

'TIS ALL MY EYE

AND

BETTY MARTIN;

OR,

by R. S. M.

THE FOLLY OF MENS' PURSUITS.

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Oh! mihi, Beate Martine.

'TIS ALL MY EYE AND BETTY MARTIN,

OR

THE FOLLY OF MENS' PURSUITS.

DEAN SWIFT, a clever versifier,
Thought life had no vocation higher,
Than dealing satire on the knave,
Whose hollow smile or aspect grave,
Under some plausible disguise,
Throws dust in simple people's eyes.
He shewed us how the spangled dress
Put on to cover ugliness,
Will tell the tale, so often told,
That all that glitters is not gold.
My muse, scarce fit to hold the candle
To one so great, yet dares to handle
The self-same theme, to disabuse
The thoughtless youth, and bid him choose
The lamp of reason as his guide,
And never trust to mere outside,
Which though with lustre falsely darting,
Is all my eye and Betty Martin.

When Strephon came to twenty-one,
And had the race of life to run,
With fifteen thousand pounds a year,
His youth and fortune made it clear
One thing alone remained to do—
To choose the course he would pursue.
He told me of his happiness,
And chid me that I felt it less
Than other friends and dear relations,
Who sent such warm congratulations.
I answered frankly "All the pleasures
That he could purchase with his treasures,
At first so seemingly inviting,
He soon would cease to take delight in—

Believe my words" (I said at parting)
They're all my eye and Betty Martin.

Well! Strephon bought a splendid seat,—
Had every day choice things to eat,—
Had always many guests to dine,
Who ate his venison, praised his wine,
And whispered, "when the Whigs were out, he
Was fit to represent the county."
Of hounds he kept a goodly pack,
And rode to cover on his hack.
Old dowagers, who drink strong waters,
Brought out at balls their single daughters;
And every neighbour round would vie
In shewing friendly courtesy:
But still, whene'er the day was ended,
He thought that matters might be mended,
If, when 'twas wet or frosty weather,
A wife were there to sleep together.
The house a woman has no part in
Is all my eye and Betty Martin.

So, in the winter, up to Town
He goes; and stomacher and gown
He casts his eyes on, 'till he meets
In Celia concentrated sweets.
The lady had a pretty face,
Was scion of a noble race,
One season only had been out:
Though in her person 'twas a doubt,
Betwixt her bustle and her waist,
What share was nature's, what was taste.
When courtship ends in matrimony,
Love answers for one moon of honey:
Of what may follow youth ne'er dreams,
His all in all possession seems.
But Strephon soon found out 'twas stupid
To put such confidence in Cupid—
A little artful meddling elf,
And even younger than himself.
Soon as his passion's gratified,
He, somehow, thinks his lovely bride
Is not so charming by a deal
As he was wont before to feel.

So plated goods at first display
 A brightness use soon takes away ;
 So ripened peaches wear a bloom,
 Which, plucked, they never reassume.
 She, in her turn, has some misgiving ;
 He alters in his mode of living ;
 He slackens in attention to her ;
 How diff'rent when he came to woo her !
 And then, if no one's there to dine,
 He gets so drowsy o'er his wine ;—
 Passes the morning in his study ;—
 Declines to walk, "it is so muddy."
 And, if a word is said of riding,
 He gets so cross, and takes to chiding,
 "He should be certainly to blame
 To let her mount a horse that's lame."
 Then his own horse wants something doing :
 'Tis physicking, or else 'tis shoeing :
 "He thought she meant to keep her room :
 But shall he order round the brougham ?"
 Or kindly adds "the chariot's there,
 If she's disposed to take the air."
 At length, when all disguise is over,
 Though Strephon's bed at first was clover,
 Yet truth compelled him to confess
 That half a woman's charm was dress.
 Decorum helped them on awhile :
 The house was grand ; they lived in style :
 But things, forbidden when we're single :
 Will soon or late in wedlock mingle.
 Bashful at first and scarce at ease,
 Restraint was banished by degrees.
 Familiarity, exempt
 From all restriction, breeds contempt,
 A musty apothegm affirms,
 At last they came to f * * * * g terms ;
 But, when a couple gets to f * * * * g,
 Love's all my eye and Betty Martin.

Tired of domestic life, the riches
 Which filled the pockets of his breeches,
 Were still too plenteous to lie idle ;
 And passion, wanting reason's bridle,

Urged him to seek for sugar-candy
 Abroad, although at home so handy.
 Alas! for those who fornicate!
 Repentance comes, or soon or late,
 The harlot's meretricious lust
 Is but the prelude to disgust.
 Her mercenary smiles to please
 Are paid with loathing and disease.
 A *Putrid Sea* you have no chart in
 Is all my eye and Betty Martin.

When war broke out, and men, excited,
 In blood and battle-fields delighted,
 With martial ardour in his breast,
 Strephon could never be at rest.
 Proud anecdotes of arms and glory
 Turned inside out his upper story;
 Just as a washerwoman's slop
 Throws all the frothy suds at top;
 Or as a whirl-about at fairs,
 With gilded pole and painted chairs,
 Tempts boys and girls to quit the ground
 Until their heads swim round and round.
 His sobbing wife, his baby's eyes,
 His home, are now unheeded ties;
 The horrors of a long campaign
 Are set before him—all in vain.
 From the Militia to the Line
 Exchanged, he hopes one day to shine;
 And, though Lord Hardinge may be partial,
 Great deeds can make a man Field Marshal.
 He reaches camp, and longs to try
 A tussle with the enemy:
 Nights in the trenches quite delight him:
 Nor shells nor cannon-balls affright him.
 At last our noodle-chieftain's plan
 The storming of the Great Redan.—
 He rushes boldly to the breach:
 Grape rattles; heavy ordnance screech:
 Nor blood nor bayonet appals,
 Till, like a hero, down he falls.
 Borne on a stretcher to his tent,
 He muses on the sad event.
 "I've got a pepper-corn or two,"

He cries, "one in me, one quite through;
"Glory!—oh! how my wounds are smarting!
'Tis all my eye and Betty Martin."

He lived—and, quitting fields to die on,
Went home, no Marshal, but a Lion:
There, o'er his claret, told his story,
And closed his fond career of glory;
Ending his dream in salve and ointment.—
Yet, though thus doomed to disappointment,
He burned to signalize his name;
So next ambition lights the flame.
His country's good, the people's cause,
Equal obedience to the laws,
Now quite engrossed his ardent soul;
But still some doubtful questions stole
Across his mind, and left a void,
That all his energies destroyed.
He saw the writer sell his pen
To praise the acts of wicked men;
He saw the alms for paupers spent
By base trustees in merriment.
Loud patriots suddenly grew dumb,
And seats were bartered for a sum.
Peers of the realm felt no disgrace
In swopping principles for place.
Strephon, amazed, in time withdrew,
Disgusted with the venal crew.
To pawn one's honour such a mart in
Was all my eye and Betty Martin.

At last religion crossed his way,
And seemed to shine with brighter day,
With hope to cheer, with promised bliss,
All in a better world than this.
But, when he searched about for teachers,
And heard a score of godly preachers—
Of protestant and catholics—
Who use the holy crucifix,—
He doubted e'en his catechism,
And met at every turn a schism.
But, what seemed worse than all the rest,
Hypocrisy so much possessed
The people, that the outer show
Of duty would no further go

Than radiant joy by virtue won—
 The cheerful sense of duty done.
 Fresh from a sermon, ladies stalked
 Like Stygian ghosts; and, as they walked,
 Presented prayer-books to view
 As highwaymen their pistols do;—
 Held their cocked Bibles in their hand
 As who should say “There! miscreant, stand!
 You have not been to church: and I
 Scorn you for your impiety.”
 Zealots! go, listen to the lark;
 The buttercup and poppy mark:
 Yon flowery meads were never meant
 To nourish gloom and discontent.
 Look at the brightness of the sun:
 Observe how gay the rivers run.
 Where are the signs that our Creator
 Intended a black parson’s gaiter
 Should any holiness impart?
 He never wished to chill the heart.
 How little know our modern saints
 That, gloomy sadness rarely taints
 Virtue’s confiding cheerful eye,
 ’Tis vice’s surest panoply.
 Vice always takes a sombre basis;
 Clear consciences have lively faces.
 Are scripture precepts all forgotten?
 Are all God’s intimations rotten?
 “Enter my presence with a song;
 And serve with gladness all day long.”
 Earth cannot shew an uglier sight
 Than a white-neckclothed hypocrite;
 And, in one word to say it all,
 Than that arch-scoundrel, J—— D—— P——.
 Oh! but (thought Strephon) folks like these
 Are ignorant one plainly sees;
 Led by the nose, to teachers humble,
 They may, from misconception, stumble.
 They have a livelihood to gain,
 With little children to maintain:
 To know what true religion is
 Let’s enter bishop’s palaces.

There prelates stored with learning dwell,
And nourish thoughts ineffable.

There,—lowly, as if soon to meet
Their maker on the judgment seat,
They minister, in Christian meekness,
The bread of life to sinners' weakness ;—
Diffuse with lavish hand, by stealth,
Upon the poor their lordly wealth ;
Baths, hospitals, alms-houses, found ;
And die for charity renowned.

There's C—— J—— L—— keeps his bed :

They say he's dying, if not dead.
He's palsied, and his days are few :
He may survive a month or two,
A martyr to disease and pains.—
No doubt the time that yet remains
Is spent in passing in review

His course of life, as wise men do,
And making proper reparation,
As suits his piety and station.
Submissive there behold him wait,

Reflecting on a future state,
In Christian fortitude resigned,
And meek with penitential mind.

Thus, shaking off the earthly leaven,
That renders man unfit for heaven,
He hails the angels' call to rise,
And takes his seat in Paradise.

Not he!—he feels the tottering mitre
Is slipping off, and holds it tighter ;—
Clings with his latest breath to Mammon,
And tries his skill, how best to gammon
The shrewd dispensers of preferment,
Who calculate on his interment.

Cries he, “ A poor man, like myself,
Who never thought of dirty pelf,
Has much to answer for, unless
He keeps his children from distress.

Supposing I should chance to die,
There's nothing for my family.

My charities have been enormous :
I've given away the wealth of Ormus

To help poor curates in their trouble,
 And make their trifling pittance double.
 Besides, providing for my wife
 Compelled me to insure my life;
 And with ten thousand pounds a year
 I scarcely own a sixpence clear."
 To hear the bishop's mournful tone,
 A man must have a heart of stone,
 Or else be moved by wicked malice,
 Who would deprive him of his palace.
 He only asks six thousand pounds
 (Per annum) to keep up the grounds;
 Something to pay the doctor's fees,
 And just afford him bread and cheese.
 'Tis true, Cort's daughters have much less—
 What's iron to a diocess?
 'Tis true that priests in other days
 Have aimed at apostolic praise.
 When Berkeley held a bishopric,
 And in the course of time fell sick,
 So that he found he could no longer
 Serve mother Church, unless to wrong her,
 He sent at once his resignation,
 And scorned a bargain for his station.
 Strephon soon found his error out;
 To confidence succeeded doubt,
 But what he thought (of censure shy)
 He uttered in soliloquy.
 "What good are bishops, rich as Cræsus,
 With charitable schemes to fleece us?
 Who always beg, but never give;
 Who feed no flocks but on them live:
 And deans, and canons, in their stall,
 What good are they, too, after all?
 There's Soapy Sam, the church Apollo,
 Dealing in phrases smooth and hollow,
 Who, like a butcher, o'er the boulders,
 Trots (apron on) and works his shoulders,
 Wearing a taped-up shovel hat;
 Whilst common people ask 'Who's that.'
 Sam in his club—the Athenæum—
 (Nam ipse ego vidi eum)

Makes nothing of a flight of stairs,
 And clears them, schoolboy-like, in pairs.
 A jolly bishop may be pleasant,
 Who takes his glass and shoots his pheasant,
 Who plays a decent game at billiards,
 And registers his weight by steelyards,
 Who cracks a joke at visitations,
 And livings gives to poor relations:
 But, when his lordship goes to hector
 Over a poor defenceless rector,
 Think you religion is his heart in?
 'Tis all my eye and Betty Martin.

'Twas thus Sam's father, ~~Will~~ *before*,
 Mouthing, until his voice was hoarse—
 Kept turning, twisting all about:
 And yet his hearers were in doubt,
 If in his speech they did not spy
 More cunning than philanthropy.
 'Tis thus a fountain, in a square,
 Throws up its water high in air,
 The wond'ring cockney gazes round,
 And thinks pure springs are underground,
 Which, bursting upwards, will not stay
 Until they see the light of day.
 Alas! poor fool; he ne'er surmises
 From belching steam and soot it rises.
 'Twas thus Dick Martin capped his fame,
 And from mock-feeling earned a name,
 By saving donkeys from a cudgel,
 Whilst those who knew him said 'twas fudge all.
 Why was his anguish so acute
 To see ill-treatment of a brute?
 And yet to never raise a cry
 Against sea-captains' cruelty,
 Whose lashes tell upon a skin
 That's twice as tender, twice as thin.
 Had Sammy lived when Mary reigned—
 Mary with blood of martyrs stained—
 Who sent recusants to the stake
 Just as you send a pie to bake,
 Then bloody Mary (curses on her!)
 Had found in him another Bonner.

Bonner was smooth in cheek and tongue,
 Had lips where sweetest accents hung ;
 Yet from his bland and smiling look
 Designing craft her weapons took.
 But, should you ask me where to find
 A churchman of a pious mind,
 One who adorns the prelate's dress,
 One cheerful in his holiness ;
 A mirror void of stain, wherein
 Sinners might shudder at their sin ;
 One who adds splendour to his throne,
 And gains respect by good alone ;
 Urbane, yet dignified ; well bred ;
 In love profane and sacred read ;
 Grave in his mien, yet free from cant ;—
 That man is—just the man we want.

Reflecting thus as Strephon lay,
 He heard a voice that seemed to say,
 " Oh ! thou, who wastest thus thy youth
 In vain researches after truth,
 Perhaps thou thinkest that the goddess
 Goes naked, without shift or bodice,
 Just as the poets have portrayed her,
 Who nude and simple always made her.
 And so she was ; but people loathed her,
 And, under false pretences clothed her
 In various costumes, so that, now,
 She goes about the Lord knows how :
 And even those who most respect her
 With difficulty recollect her.
 Her friends had tried to make her sprucer,
 And thought at Court to introduce her ;
 But there they only called her ' fool,'
 And turned her into ridiculê.
 When taken next to Lincoln's Inn,
 The wigs received her with a grin :
 The judges said she must withdraw ;
 Their business was not truth, but law.
 At evening parties, where she went,
 The ladies showed their discontent ;
 They talked of pads and crinolines,
 Truth wondered what the jargon means.

Whatever article of dress
 Gave maidens charms they don't possess
 She held as instruments of woe;
 For when with love their suitors glow,
 The soft illusion melts away
 As soon as marriage comes in play!
 For ardent passions generate,
 When disappointed, mortal hate."
 How others served her need I tell?
 Thus, by degrees, she lower fell.
 Some rags the poor-house guardians give her,
 And praise her worth and let her shiver.
 Where then to find religious zeal
 That does not motives base conceal?
 So different creeds which men profess
 Have for their symbol each a dress.
 When Jupiter his thunders hurled
 From high Olympus o'er the world,
 In forms of worship then, as now,
 The multitude were made to bow.
 Old Chryses might have vestments worn—
 Have had his crazy noddle shorn,
 Just as a popish priest would pass
 When going through his morning mass.
 To Flamens Cardinals succeeded,
 With superstitions ready kneaded.
 When screaming heretics expire,
 Burnt, as they say, at God's desire,
 Inquisitors a hundred fold
 More pious seem in robes of gold.
 Without a cassock what's a parson?
 How could he keep the holy farce on?
 Yes, sanctity is all pretence!
 True piety's the inward sense
 Which rites and rubrics sets at naught,
 And adoration is in thought.
 Be this the moral of my verse,
 God regulates the universe;
 Not all the prayers that e'er were writ
 Can alter his decrees a bit.
 Ask nothing—'tis but blindman's buff:
 Learn to be thankful—that's enough;

Praying, you pray ('tis ten to one)
For what would best be left undone.
Religion is, "To others do
Whate'er you wish were done to you;"
With that, his thanks to God who pours
For all his mercies, and adores
The power that made the joyful earth,
And gave the sun and planets birth,
He will not, as was said at starting,
Find all my eye and Betty Martin.

THE END.