# Richard Cumberland, â??Envyâ?•

## Description

[RICHARD] CUMBERLAND

**â??Envyâ?•**

Oh! never let me see that shape again!
Exile me rather to some savage den,
Far from the social haunts of men!
Horrible phantom! pale it was as death,
Consumption fed upon its meagre cheek,
And ever as the fiend essayâ??d to speak,
Dreadfully steamâ??d its pestilential breath!
Fangâ??d like the wolf it was, and all agaunt,
And still it prowlâ??d around us and around,
Rolling its squinting eyes askaunt,
Wherever human happiness was found.

Furious thereat, the self-tormenting sprite
Drew forth an asp, and (terrible to sight)
To its left pap thâ?? envenomâ??d reptile prest,
Which gnawâ??d and wormâ??d into its torturâ??d breast.
The desperate suicide, with pain,
Writhâ??d to and fro, and yellâ??d amain;
And then, with hollow dying cadence, criesâ??
â??It is not of this asp that ENVY dies;
â??Tis not this reptileâ??s tooth that gives the smart;
â??Tis othersâ?? happiness that gnaws my heart.â?•

**NOTES:**

**6** *essayâ??d* Tried.

**7** *pestilential â??*Carrying pestilence or epidemic disease, esp. bubonic plagueâ?• *(OED*).

**10** *askaunt* â??With suspicion or mistrustâ?• (*OED*).

**12** *sprite* Spirit.

**13** *asp â??*A small, venomous, hooded serpent, found in Egypt and Lybiaâ?• (*OED*).

**14** *pap* Breast (*OED*).

**17** *amain* â??With full forceâ?• (*OED*).

**Source: *The Gentlemanâ??s Magazine (*August, 1791), p. 759.**

*Edited by Louise Noble*