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The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford

In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

Verses in Memory of King Henry the Sixth

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ENGLISH [1]

James Cauffield Bengal Carabry
FUGITIVE PIECES.

V E R S E S

*M. Hillier
Ld. M. Burgess*

Feb. 16/18.

IN MEMORY OF

KING HENRY the SIXTH,

FOUNDER of KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

[Written February 2, 1738.]

WHILE superstition teaches to revere
The fainted calendar and letter'd year;
While bigots joy in canonizing shades,
Fictitious martyrs, visionary maids;
Haste, Gratitude, and hail this better day;
At HENRY's shrine present thy votive lay;
If this peculiarly for His be known,
Whose charity made every day his own.
But say, what shrine?—my eyes in *vain require
Th' engraven bras and monumental spire.
HENRY knows none of these—above! around!
Behold where e'er this penfile quarry's found,

* King Henry is buried obscurely at Windfor.

VOL. I.

B

Or

Or swelling into vaulted roofs its weight,
 Or shooting columns into gothic state,
 Where e'er this fanè extends its lofty frame,
 * Behold the monument to HENRY's name!

When HENRY bade this pompous temple rise,
 Nor with presumption emulate the skies,
 Art and Palladio had not reach'd the land,
 Nor methodiz'd the Vandal builder's hand:
 Wonders, unknown to rule, these piles disclose;
 The walls, as if by inspiration, rose.
 The edifice †, continued by his care,
 With equal pride had form'd the sumptuous square,
 Had not th' assassins disappointed part,
 And stab'd the growing fabric in his heart.
 More humble hands, but grateful to the mind
 That first the royal benefit design'd,
 Renew the labour ‡, re-assume the stone,
 And GEORGE's auspices the structure crown.
 No lifeless pride the rising walls contain,
 Neat without art, and regularly plain.
 What tho' with pomp unequal sinks the pile
 Beneath the grandeur of the gothic isle;
 What tho' the modern master's weaker hand
 Unexecuted drops what HENRY plann'd;
 This for the sons of men is an abode,
 But that the temple of the *living God!*

Ascend the temple! join the vocal choir,
 Let harmony your raptur'd souls inspire.
 Hark how the tuneful solemn organs blow,
 Awfully strong, elaborately flow;

* This thought is copied from the inscription
 over Sir Christopher Wren, who is buried under
 the dome of St. Paul, of which he was the archi-
 tect. "—si queras monumentum, suspice!"

† The original plan is extant in the library

of the college.

‡ The new building was raised at the expence
 of the college; and by contributions of the minis-
 ters, nobility and others.

Now

Now to yon empyrean seats above
 Raise meditation on the wings of love;
 Now falling, sinking, dying to the moan
 Once warbled sad by Jesse's contrite son,
 Breathe in each note a conscience thro' the sense,
 And call forth tears from soft-ey'd penitence.
 Along the vaulted roof sweet strains decay,
 And liquid Hallelujahs melt away;
 The floating accents less'ning as they flow,
 Like distant arches gradually low.
 Taste has not vitiated our purer ear,
 Perverting sounds to merriment of pray'r.
 Here mild devotion bends her pious knee,
 Calm and unruffled as a summer sea;
 Avoids each wild enthusiastic tone,
 Nor borrows utt'rance from a tongue unknown.

O HENRY! from thy lucid orb regard
 How purer hands thy pious cares reward;
 Now Heav'n illuminates thy godlike mind
 From superstition's papal gloom refin'd:
 Behold thy sons with that religion blest,
 Which thou wou'dst own and CAROLINE profess'd—
 Great*, mournful name—struck with the well-known sound,
 Their patroness! the muses droop around,
 Unstrung their lyres, inanimate their lays,
 Forget to celebrate e'en HENRY's praise—
 I cease, ye muses, to implore your song;
 I cease your tuneless silent grief to wrong;
 And HENRY's praise refer to that great day,
 Which †, what he was, shall, when it comes, display.

* Queen Caroline died in the preceding November.

† The thought of the last line alludes to an epitaph in the chapel of King's college, which is

mentioned in the Spectator: "Hic situs est N. N. Qualis eram, Dies istic cum venerit, scies:" which being a monkish verse, Mr. Addison has changed the last word *scies* for *indicabit*.