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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

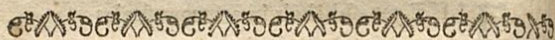
The Scavengers. A Town Eclogue. In the Manner of Swift. By the Same.

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Their spritely notes from every shade
 Their mutual loves proclaim ;
 Till winter's chilling blasts invade,
 And damp th' enlivening flame.

Then all the jocund scene declines,
 Nor woods nor meads delight ;
 The drooping tribe in secret pines,
 And mourns th' unwelcome sight.

Go, blissful warblers ! timely wise,
 Th' instructive moral tell !
 Nor thou their *meaning* lays despise,
 My charming Annabelle !



The SCAVENGERS. A Town Eclogue.

In the Manner of SWIFT.

By the Same.

AWAKE my Muse, prepare a loftier theme :
 The winding valley and the dimpled stream
 Delight not all ; quit, quit the verdant field,
 And try what dusty streets and alleys yield.

Where

Where *Avon* wider flows, and gathers fame,
 A town there stands, and *Warwick* is its name,
 For useful arts, entitled once to share
 The Mercian dame, *Elfreda's* guardian care.
 Nor less for feats of chivalry renown'd
 When her own *Guy* was with her laurels crown'd.
 Now indolence subjects the drowsy place,
 And binds in silken bonds her feeble race.
 No busy artisans their fellows greet,
 No loaded carriages obstruct the street;
 Scarce here and there a fauntring band is seen,
 And pavements dread the turf's incroaching green.

Last of the toiling race there liv'd a pair,
 Bred up in labour, and inur'd to care,
 To sweep the streets their task from sun to sun,
 And seek the nastiness that others shun.
 More plodding hind, or dame, you ne'er shall see,
 He gaffer *Pestel* hight, and gammer she.
 As at their door they fate one summer's day,
 Old *Pestel* first essay'd the plaintive lay,
 His gentle mate the plaintive lay return'd,
 And thus alternately their grief they mourn'd.

O. P. Alas! was ever such fine weather seen!
 How dusty are the roads, the streets how clean!
 How long, ye almanacks, will it be dry?
 Empty my *cart* how long, and idle I?
 Once other days, and diff'rent fate we knew,
 That something had to carry, *I* to do.

Now



Now e'en at best the times are none so good,
 But 'tis hard work to scrape a livelihood.
 The cattle in the stalls resign their life,
 And baulk the shambles, and the bloody knife.
 Th' affrighted farmer penfive sits at home,
 And turnpikes threaten to compleat my doom.

WIFE. Well! for the turnpike, that will do no hurt,
 The roads, they say, are n't much the better for't.
 But much I fear this murrain, where 'twill end,
 For sure the cattle did our door befriend.
 Oft have I prais'd them as they stalk'd along,
 Their fat the butchers pleas'd, but me their dung.

O. P. See what a little dab of dirt is here!
 But yields all Warwick more, O tell me where?
 Lo! where this ant-like hillock scarce is seen,
 Heaps upon heaps, and loads on loads have been:
 Bigger and bigger the proud dunghill grew,
 'Till my diminish'd house was hid from view.

WIFE. Ah! gaffer *Pestel*, what brave days were those
 When higher than our house, our muck-hill rose?
 The growing mount I view'd with joyful eyes,
 And mark'd what each load added to its size.
 Wrapt in its fragrant steam we often sate,
 And to its praises held delightful chat.
 Nor did I e'er neglect my mite to pay,
 To swell the goodly heap from day to day;
 For this each morn I plied the stubbed-broom,
 'Till I scarce hobbled o'er my furrow'd room:

For

For this I squat me on my hams each night,
 And mingle profit sweet with sweet delight?
 A cabbage once I bought, but small the cost,
 Nor do I think the farthing all was lost:
 Again you sold its well digested store,
 To dung the garden where it grew before.

O. P. What tho' the boys, and boy-like fellows jeer'd,
 And at the scavenger's employment sneer'd,
 Yet then at night content I told my gains,
 And thought well paid their malice and my pains.

Why toils the merchant but to swell his store?
 Why craves the wealthy landlord still for more?
 Why will our gentry flatter, trade, and lie,
 Why pack the cards, and—what d'ye call't the die?
 All, all the pleasing paths of gain pursue,
 And wade thro' thick and thin, as we folk do.
 Sweet is the scent that from advantage springs,
 And nothing *dirty* that good interest brings.
 'Tis this that cures the scandal, and the smell,
 The rest—e'en let our learned *betters* tell.

WIFE. When goody *Dobbins* call'd me filthy bear,
 And nam'd the kennel and the ducking chair;
 With patience I cou'd hear the scolding quean,
 For sure 'twas dirtiness that kept me clean.
 Clean was my gown on Sundays, tho' not fine,
 Nor mistress ***'s cap so white at mine.
 A slut in silk or kersey is the same,
 Nor sweetest always is the finest dame.