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# Eighteenth-Century Verse

*Edited by* Roger Lonsdale

# THE OXFORD BOOK OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VERSE

EMERITUS FELLOW of Balliol and former Professor of English at the University of Oxford, Roger Lonsdale is a distinguished authority on English literature of the eighteenth century. He is the author and editor of numerous books, including *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (OUP, 1989) and, most recently, Samuel Johnson's *The Lives of the Poets* (four volumes, OUP, 2006).

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THE NEW  
OXFORD BOOK OF  
EIGHTEENTH  
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Chosen and Edited by  
ROGER LONSDALE

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# OXFORD

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*For Anne, Charles, and Kate*

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## INTRODUCTION

### (i)

IN the preface to his *Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse* in 1926, David Nichol Smith suggested that attitudes to that century's poetry were 'still in process of readjustment':

What is reasonably certain is that a new verdict, favourable or unfavourable, will be given by the twentieth century, and that in time we ourselves, or more probably our successors, will speak of the eighteenth century with as little sense of contention as we now speak of the seventeenth and the age of Elizabeth.

Almost sixty years later, Nichol Smith's prediction has surely been fulfilled. Indeed, the history and the nature of eighteenth-century poetry may well appear disappointingly uncontentious topics. Two generations of scholars have conscientiously explored and charted the territory. The general reader seems to know all too well what to expect from the age of Good Taste and Common Sense.

There have, of course, been readjustments. While Pope has been rehabilitated as a major satiric poet, we have been reminded that the early decades of the century have other representative voices; that, for example, Swift's deliberately 'unpoetic' intensity, and the blend of detailed natural description and religious sublimity in Thomson's blank verse, are also very much of their period. As for the later eighteenth century, what Northrop Frye has called 'a vague notion that the age of sensibility was the time when poetry moved from a reptilian Classicism, all cold and dry reason, to a mammalian Romanticism, all warm and wet feeling', tends to persist. The absence, after the death of Pope, of any comparably compelling figure before the appearance of Blake in the 1780s, may help to explain such vagueness. Yet the mid-century offers a variety of interesting individual voices, and the discovery in 1939 of Smart's extraordinary madhouse poem, 'Jubilate Agno', has only added to this diversity. The couplet survives with sombre dignity in Johnson's 'The Vanity of Human Wishes', more feverishly in Churchill's political satire in the 1760s, more lyrically and nostalgically in Goldsmith's 'The Deserted Village'. Since the 1740s, however, fashionable poetry had been increasingly preoccupied with other forms and interests. Literary historians have urged us to avoid labelling these decades 'pre-Romantic' (with the implication that their only achievement lay in perfunctory anticipations of Wordsworth) and to grant the Age of Sensibility its own personality. Its most representative poem is no doubt Gray's 'Elegy', in which confident and supremely eloquent generalities about life and death lead eventually to a much less assured projection of the isolated poet himself, burdened with mysterious sorrows.

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Gray's later and more defiant version of the poet as 'The Bard' draws on a revealing blend of biblical, medieval, and Welsh sources to create the sublime if doomed figure who so awed contemporary readers. While Gray and his generation were increasingly fascinated by the lost sources of poetic power and authority, the pursuit of these elusive qualities could be frustrating and self-conscious. The search for inspiration led poets away from classical and French influences and back to the native tradition of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, or further afield to the Orient, Scandinavia, the Middle Ages. William Collins, for example, imitated what he hoped was Persian poetry, invoked Shakespeare and Milton, vicariously indulged in Scottish superstitions, and celebrated the rare visionary powers of the true poet. By the 1760s, James Macpherson was 'discovering' a primitive epic in the Highlands, the ill-fated Thomas Chatterton was 'discovering' a cache of medieval lyrics in Bristol, and Thomas Percy was refurbishing ancient ballads to meet contemporary taste.

In tracing the changing sensibility of eighteenth-century poetry, literary historians have done much to persuade us to be sympathetic to its special conventions and aspirations, and not to judge it by criteria appropriate to quite different periods. Yet the very qualities welcomed in the new poets who emerged in the 1780s suggest the limitations of their predecessors: Crabbe's stern realism about rural life, and Burns's genial, colloquial vigour; Cowper's freshness of observation, disarming confidentiality and, always in the background, intimations of psychic instability; and Blake's enigmatic lyricism and radical conviction. We may have to concede, in fact, that emotional and stylistic inhibitions are what continue to strike many readers most forcibly about the verse of the earlier period. Commentators still generalize freely about the large areas of experience which, it is claimed, eighteenth-century poets ignored: interest in the non-rational, the insight of children, the isolation of the individual from conventional society, the exotic and savage, the poor and unlettered. The most sympathetic historians advise the reader that, from the poetry of an age of politeness and urbanity, he is not to expect earthy verisimilitude about everyday life, the expression of intimate or disturbing emotions, the energetic tones of a real speaking voice, or any but the most insipid eroticism.

Eighteenth-century poetic theory evidently made a virtue of such inhibitions. Throughout the period critics warned the poet to resist the temptation of dwelling on the local and the temporary surface of life, to avoid the homely, the crude, the capricious, and the abnormal. The ideal was apparently a 'polite' style which would succeed in muffling the 'low' and potentially disturbing immediacy of the real world. Theoretical preoccupation with general and universal experience made particularity of description and idiosyncratic subjectivity undesirable

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and irrelevant. The prescribed decorum of the relationship between poet and genteel reader led inevitably to reliance on predictable, usually classically influenced, forms and conventions, precisely adjusted style levels and specialized poetic diction.

Lucidity, elegance, and refinement are the positive qualities encouraged by such prescriptions, and these features of eighteenth-century verse have always appealed to readers who find in them the reflection of an age of apparent repose, moderation, and stability. Yet 'The Peace of the Augustans' has come increasingly to seem a dangerous delusion. Modern readers are inclined to view suspiciously poetry written, as we are so often assured it was, for the fashionable classes and accordingly subservient to the dictates of polite taste. Whereas Pope's later satire still engages urgently with the political and economic realities of his age as he perceived them, it is the evasive, escapist aspect of the poetry of the next two generations which can seem most striking. Just as the novel discovered its full potential between 1740 and 1760, the poets began retreating dispiritedly into a twilit, rural landscape to brood on Fancy and Melancholy and to contemplate their own sensibilities, turning their backs on public experience, and losing any capacity or desire to observe the actualities of contemporary life with any precision or immediacy, let alone to transform them imaginatively.

The ability of later eighteenth-century poets to ignore the social changes they were living through must seem ominous. Where do we find them responding to the agricultural and industrial revolutions, the effects of economic growth, increased social mobility, rapid urban development, changing sexual mores, the impact of British imperialism at home or abroad, or all the social tensions which would erupt in the last decade of the century? So evasive or so ignorant, it would seem, were the poets of such matters, so self-consciously elevated above the facts of everyday existence, that ideologically minded critics have had to resort to a process of deciphering the means by which the verse of the period contrives to gloss over, for example, the harsh realities of rural life, and the unjust relationships it complacently takes for granted.

### (ii)

Since the landscape of eighteenth-century poetry is now apparently so well mapped and likely to afford so few unexpected perspectives, since the poets themselves were evidently so unanimous about their aims and means, it will seem outrageous to suggest that we still know very little about the subject. Yet given the sheer quantity of verse published in the century—the thousands of substantial, separately published poems, the hundreds of volumes of collected poems by individual authors, the innumerable miscellanies by several hands, all the verse which appeared

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in the poetry sections of hundreds of magazines and newspapers—this must literally be the case. How confident can we be that generations of historians and anthologists have efficiently sifted through this rubble in search of anything of value? With some honourable exceptions, they have in fact returned again and again to the same familiar material. Specialist studies have been written only of the most respectable and predictable genres, which are guaranteed to offer few or no surprises.

This situation is explicable only if we recognize the hypnotically influential way in which the eighteenth century succeeded in anthologizing itself. In one sense the process began with Pope's assault on what he could dismiss as Grub Street in *The Dunciad*. More directly influential have been Dodsley's *Collection of Poems* (1748–58), invariably trusted as definitively representative of the mid-century, and the much more massive compilations of English poetry which the booksellers began publishing towards the end of the century. So gratefully have most historians and anthologists relied on such huge collections as Robert Anderson's *Works of the British Poets* (13 vols., Edinburgh, 1792–5) and Alexander Chalmers's *Works of the English Poets* (21 vols., 1810), that the criteria governing the creation of this influential 'canon' have never been pondered. Some working principles of these editors were to have their own effect: Anderson (followed by Chalmers) admitted no anonymous authors, no women, no poets whose works had not already appeared in convenient collected editions, no living poets (so that Chalmers could replace eight of Anderson's poets with eight who had died by 1810). More significantly, however, these compilations were calculated to appeal to a respectable readership at a precise historical moment. For much of the century 'polite' taste had been steadily detaching itself from 'low', popular culture and by the 1790s, when Anderson made his crucial decisions, the divergence accelerated. In the decade of unprecedented social tension which followed the French Revolution, it need be no surprise that moderation, decorum, restraint and propriety were the criteria controlling admission to a compilation like Anderson's (endorsed by Chalmers in 1810), the very qualities which have helped to impart an air of remoteness and insubstantiality to much eighteenth-century poetry. There could be no place for the eccentric, the vulgar, the extravagant, the disturbing, the subversive.

Yet did such material exist to exercise the vigilance of the compilers? It is commonly assumed that the restraints imposed by polite taste were so pervasive that it never occurred to eighteenth-century poets to write in certain ways or on certain subjects, as if for several decades they simply failed to experience various basic human interests or emotions. In fact, throughout the century there were poets oblivious of, or indifferent to, the inhibitions of polite taste: the success of that taste lay

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less in governing what was written than in influencing what would be allowed to survive. Inevitably, many of the now totally forgotten poets of the period are precisely what we would have predicted: clumsy or insipid versifiers, feebly malignant dunces, slavish mimics of currently fashionable modes, opportunistic purveyors of doggerel on transient occasions, blank-verse moralists of stupefying turgidity, religiose maunders of such lameness as hardly to qualify as pedestrian.

Yet the patient explorer will also encounter something much less predictable: the vigorous, humorous, idiosyncratic verse of authors, many of them anonymous, who felt impelled at least to try to describe with some immediacy and colloquial directness the changing world they lived in, often for anything but a polite readership. With varying degrees of competence and sophistication, they wrote about all aspects of mundane urban life, or, at a period when we are assured pastoral had declined into insipid Arcadianism or mutated into pompous georgic, continued writing realistically about rural superstitions, amusements, and hardships. In the 1740s when, if one were to believe some historians, all the poets had taken to gloomy meditations in graveyards, they were writing cheerfully about cricket, golf, and boxing. While many 'uneducated' poets tried feebly to imitate the poetic manners of their betters, there were others who wrote graphically if naively about their daily lives and resentfully about their poverty. Women, who also tended to see themselves as educationally deprived, wrote scathingly at times about their restricted lives and opportunities. Both sexes wrote, with surprising frequency, about the pains of matrimonial life. Poets wrote exuberant nonsense and garrulous autobiography and vigorous bawdy, described life in the army or the navy or prison, tried to convey the anguish of unemployment, campaigned with increasing fervour against the evils of war, imperialism, slavery and the treatment of the poor. In an age supposedly unanimous about the primacy of correctness and decorum, there was a surprising amount of stylistic restlessness: some poets wrote with unexpected plainness and simplicity throughout the century, others with an extravagance which at times can suggest literal derangement. Theoretically devoted to formal predictability, they wrote poems which seem to have no generic affiliations, or else perfunctorily claim to imitate Spenser or Milton, or shelter under the label of 'burlesque', while getting on with what they wanted to say.

### (iii)

A single anthology can hardly illustrate all these assertions, especially when its aim is less to subvert traditional accounts of the nature and development of eighteenth-century poetry than to supplement them. I have tried to include all those writers who represent the familiar poetic

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interests and achievements of the century, while juxtaposing with them some much less familiar material. In this way I hope to suggest that there was greater diversity of style, form, and content in the period, particularly after the death of Pope, than is usually conceded. It is not necessary, in fact, to deviate far from the beaten track to demonstrate that polite taste exerted a less potent influence, indeed existed more precariously, than has often been asserted. Some historians mention the names of Edward Ward and John Wolcot at opposite ends of the century; but both were prolific, careless, uneven and indecorous writers, and the sheer size of their output has evidently made it easier to refer to them than to read their verse. Yet it is hard to see why Ward's earthy and at best graphic depictions of humble life should not enter our consciousness of what the 'Augustan' period could include, or why Wolcot's robust humour, mocking informality, and healthy scepticism about politics and sexual morality should not help to complicate our notions of 'pre-Romantic' verse.

About a quarter of the material in this anthology is, however, rather more obscure. Little or none of it seems to have been reprinted, or perhaps even read, since the eighteenth century itself ended. Without wishing to distort my representation of the period by laying undue emphasis on such verse, its inclusion may deserve further comment. I have tried to resist the temptation to include material merely because its style or content might seem to confound familiar generalizations about the period, or because it has purely documentary interest. Yet the problem, if it is allowed to be a problem, of what is 'literary' and what is 'non-literary' may well confront some readers at various points in this anthology. When such verse appears artless, unsubtle or inelegant, I hope that qualities of individuality and freshness will compensate. Such poems as those from the totally forgotten pens of Wright, Dower, Wilde and Hawthorn (nos. 138, 211, 418 and 420-1) may suggest that, when the poet has seen or felt something of his own, naivety or even clumsiness can impart to his verse a kind of immediacy about which conventional criticism and history have found little or nothing to say. In these and some other cases, the reader may well 'look round for poetry, and . . . be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume the title'. If so, I am content to let these and many other poets anticipate the supposedly revolutionary challenge to polite taste which Wordsworth would introduce with these words in 1798.

It would be misleading to suggest that only humble poets could look around them with freshness or immediacy or humour. T. S. Eliot thought of English verse after the death of Pope as the product of 'an age of retired country clergymen and schoolmasters'. If the reader feels confident about what he may expect from clerical poetry of the

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mid-eighteenth century, let him read the poems by Kenrick Prescott, 'J.T.', and Leonard Howard in this anthology (nos. 311, 315, 346). If he is convinced that excess of sensibility or devotion to stilted diction prevented poets from noticing what was going on around them, let him consider such poems as those by John Gerrard and James Graeme (nos. 358, 372) or a number of anonymous authors (e.g. nos. 320, 402-3, 409).

Mention of Wordsworth may call for some explanation of his and Coleridge's absence from the closing pages of this anthology. I have not consciously included any material written earlier than 1700 or later than 1799, with the exception of an extract from James Bissett's depiction of the classical gods as tourists in industrial Birmingham in 1800 as a postscript to a supposedly neo-classical era. Some of the most familiar poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge theoretically qualifies for inclusion. Instead of reprinting such accessible poems as 'Tintern Abbey' and 'The Ancient Mariner', however, I have used the space to give some impression of the violent tensions in English society in the 1790s as perceived by the neglected poets of the decade. At the same time I have found various ways of reminding the reader of the emergence of Wordsworth and Coleridge in those heated years.

After several years of reading the 'submerged' poets of the period, I can only hope that this anthology succeeds to some extent in conveying my own conviction that the world of eighteenth-century poetry is at once less predictable and more familiar than we have been led to believe. Whether, in the absence of a single new figure who might focus all the neglected features of the period I have emphasized above, preconceptions about the age can be significantly changed I am inclined to doubt. One of the most interesting poets is the ubiquitous 'Anonymous', whose voice almost never registers in conventional literary history. If, inevitably, I would like to believe that this anthology is in various ways more representative of the full range of eighteenth-century verse than most collections, I have no desire that it should come to seem in any way definitive, aware as I am of the arbitrary decisions I have had to make, particularly among the poets so long buried beneath the debris of history. I would prefer it instead to be seen as making a case for further exploration and for further risking of judgement. As usual, readers will be struck by apparently inexplicable decisions in my selection from some of the better known poets: I am consoled only by the knowledge that limitations of space were always going to prevent illustration of the full range of, for example, Pope's achievement. Pope will, however, survive my attentions. I am more haunted by the lingering memory of some of the totally forgotten men and women whose literary bones I disturbed after they had slumbered peacefully for some two hundred years, who had something graphic or individual to say, however modestly, and for whom I had envisaged some kind of minor literary



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resurrection, but who necessarily fell back into the darkness of the centuries, perhaps irretrievably, at the last stage of my selection.

### EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

The arrangement is basically chronological, in that poets are introduced successively by the date of their earliest poem included in this anthology. Only when the date of composition is known to have been significantly earlier is it given priority over date of publication. Posthumously published poems are introduced not later than the date of the author's death. Since a poet's career may cover more than one decade, such an arrangement can be only approximately chronological. Pope poses a special problem since, emerging in the first decade of the century, his career would then carry the anthology forward to the 1740s. I have therefore divided the relatively large selection from his poems in the years in which he was preoccupied with translating Homer and wrote little original poetry. On balance, the chronological advantage seems to outweigh the inconvenience of this division.

Except for poems in dialect or in which archaic effects were deliberately sought, texts have been modernized: spelling and punctuation have been normalized, pervasive initial capitals and italics removed, and contractions expanded except when of metrical significance. (I have not, however, tried to impose an artificial consistency on the widely varying practice of poets and printers in the use of contractions.) While the original accidental features of a text can have their own interest and sometimes scholarly importance, it is worth remembering that the surviving manuscripts of many eighteenth-century poets make clear that they were content to leave such matters to the printer; that the original spelling and punctuation of some of the poems I have included would severely test the patience of many modern readers; that, while printing practice varied widely throughout the century, there was a widespread tendency from about 1750 for printers to reduce or eliminate the initial capitalization of nouns, and that most eighteenth-century readers thereafter would encounter English poetry in what was already a virtually modernized form. (I have followed the convention in recent modernizing of retaining initial capitals at least for personified qualities, but it is worth noting that the poets, or their printers, did not themselves consistently follow this principle.)

I have included few direct translations, because of limitations of space: a hundred pages devoted to the eighteenth century can be consulted in Charles Tomlinson's admirable *Oxford Book of Verse in English Translation* (1980). I have, however, included a number of imitations of poems in other languages, in which the original poem has

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been radically adapted to modern purposes: as, for example, in Thomas Morris's unusual account of a subaltern's life in the British army in Canada in imitation of Horace (no. 327).

For obvious reasons I have been able to give only excerpts from many of the century's longer poems. No anthologist can enjoy carving up the works of a major poet and in a number of important cases—poems by Swift, Pope, Johnson, Collins and Goldsmith—I could not bring myself to provide less than a complete text. Rather than offer a sequence of miscellaneous paragraphs from the final version of *The Seasons*, I have included the complete text of the first version of Thomson's 'Winter'. Totally neglected poets are a different matter: an excerpt gives them at least some chance of emerging from oblivion. I have tried to make the difference between excerpts and complete poems unambiguous: titles in square brackets are not the poet's but the editor's.

The date at the end of the poem is that of first publication. If the date of composition is verifiable and significantly different, this is also indicated. When the text followed is not that of the first edition, its source and date will be indicated in the endnotes. I have glossed on the page some words which seem likely to impede comprehension. Any other notes on the page are by the original author (included only selectively). Brief editorial notes on biographical and historical matters are confined to the end of the volume.

## NOTE TO THE PAPERBACK EDITION

I have taken the opportunity offered by this new edition of making some minor corrections. A more substantial change affects poem no. 304. I have replaced my original choice, which turned out to be an adaptation of a much earlier song by Thomas D'Urfey, with a poem for which I had not previously been able to find space. The chronological sequence is only slightly disturbed by the substitution.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DURING my exploration of the poetry of the first half of the eighteenth century, I found David Foxon's monumental *English Verse 1701-1750* (Cambridge, 1975) an invaluable bibliographical guide, particularly to the existence and location of hitherto neglected material. My appreciation of Mr Foxon's expertise was only enhanced during my relatively unaided and much more laborious attempt to come to terms with the ever increasing output of verse in the later decades of the century. I am also grateful to Mr Foxon for his encouragement and willingness to answer particular queries.

Over a period of several years, many hundredweight, perhaps tons, of eighteenth-century verse were conveyed to the Upper Reading Room of the Bodleian Library for my inspection, and I am anxious to record my appreciation of the courteous and helpful service I received from the staff of the Library during this onerous process. I am inevitably indebted to the staff of other libraries: in particular to the British Library, but also to Balliol College Library, Birmingham Reference Library, the Brotherton Collection of Leeds University Library, the English Faculty Library, Oxford, Sheffield City Libraries, and the Special Collections Department of the University of Cincinnati Libraries. During visits to New Haven and Dublin I received generous assistance from Marjorie Wynne at the Beinecke Library at Yale and from Peter MacMahon at the National Library of Ireland.

For advice, information, or other assistance, I am grateful to James Basker, Antonia Forster, Harold Forster, Claude Rawson, Julian Roberts, Derek Roper and James Sambrook. Although I would not wish to implicate them in the way I have chosen to represent eighteenth-century poetry, I benefited at various times from the opportunity of discussing the subject with Irvin Ehrenpreis and Christopher Ricks. In the final stages of the compilation of this anthology I came to rely heavily on the vigilance, patience, and good sense of Mrs Judith Luna of the Oxford University Press.

This anthology has been completed during my tenure of a British Academy Readership. I am naturally grateful to the Academy for an appointment which dramatically accelerated my progress.

# JOHN POMFRET

1667-1702

## *The Choice*

IF heav'n the grateful liberty would give,  
That I might choose my method how to live,  
And all those hours propitious Fate should lend  
In blissful ease and satisfaction spend:

Near some fair town I'd have a private seat,  
Built uniform, not little, nor too great:  
Better, if on a rising ground it stood,  
Fields on this side, on that a neighbouring wood.  
It should within no other things contain  
But what were useful, necessary, plain:  
Methinks 'tis nauseous, and I'd ne'er endure  
The needless pomp of gaudy furniture.

10

A little garden, grateful to the eye,  
And a cool rivulet run murm'ring by,  
On whose delicious banks a stately row  
Of shady limes or sycamores should grow;  
At th' end of which a silent study placed  
Should be with all the noblest authors graced:  
Horace and Virgil, in whose mighty lines  
Immortal wit and solid learning shines;  
Sharp Juvenal, and am'rous Ovid too,  
Who all the turns of love's soft passion knew;  
He that with judgement reads his charming lines,  
In which strong art with stronger nature joins,  
Must grant his fancy does the best excel,  
His thoughts so tender, and expressed so well;  
With all those moderns, men of steady sense,  
Esteemed for learning and for eloquence.  
In some of these, as fancy should advise,  
I'd always take my morning exercise:  
For sure no minutes bring us more content  
Than those in pleasing, useful studies spent.

20

30

I'd have a clear and competent estate,  
That I might live genteelly, but not great:  
As much as I could moderately spend;  
A little more, sometimes t' oblige a friend.  
Nor should the sons of poverty repine  
Too much at fortune, they should taste of mine;

JOHN POMFRET

And all that objects of true pity were  
 Should be relieved with what my wants could spare: 40  
 For what our Maker has too largely giv'n  
 Should be returned in gratitude to heav'n.  
 A frugal plenty should my table spread,  
 With healthy, not luxurious, dishes fed:  
 Enough to satisfy, and something more  
 To feed the stranger, and the neighb'ring poor.  
 Strong meat indulges vice, and pampering food  
 Creates diseases, and inflames the blood.  
 But what's sufficient to make nature strong,  
 And the bright lamp of life continue long, 50  
 I'd freely take; and, as I did possess,  
 The bounteous Author of my plenty bless.  
 I'd have a little vault, but always stored  
 With the best wines each vintage could afford.  
 Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,  
 And gives a pleasant flavour to discourse;  
 By making all our spirits debonair,  
 Throws off the lees, the sediment of care.  
 But as the greatest blessing heaven lends  
 May be debauched, and serve ignoble ends; 60  
 So, but too oft, the grape's refreshing juice  
 Does many mischievous effects produce.  
 My house should no such rude disorders know,  
 As from high drinking consequently flow.  
 Nor would I use what was so kindly giv'n  
 To the dishonour of indulgent heav'n.  
 If any neighbour came, he should be free,  
 Used with respect, and not uneasy be  
 In my retreat, or to himself or me.  
 What freedom, prudence, and right reason give, 70  
 All men may with impunity receive:  
 But the least swerving from their rule's too much;  
 For what's forbidden us, 'tis death to touch.  
 That life may be more comfortable yet,  
 And all my joys refined, sincere, and great,  
 I'd choose two friends, whose company would be  
 A great advance to my felicity:  
 Well-born, of humours suited to my own,  
 Discreet, and men as well as books have known;  
 Brave, gen'rous, witty, and exactly free 80  
 From loose behaviour, or formality;  
 Airy and prudent, merry, but not light,  
 Quick in discerning, and in judging right.  
 Secret they should be, faithful to their trust;

In reas'ning cool, strong, temperate, and just;  
 Obliging, open, without huffing brave,  
 Brisk in gay talking, and in sober, grave;  
 Close in dispute, but not tenacious; tried  
 By solid reason, and let that decide;  
 Not prone to lust, revenge, or envious hate, 90  
 Nor busy meddlers with intrigues of state;  
 Strangers to slander, and sworn foes to spite,  
 Not quarrelsome, but stout enough to fight;  
 Loyal, and pious, friends to Caesar; true,  
 As dying martyrs, to their Maker too.  
 In their society I could not miss  
 A permanent, sincere, substantial bliss.

Would bounteous heav'n once more indulge, I'd choose  
 (For who would so much satisfaction lose,  
 As witty nymphs, in conversation, give?) 100  
 Near some obliging, modest fair to live;  
 For there's that sweetness in a female mind,  
 Which in a man's we cannot hope to find;  
 That, by a secret but a pow'rful art,  
 Winds up the springs of life, and does impart  
 Fresh vital heat to the transported heart.

I'd have her reason all her passions sway:  
 Easy in company, in private gay;  
 Coy to a fop, to the deserving free,  
 Still constant to herself, and just to me. 110  
 A soul she should have for great actions fit;  
 Prudence and wisdom to direct her wit;  
 Courage to look bold danger in the face,  
 No fear, but only to be proud, or base;  
 Quick to advise, by an emergence pressed,  
 To give good counsel, or to take the best.  
 I'd have th' expression of her thoughts be such,  
 She might not seem reserved, nor talk too much:  
 That shows a want of judgement, and of sense;  
 More than enough is but impertinence. 120  
 Her conduct regular, her mirth refined,  
 Civil to strangers, to her neighbours kind;  
 Averse to vanity, revenge, and pride,  
 In all the methods of deceit untried;  
 So faithful to her friend, and good to all,  
 No censure might upon her actions fall:  
 Then would e'en envy be compelled to say,  
 She goes the least of womankind astray.

To this fair creature I'd sometimes retire;  
 Her conversation would new joys inspire, 130

JOHN POMFRET

Give life an edge so keen, no surly care  
 Would venture to assault my soul, or dare  
 Near my retreat to hide one secret snare.  
 But so divine, so noble a repast  
 I'd seldom, and with moderation, taste.  
 For highest cordials all their virtue lose  
 By a too frequent and too bold an use;  
 And what would cheer the spirits in distress,  
 Ruins our health when taken to excess.

I'd be concerned in no litigious jar; 140  
 Beloved by all, not vainly popular.  
 Whate'er assistance I had power to bring  
 T' oblige my country, or to serve my king,  
 Whene'er they called, I'd readily afford,  
 My tongue, my pen, my counsel, or my sword.  
 Law-suits I'd shun, with as much studious care,  
 As I would dens where hungry lions are;  
 And rather put up injuries than be  
 A plague to him, who'd be a plague to me.  
 I value quiet at a price too great 150  
 To give for my revenge so dear a rate:  
 For what do we by all our bustle gain,  
 But counterfeit delight for real pain?

If heav'n a date of many years would give,  
 Thus I'd in pleasure, ease, and plenty live.  
 And as I near approached the verge of life,  
 Some kind relation (for I'd have no wife)  
 Should take upon him all my worldly care,  
 While I did for a better state prepare.  
 Then I'd not be with any trouble vexed, 160  
 Nor have the ev'ning of my days perplexed;  
 But by a silent and a peaceful death,  
 Without a sigh, resign my aged breath:  
 And when committed to the dust, I'd have  
 Few tears, but friendly, dropped into my grave.  
 Then would my exit so propitious be,  
 All men would wish to live and die like me.

(1700)

# THOMAS D'URFEY

1653-1723

2

## *Dialogue, between Crab and Gillian*

- Crab* WHERE oxen do low and apples do grow,  
Where corn is sown and grass is mown,  
Where pigeons do fly and rooks nestle high,  
Fate give me for life a place;
- Gill.* Where hay is well cocked and udders are stroked,  
Where duck and drake cry quack, quack, quack,  
Where turkeys lay eggs and sows suckle pigs,  
Oh, there I would pass my days.
- Crab* On nought we will feed
- Gill.* But what we do breed; 10
- Crab* And wear on our backs
- Gill.* The wool of our flocks.
- Crab* And though linen feel
- Gill.* Rough, spun from the wheel,  
'Tis cleanly, though coarse it comes.
- Crab* Town follies and cullies, and Mollies and Dollies,  
For ever adieu and for ever;
- Gill.* And beaus that in boxes lie nuzzling their doxies,  
In wigs that hang down to their burns.
- Crab* Adieu, the Pall Mall, the Park and Canal, 20  
St. James's Square and flaunters there,  
The gaming-house too, where high dice and low  
Are managed by all degrees.
- Gill.* Goodbye to the knight was bubbled last night,  
That keeps a blowze and beats his spouse,  
And now in great haste, to pay what he lost,  
Sends home to cut down the trees.
- Crab* And hey for the lad
- Gill.* Improves ev'ry clod,
- Crab* That ne'er set his hand 30
- Gill.* To bill or to bond,
- Crab* Nor barter his flocks
- Gill.* For wine or the pox,  
To chouse him of half his days;
- Crab* But fishing and fowling, hunting and bowling,  
His pastimes are ever and ever,

chouse] cheat



THOMAS D'URFEY

- Gill.* Whose lips when ye buss 'em  
Smell like the bean-blossom;  
Ah, he 'tis shall have my praise.
- Crab* To taverns where grow sour apple and sloe 40  
A long adieu, and farewell too  
The house of the great, whose cook has no meat  
And butler can't quench my thirst;
- Gill.* Goodbye to the Change, where rantipoles range,  
Farewell cold tea and ratafie,  
Hyde Park too, where Pride in coaches will ride,  
Although they be choked with dust.
- Crab* Farewell the law-gown,  
*Gill.* The plague of the town,  
*Crab* And friends of the Crown 50  
*Gill.* Cried up or run down.  
*Crab* And city jackdaws,  
*Gill.* That fain would make laws  
To measure by yards and ells;
- Crab* Stockjobbers and swabbers, and toasters and roasters,  
For ever adieu and for ever;
- Gill.* We find what you're doing and home we're a-going,  
And so you may ring the bells.

(1701)

JOHN PHILIPS

1676-1709

3 from *The Splendid Shilling. An Imitation of Milton*

HAPPY the man, who, void of cares and strife,  
In silken or in leathern purse retains  
A Splendid Shilling: he nor hears with pain  
New oysters cried, nor sighs for cheerful ale;  
But with his friends, when nightly mists arise,  
To Juniper's, Magpie, or Town-Hall repairs:  
Where, mindful of the nymph whose wanton eye  
Transfixed his soul, and kindled amorous flames,  
Chloe, or Phillis, he each circling glass  
Wisheth her health, and joy, and equal love. 10  
Meanwhile he smokes, and laughs at merry tale,

2 rantipoles] ill-mannered women

JOHN PHILIPS

Or pun ambiguous, or conundrum quaint.  
 But I, whom griping penury surrounds,  
 And hunger, sure attendant upon want,  
 With scanty offals and small acid tiff  
 (Wretched repast!) my meagre corpse sustain:  
 Then solitary walk, or doze at home  
 In garret vile, and with a warming puff  
 Regale chilled fingers; or from tube as black  
 As winter-chimney or well-polished jet, 20  
 Exhale mundungus, ill-perfuming scent.  
 Not blacker tube, nor of a shorter size,  
 Smokes Cambro-Briton (versed in pedigree,  
 Sprung from Cadwalader and Arthur, kings  
 Full famous in romantic tale) when he  
 O'er many a craggy hill and barren cliff,  
 Upon a cargo of famed Cestrian cheese,  
 High over-shadowing rides, with a design  
 To vend his wares, or at th' Arvonian mart,  
 Or Maridunum, or the ancient town 30  
 Ycleped Brechinia, or where Vaga's stream  
 Encircles Ariconium, fruitful soil,  
 Whence flow nectareous wines, that well may vie  
 With Massic, Setin, or renowned Falern.  
 Thus while my joyless minutes tedious flow,  
 With looks demure and silent pace, a Dun,  
 Horrible monster! hated by gods and men,  
 To my aerial citadel ascends;  
 With vocal heel thrice thund'ring at my gates,  
 With hideous accent thrice he calls; I know 40  
 The voice ill-boding, and the solemn sound.  
 What should I do? or whither turn? Amazed,  
 Confounded, to the dark recess I fly  
 Of woodhole; straight my bristling hairs erect  
 Through sudden fear; a chilly sweat bedews  
 My shudd'ring limbs, and (wonderful to tell!)  
 My tongue forgets her faculty of speech,  
 So horrible he seems! His faded brow  
 Entrenched with many a frown, and conic beard,  
 And spreading band, admired by modern saints, 50  
 Disastrous acts forebode; in his right hand  
 Long scrolls of paper solemnly he waves,  
 With characters and figures dire inscribed,  
 Grievous to mortal eyes; (ye gods, avert

tiff] diluted punch  
 Arvonian mart] Aberavon  
 Vaga] the Wye

mundungus] bad-smelling tobacco  
 Maridunum] Carmarthen  
 Ariconium] Hereford

Cestrian] Cheshire  
 Brechinia] Brecon

JOHN PHILIPS

Such plagues from righteous men!) Behind him stalks  
Another monster, not unlike himself,  
Sullen of aspect, by the vulgar called  
A Catchpole, whose polluted hands the gods  
With force incredible and magic charms  
Erst have endued: if he his ample palm  
Should haply on ill-fated shoulder lay  
Of debtor, straight his body, to the touch  
Obsequious (as whilom knights were wont)  
To some enchanted castle is conveyed,  
Where gates impregnable and coercive chains  
In durance strict detain him, till, in form  
Of money, Pallas sets the captive free.

60

(1701)

4

from *Blenheim*

[*War Poetry*]

Now from each van  
The brazen instruments of death discharge  
Horrible flames, and turbid streaming clouds  
Of smoke sulphureous; intermixed with these  
Large globous irons fly, of dreadful hiss,  
Singeing the air, and from long distance bring  
Surprising slaughter; on each side they fly  
By chains connexed, and with destructive sweep  
Behead whole troops at once; the hairy scalps  
Are whirled aloof, while numerous trunks bestrow  
Th' ensanguined field; with latent mischief stored  
Show'rs of grenadoes rain, by sudden burst  
Disploding murd'rous bowels, fragments of steel,  
And stones, and glass, and nitrous grain adust.  
A thousand ways at once the shivered orbs  
Fly diverse, working torment and foul rout  
With deadly bruise, and gashes furrowed deep.  
Of pain impatient, the high-prancing steeds  
Disdain the curb, and, flinging to and fro,  
Spurn their dismounted riders; they expire  
Indignant, by unhostile wounds destroyed.

10

20

Thus through each army death in various shapes  
Prevailed; here mangled limbs, here brains and gore  
Lie clotted; lifeless some: with anguish these  
Gnashing, and loud laments invoking aid,

JOHN PHILIPS

Unpitied and unheard; the louder din  
Of guns, and trumpets' clang, and solemn sound  
Of drums, o'ercame their groans.

(1705)

JONATHAN SWIFT

1667-1745

5     *To Their Excellencies the Lords Justices of Ireland.  
          The Humble Petition of Frances Harris, Who  
          Must Starve and Die a Maid If It Miscarries*

*Humbly sheweth:*

THAT I went to warm myself in Lady Betty's chamber, because I was  
cold,

And I had in a purse, seven pound, four shillings and sixpence, besides  
farthings, in money, and gold;

So because I had been buying things for my Lady last night,

I was resolved to tell my money, to see if it was right.

Now you must know, because my trunk has a very bad lock,

Therefore all the money I have, which, God knows, is a very small  
stock,

I keep in a pocket tied about my middle, next my smock.

So when I went to put up my purse, as God would have it, my smock was  
unripped,

And, instead of putting it into my pocket, down it slipped:

Then the bell rung, and I went down to put my Lady to bed,

10

And, God knows, I thought my money was as safe as my maidenhead.

So when I came up again, I found my pocket feel very light,

But when I searched, and missed my purse, Lord! I thought I should  
have sunk outright.

'Lord! Madam,' says Mary, 'how d'ye do?'—'Indeed,' said I, 'never  
worse;

But pray, Mary, can you tell what I have done with my purse?'

'Lord help me,' said Mary, 'I never stirred out of this place!'

'Nay,' said I, 'I had it in Lady Betty's chamber, that's a plain case.'

So Mary got me to bed, and covered me up warm,

However, she stole away my garters, that I might do myself no harm.

So I tumbled and tossed all night, as you may very well think,

20

But hardly ever set my eyes together, or slept a wink.

So I was a-dreamed, methought, that we went and searched the folks round,

And in a corner of Mrs. Dukes' box, tied in a rag, the money was found.  
So next morning we told Whittle, and he fell a-swearing;  
Then my Dame Wadgar came, and she, you know, is thick of hearing;  
'Dame,' said I, as loud as I could bawl, 'do you know what a loss I have had?'

'Nay,' said she, 'my Lord Collway's folks are all very sad,  
For my Lord Dromedary comes a Tuesday without fail';  
'Pugh!' said I, 'but that's not the business that I ail.'

Says Cary, says he, 'I have been a servant this five and twenty years,  
come spring,

30

And in all the places I lived, I never heard of such a thing.'

'Yes,' says the steward, 'I remember when I was at my Lady Shrewsbury's,

Such a thing as this happened, just about the time of gooseberries.'

So I went to the party suspected, and I found her full of grief;

(Now you must know, of all things in the world, I hate a thief).

However, I was resolved to bring the discourse slyly about.

'Mrs. Dukes,' said I, 'here's an ugly accident has happened out;

'Tis not that I value the money three skips of a louse;

But the thing I stand upon is the credit of the House;

'Tis true, seven pound, four shillings, and sixpence, makes a great hole  
in my wages,

40

Besides, as they say, service is no inheritance in these ages.

Now, Mrs. Dukes, you know, and everybody understands,

That though 'tis hard to judge, yet money can't go without hands.'

'The devil take me,' said she (blessing herself), 'if ever I saw't!'

So she roared like a Bedlam, as though I had called her all to naught;

So you know, what could I say to her any more?

I e'en left her, and came away as wise as I was before.

Well: but then they would have had me gone to the cunning man;

'No,' said I, 'tis the same thing, the chaplain will be here anon.'

So the chaplain came in. Now the servants say he is my sweetheart,

50

Because he's always in my chamber, and I always take his part;

So, as the devil would have it, before I was aware, out I blundered,

'Parson,' said I, 'can you cast a nativity, when a body's plundered?'

(Now you must know, he hates to be called parson, like the devil.)

'Truly,' says he, 'Mrs. Nab, it might become you to be more civil;

If your money be gone, as a learned divine says, d'ye see,

You are no text for my handling, so take that from me;

I was never taken for a conjurer before, I'd have you to know.'

'Lord,' said I, 'don't be angry, I'm sure I never thought you so;

You know I honour the cloth, I design to be a parson's wife,

60

I never took one in your coat for a conjurer in all my life.'

With that, he twisted his girdle at me like a rope, as who should say,

'Now you may go hang yourself for me', and so went away.  
Well, I thought I should have swooned: 'Lord,' said I, 'what shall I do?  
I have lost my money, and I shall lose my true-love too.'  
Then my Lord called me; 'Harry,' said my Lord, 'don't cry,  
I'll give something towards thy loss'; and says my Lady, 'so will I'.  
'Oh but', said I, 'what if after all the chaplain won't come to?'  
For that, he said (an't please your Excellencies) I must petition you.

The premises tenderly considered, I desire your Excellencies'  
protection,

70

And that I may have a share in next Sunday's collection:  
And over and above, that I may have your Excellencies' letter  
With an order for the chaplain aforesaid, or instead of him, a better;  
And then your poor petitioner, both night and day,  
Or the chaplain (for 'tis his trade) as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

(Wr. 1701; pub. 1709)

## 6 *Baucis and Philemon. Imitated from the Eighth Book of Ovid*

IN ancient times, as story tells,  
The saints would often leave their cells,  
And stroll about, but hide their quality,  
To try good people's hospitality.

It happened on a winter night  
(As authors of the legend write),  
Two brother hermits, saints by trade,  
Taking their tour in masquerade,  
Disguised in tattered habits, went  
To a small village down in Kent;  
Where, in the strollers' canting strain,  
They begged from door to door in vain;  
Tried every tone might pity win,  
But not a soul would let them in.

10

Our wand'ring saints, in woeful state,  
Treated at this ungodly rate,  
Having through all the village passed,  
To a small cottage came at last,  
Where dwelt a good old honest yeoman,  
Called in the neighbourhood Philemon;  
Who kindly did the saints invite  
In his poor hut to pass the night;  
And then the hospitable sire  
Bid Goody Baucis mend the fire;

20

JONATHAN SWIFT

While he from out the chimney took  
 A flitch of bacon off the hook,  
 And freely from the fattest side  
 Cut out large slices to be fried;  
 Then stepped aside to fetch them drink,  
 Filled a large jug up to the brink, 30  
 And saw it fairly twice go round;  
 Yet (what was wonderful) they found  
 'Twas still replenished to the top,  
 As if they ne'er had touched a drop.  
 The good old couple was amazed,  
 And often on each other gazed;  
 For both were frightened to the heart,  
 And just began to cry, 'What art!'  
 Then softly turned aside to view  
 Whether the lights were burning blue. 40  
 The gentle pilgrims, soon aware on't,  
 Told them their calling and their errand:  
 'Good folks, you need not be afraid,  
 We are but saints,' the hermits said;  
 'No hurt shall come to you or yours;  
 But, for that pack of churlish boors,  
 Not fit to live on Christian ground,  
 They and their houses shall be drowned;  
 Whilst you shall see your cottage rise,  
 And grow a church before your eyes.' 50  
 They scarce had spoke, when, fair and soft,  
 The roof began to mount aloft;  
 Aloft rose ev'ry beam and rafter;  
 The heavy wall climbed slowly after.  
 The chimney widened and grew higher,  
 Became a steeple with a spire.  
 The kettle to the top was hoist,  
 And there stood fastened to a joist,  
 But with the upside down, to show  
 Its inclination for below: 60  
 In vain; for some superior force  
 Applied at bottom stops its course:  
 Doomed ever in suspense to dwell,  
 'Tis now no kettle, but a bell.  
 A wooden jack, which had almost  
 Lost by disuse the art to roast,  
 A sudden alteration feels,  
 Increased by new intestine wheels:  
 And, what exalts the wonder more,  
 The number made the motion slower. 70

JONATHAN SWIFT

The flier, tho't had leaden feet,  
 Turned round so quick you scarce could see't;  
 Now, slackened by some secret power,  
 Can hardly move an inch an hour.  
 The jack and chimney, near allied,  
 Had never left each other's side;  
 The chimney to a steeple grown,  
 The jack would not be left alone,  
 But up against the steeple reared,  
 Became a clock, and still adhered;  
 And still its love to household cares,  
 By an ill voice at noon, declares,  
 Warning the cook-maid not to burn  
 That roast meat, which it cannot turn.

80

The groaning chair was seen to crawl,  
 Like an huge snail, half up the wall;  
 There stuck aloft in public view,  
 And with small change, a pulpit grew.

The porringers, that in a row  
 Hung high, and made a glitt'ring show,  
 To a less noble substance changed,  
 Were now but leathern buckets ranged.

90

The ballads pasted on the wall,  
 Of Joan of France, and English Moll,  
 Fair Rosamond, and Robin Hood,  
 The Little Children in the Wood,  
 Now seemed to look abundance better,  
 Improved in picture, size, and letter;  
 And, high in order placed, describe  
 The heraldry of ev'ry tribe.

100

A bedstead of the antique mode,  
 Compact of timber many a load,  
 Such as our grandsires wont to use,  
 Was metamorphosed into pews;  
 Which still their ancient nature keep,  
 By lodging folks disposed to sleep.

The cottage, by such feats as these,  
 Grown to a church by just degrees,  
 The hermits then desire their host  
 To ask for what he fancied most.

110

Philemon, having paused a while,  
 Returned 'em thanks in homely style;  
 Then said, 'My house is grown so fine,  
 Methinks, I still would call it mine.  
 I'm old, and fain would live at ease;  
 Make me the parson if you please.'



# JONATHAN SWIFT

He spoke, and presently he feels  
His grazier's coat fall down his heels;  
He sees, yet hardly can believe,  
About each arm a pudding-sleeve; 120  
His waistcoat to a cassock grew,  
And both assumed a sable hue;  
But, being old, continued just  
As threadbare, and as full of dust.

His talk was now of tithes and dues,  
Could smoke his pipe, and read the news;  
Knew how to preach old sermons next,  
Vamped in the preface and the text;  
At christ'nings well could act his part,  
And had the service all by heart; 130  
Wished women might have children fast,  
And thought whose sow had farrowed last;  
Against dissenters would repine,  
And stood up firm for Right Divine;  
Found his head filled with many a system;  
But classic authors—he ne'er missed 'em.

Thus having furbished up a parson,  
Dame Baucis next they played their farce on:  
Instead of homespun coifs, were seen  
Good pinners edged with colberteen; 140  
Her petticoat, transformed apace,  
Became black satin, flounced with lace.  
Plain 'Goody' would no longer down,  
'Twas 'Madam,' in her grogram gown.  
Philemon was in great surprise,  
And hardly could believe his eyes,  
Amazed to see her look so prim,  
And she admired as much at him.

Thus happy in their change of life,  
Were several years this man and wife: 150  
When on a day, which proved their last,  
Discoursing o'er old stories past,  
They went by chance, amidst their talk,  
To the churchyard to fetch a walk;  
When Baucis hastily cried out,  
'My dear, I see your forehead sprout.'  
'Sprout!' quoth the man; 'what's this you tell us?  
I hope you don't believe me jealous:  
But yet, methinks, I feel it true,  
And really yours is budding too— 160  
Nay,—now I cannot stir my foot;  
It feels as if 'twere taking root.'

Description would but tire my Muse:  
 In short, they both were turned to yews.  
 Old Goodman Dobson of the Green  
 Remembers he the trees has seen;  
 He'll talk of them from noon to night,  
 And goes with folks to show the sight;  
 On Sundays, after ev'ning prayer,  
 He gathers all the parish there;  
 Points out the place of either yew,  
 Here Baucis, there Philemon, grew.  
 Till once a parson of our town,  
 To mend his barn, cut Baucis down;  
 At which, 'tis hard to be believed  
 How much the other tree was grieved,  
 Grew scrubby, died a-top, was stunted:  
 So the next parson stubbed and burnt it.

170

(Wr. 1706; pub. 1709)

7

*A Description of the Morning*

Now hardly here and there a hackney-coach  
 Appearing, showed the ruddy morn's approach.  
 Now Betty from her master's bed had flown,  
 And softly stole to discompose her own.  
 The slipshod prentice from his master's door  
 Had pared the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor.  
 Now Moll had whirled her mop with dext'rous airs,  
 Prepared to scrub the entry and the stairs.  
 The youth with broomy stumps began to trace  
 The kennel-edge, where wheels had worn the place.  
 The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,  
 Till drowned in shriller notes of chimney-sweep.  
 Duns at his lordship's gate began to meet,  
 And Brickdust Moll had screamed through half the street.  
 The turnkey now his flock returning sees,  
 Duly let out a-nights to steal for fees.  
 The watchful bailiffs take their silent stands,  
 And schoolboys lag with satchels in their hands.

10

(1709)

7 kennel] gutter

*A Description of a City Shower*

CAREFUL observers may foretell the hour  
 (By sure prognostics) when to dread a show'r:  
 While rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er  
 Her frolics, and pursues her tail no more.  
 Returning home at night, you'll find the sink  
 Strike your offended sense with double stink.  
 If you be wise, then go not far to dine,  
 You spend in coach-hire more than save in wine.  
 A coming show'r your shooting corns presage,  
 Old aches throb, your hollow tooth will rage.  
 Saunt'ring in coffee-house is Dulman seen;  
 He damns the climate, and complains of spleen.

10

Meanwhile the South, rising with dabbled wings,  
 A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings,  
 That swilled more liquor than it could contain,  
 And like a drunkard gives it up again.  
 Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,  
 While the first drizzling show'r is borne aslope;  
 Such is that sprinkling which some careless quean  
 Flirts on you from her mop, but not so clean.  
 You fly, invoke the gods; then turning, stop  
 To rail; she singing, still whirls on her mop.  
 Not yet the dust had shunned th' unequal strife,  
 But aided by the wind, fought still for life;  
 And wafted with its foe by violent gust,  
 'Twas doubtful which was rain, and which was dust.  
 Ah! where must needy poet seek for aid,  
 When dust and rain at once his coat invade?  
 Sole coat, where dust cemented by the rain  
 Erects the nap, and leaves a cloudy stain.

20

30

Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,  
 Threat'ning with deluge this devoted town.  
 To shops in crowds the dagged females fly,  
 Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.  
 The Templar spruce, while ev'ry spout's a-broach,  
 Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach.  
 The tucked-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,  
 While streams run down her oiled umbrella's sides.  
 Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,  
 Commence acquaintance underneath a shed.  
 Triumphant Tories and desponding Whigs  
 Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs.

40

devoted] doomed

Boxed in a chair the beau impatient sits,  
 While spouts run clatt'ring o'er the roof by fits;  
 And ever and anon with frightful din  
 The leather sounds, he trembles from within.  
 So when Troy chair-men bore the wooden steed,  
 Pregnant with Greeks impatient to be freed  
 (Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,  
 Instead of paying chair-men, run them through), 50  
 Laocoön struck the outside with his spear,  
 And each imprisoned hero quaked for fear.

Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,  
 And bear their trophies with them as they go:  
 Filth of all hues and odours seem to tell  
 What streets they sailed from, by the sight and smell.  
 They, as each torrent drives, with rapid force  
 From Smithfield or St. Pulchre's shape their course,  
 And in huge confluent join at Snow Hill ridge,  
 Fall from the Conduit prone to Holborn Bridge. 60  
 Sweepings from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,  
 Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,  
 Dead cats and turnip-tops come tumbling down the flood.

(1710)

9 *In Sickness. Written soon after the Author's coming  
 to live in Ireland, upon the Queen's Death,  
 October 1714*

'TIS true—then why should I repine  
 To see my life so fast decline?  
 But why obscurely here alone,  
 Where I am neither loved nor known?  
 My state of health none care to learn;  
 My life is here no soul's concern.  
 And those with whom I now converse  
 Without a tear will tend my hearse;  
 Removed from kind Arbuthnot's aid,  
 Who knows his art but not his trade, 10  
 Preferring his regard for me  
 Before his credit or his fee.  
 Some formal visits, looks, and words,  
 What mere humanity affords,  
 I meet perhaps from three or four,  
 From whom I once expected more;  
 Which those who tend the sick for pay

JONATHAN SWIFT

Can act as decently as they.  
But no obliging, tender friend  
To help at my approaching end;  
My life is now a burthen grown  
To others, ere it be my own.

20

Ye formal weepers for the sick,  
In your last offices be quick;  
And spare my absent friends the grief  
To hear, yet give me no relief;  
Expired today, entombed tomorrow,  
When known, will save a double sorrow.

(1735)

10

*To Stella*

MARCH 13, 1723-4

[Written on the Day of her Birth, but not on the Subject,  
when I was sick in bed.]

TORMENTED with incessant pains,  
Can I devise poetic strains?  
Time was, when I could yearly pay  
My verse on Stella's native day:  
But now, unable grown to write,  
I grieve she ever saw the light.  
Ungrateful; since to her I owe  
That I these pains can undergo.  
She tends me like an humble slave;  
And, when indecently I rave,  
When out my brutish passions break,  
With gall in ev'ry word I speak,  
She with soft speech my anguish cheers,  
Or melts my passions down with tears;  
Although 'tis easy to descry  
She wants assistance more than I;  
Yet seems to feel my pains alone,  
And is a stoic in her own.  
When, among scholars, can we find  
So soft and yet so firm a mind?  
All accidents of life conspire  
To raise up Stella's virtue higher;  
Or else to introduce the rest  
Which had been latent in her breast.  
Her firmness who could e'er have known,

10

20

JONATHAN SWIFT

Had she not evils of her own?  
Her kindness who could ever guess,  
Had not her friends been in distress?  
Whatever base returns you find  
From me, dear Stella, still be kind.  
In your own heart you'll reap the fruit,  
Though I continue still a brute.  
But, when I once am out of pain,  
I promise to be good again;  
Meantime, your other juster friends  
Shall for my follies make amends;  
So may we long continue thus,  
Admiring you, you pitying us.

30

(1765)

11

*Stella's Birthday, 1725*

As, when a beauteous nymph decays,  
We say, she's past her dancing days;  
So poets lose their feet by time,  
And can no longer dance in rhyme.  
Your annual bard had rather chose  
To celebrate your birth in prose;  
Yet merry folks, who want by chance  
A pair to make a country dance,  
Call the old housekeeper, and get her  
To fill a place for want of better;  
While Sheridan is off the hooks,  
And friend Delany at his books,  
That Stella may avoid disgrace,  
Once more the Dean supplies their place.

10

Beauty and wit, too sad a truth,  
Have always been confined to youth;  
The god of wit and beauty's queen,  
He twenty-one and she fifteen:  
No poet ever sweetly sung,  
Unless he were, like Phoebus, young;  
Nor ever nymph inspired to rhyme,  
Unless, like Venus, in her prime.  
At fifty-six, if this be true,  
Am I a poet fit for you?  
Or, at the age of forty-three,  
Are you a subject fit for me?  
Adieu, bright wit, and radiant eyes;

20

JONATHAN SWIFT

You must be grave and I be wise.  
Our fate in vain we would oppose,  
But I'll be still your friend in prose: 30  
Esteem and friendship to express  
Will not require poetic dress;  
And if the Muse deny her aid  
To have them sung, they may be said.

But, Stella, say, what evil tongue  
Reports you are no longer young;  
That Time sits with his scythe to mow  
Where erst sat Cupid with his bow;  
That half your locks are turned to grey?  
I'll ne'er believe a word they say. 40  
'Tis true, but let it not be known,  
My eyes are somewhat dimmish grown;  
For nature, always in the right,  
To your decays adapts my sight,  
And wrinkles undistinguished pass,  
For I'm ashamed to use a glass;  
And till I see them with these eyes,  
Whoever says you have them, lies.

No length of time can make you quit  
Honour and virtue, sense and wit; 50  
Thus you may still be young to me,  
While I can better hear than see.  
O ne'er may Fortune show her spite,  
To make me deaf, and mend my sight.

(1727)

12

*A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed*

CORINNA, pride of Drury Lane,  
For whom no shepherd sighs in vain—  
Never did Covent Garden boast  
So bright a battered, strolling toast;  
No drunken rake to pick her up,  
No cellar where on tick to sup;  
Returning at the midnight hour,  
Four storeys climbing to her bow'r,  
Then, seated on a three-legged chair,  
Takes off her artificial hair; 10  
Now, picking out a crystal eye,  
She wipes it clean, and lays it by.  
Her eyebrows from a mouse's hide,  
Stuck on with art on either side,

JONATHAN SWIFT

Pulls off with care, and first displays 'em,  
 Then in a play-book smoothly lays 'em.  
 Now dextrously her plumpers draws,  
 That serve to fill her hollow jaws.  
 Untwists a wire, and from her gums  
 A set of teeth completely comes. 20  
 Pulls out the rags contrived to prop  
 Her flabby dug and down they drop.  
 Proceeding on, the lovely goddess  
 Unlaces next her steel-ribbed bodice,  
 Which by the operator's skill,  
 Press down the lumps, the hollows fill;  
 Up goes her hand, and off she slips  
 The bolsters that supply her hips.  
 With gentlest touch, she next explores  
 Her chancres, issues, running sores, 30  
 Effects of many a sad disaster,  
 And then to each applies a plaster.  
 But must, before she goes to bed,  
 Rub off the daubs of white and red;  
 And smooth the furrows in her front,  
 With greasy paper stuck upon't.  
 She takes a bolus ere she sleeps,  
 And then between two blankets creeps.  
 With pains of love tormented lies;  
 Or if she chance to close her eyes, 40  
 Of Bridewell and the Compter dreams,  
 And feels the lash, and faintly screams;  
 Or, by a faithless bully drawn,  
 At some hedge-tavern lies in pawn;  
 Or to Jamaica seems transported,  
 Alone, and by no planter courted;  
 Or, near Fleet Ditch's oozy brinks,  
 Surrounded with a hundred stinks,  
 Belated, seems on watch to lie,  
 And snap some cully passing by; 50  
 Or, struck with fear, her fancy runs  
 On watchmen, constables and duns,  
 From whom she meets with frequent rubs;  
 But never from religious clubs,  
 Whose favour she is sure to find,  
 Because she pays them all in kind.  
 Corinna wakes. A dreadful sight!  
 Behold the ruins of the night!

Compter] debtors' prison

cully] dupe



JONATHAN SWIFT

A wicked rat her plaster stole,  
Half ate, and dragged it to his hole.  
The crystal eye, alas, was missed;  
And Puss had on her plumpers pissed.  
A pigeon picked her issue-peas;  
And Shock her tresses filled with fleas.

60

The nymph, though in this mangled plight,  
Must ev'ry morn her limbs unite.  
But how shall I describe her arts  
To recollect the scattered parts?  
Or show the anguish, toil, and pain  
Of gath'ring up herself again?  
The bashful Muse will never bear  
In such a scene to interfere.  
Corinna in the morning dizen'd,  
Who sees, will spew; who smells, be poisoned.

70

(Wr. 1731<sup>2</sup>; pub. 1734)

13

*The Day of Judgement*

WITH a whirl of thought oppressed,  
I sink from reverie to rest.  
An horrid vision seized my head,  
I saw the graves give up their dead.  
Jove, armed with terrors, burst the skies,  
And thunder roars, and light'ning flies!  
Amazed, confused, its fate unknown,  
The world stands trembling at his throne.  
While each pale sinner hangs his head,  
Jove, nodding, shook the heav'ns, and said,  
'Offending race of human kind,  
By nature, reason, learning, blind;  
You who through frailty stepped aside,  
And you who never fell—though pride;  
You who in different sects have sham'd,  
And come to see each other dam'd;  
(So some folks told you, but they knew  
No more of Jove's designs than you);  
The world's mad business now is o'er,  
And I resent these pranks no more.  
I to such blockheads set my wit!  
I damn such fools!—Go, go, you're bit.'

10

20

(Wr. 1731<sup>2</sup>; pub. 1774)

12 dizen'd] arrayed

*Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift, D.S.P.D.,  
Occasioned by Reading a Maxim in Rochefoucauld*

As Rochefoucauld his maxims drew  
From nature, I believe 'em true:  
They argue no corrupted mind  
In him; the fault is in mankind.

This maxim more than all the rest  
Is thought too base for human breast:  
'In all distresses of our friends  
We first consult our private ends,  
While nature, kindly bent to ease us,  
Points out some circumstance to please us.'

10

If this perhaps your patience move,  
Let reason and experience prove.

We all behold with envious eyes  
Our equal raised above our size;  
Who would not at a crowded show  
Stand high himself, keep others low?  
I love my friend as well as you,  
But would not have him stop my view;  
Then let me have the higher post;  
I ask but for an inch at most.

20

If in a battle you should find,  
One, whom you love of all mankind,  
Had some heroic action done,  
A champion killed, or trophy won;  
Rather than thus be over-topped,  
Would you not wish his laurels cropped?

Dear honest Ned is in the gout,  
Lies racked with pain, and you without:  
How patiently you hear him groan!  
How glad the case is not your own!

30

What poet would not grieve to see  
His brethren write as well as he?  
But rather than they should excel,  
He'd wish his rivals all in hell.

Her end, when Emulation misses,  
She turns to envy, stings and hisses;  
The strongest friendship yields to pride,  
Unless the odds be on our side.

Vain human kind! Fantastic race!  
Thy various follies who can trace?  
Self-love, ambition, envy, pride,  
Their empire in our hearts divide:

40

JONATHAN SWIFT

Give others riches, power, and station,  
'Tis all on me an usurpation.

I have no title to aspire;  
Yet, when you sink, I seem the higher.

In Pope, I cannot read a line,  
But with a sigh, I wish it mine;  
When he can in one couplet fix  
More sense than I can do in six,

50

It gives me such a jealous fit,  
I cry, 'Pox take him, and his wit.'

Why must I be outdone by Gay,  
In my own hum'rous biting way?

Arbuthnot is no more my friend,  
Who dares to irony pretend;  
Which I was born to introduce,  
Refined it first, and showed its use.

St. John, as well as Pulteney, knows  
That I had some repute for prose;  
And till they drove me out of date,  
Could maul a minister of state.  
If they have mortified my pride,  
And made me throw my pen aside,  
If with such talents heav'n hath blest 'em,  
Have I not reason to detest 'em?

60

To all my foes, dear Fortune, send  
Thy gifts, but never to my friend;  
I tamely can endure the first,  
But this with envy makes me burst.

70

Thus much may serve by way of proem,  
Proceed we therefore to our poem.

The time is not remote, when I  
Must by the course of nature die;  
When I foresee my special friends  
Will try to find their private ends,  
Though it is hardly understood  
Which way my death can do them good;  
Yet thus, methinks, I hear 'em speak:

'See, how the Dean begins to break:

80

Poor gentleman, he droops apace,  
You plainly find it in his face;  
That old vertigo in his head  
Will never leave him, till he's dead.  
Besides, his memory decays,  
He recollects not what he says;  
He cannot call his friends to mind,  
Forgets the place where last he dined;

JONATHAN SWIFT

Plies you with stories o'er and o'er:  
 He told them fifty times before. 90  
 How does he fancy we can sit  
 To hear his out-of-fashioned wit?  
 But he takes up with younger folks,  
 Who for his wine will bear his jokes:  
 Faith, he must make his stories shorter,  
 Or change his comrades once a quarter;  
 In half the time, he talks them round;  
 There must another set be found.  
 'For poetry, he's past his prime,  
 He takes an hour to find a rhyme: 100  
 His fire is out, his wit decayed,  
 His fancy sunk, his Muse a jade.  
 I'd have him throw away his pen;  
 But there's no talking to some men.'  
 And then their tenderness appears,  
 By adding largely to my years:  
 'He's older than he would be reckoned,  
 And well remembers Charles the Second.  
 'He hardly drinks a pint of wine;  
 And that, I doubt, is no good sign. 110  
 His stomach too begins to fail:  
 Last year we thought him strong and hale;  
 But now he's quite another thing;  
 I wish he may hold out till spring.'  
 Then hug themselves, and reason thus:  
 'It is not yet so bad with us.'  
 In such a case they talk in tropes,  
 And by their fears express their hopes;  
 Some great misfortune to portend,  
 No enemy can match a friend. 120  
 With all the kindness they profess,  
 The merit of a lucky guess  
 (When daily howd'y's come of course,  
 And servants answer, 'Worse and worse')  
 Would please 'em better than to tell  
 That, God be praised, the Dean is well.  
 Then he who prophesied the best  
 Approves his foresight to the rest:  
 'You know, I always feared the worst,  
 And often told you so at first.' 130  
 He'd rather choose that I should die  
 Than his prediction prove a lie.  
 Not one foretells I shall recover;  
 But all agree to give me over.

JONATHAN SWIFT

Yet should some neighbour feel a pain  
Just in the parts where I complain;  
How many a message would he send?  
What hearty prayers that I should mend?  
Inquire what regimen I kept;  
What gave me ease, and how I slept?  
And more lament, when I was dead,  
Than all the sniv'lers round my bed.

140

My good companions, never fear,  
For though you may mistake a year,  
Though your prognostics run too fast,  
They must be verified at last.

Behold the fatal day arrive!  
'How is the Dean?' 'He's just alive.'  
Now the departing prayer is read.  
'He hardly breathes.' 'The Dean is dead.'  
Before the passing-bell begun,  
The news through half the town has run.  
'O, may we all for death prepare!  
What has he left? And who's his heir?'  
'I know no more than what the news is,  
'Tis all bequeathed to public uses.'  
'To public use! A perfect whim!  
What had the public done for him?  
Mere envy, avarice, and pride!  
He gave it all.—But first he died.  
And had the Dean, in all the nation,  
No worthy friend, no poor relation?  
So ready to do strangers good,  
Forgetting his own flesh and blood?'

150

160

Now Grub Street wits are all employed;  
With elegies the town is cloyed:  
Some paragraph in ev'ry paper,  
To curse the Dean, or bless the Drapier.

The doctors, tender of their fame,  
Wisely on me lay all the blame:  
'We must confess his case was nice,  
But he would never take advice;  
Had he been ruled, for aught appears,  
He might have lived these twenty years;  
For when we opened him we found  
That all his vital parts were sound.'

170

From Dublin soon to London spread,  
'Tis told at court, the Dean is dead.

Kind Lady Suffolk in the spleen  
Runs laughing up to tell the Queen.

180

JONATHAN SWIFT

The Queen, so gracious, mild, and good,  
 Cries, 'Is he gone? 'Tis time he should.  
 He's dead, you say? Why, let him rot;  
 I'm glad the medals were forgot.  
 I promised him, I own; but when?  
 I only was the Princess then;  
 But now as consort of the King,  
 You know 'tis quite a different thing.'

Now, Chartres at Sir Robert's levee  
 Tells, with a sneer, the tidings heavy:  
 'Why, is he dead without his shoes?'  
 (Cries Bob) 'I'm sorry for the news;  
 Oh, were the wretch but living still,  
 And in his place my good friend Will;  
 Or had a mitre on his head,  
 Provided Bolingbroke were dead.'

190

Now, Curll his shop from rubbish drains:  
 Three genuine tomes of *Swift's Remains*.  
 And then, to make them pass the glibber,  
 Revised by Tibbalds, Moore, and Cibber.  
 He'll treat me as he does my betters:  
 Publish my will, my life, my letters,  
 Revive the libels born to die,  
 Which Pope must bear, as well as I.

200

Here shift the scene, to represent  
 How those I love my death lament.  
 Poor Pope will grieve a month; and Gay  
 A week; and Arbuthnot a day.

St. John himself will scarce forbear  
 To bite his pen, and drop a tear.  
 The rest will give a shrug, and cry,  
 'I'm sorry; but we all must die.'  
 Indifference clad in wisdom's guise  
 All fortitude of mind supplies;  
 For how can stony bowels melt  
 In those who never pity felt;  
 When we are lashed, they kiss the rod,  
 Resigning to the will of God.

210

The fools, my juniors by a year,  
 Are tortured with suspense and fear,  
 Who wisely thought my age a screen,  
 When death approached, to stand between:  
 The screen removed, their hearts are trembling,  
 They mourn for me without dissembling.

220

My female friends, whose tender hearts  
 Have better learned to act their parts,

JONATHAN SWIFT

Receive the news in doleful dumps:  
 'The Dean is dead (and what is trumps?),  
 Then Lord have mercy on his soul.  
 (Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.) 230  
 Six deans, they say, must bear the pall.  
 (I wish I knew what king to call.)  
 Madam, your husband will attend  
 The funeral of so good a friend.'  
 'No, madam, 'tis a shocking sight,  
 And he's engaged tomorrow night!  
 My Lady Club would take it ill,  
 If he should fail her at quadrille.  
 He loved the Dean. (I lead a heart.)  
 But dearest friends, they say, must part. 240  
 His time was come, he ran his race;  
 We hope he's in a better place.'  
 Why do we grieve that friends should die?  
 No loss more easy to supply.  
 One year is past; a different scene;  
 No further mention of the Dean,  
 Who now, alas, no more is missed  
 Than if he never did exist.  
 Where's now this fav'rite of Apollo?  
 Departed; and his works must follow, 250  
 Must undergo the common fate;  
 His kind of wit is out of date.  
 Some country squire to Lintot goes,  
 Inquires for Swift in verse and prose:  
 Says Lintot, 'I have heard the name;  
 He died a year ago.' The same.  
 He searcheth all his shop in vain:  
 'Sir, you may find them in Duck Lane:  
 I sent them with a load of books,  
 Last Monday, to the pastry-cooks. 260  
 To fancy they could live a year!  
 I find you're but a stranger here.  
 The Dean was famous in his time,  
 And had a kind of knack at rhyme;  
 His way of writing now is past;  
 The town hath got a better taste.  
 I keep no antiquated stuff;  
 But, spick and span I have enough.  
 Pray, do but give me leave to show 'em:  
 Here's Colley Cibber's birthday poem. 270  
 This ode you never yet have seen,  
 By Stephen Duck, upon the Queen.

JONATHAN SWIFT

Then here's a letter finely penned  
 Against the Craftsman and his friend;  
 It clearly shows that all reflection  
 On ministers is disaffection.  
 Next, here's Sir Robert's *Vindication*,  
 And Mr. Henley's last Oration;  
 The hawkers have not got 'em yet:  
 Your honour please to buy a set?

280

'Here's Woolston's tracts, the twelfth edition;  
 'Tis read by every politician;  
 The country members, when in town,  
 To all their boroughs send them down.  
 You never met a thing so smart;  
 The courtiers have them all by heart:  
 Those Maids of Honour (who can read)  
 Are taught to use them for their creed.  
 The rev'rend author's good intention  
 Hath been rewarded with a pension:  
 He doth an honour to his gown,  
 By bravely running priestcraft down;  
 He shows, as sure as God's in Gloucester,  
 That Jesus was a grand impostor,  
 That all his miracles were cheats,  
 Performed as jugglers do their feats.  
 The Church had never such a writer;  
 A shame he hath not got a mitre!

290

Suppose me dead; and then suppose  
 A club assembled at the Rose,  
 Where, from discourse of this and that,  
 I grow the subject of their chat;  
 And, while they toss my name about,  
 With favour some, and some without,  
 One quite indiff'rent in the cause  
 My character impartial draws:

300

'The Dean, if we believe report,  
 Was never ill received at court.  
 As for his works in verse and prose,  
 I own myself no judge of those;  
 Nor, can I tell what critics thought 'em,  
 But, this I know, all people bought 'em;  
 As with a moral view designed  
 To cure the vices of mankind,  
 His vein, ironically grave,  
 Exposed the fool, and lashed the knave;  
 To steal a hint was never known,  
 But what he writ was all his own.

310



JONATHAN SWIFT

'He never thought an honour done him,  
 Because a duke was proud to own him; 320  
 Would rather slip aside, and choose  
 To talk with wits in dirty shoes;  
 Despised the fools with Stars and Garters  
 So often seen caressing Chartres.  
 He never courted men in station,  
 Nor persons had in admiration;  
 Of no man's greatness was afraid,  
 Because he sought for no man's aid.  
 Though trusted long in great affairs,  
 He gave himself no haughty airs; 330  
 Without regarding private ends,  
 Spent all his credit for his friends,  
 And only chose the wise and good—  
 No flatterers; no allies in blood—  
 But succoured virtue in distress,  
 And seldom failed of good success;  
 As numbers in their hearts must own,  
 Who, but for him, had been unknown.  
 'With princes kept a due decorum,  
 But never stood in awe before 'em: 340  
 And to her Majesty, God bless her,  
 Would speak as free as to her dresser;  
 She thought it his peculiar whim,  
 Nor took it ill as come from him.  
 He followed David's lesson just,  
*In princes never put thy trust.*  
 And, would you make him truly sour,  
 Provoke him with a slave in power.  
 The Irish Senate if you named,  
 With what impatience he declaimed! 350  
 Fair Liberty was all his cry;  
 For her he stood prepared to die;  
 For her he boldly stood alone;  
 For her he oft exposed his own.  
 Two kingdoms, just as faction led,  
 Had set a price upon his head;  
 But not a traitor could be found,  
 To sell him for six hundred pound.  
 'Had he but spared his tongue and pen,  
 He might have rose like other men: 360  
 But power was never in his thought;  
 And wealth he valued not a groat.  
 Ingratitude he often found,  
 And pitied those who meant the wound:

But kept the tenor of his mind,  
 To merit well of human kind,  
 Nor made a sacrifice of those  
 Who still were true, to please his foes.  
 He laboured many a fruitless hour  
 To reconcile his friends in power;  
 Saw mischief by a faction brewing,  
 While they pursued each other's ruin;  
 But, finding vain was all his care,  
 He left the court in mere despair.

370

'And, oh, how short are human schemes!

Here ended all our golden dreams.  
 What St. John's skill in state affairs,  
 What Ormonde's valour, Oxford's cares,  
 To save their sinking country lent,  
 Was all destroyed by one event.  
 Too soon that precious life was ended,  
 On which alone our weal depended.  
 When up a dangerous faction starts,  
 With wrath and vengeance in their hearts;  
 By solemn league and covenant bound  
 To ruin, slaughter, and confound;  
 To turn religion to a fable,  
 And make the government a Babel;  
 Pervert the law, disgrace the gown,  
 Corrupt the senate, rob the crown;  
 To sacrifice old England's glory,  
 And make her infamous in story.  
 When such a tempest shook the land,  
 How could unguarded virtue stand?

380

390

'With horror, grief, despair the Dean  
 Beheld the dire destructive scene:  
 His friends in exile, or the Tower,  
 Himself within the frown of power;  
 Pursued by base envenomed pens  
 Far to the land of slaves and fens;  
 A servile race in folly nursed,  
 Who truckle most when treated worst.

400

'By innocence and resolution,  
 He bore continual persecution,  
 While numbers to preferment rose,  
 Whose merits were, to be his foes;  
 When ev'n his own familiar friends,  
 Intent upon their private ends,  
 Like renegadoes now he feels  
 Against him lifting up their heels.

410

JONATHAN SWIFT

'The Dean did by his pen defeat  
An infamous destructive cheat;  
Taught fools their int'rest how to know,  
And gave them arms to ward the blow.  
Envy hath owned it was his doing  
To save that helpless land from ruin,  
While they who at the steerage stood,  
And reaped the profit, sought his blood.

'To save them from their evil fate,  
In him was held a crime of state.  
A wicked monster on the bench,  
Whose fury blood could never quench,  
As vile and profligate a villain  
As modern Scroggs, or old Tresilian,  
Who long all justice had discarded,  
Nor feared he God, nor man regarded;  
Vowed on the Dean his rage to vent,  
And make him of his zeal repent;  
But heav'n his innocence defends;  
The grateful people stand his friends.  
Not strains of law, nor judge's frown,  
Nor topics brought to please the crown,  
Nor witness hired, nor jury picked,  
Prevail to bring him in convict.

420

430

'In exile with a steady heart,  
He spent his life's declining part,  
Where folly, pride, and faction sway,  
Remote from St. John, Pope, and Gay.

'His friendship there to few confined,  
Were always of the middling kind:  
No fools of rank, a mongrel breed,  
Who fain would pass for lords indeed,  
Where titles give no right or power,  
And peerage is a withered flower;  
He would have held it a disgrace,  
If such a wretch had known his face.  
On rural squires, that kingdom's bane,  
He vented oft his wrath in vain:  
Biennial squires, to market brought,  
Who sell their souls and votes for naught;  
The nation stripped, go joyful back,  
To rob the church, their tenants rack,  
Go snacks with thieves and rapparees,  
And keep the peace, to pick up fees;  
In every job to have a share,  
A jail or barrack to repair;

440

450

JONATHAN SWIFT

And turn the tax for public roads  
Commodious to their own abodes.  
‘Perhaps I may allow the Dean  
Had too much satire in his vein;  
And seemed determined not to starve it,  
Because no age could more deserve it.  
Yet malice never was his aim;  
He lashed the vice, but spared the name.  
No individual could resent,  
Where thousands equally were meant.  
His satire points at no defect  
But what all mortals may correct;  
For he abhorred that senseless tribe  
Who call it humour when they jibe.  
He spared a hump or crooked nose  
Whose owners set not up for beaux.  
True genuine dullness moved his pity,  
Unless it offered to be witty.  
Those who their ignorance confessed  
He ne’er offended with a jest;  
But laughed to hear an idiot quote  
A verse from Horace learned by rote.  
‘He knew an hundred pleasant stories,  
With all the turns of Whigs and Tories;  
Was cheerful to his dying day,  
And friends would let him have his way.  
‘He gave the little wealth he had  
To build a house for fools and mad,  
And showed by one satiric touch,  
No nation wanted it so much.  
That kingdom he hath left his debtor;  
I wish it soon may have a better.’

460

470

480

(Wr. 1731; pub. 1739)

DANIEL DEFOE

1660-1731

15

from *Reformation of Manners*

[*London*]

No city in the spacious universe  
Boasts of religion more, or minds it less;  
Of reformation talks and government,

Backed with an hundred Acts of Parliament,  
 Those useless scarecrows of neglected laws,  
 That miss th' effect by missing first the cause:  
 Thy magistrates, who should reform the town,  
 Punish the poor men's faults, but hide their own;  
 Suppress the players' booths in Smithfield Fair,  
 But leave the Cloisters, for their wives are there,  
 Where all the scenes of lewdness do appear.

10

Satire, the arts and mysteries forbear,  
 Too black for thee to write or us to hear;  
 No man, but he that is as vile as they,  
 Can all the tricks and cheats of trade survey.  
 Some in clandestine companies combine,  
 Erect new stocks to trade beyond the line:  
 With air and empty names beguile the town,  
 And raise new credits first, then cry 'em down:

20

Divide the empty nothing into shares,  
 To set the town together by the ears.  
 The sham projectors and the brokers join,  
 And both the cully merchant undermine;  
 First he must be drawn in and then betrayed,  
 And they demolish the machine they made:  
 So conjuring chymists, with their charm and spell,  
 Some wondrous liquid wondrously exhale;  
 But when the gaping mob their money pay,  
 The cheat's dissolved, the vapour flies away:  
 The wond'ring bubbles stand amazed to see  
 Their money mountebanked to Mercury.

30

Some fit out ships, and double freights ensure,  
 And burn the ships to make the voyage secure:  
 Promiscuous plunders through the world commit,  
 And with the money buy their safe retreat.

Others seek out to Afric's torrid zone,  
 And search the burning shores of Serralone;  
 There in insufferable heats they fry,  
 And run vast risks to see the gold, and die:  
 The harmless natives basely they trepan,  
 And barter baubles for the souls of men:  
 The wretches they to Christian climes bring o'er,  
 To serve worse heathens than they did before.  
 The cruelties they suffer there are such,  
 Amboyne's nothing, they've outdone the Dutch.

40

Cortez, Pizarro, Guzman, Penaloe,  
 Who drank the blood and gold of Mexico,  
 Who thirteen millions of souls destroyed,  
 And left one third of God's creation void;

DANIEL DEFOE

By birth for nature's butchery designed, 50  
Compared to these are merciful and kind.  
Death could their cruellest designs fulfil,  
Blood quenched their thirst, and it sufficed to kill:  
But these the tender *coup de grâce* deny,  
And make men beg in vain for leave to die;  
To more than Spanish cruelty inclined,  
Torment the body and debauch the mind:  
The ling'ring life of slavery preserve,  
And vilely teach them both to sin and serve.  
In vain they talk to them of shades below: 60  
They fear no hell, but where such Christians go.  
Of Jesus Christ they very often hear,  
Often as his blaspheming servants swear;  
They hear and wonder what strange gods they be,  
Can bear with patience such indignity.  
They look for famines, plagues, disease and death,  
Blasts from above and earthquakes from beneath:  
But when they see regardless heaven looks on,  
They curse our gods, or think that we have none.  
Thus thousands to religion are brought o'er, 70  
And made worse devils than they were before.

(1702)

LAWRENCE SPOONER

*fl.* 1703

16

from *A Looking-Glass for Smokers*

[*On Giving Up Smoking*]

BUT O! the freedom, pleasure and the ease  
That I sustained, when this foul disease  
I had shook off! It was a kind of life  
From death's confines, an end of fearful strife  
Betwixt my soul and body. Civil wars  
In this respect were ended; locks and bars  
That kept my prisoned soul were then broke ope.  
My mind was pleasant, sprightly, full of hope:  
I had no shame (as I had had before)  
Because my neighbours saw me out of door  
Defiling of the wholesome, precious air 10  
With foreign fumes; nor did I greatly fear

LAWRENCE SPOONER

That anyone should justly at me scoff,  
When this defiling branch was loppèd off.

I now could rise in quiet from my bed  
And feel no scorched throat nor aching head;  
My mouth was moist, my lungs could not send forth  
As heretofore a noisome, stinking breath.  
I could perform my duties to my God,  
Or go about my business well abroad,  
And naught to hinder . . .

20

(1703)

LADY MARY CHUDLEIGH

1656-1710

17

*To the Ladies*

WIFE and servant are the same,  
But only differ in the name:  
For when that fatal knot is tied,  
Which nothing, nothing can divide,  
When she the word *Obe*y has said,  
And man by law supreme has made,  
Then all that's kind is laid aside,  
And nothing left but state and pride.  
Fierce as an eastern prince he grows,  
And all his innate rigour shows:  
Then but to look, to laugh, or speak,  
Will the nuptial contract break.  
Like mutes, she signs alone must make,  
And never any freedom take,  
But still be governed by a nod,  
And fear her husband as her god:  
Him still must serve, him still obey,  
And nothing act, and nothing say,  
But what her haughty lord thinks fit,  
Who, with the power, has all the wit.  
Then shun, oh! shun that wretched state,  
And all the fawning flatt'ers hate.  
Value yourselves, and men despise:  
You must be proud, if you'll be wise.

10

20

(1703)

SARAH FYGE EGERTON

1670-1723

18

*The Emulation*

SAY, tyrant Custom, why must we obey  
The impositions of thy haughty sway?  
From the first dawn of life unto the grave,  
Poor womankind's in every state a slave,  
The nurse, the mistress, parent and the swain,  
For love she must, there's none escape that pain.  
Then comes the last, the fatal slavery:  
The husband with insulting tyranny  
Can have ill manners justified by law,  
For men all join to keep the wife in awe. 10  
Moses, who first our freedom did rebuke,  
Was married when he writ the Pentateuch.  
They're wise to keep us slaves, for well they know,  
If we were loose, we soon should make them so.  
We yield like vanquished kings whom fetters bind,  
When chance of war is to usurpers kind;  
Submit in form; but they'd our thoughts control,  
And lay restraints on the impassive soul.  
They fear we should excel their sluggish parts,  
Should we attempt the sciences and arts; 20  
Pretend they were designed for them alone,  
So keep us fools to raise their own renown.  
Thus priests of old, their grandeur to maintain,  
Cried vulgar eyes would sacred laws profane;  
So kept the mysteries behind a screen:  
Their homage and the name were lost had they been seen.  
But in this blessèd age such freedom's given,  
That every man explains the will of heaven;  
And shall we women now sit tamely by,  
Make no excursions in philosophy, 30  
Or grace our thoughts in tuneful poetry?  
We will our rights in learning's world maintain;  
Wit's empire now shall know a female reign.  
Come, all ye fair, the great attempt improve,  
Divinely imitate the realms above:  
There's ten celestial females govern wit,  
And but two gods that dare pretend to it.  
And shall these finite males reverse their rules?  
No, we'll be wits, and then men must be fools.

(1703)



WILLIAM CONGREVE

1670-1729

19

*A Hue and Cry after Fair Amoret*

FAIR Amoret is gone astray;  
Pursue and seek her, ev'ry lover;  
I'll tell the signs by which you may  
The wand'ring shepherdess discover.

Coquet and coy at once her air,  
Both studied, though both seem neglected;  
Careless she is with artful care,  
Affecting to seem unaffected.

With skill her eyes dart ev'ry glance,  
Yet change so soon you'd ne'er suspect 'em;  
For she'd persuade they wound by chance,  
Though certain aim and art direct 'em.

10

She likes herself, yet others hates  
For that which in herself she prizes;  
And, while she laughs at them, forgets  
She is the thing that she despises.

(1704)

20

*Song*

SEE, see she wakes, Sabina wakes!  
And now the sun begins to rise;  
Less glorious is the morn that breaks  
From his bright beams than her fair eyes.

With light united, day they give,  
But diff'rent fates ere night fulfil:  
How many by his warmth will live!  
How many will her coldness kill!

(1704)

21

*Song*

PIOUS Selinda goes to prayers,  
 If I but ask the favour;  
 And yet the tender fool's in tears,  
 When she believes I'll leave her.

Would I were free from this restraint,  
 Or else had hopes to win her;  
 Would she could make of me a saint,  
 Or I of her a sinner.

(1704)

22

*Doris*

DORIS, a nymph of riper age,  
 Has every grace and art  
 A wise observer to engage,  
 Or wound a heedless heart.  
 Of native blush and rosy dye  
 Time has her cheek bereft,  
 Which makes the prudent nymph supply  
 With paint th' injurious theft.  
 Her sparkling eyes she still retains,  
 And teeth in good repair,  
 And her well-furnished front disdains  
 To grace with borrowed hair.  
 Of size, she is not short nor tall,  
 And does to fat incline  
 No more than what the French would call  
*Aimable embonpoint*.  
 Farther her person to disclose  
 I leave—let it suffice,  
 She has few faults but what she knows,  
 And can with skill disguise.  
 She many lovers has refused,  
 With many more complied,  
 Which, like her clothes, when little used  
 She always lays aside.  
 She's one who looks with great contempt  
 On each affected creature,  
 Whose nicety would seem exempt  
 From appetites of nature.

10

20

WILLIAM CONGREVE

She thinks they want or health or sense,  
 Who want an inclination; 30  
 And therefore never takes offence  
 At him who pleads his passion.  
 Whom she refuses she treats still  
 With so much sweet behaviour,  
 That her refusal, through her skill,  
 Looks almost like a favour.  
 Since she this softness can express  
 To those whom she rejects,  
 She must be very fond, you'll guess,  
 Of such whom she affects. 40  
 But here our Doris far outgoes  
 All that her sex have done;  
 She no regard for custom knows,  
 Which reason bids her shun.  
 By reason, her own reason's meant,  
 Or, if you please, her will:  
 For when this last is discontent,  
 The first is served but ill.  
 Peculiar therefore is her way;  
 Whether by nature taught, 50  
 I shall not undertake to say,  
 Or by experience bought.  
 But who o'er-night obtained her grace,  
 She can next day disown,  
 And stare upon the strange man's face  
 As one she ne'er had known.  
 So well she can the truth disguise,  
 Such artful wonder frame,  
 The lover or distrusts his eyes,  
 Or thinks 'twas all a dream. 60  
 Some censure this as lewd and low,  
 Who are to bounty blind;  
 For to forget what we bestow  
 Bespeaks a noble mind.  
 Doris our thanks nor asks nor needs,  
 For all her favours done:  
 From her love flows, as light proceeds  
 Spontaneous from the sun.  
 On one or other still her fires  
 Display their genial force; 70  
 And she, like Sol, alone retires  
 To shine elsewhere of course.

(1710)

JOSEPH ADDISON

1672-1719

23

*A Letter from Italy, to the Right Honourable  
Charles Lord Halifax*

WHILE you, my lord, the rural shades admire,  
And from Britannia's public posts retire,  
Nor longer, her ungrateful sons to please,  
For their advantage sacrifice your ease;  
Me into foreign realms my fate conveys,  
Through nations fruitful of immortal lays,  
Where the soft season and inviting clime  
Conspire to trouble your repose with rhyme.

For wheresoe'er I turn my ravished eyes,  
Gay gilded scenes and shining prospects rise,  
Poetic fields encompass me around,  
And still I seem to tread on classic ground;  
For here the Muse so oft her harp has strung  
That not a mountain rears its head unsung,  
Renowned in verse each shady thicket grows,  
And ev'ry stream in heavenly numbers flows.

10

How am I pleased to search the hills and woods  
For rising springs and celebrated floods!  
To view the Nar, tumultuous in his course,  
And trace the smooth Clitumnus to his source,  
To see the Mincio draw his watry store  
Through the long windings of a fruitful shore,  
And hoary Albula's infected tide  
O'er the warm bed of smoking sulphur glide.

20

Fired with a thousand raptures I survey  
Eridanus through flowery meadows stray,  
The king of floods! that rolling o'er the plains  
The tow'ring Alps of half their moisture drains,  
And, proudly swoll'n with a whole winter's snows,  
Distributes wealth and plenty where he flows.

30

Sometimes, misguided by the tuneful throng,  
I look for streams immortalized in song,  
That lost in silence and oblivion lie  
(Dumb are their fountains and their channels dry),  
Yet run for ever by the Muse's skill,  
And in the smooth description murmur still.

Sometimes to gentle Tiber I retire,

JOSEPH ADDISON

And the famed river's empty shores admire,  
That destitute of strength derives its course  
From thrifty urns and an unfruitful source; 40  
Yet, sung so often in poetic lays,  
With scorn the Danube and the Nile surveys;  
So high the deathless Muse exalts her theme!  
Such was the Boyne, a poor inglorious stream,  
That in Hibernian vales obscurely strayed,  
And unobserved in wild meanders played;  
Till by your lines and Nassau's sword renowned,  
Its rising billows through the world resound,  
Where'er the hero's godlike acts can pierce,  
Or where the fame of an immortal verse. 50

Oh, could the Muse my ravished breast inspire  
With warmth like yours, and raise an equal fire,  
Unnumbered beauties in my verse should shine,  
And Virgil's Italy should yield to mine!

See how the golden groves around me smile,  
That shun the coast of Britain's stormy isle,  
Or, when transplanted and preserved with care,  
Curse the cold clime and starve in northern air.  
Here kindly warmth their mounting juice ferments 60  
To nobler tastes and more exalted scents:  
Ev'n the rough rocks with tender myrtle bloom,  
And trodden weeds send out a rich perfume.  
Bear me, some god, to Baia's gentle seats,  
Or cover me in Umbria's green retreats;  
Where western gales eternally reside,  
And all the seasons lavish all their pride:  
Blossoms and fruits and flowers together rise,  
And the whole year in gay confusion lies.

Immortal glories in my mind revive,  
And in my soul a thousand passions strive, 70  
When Rome's exalted beauties I descry  
Magnificent in piles of ruin lie.  
An amphitheatre's amazing height  
Here fills my eye with terror and delight,  
That on its public shows unpeopled Rome,  
And held uncrowded nations in its womb.  
Here pillars rough with sculpture pierce the skies:  
And here the proud triumphal arches rise,  
Where the old Romans' deathless acts displayed  
Their base degenerate progeny upbraid. 80

Whole rivers here forsake the fields below,  
And wond'ring at their height through airy channels flow.  
Still to new scenes my wand'ring Muse retires,

And the dumb show of breathing rocks admires;  
 Where the smooth chisel all its force has shown,  
 And softened into flesh the rugged stone.  
 In solemn silence, a majestic band,  
 Heroes and gods and Roman consuls stand,  
 Stern tyrants, whom their cruelties renown,  
 And emperors in Parian marble frown;  
 While the bright dames, to whom they humbly sued,  
 Still show the charms that their proud hearts subdued.

90

Fain would I Raphael's godlike art rehearse,  
 And show th' immortal labours in my verse,  
 Where from the mingled strength of shade and light  
 A new creation rises to my sight:

Such heav'nly figures from his pencil flow,  
 So warm with life his blended colours glow.  
 From theme to theme with secret pleasure tossed,  
 Amidst the soft variety I'm lost:

100

Here pleasing airs my ravished soul confound  
 With circling notes and labyrinths of sound;  
 Here domes and temples rise in distant views,  
 And opening palaces invite my Muse.

How has kind heav'n adorned the happy land,  
 And scattered blessings with a wasteful hand!  
 But what avail her unexhausted stores,  
 Her blooming mountains and her sunny shores,  
 With all the gifts that heav'n and earth impart,  
 The smiles of nature and the charms of art,  
 While proud Oppression in her valleys reigns,  
 And Tyranny usurps her happy plains?

110

The poor inhabitant beholds in vain  
 The redd'ning orange and the swelling grain:  
 Joyless he sees the growing oils and wines,  
 And in the myrtle's fragrant shade repines:  
 Starves, in the midst of nature's bounty cursed,  
 And in the loaden vineyard dies for thirst.

Oh Liberty, thou goddess heavenly bright,  
 Profuse of bliss and pregnant with delight,  
 Eternal pleasures in thy presence reign,  
 And smiling Plenty leads thy wanton train!  
 Eased of her load Subjection grows more light,  
 And Poverty looks cheerful in thy sight;  
 Thou mak'st the gloomy face of nature gay,  
 Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day.

120

Thee, goddess, thee, Britannia's isle adores;  
 How has she oft exhausted all her stores,  
 How oft in fields of death thy presence sought,

JOSEPH ADDISON

Nor thinks the mighty prize too dearly bought! 130  
 On foreign mountains may the sun refine  
 The grape's soft juice, and mellow it to wine,  
 With citron groves adorn a distant soil,  
 And the fat olive swell with floods of oil:  
 We envy not the warmer clime that lies  
 In ten degrees of more indulgent skies,  
 Nor at the coarseness of our heav'n repine,  
 Though o'er our heads the frozen Pleiads shine:  
 'Tis Liberty that crowns Britannia's isle,  
 And makes her barren rocks and her bleak mountains smile. 140

Others with towering piles may please the sight,  
 And in their proud aspiring domes delight;  
 A nicer touch to the stretched canvas give,  
 Or teach their animated rocks to live:  
 'Tis Britain's care to watch o'er Europe's fate,  
 And hold in balance each contending state,  
 To threaten bold presumptuous kings with war,  
 And answer her afflicted neighbours' pray'r.  
 The Dane and Swede, roused up by fierce alarms,  
 Bless the wise conduct of her pious arms: 150  
 Soon as her fleets appear their terrors cease,  
 And all the northern world lies hushed in peace.

Th' ambitious Gaul beholds with secret dread  
 Her thunder aimed at his aspiring head,  
 And fain her godlike sons would disunite  
 By foreign gold or by domestic spite;  
 But strives in vain to conquer or divide,  
 Whom Nassau's arms defend and counsels guide.

Fired with the name, which I so oft have found  
 The distant climes and different tongues resound, 160  
 I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain,  
 That longs to launch into a bolder strain.

But I've already troubled you too long,  
 Nor dare attempt a more advent'rous song.  
 My humble verse demands a softer theme,  
 A painted meadow or a purling stream;  
 Unfit for heroes, whom immortal lays,  
 And lines like Virgil's or like yours, should praise.

(1704)

24

*Ode*

THE spacious firmament on high,  
 With all the blue ethereal sky,  
 And spangled heav'ns, a shining frame,  
 Their great original proclaim:  
 Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,  
 Does his Creator's power display,  
 And publishes to every land  
 The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
 The moon takes up the wondrous tale,  
 And nightly to the list'ning earth  
 Repeats the story of her birth:  
 Whilst all the stars that round her burn,  
 And all the planets in their turn,  
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

10

What though, in solemn silence, all  
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball?  
 What though nor real voice nor sound  
 Amid their radiant orbs be found?  
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
 And utter forth a glorious voice,  
 For ever singing, as they shine,  
 'The hand that made us is divine.'

20

(1712)

25

*Song*

OH the charming month of May!  
 Oh the charming month of May!  
 When the breezes fan the treeses  
 Full of blossoms fresh and gay—  
 Full, &c.

Oh what joys our prospects yield!  
 Charming joys our prospects yield!  
 In a new livery when we see every  
 Bush and meadow, tree and field—  
 Bush, &c.

10



JOSEPH ADDISON

Oh how fresh the morning air!  
Charming fresh the morning air!  
When the zephyrs and the heifers  
Their odoriferous breath compare—  
Their, &c.

Oh how fine our ev'ning walk!  
Charming fine our ev'ning walk!  
When the nightingale delighting  
With her song suspends our talk—  
With her, &c.

20

Oh how sweet at night to dream!  
Charming sweet at night to dream!  
On mossy pillows, by the trilloes  
Of a gentle purling stream—  
Of a, &c.

Oh how kind the country lass!  
Charming kind the country lass!  
Who, her cow bilking, leaves her milking  
For a green gown upon the grass—  
For a, &c.

30

Oh how sweet it is to spy!  
Charming sweet it is to spy!  
At the conclusion, her confusion,  
Blushing cheeks, and downcast eye—  
Blushing, &c.

Oh the cooling curds and cream!  
Charming cooling curds and cream!  
When all is over, she gives her lover,  
Who on her skimming-dish carves her name—  
Who on, &c.

40

(1713)

MATTHEW PRIOR

1664-1721

26      *To a Child of Quality of Five Years Old, the  
              Author Supposed Forty*

LORDS, knights, and squires, the num'rous band  
    That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,  
Were summoned, by her high command,  
    To show their passion by their letters.

My pen amongst the rest I took,  
    Lest those bright eyes that cannot read  
Should dart their kindling fires, and look  
    The pow'r they have to be obeyed.

Nor quality, nor reputation,  
    Forbid me yet my flame to tell,  
Dear five years old befriends my passion,  
    And I may write till she can spell.

10

For, while she makes her silkworms beds  
    With all the tender things I swear;  
Whilst all the house my passion reads  
    In papers round her baby's hair;

She may receive and own my flame,  
    For, though the strictest prudes should know it,  
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,  
    And I for an unhappy poet.

20

Then too, alas! when she shall tear  
    The lines some younger rival sends,  
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,  
    And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our diff'rent ages move,  
    'Tis so ordained (would Fate but mend it!)  
That I shall be past making love,  
    When she begins to comprehend it.

(1704)

baby's] doll's

27

*A Simile*

DEAR Thomas, didst thou never pop  
 Thy head into a tin-man's shop?  
 There, Thomas, didst thou never see  
 ('Tis but by way of simile)  
 A squirrel spend his little rage  
 In jumping round a rolling cage?  
 The cage, as either side turned up,  
 Striking a ring of bells a-top?

Moved in the orb, pleased with the chimes,  
 The foolish creature thinks he climbs:  
 But here or there, turn wood or wire,  
 He never gets two inches higher.

10

So fares it with those merry blades,  
 That frisk it under Pindus' shades.  
 In noble songs, and lofty odes,  
 They tread on stars, and talk with gods;  
 Still dancing in an airy round,  
 Still pleased with their own verses' sound;  
 Brought back, how fast soe'er they go,  
 Always aspiring, always low.

20

(1706)

28

*An Ode*

THE merchant, to secure his treasure,  
 Conveys it in a borrowed name:  
 Euphelia serves to grace my measure,  
 But Cloe is my real flame.

My softest verse, my darling lyre,  
 Upon Euphelia's toilet lay,  
 When Cloe noted her desire  
 That I should sing, that I should play.

My lyre I tune, my voice I raise,  
 But with my numbers mix my sighs:  
 And whilst I sing Euphelia's praise,  
 I fix my soul on Cloe's eyes.

10

MATTHEW PRIOR

Fair Cloe blushed, Euphelia frowned;  
I sung and gazed, I played and trembled;  
And Venus to the Loves around  
Remarked how ill we all dissembled.

(1709)

29

*A Dutch Proverb*

FIRE, water, woman, are man's ruin,  
Says wise Professor Vander Brün.  
By flames a house I hired was lost  
Last year, and I must pay the cost.  
This spring the rains o'erflowed my ground,  
And my best Flanders mare was drowned.  
A slave I am to Clara's eyes:  
The gypsy knows her pow'r, and flies.  
Fire, water, woman, are my ruin:  
And great thy wisdom, Vander Brün.

(1709)

30

*from Solomon on the Vanity of the World,*  
*Book III*

PASS we the ills, which each man feels or dreads,  
The weight or fall'n, or hanging o'er our heads;  
The bear, the lion, terrors of the plain,  
The sheepfold scattered, and the shepherd slain;  
The frequent errors of the pathless wood,  
The giddy precipice, and the dang'rous flood:  
The noisome pest'lence that, in open war  
Terrible, marches through the midday air,  
And scatters death; the arrow that by night  
Cuts the dank mist, and fatal wings its flight;  
The billowing snow, and violence of the show'r,  
That from the hills disperse their dreadful store,  
And o'er the vales collected ruin pour;  
The worm that gnaws the ripening fruit, sad guest,  
Canker or locust hurtful to infest  
The blade; while husks elude the tiller's care,

10