John Ogilvie, â??Jupiter and the Clown. A Fableâ?•

Description

JOHN OGILVIE

â??Jupiter and the Clown. A Fableâ?•

Envy! thou Fiend, whose venomed sting
Still points to Fameâ??s aspiring wing;
Whose breath, blue sulphurâ??s blasting steam,
Whose eye the basiliskâ??s lightning-gleam;
Say, through the dun ileâ??s solemn round,
Where Deathâ??s dread foot-step prints the ground,
Lovest thou to haunt the yawning tomb,
And crush fallen Grandeurâ??s dusty plume?
Or, where the wild Hyaenaâ??s yell
Rings throâ?? the hermitâ??s cavernâ??d cell,
Moves thy black wing its devious flight?
(The wing that bloats the cheek of Night)
There oft beneath some hoary wall
Thy stings are dipt in scorpionâ??s gall;
Thence whizzing springs the forky dart,
And spreads its poison to the heart.

Hence all thâ?? unnumberâ??d cares of life,
Hence malice, fury, rapine, strife;
Hence all exclaim on partial fate;
Hence pale Revenge, and stern Debate;
Hence man (to every passion prone)
Sees much, loves all;â??but hates his own.

Now, Delia, should the chance to know
Some trifling fool, â??perhapsâ??a beau,
The fair at once implores the skies,
With glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes;
O, hear your Votaryâ??s earnest prayer,
Ye guardian angels of the fair!
Make but this charming creature prove
A victim to the power of love:
â??Tis this, Ye Gods, I would implore!
And grant but this;â?? I ask no more.

The prayer is heard (what power delays
To grant her suit when Delia prays!)
The beau is caught, he swears, and bows,
Protests, and snuffs, and sweats, and vows
By all the oaths the fool can swear,
That never creature was so fair:
Then adds a thousand more, to tell
That never mortal loved so well.

The prize is gainâ??dâ??the pleasure oâ??er;
Lace, bag, and snuff-box charm no more:
No bosom feels the killing smart,
No side-long glance betrays the heart,
No fan conceals a rivalâ??s fears,
No cheek is stainâ??d with spiteful tears.
On new delights her passions fix,
A court perhaps, or coach and six,
She wants a ball, and justly vain,
Admires a title,â??or a cane.

But ere our readerâ??s patience fail,
â??Tis time we now begin our tale.

An honest Farmer, old and sage,
(Sure wisdom still attends on age)
One morning rose, when all was fair,
And joyous breathed the scented air.
Waked by the Zephyrâ??s tepid wing,
Aurora, fragrant as the Spring,
Rose from her couch, the busy Hours
Stole from their crimson-curtainâ??d bowers;
Loose was her robe of saffron hue,
Her locks diffused ambrosial dew;
The skyâ??s broad gates at once unfold,
The light cloud flames with cinctured gold;
The woodland gleams, the silver stream
Waves to the broad sunâ??s fluttering beam;
The featherâ??d people sing their love,
And music rings along the grove.

Elate, the happy clown surveyed
The field wide-opening throâ?? the shade;
The green ears rustling to the gale
Shot throâ?? to thin nightâ??s ruffled veil;
Slow rose to sight the new-born day,
Slow crept the lingering shades away,
â??Till oâ??er the broad hillâ??s summit dun
Obliquely glancâ??d the mounting sun;

And all-illumed with rushing light,
The swelling landskip burst to sight.

As the fond Motherâ??s panting breast
Throbs oâ??er her infant hushâ??d to rest,
Warm in his little hut, the boy
Flutters elate with rising joy;
As by her gentle pressure swayâ??d,
Swings soft and slow the sleepy bed;
Wild Fancy whispers in her ear,
She whirls away the rolling year!
Youth, manhood comes! she marks afar
A robe, a mitre, or a fâ??r!
Her heart leaps quick! elate with pride!
Each prudeâ??s insulting dress outvyed!
Each neighbourâ??s booby son, unseen,
Gnaws the pale lip with fruitless spleen!
Sudden she starts! some rival dressâ??d,
Swims in the loosely-floating vest,
Her bosom heaves a sullen groan:â??-
Ah! was that charming suit *my own*!

Such joy (soon checkâ??d with killing smart)
Shot throâ?? the swainâ??s exulting heart;
He hears the reaperâ??s sprightly song:
The rustling sickle sweeps along;
His barns with swelling sheaves are stored,
Gay Plenty crowns the festive board;
He cries in triumph, with a smile,
â??For hopes like these who would not toil,
That neither flatter, nor beguile?â•
Just as he spoke the word,â??behold
A gaudy thing, oâ??erlaid with gold,
Came fluttering by!â??so nicely clad,
With powderâ??d wig, and laced brocade;
So gay, so rich (though strange to tell!)
No butterfly lookâ??d half so well.

Struck with the glittering vest he wore,
The clownâ??s rude eye-ball stared him oâ??er;
Sly Envy markâ??d the secret snare,
The pickâ??d a chosen dart with care;
Of power to edge the quickest pain;â??-
Then plunged it reeking in his brain.
Inflamed with fury and surprize,
Red Anger flashes from his eyes
â??Must I (he cryed and scratchâ??d his head)
Supply this prattling thing with bread?

Must Farmers sweat, and wear their cloaths,
To furnish equipage for beaux?
We, Drudges doomâ??d to ceaseless toil,
For others tear the stubborn soil,
Our thoughts suspense and fears inflame,
Wretched and cursâ??d beyond a name;
While these amidâ?? the balmy bower,
Spend in soft ease the fleeting hour;â??-
How fine they look! what charms they show,
Ah! would to heavâ??n I was a Beau!â?•

Soft Pity touchâ??d thâ?? Almighty Sire:
Jove heard, and granted his desire.
At once his furrowâ??d brow was smooth,
In all the blooming pride of youth;
His hair in wavy ringlets flowâ??d,
His cheek with fine vermilion glowâ??d;
Not like our modern pigmy race,
With witherâ??d limbs, and meagre face,
But plump and pruce heâ??d matchâ??d a score;
Such were the Beaux in days of yore.
Gay pleasure dancâ??d in every limb,
He skimmâ??d along with airy swim;
The God, propitious to his prayer,
Gave the soft look, and graceful air;
But wrapt in his dreams of bliss, the Fool
Forgot his pocket, and his soul.

When thus transformâ??d, our glittering Beau
Surveyed himself from top to toe,
Stuck at the change with vast surprize,
He stares, and scarce believed his eyes.
But when he found that all was sure,
He cockâ??d his hat, and frownâ??d, and swore;
Applauded by the wondering throng,
The sullen Heroe strode along:
And while the swains in rude amaze
Mark his high port with stupid gaze,
Like Jove with solemn pace he trod,
And deignâ??dâ??, yet scarcely deignâ??d,â??to nod.

But now to town he takes his way,
And sees the court, the park, the play;
Attends the Fair, admirâ??d by all,
Leads the gay dance, and rules the ball.
â??Heavâ??ns! what a shape! fair Daphne cries,
How fine his mien! how bright his eyes!â?•
Thus all admire the charms they see,

His cane that dangled at his knee,
His box and hat they view together,â??
Some praisâ??d the paint, and some the feather;
No english taylorâ??s clumsy fist
Eâ??er matchâ??d the sleeve that graced his wrist;
The lace,â??from Brussels last;â?? by chance
He pickâ??d the brilliant up in France.
His coat so trim! so neat his shoe!
His limbs so shaped to strut, orâ?? bow!
Fashion, youâ??d swear, to show her power,
Had left dear Paris half an hour.

But, ah! with grief the muse proceeds:
What power can mend the vulgarâ??s deeds!
One night a coachman set him down,
Then rudely askâ??d himâ?? half a crown.

He searchâ??d his pocket;â??what a curse?
His pocket heldâ??an empty purse!
What should he do!â??all aid withdrawn!
Cane, box, and watch, were sent to pawn;
His brilliant too (â??t had vexâ??d a saint)
Gained a few crownsâ??and cent per cent!
No friend his money can afford:
He gamed,â??a sharper swept the board.

Then scornâ??d by all,â??in deep despair,
To Jove once more he made his prayer,
And beggâ??d the God to ease his pain,
And give him back his plough again.

NOTES:

Title *Jupiter* â??The supreme deity of the ancient Romansâ?• (*OED*); *Clown* â??A countryman, rusticâ?• (*OED*).

4 *basilisk* â??A fabulous reptile;â?¦ancient authors stated that its hissing drove away all other serpents, and that its breath, and even its look, was fatalâ?• (*OED*).

5 *dun ileâ??s* [Unable to trace.]

18 *rapine* â??The act or practice of seizing and taking away by force the property of others; plunderâ?• (*OED*).

27 *Votary* â??A person who has dedicated himself or herself to religious service by taking vows; a monk or nunâ?• (*OED*).

35 *beau* â??Suitor of a lady,â?• but also â??a man who gives particular, or excessive, attention to dressâ?• (*OED*).

57 *Zephyr* â??A gentle, mild wind or breezeâ?• (*OED*).

58 *Aurora* â??The (Roman) goddess of dawn, represented as rising with rosy fingers from the saffron-coloured bed of Tithonusâ?• (*OED*).

64 *cinctured* â??Girdledâ?• (*OED*).

88 *mitre* â??The headdress of a priestâ?• (*OED*); *fâ??r* Likely â??fur,â?• â??worn as a mark of office or stateâ?• (*OED*).

123 *equipage for beaux* Articles of dress and ornament for young men (*OED*).

133 *Jove* â??A poetical equivalent of Jupiterâ?¦the highest deity of the ancient Romansâ?• *(OED)*

143 *swim* â??The smooth gliding movement of the bodyâ?• (*OED*).

147 *pocket* â??Any small bag or pouch worn on the personâ?• (*OED*).

173 *brilliant* â??A diamond of the finest cutâ?• (*OED*).

187 *cent per cent* â??Profitâ?• (*OED*).

189 *sharper* â??A fraudulent gamester, a cheatâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: ***A Collection of Poems on Several Subjects*** **(London, 1762), pp. 120-28. [Google Books]**

Edited by Jordan Young