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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

Epistle II. Of the characters of Women

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MORAL ESSAYS.

EPISTLE II.

T O

A L A D Y.

Of the Characters of Women.

NOTHING so true as what you once let fall,
 "Most Women have no Characters at all."
 Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
 And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair.

N O T E S.

Of the Characters of Women. There is nothing in Mr. Pope's works more highly finished than this Epistle: Yet its success was in no proportion to the pains he took in composing it. Something he chanced to drop in a short Advertisement prefixed to it, on its first publication, may per-

haps account for the small attention given to it. He said, that *no one character in it was drawn from the life.* The Public believed him on his word, and expressed little curiosity about a Satire in which there was nothing personal.

VER. I. *Nothing so true &c.* The reader perhaps may

N

How many pictures of one Nymph we view, 5
All how unlike each other, all how true!

NOTES.

be disappointed to find that this *Epistle*, which proposes the same subject with the preceding, is conducted on very different rules of method; for instead of being disposed in the same logical connection, and filled with the like philosophical remarks, it is wholly taken up in drawing a great variety of capital Characters: But if he would reflect, that the *two Sexes* make but *one Species*, and consequently, that the Characters of both must be studied and explained on the same principles, he would see, that when the poet had done this in the preceding *Epistle*, his business here was, not to repeat what he had already delivered, but only to verify and illustrate his doctrine, by every *view* of that perplexity of Nature, which *his* philosophy only can explain. If the reader therefore will but be at the

pains to study these Characters with any degree of attention, as they are here masterly drawn, one important particular (for which the poet has artfully prepared him by the introduction) will very forcibly strike his observation; and that is, that all the great strokes in the several Characters of *Women* are not only infinitely perplexed and discordant, like those in *Men*, but absolutely inconsistent, and in a much higher degree *contradictory*. As strange as this may appear, yet he will see that the poet has all the while strictly followed Nature, whose ways, we find by the former *Epistle*, are not a little mysterious; and a mystery this might have remained, had not our author explained it at *l* 207, where he shuts up his *Characters* with this philosophical reflexion:

*In Men, we various ruling Passions find;
In Women, two almost divide the kind;
Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,
The love of Pleasure, and the love of Sway.*

If this account be true, we see the perpetual necessity (which is not the case in *Men*) that *Women* lye under of *disguising*

their *ruling passion*. Now the variety of arts employed to this purpose must needs draw them into infinite contradic-

Arcadia's Countess, here, in ermin'd pride,
Is there, Pastora by a fountain side.

NOTES.

tions in those *Actions* from whence their general and obvious Character is denominated: To verify this observation, let the reader examine all the Characters here drawn, and try whether with this key he cannot discover that all their Contradictions arise from a desire to hide the *ruling Passion*.

But this is not the worst. The poet afterwards (from ν 218 to 249) takes notice of another mischief arising from this necessity of hiding their ruling Passions; which is, that generally the end of each is defeated even there where they are most violently pursued: For the necessity of hiding them inducing an habitual disposition of mind, Reason,

whose office it is to regulate the *ruling Passion*, loses all its force and direction; and these unhappy victims to their principles, tho' with their attention still *fixed* upon them, are ever prosecuting the means destructive of their end, and thus become ridiculous in youth, and miserable in old age.

Let me not omit to observe the great beauty of the conclusion: It is an Encomium on an imaginary Lady to whom the Epistle is addressed, and artfully turns upon the fact which makes the subject of the Epistle, the *contradiction of a Woman's Character*, in which contradiction he shews that all the lustre even of the best Character consists:

*And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
Woman's at best a Contradiction still, &c.*

VER. 5. *How many pictures*] The poet's purpose here is to shew, that the Characters of Women are generally inconsistent with themselves; and this he illustrates by so happy a *Similitude*, that we see the folly, described in it, arises from that very principle which gives birth to this inconsistency of Character.

VER. 7, 8, 10, &c. *Arcadia's Countess,—Pastora by a fountain—Leda with a swan.—Magdalen—Cecilia—*] Attitudes in which several ladies affected to be drawn, and sometimes one lady in them all —The poet's politeness and complaisance to the sex is observable in this instance, amongst others, that, whereas

Here Fannia, leering on her own good man,
 And there, a naked Leda with a Swan. 10
 Let then the Fair one beautifully cry,
 In Magdalen's loose hair and lifted eye,
 Or drest in smiles of sweet Cecilia shine,
 With simp'ring Angels, Palms, and Harps divine;
 Whether the Charmer finner it, or faint it, 15
 If Folly grow romantic, I must paint it.

Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!
 Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air;
 Chuse a firm Cloud, before it fall, and in it 19
 Catch, e'er she change, the Cynthia of this minute.

Rufa, whose eye quick-glancing o'er the Park,
 Attracts each light gay meteor of a Spark,
 Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
 As Sappho's di'monds with her dirty smock;

NOTES.

in the *Characters of Men* he has sometimes made use of real names, in the *Characters of Women* always fictitious. P.

VER. 20. *Catch, e'er she change, the Cynthia of this minute.*] Alluding to the precept of *Fresnoy*,

formæ veneres captando fugaces.

VER. 21. Instances of con-

trarieties, given even from such Characters as are most strongly mark'd, and seemingly therefore most consistent: As, I. In the *Affected*, § 21, &c. P.

VER. 23. *Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,*] This thought is expressed with great humour in the following stanza:

Or Sappho at her toilet's greazy task, 25

With Sappho fragrant at an ev'ning Mask :

So morning Insects that in muck begun,

Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting-sun.

How soft is Silia ! fearful to offend ;

The Frail one's advocate, the Weak one's friend :

To her, Calista prov'd her conduct nice ; 31

And good Simplicius asks of her advice.

Sudden, she storms ! she raves ! You tip the wink,

But spare your censure ; Silia does not drink.

All eyes may see from what the change arose, 35

All eyes may see—a Pimple on her nose.

Papillia, wedded to her am'rous spark,

Sighs for the shades—"How charming is a Park !"

A Park is purchas'd, but the Fair he sees

All bath'd in tears—"Oh odious, odious Trees !"

Ladies, like variegated Tulips, show ; 41

'Tis to their Changes half their charms we owe ;

NOTES.

*Tho' Artemesia talks, by fits,
Of councils, classics, fathers, wits ;
Reads Malbranche, Boyle, and Locke :
Yet in some things, methinks, she fails,
'Twere well if she wou'd pare her nails,
And wear a cleaner smock.*

VER. 29 and 37. II. Contrarities in the *Soft-natured*. P.

Fine by defect, and delicately weak.
 Their happy Spots the nice admirer take,
 'Twas thus Calypso once each heart alarm'd, 45
 Aw'd without Virtue, without Beauty charm'd;
 Her Tongue bewitch'd as odly as her Eyes,
 Less Wit than Mimic, more a Wit than wife;
 Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
 Was just not ugly, and was just not mad; 50
 Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
 As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate.

Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
 To make a wash, would hardly stew a child;
 Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a Lover's pray'r, 55
 And paid a Tradesman once to make him stare;
 Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
 And made a Widow happy, for a whim.

NOTES.

VER. 45. III. Contrarieties
 in the *Cunning* and *Artful*. P.

VER. 52. *As when she
 touch'd the brink of all we hate.*
 Her charms consisted in the
 singular turn of her vivacity;
 consequently the stronger she
 exerted this vivacity the more
 forceable must be her attrac-
 tion. But the point, where it
 came to excess, would destroy
 all the delicacy, and expose all

the coarseness of sensuality.

VER. 53. IV. In the *Whim-
 sical*. P.

VER. 57. — *in a Christian
 trim,*] This is finely expressed,
 implying that her very charity
 was as much an exterior of
 Religion, as the ceremonies of
 the season. It was not even in
 a *Christian humour*, it was only
 in a *Christian trim*.

Why then declare Good-nature is her scorn,
 When 'tis by that alone she can be born? 60
 Why pique all mortals, yet affect a name?
 A fool to Pleasure, yet a slave to Fame:
 Now deep in Taylor and the Book of Martyrs,
 Now drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres:
 Now Conscience chills her, and now Passion burns;
 And Atheism and Religion take their turns; 66
 A very Heathen in the carnal part,
 Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart.
 See Sin in State, majestically drunk;
 Proud as a Peerefs, prouder as a Punk; 70
 Chaste to her Husband, frank to all beside,
 A teeming Mistrefs, but a barren Bride.
 What then? let Blood and Body bear the fault,
 Her Head's untouch'd, that noble Seat of Thought:
 Such this day's doctrine—in another fit 75
 She sins with Poets thro' pure Love of Wit.

VARIATIONS.

VER. 77. *What has not fir'd &c.*] in the MS.
 In whose mad brain the mixt ideas roll
 Of Tall-boy's breeches, and of Cæsar's foul.

NOTES.

VER. 69. V. In the *Lewd and Vicious*. P.

What has not fir'd her bosom or her brain?
 Cæsar and Tall-boy, Charles and Charlema'ne.
 As Helluo, late Dictator of the Feast,
 'The Nose of Hautgout, and the Tip of Taste, 80
 Critick'd your wine, and analyz'd your meat,
 Yet on plain Pudding deign'd at-home to eat;
 So Philomedé, lect'ring all mankind
 On the soft Passion, and the Taste refin'd,
 Th'Address, the Delicacy—stoops at once, 85
 And makes her hearty meal upon a Dunce.

Flavia's a Wit, has too much sense to Pray;
 To Toast our wants and wishes, is her way;
 Nor asks of God, but of her Stars, to give
 The mighty blessing, "while we live, to live." 90
 Then all for Death, that Opiate of the soul!
 Lucretia's dagger, Rosamonda's bowl.
 Say, what can cause such impotence of mind?
 A Spark too fickle, or a Spouse too kind.
 Wise Wretch! with Pleasures too refin'd to please;
 With too much Spirit to be e'er at ease; 96

NOTES.

VER. 87. VI. Contrarieties in the <i>Witty and Refin'd</i> . P. VER. 89. <i>Nor asks of God,</i> <i>but of her Stars.—Death, that</i>	<i>Opiate of the soul!</i>] See Note on y 90. of Ep. to Lord <i>Cobham</i> .
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With too much Quickness ever to be taught ;
 With too much Thinking to have common Thought :
 You purchase Pain with all that Joy can give,
 And die of nothing but a Rage to live. 100

Turn then from Wits ; and look on Simo's Mate,
 No Afs so meek, no Afs so obstinate.

Or her, that owns her Faults, but never mends,
 Because she's honest, and the best of Friends.

Or her, whose life the Church and Scandal share,
 For ever in a Passion, or a Pray'r. 106

Or her, who laughs at Hell, but (like her Grace)
 Cries, "Ah! how charming, if there's no such place!"

Or who in sweet vicissitude appears
 Of Mirth and Opium, Ratafie and Tears, 110

The daily Anodyne, and nightly Draught,
 To kill those foes to Fair ones, Time and Thought.

Woman and Fool are two hard things to hit ;
 For true No-meaning puzzles more than Wit.

But what are these to great Atossa's mind? 115
 Scarce once herself, by turns all Womankind!

NOTES.

VER. 107. Or her, who laughs at Hell, but (like her Grace)—Cries, "Ah! how charming if there's no such place!" i. e. Her who affects to laugh out of fashion, and strives to disbelieve out of fear.

Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
 Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:
 Shines, in exposing Knaves, and painting Fools,
 Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules. 120
 No Thought advances, but her Eddy Brain
 Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
 Full sixty years the World has been her Trade,
 The wisest Fool much Time has ever made.
 From loveless youth to unrespected age, 125
 No Passion gratify'd except her Rage.
 So much the Fury still out-ran the Wit,
 The Pleasure mis'd her, and the Scandal hit.
 Who breaks with her, provokes Revenge from Hell,
 But he's a bolder man who dares be well. 130
 Her ev'ry turn with Violence pursu'd,
 Nor more a storm her Hate than Gratitude:
 To that each Passion turns, or soon or late;
 Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate:
 Superiors? death! and Equals? what a curse! 135
 But an Inferior not dependant? worse.

VARIATIONS.

After ν 122. in the MS.

Oppress'd with wealth and wit, abundance sad!
 One makes her poor, the other makes her mad.

Offend her, and she knows not to forgive ;
 Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live :
 But die, and she'll adore you—Then the Bust
 And Temple rise—then fall again to dust. 140
 Last night, her Lord was all that's good and great;
 A Knave this morning, and his Will a Cheat.
 Strange ! by the Means defeated of the Ends,
 By Spirit robb'd of Pow'r, by Warmth of Friends,
 By Wealth of Follow'rs ! without one distress 145
 Sick of herself thro' very selfishness !
 Atossa, curs'd with ev'ry granted pray'r,
 Childless with all her Children, wants an Heir.
 To Heirs unknown descends th'unguarded store,
 Or wanders, Heav'n-directed, to the Poor. 150
 Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
 Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line ;

VARIATIONS.

After v 148. in the MS.

This Death decides, nor lets the blessing fall
 On any one she hates, but on them all.
 Curs'd chance ! this only could afflict her more,
 If any part should wander to the poor.

NOTES.

VER. 150. *Or wanders, Heav'n-directed, &c.*] Alluding and referring to the great principle of his Philosophy, which he never loses sight of, and which teaches, that Providence is incessantly turning the evils arising from the follies and vices of men to general good.

Some wand'ring touches, some reflected light,
 Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right:
 For how should equal Colours do the knack? 155
 Chameleons who can paint in white and black?

“Yet Cloe sure was form'd without a spot”—
 Nature in her then err'd not, but forgot.

NOTES.

VER. 156. *Chameleons who can paint in white and black?*] There is one thing that does a very distinguished honour to the accuracy of our poet's judgment, of which, in the course of these observations, I have given many instances, and shall here explain in what it consists; it is this, that the *Similitudes* in his didactic poems, of which he is not sparing, and which are highly poetical, are always chosen with such exquisite discernment of Nature, as not only to illustrate the particular point he is upon, but to establish the general principles he would enforce; so, in the instance before us, he compares the inconstancy and contradiction in the Characters of Women, to the change of colours in the Chameleon; yet 'tis nevertheless the great principle of this poem to shew that the general Characteristic of the Sex, as to the Ruling Passion, which they all have, is more uniform than that in

Man: Now for this purpose, all Nature could not have supplied such another illustration as this of the Chameleon; for tho' it instantaneously assumes much of the colour of every subject on which it chances to be placed, yet, as the most accurate *Virtuosi* have observed, it has two native colours of its own, which, amidst all these changes are never totally discharged, but, tho' often discoloured by the neighbourhood of adventitious ones, still make the foundation, and give a tincture to all those which, from thence, it occasionally assumes.

VER. 157. “*Yet Cloe sure &c.*”] The purpose of the poet in this Character is important: It is to shew that the politic or prudent government of the passions is not enough to make a Character amiable, nor even to secure it from being ridiculous, if the end of that government be not pursued, which is the free exercise of the social appetites after the selfish

" With ev'ry pleasing, ev'ry prudent part,
 " Say, what can Cloe want?"—She wants a Heart.
 She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought; 161
 But never, never, reach'd one gen'rous Thought.
 Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
 Content to dwell in Decencies for ever.
 So very reasonable, so unmov'd, 165
 As never yet to love, or to be lov'd.
 She, while her Lover pants upon her breast,
 Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;
 And when she sees her Friend in deep despair,
 Observes how much a Chintz exceeds Mohair. 170
 Forbid it Heav'n, a Favour or a Debt
 She e'er should cancel—but she may forget.
 Safe is your Secret still in Cloe's ear;
 But none of Cloe's shall you ever hear.
 Of all her Dears she never slander'd one, 175
 But cares not if a thousand are undone.
 Would Cloe know if you're alive or dead?
 She bids her Footman put it in her head.

NOTES.

ones have been subdued; for that if, tho' reason govern, the heart be never consulted, we interest ourselves as little in the	fortune of such a Character, as in any of the foregoing, which passions or caprice drive up and down at random.
--	--

Cloe is prudent—Would you too be wife?
 Then never break your heart when Cloe dies. 180
 One certain Portrait may (I grant) be seen,
 Which Heav'n has varnish'd out, and made a *Queen*:
 THE SAME FOR EVER! and describ'd by all
 With Truth and Goodness, as with Crown and Ball.
 Poets heap Virtues, Painters Gems at will, 185
 And show their zeal, and hide their want of skill.
 'Tis well—but, Artists! who can paint or write,
 To draw the Naked is your true delight.
 That Robe of Quality so struts and swells,
 None see what Parts of Nature it conceals: 190
 Th'exactest traits of Body or of Mind,
 We owe to models of an humble kind.
 If QUEENSBERRY to strip there's no compelling,
 'Tis from a Handmaid we must take a Helen.
 From Peer or Bishop 'tis no easy thing 195
 To draw the man who loves his God, or King:
 Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)
 From honest Mah'met, or plain Parson Hale.

NOTES.

VER. 181. *One certain Portrait—the same for ever!—*
 This is intirely ironical, and
 conveys under it this general
 moral truth, that there is, in
 life, no such thing as a perfect

Character; so that the satire
 falls not on any particular *Char-*
acter, but on the *Character-*
maker only. See Note on § 78.
 I Dialogue 1738.

VER. 198. *Mah'met*, ser-

But grant, in Public Men sometimes are shown,
 A Woman's seen in Private life alone : 200
 Our bolder Talents in full light display'd ;
 Your Virtues open fairest in the shade.
 Bred to disguise, in Public 'tis you hide ;
 There, none distinguish 'twixt your Shame or Pride,

VARIATIONS.

After v 198. in the MS.

Fain I'd in Fulvia spy the tender Wife,
 I cannot prove it on her, for my life :
 And, for a noble pride, I blush no less,
 Instead of Berenice, to think on Bess.
 Thus while immortal Cibber only sings
 (As * and H**y preach) for queens and kings,
 The nymph, that ne'er read Milton's mighty line,
 May, if the love, and merit verse, have mine.

NOTES.

vant to the late King, said to be the son of a Turkish Bassa, whom he took at the Siege of Buda, and constantly kept about his person. P.

Ibid. Dr. Stephen Hale, not more estimable for his useful discoveries as a natural Philosopher, than for his exemplary Life and Pastoral Charity as a Parish Priest.

VER. 199. *But grant, in Public, &c.*] In the former Editions, between this and the foregoing lines, a want of Connexion might be perceived, occasioned by the omission of cer-

tain *Examples* and *Illustrations* to the Maxims laid down ; and tho' some of these have since been found, viz. the Characters of *Philomedé, Atossa, Cloe*, and some verses following, others are still wanting, nor can we answer that these are exactly inserted.

VER. 203. *Bred to disguise, in Public 'tis you hide ;*] There is something particular in the turn of this assertion, as making their disguising in public the necessary effect of their being *bred to disguise* ; but if we consider that female Education

Weakness or Delicacy ; all so nice, 205

That each may seem a Virtue, or a Vice.

In Men, we various Ruling Passions find ;

In Women, two almost divide the kind ;

Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,

The Love of Pleasure, and the Love of Sway. 210

That, Nature gives ; and where the lesson taught
Is but to please, can Pleasure seem a fault ?

VARIATIONS.

VER. 207. in the first Edition,

In sev'ral Men we sev'ral passions find ;

In Women, two almost divide the Kind.

NOTES.

is an art of teaching not to *be*, but to *appear*, we shall have no reason to find fault with the exactness of the expression.

VER. 206. *That each may seem a Virtue or a Vice.*] For Women are taught Virtue so artificially, and Vice so naturally, that, in the nice exercise of them, they may be easily mistaken for one another.

SCRIB.
VER. 207. The former part having shewn, that the *particular Characters* of Women are more various than those of Men, it is nevertheless observed, that the *general Characteristic* of the sex, as to the *ruling Passion*, is more uniform.

VER. 211. This is occasioned partly by their *Nature*, partly their *Education*, and in some degree by *Necessity*. P.

VER. 211, 212. — *and where the lesson taught—Is but to please, can, &c.*] The delicacy of the poet's address is here observable, in his manner of informing us what this *Pleasure* is, which makes one of the two objects of Woman's *ruling Passion*. He does it in an ironical apology for it, arising from its being a Pleasure of the *beneficent* and *communicative* kind, and not merely selfish, like those which the other sex generally pursues.

VER. 213. *Experience this, &c.*] The ironical apology con-

Experience, this; by Man's oppression curst,
They seek the second not to lose the first.

Men, some to Bus'ness, some to Pleasure take;
But ev'ry Woman is at heart a Rake: 216

Men, some to Quiet, some to public Strife;
But ev'ry Lady would be Queen for life.

Yet mark the fate of a whole Sex of Queens!
Pow'r all their end, but Beauty all the means: 220

In Youth they conquer, with so wild a rage,
As leaves them scarce a subject in their Age:

For foreign glory, foreign joy, they roam;
No thought of peace or happiness at home.

But Wisdom's triumph is well-tim'd Retreat, 225
As hard a science to the Fair as Great!

Beauties, like Tyrants, old and friendless grown,
Yet hate repose, and dread to be alone,

NOTES.

tinued: That the Second is, as it were, forced upon them by the tyranny and oppression of man, in order to secure the first

VER. 216. *But ev'ry Woman is at heart a Rake:*] "Some men (says the Poet) take to bus'ness, some to pleasure, but every woman would willingly make pleasure her bu-

“*siness* :” which being the peculiar characteristic of a *Rake*, we must needs think that he includes (in his use of the word here) no more of the *Rake*'s ill qualities than are implied in this definition, of *one who makes pleasure his business*.

VER. 219. What are the *Aims* and the *Fate* of this Sex?
—I. As to *Power*. P.

Worn out in public, weary ev'ry eye,
Nor leave one sigh behind them when they die. 230

Pleasures the sex, as children Birds, pursue,
Still out of reach, yet never out of view ;
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the Toy at most,
To covet flying, and regret when lost :

At last, to follies Youth could scarce defend, 235

It grows their Age's prudence to pretend ;

Asham'd to own they gave delight before,

Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more :

As Hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than spight,

So these their merry, miserable Night ; 240

Still round and round the Ghosts of Beauty glide,

And haunt the places where their Honour dy'd.

See how the World its Veterans rewards !

A Youth of Frolicks, an old Age of Cards ;

Fair to no purpose, artful to no end, 245

Young without Lovers, old without a Friend ;

A Fop their Passion, but their Prize a Sot,

Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot !

Ah ! Friend ! to dazzle let the Vain design ;

To raise the Thought, and touch the Heart be
thine ! 250

NOTES.

VER. 231. — II. As to *Plea-*
sure. P.

VER. 249. Advice for their
true Interest. P.

That Charm shall grow, while what fatigues the
Ring,

Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing :
So when the Sun's broad beam has tir'd the fight,
All mild ascends the Moon's more sober light,
Serene in Virgin Modesty she shines, 255
And unobserv'd the glaring Orb declines.

Oh! blest with Temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow chearful as to-day ;
She, who can love a Sister's charms, or hear
Sighs for a Daughter with unwounded ear ; 260

NOTES.

VER. 253. *So when the Sun's broad beam &c.*] One of the great beauties observable in the poet's management of his *Similitudes*, is the ceremonious preparation he makes for

them, in gradually raising the imagery of the similitude in the lines preceding, by the use of metaphors taken from the subject of it :

— *while what fatigues the ring,*
Flaunts and goes down, *an unregarded thing.*

And the civil dismissal he gives them by the continuance of the same metaphor, in the lines following, whereby the traces of the imagery gradually decay,

and give place to others, and the reader is never offended with the sudden or abrupt disappearance of it,

Oh! blest with Temper, whose unclouded ray &c.
Another instance of the same kind we have in this epistle, in the following lines,

*Choose a firm cloud before it fall, and in it
Catch, e'er she change, the Cynthia of this minute.
Rusa, whose eye quick-glancing o'er the Park,
Attracts each light gay Meteor of a Spark, &c.*

She, who ne'er answers till a Husband cools,
 Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
 Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
 Yet has her humour most, when she obeys;
 Let Fops or Fortune fly which way they will; 265
 Disdains all loss of Tickets, or Codille;
 Spleen, Vapours, or Small-pox, above them all,
 And Mistress of herself, tho' China fall.

And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
 Woman's at best a Contradiction still. 270

Heav'n, when it strives to polish all it can
 Its last best work, but forms a softer Man;
 Picks from each sex, to make the Fav'rite blest,
 Your love of Pleasure, our desire of Rest:
 Blends, in exception to all gen'ral rules, 275
 Your Taste of Follies, with our Scorn of Fools:
 Reserve with Frankness, Art with Truth ally'd,
 Courage with Softness, Modesty with Pride;

NOTES.

VER. 269. The Picture of an estimable Woman, with the best kind of contrarieties, created out of the poet's imagination; who therefore feigned those circumstances of a *Husband*, a *Daughter*, and love for a *Sister*, to prevent her being mistaken for any of his acquaintance. And having thus made his *Woman*, he did, as the ancient poets were wont, when they had made their *Muse*, invoke, and address his poem to, her.

Fix'd Principles, with Fancy ever new ;
Shakes all together, and produces—You. 280

Be this a Woman's Fame : with this unblest,
Toasts live a scorn, and Queens may die a jest.
This Phœbus promis'd (I forget the year)
When those blue eyes first open'd on the sphere;
Ascendant Phœbus watch'd that hour with care,
Averted half your Parents' simple Pray'r ; 286
And gave you Beauty, but deny'd the Pelf
That buys your sex a Tyrant o'er itself.
The gen'rous God, who Wit and Gold refines,
And ripens Spirits as he ripens Mines, 290
Kept Dross for Duchesses, the world shall know it,
To you gave Sense, Good-humour, and a Poet.

NOTES.

VER. 285. &c. *Ascendant Phœbus watch'd that hour with care, Averted half your Parents' simple Pray'r ; And gave you Beauty, but deny'd the Pelf*] The poet concludes his Epistle with a fine *Moral*, that deserves the serious attention of the public : It is this, that all the extravagances of these *vicious* Characters here described, are much inflamed by a wrong Education, hinted at in *ÿ* 203; and that even the *best* are rather secured by a *good natural* than by the prudence and providence of parents ; which ob-

servation is conveyed under the sublime classical machinery of Phœbus in the ascendant, watching the natal hour of his favourite, and averting the ill effects of her parents mistaken fondness : For Phœbus, as the god of Wit, confers Genius ; and, as one of the astronomical influences, defeats the adventitious bias of education.

In conclusion, the great Moral from both these Epistles together is, that the two rarest things in all Nature are a DISINTERESTED MAN, and a REASONABLE WOMAN.