A DIALOGUE ON BEAUTY: IN THE MANNER OF PLATO

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A Dialogue on Beauty: In the Manner of Plato by Anonymous

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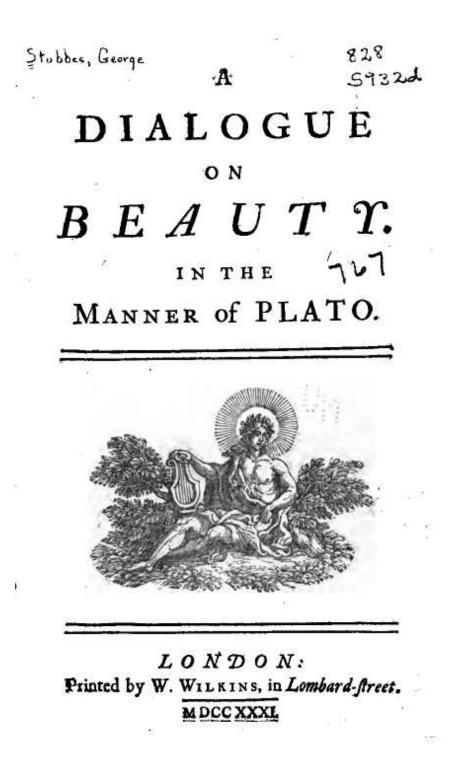
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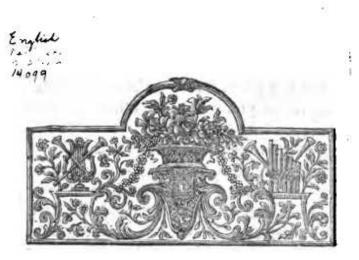
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ANONYMOUS

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Trieste





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Mr. Dodington.

DEAR SIR,

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TAKE the Liberty to fend you a Dialogue in Imitation of PLATO, of which I fhewed you an imperfect Sketch, when you was last in the Country. I am fo

much pleafed with this agreeable Manner of Writing, which, by enlivening Philofophy with the Charms of Poefy, entertains at once the Understanding and the Imagination, that if you approve of this

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this first Essay, I may perhaps endeavour to divert you with some other Performances of the same Nature. It is, indeed, owing to you, that I ever attempted to write any thing in this Way: For, tho' I am as fond of PLATO as of any of the ancient Poets, I should not have entertained a Thought of imitating him, had not some *Socratic* Conversations at EASTBURY, in which I had the Pleafure to bear a (very little) Part, first made me conceive it an Attempt not altogether impracticable.

As the different Opinions in Morality, debated in these Dialogues, are the strongest Lineaments, by which Characters are distinguished; so these Representations of them may be looked on as ferious Comedies, more just and instructive, as well as more decent and refined, than those of a lighter fort, which reprefent Humane Life under its more superficial Appearances. I only entertain you at present with one single Character (besides that of SOCRATES himself) as innocent and as beautiful as can be formed by my Imagination, but simple and uniform: The

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The various and inconfistent Characters of a PROTAGORAS, a HIPPIAS, or an EUTHYPHRON, tho' void of Beauty, may furnish no less agreeable Entertainment in some future Dialogues.

THE principal Motive of publishing this little Piece, is an Ambition to have the Honour of prefenting it, by your Hand, to his Grace the $D \cup \kappa \in$ of $D \cap R S \in T$, as a Specimen of my Duty, fince my Attendance may perhaps not be required.

As nothing of this Kind has been attempted in our Language, it is very uncertain what Succefs it may find : Some few Dialogues have indeed been received with just Applause ; but none of them are strict Imitations of PLATO, 10 .much defigned to refemble him. The few, who read his Works with Tafte, will find in this Sketch fo much Refemblance of them, as may engage them to look on it with the fame Indulgence we are apt to entertain for a new Face, which has fome Lineaments of a beloved Friend, or Mistress. Such as are unacquainted with

with his elegant Manner of Writing, thould methinks be the more pleafed even with a faint Imitation of it, fince its great Difproportion to the inimitable Beauty of the Original will be lefs vifible to them.

HAD I no farther View than to gain it a favourable Reception from the Men of Literature and Politeness, nothing could have a greater Influence on them, than the Favour of HIS GRACE'S Protection, had I the Prefumption to ask it : But, to fpeak freely, the Subject of it has led me to a more nice and flattering Ambition, by inducing me to defign it as a not uninftructive Entertainment for young Ladies, even of the higheft Rank. To engage them to read it. I have endeavoured to give the beautiful Nymph in the Dialogue every Accomplifhment, every Ingenuity, agreeable to a refined Education. To fhew them with how much Eafe they may enter into the Reafoning Part of it, I have avoided giving her the leaft Tincture of Philosophy, the least Degree of Knowledge, unfuitable to her early Age or Sex.

Sex. A mere Readinefs of Apprehenfion, and an ingenuous Defire to be informed, lead her on with Pleafure thro' a System of Beaury entirely new to her, and difcover to her View the fecret Foundations of Moral Excellence. To recommend it to them in the most prevailing Manner, my Imagination, if unrestrained, would fuggest a Thought beyond my utmost Hope ; a Thought almost too extravagant to be formed into You, who are fo well aca Wilh. quainted with my Romantic Temper, will eafily conclude it must be fome Scheme worthy to be preferved in the Annals of La Mancha ; And tho' I do not yet dream of the Government of an Ifland, I will own to you, that I fhould efteem myfelf as happy as Sancho, when in Conversation with the Dutchess, had I the Honour to find a Fair Patronels in HIS GRACE'S Family.

To apply for a Permission of this Nature, is fo very tender and delicate a Point, that it would be trespassing too far on the Friendship you have fo long honoured me with, to endeavour to engage

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gage you in it : Were I inclined to take Advantage of the generous Warmth, with which you efpouse every thing proposed in my Favour, I could find a pleafant Expedient to overcome your Delicacy, by infinuating that, unless you obtained this Permiffion for me, I should be tempted to leave this Orphan to your Guardian Care, by addreffing it to you in this plain familiar Epiftle. I am very fenfible of the Pain every thing of this Nature is apt to give you : But, in this Inftance, it would be made agreeable to you by the Affurance of receiving HER GRACE'S Thanks for skreening Her, in fo handfome a Manner, from the Importunity of,

DEAR SIR,

Tour most Obliged,

and most Devoted

Humble Servant,

GEORGE STUBBES.