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The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford

In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

Advertisement to a Catalogue of the Collection of King James II.

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TO A
CATALOGUE
OF THE
COLLECTION of PICTURES, &c.
BELONGING TO
KING JAMES the SECOND.

THE following catalogues, as well as that of king Charles's collection published last summer, were purchased by the * editor at the sale of Mr. VERTUE. The first [that of king James's collection] was transcribed from a book in the possession of the late earl of Oxford, with the king's arms on the covers, which probably was for his majesty's own use. There are short descriptions of each picture, but no measures. In one leaf it is said, that the Mantuan collection, which by the former catalogue seems to have been greatly damaged, cost king Charles fourscore thousand pounds. It adds, that part of the collection was purchased of one Mr. Frosely; another part, presented to the same king by the lord abbot Montagu, almoner to queen Henrietta-Maria; and a handsome number, the gift of the States to Charles II. They had belonged to his father, were bought during the rebellion by mynheer Reyntz, a virtuoso, [whose collection was engraved, with prints of these very pictures] and on his death were purchased and re-

* William Bathoe, Bookseller.

stored

stored by the States. The catalogue is signed by Mr. Chiffinch, of the king's bed chamber; and in the last leaf are some memorandums of furniture in the custody of different wardrobe-keepers, and quantities of royal plate, all which seem to have been specified in lord Oxford's manuscript.

The catalogue of queen Caroline's closet was taken by Mr. Vertue himself in 1743, and contains an account of a very valuable cabinet; particularly of that curious parcel of original drawings of Holbein, the sketches for his portraits in oil. They are not only some of his most masterly performances, but preserve representations of many illustrious persons of the court of Henry VIII. and of whom no other pictures are known. There are portraits of the accomplished earl of Surrey at different stages of his life; of an admired poet at the same time, lord Vaux; of two or three of the queens, and other beauties. It is pity that so valuable a treasure should not be ensured to the public by engravings*. They seem to have composed that book mentioned in king Charles's collection, page 4, which his majesty exchanged with the lord chamberlain Pembroke for a Saint George by Raphael, and which his lordship gave to that great collector the earl of Arundel. A few of the same set are in the possession of the lady Elizabeth Germain. I do not doubt but it is the same book mentioned with such eulogiums, and so deservedly, by Saunderson, in his *Graphice*, page 79. There are many other curious pieces in this cabinet, assembled by her late majesty, who had great pleasure in collecting and preserving the dispersed remains of the collection belonging to the crown, who formed the gallery of royal portraits at Kensington, and was the gracious patroness of every art.

* We cannot help lamenting, that the portraits [at Windsor] of an age so celebrated for beauty as the reign of Charles II. should likewise remain shut up from the public, and be liable to be totally lost, by not being engraved.

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