



FASHION: A SATIRE.

*Honestius putamus, quod frequentius; recti apud nos locum
tenet error, ubi publicus factus.* SENECA.

YES, yes, my friend, disguise it as you will,
To right or wrong 'tis Fashion guides us still;
A few perhaps rise singularly good,
Defy, and stem the fool-o'erwhelming flood;
The rest to wander from their brethren fear,
As social herrings in large shoals appear.

'Twas not a taste, but pow'rful mode, that bade
Yon' purblind, poking peer run picture mad;
With the same wonder-gaping face he stares
On flat DUTCH dawbing, as on GUIDO's airs;
What might his oak-crown'd manors mortgag'd gain?
Alas! five faded landscapes of * LORAINÉ.

Not so GARGILIUS——fleck voluptuous lord,
A hundred dainties smother upon his board;
Earth, air, and ocean's ranfack'd for the feast,
In masquerade of foreign OLIO's dress'd;
Who praises, in this sauce-enamour'd age,
Calm, healthful temp'rance, like an INDIAN sage:

* *Claude Lorraine.*

But

But could he walk in publick, were it said,
 “ GARGILIUS din’d on beef, and eat brown bread ?”
 Happy the grotto’d hermit with his pulse,
 Who wants no truffles, rich ragouts — nor * HULSE.

How strict on Sundays gay LÆTITIA’s face !
 How curl’d her hair, how clean her Bruffels lace !
 She lifts her eyes, her sparkling eyes to heav’n,
 Most nun-like mourns, and hopes to be forgiv’n.
 Think not she prays, or is grown penitent —
 She went to church — because the parish went.

Close CHREMES, deaf to the pale widow’s grief,
 Parts with an unfun’d guinea for relief ;
 No meltings o’er his ruthless bosom steal,
 More than fierce Arabs, or proud tyrants feel ;
 Yet, since his neighbours give, the churl unlocks,
 Damning the poor, his triple-bolted box.

Why loves not HIPPIA rank obscenity ?
 Why would she not with twenty porters lie ?
 Why not in crowded Malls quite naked walk ?
 Not aw’d by virtue — but “ The world would talk.” —
 Yet how demurely looks the wishing maid,
 For ever, but in bed, of man afraid !
 Thus † HAMMON’s spring by day feels icy-cool,
 At night is hot as hell’s sulphureous pool.

Each panting warble of VESCONTI’s throat,
 To DICK, is heav’nlier than a seraph’s note ;

* *The Physician.*

† *Lucretius, lib. 6. 848.*

The thrills, he swears, soft-stealing to his breast,
 Are lullabies, to sooth his cares to rest;
 Are sweeter far, than LAURA's luscious kifs,
 Charm the whole man, and lap his soul in blifs:
 Who can such counterfeited raptures bear,
 Of a deaf fool who scarce can thunders hear?
 CROWDERO might with him for FESTIN pass,
 And touching HANDEL yield to trifling HASSE.

But curd-fac'd CURIO comes! all prate, and smile,
 Supreme of beaux, great bulwarks of our isle!
 Mark well his feather'd hat, his gilt cockade,
 Rich rings, white hand, and coat of stiff brocade;
 Such weak-wing'd May-flies BRITAIN's troops disgrace,
 That FLANDRIA, wond'ring, mourns our alter'd race:
 With him the fair, enraptur'd with a rattle,
 Of VAUXHALL, GARRICK, or PAMELA prattle:
 This self-pleas'd king of emptiness permit
 At the dear toilette harmlessly to sit;
 As mirthless infants, idling out the day,
 With wooden swords, or toothless puppies play:
 'Tis meaner (cries the manling) to command
 A conquering host, or save a sinking land,
 Than furl fair FLAVIA's fan, or lead a dance,
 Or broach new-minted FASHIONS fresh from FRANCE.

O FRANCE, whose edicts govern dress and meat,
 Thy victor BRITAIN bends beneath thy feet!
 Strange! that pert grasshoppers should lions lead,
 And teach to hop, and chirp across the mead:

Of

Of fleets and laurel'd chiefs let others boast,
 Thy honours are to bow, dance, boil and roast.
 Let ITALY give mimick canvas fire,
 Carve rock to life, or tune the lulling lyre;
 For gold let rich POTOSI be renown'd,
 Be balmy-breathing gums in INDIA found;
 'Tis thine for slaves to teach the shantiest cuts,
 Give empty coxcombs more important struts,
 Prescribe new rules for knots, hoops, manteaus, wigs,
 Shoes, founs, complexions, coaches, farces, jigs.

MUSCALIA dreams of last night's ball till ten,
 Drinks chocolate, stroaks FOP, and sleeps agen,
 Perhaps at twelve dares ope her drowsy eyes,
 Asks LUCY if 'tis late enough to rise;
 By three each curl and feature justly set,
 She dines, talks scandal, visits, plays piquette:
 Meanwhile her babes with some foul nurse remain,
 For modern dames a mother's cares disdain;
 Each fortnight once she bears to see the brats,
 "For oh they stun one's ears, like squalling cats!"
 Tigers and pards protect, and nurse their young,
 The parent-snake will roll her forked tongue,
 The vulture hovers vengeful o'er her nest,
 If the rude hand her helpless brood infest;
 Shall lovely woman, softest frame of heav'n,
 To whom were tears, and feeling pity giv'n,
 Most fashionably cruel, less regard
 Her offspring, than the vulture, snake, and pard?

What art, O FASHION, pow'r supreme below !
 You make us virtue, nature, sense, forego ;
 You sanctify knave, atheist, whore, and fool,
 And shield from justice, shame, and ridicule.
 Our grandames modes, long absent from our eyes,
 At your all-powerful bidding duteous rise ;
 As ARETHUSA sunk beneath the plain
 For many a league, emerging flows again ;
 Now * Mary's mobs, and flounces you approve,
 Now shape-disguising sacks, and flippers love :
 Scarce have you chose (like Fortune fond to joke)
 Some reigning dress, but you the choice revoke :
 So when the deep-tongu'd organ's notes swell high,
 And loud HOSANNAHS reach the distant sky,
 Hark, how at once the dying strains decay,
 And soften unexpectedly away.
 The peer, prince, peasant, soldier, squire, divine,
 Goddesses of Change, bend low before your shrine,
 Swearing to follow, wheresoe'er you lead,
 Tho' you eat toads, or walk upon your head.

'Tis hence belles game, intrigue, sip citron-drams,
 And hide their lovely locks with † heads of rams ;
 Hence girls, once modest, without blush appear,
 With legs display'd, and swan-soft bosoms bare ;

* *Mary queen of Scots mobs, much worn by the ladies.*

† *Tête de Mouton, literally translated,*

Hence stale, autumnal dames, still deck'd with laces,
 Look like vile canker'd coins in velvet cases.
 Ask you, why whores live more belov'd than wives,
 Why weeping virtue exil'd, flattery thrives,
 Why mad for pensions, BRITONS young and old
 Adore base ministers, those calves of gold,
 Why witling templars on religion joke,
 Fat, rosy justices, drink, doze, and smoak,
 Dull criticks on best bards pour harmless spite,
 As babes that mumble coral, cannot bite,
 Why knaves malicious, brother-knaves embrace,
 With hearts of gall, but courtly-smiling face,
 Why scornful FOLLY from her gawdy coach,
 At starving houseless VIRTUE points reproach,
 Why AV'RICE is the great all-worship'd God?
 Methinks some DÆMON answers—" 'Tis the mode!"

At this CORRUPTION smiles with ghastly grin,
 Prefaging triumphs to her mother, SIN;
 Who, as with baneful wings aloft she flies,
 "This falling land be mine!"—exulting cries;
 Grim TYRANNY attends her on her way,
 And frowns, and whets his sword that thirsts to slay.

Look, from the frigid to the torrid zone,
 By custom all are led, by nature none.
 * The hungry TARTAR rides upon his meat,
 To cook the dainty flesh with buttock's heat:

** The following facts are taken from the accounts of different countries.*

The CHINESE complaisantly takes his bed
 With his big wife, and is with cawdle fed.
 How would our tender British beauties shriek,
 To see slim beaux on bulls their lances break!
 Yet not LUCINDA, in heroic SPAIN,
 Admits a youth, but who his beast has slain.
 See, wond'rous lands, where the fell victor brings,
 To his glad wives, the heads of slaughter'd kings,
 The mangled heads!—o'er which they sing and laugh,
 And in dire banquets the warm life-blood quaff;
 Where youths their grandfires, age-bent, trembling, grey,
 Pitying their weary weakness, kindly flay:
 Where fainted BRACHMANS, sick of life, retire,
 To die spontaneous on the spicy pyre;
 Where (stranger still!) with their wild dates content,
 The simple swains no sighs for gold torment.

How fondly partial are our judgments grown,
 We deem all manners odious, but our own!

O teach me, friend, to know wise NATURE's rules,
 And laugh, like you, at FASHION's hoodwink'd fools;
 You, who to woods remov'd from modish sin,
 Despise the distant world's hoarse, busy din;
 As shepherds from high rocks hear far below,
 Hear unconcern'd loud torrents fiercely flow;
 You, tho' mad millions the mean taste upbraid,
 Who still love VIRTUE, fair, forsaken maid;
 As BACCHUS charming ARIADNE bore,
 By all abandon'd, from the lonesome shore.

NATURE