



A SATIRE in the Manner of PERSIUS, in a
Dialogue between ATTICUS and EUGENIO.

By the late Lord HERVEY.

ATTICUS.

WHY wears my pensive friend that gloomy brow?
Say, whence proceeds th' imaginary woe?

What prosp'rous villain hast thou met to-day?

Or hath afflicted Virtue cross'd thy way?

Is it some crime unpunish'd you deplore,

Or right subverted by injurious Power?

Be this or that the cause, 'tis wisely done

To make the sorrows of mankind your own:

To see the injur'd pleading unredress'd,

The proud exalted, and the meek oppress'd,

Can hurt thy health, and rob thee of thy rest.

Your cares are in a hopeful way to cease,

If you must find perfection to find peace.

But reck thy malice, vent thy stifled rage,

Inveigh against the times and lash the age. —

Perhaps just recent from the court you come,

O'er public ills to ruminate at home:

Say, which of all the wretches thou hast seen

Hath thrown a morsel to thy hungry spleen?

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What

What worthless member of that medley throng,
 Who basely acts, or tamely suffers wrong ?
 He, who to nothing but his int'rest true,
 Cajoles the fool he's working to undo :
 Or that more despicable timorous slave,
 Who knows himself abus'd, yet hugs the knave ?
 Perhaps you mourn our senate's sinking fame,
 That shew of freedom dwindled to a name :
 Where hireling judges deal their venal laws,
 And the best bidder hath the justest cause ;
 What then ?
 They have the pow'r, and who shall dare to blame
 The legal wrong that bears Astræa's name ?
 Besides, such thoughts shou'd never stir the rage
 Of youthful gall ;—reflection comes with age :
 'Tis our decaying life's autumnal fruit,
 The bitter produce of our latest shoot,
 When ev'ry blossom of the tree is dead,
 Enjoyment wither'd, and our wishes fled :
 Thine still is in its spring, on ev'ry bough
 Fair Plenty blooms, and youthful Odours blow ;
 Season of joy, too early to be wise,
 The time to covet pleasures, not despise :
 Yours is an age when trifles ought to please,
 Too soon for reason to attack thy ease.
 Tho' soon the hour shall come, when thou shalt know
 'Tis vain fruition ull, and empty shew.

But

But late examine, late inspect mankind,
 If seeing pains, 'tis prudence to be blind.
 Let not their vices yet employ thy thoughts,
 Laugh at their follies, ere you weep their faults :
 And when (as sure you must) at length you find
 What things men are, resolve to arm your mind.
 Too nicely never their demerits scan,
 And of their virtues make the most you can.
 Silent avert the mischief they intend,
 And cross, but seem not to discern, their end :
 If they prevail, submit, for prudence lies
 In suffering well.—'Tis equally unwise,
 To see the injuries we won't resent,
 And mourn the evils which we can't prevent.

EUGENIO.

You counsel well to bid me arm my mind.
 Wou'd the receipt were easy, as 'tis kind ;
 But hard it is for misery to reach
 That fortitude prosperity can teach.
 Cou'd I forbid what has been to have been,
 Or lodge a doubt on truths myself have seen ;
 Cou'd I divest remembrance of her store,
 And say, collect these images no more ;
 Cou'd I dislodge sensation from my breast,
 And charm her wakeful faculties to rest ;
 Cou'd I my nature and myself subdue,
 I might the method you prescribe pursue.

But if unfeign'd afflictions we endure,
 If reason's our disease, and not our cure,
 Then seeming ease is all we can obtain;
 As one, who long familiariz'd to pain,
 Still feels the smart, but ceases to complain.
 Tho' young in life, yet long inur'd to care,
 Thus I submissive every evil bear:
 If unexpected ills alone are hard,
 Mine shou'd be light, who am for all prepar'd:
 No disappointments can my peace annoy,
 Disuse has wean'd me from all hopes of joy:
 The vain pursuit for ever I give o'er,
 Repuls'd I strive, betray'd I trust no more:
 Mankind I know, their nature, and their art,
 Their vice their own, their virtue but a part;
 Ill play'd so oft, that all the cheat can tell,
 And dang'rous only where 'tis acted well.
 In different classes rang'd, a different name
 Attends their practice, but the heart's the same.
 Their hate is interest, interest too their love,
 On the same springs these different engines move:
 That sharpens malice, and directs her sting,
 And thence the honey'd streams of flattery spring.

Long I suspected what at last I know:
 I thought men worthless, now I've prov'd 'em so;
 Reluctant prov'd it, by too sure a rule,
 I learn'd my science in a painful school.

He buys e'en wisdom at too dear a price,
 Who pays my sad experience to be wise.
 Why did I hope, by sanguine views possess'd,
 That Virtue harbour'd in a human breast?
 Why did I trust to Flattery's specious wile,
 The April sunshine of her transient smile?
 Why disbelieve the lessons of the wise,
 That taught me young to pierce her thin disguise?
 I thought their rancour, not their prudence, spoke,
 That age perverse in false invectives broke;
 I thought their comments on this gaudy scene
 The effects of phlegm, and dictated by spleen;
 That jealous of the joys themselves were past,
 Their envy try'd to pall their children's taste:
 Like the deaf adder to the charmer's tongue,
 I gave no credit to the truths they sung;
 But, happy in a visionary scheme,
 Still sought companions worthy my esteem:
 The tongue, the heart's interpreter I deem'd,
 And judg'd of what men were by what they seem'd;
 I thought each warm professor meant me fair,
 Each supple sycophant a friend sincere.
 The solemn hypocrite, whose close design
 Mirth never interrupts, nor love, nor wine,
 Who talks on any secret but his own,
 Collecting all, communicating none;
 Who still attentive to what others say,
 Observes to wound, or questions to betray;

Of him as guardian of my private thought,
 In morning counsels cool resolves I sought;
 To him still open, cautiously consign'd
 The inmost treasures of my secret mind;
 My joys, and griefs delighted to impart,
 In sacred confidence unmix'd with art;
 That dangerous pleasure of the honest heart!
 Whene'er I purpos'd to unbend my soul
 In social banquets, where the circling bowl
 To gladness lifts all sorrows but despair,
 And gives a transient Lethe to our care;
 I chose the men whose talents entertain
 And season converse with a lively strain;
 Who thoughtless still, by hope, nor fear perplex'd,
 Enjoy the present hour, and risque the next.
 These not the luxury of slothful ease,
 Soft downy beds, nor balmy slumbers please;
 While wakeful kings on purple couches own
 The secret sorrows of their envy'd crown,
 And wait revolving light, with shorter rest
 Than e'en those wretches by their power oppress:
 This jocund train, devoted to delight,
 In chearful vigils still protract the night,
 Nor dread the cares approaching with the day;
 Thro' each vicissitude for ever gay.
 With such I commun'd, pleas'd that I cou'd find
 Recess so grateful to the active mind:

And

And while the youths in sprightly contest try,
 With humorous tale, or apposite reply,
 Or amorous song, or inoffensive jest,
 (The test of wit) to glad the lengthen'd feast;
 My soul, said I, depend upon their truth,
 For fraud inhabits not the breast of youth;
 Indulge thy genius here, be free, be safe,
 Mirth is their aim, they covet but to laugh;
 Pure from deceit, as ignorant of care,
 Their friendship, and their joys are both sincere.
 I judg'd their nature, like their humour good;
 As if the soul depended on the blood;
 And that the seeds of honesty must grow
 Wherever health resides, or spirits flow.
 I see my error : but I see too late :
 'Tis vain inspection to look back on Fate. —
 What are the men who most esteem'd we find,
 But such whose vices are the most refin'd ?
 Blind preference ! for vice like poison shews,
 The surest death is in the subtlest dose. —
 To such reflections when I turn my mind,
 I loath my being, and abhor mankind.
 What joy for truth, what commerce for the just,
 If all our safety's founded on distrust;
 If all our wisdom is a mean deceit,
 And he who prospers but the ablest cheat !

ATTICUS.

ATTICUS.

O early wife ! how well hast thou defin'd
The worth, the joys, the friendship of mankind !

EUGENIO.

Blest be the pow'rs, I know their abject state.

ATTICUS.

Yet bear with this, and hope a better fate.
Thrice happy they, who view with stable eyes
The shifting scene, who temp'rate, firm, and wise,
Can bear its sorrows, and its joys despise;
Who look on disappointments, shocks, and strife,
And all the consequential ills of life,
Not as severities the gods impose,
But easy terms indulgent Heav'n allows
To man, by short probation to obtain
Immortal recompence for transient pain.
Th' intent of Heav'n thus rightly understood,
From every evil we extract a good :
This truth divine implanted in the heart,
Supports each drudging mortal thro' his part;
Gives a delightful prospect to the blind ;
The friendless thence a constant succour find :
The wretch by fraud betray'd, by pow'r oppress'd,
With this restorative still sooths his breast ;
This suffering Virtue cheers, this Pain beguiles,
And decks Calamity herself in smiles.
When Mead and Friend have ranack'd ev'ry rule,
Taught in Hippocrates' and Galen's school,

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To quiet ills that mock the leech's art,
 Which opiates fail to deaden in the heart,
 This cordial still th' incurable sustains :
 He triumphs in the sharp instructive pains,
 Nor like a Roman hero, falsely great,
 With impious hand anticipates his fate ;
 But waits resign'd the slow approach of death ;
 Till that great Power who gave, demands his breath.
 Such are thy solid comforts, love divine,
 Such solid comforts, O my friend, be thine.
 On this firm basis thy foundation lay,
 Of happiness unsubject to decay.
 On man no more, that frail support, depend,
 The kindest patron, or the warmest friend ;
 The warmest friend may one day prove untrue,
 And interest change the kindest patron's view.
 Hear not, my friend, the fondness they profess,
 Nor on the trial grieve to find it less :
 With patience each capricious change endure ;
 Careful to merit where reward is sure.
 To Providence implicitly resign'd,
 Let this grand precept poise thy wavering mind :
 With partial eyes we view our own weak cause,
 And rashly scan her upright equal laws :
 For undeserv'd she ne'er inflicts a woe,
 Nor is her recompence unsure, tho' slow.
 Unpunish'd none transgress, deceiv'd none trust,
 Her rules are fixt, and all her ways are just.

To