

**THE LIFE OF THE RIGHT
REVEREND BEILBY
PORTEUS, D.D.
LATE BISHOP OF LONDON**

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The life of the Right Reverend Beilby Porteus, D.D. late Bishop of London by Robert Hodgson

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ROBERT HODGSON

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THE
L I F E
OF THE
RIGHT REVEREND
BEILBY PORTEUS, D. D.
LATE BISHOP OF LONDON.

BY THE
REV. ROBERT HODGSON, A. M. F. R. S.

Rector of St. George's Hanover-Square, and one of the
Chaplains in ordinary to his Majesty.

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1811.

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TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
SHUTE,
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM,
AND
THE RIGHT REVEREND
GEORGE,
LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN,
THE FOLLOWING
LIFE OF DR. BEILBY PORTEUS,
LATE BISHOP OF LONDON,
FOR WHOM,
AS A PRELATE,
THEY ENTERAINED THE HIGHEST RESPECT,
AND,
AS A FRIEND,
THE MOST AFFECTIONATE REGARD,
IS,
WITH GREAT DEFERENCE,
INSCRIBED,
BY
THEIR OBLIGED,
AND MOST OBEIENT SERVANT,

ROBERT HODGSON.

15, Grosvenor-street,
May 1811.

THE
L I F E
OF
DR. BEILBY PORTEUS,
BISHOP OF LONDON.

UPON the merits of the venerable Prelate, of whose writings a new and complete edition is now presented to the world, the public sentiment has long and justly decided: and it is under the impression, that whatever relates to him will be read with interest, that a History of his Life is here prefixed. I could much have wished that the task of preparing it had fallen into abler hands: but thus far I feel justified in saying, that it has been drawn from the most authentic sources, and certainly with no intention to raise his character by undue panegyric. The portrait of such a man is best delineated in the simple colouring of truth; and it has

been my anxious endeavour, so to represent it in the following pages.

Dr. BEILBY PORTEUS, late Bishop of London, was the youngest but one of nineteen children, and was born at York on the 8th of May 1731. His father and mother were natives of Virginia, in North America. They were both descended from good families, and, during their residence in that colony, were on a footing with its principal inhabitants, to many of whom they were allied. His father was of no profession; but, being born to what in that country was considered as an independent fortune, lived upon his own estate. It consisted chiefly of plantations of tobacco; and on one of these, called Newbottle (from a village of that name near Edinburgh, once belonging to his family, but now in the possession of the Marquis of Lothian), he usually resided. The house stood upon a rising ground, with a gradual descent to York river, which was there at least two miles over: and here he enjoyed within himself every comfort and convenience that a man of moderate wishes could desire; living without the burthen of taxes, and possessing, under the powerful

protection of this kingdom, peace, plenty, and security. The Bishop had a singular picture, which, though not in the best style of colouring, was yet thought valuable by Sir Joshua Reynolds, as a specimen of the extent which the art of painting had reached at that time in America: and he himself very highly prized it, as exhibiting a faithful and interesting representation of his father's residence.

His mother's name was Jennings. She was said to be distantly related to Sarah Jennings, the wife of John, Duke of Marlborough: and two of her ancestors, Sir Edmund and Sir Jonathan Jennings, lived at Ripon in Yorkshire, for which place, it appears, they were both representatives in Parliament in the reign of James the Second. Her father, Colonel Jennings, was Sir Edmund's son, and the first of the family who settled in Virginia, where he was superintendant of Indian affairs for that province; became afterwards one of the Supreme Council; and for some time acted as Deputy Governor of the Colony.

The principal reason which induced the Bishop's father to quit a situation so per-

fectly independent and comfortable, as that he had in America, was the desire of procuring for his children better instruction than he could there obtain. His health besides had been much impaired by the climate; and these causes combined, determined him at length to leave the country, and remove to England, which he accordingly did in 1720, and fixed himself in the city of York.

In one respect, however, and that an important one, this change in his situation was attended with considerable inconvenience; for, whilst his expenses every year increased, his revenue diminished almost in the same proportion; and either by the negligence or dishonesty of his agents, he received little more than a fourth part of what ought to have been his real income. But still, even with such contracted means, he accomplished the object nearest to his heart, that of giving his children an excellent education; and certainly, in the instance at least of the subject of these memoirs, his kindness was repaid beyond his most sanguine expectations.

After having been for several years at a small school at York, Mr. Porteus, then at

the age of thirteen, was placed at Ripon, under the care of Mr. Hyde, an upright, sensible, judicious man, of whose attention he ever entertained a grateful remembrance; and from him, at an earlier age than is now usually the case, he was sent to Cambridge, where, by the recommendation and under the immediate superintendance of his elder brother, Mr. Robert Porteus,* he was admitted a sizer at Christ's College, of which Dr. Rooke was at that time master, and the only person whom he then knew in the University.

His attention, whilst he continued under graduate, was directed chiefly to mathe-

* This excellent man had the living of Cockayne Hatley, near Pottou, in Bedfordshire; and I cannot mention his name, without offering in this place a tribute of affectionate respect to his memory. With very considerable literary attainments, he combined the greatest gentleness and simplicity of manners. Exemplary in all his domestic duties, he was beloved by his family: indefatigable in the labours of his sacred office, he was revered by his parish.—No one ever more uniformly maintained the Christian character: and by those who knew his many virtues, he was most sincerely regretted.—He died in the prime of life, and is buried in Hatley church.