â??I.O.,â?• â??Reasonâ??s Expostulation with Loveâ?•

Description

â??I. O.â?•

â??REASONâ??S *Expostulation with* LOVEâ?•

FOND, feverish boy, why madly feed
A restless love, without an end?
Say, to what good those wishes lead,
Or whither does thy passion tend.
The flame you nurse, that very flame
Shall prove a serpent in your breast;
Of strength shall rob your sickly frame,
Your days of work, your nights of rest.
Say that thy love canâ??t injure thee,
Yet, for her sake, oh! quench the fire;
Think how youâ??d wrong the maid and me,
If once you kindled soft desire!
Thou knowâ??st the nymph can neâ??er be thine,
Then why thus every art essay?
How canst thou first her hand resign,
Then try to steal her heart away?
Grant that heart be all thine own,
Grant that her love thy love exceed â??
â??Twere better far tâ?? endure alone,
Than teach the maid like thee to bleed.
Wouldâ??st thou for this her heart obtain?
Eâ??en like a wanton puling boy,
Who first a play-thing cries to gain,
And, when heâ??s gainâ??d it, breaks the toy.
Would love, did love do her no harm,
From passionâ??s ills thy soul release?
Would that which made her bosom warm,
Restore thy long-forgotten peace?
Thou canst not bear thâ?? averted cheek,
Thou canst not bear her silent eye:
How couldâ??st thou bear those eyes that speak,
How couldâ??st thou bear thâ?? impassionâ??d sigh?
Nought that she does thy soul can please:
Thoâ?? Scorn may make thy fetters grind,
No smiles can make them fit with ease,
And Scorn itself can neâ??er unbind.
The cold indifference of her looks

Thy love-sick heart can ill endure;
And if her frown thy flame rebukes,
The pain it gives admits no cure.
If she be kind, what boots it more?
It tells how Fate thy doom has fixt,
And wider sets the distant shore,
And clearer shews the gulf betwixt.
Why wilt thou rush to certain pain?
To her thy foot why madly flies?
So seeks the silly moth her bane,
And courts the blaze by which she dies.
Say, can the bliss her presence brings
Reward an absent loverâ??s woe?
Oft hast thou felt how parting stings,
And curst the cause that bade thee go.
And wilt thou seek her mansion yet?
Back shalt thou still return to Care;
To waste thine hours in vain regret;
To wish thou neâ??er hadst enterâ??d there.

NOTES:

Title *REASONâ??S Expostulation with LOVE.* A companion poem answering this one titled â??LOVEâ??S *Answer to* REASONâ?• was published on the same page in this issue.

22 *puling â??*Crying querulously or weakly, as a child; whining, feebly wailingâ?• (*OED*).

41 *boots* To boot: old English for use, profit, to be of advantage (*Online Etymology Dictionary*).

Source: *The Gentlemanâ??s Magazine* (July, 1788), *p. 640.* [Hathi Trust]

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