

A L A S H A T A T H I E S T S

The Poet speaking, as the Ghost of
Quondam Libertine, suppos'd to be the late
E. of R. Reflects on that part of Seneca's
Troas, beginning at

*Post Mortem nihil est, Ipsaq; Mors nihil
Velocis spatii meta Novissima:
Spem ponant avidi solliciti metum.
Quæris quo Faceas post Obitum loco
Quo non Nata Facent.*

INcumbred with vile Flesh, to Earth inclin'd,
Prophane Tragedian, once I wore thy Mind,
Born on the Wings of soaring Wit so high,
I thought my Soul no farther pitch could fly
Than the gay Regions of Philosophy.

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The hot-brain'd Stag'rite in my Breast did reign,
 And Sacred Prophets preach'd the Truth in vain,
 Nourish'd by Logick Arts so well I knew
 To vent false Reason and disguise the true:
 Around my Beams the Athiests of the Times,
 Like Artoms, danc'd and wanton'd in my Crimes,
 Strong Vice Opinion of my Wisdom bred,
 Which round the World, those false Apostles led,
 Whilst scandal hourly I on Vertue threw,
 Nor would be witty, unless wicked too;
 All thy pernicious Tenets then I own'd,
 And Wit prophane with circling Bays I crown'd,
 Proud of short-sighted Reason, my design
 Was still to blast the Mysteries Divine;
 Defame Religion with unhallow'd wit,
 And ridicule the Laws of Sacred Writ:
 But Oh, you foolish, fond, and apish Crew,
 Ye Learned Idiots that my Tracts pursue,
 Ye crawling Worms that bask in the Suns Ray,
 And yet the Suns great Maker disobey.

Pernicious Snakes that by Celestial Fire,
Reliev'd from frozen Ignorance, conspire
Against your God, and think frail Eyes can see
Through the Arcana of the Trinity,
Reflect how false your Notions are, by me.
And thou, poor Heathen, that hadst wit to win
Yet not the Truth, hadst Eyes, and yet no sight,
That wert in th' dawn of our Redemption driv'n
Through moral Mists to grope the way to Heav'n
Thou that with one poor glimpse of Reason blest,
Given only as distinction from the Beast;
Prophanely dar'st affirm there nothing is
Beyond the Grave, of Misery or Bliss:
But that the Soul and Body, like a Tree,
Rest undisturb'd in Earth's Obscurity.
With me art now severely undeceiv'd
In those dam'd Tenets which we once believ'd
Yet not believ'd, for in each vile Harrangue
The Atheist speaks he feels a secret Pang: poor

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poor tortur'd Conscience peeps through his disguise,
 And tells the noisic hot-brain'd Fool he lyes;
 Thus Man more sordid than a Brute must be,
 That plagu'd with the Salt Itch of Sophistry,
 Forfeits his Soul, prophanes all Sacred Laws,
 For the vain blast of Popular Applause.
 Had Reverend *Hobbs* this Revelation mark'd
 Before his dubious leap into the dark;
 Had he found Faith, before false Sence approv'd,
Moses, instead of *Aristotle* lov'd,
 Eternal Vengeance had not found him then,
 Nor gorg'd him with his own *Leviathan*;
 Like him, or worse, once madly did I Rave
 Till I had got one Foot into the Grave:
 But there, as if Eternal Power had pleas'd
 To shew in me that Wonders were not ceas'd;
 My Guardian Angel snatch'd my Soul from Night
 To the clear Paths of Everlasting Light:
 Then banish'd Wisdom reasum'd my Brain,
 Religious Reason took her Sear agen;

Sigh'd

I sigh'd, and trembled at the horrid view
Of my past Crimes, and scarcely could renew
Forgotten Prayer, so little good I knew,
Till heavenly Mercy down like *Manna* fell,
And true Repentance lifted me from Hell:
Thus Sickness which my Mourning Friends con-
dole
When Art could not restore my Body whole,
Prov'd the Divine Phytician of my Soul.
How deeply then my long lost Reason priz'd
The Balmy Scriptures I so late despis'd!
How poorly Tinsel rob'd Philosophy
Appear'd when Rich Divinity was by!
And how th' Evangelists and Prophets shone
'Mongst Heathen Poets, that my Heart had won
Gone was my doubt, the Resurrection plain,
And if there be a Fool, so vile, so vain,
That in his Head that Scruple does retain:
Let him but think what first Created Man,
Then let him be an Athiest if he can.

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