

Mine Own John Poins¹

Mine own John Poins, since ye delight to know
 The cause why that homeward I me draw,
 And flee the press of courts, whereso they go,
 Rather than to live thrall, under the awe
 Of lordly looks, wrapped within my cloak,
 To will and lust² learning to set a law;
 It is not for because I scorn and mock
 The power of them to whom Fortune hath lent
 Charge over us, of right to strike the stroke.³
 But true it is that I have always meant
 Less to esteem them than the common sort,
 Of outward things that judge in their intent
 Without regard what doth inward resort.
 I grant sometime that of glory the fire
 Doth touch my heart; me list not to report
 Blame by honor, and honor to desire.⁴
 But how may I this honor now attain

That cannot dye the color black a liar?
 My Poins, I cannot frame me tune to feign,
 To cloak the truth, for praise without desert,
 Of them that list all vice for to retain.
 I cannot honor them that sets their part
 With Venus and Bacchus all their life long;⁵
 Nor hold my peace of them, although I smart.
 I cannot crouch nor kneel to do so great a wrong,
 To worship them like God on earth alone,
 That are as wolves these sely⁶ lambs among.
 I cannot with my words complain and moan
 Nor suffer naught, nor smart without complaint,
 Nor turn the word that from my mouth is gone;
 I cannot speak and look like a saint,
 Use wiles for wit, or make deceit a pleasure;
 And call craft counsel, for profit still to paint;
 I cannot wrest the law to fill the coffer,
 With innocent blood to feed myself fat,
 And do most hurt where most help I offer.
 I am not he that can allow the state
 Of high Caesar, and damn Cato⁷ to die,
 That with his death did 'scape out of the gate
 From Caesar's hands, if Livy⁸ do not lie,
 And would not live where liberty was lost,
 So did his heart the common weal⁹ apply.
 I am not he, such eloquence to boast
 To make the crow in singing as the swan,
 Nor call the lion of coward beasts the most,
 That cannot take a mouse as the cat can;
 And he that dieth of hunger of the gold,
 Call him Alexander,¹ and say that Pan
 Passeth Apollo in music manifold;²
 Praise Sir Thopas for a noble tale,
 And scorn the story that the Knight told;³
 Praise him for counsel that is drunk of ale;
 Grin when he laugheth that beareth all the sway,
 Frown when he frowneth, and groan when he is pale;
 On others' lust to hang both night and day—
 None of these points would ever frame in me;
 My wit is naught: I cannot learn the way;
 And much the less of things that greater be
 That asken help of colors of device⁴

To join the mean with each extremity.
 With nearest virtue to cloak away the vice,
 And as to purpose, likewise it shall fall
 To press the virtue that it may not rise;
 As drunkenness, good fellowship to call;
 The friendly foe, with his double face,
 Say he is gentle and courteous therewithal;
 And say that favel⁵ hath a goodly grace
 In eloquence; and cruelty to name
 Zeal of justice, and change in time and place;
 And he that suff'reth offense without blame,
 Call him pitiful, and him true and plain
 That railleth reckless to every man's shame,
 Say he is rude that cannot lie and feign,
 The lecher a lover, and tyranny
 To be the right of a prince's reign.
 I cannot, I: no, no, it will not be.
 This is the cause that I could never yet
 Hang on their sleeves, that weigh, as thou mayst see,
 A chip of chance more than a pound of wit.
 This maketh me at home to hunt and hawk,
 And in foul weather at my book to sit,
 In frost and snow then with my bow to stalk.
 No man doth mark whereso I ride or go.
 In lusty leas⁶ at liberty I walk,
 And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe,
 Save that a clog doth hang yet at my heel.⁷
 No force for that, for it is ordered so
 That I may leap both hedge and dike full well;
 I am not now in France, to judge the wine,
 With sav'ry sauce those delicacies⁸ to feel;
 Nor yet in Spain, where one must him incline,
 Rather than to be, outwardly to seem.
 I meddle not with wits that be so fine;
 Nor Flanders' cheer⁹ letteth not my sight to deem
 Of black and white, nor taketh my wit away
 With beastliness, they beasts do so esteem.
 Nor am I not where Christ is given in prey
 For money, poison, and treason—at Rome¹
 A common practice, used night and day.
 But here I am in Kent and Christendom,
 Among the Muses, where I read and rhyme;
 Where, if thou list, my Poins, for to come,
 Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

5. Flattery.

6. Pleasant fields.

7. "I feel neither happiness nor unhappiness about current political affairs, except that a 'clog' (i.e., his confinement on parole to his estate) keeps me from traveling far." Note that "news" is a plural in Elizabethan English. "No force": no matter.

8. Delicacies.

9. I.e., the drinking for which Flemings were notorious in the 16th century; "letteth": hinders, prevents.

1. In *Tottel's Miscellany*, published in the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary, these lines were altered as follows: "where truth is given in prey / For money, poison and treason; of some."

5. I.e., I cannot honor those who devote themselves to Venus (goddess of love-making) and Bacchus (god of drinking).

6. Innocent.

7. Cato the Younger, the famous Roman patriot who committed suicide rather than submit to Caesar.

8. Titus Livius (59 B.C.–A.D. 17), the great Roman historian.

9. The common good, or the state.

1. Alexander yearned for more worlds to conquer.

2. Pan's music was simple and rustic, played on "Pan's pipes."

3. The silly tale of Sir Thopas, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, is told by Chaucer himself, until the Host forces him to stop. The Knight's Tale is the most courtly and dignified of the tales.

4. Tricks of rhetoric.

Earl of Surrey

PRISONED IN WINDSOR, HE RECOUNTETH HIS PLEASURE THERE PASSED

So cruell prison how coulde betide, alas,
As proude Windsor? where I in lust and joye,
With a kinges sonne, my childishe yeres did passe,
In greater feast than Priams sonnes of Troy:
Where eche swete place returns a taste full sower,
The large grene courtes, where we were wont to hove,
With eyes cast up into the maydens tower.
And easie sighes, suche as folke drawe in love:
The stately seates, the ladies bright of hewe:
The daunces shorte, longe tales of great delight:
With wordes and lokes, that tygers coulde but rewe,
Where eche of us did pleade the others right:
The palme play, where, dispoyled for the game,
With dazed eies oft we by gleames of love,
Have mist the ball, and got sight of our dame,
To baite her eyes, whiche kept the leads above:
The gravell grounde, with sleeves tyed on the helme:
On fomyng horse, with swordes and frendlye hartes:
With cheare, as though one should another whelme:
Where we have fought, and chased oft with dartes,
With silver droppes the meade yet spred for ruthe,
In active games of nimblenes, and strength,
Where we did straine, trayned with swarmes of youth.
Our tender lymmes, that yet shot up in length:
The secrete groves, which oft we made resounde
Of pleasaunt playnt, and of our ladies prayse,
Recordyng ofte what grace eche one had founde,
What hope of speede, what dreade of long delayes:
The wilde forest, the clothed holtes with grene:
With rayns availed, and swift ybreathed horse,

With crye of houndes, and mery blastes betwene,
Where we did chase the fearfull harte of force,
The wide vales eke, that harborde us ech night,
Wherwith (alas) reviveth in my brest
The swete accorde: such slepes as yet delight,
The pleasant dreames, the quiet bed of rest:
The secrete thoughtes imparted with such trust:
The wanton talke, the divers change of play:
The frendship sworne, eche promise kept so just:
Wherwith we pass the winter night away.
And, with this thought, the bloud forsakes the face,
The teares berayne my chekes of deadly hewe:
The whiche as sone as sobbyng sighes (alas)
Upsupped have, thus I my plaint renewe:
O place of blisse, renuer of my woes,
Geve me accompt, where is my noble fere:
Whom in thy walles thou doest eche night enclose,
To other leefe, but unto me most dere.
Eccho (alas) that dothe my sorow rewe,
Returns therto a hollow sounde of playnte.
Thus I alone, where all my fredome grewe,
In prison pyne, with bondage and restrainte,
And with remembrance of the greater greefe
To banishe the lesse, I find my chief releefe.

Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax

I

Within this sober Frame expect
Work of no Forrain *Architect*;
That unto Caves the Quarries drew,
And Forrests did to Pastures hew;
Who of his great Design in pain
Did for a Model vault his Brain,
Whose Columnes should so high be rais'd
To arch the Brows that on them gaz'd.

2

Why should of all things Man unrul'd
Such unproportion'd dwellings build?
The Beasts are by their Dens exprest:
And Birds contrive an equal Nest;
The low roof'd Tortoises do dwell
In cases fit of Tortoise-shell:
No Creature loves an empty space;
Their Bodies measure out their Place.

3

But He, superfluously spread,
Demands more room alive than dead.
And in his hollow Palace goes
Where Winds as he themselves may lose.
What need of all this Marble Crust
T'impark the wanton Mote of Dust,
That thinks by Breadth the World t'unite
Though the first Builders fail'd in Height?

4

But all things are composed here
Like Nature, orderly and near:
Be which we the Dimensions find
Of that more sober Age and Mind,
When larger sized Men did stoop
To enter at a narrow loop;
As practising, in doors so strait,
To strain themselves through *Heavens Gate*.

5

And surely when the after Age
Shall hither come in *Pilgrimage*,
These sacred Places to adore,
By *Vere* and *Fairfax* trod before,
Men will dispute how their Extent
Within such dwarfish Confines went:
And some will smile at this, as well
As *Romulus* his Bee-like Cell.

6

Humility alone designs
Those short but admirable Lines,
By which, ungirt and unconstrain'd,
Things greater are in less contain'd.
Let others vainly strive t'immure
The *Circle* in the *Quadrature*!
These *holy Mathematicks* can
In ev'ry Figure equal Man.

7

Yet thus the laden House does sweat,
And scarce induces the *Master* great:
But where he comes the swelling Hall
Stirs, and the *Square* grows *Spherical*;
More by his *Magnitude* distrest,
Then he is by its straitness prest:
And too officiously it slights
That in it self which him delights.

8

So Honour better Lowness bears,
Then That unwonted Greatness wears.
Height with a certain Grace does bend,
But low Things clownishly ascend.
And yet what needs there here Excuse,
Where ev'ry Thing does answer Use?
Where neatness nothing can condemn,
Nor Pride invent what to contemn?

9

A Stately *Frontispice* of Poor
Adorns without the open Door:
Nor less the Rooms within commends
Daily new *Furniture* of Friends.

The House was built upon the Place
Only as for a *Mark of Grace*;
And for an *Inn* to entertain
Its *Lord a while, but not remain*.

10

Him *Bishops-Hill*, or *Denton* may,
Or *Bilbrough*, better hold then they:
But Nature here hath been so free
As if she said leave this to me.
Art would more neatly have defac'd
What she had laid so sweetly wast;
In fragrant Gardens, shady Woods,
Deep Meadows, and transparent Floods.

11

While with slow Eyes we these survey,
And on each pleasant footstep stay,
We opportunly may relate
The Progress of this Houses Fate.
A *Nunnery* first gave it birth.
For *Virgin Buildings* oft brought forth.
And all that Neighbour-Ruine shows
The Quarries whence this dwelling rose.

12

Near to this gloomy Cloysters Gates
There dwelt the blooming Virgin *Thwates*;
Fair beyond Measure, and an Heir
Which might Deformity make fair.
And oft She spent the Summer Suns
Discoursing with the *Suttle Nunns*.
Whence in those Words one to her weav'd,
(As 'twere by Chance) Thoughts long conceiv'd.

13

'Within this holy leisure we
'Live innocently as you see.
'These Walls restrain the World without,
'But hedge our Liberty about.
'These Bars inclose that wider Den
'Of those wild Creatures, called Men.
'The Cloyster outward shuts its Gates,
'And, from us, locks on them the Grates.

14

'Here we, in shining Armour white,
'Like *Virgin Amazons* do fight.
'And our chast *Lamps* we hourly trim,
'Lest the great *Bridegroom* find them dim.
'Our *Orient* Breaths perfumed are
'With insense of incessant Pray'r.
'And Holy-water of our Tears
'Most strangely our Complexion clears.

15

'Not Tears of Grief; but such as those
'With which calm Pleasure overflows;
'Or Pity, when we look on you
'That live without this happy Vow.
'How should we grieve that must be seen
'Each one a *Spouse* and each a *Queen*;
'And can in *Heaven* hence behold
'Our brighter Robes and Crowns of Gold?

16

'When we have prayed all our Beads,
'Some One the holy *Legend* reads;
'While all the rest with Needles paint
'The Face and Graces of the *Saint*.
'But what the Linnen can't receive
'They in their Lives do interweave.
'This Work the *Saints* best represents;
'That serves for *Altar s Ornaments*.

17

'But much it to our work would add
'If here your hand, your Face we had:
'By it we would *our Lady* touch;
'Yet thus She you resembles much.
'Some of your Features, as we sow'd,
'Through ev'ry *Shrine* should be bestow'd.
'And in one Beauty we would take
'Enough a thousand *Saints* to make.

18

'And (for I dare not quench the Fire
'That me does for your good inspire)
'Twere Sacriledge a Man t'admit
'To holy things, for *Heaven* fit.

'I see the *Angels* in a Crown
'On you the Lillies show'ring down:
'And round about you Glory breaks,
'That something more then humane speaks,

19

'All Beauty, when at such a height,
'Is so already consecrate.
'*Fairfax* I know; and long ere this
'Have mark'd the Youth, and what he is.
'But can he such a *Rival* seem
'For whom you *Heav'n* should disesteem?
'Ah, no! and 'twould more honour prove
'He your *Devoto* were, then *Love*.

20

'Here live beloved, and obey'd:
'Each one your Sister, each your Maid.
'And, if our Rule seem strictly pend,
'The Rule it self to you shall bend.
'Our *Abbess* too, now far in Age,
'Doth your succession near presage.
'How soft the yoke on us would lye,
'Might such fair Hands as yours it tye!

21

'Your voice, the sweetest of the Quire,
'Shall draw *Heav'n* nearer, raise us higher.
'And your Example, if our Head,
'Will soon us to perfection lead.
'Those Virtues to us all so dear,
'Will straight grow Sanctity when here:
'And that, once sprung, increase so fast
'Till Miracles it work at last.

22

'Nor is our *Order* yet so nice,
'Delight to banish as a Vice.
'Here Pleasure Piety doth meet:
'One perfecting the other Sweet.
'So through the mortal fruit we boyl
'The Sugars uncorrupting Oyl:
'And that which perisht while we pull,
'Is thus preserved clear and full.

23

'For such indeed are all our Arts;
'Still handling Natures finest Parts.
'Flow'rs dress the Altars; for the Clothes,
'The Sea-born Amber we compose;
'Balsms for the griv'd we draw; and Pastes
'We mold, as Baits for curious tasts.
'What need is here of Man? unless
'These as sweet Sins we should confess.

24

'Each Night among us to your side
'Appoint a fresh and Virgin Bride;
'Whom if *our Lord* at midnight find,
'Yet Neither should be left behind.
'Where you may lye as chast in Bed,
'As Pearls together billeted.
'All Night embracing Arm in Arm,
'Like Chrystal pure with Cotton warm.

25

'But what is this to all the store
'Of Joys you see, and may make more!
'Try but a while, if you be wise:
'The Tryal neither Costs, nor Tyes.'
Now *Fairfax* seek her promis'd faith:
Religion that dispensed hath;
Which She hence forward does begin;
The *Nuns* smooth Tongue has suckt her in.

26

Oft, though he knew it was in vain,
Yet would he valiantly complain.
'Is this that *Sanctity* so great,
'An Art by which you finly'r cheat?
'Hypocrite Witches, hence *avant*
'Who though in prison yet inchant!
'Death only can such Theeves make fast,
'As rob though in the Dungeon cast.

27

'Were there but, when this House was made,
'One Stone that a just Hand had laid,
'It must have fall'n upon her Head
'Who first Thee from thy Faith misled.

'And yet, how well soever ment,
'With them 'twould soon grow fraudulent:
'For like themselves they alter all,
'And vice infects the very Wall.

28

'But sure those Buildings last not long,
'Founded by Folly, kept by Wrong.
'I know what Fruit their Gardens yield,
'When they it think by Night conceal'd.
'Fly from their Vices. 'Tis thy state,
'Not Thee, that they would consecrate.
'Fly from their Ruine. How I fear
'Though guiltless lest thou perish there.'

29

What should he do? He would respect
Religion, but not Right neglect:
For first Religion taught him Right,
And dazled not but clear'd his sight.
Sometimes resolv'd his Sword he draws,
But reverenceth then the Laws:
For Justice still that Courage led;
First from a Judge, then Souldier bred.

30

Small Honour would be in the Storm.
The *Court* him grants the lawful Form;
Which licens'd either Peace or Force,
To hinder the unjust Divorce.
Yet still the *Nuns* his Right debar'd,
Standing upon their holy Guard.
III-counsell'd Women, do you know
Whom you resist, or what you do?

31

Is not this he whose Offspring fierce
Shall fight through all the *Universe*;
And with successive Valour try
France, Poland, either Germany;
Till one, as long since prophecy'd,
His Horse through conquer'd *Britain* ride?
Yet, against Fate, his Spouse they kept;
And the great Race would intercept.

32

Some to the Breach against their Foes
Their *Wooden Saints* in vain oppose.

Another bolder stands at push
With their old *Holy-Water Brush*.
While the disjointed *Abbess* threads
The gingling Chain-shot of her *Beads*.
But their lowd'st Cannon were their Lungs;
And sharpest Weapons were their
Tongues.

33

But, waving these aside like Flyes,
Young *Fairfax* through the Wall does rise,
Then th' unfrequented Vault appear'd,
And superstitions vainly fear'd.
The *Relicks false* were set to view;
Only the Jewels there were true.
But truly bright and holy *Thwaites*
That weeping at the *Altar* waites.

34

But the glad Youth away her bears,
And to the *Nuns* bequeaths her Tears:
Who guiltily their Prize bemoan,
Like Gipsies that a Child hath stoln.
Thenceforth (as when th' *Inchantment*
ends

The Castle vanishes or rends)
The wasting Cloister with the rest
Was in one instant dispossess.

35

At the demolishing, this Seat
To *Fairfax* fell as by Escheat.
And what both *Nuns* and *Founders* will'd
'Tis likely better thus fulfill'd.
For if the *Virgin* prov'd not theirs,
The *Cloyster* yet remained hers.
Though many a *Nun* there made her Vow,
'Twas no *Religious House* till now.

36

From that blest Bed the *Heroe* came,
Whom *France* and *Poland* yet does fame:
Who, when retired here to Peace,
His warlike Studies could not cease;
But laid these Gardens out in sport
In the just Figure of a Fort;
And with five Bastions it did fence,
As aiming one for ev'ry Sense.

37

When in the *East* the Morning Ray
Hangs out the Colours of the Day,
The Bee through these known Allies hums,
Beating the *Dian* with its *Drumms*.
Then Flow'rs their drowsy Eylids raise,
Their Silken Ensigns each displayes,
And dries its Pan yet dank with Dew,
And fills its Flask with Odours new.

38

These, as their *Governour* goes by,
In fragrant Volleys they let fly;
And to salute their *Governess*
Again as great a charge they press:
None for the *Virgin Nymph*; for She
Seems with the Flow'rs a Flow'r to be.
And think so still! though not compare
With Breath so sweet, or Cheek so faire.

39

Well shot ye Firemen! Oh how sweet,
And round your equal Fires do meet;
Whose shrill report no Ear can tell,
But Ecchoes to the Eye and smell.
See how the Flow'rs, as at *Parade*,
Under their *Colours* stand displaid:
Each *Regiment* in order grows,
That of the Tulip Pinke and Rose.

40

But when the vigilant *Patroul*
Of Stars walks round about the *Pole*,
Their Leaves, that to the stalks are curl'd,
Seem to their Staves the *Ensigns* furl'd.
Then in some Flow'rs beloved Hut
Each Bee as Sentinel is shut;
And sleeps so too but, if once stir'd,
She runs you through, nor asks the *Word*.

41

Oh Thou, that dear and happy Isle
The Garden of the World ere while,
Thou *Paradise* of four Seas,
Which *Heaven* planted us to please,

But, to exclude the World, did guard
With watry if not flaming Sword;
What luckless Apple did we tast,
To make us Mortal, and The Wast?

42

Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet *Militia* restore,
When Gardens only had their Towrs,
And all the Garrisons were Flowrs,
When Roses only Arms might bear,
And Men did rosie Garlands wear?
Tulips, in several Colours barr'd,
Were then the *Switzers* of our *Guard*.

43

The *Gardiner* had the *Souldiers* place,
And his more gentle Forts did trace.
The Nursery of all things green
Was then the only *Magazeen*.
The *Winter Quarters* were the Stoves,
Where he the tender Plants removes.
But War all this doth overgrow:
We Ord'nance Plant and Powder sow.

44

And yet there walks one on the Sod
Who, had it pleased him and *God*,
Might once have made our Gardens spring
Fresh as his own and flourishing.
But he preferr'd to the *Cinque Ports*
These five imaginary Forts:
And, in those half-dry Trenches, spann'd
Pow'r which the Ocean might command.

45

For he did, with his utmost Skill,
Ambition weed, but *Conscience* till.
Conscience that Heaven-nursed Plant,
Which most our Earthly Gardens want.
A prickling leaf it bears, and such
As that which shrinks at ev'ry touch;
But Flowrs eternal, and divine,
That in the Crowns of Saints do shine.

46

The sight does from these *Bastions* ply,
Th' invisible *Artillery*;
And at proud *Cawood Castle* seems
To point the *Battery* of its Beams.
As if it quarrell'd in the Seat
Th' Ambition of its *Prelate* great.
But ore the Meads below it plays,
Or innocently seems to gaze.

47

And now to the Abbyss I pass
Of that unfathomable Grass,
Where Men like Grashoppers appear,
But Grashoppers are Gyants there:
They, in their squeaking Laugh, contemn
Us as we walk more low then them:
And, from the Precipices tall
Of the green spir's, to us do call.

48

To see Men through this Meadow
Dive,
We wonder how they rise alive.
As, under Water, none does know
Whether he fall through it or go.
But, as the Marriners that sound,
And show upon their Lead the Ground,
They bring up Flow'rs so to be seen,
And prove they've at the Bottom been.

49

No Scene that turns with Engines strange
Does oftner then these Meadows change.
For when the Sun the Grass hath vext,
The tawny Mowers enter next;
Who seem like *Israelites* to be,
Walking on foot through a green Sea.
To them the Grassy Deeps divide,
And crowd a Lane to either Side.

50

With whistling Sithe, and Elbow strong,
These Massacre the Grass along:
While one, unknowing, carves the *Rail*,
Whose yet unfeather'd Quils her fail.

The Edge all bloody from its Breast
He draws, and does his stroke detest;
Fearing the Flesh untimely mow'd
To him a Fate as black forebode.

51

But bloody *Thestylis*, that waites
To bring the mowing Camp their Cates.
Greedy as Kites has trust it up,
And forthwith means on it to sup:
When on another quick She lights,
And cryes, he call'd us *Israelites*;
But now, to make his saying true,
Rails rain for Quails, for Manna Dew.

52

Unhappy Birds! what does it boot
To build below the Grasses Root;
When Lowness is unsafe as Hight,
And Chance o'retakes what scapeth spight?
And now your Orphan Parents Call
Sounds your untimely Funeral.
Death-Trumpets creak In such a Note,
And 'tis the *Sourdine* in their Throat.

53

Or sooner hatch or higher build:
The Mower now commands the Field;
In whose new Traverse seemeth wrought
A Camp of Battail newly fought:
Where, as the Meads with Hay, the Plain
Lyes quilted ore with Bodies slain:
The Women that with forks it fling,
Do represent the Pillaging.

54

And now the careless Victors play,
Dancing the Triumphs of the Hay;
Where every Mowers wholesome Heat
Smells like an *Alexanders sweat*.
Their Females fragrant as the Mead
Which they in *Fairy Circles* tread:
When at their Dances End they kiss,
Their new-made Hay not sweeter is.

55

When after this 'tis pil'd in Cocks,
Like a calm Sea it shews the Rocks:
We wondring in the River near
How Boats among them safely steer.
Or, like the *Desert Memphis Sand*,
Short *Pyramids* of Hay do stand.
And such the *Roman Camps* do rise
In Hills for Soldiers Obsequies.

56

This *Scene* again withdrawing brings
A new and empty Face of things;
A levell'd space, as smooth and plain,
As Clothes for *Lilly* strecht to stain.
The World when first created sure
Was such a Table rash and pure.
Or rather such is the *Toril*
Ere the Bulls enter at Madril.

57

For to this naked equal Flat,
Which *Levellers* take Pattern at,
The Villagers in common chase
Their Cattle, which it closer rase;
And what below the Sith increast
Is pinch't yet nearer by the Beast.
Such, in the painted World, appear'd
Davenant with th' Universal Heard.

58

They seem within the polisht Grass
A Landskip drawn in Looking-Glass
And shrunk in the huge Pasture show
As Spots, so shap'd, on Faces do.
Such Fleas, ere they approach the Eye,
In Multiplying Glasses lye.
They feed so wide, so slowly move,
As *Constellations* do above.

59

Then, to conclude these pleasant
Acts,
Denton sets ope its *Cataracts*;
And makes the Meadow truly be
(What it but seem'd before) a Sea.
For, jealous of its *Lords* long stay,
It try's t'invite him thus away.

The River in it self is drown'd,
And Isl's th' astonish'd Cattle round.

60

Let others tell the *Paradox*,
How Eels now bellow in the Ox;
How Horses at their Tails do kick,
Turn'd as they hang to Leeches quick;
How Boats can over Bridges sail;
And Fishes do the Stables scale.
How *Salmons* trespassing are found;
And Pikes are taken in the Pound.

61

But I, retiring from the Flood,
Take Sanctuary in the Wood;
And, while it lasts, my self imbark
In this yet green, yet growing Ark;
Where the first Carpenter might best
Fit Timber for his Keel have Prest.
And where all Creatures might have shares;
Although in Armies, not in Paires.

62

The double Wood of ancient Stocks
Link'd in so thick, an Union locks,
It like two *Pedigrees* appears,
On one hand *Fairfax*, th' other *Veres*:
Of whom though many fell in War,
Yct more to Heaven shooting are:
And, as they Natures Cradle deckt;
Will in green Age her Hearse expect.

63

When first the Eye this Forrest sees
It seems indeed as *Wood* not *Trees*:
As if their Neighbourhood so old
To one great Trunk them all did mold.
There the huge Bulk takes place, as ment
To thrust up a *Fifth Element*;
And stretches still so closely wedg'd
As if the Night within were hedg'd.

64

Dark all without it knits; within
It opens passable and thin;
And in as loose an order grows,
As the *Corinthean Porticoes*.

The arching Boughs unite between
The Columnes of the Temple green;
And underneath the winged Quires
Echo about their tuned Fires.

65

The *Nightingale* does here make choice
To sing the Tryals of her Voice.
Low Shrubs she sits in, and adorns
With Musick high the squatted Thorns.
But highest Oakes stoop down to hear,
And listning Elders prick the Ear.
The Thorn, lest it should hurt her, draws
Within the Skin its shrunk claws.

66

But I have for my Musick found
A Sadder, yet more pleasing Sound:
The *Stock-doves*, whose fair necks are grac'd
With Nuptial Rings their Ensigns chaste;
Yet always, for some Cause unknown,
Sad pair unto the Elms they moan.
O why should such a Couple mourn,
That in so equal Flames do burn!

67

Then as I careless on the Bed
Of gelid *Straw-berrys* do tread,
And through the Hazles thick espy
The hatching *Thrustles* shining Eye;
The *Heron* from the Ashes top,
The eldest of its young lets drop,
As if it Stork-like did pretend
That *Tribute* to its Lord to send.

68

But most the *Hewel's* wonders are,
Who here has the *Holt-feisters* care.
He walks still upright from the Root,
Meas'ring the Timber with his Foot;
And all the way, to keep it clean,
Doth from the Bark the Wood-moths glean.
He, with his Beak, examines well
Which fit to stand and which to fell.

69

The good he numbers up, and hacks;
As if he mark'd them with the Ax.
But where he, tinkling with his Beak,
Does find the hollow Oak to speak,
That for his building he designs,
And through the tainted Side he mines.
Who could have thought the *tallest Oak*
Should fall by such a *feeble Strok'*!

70

Nor would it, had the Tree not fed
A *Traitor-worm*, within it bred.
(As first our *Flesh* corrupt within
Tempts impotent and bashful *Sin*.)
And yet that *Worm* triumphs not long,
But serves to feed the *Hewels* young.
While the Oake seems to fall content,
Viewing the Treason's Punishment.

71

Thus I, *easie Philosopher*,
Among the *Birds* and *Trees* confer:
And little now to make me, wants
Or of the *Fowles*, or of the *Plants*.
Give me but Wings as they, and I
Streight floting on the Air shall fly:
Or turn me but, and you shall see
I was but an inverted Tree.

72

Already I begin to call
In their most learned Original:
And where I Language want, my Signs
The Bird upon the Bough divines;
And more attentive there doth sit
Then if She were with Lime-twigs knit.
No Leaf does tremble in the Wind
Which I returning cannot find.

73

Out of these scattr'd *Sibyls* Leaves
Strange *Prophecies* my Phancy weaves:
And in one History consumes,
Like *Mexique Paintings*, all the *Plumes*.

What *Rome, Greece, Palestine*, ere said
I in this light *Mosaick* read.
Thrice happy he who, not mistook,
Hath read in *Natures mystick Book*.

74

And see how Chance's better Wit
Could with a Mask my studies hit!
The Oak-Leaves me embroyder all,
Between which Caterpillars crawl:
And Ivy, with familiar trails,
Me licks, and clasps, and curles, and hales.
Under this *antick Cope* I move
Like some great *Prelate of the Grove*,

75

Then, languishing with ease, I toss
On Pallets swoln of Velvet Moss;
While the Wind, cooling through the Boughs,
Flatters with Air my panting Brows.
Thanks for my Rest ye *Mossy Banks*,
And unto you *cool Zephyr's* Thanks,
Who, as my Hair, my Thoughts too shed,
And winnow from the Chaff my head.

76

How safe, methinks, and strong, behind
These Trees have I incamp'd my Mind;
Where Beauty, aiming at the Heart,
Bends in some Tree its useless Dart;
And where the World no certain Shot
Can make, or me it toucheth not.
But I on it securely play,
And gaul its Horsemen all the Day.

77

Bind me ye *Woodbines* in your 'twines,
Curle me about ye gadding *Vines*,
And Oh so close your Circles lace,
That I may never leave this Place:
But, lest your Fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your Silken Bondage break,
Do you, O *Brambles*, chain me too,
And courteous *Briars* nail me through.

78

Here in the Morning tye my Chain,
Where the two Woods have made a Lane:
While, like a *Guard* on either side,
The Trees before their *Lord* divide;
This, like a long and equal Thread,
Betwixt two *Labyrinths* does lead.
But, where the Floods did lately drown,
There at the Ev'ning stake me down.

79

For now the Waves are fal'n and dry'd,
And now the Meadows fresher dy'd;
Whose Grass, with moister colour dasht,
Seems as green Silks but newly washt.
No *Serpent* new nor *Crocodile*
Remains behind our little *Nile*;
Unless it self you will mistake,
Among these Meads the only Snake.

80

See in what wanton harmless folds
It ev'ry where the Meadow holds;
And its yet muddy back doth lick,
Till as a *Chrystal Mirrour* slick;
Where all things gaze themselves, and doubt
If they be in it or without.
And for his shade which therein shines,
Narcissus like, the *Sun* too pines.

81

Oh what a Pleasure 'tis to hedge
My Temples here with heavy sedge;
Abandoning my lazy Side,
Stretcht as a Bank unto the Tide;
Or to suspend my sliding Foot
On the Osiers undermined Root,
And in its Branches tough to hang,
While at my Lines the Fishes twang!

82

But now away my Hooks, my Quills,
And Angles, idle Utensils.
The *young Maria* walks to night:
Hide trifling Youth thy Pleasures slight.
'Twere shame that such judicious Eyes
Should with such Toyes a Man surprize;
She that already is the *Law*
Of all her *Sex*, her *Ages Aw*.

83

See how loose Nature, in respect
To her, it self doth recollect;
And every thing so whisht and fine,
Starts forth with to its *Bonne Mine*.
The *Sun* himself, of *Her* aware
Seems to descend with greater Care:
And lest *She* see him go to Bed,
In blushing Clouds conceales his Head.

84

So when the Shadows laid asleep
From underneath these Banks do creep,
And on the River as it flows
With *Eben Shuts* begin to close;
The modest *Halcyon* comes in sight,
Flying betwixt the Day and Night;
And such an horror calm and dumb,
Admiring Nature does benum.

85

The viscous Air, wheres'ere *She* fly,
Follows and sucks her Azure dy;
The gellying Stream compacts below,
If it might fix her shadow so;
The stupid Fishes hang, as plain
As *Flies in Chrystal* overt'ane;
And Men the silent *Scene* assist,
Charm'd with the *Saphir-winged Mist*.

86

Maria such, and so doth hush
The *World*, and through the *Ev'ning* rush.
No new-born *Comet* such a Train
Draws through the Skie, nor Star new-slain.
For streight those giddy Rockets fail,
Which from the putrid Earth exhale,
But by her *Flames*, in *Heaven* try'd,
Nature is wholly *vitrifi'd*.

87

'Tis *She* that to these Gardens gave
That wondrous Beauty which they have;

She streightness on the Woods bestows;
To *Her* the Meadow sweetness owes;
Nothing could make the River be
So Chrystal-pure but only *She*;
She yet more Pure, Sweet, Streight, and Fair,
Then Gardens, Woods, Meads, Rivers are.

88

Therefore what first *She* on them spent,
They gratefully again present.
The Meadow Carpets where to tread;
The Garden Flow'rs to Crown *Her* head;
And for a Glass the limpid Brook,
Where *She* may all *her* Beautyes look;
But, since *She* would not have them seen,
The Wood about *her* draws a Skreen.

89

For *She*, to higher Beauties rais'd,
Disdains to be for lesser prais'd.
She counts her Beauty to converse
In all the Languages as *hers*;
Nor yet in those *her* self imployes
But for the *Wisedome*, not the *Noyse*;
Nor yet that *Wisdom*e would affect,
But as 'tis *Heavens Dialect*.

90

Blest Nymph! that couldst so soon prevent
Those *Trains* by Youth against thee meant;
Tears (watry Shot that pierce the Mind;)
And *Sighs* (Loves Cannon charg'd with Wind;)
True Praise (That breaks through all defence;)
And *feign'd complying Innocence*;
But knowing where this *Ambush* lay,
She scap'd the sage, but roughest Way.

91

This 'tis to have been from the first
In a *Domestick Heaven* nurst,
Under the *Discipline severe*
Of *Fairfax* and the starry *Vere*;
Where not one object can come nigh
But pure, and spotless as the Eye;
And *Goodness* doth it self intail
On *Females*, if there want a *Male*.

Go now fond Sex that on your Face
 Do all your useless Study place,
 Nor once at Vice your Brows dare knit
 Lest the smooth Forehead wrinkled sit:
 Yet your own Face shall at you grin,
 Thorough the Black-bag of your Skin;
 When *knowledge* only could have fill'd
 And *Virtue* all those *Furrows* till'd.

Hence *She* with Graces more divine
 Supplies beyond her *Sex* the *Line*;
 And, like a *sprig* of *Miseto*
 On the *Fairfacian Oak* does grow;
 Whence, for some universal good,
 The *Priest* shall cut the sacred Bud;
 While her *glad Parents* most rejoice,
 And make their *Destiny* their *Choice*.

Mean time ye Fields, Springs, Bushes, Flow'rs,
 Where yet *She* leads her studious Hours,
 (Till Fate her worthily translates,
 And find a *Fairfax* for our *Thwaites*)
 Employ the means you have by Her,
 And in your kind your selves preferr;
 That, as all *Virgins* *She* preceds,
 So you all *Woods, Streams, Gardens, Meads*.

For you *Thessalian Tempe's Seat*
 Shall now be scorn'd as obsolete;
Aranjuez, as less, disdain'd;
 The *Bel-Retiro* as constrain'd;
 But name not the *Idalian Grove*,
 For 'twas the Seat of wanton Love;
 Much less the Dead's *Elysian Fields*,
 Yet nor to them your Beauty yields.

'Tis not, what once it was, the *World*:
 But a rude heap together hurl'd;
 All negligently overthrown,
 Gulfes, Deserts, Precipices, Stone.
 Your lesser *World* contains the same.
 But in more decent Order tame;
 You *Heaven's center, Nature's Lap*.
 And *Paradice's ony Map*.

But now the *Salmon-Fisher's* moist
 Their *Leathern Boats* begin to hoist;
 And, like *Antipodes* in Shoes,
 Have shod their *Heads* in their *Canoos*.
 How *Tortoise* like, but not so slow,
 These rational *Amphibii* go?
 Let's in: for the dark *Hemisphere*
 Does now like one of them appear.

*Epistle to Miss Blount, on her Leaving the Town,
after the Coronation*

As some fond virgin, whom her mother's care
 Drags from the town to wholesome country air,
 Just when she learns to roll a melting eye,
 And hear a spark, yet think no danger nigh;
 From the dear man unwilling she must sever,
 Yet takes one kiss before she parts for ever:
 Thus from the world fair Zephalinda flew,
 Saw others happy, and with sighs withdrew;
 Not that their pleasures caused her discontent,
 She sighed not that they stayed, but that she went.
 She went to plain-work, and to purling brooks,
 Old-fashioned halls, dull aunts, and croaking rooks;
 She went from op'ra, park, assembly, play,
 To morning walks, and pray'rs three hours a day;
 To pass her time 'twixt reading and bohea,
 To muse, and spill her solitary tea,
 Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon,
 Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon;
 Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,
 Hum half a tune, tell stories to the squire;
 Up to her godly garret after sev'n,
 There starve and pray, for that's the way to heav'n.
 Some squire, perhaps, you take delight to rack,
 Whose game is whisk, whose treat a toast in sack,
 Who visits with a gun, presents you birds,
 Then gives a smacking buss and cries,—No words!
 Or with his hound comes hollowing from the stable,
 Makes love with nods, and knees beneath a table;
 Whose laughs are hearty, though his jests are coarse,
 And loves you best of all things—but his horse.
 In some fair evening, on your elbow laid,
 You dream of triumphs in the rural shade;
 In pensive thought recall the fancied scene,
 See coronations rise on ev'ry green;
 Before you pass th' imaginary sights
 Of lords, and earls, and dukes, and gartered knights,
 While the spread fan o'er shades your closing eyes;
 Then give one flirt, and all the vision flies.
 Thus vanish sceptres, coronets, and balls,
 And leave you in lone woods, or empty walls.
 So when your slave, at some dear, idle time
 (Not plagued with head-aches, or the want of rhyme),
 Stands in the streets, abstracted from the crew,
 And while he seems to study, thinks of you:
 Just when his fancy points your sprightly eyes,
 Or sees the blush of soft Parthenia rise,
 Gay pats my shoulder, and you vanish quite;
 Streets, chairs, and coxcombs rush upon my sight;
 Vexed to be still in town, I knit my brow,
 Look sour, and hum a tune—as you may now.

(Wt. 1714; pub. 1717)

65 bohea] black tea

Country and Town

IN London I never know what to be at,
 Enraptured with this and enchanted with that!
 I'm wild with the sweets of variety's plan,
 And life seems a blessing too happy for man.

But the country, Lord help us, sets all matters right,
 So calm and composing from morning till night;
 O, it settles the spirits when nothing is seen
 But an ass on a common or goose on a green.

In town if it rains, why it damps not our hope,
 The eye has its range and the fancy her scope;
 Still the same, though it pour all night and all day,
 It spoils not our prospects, it stops not our way.

10

In the country how blessed, when it rains in the fields,
 To feast upon transports that shuttlecock yields,
 Or go crawling from window to window to see
 A hog on a dunghill or crow on a tree.

In London how easy we visit and meet,
 Gay pleasure the theme and sweet smiles are our treat;
 Our morning's a round of good-humoured delight,
 And we rattle in comfort and pleasure all night.

20

In the country how charming our visits to make
 Through ten miles of mud for formality's sake,
 With the coachman in drink and the moon in a fog,
 And no thought in our head but a ditch and a bog.

In London if folks ill together are put,
 A bore may be dropped or a quiz may be cut;
 We change without end and, if happy or ill,
 Our wants are at hand and our wishes at will.

In the country you're nailed, like a pale in your park,
 To some stick of a neighbour, crammed into the ark;
 Or if you are sick or in fits tumble down,
 You reach death ere the doctor can reach you from town.

30

I have heard how that love in a cottage is sweet,
 When two hearts in one link of soft sympathy meet;
 I know nothing of that, for alas! I'm a swain
 Who requires, I own it, more links to my chain.

You jays and your magpies may chatter on trees,
 And whisper soft nonsense in groves if they please;
 But a house is much more to my mind than a tree,
 And for groves, O! a fine grove of chimneys for me.

40

Then in town let me live and in town let me die,
 For in truth I can't relish the country, not I.
 If one must have a villa in summer to dwell,
 O give me the sweet shady side of Pall Mall.

(Pub. by 1797)

rattle] chatter

quiz] eccentric

SOAME JENYNS

1704-1787

The Modern Fine Lady

SKILLED in each art that can adorn the fair,
The sprightly dance, the soft Italian air,
The toss of quality and high-bred fleer,
Now Lady Harriot reached her fifteenth year.
Winged with diversions all her moments flew,
Each, as it passed, presenting something new;
Breakfasts and auctions wear the morn away,
Each evening gives an opera, or a play;
Then brag's eternal joys all night remain,
And kindly usher in the morn again.

For love no time has she, or inclination,
Yet must coquet it for the sake of fashion;
For this she listens to each fop that's near,
Th' embroidered colonel flatters with a sneer,

And the cropped ensign nuzzles in her ear.
But with most warmth her dress and airs inspire
Th' ambitious bosom of the landed squire,
Who fain would quit plump Dolly's softer charms
For withered lean right honourable arms;
He bows with reverence at her sacred shrine,
And treats her as if sprung from race divine,
Which she returns with insolence and scorn,
Nor deigns to smile on a plebeian born.

Ere long by friends, by cards and lovers crossed,
Her fortune, health and reputation lost;
Her money gone, yet not a tradesman paid,
Her fame, yet she still damned to be a maid,
Her spirits sink, her nerves are so unstrung,
She weeps, if but a handsome thief is hung:
By mercers, lacemen, mantua-makers pressed,
But most for ready cash for play distressed,
Where can she turn?—the squire must all repair,
She condescends to listen to his pray'r,
And marries him at length in mere despair.

But soon th' endearments of a husband cloy,
Her soul, her frame incapable of joy:
She feels no transports in the bridal bed,
Of which so oft sh' has heard, so much has read;
Then vexed that she should be condemned alone
To seek in vain this philosophic stone,
To abler tutors she resolves t' apply,
A prostitute from curiosity.

Hence men of ev'ry sort and ev'ry size,
Impatient for heav'n's cordial drop, she tries;
The fribbling beau, the rough unwieldy clown,
The ruddy templar newly on the town,
Th' Hibernian captain of gigantic make,
The brimful parson, and th' exhausted rake.

But still malignant Fate her wish denies,
Cards yield superior joys, to cards she flies;
All night from rout to rout her chairmen run,
Again she plays, and is again undone.

Behold her now in Ruin's frightful jaws!
Bonds, judgements, executions ope their paws;
Seize jewels, furniture and plate, nor spare
The gilded chariot, or the tasseled chair;
For lonely seat she's forced to quit the town,
And Tubbs conveys the wretched exile down.

Now rumbling o'er the stones of Tyburn-road,
Ne'er pressed with a more grieved or guilty load,
She bids adieu to all the well-known streets,
And envies ev'ry cinder-wench she meets.
And now the dreaded country first appears:
With sighs unfeigned the dying noise she hears
Of distant coaches fainter by degrees,
Then starts, and trembles at the sight of trees.
Silent and sullen, like some captive queen,
She's drawn along, unwilling to be seen,
Until at length appears the ruined hall,
Within the grass-green moat and ivied wall,
The doleful prison where for ever she,
But not, alas! her griefs, must buried be.

Her coach the curate and the tradesmen meet,
Great-coated tenants her arrival greet,
And boys with stubble bonfires light the street,
While bells her ears with tongues discordant grate,
Types of the nuptial ties they celebrate:
But no rejoicings can unbend her brow,
Nor deigns she to return one awkward bow,
But bounces in, disdaining once to speak,
And wipes the trickling tear from off her cheek.

Now see her in the sad decline of life,
A peevish mistress, and a sulky wife;
Her nerves unbraced, her faded cheek grown pale
With many a real, and many a fancied ail;
Of cards, admirers, equipage bereft,
Her insolence and title only left;
Severely humbled to her one-horse chair,
And the low pastimes of a country fair:
Too wretched to endure one lonely day,
Too proud one friendly visit to repay,
Too indolent to read, too criminal to pray.
At length half-dead, half-mad, and quite confined,
Shunning, and shunned by, all of human kind,
Ev'n robbed of the last comfort of her life,
Insulting the poor curate's callous wife,
Pride, disappointed pride, now stops her breath,
And with true scorpion rage she stings herself to death.

(1751)

brag] a card game

rout] an evening assembly

ROBERT LLOYD

1733-1764

The Cit's Country Box

THE wealthy Cit, grown old in trade,
Now wishes for the rural shade,
And buckles to his one-horse chair
Old Dobbin or the foundered mare;
While, wedged in closely by his side,
Sits Madam, his unwieldy bride,
With Jacky on a stool before 'em,
And out they jog in due decorum.
Scarce past the turnpike half a mile,
How all the country seems to smile!
And as they slowly jog together,
The Cit commends the road and weather;
While Madam dotes upon the trees,
And longs for ev'ry house she sees,
Admires its views, its situation,
And thus she opens her oration:

'What signify the loads of wealth,
Without that richest jewel, health?
Excuse the fondness of a wife,
Who dotes upon your precious life!
Such easeless toil, such constant care,
Is more than human strength can bear.
One may observe it in your face—
Indeed, my dear, you break apace:
And nothing can your health repair,
But exercise and country air.
Sir Traffic has a house, you know,
About a mile from Cheney Row:
He's a *good* man, indeed 'tis true,
But not so *warm*, my dear, as you:
And folks are always apt to sneer—
One would not be out-done, my dear!'

Sir Traffic's name so well applied
Awaked his brother-merchant's pride;
And Thrifty, who had all his life
Paid utmost deference to his wife,
Confessed her arguments had reason,
And by th' approaching summer season,
Draws a few hundreds from the stocks,
And purchases his country box.

Some three or four mile out of town
(An hour's ride will bring you down),
He fixes on his choice abode,
Not half a furlong from the road:
And so convenient does it lay,
The stages pass it ev'ry day:
And then so snug, so mighty pretty,
To have an house so near the city!
Take but your places at the Boar,
You're set down at the very door.

Well then, suppose them fixed at last,
White-washing, painting, scrubbing past,
Hugging themselves in ease and clover,
With all the fuss of moving over;
Lo, a new heap of whims are bred,
And wanton in my lady's head:

'Well, to be sure, it must be owned
It is a charming spot of ground;
So sweet a distance for a ride,
And all about so *countrified*!

'Twould come to but a trifling price
To make it quite a paradise;
I cannot bear those nasty rails,
Those ugly, broken, mouldy pales:
Suppose, my dear, instead of these,
We build a railing, all Chinese.
Although one hates to be exposed,
'Tis dismal to be thus inclosed;
One hardly any object sees—
I wish you'd fell those odious trees.
Objects continual passing by
Were something to amuse the eye,
But to be pent within the walls—
One might as well be at St. Paul's.
Our house beholders would adore,
Was there a level lawn before,
Nothing its views to incommode,
But quite laid open to the road;
While ev'ry trav'ler in amaze
Should on our little mansion gaze,
And, pointing to the choice retreat,
Cry, "That's Sir Thrifty's country seat."
No doubt her arguments prevail,
For Madam's *taste* can never fail.

Blest age! when all men may procure
The title of a connoisseur;
When noble and ignoble herd
Are governed by a single word;
Though, like the royal German dames,
It bears an hundred Christian names,
As Genius, Fancy, Judgement, Goût,
Whim, Caprice, Je-ne-sais-quoi, Virtù:
Which appellations all describe
Taste, and the modern *tasteful* tribe.

Now bricklay'rs, carpenters and joiners,
With Chinese artists and designers,
Produce their schemes of alteration,
To work this wond'rous reformation.
The useful dome, which secret stood
Embosomed in the yew-tree's wood,
The trav'ler with amazement sees
A temple, Gothic, or Chinese,
With many a bell and tawdry rag on,
And crested with a sprawling dragon;
A wooden arch is bent astride
A ditch of water, four foot wide,
With angles, curves and zigzag lines,
From Halfpenny's exact designs.
In front, a level lawn is seen,
Without a shrub upon the green,
Where Taste would want its first great law,
But for the skulking, sly *ha-ha*,
By whose miraculous assistance,
You gain a prospect two fields' distance.
And now from Hyde-Park Corner come
The gods of Athens and of Rome.
Here squabby Cupids take their places,
With Venus and the clumsy Graces:
Apollo there, with aim so clever,
Stretches his leaden bow for ever;
And there, without the pow'r to fly,
Stands fixed a tip-toe Mercury.

The villa thus completely graced,
All own that Thrifty has a Taste;
And Madam's female friends and cousins,
With common-council-men by dozens,
Flock ev'ry Sunday to the seat,
To stare about them, and to eat.

(1756)

common-council-men] London town-councillors

JAMES CAWTHORN

1719-1761

from *Of Taste. An Essay*

TIME was, a wealthy Englishman would join
A rich plum-pudding to a fat sirloin;
Or bake a pasty, whose enormous wall
Took up almost the area of his hall:
But now, as art improves, and life refines,
The demon Taste attends him when he dines,
Serves on his board an elegant regale,
Where three stewed mushrooms flank a larded quail;
Where infant turkeys, half a month resigned
To the soft breathings of a southern wind,
And smothered in a rich ragout of snails,
Outstink a lenten supper at Versailles.
Is there a saint that would not laugh to see
The good man piddling with his fricassee;
Forced by the luxury of taste to drain
A flask of poison, which he calls champagne!
While he, poor idiot! though he dare not speak,
Pines all the while for porter and ox-check?
Sure 'tis enough to starve for pomp and show,
To drink, and curse the clarets of Bordeaux:
Yet such our humour, such our skill to hit
Excess of folly through excess of wit,
We plant the garden, and we build the seat,
Just as absurdly as we drink and eat.
For is there aught that nature's hand has sown
To bloom and ripen in her hottest zone?
Is there a shrub which, ere its verdure blow,
Asks all the suns that beam upon the Po?
Is there a flowret whose vermilion hue
Can only catch its beauty in Peru?
Is there a portal, colonnade or dome,
The pride of Naples, or the boast of Rome?
We raise it here, in storms of wind and hail,
On the bleak bosom of a sunless vale;
Careless alike of climate, soil and place,
The cast of nature, and the smiles of grace.
Hence all our stuccoed walls, mosaic floors,
Palladian windows and Venetian doors,
Our Gothic fronts, whose Attic wings unfold
Fluted pilasters tipped with leaves of gold,
Our massy ceilings, graced with gay festoons,
The weeping marbles of our damp salons,
Lawns fringed with citrons, amaranthine bow'rs,
Expiring myrtles, and unop'ning flow'rs.
Hence the good Scotsman bids th' anana blow
In rocks of crystal or in Alps of snow;
On Orcus' steep extends his wide arcade,
And kills his scanty sunshine in a shade.
One might expect a sanctity of style,
August and manly, in an holy pile,
And think an architect extremely odd
To build a playhouse for the church of God:
Yet half our churches, such the mode that reigns,
Are Roman theatres or Grecian fanes;
Where broad-arched windows to the eye convey
The keen diffusion of too strong a day;
Where, in the luxury of wanton pride,
Corinthian columns languish side by side,
Closed by an altar, exquisitely fine,
Loose and lascivious as a Cyprian shrine.
Of late, 'tis true, quite sick of Rome and Greece,
We fetch our models from the wise Chinese:
European artists are too cool and chaste,
For Mand'rin only is the man of taste;

Whose bolder genius, fondly wild to see
His grove a forest, and his pond a sea,
Breaks out—and, whimsically great, designs
Without the shackles or of rules or lines:
Formed on his plans, our farms and seats begin
To match the boasted villas of Pekin.
On every hill a spire-crowned temple swells,
Hung round with serpents and a fringe of bells:

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Junks and balons along our waters sail,
With each a gilded cockboat at his tail;
Our choice exotics to the breeze exhale,
Within th' inclosure of a zigzag rail;
In Tartar huts our cows and horses lie,
Our hogs are fatted in an Indian sty;
On ev'ry shelf a joss divinely stares,
Nymphs laid on chintzes sprawl upon our chairs;
While o'er our cabinets Confucius nods,
Midst porcelain elephants and china gods.

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JOHN AIKIN

1747-1822

Picturesque; A Fragment

NEW follies spring; and now we must be taught
To judge of prospects by an artist's rules,
And Picturesque's the word. Whatever scene,
Gay, rich, sublime, stupendous, wide or wild,
Disdains the bounds of canvas, nor supplies
Foreground and background, keeping, lights and shades
To aid the pencil's power, contracts the brow
And curls the nose of Taste's great arbiter,
Too learned far to feel a vulgar joy.
'That station shows too much—the boundless length

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Of dazzling distance mars the near effect.
Yon village spire, embosomed in the trees,
Takes from the scene its savage character,
And makes it smack of man; and those sleek kine
And well-fed steeds might grace a country fair,
But tame their outlines, and a heavy mass
Of glaring light gleams from their polished sides.
How stiff that conic hill! Those chalky cliffs
Rush forward on the sight and harshly break
All harmony of keeping! 'tis as bad
As country parson's white-beplastered front!
Such the grave doctrines of the modern sage,
The Prospect-Critic, when, with half-shut eye
And hand-formed tube, he squints at Nature's works
And takes them piece by piece; with six-inch square
Metes out the vast horizon; culls, rejects,
Lights up, obscures and blots the blessed sun.
And is it thus the handmaid Art presumes
To rule her mistress? thus would she confine
The Maker's hand to suit the copyist's skill?

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In Nature all is fair—or, if ungraced
With flowing form and harmony of hues,
Yet by the force of some associate charm,
Some touch sublime or contrast's magic power,
It awes, expands, delights or melts the soul.

I love to see the lonely mountain start
Bold from the plain, whose huge though shapeless bulk
Shrinks Egypt's pyramids to pigmy toys;
I love the piny forest, many a mile
Blackening th' horizon, though a dreary moor
Fill up the space between; I joy to stand
On the bare ridge's utmost verge, air-propped,
And with an eagle's ken the vale below,
With all its fields, groves, farms and winding rills,
At once drink in; still more my transport swells,
If sudden on my easy-turning eye
Bursts the wide ocean, though the dazzling blaze
Of noontide sun reflected from his waves
Confound all space in undistinguished light.
Celestial glory, hail! my ravished soul
Imbibes the bright effulgence, feels how weak
Art's feeble hand to imitate thy fires

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