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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

An Ode to a Gentleman, On his pitching a Tent in his Garden.

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An ODE to a GENTLEMAN,

On his pitching a Tent in his GARDEN.

By the Same.

AH! friend, forbear, nor fright the fields
 With hostile scenes of imag'd war;
 Content still roves the blooming wilds,
 And sheds her mildest influence there:
 Ah! drive not the sweet wand'rer from her seat,
 Nor with rude arts profane her latest best retreat.

Are there not bowers, and sylvan scenes,
 By nature's kind luxuriance wove?
 Has Romely lost the living greens
 Which erst adorn'd her artless grove?
 Where thro' each hallow'd haunt the poet stray'd,
 And met the willing Muse and peopled every shade.

But now no bards thy woods among,
 Shall wait th' inspiring Muse's call;
 For tho' to mirth and festal song
 Thy choice devotes the woven wall,
 Yet what avails that all be peace within,
 If horrors guard the gate, and scare us from the scene?

'Tis true of old the patriarch spread
 His happier tents which knew not war,
 And chang'd at will the trampled mead
 For fresher greens and purer air;

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But



But long has man forgot such simple ways,
Truth unsuspecting harm!—the dream of ancient days;

Ev'n he, cut off from human kind,
(Thy neighb'ring wretch) the child of Care,
Who, to his native mines confin'd,
Nor sees the sun, nor breathes the air,
But 'midst the damps and darkness of Earth's womb
Drags out laborious life, and scarcely dreads the tomb;

Ev'n he, should some indulgent chance
Transport him to thy sylvan reign,
Would eye the floating veil askance,
And hide him in his caves again,
While dire presage in every breeze that blows
Hears shrieks, and clashing arms, and all Germania's woes;

And doubt not thy polluted taste
A sudden vengeance shall pursue;
Each fairy form we whilom trac'd
Along the morn or evening dew,
Nymph, Satyr, Faun, shall vindicate their grove,
Robb'd of its genuine charms, and hospitable Jove.

I see, all-arm'd with dews unblest,
Keen frosts, and noisome vapours drear,
Already, from the bleak north-east,
The Genius of the wood appear!

—Far