

Maxims in prose and verse : addressed to the affluent and benevolent public / By an unfortunate prisoner, of long durance in his Majesty's Goal [sic] of Newgate, for a debt.

Publication/Creation

London, Printed in the year 1788.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/k6rzufmr>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

2
M A X I M S,

I N

P R O S E A N D V E R S E,

A D D R E S S E D T O T H E

A F F L U E N T A N D B E N E V O L E N T P U B L I C .

By an unfortunate Prisoner, of long durance in his Majesty's Goal of Newgate, for a Debt.

Many can serve One:

To banish anxious Thought, and quiet Pain,
Read Homer's Frogs, or my more trifling Strain.

L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D I N T H E Y E A R M D C C L X X X V I I I .

[Price One Shilling.]

M A X I M A

PROSE AND VERSE

ADDRESSED TO THE

ATTENDANT AND BENEVOLENT PUBLIC

IN A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON GAZETTE

BY

To build a nation's thought and great
Lead Homer's Troje, or my more cutting strain.

L O N D O N

PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1800

BY

P R E F A C E.

BENEVOLENT READER,

I H A V E been confined many Months within the Walls of Newgate, for a Debt I was then, and am now unable to pay.

The Horrors of a Prison is past all Description! View me deserted by former Friends and Acquaintances—left to all the Pangs of Hunger and Nakedness—shut up where Pity seldom comes—the weeping Eyes of a dear Child looking on me (often in vain) for a Morfel of Bread; while the Privilege of the Pauper who craves your Charity from Door to Door is denied, and Infamy stigmatizes my dreadful Situation.

This is briefly my Case, which a very few Years ago was quite the Reverse.

The Series of Circumstances that caused this Change, as they are of no Concern to the Public, you will allow
me

me here to be silent upon; particularly so, as I have Hope, that the same Wheel of Providence which has moved me so much beneath the HORISON, may hereafter raise me again into Life. From which I persuade myself you will also excuse my Name appearing at present Public.

Should you find one Maxim herein to improve your Mind, I am sure you will not regret the small Purchase; and if every House in this great Metropolis would but do the same, it will be the Means of giving Happiness and Liberty to

Your most devoted;

Obedient humble Servant,

C ——— P ———;

Copy

*Mr. P has behaved himself since he has been
prisoner here very properly and is certainly
an object of Charity. Matthew Bloxha
May 4 88. Sheriff*

M A X I M S,

I N

PROSE AND VERSE.

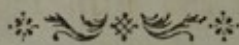
FOR my own part I am of opinion, compassion does not only refine and civilize human nature, but has something in it more pleasing and agreeable than what can be met with in such an indolent happiness, such an indifference to mankind, as that in which the Stoics placed their wisdom. As love is the most delightful passion, pity is nothing else but love softened by a degree of sorrow; it is both a pleasing anguish, as well as a generous sympathy that knits mankind together, and blends them in the same common lot.

What by good nature can be understood?
What, but the glorious thirst of doing good.
The heart that finds it's happiness to please,
Can feel another's pain, or taste his ease;
The cheek that with another's joy can glow,
Turn pale and sicken with another's woe,
Free from contempt and envy. He who deems
Justly of life's two opposite extremes;
Who, to make all and each man truly blest,
Does all he can, and wishes all the rest.

B

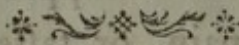
It is weak and impertinent to impart our griefs where they are not pitied, and it is cruel where they are :—Persons indifferent to us are not susceptible of the sympathy ; our friends we should spare the pain of it.

When smiling fortune spreads her golden ray,
All crowd around to flatter and betray ;
But when she thunders from an angry sky,
Our friends, our flatterers, our lovers fly.



A generous readiness to make every kind of allowance for what may be amiss in others is, perhaps, the rarest quality in the world ; it is, however, one of the most necessary in the several connections of society, but especially in the nearest of all connections.

While FAME is young, too weak to fly away,
Envy pursues her like some bird of prey ;
But once on wing, then all the dangers cease,
And Envy's self is glad to be at peace :
Tir'd with a flight so high, the chase gives o'er ;
Envy flies low, but Fame aloft will soar.



Idleness is the bane and ruin of youth ; it is the unbending of their spirits, the rust of their faculties, and as it were, the laying their minds fallow ; not as husbandmen do their lands, that they may get new heat and strength, but to impair and lose that which they have.

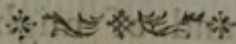
Duty

Duty demands, the parent's voice
 Should sanctify the daughter's choice;
 In that is due obedience shewn,
 To chuse belongs to her alone.
 May horror seize his midnight hour
 Who builds upon a parent's pow'r,
 And claims by purchase, vile and base,
 The loathing Maid for his embrace:
 Hence virtue sickens, and the breast
 Where peace had built her downy nest,
 Becomes the troubled seat of care,
 And pines with anguish and despair.



We suffer with impatience the misfortunes that beset us; we weep, we lament, we think our evils insupportable, and look on them as the greatest imaginable; and yet it is but too true, that the greatest grief, according to our present apprehensions, may be succeeded by a still more oppressing one.

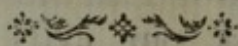
Let not the curious from your bosom steal
 SECRETS, where prudence ought to set her seal;
 Yet be so frank and plain, that at one view,
 In other things, each man may see you thro':
 For if the mask of policy you wear,
 The honest hate you, and the cunning fear.



A dull lesson is received with yawning, and forgotten as soon as delivered. The preacher's words are no sooner out of his mouth,
 than

than out of the hearer's memory. No pill wants more gilding than instruction. Virtuous principles should steal upon children imperceptibly. If the seed is sown, a little culture will secure its growth. Mirth enlivens the mind, and keeps the spirits from flagging, which must be the effect of grave discourses among young persons.

Have not you seen when danger's near,
The coward's cheek turn white with fear?
Have you not seen when danger's fled,
The self-same cheek with joy turn red?
These are low symptoms which we find
Fit only for a vulgar mind:
Where honest features, void of art,
Betray the feelings of the heart.



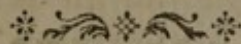
There is no charm in the female sex, that can supply the place of virtue. Without innocence, beauty is unlovely, and quality contemptible; good breeding degenerates into wantonness, and wit into impudence. It is observed that all the virtues are represented both by Painters and Statuaries, under female shapes; but if any one of them has a more particular title to that sex, it is modesty.

When sad your ills, examine and compare,
Judge of your own by what another's are;
Consider greater wretches, and the fates
Of mighty heroines, and of mighty states:
Thus real evils in their proper light
Appear, the false thus vanish out of sight.

The

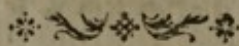
The descent to age and affliction, is smoothed and softened by the assistance of Friendship; it blunts the edge of the sharpest misfortunes. We seem not to grow old, when we have a friend to make life palatable to us. Time flies over us indeed, but he seems to brush us with downy wings, and marks his way with slight impressions.

Soft smiling hope! thou anchor of the mind!
 The only resting-place the unhappy find;
 How dost thou all our anxious cares beguile,
 And make the orphan and the friendless smile:
 With thee on pleasure's wings, through life we're borne,
 Without thee, wretched, friendless and forlorn.



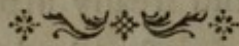
Common civility is pleasing; but if a woman wishes to be irresistible, let her acquire a habit of fixed attention: it is a sort of silent flattery, truly exquisite and perfectly innocent. To the most attentive person in company, you may observe the conversation almost always directed; while by interruption, listlessness, or a vacant look, in those that are present, every creature who offers to speak is sure to be mortified. A small expression of kindness delights; she has it also in her power, by this single mark of good breeding, to be unspeakably captivating. In short, listening to the person who speaks with a recollected, mild, and steady aspect, which nothing frivolous can divert, is, perhaps, the most valuable secret in the whole science of genuine politeness: from an agreeable yet intelligent man, it is incredibly bewitching.

Mothers, 'tis said, in days of old,
 Esteem'd their girls more choice than gold;
 Too well a daughter's worth they knew,
 To make her cheap by public view.
 (Few, who their diamonds value weigh,
 Expose their diamonds ev'ry day.)
 Then if Sir Plume drew near, and smil'd,
 The parent trembled for his child:
 The first advance alarm'd her breast,
 And fancy pictur'd all the rest;
 But now, no mother fears a foe,
 No daughter shudders at a beau.



Never do any thing for your friends, that is not consonant to your honour and conscience, you ought to prefer those to your friends; and if you would live happy with them, be as independent of them as you can.

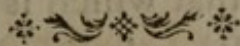
Of all the griefs that harras the distrest,
 Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
 Fate never wounds more deep the gen'rous heart,
 Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.



Have the same regard for all the world, that you would wish them
 never make confidants of any but such as are
 wit, sense, or probity. Look upon them as
 fighting you through the darkness which
 the

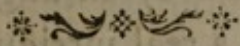
the affairs of the world will spread over the various incidents of your life.—Consider all others as wandering stars, which make a great show, but fall all at once.

—————If beauty we expose
 To vulgar eyes, too cheap it grows;
 The force is lost, and free from awe,
 We spy, and censure ev'ry flaw:
 But well preserv'd from public view,
 It always breaks forth fresh and new;
 Fierce as the sun in all his pride
 It shines, and not a spot's descry'd.



The heart which can question the virtue of a friend, until it argues upon absolute convictions, is a traitor to the cause of amity. The most alarming appearances should never shake the confidence of our friendship; and though in every thing else, a nice combination of circumstances may justify a doubt, yet here we ought never to hesitate nor lessen our regards, until conjecture is evidently lost in certainty.

Sincerity has such resistless charms,
 She oft the fiercest of our foes disarms;
 No art she knows, in native whiteness drest,
 Her thoughts all pure, and therefore all exprest.

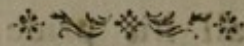


We should be cautious how we condemn as follies, the actions of others, merely because our own judgments would have prevented

ed

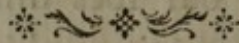
ed us from doing them, unless we can assure ourselves that this judgment is above the reach of error, and that every thing is disagreeable to the whole world that does not please our particular palate.

The trav'ler, if he chance to stray,
 May turn uncur'd to his way;
 Polluted streams again are pure,
 And deepest wounds admit a cure,
 But Woman no redemption knows,
 The wounds of honour never close.



Of this be certain, that no trade can be so bad as none at all; nor any life so tiresome, as that which is spent in continual visiting and dissipation. To give all one's time to other people, and never reserve any for one's self, is to be free in appearance only and a slave in effect.

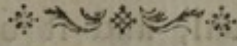
Hail, sacred friendship! virtue's best defence,
 Parent at once, and child of innocence!
 Thou best of blessings we enjoy below,
 From thy clear fount our purest pleasures flow;
 Life when improv'd by thee, can never cloy,
 By thee we relish each inferior joy.



Many a husband is reclaimed by the moderation of his wife, and very many rendered abandoned by an unguarded violence of temper. Many a one has relinquished a real intrigue, from his wife's avoiding to discover it: many a man has thrown him into such a one, by her suspicion of an imaginary connection.

The

The selfish heart that but by halves is giv'n,
 Shall find no place in love's delightful heav'n;
 Here sweet extremes alone can truly bless
 The virtue of a lover is excess.



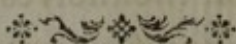
The girls who vainly exhibit themselves in public places, seldom are fit companions for a man of a domestic turn; as they are too fond generally of dress, diversions, and all kinds of dissipation, and too eager to be univ'rsally admired, even to be content with home and a husband's love. The girls who are most likely to prove good wives, are those who are privately educated in sober families, under the care of prudent fathers and uncles, and instructed by exemplary mothers and aunts, who by first rendering them sensible that they are their best and only friends, win their affections by the mild indulgence of their behaviour, and then give them a relish for those pleasures, which though they may not make a rapid progress in a young heart, may by proper management, make a desirable and lasting impression upon it.

Happy was virtue in the times of old,
 When golden ages saw contempt of gold;
 Ere yet for equipage coy virgins sigh'd,
 Or men of sense for glittering dowdies dy'd;
 Ere passion learnt by rules of trade to move;
 Or love was exil'd from the realms of love:
 Then the chaste lyre in sylvan verse complain'd,
 With nature's blush the modest cheek was stain'd;
 Fair shone the heart thro' truth's transparent shield,
 As gems by crystal, guarded tho' reveal'd:

D

Whilst

Whilst faith and virtue bore the mutual vow,
 Thro' whisp'ring groves, and the glad vales below;
 Nor happiness on hasty pinions fled,
 The pair just rising from the nuptial bed,
 Long liv'd, long lov'd the husband and the wife,
 The flame was mutual, and it burnt for life.



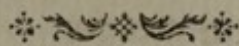
The woman who has not the most striking exterior, is frequently a more desirable companion, and is fitter for a domestic life, than the flourishing fair one, who exhibits all her charms at once, and captivates at first sight.

If, O ye pow'rs celestial! you decree
 That ere a husband is design'd for me,
 Attend propitious to your suppliant's voice,
 Accept my prayer and ratify my choice;
 Give me the man whose mild and gentle sway
 Commands with love and pleasure to obey;
 In whom good-nature and good sense combine,
 And all the manly virtues nobly shine.
 With useful learning let his mind be grac'd,
 Correct with reason, and refin'd by taste;
 And whatso'er his fortune, may he be
 By prudence rul'd, yet blest with charity;
 And may religion regulate his life,
 With such a mate who would not be a wife.

There

There is reason to fear that much of the worthlessness of many married men, as well as much of the unhappiness of both them and their partners, must be imputed to the turbulent passions and uncomplying humours of the latter, such is the sameness of the matrimonial state on the one hand, and such its cares on the other; and it is but fair to add, such the indisposition of numbers of men, to be long delighted, that to preserve the attachment of a husband unimpaired, the utmost attention, and the mildest complaisance are commonly requisite on the side of the woman.

The point to which our sweetest passions move,
Is to be truly lov'd, and fondly love;
This is the charm that smooths the troubled breast;
Friend to our health, and author of our rest;
That bids each gloomy, vexing passion fly,
And tunes each jarring string to harmony.



When once the fatal fire of jealousy has got possession of the mind, though it may lay dormant for awhile, yet the least wafting of a feather, or even a shadow is sufficient to give it motion, and kindle the smothered embers into a flame.

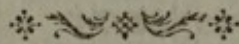
What fame's secure from an invidious jest?

By flight the deer no more of dogs afraid,
Falls by a shot from some dark covert made;
So envious tongues their foul intentions hide,
Wound, tho' unseen, and kill us ere descry'd.

It

It is curious to observe how the nature of truth may be changed by the garb it wears; softened to the admonition of friendship, or soured in the severity of reproof, yet this severity may be useful to some tempers; it somewhat resembles a file, disagreeable in its operation, but hard metals may be the brighter for it.

Narcissa's pious; envy cannot say
 She miss'd, these many years, the church or play.
 She makes no bustle in the world, 'tis true,
 But pays her debts and visits when they're due:
 A smile eternal on her lip she wears,
 Which equally the wise and worthless shares;
 She charitably lends the Town her face
 For ornament in ev'ry public place;
 And her whole study is, from morn to night,
 T' appear abroad excessively polite.

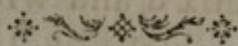


The fervor of a man's love, is preserved by a proper opposition to his passion: the easy yielding fair-one, soon damps the flame which she had raised. By keeping men at a prudent distance, women stand the fairest chance to keep them in their service.

The princely pine on hills exalted,
 Whose lofty branches cleave the sky,
 By winds long brav'd at last assaulted
 Is headlong whirl'd in dust to lie;
 Whilst the mild rose more safely growing,
 Low in its un aspiring vale

Amidst

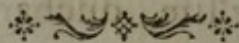
Amidst retirements shelter blowing,
Exchanges sweets with ev'ry gale.



It is in vain to multiply words and make apologies for what is never to be defended by the best advocate in the world, *the guilt of being unfortunate*. The man who becomes insolvent, has new interpretations put on all his indifferent actions; and those whom he has favoured in his former life, discharge themselves of their obligations to him, by joining in the reproaches of his enemies.—On the other hand, let any one who is conversant in the variety of human life reflect upon it, and he will find the man who wants mercy, has a taste of no enjoyment of any kind; there is a natural disrelish of every thing which is good in his very nature, and he is born an enemy to the world; he is ever extremely partial to himself in all his actions, and has no sense of iniquity but from the punishment which shall attend it; the law of the land is his gospel, and all his cases of conscience are determined by his attorney.

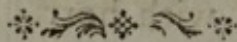
I pass'd this very moment by thy doors,
And found them guarded by a troop of villains:
The Sons of public rapine were destroying.
They told me, by the sentence of the law,
They had commission to seize all thy furniture;
Nay more, Priule's cruel hand had sign'd it.
Here stood a ruffian with horrid face,
Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate,
Tumbled into a heap for public sale.
There was another making villainous jests

At thy undoing: he had ta'en possession
 Of all thy ancient most domestic ornaments:
 Rich hangings intermix'd and wrought with gold;
 The very bed, which on thy wedding-night
 Receiv'd thee to the arms of Belvidera,
 The scene of all thy joys, was violated
 By the coarse hands of filthy dungeon villains,
 And thrown amongst the common number.



It is certain that many a young woman in this town has had her heart irrecoverably won by men who have not made one advance which ties their admirers. Agreeable manners, or what is called the prevailing gentle art, steals into the imagination of the unguarded, with a fondness which grows too insensibly to be resisted; and if his heart has not the abhorrence of any treacherous design, he may easily improve approbation into kindness, and kindness into passion.

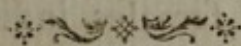
Sidney has that prevailing gentle art,
 Which can with a resistless charm impart
 The loosest wishes to the chafest heart;
 Raise such a conflict, kindle such a fire,
 Between declining virtue and desire,
 That the poor vanquish'd maid dissolves away
 In dreams all night, in sighs and tears all day.



It is much easier to feel the tender passion, than to give a definition of it. The philosopher defines love prettily, when he said, that it was a circle, returning through happiness, to happiness, from happiness. The lovers ring, is a proper and significant allusion to it.

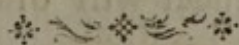
The

The bliss which ne'er was found below,
 Above by virtue we obtain;
 And virtue if we wish to know,
 We must not strangers be to pain:
 Who hopes for heav'n adversity defies,
 And fights on earth, to triumph in the skies.



Benevolence appears with a peculiar lustre in a female form. The domestic cares to which the well-educated have been trained, happily qualify them for discerning and executing the offices of humanity.

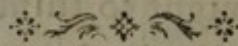
The mind not taught to think, without a store
 To fix reflection, dreads the vacant hour;
 Yet cannot wisdom stamp our joys complete,
 'Tis conscious virtue fits us for retreat:
 Who feels not *that* the private path must shun,
 And fly to public view to escape her own:
 In life's gay scenes uneasy thoughts suppress,
 And lull each anxious care in dreams of peace.
 Midst foreign objects unemploy'd to roam,
 Thought, idly active, still corrodes at home;
 A serious moment breaks the false repose,
 And guilt in all its naked horror shows.



The dilatory mind who defers doing what ought to be done, is guilty of injustice so long as he defers it. The benevolent mind will always consider poverty a sufficient recommendation to the work
 of

of charity. The honest mind will enjoy himself better in a moderate fortune that is gained in honour and reputation, than in an overgrown estate that is cankered with the acquisition of rapine and exaction.

The prude demure, with sober faint-like air,
Pities her neighbour—for she's wond'rous fair,
And when temptations lie before our feet,
Beauty is frail, and females indiscreet.
She hopes the nymph will ev'ry danger shun,
Yet prays devoutly—she may be undone.
Mean time sits watching for the daily lie,
As spiders lurk to catch a simple fly.



Our actual enjoyments are so few and transcient, that man would be a very miserable being, were he not endowed with the passion of hope, which gives him a taste of those good things that may possibly come into his possession. Hope is a kind of vital heat, that cheers and gladdens the soul, and makes our present condition supportable if not pleasing. When Cæsar the great, had given away all his estate in gratuities amongst his friends, one of them asked what he had left for himself, to which he replied, HOPE. His natural magnanimity hindered him from prizing what he was certainly possessed of, and turned all his thoughts on the more valuable that he had in view.

I question not but every reader will draw a moral from this, and apply it to myself.

Mrs. STEWART'S CASE,

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

[Price 1s. 6d.]

