

**LIVES AND ANECDOTES OF MISERS; OR, THE
PASSION OF AVARICE DISPLAYED: IN THE
PARSIMONIOUS HABITS, UNACCOUNTABLE
LIVES AND REMARKABLE DEATHS OF THE
MOST NOTORIOUS
MISERS OF ALL AGES, WITH A FEW WORDS
ON FRUGALITY AND SAVING**

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F. SOMNER MERRYWEATHER

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BY
F. SOMNER MERRYWEATHER,

AUTHOR OF
"BIBLIOMANIA IN THE MIDDLE AGES;" "GLIMMERINGS IN THE
DARK, OR LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF THE OLDEN TIME," ETC.



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P R E F A C E.

If the poet said true, when he wrote that the proper study of mankind is man, the subject of this little volume will serve some better object than mere curiosity. It has been my aim throughout its compilation, to render it a volume of instruction as well as of amusement. I think it a pleasant way to instil a moral by exciting curiosity, and have endeavoured, in gathering together examples of avarice, to show the evils of that passion—to show how, before its influence, vanish the better spirits of the heart, and how impossible it is, that within the avaricious soul, virtue or charity can find a profitable habitation.

In presenting this volume to the public, I deem it but justice to myself, and candour to

my readers, to intimate that I do not profess to fill the book with novel and unheard-of instances of avarice. I have not sought, like a diligent antiquary, into the biographical minutæ of misers. I have not met with any old manuscript lives; I have discovered in public libraries no curious diary of a miser's schemes, or of a miser's gains. Some of these materials have been in print before, and have doubtless long ago, amused many of my readers; but a great proportion have been extracted from books but little known—from forgotten pamphlets, and from newspapers long out of date. Some have been gathered from old country gossips, and some have been gleaned from ephemeral sources, to which I cannot even myself distinctly refer. I have thought it fit to declare thus much, lest, in introducing some anecdote which my readers may have heard of before, they should accuse me of plagiarism. I would have it remembered too, that old illustrations may be so re-applied, as that the life of a Daniel Dancer, or of a John Elwes, may still carry a warning, of how sinful is avarice, or of how fruitless is an eternal parsimony; although they may have been related in other books.

My instances are veritable ones, and most of them I believe to be illustrations of real life unexaggerated by fiction. Whilst I have an object in the compilation—whilst I aim, to point now and then a moral, and to exemplify sometimes one of the propensities of the human mind, I have not forgotten that many will read the book to drive away ennui; and that youthful readers in winter evenings may expect some amusement from my pages. As I earnestly wish that such may be the case, I have endeavoured, in choosing my illustrations and anecdotes, to select those which appeared the most amusing from their eccentricity, or the most instructive by the warning they convey. I have winnowed my multitudinous materials from all those anecdotes and reminiscences, which from the coarseness of their allusions, or the indelicacy of their nature, might seem offensive to virtue, or likely to prove dangerous to innocence.

I hope then, the book may not be without its use, and am inclined to say, as Southey said on one occasion,

Be it with thee according to thy worth;
Go, little book! in faith I send thee forth.

or in the quaint words of a very old author, whose

book I happened just now to take down from my shelf, would say—

Go thou little book, with due reverence
And with an humble heart; recommend me
To all those, who of their benevolence
This little Treatise doth read, hear, or see,
Wherewith I pray them contented to be,
And to amend it, in places behovable,
Whersin I have faulted, or be culpable.
For hard it is, a man to attain
To make a thing perfect, at the first sight;
But when it is read, and well over seen
Faults may be found, that never came to light,
Though the maker do his diligence and might.
Praying them to take it, as I have intended,
And to forgive one, if I have offended.

F. S. M.

Gloucester Place.
Kentish Town.

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