic Manus ob Patriam pugnando vulnera pass;
Quique Sacerdotes casti dum vita manebat;
Quique pii Vates, & Pbabo digna locuti,
Inventas aut qui Vitam excoluere per Artes,
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo;
Omnibus his nivea cinguntur Tempora vitta. VIR. ÆD. 6.

————— *Who shall go about*
To couzen Fortune, and be honourable
Without the Stamp of Merit? SHAKESPEAR.

YES: all, my Lord, usurp fair HONOUR's fame,
 Tho' false as various be the boasted claim:
 Th' ambitious miser swells his boundless store,
 And dreads that highest scandal, to be poor;

*Verse 1, &c. The various and ridiculous pretensions of
 mankind to Honour and Fame enumerated.*

IMITATIONS.

*Ver. 1. &c. Oui, l'honneur, Valincour, est cheri dans le monde—
 L'Ambitieux le met souvent a tout bruler,
 L'Avaré a voir chez lui le Pactole rouler,
 Une faux brave a vanter sa prouesse sri vole.*

His

His wifer heir derides the dotard's aim, 5
 And bids profusion bribe him into fame.
 Off' Honour, perching on the ribon'd breast,
 Sneers at weak justice, and defies th' arrest;
 She dwells exulting on the tongues of kings;
 She wakes the Muse to flight, and plumes her wings; 10
 The soldier views her in the shining blade;
 The pedant 'midst the lumber in his head.
 She to sell Treason the disguise can lend,
 And sheath her sword remorseless in a friend:
 Her throne's fantastick pride, we often see 15
 Rear'd on the tombs of Truth and Honesty;
 Fops, templars,—courtiers, slaves,—cheats, patriots,—all
 Pretend to hear, and to obey her call.

Where fix we then?—Each boasting thus his own,
 Say, does *true* Honour dwell with all, or none? 20

The truth, my Lord, is clear:—Tho' impious pride
 Is ever self-ador'd, self-deify'd;
 Though fools by passion or self-love betray'd,
 Fall down and worship what themselves have made;

*Verse 21. Tho' they are thus inconstant and contradictory,
 yet true Honour is a thing fixed and determinate.*

I M I T A T I O N S.

*Un vrai fourbe, à jamais ne garder sa parole,
 Ce Poete à noircir d'insipides Papiers,
 Ce marquis à savoir frauder ces creanciers. ———
 Interrogeons marchands, financiers, gens du guerre,
 Courtisans, magistrats, chez eux, si je les croi,
 L'Interêt ne peut rien, l'honneur seul fait la loi.*

BOILEAU, Sat. II.

Still

Still does the Goddess, in her form divine, 25

O'er each grim idol eminently shine ;

Array'd in lasting majesty, is known

Thro' every clime and age, unchang'd, and One.

But how explor'd ?—Take reason for your guide,

Discard self-love ; set passion's glass aside ; 30 }

Nor view her with the jaundic'd eye of pride.

Yet judge not rashly from a partial view

Of what is wrong or right, or false or true ;

Objects too near deceive th' observer's eye ;

Examine those which at a distance lie. 35

Scarce is the structure's harmony descry'd

'Midst the tall column's, and gay order's pride ;

But tow'rd's the destin'd point your sight remove,

And this shall lessen still, and that improve,

New beauties gain upon your wond'ring eyes, 40

And the fair Whole in just proportion rise.

Thus Honour's true proportions best are seen,

Where the due length of ages lies between :

This separates pride from greatness, show from worth,

Detects false beauty, real grace calls forth ; 45

Verse 29. If we would form an impartial judgment of what is truly honourable, we must abstract all considerations which regard ourselves.

Verse 32. Not only so, but we must remove ourselves to a proper distance from the object we examine, lest some part would predominate in our eye, and occasion a false judgment of the whole.

Points



Points out what merits praise, what merits blame,
Sinks in disgrace, or rises into fame.

Come then, from past examples let us prove
What raises hate, contempt, esteem, or love.

Can greatness give true Honour? can expence?
Can luxury? or can magnificence?

Wild is the purpose, and the fruitless aim,
Like a vile prostitute to bribe fair Fame;
Persuasive splendor vainly tempts her ear,
And e'en all-potent gold is baffled here.

Ye pyramids, that once could threat the skies,
Aspiring tow'rs, and cloud-wrapt wonders, rise!
To latest age your founder's pride proclaim;
Record the tyrant's greatness; tell his name;
No more:—The treacherous brick and mould'ring stone
Are sunk in dust: the boasting title gone:

Pride's trophies swept by Time's devouring flood,
Th' inscription want, to tell where once they stood:
But could they rival Nature, Time defy,
Yet what record but Vice or Vanity?
His the true glory, tho' his name unknown,
Who taught the arch to swell; to rise, the stone;

Verse 48. Therefore the surest method is, to prove by past examples what commands our love and esteem.

Verse 50, &c. Experience and grandeur cannot give true Honour: Their most splendid monuments vanish; and even should they last for ever, could not bestow real glory, if only the records of Pride, Tyranny, and Vice.

Not his, whose wild command fair art obey'd,
Whillt folly dictated, or passion sway'd.

No: spite of greatness, pride and vice are seen, 70
Shameful in pomp, conspicuously mean.

In vain, O St—d—y, thy proud forests spread ;
In vain each gilded turret rears its head ;

In vain thy Lord commands the streams to fall,
Extends the view, and spreads the smooth canal, 75
While guilt's black train each conscious walk invade;
And cries of orphans haunt him in the shade.

Mistaken man ! by crimes to hope for fame !

Thy imag'd glory leads to real shame :

Is villainy self-hated ? thus to raise 80

Upbraiding monuments of foul disgrace ?

Succeeding times, and ages yet unborn,

Shall view the guilty scenes with honest scorn ;

Disdain each beauty thy proud folly plann'd,

And curse the labours of oppression's hand. 85

Next, view the Heroe in th' embattled field :

True Honour's fruit can conquest's laurel yield ?

Him only honour'd, only lov'd we find,

Who fights not to destroy, but save mankind :

PELIDES' fury may our wonder move, 90

But god-like HECTOR is the man we love.

Verse 72, &c. Much less is purchas'd by Oppression and Guilt.

Verse 86, &c. True Honour is not to be reaped from unjust Conquest : It is not Victory, but a just Cause that can engage our Esteem.



See WILLIAM's sword a tyrant's pride difarm :
 See LEWIS trembling under MARLB'RO's arm :
 Say, which to human kind are friends or foes ;
 And who detests not These, and loves not Those ? 95
 Conquest unjust can ne'er command applause ;
 'Tis not the vict'ry charms you, but the cause :
 Not Cæsar's self can feign the patriot's part,
 Nor his false virtues hide his poison'd heart :
 Rut round thy brows the willing laurels twine, 100
 Whose voice wak'd freedom in the savage mine !
 Yes : truly glorious, only great is he,
 Who conquers, or who bleeds for liberty.
 " Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
 " From Macedonia's mad-man to the Swede. 105
 Like baleful comets flaming in the skies,
 At destin'd times th' appointed scourges rise ;
 Awhile in streaming lustre sweep along,
 And fix in wonder's gaze th' admiring throng ;
 But reason's eye detects the spurious ray, 110
 And the false blaze of glory dies away.
 Now all th' aerial cells of wit explore ;
 The mazy rounds of science travel o'er ;
 Search all the deep recesses of the mind,
 And see, if there true Honour fits enshrin'd. 115

I M I T A T I O N S.

*Verse 98. Du premier des Cæsars on vante les exploits ;
 Mais dans quel tribunal, jugé sui- vant les loix,
 Eut il pû disculper son injuste manie ?*

BOILEAU, Sat. II.

GUSTAVUS VASA.

Alas,

Alas, nor wit nor science this can boast,
 Oft dash'd with error, oft' in caprice lost !
 Transient as bright the short-liv'd bubbles fly !
 And modes of wit, and modes of science die.
 See Rab'lais once the idol of the age ; 120
 Yet now neglected lies the smutted page !
 Of once renown'd Des Cartes how low the fall,—
 His glory with his whirlpools vanish all !
 See folly, wit—and weakness, wisdom stain,—
 And Villars witty—Bacon wise in vain ! 125
 Off' vice corrupts what sense and parts refine,
 And clouds the splendor of the brightest line,
 Sullies what Congreve, and what Dryden writ,—
 This, fashion's slave ; as that, the slave of wit.
 In vain fair Genius bids the laurel shoot, 130
 The deadly worm thus eating at the root :
 Corroded thus, the greenest wreaths decay,
 And all the poet's honours fall away ;
 Quick as autumnal leaves, the laurels fade,
 And drop on Rochester's and Otway's head. 135

Verse 116. Neither is true glory to be obtain'd by wit or science : They are chimerical : Sometimes attended with folly, and weakness ; often stained with vice, and so render their possessors mischievous and infamous.

IMITATIONS.

*Verse 126. Je ne puis estimer ces dangereux auteurs,
 Qui de l'honneur en vers infames deserteurs,
 Trahissant la vertu sur un papier coupable,
 Aux yeux de leur lecteurs rendent le vice amiable.—
 En vain l'esprit est plein d'un noble vigour ;
 Le vers se sent toujours des bassesses du cœur.*

BOILEAU *l'Art Poet.* Ch. 4.

T 2

Where



Where then is found TRUE HONOUR, heavenly fair ?
Ask, LONSDALE, ask your heart—she dictates there.

Yes : 'tis in VIRTUE :—— That alone can give
The lasting honour, and bid glory live :
On virtue's basis only fame can rise, 140

To stand the storms of age, and reach the skies :
Arts, conquest, greatness, feel the stroke of fate,
Shrink sudden, and betray th' incumbent weight ;
Time with contempt the faithless props surveys,
“ And buries madmen in the heaps they raise. 145

'Tis Virtue only can the bard inspire,
And fill his raptur'd breast with lasting fire :
Touch'd by th' ethereal ray each kindled line
Beams strong : still Virtue feeds the flame divine ;
Where-e'er she treads she leaves her footsteps bright, 150

In radiant tracts of never-dying light ;
These shed the lustre o'er each sacred name,
Give SPENSER's clear, and SHAKESPEAR's noble flame ;
Blaze to the skies in MILTON's ardent song,
And kindle the brisk-falling fire of YOUNG ; 155
These gild each humble verse in modest GAY ;
These give to SWIFT the keen, soul-piercing ray ;
Mildly thro' ADDISON's chaste page they shine,
And glow and warm in POPE's immortal line.

Nor less the sage must live by Virtue's aid ; 160
Truth must support him, or his glories fade ;

*Verse 138. The foundation of true Honour is Virtue only.
Verse 153. It is Virtue only that gives the poet lasting
glory : this proved by instances.*

And

And truth and virtue differ but in name :
Like light and heat — distinguish'd, yet the same.

To truth and virtue the ascent is sure ;
The wholesome stream implies the fountain pure ;

To taste the spring we oft' essay in vain :

Deep lies the source, too short is reason's chain ;

But those the issues of pure truth we know,

Which in clear strength thro' virtue's channel flow :

Error in vain attempts the foul disguise,

Still tasted in the bitter wave of vice ;

Drawn from the springs of Falshood all confess

Each baneful drop that poisons happiness ;

G--rd--n's thin shallows, Tindal's muddy page,

And Morgan's gall, and Woolston's furious rage ;

175
Th' en-

Verse 164. The philosopher can only hope for true glory from the same source ; because Truth is his object, and nothing can be Truth that tends to destroy Virtue and Happiness.

Verse 174. Hence appears the madness, infamy, and falsehood of those destructive schemes set on foot by the sect called Free-Thinkers.

R E M A R K S.

G--rd--n's thin Shallows.] The work here characterized is entitled " The independent Whig, or a defence of our ecclesiastical Establishment ." Yet it may be truly affirmed, that there is not one institution of the Church of England, but what is there misrepresented, and ridiculed with the lowest and most despicable scurrility.

Tindal's muddy page.] Alluding to the confusion of Ideas, which that dull writer labours under.

Morgan.] His character is thus drawn by an excellent writer—" Who by the peculiar felicity of a good choice, having learned his Morality of our Tindal, and his Philosophy of your [the Jews] Spinoza, calls himself, by the courtesy of

T 3

" England,

Th' envenom'd stream that flows from Toland's quill,
 And the rank dregs of Hobbes and Mandeville.
 Detested names ! yet sentenc'd ne'er to die ;
 Snatch'd from oblivion's grave by infamy !

Insect-opinions, hatch'd by folly's ray, 180
 Bask in the beam that wing'd them, for a day :
 Truth, phoenix-like immortal, tho' she dies,
 With strength renew'd shall from her ashes rise.

See, how the lustre of th' ATHENIAN † sage
 Shines thro' the lengthen'd gloom of many an age ! 185
 Virtue alone so wide the beam cou'd spread,
 And throw the lasting glory round his head.
 See NEWTON chase conjecture's twilight ray,
 And light up nature into certain day !

“ *England, a Moral Philosopher.*” WARB. *Div. Leg. of Moses dem. Vol. II. Ded. p. 20.*

[Toland.] *A noted advocate for that species of Atheism commonly called Pantheism.*

[Hobbes.] *It is confessed he was a man of Genius and Learning: Yet thro' a ridiculous affectation of being regarded as the founder of new Systems, he has advanced many things even below confusion.*

[Mandeville.] *The Author of that monstrous heap of contradiction and absurdity. “ The Fable of the Bees, or private Vices publick Benefits.” The reader who is acquainted with the writings of these Gentlemen, will probably observe a kind of climax in this place; ascending from those who have attempted to destroy the several fences of virtue, to the wild boars of the wood that root it up.*

Verse 180. *Falsehood short-lived: Truth eternal.*

Verse 184, &c. *Examples of the two most illustrious philosophers that ever adorned the world; the one excellent in moral, the other in natural knowledge.*

† SOCRATES.

He

He wide creation's trackless mazes trod; 190

And in each atom found the ruling God.

Unrival'd pair! with truth and virtue fraught!

Whose lives confirm'd whate'er their reason taught!

Whose far-stretch'd views, and bright examples join'd

At once t' enlighten and persuade mankind! 195

Hail names rever'd! which time and truth proclaim

The first and fairest in the list of fame.

Kings, statesmen, patriots, thus to glory rise;

On virtue grows their fame, or soon it dies;

But grafted on the vigorous stock, 'tis seen 200

Brighten'd by age, and springs in endless green:

Pride, folly, vice, may blossom for an hour,

Fed by court-sun-shine, and poetick show'r;

But the pale tendrils, nurs'd by flattery's hand,

Unwearied tendance, fresh supplies demand; 205

By heats unnatural push'd to sudden growth,

They sicken at th' inclement blasts of truth;

Shook by the weakest breath that passes by,

Their colours fade, they wither, droop, and die.

* * * * *

'Tis Virtue only that shall grow with time, 210

Live thro' each age, and spread thro' every clime.

See god-like patriots, gen'rous, wise, and good,

Stand in the breach, and stem corruption's flood!

Verse 198, &c. Kings, statesmen, and patriots, must build their fame on Virtue.

Verse 204. Flattery cannot raise folly or vice into true glory.



See martyr-bishops at the stake expire,
 Smile on the faggot. and defy its fire! 215
 How great in exile HYDE and TULLY shone!
 How ALFRED's virtues brighten'd all his throne!
 From worth like this unbidden glories stream;
 Nor borrow'd blaze it asks, nor fortune's beam;
 Affliction's gloom but makes it still more bright, 220
 As the clear lamp shines clearest in the night,

Thus various honours various states adorn,
 As different stars with different glories burn;
 Their orbs too wider, as their sphere is higher;
 Yet all partake the same celestial fire. 225

See then heav'n's endless bounty, and confess,
 Which gives in Virtue fame and happiness!
 See mankind's folly, who the boon despise,
 And grasp at pain and infamy in Vice!

Not so the man who mov'd by Virtue's laws, 230
 Reveres himself—and gains, not seeks applause;
 Whose views concenter'd all to Virtue tend;
 Who makes true glory but his second end:

R E M A R K S.

See martyr-bishops, &c.] The catalogue of these heroes, through the several ages of Christianity, is too large to be inserted in a work of this nature: Those of our own Country were RIDLEY, LATIMER, and the good (tho' less fortunate) CRANMER.

Verse 222. Thus it appears that every one has the power of obtaining true honour, by promoting the happiness of mankind in his proper station.

Verse 226. And thus the love of fame, tho' often perverted to bad ends, is naturally conducive to virtue and happiness.

Verse 230, &c. True honour characteriz'd and exemplify'd. Still