

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

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CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH CLASSICS

The Writings
of
Matthew Prior

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

MATTHEW PRIOR

Born 1664

Died 1721

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

MATTHEW PRIOR

POEMS
ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS

THE TEXT EDITED BY
A. R. WALLER, M.A.



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at the University Press
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTE.

IN 1718 a folio edition of Prior's poems was published by subscription, containing all the poems previously issued by him which he wished to acknowledge and preserve, carefully revised, and accompanied by others then printed for the first time. This folio was issued in three sizes. It will be remembered that a passage in Prior's will runs thus:—'To the College of St. John the Evangelist, in Cambridge, I leave Such and so many of my Books, as shall be judged to amount unto the Value of Two Hundred Pounds: These Books, with my own Poems in the greatest Paper, to be kept in the Library, together with the Books which I have already given.' Of these eighteenth-century examples of large-paper issues Mr Austin Dobson remarks, 'with the small copy of 1718, Johnson might have knocked down Osborne the bookseller; with the same work in its tallest form....Osborne the bookseller might have laid prostrate the "Great Lexicographer" himself.' Those who have seen the 'greatest' copy will not doubt the truth of this statement. Desirous of being suitably equipped in this 'Battle of the Books,' I have used a medium copy as the basis of the present text, a copy measuring $16\frac{3}{8}$ ins. \times $10\frac{3}{4}$ ins. Even this is a handsome folio, with engraved initial letters, head-pieces and tail-pieces, of the usual mythological nature. 'The Names of the Subscribers' who received the volume in

v

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTE

1719 in exchange for some four thousand guineas are duly given. These names occupy twenty double-columned pages, and it did not seem desirable to reprint them here. *The Reverend Dr Peter Drelincourt, Dean of Armagh*, known to students of Defoe, in connection with 'The Apparition of Mrs Veal,' is a subscriber; William Congreve, *Esq.*, *Sir Godfrey Kneller, Bar.*, *Sir Isaac Newton*, each take a copy, and so does Alexander Pope, *Esq.*; while Jonathan Swift, *D.D.*, *Dean of St. Patricks, Dublin*, subscribes for '*Five Books*,' and, low down on the list, appears the name of *Sir John Vanbrugh*, architect and dramatist.

Two or three previous collections of Prior's poems had appeared. In 1707 a volume entitled '*Poems on Several Occasions: consisting of Odes, Satyrs and Epistles; With some Select Translations and Imitations*,' was published bearing the imprint, 'London: Printed for R. Burrough, and J. Baker, at the *Sun* and *Moon* in *Cornhill*, and E. Curll, at the *Peacock* without *Temple-Bar*,' with three lines from Roscommon on the title-page:

*'Be not too Rigidly Censorious;
A String may farr, in the Best Master's Hand,
And the most Skilful Archer miss his Aim.'*

Its Contents are given in the Appendix to the present edition (p. 362). Two years later, Prior published a volume of '*Poems on Several Occasions*. London: Printed for *Jacob Tonson*, within *Grays-Inn Gate* next *Grays-Inn Lane*,' in the Preface to which, referring to the issue of 1707, he says: '*a Collection of Poems has lately appeared under my Name, tho' without my Knowledge, in which the Publisher has given me the Honour of some Things that did not belong to me, and has Transcribed others so imperfectly, that I hardly knew them to be mine.*'

vi

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTE

(See p. xxiii, the Preface and Dedication of the 1709 volume forming a part of the edition of 1718.) Since all the poems in the 1707 edition save the first two ('A *Satyr, on the Modern Translators of Ovid's Epistles*' and 'The *Seventh Satyr* of Juvenal, *imitated*') are known to be by Prior, the first portion of the above disclaimer must refer to these two. They will be included in the second volume of the present edition, and they need not, therefore, be discussed here. A collation of the earlier issues of Prior's publications with his later collected versions induces the belief that the second portion of the above disclaimer may also be regarded in a diplomatic or Pickwickian sense. A reference to the variants given in the Appendix to this volume will show that Prior's final forms, especially in his State Odes, differ as greatly from their earlier acknowledged versions as do the texts of the poems of 1709 from the '*imperfectly...Transcribed*' copies of 1707, and it will be seen that, in the case of the 'Prologue, spoken at Court before the Queen, On Her Majesty's Birth-Day, 1704,' Prior's first version of 1704 is practically identical with the 1707 'unauthorised' version, though greatly altered when he issued, in 1709, the '*indifferent Collection of Poems, for fear of being thought the Author of a worse.*'

On the whole, therefore, it seemed best to give in the present volume, the text of Prior's last collected issue, following the folio of 1718, and in the Appendix to give not only the variants of the acknowledged edition of 1709, but also (a) those of the separate early states of the poems where possible, (b) those of the repudiated collection of 1707, and (c) those of 'A Second Collection of Poems on Several Occasions. By Matthew Prior, Esq.,' which was published in London in 1716, 'Printed for J. Roberts near the *Oxford Arms*

vii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTE

in *Warwick-Lane*. Price One Shilling.' The four collections are distinguished in the Notes by the letters A (= 1707), B (= 1709), C (= 1716) and D (= 1718). The 1716 edition also was disowned, in the London Gazette, March 24, 1716. There can be little doubt, however, of the truth of Pope's statement (*Letters*, ed. Elwin and Courthope, iii. 194–5) that 'Mr Prior himself thought it prudent to disown' certain poems, i.e. the two Satires above referred to, which also appear in the 1716 volume. For the contents of C see Appendix, p. 362.

The original spelling and punctuation, etc., of the folio of 1718 have been preserved, and the few misprints corrected are noted. The folio is excellently printed, the errors of the press are remarkably few, and there is no doubt that it presents the final form of those poems which at the date of its publication Prior wished to preserve.

I have not reprinted the Latin version of the *Carmen Seculare*, by Tho. Dibben, of Trinity College, Cambridge, referred to in the Preface (p. xxiii), nor *The Nut-brown Maid. A Poem, written Three Hundred Years Since*, upon which Prior's *Henry and Emma* (pp. 138–158) was modelled. Mrs Elizabeth Singer's *Pastoral* (see pp. 26 and 27) has been printed in smaller type to differentiate it from Prior's own work, and the same course has been adopted in a few other similar cases.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help given me by Mr George A. Brown in the collation of some of the early editions.

The second volume of the present edition is in the press. It will contain the remainder of Prior's writings in prose and verse, the poems published before the
viii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTE

folio of 1718 but not included therein, the poems published between 1718 and 1721, the date of Prior's death, and those posthumously published. Through the kindness of the Marquis of Bath it will also contain the Prose Dialogues of Prior, hitherto unpublished, from the Longleat MSS.

A. R. WALLER.

CAMBRIDGE,

25 June, 1905.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

POEMS
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SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To the Right Honorable
LIONEL,
 EARL of
DORSET and *MIDDLE-SEX*.

IT looks like no great Compliment to Your Lordship, that I prefix Your Name to this Epistle; when, in the Preface, I declare the Book is publish'd almost against my Inclination. But, in all Cases, My Lord, You have an Hereditary Right to whatever may be called Mine. Many of the following Pieces were written by the Command of Your Excellent Father; and most of the rest, under His Protection and Patronage.

The particular Felicity of Your Birth, My Lord; The natural Endowments of Your Mind, (which, without suspicion of Flattery) I may tell You, are very Great; The good Education with which these Parts have been improved; and Your coming into the World, and seeing Men very early; make Us expect from Your Lordship all the Good, which our Hopes can form in Favour of a young Nobleman. *Tu Marcellus eris,*—Our Eyes and our Hearts are turned on You. You must be a Judge and Master of Polite Learning; a Friend and Patron to Men of Letters and Merit; a faithful and able Counsellor to Your Prince; a true Patriot to your Countrey; an Ornament and Honor to the Titles You possess; and in one Word, a Worthy Son to the Great Earl of DORSET.

It is as impossible to mention that Name, without desiring to Commend the Person; as it is to give Him the Commendations which His Virtues deserved. But I assure my self, the most agreeable Compliment I can bring Your Lordship, is to

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

pay a grateful Respect to Your Father's Memory. And my own Obligations to Him were such; that the World must pardon my Endeavoring at His Character, however I may miscarry in the Attempt.

A Thousand Ornaments and Graces met in the Composition of this Great Man; and contributed to make Him universally Belov'd and Esteem'd. The Figure of His Body was Strong, Proportionable, Beautiful: and were His Picture well Drawn, it must deserve the Praise given to the Pourtraits of RAPHAEL; and, at once, create Love and Respect. While the Greatness of His Mein inform'd Men, they were approaching the Nobleman; the Sweetness of it invited them to come nearer to the Patron. There was in His Look and Gesture something that is easier conceived than described; that gain'd upon You in His Favor, before He spake one Word. His Behavior was Easie and Courteous to all; but Distinguished and Adapted to each Man in particular, according to his Station and Quality. His Civility was free from the Formality of Rule, and flowed immediately from His good Sense.

Such were the Natural Faculties and Strength of His Mind, that He had occasion to borrow very little from Education: and He owed those Advantages to His own Good Parts, which Others acquire by Study and Imitation. His Wit was Abundant, Noble, Bold. Wit in most Writers is like a Fountain in a Garden, supply'd by several Streams brought thro' artful Pipes, and playing sometimes agreeably. But the Earl of DORSET's was a Source rising from the Top of a Mountain, which forced it's own way, and with inexhaustible Supplies, delighted and enriched the Country thro' which it pass'd. This extraordinary Genius was accompany'd with so true a Judgment in all Parts of fine Learning, that whatever Subject was before Him, He Discours'd as properly of it, as if the peculiar Bent of His Study had been apply'd That way; and He perfected His Judgment by Reading and Digesting the best Authors, tho' He quoted Them very seldom.

Contemnebat potius literas, quàm nesciebat:

and rather seem'd to draw His Knowledge from His own Stores, than to owe it to any Foreign Assistance.

The Brightness of His Parts, the Solidity of His Judgment,

xiv

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

and the Candor and Generosity of His Temper distinguish'd Him in an Age of great Politeness, and at a Court abounding with Men of the finest Sense and Learning. The most eminent Masters in their several Ways appeal'd to His Determination. WALLER thought it an Honor to consult Him in the Softness and Harmony of his Verse: and Dr. SPRAT, in the Delicacy and Turn of his Prose. DRYDEN determines by Him, under the Character of *Eugenius*; as to the Laws of Dramatick Poetry. BUTLER ow'd it to Him, that the Court tasted his *Hudibras*: WICHERLEY, that the Town liked his *Plain Dealer*: and the late Duke of BUCKINGHAM deferr'd to publish his *Rehearsal*; 'till He was sure (as He expressed it) that my Lord DORSET would not *Rehearse* upon Him again. If We wanted Foreign Testimony; LA FONTAINE and S^r. EVREMONT have acknowledg'd, that He was a Perfect Master in the Beauty and Fineness of their Language, and of All that They call *les Belles Lettres*. Nor was this Nicety of His Judgement confined only to Books and Literature; but was the Same in Statuary, Painting, and all other Parts of Art. BERNINI would have taken His Opinion upon the Beauty and Attitude of a Figure; and King CHARLES did not agree with LELY, that my Lady CLEVELAND's Picture was Finished, 'till it had the Approbation of my Lord BUCKEHURST.

As the Judgement which He made of Others Writings, could not be refuted; the Manner in which He wrote, will hardly ever be Equalled. Every one of His Pieces is an Ingot of Gold, intrinsically and solidly Valuable; such as, wrought or beaten thinner, would shine thro' a whole Book of any other Author. His Thought was always New; and the Expression of it so particularly Happy, that every body knew immediately, it could only be my Lord DORSET's: and yet it was so Easy too, that Every body was ready to imagine himself capable of writing it. There is a Lustre in His Verses, like That of the Sun in CLAUDE LORAINÉ's Landskips; it looks Natural, and is Inimitable. His Love-Verses have a Mixture of Delicacy and Strength: they convey the Wit of PETRONIUS in the Softness of TIBULLUS. His Satyr indeed is so severely Pointed, that in it He appears, what His Great Friend the Earl of ROCHESTER (that other Prodigy of the Age) says He was;

The best good Man, with the worst-natur'd Muse.

xv

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

Yet even here, That Character may justly be Applied to Him,
which PERSIUS gives of the best Writer in this Kind, that ever
lived :

*Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
Tangit, & admissus circum præcordia ludit.*

And the Gentleman had always so much the better of the Satyrists, that the Persons touched did not know where to fix their Resentments; and were forced to appear rather Ashamed than Angry. Yet so far was this great Author from Valuing himself upon His Works, that He cared not what became of them, though every body else did. There are many Things of His not Extant in Writing, which however are always repeated: like the Verses and Sayings of the Ancient DRUIDS, they retain an Universal Veneration; tho' they are preserved only by Memory.

As it is often seen, that those Men who are least Qualified for Business, love it most; my Lord DORSET's Character was, that He certainly understood it, but did not care for it.

Coming very Young to the Possession of two Plentiful Estates, and in an Age when Pleasure was more in Fashion than Business; He turned his Parts rather to Books and Conversation, than to Politicks, and what more immediately related to the Public. But whenever the Safety of His Countrey demanded His Assistance, He readily entred into the most Active Parts of Life; and underwent the greatest Dangers, with a Constancy of Mind, which shewed, that He had not only read the Rules of Philosophy, but understood the Practice of them.

In the first *Dutch* War He went a Volunter under the Duke of YORK: His Behavior, during That Campaign, was such, as distinguish'd the SACKVILLE descended from that HILDEBRAND of the Name, who was one of the greatest Captains that came into ENGLAND with the Conqueror. But His making a Song the Night before the Engagement (and it was one of the prettiest that ever was made) carries with it so sedate a Presence of Mind, and such an unusual Gallantry, that it deserves as much to be Recorded, as ALEXANDER's jesting with his Soldiers, before he passed the GRANICUS: or WILLIAM the First of ORANGE, giving Order over Night for a Battel, and

xvi

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

desiring to be called in the Morning, lest He should happen to Sleep too long.

From hence, during the remaining Part of King CHARLES's Reign, He continued to Live in Honorable Leisure. He was of the Bed-chamber to the King; and Possessed not only His Master's Favor, but (in a great Degree) His Familiarity; never leaving the Court, but when He was sent to That of FRANCE, on some short Commissions and Embassies of Compliment: as if the King designed to show the FRENCH, (who would be thought the Politest Nation) that one of the Finest Gentlemen in EUROPE was His Subject; and that We had a Prince who understood His Worth so well, as not to suffer Him to be long out of His Presence.

The succeeding Reign neither relish'd my Lord's Wit, nor approved His Maxims: so He retired altogether from Court. But as the irretrievable Mistakes of That unhappy Government, went on to Threaten the Nation with something more Terrible than a *Dutch War*: He thought it became Him to resume the Courage of His Youth, and once more to Engage Himself in defending the Liberty of His Countrey. He entred into the Prince of ORANGE's Interest; and carried on His Part of That great Enterprise here in LONDON, and under the Eye of the Court; with the same Resolution, as His Friend and Fellow-Patriot the late Duke of DEVONSHIRE did in open Arms at NOTTINGHAM; 'till the Dangers of those Times increased to Extremity; and just Apprehensions arose for the Safety of the Princess, our present Glorious Queen: then the Earl of DORSET was thought the properest Guide of Her necessary Flight, and the Person under whose Courage and Direction the Nation might most safely Trust a Charge so Precious and Important.

After the Establishment of Their late Majesties upon the Throne, there was Room again at Court for Men of my Lord's Character. He had a Part in the Councils of those Princes; a great Share in their Friendship; and all the Marks of Distinction, with which a good Government could reward a Patriot. He was made Chamberlain of their Majesties Household; a Place which He so eminently Adorn'd, by the Grace of His Person, the Fineness of His Breeding, and the Knowledge and Practice of what was Decent and Magnificent; that He

xvii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

could only be Rivalled in these Qualifications by one great Man, who has since held the same Staff.

The last Honors He received from His Sovereign, (and indeed they were the Greatest which a Subject could receive) were, that He was made Knight of the Garter, and constituted One of the Regents of the Kingdom, during His Majesty's Absence. But his Health, about that time, sensibly Declining; and the Public Affairs not Threatned by any Imminent Danger; He left the Business to Those who delighted more in the State of it; and appeared only sometimes at Council, to show his Respect to the Commission: giving as much Leisure as He could to the Relief of those Pains, with which it pleased God to Afflict Him; and Indulging the Reflexions of a Mind, that had looked thro' the World with too piercing an Eye, and was grown weary of the Prospect. Upon the whole; it may very justly be said of this Great Man, with Regard to the Public, that thro' the Course of his Life, He Acted like an able Pilot in a long Voyage; contented to sit Quiet in the Cabin, when the Winds were allayed, and the Waters smooth; but Vigilant and Ready to resume the Helm, when the Storm arose, and the Sea grew Tumultuous.

I ask Your Pardon, My Lord, if I look yet a little more nearly into the late Lord DORSET's Character: if I examine it not without some Intention of finding Fault; and (which is an odd way of making a Panegyric) set his Blemishes and Imperfections in open View.

The Fire of His Youth carried Him to some Excesses: but they were accompanied with a most lively Invention, and true Humour. The little Violences and easie Mistakes of a Night too gayly spent, (and That too in the Beginning of Life) were always set Right, the next Day, with great Humanity, and ample Retribution. His Faults brought their Excuse with them, and his very Failings had their Beauties. So much Sweetness accompanied what He said, and so great Generosity what He did; that People were always prepossess'd in his Favor: and it was in Fact true, when the late Earl of ROCHESTER said, in Jest, to King CHARLES; That He did not know how it was, but my Lord DORSET might do any thing, yet was never to Blame.

He was naturally very subject to Passion; but the short
xviii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

Gust was soon over, and served only to set off the Charms of his Temper, when more Compos'd. That very Passion broke out with a Force of Wit, which made even Anger agreeable: While it lasted, He said and forgot a thousand Things, which other Men would have been glad to have studied and wrote: but the Impetuosity was Corrected upon a Moment's Reflection; and the Measure altered with such Grace and Delicacy, that You could scarce perceive where the Key was Changed.

He was very Sharp in his Reflections; but never in the wrong Place. His Darts were sure to Wound; but they were sure too to hit None but those whose Follies gave Him very fair Aim. And when He allowed no Quarter; He had certainly been provoked by more than common Error: by Men's tedious and circumstantial Recitals of their Affairs; or by their multiply'd Questions about his own: by extreme Ignorance and Impertinence; or the mixture of these, an ill-judg'd and never-ceasing Civility: or lastly, by the two Things which were his utter Aversion; the Insinuation of a Flatterer, and the Whisper of a Tale-bearer.

If therefore, We set the Piece in it's worst Position; if it's Faults be most exposed, the Shades will still appear very finely join'd with their Lights; and every Imperfection will be diminished by the Lustre of some Neighb'ring Virtue. But if We turn the great Drawings and wonderful Colourings to their true Light; the Whole must appear Beautiful, Noble, Admirable.

He possessed all those Virtues in the highest Degree, upon which the Pleasure of Society, and the Happiness of Life depend: and He exercised them with the greatest Decency, and best Manners. As good Nature is said, by a great *Author, to belong more particularly to the ENGLISH, than any other Nation; it may again be said, that it belonged more particularly to the late Earl of DORSET, than to any other ENGLISH Man.

A kind Husband He was, without Fondness: and an indulgent Father without Partiality. So extraordinary good a Master, that This Quality ought indeed to have been number'd among his Defects: for He was often worse served than became his Station; from his Unwillingness to assume an Authority too Severe. And, during those little Transports of Passion, to

* Sprat, *Hist. of the Royal Society*.

xix

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

which I just now said He was subject; I have known his Servants get into his way, that They might make a Merit of it immediately after: for He that had the good Fortune to be Chid, was sure of being Rewarded for it.

His Table was one of the Last, that gave Us an Example of the Old House-keeping of an ENGLISH Nobleman. A Freedom reigned at it, which made every one of his Guests think Himself at Home: and an Abundance, which shewed that the Master's Hospitality extended to many More, than Those who had the Honor to sit at Table with Him.

In his Dealings with Others; his Care and Exactness, that every Man should have his Due, was such, that You would think He had never seen a Court: the Politeness and Civility with which this Justice was administred, would convince You He never had lived out of One.

He was so strict an Observer of his Word, that no Consideration whatever, could make him break it: yet so cautious, lest the Merit of his Act should arise from that Obligation only; that He usually did the greatest Favors, without making any previous Promise. So inviolable was He in his Friendship; and so kind to the Character of Those, whom He had once Honored with a more intimate Acquaintance; that nothing less than a Demonstration of some Essential Fault, could make Him break with Them: and then too, his good Nature did not consent to it, without the greatest Reluctance and Difficulty. Let me give one Instance of this amongst many. When, as Lord Chamberlain, He was obliged to take the King's Pension from Mr. DRYDEN, who had long before put Himself out of a Possibility of Receiving any Favor from the Court: my Lord allowed Him an Equivalent, out of his own Estate. However displeased with the Conduct of his old Acquaintance, He relieved his Necessities; and while He gave Him his Assistance in Private; in Public, He extenuated and pitied his Error.

The Foundation indeed of these Excellent Qualities, and the Perfection of my Lord DORSET's Character, was, That unbounded Charity which ran through the whole Tenor of his Life; and sat as visibly Predominant over the other Faculties of his Soul; as She is said to do in Heaven, above Her Sister Virtues.

Crouds of Poor daily thronged his Gates, expecting thence

xx

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

their Bread: and were still lessened by His sending the most proper Objects of his Bounty to Apprenticeships, or Hospitals. The Lazar and the Sick, as He accidentally saw them, were removed from the Street to the Physician: and Many of Them not only restored to Health; but supplied with what might enable Them to resume their former Callings, and make their future Life happy. The Prisoner has often been released, by my Lord's paying the Debt; and the Condemned has been saved by his Intercession with the Sovereign; where He thought the Letter of the Law too rigid. To Those whose Circumstances were such as made Them ashamed of their Poverty; He knew how to bestow his Munificence, without offending their Modesty: and under the Notion of frequent Presents, gave Them what amounted to a Subsistence. Many yet alive know This to be true, though He told it to None, nor ever was more uneasy, than when any one mentioned it to Him.

We may find among the *Greeks* and *Latins*, TIBULLUS, and GALLUS; the Noblemen that writ Poetry: AUGUSTUS and MÆCENAS; the Protectors of Learning: ARISTIDES, the good Citizen; and ATTICUS, the well-bred Friend: and bring Them in, as Examples, of my Lord DORSET's Wit; His Judgment; His Justice; and His Civility. But for His Charity, My Lord, We can scarce find a Parallel in History it self.

TITUS was not more the *Deliciæ Humani generis*, on this Account, than my Lord DORSET was. And, without any Exageration, that Prince did not do more good in Proportion, out of the Revenue of the *Roman* Empire, than Your Father, out of the Income of a private Estate. Let this, my Lord, remain to You and Your Posterity a Possession for ever, to be Imitated, and if possible, to be Excelled.

As to my own Particular, I scarce knew what Life was, sooner than I found my self obliged to His Favor; nor have had Reason to feel any Sorrow, so sensibly as That of His Death.

*Ille dies—quem semper acerbum
Semper honoratum (sic Dī voluistis) habebō.*

ÆNEAS could not reflect upon the Loss of His own Father with greater Piety, my Lord, than I must recall the Memory of Your's: and when I think whose Son I am writing to, the

xxi

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-63449-7 - Matthew Prior: Poems On Several Occasions

Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION

least I promise my self from Your Goodness is an uninterrupted Continuance of Favor, and a Friendship for Life. To which that I may with some Justice Intitle my self, I send Your Lordship a Dedication, not filled with a long Detail of Your Praises, but with my sincerest Wishes, that You may Deserve them; That You may Employ those extraordinary Parts and Abilities, with which Heaven has blessed You, to the Honor of Your Family, the Benefit of Your Friends, and the Good of Your Country; That all Your Actions may be Great, Open, and Noble, such as may tell the World, whose Son, and whose Successor You are.

What I now offer to Your Lordship is a Collection of Poetry, a kind of Garland of Good Will. If any Verses of My Writing should appear in Print, under another Name and Patronage, than That of an Earl of DORSET; People might suspect them not to be Genuine. I have attained my present End, if these Poems prove the Diversion of some of Your Youthful Hours, as they have been occasionally the Amusement of some of Mine; and I humbly hope, that as I may hereafter bind up my fuller Sheaf, and lay some Pieces of a very different Nature (the Product of my severer Studies) at Your Lordship's Feet, I shall engage Your more serious Reflection: Happy, if in all my Endeavors I may contribute to Your Delight, or to Your Instruction. I am, with all Duty and Respect,

MY LORD,

*Your Lordship's**most Obedient, and**most Humble Servant,*

MAT. PRIOR.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

THE Greatest Part of what I have Written having already been Published, either singly or in some of the Miscellanies; it would be too late for Me to make any Excuse for appearing in Print: But a Collection of Poems has lately appeared under my Name, tho' without my Knowledge, in which the Publisher has given Me the Honor of some Things that did not belong to Me; and has Transcribed others so imperfectly, that I hardly knew them to be Mine. This has obliged Me, in my own Defence, to look back upon some of those lighter Studies, which I ought long since to have quitted, and to Publish an indifferent Collection of Poems, for fear of being thought the Author of a worse.

Thus I beg Pardon of the Public for Reprinting some Pieces, which, as they came singly from their first Impression, have (I fancy) lain long and quietly in Mr. TONSON's Shop; and adding others to them, which were never before Printed, and might have lain as quietly, and perhaps more safely, in a Corner of my own Study.

The Reader will, I hope, make Allowance for their having been written at very distant Times, and on very different Occasions; and take them as they happen to come, Public Panegyrics, Amorous Odes, Serious Reflections, or Idle Tales, the Product of his leisure Hours, who had Business enough upon his Hands, and was only a Poet by Accident.

I take this Occasion to thank my good Friend and School-fellow Mr. DIBBEN, for his excellent Version of the *Carmen Seculare*; though my Gratitude may justly carry a little Envy with it: for I believe the most accurate Judges will find the Translation exceed the Original.

I must likewise own my self obliged to Mrs. SINGER, who has given Me Leave to Print a Pastoral of Her Writing; That Poem having produced the Verses immediately following it. I wish She might be prevailed with to publish some other Pieces of that Kind, in which the Softness of Her Sex, and the Fineness of Her Genius, conspire to give Her a very distinguishing Character.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

POSTSCRIPT.

I Must help my Preface by a Postscript, to tell the Reader, that there is Ten Years Distance between my writing the One and the Other; and that (whatever I thought then, and have somewhere said, that I would publish no more Poetry) He will find several Copies of Verses scattered through this Edition, which were not printed in the First. Those relating to the Publick stand in the Order They did before, and according to the several Years, in which They were written; however the Disposition of our National Affairs, the Actions, or the Fortunes of some Men, and the Opinions of others may have changed. Prose, and other Human Things may take what Turn they can; but Poetry, which pretends to have something of Divinity in it, is to be more permanent. Odes once printed cannot well be altered, when the Author has already said, that He expects His Work should Live for Ever. And it had been very foolish in my Friend HORACE, if some Years after His Exegi Monumentum, He should have desired to see his Building taken down again.

The Dedication likewise is Reprinted to the Earl of DORSET, in the foregoing Leaves, without any Alteration; though I had the fairest Opportunity, and the strongest Inclination to have added a great deal to it. The blooming Hopes, which I said the World expected from my then very Young Patron, have been confirmed by most Noble and distinguished First-Fruits; and His Life is going on towards a plentiful Harvest of all accumulated Virtues. He has in Fact exceeded whatever the Fondness of my Wishes could invent in His Favor: His equally Good and Beautiful Lady enjoys in Him an Indulgent, and Obliging Husband; His Children, a Kind, and Careful Father; and His Acquaintance, a Faithful, Generous, and Polite Friend. His Fellow-Peers have attended to the Perswasion of His Eloquence; and have been convinced by the Solidity of His Reasoning. He has long since deserved and attained

xxiv

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Edited by A. R. Waller

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

POSTSCRIPT

the Honor of the Garter. He has managed some of the greatest Charges of the Kingdom with known Ability; and laid them down with entire Disinterestment. And as He continues the Exercises of these eminent Virtues (which that He may do to a very old Age, shall be my perpetual Wish) He may be One of the Greatest Men that our Age, or possibly our Nation has bred; and leave Materials for a Panegyric, not unworthy the Pen of some future PLINY.

From so Noble a Subject as the Earl of DORSET, to so mean a one as my self, is (I confess) a very Pindaric Transition. I shall only say one Word, and trouble t[h]e Reader no further. I published my Poems formerly, as Monsieur JOURDAIN sold his Silk: He would not be thought a Tradesman; but ordered some Pieces to be measured out to his particular Friends. Now I give up my Shop, and dispose of all my Poetical Goods at once: I must therefore desire, that the Public would please to take them in the Gross; and that every Body would turn over what He does not like.

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[More information](#)
