

WELLS CAROLYN

A SATIRE
ANTHOLOGY

Carolyn Wells

A Satire Anthology

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Various A Satire Anthology

NOTE

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INTRODUCTION

SATIRE, though a form of literature familiar to everyone, is difficult to define. Partaking variously of sarcasm, irony, ridicule, and burlesque, it is exactly synonymous with no one of these.

Satire is primarily dependent on the motive of its writer. Unless meant for satire, it is not the real thing; unconscious satire is a contradiction of terms, or a mere figure of speech.

Secondarily, satire depends on the reader. What seems to us satire to-day, may not seem so to-morrow. Or, what seems satire to a pessimistic mind, may seem merely good-natured chaff to an optimist.

This, of course, refers to the subtler forms of satire. Many classic satires are direct lampoons or broadsides which admit of only one interpretation.

Literature numbers many satirists among its most honoured names; and the best satires show intellect, education, and a keen appreciation of human nature.

Nor is satire necessarily vindictive or spiteful. Often its best examples show a kindly tolerance for the vice or folly in question, and even hint a tacit acceptance of the conditions condemned. Again, in the hands of a carping and unsympathetic critic, satire is used with vitriolic effects on sins for which the writer has no mercy.

This lashing form of satire was doubtless the earliest type. The Greeks show sardonic examples of it, but the Romans allowed a broader sense of humour to soften the satirical sting.

Following and outstripping Lucilius, Horace is the acknowledged father of satire, and was himself followed, and, in the opinion of some, outstripped by Juvenal.

But the works of the ancient satirists are of interest mainly to scholars, and cannot be included in a collection destined for a popular audience. The present volume, therefore, is largely made up from the products of more recent centuries.

From the times of Horace and Juvenal, down through the mediæval ages to the present day, satires may be divided into the two classes founded by the two great masters: the work of Horace's followers marked by humour and tolerance, that of Juvenal's imitators by bitter invective. On the one side, the years have arrayed such names as Chaucer, Swift, Goldsmith, and Thackeray; on the other, Langland, Dryden, Pope, and Burns.

A scholarly gentleman of our own day classifies satires in three main divisions: those directed at society, those which ridicule political conditions, and those aimed at individual characters.

These variations of the art of satire form a fascinating study, and to one interested in the subject, this small collection of representative satires can be merely a series of guide-posts.

It is the compiler's regret that a great mass of material is necessarily omitted for lack of space; other selections are discarded because of their present untimeliness, which deprives them of their intrinsic interest. But an endeavour has been made to represent the greatest and best satiric writers, and also to include at least extracts from the masterpieces of satire.

It is often asked why we have no satire at the present day. Many answers have been given, but one reason is doubtless to be found in the acceleration of the pace of life; fads and foibles follow one another so quickly, that we have time neither to write nor read satiric disquisitions upon them.

Another reason lies in the fact that we have achieved a broader and more tolerant human outlook.

Again, the true satirist must be possessed of earnestness and sincerity. And it is a question whether the mental atmosphere of the twentieth century tends to stimulate and foster those qualities.

These explanations, however, seem to apply to American writers more especially than to English.

The leisurely thinking Briton, with his more personal viewpoint, has produced, and is even now producing, satires marked by strength, honesty, and literary value.

But America is not entirely unrepresented. The work of James Russell Lowell cannot suffer by comparison with that of any contemporary English author; and, though now forgotten because dependent on local and timely interest, many political satires written by Americans during the early part of the nineteenth century show clever and ingenious work founded on a comprehensive knowledge of the truth.

Yet, though the immediate present is not producing masterpieces of satire, the lack is partially made up by the large quantity of really meritorious work that is being done in a satirical vein. In this country and in England are young and middle-aged writers who show evidences of satiric power, which, though it does not make for fame and glory, is yet not without its value.

CHORUS OF WOMEN

(From the “Thesmophoriazusæ.”)

THEY'RE always abusing the women,
As a terrible plague to men;
They say we're the root of all evil,
And repeat it again and again —
Of war, and quarrels, and bloodshed,
All mischief, be what it may.
And pray, then, why do you marry us,
If we're all the plagues you say?
And why do you take such care of us,
And keep us so safe at home,
And are never easy a moment
If ever we chance to roam?
When you ought to be thanking Heaven
That your plague is out of the way,
You all keep fussing and fretting —
“Where is my Plague to-day?”
If a Plague peeps out of the window,
Up go the eyes of men;
If she hides, then they all keep staring
Until she looks out again.

Aristophanes.

A WOULD-BE LITERARY BORE

IT chanced that I, the other day,
Was sauntering up the Sacred Way,
And musing, as my habit is,
Some trivial random fantasies,
When there comes rushing up a wight
Whom only by his name I knew.
“Ha! my dear fellow, how d’ye do?”
Grasping my hand, he shouted. “Why,
As times go, pretty well,” said I;
“And you, I trust, can say the same.”
But after me as still he came,
“Sir, is there anything,” I cried,
“You want of me?” “Oh,” he replied,
“I’m just the man you ought to know:
A scholar, author!” “Is it so?
For this I’ll like you all the more!”
Then, writhing to escape the bore,
I’ll quicken now my pace, now stop,
And in my servant’s ear let drop
Some words; and all the while I feel
Bathed in cold sweat from head to heel.
“Oh, for a touch,” I moaned in pain,
“Bolanus, of the madcap vein,
To put this incubus to rout!”
As he went chattering on about
Whatever he describes or meets —
The city’s growth, its splendour, size.
“You’re dying to be off,” he cries
(For all the while I’d been stock dumb);
“I’ve seen it this half-hour. But come,
Let’s clearly understand each other;
It’s no use making all this pother.
My mind’s made up to stick by you;
So where you go, there I go too.”
“Don’t put yourself,” I answered, “pray,
So very far out of your way.
I’m on the road to see a friend
Whom you don’t know, that’s near his end,
Away beyond the Tiber far,
Close by where Cæsar’s gardens are.”
“I’ve nothing in the world to do,
And what’s a paltry mile or two?
I like it: so I’ll follow you!”
Down dropped my ears on hearing this,
Just like a vicious jackass’s,

That's loaded heavier than he likes,
But off anew my torment strikes:
"If well I know myself, you'll end
With making of me more a friend
Than Viscus, ay, or Varius; for,
Of verses, who can run off more,
Or run them off at such a pace?
Who dance with such distinguished grace?
And as for singing, zounds!" says he,
"Hermogenes might envy me!"
Here was an opening to break in:
"Have you a mother, father, kin,
To whom your life is precious?" "None;
I've closed the eyes of everyone."
Oh, happy they, I inly groan;
Now I am left, and I alone.
Quick, quick despatch me where I stand;
Now is the direful doom at hand,
Which erst the Sabine beldam old,
Shaking her magic urn, foretold
In days when I was yet a boy:
"Him shall no poison fell destroy,
Nor hostile sword in shock of war,
Nor gout, nor colic, nor catarrh.
In fulness of time his thread
Shall by a prate-apace be shred;
So let him, when he's twenty-one,
If he be wise, all babblers shun."

Quintus Horatius Flaccus Horace.

THE WISH FOR LENGTH OF LIFE

PRODUCE the urn that Hannibal contains,
And weigh the mighty dust that yet remains.
And this is all? Yet this was once the bold,
The aspiring chief, whom Attic could not hold.
Afric, outstretched from where the Atlantic roars
To Nilus; from the Line to Libya's shores.
Spain conquered, o'er the Pyrenees he bounds.
Nature opposed her everlasting mounds,
Her Alps and snows. O'er these with torrent force
He pours, and rends through rocks his dreadful course.
Yet thundering on, "Think nothing done," he cries,
"Till o'er Rome's prostrate walls I lead my powers,
And plant my standard on her hated towers!"
Big words? But view his figure, view his face!
Ah, for some master hand the lines to trace,
As through the Etrurian swamps, by floods increased,
The one-eyed chief urged his Getulian beast!
But what ensued? Illusive glory, say:
Subdued on Zama's memorable day,
He flies in exile to a petty state,
With headlong haste, and at a despot's gate
Sits, mighty suppliant – of his life in doubt,
Till the Bithynian's morning nap be out.
Nor swords, nor spears, nor stones from engines hurled,
Shall quell the man whose frowns alarmed the world.
The vengeance due to Cannæ's fatal field,
And floods of human gore, a ring shall yield!
Go, madman, go! at toil and danger mock,
Pierce the deep snow, and scale the eternal rock,
To please the rhetoricians, and become
A declamation for the boys of Rome.

Juvenal.

THE ASS'S LEGACY

A PRIEST there was, in times of old,
Fond of his church, but fonder of his gold,
Who spent his days, and all his thought,
In getting what he preached was naught.
His chests were full of robes and stuff;
Corn filled his garners to the roof,
Stored up against the fair-times gay
From St. Rémy to Easter day.

An ass he had within his stable,
A beast most sound and valuable;
For twenty years he lent his strength
For the priest, his master, till at length,
Worn out with work and age, he died.
The priest, who loved him, wept and cried;
And, for his service long and hard,
Buried him in his own churchyard.

Now turn we to another thing:
'Tis of a bishop that I sing.
No greedy miser he, I ween;
Prelate so generous ne'er was seen.
Full well he loved in company
Of all good Christians still to be;
When he was well, his pleasure still;
His medicine best when he was ill.

Always his hall was full, and there
His guests had ever best of fare.
Whate'er the bishop lacked or lost,
Was bought at once, despite the cost.
And so, in spite of vent and score,
The bishop's debts grew more and more.
For true it is – this ne'er forget —
Who spends too much gets into debt.
One day his friends all with him sat,
The bishop talking this and that,
Till the discourse on rich clerks ran,
Of greedy priests, and how their plan
Was all good bishops still to grieve,
And of their dues their lords deceive.

And then the priest of whom I've told
Was mentioned – how he loved his gold.
And, because men do often use

More freedom than the truth would choose,
They gave him wealth, and wealth so much,
As those like him could scarcely touch.
“And then, besides, a thing he’s done
By which great profit might be won,
Could it be only spoken here.”
Quoth the bishop, “Tell it without fear.”
“He’s worse, my lord, than Bedouin,
Because his own dead ass, Baldwin,
He buried in the sacred ground.”
“If this is truth, as shall be found,”
The bishop cried, “a forfeit high
Will on his worldly riches lie.
Summon this wicked priest to me;
I will myself in this case be
The judge. If Robert’s word be true,
Mine are the fine, and forfeit too.”

“Disloyal! God’s enemy and mine,
Prepare to pay a heavy fine.
Thy ass thou buriest in the place
Sacred by church. Now, by God’s grace,
I never heard of crime more great.
What! Christian men with asses wait!
Now, if this thing be proven, know
Surely to prison thou wilt go.”
“Sir,” said the priest, “thy patience grant;
A short delay is all I want.
Not that I fear to answer now,
But give me what the laws allow.”
And so the bishop leaves the priest,
Who does not feel as if at feast;
But still, because one friend remains,
He trembles not at prison pains.
His purse it is which never fails
For tax or forfeit, fine or vails.

The term arrived, the priest appeared,
And met the bishop, nothing feared;
For ’neath his girdle safe there hung
A leathern purse, well stocked and strung
With twenty pieces fresh and bright,
Good money all, none clipped or light.
“Priest,” said the bishop, “if thou have
Answer to give to charge so grave,
’Tis now the time.”
“Sir, grant me leave
My answer secretly to give.
Let me confess to you alone,

And, if needs be, my sins atone.”
The bishop bent his head to hear;
The priest he whispered in his ear:
“Sir, spare a tedious tale to tell.
My poor ass served me long and well.
For twenty years my faithful slave;
Each year his work a saving gave
Of twenty sous, so that, in all,
To twenty livres the sum will fall;
And, for the safety of his soul,
To you, my lord, he left the whole.”
“’Twas rightly done,” the bishop said.
And gravely shook his godly head;
“And that his soul to heaven may go,
My absolution I bestow.”

Now have you heard a truthful lay,
How with rich priests the bishops play;
And Rutebœuf the moral draws
That, spite of kings’ and bishops’ laws,
No evil times has he to dread
Who still has silver at his need.

Rutebœuf.

A BALLADE OF OLD-TIME LADIES

(Translated by John Payne.)

TELL me, where, in what land of shade,
Hides fair Flora of Rome? and where
Are Thaïs and Archipiade,
Cousins-german in beauty rare?
And Echo, more than mortal fair,
That when one calls by river flow,
Or marish, answers out of the air?
But what has become of last year's snow?

Where did the learn'd Héloïsa vade,
For whose sake Abelard did not spare
(Such dole for love on him was laid)
Manhood to lose and a cowl to wear?
And where is the queen who will'd whilere
That Buridan, tied in a sack, should go
Floating down Seine from the turret-stair?
But what has become of last year's snow?

Blanche, too, the lily-white queen, that made
Sweet music as if she a siren were?
Broad-foot Bertha? and Joan, the maid,
The good Lorrainer the English bare
Captive to Rouen, and burn'd her there?
Beatrix, Eremburge, Alys – lo!
Where are they, virgins debonair?
But what has become of last year's snow?

Envoi

Prince, you may question how they fare,
This week, or liefer this year, I trow:
Still shall this burden the answer bear —
But what has become of last year's snow?

François Villon.

A CARMAN'S ACCOUNT OF A LAWSUIT

MARRY, I lent my gossip my mare, to fetch hame coals,
And he her drounit into the quarry holes;
And I ran to the consistory, for to pleinyie,
And there I happenit amang ane greedie meinyie.
They gave me first ane thing they call *citandum*,
Within aucht days I gat but *libellandum*;
Within ane month I gat *ad opponendum*;
In half ane year I gat *inter-loquendum*;
And syne I gat – how call ye it? —*ad replicandum*;
Bot I could never ane word yet understand him:
And then they gart me cast out mony placks,
And gart me pay for four-and-twenty acts.
Bot or they came half gate to *concludendum*,
The fiend ane plack was left for to defend him.
Thus they postponed me twa year with their train,
Syne, *hodie ad octo*, bade me come again;
And then their rooks they rowpit wonder fast
For sentence, silver, they cryit at the last.
Of *pronunciandum* they made me wonder fain,
Bot I gat never my gude gray mare again.

Sir David Lyndsay.

THE SOUL'S ERRAND

GO, Soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless errand;
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant.
Go, since I needs must die,
And give them all the lie.

Go tell the Court it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Go tell the Church it shows
What's good, but does no good.
If Court and Church reply,
Give Court and Church the lie.

Tell Potentates they live
Acting, but oh! their actions;
Not loved, unless they give,
Not strong but by their factions.
If Potentates reply,
Give Potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,
That rule affairs of state,
Their purpose is ambition;
Their practice only hate;
And if they do reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell those that brave it most,
They beg for more by spending,
Who in their greatest cost
Seek nothing but commending;
And if they make reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

Tell Zeal it lacks devotion;
Tell Love it is but lust;
Tell Time it is but motion;
Tell Flesh it is but dust;
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell Age it daily wasteth;
Tell Honour how it alters;
Tell Beauty how it blasteth;

Tell Favour that she falters;
And as they do reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell Wit how much it wrangles
In fickle points of niceness;
Tell Wisdom she entangles
Herself in overwiseness;
And if they do reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell Physic of her boldness;
Tell Skill it is pretension;
Tell Charity of coldness;
Tell Law it is contention;
And if they yield reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell Fortune of her blindness;
Tell Nature of decay;
Tell Friendship of unkindness;
Tell Justice of delay;
And if they do reply,
Then give them still the lie.

Tell Arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming;
Tell Schools they lack profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming.
If Arts and Schools reply,
Give Arts and Schools the lie.

Tell Faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country erreth;
Tell, Manhood shakes off pity;
Tell, Virtue least preferreth;
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

So, when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing,
Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing,
Yet stab at thee who will,
No stab the Soul can kill!

Sir Walter Raleigh.

OF A CERTAIN MAN

THERE was (not certain when) a certain preacher
That never learned, and yet became a teacher,
Who, having read in Latin thus a text
Of *erat quidam homo*, much perplexed,
He seemed the same with study great to scan,
In English thus, *There was a certain man*.
“But now,” quoth he, “good people, note you this,
He said there was: he doth not say there is;
For in these days of ours it is most plain
Of promise, oath, word, deed, no man’s certain;
Yet by my text you see it comes to pass
That surely once a certain man there was;
But yet, I think, in all your Bible no man
Can find this text, *There was a certain woman*.”

Sir John Harrington.

A PRECISE TAILOR

A TAILOR, thought a man of upright dealing —
True, but for lying, honest, but for stealing —
Did fall one day extremely sick by chance,
And on the sudden was in wondrous trance;
The fiends of hell mustering in fearful manner,
Of sundry colour'd silks display'd a banner
Which he had stolen, and wish'd, as they did tell,
That he might find it all one day in hell.
The man, affrighted with this apparition,
Upon recovery grew a great precisian:
He bought a Bible of the best translation,
And in his life he show'd great reformation;
He walkéd mannerly, he talkéd meekly,
He heard three lectures and two sermons weekly;
He vow'd to shun all company unruly,
And in his speech he used no oath but truly;
And zealously to keep the Sabbath's rest,
His meat for that day on the eve was drest;
And lest the custom which he had to steal
Might cause him sometimes to forget his zeal,
He gives his journeyman a special charge,
That if the stuff, allowance being large,
He found his fingers were to filch inclined,
Bid him to have the banner in his mind.
This done (I scant can tell the rest for laughter),
A captain of a ship came, three days after,
And brought three yards of velvet and three-quarters,
To make Venetians down below the garters.
He, that precisely knew what was enough,
Soon slipt aside three-quarters of the stuff.
His man, espying it, said in derision,
“Master, remember how you saw the vision!”
“Peace, knave!” quoth he, “I did not see one rag
Of such a colour'd silk in all the flag.”

Sir John Harrington.

THE WILL

BEFORE I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe,
Great Love, some legacies: Here I bequeathe
Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see;
If they be blind, then, Love, I give them thee;
My tongue to fame; to ambassadors mine ears;
To women or the sea, my tears.
Thou, Love, hast taught me heretofore,
By making me serve her who had twenty more,
That I should give to none but such as had too much before.

My constancy I to the planets give;
My truth to them who at the court do live;
My ingenuity and openness
To Jesuits; to buffoons my pensiveness;
My silence to any who abroad have been;
My money to a Capuchin.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by appointing me
To love there where no love received can be,
Only to give to such as have an incapacity.

My faith I give to Roman Catholics;
All my good works unto the schismatics
Of Amsterdam; my best civility
And courtship to a university;
My modesty I give to soldiers bare;
My patience let gamesters share.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her that holds my love disparity,
Only to give to those that count my gifts indignity.

I give my reputation to those
Which were my friends; mine industry to foes;
To schoolmen I bequeathe my doubtfulness;
My sickness to physicians, or excess;
To Nature all that I in rhyme have writ;
And to my company my wit.
Thou, Love, by making me adore
Her who begot this love in me before,
Taught'st me to make as though I gave, when I do but restore.

To him for whom the passing bell next tolls
I give my physic-books; my written rolls
Of moral counsel I to Bedlam give;
My brazen medals unto them which live
In want of bread; to them which pass among

All foreigners, mine English tongue.
Thou, Love, by making me love one
Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
For younger lovers, dost my gifts thus disproportion.

Therefore I'll give no more, but I'll undo
The world by dying, because love dies too.
Then all your beauties will no more be worth
Than gold in mines where none doth draw it forth;
And all your graces no more use shall have
Than a sundial in a grave.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her who doth neglect both thee and me,
To invent and practise this one way to annihilate all three.

John Donne.

SHAKESPEAREAN SATIRE

FROM “KING HENRY IV”

MY liege, I did deny no prisoners;
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly dress'd,
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin, new reap'd,
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home.
He was perfuméd like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose and took 't away again;
Who, therewith angry, when it next came there,
Took it in snuff: and still he smil'd and talk'd,
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly, unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me; among the rest, demanded
My prisoners in your Majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answer'd neglectingly I know not what,
He should, or he should not; for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
Of guns and drums and wounds – God save the mark! —
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise;
And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villainous saltpetre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly; and but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier.
This bald, unjointed chat of his, my lord,
I answer'd indirectly, as I said;
And I beseech you, let not this report
Come current for an accusation
Betwixt my love and your high Majesty.

Shakespeare.

FROM “LOVE’S LABOUR’S LOST”

THIS fellow pecks up wit, as pigeons pease,
And utters it again when God doth please.
He is wit’s pedler, and retails his wares
At wakes and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs;
And we that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,
Have not the grace to grace it with such show.
This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve;
Had he been Adam, he had tempted Eve.
He can carve, too, and lisp; why, this is he
That kiss’d his hand away in courtesy;
This is the ape of form, monsieur the nice,
That, when he plays at table, chides the dice
In honourable terms; nay, he can sing
A mean most meanly; and in ushering,
Mend him who can: the ladies call him sweet;
The stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet.
This is the flower that smiles on every one,
To show his teeth as white as whale’s bone;
And consciences that will not die in debt
Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet.

...

See where it comes! – Behaviour, what wert thou
Till this man show’d thee? and what art thou now?

Shakespeare.

FROM “AS YOU LIKE IT”

ALL the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits, and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms:
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel,
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school: And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow: Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth: And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part: The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound: Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Shakespeare.

HORACE CONCOCTING AN ODE

TO thee, whose forehead swells with roses,
Whose most haunted bower
Gives life and scent to every flower,
Whose most adoréd name encloses
Things abstruse, deep, and divine;
Whose yellow tresses shine
Bright as Eoan fire:
Oh, me thy priest inspire!
For I to thee and thine immortal name,
In – in – in golden tunes,
For I to thee and thine immortal name —
In – sacred raptures flowing, flowing, swimming, swimming:
In sacred raptures swimming,
Immortal name, game, dame, tame, lame, lame, lame,
(Foh) hath, shame, proclaim, oh —
In sacred raptures flowing, will proclaim. (No!)
Oh, me thy priest inspire!
For I to thee and thine immortal name,
In flowing numbers filled with spright and flame,
(Good! good!)
In flowing numbers filled with spright and flame.

Thomas Dekker.

ON DON SURLY

DON SURLY, to aspire the glorious name
Of a great man, and to be thought the same,
Makes serious use of all great trade he knows.
He speaks to men with a rhinocerote's nose,
Which he thinks great; and so reads verses too;
And that is done as he saw great men do.
He has tympanies of business in his face,
And can forget men's names with a great grace.
He will both argue and discourse in oaths,
Both which are great, and laugh at ill-made clothes;
That's greater yet, to cry his own up neat.
He doth, at meals, alone his pheasant eat,
Which is main greatness; and at his still board
He drinks to no man: that's, too, like a lord.
He keeps another's wife, which is a spice
Of solemn greatness; and he dares, at dice,
Blaspheme God greatly; or some poor hind beat,
That breathes in his dog's way: and this is great.
Nay, more, for greatness' sake he will be one
May hear my epigrams, but like of none.
Surly, use other arts; these only can
Style thee a most great fool, but no great man.

Ben Jonson.

THE SCHOLAR AND HIS DOG

I WAS a scholar: seven useful springs
Did I deflower in quotations
Of cross'd opinions 'bout the soul of man;
The more I learnt, the more I learnt to doubt.
Delight my spaniel slept, whilst I baus'd leaves,
Toss'd o'er the dunces, pored on the old print
Of titled words: and still my spaniel slept.
Whilst I wasted lamp-oil, baited my flesh,
Shrunk up my veins: and still my spaniel slept.
And still I held converse with Zabarell,
Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saw
Of antick Donate: still my spaniel slept.
Still on went I; first, *an sit anima*;
Then, an it were mortal. Oh, hold, hold! at that
They're at brain buffets, fell by the ears amain
Pell-mell together; still my spaniel slept.
Then, whether 't were corporeal, local, fixt,
Ex traduce, but whether 't had free will
Or no, hot philosophers
Stood banding factions, all so strongly propt,
I stagger'd, knew not which was firmer part,
But thought, quoted, read, observ'd, and pryed,
Stuft noting-books: and still my spaniel slept.
At length he wak'd, and yawned; and by yon sky,
For aught I know he knew as much as I.

John Marston.

THE MANLY HEART

SHALL I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or my cheeks make pale with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May,
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

Shall my foolish heart be pined
'Cause I see a woman kind;
Or a well-disposed nature
Joined with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder, than
Turtle-dove or pelican,
If she be not so to me,
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her merit's value known
Make me quite forget my own?
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may gain her name of Best,
If she seem not such to me,
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
Those that bear a noble mind
Where they want of riches find,
Think what with them they would do
Who without them dare to woo;
And unless that mind I see,
What care I though great she be?

Great or good, or kind or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair;
If she loves me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and let her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be?

George Wither.

THE CONSTANT LOVER

OUT upon it! I have loved
Three whole days together,
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on 't is, no praise
Is due at all to me:
Love with me had made no stays,
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place.

Sir John Suckling.

THE REMONSTRANCE

WHY so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move,
This cannot take her;
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!

Sir John Suckling.

SAINTSHIP VERSUS CONSCIENCE

“WHY didst thou choose that cursed sin,
Hypocrisy, to set up in?”
“Because it is the thriving’st calling,
The only saints’ bell that rings all in;
In which all churches are concern’d,
And is the easiest to be learn’d.”

...

Quoth he, “I am resolv’d to be
Thy scholar in this mystery;
And therefore first desire to know
Some principles on which you go.
What makes a knave a child of God,
And one of us?” “A livelihood.”
“What renders beating out of brains,
And murder, godliness?” “Great gains.”
“What’s tender conscience?” “’Tis a botch
That will not bear the gentlest touch;
But, breaking out, despatches more
Than th’ epidemical’st plague-sore.”
“What makes y’ encroach upon our trade,
And damn all others?” “To be paid.”
“What’s orthodox and true believing,
Against a conscience?” “A good living.”
“What makes rebelling against kings
A good old cause?” “Administ’rings.”
“What makes all doctrines plain and clear?”
“About two hundred pounds a year.”
“And that which was prov’d true before,
Prov’d false again?” “Two hundred more.”
“What makes the breaking of all oaths
A holy duty?” “Food and clothes.”
“What, laws and freedom, persecution?”
“Being out of power and contribution.”
“What makes a church a den of thieves?”
“A dean and chapter, and white sleeves.”
“And what would serve, if these were gone,
To make it orthodox?” “Our own.”
“What makes morality a crime,
The most notorious of the time;
Morality, which both the saints

And wicked, too, cry out against?”
“Cause grace and virtue are within
Prohibited degrees of kin;
And therefore no true saint allows
They shall be suffered to espouse.”

Samuel Butler.

DESCRIPTION OF HOLLAND

A COUNTRY that draws fifty foot of water,
In which men live as in the hold of Nature,
And when the sea does in upon them break,
And drowns a province, does but spring a leak;
That always ply the pump, and never think
They can be safe but at the rate they stink;
They live as if they had been run aground,
And, when they die, are cast away and drowned;
That dwell in ships, like swarms of rats, and prey
Upon the goods all nations' fleets convey;
And when their merchants are blown up and crackt,
Whole towns are cast away in storms, and wreckt;
That feed, like cannibals, on other fishes,
And serve their cousin-germans up in dishes:
A land that rides at anchor, and is moored,
In which they do not live, but go aboard.

Samuel Butler.

THE RELIGION OF HUDIBRAS

FOR his religion it was fit
To match his learning and his wit:
Twas Presbyterian true blue;
For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true Church militant;
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun;
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery,
And prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks;
Call fire, and sword, and desolation,
A godly, thorough reformation.
Which always must be carried on,
And still be doing, never done;
As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended;
A sect whose chief devotion lies
In odd perverse antipathies;
In falling out with that or this,
And finding somewhat still amiss;
More peevish, cross, and splenetic,
Than dog distract or monkey sick;
That with more care keep holy-day
The wrong, than others the right way;
Compound for sins they are inclin'd to,
By damning those they have no mind to;
Still so perverse and opposite,
As if they worshipped God for spite;
The self-same thing they will abhor
One way, and long another for;
Free-will they one way disavow,
Another, nothing else allow;
All piety consists therein
In them, in other men all sin;
Rather than fail, they will defy
That which they love most tenderly;
Quarrel with minc'd pies, and disparage
Their best and dearest friend, plum porridge;
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
And blaspheme custard through the nose.

Samuel Butler.

SATIRE ON THE SCOTS

A LAND where one may pray with cursed intent,
Oh, may they never suffer banishment!
Had Cain been Scot, God would have chang'd his doom —
Not forc'd him wander, but confin'd him home.
Like Jews they spread and as infection fly,
As if the devil had ubiquity;
Hence 'tis they live as rovers, and defy
This or that place, rags of geography;
They're citizens o' th' world, they're all in all;
Scotland's a nation epidemical.
And yet they ramble not to learn the mode
How to be drest, or how to lisp abroad...
No, the Scots errant fight, and fight to eat;
Their ostrich-stomachs make their swords their meat;
Nature with Scots as tooth-drawers hath dealt,
Who use to string their teeth upon their belt...
Lord! what a godly thing is want of shirts!
How a Scotch stomach and no meat converts!
They wanted food and raiment; so they took
Religion for their seamstress and their cook.
Unmask them well, their honours and estate,
As well as conscience, are sophisticate.
Shrive but their title and their moneys poize,
A laird and twenty pence pronounc'd with noise,
When constru'd but for a plain yeoman go,
And a good sober twopence, and well so.
Hence, then, you proud impostors! get you gone,
You Picts in gentry and devotion,
You scandal to the stock of verse – a race
Able to bring the gibbet in disgrace!
Hyperbolus by suffering did traduce
The ostracism, and sham'd it out of use.
The Indian that heaven did forswear,
Because he heard some Spaniards were there,
Had he but known what Scots in hell had been,
He would, Erasmus-like, have hung between.
My muse hath done. A voyder for the nonce,
I wrong the devil should I pick their bones;
That dish is his; for when the Scots decease,
Hell, like their nation, feeds on barnacles.
A Scot when from the gallow-tree got loose,
Drops into Styx, and turns a Soland goose.

John Cleiveland.

SONG

WHY should you swear I am forsworn,
Since thine I vowed to be?
Lady, it is already morn,
And 'twas last night I swore to thee
That fond impossibility.

Have I not loved thee much and long,
A tedious twelve hours' space?
I must all other beauties wrong,
And rob thee of a new embrace,
Could I still dote upon thy face.

Not but all joy in thy brown hair
By others may be found;
But I must search the black and fair,
Like skilful mineralists that sound
For treasure in unploughed-up ground.

Then, if when I have loved my round,
Thou prov'st the pleasant she;
With spoils of meaner beauties crowned,
I laden will return to thee,
Even sated with variety.

Richard Lovelace.

THE CHARACTER OF HOLLAND

HOLLAND, that scarce deserves the name of land,
As but the off-scouring of the British sand,
And so much earth as was contributed
By English pilots when they heaved the lead;
Or what by th' ocean's slow alluvion fell,
Of shipwrecked cockle and the mussel-shell;
This indigested vomit of the sea
Fell to the Dutch by just propriety.
Glad then, as miners who have found the ore,
They, with mad labour, fished the land to shore;
And dived as desperately for each piece
Of earth as if 't had been of ambergreese;
Collecting anxiously small loads of clay,
Less than what building-swallows bear away;
Or than those pills which sordid beetles roll,
Transfusing into them their dunghill soul.
How did they rivet, with gigantic piles,
Thorough the centre their new-catched miles;
And to the stake a struggling country bound,
Where barking waves still bait the forcéd ground;
Building their watery Babel far more high
To reach the sea, than those to scale the sky.
Yet still his claim the injured ocean laid,
And oft at leap-frog o'er their steeples played;
As if on purpose it on land had come
To shew them what's their *mare liberum*.
A daily deluge over them does boil;
The earth and water play at level-coil.
The fish ofttimes the burgher dispossessed,
And sat, not as a meat, but as a guest;
And oft the Tritons and the sea-nymphs saw
Whole shoals of Dutch served up for cabillau;
Or, as they over the new lever ranged,
For pickled herring, pickled heeren changed.
Nature, it seemed, ashamed of her mistake,
Would throw their land away at duck and drake,
Therefore necessity, that first make kings,
Something like government among them brings;
For, as with pigmies, who best kills the crane,
Among the hungry he that treasures grain,
Among the blind the one-eyed blinkard reigns,
So rules among the drowned he that drains.
Not who first see the rising sun commands,
But who could first discern the rising lands.
Who best could know to pump an earth so leak,

Him they their Lord and Country's Father speak.
To make a bank was a great plot of state;
Invent a shovel, and be a magistrate.
Hence some small dike-grave unperceived invades
The power, and grows, as 'twere, a king of spades;
But, for less envy, some joined states endures,
Who look like a commission of the sewers:
For these Half-anders, half wet, and half dry,
Nor bear strict service, nor pure liberty.
'Tis probable religion, after this,
Came next in order, which they could not miss.
How could the Dutch but be converted, when
The apostles were so many fishermen?
Besides, the waters of themselves did rise,
And, as their land, so them did rebaptize.

Andrew Marvell.

THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

SOME of their chiefs were princes of the land:
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,
A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes,
And both, to shew his judgment, in extremes;
So over-violent, or over-civil,
That every man with him was god or devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but desert:
Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate;
He laughed himself from court, then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief;
For, spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel.
Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left.

John Dryden.

ON SHADWELL

ALL human things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was called to empire, and had governed long.
In prose and verse was owned, without dispute,
Through all the realms of Nonsense absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase,
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state;
And pondering which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with Wit,
Cried: "Tis resolved; for Nature pleads that he
Should only rule who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years;
Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval,
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray;
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems designed for thoughtless majesty —
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology!
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way."

John Dryden.

SATIRE ON EDWARD HOWARD

THEY lie, dear Ned, who say thy brain is barren,
When deep conceits, like maggots, breed in carrion.
Thy stumbling foundered jade can trot as high
As any other Pegasus can fly.
So the dull eel moves nimbler in the mud
Than all the swift-finned racers of the flood.
As skilful divers to the bottom fall
Sooner than those who cannot swim at all,
So in this way of writing, without thinking,
Thou hast a strange alacrity in sinking.

Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset.

ST. ANTHONY'S SERMON TO THE FISHES

SAINT ANTHONY at church
Was left in the lurch,
So he went to the ditches
And preached to the fishes.
They wriggled their tails,
In the sun glanced their scales.

The carps, with their spawn,
Are all thither drawn;
Have opened their jaws,
Eager for each clause.
No sermon beside
Had the carps so edified.

Sharp-snouted pikes,
Who keep fighting like tikes,
Now swam up harmonious
To hear Saint Antonius.
No sermon beside
Had the pikes so edified.

And that very odd fish,
Who loves fast-days, the cod-fish —
The stock-fish, I mean —
At the sermon was seen.
No sermon beside
Had the cods so edified.

Good eels and sturgeon,
Which aldermen gorge on,
Went out of their way
To hear preaching that day.
No sermon beside
Had the eels so edified.

Crabs and turtles also,
Who always move low,
Made haste from the bottom
As if the devil had got 'em.
No sermon beside
The crabs so edified.

Fish great and fish small,
Lords, lackeys, and all,
Each looked at the preacher

Like a reasonable creature.
At God's word,
They Anthony heard.

The sermon now ended,
Each turned and descended;
The pikes went on stealing,
The eels went on eeling.
Much delighted were they,
But preferred the old way.

The crabs are backsliders,
The stock-fish thick-siders,
The carps are sharp-set —
All the sermon forget.
Much delighted were they,
But preferred the old way.

Abraham á Sancta-Clara.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRUE-BORN ENGLISHMAN

SPEAK, satire; for there's none can tell like thee
Whether 'tis folly, pride, or knavery
That makes this discontented land appear
Less happy now in times of peace than war?
Why civil feuds disturb the nation more
Than all our bloody wars have done before?
Fools out of favour grudge at knaves in place,
And men are always honest in disgrace;
The court preferments make men knaves in course,
But they which would be in them would be worse.
'Tis not at foreigners that we repine,
Would foreigners their perquisites resign;
The grand contention's plainly to be seen,
To get some men put out, and some put in.
For this our senators make long harangues,
And florid members whet their polished tongues.
Statesmen are always sick of one disease,
And a good pension gives them present ease;
That's the specific makes them all content
With any king and any government.
Good patriots at court abuses rail,
And all the nation's grievances bewail;
But when the sovereign's balsam's once applied,
The zealot never fails to change his side;
And when he must the golden key resign,
The railing spirit comes about again.
Who shall this bubbled nation disabuse,
While they their own felicities refuse,
Who the wars have made such mighty pother,
And now are falling out with one another:
With needless fears the jealous nation fill,
And always have been saved against their will:
Who fifty millions sterling have disbursed,
To be with peace and too much plenty cursed:
Who their old monarch eagerly undo,
And yet uneasily obey the new?
Search, satire, search; a deep incision make;
The poison's strong, the antidote's too weak.
'Tis pointed truth must manage this dispute,
And downright English, Englishmen confute.
Whet thy just anger at the nation's pride,
And with keen phrase repel the vicious tide;
To Englishmen their own beginnings show,
And ask them why they slight their neighbours so.
Go back to elder times and ages past,

And nations into long oblivion cast;
To old Britannia's youthful days retire,
And there for true-born Englishmen inquire.
Britannia freely will disown the name,
And hardly knows herself from whence they came;
Wonders that they of all men should pretend
To birth and blood, and for a name contend.
Go back to causes where our follies dwell,
And fetch the dark original from hell.
Speak, satire, for there's none like thee can tell.

Daniel Defoe.

AN EPITAPH

INTERRED beneath this marble stone
Lie sauntering Jack and idle Joan.
While rolling threescore years and one
Did round this globe their courses run.
If human things went ill or well,
If changing empires rose or fell,
The morning past, the evening came,
And found this couple just the same.
They walked and ate, good folks. What then?
Why, then they walked and ate again;
They soundly slept the night away;
They did just nothing all the day,
Nor sister either had, nor brother;
They seemed just tallied for each other.
Their moral and economy
Most perfectly they made agree;
Each virtue kept its proper bound,
Nor trespassed on the other's ground.
Nor fame nor censure they regarded;
They neither punished nor rewarded.
He cared not what the footman did;
Her maids she neither praised nor chid;
So every servant took his course,
And, bad at first, they all grew worse;
Slothful disorder filled his stable,
And sluttish plenty decked her table.
Their beer was strong, their wine was port;
Their meal was large, their grace was short.
They gave the poor the remnant meat,
Just when it grew not fit to eat.
They paid the church and parish rate,
And took, but read not, the receipt;
For which they claimed their Sunday's due
Of slumbering in an upper pew.
No man's defects sought they to know,
So never made themselves a foe.
No man's good deeds did they commend,
So never raised themselves a friend.
Nor cherished they relations poor,
That might decrease their present store;
Nor barn nor house did they repair,
That might oblige their future heir.
They neither added nor confounded;
They neither wanted nor abounded.
Nor tear nor smile did they employ

At news of grief or public joy.
When bells were rung and bonfires made,
If asked, they ne'er denied their aid;
Their jug was to the ringers carried,
Whoever either died or married.
Their billet at the fire was found,
Whoever was deposed or crowned.
Nor good, nor bad, nor fools, nor wise;
They would not learn, nor could advise;
Without love, hatred, joy, or fear,
They led – a kind of – as it were;
Nor wished, nor cared, nor laughed, nor cried.
And so they lived, and so they died.

Matthew Prior.

THE REMEDY WORSE THAN THE DISEASE

I sent for Ratcliffe; was so ill,
That other doctors gave me over:
He felt my pulse, prescribed his pill,
And I was likely to recover.

But when the wit began to wheeze,
And wine had warm'd the politician,
Cured yesterday of my disease,
I died last night of my physician.

Matthew Prior.

TWELVE ARTICLES

I

LEST it may more quarrels breed,
I will never hear you read.

II

By disputing, I will never,
To convince you, once endeavour.

III

When a paradox you stick to,
I will never contradict you.

IV

When I talk, and you are heedless,
I will show no anger needless.

V

When your speeches are absurd,
I will ne'er object a word.

VI

When you, furious, argue wrong,
I will grieve, and hold my tongue.

VII

Not a jest or humorous story
Will I ever tell before ye.
To be chidden for explaining,
When you quite mistake the meaning.

VIII

Never more will I suppose,
You can taste my verse or prose.

IX

You no more at me shall fret,
While I teach and you forget.

X

You shall never hear me thunder,
When you blunder on, and blunder.

XI

Show your poverty of spirit,
And in dress place all your merit;
Give yourself ten thousand airs:
That with me shall break no squares.

XII

Never will I give advice,
Till you please to ask me thrice:
Which if you in scorn reject,
'Twill be just as I expect.

Thus we both shall have our ends,
And continue special friends.

Jonathan Swift.

THE FURNITURE OF A WOMAN'S MIND

A SET of phrases learned by rote;
A passion for a scarlet coat;
When at a play, to laugh or cry,
Yet cannot tell the reason why;
Never to hold her tongue a minute,
While all she prates has nothing in it;
Whole hours can with a coxcomb sit,
And take his nonsense all for wit.
Her learning mounts to read a song,
But half the words pronouncing wrong;
Has every repartee in store
She spoke ten thousand times before;
Can ready compliments supply
On all occasions, cut and dry;
Such hatred to a parson's gown,
The sight would put her in a swoon;
For conversation well endued,
She calls it witty to be rude;
And, placing raillery in railing,
Will tell aloud your greatest failing;
Nor make a scruple to expose
Your bandy leg or crooked nose;
Can at her morning tea run o'er
The scandal of the day before;
Improving hourly in her skill,
To cheat and wrangle at quadrille.
In choosing lace, a critic nice,
Knows to a groat the lowest price;
Can in her female clubs dispute
What linen best the silk will suit,
What colours each complexion match,
And where with art to place a patch.
If chance a mouse creeps in her sight,
Can finely counterfeit a fright;
So sweetly screams, if it comes near her,
She ravishes all hearts to hear her.
Can dexterously her husband tease,
By taking fits whene'er she please;
By frequent practice learns the trick
At proper seasons to be sick;
Thinks nothing gives one airs so pretty,
At once creating love and pity.
If Molly happens to be careless,
And but neglects to warm her hair-lace,
She gets a cold as sure as death,

And vows she scarce can fetch her breath;
Admires how modest woman can
Be so robustious, like a man.
In party, furious to her power,
A bitter Whig, or Tory sour,
Her arguments directly tend
Against the side she would defend;
Will prove herself a Tory plain,
From principles the Whigs maintain,
And, to defend the Whiggish cause,
Her topics from the Tories draws.

Jonathan Swift.

FROM “THE LOVE OF FAME”

BEGIN. Who first the catalogue shall grace?
To quality belongs the highest place.
My lord comes forward; forward let him come!
Ye vulgar! at your peril, give him room:
He stands for fame on his forefathers' feet,
By heraldry proved valiant or discreet.
With what a decent pride he throws his eyes
Above the man by three descents less wise!
If virtues at his noble hands you crave,
You bid him raise his fathers from the grave.
Men should press forward in fame's glorious chase;
Nobles look backward, and so lose the race.
Let high birth triumph! What can be more great?
Nothing – but merit in a low estate.
To virtue's humblest son let none prefer
Vice, though descended from the Conqueror.
Shall men, like figures, pass for high or base,
Slight or important, only by their place?
Titles are marks of honest men, and wise;
The fool or knave, that wears a title, lies.

...

On buying books Lorenzo long was bent,
But found, at length, that it reduced his rent;
His farms were flown; when, lo! a sale comes on,
A choice collection – what is to be done?
He sells his last, for he the whole will buy;
Sells even his house – nay, wants whereon to lie
So high the generous ardor of the man
For Romans, Greeks, and Orientals ran.
When terms were drawn, and brought him by the clerk,
Lorenzo signed the bargain – with his mark.
Unlearned men of books assume the care,
As eunuchs are the guardians of the fair.

...

The booby father craves a booby son,
And by Heaven's blessing thinks himself undone.

...

These subtle wights (so blind are mortal men,
Though satire couch them with her keenest pen)
Forever will hang out a solemn face,
To put off nonsense with a better grace:
As perlers with some hero's head make bold —
Illustrious mark! – where pins are to be sold.
What's the bent brow, or neck in thought reclined?
The body's wisdom to conceal the mind.
A man of sense can artifice disdain,
As men of wealth may venture to go plain;
And be this truth eternal ne'er forgot,
Solemnity's a cover for a sot.
I find the fool, when I behold the screen;
For 'tis the wise man's interest to be seen.

...

And what so foolish as the chance of fame?
How vain the prize! how impotent our aim!
For what are men who grasp at praise sublime,
But bubbles on the rapid stream of time,
That rise and fall, that swell, and are no more,
Born, and forgot, ten thousand in an hour?

...

Thus all will judge, and with one single aim,
To gain themselves, not give the writer fame.
The very best ambitiously advise,
Half to serve you, and half to pass for wise.
Critics on verse, as squibs on triumphs wait,
Proclaim the glory, and augment the state;
Hot, envious, noisy, proud, the scribbling fry
Burn, hiss, and bounce, waste paper, stink, and die.

Edward Young.

DR. DELANY'S VILLA

WOULD you that Delville I describe?
Believe me, sir, I will not gibe;
For who could be satirical
Upon a thing so very small?
You scarce upon the borders enter,
Before you're at the very centre.
A single crow can make it night,
When o'er your farm she takes her flight:
Yet, in this narrow compass, we
Observe a vast variety;
Both walks, walls, meadows, and parterres,
Windows, and doors, and rooms, and stairs,
And hills, and dales, and woods, and fields,
And hay, and grass, and corn, it yields;
All to your haggard brought so cheap in,
Without the mowing or the reaping:
A razor, tho' to say't I'm loth,
Would shave you and your meadows both.
Tho' small's the farm, yet here's a house
Full large to entertain a mouse;
But where a rat is dreaded more
Than savage Caledonian boar;
For, if it's enter'd by a rat,
There is no room to bring a cat.
A little rivulet seems to steal
Down thro' a thing you call a vale,
Like tears adown a wrinkled cheek,
Like rain along a blade of leek:
And this you call your sweet meander,
Which might be suck'd up by a gander,
Could he but force his nether bill
To scoop the channel of the rill.
For sure you'd make a mighty clutter,
Were it as big as city gutter.
Next come I to your kitchen garden,
Where one poor mouse would fare but hard in;
And round this garden is a walk,
No longer than a tailor's chalk;
Thus I compare what space is in it,
A snail creeps round it in a minute.
One lettuce makes a shift to squeeze
Up thro' a tuft you call your trees:
And, once a year, a single rose
Peeps from the bud, but never blows;
In vain then you expect its bloom!

It cannot blow for want of room.
In short, in all your boasted seat,
There's nothing but yourself that's GREAT.

Thomas Sheridan.

THE QUIDNUNCKIS

“**H**OW vain are mortal man’s endeavours?
(Said, at Dame Elleot’s, Master Travers)
Good Orleans dead! in truth ’tis hard:
Oh, may all statesmen die prepar’d!
I do foresee (and for foreseeing
He equals any man in being)
The army ne’er can be disbanded.
I with the king was safely landed.
Ah, friends, great changes threat the land!
All France and England at a stand!
There’s Meroweis – mark! strange work!
And there’s the Czar, and there’s the Turk —
The Pope – ” An Indian merchant by,
Cut short the speech with this reply:
“All at a stand? You see great changes?
Ah, sir, you never saw the Ganges.
There dwells the nation of Quidnunkis
(So Monomotapa calls monkeys);
On either bank, from bough to bough,
They meet and chat (as we may now);
Whispers go round, they grin, they shrug,
They bow, they snarl, they scratch, they hug;
And, just as chance or whim provoke them,
They either bite their friends, or stroke them.
There have I seen some active prig,
To show his parts, bestride a twig.
Lord, how the chatt’ring tribe admire!
Not that he’s wiser, but he’s higher.
All long to try the vent’rous thing
(For power is but to have one’s swing);
From side to side he springs, he spurns,
And bangs his foes and friends by turns.
Thus as in giddy freaks he bounces,
Crack goes the twig, and in he flounces!
Down the swift stream the wretch is borne,
Never, ah, never to return!
Zounds! what a fall had our dear brother!
Morbleu! cries one, and damme, t’other.
The nation gives a general screech;
None cocks his tail, none claws his breech;
Each trembles for the public weal,
And for awhile forgets to steal.
Awhile all eyes intent and steady
Pursue him whirling down the eddy:
But, out of mind when out of view,

Some other mounts the twig anew;
And business on each monkey shore
Runs the same track it ran before.”

John Gay.

THE SICK MAN AND THE ANGEL

Is there no hope? the Sick Man said.
The silent doctor shook his head,
And took his leave with signs of sorrow,
Despairing of his fee to-morrow.
When thus the Man with gasping breath:
“I feel the chilling wound of death;
Since I must bid the world adieu,
Let me my former life review.
I grant, my bargains well were made,
But all men overreach in trade;
'Tis self-defence in each profession;
Sure, self-defence is no transgression.
The little portion in my hands,
By good security on lands,
Is well increased. If unawares,
My justice to myself and heirs
Hath let my debtor rot in jail,
For want of good sufficient bail;
If I by writ, or bond, or deed,
Reduce a family to need,
My will hath made the world amends;
My hope on charity depends.
When I am numbered with the dead,
And all my pious gifts are read,
By heaven and earth 'twill then be known,
My charities were amply shown.”
An angel came. “Ah, friend,” he cried,
“No more in flattering hope confide.
Can thy good deeds in former times
Outweigh the balance of thy crimes?
What widow or what orphan prays
To crown thy life with length of days?
A pious action's in thy power;
Embrace with joy the happy hour.
Now, while you draw the vital air,
Prove your intention is sincere:
This instant give a hundred pounds;
Your neighbours want, and you abound.”
“But why such haste?” the Sick Man whines:
“Who knows as yet what Heaven designs?
Perhaps I may recover still;
That sum, and more, are in my will.”
“Fool,” says the Vision, “now 'tis plain,
Your life, your soul, your heaven was gain;
From every side, with all your might,

You scraped, and scraped beyond your right;
And after death would fain atone,
By giving what is not your own.”
“Where there is life there’s hope,” he cried;
“Then why such haste?” – so groaned, and died.

John Gay.

SANDYS' GHOST

**OR A PROPER NEW BALLAD OF THE NEW OVID'S METAMORPHOSES,
AS IT WAS INTENDED TO BE TRANSLATED BY PERSONS OF QUALITY**

YE Lords and Commons, men of wit
And pleasure about town,
Read this, ere you translate one bit
Of books of high renown.

Beware of Latin authors all!
Nor think your verses sterling,
Though with a golden pen you scrawl,
And scribble in a Berlin;

For not the desk with silver nails,
Nor bureau of expense,
Nor standish well japanned avails
To writing of good sense.

Hear how a ghost in dead of night,
With saucer eyes of fire,
In woful wise did sore affright
A wit and courtly squire.

Rare Imp of Phœbus, hopeful youth,
Like puppy tame that uses
To fetch and carry, in his mouth,
The works of all the Muses.

Ah, why did he write poetry,
That hereto was so civil,
And sell his soul for vanity,
To rhyming and the devil?

A desk he had of curious work,
With glittering studs about;
Within the same did Sandys lurk,
Though Ovid lay without.

Now, as he scratched to fetch up thought,
Forth popped the sprite so thin,
And from the key-hole bolted out,
All upright as a pin,

With whiskers, band, and pantaloon,
And ruff composed most duly.
The squire he dropped his pen full soon,
While as the light burnt blueely.
“Ho! Master Sam,” quoth Sandys’ sprite,
“Write on, nor let me scare ye;
Forsooth, if rhymes fall in not right,
To Budgell seek, or Carey.

“I hear the beat of Jacob’s drums;
Poor Ovid finds no quarter.
See first the merry P – comes
In haste, without his garter.

“Then lords and lordlings, squires and knights,
Wits, witlings, prigs, and peers;
Garth at St. James’s, and at White’s,
Beat up for volunteers.

“What Fenton will not do, nor Gay,
Nor Congreve, Rowe, nor Stanyan,
Tom Burnett or Tom D’Urfey may,
John Dunton, Steele, or anyone.

“If Justice Philips’ costive head
Some frigid rhymes disburses,
They shall like Persian tales be read,
And glad both babes and nurses.

“Let Warwick’s muse with Ashurst join,
And Ozell’s with Lord Hervey’s;
Tickell and Addison combine,
And Pope translate with Jervas.
“Lansdowne himself, that lively lord,
Who bows to every lady,
Shall join with Frowde in one accord,
And be like Tate and Brady.

“Ye ladies, too, draw forth your pen;
I pray where can the hurt lie?
Since you have brains as well as men,
As witness Lady Wortley.

“Now, Tonson, ’list thy forces all,
Review them, and tell noses;
For to poor Ovid shall befall
A strange metamorphosis;

“A metamorphosis more strange

Than all his books can vapour.”
“To what” (quoth squire) “shall Ovid change?”
Quoth Sandys, “To waste paper.”

Alexander Pope.

FROM “THE EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT”

“SHUT, shut the door, good John!” fatigued I said;
Tie up the knocker; say I’m sick, I’m dead.
The dog-star rages! nay, ’tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out;
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thickets, through my grot they glide.
By land, by water, they renew the charge;
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the church is free;
Ev’n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me;
Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,
Happy to catch me – just at dinner-time.
Is there a parson much bemus’d in beer,
A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer,
A clerk foredoom’d his father’s soul to cross,
Who pens a stanza when he should engross?
Is there, who, lock’d from ink and paper, scrawls
With desperate charcoal round his darken’d walls?
All fly to Twit’nam, and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.
Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn’d works the cause;
Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses wit, and poetry, and Pope.
Friend to my life (which did you not prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song),
What drop or nostrum can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a fool’s wrath or love?
A dire dilemma – either way I’m sped;
If foes, they write; if friends, they read me dead.
Seiz’d and ty’d down to judge, how wretched I,
Who can’t be silent, and who will not lie.
To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace;
And to be grave, exceeds all power of face.
I sit with sad civility; I read
With honest anguish, and an aching head,
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, “Keep your piece nine years.”
“Nine years!” cries he, who high in Drury Lane,
Lull’d by soft zephyrs through the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before term ends,
Oblig’d by hunger, and request of friends:
“The piece, you think, is incorrect? Why take it;

I'm all submission; what you'd have it, make it."
Three things another's modest wishes bound,
My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.
Pitholeon sends to me: "You know his grace.
I want a patron: ask him for a place."
Pitholeon libell'd me. "But here's a letter
Informs you, sir, 'twas when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? Curll invites to dine;
He'll write a journal, or he'll turn divine."
Bless me! a packet. "'Tis a stranger sues,
A virgin tragedy, an orphan muse."
If I dislike it, "Juries, death, and rage!"
If I approve, "Commend it to the stage."
There (thank my stars!), my whole commission ends;
The players and I are luckily no friends.
Fir'd that the house reject him, "'Sdeath! I'll print it,
And shame the fools. Your interest, sir, with Lintot."
"Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much."
"Not, sir, if you revise it, and retouch."
All my demurs but double his attacks;
At last he whispers, "Do, and we go snacks."
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door:
"Sir, let me see your works and you no more!"

Alexander Pope.

THE THREE BLACK CROWS

Two honest tradesmen meeting in the Strand,
One took the other briskly by the hand;
“Hark-ye,” said he, “’tis an odd story, this,
About the crows!” “I don’t know what it is,”
Replied his friend. “No! I’m surprised at that;
Where I came from it is the common chat;
But you shall hear – an odd affair indeed!
And that it happened, they are all agreed.
Not to detain you from a thing so strange,
A gentleman, that lives not far from ’Change,
This week, in short, as all the alley knows,
Taking a puke, has thrown up three black crows.”
“Impossible!” “Nay, but it’s really true;
I have it from good hands, and so may you.”
“From whose, I pray?” So, having named the man,
Straight to inquire his curious comrade ran.
“Sir, did you tell” – relating the affair.
“Yes, sir, I did; and, if it’s worth your care,
Ask Mr. Such-a-one, he told it me.
But, by the bye, ’twas two black crows – not three.”
Resolved to trace so wondrous an event,
Whip, to the third, the virtuoso went;
“Sir” – and so forth. “Why, yes; the thing is fact,
Though, in regard to number, not exact;
It was not two black crows – ’twas only one;
The truth of that you may depend upon;
The gentleman himself told me the case.”
“Where may I find him?” “Why, in such a place.”
Away goes he, and, having found him out,
“Sir, be so good as to resolve a doubt.”
Then to his last informant he referred,
And begged to know if true what he had heard.
“Did you, sir, throw up a black crow?” “Not I.”
“Bless me! how people propagate a lie!
Black crows have been thrown up, three, two, and one;
And here, I find, all comes, at last, to none.
Did you say nothing of a crow at all?”
“Crow – crow – perhaps I might, now I recall
The matter over.” “And pray, sir, what was’t?”
“Why, I was horrid sick, and, at the last,
I did throw up, and told my neighbor so,
Something that was – as black, sir, as a crow.”

John Byrom.

AN EPITAPH

A lovely young lady I mourn in my rhymes;
She was pleasant, good-natured, and civil (sometimes);
Her figure was good; she had very fine eyes,
And her talk was a mixture of foolish and wise.
Her adorers were many, and one of them said
“She waltzed rather well – it’s a pity she’s dead.”

George John Cayley.

AN EPISTLE TO SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

WHILE at the helm of State you ride,
Our nation's envy, and its pride;
While foreign courts with wonder gaze,
And curse those counsels that they praise;
Would you not wonder, sir, to view
Your bard a greater man than you?
Which that he is, you cannot doubt,
When you have read the sequel out.

You know, great sir, that ancient fellows,
Philosophers, and such folks, tell us,
No great analogy between
Greatness and happiness is seen.
If, then, as it might follow straight,
Wretched to be, is to be great,
Forbid it, gods, that you should try
What 'tis to be so great as I!

The family that dines the latest
Is in our street esteem'd the greatest;
But latest hours must surely fall
'Fore him who never dines at all.
Your taste in architect, you know,
Hath been admired by friend and foe;
But can your earthly domes compare
With all my castles – in the air?
We're often taught, it doth behove us
To think those greater who're above us;
Another instance of my glory,
Who live above you, twice two story,
And from my garret can look down
On the whole street of Arlington.

Greatness by poets still is painted
With many followers acquainted;
This, too, doth in my favour speak;
Your levée is but twice a week;
From mine I can exclude but one day —
My door is quiet on a Sunday.

Nor in the manner of attendance
Doth your great bard claim less ascendance;
Familiar, you to admiration
May be approached by all the nation;
While I, like the Mogul in Indo,

Am never seen but at my window.
If with my greatness you're offended,
The fault is easily amended;
For I'll come down, with wondrous ease,
Into whatever *place* you please.
I'm not ambitious; little matters
Will serve us, great but humble creatures.

Suppose a secretary o' this isle,
Just to be doing with a while;
Admiral, general, judge, or bishop —
Or I can foreign treaties dish up.
If the good genius of the nation
Should call me to negotiation,
Tuscan and French are in my head;
Latin I write, and Greek – I read.
If you should ask, What pleases best?
To get the most, and do the least.
What fittest for? You know, I'm sure:
I'm fittest for – a sinecure.

Henry Fielding.

THE PUBLIC BREAKFAST

NOW my lord had the honour of coming down
post,
To pay his respects to so famous a toast,
In hopes he her ladyship's favour might win,
By playing the part of a host at an inn.
I'm sure he's a person of great resolution,
Though delicate nerves and a weak constitution;
For he carried us all to a place 'cross the river,
And vowed that the rooms were too hot for his liver.
He said it would greatly our pleasure promote,
If we all for Spring Gardens set out in a boat.
I never as yet could his reason explain,
Why we all sallied forth in the wind and the rain;
For sure such confusion was never yet known;
Here a cap and a hat, there a cardinal blown;
While his lordship, embroidered and powdered all o'er,
Was bowing, and handing the ladies ashore.
How the Misses did huddle, and scuddle, and run!
One would think to be wet must be very good fun;
For by wagging their tails, they all seemed to take pains
To moisten their pinions like ducks when it rains.
And 'twas pretty to see how, like birds of a feather,
The people of quality flocked all together;
All pressing, addressing, caressing, and fond,
Just the same as these animals are in a pond.
You've read all their names in the news, I suppose,
But, for fear you have not, take the list as it goes:
There was Lady Greasewrister,
And Madam Van-Twister,
Her ladyship's sister;
Lord Cram, and Lord Vulter,
Sir Brandish O'Culter,
With Marshal Carouzer,
And old Lady Mouzer,
And the great Hanoverian Baron Panzmowzer;
Besides many others, who all in the rain went,
On purpose to honour this great entertainment.
The company made a most brilliant appearance,
And ate bread and butter with great perseverance;
All the chocolate, too, that my lord set before 'em,
The ladies despatched with the utmost decorum.
Soft musical numbers were heard all around,
The horns and the clarions echoing sound.
Sweet were the strains, as odourous gales that blow
O'er fragrant banks, where pinks and roses grow.

The peer was quite ravish, while close to his side
Sat Lady Bunbutter, in beautiful pride.
Oft turning his eyes, he with rapture surveyed
All the powerful charms she so nobly displayed;
As when at the feast of the great Alexander,
Timotheus, the musical son of Thersander,
Breathed heavenly measures.
The prince was in pain,
And could not contain,
While Thais was sitting beside him;
But, before all his peers,
Was for shaking the spheres,
Such goods the kind gods did provide him.
Grew bolder and bolder,
And cocked up his shoulder,
Like the son of great Jupiter Ammon,
Till at length, quite opprest,
He sunk on her breast,
And lay there, as dead as a salmon.

Oh, had I a voice that was stronger than steel,
With twice fifty tongues to express what I feel,
And as many good mouths, yet I never could utter
All the speeches my lord made to Lady Bunbutter!
So polite all the time, that he ne'er touched a bit,
While she ate up his rolls and applauded his wit;
For they tell me that men of true taste, when they treat,
Should talk a great deal, but they never should eat;
And if that be the fashion, I never will give
Any grand entertainment as long as I live;
For I'm of opinion, 'tis proper to cheer
The stomach and bowels as well as the ear.
Nor me did the charming concerto of Abel
Regale like the breakfast I saw on the table;
I freely will own I the muffins preferred
To all the genteel conversation I heard.
E'en though I'd the honour of sitting between
My Lady Stuff-damask and Peggy Moreen,
Who both flew to Bath in the nightly machine.
Cries Peggy: "This place is enchantingly pretty;
We never can see such a thing in the city.
You may spend all your lifetime in Cateaton Street,
And never so civil a gentleman meet;
You may talk what you please, you may search London through,
You may go to Carlisle's, and to Almack's, too,
And I'll give you my head if you find such a host,
For coffee, tea, chocolate, butter, and toast.
How he welcomes at once all the world and his wife,
And how civil to folks he ne'er saw in his life!"

“These horns,” cries my lady, “so tickle one’s ear,
Lord! what would I give that Sir Simon was here!
To the next public breakfast Sir Simon shall go,
For I find here are folks one may venture to know.
Sir Simon would gladly his lordship attend,
And my lord would be pleased with so cheerful a friend.”
So, when we had wasted more bread at a breakfast
Than the poor of our parish have ate for this week past,
I saw, all at once, a prodigious great throng
Come bustling, and rustling, and jostling along;
For his lordship was pleased that the company now
To my Lady Bunbutter should courtesy and bow;
And my lady was pleased, too, and seemed vastly proud
At once to receive all the thanks of a crowd.
And when, like Chaldeans, we all had adored
This beautiful image set up by my lord,
Some few insignificant folk went away,
Just to follow the employments and calls of the day;
But those who knew better their time how to spend,
The fiddling and dancing all chose to attend.
Miss Clunch and Sir Toby performed a cotillion,
Just the same as our Susan and Bob the postilion;
All the while her mamma was expressing her joy
That her daughter the morning so well could employ.
Now, why should the Muse, my dear mother, relate
The misfortunes that fall to the lot of the great?
As homeward we came, ’tis with sorrow you’ll hear
What a dreadful disaster attended the peer;
For whether some envious god had decreed
That a naiad should long to ennoble the breed,
Or whether his lordship was charmed to behold
His face in the stream, like Narcissus of old,
In handing old Lady B – and daughter,
This obsequious lord tumbled into the water;
But a nymph of the flood brought him safe to the boat,
And I left all the ladies a-cleaning his coat.

Christopher Anstey.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

GOOD people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song;
And if you find it wondrous short
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man
Of whom the world might say
That still a godly race he ran
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad,
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends,
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain his private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied:
The man recover'd of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

Oliver Goldsmith.

ON SMOLLETT

WHENCE could arise this mighty critic spleen,
The muse a trifler, and her theme so mean?
What had I done that angry Heaven should send
The bitterest foe where most I wished a friend?
Oft hath my tongue been wanton at thy name,
And hailed the honours of thy matchless fame.
For me let hoary Fielding bite the ground,
So nobler Pickle stand superbly bound;
From Livy's temples tear the historic crown,
Which with more justice blooms upon thine own.
Compared with thee, be all life-writers dumb,
But he who wrote the life of Tommy Thumb.
Who ever read "The Regicide" but swore
The author wrote as man ne'er wrote before?
Others for plots and under-plots may call;
Here's the right method – have no plot at all!

Charles Churchill.

THE UNCERTAIN MAN

DUBIUS is such a scrupulous good man —
Yes, you may catch him tripping, if you can.
He would not with a peremptory tone
Assert the nose upon his face his own;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes – presumes – it may be so.
His evidence, if he were called by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just belief,
Would hang an honest man and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense;
Knows what he knows as if he knew it not;
What he remembers, seems to have forgot;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centring at last in having none at all.

William Cowper.

A FAITHFUL PICTURE OF ORDINARY SOCIETY

THE circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate.
“Yes, ma’am” and “No, ma’am” uttered softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go.
Each individual, suffering a constraint —
Poetry may, but colours cannot, paint —
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry,
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are
Of coughs and rheums, and phthisic and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Filled up at last with interesting news:
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed;
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed,
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if ’twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years’ transportation, home
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to naught,
Expression, and the privilege of thought.

William Cowper.

ON JOHNSON

I OWN I like not Johnson's turgid style,
That gives an inch th' importance of a mile;
Casts of manure a wagon-load around,
To raise a simple daisy from the ground;
Uplifts the club of Hercules – for what?
To crush a butterfly or brain a gnat;
Creates a whirlwind from the earth, to draw
A goose's feather or exalt a straw;
Sets wheels on wheels in motion – such a clatter —
To force up one poor nipperkin of water;
Bids ocean labour with tremendous roar
To heave a cockle-shell upon the shore;
Alike in every theme his pompous art,
Heaven's awful thunder or a rumbling cart!

John Wolcott (Peter Pindar).

TO BOSWELL

O Boswell, Bozzy, Bruce, what're thy name,
Thou mighty shark for anecdote and fame,
Thou jackal, leading lion Johnson forth
To eat Macpherson midst his native north,
To frighten grave professors with his roar,
And shake the Hebrides from shore to shore,
All hail!
Triumphant thou through time's vast gulf shalt sail,
The pilot of our literary whale;
Close to the classic Rambler shalt thou cling,
Close as a supple courtier to a king;
Fate shall not shake thee off with all its power,
Stuck like a bat to some old ivied tower.
Nay, though thy Johnson ne'er had blessed thy eyes,
Paoli's deeds had raised thee to the skies:
Yes, his broad wing had raised thee (no bad hack),
A tomtit twittering on an eagle's back.

John Wolcott (Peter Pindar).

THE HEN

WAS once a hen of wit not small
(In fact, 'twas not amazing),
And apt at laying eggs withal,
Who, when she'd done, would scream and bawl,
As if the house were blazing.
A turkey-cock, of age mature,
Felt thereat indignation;
'Twas quite improper, he was sure —
He would no more the thing endure;
So, after cogitation,
He to the lady straight repaired,
And thus his business he declared:
“Madam, pray, what's the matter,
That always, when you've laid an egg,
You make so great a clatter?
I wish you'd do the thing in quiet.
Do be advised by me, and try it.”
“Advised by you!” the lady cried,
And tossed her head with proper pride;
“And what do you know, now I pray,
Of the fashion of the present day,
You creature ignorant and low?
However, if you want to know,
This is the reason why I do it:
I lay my egg, and then review it!”

Matthew Claudius.

LET US ALL BE UNHAPPY TOGETHER

WE bipeds, made up of frail clay,
Alas! are the children of sorrow;
And, though brisk and merry to-day,
We may all be unhappy to-morrow.
For sunshine's succeeded by rain;
Then, fearful of life's stormy weather,
Lest pleasure should only bring pain,
Let us all be unhappy together.

I grant the best blessing we know
Is a friend, for true friendship's a treasure;
And yet, lest your friend prove a foe,
Oh, taste not the dangerous pleasure.
Thus, friendship's a flimsy affair;
Thus, riches and health are a bubble;
Thus, there's nothing delightful but care,
Nor anything pleasing but trouble.

If a mortal could point out that life
Which on earth could be nearest to heaven,
Let him, thanking his stars, choose a wife
To whom truth and honour are given.
But honour and truth are so rare,
And horns, when they're cutting, so tingle,
That, with all my respect to the fair,
I'd advise him to sigh, and live single.

It appears from these premises plain,
That wisdom is nothing but folly;
That pleasure's a term that means pain,
And that joy is your true melancholy;
That all those who laugh ought to cry;
That 'tis fine frisk and fun to be grieving;
And that, since we must all of us die,
We should taste no enjoyment while living.

Charles Dibdin.

THE FRIAR OF ORDERS GRAY

I AM a friar of orders gray,
And down in the valleys I take my way;
I pull not blackberry, haw, or hip;
Good store of venison fills my scrip;
My long bead-roll I merrily chant;
Where'er I walk no money I want;
And why I'm so plump the reason I tell:
Who leads a good life is sure to live well.
What baron or squire,
Or knight of the shire,
Lives half so well as a holy friar?

After supper, of heaven I dream,
But that is a pullet and clouted cream;
Myself by denial I mortify —
With a dainty bit of a warden-pie;
I'm clothed in sackcloth for my sin —
With old sack wine I'm lined within;
A chirping cup is my matin song,
And the vesper's bell is my bowl, ding-dong.
What baron or squire,
Or knight of the shire,
Lives half so well as a holy friar?

John O'Keefe.

THE COUNTRY SQUIRE

A COUNTRY squire, of greater wealth than wit
(For fools are often bless'd with fortune's smile),
Had built a splendid house, and furnish'd it
In splendid style.

“One thing is wanted,” said a friend; “for, though
The rooms are fine, the furniture profuse,
You lack a library, dear sir, for show,
If not for use.”

“Tis true; but, zounds!” replied the squire with glee,
“The lumber-room in yonder northern wing
(I wonder I ne’er thought of it) will be
The very thing.

“I’ll have it fitted up without delay
With shelves and presses of the newest mode.
And rarest wood, befitting every way
A squire’s abode.

“And when the whole is ready, I’ll despatch
My coachman – a most knowing fellow – down,
To buy me, by admeasurement, a batch
Of books in town.”

But ere the library was half supplied
With all its pomp of cabinet and shelf,
The booby squire repented him, and cried
Unto himself:

“This room is much more roomy than I thought;
Ten thousand volumes hardly would suffice
To fill it, and would cost, however bought,
A plaguy price.

“Now, as I only want them for their looks,
It might, on second thoughts, be just as good,
And cost me next to nothing, if the books
Were made of wood.

“It shall be so. I’ll give the shaven deal
A coat of paint – a colourable dress,
To look like calf or vellum, and conceal
Its nakedness.

And gilt and letter'd with the author's name,
Whatever is most excellent and rare
Shall be, or seem to be ('tis all the same),
Assembled there."

The work was done; the simulated hoards
Of wit and wisdom round the chamber stood.
In bindings some; and some, of course, in boards,
Were all of wood.

From bulky folios down to slender twelves,
The choicest tomes in many an even row,
Display'd their letter'd backs upon the shelves,
A goodly show.

With such a stock, which seemingly surpass'd
The best collection ever form'd in Spain,
What wonder if the owner grew at last
Supremely vain?

What wonder, as he paced from shelf to shelf,
And conn'd their titles, that the Squire began,
Despite his ignorance, to think himself
A learned man?

Let every amateur, who merely looks
To backs and bindings, take the hint, and sell
His costly library; for painted books
Would serve as well.

Tomas Yriarte.

THE EGGS

BEYOND the sunny Philippines
An island lies, whose name I do not know;
But that's of little consequence, if so
You understand that there they had no hens,
Till, by a happy chance, a traveller,
After a while, carried some poultry there.
Fast they increased as anyone could wish,
Until fresh eggs became the common dish.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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