

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

The Progress of Discontent. A Poem. Written at Oxford in the Year 1746.

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

What joy can be greater than this is ?
 My life on thy lips shall be spent ;
 But the wretch that can number his kisses
 With few will be ever content.



The Progress of DISCONTENT.

A P O E M.

Written at Oxford in the Year 1746.

WHEN now mature in classic knowledge,
 The joyful youth is sent to college,
 His father comes, a vicar plain,
 At Oxford bred—in Anna's reign,
 And thus in form of humble suitor
 Bowing accosts a reverend tutor.
 “ Sir, I'm a Glo'stershire divine,
 “ And this my eldest son of nine ;
 “ My wife's ambition and my own
 “ Was that this child should wear a gown :
 “ I'll warrant that his good behaviour
 “ Will justify your future favour :
 “ And for his parts, to tell the truth,
 “ My son's a very forward youth ;
 “ Has Horace all by heart—you'd wonder—
 “ And mouths out Homer's Greek like thunder.
 “ If you'd examine—and admit him,
 “ A scholarship would nicely fit him :
 “ That

“ That he succeeds ’tis ten to one;
 “ Your vote and interest, Sir!”—’Tis done.

Our pupil’s hopes, tho’ twice defeated,
 Are with a scholarship compleated :
 A scholarship but half maintains,
 And college rules are heavy chains :
 In garret dark he smokes and puns,
 A prey to discipline and duns ;
 And now intent on new designs,
 Sighs for a fellowship — and fines.

When nine full tedious winters past,
 That utmost wish is crown’d at last :
 But the rich prize no sooner got,
 Again he quarrels with his lot :

“ These fellowships are pretty things,
 “ We live indeed like petty kings :
 “ But who can bear to waste his whole age
 “ Amid the dullness of a college,
 “ Debarr’d the common joys of life.
 “ And that prime bliss—a loving wife !
 “ O! what’s a table richly spread
 “ Without a woman at its head !
 “ Would some snug benefice but fall,
 “ Ye feasts, ye dinners! farewell all !
 “ To offices I’d bid adieu,
 “ Of dean, vice præ. — of burfar too ;
 “ Come joys, that rural quiet yields,
 “ Come, tythes, and house, and fruitful fields !”



Too fond of freedom and of ease
 A patron's vanity to please,
 Long time he watches, and by stealth,
 Each frail incumbent's doubtful health;
 At length—and in his fortieth year,
 A living drops—two hundred clear!
 With breast elate beyond expression,
 He hurries down to take possession,
 With rapture views the sweet retreat—
 “ What a convenient house! how neat!
 “ For fuel here's sufficient wood:
 “ Pray God the cellars may be good!
 “ The garden—that must be new plann'd—
 “ Shall these old fashion'd yew-trees stand?
 “ O'er yonder vacant plot shall rise
 “ The flow'ry shrub of thousand dies:—
 “ Yon wall, that feels the southern ray,
 “ Shall blush with ruddy fruitage gay:
 “ While thick beneath its aspect warm
 “ O'er well-rang'd hives the bees shall swarm,
 “ From which, ere long, of golden gleam
 “ Metheglin's luscious juice shall stream:
 “ This awkward hutt, o'er-grown with ivy,
 “ We'll alter to a modern privy:
 “ Up yon green slope, of hazels trim,
 “ An avenue so cool and dim,
 “ Shall to an arbour, at the end,
 “ In spite of gout, entice a friend.



“ My predeceſſor lov'd devotion —

“ But of a garden had no notion.”

Continuing this fantaſtic farce on,
 He now commences country parſon.
 To make his character entire,
 He weds—a couſin of the 'ſquire ;
 Not over weighty in the purſe,
 But many doctors have done worſe :
 And tho' ſhe boaſt no charms divine,
 Yet ſhe can carve and make birch wine.

Thus fixt, content he taps his barrel,
 Exhorts his neighbours not to quarrel ;
 Finds his church-wardens have diſcerning
 Both in good liquor and good learning ;
 With tythes his barns replete he fees,
 And chuckles o'er his ſurplice fees ;
 Studies to find out latent dues,
 And regulates the ſtate of pews ;
 Rides a ſleek mare with purple houſing,
 To ſhare the monthly clubs carouſing ;
 Of Oxford pranks facetious tells,
 And—but on Sundays—hears no bells ;
 Sends preſents of his choicelt fruit,
 And prunes himſelf each ſapleſs ſhoot,
 Plants colliflow'rs, and boaſts to rear
 The earlieſt melons of the year ;
 Thinks alteration charming work is,
 Keeps Bantam cocks, and feeds his turkies ;

Builds



Builds in his copse a favorite bench,
And stores the pond with carp and tench.—

But ah! too soon his thoughtless breast
By cares domestic is oppress'd ;
And a third butcher's bill, and brewing,
Threaten inevitable ruin :

For children fresh expences yet,
And Dicky now for school is fit.

“ Why did I sell my college life

“ (He cries) for benefice and wife ?

“ Return, ye days ! when endless pleasure

“ I found in reading, or in leisure !

“ When calm around the common room

“ I puff'd my daily pipe's perfume !

“ Rode for a stomach, and inspected,

“ At annual bottlings, corks selected :

“ And din'd untax'd, untroubled, under

“ The pourtrait of our pious founder !

“ When impositions were supply'd

“ To light my pipe—or sooth my pride—

“ No cares were then for forward peas

“ A yearly longing-wife to please ;

“ My thoughts no christ'ning dinner cost,

“ No children cry'd for butter'd toast ;

“ And ev'ry night I went to bed,

“ Without a Modus in my head !”

Oh! trifling head, and sickle heart!

Chagrin'd at whatsoe'er thou art ;

A dupe