Classic Poetry Series

Thomas Flatman

- poems -

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Advice To An Old Man of Sixty Three About To Marry a Girle of Sixteen

Now fie upon him! what is Man,
Whose life at best is but a span?
When to an inch it dwindles down,
Ice in his bones, snow on his Crown,
That he within his crazy brain,
Kind thoughts of Love should entertain,
That he, when Harvest comes should plow
And when 'tis time to reap, go sowe,
Who in imagination only strong,
Tho' twice a Child, can never twice grow young

II.

Nature did those design for Fools,
That sue for work, yet have no tools.
What fellow feeling can there be
In such a strange disparity?
Old age mistakes the youthful breast,
Love dwels not there, but interest:
Alas Good Man! take thy repose,
Get ribband for thy thumbs, and toes,
Provide thee flannel, and a sheet of lead,
Think on thy Coffin, not thy bridal bed.

Thomas Flatman

The Batchelors Song

Like a Dog with a bottle, fast ti'd to his tail,
Like Vermin in a trap, or a Thief in a Jail,
Or like a Tory in a Bog,
Or an Ape with a Clog:
Such is the man, who when he might go free,
Does his liberty loose,
For a Matrimony noose,
And sels himself into Captivity;
The Dog he do's howl, when his bottle do's jog,
The Vermin, the Theif, and the Tory in vain
Of the trap, of the Jail, of the Quagmire complain.
But welfare poor Pug! for he playes with his Clog;
And tho' he would be rid on't rather than his life,
Yet he lugg's it, and he hug's it, as a man does his wife.

Thomas Flatman

The Sad Day

O THE sad day!
When friends shall shake their heads, and say
Of miserable me--
'Hark, how he groans!
Look, how he pants for breath!
See how he struggles with the pangs of death!'
When they shall say of these dear eyes--
'How hollow, O how dim they be!
Mark how his breast doth rise and swell
Against his potent enemy!'
When some old friend shall step to my bedside,
Touch my chill face, and thence shall gently slide.

But--when his next companions say
'How does he do? What hopes?'--shall turn away,
Answering only, with a lift-up hand--
'Who can his fate withstand?'

Then shall a gasp or two do more
Than e'er my rhetoric could before:
Persuade the world to trouble me no more!

Thomas Flatman