

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Jonathan Swift**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

### **Jonathan Swift (1667 - 1745)**

Swift, a cousin of Dryden, was born in Dublin and went to school with the playwright Congreve. He completed his education at Trinity College, Dublin, where he gained his degree only by "special grace", because of his bad behaviour.

Swift's life-long involvement with political concerns began in 1689 when he became secretary to Sir William Temple, a diplomat and essayist. He was ordained in 1694 and this marks another key focus in his life and work. He was given a prebend at St Patrick's, Dublin in 1699. Swift had several close literary companions and in 1714 together with Pope, Gay and others he founded the Scribelunus club. The professed aim of this club was to ridicule "false tastes in learning", and indeed, much of Swift's written work is an attack on the institutions and accepted beliefs of his day. Gulliver's Travels, for instance is presented as an attractive travel novel yet also mounts an attack against political parties, philosophers, historians and others, through detailed satiric observation. Through his regular trips to London, Swift became acquainted with Addison, Steele and Halifax and he particularly enjoyed playing language games with Sheridan. Although Gulliver's Travels had an immediate and widespread success, the satirical element alienated many including Dr Johnson and Thackeray, and there were even claims that Swift had been mad before he died.

## A Beautiful Young Nymph Going To Bed

Corinna, Pride of Drury-Lane,  
For whom no Shepherd sighs in vain;  
Never did Covent Garden boast  
So bright a batter'd, strolling Toast;  
No drunken Rake to pick her up,  
No Cellar where on Tick to sup;  
Returning at the Midnight Hour;  
Four Stories climbing to her Bow'r;  
Then, seated on a three-legg'd Chair,  
Takes off her artificial Hair:  
Now, picking out a Crystal Eye,  
She wipes it clean, and lays it by.  
Her Eye-Brows from a Mouse's Hide,  
Stuck on with Art on either Side,  
Pulls off with Care, and first displays 'em,  
Then in a Play-Book smoothly lays 'em.  
Now dextrously her Plumpers draws,  
That serve to fill her hollow Jaws.  
Untwists a Wire; and from her Gums  
A Set of Teeth completely comes.  
Pulls out the Rags contriv'd to prop  
Her flabby Dugs and down they drop.  
Proceeding on, the lovely Goddess  
Unlaces next her Steel-Rib'd Bodice;  
Which by the Operator's Skill,  
Press down the Lumps, the Hollows fill,  
Up hoes her Hand, and off she slips  
The Bolsters that supply her Hips.  
With gentlest Touch, she next explores  
Her Shankers, Issues, running Sores,  
Effects of many a sad Disaster;  
And then to each applies a Plaster.  
But must, before she goes to Bed,  
Rub off the Daubs of White and Red;  
And smooth the Furrows in her Front,  
With greasy Paper stuck upon't.  
She takes a Bolus e'er she sleeps;  
And then between two Blankets creeps.  
With pains of love tormented lies;  
Or if she chance to close her Eyes,  
Of Bridewell and the Compter dreams,  
And feels the Lash, and faintly screams;  
Or, by a faithless Bully drawn,  
At some Hedge-Tavern lies in Pawn;  
Or to Jamaica seems transported,  
Alone, and by no Planter courted;  
Or, near Fleet-Ditch's oozy Brinks,  
Surrounded with a Hundred Stinks,  
Belated, seems on watch to lie,  
And snap some Cull passing by;  
Or, struck with Fear, her Fancy runs  
On Watchmen, Constables and Duns,

From whom she meets with frequent Rubs;  
But, never from Religious Clubs;  
Whose Favour she is sure to find,  
Because she pays them all in Kind.  
CORINNA wakes. A dreadful Sight!  
Behold the Ruins of the Night!  
A wicked Rat her Plaster stole,  
Half eat, and dragged it to his Hole.  
The Crystal Eye, alas, was miss'd;  
And Puss had on her Plumpers piss'd.  
A Pigeon pick'd her Issue-Peas;  
And Shock her Tresses fill'd with Fleas.  
The Nymph, tho' in this mangled Plight,  
Must ev'ry Morn her Limbs unite.  
But how shall I describe her Arts  
To recollect the scatter'd Parts?  
Or show the Anguish, Toil, and Pain,  
Of gath'ring up herself again?  
The bashful Muse will never bear  
In such a Scene to interfere.  
Corinna in the Morning dizen'd,  
Who sees, will spew; who smells, be poison'd.

Submitted by Andrew Mayers

Jonathan Swift

## A Description of a City Shower

Careful Observers may foretel the Hour  
(By sure Prognosticks) when to dread a Show'r:  
While Rain depends, the pensive Cat gives o'er  
Her Frolicks, and pursues her Tail no more.  
Returning Home at Night, you'll find the Sink  
Strike your offended Sense with double Stink.  
If you be wise, then go not far to Dine,  
You spend in Coach-hire more than save in Wine.  
A coming Show'r your shooting Corns presage,  
Old Aches throb, your hollow Tooth will rage.  
Sauntring in Coffee-house is Dulman seen;  
He damns the Climate, and complains of Spleen.

Mean while the South rising with dabbled Wings,  
A Sable Cloud a-thwart the Welkin flings,  
That swill'd more Liquor than it could contain,  
And like a Drunkard gives it up again.  
Brisk Susan whips her Linen from the Rope,  
While the first drizzling Show'r is born aslope,  
Such is that Sprinkling which some careless Quean  
Flirts on you from her Mop, but not so clean.  
You fly, invoke the Gods; then turning, stop  
To rail; she singing, still whirls on her Mop.  
Not yet, the Dust had shun'd th' unequal Strife,  
But aided by the Wind, fought still for Life;  
And wafted with its Foe by violent Gust,  
'Twas doubtful which was Rain, and which was Dust.  
Ah! where must needy Poet seek for Aid,  
When Dust and Rain at once his Coat invade;  
Sole Coat, where Dust cemented by the Rain,  
Erects the Nap, and leaves a cloudy Stain.

Now in contiguous Drops the Flood comes down,  
Threat'ning with Deluge this Devoted Town.  
To Shops in Crouds the dagled Females fly,  
Pretend to cheapen Goods, but nothing buy.  
The Templer spruce, while ev'ry Spout's a-broach,  
Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a Coach.  
The tuck'd-up Sempstress walks with hasty Strides,  
While Streams run down her oil'd Umbrella's Sides.  
Here various Kinds by various Fortunes led,  
Commence Acquaintance underneath a Shed.  
Triumphant Tories, and desponding Whigs,  
Forget their Fewds, and join to save their Wigs.  
Box'd in a Chair the Beau impatient sits,  
While Spouts run clatt'ring o'er the Roof by Fits;  
And ever and anon with frightful Din  
The Leather sounds, he trembles from within.  
So when Troy Chair-men bore the Wooden Steed,  
Pregnant with Greeks, impatient to be freed,  
(Those Bully Greeks, who, as the Moderns do,  
Instead of paying Chair-men, run them thro'.)

Laoco'n struck the Outside with his Spear,  
And each imprison'd Hero quak'd for Fear.

Now from all Parts the swelling Kennels flow,  
And bear their Trophies with them as they go:  
Filth of all Hues and Odours seem to tell  
What Streets they sail'd from, by the Sight and Smell.  
They, as each Torrent drives, with rapid Force  
From Smithfield, or St.Pulchre's shape their Course,  
And in huge Confluent join at Snow-Hill Ridge,  
Fall from the Conduit prone to Holborn-Bridge.  
Sweepings from Butchers Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood,  
Drown'd Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench'd in Mud,  
Dead Cats and Turnips-Tops come tumbling down the Flood.

Jonathan Swift

## **A Description of the Morning**

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

Jonathan Swift

## A Maypole

Deprived of root, and branch and rind,  
Yet flowers I bear of every kind:  
And such is my prolific power,  
They bloom in less than half an hour;  
Yet standers-by may plainly see  
They get no nourishment from me.  
My head with giddiness goes round,  
And yet I firmly stand my ground:  
All over naked I am seen,  
And painted like an Indian queen.  
No couple-beggar in the land  
E'er joined such numbers hand in hand.  
I joined them fairly with a ring;  
Nor can our parson blame the thing.  
And though no marriage words are spoke,  
They part not till the ring is broke;  
Yet hypocrite fanatics cry,  
I'm but an idol raised on high;  
And once a weaver in our town,  
A damned Cromwellian, knocked me down.  
I lay a prisoner twenty years,  
And then the jovial cavaliers  
To their old post restored all three -  
I mean the church, the king, and me.

Jonathan Swift

## A Satirical Elegy

On the Death of a Late FAMOUS GENERAL

His Grace! impossible! what dead!  
Of old age, too, and in his bed!  
And could that Mighty Warrior fall?  
And so inglorious, after all!  
Well, since he's gone, no matter how,  
The last loud trump must wake him now:  
And, trust me, as the noise grows stronger,  
He'd wish to sleep a little longer.  
And could he be indeed so old  
As by the news-papers we're told?  
Threescore, I think, is pretty high;  
'Twas time in conscience he should die.  
This world he cumber'd long enough;  
He burnt his candle to the snuff;  
And that's the reason, some folks think,  
He left behind so great a stink.  
Behold his funeral appears,  
Nor widow's sighs, nor orphan's tears,  
Wont at such times each heart to pierce,  
Attend the progress of his hearse.  
But what of that, his friends may say,  
He had those honours in his day.  
True to his profit and his pride,  
He made them weep before he dy'd.  
Come hither, all ye empty things,  
Ye bubbles rais'd by breath of Kings;  
Who float upon the tide of state,  
Come hither, and behold your fate.  
Let pride be taught by this rebuke,  
How very mean a thing's a Duke;  
From all his ill-got honours flung,  
Turn'd to that dirt from whence he sprung.

Jonathan Swift

## A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General

"His Grace! impossible! what, dead!  
Of old age too, and in his bed!  
And could that mighty warrior fall,  
And so inglorious, after all?  
Well, since he's gone, no matter how,  
The last loud trump must wake him now;  
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Jonathan Swift

## Advice to the Grub Street Verse-writers

Ye poets ragged and forlorn,  
Down from your garrets haste;  
Ye rhymers, dead as soon as born,  
Not yet consign'd to paste;  
I know a trick to make you thrive;  
O, 'tis a quaint device:  
Your still-born poems shall revive,  
And scorn to wrap up spice.  
Get all your verses printed fair,  
Then let them well be dried;  
And Curll must have a special care  
To leave the margin wide.

Lend these to paper-sparing Pope;  
And when he sets to write,  
No letter with an envelope  
Could give him more delight.

When Pope has fill'd the margins round,  
Why then recall your loan;  
Sell them to Curll for fifty pound,  
And swear they are your own.

Jonathan Swift

## Elegy Upon Tiger

Her dead lady's joy and comfort,  
Who departed this life  
The last day of March, 1727:  
To the great joy of Bryan  
That his antagonist is gone.

And is poor Tiger laid at last so low?  
O day of sorrow! -Day of dismal woe!  
Bloodhounds, or spaniels, lap-dogs, 'tis all one,  
When Death once whistles -snap! -away they're gone.  
See how she lies, and hangs her lifeless ears,  
Bathed in her mournful lady's tears!  
Dumb is her throat, and wagless is her tail,  
Doomed to the grave, to Death's eternal jail!  
In a few days this lovely creature must  
First turn to clay, and then be changed to dust.  
That mouth which used its lady's mouth to lick  
Must yield its jaw-bones to the worms to pick.  
That mouth which used the partridge-wing to eat  
Must give its palate to the worms to eat.

Methinks I see her now in Charon's boat  
Bark at the Stygian fish which round it float;  
While Cerberus, alarmed to hear the sound,  
Makes Hell's wide concave bellow all around.  
She sees him not, but hears him through the dark,  
And valiantly returns him bark for bark.  
But now she trembles -though a ghost, she dreads  
To see a dog with three large yawning heads.  
Spare her, you hell-hounds, ease your frightful paws,  
And let poor Tiger 'scape your furious jaws.  
Let her go safe to the Elysian plains,  
Where Hylax barks among the Mantuan swains;  
There let her frisk about her new-found love:  
She loved a dog when she was here above.

### The Epitaph

Here lies beneath this marble  
An animal could bark, or warble:  
Sometimes a bitch, sometimes a bird,  
Could eat a tart, or eat a t -.

Jonathan Swift

## Mrs Frances Haris's Petition

To their Excellencies the Lords Justices of Ireland,  
The humble petition of Frances Harris,  
Who must starve and die a maid if it miscarries;  
Humble sheweth, that I went to warm myself in Lady Betty's chamber, because I  
was cold;  
And I had in a purse seven pounds, four shillings, and sixpence, (besides  
farthings) in money and gold;  
So because I had been buying things for my lady last night,  
I was resolved to tell my money, to see if it was right.  
Now, you must know, because my trunk has a very bad lock,  
Therefore all the money I have, which, God knows, is a very small stock,  
I keep in my pocket, tied about my middle, next my smock.  
So when I went to put up my purse, as God would have it, my smock was unripped,  
And instead of putting it into my pocket, down it slipped;  
Then the bell rung, and I went down to put my lady to bed;  
And, God knows, I thought my money was as safe as my maidenhead.  
So, when I came up again, I found my pocket feel very light;  
But when I searched, and missed my purse, Lord! I thought I should have sunk  
outright.  
"Lord! madam," says Mary, "how d'ye do?" -"Indeed," says I, "never worse:  
But pray, Mary, can you tell what I have done with my purse?"  
"Lord help me!" says Mary, "I never stirred out of this place!"  
"Nay," said I, "I had it in Lady Betty's chamber, that's a plain case."  
So Mary got me to bed, and covered me up warm:  
However, she stole away my garters, that I might do myself no harm.  
So I tumbled and tossed all night, as you may very well think,  
But hardly ever set my eyes together, or slept a wink.  
So I was a-dreamed, methought, that I went and searched the folks round,  
And in a corner of Mrs Duke's box, tied in a rag, the money was found.  
So next morning we told Whittle, and he fell a swearing:  
Then my dame Wadgar came, and she, you know, is thick of hearing.  
"Dame," says I, as loud as I could bawl, "do you know what a loss I have had?"  
"Nay," says she, "my Lord Colway's folks are all very sad:  
For my Lord Dromedary comes a Tuesday without fail."  
"Pugh!" said I, "but that's not the business that I ail."  
Says Cary, says he, "I have been a servant this five and twenty years come  
spring,  
And in all the places I lived I never heard of such a thing."  
"Yes," says the steward, "I remember when I was at my Lord Shrewsbury's,  
Such a thing as this happened, just about the time of gooseberries."  
So I went to the party suspected, and I found her full of grief:  
(Now, you must know, of all things in the world I hate a thief:)  
However, I was resolved to bring the discourse sliely about:  
"Mrs Duke," said I, "here's an ugly accident has happened out:  
'Tis not that I value the money three skips of a louse:  
But the thing I stand upon is the credit of the house.  
'Tis true, seven pounds, four shillings, and sixpence makes a great hole in my  
wages:  
Besides, as they say, service is no inheritance in these ages.  
Now, Mrs Duke, you know, and everybody understands,  
That though 'tis hard to judge, yet money can't go without hands."  
"The devil take me!" said she, (blessing herself,) "if ever I saw't!"

So she roared like a bedlam, as though I had called her all to naught.  
 So, you know, what could I say to her any more?  
 I e'en left her, and came away as wise as I was before.  
 Well; but then they would have had me gone to the cunning man:  
 "No," said I, "'tis the same thing, the CHAPLAIN will be here anon."  
 So the Chaplain came in. Now the servants say he is my sweetheart,  
 Because he's always in my chamber, and I always take his part.  
 So, as the devil would have it, before I was aware, out I blundered,  
 "Parson," said I, "can you cast a nativity, when a body's plundered?"  
 (Now you must know, he hates to be called Parson, like the devil!)  
 "Truly," says he, "Mrs Nab, it might become you to be more civil;  
 If your money be gone, as a learned Divine says, d'ye see,  
 You are no text for my handling; so take that from me:  
 I was never taken for a Conjurer before, I'd have you to know."  
 "Lord!" said I, "don't be angry, I am sure I never thought you so;  
 You know I honour the cloth; I design to be a Parson's wife;  
 I never took one in your coat for a conjurer in all my life."  
 With that he twisted his girdle at me like a rope, as who should say,  
 `Now you may go hang yourself for me!' and so went away.  
 Well: I thought I should have swooned. "Lord!" said I, "what shall I do?  
 I have lost my money, and shall lose my true love too!"  
 Then my lord called me: "Harry," said my lord, "don't cry;  
 I'll give you something toward thy loss: "And," says my lady, "so will I."  
 Oh! but, said I, what if, after all, the Chaplain won't come to?  
 For that, he said (an't please your Excellencies), I must petition you.  
 The premisses tenderly considered, I desire your Excellencies' protection,  
 And that I may have a share in next Sunday's collection;  
 And, over and above, that I may have your Excellencies' letter,  
 With an order for the Chaplain aforesaid, or, instead of him, a better:  
 And then your poor petitioner, both night and day,  
 Or the Chaplain (for 'tis his trade,) as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

Jonathan Swift

### **On Stella's Birth-Day 1719**

Stella this Day is thirty four,  
(We shan't dispute a Year or more)  
However Stella, be not troubled,  
Although thy Size and Years are doubled,  
Since first I saw Thee at Sixteen  
The brightest Virgin on the Green,  
So little is thy Form declin'd  
Made up so largely in thy Mind.  
Oh, woud it please the Gods to split  
Thy Beauty, Size, and Years, and Wit,  
No Age could furnish out a Pair  
Of Nymphs so graceful, Wise and fair  
With half the Lustre of your Eyes,  
With half your Wit, your Years and Size:  
And then before it grew too late,  
How should I beg of gentle Fate,  
(That either Nymph might have her Swain,)  
To split my Worship too in twain.

Jonathan Swift

### **On Stella's Birth-Day, 1719**

Stella this Day is thirty four,  
(We shan't dispute a Year or more)  
However Stella, be not troubled,  
Although thy Size and Years are doubled,  
Since first I saw Thee at Sixteen  
The brightest Virgin on the Green,  
So little is thy Form declin'd  
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Oh, woud it please the Gods to split  
Thy Beauty, Size, and Years, and Wit,  
No Age could furnish out a Pair  
Of Nymphs so graceful, Wise and fair  
With half the Lustre of your Eyes,  
With half your Wit, your Years and Size:  
And then before it grew too late,  
How should I beg of gentle Fate,  
(That either Nymph might have her Swain,)  
To split my Worship too in twain.

Jonathan Swift

### **On Stephen Duck, the Thresher, and Favourite Poet. A Quibbl**

The Thresher Duck, could o'er the Q {-}{-}{-}{-}{-}{-} prevail,  
The Proverb says; No Fence against a Flayl.  
From threshing Corn, he turns to thresh his Brains;  
For which Her M{-}{-}{-}{-}{-}{-}y allows him Grains.  
Though 'tis confess't, that those who ever saw  
His Poems, think them all not worth a Straw.  
Thrice happy Duck, employ'd in threshing Stubble!  
Thy Toil is lessen'd, and thy Profits double.

Jonathan Swift

## Oysters

Charming oysters I cry:  
My masters, come buy,  
So plump and so fresh,  
So sweet is their flesh,  
No Colchester oyster  
Is sweeter and moister:  
Your stomach they settle,  
And rouse up your mettle:  
They'll make you a dad  
Of a lass or a lad;  
And madam your wife  
They'll please to the life;  
Be she barren, be she old,  
Be she slut, or be she scold,  
Eat my oysters, and lie near her,  
She'll be fruitful, never fear her.

Jonathan Swift

## Phillis, Or, the Progress of Love

Desponding Phillis was endu'd  
With ev'ry Talent of a Prude,  
She trembled when a Man drew near;  
Salute her, and she turn'd her Ear:  
If o'er against her you were plac't  
She durst not look above your Wa[i]st;  
She'd rather take you to her Bed  
Than let you see her dress her Head;  
In Church you heard her thro' the Crowd  
Repeat the Absolution loud;  
In Church, secure behind her Fan  
She durst behold that Monster, Man:  
There practic'd how to place her Head,  
And bit her Lips to make them red:  
Or on the Matt devoutly kneeling  
Would lift her Eyes up to the Ceiling,  
And heave her Bosom unaware  
For neighb'ring Beaux to see it bare.  
At length a lucky Lover came,  
And found Admittance to the Dame.  
Suppose all Partys now agreed,  
The Writings drawn, the Lawyer fee'd,  
The Vicar and the Ring bespoke:  
Guess how could such a Match be broke.  
See then what Mortals place their Bliss in!  
Next morn betimes the Bride was missing,  
The Mother scream'd, the Father chid,  
Where can this idle Wench be hid?  
No news of Phil. The Bridegroom came,  
And thought his Bride had sculk't for shame,  
Because her Father us'd to say  
The Girl had such a Bashfull way.  
Now John the Butler must be sent  
To learn the Road that Phillis went;  
The Groom was wisht to saddle Crop,  
For John must neither light nor stop;  
But find her where so'er she fled,  
And bring her back, alive or dead.  
See here again the Dev'l to do;  
For truly John was missing too:  
The Horse and Pillion both were gone  
Phillis, it seems, was fled with John.  
Old Madam who went up to find  
What Papers Phil had left behind,  
A Letter on the Toylet sees  
To my much honor'd Father; These:  
( 'Tis always done, Romances tell us,  
When Daughters run away with Fellows)  
Fill'd with the choicest common-places,  
By others us'd in the like Cases.  
That, long ago a Fortune-teller  
Exactly said what now befell her,

And in a Glass had made her see  
 A serving-Man of low Degree:  
 It was her Fate; must be forgiven;  
 For Marriages were made in Heaven:  
 His Pardon begg'd, but to be plain,  
 She'd do't if 'twere to do again.  
 Thank God, 'twas neither Shame nor Sin,  
 For John was come of honest Kin:  
 Love never thinks of Rich and Poor,  
 She'd beg with John from Door to Door:  
 Forgive her, if it be a Crime,  
 She'll never do't another Time,  
 She ne'r before in all her Life  
 Once disobey'd him, Maid nor Wife.  
 One Argument she summ'd up all in,  
 The Thing was done and past recalling:  
 And therefore hop'd she should recover  
 His Favor, when his Passion's over.  
 She valued not what others thought her;  
 And was--His most obedient Daughter.  
 Fair Maidens all attend the Muse  
 Who now the wandring Pair pursues:  
 Away they rose in homely Sort  
 Their Journy long, their Money Short;  
 The loving Couple well bemir'd,  
 The Horse and both the Riders tir'd:  
 Their Vittells bad, their Lodging worse,  
 Phil cry'd, and John began to curse;  
 Phil wish't, that she had strained a Limb  
 When first she ventur'd out with him.  
 John wish't, that he had broke a Leg  
 When first for her he quitted Peg.  
 But what Adventures more befell 'em  
 The Muse hath now no time to tell 'em.  
 How Jonny wheadled, threatned, fawnd,  
 Till Phillis all her Trinkets pawn'd:  
 How oft she broke her marriage Vows  
 In kindness to maintain her Spouse;  
 Till Swains unwholsome spoyled the Trade,  
 For now the Surgeon must be paid;  
 To whom those Perquisites are gone  
 In Christian Justice due to John.  
 When Food and Rayment now grew scarce  
 Fate put a Period to the Farce;  
 And with exact Poetic Justice:  
 For John is Landlord, Phillis Hostess;  
 They keep at Stains the old blue Boar,  
 Are Cat and Dog, and Rogue and Whore.

Jonathan Swift

### **Stella's Birthday March 13, 1719**

Stella this day is thirty-four,  
(We shan't dispute a year or more:)  
However, Stella, be not troubled,  
Although thy size and years are doubled,  
Since first I saw thee at sixteen,  
The brightest virgin on the green;  
So little is thy form declin'd;  
Made up so largely in thy mind.

Oh, would it please the gods to split  
Thy beauty, size, and years, and wit;  
No age could furnish out a pair  
Of nymphs so graceful, wise, and fair;  
With half the lustre of your eyes,  
With half your wit, your years, and size.  
And then, before it grew too late,  
How should I beg of gentle Fate,  
(That either nymph might have her swain,)  
To split my worship too in twain.

Jonathan Swift

## Stella's Birthday March 13, 1727

This day, whate'er the Fates decree,  
Shall still be kept with joy by me:  
This day then let us not be told,  
That you are sick, and I grown old;  
Nor think on our approaching ills,  
And talk of spectacles and pills.  
To-morrow will be time enough  
To hear such mortifying stuff.  
Yet, since from reason may be brought  
A better and more pleasing thought,  
Which can, in spite of all decays,  
Support a few remaining days:  
From not the gravest of divines  
Accept for once some serious lines.

Although we now can form no more  
Long schemes of life, as heretofore;  
Yet you, while time is running fast,  
Can look with joy on what is past.

Were future happiness and pain  
A mere contrivance of the brain,  
As atheists argue, to entice  
And fit their proselytes for vice;  
(The only comfort they propose,  
To have companions in their woes;)   
Grant this the case; yet sure 'tis hard  
That virtue, styl'd its own reward,  
And by all sages understood  
To be the chief of human good,  
Should, acting, die, nor leave behind  
Some lasting pleasure in the mind;  
Which by remembrance will assuage  
Grief, sickness, poverty, and age;  
And strongly shoot a radiant dart  
To shine through life's declining part.

Say, Stella, feel you no content,  
Reflecting on a life well spent?  
Your skilful hand employ'd to save  
Despairing wretches from the grave;  
And then supporting with your store  
Those whom you dragg'd from death before?  
So Providence on mortals waits,  
Preserving what it first creates.  
Your gen'rous boldness to defend  
An innocent and absent friend;  
That courage which can make you just  
To merit humbled in the dust;  
The detestation you express  
For vice in all its glitt'ring dress;  
That patience under torturing pain,

Where stubborn stoics would complain:  
Must these like empty shadows pass,  
Or forms reflected from a glass?  
Or mere chimæras in the mind,  
That fly, and leave no marks behind?  
Does not the body thrive and grow  
By food of twenty years ago?  
And, had it not been still supplied,  
It must a thousand times have died.  
Then who with reason can maintain  
That no effects of food remain?  
And is not virtue in mankind  
The nutriment that feeds the mind;  
Upheld by each good action past,  
And still continued by the last?  
Then, who with reason can pretend  
That all effects of virtue end?

Believe me, Stella, when you show  
That true contempt for things below,  
Nor prize your life for other ends,  
Than merely to oblige your friends;  
Your former actions claim their part,  
And join to fortify your heart.  
For Virtue, in her daily race,  
Like Janus, bears a double face;  
Looks back with joy where she has gone  
And therefore goes with courage on:  
She at your sickly couch will wait,  
And guide you to a better state.

O then, whatever Heav'n intends,  
Take pity on your pitying friends!  
Nor let your ills affect your mind,  
To fancy they can be unkind.  
Me, surely me, you ought to spare,  
Who gladly would your suff'rings share;  
Or give my scrap of life to you,  
And think it far beneath your due;  
You, to whose care so oft I owe  
That I'm alive to tell you so.

Jonathan Swift

## The Beasts' Confession

To the Priest, on Observing how most Men mistake their own Talents

When beasts could speak (the learned say,  
They still can do so ev'ry day),  
It seems, they had religion then,  
As much as now we find in men.  
It happen'd, when a plague broke out  
(Which therefore made them more devout),  
The king of brutes (to make it plain,  
Of quadrupeds I only mean)  
By proclamation gave command,  
That ev'ry subject in the land  
Should to the priest confess their sins;  
And thus the pious wolf begins:

"Good father, I must own with shame,  
That often I have been to blame:  
I must confess, on Friday last,  
Wretch that I was! I broke my fast:  
But I defy the basest tongue  
To prove I did my neighbour wrong;  
Or ever went to seek my food  
By rapine, theft, or thirst of blood."

The ass, approaching next, confess'd  
That in his heart he lov'd a jest:  
A wag he was, he needs must own,  
And could not let a dunce alone:  
Sometimes his friend he would not spare,  
And might perhaps be too severe:  
But yet, the worst that could be said,  
He was a wit both born and bred;  
And, if it be a sin or shame,  
Nature alone must bear the blame:  
One fault he hath, is sorry for't,  
His ears are half a foot too short;  
Which could he to the standard bring,  
He'd show his face before the King:  
Then for his voice, there's none disputes  
That he's the nightingale of brutes.

The swine with contrite heart allow'd,  
His shape and beauty made him proud:  
In diet was perhaps too nice,  
But gluttony was ne'er his vice:  
In ev'ry turn of life content,  
And meekly took what fortune sent:  
Inquire through all the parish round,  
A better neighbour ne'er was found:  
His vigilance might some displease;  
'Tis true he hated sloth like peas.

The mimic ape began his chatter,

How evil tongues his life bespatter:  
Much of the cens'ring world complain'd,  
Who said, his gravity was feign'd:  
Indeed, the strictness of his morals  
Engag'd him in a hundred quarrels:  
He saw, and he was griev'd to see't,  
His zeal was sometimes indiscreet:  
He found his virtues too severe  
For our corrupted times to bear:  
Yet, such a lewd licentious age  
Might well excuse a Stoic's rage.

The goat advanc'd with decent pace;  
And first excus'd his youthful face;  
Forgiveness begg'd that he appear'd  
( 'Twas nature's fault) without a beard.  
'Tis true, he was not much inclin'd  
To fondness for the female kind;  
Not, as his enemies object,  
From chance, or natural defect;  
Not by his frigid constitution,  
But through a pious resolution;  
For he had made a holy vow  
Of chastity as monks do now;  
Which he resolv'd to keep for ever hence,  
As strictly too, as doth his Reverence.

Apply the tale, and you shall find,  
How just it suits with human kind.  
Some faults we own: but, can you guess?  
Why?--virtues carried to excess,  
Wherewith our vanity endows us,  
Though neither foe nor friend allows us.

The lawyer swears, you may rely on't,  
He never squeez'd a needy client;  
And this he makes his constant rule,  
For which his brethren call him fool:  
His conscience always was so nice,  
He freely gave the poor advice;  
By which he lost, he may affirm,  
A hundred fees last Easter term.  
While others of the learned robe  
Would break the patience of a Job;  
No pleader at the bar could match  
His diligence and quick dispatch;  
Ne'er kept a cause, he well may boast,  
Above a term or two at most.

The cringing knave, who seeks a place  
Without success, thus tells his case:  
Why should he longer mince the matter?

He fail'd because he could not flatter;  
He had not learn'd to turn his coat,  
Nor for a party give his vote:  
His crime he quickly understood;  
Too zealous for the nation's good:  
He found the ministers resent it,  
Yet could not for his heart repent it.

The chaplain vows he cannot fawn,  
Though it would raise him to the lawn:  
He pass'd his hours among his books;  
You find it in his meagre looks:  
He might, if he were worldly wise,  
Preferment get and spare his eyes:  
But own'd he had a stubborn spirit,  
That made him trust alone in merit:  
Would rise by merit to promotion;  
Alas! a mere chimeric notion.

The doctor, if you will believe him,  
Confess'd a sin; and God forgive him!  
Call'd up at midnight, ran to save  
A blind old beggar from the grave:  
But see how Satan spreads his snares;  
He quite forgot to say his prayers.  
He cannot help it for his heart  
Sometimes to act the parson's part:  
Quotes from the Bible many a sentence,  
That moves his patients to repentance:  
And, when his med'cines do no good,  
Supports their minds with heav'nly food,  
At which, however well intended,  
He hears the clergy are offended;  
And grown so bold behind his back,  
To call him hypocrite and quack.  
In his own church he keeps a seat;  
Says grace before and after meat;  
And calls, without affecting airs,  
His household twice a day to prayers.  
He shuns apothecaries' shops;  
And hates to cram the sick with slops:  
He scorns to make his art a trade;  
Nor bribes my lady's fav'rite maid.  
Old nurse-keepers would never hire  
To recommend him to the squire;  
Which others, whom he will not name,  
Have often practis'd to their shame.

The statesman tells you with a sneer,  
His fault is to be too sincere;  
And, having no sinister ends,  
Is apt to disoblige his friends.

The nation's good, his master's glory,  
Without regard to Whig or Tory,  
Were all the schemes he had in view;  
Yet he was seconded by few:  
Though some had spread a hundred lies,  
'Twas he defeated the Excise.  
'Twas known, though he had borne aspersion,  
That standing troops were his aversion:  
His practice was, in ev'ry station,  
To serve the King, and please the nation.  
Though hard to find in ev'ry case  
The fittest man to fill a place:  
His promises he ne'er forgot,  
But took memorials on the spot:  
His enemies, for want of charity,  
Said he affected popularity:  
'Tis true, the people understood,  
That all he did was for their good;  
Their kind affections he has tried;  
No love is lost on either side.  
He came to Court with fortune clear,  
Which now he runs out ev'ry year:  
Must, at the rate that he goes on,  
Inevitably be undone:  
Oh! if his Majesty would please  
To give him but a writ of ease,  
Would grant him licence to retire,  
As it hath long been his desire,  
By fair accounts it would be found,  
He's poorer by ten thousand pound.  
He owns, and hopes it is no sin,  
He ne'er was partial to his kin;  
He thought it base for men in stations  
To crowd the Court with their relations;  
His country was his dearest mother,  
And ev'ry virtuous man his brother;  
Through modesty or awkward shame  
(For which he owns himself to blame),  
He found the wisest man he could,  
Without respect to friends or blood;  
Nor ever acts on private views,  
When he hath liberty to choose.

The sharper swore he hated play,  
Except to pass an hour away:  
And well he might; for, to his cost,  
By want of skill he always lost;  
He heard there was a club of cheats,  
Who had contriv'd a thousand feats;  
Could change the stock, or cog a die,  
And thus deceive the sharpest eye:  
Nor wonder how his fortune sunk,

His brothers fleece him when he's drunk.

I own the moral not exact;  
Besides, the tale is false in fact;  
And so absurd, that could I raise up  
From fields Elysian fabling Aesop;  
I would accuse him to his face  
For libelling the four-foot race.  
Creatures of ev'ry kind but ours  
Well comprehend their natural pow'rs;  
While we, whom reason ought to sway,  
Mistake our talents ev'ry day.  
The ass was never known so stupid  
To act the part of Tray or Cupid;  
Nor leaps upon his master's lap,  
There to be strok'd, and fed with pap,  
As Aesop would the world persuade;  
He better understands his trade:  
Nor comes, whene'er his lady whistles;  
But carries loads, and feeds on thistles.  
Our author's meaning, I presume, is  
A creature bipes et implumis;  
Wherein the moralist design'd  
A compliment on human kind:  
For here he owns, that now and then  
Beasts may degenerate into men.

Jonathan Swift

## **The Place of the Damned**

All folks who pretend to religion and grace,  
Allow there's a HELL, but dispute of the place:  
But, if HELL may by logical rules be defined  
The place of the damned -I'll tell you my mind.  
Wherever the damned do chiefly abound,  
Most certainly there is HELL to be found:  
Damned poets, damned critics, damned blockheads, damned knaves,  
Damned senators bribed, damned prostitute slaves;  
Damned lawyers and judges, damned lords and damned squires;  
Damned spies and informers, damned friends and damned liars;  
Damned villains, corrupted in every station;  
Damned time-serving priests all over the nation;  
And into the bargain I'll readily give you  
Damned ignorant prelates, and counsellors privy.  
Then let us no longer by parsons be flammed,  
For we know by these marks the place of the damned:  
And HELL to be sure is at Paris or Rome.  
How happy for us that it is not at home!

Jonathan Swift

## The Progress of Poetry

The Farmer's Goose, who in the Stubble,  
Has fed without Restraint, or Trouble;  
Grown fat with Corn and Sitting still,  
Can scarce get o'er the Barn-Door Sill:  
And hardly waddles forth, to cool  
Her Belly in the neighb'ring Pool:  
Nor loudly cackles at the Door;  
For Cackling shews the Goose is poor.

But when she must be turn'd to graze,  
And round the barren Common strays,  
Hard Exercise, and harder Fare  
Soon make my Dame grow lank and spare:  
Her Body light, she tries her Wings,  
And scorns the Ground, and upward springs,  
While all the Parish, as she flies,  
Hear Sounds harmonious from the Skies.

Such is the Poet, fresh in Pay,  
(The third Night's Profits of his Play;)   
His Morning-Draughts 'till Noon can swill,  
Among his Brethren of the Quill:  
With good Roast Beef his Belly full,  
Grown lazy, foggy, fat, and dull:  
Deep sunk in Plenty, and Delight,  
What Poet e'er could take his Flight?  
Or stuff'd with Phlegm up to the Throat,  
What Poet e'er could sing a Note?  
Nor Pegasus could bear the Load,  
Along the high celestial Road;  
The Steed, oppress'd, would break his Girth,  
To raise the Lumber from the Earth.

But, view him in another Scene,  
When all his Drink is Hippocrene,  
His Money spent, his Patrons fail,  
His Credit out for Cheese and Ale;  
His Two-Year's Coat so smooth and bare,  
Through ev'ry Thread it lets in Air;  
With hungry Meals his Body pin'd,  
His Guts and Belly full of Wind;  
And, like a Jockey for a Race,  
His Flesh brought down to Flying-Case:  
Now his exalted Spirit loaths  
Incumbrances of Food and Cloaths;  
And up he rises like a Vapour,  
Supported high on Wings of Paper;  
He singing flies, and flying sings,  
While from below all Grub-street rings.

Jonathan Swift

## The Sick Lion and the Ass

A lion sunk by time's decay,  
Too feeble grown to hunt his prey,  
Observed his fatal hour draw nigh:  
He drooped and laid him down to die.  
There came by chance a savage boar,  
Who trembled oft to hear him roar,  
But when he saw him thus distressed  
He tore and gored his royal breast.  
A bull came next (ungen'rous foe),  
Rejoiced to find him fall'n so low,  
And with his horny-armed head  
He aimed at once to strike him dead, -  
He strikes, he wounds, he shocks in vain,  
The lion still conceals his pain.  
At length a base inglorious ass,  
Who saw so many insults pass,  
Came up and kicked him in the side:  
'Twas this that raised the lion's pride.  
He roused, and thus he spoke at length,  
For indignation gave him strength:  
Thou sorry, stupid, sluggish creature,  
Disgrace and shame and scorn of nature!  
You saw how well I could dispense  
With blows from beasts of consequence!  
They dignified the wounds they gave;  
For none complain who feel the brave.  
But you, the lowest of all brutes,  
How ill your face with courage suits!  
What dullness in thy looks appears!  
I'd rather far (by heav'n 'tis true)  
Expire by these than live by you:  
A kick from thee is double death -  
I curse thee with my dying breath!

### The Moral

Rebukes are easy from our betters,  
From men of quality and letters;  
But when low dunces will affront,  
What man alive can stand the brunt?

Jonathan Swift

## **To Quilca, A Country-House in no very good Repair, where th**

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

Jonathan Swift

## To Stella, Who Collected and Transcribed His Poems

As, when a lofty pile is raised,  
We never hear the workmen praised,  
Who bring the lime, or place the stones;  
But all admire Inigo Jones:  
So, if this pile of scattered rhymes  
Should be approved in aftertimes;  
If it both pleases and endures,  
The merit and the praise are yours.  
Thou, Stella, wert no longer young,  
When first for thee my harp was strung,  
Without one word of Cupid's darts,  
Of killing eyes, or bleeding hearts;  
With friendship and esteem possest,  
I ne'er admitted Love a guest.  
In all the habitudes of life,  
The friend, the mistress, and the wife,  
Variety we still pursue,  
In pleasure seek for something new;  
Or else, comparing with the rest,  
Take comfort that our own is best;  
The best we value by the worst,  
As tradesmen show their trash at first;  
But his pursuits are at an end,  
Whom Stella chooses for a friend.  
A poet starving in a garret,  
Invokes his mistress and his Muse,  
And stays at home for want of shoes:  
Should but his Muse descending drop  
A slice of bread and mutton-chop;  
Or kindly, when his credit's out,  
Surprise him with a pint of stout;  
Or patch his broken stocking soles;  
Or send him in a peck of coals;  
Exalted in his mighty mind,  
He flies and leaves the stars behind;  
Counts all his labours amply paid,  
Adores her for the timely aid.  
Or, should a porter make inquiries  
For Chloe, Sylvia, Phillis, Iris;  
Be told the lodging, lane, and sign,  
The bowers that hold those nymphs divine;  
Fair Chloe would perhaps be found  
With footmen tippling under ground;  
The charming Sylvia beating flax,  
Her shoulders marked with bloody tracks;  
Bright Phyllis mending ragged smocks:  
And radiant Iris in the pox.  
These are the goddesses enrolled  
In Curll's collection, new and old,  
Whose scoundrel fathers would not know 'em,  
If they should meet them in a poem.  
True poets can depress and raise,

Are lords of infamy and praise;  
They are not scurrilous in satire,  
Nor will in panegyric flatter.  
Unjustly poets we asperse;  
Truth shines the brighter clad in verse,  
And all the fictions they pursue  
Do but insinuate what is true.  
Now, should my praises owe their truth  
To beauty, dress, or paint, or youth,  
What stoics call without our power,  
They could not be ensured an hour;  
'Twere grafting on an annual stock,  
That must our expectation mock,  
And, making one luxuriant shoot,  
Die the next year for want of root:  
Before I could my verses bring,  
Perhaps you're quite another thing.  
So Maeuius, when he drained his skull  
To celebrate some suburb trull,  
His similes in order set,  
And every crambo he could get;  
Had gone through all the common-places  
Worn out by wits, who rhyme on faces;  
Before he could his poem close,  
The lovely nymph had lost her nose.  
Your virtues safely I commend;  
They on no accidents depend:  
Let malice look with all her eyes,  
She dare not say the poet lies.  
Stella, when you these lines transcribe,  
Lest you should take them for a bribe,  
Resolved to mortify your pride,  
I'll here expose your weaker side.  
Your spirits kindle to a flame,  
Moved by the lightest touch of blame;  
And when a friend in kindness tries  
To show you where your error lies,  
Conviction does but more incense;  
Perverseness is your whole defence;  
Truth, judgment, wit, give place to spite,  
Regardless both of wrong and right;  
Your virtues all suspended wait,  
Till time has opened reason's gate;  
And, what is worse, your passion bends  
Its force against your nearest friends,  
Which manners, decency, and pride,

Have taught from you the world to hide;  
In vain; for see, your friend has brought  
To public light your only fault;  
And yet a fault we often find  
Mixed in a noble, generous mind:

And may compare to Etna's fire,  
Which, though with trembling, all admire;  
The heat that makes the summit glow,  
Enriching all the vales below.  
Those who, in warmer climes, complain  
From Phoebus' rays they suffer pain,  
Must own that pain is largely paid  
By generous wines beneath a shade.  
Yet, when I find your passions rise,  
And anger sparkling in your eyes,  
I grieve those spirits should be spent,  
For nobler ends by nature meant.  
One passion, with a different turn,  
Makes wit inflame, or anger burn:  
So the sun's heat, with different powers,  
Ripens the grape, the liquor sours:  
Thus Ajax, when with rage possest,  
By Pallas breathed into his breast,  
His valour would no more employ,  
Which might alone have conquered Troy;  
But, blinded by resentment, seeks  
For vengeance on his friends the Greeks.  
You think this turbulence of blood  
From stagnating preserves the flood,  
Which, thus fermenting by degrees,  
Exalts the spirits, sinks the lees.  
Stella, for once your reason wrong;  
For, should this ferment last too long,  
By time subsiding, you may find  
Nothing but acid left behind;  
From passion you may then be freed,  
When peevishness and spleen succeed.  
Say, Stella, when you copy next,  
Will you keep strictly to the text?  
Dare you let these reproaches stand,  
And to your failing set your hand?  
Or, if these lines your anger fire,  
Shall they in baser flames expire?  
Whene'er they burn, if burn they must,  
They'll prove my accusation just.

Jonathan Swift

## Verses on the Death of Doctor Swift

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

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

If this perhaps your patience move,  
Let reason and experience prove.  
We all behold with envious eyes  
Our equal raised above our size.  
Who would not at a crowded show  
Stand high himself, keep others low?  
I love my friend as well as you:  
But why should he obstruct my view?  
Then let me have the higher post:  
Suppose it but an inch at most.  
If in battle you should find  
One whom you love of all mankind,  
Had some heroic action done,  
A champion killed, or trophy won;  
Rather than thus be overtopped,  
Would you not wish his laurels cropped?  
Dear honest Ned is in the gout,  
Lies racked with pain, and you without:  
How patiently you hear him groan!  
How glad the case is not your own!

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

Her end when Emulation misses,  
She turns to Envy, stings, and hisses:  
The strongest friendship yields to pride,  
Unless the odds be on our side.  
Vain human kind! fantastic race!  
Thy various follies who can trace?  
Self-love, ambition, envy, pride,  
Their empire in our hearts divide.  
Give others riches, power, and station,  
'Tis all on me an usurpation.  
I have no title to aspire;  
Yet, when you sink, I seem the higher.  
In Pope I cannot read a line,  
But with a sigh I wish it mine;

When he can in one couplet fix  
More sense than I can do in six;  
It gives me such a jealous fit,  
I cry "Pox take him and his wit!"  
I grieve to be outdone by Gay  
In my own hum'rous biting way.  
Arbuthnot is no more my friend,  
Who dares to irony pretend,  
Which I was born to introduce,  
Refined it first, and shewed its use.  
St. John, as well as Pultney, knows  
That I had some repute for prose;  
And till they drove me out of date  
Could maul a minister of state.  
If they have mortified my pride,  
And made me throw my pen aside;  
If with such talents Heav'n has blest 'em,  
Have I not reason to detest 'em?

To all my foes, dear Fortune, send  
Thy gifts; but never to my friend:  
I tamely can endure the first;  
But this with envy makes me burst.  
Thus much may serve by way of proem:  
Proceed we therefore to our poem.

The time is not remote when I  
Must by the course of nature die;  
When, I foresee, my special friends  
Will try to find their private ends:  
Tho' it is hardly understood  
Which way my death can do them good,  
Yet thus, methinks, I hear 'em speak:  
"See, how the Dean begins to break!  
Poor gentleman, he droops apace!  
You plainly find it in his face.  
That old vertigo in his head  
Will never leave him till he's dead.  
Besides, his memory decays:  
He recollects not what he says;  
He cannot call his friends to mind;  
Forgets the place where last he dined;  
Plyes you with stories o'er and o'er,  
He told them fifty times before.  
How does he fancy we can sit  
To hear his out-of-fashioned wit?  
But he takes up with younger folks,  
Who for his wine will bear his jokes.  
Faith! he must make his stories shorter,  
Or change his comrades once a quarter:  
In half the time he talks them round,  
There must another set be found.

"For poetry he's past his prime:  
He takes an hour to find a rhyme;  
His fire is out, his wit decayed,  
His fancy sunk, his Muse a jade.  
I'd have him throw away his pen; -  
But there's no talking to some men!"

And then their tenderness appears,  
By adding largely to my years:  
"He's older than he would be reckoned,  
And well remembers Charles the Second.  
He hardly drinks a pint of wine;  
And that, I doubt, is no good sign.  
His stomach too begins to fail;  
Last year we thought him strong and hale,  
But now he's quite another thing:  
I wish he may hold out till spring."  
Then hug themselves, and reason thus:  
"It is not yet so bad with us!"

In such a case they talk in tropes,  
And by their fears express their hopes:  
Some great misfortune to portend,  
No enemy can match a friend.  
With all the kindness they profess,  
The merit of a lucky guess  
(When daily how-d'ye's come of course,  
And servants answer, Worse and worse!)  
Would please 'em better than to tell  
That "God be praised, the Dean is well."  
Then he who prophesied the best  
Approves his foresight to the rest:  
"You know I always feared the worst,  
And often told you so at first." -  
He'd rather choose that I should die  
Than his prediction prove a lie.  
Not one foretells I shall recover,  
But all agree to give me over.

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

My good companions, never fear,  
For though you may mistake a year,  
Though your prognostics run too fast,

They must be verified at last.

Behold the fatal day arrive!  
"How is the Dean?" - "He's just alive."  
Now the departing prayer is read:  
"He hardly breathes." - "The Dean is dead."

Before the Passing-bell begun,  
The news thro' half the town has run.  
"O, may we all for death prepare!  
What has he left? and who's his heir?" -  
"I know no more that what the news is:  
'Tis all bequeathed to public uses." -  
"To public use! A perfect whim!  
What had the public done for him?  
Mere envy, avarice, and pride:  
He gave it all -but first he died.  
And had the Dean, in all the nation,  
No worthy friend, no poor relation?  
So ready to do strangers good,  
Forgetting his own flesh and blood!"

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

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

From Dublin soon to London spread,  
'Tis told at court "the Dean is dead."  
Kind Lady Suffolk, in the spleen,  
Runs laughing up to tell the queen.  
The queen, so gracious, mild, and good,  
Cries "Is he gone? 'tis time he should.  
He's dead, you say; why, let him rot:  
I'm glad the medals were forgot.  
I promised him, I own; but when?  
I only was a princess then;  
But now, as consort of a king,  
You know, 'tis quite a diff'rent thing."

Now Chartres, at Sir Robert's levee,  
Tells with a sneer the tidings heavy:  
"Why, is he dead without his shoes?"

Cries Bob "I'm sorry for the news:  
O, were the wretch but living still,  
And in his place my good friend Will!  
Or had a mitre on his head,  
Provided Bolinbroke were dead!"

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

Here shift the scene, to represent  
How those I love my death lament.  
Poor Pope will grieve a month; and Gay  
A week; and Arbuthnot a day.  
St. John himself will scarce forbear  
To bite his pen, and drop a tear.  
The rest will give a shrug, and cry  
"I'm sorry -but we all must die."

Indifference, clad in Wisdom's guise,  
All fortitude of mind supplies:  
For how can stony bowels melt  
In those who never pity felt?  
When we are lashed, they kiss the rod,  
Resigning to the will of God.

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

My female friends, whose tender hearts  
Have better learned to act their parts,  
Receive the news in doleful dumps:  
"The Dean is dead -and what is trumps? -  
Then Lord have mercy on his soul!  
- Ladies, I'll venture for the vole. -  
Six deans, they say, must bear the pall.  
- I wish I knew what king to call. -  
Madam, your husband will attend  
The funeral of so good a friend?  
No, madam, 'tis a shocking sight,  
And he's engaged tomorrow night;  
My Lady Club would take it ill  
If he should fail her at quadrille.

He loved the Dean -I lead a heart -  
But dearest friends, they say, must part.  
His time was come; he ran his race;  
We hope he's in a better place."  
Why do we grieve that friends should die?  
No loss more easy to supply.  
One year is past: a different scene:  
No further mention of the Dean;  
Who now, alas, no more is missed  
Than if he never did exist.  
Where's now this fav'rite of Apollo?  
Departed: -and his works must follow;  
Must undergo the common fate;  
His kind of wit is out of date.

Some country squire to Lintot goes,  
Inquires for "Swift in Verse and Prose".  
Says Lintot "I have heard the name;  
He died a year ago." -"The same."  
He searches all the shop in vain.  
"Sir, you may find them in Duck Lane:  
I sent them with a load of books  
Last Monday to the pastry-cook's.  
To fancy they could live a year!  
I find you're but a stranger here.  
The Dean was famous in his time,  
And had a kind of knack at rhyme.  
His way of writing now is past;  
The town has got a better taste.  
I keep no antiquated stuff;  
But spick and span I have enough.  
Pray do but give me leave to show 'em:  
Here's Colley Cibber's birthday poem.  
This ode you never yet have seen,  
By Stephen Duck, upon the queen.  
Then here's a letter finely penned  
Against the Craftsman and his friend;  
It clearly shows that all reflection  
On ministers is disaffection.  
Next, here's Sir Robert's vindication;  
And Mr Henley's last oration.  
The hawkers have not got 'em yet -  
Your honour please to buy a set?  
Here's Woolston's tracts, the twelfth edition,  
'Tis read by ev'ry politician:  
The country members, when in town,  
To all their boroughs send them down;  
You never met a thing so smart!  
The courtiers have them all by heart;  
Those maids of honour (who can read),  
Are taught to use them for their creed.  
The rev'rend author's good intention

Has been rewarded with a pension.  
He does an honour to his gown,  
By bravely running priestcraft down:  
He shows, as sure as God's in Gloucester,  
That Moses was a grand imposter;  
That all his miracles were cheats,  
Performed as jugglers do their feats.  
The church had never such a writer;  
A shame he has not got a mitre!"

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

"The Dean, if we believe report,  
Was never ill-received at court.  
As for his works in verse and prose,  
I own myself no judge of those;  
Nor can I tell what critics thought 'em,  
But this I know, all people bought 'em;  
As with a moral view designed  
To cure the vices of mankind:  
And, if he often missed his aim,  
The world must own it, to their shame:  
The praise is his, and theirs the blame."

"Sir, I have heard another story:  
He was a most confounded Tory,  
And grew, or he is much belied,  
Extremely dull before he died."

"Can we the Drapier then forget?  
Is not our nation in his debt?  
'Twas he that writ the Drapier's letters!"

"He should have left them for his betters;  
We had a hundred abler men,  
Nor need depend upon his pen.  
Say what you will about his reading,  
You never can defend his breeding;  
Who in his satires running riot,  
Could never leave the world in quiet;  
Attacking, when he took the whim,  
Court, city, camp -all one to him!  
But why should he, except he slobber't,  
Offend our patriot, great Sir Robert,  
Whose counsels aid the sov'reign power

To save the nation every hour?  
What scenes of evil he unravels  
In satires, libels, lying travels!  
Not sparing his own clergy-cloth,  
But eats into it, like a moth!"

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

But kept the tenor of his mind  
To merit well of human kind;  
Nor made a sacrifice of those  
Who still were true, to please his foes.  
He laboured many a fruitless hour  
To reconcile his friends in power;  
Saw mischief by a faction brewing,  
While they pursued each other's ruin.  
But finding vain was all his care,  
He left the court in mere despair.  
And oh! how short are human schemes!  
Here ended all our golden dreams.  
What St John's skill in state affairs,  
What Ormond's valour, Oxford's cares,  
To save their sinking country lent,  
Was all destroyed by one event.  
Too soon that precious life was ended,  
On which alone our weal depended.  
When up a dangerous faction starts,  
With wrath and vengeance in their hearts,  
By solemn League and Cov'nant bound,  
To ruin, slaughter, and confound;  
To turn religion to a fable,  
And make the government a Babel;  
Pervert the laws, disgrace the gown,  
Corrupt the senate, rob the crown;  
To sacrifice old England's glory,  
And make her infamous in story: -  
When such a tempest shook the land,  
How could unguarded Virtue stand!  
With horror, grief, despair, the Dean  
Beheld the dire destructive scene:  
His friends in exile, or the tower,  
Himself within the frown of power,  
Pursued by base envenomed pens,  
Far to the land of slaves and fens;  
A servile race in folly nursed,  
Who truckle most when treated worst.  
By innocence and resolution,  
He bore continual persecution;  
While numbers to preferment rose,  
Whose merits were, to be his foes;  
When ev'n his own familiar friends,  
Intent upon their private ends,  
Like renegadoes now he feels,  
Against him lifting up their heels.  
The Dean did by his pen defeat  
An infamous destructive cheat;  
Taught fools their int'rest how to know,  
And gave them arms to ward the blow.  
Envy has owned it was his doing,  
To save that hapless land from ruin;

While they who at the steerage stood,  
 And reaped the profit, sought his blood.  
 To save them from their evil fate,  
 In him was held a crime of state.  
 A wicked monster on the bench,  
 Whose fury blood could never quench  
 - As vile and profligate a villain  
 As modern Scroggs, or old Tresilian;  
 Who long all justice had discarded,  
 Nor feared he God, nor man regarded -  
 Vowed on the Dean his rage to vent,  
 And make him of his zeal repent.  
 But Heaven his innocence defends,  
 The grateful people stand his friends:  
 Not strains of law, nor judge's frown,  
 Nor topics brought to please the crown,  
 Nor witness hired, nor jury picked,  
 Prevail to bring him in convict.  
 In exile, with a steady heart,  
 He spent his life's declining part;  
 Where folly, pride, and faction sway,  
 Remote from St John, Pope, and Gay.  
 Alas, poor Dean! his only scope  
 Was to be held a misanthrope.  
 This into gen'ral odium drew him,  
 Which, if he liked, much good may't do him.  
 His zeal was not to lash our crimes,  
 But discontent against the times;  
 For had we made him timely offers  
 To raise his post, or fill his coffers,  
 Perhaps he might have truckled down,  
 Like other brethren of his gown.  
 For party he would scarce have bled -  
 I say no more, because he's dead.  
 What writings has he left behind?  
 I hear they're of a different kind:  
 A few in verse, but most in prose,  
 - Some high-flown pamphlets, I suppose -  
 All scribbled in the worst of times,  
 To palliate his friend Oxford's crimes,  
 To praise Queen Anne, nay more, defend her,  
 As never fav'ring the Pretender;  
 Or libels yet concealed from sight,  
 Against the court to show his spite;  
 Perhaps his Travels, part the third,  
 A lie at every second word,  
 Offensive to a loyal ear;  
 But not one sermon, you may swear."

"His friendships there, to few confined,  
 Were always of the middling kind:  
 No fools of rank, a mongrel breed,

Who fain would pass for lords indeed.  
 Where titles give no right or power,  
 And peerage is a withered flower,  
 He would have held it a disgrace  
 If such a wretch had known his face.  
 On rural squires, that kingdom's bane,  
 He vented oft his wrath in vain;  
 [Biennial] squires to market brought,  
 Who sell their souls and [votes] for nought;  
 The [nation stripped,] go joyful back,  
 To [rob the] church, their tenants rack,  
 Go snacks with [rogues and rapparees,]  
 And keep the peace to pick up fees;  
 In every job to have a share,  
 A goal or barrack to repair;  
 And turn the tax for public roads  
 Commodious to their own abodes."  
 "Perhaps I may allow the Dean  
 Had too much satire in his vein,  
 And seemed determined not to starve it,  
 Because no age could more deserve it.  
 Yet malice never was his aim;  
 He lashed the vice, but spared the name;  
 No individual could resent  
 Where thousands equally were meant.  
 His satire points at no defect  
 But what all mortals may correct;  
 For he abhorred that senseless tribe  
 Who call it humour when they gibe.  
 He spared a hump, or crooked nose,  
 Whose owners set not up for beaux.  
 True genuine dulness moved his pity,  
 Unless it offered to be witty.  
 Those who their ignornace confessed  
 He ne'er offended with a jest;  
 But laughed to hear an idiot quote  
 A verse from Horace learned by rote.  
 Vice, if it e'er can be abashed,  
 Must be or ridiculed or lashed.  
 If you resent it, who's to blame?  
 He neither knew you nor your name.  
 Should vice expect to 'scape rebuke,  
 Because its owner is a duke?"  
 "He knew an hundred pleasant stories,  
 With all the turns of Whigs and Tories;  
 Was cheerful to his dying day,  
 And friends would let him have his way."  
 "He gave what little wealth he had  
 To build a house for fools and mad;  
 And showed by one satiric touch,  
 No nation wanted it so much.  
 That kingdom he hath left his debtor,

I wish it soon may have a better."  
And since you dread no further lashes,  
Methinks you may forgive his ashes.

Jonathan Swift

## Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift, D.S.P.D.

As Rochefoucauld his maxims drew  
From Nature, I believe 'em true:  
They argue no corrupted mind  
In him; the fault is in mankind.  
This maxim more than all the rest  
Is thought too base for human breast:  
"In all distresses of our friends,  
We first consult our private ends;  
While Nature, kindly bent to ease us,  
Points out some circumstance to please us."

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

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

If in a battle you should find  
One, whom you love of all mankind,  
Had some heroic action done,  
A champion kill'd, or trophy won;  
Rather than thus be overtopt,  
Would you not wish his laurels cropt?

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

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

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

Vain human kind! fantastic race!  
Thy various follies who can trace?  
Self-love, ambition, envy, pride,  
Their empire in our hearts divide.  
Give others riches, power, and station,  
'Tis all on me a usurpation.  
I have no title to aspire;

Yet, when you sink, I seem the higher.  
In Pope I cannot read a line,  
But with a sigh I wish it mine;  
When he can in one couplet fix  
More sense than I can do in six;  
It gives me such a jealous fit,  
I cry, "Pox take him and his wit!"

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

Arbutnot is no more my friend,  
Who dares to irony pretend,  
Which I was born to introduce,  
Refin'd it first, and show'd its use.

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

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

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

The time is not remote, when I  
Must by the course of nature die;  
When I foresee my special friends  
Will try to find their private ends:  
Tho' it is hardly understood  
Which way my death can do them good,  
Yet thus, methinks, I hear 'em speak:  
"See, how the Dean begins to break!  
Poor gentleman, he droops apace!  
You plainly find it in his face.  
That old vertigo in his head  
Will never leave him till he's dead.  
Besides, his memory decays:  
He recollects not what he says;  
He cannot call his friends to mind:  
Forgets the place where last he din'd;  
Plies you with stories o'er and o'er;  
He told them fifty times before.  
How does he fancy we can sit

To hear his out-of-fashion'd wit?  
But he takes up with younger folks,  
Who for his wine will bear his jokes.  
Faith, he must make his stories shorter,  
Or change his comrades once a quarter:  
In half the time he talks them round,  
There must another set be found.

"For poetry he's past his prime:  
He takes an hour to find a rhyme;  
His fire is out, his wit decay'd,  
His fancy sunk, his Muse a jade.  
I'd have him throw away his pen;--  
But there's no talking to some men!"

And then their tenderness appears,  
By adding largely to my years:  
"He's older than he would be reckon'd  
And well remembers Charles the Second.

"He hardly drinks a pint of wine;  
And that, I doubt, is no good sign.  
His stomach too begins to fail:  
Last year we thought him strong and hale;  
But now he's quite another thing:  
I wish he may hold out till spring."

Then hug themselves, and reason thus:  
"It is not yet so bad with us."

In such a case, they talk in tropes,  
And by their fears express their hopes:  
Some great misfortune to portend,  
No enemy can match a friend.  
With all the kindness they profess,  
The merit of a lucky guess  
(When daily "How d'ye's" come of course,  
And servants answer, "Worse and worse!")  
Would please 'em better, than to tell,  
That, "God be prais'd, the Dean is well."  
Then he who prophecy'd the best  
Approves his foresight to the rest:  
"You know I always fear'd the worst,  
And often told you so at first."  
He'd rather choose that I should die,  
Than his prediction prove a lie.  
Not one foretells I shall recover;  
But all agree to give me over.

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

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

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

Now Grub-Street wits are all employ'd;  
With elegies the town is cloy'd:  
Some paragraph in ev'ry paper  
To curse the Dean or bless the Drapier.

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

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

Kind Lady Suffolk in the spleen  
Runs laughing up to tell the Queen.  
The Queen, so gracious, mild, and good,  
Cries, "Is he gone! 'tis time he should.  
He's dead, you say; why, let him rot:  
I'm glad the medals were forgot.  
I promis'd them, I own; but when?  
I only was the Princess then;  
But now, as consort of a king,  
You know, 'tis quite a different thing."

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

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

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

St. John himself will scarce forbear  
To bite his pen, and drop a tear.  
The rest will give a shrug, and cry,  
"I'm sorry--but we all must die!"  
Indifference, clad in Wisdom's guise,  
All fortitude of mind supplies:  
For how can stony bowels melt  
In those who never pity felt?

When we are lash'd, they kiss the rod,  
Resigning to the will of God.

The fools, my juniors by a year,  
Are tortur'd with suspense and fear;  
Who wisely thought my age a screen,  
When death approach'd, to stand between:  
The screen remov'd, their hearts are trembling;  
They mourn for me without dissembling.

My female friends, whose tender hearts  
Have better learn'd to act their parts,  
Receive the news in doleful dumps:  
"The Dean is dead: (and what is trumps?)  
Then, Lord have mercy on his soul!  
(Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.)  
Six deans, they say, must bear the pall:  
(I wish I knew what king to call.)  
Madam, your husband will attend  
The funeral of so good a friend.  
No, madam, 'tis a shocking sight:  
And he's engag'd to-morrow night:  
My Lady Club would take it ill,  
If he should fail her at quadrille.  
He lov'd the Dean--(I lead a heart)  
But dearest friends, they say, must part.  
His time was come: he ran his race;  
We hope he's in a better place."

Why do we grieve that friends should die?  
No loss more easy to supply.  
One year is past; a different scene!  
No further mention of the Dean;  
Who now, alas! no more is miss'd,  
Than if he never did exist.  
Where's now this fav'rite of Apollo!  
Departed:--and his works must follow;  
Must undergo the common fate;  
His kind of wit is out of date.  
Some country squire to Lintot goes,  
Inquires for "Swift in Verse and Prose."  
Says Lintot, "I have heard the name;  
He died a year ago."--"The same."  
He searcheth all his shop in vain.  
"Sir, you may find them in Duck-lane;  
I sent them with a load of books,  
Last Monday to the pastry-cook's.  
To fancy they could live a year!  
I find you're but a stranger here.

The Dean was famous in his time,  
And had a kind of knack at rhyme.  
His way of writing now is past;  
The town hath got a better taste;  
I keep no antiquated stuff,  
But spick and span I have enough.  
Pray do but give me leave to show 'em;  
Here's Colley Cibber's birth-day poem.  
This ode you never yet have seen,  
By Stephen Duck, upon the Queen.  
Then here's a letter finely penn'd  
Against the Craftsman and his friend:  
It clearly shows that all reflection  
On ministers is disaffection.  
Next, here's Sir Robert's vindication,  
And Mr. Henley's last oration.  
The hawkers have not got 'em yet:  
Your honour please to buy a set?

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

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

"The Dean, if we believe report,  
Was never ill receiv'd at Court.

As for his works in verse and prose  
I own myself no judge of those;  
Nor can I tell what critics thought 'em:  
But this I know, all people bought 'em.  
As with a moral view design'd  
To cure the vices of mankind:  
His vein, ironically grave,  
Expos'd the fool, and lash'd the knave.  
To steal a hint was never known,  
But what he writ was all his own.

"He never thought an honour done him,  
Because a duke was proud to own him,  
Would rather slip aside and choose  
To talk with wits in dirty shoes;  
Despis'd the fools with stars and garters,  
So often seen caressing Chartres.  
He never courted men in station,  
Nor persons held in admiration;  
Of no man's greatness was afraid,  
Because he sought for no man's aid.  
Though trusted long in great affairs  
He gave himself no haughty airs:  
Without regarding private ends,  
Spent all his credit for his friends;  
And only chose the wise and good;  
No flatt'ers; no allies in blood:  
But succour'd virtue in distress,  
And seldom fail'd of good success;  
As numbers in their hearts must own,  
Who, but for him, had been unknown.

"With princes kept a due decorum,  
But never stood in awe before 'em.  
He follow'd David's lesson just:  
'In princes never put thy trust';  
And, would you make him truly sour,  
Provoke him with a slave in pow'r.  
The Irish senate if you nam'd,  
With what impatience he declaim'd!  
Fair Liberty was all his cry,  
For her he stood prepar'd to die;  
For her he boldly stood alone;  
For her he oft expos'd his own.  
Two kingdoms, just as faction led,  
Had set a price upon his head;  
But not a traitor could be found  
To sell him for six hundred pound.

"Had he but spar'd his tongue and pen  
He might have rose like other men:  
But pow'r was never in his thought,  
And wealth he valu'd not a groat:  
Ingratitude he often found,  
And pity'd those who meant the wound:  
But kept the tenor of his mind,  
To merit well of human kind:  
Nor made a sacrifice of those  
Who still were true, to please his foes.  
He labour'd many a fruitless hour  
To reconcile his friends in pow'r;  
Saw mischief by a faction brewing,  
While they pursu'd each other's ruin.  
But, finding vain was all his care,  
He left the Court in mere despair.

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

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

"By innocence and resolution,  
He bore continual persecution,

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

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

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

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

"His friendships there, to few confin'd,  
Were always of the middling kind;  
No fools of rank, a mongrel breed,  
Who fain would pass for lords indeed:  
Where titles gave no right or power  
And peerage is a wither'd flower;  
He would have held it a disgrace,  
If such a wretch had known his face.  
On rural squires, that kingdom's bane,  
He vented oft his wrath in vain;

Biennial squires to market brought;  
Who sell their souls and votes for nought;  
The nation stripp'd, go joyful back,  
To rob the church, their tenants rack,  
Go snacks with thieves and rapparees,  
And keep the peace to pick up fees;  
In ev'ry job to have a share,  
A jail or barrack to repair;  
And turn the tax for public roads,  
Commodious to their own abodes.

"Perhaps I may allow, the Dean  
Had too much satire in his vein;  
And seem'd determin'd not to starve it,  
Because no age could more deserve it.  
Yet malice never was his aim;  
He lash'd the vice, but spar'd the name;  
No individual could resent,  
Where thousands equally were meant.  
His satire points at no defect,  
But what all mortals may correct;  
For he abhorr'd that senseless tribe  
Who call it humour when they gibe.  
He spar'd a hump, or crooked nose,  
Whose owners set not up for beaux.  
True genuine dulness mov'd his pity,  
Unless it offer'd to be witty.  
Those who their ignorance confess'd  
He ne'er offended with a jest;  
But laugh'd to hear an idiot quote  
A verse from Horace, learn'd by rote.

"He knew a hundred pleasant stories  
With all the turns of Whigs and Tories:  
Was cheerful to his dying day;  
And friends would let him have his way.

"He gave the little wealth he had  
To build a house for fools and mad;  
And show'd by one satiric touch,  
No nation wanted it so much.  
That kingdom he hath left his debtor,  
I wish it soon may have a better."

Jonathan Swift