

**MODERN  
ANTIQUITY,  
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Modern antiquity, and other poems by C. C. Colton

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*&c.*

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MODERN ANTIQUITY,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

THE LATE REV. C. C. COLTON,

AUTHOR OF "LACON," &c.

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## PREFACE.

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I most willingly admit that no poetry, having the slightest taint of mediocrity, would meet with readers in the present day; but, when we consider the following Poem, either as to its extent or its variety, or the masterly manner in which that diversity is handled, we feel assured that none who are in possession of "Lacon," or "Hypocrisy," will deem their libraries complete without the assistance of this their sister Muse.

The dying request of my much-esteemed friend, the author of "Modern Antiquity," that it should be printed after his death, involved me in a task of great difficulty. I say, it was a difficult

task imposed upon me, because he desired I would write explanatory Notes to such parts of it as I should find necessary to be relieved from an almost unavoidable obscurity. He conceived the idea that I was fully acquainted with all the matter which his master-mind has endeavoured to express on the subject now before us. But Mr. COLTON, however he might feel convinced, after an acquaintance of twenty years, of my readiness to serve him to the extent of my power, deceived himself much as to my capability for such a task, and had formed too high an opinion of that which appears but too insignificant in the execution.

A few hours previous to his death, Mr. Colton dictated the last four stanzas of "Modern Antiquity," and at the same time expressed a wish that they had been more creditable to him and to the subject: how far his apprehension was well founded is for those to decide who are fit judges and liberal critics.



That the poem would have been retouched by his powerful pen, there can be little doubt; and that he would have added to it a long train of deep thought, fitting the subject he had in view, I know to have been his intention, if pain and disease had not wholly deprived him of that "Hope and Patience" which he felt had quitted him for ever!

It may be said by some, that the object of this poem is of little worth, or that it possesses no moral: the fact of there being no moral attached to it, is certainly less reprehensible than if it inculcated a bad one. The subject had been treated on before the late Mr. Colton gave it its present splendid form, as Bacon was the first writer to dispute the validity of the claims of our forefathers to *true* antiquity; claims that have produced much that is deplorable, if not more that is absurd.

" True talent is the ray that flings  
A novel light o'er common things."

In the following pages we find many of those thoughts that would have been beautiful even in their simplicity and nakedness of nature, and are certainly not less so now that they are presented in the best drapery and ornaments of art: we should be equally capable of detecting deformity, were she arrayed in costly trinkets.

In this poem we observe that the rhyme is almost invariably thrown upon the strongest word; which, however difficult to accomplish, is a rule that our poet strictly attended to.

Antithesis became a powerful engine in such skilful hands as those of our author; and in most cases we may acknowledge that it had Truth for its root, and Wit for its fairest blossom. For his images and illustrations, he had recourse to the whole material and intellectual world: his researches were deep, and he frequently chose the most obvious as the most expressive, notwithstanding the chance that they had been anticipated; while at other moments he selected

some less clear and less evident, because they were novel, although they might possess the disadvantage of being somewhat obscure.

Metaphors have been described as the algebra of language, and their use or abuse is an almost unerring test of talent: we may venture to assert that the abuse of this elegant figure is scarcely to be found in this poem; for our author was not of that class of bad poets, who, when mounted on a metaphor, generally break down or bolt.

I have heard Mr. Colton say, that, when he was writing his poem "Hypocrisy," (now out of print,) he had no books in the room in which he wrote; and it was only when he had finished that work that he examined with the originals the quotations he applied, in order to ascertain if his memory had been correct. That he wrote "Modern Antiquity" under the same circumstances, would not be difficult for me to aver. During the progress of his writing, he did not appear at a loss for those close and remote re-