

Charles Morris

*Hilaria.
The Festive
Board*

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HOR.

London:
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1798.

PRELIMINARY.

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*Tres mihi convivæ prope dissentire videntur,
Poscentes vario multum diversa palato.*

HOR.

We, for the most part, differ in our notions of pleasure; one man's delight is another's aversion: but felicity is the aim of all. Where then shall we find it? a celebrated poet observes, "'tis no where to be found, or everywhere." I say with an air of triumph, which the experience of a laughing life has imparted, the delights of love and joys of wine, happily blended, will enable us to attain the summit of human enjoyment. Would you meliorate the condition of the mind, and give to the body its best energies; fly to the circle of convivial gaiety for the one, and to the arms of indulgent beauty for the other—Life without this charming union, is like wine without fermentation, perfectly insipid—for the vinosity of wine, as well as the libidinosity of carnal nature, is produced (as Doctor Johnson, that leviathan of literature would have said) by the same exquisite process—*fermentation*.—So much in ancient as well as modern times has been said and sung of love and wine, that novelty on these topics cannot be expected. I am an enemy to every species of innovation; but more particularly to that lately broached by the celebrated original four-legg'd, long-tail'd,

philosopher, Lord Monboddo, Who is full of regret because we do not mix water with our wine.

Read with sober attention what his lordship says on this subject.

“As, by Isis, a plant was discovered, which furnished bread to man; so by Osiris, her husband and brother, an art was invented of making drink for man: this art is what is called fermentation, which he applied to the use of the grape; and so first made wine: which, though it has been very much abused, as almost every production of nature and art has been by man, and, therefore, is very properly styled by Milton, *The sweet poison of misused wine*. It may be applied to the most useful purposes, for it is the best cordial of old age: and at all times of life it enlivens the spirits; and, therefore, Bacchus is called *Lætitiaæ Dator*; and it cherishes the stomach: *but it is a great abuse of this liquor, in modern times, to drink it pure, without mixture of water, which, I am sorry to observe so much practised in Britain.*”—Horace says this ironically.

Notwithstanding this opinion, the gentlemen of Britain, whose fondness for pure, unadulterated, wine, cannot be doubted, will continue the old custom of drinking a bumper of wine with the first toast after dinner, to the first thing that ever was created for the enjoyment of their sex.

Solomon, who was at least as wise as the author in question, says, “*Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts:*” “Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.”

Burns, the admirable Scots bard, agreed with Solomon, and agreed with himself also, to versify these doctrines:

“Give him strong drink until he wink,
That’s sinking in despair;
And liquor good to fire his blood,
That’s prest with grief and care:
There let him bouse, and deep carouse,
With bumpers flowing o’er,
Till he forgets—his loves or debts,
And minds his griefs no more.”

But what are the vital elixirs, gold tinctures, wonder-working essences, electricity, and animal magnetism, compared to the properties of wine? Dr. Franklin, a name dear to political liberty, has recorded a curious fact concerning the effects of wine. When in France he received a quantity of Madeira, that had been bottled in Virginia: in some of the bottles he found a few dead flies, which he exposed to the warm sun in the month of July, and, in less than three hours, these apparently dead animals recovered life, which had been so long suspended. The philosopher then asks whether such a process might not be employed with regard to man? if that be the case, I can imagine, adds he, no greater pleasure, than to cause myself to be immersed along with a few friends in Madeira wine, (not wine and water,) and to again called to life, at the end of fifty, or more years, by the genial solar rays of my native country; only that I may see what improvement the state has made, and what changes time has brought along with it.

I cannot conclude these few observations on the virtues of wine, without introducing the sentiment of another philosophical gentleman. A modern practitioner of considerable medical skill, has given an opinion worthy the attention of the convivial world: he tells us, if our vital sensation require to be much exalted, neither alembics nor crucibles are necessary for that purpose; Nature herself has provided for us that most excellent spirit—wine, which exceeds all those prepared by the art of man: if there be any thing in the world which one can call the *prima materia*, that contains the spirit of the earth in an incorporated form, it is certainly this noble production:

“With genial joy to warm the soul,
“Bright Helen mix’d a mirth-inspiring bowl.”

ODYSSEY.

To promote hilarity, to keep up the good humour of life, to help digestion by the salutary exercise of the risible faculty, the compositions that follow were chiefly written;—the cynic, the sanctified hypocrite, and the misanthrope, will eagerly condemn many of them, but the man of the world, who thinks liberally, and acts up to his feelings, the *bon vivant*, the friend of the fair sex, the bottle and song, will, it is hoped and presumed, place them under their private care and protection.

PAT-RIOT, A REVOLUTIONARY SONG.

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I.

Och! my name is Pat Riot,
And I'm never easy;
For when all is quiet,
It turns my head crazy;
So to kick up a dust,
By my soul is delighting;
Then to lay it again,
I fall to without fighting.

Chorus—Row, row, row, row, row, row.

II.

Nought but times topsy turvy
Suit my constitution;
And all that I want, is
A snug Revolution:
Then in rank and in riches
I'll equal my betters;
And a long list of creditors
Change into debtors.

Chorus—Row, row, &c.

III.

I dare not be loyal,

For this loyal reason;
My tutor, Tom Paine,
Tells me loyalty's treason:
And Priestley my Faith has
Shook to its foundation;
So I've no prospect on earth
But eternal damnation.

Chorus—Row, row, &c.

IV.
In this plight I've a plan,
Tho' it's not ripe for broaching;
But between you and me,
'Tis a little encroaching;
By a stroke—slight of hand—
To surprize all beholders:
Why I mean to take off
The king's head from his shoulders.

Chorus—Row, row, &c.

V.
Then the crown, d'ye see,
I wou'd lay on a shelf, Sir;
Tho' it fits me as if it
Was made for myself, Sir:
Och! good luck to the sound,
How the dumb bells will ring, Sir,
When I've made all men equal,
And made myself king, Sir!

Chorus—Row, row, &c.

VI.

Just to guard off th'effect
Of fell lightning and thunder,
That together split churches
And steeples asunder,
I mean to pull down
All old orthodox structures;
'Cause Priestley says chapels
Are Heaven's conductors.

Chorus—Row, row, &c.

VII.

To see chapels, from churches,
Like Phœnixes rising,
Good souls, the dissenters
Wou'd deem it surprising,
And, grateful to me,
They wou'd down on their knees too,
Who hate both a church
And a chapel of ease too.

Chorus—Row, row, &c.

VIII.

Now the lands of the church,
That feed fat and lean preachers,
By their leaves, I'll bestow
On the puritan teachers:
Of their tithes, and their off'rings,