

*Saint Evremond*

THE portrait of St. Evremond, delineated by his own hand, will not be unacceptable to many readers.

This writer possessed delicacy and wit, and has written well, but with great inequality. His poetry is insipid, and his prose abounds with points; the antithesis was his favourite figure, and its prodigality fatigues. The comparisons he forms between some of the illustrious ancients will interest from their ingenuity.

In his day it was a literary fashion for writers to give their own portraits; a fashion that seems to have passed over into our country, for Farquhar has drawn his own character in a letter to a lady. Others of our writers have given these self-miniatures. Such painters are, no doubt, great flatterers, and it is rather their ingenuity than their truth, which we admire in these cabinet-pictures.

“I am a philosopher, as far removed from superstition as from impiety; a voluptuary, who has not less abhorrence of debauchery than inclination for pleasure; a man, who has never known want, or abundance. I occupy that station of life which is contemned by those who possess every thing; envied by those who have nothing and only relished by those who make their felicity consist in the exercise of their reason. Young,

ISAAC D’ISRAELI

I hated dissipation; convinced that a man must possess wealth to provide for the comforts of a long life. Old, I disliked economy; as I believe that we need not greatly dread want, when we have but a short time to be miserable. I am satisfied with what nature has done for me, nor do I repine at fortune. I do not seek in men what they have of evil, that I may censure; I only discover what they have ridiculous, that I may be amused. I feel a pleasure in detecting their follies; I should feel a greater in communicating my discoveries did not my prudence restrain me. Life is too short, according to my ideas, to read all kinds of books, and to load our memories with an endless number of things at the cost of our judgment. I do not attach myself to the observations of scientific men to acquire science; but to the most rational, that I may strengthen my reason. Sometimes, I seek for more delicate minds, that my taste may imbibe their delicacy; sometimes, for the gayer, that I may enrich my genius with their gaiety: and, although I constantly read, I make it less my occupation than my pleasure. In religion, and in friendship, I have only to paint myself such as I am—in friendship more tender than a philosopher; and in religion, as constant and as sincere as a youth who has more simplicity than experi-

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ence. My piety is composed more of justice and charity than of penitence. I rest my confidence on God, and hope every thing from his benevolence. In the bosom of providence I find my repose, and my felicity.”