

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Countess Winchilsea Anne  
Finch  
- poems -**

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## A Description of One of the Pieces of Tapistry at Long-Leat

THUS Tapistry of old, the Walls adorn'd,  
Ere noblest Dames the artful Shuttle scorn'd:  
Arachne, then, with Pallas did contest,  
And scarce th' Immortal Work was judg'd the Best.  
Nor valorous Actions, then, in Books were fought;  
But all the Fame, that from the Field was brought,  
Employ'd the Loom, where the kind Consort wrought:  
Whilst sharing in the Toil, she shar'd the Fame,  
And with the Heroes mixt her interwoven Name.  
No longer, Females to such Praise aspire,  
And seldom now We rightly do admire.

So much, All Arts are by the Men engross'd,  
And Our few Talents unimprov'd or cross'd;  
Even I, who on this Subject wou'd compose,  
Which the fam'd Urbin for his Pencil chose,  
(And here, in tinctur'd Wool we now behold  
Correctly follow'd in each Shade, and Fold)  
Shou'd prudently from the Attempt withdraw,  
But Inclination proves the stronger Law:  
And tho' the Censures of the World pursue  
These hardy Flights, whilst his Designs I view;  
My burden'd Thoughts, which labour for a Vent,  
Urge me t'explain in Verse, what by each Face is meant.

Of SERGIUS first, upon his lofty Seat,  
With due Regard our Observations treat;  
Who, whilst he thence on ELYMAS looks down,  
Contracts his pensive Brow into a Frown,  
With Looks inquistive he seeks the Cause  
Why Nature acts not still by Natures Laws.  
'Twas but a Moment, since the Sorcerer's Sight  
Receiv'd the Day, and blaz'd infernal Light:  
Untouch'd, the Optiques in a Moment fail'd,  
Their fierce Illumination quench'd, or veil'd;  
Throughout th' Extention of his ample Sway,  
No Fact, like this, the Roman cou'd survey,  
Who, with spread Hands, invites Mankind to gaze,  
And sympathize in the profound Amaze.  
To share his Wonder every one combines,  
By diff'rent Aspects shewn, and diff'rent Signs.  
A comely Figure, near the Consul plac'd,  
With serious Mildness and Instruction grac'd,  
To Others seems imparting what he saw,  
And shews the Wretch with reverential Awe:  
Whilst a more eager Person next we find,  
Viewing the Wizard with a Skeptic's Mind;  
Who his fixt Eyes so near him do's apply,  
We think, enliv'ning Beams might from them fly,  
To re-inkindle, by so just an Aim,  
The radial Sparks, but lately check'd and tame,

As Tapers new put-out will catch approaching Flame.  
But dire Surprize th' Enquiry do's succeed,  
Whilst full Conviction in his Face we read,  
And He, who question'd, now deplores the Deed.

To sacred PAUL a younger Figure guides,  
With seeming Warmth, which still in Youth presides;  
And pointing forward, Elder Men directs,  
In Him, to note the Cause of these Effects;  
Upon whose Brow do's evidently shine  
Deputed Pow'r, t' inflict the Wrath Divine;  
Whilst sad and solemn, suited to their Years,  
Each venerable Countenance appears,  
Where, yet we see Astonishment reveal'd,  
Tho' by the Aged often 'tis conceal'd;  
Who the Emotions of their Souls disguise,  
Lest by admiring they shou'd seem less Wise.

But to thy Portrait, ELYMAS, we come  
Whose Blindness almost strikes the Poet dumb;  
And whilst She vainly to Describe thee seeks,  
The Pen but traces, where the Pencil speaks.  
Of Darkness to be felt, our Scriptures write,  
Thou Darken'd seem'st, as thou would'st feel the Light;  
And with projected Limbs, betray'st a Dread,  
Of unseen Mischiefs, levell'd at thy Head.  
Thro' all thy Frame such Stupefaction reigns,  
As Night it self were sunk into thy Veins:  
Nor by the Eyes alone thy Loss we find,  
Each Lineament helps to proclaim thee Blind.  
An artful Dimness far diffus'd we grant,  
And failing seem all Parts through One important Want.

Oh! Mighty RAPHAEL, justly sure renown'd!  
Since in thy Works such Excellence is found;  
No Wonder, if with Nature Thou'rt at strife,  
Who thus can paint the Negatives of Life;  
And Deprivation more expressive make,  
Than the most perfect Draughts, which Others take.  
Whilst to this Chiefest Figure of the Piece,  
All that surround it, Heightnings do encrease:  
In some, Amazement by Extrems is shewn,  
Who viewing his clos'd Lids, extend their Own.  
Nor can, by that, enough their Thoughts express,  
Which op'ning Months seem ready to confess.

Thus stand the LICTORS gazing on a Deed,  
Which do's all humane Chastisements exceed;  
Enfeeb'l'd seem their Instruments of smart,

When keener Words can swifter Ills impart.

Thou, BARNABAS, though Last, not least our Care,  
Seem'st equally employ'd in Praise, and Prayer,  
Acknowledging th' Omnipotent Decree,  
Yet soft Compassion in thy Face we see;  
Whilst lifted Hands implore a kind Relief,  
Tho' no Impatience animates thy Grief;  
But mild Suspence and Charity benign,  
Do all th' excesses of thy Looks confine.

Thus far, our slow Imagination goes:  
Wou'd the more skill'd THEANOR his disclose;  
Expand the Scene, and open to our Sight  
What to his nicer Judgement gives Delight;  
Whose soaring Mind do's to Perfections climb,  
Nor owns a Relish, but for Things sublime:  
Then, wou'd the Piece fresh Beauties still present,  
Nor Length of Time wou'd leave the Eye content:  
As moments, Hours; as Hours the Days wou'd seem,  
Observing here, taught to observe by HIM.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## All Is Vanity

### I

How vain is Life! which rightly we compare  
To flying Posts, that haste away;  
To Plants, that fade with the declining Day;  
To Clouds, that sail amidst the yielding Air;  
Till by Extention into that they flow,  
Or, scatt'ring on the World below,  
Are lost and gone, ere we can say they were;  
To Autumn-leaves, which every Wind can chase;  
To rising Bubbles, on the Waters Face;  
To fleeting Dreams, that will not stay,  
Nor in th' abused Fancy dance,  
When the returning Rays of Light,  
Resuming their alternate Right,  
Break on th' ill-order'd Scene on the fantastick Trance:  
As weak is Man, whilst Tenant to the Earth;  
As frail and as uncertain all his Ways,  
From the first moment of his weeping Birth,  
Down to the last and best of his few restless Days;  
When to the Land of Darkness he retires  
From disappointed Hopes, and frustrated Desires;  
Reaping no other Fruit of all his Pain  
Bestow'd whilst in the vale of Tears below,  
But this unhappy Truth, at last to know,  
That Vanity's our Lot, and all Mankind is Vain.

### II

If past the hazard of his tendrest Years,  
Neither in thoughtless Sleep opprest,  
Nor poison'd with a tainted Breast,  
Loos'd from the infant Bands and female Cares,  
A studious Boy, advanc'd beyond his Age,  
Wastes the dim Lamp, and turns the restless Page;  
For some lov'd Book prevents the rising Day,  
And on it, stoln aside, bestows the Hours of Play;  
Him the observing Master do's design  
For search of darkned Truths and Mysteries Divine;  
Bids him with unremitted Labour trace  
The Rise of Empires, and their various Fates,  
The several Tyrants o'er the several States,  
To Babel's lofty Towers, and warlike Nimrod's Race;  
Bids him in Paradise the Bank survey,  
Where Man, new-moulded from the temper'd Clay,  
(Till fir'd with Breath Divine) a helpless Figure lay:  
Could he be led thus far---What were the Boast,  
What the Reward of all the Toil it cost,  
What from that Land of ever-blooming Spring,  
For our Instruction could he bring,  
Unless, that having Humane Nature found  
Unseparated from its Parent Ground,

(Howe'er we vaunt our Elevated Birth)  
 The Epicure in soft Array,  
 The lothsome Beggar, that before  
 His rude unhospitable Door,  
 Unpity'd but by Brutes, a broken Carcass lay,  
 Were both alike deriv'd from the same common Earth?  
 But ere the Child can to these Heights attain,  
 Ere he can in the Learned Sphere arise;  
 A guilding Star, attracting to the Skies,  
 A fever, seizing the o'er labour'd Brain,  
 Sends him, perhaps, to Death's concealing Shade;  
 Where, in the Marble Tomb now silent laid,  
 He better do's that useful Doctrine show,  
 (Which all the sad Assistants ought to know,  
 Who round the Grave his short continuance mourn)  
 That first from Dust we came, and must to Dust return.

### III

A bolder Youth, grown capable of Arms,  
 Bellona courts with her prevailing Charms;  
 Bids th' enchanting Trumpet sound,  
 Loud as Triumph, soft as Love,  
 Striking now the Poles above,  
 Then descending from the Skies,  
 Soften every falling Note;  
 As the harmonious Lark that sings and flies,  
 When near the Earth, contracts her narrow Throat,  
 And warbles on the Ground:  
 Shews the proud Steed, impatient of the Check,  
 'Gainst the loudest Terrors Proof,  
 Pawing the Valley with his steeled Hoof,  
 With Lightning arm'd his Eyes, with Thunder cloth'd his Neck;  
 Who on the th' advanced Foe, (the Signal giv'n)  
 Flies, like a rushing Storm by mighty Whirlwinds driv'n;  
 Lays open the Records of Fame,  
 No glorious Deed omits, no Man of mighty Name;  
 Their Stratagems, their Tempers she'll repeat,  
 From Alexander's, (truly stil'd the GREAT)  
 From Cæsar's on the World's Imperial Seat,  
 To Turenne's Conduct, and to Conde's Heat.  
 'Tis done! and now th' ambitious Youth disdains  
 The safe, but harder Labours of the Gown,  
 The softer pleasures of the Courtly Town,  
 The once lov'd rural Sports, and Chaces on the Plains;  
 Does with the Soldier's Life the Garb assume,  
 The gold Embroid'ries, and the graceful Plume;  
 Walks haughty in a Coat of Scarlet Die,  
 A Colour well contriv'd to cheat the Eye,  
 Where richer Blood, alas! may undistinguisht lye.  
 And oh! too near that wretched Fate attends;  
 Hear it ye Parents, all ye weeping Friends!

Thou fonder Maid! won by these gaudy Charms,  
 (The destin'd Prize of his Victorious Arms)  
 Now fainting Dye upon the mournful Sound,  
 That speaks his hasty Death, and paints the fatal Wound!  
 Trail all your Pikes, dispirit every Drum,  
 March in a slow Procession from afar,  
 Ye silent, ye dejected Men of War!  
 Be still the Hautboys, and the Flute be dumb!  
 Display no more, in vain, the lofty Banner;  
 For see! where on the Bier before ye lies  
 The pale, the fall'n, th' untimely Sacrifice  
 To your mistaken Shrine, to your false Idol Honour!

#### IV

As Vain is Beauty, and as short her Power;  
 Tho' in its proud, and transitory Sway,  
 The coldest Hearts and wisest Heads obey  
 That gay fantastick Tyrant of an Hour.  
 On Beauty's Charms, (altho' a Father's Right,  
 Tho' grave Seleucus! to thy Royal Side  
 By holy Vows fair Stratonice be ty'd)  
 With anxious Joy, with dangerous Delight,  
 Too often gazes thy unwary Son,  
 Till past all Hopes, expiring and undone,  
 A speaking Pulse the secret Cause impart;  
 The only time, when the Physician's Art  
 Could ease that lab'ring Grief, or heal a Lover's Smart.  
 See Great Antonius now impatient stand,  
 Expecting, with mistaken Pride,  
 On Cydnus crowded Shore, on Cydnus fatal Strand,  
 A Queen, at his Tribunal to be try'd,  
 A Queen that arm'd in Beauty, shall deride  
 His feeble Rage, and his whole Fate command:  
 O'er the still Waves her burnisht Galley moves,  
 Row'd by the Graces, whilst officious Loves  
 To silken Cords their busie Hands apply,  
 Or gathering all the gentle Gales that fly,  
 To their fair Mistress with these Spoils repair,  
 And from their purple Wings disperse the balmy Air.  
 Hov'ring Perfumes ascend in od'rous Clouds,  
 Curl o'er the Barque, and play among the Shrouds;  
 Whilst gently dashing every Silver Oar,  
 Guided by the Rules of Art,  
 With tuneful Instruments design'd  
 To soften, and subdue the stubborn Mind,  
 A strangely pleasing and harmonious Part  
 In equal Measures bore.  
 Like a new Venus on her native Sea,  
 In midst of the transporting Scene,  
 (Which Pen or Pencil imitates in vain)  
 On a resplendent and conspicuous Bed,

With all the Pride of Persia loosely spread,  
 The lovely Syrene lay.  
 Which but discern'd from the yet distant Shore,  
 Th' amazed Emperor could hate no more;  
 No more a baffled Vengeance could pursue;  
 But yielding still, still as she nearer drew,  
 When Cleopatra anchor'd in the Bay,  
 Where every Charm cou'd all its Force display,  
 Like his own Statue stood, and gaz'd the World away.  
 Where ends alas! this Pageantry and State;  
 Where end the Triumphs of this conqu'ring Face,  
 Envy'd of Roman Wives, and all the Female Race?  
 Oh swift Vicissitude of Beauty's Fate!  
 Now in her Tomb withdrawn from publick Sight,  
 From near Captivity and Shame,  
 The vanquish'd, the abandon'd Dame  
 Proffers the Arm, that held another's Right,  
 To the destructive Snake's more just Embrace,  
 And courts deforming Death, to mend his Leaden Pace.

V

But Wit shall last (the vaunting Poet cries)  
 Th' immortal Streams that from Parnassus flow,  
 Shall make his never-fading Lawrels grow,  
 Above this mouldring Earth to flourish in the Skies:  
 "And when his Body falls in Funeral Fire,  
 When late revolving Ages shall consume  
 The very Pillars, that support his Tomb,  
 "His name shall live, and his best Part aspire.  
 Deluded Wretch! grasping at future Praise,  
 Now planting, with mistaken Care,  
 Round thy enchanted Palace in the Air,  
 A Grove, which in thy Fancy time shall raise,  
 A Grove of soaring Palms, and everlasting Bays;  
 Could'st Thou alas! to such Reknown arrive,  
 As thy Imagination wou'd contrive;  
 Should numerous Cities, in a vain contest,  
 Struggle for thy famous Birth;  
 Should the sole Monarch of the conquer'd Earth,  
 His wreathed Head upon thy Volume rest;  
 Like Maro, could'st thou justly claim,  
 Amongst th' inspired tuneful Race,  
 The highest Room, the undisputed Place;  
 And after near Two Thousand Years of Fame,  
 Have thy proud Work to a new People shown;  
 Th' unequal'd Poems made their own,  
 In such a Dress, in such a perfect Stile  
 As on his Labours Dryden now bestows,  
 As now from Dryden's just Improvement flows,  
 In every polish'd Verse throughout the British Isle;  
 What Benefit alas! would to thee grow?

What Sense of Pleasure wou'dst thou know?  
What swelling Joy? what Pride? what Glory have,  
When in the Darkness of the abject Grave,  
Insensible, and Stupid laid below,  
No Atom of thy Heap, no Dust wou'd move,  
For all the airy Breath that form'd thy Praise above?

## VI

True, says the Man to Luxury inclin'd;  
Without the Study of uncertain Art,  
Without much Labour of the Mind,  
Meer uninstructed Nature will impart,  
That Life too swiftly flies, and leaves all good behind.  
Sieze then, my Friends, (he cries) the present Hour;  
The Pleasure which to that belongs,  
The Feasts, th' o'erflowing Bowls, the Mirth, the Songs,  
The Orange-Bloom, that with such Sweetness blows,  
Anacreon's celebrated Rose,  
The Hyacinth, with every beauteous Flower,  
Which just this happy Moment shall disclose,  
Are out of Fortune's reach, and all within our Power.  
Such costly Garments let our Slaves prepare,  
As for the gay Demetrius were design'd;  
Where a new Sun of radiant Diamonds shin'd,  
Where the enamel'd Earth, and scarce-discerned Air,  
With a transparent Sea were seen,  
A Sea composed of the Em'rald's Green,  
And with a golden Shore encompass'd round;  
Where every Orient Shell, of wondrous shape was found.  
The whole Creation on his Shoulders hung,  
The whole Creation with his Wish comply'd,  
Did swiftly, for each Appetite provide,  
And fed them all when Young.  
No less, th' Assyrian Prince enjoy'd,  
Of Bliss too soon depriv'd, but never cloy'd,  
Whose Counsel let us still pursue,  
Whose Monument, did this Inscription shew  
To every Passenger, that trod the way,  
Where, with a slighting Hand, and scornful Smile  
The proud Effigies, on th' instructive Pile,  
A great Example lay.  
I, here Entomb'd, did mighty Kingdoms sway,  
Two Cities rais'd in one prodigious Day:  
Thou wand'ring Traveller, no longer gaze,  
No longer dwell upon this useless Place;  
Go Feed, and Drink, in Sports consume thy Life;  
For All that else we gain's not worth a Moment's Strife.  
Thus! talks the Fool, whom no Restraint can bound,  
When now the Glass has gone a frequent round;  
When soaring Fancy lightly swims,  
Fancy, that keeps above, and dances o'er the Brims;

Whilst weighty Reason sinks, and in the bottom's drown'd;  
Adds to his Own, an artificial Fire,  
    Doubling ev'ry hot Desire,  
Till th' auxiliary Spirits, in a Flame,  
The Stomach's Magazine defy,  
That standing Pool, that helpless Moisture nigh,  
Thro' every Vital part impetuous fly,  
    And quite consume the Frame;  
When to the Under-world despis'd he goes,  
A pamper'd Carcase on the Worms bestows,  
Who rioting on the unusual Chear,  
As good a Life enjoy, as he could boast of here.

## VII

But hold my Muse! thy farther Flight restrain,  
    Exhaust not thy declining Force,  
Nor in a long, pursu'd, and breathless Course,  
    Attempt, with slacken'd speed, to run  
Through ev'ry Vanity beneath the Sun,  
Lest thy o'erweary'd Reader, should complain,  
    That of all Vanities beside,  
Which thine, or his Experience e'er have try'd,  
Thou art, too tedious Muse, most frivolous and vain;  
Yet, tell the Man, of an aspiring Thought,  
    Of an ambitious, restless Mind,  
That can no Ease, no Satisfaction find,  
Till neighb'ring States are to Subjection brought,  
Till Universal Awe, enslav'd Mankind is taught;  
That, should he lead an Army to the Field,  
    For whose still necessary Use,  
Th' extended Earth cou'd not enough produce,  
Nor Rivers to their Thirst a full Contentment yield;  
Yet, must their dark Reverse of Fate  
Roll round, within that Course of Years,  
Within the short, the swift, and fleeting Date  
Prescrib'd by Xerxes, when his falling Tears  
Bewail'd those Numbers, which his Sword employ'd,  
And false, Hyena-like, lamented and destroy'd.  
Tell Him, that does some stately Building raise,  
    A Windsor or Versailles erect,  
And thorough all Posterity expect,  
With its unshaken Base, a firm unshaken Praise;  
Tell Him, Judea's Temple is no more,  
Upon whose Splendour, Thousands heretofore  
Spent the astonish'd Hours, forgetful to Adore:  
Tell him, into the Earth agen is hurl'd,  
That most stupendious Wonder of the World,  
Justly presiding o'er the boasted Seven,  
By humane Art and Industry design'd,  
This! the rich Draught of the Immortal Mind,  
    The Architect of Heaven.

Remember then, to fix thy Aim on High,  
Project, and build on t'other side the Sky,  
For, after all thy vain Expence below,  
Thou canst no Fame, no lasting Pleasure know;  
No Good, that shall not thy Embraces fly;  
Or thou from that be in a Moment caught,  
Thy Spirit to new Claims, new Int'rests brought,  
Whilst unconcern'd thy secret Ashes lye,  
Or stray about the Globe, O Man ordain'd to Dye!

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## Fanscomb Barn

In Fanscomb Barn (who knows not Fanscomb Barn?)  
Seated between the sides of rising Hills,  
Whose airy Tops o'erlook the Gallick Seas,  
Whilst, gentle Stower, thy Waters near them flow,  
To beautify the Seats that crown thy Banks.

-In this Retreat

Through Ages pass'd consign'd for Harbour meet,  
And Place of sweet Repose to Wand'ers poor,  
The weary Strolepedon felt that Ease,  
Which many a dangerous Borough had deny'd  
To him, and his Budgeta lov'd Compeer;  
Nor Food was wanting to the happy Pair,  
Who with meek Aspect, and precarious Tone,  
Well suited to their Hunger and Degree,  
Had mov'd the Hearts of hospitable Dames,  
To furnish such Repast as Nature crav'd.  
Whilst more to please the swarthy Bowl appears,  
Replete with Liquor, globulous to fight,  
And threat'ning Inundation o'er the Brim;  
Yet, ere it to the longing Lips was rais'd  
Of him who held it at its due Desert,  
And more than all entreated Bounty priz'd,  
Into the strong Profundity he throws  
The floating Healths of Females, blith and young,  
Who there had rendezvouz'd in past Delight,  
And to stol'n Plenty added clamorous Mirth,  
With Song and Dance, and every jovial Prank  
Befitting buxom Crew, untied by Forms:  
Whilst kind Budgeta nam'd such sturdy Youths,  
As next into her tender Thoughts revolv'd,  
And now were straggling East, and West, and South,  
Hoof-beating, and at large, as Chance directs,  
Still shifting Paths, lest Men (tho' stil'd of Peace)  
Should urge their calmer Thoughts to Iron War,  
Or force them to promote coercive Laws,  
Beating that Hemp which oft entraps their Lives;  
Or into Cordage pleated, and amass'd,  
Deprives unruly Flesh of tempting Skin.  
Thus kind Remembrance brought the Absent near  
And hasten'd the Return of either's Pledge:  
Brown were the Toasts, but not unsav'ry found  
To Fancies clear'd by Exercise and Air,  
Which the spirituous Nectar still improves,  
And gliding now thro' every cherish'd Vein,  
New Warmth diffus'd, new Cogitations bred,  
With Self-conceit of Person, and of Parts.  
When Strolepedon (late distorted Wight,  
Limb-wanting to the View, and all mis-shap'd)  
Permits a pinion'd Arm to fill the Sleeve,  
Erst pendant, void, and waving with the Wind,  
The Timber-Leg obsequiously withdraws,  
And gives to that of Bone Precedence due.

Thus undisguis'd that Form again he wears,  
 Which Damsel fond had drawn from household Toils,  
 And strict Behests of Parents, old and scorn'd;  
 Whilst farther yet his Intellects confess  
 The bouzy Spell dilated and inhans'd,  
 Ripe for Description, and sett Turns of Speech,  
 Which to Conjugal Spouse were thus address.  
 My Wife (acknowledg'd such thro' maunding Tribes,  
 As long as mutual Love, the only Law,  
 Of Hedge or Barn, can bind our easy Faiths)  
 Be thou observant of thy Husband's Voice,  
 Sole Auditor of Flights and Figures bold;  
 Know, that the Valley which we hence descry  
 Richly adorn'd, is Fanscomb-Bottom call'd:  
 But whether from these Walls it takes the Name,  
 Or they from that, let Antiquaries tell,  
 And Men, well-read in Stories obsolete,  
 Whilst such Denomination either claims,  
 As speaks Affinity contiguous—  
 Thence let thy scatter'd Sight, and oft-griev'd Smell  
 Engulf the Sweets, and Colours free dispos'd  
 To Flowers promiscuous, and redundant Plants.  
 And (if the drouzy Vapour will admit,  
 Which from the Bowl soon triumphs o'er thy Lidds,  
 And Thee the weaker Vessel still denotes)  
 With Looks erect observe the verdant Slope  
 Of graceful Hills, fertile in Bush and Brake,  
 Whose Height attain'd, th' expatiated Downs  
 Shall wider Scenes display of rural Glee;  
 Where banner'd Lords, and fair escutcheon'd Knights,  
 With gentle Squires, and the Staff-gripping Clown,  
 Pursue the trembling Prey impetuous;  
 Which yet escaping, when the Night returns,  
 And downy Beds enfold their careless Limbs,  
 More wakeful Trundle (Knapsack-bearing Cur)  
 Follows the Scent untrac'd by nobler Hounds,  
 And brings to us the Fruit of all their Toil.

Thus sung the Bard, whom potent Liquor rais'd,  
 Nor so contented, wish'd sublimer Aid.  
 Ye Wits! (he cry'd) ye Poets! (Loiterers vain,  
 Who like to us, in Idleness and Want  
 Consume fantastick Hours) hither repair,  
 And tell to list'ning Mendicants the Cause  
 Of Wonders, here observ'd but not discuss'd:  
 Where, the White Sparrow never soil'd her Plumes,  
 Nor the dull Russet cloaths the Snowy Mouse.  
 To Helicon you might the Spring compare,  
 That flows near Pickersdane renowned Stream,  
 Which, for Disport and Play, the Youths frequent,  
 Who, train'd in Learned School of ancient Wye,  
 First at this Fount suck in the Muses Lore,

When mixt with Product of the Indian Cane,  
They drink delicious Draughts, and part inspir'd,  
Fit for the Banks of Isis, or of Cham,  
(For Cham, and Isis to the Bard were known,  
A Servitor, when young in College-Hall,  
Tho' vagrant Liberty he early chose,  
Who yet, when Drunk, retain'd Poetick Phrase.)  
Nor shou'd (quoth he) that Well, o'erhung with shade,  
Amidst those neighb'ring Trees of dateless growth,  
Be left unfathom'd by your nicer Skill

Who thence cou'd extricate a thousand Charms,  
Or to oblivious Lethe might convert  
The stagnant Waters of the sleepy Pool.  
But most unhappy was that Morphean Sound  
For lull'd Budgeta, who had long desir'd  
Dismission fair from Tales, not throughly scann'd,  
Thinking her Love a Sympathy confest,  
When the Word Sleepy parted from his Lips,  
Sunk affable and easy to that Rest,  
Which Straw affords to Minds, unvex'd with Cares.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## Jupiter And The Farmer

When Poets gave their God in Crete a Birth,  
Then Jupiter held Traffick with the Earth,  
And had a Farm to Lett: the Fine was high,  
For much the Treas'ry wanted a Supply,  
By Danae's wealthy Show'r exhausted quite, and dry.  
But Merc'ry, who as Steward kept the Court,  
So rack'd the Rent, that all who made Resort  
Unsatisfy'd return'd, nor could agree  
To use the Lands, or pay his secret Fee;  
'Till one poor Clown (thought subt'ler than the rest,  
Thro' various Projects rolling in his Breast)  
Consents to take it, if at his Desire  
All Weathers tow'rds his Harvest may conspire;  
The Frost to kill the Worm, the brooding Snow,  
The filling Rains may come, and Phoebus glow.  
The Terms accepted, sign'd and seal'd the Lease,  
His Neighbours Grounds afford their due Encrease  
The Care of Heav'n; the Owner's Cares may cease.  
Whilst the new Tenant, anxious in his Mind,  
Now asks a Show'r, now craves a rustling Wind  
To Raise what That had lodg'd, that he the Sheaves may bind.  
The Sun, th'o'er-shadowing Clouds, the moistning Dews  
He with such Contrariety does chuse;  
So often and so oddly shifts the Scene,  
Whilst others Load, he scarce has what to Glean.

O Jupiter! with Famine pinch'd he cries,  
No more will I direct th' unerring Skies;  
No more my Substance on a Project lay,  
No more a sullen Doubt I will betray,  
Let me but live to Reap, do Thou appoint the way

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## Love, Death, and Reputation

Reputation, Love, and Death,  
(The Last all Bones, the First all Breath,  
The Midd'st compos'd of Restless Fire)  
From each other wou'd Retire;  
Thro' the World resolv'd to stray;  
Every One a several Way;  
Exercising, as they went,  
Each such Power, as Fate had lent;  
Which, if it united were,  
Wretched Mortals cou'd not bear:  
But as parting Friends do show,  
To what Place they mean to go,  
Correspondence to engage,  
Nominate their utmost Stage;  
Death declar'd he wou'd be found  
Near the fatal Trumpet's sound;  
Or where Pestilences reign,  
And Quacks the greater Plagues maintain;  
Shaking still his sandy Glass,  
And mowing Human Flesh, like Grass.  
Love, as next his Leave he took,  
Cast on both so sweet a Look,  
As their Tempers near disarm'd,  
One relax'd, and t'other warm'd;  
Shades for his Retreat he chose,  
Rural Plains, and soft Repose;  
Where no Dowry e'er was paid,  
Where no Jointure e'er was made;  
No Ill Tongue the Nymph perplex'd,  
Where no Forms the Shepherd vex'd;  
Where Himself shou'd be the Care,  
Of the Fond and of the Fair:  
Where that was, they soon should know,  
Au Revoir! then turn'd to Go.

Reputation made a Pause,  
Suiting her severer Laws;  
Second Thoughts, and Third she us'd,  
Weighing Consequences mus'd;  
When, at length to both she cry'd:  
You Two safely may Divide,  
To th' Antipodes may fall,  
And re-ascend th' encompass Ball;  
Certain still to meet agen  
In the Breasts of tortur'd Men;  
Who by One (too far) betray'd,  
Call in t'other to their Aid:  
Whilst I Tender, Coy, and Nice,  
Rais'd and ruin'd in a Trice,  
Either fix with those I grace,  
Or abandoning the Place,  
No Return my Nature bears,

From green Youth, or hoary Hairs;  
If thro' Guilt, or Chance, I sever,  
I once Parting, Part for ever.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## Mercury And The Elephant

As Merc'ry travell'd thro' a Wood,  
(Whose Errands are more Fleet than Good)  
An Elephant before him lay,  
That much encumber'd had the Way:  
The Messenger, who's still in haste,  
Wou'd fain have bow'd, and so have past;  
When up arose th' unweildy Brute,  
And wou'd repeat a late Dispute,

In which (he said) he'd gain'd the Prize  
From a wild Boar of monstrous Size:  
But Fame (quoth he) with all her Tongues,  
Who Lawyers, Ladies, Soldiers wrongs,  
Has, to my Disadvantage, told  
An Action throughly Bright and Bold;  
Has said, that I foul Play had us'd,  
And with my Weight th' Opposer bruise'd;  
Had laid my Trunk about his Brawn,  
Before his Tushes cou'd be drawn;  
Had stunn'd him with a hideous Roar,  
And twenty-thousand Scandals more:  
But I defy the Talk of Men,  
Or Voice of Brutes in ev'ry Den;  
Th' impartial Skies are all my Care,  
And how it stands Recorded there.  
Amongst you Gods, pray, What is thought?  
Quoth Mercury—Then have you Fought!

Solicitous thus shou'd I be  
For what's said of my Verse and Me;

Or shou'd my Friends Excuses frame,  
And beg the Criticks not to blame  
(Since from a Female Hand it came)  
Defects in Judgment, or in Wit;  
They'd but reply - Then has she Writ!

Our Vanity we more betray,  
In asking what the World will say,  
Than if, in trivial Things like these,  
We wait on the Event with ease;  
Nor make long Prefaces, to show  
What Men are not concern'd to know:  
For still untouch'd how we succeed,  
'Tis for themselves, not us, they Read;  
Whilst that proceeding to requite,  
We own (who in the Muse delight)  
'Tis for our Selves, not them, we Write.  
Betray'd by Solitude to try  
Amusements, which the Prosp'rous fly;

And only to the Press repair,  
To fix our scatter'd Papers there;  
Tho' whilst our Labours are preserv'd,  
The Printers may, indeed, be starv'd.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## Mussulman's Dream

Where is that World, to which the Fancy flies,  
When Sleep excludes the Present from our Eyes;  
Whose Map no Voyager cou'd e'er design,  
Nor to Description its wild Parts confine?  
Yet such a Land of Dreams We must allow,  
Who nightly trace it, tho' we know not how:  
Unfetter'd by the Days obtruded Rules,  
We All enjoy that Paradise of Fools;  
And find a Sorrow, in resuming Sense,  
Which breaks some free Delight, and snatches us from thence.

Thus! in a Dream, a Musselman was shown  
A Vizir, whom he formerly had known,  
When at the Port he bore deputed Sway,  
And made the Nations with a Nod obey.  
Now all serene, and splendid was his Brow,  
Whilst ready Waiters to his Orders bow;  
His Residence, an artful Garden seem'd,  
Adorn'd with all, that pleasant he esteem'd;  
Full of Reward, his glorious Lot appear'd,  
As with the Sight, our Dreamer's Mind was chear'd;  
But turning, next he saw a dreadful Sight,  
Which fill'd his Soul with Wonder and Affright,  
Pursu'd by Fiends, a wretched Dervis fled  
Through scorching Plains, which to wide Distance spread;  
Whilst every Torture, gloomy Poets paint,  
Was there prepar'd for the reputed Saint.  
Amaz'd at this, the sleeping Turk enquires,  
Why He that liv'd above, in soft Attires,  
Now roll'd in Bliss, while t'other roll'd in Fires?  
We're taught the Suff'rings of this Future State,  
Th' Excess of Courts is likeliest to create;  
Whilst solitary Cells, o'ergrown with Shade,  
The readiest way to Paradise is made.  
True, quoth the Phantom (which he dream'd reply'd)  
The lonely Path is still the surest Guide,  
Nor is it by these Instances deny'd.  
For, know my Friend, whatever Fame report,  
The Vizier to Retirements wou'd resort,  
Th' ambitious Dervis wou'd frequent the Court.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## The Brass-Pot And Stone-Jugg

A brazen Pot, by scouring vext,  
With Beef and Pudding still perplext,  
Resolv'd t' attempt a nobler Life,  
Urging the Jugg to share the Strife:  
Brother, quoth he, (Love to endear)  
Why shou'd We Two continue here,  
To serve and cook such homely Cheer?  
Who tho' we move with awkward pace,  
Your stony Bowels, and my Face,  
Abroad can't miss of Wealth and Place.  
Then let us instantly be going,  
And see what in the World is Doing.  
The bloated Jugg, supine and lazy,  
Who made no Wish, but to be easy,  
Nor, like it's Owner, e'er did think  
Of ought, but to be fill'd with Drink;  
Yet something mov'd by this fine Story,  
And frothing higher with Vain-glory,  
Reply'd, he never wanted Metal,  
But had not Sides, like sturdy Kettle,  
That in a Croud cou'd shove and bustle,  
And to Preferment bear the Justle;  
When the first Knock would break His Measures,  
And stop his Rise to Place and Treasures.  
Sure (quoth the Pot ) thy Scull is thicker,  
Than ever was thy muddiest Liquor:  
Go I not with thee, for thy Guard,  
To take off Blows, and Dangers ward?  
And hast thou never heard, that Cully  
Is borne thro' all by daring Bully?  
Your self (reply'd the Drink-conveigher)  
May be my Ruin and Betrayer:  
A Superiority you boast,  
And dress the Meat, I but the Toast:  
Than mine your Constitution's stronger,  
And in Fatigues can hold out longer;  
And shou'd one Bang from you be taken,  
I into Nothing shou'd be shaken.  
A d'autre cry'd the Pot in scorn,  
Dost think, there's such a Villain born,  
That, when he proffers Aid and Shelter,  
Will rudely fall to Helter-Skelter?  
No more, but follow to the Road,  
Where Each now drags his pond'rous Load,  
And up the Hill were almost clamber'd,  
When (may it ever be remember'd!)  
Down rolls the Jugg, and after rattles  
The most perfidious of all Kettles;  
At every Molehill gives a Jump,  
Nor rests, till by obdurate Thump,  
The Pot of Stone, to shivers broken,  
Sends each misguided Fool a Token:

To show them, by this fatal Test,  
That Equal Company is best,  
Where none Oppress, nor are Opprest.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## The Decision of Fortune

Fortune well-Pictur'd on a rolling Globe,  
With waving Locks, and thin transparent Robe,  
A Man beholding, to his Neighbor cry'd,  
Whoe'er would catch this Dame, must swiftly ride.  
Mark, how she seems to Fly, and with her bears,  
All that is worth a busie Mortal's Cares:  
The gilded Air about her Statue shines,  
As if the Earth had lent it all her Mines;  
At random Here a Diadem she flings,  
And There a scarlet Hat with dangling Strings,  
And to ten Thousand Fools ten Thousand glorious Things.  
Shall I then stay at Home, Dull and Content  
With Quarter-Days, and hard extorted Rent?  
No, I'll to Horse, to Sea, to utmost Isles,  
But I'll encounter her propitious Smiles:  
Whilst you in slothful Ease may chuse to Sleep,  
And scarce the few Paternal Acres keep.  
Farewel, reply'd his Friend, may you advance,  
And grow the Darling of this Lady Chance:  
Whilst I indeed, not courting of her Grace,  
Shall dwell content, in this my Native Place,  
Hoping I still shall for your Friend be known:  
But if too big for such Acquaintance grown,  
I shan't be such a fond mistaken Sot,  
To think Remembrance should become my Lot;  
When you Exalted, have your self Forgot.  
Nor me Ambitious ever shall you find,  
Or hunting Fortune, who, they say, is Blind:  
But if her Want of Sight shou'd make her Stray,  
She shou'd be Welcome, if she came this way.  
'Tis very like (the Undertaker cry'd)  
That she her steps to these lost Paths shou'd guide:  
But I lose Time, whilst I such Thoughts deride.  
Away he goes, with Expectation chear'd,  
But when his Course he round the World had steer'd,  
And much had borne, and much had hop'd and fear'd,  
Yet cou'd not be inform'd where he might find  
This fickle Mistress of all Human-kind:  
He quits at length the Chace of flying Game,  
And back as to his Neighbor's House he came,  
He there encounters the uncertain Dame;  
Who lighting from her gaudy Coach in haste,  
To him her eager Speeches thus address.  
Fortune behold, who has been long pursu'd,  
Whilst all the Men, that have my Splendors view'd,  
Madly enamour'd, have such Flatt'ries forg'd,  
And with such Lies their vain Pretensions urg'd,  
That Hither I am fled to shun their Suits,  
And by free Choice conclude their vain Disputes;  
Whilst I the Owner of this Mansion bless,  
And he unseeking Fortune shall possess.  
Tho' rightly charg'd as something Dark of Sight,

Yet Merit, when 'tis found, is my Delight;  
To Knaves and Fools, when I've some Grace allow'd,  
'T has been like scattering Money in a Croud,  
To make me Sport, as I beheld them strive,  
And some observ'd (thro' Age) but Half-alive;  
Scrambling amongst the Vigorous and Young,  
One proves his Sword, and One his wheedling Tongue,  
All striving to obtain me right or wrong;  
Whilst Crowns, and Crosiers in the Contest hurl'd,  
Shew'd me a Farce in the contending World.  
Thou wert deluded, whilst with Ship, or Steed,  
Thou lately didst attempt to reach my Speed,  
And by laborious Toil, and endless Pains,  
Didst sell thy Quiet for my doubtful Gains:  
Whilst He alone my real Fav'rite rises,  
Who every Thing to its just Value prizes,  
And neither courts, nor yet my Gifts despises

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## The Petition for an Absolute Retreat (excerpt)

(Inscribed to the Right Honourable Catharine Countess of Thanet,  
mentioned in the poem under the name of Arminda)

Give me, O indulgent Fate!  
Give me yet before I die  
A sweet, but absolute retreat,  
'Mongst paths so lost and trees so high  
That the world may ne'er invade  
Through such windings and such shade  
My unshaken liberty.

No intruders thither come  
Who visit but to be from home!  
None who their vain moments pass  
Only studious of their glass;  
News, that charm to list'ning ears,  
That false alarm to hopes and fears,  
That common theme for every fop,  
From the statesman to the shop,  
In those coverts ne'er be spread,  
Of who's deceas'd, and who's to wed.  
Be no tidings thither brought,  
But silent as a midnight thought  
Where the world may ne'er invade  
Be those windings and that shade!

Courteous Fate! afford me there  
A table spread, without my care,  
With what the neighb'ring fields impart,  
Whose cleanliness be all its art.  
When of old the calf was drest  
(Though to make an angel's feast)  
In the plain unstudied sauce  
Nor truffle nor morillia was;  
Nor could the mighty patriarchs' board  
One far-fetch'd ortolan afford.  
Courteous Fate! then give me there  
Only plain and wholesome fare;  
Fruits indeed (would heaven bestow)  
All that did in Eden grow,  
All but the forbidden Tree  
Would be coveted by me;  
Grapes with juice so crowded up  
As breaking through the native cup;  
Figs yet growing candied o'er  
By the sun's attracting power;  
Cherries, with the downy peach,  
All within my easy reach;  
Whilst creeping near the humble ground  
Should the strawberry be found  
Springing wheresoe'er I stray'd  
Through those windings and that shade.  
For my garments: let them be

What may with the time agree;

Warm when Phoebus does retire  
And is ill-supplied by fire:  
But when he renews the year  
And verdant all the fields appear,  
Beauty every thing resumes,  
Birds have dropp'd their winter plumes,  
When the lily full-display'd  
Stands in purer white array'd  
Than that vest which heretofore  
The luxurious monarch wore,  
When from Salem's gates he drove  
To the soft retreat of love,  
Lebanon's all burnish'd house  
And the dear Egyptian spouse.  
Clothe me, Fate, though not so gay,  
Clothe me light and fresh as May!  
In the fountains let me view  
All my habit cheap and new  
Such as, when sweet zephyrs fly,  
With their motions may comply,  
Gently waving to express  
Unaffected carelessness.  
No perfumes have there a part  
Borrow'd from the chemist's art,  
But such as rise from flow'ry beds  
Or the falling jasmine sheds!  
'Twas the odour of the field  
Esau's rural coat did yield  
That inspir'd his father's prayer  
For blessings of the earth and air:  
Of gums or powders had it smelt,  
The supplanter, then unfelt,  
Easily had been descried  
For one that did in tents abide,  
For some beauteous handmaid's joy,  
And his mother's darling boy.

Let me then no fragrance wear  
But what the winds from gardens bear,  
In such kind surprising gales  
As gather'd from Fidentia's vales  
All the flowers that in them grew;  
Which intermixing as they flew  
In wreathen garlands dropp'd again  
On Lucullus and his men;  
Who, cheer'd by the victorious sight,  
Trebled numbers put to flight.  
Let me, when I must be fine,  
In such natural colours shine;  
Wove and painted by the sun;

Whose resplendent rays to shun  
When they do too fiercely beat  
Let me find some close retreat  
Where they have no passage made  
Through those windings, and that shade.....

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## **The Prevalence of Custom**

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## The Shepherd Piping to the Fishes

A Shepherd seeking with his Lass  
To shun the Heat of Day;  
Was seated on the shadow'd Grass,  
Near which a flowing Stream did pass,  
And Fish within it play.

The Phillis he an Angle gave,  
And bid her toss the Line;  
For sure, quoth he, each Fish must have,  
Who do's not seek to be thy Slave,  
A harder Heart than mine.

Assemble here you watry Race,  
Transportedly he cries;  
And if, when you behold her Face,  
You e'er desire to quit the Place,  
You see not with my Eyes.

But you, perhaps, are by the Ear,  
More easie to be caught;  
If so, I have my Bagpipe here,  
The only Musick that's not dear,  
Nor in great Cities bought.

So sprightly was the Tune he chose,  
And often did repeat;  
That Phillis, tho' not up she rose,  
Kept time with every thrilling Close,  
And jigg'd upon her Seat.

But not a Fish wou'd nearer draw,  
No Harmony or Charms,  
Their frozen Blood, it seems, cou'd thaw,  
Nor all they heard, nor all they saw  
Cou'd woo them to such Terms.

The angry Shepherd in a Pett,  
Gives o'er his wheedling Arts,  
And from his Shoulder throws the Net,  
Resolv'd he wou'd a Supper get  
By Force, if not by Parts.

Thus stated Laws are always best  
To rule the vulgar Throng,  
Who grow more Stubborn when Carest,  
Or with soft Rhetorick address,  
If taking Measures wrong.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## The Tree

Fair tree! for thy delightful shade  
'Tis just that some return be made;  
Sure some return is due from me  
To thy cool shadows, and to thee.  
When thou to birds dost shelter give,  
Thou music dost from them receive;  
If travellers beneath thee stay  
Till storms have worn themselves away,  
That time in praising thee they spend  
And thy protecting pow'r commend.  
The shepherd here, from scorching freed,  
Tunes to thy dancing leaves his reed;  
Whilst his lov'd nymph, in thanks, bestows  
Her flow'ry chaplets on thy boughs.  
Shall I then only silent be,  
And no return be made by me?  
No; let this wish upon thee wait,  
And still to flourish be thy fate.  
To future ages may'st thou stand  
Untouch'd by the rash workman's hand,  
Till that large stock of sap is spent,  
Which gives thy summer's ornament;  
Till the fierce winds, that vainly strive  
To shock thy greatness whilst alive,  
Shall on thy lifeless hour attend,  
Prevent the axe, and grace thy end;  
Their scatter'd strength together call  
And to the clouds proclaim thy fall;  
Who then their ev'ning dews may spare  
When thou no longer art their care,  
But shalt, like ancient heroes, burn,  
And some bright hearth be made thy urn.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch

## **There's No To-Morrow**

Two long had Lov'd, and now the Nymph desir'd,  
The Cloak of Wedlock, as the Case requir'd;  
Urg'd that, the Day he wrought her to this Sorrow,  
He Vow'd, that he wou'd marry her To-Morrow.  
Agen he Swears, to shun the present Storm,  
That he, To-Morrow, will that Vow perform.  
The Morrows in their due Successions came;  
Impatient still on Each, the pregnant Dame  
Urg'd him to keep his Word, and still he swore the same.  
When tir'd at length, and meaning no Redress,  
But yet the Lye not caring to confess,  
He for his Oath this Salvo chose to borrow,  
That he was Free, since there was no To-Morrow;  
For when it comes in Place to be employ'd,  
'Tis then To-Day; To-Morrow's ne'er enjoy'd.

The Tale's a Jest, the Moral is a Truth;  
To-Morrow and To-Morrow, cheat our Youth:  
In riper Age, To-Morrow still we cry,  
Not thinking, that the present Day we Dye;  
Unpractis'd all the Good we had Design'd;  
There's No To-Morrow to a Willing Mind.

Countess Winchilsea Anne Finch