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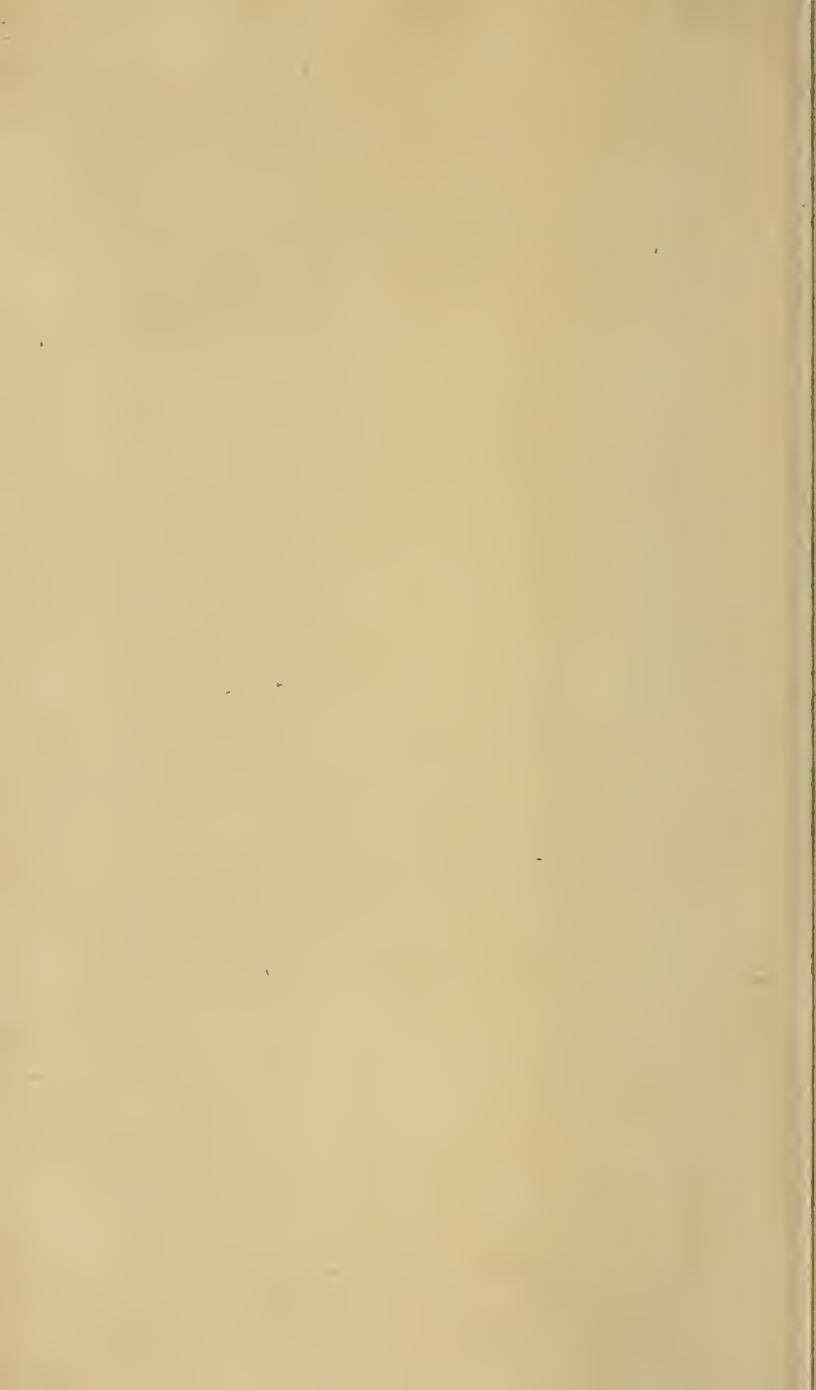
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JOHN ROBINSON,

B. N. C.



THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS.

WITH
PREFACES,
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,
BY
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

Re-edited,

WITH NEW BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL MATTER,
BY J. AIKIN, M.D.

VOL. VI.

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1802.

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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
EDMUND SPENSER.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

FROM
THE TEXT OF J. UPTON.

WITH A
PREFACE, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,
BY J. AIKIN, M.D.

VOL. VI.

THE

AMERICAN

REVIEW

OF THE

PROGRESS OF THE

REPUBLICAN PARTY

IN THE

WEST

AND

THE

C O N T E N T S

OF THE

SIXTH VOLUME.

HYMNS.

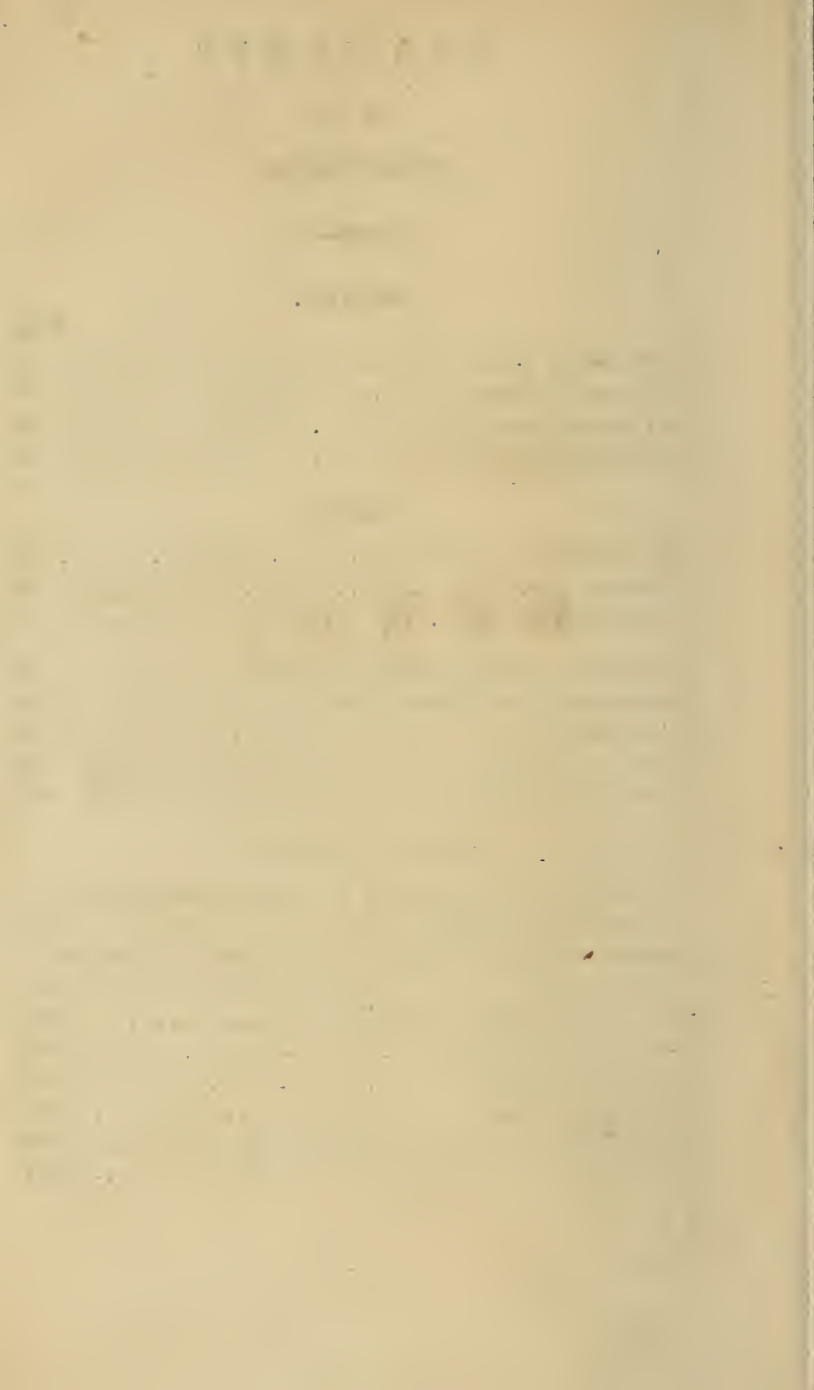
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H Y M N S.

27501

To the right Honourable and most vertuous Ladies

THE LADY MARGARET,

COUNTESS OF CUMBERLAND;

AND THE LADY MARY,

COUNTESS OF WARWICK.

HAVING, in the greener times of my youth, composed these former two Hymns in the praise of love and beauty, and finding that the same too much pleased those of like age and disposition, which being too vehemently carried with that kind of affection, do rather suck out poison to their strong passion, than honey to their honest delight, I was moved by the one of you two most excellent Ladies to call in the same; but being unable so to do, by reason that many copies thereof were formerly scattered abroad, I resolved at least to amend, and, by way of retraction, to reform them, making (instead of those two Hymns of earthly or natural love and beauty) two others of heavenly and celestial; the which I do dedicate jointly unto you two honourable sisters, as to the most excellent and rare ornaments of all true love and beauty, both in the one and the other kind; humbly besecching you to

DEDICATION.

vouchsafe the patronage of them, and to accept this my humble service, in lieu of the great graces and honourable favours which ye daily show unto me, until such time as I may, by better means, yield you some more notable testimony of my thankful mind and dutiful happiness. And even so I pray for your happiness.

Your Honours most bounden ever,

In all humble service,

Greenwich this first of
September, 1596.

EDMUND SPENSER.

AN HYMN

IN HONOUR OF LOVE.

LOVE, that long since hast to thy mighty powro
Perforce subdu'd my poor captived heart,
And raging now therein with restless stowre,
Dost tyrannize in every weaker part,
Fain would I seek to ease my bitter smart 5
By any service I might do to thee,
Or ought that else might to thee pleasing be.

And now t' assuage the force of this new flame,
And make thee more propitious in my need,
I mean to sing the praises of thy name, 10
And thy victorious conquests to areed,
By which thou madest many hearts to bleed
Of mighty victors, with wide wounds inbru'd,
And by thy cruel darts to thee subdu'd.

Only I fear my wits enfeebled late, 15
Through the sharp sorrows which thou hast me bred,
Should faint, and words should fail me to relate
The wondrous triumphs of thy great god-head :
But if thou wouldst vouchsafe to overspread
Me with the shadow of thy gentle wing, 20
I should enabled be thy acts to sing.

Come, then, O come, thou mighty God of Love!
 Out of thy silver bowres and secret bliss,
 Where thou dost sit in Venus' lap above,
 Bathing thy wings in her ambrosial kiss, 25
 That sweeter far than any nectar is;
 Come softly, and my feeble breast inspire
 With gentle fury, kindled of thy fire.

And ye, sweet Muses! which have often proved
 The piercing points of his avengeful darts; 30
 And ye, fair Nymphes! which oftentimes have loved
 The cruel worker of your kindly smarts,
 Prepare yourselves, and open wide your hearts
 For to receive the triumph of your glory,
 That made you merry oft when ye were sorry. 35

And ye, fair blossoms of youth's wanton breed!
 Which in the conquests of your beauty boast,
 Wherewith your lovers feeble eyes you feed,
 But starve their hearts that needeth nurture most,
 Prepare your selves to march amongst his host, 40
 And all the way this sacred Hymn to sing,
 Made in the honour of your sovereign king.

GREAT God of might, that reigneth in the mind,
 And all the body to thy hest dost frame,
 Victor of gods, subduer of mankind, 45
 That dost the lions and fell tygers tame,
 Making their cruel rage thy scornful game,
 And in their roaring taking great delight,
 Who can express the glory of thy might?

Or who alive can perfectly declare 50
 The wondrous cradle of thine infancy,
 When thy great mother Venus first thee bare,
 Begot of Plenty and of Penury,
 Though elder than thine own nativity,
 And yet a child, renewing still thy years, 55
 And yet the eldest of the heavenly peers ?

For ere this world's still moving mighty mass
 Out of great Chaos' ugly prison crept,
 In which his goodly face long hidden was
 From heaven's view, and in deep darkness kept, 60
 Love, that had now long time securely slept
 In Venus' lap, unarmed then and naked,
 Gan rear his head, by Clotho being waked :

And taking to him wings of his own heat,
 Kindled at first from heaven's life-giving fire, 65
 He gan to move out of his idle seat ;
 Weakly at first, but after with desire
 Lifted aloft, he 'gan to mount up higher,
 And, like fresh eagle, made his hardy flight
 Thro all the great wide waste yet wanting light. 70

Yet wanting light to guide his wandring way,
 His own fair mother, for all creatures' sake,
 Did lend him light from her own goodly ray ;
 Then through the world his way he gan to take,
 The world, that was not till he did it make, 75
 Whose sundry parts he from themselves did sever,
 The which before had lyen confused ever.

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