

POETICAL WORKS

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Poetical works by William Collins

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WILLIAM COLLINS

**POETICAL
WORKS**



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THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COLLINS;

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR BY DR. JOHNSON,
OBSERVATIONS ON HIS WRITINGS BY DR. LANGHORNE;
AND BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTES,

BY

THE REV. ALEXANDER DYCE, A. B. OXON.

LONDON,

WILLIAM PICKERING, CHANCERY LANE;
D. A. TALBOYS, OXFORD.

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PREFACE.

I NOW offer to the admirers of Collins a volume, which it has been my aim to render far more complete and correct than any preceding edition of his works.

To Johnson's scanty narrative I have appended, as notes, all the additional particulars concerning our poet, which a diligent search over a wide field has enabled me to present; nor will the reader, I trust, reject as trivial or uninteresting, whatever contributes to illustrate the life and genius of such a gifted being. To Johnson's unfeeling criticism on his exquisite productions, a sufficient antidote is furnished in the remarks (scattered through the volume) of va-

rious writers, who, however inferior in other respects to the great moralist, were better fitted by nature to appreciate the lofty raptures of the lyric muse,—for the severity of Johnson's strictures must be ascribed to his want of relish for the poetry of imagination.

The various readings, obtained by a careful collation of editions, I have placed at the bottom of the page: on what authority "Dodsley and Langhorne deviated occasionally from the original text, they have not informed us; but doubtless the alterations which they introduced had been made by the author himself, in copies of his poems which had fallen into their hands. "I have seen," says T. Warton^b, "all his odes

^a In different editions of his *Collection of Poems*.

^b See p. 30.

already published in his own handwriting; they had the marks of repeated correction: he was perpetually changing his epithets."

The explanatory notes below the text are by Collins.

The commentary of Langhorne, which has accompanied so many editions of our author, is once more printed entire. It is the work of one who was himself, if not a poet, at least a writer of most pleasing verses; and it breathes throughout such fervid admiration for Collins and for poetry, that the reader is induced to overlook its occasional weakness.

The Various Notes, which conclude the volume, consist chiefly of citations of parallel passages: for a considerable number of them, (as well as for some

biographical notes,) I am indebted to the Rev. J. Mitford, the learned editor of Gray, who, in the most liberal and obliging manner, transmitted to me the memoranda which he had made for an intended edition of Collins.

ALEXANDER DYCE.

LONDON, *June*, 1827.

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