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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

Prologue.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-1993

P R O L O G U E.

I.

HARD is the heart that never knew to love,
 Ne felt the pleasing anguish of desire.
 Ye British maids, more fair than Venus' dove,
 For you alone I tune my humble lyre;
 Adopt me, nymphs, receive me in your quire,
 Make me your bard; for that is all my care:
 Then shall I envy not that aged fire,
 Who doth for court his annual song prepare:
 I lever myrtle wreath than Kesar's laurel wear.

II.

Think not because I write of Columbel
 I thence would blast the sex with impious tale;
 Transactions vile of foreign stronds I tell,
 Ne 'gainst a British female would I rail
 For all the wealth that rolls on Indian grail.
 Here, beauty, truth, and chastity are found:
 Eleonora here, with visage pale,
 Did suck the poison from her Edward's wound,
 And Anna's nuptial faith shall stand for aye renown'd.

III.

See the fair swans on Thamis' lovely tide,
 The which do trim their pennons silver bright,
 In shining ranks they down the waters ride;
 Oft have mine eyes devour'd the gallant fight.

Then

Then cast thy looks, with wonder and delight,
 Where yon sweet nymphs enjoy the ev'ning air,
 Some daunce along the green, like fairies light,
 Some flow'rets cull to deck their flowing hair; [fair.
 Then tell me, soothing, swain, which fight thou deem'st most

IV.

To you, bright stars, that sparkle on our isle,
 I give my life, my fortune, and my fame;
 For my whole guerdon grant me but a smile,
 A smile from you is all I hope or claim;
 Nor age's ice my ardent zeal shall tame,
 To my life's end I shall your names adore,
 Not hermits' bosoms feel so pure a flame,
 Warm'd by approval I more high shall soar:
 Receive my humble lays, my heart was yours before.

V.

Should you consent, I'll quit my shepherd's grey,
 And don more graceful and more costly gear,
 My crook and scrip I'll throw with scorn away,
 And in a samite garment streit appear.
 Farewell, ye groves, which once I held so dear;
 Farewell, ye glens, I other joys pursue;
 Then shall the world your matchless pow'r revere,
 And own what wonders your sweet smiles can do,
 That could a simple clown into a bard transnew.

