Classic Poetry Series

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

- poems -

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A Ballad

To that dear nymph, whose pow'rful name
Does every throbbing nerve inflame
(As the soft sound I low repeat,
My pulse unequal measures beat),
Whose eyes I never more shall see,
That once so sweetly shin'd on thee;
Go, gentle wind! and kindly bear
My tender wishes to the fair.
Hoh, ho, ho, &c.

Amidst her pleasures let her know
The secret anguish of my woe,
The midnight pang, the jealous hell,
Does in this tortur'd bosom dwell:
While laughing she, and full of play,
Is with her young companions gay;
Or hearing in some fragrant bower
Her lover's sigh, and beauty's power.
Hoh, ho, ho, &c.

Lost and forgotten may I be!
Oh may no pitying thought of me
Disturb the joy that she may find,
When love is crown'd and fortune kind:
May that bless'd swain (whom yet I hate)
Be proud of his distinguish'd fate:
Each happy night be like the first;
And he be bless'd as I am curs'd.
Hoh, ho, ho, &c.

While in these pathless woods I stray,
And lose my solitary way;
Talk to the stars, to trees complain,
And tell the senseless words my pain:
But madness spares the sacred name,
Nor dares the hidden wound proclaim;
Which, secret rankling, sure and slow,
Shall close in endless peace my woe.
Hoh, ho, ho, &c.

When this fond heart shall ache no more,
And all the ills of life are o'er
(If gods by lovers' prayers are mov'd,
As ev'ry god in heaven has lov'd);
Instead of bright Elysian joys,
That unknown something in the skies,
In recompense of all my pain,
The only heaven I'd obtain,
May I, the guardian of her charms,
Preserve that paradise from harms.
Hoh, ho, ho, &c.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

A Character

Though a strong vanity may you persuade -- -
You are not for a politician made;
Your tropes are drawn from Robin Walpole's head,
Your sense is but repeating what he said;
A useful puppy, eminently known,
As proud to father what he will not own,
Some arguments he leaves you to expose,
Some valets flutter in my lord's old clothes.
But should he strip you of his borrow'd sense,
How poorly thin your boasted eloquence!
Know your own talents better, I advise;
Be brisk, yet dull, but aim not to look wise;
In low insipid rhymes place your delight;
Laugh without jests, and without reading write.
Despis'd men, in ladies' ruelles sit,
Where country coquettes bolster up your wit.
May all your minuets applauses meet!
An able coxcomb only in your feet.
By fawning lies, in leagues with court-knaves grow,
And smile on beauties whom you do not know.

Then, acting all the coyness of a lover,
Your no-intrigue endeavour to discover.
Aiming at wit, in many an evil hour,
Have the perpetual will without the power.
Conceit for breeding, rude for easy take,
Horseplay for wit, and noise for mirth mistake.
Love's perfect joys to perfect men belong;
Seek you but the occasion for a song.
Thus to the end of life may you remain
A merry blockhead, treacherous and vain.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

A Hymn to the Moon

Written in July, in an arbour

Thou silver deity of secret night,
Direct my footsteps through the woodland shade;
Thou conscious witness of unknown delight,
The Lover's guardian, and the Muse's aid!
By thy pale beams I solitary rove,
To thee my tender grief confide;
Serenely sweet you gild the silent grove,
My friend, my goddess, and my guide.
E'en thee, fair queen, from thy amazing height,
The charms of young Endymion drew;
Veil'd with the mantle of concealing night;
With all thy greatness and thy coldness too.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

A Man in Love

L'Homme qui ne se trouve point, et ne se trouvera jamais.

The man who feels the dear disease,
Forgets himself, neglects to please,
The crowd avoids, and seeks the groves,
And much he thinks when much he loves;
Press'd with alternate hope and fear,
Sighs in her absence, sighs when near.
The gay, the fond, the fair, the young,
Those trifles pass unseen along,
To him a pert insipid throng.
But most he shuns the vain coquette;
Contemns her false affected wit:
The minstrel's sound, the flowing bowl,
Oppress and hurt the amorous soul.
'Tis solitude alone can please,
And give some intervals of ease.
He feeds the soft distemper there,
And fondly courts the distant fair;
To balls the silent shade prefers,
And hates all other charms but hers.
When thus your absent swain can do,
Molly, you may believe him true.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

A Summary of Lord Lyttleton's Advice to a Lady

Be plain in dress, and sober in your diet,
In short, my deary, kiss me! and be quiet.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Addressed to ------, 1736

With toilsome steps I pass thro' life's dull road
(No pack-horse half so tired of his load);
And when this dirty journey will conclude,
To what new realms is then my way pursued?
Say, then does the unbodied spirit fly
To happier climes and to a better sky?
Or, sinking, mixes with its kindred clay,
And sleeps a whole eternity away?
Or shall this form be once again renew'd,
With all its frailties, all its hopes, endu'd;
Acting once more on this detested stage
Passions of youth, infirmities of age?
I see in Tully what the ancients thought,
And read unprejudic'd what moderns taught;
But no conviction from my reading springs --
Most dubious on the most important things.
Yet one short moment would at once explain
What all philosophy has sought in vain;
Would clear all doubt, and terminate all pain.
Why then not hasten that decisive hour;
Still in my view, and ever in my pow'r?
Why should I drag along this life I hate,
Without one thought to mitigate the weight?
Whence this mysterious bearing to exist,
When ev'ry joy is lost, and ev'ry hope dismiss'd?
In chains and darkness wherefore should I stay,
And mourn in prison whilst I keep the key?

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Advice

Cease, fond shepherd -- cease desiring
What you never must enjoy;
She derides your vain aspiring,
She to all your sex is coy.
Cunning Damon once pursu'd her,
Yet she never would incline;
Strephon too as vainly woo'd her,
Though his flocks are more than thine.
At Diana's shrine aloud,
By the zone around her waist,
Thrice she bow'd, and thrice she vow'd
Like the Goddess to be chaste.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

An Answer to a Lady, Who Advised Lady Montagu to Retire

You little know the heart that you advise:
I view this various scene with equal eyes;
In crowded courts I find myself alone,
And pay my worship to a nobler throne.
Long since the value of this world I know;
Pitied the folly, and despis'd the show;
Well as I can, my tedious part I bear,
And wait dismissal without pain or fear.
Seldom I mark mankind's detested ways,
Not hearing censure or affecting praise;
And unconcern'd my future fate I trust
To that sole Being, merciful and just!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

An Answer to a Love-Letter, in Verse

Is it to me this sad lamenting strain?
Are Heaven's choicest gifts bestow'd in vain?
A plenteous fortune and a beauteous bride,
Your love rewarded, and content your pride;
Yet, leaving her, 'tis me that you pursue,
Without one single charm -- but being new.
How vile is man! How I detest the ways
Of covert falsehood and designing praise!
As tasteless, easier happiness you slight,
Ruin your joy, and mischief your delight.
Why should poor pug (the mimic of your kind)
Wear a rough chain, and be to box confin'd?
Some cup, perhaps, he breaks, or tears a fan,
While moves, unpunish'd, the destroyer man;
Not bound by vows, and unrestrain'd by shame,
In sport you break the heart, and rend the fame.
Not that your art can be successful here,
Th' already plunder'd need no robber fear.
Nor sighs nor charms, nor flattery, can move,
Too well secur'd against a second love.
Once, and but once, that devil charm'd my mind,
To reason deaf, to observation blind,
I idly hop'd (what cannot Love persuade!)
My fondness equall'd and my truth repaid:
Slow to distrust, and willing to believe;
Long hush'd my doubts, I would myself deceive.

But oh! too soon -- this tale would ever last --
Sleep on my wrongs, and let me think them past.
For you, who mourn with counterfeited grief,
And ask so boldly, like a begging thief,
May soon some other nymph inflict the pain
You know so well with cruel art to feign.
Though long you've sported with Dan Cupid's dart,
You may see eyes, and you may feel a heart.
So the brisk wits who stop the evening coach,
Laugh at the fear that follows their approach;
With idle mirth and haughty scorn despise
The passenger's pale cheek and staring eyes;
But seiz'd by justice, find a fright no jest,
And all the terror doubled in their breast.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

An Elegy on Mrs. Thompson

Unhappy fair, by fatal love betray'd!
Must then thy beauties thus untimely fade!
And all thy blooming, soft, inspiring charms,
Become a prey to Death's destructive arms!
Though short thy day, and transient like the wind,
How far more blest than those yet left behind!
Safe in the grave thy griefs with thee remain;
And life's tempestuous billows break in vain.
Ye tender nymphs in lawless pastimes gay,
Who heedless down the paths of pleasures stray;
Though long secure, with blissful joys elate,
Yet pause and think of Arabella's fate;
For such may be your unexpected doom,
And your next pleasures lull you in the tomb.
But let it be the muse's gentle care
To shield from envy's rage the mould'ring fair;
To draw a veil o'er faults she can't defend;
And what prudes have devour'd, leave time to end:
Be it her part to drop a pitying tear,
And mourning sigh around thy sable bier,
Nor shall thy woes long glad th'ill-natur'd crowd,
Silent to praise, and in detraction loud:
When scandal, that through life each worth destroys,
And malice that embitters all our joys,
Shall in some ill-starr'd wretch find later stains,
And let thine rest, forgot as thy remains.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

An Epistle from Pope to Lord Bolingbroke

Confess, dear Laelius! pious, just, and wise,
Some self-content does in that bosom rise,
When you reflect, as sure you sometimes must,
What talents Heaven does to thy virtue trust,
While with contempt you view poor humankind,
Weak, wilful, sensual, passionate, and blind.
Amid these errors thou art faultless found,
(The moon takes lustre from the darkness round)
Permit me too, a small attendant star,
To twinkle, though in a more distant sphere;
Small things with great, we poets oft compare.
With admiration all your steps I view,
And almost envy what I can't pursue.
The world must grant (and 'tis no common fame)
My courage and my probity the same.
But you, great Lord, to nobler scenes were born;
Your early youth did Anna's court adorn.
Let Oxford own, let Catalonia tell,
What various victims to your wisdom fell;
Let vows or benefits the vulgar bind,
Such ties can never chain th'intrepid mind.
Recorded be that memorable hour,
When, to elude exasperated pow'r
With blushless front you durst your friend betray,
Advise the whole confed'racy to stay,
While with sly courage you run brisk away.
By a deserted court with joy receiv'd,
Your projects all admir'd, your oaths believ'd;
Some trust obtain'd, of which good use he made,
To gain a pardon where you first betray'd.
But what is pardon to th'aspiring breast?
You should have been first minister at least:
Failing of that, forsaken and depress'd,
Sure any soul but yours had sought for rest!
And mourn'd in shades, far from the public eye,
Successless fraud, and useless infamy.
And here, my lord! let all mankind admire
The efforts bold of unexhausted fire;
You stand the champion of the people's cause,
And bid the mob reform defective laws.
Oh! was your pow'r, like your intention good,
Your native land would stream with civic blood.
I own these glorious schemes I view with pain;
My little mischiefs to myself seem mean,
Such ills are humble though my heart is great,
All I can do is flatter, lie, and cheat;
Yet I may say 'tis plain that you preside
O'er all my morals, and 'tis much my pride
To tread with steps unequal where you guide.
My first subscribers I have first defam'd,
And when detected, never was asham'd;
Rais'd all the storms I could in private life,

Whisper'd the husband to reform the wife;
Outwitted Lintot in his very trade,
And charity with obloquy repaid.
Yet while you preach in prose, I scold in rhymes,
Against th'injustice of flagitious times.
You, learned doctor of the public stage,
Give gilded poison to corrupt the age;
Your poor toad-eater I, around me scatter
My scurril jests, and gaping crowds bespatter.
This may seem envy to the formal fools
Who talk of virtue's bounds and honour's rules;
We, who with piercing eyes look nature through,
We know that all is right in all we do.

Reason's erroneous -- honest instinct right --
Monkeys were made to grin, and fleas to bite.
Using the spite by the Creator given,
We only tread the path that's mark'd by Heaven.
And sure with justice 'tis that we exclaim,
Such wrongs must e'en your modesty inflame;
While blockheads, court-rewards and honours share,
You, poet, patriot, and philosopher,
No bills in pockets, nor no garter wear.
When I see smoking on a booby's board
Fat ortolans and pye of Perigord,
Myself am mov'd to high poetic rage
(The Homer and the Horace of the age),
Puppies who have the insolence to dine
With smiling beauties, and with sparkling wine;
While I retire, plagu'd with an empty purse,
Eat brocoli, and kiss my ancient nurse.
But had we flourish'd when stern Harry reign'd,
Our good designs had been but ill explained;
The axe had cut your solid reas'nings short,
I, in the porter's lodge, been scourg'd at court.
To better times kind Heav'n reserv'd our birth.
Happy for you such coxcombs are on earth!
Mean spirits seek their villainy to hide;
We show our venom'd souls with nobler pride,
And in bold strokes have all man kind defy'd,
Pass'd o'er the bounds that keep mankind in awe,
And laugh'd at justice, liberty, and law.
While our admirers stare with dumb surprise,
Treason and scandal we monopolise.
Yet this remains our most peculiar boast,
You 'scape the block, and I the whipping-post.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

An Epistle to the Earl of Burlington

How happy you! who varied joys pursue;
And every hour presents you something new!
Plans, schemes, and models, all Palladio's art,
For six long months have gain'd upon your heart;
Of collonades, of corridors you talk,
The winding staircase and the cover'd walk;
You blend the orders with Vitruvian toil,
And raise with wond'rous joy the fancy'd pile:
But the dull workman's slow-performing hand
But coldly executes his lord's command.
With dirt and mortar soon you grow displeas'd,
Planting succeeds, and avenues are rais'd,
Canals are cut, and mountains level made,
Bow'rs of retreat, and galleries of shade;
The shaven turf presents a lively green;
The bordering flowers in mystic knots are seen:
With studied art on nature you refine --
The spring beheld you warm in this design,
But scarce the cold attacks your fav'rite trees,
Your inclination fails, and wishes freeze:
You quit the grove so lately you admir'd;
With other views your eager hopes are fir'd;
Post to the city you direct your way;
Not blooming paradise could bribe your stay:
Ambition shows you power's brightest side,
'Tis meanly poor in solitude to hide:
Though certain pains attend the cares of state,
A good man owes his country to be great;
Should act abroad the high distinguish'd part,
Or show at least the purpose of his heart.
With thoughts like these the shining courts you seek,
Full of new projects for almost a week;
You then despise the tinsel-glittering snare,
Think vile mankind below a serious care.
Life is too short for any distant aim;
And cold the dull reward of future fame:
Be happy then, while yet you have to live;
And love is all the blessing Heav'n can give.
Fir'd by new passion you address the fair,
Survey the opera as a gay parterre;
Young Chloe's bloom had made you certain prize,
But for a sidelong glance from Celia's eyes:
Your beating heart acknowledges her pow'r;
Your eager eyes her lovely form devour;
You feel the poison swelling in your breast,
And all your soul by fond desire possess'd.
In dying sighs a long three hours are past;
To some assembly with impatient haste,
With trembling hope, and doubtful fear, you move,
Resolv'd to tempt your fate, and own your love:
But there Belinda meets you on the stairs,
Easy her shape, attracting all her airs;

A smile she gives, and with a smile can wound;
Her melting voice hath music in the sound;
Her every motion wears resistless grace;
Wit in her mien, and pleasure in her face:
Here while you vow eternity of love,
Chloe and Celia unregarded move.
Thus on the sands of Afric's burning plains,
However deeply made, no long impress remains;
The slightest leaf can leave its figure there;
The strongest form is scatter'd by the air.
So yielding the warm temper of your mind,
So touch'd by every eye, so toss'd by wind;
Oh! how unlike the Heav'n my soul design'd!
Unseen, unheard, the throng around me move;
Not wishing praise, insensible of love;
No whispers soften, nor no beauties fire;
Careless I see the dance, and coldly hear the lyre.
So num'rous herds are driv'n o'er the rock;
No print is left of all the passing flock:
So sings the wind around the solid stone;
So vainly beat the waves with fruitless moan.
Tedious the toil, and great the workman's care,
Who dare attempt to fix impressions there:
But should some swain, more skilful than the rest,
Engrave his name upon this marble breast,
Not rolling ages could deface that name;
Through all the storms of life 'tis still the same:
Though length of years with moss may shade the ground,
Deep, though unseen, remains the secret wound.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Answer

Though I never got possession,
'Tis a pleasure to adore;
Hope, the wretch's only blessing,
May in time procure me more.
Constant courtship may obtain her, --
Where both wealth and merit fail,
And the lucky minute gain her, --
Fate and fancy must prevail.
At Diana's shrine aloud,
By the bow and by the quiver,
Thrice she bow'd, and thrice she vow'd,
Once to love -- and that forever.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Answered, for Lord William Hamilton

Good Madam, when ladies are willing,
A man must needs look like a fool;
For me, I would not give a shilling
For one who would love out of rule.
You should leave us to guess by your blushing,
And not speak the matter so plain;
'Tis ours to write and be pushing,
'Tis yours to affect a disdain.
That you're in a terrible taking,
By all these sweet oglings I see;
But the fruit that can fall without shaking,
Indeed is too mellow for me.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Ballad, on a Late Occurrence

Ungodly papers ev'ry week
Poor simple souls persuade
That courtiers good for nothing are,
Or but for mischief made.
But I who know their worthy hearts,
Pronounce that we are blind,
Who disappoint their honest schemes,
Who would be just and kind.
For in this vile degen'rate age
'Tis dangerous to do good;
Which will, when I have told my tale,
Be better understood.
A puppy, gamesome, blithe, and young,
Who play'd about the court,
Was destin'd by unlucky boys,
To be their noonday's sport.
With flatt'ring words they him entic'd,
(Words such as much prevail!)
And then with cruel art they tied
A bottle to his tail.
Lord Hervey at a window stood,
Detesting of the fact;
And cried aloud with all his might,
"I know the bottle's crack'd.
"Do not to such a dirty hole
Let them your tail apply;
Alas! you cannot know these things
One half so well as I.
"Harmless and young, you don't suspect
The venom of this deed;
But I see through the whole design, --
It is to make you bleed."
This good advice was cast away;
The puppy saw it shine;
And tamely lick'd their treach'rous hands,
And thought himself grown fine.
But long he had not worn the gem,
But as Lord Hervey said,
He ran and bled; the more he ran,
Alas! the more he bled.
Griev'd to the soul, this gallant lord
Tripp'd hastily down stairs;
With courage and compassion fir'd,
To set him free prepares.
But such was his ingratitude
To this most noble lord,
He bit his lily hand quite through,
As he untied the cord.
Next day the Maids of Honour came,
As I heard people tell;
They wash'd the wound with brinish tears,
-- And yet it is not well.

Oh! gen'rous youth, my counsel take,
And warlike acts forbear;
Put on white gloves, and lead folks out,
-- For that is your affair.
Never attempt to take away
Bottles from others' tails,
For that is what no soul will bear
From Italy to Wales.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Conclusion of a Letter to a Friend

Sent from Italy, 1741

But happy you from the contagion free,
Who, through her veil, can human nature see;
Calm you reflect, amid the frantic scene,
On the low views of those mistaken men,
Who lose the short invaluable hour,
Through dirt-pursuing schemes of distant pow'r:
Whose best enjoyments never pay the chase,
But melt like snow within a warm embrace.
Believe me, friend, for such indeed are you,
Dear to my heart, and to my int'rest true;
Too much already have you thrown away,
Too long sustain'd the labor of the day;
Enjoy the remnant of declining light,
Nor wait for rest till overwhelm'd in night.
By present pleasure balance pain you've past,
Forget all systems, and indulge your taste.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Constantinople

Written January 1718 in the Chiosk at Pera, overlooking Constantinople

Give me Great God (said I) a Little Farm
in Summer shady, & in Winter warm
where a cool spring gives birth to a clear brook
by Nature slideing down a mossy Rock
Not artfully in Leaden Pipes convey'd
Or greatly falling in a forc'd Cascade
Pure & unsully'd winding throu' ye Shade.
All bounteous Heaven has added to my Praier
a softer Climate and a purer Air.

Our Frozen Isle now chilling Winter binds
Deform'd by Rains, & rough wth blasting Winds
ye wither'd Woods grown white wth hoary Frost
by driving storms their scatter'd beautys lost
The Trembling birds their leaveless coverts shun
And seek in distant Climes a warmer Sun
The Water Nymphs their silenced Urns deplore
Even Thames benumb'd a River now no more
The barren Meadows give no more delight
by Glist'ning Snows made painfull to ye Sight.

Here Summer reigns wth one Eternal Smile
And double Harvests bless ye happy Soil.
Fair, fertile Fields to warm Indulgent Heaven
Has every Charm of every Season given!
No Killing Cold deforms ye Beauteous Year
The springing Flowers no coming Winter Fear
But as ye Parent Rose decays & dies
ye Infant Buds wth brighter Colours rise
And with fresh sweets ye Mother-scent supplys
Near them the Vi'let glows wth odours blest
And blooms in more than Tyrian Purple drest
The rich Jonquils their golden gleam display
And shine in glorys emulateing day.
These chearfull Groves their living Leaves retain
The Streams still murmur undefil'd by Rain
And growing Green adorns ye Fruitfull Plain
The warbling Kind uninterrupted Sing,
Warm'd wth Enjoyment of perpetual Spring.

Here from my Window I at once survey
The crouded City, & resounding Sea
In distant Views see Assian Mountains rise
And Lose their Snowy Summits in ye Skies.
Above those Mountains high Olympus Tow'rs
The Parliamental Seat of Heavenly Powers.
New to ye Sight my ravish'd Eyes admire
Each guilded Crescent & each Antique Spire
The Fair Serail where sunk in Idle ease

The Lazy Monarch melts his thoughtless days
The Marble Mosques beneath whose Ample Domes
Fierce Warlike Sultans sleep in peacefull Tombs
Those lofty Structures once the Christian boast
Their Names, their Honnours, & their Beautys lost
Those Altars bright wth Gold, wth Sculpture grac'd
By barbarous Zeal of savage Foes defac'd
Convents where Emperors profess'd of old
The Labour'd Pillars that their Triumphs told.
Vain Monuments of Men that once were great!
Sunk, undistinguish'd, by one Common Fate!
How art thou falln Imperial City, Low!
Where are thy Hopes of Roman Glory now?
Where are thy Palaces by Prelates rais'd
Where preistly Pomp in Purple Lustre blaz'd?
So vast, that Youthfull Kings might there reside
So Splendid; to content a Patriarchs pride
Where Grecian Artists all their skill displayd
Before ye happy Sciences decay'd;
So vast, that Youthfull Kings might there reside
So Splendid; to content a Patriarchs Pride;
Convents where Emperors proffess'd of Old,
The Labour'd Pillars that their Triumphs told,
Vain Monuments of Men that once were great!
Sunk, undistinguish'd in one common Fate!

One Little Spot, the small Fenar contains,
Of Greek Nobillity, the poor Remains,
Where other Helens show like powerfull Charms
As once engag'd the Warring World in Arms:
Those Names that Roial Auncestry can boast
In mean Mechanic Arts obscurely lost
Those Eyes a second Homer might inspire,
fix'd at the Loom, destroy their useless Fire.

Greiv'd at a view which strikes vpon my Mind
The short liv'd Vanity of Human kind
In Gaudy Objects I indulge my Sight,
And turn where Eastern Pomp gives gay delight.

See; the vast Train in various Habits dress'd!
By the Bright Seymetar and Sable Vest;
The Vizier proud, distinguish'd o're the rest!
Six slaves in gay Attire his Bridle hold;
His Bridle rough with Gems, his Stirups Gold;
His Snowy Steed adorn'd with lavish Pride
Whole Troops of Soldiers mounted by his Side,
These toss the Plumy Crest, Arabian Coursers guide.
With awfull Duty all decline their Eyes,
No bellowing Shouts of noisy Crouds arise;
Silence in solemn State the march attends
Till at the dread Divan the slow processions ends.

Yet not these Objects all profusely Gay,
The Gilded Navy that adorns the Sea,
The riseing City in Confusion fair;
Magnificently form'd irregular
Where Woods and Palaces at once surprise
Gardens, on Gardens, Domes on Domes arise
And endless Beauties tire the wandering Eyes,
So sooths my Wishes, or so charms my Mind,
As this Retreat, secure from Human kind.
No Knaves successfull Craft does Spleen excite
No Coxcombs tawdry Splendour shocks my Sight;
No Mob Alarm awakes my Female Fears,
No unrewarded Merit asks my Tears;
Nor Praise my Mind, nor Envy hurts my Ear,
Even Fame it selfe can hardly reach me here,
Impertinence with all her Tattling Train
Fair-sounding Flatterys delicious Bane
Censorious Folly; Noisy Party Rage;
The Thousand with which she must engage
Who dare have Virtue in a Vicious Age.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Continuation

So sung the poet in a humble strain,
With empty pockets, and a head in pain,
Where the soft clime inclin'd the soul to rest,
And past'ral images inspir'd the breast.
Apollo listen'd from his heav'nly bower,
And, in his health restor'd, express'd his power.
Pygmalion thus before the Paphian shrine,
With trembling vows address'd the pow'r divine;
Durst hardly make his hopeless wishes known,
And scarce a greater miracle was shown --
Returning vigour glow'd in every vein,
And gay ideas flutter'd in the brain;
Back he returns to breathe his native air,
And all his first resolves are melted there!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epigram, 1734

Born to be slaves, our fathers freedom sought,
And with their blood the precious treasure bought;
We their mean offspring our own bondage plot,
And, born to freedom, for our chains we vote.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epilogue to Mary Queen of Scots

What could luxurious woman wish for more,
To fix her joys, or to extend her pow'r?
Their every wish was in this Mary seen,
Gay, witty, youthful, beauteous, and a queen.
Vain, useless blessings with ill-conduct join'd!
Light as the air, and fleeting as the wind.
Whatever poets write, and lovers vow,
Beauty, what poor omnipotence hast thou!
Queen Bess had wisdom, council, power, and laws;
How few espous'd a wretched beauty's cause!
Learn thence, ye fair, more solid charms to prize;
Contemn the idle flatt'rers of your eyes.
The brightest object shines but while 'tis new:
That influence lessens by familiar view.
Monarchs and beauties rule with equal sway,
All strive to serve, and glory to obey;
Alike unpitied when depos'd they grow --
Men mock the idol of their former vow.
Two great examples have been shown today,
To what sure ruin passion does betray;
What long repentance to short joys is due;
When reason rules, what glory must ensue.
If you will love, love like Eliza then;
Love for amusement, like those traitors, men.
Think that the pastime of a leisure hour
She favour'd oft -- but never shar'd her pow'r.
The traveller by desert wolves pursu'd,
If by his heart the savage foe's subdued,
The world will still the noble act applaud,
Though victory was gain'd by needful fraud.
Such is, my tender sex, our helpless case;
And such the barbarous heart, hid by the begging face;
By passion fir'd, and not withheld by shame,
They cruel hunters are, we trembling game.
Trust me, dear ladies (For I know 'em well),
They burn to triumph, and they sigh to tell:
Cruel to them that yield, cullies to them that sell.
Believe me, 'tis by far the wiser course,
Superior art should meet superior force:
Hear, but be faithful to your int'rest still:
Secure your hearts -- then fool with whom you will.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epilogue to the Tragedy of Cato

You see in ancient Rome what folly reign'd;
A folly British men would have disdain'd.
Here's none so weak to pity Cato's case,
Who might have liv'd, and had a handsome place;
But rashly vain, and insolently great,
He perish'd by his fault -- and not his fate.
Thank Heav'n! our patriots better ends pursue,
With something more than glory in their view.
Poets write morals -- priests for martyrs preach --
Neither such fools to practice what they teach.
Though your dear country much you wish to serve,
For bonny Britons 'tis too hard to starve;
Or what's all one, to any generous mind,
>From girls, champagne, and gaming, be confin'd;
Portius might well obey his sire's command,
Returning to his small paternal land;
A low estate was ample to support
His private life, far distant from the court!
Far from the crowd of emulating beaux,
Where Martia never wanted birthday clothes.
For you, who live in these more polish'd days,
To spend your money, lo! ten thousand ways;
Dice may run ill, or duns demand their due,
And ways to get (God knows) are very few;
In times so differing, who shall harshly blame
Our modern heroes, not to act the same?

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epistle from Arthur Grey, the Footman, to Mrs. Murray, after His Condemnation for Attempting to Comm

Read, lovely nymph, and tremble not to read,
I have no more to wish, nor you to dread;
I ask not life, for life to me were vain,
And death a refuge from severer pain.
My only hope in these last lines I try --
I would be pitied, and I then would die.
Long had I liv'd as sordid as my fate,
Nor curs'd the destiny that made me wait
A servile slave: content with homely food,
The gross instinct of happiness pursued:
Youth gave me sleep at night and warmth of blood.
Ambition yet had never touch'd my breast;
My lordly master knew no sounder rest;
With labour healthy, in obedience blest.
But when I saw -- oh! had I never seen
That wounding softness, that engaging mien!
The mist of wretched education flies,
Shame, fear, desire, despair, and love arise,
The new creation of those beauteous eyes.
But yet that love pursu'd no guilty aim;
Deep in my heart I hid the secret flame:
I never hop'd my fond desire to tell,
And all my wishes were to serve you well.
Heav'ns! how I flew when wing'd by your command,
And kiss'd the letters giv'n me by your hand.
How pleas'd, how proud, how fond I was to wait,
Present the sparkling wine, or change the plate!
How, when you sung, my soul devour'd the sound,
And ev'ry sense was in the rapture drown'd!
Though bid to go, I quite forgot to move;
-- You knew not that stupidity was love!
But oh! the torment not to be express'd,
The grief, the rage, the hell, that fir'd this breast,
When my great rivals, in embroidery gay,
Sate by your side, or led you from the play!

I still contriv'd near as I could to stand
(the flambeau trembling in my shaking hand);
I saw, or thought I saw, those fingers press'd,
For thus their passion by my own I guess'd,
And jealous fury all my soul possess'd.
Like torrents, love and indignation meet,
And madness would have thrown me at your feet.
Turn, lovely nymph (for so I would have said),
Turn from those triflers who make love a trade;
This is true passion in my eyes you see;
They cannot, no -- they cannot love like me;
Frequent debauch has pall'd their sickly taste,
Faint their desire, and in a moment past;
They sigh not from the heart, but from the brain;
Vapours of vanity and strong champagne.
Too dull to feel what forms like yours inspire,

After long talking of their painted fire,
To some lewd brothel they at night retire;
There, pleas'd with fancy'd quality and charms,
Enjoy your beauties in a strumpet's arms.
Such are the joys those toasters have in view,
And such the wit and pleasure they pursue;
-- And is this love that ought to merit you?
Each opera night a new address begun,
They swear to thousands what they swear to one.
Not thus I sigh -- but all my sighs are vain --
Die, wretched Arthur, and conceal thy pain:
'Tis impudence to wish, and madness to complain.
Fix'd on this view, my only hope of ease,
I waited not the aid of slow disease;
The keenest instruments of death I sought,
And death alone employ'd my lab'ring thought.
This all the night -- when I remember well
The charming tinkle of your morning bell!
Fir'd by the sound, I hasten'd with your tea,
With one last look to smooth the darksome way --
But oh! how dear that fatal look has cost!
In that fond moment my resolves were lost.
Hence all my guilt, and all your sorrows rise --
I saw the languid softness of your eyes;

I saw the dear disorder of your bed;
Your cheeks all glowing with a tempting red;
Your night-clothes tumbled with resistless grace,
Your flowing hair play'd careless down your face
Your night-gown fasten'd with a single pin;
-- Fancy improv'd the wondrous charms within!
I fix'd my eyes upon that heaving breast,
And hardly, hardly, I forbore the rest:
Eager to gaze, unsatisfied with sight,
My head grew giddy with the near delight!
-- Too well you know the fatal following night!
Th'extremest proof of my desire I give,
And since you will not love, I will not live.
Condemn'd by you, I wait the righteous doom.
Careless and fearless of the woes to come.
But when you see me waver in the wind,
My guilty flame extinct, my soul resign'd,
Sure you may pity what you can't approve,
The cruel consequence of furious love.
Think the bold wretch, that could so greatly dare,
Was tender, faithful, ardent, and sincere;
Think when I held the pistol to your breast, --
Had I been of the world's large rule possess'd, --
That world had then been yours, and I been blest;
Think that my life was quite below my care,
Nor fear'd I any hell beyond despair. --
If these reflections, though they seize you late,

Give some compassion for your Arthur's fate:
Enough you give, nor ought I to complain:
You pay my pangs, nor have I died in vain.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epistle from Arthur Grey, the Footman, to Mrs. Murray, after His Condemnation for Attempting to Commit Violence.

Read, lovely nymph, and tremble not to read,
I have no more to wish, nor you to dread;
I ask not life, for life to me were vain,
And death a refuge from severer pain.
My only hope in these last lines I try --
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In that fond moment my resolves were lost.
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Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epistle from Mrs. Yonge to Her Husband

Think not this paper comes with vain pretense
To move your pity, or to mourn th'offense.
Too well I know that hard obdurate heart;
No softening mercy there will take my part,
Nor can a woman's arguments prevail,
When even your patron's wise example fails.
But this last privilege I still retain;
Th'oppressed and injured always may complain.
Too, too severely laws of honor bind
The weak submissive sex of womankind.
If sighs have gained or force compelled our hand,
Deceived by art, or urged by stern command,
Whatever motive binds the fatal tie,
The judging world expects our constancy.
Just heaven! (for sure in heaven does justice reign,
Though tricks below that sacred name profane)
To you appealing I submit my cause,
Nor fear a judgment from impartial laws.
All bargains but conditional are made;
The purchase void, the creditor unpaid;
Defrauded servants are from service free;
A wounded slave regains his liberty.
For wives ill used no remedy remains,
To daily racks condemned, and to eternal chains.
From whence is this unjust distinction grown?
Are we not formed with passions like your own?
Nature with equal fire our souls endued,
Our minds as haughty, and as warm our blood;
O'er the wide world your pleasures you pursue,
The change is justified by something new;
But we must sigh in silence -- and be true.
Our sex's weakness you expose and blame
(Of every prattling fop the common theme).
Yet from this weakness you suppose is due
Sublimer virtue than your Cato knew.
Had heaven designed us trials so severe,
It would have formed our tempers then to bear.
And I have borne (oh what have I not borne!)
The pang of jealousy, the insults of scorn.
Wearied at length, I from your sight remove,
And place my future hopes in secret love.
In the gay bloom of glowing youth retired,
I quit the woman's joy to be admired,
With that small pension your hard heart allows,
Renounce your fortune, and release your vows.
To custom (though unjust) so much is due;
I hide my frailty from the public view.
My conscience clear, yet sensible of shame,
My life I hazard, to preserve my fame.
And I prefer this low inglorious state
To vile dependence on the thing I hate --
But you pursue me to this last retreat.

Dragged into light, my tender crime is shown
And every circumstance of fondness known.
Beneath the shelter of the law you stand,
And urge my ruin with a cruel hand,
While to my fault thus rigidly severe,
Tamely submissive to the man you fear.
This wretched outcast, this abandoned wife,
Has yet this joy to sweeten shameful life:
By your mean conduct, infamously loose,
You are at once my accuser and excuse.
Let me be damned by the censorious prude
(stupidly dull, or spiritually lewd),
My hapless case will surely pity find
From every just and reasonable mind.
When to the final sentence I submit,
The lips condemn me, but their souls acquit.
No more my husband, to your pleasures go,
The sweets of your recovered freedom know.
Go: court the brittle friendship of the great,
Smile at his board, or at his levee wait;
And when dismissed, to madam's toilet fly,
More than her chambermaids, or glasses, lie,
Tell her how young she looks, how heavenly fair,
Admire the lilies and the roses there.
Your high ambition may be gratified,
Some cousin of her own be made your bride,
And you the father of a glorious race
Endowed with Ch------l's strength and Low---r's face.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epistle to Lord Hervey on the King's Birthday from the Country

Where I enjoy in contemplative chamber,
Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber.

Through shining crowds you now make way,
With sideling bow and golden key;
While wrapped in spleen and easy-chair,
For all this pomp so small my care,
I scarce remember who are there.
Yet in brocade I can suppose
The potent Knight whose presence goes
At least a yard before his nose:
And majesty with sweeping train,
That does so many yards contain,
Superior to her waiting nymphs,
As lobster to attendant shrimps.
I do not ask one word of news,
Which country damsels much amuse.
If a new batch of Lords appears,
After a tour of half six years,
With foreign years to grace the nation,
The Maids of Honour's admiration;
Whose bright improvements give surprise
To their own lady-mother's eyes:
Improvements, such as colts might show,
Were mares so mad to let them go;
Their limbs perhaps a little stronger,
Their manes and tails grown somewhat longer.
I would not hear of ball-room scuffles,
Nor what new whims adorn the ruffles.
This meek epistle comes to tell,
On Monday, I in town shall dwell;
Where, if you please to condescend
In Cavendish-square to see your friend,
I shall disclose to you alone
Such thoughts as ne'er were thought upon.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Epithalamium

Since you, Mr. H**d, will marry black Kate,
Accept of good wishes for that blessed state:
May you fight all the day like a dog and a cat,
And yet ev'ry year produce a new brat.
Fal la!

May she never be honest -- you never be sound;
May her tongue like a clapper be heard a mile round;
Till abandon'd by joy, and deserted by grace,
You hang yourselves both in the very same place.
Fal la!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Farewell to Bath

To all you ladies now at Bath,
And eke, ye beaux, to you,
With aching heart, and wat'ry eyes,
I bid my last adieu.

Farewell ye nymphs, who waters sip
Hot reeking from the pumps,
While music lends her friendly aid,
To cheer you from the dumps.

Farewell ye wits, who prating stand,
And criticise the fair;
Yourselves the joke of men of sense,
Who hate a coxcomb's air.

Farewell to Deard's, and all her toys,
Which glitter in her shop,
Deluding traps to girls and boys,
The warehouse of the fop.

Lindsay's and Hayes's both farewell,
Where in the spacious hall,
With bounding steps, and sprightly air,
I've led up many a ball.

Where Somerville of courteous mien,
Was partner in the dance,
With swimming Haws, and Brownlow blithe,
And Britton pink of France.

Poor Nash, farewell! may fortune smile,
Thy drooping soul revive,
My heart is full I can no more--
John, bid the coachman drive.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Fragment to ****

Let mules and asses in that circle tread,
And proud of trappings toss a feather'd head;
Leave you the stupid business of the state,
Strive to be happy, and despise the great:
Come where the Graces guide the gentle day,
Where Venus rules amidst her native sea,
Where at her altar gallantries appear,
And even Wisdom dares not show severe.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Friday, The Toilette

LYDIA.

Now twenty springs had cloth'd the Park with green,
Since Lydia knew the blossom of fifteen;
No lovers now her morning hours molest,
And catch her at her toilet half undrest.
The thund'ring knocker wakes the street no more,
Nor chairs, nor coaches, crowd the silent door;
Now at the window all her mornings pass,
Or at the dumb devotion of her glass:
Reclin'd upon her arm she pensive sate,
And curs'd th' inconstancy of man too late.
"O youth! O spring of life, for ever lost!
No more my name shall reign the fav'rite toast:
On glass no more the diamond grave my name,
And lines mis-spelt record my lover's flame:
Nor shall side-boxes watch my wand'ring eyes,
And, as they catch the glance, in rows arise
With humble bows; nor white-glov'd beaux encroach
In crowds behind, to guard me to my coach.
"What shall I do to spend the hateful day?
At chapel shall I wear the morn away?
Who there appears at these unmodish hours,
But ancient matrons with their frizzled tow'rs,
And gray religious maids? My presence there,
Amidst that sober train, would own despair?
Nor am I yet so old, nor is my glance
As yet fix'd wholly on devotion's trance.
Strait then I'll dress, and take my wonted range
Through India's shops, to Motteux's, or the Change,
Where the tall jar erects its stately pride,
With antic shapes in China's azure dy'd;
There careless lies a rich brocade unroll'd,
Here shines a cabinet with burnish'd gold.
But then alas! I must be forc'd to pay,
And bring no penn'orth, not a fan away!

"How am I curs'd, unhappy and forlorn!
My lover's triumph, and my sex's scorn!
False is the pompous grief of youthful heirs;
False are the loose coquet's inveigling airs;
False is the crafty courtier's plighted word;
False are the dice when gamesters stamp the board;
False is the sprightly widow's public tear;
Yet these to Damon's oaths are all sincere.
"For what young flirt, base man, am I abus'd?
To please your wife am I unkindly us'd?
'Tis true her face may boast the peach's bloom;
But does her nearer whisper breathe perfume?
I own her taper shape is form'd to please;
But don't you see her unconfin'd by stays?
She doubly to fifteen may claim pretence;

Alike we read it in her face and sense.
Insipid, servile thing! whom I disdain;
Her phlegm can best support the marriage chain.
Damon is practis'd in the modish life,
Can hate, and yet be civil to his wife:
He games, he drinks, he swears, he fights, he roves;
Yet Cloe can believe he fondly loves.
Mistress and wife by turns supply his need;
A miss for pleasure, and a wife for breed.
Powder'd with diamonds, free from spleen or care,
She can a sullen husband's humour bear;
Her credulous friendship and her stupid ease,
Have often been my jest in happier days;
How Chloe boasts and triumphs in my pains!
To her he's faithful; 'tis to me he feigns.
Am I that stupid thing to bear neglect,
And force a smile, not daring to suspect?
No, perjur'd man! a wife may be content;
But you shall find a mistress can resent."
Thus love-sick Lydia rav'd; her maid appears,
And in her faithful hand the band-box bears
The cestus, that reform'd inconstant Jove,
Not better fill'd with what allur'd to love);
"How well this ribbon's gloss becomes your face!"
She cries in rapture; "then so sweet a lace!
How charmingly you look! so bright! so fair!
"Tis to your eyes the head-dress owes its air!"
Straight Lydia smiled; the comb adjusts her locks;
And at the play-house Harry keeps her box.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Impromptu, to a Young Lady Singing

Sing, gentle maid -- reform my breast,
And soften all my care;
Thus may I be some moments blest,
And easy in despair.
The pow'r of Orpheus lives in you;
You can the passions of my soul subdue,
And tame the lions and the tigers there.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Irregular Verses to Truth

Written at Fourteen Years of Age.

Where, lovely Goddess, dost thou dwell?
In what remote and silent shade?
Within what cave or lonely cell?
With what old hermit, or unpractis'd maid?
In vain I've sought thee all around,
But thy unfashionable sound
In crowds was never heard,
Nor ever has thy form in town or court appear'd.

The sanctuary is not safe to thee,
Chas'd thence by endless mystery;
Thy own professors chase thee thence,
And wage eternal war with thee and sense;
Then in perplexing comments lost,
E'en when they would be thought to show the most.
Most beautiful when most distress'd,
Descend, O Goddess, to my breast;
There thou may'st reign, unrivall'd and alone,
My thoughts thy subject, and my heart thy throne.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

John Duke of Marlborough

When the proud Frenchman's strong rapacious hand
Spread o'er Europe ruin and command,
Our sinking temples and expiring law
With trembling dread the rolling tempest saw;
Destin'd a province to insulting Gaul,
This genius rose, and stopp'd the ponderous fall.
His temperate valour form'd no giddy scheme,
No victory ras'd him to a rage of fame;
The happy temper of his even mind
No danger e'er could shock, or conquest blind.
Fashion'd alike by Nature and by Art,
To please, engage, and int'rest ev'ry heart.
In public life by all who saw approv'd,
In private hours by all who knew him lov'd.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Julia to Ovid

Written at Twelve Years of Age, in imitation of Ovid's Epistles.

Are love and pow'r incapable to meet?
And must they all be wretched who are great?
Enslav'd by titles, and by forms confin'd,
For wretched victims to the state design'd.
What rural maid, that my sad fortune knows,
Would quit her cottage to embrace my woes?
Would be this cursed sacrifice to pow'r,
This wretched daughter of Rome's emperour?
When sick with sighs to absent Ovid given,
I tire with vows the unrelenting Heaven,
Drown'd in my tears, and with my sorrows pale,
What then do all my kindred gods avail?
Let proud Augustus the whole world subdue,
be mine to place all happiness in you;
With nobler pride I can on throes look down,
Can court your love and can despise a crown, --
O Love! thou pleasure never dearly bought!
Whose joys exceed the very lover's thought;
Of that soft passion, when you teach the art,
In gentle sounds it steals into the heart;
With such sweet magic does the soul surprise,
'Tis only taught us better by your eyes.
O Ovid! first of the inspired train,
To Heaven I speak in that enchanting strain,
So sweet a voice can never plead in vain.

Apollo will protect his favourite son,
And all the little Loves unto thy succour run.
The Loves and Muses in thy prayer shall join,
And all their wishes and their vows be thine;
Some god will soften my hard Father's breast,
And work a miracle to make thee blest.

* * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *

Hard as this is, I even could this bear,
But greater ills than what I feel, I fear.
My fame -- my Ovid -- both for ever fled,
what greater evil is there left to dread!
Yes, there is one . . . . . .
Avert it, Gods, who do my sorrows see!
Avert it, thou, who art a god to me!
When back to Rome your wishing eyes are cast,
And on the lessening towers you gaze your last --
When fancy shall recal unto your view
The pleasures now for ever lost to you,
The shining court, and all the thousand ways
To melt the nights and pass the happy days --

Will you not sigh, and hate the wretched maid,
Whose fatal love your safety has betray'd?
Say that from me your banishment does come,
And curse the eyes that have expell'd you Rome?
Those eyes, which now are weeping for your woes,
The sleep of death shall then for ever close.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Lady Hertford to Lord William Hamilton

Dear Colin, prevent my warm blushes,
Since how can I speak without pain?
My eyes oft have told you my wishes,
Why don't you their meaning explain?
My passion will lose by expression,
And you may too cruelly blame;
Then do not expect a confession
Of what is too tender to name.
Since yours is the province of speaking,
How can you then hope it from me?
Our wishes should be in our keeping,
'Till yours tell us what they should be.
Alas! then, why don't you discover?
DId your heart feel such torments as mine,
Eyes need not tell over and over,
What I in my breast would confine.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Lines Written in a Blank Page of Milton's Paradise Lost

This happy pair a certain bliss might prove,
Confin'd to constancy and mutual love:
Heaven to one object limited their vows,
The only safety faithless Nature knows.
God saw the wand'ring appetite would range,
And would have kept them from the pow'r to change;
But falsehood, soon as man increas'd, began;
Down through the race the swift contagion ran,
All ranks are tainted, all deceitful prove,
False in all shapes, but doubly false in love.
This makes the censure of the world more just,
That damns with shame the weakness of a trust!
Ere change began, our sex no scandal knew,
All nymphs were chaste as long as swains were true;
But now, tho' by the subtlest art betray'd,
We're so by custom and false maxims sway'd
That infamy still brands the injur'd maid.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Melinda's Complaint

By the side of a glimmering fire,
Melinda sat pensively down,
Impatient of rural esquire,
And vex'd to be absent from Town.
The cricket, from under the grate,
With a chirp to her sighs did reply,
And the kitten, as grave as a cat,
Sat mournfully purring hard by.
"Alas! silly maid that I was!"
Thus sadly complaining, she cried;
"When first I forsook that dear place,
'T were better by far I had died!
How gaily I pass'd the long day,
In a round of continu'd delight;
Park, visits, assemblies, and play,
And quadrille to enliven the night.
"How simple was I to believe
Delusive poetical dreams!
The flattering landskips they give
Of groves, meads, and murmuring streams.
Bleak mountains, and wild staring rocks,
Are the wretched result of my pains;
The swains greater brutes than their flocks,
And the nymphs as polite as the swains.
"What though I have skill to ensnare,
Where Smarts in bright circles abound;
What though at St. James's at prayers,
Beaux ogle devoutly around:
Fond virgin, thy power is lost,
On a race of rude Hottentot brutes;
What glory in being the toast
Of noisy dull 'squires in boots?
"And thou, my companion, so dear,
My all that is left of relief,
Whatever I suffer, forbear --
Forbear to dissuade me from grief:
'Tis in vain then, you'll say to repine
At ills which cannot be redress'd,
But in sorrows so pungent as mine,
To be patient, alas! is a test.
"If, further to soothe my distress,
Thy tender compassion is led,
Call Jenny to help me undress,
And decently put me to bed.
The last humble solace I wait,
Would Heaven indulge me the boon,
Some dream less unkind than my fate,
In a vision transport me to Town.
"Clarissa, meantime, weds a beau,
Who decks her in golden array;
The finest at every fine show,
And flaunts it at Park and at Play;

Whilst here we are left in the lurch,
Forgot and secluded from view;
Unless when some bumpkin at church
Stares wistfully over the pew."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Monday, Roxana, or the Drawing-Room

Roxana from the court retiring late,
Sigh'd her soft sorrows at St. JAMES's gate:
Such heavy thoughts lay brooding in her breast,
Not her own chairmen wth more weight opprest;
They groan the cruel load they're doom'd to bear;
She in these gentler sounds express'd her care.

"Was it for this, that I these Roses wear,
"For this new-set my Jewels for my hair?
"Ah ! Princess ! with what zeal have I pursu'd!
"Almost forgot the duty of a Prude.
"Thinking I never cou'd attend too soon,
"I've miss'd my prayers, to get me dress'd by noon.
"For Thee, ah ! what for Thee did I resign?
"My Pleasures, Passions, all that e'er was mine.
"I sacrific'd both Modesty and Ease,
"Left Operas, and went to filthy Plays;
"Double entendres shock'd my tender ear,
"Yet even this for Thee I chose to bear.
"In glowing youth, when nature bids be gay,
"And ev'ry joy of life before me lay,
"By honour prompted, and by pride restrain'd,
"The pleasures of the young my soul disdain'd:
"Sermons I sought, and with a mien severe
"Censur'd my neighbours, and said daily pray'r.
"Alas ! how chang'd! -- with the same sermon mien
"That once I pray'd, the What-d'ye call't I've seen.
"Ah ! cruel Princess, for thy sake I've lost
"That reputation which so dear had cost:
"I, who avoided ev'ry publick place,
"When bloom, and beauty bid me show my face;
"Now near Thee constant ev'ry night abide
"With never-failing duty by thy side,
"Myself and daughters standing on a row,
"To all the foreigners a goodly show!
"Oft had your drawing-room been sadly thin,
"And merchants wives close by the chair had been seen;
"Had not I amply fill'd the empty space,
"And sav'd your Highness from the dire disgrace.

"Yet COQUETILLA's artifice prevails,
"When all my merit and my duty fails:
"That COQUETILLA, whose deluding airs
"Corrupts our virgins, and our youth ensnares;
"So sunk her character, so lost her fame,
"Scarce visited before your Highness came;
"Yet for the Bed-chamber 'tis Her you chuse,
"When Zeal and Fame and Virtue you refuse.
"Ah ! worthy choice ! not one of all your train
"Whom censure blasts not, and dishonours stain.
"Let the nice hind now suckle dirty pigs,
"And the proud pea-hen snatch the cuckoo's eggs!

"Let IRIS leave her paint, and own her age,
"And grave SUFFOLKIA wed a giddy page !
"A greater miracle is daily view'd,
"A virtuous Princess with a court so lewd.

"I know thee, Court ! with all thy treach'rous wiles,
"Thy false caresses and undoing smiles !
"Ah ! Princess, learn'd in all the courtly arts
"To cheat our hopes, and yet to gain our hearts.

"Large lovely bribes are the great statesman's aim;
"And the neglected patriot follows fame.
"The Prince is ogled ; some the King pursue;
"But your ROXANA only follows YOU.
"Despis'd ROXANA, cease, and try to find
"Some other, since the Princess proves unkind:
"Perhaps it is not hard to find at court
"If not a greater, a more firm support."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

On Seeing a Portrait of Sir Robert Walpole

Such were the lively eyes and rosy hue
Of Robin's face, when Robin first I knew;
The gay companion and the fav'rite guest;
Lov'd without awe, and without views caress'd;
His cheerful smile, and open honest look,
Added new graces to the truth he spoke.
Then ev'ry man found something to commend,
The pleasant neighbour and the worthy friend;
The gen'rous master of a private house,
The tender father and indulgent spouse.
The hardest censors at the worst believ'd,
His temper was too easily deceiv'd
(A consequential ill good-nature draws,
A bad effect, but from a noble cause).
Whence, then, these clamours of a judging crowd?
Suspicious, griping, insolent, and proud --
Rapacious, cruel, violent, unjust;
False to his friend, and traitor to his trust?

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

On the Death of Mrs. Bowes

Written extempore on a card, in a large company, December 14, 1724.

Hail, happy bride, for thou art truly blest!
Three months of rapture, crown'd with endless rest.
Merit like yours was Heav'n's peculiar care,
You lov'd -- yet tasted happiness sincere.
To you the sweets of love were only shown,
The sure succeeding bitter dregs unknown;
You had not yet the fatal charge deplor'd,
The tender lover for th'imperious lord:
Nor felt the pain that jealous fondness brings:
Nor felt, that coldness from possession springs.
Above your sex, distinguish'd in your fate,
You trusted -- yet experienc'd no deceit;
Soft were your hours, and wing'd with pleasure flew;
No vain repentance gave a sigh to you:
And if superior bliss Heaven can bestow,
With fellow-angels you enjoy it now.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Saturday, the Small-Pox

FLAVIA.

The wretched FLAVIA on her couch reclin'd,
Thus breath'd the anguish of a wounded mind ;
A glass revers'd in her right hand she bore,
For now she shun'd the face she sought before.

'How am I chang'd ! alas ! how am I grown
'A frightful spectre, to myself unknown !
'Where's my Complexion ? where the radiant Bloom,
'That promis'd happiness for Years to come ?
'Then with what pleasure I this face survey'd !
'To look once more, my visits oft delay'd !
'Charm'd with the view, a fresher red would rise,
'And a new life shot sparkling from my eyes !

'Ah ! faithless glass, my wonted bloom restore;
'Alas ! I rave, that bloom is now no more !
'The greatest good the GODS on men bestow,
'Ev'n youth itself, to me is useless now.
'There was a time, (oh ! that I could forget !)
'When opera-tickets pour'd before my feet ;
'And at the ring, where brightest beauties shine,
'The earliest cherries of the spring were mine.
'Witness, O Lilly ; and thou, Motteux, tell
'How much Japan these eyes have made ye sell.
'With what contempt ye you saw me oft despise
'The humble offer of the raffled prize ;
'For at the raffle still the prize I bore,
'With scorn rejected, or with triumph wore !
' Now beauty's fled, and presents are no more !

'For me the Patriot has the house forsook,
'And left debates to catch a passing look :
'For me the Soldier has soft verses writ ;
'For me the Beau has aim'd to be a Wit.
'For me the Wit to nonsense was betray'd ;
'The Gamester has for me his dun delay'd,
'And overseen the card, I would have play'd.
'The bold and haughty by success made vain,
'Aw'd by my eyes has trembled to complain:
'The bashful 'squire touch'd by a wish unknown,
'Has dar'd to speak with spirit not his own ;
'Fir'd by one wish, all did alike adore ;
'Now beauty's fled, and lovers are no more!

'As round the room I turn my weeping eyes,
'New unaffected scenes of sorrow rise !
'Far from my sight that killing picture bear,
'The face disfigure, and the canvas tear !
'That picture which with pride I us'd to show,
'The lost resemblance but upbraids me now.

'And thou, my toilette! where I oft have sat,
'While hours unheeded pass'd in deep debate,
'How curls should fall, or where a patch to place :
'If blue or scarlet best became my face;
'Now on some happier nymph thy aid bestow ;
'On fairer heads, ye useless jewels glow !
'No borrow'd lustre can my charms restore ;
'Beauty is fled, and dress is now no more !

'Ye meaner beauties, I permit ye shine ;
'Go, triumph in the hearts that once were mine ;
'But midst your triumphs with confusion know,
''Tis to my ruin all your arms ye owe.
'Would pitying Heav'n restore my wonted mien,
'Ye still might move unthought-of and unseen.
'But oh ! how vain, how wretched is the boast
'Of beauty faded, and of empire lost !
'What now is left but weeping, to deplore
'My beauty fled, and empire now no more !

'Ye, cruel Chymists, what with-held your aid !
'Could no pomatums save a trembling maid ?
'How false and trifling is that art you boast ;
'No art can give me back my beauty lost.
'In tears, surrounded by my friends I lay,
'Mask'd o'er and trembled at the sight of day;
'MIRMILLO came my fortune to deplore,
'(A golden headed cane, well carv'd he bore)
'Cordials, he cried, my spirits must restore :
'Beauty is fled, and spirit is no more !

'GALEN, the grave ; officious SQUIRT was there,
'With fruitless grief and unavailing care :
'MACHAON too, the great MACHAON, known
'By his red cloak and his superior frown ;
'And why, he cry'd, this grief and this despair ?
'You shall again be well, again be fair ;
'Believe my oath; (with that an oath he swore)
'False was his oath; my beauty is no more!

'Cease, hapless maid, no more thy tale pursue,
'Forsake mankind, and bid the world adieu !
'Monarchs and beauties rule with equal sway ;
'All strive to serve, and glory to obey :
'Alike unpitied when depos'd they grow ;
'Men mock the idol of their former vow.

'Adieu ! ye parks ! -- in some obscure recess,
'Where gentle streams will weep at my distress,
'Where no false friend will in my grief take part,
'And mourn my ruin with a joyful heart ;
'There let me live in some deserted place,

'There hide in shades this lost inglorious face.
'Ye, operas, circles, I no more must view !
'My toilette, patches, all the world adieu!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Song

How happy is the harden'd heart,
Where interest is the only view!
Can sigh and meet, or smile and part,
Nor pleas'd, nor griev'd, nor false, nor true --
Yet, have they truly peace of mind?
Or do they ever truly know
The bliss sincerer tempers find,
Which truth and virtue can bestow?

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Song -- Rondeau

Finish these langours! Oh! I'm sick
Of dying airs, I know the trick;
Long since I've learn'd to well explain
Th'unmeaning cant of fire and pain,
And see through all the senseless lies
Of burning darts from killing eyes;
I'm tir'd with this continual rout
Of bowing low and leading out.
Finish, &c.
Finish this tedious dangling trade,
By which so many fools are made;
For fools they are, whom you can please
By such affected airs as these:
At opera near my box to stand,
And slyly press the given hand,
Thus may you wait whole years in vain;
But sure you would, were you in pain.
Finish, &c.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Bride in the Country

A Parody on Rowe's Ballad, "Despairing beside a clear stream," &c.

By the side of a half-rotten wood
Melantha sat silently down,
Convinc'd that her scheme was not good,
And vex'd to be absent from Town.
Whilst pitied by no living soul,
To herself she was forc'd to reply,
And the sparrow, as grave as an owl,
Sat list'ning and pecking hard by.
"Alas! silly maid that I was!"
Thus sadly complaining, she cried;
"When first I forsook that dear place,
'T had been better by far I had died!
How gaily I pass'd the long days,
In a round of continual delights;
Park, visits, assemblies, and plays,
And a dance to enliven the nights.

"How simple was I to believe
Delusive poetical dreams!
Or the flattering landscapes they give
Of meadows and murmuring streams.
Bleak mountains, and cold starving rocks,
Are the wretched result of my pains;
The swains greater brutes than their flocks,
The nymphs as polite as the swains.
"What though I have got my dear Phil;
I see him all night and all day;
I find I must not have my will,
And I've cursedly sworn to obey!
Fond damsel, thy power is lost,
As now I experience too late!
Whatever a lover may boast,
A husband is what one may hate!
"And thou, my old woman, so dear,
My all that is left of relief,
Whatever I suffer, forbear --
Forbear to dissuade me from grief:
'Tis in vain, as you say, to repine
At ills which cannot be redress'd;
But, in sorrows so poignant as mine,
To be patient, alas! is a jest.
"If, further to soothe my distress,
Your tender compassion is led,
Come hither and help to undress,
And decently put me to bed.
The last humble solace I wait,
Would Heav'n but indulge me the boon,
May some dream, less unkind than my fate,
In a vision transport me to Town.

"Clarissa, meantime, weds a beau,
Who decks her in golden array:
She's the finest at ev'ry fine show,
And flaunts it at Park and at Play:
Whilst I am here left in the lurch,
Forgot and secluded from view;
Unless when some bumpkin at church
Stares wistfully over the pew."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Court of Dulness

Her palace plac'd beneath a muddy road,
And such the influence of the dull abode,
The carrier's horse above can scarcely drag his load.
Here chose the goddess her belov'd retreat,
Which Phoebus tries in vain to penetrate;
Adorn'd within with shells of small expense,
(Emblems of tinsel rhyme and trifling sense),
Perpetual fogs enclose the sacred cave,
The neighbouring sinks their fragrant odours gave;
In contemplation here she pass'd her hours,
Closely attended by subservient powers:
Bold Profanation with a brazen brow, --
Much to this great ally does Dulness owe:
But still more near the goddess you attend,
Naked Obscenity! her darling friend.
To thee for shelter all the dull still fly,
Pert double meanings e'en at school we try.
What numerous writers owe their praise to thee,
No sex -- no age -- is from thy influence free;
By thee how bright appears the senseless song,
By thee the book is sold, the lines are strong.
The heaviest poet, by thy pow'rful aid,
Warms the brisk youth and charms the sprightly maid;
Where breathes the mortal who's not prov'd thy force
In well-bred pun, or waiting-room discourse?
Such were the chiefs who form'd her gloomy court,
Her pride, her ornaments, and her support:
Behind attended such a numerous crowd
Of quibbles strain'd old rhymes, and laughter loud,
Throngs that might even make a goddess proud.
Yet pensive thoughts lay brooding in her breast,
And fear, the mate of pow'r, her mind oppress'd.
Oft she revolv'd -- for oh, too well she knew
What Merlin sung, and part long since prov'd true,
"When Harry's brows the diadem adorn
From Reformation Learning shall be born;
Slowly in strength the infant shall improve,
The parents' glory and its country's love:
Free from the thraldom of monastic rhymes,
In bright progression bless succeeding times;
Milton free poetry from the monkish chain,
And Addison that Milton shall explain;
Point out the beauties of each living page;
Reform the taste of a degen'rate age;
Show that true wit disdains all little art,
And can at once engage and mend the heart;
Knows even popular applause to gain,
Yet not malicious, wanton, or profane."
This prophecy perplex'd her anxious head;
And, yawning thrice, thus to her sons she said:
"When such an author honour'd shall appear,
'Tis plain, the hour of our destruction's near!

And public rumour now aloud proclaims
At universal monarchy he aims.
What to this hero, whom shall we oppose?
A strong confederacy of stupid foes --
Such brave allies as are by nature fit
To check the progress of o'erflowing wit;
Where envy and where impudence are join'd
To contradict the voice of humankind,
At Dacier's ignorance shall gravely smile,
And blame the coarseness of Spectator's style;
Shall swear that Tickell understands not Greek,
That Addison can't write, nor Walpole speak."
Fir'd by this project Profanation rose --
"One leader, Goddess, let me here propose;
In a near realm, which owns thy gentle sway,
My darling son now chants his pleasing lay,
Trampling on order, decency, and laws,
And vaunts himself the champion of my cause.
Him will I bring to teach the callow youth
To scorn dry morals -- laugh at sacred truth.
All fears of future reckonings he shall quench,
And bid them bravely drink and freely wench.

By his example much, by precept more,
There learn 'tis wit to swear, and safe to whore.
* * * * * *
Mocks Newton's schemes, and Tillotson's discourse,
And imitates the virtues of a horse.
With this design to add to his renown,
He wears the rev'rend dress of band and gown."
The Goddess, pleas'd, bestow'd a gracious grin,
When thus does fair Obscenity begin:
"My humbler subjects are not plac'd so high,
They joke in kitchens, and in cellars ply;
Yet one I have, bred in those worthy schools,
Admir'd by shoals of male and female fools;
In ballads what I dictate he shall sing,
And troops of converts to my banners bring.
Bold in my cause, and most profoundly dull,
With smooth unmeaning rhymes the town shall lull;
Shall sing of worms in great Arbuthnot's strain,
In lewd burlesque the sacred Psalms profane;
To maids of honour songs obscene address,
Nor need we doubt his wonderful success.
Long have I watch'd this genius yet unknown,
Inspir'd his rhyme, and mark'd him for my own;
His early youth in superstition bred,
And monkish legends all the books he read.
Tinctur'd by these, proceeds his love of rhyme,
Milton he scorns, but Crambo thinks divine.
And oh! 'tis sure (our foes confess this truth)
The old Cambronians yield to this stupendous youth.

But present want obscures the poet's name,
Be it my charge to talk him into fame.
My Lansdowne (whose love-songs so smoothly run,
My darling author, and my fav'rite son)
He shall protect the man whom I inspire,
And Windsor Forest openly admire;
And Bolingbroke with flattery shall bribe,
'Till the charm'd lord most nobly shall subscribe;
And hostile Addison too late shall find,
'Tis easier to corrupt than mend mankind.
The town, which now revolts, once more obey,
And the whole island own my pristine sway!"
She said, and slowly leaves the realm of night,
While the curs'd phantoms praise her droning flight.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Fifth Ode of the First Book of Horace Imitated

Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa.

For whom are now your airs put on,
And what new beauty's doom'd to be undone?
That careless elegance of dress,
This essence that perfumes the wind,
Your ev'ry motion does confess
Some secret conquest is design'd.
Alas! the poor unhappy maid,
To what a train of ills betray'd!
What fears, what pangs shall rend her breast,
How will her eyes dissolve in tears!
That now with glowing joy is bless'd,
Charm'd with the faithless vows she hears.
So the young sailor on the summer sea
Gaily pursues his destin'd way:
Fearless and careless on the deck he stands,
Till sudden storms arise and thunders roll;
In vain he casts his eyes to distant lands,
Distracting terror tears his timorous soul.
For me, secure I view the raging main,
Past are my dangers, and forgot my pain:
My votive tablet in the temple shows
The monument of folly past;
I paid the bounteous god my grateful vows,
Who snatch'd from ruin, sav'd me at the last.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Fourth Ode of the First Book of Horace Imitated

Solvitur acris hyems grata vice veris

Sharp winter now dissolv'd, the linnet sing,
The grateful breath of pleasing Zephyrs bring
The welcome joys of long-desired spring.
The galleys now for open sea prepare,
The herds forsake their stalls for balmy air,
The fields adorn'd with green th'approaching sun declare.
In shining nights the charming Venus leads
Her troop of Graces, and her lovely maids,
Who gaily trip the ground in myrtle shades.
The blazing forge her husband Vulcan heats
And thunderlike the labouring hammer beats,
While toiling Cyclops every stroke repeats.
Of myrtle new the cheerful wreath compose,
Of various flowers which opening spring bestows,
Till coming June presents the blushing rose.
Pay your vow'd offering to God Faunus' bower!
Then, happy Sestius, seize the present hour,
'Tis all that nature leaves to mortal power.
The equal hand of strong impartial Fate
Levels the peasant and th'imperious great,
Nor will that doom on human projects wait.
To the dark mansions of the senseless dead,
With daily steps our destin'd path we tread,
Realms still unknown, of which so much is said.
Ended your schemes of pleasure and of pride,
In joyous feasts no one will there preside,
Torn from your Lycidas' beloved side.
Whose tender youth does now our eyes engage,
And soon will give, in his maturer age,
Sighs to our virgins -- to our matrons rage.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Lady's Resolve

Written on a window, soon after her marriage, 1713.

Whilst thirst of praise and vain desire of fame,
In every age is every woman's aim;
With courtship pleas'd, of silly toasters proud,
Fond of a train, and happy in a crowd;
On each proud fop bestowing some kind glance,
Each conquest owing to some loose advance;
While vain coquets affect to be pursued,
And think they're virtuous, if not grossly lewd:
Let this great maxim be my virtue's guide;
In part she is to blame that has been try'd --
He comes too near, that comes to be deny'd.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Lover: A Ballad

At length, by so much importunity press'd,
Take, C----, at once, the inside of my breast;
This stupid indiff'rence so often you blame,
Is not owing to nature, to fear, or to shame:
I am not as cold as a virgin in lead,
Nor is Sunday's sermon so strong in my head:
I know but too well how time flies along,
That we live but few years, and yet fewer are young.

But I hate to be cheated, and never will buy
Long years of repentance for moments of joy,
Oh! was there a man (but where shall I find
Good sense and good nature so equally join'd?)
Would value his pleasure, contribute to mine;
Not meanly would boast, nor would lewdly design;
Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain,
For I would have the power, tho' not give the pain.

No pedant, yet learned; no rake-helly gay,
Or laughing, because he has nothing to say;
To all my whole sex obliging and free,
Yet never be fond of any but me;
In public preserve the decorum that's just,
And shew in his eyes he is true to his trust;
Then rarely approach, and respectfully bow,
But not fulsomely pert, nor yet foppishly low.

But when the long hours of public are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May ev'ry fond pleasure that moment endear;
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud.
Till lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
And he may be rude, and yet I may forgive.

And that my delight may be solidly fix'd,
Let the friend and the lover be handsomely mix'd;
In whose tender bosom my soul may confide,
Whose kindness can soothe me, whose counsel can guide.
From such a dear lover as here I describe,
No danger should fright me, no millions should bribe;
But till this astonishing creature I know,
As I long have liv'd chaste, I will keep myself so.

I never will share with the wanton coquette,
Or be caught by a vain affectation of wit.
The toasters and songsters may try all their art,
But never shall enter the pass of my heart.
I loath the lewd rake, the dress'd fopling despise:
Before such pursuers the nice virgin flies:
And as Ovid has sweetly in parable told,

We harden like trees, and like rivers grow cold.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Ninth Ode of the Third Book of Horace Imitated

1736. Donec gratus eram tibi.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

Whilst in each of my schemes you most heartily join'd,
And help'd the worst jobs that I ever design'd,
In pamphlets, in ballads, in senate, at table,
Thy satire was witty, thy counsel was able.

WILLIAM PULTENEY.

Whilst with me you divided both profit and care,
And the plunder and glory did equally share;
Assur'd of his place, if my fat friend should die,
The Prince of Wales was not so happy as I.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

Harry Pelham is now my support and delight,
Whom we bubble all day, and we joke on at night;
His head is well furnish'd, his lungs have their merit,
I would venture a rope to advance such a spirit.

WILLIAM PULTENEY.

I too have a Harry more useful than yours,
Writes verses like mad, and will talk you whole hours;
I would bleed by the hatchet, or swing by the cord,
To see him once more in his robes, like a lord.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

But what if this quarrel was kindly made up?
Would you, my dear Willy, accept of a sup?
If the queen should confess, you had long been her choice,
And you knew it was I who had spoke in her voice?

WILLIAM PULTENEY.

Though my Harry's so gay, so polite, and so civil,
You rude as a bear, and more proud than the devil,
I gladly would drop him, and laugh in your ear
At the fools we have made for this last dozen year.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Politicians

In ancient days when every brute
To humble privilege had right;
Could reason, wrangle, or dispute,
As well as scratch, and tear, and bite;
When Phoebus shone his brightest ray,
The rip'ning corn his pow'r confessed;
His cheering beams made Nature gay,
The eagle in his warmth was blest.
But malcontents e'en then arose,
The birds who love the dolesome night
The darkest grove with care they chose,
And there caball'd against the light.
The screech-owl, with ill-boding cry,
Portends strange things, old women say,
Stops ev'ry fool that passes by,
And frights the schoolboy from his play.
The raven and the double bat,
With families of owls combine;
In close consult they rail and chat,
And curse aloud the glorious shine.
While the great planet, all serene,
Heedless pursues his destin'd way,
He asks not what these murmurs mean,
But runs his course, and gives us day.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The Reasons that Induced Dr S to Write a Poem Call'd the Lady's Dressing Room

The Doctor in a clean starch'd band,
His Golden Snuff box in his hand,
With care his Di'mond Ring displays
And Artfull shews its various Rays,
While Grave he stalks down -- -- Street
His dearest Betty -- to meet.
Long had he waited for this Hour,
Nor gain'd Admittance to the Bower,
Had jok'd and punn'd, and swore and writ,
Try'd all his Galantry and Wit,
Had told her oft what part he bore
In Oxford's Schemes in days of yore,
But Bawdy, Politicks nor Satyr
Could move this dull hard hearted Creature.
Jenny her Maid could taste a Rhyme
And greiv'd to see him lose his Time,
Had kindly whisper'd in his Ear,
For twice two pound you enter here,
My lady vows without that Summ
It is in vain you write or come.
The Destin'd Offering now he brought
And in a paradise of thought
With a low Bow approach'd the Dame
Who smileing heard him preach his Flame.
His Gold she takes (such proofes as these
Convince most unbeleiving shees)
And in her trunk rose up to lock it
(Too wise to trust it in her pocket)
And then return'd with Blushing Grace
Expects the Doctor's warm Embrace.
But now this is the proper place
Where morals Stare me in the Face
And for the sake of fine Expression
I'm forc'd to make a small digression.
Alas for wretched Humankind,
With Learning Mad, with wisdom blink!
The Ox thinks he's for Saddle fit
(As long ago Freind Horace writ)
And Men their Talents still mistakeing,
The stutterer fancys his is speaking.
With Admiration oft we see
Hard Features heighten'd by Toupée,
The Beau affects the Politician,
Wit is the citizen's Ambition,
Poor Pope Philosophy displays on
With so much Rhime and little reason,
And thô he argues ne'er so long
That, all is right, his Head is wrong.
None strive to know their proper merit
But strain for Wisdom, Beauty, Spirit,
And lose the Praise that is their due
While they've th'impossible in view.

So have I seen the Injudicious Heir
To add one Window the whole House impair.
Instinct the Hound does better teach
Who never undertook to preach,
The frighted Hare from Dogs does run
But not attempts to bear a Gun.
Here many Noble thoughts occur
But I prolixity abhor,
And will persue th'instructive Tale
To shew the Wise in some things fail.
The Reverend Lover with surprize
Peeps in her Bubbys, and her Eyes,
And kisses both, and trys--and trys.
The Evening in this Hellish Play,
Beside his Guineas thrown away,
Provok'd the Preist to that degree
he swore, the Fault is not in me.
Your damn'd Close stool so near my Nose,
Your Dirty Smock, and Stinking Toes
Would make a Hercules as tame
As any Beau that you can name.
The nymph grown Furious roar'd by God
The blame lyes all in Sixty odd
And scornfull pointing to the door
Cry'd, Fumbler see my Face no more.
With all my Heart I'll go away
But nothing done, I'll nothing pay.
Give back the Money--How, cry'd she,
[I lock'd it in the Trunk stands there
And break it open if you dare.]
Would you palm such a cheat on me!
For poor 4 pound to roar and bellow,
Why sure you want some new Prunella?
[What if your Verses have not sold,
Must therefore I return your Gold?
Perhaps your have no better Luck in
The Knack of Rhyming than of --
I won't give back one single Crown,
To wash your Band, or turn your Gown.]
I'll be reveng'd you saucy Quean
(Replys the disapointed Dean)
I'll so describe your dressing room
The very Irish shall not come.
She answer'd short, I'm glad you'l write,
You'l furnish paper when I shite.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Thursday, the Bassette-Table

CARDELIA.

The bassette-table spread, the tallier come,
Why stays SMILINDA in the dressing-room?
Rise, pensive nymph! the tallier stays for you.

SMILINDA.

Ah ! Madam, since my SHARPER is untrue,
I joyless make my once ador'd alpieu.
I saw him stand behind OMBRELIA's Chair,
And whisper with that soft deluding air,
And those feign'd sighs that cheat the list'ng fair --

CARDELIA.

Is this the cause of your romantic strains ?
A mightier grief my heavy heart sustains.
As you by love, so I by fortune cross'd,
In one bad deal three Septleva's I lost.

SMILINDA.

Is that a grief which you compare with mine ?
With ease the smiles of fortune I resign.
Wou'd all my gold in one bad deal were gone,
Were lovely SHARPFR mine, and mine alone.

CARDELIA.

A lover lost, is but a common care,
And prudent nymphs against the change prepare.
The queen of Clubs thrice lost ! Oh ! who cou'd guess
This fatal stroke this unforeseen distress !

SMILINDA.

See ! BETTY LOVEIT very à propos !
She all the pains of love and play does know,
Deeply experienc'd many years ago.
Dear BETTY shall th' important point decide,
BETTY, who oft the pains of each has try'd :
Impartial, she shall say who suffers most,
By cards, ill-usage, or by lovers lost.

LOVEIT.

Tell, tell your griefs ; attentive will I stay,
Tho' time is precious, and I want some tea.

CARDELIA.

Behold this equipage by MATHERS wrought
With fifty guineas (a great pen'orth !) bought !
See on the tooth-pick MARS and CUPID strive,
And both the struggling figures seem to liue.
Upon the bottom see the Queen's bright face ;
A myrtle foliage round the thimble case ;
JOVE, JOVE himself does on the scissars shine,
The metal and the workmanship divine.

SMILINDA.

This snuff-box once the pledge of SHARPER's love,
When rival beauties for the present strove,
(At CORTICELLI's he the raffle won,
There first his passion was in public shown ;
HAZARDIA blush'd, and turn'd her head aside,
A rival's envy all in vain to hide)
This snuff-box -- on the hinge see diamonds shine ;
This snuff-box will I stake, the prize is mine.

CARDELIA.

Alas ! far lesser losses than I bear,
Have made a soldier sigh, a lover swear :
But oh ! what makes the disappointment hard,
'Twas my own Lord who drew the fatal card ! --
In complaisance I took the Queen he gave,
Tho' my own secret wish was for the Knave :
The Knave won son ecart that I had chose,
And the next pull my septleva I lose.

SMILINDA.

But ah ! what aggravates the killing smart,
The cruel thought that stabs me to the heart,
This curs'd OMBRELIA, this undoing fair,
By whose vile arts this heavy grief I bear,
She, at whose name I shed these spiteful tears,
She owes to me, the very charms she wears :
An aukward thing when first she came to town,
Her shape unfinish'd and her face unknown ;
She was my friend, I taught her first to spread

Upon her sallow cheeks enlivening red,
I introduc'd her to the park and plays,
And by my Interest COSINS made her stays ;
Ungrateful wretch ! with mimick airs grown pert,
She dares to steal my favourite lover's heart.

CARDELIA.

Wretch that I was ! how often have I swore,
When WINNALL tallied, I would punt no more !
I know the bite, yet to my ruin run,
And see the folly which I cannot shun.

SMILINDA.

How many maids have SHARPER's vows deceiv'd !
How many curs'd the moment they believ'd !
Yet, his known falshood could no warning prove :
Ah ! what are warnings to a maid in love !

CARDELIA.

But of what marble must that breast be form'd,
Can gaze on Bassette, and remain unwarm'd ?
When kings, queens, knaves are set in decent rank,
Expos'd in glorious heaps the tempting bank !
Guineas, half-guineas, all the shining train,
The Winner's pleasure and the Loser's pain ;
In bright confusion open rouleaus lie,
They strike the soul, and glitter in the eye ;
Fir'd by the sight, all reason I disdain,
My passions rise, and will not bear the rein :
Look upon Bassette, you who Reason boast,
And see if Reason may not there be lost !

SMILINDA.

What more than marble must that breast compose,
That listens coldly to my SHARPER's vows !
Then when he trembles, when his blushes rise,
When awful Love seems melting in his eyes !
With eager beats his Mechlin cravat moves :
He loves, I whisper to myself, He loves !
Such unfeign'd passion in his look appears,
I lose all mem'ry of my former fears ;
My panting heart confesses all his charms ;
I yield at once, and sink into his arms.
Think of that moment, you who Prudence boast !

For such a moment, Prudence well were lost.

CARDELIA.

At the Groom-porter's, batter'd bullies play ;
Some Dukes at Marybon bowl time away :
But who the bowl or rattling dice compares
To Bassette's heavenly joys and pleasing cares ?

SMILINDA.

Soft SIMPLICETTA doats upon a beau ;
PRUDINA likes a man, and laughs at show :
Their several graces in my SHARPER meet ;
Strong as the footman, as the master sweet.

LOVEIT.

Cease your contention, which has been too long,
I grow impatient, and the tea too strong :
Attend, and yield to what I now decide ;
The equipage shall grace SMILINDA's side ;
The snuff-box to CARDELIA I decree ;
So leave complaining, and begin your tea.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

To a Friend on His Travels

From this vile town, immers'd in smoke and care,
To you who brighten in a purer air,
Your faithful friend conveys her tenderest thought
(Though now perhaps neglected and forgot).
May blooming health your wonted mirth restore,
And every pleasure crown your every hour;
Caress'd, esteem'd, and lov'd, your merit known,
And foreign lands admire you, like your own:
Whilst I in silence various fortunes bear,
Distracted with the rage of bosom-war:
My restless fever tears my changeful brain,
With mix'd ideas of delight and pain;
Sometimes soft views my morning dreams employ
In the faint dawn of visionary joy;
Which rigid reason quickly drives away --
I seek the shade and fly from rising day:
In pleasing madness meet some moment's ease,
And fondly cherish my belov'd disease.
If female weakness melt my woman's mind,
At least no weakness in the choice I find,
Not sooth'd to softness by a warbling flute,
Nor the bought merit of a birthday suit;
Not lost my heart by the surprising skill
In opera tunes, in dancing, or quadrille.
The only charm my inclination moves
Is such a virtue, Heaven itself approves!
A soul superior to each vulgar view,
Great, steady, gentle, generous, and true.
How I regret my trifling hours past,
And look with sorrow oe'r the dreary waste!
In false pursuits and vanity bestow'd,
The perfect image of a dirty road;
Through puddles oft, o'er craggy rocks I stray,
A tiresome dull uncomfortable way:
And after toiling long through thick and thin
To reach some meanly mercenary inn,
The bills are high, and very bad the fare,
I curse the wretched entertainment there:
And, jogging on, resolve to stop no more
Where gaudy signs invite me to the door.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

To Mr. ------

For ever blest be that prolific brain
Which can such stores of images contain!
Thus the charg'd trees, with blooming odours crown'd,
Shed their fair blossoms with profusion round;
So swells the brook with heav'n descended rain,
And flows meand'ring on thirsty plain;
Such various talents were by Heav'n design'd
Too vast a treasure for a single mind),
To please, astonish, and instruct mankind.
With a delight not to be told, I view
Themes long exhausted in your hands grow new;
Past all describing your descriptions are,
So full, so just, so bold, yet regular;
The style so varied that it wants a name,
Which, ever differing, ever is the same;
You raise or calm our passions as you please,
The human heart your powerful pen obeys.
When eager Trasimond pursues the course,
We hear the whip, and see the foaming horse;
With Sophronia we have wept and smil'd,
So soon offended -- sooner reconcil'd.
Go on, great author! that the world may see
How bright, when from pedantic fetters free,
True genius shines, and shines alone in thee.
Give new editions, with a noble scorn
Of insect critics, who'd obscure thy morn;
Neglect their censures, nor thy work delay,
The owls still sicken at the sight of day.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

To the Same

Though old in ill, the traitor sure should find
Some secret sting transfix his guilty mind.
Though bribes or favour may protect his fame,
Or fear restrain invectives on his name;
None 'quits himself -- his own impartial thought
Condemns -- and conscience shall record the fault.
Yet more, my friend! your happy state may bear
This disappointment, as below your care.
For what you have, return to Heav'n your thanks;
Few share the prizes, many draw the blanks.
Of breach of promise loudly you complain,
Have you then known the world so long in vain?
Worse than the iron age, our impious times
Have learn'd to laugh at most flagitious crimes.
Are you to know that 'tis a jest to find
Unthinking honesty pervade the mind?
At best, they say, the man is strangely odd
Who keeps his oath, and can believe a God.
This was the cant when Edward held the throne,
Before Spinoza wrote, or Hobbes was known;
When the gilt Bible was the king's delight,
When prayer preceded day, and hymns the night.
Now softening eunuchs sing Italian airs,
The dancing dame to midnight ball repairs.
Now, if an honest man (like you) I view,
Contemning interest, and to virtue true,
I deem, he deviates from Nature's rules,
Like burning hills, or petrifying pools.
I stand astonish'd at the strange portent,
And think some revolution the event;
As all grave heads were startled, as they heard
That a new comet in the west appear'd;
When from a human mother rabbits sprung,
And Ward his pills like hand-grenadoes flung;
When gratis scattering cures amidst the crowd --
A miracle! as Charteris swears aloud --
A greater miracle I daily see,
The ancient faith of Pius reign in thee.
Observe the wretch, who has that faith forsook,
How clear his voice, and how assur'd his look!
Like innocence, and as serenely bold,
Conscious protection of almighty gold!
While thus he reasons, to relieve his fears:
"Oft I've deceiv'd, yet still have kept my ears.
I have been threat'ned for a broken vow,
And yet successively have laugh'd till now,
And will laugh on, my fortune's not the worse,
When starving cullies rail, or vainly curse."
Shall then the villain 'scape? such knaves as he
Be rich and safe, and from all vengeance free?
Consider, friend, but coolly, and you'll find
Revenge the frailty of a feeble mind;

Nor think he 'scapes though he should never feel
The pangs of poison, or the force of steel.
There is a time when conscience shakes the soul,
When Toland's tenets cannot fear control,
When secret anguish fills the anxious breast,
Vacant from business, nor compos'd by rest;
Then dreams invade, the injur'd gods appear
All arm'd with thunder, and awake his fear;
The wretch will start at every flash that flies,
Grow pale at the first murmur of the skies;
Then, if a fever fires corrupted blood,
In every fit he feels the hand of God.
Trembling, and sunk into the last despair,
He dares not offer one repenting prayer;
For how can hope with desperate guilt agree?
And the worst beast is worthier life than he;
This, at the best, will be his certain fate,
Or Heav'n may sooner think his crimes complete.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Town Eclogues: Monday; Roxana or the Drawing-Room

ROXANA from the court retiring late,
Sigh'd her soft sorrows at St. JAMES's gate:
Such heavy thoughts lay brooding in her breast,
Not her own chairmen |w^th^| more weight opprest;
They groan the cruel load they're doom'd to bear ;
She in these gentler sounds express'd her care.

" Was it for this, that I these Roses wear,
" For this new-set my Jewels for my hair ?
" Ah ! Princess ! with what zeal have I pursu'd !
" Almost forgot the duty of a Prude.
" Thinking I never cou'd attend too soon,
" I've miss'd my prayers, to get me dress'd by noon.
" For Thee, ah ! what for Thee did I resign ?
" My Pleasures, Passions, all that e'er was mine.
" I sacrific'd both Modesty and Ease,
" Left Operas, and went to filthy Plays ;
" Double entendres shock'd my tender ear,
" Yet even this for Thee I chose to bear.
" In glowing youth, when nature bids be gay,
" And ev'ry joy of life before me lay,
" By honour prompted, and by pride restrain'd,
" The pleasures of the young my soul disdain'd :
" Sermons I sought, and with a mien severe
" Censur'd my neighbours, and said daily pray'r.
" Alas ! how chang'd! -- with the same sermon mien
" That once I pray'd, the What-d'ye call't I've seen.
" Ah ! cruel Princess, for thy sake I've lost
" That reputation which so dear had cost :
" I, who avoided ev'ry publick place,
" When bloom, and beauty bid me show my face ;
" Now near Thee constant ev'ry night abide
" With never-failing duty by thy side,
" Myself and daughters standing on a row,
" To all the foreigners a goodly show !
" Oft had your drawing-room been sadly thin,
" And merchants wives close by the chair had been seen ;
" Had not I amply fill'd the empty space,
" And sav'd your Highness from the dire disgrace.

" Yet COQUETILLA's artifice prevails,
" When all my merit and my duty fails :
" That COQUETILLA, whose deluding airs
" Corrupts our virgins, and our youth ensnares ;
" So sunk her character, so lost her fame,
" Scarce visited before your Highness came ;
" Yet for the Bed-chamber 'tis Her you chuse,
" When Zeal and Fame and Virtue you refuse.
" Ah ! worthy choice ! not one of all your train
" Whom censure blasts not, and dishonours stain.
" Let the nice hind now suckle dirty pigs,
" And the proud pea-hen snatch the cuckoo's eggs !

" Let IRIS leave her paint, and own her age,
" And grave SUFFOLKIA wed a giddy page !
" A greater miracle is daily view'd,
" A virtuous Princess with a court so lewd.

" I know thee, Court ! with all thy treach'rous wiles,
" Thy false caresses and undoing smiles !
" Ah ! Princess, learn'd in all the courtly arts
" To cheat our hopes, and yet to gain our hearts.

" Large lovely bribes are the great statesman's aim ;
" And the neglected patriot follows fame.
" The Prince is ogled ; some the King pursue ;
" But your ROXANA only follows YOU.
" Despis'd ROXANA, cease, and try to find
" Some other, since the Princess proves unkind :
" Perhaps it is not hard to find at court
" If not a greater, a more firm support.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Town Eclogues: Saturday; The Small-Pox

FLAVIA.
THE wretched FLAVIA on her couch reclin'd,
Thus breath'd the anguish of a wounded mind ;
A glass revers'd in her right hand she bore,
For now she shun'd the face she sought before.

' How am I chang'd ! alas ! how am I grown
' A frightful spectre, to myself unknown !
' Where's my Complexion ? where the radiant Bloom,
' That promis'd happiness for Years to come ?
' Then with what pleasure I this face survey'd !
' To look once more, my visits oft delay'd !
' Charm'd with the view, a fresher red would rise,
' And a new life shot sparkling from my eyes !

' Ah ! faithless glass, my wonted bloom restore;
' Alas ! I rave, that bloom is now no more !
' The greatest good the GODS on men bestow,
' Ev'n youth itself, to me is useless now.
' There was a time, (oh ! that I could forget !)
' When opera-tickets pour'd before my feet ;
' And at the ring, where brightest beauties shine,
' The earliest cherries of the spring were mine.
' Witness, O Lilly ; and thou, Motteux, tell
' How much Japan these eyes have made ye sell.
' With what contempt ye you saw me oft despise
' The humble offer of the raffled prize ;
' For at the raffle still the prize I bore,
' With scorn rejected, or with triumph wore !
' Now beauty's fled, and presents are no more !

' For me the Patriot has the house forsook,
' And left debates to catch a passing look :
' For me the Soldier has soft verses writ ;
' For me the Beau has aim'd to be a Wit.
' For me the Wit to nonsense was betray'd ;
' The Gamester has for me his dun delay'd,
' And overseen the card, I would have play'd.
' The bold and haughty by success made vain,
' Aw'd by my eyes has trembled to complain:
' The bashful 'squire touch'd by a wish unknown,
' Has dar'd to speak with spirit not his own ;
' Fir'd by one wish, all did alike adore ;
' Now beauty's fled, and lovers are no more!

' As round the room I turn my weeping eyes,
' New unaffected scenes of sorrow rise !
' Far from my sight that killing picture bear,
' The face disfigure, and the canvas tear !
' That picture which with pride I us'd to show,
' The lost resemblance but upbraids me now.
' And thou, my toilette! where I oft have sat,

' While hours unheeded pass'd in deep debate,
' How curls should fall, or where a patch to place :
' If blue or scarlet best became my face;
' Now on some happier nymph thy aid bestow ;
' On fairer heads, ye useless jewels glow !
' No borrow'd lustre can my charms restore ;
' Beauty is fled, and dress is now no more !

' Ye meaner beauties, I permit ye shine ;
' Go, triumph in the hearts that once were mine ;
' But midst your triumphs with confusion know,
' 'Tis to my ruin all your arms ye owe.
' Would pitying Heav'n restore my wonted mien,
' Ye still might move unthought-of and unseen.
' But oh ! how vain, how wretched is the boast
' Of beauty faded, and of empire lost !
' What now is left but weeping, to deplore
' My beauty fled, and empire now no more !

' Ye, cruel Chymists, what with-held your aid !
' Could no pomatums save a trembling maid ?
' How false and trifling is that art you boast ;
' No art can give me back my beauty lost.
' In tears, surrounded by my friends I lay,
' Mask'd o'er and trembled at the sight of day;
' MIRMILLO came my fortune to deplore,
' (A golden headed cane, well carv'd he bore)
' Cordials, he cried, my spirits must restore :
' Beauty is fled, and spirit is no more !

' GALEN, the grave ; officious SQUIRT was there,
' With fruitless grief and unavailing care :
' MACHAON too, the great MACHAON, known
' By his red cloak and his superior frown ;
' And why, he cry'd, this grief and this despair ?
' You shall again be well, again be fair ;
' Believe my oath ; (with that an oath he swore)
' False was his oath ; my beauty is no more !

' Cease, hapless maid, no more thy tale pursue,
' Forsake mankind, and bid the world adieu !
' Monarchs and beauties rule with equal sway ;
' All strive to serve, and glory to obey :
' Alike unpitied when depos'd they grow ;
' Men mock the idol of their former vow.

' Adieu ! ye parks ! -- in some obscure recess,
' Where gentle streams will weep at my distress,
' Where no false friend will in my grief take part,
' And mourn my ruin with a joyful heart ;
' There let me live in some deserted place,
' There hide in shades this lost inglorious face.

' Ye, operas, circles, I no more must view !
' My toilette, patches, all the world adieu!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Town Eclogues: Thursday; the Bassette-Table

SMILINDA and CARDELIA.CARDELIA.
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Why stays SMILINDA in the dressing-room ?
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She owes to me, the very charms she wears :
An aukward thing when first she came to town,
Her shape unfinish'd and her face unknown ;
She was my friend, I taught her first to spread
Upon her sallow cheeks enlivening red,
I introduc'd her to the park and plays,
And by my Interest COSINS made her stays ;
Ungrateful wretch ! with mimick airs grown pert,
She dares to steal my favourite lover's heart.

CARDELIA.

Wretch that I was ! how often have I swore,
When WINNALL tallied, I would punt no more !
I know the bite, yet to my ruin run,
And see the folly which I cannot shun.

SMILINDA.

How many maids have SHARPER's vows deceiv'd !
How many curs'd the moment they believ'd !
Yet, his known falshood could no warning prove :
Ah ! what are warnings to a maid in love !

CARDELIA.

But of what marble must that breast be form'd,
Can gaze on Bassette, and remain unwarm'd ?
When kings, queens, knaves are set in decent rank,
Expos'd in glorious heaps the tempting bank !
Guineas, half-guineas, all the shining train,
The Winner's pleasure and the Loser's pain ;
In bright confusion open rouleaus lie,
They strike the soul, and glitter in the eye ;
Fir'd by the sight, all reason I disdain,
My passions rise, and will not bear the rein :
Look upon Bassette, you who Reason boast,
And see if Reason may not there be lost !

SMILINDA.

What more than marble must that breast compose,
That listens coldly to my SHARPER's vows !
Then when he trembles, when his blushes rise,
When awful Love seems melting in his eyes !
With eager beats his Mechlin cravat moves :
He loves, I whisper to myself, He loves !
Such unfeign'd passion in his look appears,
I lose all mem'ry of my former fears ;
My panting heart confesses all his charms ;
I yield at once, and sink into his arms.
Think of that moment, you who Prudence boast !
For such a moment, Prudence well were lost.

CARDELIA.

At the Groom-porter's, batter'd bullies play ;
Some Dukes at Marybon bowl time away :
But who the bowl or rattling dice compares
To Bassette's heavenly joys and pleasing cares ?

SMILINDA.

Soft SIMPLICETTA doats upon a beau ;
PRUDINA likes a man, and laughs at show :
Their several graces in my SHARPER meet ;
Strong as the footman, as the master sweet.

LOVEIT.

Cease your contention, which has been too long,
I grow impatient, and the tea too strong :
Attend, and yield to what I now decide ;
The equipage shall grace SMILINDA's side ;
The snuff-box to CARDELIA I decree ;
So leave complaining, and begin your tea.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Town Eclogues: Tuesday; St. James's Coffee-House

SILLIANDER and PATCH.
THOU so many favours hast receiv'd,
Wondrous to tell, and hard to be believ'd,
Oh ! H---- D, to my lays attention lend,
Hear how two lovers boastingly contend ;
Like thee successful, such their bloomy youth,
Renown'd alike for gallantry and truth.

St. JAMES's bell had toll'd some wretches in,
(As tatter'd riding-hoods alone could sin)
The happier sinners now their charms put out,
And to their manteaus their complexions suit :
The opera queens had finish'd half their faces,
And city-dames allready taken places ;
Fops of all kinds to see the Lion, run ;
The beauties stay till the first act's begun,
And beaux step home to put fresh linen on.
No well-dress'd youth in coffee-house remain'd,
But pensive PATCH, who on the window lean'd ;
And SILLIANDER, that alert and gay,
First pick'd his teeth, and then began to say.

SILLIANDER.

Why all these sighs ? ah ! why so pensive grown ?
Some cause there is that thus you sit alone.
Does hapless passion all this sorrow move ?
Or dost thou envy where the ladies love ?

PATCH.

If, whom they love, my envy must pursue,
'Tis sure, at least, I never envy You.

SILLIANDER.

No, I'm unhappy, You are in the right,
'Tis You they favour, and 'tis Me they slight.
Yet I could tell, but that I hate to boast,
A club of ladies where 'tis Me they toast.

PATCH.

Toasting does seldom any favour prove ;
Like us, they never toast the thing they love.
A certain Duke one night my health begun ;
With chearful pledges round the room it run,
Till the young SILVIA press'd to drink it too,

Started, and vow'd she knew not what to do :
What, drink a fellow's health ! she dy'd with shame :
Yet blush'd whenever she pronounc'd my name.

SILLIANDER.

Ill fates pursue me, may I never find
The dice propitious, or the ladies kind,
If fair Miss FLIPPY's fan I did not tear,
And one from me she condescends to wear.

PATCH.

Women are always ready to receive ;
'Tis then a favour when the sex will give.
A lady (but she is too great to name)
Beauteous in person, spotless is her fame,
With gentle strugglings let me force this ring ;
Another day may give another thing.

SILLIANDER.

I cou'd say something -- see this billet-doux --
And as for presents -- look upon my shoe --
These buckles were not forc'd, nor half a theft,
But a young Countess fondly made the gift.

PATCH.

My Countess is more nice, more artful too,
Affects to fly that I may fierce pursue :
This snuff-box which I begg'd, she still deny'd,
And when I strove to snatch it, seem'd to hide ;
She laugh'd and fled, and as I sought to seize,
With affectation cramm'd it down her stays :
Yet hop'd she did not place it there unseen,
I press'd her breasts, and pull'd it from between.

SILLIANDER.

Last night, as I stood ogling of her Grace,
Drinking delicious poison from her face,
The soft enchantress did that face decline,
Nor ever rais'd her eyes to meet with mine ;
With sudden art some secret did pretend,
Lean'd cross two chairs to whisper to a friend,
While the stiff whalebone with the motion rose,

And thousand beauties to my sight expose.

PATCH.

Early this morn -- (but I was ask'd to come)
I drank bohea in CÆLIA's dressing-room :
Warm from her bed, to me alone within,
Her night-gown fasten'd with a single pin ;
Her night-cloaths tumbled with resistless grace,
And her bright hair play'd careless round her face ;
Reaching the kettle, made her gown unpin,
She wore no waistcoat, and her shift was thin.

SILLIANDER.

See TITIANA driving to the park,
Hark ! let us follow, 'tis not yet too dark ;
In her all beauties of the spring are seen,
Her cheeks are rosy, and her mantle green.

PATCH.

See, TINTORETTA to the opera goes !
Haste, or the crowd will not permit our bows ;
In her the glory of the heav'ns we view,
Her eyes are star-like, and her mantle blue.

SILLIANDER.

What colour does in CÆLIA's stockings shine ?
Reveal that secret, and the prize is thine.

PATCH.

What are her garters ! tell me if you can ;
I'll freely own thee for the happier man.

Thus PATCH continued his heroic strain,
While SILLIANDER but contends in vain.
After a conquest so important gain'd,
Unrival'd PATCH in ev'ry ruelle reign'd.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Town Eclogues: Wednesday

DANCINDA.
" NO, fair DANCINDA, no ; you strive in vain
" To calm my care and mitigate my pain ;
" If all my sighs, my cares, can fail to move,
" Ah ! sooth me not with fruitless vows of love."

Thus STREPHON spoke. DANCINDA thus reply'd :
`What must I do to gratify your pride ?
`Too well you know (ungrateful as thou art)
`How much you triumph in this tender heart ;
`What proof of love remains for me to grant ?
Yet still you teize me with some new complaint.
Oh ! would to heav'n ! -- but the fond wish is vain --
Too many favours had not made it plain !
But such a passion breaks thro' all disguise,
Love reddens on my cheek and wishes in my eyes.
Is't not enough (inhuman and unkind !)
I own the secret conflict of my mind ?
You cannot know what secret pain I prove,
When I with burning blushes own I love.
You see my artless joy at your approach,
I sigh, I faint, I tremble at your touch ;
And in your absence all the world I shun ;
I hate mankind, and curse the cheering sun.
Still as I fly, ten thousand swains pursue ;
Ten thousand swains I sacrifice to you.
I shew you all my heart without disguise :
But these are tender proofs that you despise --
I see too well what wishes you pursue ;
You wou'd not only conquer, but undo :
You, cruel victor, weary of your flame,
Would seek a cure in my eternal shame ;
And not content my honour to subdue,
Now strive to triumph o'er my virtue too.
Oh ! LOVE, a God indeed to womankind,
Whose arrows burn me and whose fetters bind,
Avenge thy altars, vindicate thy fame,
And blast these traytors that profane thy name,
Who by pretending to thy sacred fire,
Raise cursed trophies to impure desire.

Have you forgot with what ensnaring art
You first seduc'd this fond uncautious heart ?
Then as I fled, did you not kneeling cry,
Turn, cruel beauty ; whither wou'd you fly ?
Why all these Doubts ? why this distrustful fear ?
No impious wishes shall offend your ear :
Nor ever shall my boldest hopes pretend
Above the title of a tender friend ;
Blest, if my lovely Goddess will permit
My humble vow, thus sighing at her feet.

The tyrant Love that in my Bosom reigns,
The God himself submits to wear your chains ;
You shall direct his course, his ardour tame,
And check the fury of his wildest flame.

Unpractis'd youth is easily deceiv'd ;
Sooth'd by such sounds, I listen'd and believ'd :
Now quite forgot that soft submissive fear :
You dare to ask what I must blush to hear.

Cou'd I forget the honour of my race,
And meet your wishes, fearless of disgrace ;
Cou'd passion o'er my tender youth prevail,
And all my mother's pious maxims fail ;
Yet to preserve your heart (which still must be,
False as it is, for ever dear to me)
This fatal proof of love I wou'd not give,
Which you contemn the moment you receive.
The wretched she, who yields to guilty joys
A man may pity, but he must despise.
Your ardour ceas'd, I then shou'd see you shun
The wretched victim by your arts undone.
Yet if I cou'd that cold indifference bear,
What more wou'd strike me with the last despair,
With this reflection wou'd my soul be torn,
To know I merited your cruel scorn.

Has Love no pleasures free from guilt or fear ?
Pleasures less fierce, more lasting, more sincere ?
Thus let us gently kiss and fondly gaze,
Love is a child, and like a child it plays.

O STREPHON, if you wou'd continue just,
If Love be something more than brutal lust,
Forbear to ask what I must still deny,
This bitter pleasure, this destructive joy,
So closely follow'd by the dismal train
Of cutting shame, and guilt's heart-piercing pain.

She paus'd ; and fix'd her eyes upon her fan ;
He took a pinch of snuff, and thus began ;
Madam, if Love -- but he cou'd say no more,
For Mademoiselle came rapping at the door.

The dangerous moments no adieus afford ;
Begone, she cries, I'm sure I hear my Lord.
The lover starts from his unfinish'd loves,
To snatch his hat, and seek his scatter'd gloves :
The sighing dame to meet her dear prepares,
While STREPHON cursing, slips down the back-stairs.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Tuesday, St. James's Coffee-House

SILLIANDER and PATCH.

THOU so many favours hast receiv'd,
Wondrous to tell, and hard to be believ'd,
Oh ! H---- D, to my lays attention lend,
Hear how two lovers boastingly contend ;
Like thee successful, such their bloomy youth,
Renown'd alike for gallantry and truth.

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(As tatter'd riding-hoods alone could sin)
The happier sinners now their charms put out,
And to their manteaus their complexions suit:
The opera queens had finish'd half their faces,
And city-dames allready taken places;
Fops of all kinds to see the Lion, run;
The beauties stay till the first act's begun,
And beaux step home to put fresh linen on.
No well-dress'd youth in coffee-house remain'd,
But pensive PATCH, who on the window lean'd;
And SILLIANDER, that alert and gay,
First pick'd his teeth, and then began to say.

SILLIANDER.

Why all these sighs? ah! why so pensive grown?
Some cause there is that thus you sit alone.
Does is her fame,
With gentle strugglings let me force this ring ;
Another day may give another thing.

SILLIANDER.

I cou'd say something -- see this billet-doux --
And as for presents -- look upon my shoe --
These buckles were not forc'd, nor half a theft,
But a young Countess fondly made the gift.

PATCH.

My Countess is more nice, more artful too,
Affects to fly that I may fierce pursue :
This snuff-box which I begg'd, she still deny'd,
And when I strove to snatch it, seem'd to hide ;
She laugh'd and fled, and as I sought to seize,
With affectation cramm'd it down her stays :
Yet hop'd she did not place it there unseen,
I press'd her breasts, and pull'd it from between.

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Drinking delicious poison from her face,
The soft enchantress did that face decline,
Nor ever rais'd her eyes to meet with mine ;
With sudden art some secret did pretend,
Lean'd cross two chairs to whisper to a friend,
While the stiff whalebone with the motion rose,
And thousand beauties to my sight expose.

PATCH.

Early this morn -- (but I was ask'd to come)
I drank bohea in CÆLIA's dressing-room :
Warm from her bed, to me alone within,
Her night-gown fasten'd with a single pin ;
Her night-cloaths tumbled with resistless grace,
And her bright hair play'd careless round her face ;
Reaching the kettle, made her gown unpin,
She wore no waistcoat, and her shift was thin.

SILLIANDER.

See TITIANA driving to the park,
Hark ! let us follow, 'tis not yet too dark ;
In her all beauties of the spring are seen,
Her cheeks are rosy, and her mantle green.

PATCH.

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Haste, or the crowd will not permit our bows ;
In her the glory of the heav'ns we view,
Her eyes are star-like, and her mantle blue.

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Reveal that secret, and the prize is thine.

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Thus PATCH continued his heroic strain,
While SILLIANDER but contends in vain.
After a conquest so important gain'd,
Unrival'd PATCH in ev'ry ruelle reign'd.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Verses Addressed to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book Of Horace

In two large columns on thy motley page
Where Roman wit is strip'd with English rage;
Where ribaldry to satire makes pretence,
And modern scandal rolls with ancient sense:
Whilst on one side we see how Horace thought,
And on the other how he never wrote;
Who can believe, who view the bad, the good,
That the dull copyist better understood
That spirit he pretends to imitate,
Than heretofore that Greek he did translate?
Thine is just such an image of his pen,
As thou thyself art of the sons of men,
Where our own species in burlesque we trace,
A sign-post likeness of the human race,
That is at once resemblance and disgrace.
Horace can laugh, is delicate, is clear,
You only coarsely rail, or darkly sneer;
His style is elegant, his diction pure,
Whilst none thy crabbed numbers can endure;
Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure.
If he has thorns, they all on roses grow;
Thine like thistles, and mean brambles show;
With this exception, that, though rank the soil,
Weeds as they are, they seem produc'd by toil.
Satire should, like a polish'd razor, keen,
Wound with a touch, that's scarcely felt or seen:
Thine is an oyster-knife, that hacks and hews;
The rage, but not the talent to abuse;
And is in hate, what love is in the stews.
'Tis the gross lust of hate, that still annoys,
Without distinction, as gross love enjoys:
Neither to folly, nor to vice confin'd,
The object of thy spleen is humankind:
It preys on all who yield, or who resist:
To thee 'tis provocation to exist.

But if thou seest a great and generous heart,
Thy bow is doubly bent to force a dart.
Nor dignity nor innocence is spar'd,
Nor age, nor sex, nor thrones, nor graves, rever'd.
Nor only justice vainly we demand,
But even benefits can't rein thy hand;
To this or that alike in vain we trust,
Nor find thee less ungrateful than unjust.
Not even youth and beauty can control
The universal rancour of thy soul;
Charms that might soften superstition's rage,
Might humble pride, or thaw the ice of age.
But how should'st thou by beauty's force be mov'd,
No more for loving made than to be lov'd?
It was the equity of righteous Heav'n,
That such a soul to such a form was giv'n;

And shows the uniformity of fate,
That one so odious should be born to hate.
When God created thee, one would believe
He said the same as to the snake of Eve;
To human race antipathy declare,
'Twixt them and thee be everlasting war.
But oh! the sequel of the sentence dread,
And whilst you bruise their heel, beware your head.
Nor think thy weakness shall be thy defence,
The female scold's protection in offence.
Sure 'tis as fair to beat who cannot fight,
As 'tis to libel those who cannot write.
And if thou draw'st thy pen to aid the law,
Others a cudgel, or a rod, may draw.
If none with vengeance yet thy crimes pursue,
Or give thy manifold affronts their due;
If limbs unbroken, skin without a stain,
Unwhipt, unblanketed, unkick'd, unslain,
That wretched little carcase you retain,
The reason is, not that the world wants eyes,
But thou'rt so mean, they see, and they despise:
When fretful porcupine, with ranc'rous will,
From mounted back shoots forth a harmless quill,
Cool the spectators stand; and all the while
Upon the angry little monster smile.
Thus 'tis with thee: -- while impotently safe,
You strike unwounding, we unhurt can laugh.
Who but must laugh, this bully when he sees,
A puny insect shiv'ring at a breeze?
One over-match'd by every blast of wind,
Insulting and provoking all mankind.
Is this the thing to keep mankind in awe,
To make those tremble who escape the law?
Is this the ridicule to live so long,
The deathless satire and immortal song?
No: like the self-blown praise, thy scandal flies;
And, as we're told of wasps, it stings and dies.
If none do yet return th'intended blow,
You all your safety to your dulness owe:
But whilst that armour thy poor corse defends,
'Twill make thy readers few, as are thy friends:
Those, who thy nature loath'd, yet lov'd thy art,
Who lik'd thy head, and yet abhorr'd thy heart:
Chose thee to read, but never to converse,
And scorn'd in prose him whom they priz'd in verse
Ev'n they shall now their partial error see,
Shall shun thy writings like thy company;
And to thy books shall ope their eyes no more
Than to thy person they would do their door.
Nor thou the justice of the world disown,
That leaves thee thus an outcast and alone;
For though in law to murder be to kill,

In equity the murder's in the will:
Then whilst with coward-hand you stab a name,
And try at least t'assassinate our fame,
Like the first bold assassin's be thy lot,
Ne'er be thy guilt forgiven, or forgot;
But, as thou hat'st be hated by mankind,
And with the emblem of thy crooked mind
Mark'd on thy back, like Cain by God's own hand,
Wander, like him, accursed through the land.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Verses Written in a Garden

See how the pair of billing doves
With open murmurs own their loves;
And, heedless of censorious eyes,
Pursue their unpolluted joys;
No fears of future want molest
The downy quiet of their nest:
No int'rest join'd the happy pair,
Securely blest in Nature's care,
While her dictates they pursue;
For constancy is Nature too.
Can all the doctrine of the schools,
Our maxims, our religious rules,
Can learning to our lives ensure,
Virtue so bright, or bliss so pure?

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Wednesday, the Tête à Tête

DANCINDA.

"NO, fair DANCINDA, no; you strive in vain
"To calm my care and mitigate my pain ;
"If all my sighs, my cares, can fail to move,
"Ah! sooth me not with fruitless vows of love."

Thus STREPHON spoke. DANCINDA thus reply'd :
`What must I do to gratify your pride?
`Too well you know (ungrateful as thou art)
`How much you triumph in this tender heart;
`What proof of love remains for me to grant?
Yet still you teize me with some new complaint.
Oh ! would to heav'n ! -- but the fond wish is vain --
Too many favours had not made it plain !
But such a passion breaks thro' all disguise,
Love reddens on my cheek and wishes in my eyes.
Is't not enough (inhuman and unkind !)
I own the secret conflict of my mind ?
You cannot know what secret pain I prove,
When I with burning blushes own I love.
You see my artless joy at your approach,
I sigh, I faint, I tremble at your touch ;
And in your absence all the world I shun ;
I hate mankind, and curse the cheering sun.
Still as I fly, ten thousand swains pursue ;
Ten thousand swains I sacrifice to you.
I shew you all my heart without disguise :
But these are tender proofs that you despise --
I see too well what wishes you pursue ;
You wou'd not only conquer, but undo :
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Would seek a cure in my eternal shame ;
And not content my honour to subdue,
Now strive to triumph o'er my virtue too.
Oh ! LOVE, a God indeed to womankind,
Whose arrows burn me and whose fetters bind,
Avenge thy altars, vindicate thy fame,
And blast these traytors that profane thy name,
Who by pretending to thy sacred fire,
Raise cursed trophies to impure desire.

Have you forgot with what ensnaring art
You first seduc'd this fond uncautious heart ?
Then as I fled, did you not kneeling cry,
Turn, cruel beauty ; whither wou'd you fly ?
Why all these Doubts ? why this distrustful fear ?
No impious wishes shall offend your ear :
Nor ever shall my boldest hopes pretend
Above the title of a tender friend ;
Blest, if my lovely Goddess will permit
My humble vow, thus sighing at her feet.

The tyrant Love that in my Bosom reigns,
The God himself submits to wear your chains ;
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And check the fury of his wildest flame.

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Sooth'd by such sounds, I listen'd and believ'd :
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Cou'd I forget the honour of my race,
And meet your wishes, fearless of disgrace ;
Cou'd passion o'er my tender youth prevail,
And all my mother's pious maxims fail ;
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False as it is, for ever dear to me)
This fatal proof of love I wou'd not give,
Which you contemn the moment you receive.
The wretched she, who yields to guilty joys
A man may pity, but he must despise.
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Love is a child, and like a child it plays.

O STREPHON, if you wou'd continue just,
If Love be something more than brutal lust,
Forbear to ask what I must still deny,
This bitter pleasure, this destructive joy,
So closely follow'd by the dismal train
Of cutting shame, and guilt's heart-piercing pain.

She paus'd ; and fix'd her eyes upon her fan ;
He took a pinch of snuff, and thus began ;
Madam, if Love -- but he cou'd say no more,
For Mademoiselle came rapping at the door.

The dangerous moments no adieus afford ;
Begone, she cries, I'm sure I hear my Lord.
The lover starts from his unfinish'd loves,
To snatch his hat, and seek his scatter'd gloves :
The sighing dame to meet her dear prepares,
While STREPHON cursing, slips down the back-stairs.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Written at Lovere, 1755

Wisdom, slow product of laborious years,
The only fruit that life's cold winter bears;
Thy sacred seeds in vain in youth we lay,
By the fierce storm of passion torn away.
Should some remain in a rich gen'rous soil,
They long lie hid, and must be rais'd with toil;
Faintly they struggle with inclement skies,
No sooner born than the poor planter dies.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Written at Lovere, October, 1736

If age and sickness, poverty and pain,
Should each assault me with alternate plagues,
I know mankind is destin'd to complain,
And I submit to torment and fatigues.
The pious farmer, who ne'er misses pray'rs,
With patience suffers unexpected rain;
He blesses Heav'n for what its bounty spares,
And sees, resign'd, a crop of blighted grain.
But, spite of sermons, farmers would blaspheme,
If a star fell to set their thatch on flame.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu