

Matthew Pilkington, "Happiness"

by admin - Friday, August 12, 2016

<http://poeticalscavenger.sfsuenglishdh.net/poems/matthew-pilkington-happiness/>

[MATTHEW PILKINGTON]

“Happiness”

Plagu'd with dependance on the great,
To raise me from my humble state;
With paying court to faithless friends,
Who disappointed all my ends;
With wasting all my blooming years, 5
In endless toils, and hopes, and fears;
How fondly longs my soul to gain
The calm, uncrowded rural scene!
To fly the man, whose treach'rous art
Deludes the undesigning heart. 10
No calumny, no pale-cheek'd care,
No envy shall attend me there.
There seated near a gliding stream,
Intent on some inspiring theme,
Or wand'ring o'er the flow'ry vale, 15
Imbibing joy from every gale,
I strive that blissful state to gain,
So fondly sought, so sought in vain.

Vain are our fondest hopes of bliss,
From such a faithless world as this. 20
Where vice in every form appears,
In wanton'd youth and palsy'd years.
Where villainy exalted shines,
And merit unregarded pines;
Angelic probity's unpriz'd, 25
And heav'n-descended truth despised:
Where friendship's name conceals a knave,
Subtle and studious to deceive;
(A Corvus, who with great success,
At once can murder and caress;) 30
Where triumphs self-adoring pride,
Where virtue's scorn'd, and God defy'd.

Too long deceiv'd, I strove to know

Felicity in things below;
But now, O pow'r supreme, I see, 35
True happiness resides with thee.
With thee, whose wisdom guides on high
The worlds of light that gild the sky,
And made this earth, a place of pain,
A mix'd unsatisfying scene. 40

Let wealth have wings, and friends profest
Stab the sincere unguarded breast;
Preferment's golden show'r be shed
On *Clodio's* undeserving head.
Or Calumny's envenom'd dart 45
Transfix me in the tend'rest part;
Since no distress in time or place,
Can make eternal goodness cease,
In God alone my raptur'd mind
Unmix'd felicity shall find. 50

NOTES:

11 *calumny* "False charge, slander" (*OED*).

15 *vale* "A dale or valley" (*OED*).

16 *gale* "A song; merriment" (*OED*).

22 *palsy'd* "Affected with palsy, trembling, tottering" (*OED*).

25 *probity* "Moral integrity, decency" (*OED*).

29 *Corvus* Latin for raven. May also refer to a raven in Greek mythology known as a trickster and thief.

44 *Clodio* Unable to trace.

Source: *The Magazine of Magazines*, vol. 8 (July, 1754), p. 82. [Google Books]

Edited by Keli Landowski