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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

Elegy V. To a Friend Sick. Written at Rome. 1756

E L E G Y V.

To a F R I E N D Sick.

Written at Rome 1756.

'TWAS in this [b] isle, O Wright indulge my lay,
　　Whose naval form divides the Tuscan flood,
In the bright dawn of her illustrious day
　　Rome fix'd her Temple to the healing God.

Here stood his altars, here his arm he bared,
　　And round his mystic staff the serpent twin'd,
Through crowded portals hymns of praise were heard,
　　And victims bled, and sacred seers divin'd.

On every breathing wall, on every round
　　Of column, swelling with proportion'd grace,
Its stated seat some votive tablet found,
　　And storied wonders dignified the place.

[b] *The Insula Tiberina, where there are still some small
remains of the famous temple of Æsculapius.*

Oft

Oft from the balmy bleſſings of repoſe,
   And the cool ſtillneſs of the night's deep ſhade,
To light and health th' exulting Votariſt roſe,
   Whilſt fancy work'd with med'cine's powerful aid.

Oft in his dreams (no longer clogg'd with fears
   Of ſome broad torrent, or ſome headlong ſteep,
With each dire form Imagination wears
   When harraſs'd Nature ſinks in turbid ſleep)

Oft in his dreams he ſaw diffuſive day
   Through burſting glooms its chearful beams extend ;
On billowy clouds ſaw ſportive Genii play,
   And bright Hygeia from her heaven deſcend.

What marvel then, that man's o'erflowing mind
   Should wreath-bound columns raiſe, and altars fair,
And grateful offerings pay, to Powers ſo kind,
   Tho' fancy-form'd, and creatures of the Air.

Who that has writh'd beneath the ſcourge of pain,
   Or felt the burthen'd languor of diſeaſe,
But would with joy the ſlighteſt reſpite gain,
   And idolize the hand which lent him eaſe ?

To Thee, my friend, unwillingly to thee
   For truths like theſe the anxious Muſe appeals.
Can Memory anſwer from affliction free,
   Or ſpeaks the ſufferer what, I fear, he feels ?

No,