

We might be endless in giving instances of his fine sense out of these plays; but, to those who have not read him, a few may be here acceptable, and enough to shew his preference of merit to dignity, and who is to be accounted the greatest Conqueror, may be seen below: and we shall refer to other topics gathered out of him, in a collection of our old poets lately published. Besides those authors before mentioned, others have celebrated these performances; as John Davis, of Hereford, who in a book of epigrams, published about the year 1611, has one to Mr. Alexander, of Menstrie, in praise of these tragedies, & wherein, though a stranger to his person, he thinks himself obliged to applaud his writings; as having made himself thereby, a Sovereign even over Monarchs; and thinks Alexander the Great had not gained more glory with his sword, than this Alexander has acquired by his pen. Michael Drayton calls him *my Alexander*, whose name he would ever have known to stand by his; yet attempts but to shew the friendship that was between them, not the merit of

What comfort's this, to have the highest Jeat,

And all the blifs that Majesty imparts;

If those, whom only we excel in state,

Be our superiors in far better parts?

*More than a crown, true worth should be
esteem'd:*

One, fortune gives, the other is our own;

By which the mind from anguish is redeem'd;

When fortune's goods are by herself o'erthrown.

Cæsus, Act 3.

O! what a great indignity is this?

To see a Conqueror to his lust a slave!

Who would the title of true worth were his,

*Must vanquish vice, and no base thoughts
conceiv:*

The bravest trophy ever man obtained,

Is that, which o'er himself, himself hath gain'd.

Darius, Act 3.

Then let us live, since all things change below,

*When raised most high, as those who once may
fall;*

And bold, when by disasters brought more low,

The mind still free, whatever else be thrall:

Those, Lords of fortune, sweeten every state,

*Who can command themselves, though not their
fate.*

Jul. Cæsar.

*† Mr. T. Hayward's British Muse. 120
1738.*

‡ Davis's scourge of folly. 80.

his numbers, which were brave and lofty, so like his mind was his muse.^h

We are informed, that not long after, was first published, the supplement he wrote to complete the third part of Sir Philip Sydney's celebrated romance; and that it is to be found in the true fourth, as well as the subsequent editions thereof, with the initial letters of his name; tho' Anthony Wood only mentions it in the eighth, as perhaps having only that at hand, when he made this remark: *an exercise for his Muse, still in a kind of poetry, though not in verse.* In the month of July, 1613, the same year that supplement was printed, we find Mr. Alexander mentioned, to have been sworn one of the Gentlemen Ushers of the Presence to Prince Charles. But now his Muse laboured with a more solemn birth than any of her tragic productions, and brought forth a fruit unusual to the soil of courts, which gave him the title of a *Divine Poet*; being a sacred poem, as large as all his others, called *Doom's Day*; or *the Great Day of the Lord's Judgment*. It was printed at Edinburgh, in quarto, 1614, and afterwards in the folio edition of his works; also again by itself, in a quarto edition at London.ⁱ It is divided into twelve hours, as the author calls them, or books; and the first book was, a few years since, re-printed in octavo, with intention to give us the remainder of his poetical works in a correct edition. The editor, A. Johnston, tells us, that having communicated the author's whole works to Mr. Addison, for his perusal; he said, in approbation of them, *That he had read them over with the greatest satisfaction*; and gave it as his judgment, "That the beauties of our ancient English poets, are too slightly passed over by the modern writers; who out of a peculiar singularity, had rather take pains to find fault, than endeavour to excel."^m In the year above-mentioned, the King, looking upon him as a wife man, made him Master of the Requests, and conferred upon him the honour of knighthood. And now begins the other part of his character, the man of business, title, and great undertaking; for little more of the Poet appears, except that two years after, came forth a new edition of his plays, in a pocket volume. Thus, as it is hard to reside long

^h See *M. Drayton's elegies*, fol. 1627, p. 207.

ⁱ *Arcadia*, fol. 1613.

^k *Arden. Oxon. col.* 228.

^l 1641.

^m *Doom's Day, or the last Judgment*, &c. in *Præfation*, by W. Earl of Stirling, 80. 1720, in *Præfation*.