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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

To Mr. Mason. By William Whitehead, Esq.

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Westward the course of empire takes its way ;
 The four first acts already past,
 A fifth shall close the drama with the day ;
 Time's noblest offspring is the last.



To Mr. M A S O N.

By WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, Esq;

I.

BELIEVE me, MASON, 'tis in vain
 Thy fortitude the torrent braves ;
 Thou too must bear th' inglorious chain ;
 The world, the world will have its slaves.
 The chosen friend, for converse sweet,
 The small, yet elegant retreat,
 Are peaceful unambitious views
 Which early fancy loves to form.
 When aided by th' ingenuous Muse,
 She turns the philosophic page,
 And sees the wife of every age
 With Nature's dictates warm,

II.

But ah ! to few has fortune given
 The choice, to take or to refuse ;
 To fewer still indulgent heaven
 Allots the very will to chuse,
 And why are varying schemes prefer'd ?
 Man mixes with the common herd,

By custom guided to pursue
 Or wealth, or honors, fame, or ease,
 What others wish he wishes too,
 Nor from his own peculiar choice,
 'Till strengthen'd by the public voice,
 His very pleasures please.

III.

How oft, beneath some hoary shade
 Where Cam glides indolently flow,
 Hast thou, as indolently laid,
 Prefer'd to heaven thy fav'rite vow,
 " Here, here forever let me stay,
 " Here calmly loiter life away,
 " Nor all those vain connections know
 " Which fetter down the free-born mind
 " The slave of interest, or of show ;
 " Whilst yon gay tenant of the grove,
 " The happier heir of Nature's love,
 " Can warble unconfin'd."

IV.

Yet sure, my friend, th' eternal plan
 By truth unerring was design'd ;
 Inferior parts were made for man,
 But man himself for all mankind.
 Then by th' apparent judge th' unseen ;
 Behold how rolls this vast machine
 To one great end, howe'er withstood,

Directing



Directing it's impartial course.
 All labour for the general good.
 Some stem the wave, some till the soil,
 By choice the bold, th' ambitious toil,
 The indolent by force.

V.

That bird, thy fancy frees from care,
 With many a fear, unknown to thee,
 Must rove to glean his scanty fare
 From field to field, from tree to tree,
 His lot, united with his kind,
 Has all his little joys confin'd ;
 The Lover's and the Parent's ties
 Alarm by turns his anxious breast,
 Yet, bound by fate, by instinct wife,
 He hails with songs the rising morn,
 And pleas'd at Evening's cool return
 He sings himself to rest.

VI.

And tell me, has not Nature made
 Some stated void for thee to fill,
 Some spring, some wheel which asks thy aid
 To move, regardless of thy will ?
 Go then, go feel with glad surprize
 New blifs from new attentions rise ;
 Till, happier in thy wider sphere,
 Thou quit thy darling schemes of ease ;
 Nay, glowing in the full career
 Ev'n wish thy virtuous labours more ;
 Nor 'till the toilsome day is o'er
 Expect the night of peace.