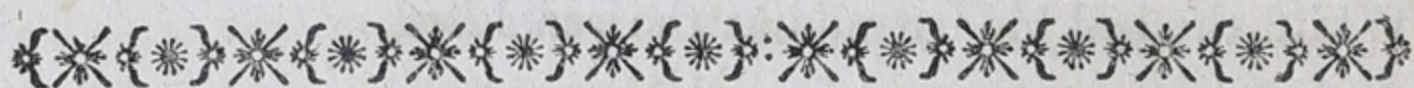


Whilst other maids a shameless path pursue,
 Neither to int'rest, nor to honour true,
 And proud to swell the triumph of their eyes,
 Exult in love from lovers they despise ;
 Their maxims all revers'd I mean to prove,
 And tho' I like the lover, quit the love.



EPISTLES in the Manner of OVID.

MONIMIA to PHILOCLES.

By the Same.

SINCE language never can describe my pain,
 How can I hope to move when I complain ?
 But such is woman's frenzy in distress,
 We love to plead, tho' hopeless of redress.

Perhaps, affecting ignorance, thou'lt say,
 From whence these lines ? whose message to convey ?
 Mock not my grief with that feign'd cold demand,
 Too well you know the hapless writer's hand :
 But if you force me to avow my shame,
 Behold it prefac'd with Monimia's name.

Lost to the world, abandon'd and forlorn,
 Expos'd to infamy, reproach, and scorn,

To

To mirth and comfort lost, and all for you,
 Yet lost, perhaps, to your remembrance too,
 How hard my lot ! what refuge can I try,
 Weary of life, and yet afraid to die !
 Of hope, the wretch's last resort, bereft,
 By friends, by kindred, by my lover, left.
 Oh ! frail dependence of confiding fools !
 On lovers oaths, or friendship's sacred rules,
 How weak in modern heats, too late I find,
 Monimia's faln, and Philocles unkind !
 To these reflections, each slow wearing day,
 And each revolving night a constant prey,
 Think what I suffer, nor ungentle hear
 What madness dictates in my fond despair ;
 Grudge not this short relief, (too fast it flies)
 Nor chide that weakness I myself despise.
 One moment sure may be at least her due,
 Who sacrific'd her all of life for you.
 Without a frown this farewell then receive,
 For, 'tis the last my hapless love shall give ;
 Nor this I wou'd, if reason cou'd command,
 But what restriction reins a lover's hand ?
 Nor prudence, shame, nor pride, nor int'rest sways,
 The hand implicitly the heart obeys :
 Too well this maxim has my conduct shewn,
 Too well that conduct to the world is known.

Oft have I writ, and often to the flame
 Condemn'd this after-witness of my shame ;

Oft

Oft in my cooler recollected thought,
 Thy beauties, and my fondness half forgot,
 (How short those intervals for reason's aid !)
 Thus to myself in anguish have I said.

Thy vain remonstrance, foolish maid, give o'er,
 Who act the wrong, can ne'er that wrong deplore.
 Then sanguine hopes again delusive reign,
 I form'd thee melting, as I tell my pain.
 If not of rock thy flinty heart is made,
 Nor tygers nurs'd thee in the desert shade,
 Let me at least thy cold compassion prove,
 That slender sustenance of greedy love :
 Tho' no return my warmer wishes find,
 Be to the wretch, tho' not the mistress, kind ;
 Nor whilst I court my melancholy state,
 Forget 'twas love, and thee, that wrought my fate.
 Without restraint habituate to range,
 The paths of pleasure ; can I bear this change ?
 Doom'd from the world unwilling to retire,
 In bloom of life, and warm with young desire,
 In lieu of roofs with regal splendor gay,
 Condemn'd in distant wilds to drag the day ;
 Where beasts of prey maintain their savage court,
 Or human brutes (the worst of brutes) resort.
 Yes, yes, the change I cou'd unsighing see,
 For none I mourn, but what I find in thee,
 There center all my woes, thy heart estrang'd,
 I weep my lover, not my fortune, chang'd ;

Bless'd

Bless'd with thy presence, I could all forget,
 Nor gilded palaces in huts regret,
 But exil'd thence, superfluous is the rest,
 Each place the same, my hell is in my breast;
 To pleasure dead, and living but to pain,
 My only sense to suffer, and complain.

As all my wrongs distressful I repeat,
 Say, can thy pulse with equal cadence beat?
 Can'st thou know peace? is conscience mute within?
 That upright delegate for secret sin;
 Is nature so extinguish'd in thy heart,
 That not one spark remains to take my part?
 Not one repentant throb, one grateful sigh?
 Thy breast unruffled, and unwet thy eye?
 Thou cool betrayer, temperate in ill!
 Thou nor remorse, nor thought humane can'st feel:
 Nature has form'd thee of the rougher kind,
 And education more debas'd thy mind,
 Born in an age when guilt and fraud prevail,
 When Justice sleeps, and Int'rest holds the scale;
 Thy loose companions a licentious crew,
 Most to each other, all to us untrue,
 Whom chance, or habit mix, but rarely choice,
 Nor leagu'd in friendship, but in social vice,
 Who indigent of honour, or of shame,
 Glory in crimes which others blush to name;
 By right or wrong disdaining to be mov'd,
 Unprincipled, unloving, and unlov'd.

The fair who trusts their prostituted vows,
 If not their falshood, still their boasts expose ;
 Nor knows the wisest to elude the harm,
 Ev'n she whose prudence shuns the tinsel charm
 They know to slander, though they fail to warm :
 They make her languish in fictitious flame,
 Affix some specious slander on her name,
 And baffled by her virtue, triumph o'er her fame.

These are the leaders of thy blinded youth,
 These vile seducers laugh'd thee out of truth ;
 Whose scurril jests all solemn ties profane,
 Or Friendship's band, or Hymen's sacred chain ;
 Morality as weakness they upbraid,
 Nor e'en revere Religion's hallow'd head ;
 Alike they spurn divine and human laws,
 And treat the honest like the christian cause.
 Curse on that tongue whose vile pernicious art
 Delights the ear but to corrupt the heart,
 That takes advantage of the chearful hour,
 When weaken'd Virtue bends to Nature's pow'r,
 And would the goodness of the soul efface,
 To substitute dishonour in her place.

With such you lose the day in false delights,
 In lewd debauch you revel out the nights,
 (O fatal commerce to Monimia's peace !)
 Their arguments convince because they please ;
 Whilst sophistry for reason they admit,
 And wander dazzled by the glare of wit,

Wit that on ill a specious lustre throws,
 And in false colours ev'ry object shows,
 That gilds the wrong, depreciating the right,
 And hurts the judgment, while it feasts the sight;
 So in the prism to the deluded eye
 Each pictur'd trifle takes a rainbow dye,
 With borrow'd charms the shining prospect glows,
 And truth revers'd the faithless mirror shows,
 Inverted scenes in bright confusion lie,
 The lawns impending o'er the nether sky;
 No just, no real images we meet,
 But all the gaudy vision is deceit.

Oft I revolve in this distracted mind
 Each word, each look, that spoke my charmer kind;
 But oh! how dear their memory I pay!
 What pleasures past can present cares allay?
 Of all I love for ever dispossest'd:
 Ah! what avails to think I once was blest'd?
 Hard disposition of unequal fate!
 Mix'd are our joys, and transient are their date;
 Nor can reflection bring them back again,
 Yet brings an after-sting to ev'ry pain.

Thy fatal letters, oh immoral youth,
 Those perjur'd pledges of fictitious truth,
 Dear as they were no second joy afford,
 My cred'lous heart once leap'd at ev'ry word,
 My glowing bosom throb'd with thick-heav'd sighs,
 And floods of rapture gush'd into my eyes:

When now repeated (for thy theft was vain,
 Each treasur'd syllable my thoughts retain)
 Far other passions rule, and diff'rent care,
 My joys and grief, my transports and despair.

Why dost thou mock the ties of constant love?
 But half its joys the faithless ever prove,
 They only taste the pleasures they receive,
 When sure the noblest is in those we give.
 Acceptance is the heav'n which mortals know,
 But 'tis the bliss of angels to bestow.
 Oh! emulate, my love, that task divine,
 Be thou that angel, and that heav'n be mine.
 Yes, yet relent, yet intercept my fate:
 Alas! I rave, and sue for new deceit.
 As soon the dead shall from the grave return,
 As love extinguish'd with new ardor burn.
 Oh! that I dar'd to act a Roman part,
 And stab thy image in this faithful heart,
 Where riveted for life secure you reign,
 A cruel inmate, author of my pain:
 But coward-like irresolute I wait
 Time's tardy aid, nor dare to rush on fate;
 Perhaps may linger on life's latest stage,
 Survey thy cruelties, and fall by age:
 No—grief shall swell my sails, and speed me o'er
 (Despair my pilot) to that quiet shore
 Where I can trust, and thou betray no more.

Might I but once again behold thy charms,
 Might I but breathe my last in those dear arms,
 On that lov'd face but fix my closing eye,
 Permitted where I might not live to die,
 My soften'd fate I wou'd accuse no more ;
 But fate has no such happiness in store.
 'Tis past, 'tis done — what gleam of hope behind,
 When I can ne'er be false, nor thou be kind ?
 Why then this care ? — 'tis weak — 'tis vain — farewell —
 At that last word what agonies I feel !
 I faint — I die — remember I was true —
 'Tis all I ask — eternally — adieu ! —

