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The Works Of Mr. George Lillo; With Some Account Of His Life

Containing, *Silvia; or, The Country Burial. A Ballad Opera.* *George Barnwell, A Tragedy.* *The Life of Scanderbeg.* And *The Christian Hero, A Tragedy*

Lillo, George

London, 1775

Prologue.

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P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr. CIBBER, Jun.

*T*HE Tragick Muse, sublime, delights to show
Princes distress, and scenes of royal woe ;
In awful pomp, majestic to relate
The fall of nations, or some hero's fate :
That scepter'd chiefs may by example know
The strange vicissitude of things below :
What dangers on security attend ;
How pride and cruelty in ruin end :
Hence Providence supreme to know ; and own
Humanity adds glory to a throne.

In e'ry former age, and foreign tongue,
With native grandeur thus the goddess sung,
Upon our stage, indeed, with wish'd success,
You've sometimes seen her in an humbler dress ;
Great only in distress. When she complains
In Southern's, Rowe's, or Otway's moving strains,
The brilliant drops that fall from each bright eye,
The absent pomp, with brighter gems, supply.

Forgive us then, if we attempt to show,
In ariless strains, a tale of private woe.
A London prentice ruin'd is our theme,
Drawn from the fam'd old song that bears his name.
We hope your taste is not so high to scorn
A moral tale, esteem'd ere you were born ;
Which for a century of rolling years,
Has fill'd a thousand thousand eyes with tears.

If thoughtless youth to warn, and shame the age
From vice destructive, well becomes the stage ;
If this example innocence insure,
Prevent our guilt, or by reflection cure ;
If Milwood's dreadful crimes, and sad despair,
Commend the virtue of the good and fair ;
Tho' art be wanting, and our numbers fail,
Indulge the attempt in justice to the tale.

