

Alexander Search

EPIGRAM — Ah, foolish girl with a many fancy fraught,

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Ah, foolish girl with many a fancy fraught,
Seek not the dreary path of solemn thought.
The man who thinks is he that suffers worst,
By Nature blest, by everything accurst.
Thought is but madness to one thing confined,
A pleasing illness, woeful, undefined;
Pleasing as is the fury of the storm
That swings above its dangerous force enorm;
Pleasing as genius to which one must know
Death will not spare the dreadful, sudden blow;
Of body, soul and happiness the waster,
Thought's a good servant but a tyrannous master.

Leave then to madmen thought and pass thy life
Away from doubt and ceaseless mental strife;
Seek but to please and cherish but to scorn,
Love not with faith or thou must learn to mourn;
Be thy delight in silks and baubles gay,
Treat tears as feints and think life but a play;
Think with thy heart, reserve thy mind to scheme;
Let thine eyes practise an (unreal) dream:
Thy form to attract, thy voice not to repel;
The art of slander see than learn full well;
Try to please women as thou pleasest men. . .
Thou may'st succeed. . . and may I live till then.

1904

Poesia Inglesa. Fernando Pessoa. (Organização e tradução de Luísa Freire. Prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes.) Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1995: 32.