

October 1807

Byron, *Hours of Idleness* (1807); *British Critic*, XXX (Oct. 1807), 436-437. The notice mentions as publisher Rivingtons, publishers of the *British Critic* but only one of the five booksellers listed on the title page of Byron's volume.

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POETRY.

ART. 11. *Hours of Idleness: a Series of Poems original, and translated, by George Gordon, Lord Byron, a Minor.* 12mo. 6s. Rivingtons. 1807.

This is very ingenious idleness, and has produced some elegant and interesting compositions. There is much taste, and more vigour than might reasonably be expected from a minor. But the following specimen will justify this and greater commendation, as to poetry; though it tells some facts which cannot be read without much regret.

"T_o ———

" Oh! had my fate been join'd with thine,
As once this pledge appear'd a token;
These follies had not, then, been mine,
For, then, my peace had not been broken.
To thee, these early faults I owe,
To thee, the wife and old reproving;
They know my sins, but do not know,
'Twas thine to break the bonds of loving.

For,

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For, once, my soul like thine was pure,
And all its rising fires could smother;
But, now, thy vows no more endure,
Bestow'd by thee upon another.

Perhaps, his peace I could destroy,
And spoil the blisses that await him;
Yet, let my rival smile in joy,
For thy dear sake, I cannot hate him.

Ah! since thy angel form is gone,
My heart no more can rest with any;
But what it fought in thee alone,
Attempts, alas! to find in many.

Then, fare thee well, deceitful maid,
'Twere vain and fruitless to regret thee;
Nor hope, nor memory yield their aid,
But pride may teach me to forget thee.

Yet all this giddy waste of years,
This tiresome round of palling pleasures;
These varied loves, these matron's fears,
These thoughtless strains to passion's measures,

If thou wert mine, had all been hush'd,
This cheek now pale from early riot;
With passion's hectic ne'er had flush'd,
But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet.

Yes, once the rural scene was sweet,
For Nature seem'd to smile before thee;
And once my breast abhor'd deceit,
For then it beat but to adore thee:

But, now, I seek for other joys;
To think, would drive my soul to madness;
In thoughtless throngs, and empty noise,
I conquer half my bosom's sadness.

Yet, even in these, a thought will steal,
In spite of every vain endeavour;
And fiends might pity what I feel,
To know, that thou art lost for ever."

The author appears to have been educated at Harrow, and to have left it with no favourable impressions of the present head master, whom he names Pomposus. The volume deserved a better press, the typography is very indifferent indeed, and does no great credit to the work.