

**POLITICAL AND
LITERARY ANECDOTES
OF HIS OWN TIMES**

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Political and Literary Anecdotes of His Own Times by William King

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WILLIAM KING

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William B. Philpot
South Bersted Vicarage 1880

POLITICAL AND LITERARY

A N E C D O T E S

OF

HIS OWN TIMES.

BY DR. WILLIAM KING,

PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARY HALL, OXON.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1819.

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BUT lo! at once the pealing concerts cease,
And crowded theatres are hush'd in peace.
See, on yon sage how all attentive stand,
To catch his darting eye, and waving hand.
Hark! he begins, with all a Tully's art,
To pour the dictates of a Cato's heart:
SEEM'd to pronounce what noblest thoughts inspire,
He blends the speaker's with the patriot's fire;
Bold to conceive, nor timorous to conceal,
What Britons dare to think, he dares to tell.
Tis his alike the ear and eye to charm,
To win with action, and with sense to warn;
Untaught in flowery periods to dispense
The lulling sounds of sweet impertinence:
In frowns or smiles he gains an equal prize,
Nor nearly fears to fall, nor creeps to rise.

T. WARTON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A FRIEND, who was a long time a prisoner in France, met with the following work in the possession of two ladies, relatives of the writer, Dr. King. From the interesting passages which he was permitted to extract, the Editor conceived that the original might be well worthy of publication; he therefore desired his friend to procure it, and found, on a comparison of the hand-writing with that which is well ascertained to be Dr. King's in the account-books of St. Mary Hall in Oxford (of which he was many years the principal), that there is every reason to suppose this MS. to have been written by Dr. King himself. From certain minute additions and corrections of the

language, there can be little doubt of its having been intended for publication. It contains a very striking character of the Pretender, and many interesting anecdotes of the jacobite party, to which he was strongly attached, and with the leaders of which he was intimately acquainted. There will also be found in it an amusing *jeu d'esprit* called the Somnium Academicum, written in very pure Latin, for which he was much distinguished; and many pleasant stories of the great men and literary characters of his days, with some elegant criticism on the Latin poets. Having said thus much on the history and contents of this publication, it will be necessary to add a short account of the writer for the instruction of those who may be ignorant of his name and character.

* "Dr. William King, son of the Rev. Peregrine King, was born at Stepney,

* From Chalmers's Biography.

in Middlesex, in 1685; and, after a school-education at Salisbury, was entered of Baliol College, Oxford, July 9, 1701. Proceeding on the law line, he took his doctor's degree in 1715; was secretary to the Duke of Ormond and the Earl of Arran, when chancellors of the university; and was made Principal of St. Mary Hall in 1718. When he was candidate for the university, in 1722, he resigned his office of secretary; but his other preferment he enjoyed (and it was all he did enjoy) to the time of his death. Dr. Clarke, who opposed him, carried his election; and, after this disappointment, 1727, he went over to Ireland. With what design he went thither is to us unknown; but his enemies say, it was for the purposes of intrigue, and to expose himself to sale. But he says himself, and there are no facts alleged to disprove it, "at no time of my life, either in England or Ireland, either from the

present or any former government, have I asked, or endeavoured by any means to obtain, a place, pension, or employment of any kind. I could assign many reasons for my conduct; but one answer I have always ready: I inherited a patrimony, which I found sufficient to supply all my wants, and to leave me at liberty to pursue those liberal studies which afforded me the most solid pleasures in my youth, and are the delight and enjoyment of my old age. Besides, I always conceived a secret horror of a state of servility and dependence: and I never yet saw a placeman or a courtier, whether in a higher or lower class, whether a priest or a layman, who was his own master." During his stay in Ireland, he is said to have written an epic poem, called "The Toast," bearing the name of Scheffer, a Laplander, as its author, and of Peregrine O'Donald, esq. as its translator; which was a political satire,