

SELECT WORKS
OF MR. A. COWLEY;
IN TWO VOLUMES:
With a PREFACE and NOTES by the Editor.
VOLUME THE SECOND.



Drawn & engraved by John Hall, from an Original Picture painted by Zuccaro in Enamel, in the Collection of the Hon.^{ble} Horace Walpole.

THE THIRD EDITION.

“Forgot his Epic, nay Pindaric art;
“But still we love the language of his heart.” POPE.

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A

D I S C O U R S E,

By way of VISION,

C O N C E R N I N G

The Government of OLIVER CROMWELL [a].

IT was the funeral day of the late man who made himself to be called protector. And though I bore but little affection, either to the memory of him, or to the trouble and folly of all public pageantry, yet I was forced by the importunity of my company to go along with them, and be a spectator of that solemnity,

[a] This is the best of our author's prose-works. The subject, which he had much at heart, raised his genius. There is something very noble, and almost poetical, in the plan of this Vision ; and a warm vein of eloquence runs quite through it.

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B

the

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the expectation of which had been so great, that it was said to have brought some very curious persons (and no doubt singular virtuosos) as far as from the Mount in Cornwall, and from the Orcades. I found there had been much more cost bestowed than either the dead man, or indeed death itself, could deserve. There was a mighty train of black assistants, among which, too, divers princes in the persons of their ambassadors (being infinitely afflicted for the loss of their brother) were pleased to attend; the hearse was magnificent, the idol crowned, and (not to mention all other ceremonies which are practised at royal interments, and therefore by no means could be omitted here) the vast multitude of spectators made up, as it uses to do, no small part of the spectacle itself. But yet, I know not how, the whole was so managed, that, methought, it somewhat represented the life of him for whom it was made; much noise, much tumult, much expence, much magnificence, much vain-glory;

glory ; briefly, a great show, and yet, after all this, but an ill sight. At last (for it seemed long to me, and, like his short reign too, very tedious) the whole scene passed by ; and I retired back to my chamber, weary, and I think more melancholy than any of the mourners ; where I began to reflect on the whole life of this prodigious man : and sometimes I was filled with horror and detestation of his actions, and sometimes I inclined a little to reverence and admiration of his courage, conduct, and success ; till, by these different motions and agitations of mind, rocked, as it were asleep, I fell at last into this vision ; or if you please to call it but a dream, I shall not take it ill, because the father of poets tells us, even dreams, too, are from God.

But sure it was no dream ; for I was suddenly transported afar off (whether in the body, or out of the body, like St. Paul [*b*], I know not) and found myself

[*b*] *like St. Paul*] Very injudicious, on such an occasion, to use the language of St. Paul.

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on the top of that famous hill in the island Mona, which has the prospect of three great, and not-long-since most happy, kingdoms. As soon as ever I looked on them, the *not-long-since* struck upon my memory, and called forth the sad representation of all the sins, and all the miseries, that had overwhelmed them these twenty years. And I wept bitterly for two or three hours ; and, when my present stock of moisture was all wasted, I fell a sighing for an hour more ; and, as soon as I recovered from my passion the use of speech and reason, I broke forth, as I remember (looking upon England) into this complaint :

I.

Ah, happy isle, how art thou chang'd and curst,
 Since I was born, and knew thee first !
 When peace, which had forsook the world around,
 (Frighted with noise, and the shrill trumpet's sound)
 Thee, for a private place of rest,
 And a secure retirement, chose
 Wherein to build her halcyon nest ;
 No wind durst stir abroad, the air to discompose.

2. When

2.

When all the riches of the globe beside
 Flow'd in to thee with every tide :
 When all, that nature did thy soil deny,
 The growth was of thy fruitful industry ;
 When all the proud and dreadful sea,
 And all his tributary streams,
 A constant tribute paid to thee,
 When all the liquid world was one extended Thames.

3.

When plenty in each village did appear,
 And bounty was it's steward there ;
 When gold walk'd free about in open view,
 Ere it one conquering party's prisoner grew ;
 When the religion of our state
 Had face and substance with her voice,
 Ere she, by her foolish loves of late,
 Like echo (once a nymph) turn'd only into noise.

4.

When men to men, respect and friendship bore,
 And God with reverence did adore ;
 When upon earth no kingdom could have shewn
 A happier monarch to us, than our own :

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And yet his subjects by him were
 (Which is a truth will hardly be
 Receiv'd by any vulgar ear,
A secret known to few) made happier ev'n than he.

5.

Thou dost a Chaos, and confusion now,
 A Babel, and a Bedlam grow,
And, like a frantic person, thou dost tear
The ornaments and cloaths, which thou should'st
 wear,
 And cut thy limbs ; and, if we see
 (Just as thy barbarous Britons did)
 Thy body with hypocrisy
Painted all o'er, thou think'st, thy naked shame is
 hid.

6.

The nations, which envied thee erewhile,
 Now laugh (too little 'tis to smile)
They laugh, and would have pitied thee (alas !)
But that thy faults all pity do surpass.
 Art thou the country, which didst hate
 And mock the French inconsistency ?
 And have we, have we seen of late
Less change of habits there, than governments in
 thee ?

7. Un-

OF OLIVER CROMWELL. 7

7.

Unhappy isle ! no ship of thine at sea,
Was ever toft and torn like thee.
Thy naked hulk loose on the waves does beat,
The rocks and banks around her ruin threat ;
What did thy foolish pilots ail,
To lay the compass quite aside ?
Without a law or rule to fail,
And rather take the winds, than heavens, to be their
guide ?

8.

Yet, mighty God, yet, yet, we humbly crave,
This floating isle from shipwreck save ;
And though, to wash that blood which does it
stain,
It well deserve to sink into the main ;
Yet, for the royal martyr's pray'r,
(The royal martyr prays, we know)
This guilty, perishing vessel spare ;
Hear but his soul above, and not his blood below.

I think I should have gone on, but that
I was interrupted by a strange and terrible apparition ; for there appeared to me

(arising out of the earth [c], as I conceived) the figure of a man, taller than a giant, or indeed than the shadow of any giant in the evening. His body was naked ; but that nakedness adorned, or rather deformed all over, with several figures, after the manner of the antient Britons, painted upon it : and I perceived that most of them were the representation of the late battles in our civil wars, and (if I be not much mistaken) it was the battle of Naseby that was drawn upon his breast. His eyes were like burning bras ; and there were three crowns of the same metal (as I guessed) and that looked as red-hot too, upon his head [d]. He held in his right hand a sword, that was yet bloody, and nevertheless the motto of it was, *Pax queritur bello* ; and in his left hand a thick book, upon the back of which was written

[c] *out of the earth* i. e. from a low and plebeian original.

[d] The idea of this gigantic figure seems taken from the frontispiece to Hobbes' *Leviathan*.

in letters of gold, Acts, Ordinances, Protestations, Covenants, Engagements, Declarations, Remonstrances, &c.

Though this sudden, unusual, and dreadful object might have quelled a greater courage than mine, yet so it pleased God (for there is nothing bolder than a man in a vision) that I was not at all daunted, but asked him resolutely and briefly, "What art thou?" And he said, "I am called the north-west principality, his highness, the protector of the common-wealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions belonging thereunto; for I am that angel, to whom the Almighty has committed the government of those three kingdoms, which thou seest from this place." And I answered and said, "If it be so, Sir, it seems to me that for almost these twenty years past, your highness has been absent from your charge: for not only if any angel, but if any wise and honest man had since that time been our governor, we should not have wandered thus long in these laborious
and