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The Works Of Alexander Pope Esq.

In Nine Volumes Complete. With His Last Corrections, Additions, And Improvements; As they were delivered to the Editor a little before his Death

Containing His Moral Essays

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Part I. Of the End and Efficacy of Satire.

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P A R T I.

FA T E gave the Word; the cruel arrow sped;
And P O P E lies number'd with the mighty
Dead!

Resign'd he fell; superior to the dart,
That quench'd its rage in Y O U R S and B R I T A I N ' S
Heart:

You mourn: but B R I T A I N, lull'd in rest profound,
(Unconscious Britain!) slumbers o'er her wound.
Exulting Dulness ey'd the setting Light,
And flapp'd her wing, impatient for the Night:
Rouz'd at the signal, Guilt collects her train,
And counts the Triumphs of her growing Reign:
With inextinguishable rage they burn; 11
And Snake-hung E N V Y hisses o'er his Urn:
Th' envenom'd Monster spit their deadly foam,
To blast the Laurel that surrounds his Tomb.

But Y O U, O W A R B U R T O N ! whose eye refin'd
Can see the greatness of an honest mind;

vi ESSAY ON SATIRE.

Can see each Virtue and each Grace unite,
 And taste the Raptures of a *pure* Delight;
 You visit oft his awful Page with Care,
 And view that bright Assemblage treasur'd there;
 You trace the Chain that links his deep Design,
 And pour new Lustre on the glowing Line.
 Yet deign to hear the efforts of a Muse,
 Whose eye, not wing, his ardent flight pursues;
 Intent from this great Archetype to draw 25
 SATIRE's bright Form, and fix her equal Law;
 Pleas'd if from hence th'unlearn'd may comprehend,
 And rev'rence HIS and SATIRE's gen'rous End.

IN ev'ry Breast there burns an active flame,
 The Love of Glory, or the Dread of Shame: 30
 The Passion ONE, tho' various it appear,
 As brighten'd into Hope, or dimm'd by Fear.
 The lisping Infant, and the hoary Sire,
 And Youth and Manhood feel the heart-born fire:
 The Charms of Praise the Coy, the Modest wooe,
 And only fly, that Glory may pursue: 36
 She, Pow'r resistless, rules the wise and great,
 Bends ev'n reluctant Hermits at her feet;

Haunts the proud City, and the lowly Shade,
And sways alike the Scepter and the Spade. 40

Thus Heav'n in Pity wakes the friendly Flame,
To urge Mankind on Deeds that merit Fame:
But Man, vain Man, in folly only wise,
Rejects the Manna sent him from the Skies:
With rapture hears corrupted Passion's call, 45
Still proudly prone to mingle with the stall.
As each deceitful shadow tempts his view,
He for the *imag'd* Substance quits the *true*;
Eager to catch the visionary Prize,
In quest of Glory plunges deep in Vice; 50
'Till madly zealous, impotently vain,
He forfeits ev'ry Praise he pants to gain.

Thus still imperious NATURE plies her part;
And still her Dictates work in ev'ry heart.
Each Pow'r that sov'reign Nature bids enjoy, 55
Man may corrupt, but Man can ne'er destroy.
Like mighty rivers, with resistless force
The Passions rage, obstructed in their course;
Swell to new heights, forbidden paths explore,
And drown those Virtues which they fed before.

And sure, the deadliest Foe to Virtue's flame,
 Our worst of Evils, is *perverted Shame*.
 Beneath this load what abject numbers groan,
 Th' entangled Slaves to folly not their own!
 Meanly by fashionable fear oppress'd, 65
 We seek our Virtues in each other's breast;
 Blind to ourselves, adopt each foreign Vice,
 Another's weakness, int'rest, or caprice.
 Each Fool to low Ambition, poorly great,
 That pines in splendid wretchedness of state, 70
 Tir'd in the treach'rous Chase, would nobly yield,
 And but for Shame, like SYLLA, quit the field:
 The Dæmon *Shame* paints strong the ridicule,
 And whispers close, "*the World will call you Fool.*"

Behold, yon Wretch, by impious fashion driv'n,
 Believes and trembles while he scoffs at Heav'n.
 By weakness strong, and bold thro' fear alone,
 He dreads the sneer by shallow Coxcombs thrown;
 Dauntless pursues the path *Spinoza* trod;
 To Man a *Coward*, and a *Brave* to God. 80

IMITATIONS.

VER. 80. *To Man a Coward, etc.]*

*Vois tu ce Libertin en public intrepide,
 Qui preche contre un Dieu que dans son Ame il croit?*

Faith, Justice, Heav'n itself now quit their hold,
 When to false Fame the captiv'd heart is sold:
 Hence, blind to truth, relentless *Cato* dy'd;
 Nought could subdue his Virtue, but his Pride.
 Hence chaste *Lucretia's* Innocence betray'd 85
 Fell by that Honour which was meant its aid.
 Thus Virtue sinks beneath unnumber'd woes,
 When Passions, born her friends, revolt her foes.

Hence SATIRE's pow'r: 'Tis her corrective part,
 To calm the wild disorders of the heart. 90
 She points the arduous height where Glory lies,
 And teaches mad Ambition to be wise:
 In the dark bosom wakes the fair desire,
 Draws good from ill, a brighter flame from fire;
 Strips black Oppression of her gay disguise, 95
 And bids the Hag in native horror rise;
 Strikes tow'ring Pride and lawless Rapine dead,
 And plants the wreath on Virtue's awful head.

Nor boasts the Muse a vain imagin'd Pow'r,
 Tho' oft she mourn those ills she cannot cure. 100

IMITATIONS.

*Il iroit embrasser la Verité, qu'il voit ;
 Mais de ses faux Amis il craint la Raillerie,
 Et ne brave ainsi Dieu que par Poltronnerie.*

BOILEAU, Ep. iii.

x E S S A Y O N S A T I R E .

The Worthy court her, and the Worthless fear;
 Who shun her piercing eye, that eye revere.
 Her awful voice the Vain and Vile obey,
 And ev'ry foe to Wisdom feels her sway. 104
 Smarts, Pedants, as she smiles, no more are vain;
 Desponding Fops resign the *clouded cane* :
 Hush'd at her voice, pert Folly's self is still,
 And Dulness wonders while she drops her quill.
 Like the arm'd BEE, with art most subtly true,
 From poys'nous Vice she draws a healing dew:
 Weak are the ties that civil arts can find, 111
 To quell the ferment of the tainted mind:
 Cunning evades, securely wrapt in wiles;
 And force strong-finew'd rends th' unequal toils:
 The stream of vice impetuous drives along, 115
 Too deep for Policy, for Pow'r too strong.
 Ev'n fair Religion, Native of the skies,
 Scorn'd by the Crowd, seeks refuge with the Wise;
 The Crowd with laughter spurns her awful train,
 And Mercy courts, and Justice frowns in vain. 120
 But SATIRE's shaft can pierce the harden'd breast :
 She plays a *ruling Passion* on the rest :

IMITATIONS.

VER. 110. *From poys'nous Vice, etc.*] Alluding to these Lines
 of Mr. Pope;

In the nice Bee what Art so subtly true
 From poys'nous Herbs extracts a healing Dew?

Undaunted storms the batt'ry of his pride,
 And awes the *Brave* that Earth and Heav'n defy'd.
 When fell Corruption, by her vassals crown'd, 125
 Derides fall'n Justice prostrate on the ground;
 Swift to redress an injur'd People's groan,
 Bold SATIRE shakes the Tyrant on her throne;
 Pow'rful as Death, defies the sordid train,
 And Slaves and Sycophants surround in vain. 130

But with the friends of Vice, the foes of SATIRE,
 All truth is spleen; all just reproof, Ill-nature.

Well may they dread the Muse's fatal skill;
 Well may they tremble when she draws her quill:
 Her magic quill, that, like ITHURIEL's spear, 135
 Reveals the cloven hoof, or lengthen'd ear:
 Bids Vice and Folly take their natural shapes,
 Turns Duchesses to strumpets, Beaux to apes;
 Drags the vile Whisp'rer from his dark abode,
 Till all the Dæmon starts up from the toad. 140

O sordid maxim, form'd to screen the vile,
 That true good-nature still must wear a smile!
 In frowns array'd her beauties stronger rise,
 When love of Virtue wakes her scorn of Vice:

xii E S S A Y O N S A T I R E .

Where Justice calls, 'tis Cruelty to save; 145
And 'tis the Law's good-nature hangs the Knave.
Who combats Virtue's foe is Virtue's friend :
Then judge of SATIRE's merit by her end :
To Guilt alone her vengeance stands confin'd,
The object of her love is all Mankind. 150
Scarce more the friend of Man, the wise must own
Ev'n ALLEN's bounteous hand, than SATIRE's frown:
This to chastise, as That to bless, was giv'n;
Alike the faithful Ministers of Heav'n.

Oft in unfeeling hearts the shaft is spent: 155
Tho' strong th' example, weak the punishment.
They least are pain'd, who merit satire most ;
Folly the *Laureat's*, Vice was *Chartres'* boast :
Then where's the wrong, to gibbet high the name
Of Fools and Knaves already dead to shame? 160
Oft SATIRE acts the faithful Surgeon's part ;
Gen'rous and kind tho' painful is her art :
With caution bold, she only strikes to heal,
Tho' Folly raves to break the friendly steel.
Then sure no fault impartial SATIRE knows, 165
Kind ev'n in Vengeance, kind to Virtue's foes.
Whose is the crime, the scandal too be theirs :
The Knave and Fool are their own Libellers.