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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

Verses spoken at Westminster School.

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VERSES spoken at WESTMINSTER School.

J. F. **H**OW like you, Sir, the splendor of the day?
 What! has your lordship not a word to say?

Can neither verse, nor prose your praises move?

He sure dislikes who cares not to approve.

You view with scorn our antiquated ways,

Queen Bess's golden rules and golden days.

No powder'd liveries attend us here,

Hunger's our fauce, and mutton is our cheer.

Our worn-out customs may provoke your sport,

How long the graces, and the meals how short!

Nor can our mouldy college-life afford

A bed more fashionable than its board.

No state-alcove, no wainscōt can you see

Of cedar old, or new mahogany:

To us, poetic furniture is given,

Curtains of night and canopy of heaven:

Our youths, whom well-bred gentlemen despise,

Sleep with the lamb, as with the lark they rise.

Nay, prayers each day (strange things to modern beaux)

Open our morning, and our evening close:

Nor yet content with what at home we do,

Our laws present us to the public view;

We

We to the Abbey march in white array
 Thrice every week, beside each holy day.
 What boys of rank cou'd brook such hard commands ?
 Like meanest choristers to take their stands,
 Or penitents, with tapers in their hands ?
 But these objections nobles may disown,
 Who seldom stoop to wear the daggled gown :
 The school itself unmannerly they call,
 Like death a general leveller of all ;
 Which ne'er regards the priv'lege of a peer,
 What race you spring from, or what arms you bear.
 Boys on themselves, not ancestors, relie,
 Distinguish'd by intrinsic quality :
 A saucy commoner may take *his* place,
 Who is a lord, and is to be his grace.

Not so at home——there due distinction's made,
 And full obeisance to degree is paid :
 Far milder treatment does his honour meet,
 From handmaid gentle, and from sister sweet :
 With footmen romps (which finely must improve him)
 And kiss his cousins that his aunts may love him.
 There the whole kindred join to form an heir,
 And uncles, grandfires, grandmothers are there :
 But oh ! th' enchanting blessings who can shew,
 Which from the kennel, and the stable flow !
 When honour quits the closet for the fields,
 And all the student to the sportsman yields.

Perhaps

Perhaps some glorious hunting-match design'd,
 E'en now, tho' absent, rises to your mind ;
 If not prevented by this luckless day,
 How had you scower'd o'er hills and dales away,
 By foxes murder'd glory to obtain,
 And boast three vixens in a fortnight slain !
 Or had the generous stag with winged speed
 Across whole countries urg'd the straining steed,
 Each Yorkshire Riding might have view'd the race ;
 Your horn perhaps had rung thro' Chevy-Chace.
 More cou'd I say——

LORD C. ———— But hold, 'tis time you end,
 Who for a renegade mistake a friend.
 And cou'd you think one son so void of grace,
 T' abjure his Alma Mater to her face ?
 How shou'd not she with irony dispense,
 Who lends us figures to adorn our sense ?
 Why, 'tis to gain her smiles our parts we prove,
 To shew our genius is to shew our love :
 And you the judges, since yourselves inspire,
 Or our pacific or prolific fire,
 Be candid, and absolve the general aim,
 We argue different, but we think the same.

Parents, when fondness, or the fashion sway,
 Will breed their child themselves, the modern way ;
 No pedant schemes, that abject minds controul,
 Shou'd thwart the native freedom of his soul :



Him their own eye o'erlooks, own modes refine,
 And master's powder'd ev'ry day to dine.
 As for his pretty head, mamma takes care
 The comb's well fix'd, and nicely curl'd the hair,
 And not one thing, I'll warrant you, breeds there. }
 E'en let the dirty boys, so doom'd, be fools,
 And walk thro' thick and thin to crowded schools,
 Lest such rude noise shou'd hurt his tender brain,
 In his own hall Sir Timothy they train.
 Moll tells him stories while she sweeps the room,
 And he imbibes his morals from the groom.
 At twelve years old the sprightly youth is able
 To turn a pancake, or dry-rub a table.
 Soon as the clerk has taught him all he can,
 They send to London for some abler man.
 Down comes a Frenchman : Sire, me swear and vow,
 Me be surpriz'd you make no better bow :
 But will make you un brave scholar, no fear,
 Better den my own self, in two, tree year.
 The knight begins, and in a literal sense,
 Turns French to English, and makes Latin French.
 Three years my lady mother has the joy
 To hear the Frenchman and to see the boy ;
 To her it is a comfort (above all)
 That Tim should learn so fast, and grow so tall.
 Kitty, my lady's waiting maid, was sister
 To Tom the groom, who knew the knight had kifs'd her ;

Tom manages his knight at such a rate,
 He beats the Frenchman, and he marries Kate.
 So fondly the wise mother lov'd the child,
 She quite undid him, lest he shou'd be spoil'd.

This news the widow of the neighb'ring grange
 Heard with surprize — But I, said she, will change
 This unsuccessful method, and my Jerry,
 I'll answer for't, shall never thus miscarry.
 Prate with the maid! No — him I'll breed up shyly,
 And every servant shall respect him highly.

No trifling monsieur here shall give advice;
 I'll have some senior-fellow, grave and wise,
 From either of our universities.

She said — 'Tis done — The honest man with pains
 Gender and number, mood and tense explains;
 Jerry goes thro' his daily task and thrives,
 From *in speech* he to th' *apple-tree* arrives.

Then studious reads what Belgian authors writ,
 And drains whole nomenclators for their wit:
 From thence apace he grows accomplish'd fully,
 Has read Corderius, and has heard of Tully.
 Shou'd Oxford next, or Paris be his chance?
 The last prevails, and he's equip'd for France.

He goes — sees every thing that rare and new is,
 And hunts like any alderman, with Lewis;
 Till some great fortune, or mamma's command,
 Again restores him to the British strand,
 Then, welcome Sir, to bless your native land.

But see, the proper vacancy present,
 And up he comes full fraught with parliament.
 Then first his noble heart begins to sink,
 Fain would he speak, but knows not how to think :
 Howe'er he'll needs launch out beyond his reach,
 For who ne'er made a theme, makes no good speech.
 Hence the loud laugh, and scornful sneer arise,
 Hence round and round the piquant raill'ry flies,
 And thus (sad shame) tho' now he's twenty-four,
 He's finely lash'd that ne'er was lash'd before.
 While each mean time, or commoner or peer,
 Who pass'd the discipline in practice here,
 Convinc'd applauds the doctor's wholesome plan,
 Who made the youngster smart to save the man.
 For what tho' some the good old man desert,
 Grow learn'd with ease, and grasp the shade of art,
 For us, we foster here no vain pretence,
 Nor fill with empty pride the void of sense ;
 We rise with pains, nor think the labour light
 To speak like Romans, and like Romans write.
 'Tis ours to court with care the learned throng,
 To catch their spirit as we gain their tongue ;
 To enjoy the charms in Caesar's works that shine,
 And learn to glow at Virgil's lofty line.
 'Twas thus you mov'd, and thus in riper years,
 With such superior lustre fill your spheres ;
 'Twas thus you learn'd to rise, nor can you blame
 If as we tread your steps we hope your fame.

And