



ODE IV.

T O

A GENTLEMAN whose MISTRESS
had married an Old Man.

INDEED, my PHÆDRIA, if to find
That gold a female's vow can gain,
If this had e'er disturb'd your mind,
Or cost one ferious moment's pain,
I should have said that all the rules
You learnt of moralists and schools,
Were very usefess, very vain.

Yet I perhaps mistake the case ;
And tho' with this heroic air,
Like one that holds a nobler chace,
You seem the lady's loss to bear,
Perhaps your heart bely'd your tongue,
And thinks my censure mighty wrong
To count it such a flight affair.

When HESPER gilds the shaded sky,
 Slow-wand'ring thro' the well-known grove,
 Methinks I see you cast your eye
 Back to the morning-scenes of love :
 Her tender look, her graceful way,
 The pretty things you heard her say,
 Afresh your struggling fancy move.

Then tell me, is your soul intire ?
 Does wisdom calmly hold her throne ?
 Then can you question each desire,
 Bid this remain, and that begone ?
 No tear half-starting from your eye ?
 No kindling blush you know not why ?
 No stealing sigh or stifled groan ?

Away with this unmanly mood !
 See where the hoary churl appears,
 Whose hand hath seiz'd the fav'rite good
 Which you reserv'd for happier years :
 While side by side the blushing maid
 Shrinks from his visage half-afraid,
 Spite of the sickly joy she wears.

Ye guardian pow'rs of love and fame,
 This chaste, harmonious pair behold;
 And thus reward the gen'rous flame
 Of all who barter vows for gold.
 O bloom of youth and opening charms
 Well-buried in a dotard's arms!
 O worthy price of beauty fold!

Cease then to gaze, unthankful boy;
 Let, let her go, the venal fair!
 Unworthy she to give you joy;
 Then wherefore should she give you care?
 Lay, lay your myrtle garland down,
 And let the willow's virgin-crown
 With happier omens bind your hair.

O just escap'd the faithless main,
 Tho' driv'n unwilling on the land!
 To guide your favour'd steps again,
 Behold your better genius stand:
 Where PLATO'S olive courts your eye,
 Where HAMDEN'S laurel blooms on high,
 He lifts his heav'n-directed hand.

When these are blended on your brow,
 The willow will be nam'd no more;
 Or if that love-deserted bough
 The pitying, laughing girls deplore,
 Yet still shall I most freely swear,
 Your dress has much a better air
 Than all that ever bridegroom wore.



ODE