

Classic Poetry Series

Voltaire
- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Voltaire(1694 - 1778)

Francois Marie Arouet (pen name Voltaire) was born on November 21, 1694 in Paris. Voltaire's intelligence, wit and style made him one of France's greatest writers and philosophers. Voltaire was the embodiment of the 18th-century Enlightenment.

Young Francois Marie received his education at "Louis-le-Grand," a Jesuit college in Paris from 1704-11. From 1711 to 1713 he studied law, and then worked as a secretary to the French ambassador in Holland before devoting himself entirely to writing. He soon made friends among the Parisian aristocrats. His humorous verses made him a favorite in society circles. In 1717, his sharp wit got him into trouble with the authorities. He was imprisoned in the Bastille for eleven months for writing a scathing satire of the French government. During his time in prison Francois Marie wrote Oedipe which was to become his first theatrical success and adopted his pen name "Voltaire."

In 1726, Voltaire insulted the powerful young nobleman, "Chevalier De Rohan," and was given two options: imprisonment or exile. He chose exile and from 1726 to 1729 lived in England. While in England Voltaire was attracted to the philosophy of John Locke and ideas of mathematician and scientist, Sir Isaac Newton. He studied England's Constitutional Monarchy and its religious tolerance. Voltaire was particularly interested in the philosophical rationalism of the time, and in the study of the natural sciences. After returning to Paris he wrote a book praising English customs and institutions. It was interpreted as criticism of the French government and was forced to leave Paris again.

At the age of thirty-nine, Voltaire started his famous sixteen-year liaison with Mme du Châtelet. She was twenty-seven, married, and the mother of three children. "I found, in 1733, a young woman who thought as I did," Voltaire wrote in his memoirs, "and who decided to spend several years in the country, cultivating her mind." The Marquis du Châtelet was well aware of the affair. With madame du Châtelet Voltaire lived at the Château de Cirey in Luneville,(in eastern France) in 1734-36 and 1737-40. Together they studied the natural sciences for several years. In 1746, Voltaire was voted into the "Academie Francaise." In 1749, after the death of "Marquise du Chatelet" and at the invitation of the King of Prussia, "Frederick the Great," he moved to Potsdam (near Berlin in Germany). In 1753, Voltaire left Potsdam to return to France.

In 1759, Voltaire purchased an estate called "Ferney" near the French-Swiss border where he lived until just before of his death. Ferney soon became the

intellectual capital of Europe. Voltaire worked continuously throughout the years, producing a constant flow of books, plays and other publications. Voltaire left behind him over fourteen thousand known letters and over two thousand books and pamphlets. Among his best-known works is the satirical short story *Candide* (1759). In addition to *Candide*, Voltaire treated the problem of evil among others in his classic tale *Zadig* (1747), set in the ancient Babylon, and in *Poem of the Lisbon Earthquake* Voltaire asks:

"But how conceive a God supremely good

Who heaps his favours on the sons he loves

Yet scatters evil with as large a hand?"

Voltaire returned to a hero's welcome in Paris at age 83. Voltaire died in Paris on May 30, 1778, as the undisputed leader of the Age of Enlightenment. He had suffered throughout his life from poor health, but at the time of his death he was eighty-four. Because of his criticism of the church Voltaire was denied burial in church ground. He was finally buried at an abbey in Champagne. In 1791 his remains were moved to a resting place at the Pantheon in Paris.

Azolan

At village lived, in days of yore,
A youth bred in Mahomet's lore;
His well-turned limbs were formed with grace,
With blooming beauty glowed his face;
His name was Azolan, with care
The Koran he had written fair;
Was on its study ever bent,
To get it all by heart he meant.
From the most early youth his breast
By zeal for Gabriel was possessed;
This minister of the most high
Descended to him from the sky.
'The zeal that in thy bosom glows,'
Said he, 'thy guardian Gabriel knows:
To Gabriel gratitude is dear,
To make your fortune I'm come here;
You'll in short time as first divine
Of Medina and Mecca shine;
This, next to his place who is chief
Of all who hold the true belief,
Is the most high and wealthy station
In holy Mahomet's donation.
When you your duties once begin,
Honors on all sides will pour in;
But you a solemn oath must make
The whole sex female to forsake;
To lead a life most chaste, and ne'er
But through a grate to view the fair.'
Too hastily the beauteous boy,
That he church treasures might enjoy,
Fell easily into the snare,
Nor of his folly was aware.
Our new-made imam was elate,
Seeing himself become so great;
His joy the salary enhanced,
Which was immediately advanced
by a clerk of important air,
Who with him still went share and share.
No joy can dignity supply,

Nor wealth, should love his aid deny.
Amina fair by chance he spies,
With youthful bloom and charming eyes;
He loves Amina, she in turn
For him feels love's flame equal burn.
Each morning as the day returned,
The youth, who with love's flames still burned,
Being by his cursed oath enchained,
Of his sad slavery complained,
Avowing freely in his heart,
That he had played a foolish part.
'Then, Medina, farewell,' he cried,
'Mecca, vain pomp and foolish pride;
Amina, mistress of my breast,
We'll both live in my village blessed.'
From heaven the archangel made descent,
Severely to reproach him bent:
The tender lover thus replies:
'Do but behold my mistress' eyes;
I find of me you've made a jest,
I'm by your contract quite distressed;
With all you gave I'll freely part,
I ask alone Amina's heart.
The prudent and the sacred lore
Of Mahomet I must adore;
Love's joys he grants to the elect,
Nay, he allows them to expect
Aminas and eternal love,
In his bright Paradise above.
To heaven again, dear Gabriel, go,
My zeal for you shall still o'erflow;
To the empyrean then repair;
Without my love I'd not go there.'

Voltaire

From Love To Friendship

If you would have me love once more,
The blissful age of love restore;
From wine's free joys, and lovers' cares,
Relentless time, who no man spares,
Urges me quickly to retire,
And no more to such bliss aspire.
From such austerity exact,
Let's, if we can, some good extract;
Whose way of thinking with this age
Suits not, can ne'er be deemed a sage.
Let sprightly youth its follies gay,
Its follies amiable display;
Life to two moments is confined,
Let one to wisdom be consigned.
You sweet delusions of my mind,
Still to my ruling passion kind,
Which always brought a sure relief
To life's accurst companion, grief.
Will you forever from me fly,
And must I joyless, friendless die?
No mortal e'er resigns his breath
I see, without a double death;
Who loves, and is beloved no more,
His hapless fate may well deplore;
Life's loss may easily be borne,
Of love bereft man is forlorn.
'Twas thus those pleasures I lamented,
Which I so oft in youth repented;
My soul replete with soft desire,
Vainly regretted youthful fire.
But friendship then, celestial maid,
From heaven descended to my aid;
Less lively than the amorous flame,
Although her tenderness the same.
The charms of friendship I admired,
My soul was with new beauty fired;
I then made one in friendship's train,
But destitute of love, complain.

In Camp Before Philippsburg

Without a bed we now sleep sound
And take our meals upon the ground;
And though the blazing atmosphere
Must dreadful to the eye appear,
The air though roaring cannons rend
While warriors with fierce rage contend,
The thoughtless French drink, laugh, and sing,
And with their mirth the heavens ring;
The walls of Philippsburg shall burn,
And all her towers to ashes turn
By fifty thousand Alexanders,
Who all deserve to be commanders,
Though they receive the paltry pay
Of only four poor sous a day.
Lavish of life, with high delight
I see them rushing to the fight;
They all appear both gay and jolly,
Quite covered o'er with fame and folly.
The Phantom, which we Glory name,
Spurs them to the pursuit of fame;
With threat'ning eye, and front all o'er
Bedusted, marching still before,
She holds a trumpet in her hand
To sound to arms, and cheer the band,
And loudly sings, with voice sonorous,
Catches, which they repeat in chorus.
Oh! people brilliant, gay, and vain,
Who drag with patience glory's chain,
'Tis great, an honorable grave
To seek, Eugene and death to brave.
But what will be your mighty prize?
What from your prowess will arise?
Regret your blood, in vain you spilt it;
At Paris cuckolded, or jilted.

Voltaire

On The Death Of Adrienne Lecouvreur, A Celebrated Actress

Hat sight of woe thus harrows up my soul!
Must those love-darting eyes in anguish roll?
Shall ghastly death such charms divine invade?
You muses, graces, loves come to her aid.
Oh! you my gods and hers assist the fair,
Your image sure must well deserve your care.
Alas! thou diest, I press thy corpse alone;
Thou diest, the fatal news too soon is known.
In such a loss, each tender feeling heart
Is touched like mine, and takes in grief a part.
I hear the arts on every side deplore
Their loss, and cry, 'Melpomene's no more:'
What exclamations will the future race
Utter, at hearing of those arts' disgrace?
See cruel men a burying place refuse,
To her whom Greece had worshipped as a muse;
When living, they adored her power divine,
To her they bowed like votaries at a shrine:
Should she then, breathless, criminal be thought,
And is it then to charm the world a fault?
Seine's [1] banks should now no more be deemed profane,
Lecouvreur's sacred ashes there remain:
At this sad tomb, shrine sacred to thy shade,
Our vows are still as at a temple paid.
I don't revere the famed St. Denis more,
Thy graces, charms, and wit, I there adore:
I loved them living, incense now I'll burn,
And pay due honors to thy sacred urn.
Though error and ingratitude are bent,
To brand with infamy thy monument.
Shall Frenchmen never know what they require,
But damn capriciously what they admire?
Must laws with manners jar? Must every mind
In France, be made by superstition blind?
Wherefore should England be the only clime,
Where to think freely is not deemed a crime?
Oh! London, Athens' rival, thou alone,

Could tyrants, and could prejudice dethrone;
In that blest region, general freedom reigns,
Merit is honored, and reward obtains:
Marlborough the greatest general of his age,
Harmonious Dryden, Addison the sage,
Immortal Newton, charming Oldfield there,
The honors due to real genius share.
The farce of life had there Lecouvreur closed
With heroes, statesmen, kings she had reposed;
Genius at London makes its owner great,
Freedom and wealth have in that happy state,
Procured the inhabitants immortal fame,
They rival now the Greek and Roman name.
Parnassian laurels wither in our fields,
And France no more a crop of merit yields:
Wherefore you gods do all our glories fade,
Why is not honor due to genius paid?

Voltaire

The Origin Of Trades

When with a skilful hand Prometheus made
A statue that the human form displayed,
Pandora, his own work, to wed he chose,
And from those two the human race arose.
When first to know herself the fair began,
She played her smile's enchantment upon man;
By softness and alluring speech she gained
The ascendant, and her master soon enchained;
Her beauty on Prometheus' sense ne'er palled,
And the first husband was the first enthralled.
The god of war soon saw the new-formed fair;
His manly beauty and his martial air,
His golden casque and all his glittering arms
Pandora pleased, and he enjoyed her charms.
When the sea's ruler in his humid court
Had heard of this intrigue from fame's report,
The fair he sought, a like reception found,
Could Neptune fail where Mars a triumph found?
Day's light-haired god from his resplendent height
Their pleasures saw, and hoped the same delight;
She could not to refuse him have the heart,
Who o'er the day presides and every art.
Mercury with eloquence declared his flame,
And in his turn he triumphed o'er the dame.
Squalid and sooty from his forge, at first
Vulcan was ill-received, and gave disgust;
But he by importunity obtained
What other gods with so much ease had gained.
Pandora's prime thus winged with pleasure flew,
Then she in languor lived, nor wherefore knew.
She that devotes to love her life's first spring,
As years increase can do no other thing;
For e'en to gods inconstancy is known,
And those who dwell in heaven to change are prone.
Pandora of her favors had been free
To gods who left her; happening then to see
A satyr who through plains and meadows strayed,
Smit with his mien, she love-advances made.
To these amours our race existence owes,

From such amusements all mankind arose;
Hence those varieties in talents spring,
In genius, passions, business, everything:
To Vulcan one, to Mars one owes his birth,
This to a satyr; very few on earth
Claim any kindred with the god of day,
Few that celestial origin display.
From parents each his taste and turn derives:
But most of all trades now Pandora's thrives;
The most delightful, though least rare it seems,
And is the trade all Paris most esteems.

Voltaire

The Padlock

I triumphed, love's victorious power
Prevailed, and near approached the hour
Which should have crowned our mutual flame,
Just then your tyrant husband came.
That hoary Jailer was too hard,
To love he all access has barred,
And all our wishes to defeat,
Secures the key of pleasure's seat;
For such strange matters to account,
Our tale to ancient days should mount;
Ceres must to you sure be known,
Ceres one daughter had alone,
Who much resembled you in face,
Beauteous, adorned with every grace,
To the soft passion much inclined,
And guided by a Cupid blind.
Hymen, a god as blind as he,
Treated him as he treated thee;
Pluto, the rich and old, in hell
Made her his wife, and forced to dwell;
But she the jealous miser scorned,
And Pluto, though a god, was horned;
Pirithous, his rival bright,
Young, handsome, generous, and polite,
Found means to get to hell ere dead,
And clapped huge horns upon his head.
This as a fable you'll deride,
But love a man to hell may guide;
In hell, as here, by some strange spite,
Intrigues are always brought to light;
In a hot hole a spy concealed,
Saw all, and all he saw revealed;
And added, that the royal dame,
With half the damned had done the same.
The horned god on this report
Convokes at his infernal court,
Each odious, black, and cursed soul,
Sainted below for actions foul,
Each cuckold's soul, who during life

Did all he could to plague his wife.
Then thus declared a Florentine,
'Most mighty monarch, I'd opine
For death, for once a wife is dead,
She can't defile the marriage bed;
But ah, sir, an immortal wife
Can never be deprived of life;
A padlock, therefore, I'd invent,
Which should such accidents prevent;
She must be virtuous, of course,
When under the restraint of force;
Not to be come at by her elf,
You're sure to have her to yourself;
Would I had thought before I died,
Such a convenience to provide.'
This sage advice a loud applause
From all the damned assembly draws;
And straight by order of the state,
Was registered on brass by fate.
That moment in the shades below,
They anvils beat, and bellows blow;
Tisiphone the blacksmith's trade
Well understood, the locks she made.
Proserpina, from Pluto's hand
Receiving, wore it by command.
Sometimes the hardest hearts relent,
Even Pluto's self some pity felt,
When spouse's virtue he made fast,
And said, 'you'll now perforce be chaste.'
This lock which hell could frame alone,
Soon to the human race was known;
In Venice, Rome, and all about it,
No gentleman or cit's without it;
'Tis always thought a method sure,
All female honor to secure.
There husbands, though some sneerers mock,
Keep virtue safe and under lock.
But now to bring the matter home,
Your spouse, you know, lived long at Rome;
With bad men few infection 'scape,
He has learned the Roman modes to ape.
But all his jealous care is vain,

Love always knows his ends to gain;
That god will sure espouse our cause,
He still protects who keeps his laws;
For you have given me your heart,
And can't refuse me any part.

Voltaire

The Temple Of Friendship

Sacred to peace, within a wood's recess,
A blest retreat, where courtiers never press,
A temple stands, where art did never try
With pompous wonders to enchant the eye;
There are no dazzling ornaments, nor vain,
But truth, simplicity, and nature reign:
The virtuous Gauls raised erst the noble shrine,
And sacred vowed to Friendship's power divine.
Mistaken mortals who believed their race,
Would never cease to crowd to such a place!
Orestes' name, and Pylades' appear,
Wrote on the front, names still to Friendship dear:
Pirithous' medal of uncommon size,
Those of soft Nisus and Achates wise.
All these are heroes, and as friends renowned,
These names are great, but still in fable found;
The power to this remote retreat retired,
Nor Tripod boasts, nor priests with truth inspired;
She miracles but seldom can effect,
No popish saint e'er met with such neglect.
Still in her presence faithful truth attends,
And to the goddess needful succor lends:
Truth's every ready to enlighten all,
But few on truth for kind assistance call.
In vain she waits for votaries at her shrine,
None come, though all at wanting her repine;
Her hand holds forth the register exact,
Of every generous, every friendly act;
Favors in which esteem with friendship vied,
Received not meanly, not conferred with pride:
Such favors as those who confer forget,
And who receive, declare without regret.
This history of the virtues of mankind,
Within a narrow compass is confined;
In Gothic characters all these are traced
Upon two sheets, by time almost defaced.
By what strange frenzy is mankind possessed,
Friendship is banished now from every breast;
Yet all usurp of Friend the sacred name,

And vilest hypocrites bring in their claim.
All that they're faithful to her laws maintain,
And even her enemies her rights profane:
In regions subject to the pope's command,
Thus we see beads oft in an atheist's hand.
'Tis said the goddess, each pretended friend,
Once in her presence summoned to attend;
She fixed the day on which they should be there,
A prize proposing for each faithful pair;
Who with a tenderness like hers replete,
Amongst true friends might justly claim a seat;
Then quickly came allured by such a prize,
The French who novelty still idolize:
A multitude before the temple came,
And first, two courtly friends preferred their claim,
By interest joined, thy walked still hand in hand,
And of their union Friendship thought the band:
Post-haste a courier came and made report,
That there was then a vacancy at court;
Away each friend polite that moment flies,
Forsakes at once the temple and the prize;
Thus in a moment friends are turned to foes,
Each swears his rival warmly to oppose:
Four devotees next issue from the throng,
Poring on prayer-books as they pass along;
Their charity to mankind overflows,
And with religious zeal their bosom glows.
A pampered prelate one with fat o'ergrown,
Triple-chinned, much to apoplexy prone;
The swine quite gorged with tithes, and overfed,
At length by indigestion's force lies dead:
Quick the confessor clears the sinner's score,
His soles are greased, his body sprinkled o'er,
And spruced up by the curate of the place,
To go his heavenly journey with good grace;
His three friends o'er him merrily say prayers,
His benefice alone excites their cares:
Devoutly rivals grown, each still pretends
Attachment most sincere to both his friends;
Yet all in making interest at the court,
Their brothers downright Jansenists report.
Two youths of fashion next came arm in arm,

Their eyes and hearts, their mistress letters charm:
These as they passed along they read aloud,
And both displayed their persons to the crowd;
Some favorite airs they sing, while they advance
Up to the altar, just as to a dance:
They fight about some trifle, one is slain,
And Friendship's altar hence receives a stain;
The less mad of the two with conquest crowned,
Left his dear friend expiring on the ground.
Next Lisis, with her much loved Chloe came,
From infancy their pleasures were the same;
Alike their humor, and alike their age,
Those trifles which the female heart engage;
Lisis was prone to Chloe to impart,
They spoke the overflowings of the heart;
At last one lover touched both female friends,
And strange to tell! here all their Friendship ends;
Lisis and Chloe Friendship's shrine forsake,
And the high road to Hatred's temple take.
The beauteous Zara shone forth in her turn,
With eyes that languish, whilst our hearts they burn:
'What languor,' said she, 'reigns in this abode!
By that sad goddess, say what joy's bestowed?
Here dismal melancholy dwells alone,
For love's soft joys are ever here unknown.'
Leaving the place, crowds followed her behind,
And struck with envy, twenty beauties pined:
Where next my Zara went, is known to none,
And Friendship's glorious prize could not be won:
The goddess everywhere so much admired;
So little known, and yet by all admired;
With cold upon her sacred altar froze--
Hence hapless mortals, hence derive your woes.

Voltaire

Thelema And Macareus

Thelema's lively, all admire
Her charms, but she's too full of fire;
Impatience ever racks her breast,
Her heart a stranger is to rest.
A jocund youth of bulky size
This nymph beheld with tender eyes,
From hers his humor differed quite,
Black does not differ more from white.
On his broad face and open mien
There dwelt tranquility serene;
His converse is from languor free
And boisterous vivacity.
His sleep was sound and sweet at night,
Active he was at morn like light;
As day advanced he pleased still more,
Macareus was the name he bore.
His mistress void of thought as fair
Tormented him with too much care:
She adoration thought her due,
And into fierce reproaches flew;
Her Macareus with laughter left,
And of all hopes of bliss bereft.
From clime to clime like mad she ran
To seek the dear, the faithless man:
From him she could not live content,
So first of all to court she went.
There she of every one inquired,
'Is Macareus with you retired?'
Hearing that name the witlings there
To laugh and smile could scarce forbear.
'Madam,' said they, 'who is this squire
Macareus, for whom you inquire?
Madam, his character display,
Or else we shan't know what to say.'
'He is a man,' returned the fair,
'Possessed of each endowment rare,
A man of virtue so refined,
He hated none of human kind;
To whom no man e'er owed a spite,

Who always knew to reason right,
Who void of care lived still at ease,
And knew all human kind to please.'
The courtiers answered with a sneer,
'You are not like to find him here,
Mortals with such endowments rare
But seldom to the court repair.'
The fair then to the city bent
Her way, and stopped a convent.
She thought that in that calm retreat
She might her tranquil lover meet.
'Madam,' then said the under-prior,
The man for whom you thus inquire
We long have waited for in vain,
To visit us he ne'er did deign.
But such a loss to compensate,
We've idle time and vigils late;
We have our stated days of fasting
With discord and divisions lasting.'
A short monk then with crown shaved o'er,
Said, 'Madam, seek this man no more;
For I'm by false reports misled,
Or else your lover's long since dead.'
What the monk insolently said
Made Thelema with rage grow red:
'Brother,' said she, 'I'd have you know
The man who has caused all my woe
Was made for me, and me alone,
He's in this world on which I'm thrown;
With me he'll live and die content,
I'm propey his element:
Who aught else told you, on my word,
Has said a thing that's most absurd.'
This said, away the fair one ran,
Resolved to find the inconstant man.
'At Paris, where the wits abound,
Perhaps,' said she, 'he may be found,
The wits speak of him as a sage;'
On of them said: 'You by our page,
Madam, perhaps have been misled;
When there of Macareus you read,
We spoke of one we never knew.'

Then near she to the law-court drew,
Shutting her eyes, quick passed the fair,
'My love,' she cried, 'can't sure be there;
There's some attraction in the Court,
But who'd to this vile place resort?
Themis' black followers needs must prove
Eternal foes to him I love.'
Fair Thelema at Rameau's shrine,
Where the muse utters strains divine,
The man who her so much neglected
There to meet, was what she expected.
At those feasts oft she was a guest,
Where meet gay people richly dressed;
Such people as we all agree
To call the best of company.
People of an address polite,
She looked upon at the first sight
As perfect copies of her lover;
But she soon after could discover,
That striving most to appear the same,
They still were widest of their aim.
At last the fair one in despair,
Finding how vain was all her care,
And grown of her inquiries tired,
To her retreat would have retired:
The object which she there first spied
Was Macareus by her bedside;
He waited there, hid from her eyes,
That he the fair one might surprise:
'Henceforward,' said he, 'live with me,
From all inquietude be free,
Do not, like vain and haughty dames,
Be too assuming in your claims;
And if you would henceforth possess
My person and my tenderness,
Never more make demands more high
Than suits me with them to comply.'
Who's understood by either name,
Both of the lover and the dame,
The folks who are profound in Greek
Cannot be very far to seek.
Taught by this emblem they'll relate

What's to be every mortal's fate,
Thee, Macareus, though all men choose,
Though much they love thee, oft they lose;
And I'm persuaded that you dwell
With me, though this I fear to tell.
Who boasts that with thee he is blessed,
By envy oft is dispossessed;
A man should know, to make thee sure,
How to live happy while obscure.

Voltaire

To A Lady Very Well Known To The Whole Town

Phillis, how much the times are changed,
Since in a hack the town you ranged,
Since without finery or train you shone,
Conspicuous for your charms alone;
When though you supped on sorry fare,
You nectar seemed with gods to share.
You foolishly to one consigned
Beauty which might charm all mankind:
A desperate lover, who for life
Engaged you when he made his wife.
You then no treasure did inherit,
Your beauty was your only merit,
Your bosom charms divine displayed;
There Cupid still an ambush laid;
Your heart was tender, and your mind
To youthful frolics much inclined.
With so many charms endued,
What woman e'er could be a prude?
That fault, oh! beauty all divine,
Was very far from being thine;
Because of favors you were free,
You were the better liked by me.
How differently you live, grown great,
Your life is but the farce of state;
The hoary porter, who still plies
At your own door, and tells such lies,
Is a just emblem of the age,
His very looks ill-luck presage;
He thinks the duty of his place is
To drive away the loves and graces.
The tender swain's abashed, afraid
Your pompous palace to invade.
When you were young, to my amazement
I've seen them enter at the casement;
I've seen them enter every day,
And in your chamber nimbly play.
Not all your carpets, and your plate,
Not all your proud parade of state,
Those goblets which so brightly shine,

Graved by Germain with art divine;
Those closets nobly furnished, where
Martin's exceeds the China ware,
Your vases of Japan, and all
The brittle wonders of your hall;
Your diamond pendants which appear
With such bright lustre at each ear;
Your solitaires so dazzling bright,
Your pomp which strikes the gazer's sight,
Are worth one quarter of that bliss,
Which once you imparted by a kiss.

Voltaire

To Her Royal Highness, The Princess Of ***

Abeauteous princess often may
Languish in pleasure's season gay;
The empty forms of haughty state
Oft make life tedious to the great.

It must the greatest king confound,
With all his courtiers circled round,
Amidst a splendid court to find,
That grandeur can't give peace of mind.

Some think that play can give delight,
But soon it grows insipid quite;
And monarchs have been often seen,
While gaming, tortured with the spleen.

A king oft feasts with heavy heart,
Pleasures to him no joy impart;
While the dull vulgar contemplate,
Like gazing idiots, pomp and state,

And fondly think who is possessed
Of them with bliss supreme is blessed.
Soon as the sun's refulgent rays,
Spread o'er the hemisphere their blaze;

The king begins another day,
Yet knows not where to take his way:
Tired of himself he straight repairs
To company, to soothe his cares.

But pleasure flies from his embrace,
It rises not from change of place;
This day's insipid as the last,
At night he knows not how it passed.

Time's loss is not to be repaired,
Life's to an instant well compared;
What, when life posts away so fast,
Can days appear so long at last?

Princess, whose worth above thy age,
All hearts at two courts can engage;
You usefully that time employ,
By youth consumed in rapid joy.

The genius given by heaven benign,
You strive to polish and refine,
By studies which at once unite
Instructions solid, with delight.

'Tis best the mind should be employed,
Indolence leaves a craving void;
The soul is like a subtle fire,
Which if not fed must soon expire.

Voltaire

To The Queen Of Hungary

Princess, descended from that noble race
Which still in danger held the imperial throne,
Who human nature and thy sex dost grace,
Whose virtues even thy foes are forced to own.

The generous French, as fierce as they're polite,
Who to true glory constantly aspire;
Whilst obstinately they against thee fight,
Thy virtue and great qualities admire.

The French and Germans leagued by wondrous ties,
Make Christendom one dismal scene of woe;
And from their friendship greater ills arise,
Than e'er did from their longest quarrels flow.

Thus from the equator and the frozen pole,
The impetuous winds drive on with headlong force
Two clouds, which as they on each other roll,
Forth from their sable skirts the thunder force.

Do virtuous kings such ruin then ordain?
A calm they promise, but excite a storm:
Felicity we hope for from their reign,
Whilst they with slaughter dire the earth deform.

Oh! Fleury, wise and venerable sage,
Whom good ne'er dazzles, danger ne'er alarms;
Who dost exceed the ancient Nestor's age:
Must Europe never cease to be in arms?

Would thou couldst hold with prudent, steady hand,
Europa's balance, shut up Janus' shrine;
Make feuds and discords cease at thy command,
And bring from heaven Astrea, maid divine.

Would France's treasures were dispersed no more,
But prudently within the realm applied;
Opulence to our cities to restore,
And make them flourishing on every side.

You arts from heaven, and from the muses sprung,
Whom Louis brought triumphant into France;
Too long your hands are idle, lyres unstrung,
'Tis time to start from so profound a trance.

Your labors are of lasting glory sure,
Whilst warlike pomps, the triumphs of a day,
Blaze for a moment, never long endure,
But soon like fleeting shadows pass away.

Voltaire