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THE
O R I G I N
O F
T H E V E I L.



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THE
O R I G I N
OF
T H E V E I L.

A P O E M.

BY DR. LANGHORNE.

LONDON:
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THE
O R I G I N
O F
T H E V E I L.

WARM from this Heart while flows the faithful
Line,

The meanest Friend of Beauty shall be mine.
What Love, or Fame, or Fortune could bestow,
The Charm of Praise, the Ease of Life I owe
To Beauty present, or to Beauty fled,
To HERTFORD living, or CAERNARVON dead,
To TWEEDALE's Taste, to EDGECUMBE's Sense serene,
And, Envy spare this Boast, to BRITAIN's Queen.

B Kind
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Kind to the Lay that all unlaboured flowed,
What Fancy caught, where Nature's Pencil glowed *,
She saw the Path to new, though humble Fame,
Gave me her Praise, and left me Fools to blame.

Strong in their Weakness are each Woman's Charms,
Dread that endears, and Softness that disarms.
The timorous Eye retiring from Applause,
And the mild Air that fearfully withdraws,
Marks of our Power these humble Graces prove,
And, dash'd with Pride, we deeper drink of Love.

Chief of those Charms that hold the Heart in Thrall,
At thy fair Shrine, O MODESTY, we fall.
Not CYNTHIA rising o'er the watry Way,
When on the dim Wave falls her friendly Ray ;

* The Fables of Flora.

Not the pure Æther of Eolian Skies,
That drinks the Day's first Glories as they rise,
Not all the Tints from Evening-Clouds that break,
Burn in the Beauties of the Virgin's Cheek ;
When o'er that Cheek, undisciplined by Art,
The sweet Suffusion rushes from the Heart.

Yet the soft Blush, untutored to controul,
The Glow that speaks the susceptible Soul,
Led by nice Honour and by decent Pride,
The Voice of ancient Virtue taught to hide ;
Taught Beauty's Bloom the searching Eye to shun,
As early Flowers blow fearful of the Sun.

Far as the long Records of Time we trace *,
Still flowed the Veil o'er Modesty's fair Face :

The

* *Plato* mentions two Provinces in *Persia*, one of which was called the Queen's Girdle, the other the Queen's Veil, the Revenues of which, no doubt,

The Guard of Beauty, in whose friendly Shade,
 Safe from each Eye the featured Soul is laid,—
 The penfive Thought that paler Looks betray,
 The tender Grief that steals in Tears away,
 The hopeless Wish that prompts the frequent Sigh,
 Bleeds in the Blush, or melts upon the Eye.

The Man of Faith thro' *Gerar* doom'd to stray,
 A Nation waiting his eventful Way,
 His Fortune's fair Companion at his Side,
 The World his Promise, Providence his Guide,
 Once, more than Virtue dared to value Life,
 And called a Sister whom he owned a Wife.

doubt, were employed in purchasing those Parts of Her Majesty's Dress. It was about the Middle of the Third Century that the Eastern Women, on taking the Vow of Virginity, assumed that Veil which had before been worn by the Pagan Priestesses, and which is used by the Religious among the Romanists now.

Mistaken Father of the faithful Race,
 Thy Fears alone could purchase thy Disgrace.
 "Go," to the Fair, when conscious of the Tale,
 Said *Gerar's* Prince, "THY HUSBAND IS THY VEIL*."

O ancient Faith! O Virtue mourned in vain!
 When Hymen's Altar never held a Stain;
 When his pure Torch shed undiminished Rays,
 And Fires unholy died beneath the Blaze!

For Faith like this fair GREECE was early known,
 And claimed the Veil's first Honours as her own.

Ere half her Sons, o'er ASIA's trembling Coast,
 Armed to revenge one Woman's Virtue lost;

* He is the Tail of thine Eyes to all that are with thee,
 and to all others. GEN. XX. 16. VET. TRANS.

6 THE ORIGIN OF THE VEIL.

Ere He, whom CIRCE fought to charm in vain,
Followed wild Fortune o'er the various Main,
In Youth's gay Bloom He plied th' exulting Oar,
From ITHACA'S white Rocks to SPARTA'S Shore :
Free to NERICIAN * Gales the Vessel glides,
And wild EUROTAS † smoothes his Warrior-Tides ;
For amorous Greece, when Love conducts the Way,
Beholds her Waters, and her Winds obey.
No Object her's but Love's Impression knows,
No Wave that wanders, and no Breeze that blows ;
Her Groves ‡, her Mountains have his Power confest,
And ZEPHYR fighed not but for FLORA'S Breast.

'Twas when his Sighs in sweetest Whispers strayed,
Far o'er LACONIA'S Plains from EVA'S § Shade ;

* From the Mountain Neritos in Ithaca, now called *Nericia*.

† The Spartan River.

‡ E mentre d'Albrghe Amore.

TASSO.

§ A Mountain in Peloponnesus.

When soft-eyed Spring resumed his Mantle gay,
 And leaned luxurious on the Breast of May,
 Love's genial Banners young ULYSSES bore
 From ITHACA'S white Rocks to SPARTA'S Shore.

With all that foothes the Heart, that wins, or warms,
 All princely Virtues, and all manly Charms,
 All Love can urge, or Eloquence persuade,
 The future Heroe wooed his SPARTAN Maid.
 Yet long He wooed—In Sparta, slow to yield,
 Beauty, like Valour, long maintained the Field.

“ No Bloom so fair MESSENE'S Banks disclose ;
 “ No Breath so pure o'er TEMPE'S Bosom blows ;
 “ No Smile so radiant throws the genial Ray
 “ Thro' the fair Eye-lids of the opening Day ;
 “ But deaf to Vows with fondest Passion prest,
 “ Cold as the Wave of HEBRUS' wintry Breast,

8 THE ORIGIN OF THE VEIL.

“ PENELOPE regards no Lover's Pain,
“ And owns ULYSSES eloquent in vain.

“ To Vows that vainly waste their Warmth in Air,
“ Infidious Hopes that lead but to Despair,
“ Affections lost, Desires the Heart must rue,
“ And Love, and SPARTA's joyless Plains adieu !

“ Yet still this Bosom shall one Passion share,
“ Still shall my Country find a Father there.
“ Ev'n now the Children of my little Reign
“ Demand that Father of the faithless Main,
“ Ev'n now, their Prince solicitous to save,
“ Climb the tall Cliff, and watch the changeful Wave.

“ But not for Him their Hopes, or Fears alone !
“ They seek the promised Partner of his Throne ;
“ For Her their Incense breathes, their Altars blaze,
“ For Her to Heaven the suppliant Eye they raise.

“ Ah !

“ Ah! shall They know their Prince implored in vain?

“ Can my Heart live beneath a Nation’s Pain ?”

There spoke the Virtue that her Soul admired,
The Spartan Soul, with Patriot Ardour fired.

“ Enough !” she cried—“ Be mine to boast a Part

“ In Him, who holds his Country to his Heart.

“ Worth, Honour, Faith that fair Affection gives,

“ And with that Virtue, every Virtue lives *.”

Pleased that the nobler Principles could move
His Daughter’s Heart, and soften it to Love,
Icarius owned the Auspices divine,
Wove the fair Crown †, and blessed the holy Shrine.

But

* Omnes omnium Caritates, &c. Cic.

† The Women of ancient Greece at the Marriage Ceremony wore
D Garlands

But ah! the dreaded parting Hour to brave!
 Then strong Affection griev'd for what it gave.
 Should He the Comfort of his Life's Decline,
 His Life's last Charm to Ithaca resign?
 Or, wandering with Her to a distant Shore,
 Behold Eurotas' long-loved Banks no more?
 Expose his grey Hairs to an alien Sky,
 Nor on his Country's Parent Bosom die *?

Garlands of Flowers, probably as Emblems of Purity, Fertility and Beauty. Thus Euripides,

— αλλ' ὄμωσ

Σοι κατασεψασ' ἐγὼ νῦν ἦγον, ὡς γαμουμένην·

IPH. in AUL.

The modern Greek Ladies wear these Garlands in various Forms, whenever they appear dressed; and frequently adorn themselves thus for their own Amusement, and when they do not expect to be seen by any but their Domestic.

VOYAGE LITERAIRE DE LA GRECE.

* The Ancients esteemed this one of the greatest Misfortunes that could befall them. The Trojans thought it the most lamentable Circumstance attending the Loss of their Pilot Palinurus, that his Body should lie in a foreign Country.

— *Ignota Palinure jacebis Arena.*

VIRG.

“ No,

“ No, Prince, He cried ; for Sparta’s happier Plain,
“ Leave the loved Honours of thy little Reign.
“ The grateful Change shall equal Honours bring ;
“ —Lord of Himself, a Spartan is a King.”

When thus the Prince, with obvious Grief oppress’d,
“ Canst Thou not force the Father from thy Breast?
“ Not without Pain behold one Child depart,
“ Yet bid Me tear a Nation from my Heart ?
“ —Not for all Sparta’s, all Eubœa’s Plains” —
He said, and to his Coursers gave the Reins.

Still the fond Sire pursues with suppliant Voice,
’Till, moved, the Monarch yields her to her Choice.
“ Tho’ mine by Vows, by fair Affection mine,
“ And holy Truth, and Auspices divine,
“ This Suit let fair Penelope decide,
“ Remain the Daughter, or proceed the Bride.”

O’er

O'er the quick Blush her friendly Mantle fell,
And told him all that Modesty could tell.

No longer now the Father's Fondness strove
With Patriot Virtue or acknowledged Love,
But on the Scene that parting Sighs endeared,
Fair MODESTY'S * first honoured Fane He reared.

The Daughter's Form the pictured Goddess wore,
The Daughter's Veil † before her Blushes bore,

* Pausanias, who has recorded the Story on which this little Poem is founded, tells us that this was the first Temple erected to Modesty in Greece.

† See the Veil of Modesty in the *Musæum Capitolinum*, Vol. 3. and for further Proofs of its high Antiquity, see Hom. Odyss. L. 6. Claud. Epithal. Honor. where he says,

*Et Crines festina ligat PEPLUMQUE fluentem
Allevat ——— ———*

Iphig. in Taur. Act. 4. and Colut. Rapt. Helen. L. 1. V. 381. where Hermione tears her Gold embroidered Veil on the Disappearance of Helen :

—— Aureum quoque rupit Capitis Tegmen.

And

And taught the Maids of Greece this Sovereign Law—
—She most shall conquer, who shall most withdraw.

THE END.

E

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