Classic Poetry Series

John Dryden

- 104 poems -

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John Dryden (1631 - 1700)

JJohn Dryden was an influential English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright who dominated the literary life of Restoration England to such a point that the period came to be known in literary circles as the Age of Dryden. Walter Scott called him "Glorious John." He was made Poet Laureate in 1668.

Early life

Dryden was born in the village rectory of Aldwincle near Thrapston in Northamptonshire, where his maternal grandfather was Rector of All Saints. He was the eldest of fourteen children born to Erasmus Dryden and wife Mary Pickering, paternal grandson of Sir Erasmus Dryden, 1st Baronet (1553–1632) and wife Frances Wilkes, Puritan landowning gentry who supported the Puritan cause and Parliament. He was also a second cousin once removed of Jonathan Swift. As a boy Dryden lived in the nearby village of Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire where it is also likely that he received his first education. In 1644 he was sent to Westminster School as a King's Scholar where his headmaster was Dr Richard Busby, a charismatic teacher and severe disciplinarian. Having recently been re-founded by Elizabeth I, Westminster during this period embraced a very different religious and political spirit encouraging royalism and high Anglicanism. Whatever Dryden's response to this was, he clearly respected the Headmaster and would later send two of his own sons to school at Westminster. In the late twentieth century a house at Westminster was founded in his name.

As a humanist public school, Westminster maintained a curriculum which trained pupils in the art of rhetoric and the presentation of arguments for both sides of a given issue. This is a skill which would remain with Dryden and influence his later writing and thinking, as much of it displays these dialectical patterns. The Westminster curriculum also included weekly translation assignments which developed Dryden's capacity for assimilation. This was also to be exhibited in his later works. His years at Westminster were not uneventful, and his first published poem, an elegy with a strong royalist feel on the death of his schoolmate Henry, Lord Hastings from smallpox, alludes to the execution of King Charles I, which took place on 30 January 1649, very near the school where Dr Busby had first prayed for the King and then locked in his schoolboys to prevent their attending the spectacle.

In 1650 Dryden went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he would have experienced a return to the religious and political ethos of his childhood: the Master of Trinity was a Puritan preacher by the name of Thomas Hill who had been a rector in Dryden's home village. Though there is little specific

information on Dryden’s undergraduate years, he would most certainly have followed the standard curriculum of classics, rhetoric, and mathematics. In 1654 he obtained his BA, graduating top of the list for Trinity that year. In June of the same year Dryden’s father died, leaving him some land which generated a little income, but not enough to live on.

Returning to London during The Protectorate, Dryden obtained work with Cromwell’s Secretary of State, John Thurloe. This appointment may have been the result of influence exercised on his behalf by his cousin the Lord Chamberlain, Sir Gilbert Pickering. At Cromwell’s funeral on 23 November 1658 Dryden processed with the Puritan poets John Milton and Andrew Marvell. Shortly thereafter he published his first important poem, Heroique Stanzas (1658), a eulogy on Cromwell’s death which is cautious and prudent in its emotional display. In 1660 Dryden celebrated the Restoration of the monarchy and the return of Charles II with Astraea Redux, an authentic royalist panegyric. In this work the interregnum is illustrated as a time of anarchy, and Charles is seen as the restorer of peace and order.

Later life and career

After the Restoration, Dryden quickly established himself as the leading poet and literary critic of his day and he transferred his allegiances to the new government. Along with Astraea Redux, Dryden welcomed the new regime with two more panegyrics; To His Sacred Majesty: A Panegyric on his Coronation (1662), and To My Lord Chancellor (1662). These poems suggest that Dryden was looking to court a possible patron, but he was to instead make a living in writing for publishers, not for the aristocracy, and thus ultimately for the reading public. These, and his other nondramatic poems, are occasional—that is, they celebrate public events. Thus they are written for the nation rather than the self, and the Poet Laureate (as he would later become) is obliged to write a certain number of these per annum. In November 1662 Dryden was proposed for membership in the Royal Society, and he was elected an early fellow. However, Dryden was inactive in Society affairs and in 1666 was expelled for non-payment of his dues.

On 1 December 1663 Dryden married the royalist sister of Sir Robert Howard—Lady Elizabeth. Dryden’s works occasionally contain outbursts against the married state but also celebrations of the same. Thus, little is known of the intimate side of his marriage. Lady Elizabeth however, was to bear him three sons and outlive him.

With the reopening of the theatres after the Puritan ban, Dryden busied himself with the composition of plays. His first play, The Wild Gallant appeared in 1663 and was not successful, but he was to have more success, and from 1668 on he was contracted to produce three plays a year for the King's Company in which he was also to become a shareholder. During the 1660s and 70s theatrical writing was to be his main source of income. He led the way in Restoration comedy, his best known work being Marriage à la Mode (1672), as well as heroic tragedy and regular tragedy, in which his greatest success was All for Love (1678). Dryden was never satisfied with his theatrical writings and frequently suggested that his talents were wasted on unworthy audiences. He thus was making a bid for poetic fame off-stage. In 1667, around the same time his dramatic career began, he published Annus Mirabilis, a lengthy historical poem which described the events of 1666; the English defeat of the Dutch naval fleet and the Great Fire of London. It was a modern epic in pentameter quatrains that established him as the preeminent poet of his generation, and was crucial in his attaining the posts of Poet Laureate (1668) and historiographer royal (1670).

When the Great Plague of London closed the theatres in 1665 Dryden retreated to Wiltshire where he wrote Of Dramatick Poesie (1668), arguably the best of his unsystematic prefaces and essays. Dryden constantly defended his own literary practice, and Of Dramatick Poesie, the longest of his critical works, takes the form of a dialogue in which four characters–each based on a prominent contemporary, with Dryden himself as

‘Neander’—debate the merits of classical, French and English drama. The greater part of his critical works introduce problems which he is eager to discuss, and show the work of a writer of independent mind who feels strongly about his own ideas, ideas which demonstrate the incredible breadth of his reading. He felt strongly about the relation of the poet to tradition and the creative process, and his best heroic play Aureng-zebe (1675) has a prologue which denounces the use of rhyme in serious drama. His play All for Love (1678) was written in blank verse, and was to immediately follow Aureng-Zebe. In 1679 he was attacked in an alley near his home in Covent Garden by thugs hired by John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester, with whom he had a long-standing conflict.

Dryden's greatest achievements were in satiric verse: the mock-heroic MacFlecknoe, a more personal product of his Laureate years, was a lampoon circulated in manuscript and an attack on the playwright Thomas Shadwell. Dryden's main goal in the work is to "satirize Shadwell, ostensibly for his offenses against literature but more immediately we may suppose for his habitual badgering of him on the stage and in print." It is not a belittling form of satire, but rather one which makes his object great in ways which are unexpected, transferring the ridiculous into poetry. This line of satire continued with Absalom and Achitophel (1681) and The Medal (1682). His other major works from this period are the religious poems Religio Laici (1682), written from the position of a member of the Church of England; his 1683 edition of Plutarch's Lives Translated From the Greek by Several Hands in which he introduced the word biography to English readers; and The Hind and the Panther, (1687) which celebrates his conversion to Roman Catholicism.

When in 1688 James was deposed, Dryden’s refusal to take the oaths of allegiance to the new government left him out of favour at court. Thomas Shadwell succeeded him as Poet Laureate, and he was forced to give up his public offices and live by the proceeds of his pen. Dryden translated works by Horace, Juvenal, Ovid, Lucretius, and Theocritus, a task which he found far more satisfying than writing for the stage. In 1694 he began work on what would be his most ambitious and defining work as translator, The Works of Virgil (1697), which was published by subscription. The publication of the translation of Virgil was a national event and brought Dryden the sum of £1,400. His final translations appeared in the volume Fables Ancient and Modern (1700), a series of episodes from Homer, Ovid, and Boccaccio, as well as modernized adaptations from Geoffrey Chaucer interspersed with Dryden’s own poems. The Preface to Fables is considered to be both a major work of criticism and one of the finest essays in English. As a critic and translator he was essential in making accessible to the reading English public literary works in the classical languages.

Dryden died on May 1, 1700, and was initially buried in St. Anne's cemetery in Soho, before being exhumed and reburied in Westminster Abbey ten days later. He was the subject of various poetic eulogies, such as Luctus Brittannici: or the Tears of the British Muses; for the Death of John Dryden, Esq. (London, 1700), and The Nine Muses.

Reputation and influence

Dryden was the dominant literary figure and influence of his age. He established the heroic couplet as a standard form of English poetry by writing successful satires, religious pieces, fables, epigrams, compliments, prologues, and plays with it; he also introduced the alexandrine and triplet into the form. In his poems, translations, and criticism, he established a poetic diction appropriate to the heroic couplet—Auden referred to him as "the master of the middle style"—that was a model for his contemporaries and for much of the 18th century. The considerable loss felt by the English literary community at his death was evident from the elegies that it inspired. Dryden's heroic couplet became the dominant poetic form of the 18th century. The most influential poet of the 18th century, Alexander Pope, was heavily influenced by Dryden, and often borrowed from him; other

writers were equally influenced by Dryden and Pope. Pope famously praised Dryden's versification in his imitation of Horace's Epistle II.i: "Dryden taught to join / The varying pause, the full resounding line, / The long majestic march, and energy divine." Samuel Johnson summed up the general attitude with his remark that "the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English poetry." His poems were very widely read, and are often quoted, for instance, in Tom Jones and Johnson's essays.
Johnson also noted, however, that "He is, therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic; and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure." The first half of the 18th century did not mind this too much, but in later generations, this was increasingly considered a fault. One of the first attacks on Dryden's reputation was by Wordsworth, who complained that Dryden's descriptions of natural objects in his translations from Virgil were much inferior to the originals. However, several of Wordsworth's contemporaries, such as George Crabbe, Lord Byron, and Walter Scott (who edited Dryden's works), were still keen admirers of Dryden. Besides, Wordsworth did admire many of Dryden's poems, and his famous "Intimations of Immortality" ode owes something stylistically to Dryden's "Alexander's Feast". John Keats admired the "Fables," and imitated them in his poem Lamia. Later 19th century writers had little use for verse satire, Pope, or Dryden; Matthew Arnold famously dismissed them as "classics of our prose." He did have a committed admirer in George Saintsbury, and was a prominent figure in quotation books such as Bartlett's, but the next major poet to take an interest in Dryden was T. S. Eliot, who wrote that he was 'the ancestor of nearly all that is best in the poetry of the eighteenth century', and that 'we cannot fully enjoy or rightly estimate a hundred years of English poetry unless we fully enjoy Dryden.' However, in the same essay, Eliot accused Dryden of having a "commonplace mind." Critical interest in Dryden has increased recently, but, as a relatively straightforward writer (William Empson, another modern admirer of Dryden, compared his "flat" use of language with Donne's interest in the "echoes and recesses of words") his work has not occasioned as much interest as Andrew Marvell's or John Donne's or Pope's.

Dryden is also believed to be the first person to posit that English sentences should not end in prepositions because it was against the rules of Latin grammar. Dryden created the prescription against preposition stranding in 1672 when he objected to Ben Jonson's 1611 phrase the bodies that those souls were frightened from, although he didn't provide an explanation of the rationale that gave rise to his preference.

Poetic style

What Dryden achieved in his poetry was not the emotional excitement we find in the Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century, nor the intellectual complexities of the metaphysical poets. His subject-matter was often factual, and he aimed at expressing his thoughts in the most precise and concentrated way possible. Although he uses formal poetic structures such as heroic stanzas and heroic couplets, he tried to achieve the rhythms of speech. However, he knew that different subjects need different kinds of verse, and in his preface to Religio Laici he wrote: "...the expressions of a poem designed purely for instruction ought to be plain and natural, yet majestic...The florid, elevated and figurative way is for the passions; for (these) are begotten in the soul by showing the objects out of their true proportion....A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reasoned into

truth.”

Works:

Astraea Redux, 1660
The Wild Gallant (comedy), 1663
The Indian Emperour (tragedy), 1665
Annus Mirabilis (poem), 1667
The Enchanted Island (comedy), 1667, an adaptation with William D'Avenant of Shakespeare's The Tempest
Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen, 1667
An Essay of Dramatick Poesie, 1668
An Evening's Love (comedy), 1668
Tyrannick Love (tragedy), 1669
The Conquest of Granada, 1670
The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery, 1672
Marriage à la mode, 1672
Amboyna, or the Cruelties of the Dutch to the English Merchants, 1673
The Mistaken Husband (comedy), 1674
Aureng-zebe, 1675
All for Love, 1678
Oedipus (heroic drama), 1679, an adaptation with Nathaniel Lee of Sophocles' Oedipus
Absalom and Achitophel, 1681
The Spanish Fryar, 1681
MacFlecknoe, 1682
The Medal, 1682
Religio Laici, 1682
Threnodia Augustalis, 1685
The Hind and the Panther, 1687
A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687
Amphitryon, 1690
Don Sebastian, 1690
Creator Spirit, by whose aid, 1690. Translation of Rabanus Maurus' Veni Creator Spiritus [22]
King Arthur, 1691
Cleomenes, 1692
Love Triumphant, 1694
The Works of Virgil, 1697
Alexander's Feast, 1697
Fables, Ancient and Modern, 1700
The Art of Satire
To the Memory of Mr. Oldham, 1684

A Prologue

Gallants, a bashful poet bids me say,
He's come to lose his maidenhead to-day.
Be not too fierce; for he's but green of age,
And ne'er, till now, debauched upon the stage.
He wants the suffering part of resolution,
And comes with blushes to his execution.
Ere you deflower his Muse, he hopes the pit
Will make some settlement upon his wit.
Promise him well, before the play begin;
For he would fain be cozened into sin.
'Tis not but that he knows you mean to fail;
But, if you leave him after being frail,
He'll have, at least, a fair pretence to rail;
To call you base, and swear you used him ill,
And put you in the new Deserters' Bill.
Lord, what a troop of perjured men we see;
Enow to fill another Mercury!
But this the ladies may with patience brook;
Theirs are not the first colours you forsook.
He would be loath the beauties to offend;
But, if he should, he's not too old to mend.
He's a young plant, in his first year of bearing;
But his friend swears, he will be worth the rearing.
His gloss is still upon him; though 'tis true
He's yet unripe, yet take him for the blue.
You think an apricot half green is best;
There's sweet and sour, and one side good at least.
Mangos and limes, whose nourishment is little,
Though not for food, are yet preserved for pickle,
So this green writer may pretend, at least,
To whet your stomachs for a better feast.
He makes this difference in the sexes too;
He sells to men, he gives himself to you.
To both he would contribute some delight;
A mere poetical hermaphrodite.
Thus he's equipped, both to be wooed, and woo;
With arms offensive, and defensive too;
'Tis hard, he thinks, if neither part will do.

John Dryden

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,
  This universal frame began:
  When nature underneath a heap
  Of jarring atoms lay,
  And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
  'Arise, ye more than dead!'
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
  In order to their stations leap,
  And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
  This universal frame began:
  From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
  When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
  His listening brethren stood around,
  And, wondering, on their faces fell
  To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
  Within the hollow of that shell,
  That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

  The trumpet's loud clangour
  Excites us to arms,
  With shrill notes of anger,
  And mortal alarms.
  The double double double beat
  Of the thundering drum
  Cries Hark! the foes come;
  Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!

  The soft complaining flute,
  In dying notes, discovers
  The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

  Sharp violins proclaim
  Their jealous pangs and desperation,
  Fury, frantic indignation,
  Depth of pains, and height of passion,
  For the fair, disdainful dame.

  But O, what art can teach,
  What human voice can reach,
  The sacred organ's praise?
  Notes inspiring holy love,
  Notes that wing their heavenly ways
  To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the Blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky!

John Dryden

A Song To A Fair Young Lady Going Out Of Town In The Spring

1.
Ask not the cause why sullen spring
So long delays her flowers to bear;
Why warbling birds forget to sing,
And winter storms invert the year;
Chloris is gone, and Fate provides
To make it spring where she resides.

2.
Chloris is gone, the cruel fair;
She cast not back a pitying eye;
But left her lover in despair,
To sigh, to languish, and to die:
Ah, how can those fair eyes endure
To give the wounds they will not cure!

3.
Great god of love, why hast thou made
A face that can all hearts command,
That all religions can invade,
And change the laws of every land?
Where thou hadst plac'd such pow'r before,
Thou shouldst have made her mercy more.

4.
When Chloris to the temple comes,
Adoring crowds before her fall;
She can restore the dead from tombs,
And ev'ry life but mine recall.
I only am by love designed
To be the victim for mankind.

John Dryden

A Song. High State And Honours To Others Impart

High state and honours to others impart,
But give me your heart:
That treasure, that treasure alone,
I beg for my own.

So gentle a love, so fervent a fire,
My soul does inspire;
That treasure, that treasure alone,
I beg for my own.
Your love let me crave;
Give me in possessing
So matchless a blessing;
That empire is all I would have.
Love's my petition,
All my ambition;
If e'er you discover
So faithful a lover,
So real a flame,
I'll die, I'll die,
So give up my game.

John Dryden

A Song. Fair, Sweet And Young, Receive A Prize

1.
Fair, sweet, and young, receive a prize
Reserved for your victorious eyes:
From crowds, whom at your feet you see,
O pity, and distinguish me!
As I from thousand beauties more
Distinguish you, and only you adore.

2.
Your face for conquest was design'd,
Your every motion charms my mind;
Angels, when you your silence break,
Forget their hymns, to hear you speak;
But when at once they hear and view,
Are loth to mount, and long to stay with you.

3.
No graces can your form improve,
But all are lost, unless you love;
While that sweet passion you disdain,
Your veil and beauty are in vain:
In pity then prevent my fate,
For after dying all reprieve's too late.

John Dryden

A Song. Go Tell Amynta, Gentle Swain

1.
Go tell Amynta, gentle swain,
I would not die, nor dare complain.
Thy tuneful voice with numbers join,
Thy voice will more prevail than mine;
For souls opprest and dumb with grief,
The gods ordain'd this kind relief.
That music should in sounds convey
What dying lovers dare not say.

2.
A sigh or tear perhaps she'll give,
But love on pity cannot live:
Tell her that hearts for hearts were made,
And love with love is only paid,
Tell her my pains so fast increase
That soon it will be past redress;
For the wretch that speechless lies,
Attends but death to close his eyes.

John Dryden

Absalom and Achitophel

In pious times, e'er Priest-craft did begin,
Before Polygamy was made a sin;
When man, on many, multiply'd his kind,
E'r one to one was, cursedly, confind:
When Nature prompted, and no law deny'd
Promiscuous use of Concubine and Bride;
Then, Israel's monarch, after Heaven's own heart,
His vigorous warmth did, variously, impart
To Wives and Slaves; And, wide as his Command,
Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land.
Michal, of Royal blood, the Crown did wear,
A Soyl ungratefull to the Tiller's care;
Not so the rest; for several Mothers bore
To Godlike David, several Sons before.
But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,
No True Succession could their seed attend.
Of all this Numerous Progeny was none
So Beautifull, so brave as Absalon:
Whether, inspir'd by some diviner Lust,
His father got him with a greater Gust;
Or that his Conscious destiny made way
By manly beauty to Imperiall sway.
Early in Foreign fields he won Renown,
With Kings and States ally'd to Israel's Crown
In Peace the thoughts of War he could remove,
And seem'd as he were only born for love.
What e'er he did was done with so much ease,
In him alone, 'twas Natural to please.
His motions all accompanied with grace;
And Paradise was open'd in his face.
With secret Joy, indulgent David view'd
His Youthfull Image in his Son renew'd:
To all his wishes Nothing he deny'd,
And made the Charming Annabel his Bride.
What faults he had (for who from faults is free?)
His Father could not, or he would not see.
Some warm excesses, which the Law forbore,
Were constru'd Youth that purg'd by boyling o'r:
And Amnon's Murther, by a specious Name,
Was call'd a Just Revenge for injur'd Fame.
Thus Prais'd, and Lov'd, the Noble Youth remain'd,
While David, undisturb'd, in Sion raign'd.
But Life can never be sincerely blest:
Heaven punishes the bad, and proves the best.
The Jews, a Headstrong, Moody, Murmuring race,
As ever try'd th' extent and stretch of grace;
God's pamper'd people whom, debauch'd with ease,
No King could govern, nor no God could please;
(Gods they had tri'd of every shape and size
That Gods-smiths could produce, or Priests devise.)
These Adam-wits too fortunately free,
Began to dream they wanted libertie;

And when no rule, no precedent was found
Of men, by Laws less circumscrib'd and bound,
They led their wild desires to Woods and Caves,
And thought that all but Savages were Slaves.
They who when Saul was dead, without a blow,
Made foolish Ishbosheth the Crown forgo;
Who banisht David did from Hebron bring,
And with a Generall Shout, proclaim'd him King:
Those very Jewes, who, at their very best,
Their Humour more than Loyalty exprest,
Now wondred why, so long, they had obey'd
An Idoll Monarch which their hands had made:
Thought they might ruine him they could create;
Or melt him to that Golden Calf, a State,
But these were randome bolts: No form'd Design,
Nor Interest made the Factious Croud to joyn:
The sober part of Israel, free from stain,
Well knew the value of a peacefull raign:
And, looking backward with a wise afright,
Saw Seames of wounds, dishonest to the sight;
In contemplation of whose ugly Scars,
They Curst the memory of Civil Wars.
The moderate sort of Men, thus qualifi'd,
Inclin'd the Ballance to the better side:
And David's mildness manag'd it so well,
The Bad found no occasion to Reb ell.
But, when to Sin our byast Nature leans,
The carefull Devil is still at hand with means;
And providently Pimps for ill desires:
The Good old Cause reviv'd, a Plot requires.
Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
To raise up Common-wealths, and ruin Kings.

Th' inhabitants of old Jerusalem
Were Jebusites: the Town so call'd from them;
And theirs' the Native right-
But when the chosen people grew more strong,
The rightfull cause at length became the wrong:
And every loss the men of Jebus bore,
They still were thought God's enemies the more.
Thus, worn and weaken'd, well or ill content,
Submit they must to David's Government:
Impoverist, and depriv'd of all Command,
Their Taxes doubled as they lost their Land,
And what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
Their Gods disgrac'd, and burnt like common wood.
This set the Heathen Priesthood in a flame;
For Priests of all Religions are the same:
Of whatsoe'r descent their Godhead be,
Stock, Stone, or other homely pedigree,
In his defence his Servants are as bold
As if he had been born of beaten gold.

The Jewish Rabbins tho their Enemies,
In this conclude them honest men and wise;
For 'twas their duty, all the Learned think,
T' espouse his Cause by whom they eat and drink.
From hence began that Plot, the Nation's Curse,
Bad in it self, but represented worse,
Rais'd in extremes, and in extremes decry'd;
With Oaths affirm'd, with dying Vows deny'd,
Not weigh'd, or winnow'd by the Multitude;
But swallow'd in the Mass, unchew'd and Crude.
Some Truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with Lyes;
To please the Fools, and puzzle all the Wise.
Succeeding times did equal folly call,
Believing nothing, or believing all.
Th' Egyptian Rites the Jebusites imbrac'd;
Where Gods were recommended by their Tast.
Such savory Deities must needs be good,
As serv'd t once for Worship and for Food.
By force they could not Introduce these Gods,
For Ten to One, in former days was odds.
So Fraud was us'd, (the Scrificers trade,)
Fools are more hard to Conquer than Perswade.
Their busie Teachers mingled with the Jews;
And rak'd, for Converts, even the Court and Stews;
Which Hebrew Priests the more unkindly took,
Because the Fleece accompanies the Flock.
Some thought they God's anointed meant to Slay
By Guns, invented since full many a day:
Our Authour swears it not; but who can know
How far the Devil and Jebusites may go?
This Plot, which fail'd for want of common Sense,
Had yet a deep and dangerous Consequence:
For, as when raging Fevers boyl the Blood,
The standing Lake soon floats into a Flood;
And every hostile Humour, which before
Slept quiet in its Channels, bubbles o'er:
So, several Factions from this first Ferment,
Work up to Foam, and threat the Government.
Some by their Friends, more by themselves thought wise,
Oppos'd the Power, to which they could not rise.
Some had in Courts been Great, and thrown from thence,
Like Feinds, were harden'd in Impenitence.
Some by their Monarch's fatal mercy grown,
From Pardon'd Rebels, Kinsmen to the Throne;
Were rais'd in Power and publick Office high:
Strong Bands, if Bands ungratefull men could tye.

Of these the false Achitophel was first:
A Name to all succeeding Ages Curst.
For close Designs, and crooked Counsels fit;
Sagacious, Bold, and Turbulent of wit:
Restless, unfixt in Principles and Place;

In Power unpleas'd, impatient of Disgrace.
A fiery Soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay:
And o'r inform'd the Tenement of Clay.
A daring Pilot in extremity;
Pleas'd with the Danger, when the Waves went high
He sought the Storms; but for a Calm unfit
Would Steer too night the Sands, to boast his Wit.
Great Wits are sure to Madness near ally'd;
And thin Partitions do their Bounds divide;
Else, why should he, with Wealth and Honour blest,
Refuse his Age the needful hours of Rest?
Punish a Body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of Life, yet Prodigal of Ease?
And all to leave, what with his Toyl he won,
To that unfeather'd, two Leg'd thing, a Son;
Got, while his Sould did hudled Notions try;
And born a shapeless Lump, like Anarchy.
In Friendship False, Implacable in Hate:
Resolv'd to Ruine or to Rule the State.
To Compass this the Triple Bond he broke;
The Pillars of the publick Safety shok;
And fitted Israel for a foreign Yoke.
Then, seiz'd with Fear, yet still affecting Fame,
Usurp'd a Patriott's All-attoning Name.
So easie still it proves in Factious Times,
With publick Zeal to cancel private Crimes.
How safe is Treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the Peoples Will:
Where Crouds can wink; and no offence be known,
Since in anothers guilt they find their own.
Yet, Fame deserv'd, no Enemy can grudge;
The Statesman we abhor, but praise the Judge.
In Israels Courts ne'r sat an Abbethdin
With more discerning Eyes, or Hands more clean;
Unbrib'd, unsought, the Wretched to redress;
Swift of Dispatch, and easie of Access.
Oh, had he been content to serve the Crown,
With vertues only proper to the Gown;
Or, had the rankness of the Soyl been freed
From Cockle, that opprest the Noble seed;
David, for him his tunefull Harp had strung,
And Heaven had wanted one immortal song.
But wide Ambition loves to slide, not stand;
And Fortunes Ice prefers to Vertues Land:
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
A lawfull Fame, and lazy Happiness;
Disdain'd the Golden fruit to gather free,
And lent the Croud his Arm to shake the Tree.
Now, manifest of Crimes, contriv'd long since,
He stood at bold Defiance with his Prince;
Held up the Buckler of the Peoples Cause,

Against the Crown; and sculk'd behind the Laws.
The wish'd occasion of the Plot he takes,
Some Circumstances finds, but more he makes.
By buzzing Emissaries, fills the ears
Of listning Crowds, with Jealosies and Fears
Of Arbitrary COunsels brought to light,
And proves the King himself a Jebusite.
Weak Arguments! which yet he knew fulwell,
Were strong with People easie to Rebell.
For, govern'd by the Moon, the giddy Jews
Tread the same track when she the Prime renews:
And once in twenty Years, their Scribes Record,
By natural Instinct they change their Lord.
Achitophel still wants a Chief, and none
Was found so fit as Warlike Absalon:
Not that he wished his Greatness to create,
(For Polititians neither love nor hate).
Bur, for he knew, his Title not allow'd,
Would keep him still depending on the Crowd:
That Kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be
Drawn to the dregs of a Democracy.
Him he attempts, with studied Arts to please,
And sheds his Venome, in such words as these.

Auspicious Prince! at whose Nativity
Some Royal Planet rul'd the Southern sky;
Thy longing Countries Darling and Desire;
Their cloudy Pillar, and their guardian Fire:
Their Second Moses, whose extended Wand
Divides the Seas, and shews the promis'd Land:
Whose dawning Day, in every distant age,
Has exercis'd the Sacred Prophets rage:
The Peoples Prayer, the glad Diviners Theam,
The Young-mens Vision, and the Old mens Dream!
Thee, Saviour, Thee, the Nations Vows confess;
And, never satisfi'd with seeing, bless:
Swift, undespoken Pomps, they steps proclaim,
And stemmerring Babes are taught to lisp thy Name.
How long wilt thou the general Joy detain;
Starve, and defraud the People of thy Reign?
Content ingloriously to pass they days
Like one of Vertues Fools that feeds on Praise;
Till thy fresh Glories, which now shine so bright,
Grow Stale and Tarnish with our daily sight.
Believe me, Royal Youth, thy Fruit must be,
Or gather'd Ripe, or rot upon the Tree.
Heav'n has to all alloted, soon or late,
Some lucky Revolution of their Fate;
Whose Motions, if we watch and guide with Skill,
(For humane Good depends on humane Will,)
Our Fortune rolls, as from a smooth Descent,
And, from the first Impression, takes the Bent;

But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind;
And leaves repenting Folly far behind.
Now, now she meets you, with a glorious prize,
And spreads her Locks before her as she flies.
Had thus Old David, from whose Loyns you spring,
Not dar'd, when Fortune call'd him, to be King,
At Gath an Exile he might still remain,
And heavens Anointing Oyle had been in vain.
Let his successfull Youth your hopes engage,
But shun th' example of Declining Age:
Behold him setting in his Western Skies,
The Shadows lengthening as the Vapours rise.
He is not now, as when on Jordan's Sand
The Joyfull People throng'd to see him Land,
Cov'ring all the Beach, and blackning all the Strand;
But, like the Prince of Angels from his height,
Comes tumbling downward with diminsh'd light;
Betray'd by one poor Plot to publick Scorn,
(Our only blessing since his Curst Return).
Those heaps of People which one Sheaf did bind,
Blown off and scatter'd by a Puff of WInd.
What strength can he to y0our Designs oppose,
Naked of Friends, and round beset with Foes?
If Pharoah's doubtfull Succour he shoud use,
A Foreign Aid would more incense the Jews.
Proud Egypt would dissembled Friendship bring;
Foment the War, but not support the King:
Nor would the Royal Party e'r unite
With Pharoah's Arms, t' assist the Jebusite;
Or if they shoud, their Interest soon woud break,
And with such odious Aid make David weak.
All sorts of men by my successfull Arts,
Abhorring Kings, estrange their alter'd Hearts
From David's Rule: And 'tis the general Cry,
Religion, Common-wealth, and Liberty.
If you as Champion of the publique Good,
Add to their Arms a Chief of Royal BLood;
What may not Israel hope, and what Applause
Might such a General gain by such a Cause?
Not barren Praise alone, that Gaudy Flower,
Fair only to the sight, but solid Power:
And Nobler is a limited Command,
Giv'n by the Love of all your Native Land,
Than a Successive Title, Long, and Dark,
Drawn from the Mouldy rolls of Noah's Ark.

What cannot Praise effect in Mighty Minds,
When Flattery Sooths, and when Ambition Blinds!
Desire of Power, on Earth a Vitious Weed,
Yet, sprung from High, is of Cælestial Seed:
In God 'tis Glory: And when men Aspire,
'Tis but a Spark too much of Heavenly Fire.

Th'Ambitious Youth, too covetous of Fame,
Too full of Angells Metal in his Frame,
Unwarily was led from Vertues ways;
Made Drunk with Honour, and Debauch'd with Praise.
Half loath, and half consenting to the Ill,
(For Loyal Blood within him strugled still)
He thus reply'd - And what Pretence have I
To take up Arms for Publick Liberty?
My Father Governs with unquestion'd Right;
The Faiths Defender, and Mankinds Delight:
Good, Gracious, Just, observant of the Laws;
And Heav'n by Wonders has Espous'd his Cause.
Whom has he Wrong'd in all his Peaceful Reign?
Who sues for Justice to his Throne in Vain?
What Millions has he Pardon'd of his Foes,
Whom Just Revenge did to his Wrath expose?
Mild, Easy, Humble, Studious of our Good;
Enclin'd to Mercy, and averse from Blood.
If Mildness Ill with Stubborn Israel Suite,
His Crime is God's beloved Attribute.
What could he gain, his People to Betray,
Or change his Right, for Aribtrary Sway?
Let Haughty Pharoah Curse with such a Reign,
His Fruitfull Nile, nad Yoak a Servile Train.
If David'd Rule Jerusalem Displease,
The Dog-star heats their Brains to this Disease.
Why then should I, Encouraging the Bad,
Turn Rebell, and run Popularly Mad?
Were he a Tyrant who, by Lawless Might,
Opprest the Jews, and Rais'd the Jebusite,
Well might I Mourn; but Natures Holy Bands
Would Curb my Spirits, and Restrain my Hands:
The People might assert their Liberty;
But what was Right in them, were Crime in me.
His Favour leaves me nothing to require;
Prevents my WIshes, and outruns Desire.
What more can I expect while David lives,
All but his Kingly Diadem he gives;
And that: But there he Paus'd; then Sighing, said,
Is Justly Destin'd for a Worthier Head.
For when my Father from his Toyls shall Rest,
And late Augment the Number of the Blest:
His Lawfull Issue shall the Throne ascend,
Or the Collateral Line where that shall end.
His Brother, though Opprest with Vulgar Spright,
Yet Dauntless and Secure of Native Right,
Of every Royal Vertue stands possest;
Still Dear to all the Bravest, and the Best.
His Courage Foes, his Friends his Truth Proclaim;
His Loyalty the King, the World his Fame.
His Mercy even th'Offending Crowd will find,
For sure he comes of a Forgiving Kind.

Why should I then Repine at Heavens Decree;
Which gives me no Pretence to Royalty?
Yet oh that Fate Propitiously Enclind,
Had rais'd my Birth, or had debas'd my Mind;
To my large Soul, not all her Treasure lent,
And then Betray'd it to a mean Descent.
I find, I find my mounting Spirits Bold,
And David's Part disdains my Mothers Mold.
Why am I Scanted by a Niggard Birth,,
My Soul Disclaims the Kindred of her Earth:
And made for Empire, Whispers me within;
Desire of Greatness is a Godlike Sin.

Him Staggering so when Hells dire Agent found,
While fainting Vertue scarce maintain'd her Ground,
He pours fresh Forces in, and thus Replies:

Th'Eternal God Supreamly Good and Wise,
Imparts not these Prodigiuos Gifts in vain;
What Wonders are Reserv'd to bless your Reign?
Against your will your Arguments have shown,
Such Vertue's only given to guide a Throne.
Not that your Father's Mildness I contemn;
But Manly Force becomes the Diadem.
'Tis true, he grants the People all they crave;
And more perhaps than Subjects ought to have:
For Lavish grants suppose a Monarch tame,
And more his Goodness than his Wit proclaim.
But when shoud People strive their Bonds to break,
If not when Kings are Negligent or Weak?
Let him give on till he can give no more,
The Thrifty Sanhedrin shall keep him poor:
And every Sheckle which he can receive,
Shall cost a Limb of his Prerogative.
To ply him wiht new Plots, shall be my care,
Or plunge him deep in some Expensive War;
Which when his Treasure can no more Supply,
He must, with the Remains of Kingship, buy.
His faithful Friends, our Jealousies and Fears,
Call Jebusites; and Pharaoh's Pentioners:
Whom, when our Fury from his Aid has torn,
He shall be Naked left to publick Scorn.
The next Successor, whom I fear and hate,
My Arts have made Obnoxious to the State;
Turn'd all his Vertues to his Overthrow,
And gain'd our Elders to pronouce a Foe.
His Right, for Sums of necessary Gold,
Shall first be Pawn'd, and afterwards be Sold:
Till time shall Ever-wanting David draw,
To pass your doubtfull Title into Law:
If not; the People have a Right Supreme
To make their Kings; for Kings are made for them.

All Empire is no more than Pow'r in Trust,
Which when resum'd, can be no longer Just.
Succession, for the general Good design'd,
In its own wrong a Nation cannot bind:
If alterning that, the People can relieve,
Better one Suffer, than a Nation grieve.
The Jews well know their power: e'r Saul they Chose,
God was their King, and God they durst Depose.
Urge now your Piety, your Filial Name,
A Father's Right, and fear of future Fame;
The publick Good, that Universal Call,
To which even Heav'n Submitted, answers all.
Nor let his Love Enchant your generous Mind;
'Tis Natures trick to Propogate her Kind.
Our fond Begetters, who would never dye,
Love but themselves in their Posterity.
Or let his Kindness by th'Effects by try'd,
Or let him lay his vain Pretence aside.
God said he lov'd your Father; coud he bring
A better Proof, than to Anoint him King?
It surely shew'd he lov'd the Shepherd well,
Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.
Would David have you thought his Darling Son?
What means he then, to Alienate the Crown?
The name of Godly he may blush to hear:
'Tis after God's own heart to Cheat his Heir.
He to his Brother gives Supreme Command;
To you a Legacy of Barren Land:
Perhaps th'old Harp, on which he thrums his Layes:
Or some dull Hebrew Ballad in your Praise.
Then the next Heir, a Prince, Severe and Wise,
Already looks on you with Jealous Eyes;
Sees through the thin Disguises of your Arts,
And markes your Progress in the Peoples Hearts.
Though now his mighty Soul its Grief contains;
He meditates Revenge who least Complains.
And like a Lyon, Slumbring in the way,
Or Sleep-dissembling, while he waits his Prey,
His fearless Foes within his Distance draws;
Constrains his Roaring, and Contracts his Paws;
Till at the last, his time for Fury found,
He shoots with suddain Vengeance from the Ground:
The Prostrate Vulgar, passes o'r, and Spares;
But with a Lordly Rage, his Hunters teares.
Your Case no tame Expedients will afford;
Resolve on Death, or Conquest by the Sword,
Which for no less a Stake than Life, you Draw;
And Self-defence is Natures Eldest Law.
Leave the warm People no Considering time;
For then Rebellion may be thought a Crime.
Prevail your self of what Occasion gives,
But try your Title while your Father lives;

And that your Arms may have a fair Pretence,
Proclaim, you take them in the King's Defence:
Whose Sacred Life each minute woud Expose,
To Plots, from seeming Friends, and secret Foes.
And who can sound the depth of David's Soul?
Perhaps his fear, his kindness may Controul.
He fears his Brother, though he loves his Son,
For plighted Vows too late to be undone.
If so, by Force he wishes to be gain'd,
Like womens Leachery, to seem Constrain'd:
Doubt not, but when he most affects the Frown,
Commit a pleasing Rape upon the Crown.
Secure his Person to secure your Cause;
They who possess the Prince, possess the Laws.

He said, And this Advice above the rest,
With Absalom's Mild nature suited best;
Unblam'd of Life (Ambition set aside,)
Not stain'd with Cruelty, nor puft with Pride;
How happy had he been, if Destiny
Had higher plac'd his Birth, or not so high!
His Kingly vertues might have claim'd a Throne,
And blest all other Countries but his own:
But charming Greatness, since so few refuse;
'Tis Juster to Lament him, than Accuse.
Strong were his hopes a Rival to remove,
With blandishment to gain the publick Love;
To Head the Faction while their Zeal was hot,
And Popularly prosecute the Plot.
To farther this Achithphel Unites
The Malecontents of all the Israelites;
Whose differing Parties he could wisely Joyn,
For several Ends, to serve the same Design.
The Best, and of the Princes some were such,
Who thought the power of Monarchy too much:
Mistaken Men, and Patriots in their Hearts;
Not Wicked, but Seduc'd by Impious Arts.
By these the Springs of Property were bent,
And wound so high, they Crack'd the Government.
The next for Interest sought t'embroil the State,
TO sell their Duty at a dearer rate;
And make their Jewish Markets of the Throne,
Pretending puclick Good, to serve their own.
Others thought Kings an useless heavy Load,
Who Cost too much, and did too little Good.
These were for laying Honest David by,
On Principles of pure good Husbandry.
With them Joyn'd all th' Haranguers of the Throng,
That thought to get Preferment by the Tongue.
Who follows next, a double Danger bring,
Not only hating David, but the King,
The Solymæan Rout; well Verst of old,

In Godly Faction, and in Treason bold;
Cowring and Quaking at a Conqueror's Sword,
But Lofty to a Lawfull Prince Restor'd;
Saw with Disdain an Ethnick Plot begun,
And Scorn'd by Jebusites to be Out-done.
Hot Levites Headed these; who pul'd before
From the Ark, which in the Judges days they bore,
Resum'd their Cant, and with a Zealous Cry,
Pursu'd their old belov'd Theocracy.
Where Sanhedrin and Priest inslav'd the Nation,
And justifi'd their Spoils by Inspiration;
For who so fit for Reign as Aarons's race,
If once Dominion they could found in Grace?
These led the Pack; tho not of surest scent,
Yet deepest mouth'd against the Government.
A numerous Host of dreaming Saints succeed;
Of the true old Enthusiastick breed;
'Gainst Form and Order they their Power employ;
Nothing to Build and all things to Destroy.
But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little, and who talk too much.
These, out of meer instinct, they knew not why,
Ador'd their fathers God, and Property:
And, by the same blind benefit of Fate,
The Devil and the Jebusite did hate:
Born to be sav'd, even in their own despight;
Because they could not help believing right.
Such were the tools; but a whole Hydra more
Remains, of sprouting heads too long, to score.

Some of their Chiefs were Princes of the Land;
In the first Rank of these did Zimri stand:
A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all Mankinds Epitome.
Stiff in Opinions, always in the wrong;
Was every thing by starts, and nothing long:
But in the course of one revolving Moon,
Was Chymist, Fidler, States-Man, and Buffoon:
Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking;
Besides ten thousand freaks that dy'd in thinking.
Blest Madman, who could every hour employ,
With something New to wish, or to enjoy!
Rayling and praising were his usual Theams;
And both (to shew his Judgment) in Exreams:
So over Violent, or over Civil,
That every man, with him, was God or Devil.
In squandring Wealth was his peculiar Art:
Nothing went unrewarded, but Desert.
Begger'd by Fools, whom still he found too late:
He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.
He laught himself from Court, then sought Releif
By forming Parties, but coud ne're be Chief.

For, spight of him, the weight of Business fell
On Absalom and Achitophel:
Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not Faction, but of that was left.

Titles and Names 'twere tedious to Reherse
Of Lords, below the Dignity of Verse.
Wits warriors Common-wealthsmen, were the best:
Kind Husbands and meer Nobles all the rest.
And, therefore in the name of Dulness, be
The well hung Balaam and cold Caleb free.
And canting Nadab let Oblivion damn,
Who made new porridge for the Paschal Lamb.
Let Friendships holy band some Names assure:
Some their own Worth, and some let Scorn secure.
Nor shall the Rascall Rabble here have Place,
Whom Kings no Titles gave, and God no Grace:
Not Bull-fac'd Jonas, who could Statues draw
To mean Rebellion, and make Treason Law.
But he, thos bad, is follow'd by a worse,
The wretch, who Heavens Annointed dar'd to Curse.
Shimei, whose Youth did early Promise bring
Of Zeal to God, and Hatred to his King;
Did wisely from Expensive Sins refrain,
And never broke the Sabbath, but for Gain:
Nor ever was he known an Oath to vent,
Or Curse unless against the Government.
Thus, heaping Wealth, by the most ready way
Among the Jews, which was to Cheat and Pray;
The City, to reward his pious Hate
Against his Master, chose him Magistrate;
His Hand a Vare of Justice did uphold;
His Neck was loaded with Chain of Gold.
During his Office, Treason was no Crime.
The Sons of Belial had a glorious Time:
For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,
Yet lov'd his wicked Neighbour as himself:
When two or three were gathere'd to declaim
Against the Monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them.
And, if they Curst the King when he was by,
Would rather Curse, than break good Company.
If any durst his Factious Friends accuse,
He pact a Jury of dissenting Jews:
WHose fellow-feeling, in the godly Cause,
Would free the suffring Saint from Humane Laws.
For Laws are only made to Punish those,
Who serve the King, and to protect his Foes.
If any leisure time he had from Power,
(Because 'tis Sin to misimploy an hour);
His business was, by Writing, to Persuade,
That Kings were Useless, and a Clog to Trade:

And, that his noble Stile he might refine,
No Rechabite more shund the fumes of Wine.
Chaste were his Cellars, and his Shrieval Board
The Grossness of a City Feast abhor'd:
His Cooks, with long disuse, their Trade forgot;
Cool was his Kitchen, tho his Brains were hot.
Such frugal Vertue Malice may accuse,
But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews;
For towns once burnt, such Magistrates require
As dare not tempt Gods Providence by fire.
With Spiritual food he fed his Servants well,
But free from flesh, that made the Jews Rebel:
And Mose's Laws he held in more account,
For forty days of Fasting in the Mount.

To speak the rest, who better are forgot,
Would tyre a well-breath'd Witness of the Plot:
Yet, Corah, thou shalt from Oblivion pass;
Erect thy self thou Monumental Brass:
High as the Serpent of thy mettall made,
While Nations stand secure beneath thy shade.
What tho his Birth were base, yet Comets rise
From Earthy Vapours ere they shine in Skies.
Prodigious Actions may as well be done
By Weavers issue, as by Princes Son.
This Arch-Attestor for the Publick Good,
By that one Deed Enobles all his Bloud.
Who ever ask'd the Witnesses high race,
Whose Oath with Martyrdom did Stephen grace?
Ours was a Levite, and as times went then,
His Tribe were Godalmighty's Gentlemen.
Sunk were his Eyes, his Voyce was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither Cholerick was, nor Proud:
His long Chin prov'd his Wit, his Saintlike Grace
A Church Vermilion, and a Moses's face;
His Memory, miraculously great,
Could Plots, exceeding mans belief, repeat;
Which, therefore cannot be accounted Lies,
For human Wit could never such devise.
Some future Truths are mingled in his Book;
But, where the witness faild, the Prophet Spoke:
Some things like Visionary flights appear;
The Spirit caught him, up, the Lord knows where:
And gave him his Rabinical degree
Unknown to Foreign University.
His Judgment yet his Memory did excel;
Which piec'd his wonderous Evidence so well:
And suited to the temper of the times;
Then groaning under Jebusitick Crimes.
Let Israels foes suspect his heav'nly call,
And rashly judge his Writ Apocryphal;
Our Laws for such affronts have forfeits made:

He takes his life, who takes away his trade.
Were I my self in witness Corahs place,
The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace,
Should whet my memory, though once forgot,
To make him an Appendix of my Plot.
His Zeal to heav'n, made him his Prince despise,
And load his person with indignities:
But Zeal peculiar priviledge affords;
Indulging latitude to deeds and words.
And Corah might for Agag's murther call,
In terms as course as Samuel used to Saul.
What others in his Evidence did Joyn,
(The best that could be had for love or coyn,)
In Corah's own predicament will fall:
For witness is a Common Name to all.

Surrounded thus with Friends of every sort,
Deluded Absalom, forsakes the Court:
Impatient of high hopes, urg'd with renown,
And Fir'd with near possession of a Crown,
Th' admiring Croud are dazled with surprize,
And on his goodly person feed their eyes:
His joy conceal'd, he sets himself to show;
On each side bowing popularly low:
His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames,
And with familiar ease repeats their Names.
Thus, form'd by Nature, furnish'd out with Arts,
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts:
Then with a kind compassionating look,
And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoak:
Few words he said; but easy those and fit:
More slow than Hybla drops, and far more sweet.

I mourn, my Countrymen, your lost Estate;
Tho far unable to prevent your fate:
Behold a Banisht man, for your dear cause
Expos'd a prey to Arbitrary laws!
Yet oh! that I alone cou'd be undone,
Cut off from Empire, and no more a Son!
Now all your liberties a spoil are made:
Ægypt and Tyrus intercept your trade,
And Jebusites your Sacred Rites invade.
My Father, whom with reverence yet I name,
Charm'd into Ease, is careless of his Fame:
And, brib'd with petty summs of Forreign Gold,
Is grown in Bathsheba's Embraces old.
Exalts his Enemies, his Friends destroys:
And all his pow'r against himself employs.
He gives, and let him give my right away:
But why should he his own, and yours betray?
He only, he can make the Nation bleed,
And he alone from my revenge is freed.

Take then my tears (with that he wip'd his Eyes)
'Tis all the Aid my present power supplies:
No Court Informer can these Arms accuse,
These Arms may Sons against their Fathers use,
And, tis my wish, the next Successors Reign
May make no other Israelite complain.

Youth, Beauty, Graceful Action, seldom fail:
But Common Interest always will prevail:
And pity never Ceases to be shown
To him, who makes the peoples wrongs his own.
The Croud, (that still believes their Kings oppress)
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless:
Who now begins his Progress to ordain;
With Chariots, Horsmen, and a numerous train:
From East to West his Glories he displaies:
And, like the Sun, the promis'd land survays.
Fame runs before him, as the morning Star;
And shouts of Joy salute him from afar:
Each house receives him as a Guardian God;
And Consecrates the Place of his aboad:
But hospitable treats did most commend
Wise Issachar, his wealthy western friend.
This moving Court, that caught the peoples Eyes,
And seem'd but Pomp, did other ends disguise:
Achitophel had form'd it, with intent
To sound the depths, and fathom where it went:
The Peoples hearts, distinguish Friends from Foes;
And try their strength, before they came to blows:
Yet all was colour'd with a smooth pretence
Of specious love, and duty to their Prince.
Religion, and Redress of Grievances,
Two names, that always cheat and always please,
Are often urg'd; and good King David's life
Indanger'd by a Brother and a Wife.
Thus, in a Pageant Show, a Plot is made;
And Peace it self is War in Masquerade.
Oh foolish Israel! never warn'd by ill,
Still the same baite, and circumvented still!
Did ever men forsake their present ease,
In midst of health Imagine a desease;
Take pains Contingent mischiefs to foresee,
Make Heirs for Monarks, and for God decree?
What shall we think! can People give away
Both for themselves and Sons, their Native sway?
Then they are left Defensless, to the Sword
Of each unbounded Arbitrary Lord:
And Laws are vain, by which we Rights enjoy,
If Kings unquestiond can those laws destroy.
Yet, if the Crowd be Judge of fit and Just,
And Kings are onely Officers in trust,
Then this resuming Cov'nant was declar'd

When Kings were made, or is for ever bard:
If those who give the Scepter, could not tye
By their own deed their own Posterity,
How then coud Adam bind his future Race?
How coud his forfeit on mankind take place?
Or how coud heavnly Justice damn us all,
Who nere consented to our Fathers fall?
Then Kings are slaves to those whom they Command,
And Tenants to their Peoples pleasure stand.
Add, that the Pow'r for Property allowd,
Is mischeivously seated in the Crowd:
For who can be secure of private Right,
If Sovereign sway may be dissolv'd by might?
Nor is the Peoples Judgment always true:
The most may err as grosly as the few.
And faultless Kings run down, by Common Cry,
For Vice, Oppression, and Tyranny.
What Standard is there in a fickle rout,
Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out?
Nor only Crowds, but Sanherins may be
Infected with the publick Lunacy:
And Share the madness of Rebellious times,
To Murther Monarchs for Imagin'd crimes.
If they may Give and Take when e'r they please,
Not Kings alone, (the Godheads Images,)
But Government it self at length must fall
To Natures state; where all have Right to all.
Yet, grant our Lords the People Kings can make,
What Prudent men a setled Throne would shake?
For whatsoe'r their Sufferings were before,
That Change they Covet makes them suffer more.
All other Errors but disturb a State,
But Innovation is the Blow of Fate.
If ancient Fabricks nod, and threat to fall,
To Patch the Flows, and Buttress up the Wall,
Thus far 'tis Duty; but here fix the Mark:
For all beyond it is to touch our Ark.
To change Foundations, cast the Frame anew,
Is work for Rebels who base Ends pursue:
At once Divine and Humane Laws controul;
And mend the Parts by ruine of the Whole.
The Tampering World is subject to this Curse,
To Physick their Disease into a worse.

Now what Relief can Righteous David bring?
How Fatall 'tis to be too good a King!
Friends he has few, so high the Madness grows;
Who dare be such, must be the Peoples Foes:
Yet some there were, ev'n in the worst of days;
Some let me name, and Naming is to praise.

In this short File Barzillai first appears;

Barzillai crown'd with Honour and with Years:
Long since, the rising Rebells he withstood
In Regions Waste, beyond the Jordans Flood:
Unfortunately Brave to buoy the State;
But sinking underneath his Masters Fate:
In Exile with his Godlike Prince he Mourn'd;
For him he Suffer'd, and with him Return'd.
The Court he practis'd, not the Courtier's art:
Large was his Wealth, but larger was his Heart:
Which, well the Noblest Objects know to choose,
The Fighting Warriour, and Recording Muse.
His Bed coud once a Fruitfull Issue boast:
Now more than half a Father's Name is lost.
His Eldest Hope, with every Grace adorn'd,
By me (so Heav'n will have it) always Mourn'd,
And always honour'd, snatcht in Manhoods prime
By unequal Fates, and Providences crime:
Yet not before the Goal of Honour won,
All parts fulfill'd of Subject and of Son;
Swift was the Race, but short the Time to run.
Oh Narrow Circle, but of Pow'r Divine,
Scanted in Space, but perfect in thy Line!
By Sea, by Land, thy Matchless Worth was known;
Arms thy Delight, and War was all thy Own:
Thy force, Infus'd, the fainting Tyrians prop'd:
And Haughty Pharoah found his Fortune stop'd.
Oh Ancient Honour, Oh Unconquer'd Hand,
Whom Foes unpunish'd never coud withstand!
But Israel was unworthy of thy Name:
Short is the date of all Immoderate Fame.
It looks as Heaven our Ruine had design'd,
And durst not trust thy Fortune and thy Mind.
Now, free from Earth, thy disencumbred Soul
Mounts up, and leaves behind the Clouds and Starry Pole:
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring
To aid the guardian Angel of thy King.
Here stop my Muse, here cease thy painfull flight;
No Pinions can pursue Immortal height:
Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
And tell thy Soul she should have fled before;
Or fled she with his life, and left this Verse
To hang on her departed Patron's Herse?
Now take thy steepy flight from heaven, and see
If thou canst find on earth another He,
Another he would be too hard to find,
See then whom thou canst see not far behind.
Zadock the Priest, whom, shunning Power and Place,
His lowly mind advanc'd to David's Grace:
With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,
Of hospitable Soul and noble Stem;
Him of the Western dome, whose weighty sense
Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence.

The Prophets Sons by such example led,
To learning and to Loyalty were bred:
For Colleges on bounteous Kings depend,
And never Rebell was to Arts a friend.
To these succeed the Pillars of the Laws,
Who best cou'd plead and best can judge a Cause.
Next them a train of Loyal Peers ascend:
Sharp judging Adriel the Muses friend,
Himself a Muse-In Sanhedrins debate
True to his Prince; but not a Slave of State.
Whom David's love with Honours did adorn,
That from his disobedient Son were torn.
Jotham of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
Indew'd by nature, and by learning taught
To move Assemblies , who but onely try'd
The worse awhile, then chose the better side;
Nor chose alone, but turn'd the balance too;
So much the weight of one brave man can doe.
Hushai the friend of David in distress,
In publick storms of manly stedfastness;
By foreign treaties he inform'd his Youth;
And join'd experience to his native truth.
His frugal care supply'd the wanting Throne,
Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:
'Tis easy conduct when Exchequers flow,
But hard the task to manage well the low:
For Soveraign power is too deprest or high,
When Kings are forc'd to sell, or Crowds to buy.
Indulge one labour more my weary Muse,
For Amiel, who can Amiel's praise refuse?
Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet
In his own worth, and without Title great:
The Sanhedrin long time as chief he rul'd,
Their Reason guided and their Passion coold;
So dexterous was he in the Crown's defence,
So form'd to speak a Loyal Nations Sense,
That as their band was Israel's Tribes in small,
So fit was he to represent them all.
Now rasher Charioteers the Seat ascend,
Whose loose Carriers his steady Skill commennd:
They like th' unequal Ruler of the Day,
Misguide the Seasons and mistake the Way;
While he withdrawn at their mad Labour smiles,
And safe enjoys the Sabbath of his Toyls.

These were the chief, a small but faithful Band
Of Worthies, in the Breach who dar'd to stand,
And tempt th' united Fury of the Land.
With grief they view'd such powerful Engines bent,
To batter down the lawful Government.
A numerous Faction with pretended frights,
In Sanhedrins to plume the Regal Rights.

The true Successour from the Court remov'd:
The Plot, by hireling Witnesses improv'd.
These Ills they saw, and as their Duty bound,
They shew'd the King the danger of the Wound:
That no Concessions from the Throne woud please,
But Lenitives fomented the Disease:
That Absalom, ambitious of the Crown,
Was made the Lure to draw the People down:
That false Achitophel's pernitious Hate,
Had turn'd the Plot to Ruine Church and State:
The Councill violent, the Rabble worse
That Shimei taught Jerusalem to Curse.

With all these loads of Injuries opprest,
And long revolving, in his carefull Breast,
Th' event of things, at last his patience tir'd,
Thus from his Royal Throne by Heav'n inspir'd,
The God-like David spoke: with awfull fear
His Train their Maker in their Master hear.

'Thus long have I, by native mercy sway'd,
My wrongs dissembl'd, my revenge delay'd:
So willing to forgive th' Offending Age,
So much the Father did the King asswage.
But now so far my Clemency they slight,
Th' Offenders question my Forgiving Right.
That one was made for many, they contend;
But 'tis to Rule, for that's a Monarch's End.
They call my tenderness of Blood, my Fear:
Though Manly tempers can the longest bear.
Yet, since they will divert my Native course,
'Tis time to shew I am not Good by Force.
Those heap'd Affronts that haughty Subjects bring,
Are burthens for a Camel, not a King:
Kings are the publick Pillars of the State,
Born to sustain and prop the Nations weight:
If my Young Samson will pretend a Call
To shake the Column, let him share the Fall:
But oh that yet he woud repent and live!
How easie 'tis for Parents to forgive!
With how few Tears a Pardon might be won
From Nature, pleading for a Darling Son!
Poor pitied Youth, by my Paternal care,
Rais'd up to all the Height his Frame coud bear:
Had God ordain'd his fate for Empire born,
He woud have given his Soul another turn:
Gull'd with a Patriots name, whose Modern sense
Is one that woud by Law supplant his Prince:
The Peoples Brave, the Politicians Tool;
Never was Patriot yet, but was a Fool.
Whence comes it that Religion and the Laws
Should more be Absalom's than David's Cause?

His old Instructor, e're he lost his Place,
Was never thought indu'd with so much Grace.
Good Heav'ns, how Faction can a Patriot Paint!
My Rebel ever proves my Peoples Saint:
Would They impose an Heir upon the Throne?
Let Sanhedrins be taught to give their Own.
A King's at least a part of Government,
And mine as requisite as their Consent:
Without my Leave a future King to choose,
Infers a Right the Present to Depose:
True, they Petition me t'approve their Choise,
But Esau's Hands suite ill with Jacob's Voice.
My Pious Subjects for my Safety pray,
Which to Secure they take my Power away.
From Plots and Treasons Heaven preserve my years,
But Save me most from my Petitioners.
Unsatiate as the barren Womb or Grave;
God cannot Grant so much as they can Crave.
What then is left but with a Jealous Eye
To guard the Small remains of Royalty?
The Law shall still direct my peacefull Sway,
And the same Law teach Rebels to Obey:
Votes shall no more Establish'd Pow'r controul,
Such Votes as make a Part exceed the Whole;
No groundlesss Clamours shall my Friends remove,
Nor Crowds have power to Punish e're they Prove:
For Gods, and Godlike Kings their Care express,
Still to Defend their Servants in distress.
Oh that my Power to Saving were confin'd:
Why am I forc'd, like Heaven, against my mind,
To make Examples of another Kind?
Must I at length the Sword of Justice draw?
Oh curst Effects of necessary Law!
How ill my Fear they by my Mercy scan,
Beware the Fury of a Patient Man.
Law they require, let Law then shew her Face;
They coud not be content to look on Grace,
Her hinder parts, but with a daring Eye
To tempt the terror of her Front, and Dye.
To their own arts 'tis Righteously decreed
Those dire Artificers of Death shall bleed.
Against themselves their Witnesses will Swear,
Till Viper-like their Mother Plot they tear:
And suck for Nutriment that bloody gore
Which was their Principle of Life before.
Their Belial with their Belzebub will fight;
Thus on my Foes, my Foes shall do me Right:
Nor doubt th' event; for Factious crowds engage
In their first Onset, all their Brutal Rage;
Then, let 'em take an unresisted Course,
Retire and Traverse, and Delude their Force:
But when they stand all Breathless, urge the fight,

And rise upon 'em with redoubled might:
For Lawfull Pow'r is still Superiour found,
When long driven back, at length it stands the ground.'

He said. Th' Almighty, nodding, gave Consent;
And Peals of Thunder shook the Firmament.
Henceforth a Series of new time began,
The mighty Years in long Procession ran:
Once more the God-like David was Restor'd,
And willing Nations knew their Lawfull Lord.

John Dryden

Ah, how sweet it is to love!

AH, how sweet it is to love!
  Ah, how gay is young Desire!
And what pleasing pains we prove
  When we first approach Love's fire!
Pains of love be sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.

Sighs which are from lovers blown
  Do but gently heave the heart:
Ev'n the tears they shed alone
  Cure, like trickling balm, their smart:
Lovers, when they lose their breath,
Bleed away in easy death.

Love and Time with reverence use,
  Treat them like a parting friend;
Nor the golden gifts refuse
  Which in youth sincere they send:
For each year their price is more,
And they less simple than before.

Love, like spring-tides full and high,
  Swells in every youthful vein;
But each tide does less supply,
  Till they quite shrink in again:
If a flow in age appear,
'Tis but rain, and runs not clear.

John Dryden

Alexander's Feast; Or, The Power Of Music

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son—
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
(So should desert in arms be crowned);
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate like a blooming eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride:—
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave
None but the brave
None but the brave deserves the fair!

Timotheus placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire
With flying fingers touched the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
A dragon's fiery form belied the god
Sublime on radiant spires he rode
When he to fair Olympia prest,
And while he sought her snowy breast,
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
- The listening crowd admire the lofty sound!
A present deity! they shout around:
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound!
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes!
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,

Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And while he Heaven and Earth defied
Changed his hand and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes.
- With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of Chance below;
And now and then a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble,
Honour but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think, it worth enjoying:
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee!
- The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:
At length with love and wine at once opprest
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!

Break his bands of sleep asunder

And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head:
As awaked from the dead
And amazed he stares around.
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
See the Furies arisel
See the snakes that they rear
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
- The princes applaud with a furious joy:
And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen, fired another Troy!

- Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
- Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down!

John Dryden

An Epilogue

You saw your wife was chaste, yet throughly tried,
And, without doubt, you are hugely edified;
For, like our hero, whom we showed to-day,
You think no woman true, but in a play.
Love once did make a pretty kind of show;
Esteem and kindness in one breast would grow;
But 'twas heaven knows how many years ago.
Now some small chat, and guinea expectation,
Gets all the pretty creatures in the nation.
In comedy your little selves you meet;
'Tis Covent Garden drawn in Bridges Street.
Smile on our author then, if he has shown
A jolly nut-brown bastard of your own.
Ah! happy you, with ease and with delight,
Who act those follies, poets toil to write!
The sweating Muse does almost leave the chase;
She puffs, and hardly keeps your Protean vices pace.
Pinch you but in one vice, away you fly
To some new frisk of contrariety.
You roll like snow-balls, gathering as you run,
And get seven devils, when dispossessed of one.
Your Venus once was a Platonic queen,
Nothing of love beside the face was seen;
But every inch of her you now uncase,
And clap a vizard-mask upon the face;
For sins like these, the zealous of the land,
With little hair, and little or no band,
Declare how circulating pestilences
Watch, every twenty years, to snap offences.
Saturn, e'en now, takes doctoral degrees;
He'll do your work this summer without fees.
Let all the boxes, Phœbus, find thy grace,
And, ah, preserve the eighteen-penny place!
But for the pit confounders, let them go,
And find as little mercy as they show!
The actors thus, and thus thy poets pray;
For every critic saved, thou damn'st a play.

John Dryden

An Ode, On the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell

Late Servant to his Majesty, and Organist of the Chapel Royal, and of St. Peter's Westminster

I

Mark how the Lark and Linnet Sing,
With rival Notes
They strain their warbling Throats,
To welcome in the Spring.
But in the close of Night,
When Philomel begins her Heav'nly lay,
They cease their mutual spite,
Drink in her Music with delight,
And list'ning and silent, and silent and list'ning,
And list'ning and silent obey.

II

So ceas'd the rival Crew when Purcell came,
They Sung no more, or only Sung his Fame.
Struck dumb they all admir'd the God-like Man,
The God-like Man,
Alas, too soon retir'd,
As He too late began.
We beg not Hell, our Orpheus to restore,
Had He been there,
Their Sovereign's fear
Had sent Him back before.
The pow'r of Harmony too well they know,
He long e'er this had Tun'd their jarring Sphere,
And left no Hell below.

III

The Heav'nly Choir, who heard his Notes from high,
Let down the Scale of Music from the Sky:
They handed him along,
And all the way He taught, and all the way they Sung.
Ye Brethren of the Lyre, and tuneful Voice,
Lament his Lot: but at your own rejoice.
Now live secure and linger out your days,
The Gods are pleas'd alone with Purcell's Lays,
Nor know to mend their Choice.

John Dryden

Annus Mirabilis, The Year Of Wonders, 1666

1
In thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home and cruel when abroad:
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own;
Our King they courted, and our merchants awed.

2
Trade, which, like blood, should circularly flow,
Stopp'd in their channels, found its freedom lost:
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
And seem'd but shipwreck'd on so base a coast.

3
For them alone the heavens had kindly heat;
In eastern quarries ripening precious dew:
For them the Idumaean balm did sweat,
And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew.

4
The sun but seem'd the labourer of the year;
Each waxing moon supplied her watery store,
To swell those tides, which from the line did bear
Their brimful vessels to the Belgian shore.

5
Thus mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,
And swept the riches of the world from far;
Yet stoop'd to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong:
And this may prove our second Punic war.

6
What peace can be, where both to one pretend?
(But they more diligent, and we more strong)
Or if a peace, it soon must have an end;
For they would grow too powerful, were it long.

7
Behold two nations, then, engaged so far
That each seven years the fit must shake each land:
Where France will side to weaken us by war,
Who only can his vast designs withstand.

8
See how he feeds the Iberian with delays,
To render us his timely friendship vain:
And while his secret soul on Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Spain.

9
Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them, whose cause he seems to take in hand;
And prudently would make them lords at sea,

To whom with ease he can give laws by land.

10
This saw our King; and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanced to and fro:
He grieved the land he freed should be oppress'd,
And he less for it than usurpers do.

11
His generous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay;
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew,
Not to be gather'd but by birds of prey.

12
The loss and gain each fatally were great;
And still his subjects call'd aloud for war;
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
Each, other's poise and counterbalance are.

13
He first survey'd the charge with careful eyes,
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain;
Yet judged, like vapours that from limbecks rise,
It would in richer showers descend again.

14
At length resolved to assert the watery ball,
He in himself did whole Armadoes bring:
Him aged seamen might their master call,
And choose for general, were he not their king.

15
It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey;
So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.

16
To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

17
Whether they unctuous exhalations are,
Fired by the sun, or seeming so alone:
Or each some more remote and slippery star,
Which loses footing when to mortals shown.

18
Or one, that bright companion of the sun,

Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born king;
And now a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring.

19
Victorious York did first with famed success,
To his known valour make the Dutch give place:
Thus Heaven our monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his royal race.

20
But since it was decreed, auspicious King,
In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doom'd that Lawson should be slain.

21
Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,
Whom sea-green Sirens from the rocks lament;
Thus as an offering for the Grecian state,
He first was kill'd who first to battle went.

22
Their chief blown up in air, not waves, expired,
To which his pride presumed to give the law:
The Dutch confess'd Heaven present, and retired,
And all was Britain the wide ocean saw.

23
To nearest ports their shatter'd ships repair,
Where by our dreadful cannon they lay awed:
So reverently men quit the open air,
When thunder speaks the angry gods abroad.

24
And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the rising sun:
And precious sand from southern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.

25
Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
Their waylaid wealth to Norway's coasts they bring:
There first the north's cold bosom spices bore,
And winter brooded on the eastern spring.

26
By the rich scent we found our perfumed prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie;
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

27
Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake the unequal war:
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

28
These fight like husbands, but like lovers those:
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy:
And to such height their frantic passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy.

29
Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them fly:
Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.

30
And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In Heaven's inclemency some ease we find:
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

31
Nor wholly lost we so deserved a prey;
For storms repenting part of it restored:
Which, as a tribute from the Baltic sea,
The British ocean sent her mighty lord.

32
Go, mortals, now; and vex yourselves in vain
For wealth, which so uncertainly must come:
When what was brought so far, and with such pain,
Was only kept to lose it nearer home.

33
The son, who twice three months on th' ocean tost,
Prepared to tell what he had pass'd before,
Now sees in English ships the Holland coast,
And parents' arms in vain stretch'd from the shore.

34
This careful husband had been long away,
Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn;
Who on their fingers learn'd to tell the day
On which their father promised to return.

35
Such are the proud designs of human kind,
And so we suffer shipwreck every where!
Alas, what port can such a pilot find,

Who in the night of fate must blindly steer!

36
The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill,
Heaven, in his bosom, from our knowledge hides:
And draws them in contempt of human skill,
Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides.

37
Let Munster's prelate ever be accurst,
In whom we seek the German faith in vain:
Alas, that he should teach the English first,
That fraud and avarice in the Church could reign!

38
Happy, who never trust a stranger's will,
Whose friendship's in his interest understood!
Since money given but tempts him to be ill,
When power is too remote to make him good.

39
Till now, alone the mighty nations strove;
The rest, at gaze, without the lists did stand:
And threatening France, placed like a painted Jove,
Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand.

40
That eunuch guardian of rich Holland's trade,
Who envies us what he wants power to enjoy;
Whose noiseful valour does no foe invade,
And weak assistance will his friends destroy.

41
Offended that we fought without his leave,
He takes this time his secret hate to show:
Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive,
As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe.

42
With France, to aid the Dutch, the Danes unite:
France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave,
But when with one three nations join to fight,
They silently confess that one more brave.

43
Lewis had chased the English from his shore;
But Charles the French as subjects does invite:
Would Heaven for each some Solomon restore,
Who, by their mercy, may decide their right!

44
Were subjects so but only by their choice,

And not from birth did forced dominion take,
Our prince alone would have the public voice;
And all his neighbours' realms would deserts make.

45
He without fear a dangerous war pursues,
Which without rashness he began before:
As honour made him first the danger choose,
So still he makes it good on virtue's score.

46
The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,
Who, in that bounty, to themselves are kind:
So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise,
And in his plenty their abundance find.

47
With equal power he does two chiefs create,
Two such as each seem'd worthiest when alone;
Each able to sustain a nation's fate,
Since both had found a greater in their own.

48
Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,
Yet neither envious of the other's praise;
Their duty, faith, and interest too the same,
Like mighty partners equally they raise.

49
The prince long time had courted fortune's love,
But once possess'd, did absolutely reign:
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove,
And conquer'd first those beauties they would gain.

50
The Duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain,
That Carthage, which he ruin'd, rise once more;
And shook aloft the fasces of the main,
To fright those slaves with what they felt before.

51
Together to the watery camp they haste,
Whom matrons passing to their children show:
Infants' first vows for them to heaven are cast,
And future people bless them as they go.

52
With them no riotous pomp, nor Asian train,
To infect a navy with their gaudy fears;
To make slow fights, and victories but vain:
But war severely like itself appears.

53
Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,
They make that warmth in others they expect;
Their valour works like bodies on a glass,
And does its image on their men project.

54
Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,
In number, and a famed commander, bold:
The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear,
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold.

55
The Duke, less numerous, but in courage more,
On wings of all the winds to combat flies:
His murdering guns a loud defiance roar,
And bloody crosses on his flag-staffs rise.

56
Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight;
Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air:
The Elean plains could boast no nobler sight,
When struggling champions did their bodies bare.

57
Borne each by other in a distant line,
The sea-built forts in dreadful order move:
So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,
But lands unfix'd, and floating nations strove.

58
Now pass'd, on either side they nimbly tack;
Both strive to intercept and guide the wind:
And, in its eye, more closely they come back,
To finish all the deaths they left behind.

59
On high-raised decks the haughty Belgians ride,
Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go:
Such port the elephant bears, and so defied
By the rhinoceros, her unequal foe.

60
And as the build, so different is the fight;
Their mounting shot is on our sails design'd:
Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light,
And through the yielding planks a passage find.

61
Our dreaded admiral from far they threat,
Whose batter'd rigging their whole war receives:
All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,

He stands, and sees below his scatter'd leaves.

62
Heroes of old, when wounded, shelter sought;
But he who meets all danger with disdain,
Even in their face his ship to anchor brought,
And steeple-high stood propt upon the main.

63
At this excess of courage, all amazed,
The foremost of his foes awhile withdraw:
With such respect in enter'd Rome they gazed,
Who on high chairs the god-like fathers saw.

64
And now, as where Patroclus' body lay,
Here Trojan chiefs advanced, and there the Greek
Ours o'er the Duke their pious wings display,
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek.

65
Meantime his busy mariners he hastes,
His shatter'd sails with rigging to restore;
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before.

66
Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,
More fierce the important quarrel to decide:
Like swans, in long array his vessels show,
Whose crests advancing do the waves divide.

67
They charge, recharge, and all along the sea
They drive, and squander the huge Belgian fleet;
Berkeley alone, who nearest danger lay,
Did a like fate with lost Creusa meet.

68
The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they ashamed to leave:
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.

69
In the English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader's fame:
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And, slumbering, smile at the imagined flame.

70
Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,

Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie;
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run;
Vast bulks which little souls but ill supply.

71
In dreams they fearful precipices tread:
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore:
Or in dark churches walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

72
The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,
Till from their main-top joyful news they hear
Of ships, which by their mould bring new supplies,
And in their colours Belgian lions bear.

73
Our watchful general had discern'd from far
This mighty succour, which made glad the foe:
He sigh'd, but, like a father of the war,
His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow.

74
His wounded men he first sends off to shore,
Never till now unwilling to obey:
They, not their wounds, but want of strength deplore,
And think them happy who with him can stay.

75
Then to the rest, Rejoice, said he, to-day;
In you the fortune of Great Britain lies:
Among so brave a people, you are they
Whom Heaven has chose to fight for such a prize.

76
If number English courages could quell,
We should at first have shunn'd, not met, our foes,
Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell:
Courage from hearts and not from numbers grows.

77
He said, nor needed more to say: with haste
To their known stations cheerfully they go;
And all at once, disdaining to be last,
Solicit every gale to meet the foe.

78
Nor did the encouraged Belgians long delay,
But bold in others, not themselves, they stood:
So thick, our navy scarce could steer their way,
But seem'd to wander in a moving wood.

79
Our little fleet was now engaged so far,
That, like the sword-fish in the whale, they fought:
The combat only seem'd a civil war,
Till through their bowels we our passage wrought.

80
Never had valour, no not ours, before
Done aught like this upon the land or main,
Where not to be o'ercome was to do more
Than all the conquests former kings did gain.

81
The mighty ghosts of our great Harries rose,
And armed Edwards look'd with anxious eyes,
To see this fleet among unequal foes,
By which fate promised them their Charles should rise.

82
Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear,
And raking chase-guns through our sterns they send:
Close by their fire ships, like jackals appear
Who on their lions for the prey attend.

83
Silent in smoke of cannon they come on:
Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide:
In these the height of pleased revenge is shown,
Who burn contented by another's side.

84
Sometimes from fighting squadrons of each fleet,
Deceived themselves, or to preserve some friend,
Two grappling AEtnas on the ocean meet,
And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

85 Now at each tack our little fleet grows less;
And like maim'd fowl, swim lagging on the main:
Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
While they lose cheaper than the English gain.

86
Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,
Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
And, with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind.

87
The dastard crow that to the wood made wing,
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud caws her craven kind does bring,
Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird.

88
Among the Dutch thus Albemarle did fare:
He could not conquer, and disdain'd to fly;
Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Caesar, decently to die.

89
Yet pity did his manly spirit move,
To see those perish who so well had fought;
And generously with his despair he strove,
Resolved to live till he their safety wrought.

90
Let other muses write his prosperous fate,
Of conquer'd nations tell, and kings restored;
But mine shall sing of his eclipsed estate,
Which, like the sun's, more wonders does afford.

91
He drew his mighty frigates all before,
On which the foe his fruitless force employs:
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore
Remote from guns, as sick men from the noise.

92
His fiery cannon did their passage guide,
And following smoke obscured them from the foe:
Thus Israel safe from the Egyptian's pride,
By flaming pillars, and by clouds did go.

93
Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,
But here our courages did theirs subdue:
So Xenophon once led that famed retreat,
Which first the Asian empire overthrew.

94
The foe approach'd; and one for his bold sin
Was sunk; as he that touch'd the ark was slain:
The wild waves master'd him and suck'd him in,
And smiling eddies dimpled on the main.

95
This seen, the rest at awful distance stood:
As if they had been there as servants set
To stay, or to go on, as he thought good,
And not pursue, but wait on his retreat.

96
So Lybian huntsmen, on some sandy plain,
From shady coverts roused, the lion chase:

The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
And slowly moves, unknowing to give place.

97
But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail, and swiftly turns him round;
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground.

98
Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night;
Now hissing waters the quench'd guns restore;
And weary waves, withdrawing from the fight,
Lie lull'd and panting on the silent shore:

99
The moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,
Where, while her beams like glittering silver play,
Upon the deck our careful general stood,
And deeply mused on the succeeding day.

100
That happy sun, said he, will rise again,
Who twice victorious did our navy see:
And I alone must view him rise in vain,
Without one ray of all his star for me.

101
Yet like an English general will I die,
And all the ocean make my spacious grave:
Women and cowards on the land may lie;
The sea's a tomb that's proper for the brave.

102
Restless he pass'd the remnant of the night,
Till the fresh air proclaimed the morning nigh:
And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,
With paler fires beheld the eastern sky.

103
But now, his stores of ammunition spent,
His naked valour is his only guard;
Rare thunders are from his dumb cannon sent,
And solitary guns are scarcely heard.

104
Thus far had fortune power, here forced to stay,
Nor longer durst with virtue be at strife:
This as a ransom Albemarle did pay,
For all the glories of so great a life.

105

For now brave Rupert from afar appears,
Whose waving streamers the glad general knows:
With full spread sails his eager navy steers,
And every ship in swift proportion grows.

106
The anxious prince had heard the cannon long,
And from that length of time dire omens drew
Of English overmatch'd, and Dutch too strong,
Who never fought three days, but to pursue.

107
Then, as an eagle, who, with pious care
Was beating widely on the wing for prey,
To her now silent eyrie does repair,
And finds her callow infants forced away:

108
Stung with her love, she stoops upon the plain,
The broken air loud whistling as she flies:
She stops and listens, and shoots forth again,
And guides her pinions by her young ones' cries.

109
With such kind passion hastes the prince to fight,
And spreads his flying canvas to the sound;
Him, whom no danger, were he there, could fright,
Now absent every little noise can wound.

110
As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry,
And gape upon the gather'd clouds for rain,
And first the martlet meets it in the sky,
And with wet wings joys all the feather'd train.

111
With such glad hearts did our despairing men
Salute the appearance of the prince's fleet;
And each ambitiously would claim the ken,
That with first eyes did distant safety meet.

112
The Dutch, who came like greedy hinds before,
To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield,
Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar,
And sheets of lightning blast the standing field.

113
Full in the prince's passage, hills of sand,
And dangerous flats in secret ambush lay;
Where the false tides skim o'er the cover'd land,
And seamen with dissembled depths betray.

114
The wily Dutch, who, like fallen angels, fear'd
This new Messiah's coming, there did wait,
And round the verge their braving vessels steer'd,
To tempt his courage with so fair a bait.

115
But he, unmoved, contemns their idle threat,
Secure of fame whene'er he please to fight:
His cold experience tempers all his heat,
And inbred worth doth boasting valour slight.

116
Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
And he the substance, not the appearance chose
To rescue one such friend he took more pride,
Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes.

117
But when approach'd, in strict embraces bound,
Rupert and Albemarle together grow;
He joys to have his friend in safety found,
Which he to none but to that friend would owe.

118
The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supplied,
Now long to execute their spleenful will;
And, in revenge for those three days they tried,
Wish one, like Joshua's, when the sun stood still.

119
Thus reinforced, against the adverse fleet,
Still doubling ours, brave Rupert leads the way:
With the first blushes of the morn they meet,
And bring night back upon the new-born day.

120
His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,
And his loud guns speak thick like angry men:
It seem'd as slaughter had been breathed all night,
And Death new pointed his dull dart again.

121
The Dutch too well his mighty conduct knew,
And matchless courage since the former fight;
Whose navy like a stiff-stretch'd cord did show,
Till he bore in and bent them into flight.

122
The wind he shares, while half their fleet offends
His open side, and high above him shows:

Upon the rest at pleasure he descends,
And doubly harm'd he double harms bestows.

123
Behind the general mends his weary pace,
And sullenly to his revenge he sails:
So glides some trodden serpent on the grass,
And long behind his wounded volume trails.

124
The increasing sound is borne to either shore,
And for their stakes the throwing nations fear:
Their passions double with the cannons' roar,
And with warm wishes each man combats there.

125
Plied thick and close as when the fight begun,
Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away;
So sicken waning moons too near the sun,
And blunt their crescents on the edge of day.

126
And now reduced on equal terms to fight,
Their ships like wasted patrimonies show;
Where the thin scattering trees admit the light,
And shun each other's shadows as they grow.

127
The warlike prince had sever'd from the rest
Two giant ships, the pride of all the main;
Which with his one so vigorously he prest,
And flew so home they could not rise again.

128
Already batter'd, by his lee they lay,
In rain upon the passing winds they call:
The passing winds through their torn canvas play,
And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall.

129
Their open'd sides receive a gloomy light,
Dreadful as day let into shades below:
Without, grim Death rides barefaced in their sight,
And urges entering billows as they flow.

130
When one dire shot, the last they could supply,
Close by the board the prince's mainmast bore:
All three now helpless by each other lie,
And this offends not, and those fear no more.

131

So have I seen some fearful hare maintain
A course, till tired before the dog she lay:
Who, stretch'd behind her, pants upon the plain,
Past power to kill, as she to get away.

132
With his loll'd tongue he faintly licks his prey;
His warm breath blows her flix[44] up as she lies;
She trembling creeps upon the ground away,
And looks back to him with beseeching eyes.

133
The prince unjustly does his stars accuse,
Which hinder'd him to push his fortune on;
For what they to his courage did refuse,
By mortal valour never must be done.

134
This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes,
And warns his tatter'd fleet to follow home;
Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,
Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome.

135
The general's force, as kept alive by fight,
Now not opposed, no longer can pursue:
Lasting till heaven had done his courage right;
When he had conquer'd he his weakness knew.

136
He casts a frown on the departing foe,
And sighs to see him quit the watery field:
His stern fix'd eyes no satisfaction show,
For all the glories which the fight did yield.

137
Though, as when fiends did miracles avow,
He stands confess'd e'en by the boastful Dutch:
He only does his conquest disavow,
And thinks too little what they found too much.

138
Return'd, he with the fleet resolved to stay;
No tender thoughts of home his heart divide;
Domestic joys and cares he puts away;
For realms are households which the great must guide.

139
As those who unripe veins in mines explore,
On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,
And know it will be gold another day:

140
So looks our monarch on this early fight,
Th' essay and rudiments of great success;
Which all-maturing time must bring to light,
While he, like Heaven, does each day's labour bless.

141
Heaven ended not the first or second day,
Yet each was perfect to the work design'd;
God and king's work, when they their work survey,
A passive aptness in all subjects find.

142
In burden'd vessels first, with speedy care,
His plenteous stores do seasoned timber send;
Thither the brawny carpenters repair,
And as the surgeons of maim'd ships attend.

143
With cord and canvas from rich Hamburgh sent,
His navy's molted wings he imps once more:
Tall Norway fir, their masts in battle spent,
And English oak, sprung leaks and planks restore.

144
All hands employ'd, the royal work grows warm:
Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm.
And some on bells of tasted lilies play.

145
With gluey wax some new foundations lay
Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung:
Some arm'd, within doors upon duty stay,
Or tend the sick, or educate the young.

146
So here some pick out bullets from the sides,
Some drive old oakum through each seam and rift:
Their left hand does the calking-iron guide,
The rattling mallet with the right they lift.

147
With boiling pitch another near at hand,
From friendly Sweden brought, the seams instops:
Which well paid o'er, the salt sea waves withstand,
And shakes them from the rising beak in drops.

148
Some the gall'd ropes with dauby marline bind,
Or sear-cloth masts with strong tarpaulin coats:

To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind,
And one below their ease or stiffness notes.

149
Our careful monarch stands in person by,
His new-cast cannons' firmness to explore:
The strength of big-corn'd powder loves to try,
And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore.

150
Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men,
And ships which all last winter were abroad;
And such as fitted since the fight had been,
Or, new from stocks, were fallen into the road.

151
The goodly London in her gallant trim
(The Phoenix daughter of the vanish'd old).
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.

152
Her flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire;
The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

153
With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves;
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

154
This martial present, piously design'd,
The loyal city give their best-loved King:
And with a bounty ample as the wind,
Built, fitted, and maintain'd, to aid him bring.

155
By viewing Nature, Nature's handmaid, Art,
Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow:
Thus fishes first to shipping did impart,
Their tail the rudder, and their head the prow.

156
Some log perhaps upon the waters swam,
An useless drift, which, rudely cut within,
And, hollow'd, first a floating trough became,
And cross some rivulet passage did begin.

157

In shipping such as this, the Irish kern,
And untaught Indian, on the stream did glide:
Ere sharp-keel'd boats to stem the flood did learn,
Or fin-like oars did spread from either side.

158
Add but a sail, and Saturn so appear'd,
When from lost empire he to exile went,
And with the golden age to Tiber steer'd,
Where coin and commerce first he did invent.

159
Rude as their ships was navigation then;
No useful compass or meridian known;
Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,
And knew no North but when the Pole-star shone.

160
Of all who since have used the open sea,
Than the bold English none more fame have won:
Beyond the year, and out of heaven's high way,
They make discoveries where they see no sun.

161
But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,
Shall in this age to Britain first be shown,
And hence be to admiring nations taught.

162
The ebbs of tides and their mysterious flow,
We, as art's elements, shall understand,
And as by line upon the ocean go,
Whose paths shall be familiar as the land.

163
Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,
By which remotest regions are allied;
Which makes one city of the universe,
Where some may gain, and all may be supplied.

164
Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
And view the ocean leaning on the sky:
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.

165
This I foretell from your auspicious care,
Who great in search of God and nature grow;
Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,
Since best to praise his works is best to know.

166
O truly royal! who behold the law
And rule of beings in your Maker's mind:
And thence, like limbecks, rich ideas draw,
To fit the levell'd use of human-kind.

197
But first the toils of war we must endure,
And from the injurious Dutch redeem the seas.
War makes the valiant of his right secure,
And gives up fraud to be chastised with ease.

168
Already were the Belgians on our coast,
Whose fleet more mighty every day became
By late success, which they did falsely boast,
And now by first appearing seem'd to claim.

169
Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,
They knew to manage war with wise delay:
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross,
And by their pride their prudence did betray.

170
Nor stay'd the English long; but, well supplied,
Appear as numerous as the insulting foe:
The combat now by courage must be tried,
And the success the braver nation show.

171
There was the Plymouth squadron now come in,
Which in the Straits last winter was abroad;
Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been,
And on the midland sea the French had awed.

172
Old expert Allen, loyal all along,
Famed for his action on the Smyrna fleet:
And Holmes, whose name shall live in epic song,
While music numbers, or while verse has feet.

173
Holmes, the Achates of the general's fight;
Who first bewitch'd our eyes with Guinea gold;
As once old Cato in the Roman sight
The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold.

174
With him went Spragge, as bountiful as brave,
Whom his high courage to command had brought:

Harman, who did the twice-fired Harry save,
And in his burning ship undaunted fought.

175
Young Hollis, on a Muse by Mars begot,
Born, Caesar-like, to write and act great deeds:
Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,
His right hand doubly to his left succeeds.

176
Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn:
And, though to me unknown, they sure fought well
Whom Rupert led, and who were British born.

177
Of every size an hundred fighting sail:
So vast the navy now at anchor rides,
That underneath it the press'd waters fail,
And with its weight it shoulders off the tides.

178
Now anchors weigh'd, the seamen shout so shrill,
That heaven and earth and the wide ocean rings:
A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill,
And rests in those high beds his downy wings.

179
The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw,
And durst not bide it on the English coast:
Behind their treacherous shallows they withdraw,
And there lay snares to catch the British host.

180
So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
Deep ambush'd in her silent den does lie:
And feels far off the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly.

181
Then if at last she find him fast beset,
She issues forth and runs along her loom:
She joys to touch the captive in her net,
And drags the little wretch in triumph home.

182
The Belgians hoped, that, with disorder'd haste,
Our deep-cut keels upon the sands might run:
Or, if with caution leisurely were past,
Their numerous gross might charge us one by one.

183

But with a fore-wind pushing them above,
And swelling tide that heaved them from below,
O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move,
And with spread sails to welcome battle go.

184
It seem'd as there the British Neptune stood,
With all his hosts of waters at command.
Beneath them to submit the officious flood;
And with his trident shoved them off the sand.

185
To the pale foes they suddenly draw near,
And summon them to unexpected fight:
They start like murderers when ghosts appear,
And draw their curtains in the dead of night.

186
Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,
The midmost battles hastening up behind,
Who view far off the storm of falling sleet,
And hear their thunder rattling in the wind.

187 At length the adverse admirals appear;
The two bold champions of each country's right:
Their eyes describe the lists as they come near,
And draw the lines of death before they fight.

188
The distance judged for shot of every size,
The linstocks touch, the ponderous ball expires:
The vigorous seaman every port-hole plies,
And adds his heart to every gun he fires!

189
Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side,
For honour, which they seldom sought before!
But now they by their own vain boasts were tied,
And forced at least in show to prize it more.

190
But sharp remembrance on the English part,
And shame of being match'd by such a foe,
Rouse conscious virtue up in every heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so.

191
Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain,
Which did two generals' fates, and Caesar's bear:
Each several ship a victory did gain,
As Rupert or as Albemarle were there.

192
Their batter'd admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthank'd by ours for his unfinish'd fight;
But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew,
Who call'd that Providence which we call'd flight.

193
Never did men more joyfully obey,
Or sooner understood the sign to fly:
With such alacrity they bore away,
As if to praise them all the States stood by.

194
O famous leader of the Belgian fleet,
Thy monument inscribed such praise shall wear,
As Varro, timely flying, once did meet,
Because he did not of his Rome despair.

195
Behold that navy, which a while before,
Provoked the tardy English close to fight,
Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,
As larks lie, dared, to shun the hobby's flight.

196
Whoe'er would English monuments survey,
In other records may our courage know:
But let them hide the story of this day,
Whose fame was blemish'd by too base a foe.

197
Or if too busily they will inquire
Into a victory which we disdain;
Then let them know the Belgians did retire
Before the patron saint of injured Spain.

198
Repenting England this revengeful day
To Philip's manes did an offering bring:
England, which first by leading them astray,
Hatch'd up rebellion to destroy her King.

199
Our fathers bent their baneful industry,
To check a, monarchy that slowly grew;
But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,
Whose rising power to swift dominion flew.

200
In fortune's empire blindly thus we go,
And wander after pathless destiny;
Whose dark resorts since prudence cannot know,

In vain it would provide for what shall be.

201
But whate'er English to the bless'd shall go,
And the fourth Harry or first Orange meet;
Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe,
And him detesting a Batavian fleet.

202
Now on their coasts our conquering navy rides,
Waylays their merchants, and their land besets:
Each day new wealth without their care provides;
They lie asleep with prizes in their nets.

203
So, close behind some promontory lie
The huge leviathans to attend their prey;
And give no chase, but swallow in the fry,
Which through their gaping jaws mistake the way.

204
Nor was this all: in ports and roads remote,
Destructive fires among whole fleets we send:
Triumphant flames upon the water float,
And out-bound ships at home their voyage end.

205
Those various squadrons variously design'd,
Each vessel freighted with a several load,
Each squadron waiting for a several wind,
All find but one, to burn them in the road.

206
Some bound for Guinea, golden sand to find,
Bore all the gauds the simple natives wear;
Some for the pride of Turkish courts design'd,
For folded turbans finest Holland bear.

207
Some English wool, vex'd in a Belgian loom,
And into cloth of spungy softness made,
Did into France, or colder Denmark, doom,
To ruin with worse ware our staple trade.

208
Our greedy seamen rummage every hold,
Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest;
And, as the priests who with their gods make bold,
Take what they like, and sacrifice the rest.

209
But ah! how insincere are all our joys!

Which, sent from heaven, like lightning make no stay;
Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,
Or grief, sent post, o'ertakes them on the way.

210
Swell'd with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted power to cross,
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low,
And feed their envious eyes with English loss.

211
Each element His dread command obeys,
Who makes or ruins with a smile or frown;
Who, as by one he did our nation raise,
So now he with another pulls us down.

212
Yet London, empress of the northern clime,
By an high fate thou greatly didst expire;
Great as the world's, which, at the death of time
Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by fire!

213
As when some dire usurper Heaven provides,
To scourge his country with a lawless sway;
His birth perhaps some petty village hides,
And sets his cradle out of fortune's way.

214
Till fully ripe his swelling fate breaks out,
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on:
His prince, surprised at first, no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

215
Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,
Which, in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire,
And straight to palaces and temples spread.

216
The diligence of trades and noiseful gain,
And luxury more late, asleep were laid:
All was the night's; and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of nature did invade.

217
In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose;
And first few scattering sparks about were blown,
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose.

218
Then in some close-pent room it crept along,
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed;
Till the infant monster, with devouring strong,
Walk'd boldly upright with exalted head.

219
Now like some rich or mighty murderer,
Too great for prison, which he breaks with gold;
Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear,
And dares the world to tax him with the old:

220
So 'scapes the insulting fire his narrow jail,
And makes small outlets into open air:
There the fierce winds his tender force assail,
And beat him downward to his first repair.

221
The winds, like crafty courtesans, withheld
His flames from burning, but to blow them more:
And every fresh attempt he is repell'd
With faint denials weaker than before.

222
And now no longer letted of his prey,
He leaps up at it with enraged desire:
O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
And nods at every house his threatening fire.

223
The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend,
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice:
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

224
Our guardian angel saw them where they sate
Above the palace of our slumbering king:
He sigh'd, abandoning his charge to fate,
And, drooping, oft look'd back upon the wing.

225
At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze
Call'd up some waking lover to the sight;
And long it was ere he the rest could raise,
Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night.

226
The next to danger, hot pursued by fate,
Half-clothed, half-naked, hastily retire:
And frighted mothers strike their breasts too late,

For helpless infants left amidst the fire.

227Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near;
Now murmuring noises rise in every street:
The more remote run stumbling with their fear,
And in the dark men jostle as they meet.

228
So weary bees in little cells repose;
But if night-robbers lift the well-stored hive,
An humming through their waxen city grows,
And out upon each other's wings they drive.

229
Now streets grow throng'd and busy as by day:
Some run for buckets to the hallow'd quire:
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play;
And some more bold mount ladders to the fire.

230
In vain: for from the east a Belgian wind
His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent;
The flames impell'd soon left their foes behind,
And forward with a wanton fury went.

231
A quay of fire ran all along the shore,
And lighten'd all the river with a blaze:
The waken'd tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.

232
Old father Thames raised up his reverend head,
But fear'd the fate of Simois would return:
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed,
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

233
The fire, meantime, walks in a broader gross;
To either hand his wings he opens wide:
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross,
And plays his longing flames on the other side.

234
At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take;
Now with long necks from side to side they feed:
At length, grown strong, their mother-fire forsake,
And a new colony of flames succeed.

235
To every nobler portion of the town
The curling billows roll their restless tide:

In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies, unopposed, for prey divide.

236
One mighty squadron with a side-wind sped,
Through narrow lanes his cumber'd fire does haste,
By powerful charms of gold and silver led,
The Lombard bankers and the 'Change to waste.

237
Another backward to the Tower would go,
And slowly eats his way against the wind:
But the main body of the marching foe
Against the imperial palace is design'd.

238
Now day appears, and with the day the King,
Whose early care had robb'd him of his rest:
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring,
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast.

239 Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke
With gloomy pillars cover all the place;
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks, that drive against his sacred face.

240
More than his guards, his sorrows made him known,
And pious tears, which down his cheeks did shower;
The wretched in his grief forgot their own;
So much the pity of a king has power.

241
He wept the flames of what he loved so well,
And what so well had merited his love:
For never prince in grace did more excel,
Or royal city more in duty strove.

242
Nor with an idle care did he behold:
Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress;
He cheers the fearful, and commends the bold,
And makes despairers hope for good success.

243
Himself directs what first is to be done,
And orders all the succours which they bring,
The helpful and the good about him run,
And form an army worthy such a king.

244
He sees the dire contagion spread so fast,

That, where it seizes, all relief is vain:
And therefore must unwillingly lay waste
That country, which would else the foe maintain.

245
The powder blows up all before the fire:
The amazed flames stand gather'd on a heap;
And from the precipice's brink retire,
Afraid to venture on so large a leap.

246
Thus fighting fires a while themselves consume,
But straight, like Turks forced on to win or die,
They first lay tender bridges of their fume,
And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly.

247
Part stay for passage, till a gust of wind
Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet:
Part creeping under ground their journey blind,
And climbing from below their fellows meet.

248
Thus to some desert plain, or old woodside,
Dire night-hags come from far to dance their round;
And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride,
Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground.

249
No help avails: for hydra-like, the fire
Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way;
And scarce the wealthy can one half retire,
Before he rushes in to share the prey.

250
The rich grow suppliant, and the poor grow proud;
Those offer mighty gain, and these ask more:
So void of pity is the ignoble crowd,
When others' ruin may increase their store.

251
As those who live by shores with joy behold
Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh;
And from the rocks leap down for shipwreck'd gold,
And seek the tempests which the others fly:

252
So these but wait the owners' last despair,
And what's permitted to the flames invade;
Even from their jaws they hungry morsels tear,
And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade.

253
The days were all in this lost labour spent;
And when the weary king gave place to night,
His beams he to his royal brother lent,
And so shone still in his reflective light.

254
Night came, but without darkness or repose,--
A dismal picture of the general doom,
Where souls, distracted when the trumpet blows,
And half unready, with their bodies come.

255
Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wandering friends:
Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends.

256
Those who have none, sit round where once it was,
And with full eyes each wonted room require;
Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
As murder'd men walk where they did expire.

257
Some stir up coals, and watch the vestal fire,
Others in vain from sight of ruin run;
And, while through burning labyrinths they retire,
With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

258
The most in fields like herded beasts lie down,
To dews obnoxious on the grassy floor;
And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
Sad parents watch the remnants of their store.

259
While by the motion of the flames they guess
What streets are burning now, and what are near;
An infant waking to the paps would press,
And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

260
No thought can ease them but their sovereign's care,
Whose praise the afflicted as their comfort sing:
Even those whom want might drive to just despair,
Think life a blessing under such a king.

261
Meantime he sadly suffers in their grief,
Out-weeps an hermit, and out-prays a saint:
All the long night he studies their relief,

How they may be supplied, and he may want.

262
O God, said he, thou patron of my days,
Guide of my youth in exile and distress!
Who me, unfriended, brought'st by wondrous ways,
The kingdom of my fathers to possess:

263
Be thou my judge, with what unwearied care
I since have labour'd for my people's good;
To bind the bruises of a civil war,
And stop the issues of their wasting blood.

264
Thou who hast taught me to forgive the ill,
And recompense, as friends, the good misled;
If mercy be a precept of thy will,
Return that mercy on thy servant's head.

265
Or if my heedless youth has stepp'd astray,
Too soon forgetful of thy gracious hand;
On me alone thy just displeasure lay,
But take thy judgments from this mourning land.

266
We all have sinn'd, and thou hast laid us low,
As humble earth from whence at first we came:
Like flying shades before the clouds we show,
And shrink like parchment in consuming flame.

267
O let it be enough what thou hast done;
When spotted Deaths ran arm'd through every street,
With poison'd darts which not the good could shun,
The speedy could out-fly, or valiant meet.

268
The living few, and frequent funerals then,
Proclaim'd thy wrath on this forsaken place;
And now those few who are return'd again,
Thy searching judgments to their dwellings trace.

269
O pass not, Lord, an absolute decree,
Or bind thy sentence unconditional!
But in thy sentence our remorse foresee,
And in that foresight this thy doom recall.

270
Thy threatenings, Lord, as thine thou mayst revoke:

But if immutable and fix'd they stand,
Continue still thyself to give the stroke,
And let not foreign foes oppress thy land.

271
The Eternal heard, and from the heavenly quire
Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword;
And bade him swiftly drive the approaching fire
From where our naval magazines were stored.

272
The blessed minister his wings display'd,
And like a shooting star he cleft the night:
He charged the flames, and those that disobey'd
He lash'd to duty with his sword of light.

273
The fugitive flames chastised went forth to prey
On pious structures, by our fathers rear'd;
By which to heaven they did affect the way,
Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard.

274
The wanting orphans saw, with watery eyes,
Their founder's charity in dust laid low;
And sent to God their ever-answered cries,
For He protects the poor, who made them so.

275
Nor could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long,
Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise:
Though made immortal by a poet's song;
And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise.

276
The daring flames peep'd in, and saw from far
The awful beauties of the sacred quire:
But since it was profaned by civil war,
Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire.

277
Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came,
And widely opening did on both sides prey:
This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
If only ruin must enlarge our way.

278
And now four days the sun had seen our woes:
Four nights the moon beheld the incessant fire:
It seem'd as if the stars more sickly rose,
And farther from the feverish north retire.

279
In th' empyrean heaven, the bless'd abode,
The Thrones and the Dominions prostrate lie,
Not daring to behold their angry God;
And a hush'd silence damps the tuneful sky.

280
At length the Almighty cast a pitying eye,
And mercy softly touch'd his melting breast:
He saw the town's one half in rubbish lie,
And eager flames drive on to storm the rest.

281
An hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipt above;
Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,
And hoods the flames that to their quarry drove.

282 The vanquish'd fires withdraw from every place,
Or, full with feeding, sink into a sleep:
Each household genius shows again his face,
And from the hearths the little Lares creep.

283
Our King this more than natural change beholds;
With sober joy his heart and eyes abound:
To the All-good his lifted hands he folds,
And thanks him low on his redeemed ground.

284
As when sharp frosts had long constrain'd the earth,
A kindly thaw unlocks it with mild rain;
And first the tender blade peeps up to birth,
And straight the green fields laugh with promised grain:

285
By such degrees the spreading gladness grew
In every heart which fear had froze before:
The standing streets with so much joy they view,
That with less grief the perish'd they deplore.

286
The father of the people open'd wide
His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed:
Thus God's anointed God's own place supplied,
And fill'd the empty with his daily bread.

287
This royal bounty brought its own reward,
And in their minds so deep did print the sense,
That if their ruins sadly they regard,
'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence.

288
But so may he live long, that town to sway,
Which by his auspice they will nobler make,
As he will hatch their ashes by his stay,
And not their humble ruins now forsake.

289
They have not lost their loyalty by fire;
Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,
That from his wars they poorly would retire,
Or beg the pity of a vanquish'd foe.

290
Not with more constancy the Jews of old,
By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,
Their royal city did in dust behold,
Or with more vigour to rebuild it went.

291
The utmost malice of their stars is past,
And two dire comets, which have scourged the town,
In their own plague and fire have breathed the last,
Or dimly in their sinking sockets frown.

292
Now frequent trines the happier lights among,
And high-raised Jove, from his dark prison freed,
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
Will gloriously the new-laid work succeed.

293
Methinks already from this chemic flame,
I see a city of more precious mould:
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
With silver paved, and all divine with gold.

294
Already labouring with a mighty fate,
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow,
And seems to have renew'd her charter's date,
Which Heaven will to the death of time allow.

295
More great than human now, and more august,
Now deified she from her fires does rise:
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,
And opening into larger parts she flies.

296
Before, she like some shepherdess did show,
Who sat to bathe her by a river's side;

Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.

297
Now, like a maiden queen, she will behold,
From her high turrets, hourly suitors come;
The East with incense, and the West with gold,
Will stand, like suppliants, to receive her doom!

298
The silver Thames, her own domestic flood,
Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train;
And often wind, as of his mistress proud,
With longing eyes to meet her face again.

299
The wealthy Tagus, and the wealthier Rhine,
The glory of their towns no more shall boast;
And Seine, that would with Belgian rivers join,
Shall find her lustre stain'd, and traffic lost.

300
The venturous merchant who design'd more far,
And touches on our hospitable shore,
Charm'd with the splendour of this northern star,
Shall here unlade him, and depart no more.

301
Our powerful navy shall no longer meet,
The wealth of France or Holland to invade;
The beauty of this town without a fleet,
From all the world shall vindicate her trade.

302
And while this famed emporium we prepare,
The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,
That those, who now disdain our trade to share,
Shall rob like pirates on our wealthy coast.

303
Already we have conquer'd half the war,
And the less dangerous part is left behind:
Our trouble now is but to make them dare,
And not so great to vanquish as to find.

304
Thus to the Eastern wealth through storms we go,
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more;
A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.

John Dryden

Ask not the cause why sullen spring

Ask not the cause why sullen spring
So long delays her flow'rs to bear;
Why warbling birds forget to sing,
And winter storms invert the year?
Chloris is gone; and Fate provides
To make it spring where she resides.

Chloris is gone, the cruel fair;
She cast not back a pitying eye:
But left her lover in despair,
To sigh, to languish, and to die:
Ah, how can those fair eyes endure
To give the wounds they will not cure!

Great god of Love, why hast thou made
A face that can all hearts command,
That all religions can invade,
And change the laws of ev'ry land?
Where thou hadst plac'd such pow'r before,
Thou shouldst have made her mercy more.

When Chloris to the temple comes,
Adoring crowds before her fall;
She can restore the dead from tombs,
And ev'ry life but mine recall.
I only am by love design'd
To be the victim for mankind.Credits and CopyrightTogether with the editors, the Department ofEnglish (University of Toronto), and the University of Toronto Press,the following individuals share copyright for the work that wentinto this edition:Screen Design (Electronic Edition): Sian Meikle (University ofToronto Library)Scanning: Sharine Leung (Centre for Computing in the Humanities)

John Dryden

ASTRÆA REDUX. A Poem, on the Happy Restoration and Return of His Sacred Majesty, Charles the Second

Now with a general peace the world was blest,
While ours, a world divided from the rest,
A dreadful quiet felt, and worser far
Than arms, a sullen interval of war.
Thus when black clouds draw down the lab'ring skies,
Ere yet abroad the winged thunder flies,
An horrid stillness first invades the ear,
And in that silence we the tempest fear.
The ambitious Swede, like restless billows tost,
On this hand gaining what on that he lost,
Though in his life he blood and ruin breathed,
To his now guideless kingdom peace bequeathed;
And heaven that seemed regardless of our fate,
For France and Spain did miracles create;
Such mortal quarrels to compose in peace,
As nature bred, and interest did increase.
We sighed to hear the fair Iberian bride
Must grow a lily to the lily's side;
While our cross stars denied us Charles his bed,
Whom our first flames and virgin love did wed.
For his long absence church and state did groan;
Madness the pulpit, faction seized the throne:
Experienced age in deep despair was lost,
To see the rebel thrive, the loyal crost:
Youth, that with joys had unacquainted been,
Envied grey hairs, that once good days had seen:
We thought our sires, not with their own content,
Had, ere we came to age, our portion spent.
Nor could our nobles hope their bold attempt,
Who ruined crowns, would coronets exempt:
For when, by their designing leaders taught
To strike at power, which for themselves they sought,
The vulgar, gulled into rebellion, armed,
Their blood to action by the prize was warmed.
The sacred purple, then, and scarlet gown,
Like sanguine dye to elephants, was shewn.
Thus, when the bold Typhœus scaled the sky,
And forced great Jove from his own heaven to fly,
(What king, what crown, from treason's reach is free,
If Jove and Heaven can violated be?)
The lesser gods, that shared his prosperous state,
All suffered in the exiled Thunderer's fate.
The rabble now such freedom did enjoy,
As winds at sea, that use it to destroy:
Blind as the Cyclops, and as wild as he,
They owned a lawless savage liberty,
Like that our painted ancestors so prized,
Ere empire's arts their breast had civilised.
How great were then our Charles his woes, who thus
Was forced to suffer for himself and us!
He, tossed by fate, and hurried up and down,
Heir to his father's sorrows, with his crown,

Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.
Unconquered yet in that forlorn estate,
His manly courage overcame his fate:
His wounds he took, like Romans, on his breast,
Which by his virtue were with laurels drest.
As souls reach heaven, while yet in bodies pent,
So did he live above his banishment.
That sun, which we beheld with cozened eyes
Within the water, moved along the skies.
How easy 'tis, when destiny proves kind,
With full-spread sails to run before the wind!
But those, that 'gainst stiff gales laveering go,
Must be at once resolved, and skilful too.
He would not, like soft Otho, hope prevent,
But stayed, and suffered fortune to repent.
These virtues Galba in a stranger sought,
And Piso to adopted empire brought.
How shall I then my doubtful thoughts express,
That must his suffering both regret and bless!
For, when his early valour heaven had crost,
And all at Worc'ster but the honour lost;
Forced into exile from his rightful throne,
He made all countries where he came his own;
And, viewing monarchs' secret arts of sway,
A royal factor for their kingdoms lay.
Thus, banished David spent abroad his time,
When to be God's anointed was his crime;
And, when restored, made his proud neighbours rue
Those choice remarks he from his travels drew.
Nor is he only by afflictions shown
To conquer others' realms, but rule his own;
Recovering hardly what he lost before,
His right endears it much, his purchase more.
Inured to suffer ere he came to reign,
No rash procedure will his actions stain:
To business ripened by digestive thought,
His future rule is into method brought;
As they who first proportion understand,
With easy practice reach a master's hand.
Well might the ancient poets then confer
On Night the honoured name of Counsellor;
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.
In such adversities to sceptres trained,
The name of Great his famous grandsire gained;
Who yet, a king alone in name and right,
With hunger, cold, and angry Jove did fight;
Shocked by a covenanting League's vast powers,
As holy and as catholic as ours:
Till Fortune's fruitless spite had made it known,
Her blows not shook, but riveted, his throne.

Some lazy ages, lost in sleep and ease,
No action leave to busy chronicles:
Such, whose supine felicity but makes
In story chasms, in epoches mistakes;
O'er whom Time gently shakes his wings of down,
Till with his silent sickle they are mown.
Such is not Charles his too too active age,
Which, governed by the wild distempered rage
Of some black star, infecting all the skies,
Made him at his own cost, like Adam, wise.
Tremble, ye nations, who, secure before,
Laughed at those arms that 'gainst ourselves we bore;
Roused by the lash of his own stubborn tail,
Our Lion now will foreign foes assail.
With alga, who the sacred altar strews?
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes:
A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain,
A lamb to you, ye tempests of the main:
For those loud storms, that did against him roar,
Have cast his shipwrecked vessel on the shore.
Yet, as wise artists mix their colours so,
That by degrees they from each other go;
Black steals unheeded from the neighbouring white,
Without offending the well-cozened sight:
So on us stole our blessed change; while we
The effect did feel, but scarce the manner see.
Frosts, that constrain the ground, and birth deny
To flowers that in its womb expecting lie,
Do seldom their usurping power withdraw,
But raging floods pursue their hasty thaw;
Our thaw was mild, the cold not chased away,
But lost in kindly heat of lengthened day.
Heaven would no bargain for its blessings drive,
But what we could not pay for, freely give.
The Prince of Peace would, like himself, confer
A gift unhoped, without the price of war:
Yet, as he knew his blessing's worth, took care,
That we should know it by repeated prayer;
Which stormed the skies, and ravished Charles from thence,
As heaven itself is took by violence.
Booth's forward valour only served to show,
He durst that duty pay, we all did owe:
The attempt was fair; but heaven's prefixed hour
Not come: so, like the watchful travellour,
That by the moon's mistaken light did rise,
Lay down again, and closed his weary eyes.
'Twas Monk, whom Providence designed to loose
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
The blessed saints, that watched this turning scene,
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.

Thus, pencils can, by one slight touch, restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimeras we pursue,
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue:
But when ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint, like gold that chemists make.
How hard was then his task, at once to be
What in the body natural we see!
Man's architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense;
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripened fruit of wise delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let them play a while upon the hook.
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.
Wise leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude:
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
Till some safe crisis authorise their skill.
Nor could his acts too close a vizard wear,
To 'scape their eyes whom guilt had taught to fear,
And guard with caution that polluted nest,
Whence Legion twice before was dispossest:
Once sacred house, which when they entered in,
They thought the place could sanctify a sin;
Like those, that vainly hoped kind heaven would wink,
While to excess on martyrs' tombs they drink.
And, as devouter Turks first warn their souls
To part, before they taste forbidden bowls,
So these, when their black crimes they went about,
First timely charmed their useless conscience out.
Religion's name against itself was made;
The shadow served the substance to invade:
Like zealous missions, they did care pretend
Of souls, in show, but made the gold their end.
The incensed powers beheld with scorn, from high,
An heaven so far distant from the sky,
Which durst, with horses' hoofs that beat the ground,
And martial brass, bely the thunder's sound.
'Twas hence, at length, just vengeance thought it fit
To speed their ruin by their impious wit:
Thus Sforza, cursed with a too fertile brain,
Lost by his wiles the power his wit did gain.
Henceforth their fougue must spend at lesser rate,
Than in its flames to wrap a nation's fate.
Suffered to live, they are like Helots set,
A virtuous shame within us to beget;
For, by example most we sinned before,
And glass-like clearness mixed with frailty bore.

But since, reformed by what we did amiss,
We by our sufferings learn to prize our bliss:
Like early lovers, whose unpractised hearts
Were long the may-game of malicious arts,
When once they find their jealousies were vain,
With double heat renew their fires again.
'Twas this produced the joy, that hurried o'er
Such swarms of English to the neighbouring shore,
To fetch that prize, by which Batavia made
So rich amends for our impoverished trade.
Oh, had you seen from Scheveline's barren shore,
(Crowded with troops, and barren now no more,)
Afflicted Holland to his farewell bring
True sorrow, Holland to regret a king!
While waiting him his royal fleet did ride,
And willing winds to their lower'd sails denied.
The wavering streamers, flags, and standart out,
The merry seamen's rude but cheerful shout;
And last the cannon's voice that shook the skies,
And, as it fares in sudden ecstasies,
At once bereft us both of ears and eyes.
The Naseby, now no longer England's shame,
But better to be lost in Charles his name,
(Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets)
Receives her lord; the joyful London meets
The princely York, himself alone a freight;
The Swiftsure groans beneath great Gloster's weight:
Secure as when the halcyon breeds, with these,
He, that was born to drown, might cross the seas.
Heaven could not own a Providence, and take
The wealth three nations ventured at a stake.
The same indulgence Charles his voyage blessed,
Which in his right had miracles confessed.
The winds, that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their straightened lungs, or conscious of their charge.
The British Amphitrite, smooth and clear,
In richer azure never did appear;
Proud her returning prince to entertain
With the submitted fasces of the main.
And welcome now, great monarch, to your own!
Behold the approaching cliffs of Albion.
It is no longer motion cheats your view;
As you meet it, the land approacheth you.
The land returns, and, in the white it wears,
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.
But you, whose goodness your descent doth show,
Your heavenly parentage and earthly too,
By that same mildness, which your father's crown
Before did ravish, shall secure your own.
Not tied to rules of policy, you find

Revenge less sweet than a forgiving mind.
Thus, when the Almighty would to Moses give
A sight of all he could behold and live;
A voice before his entry did proclaim,
Long-suffering, goodness, mercy, in his name.
Your power to justice doth submit your cause,
Your goodness only is above the laws;
Whose rigid letter, while pronounced by you,
Is softer made. So winds, that tempests brew,
When through Arabian groves they take their flight,
Made wanton with rich odours, lose their spite.
And as those lees, that trouble it, refine
The agitated soul of generous wine;
So tears of joy, for your returning spilt,
Work out, and expiate our former guilt.
Methinks I see those crowds on Dover's strand,
Who, in their haste to welcome you to land,
Choked up the beach with their still growing store,
And made a wilder torrent on the shore:
While, spurred with eager thoughts of past delight,
Those, who had seen you, court a second sight;
Preventing still your steps, and making haste
To meet you often whersoe'er you past.
How shall I speak of that triumphant day,
When you renewed the expiring pomp of May!
A month that owns an interest in your name:
You and the flowers are its peculiar claim.
That star, that at your birth shone out so bright,
It stained the duller sun's meridian light,
Did once again its potent fires renew,
Guiding our eyes to find and worship you.
And now Time's whiter series is begun,
Which in soft centuries shall smoothly run:
Those clouds, that overcast your morn, shall fly,
Dispelled, to farthest corners of the sky.
Our nation, with united interest blest,
Not now content to poise, shall sway the rest.
Abroad your empire shall no limits know,
But, like the sea, in boundless circles flow;
Your much-loved fleet shall, with a wide command,
Besiege the petty monarchs of the land;
And, as old Time his offspring swallowed down,
Our ocean in its depths all seas shall drown.
Their wealthy trade from pirates' rapine free,
Our merchants shall no more adventurers be;
Nor in the farthest east those dangers fear,
Which humble Holland must dissemble here.
Spain to your gift alone her Indies owes;
For, what the powerful takes not, he bestows:
And France, that did an exile's presence fear,
May justly apprehend you still too near.
At home the hateful names of parties cease,

And factious souls are wearied into peace.
The discontented now are only they,
Whose crimes before did your just cause betray;
Of those your edicts some reclaim from sins,
But most your life and blest example wins.
Oh happy prince, whom heaven hath taught the way
By paying vows to have more vows to pay!
Oh happy age! Oh times like those alone,
By fate reserved for great Augustus' throne!
When the joint growth of arms and arts foreshew
The world a monarch, and that monarch you.

John Dryden

Britannia Rediviva: A Poem on the Birth of the Prince

Our vows are heard betimes, and heaven takes care
To grant, before we can conclude the prayer;
Preventing angels met it half the way,
And sent us back to praise, who came to pray.
Just on the day, when the high-mounted sun
Did farthest in his northern progress run,
He bended forward, and even stretched the sphere
Beyond the limits of the lengthened year,
To view a brighter sun in Britain born;
That was the business of his longest morn;
The glorious object seen, 'twas time to turn.
Departing spring could only stay to shed
Her bloomy beauties on the genial bed,
But left the manly summer in her stead,
With timely fruit the longing land to cheer,
And to fulfil the promise of the year.
Betwixt two seasons comes the auspicious heir,
This age to blossom, and the next to bear.
Last solemn Sabbath saw the Church attend,
The Paraclete in fiery pomp descend;
But when his wondrous octave rolled again,
He brought a royal infant in his train:
So great a blessing to so good a king,
None but the Eternal Comforter could bring.
Or did the mighty Trinity conspire,
As once in council to create our sire?
It seems as if they sent the new-born guest,
To wait on the procession of their feast;
And on their sacred anniverse decreed
To stamp their image on the promised seed.
Three realms united, and on one bestowed,
An emblem of their mystic union showed;
The Mighty Trine the triple empire shared,
As every person would have one to guard.
Hail, son of prayers! by holy violence
Drawn down from heaven; but long be banished thence,
And late to thy paternal skies retire!
To mend our crimes, whole ages would require;
To change the inveterate habit of our sins,
And finish what thy godlike sire begins.
Kind heaven, to make us Englishmen again,
No less can give us than a patriarch's reign.
The sacred cradle to your charge receive,
Ye seraphs, and by turns the guard relieve;
Thy father's angel, and thy father join,
To keep possession, and secure the line;
But long defer the honours of thy fate;
Great may they be like his, like his be late,
That James this running century may view,
And give this son an auspice to the new.
Our wants exact at least that moderate stay;
For, see the dragon winged on his way,

To watch the travail, and devour the prey:
Or, if allusions may not rise so high,
Thus, when Alcides raised his infant cry,
The snakes besieged his young divinity;
But vainly with their forked tongues they threat,
For opposition makes a hero great.
To needful succour all the good will run,
And Jove assert the godhead of his son.
O still repining at your present state,
Grudging yourselves the benefits of fate;
Look up, and read in characters of light
A blessing sent you in your own despite!
The manna falls, yet that celestial bread,
Like Jews, you munch, and murmur while you feed.
May not your fortune be, like theirs, exiled,
Yet forty years to wander in the wild!
Or, if it be, may Moses live at least,
To lead you to the verge of promised rest!
Though poets are not prophets, to foreknow
What plants will take the blight, and what will grow,
By tracing heaven, his footsteps may be found;
Behold, how awfully he walks the round!
God is abroad, and, wondrous in his ways,
The rise of empires, and their fall, surveys;
More, might I say, than with an usual eye,
He sees his bleeding Church in ruins lie,
And hears the souls of saints beneath his altar cry.
Already has he lifted high the sign,
Which crowned the conquering arms of Constantine,
The moon grows pale at that presaging sight,
And half her train of stars have lost their light.
Behold another Sylvester, to bless
The sacred standard, and secure success;
Large of his treasures, of a soul so great,
As fills and crowds his universal seat.
Now view at home a second Constantine;
(The former too was of the British line,)
Has not his healing balm your breaches closed,
Whose exile many sought, and few opposed?
O, did not Heaven, by its eternal doom,
Permit those evils, that this good might come?
So manifest, that even the moon-eyed sects
See whom and what this Providence protects.
Methinks, had we within our minds no more
Than that one shipwrack on the fatal Ore,
That only thought may make us think again,
What wonders God reserves for such a reign.
To dream, that chance his preservation wrought,
Were to think Noah was preserved for nought;
Or the surviving eight were not designed
To people earth, and to restore their kind.
When humbly on the royal babe we gaze,

The manly lines of a majestic face
Give awful joy; 'tis paradise to look
On the fair frontispiece of nature's book:
If the first opening page so charms the sight,
Think how the unfolded volume will delight!
See how the venerable infant lies
In early pomp; how through the mother's eyes
The father's soul, with an undaunted view,
Looks out, and takes our homage as his due!
See on his future subjects how he smiles,
Nor meanly flatters, nor with craft beguiles;
But with an open face, as on his throne,
Assures our birthrights, and assumes his own.
Born in broad day-light, that the ungrateful rout
May find no room for a remaining doubt;
Truth, which itself is light, does darkness shun,
And the true eaglet safely dares the sun.
Fain would the fiends have made a dubious birth,
Loath to confess the godhead clothed in earth;
But, sickened, after all their baffled lies,
To find an heir apparent of the skies,
Abandoned to despair, still may they grudge,
And, owning not the Saviour, prove the judge.
Not great Æneas stood in plainer day,
When the dark mantling mist dissolved away;
He to the Tyrians showed his sudden face,
Shining with all his goddess mother's grace;
For she herself had made his countenance bright,
Breathed honour on his eyes, and her own purple light.
If our victorious Edward, as they say,
Gave Wales a prince on that propitious day,
Why may not years revolving with his fate
Produce his like, but with a longer date;
One, who may carry to a distant shore
The terror that his famed forefather bore?
But why should James, or his young hero, stay
For slight presages of a name or day?
We need no Edward's fortune to adorn
That happy moment when our prince was born;
Our prince adorns this day, and ages hence
Shall wish his birthday for some future prince.
Great Michael, prince of all the ethereal hosts,
And whate'er inborn saints our Britain boasts;
And thou, the adopted patron of our isle,
With cheerful aspects on this infant smile!
The pledge of heaven, which, dropping from above,
Secures our bliss, and reconciles his love.
Enough of ills our dire rebellion wrought,
When to the dregs we drank the bitter draught;
Then airy atoms did in plagues conspire,
Nor did the avenging angel yet retire,
But purged our still-increasing crimes with fire.

Then perjured plots, the still impending test,
And worse—but charity conceals the rest.
Here stop the current of the sanguine flood;
Require not, gracious God! thy martyrs' blood;
But let their dying pangs, their living toil,
Spread a rich harvest through their native soil;
A harvest ripening for another reign,
Of which this royal babe may reap the grain.
Enough of early saints one womb has given,
Enough increased the family of heaven;
Let them for his and our atonement go,
And, reigning blest above, leave him to rule below.
Enough already has the year foreslowed
His wonted course, the sea has overflowed,
The meads were floated with a weeping spring,
And frightened birds in woods forgot to sing;
The strong-limbed steed beneath his harness faints,
And the same shivering sweat his lord attaints.
When will the minister of wrath give o'er?
Behold him at Araunah's threshing-floor!
He stops, and seems to sheathe his flaming brand,
Pleased with burnt incense from our David's hand;
David has bought the Jebusite's abode,
And raised an altar to the living God.
Heaven, to reward him, makes his joys sincere;
No future ills nor accidents appear,
To sully and pollute the sacred infant's year.
Five months to discord and debate were given;
He sanctifies the yet remaining seven.
Sabbath of months! henceforth in him be blest,
And prelude to the realms perpetual rest!
Let his baptismal drops for us atone;
Lustrations for offences not his own:
Let conscience, which is interest ill disguised,
In the same font be cleansed, and all the land baptized.
Unnamed as yet; at least unknown to fame;
Is there a strife in heaven about his name,
Where every famous predecessor vies,
And makes a faction for it in the skies?
Or must it be reserved to thought alone?
Such was the sacred Tetragrammaton.
Things worthy silence must not be revealed;
Thus the true name of Rome was kept concealed,
To shun the spells and sorceries of those
Who durst her infant majesty oppose.
But when his tender strength in time shall rise
To dare ill tongues, and fascinating eyes,
This isle, which hides the little Thunderer's fame,
Shall be too narrow to contain his name:
The artillery of heaven shall make him known;
Crete could not hold the god, when Jove was grown.
As Jove's increase, who from his brain was born,

Whom arms and arts did equally adorn,
Free of the breast was bred, whose milky taste
Minerva's name to Venus had debased;
So this imperial babe rejects the food,
That mixes monarch's with plebeian blood:
Food that his inborn courage might control,
Extinguish all the father in his soul,
And for his Estian race, and Saxon strain,
Might reproduce some second Richard's reign.
Mildness he shares from both his parents' blood;
But kings too tame are despicably good:
Be this the mixture of this regal child,
By nature manly, but by virtue mild.
Thus far the furious transport of the news
Had to prophetic madness fired the muse;
Madness ungovernable, uninspired,
Swift to foretell whatever she desired.
Was it for me the dark abyss to tread,
And read the book which angels cannot read?
How was I punished, when the sudden blast
The face of heaven, and our young sun, o'ercast!
Fame, the swift ill increasing as she rolled,
Disease, despair, and death, at three reprises told:
At three insulting strides she stalked the town,
And, like contagion, struck the loyal down.
Down fell the winnowed wheat; but, mounted high,
The whirlwind bore the chaff, and hid the sky.
Here black rebellion shooting from below,
(As earth's gigantic brood by moments grow,)
And here the sons of God are petrified with woe:
An apoplex of grief! so low were driven
The saints, as hardly to defend their heaven.
As, when pent vapours run their hollow round,
Earthquakes, which are convulsions of the ground,
Break bellowing forth, and no confinement brook,
Till the third settles what the former shook;
Such heavings had our souls, till, slow and late,
Our life with his returned, and faith prevailed on fate.
By prayers the mighty blessing was implored,
To prayers was granted, and by prayers restored.
So, ere the Shunamite a son conceived,
The prophet promised, and the wife believed;
A son was sent, the son so much desired,
But soon upon the mother's knees expired.
The troubled seer approached the mournful door,
Ran, prayed, and sent his pastoral staff before,
Then stretched his limbs upon the child, and mourned,
Till warmth, and breath, and a new soul returned.
Thus Mercy stretches out her hand, and saves
Desponding Peter, sinking in the waves.
As when a sudden storm of hail and rain
Beats to the ground the yet unbearded grain,

Think not the hopes of harvest are destroyed
On the flat field, and on the naked void;
The light, unloaded stem, from tempest freed,
Will raise the youthful honours of his head;
And, soon restored by native vigour, bear
The timely product of the bounteous year.
Nor yet conclude all fiery trials past,
For heaven will exercise us to the last;
Sometimes will check us in our full career,
With doubtful blessings, and with mingled fear,
That, still depending on his daily grace,
His every mercy for an alms may pass;
With sparing hands will diet us to good,
Preventing surfeits of our pampered blood.
So feeds the mother bird her craving young
With little morsels, and delays them long.
True, this last blessing was a royal feast;
But where's the wedding-garment on the guest?
Our manners, as religion were a dream,
Are such as teach the nations to blaspheme.
In lusts we wallow, and with pride we swell,
And injuries with injuries repel;
Prompt to revenge, not daring to forgive,
Our lives unteach the doctrine we believe.
Thus Israel sinned, impenitently hard,
And vainly thought the present ark their guard;
But when the haughty Philistines appear,
They fled, abandoned to their foes and fear;
Their God was absent, though his ark was there.
Ah! lest our crimes should snatch this pledge away,
And make our joys the blessings of a day!
For we have sinned him hence, and that he lives,
God to his promise, not our practice, gives.
Our crimes would soon weigh down the guilty scale,
But James and Mary, and the Church prevail.
Nor Amalek can rout the chosen bands,
While Hur and Aaron hold up Moses' hands.
By living well, let us secure his days,
Moderate in hopes, and humble in our ways.
No force the free-born spirit can constrain,
But charity, and great examples gain.
Forgiveness is our thanks for such a day;
'Tis godlike God in his own coin to pay.
But you, propitious queen, translated here,
From your mild heaven, to rule our rugged sphere,
Beyond the sunny walks, and circling year;
You, who your native climate have bereft
Of all the virtues, and the vices left;
Whom piety and beauty make their boast,
Though beautiful is well in pious lost;
So lost as star-light is dissolved away,
And melts into the brightness of the day;

Or gold about the royal diadem,
Lost, to improve the lustre of the gem,—
What can we add to your triumphant day?
Let the great gift the beauteous giver pay;
For should our thanks awake the risingsun,
And lengthen, as his latest shadows run,
That, though the longest day, would soon, too soon be done.
Let angels' voices with their harps conspire,
But keep the auspicious infant from the choir;
Late let him sing above, and let us know
No sweeter music than his cries below.
Nor can I wish to you, great monarch, more
Than such an annual income to your store;
The day, which gave this unit, did not shine
For a less omen, than to fill the trine.
After a prince, an admiral beget;
The Royal Sovereign wants an anchor yet.
Our isle has younger titles still in store,
And when the exhausted land can yield no more,
Your line can force them from a foreign shore.
The name of Great your martial mind will suit;
But justice is your darling attribute:
Of all the Greeks, 'twas but one hero's due,
And, in him, Plutarch prophesied of you.
A prince's favours but on few can fall,
But justice is a virtue shared by all.
Some kings the name of conquerors have assumed,
Some to be great, some to be gods presumed;
But boundless power, and arbitrary lust,
Made tyrants still abhor the name of Just;
They shunned the praise this godlike virtue gives
And feared a title that reproached their lives.
The power, from which all kings derive their state,
Whom they pretend, at least, to imitate,
Is equal both to punish and reward;
For few would love their God, unless they feared.
Resistless force and immortality
Make but a lame, imperfect deity;
Tempests have force unbounded to destroy,
And deathless being even the damned enjoy;
And yet heaven's attributes, both last and first;
One without life, and one with life accurst;
But justice is heaven's self, so strictly he,
That could it fail, the godhead could not be.
This virtue is your own; but life and state
Are, one to fortune subject, one to fate:
Equal to all, you justly frown or smile;
Nor hopes nor fears your steady hand beguile;
Yourself our balance hold, the world's our isle.

John Dryden

By a dismal cypress lying: A Song from the Italian

By a dismal cypress lying,
Damon cried, all pale and dying,
Kind is death that ends my pain,
But cruel she I lov'd in vain.
The mossy fountains
Murmur my trouble,
And hollow mountains
My groans redouble:
Ev'ry nymph mourns me,
Thus while I languish;
She only scorns me,
Who caus'd my anguish.
No love returning me, but all hope denying;
By a dismal cypress lying,
Like a swan, so sung he dying:
Kind is death that ends my pain,
But cruel she I lov'd in vain.

John Dryden

Calm was the even, and clear was the sky

Calm was the even, and clear was the sky,
And the new budding flowers did spring,
When all alone went Amyntas and I
To hear the sweet nightingale sing;
I sate, and he laid him down by me;
But scarcely his breath he could draw;
For when with a fear, he began to draw near,
He was dash'd with A ha ha ha ha!

He blush'd to himself, and lay still for a while,
And his modesty curb'd his desire;
But straight I convinc'd all his fear with a smile,
Which added new flames to his fire.
O Silvia, said he, you are cruel,
To keep your poor lover in awe;
Then once more he press'd with his hand to my breast,
But was dash'd with A ha ha ha ha!

I knew 'twas his passion that caus'd all his fear;
And therefore I pitied his case:
I whisper'd him softly, there's nobody near,
And laid my cheek close to his face:
But as he grew bolder and bolder,
A shepherd came by us and saw;
And just as our bliss we began with a kiss,
He laugh'd out with A ha ha ha ha!

John Dryden

Can life be a blessing

Can life be a blessing,
Or worth the possessing,
Can life be a blessing if love were away?
Ah no! though our love all night keep us waking,
And though he torment us with cares all the day,
Yet he sweetens, he sweetens our pains in the taking,
There's an hour at the last, there's an hour to repay.

In ev'ry possessing,
The ravishing blessing,
In ev'ry possessing the fruit of our pain,
Poor lovers forget long ages of anguish,
Whate'er they have suffer'd and done to obtain;
'Tis a pleasure, a pleasure to sigh and to languish,
When we hope, when we hope to be happy again.

John Dryden

Cymon And Iphigenia. From Boccace

Old as I am, for lady's love unfit,
The power of beauty I remember yet,
Which once inflamed my soul, and still inspires my wit.
If love be folly, the severe divine;
Has felt that folly, though he censures mine;
Pollutes the pleasures of a chaste embrace,
Acts what I write, and propagates in grace,
With riotous excess, a priestly race.
Suppose him free, and that I forge the offence,
He showed the way, perverting first my sense:
In malice witty, and with venom fraught,
He makes me speak the things I never thought.
Compute the gains of his ungoverned zeal;
Ill suits his cloth the praise of railing well.
The world will think that what we loosely write,
Though now arraigned, he read with some delight;
Because he seems to chew the end again,
When his broad comment makes the text too plain,
And teaches more in one explaining page
Than all the double meanings of the stage.

What needs he paraphrase on what we mean?
We were at worst but wanton; he's obscene.
I nor my fellows nor my self excuse;
But Love's the subject of the comic Muse;
Nor can we write without, nor would you
A tale of only dry instruction view.
Nor love is always of a vicious kind,
But oft to virtuous acts inflames the mind,
Awakes the sleepy vigour of the soul,
And, brushing o'er, adds motion to the pool.
Love, studious how to please, improves our parts
With polished manners, and adorns with arts.
Love first invented verse, and formed the rhyme,
The motion measured, harmonized the chime;
To liberal acts enlarged the narrow-souled,
Softened the fierce, and made the coward bold;
The world, when waste, he peopled with increase,
And warring nations reconciled in peace.
Ormond, the first, and all the fair may find,
In this one legend to their fame designed,
When beauty fires the blood, how love exalts the mind.
In that sweet isle, where Venus keeps her court,
And every grace, and all the loves, resort;
Where either sex is formed of softer earth,
And takes the bent of pleasure from their birth;
There lived a Cyprian lord, above the rest
Wise, wealthy, with a numerous issue blest.

But, as no gift of fortune is sincere,
Was only wanting in a worthy heir:
His eldest born, a goodly youth to view,

Fair, tall, his limbs with due proportion joined,
But of a heavy, dull, degenerate mind.
His soul belied the features of his face;
Beauty was there, but beauty in disgrace.
A clownish mien, a voice with rustic sound,
And stupid eyes that ever loved the ground,
He looked like Nature's error, as the mind
And body were not of a piece designed,
But made for two, and by mistake in one were joined.

The ruling rod, the father's forming care,
Were exercised in vain on wit's despair;
The more informed, the less he understood,
And deeper sunk by floundering in the mud.
Now scorned of all, and grown the public shame,
The people from Galesus changed his name,
And Cymon called, which signifies a brute;
So well his name did with his nature suit.

His father, when he found his labour tost,
And care employed that answered not the cost,
Chose an ungrateful object to remove,
And loathed to see what Nature made him love;
So to his country-farm the fool confined;
Rude work well suited with a rustic mind.
Thus to the wilds the sturdy Cymon went,
A squire among the swains, and pleased with banishment.
His corn and cattle were his only care,
And his supreme delight a country-fair.

It happened on a summer's holiday,
That to the greenwood-shade he took his way;
For Cymon shunned the church, and used not much to pray.
His quarter-staff, which he could ne'er forsake,
Hung half before and half behind his back.
He trudged along, unknowing what he sought,
And whistled as he went, for want of thought.

By chance conducted, or by thirst constrained,
The deep recesses of the grove he gained;
Where, in a plain defended by the wood,
Crept through the matted grass a crystal flood,
By which an alabaster fountain stood;
And on the margin of the fount was laid,
Attended by her slaves, a sleeping maid;
Like Dian and her nymphs, when, tired with sport,
To rest by cool Eurotas they resort.
The dame her self the goddess well expressed,
Not more distinguished by her purple vest
Than by the charming features of her face,
And, even in slumber, a superior grace:
Her comely limbs composed with decent care,

Her body shaded with a slight cymarr;
Her bosom to the view was only bare:
For yet their places were but signified:
The fanning wind upon her bosom blows,
To meet the fanning wind the bosom rose;
The fanning wind and purling streams continue her repose.

The fool of nature stood with stupid eyes,
And gaping mouth, that testified surprise,
Fixed on her face, nor could remove his sight,
New as he was to love, and novice in delight:
Long mute he stood, and leaning on his staff,
His wonder witnessed with an idiot laugh;
Then would have spoke, but by his glimmering sense
First found his want of words, and feared offence:
Doubted for what he was he should be known,
By his clown-accent and his country-tone.

Through the rude chaos thus the running light
Shot the first ray that pierced the native night:
Then day and darkness in the mass were mixed,
Till gathered in a globe the beams were fixed:
Last shone the sun, who, radiant in his sphere,
Illumined heaven and earth, and rolled around the year.
So reason in this brutal soul began:
Love made him first suspect he was a man;
Love made him doubt his broad barbarian sound;
By love his want of words and wit he found;
That sense of want prepared the future way
To knowledge, and disclosed the promise of a day.

What not his father's care nor tutor's art
Could plant with pains in his unpolished heart,
The best instructor, Love, at once inspired,
As barren grounds to fruitfulness are fired;
Love taught him shame, and shame with love at strife
Soon taught the sweet civilities of life.
His gross material soul at once could find
Somewhat in her excelling all her kind;
Exciting a desire till then unknown,
Somewhat unfound, or found in her alone.
This made the first impression on his mind,
Above, but just above, the brutal kind.
For beasts can like, but not distinguish too,
Nor their own liking by reflection know;
Nor why they like or this or t'other face,
Or judge of this or that peculiar grace;
But love in gross, and stupidly admire;
As flies, allured by light, approach the fire.
Thus our man-beast, advancing by degrees,
First likes the whole, then separates what he sees;
On several parts a several praise bestows,

The ruby lips, the well-proportioned nose,
The snowy skin, the raven-glossy hair,
The dimpled cheek, the forehead rising fair,
And even in sleep it self a smiling air.
From thence his eyes descending viewed the rest,
Her plump round arms, white hands and heaving breast.
Long on the last he dwelt, though every part
A pointed arrow sped to pierce his heart.

Thus in a trice a judge of beauty grown,
(A judge erected from a country clown,)
He longed to see her eyes in slumber hid,
And wished his own could pierce within the lid.
He would have waked her, but restrained his thought,
And love new-born the first good manners taught.
An awful fear his ardent wish withstood,
Nor durst disturb the goddess of the wood;
For such she seemed by her celestial face,
Excelling all the rest of the human race;
And things divine, by common sense he knew,
Must be devoutly seen at distant view:
So checking his desire, with trembling heart
Gazing he stood, nor would nor could depart;
Fixed as a pilgrim wildered in his way,
Who dares not stir by night, for fear to stray;
But stands with awful eyes to watch the dawn of day.

At length awakening, Iphigene the fair
(So was the beauty called who caused his care)
Unclosed her eyes, and double day revealed,
While those of all her slaves in sleep were sealed.

The slavering cudden, propped upon his staff,
Stood ready gaping with a grinning laugh,
To welcome her awake, nor durst begin
To speak, but wisely kept the fool within.
Then she: 'What make you, Cymon, here alone?'
(For Cymon's name was round the country known,
Because descended of a noble race,
And for a soul ill sorted with his face.)

But still the sot stood silent with surprise,
With fixed regard on her new opened eyes,
And in his breast received the envenomed dart,
A tickling pain that pleased amid the smart.
But conscious of her form, with quick distrust
She saw his sparkling eyes, and feared his brutal lust.
This to prevent, she waked her sleepy crew,
And rising hasty took a short adieu.

Then Cymon first his rustic voice essayed,
With proffered service to the parting maid

To see her safe; his hand she long denied,
But took at length, ashamed of such a guide.
So Cymon led her home, and leaving there,
No more would to this country clowns repair,
But sought his father's house, with better mind,
Refusing in the farm to be confined.

The father wondered at the son's return,
And knew not whether to rejoice or mourn;
But doubtfully received, expecting still
To learn the secret causes of his altered will.
He made, was like his brothers to be dressed,
And, as his birth required, above the rest.

With ease his suit was granted by his sire,
Distinguishing his heir by rich attire:
His body thus adorned, he next designed
With liberal arts to cultivate his mind;
He sought a tutor of his own accord,
And studied lessons he before abhorred.

Thus the man-child advanced, and learned so fast,
That in short time his equals he surpassed:
His brutal manners from his breast exiled,
His mien he fashioned, and his tongue he filed;
In every exercise of all admired,
He seemed, nor only seemed, but was inspired:
Inspired by love, whose business is to please;
He rode, he fenced, he moved with graceful ease,
More famed for sense, for courtly carriage more,
Than for his brutal folly known before.

What then of altered Cymon shall we say,
But that the fire which choked in ashes lay,
Was upward blown below, and brushed away by love?
Love made an active progress through his mind,
The dusky parts he cleared, the gross refined,
The drowsy waked; and, as he went, impressed
The Maker's image on the human breast.
Thus was the man amended by desire,
And, though he loved perhaps with too much fire,
His father all his faults with reason scanned,
And liked an error of the better hand;
Excused the excess of passion in his mind,
By flames too fierce, perhaps too much refined:
So Cymon, since his sire indulged his will,
Impetuous loved, and would be Cymon still;
Galesus he disowned, and chose to bear
The name of fool, confirmed and bishoped by the fair.

To Cipseus by his friends his suit he moved,
But he was pre-engaged by former ties,

While Cymon was endeavouring to be wise;
And Iphigene, obliged by former vows,
Had given her faith to wed a foreign spouse:
Her sire and she to Rhodian Pasimond,
Though both repenting, were by promise bound,
Nor could retract; and thus, as Fate decreed,
Though better loved, he spoke too late to speed.

The doom was past; the ship already sent
Did all his tardy diligence prevent;
Sighed to her self the fair unhappy maid,
While stormy Cymon thus in secret said:
'The time is come for Iphigene to find
'The miracle she wrought upon my mind;
'Her charms have made me man, her ravished love
'In rank shall place me with the blessed above.
'For mine by love, by force she shall be mine,
'Or death, if force should fail, shall finish my design.'

Resolved he said; and rigged with speedy care
A vessel strong, and well equipped for war.
The secret ship with chosen friends he stored,
And bent to die, or conquer, went aboard.
Ambushed he lay behind the Cyprian shore,
Waiting the sail that all his wishes bore;
Nor long expected, for the following tide
Sent out the hostile ship and beauteous bride.

To Rhodes the rival bark directly steered,
When Cymon sudden at her back appeared,
And stopped her flight: then standing on his prow,
In haughty terms he thus defied the foe:
'Or strike your sails at summons, or prepare
'To prove the last extremities of war.'
Thus warned, the Rhodians for the fight provide;
Already were the vessels side by side,
These obstinate to save, and those to seize the bride.
But Cymon soon his crooked grapples cast,
Which tenacious hold his foes embraced,
And, armed with sword and shield, amid the press he passed.
Fierce was the fight, but hastening to his prey,
By force the furious lover freed his way;
Him self alone dispersed the Rhodian crew,
The weak disdained, the valiant overthrew;
Cheap conquest for his following friends remained,
He reaped the field, and they but only gleaned.

His victory confessed, the foes retreat,
Whom thus he cheered: 'O Rhodian youth, I fought
'For love alone, nor other booty sought;
'Your lives are safe; your vessel I resign,
'Yours be your own, restoring what is mine;

'In Iphigene I claim my rightful due,
'Robbed by my rival, and detained by you:
'Your Pasimond a lawless bargain drove,
'The parent could not sell the daughter's love;
'Or if he could, my love disdains the laws,
'And like a king by conquest gains his cause;
'Where arms take place, all other pleas are vain;
'Love taught me force, and force shall love maintain.
'You, what by strength you could not keep, release,
'And at an easy ransom buy your place.'

Fear on the conquered side soon signed the accord,
And Iphigene to Cymon was restored.
While to his arms the blushing bride he took,
To seeming sadness she composed her look;
As if by force subjected to his will,
Though pleased, dissembling, and a woman still.
And, for she wept, he wiped her falling tears,
And prayed her to dismiss her empty fears;
'For yours I am,' he said, 'and have deserved
'Your love much better, whom so long I served,
'Than he to whom your formal father tied
'Your vows, and sold a slave, not sent a bride.'
Thus while he spoke, he seized the willing prey,
As Paris bore the Spartan spouse away.
Faintly she screamed, and even her eyes confessed
She rather would be thought, than was, distressed.

Who now exults but Cymon in his mind?
Vain hopes and empty joys of human kind,
Proud of the present, to the future blind!
Secure of fate, while Cymon ploughs the sea,
And steers to Candy with his conquered prey,
Scarce the third glass of measured hours was run,
When like a fiery meteor sunk the sun,
The promise of a storm; the shifting gales
Forsake by fits and fill the flagging sails;
Hoarse murmurs of the main from far were heard,
And night came on, not by degrees prepared,
But all at once; at once the winds arise,
The thunders roll, the forky lightning flies.
In vain the master issues out commands,
In vain the trembling sailors ply their hands;
The tempests unforeseen prevents their care,
And from the first they labour in despair.
The giddy ship betwixt the winds and tides,
Forced back and forwards, in a circle rides,
Stunned with the different blows; then shoots amain,
Till counterbuffed she stops, and sleeps again.
Not more aghast the proud archangel fell,
Plunged from the height of heaven to deepest hell,
Than stood the lover of his love possessed,

Now cursed the more, the more he had been blessed;
More anxious for her danger than his own,
Death he defies, but would be lost alone.

Sad Iphigene to womanish complaints
Adds pious prayers, and wearies all the saints;
Even if she could, her love she would repent,
But since she cannot, dreads the punishment:
Her forfeit faith and Pasimond betrayed
Are ever present, and her crime upbraid.
She blames her self, nor blames her lover less;
Augments her anger as her fears increase;
From her own back the burden would remove,
And lays the load on his ungoverned love,
Which interposing durst, in Heaven's despite,
Invade and violate another's right:
The Powers incensed awhile deferred his pain,
And made him master of his vows in vain:
But soon they punished his presumptuous pride;
That for his daring enterprise she died,
Who rather not resisted than complied.

Then, impotent of mind, with altered sense,
She hugged the offender, and forgave the offence,
Sex to the last. Mean time with sails declined
The wandering vessel drove before the wind,
Tossed and retossed, aloft, and then alow;
Nor port they seek, nor certain course they know,
But every moment wait the coming blow.
Thus blindly driven, by breaking day they viewed
The land before them, and their fears renewed;
The land was welcome, but the tempest bore
The threatened ship against a rocky shore.

A winding bay was near; to this they bent,
And just escaped; their force already spent.
Secure from storms, and panting from the sea,
The land unknown at leisure they survey;
And saw (but soon their sickly sight withdrew)
The rising towers of Rhodes at distant view;
And cursed the hostile shore of Pasimond,
Saved from the seas, and shipwrecked on the ground.

The frighted sailors tried their strength in vain
To turn the stern, and tempt the stormy main;
But the stiff wind withstood the labouring oar,
And forced them forward on the fatal shore!
The crooked keel now bites the Rhodian strand,
And the ship moored constrains the crew to land:
Yet still they might be safe, because unknown;
But as ill fortune seldom comes alone,
The vessel they dismissed was driven before,

Already sheltered on their native shore;
Known each, they know, but each with change of cheer;
The vanquished side exults; the victors fear;
Not them but theirs, made prisoners ere they fight,
Despairing conquest, and deprived of flight.

The country rings around with loud alarms,
And raw in fields the rude militia swarms;
Mouths without hands; maintained at vast expense,
In peace a charge, in war a weak defence;
Stout once a month they march, a blustering band,
And ever, but in times of need, at hand;
This was the morn when, issuing on the guard,
Drawn up in rank and file they stood prepared
Of seeming arms to make a short essay,
Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day.

The cowards would have fled, but that they knew
Them selves so many, and their foes so few;
But crowding on, the last the first impel,
Till overborne with weight the Cyprians fell.
Cymon enslaved, who first the war begun,
And Iphigene once more is lost and won.

Deep in a dungeon was the captive cast,
Deprived of day, and held in fetters fast;
His life was only spared at their request,
Whom taken he so nobly had released:
But Iphigenia was the ladies' care,
Each in their turn addressed to treat the fair;
While Pasimond and his the nuptial feast prepare.

Her secret soul to Cymon was inclined,
But she must suffer what her fates assigned;
So passive is the church of womankind.
What worse to Cymon could his fortune deal,
Rolled to the lowest spoke of all her wheel?
It rested to dismiss the downward weight,
Or raise him upward to his former height;
The latter pleased; and love (concerned the most)
Prepared amends for what by love he lost.

The sire of Pasimond had left a son,
Though younger, yet for courage early known,
Ormisda called, to whom, by promise tied,
A Rhodian beauty was the destined bride;
Cassandra was her name, above the rest
Renowned for birth, with fortune amply blessed.
Lysimachus, who ruled the Rhodian state,
Was then by choice their annual magistrate:
He loved Cassandra too with equal fire,
But Fortune had not favoured his desire;

Crossed by her friends, by her not disapproved,
Nor yet preferred, or like Ormisda loved:
So stood the affair: some little hope remained,
That, should his rival chance to lose, he gained.

Meantime young Pasimond his marriage pressed,
Ordained the nuptial day, prepared the feast;
And frugally resolved (the charge to shun
Which would be double should he wed alone,)
To join his brother's bridal with his own.

Lysimachus, oppressed with mortal grief,
Received the news, and studied quick relief:
The fatal day approached; if force were used,
The magistrate his public trust abused;
To justice liable, as law required,
For when his office ceased, his power expired:
While power remained, the means were in his hand
By force to seize, and then forsake the land:
Betwixt extremes he knew not how to move,
A slave to fame, but more a slave to love:
Restraining others, yet him self not free,
Made impotent by power, debased by dignity.
Both sides he weighed: but after much debate,
The man prevailed above the magistrate.

Love never fails to master what he finds,
But works a different way in different minds,
The fool enlightens, and the wise he blinds.
This youth proposing to possess and scape,
Began in murder, to conclude in rape:
Unpraised by me, though Heaven sometime may bless
An impious act with undeserved success:
The great, it seems, are privileged alone,
To punish all injustice but their own.
But here I stop, not daring to proceed,
Yet blush to flatter an unrighteous deed;
For crimes are but permitted, not decreed.

Resolved on force, his wit the praetor bent
To find the means that might secure the event;
Nor long he laboured, for his lucky thought
In captive Cymon found the friend he sought.
The example pleased: the cause and crime the same,
An injured lover and a ravished dame.
How much he durst he knew by what he dared,
The less he had to lose, the less he cared
To menage loathsome life when love was the reward.

This pondered well, and fixed on his intent,
In depth of night he for the prisoner sent;
In secret sent, the public view to shun,

Then with a sober smile he thus begun:
'The Powers above, who bounteously bestow
'Their gifts and graces on mankind below,
'Yet prove our merit first, nor blindly give
'To such as are not worthy to receive:
'For valour and for virtue they provide
'Their due reward, but first they must be tried:
'These fruitful seeds within your mind they sowed;
''Twas yours to improve the talent they bestowed;
'They gave you to be born of noble kind,
'They have you love to lighten up your mind
'And purge the grosser parts; they gave you care
'To please, and courage to deserve the fair.

'Thus far they tried you, and by proof they found
'The grain entrusted in a grateful ground:
'But still the great experiment remained,
'They suffered you to love the prize you gained,
'That you might learn the gift was theirs alone,
'And, when restored, to them the blessing own.
'Restored it soon will be; the means prepared,
'The difficulty smoothed, the danger shared:
'But be your self, the care to me resign,
'Then Iphigene is yours, Cassandra mine.
'Your rival Pasimond pursues your life,
'Impatient to revenge his ravished wife,
'But yet not his; to-morrow is behind,
'And Love our fortunes in one band has joined:
'Two brothers are our foes, Ormisda mine
'As much declared as Pasimond is thine:
'To-morrow must their common vows be tied:
'With Love to friend, and Fortune for our guide,
'Let both resolve to die, or each redeem a bride.

'Right I have none, nor hast thou much to plead;
''Tis force, when done, must justify the deed:
'Our task performed, we next prepare for flight:
'And let the losers talk in vain of right:
'We with fair will sail before the wind;
'If they are grieved, I leave the laws behind.
'Speak thy resolves: if now thy courage droop,
'Despair in prison and abandon hope;
'But if thou darest in arms thy love regain,
'(For liberty without thy love were vain):
'Then second my design to seize the prey,
'Or lead to second rape, for well thou knowest the way.'

Said Cymon, overjoyed: 'Do thou propose
'The means to fight, and only show the foes:
'For from the first, when love had fired my mind,
'Resolved, I left the care of life behind.'

To this the bold Lysimachus replied,
'Let Heaven be neuter and the sword decide:
'The spousals are prepared, already play
'The minstrels, and provoke the tardy day:
'By this the brides are waked, their grooms are dressed;
'All Rhodes is summoned to the nuptial feast,
'All but my self, the sole unbidden guest.
'Unbidden though I am, I will be there,
'And, joined by thee, intend to joy the fair.

'Now hear the rest; when day resigns the light,
'And cheerful torches gild the jolly night,
'Be ready at my call; my chosen few
'With arms administered shall aid thy crew.
'Then entering unexpected will we seize
'Our destined prey, from men dissolved in ease,
'By wine disabled, unprepared for fight,
'And hastening to the seas, suborn our flight:
'The seas are ours, for I command the fort,
'A ship well manned expects us in the port:
'If they, or if their friends, the prize contest,
'Death shall attend the man who dares resist.'

It pleased; the prisoner to his hold retired,
His troop with equal emulation fired,
All fixed to fight, and all their wonted work required.

The sun arose; the streets were thronged around,
The palace opened, and the posts were crowned.
The double bridegroom at the door attends
The expected spouse, and entertains the friends:
They meet, they lead to church, the priests invoke
The Powers, and feed the flames with fragrant smoke.
This done, they feast, and at the close of night
By kindled torches vary their delight,
These lead the lively dance, and those the brimming bowls invite.

Now, at the appointed place and hour assigned,
With souls resolved the ravishers were joined:
Three bands are formed; the first is sent before
To favour the retreat and guard the shore;
The second at the palace-gate is placed,
And up the lofty stairs ascend the last:
A peaceful troop they seem with shining vests,
But coasts of mail beneath secure their breasts.

Dauntless they enter, Cymon at their head,
And find the feast renewed, the table spread:
Sweet voices mixed with instrumental sounds,
Ascend the vaulted roof, the vaulted roof rebounds.
When, like the harpies, rushing through the hall
The sudden troop appears, the tables fall,

Their smoking load is on the pavement thrown;
Each ravisher prepares to seize his own:
The brides, invaded with a rude embrace,
Shriek out for aid, confusion fills the place.
Quick to redeem the prey their plighted lords
Advance, the palace gleams with shining swords.

But late is all defence, and succour vain;
The rape is made, the ravishers remain:
Two sturdy slaves were only sent before
To bear the purchased prize in safety to the shore.
The troop retires, the lovers close the rear,
With forward faces not confessing fear:
Backward they move, but scorn their pace to mend;
Then seek the stairs, and with slow haste descend.

Fierce Pasimond, their passage prevent,
Thrust full on Cymon's back in his descent,
The blade returned unbathed, and to the handle bent.
Stout Cymon soon remounts, and cleft in two
His rival's head with one descending blow:
And as the next in rank Ormisda stood,
He turned the point; the sword enured to blood
Bored his unguarded breast, which poured a purple flood.

With vowed revenge the gathering crowd pursues,
The ravishers turn head, the fight renews;
The hall is heaped with corps; the sprinkled gore
Besmears the walls, and floats the marble floor.
Dispersed at length, the drunken squardon flies,
The victors to their vessel bear the prize,
And hear behind loud groans, and lamentable cries.

The crew with merry shouts their anchors weigh,
Then ply their oars, and brush the buxom sea,
While troops of gathered Rhodians crowd the key.
What should the people do when left alone?
The governor and government are gone;
The public wealth to foreign parts conveyed;
Some troops disbanded, and the rest unpaid.
Rhodes is the sovereign of the sea no more;
Their ships unrigged, and spent their naval store;
They neither could defend nor can pursue,
But grind their teeth, and cast a helpless view:
In vain with darts a distant war they try,
Short, and more short, the massive weapons fly.
Mean while the ravishers their crimes enjoy,
And flying sails and sweeping oars employ:
The cliffs of Rhodes in little space are lost;
Jove's isle they seek, nor Jove denies his coast.

In safety landed on the Candian shore,

With generous wines their spirits they restore;
There Cymon with his Rhodian friend resides,
Both court and wed at once the willing brides.
A war ensues, the Cretans own their cause,
Stiff to defend their hospitable laws:
Both parties lose by turns, and neither wins,
Till peace, propounded by a truce, begins.
The kindred of the slain forgive the deed,
But a short exile must for show precede:
The term expired, from Candia they remove,
And happy each at home enjoys his love.

John Dryden

Dreams

Dreams are but interludes which Fancy makes;
When monarch Reason sleeps, this mimic wakes:
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A mob of cobblers, and a court of kings:
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad;
Both are the reasonable soul run mad;
And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind
Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.
The nurse's legends are for truths received,
And the man dreams but what the boy believed.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
The night restores our actions done by day;
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.
In short, the farce of dreams is of a piece,
Chimeras all; and more absurd, or less.

John Dryden

Eleonora : A Panegyrical

Dedicated to the Memory of the Late Countess of Abingdon.

As when some great and gracious monarch dies,
Soft whispers first and mournful rise
Among the sad attendants; then the sound
Soon gathers voice and spreads the news around,
Through town and country, till the dreadful blast
Is blown to distant colonies at last;
Who then perhaps were offering vows in vain
For his long life and for his happy reign:
So slowly, by degrees, unwilling Fame
Did matchless Eleonora's fate proclaim,
Till public as the loss the news became.
The nation felt it in the extremest parts,
With eyes o'erflowing and with bleeding hearts;
But most of the poor, whom daily she supplied,
Beginning to be such but when she died.
For, while she lived, they slept in peace by night,
Secure of bread as of returning light,
And with such firm dependence on the day,
That need grew pampered and forgot to pray:
So sure the dole, so ready at their call,
They stood prepared to see the manna fall.
Such multitudes she fed, she clothed, she nurst,
That she her self might fear her wanting first.
Of her five talents other five she made;
Heaven, that had largely given, was largely paid;
And in few lives, in wondrous few, we find
A fortune better fitted to the mind.
Nor did her alms from ostentation fall,
Or proud desire of praise; the soul gave all:
Unbribed it gave; or, if a bribe appear,
No less than Heaven, to heap huge treasures there.
Want passed for merit at her open door:
Heaven saw her safely might increase his poor,
And trust their sustenance with her so well
As not to be at charge of miracle.
None could be needy whom she saw or knew;
All in the compass of her sphere she drew:
He who could touch her garment was as sure,
As the first Christians of the Apostles' cure.
The distant heard by fame her pious deeds,
And laid her up for their extremest needs,
A future cordial for a fainting mind;
For what was ne'er refused all hoped to find,
Each in his turn: the rich might freely come,
As to a friend; but to the poor 'twas a home.
As to some holy house the afflicted came,
The hunger-starved, the naked, and the lame;
Want and diseases fled before her name.
For zeal like hers her servants were too slow;
She was the first, where need required, to go,

Her self the foundress, and attendant too.
Sure she had guests sometimes to entertain,
Guests in disguise, of her great Master's train:
Her Lord him self might come, for aught we know,
Since in a servant's form he lived below;
Beneath her roof he might be pleased to stay:
Or some benighted angel in his way
Might ease his wings, and seeing Heaven appear
In its best work of mercy, think it there,
Where all the deeds of charity and love
Were in as constant method as above,
All carried on; all of a piece with theirs;
As free her alms, as diligent her cares;
As loud her praises, and as warm her prayers.
Yet was she not profuse; but feared to waste,
And wisely managed, that the stock might last;
That all might be supplied, and she not grieve,
When crowds appeared, she had not to relieve:
Which to prevent, she still increased her store;
Laid up, and spared, that she might give the more.
So Pharaoh, or some greater king than he,
Provided for the seventh necessity;
Taught from above his magazines to frame,
That famine was prevented ere it came.
Thus Heaven, though all-sufficient, shows a thrift
In his economy, and bounds his gift;
Creating for our day one single light;
And his reflection too supplies the night.
Perhaps a thousand other words, that lie
Remote from us and latent in the sky,
Are lightened by his beams, and kindly nurst;
Of which our earthly dunghill is the worst.
Now, as all virtues keep the middle line,
Yet somewhat more to one extreme incline,
Such was her soul, abhorring avarice,
Bounteous, but almost bounteous to a vice:
Had she given more, it had profusion been,
And turned the excess of goodness into sin.
These virtues raised her fabric to the sky;
For that which is next Heaven is charity.
But as high turrets for their airy steep
Require foundations in proportion deep,
And lofty cedars as far upward shoot
As to the nether heavens they drive the root,
So low did her secure foundation lie;
She was not humble, but humility.
Scarcely she knew that she was great or fair
Or wise beyond what other women are,
Or, which is better, knew, but never durst compare.
For to be conscious of what all admire,
And not be vain, advances virtue higher.
But still she found, or rather thought she found,

Her own worth wanting, others' to abound;
Ascribed above their due to every one,
Unjust and scanty to her self alone.
Such her devotion was as might give rules
Of speculation to disputing schools,
And teach us equally the scales to hold
Betwixt the two extremes of hot and cold;
That pious heat may moderately prevail,
And we be warmed, but not be scorched with zeal.
Business might shorten, not disturb her prayer;
Heaven had the best, if not the greater share.
An active life long orisons forbids;
Yet still she prayed, for still she prayed by deeds.
Her every day was Sabbath; only free
From hours of prayer, for hours of charity.
Such as the Jews from servile toil releast,
Where works of mercy were a part of rest;
Such as blest angels exercise above,
Varied with sacred hymns and acts of love;
Such Sabbaths as that one she now enjoys,
Even that perpetual one, which she employs
(For such vicissitudes in Heaven there are)
In praise alternate and alternate prayer.
All this she practised here; that when she sprung
Amidst the quires, at the first sight she sung;
Sung, and was sung her self, in angels' lays;
For, praising her, they did her Maker praise.
All offices of Heaven so well she knew,
Before she came, that nothing there as new;
And she was so familiarly received
As one returning, not as one arrived.
Muse, down again precipitate thy flight.
For how can mortal eyes sustain immortal light?
But as the sun in water we can bear,
Yet not the sun, but his reflection there,
So let us view her here in what she was,
And take her image in this watery glass:
Yet look not every lineament to see;
Some will be cast in shades, and some will be
So lamely drawn, you scarcely know 'tis she.
For where such various virtues we recite,
'Tis like the milky way, all over bright,
But sown so thick with stars, 'tis undistinguished light.
Her virtue, not her virtues, let us call;
For one heroic comprehends them all:
One, as a constellation is but one,
Though 'tis a train of stars that, rolling on,
Rise in their turn and in the Zodiac run,
Ever in motion; now 'tis faith ascends,
Now hope, now charity, that upward tends,
And downwards with diffusive good descends.
As in perfumes composed with art and cost,

'Tis hard to say what scent is uppermost;
Nor this part musk or civet can we call,
Or amber, but a rich result of all;
So she was all a sweet, whose every part,
In due proportion mixed, proclaimed the Maker's art.
No single virtue we could most commend,
Whether the wife, the mother, or the friend;
For she was all, in that supreme degree,
That as no one prevailed, so all was she.
The several parts lay hidden in the piece;
The occasion but exerted that or this.
A wife as tender, and as true withal,
As the first woman was before her fall:
Made for the man, of whom she was a part;
Made to attract his eyes and keep his heart.
A second Eve, but by no crime accurst;
As beauteous, not as brittle as the first.
Had she been first, still Paradise had been,
And death had found no entrance by her sin.
She not only had preserved from ill
Her sex and ours, but lived their pattern still.
Love and obedience to her lord she bore;
She much obeyed him, but she loved him more:
Not awed to duty by superior sway,
But taught by his indulgence to obey.
Thus we love God, as author of our good;
So subjects love just kings, or so they should.
Nor was it with ingratitude returned;
In equal fires the blissful couple burned;
One joy possessed them both, and in one grief they mourned.
His passion still improved; he loved so fast,
As if he feared each day would be her last.
Too true a prophet to foresee the fate
That should so soon divide their happy state:
When he to Heaven entirely must restore
That love, that heart, where he went halves before.
Yet as the soul is all in every part,
So God and he might each have all her heart.
So had her children too; for charity
Was not more fruitful or more kind than she;
Each under other by degrees they grew;
A goodly perspective of distant view.
Anchises looked not with so pleased a face,
In numbering o'er his future Roman race,
And marshalling the heroes of his name,
As in their order next to light they came.
Nor Cybele with half so kind an eye
Surveyed her sons and daughters of the sky;
Proud, shall I say, of her immortal fruit?
As far as pride with heavenly minds may suit.
Her pious love excelled to all she bore;
New objects only multiplied it more.

And as the chosen found the pearly grain
As much as every vessel could contain;
As in the blissful vision each shall share
As much of glory as his soul can bear;
so did she love, and so dispense her care.
Her eldest thus, by consequence, was best,
As longer cultivated than the rest.
The babe had all that infant care beguiles,
And early knew his mother in her smiles:
But when dilated organs let in day
To the young soul, and gave it room to play,
At first aptness the maternal love
Those rudiments of reason did improve:
The tender age was pliant to command;
Like wax it yielded to the forming hand:
True to the artificer, the laboured mind
With ease was pious, generous, just and kind;
Soft for impression, from the first prepared,
Till virtue with long exercise grew hard:
With every act confirmed, and made at last
So durable as not to be effaced,
It turned to habit; and, from vices free,
Goodness resolved into necessity.
Thus fixed she virtue's image, that's her own,
Till the whole mother in the children shone;
For that was their perfection; she was such,
They never could express her mind too much.
So unexhausted her perfections were,
That for more children she had more to spare;
For souls unborn, whom her untimely death
Deprived of bodies and of mortal breath;
And, could they take the impressions of her mind,
Enough still left to sanctify her kind.
Then wonder not to see this soul extend
The bounds, and seek some other self, a friend:
As swelling seas to gentle rivers glide,
To seek repose, and empty out the tide,
So this full soul, in narrow limits pent,
Unable to contain her, sought a vent
To issue out, and in some friendly breast
Discharge her treasures, and securely rest:
To unbosom all the secrets of her heart,
Take good advice, but better to impart.
For 'tis the bliss of friendship's holy state
To mix their minds, and to communicate;
Though bodies cannot, souls can penetrate:
Fixed to her choice, inviolably true,
And wisely choosing, for she chose but few.
Some she must have; but in no one could find
A tally fitted for so large a mind.
The souls of friends like kings in progress are;
Still in their own, though from the palace far;

Thus her friend's heart her country dwelling was,
A sweet retirement to a coarser place;
Where pomp and ceremonies entered not,
Where greatness was shut out, and business well forgot.
This is the imperfect draught; but short as far
As the true height and bigness of a star
Exceeds the measures of the astronomer.
She shines above, we know; but in what place,
How near the throne and Heaven's imperial face,
By our weak optics is but vainly guest;
Distance and altitude conceal the rest.
Though all these rare endowments of the mind
Were in a narrow space of life confide,
The figure was with full perfection crowned,
Though not so large an orb, as truly round.
As when in glory, through the public place,
The spoils of conquered nations were to pass,
And but one day for triumph was allowed,
The Consul was constrained his pomp to crowd;
And so the swift procession hurried on,
That all, though not distinctly, might be shown;
So, in the straitened bounds of life confined,
She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind;
And multitudes of virtues passed along,
Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,
Ambitious to be seen, and the make room
For greater multitudes that were to come.
Yet unemployed no minute slipped away;
Moments were precious in so short a stay.
The haste of Heaven to have her was so great
That some were single acts, though each complete
But every act stood ready to repeat.
Her fellow saints with busy care will look
For her blest name in Fate's eternal book;
And, pleased to be outdone, with joy will see
Numberless virtues, endless charity:
But more will wonder at so short an age
To find a blank beyond the thirtieth page;
And with a pious fear begin to doubt
The piece imperfect, and the rest torn out.
But 'twas her Saviour's time; and, could there be
A copy near the original, 'twas she.
As precious gums are not for lasting fire,
They but perfume the temple, and expire;
So was she soon exhaled, and vanished hence,
A short sweet odour, of a vast expense.
She vanished, we can scarcely say she died;
For but a now did heaven and earth divide:
She passed serenely with a single breath;
This moment perfect health, the next was death:
One sigh did her eternal bliss assure;
So little penance needs, when souls are almost pure.

As gentle dreams our waking thoughts pursue,
Or, one dream passed, we slide into a new;
So close they follow, such wild order keep
We think our selves awake, and are asleep;
So softly death succeeded life in her,
She did but dream of Heaven, and she was there.
No pains she suffered, nor expired with noise;
Her soul was whispered out with God's still voice;
As an old friend is beckoned to a feast,
And treated like a long familiar guest.
He took her as he found, but found her so,
As one in hourly readiness to go;
Even on that day, in all her trim prepared,
As early notice she from Heaven had heard,
And some descending courtier from above
Had given her timely warning to remove,
Or counselled her to dress the nuptial room,
For on that night the bridegroom was to come.
He kept his hour, and found her where she lay
Clothed all in whit,e the livery of the day;
Scarce had she sinned in thought or word or act;
Unless omissions were to pass for fact;
That hardly Death a consequence could draw,
To make her liable to Nature's law.
And that she died, we only have to show
The mortal part of her she left below;
The rest (so smooth, so suddenly she went)
Looked like translation through the firmament,
Or like the fiery car on the third errand sent.
O happy soul! if thou canst view from high,
Where thou art all intelligence, all eye,
If looking up to God, or down to us,
Thou findst that any way be pervious,
Survey the ruins of thy house, and see
Thy widowed, and thy orphan family;
Look on thy tender pledges left behind;
And, if thou canst a vacant minute find
From heavenly joys, that interval afford
To thy sad children and thy mourning lord.
See how they grieve, mistaken in their love,
And shed a beam of comfort from above;
Give them, as much as mortal eyes can bear,
A transient view of thy full glories there;
That they with moderate sorrow may sustain
And mollify their losses in thy gain.
Or else divide the grief; for such thou wert,
That should not all relations bear a part,
It were enough to break a single heart.
Let this suffice: nor thou, great saint, refuse
This humble tribute of no vulgar muse:
Who, not by cares or wants or age deprest,
Stems a wild deluge with a dauntless breast;

And dares to sing thy praises in a clime
Where vice triumphs and virtue is a crime;
Where even to draw the picture of thy mind
Is satire on the most of human kind:
Take it, while yet 'tis praise; before my rage,
Unsafely just, break loose on this bad age;
So bad, that thou thy self hadst no defence
From vice, but barely by departing hence.
Be what, and where thou art: to wish thy place
Were in the best presumption more than grace.
Thy relics (such thy works of mercy are)
Have in this poem been my holy care.
As earth thy body keeps, thy soul the sky,
So shall this verse preserve thy memory,
For thou shalt make it live, because it sings of thee.

John Dryden

Epilogue on the Same Occasion (Princess of Cleves)

New ministers, when first they get in place,
Must have a care to please; and that's our case:
Some laws for public welfare we design,
If you, the power supreme, will please to join.
There are a sort of prattlers in the pit,
Who either have, or who pretend to wit;
These noisy sirs so loud their parts rehearse,
That oft the play is silenced by the farce.
Let such be dumb, this penalty to shun,
Each to be thought my lady's eldest son.
But stay; methinks some vizard mask I see,
Cast out her lure from the mid gallery:
About her all the fluttering sparks are ranged;
The noise continues, though the scene is changed:
Now growling, sputtering, wauling, such a clutter!
'Tis just like puss defendant in a gutter:
Fine love, no doubt; but ere two days are o'er ye,
The surgeon will be told a woful story.
Let vizard mask her naked face expose,
On pain of being thought to want a nose:
Then for your lacqueys, and your train beside,
By whate'er name or title dignified,
They roar so loud, you'd think behind the stairs
Tom Dove, and all the brotherhood of bears:
They're grown a nuisance, beyond all disasters;
We've none so great but—their unpaying masters.
We beg you, Sirs, to beg your men, that they
Would please to give you leave to hear the play.
Next, in the playhouse, spare your precious lives;
Think, like good Christians, on your bearns and wives:
Think on your souls; but, by your lugging forth,
It seems you know how little they are worth.
If none of these will move the warlike mind,
Think on the helpless whore you leave behind.
We beg you, last, our scene-room to forbear,
And leave our goods and chattels to our care.
Alas! our women are but washy toys,
And wholly taken up in stage employs:
Poor willing tits they are; but yet, I doubt,
This double duty soon will wear them out.
Then you are watched besides with jealous care;
What if my lady's page should find you there?
My lady knows t' a tittle what there's in ye;
No passing your gilt shilling for a guinea.
Thus, gentlemen, we have summed up in short
Our grievances, from country, town, and court:
Which humbly we submit to your good pleasure;
But first vote money, then redress at leisure.

John Dryden

Epilogue to Henry II.

Thus you the sad catastrophe have seen,
Occasioned by a mistress and a queen.
Queen Eleanor the proud was French, they say;
But English manufacture got the day.
Jane Clifford was her name, as books aver;
Fair Rosamond was but her nom de guerre.
Now tell me, gallants, would you lead your life
With such a mistress, or with such a wife?
If one must be your choice, which d' ye approve,
The curtain lecture, or the curtain love?
Would ye be godly with perpetual strife,
Still drudging on with homely Joan, your wife,
Or take your pleasure in a wicked way,
Like honest whoring Harry in the play?
I guess your minds; the mistress would be taking,
And nauseous matrimony sent a packing.
The devil's in you all; mankind's a rogue;
You love the bride, but you detest the clog.
After a year, poor spouse is left i' the lurch,
And you, like Haynes, return to mother-church.
Or, if the name of church comes cross your mind,
Chapels-of-ease behind our scenes you find.
The playhouse is a kind of market-place;
One chaffers for a voice, another for a face;
Nay, some of you,—I dare not say how many,—
Would buy of me a pen'worth for your penny.
E'en this poor face, which with my fan I hide,
Would make a shift my portion to provide,
With some small perquisites I have beside.
Though for your love, perhaps, I should not care,
I could not hate a man that bids me fair.
What might ensue, 'tis hard for me to tell;
But I was drenched to-day for loving well,
And fear the poison that would make me swell.

John Dryden

Epilogue to The Husband His Own Cuckold

Like some raw sophister that mounts the pulpit,
So trembles a young poet at a full pit.
Unused to crowds, the parson quakes for fear,
And wonders how the devil he durst come there;
Wanting three talents needful for the place,
Some beard, some learning, and some little grace.
Nor is the puny poet void of care;
For authors, such as our new authors are,
Have not much learning, nor much wit to spare;
And as for grace, to tell the truth, there's scarce one,
But has as little as the very parson:
Both say, they preach and write for your instruction;
But 'tis for a third day, and for induction.
The difference is, that though you like the play,
The poet's gain is ne'er beyond his day;
But with the parson 'tis another case,
He, without holiness, may rise to grace;
The poet has one disadvantage more,
That if his play be dull, he's damned all o'er,
Not only a damn'd blockhead, but damn'd poor.
But dulness well becomes the sable garment;
I warrant that ne'er spoiled a priest's preferment;
Wit's not his business, and as wit now goes,
Sirs, 'tis not so much yours as you suppose,
For you like nothing now but nauseous beaux.
You laugh not, gallants, as by proof appears,
At what his beauship says, but what he wears;
So 'tis your eyes are tickled, not your ears.
The tailor and the furrier find the stuff,
The wit lies in the dress, and monstrous muff.
The truth on 't is, the payment of the pit
Is like for like, clipt money for clipt wit.
You cannot from our absent author hope,
He should equip the stage with such a fop.
Fools change in England, and new fools arise;
For, though the immortal species never dies,
Yet every year new maggots make new flies.
But where he lives abroad, he scarce can find
One fool, for million that he left behind.

John Dryden

Epitaph On a Nephew, In Catworth Church, Huntingdonshire

Stay, stranger, stay, and drop one tear.
She always weeps, who laid him here;
And will do till her race is run;
His father's fifth, her only son.

John Dryden

Epitaph on Mrs. Margaret Paston, of Barningham, in Norfolk

So fair, so young, so innocent, so sweet,
So ripe a judgment, and so rare a wit,
Require at least an age in one to meet.
In her they met; but long they could not stay,
'Twas gold too fine to fix without allay.
Heaven's image was in her so well exprest,
Her very sight upbraided all the rest;
Too justly ravished from an age like this,
Now she is gone, the world is of a piece.

John Dryden

Epitaph on Sir Palmes Fairborne's Tomb in Westminster Abbey

Ye sacred relics, which your marble keep,
Here, undisturbed by wars, in quiet sleep;
Discharge the trust, which, when it was below,
Fairborne's undaunted soul did undergo,
And be the town's palladium from the foe.
Alive and dead these walls he will defend:
Great actions great examples must attend.
The Candian siege his early valour knew,
Where Turkish blood did his young hands imbrue.
From thence returning with deserved applause,
Against the Moors his well-fleshed sword he draws;
The same the courage, and the same the cause.
His youth and age, his life and death, combine,
As in some great and regular design,
All of a piece throughout, and all divine.
Still nearer heaven his virtues shone more bright,
Like rising flames expanding in their height;
The martyr's glory crowned the soldier's fight.
More bravely British general never fell,
Nor general's death was e'er revenged so well;
Which his pleased eyes beheld before their close,
Followed by thousand victims of his foes.
To his lamented loss, for time to come,
His pious widow consecrates this tomb.

John Dryden

Epitaph on the Lady Whitmore

Fair, kind, and true, a treasure each alone,
A wife, a mistress, and a friend, in one;
Rest in this tomb, raised at thy husband's cost,
Here sadly summing, what he had, and lost.
Come, virgins, ere in equal bands ye join,
Come first and offer at her sacred shrine;
Pray but for half the virtues of this wife,
Compound for all the rest, with longer life;
And wish your vows, like hers, may be returned,
So loved when living, and, when dead, so mourned.

John Dryden

Epitaph on the Monument of a Fair Maiden Lady, Who Died at Bath, and is There Interred

Below this marble monument is laid
All that heaven wants of this celestial maid.
Preserve, O sacred tomb, thy trust consigned;
The mould was made on purpose for the mind:
And she would lose, if, at the latter day,
One atom could be mixed with other clay;
Such were the features of her heavenly face,
Her limbs were formed with such harmonious grace:
So faultless was the frame, as if the whole
Had been an emanation of the soul;
Which her own inward symmetry revealed,
And like a picture shone, in glass annealed;
Or like the sun eclipsed, with shaded light;
Too piercing, else, to be sustained by sight.
Each thought was visible that rolled within;
As through a crystal case the figured hours are seen.
And heaven did this transparent veil provide,
Because she had no guilty thoughts to hide.
All white, a virgin-saint, she sought the skies,
For marriage, though it sullies not, it dyes.
High though her wit, yet humble was her mind;
As if she could not, or she would not find
How much her worth transcended all her kind.
Yet she had learned so much of heaven below,
That when arrived, she scarce had more to know;
But only to refresh the former hint,
And read her Maker in a fairer print.
So pious, that she had no time to spare
For human thoughts, but seemed confined to prayer;
Yet in such charities she passed the day,
'Twas wondrous how she found an hour to pray.
A soul so calm, it knew not ebbs or flows,
Which passion could but curl, not discompose.
A female softness, with a manly mind;
A daughter duteous, and a sister kind;
In sickness patient, and in death resigned.

John Dryden

Epitaph on the Monument of the Marquis of Winchester

He who, in impious times, undaunted stood,
And 'midst rebellion durst be just and good;
Whose arms asserted, and whose sufferings more
Confirmed the cause for which he fought before,
Rests here, rewarded by an heavenly prince,
For what his earthly could not recompence.
Pray, reader, that such times no more appear;
Or, if they happen, learn true honour here.
Ark of this age's faith and loyalty,
Which, to preserve them, heaven confined in thee.
Few subjects could a king like thine deserve;
And fewer, such a king so well could serve.
Blest king, blest subject, whose exalted state
By sufferings rose, and gave the law to fate!
Such souls are rare, but mighty patterns given
To earth, were meant for ornaments to heaven.

John Dryden

Fair Iris I Love and Hourly I Die

Fair Iris I love and hourly I die,
But not for a lip nor a languishing eye:
She's fickle and false, and there I agree;
For I am as false and as fickle as she:
We neither believe what either can say;
And, neither believing, we neither betray.

'Tis civil to swear and say things, of course;
We mean not the taking for better or worse.
When present we love, when absent agree;
I think not of Iris, nor Iris of me:
The legend of love no couple can find
So easy to part, or so equally join'd.

John Dryden

Farewell Ungrateful Traitor

Farewell ungrateful traitor,
Farewell my perjured swain,
Let never injured creature
Believe a man again.
The pleasure of possessing
Surpasses all expressing,
But 'tis too short a blessing,
And love too long a pain.

'Tis easy to deceive us
In pity of your pain,
But when we love you leave us
To rail at you in vain.
Before we have descried it,
There is no bliss beside it,
But she that once has tried it
Will never love again.

The passion you pretended
Was only to obtain,
But when the charm is ended
The charmer you disdain.
Your love by ours we measure
Till we have lost our treasure,
But dying is a pleasure,
When living is a pain.

John Dryden

Farewell, Fair Armida. A Song

Farewell, fair Armida, my joy and my grief!
In vain I have loved you, and hope no relief;
Undone by your virtue, too strict and severe,
Your eyes gave me love, and you gave me despair:
Now called by my honour, I seek with content
The fate which in pity you would not prevent:
To languish in love were to find, by delay,
A death that's more welcome the speediest way.
On seas and in battles, in bullets and fire,
The danger is less than in hopeless desire;
My death's wound you give me, though far off I bear
My fall from your sight—not to cost you a tear:
But if the kind flood on a wave should convey,
And under your window my body should lay,
The wound on my breast when you happen to see,
You'll say with a sigh—it was given by me.

John Dryden

Fragment of a Character of Jacob Tonson, His Publisher

With leering looks, bull-faced, and freckled fair,
With two left legs, and Judas-coloured hair,
And frowzy pores that taint the ambient air.

John Dryden

Happy the man

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call today his own:
He who, secure within, can say,
Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today.
Be fair or foul or rain or shine
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not Heaven itself upon the past has power,
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.

John Dryden

Heroic Stanzas

Consecrated to the Glorious Memory of His
Most Serene and Renowned Highness, Oliver,
Late Lord Protector of This Commonwealth, etc.
Written After the Celebration of his Funeral

1

And now 'tis time; for their officious haste,
Who would before have borne him to the sky,
Like eager Romans ere all rites were past
Did let too soon the sacred eagle fly.

2

Though our best notes are treason to his fame
Join'd with the loud applause of public voice;
Since Heav'n, what praise we offer to his name,
Hath render'd too authentic by its choice;

3

Though in his praise no arts can liberal be,
Since they whose Muses have the highest flown
Add not to his immortal memory,
But do an act of friendship to their own;

4

Yet 'tis our duty and our interest too
Such monuments as we can build to raise,
Lest all the world prevent what we should do
And claim a title in him by their praise.

5

How shall I then begin, or where conclude
To draw a fame so truly circular?
For in a round what order can be shew'd,
Where all the parts so equal perfect are?

6

His grandeur he deriv'd from Heav'n alone,
For he was great ere fortune made him so,
And wars like mists that rise against the sun
Made him but greater seem, not greater grown.

7

No borrow'd bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring.

Nor was his virtue poison'd soon as born
With the too early thoughts of being king.

8

Fortune (that easy mistress of the young
But to her ancient servant coy and hard)
Him at that age her favorites rank'd among
When she her best-lov'd Pompey did discard.

9

He, private, mark'd the faults of others' sway,
And set as sea-marks for himself to shun,
Not like rash monarchs who their youth betray
By acts their age too late would wish undone.

10

And yet dominion was not his design;
We owe that blessing not to him but Heaven,
Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join,
Rewards that less to him than us were given.

11

Our former chiefs like sticklers of the war
First sought t'inflame the parties, then to poise,
The quarrel lov'd, but did the cause abhor,
And did not strike to hurt but make a noise.

12

War, our consumption, was their gainfull trade;
We inward bled whilst they prolong'd our pain;
He fought to end our fighting and assay'd
To stanch the blood by breathing of the vein.

13

Swift and resistless through the land he pass'd
Like that bold Greek who did the east subdue,
And made to battles such heroic haste
As if on wings of victory he flew.

14

He fought secure of fortune as of fame,
Till by new maps the island might be shown,
Of conquests which he strew'd where'er he came
Thick as a galaxy with stars is sown.

15

His palms, though under weights they did not stand,
Still thriv'd; no winter could his laurels fade;
Heav'n in his portrait shew'd a workman's hand
And drew it perfect yet without a shade.

16

Peace was the prize of all his toils and care,
Which war had banish'd and did now restore;
Bologna's walls thus mounted in the air
To seat themselves more surely than before.

17

Her safety rescu'd Ireland to him owes,
And treacherous Scotland, to no int'rest true,
Yet bless'd that fate which did his arms dispose
Her land to civilize as to subdue.

18

Nor was he like those stars which only shine
When to pale mariners they storms portend;
He had his calmer influence, and his mien
Did love and majesty together blend.

19

'Tis true, his count'nance did imprint an awe,
And naturally all souls to his did bow,
As wands of divination downward draw
And points to beds where sov'reign gold doth grow.

20

When past all offerings to Feretrian Jove,
He Mars depos'd and arms to gowns made yield;
Successful councils did him soon approve
As fit for close intrigues as open field.

21

To suppliant Holland he vouchsaf'd a peace,
Our once bold rival in the British main,
Now tamely glad her unjust claim to cease
And buy our friendship with her idol, gain.

22

Fame of th' asserted sea through Europe blown

Made France and Spain ambitious of his love;
Each knew that side must conquer he would own,
And for him fiercely as for empire strove.

23

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd
Than the light monsieur the grave don outweigh'd;
His fortune turn'd the scale where it was cast,
Though Indian mines were in the other laid.

24

When absent, yet we conquer'd in his right,
For though some meaner artist's skill were shown
In mingling colours, or in placing light,
Yet still the fair designment was his own.

25

For from all tempers he could service draw;
The worth of each with its alloy he knew,
And as the confidant of Nature saw
How she complexions did divide and brew.

26

Or he their single virtues did survey
By intuition in his own large breast,
Where all the rich ideas of them lay,
That were the rule and measure to the rest.

27

When such heroic virtue Heav'n sets out,
The stars like Commons sullenly obey,
Because it drains them when it comes about,
And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

28

From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,
Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend,
Since their commencement to his arms they owe,
If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

29

He made us freemen of the continent
Whom Nature did like captives treat before,
To nobler preys the English lion sent,
And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

30

That old unquestion'd pirate of the land,
Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk heard,
And trembling wish'd behind more Alps to stand,
Although an Alexander were here guard.

31

By his command we boldly cross'd the line
And bravely fought where southern stars arise,
We trac'd the far-fetch'd gold unto the mine
And that which brib'd our fathers made our prize.

32

Such was our prince; yet own'd a soul above
The highest acts it could produce to show:
Thus poor mechanic arts in public move
Whilst the deep secrets beyond practice go.

33

Nor di'd he when his ebbing fame went less,
But when fresh laurels courted him to live;
He seem'd but to prevent some new success,
As if above what triumphs earth could give.

34

His latest victories still thickest came,
As near the center motion does increase,
Till he, press'd down by his own weighty name,
Did, like the vestal, under spoils decrease.

35

But first the ocean as a tribute sent
That giant prince of all her watery herd,
And th' isle when her protecting genius went
Upon his obsequies loud sighs conferr'd.

36

No civil broils have since his death arose,
But faction now by habit does obey,
And wars have that respect for his repose,
As winds for halycons when they breed at sea.

37

His ashes in a peaceful urn shall rest;
His name a great example stands to show
How strangely high endeavours may be blest,
Where piety and valour jointly go.

John Dryden

Hidden Flame

I FEED a flame within, which so torments me
That it both pains my heart, and yet contents me:
'Tis such a pleasing smart, and I so love it,
That I had rather die than once remove it.

Yet he, for whom I grieve, shall never know it;
My tongue does not betray, nor my eyes show it.
Not a sigh, nor a tear, my pain discloses,
But they fall silently, like dew on roses.

Thus, to prevent my Love from being cruel,
My heart 's the sacrifice, as 'tis the fuel;
And while I suffer this to give him quiet,
My faith rewards my love, though he deny it.

On his eyes will I gaze, and there delight me;
While I conceal my love no frown can fright me.
To be more happy I dare not aspire,
Nor can I fall more low, mounting no higher.

John Dryden

Hymn For St. John's Eve, 29th June

O sylvan prophet! whose eternal fame
Echoes from Judah's hills and Jordan's stream;
The music of our numbers raise,
And tune our voices to thy praise.

A messenger from high Olympus came
To bear the tidings of thy life and name,
And told thy sire each prodigy
That Heaven designed to work in thee.

Hearing the news, and doubting in surprise,
His falt'ring speech in fettered accent dies;
But Providence, with happy choice,
In thee restored thy father's voice.

In the recess of Nature's dark abode,
Though still enclosed, yet knewest thou thy God;
Whilst each glad parent told and blessed
The secrets of each other's breast.

John Dryden

Impromptu Lines Addressed To His Cousin, Mrs. Creed, In A Conversation After Dinner On The Origin Of Names

So much religion in your name doth dwell,
Your soul must needs with piety excel.
Thus names, like well-wrought pictures drawn of old,
Their owners' nature and their story told.
Your name but half expresses, for in you
Belief and practice do together go.
My prayers shall be, while this short life endures,
These may go hand in hand, with you and yours;
Till faith hereafter is in vision drowned,
And practice is with endless glory crowned.

John Dryden

Life a Cheat

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse; and while it says, we shall be blessed
With some new joys, cuts off what we possessed.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And, from the dregs of life, think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.
I'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold,
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.

John Dryden

Lines In A Letter To His Lady Cousin, Honor Driden, Who Had Given Him A Silver Inkstand, With A Set Of Writing Materials, 1655

For since 'twas mine, the white hath lost its hue,
To show 'twas ne'er it self but whilst in you,
The virgin wax hath blushed it self to red
Since it with me hath lost its maidenhead.
You, fairest nymph, are wax: O, may you be
As well in softness as in purity!
Till fate and your own happy choice reveal
Whom you shall so far bless to make your seal.

John Dryden

Lines Printed Under The Engraved Portrait Of Milton, In Tonson's Folio Edition Of The Paradise Lost, 1688

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England, did adorn.
The first, in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next, in majesty; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no further go;
To make a third, she joined the former two.

John Dryden

Mac Flecknoe: A Satire upon the True-blue Protestant Poet T

All human things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey:
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long:
In prose and verse, was own'd, without dispute
Through all the realms of Non-sense, 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 pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit;
Cry'd, 'tis resolv'd; for nature pleads that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me:
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dullness from his tender years.
Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirm'd 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 design'd 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;
And coarsely clad in Norwich drugget came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames did'st cut thy way,
With well tim'd oars before the royal barge,
Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial charge;
And big with hymn, commander of an host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets toss'd.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well sharpen'd thumb from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar:
Echoes from Pissing-Alley, Shadwell call,
And Shadwell they resound from Aston Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast, that floats along.
Sometimes as prince of thy harmonious band
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.

St. Andre's feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not ev'n the feet of thy own Psyche's rhyme:
Though they in number as in sense excel;
So just, so like tautology they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton forswore
The lute and sword which he in triumph bore
And vow'd he ne'er would act Villerius more.
Here stopt the good old sire; and wept for joy
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dullness he was made.

Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclin'd)
An ancient fabric, rais'd t'inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:
A watch tower once; but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys.
Where their vast courts, the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturb'd by watch, in silence sleep.
Near these a nursery erects its head,
Where queens are form'd, and future heroes bred;
Where unfledg'd actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks their tender voices try,
And little Maximins the gods defy.
Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear;
But gentle Simkin just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanish'd minds:
Pure clinches, the suburbian muse affords;
And Panton waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously design'd his Shadwell's throne.
For ancient Decker prophesi'd long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense:
To whom true dullness should some Psyches owe,
But worlds of Misers from his pen should flow;
Humorists and hypocrites it should produce,
Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.

Now Empress Fame had publisht the renown,
Of Shadwell's coronation through the town.
Rous'd by report of fame, the nations meet,
From near Bun-Hill, and distant Watling-street.
No Persian carpets spread th'imperial way,
But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay:
From dusty shops neglected authors come,
Martyrs of pies, and reliques of the bum.
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay,

But loads of Shadwell almost chok'd the way.
Bilk'd stationers for yeoman stood prepar'd,
And Herringman was Captain of the Guard.
The hoary prince in majesty appear'd,
High on a throne of his own labours rear'd.
At his right hand our young Ascanius sat
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state.
His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
And lambent dullness play'd around his face.
As Hannibal did to the altars come,
Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
That he till death true dullness would maintain;
And in his father's right, and realm's defence,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The king himself the sacred unction made,
As king by office, and as priest by trade:
In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
He plac'd a mighty mug of potent ale;
Love's kingdom to his right he did convey,
At once his sceptre and his rule of sway;
Whose righteous lore the prince had practis'd young,
And from whose loins recorded Psyche sprung,
His temples last with poppies were o'er spread,
That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head:
Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
Th'admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honours of his head,
And from his brows damps of oblivion shed
Full on the filial dullness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:

Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbadoes on the Western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne.
Beyond love's kingdom let him stretch his pen;
He paus'd, and all the people cry'd Amen.
Then thus, continu'd he, my son advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let other teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let Virtuosos in five years be writ;
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage,
Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,

And in their folly show the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence,
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dullness, and desire no foreign aid:
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
Nay let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name;
But let no alien Sedley interpose
To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou would'st cull,
Trust Nature, do not labour to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and in each line,
Sir Formal's oratory will be thine.
Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy Northern Dedications fill.
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
Let Father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
And Uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part;
What share have we in Nature or in Art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's vein,
Or swept the dust in Psyche's humble strain?
Where sold he bargains, whip-stitch, kiss my arse,
Promis'd a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
As thou whole Eth'ridge dost transfuse to thine?
But so transfus'd as oil on waters flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humours to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way, to dullness, 'tis inclin'd,
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And in all changes that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
Of likeness; thine's a tympany of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou 'rt but a kilderkin of wit.
Like mine thy gentle numbers feebly creep,
Thy Tragic Muse gives smiles, thy Comic sleep.
With whate'er gall thou sett'st thy self to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite.
In thy felonious heart, though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram:
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command

Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or if thou would'st thy diff'rent talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.
He said, but his last words were scarcely heard,
For Bruce and Longvil had a trap prepar'd,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Born upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

John Dryden

Mankind

Men are but children of a larger growth;
Our appetites are apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain;
And yet the soul, shut up in her dark room,
Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing;
But, like a mole in earth, busy and blind,
Works all her folly up, and casts it outward
To the world's open view.

John Dryden

Marriage A-La-Mode

Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now
When passion is decay'd?
We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we could,
Till our love was lov'd out in us both:
But our marriage is dead, when the pleasure is fled:
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.

If I have pleasures for a friend,
And farther love in store,
What wrong has he whose joys did end,
And who could give no more?
'Tis a madness that he should be jealous of me,
Or that I should bar him of another:
For all we can gain is to give our selves pain,
When neither can hinder the other.

John Dryden

O Souls, In Whom No Heavenly Fire

O souls, in whom no heavenly fire is found,
Fat minds, and ever grovelling on the ground!
We bring our manners to the blest abodes,
And think what pleases us must please the Gods.

John Dryden

Ode

To the Pious Memory of the Accomplished Young Lady, Mrs Anne Killigrew,
Excellent in the Two Sister-arts of Poesy and Painting.

Thou youngest Virgin Daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new-plucked from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green, above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,
Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,
Or, in procession fixed and regular
Moved with the heavens' majestic pace;
Or, called to more superior bliss,
Thou tread'st with seraphims the vast abyss:
Whatever happy region be thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
(Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since Heaven's eternal year is thine.)
Hear then a mortal muse thy praise rehearse
In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesie were given,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there;
While yet a young probationer
And candidate of Heaven.

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfused into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
(An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.)
But if thy pre-existing soul
Was formed, at first, with myriads more,
It did through all the mighty poets roll
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before;
If so, then cease thy flight, O Heav'n-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore:
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return, to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

May we presume to say that at thy birth
New joy was sprung in Heav'n as well as here on earth?
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And ev'n the most malicious were in trine.
Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tuned it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth;

And then if ever, mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres!
And if no clust'ring swarm of bees
On thy sweet mouth distilled their golden dew,
'Twas that such vulgar miracles
Heav'n had not leisure to renew:
For all the blest fraternity of love
Solemnized there thy birth, and kept thy holyday above.

O gracious God! how far have we
Profaned thy Heav'nly gift of poesy!
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debased to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordained above,
For tongues of angels and for hymns of love!
Oh wretched we! why were we hurried down
This lubrique and adult'rate age
(Nay, added fat pollutions of our own)
T' increase the steaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t' excuse our second fall?
Let this thy vestal, Heav'n, atone for all:
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoiled,
Unmixed with foreign filth and undefiled;
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child.

Art she had none, yet wanted none,
For nature did that want supply:
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
That it seemed borrowed, where 'twas only born.
Her morals too were in her bosom bred
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of books, her father's life, she read.
And to be read herself she need not fear;
Each test and ev'ry light her muse will bear,
Though Epictetus with his lamp were there.
Ev'n love (for love sometimes her muse expressed)
Was but a lambent-flame which played about her breast,
Light as the vapours of a morning dream;
So cold herself, while she such warmth expressed,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretched her sway,
For painture near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.
A chamber of dependences was framed,
(As conquerers will never want pretence,

When armed, to justify th' offence),
And the whole fief, in right of poetry, she claimed.
The country open lay without defence;
For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with ev'ry lineament;

And all the large domains which the dumb-sister swayed,
All bowed beneath her government,
Received in triumph wheresoe'er she went.
Her pencil drew whate'er her soul designed,
And oft the happy draught surpassed the image in her mind.
The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks;
Of shallow brooks that flowed so clear,
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods
Which as in mirrors showed the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear.
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns, broken lie,
And, though defaced, the wonder of the eye;
What nature, art, bold fiction, e'er durst frame,
Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopled ark the whole creation bore.

The scene then changed; with bold erected look
Our martial king the sight with rev'rence strook:
For, not content t' express his outward part,
Her hand called out the image of his heart,
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts were figured there,
As when, by magic, ghosts are made appear.
Our phoenix Queen was portrayed too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observed, as well as heavenly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands:
Before a train of heroines was seen,
In beauty foremost, as in rank, the Queen!
Thus nothing to her genius was denied,
But like a ball of fire, the farther thrown,
Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry side.
What next she had designed, Heaven only knows:

To such immod'rate growth her conquest rose,
That Fate alone its progress could oppose.

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,
That well-proportioned shape, and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes;
In earth the much-lamented virgin lies!
Not wit nor piety could Fate prevent;

Nor was the cruel destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life and beauty too;
But, like a hardened felon, took a pride
To work more mischievously slow,
And plundered first, and then destroyed.
O double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relic, and deface the shrine!
But thus Orinda died:
Heaven, by the same disease, did both translate;
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

Meantime, her warlike brother on the seas
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.
Ah, gen'rous youth! that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here!
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wrecked at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou kenn'st from far
Among the Pleiads a new-kindled star,
If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
'Tis she that shines in that propitious light.

When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations underground;
When in the valley of Jehosaphat
The judging God shall close the book of Fate;
And there the last assizes keep
For those who wake and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly
From the four corners of the sky,
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those clothed with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound:
For they are covered with the lightest ground;
And straight with in-born vigour, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the New Morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shall go,
As harbinger of Heav'n, the way to show,

The way which thou so well hast learned below.

John Dryden

On the Death of a Very Young Gentleman

He, who could view the book of destiny,
And read whatever there was writ of thee,
O charming youth, in the first opening page,
So many graces in so green an age,
Such wit, such modesty, such strength of mind,
A soul at once so manly and so kind,
Would wonder when he turned the volume o'er,
And, after some few leaves, should find no more,
Nought but a blank remain, a dead void space,
A step of life that promised such a race.
We must not, dare not, think, that heaven began
A child, and could not finish him a man;
Reflecting what a mighty store was laid
Of rich materials, and a model made:
The cost already furnished; so bestowed,
As more was never to one soul allowed:
Yet after this profusion spent in vain,
Nothing but mouldering ashes to remain,
I guess not, lest I split upon the shelf,
Yet, durst I guess, heaven kept it for himself;
And giving us the use, did soon recall,
Ere we could spare the mighty principal.
Thus then he disappeared, was rarified,
For 'tis improper speech to say he died:
He was exhaled; his great Creator drew
His spirit, as the sun the morning dew.
'Tis sin produces death; and he had none,
But the taint Adam left on every son.
He added not, he was so pure, so good,
'Twas but the original forfeit of his blood;
And that so little, that the river ran
More clear than the corrupted fount began.
Nothing remained of the first muddy clay;
The length of course had washed it in the way:
So deep, and yet so clear, we might behold
The gravel bottom, and that bottom gold.
As such we loved, admired, almost adored,
Gave all the tribute mortals could afford.
Perhaps we gave so much, the powers above
Grew angry at our superstitious love;
For when we more than human homage pay,
The charming cause is justly snatched away.
Thus was the crime not his, but ours alone;
And yet we murmur that he went so soon,
Though miracles are short, and rarely shown.
Learn then, ye mournful parents, and divide
That love in many, which in one was tied.
That individual blessing is no more,
But multiplied in your remaining store.
The flame's dispersed, but does not all expire;
The sparkles blaze, though not the globe of fire.
Love him by parts, in all your numerous race,

And from those parts form one collected grace;
Then, when you have refined to that degree,
Imagine all in one, and think that one is he.

John Dryden

On the Death of Amyntas. A Pastoral Elegy

'Twas on a joyless and a gloomy morn,
Wet was the grass, and hung with pearls the thorn,
When Damon, who designed to pass the day
With hounds and horns, and chase the flying prey,
Rose early from his bed; but soon he found
The welkin pitched with sullen clouds around,
An eastern wind, and dew upon the ground.
Thus while he stood, and sighing did survey
The fields, and curst the ill omens of the day,
He saw Menalcas come with heavy pace:
Wet were his eyes, and cheerless was his face:
He wrung his hands, distracted with his care,
And sent his voice before him from afar.
“Return,” he cried, “return, unhappy swain,
The spongy clouds are filled with gathering rain:
The promise of the day not only crossed,
But even the spring, the spring itself is lost.
Amyntas—oh!”—he could not speak the rest,
Nor needed, for presaging Damon guessed.
Equal with heaven young Damon loved the boy,
The boast of nature, both his parents' joy.
His graceful form revolving in his mind;
So great a genius, and a soul so kind,
Gave sad assurance that his fears were true;
Too well the envy of the gods he knew:
For when their gifts too lavishly are placed,
Soon they repent, and will not make them last.
For sure it was too bountiful a dole,
The mother's features, and the father's soul.
Then thus he cried:—“The morn bespoke the news;
The morning did her cheerful light diffuse;
But see how suddenly she changed her face,
And brought on clouds and rain, the day's disgrace;
Just such, Amyntas, was thy promised race.
What charms adorned thy youth, where nature smiled,
And more than man was given us in a child!
His infancy was ripe; a soul sublime
In years so tender that prevented time:
Heaven gave him all at once; then snatched away,
Ere mortals all his beauties could survey;
Just like the flower that buds and withers in a day.”

MENALCAS.
The mother, lovely, though with grief opprest,
Reclined his dying head upon her breast.
The mournful family stood all around;
One groan was heard, one universal sound:
All were in floods of tears and endless sorrow drowned.
So dire a sadness sat on every look,
Even Death repented he had given the stroke.
He grieved his fatal work had been ordained,
But promised length of life to those who yet remained.

The mother's and her eldest daughter's grace,
It seems, had bribed him to prolong their space.
The father bore it with undaunted soul,
Like one who durst his destiny control;
Yet with becoming grief he bore his part,
Resigned his son, but not resigned his heart.
Patient as Job; and may he live to see,
Like him, a new increasing family!

DAMON.
Such is my wish, and such my prophecy;
For yet, my friend, the beauteous mould remains;
Long may she exercise her fruitful pains!
But, ah! with better hap, and bring a race
More lasting, and endued with equal grace!
Equal she may, but farther none can go;
For he was all that was exact below.

MENALCAS.
Damon, behold yon breaking purple cloud;
Hear'st thou not hymns and songs divinely loud?
There mounts Amyntas; the young cherubs play
About their godlike mate, and sing him on his way.
He cleaves the liquid air; behold, he flies,
And every moment gains upon the skies.
The new-come guest admires the ethereal state,
The sapphire portal, and the golden gate;
And now admitted in the shining throng,
He shows the passport which he brought along.
His passport is his innocence and grace,
Well known to all the natives of the place.
Now sing, ye joyful angels, and admire
Your brother's voice that comes to mend your quire:
Sing you, while endless tears our eyes bestow;
For, like Amyntas, none is left below.

John Dryden

Palamon And Arcite; Or The Knight's Tale. From Chaucer. In Three Books. Book II.

While Arcite lives in bliss, the story turns
Where hopeless Palamon in prison mourns.
For six long years immured, the captive knight
Had dragged his chains, and scarcely seen the light:
Lost liberty and love at once he bore;
His prison pained him much, his passion more:
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wishes to be free from love.
But when the sixth revolving year was run,
And May within the Twins received the sun,
Were it by Chance, or forceful Destiny,
Which forms in causes first whate'er shall be,
Assisted by a friend one moonless night,
This Palamon from prison took his flight:
A pleasant beverage he prepared before
Of wine and honey mixed, with added store
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who swallowed unaware the sleepy draught,
And snored secure till morn, his senses bound
In slumber, and in long oblivion drowned.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert ere the rising sun.
A thick-spread forest near the city lay,
To this with lengthened strides he took his way,
(For far he could not fly, and feared the day.)

Safe from pursuit, he meant to shun the light,
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next design
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theseus, till he lost his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our style;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the snare.
The morning-lark, the messenger of day,
Saluted in her song the morning gray;
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,
That all the horizon laughed to see the joyous sight;
He with his tepid rays the rose renews,
And licks the dropping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, resolved to pay
Observance to the month of merry May,
Forth on his fiery steed betimes he rode,
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trod:
At ease he seemed, and prancing o'er the plains,
Turned only to the grove his horse's reins,
The grove I named before, and, lighting there,
A woodbind garland sought to crown his hair;
Then turned his face against the rising day,

And raised his voice to welcome in the May:
“For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the first, the fairest of the year:
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers:
When thy short reign is past, the feverish sun
The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.
So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight,
Nor goats with venomed teeth thy tendrils bite,
As thou shalt guide my wandering feet to find
The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind.”
His vows addressed, within the grove he strayed,
Till Fate or Fortune near the place conveyed
His steps where secret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
Who flying death had there concealed his flight,
In brakes and brambles hid, and shunning mortal sight;
And less he knew him for his hated foe,
But feared him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been said of ancient years,
That fields are full of eyes and woods have ears,
For this the wise are ever on their guard,
For unforeseen, they say, is unprepared.
Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone,
And less than all suspected Palamon,
Who, listening, heard him, while he searched the grove,
And loudly sung his roundelay of love:
But on the sudden stopped, and silent stood,
(As lovers often muse, and change their mood
Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell,
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well:
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.
Thus Arcite, having sung, with altered hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew
A desperate sigh, accusing Heaven and Fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate:
“Cursed be the day when first I did appear;
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year.
Still will the jealous Queen pursue our race?
Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:
Yet ceases not her hate; for all who come
From Cadmus are involved in Cadmus' doom.
I suffer for my blood: unjust decree,
That punishes another's crime on me.
In mean estate I serve my mortal foe,
The man who caused my country's overthrow.
This is not all; for Juno, to my shame,
Has forced me to forsake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philostratus I am.
That side of heaven is all my enemy:

Mars ruined Thebes; his mother ruined me.
Of all the royal race remains but one
Besides myself, the unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theseus holds in bonds and will not free;
Without a crime, except his kin to me.
Yet these and all the rest I could endure;
But love's a malady without a cure:
Fierce Love has pierced me with his fiery dart,
He fires within, and hisses at my heart.
Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue;
I suffer for the rest, I die for you.
Of such a goddess no time leaves record,
Who burned the temple where she was adored:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleased with my sufferings, if you knew my pain."
At this a sickly qualm his heart assailed,
His ears ring inward, and his senses failed.
No word missed Palamon of all he spoke;
But soon to deadly pale he changed his look:
He trembled every limb, and felt a smart,
As if cold steel had glided through his heart;
Nor longer stayed, but starting from his place,
Discovered stood, and showed his hostile face:
"False traitor, Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good,
Now art thou found forsworn for Emily,
And darest attempt her love, for whom I die.
So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,
Against thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrowed name: as false to me,
So false thou art to him who set thee free.
But rest assured, that either thou shalt die,
Or else renounce thy claim in Emily;
For, though unarmed I am, and freed by chance,
Am here without my sword or pointed lance,
Hope not, base man, unquestioned hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe."
Arcite, who heard his tale and knew the man,
His sword unsheathed, and fiercely thus began:
"Now, by the gods who govern heaven above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy last; or in this grove
This hand should force thee to renounce thy love;
The surety which I gave thee I defy:
Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
And Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury.
Know, I will serve the fair in thy despite:
But since thou art my kinsman and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
Our arms shall plead the titles of our love:
And Heaven so help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cause and quarrel both unknown,

With arms of proof both for myself and thee;
Choose thou the best, and leave the worst to me.
And, that at better ease thou mayest abide,
Bedding and clothes I will this night provide,
And needful sustenance, that thou mayest be
A conquest better won, and worthy me."

His promise Palamon accepts; but prayed,
To keep it better than the first he made.
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn;
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn;
Oh Love! thou sternly dost thy power maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign!
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.
This was in Arcite proved and Palamon:
Both in despair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite returned, and, as in honour tied,
His foe with bedding and with food supplied;
Then, ere the day, two suits of armour sought,
Which borne before him on his steed he brought:
Both were of shining steel, and wrought so pure
As might the strokes of two such arms endure.
Now, at the time, and in the appointed place,
The challenger and challenged, face to face,
Approach; each other from afar they knew,
And from afar their hatred changed their hue.
So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees
His course at distance by the bending trees:
And thinks, Here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he must fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A generous chillness seizes every part,
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.

Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
None greets, for none the greeting will return;
But in dumb surliness each armed with care
His foe professed, as brother of the war;
Then both, no moment lost, at once advance
Against each other, armed with sword and lance:
They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore
Their corslets, and the thinnest parts explore.
Thus two long hours in equal arms they stood,
And wounded wound, till both are bathed in blood
And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the spot.
Fell Arcite like an angry tiger fared,
And like a lion Palamon appeared:
Or, as two boars whom love to battle draws,
With rising bristles and with frothy jaws,

Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound
With grunts and groans the forest rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,
Till Fate an umpire sends their difference to decide.
The power that ministers to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what Heaven foresees,
Called Providence, or Chance, or Fatal sway,
Comes with resistless force, and finds or makes her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power
One moment can retard the appointed hour,
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,
Which happened not in centuries of years:
For sure, whate'er we mortals hate or love
Or hope or fear depends on powers above:
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foresight necessitate the will.
In Theseus this appears, whose youthful joy
Was beasts of chase in forests to destroy;
This gentle knight, inspired by jolly May,
Forsook his easy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds pursued his way.
Beside him rode Hippolita the queen,
And Emily attired in lively green,
With horns and hounds and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh:
And, as he followed Mars before, so now
He serves the goddess of the silver bow.
The way that Theseus took was to the wood,
Where the two knights in cruel battle stood:
The laund on which they fought, the appointed place
In which the uncoupled hounds began the chase.
Thither forth-right he rode to rouse the prey,
That shaded by the fern in harbour lay;
And thence dislodged, was wont to leave the wood
For open fields, and cross the crystal flood.
Approached, and looking underneath the sun,
He saw proud Arcite and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow;
Like lightning flamed their fauchions to and fro,
And shot a dreadful gleam; so strong they strook,
There seemed less force required to fell an oak.
He gazed with wonder on their equal might,
Looked eager on, but knew not either knight.
Resolved to learn, he spurred his fiery steed
With goring rowels to provoke his speed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So soon he was betwixt them on the place;
And with his sword unsheathed, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to cease their strife;
Then with imperious tone pursues his threat:
"What are you? why in arms together met?
How dares your pride presume against my laws,

As in a listed field to fight your cause,
Unasked the royal grant; no marshal by,
As knightly rites require, nor judge to try?”
Then Palamon, with scarce recovered breath,
Thus hasty spoke: “We both deserve the death,
And both would die; for look the world around,
And pity soonest runs in gentle minds;
Then reasons with himself; and first he finds
His passion cast a mist before his sense,
And either made or magnified the offence.
Offence? Of what? To whom? Who judged the cause?
The prisoner freed himself by Nature's laws;
Born free, he sought his right; the man he freed
Was perjured, but his love excused the deed:
Thus pondering, he looked under with his eyes,
And saw the women's tears, and heard their cries,
Which moved compassion more; he shook his head,
And softly sighing to himself he said:

Curse on the unpardoning prince, whom tears can draw
“To no remorse, who rules by lion's law;
And deaf to prayers, by no submission bowed,
Rends all alike, the penitent and proud!”
At this with look serene he raised his head;
Reason resumed her place, and passion fled:
Then thus aloud he spoke:—” The power of Love,
“In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,
Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod,
By daily miracles declared a god;
He blinds the wise, gives eye-sight to the blind;
And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,
What hindered either in their native soil
At ease to reap the harvest of their toil?
But Love, their lord, did otherwise ordain,
And brought them, in their own despite again,
To suffer death deserved; for well they know
'Tis in my power, and I their deadly foe.
The proverb holds, that to be wise and love,
Is hardly granted to the gods above.
See how the madmen bleed! behold the gains
With which their master, Love, rewards their pains!
For seven long years, on duty every day,
Lo! their obedience, and their monarch's pay!
Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on;
And ask the fools, they think it wisely done;
Nor ease nor wealth nor life it self regard,
For 'tis their maxim, love is love's reward.
This is not all; the fair, for whom they strove,
Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love,
Nor thought, when she beheld the fight from far,

Her beauty was the occasion of the war.
But sure a general doom on man is past,
And all are fools and lovers, first or last:
This both by others and my self I know,
For I have served their sovereign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female snares, and felt the lover's pain,
And learned how far the god can human hearts constrain.
To this remembrance, and the prayers of those
Who for the offending warriors interpose,
I give their forfeit lives, on this accord,
To do me homage as their sovereign lord;
And as my vassals, to their utmost might,
Assist my person and assert my right."
This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtained;
Then thus the King his secret thought explained:
"If wealth or honour or a royal race,
Or each or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you knights may well deserve
A princess born; and such is she you serve:
For Emily is sister to the crown,
And but too well to both her beauty known:
But should you combat till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot share a single bed
As, therefore, both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to destiny.
Now hear the award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who best deserves her love.
Depart from hence in peace, and free as air,
Search the wide world, and where you please repair;
But on the day when this returning sun
To the same point through every sign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring
In royal lists, to fight before the king;
And then the knight, whom Fate or happy Chance
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms so far in equal fight,
From out the bars to force his opposite,
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love shall gain;
The vanquished party shall their claim release,
And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.
The charge be mine to adorn the chosen ground,
The theatre of war, for champions so renowned;
And take the patron's place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And Heaven of me so judge as I shall judge aright.
If both are satisfied with this accord,
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my sword."

Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And ravished Arcite seems to touch the sky.

The whole assembled troop was pleased as well,
Extolled the award, and on their knees they fell
To bless the gracious King. The knights, with leave
Departing from the place, his last commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardour look,
And from her eyes their inspiration took:
From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.

It might be deemed, on our historian's part,
Or too much negligence or want of art,
If he forgot the vast magnificence
Of royal Theseus, and his large expense.
He first enclosed for lists a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile around;
The form was circular; and all without
A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.
Within, an amphitheatre appeared,
Raised in degrees, to sixty paces reared:
That when a man was placed in one degree,
Height was allowed for him above to see.

Eastward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorned the western opposite.
A nobler object than this fabric was
Rome never saw, nor of so vast a space:
For, rich with spoils of many a conquered land,
All arts and artists Theseus could command,
Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
The master-painters and the carvers came.
So rose within the compass of the year
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eastern gate was raised above
A temple, sacred to the Queen of Love;
An altar stood below; on either hand
A priest with roses crowned, who held a myrtle wand.

The dome of Mars was on the gate opposed,
And on the north a turret was enclosed
Within the wall of alabaster white
And crimson coral, for the Queen of Night,
Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.

Within those oratories might you see
Rich carvings, portraitures, and imagery;
Where every figure to the life expressed
The godhead's power to whom it was addressed.
In Venus' temple on the sides were seen
The broken slumbers of enamoured men;
Prayers that even spoke, and pity seemed to call,
And issuing sighs that smoked along the wall;
Complaints and hot desires, the lover's hell,

And scalding tears that wore a channel where they fell;
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties
Of love's assurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in lust, conclude in perjuries;
Beauty, and Youth, and Wealth, and Luxury,
And sprightly Hope and short-enduring Joy,
And Sorceries, to raise the infernal powers,
And Sigils framed in planetary hours;
Expense, and After-thought, and idle Care,
And Doubts of motley hue, and dark Despair;
Suspicions and fantastical Surmise,
And Jealousy suffused, with jaundice in her eyes,
Discolouring all she viewed, in tawny dressed,
Down-looked, and with a cuckow on her fist.
Opposed to her, on the other side advance
The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,
Minstrels and music, poetry and play,
And balls by night, and turnaments by day.
All these were painted on the wall, and more;
With acts and monuments of times before;
And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:
For there the Idalian mount, and Citheron,
The court of Venus, was in colours drawn;
Before the palace gate, in careless dress
And loose array, sat portress Idleness;
There by the fount Narcissus pined alone;
There Samson was; with wiser Solomon,
And all the mighty names by love undone.
Medea's charms were there; Circean feasts,
With bowls that turned enamoured youths to beasts.
Here might be seen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And prowess to the power of love submit;
The spreading snare for all mankind is laid,
And lovers all betray, and are betrayed.
The Goddess' self some noble hand had wrought;
Smiling she seemed, and full of pleasing thought;
From ocean as she first began to rise,
And smoothed the ruffled seas, and cleared the skies,
She trod the brine, all bare below the breast,
And the green waves but ill-concealed the rest:
A lute she held; and on her head was seen
A wreath of roses red and myrtles green;
Her turtles fanned the buxom air above;
And by his mother stood an infant Love,
With wings unfledged; his eyes were banded o'er,
His hands a bow, his back, a quiver bore,
Supplied with arrows bright and keen, a deadly store.

But in the dome of mighty Mars the red
With different figures all the sides were spread;
This temple, less in form, with equal grace,

Was imitative of the first in Thrace;
For that cold region was the loved abode
And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.
The landscape was a forest wide and bare,
Where neither beast nor human kind repair,
The fowl that scent afar the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deformed and old,
Headless the most, and hideous to behold;
A rattling tempest through the branches went,
That stripped them bare, and one sole way they bent.
Heaven froze above severe, the clouds congeal,
And through the crystal vault appeared the standing hail.
Such was the face without: a mountain stood
Threatening from high, and overlooked the wood:
Beneath the lowering brow, and on a bent,
The temple stood of Mars armipotent;
The frame of burnished steel, that cast a glare
From far, and seemed to thaw the freezing air.
A straight long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls, and horror over head;
Thence issued such a blast, and hollow roar,
As threatened from the hinge to heave the door;
In through that door a northern light there shone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.
The gate was adamant; eternal frame,
Which, hewed by Mars himself, from Indian quarries came,
The labour of a God; and all along
Tough iron plates were clenched to make it strong.
A tun about was every pillar there;
A polished mirror shone not half so clear.
There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought,
And midwife Time the ripened plot to murder brought.
There the red Anger dared the pallid Fear;
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer,
Soft, smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown;
The assassinating wife, the household fiend;
And far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.
On the other side there stood Destruction bare,
Unpunished Rapine, and a waste of war;
Contest with sharpened knives in cloisters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language base;
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the place.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congealed was clotted in his hair;
With eyes half closed and gaping mouth he lay,

And grim as when he breathed his sullen soul away.
In midst of all the dome, Misfortune sate,
And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,
And Madness laughing in his ireful mood;
And armed Complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murdered corps, in covert laid,
And violent death in thousand shapes displayed:
The city to the soldier's rage resigned;
Successless wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forced on rocky shores,
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars' his nature, flame and steel;
The gasping charioteer beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruined house that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole division that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains
Were there: the butcher, armourer, and smith,
Who forges sharpened fauchions, or the scythe.
The scarlet conquest on a tower was placed,
With shouts and soldiers' acclamations graced:
A pointed sword hung threatening o'er his head,
Sustained but by a slender twine of thread.
There saw I Mars his ides, the Capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Caesar's fall;
The last Triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love.
These, and a thousand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born,
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force
Of the red star, in his revolving course.
The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,
All sheathed in arms, and gruffly looked the god;
Two geomantic figures were displayed
Above his head, a warrior and a maid,
One when direct, and one when retrograde.

Tired with deformities of death, I haste
To the third temple of Diana chaste.
A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the sides, and on the midst a lawn;
The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Pursued the flying deer, the woods with horns resound:
Calisto there stood manifest of shame,
And, turned a bear, the northern star became:
Her son was next, and, by peculiar grace,
In the cold circle held the second place;
The stag Actson in the stream had spied
The naked huntress, and for seeing died;
His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue

The chase, and their mistaken master slew.
Peneian Daphne too, was there to see,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree.
The adjoining fane the assembled Greeks expressed,
And hunting of the Calydonian beast.
OEnides' valour, and his envied prize;
The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor shown,
The murderess mother, and consuming son;
The Volscian queen extended on the plain,
The treason punished, and the traitor slain.
The rest were various huntings, well designed,
And savage beasts destroyed, of every kind.
The graceful goddess was arrayed in green;
About her feet were little beagles seen,
That watched with upward eyes the motions of their Queen.
Her legs were buskined, and the left before,
In act to shoot; a silver bow she bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that soon would wane,
And, drinking borrowed light, be filled again;
With downcast eyes, as seeming to survey
The dark dominions, her alternate sway.
Before her stood a woman in her throes,
And called Lucina's aid, her burden to disclose.
All these the painter drew with such command,
That Nature snatched the pencil from his hand,
Ashamed and angry that his art could feign,
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theseus beheld the fanes of every god,
And thought his mighty cost was well bestowed.
So princes now their poets should regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.

The theatre thus raised, the lists enclosed,
And all with vast magnificence disposed,
We leave the monarch pleased, and haste to bring
The knights to combat, and their arms to sing.

John Dryden

Palamon And Arcite; Or, The Knight's Tale. From Chaucer. In Three Books. Book I.

In days of old there lived, of mighty fame,
A valiant Prince, and Theseus was his name;
A chief, who more in feats of arms excelled,
The rising nor the setting sun beheld.
Of Athens he was lord; much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown.
In Scythia with the warrior Queen he strove,
Whom first by force he conquered, then by love;
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theseus ride,
With Love to friend, and Fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his side.
I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way;
But, were it not too long, I would recite
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy Queen and hero Knight;
The town besieged, and how much blood it cost
The female army, and the Athenian host;
The spousals of Hippolyta the Queen;
What tilts and turneys at the feast were seen;
The storm at their return, the ladies' fear:
But these and other things I must forbear.

The field is spacious I design to sow
With oxen far unfit to draw the plough:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waste my strength;
And trivial accidents shall be forborn,
That others may have time to take their turn,
As was at first enjoined us by mine host,
That he, whose tale is best and pleases most,
Should win his supper at our common cost.
And therefore where I left, I will pursue
This ancient story, whether false or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The Prince I mentioned, full of high renown,
In this array drew near the Athenian town;
When, in his pomp and utmost of his pride
Marching, he chanced to cast his eye aside,
And saw a quire of mourning dames, who lay
By two and two across the common way:
At his approach they raised a rueful cry,
And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,
Creeping and crying, till they seized at last
His courser's bridle and his feet embraced.
“Tell me,” said Theseus, “what and whence you are,
“And why this funeral pageant you prepare?
Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
To meet my triumph in ill-omened weeds?
Or envy you my praise, and would destroy

With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy?
Or are you injured, and demand relief?
Name your request, and I will ease your grief."
The most in years of all the mourning train
Began; but swounded first away for pain;
Then scarce recovered spoke: "Nor envy we
"Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O King, the afflicted to redress,
And fame has filled the world with thy success:
We wretched women sue for that alone,
Which of thy goodness is refused to none;
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief;
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of sovereign queen before;
Till, thanks to giddy Chance, which never bears
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,
She cast us headlong from our high estate,
And here in hope of thy return we wait,
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.
But reverence thou the power whose name it bears,
Relieve the oppressed, and wipe the widows' tears.
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a Queen;
At Thebes he fell; cursed be the fatal day!
And all the rest thou seest in this array
To make their moan their lords in battle lost,
Before that town besieged by our confederate host.
But Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,
Denies the rites of funeral fires to those
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburned, unburied, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed."
At this she shrieked aloud; the mournful train
Echoed her grief, and grovelling on the plain,
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Besought his pity to their helpless kind.

The Prince was touched, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He sighed; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, so fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And whate'er else to chivalry belongs,
He would not cease, till he revenged their wrongs;

That Greece should see performed what he declared,
And cruel Creon find his just reward.
He said no more, but shunning all delay
Rode on, nor entered Athens on his way;
But left his sister and his queen behind,
And waved his royal banner in the wind,
Where in an argent field the God of War
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car.
Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead seemed to glow with fire;
Even the ground glittered where the standard flew,
And the green grass was dyed to sanguine hue.
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquered Minotaur:
The soldiers shout around with generous rage,
And in that victory their own presage.
He praised their ardour, inly pleased to see
His host, the flower of Grecian chivalry.
All day he marched, and all the ensuing night,
And saw the city with returning light.
The process of the war I need not tell,
How Theseus conquered, and how Creon fell;
Or after, how by storm the walls were won,
Or how the victor sacked and burned the town;
How to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of their lords in battle slain;
And with what ancient rites they were interred;
All these to fitter time shall be deferred:
I spare the widows' tears, their woful cries,
And howling at their husbands' obsequies;
How Theseus at these funerals did assist,
And with what gifts the mourning dames dismissed.

Thus when the victor chief had Creon slain,
And conquered Thebes, he pitched upon the plain
His mighty camp, and when the day returned,
The country wasted and the hamlets burned,
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without control to strip and spoil the dead.

There, in a heap of slain, among the rest
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load oppressed
Of slaughtered foes, whom first to death they sent,
The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they seemed,
Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deemed;
That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
Their swords, their shields, their surcoats were the same:
Close by each other laid they pressed the ground,
Their manly bosoms pierced with many a grisly wound;
Nor well alive nor wholly dead they were,
But some faint signs of feeble life appear;

The wandering breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulse, and hardly heaved the heart.
These two were sisters' sons; and Arcite one,
Much famed in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,
And softly both conveyed to Theseus' tent:
Whom, known of Creon's line and cured with care,
He to his city sent as prisoners of the war;
Hopeless of ransom, and condemned to lie
In durance, doomed a lingering death to die.

This done, he marched away with warlike sound,
And to his Athens turned with laurels crowned,
Where happy long he lived, much loved, and more renowned.
But in a tower, and never to be loosed,
The woful captive kinsmen are enclosed.

Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,
Till once ('twas on the morn of cheerful May)
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new,
(For with the rosy colour strove her hue,)
Waked, as her custom was, before the day,
To do the observance due to sprightly May;
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves;
Inspires new flames, revives extinguished loves.
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Arose, and dressed herself in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair,
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair:
A ribband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wantoned in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chased the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden-walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May. 190

At every turn she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose; and every rose she drew,
She shook the stalk, and brushed away the dew;

Then party-coloured flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, she sung and carolled out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear;
Even wondering Philomel forgot to sing,
And learned from her to welcome in the spring.

The tower, of which before was mention made,
Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and strong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall;
The garden was enclosed within the square,
Where young Emilia took the morning air.

It happened Palamon, the prisoner knight,
Restless for woe, arose before the light,
And with his jailor's leave desired to breathe
An air more wholesome than the damps beneath.
This granted, to the tower he took his way,
Cheered with the promise of a glorious day;
Then cast a languishing regard around,
And saw with hateful eyes the temples crowned
With golden spires, and all the hostile ground.
He sighed, and turned his eyes, because he knew
'Twas but a larger jail he had in view;
Then looked below, and from the castle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight;
The garden, which before he had not seen,
In spring's new livery clad of white and green,
Fresh flowers in wide parterres, and shady walks between.
This viewed, but not enjoyed, with arms across
He stood, reflecting on his country's loss;
Himself an object of the public scorn,
And often wished he never had been born.
At last (for so his destiny required),
With walking giddy, and with thinking tired,

He through a little window cast his sight,
Though thick of bars, that gave a scanty light;
But even that glimmering served him to descry
The inevitable charms of Emily.

Scarce had he seen, but, seized with sudden smart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;
Struck blind with overpowering light he stood,
Then started back amazed, and cried aloud.

Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haste,
To help his friend, and in his arms embraced;
And asked him why he looked so deadly wan,
And whence, and how, his change of cheer began?
Or who had done the offence? “But if,” said he,
“Your grief alone is hard captivity,
For love of Heaven with patience undergo
A cureless ill, since Fate will have it so:
So stood our horoscope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,
Or other baleful aspect, ruled our birth,
When all the friendly stars were under earth;

Whate'er betides, by Destiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men than vainly seek to shun."
Nor of my bonds," said Palamon again,
Nor of unhappy planets I complain;
But when my mortal anguish caused my cry,
The moment I was hurt through either eye;
Pierced with a random shaft, I faint away,
And perish with insensible decay:
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound,
Whom, like Actaeon, unaware I found.
Look how she walks along yon shady space;
Not Juno moves with more majestic grace,
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
If thou art Venus (for thy charms confess
That face was formed in heaven), nor art thou less,
Disguised in habit, undisguised in shape,
O help us captives from our chains to scape!
But if our doom be past in bonds to lie
For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die,
Then be thy wrath appeased with our disgrace,
And show compassion to the Theban race,
Oppressed by tyrant power!"—While yet he spoke,
Arcite on Emily had fixed his look;
The fatal dart a ready passage found
And deep within his heart infixed the wound:
So that if Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he or more:
Then from his inmost soul he sighed, and said,
"The beauty I behold has struck me dead:
Unknowingly she strikes, and kills by chance;
Poison is in her eyes, and death in every glance.
Oh, I must ask; nor ask alone, but move
Her mind to mercy, or must die for love."

Thus Arcite: and thus Palamon replies
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes,)
"Speakest thou in earnest, or in jesting vein?"
"Jesting," said Arcite, "suits but ill with pain."
"It suits far worse," (said Palamon again,
And bent his brows,) "with men who honour weigh,
Their faith to break, their friendship to betray;
But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one should be the common good of both;
One soul should both inspire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in pursuit of love?
To this before the Gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.

This binds thee, then, to farther my design,
As I am bound by vow to farther thine:

Nor canst, nor darest thou, traitor, on the plain
Appeach my honour, or thy own maintain,
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whose faith I trust, and on whose care depend.
And wouldst thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than release, would choose to die?
But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain,
Thy bad pretence; I told thee first my pain:
For first my love began ere thine was born;
Thou as my council, and my brother sworn,
Art bound to assist my eldership of right,
Or justly to be deemed a perjured knight."

Thus Palamon: but Arcite with disdain
In haughty language thus replied again:
"Forsworn thyself: the traitor's odious name
I first return, and then disprove thy claim.
If love be passion, and that passion nurst
With strong desires, I loved the lady first.
Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflamed
To worship, and a power celestial named?
Thine was devotion to the blest above,
I saw the woman, and desired her love;
First owned my passion, and to thee commend
The important secret, as my chosen friend.
Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire
A moment elder than my rival fire;
Can chance of seeing first thy title prove?
And knowst thou not, no law is made for love?
Law is to things which to free choice relate;
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
Laws are not positive; love's power we see
Is Nature's sanction, and her first decree,
Each day we break the bond of human laws
For love, and vindicate the common cause.
Laws for defence of civil rights are placed,
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waste.
Maids, widows, wives without distinction fall;
The sweeping deluge, love, comes on and covers all.
If then the laws of friendship I transgress,
I keep the greater, while I break the less;
And both are mad alike, since neither can possess.
Both hopeless to be ransomed, never more
To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.
Like Asop's hounds contending for the bone,
Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone;
The fruitless fight continued all the day,
A cur came by and snatched the prize away.
As courtiers therefore justle for a grant,
And when they break their friendship, plead their want,
So thou, if Fortune will thy suit advance,
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:

For I must love, and am resolved to try
My fate, or failing in the adventure die."

Great was their strife, which hourly was renewed,
Till each with mortal hate his rival viewed:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met they made a surly stand,
And glared like Angry lions as they passed,
And wished that every look might be their last.

It chanced at length, Pirithous came to attend
This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend:
Their love in early infancy began,
And rose as childhood ripened into man,
Companions of the war; and loved so well,
That when one died, as ancient stories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.

But to pursue my tale: to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long since,
And honoured by this young Thessalian prince.
Theseus, to gratify his friend and guest,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his request,
Restored to liberty the captive knight,
But on these hard conditions I recite:
That if hereafter Arcite should be found
Within the compass of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head should pay the forfeit of the offence.
To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promise was the prisoner freed.

Unpleased and pensive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life must pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late?
"What have I gained," he said, "in prison pent,
If I but change my bonds for banishment?
And banished from her sight, I suffer more
In freedom than I felt in bonds before;
Forced from her presence and condemned to live,
Unwelcome freedom and unthanked reprieve:
Heaven is not but where Emily abides,
And where she's absent, all is hell besides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accurst
Which bound my friendship to Pirithous first:
Had I not known that prince, I still had been
In bondage and had still Emilia seen:
For though I never can her grace deserve,
'Tis recompense enough to see and serve.
O Palamon, my kinsman and my friend,

How much more happy fates thy love attend I

Thine is the adventure, thine the victory,
Well has thy fortune turned the dice for thee:
Thou on that angel's face mayest feed thy eyes,
In prison, no; but blissful paradise!
Thou daily seest that sun of beauty shine,
And lovest at least in love's extremest line.
I mourn in absence, love's eternal night;
And who can tell but since thou hast her sight,
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various power) may cease to frown,
And by some ways unknown thy wishes crown?
But I, the most forlorn of human kind,
Nor help can hope nor remedy can find;
But doomed to drag my loathsome life in care,
For my reward, must end it in despair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates
That governs all, and Heaven that all creates,
Nor art, nor Nature's hand can ease my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief:
Then farewell youth, and all the joys that dwell
With youth and life, and life itself, farewell!
But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of Fortune, Fate, or Providence complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than those which we desire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But, watched by robbers, for their wealth are slain;
Some pray from prison to be freed; and come,
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
Murdered by those they trusted with their life,
A favoured servant or a bosom wife.
Such dear-bought blessings happen every day,
Because we know not for what things to pray.
Like drunken sots about the streets we roam:

"Well knows the sot he has a certain home,
Yet knows not how to find the uncertain place,
And blunders on and staggers every pace.
Thus all seek happiness; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.
This is my case, who thought our utmost good
Was in one word of freedom understood:
The fatal blessing came: from prison free,
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily."

Thus Arcite: but if Arcite thus deplore
His sufferings, Palamon yet suffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He swells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan;
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground;

The hollow tower with clamours rings around:
With briny tears he bathed his fettered feet,
And dropped all o'er with agony of sweat.
“Alas!” he cried, “I, wretch, in prison pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
Thou livest at large, thou drawest thy native air,
Pleased with thy freedom, proud of my despair:
Thou mayest, since thou hast youth and courage joined,
A sweet behaviour and a solid mind,
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace;
And after (by some treaty made) possess
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.
So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I
Must languish in despair, in prison die.
Thus all the advantage of the strife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine.”

The rage of jealousy then fired his soul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal
Now cold despair, succeeding in her stead,
To livid paleness turns the glowing red.
His blood, scarce liquid, creeps within his veins,
Like water which the freezing wind constrains.
Then thus he said: “Eternal Deities,
“Who rule the world with absolute decrees,
And write whatever time shall bring to pass
With pens of adamant on plates of brass;
What is the race of human kind your care
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
He with the rest is liable to pain,
And like the sheep, his brother-beast, is slain.
Cold, hunger, prisons, ills without a cure,
All these he must, and guiltless oft, endure;
Or does your justice, power, or prescience fail,
When the good suffer and the bad prevail?
What worse to wretched virtue could befal,
If Fate or giddy Fortune governed all?
Nay, worse than other beasts is our estate:
Them, to pursue their pleasures, you create;
We, bound by harder laws, must curb our will,
And your commands, not our desires, fulfil:
Then, when the creature is unjustly slain,
Yet, after death at least, he feels no pain;
But man in life surcharged with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doomed to suffer more.
A serpent shoots his sting at unaware;
An ambushed thief forelays a traveller;
The man lies murdered, while the thief and snake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Just or unjust, I have my share of woe,

Through Saturn seated in a luckless place,
And Juno's wrath that persecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus in a quartil, move
My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love,”

Let Palamon oppressed in bondage mourn,
While to his exited rival we return.
By this the sun, declining from his height,
The day had shortened to prolong the night:
The lengthened night gave length of misery,
Both to the captive lover and the free:
For Palamon in endless prison mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns;
The banished never hopes his love to see,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty.
'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains;
One sees his love, but cannot break his chains;
One free, and all his motions uncontrolled,
Beholds whate'er he would but what he would behold.
Judge as you please, for I will haste to tell
What fortune to the banished knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes returned again,
The loss of her he loved renewed his pain;
What could be worse than never more to see
His life, his soul, his charming Emily?
He raved with all the madness of despair,
He roared, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.
Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
For wanting nourishment, he wanted tears;
His eyeballs in their hollow sockets sink,
Bereft of sleep; he loathes his meat and drink;
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale spectre of a murdered man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves;
In solitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone;
Nor, mixed in mirth, in youthful pleasure shares,
But sighs when songs and instruments he hears.

His spirits are so low, his voice is drowned,
He hears as from afar, or in a swound,
Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound:
Uncombed his locks, and squalid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay desire;
But full of museful mopings, which presage
The loss of reason and conclude in rage.

This when he had endured a year and more,
Now wholly changed from what he was before,
It happened once, that, slumbering as he lay,
He dreamt (his dream began at break of day)

That Hermes o'er his head in air appeared,
And with soft words his drooping spirits cheered;
His hat adorned with wings disclosed the god,
And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod;
Such as he seemed, when, at his sire's command,
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand.
“Arise,” he said, “to conquering Athens go;
There Fate appoints an end of all thy woe.”
The fright awakened Arcite with a start,
Against his bosom bounced his heaving heart;
But soon he said, with scarce recovered breath,
“And thither will I go to meet my death,
Sure to be slain; but death is my desire,
Since in Emilia's sight I shall expire.”
By chance he spied a mirror while he spoke,
And gazing there beheld his altered look;
Wondering, he saw his features and his hue
So much were changed, that scarce himself he knew.
A sudden thought then starting in his mind,
“Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may search in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate through this disguise.
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,
In low estate I may securely live,
And see, unknown, my mistress day by day.”
He said, and clothed himself in coarse array,
A labouring hind in show; then forth he went,
And to the Athenian towers his journey bent:
One squire attended in the same disguise,
Made conscious of his master's enterprise.
Arrived at Athens, soon he came to court,
Unknown, unquestioned in that thick resort:
Proffering for hire his service at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.

So fair befel him, that for little gain
He served at first Emilia's chamberlain;
And, watchful all advantages to spy,
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye;
And as his bones were big, and sinews strong,
Refused no toil that could to slaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And used his noble hands the wood to hew.
He passed a year at least attending thus
On Emily, and called Philostratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much esteemed, so well beloved as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courtesy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace;
That exercised within a higher sphere,

His virtues more conspicuous might appear.
Thus by the general voice was Arcite praised,
And by great Theseus to high favour raised;
Among his menial servants first enrolled,
And largely entertained with sums of gold:
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,

Of his own income and his annual rent.
This well employed, he purchased friends and fame,
But cautiously concealed from whence it came.
Thus for three years he lived with large increase
In arms of honour, and esteem in peace;
To Theseus' person he was ever near,
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear.

John Dryden

Palamon And Arcite; Or, The Knight's Tale. From Chaucer. In Three Books. Book III.

The day approached when Fortune should decide
The important enterprise, and give the bride;
For now the rivals round the world had sought,
And each his number, well appointed, brought.
The nations far and near contend in choice,
And send the flower of war by public voice;
That after or before were never known
Such chiefs, as each an army seemed alone:
Beside the champions, all of high degree,
Who knighthood loved, and deeds of chivalry,
Thronged to the lists, and envied to behold
The names of others, not their own, enrolled.
Nor seems it strange; for every noble knight
Who loves the fair, and is endued with might,
In such a quarrel would be proud to fight.
There breathes not scarce a man on British ground
(An isle for love and arms of old renowned)
But would have sold his life to purchase fame,
To Palamon or Arcite sent his name;
And had the land selected of the best,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
Approved in fight, and men of mighty name;
Their arms were several, as their nations were,
But furnished all alike with sword and spear.

Some wore coat armour, imitating scale,
And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail;
Some wore a breastplate and a light juppon,
Their horses clothed with rich caparison;
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use
Of folded hides, and others shields of Pruce.
One hung a pole-axe at his saddle-bow,
And one a heavy mace to stun the foe;
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With jambeux armed, and double plates of steel;
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a sleeve embroidered by his love.

With Palamon above the rest in place,
Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face
The balls of his broad eyes rolled in his head,
And glared betwixt a yellow and a red;
He looked a lion with a gloomy stare,
And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair;
Big-boned and large of limbs, with sinews strong,
Broad-shouldered, and his arms were round and long.
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)
Were yoked to draw his car of burnished gold.
Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,
Conspicuous from afar, and overlooked the field.

His surcoat was a bear-skin on his back;
His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven-black.
His ample forehead bore a coronet,
With sparkling diamonds and with rubies set.
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy fair,
And tall as stags, ran loose, and coursed around his chair,
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear;
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the same their necks surround.

Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.

To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came
Emetrius, king of Inde, a mighty name,
On a bay courser, goodly to behold,
The trappings of his horse embossed with barbarous gold.
Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace;
His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorned with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His saddle was of gold, with emeralds set;
His shoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire;
His amber-coloured locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.
His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue;
Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of the skin.
His awful presence did the crowd surprise,
Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes;
Eyes that confessed him born for kingly sway,
So fierce, they flashed intolerable day.
His age in nature's youthful prime appeared,
And just began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound;
A laurel wreathed his temples, fresh, and green,
And myrtle sprigs, the marks of love, were mixed between.
Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaimed, and lily white.

His hundred knights attend him to the war,
All armed for battle; save their heads were bare.
Words and devices blazed on every shield,
And pleasing was the terror of the field.
For kings, and dukes, and barons you might see,
Like sparkling stars, though different in degree,
All for the increase of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus through the conquered Indies rode,

And beasts in gambols frisked before their honest god.

In this array the war of either side
Through Athens passed with military pride.
At prime, they entered on the Sunday morn;
Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flowers the posts adorn.
The town was all a jubilee of feasts;
So Theseus willed in honour of his guests;
Himself with open arms the kings embraced,
Then all the rest in their degrees were graced.
No harbinger was needful for the night,
For every house was proud to lodge a knight.

I pass the royal treat, nor must relate
The gifts bestowed, nor how the champions sate;
Who first, who last, or how the knights addressed
Their vows, or who was fairest at the feast;
Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most surprise,
Soft amorous sighs, and silent love of eyes.
The rivals call my Muse another way,
To sing their vigils for the ensuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night:
And Phosphor, on the confines of the light,
Promised the sun; ere day began to spring,
The tuneful lark already stretched her wing,
And flickering on her nest, made short essays to sing.

When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took to the royal lists his early way,
To Venus at her fane, in her own house, to pray.
There, falling on his knees before her shrine,
He thus implored with prayers her power divine:
“Creator Venus, genial power of love,
The bliss of men below, and gods above!
Beneath the sliding sun thou runst thy race,
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place.
For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.
Thee, Goddess, thee the storms of winter fly;
Earth smiles with flowers renewing, laughs the sky,
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.
For thee the lion loathes the taste of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood;
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the stream, and snuff their absent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair;
All nature is thy province, life thy care;
Thou madest the world, and dost the world repair.
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increase of Jove, companion of the Sun,
If e'er Adonis touched thy tender heart,
Have pity, Goddess, for thou knowest the smart!

Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my sorrow would be some relief;
Light sufferings give us leisure to complain;
We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.
O Goddess, tell thyself what I would say!
Thou knowest it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my suit, as I enforce my might,
In love to be thy champion and thy knight,
A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,
A foe professed to barren chastity:
Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,
Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield:
In my divine Emilia make me blest,
Let Fate or partial Chance dispose the rest:
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Possession, more than conquest, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies
On whom he favours to confer the prize;
With smiling aspect you serenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The Fates but only spin the coarser clue,
The finest of the wool is left for you:
Spare me but one small portion of the twine,
And let the Sisters cut below your line:
The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,
Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap.
But if you this ambitious prayer deny,
(A wish, I grant; beyond mortality,)
Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And, I once dead, let him possess her charms."

Thus ended he; then, with observance due,
The sacred incense on her altar threw:
The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious Goddess gave the sign,
Her statue shook, and trembled all the shrine:
Pleased Palamon the tardy omen took;
For since the flames pursued the trailing smoke,
He knew his boon was granted, but the day
To distance driven, and joy adjourned with long delay.

Now morn with rosy light had streaked the sky,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily;
Addressed her early steps to Cynthia's fane,
In state attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the vests that holy rites require,
Incense, and odorous gums, and covered fire.
The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown
Nor wanted aught besides in honour of the Moon.
Now, while the temple smoked with hallowed steam,
They wash the virgin in a living stream;

The secret ceremonies I conceal,
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful to reveal:
But such they were as pagan use required,
Performed by women when the men retired,
Whose eyes profane their chaste mysterious rites
Might turn to scandal or obscene delights.
Well-meaners think no harm; but for the rest,
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.
Her shining hair, uncombed, was loosely spread,
A crown of mastless oak adorned her head:
When to the shrine approached, the spotless maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid;
(The rites were such as were observed of old,
By Statius in his Theban story told.)
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast,
Thus lowly she preferred her chaste request.

"O Goddess, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heaven and earth and seas are seen;
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere;
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts,
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,
(Which Niobe's devoted issue felt,
When hissing through the skies the feathered deaths
were dealt,)

"As I desire to live a virgin life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.
Thy votress from my tender years I am,
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.
Like death, thou knowest, I loathe the nuptial state,
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate;
Where love is duty on the female side,
On theirs mere sensual gust, and sought with surly pride.
Now by thy triple shape, as thou art seen
In heaven, earth, hell, and everywhere a queen,
Grant this my first desire; let discord cease,
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on some other love;
Or if my frowning stars have so decreed,
That one must be rejected, one succeed,
Make him my lord, within whose faithful breast
Is fixed my image, and who loves me best.
But oh! even that avert! I choose it not,
But take it as the least unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
Oh, let me still that spotless name retain!
Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey,
And only make the beasts of chase my prey!"

The flames ascend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameless maid addressed her prayer.
When lo! the burning fire that shone so bright
Flew off, all sudden, with extinguished light,
And left one altar dark, a little space,
Which turned self-kindled, and renewed the blaze;
That other victor-flame a moment stood,
Then fell, and lifeless. left the extinguished wood;
For ever lost, the irrevocable light
Forsook the blackening coals, and sunk to night:
At either end it whistled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, so dropped the dew,
Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue.

The maid from that ill omen turned her eyes,
And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies;
Nor knew what signified the boding sign,
But found the powers displeased, and feared the wrath divine.

Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple bright.
The Power, behold! the Power in glory shone,
By her bent bow and her keen arrows known;
The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel spear she stood.
Then gracious thus began: “Dismiss thy fear,
And Heaven's unchanged decrees attentive hear:
More powerful gods have torn thee from my side,
Unwilling to resign, and doomed a bride;
The two contending knights are weighed above;
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of Love:
But which the man is in the Thunderer's breast;
This he pronounced, 'Tis he who loves thee best.'
The fire that, once extinct, revived again
Foreshows the love allotted to remain.
Farewell!” she said, and vanished from the place;
The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.
Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,
Disclaimed, and now no more a sister of the wood:
But to the parting Goddess thus she prayed:
“Propitious still, be present to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once favoured maid.”
Then sighing she returned; but smiled betwixt,
With hopes, and fears, and joys with sorrows mixt.

The next returning planetary hour
of Mars, who shared the heptarchy of power,
His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
To adorn with pagan rites the power armipotent:
Then prostrate, low before his altar lay,
And raised his manly voice, and thus began, to pray:

“Strong God of Arms, whose iron sceptre sways
The freezing North, and Hyperborean seas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's wintry coast,
Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honoured most:
There most, but everywhere thy power is known,
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung
From out thy chariot, withers even the strong;
And disarray and shameful rout ensue,
And force is added to the fainting crew.
Acknowledged as thou art, accept my prayer!
If aught I have achieved deserve thy care,
If to my utmost power with sword and shield
I dared the death, unknowing how to yield,
And falling in my rank, still kept the field;
Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustained,
That Emily by conquest may be gained.
Have pity on my pains; nor those unknown
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy stubborn heart has softened into love:
Now, by her blandishments and powerful charms,
When yielded she lay curling in thy arms,
Even by thy shame, if shame it may be called,
When Vulcan had thee in his net enthralled;
O envied ignominy, sweet disgrace,
When every god that saw thee wished thy place!
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right:
For I am young, a novice in the trade,
The fool of love, unpractised to persuade,
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,
But, caught my self, lie struggling in the snare;
And she I love or laughs at all my pain
Or knows her worth too well, and pays me with disdain.
For sure I am, unless I win in arms,
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my strength avail, unless by thee
Endued with force I gain the victory;
Then for the fire which warmed thy generous heart,
Pity thy subject's pains and equal smart.
So be the morrow's sweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conquest thine:
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife
Immortal be the business of my life;
And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among,
High on the burnished roof, my banner shall be hung,
Ranked with my champion's bucklers; and below,
With arms reversed, the achievements of my foe;
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds,
While day to night and night to day succeeds,
Thy smoking altar shall be fat with food

Of incense and the grateful steam of blood;
Burnt-offerings morn and evening shall be thine,
And fires eternal in thy temple shine.
The bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
Guiltless of steel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reserved for thee.
So may my arms with victory be blest,
I ask no more; let Fate dispose the rest."

The champion ceased; there followed in the close
A hollow groan; a murmuring wind arose;
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung:
The bolted gates blew open at the blast,
The storm rushed in, and Arcite stood aghast:
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,
Fanned by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.
Then from the ground a scent began to rise,
Sweet smelling as accepted sacrifice:
This omen pleased, and as the flames aspire,
With odorous incense Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars or heathen charms:
At length the nodding statue clashed his arms,
And with a sullen sound and feeble cry,
Half sunk and half pronounced the word of Victory.
For this, with soul devout, he thanked the God,
And, of success secure, returned to his abode.

These vows, thus granted, raised a strife above
Betwixt the God of War and Queen of Love.
She, granting first, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.
Jove was for Venus, but he feared his wife,
And seemed unwilling to decide the strife:
Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,
And found a way the difference to compose:
Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,
He seldom does a good with good intent.
Wayward, but wise; by long experience taught,
To please both parties, for ill ends, he sought:
For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be outridden, though outrun.
By fortune he was now to Venus trined,
And with stern Mars in Capricorn was joined:
Of him disposing in his own abode,
He soothed the Goddess, while he gulled the God:
"Cease, daughter, to complain, and stint the strife;
Thy Palamon shall have his promised wife:
And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight
With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.
Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place,

Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
Man feels me when I press the etherial plains;
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.
Mine is the shipwreck in a watery sign;
And in an earthy the dark dungeon mine.
Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,
And bitter blasting winds, and poisoned air,
Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from despair.
The throttling quinsey 'tis my star appoints,
And rheumatisms I send to rack the joints:
When churls rebel against their native prince,
I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence;
And housing in the lion's hateful sign,
Bought senates and deserting troops are mine.
Mine is the privy poisoning; I command
Unkindly seasons and ungrateful land.
By me kings' palaces are pushed to ground,
And miners crushed beneath their mines are found.
'Twas I slew Samson, when the pillared hall
Fell down, and crushed the many with the fall.
My looking is the sire of pestilence,
That sweeps at once the people and the prince.
Now weep no more, but trust thy grandsire's art,
Mars shall be pleased, and thou perform thy part.
'Tis ill, though different your complexions are,
The family of Heaven for men should war."
The expedient pleased, where neither lost his right;
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.
The management they left to Chronos' care.
Now turn we to the effect, and sing the war.

In Athens all was pleasure, mirth, and play,
All proper to the spring and sprightly May:
Which every soul inspired with such delight,
'Twas justing all the day, and love at night.
Heaven smiled, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world as when it first began.
At length in sleep their bodies they compose,
And dreamt the future fight, and early rose.

Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,
As at a signal given, the streets with clamours ring:
At once the crowd arose; confused and high,
Even from the heaven was heard a shouting cry,
For Mars was early up, and roused the sky.
The gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharpening their sights, and leaning from their stars.
The neighing of the generous horse was heard,
For battle by the busy groom prepared:
Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield,
Clattering of armour, furbished for the field.
Crowds to the castle mounted up the street;

Battering the pavement with their coursers' feet:
The greedy sight might there devour the gold
Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold:
And polished steel that cast the view aside,
And crested morions, with their plumy pride.
Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,
In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.
One laced the helm, another held the lance;
A third the shining buckler did advance.
The courser pawed the ground with restless feet,
And snorting foamed, and champed the golden bit.
The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side,
And nails for loosened spears and thongs for shields provide.
The yeomen guard the streets in seemly bands;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their hands.

The trumpets, next the gate, in order placed,
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast:
The palace yard is filled with floating tides,
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.
The throng is in the midst; the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few.
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk;
Factious, and favouring this or t'other side,
As their strong fancies and weak reason guide;
Their wagers back their wishes; numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:
So vigorous are his eyes, such rays they cast,
So prominent his eagle's beak is placed.
But most their looks on the black monarch bend;
His rising muscles and his brawn commend;
His double-biting axe, and beamy spear,
Each asking a gigantic force to rear.
All spoke as partial favour moved the mind;
And, safe themselves, at others' cost divined.

Waked by the cries, the Athenian chief arose,
The knightly forms of combat to dispose;
And passing through the obsequious guards, he sate
Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state;
There, for the two contending knights he sent;
Armed cap-a-pie, with reverence low they bent;
He smiled on both, and with superior look
Alike their offered adoration took.
The people press on every side to see
Their awful Prince, and hear his high decree.
Then signing to their heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty stand.
Silence is thrice enjoined; then thus aloud
The king-at-arms bespeaks the knights and listening crowd:

“Our sovereign lord has pondered in his mind
The means to spare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace and inborn clemency
He modifies his first severe decree,
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills, not death should terminate their strife,
And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life;
But issues, ere the fight, his dread command,
That slings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
Be banished from the field; that none shall dare
With shortened sword to stab in closer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly strength,
Nor push with biting point, but strike at length.
The turney is allowed but one career
Of the tough ash, with the sharp-grinded spear;
But knights unhorsed may rise from off the plain,
And fight on foot their honour to regain;
Nor, if at mischief taken, on the ground
Be slain, but prisoners to the pillar bound,
At either barrier placed; nor, captives made,
Be freed, or armed anew the fight invade:
The chief of either side, bereft of life,
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.
Thus dooms the lord: now valiant knights and young,
Fight each his fill, with swords and maces long.”

The herald ends: the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims and vast applause is rent:
Heaven guard a Prince so gracious and so good,
So just, and yet so provident of blood!
This was the general cry. The trumpets sound,
And warlike symphony is heard around.
The marching troops through Athens take their way,
The great Earl-marshal orders their array.
The fair from high the passing pomp behold;
A rain of flowers is from the window rolled.
The casements are with golden tissue spread,
And horses' hoofs, for earth, on silken tapestry tread.
The King goes midmost, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and close his either side.
Next after these there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cause and the reward of strife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marshalled in degree.
Thus through the southern gate they take their way,
And at the list arrived ere prime of day.
There, parting from the King, the chiefs divide,
And wheeling east and west, before their many ride.
The Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the Queen and Emily:
Next these, the kindred of the crown are graced

With nearer seats, and lords by ladies placed.
Scarce were they seated, when with clamours loud
In rushed at once a rude promiscuous crowd,
The guards, and then each other overbare,
And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.
Now changed the jarring noise to whispers low,
As winds forsaking seas more softly blow,
When at the western gate, on which the car
Is placed aloft that bears the God of War,
Proud Arcite entering armed before his train
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and displayed abroad
The bloody colours of his patron god.

At that self moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the rising Sun;
Waved by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes.
From east to west, look all the world around,
Two troops so matched were never to be found;
Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,
In stature sized; so proud an equipage:
The nicest eye could no distinction make,
Where lay the advantage, or what side to take.

Thus ranged, the herald for the last proclaims
A silence, while they answered to their names:
For so the king decreed, to shun with care
The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.
The tale was just, and then the gates were closed;
And chief to chief, and troop to troop opposed.
The heralds last retired, and loudly cried,
“The fortune of the field be fairly tried!”

At this the challenger, with fierce defy,
His trumpet sounds; the challenged makes reply:
With clangour rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.
Their vizors closed, their lances in the rest,
Or at the helmet pointed or the crest,
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,
And spurring see decrease the middle space.
A cloud of smoke envelopes either host,
And all at once the combatants are lost:
Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,
Coursers with coursers justling, men with men:
As labouring in eclipse, a while they stay,
Till the next blast of wind restores the day.
They look anew: the beauteous form of fight
Is changed, and war appears a grisly sight.
Two troops in fair array one moment showed,
The next, a field with fallen bodies strowed:
Not half the number in their seats are found;

But men and steeds lie grovelling on the ground.
The points of spears are stuck within the shield,
The steeds without their riders scour the field.
The knights unhorsed, on foot renew the fight;
The glittering fauchions cast a gleaming light;
Hauberks and helms are hewed with many a wound,
Out spins the streaming blood, and dyes the ground.
The mighty maces with such haste descend,
They break the bones, and make the solid armour bend.
This thrusts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:
That courser stumbles on the fallen steed,
And, floundering, throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a football to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this disabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
Where by the king's award he must abide:
There goes a captive led on t'other side.
By fits they cease, and leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.

Full oft the rivals met, and neither spared
His utmost force, and each forgot to ward:
The head of this was to the saddle bent,
The other backward to the crupper sent:
Both were by turns unhorsed; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close.
So deep their fauchions bite, that every stroke
Pierced to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far asunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and steel they met agen.

So when a tiger sucks the bullock's blood,
A famished lion issuing from the wood
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.
Each claims possession, neither will obey,
But both their paws are fastened on the prey;
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they strive,
The swains come armed between, and both to distance drive.
At length, as Fate foredoomed, and all things tend
By course of time to their appointed end;
So when the sun to west was far declined,
And both afresh in mortal battle joined,
The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:
For, turning short, he struck with all his might
Full on the helmet of the unwary knight.
Deep was the wound; he staggered with the blow,
And turned him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with such force he struck, he felled him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.

But Arcite's men, who now prevailed in fight,
Twice ten at once surround the single knight:
O'erpowered at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.

Who now laments but Palamon, compelled
No more to try the fortune of the field,
And, worse than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize!

The royal judge on his tribunal placed,
Who had beheld the fight from first to last,
Bade cease the war; pronouncing from on high,
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.
The sound of trumpets to the voice replied,
And round the royal lists the heralds cried,
"Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride!"

The people rend the skies with vast applause;
All own the chief, when Fortune owns the cause.
Arcite is owned even by the gods above,
And conquering Mars insults the Queen of Love.
So laughed he when the rightful Titan failed,
And Jove's usurping arms in heaven prevailed.
Laughed all the powers who favour tyranny,
And all the standing army of the sky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears.
And weeping on the lists distilled her tears;
Her will refused, which grieves a woman most,
And, in her champion foiled, the cause of Love is lost.
Till Saturn said:—"Fair daughter, now be still,
"The blustering fool has satisfied his will;
His boon is given; his knight has gained the day,
But lost the prize; the arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free."

Now while the heralds run the lists around,
And Arcite! Arcite! heaven and earth resound,
A miracle (nor less it could be called)
Their joy with unexpected sorrow palled.
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,
Part for his ease, the greater part for pride:
Bareheaded, popularly low he bowed,
And paid the salutations of the crowd;
Then spurring, at full speed, ran headlong on
Where Theseus sat on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,
Where, next the Queen, was placed his Emily;
Then passing, to the saddle-bow he bent;

A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent;
(For women, to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow Fortune, where she leads the way
Just then from earth sprung out a flashing fire,
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire:
The startling steed was seized with sudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pummel cast the knight;
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,
He quivered with his feet, and lay for dead.

Black was his countenance in a little space,
For all the blood was gathered in his face.
Help was at hand: they reared him from the ground,
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanced a vein, and watched returning breath;
It came, but clogged with symptoms of his death.
The saddle-bow the noble parts had prest,
All bruised and mortified his manly breast.
Him still entranced, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed conveyed.
At length he waked; and, with a feeble cry,
The word he first pronounced was Emily.

Mean time the King, though inwardly he mourned,
In pomp triumphant to the town returned,
Attended by the chiefs who fought the field,
(Now friendly mixed, and in one troop compelled
Composed his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior train,
Though most were sorely wounded, none were slain.
The surgeons soon despoiled them of their arms,
And some with salves they cure, and some with charms;
Foment the bruises, and the pains assuage,
And heal their inward hurts with sovereign draughts of sage.
The King in person visits all around,
Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound;
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.
None was disgraced; for falling is no shame,
And cowardice alone is loss of fame.
The venturous knight is from the saddle thrown,
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own;
If crowds and palms the conquering side adorn,
The victor under better stars was born:

The brave man seeks not popular applause,
Nor, overpowered with arms, deserts his canse;
Unshamed, though foiled, he does the best he can:
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.

Thus Theseus smiled on all with equal grace,

And each was set according to his place;
With ease were reconciled the differing parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.
At length they took their leave, the time expired,
Well pleased, and to their several homes retired.

Mean while, the health of Arcite still impairs;
From bad proceeds to worse, and mocks the leech's cares;
Swoln is his breast; his inward pains increase;
All means are used, and all without success.
The clottered blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art;
Nor breathing veins nor cupping will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail.
The mould of nature's fabric is destroyed,
Her vessels discomposed, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begins to swell;
All out of frame is every secret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Those breathing organs, thus within opprest,
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.
Nought profits him to save abandoned life,
Nor vomit's upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmost region battered and destroyed,
When nature cannot work, the effect of art is void:
For physic can but mend our crazy state,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doomed to die in all his pride,
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gained hardly against right, and unenjoyed.

When 'twas declared all hope of life was past,
Conscience, that of all physic works the last,
Caused him to send for Emily in haste.
With her, at his desire, came Palamon;
Then, on his pillow raised, he thus begun:
"No language can express the smallest part
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,
For you, whom best I love and value most;
But to your service I bequeath my ghost;
Which, from this mortal body when untied,
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side;
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,
But wait officious, and your steps attend.
How I have loved, excuse my faltering tongue,
My spirit's feeble, and my pains are strong:
This I may say, I only grieve to die,
Because I lose my charming Emily.
To die, when Heaven had put you in my power!
Fate could not choose a more malicious hour.
What greater curse could envious Fortune give,
Than just to die when I began to live!

Vain men! how vanishing a bliss we crave;
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave!
Never, O never more to see the sun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone!
This fate is common; but I lose my breath
Near bliss, and yet not blessed before my death.
Farewell! but take me dying in your arms;
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
This hand I cannot but in death resign;
Ah, could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and thus embraced
Am pleased to die; but hear me speak my last:
Ah, my sweet foe! for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injured Palamon.
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds;
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
And much I doubt, should Heaven my life prolong,
I should return to justify my wrong;
For while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to sin.
With mortal hatred I pursued his life,
Nor he nor you were guilty of the strife;
Nor I, but as I loved; yet all combined,
Your beauty and my impotence of mind,
And his concurrent flame that blew my fire,
For still our kindred souls had one desire.
He had a moment's right in point of time;
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime.
Fate made it mine, and justified his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is comprised in good;
So help me Heaven, in all the world is none
So worthy to be loved as Palamon.
He loves you too, with such a holy fire,
As will not, cannot, but with life expire:
Our vowed affections both have often tried,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then, by my love's inviolable band,
By my long suffering and my short command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon."
This was his last; for Death came on amain,
And exercised below his iron reign;
Then upward to the seat of life he goes;
Sense fled before him, what he touched he froze:
Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw,
Though less and less of Emily he saw;
So, speechless, for a little space he lay;
Then grasped the hand he held, and sighed his soul away.

But whither went his soul? let such relate

Who search the secrets of the future state:
Divines can say but what themselves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative;
For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,
And faith itself be lost in certainty.
To live uprightly then is sure the best;
To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.
The soul of Arcite went where heathens go,
Who better live than we, though less they know.

In Palamon a manly grief appears;
Silent he wept, ashamed to show his tears.
Emilia shrieked but once; and then, opprest
With sorrow, sunk upon her lover's breast:
Till Theseus in his arms conveyed with care
Far from so sad a sight the swooning fair.
'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate;
Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,
When just approaching to the nuptial state:
But, like a low-hung cloud, it rains so fast,
That all at once it falls, and cannot last.
The face of things is changed, and Athens now
That laughed so late, becomes the scene of woe.
Matrons and maids, both sexes, every state,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Not greater grief in falling Troy was seen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with dust deformed their hoary hair;
The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tear.
“Why wouldst thou go,” with one consent they cry,
When thou hadst gold enough, and Emily?”
Theseus himself, who should have cheered the grief
Of others, wanted now the same relief:
Old Ageus only could revive his son,
Who various changes of the world had known,
And strange vicissitudes of human fate,
Still altering, never in a steady state:
Good after ill and after pain delight,
Alternate, like the scenes of day and night.
Since every man who lives is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind, what happens, let us bear,
Nor joy, nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims to the appointed place we tend;
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Even kings but play, and when their part is done,
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne.
With words like these the crowd was satisfied;
And so they would have been, had Theseus died.
But he, their King, was labouring in his mind
A fitting place for funeral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead designed.

And, after long debate, at last he found
(As Love itself had marked the spot of ground,)
That grove for ever green, that conscious laund,
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand;
That, where he fed his amorous desires
With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,
There other flames might waste his earthly part,
And burn his limbs, where love had burned his heart.

This once resolved, the peasants were enjoined
Sere-wood, and firs, and doddered oaks to find.
With sounding axes to the grove they go,
Fell, split, and lay the fuel in a row;
Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepared,
On which the lifeless body should be reared,
Covered with cloth of gold; on which was laid
The corps of Arcite, in like robes arrayed.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mixed with myrtle, spread.
A sword keen-edged within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquered field:
Bare was his manly visage on the bier;
Menaced his countenance, even in death severe.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,
To lie in solemn state, a public sight:
Groans, cries, and bowlings fill the crowded place,
And unaffected sorrow sat on every face.
Sad Palamon above the rest appears,
In sable garments, dewed with gushing tears;
His auburn locks on either shoulder flowed,
Which to the funeral of his friend he vowed;
But Emily, as chief, was next his side,
A virgin-widow and a mourning bride.
And, that the princely obsequies might be
Performed according to his high degree,
The steed, that bore him living to the fight,
Was trapped with polished steel, all shining bright,
And covered with the atchievements of the knight.
The riders rode abreast; and one his shield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow, and, glorious to behold,
The costly quiver, all of burnished gold.
The noblest of the Grecians next appear,
And weeping on their shoulders bore the bier;
With sober pace they marched, and often stayed,
And through the master-street the corps conveyed.
The houses to their tops with black were spread,
And even the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right side of the pall old Ageus kept,
And on the left the royal Theseus wept;
Each bore a golden bowl of work divine,
With honey filled, and milk, and mixed with ruddy wine.

Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain,
And after him appeared the illustrious train.
To grace the pomp came Emily the bright,
With covered fire, the funeral pile to light.
With high devotion was the service made,
And all the rites of pagan honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, must send the shaft below.
The bottom was full twenty fathom broad,
With crackling straw, beneath in due proportion strowed.
The fabric seemed a wood of rising green,
With sulphur and bitumen cast between
To feed the flames: the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain-ash, the mother of the spear;
The mourner-yew and builder-oak were there,
The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a softer grain,
And laurels, which the gods for conquering chiefs ordain.
How they were ranked shall rest untold by me,
With nameless Nymphs that lived in every tree;
Nor how the Dryads and the woodland train,
Disherited, ran howling o'er the plain:
Nor how the birds to foreign seats repaired,
Or beasts that bolted out and saw the forests bared:
Nor how the ground now cleared with ghastly fright
Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light.

The straw, as first I said, was laid below:
Of chips and sere-wood was the second row;
The third of greens, and timber newly felled;
The fourth high stage the fragrant odours held,
And pearls, and precious stones, and rich array;
In midst of which, embalmed, the body lay.
The service sung, the maid with mourning eyes
The stubble fired; the smouldering flames arise:
This office done, she sunk upon the ground;
But what she spoke, recovered from her swound,
I want the wit in moving words to dress;
But by themselves the tender sex may guess.
While the devouring fire was burning fast,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast;
And some their shields, and some their lances threw,
And gave the warrior's ghost a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk and blood
Were poured upon the pile of burning wood,
And hissing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted squadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice resound:
“Hail and farewell!” they shouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turned again:
Still, as they turned, they beat their clattering shields;
The women mix their cries, and clamour fills the fields.

The warlike wakes continued all the night,
And funeral games were played at new returning light:
Who naked wrestled best, besmeared with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor would you attend;
But briefly haste to my long story's end.

I pass the rest; the year was fully mourned,
And Palamon long since to Thebes returned:
When, by the Grecians' general consent,
At Athens Theseus held his parliament;
Among the laws that passed, it was decreed,
That conquered Thebes from bondage should be freed;
Reserving homage to the Athenian throne,
To which the sovereign summoned Palamon.
Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and still in black array.

The monarch mounts the throne, and, placed on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily.
So called, she came; the senate rose, and paid
Becoming reverence to the royal maid.
And first, soft whispers through the assembly went;
With silent wonder then they watched the event;
All hushed, the King arose with awful grace;
Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face:
At length he sighed, and having first prepared
The attentive audience, thus his will declared:

"The Cause and Spring of motion from above
Hung down on earth the golden chain of Love;
Great was the effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring seeds he sent;
Fire, flood, and earth and air by this were bound,
And Love, the common link, the new creation crowned.
The chain still holds; for though the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away:
The same first mover certain bounds has placed,
How long those perishable forms shall last;
Nor can they last beyond the time assigned
By that all-seeing and all-making Mind:
Shorten their hours they may, for will is free,
But never pass the appointed destiny.
So men oppressed, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and suborn their death.
Then, since those forms begin, and have their end,
On some unaltered cause they sure depend:
Parts of the whole are we, but God the whole,
Who gives us life, and animating soul.
For Nature cannot from a part derive
"That being which the whole can only give:
He perfect, stable; but imperfect we,

Subject to change, and different in degree;
Plants, beasts, and man; and, as our organs are,
We more or less of his perfection share.
But, by a long descent, the etherial fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire.
As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,
And the same matter makes another mass:
This law the omniscient Power was pleased to give,
That every kind should by succession live;
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated species still remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees;
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays,
Supreme in state, and in three more decays:
So wears the paving pebble in the street,
And towns and towers their fatal periods meet:
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,
Forsaken of their springs, and leave their channels dry.
So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat,
Then, formed, the little heart begins to beat;
Secret he feeds, unknowing, in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell,
And struggles into breath, and cries for aid;
Then helpless in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and, issuing into man,
Grudges their life from whence his own began;
Reckless of laws, affects to rule alone,
Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne;
First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last;
Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.
Some thus; but thousands more in flower of age,
For few arrive to run the latter stage.
Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain,
And others whelmed beneath the stormy main.
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
At whose command we perish, and we spring?
Then 'tis our best, since thus ordained to die,
To make a virtue of necessity;
Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain;
The bad grows better, which we well sustain;
And could we choose the time, and choose aright,
'Tis best to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But served our friends, and well secured our fame;
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose;
So should we make our death a glad relief
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief;
Enjoying while we live the present hour,
And dying in our excellence and flower.
Then round our death-bed every friend should run,

And joy us of our conquest early won;
While the malicious world, with envious tears,
Should grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,
Why should we mourn, that he so soon is freed,
Or call untimely what the gods decreed?
With grief as just a friend may be deplored,
From a foul prison to free air restored.
Ought he to thank his kinsman or his wife,
Could tears recall him into wretched life?
Their sorrow hurts themselves; on him is lost,
And worse than both, offends his happy ghost.
What then remains, but after past annoy
To take the good vicissitude of joy;
To thank the gracious gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and, while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two sorrows to combine,
And in one point the extremes of grief to join;
That thence resulting joy may be renewed,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
Then I propose that Palamon shall be
In marriage joined with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gained the assent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,
And well deserved, had Fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault, since Emily
By Arcite's death from former vows is free;
If you, fair sister, ratify the accord,
And take him for your husband and your lord,
'Tis no dishonour to confer your grace
On one descended from a royal race;
And were he less, yet years of service past
From grateful souls exact reward at last.
Pity is Heaven's and yours; nor can she find
A throne so soft as in a woman's mind."

He said; she blushed; and as o'erawed by might,
Seemed to give Theseus what she gave the knight.
Then, turning to the Theban, thus he said:

"Small arguments are needful to persuade
Your temper to comply with my command:"

And speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smiled Venus, to behold her own true knight.
Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight;
And blessed with nuptial bliss the sweet laborious night.
Eros and Anteros on either side,
One fired the bridegroom, and one warmed the bride;
And long-attending Hymen from above

Showered on the bed the whole Idalian grove.
All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day discoloured with domestic strife;
No jealousy, but mutual truth believed,
Secure repose, and kindness undeceived.
Thus Heaven, beyond the compass of his thought,
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.

So may the Queen of Love long duty bless,
And all true lovers find the same success.

John Dryden

Prologue For The Women, When They Acted at the Old Theatre, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields

Were none of you, gallants, e'er driven so hard,
As when the poor kind soul was under guard,
And could not do 't at home, in some by-street
To take a lodging, and in private meet?
Such is our case; we can't appoint our house,
The lovers' old and wonted rendezvous,
But hither to this trusty nook remove;
The worse the lodging is, the more the love.
For much good pastime, many a dear sweet hug,
Is stolen in garrets, on the humble rug.
Here's good accommodation in the pit;
The grave demurely in the midst may sit,
And so the hot Burgundian on the side,
Ply vizard mask, and o'er the benches stride:
Here are convenient upper boxes too,
For those that make the most triumphant show;
All, that keep coaches, must not sit below.
There, gallants, you betwixt the acts retire,
And, at dull plays, have something to admire:
We, who look up, can your addresses mark,
And see the creatures coupled in the ark:
So we expect the lovers, braves, and wits;
The gaudy house with scenes will serve for cits.

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John Dryden

Prologue Spoken at the Opening of The New House, March 26, 1674

A plain-built house, after so long a stay,
Will send you half unsatisfied away;
When, fallen from your expected pomp, you find
A bare convenience only is designed.
You, who each day can theatres behold,
Like Nero's palace, shining all with gold,
Our mean ungilded stage will scorn, we fear,
And, for the homely room, disdain the cheer.
Yet now cheap druggets to a mode are grown,
And a plain suit, since we can make but one,
Is better than to be by tarnished gawdry known.
They, who are by your favours wealthy made,
With mighty sums may carry on the trade;
We, broken bankers, half destroyed by fire,
With our small stock to humble roofs retire;
Pity our loss, while you their pomp admire.
For fame and honour we no longer strive;
We yield in both, and only beg—to live;
Unable to support their vast expense,
Who build and treat with such magnificence,
That, like the ambitious monarchs of the age,
They give the law to our provincial stage.
Great neighbours enviously promote excess,
While they impose their splendour on the less;
But only fools, and they of vast estate,
The extremity of modes will imitate,
The dangling knee-fringe, and the bib-cravat.
Yet if some pride with want may be allowed,
We in our plainness may be justly proud;
Our Royal Master willed it should be so;
Whate 'er he's pleased to own, can need no show:
That sacred name gives ornament and grace,
And, like his stamp, makes basest metal pass.
'Twere folly now a stately pile to raise,
To build a playhouse while you throw down plays;
While scenes, machines, and empty operas reign,
And for the pencil you the pen disdain;
While troops of famished Frenchmen hither drive,
And laugh at those upon whose alms they live:
Old English authors vanish, and give place
To these new conquerors of the Norman race.
More tamely than your fathers you submit;
You're now grown vassals to them in your wit.
Mark, when they play, how our fine fops advance
The mighty merits of their men of France,
Keep time, cry Ben! and humour the cadence.
Well, please yourselves; but sure 'tis understood,
That French machines have ne'er done England good.
I would not prophesy our house's fate;
But while vain shows and scenes you overrate,
'Tis to be feared—
That, as a fire the former house o'erthrew,

Machines and tempests will destroy the new.

John Dryden

Prologue Spoken the First Day of the King's House Acting After the Fire

So shipwracked passengers escape to land,
So look they, when on the bare beach they stand,
Dropping and cold, and their first fear scarce o'er,
Expecting famine on a desert shore.
From that hard climate we must wait for bread,
Whence even the natives, forced by hunger, fled.
Our stage does human chance present to view,
But ne'er before was seen so sadly true:
You are changed too, and your pretence to see
Is but a nobler name for charity.
Your own provisions furnish out our feasts,
While you, the founders, make yourselves the guests.
Of all mankind beside, fate had some care,
But for poor Wit no portion did prepare,
'Tis left a rent-charge to the brave and fair.
You cherished it, and now its fall you mourn,
Which blind unmannered zealots make their scorn,
Who think that fire a judgment on the stage,
Which spared not temples in its furious rage.
But as our new-built city rises higher,
So from old theatres may new aspire,
Since fate contrives magnificence by fire.
Our great metropolis does far surpass
Whate'er is now, and equals all that was:
Our wit as far does foreign wit excel,
And, like a king, should in a palace dwell.
But we with golden hopes are vainly fed
Talk high, and entertain you in a shed:
Your presence here, for which we humbly sue
Will grace old theatres, and build up new.

John Dryden

Prologue to Albumazar

To say this comedy pleased long ago,
Is not enough to make it pass you now.
Yet, gentlemen, your ancestors had wit,
When few men censured, and when fewer writ.
And Jonson, of those few the best, chose this,
As the best model of his master-piece:
Subtle was got by our Albumazar,
That Alchymist by this Astrologer;
Here he was fashioned, and we may suppose,
He liked the fashion well, who wore the clothes.
But Ben made nobly his what he did mould;
What was another's lead, becomes his gold:
Like an unrighteous conqueror he reigns,
Yet rules that well which he unjustly gains.
But this our age such authors does afford,
As make whole plays, and yet scarce write one word;
Who, in this anarchy of wit, rob all,
And what's their plunder, their possession call;
Who, like bold padders, scorn by night to prey,
But rob by sunshine, in the face of day:
Nay, scarce the common ceremony use
Of, "Stand, Sir, and deliver up your Muse;"
But knock the poet down, and, with a grace,
Mount Pegasus before the owner's face.
Faith, if you have such country Toms abroad,
'Tis time for all true men to leave that road.
Yet it were modest, could it but be said,
They strip the living, but these rob the dead;
Dare with the mummies of the Muses play,
And make love to them the Egyptian way;
Or, as a rhyming author would have said,
Join the dead living to the living dead.
Such men in poetry may claim some part,
They have the licence, though they want the art;
And might, where theft was praised, for laureats stand,
Poets, not of the head, but of the hand.
They make the benefits of others' studying,
Much like the meals of politic Jack-Pudding,
Whose dish to challenge no man has the courage;
'Tis all his own, when once he has spit i'the porridge.
But, gentlemen, you're all concerned in this;
You are in fault for what they do amiss;
For they their thefts still undiscovered think,
And durst not steal, unless you please to wink.
Perhaps, you may award by your decree,
They should refund,—but that can never be;
For, should you letters of reprisal seal,
These men write that which no man else would steal.

John Dryden

Prologue to Caesar Borgia

The unhappy man, who once has trailed a pen,
Lives not to please himself, but other men;
Is always drudging, wastes his life and blood,
Yet only eats and drinks what you think good.
What praise soe'er the poetry deserve,
Yet every fool can bid the poet starve.
That fumbling lecher to revenge is bent,
Because he thinks himself, or whore, is meant:
Name but a cuckold, all the city swarms;
From Leadenhall to Ludgate is in arms.
Were there no fear of Antichrist, or France,
In the best time poor poets live by chance.
Either you come not here, or, as you grace
Some old acquaintance, drop into the place,
Careless and qualmish with a yawning face:
You sleep o'er wit,—and by my troth you may;
Most of your talents lie another way.
You love to hear of some prodigious tale,
The bell that tolled alone, or Irish whale.
News is your food, and you enough provide,
Both for yourselves, and all the world beside.
One theatre there is, of vast resort,
Which whilome of Requests was called the Court;
But now the great exchange of news 'tis hight,
And full of hum and buzz from noon till night.
Up stairs and down you run, as for a race,
And each man wears three nations in his face.
So big you look, though claret you retrench,
That, armed with bottled ale, you huff the French.
But all your entertainment still is fed
By villains in our own dull island bred.
Would you return to us, we dare engage
To show you better rogues upon the stage.
You know no poison but plain ratsbane here;
Death's more refined, and better bred elsewhere.
They have a civil way in Italy,
By smelling a perfume to make you die;
A trick would make you lay your snuff-box by.
Murder's a trade, so known and practised there,
That 'tis infallible as is the chair.
But mark their feasts, you shall behold such pranks!
The Pope says grace, but 'tis the devil gives thanks.

John Dryden

Prologue to His Royal Highness, Upon His First Appearance at the Duke's Theatre After His Return from Scotland.

In those cold regions which no summers cheer,
Where brooding darkness covers half the year,
To hollow caves the shivering natives go,
Bears range abroad, and hunt in tracks of snow.
But when the tedious twilight wears away,
And stars grow paler at the approach of day,
The longing crowds to frozen mountains run,
Happy who first can see the glimmering sun;
The surly savage offspring disappear,
And curse the bright successor of the year.
Yet, though rough bears in covert seek defence,
White foxes stay, with seeming innocence;
That crafty kind with daylight can dispense.
Still we are thronged so full with Reynard's race,
That loyal subjects scarce can find a place;
Thus modest truth is cast behind the crowd,
Truth speaks too low, hypocrisy too loud.
Let them be first to flatter in success;
Duty can stay, but guilt has need to press.
Once, when true zeal the sons of God did call,
To make their solemn show at heaven's White-hall,
The fawning Devil appeared among the rest,
And made as good a courtier as the best.
The friends of Job, who railed at him before,
Came cap in hand when he had three times more.
Yet late repentance may, perhaps, be true;
Kings can forgive, if rebels can but sue:
A tyrant's power in rigour is exprest;
The father yearns in the true prince's breast.
We grant, an o'ergrown Whig no grace can mend,
But most are babes, that know not they offend;
The crowd, to restless motion still inclined,
Are clouds, that rack according to the wind.
Driven by their chiefs, they storms of hailstones pour,
Then mourn, and soften to a silent shower.
O welcome to this much-offending land,
The prince that brings forgiveness in his hand!
Thus angels on glad messages appear,
Their first salute commands us not to fear;
Thus heaven, that could constrain us to obey,
(With reverence if we might presume to say),
Seems to relax the rights of sovereign sway;
Permits to man the choice of good and ill,
And makes us happy by our own free-will.

John Dryden

Prologue To Sophonisba; Spoken at Oxford, 1680

Thespis, the first professor of our art,
At country wakes, sung ballads from a cart.
To prove this true, if Latin be no trespass,
Dicitur et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis.
But Æschylus, says Horace in some page,
Was the first mountebank that trod the stage:
Yet Athens never knew your learned sport,
Of tossing poets in a tennis-court.
But 'tis the talent of our English nation,
Still to be plotting some new reformation;
And few years hence, if anarchy goes on,
Jack Presbyter shall here erect his throne,
Knock out a tub with preaching once a day,
And every prayer be longer than a play.
Then all your heathen wits shall go to pot,
For disbelieving of a Popish Plot;
Nor should we scape the sentence, to depart,
Even in our first original, a cart;
Your poets shall be used like infidels,
And worst, the author of the Oxford bells;
No zealous brother there would want a stone,
To maul us cardinals, and pelt Pope Joan.
Religion, learning, wit, would be supprest,
Rags of the whore, and trappings of the beast;
Scot, Suarez, Tom of Aquin, must go down,
As chief supporters of the triple crown;
And Aristotle's for destruction ripe;
Some say, he called the soul an organ-pipe,
Which, by some little help of derivation,
Shall then be proved a pipe of inspiration.

John Dryden

Prologue to the Princess of Cleves

Ladies! (I hope there's none behind to hear)
I long to whisper something in your ear:
A secret, which does much my mind perplex,—
There's treason in the play against our sex.
A man that's false to love, that vows and cheats,
And kisses every living thing he meets;
A rogue in mode,—I dare not speak too broad,—
One that—does something to the very bawd.
Out on him, traitor, for a filthy beast!
Nay, and he's like the pack of all the rest:
None of them stick at mark; they all deceive.
Some Jew has changed the text, I half believe;
Their Adam cozened our poor grandame Eve.
To hide their faults they rap out oaths, and tear;
Now, though we lie, we're too well bred to swear.
So we compound for half the sin we owe,
But men are dipt for soul and body too;
And, when found out, excuse themselves, pox cant them,
With Latin stuff, Perjuria ridet amantum.
I'm not book-learned, to know that word in vogue,
But I suspect 'tis Latin for a rogue.
I'm sure, I never heard that screech-owl hollowed
In my poor ears, but separation followed.
How can such perjured villains e'er be saved?
Achitophel's not half so false to David.
With vows and soft expressions to allure,
They stand, like foremen of a shop, demure:
No sooner out of sight, but they are gadding,
And for the next new face ride out a padding.
Yet, by their favour, when they have been kissing,
We can perceive the ready money missing.
Well! we may rail; but 'tis as good e'en wink;
Something we find, and something they will sink.
But, since they're at renouncing, 'tis our parts
To trump their diamonds, as they trump our hearts.

John Dryden

Prologue to the Prophetess, by Beaumont and Fletcher. Revived by Dryden. Spoken by Mr. Betterton

What Nostradame, with all his art, can guess
The fate of our approaching Prophetess?
A play, which, like a prospective set right,
Presents our vast expenses close to sight;
But turn the tube, and there we sadly view
Our distant gains, and those uncertain too;
A sweeping tax, which on ourselves we raise,
And all, like you, in hopes of better days.
When will our losses warn us to be wise?
Our wealth decreases, and our charges rise.
Money, the sweet allurer of our hopes,
Ebbs out in oceans, and comes in by drops.
We raise new objects to provoke delight,
But you grow sated ere the second sight.
False men, even so you serve your mistresses;
They rise three stories in their towering dress;
And, after all, you love not long enough
To pay the rigging, ere you leave them off.
Never content with what you had before,
But true to change, and Englishmen all o'er.
Now honour calls you hence; and all your care
Is to provide the horrid pomp of war.
In plume and scarf, jack-boots, and Bilbo blade,
Your silver goes, that should support our trade.
Go, unkind heroes! leave our stage to mourn,
Till rich from vanquished rebels you return;
And the fat spoils of Teague in triumph draw,
His firkin butter, and his usquebaugh.
Go, conquerors of your male and female foes;
Men without hearts, and women without hose.
Each bring his love a Bogland captive home;
Such proper pages will long trains become;
With copper collars, and with brawny backs,
Quite to put down the fashion of our blacks.
Then shall the pious Muses pay their vows,
And furnish all their laurels for your brows;
Their tuneful voice shall raise for your delights;
We want not poets fit to sing your flights.
But you, bright beauties, for whose only sake
Those doughty knights such dangers undertake,
When they with happy gales are gone away,
With your propitious presence grace our play,
And with a sigh their empty seats survey;
Then think,—On that bare bench my servant sat!
I see him ogle still, and hear him chat;
Selling facetious bargains, and propounding
That witty recreation, called dumb-founding.
Their loss with patience we will try to bear,
And would do more, to see you often here;
That our dead stage, revived by your fair eyes,
Under a female regency may rise.

John Dryden

Prologue to the True Widow

Heaven save ye, gallants, and this hopeful age!
Y' are welcome to the downfall of the stage.
The fools have laboured long in their vocation,
And vice, the manufacture of the nation,
O'erstocks the town so much, and thrives so well,
That fops and knaves grow drugs, and will not sell.
In vain our wares on theatres are shown,
When each has a plantation of his own.
His cruse ne'er fails; for whatsoe'er he spends,
There's still God's plenty for himself and friends.
Should men be rated by poetic rules,
Lord, what a poll would there be raised from fools!
Meantime poor wit prohibited must lie,
As if 'twere made some French commodity.
Fools you will have, and raised at vast expense;
And yet, as soon as seen, they give offence.
Time was, when none would cry,—That oaf was me;
But now you strive about your pedigree.
Bauble and cap no sooner are thrown down,
But there's a muss of more than half the town.
Each one will challenge a child's part at least;
A sign the family is well increased.
Of foreign cattle there's no longer need,
When we're supplied so fast with English breed.
Well! flourish, countrymen; drink, swear, and roar;
Let every free-born subject keep his whore,
And wandering in the wilderness about,
At end of forty years not wear her out.
But when you see these pictures, let none dare
To own beyond a limb, or single share;
For where the punk is common, he's a sot,
Who needs will father what the parish got.

John Dryden

Prologue To The University Of Oxford, 1674.

Poets, your subjects have their parts assign'd
To unbend, and to divert their sovereign's mind:
When tired with following nature, you think fit
To seek repose in the cool shades of wit,
And, from the sweet retreat, with joy survey
What rests, and what is conquer'd, of the way.
Here, free yourselves from envy, care, and strife
You view the various turns of human life:
Safe in our scene, through dangerous courts you go,
And, undebauch'd, the vice of cities know
Your theories are here to practice brought,
As in mechanic operations wrought;
And man, the little world, before you set,
As once the sphere[49] of crystal show'd the great.
Blest, sure, are you above all mortal kind,
If to your fortunes you can suit your mind:
Content to see, and shun, those ills we show,
And crimes on theatres alone to know.
With joy we bring what our dead authors writ,
And beg from you the value of their wit:
That Shakspeare's, Fletcher's, and great Jonson's claim,
May be renew'd from those who gave them fame.
None of our living poets dare appear;
For Muses so severe are worshipp'd here,
That, conscious of their faults, they shun the eye,
And, as profane, from sacred places fly,
Rather than see the offended God, and die.
We bring no imperfections but our own;
Such faults as made are by the makers shown:
And you have been so kind, that we may boast,
The greatest judges still can pardon most.
Poets must stoop, when they would please our pit,
Debased even to the level of their wit;
Disdaining that, which yet they know will take,
Hating themselves what their applause must make.
But when to praise from you they would aspire,
Though they like eagles mount, your Jove is higher.
So far your knowledge all their power transcends,
As what _should be_ beyond what _is_ extends.

John Dryden

Religio Laici

(OR A LAYMAN'S FAITH)

Dim, as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring travellers,
Is reason to the soul; and as on high,
Those rolling fires discover but the sky
Not light us here; so reason's glimmering ray
Was lent not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere
So pale grows reason at religion's sight:
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.
Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause, to Nature's secret head;
And found that one first principle must be:
But what, or who, that Universal He;
Whether some soul incompassing this ball
Unmade, unmov'd; yet making, moving all;
Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leapt into form (the noble work of chance
Or this great all was from eternity;
Not even the Stagirite himself could see;
And Epicurus guess'd as well as he:
As blindly grop'd they for a future state;
As rashly judg'd of Providence and Fate:
But least of all could their endeavours find
What most concern'd the good of human kind.
For happiness was never to be found;
But vanish'd from 'em, like enchanted ground.
One thought content the good to be enjoy'd:
This, every little accident destroy'd:
The wiser madmen did for virtue toil:
A thorny, or at best a barren soil:
In pleasure some their glutton souls would steep;
But found their line too short, the well too deep;
And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep.
Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,
Without a centre where to fix the soul:
In this wild maze their vain endeavours end:
How can the less the greater comprehend?
Or finite reason reach infinity?
For what could fathom God were more than He.

The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground;
Cries [lang g]eur{-e}ka[lang e] the mighty secret's found:
God is that spring of good; supreme, and best;
We, made to serve, and in that service blest;
If so, some rules of worship must be given;
Distributed alike to all by Heaven:
Else God were partial, and to some deny'd
The means his justice should for all provide.

This general worship is to PRAISE, and PRAY:
One part to borrow blessings, one to pay:
And when frail Nature slides into offence,
The sacrifice for crimes is penitence.
Yet, since th'effects of providence, we find
Are variously dispens'd to human kind;
That vice triumphs, and virtue suffers here,
(A brand that sovereign justice cannot bear
Our reason prompts us to a future state:
The last appeal from fortune, and from fate:
  Where God's all-righteous ways will be declar'd;
The bad meet punishment, the good, reward.

    Thus man by his own strength to Heaven would soar:
And would not be oblig'd to God for more.
Vain, wretched creature, how art thou misled
To think thy wit these god-like notions bred!
These truths are not the product of thy mind,
But dropt from Heaven, and of a nobler kind.
Reveal'd religion first inform'd thy sight,
And reason saw not, till faith sprung the light.
Hence all thy natural worship takes the source:
'Tis revelation what thou think'st discourse.
Else how com'st thou to see these truths so clear,
Which so obscure to heathens did appear?
Not Plato these, nor Aristotle found:
Nor he whose wisdom oracles renown'd.
Hast thou a wit so deep, or so sublime,
Or canst thou lower dive, or higher climb?
Canst thou, by reason, more of God-head know
Than Plutarch, Seneca, or Cicero?
Those giant wits, in happier ages born,
(When arms, and arts did Greece and Rome adorn)
Knew no such system; no such piles could raise
Of natural worship, built on pray'r and praise,
To one sole God.
Nor did remorse, to expiate sin, prescribe:
But slew their fellow creatures for a bribe:
The guiltless victim groan'd for their offence;
And cruelty, and blood was penitence.
If sheep and oxen could atone for men
Ah! at how cheap a rate the rich might sin!
And great oppressors might Heaven's wrath beguile
By offering his own creatures for a spoil!

    Dar'st thou, poor worm, offend Infinity?
And must the terms of peace be given by thee?
Then thou art justice in the last appeal;
Thy easy God instructs thee to rebel:
And, like a king remote, and weak, must take
What satisfaction thou art pleas'd to make.

But if there be a pow'r too just, and strong
To wink at crimes, and bear unpunish'd wrong;
Look humbly upward, see his will disclose
The forfeit first, and then the fine impose:
A mulct thy poverty could never pay
Had not Eternal Wisdom found the way:
And with celestial wealth supply'd thy store:
His justice makes the fine, his mercy quits the score.
See God descending in thy human frame;
Th'offended, suff'ring in th'offender's name:
All thy misdeeds to him imputed see;
And all his righteousness devolv'd on thee.

For granting we have sinn'd, and that th'offence
Of man, is made against omnipotence,
Some price, that bears proportion, must be paid;
And infinite with infinite be weigh'd.
See then the Deist lost: remorse for vice,
Not paid, or paid, inadequate in price:
What farther means can reason now direct,
Or what relief from human wit expect?
That shows us sick; and sadly are we sure
Still to be sick, till Heav'n reveal the cure:
If then Heaven's will must needs be understood,
(Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good)
Let all records of will reveal'd be shown;
With Scripture, all in equal balance thrown,
And our one sacred Book will be that one.

Proof needs not here, for whether we compare
That impious, idle, superstitious ware
Of rites, lustrations, offerings, (which before,
In various ages, various countries bore)
With Christian faith and virtues, we shall find
None answ'ring the great ends of human kind,
But this one rule of life: that shows us best
How God may be appeas'd, and mortals blest.
Whether from length of time its worth we draw,
The world is scarce more ancient than the law:
Heav'n's early care prescrib'd for every age;
First, in the soul, and after, in the page.
Or, whether more abstractedly we look,
Or on the writers, or the written Book,
Whence, but from Heav'n, could men unskill'd in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.

If on the Book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent heathens prove the story true:

The doctrine, miracles; which must convince,
For Heav'n in them appeals to human sense:
And though they prove not, they confirm the cause,
When what is taught agrees with Nature's laws.

Then for the style; majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line:
Commanding words; whose force is still the same
As the first fiat that produc'd our frame.
All faiths beside, or did by arms ascend;
Or sense indulg'd has made mankind their friend:
This only doctrine does our lusts oppose:
Unfed by Nature's soil, in which it grows;
Cross to our interests, curbing sense, and sin;
Oppress'd without, and undermin'd within,
It thrives through pain; its own tormentors tires;
And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
To what can reason such effects assign,
Transcending Nature, but to laws divine:
Which in that sacred volume are contain'd;
Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordain'd.

But stay: the Deist here will urge anew,
No supernatural worship can be true:
Because a general law is that alone
Which must to all, and everywhere be known:
A style so large as not this Book can claim
Nor aught that bears reveal'd religion's name.
'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's Birth
Is gone through all the habitable earth:
But still that text must be confin'd alone
To what was then inhabited, and known:
And what Provision could from thence accrue
To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new?
In other parts it helps, that ages past,
The Scriptures there were known, and were embrac'd,
Till sin spread once again the shades of night:
What's that to these who never saw the light?

Of all objections this indeed is chief
To startle reason, stagger frail belief:
We grant, 'tis true, that Heav'n from human sense
Has hid the secret paths of Providence:
But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy, may
Find ev'n for those bewilder'd souls, a way:
If from his nature foes may pity claim,
Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his name.
And though no name be for salvation known,
But that of his eternal Son's alone;
Who knows how far transcending goodness can
Extend the merits of that Son to man?
Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead;

Or ignorance invincible may plead?
Not only charity bids hope the best,
But more the great Apostle has expressed.
That, if the Gentiles (whom no law inspir'd,)
By nature did what was by law requir'd;
They, who the written rule had never known,
Were to themselves both rule and law alone:
To nature's plain indictment they shall plead;
And, by their conscience, be condemn'd or freed.
Most righteous doom! because a rule reveal'd
Is none to those, from whom it was conceal'd.
Then those who follow'd reason's dictates right;
Liv'd up, and lifted high their natural light;
With Socrates may see their Maker's Face,
While thousand rubric-martyrs want a place.

Nor does it baulk my charity, to find
Th'Egyptian Bishop of another mind:
For, though his Creed eternal truth contains,
'Tis hard for man to doom to endless pains
All who believ'd not all, his zeal requir'd,
Unless he first could prove he was inspir'd.
Then let us either think he meant to say
This faith, where publish'd, was the only way;
Or else conclude that, Arius to confute,
The good old man, too eager in dispute,
Flew high; and as his Christian fury rose
Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose.

Thus far my charity this path has tried;
(A much unskilful, but well meaning guide
Yet what they are, ev'n these crude thoughts were bred
By reading that, which better thou hast read,
Thy matchless Author's work: which thou, my friend,
By well translating better dost commend:
Those youthful hours which, of thy equals most
In toys have squander'd, or in vice have lost,
Those hours hast thou to nobler use employ'd;
And the severe delights of truth enjoyed.
Witness this weighty book, in which appears
The crabbed toil of many thoughtful years,
Spent by thy author in the sifting care
Of rabbins' old sophisticated ware
From gold divine; which he who well can sort
May afterwards make algebra a sport.
A treasure, which if country-curates buy,
They Junius and Tremellius may defy:
Save pains in various readings, and translations;
And without Hebrew make most learn'd quotations.
A work so full with various learning fraught,
So nicely ponder'd, yet so strongly wrought,
As nature's height and art's last hand requir'd:

As much as man could compass, uninspir'd.
Where we may see what errors have been made
Both in the copier's and translator's trade:
How Jewish, Popish, interests have prevail'd,
And where infallibility has fail'd.

For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,
Have found our author not too much a priest:
For fashion-sake he seems to have recourse
To Pope, and Councils, and tradition's force:
But he that old traditions could subdue,
Could not but find the weakness of the new:
If Scripture, though deriv'd from Heavenly birth,
Has been but carelessly preserv'd on earth;
If God's own people, who of God before
Knew what we know, and had been promis'd more,
In fuller terms, of Heaven's assisting care,
And who did neither time, nor study spare
To keep this Book untainted, unperplex'd;
Let in gross errors to corrupt the text:
Omitted paragraphs, embroil'd the sense;
With vain traditions stopp'd the gaping fence,
Which every common hand pull'd up with ease:
What safety from such brushwood-helps as these?
If written words from time are not secur'd,
How can we think have oral sounds endur'd?
Which thus transmitted, if one mouth has fail'd,
Immortal lies on ages are entail'd:
And that some such have been, is prov'd too plain;
If we consider interest, church, and gain.

Oh but says one, tradition set aside,
Where can we hope for an unerring guide?
For since th' original Scripture has been lost,
All copies disagreeing, maim'd the most,
Or Christian faith can have no certain ground,
Or truth in Church tradition must be found.

Such an omniscient church we wish indeed;
'Twere worth both Testaments, and cast in the Creed:
But if this Mother be a guide so sure,
As can all doubts resolve, all truth secure;
Then her infallibility, as well
Where copies are corrupt, or lame, can tell?
Restore lost Canon with as little pains,
As truly explicate what still remains:
Which yet no Council dare pretend to do;
Unless like Esdras, they could write it new:
Strange confidence, still to interpret true,
Yet not be sure that all they have explain'd,
Is in the blest Original contain'd.
More safe, and much more modest 'tis, to say

God would not leave mankind without a way:
And that the Scriptures, though not everywhere
Free from corruption, or entire, or clear,
Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, entire,
In all things which our needful faith require.
If others in the same glass better see
'Tis for themselves they look, but not for me:
For my salvation must its doom receive
Not from what others , but what I believe.

Must all tradition then be set aside?
This to affirm were ignorance, or pride.
Are there not many points, some needful sure
To saving faith, that Scripture leaves obscure?
Which every sect will wrest a several way
(For what one sect interprets, all sects may
We hold, and say we prove from Scripture plain,
That Christ is God ; the bold Socinian
From the same Scripture urges he's but man .
Now what appeal can end th'important suit;
Both parts talk loudly, but the Rule is mute?

Shall I speak plain, and in a nation free
Assume an honest layman's liberty?
I think (according to my little skill,
To my own Mother-Church submitting still)
That many have been sav'd, and many may,
Who never heard this question brought in play.
Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,
Plods on to Heaven; and ne'er is at a loss:
For the Strait-gate would be made straiter yet,
Were none admitted there but men of wit.
The few, by nature form'd, with learning fraught,
Born to instruct, as others to be taught,
Must study well the sacred page; and see
Which doctrine, this, or that, does best agree
With the whole tenor of the Work divine:
And plainliest points to Heaven's reveal'd design:
Which exposition flows from genuine sense;
And which is forc'd by wit and eloquence.
Not that tradition's parts are useless here:
When general, old, disinteress'd and clear:
That ancient Fathers thus expound the page,
Gives truth the reverend majesty of age:
Confirms its force, by biding every test;
For best authority's next Rules are best.
And still the nearer to the Spring we go
More limpid, more unsoil'd the waters flow.
Thus, first traditions were a proof alone;
Could we be certain such they were, so known:
But since some flaws in long descent may be,
They make not truth but probability.

Even Arius and Pelagius durst provoke
To what the centuries preceding spoke.
Such difference is there in an oft-told tale:
But truth by its own sinews will prevail.
Tradition written therefore more commends
Authority, than what from voice descends:
And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
Rolls down to us the Sacred History:
Which, from the Universal Church receiv'd,
Is tried, and after, for its self believ'd.

The partial Papists would infer from hence
Their church, in last resort, should judge the sense.
But first they would assume, with wondrous art,
Themselves to be the whole, who are but part
Of that vast frame, the Church; yet grant they were
The handers down, can they from thence infer
A right t'interpret? or would they alone
Who brought the present, claim it for their own?
The Book's a common largess to mankind;
Not more for them, than every man design'd:
The welcome news is in the letter found;
The carrier's not commission'd to expound.
It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
In all things needful to be known, is plain.

In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance,
A gainful trade their clergy did advance:
When want of learning kept the laymen low,
And none but priests were authoriz'd to know:
When what small knowledge was, in them did dwell;
And he a God who could but read or spell;
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail:
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail:
But still expounded what she sold or gave;
To keep it in her power to damn and save:
Scripture was scarce, and as the market went,
Poor laymen took salvation on content;
As needy men take money, good or bad:
God's Word they had not, but the priests they had.
Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
The lawyer still was certain to be paid.
In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well.
That by long use they grew infallible:
At last, a knowing age began t'enquire
If they the Book, or that did them inspire:
And, making narrower search they found, though late,
That what they thought the priest's was their estate:
Taught by the will produc'd, (the written Word)
How long they had been cheated on record.
Then, every man who saw the title fair,
Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share:

Consulted soberly his private good;
And sav'd himself as cheap as e'er he could.

'Tis true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence)
This good had full as bad a consequence:
The Book thus put in every vulgar hand,
Which each presum'd he best could understand,
The common rule was made the common prey;
And at the mercy of the rabble lay.
The tender page with horny fists was gall'd;
And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd:
The spirit gave the doctoral degree:
And every member of a company
Was of his trade, and of the Bible free.
Plain truths enough for needful use they found;
But men would still be itching to expound:
Each was ambitious of th'obscurest place,
No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from grace .
Study and pains were now no more their care:
Texts were explain'd by fasting, and by prayer:
This was the fruit the private spirit brought;
Occasion'd by great zeal, and little thought.
While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,
About the sacred viands buzz and swarm,
The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood;
And turns to maggots what was meant for food.
A thousand daily sects rise up, and die;
A thousand more the perish'd race supply:
So all we make of Heaven's discover'd Will
Is, not to have it, or to use it ill.
The danger's much the same; on several shelves
If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.

What then remains, but, waving each extreme,
The tides of ignorance, and pride to stem?
Neither so rich a treasure to forego;
Nor proudly seek beyond our pow'r to know:
Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe, are few, and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need;
And every man will make himself a creed:
In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say:
For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
In search of Heav'n, than all the Church before:
Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see
The Scripture, and the Fathers disagree.
If after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will
'Tis some relief, that points not clearly known,
Without much hazard may be let alone:
And, after hearing what our Church can say,

If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb:
For points obscure are of small use to learn:
But common quiet is mankind's concern.

Thus have I made my own opinions clear:
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear:
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse, I chose;
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose:
For, while from sacred truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's, or Tom Shadwell's rhymes will serve.

John Dryden

Roundelay

I.
Chloe found Amyntas lying,
All in tears, upon the plain,
Sighing to himself, and crying,
Wretched I, to love in vain!
Kiss me, dear, before my dying;
Kiss me once, and ease my pain.

II.
Sighing to himself, and crying,
Wretched I, to love in vain!
Ever scorning, and denying
To reward your faithful swain.
Kiss me, dear, before my dying;
Kiss me once, and ease my pain.

III.
Ever scorning, and denying
To reward your faithful swain.---
Chloe, laughing at his crying,
Told him, that he loved in vain.
Kiss me, dear, before my dying;
Kiss me once, and ease my pain.

IV.
Chloe, laughing at his crying,
Told him, that he loved in vain;
But, repenting, and complying,
When he kissed, she kissed again:
Kissed him up, before his dying;
Kissed him up, and eased his pain.

John Dryden

Satire On The Dutch

As needy gallants, in the scrivener's hands,
Court the rich knaves that gripe their mortgaged lands;
The first fat buck of all the season's sent,
And keeper takes no fee in compliment;
The dotage of some Englishmen is such,
To fawn on those who ruin them,—the Dutch.
They shall have all, rather than make a war
With those who of the same religion are.
The Straits, the Guinea trade, the herrings too;
Nay, to keep friendship, they shall pickle you.
Some are resolved not to find out the cheat,
But, cuckold-like, love them that do the feat.
What injuries soe'er upon us fall,
Yet still the same religion answers all:—
Religion wheedled us to civil war,
Drew English blood, and Dutchmen's now would spare.
Be gulled no longer, for you'll find it true,
They have no more religion, faith! than you.
Interest's the god they worship in their state;
And we, I take it, have not much of that.
Well monarchies may own religion's name;
But states are atheists in their very frame.
They share a sin; and such proportions fall,
That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to them all.
Think on their rapine, falsehood, cruelty,
And that, what once they were they still would be.
To one well-born the affront is worse and more,
When he's abused and baffled by a boor,
With an ill grace the Dutch their mischiefs do;
They've both ill nature and ill manners too.
Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation;
For they were bred ere manners were in fashion:
And their new commonwealth hath set them free
Only from honour and civility.
Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,
Than did their lubber state mankind bestride;
Their sway became them with as ill a mein,
As their own paunches swell above their chin.
Yet is their empire no true growth, but humour,
And only two kings' touch can cure the tumour.
As Cato fruits of Afric did display,
Let us before our eyes their Indies lay:
All loyal English will like him conclude,—
Let Cæsar live, and Carthage be subdued.

John Dryden

Sigismond And Guiscardo. From Boccace

While Norman Tancred in Salerno reigned,
The title of a gracious Prince he gained;
Till turned a tyrant in his latter days,
He lost the lustre of his former praise,
And from the bright meridian where he stood
Descending dipped his hands in lovers' blood.

This Prince, of Fortune's favour long possessed,
Yet was with one fair daughter only blessed;
And blessed he might have been with her alone,
But oh! how much more happy had he none!
She was his care, his hope, and his delight,
Most in his thought, and ever in his sight:
Next, nay beyond his life, he held her dear;
She lived by him, and now he lived in her.
For this, when ripe for marriage, he delayed
Her nuptial bands, and kept her long a maid,
As envying any else should share a part
Of what was his, and claiming all her heart.
At length, as public decency required,
And all his vassals eagerly desired,
With mind averse, he rather underwent
His people's will than gave his own consent.
So was she torn, as from a lover's side,
And made, almost in his despite, a bride.

Short were her marriage joys; for in the prime
Of youth, her lord expired before his time;
And to her father's court in little space
Restored anew, she held a higher place;
More loved, and more exalted into grace.
This Princess, fresh and young, and fair and wise,
The worshipped idol of her father's eyes,
Did all her sex in every grace exceed,
And had more wit beside than women need.

Youth, health, and ease, and most an amorous mind,
To second nuptials had her thoughts inclined;
And former joys had left a secret string behind.
But, prodigal in every other grant,
Her sire left unsupplied her only want,
And she, betwixt her modesty and pride,
Her wishes, which she could not help, would hide.

Resolved at last to lose no longer time,
And yet to please her self without a crime,
She cast her eyes around the court, to find
A worthy subject suiting to her mind,
To him in holy nuptials to be tied,
A seeming widow, and a secret bride.
Among the train of courtiers, one she found
With all the gifts of bounteous nature crowned,

Of gentle blood, but one whose niggard fate
Had set him far below her high estate:
Guiscard his name was called, of blooming age,
Now squire to Tancred, and before his page:
To him, the choice of all the shining crowd,
Her heart the noble Sigismonda vowed.

Yet hitherto she kept her love concealed,
And with close glances every day beheld
The graceful youth; and every day increased
The raging fire that burned within her breast;
Some secret charm did all his acts attend,
And what his fortune wanted hers could mend;
Till, as the fire will force its outward way,
Or, in the prison pent, consume the prey,
So long her earnest eyes on his were set,
At length their twisted rays together met;
And he, surprised with humble joy, surveyed
One sweet regard, shot by the royal maid.
Not well assured, while doubtful hopes he nursed,
A second glance came gliding like the first;
And he, who saw the sharpness of the dart,
Without defence received it in his heart.
In public, though their passion wanted speech,
Yet mutual looks interpreted for each:
Time, ways, and means of meeting were denied,
But all those wants ingenious Love supplied.
The inventive god, who never fails his part,
Inspires the wit when once he warms the heart.

When Guiscard next was in the circle seen,
Where Sigismonda held the place of queen,
A hollow cane within her hand she brought,
But in the concave had enclosed a note;
With this she seemed to play, and, as in sport,
Tossed to her love in presence of the court;
'Take it,' she said, 'and when your needs require,
'This little brand will serve to light your fire.'
He took it with a bow, and soon divined
The seeming toy was not for nought designed:
But when retired, so long with curious eyes
He viewed the present, that he found the prize.
Much was in little writ; and all conveyed
With cautious care, for fear to be betrayed
By some false confident or favourite maid.
The time, the place, the manner how to meet,
Were all in punctual order plainly writ:
But since a trust must be, she thought it best
To put it out of laymen's power at least,
And for their solemn vows prepared a priest.

Guiscard, her secret purpose understood,

With joy prepared to meet he coming good;
Nor pains nor danger was resolved to spare,
But use the means appointed by the fair.

Near the proud palace of Salerno stood
A mount of rough ascent, and thick with wood;
Through this cave was dug with vast expense,
The work it seemed of some suspicious Prince,
Who, when abusing power with lawless might,
From public justice would secure his flight.
The passage made by many a winding way,
Reached even the room in which the tyrant lay,
Fit for his purpose; on a lower floor,
He lodged, whose issue was an iron door,
From whence by stairs descending to the ground,
In the blind grot a safe retreat he found.
Its outlet ended in a brake o'ergrown
With brambles, choked by time, and now unknown.
A rift there was, which from the mountain's height
Conveyed a glimmering and malignant light,
A breathing-place to draw the damps away,
A twilight of an intercepted day.
The tyrant's den, whose use, though lost to fame,
Was now the apartment of the royal dame;
The cavern, only to her father known,
By him was to his darling daughter shown.

Neglected long she let the secret rest,
Till love recalled it to her labouring breast,
And hinted as the way by Heaven designed
The teacher by the means he taught to blind.
What will not women do, when need inspires
Their wit, or love their inclination fires!
Though jealousy of state the invention found,
Yet love refined upon the former ground.
That way the tyrant had reserved, to fly
Pursuing hate, now served to bring two lovers nigh.

The dame, who long in vain had kept the key,
Bold by desire, explored the secret way;
Now tried the stairs, and wading through the night,
Searched all the deep recess, and issued into light.
All this her letter had so well explained,
The instructed youth might compass what remained;
The cavern-mouth alone was hard to find,
Because the path disused was out of mind:
But in what quarter of the cops it lay,
His eye by certain level could survey:
Yet (for the wood perplexed with thorns he knew)
A frock of leather o'er his limbs he drew;
And thus provided searched the brake around,
Till the choked entry of the cave he found.

Thus all prepared, the promised hour arrived,
So long expected, and so well contrived:
With love to friend, the impatient lover went,
Fenced from the thorns, and trod the deep descent.
The conscious priest, who was suborned before,
Stood ready posted at the postern-door;
The maids in distant rooms were sent to rest,
And nothing wanted but the invited guest.
He came, and, knocking thrice, without delay
The longing lady heard, and turned the key;
At once invaded him with all her charms,
And the first step he made was in her arms:
The leathern outside, boistrous as it was,
Gave way, and bent beneath her strict embrace:
On either side the kisses flew so thick,
That neither he nor she had breath to speak.
The holy man, amazed at what he saw,
Made haste to sanctify the bliss by law;
And muttered fast the matrimony o'er,
For fear committed sin should get before.
His work performed, he left the pair alone,
Because he knew he could not go too soon;
His presence odious, when his task was done.
What thoughts he had beseems not me to say,
Though some surmise he went to fast and pray,
And needed both to drive the tempting thoughts away.

The foe once gone, they took their full delight;
'Twas restless rage and tempest all the night;
For greedy love each moment would employ,
And grudged the shortest pauses of their joy.

Thus were their loves auspiciously begun,
And thus with secret care were carried on,
The stealth it self did appetite restore,
And looked so like a sin, it pleased the more.

The cave was now become a common way,
The wicket, often opened, knew the key.
Love rioted secure, and, long enjoyed,
Was ever eager, and was never cloyed.

But as extremes are short, of ill and good,
And tides the highest mark regorge the flood;
So Fate, that could no more improve their joy,
Took a malicious pleasure to destroy.

Tancred, who fondly loved, and whose delight
Was placed in his fair daughter's daily sight,
Of custom, when his state affairs were done,
Would pass his pleasing hours with her alone;

And, as a father's privilege allowed,
Without attendance of the officious crowd.

It happened once, that when in heat of day
He tried to sleep, as was his usual way,
The balmy slumber fled his wakeful eyes,
And forced him, in his own despite, to rise:
Of sleep forsaken, to relieve his care,
He sought the conversation of the fair;
But with her train of damsels she was gone,
In shady walks the scorching heat to shun:
He would not violate that sweet recess,
And found besides a welcome heaviness
That seized his eyes; and slumber, which forgot,
When called before, to come, now came unsought.
From light retired, behind his daughter's bed,
He for approaching sleep composed his head;
A chair was ready, for that use designed,
So quilted that he lay at ease reclined;
The curtains closely drawn, the light to screen,
As if he had contrived to lie unseen:
Thus covered with an artificial night,
Sleep did his office soon, and sealed his sight.

With Heaven averse, in this ill-omened hour
Was Guiscard summoned to the secret bower,
And the fair nymph, with expectation fired,
From her attending damsels was retired:
For, true to love, she measured time so right
As not to miss one moment of delight.
The garden, seated on the level floor,
She left behind, and locking every door,
Thought all secure; but little did she know,
Blind to her fate, she had enclosed her foe.
Attending Guiscard in his leathern frock
Stood ready, with his thrice repeated knock:
Thrice with a doleful sound the jarring grate
Rung deaf and hollow, and presaged their fate.
The door unlocked, to known delight they haste,
And panting, in each other's arms embraced,
Rush to the conscious bed, a mutual freight,
And heedless press it with their wonted weight.

The sudden bound awaked the sleeping sire,
And showed a sight no parent can desire;
His opening eyes at once with odious view
The love discovered, and the lover knew:
He would have cried; but, hoping that he dreamt,
Amazement tied his tongue, and stopped the attempt.
The ensuing moment all the truth declared,
But now he stood collected and prepared;
For malice and revenge had put him on his guard.

So, like a lion that unheeded lay,
Dissembling sleep, and watchful to betray,
With inward rage he meditates his prey.
The thoughtless pair, indulging their desires,
Alternate kindled and then quenched their fires;
Nor thinking in the shades of death they played,
Full of themselves, themselves alone surveyed,
And, too secure, were by themselves betrayed.
Long time dissolved in pleasure thus they lay,
Till nature could no more suffice their play;
Then rose the youth, and through the cave again
Returned; the princess mingled with her train.

Resolved his unripe vengeance to defer,
The royal spy, when now the coast was clear,
Sought not the garden, but retired unseen,
To brood in secret on his gathered spleen,
And methodize revenge: to death he grieved;
And, but he saw the crime, had scarce believed.
The appointment for the ensuing night he heard;
And, therefore, in the cavern had prepared
Two brawny yeoman of his trusty guard.

Scarce had unwary Guiscard set his foot
Within the farmost entrance of the grot,
When these in secret ambush ready lay,
And, rushing on the sudden, seized the prey.
Encumbered with his frock, without defence,
An easy prize, they led the prisoner thence,
The gloomy sire, too sensible of wrong
To vent his rage in words, restrained his tongue,
And only said, 'Thus servants are preferred
'And trusted, thus their sovereigns they reward:
'Had I not seen, had not these eyes received
'Too clear a proof, I could not have believed.'

He paused, and choked the rest. The youth, who saw
His forfeit life abandoned to the law,
The judge the accuser, and the offence to him,
Who had both power and will to avenge the crime,
No vain defence prepared, but thus replied:
'The faults of Love by Love are justified;
'With unresisted might the monarch reigns,
'He levels mountains and he raises plains,
'And, not regarding difference of degree,
'Abased your daughter and exalted me.'

This bold return with seeming patience heard,
The prisoner was remitted to the guard.
But lonely walking by a winking night,
Sobbed, wept, and groaned, and beat his withered breast,

But would not violate his daughter's rest;
Who long expecting lay, for bliss prepared,
Listening for noise, and grieved that none she heard;
Oft rose, and oft in vain employed the key,
And oft accused her lover of delay,
And passed the tedious hours in anxious thoughts away.

The morrow came; and at his usual hour
Old Tancred visited his daughter's bower;
Her cheek (for such his custom was) he kissed,
Then blessed her kneeling, and her maids dismissed.
The royal dignity thus far maintained,
Now left in private, he no longer feigned;
But all at once his grief and rage appeared,
And floods of tears ran trickling down his beard.

'O Sigismonda,' he began to say;
Thrice he began, and thrice was forced to stay,
Till words with often trying found their way;
'I thought, O Sigismonda, (but how blind
'Are parents' eyes their children's faults to find!)
'Thy virtue, birth, and breeding were above
'A mean desire, and vulgar sense of love;
'Nor less than sight and hearing could convince
'So fond a father, and so just a Prince,
'Of such an unforeseen and unbelieved offece:
'Then what indignant sorrow must I have,
'To see thee lie subjected to my slave!
'A man so smelling of the people's lee,
'The court received him first for charity;
'And since with no degree of honour graced,
'But only suffered where he first was placed;
'A grovelling insect still; and so designed
'By nature's hand, nor born of noble kind;
'A thing by neither man nor woman prized,
'And scarcely known enough to be despised:
'To what has Heaven reserved my age? Ah! why
'Should man, when nature calls, not choose to die;
'Rather than stretch the span of life, to find
'Such ills as Fate has wisely cast behind,
'For those to feel, whom fond desire to live
'Makes covetous of more than life can give!
'Each has his share of good; and when 'tis gone
'The guest, though hungry, cannot rise too soon.
'But I, expecting more, in my own wrong
'Protracting life, have lived a day too long.
'If yesterday could be recalled again,
'Even now would I conclude my happy reign;
'But 'tis too late, my glorious race is run,
'And a dark cloud o'ertakes my setting sun.
'Hadst thou not loved, or loving saved the shame,
'If not the sin, by some illustrious name,

'This little comfort had relieved my mind,
''Twas frailty, not unusual to thy kind:
'But thy low fall beneath thy royal blood
'Shows downward appetite to mix with mud.
'Thus not the least excuse is left for thee,
'Nor the least refuge for unhappy me.

'For him I have resolved: whom by surprise
'I took, and scarce can call it, in disguise;
'For such was his attire, as, with intent
'Of nature, suited to his mean descent:
'The harder question yet remains behind,
'What pains a parent and a prince can find
'To punish an offence of this degenerate kind.

'As I have loved, and yet I love thee more
'Than ever father loved a child before;
'So that indulgence draws me to forgive:
'Nature, that gave thee life, would have thee live,
'But, as a public parent of the state,
'My justice and thy crime requires thy fate.
'Fain would I choose a middle course to steer;
'Nature's too kind, and justice too severe:
'Speak for us both, and to the balance bring
'On either side the father and the king.
'Heaven knows, my heart is bent to favour thee;
'Make it but scanty weight, and leave the rest to me.'

Here stopping with a sigh, he poured a flood
Of tears, to make his last expression good.
She who had heard him speak, nor saw alone
The secret conduct of her love was known,
But he was taken who her soul possessed,
Felt all the pangs of sorrow in her breast:
And little wanted, but a woman's heart
With cries and tears had testified her smart,
But inborn worth, that fortune can control,
New strung and stiffer bent her softer soul;
The heroine assumed the woman's place,
Confirmed her mind, and fortified her face:
Why should she beg, or what could she pretend,
When her stern father had condemned her friend!
Her life she might have had; but her despair
Of saving his had put it past her care:
Resolved on fate, she would not lose her breath,
But, rather than not die, solicit death.
Fixed on this thought, she, not as women use,
Her fault by common frailty would excuse;
But boldly justified her innocence,
And while the fact was owned, denied the offence:
Then with dry eyes, and with an open look,
She met his glance midway, and thus undaunted spoke:

'Tancred, I neither am disposed to make
'Request for life, nor offered life to take;
'Much less deny the deed; but least of all
'Beneath pretended justice weakly fall.
'My words to sacred truth shall be confined,
'My deeds shall show the greatness of my mind.
'That I have loved, I own; that still I love
'I call to witness all the powers above:
'Yet more I own; to Guiscard's love I give
'The small remaining time I have to live;
'And if beyond this life desire can be,
'Not Fate it self shall set my passion free.

'This first avowed, nor folly warped my mind,
'Nor the frail texture of the female kind
'Betrayed my virtue; for too well I knew
'What honour was, and honour had his due:
'Before the holy priest my vows were tied,
'So came I not a strumpet, but a bride:
'This for my fame, and for the public voice;
'Yet more, his merits justified my choic:
'Which had they not, the first election thine,
'That bond dissolved, the next is freely mine;
'Or grant I erred (which yet I must deny),
'Had parents power even second vows to tie,
'Thy little care to mend my widowed nights
'Has forced me to recourse of marriage rites,
'To fill an empty side, and follow known delights.
'What have I done in this, deserving blame?
'State-laws may alter: Nature's are the same;
'Those are usurped on helpless woman-kind,
'Made without our consent, and wanting power to bind.

'Thou, Tancred, better shouldst have understood,
'That, as thy father gave thee flesh and blood,
'So gavest thou me: not from the quarry hewed,
'But of a softer mould, with a sense endued;
'Even softer than thy own, of suppler kind,
'More exquisite of taste, and more than man refined.
'Nor needst thou by thy daughter to be told,
'Though now thy sprightly blood with age be cold,
'Thou hast been young: and canst remember still,
'That when thou hadst the power, thou hadst the will:
'And from the past experience of thy fires,
'Canst tell with what a tide our strong desires
'Come rushing on in youth, and what their rage requires.

'And grant thy youth was exercised in arms,
'When love no leisure found for softer charms,
'My tender age in luxury was trained,
'With idle ease and pageants entertained;

'My hours my own, my pleasures unrestrained.
'So bred, no wonder if I took the bent
'That seemed even warranted by thy consent,
'For, when the father is too fondly kind,
'Such seed he sows, such harvest shall he find.
'Blame then thy self, as reason's law requires,
'(Since nature gave, and thou fomentst my fires);
'If still those appetites continue strong,
'Thou mayest consider I am yet but young.
'Consider too that, having been a wife,
'I must have tasted of a better life,
'And am not to be blamed, if I renew
'By lawful means the joys which then I knew.
'Where was the crime, if pleasure I procured,
'Young, and a woman, and to bliss enured?
'That was my case, and this is my defence:
'I pleased my self, I shunned incontinence,
'And, urged by strong desires, indulged my sense.

'Left to my self, I must avow, I strove
'And, well acquainted with thy native pride,
'Endeavoured what I could not help to hide,
'For which a woman's wit an easy way supplied.
'How this, so well contrived, so closely laid,
'Was known to thee, or by what chance betrayed,
'Is not my care; to please thy pride alone,
'I could have wished it had been still unknown.

'Nor took I Guiscard, by blind fancy led
'Or hasty choice, as many women wed;
'But with deliberate care, and ripened thought,
'At leisure first designed, before I wrought:
'On him I rested after long debate,
'And not without considering fixed my fate:
'His flame was equal, though by mine inspired:
'(For so the difference of our birth required):
'Had he been born like me, like me his love
'Had first begun what mine was forced to move:
'But thus beginning, thus we preserve;
'Our passions yet continue what they were,
'Nor length of trial makes our joys the less sincere.

'At this my choice, though not by thine allowed,
'(Thy judgement herding with the common crowd,)
'Dost less the merit than the man esteem.
'Too sharply, Tancred, by thy pride betrayed,
'Hast thou against the laws of kind inveighed;
'For all the offence is in opinion placed,
'Which deems high birth by lowly choice debased.
'This thought alone with fury fires thy breast,
'(For holy marriage justifies the rest,)
'That I have sunk the glories of the state,

'And mixed my blood with a plebeian mate:
'In which I wonder thou shouldst oversee
'Superior causes, or impute to me
'The fault of Fortune, or the Fates' decree.
'Or call it Heaven's imperial power alone,
'Which moves on springs of justice, though unknown.
'Yet this we see, though ordered for the best,
'The bad exalted, and the good oppressed;
'Permitted laurels grace the lawless brow,
'The unworthy raised, the worthy cast below.

'But leaving that: search we the secret springs,
'And backward trace the principles of things;
'There shall we find, that when the world began,
'One common mass composed the mould of man;
'One paste of flesh on all degrees bestowed,
'And kneaded up alike with moistening blood.
'The same Almighty Power inspired the frame
'With kindled life, and formed the souls the same:
'The faculties of intellect and will
'Dispensed with equal hand, disposed with equal skill,
'Like liberty indulged with choice of good or ill.
'Thus born alike, from virtue first began
'The diffidence that distinguished man from man:
'He claimed no title from descent of blood,
'But that which made him noble made him good.
'Warmed with more particles of heavenly flame,
'He winged his upward flight, and soared to fame;
'The rest remained below, a tribe without a name.

'This law, though custom now diverts the course,
'As Nature's institute, is yet in force;
'Uncancelled, though disused; and he, whose mind
'Is virtuous, is alone of noble kind;
'Though poor in fortune, of celestial race;
'And he commits the crime who calls him base.

'Now lay the line; and measure all thy court
'By inward virtue, not external port,
'And find whom justly to prefer above
'The man on whom my judgement placed my love;
'So shalt thou see his parts and person shine,
'And thus compared, the rest a base degenerate line.
'Nor took I, when I first surveyed thy court,
'His valour or his virtues on report;
'But trustd what I ought to trust alone,
'Relying on thy eyes, and not my own;
'Thy praise (and thine was then the public voice)
'First recommended Guiscard to my choice:
'Directed thus by thee, I looked, and found
'A man I thought deserving to be crowned!
'First by my father pointed to my sight,

'Nor less conspicuous by his native light;
'His mind, his mien, the features of his face,
'Excelling all the rest of human race:
'These were thy thoughts, and thou couldst judge aright,
'Till interest made a jaundice in thy sight.

'Or should I grant thou didst not rightly see,
'Then thou wert first deceived, and I deceived by thee.
'But if thou shalt allege, through pride of mind,
'Thy blood with one of base condition joined,
''Tis false; for 'tis not baseness to be poor:
'His poverty augments thy crime the more;
'Upbraid thy justice with the scant regard
'Of worth; whom princes praise, they should reward.
'Are these the kings entrusted by the crowd
'With wealth, to be dispensed for common good?
'The people sweat not for their king's delight,
'To enrich a pimp, or raise a parasite;
'Theirs is the toil; and he who well has served
'His country, has his country's wealth deserved.

'Even mighty monarchs oft are meanly born,
'And kings by birth to lowest rank return;
'All subject to the power of giddy chance,
'For Fortune can depress, or can advance;
'But true nobility is of the mind,
'Not given by chance, and not to chance resigned.

'For the remaining doubt of thy decree,
'What to resolve, and how dispose of me,
'Be warned to cast that useless care aside,
'My self alone will for my self provide.
'If in thy doting and decrepit age,
'Thy soul, a stranger in thy youth to rage,
'Begins in cruel deeds to take delight,
'Gorge with my blood thy barbarous appetite;
'For I so little am disposed to pray
'For life, I would not cast a wish away.
'Such as it is, the offence is all my own;
'And what to Guiscard is already done,
'Or to be done, is doomed by thy decree,
'That, if not executed first by thee,
'Shall on my person be performed by me.

'Away! with women weep, and leave me here,
'Fixed, like a man, to die without a tear;
'Or save or slay us both this present hour,
''Tis all that Fate has left within thy power.'
She said; nor did her father fail to find
In all she spoke the greatness of her mind;
Yet thought she was not obstinate to die,
Nor deemed the death she promised was so nigh:

Secure in this belief, he left the dame,
Resolved to spare her life, and save her shame;
But that detested object to remove,
To wreak his vengeance, and to cure her love.

Intent on this, a secret order signed
The death of Guiscard to his guards enjoined;
Strangling was chosen, and the night the time;
A mute revenge, and blind as was the crime:
His faithful heart, a bloody sacrifice,
Torn from his breast, to glut the tyrant's eyes,
Closed the severe command; for, slaves to pay,
What kings decree the soldier must obey:
Waged against foes, and, when the wars are o'er,
Fit only to maintain despotic power;
Dangerous to freedom, and desired alone
By kings, who seek an arbitrary throne.
Such were these guards; as ready to have slain
The Prince him self, allured with greater gain;
So was the charge performed with better will,
By men enured to blood, and exercised in ill.

Now, though the sullen sire had eased his mind,
The pomp of his revenge was yet behind,
A goblet rich with gems, and rough with gold,
Of depth and breadth the precious pledge to hold,
With cruel care he chose; the hollow part
Enclosed, the lid concealed the lover's heart.
Then of his trusted mischiefs one he sent,
And bad him, with these words, the gift present:
'Thy father sends thee this to cheer thy breast,
'And glad thy sight with what thou lovest the best,
'As thou hast pleased his eyes, and joyed his mind,
'With what he loved the most of human kind.'

Ere this, the royal dame, who well had weighed
The consequence of what her sire had said,
Fixed on her fate, against the expected hour,
Procured the means to have it in her power;
For this she had distilled with early care
The juice of simples friendly to despair,
A magazine of death, and thus prepared,
Secure to die, the fatal message heard:
Then smiled severe; nor with a troubled look,
Or trembling hand, the funeral present took;
Even kept her countenance, when the lid removed
Disclosed her heart, unfortunately loved.
She needed not to be told within whose breast
It lodged; the message had explained the rest.
Or not amazed, or hiding her surprise,
She sternly on the bearer fixed her eyes;
Then thus: 'Tell Tancred, on his daughter's part,

'The gold, though precious, equals not the heart;
'But he did well to give his best; and I,
'Who wished a worthier urn, forgive his poverty.'

At this she curbed a groan, that else had come,
And pausing, viewed the present in the tomb;
Then to the heart adored devoutly glued
Her lips, and raising it, her speech renewed:
'Even from my day of birth, to this, the bound
'Of my unhappy being, I have found
'My father's care and tenderness expressed;
'But this last act of love excels the rest:
'For this so dear a present, bear him back
'The best return that I can live to make.'

The messenger dispatched, again she viewed
The loved remains, and, sighing, thus pursued:
'Source of my life, and lord of my desires,
'In whom I lived, with whom my soul expires!
'Poor heart, no more the spring of vital heat,
'Cursed be the hands that tore thee from thy seat!
'The course is finished which thy fates decreed,
'And thou from thy corporeal prison freed:
'Soon hast thou reached the goal with mended pace;
'A world of woes dispatched in little space;
'Forced by thy worth, thy foe, in death become
'Thy friend, has lodged thee in a costly tomb.
'There yet remained thy funeral exequies,
'The weeping tribute of thy widow's eyes;
'And those indulgent Heaven has found the way
'That I, before my death, have leave to pay.
'My father even in cruelty is kind,
'Or Heaven has turned the malice of his mind
'To better uses than his hate designed,
'And made the insult, which in his gift appears,
'The means to mourn thee with my pious tears;
'Which I will pay thee down before I go,
'And save myself the pains to weep below,
'If souls can weep. Though once I meant to meet
'My fate with face unmoved, and eyes unwet,
'Yet, since I have thee here in narrow room,
'My tears shall set thee first afloat within thy tomb.
'Then (as I know thy spirit hovers nigh)
'Under thy friendly conduct will I fly
'To regions unexplored, secure to share
'Thy state; nor hell shall punishment appear;
'And Heaven is double Heaven, if thou art there.'

She said. Her brimful eyes, that ready stood,
And only wanted will to weep a flood,
Released their watery store, and poured amain,
Like clouds low hung, a sober shower of rain;

Mute solemn sorrow, free from female noise,
Such as the majesty of grief destroys;
For, bending o'er the cup, the tears she shed
Seemed by the posture to discharge her head,
O'er-filled before; and oft (her mouth applied
To the cold heart) she kissed at once, and cried.
Her maids, who stood amazed, nor knew the cause
Of her complaining, nor whose heart it was,
Yet all dlue measures of her mouring kept,
Did office at the dirge, and by infection swept,
And oft inquired the occasion of her grief,
Unanswered but by sighs, and offered vain relief.
At length, her stock of tears already shed,
She wiped her eyes, she raised her drooping head,
And thus pursued: -- 'O ever faithful heart,
'I have performed the ceremonial part,
'The decencies of grief; it rests behind,
'That, as our bodies were, our souls be joined:
'To thy whate'er abode my shade convey,
'And, as an elder ghost, direct the way!'
She said; and bad the vial to be brought,
Where she before had brewed the deadly draught:
First pouring out the medicinable bane,
The heart her tears had rinsed she bathed again;
Then down her throat the death securely throws,
And quaffs a long oblivion of her woes.

This done, she mounts the genial bed, and there
(Her body first composed with honest care)
Attends the welcome rest; her hands yet hold
Close to her heart the monumental gold;
Nor farther word she spoke, but closed her sight,
And quiet sought the covert of the night.

The damsels, who the while in silence mourned,
Not knowing nor suspecting death suborned,
Yet, as their duty was, to Tancred sent,
Who, conscious of the occasion, feared the event.
Alarmed, and with presaging heart, he came
And drew the curtains, and exposed the dame
To loathsome light; then with a late relief
Made vain efforts to mitigate her grief.
She, what she could, excluding day, her eyes
Kept firmly sealed, and sternly thus replies:

'Tancred, restrain thy tears unsought by me,
'And sorrow unavailing now to thee:
'Did ever man before afflict his mind
'To see the effect of what himself designed?
'Yet, if thou hast remaining in thy heart
'Some sense of love, some unextinguished part
'Of former kindness, largely once professed,

'Let me by that adjure thy hardened breast
'Not to deny thy daughter's last request:
'The secret love which I so long enjoyed,
'And still concealed to gratify thy pride,
'Thou hast disjoined; but, with my dying breath,
'Seek not, I beg thee, to disjoin our death:
'Where'er his corps by thy command is laid,
'Thither let mine in public be conveyed;
'Exposed in open view, and side by side,
'Acknowledged as a bridegroom and a bride.'

The Prince's anguish hindered his reply;
And she, who felt her fate approaching nigh,
Seized the cold heart, and heaving to her breast,
'Here, precious pledge,' she said, 'securely rest.'
These accents were her last; the creeping death
Benumbed her senses first, then stopped her breath.

Thus she for disobedience justly died;
The sire was justly punished for his pride;
The youth, least guilty, suffered for the offence
Of duty violated to his Prince;
Who, late repenting of his cruel deed,
One common sepulchre for both decreed;
Entombed the wretched pair in royal state,
And on their monument inscribed their fate.

John Dryden

Song (Sylvia The Fair, In The Bloom Of Fifteen)

Sylvia the fair, in the bloom of fifteen,
Felt an innocent warmth as she lay on the green:
She had heard of a pleasure, and something she guessed
By the towsing and tumbling and touching her breast:
She saw the men eager, but was at a loss
What they meant by their sighing and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close.

"Ah!" she cried, "ah, for a languishing maid
In a country of Christians to die without aid!
Not a Whig, or a Tory, or Trimmer at least,
Or a Protestant parson, or Catholic priest,
To instruct a young virgin that is at a loss
What they meant by their sighing and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close."

Cupid in shape of a swain did appear;
He saw the sad wound, and in pity drew near;
Then showed her his arrow, and bid her not fear,
For the pain was no more than a maiden may bear;
When the balm was infused, she was not at a loss
What they meant by their sighing and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close.

John Dryden

Song From Amphitryon

Air Iris I love, and hourly I die,
But not for a lip, nor a languishing eye:
She's fickle and false, and there we agree,
For I am as false and as fickle as she.
We neither believe what either can say;
And, neither believing, we neither betray.
'Tis civil to swear, and say things of course;
We mean not the taking for better or worse.
When present, we love; when absent, agree:
I think not of Iris, nor Iris of me.
The legend of love no couple can find,
So easy to part, or so equally join'd.

John Dryden

Song From An Evening's Love

After the pangs of a desperate lover,
When day and night I have sighed all in vain,
Ah, what a pleasure it is to discover
In her eyes pity, who causes my pain!

When with unkindness our love at a stand is,
And both have punished ourselves with the pain,
Ah, what a pleasure the touch of her hand is!
Ah, what a pleasure to touch it again!

When the denial comes fainter and fainter,
And her eyes give what her tongue does deny,
Ah, what a trembling I feel when I venture!
Ah, what a trembling does usher my joy!

When, with a sigh, she accords me the blessing,
And her eyes twinkle 'twixt pleasure and pain,
Ah, what a joy 'tis beyond all expressing!
Ah, what a joy to hear 'Shall we again!'

John Dryden

Song From Marriage-A-La-Mode

Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now,
When passion is decayed?
We loved, and we loved, as long as we could,
Till our love was loved out in us both;
But our marriage is dead when the pleasure is fled:
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.

If I have pleasures for a friend,
And farther love in store,
What wrong has he whose joys did end,
And who could give no more?
'Tis a madness that he should be jealous of me,
Or that I should bar him of another;
For all we can gain is to give ourselves pain,
When neither can hinder the other.

John Dryden

Song Of A Scholar And His Mistress, Who, Being Crossed By Their Friends, Fell Mad For One Another; And Now First Meet In Bedlam

[Music within.]

The Lovers enter at opposite doors, each held by a keeper.

Phillis.
Look, look I see—-I see my love appear!
'Tis he—-'Tis he alone;
For, like him, there is none:
'Tis the dear, dear man, 'tis thee, dear.

Amyntas.
Hark! the winds war;
The foamy waves roar;
I see a ship afar:
Tossing and tossing, and making to the shore:
But what's that I view,
So radiant of hue,
St. Hermo, St Hermo, that sits upon the sails?
Ah! No, no, no.
St. Hermo never, never shone so bright;'
'Tis Phillis, only Phillis, can shoot so fair a light;
'Tis Phillis, 'tis Phillis, that saves the ship alone,
For all the winds are hush'd, and the storm is overblown.

Phillis.
Let me go, let me run, let me fly to his arms.

Amyntas.
If all the fates combine,
And all the furies join,
I'll force my way to Phillis, and break through the charm.

[Here they break from their keepers, run to each other, and embrace.]

Phillis.
Shall I marry the man I love?
And shall I conclude my pains?
Now bless'd be the powers above,
I feel the blood bound in my veins;
With a lively leap it began to move,
And the vapours leave my brains.

Amyntas.
Body join'd to body, and heart join'd to heart,
To make sure of the cure,
Go call the man in black, to mumble o'er his part.

Phillis.
But suppose he should stay—-

Amyntas.
At worst if he delay,

'Tis a work must be done,
We'll borrow but a day,
And the better, the sooner begun.

[They run out together hand in hand.]

John Dryden

Song to a Fair Young Lady

Ask not the cause why sullen Spring
So long delays her flowers to bear;
Why warbling birds forget to sing,
And winter storms invert the year:
Chloris is gone; and fate provides
To make it Spring where she resides.

Chloris is gone, the cruel fair;
She cast not back a pitying eye:
But left her lover in despair
To sigh, to languish, and to die:
Ah! how can those fair eyes endure
To give the wounds they will not cure?

Great God of Love, why hast thou made
A face that can all hearts command,
That all religions can invade,
And change the laws of every land?
Where thou hadst placed such power before,
Thou shouldst have made her mercy more.

When Chloris to the temple comes,
Adoring crowds before her fall;
She can restore the dead from tombs
And every life but mine recall,
I only am by Love designed
To be the victim for mankind.

John Dryden

Suum Cuique

When lawless men their neighbours dispossess,
The tenants they extirpate or oppress,
And make rude havoc in the fruitful soil,
Which the right owners ploughed with careful toil.
The same proportion does in kingdoms hold;
A new prince breaks the fences of the old,
And will o'er carcases and deserts reign,
Unless the land its rightful lord regain.
He gripes the faithless owners of the place,
And buys a foreign army to deface
The feared and hated remnant of their race;
He starves their forces, and obstructs their trade;
Vast sums are given, and yet no native paid.
The church itself he labours to assail,
And keeps fit tools to break the sacred pale.
Of those let him the guilty roll commence,
Who has betrayed a master and a prince;
A man, seditious, lewd, and impudent;
An engine always mischievously bent;
One who from all the bans of duty swerves,
No tie can hold but that which he deserves;
An author dwindled to a pamphleteer;
Skilful to forge, and always insincere;
Careless exploded practices to mend;
Bold to attack, yet feeble to defend.
Fate's blindfold reign the atheist loudly owns,
And providence blasphemously dethrones.
In vain the leering actor strains his tongue
To cheat, with tears and empty noise, the throng;
Since all men know, whate'er he says or writes,
Revenge, or stronger interest, indites;
And that the wretch employs his venal wit
How to confute what formerly he writ.
Next him the grave Socinian claims a place,
Endowed with reason, though bereft of grace;
A preaching pagan of surpassing fame,
No register records his borrowed name.
O, had the child more happily been bred,
A radiant mitre would have graced his head:
But now unfit, the most he should expect,
Is to be entered of T&wblank; F&wblank;'s sect.
To him succeeds, with looks demurely sad,
A gloomy soul, with revelation mad;
False to his friend, and careless of his word;
A dreaming prophet, and a gripping lord;
He sells the livings which he can't possess,
And forms that sinecure, his diocese.
Unthinking man! to quit thy barren see
And vain endeavours in chronology,
For the more fruitless care of royal charity.
Thy hoary noddle warns thee to return,
The treason of old age in Wales to mourn;

Nor think the city-poor may less sustain,
Thy place may well be vacant in this reign.
I should admit the booted prelate now,
But he is even for lampoon too low;
The scum and outcast of a royal race,
The nation's grievance, and the gown's disgrace.
None so unlearned did e'er at London sit;
This driveller does the sacred chair besh---t.
I need not brand the spiritual parricide,
Nor draw the weapon dangling by his side;
The astonished world remembers that offence,
And knows he stole the daughter of his prince.
'Tis time enough, in some succeeding age,
To bring this mitred captain on the stage.
These are the leaders in apostasy,
And the blind guides of poor elective majesty;
A thing which commonwealths-men did devise,
Till plots were ripe, to catch the people's eyes.
Their king's a monster, in a quagmire born,
Of all the native brutes the grief and scorn;
With a big snout, cast in a crooked mould,
Which runs with glanders and an inborn cold;
His substance is of clammy snot and phlegm;
Sleep is his essence, and his life a dream.
To Caprea this Tiberius does retire,
To quench with catamite his feeble fire.
Dear catamite! who rules alone the state,
While monarch dozes on his unpropt height,
Silent, yet thoughtless, and secure of fate.
Could you but see the fulsome hero led
By loathing vassals to his noble bed!
In flannel robes the coughing ghost does walk,
And his mouth moats like cleaner breech of hawk;
Corruption, springing from his cankered breast,
Furs up the channel, and disturbs his rest.
With head propt up, the bolstered engine lies;
If pillow slip aside, the monarch dies.

John Dryden

Tarquin And Tullia

In times when princes cancelled nature's law,
And declarations which themselves did draw;
When children used their parents to dethrone,
And gnaw their way, like vipers, to the crown;
Tarquin, a savage, proud, ambitious prince,
Prompt to expel, yet thoughtless of defence,
The envied sceptre did from Tullius snatch,
The Roman king, and father by the match.
To form his party, histories report,
A sanctuary was opened in his court,
Where glad offenders safely might resort.
Great was the crowd, and wonderous the success,
For those were fruitful times of wickedness;
And all that lived obnoxious to the laws,
Flocked to prince Tarquin, and embraced his cause.
'Mongst these a pagan priest for refuge fled;
A prophet deep in godly faction read;
A sycophant, that knew the modish way
To cant and plot, to flatter and betray,
To whine and sin, to scribble and recant,
A shameless author, and a lustful saint.
To serve all times he could distinctions coin
And with great ease flat contradictions join
A traitor now, once loyal in extreme,
And then obedience was his only theme:
He sung in temples the most passive lays
And wearied monarchs with repeated praise
But managed awkwardly that lawful part,
To vent foul lies and treason was his art,
And pointed libels at crowned heads to dart.
This priest, and others, learned to defame,
First murder injured Tullius in his name;
With blackest calumnies their sovereign load,
A poisoned brother, and dark league abroad;
A son unjustly top'd upon the throne,
Which yet was proved undoubtedly his own;
Though, as the law was then, 'twas his behoof,
Who dispossessed the heir, to bring the proof.
This hellish charge they backed with dismal frights,
The loss of property, and sacred rights,
And freedom; words which all false patriots use
As surest names the Romans to abuse;
Jealous of kings, and always malcontent,
Forward in change, yet certain to repent.
Whilst thus the plotters needful fears create,
Tarquin with open force invades the state.
Lewd nobles join him with their feeble might,
And atheist fools for dear religion fight.
The priests their boasted principles disown,
And level their harangues against the throne.
Vain promises the people's minds allure:
Slight were these ills, but desperate the cure.

'Tis hard for kings to steer an equal course,
And they who banish one oft gain a worse.
Those heavenly bodies we admire above,
Do every day irregularly move;
Yet Tullius, 'tis decreed, must lose the crown,
For faults that were his council's, not his own.
He now in vain commands even those he payed,
By darling troops deserted and betrayed,
By creatures which his generous warmth had made.
Of these a captain of the guards was worst,
Whose memory to this day stands accurst.
This rogue, advanced to military trust
By his own whoredom, and his sister's lust,
Forsook his master, after dreadful vows,
And plotted to betray him to his foes;
The kindest master to the vilest slave,
As free to give, as he was sure to crave.
His haughty female, who, as books declare,
Did always toss wide nostrils in the air,
Was to the younger Tullia governess,
And did attend her, when, in borrowed dress,
She fled by night from Tullius in distress.
This wretch, by letters, did invite his foes,
And used all arts her father to depose;
A father, always generously bent,
So kind, that even her wishes he'd prevent.
'Twas now high time for Tullius to retreat,
When even his daughter hastened his defeat;
When faith and duty vanished, and no more
The name of father and of king he bore:
A king, whose right his foes could ne'er dispute;
So mild, that mercy was his attribute;
Affable, kind, and easy of access;
Swift to relieve, unwilling to oppress;
Rich without taxes, yet in payment just;
So honest, that he hardly could distrust:
His active soul from labours ne'er did cease,
Valiant in war, and vigilant in peace;
Studious with traffic to enrich the land,
Strong to protect, and skilful to command;
Liberal and splendid, yet without excess;
Prone to relieve, unwilling to distress:
In sum, how godlike must his nature be,
Whose only fault was too much piety!
This king removed, the assembled states thought fit,
That Tarquin in the vacant throne should sit;
Voted him regent in their senate-house,
And with an empty name endowed his spouse.
The elder Tullia, who, some authors feign,
Drove o'er her father's corse a rumbling wain:
But she, more guilty, numerous wains did drive,
To crush her father and her king alive;

And in remembrance of his hastened fall,
Resolved to institute a weekly ball.
The jolly glutton grew in bulk and chin,
Feasted on rapine, and enjoyed her sin;
With luxury she did weak reason force,
Debauched good-nature, and cram'd down remorse;
Yet when she drank cold tea in liberal sups,
The sobbing dame was maudling in her cups.
But brutal Tarquin never did relent,
Too hard to melt, too wicked to repent;
Cruel in deeds, more merciless in will,
And blest with natural delight in ill.
From a wise guardian he received his doom
To walk the change, and not to govern Rome.
He swore his native honours to disown,
And did by perjury ascend the throne.
Oh! had that oath his swelling pride represt,
Rome had been then with peace and plenty blest.
But Tarquin, guided by destructive fate,
The country wasted, and embroiled the state,
Transported to their foes the Roman pelf,
And by their ruin hoped to save himself.
Innumerable woes oppress the land,
When it submitted to his curs'd command.
So just was Heaven, that 'twas hard to tell,
Whether its guilt or losses did excel.
Men that renounced their God for dearer trade,
Were then the guardians of religion made.
Rebels were sainted, foreigners did reign,
Outlaws returned, preferment to obtain,
With frogs, and toads, and all their croaking train.
No native knew their features nor their birth;
They seemed the greasy offspring of the earth.
The trade was sunk, the fleet and army spent;
Devouring taxes swallowed lesser rent;
Taxes imposed by no authority;
Each lewd collection was a robbery.
Bold self-creating men did statutes draw,
Skilled to establish villainy by law;
Fanatic drivers, whose unjust careers.
Produced new ills exceeding former fears:
Yet authors here except a faithful band,
Which the prevailing faction did withstand;
And some, who bravely stood in the defence
Of baffled justice, and their exiled prince.
These shine to after-times; each sacred name
Stands still recorded in the rolls of fame.

John Dryden

Te Deum

Thee, Sovereign God, our grateful accents praise;
We own thee Lord, and bless thy wondrous ways;
To thee, Eternal Father, earth's whole frame
With loudest trumpets sounds immortal fame.
Lord God of Hosts! for thee the heavenly powers,
With sounding anthems, fill the vaulted towers.
Thy Cherubims thee Holy, Holy, Holy, cry;
Thrice Holy, all the Seraphims reply,
And thrice returning echoes endless songs supply.
Both heaven and earth thy majesty display;
They owe their beauty to thy glorious ray.
Thy praises fill the loud apostles' quire:
The train of prophets in the song conspire.
Legions of martyrs in the chorus shine,
And vocal blood with vocal music join.[24]
By these thy church, inspired by heavenly art,
Around the world maintains a second part,
And tunes her sweetest notes, O God, to thee,
The Father of unbounded majesty;
The Son, adored co-partner of thy seat,
And equal everlasting Paraclete.
Thou King of Glory, Christ, of the Most High,
Thou co-eternal filial Deity;
Thou who, to save the world's impending doom,
Vouchsafst to dwell within a virgin's womb;
Old tyrant Death disarmed, before thee flew
The bolts of heaven, and back the foldings drew,
To give access, and make thy faithful way;
From God's right hand thy filial beams display.
Thou art to judge the living and the dead;
Then spare those souls for whom thy veins have bled.
O take us up amongst thy bless'd above,
To share with them thy everlasting love.
Preserve, O Lord! thy people, and enhance
Thy blessing on thine own inheritance.
For ever raise their hearts, and rule their ways,
Each day we bless thee, and proclaim thy praise;
No age shall fail to celebrate thy name,
No hour neglect thy everlasting fame.
Preserve our souls, O Lord, this day from ill;
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy still:
As we have hoped, do thou reward our pain;
We've hoped in thee--let not our hope be vain.

John Dryden

The Beautiful Lady Of The May

I.
A quire of bright beauties in spring did appear,
To choose a May-lady to govern the year;
All the nymphs were in white, and the shepherds in green,
The garland was given, and Phillis was queen;
But Phillis refused it, and sighing did say,
I'll not wear a garland while Pan is away.

II.
While Pan and fair Syrinx are fled from our shore,
The Graces are banished, and Love is no more:
The soft god of pleasure that warmed our desires
Has broken his bow, and extinguished his fires,
And vows that himself and his mother will mourn,
Till Pan and fair Syrinx in triumph return.

III.
Forbear your addresses, and court us no more,
For we will perform what the Deity swore:
But, if you dare think of deserving our charms,
Away with your sheephooks, and take to your arms;
Then laurels and myrtles your brows shall adorn,
When Pan and his son and fair Syrinx return.

John Dryden

The Character Of A Good Parson. Imitated From Chaucer, And Enlarged

A parish-priest was of the pilgrim-train;
An awful, reverend, and religious man.
His eyes diffused a venerable grace,
And charity itself was in his face.
Rich was his soul, though his attire was poor,
(As God had clothed his own ambassador);
For such, on earth, his blessed Redeemer bore.
Of sixty years he seemed; and well might last
To sixty more, but that he lived too fast;
Refined himself to soul, to curb the sense;
And made almost a sin of abstinence.
Yet had his aspect nothing of severe,
But such a face as promised him sincere.
Nothing reserved or sullen was to see:
But sweet regards, and pleasing sanctity;
Mild was his accent, and his action free.
With eloquence innate his tongue was armed;
Though harsh the precept, yet the preacher charmed;
For, letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the sky:
And oft, with holy hymns, he charmed their ears:
(A music more melodious than the spheres)
For David left him, when he went to rest,
His lyre; and after him he sung the best.
He bore his great commission in his look:
But sweetly tempered awe; and softened all he spoke.
He preached the joys of heaven, and pains of hell,
And warned the sinner with becoming zeal;
But on eternal mercy loved to dwell.
He taught the gospel rather than the law;
And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw.
For fear but freezes minds; but love, like heat,
Exhales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat.
To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard,
Wrapped in his crimes, against the storm prepared;
But, when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.
Lightning and thunder (heaven’s artillery)
As harbingers before the Almighty fly:
Those but proclaim his style, and disappear;
The stiller sound succeeds, and God is there.
The tithes, his parish freely paid, he took;
But never sued, or cursed with bell and book.
With patience bearing wrong, but offering none:
Since every man is free to lose his own.
The country churls, according to their kind,
(Who grudge their dues, and love to be behind,)
The less he sought his offerings, pinched the more,
And praised a priest contented to be poor.
Yet of his little he had some to spare,
To feed the tamished, and to clothe the bare:
For mortified he was to that degree,

A poorer than himself he would not see.
True priests, he said, and preachers of the word,
Were only stewards of their sovereign lord;
Nothing was theirs; but all the public store;
Intrusted riches to relieve the poor;
Who, should they steal, for want of his relief,
He judged himself accomplice with the thief.
Wide was his parish; not contracted close
In streets, but here and there a straggling house;
Yet still he was at hand, without request,
To serve the sick, to succour the distressed;
Tempting, on foot, alone, without affright,
The dangers of a dark tempestuous night.
All this the good old man performed alone,
Nor spared his pains; for curate he had none.
Nor durst he trust another with his care;
Nor rode himself to Paul's, the public fair,
To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
Where bishoprics and sinecures are sold;
But duly watched his flock, by night and day;
And from the prowling wolf redeemed the prey,
And hungry sent the wily fox away.
The proud he tamed, the penitent he cheered:
Nor to rebuke the rich offender feared.
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought;
(A living sermon of the truths he taught);
For this by rules severe his life he squared:
That all might see the doctrine which they heard.
For priests, he said, are patterns for the rest;
(The gold of heaven, who bear the God impressed;
But when the precious coin is kept unclean.
The sovereign's image is no longer seen.
If they be foul on whom the people trust,
Well may the baser brass contract a rust.
The prelate, for his holy life he prized;
The worldly pomp of prelacy despised.
His Saviour came not with a gaudy show,
Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
Patience in want, and poverty of mind,
These marks of church and churchmen he designed,
And living taught, and dying left behind.
The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn;
In purple he was crucified, not born.
They who contend for place and high degree,
Are not his sons, but those of Zebedee.
Not but he knew the signs of earthly power
Might well become Saint Peter's successor;
The holy father holds a double reign,
The prince may keep his pomp, the fisher must be plain.
Such was the saint; who shone with every grace,
Reflecting, Moses like, his Maker's face.
God saw his image lively was expressed;

And his own work, as in creation, blessed.
The tempter saw him too with envious eye,
And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.
He took the time when Richard was deposed,
And high and low with happy Harry closed.
This prince, though great in arms, the priest withstood:
Near though he was, but not the next of blood.
Had Richard unconstrained, resigned the throne,
A king can give no more than is his own;
The title stood entailed, had Richard had a son.
Conquest, an odious game, was laid aside,
Where all submitted, none the battle tried.
The senseless plea of right by Providence
Was, by a flattering priest, invented since;
And lasts no longer than the present sway,
But justifies the next who comes in play.
The people's right remains; let those who dare
Dispute their power, when they the judges are.
He joined not in their choice, because he knew
Worse might, and often did from change ensue.
Much to himself he thought; but little spoke;
And, undeprived, his benefice forsook.
Now, through the land, his cure of souls he stretched,
And like a primitive apostle preached.
Still cheerful; ever constant to his call;
By many followed; loved by most, admired by all.
With what he begged, his brethren he relieved;
And gave the charities himself received;
Gave, while he taught; and edified the more,
Because he showed, by proof, 'twas easy to be poor.
He went not, with the crowd, to see a shrine;
But fed us, by the way, with food divine.
In deference to his virtues, I forbear
To show you what the rest in orders were:
This brilliant is so spotless, and so bright,
He needs no foil, but shines by his own proper light.

John Dryden

The Cock And The Fox: Or, The Tale Of The Nun's Priest

There lived, as authors tell, in days of yore,
A widow, somewhat old, and very poor;
Deep in a dale her cottage lonely stood,
Well thatched, and under covert of a wood.
This dowager, on whom my tale I found,
Since last she laid her husband in the ground,
A simple sober life, in patience led,
And had but just enough to buy her bread;
But huswifing the little Heaven had lent,
She duly paid a groat for quarter rent;
And pinched her belly, with her daughters two,
To bring the year about with much ado.
The cattle in her homestead were three sows,
An ewe called Mally, and three brinded cows.
Her parlour window stuck with herbs around,
Of savoury smell; and rushes strewed the ground.
A maple-dresser in her hall she had,
On which full many a slender meal she made,
For no delicious morsel passed her throat;
According to her cloth she cut her coat;
No poignant sauce she knew, nor costly treat,
Her hunger gave a relish to her meat.
A sparing diet did her health assure;
Or sick, a pepper posset was her cure.
Before the day was done, her work she sped,
And never went by candle light to bed.
With exercise she sweat ill humours out;
Her dancing was not hindered by the gout.
Her poverty was glad, her heart content,
Nor knew she what the spleen or vapours meant.
Of wine she never tasted through the year,
But white and black was all her homely cheer;
Brown bread and milk,(but first she skimmed her bowls)
And rashers of singed bacon on the coals.
On holy days an egg, or two at most;
But her ambition never reached to roast.
A yard she had with pales enclosed about,
Some high, some low, and a dry ditch without.
Within this homestead lived, without a peer,
For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer;
So hight her cock, whose singing did surpass
The merry notes of organs at the mass.
More certain was the crowing of the cock
To number hours, than is an abbey-clock;
And sooner than the matin-bell was rung,
He clapped his wings upon his roost, and sung:
For when degrees fifteen ascended right,
By sure instinct he knew ’twas one at night.
High was his comb, and coral-red withal,
In dents embattled like a castle wall;
His bill was raven-black, and shone like jet;
Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet;

White were his nails, like silver to behold,
His body glittering like the burnished gold
This gentle cock, for solace of his life,
Six misses had, besides his lawful wife;
Scandal, that spares no king, though ne'er so good,
Says, they were all of his own flesh and blood,
His sisters both by sire and mother's side;
And sure their likeness showed them near allied.
But make the worst, the monarch did no more,
Than all the Ptolemys had done before:
When incest is for interest of a nation,
'Tis made no sin by holy dispensation.
Some lines have been maintained by this alone,
Which by their common ugliness are known.
But passing this as from our tale apart,
Dame Partlet was the sovereign of his heart:
Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,
He feathered her a hundred times a day;
And she, that was not only passing fair,
But was withal discreet, and debonair,
Resolved the passive doctrine to fulfil,
Though loath, and let him work his wicked will:
At board and bed was affable and kind,
According as their marriage-vow did bind,
And as the Church's precept had enjoined.
Even since she was a se'nnight old, they say,
Was chaste and humble to her dying day,
Nor chick nor hen was known to disobey.
By this her husband's heart she did obtain;
What cannot beauty, joined with virtue, gain!
She was his only joy, and he her pride,
She, when he walked, went pecking by his side;
If, spurning up the ground, he sprung a corn,
The tribute in his bill to her was borne.
But oh! what joy it was to hear him sing
In summer, when the day began to spring,
Stretching his neck, and warbling in his throat,
Solus cum sola, then was all his note.
For in the days of yore, the birds of parts
Were bred to speak, and sing, and learn the liberal arts.
It happed that perching on the parlour-beam
Amidst his wives, he had a deadly dream,
Just at the dawn; and sighed and groaned so fast,
As every breath he drew would be his last.
Dame Partlet, ever nearest to his side,
Heard all his piteous moan, and how he cried
For help from gods and men; and sore aghast
She pecked and pulled, and wakened him at last.
'Dear heart,' said she, 'for love of Heaven declare
Your pain, and make me partner in your care.
You groan, sir, ever since the morning light,
As something had disturbed your noble sprite.'

‘And, madam, well I might,’ said Chanticleer,
Never was shrovetide-cock in such a fear.
Even still I run all over in a sweat,
My princely senses not recovered yet.
For such a dream I had of dire portent,
That much I fear my body will be shent;
It bodes I shall have wars and woeful strife,
Or in a loathsome dungeon end my life.
Know, dame, I dreamt within my troubled breast,
That in our yard I saw a murderous beast,
That on my body would have made arrest.
With waking eyes I ne’er beheld his fellow;
His colour was betwixt a red and yellow:
Tipped was his tail, and both his pricking ears
Were black; and much unlike his other hairs:
The rest, in shape a beagle’s whelp throughout,
With broader forehead, and a sharper snout.
Deep in his front were sunk his glowing eyes,
That yet, methinks, I see him with surprise.
Reach out your hand, I drop with clammy sweat,
And lay it to my heart, and feel it beat.’
‘Now fie for shame,’ quoth she, ‘by Heaven above,
Thou hast for ever lost thy lady’s love.
No woman can endure a recreant knight;
He must be bold by day, and free by night:
Our sex desires a husband or a friend,
Who can our honour and his own defend;
Wise, hardy, secret, liberal of his purse;
A fool is nauseous, but a coward worse:
No bragging coxcomb, yet no baffled knight.
How darest thou talk of love, and darest not fight?
How darest thou tell thy dame thou art affeared;
Hast thou no manly heart, and hast a beard?
‘If aught from fearful dreams may be divined,
They signify a cock of dunghill kind.
All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
Are from repletion and complexion bred;
From rising fumes of indigested food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood:
And sure, my lord, if I can read aright,
These foolish fancies, you have had to-night,
Are certain symptoms (in the canting style)
Of boiling choler, and abounding bile;
This yellow gall that in your stomach floats,
Engenders all these visionary thoughts.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beasts, in sleep we view,
For humours are distinguished by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double wings.
‘Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,

Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound;
With rheums oppressed, we sink in rivers drowned.
'More I could say, but thus conclude my theme,
The dominating humour makes the dream.
Cato was in his time accounted wise,
And he condemns them all for empty lies.
Take my advice, and when we fly to ground,
With laxatives preserve your body sound,
And purge the peccant humours that abound.
I should be loath to lay you on a bier;
And though there lives no 'pothecary near,
I dare for once prescribe for your disease,
And save long bills, and a damned doctor's fees.
'Two sovereign herbs, which I by practice know,
And both at hand, (for in our yard they grow,)
On peril of my soul shall rid you wholly
Of yellow choler, and of melancholy:
You must both purge and vomit; but obey,
And for the love of Heaven make no delay.
Since hot and dry in your complexion join,
Beware the sun when in a vernal sign;
For when he mounts exalted in the Ram,
If then he finds your body in a flame,
Replete with choler, I dare lay a groat,
A tertian ague is at least your lot.
Perhaps a fever (which the gods forfend)
May bring your youth to some untimely end:
And therefore, sir, as you desire to live,
A day or two before your laxative,
Take just three worms, nor under nor above,
Because the gods unequal numbers love,
These digestives prepare you for your purge;
Of fumetery, centaury, and spurge,
And of ground-ivy add a leaf, or two,
All which within our yard or garden grow.
Eat these, and be, my lord, of better cheer;
Your father's son was never born to fear.'
'Madam,' quoth he, 'gramercy for your care,
But Cato, whom you quoted, you may spare;
'Tis true, a wise and worthy man he seems,
And (as you say) gave no belief to dreams;
But other men of more authority,
And, by the immortal powers, as wise as he,
Maintain, with sounder sense, that dreams forbode;
For Homer plainly says they come from God.
Nor Cato said it; but some modern fool
Imposed in Cato's name on boys at school.
'Believe me, madam, morning dreams foreshow
The events of things, and future weal or woe:
Some truths are not by reason to be tried,
But we have sure experience for our guide.

An ancient author, equal with the best,
Relates this tale of dreams among the rest.
'Two friends or brothers, with devout intent,
On some far pilgrimage together went.
It happened so, that, when the sun was down,
They just arrived by twilight at a town;
That day had been the baiting of a bull,
'Twas at a feast, and every inn so full,
That at void room in chamber, or on ground,
And but one sorry bed was to be found;
And that so little it would hold but one,
Though till this hour they never lay alone.
'So were they forced to part; one stayed behind,
His fellow sought what lodging he could find;
At last he found a stall where oxen stood,
And that he rather choose than lie abroad.
'Twas in a farther yard without a door;
But, for his ease, well littered was the floor.
'His fellow, who the narrow bed had kept,
Was weary, and without a rocker slept:
Supine he snored; but in the dead of night,
He dreamt his friend appeared before his sight,
Who, with a ghastly look and doleful cry,
Said, 'Help me, brother, or this night I die:
Arise, and help, before all help be vain,
Or in an ox's stall I shall be slain.'
'Roused from his rest, he wakened in a start,
Shivering with horror, and with aching heart;
At length to cure himself by reason tries;
'Tis but a dream, and what are dreams but lies?
So thinking changed his side, and closed his eyes.
His dream returns; his friend appears again:
'The murderers come, now help, or I am slain:'
'Twas but a vision still, and visions are but vain.
'He dreamt the third: but now his friend appeared
Pale, naked, pierced with wounds, with blood besmeared:
'Thrice warned, awake,' said he; 'relief is late,
The deed is done; but thou revenge my fate:
Tardy of aid, unseal thy heavy eyes,
Awake, and with the dawning day arise:
Take to the western gate thy ready way,
For by that passage they my corpse convey
My corpse is in a tumbril laid, among
The filth, and ordure, and inclosed with dung.
That cart arrest, and raise a common cry;
For sacred hunger of my gold, I die:'
Then showed his grisly wounds; and last he drew
A piteous sigh; and took a long adieu.
'The frighted friend arose by break of day,
And found the stall where late his fellow lay.
Then of his impious host inquiring more,
Was answered that his guest was gone before:

‘Muttering he went,’ said he, ‘by morning light,
And much complained of his ill rest by night.’
This raised suspicion in the pilgrim’s mind;
Because all hosts are of an evil kind,
And oft to share the spoil with robbers joined.
‘His dream confirmed his thought: with troubled look
Straight to the western gate his way he took;
There, as his dream foretold, a cart he found,
That carried composs forth to dung the ground.
This when the pilgrim saw, he stretched his throat,
And cried out ‘Murder’ with a yelling note.
‘My murdered fellow in this cart lies dead;
Vengeance and justice on the villain’s head!
You, magistrates, who sacred laws dispense,
On you I call to punish this offence.’
‘The word thus given, within a little space,
The mob came roaring out, and thronged the place.
All in a trice they cast the cart to ground,
And in the dung the murdered body found;
Though breathless, warm, and reeking from the wound.
Good Heaven, whose darling attribute we find,
Is boundless grace, and mercy to mankind,
Abhors the cruel; and the deeds of night
By wondrous ways reveals in open light:
Murder may pass unpunished for a time,
But tardy justice will o’ertake the crime.
And oft a speedier pain the guilty feels,
The hue and cry of Heaven pursues him at the heels,
Fresh from the fact; as in the present case,
The criminals are seized upon the place:
Carter and host confronted face to face.
Stiff in denial, as the law appoints,
On engines they distend their tortured joints:
So was confession forced, the offence was known.
And public justice on the offenders done.
‘Here may you see that visions are to dread;
And in the page that follows this, I read
Of two young merchants, whom the hope of gain
Induced in partnership to cross the main;
Waiting till willing winds their sails supplied,
Within a trading town they long abide,
Full fairly situate on a haven’s side.
‘One evening it befel, that looking out,
The wind they long had wished was come about;
Well pleased they went to rest; and if the gale
Till morn continued, both resolved to sail.
But as together in a bed they lay,
The younger had a dream at break of day.
A man, he thought, stood frowning at his side,
Who warned him for his safety to provide,
Nor put to sea, but safe on shore abide.
‘I come, thy genius, to command thy stay;

Trust not the winds, for fatal is the day,
And death unhoped attends the watery way.'
'The vision said: and vanished from his sight;
The dreamer wakened in a mortal fright;
Then pulled his drowsy neighbour, and declared
What in his slumber he had seen and heard.
His friend smiled scornful, and, with proud contempt,
Rejects as idle what his fellow dreamt.
'Stay, who will stay; for me no fears restrain,
Who follow Mercury, the god of gain;
Let each man do as to his fancy seems,
I wait not, I, till you have better dreams.
Dreams are but interludes, which fancy makes;
When monarch reason sleeps, this mimic wakes;
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A mob of cobblers, and a court of kings:
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad;
Both are the reasonable soul run mad;
And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes, forgotten things long cast behind
Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.
The nurse's legends are for truths received,
And the man dreams but what the boy believed.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
The night restores our actions done by day,
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.
In short the farce of dreams is of a piece,
Chimeras all; and more absurd, or less.
You, who believe in tales, abide' alone;
Whate'er I get this voyage is my own.'
'Thus while he spoke, he heard the shouting crew
That called aboard, and took his last adieu.
The vessel went before a merry gale,
And for quick passage put on every sail:
But when least feared, and even in open day,
The mischief overtook her in the way:
Whether she sprung a leak, I cannot find,
Or whether she was overset with wind,
Or that some rock below her bottom rent;
But down at once with all her crew she went.
Her fellow-ships from far her loss descried;
But only she was sunk, and all were safe beside.
'By this example you are taught again,
That dreams and visions are not always vain:
But if, dear Partlet, you are still in doubt,
Another tale shall make the former out.
'Kenelm, the son of Kenulph, Mercia's king,
Whose holy life the legends loudly sing,
Warned in a dream, his murder did foretel
From point to point as after it befel;
All circumstances to his nurse he told,

(A wonder from a child of seven years old);
The dream with horror heard, the good old wife
From treason counselled him to guard his life;
But close to keep the secret in his mind,
For a boy's vision small belief would find.
The pious child, by promise bound, obeyed,
Nor was the fatal murder long delayed:
By Quenda slain, he fell before his time,
Made a young martyr by his sister's crime.
The tale is told by venerable Bede,
Which, at your better leisure, you may read.
'Macrobius too relates the vision sent
To the great Scipio, with the famed, event;
Objections makes, but after makes replies,
And adds, that dreams are often prophesies.
'Of Daniel you may read in holy writ,
Who, when the king his vision did forget,
Could word for word the wondrous dream repeat.
Nor less of patriarch Joseph understand,
Who by a dream, enslaved, the Egyptian land,
The years of plenty and of dearth foretold,
When, for their bread, their liberty they sold.
Nor must the exalted butler be forgot,
Nor he whose dream presaged his hanging lot.
'And did not Crœsus the same death foresee,
Raised in his vision on a lofty tree?
The wife of Hector, in his utmost pride,
Dreamt of his death the night before he died;
Well was he warned from battle to refrain,
But men to death decreed are warned in vain;
He dared the dream, and by his fatal foe was slain.
'Much more I know, which I forbear to speak,
For see the ruddy day begins to break:
Let this suffice, that plainly I foresee
My dream was bad, and bodes adversity,
But neither pills nor laxatives I like,
They only serve to make the well-man sick:
Of these his gain the sharp physician makes,
And often gives a purge, but seldom takes;
They not correct, but poison all the blood,
And ne'er did any but the doctors good.
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all,
With every work of 'pothecary's hall.
'These melancholy matters I forbear;
But let me tell thee, Partlet mine, and swear,
That when I view the beauties of thy face,
I fear not death, nor dangers, nor disgrace;
So may my soul have bliss, as when I spy
The scarlet red about thy partridge eye,
While thou art constant to thy own true knight,
While thou art mine, and I am thy delight,
All sorrows at thy presence take their flight.

For true it is, as in principio,
Mulier est hominis confusio.
Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,
That woman is to man his sovereign bliss.
For when by night I feel your tender side,
Though for the narrow perch I cannot ride,
Yet I have such a solace in my mind,
That all my boding cares are cast behind,
And even already I forget my dream.'
He said, and downward flew from off the beam.
For daylight now began apace to spring,
The thrush to whistle, and the lark to sing.
Then crowing clapped his wings, the appointed call,
To chuck his wives together in the hall.
By this the widow had unbarred the door,
And Chanticleer went strutting out before,
With royal courage, and with heart so light,
As showed he scorned the visions of the night.
Now roaming in the yard, he spurned the ground,
And gave to Partlet the first grain found.
Then often feathered her with wanton play,
And trod her twenty times ere prime of day;
And took by turns and gave so much delight,
Her sisters pined with envy at the sight.
He chucked again, when other corns he found,
And scarcely deigned to set a foot to ground,
But swaggered like a lord about his hall,
And his seven wives came running at his call.
'Twas now the month in which the world began,
(If March beheld the first created man
And since the vernal equinox, the sun,
In Aries twelve degrees, or more had run;
When casting up his eyes against the light,
Both month, and day, and hour, he measured right,
And told more truly than the Ephemeris:
For art may err, but nature cannot miss.
Thus numbering times and seasons in his breast,
His second crowing the third hour confessed.
Then turning, said to Partlet,—'See, my dear,
How lavish nature has adorned the year;
How the pale primrose and blue violet spring,
And birds essay their throats diffused to sing:
All these are ours; and I with pleasure see
Man strutting on two legs, and aping me:
An unfledged creature of a lumpish frame,
Endowed with fewer particles of flame:
Our dame sits cowering o'er a kitchen fire,
I draw fresh air, and nature's works admire;
And even this day in more delight abound,
Than, since I was an egg, I ever found.'—
The time shall come when Chanticleer shall wish
His words unsaid, and hate his boasted bliss;

The crested bird shall by experience knew,
Jove made not him his masterpiece below;
And learn the latter end of joy is woe.
The vessel of his bliss to dregs is run,
And Heaven will have him taste his other tun.
Ye wise, draw near, and hearken to my tale,
Which proves that oft the proud by flattery fall;
The legend is as true I undertake
As Tristran is, and Lancelot of the Lake:
Which all our ladies in such reverence hold,
As if in Book of Martyrs it were told.
A Fox full fraught with seeming sanctity,
That feared an oath, but, like the devil, would lie;
Who looked like Lent, and had the holy leer,
And durst not sin before he said his prayer;
This pious cheat, that never sucked the blood,
Nor chewed the flesh of lambs, but when he could;
Had passed three summers in the neighbouring wood:
And musing long, whom next to cirumvent,
On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent;
And in his high imagination cast,
By stratagem to gratify his taste.
The plot contrived, before the break of day,
Saint Reynard through the hedge had made his way;
The pale was next, but, proudly, with a bound
He leapt the fence of the forbidden ground:
Yet fearing to be seen, within a bed
Of coleworts he concealed his wily head;
Then skulked till afternoon, and watched his time,
(As murderers use) to perpetrate his crime.
O hypocrite, ingenious to destroy!
O traitor, worse than Simon was to Troy!
O vile subverter of the Gallic reign,
More false than Gano was to Charlemagne!
O Chanticleer, in an unhappy hour
Didst thou forsake the safety of thy bower;
Better for thee thou hadst believed thy dream,
And not that day descended from the beam!
But here the doctors eagerly dispute;
Some hold predestination absolute;
Some clerks maintain, that Heaven at first foresees,
And in the virtue of foresight decrees.
If this be so, then prescience binds the will,
And mortals are not free to good or ill;
For what he first foresaw, he must ordain,
Or its enternal prescience may be vain;
As bad for us as prescience had not been;
For first, or last, he’s author of the sin.
And who says that, let the blaspheming man
Say worse even of the devil, if he can.
For how can that Eternal Power be just
To punish man, who sins because he must?

Or, how can He reward a virtuous deed,
Which is not done by us, but first decreed?
I cannot bolt this matter to the bran,
As Bradwardin and holy Austin can:
If prescience can determine actions so,
That we must do, because he did foreknow,
Or that foreknowing, yet our choice is free,
Not forced to sin by strict necessity;
This strict necessity they simple call,
Another sort there is conditional.
The first so binds the will, that things foreknown
By spontaneity, not choice, are done.
Thus galley-slaves tug willing at their oar,
Content to work, in prospect of the shore;
But would not work at all, if not constrained before.
That other does not liberty constrain,
But man may either act, or my refrain.
Heaven made us agents free to good or ill,
And forced it not, though he foresaw the will.
Freedom was first bestowed on human race,
And prescience only held the second place.
If he could make such agents wholly free,
I not dispute; the point's too high for me:
For Heaven's unfathomed power what man can sound,
Or pout to his omnipotence a bound?
He made us to his image, all agree;
That image is the soul, and that must be,
Or not the Maker's image, or be free.
But whether it were better man had been
By nature bound to good, not free to sin,
I waive, for fear of splitting on a rock.
The tale I tell is only of a cock;
Who had not run the hazard of his life,
Had he believed his dream, and not his wife:
For women, which a mischief to their kind,
Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.
A woman's counsel brought us first to woe,
And made her man his paradise forego,
Where at heart's ease he lived; and might have been
As free from sorrow as he was from sin.
For what the devil had their sex to do,
That, born to folly, they presumed to know;
And could not see the serpent in the grass?
But I myself presume, and let it pass.
Silence in times of suffering is the best,
'Tis dangerous to disturb a hornets' nest.
In other authors you may find enough,
But all they way of dames is idle stuff.
Legends of lying wits together bound,
The wife of Bath would throw them to the ground;
These are the words of Chanticleer, not mine,
I honour dames, and think their sex divine.

Now to continue what my tale begun;
Lay madam Partlet basking in the sun,
Breast high in sand; her sisters, in a row,
Enjoyed the beams above, the warmth below.
The cock, that of his flesh was ever free,
Sung merrier than the mermaid in the sea;
And so befel, that as he cast his eye
Among the coleworts, on a butterfly,
He saw false Reynard where he lay full low;
I need not swear he had no list to crow;
But cried, cock, cock, and gave a sudden start,
As sore dismayed and frighted at his heart.
For birds and beasts, informed by nature know
Kinds opposite to theirs, and fly their foe.
So Chanticleer, who never was a fox,
Yet shunned him as a sailor shuns the rocks.
But the false loon, who could not work his will
By open force, employed his flattering skill:
'I hope, my lord,' said he, 'I not offend;
Are you afraid of me that am your friend?
I were a beast indeed to do you wrong,
I, who have loved and honoured you so long:
Stay, gentle sir, nor take a false alarm,
For, on my soul, I never meant you harm!
I come no spy, nor as a traitor press,
To learn the secrets of your soft recess:
Far be from Reynard so profane a thought,
But by the sweetness of your voice was brought:
For, as I bid my beads, by chance I heard
The song that would have charmed the infernal gods,
And banished horror from the dark abodes:
Had Orpheus sung it in the nether sphere,
So much the hymn had pleased the tyrant's ear,
The wife had been detained, to keep the husband there.
'My lord, your sire familiarly I knew,
A peer deserving such a son as you:
He, with your lady-mother, (whom Heaven rest)
Has often graced my house, and been my guest:
To view his living features does me good,
For I am your poor neighbour in the wood;
And in my cottage should be proud to see
The worthy heir of my friend's family.
'But since I speak of signing let me say,
As with un upright heart I safely may,
That, save yourself, there breathes not on the ground
One like your father for a silver-sound.
So sweetly would he wake the winter-day,
That matrons to the church mistook their way,
And thought they heard the merry organ play.
And he to raise his voice with artful care,
(What will not beaux attempt to please the fair?)
On tiptoe stood do sing with greater strength,

And stretched his comely neck at all the length;
And while he strained his voice to pierce the skies,
As saints in raptures, use, would shut his eyes,
That the sound striving through the narrow throat,
His winking might avail to mend the note.
By this, in song, he never had his peer,
From sweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer;
Not Maro's muse, who sung the mighty man,
Nor Pindar's heavenly lyre, nor Horace when a swan.
Your ancestors proceed from race divine:
From Brennus and Belinus is your line;
Who gave to sovereign Rome such loud alarms,
That even the priests were not excused from arms,
'Besides, a famous monk of modern times
Has left of cocks recorded in his rhymes,
That of a parish priest the son and heir,
(When sons of priests were from the proverb clear,)
Affronted once a cock of noble kind,
And either lamed his legs, or strucks him blind;
For which the clerk his father was disgraced,
And in his benefice another placed.
Now sing, my lord, if not for love of me,
Yet for the sake of sweet Saint Charity;
Make hills and dales, and earth and heaven, rejoice,
And emulate your father's angel-voice.'
The cock was pleased to hear him speak so fair,
And proud beside, as solar people are;
Nor could the treason from the truth descry,
So was he ravished with this flattery:
So much the more, as from a little elf,
He had a high opinion of himself;
Though sickly, slender, and not large of limb,
Concluding all the world was made for him.
Ye princes, raised by poets to the gods,
And Alexandered up in lying odes,
Believe not every flattering knave's report,
There's many a Reynard lurking in the court;
And he shall be received with more regard,
And listened to, than modest truth is heard.
This Chanticleer, of whom the story sings,
Stood high upon his toes, and clapped his wings;
Then stretched his neck, and winked with both his eyes,
Ambitious, as he sought the Olympic prize.
But while he pained himself to raise his note,
False Reynard rushed, and caught him by the throat.
Then on his back he laid the precious load,
And sought his wonted shelter of the wood;
Swiftly he made his way, the mischief done,
Of all unheeded, and pursued by none.
Alas! what stay is there in human state,
Or who can shun inevitable fate?
The doom was written, the decree was past,

Ere the foundations of the world were cast!
In Aries though the sun exalted stood,
His patron-planet to procure his good;
Yet Saturn was his mortal foe, and he,
In Libra raised, opposed the same degree:
The rays both good and bad, of equal power,
Each thwarting other, made a mingled hour.
On Friday-morn he dreamt this direful dream,
Cross to the worthy native, in his scheme.
Ah blissful Venus! Goddess of delight!
How couldst thou suffer thy devoted knight,
On thy own day, to fall by foe oppressed,
The wight of all the world who served thee best?
Who true to love, was all for recreation,
And minded not the work of propagation.
Ganfride, who couldst so well in rhyme complain
The death of Richard with an arrow slain,
Why had not I thy muse, or thou my heart,
To sing this heavy dirge with equal art!
That I like thee on Friday might complain;
For on that day was Coeur de Lion slain.
Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,
Were sent to Heaven by woeful Trojan dames,
When Pyrrhus tossed on high his burnished blade,
And offered Priam to his father's shade,
Than for the cock the widowed poultry made.
Fair Partlet first, when he was borne from sight,
With sovereign shrieks bewailed her captive knight:
Far louder than the Carthaginian wife,
When Asdrubal her husband lost his life,
When she beheld the smould'ring flames ascend,
And all the Punic glories at an end:
Willing into the fires she plunged her head,
With greater ease than others seek their bed.
Not more aghast the matrons of renown,
When tyrant Nero burned the imperial town,
Shrieked for the downfal in a doleful cry,
For which their guiltless lords were doomed to die.
Now to my story I return again:
The trembling widow, and her daughters twain,
This woeful cackling cry with horror heard,
Of those distracted damsels in the yard;
And starting up, beheld the heavy sight,
How Reynard to the forest took his flight,
And cross his back, as in triumphant scorn,
The hope and pillar of the house was borne.
'The fox, the wicked fox,' was all the cry;
Out from his house ran every neighbour nigh:
The vicar first, and after him the crew,
With forks and staves the felon to pursue.
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,
And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand:

Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,
In panic horror of pursuing dogs;
With many a deadly grunt and doleful squeak,
Poor swine, as if their pretty hearts would break.
The shouts of men, the women in dismay,
With shrieks augment the terror of the day.
The ducks, that heard the proclamation cried,
And feared a persecution might betide,
Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,
Obscure in rushes of the liquid lake.
The geese fly o'er the barn; the bees in arms,
Drive headlong from their waxen cells in swarms.
Jack Straw at London-stone, with all his rout,
Struck not the city with so loud a shout;
Not when with English hate they did pursue
A Frenchman, or an unbelieving Jew;
Not when the welkin rung with 'one and all;'
And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall;
Earth seemed to sink beneath, and heaven above to fall.
With might and main they chased the murderous fox,
With brazen trumpets, and inflated box,
To kindle Mars with military sounds,
Nor wanted horns to inspire sagacious hounds.
But see how Fortune can confound the wise,
And when they least expect it, turn the dice.
The captive-cock, who scarce could draw his breath,
And lay within the very jaws of death;
Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,
And fear supplied him with this happy thought:
'Yours is the prize, victorious prince,' said he,
'The vicar my defeat, and all the village see.
Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,
And bid the churls that envy you the prey
Call back the mongrel curs, and cease their cry:
See, fools, the shelter of the wood is nigh,
And Chanticleer in your despite shall die;
He shall be plucked and eaten to the bone.'
'Tis well advised, in faith it shall be done;'
This Reynard said: but as the word he spoke,
The prisoner with a spring from prison broke;
Then stretched his feathered fans with all his might,
And to the neighbouring maple winged his flight.
Whom, when the traitor safe on tree beheld,
He cursed the gods, with shame and sorrow filled;
Shame for his folly; sorrow out of time,
For plotting an unprofitable crime:
Yet, mastering both, the artificer of lies
Renews the assault, and his last battery tries.
'Though I,' said he, 'did ne'er in thought offend,
How justly may my lord suspect his friend!
The appearance is against me, I confess,
Who seemingly have put you in distress;

You, if your goodness does not plead my cause,
May think I broke all hospitable laws,
To bear you from your palace-yard by might,
And put your noble person in a fright;
This, since you take it ill, I must repent,
Though Heaven can witness with no bad intent
I practised it, to make you taste your cheer
With double pleasure, first prepared by fear.
So loyal subjects often seize their prince,
Forced (for his good) to seeming violence,
Yet mean his sacred person not the least offence.
Descend; so help me Jove, as you shall find,
That Reynard comes of no dissembling kind.'
'Nay,' quoth the cock; 'but I beshrew us both,
If I believe a saint upon his oath:
An honest man may take a knave's advice,
But idiots only may be cozened twice:
Once warned is well bewared; not flattering lies
Shall soothe me more to sing with winking eyes,
And open mouth, for fear of catching flies.
Who blindfold walks upon a river's brim,
When he should see, has he deserved to swim!'
'Better, sir Cock, let all contention cease,
Come down,' said Reynard, 'let us treat of peace.'
'A peace with all my soul,' said Chanticleer,
'But, with your favour, I will treat it here:
And lest the truce with treason should be mixed,
'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.'

The Moral
In this plain fable you the effect may see
Of negligence, and fond credulity:
And learn besides of flatterers to beware,
Then most pernicious when they speak too fair.
The cock and fox, the fool and knave imply;
The truth is moral, though the tale a lie.
Who spoke in parables, I dare not say;
But sure he knew it was a pleasing way,
Sound sense, by plain example, to convey.
And in a heathen author we may find,
That pleasure with instruction should be joined;
So take the corn, and leave the chaff behind.

John Dryden

The Fair Stranger. A Song

Happy and free, securely blest,
No beauty could disturb my rest;
My amorous heart was in despair
To find a new victorious fair:
Till you, descending on our plains,
With foreign force renew my chains;
Where now you rule without control,
The mighty sovereign of my soul.
Your smiles have more of conquering charms,
Than all your native country's arms;
Their troops we can expel with ease,
Who vanquish only when we please.
But in your eyes, O! there's the spell!
Who can see them, and not rebel?
You make us captives by your stay;
Yet kill us if you go away.

John Dryden

The Flower And The Leaf, Or the Lady In The Arbour. A Vision

Now turning from the wintry signs, the sun
His course exalted through the Ram had run,
And whirling up the skies, his chariot drove
Through Taurus, and the lightsome realms of love;
Where Venus from her orb descends in showers,
To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flowers:
When first the tender blades of grass appear,
And buds, that yet the blast of Eurus fear,
Stand at the door of life, and doubt to clothe the year;
Till gentle heat, and soft repeated rains,
Make the green blood to dance within their veins;
Then, at their call emboldened, out they come,
And swell the gems, and burst the narrow room;
Broader and broader yet, their blooms display,
Salute the welcome sun, and entertain the day.
Then from their breathing souls the sweets repair
To scent the skies, and purge the unwholesome air:
Joy spreads the heart, and, with a general song,
Spring issues out, and leads the jolly months along.
In that sweet season, as in bed I lay,
And sought in sleep to pass the night away,
I turned my weary side, but still in vain,
Though full of youthful health, and void of pain:
Cares I had none, to keep me from my rest,
For love had never entered in my breast;
I wanted nothing Fortune could supply,
Nor did she slumber till that hour deny.
I wondered then, but after found it true,
Much joy had dried away the balmy dew:
Seas would be pools, without the brushing air
To curl the waves; and sure some little care
Should weary nature so, to make her want repair.
When Chanticleer the second watch had sung,
Scorning the scorner sleep, from bed I sprung;
And dressing, by the moon, in loose array,
Passed out in open air, preventing day,
And sought a goodly grove, as fancy led my way.
Straight as a line in beauteous order stood
Of oaks unshorn a venerable wood;
Fresh was the grass beneath, and every tree,
At distance planted in a due degree,
Their branching arms in air with equal space
Stretched to their neighbours with a long embrace;
And the new leaves on every bough were seen,
Some ruddy coloured, some of lighter green.
The painted birds, companions of the spring,
Hopping from spray to spray, were heard to sing.
Both eyes and ears received a like delight,
Enchanting music, and a charming sight.
On Philomel I fixed my whole desire,
And listened for the queen of all the quire;
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to sing;

And wanted yet an omen to the spring.
Attending long in vain, I took the way,
Which through a path, but scarcely printed, lay;
In narrow mazes oft it seemed to meet,
And looked, as lightly pressed by fairy feet.
Wandering I walked alone, for still methought
To some strange end so strange a path was wrought:
At last it led we where an arbour stood,
The sacred receptacle of the wood:
This place unmarked, though oft I walked the green,
In all my progress I had never seen;
And seized at once with wonder and delight,
Gazed all around me, new to the transporting sight.
'Twas thick benched with turf, and, goodly to be seen,
The thick young grass arose in fresher green,
The mound was newly made, no sight could pass
Betwixt the nice partitions of the grass,
The well-united sods so closely lay;
And all around the shades defended it from day;
For sycamores with eglantine were spread,
A hedge about the sides, a covering overhead.
And so the fragrant briar was wove between,
The sycamore and flowers were mixed with green,
That nature seemed to very the delight,
And satisfied at once the smell and sight.
The master-workman of the bower was known
Through fairy-lands, and built for Oberon;
Who twining leaves with such proportion drew,
They rose by measure, and by rule they grew;
No mortal tongue can half the beauty tell,
For none but hands divine could work so well.
Both roof and sides were like a parlour made,
A soft recess, and a cool summer shade;
The hedge was set to thick, no foreign eye
The persons placed within it could espy;
But all that passed without with ease was seen,
As if nor fence nor tree was placed between.
'Twas bordered with a field; and some was plain
With grass, and some was sowed with rising grain.
That (now the dew with spangles decked the ground),
A sweeter spot of earth was never found.
I looked and looked, and still with new delight;
Such joy my soul, such pleasures filled my sight:
And the fresh eglantine exhaled a breath,
Whose odours were or power to raise from death.
Nor sullen discontent, nor anxious care,
Even though brought thither, could inhabit there:
But thence they field as from their mortal foe;
For this sweet place could only pleasure know.
Thus as I mused, I cast aside my eye,
And saw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.
The spreading branches made a goodly show,

And full of opening blooms was every bough:
A goldfinch there I saw with gaudy pride
Of painted plumes, that hopped from side to side,
Still picking as she passed; and still she drew
The sweets from every flower, and sucked the dew:
Sufficed at length, she warbled in her throat,
And tuned her voice to many a merry note,
But indistinct, and neither sweet nor clear,
Yet such as soothed my soul, and pleased my ear.
Her short performance was no sooner tried,
When she I sought, the nightingale, replied:
So sweet, so shrill, so variously she sung,
That the grove echoed, and the valleys rung,
And I so ravished with her heavenly note,
I stood entranced, and had no room for thought,
But all o'erpowered with ecstasy of bliss,
Was in a pleasing dream or paradise;
At length I waked, and looking round the bower
Searched every tree, and pryed on every flower,
If anywhere by chance I might espy
The rural poet of the melody;
For still methought she sung nor far away:
At last I found her on a laurel spray.
Close by my side she sat, and fair in sight,
Full in a line, against her opposite,
Where stood with eglantine the laurel twined;
And both their native sweets were well conjoined.
On the green bank I sat, and listened long;
(Sitting was more convenient for the song):
Nor till her lay was convenient ended could I move,
But wished to dwell for ever in the grove.
Only methought the time too swiftly passed,
And every note I feared would be last.
My sight, and smell, and hearing, were employed,
And all three senses in full gust enjoyed.
And what alone did all the rest surpass,
The sweet possession of the fairy place;
Single, and conscious to myself alone
Of pleasures to the excluded world unknown;
Pleasures which nowhere else were to be found,
And all Elysium in a spot of ground.
Thus while I sat intent to see and hear,
And drew perfumes of more than vital air,
All suddenly I heard the approaching sound
Of vocal music on the enchanted ground;
An host of saints it seemed, so full the choir,
As if the blessed above did all conspire
To join their voices, and neglect the lyre.
At length there issued from the grove behind
A fair assembly of the female kind:1
A train less fair, as ancient fathers tell,
Seduced the sons of heaven to rebel.

I pass their form, and every charming grace;
Less than an angel would their worth debase:
But their attire, like liveries of a kind,
All rich and rare, is fresh within my mind.
In velvet, white as snow, the troop was gowned,
The seams with sparkling emeralds set around:
Their hoods and sleeves the same; and purfled o'er
With diamonds, pearls, and all the shining store
Of eastern pomp: their long descending train,
With rubies edged, and sapphires, swept the plain:
High on their heads, with jewels richly set,
Each lady wore a radiant coronet.
Beneath the circles, all the choir was graced
With chaplets green on their fair foreheads placed,
Of laurel some, of woodbine many more;
And wreaths of Agnus castus2 others bore;
These last, who with those virgin crowns were dressed,
Appeared in higher honour than the rest.
They danced around: but in the midst was seen
A lady of a more majestic mien;
By stature, and by beauty, marked their sovereign queen.
She in the midst began with sober grace;
Her servants' eyes were fixed upon her face,
And as she moved or turned, her motions viewed,
Her measures kept, and step by step pursued.
Methought she trod the ground with greater grace,
With more of godhead shining in her face;
And as in beauty she surpassed the quire,
So, nobler than the rest was her attire.
A crown of ruddy gold inclosed her brow,
Plain without pomp, and rich without a show:
A branch of Agnus castus in her hand
She bore aloft (her sceptre of command);
Admired, adored by all the circling crowd,
For wheresoe'er she turned her face, they bowed:
And as she danced, a roundelay she sung,
In honour of the laurel, ever young:
She raised her voice on high, and sung so clear,
The fawns came scudding from the groves to hear:
And all the bending forest lent an ear.
At every close she made, the attending throng
Replied, and bore the burden of the song:
So just, so small, yet in so sweet a note,
It seemed the music melted in the throat.
Thus dancing on, and signing as they danced,
They to the middle of the mead advanced,
Till round my arbour a new ring they made,
And footed it about the secret shade.
O'erjoyed to see the jolly troop so near,
But somewhat awed, I shook with holy fear;
Yet not so much, but that I noted well
Who did the most in song or dance excel.

Not long I had observed, when from afar
I heard a sudden symphony of war;
The neighing coursers, and the soldiers cry,
And sounding trumps that seemed to tear the sky.
I saw soon after this, behind the grove
From whence the ladies did in order move,
Come issuing out in arms a warrior train,
That like a deluge poured upon the plain:
On barbed steeds they rode in proud array,
Thick as the college of the bees in May,
When swarming o'er the dusky fields they fly,
New to the flowers, and intercept the sky.
So fierce they drove, their coursers were so fleet,
That the turf trembled underneath their feet.
To tell their costly furniture were long,
The summer's day would end before the song:
To purchase but the tenth of all their store,
Would make the mighty Persian monarch poor.
Yet what I can, I will; before the rest
The trumpets issued, in white mantles dressed;
A numerous troop, and all their heads around
With chaplets green of cerrial oak3 were crowned,
And at each trumpet was a banner bound;
Which waving in the wind displayed at large
Their master's coat of arms, and knightly charge.
Broad were the banners, and of snowy hue,
A purer web the silkworm never drew.
The chief about their necks the scutcheons wore,
With orient pearls and jewels powdered o'er:
Broad were their collars too, and every one
Was set about with many a costly stone.
Next these, of kings at arms a goodly train
In proud array came prancing o'er the plain:
Their cloaks were cloth of silver mixed with gold,
And garlands green around their temples rolled:
Rich crowns were on their royal scutcheons placed,
With sapphires, diamonds, and with rubies graced:
And as the trumpets their appearance made,
So these in habits were alike arrayed;
But with a pace more sober, and more slow,
And twenty, rank in rank, they rode a-row.
The pursuivants came next, in number more;
And like the heralds each his scutcheon bore:
Clad in white velvet all their troop they led,
With each an oaken chaplet on his head.
Nine royal knights in equal rank succeed,
Each warrior mounted on a fiery steed,
In golden armour glorious to behold;
The rivets of their arms were nailed with gold.
Their surcoats of white ermine fur were made,
With cloth of gold between, that cast a glittering shade;
The trappings of their steeds were of the same;

The golden fringe even set the ground on flame,
And drew a precious trail: a crown divine
Of laurel did about their temples twine.
Three henchmen were for every knight assigned,4
All in rich livery clad, and of a kind;
White velvet, but unshorn for cloaks they wore,
And each within his hand a truncheon bore:
The foremost held a helm of rare device;
A prince's ransom would not pay the price.
The second bore the buckler of his knight,
The third of cornel-wood5 a spear upright,
Headed with piercing steel, and polished bright.
Like to their lords their equipage was seen,
And all their foreheads crowned with garlands green.
And after these came, armed with spear and shield,
An host so great as covered all the field:
And all their foreheads, like the knights before,
With laurels ever-green were shaded o'er,
Or oak, or other leaves of lasting kind,
Tenacious of the stem, and firm against the wind.
Some in their hands, beside the lance and shield,
The boughs of woodbine or of hawthorn held,
Or branches for their mystic emblems took,
Of palm, of laurel, or of cerrial oak.
Thus marching to the trumpet's lofty sound,
Drawn in two lines adverse they wheeled around,
And in the middle meadow took their ground.
Among themselves the tourney they divide,
In equal squadrons ranged on either side.
Then turned their horses' heads, and man to man,
And steed to steed opposed, the jousts began.
They lightly set their lances in the rest,
And, at the sign, against each other pressed:
They met. I sitting at my ease beheld
The mixed events and fortunes of the field.
Some broke their spears, some tumbled horse and man,
And round the field the lightened coursers ran.
An hour and more, like tides in equal sway,
They rushed, and won by turns, and lost the day:
At length the nine (who still together held)
Their fainting foes to shameful flight compelled,
And with resistless force o'er-ran the field.
Thus, to their fame, when finished was the fight,
The victors from their lofty steeds alight:
Like them dismounted all the warlike train,
And two by two proceeded o'er the plain:
Till to the fair assembly they advanced,
Who near the secret arbour sung and danced.
The ladies left their measures at the sight,
To meet the chiefs returning from the fight,
And each with open arms embraced her chosen knight.
Amid the plain a spreading laurel stood,

The grace and ornament of all the wood:
That pleasing shade they sought, a soft retreat
From sudden April showers, a shelter from the heat:
Her leafy arms with such extent were spread,
So near the clouds was her aspiring head,
That hosts of birds, that wing the liquid air,
Perched in the boughs, had nightly lodging there:
And flocks of sheep beneath the shade from far
Might hear the rattling hail, and wintry war;
From heaven's inclemency here found retreat,
Enjoyed the cool, and shunned the scorching heat:
A hundred knights might there at ease abide;
And every knight a lady by his side:
The trunk itself such odours did bequeath,
That a Moluccan breeze to these was common breath.6
The lords and ladies here, approaching, paid
Their homage, with a low obeisance made,
And seemed to venerate the sacred shade.
These rites performed, their pleasures they pursue,
With song of love, and mix with measures new;
Around the holy tree their dance they frame,
And every champion leads his chosen dame.
I cast my sight upon the farther field,
And a fresh object of delight beheld:
For from the region of the west I heard
New music sound, and a new troop appeared
Of knights and ladies mixed, a jolly band,
But all on foot they marched, and hand in hand.
The ladies dressed in rich symars were seen
Of Florence satin, flowered with white and green,
And for a shade betwixt the bloomy gridelin.
The borders of their petticoats below
Were guarded thick with rubies on a row;
And every damsel wore upon her head
Of flowers a garland blended white and red.
Attired in mantles all the knights were seen,
That gratified the view with cheerful green;
Their chaplets of their ladies' colours were,
Composed of white and red, to shade their shining hair.
Before the merry troop the minstrels played;
All in their masters' liveries were arrayed,
And clad in green, and on their temples wore
The chaplets white and red their ladies bore.
Their instruments were various in their kind,
Some for the bow, and some for breathing wind:
The sawtry, pipe, and hautboy's noisy band,
And the soft lute trembling beneath the touching hand.
A tuft of daisies on a flowery lea
They saw, and thitherward they bent their way;
To this both knights and dames their homage made,
And due obeisance to the daisy paid.
And then the band of flutes began to play,

To which a lady sung a virelay:7
And still at every close she would repeat
The burden of the song, The daisy is so sweet.
The daisy is so sweet, when she begun,
The troop of knights and dames continued on.
The consort and the voice so charmed my ear,
And soothed my soul, that it was heaven to hear.
But soon their pleasure passed: at noon of day
The sun with sultry beams began to play:
Not Sirius shoots a fiercer flame from high,
When with his poisonous breath he blasts the sky:
Then drooped the fading flowers (their beauty fled)
And closed their sickly eyes, and hung the head,
And rivelled up with heat, lay dying in their bed.8
The ladies gasped, and scarcely could respire;
The breath they drew, no longer air but fire;
The fainty knights were scorched, and knew not where
To run for shelter, for no shade was near.
And after this the gathering clouds amain
Poured down a storm of rattling hail and rain;
And lightning flashed betwixt; the field and flowers,
Burnt up before, were buried in the showers.
The ladies and the knights, no shelter nigh,
Bare to the weather and the wintry sky,
Were dropping wet, disconsolate, and wan,
And through their thin array received the rain;
While those in white, protected by the tree,
Saw pass in vain the assault, and stood from danger free;
But as compassion moved their gentle minds,
When ceased the storm, and silent were the winds,
Displeased at what, not suffering, they had seen,
They went to cheer the faction of the green:
The queen in white array, before her band,
Saluting, took her rival by the hand;
So did the knights and dames, with courtly grace,
And with behaviour sweet their foes embrace.
Then thus the queen with laurel on her brow,—
'Fair sister, I have suffered in your woe;
Nor shall be wanting aught within my power
For your relief in my refreshing bower.'
That other answered with a lowly look,
And soon the gracious invitation took:
For ill at ease both she and all her train
The scorching sun had borne, and beating rain.
Like courtesy was used by all in white,
Each dame a dame received, and every knight a knight.
The laurel champions with their swords invade
The neighbouring forests, where the jousts were made,
And serewood from the rotten hedges took,
And seeds of latent fire from flints provoke:
A cheerful blaze arose, and by the fire
They warmed their frozen feet, and dried their wet attire.

Refreshed with heat, the ladies sought around
For virtuous herbs, which gathered from the ground
They squeezed the juice, and cooling ointment made,
Which on their sun-burnt cheeks, and their chapt skins, they laid;
Then sought green salads, which they bade them eat,
A sovereign remedy for inward heat.
The Lady of the Leaf ordained a feast,
And made the Lady of the Flower her guest:
When lo! a bower descended on the plain,
With sudden seats ordained, and large for either train.
This bower was near my pleasant arbour placed,
That I could hear and see whatever passed:
The ladies sat with each a knight between,
Distinguished by their colours white and green;
The vanquished party with the victors joined,
Nor wanted sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind.
Meantime the minstrels played on either side,
Vain of their art, and for the mastery vied:
The sweet contention lasted for an hour,
And reached my secret arbour from the bower.
The sun was set; and Vesper, to supply
His absent beams, had lighted up the sky;
When Philomel, officious all the day
To sing the service of the ensuing May,
Fled from her laurel shade, and winged her flight
Directly to the queen arrayed in white;
And hopping sat familiar on her hand,
A new musician, and increased the band.
The goldfinch, who, to shun the scalding heat,
Had changed the medlar for a safer seat,
And hid in bushes ’scaped the bitter shower,
Now perched upon the Lady of the Flower;
And either songster holding out their throats,
And folding up their wings, renewed their notes;
As if all day, preluding to the fight,
They only had rehearsed, to sing by night.
The banquet ended, and the battle done,
They danced by starlight and the friendly moon:
And when they were to part, the laureat queen
Supplied with steeds the lady of the green,
Her and her train conducting on the way,
The moon to follow, and avoid the day.
This when I saw, inquisitive to know
The secret moral of the mystic show,
I started from my shade, in hopes to find
Some nymph to satisfy my longing mind;
And as my fair adventure fell, I found
A lady all in white, with laurel crowned,
Who closed the rear, and softly paced along,
Repeating to herself the former song.
With due respect my body I inclined,
As to some being of superior kind,

And made my court according to the day,
Wishing her queen and her a happy May.
'Great thanks, my daughter,' with a gracious bow,
She said; and I, who much desired to know
Of whence she was, yet fearful how to break
My mind, adventured humbly thus to speak:—
'Madam, might I presume and not offend,
So may the stars and shining moon attend
Your nightly sports, as you vouchsafe to tell,
What nymphs they were who mortal forms excel,
And what the knights who fought in listed fields so well.'
To this the dame replied: 'Fair daughter, know,
That what you saw was all a fairy show;
And all those airy shapes you now behold
Were human bodies once, and clothed with earthly [mould.
Our souls, not yet prepared for upper light,
Till doomsday wander in the shades of night;
This only holiday of all the year,
We, privileged, in sunshine may appear;
With songs and dance we celebrate the day,
And with due honours usher in the May.
At other times we reign by night alone,
And posting through the skies pursue the moon;
But when the morn arises, none are found,
For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,
And if he finds a fairy lag in light,
He drives the wretch before, and lashes into night
'All courteous are by kind; and ever proud
With friendly offices to help the good.
In every land we have a larger space
Than what is known to you of mortal race;
Where we with green adorn our fairy bowers,
And even this grove, unseen before, is ours.
Know farther, every lady clothed in white,
And crowned with oak and laurel every knight,
Are servants to the Leaf, by liveries known
Of innocence; and I myself am one.
Saw you not her so graceful to behold,
In white attire, and crowned with radiant gold?
The sovereign lady of our land is she,
Diana called, the queen of chastity;
And, for the spotless name of maid she bears,
That Agnus castus in her hand appears;
And all her train, with leafy chaplets crowned,
Were for unblamed virginity renowned;
But those the chief and highest in command
Who bear those holy branches in their hand.
The knights adorned with laurel crowns are they,
Whom death nor danger ever could dismay,
Victorious names, who made the world obey:
Who, while they lived, in deeds of arms excelled,
And after death for deities were held.

But those who wear the woodbine on their brow,
Were knights of love, who never broke their vow;
Firm to their plighted faith, and ever free
From fears, and fickle chance, and jealousy.
The lords and ladies, who the woodbine bear,
As true as Tristram and Isotta were.'
'But what are those,' said I, 'the unconquered nine,
Who, crowned with laurel-wreaths, in golden armour shine?
And who the knights in green, and what the train
Of ladies dressed with daisies on the plain?
Why both the bands in worship disagree,
And some adore the flower, and some the tree?'
'Just is your suit, fair daughter,' said the dame:
'Those laurelled chiefs were men of mighty fame;
Nine worthies were they called of different rites,
Three Jews, three Pagans, and three Christian knights.
These, as you see, ride foremost in the field,
As they the foremost rank of honour held,
And all in deeds of chivalry excelled:
Their temples wreathed with leaves, that still renew,
For deathless laurel is the victor's due.
Who bear the bows were knights in Arthur's reign,
Twelve they, and twelve the peers of Charlemagne:
For bows the strength of brawny arms imply,
Emblems of valour and of victory.
Behold an order yet of newer date,
Doubling their number, equal in their state;
Our England's ornament, the crown's defence,
In battle brave, protectors of their prince:
Unchanged by fortune, to their sovereign true,
For which their manly legs are bound with blue.
These, of the Garter called, of faith unstained,
In fighting fields the laurel have obtained,
And well repaid the honours which they gained.
The laurel wreaths were first by Caesar worn,
And still they Caesar's successors adorn;
One leaf of this is immortality,
And more of worth than all the world can buy.'
'One doubt remains,' said I, 'the dames in green,
What were their qualities, and who their queen?'
'Flora commands,' said she, 'those nymphs and knights,
Who lived in slothful ease and loose delights;
Who never acts of honour durst pursue,
The men inglorious knights, the ladies all untrue;
Who, nursed in idleness, and trained in courts,
Passed all their precious hours in plays and sports,
Till death behind came stalking on unseen,
And withered (like the storm) the freshness of their green.
These, and their mates, enjoy their present hour,
And therefore pay their homage to the Flower.
But knights in knightly deeds should persevere,
And still continue what at first they were;

Continue, and proceed in honour’s fair career.
No room for cowardice, or dull delay;
From good to better they should urge their way.
For this with golden spurs the chiefs are graced,
With pointed rowels armed to mend their haste;
For this with lasting leaves their brows are bound,
For laurel is the sign of labour crowned,
Which bears the bitter blast, nor shaken falls to ground:
From winter winds it suffers no decay,
For ever fresh and fair, and every month is May.
Even when the vital sap retreats below,
Even when the hoary head is hid in snow,
The life is in the leaf, and still between
The fits of falling snow appears the streaky green.
Not so the flower, which lasts for little space,
A short-lived good, and an uncertain grace;
This way and that the feeble stem is driven,
Weak to sustain the storms and injuries of heaven.
Propped by the spring, it lifts aloft the head,
But of a sickly beauty, soon to shed;
In summer living, and in winter dead.
For things of tender kind, for pleasure made,
Shoot up with swift increase, and sudden are decayed.’
With humble words, the wisest I could frame,
And proffered service, I repaid the dame;
That, of her grace, she gave her maid to know
The secret meaning of this moral show.
And she, to prove what profit I had made
Of mystic truth, in fables first conveyed,
Demanded till the next returning May,
Whether the Leaf or Flower I would obey?
I chose the Leaf; she smiled with sober cheer,
And wished me fair adventure for the year,
And gave me charms and sigils, for defence
Against ill tongues that scandal innocence:
‘But I,’ said she, ‘my fellows must pursue,
Already past the plain, and out of view.’
We parted thus; I homeward sped my way,
Bewildered in the wood till dawn of day:
And met the merry crew who danced about the May.
Then late refreshed with sleep, I rose to write
The visionary vigils of the night.
Blush, as thou mayest, my little book with shame,
Nor hope with homely verse to purchase fame;
For such thy maker chose; and so designed
Thy simple style to suit thy lowly kind.

John Dryden

The Hind And The Panther, A Poem In Three Parts : Part II.

“Dame,” said the Panther, “times are mended well,
Since late among the Philistines you fell.
The toils were pitched, a spacious tract of ground
With expert huntsmen was encompassed round;
The inclosure narrowed; the sagacious power
Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour.
'Tis true, the younger lion 'scaped the snare,
But all your priestly calves lay struggling there,
As sacrifices on their altars laid;
While you, their careful mother, wisely fled,
Not trusting destiny to save your head.
For, whate'er promises you have applied
To your unfailing Church, the surer side
Is four fair legs in danger to provide;
And whate'er tales of Peter's chair you tell,
Yet, saving reverence of the miracle,
The better luck was yours to 'scape so well.”
“As I remember,” said the sober Hind,
“Those toils were for your own dear self designed,
As well as me; and with the selfsame throw,
To catch the quarry and the vermin too,—
Forgive the slanderous tongues that called you so.
Howe'er you take it now, the common cry
Then ran you down for your rank loyalty.
Besides, in Popery they thought you nurst,
As evil tongues will ever speak the worst,
Because some forms, and ceremonies some
You kept, and stood in the main question dumb.
Dumb you were born indeed; but, thinking long,
The test, it seems, at last has loosed your tongue:
And to explain what your forefathers meant,
By real presence in the sacrament,
After long fencing pushed against a wall,
Your salvo comes, that he's not there at all:
There changed your faith, and what may change may fall.
Who can believe what varies every day,
Nor ever was, nor will be at a stay?”
“Tortures may force the tongue untruths to tell,
And I ne'er owned myself infallible,”
Replied the Panther: “grant such presence were,
Yet in your sense I never owned it there.
A real virtue we by faith receive,
And that we in the sacrament believe.”
“Then,” said the Hind, “as you the matter state,
Not only Jesuits can equivocate;
For real, as you now the word expound,
From solid substance dwindles to a sound.
Methinks, an Æsop's fable you repeat;
You know who took the shadow for the meat:
Your Church's substance thus you change at will,
And yet retain your former figure still.
I freely grant you spoke to save your life;

For then you lay beneath the butcher's knife.
Long time you fought, redoubled battery bore,
But, after all, against yourself you swore,
Your former self; for every hour your form
Is chopped and changed, like winds before a storm.
Thus fear and interest will prevail with some;
For all have not the gift of martyrdom."
The Panther grinned at this, and thus replied:
"That men may err was never yet denied;
But, if that common principle be true,
The canon, dame, is levelled full at you.
But, shunning long disputes, I fain would see
That wondrous wight, Infallibility.
Is he from heaven, this mighty champion, come?
Or lodged below in subterranean Rome?
First, seat him somewhere, and derive his race,
Or else conclude that nothing has no place."
"Suppose, though I disown it," said the Hind,
"The certain mansion were not yet assigned;
The doubtful residence no proof can bring
Against the plain existence of the thing.
Because philosophers may disagree,
If sight by emission, or reception be,
Shall it be thence inferred, I do not see?
But you require an answer positive,
Which yet, when I demand, you dare not give;
For fallacies in universals live.
I then affirm, that this unfailing guide
In Pope and General Councils must reside;
Both lawful, both combined; what one decrees
By numerous votes, the other ratifies:
On this undoubted sense the Church relies.
'Tis true, some doctors in a scantier space,
I mean, in each apart, contract the place.
Some, who to greater length extend the line,
The Church's after-acceptation join.
This last circumference appears too wide;
The Church diffused is by the Council tied,
As members by their representatives
Obliged to laws, which prince and senate gives.
Thus, some contract, and some enlarge the space;
In Pope and Council, who denies the place,
Assisted from above with God's unfailing grace?
Those canons all the needful points contain;
Their sense so obvious, and their words so plain,
That no disputes about the doubtful text
Have hitherto the labouring world perplext.
If any should in after-times appear,
New Councils must be called, to make the meaning clear;
Because in them the power supreme resides,
And all the promises are to the guides.
This may be taught with sound and safe defence;

But mark how sandy is your own pretence,
Who, setting Councils, Pope, and Church aside,
Are every man his own presuming guide.
The sacred books, you say, are full and plain,
And every needful point of truth contain;
All who can read interpreters may be.
Thus, though your several Churches disagree,
Yet every saint has to himself alone
The secret of this philosophic stone.
These principles you jarring sects unite,
When differing doctors and disciples fight.
Though Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, holy chiefs,
Have made a battle-royal of beliefs;
Or, like wild horses, several ways have whirled
The tortured text about the Christian world;
Each Jehu lashing on with furious force,
That Turk or Jew could not have used it worse;
No matter what dissension leaders make,
Where every private man may save a stake:
Ruled by the scripture and his own advice,
Each has a blind by-path to Paradise;
Where, driving in a circle slow or fast,
Opposing sects are sure to meet at last.
A wondrous charity you have in store
For all reformed to pass the narrow door;
So much, that Mahomet had scarcely more.
For he, kind prophet, was for damning none;
But Christ and Moses were to save their own:
Himself was to secure his chosen race,
Though reason good for Turks to take the place,
And he allowed to be the better man,
In virtue of his holier Alcoran."
"True," said the Panther, "I shall ne'er deny
My brethren may be saved as well as I:
Though Huguenots contemn our ordination,
Succession, ministerial vocation;
And Luther, more mistaking what he read,
Misjoins the sacred body with the bread:
Yet, lady, still remember I maintain,
The word in needful points is only plain."
"Needless, or needful, I not now contend,
For still you have a loop-hole for a friend,"
Rejoined the matron; "but the rule you lay
Has led whole flocks, and leads them still astray,
In weighty points, and full damnation's way.
For, did not Arius first, Socinus now,
The Son's eternal Godhead disavow?
And did not these by gospel texts alone
Condemn our doctrine, and maintain their own?
Have not all heretics the same pretence
To plead the scriptures in their own defence?
How did the Nicene Council then decide

That strong debate? was it by scripture tried?
No, sure; to that the rebel would not yield;
Squadrons of texts he marshalled in the field:
That was but civil war, an equal set,
Where piles with piles, and eagles eagles met.
With texts point-blank and plain he faced the foe,
And did not Satan tempt our Saviour so?
The good old bishops took a simpler way;
Each asked but what he heard his father say,
Or how he was instructed in his youth,
And by tradition's force upheld the truth."
The Panther smiled at this;—"And when," said she,
"Were those first Councils disallowed by me?
Or where did I at sure tradition strike,
Provided still it were apostolic?"
"Friend," said the Hind, "you quit your former ground,
Where all your faith you did on scripture found:
Now 'tis tradition joined with holy writ;
But thus your memory betrays your wit."
"No," said the Panther; "for in that I view,
When your tradition's forged, and when 'tis true.
I set them by the rule, and, as they square,
Or deviate from undoubted doctrine there,
This oral fiction, that old faith declare."

Hind.
"The Council steered, it seems, a different course;
They tried the scripture by tradition's force:
But you tradition by the scripture try;
Pursued by sects, from this to that you fly,
Nor dare on one foundation to rely.
The word is then deposed, and in this view,
You rule the scripture, not the scripture you."
Thus said the dame, and, smiling, thus pursued:
"I see, tradition then is disallowed,
When not evinced by scripture to be true,
And scripture, as interpreted by you.
But here you tread upon unfaithful ground,
Unless you could infallibly expound;
Which you reject as odious popery,
And throw that doctrine back with scorn on me.
Suppose we on things traditive divide,
And both appeal to scripture to decide;
By various texts we both uphold our claim,
Nay, often, ground our titles on the same:
After long labour lost, and time's expense,
Both grant the words, and quarrel for the sense.
Thus all disputes for ever must depend;
For no dumb rule can controversies end.
Thus, when you said,—Tradition must be tried
By sacred writ, whose sense yourselves decide,
You said no more, but that yourselves must be

The judges of the scripture sense, not we.
Against our Church-tradition you declare,
And yet your clerks would sit in Moses' chair;
At least 'tis proved against your argument,
The rule is far from plain, where all dissent."
"If not by scriptures, how can we be sure,"
Replied the Panther, "what tradition's pure?
For you may palm upon us new for old;
All, as they say, that glitters, is not gold."
"How but by following her," replied the dame,
"To whom derived from sire to son they came;
Where every age does on another move,
And trusts no farther than the next above;
Where all the rounds like Jacob's ladder rise,
The lowest hid in earth, the topmost in the skies?"
Sternly the savage did her answer mark,
Her glowing eye-balls glittering in the dark,
And said but this:—"Since lucre was your trade,
Succeeding times such dreadful gaps have made,
'Tis dangerous climbing: To your sons and you
I leave the ladder, and its omen too."

Hind.
"The Panther's breath was ever famed for sweet;
But from the Wolf such wishes oft I meet.
You learned this language from the Blatant Beast,
Or rather did not speak, but were possessed.
As for your answer, 'tis but barely urged:
You must evince tradition to be forged;
Produce plain proofs; unblemished authors use
As ancient as those ages they accuse;
Till when, 'tis not sufficient to defame;
An old possession stands, till elder quits the claim.
Then for our interest, which is named alone
To load with envy, we retort your own;
For, when traditions in your faces fly,
Resolving not to yield, you must decry.
As when the cause goes hard, the guilty man
Excepts, and thins his jury all he can;
So when you stand of other aid bereft,
You to the twelve apostles would be left.
Your friend the Wolf did with more craft provide
To set those toys, traditions, quite aside;
And fathers too, unless when, reason spent,
He cites them but sometimes for ornament.
But, madam Panther, you, though more sincere,
Are not so wise as your adulterer;
The private spirit is a better blind,
Than all the dodging tricks your authors find.
For they, who left the scripture to the crowd,
Each for his own peculiar judge allowed;
The way to please them was to make them proud.

Thus with full sails they ran upon the shelf;
Who could suspect a cozenage from himself?
On his own reason safer 'tis to stand,
Than be deceived and damned at second-hand.
But you, who fathers and traditions take,
And garble some, and some you quite forsake,
Pretending Church-authority to fix,
And yet some grains of private spirit mix,
Are, like a mule, made up of different seed,
And that's the reason why you never breed;
At least, not propagate your kind abroad,
For home dissenters are by statutes awed.
And yet they grow upon you every day,
While you, to speak the best, are at a stay,
For sects, that are extremes, abhor a middle way:
Like tricks of state, to stop a raging flood,
Or mollify a mad-brained senate's mood;
Of all expedients never one was good.
Well may they argue, nor can you deny,
If we must fix on Church authority,
Best on the best, the fountain, not the flood;
That must be better still, if this be good.
Shall she command, who has herself rebelled?
Is antichrist by antichrist expelled?
Did we a lawful tyranny displace,
To set aloft a bastard of the race?
Why all these wars to win the book, if we
Must not interpret for ourselves, but she?
Either be wholly slaves, or wholly free.
For purging fires traditions must not fight;
But they must prove episcopacy's right.
Thus, those led horses are from service freed;
You never mount them but in time of need.
Like mercenaries, hired for home defence,
They will not serve against their native prince.
Against domestic foes of hierarchy
These are drawn forth, to make fanatics fly;
But, when they see their countrymen at hand,
Marching against them under Church-command,
Straight they forsake their colours, and disband."
Thus she; nor could the Panther well enlarge
With weak defence against so strong a charge;
But said:—"For what did Christ his word provide,
If still his Church must want a living guide?
And if all-saving doctrines are not there,
Or sacred penmen could not make them clear,
From after-ages we should hope in vain
For truths which men inspired could not explain."
"Before the word was written," said the Hind,
"Our Saviour preached his faith to humankind:
From his apostles the first age received
Eternal truth, and what they taught believed.

Thus, by tradition faith was planted first,
Succeeding flocks succeeding pastors nursed.
This was the way our wise Redeemer chose,
Who sure could all things for the best dispose,
To fence his fold from their encroaching foes.
He could have writ himself, but well foresaw
The event would be like that of Moses' law;
Some difference would arise, some doubts remain,
Like those which yet the jarring Jews maintain.
No written laws can be so plain, so pure,
But wit may gloss, and malice may obscure;
Not those indited by his first command,
A prophet graved the text, an angel held his hand.
Thus faith was ere the written word appeared,
And men believed not what they read, but heard.
But since the apostles could not be confined
To these, or those, but severally designed
Their large commission round the world to blow,
To spread their faith, they spread their labours too.
Yet still their absent flock their pains did share;
They hearkened still, for love produces care.
And as mistakes arose, or discords fell,
Or bold seducers taught them to rebel,
As charity grew cold, or faction hot,
Or long neglect their lessons had forgot,
For all their wants they wisely did provide,
And preaching by epistles was supplied;
So, great physicians cannot all attend,
But some they visit, and to some they send.
Yet all those letters were not writ to all;
Nor first intended but occasional,
Their absent sermons; nor, if they contain
All needful doctrines, are those doctrines plain.
Clearness by frequent preaching must be wrought;
They writ but seldom, but they daily taught;
And what one saint has said of holy Paul,
‘He darkly writ,’ is true applied to all.
For this obscurity could heaven provide
More prudently than by a living guide,
As doubts arose, the difference to decide?
A guide was therefore needful, therefore made;
And, if appointed, sure to be obeyed.
Thus, with due reverence to the apostles' writ,
By which my sons are taught, to which submit,
I think, those truths, their sacred works contain,
The Church alone can certainly explain;
That following ages, leaning on the past,
May rest upon the primitive at last.
Nor would I thence the word no rule infer,
But none without the Church-interpreter;
Because, as I have urged before, 'tis mute,
And is itself the subject of dispute.

But what the apostles their successors taught,
They to the next, from them to us is brought,
The undoubted sense which is in scripture sought.
From hence the Church is armed, when errors rise,
To stop their entrance, and prevent surprise;
And, safe entrenched within, her foes without defies.
By these all festering sores her Councils heal,
Which time or has disclosed, or shall reveal;
For discord cannot end without a last appeal.
Nor can a council national decide,
But with subordination to her guide:
(I wish the cause were on that issue tried.)
Much less the scripture; for suppose debate
Betwixt pretenders to a fair estate,
Bequeathed by some legator's last intent;
(Such is our dying Saviour's testament
The will is proved, is opened, and is read,
The doubtful heirs their differing titles plead;
All vouch the words their interest to maintain,
And each pretends by those his cause is plain.
Shall then the testament award the right?
No, that's the Hungary for which they fight;
The field of battle, subject of debate;
The thing contended for, the fair estate.
The sense is intricate, 'tis only clear
What vowels and what consonants are there.
Therefore 'tis plain, its meaning must be tried
Before some judge appointed to decide."
"Suppose," the fair apostate said, "I grant,
The faithful flock some living guide should want,
Your arguments an endless chase pursue:
Produce this vaunted leader to our view,
This mighty Moses of the chosen crew."
The dame, who saw her fainting foe retired,
With force renewed, to victory aspired;
And, looking upward to her kindred sky,
As once our Saviour owned his Deity,
Pronounced his words—"She whom ye seek am I."
Nor less amazed this voice the Panther heard,
Than were those Jews to hear a God declared.
Then thus the matron modestly renewed:
"Let all your prophets and their sects be viewed,
And see to which of them yourselves think fit
The conduct of your conscience to submit;
Each proselyte would vote his doctor best,
With absolute exclusion to the rest:
Thus would your Polish diet disagree,
And end, as it began, in anarchy;
Yourself the fairest for election stand,
Because you seem crown-general of the land;
But soon against your superstitious lawn
Some Presbyterian sabre would be drawn;

In your established laws of sovereignty
The rest some fundamental flaw would see,
And call rebellion gospel-liberty.
To Church-decrees your articles require
Submission mollified, if not entire.
Homage denied, to censures you proceed;
But when Curtana will not do the deed,
You lay that pointless clergy-weapon by,
And to the laws, your sword of justice, fly.
Now this your sects the more unkindly take,
(Those prying varlets hit the blots you make,)
Because some ancient friends of yours declare,
Your only rule of faith the scriptures are,
Interpreted by men of judgment sound,
Which every sect will for themselves expound;
Nor think less reverence to their doctors due
For sound interpretation, than to you.
If then, by able heads, are understood
Your brother prophets, who reformed abroad;
Those able heads expound a wiser way,
That their own sheep their shepherd should obey.
But if you mean yourselves are only sound,
That doctrine turns the reformation round,
And all the rest are false reformers found;
Because in sundry points you stand alone,
Not in communion joined with any one;
And therefore must be all the Church, or none.
Then, till you have agreed whose judge is best,
Against this forced submission they protest;
While sound and sound a different sense explains,
Both play at hardhead till they break their brains;
And from their chairs each other's force defy,
While unregarded thunders vainly fly.
I pass the rest, because your Church alone
Of all usurpers best could fill the throne.
But neither you, nor any sect beside,
For this high office can be qualified,
With necessary gifts required in such a guide.
For that, which must direct the whole, must be
Bound in one bond of faith and unity;
But all your several Churches disagree.
The consubstantiating Church and priest
Refuse communion to the Calvinist;
The French reformed from preaching you restrain,
Because you judge their ordination vain;
And so they judge of yours, but donors must ordain.
In short, in doctrine, or in discipline,
Not one reformed can with another join;
But all from each, as from damnation, fly:
No union they pretend, but in non-popery.
Nor, should their members in a synod meet,
Could any Church presume to mount the seat,

Above the rest, their discords to decide;
None would obey, but each would be the guide;
And face to face dissensions would increase,
For only distance now preserves the peace.
All in their turns accusers, and accused;
Babel was never half so much confused;
What one can plead, the rest can plead as well;
For amongst equals lies no last appeal,
And all confess themselves are fallible.
Now, since you grant some necessary guide,
All who can err are justly laid aside;
Because a trust so sacred to confer
Shows want of such a sure interpreter;
And how can he be needful who can err?
Then, granting that unerring guide we want,
That such there is you stand obliged to grant;
Our Saviour else were wanting to supply
Our needs, and obviate that necessity.
It then remains, that Church can only be
The guide, which owns unfailing certainty;
Or else you slip your hold, and change your side,
Relapsing from a necessary guide.
But this annexed condition of the crown,
Immunity from errors, you disown;
Here then you shrink, and lay your weak pretensions down.
For petty royalties you raise debate;
But this unfailing universal state
You shun; nor dare succeed to such a glorious weight;
And for that cause those promises detest,
With which our Saviour did his Church invest;
But strive to evade, and fear to find them true,
As conscious they were never meant to you;
All which the Mother-Church asserts her own,
And with unrivalled claim ascends the throne.
So, when of old the Almighty Father sate
In council, to redeem our ruined state,
Millions of millions, at a distance round,
Silent the sacred consistory crowned,
To hear what mercy, mixed with justice, could propound;
All prompt, with eager pity, to fulfil
The full extent of their Creator's will:
But when the stern conditions were declared,
A mournful whisper through the host was heard,
And the whole hierarchy, with heads hung down,
Submissively declined the ponderous proffer'd crown.
Then, not till then, the Eternal Son from high
Rose in the strength of all the Deity;
Stood forth to accept the terms, and underwent
A weight which all the frame of heaven had bent,
Nor he himself could bear, but as Omnipotent.
Now, to remove the least remaining doubt,
That even the blear-eyed sects may find her out,

Behold what heavenly rays adorn her brows,
What from his wardrobe her beloved allows,
To deck the wedding-day of his unspotted spouse!
Behold what marks of majesty she brings,
Richer than ancient heirs of eastern kings!
Her right hand holds the sceptre and the keys,
To show whom she commands, and who obeys;
With these to bind, or set the sinner free,
With that to assert spiritual royalty.
"One in herself, not rent by schism, but sound,
Entire, one solid shining diamond;
Not sparkles shattered into sects like you:
One is the Church, and must be to be true;
One central principle of unity;
As undivided, so from errors free;
As one in faith, so one in sanctity.
Thus she, and none but she, the insulting rage
Of heretics opposed from age to age;
Still when the giant-brood invades her throne,
She stoops from heaven, and meets them halfway down,
And with paternal thunder vindicates her crown.
But like Egyptian sorcerers you stand,
And vainly lift aloft your magic wand,
To sweep away the swarms of vermin from the land;
You could, like them, with like infernal force,
Produce the plague, but not arrest the course.
But when the boils and botches, with disgrace
And public scandal, sat upon the face,
Themselves attacked, the Magi strove no more,
They saw God's finger, and their fate deplore;
Themselves they could not cure of the dishonest sore.
Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread,
Like the fair ocean from her mother-bed;
From east to west triumphantly she rides,
All shores are watered by her wealthy tides.
The gospel-sound, diffused from pole to pole,
Where winds can carry, and where waves can roll,
The selfsame doctrine of the sacred page
Conveyed to every clime, in every age.
"Here let my sorrow give my satire place,
To raise new blushes on my British race.
Our sailing ships like common-sewers we use,
And through our distant colonies diffuse
The draught of dungeons, and the stench of stews;
Whom, when their home-bred honesty is lost,
We disembogue on some far Indian coast,
Thieves, panders, palliards, sins of every sort;
Those are the manufactures we export,
And these the missioners our zeal has made;
For, with my country's pardon, be it said,
Religion is the least of all our trade.
"Yet some improve their traffic more than we,

For they on gain, their only god, rely,
And set a public price on piety.
Industrious of the needle and the chart,
They run full sail to their Japonian mart;
Preventing fear, and, prodigal of fame,
Sell all of Christian to the very name,
Nor leave enough of that to hide their naked shame.
“Thus, of three marks, which in the creed we view,
Not one of all can be applied to you;
Much less the fourth. In vain, alas! you seek
The ambitious title of apostolic:
Godlike descent! 'tis well your blood can be
Proved noble in the third or fourth degree;
For all of ancient that you had before,
I mean what is not borrowed from our store,
Was error fulminated o'er and o'er;
Old heresies condemned in ages past,
By care and time recovered from the blast.
“'Tis said with ease, but never can be proved,
The Church her old foundations has removed,
And built new doctrines on unstable sands:
Judge that, ye winds and rains! you proved her, yet she stands.
Those ancient doctrines charged on her for new,
Show when, and how, and from what hands they grew.
We claim no power, when heresies grow bold,
To coin new faith, but still declare the old.
How else could that obscene disease be purged,
When controverted texts are vainly urged?
To prove tradition new, there's somewhat more
Required, than saying, 'Twas not used before.
Those monumental arms are never stirred,
Till schism or heresy call down Goliah's sword.
“Thus, what you call corruptions, are, in truth,
The first plantations of the gospel's youth;
Old standard faith; but cast your eyes again,
And view those errors which new sects maintain,
Or which of old disturbed the Church's peaceful reign;
And we can point each period of the time,
When they began, and who begot the crime;
Can calculate how long the eclipse endured,
Who interposed, what digits were obscured:
Of all which are already passed away,
We know the rise, the progress, and decay.
“Despair at our foundations then to strike,
Till you can prove your faith apostolic;
A limpid stream drawn from the native source;
Succession lawful in a lineal course.
Prove any Church, opposed to this our head,
So one, so pure, so unconfinedly spread,
Under one chief of the spiritual state,
The members all combined, and all subordinate;
Show such a seamless coat, from schism so free,

In no communion joined with heresy;—
If such a one you find, let truth prevail;
Till when, your weights will in the balance fail;
A Church unprincipled kicks up the scale.
But if you cannot think, (nor sure you can
Suppose in God what were unjust in man,)
That He, the fountain of eternal grace,
Should suffer falsehood for so long a space
To banish truth, and to usurp her place;
That seven successive ages should be lost,
And preach damnation at their proper cost;
That all your erring ancestors should die,
Drowned in the abyss of deep idolatry;
If piety forbid such thoughts to rise,
Awake, and open your unwilling eyes:
God hath left nothing for each age undone,
From this to that wherein he sent his Son;
Then think but well of him, and half your work is done.
See how his Church, adorned with every grace,
With open arms, a kind forgiving face,
Stands ready to prevent her long-lost son's embrace!
Not more did Joseph o'er his brethren weep,
Nor less himself could from discovery keep,
When in the crowd of suppliants they were seen,
And in their crew his best-loved Benjamin.
That pious Joseph in the Church behold,
To feed your famine, and refuse your gold;
The Joseph you exiled, the Joseph whom you sold.”
Thus, while with heavenly charity she spoke,
A streaming blaze the silent shadows broke;
Shot from the skies a cheerful azure light;
The birds obscene to forests winged their flight,
And gaping graves received the wandering guilty sprite.
Such were the pleasing triumphs of the sky,
For James his late nocturnal victory;
The pledge of his almighty Patron's love,
The fireworks which his angels made above.
I saw myself the lambent easy light
Gild the brown horror, and dispel the night;
The messenger with speed the tidings bore;
News, which three labouring nations did restore;
But heaven's own Nuntius was arrived before.
By this, the Hind had reached her lonely cell,
And vapours rose, and dews unwholesome fell;
When she, by frequent observation wise,
As one who long on heaven had fixed her eyes,
Discerned a change of weather in the skies.
The western borders were with crimson spread,
The moon descending looked all flaming red;
She thought good manners bound her to invite
The stranger dame to be her guest that night.
'Tis true, coarse diet, and a short repast,

She said, were weak inducements to the taste
Of one so nicely bred, and so unused to fast;
But what plain fare her cottage could afford,
A hearty welcome at a homely board,
Was freely hers; and, to supply the rest,
An honest meaning, and an open breast;
Last, with content of mind, the poor man's wealth,
A grace-cup to their common patron's health.
This she desired her to accept, and stay,
For fear she might be wildered in her way,
Because she wanted an unerring guide,
And then the dewdrops on her silken hide
Her tender constitution did declare,
Too lady-like a long fatigue to bear,
And rough inclemencies of raw nocturnal air.
But most she feared, that, travelling so late,
Some evil-minded beasts might lie in wait,
And without witness wreak their hidden hate.
The Panther, though she lent a listening ear,
Had more of lion in her than to fear;
Yet wisely weighing, since she had to deal
With many foes, their numbers might prevail,
Returned her all the thanks she could afford,
And took her friendly hostess at her word;
Who, entering first her lowly roof, a shed
With hoary moss and winding ivy spread,
Honest enough to hide an humble hermit's head,
Thus graciously bespoke her welcome guest:
“So might these walls, with your fair presence blest,
Become your dwelling-place of everlasting rest;
Not for a night, or quick revolving year,
Welcome an owner, not a sojourner.
This peaceful seat my poverty secures;
War seldom enters but where wealth allures:
Nor yet despise it; for this poor abode,
Has oft received, and yet receives a God;
A God, victorious of the Stygian race,
Here laid his sacred limbs, and sanctified the place.
This mean retreat did mighty Pan contain;
Be emulous of him, and pomp disdain,
And dare not to debase your soul to gain.”
The silent stranger stood amazed to see
Contempt of wealth, and wilful poverty;
And, though ill habits are not soon controlled,
Awhile suspended her desire of gold.
But civilly drew in her sharpened paws,
Not violating hospitable laws,
And pacified her tail, and licked her frothy jaws.
The Hind did first her country cates provide;
Then couched herself securely by her side.

John Dryden

The Hind And The Panther, A Poem In Three Parts : Part III.

Much malice, mingled with a little wit,
Perhaps may censure this mysterious writ;
Because the muse has peopled Caledon
With panthers, bears, and wolves, and beasts unknown,
As if we were not stocked with monsters of our own.
Let Æsop answer, who has set to view
Such kinds as Greece and Phrygia never knew;
And Mother Hubbard, in her homely dress,
Has sharply blamed a British lioness;
That queen, whose feast the factious rabble keep,
Exposed obscenely naked, and asleep.
Led by those great examples, may not I
The wonted organs of their words supply?
If men transact like brutes, 'tis equal then
For brutes to claim the privilege of men.
Others our Hind of folly will indite,
To entertain a dangerous guest by night.
Let those remember, that she cannot die,
Till rolling time is lost in round eternity;
Nor need she fear the Panther, though untamed,
Because the Lion's peace was now proclaimed;
The wary savage would not give offence,
To forfeit the protection of her prince;
But watched the time her vengeance to complete,
When all her furry sons in frequent senate met;
Meanwhile she quenched her fury at the flood,
And with a lenten salad cooled her blood.
Their commons, though but coarse, were nothing scant,
Nor did their minds an equal banquet want.
For now the Hind, whose noble nature strove
To express her plain simplicity of love,
Did all the honours of her house so well,
No sharp debates disturbed the friendly meal.
She turned the talk, avoiding that extreme,
To common dangers past, a sadly-pleasing theme;
Remembering every storm which tossed the state,
When both were objects of the public hate,
And dropt a tear betwixt for her own children's fate.
Nor failed she then a full review to make
Of what the Panther suffered for her sake;
Her lost esteem, her truth, her loyal care,
Her faith unshaken to an exiled heir,
Her strength to endure, her courage to defy,
Her choice of honourable infamy.
On these, prolixly thankful, she enlarged;
Then with acknowledgments herself she charged;
For friendship, of itself an holy tie,
Is made more sacred by adversity.
Now should they part, malicious tongues would say,
They met like chance companions on the way,
Whom mutual fear of robbers had possessed;
While danger lasted, kindness was professed;

But, that once o'er, the short-lived union ends,
The road divides, and there divide the friends.
The Panther nodded, when her speech was done,
And thanked her coldly in a hollow tone;
But said, her gratitude had gone too far
For common offices of Christian care.
If to the lawful heir she had been true,
She paid but Cæsar what was Cæsar's due.
“I might,” she added, “with like praise describe
Your suffering sons, and so return your bribe:
But incense from my hands is poorly prized;
For gifts are scorned where givers are despised.
I served a turn, and then was cast away;
You, like the gaudy fly, your wings display,
And sip the sweets, and bask in your great patron's day.”
This heard, the matron was not slow to find
What sort of malady had seized her mind;
Disdain, with gnawing envy, fell despite,
And cankered malice, stood in open sight;
Ambition, interest, pride without control,
And jealousy, the jaundice of the soul;
Revenge, the bloody minister of ill,
With all the lean tormentors of the will.
'Twas easy now to guess from whence arose
Her new-made union with her ancient foes;
Her forced civilities, her faint embrace,
Affected kindness, with an altered face;
Yet durst she not too deeply probe the wound,
As hoping still the nobler parts were sound;
But strove with anodynes to assuage the smart,
And mildly thus her medicine did impart.
“Complaints of lovers help to ease their pain;
It shows a rest of kindness to complain;
A friendship loath to quit its former hold,
And conscious merit, may be justly bold;
But much more just your jealousy would show,
If others' good were injury to you:
Witness, ye heavens, how I rejoice to see
Rewarded worth and rising loyalty!
Your warrior offspring, that upheld the crown,
The scarlet honour of your peaceful gown,
Are the most pleasing objects I can find,
Charms to my sight, and cordials to my mind:
When virtue spooms before a prosperous gale,
My heaving wishes help to fill the sail;
And if my prayers for all the brave were heard,
Cæsar should still have such, and such should still reward.
“The laboured earth your pains have sowed and tilled,
'Tis just you reap the product of the field:
Yours be the harvest; 'tis the beggar's gain,
To glean the fallings of the loaded wain.
Such scattered ears as are not worth your care,

Your charity, for alms, may safely spare,
For alms are but the vehicles of prayer.
My daily bread is literally implored;
I have no barns nor granaries to hoard.
If Cæsar to his own his hand extends,
Say which of yours his charity offends;
You know, he largely gives to more than are his friends.
Are you defrauded, when he feeds the poor?
Our mite decreases nothing of your store.
I am but few, and by your fare you see
My crying sins are not of luxury.
Some juster motive sure your mind withdraws,
And makes you break our friendship's holy laws;
For barefaced envy is too base a cause.
Show more occasion for your discontent;
Your love, the Wolf, would help you to invent:
Some German quarrel, or, as times go now,
Some French, where force is uppermost, will do.
When at the fountain's head, as merit ought
To claim the place, you take a swilling draught,
How easy 'tis an envious eye to throw,
And tax the sheep for troubling streams below;
Or call her, when no further cause you find,
An enemy professed of all your kind!
But, then, perhaps, the wicked world would think,
The Wolf designed to eat as well as drink."
This last allusion galled the Panther more,
Because, indeed, it rubbed upon the sore;
Yet seemed she not to wince, though shrewdly pained,
But thus her passive character maintained.
"I never grudged, whate'er my foes report,
Your flaunting fortune in the Lion's court.
You have your day, or you are much belied,
But I am always on the suffering side;
You know my doctrine, and I need not say,
I will not, but I cannot disobey.
On this firm principle I ever stood;
He of my sons who fails to make it good,
By one rebellious act renounces to my blood."
"Ah," said the Hind, "how many sons have you,
Who call you mother, whom you never knew!
But most of them, who that relation plead,
Are such ungracious youths as wish you dead.
They gape at rich revenues which you hold,
And fain would nibble at your grandame gold;
Enquire into your years, and laugh to find
Your crazy temper shows you much declined.
Were you not dim and doted, you might see
A pack of cheats that claim a pedigree,
No more of kin to you, than you to me.
Do you not know, that, for a little coin,
Heralds can foist a name into the line?

They ask you blessing but for what you have,
But, once possessed of what with care you save,
The wanton boys would piss upon your grave.
“Your sons of latitude, that court your grace,
Though most resembling you in form and face,
Are far the worst of your pretended race;
And, but I blush your honesty to blot,
Pray God you prove them lawfully begot!
For, in some Popish libels I have read,
The Wolf has been too busy in your bed;
At least their hinder parts, the belly-piece,
The paunch, and all that Scorpio claims, are his.
Their malice too a sore suspicion brings,
For, though they dare not bark, they snarl at kings.
Nor blame them for intruding in your line;
Fat bishoprics are still of right divine.
Think you, your new French proselytes are come,
To starve abroad, because they starved at home?
Your benefices twinkled from afar,
They found the new Messiah by the star;
Those Swisses fight on any side for pay,
And 'tis the living that conforms, not they.
Mark with what management their tribes divide;
Some stick to you, and some to t'other side,
That many churches may for many mouths provide.
More vacant pulpits would more converts make;
All would have latitude enough to take:
The rest unbeneficed your sects maintain;
For ordinations, without cures, are vain,
And chamber practice is a silent gain.
Your sons of breadth at home are much like these;
Their soft and yielding metals run with ease;
They melt, and take the figure of the mould,
But harden and preserve it best in gold.”
“Your Delphic sword,” the Panther then replied,
“Is double-edged, and cuts on either side.
Some sons of mine, who bear upon their shield
Three steeples argent in a sable field,
Have sharply taxed your converts, who, unfed,
Have followed you for miracles of bread;
Such, who themselves of no religion are,
Allured with gain, for any will declare.
Bare lies, with bold assertions, they can face;
But dint of argument is out of place.
The grim logician puts them in a fright;
'Tis easier far to flourish than to fight.
Thus, our eighth Henry's marriage they defame;
They say, the schism of beds began the game,
Divorcing from the Church to wed the dame;
Though largely proved, and by himself professed,
That conscience, conscience would not let him rest,—
I mean, not till possessed of her he loved,

And old, uncharming Catherine was removed.
For sundry years before he did complain,
And told his ghostly confessor his pain.
With the same impudence, without a ground,
They say, that, look the reformation round,
No treatise of humility is found.
But if none were, the gospel does not want;
Our Saviour preached it, and I hope you grant,
The sermon on the mount was Protestant."
"No doubt," replied the Hind, "as sure as all
The writings of Saint Peter and Saint Paul;
On that decision let it stand, or fall.
Now for my converts, who, you say, unfed,
Have followed me for miracles of bread.
Judge not by hearsay, but observe at least,
If since their change their loaves have been increased.
The Lion buys no converts; if he did,
Beasts would be sold as fast as he could bid.
Tax those of interest, who conform for gain,
Or stay the market of another reign:
Your broad-way sons would never be too nice
To close with Calvin, if he paid their price;
But, raised three steeples higher, would change their note,
And quit the cassock for the canting-coat.
Now, if you damn this censure, as too bold,
Judge by yourselves, and think not others sold.
"Meantime, my sons accused, by fame's report,
Pay small attendance at the Lion's court,
Nor rise with early crowds, nor flatter late;
For silently they beg, who daily wait.
Preferment is bestowed, that comes unsought;
Attendance is a bribe, and then 'tis bought.
How they should speed, their fortune is untried;
For not to ask, is not to be denied.
For what they have, their God and king they bless,
And hope they should not murmur, had they less.
But if reduced subsistence to implore,
In common prudence they would pass your door;
Unpitied Hudibras, your champion friend,
Has shown how far your charities extend.
This lasting verse shall on his tomb be read,
'He shamed you living, and upbraids you dead.'
"With odious atheist names you load your foes;
Your liberal clergy why did I expose?
It never fails in charities like those.
In climes where true religion is professed,
That imputation were no laughing jest;
But imprimatur, with a chaplain's name,
Is here sufficient licence to defame.
What wonder is 't that black detraction thrives?
The homicide of names is less than lives;
And yet the perjured murderer survives."

This said, she paused a little, and suppressed
The boiling indignation of her breast.
She knew the virtue of her blade, nor would
Pollute her satire with ignoble blood;
Her panting foe she saw before her eye,
And back she drew the shining weapon dry.
So when the generous Lion has in sight
His equal match, he rouses for the fight;
But when his foe lies prostrate on the plain,
He sheathes his paws, uncurls his angry mane,
And, pleased with bloodless honours of the day,
Walks over, and disdains the inglorious prey.
So James, if great with less we may compare,
Arrests his rolling thunder-bolts in air;
And grants ungrateful friends a lengthened space,
To implore the remnants of long-suffering grace.
This breathing-time the matron took; and then
Resumed the thrid of her discourse again.
“Be vengeance wholly left to powers divine,
And let heaven judge betwixt your sons and mine:
If joys hereafter must be purchased here
With loss of all that mortals hold so dear,
Then welcome infamy and public shame,
And last, a long farewell to worldly fame!
'Tis said with ease, but, oh, how hardly tried
By haughty souls to human honour tied!
O sharp convulsive pangs of agonising pride!
Down then, thou rebel, never more to rise!
And what thou didst, and dost, so dearly prize,
That fame, that darling fame, make that thy sacrifice.
'Tis nothing thou hast given; then add thy tears
For a long race of unrepenting years:
'Tis nothing yet, yet all thou hast to give:
Then add those may-be years thou hast to live:
Yet nothing still: then poor and naked come,
Thy Father will receive his unthrift home,
And thy blest Saviour's blood discharge the mighty sum.
“Thus,” she pursued, “I discipline a son,
Whose unchecked fury to revenge would run;
He champs the bit, impatient of his loss,
And starts aside, and flounders at the cross.
Instruct him better, gracious God, to know,
As thine is vengeance, so forgiveness too;
That, suffering from ill tongues, he bears no more
Than what his sovereign bears, and what his Saviour bore.
“It now remains for you to school your child,
And ask why God's anointed he reviled;
A king and princess dead! did Shimei worse?
The curser's punishment should fright the curse;
Your son was warned, and wisely gave it o'er,
But he, who counselled him, has paid the score;
The heavy malice could no higher tend,

But woe to him on whom the weights descend.
So to permitted ills the demon flies;
His rage is aimed at him who rules the skies:
Constrained to quit his cause, no succour found,
The foe discharges every tire around,
In clouds of smoke abandoning the fight,
But his own thundering peals proclaim his flight.
“In Henry's change his charge as ill succeeds;
To that long story little answer needs;
Confront but Henry's words with Henry's deeds.
Were space allowed, with ease it might be proved,
What springs his blessed reformation moved.
The dire effects appeared in open sight,
Which from the cause he calls a distant flight,
And yet no larger leap than from the sun to light.
“Now last your sons a double pæan sound,
A treatise of humility is found.
'Tis found, but better it had ne'er been sought,
Than thus in Protestant procession brought.
The famed original through Spain is known,
Rodriguez' work, my celebrated son,
Which yours, by ill-translating, made his own;
Concealed its author, and usurped the name,
The basest and ignoblest theft of fame.
My altars kindled first that living coal;
Restore, or practise better what you stole;
That virtue could this humble verse inspire,
'Tis all the restitution I require.”
Glad was the Panther that the charge was closed,
And none of all her favourite sons exposed;
For laws of arms permit each injured man,
To make himself a saver where he can.
Perhaps the plundered merchant cannot tell
The names of pirates in whose hands he fell;
But at the den of thieves he justly flies,
And every Algerine is lawful prize;
No private person in the foe's estate
Can plead exemption from the public fate.
Yet Christian laws allow not such redress;
Then let the greater supersede the less.
But let the abettors of the Panther's crime
Learn to make fairer wars another time.
Some characters may sure be found to write
Among her sons; for 'tis no common sight,
A spotted dam, and all her offspring white.
The savage, though she saw her plea controlled,
Yet would not wholly seem to quit her hold,
But offered fairly to compound the strife,
And judge conversion by the convert's life.
“'Tis true,” she said, “I think it somewhat strange,
So few should follow profitable change;
For present joys are more to flesh and blood,

Than a dull prospect of a distant good.
'Twas well alluded by a son of mine,
(I hope to quote him is not to purloin,)
Two magnets, heaven and earth, allure to bliss;
The larger loadstone that, the nearer this:
The weak attraction of the greater fails;
We nod a while, but neighbourhood prevails;
But when the greater proves the nearer too,
I wonder more your converts come so slow.
Methinks in those who firm with me remain,
It shows a nobler principle than gain."
"Your inference would be strong," the Hind replied,
"If yours were in effect the suffering side;
Your clergy's sons their own in peace possess,
Nor are their prospects in reversion less.
My proselytes are struck with awful dread,
Your bloody comet-laws hang blazing o'er their head;
The respite they enjoy but only lent,
The best they have to hope, protracted punishment.
Be judge yourself, if interest may prevail,
Which motives, yours or mine, will turn the scale.
While pride and pomp allure, and plenteous ease,
That is, till man's predominant passions cease,
Admire no longer at my slow increase.
"By education most have been misled;
So they believe, because they so were bred.
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man.
The rest I named before, nor need repeat;
But interest is the most prevailing cheat,
The sly seducer both of age and youth;
They study that, and think they study truth.
When interest fortifies an argument,
Weak reason serves to gain the will's assent;
For souls, already warped, receive an easy bent.
"Add long prescription of established laws,
And pique of honour to maintain a cause,
And shame of change, and fear of future ill,
And zeal, the blind conductor of the will;
And chief, among the still-mistaking crowd,
The fame of teachers obstinate and proud,
And, more than all, the private judge allowed;
Disdain of fathers which the dance began,
And last, uncertain whose the narrower span,
The clown unread, and half-read gentleman."
To this the Panther, with a scornful smile;—
"Yet still you travail with unwearied toil,
And range around the realm without control,
Among my sons for proselytes to prowl;
And here and there you snap some silly soul.
You hinted fears of future change in state;
Pray heaven you did not prophesy your fate!

Perhaps you think your time of triumph near,
But may mistake the season of the year;
The Swallow's fortune gives you cause to fear."
"For charity," replied the matron, "tell
What sad mischance those pretty birds befell."
"Nay, no mischance," the savage dame replied,
"But want of wit in their unerring guide,
And eager haste, and gaudy hopes, and giddy pride.
Yet, wishing timely warning may prevail,
Make you the moral, and I'll tell the tale.
"The Swallow, privileged above the rest
Of all the birds, as man's familiar guest,
Pursues the sun, in summer brisk and bold,
But wisely shuns the persecuting cold;
Is well to chancels and to chimneys known,
Though 'tis not thought she feeds on smoke alone.
From hence she has been held of heavenly line,
Endued with particles of soul divine.
This merry chorister had long possessed
Her summer-seat, and feathered well her nest;
Till frowning skies began to change their cheer,
And time turned up the wrong side of the year;
The shading trees began the ground to strow
With yellow leaves, and bitter blasts to blow.
Sad auguries of winter thence she drew,
Which by instinct, or prophecy, she knew;
When prudence warned her to remove betimes,
And seek a better heaven, and warmer climes.
"Her sons were summoned on a steeple's height,
And, called in common council, vote a flight.
The day was named, the next that should be fair;
All to the general rendezvous repair,
They try their fluttering wings, and trust themselves in air.
But whether upward to the moon they go,
Or dream the winter out in caves below,
Or hawk at flies elsewhere, concerns us not to know.
Southwards you may be sure they bent their flight,
And harboured in a hollow rock at night;
Next morn they rose, and set up every sail;
The wind was fair, but blew a mackrel gale;
The sickly young sat shivering on the shore,
Abhorred salt-water never seen before,
And prayed their tender mothers to delay
The passage, and expect a fairer day.
"With these the Martin readily concurred,
A church-begot and church-believing bird;
Of little body, but of lofty mind,
Round bellied, for a dignity designed,
And much a dunce, as Martins are by kind;
Yet often quoted canon-laws, and code,
And fathers which he never understood;
But little learning needs in noble blood.

For, sooth to say, the Swallow brought him in,
Her household chaplain, and her next of kin;
In superstition silly to excess,
And casting schemes by planetary guess;
In fine, short-winged, unfit himself to fly,
His fear foretold foul weather in the sky.
Besides, a Raven from a withered oak,
Left of their lodging, was observed to croak.
That omen liked him not; so his advice
Was present safety, bought at any price;
A seeming pious care, that covered cowardice.
To strengthen this, he told a boding dream,
Of rising waters, and a troubled stream,
Sure signs of anguish, dangers, and distress,
With something more, not lawful to express:
By which he slily seemed to intimate
Some secret revelation of their fate.
For he concluded, once upon a time,
He found a leaf inscribed with sacred rhyme,
Whose antique characters did well denote
The Sibyl's hand of the Cumæan grot;
The mad divineress had plainly writ,
A time should come, but many ages yet,
In which, sinister destinies ordain,
A dame should drown with all her feathered train,
And seas from thence be called the Chelidonian main.
At this, some shook for fear; the more devout
Arose, and blessed themselves from head to foot.
"'Tis true, some stagers of the wiser sort
Made all these idle wonderments their sport;
They said their only danger was delay,
And he, who heard what every fool could say,
Would never fix his thought, but trim his time away.
The passage yet was good; the wind, 'tis true,
Was somewhat high, but that was nothing new,
No more than usual equinoxes blew.
The sun, already from the Scales declined,
Gave little hopes of better days behind,
But change from bad to worse, of weather and of wind.
Nor need they fear the dampness of the sky
Should flag their wings, and hinder them to fly,
'Twas only water thrown on sails too dry.
But, least of all, philosophy presumes
Of truth in dreams, from melancholy fumes;
Perhaps the Martin, housed in holy ground,
Might think of ghosts, that walk their midnight round,
Till grosser atoms, tumbling in the stream
Of fancy, madly met, and clubbed into a dream:
As little weight his vain presages bear,
Of ill effect to such alone who fear;
Most prophecies are of a piece with these,
Each Nostradamus can foretell with ease:

Not naming persons, and confounding times,
One casual truth supports a thousand lying rhymes.
“The advice was true; but fear had seized the most,
And all good counsel is on cowards lost.
The question crudely put to shun delay,
'Twas carried by the major part to stay.
“His point thus gained, Sir Martin dated thence
His power, and from a priest became a prince.
He ordered all things with a busy care,
And cells and refectories did prepare,
And large provisions laid of winter fare;
But, now and then, let fall a word or two,
Of hope, that heaven some miracle might show,
And, for their sakes, the sun should backward go;
Against the laws of nature upward climb,
And, mounted on the Ram, renew the prime;
For which two proofs in sacred story lay,
Of Ahaz' dial, and of Joshua's day.
In expectation of such times as these,
A chapel housed them, truly called of ease;
For Martin much devotion did not ask;
They prayed sometimes, and that was all their task.
“It happened, as beyond the reach of wit
Blind prophecies may have a lucky hit,
That this accomplished, or at least in part,
Gave great repute to their new Merlin's art.
Some Swifts, the giants of the Swallow kind,
Large limbed, stout hearted, but of stupid mind,
(For Swisses, or for Gibeonites designed,)
These lubbers, peeping through a broken pane,
To suck fresh air, surveyed the neighbouring plain,
And saw, but scarcely could believe their eyes,
New blossoms flourish, and new flowers arise;
As God had been abroad, and, walking there,
Had left his footsteps, and reformed the year.
The sunny hills from far were seen to glow
With glittering beams, and in the meads below
The burnished brooks appeared with liquid gold to flow.
At last they heard the foolish Cuckoo sing,
Whose note proclaimed the holiday of spring.
“No longer doubting, all prepare to fly,
And repossess their patrimonial sky.
The priest before them did his wings display;
And that good omens might attend their way,
As luck would have it, 'twas St. Martin's day.
“Who but the Swallow now triumphs alone?
The canopy of heaven is all her own;
Her youthful offspring to their haunts repair,
And glide along in glades, and skim in air,
And dip for insects in the purling springs,
And stoop on rivers to refresh their wings.
Their mother thinks a fair provision made,

That every son can live upon his trade,
And, now the careful charge is off their hands,
Look out for husbands, and new nuptial bands.
The youthful widow longs to be supplied;
But first the lover is by lawyers tied,
To settle jointure-chimneys on the bride.
So thick they couple in so short a space,
That Martin's marriage-offerings rise apace.
Their ancient houses, running to decay,
Are furbished up, and cemented with clay:
They teem already; store of eggs are laid,
And brooding mothers call Lucina's aid.
Fame spreads the news, and foreign fowls appear,
In flocks, to greet the new returning year,
To bless the founder, and partake the cheer.
“And now 'twas time, so fast their numbers rise,
To plant abroad and people colonies.
The youth drawn forth, as Martin had desired,
(For so their cruel destiny required,)
Were sent far off on an ill-fated day;
The rest would needs conduct them on their way,
And Martin went, because he feared alone to stay.
“So long they flew with inconsiderate haste,
That now their afternoon began to waste;
And, what was ominous, that very morn
The sun was entered into Capricorn;
Which, by their bad astronomer's account,
That week the Virgin balance should remount.
An infant moon eclipsed him in his way,
And hid the small remainders of his day.
The crowd, amazed, pursued no certain mark,
But birds met birds, and jostled in the dark.
Few mind the public, in a panic fright,
And fear increased the horror of the night.
Night came, but unattended with repose;
Alone she came, no sleep their eyes to close;
Alone, and black she came; no friendly stars arose.
“What should they do, beset with dangers round,
No neighbouring dorp, no lodging to be found,
But bleaky plains, and bare, unhospitable ground?
The latter brood, who just began to fly,
Sick-feathered, and unpractised in the sky,
For succour to their helpless mother call:
She spread her wings; some few beneath them crawl;
She spread them wider yet, but could not cover all.
To augment their woes, the winds began to move,
Debate in air for empty fields above,
Till Boreas got the skies, and poured amain
His rattling hailstones, mixed with snow and rain.
“The joyless morning late arose, and found
A dreadful desolation reign around,
Some buried in the snow, some frozen to the ground.

The rest were struggling still with death, and lay
The Crows' and Ravens' rights, an undefended prey:
Excepting Martin's race; for they and he
Had gained the shelter of a hollow tree;
But, soon discovered by a sturdy clown,
He headed all the rabble of a town,
And finished them with bats, or polled them down.
Martin himself was caught alive, and tried
For treasonous crimes, because the laws provide
No Martin there in winter shall abide.
High on an oak, which never leaf shall bear,
He breathed his last, exposed to open air;
And there his corpse unblessed is hanging still,
To show the change of winds with his prophetic bill."
The patience of the Hind did almost fail,
For well she marked the malice of the tale;
Which ribald art their Church to Luther owes;
In malice it began, by malice grows;
He sowed the serpent's teeth, an iron harvest rose.
But most in Martin's character and fate,
She saw her slandered sons, the Panther's hate,
The people's rage, the persecuting state:
Then said, "I take the advice in friendly part;
You clear your conscience, or at least your heart.
Perhaps you failed in your foreseeing skill,
For Swallows are unlucky birds to kill:
As for my sons, the family is blessed,
Whose every child is equal to the rest;
No Church reformed can boast a blameless line,
Such Martins build in yours, and more than mine;
Or else an old fanatic author lies,
Who summed their scandals up by centuries.
But through your parable I plainly see
The bloody laws, the crowd's barbarity;
The sunshine, that offends the purblind sight,
Had some their wishes, it would soon be night.
Mistake me not; the charge concerns not you;
Your sons are malcontents, but yet are true,
As far as non-resistance makes them so;
But that's a word of neutral sense, you know,
A passive term, which no relief will bring,
But trims betwixt a rebel and a king."
"Rest well assured," the Pardalis replied,
"My sons would all support the regal side,
Though heaven forbid the cause by battle should be tried."
The matron answered with a loud Amen,
And thus pursued her argument again:—
"If, as you say, and as I hope no less,
Your sons will practise what yourselves profess,
What angry power prevents our present peace?
The Lion, studious of our common good,
Desires (and kings' desires are ill withstood)

To join our nations in a lasting love;
The bars betwixt are easy to remove,
For sanguinary laws were never made above.
If you condemn that prince of tyranny,
Whose mandate forced your Gallic friends to fly,
Make not a worse example of your own,
Or cease to rail at causeless rigour shown,
And let the guiltless person throw the stone.
His blunted sword your suffering brotherhood
Have seldom felt; he stops it short of blood:
But you have ground the persecuting knife,
And set it to a razor-edge on life.
Cursed be the wit, which cruelty refines,
Or to his father's rod the scorpion joins!
Your finger is more gross than the great monarch's loins.
But you, perhaps, remove that bloody note,
And stick it on the first reformers' coat.
Oh let their crime in long oblivion sleep;
'Twas theirs indeed to make, 'tis yours to keep!
Unjust, or just, is all the question now;
'Tis plain, that, not repealing, you allow.
"To name the Test would put you in a rage;
You charge not that on any former age,
But smile to think how innocent you stand,
Armed by a weapon put into your hand.
Yet still remember, that you wield a sword,
Forged by your foes against your sovereign lord;
Designed to hew the imperial cedar down,
Defraud succession, and dis-heir the crown.
To abhor the makers, and their laws approve,
Is to hate traitors, and the treason love.
What means it else, which now your children say,
We made it not, nor will we take away?
"Suppose some great oppressor had, by slight
Of law, disseised your brother of his right,
Your common sire surrendering in a fright;
Would you to that unrighteous title stand,
Left by the villain's will to heir the land?
More just was Judas, who his Saviour sold;
The sacrilegious bribe he could not hold,
Nor hang in peace, before he rendered back the gold.
What more could you have done, than now you do,
Had Oates and Bedloe and their plot been true;
Some specious reasons for those wrongs were found;
The dire magicians threw their mists around,
And wise men walked as on enchanted ground.
But now when time has made the imposture plain,
(Late though he followed truth, and limping held her train,)
What new delusion charms your cheated eyes again?
The painted harlot might a while bewitch,
But why the hag uncased, and all obscene with itch?
"The first reformers were a modest race;

Our peers possessed in peace their native place,
And when rebellious arms o'erturned the state,
They suffered only in the common fate;
But now the sovereign mounts the regal chair,
And mitred seats are full, yet David's bench is bare.
Your answer is, they were not dispossest;
They need but rub their metal on the Test
To prove their ore;—'twere well if gold alone
Were touched and tried on your discerning stone;
But that unfaithful test unfound will pass
The dross of Atheists, and sectarian brass;
As if the experiment were made to hold
For base production, and reject the gold.
Thus men ungodded may to places rise,
And sects may be preferred without disguise;
No danger to the Church or State from these,
The Papist only has his writ of ease.
No gainful office gives him the pretence
To grind the subject, or defraud the prince.
Wrong conscience, or no conscience, may deserve
To thrive, but ours alone is privileged to starve.
Still thank yourselves, you cry; your noble race
We banish not, but they forsake the place;
Our doors are open:—true, but ere they come,
You toss your censing test, and fume the room;
As if 'twere Toby's rival to expel,
And fright the fiend who could not bear the smell.”
To this the Panther sharply had replied,
But having gained a verdict on her side,
She wisely gave the loser leave to chide;
Well satisfied to have the butt and peace,
And for the plaintiff's cause she cared the less,
Because she sued in forma pauperis;
Yet thought it decent something should be said,
For secret guilt by silence is betrayed;
So neither granted all, nor much denied,
But answered with a yawning kind of pride:
“Methinks such terms of proffered peace you bring,
As once Æneas to the Italian king:
By long possession all the land is mine;
You strangers come with your intruding line,
To share my sceptre, which you call to join.
You plead like him an ancient pedigree,
And claim a peaceful seat by fate's decree.
In ready pomp your sacrificer stands,
To unite the Trojan and the Latin bands;
And, that the league more firmly may be tied,
Demand the fair Lavinia for your bride.
Thus plausibly you veil the intended wrong,
But still you bring your exiled gods along;
And will endeavour, in succeeding space,
Those household puppets on our hearths to place.

Perhaps some barbarous laws have been preferred;
I spake against the Test, but was not heard.
These to rescind, and peerage to restore,
My gracious sovereign would my vote implore;
I owe him much, but owe my conscience more."
"Conscience is then your plea," replied the dame,
"Which, well-informed, will ever be the same.
But yours is much of the chameleon hue,
To change the dye with every distant view.
When first the Lion sat with awful sway,
Your conscience taught your duty to obey:
He might have had your statutes and your Test;
No conscience but of subjects was professed.
He found your temper, and no farther tried,
But on that broken reed, your Church, relied.
In vain the sects essayed their utmost art,
With offered treasures to espouse their part;
Their treasures were a bribe too mean to move his heart.
But when, by long experience, you had proved,
How far he could forgive, how well he loved;
(A goodness that excelled his godlike race,
And only short of heaven's unbounded grace;
A flood of mercy that o'erflowed our isle,
Calm in the rise, and fruitful as the Nile,)
Forgetting whence your Egypt was supplied,
You thought your sovereign bound to send the tide;
Nor upward looked on that immortal spring,
But vainly deemed, he durst not be a king.
Then Conscience, unrestrained by fear, began
To stretch her limits, and extend the span;
Did his indulgence as her gift dispose,
And made a wise alliance with her foes.
Can Conscience own the associating name,
And raise no blushes to conceal her shame?
For sure she has been thought a bashful dame.
But if the cause by battle should be tried,
You grant she must espouse the regal side;
O Proteus-conscience, never to be tied!
What Phœbus from the Tripod shall disclose,
Which are, in last resort, your friends or foes?
Homer, who learned the language of the sky,
The seeming Gordian knot would soon untie;
Immortal powers the term of Conscience know,
But Interest is her name with men below."
"Conscience or Interest be't, or both in one,"
(The Panther answered in a surly tone
"The first commands me to maintain the crown,
The last forbids to throw my barriers down.
Our penal laws no sons of yours admit,
Our Test excludes your tribe from benefit.
These are my banks your ocean to withstand,
Which, proudly rising, overlooks the land,

And, once let in, with unresisted sway,
Would sweep the pastors and their flocks away.
Think not my judgment leads me to comply
With laws unjust, but hard necessity:
Imperious need, which cannot be withstood,
Makes ill authentic, for a greater good.
Possess your soul with patience, and attend;
A more auspicious planet may ascend;
Good fortune may present some happier time
With means to cancel my unwilling crime;
(Unwilling, witness all ye powers above!)
To mend my errors, and redeem your love:
That little space you safely may allow;
Your all-dispensing power protects you now."
"Hold," said the Hind, "'tis needless to explain;
You would postpone me to another reign;
Till when, you are content to be unjust:
Your part is to possess, and mine to trust;
A fair exchange proposed, of future chance
For present profit and inheritance.
Few words will serve to finish our dispute;
Who will not now repeal, would persecute.
To ripen green revenge your hopes attend,
Wishing that happier planet would ascend.
For shame, let Conscience be your plea no more;
To will hereafter, proves she might before;
But she's a bawd to gain, and holds the door.
"Your care about your banks infers a fear
Of threatening floods and inundations near;
If so, a just reprise would only be
Of what the land usurped upon the sea;
And all your jealousies but serve to show,
Your ground is, like your neighbour-nation, low.
To intrench in what you grant unrighteous laws,
Is to distrust the justice of your cause;
And argues, that the true religion lies
In those weak adversaries you despise.
Tyrannic force is that which least you fear;
The sound is frightful in a Christian's ear:
Avert it, Heaven! nor let that plague be sent
To us from the dispeopled continent.
"But piety commands me to refrain;
Those prayers are needless in this monarch's reign.
Behold how he protects your friends oppressed,
Receives the banished, succours the distressed!
Behold, for you may read an honest open breast.
He stands in daylight, and disdains to hide
An act, to which by honour he is tied,
A generous, laudable, and kingly pride.
Your Test he would repeal, his peers restore;
This when he says he means, he means no more."
"Well," said the Panther, "I believe him just,

And yet—”
“And yet, 'tis but because you must;
You would be trusted, but you would not trust.”
The Hind thus briefly; and disdained to enlarge
On power of kings, and their superior charge,
As heaven's trustees before the people's choice;
Though sure the Panther did not much rejoice
To hear those echoes given of her once loyal voice.
The matron wooed her kindness to the last,
But could not win; her hour of grace was past.
Whom, thus persisting, when she could not bring
To leave the Wolf, and to believe her king,
She gave her up, and fairly wished her joy
Of her late treaty with her new ally:
Which well she hoped would more successful prove,
Than was the Pigeon's and the Buzzard's love.
The Panther asked, what concord there could be
Betwixt two kinds whose natures disagree?
The dame replied: “'Tis sung in every street,
The common chat of gossips when they meet;
But, since unheard by you, 'tis worth your while
To take a wholesome tale, though told in homely style.
“A plain good man, whose name is understood,
(So few deserve the name of plain and good,)
Of three fair lineal lordships stood possessed,
And lived, as reason was, upon the best.
Inured to hardships from his early youth,
Much had he done and suffered for his truth:
At land and sea, in many a doubtful fight,
Was never known a more adventurous knight,
Who oftener drew his sword, and always for the right.
“As fortune would, (his fortune came, though late,)
He took possession of his just estate;
Nor racked his tenants with increase of rent,
Nor lived too sparing, nor too largely spent,
But overlooked his hinds; their pay was just,
And ready, for he scorned to go on trust:
Slow to resolve, but in performance quick;
So true, that he was awkward at a trick.
For little souls on little shifts rely,
And coward arts of mean expedients try;
The noble mind will dare do anything but lie.
False friends, his deadliest foes, could find no way,
But shows of honest bluntness, to betray;
That unsuspected plainness he believed;
He looked into himself, and was deceived.
Some lucky planet sure attends his birth,
Or heaven would make a miracle on earth;
For prosperous honesty is seldom seen
To bear so dead a weight, and yet to win.
It looks as fate with nature's law would strive,
To show plain-dealing once an age may thrive;

And, when so tough a frame she could not bend,
Exceeded her commission, to befriend.
“This grateful man, as heaven increased his store,
Gave God again, and daily fed his poor.
His house with all convenience was purveyed;
The rest he found, but raised the fabric where he prayed;
And in that sacred place his beauteous wife
Employed her happiest hours of holy life.
“Nor did their alms extend to those alone,
Whom common faith more strictly made their own;
A sort of Doves were housed too near the hall,
Who cross the proverb, and abound with gall.
Though some, 'tis true, are passively inclined,
The greater part degenerate from their kind;
Voracious birds, that hotly bill and breed,
And largely drink, because on salt they feed.
Small gain from them their bounteous owner draws;
Yet, bound by promise, he supports their cause,
As corporations privileged by laws.
“That house, which harbour to their kind affords,
Was built long since, God knows, for better birds;
But fluttering there, they nestle near the throne,
And lodge in habitations not their own,
By their high crops and corny gizzards known.
Like Harpies, they could scent a plenteous board,
Then to be sure they never failed their lord:
The rest was form, and bare attendance paid;
They drank, and eat, and grudgingly obeyed.
The more they fed, they ravened still for more;
They drained from Dan, and left Beersheba poor.
All this they had by law, and none repined;
The preference was but due to Levi's kind:
But when some lay-preferment fell by chance,
The gourmands made it their inheritance.
When once possessed, they never quit their claim,
For then 'tis sanctified to heaven's high name;
And hallowed thus, they cannot give consent,
The gift should be profaned by worldly management.
“Their flesh was never to the table served,
Though 'tis not thence inferred the birds were starved;
But that their master did not like the food,
As rank, and breeding melancholy blood.
Nor did it with his gracious nature suit,
E'en though they were not doves, to persecute:
Yet he refused, (nor could they take offence,)
Their glutton kind should teach him abstinence.
Nor consecrated grain their wheat he thought,
Which, new from treading, in their bills they brought;
But left his hinds each in his private power,
That those who like the bran might leave the flour.
He for himself, and not for others, chose,
Nor would he be imposed on, nor impose;

But in their faces his devotion paid,
And sacrifice with solemn rites was made,
And sacred incense on his altars laid.
“Besides these jolly birds, whose corpse impure
Repaid their commons with their salt manure,
Another farm he had behind his house,
Not overstocked, but barely for his use;
Wherein his poor domestic poultry fed,
And from his pious hands received their bread.
Our pampered Pigeons, with malignant eyes,
Beheld these inmates, and their nurseries;
Though hard their fare, at evening, and at morn,
(A cruse of water and an ear of corn,)
Yet still they grudged that modicum, and thought
A sheaf in every single grain was brought.
Fain would they filch that little food away,
While unrestrained those happy gluttons prey;
And much they grieved to see so nigh their hall,
The bird that warned St. Peter of his fall;
That he should raise his mitred crest on high,
And clap his wings, and call his family
To sacred rites; and vex the ethereal powers
With midnight matins at uncivil hours;
Nay more, his quiet neighbours should molest,
Just in the sweetness of their morning rest.
Beast of a bird, supinely when he might
Lie snug and sleep, to rise before the light!
What if his dull forefathers used that cry,
Could he not let a bad example die?
The world was fallen into an easier way;
This age knew better than to fast and pray.
Good sense in sacred worship would appear,
So to begin, as they might end the year.
Such feats in former times had wrought the falls
Of crowing chanticleers in cloistered walls.
Expelled for this, and for their lands, they fled;
And sister Partlet, with her hooded head,
Was hooted hence, because she would not pray abed.
The way to win the restiff world to God,
Was to lay by the disciplining rod,
Unnatural fasts, and foreign forms of prayer;
Religion frights us with a mien severe.
'Tis prudence to reform her into ease,
And put her in undress, to make her please;
A lively faith will bear aloft the mind,
And leave the luggage of good works behind.
“Such doctrines in the Pigeon-house were taught;
You need not ask how wondrously they wrought;
But sure the common cry was all for these,
Whose life and precepts both encouraged ease.
Yet fearing those alluring baits might fail,
And holy deeds o'er all their arts prevail,

(For vice, though frontless, and of hardened face,
Is daunted at the sight of awful grace,)
An hideous figure of their foes they drew,
Nor lines, nor looks, nor shades, nor colours true;
And this grotesque design exposed to public view.
One would have thought it an Egyptian piece,
With garden-gods, and barking deities,
More thick than Ptolemy has stuck the skies.
All so perverse a draught, so far unlike,
It was no libel where it meant to strike.
Yet still the daubing pleased, and great and small,
To view the monster, crowded Pigeon-hall.
There Chanticleer was drawn upon his knees,
Adorning shrines, and stocks of sainted trees;
And by him, a misshapen, ugly race,
The curse of God was seen on every face:
No Holland emblem could that malice mend,
But still the worse the look, the fitter for a fiend.
"The master of the farm, displeased to find
So much of rancour in so mild a kind,
Enquired into the cause, and came to know,
The passive Church had struck the foremost blow;
With groundless fears, and jealousies possest,
As if this troublesome intruding guest
Would drive the birds of Venus from their nest,
A deed his inborn equity abhorred;
But interest will not trust, though God should plight his word.
"A law, the source of many future harms,
Had banished all the poultry from the farms;
With loss of life, if any should be found
To crow or peck on this forbidden ground.
That bloody statute chiefly was designed
For Chanticleer the white, of clergy kind;
But after-malice did not long forget
The lay that wore the robe and coronet.
For them, for their inferiors and allies,
Their foes a deadly Shibboleth devise;
By which unrighteously it was decreed,
That none to trust, or profit, should succeed,
Who would not swallow first a poisonous wicked weed;
Or that, to which old Socrates was cursed,
Or henbane juice to swell them till they burst.
"The patron, as in reason, thought it hard
To see this inquisition in his yard,
By which the sovereign was of subjects' use debarred.
All gentle means he tried, which might withdraw
The effects of so unnatural a law;
But still the dove-house obstinately stood
Deaf to their own, and to their neighbours' good;
And which was worse, if any worse could be,
Repented of their boasted loyalty;
Now made the champions of a cruel cause,

And drunk with fumes of popular applause:
For those whom God to ruin has designed,
He fits for fate, and first destroys their mind.
“New doubts indeed they daily strove to raise,
Suggested dangers, interposed delays,
And emissary Pigeons had in store,
Such as the Meccan prophet used of yore,
To whisper counsels in their patron's ear,
And veiled their false advice with zealous fear.
The master smiled to see them work in vain,
To wear him out, and make an idle reign:
He saw, but suffered their protractive arts,
And strove by mildness to reduce their hearts;
But they abused that grace to make allies,
And fondly closed with former enemies;
For fools are double fools, endeavouring to be wise.
“After a grave consult what course were best,
One, more mature in folly than the rest,
Stood up, and told them, with his head aside,
That desperate cures must be to desperate ills applied:
And therefore, since their main impending fear
Was from the increasing race of Chanticleer,
Some potent bird of prey they ought to find,
A foe professed to him, and all his kind:
Some haggard Hawk, who had her eyry nigh,
Well pounced to fasten, and well winged to fly;
One they might trust, their common wrongs to wreak.
The Musquet and the Coystrel were too weak,
Too fierce the Falcon; but, above the rest,
The noble Buzzard ever pleased me best:
Of small renown, 'tis true; for, not to lie,
We call him but a Hawk by courtesy.
I know he haunts the Pigeon-house and Farm,
And more, in time of war, has done us harm:
But all his hate on trivial points depends;
Give up our forms, and we shall soon be friends.
For Pigeons' flesh he seems not much to care;
Crammed Chickens are a more delicious fare.
On this high potentate, without delay,
I wish you would confer the sovereign sway;
Petition him to accept the government,
And let a splendid embassy be sent.
“This pithy speech prevailed, and all agreed,
Old enmities forgot, the Buzzard should succeed.
“Their welcome suit was granted, soon as heard,
His lodgings furnished, and a train prepared,
With B's upon their breast, appointed for his guard.
He came, and, crowned with great solemnity,
‘God save king Buzzard!’ was the general cry.
“A portly prince, and goodly to the sight,
He seemed a son of Anak for his height:
Like those whom stature did to crowns prefer,

Black-browed, and bluff, like Homer's Jupiter;
Broad-backed, and brawny-built for love's delight,
A prophet formed to make a female proselyte;
A theologue more by need than genial bent,
By breeding sharp, by nature confident.
Interest in all his actions was discerned;
More learned than honest, more a wit than learned;
Or forced by fear, or by his profit led,
Or both conjoined, his native clime he fled;
But brought the virtues of his heaven along,
A fair behaviour, and a fluent tongue.
And yet with all his arts he could not thrive,
The most unlucky parasite alive;
Loud praises to prepare his paths he sent,
And then himself pursued his compliment;
But by reverse of fortune chased away,
His gifts no longer than their author stay;
He shakes the dust against the ungrateful race,
And leaves the stench of ordures in the place.
Oft has he flattered and blasphemed the same;
For in his rage he spares no sovereign's name:
The hero and the tyrant change their style,
By the same measure that they frown or smile.
When well received by hospitable foes,
The kindness he returns, is to expose;
For courtesies, though undeserved and great,
No gratitude in felon-minds beget;
As tribute to his wit, the churl receives the treat.
His praise of foes is venomously nice;
So touched, it turns a virtue to a vice;
'A Greek, and bountiful, forewarns us twice.'
Seven sacraments he wisely does disown,
Because he knows confession stands for one;
Where sins to sacred silence are conveyed,
And not for fear, or love, to be betrayed:
But he, uncalled, his patron to control,
Divulged the secret whispers of his soul;
Stood forth the accusing Satan of his crimes,
And offered to the Moloch of the times.
Prompt to assail, and careless of defence,
Invulnerable in his impudence,
He dares the world; and, eager of a name,
He thrusts about, and jostles into fame.
Frontless, and satire-proof, he scours the streets,
And runs an Indian-muck at all he meets.
So fond of loud report, that, not to miss
Of being known, (his last and utmost bliss,)
He rather would be known for what he is.
"Such was, and is, the Captain of the Test,
Though half his virtues are not here expressed;
The modesty of fame conceals the rest.
The spleenful Pigeons never could create

A prince more proper to revenge their hate;
Indeed, more proper to revenge, than save;
A king, whom in his wrath the Almighty gave:
For all the grace the landlord had allowed,
But made the Buzzard and the Pigeons proud;
Gave time to fix their friends, and to seduce the crowd.
They long their fellow-subjects to enthral,
Their patron's promise into question call,
And vainly think he meant to make them lords of all.
“False fears their leaders failed not to suggest,
As if the Doves were to be dispossest;
Nor sighs, nor groans, nor goggling eyes did want,
For now the Pigeons too had learned to cant.
The house of prayer is stocked with large increase;
Nor doors, nor windows, can contain the press,
For birds of every feather fill the abode;
E'en atheists out of envy own a God,
And, reeking from the stews, adulterers come,
Like Goths and Vandals to demolish Rome.
That conscience, which to all their crimes was mute,
Now calls aloud, and cries to persecute:
No rigour of the laws to be released,
And much the less, because it was their Lord's request;
They thought it great their sovereign to control,
And named their pride, nobility of soul.
“'Tis true, the Pigeons, and their prince elect,
Were short of power, their purpose to effect;
But with their quills did all the hurt they could,
And cuffed the tender Chickens from their food:
And much the Buzzard in their cause did stir,
Though naming not the patron, to infer,
With all respect, he was a gross idolater.
“But when the imperial owner did espy,
That thus they turned his grace to villainy,
Not suffering wrath to discompose his mind,
He strove a temper for the extremes to find,
So to be just, as he might still be kind;
Then, all maturely weighed, pronounced a doom
Of sacred strength for every age to come.
By this the Doves their wealth and state possess,
No rights infringed, but licence to oppress:
Such power have they as factious lawyers long
To crowns ascribed, that kings can do no wrong.
But since his own domestic birds have tried
The dire effects of their destructive pride,
He deems that proof a measure to the rest,
Concluding well within his kingly breast,
His fowls of nature too unjustly were opprest.
He therefore makes all birds of every sect
Free of his farm, with promise to respect
Their several kinds alike, and equally protect.
His gracious edict the same franchise yields

To all the wild increase of woods and fields,
And who in rocks aloof, and who in steeples builds:
To Crows the like impartial grace affords,
And Choughs and Daws, and such republic birds;
Secured with ample privilege to feed,
Each has his district, and his bounds decreed;
Combined in common interest with his own,
But not to pass the Pigeons' Rubicon.
“Here ends the reign of this pretended Dove;
All prophecies accomplished from above,
For Shiloh comes the sceptre to remove.
Reduced from her imperial high abode,
Like Dionysius to a private rod,
The passive Church, that with pretended grace
Did her distinctive mark in duty place,
Now touched, reviles her Maker to his face.
“What after happened is not hard to guess;
The small beginnings had a large increase,
And arts and wealth succeed the secret spoils of peace.
'Tis said, the Doves repented, though too late,
Become the smiths of their own foolish fate:
Nor did their owner hasten their ill hour,
But, sunk in credit, they decreased in power;
Like snows in warmth that mildly pass away,
Dissolving in the silence of decay.
“The Buzzard, not content with equal place,
Invites the feathered Nimrods of his race,
To hide the thinness of their flock from sight,
And all together make a seeming goodly flight:
But each have separate interests of their own;
Two Czars are one too many for a throne.
Nor can the usurper long abstain from food;
Already he has tasted Pigeon's blood,
And may be tempted to his former fare,
When this indulgent lord shall late to heaven repair.
Bare benting times, and moulting months may come,
When, lagging late, they cannot reach their home;
Or rent in schism, (for so their fate decrees,)
Like the tumultuous college of the bees,
They fight their quarrel, by themselves opprest,
The tyrant smiles below, and waits the falling feast.”
Thus did the gentle Hind her fable end,
Nor would the Panther blame it, nor commend;
But, with affected yawnings at the close,
Seemed to require her natural repose;
For now the streaky light began to peep,
And setting stars admonished both to sleep.
The Dame withdrew, and, wishing to her guest
The peace of heaven, betook herself to rest:
Ten thousand angels on her slumbers wait,
With glorious visions of her future state.

John Dryden

The Hind and the Panther: Part I (excerpts)

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chas'd with horns and hounds
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

Not so her young; for their unequal line
Was hero's make, half human, half divine.
Their earthly mold obnoxious was to fate,
Th' immortal part assum'd immortal state.
Of these a slaughter'd army lay in blood,
Extended o'er the Caledonian wood,
Their native walk; whose vocal blood arose,
And cried for pardon on their perjur'd foes.
Their fate was fruitful, and the sanguine seed,
Endued with souls, increas'd the sacred breed.
So captive Israel multiplied in chains,
A numerous exile, and enjoy'd her pains.
With grief and gladness mix'd, their mother view'd
Her martyr'd offspring, and their race renew'd;
Their corps to perish, but their kind to last,
So much the deathless plant the dying fruit surpass'd.

Panting and pensive now she rang'd alone,
And wander'd in the kingdoms, once her own.
The common hunt, tho' from their rage restrain'd
By sov'reign pow'r, her company disdain'd;
Grinn'd as they pass'd, and with a glaring eye
Gave gloomy signs of secret enmity.
'T is true, she bounded by, and tripp'd so light,
They had not time to take a steady sight,
For Truth has such a face and such a mien,
As to be lov'd needs only to be seen.

The bloody Bear, an Independent beast,
Unlick'd to form, in groans her hate express'd.
Among the timorous kind the Quaking Hare
Profess'd neutrality, but would not swear.
Next her the buffoon Ape, as atheists use,
Mimick'd all sects, and had his own to choose:
Still when the Lion look'd, his knees he bent,
And paid at church a courtier's compliment.

The bristled Baptist Boar, impure as he,
(But whiten'd with the foam of sanctity,)
With fat pollutions fill'd the sacred place,
And mountains levell'd in his furious race:
So first rebellion founded was in grace.
But since the mighty ravage which he made

In German forests had his guilt betray'd,
With broken tusks, and with a borrow'd name,
He shunn'd the vengeance, and conceal'd the shame;
So lurk'd in sects unseen. With greater guile
False Reynard fed on consecrated spoil:
The graceless beast by Athanasius first
Was chas'd from Nice; then, by Socinus nurs'd,
His impious race their blasphemy renew'd,
And nature's King through nature's optics view'd.
Revers'd, they view'd him lessen'd to their eye,
Nor in an infant could a God descry:
New swarming sects to this obliquely tend,
Hence they began, and here they all will end.

What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
If private reason hold the public scale?
But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in th' abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
O teach me to believe Thee thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than Thyself reveal'd;
But her alone for my director take,
Whom Thou hast promis'd never to forsake!
My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires,
My manhood, long misled by wand'ring fires,
Follow'd false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am,
Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame.
Good life be now my task: my doubts are done:
(What more could fright my faith, than Three in One?)
Can I believe eternal God could lie
Disguis'd in mortal mould and infancy?
That the great Maker of the world could die?
And after that trust my imperfect sense
Which calls in question his omnipotence?
Can I my reason to my faith compel,
And shall my sight, and touch, and taste rebel?
Superior faculties are set aside,
Shall their subservient organs be my guide?
Then let the moon usurp the rule of day,
And winking tapers show the sun his way;
For what my senses can themselves perceive,
I need no revelation to believe.

...

The Panther, sure the noblest, next the Hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind;
Oh, could her inborn stains be wash'd away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey!
How can I praise, or blame, and not offend,

Or how divide the frailty from the friend!
Her faults and virtues lie so mix'd that she
Nor wholly stands condemn'd, nor wholly free.
Then, like her injur'd Lion, let me speak;
He cannot bend her, and he would not break.
Unkind already, and estrang'd in part,
The Wolf begins to share her wand'ring heart.
Though' unpolluted yet with actual ill,
She half commits, who sins but in her will.
If, as our dreaming Platonists report,
There could be spirits of a middle sort,
Too black for heav'n, and yet too white for hell,
Who just dropp'd halfway down, nor lower fell;
So pois'd, so gently she descends from high,
It seems a soft dismission from the sky.
...

John Dryden

The Medal

Of all our antic sights and pageantry
Which English idiots run in crowds to see,
The Polish Medal bears the prize alone;
A monster, more the favourite of the town
Than either fairs or theatres have shown.
Never did art so well with nature strive,
Nor ever idol seemed so much alive;
So like the man, so golden to the sight,
So base within, so counterfeit and light.
One side is filled with title and with face;
And, lest the king should want a regal place,
On the reverse a tower the town surveys,
O'er which our mounting sun his beams displays.
The word, pronounced aloud by shrieval voice,
Loetamur, which in Polish is Rejoice,
The day, month, year, to the great act are joined,
And a new canting holiday designed.
Five days he sate for every cast and look,
Four more days than God to finish Adam took.
But who can tell what essence angels are
Or how long Heaven was making Lucifer?
Oh, could the style that copied every grace
And ploughed such furrows for an eunuch face,
Could it have formed his ever-changing will,
The various piece had tired the graver's skill!
A martial hero first, with early care
Blown, like a pigmy by the winds, to war;
A beardless chief, a rebel ere a man,
So young his hatred to his Prince began.
Next this, (how wildly will ambition steer!)
A vermin wriggling in the usurper's ear,
Bartering his venal wit for sums of gold,
He cast himself into the saint-like mould;
Groaned, sighed, and prayed, while godliness was gain,
The loudest bag-pipe of the squeaking train.
But, as 'tis hard to cheat a juggler's eyes,
His open lewdness he could ne'er disguise.
There split the saint; for hypocritic zeal
Allows no sins but those it can conceal.
Whoring to scandal gives too large a scope;
Saints must not trade, but they may interlope.
The ungodly principle was all the same;
But a gross cheat betrays his partners' game.
Besides, their pace was formal, grave, and slack;
His nimble wit outran the heavy pack.
Yet still he found hs fortune at a stay,
Whole droves of blockheads choking up his way;
They took, but not rewarded, his advice;
Villain and wit exact a double price.
Power was his aim; but thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turned loyal in his own defence,
And malice reconciled him to his Prince.

Him in the anguish of his soul he served,
Rewarded faster still than he deserved.
Behold him now exalted into trust,
His counsels oft convenient, seldom just;
Even in the most sincere advice he gave
He had a grudging still to be a knave.
The frauds he learnt in his fanatic years
Made him uneasy in his lawful gears.
At best, as little honest as he could,
And, like white witches, mischievously good.
To his first bias longingly he leans
And rather would be great by wicked means.
Thus framed for ill, he loosed our triple hold,
(Advice unsafe, precipitous, and bold.)
From hence those tears, that Ilium was our woe:
Who helps a powerful friend forearms a foe.
What wonder if the waves prevail so far,
When he cut down the banks that made the bar?
Seas follow but their nature to invade;
But he by art our native strength betrayed.
So Samson to his foe his force confest,
And to be shorn lay slumbering on her breast.
But when this fatal counsel, found too late,
Exposed its author to the public hate,
When his just sovereign by no impious way
Could be seduced to arbitrary sway,
Forsaken of that hope, he shifts his sail,
Drives down the current with the popular gale,
And shows the fiend confessed without a veil.
He preaches to the crowd that power is lent,
But not conveyed to kingly government,
That claims successive bear no binding force,
That coronation oaths are things of course;
Maintains the multitude can never err,
And sets the people in the papal chair.
The reason's obvious, interest never lies;
The most have still their interest in their eyes,
The power is always theirs, and power is ever wise.
Almighty crowd! thou shortenest all dispute.
Power is thy essence, wit thy attribute!
Nor faith nor reason make thee at a stay,
Thou leapst o'er all eternal truths in thy Pindaric way!
Athens, no doubt, did righteously decide,
When Phocion and when Socrates were tried;
As righteously they did those dooms repent;
Still they were wise, whatever way they went.
Crowds err not, though to both extremes they run;
To kill the father and recall the son.
Some think the fools were most, as times went then,
But now the world's o'erstocked with prudent men.
The common cry is even religion's test;
The Turk's is at Constantinople best,

Idols in India, Popery in Rome,
And our own worship is only true at home,
And true but for the time; 'tis hard to know
How long we please it shall continue so;
This side to-day, and that to-morrow burns;
So all are God Almighties in their turns.
A tempting doctrine, plausible and new;
What fools our fathers were, if this be true!
Who, to destroy the seeds of civil war,
Inherent right in monarchs did declare;
And, that a lawful power might never cease,
Secured succession to secure our peace.
Thus property and sovereign sway at last
In equal balances were justly cast;
But this new Jehu spurs the hot-mounted horse,
Instructs the beast to know his native force,
To take the bit between his teeth and fly
To the next headlong steep of anarchy.
Too happy Engand, if our good we knew,
Would we possess the freedom we pursue!
The lavish government can give no more;
Yet we repine, and plenty makes us poor.
God tried us once; our rebel fathers fought;
He glutted them with all the power they sought,
Till, mastered by their own usurping brave,
The free-born subject sunk into a slave.
We loathe our manna, and we long for quails;
Ah! what is man, when his own wish prevails!
How rash, how swift to plunge himself in ill,
Proud of his power and boundless in his will!
That kings can do no wrong we must believe;
None can they do, and must they all receive?
Help. Heaven, or sadly we shall see an hour
When neither wrong nor right are in their power!
Already they have lost their best defence,
The benefit of laws which they dispense.
No justice to their righteous cause allowed,
But baffled by an arbitrary crowd;
And medals graved, their conquest to record,
The stamp and coin of their adopted lord.

The man who laughed but once, to see an ass
Mumbling to make the cross-grained thistles pass,
Might laugh again to see a jury chaw
The prickles of unpalatable law.
The witnesses that, leech-like lived on blood,
Sucking for them were med'cinally good;
But when they fastened on their festered sore,
Then justice and religion they forswore,
Thus men are raised by factions and decried,
And rogue and saint distinguished by their side;
They rack even Scripture to confess their cause

And plead a call to preach in spite of laws.
But that's no news to the poor injured page,
It has been used as ill in every age,
And is constrained with patience all to take,
For what defence can Greek and Hebrew make?
Happy who can this talking trumpet seize,
They make it speak whatever sense they please!
'Twas framed at first our oracle to inquire;
But since our sects in prophecy grow higher,
The text inspires not them, but they the text inspire.

London, thou great emporium of our isle,
O thou too bounteous, thou too fruitful Nile!
How shall I praise or curse to thy desert,
Or separate thy sound from thy corrupted part?
I called thee Nile; the parallel will stand:
Thy tides of wealth o'erflow the fattened land;
Yet monsters from thy large increase we find
Engendered on the slime thou leavest behind.
Sedition has not wholly seized on thee,
Thy nobler parts are from infection free.
Of Israel's tribes thou hast a numerous band,
But still the Canaanite is in the land.
Thy military chiefs are brave and true,
Nor are thy disenchanted burghers few.
The head is loyal which thy heart commands,
But what's a head with two such gouty hands?
The wise and wealthy love the surest way
And are content to thrive and to obey.
But wisdom is to sloth too great a slave;
None are so busy as the fool and knave.
Those let me curse; what vengeance will they urge,
Whose ordures neither plague nor fire can purge,
Nor sharp experience can to duty bring
Nor angry Heaven nor a forgiving king!
In gospel-phrase their chapmen they betray;
Their shops are dens, the buyer is their prey;
The knack of trades is living on the spoil;
They boast e'en when each other they beguile.
Customs to steal is such a trivial thing
That 'tis their charter to defraud their King.
All hands unite of every jarring sect;
They cheat the country first, and then infect.
They for God's cause their monarchs dare dethrone,
And they'll be sure to make His cause their own.
Whether the plotting Jesuit laid the plan
Of murdering kings, or the French Puritan,
Our sacrilegious sects their guides outgo
And kings and kingly power would murder too.

What means their traitorous combination less,
Too plain to evade, too shameful to confess?

But treason is not owned when 'tis descried;
Successful crimes alone are justified.
The men who no consiracy would find,
Who doubts but, had it taken, they had joined?
Joined in a mutual covenant of defence,
At first without, at last against their Prince?
If sovereign right by sovereign power they scan,
The same bold maxim holds in God and man:
God were not safe; his thunder could they shun,
He should be forced to crown another son.
Thus, when the heir was from the vineyard thrown,
The rich possession was the murderers' own.
In vain to sophistry they have recourse;
By proving theirs no plot they prove 'tis worse,
Unmasked rebellion, and audiacious force,
Which, though not actual, yet all eyes may see
'Tis working, in the immediate power to be;
For from pretended grievances they rise
First to dislike and after to dispise;
Then, Cyclop-like, in human flesh to deal,
Chop up a minister at every meal;
Perhaps not wholly to melt down the king,
But clip his regal rights within the ring;
From thence to asssume the power of peace and war
And ease him by degrees of public care.
Yet, to consult his dignity and fame,
He should have leave to exercise the name,
And hold the cards while Commons played the game.
For what can power give more than food and drink,
To live at ease and not be bound to think?
These are the cooler methods of their crime,
But their hot zealots think 'tis loss of time;
On utmost bounds of loyalty they stand,
And grin and whet like a Croatian band
That waits impatient for the last command:
Thus outlaws open villainy maintain;
They steal not, but in squadrons scour the plain;
And if their power the passengers subdue,
The most most have right, the wrong is in the few.
Such impious axioms foolishly they show,
For in some soils Republics will not grow:
Our temperate Isle will no extremes sustain
Of popular sway or arbitrary reign:
But slides between them both into the best,
Secure in freedom, in a monarch blest.
And, though the climate, vexed with various winds,
Works through our yielding bodies on our minds,
The wholesome tempest purges what it breeds
To recommend the calmness that succeeds.

But thou, the pander of the people's hearts,
(O crooked soul and serpentine in arts!)…

What curses on thy blasted name will fall,
Which age to age their legacy shall call,
For all must curse the woes that must descend on all!
Religion thou hast none: thy mercury
Has passed through every sect, or theirs through thee.
But what thou givest, that venom still remains,
And the poxed nation feels thee in their brains.
What else inspires the tongues and swells the breasts
Of all thy bellowing renegado priests,
That preach up thee for God, dispense thy laws,
And with thy stum ferment their fainting cause,
Fresh fumes of madness raise, and toil and sweat,
To make the formidable cripple great?
Yet should thy crimes succeed, should lawless power
Compass those ends thy greedy hopes devour,
Thy canting friends thy mortal foes would be,
Thy god and theirs will never long agree;
For thine, if thou hast any, must be one
That lets the world and human kind alone;
A jolly god that passes hours too well
To promise Heaven or threaten us with Hell,
That unconcerned can at rebellion sit
And wink at crimes he did himself commit.
A tyrant theirs; the heaven their priesthood paints
A conventicle of gloomy sullen saints;
A heaven, like Bedlam, slovenly and sad,
Foredoomed for souls with false religion mad.

Without a vision poets can foreshow
What all but fools by common sense may know:
If true succession from our Isle should fail,
And crowds profane with impious arms prevail,
Not thou nor those thy factious arts engage
Shall reap that harvest of rebellious rage,
With which thou flatterest thy decrepit age.
The swelling poison of the several sects,
Which, wanting vent, the nation's health infects,
Shall burst its bag; and fighting out their way,
The various venoms on each other prey.
The Presbyter, puffed up with spiritual pride,
Shall on the necks of the lewd nobles ride,
His brethren damn, the civil power defy,
And parcel out republic prelacy.
But short shall be his reign; his rigid yoke
And tyrant power will puny sects provoke,
And frogs, and toads, and all the tadpole train
Will croak to Heaven for help from this devouring crane.
The cut-throat sword and clamorous gown shall jar
In sharing their ill-gotten spoils of war;
Chiefs shall be grudged the part which they pretend;
Lords envy lords, and friends with every friend
About their impious merit shall contend.

The surly Commons shall respect deny
And justle peerage out with property.
Their General either shall his trust betray
And force the crowd to arbitrary sway,
Or they, suspecting his ambitious aim,
In hate of kings shall cast anew the frame
And thrust out Collatine that bore their name.

Thus inborn broils the factions would engage,
Or wars of exiled heirs, or foreign rage,
Till halting vengeance overtook our age,
And our wild labours, wearied into rest,
Reclined us on a rightful monarch's breast.

``Pudet hoec opprobria vobis
Et dici potuisse et non potuisse refelli.''

John Dryden

The Secular Masque

Enter JANUS
JANUS
Chronos, Chronos, mend thy pace,
An hundred times the rolling sun
Around the radiant belt has run
In his revolving race.
Behold, behold, the goal in sight,
Spread thy fans, and wing thy flight.

Enter CHRONOS, with a scythe in his hand, and a great globe on his back, which he sets down at his entrance

CHRONOS
Weary, weary of my weight,
Let me, let me drop my freight,
And leave the world behind.
I could not bear
Another year
The load of human-kind.

Enter MOMUS Laughing

MOMUS
Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha! well hast thou done,
To lay down thy pack,
And lighten thy back.
The world was a fool, e'er since it begun,
And since neither Janus, nor Chronos, nor I,
Can hinder the crimes,
Or mend the bad times,
'Tis better to laugh than to cry.

Cho. of all

'Tis better to laugh than to cry

JANUS
Since Momus comes to laugh below,
Old Time begin the show,
That he may see, in every scene,
What changes in this age have been,

CHRONOS
Then Goddess of the silver bow begin.

Horns, or hunting-music within Enter DIANA
DIANA
With horns and with hounds I waken the day,
And hie to my woodland walks away;
I tuck up my robe, and am buskin'd soon,

And tie to my forehead a waxing moon.
I course the fleet stag, unkennel the fox,
And chase the wild goats o'er summits of rocks,
With shouting and hooting we pierce thro' the sky;
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

Cho. of all
With shouting and hooting, we pierce through the sky,
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

JANUS
Then our age was in its prime,

CHRONOS Chronos
Free from rage,

DIANA
--And free from crime.

MOMUS
A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

Cho. of all
Then our age was in its prime,
Free from rage, and free from crime,
A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.
Dance of Diana's attendants

Enter MARS
MARS
Inspire the vocal brass, inspire;
The world is past its infant age:
Arms and honour,
Arms and honour,
Set the martial mind on fire,
And kindle manly rage.
Mars has look'd the sky to red;
And peace, the lazy good, is fled.
Plenty, peace, and pleasure fly;
The sprightly green
In woodland-walks, no more is seen;
The sprightly green, has drunk the Tyrian dye.

Cho. of all
Plenty, peace, |&|c.

MARS
Sound the trumpet, beat the drum,
Through all the world around;
Sound a reveille, sound, sound,

The warrior god is come.

Cho. of all
Sound the trumpet, |&|c.

MOMUS
Thy sword within the scabbard keep,
And let mankind agree;
Better the world were fast asleep,
Than kept awake by thee.
The fools are only thinner,
With all our cost and care;
But neither side a winner,
For things are as they were.

Cho. of all
The fools are only, |&|c.

Enter VENUS
VENUS
Calms appear, when storms are past;
Love will have his hour at last:
Nature is my kindly care;
Mars destroys, and I repair;
Take me, take me, while you may,
Venus comes not ev'ry day.

Cho. of all
Take her, take her, |&|c.

CHRONOS
The world was then so light,
I scarcely felt the weight;
Joy rul'd the day, and love the night.
But since the Queen of Pleasure left the ground,
I faint, I lag,
And feebly drag
The pond'rous Orb around.
All, all of a piece throughout;

MOMUS,
pointing {}} to Diana {}}

Thy chase had a beast in view;
to Mars
Thy wars brought nothing about;
to Venus
Thy lovers were all untrue.
JANUS
'Tis well an old age is out,
And time to begin a new.

Cho. of all
All, all of a piece throughout;
Thy chase had a beast in view;
Thy wars brought nothing about;
Thy lovers were all untrue.
And time to begin a new.
Dance of huntsmen, nymphs, warriors, and lovers.

John Dryden

The Tears Of Amynta, For The Death Of Damon. A Song

1.
On a bank, beside a willow,
Heaven her covering, earth her pillow,
Sad Amynta sigh'd alone:
From the cheerless dawn of morning
Till the dews of night returning,
Singing thus she made her moan:
Hope is banish'd,
Joys are vanish'd,
Damon, my beloved, is gone!

2.
Time, I dare thee to discover
Such a youth and such a lover;
Oh, so true, so kind was he!
Damon was the pride of nature,
Charming in his every feature;
Damon lived alone for me;
Melting kisses,
Murmuring blisses:
Who so lived and loved as we?

3.
Never shall we curse the morning.
Never bless the night returning,
Sweet embraces to restore:
Never shall we both lie dying,
Nature failing, Love supplying
All the joys he drain'd before:

Death come end me,
To befriend me:
Love and Damon are no more

John Dryden

The Wife Of Bath Her Tale

In days of old, when Arthur filled the throne,
Whose acts and fame to foreign lands were blown,
The king of elves, and little fairy queen,
Gambolled on heaths, and danced on every green;
And where the jolly troop had led the round,
The grass unbidden rose, and marked the ground.
Nor darkling did they dance, the silver light
Of Phœbe served to guide their steps aright,
And, with their tripping pleased, prolong the night.
Her beams they followed, where at full she played,
Nor longer than she shed her horns they staid,
From thence with airy flight to foreign lands conveyed.
Above the rest our Britain held they dear,
More solemnly they kept their sabbaths here,
And made more spacious rings, and revelled half the year.
I speak of ancient times; for now the swain
Returning late may pass the woods in vain,
And never hope to see the nightly train;
In vain the dairy now with mints is dressed,
The dairy-maid expects no fairy guest
To skim the bowls, and after pay the feast.
She sighs, and shakes her empty shoes in vain,
No silver penny to reward her pain;1
For priests with prayers, and other godly gear,
Have made the merry goblins disappear;
And where they played their merry pranks before,
Have sprinkled holy water on the floor;
And friars that through the wealthy regions run,
Thick as the motes that twinkle in the sun,
Resort to farmers rich, and bless their halls,
And exorcise the beds, and cross the walls:
This makes the fairy quires forsake the place,
When once ‘tis hallowed with the rites of grace:
But in the walks, where wicked elves have been,
The learning of the parish now is seen;
The midnight parson, posting o’er the green,
With gown tucked up, to wakes; for Sunday next,
With humming ale encouraging his text;
Nor wants the holy leer to country-girl betwixt.
From fiends and imps he sets the village free,
There haunts not any incubus but he.
The maids and women need no danger fear
To walk by night, and sanctity so near;
For by some haycock, or some shady thorn,
He bids his beads both even-song and morn.
It so befel in this king Arthur’s reign,
A lusty knight was pricking o’er the plain;
A bachelor he was, and of the courtly train.
It happened as he rode, a damsel gay
In russet robes to market took her way;
Soon on the girl he cast an amorous eye,
So straight she walked, and on her pasterns high:

If seeing her behind he liked her pace,
Now turning short, he better likes her face.
He lights in haste, and, full of youthful fire,
By force accomplished his obscene desire.
This done, away he rode, not unespied,
For swarming at his back, the country cried:
And once in view they never lost the sight,
But seized, and pinioned brought to court the knight.
Then courts of kings were held in high renown,
Ere made the common brothels of the town;
There, virgins honourable vows received,
But chaste as maids in monasteries lived:
The king himself, to nuptial ties a slave,
No bad example to his poets gave;
And they, not bad, but in a vicious age,
Had not, to please the prince, debauched the stage.2
Now what should Arthur do? He loved the knight,
But sovereign monarchs are the source of right:
Moved by the damsel's tears and common cry,
He doomed the brutal ravisher to die.
But fair Geneura rose in his defence,
And prayed so hard for mercy from the prince,
That to his queen the king the offender gave,
And left it in her power to kill or save.
This gracious act the ladies all approve,
Who thought it much a man should die for love;
And with their mistress joined in close debate,
(Covering their kindness with dissembled hate,)
If not to free him, to prolong his fate.
At last agreed, they call him by consent
Before the queen and female parliament;
And the fair speaker rising from the chair,
Did thus the judgment of the house declare.
'Sir knight, though I have asked thy life, yet still
Thy destiny depends upon my will:
Nor hast thou other surety, than the grace
Not due to thee from our offended race.
But as our kind is of a softer mould,
And cannot blood without a sigh behold,
I grant thee life; reserving still the power
To take the forfeit when I see my hour;
Unless thy answer to my next demand
Shall set thee free from our avenging hand.
The question, whose solution I require,
Is, What the sex of women most desire?
In this dispute thy judges are at strife;
Beware; for on thy wit depends thy life.
Yet (lest, surprised, unknowing what to say,
Thou damn thyself) we give thee farther day;
A year is thine to wander at thy will;
And learn from others, if thou want'st the skill.
But, not to hold our proffer turned to scorn,

Good sureties will we have for thy return,
That at the time prefixed thou shalt obey,
And at thy pledge's peril keep thy day.'
Woe was the knight at this severe command,
But well he knew 'twas bootless to withstand.
The terms accepted, as the fair ordain,
He put in bail for his return again;
And promised answer at the day assigned,
The best, with Heaven's assistance, he could find.
His leave thus taken, on his way he went
With heavy heart, and full of discontent,
Misdoubting much, and fearful of the event.
'Twas hard the truth of such a point to find,
As was not yet agreed among the kind.
Thus on he went; still anxious more and more,
Asked all he met, and knocked at every door;
Inquired of men; but made his chief request
To learn from women what they loved the best.
They answered each according to her mind,
To please herself, not all the female kind.
One was for wealth, another was for place;
Crones, old and ugly, wished a better face;
The widow's wish was oftentimes to wed;
The wanton maids were all for sport a-bed;
Some said the sex were pleased with handsome lies,
And some gross flattery loved without disguise.
'Truth is,' says one, 'he seldom fails to win
Who flatters well; for that's our darling sin.
But long attendance, and a duteous mind,
Will work even with the wisest of the kind.'
One thought the sex's prime felicity
Was from the bonds of wedlock to be free;
Their pleasures, hours, and actions all their own,
And uncontrolled to give account to none.
Some wish a husband-fool; but such are curst,
For fools perverse of husbands are the worst:
All women would be counted chaste and wise,
Nor should our spouses see but with our eyes;
For fools will prate; and though they want the wit
To find close faults, yet open blots will hit;
Though better for their ease to hold their tongue,
For woman-kind was never in the wrong.
So noise ensues, and quarrels last for life;
The wife abhors the fool, the fool the wife.
And some men say, that great delight have we
To be for truth extolled, and secresy:
And constant in one purpose still to dwell,
And not our husband's counsels to reveal.
But that's a fable: for our sex is frail,
Inventing rather than not tell a tale.
Like leaky sieves no secrets we can hold;
Witness the famous tale that Ovid told.

Midas, the king, as in his book appears,
By Phœbus was endowed with ass's ears,
Which under his long locks he well concealed,
(As monarch's vices must not be revealed)
For fear the people have them in the wind,
Who long ago were neither dumb nor blind;
Nor apt to think from Heaven their title springs,
Since Jove and Mars left off begetting kings.
This Midas knew; and durst communicate
To none but to his wife his ears of state;
One must be trusted, and he thought her fit,
As passing prudent, and a parlous wit.
To this sagacious confessor he went,
And told her what a gift the gods had sent;
But told it under matrimonial seal,
With strict injunction never to reveal.
The secret heard, she plighted him her troth,
(And sacred sure is every woman's oath,)
The royal malady should rest unknown,
Both for her husband's honour and her own:
But ne'ertheless she pined with discontent;
The counsel rumbled till it found a vent.
The thing she knew she was obliged to hide;
By interest and by oath the wife was tied,
But if she told it not, the woman died.
Loath to betray a husband and a prince,
But she must burst, or blab, and no pretence
Of honour tied her tongue from self-defence.
A marshy ground commodiously was near,
Thither she ran, and held her breath for fear,
Lest if a word she spoke of any thing,
That word might be the secret of the king.
Thus full of counsel to the fen she went,
Griped all the way, and longing for a vent;
Arrived, by pure necessity compelled,
On her majestic marrow bones she kneeled;
Then to the water's brink she laid her head,
And as a bittour bumps within a reed,3
'To thee alone, O lake,' she said, 'I tell,
(And, as thy queen, command thee to conceal,)
Beneath his locks, the king my husband wears
A goodly royal pair of ass's ears:
Now I have eased my bosom of the pain,
Till the next longing fit return again.'
Thus through a woman was the secret known;
Tell us, and in effect you tell the town.
But to my tale. The knight with heavy cheer,
Wandering in vain, had now consumed the year;
One day was only left to solve the doubt,
Yet knew no more than when he first set out.
But home he must, and as the award had been,
Yield up his body captive to the queen.

In this despairing state he happed to ride,
As fortune led him, by a forest side;
Lonely the vale, and full of horror stood,
Brown with the shade of a religious wood;
When full before him at the noon of night,
(The moon was up, and shot a gleamy light,)
He saw a quire of ladies in a round
That featly footing seemed to skim the ground;
Thus dancing hand in hand, so light they were,
He knew not where they trod, on earth or air.
At speed he drove, and came a sudden guest,
In hope where many women were, at least
Some one by chance might answer his request.
But faster than his horse the ladies flew,
And in a trice were vanished out of view.
One only hag remained: but fouler far
Than grandame apes in Indian forests are:
Against a withered oak she leaned her weight,
Propped on her trusty staff, not half upright,
And dropped an awkward courtesy to the knight.
Then said, 'What makes you, sir, so late abroad
Without a guide, and this no beaten road?
Or want you aught that here you hope to find,
Or travel for some trouble in your mind?
The last I guess; and if I read aright,
Those of our sex are bound to serve a knight.
Perhaps good counsel may your grief assuage,
Then tell your pain, for wisdom is in age.'
To this the knight: 'Good mother, would you know
The secret cause and spring of all my woe?
My life must with to-morrow's light expire,
Unless I tell what women most desire.
Now could you help me at this hard essay,
Or for your inborn goodness, or for pay,
Yours is my life, redeemed by your advice,
Ask what you please, and I will pay the price:
The proudest kerchief of the court shall rest
Well satisfied of what they love the best.'
'Plight me thy faith,' quoth she, 'that what I ask,
Thy danger over, and performed thy task,
That thou shalt give for hire of thy demand;
Here take thy oath, and seal it on my hand;
I warrant thee, on peril of my life,
Thy words shall please both widow, maid, and wife.'
More words there needed not to move the knight,
To take her offer, and his truth to plight.
With that she spread a mantle on the ground,
And, first inquiring whither he was bound,
Bade him not fear, though long and rough the way,
At court he should arrive ere break of day:
His horse should find the way without a guide.
She said: with fury they began to ride,

He on the midst, the beldam at his side.
The horse, what devil drove I cannot tell,
But only this, they sped their journey well;
And all the way the crone informed the knight,
How he should answer the demand aright.
To court they came; the news was quickly spread
Of his returning to redeem his head.
The female senate was assembled soon,
With all the mob of women of the town:
The queen sat lord chief justice of the hall,
And bade the crier cite the criminal.
The knight appeared; and silence they proclaim:
Then first the culprit answered to his name;
And, after forms of law, was last required
To name the thing that women most desired.
The offender, taught his lesson by the way,
And by his counsel ordered what to say,
Thus bold began:—'My lady liege,' said he,
'What all your sex desire is—SOVEREIGNTY.
The wife affects her husband to command;
All must be hers, both money, house, and land:
The maids are mistresses even in their name,
And of their servants full dominion claim.
This, at the peril of my head, I say,
A blunt plain truth, the sex aspires to sway,
You to rule all, while we, like slaves, obey.'
There was not one, or widow, maid, or wife,
But said the knight had well deserved his life.
Even fair Geneura, with a blush, confessed
The man had found what women love the best.
Up starts the beldam, who was there unseen,
And, reverence made, accosted thus the queen:—
'My liege,' said she, 'before the court arise,
May I, poor wretch, find favour in your eyes,
To grant my just request: 'twas I who taught
The knight this answer, and inspired his thought.
None but a woman could a man direct
To tell us women what we most affect.
But first I swore him on his knightly troth,
(And here demand performance of his oath,)
To grant the boon that next I should desire;
He gave his faith, and I expect my hire:
My promise is fulfilled: I saved his life,
And claim his debt, to take me for his wife.'
The knight was asked, nor could his oath deny,
But hoped they would not force him to comply.
The women, who would rather wrest the laws,
Than let a sister-plaintiff lose the cause,
(As judges on the bench more gracious are,
And more attent to brothers of the bar,)
Cried, one and all, the suppliant should have right,
And to the grandame hag adjudged the knight.

In vain he sighed, and oft with tears desired
Some reasonable suit might be required.
But still the crone was constant to her note;
The more he spoke, the more she stretched her throat.
In vain he proffered all his goods, to save
His body destined to that living grave.
The liquorish hag rejects the pelf with scorn,
And nothing but the man would serve her turn.
'Not all the wealth of eastern kings,' said she,
'Have power to part my plighted love and me;
And, old and ugly as I am, and poor,
Yet never will I break the faith I swore;
For mine thou art by promise, during life,
And I thy loving and obedient wife.'
'My love! nay, rather my damnation thou,'
Said he: 'nor am I bound to keep my vow;
The fiend, thy sire, hath sent thee from below,
Else how couldst thou my secret sorrows know?
Avaunt, old witch! for I renounce thy bed:
The queen may take the forfeit of my head,
Ere any of my race so foul a crone shall wed.'
Both heard, the judge pronounced against the knight;
So was he married in his own despite:
And all day after hid him as an owl,
Not able to sustain a sight so foul.
Perhaps the reader thinks I do him wrong,
To pass the marriage feast, and nuptial song:
Mirth there was none, the man was à-la-mort,
And little courage had to make his court.
To bed they went, the bridegroom and the bride:
Was never such an ill-paired couple tied:
Restless he tossed, and tumbled to and fro,
And rolled, and wriggled further off for woe.
The good old wife lay smiling by his side,
And caught him in her quivering arms, and cried,
'When you my ravished predecessor saw,
You were not then become this man of straw;
Had you been such you might have 'scaped the law.
Is this the custom of King Arthur's court?
Are all round-table knights of such a sort?
Remember I am she who saved your life,
Your loving, lawful, and complying wife:
Not thus you swore in your unhappy hour,
Nor I for this return employed my power.
In time of need I was your faithful friend;
Nor did I since, nor ever will offend.
Believe me, my loved lord, 'tis much unkind;
What fury has possessed your altered mind?
Thus on my wedding night,—without pretence,—
Come, turn this way—or tell me my offence.
If not your wife, let reason's rule persuade,
Name but my fault, amends shall soon be made.'

‘Amends! nay, that’s impossible,’ said he,
‘What change of age, or ugliness, can be?
Or could Medea’s magic mend thy face,
Thou art descended from so mean a race,
That never knight was matched with such disgrace.
What wonder, madam, if I move my side,
When, if I turn, I turn to such a bride?’
‘And is this all that troubles you so sore?
‘And what the devil couldst thou wish me more?’
‘Ah, Benedicite!’ replied the crone:
‘Then cause of just complaining have you none.
The remedy to this were soon applied,
Would you be like the bridegroom to the bride:
But, for you say a long descended race,
And wealth, and dignity, and power, and place,
Make gentlemen, and that your high degree
Is much disparaged to be matched with me;
Know this, my lord, nobility of blood
Is but a glittering and fallacious good:
The nobleman is he whose noble mind
Is filled with inborn worth, unborrowed from his kind.
The King of Heaven was in a manger laid,
And took his earth but from an humble Maid:
Then what can birth, or mortal men, bestow,
Since floods no higher than their fountains flow?
We, who for name and empty honour strive,
Our true nobility from him derive.
Your ancestors, who puff your mind with pride,
And vast estates to mighty titles tied,
Did not your honour, but their own, advance;
For virtue comes not by inheritance.
If you tralineate from your father’s mind,
What are you else but of a bastard kind?
Do as your great progenitors have done,
And by their virtues prove yourself their son.
No father can infuse or wit, or grace;
A mother comes across, and mars the race.
A grandsire or a grandame taints the blood;
And seldom three descents continue good.
Were virtue by descent, a noble name
Could never villanize his father’s fame:
But, as the first, the last of all the line,
Would, like the sun, even in descending shine.
Take fire, and bear it to the darkest house
Betwixt king Arthur’s court and Caucasus;
If you depart, the flame shall still remain,
And the bright blaze enlighten all the plain;
Nor, till the fuel perish, can decay,
By nature formed on things combustible to prey.
Such is not man, who, mixing better seed
With worse, begets a base degenerate breed:
The bad corrupts the good, and leaves behind

No trace of all the great begetter’s mind.
The father sinks within his son, we see,
And often rises in the third degree;
If better luck a better mother give,
Chance gave us being, and by chance we live.
Such as our atoms were, even such are we,
Or call it chance, or strong necessity:
Thus loaded with dead weight, the will is free.
And thus it needs must be: for seed conjoined
Lets into nature’s work the imperfect kind;
But fire, the enlivener of the general frame,
Is one, its operation still the same.
Its principle is in itself: while ours
Works, as confederates war, with mingled powers;
Or man or woman, which soever fails;
And oft the vigour of the worse prevails.
æther with sulphur blended alters hue,
And casts a dusky gleam of Sodom blue.
Thus, in a brute, their ancient honour ends,
And the fair mermaid in a fish descends:
The line is gone; no longer duke or earl;
But, by himself degraded, turns a churl.
Nobility of blood is but renown
Of thy great fathers by their virtue known,
And a long trail of light, to thee descending down.
If in thy smoke it ends, their glories shine;
But infamy and villanage are thine.
Then what I said before is plainly showed,
The true nobility proceeds from God:
Nor left us by inheritance, but given
By bounty of our stars, and grace of Heaven.
Thus from a captive Servius Tullius rose,
Whom for his virtues the first Romans chose:
Fabricius from their walls repelled the foe,
Whose noble hands had exercised the plough.
From hence, my lord, and love, I thus conclude,
That though my homely ancestors were rude,
Mean as I am, yet I may have the grace
To make you father of a generous race:
And noble then am I, when I begin,
In virtue clothed, to cast the rags of sin.
If poverty be my upbraided crime,
And you believe in Heaven, there was a time
When He, the great controller of our fate,
Deigned to be man, and lived in low estate;
Which He who had the world at his dispose,
If poverty were vice, would never choose.
Philosophers have said, and poets sing,
That a glad poverty’s an honest thing.
Content is wealth, the riches of the mind,
And happy he who can that treasure find;
But the base miser starves amidst his store,

Broods on his gold, and griping still at more,
Sits sadly pining, and believes he's poor.
The ragged beggar, though he want relief,
Has nought to lose, and sings before the thief.
Want is a bitter and a hateful good,
Because its virtues are not understood.
Yet many things, impossible to thought,
Have been by need to full perfection brought:
The daring of the soul proceeds from thence,
Sharpness of wit, and active diligence;
Prudence at once and fortitude it gives,
And if in patience taken, mends our lives;
For even that indigence that brings me low,
Makes me myself and Him above to know;
A good which none would challenge, few would choose;
A fair possession, which mankind refuse.
If we from wealth to poverty descend,
Want gives to know the flatterer from the friend.
If I am old and ugly, well for you,
No lewd adulterer will my love pursue;
Nor jealousy, the bane of married life,
Shall haunt you for a withered homely wife;
For age and ugliness, as all agree,
Are the best guards of female chastity.
'Yet since I see your mind is worldly bent,
I'll do my best to further your content.
And therefore of two gifts in my dispose,—
Think ere you speak, —I grant you leave to choose:
Would you I should be still deformed and old,
Nauseous to touch, and loathsome to behold;
On this condition to remain for life
A careful, tender, and obedient wife,
In all I can contribute to your ease,
And not in deed, or word, or thought displease:
Or would you rather have me young and fair,
And take the chance that happens to your share?
Temptations are in beauty, and in youth,
And how can you depend upon my truth?
Now weigh the danger with the doubtful bliss,
And thank yourself, if aught should fall amiss.'
Sore sighed the knight, who this long sermon heard;
At length considering all, his heart he cheered,
And thus replied: —'My lady, and my wife,
To your wise conduct I resign my life:
Choose you for me, for well you understand
The future good and ill, on either hand:
But if an humble husband may request,
Provide and order all things for the best;
Yours be the care to profit and to please:
And let your subject servant take his ease.'
'Then thus in peace,' quoth she, 'concludes the strife,
Since I am turned the husband, you the wife:

The matrimonial victory is mine,
Which, having fairly gained, I will resign;
Forgive if I have said or done amiss,
And seal the bargain with a friendly kiss:
I promised you but one content to share,
But now I will become both good and fair.
No nuptial quarrel shall disturb your ease;
The business of my life shall be to please;
And for my beauty, that, as time shall try,
But draw the curtain first, and cast your eye.'
He looked, and saw a creature heavenly fair,
In bloom of youth, and of a charming air.
With joy he turned, and seized her ivory arm;
And, like Pygmalion, found the statue warm.
Small arguments there needed to prevail,
A storm of kisses poured as thick as hail.
Thus long in mutual bliss they lay embraced,
And their first love continued to the last:
One sunshine was their life, no cloud between,
Nor ever was a kinder couple seen.
And so may all our lives like theirs be led;
Heaven send the maids young husbands fresh in bed:
May widows wed as often as they can,
And ever for the better change their man.
And some devouring plague pursue their lives,
Who will not well be governed by their wives.

John Dryden

Theodore And Honoria. From Boccace

Of all the cities in Romanian lands,
The chief and most renowned Ravenna stands;
Adorned in ancient times with arms and arts,
And rich inhabitants with generous hearts.
But Theodore the brave, above the rest,
With gifts of fortune and of nature blessed,
The foremost place for wealth and honour held,
And all in feats of chivalry excelled.

This noble youth to madness loved a dame
Of high degree, Honoria was her name;
Fair as the fairest, but of haughty mind,
And fiercer than became so soft a kind;
Proud of her birth (for equal she had none),
The rest she scorned, but hated him alone;
His gifts, his constant courtship, nothing gained;
For she, the more he loved, the more disdained,
He lived with all the pomp he could devise,
At tilts and turnaments obtained the prize,
But found no favour in his lady's eyes:
Relentless as a rock, the lofty maid
Turned all to poison that he did or said:
Nor prayers nor tears nor offered vows could move;
The work went backward; and the more he strove
To advance his suit, the farther from her love.

Wearied at length, and wanting remedy,
He doubted oft, and oft resolved to die.
But pride stood ready to prevent the blow,
For who would die to gratify a foe?
His generous mind disdained so mean a fate;
That passed, his next endeavour was to hate.
But vainer that relief than all the rest;
The less he hoped, with more desire possessed;
Love stood the siege, and would not yield his breast.

Change was the next, but change deceived his care;
He sought a fairer, but found none so fair.
He would have worn her out by slow degrees,
As men by fasting starve the untamed disease;
But present love required a present ease.
Looking, he feeds alone his famished eyes,
Feeds lingering death, but, looking not, he dies.
Yet still he chose the longest way to fate,
Wasting at once his life and his estate.

His friends beheld, and pitied him in vain.
For what advice can ease a lover's pain?
Absence, the best expedient they could find,
Might svae the fortune, if not cure the mind:
This means they long proposed, but little gained,
Yet after much pursuit at length obtained.

Hard you may think it was to give consent,
But struggling with his own desires he went;
With large expense, and with a pompous train,
Provided as to visit Fraunce or Spain,
Or for some distant voyage o'er the main.
But Love had clipped his wings, and cut him short,
Confined within the purlieus of his court.
Three miles he went, nor farther could retreat;
His travels ended at his country seat:
To Chassi's pleasing plains he took his way,
There pitched his tents, and there resolved to stay.

The spring was in the prime, the neighbouring grove
Supplied with birds, the choristers of love;
Music unbought, that ministered delight
To morning walks, and lulled his cares by night:
There he discharged his friends, but not the expense
Of frequent treats and proud magnificence.
He lived as kings retire, though more at large
From public business, yet with equal charge;
With house and heart still open to receive;
As well content as love would give him leave:
He would have lived more free; but many a guest,
Who could forsake the friend, pursued the feast.

It happed one morning, as his fancy led,
Before his usual hour he left his bed,
To walk within a lonely lawn, that stood
On every side surrounded by the wood:
Alone he walked, to please his pensive mind,
And sought the deepest solitude to find;
'Twas in a grove of spreading pines he strayed;
The winds within the quivering branches played,
And dancing trees a mournful music made;
The place it self was suiting to his care,
Uncouth and savage as the cruel fair.
He wandered on, unknowing where he went,
Lost in the wood, and all on love intent:
The day already half his race had run,
And summoned him to due repast at noon,
But Love could feel no hunger but his own.

While listening to the murmuring leaves he stood,
More than a mile immersed within the wood,
At once the wind was laid; the whispering sound
Was dumb; a rising earthquake rocked the ground;
With deeper brown the grove was overspread,
A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
And his ears tinkled, and his colour fled.
Nature was in alarm; some danger nigh
Seemed threatened, though unseen to mortal eye.

Unused to fear, he summoned all his soul,
And stood collected in him self -- and whole;
Not long: for soon a whirlwind rose around,
And from afar he heard a screaming sound,
As of a dame distressed, who cried for aid,
And filled with loud laments the secret shade.

A thicket close beside the grove there stood,
With breers and brambles choked, and dwarfish wood;
From thence the noise, which now approaching near
With more distinguished notes invades his ear;
He raised his head, and saw a beauteous maid
With hair dishevelled issuing through the shade;
Stripped of her clothes, and e'en those parts revealed
Which modest nature keeps from sight concealed.
Her face, her hands, her naked limbs were torn,
With passing through the brakes and prickly thorn;
Two mastiffs gaunt and grim her flight pursued,
And oft their fastened fangs in blood imbrued:
Oft they came up, and pinched her tender side,
'Mercy, O mercy, Heaven,' she ran, and cried:
When Heaven was named, they loosed their hold again.
Then sprung she forth, they followed her amain.

Not far behind, a knight of swarthy face
High on a coal-black steed pursued the chace;
With flashing flames his ardent eyes were filled,
And in his hands a naked sword he held:
He cheered the dogs to follow her who fled,
And vowed revenge on her devoted head.

As Theodore was born of noble kind,
The brutal action roused his manly mind:
Moved with unworthy usage of the maid,
He, though unarmed, resolved to give her aid.
A saplin pine he wrenched from out the ground,
The readiest weapon that his fury found.
Thus, furnished for offence, he crossed the way
Betwixt the graceless villain and his prey.

The knight came thundering on, but, from afar,
Thus in imperious tone forbad the war:
'Cease, Theodore, to proffer vain relief,
'Nor stop the vengeance of so just a grief;
'But give me leave to seize my destined prey,
'And let eternal justice take the way:
'I but revenge my fate, disdained, betrayed,
'And suffering death for this ungrateful maid.'

He said, at once dismounting from the steed;
For now the hell-hounds with superior speed
Had reached the dame, and, fastening on her side,

The ground with issuing streams of purple dyed.
Stood Theodore surprised in deadly fright,
With chattering teeth, and bristling hair upright;
Yet armed with inborn worth, -- 'Whate'er,' said he,
'Thou art, who knowst me better than I thee;
'Or prove thy rightful cause, or be defied.'
The spectre fiercely staring, thus replied:

'Know, Theodore, thy ancestry I claim,
'And Guido Cavalcanti was my name.
'One common sire our fathers did beget,
'My name and story some remember yet;
'Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid,
'When for my sins I loved this haughty maid;
'Not less adored in life, nor served by me,
'Than proud Honoria now is loved by thee.
'What did I not her stubborn heart to gain?
'But all my vows were answered with disdain:
'She scorned my sorrows, and despised my pain.
'Long time I dragged my days in fruitless care;
'Then loathing life, and plunged in deep despair,
'To finish my unhappy life I fell
'On this sharp sword, and now am damned in hell.

'Short was her joy; for soon the insulting maid
'By Heaven's decree in the cold grave was laid;
'And as in unrepenting sin she died,
'Doomed to the same bad place, is punished for her pride:
'Because she deemed I well deserved to die,
'And made a merit of her cruelty.
'There, then, we met; both tried, and both were cast,
'And this irrevocable sentence passed,
'That she, whom I so long pursued in vain,
'Should suffer from my hands a lingering pain:
'Renewed to life, that she might daily die,
'I daily doomed to follow, she to fly;
'No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
'I seek her life (for love is none below);
'As often as my dogs with better speed
'Arrest her flight, is she to death decreed:
'Then with this fatal sword, on which I died,
'I pierce her opened back or tender side,
'And tear that hardened heart from out her breast,
'Which with her entrails makes my hungry hounds a feast.
'Nor lies she long, but as her fates ordain,
'Springs up to life, and fresh to second pain,
'Is saved to-day, to-morrow to be slain.'

This, versed in death, the infernal knight relates,
And then for proof fulfilled their common fates;
Her heart and bowels through her back he drew,
And fed the hounds that helped him to pursue.

Stern looked the fiend, as frustrate of his will,
Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill.
And now the soul, expiring through the wound,
Had left the body breathless on the ground,
When thus the grisly spectre spoke again:
'Behold the fruit of ill-rewarded pain!
'As many months as I sustained her hate,
'So many years is she condemned by Fate
'To daily death; and every several place
'Conscious of her disdain and my disgrace,
'Must witness her just punishment, and be
'A scene of triumph and revenge to me.
'As in this grove I took my last farewell,
'As on this very spot of earth I fell,
'As Friday saw me die, so she my prey
'Becomes even here, on this revolving day.'

Thus while he spoke, the virgin from the ground
Upstarted fresh, already closed the wound,
And unconcerned for all she felt before,
Precipitates her flight along the shore:
The hell-hounds, as ungorged with flesh and blood,
Pursue their prey, and seek their wonted food:
The fiend remounts his courser, mends his pace,
And all the vision vanished from the place.

Long stood the noble youth oppressed with awe
And stupid at the wondrous things he saw,
Surpassing common faith, transgressing Nature's law:
He would have been asleep, and wished to wake,
But dreams, he knew, no long impression make,
Though strong at first; if vision, to what end,
But such as must his future state portend,
His love the damsel, and himself the fiend?
But yet reflecting that it could not be
From Heaven, which cannot impious acts decree,
Resolved within him self to shun the snare
Which hell for his destruction did prepare;
And as his better genius should direct,
From an ill cause to draw a good effect.

Inspired from Heaven he homeward took his way,
Nor palled his new design with long delay;
But of his train a trusty servant sent
To call his friends together at his tent.
They came, and, usual salutations paid,
With words premeditated thus he said:
'What you have often counselled, to remove
'My vain pursuit of unregarded love,
'By thrift my sinking fortune to repair,
'Though late, yet is at last become my care:
'My heart shall be my own; my vast expense

'Reduced to bounds by timely providence:
'This only I require; invite for me
'Honoria, with her father's family,
'Her friends and mine; the cause I shall display,
'On Friday next, for that's the appointed day.'

Well pleased were all his friends, the task was light,
The father, mother, daughter they invite;
Hardly the dame was drawn to this repast;
But yet resolved, because it was the last.
The day was come, the guests invited came,
And with the rest the inexorable dame:
A feast prepared with riotous expense,
Much cost, more care, and most magnificence.
The place ordained was in that haunted grove
Where the revenging ghost pursued his love:
The tables in a proud pavilion spread,
With flowers below, and tissue overhead;
The rest in rank, Honoria, chief in place,
Was artfully contrived to set her face
To front the thicket and behold the chace.
The feast was served, the time so well forecast,
That just when the dessert and fruits were placed,
The fiend's alarm began; the hollow sound
Sung in the leaves, the forest shook around,
Air blackened, rolled the thunder, groaned the ground.

Nor long before the load laments arise,
Of one distressed, and mastiffs' mingled cries;
And first the dame came rushing through the wood,
And next the famished hounds that sought their food,
And griped her flanks, and oft essayed their jaws in blood.
Last came the felon on the sable steed,
Armed with his naked sword, and urged his dogs to speed.
She ran, and cried, her flight directly bent
(A guest unbidden) to the fatal tent,
The scene of death, and place ordained for punishment.
Loud was the noise, aghast was every guest,
The woman shrieked, the men forsook the feast;
The hounds at nearer distance hoarsely bayed;
The hunter close pursued the visionary maid,
She rent the heaven with loud laments, imploring aid.

The gallants, to protect the lady's right,
Their fauchions brandished at the grisly spright;
High on his stirrups he provoked the fight.
Then on the crowd he cast a furious look,
And withered all their strength before he strook:
'Back on your lives! let be,' said he, 'my prey,
'And let my vengeance take the destined way:
'Vain are your arms, and vainer your defence,
'Against the eternal doom of Providence:

'Mine is the ungrateful maid by Heaven designed:
'Mercy she would not give, nor mercy shall she find.'
At this the former tale again he told
With thundering tone, and dreadful to behold:
Sunk were their hearts with horror of the crime,
Nor needed to be warned a second time,
But bore each other back; some knew the face,
And all had heard the much lamented case
Of him who fell for love, and this the fatal place.

And now the infernal minister advanced,
Seized the due victim, and with fury lanced
Her back, and piercing through her inmost heart,
Drew backward as before the offending part.
The recking entrails next he tore away,
And to his meagre mastiffs made a prey.
The pale assistants on each other stared,
With gaping mouths for issuing words prepared;
The stillborn sounds upon the palate hung,
And died imperfect on the faltering tongue.
The fright was general; but the female band,
A helpless train, in more confusion stand:
With horror shuddering, on a heap they run,
Sick at the sight of hateful justice done;
For conscience rung the alarm, and made the case their own.

So spread upon a lake, with upward eye,
A plump of fowl behold their foe on high;
They close their trembling troop; and all attend
On whom the sowsing eagle will descend.

But most the proud Honoria feared the event,
And thought to her alone the vision sent.
Her guilt presents to her distracted mind
Heaven's justice, Theodore's revengeful kind,
And the same fate to the same sin assigned;
Already sees her self the monster's prey,
And feels her heart and entrails torn away.
'Twas a mute scene of sorrow, mixed with fear;
Still on the table lay the unfinished cheer:
The knight and hungry mastiffs stood around,
The mangled dame lay breathless on the ground;
When on a sudden, re-inspired with breath,
Again she rose, again to suffer death;
Nor stayed the hell-hounds, nor the hunter stayed,
But followed, as before, the flying maid:
The avenger took from earth the avenging sword,
And mounting light as air his sable steed he spurred:
The clouds dispelled, the sky resumed her light,
And Nature stood recovered of her fright.

But fear, the last of ills, remained behind,

And horror heavy sat on every mind.
Nor Theodore encouraged more his feast,
But sternly looked, as hatching in his breast
Some deep design, which when Honoria viewed
The fresh impulse her former fright renewed:
She thought her self the trembling dame who fled,
And him the grisly ghost that spurred the infernal steed:
The more dismayed, for when the guests withdrew,
Their courteous host saluting all the crew,
Regardless passed her o'er, nor graced with kind adieu.
That sting infixed within her haughty mind,
The downfall of her empire she divined;
And her proud heart with secret sorrow pined.
Home as they went, the sad discourse renewed,
Of the relentless dame to death pursued,
And of the sight obscene so lately viewed;
None durst arraign the righteous doom she bore,
Even they who pitied most yet blamed her more:
The parallel they needed not to name,
But in the dead they damned the living dame.

At every little noise she looked behind,
For still the knight was present to her mind:
And anxious oft she started on the way,
And thought the horseman-ghost came thundering for his prey.
Returned, she took her bed with little rest,
But in short slumbers dreamt the funeral feast;
Awaked, she turned her side, and slept again;
The same black vapours mounted in her brain,
And the same dreams returned with double pain.

Now forced to wake, because afriad to sleep,
Her blood all fevered, with a furious leap
She sprung from bed, distracted in her mind,
And feared, at every step, a twitching spright behind.
Darkling and desperate, with a staggering pace,
Of death afraid, and conscious of disgrace,
Fear, pride, remorse, at once her heart assailed;
Pride put remorse to flight, but fear prevailed.
Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,
Her soul forethought the fiend would change his game,
And her pursue, or Theodore be slain,
And two ghosts join their packs to hunt her o'er the plain.

This dreadful image so possessed her mind,
That, desperate any succour else to find,
She ceased all farther hope; and now began
To make reflection on the unhappy man.
Rich, brave, and young, who past expression loved,
Proof to disdain, and not to be removed:
Of all the men respected and admired,
Of all the dames, except her self, desired:

Why not of her? preferred above the rest
By him with knightly deeds, and open love professed?
So had another been, where he his vows addressed.
This quelled her pride, yet other doubts remained,
That once disdaining, she might be disdained.
The fear was just, but greater fear prevailed,
Fear of her life by hellish hounds assailed:
He took a lowering leave; but who can tell
What outward hate might inward love conceal?
Her sex's arts she knew, and why not then
Might deep dissembling have a place in men?
Here hope began to dawn; resolved to try,
She fixed on this her utmost remedy;
Death was behind, but hard it was to die:
'Twas time enough at last on death to call;
The precipice in sight, a shrub was all
That kindly stood betwixt to break the fatal fall.

One maid she had, beloved above the rest:
Secure of her, the secret she confessed;
And now the cheerful light her fears dispelled,
She with no winding turns the truth concealed,
But put the woman off, and stood revealed:
With faults confessed, commissioned her to go,
If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe.
The welcome message made was soon received;
'Twas what he wished and hoped, but scarce believed:
Fate seemed a fair occasion to present,
He knew the sex, and feared she might repent
Should he delay the moment of consent.
There yet remained to gain her friends (a care
The modesty of maidens well might spare);
But she with such a zeal the cause embraced,
(As women, where they will, are all in haste,)
The father, mother, and the kin beside,
Were overborne by fury of the tide;
With full consent of all she changed her state;
Resistless in her love, as in her hate.

By her example warned, the rest beware;
More easy, less imperious, were the fair;
And that one hunting, which the devil designed
For one fair female, lost him half the kind.

John Dryden

Threnodia Augustalis: A Funeral Pindaric Poem, Sacred To The Happy Memory Of King Charles II.

I.
Thus long my grief has kept me dumb:
Sure there's a lethargy in mighty woe,
Tears stand congealed, and cannot flow;
And the sad soul retires into her inmost room:
Tears, for a stroke foreseen, afford relief;
But, unprovided for a sudden blow,
Like Niobe, we marble grow,
And petrify with grief.
Our British heaven was all serene,
No threatening cloud was nigh,
Not the least wrinkle to deform the sky;
We lived as unconcerned and happily
As the first age in nature's golden scene;
Supine amidst our flowing store,
We slept securely, and we dreamt of more;
When suddenly the thunder-clap was heard,
It took us, unprepared, and out of guard,
Already lost before we feared.
The amazing news of Charles at once were spread,
At once the general voice declared,
"Our gracious prince was dead."
No sickness known before, no slow disease,
To soften grief by just degrees;
But, like a hurricane on Indian seas,
The tempest rose;
An unexpected burst of woes.
With scarce a breathing space betwixt,
This now becalmed, and perishing the next.
As if great Atlas from his height
Should sink beneath his heavenly weight,
And, with a mighty flaw, the flaming wall,
As once it shall,
Should gape immense, and, rushing down, o'erwhelm this nether ball;
So swift and so surprising was our fear:
Our Atlas fell indeed; but Hercules was near.

II.
His pious brother, sure the best
Who ever bore that name,
Was newly risen from his rest,
And, with a fervent flame,
His usual morning vows had just addressed,
For his dear sovereign's health;
And hoped to have them heard,
In long increase of years,
In honour, fame, and wealth:
Guiltless of greatness, thus he always prayed,
Nor knew nor wished those vows he made,
On his own head should be repaid.
Soon as the ill-omen'd rumour reached his ear,
(Ill news is winged with fate, and flies apace),

Who can describe the amazement in his face!
Horror in all his pomp was there,
Mute and magnificent, without a tear;
And then the hero first was seen to fear.
Half unarrayed he ran to his relief,
So hasty and so artless was his grief:
Approaching greatness met him with her charms
Of power and future state;
But looked so ghastly in a brother's fate,
He shook her from his arms.
Arrived within the mournful room, he saw
A wild distraction, void of awe,
And arbitrary grief unbounded by a law.
God's image, God's anointed, lay
Without motion, pulse, or breath,
A senseless lump of sacred clay,
An image now of death,
Amidst his sad attendants' groans and cries,
The lines of that adored forgiving face,
Distorted from their native grace;
An iron slumber sat on his majestic eyes.
The pious duke—Forbear, audacious muse!
No terms thy feeble art can use
Are able to adorn so vast a woe:
The grief of all the rest like subject-grief did show
His, like a sovereign's, did transcend;
No wife, no brother, such a grief could know,
Nor any name but friend.

III.
O wondrous changes of a fatal scene,
Still varying to the last!
Heaven, though its hard decree was past,
Seemed pointing to a gracious turn again:
And death's uplifted arm arrested in its haste.
Heaven half repented of the doom,
And almost grieved it had foreseen,
What by foresight it willed eternally to come.
Mercy above did hourly plead
For her resemblance here below;
And mild forgiveness intercede
To stop the coming blow.
New miracles approached the ethereal throne,
Such as his wondrous life had oft and lately known,
And urged that still they might be shown.
On earth his pious brother prayed and vowed,
Renouncing greatness at so dear a rate,
Himself defending what he could,
From all the glories of his future fate.
With him the innumerable crowd
Of armed prayers
Knocked at the gates of heaven, and knocked aloud;

The first well-meaning rude petitioners.
All for his life assailed the throne,
All would have bribed the skies by offering up their own.
So great a throng, not heaven itself could bar;
'Twas almost borne by force, as in the giants' war.
The prayers, at least, for his reprieve were heard;
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferred:
Against the sun the shadow went;
Five days, those five degrees, were lent,
To form our patience, and prepare the event.
The second causes took the swift command,
The medicinal head, the ready hand,
All eager to perform their part;
All but eternal doom was conquered by their art:
Once more the fleeting soul came back
To inspire the mortal frame;
And in the body took a doubtful stand,
Doubtful and hovering, like expiring flame,
That mounts and falls by turns, and trembles o'er the brand.

IV.
The joyful short-lived news soon spread around,
Took the same train, the same impetuous bound:
The drooping town in smiles again was drest,
Gladness in every face exprest,
Their eyes before their tongues confest.
Men met each other with erected look,
The steps were higher that they took;
Friends to congratulate their friends made haste,
And long inveterate foes saluted as they passed.
Above the rest heroic James appeared,
Exalted more, because he more had feared.
His manly heart, whose noble pride
Was still above
Dissembled hate, or varnished love,
Its more than common transport could not hide;
But like an eagre rode in triumph o'er the tide.
Thus, in alternate course,
The tyrant passions, hope and fear,
Did in extremes appear,
And flashed upon the soul with equal force.
Thus, at half ebb, a rolling sea
Returns, and wins upon the shore;
The watery herd, affrighted at the roar,
Rest on their fins awhile, and stay,
Then backward take their wondering way:
The prophet wonders more than they,
At prodigies but rarely seen before,
And cries,—"A king must fall, or kingdoms change their sway."
Such were our counter-tides at land, and so
Presaging of the fatal blow,
In their prodigious ebb and flow.

The royal soul, that, like the labouring moon,
By charms of art was hurried down,
Forced with regret to leave her native sphere,
Came but a while on liking here,
Soon weary of the painful strife,
And made but faint essays of life:
An evening light
Soon shut in night;
A strong distemper, and a weak relief,
Short intervals of joy, and long returns of grief.

V.
The sons of art all med'cines tried,
And every noble remedy applied;
With emulation each essayed
His utmost skill; nay, more, they prayed:
Never was losing game with better conduct played.
Death never won a stake with greater toil,
Nor e'er was fate so near a foil:
But, like a fortress on a rock,
The impregnable disease their vain attempts did mock;
They mined it near, they battered from afar
With all the cannon of the medicinal war;
No gentle means could be essayed,
'Twas beyond parley when the siege was laid.
The extremest ways they first ordain,
Prescribing such intolerable pain,
As none but Cæsar could sustain:
Undaunted Cæsar underwent
The malice of their art, nor bent
Beneath whate'er their pious rigour could invent.
In five such days he suffered more
Than any suffered in his reign before;
More, infinitely more, than he
Against the worst of rebels could decree,
A traitor, or twice pardoned enemy.
Now art was tired without success,
No racks could make the stubborn malady confess.
The vain insurancers of life,
And he who most performed, and promised less,
Even Short himself, forsook the unequal strife.
Death and despair was in their looks,
No longer they consult their memories or books;
Like helpless friends, who view from shore
The labouring ship, and hear the tempest roar;
So stood they with their arms across,
Not to assist, but to deplore
The inevitable loss.

VI.
Death was denounced; that frightful sound
Which even the best can hardly bear;

He took the summons void of fear,
And unconcernedly cast his eyes around,
As if to find and dare the grisly challenger.
What death could do he lately tried,
When in four days he more than died.
The same assurance all his words did grace;
The same majestic mildness held its place;
Nor lost the monarch in his dying face.
Intrepid, pious, merciful, and brave,
He looked as when he conquered and forgave.

VII.
As if some angel had been sent
To lengthen out his government,
And to foretell as many years again,
As he had numbered in his happy reign;
So cheerfully he took the doom
Of his departing breath,
Nor shrunk nor stept aside for death;
But, with unaltered pace, kept on,
Providing for events to come,
When he resigned the throne.
Still he maintained his kingly state,
And grew familiar with his fate.
Kind, good, and gracious, to the last,
On all he loved before his dying beams he cast:
Oh truly good, and truly great,
For glorious as he rose, benignly so he set!
All that on earth he held most dear,
He recommended to his care,
To whom both heaven
The right had given,
And his own love bequeathed supreme command:
He took and prest that ever-loyal hand,
Which could, in peace, secure his reign;
Which could, in wars, his power maintain;
That hand on which no plighted vows were ever vain.
Well, for so great a trust, he chose
A prince, who never disobeyed;
Not when the most severe commands were laid;
Nor want, nor exile, with his duty weighed:
A prince on whom, if heaven its eyes could close,
The welfare of the world it safely might repose.

VIII.
That king, who lived to God's own heart,
Yet less serenely died than he;
Charles left behind no harsh decree,
For schoolmen with laborious art,
To salve from cruelty:
Those, for whom love could no excuses frame,
He graciously forgot to name.

Thus far my muse, though rudely, has designed
Some faint resemblance of his godlike mind;
But neither pen nor pencil can express
The parting brothers' tenderness;
Though that's a term too mean and low;
The blest above a kinder word may know:
But what they did, and what they said,
The monarch who triumphant went,
The militant who staid,
Like painters, when their heightening arts are spent,
I cast into a shade.
That all-forgiving king,
The type of him above,
That inexhausted spring
Of clemency and love,
Himself to his next self accused,
And asked that pardon which he ne'er refused;
For faults not his, for guilt and crimes
Of godless men, and of rebellious times;
For an hard exile, kindly meant,
When his ungrateful country sent
Their best Camillus into banishment,
And forced their sovereign's act, they could not his consent.
Oh how much rather had that injured chief
Repeated all his sufferings past,
Than hear a pardon begged at last,
Which, given, could give the dying no relief!
He bent, he sunk beneath his grief;
His dauntless heart would fain have held
From weeping, but his eyes rebelled.
Perhaps the godlike hero, in his breast,
Disdained, or was ashamed to show,
So weak, so womanish a woe,
Which yet the brother and the friend so plenteously confest.

IX.
Amidst that silent shower, the royal mind
An easy passage found,
And left its sacred earth behind;
Nor murmuring groan expressed, nor labouring sound,
Nor any least tumultuous breath;
Calm was his life, and quiet was his death.
Soft as those gentle whispers were,
In which the Almighty did appear;
By the still voice the prophet knew him there.
That peace which made thy prosperous reign to shine,
That peace thou leav'st to thy imperial line,
That peace, Oh happy shade, be ever thine!

X.
For all those joys thy restoration brought,
For all the miracles it wrought,

For all the healing balm thy mercy poured
Into the nation's bleeding wound,
And care, that after kept it sound,
For numerous blessings yearly showered,
And property with plenty crowned;
For freedom, still maintained alive,
Freedom, which in no other land will thrive,
Freedom, an English subject's sole prerogative,
Without whose charms, even peace would be
But a dull quiet slavery;—
For these, and more, accept our pious praise;
'Tis all the subsidy
The present age can raise,
The rest is charged on late posterity.
Posterity is charged the more,
Because the large abounding store
To them, and to their heirs, is still entailed by thee.
Succession of a long descent,
Which chastely in the channels ran,
And from our demi-gods began,
Equal almost to time in its extent,
Through hazards numberless and great,
Thou hast derived this mighty blessing down,
And fixed the fairest gem that decks the imperial crown:
Not faction, when it shook thy regal seat,
Not senates, insolently loud,
Those echoes of a thoughtless crowd,
Not foreign or domestic treachery,
Could warp thy soul to their unjust decree.
So much thy foes thy manly mind mistook,
Who judged it by the mildness of thy look;
Like a well-tempered sword, it bent at will,
But kept the native toughness of the steel.

XI.
Be true, O Clio, to thy hero's name;
But draw him strictly so,
That all who view the piece may know,
He needs no trappings of fictitious fame.
The load's too weighty; thou may'st choose
Some parts of praise, and some refuse;
Write, that his annals may be thought more lavish than the muse.
In scanty truth thou hast confined
The virtues of a royal mind,
Forgiving, bounteous, humble, just, and kind:
His conversation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
Were such, dead authors could not give;
But habitudes of those who live,
Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive:
He drained from all, and all they knew;
His apprehension quick, his judgment true,

That the most learned, with shame, confess
His knowledge more, his reading only less.

XII.
Amidst the peaceful triumphs of his reign,
What wonder, if the kingly beams he shed
Revived the drooping arts again,
If science raised her head,
And soft humanity, that from rebellion fled.
Our isle, indeed, too fruitful was before;
But all uncultivated lay
Out of the solar walk, and heaven's high way;
With rank Geneva weeds run o'er,
And cockle, at the best, amidst the corn it bore:
The royal husbandman appeared,
And ploughed, and sowed, and tilled;
The thorns he rooted out, the rubbish cleared,
And blest the obedient field.
When straight a double harvest rose,
Such as the swarthy Indian mows,
Or happier climates near the Line,
Or paradise manured, and drest by hands divine.

XIII.
As when the new-born phœnix takes his way,
His rich paternal regions to survey,
Of airy choristers a numerous train
Attend his wondrous progress o'er the plain;
So, rising from his father's urn,
So glorious did our Charles return;
The officious muses came along,
A gay harmonious quire, like angels ever young;
The muse, that mourns him now, his happy triumph sung.
Even they could thrive in his auspicious reign;
And such a plenteous crop they bore
Of purest and well-winnowed grain,
As Britain never knew before.
Though little was their hire, and light their gain,
Yet somewhat to their share he threw;
Fed from his hand, they sung and flew,
Like birds of paradise, that lived on morning dew.
Oh never let their lays his name forget!
The pension of a prince's praise is great.
Live then, thou great encourager of arts,
Live ever in our thankful hearts;
Live blest above, almost invoked below;
Live and receive this pious vow,
Our patron once, our guardian angel now!
Thou Fabius of a sinking state,
Who didst by wise delays divert our fate,
When faction like a tempest rose,
In death's most hideous form,

Then art to rage thou didst oppose,
To weather out the storm;
Not quitting thy supreme command,
Thou heldst the rudder with a steady hand,
Till safely on the shore the bark did land;
The bark, that all our blessings brought,
Charged with thyself and James, a doubly-royal fraught.

XIV.
Oh frail estate of human things,
And slippery hopes below!
Now to our cost your emptiness we know;
For 'tis a lesson dearly bought,
Assurance here is never to be sought.
The best, and best beloved of kings,
And best deserving to be so,
When scarce he had escaped the fatal blow
Of faction and conspiracy,
Death did his promised hopes destroy;
He toiled, he gained, but lived not to enjoy.
What mists of Providence are these
Through which we cannot see!
So saints, by supernatural power set free,
Are left at last in martyrdom to die;
Such is the end of oft-repeated miracles.—
Forgive me, heaven, that impious thought,
'Twas grief for Charles, to madness wrought,
That questioned thy supreme decree!
Thou didst his gracious reign prolong,
Even in thy saints' and angels' wrong,
His fellow-citizens of immortality:
For twelve long years of exile borne,
Twice twelve we numbered since his blest return:
So strictly wert thou just to pay,
Even to the driblet of a day.
Yet still we murmur, and complain
The quails and manna should no longer rain:
Those miracles 'twas needless to renew;
The chosen flock has now the promised land in view.

XV.
A warlike prince ascends the regal state,
A prince long exercised by fate:
Long may he keep, though he obtains it late!
Heroes in heaven's peculiar mould are cast;
They, and their poets, are not formed in haste;
Man was the first in God's design, and man was made the last.
False heroes, made by flattery so,
Heaven can strike out, like sparkles, at a blow;
But ere a prince is to perfection brought,
He costs Omnipotence a second thought.
With toil and sweat,

With hardening cold, and forming heat,
The Cyclops did their strokes repeat,
Before the impenetrable shield was wrought.
It looks as if the Maker would not own
The noble work for his,
Before 'twas tried and found a master-piece.

XVI.
View then a monarch ripened for a throne.
Alcides thus his race began,
O'er infancy he swiftly ran;
The future god at first was more than man:
Dangers and toils, and Juno's hate,
Even o'er his cradle lay in wait,
And there he grappled first with fate;
In his young hands the hissing snakes he prest,
So early was the Deity confest;
Thus, by degrees, he rose to Jove's imperial seat;
Thus difficulties prove a soul legitimately great.
Like his, our hero's infancy was tried;
Betimes the furies did their snakes provide,
And to his infant arms oppose
His father's rebels, and his brother's foes;
The more opprest, the higher still he rose.
Those were the preludes of his fate,
That formed his manhood, to subdue
The hydra of the many-headed hissing crew.

XVII.
As after Numa's peaceful reign,
The martial Ancus did the sceptre wield,
Furbished the rusty sword again,
Resumed the long-forgotten shield,
And led the Latins to the dusty field;
So James the drowsy genius wakes
Of Britain long entranced in charms,
Restiff and slumbering on its arms;
'Tis roused, and, with a new-strung nerve, the spear already shakes.
No neighing of the warrior steeds,
No drum, or louder trumpet, needs
To inspire the coward, warm the cold;
His voice, his sole appearance, makes them bold.
Gaul and Batavia dread the impending blow;
Too well the vigour of that arm they know;
They lick the dust, and crouch beneath their fatal foe.
Long may they fear this awful prince,
And not provoke his lingering sword;
Peace is their only sure defence,
Their best security his word.
In all the changes of his doubtful state,
His truth, like heaven's, was kept inviolate;
For him to promise is to make it fate.

His valour can triumph o'er land and main;
With broken oaths his fame he will not stain;
With conquest basely bought, and with inglorious gain.

XVIII.
For once, O heaven, unfold thy adamantine book;
And let his wondering senate see,
If not thy firm immutable decree,
At least the second page of strong contingency,
Such as consists with wills, originally free.
Let them with glad amazement look
On what their happiness may be;
Let them not still be obstinately blind,
Still to divert the good thou hast designed,
Or, with malignant penury,
To starve the royal virtues of his mind.
Faith is a Christian's and a subject's test;
Oh give them to believe, and they are surely blest.
They do; and with a distant view I see
The amended vows of English loyalty;
And all beyond that object, there appears
The long retinue of a prosperous reign,
A series of successful years,
In orderly array, a martial, manly train.
Behold e'en the remoter shores,
A conquering navy proudly spread;
The British cannon formidably roars,
While, starting from his oozy bed,
The asserted Ocean rears his reverend head,
To view and recognise his ancient lord again;
And with a willing hand, restores
The fasces of the main.

John Dryden

To Mr. Granville, On His Excellent Tragedy, Called Heroic Love

Auspicious poet, wert thou not my friend,
How could I envy, what I must commend!
But since 'tis nature's law, in love and wit,
That youth should reign, and withering age submit,
With less regret those laurels I resign,
Which, dying on my brows, revive on thine.
With better grace an ancient chief may yield
The long contended honours of the field,
Than venture all his fortune at a cast,
And fight, like Hannibal, to lose at last.
Young princes, obstinate to win the prize,
Though yearly beaten, yearly yet they rise:
Old monarchs, though successful, still in doubt,
Catch at a peace, and wisely turn devout.
Thine be the laurel, then; thy blooming age
Can best, if any can, support the stage;
Which so declines, that shortly we may see
Players and plays reduced to second infancy:
Sharp to the world, but thoughtless of renown,
They plot not on the stage, but on the town,
And, in despair their empty pit to fill,
Set up some foreign monster in a bill.
Thus they jog on, still tricking, never thriving,
And murdering plays, which they miscall reviving.
Our sense is nonsense, through their pipes conveyed;
Scarce can a poet know the play he made,
'Tis so disguised in death; nor thinks 'tis he
That suffers in the mangled tragedy.
Thus Itys first was killed, and after dressed
For his own sire, the chief invited guest.
I say not this of thy successful scenes,
Where thine was all the glory, theirs the gains.
With length of time, much judgment, and more toil,
Not ill they acted what they could not spoil.
Their setting sun still shoots a glimmering ray,
Like ancient Rome, majestic in decay;
And better gleanings their worn soil can boast,
Than the crab-vintage of the neighbouring coast.
This difference yet the judging world will see;
Thou copiest Homer, and they copy thee.

John Dryden

To My Dear Friend Mr. Congreve On His Commedy Call'd The Double Dealer

Well then; the promis'd hour is come at last;
The present age of wit obscures the past:
Strong were our sires; and as they fought they writ,
Conqu'ring with force of arms, and dint of wit;
Theirs was the giant race, before the Flood;
And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.
Like Janus he the stubborn soil manur'd,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cur'd:
Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude;
And boisterous English wit, with art endu'd.
Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gained in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were, with want of genius, curst;
The second temple was not like the first:
Till you, the best Vitruvius, come at length;
Our beauties equal; but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base:
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space;
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise:
He mov'd the mind, but had not power to raise.
Great Jonson did by strength of judgment please:
Yet doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In differing talents both adorn'd their age;
One for the study, t'other for the stage.
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,
One match'd in judgment, both o'er-match'd in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see;
Etherege's courtship, Southern's purity;
The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherly.
All this in blooming youth you have achiev'd;
Nor are your foil'd contemporaries griev'd;
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you because we love.
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw
A beardless Consul made against the law,
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome;
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame;
And scholar to the youth he taught, became.

Oh that your brows my laurel had sustain'd,
Well had I been depos'd, if you had reign'd!
The father had descended for the son;
For only you are lineal to the throne.
Thus when the State one Edward did depose;
A greater Edward in his room arose.
But now, not I, but poetry is curs'd;
For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first.
But let 'em not mistake my patron's part;
Nor call his charity their own desert.
Yet this I prophesy; thou shalt be seen,

(Tho' with some short parenthesis between
High on the throne of wit; and seated there,
Not mine (that's little) but thy laurel wear.
Thy first attempt an early promise made;
That early promise this has more than paid.
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,
That your least praise, is to be regular.
Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought,
But genius must be born; and never can be taught.
This is your portion; this your native store;
Heav'n that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much; she could not give him more.

Maintain your post: that's all the fame you need;
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age;
And just abandoning th' ungrateful stage:
Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's expense,
I live a rent-charge on his providence:
But you, whom ev'ry muse and grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and oh defend,
Against your judgment your departed friend!
Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue;
But shade those laurels which descend to you:
And take for tribute what these lines express:
You merit more; nor could my love do less.

John Dryden

To my Friend Mr. Motteux, on His Tragedy Called Beauty in Distress, Published in 1698

'Tis hard, my friend, to write in such an age,
As damns not only poets, but the stage.
That sacred art, by heaven itself infused,
Which Moses, David, Solomon, have used,
Is now to be no more: the Muses' foes
Would sink their Maker's praises into prose.
Were they content to prune the lavish vine
Of straggling branches, and improve the wine,
Who, but a madman, would his faults defend?
All would submit; for all but fools will mend.
But when to common sense they give the lie,
And turn distorted words to blasphemy,
They give the scandal; and the wise discern,
Their glosses teach an age, too apt to learn.
What I have loosely, or profanely, writ,
Let them to fires, their due desert, commit:
Nor, when accused by me, let them complain;
Their faults, and not their function, I arraign.
Rebellion, worse than witchcraft, they pursued;
The pulpit preached the crime, the people rued.
The stage was silenced; for the saints would see
In fields performed their plotted tragedy.
But let us first reform, and then so live,
That we may teach our teachers to forgive;
Our desk be placed below their lofty chairs,
Ours be the practice, as the precept theirs.
The moral part, at least we may divide,
Humility reward, and punish pride;
Ambition, interest, avarice, accuse;
These are the province of the tragic muse.
These hast thou chosen; and the public voice
Has equalled thy performance with thy choice.
Time, action, place, are so preserved by thee,
That e'en Corneille might with envy see
The alliance of his tripled unity.
Thy incidents, perhaps, too thick are sown,
But too much plenty is thy fault alone.
At least but two can that good crime commit,
Thou in design, and Wycherly in wit.
Let thy own Gauls condemn thee, if they dare,
Contented to be thinly regular:
Born there, but not for them, our fruitful soil
With more increase rewards thy happy toil.
Their tongue, enfeebled, is refined so much,
That, like pure gold, it bends at every touch.
Our sturdy Teuton yet will art obey,
More fit for manly thought, and strengthened with allay.
But whence art thou inspired, and thou alone,
To flourish in an idiom not thy own?
It moves our wonder, that a foreign guest
Should overmatch the most, and match the best.
In under-praising thy deserts, I wrong;

Here find the first deficience of our tongue:
Words, once my stock, are wanting, to commend
So great a poet, and so good a friend.

John Dryden

To my Honor'd Friend, Dr. Charleton (excerpt)

The longest tyranny that ever sway'd
Was that wherein our ancestors betray'd
Their free-born reason to the Stagirite,
And made his torch their universal light.
So truth, while only one supplied the state,
Grew scarce, and dear, and yet sophisticate;
Until 't was bought, like emp'ric wares, or charms,
Hard words seal'd up with Aristotle's arms.
Columbus was the first that shook his throne,
And found a temp'rate in a torrid zone:
The fev'rish air fann'd by a cooling breeze,
The fruitful vales set round with shady trees;
And guiltless men, who danc'd away their time,
Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.
Had we still paid that homage to a name,
Which only God and Nature justly claim,
The western seas had been our utmost bound,
Where poets still might dream the sun was drown'd:
And all the stars that shine in southern skies
Had been admir'd by none but savage eyes.

Among th' asserters of free reason's claim,
Th' English are not the least in worth, or fame.
The world to Bacon does not only owe
Its present knowledge, but its future too.
Gilbert shall live, till loadstones cease to draw,
Or British fleets the boundless ocean awe.
And noble Boyle, not less in nature seen,
Than his great brother read in states and men.
The circling streams, once thought but pools, of blood
(Whether life's fuel or the body's food),
From dark oblivion Harvey's name shall save;
While Ent keeps all the honour that he gave.

...

John Dryden

To my Honoured Kinsman John Driden, of Chesterton, in the County of Huntingdon, Esq.

How blessed is he, who leads a country life,
Unvexed with anxious cares, and void of strife!
Who, studying peace, and shunning civil rage,
Enjoyed his youth, and now enjoys his age:
All who deserve his love, he makes his own;
And, to be loved himself, needs only to be known.
Just, good, and wise, contending neighbours come,
From your award to wait their final doom;
And, foes before, return in friendship home.
Without their cost, you terminate the cause,
And save the expence of long litigious laws;
Where suits are traversed, and so little won,
That he who conquers is but last undone:
Such are not your decrees; but so designed,
The sanction leaves a lasting peace behind;
Like your own soul, serene, a pattern of your mind.
Promoting concord, and composing strife,
Lord of yourself, uncumbered with a wife;
Where, for a year, a month, perhaps a night,
Long penitence succeeds a short delight:
Minds are so hardly matched, that even the first,
Though paired by heaven, in Paradise were cursed.
For man and woman, though in one they grow,
Yet, first or last, return again to two.
He to God's image, she to his was made;
So, farther from the fount the stream at random strayed.
How could he stand, when, put to double pain,
He must a weaker than himself sustain!
Each might have stood perhaps, but each alone;
Two wrestlers help to pull each other down.
Not that my verse would blemish all the fair;
But yet if some be bad, 'tis wisdom to beware,
And better shun the bait, than struggle in the snare.
Thus have you shunned, and shun the married state,
Trusting as little as you can to fate.
No porter guards the passage of your door,
To admit the wealthy, and exclude the poor;
For God, who gave the riches, gave the heart,
To sanctify the whole, by giving part;
Heaven, who foresaw the will, the means has wrought,
And to the second son a blessing brought;
The first-begotten had his father's share;
But you, like Jacob, are Rebecca's heir.
So may your stores and fruitful fields increase;
And ever be you blessed, who live to bless.
As Ceres sowed, where-e'er her chariot flew;
As heaven in deserts rained the bread of dew;
So free to many, to relations most,
You feed with manna your own Israel host.
With crowds attended of your ancient race,
You seek the champaign sports, or sylvan chace;
With well-breathed beagles you surround the wood,

Even then industrious of the common good;
And often have you brought the wily fox
To suffer for the firstlings of the flocks;
Chased even amid the folds, and made to bleed,
Like felons, where they did the murderous deed.
This fiery game your active youth maintained;
Not yet by years extinguished, though restrained:
You season still with sports your serious hours;
For age but tastes of pleasures, youth devours.
The hare in pastures or in plains is found,
Emblem of human life; who runs the round,
And, after all his wandering ways are done,
His circle fills, and ends where he begun,
Just as the setting meets the rising sun.
Thus princes ease their cares; but happier he,
Who seeks not pleasure through necessity,
Than such as once on slippery thrones were placed,
And chasing, sigh to think themselves are chased.
So lived our sires, ere doctors learned to kill,
And multiplied with theirs the weekly bill.
The first physicians by debauch were made;
Excess began, and sloth sustains the trade.
Pity the generous kind their cares bestow
To search forbidden truths, (a sin to know,)
To which if human science could attain,
The doom of death, pronounced by God, were vain.
In vain the leech would interpose delay;
Fate fastens first, and vindicates the prey.
What help from art's endeavours can we have?
Guibbons but guesses, nor is sure to save;
But Maurus sweeps whole parishes, and peoples every grave;
And no more mercy to mankind will use,
Than when he robbed and murdered Maro's muse.
Would'st thou be soon dispatched, and perish whole,
Trust Maurus with thy life, and Milbourne with thy soul.
By chase our long-lived fathers earned their food;
Toil strung the nerves, and purified the blood:
But we their sons, a pampered race of men,
Are dwindled down to threescore years and ten.
Better to hunt in fields, for health unbought,
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.
The wise, for cure, on exercise depend;
God never made his work for man to mend.
The tree of knowledge, once in Eden placed,
Was easy found, but was forbid the taste:
O had our grandsire walked without his wife,
He first had sought the better plant of life!
Now both are lost: yet, wandering in the dark,
Physicians, for the tree, have found the bark;
They, labouring for relief of human kind,
With sharpened sight some remedies may find;
The apothecary-train is wholly blind.

From files a random recipe they take,
And many deaths of one prescription make.
Garth, generous as his muse, prescribes and gives;
The shopman sells, and by destruction lives:
Ungrateful tribe! who, like the viper's brood,
From Med'cine issuing, suck their mother's blood!
Let these obey, and let the learned prescribe,
That men may die without a double bribe;
Let them, but under their superiors, kill,
When doctors first have signed the bloody bill;
He 'scapes the best, who, nature to repair,
Draws physic from the fields, in draughts of vital air.
You hoard not health for your own private use,
But on the public spend the rich produce.
When, often urged, unwilling to be great,
Your country calls you from your loved retreat,
And sends to senates, charged with common care,
Which none more shuns, and none can better bear:
Where could they find another formed so fit,
To poise, with solid sense, a sprightly wit?
Were these both wanting, as they both abound,
Where could so firm integrity be found?
Well born, and wealthy, wanting no support,
You steer betwixt the country and the court;
Nor gratify whate'er the great desire,
Nor grudging give, what public needs require.
Part must be left, a fund when foes invade,
And part employed to roll the watery trade:
Even Canaan's happy land, when worn with toil,
Required a sabbath-year to mend the meagre soil.
Good senators (and such are you) so give,
That kings may be supplied, the people thrive:
And he, when want requires, is truly wise,
Who slights not foreign aids, nor overbuys,
But on our native strength, in time of need, relies.
Munster was bought, we boast not the success;
Who fights for gain, for greater makes his peace.
Our foes, compelled by need, have peace embraced;
The peace both parties want, is like to last;
Which if secure, securely we may trade;
Or, not secure, should never have been made.
Safe in ourselves, while on ourselves we stand,
The sea is ours, and that defends the land.
Be, then, the naval stores the nation's care,
New ships to build, and battered to repair.
Observe the war, in every annual course;
What has been done, was done with British force:
Namur subdued, is England's palm alone;
The rest besieged, but we constrained the town:
We saw the event that followed our success;
France, though pretending arms, pursued the peace,
Obliged, by one sole treaty, to restore

What twenty years of war had won before.
Enough for Europe has our Albion fought;
Let us enjoy the peace our blood has bought.
When once the Persian king was put to flight,
The weary Macedons refused to fight;
Themselves their own mortality confessed,
And left the son of Jove to quarrel for the rest.
Even victors are by victories undone;
Thus Hannibal, with foreign laurels won,
To Carthage was recalled, too late to keep his own.
While sore of battle, while our wounds are green,
Why should we tempt the doubtful die again?
In wars renewed, uncertain of success;
Sure of a share, as umpires of the peace.
A patriot both the king and country serves;
Prerogative and privilege preserves:
Of each our laws the certain limit show;
One must not ebb, nor t'other overflow:
Betwixt the prince and parliament we stand,
The barriers of the state on either hand;
May neither overflow, for then they drown the land.
When both are full, they feed our blessed abode;
Like those that watered once the Paradise of God.
Some overpoise of sway, by turns, they share;
In peace the people, and the prince in war;
Consuls of moderate power in calms were made;
When the Gauls came, one sole dictator swayed.
Patriots, in peace, assert the people's right,
With noble stubbornness resisting might;
No lawless mandates from the court receive,
Nor lend by force, but in a body give.
Such was your generous grandsire; free to grant
In parliaments, that weighed their prince's want:
But so tenacious of the common cause,
As not to lend the king against his laws;
And, in a loathsome dungeon doomed to lie,
In bonds retained his birthright liberty,
And shamed oppression, till it set him free.
O true descendant of a patriot line,
Who, while thou shar'st their lustre, lend'st them thine,
Vouchsafe this picture of thy soul to see;
'Tis so far good, as it resembles thee;
The beauties to the original I owe,
Which when I miss, my own defects I show
Nor think the kindred Muses thy disgrace;
A poet is not born in every race.
Two of a house few ages can afford,
One to perform, another to record.
Praiseworthy actions are by thee embraced,
And 'tis my praise to make thy praises last.
For even when death dissolves our human frame,
The soul returns to heaven from whence it came;

Earth keeps the body, verse preserves the fame.

John Dryden

To Sir Godfrey Kneller, Principal Painter to His Majesty

Once I beheld the fairest of her kind,
And still the sweet idea charms my mind:
True, she was dumb; for nature gazed so long,
Pleased with her work, that she forgot her tongue;
But, smiling, said—She still shall gain the prize;
I only have transferred it to her eyes.
Such are thy pictures, Kneller, such thy skill,
That nature seems obedient to thy will;
Comes out, and meets thy pencil in the draught,
Lives there, and wants but words to speak her thought.
At least thy pictures look a voice; and we
Imagine sounds, deceived to that degree,
We think 'tis somewhat more than just to see.
Shadows are but privations of the light;
Yet, when we walk, they shoot before the sight;
With us approach, retire, arise, and fall;
Nothing themselves, and yet expressing all.
Such are thy pieces, imitating life
So near, they almost conquer'd in the strife;
And from their animated canvas came,
Demanding souls, and loosened from the frame.
Prometheus, were he here, would cast away
His Adam, and refuse a soul to clay;
And either would thy noble work inspire,
Or think it warm enough, without his fire.
But vulgar hands may vulgar likeness raise;
This is the least attendant on thy praise:
From hence the rudiments of art began;
A coal, or chalk, first imitated man:
Perhaps the shadow, taken on a wall,
Gave outlines to the rude original;
Ere canvas yet was strained, before the grace
Of blended colours found their use and place,
Or cypress tablets first received a face.
By slow degrees the godlike art advanced;
As man grew polished, picture was enhanced:
Greece added posture, shade, and perspective,
And then the mimic piece began to live.
Yet perspective was lame, no distance true,
But all came forward in one common view:
No point of light was known, no bounds of art;
When light was there, it knew not to depart,
But glaring on remoter objects played;
Not languished and insensibly decayed.
Rome raised not art, but barely kept alive,
And with old Greece unequally did strive;
Till Goths and Vandals, a rude northern race,
Did all the matchless monuments deface.
Then all the Muses in one ruin lie,
And rhyme began to enervate poetry.
Thus, in a stupid military state,
The pen and pencil find an equal fate.

Flat faces, such as would disgrace a screen,
Such as in Bantam's embassy were seen,
Unraised, unrounded, were the rude delight
Of brutal nations, only born to fight.
Long time the sister arts, in iron sleep,
A heavy Sabbath did supinely keep;
At length, in Raphael's age, at once they rise,
Stretch all their limbs, and open all their eyes.
Thence rose the Roman, and the Lombard line;
One coloured best, and one did best design.
Raphael's, like Homer's, was the nobler part,
But Titian's painting looked like Virgil's art.
Thy genius gives thee both; where true design,
Postures unforced, and lively colours join,
Likeness is ever there; but still the best,
(Like proper thoughts in lofty language drest,)
Where light, to shades descending, plays, not strives,
Dies by degrees, and by degrees revives.
Of various parts a perfect whole is wrought;
Thy pictures think, and we divine their thought.
Shakespeare, thy gift, I place before my sight;
With awe, I ask his blessing ere I write;
With reverence look on his majestic face;
Proud to be less, but of his godlike race.
His soul inspires me, while thy praise I write,
And I, like Teucer, under Ajax fight;
Bids thee, through me, be bold; with dauntless breast
Contemn the bad, and emulate the best.
Like his, thy critics in the attempt are lost;
When most they rail, know then, they envy most.
In vain they snarl aloof; a noisy crowd,
Like women's anger, impotent and loud.
While they their barren industry deplore,
Pass on secure, and mind the goal before,
Old as she is, my muse shall march behind,
Bear off the blast, and intercept the wind.
Our arts are sisters, though not twins in birth,
For hymns were sung in Eden's happy earth:
For oh, the painter muse, though last in place,
Has seized the blessing first, like Jacob's race.
Apelles' art an Alexander found,
And Raphael did with Leo's gold abound;
But Homer was with barren laurel crowned.
Thou hadst thy Charles a while, and so had I;
But pass we that unpleasing image by.
Rich in thyself, and of thyself divine,
All pilgrims come and offer at thy shrine.
A graceful truth thy pencil can command;
The fair themselves go mended from thy hand.
Likeness appears in every lineament,
But likeness in thy work is eloquent.
Though nature there her true resemblance bears,

A nobler beauty in thy piece appears.
So warm thy work, so glows the generous frame,
Flesh looks less living in the lovely dame.
Thou paint'st as we describe, improving still,
When on wild nature we engraft our skill,
Yet not creating beauties at our will.
But poets are confined to narrower space,
To speak the language of their native place;
The painter widely stretches his command,
Thy pencil speaks the tongue of every land.
From hence, my friend, all climates are your own,
Nor can you forfeit, for you hold of none.
All nations all immunities will give
To make you theirs, where'er you please to live;
And not seven cities, but the world, would strive.
Sure some propitious planet then did smile,
When first you were conducted to this isle;
Our genius brought you here, to enlarge our fame,
For your good stars are everywhere the same.
Thy matchless hand, of every region free,
Adopts our climate, not our climate thee.
Great Rome and Venice early did impart
To thee the examples of their wondrous art.
Those masters, then but seen, not understood,
With generous emulation fired thy blood;
For what in nature's dawn the child admired,
The youth endeavoured, and the man acquired.
If yet thou hast not reached their high degree,
'Tis only wanting to this age, not thee.
Thy genius, bounded by the times, like mine,
Drudges on petty draughts, nor dare design
A more exalted work, and more divine.
For what a song, or senseless opera,
Is to the living labour of a play;
Or what a play to Virgil's work would be,
Such is a single piece to history.
But we, who life bestow, ourselves must live;
Kings cannot reign, unless their subjects give;
And they, who pay the taxes, bear the rule:
Thus thou, sometimes, art forced to draw a fool;
But so his follies in thy posture sink,
The senseless idiot seems at last to think.
Good heaven! that sots and knaves should be so vain,
To wish their vile resemblance may remain,
And stand recorded, at their own request,
To future days, a libel or a jest!
Else should we see your noble pencil trace
Our unities of action, time, and place;
A whole composed of parts, and those the best,
With every various character exprest;
Heroes at large, and at a nearer view;
Less, and at distance, an ignoble crew;

While all the figures in one action join,
As tending to complete the main design.
More cannot be by mortal art exprest,
But venerable age shall add the rest:
For time shall with his ready pencil stand,
Retouch your figures with his ripening hand,
Mellow your colours, and imbrown the teint,
Add every grace, which time alone can grant;
To future ages shall your fame convey,
And give more beauties than he takes away.

John Dryden

To the Lord Chancellor Hyde. Presented on New-Year's Day, 1662

My Lord,
While flattering crowds officiously appear
To give themselves, not you, an happy year,
And by the greatness of their presents prove
How much they hope, but not how well they love,—
The muses, who your early courtship boast,
Though now your flames are with their beauty lost,
Yet watch their time, that, if you have forgot
They were your mistresses, the world may not.
Decayed by time and wars, they only prove
Their former beauty by your former love;
And now present, as ancient ladies do,
That courted long, at length are forced to woo:
For still they look on you with such kind eyes,
As those, that see the Church's sovereign rise,
From their own order chose, in whose high state
They think themselves the second choice of fate.
When our great monarch into exile went,
Wit and religion suffered banishment.
Thus once, when Troy was wrapped in fire and smoke,
The helpless gods their burning shrines forsook;
They with the vanquished prince and party go,
And leave their temples empty to the foe.
At length the Muses stand, restored again
To that great charge which nature did ordain;
And their loved druids seem revived by fate,
While you dispense the laws, and guide the state.
The nation's soul, our monarch, does dispense,
Through you, to us his vital influence:
You are the channel, where those spirits flow,
And work them higher as to us they go.
In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth seems joined unto the sky:
So in this hemisphere, our utmost view
Is only bounded by our king and you;
Our sight is limited where you are joined,
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That though your orbs of different greatness be,
Yet both are for each other's use disposed,
His to inclose, and yours to be inclosed:
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptiness had come between.
Well may he, then, to you his cares impart,
And share his burden where he shares his heart.
In you his sleep still wakes; his pleasures find
Their share of business in your labouring mind.
So, when the weary sun his place resigns,
He leaves his light, and by reflection shines.
Justice, that sits and frowns where public laws
Exclude soft mercy from a private cause,
In your tribunal most herself does please;

There only smiles because she lives at ease;
And, like young David, finds her strength the more,
When disencumbered from those arms she wore.
Heaven would your royal master should exceed
Most in that virtue, which we most did need;
And his mild father (who too late did find
All mercy vain but what with power was joined)
His fatal goodness left to fitter times,
Not to increase, but to absolve our crimes:
But when the heir of this vast treasure knew
How large a legacy was left to you,
(Too great for any subject to retain)
He wisely tied it to the crown again;
Yet, passing through your hands it gathers more,
As streams, through mines, bear tincture of their ore.
While emp'ric politicians use deceit,
Hide what they give, and cure but by a cheat;
You boldly show that skill which they pretend,
And work by means as noble as your end;
Which should you veil, we might unwind the clue,
As men do nature, till we came to you.
And, as the Indies were not found before
Those rich perfumes, which, from the happy shore,
The winds upon their balmy wings conveyed,
Whose guilty sweetness first their world betrayed;
So, by your counsels, we are brought to view
A rich and undiscovered world in you.
By you our monarch does that fame assure,
Which kings must have, or cannot live secure:
For prosperous princes gain their subjects' heart,
Who love that praise in which themselves have part.
By you he fits those subjects to obey,
As heaven's eternal monarch does convey
His power unseen, and man, to his designs,
By his bright ministers, the stars, inclines.
Our setting sun, from his declining seat,
Shot beams of kindness on you, not of heat;
And, when his love was bounded in a few
That were unhappy, that they might be true,
Made you the favourite of his last sad times,
That is, a sufferer in his subjects' crimes.
Thus, those first favours you received, were sent,
Like heaven's rewards, in earthly punishment:
Yet fortune, conscious of your destiny,
E'en then took care to lay you softly by,
And wrapped your fate among her precious things,
Kept fresh to be unfolded with your king's.
Shown all at once, you dazzled so our eyes,
As new-born Pallas did the gods surprise,
When, springing forth from Jove's new-closing wound,
She struck the warlike spear into the ground;
Which sprouting leaves did suddenly inclose,

And peaceful olives shaded as they rose.
How strangely active are the arts of peace,
Whose restless motions less than war's do cease!
Peace is not freed from labour, but from noise;
And war more force, but not more pains employs.
Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,
That, like the earth, it leaves our sense behind,
While you so smoothly turn and roll our sphere,
That rapid motion does but rest appear.
For, as in nature's swiftness, with the throng
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,
All seems at rest to the deluded eye,
Moved by the soul of the same harmony;
So, carried on by your unwearied care,
We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.
Let envy, then, those crimes within you see,
From which the happy never must be free;
(Envy, that does with misery reside,
The joy and the revenge of ruined pride.)
Think it not hard, if, at so cheap a rate,
You can secure the constancy of fate,
Whose kindness sent what does their malice seem,
By lesser ills the greater to redeem;
Nor can we this weak shower a tempest call,
But drops of heat that in the sunshine fall.
You have already wearied Fortune so,
She cannot farther be your friend or foe;
But sits all breathless, and admires to feel
A fate so weighty, that it stops her wheel.
In all things else above our humble fate,
Your equal mind yet swells not into state,
But, like some mountain in those happy isles,
Where in perpetual spring young nature smiles,
Your greatness shows; no horror to affright,
But trees for shade, and flowers to court the sight:
Sometimes the hill submits itself a while
In small descents, which do its height beguile;
And sometimes mounts, but so as billows play,
Whose rise not hinders, but makes short our way.
Your brow, which does no fear of thunder know,
Sees rolling tempests vainly beat below;
And, like Olympus' top, the impression wears
Of love and friendship writ in former years.
Yet unimpaired with labours, or with time,
Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.
Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,
And measure change, but share no part of it.
And still it shall without a weight increase,
Like this new-year, whose motions never cease:
For, since the glorious course you have begun
Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,
It must both weightless and immortal prove,

Because the centre of it is above.

John Dryden

To The Memory Of Mr Oldham

Farewell, too little and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own;
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.
To the same goal did both our studies drive;
The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,
While his young friend performed and won the race.
O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?
It might (what Nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.
A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betrayed.
Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their prime,
Still showed a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.
Once more, hail and farewell! farewell, thou young,
But ah too short, Marcellus of our tongue!
Thy brows with ivy and with laurels bound;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

John Dryden

To The Pious Memory Of The Accomplished Young Lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew

Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
   Made in the last promotion of the Blest;
Whose palms, new pluck'd from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,
Thou roll'st above us, in thy wand'ring race,
   Or, in procession fix'd and regular,
   Mov'd with the Heavens' majestic pace:
 Or, call'd to more superior bliss,
Thou tread'st, with seraphims, the vast abyss.
What ever happy region is thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
(Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
 Since Heav'n's eternal year is thine.)
Hear then a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse,
In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesy were giv'n;
To make thyself a welcome inmate there:
While yet a young probationer,
And Candidate of Heav'n.

 If by traduction came thy mind,
 Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfus'd into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
(An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.)
 But if thy preexisting soul
 Was form'd, at first, with myriads more,
It did through all the mighty poets roll,
 Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.
 If so, then cease thy flight, O Heav'n-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore:
 Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,
 Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return, to fill or mend the choir, of thy celestial kind.

May we presume to say, that at thy birth,
New joy was sprung in Heav'n as well as here on earth.
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And ev'n the most malicious were in trine.
Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tun'd it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth;
And then if ever, mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres!
And if no clust'ring swarm of bees

On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,
'Twas that, such vulgar miracles,
Heav'n had not leisure to renew:
For all the blest fraternity of love
Solemniz'd there thy birth, and kept thy Holyday above.

O Gracious God! How far have we
Profan'd thy Heav'nly gift of poesy?
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordain'd above
For tongues of angels, and for hymns of love?
O wretched we! why were we hurried down
This lubrique and adult'rate age,
(Nay added fat pollutions of our own)
T'increase the steaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t'excuse our Second Fall?
Let this thy vestal, Heav'n, atone for all!
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoil'd,
Unmix'd with foreign filth, and undefil'd,
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child!

Art she had none, yet wanted none:
For Nature did that want supply,
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
That it seem'd borrow'd, where 'twas only born.
Her morals too were in her bosom bred
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of Books, her Father's Life, she read.
And to be read her self she need not fear,
Each test, and ev'ry light, her Muse will bear,
Though Epictetus with his lamp were there.
Ev'n love (for love sometimes her Muse express'd)
Was but a lambent-flame which play'd about her breast:
Light as the vapours of a morning dream,
So cold herself, whilst she such warmth express'd,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought, she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,
For painture near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.
A chamber of dependences was fram'd,
(As conquerors will never want pretence,
When arm'd, to justify th'offence)
And the whole fief, in right of poetry she claim'd.
The country open lay without defence:

For poets frequent inroads there had made,
  And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with ev'ry lineament:
And all the large domains which the Dumb-sister sway'd,
All bow'd beneath her government,
Receiv'd in triumph wheresoe'er she went,
Her pencil drew, what e'er her soul design'd,
And oft the happy draught surpass'd the image in her mind.
The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,
Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear,
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods,
Which as in mirrors, show'd the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear.
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns broken lie,
And tho' defac'd, the wonder of the eye,
What Nature, art, bold fiction e'er durst frame,
Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopl'd Ark the whole creation bore.

The scene then chang'd, with bold erected look
Our martial king the sight with reverence strook:
For not content t'express his outward part,
Her hand call'd out the image of his heart,
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts, were figur'd there,
As when, by magic, ghosts are made appear.
Our phoenix queen was portray'd too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observ'd, as well as heav'nly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands:
Before a train of heroines was seen,
In beauty foremost, as in rank, the queen!
Thus nothing to her genius was deny'd,
But like a ball of fire the further thrown,
  Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry side.
What next she had design'd, Heaven only knows,
To such immod'rate growth her conquest rose,
That fate alone its progress could oppose.

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,

The well-proportion'd shape, and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes;
In earth the much lamented virgin lies!
Not wit, not piety could fate prevent;
Nor was the cruel destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life, and beauty too;
But, like a harden'd felon, took a pride
  To work more mischievously slow,
  And plunder'd first, and then destroy'd.
O double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relique, and deface the shrine!
  But thus Orinda died:
Heav'n, by the same disease, did both translate,
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

Meantime her warlike brother on the seas
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.
Ah, generous youth, that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here!
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wreck'd at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou ken'st from far,
Among the Pleiad's, a new-kindl'd star,
If any sparkles, than the rest, more bright,
'Tis she that shines in that propitious light.

When in mid-air, the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;
When in the valley of Jehosophat,
The Judging God shall close the book of fate;
And there the last Assizes keep,
For those who wake, and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly,
From the four corners of the sky,
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those cloth'd with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound:
For they are cover'd with the lightest ground,
And straight, with in-born vigour, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shall go,
As harbinger of Heav'n, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learn'd below.

John Dryden

Troilus And Cressida

Can life be a blessing,
Or worth the possessing,
Can life be a blessing if love were away?
Ah no! though our love all night keep us waking,
And though he torment us with cares all the day,
Yet he sweetens, he sweetens our pains in the taking,
There's an hour at the last, there's an hour to repay.

In ev'ry possessing,
The ravishing blessing,
In ev'ry possessing the fruit of our pain,
Poor lovers forget long ages of anguish,
Whate'er they have suffer'd and done to obtain;
'Tis a pleasure, a pleasure to sigh and to languish,
When we hope, when we hope to be happy again.

John Dryden

Upon the Death of Lord Hastings

Must noble Hastings immaturely die,
The honour of his ancient family,
Beauty and learning thus together meet,
To bring a winding for a wedding sheet?
Must virtue prove death's harbinger? must she,
With him expiring, feel mortality?
Is death, sin's wages, grace's now? shall art
Make us more learned, only to depart?
If merit be disease; if virtue, death;
To be good, not to be; who'd then bequeath
Himself to discipline? who'd not esteem
Labour a crime? study self-murder deem?
Our noble youth now have pretence to be
Dunces securely, ignorant healthfully.
Rare linguist, whose worth speaks itself, whose praise,
Though not his own, all tongues besides do raise:
Than whom great Alexander may seem less,
Who conquered men, but not their languages.
In his mouth nations speak; his tongue might be
Interpreter to Greece, France, Italy.
His native soil was the four parts o' the earth;
All Europe was too narrow for his birth.
A young apostle; and,—with reverence may
I speak 't,—inspired with gift of tongues, as they.
Nature gave him, a child, what men in vain
Oft strive, by art though furthered, to obtain.
His body was an orb, his sublime soul
Did move on virtue's and on learning's pole;
Whose regular motions better to our view,
Than Archimedes' sphere, the heavens did shew.
Graces and virtues, languages and arts,
Beauty and learning, filled up all the parts.
Heaven's gifts, which do like falling stars appear
Scattered in others, all, as in their sphere,
Were fixed, and conglobate in's soul, and thence
Shone through his body, with sweet influence;
Letting their glories so on each limb fall,
The whole frame rendered was celestial.
Come, learned Ptolemy, and trial make,
If thou this hero's altitude can'st take:
But that transcends thy skill; thrice happy all,
Could we but prove thus astronomical.
Lived Tycho now, struck with this ray which shone
More bright i' the morn, than others beam at noon,
He'd take his astrolabe, and seek out here
What new star 'twas did gild our hemisphere.
Replenished then with such rare gifts as these,
Where was room left for such a foul disease?
The nation's sin hath drawn that veil, which shrouds
Our day-spring in so sad benighting clouds.
Heaven would no longer trust its pledge, but thus
Recalled it,—rapt its Ganymede from us.

Was there no milder way but the small-pox,
The very filthiness of Pandora's box?
So many spots, like næves, our Venus soil?
One jewel set off with so many a foil;
Blisters with pride swelled, which through's flesh did sprout
Like rosebuds, stuck i' the lily-skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit;
Which, rebel-like, with its own lord at strife,
Thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.
Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,
The cabinet of a richer soul within?
No comet need foretell his change drew on,
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.
Oh had he died of old, how great a strife
Had been, who from his death should draw their life;
Who should, by one rich draught, become whate'er
Seneca, Cato, Numa, Cæsar, were!
Learned, virtuous, pious, great; and have by this
An universal metempsychosis.
Must all these aged sires in one funeral
Expire? all die in one so young, so small?
Who, had he lived his life out, his great fame
Had swoln 'bove any Greek or Roman name.
But hasty winter, with one blast, hath brought
The hopes of autumn, summer, spring, to nought.
Thus fades the oak i' the sprig, i' the blade the corn;
Thus without young, this Phœnix dies, newborn.
Must then old three-legged grey-beards with their gout,
Catarrhs, rheums, aches, live three ages out?
Time's offals, only fit for the hospital!
Or to hang an antiquary's rooms withal!
Must drunkards, lechers, spent with sinning, live
With such helps as broths, possets, physic give?
None live, but such as should die? shall we meet
With none but ghostly fathers in the street?
Grief makes me rail, sorrow will force its way,
And showers of tears tempestuous sighs best lay.
The tongue may fail; but overflowing eyes
Will weep out lasting streams of elegies.
But thou, O virgin-widow, left alone,
Now thy beloved, heaven-ravished spouse is gone,
Whose skilful sire in vain strove to apply
Med'cines, when thy balm was no remedy;
With greater than Platonic love, O wed
His soul, though not his body, to thy bed:
Let that make thee a mother; bring thou forth
The ideas of his virtue, knowledge, worth;
Transcribe the original in new copies; give
Hastings o' the better part: so shall he live
In's nobler half; and the great grandsire be
Of an heroic divine progeny:

An issue which to eternity shall last,
Yet but the irradiations which he cast.
Erect no mausoleums; for his best
Monument is his spouse's marble breast.

John Dryden

Upon the Death of the Viscount of Dundee

O last and best of Scots! who didst maintain
Thy country's freedom from a foreign reign;
New people fill the land now thou art gone,
New gods the temples, and new kings the throne.
Scotland and thou did each in other live;
Nor wouldst thou her, nor could she thee survive.
Farewell! who, dying, didst support the state,
And couldst not fall but with thy country's fate.

John Dryden

Upon Young Mr. Rogers, of Gloucestershire

Of gentle blood, his parents' only treasure,
Their lasting sorrow, and their vanished pleasure,
Adorned with features, virtues, wit, and grace,
A large provision for so short a race:
More moderate gifts might have prolonged his date,
Too early fitted for a better state:
But, knowing heaven his home, to shun delay,
He leaped o'er age, and took the shortest way.

John Dryden

Veni, Creator Spiritus

Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit ev'ry pious mind;
Come, pour thy joys on human kind;
From sin, and sorrow set us free;
And make thy temples worthy Thee.

O, Source of uncreated Light,
The Father's promis'd Paraclete!
Thrice Holy Fount, thrice Holy Fire,
Our hearts with heav'nly love inspire;
Come, and thy Sacred Unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing!

Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sev'n-fold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty Hand,
Whose pow'r does heav'n and earth command:
Proceeding Spirit, our Defence,
Who do'st the gift of tongues dispence,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence!

Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control;
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,
Then, lay thy hand, and hold 'em down.

Chase from our minds th' Infernal Foe;
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And, lest our feet should step astray,
Protect, and guide us in the way.

Make us Eternal Truths receive,
And practise, all that we believe:
Give us thy self, that we may see
The Father and the Son, by thee.

Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend th' Almighty Father's name:
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost Man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee.

John Dryden

Verses to Her Royal Highness the Duchess, on the Memorable Victory Gained by the Duke Against the Hollanders, June 3rd, 1665

Madam,
When, for our sakes, your hero you resigned
To swelling seas, and every faithless wind;
When you released his courage, and set free
A valour fatal to the enemy;
You lodged your country's cares within your breast,
(The mansion where soft love should only rest,)
And, ere our foes abroad were overcome,
The noblest conquest you had gained at home.
Ah, what concerns did both your souls divide!
Your honour gave us what your love denied;
And 'twas for him much easier to subdue
Those foes he fought with, than to part from you.
That glorious day, which two such navies saw,
As each unmatched might to the world give law,
Neptune, yet doubtful whom he should obey,
Held to them both the trident of the sea:
The winds were hushed, the waves in ranks were cast,
As awfully as when God's people past:
Those, yet uncertain on whose sails to blow,
These, where the wealth of nations ought to flow.
Then with the Duke your Highness ruled the day:
While all the brave did his command obey,
The fair and pious under you did pray.
How powerful are chaste vows! the wind and tide
You bribed to combat on the English side.
Thus to your much-loved lord you did convey
An unknown succour, sent the nearest way.
New vigour to his wearied arms you brought,
(So Moses was upheld while Israel fought)
While, from afar, we heard the cannon play,
Like distant thunder on a shiny day.
For absent friends we were ashamed to fear,
When we considered what you ventured there.
Ships, men, and arms, our country might restore,
But such a leader could supply no more.
With generous thoughts of conquest he did burn,
Yet fought not more to vanquish than return.
Fortune and victory he did pursue,
To bring them, as his slaves, to wait on you:
Thus beauty ravished the rewards of fame,
And the fair triumphed, when the brave o'ercame.
Then, as you meant to spread another way
By land your conquests, far as his by sea,
Leaving our southern clime, you marched along
The stubborn north ten thousand Cupids strong.
Like commons the nobility resort,
In crowding heaps, to fill your moving court:
To welcome your approach the vulgar run,
Like some new envoy from the distant sun;
And country beauties by their lovers go,
Blessing themselves, and wondering at the show.

So, when the new-born Phœnix first is seen,
Her feathered subjects all adore their queen,
And, while she makes her progress through the east,
From every grove her numerous train's increased:
Each poet of the air her glory sings,
And round him the pleased audience clap their wings.

John Dryden

Why should a foolish marriage vow

Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now
When passion is decay'd?
We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we could,
Till our love was lov'd out in us both:
But our marriage is dead, when the pleasure is fled:
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.

If I have pleasures for a friend,
And farther love in store,
What wrong has he whose joys did end,
And who could give no more?
'Tis a madness that he should be jealous of me,
Or that I should bar him of another:
For all we can gain is to give our selves pain,
When neither can hinder the other.

John Dryden

You charm'd me not with that fair face

You charm'd me not with that fair face
Though it was all divine:
To be another's is the grace,
That makes me wish you mine.

The Gods and Fortune take their part
Who like young monarchs fight;
And boldly dare invade that heart
Which is another's right.

First mad with hope we undertake
To pull up every bar;
But once possess'd, we faintly make
A dull defensive war.

Now every friend is turn'd a foe
In hope to get our store:
And passion makes us cowards grow,
Which made us brave before.

John Dryden

Your hay it is mow'd, and your corn is reap'd

(Comus.) Your hay it is mow'd, and your corn is reap'd;
Your barns will be full, and your hovels heap'd:
Come, my boys, come;
Come, my boys, come;
And merrily roar out Harvest Home.
(Chorus.) Come, my boys, come;
Come, my boys, come;
And merrily roar out Harvest Home.

(Man.) We ha' cheated the parson, we'll cheat him agen,
For why should a blockhead ha' one in ten?
One in ten,
One in ten,
For why should a blockhead ha' one in ten?

For prating so long like a book-learn'd sot,
Till pudding and dumplin burn to pot,
Burn to pot,
Burn to pot,
Till pudding and dumplin burn to pot.
(Chorus.)Burn to pot,
Burn to pot,
Till pudding and dumplin burn to pot.
We'll toss off our ale till we canno' stand,
And Hoigh for the honour of Old England:
Old England,
Old England,
And Hoigh for the honour of Old England.
(Chorus.) Old England,
Old England,
And Hoigh for the honour of Old England.

John Dryden