Classic Poetry Series

John Oldham
- poems -

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John Oldham was an English satirical poet and translator.

**Life and Work**

Oldham was born in Shipton Moyne, Gloucestershire, the son of John Oldham, a non-conformist minister, and grandson of John Oldham the staunch anti-papist rector of Shipton Moyne and before that of Long Newton in Wiltshire. He was educated first at Tetbury grammar school, then at St. Edmund Hall at the University of Oxford, where the Principal was Thomas Tully, an ex-headmaster from Oldham's school at Tetbury. Tully was "a person of severe morals, puritanically inclined and a struict Calvinist."

Oldham received a B. A. degree in May 1674. He became an usher at the Whitgift School in Croydon, Surrey (now in Greater London), a position that was poorly paid, monotonous and left little time for him to compose poetry; his discontent at the time was expressed in these lines from one of his satires - "To a friend about to leave University":

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But who would be to the vile drudgery bound
Where there so small encouragement is found?
Where you for recompense for all your pains,
Shall hardly reach a common fiddler's gains?
For when you've toiled and laboured all you can,
To dung and cultivate a barren brain,
A Dancing-Master shall be better paid,
Tho' he instructs the Heels and you the Head."
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By then, his poetry had already been published, since he received an unexpected visit at the school from an illustrious party including the Earl of Rochester, Charles Sedley and the Earl of Dorset (part of the "merry gang", as Andrew Marvell called them), who wished to express their appreciation of his work.

He left the Whitgift school in 1678 and took up the post of tutor to the grandsons of a retired Judge, Sir Edward Thurland, in the vicinity of Reigate in Surrey. It was during this period that he composed and had published his satires against the Jesuits at a time when popular anger was being stirred up against Catholics in England by the "Popish plot". In 1680, he became, for a short time, tutor to the son of Sir William Hicks, through whom he made the acquaintance of the notable physicain Dr. Richard Lower. Under his influence he took up the study of medicine for a year before returning to his poetic muse.
Oldham settled in London and was introduced to John Dryden, with whom he became close friends. He entered fashionable society (said to be centred around Will's Coffee House), and was approached by the Earl of Kingston-upon-Hull to be a private chaplain to his household. Oldham turned down the post but did accept the hospitality of the Earl at his seat at Holme Pierrepont Hall in Nottinghamshire.

It was here that he died of smallpox, on 9 December 1683, aged only 30 (he may also have suffered from Tuberculosis during his lifetime). The Earl of Kingston-upon-Hull had a monument, possibly designed by Grinling Gibbons, erected over Oldham's grave in St. Edmund's Church in Holme Pierrepont. John Dryden wrote an elegy on his death.

Oldham was a satirist who imitated the classical satires of Juvenal. His best-known works are A Satire Upon a Woman Who by Her Falsehood and Scorn Was the Death of My Friend, written in 1678 and A Satire against Virtue, written in 1679. During his lifetime, his poetry was published anonymously. His translations of Juvenal were published after his death.

John Dryden was one of Oldham's admirers; upon Oldham's death, Dryden expressed his admiration in To the Memory of Mr. Oldham.

<b>Style</b>

Although regarded as a vigorous and passionate satirist, Oldham is often regarded as having been hampered by a poor ear for rhyme and rhythm. As Robinson (1980) has pointed out, however, "Oldham chose the rugged style of most of his satires: it was not imposed upon him by incapacity or carelessness."
A Quiet Soul

Thy soul within such silent pomp did keep,
As if humanity were lull'd asleep;
So gentle was thy pilgrimage beneath,
Time's unheard feet scarce make less noise,
Or the soft journey which a planet goes:
Life seem'd all calm as its last breath.
A still tranquillity so hush'd thy breast,
As if some Halcyon were its guest,
And there had built her nest;
It hardly now enjoys a greater rest.

John Oldham
1Though much concern'd to leave my dear old friend,
2I must however his design commend
3Of fixing in the country: for were I
4As free to choose my residence, as he;
5The Peak, the Fens, the Hundreds, or Land's End,
6I would prefer to Fleet Street, or the Strand.
7What place so desert, and so wild is there
8Whose inconveniences one would not bear,
9Rather than the alarms of midnight fire,
10The falls of houses, knavery of cits,
11The plots of factions, and the noise of wits,
12And thousand other plagues, which up and down
13Each day and hour infest the cursed town?
14As fate would hav't, on the appointed day
15Of parting hence, I met him on the way,
16Hard by Mile End, the place so fam'd of late,
17In prose, and verse for the great faction's treat;
18Here we stood still, and after compliments
19Of course, and wishing his good journey hence
20I ask'd what sudden causes made him fly
21The once lov'd town, and his dear company:
22When, on the hated prospect looking back,
23Thus with just rage the good old Timon spake.
24'Since virtue here in no repute is had,
25Since worth is scorn'd, learning and sense unpaid,
26And knavery the only thriving trade;
27Finding my slender fortune ev'ry day
28Dwindle, and waste insensibly away,
29I, like a losing gamester, thus retreat,
30To manage wiser my last stake of fate:
31While I have strength, and want no staff to prop
32My tott'ring limbs, ere age has made me stoop
33Beneath its weight, ere all my thread be spun,
34And life has yet in store some sands to run,
35'Tis my resolve to quit the nauseous town.
36Let thriving Morecraft choose his dwelling there,
37Rich with the spoils of some young spendthrift heir:
38Let the plot-mongers stay behind, whose art
39Can truth to sham, and sham to truth convert:
40 Whoever has an house to build, or set
41 His wife, his conscience, or his oath to let:
42 Whoever has, or hopes for offices,
43 A Navy, Guard, or Custom-house's place:
44 Let sharping courtiers stay, who there are great
45 By putting the false dice on King, and state.
46 Where they, who once were grooms, and foot-boys known,
47 Are now to fair estates, and honours grown;
48 Nor need we envy them, or wonder much
49 At their fantastic greatness, since they're such,
50 Whom Fortune oft, in her capricious freaks,
51 Is pleas'd to raise from kennels, and the jakes,
52 To wealth, and dignity above the rest,
53 When she is frolic, and dispos'd to jest.
54 'I live in London? What should I do there?
55 I cannot lie, nor flatter, nor forswear:
56 I can't commend a book, or piece of wit,
57 (Though a lord were the author) dully writ:
58 I'm no Sir Syrophel to read the stars,
59 And cast nativities for longing heirs,
60 When fathers shall dropp off: no Gadbury
61 To tell the minute when the King shall die,
62 And you know what-come in: nor can I steer,
63 And tack about my conscience, whensoe'er,
64 To a new point, I see religion veer.
65 Let others pimp to courtiers' lechery,
66 I'll draw no City-cuckold's curse on me:
67 Nor would I do it, though to be made great,
68 And rais'd to the chief ministry of state.
69 Therefore, I think it fit to rid the town
70 Of one, that is an useless member grown.
71 'Besides, who has pretence to favour now,
72 But he, who hidden villainy does know,
73 Whose breast does with some burning secret glow?
74 By none thou shalt preferred, or valued be,
75 That trusts thee with an honest secrecy:
76 He only may to great men's friendship reach,
77 Who great men, when he pleases, can impeach.
78 Let others thus aspire to dignity;
79 For me, I'd not their envied grandeur buy
80 For all th' Exchange is worth, that Paul's will cost,
81 Or was of late in the Scotch voyage lost.
What would it boot, if I, to gain my end,
Forego my quiet, and my ease of mind,
Still fear'd, at last betray'd, by my dear friend?

'Another cause, which I must boldly own,
And not the least, for which I quit the town,
Is to behold it made the common shore,
Where France does all her filth, and ordure pour:
What spark of true old English rage can bear
Those, who were slaves at home, to lord it here?
We've all our fashion, language, compliments,
Our music, dances, curing, cooking thence:
And we shall have their pois'ning too ere long,
If still in the improvement we go on.

What would'st thou say, great Harry, should'st thou view
Thy gaudy, flutt'ring race of English now,
Their tawdry cloths, pulvilios, essences,
Their Chedreux perukes, and those vanities,
Which thou, and they of old, did so despise?
What would'st thou say to see th' infected town
With the foul spawn of foreigners o'errun?
Hither from Paris, and all parts they come,
The spew, and vomit of their jails at home;
To Court they flock, and to St. James his Square,
And wriggle into great men's service there:
Footboys at first, till they from wiping shoes,
Grow, by degrees, the masters of the house:
Ready of wit, harden'd of impudence,
Able with ease to put down either Haines,
Both the King's player, and king's evidence:
Flippant of talk, and voluble of tongue,
With words at will, no lawyer better hung:
Softer than flattering Court-parasite,
Or City trader, when he means to cheat,
No calling, or profession comes amiss:
A needy Monsieur can be what he please,
Groom, page, valet, quack, operator, fencer,
Perfumer, pimp, jack-pudding, juggler, dancer:
Give but the word, the cur will fetch and bring,
Come over to the Emperor, or King:
Or, if you please, fly o'er the pyramid,
Which Aston and the rest in vain have tried.

'Can I have patience, and endure to see
The paltry foreign wretch take place of me,
Whom the same wind, and vessel brought ashore,
That brought prohibited goods, and dildoes o'er?
Then, pray, what mighty privilege is there
For me, that at my birth drew English air?
And where's the benefit to have my veins
Run British blood, if there's no difference
'Twixt me, and him, the statute freedom gave,
And made a subject of a true-born slave?
'But nothing shocks, and is more loath'd by me,
Than the vile rascal's fulsome flattery:
By help of this false magnifying glass,
A louse, or flea, shall for a camel pass:
Produce an hideous wight, more ugly far
Than those ill shapes, which in old hangings are,
He'll make him straight a beau garçon appear:
Commend his voice, and singing, though he bray
Worse than Sir Martin Mar-all in the play:
And if he rhyme, shall praise for standard wit,
More scurvy sense than Prynne, and Vickars writ.
'And here's the mischief, though we say the same,
He is believ'd, and we are thought to sham:
Do you but smile, immediately the beast
Laughs out aloud, though he ne'er heard the jest;
Pretend you're sad, he's presently in tears,
Yet grieves no more than marble, when it wears
Sorrow in metaphor: but speak of heat;
O God! How sultry 'tis!' he'll cry, and sweat
In depth of winter: strait, if you complain
Of cold; the weather-glass is sunk again:
Then he'll call for his frieze-campaign, and swear,
'Tis beyond eighty, he's in Greenland here,
Thus he shifts scenes, and oft'ner in a day
Can change his face, than actors at a play,
There's nought so mean can 'scape the flatt'ring sot,
Not his Lord's snuff-box, nor his powder-spot:
If he but spit, or pick his teeth; he'll cry,
How every thing becomes you! let me die,
Your Lordship does it most judiciously:'
And swear, 'tis fashionable, if he sneeze,
Extremely taking, and it needs must please.
'Besides, there's nothing sacred, nothing free
From the hot satyr's rampant lechery;
Nor wife, not virgin-daughter can escape,
Scarce thou thy self, or son avoid a rape:
All must go padlock'd: if nought else there be,
Suspect thy very stable's chastity.
By this the vermin into secrets creep,
Thus, families in awe they strive to keep,
What living for an Englishman, is there,
Where such as these get head, and domineer,
Whose use, and custom 'tis, never to share
A friend, but love to reign, without dispute,
Without a rival, full and absolute?
Soon as the insect gets his honour's ear,
And fly-blows some of 's pois'nous malice there,
Strait I'm turn'd off, kick'd out of doors, discarded,
And all my former service disregarded.
But leaving these Messieurs, for fear that I
Be thought of the silk-weavers' mutiny,
From the loath'd subject let us hasten on,
To mention other grievances in town:
And further, what respect at all is had
Of poor men here? and how's their service paid,
Though they be ne'er so diligent to wait,
To sneak, and dance attendance on the great?
No mark of favour is to be obtain'd
By one, that sues, and brings an empty hand:
And all his merit is but made a sport,
Unless he glut some cormorant at Court.
"Tis now a common thing, and usual here,
To see the son of some rich usurer
Take place of nobles, keep his first-rate whore,
And for a vaulting-bout or two give more
Than a Guard-captain's pay: meanwhile the breed
Of peers, reduced to poverty, and need,
Are fain to trudge to the Bankside, and there
Take up with porter's leavings, suburb-ware,
There spend that blood, which their great ancestor
So nobly shed at Cressy heretofore,
At brothel-fights in some foul common shore.
'Produce an evidence, though just he be,
As righteous Job, or Abraham, or he,
Whom Heaven, when whole nature shipwreck'd was,
Thought worth the saving, of all human race;
Or t'other, who the flaming deluge scap'd,
When Sodom's lechers angels would have rap'd;
'How rich he is,' must the first question be,
Next, for his manners and integrity:
They'll ask, 'what equipage he keeps, and what
He's reckon'd worth, in money, and estate,
For Shrieve how oft he has been known to fine,
And with how many dishes he does dine,'
You look what cash a person has in store,
Just so much credit has he, and no more:
Should I upon a thousand Bibles swear,
And call each saint throughout the calendar
To vouch my oath, it won't be taken here;
The poor slight Heav'n, and thunderbolts (they think),
And Heav'n itself does at such trifles wink.
'Besides, what store of gibing scoffs are thrown
On one, that's poor, and meanly clad in town;
If his apparel seem but overworn,
His stockings out at heel, or breeches torn?
One takes occasion his ripp'd shoe to flout,
And swears 't has been at prison-grates hung out:
Another shrewdly jeers his coarse cravat,
Because himself wears point: a third, his hat,
And most unmercifully shows his wit,
If it be old, and does not cock aright:
Nothing in poverty so ill is borne,
As its exposing men to grinning scorn,
To be by tawdry coxcombs piss'd upon
And made the jesting-stock of each buffoon,
'Turn out there, friend! (cries one at church) 'the pew
Is not for such mean scoundrel curs, as you:
'Tis for your betters kept:' belike some sot
That knew no father, was on bulks begot:
But now is rais'd to an estate, and pride,
Having the kind proverb on his side:
Let Gripe and Cheatwell take their places there,
And Dash the scriv'ner's gaudy sparkish heir,
That wears three ruin'd orphans on his back:
Meanwhile you in the alley stand, and sneak:
And you therewith must rest contented, since
Almighty wealth does put such difference.
What citizen a son-in-law will take,
Bred ne'er so well, that can't a jointure make?
What man of sense, that's poor, e'er summon'd is
Among the Common Council to advise?
At vestry-consults, when he does he appear
For choosing of some parish officer,
Or making leather-buckets for the choir?
"Tis hard for any man to rise, that feels
His virtue clogg'd with poverty at heels:
But harder 'tis by much in London, where
A sorry lodging, coarse, and slender fare,
Fire, water, breathing, every thing is dear:
Yet such as these an earthen dish disdain,
With which their ancestors, in Edgar's reign,
Were serv'd, and thought it no disgrace to dine,
Though they were rich, had store of leather-coin.
Low as their fortune is, yet they despise
A man that walks the streets in homely frieze:
To speak the truth, great part of England now
In their own cloth, will scarce vouchsafe to go:
Only the statute's penalty to save,
Some few perhaps wear woollen in the grave.
Here all go gaily dress'd, although it be
Above their means, their rank, and quality:
The most in borrow'd gallantry, are clad,
For which the tradesman's books are still unpaid:
This fault is common in the meaner sort,
That they must needs affect to bear the port
Of gentlemen, though they want income for't.
'Sir, to be short, in this expensive town
There's nothing without money to be done:
What will you give to be admitted there,
And brought to speech of some Court-minister?
What will you give to have the quarter-face,
The squint and nodding and go-by of his Grace?
His porter, groom, and steward, must have fees,
And you may see the tombs, the Tow'r for less:
Hard fate of suitors! who must pay, and pray
To livery-slaves, yet oft go scorn'd away.
'Whoe'er at Barnet, or St. Albans fears
To have his lodging dropp about his ears,
Or such a wind as blew old Noll to Hell?
Here we build slight, what scarce outlasts the lease,
Without the help of props, and buttresses:
And houses nowadays as much require
To be insur'd from falling, as from fire.

There buildings are substantial, though less neat,
And kept with care both wind-, and water-tight:
There you in safe security are blest,
And nought, but conscience to disturb your rest.

'I am for living where no fires affright,
No bells rung backward break my sleep at night:
I scarce lie down, and draw my curtains here,
But strait I'm rous'd by the next house on fire:
Pale, and half dead with fear, myself I raise,
And find my room all over in a blaze;
By this 't has seiz'd on the third stairs, and I
Can now discern no other remedy,
But leaping out at window to get free:
For if the mischief from the cellar came,
Be sure the garret is the last, takes flame.

'The moveables of Pordage were a bed
For him, and 's wife: a piss-pot by its side,
Looking-glass upon the cupboard's head,
Comb-case, candlestick, and pewter-spoon,
For want of plate, with desk to write upon:
A box without a lid serv'd to contain
Few authors, which made up his Vatican:
And there his own immortal works were laid,
On which the barb'rous mice for hunger prey'd:
Pordage had nothing, all the world does know;
And yet should he have lost this nothing too,
No one the wretched bard would have supplied
With lodging, house-room, or a crust of bread.

'But if the fire burn down some great man's house
All strait are interested in the loss:
The Court is strait in mourning sure enough,
The Act, Commencement, and the Term put off:
Then we mischances of the town lament,
And fasts are kept, like judgments to prevent.
Out comes a brief immediately, with speed
To gather charity as far as Tweed.
Nay, while 'tis burning, some will send him in
Timber, and stone to build his house again:
Others choice furniture: here some rare piece
Of Rubens, or Vandyke presented is:
There a rich suit of Mortlack tapestry,
A bed of damask, or embroidery:
One gives a fine scritoire, or cabinet,
Another a huge massy dish of plate,
Or bag of gold; thus he, at length, gets more
By kind misfortune than he had before:
And all suspect it for a laid design,
As if he did himself the fire begin.

'Could you but be advis'd to leave the town,
And from dear plays, and drinking friends be drawn,
An handsome dwelling might be had in Kent,
Surrey, or Essex, at a cheaper rent
Than what you're forc'd to give for one half-year
To lie, like lumber, in a garret here:
A garden there, and well, that needs no rope,
Engine, or pains to crane its waters up:
Water is there, through nature's pipes convey'd,
For which, no custom, nor excise is paid:
Had I the smallest spot of ground, which scarce
Would summer half-a-dozen grasshoppers,
Though hence remote, I would go to 't,
Dwell there content, and thank the fates to boot.

'Here, want of rest a-nights more people kills
Than all the College, and the weekly bills:
Where none have privilege to sleep, but those,
Whose purses can compound for their repose:
In vain I go to bed, or close my eyes,
Methinks the place the middle region is,
Where I lie down in storms, in thunder rise:
The restless bells such din in steeples keep,
That scarce the dead can in their churchyards sleep:
Huzza's of drunkards, bellmen's midnight rhymes,
The noise of shops, with hawkers' early screams,
Besides the brawls of coachmen, when they meet,
And stop in turnings of a narrow street,
Such a loud medley of confusion makes,
As drowsy Archer on the bench would wake.

If you walk out in bus'ness ne'er so great,
Ten thousand stops you must expect to meet:
Thick crowds in ev'ry place you must charge through
And storm your passage, wheresoe'er you go:
While tides of followers behind you throng,
And pressing on your heels, shove you along:
One, with a board, or rafter hits your head,
Another, with his elbow bores your side;
Some tread upon your corns, perhaps in sport,
Meanwhile your legs are cas'd all o'er with dirt.
Here you the march of a slow funeral wait,
Advancing to the church with solemn state:
There a sedan, and lackeys stop your way,
That bears some punk of honour to the play:
Now you some mighty piece of timber meet,
Which tott'ring threatens ruin to the street:
Next a huge Portland stone, for building Paul's,
Itself almost a rock, on carriage rolls:
Which, if it fall, would cause a massacre,
And serve at once to murder and inter.
If what I've said can't from the town affright,
Consider other dangers of the night:
When brickbats are from upper stories thrown,
And emptied chamber pots come pouring down
From garret windows: you have cause to bless
The gentle stars, if you come off with piss:
So many fates attend, a man had need
Ne'er walk without a surgeon by his side:
And he can hardly now discreet be thought,
That does not make his will, ere he go out.
If this you 'scape, twenty to one, you meet
Some of the drunken scourers of the street,
Flush'd with success of warlike deeds perform'd,
Or constables subdu'd, and brothels storm'd:
These, if a quarrel, or a fray be miss'd,
Are ill at ease a-nights, and want their rest;
For mischief is a lechery to some,
And serves to make them sleep like laudanum.
Yet heated, as they are, with youth, and wine,
If they discern a train of flambeaus shine,
If a great man with his gilt coach appear,
And a strong guard of footboys in the rear,
The rascals sneak, and shrink their heads for fear.
Poor me, who use no light to walk about,
Save what the parish, or the skies hang out,
They value not: 'tis worth your while to hear
The scuffle, if that be a scuffle, where
Another gives the blows, I only bear:
He bids me stand: of force I must give way,
For 'twere a senseless thing to disobey,
And struggle here, where I'd as good oppose
Myself to Preston and his mastiffs loose.

"Who's there?" he cries, and takes you by the throat,
'Dog! Are you dumb? Speak quickly, else my foot
Shall march about your buttocks: whence d' ye come,
From what bulk-ridden strumpet reeking home?
Saving your rev'rend pimpship, where d' ye ply?
How may one have a job of lechery?'
If you say anything, or hold your peace,
And silently go off, 'tis all a case:
Still he lays on: nay well, if you scape so:
Perhaps he'll clap an action on you too
Of battery, nor need he fear to meet
A jury to his turn, shall do him right,
And bring him in large damage for a shoe
Worn out, besides the pains, in kicking you.
But patience: his best way in such a case
Is to be thankful for the drubs, and beg
That they would mercifully spare one leg,
Or arm unbroke, and let him go away
With teeth enough to eat his meat next day.

'Nor is this all, which you have cause to fear,
Oft we encounter midnight padders here:
When the exchanges, and the shops are close,
The rich tradesman in his counting house
To view the profits of the day, withdraws.
Hither in flocks from Shooter's Hill they come,
To seek their prize, and booty nearer home:
'Your purse!' they cry; 'tis madness to resist,
Or strive with a cock'd pistol at your breast:
And these each day so strong and num'rous grow,
The town can scarce afford them jail-room now.
Happy the times of the old Heptarchy,
Ere London knew so much of villainy:
Then fatal carts through Holborn seldom went,
And Tyburn with few pilgrims was content:
A less, and single prison then would do,
And serv'd the city, and the county too.

'These are the reasons, sir, that drive me hence,
To which I might add more, would time dispense,
To hold you longer, but the sun draws low,
The coach is hard at hand, and I must go:
Therefore, dear sir, farewell; and when the town,
To make the country with your presence blest,
Then visit your old friend amongst the rest:
There I'll find leisure to unlade my mind
Of what remarks I now must leave behind:
The fruits of dear experience, which, with these
Improv'd will serve for hints, and notices;
And when you write again, may be of use
To furnish satire for your daring muse.'

John Oldham
The Careless Good Fellow

1       A pox of this fooling, and plotting of late,
2     What a pother, and stir has it kept in the state?
3     Let the rabble run mad with suspicions, and fears,
4     Let them scuffle, and jar, till they go by the ears:
5         Their grievances never shall trouble my pate,
6         So I can enjoy my dear bottle at quiet.

7       What coxcombs were those, who would barter their ease
8     And their necks for a toy, a thin wafer and mass?
9     At old Tyburn they never had needed to swing,
10   Had they been but true subjects to drink, and their king;
11       A friend, and a bottle is all my design;
12       He has no room for treason, that's top-full of wine.

13     I mind not the members and makers of laws,
14     Let them sit or prorogue, as his majesty please:
15     Let them damn us to woollen, I'll never repine
16   At my lodging, when dead, so alive I have wine:
17       Yet oft in my drink I can hardly forbear
18       To curse them for making my claret so dear.

19     I mind not grave asses, who idly debate
20   About right and succession, the trifles of state;
21   We've a good king already: and he deserves laughter
22   That will trouble his head with who shall come after:
23       Come, here's to his health, and I wish he may be
24       As free from all care, and all trouble, as we.

25     What care I how leagues with the Hollander go?
26   Or intrigues betwixt Sidney, and Monsieur D'Avaux?
27   What concerns it my drinking, if Cassel be sold,
28   If the conqueror take it by storming, or gold?
29       Good Bordeaux alone is the place that I mind,
30       And when the fleet's coming, I pray for a wind.

31     The bully of France, that aspires to renown
32     By dull cutting of throats, and vent'ring his own;
33     Let him fight and be damn'd, and make matches and treat,
34     To afford the news-mongers, and coffee-house chat:
He's but a brave wretch, while I am more free,
More safe, and a thousand times happier than he.

Come he, or the Pope, or the Devil to boot,
Or come faggot, and stake; I care not a groat;
Never think that in Smithfield I porters will heat:
No, I swear, Mr. Fox, pray excuse me for that.
I'll drink in defiance of gibbet, and halter,
This is the profession, that never will alter.

John Oldham