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The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing His Juvenile Poems - with his last corrections, additions, and improvements, as they were delivered to the editor a little before his death

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

[Epilogue to Mr. Rowe's Jane Shore. Designed for Mrs. Oldfield.]

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E P I L O G U E

T O

Mr. ROWE'S JANE SHORE.

Designed for Mrs. OLDFIELD.

PRODIGIOUS this ! the Frail-one of our Play
 From her own Sex should mercy find to-day !
 You might have held the pretty head aside,
 Peep'd in your fans, been serious, thus, and cry'd,
 The Play may pass--but that strange creature, Shore,
 I can't—indeed now—I so hate a whore— 6
 Just as a blockhead rubs his thoughtless skull,
 And thanks his stars he was not born a fool ;
 So from a sifter sinner you shall hear,
 “ How strangely you expose yourself, my dear ? ”
 But let me die, all raillery apart, 11
 Our sex are still forgiving at their heart ;
 And did not wicked custom so contrive,
 We'd be the best, good-natur'd things alive.

EPILOGUE TO JANE SHORE. 273

There are, 'tis true, who tell another tale, 15
That virtuous ladies envy while they rail;
Such rage without betrays the fire within;
In some close corner of the soul, they sin;
Still hoarding up, most scandalously nice,
Amidst their virtues a reserve of vice. 20

The godly dame, who fleshly failings damns,
Scolds with her maid, or with her chaplain crams.
Would you enjoy soft nights and solid dinners?
Faith, gallants, board with saints, and bed with sin-
ners.

Well, if our Author in the Wife offends, 25
He has a Husband that will make amends:
He draws him gentle, tender, and forgiving,
And sure such kind good creatures may be living.
In days of old, they pardon'd breach of vows,
Stern Cato's self was no relentless spouse: 30
Plu--Plutarch, what's his name, that writes his life?
Tells us, that Cato dearly lov'd his Wife:
Yet if a friend, a night or so, should need her,
He'd recommend her as a special breeder.
To lend a wife, few here would scruple make, 35
But, pray, which of you all would take her back?

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Tho' with the Stoic Chief our stage may ring,
The Stoic Husband was the glorious thing.
The man had courage, was a sage, 'tis true, 39
And lov'd his country—but what's that to you?
Those strange examples ne'er were made to fit ye
But the kind cuckold might instruct the City:
There, many an honest man may copy Cato,
Who ne'er saw naked sword, or look'd in Plato.
If, after all, you think it a disgrace, 45
That Edward's Mifs thus perks it in your face;
To see a piece of failing flesh and blood,
In all the rest so impudently good;
Faith, let the modest Matrons of the town 49
Come here in crouds, and stare the strumpet down.

