



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 Satires &c.

Pope, Alexander

London, 1751

Satire II.

Nutzungsbedingungen

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S A T I R E II.

SIR; though (I thank God for it) I do hate
 Perfectly all this town; yet there's one state
 In all ill things so excellently best,
 That hate towards them, breeds pity towards the rest.
 Though Poetry, indeed, be such a sin,
 As, I think, that brings *dearth* and *Spaniards* in:
 Though like the pestilence, and old-fashion'd love,
 Ridlingly it catch men, and doth remove
 Never, till it be starv'd out; yet their state
 Is poor, disarm'd, like Papists, not worth hate.

One (like a wretch, which at barre judg'd as dead,
 Yet prompts him which stands next, and cannot read,
 And saves his life) gives Idiot Actors means,
 (Starving himself) to live by's labour'd scenes.
 As in some Organs, Puppits dance above
 And bellows pant bellow, which them do move.

S A T I R E II.

Y E S; thank my stars! as early as I knew
This Town, I had the sense to hate it too:

Yet here, as ev'n in Hell, there must be still
One Giant-Vice, so excellently ill,
That all beside, one pities, not abhors; 5
As who knows Sapho, smiles at other whores.

I grant that Poetry's a crying sin;
It brought (no doubt) th' *Excise* and *Army* in:
Catch'd like the Plague, or Love, the Lord knows
how,

But that the cure is starving, all allow. 10
Yet like the Papist's, is the Poet's state,
Poor and disarm'd, and hardly worth your hate!

Here a lean Bard, whose wit could never give
Himself a dinner, makes an Actor live:
The Thief condemn'd, in law already dead, 15
So prompts, and saves a rogue who cannot read.
Thus as the pipes of some carv'd Organ move,
The gilded puppets dance and mount above.
Heav'd by the breath th' inspiring bellows blow:
Th' inspiring bellows lie and pant below. 20

One would move love by rythmes ; but witchcraft's
charms

Bring not now their old fears, nor their old harms;
Rams, and slings now are filly battery,
Pistolets are the best artillery.

And they who write to Lords, rewards to get,
Are they not like fingers at doors for meat?
And they who write, because all write, have still
That 'scuse for writing, and for writing ill.

But he is worst, who beggarly doth chaw
Others wits fruits, and in his ravenous maw
Rankly digested, doth those things out-spue,
As his own things ; and they're his own, 'tis true,
For if one eat my meat, though it be known,
The meat was mine, the excrement's his own.

But these do me no harm, nor they which use,
. to out-usure Jews,
T' out-drink the sea, t'out-swear the Letanie,
Who with sins all kinds as familiar be
As Confessors, and for whose sinful sake
Schoolmen new tenements in hell must make ;

NOTES.

VER. 38. *Irishmen outswear*] The Original says,
outswear the Letanie.
improved by the Imitator to a just stroke of Satire. Dr. Donne's
is a low allusion to a licentious quibble used, at that time, by the

One sings the Fair ; but songs no longer move ;
 No rat is rhym'd to death, nor maid to love :
 In love's, in nature's spite, the siege they hold,
 And scorn the flesh, the dev'l, and all but gold.

These write to Lords, some mean reward to get,
 As needy beggars sing at doors for meat. 26

Those write because all write, and so have still
 Excuse for writing, and for writing ill.

Wretched indeed ! but far more wretched yet
 Is he who makes his meal on others wit : 30

'Tis chang'd, no doubt, from what it was before,
 His rank digestion makes it wit no more :
 Sense, past thro' him, no longer is the same ;
 For food digested takes another name.

I pass o'er all those Confessors and Martyrs, 35
 Who live like S—tt—n, or who die like Chartres,
 Out-cant old Esdras, or out-drink his heir,
 Out-usure Jews, or Irishmen out-swear ;
 Wicked as Pages, who in early years
 Act sins which Prisca's Confessor scarce hears. 40
 Ev'n those I pardon, for whose sinful sake
 Schoolmen new tenements in hell must make ;

NOTES.

Enemies of the English Liturgy, who disliking the frequent invocations in the *Letanie*, called them the *taking God's Name in vain*, which is the Scripture periphrasis for *swearing*.

Whose strange sins Canonists could hardly tell
In which Commandments large receipt they dwell.

But these punish themselves. The insolence
Of *Cofcus*, only, breeds my just offence,
Whom time (which rots all, and makes botches pox,
And plodding on, must make a calf an ox)
Hath made a Lawyer; which (alas) of late;
But scarce a Poet: jollier of this state,
Than are new-benefic'd Ministers, he throws
Like nets or lime-twigs wherefoe'er he goes
His title of Barrister on ev'ry wench,
And woos in language of the Pleas and Bench,**

Words, words which would tear
The tender labyrinth of a Maid's soft ear:
More, more than ten Slavonians scolding, more
Than when winds in our ruin'd Abbyes roar.

NOTES.

VER. 44. *In what Commandment's large contents they dwell.*]
The Original is more humourous,

In what Commandments large receipt they dwell.
As if the *Ten Commandments* were so wide, as to stand ready to

Of whose strange crimes no Canonist can tell
 In what Commandment's large contents they dwell.

One, one man only breeds my just offence; 45
 Whom crimes gave wealth, and wealth gave Impudence :

Time, that at last matures a clap to pox,
 Whose gentle progress makes a calf an ox,
 And brings all natural events to pass,
 Hath made him an Attorney of an Ass. 50

No young divine, new-benefic'd, can be
 More pert, more proud, more positive than he.
 What further could I wish the fop to do,
 But turn a wit, and scribble verses too;
 Pierce the soft labyrinth of a Lady's ear 55

With rhymes of this *per cent.* and that *per year*?
 Or court a Wife, spread out his wily parts,
 Like nets or lime-twigs, for rich Widows hearts;
 Call himself Barrister to ev'ry wench,
 And wooe in language of the Pleas and Bench? 60
 Language, which Boreas might to Auster hold
 More rough than forty Germans when they scold.

NOTES.

receive every thing within them, that either the *Law of Nature* or the *Gospel commands*. A just ridicule on those *practical Commentators*, as they are called, who include all moral and religious Duties within them. Whereas their true original sense

Then sick with Poetry, and possess'd with Muse
 Thou wast, and mad I hop'd; but men which chuse
 Law practice for meer gain; bold soul repute
 Worse than imbrothel'd strumpets prostitute^a.
 Now like an owl-like watchman he must walk,
 His hand still at a bill; now he must talk
 Idly, like prisoners, which whole months will swear,
 That only suretyship hath brought them there,
 And to every suitor lye in every thing,
 Like a King's Favourite — or like a King.

NOTES.

is much more confined, being a short summary of duty fitted for a single People, upon a particular occasion, and to serve transitory ends.

VER. 61. *Language, which Boreas—*] The Original has here an exceeding fine stroke of satire,

Than when winds in our ruin'd Abbeys roar.

The frauds with which that work, so necessary for the welfare of the state, was begun; the rapine with which it was carried on; and the dissoluteness in which the plunder arising from it was wasted, had scandalized all sober men; and disposed the best Protestants to wish, that some part of that immense wealth, arising from the suppression of the Monasteries, had been reserved

Curs'd be the wretch, so venal and so vain :
 Paltry and proud, as drabs in Drury-lane.
 'Tis such a bounty as was never known, 65
 If PETER deigns to help you to your *own*:
 What thanks, what praise, if *Peter* but supplies,
 And what a solemn face if he denies !
 Grave, as when pris'ners shake the head and swear
 'Twas only Suretiship that brought 'em there. 70
 His *Office* keeps your Parchment fates entire,
 He starves with cold to save them from the fire ;
 For you he walks the streets thro' rain or dust,
 For not in Chariots *Peter* puts his trust ;
 For you he sweats and labours at the laws,
 Takes God to witness he affects your cause, 75
 And lies to ev'ry Lord in ev'ry thing,
 Like a King's Favourite — or like a King.

N O T E S.

for Charity, Hospitality, and even for the public service of Religion.

^a He speaks here of those illiberal Advocates who frequent the Bar for mere gain, without any purpose of promoting or advancing civil justice ; the consequence of which, he tells us, is a *slavish* attendance, together with the *degradation* of their parts and abilities. So that when they undertake to excuse the bad conduct of their client, they talk as idly, and are heard with the same contempt, as debtors, whose common cant is, that they were undone by *Suretiship*. The Imitator did not seem to take the fineness of the satire, or he would not have neglected an abuse of this importance, to fall upon such *poultry things as Peter*, and those whom he considered and so used as his *patrimony*.

Like a wedge in a block ^b, wring to the barre,
 Bearing like asses, and more shameless farre
 Than carted whores, lye to the grave Judge; for
 Bastardy abounds not in King's titles, nor
 Simony and Sodomy in Church-men's lives,
 As these things do in him; by these he thrives.
 Shortly (as th' sea) he'll compass all the land,
 From *Scots* to *Wight*, from *Mount* to *Dover* strand.
 And spying heirs melting with Luxury,
Satan will not joy at their sins as he:
 For (as a thrifty wench scrapes kitchen-stuffe,
 And barrelling the droppings, and the snuffe
 Of wasting candles, which in thirty year,
 Reliquely kept, perchance buys wedding chear)
 Piecemeal he gets lands, and spends as much time
 Wringing each acre, as maids pulling prime.
 In parchment then, large as the fields, he draws
 Assurances, big as gloss'd civil laws,
 So huge that men (in our times forwardness)
 Are Fathers of the Church for writing less.

NOTES.

^b His comparing Advocates enforcing the Law to the Bench, to a *wedge in a block*, our Author justly thought too licentious to be imitated.

These are the talents that adorn them all,
 From wicked Waters ev'n to godly * *
 Not more of Simony beneath black gowns, 80
 Nor more of bastardy in heirs to Crowns.
 In shillings and in pence at first they deal;
 And steal so little, few perceive they steal;
 Till, like the Sea, they compass all the land, 84
 From *Scots* to *Wight*, from *Mount* to *Dover* strand:
 And when rank Widows purchase luscious nights,
 Or when a Duke to *Jansen* punts at White's,
 Or City-heir in mortgage melts away;
Satan himself feels far less joy than they.
 Piecemeal they win this acre first, then that, 90
 Glean on, and gather up the whole estate.
 Then strongly fencing ill-got wealth by law,
 Indentures, Cov'nants, Articles they draw,
 Large as the fields themselves, and larger far
 Than Civil Codes, with all their Glosses, are; 95
 So vast, our new Divines, we must confess,
 Are Fathers of the Church for writing less.

These he writes not; nor for these written payes,
 Therefore spares no length, (as in those first dayes
 When *Luther* was profest, he did desire
 Short *Pater-nosters*, saying as a Fryer
 Each day his Beads; but having left those laws,
 Adds to Christ's prayer, the power and glory clause)
 But when he fells or changes land, h'impaires
 The writings, and (unwatch'd) leaves out, *ses beires*,
 As flily as any Commenter goes by
 Hard words, or sense; or, in Divinity
 As controverters in vouch'd Texts, leave out
 Shrewd words, which might against them clear the
 doubt.

Where are these spread woods which cloath'd
 heretofore

Those bought lands? not built, not burnt within door.

NOTES.

VER. 104. *So Luther etc.*] Our Poet, by judiciously transposing this fine similitude, has given new lustre to his Author's thought. The Lawyer (says Dr. Donne) enlarges the legal instruments for conveying property to the bigness of *gloss'd civil Laws*, when it is to secure his own ill-got wealth. But let the same Lawyer convey property for you, and he then omits even the necessary words; and becomes as concise and hasty as the loose postils of a modern Divine. *So Luther* while a Monk, and, by his Institution, obliged to say Mass, and pray in person for others, thought even his *Pater-noster* too long. But when he set up for a Governor in the Church, and his business was to direct others how to pray for the success of his new Model; he then lengthened the *Pater-noster* by a new clause. This

But let them write for you, each rogue impairs
 The deeds, and dextrously omits, *ses heires* :
 No Commentator can more flily pass 100
 O'er a learn'd, unintelligible place ;
 Or, in quotation, shrewd Divines leave out
 Those words, that would against them clear the
 doubt.

So Luther thought the Pater-noster long,
 When doom'd to say his beads and Even song ; 105
 But having cast his cowle, and left those laws,
 Adds to Christ's pray'r, the *Pow'r and Glory* clause.

The lands are bought ; but where are to be found
 Those ancient woods, that shaded all the ground ?
 We see no new-built palaces aspire, 110
 No kitchens emulate the vestal fire.

N O T E S.

representation of the first part of his conduct was to ridicule his want of devotion ; as the other, where he tells us, that the *addition* was the *power and glory clause*, was to satirize his ambition ; and both together to insinuate that, from a Monk, he was become totally *secularized*. — About this time of his life Dr. Donne had a strong propensity to Popery, which appears from several strokes in these satires. We find amongst his works, a short satirical thing called a *Catalogue of rare books*, one article of which is intitled, *M. Lutherus de abbreviatione Orationis Dominice*, which shews he was fond of the joke. As his putting Erasmus and Reuchlin in the rank of Lully and Agrippa shews what were then his sentiments of Reformation. I will only observe, that this Catalogue was written in imitation of Rabelais's

Where the old landlords troops, and almes? In halls
 Carthusian Fasts, and fulsome Bacchanals
 Equally I hate. Mean's blest. In rich men's homes
 I bid kill some beasts, but no hecatombs;
 None starve, none surfeit so. But (oh) we allow
 Good works as good, but out of fashion now,
 Like old rich wardrobes. But my words none draws
 Within the vast reach of th' huge statutes jawes.

NOTES.

famous *Catalogue of the Library of St. Victor*. It is one of the finest strokes in that extravagant satire (which was then the *Manual of the Wits*) and so became the subject of much imitation; the best of which are this of Dr. Donne's and one of Sir Thomas Brown's.

VER. 120. *These as good works, etc.*] Dr. Donne says,
But (oh) we allow

Good works as good, but out of fashion now.
 The popish Doctrine of *good works* was one of those abuses of

Where are those troops of Poor, that throng'd of yore
 The good old landlord's hospitable door?
 Well, I could wish, that still in lordly domes
 Some beasts were kill'd, tho' not whole hetacombs;
 That both extremes were banish'd from their walls,
 Carthusian fasts, and fulsome Bacchanals;
 And all mankind might that just Mean observe,
 In which none e'er could surfeit, none could starve.
 These as good works, 'tis true, we all allow; 120
 But oh! these works are not in fashion now:
 Like rich old wardrobes, things extremely rare,
 Extremely fine, but what no man will wear.

Thus much I've said, I trust, without offence;
 Let no Court Sycophant pervert my sense, 125
 Nor sly Informer watch these words to draw
 Within the reach of Treason, or the Law.

N O T E S.

Religion which the Church of England condemns in its Articles. To this the Poet's words satirically allude. And having throughout this satire had several flings at the Reformation, which it was penal, and then very dangerous, to accuse, he had reason to bespeak the Reader's candor, in the concluding words,

But my words none draws

Within the vast reach of th' huge statutes jaws.

VER. 127. *Treason, or the Law.*] By the *Law* is here meant the *Lawyers*.

