

**THE HYPOCRITE; OR, THE
MODERN
JANUS. A NOVEL, IN
FIVE VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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The Hypocrite; Or, the Modern Janus. A Novel, in Five Volumes, Vol. I by Selina Davenport

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SELINA DAVENPORT

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THE
HYPOCRITE;

OR,
THE MODERN JANUS.

A Novel.

—//—
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

—//—
BY
SELINA DAVENPORT.

To spake the false dissembler, unperceiv'd,
For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through heaven and earth;
And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems.

MILTON.

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THE
HYPOCRITE.



CHAP. I.

IT was the latter end of December; the day dark, humid, and oppressively gloomy; yet Dudley, the lover and the poet, felt not its chilling influence. Seated in his study-chair, by the side of a blazing fire, the sombre appearance of the atmosphere was unnoticed; visions of bliss, of love, of hope, occupied his mind. He had just finished the last line of a sonnet, which, for the beauty of its thoughts, the elegance of its diction, and the rich harmony of its numbers, might have vied with Spenser, Milton, or the immortal

Petrarch; it expressed all the delicate tenderness, the refined passion, which he felt, and which few could so happily describe as himself.

A loud knocking at the door of his lodging put to flight Cupid and his attendants. Dudley hastily concealed the effusion of his muse: it was not written to meet the eye of vulgar curiosity or every-day friendship. One object alone was destined to peruse what would have given pleasure to every mind possessed of taste and feeling.

He rose with eagerness, as Courteney, the man of his heart, the friend of his bosom, entered the chamber; and pressing his extended hand, warmly testified his joy at beholding him so soon.

"I received your letter this morning," replied his friend, "and hastened to welcome your return to London."

"Thank you, my dear Leopold, for this additional proof of your regard. How are Sybella and the boys?"

"Quite

“Quite well; Sybella requested me to deliver her love and best wishes. I need not ask concerning your health, or the state of your affairs; your countenance, Edmund, betrays that all is well within. Would that I could say the same!”

“My dear Leopold,” said Dudley, again pressing his hand, “all will soon, I trust, be well. Though your talents and abilities are, at present, a little obscured by misfortunes, yet fear not, my friend; the cloud which has lately hung over your prospects will quickly disperse, and all will be sunshine and prosperity. You must stay and partake of bachelor’s fare;” the blood crimsoned his cheek. “At eight o’clock I must leave you; until then, my dear Leopold, let us enjoy ‘the feast of reason and the flow of soul.’”

To this his friend assented, and they drew their chairs still closer to the cheering fire.

“You have been absent, Edmund,

three months; and if I may judge by your letters, they have been the happiest of your life. You have made me venerate lord Mortimer, esteem the marchioness of Wilmington, and fall desperately in love with the beautiful Althea. But tell me, Dudley, how is it that your features wear the air of one who has every thing to hope from a successful passion? I had expected to find, from the hopelessness of your attachment, all the outward and visible signs of a disappointed lover."

Dudley smiled expressively—"My better genius has destined it otherwise," said he; "and you, my friend, who, I make no doubt, hastened to afford me all the consolation in your power, supposing me to be the most unhappy of human beings, must be agreeably surprised at discovering me the very reverse of what you had expected. The truth is, my dear Leopold, that dame Fortune, who has persecuted me for two-and-twenty years, is at last tired or ashamed of annoying me

me any longer, and has bestowed a recompence for past miseries far beyond my hopes or deserts."

Courteney looked anxiously at his friend; a sickly tremor came over him. Dudley continued—"When I accompanied my more than father, the ever-to-be-revered sir Thomas Percy, to pay a visit to the widowed sister of lord Mortimer, I was, as you well know, labouring under a severe bodily derangement, and an almost insupportable oppression of spirits. At the Wilderness we found the marchioness and her infant family, her brother, lord Mortimer, and his daughter, the lovely, the divine Althea. Sir Thomas, with his usual partiality, had paved the way for my reception. It was flattering in the extreme—it was all that my high spirit and proud heart could require. In the youthful daughter of the earl, who is countess of Brandon in her own right, I quickly discovered an object