

**THE ENGLISH
GARDEN: A POEM
IN FOUR BOOKS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649574278

The English Garden: A Poem in Four Books by W. Mason

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

W. MASON

**THE ENGLISH
GARDEN: A POEM
IN FOUR BOOKS**

THE
ENGLISH GARDEN:

^
P O E M.

I N
FOUR BOOKS,
By W. MASON, M. A.

A NEW EDITION, corrected.

To which are added

A
COMMENTARY and NOTES,
By W. BURGH, Esq; LL. D.

A GARDEN IS THE PUREST OF HUMAN PLEASURES; IT IS
THE GREATEST REFRESHMENT TO THE SPIRITS OF
MAN, WITHOUT WHICH BUILDINGS AND PALACES ARE
BUT GROSS HANDY-WORKS. AND A MAN SHALL EVER
SEE, THAT WHEN AGES GROW TO CIVILITY AND ELE-
GANCE, MEN COME TO BUILD STATELY, SOONER THAN
TO GARDEN FINELY: AS IF GARDENING WERE THE
GREATER PERFECTION.

VERULAM.

YORK, PRINTED BY A. WARD:
And sold by J. DODSLEY, 'all-Mall; T. CADELL, in the
Strand; and R. FAULDER, in New Bond-Street, Lon-
don; and J. TODD, in York. 1783.

P R E F A C E.

AS the Four Books, which compose the following Poem, were published originally at very distant intervals, I thought it expedient at the conclusion of the last to subjoin a Postscript, in which I drew up an Analysis of each of them in their order, that the general plan of the whole work, and their connection with one another, might be more accurately conceived. That short analysis is now withdrawn, being superseded by a copious and complete Commentary, which the partiality of a very ingenious and learned friend has induced him to write upon it; a work which I am persuaded will be of more utility to those readers, who wish to understand the subject, than the Poem itself will be of entertainment to that more numerous class who read merely to be entertained: For myself, as to amuse was only a secondary motive with me when I composed the work, I freely own

iv P R E F A C E.

that I am more pleased by a species of writing which tends to elucidate the Principles of my Poem, and to developé its method, than I should have been with that more flattering, yet less useful one, which interested itself in displaying what little poetical merit it may possess.

Notwithstanding this, I am well aware that many persons will think my friend has taken much more pains than were necessary on this occasion; and I should agree with them in opinion were the Poem only, and not the Subject which it treats, in question: But I would wish them to discriminate between these two points, and that whatever they may think of the writer's condescension in commenting so largely on the one, they would give him credit for the great additional illustration which he has thrown upon the other.

Yet as to the Poem itself, I am not without my hopes, that in this new Edition I
have

P R E F A C E. v

have rendered it somewhat more worthy of the pains which its Commentator has bestowed upon it, and of that approbation which it has already obtained from a very respectable part of the public; having revised it very carefully throughout, and purged it, to the best of my abilities, of many defects in the prior editions. That original Sin, however, which the admirers of Rhyme, and of Rhyme only, have laid to its charge, I have still ventured to retain: To this fault I must still own myself so blind, that in defence of it I shall again reprint what I said before in my former Postscript, and make it the conclusion of my present Preface.

“ When I first had the subject in contemplation, I found it admitted of two very different modes of composition: One was that of the regular Didactic Poem, of which the Georgics of Virgil afford so perfect an example; the

the other that of the preceptive epistolary essay, the model of which Horace has given in his Epistles *Ad Augustum* and *ad Pisones*. I balanced some time which of these I should adopt, for both had their peculiar merit. The former opened a more ample field for picturesque description and poetical embellishment; the latter was more calculated to convey exact precept in concise phrase*.

The

* See Mr. Pope's account of his *design* in writing the Essay on Man, where the peculiar merit of that way, in which he so greatly excelled, is most happily explained. He chose, as he says, "Verse, and even Rhyme, for two reasons: Verse, because precepts, so written, strike more strongly, and are retained more easily: Rhyme, because it expresses arguments or instructions more concisely than even Prose itself." As I have lately, in the Preface to my Translation of Fresnoy's Art of Painting, made use of this very reason for translating that Poem into Rhyme, some superficial readers may think that I hereby contradict myself; but the judicious critic will refer Fresnoy's Poem to *Horace's Art of Poetry* as to its proper archetype, and rightly deem it, though not an *epistolary*, yet a *preceptive Essay*. Whereas the present work comes under that species of composition which has the *Georgics of Virgil* for its original, than which no two modes of writing can be more dissimilar.

P R E F A C E. vii

The one furnished better means of illustrating my subject, and the other of defining it; the former admitted those ornaments only which resulted from lively imagery and figurative diction; the latter seemed rather to require the seasoning of wit and satire; this, therefore, appeared best calculated to expose false taste, and that to elucidate the true. But false taste, on this subject, had been so inimitably ridiculed by Mr. Pope, in his Epistle to Lord Burlington, that it seemed to preclude all other authors (at least it precluded me) from touching it after him; and therefore, as he had left much unsaid on that part of the art on which it was my purpose principally to enlarge, I thought the didactic method not only more open but more proper for my attempt. This matter once determined, I did not hesitate as to my choice between blank verse and rhyme; because it clearly appeared, that numbers of the most varied kind were most proper to illustrate

viii P R E F A C E.

illustrate a subject *whose every charm springs from variety*, and which, painting Nature as *scorning control*, should employ a versification for that end as unfettered as Nature itself, Art at the same time, in rural improvements, pervading the province of Nature, unseen, and unfelt, seemed to bear a striking analogy to that species of verse, the harmony of which results from measured quantity and varied cadence, without the too studied arrangement of final syllables, or regular return of consonant sounds. I was, notwithstanding, well aware, that by choosing to write in blank verse, I should not court popularity, because I perceived it was growing much out of vogue; but this reason, as may be supposed, did not weigh much with a writer, who meant to combat Fashion in the very theme he intended to write upon; and who was also convinced that a mode of English versification, in which so many good poems, with *Paradise Lost* at their head, have