

Dédicace de Theodosius

Auteur : Lee, Nathaniel

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Les folios

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2 Fichier(s)

Mots clés

[jugement](#), [présence de la dédicataire à une représentation](#)

Informations éditoriales

Titre complet de la pièce*Theodosius, or, The Force of Love, a Tragedy, acted by their Royal Highness's Servants, at the Duke's Theatre*

Auteur de la pièceLee, Nathaniel

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To her Grace the Dutchess of Richmond.

MADAM,

THE Reputation that this Play received on the Stage, some few Errors excepted, was more than I could well hope from so Censorious an Age, from whom I ask but so much necessary Praise as will serve, once or twice a Year at most, to gain their good Company, and just keep me alive.

*There is not now that Mankind that was then,
When as the Swa and Man did seem to strive
(Joynt-Tenants of the World) who should survive :
When if a slow-pac'd Star had stohn away,
From the Observer's marking, he might stay
Two or three hundred Years to see't agen,
And then make up his Observation plain.*

Dr. Dorn,

For 'tis impossible in our limited Time (and I bring his Opinion to back my own, who is without comparison the best Writer of the Age) to present our Judges a Poem half so perfect as we cou'd make it. I must acknowledge, *Madam*, with all humility, I ought to have taken more time and more pains in this *Tragedy*, because it is dedicated to Your Grace, who being the best Judge, (and therefore can when You please make us tremble) yet with exceeding Mercy have pardon'd the defects of *Theodosius*, and given it Your entire Approbation. My *Genius*, *Madam*, was Your Favourite when the Poet was unknown, and openly receiv'd Your Smiles before I had the Honour to pay Your Grace the most submissive Gratitude for so illustrious and advantageous a Protection. To let the World too know that You do not think it beneath You to be officiously Good, even from extremest Heights to discern the lowest Creatures, and give them all the Noblest Influence You can, You brought Her Royal Highness just at the exigent Time, whose single Presence, on the Poet's Day, is a Subsistence for him all the Year after. Ah, *Madam*, if all the short-liv'd Happiness that miserable Poets can enjoy consist in Commendation only ; nay, if the most part are content with Pop'lar Breath, and even for that are thankful : How shall I express my self to Your Grace, who by a particular Goodness, and innate Sweetness, meerly for the sake of doing well, have thus rais'd me above my self. To have Your Grace's Favour is, in a word, to have the Applause of the whole Court, who are its Noblest Ornament, magnificent and eternal Praise. Something there is in Your Mien so much above that we vulgarly call Charming, that to me it seems Adorable, and Your Presence almost Divine, whose dazling and Majestick Form is a proper Mansion for the most elevated Soul: And let me tell the World, nay, sighing speak it to a Barbarous

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Age (I cannot help calling it so, when I think of *Rome* and *Greece*) Your extraordinary Love for Heroick Poetry is not the least Argument to shew the Greatness of Your Mind, and fulness of Perfection. To hear You speak with that infinite Sweetness and Chearfulness of Spirit that is natural to Your Grace, is methinks to hear our Tutelar Angels: 'Tis to bemoan the present malicious Times, and remember the Golden Age: But to behold you too, is to make Prophets quite forget their Heaven, and bind the Poets with eternal Rapture.

*Here pure and eloquent Blood
Spoke in her Cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one might almost say, her Body thought.*

*You for whose Body God made better Clay,
Or took Souls Stuff, such as shall late decay,
Or such as need small change at the last day.*

Dr. Donne.

Ziſſares and *Semandra* were first Your Grace's Favourites; and though I ought not, *Madam*, to praise Your Wit by your Judgment of my Painting, yet I must say, Such Characters every Dauber cannot draw. It has been often observed against me, That I abound in ungovern'd Fancy; but I hope the World will pardon the Sallies of Youth: Age, Despondence, and Dulness come too fast of themselves. I discommend no Man for keeping the beaten Road; but I am sure the Noble Hunters that follow the Game, must leap Hedges and Ditches sometimes, and run at all, or never come in to the fall of the Quarry. My comfort is, I cannot be so ridiculous a Creature to any Man as I am to my self: for, who should know the House so well as the good Man at home? who, when his Neighbours come to see him, still sets the best Rooms to view; and, if he be not a wilful Ass, keeps the Rubbish and Lumber in some dark Hole, where no body comes but himself, to mortifie at melancholy Hours. But how then, *Madam*, in this unsuitable condition, how shall I answer the infinite Honours and Obligations Your Grace has laid upon me? Your Grace, who is the most beautiful Idea of Love and Glory; who, to that Divine Composition, have the noblest and best-natur'd Wit in the World. All I can promise, *Madam*, and be able to perform, is, That your Grace shall never see a Play of mine that shall give offence to Modesty and Vertue; and what I humbly offer to the World, shall be of use at least, and I hope deserve imitation; which is, or ought to be, I am sure, the Design of all *Tragedies* and *Comedies* both Ancient and Modern. I should presume to promise my self too some Success in things of this nature, if Your Grace (in whom the Charms of Beauty, Wit, and Goodness seem reconcil'd) at a leisure Hour would condescend to correct with Your excellent Judgment, the Errors of,

MADAM,

Your Graces most humble,

most obedient, and devoted Servant,

NAT. LEE.