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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 II. Rules for the Conduct of Satire.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55032](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55032)

P A R T II.

DARE nobly then: But conscious of your
trust,

As ever warm and bold be ever just: 170

Nor court applause in these degen'rate days:

The Villain's censure is extorted praise.

But chief, be steady in a noble end,

And shew Mankind that Truth has yet a friend.

'Tis mean for empty praise of wit to write, 175

As Foplings grin to show their teeth are white:

To brand a doubtful folly with a smile,

Or madly blaze unknown defects, is vile:

'Tis doubly vile, when, but to prove your art,

You fix an arrow in a blameless heart. 180

O lost to honour's voice, O doom'd to shame,

Thou Fiend accurs'd, thou Murderer of Fame!

Fell Ravisher, from Innocence to tear

That name, than liberty, than life more dear!

Where shall thy baseness meet its just return, 185

Or what repay thy guilt, but endless scorn!

And know, immortal Truth shall mock thy toil:

Immortal Truth shall bid the shaft recoil;

With rage retorted, wing the deadly dart;
And empty all its poyson in thy heart. 190

With caution next, the dang'rous pow'r apply;
An eagle's talon asks an eagle's eye:
Let SATIRE then her proper object know,
And ere she strike, be sure she strike a foe.
Nor fondly deem the real fool confest, 195
Because blind *Ridicule* conceives a jest:
Before whose altar Virtue oft hath bled,
And oft a destin'd Victim shall be led:

Lo, *Shaft/b'ry* rears her high on Reason's throne,
And loads the Slave with honours not her own:
Big-swoln with folly, as her smiles provoke, 201
Prophaneness spawns, pert Dunces nurse the joke!
Come, let us join a while this tittering crew,
And own the *Idiot Guide* for once is true;
Deride our weak forefather's musty rule, 205
Who *therefore* smil'd, *because* they saw a Fool;
Sublimier logic now adorns our isle,
We *therefore* see a Fool, *because* we smile.

Truth in her gloomy Cave why fondly seek?
Lo, gay she sits in Laughter's dimpled cheek:
Contemns each surly Academic foe, 211
And courts the spruce Freethinker and the Beau.

Dædalian arguments but few can trace,
 But all can read the Language of grimace.
 Hence mighty Ridicule's all-conqu'ring hand 215
 Shall work *Herculean* wonders thro' the Land:
 Bound in the magic of her cobweb chain,
 'YOU, mighty WARBURTON, shall rage in vain,
 In vain the trackless maze of Truth YOU scan,
 And lend th' informing Clue to erring Man: 220
 No more shall Reason boast her pow'r divine,
 Her Base eternal shook by Folly's mine!
 Truth's sacred Fort th' exploded laugh shall win;
 And Coxcombs vanquish BERKLEY by a grin.

But you, more sage, reject th' inverted rule, 225
 That truth is e'er explor'd by Ridicule:
 On truth, on falsehood let her colours fall,
 She throws a dazzling glare alike on all;
 As the gay Prism but mocks the flatter'd eye,
 And gives to ev'ry object ev'ry dye. 230

Beware the mad Advent'rer: bold and blind
 She hoists her sail, and drives with ev'ry wind;
 Deaf as the Storm to sinking Virtue's groan,
 Nor heeds a Friend's destruction, or her own.

Let clear-ey'd Reason at the helm preside, 235
 Bear to the wind, or stem the furious tide;
Then Mirth may urge, when Reason can explore,
This point the way, *that* waft us glad to shore.

Tho' distant Times may rise in SATIRE's page,
 Yet chief 'tis Her's to draw the *present Age*: 240
 With Wisdom's lustre, Folly's shade contrast,
 And judge the reigning Manners by the past:
 Bid *Britain's* Heroes (awful Shades!) arise,
 And ancient Honour beam on modern Vice:
 Point back to minds ingenuous, actions fair, 245
 Till the Sons blush at what their Fathers were:
 Ere yet 'twas beggary the great to trust;
 Ere yet 'twas quite a folly to be just;
 When *low-born* Sharpers only dar'd a lie,
 Or falsify'd the card, or cogg'd the dye; 250
 Ere Lewdness the stain'd garb of Honour wore,
 Or Chastity was carted for the Whore;
 Vice flutter'd, in the plumes of Freedom dress'd;
 Or public Spirit was the public jest.

Be ever, in a just expression, bold,
 Yet ne'er degrade fair SATIRE to a Scold:

Let no unworthy mien her form debase,
 But let her smile, and let her frown with grace:
 In mirth be temp'rate, temp'rate in her spleen;
 Nor, while she preaches modesty, obscene. 260
 Deep let her wound, not rankle to a sore,
 Nor call his Lordship —, her Grace a —:
 The Muse's charms resistless then assail,
 When wrapt in *Irony's* transparent veil:
 Her beauties half-conceal'd the more surprize, 265
 And keener lustre sparkles in her eyes.
 Then be your line with sharp encomiums grac'd:
 Style *Clodius* honourable, *Busa* chaste.

Dart not on Folly an indignant eye:
 Who e'er discharg'd Artillery on a Fly? 270
 Deride not Vice: Absurd the thought and vain,
 To bind the Tyger in so weak a chain.
 Nay more: when flagrant crimes your laughter
 move,
 The Knave exults: to smile is to approve.
 The Muse's labour then success shall crown, 275
 When Folly feels her smile, and Vice her frown.

Know next what Measures to each Theme belong,
 And suit your thoughts and numbers to your song:

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

On wing proportion'd to your quarry rise,
And stoop to earth, or soar among the skies. 280
Thus when a modish folly you rehearse,
Free the expression, simple be the verse.
In artless numbers paint th' ambitious Peer
That mounts the box, and shines a Charioteer :
In strains familiar sing the midnight toil 285
Of Camps and Senates disciplin'd by *Hoyle* ;
Patriots and Chiefs, whose deep design invades
And carries off the captive King—of *Spades* !
Let SATIRE here in milder vigour shine,
And gayly graceful sport along the line ; 290
Bid courtly Fashion quit her thin pretence,
And smile each Affectation into sense.

Not so when Virtue by her Guards betray'd,
Spurn'd from her Throne, implores the Muse's aid:
When *crimes*, which erst in kindred darkness lay,
Rise frontless, and insult the eye of day ; 296
Indignant *Hymen* veils his hallow'd fires,
And white-rob'd Chastity with tears retires,
When rank Adultery on the genial bed
Hot from *Cocytus* rears her baleful head : 300
When private Faith and publick Trust are sold,
And Traitors barter Liberty for gold :

When fell Corruption dark and deep, like fate,
Saps the foundation of a sinking State :

When Giant-Vice and Irreligion rise, 305

On mountain'd falsehoods to invade the Skies :

Then warmer numbers glow thro' SATIRE's page,

And all her smiles are darken'd into rage :

On eagle-wing she gains *Parnassus*' height,

Not lofty EPIC soars a nobler flight : 310

Then keener indignation fires her eye ;

Then flash her lightnings, and her thunders fly ;

Wide and more wide her flaming bolts are hurl'd,

Till all her wrath involves the guilty World.

Yet SATIRE oft assumes a gentler mien, 315

And beams on Virtue's friends a smile serene :

She wounds reluctant ; pours her balm with joy ;

Glad to commend where Worth attracts her eye.

But chief, when *Virtue, Learning, Arts* decline,

She joys to see *unconquer'd* Merit shine ; 320

Where bursting glorious, with departing ray,

True Genius gilds the close of Britain's Day :

With joy she sees the stream of Roman art

From MURRAY's tongue flow purer to the heart :

Sees YORKE to Fame, e'er yet to Manhood known,

And just to ev'ry virtue, but his own :

Hears unstain'd CAM with generous pride proclaim

A SAGE's, CRITIC's, and a POET's name :

xx ESSAY ON SATIRE.

Beholds, where WIDCOMBE's happy hills ascend,
 Each orphan'd Art and Virtue find a friend: 326
 To HAGLEY's honour'd Shade directs her view;
 And culls each flow'r, to form a Wreath for You.

But tread with cautious step this dang'rous ground,
 Befet with faithless precipices round: 330

Truth be your guide: disdain Ambition's call;
 And if you fall with Truth, you greatly fall.

'Tis Virtue's *native lustre* that must *shine*;
 The Poet can but *set it* in his line:

And who unmov'd with laughter can behold 335
 A *sordid pebble* meanly grac'd with *gold*?

Let *real* Merit then adorn your lays,

For Shame attends on prostituted praise:

And all your wit, your most distinguish'd art 339
 But makes us grieve you want an honest heart.

Nor think the Muse by SATIRE's Law confin'd:
 She yields description of the noblest kind.

Inferior art the Landskip may design,

And paint the purple ev'ning in the line:

Her daring thought essays a higher plan; 345

Her hand delineates Passion, pictures Man.

And great the toil, the latent soul to trace,
 To paint the heart, and catch internal grace ;
 By turns bid Vice or Virtue strike our eyes,
 Now bid a *Wolfey* or a *Cromwel* rise ; 350
 Now with a touch more sacred and refin'd,
 Call forth a *CHESTERFIELD*'S or *LONSDALE*'S mind,
 Here sweet or strong may ev'ry Colour flow :
 Here let the pencil warm, the canvass glow :
 Of light and shade provoke the noble strife, 355
 And wake each striking feature into life.