

Classic Poetry Series

Sir George Etherege
- poems -

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Sir George Etherege(1635-1691)

Sir George Etherege (1635- 10 May 1692,) was an English dramatist. He wrote the plays *The Comical Revenge or, Love in a Tub* in 1664, *She Would if She Could* in 1668, and *The Man of Mode or, Sir Fopling Flutter* in 1676.

George Etherege was born in Maidenhead, Berkshire, around 1636, to George Etherege and Mary Powney, as the eldest of six children. Educated at Lord Williams's School where a school building was later named after him, he was also rumored to have been educated at Cambridge as well; however, John Dennis assures that to his certain knowledge he understood neither Greek nor Latin, thus raising doubts that he could hardly have been there. He served as apprentice to a lawyer and later studied law at Clement's Inn, London, one of the Inns of Chancery. He probably travelled abroad to France with his father who stayed with the exiled queen Henrietta Maria. It is possible that he witnessed in Paris the performances of some of Molière's earliest comedies; and he is thought, from an allusion in one of his plays, to have been personally acquainted with Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy.

A Drinking Song

The pleasures of Love and the joys of good Wine,
To perfect our happiness, wisely we join!

We, to Beauty, all day.

Give the sovereign sway;
And her favourite Nymphs devoutly obey!
At the Plays, we are constantly making our Court;
And when they are ended, we follow the sport

To the Mall, and the Park;

Where we love till 'tis dark!

Then, sparkling Champagne

Puts an end to their reign.

It quickly recovers

Poor languishing Lovers!
Makes us frolic and gay; and drowns all our sorrow!
But, alas! we relapse again on the morrow!

Let every man stand

With his Glass in his hand;
And briskly discharge, at the word of command!

Here 's a Health to all those,

Whom, to-night, we depose!
Wine and Beauty, by turns, great souls should inspire!
Present all together! and now, boys, give fire!

Sir George Etherege

Song

LADIES, though to your conquering eyes
Love owes his chiefest victories,
And borrows those bright arms from you
With which he does the world subdue,
Yet you yourselves are not above
The empire nor the griefs of love.

Then rack not lovers with disdain,
Lest Love on you revenge their pain:
You are not free because you're fair:
The Boy did not his Mother spare.
Beauty 's but an offensive dart:
It is no armour for the heart.

Sir George Etherege

Song From Love In A Tub

If she be not as kind as fair,
But peevish and unhandy,
Leave her, she's only worth the care
Of some spruce Jack-a-dandy.
I would not have thee such an ass,
Hadst thou ne'er so much leisure,
To sigh and whine for such a lass
Whose pride's above her pleasure.

Sir George Etherege

To A Very Young Lady

Sweetest bud of beauty, may
No untimely frost decay
Th' early glories which we trace
Blooming in thy matchless face:
But kindly opening, like the rose,
Fresh beauties every day disclose,
Such as by Nature are not shown
In all the blossoms she has blown:
And then, what conquest shall you make,
Who hearts already daily take!
Scorch'd in the morning with thy beams,
How shall we bear those sad extremes
Which must attend thy threat'ning eyes
When thou shalt to thy noon arise?

Sir George Etherege