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**A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands**

**Dodsley, Robert**

**London, 1758**

Vacation. By Esq;

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## V A C A T I O N.

By ——— Esq;

**H**ENCE sage, mysterious law,  
 That fit't with rugged brow, and crabbed look  
 O'er thy black-letter'd book,  
 And the night-watching student strik'ft with awe ;  
 Away with thy dull train,  
 Slow-pac'd Advice, Surmise, and squint-ey'd Doubt ;  
 Dwell with the noisy rout  
 Of busy men, 'mid cities and throng'd halls,  
 Where Clamour ceaseless bawls,  
 And enmity and strife thy state sustain.  
 But on me thy blessings pour,  
 Sweet Vacation. Thee, of yore,  
 In all her youth and beauty's prime,  
 Summer bore to aged Time,  
 As he one funny morn beheld her  
 Tending a field of corn : the elder  
 There 'mid poppies red and blue,  
 Unsuspected nearer drew,  
 And, with softly-sliding pace  
 Halt'ning to a stol'n embrace,



Fill'd her with thee; and joy and mirth  
 Hung on thy auspicious birth.  
 Come, sweet goddess; full of play,  
 Ever unconfin'd and gay,  
 Bring the leisure-hours with thee  
 Leading on the Graces three  
 Dancing; nor let aught detain  
 The Holidays, a smiling train.  
 Whose fair brows let Peace serene  
 Crown with olive-branches green.  
 Bring too Health with ruddy cheek;  
 Lively air, and count'nance sleek,  
 Attended, as she's wont to be,  
 With all her jolly company  
 Of exercises, chace, and flight,  
 Active strength, and cunning sleight,  
 Nimble feats, and playful bouts,  
 Leaps of joy, and chearful shouts,  
 Tricks and pranks and sports and games  
 Such as youthful Fancy frames.  
 And, O kind goddess, add to these  
 Chearful Content, and placid Ease;  
 Not her who fondly fitteth near,  
 Dull Indolence in elbow'd chair;  
 But Ease who aids th' harmonious Nine,  
 Tuning their instruments divine,  
 And without whom, in lofty strain,  
 Phæbus' client tries in vain



To raise his feeble voice above  
 The crowd, and catch the ear of Jove,  
 And do thou, Vacation, deign  
 To let me pass among thy train;  
 So may I thy vot'ry true,  
 All thy flow'ry paths pursue,  
 Pleased still with thee to meet  
 In some friendly rural seat;  
 Where I glad some oft' survey  
 Nature in her best array,  
 Woods and lawns and lakes between,  
 Fields of corn and hedges green,  
 Fallow grounds of tawny hue,  
 Distant hills, and mountains blue;  
 On whose ridge far off appears  
 A wood (the growth of many years)  
 Of awful oak, or gloomy pine,  
 Above th' horizon's level line  
 Rising black: such those of old  
 Where British druids went to hold  
 Solemn assemblies, and to keep  
 Their rites, unfolding myst'ries deep,  
 Such that fam'd Dodona's grove,  
 Sacred to prophetic Jove.  
 Oft' I admire the verdant steep,  
 Spotted white with many a sheep,  
 While, in pastures rich below  
 Among the grazing cattle, flow

Moves the bull with heavy tread  
 Hanging down his lumpish head,  
 And the proud steed neigheth oft  
 Shaking his wanton mane aloft.  
 Or, traversing the wood about,  
 The jingling packhorse-bells remote  
 I hear, amid the noontide stillness,  
 Sing thro' the air with brassy shrillness ;  
 What time the waggon's cumbrous load  
 Grates along the grav'ly road :  
 There onward, drefs'd in homely guise,  
 Some unregarded maiden hies,  
 Unless by chance a trav'ling 'squire,  
 Of base intent and foul desire,  
 Stops to insnare, with speech beguiling,  
 Sweet innocence and beauty smiling.  
 Nor fail I joyful to partake  
 The lively sports of country wake,  
 Where many a lad and many a lass  
 Foot it on the close-trod grass.  
 There nimble Marian of the green  
 Matchless in the jig is seen,  
 Allow'd beyond compare by all,  
 The beauty of the rustic ball :  
 While, the tripping damsels near,  
 Stands a lout with waggish leer ;  
 He, if Marian chance to shew  
 Her taper leg and stocking blue,



Winks and nods and laughs aloud,  
 Among the merry-making crowd,  
 Uttering forth, in aukward jeer,  
 Words unmeet for virgin's ear.  
 Soon as evening clouds have shed  
 Their wat'ry store on earth's soft bed,  
 And thro' their flowing mantles thin,  
 Clear azure spots of sky are seen,  
 I quit some oak's close-cover'd bow'r  
 To taste the boon of new-fall'n show'r,  
 To pace the corn-field's grassy edge  
 Close by a fresh-blown sweet-bri'r hedge;  
 While at every green leaf's end  
 Pearly drops of rain depend,  
 And an earthy fragrance 'round  
 Rises from the moisten'd ground.  
 Sudden a sun-beam darting out,  
 Brightens the landscape all about,  
 With yellow light the grove o'er spreads,  
 And tips with gold the haycocks' heads:  
 Then, as mine eye is eastward led,  
 Some fair castle rears its head,  
 Whose height the country round commands,  
 Well known mark to distant lands,  
 There the windows glowing bright  
 Blaze from afar with ruddy light  
 Borrow'd from clouds of scarlet dye,  
 Just as the sun hath left the sky.

But if chill Eurus cut the air  
 With keener wing, I then repair  
 To park or woodland, shelter meet,  
 Near some noble's ancient seat,  
 Where long winding walks are seen  
 Stately oaks and elms between,  
 Whose arms promiscuous form above  
 High over-arch'd a green alcove ;  
 While the hoarse-voic'd hungry rook  
 Near her stick-built nest doth croak,  
 Waving on the topmost bough ;  
 And the master stag below  
 Bellows loud with savage roar,  
 Stalking all his hinds before.  
 Thus musing, night with even pace  
 Steals on, o'er-shad'wing nature's face ;  
 While the bat with dusky wings  
 Flutters round in giddy rings,  
 And the buzzing chaffers come  
 Close by mine ear with solemn hum.  
 Homeward now my steps I guide  
 Some rising grassy bank beside,  
 Studded thick with sparks of light  
 Issuing from many a glow-worm bright ;  
 While village-cur with minute bark  
 Alarms the pilf'rer in the dark,  
 Save what light the stars convey,  
 Cluster'd in the milky way,



Or scatter'd numberless on high  
 Twinkling all o'er the boundless sky,  
 Then within doors let me meet  
 The viol touch'd by finger neat,  
 Or, soft symphonies among,  
 Wrap me in the sacred song,  
 Attun'd by Handel's matchless skill,  
 While Attention mute and still  
 Fixes all my soul to hear  
 The voice harmonious, sweet and clear.  
 Nor let smooth-tongu'd Converse fail,  
 With many a well-devised tale.  
 And stories link'd, to twist a chain  
 That may awhile old Time detain,  
 And make him rest upon his scythe  
 Pleas'd to see the hours so blithe:  
 While, with sweet attractive grace,  
 The beauteous house-wife of the place  
 Wins the heart of ev'ry guest  
 By courteous deeds, and all contest  
 Which shall readiest homage shew  
 To such sov'reign sweetness due:  
 These delights, Vacation, give  
 And I with thee will chuse to live.