

The Poetical Works of John Dryden, Volume 1 eBook

The Poetical Works of John Dryden, Volume 1 by John Dryden

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: 'Lord Hastings:' the nobleman herein lamented, was styled Henry Lord Hastings, son to Ferdinand Earl of Huntingdon. He died before his father in 1649, being then in his twentieth year, and on the day preceding that which had been fixed for his marriage.]

[Footnote 2: 'Archimedes:' a famous geometrician, who was killed at the taking of Syracuse, in the 542d year of Rome. He made a glass sphere, wherein the motions of the heavenly bodies were wonderfully described.]

[Footnote 3: 'Ptolemy:' Claudius Ptolemaeus, a celebrated mathematician in the reign of M. Aurelius Antoninus.]

[Footnote 4: 'Tycho:' Tycho Brahe]

* * * * *

HEROIC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROMWELL,

WRITTEN AFTER HIS FUNERAL.

- 1 And now 'tis time; for their officious haste,
Who would before have borne him to the sky,
Like eager Romans, ere all rites were past,
Did let too soon the sacred eagle^[5] fly.
- 2 Though our best notes are treason to his fame,
Join'd with the loud applause of public voice;
Since Heaven, what praise we offer to his name,
Hath render'd too authentic by its choice.
- 3 Though in his praise no arts can liberal be,
Since they, whose muses have the highest flown,
Add not to his immortal memory,
But do an act of friendship to their own:
- 4 Yet 'tis our duty, and our interest too,
Such monuments as we can build to raise;
Lest all the world prevent what we should do,
And claim a title in him by their praise.



- 5 How shall I then begin, or where conclude,
To draw a fame so truly circular?
For in a round what order can be show'd,
Where all the parts so equal perfect are?
- 6 His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone;
For he was great ere fortune made him so:
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.
- 7 No borrow'd bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring;
Nor was his virtue poison'd soon as born,
With the too early thoughts of being king.
- 8 Fortune (that easy mistress to the young,
But to her ancient servants coy and hard),
Him at that age her favourites rank'd among,
When she her best-loved Pompey did discard.
- 9 He, private, mark'd the faults of others' sway,
And set as sea-marks for himself to shun:
Not like rash monarchs, who their youth betray
By acts their age too late would wish undone.
- 10 And yet dominion was not his design;
We owe that blessing, not to him, but Heaven,
Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join;
Rewards, that less to him, than us, were given.

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- 11 Our former chiefs, like sticklers of the war,
First sought to inflame the parties, then to poise:
The quarrel loved, but did the cause abhor;
And did not strike to hurt, but make a noise.
- 12 War, our consumption, was their gainful trade:
We inward bled, whilst they prolong'd our pain;
He fought to end our fighting, and essay'd
To staunch the blood by breathing of the vein.
- 13 Swift and resistless through the land he past,
Like that bold Greek[6] who did the East subdue,
And made to battles such heroic haste,
As if on wings of victory he flew.
- 14 He fought secure of fortune as of fame:
Still by new maps the island might be shown,
Of conquests, which he strew'd where'er he came,
Thick as the galaxy with stars is sown.
- 15 His palms,[7] though under weights they did not stand,
Still thrived; no winter could his laurels fade:
Heaven in his portrait show'd a workman's hand,
And drew it perfect, yet without a shade.
- 16 Peace was the prize of all his toil and care,
Which war had banish'd, and did now restore:
Bologna's walls[8] thus mounted in the air,
To seat themselves more surely than before.
- 17 Her safety rescued Ireland to him owes;
And treacherous Scotland, to no interest true,
Yet blest that fate which did his arms dispose
Her land to civilize, as to subdue.
- 18 Nor was he like those stars which, only shine,
When to pale mariners they storms portend:
He had his calmer influence, and his mien
Did love and majesty together blend.
- 19 'Tis true, his countenance did imprint an awe;
And naturally all souls to his did bow,
As wands[9] of divination downward draw,
And point to beds where sovereign gold doth grow.



- 20 When past all offerings to Feretrian Jove,
He Mars deposed, and arms to gowns made yield;
Successful councils did him soon approve
As fit for close intrigues, as open field.
- 21 To suppliant Holland he vouchsafed a peace,
Our once bold rival of the British main,
Now tamely glad her unjust claim to cease,
And buy our friendship with her idol, gain.
- 22 Fame of the asserted sea through Europe blown,
Made France and Spain ambitious of his love;
Each knew that side must conquer he would own;
And for him fiercely, as for empire, strove.
- 23 No sooner was the Frenchman's cause^[10] embraced,
Than the light Monsieur the grave Don outweigh'd;
His fortune turn'd the scale where'er 'twas cast,
Though Indian mines were in the other laid.
- 24 When absent, yet we conquer'd in his right:
For though some meaner artist's skill were shown
In mingling colours or in placing light,
Yet still the fair designment was his own.

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25 For from all tempers he could service draw;
The worth of each, with its alloy, he knew;
And, as the confidant of Nature, saw
How she complexions did divide and brew.

26 Or he their single virtues did survey,
By intuition, in his own large breast;
Where all the rich ideas of them lay;
That were the rule and measure to the rest.

27 When such heroic virtue Heaven sets out,
The stars, like commons, sullenly obey;
Because it drains them when it comes about,
And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

28 From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,
Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend;
Since their commencement to his arms they owe,
If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

29 He made us freemen of the Continent,[11]
Whom Nature did like captives treat before;
To nobler preys the English lion sent,
And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

30 That old unquestion'd pirate of the land,
Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk heard;
And trembling wish'd behind more Alps to stand,
Although an Alexander[12] were her guard.

31 By his command we boldly cross'd the line,
And bravely fought where southern stars arise;
We traced the far-fetch'd gold unto the mine,
And that which bribed our fathers made our prize.

32 Such was our prince; yet own'd a soul above
The highest acts it could produce to show:
Thus poor mechanic arts in public move,
Whilst the deep secrets beyond practice go.

33 Nor died he when his ebbing fame went less,
But when fresh laurels courted him to live:
He seem'd but to prevent some new success,
As if above what triumphs earth could give.



34 His latest victories still thickest came,
As near the centre motion doth increase;
Till he, press'd down by his own weighty name,
Did, like the vestal,[13] under spoils decease.

35 But first the ocean as a tribute sent
The giant prince of all her watery herd;
And the Isle, when her protecting genius went,
Upon his obsequies loud sighs[14] conferr'd.

36 No civil broils have since his death arose,
But faction now by habit does obey;
And wars have that respect for his repose,
As winds for halcyons, when they breed at sea.

37 His ashes in a peaceful urn[15] shall rest;
His name a great example stands, to show
How strangely high endeavours may be blest,
Where piety and valour jointly go.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 5: 'Sacred eagle:' the Romans let fly an eagle from the pile of a dead Emperor.]

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[Footnote 6: 'Bold Greek:' Alexander the Great.]

[Footnote 7: 'Palms' were thought to grow best under pressure.]

[Footnote 8: 'Bologna's walls,' &c.: alluding to a Popish story about the wall of Bologna, on which was an image of the Virgin, being blown up, and falling exactly into its place again.]

[Footnote 9: 'Wands:' see the 'Antiquary.']

[Footnote 10: 'Frenchman's cause:' the treaty of alliance which Cromwell entered into with France against the Spaniards.]

[Footnote 11: 'Freemen of the Continent:' by the taking of Dunkirk.]

[Footnote 12: 'Alexander:' Alexander VII., at this time Pope.]

[Footnote 13: 'Vestal:' Tarpeia.]

[Footnote 14: 'Loud sighs:' the tempest which occurred at Cromwell's death.]

[Footnote 15: 'Peaceful urn:' Dryden no true prophet—Cromwell's bones having been dragged out of the royal vault, and exposed on the gibbet in 1660.]

* * * * *

ASTRAEA REDUX.

A POEM ON THE HAPPY RESTORATION AND RETURN OF HIS SACRED MAJESTY
CHARLES II., 1660.

"Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna."—VIRG.

"The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,
Renews its finish'd course; Saturnian times
Roll round again."

Now with a general peace the world was blest,
While ours, a world divided from the rest,
A dreadful quiet felt, and worser far
Than arms, a sullen interval of war:
Thus when black clouds draw down the labouring skies,
Ere yet abroad the winged thunder flies,
An horrid stillness first invades the ear,



And in that silence we the tempest fear.
The ambitious Swede,[16] like restless billows tost,
On this hand gaining what on that he lost, 10
Though in his life he blood and ruin breathed,
To his now guideless kingdom peace bequeath'd.
And Heaven, that seem'd regardless of our fate,
For France and Spain did miracles create;
Such mortal quarrels to compose in peace,
As nature bred, and interest did increase.
We sigh'd to hear the fair Iberian bride[17]
Must grow a lily to the lily's side;
While our cross stars denied us Charles' bed,
Whom our first flames and virgin love did wed. 20
For his long absence Church and State did groan;
Madness the pulpit, faction seized the throne:
Experienced age in deep despair was lost,
To see the rebel thrive, the loyal cross'd:
Youth that with joys had unacquainted been,
Envied gray hairs that once good days had seen:
We thought our sires, not with their own content,
Had, ere we came to age, our portion spent.
Nor could our nobles hope their bold attempt 30
Who ruin'd crowns would coronets

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exempt:

For when by their designing leaders taught
To strike at power, which for themselves they sought,
The vulgar, gull'd into rebellion, arm'd;
Their blood to action by the prize was warm'd.
The sacred purple, then, and scarlet gown,
Like sanguine dye to elephants, was shown.
Thus when the bold Typhoeus scaled the sky,
And forced great Jove from his own Heaven to fly,
(What king, what crown from treason's reach is free,
If Jove and Heaven can violated be?) 40
The lesser gods, that shared his prosperous state,
All suffer'd in the exiled Thunderer's fate.
The rabble now such freedom did enjoy,
As winds at sea, that use it to destroy:
Blind as the Cyclop, and as wild as he,
They own'd a lawless, savage liberty;
Like that our painted ancestors so prized,
Ere empire's arts their breasts had civilized.
How great were then our Charles' woes, who thus
Was forced to suffer for himself and us! 50
He, tost by fate, and hurried up and down,
Heir to his father's sorrows, with his crown,
Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.
Unconquer'd yet in that forlorn estate,
His manly courage overcame his fate.
His wounds he took, like Romans, on his breast,
Which by his virtue were with laurels drest.
As souls reach Heaven while yet in bodies pent,
So did he live above his banishment. 60
That sun, which we beheld with cozen'd eyes
Within the water, moved along the skies.
How easy 'tis, when destiny proves kind,
With full-spread sails to run before the wind!
But those that 'gainst stiff gales laveering go,
Must be at once resolved and skilful too.
He would not, like soft Otho,[18] hope prevent,
But stay'd, and suffer'd fortune to repent.
These virtues Galba[19] in a stranger sought,
And Piso to adopted empire brought. 70
How shall I then my doubtful thoughts express,



That must his sufferings both regret and bless?
For when his early valour Heaven had cross'd;
And all at Worcester but the honour lost;
Forced into exile from his rightful throne,
He made all countries where he came his own;
And viewing monarchs' secret arts of sway,
A royal factor for his kingdoms lay.
Thus banish'd David spent abroad his time,
When to be God's anointed was his crime; 80
And when restored, made his proud neighbours rue
Those choice remarks he from his travels drew.
Nor is he only by afflictions shown
To conquer other realms, but rule his own:
Recovering hardly what he lost before,
His right endears it much; his purchase more.
Inured to suffer ere he came to reign,

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No rash procedure will his actions stain:
To business, ripen'd by digestive thought,
His future rule is into method brought: 90
As they who first proportion understand,
With easy practice reach a master's hand.
Well might the ancient poets then confer
On Night the honour'd name of Counsellor,
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.
In such adversities to sceptre train'd,
The name of Great his famous grandsire[20] gain'd:
Who yet a king alone in name and right,
With hunger, cold, and angry Jove did fight; 100
Shock'd by a covenanting league's vast powers,
As holy and as catholic as ours:
Till fortune's fruitless spite had made it known,
Her blows, not shook, but riveted, his throne.

Some lazy ages, lost in sleep and ease,
No action leave to busy chronicles:
Such, whose supine felicity but makes
In story chasms, in epoch's mistakes;
O'er whom Time gently shakes his wings of down,
Till, with his silent sickle, they are mown. 110
Such is not Charles' too, too active age,
Which, govern'd by the wild distemper'd rage
Of some black star infecting all the skies,
Made him at his own cost, like Adam, wise.
Tremble, ye nations, which, secure before,
Laugh'd at those arms that 'gainst ourselves we bore;
Roused by the lash of his own stubborn tail,
Our lion now will foreign foes assail.
With alga[21] who the sacred altar strews?
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes: 120
A bull to thee, Portumnus,[22] shall be slain,
A lamb to you, ye Tempests of the main:
For those loud storms that did against him roar,
Have cast his shipwreck'd vessel on the shore.
Yet as wise artists mix their colours so,
That by degrees they from each other go;



Black steals unheeded from the neighbouring white,
Without offending the well-cozen'd sight:
So on us stole our blessed change; while we
The effect did feel, but scarce the manner see. 130
Frosts that constrain the ground, and birth deny
To flowers that in its womb expecting lie,
Do seldom their usurping power withdraw,
But raging floods pursue their hasty thaw.
Our thaw was mild, the cold not chased away,
But lost in kindly heat of lengthen'd day.
Heaven would no bargain for its blessings drive,
But what we could not pay for, freely give.
The Prince of peace would like himself confer
A gift unhop'd, without the price of war: 140
Yet, as he knew his blessing's worth, took care,
That we should know it by repeated prayer;
Which storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from thence,
As heaven itself is took by violence.

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Booth's[23] forward valour only served to show
He durst that duty pay we all did owe.
The attempt was fair; but Heaven's prefixed hour
Not come: so like the watchful traveller,
That by the moon's mistaken light did rise,
Lay down again, and closed his weary eyes. 150
'Twas Monk whom Providence design'd to loose
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
The blessed saints that watch'd this turning scene,
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
Not in their bulk, but in their order, strong.
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimeras we pursue,
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue: 160
But when ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint like gold that chemists make.
How hard was then his task! at once to be,
What in the body natural we see!
Man's Architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense;
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay. 170
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let him play a while upon the hook.
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.
Wise leeches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude:
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
Till some safe crisis authorise their skill.
Nor could his acts too close a vizard wear,
To 'scape their eyes whom guilt had taught to fear, 180
And guard with caution that polluted nest,
Whence Legion twice before was dispossess'd:
Once sacred house; which, when they enter'd in,
They thought the place could sanctify a sin;



Like those that vainly hoped kind Heaven would wink,
While to excess on martyrs' tombs they drink.
And as devouter Turks first warn their souls
To part, before they taste forbidden bowls:
So these, when their black crimes they went about,
First timely charm'd their useless conscience out. 190
Religion's name against itself was made;
The shadow served the substance to invade:
Like zealous missions, they did care pretend
Of souls in show, but made the gold their end.
The incensed powers beheld with scorn from high
An heaven so far distant from the sky,
Which durst, with horses' hoofs that beat the ground,
And martial brass, belie the thunder's sound.
'Twas hence at length just vengeance thought it fit
To speed their ruin by their impious wit.

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Thus Sforza, cursed with a too fertile brain,
Lost by his wiles the power his wit did gain.
Henceforth their fougue[24] must spend at lesser rate,
Than in its flames to wrap a nation's fate.
Suffer'd to live, they are like helots set,
A virtuous shame within us to beget.
For by example most we sinn'd before,
And glass-like clearness mix'd with frailty bore.
But, since reform'd by what we did amiss,
We by our sufferings learn to prize our bliss: 210
Like early lovers, whose unpractised hearts
Were long the May-game of malicious arts,
When once they find their jealousies were vain,
With double heat renew their fires again.
'Twas this produced the joy that hurried o'er
Such swarms of English to the neighbouring shore,
To fetch that prize, by which Batavia made
So rich amends for our impoverish'd trade.
Oh! had you seen from Schevelin's[25] barren shore,
(Crowded with troops, and barren now no more,) 220
Afflicted Holland to his farewell bring
True sorrow, Holland to regret a king!
While waiting him his royal fleet did ride,
And willing winds to their lower'd sails denied.
The wavering streamers, flags, and standard out,
The merry seamen's rude but cheerful shout:
And last the cannon's voice, that shook the skies,
And as it fares in sudden ecstasies,
At once bereft us both of ears and eyes.
The Naseby,[26] now no longer England's shame, 230
But better to be lost in Charles' name,
(Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets)
Receives her lord: the joyful London meets
The princely York, himself alone a freight;
The Swiftsure groans beneath great Gloster's[27] weight:
Secure as when the halcyon breeds, with these,
He that was born to drown might cross the seas.
Heaven could not own a Providence, and take
The wealth three nations ventured at a stake.
The same indulgence Charles' voyage bless'd, 240
Which in his right had miracles confess'd.



The winds that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their straighten'd lungs, or conscious of their charge.
The British Amphitrite, smooth and clear,
In richer azure never did appear;
Proud her returning prince to entertain
With the submitted fasces of the main.
And welcome now, great monarch, to your own! 250
Behold the approaching cliffs of Albion:
It is no longer motion cheats your view,
As you meet it, the land approacheth you.
The land returns, and, in the white it wears,
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.
But you, whose goodness your descent doth show,

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Your heavenly parentage and earthly too;
By that same mildness, which your father's crown
Before did ravish, shall secure your own.
Not tied to rules of policy, you find 260
Revenge less sweet than a forgiving mind.
Thus, when the Almighty would to Moses give
A sight of all he could behold and live;
A voice before his entry did proclaim
Long-suffering, goodness, mercy, in his name.
Your power to justice doth submit your cause,
Your goodness only is above the laws;
Whose rigid letter, while pronounced by you,
Is softer made. So winds that tempests brew,
When through Arabian groves they take their flight, 270
Made wanton with rich odours, lose their spite.
And as those lees, that trouble it, refine
The agitated soul of generous wine;
So tears of joy, for your returning spilt,
Work out, and expiate our former guilt.
Methinks I see those crowds on Dover's strand,
Who, in their haste to welcome you to land,
Choked up the beach with their still growing store,
And made a wilder torrent on the shore:
While, spurr'd with eager thoughts of past delight, 280
Those, who had seen you, court a second sight;
Preventing still your steps, and making haste
To meet you often wheresoe'er you past.
How shall I speak of that triumphant day,
When you renew'd the expiring pomp of May![28]
(A month that owns an interest in your name:
You and the flowers are its peculiar claim.)
That star[29] that at your birth shone out so bright,
It stain'd the duller sun's meridian light,
Did once again its potent fires renew, 290
Guiding our eyes to find and worship you.

And now Time's whiter series is begun,
Which in soft centuries shall smoothly run:
Those clouds, that overcast your morn, shall fly,
Dispell'd to farthest corners of the sky.



Our nation with united interest blest,
Not now content to poise, shall sway the rest.
Abroad your empire shall no limits know,
But, like the sea, in boundless circles flow.
Your much-loved fleet shall, with a wide command, 300
Besiege the petty monarchs of the land:
And as old Time his offspring swallow'd down,
Our ocean in its depths all seas shall drown.
Their wealthy trade from pirates' rapine free,
Our merchants shall no more adventurers be:
Nor in the farthest East those dangers fear,
Which humble Holland must dissemble here.
Spain to your gift alone her Indies owes;
For what the powerful takes not, he bestows:
And France, that did an exile's presence fear, 310
May justly apprehend you still too near.

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At home the hateful names of parties cease,
And factious souls are wearied into peace.
The discontented now are only they
Whose crimes before did your just cause betray:
Of those, your edicts some reclaim from sin,
But most your life and blest example win.
Oh, happy prince! whom Heaven hath taught the way,
By paying vows to have more vows to pay!
Oh, happy age! oh times like those alone, 320
By fate reserved for great Augustus' throne!
When the joint growth of arms and arts foreshow
The world a monarch, and that monarch you.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 16: 'Ambitious Swede:' Charles X., named also Gustavus, nephew to the great Gustavus Adolphus.]

[Footnote 17: 'Iberian bride:' the Infanta of Spain was betrothed to Louis XIV.]

[Footnote 18: 'Otho:' see Juvenal.]

[Footnote 19: 'Galba:' Roman emperor, who adopted Piso.]

[Footnote 20: 'Famous grandsire:' Charles II. was grandson by the mother's side to Henry IV. of France.]

[Footnote 21: 'With alga,' &c. : these lines refer to the ceremonies used by such heathens as escaped from shipwreck. *Alga marina*, or sea-weed, was strewed about the altar, and a lamb sacrificed to the winds.]

[Footnote 22: 'Portumnus:' Palaemon, or Melicerta, god of shipwrecked mariners.]

[Footnote 23: 'Booth's:' Sir George Booth, an unsuccessful and premature warrior on the Royal side in 1659.]

[Footnote 24: 'Fougue:' a French word used for the fire and spirit of a horse.]

[Footnote 25: 'Schevelin:' a village about a mile from the Hague, at which Charles II. embarked for England.]

[Footnote 26: 'Naseby:' the ship in which Charles II. returned from exile.]

[Footnote 27: 'Great Gloster:' Henry, Duke of Gloucester, third son of Charles I., landed at Dover with his brother in 1660, and died of the smallpox soon afterwards.]

[Footnote 28: Charles entered London on the 29th of May.]

[Footnote 29: 'Star:' said to have shone on the day of Charles' birth, and outshone the sun.]

* * * * *

TO HIS SACRED MAJESTY.

A PANEGYRIC ON HIS CORONATION.

In that wild deluge where the world was drown'd,
When life and sin one common tomb had found,
The first small prospect of a rising hill
With various notes of joy the ark did fill:
Yet when that flood in its own depths was drown'd,
It left behind it false and slippery ground;
And the more solemn pomp was still deferr'd,
Till new-born nature in fresh looks appear'd.
Thus, Royal Sir, to see you landed here,
Was cause enough of triumph for a year:



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10

Nor would your care those glorious joys repeat,
Till they at once might be secure and great:
Till your kind beams, by their continued stay,
Had warm'd the ground, and call'd the damps away,
Such vapours, while your powerful influence dries,
Then soonest vanish when they highest rise.
Had greater haste these sacred rites prepared,
Some guilty months had in your triumphs shared:
But this untainted year is all your own;
Your glories may without our crimes be shown. 20
We had not yet exhausted all our store,
When you refresh'd our joys by adding more:
As Heaven, of old, dispensed celestial dew,
You gave us manna, and still give us new.

Now our sad ruins are removed from sight,
The season too comes fraught with new delight:
Time seems not now beneath his years to stoop,
Nor do his wings with sickly feathers droop:
Soft western winds waft o'er the gaudy spring,
And open'd scenes of flowers and blossoms bring, 30
To grace this happy day, while you appear,
Not king of us alone, but of the year.
All eyes you draw, and with the eyes the heart:
Of your own pomp, yourself the greatest part:
Loud shouts the nation's happiness proclaim,
And Heaven this day is feasted with your name.
Your cavalcade the fair spectators view,
From their high standings, yet look up to you.
From your brave train each singles out a prey,
And longs to date a conquest from your day. 40
Now charged with blessings while you seek repose,
Officious slumbers haste your eyes to close;
And glorious dreams stand ready to restore
The pleasing shapes of all you saw before.
Next to the sacred temple you are led,
Where waits a crown for your more sacred head:
How justly from the church that crown is due,
Preserved from ruin, and restored by you!
The grateful choir their harmony employ,
Not to make greater, but more solemn joy. 50



Wrapt soft and warm your name is sent on high,
As flames do on the wings of incense fly:
Music herself is lost; in vain she brings
Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings:
Her melting strains in you a tomb have found,
And lie like bees in their own sweetness drown'd.
He that brought peace, all discord could atone,
His name is music of itself alone.
Now while the sacred oil anoints your head,
And fragrant scents, begun from you, are spread
Through the large dome; the people's joyful sound,
Sent back, is still preserved in hallow'd ground;
Which in one blessing mix'd descends on you;
As heighten'd spirits fall in richer dew.
Not that our wishes do increase your store,

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Full of yourself, you can admit no more:
We add not to your glory, but employ
Our time, like angels, in expressing joy.
Nor is it duty, or our hopes alone,
Create that joy, but full fruition: 70
We know those blessings, which we must possess,
And judge of future by past happiness.
No promise can oblige a prince so much
Still to be good, as long to have been such.
A noble emulation heats your breast,
And your own fame now robs you of your rest.
Good actions still must be maintain'd with good,
As bodies nourish'd with resembling food.

You have already quench'd sedition's brand;
And zeal, which burnt it, only warms the land. 80
The jealous sects, that dare not trust their cause
So far from their own will as to the laws,
You for their umpire and their synod take,
And their appeal alone to Caesar make.
Kind Heaven so rare a temper did provide,
That guilt, repenting, might in it confide.
Among our crimes oblivion may be set;
But 'tis our king's perfection to forget.
Virtues unknown to these rough northern climes
From milder heavens you bring, without their crimes. 90
Your calmness does no after-storms provide,
Nor seeming patience mortal anger hide.
When empire first from families did spring,
Then every father govern'd as a king:
But you, that are a sovereign prince, allay
Imperial power with your paternal sway.
From those great cares when ease your soul unbends,
Your pleasures are design'd to noble ends:
Born to command the mistress of the seas,
Your thoughts themselves in that blue empire please. 100
Hither in summer evenings you repair
To taste the *fraicheur* of the purer air:
Undaunted here you ride, when winter raves,
With Caesar's heart that rose above the waves.



More I could sing, but fear my numbers stays;
No loyal subject dares that courage praise.
In stately frigates most delight you find,
Where well-drawn battles fire your martial mind.
What to your cares we owe, is learnt from hence,
When even your pleasures serve for our defence. 110
Beyond your court flows in th' admitted tide,
Where in new depths the wondering fishes glide:
Here in a royal bed[30] the waters sleep;
When tired at sea, within this bay they creep.
Here the mistrustful fowl no harm suspects,
So safe are all things which our king protects.
From your loved Thames a blessing yet is due,
Second alone to that it brought in you;
A queen, near whose chaste womb, ordain'd by fate,
The souls of kings unborn for bodies wait. 120
It was your love before made discord cease:
Your love is destined to your country's

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peace.

Both Indies, rivals in your bed, provide
With gold or jewels to adorn your bride.
This to a mighty king presents rich ore,
While that with incense does a god implore.
Two kingdoms wait your doom, and, as you choose,
This must receive a crown, or that must lose.
Thus from your royal oak, like Jove's of old,
Are answers sought, and destinies foretold: 130
Propitious oracles are begg'd with vows,
And crowns that grow upon the sacred boughs.
Your subjects, while you weigh the nation's fate,
Suspend to both their doubtful love or hate:
Choose only, Sir, that so they may possess,
With their own peace their children's happiness.

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 30: 'Royal bed:' the river led from the Thames through St James' Park.]

* * * * *

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR HYDE.[31]

PRESENTED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1662.

My Lord,
While flattering crowds officiously appear
To give themselves, not you, a happy year;
And by the greatness of their presents prove
How much they hope, but not how well they love;
The Muses, who your early courtship boast,
Though now your flames are with their beauty lost,
Yet watch their time, that, if you have forgot
They were your mistresses, the world may not:
Decay'd by time and wars, they only prove
Their former beauty by your former love; 10
And now present, as ancient ladies do,



That, courted long, at length are forced to woo.
For still they look on you with such kind eyes,
As those that see the church's sovereign rise;
From their own order chose, in whose high state,
They think themselves the second choice of fate.
When our great monarch into exile went,
Wit and religion suffer'd banishment.
Thus once, when Troy was wrapp'd in fire and smoke,
The helpless gods their burning shrines forsook; 20
They with the vanquish'd prince and party go,
And leave their temples empty to the foe.
At length the Muses stand, restored again
To that great charge which Nature did ordain;
And their loved Druids seem revived by fate,
While you dispense the laws, and guide the state.
The nation's soul, our monarch, does dispense,
Through you, to us his vital influence:
You are the channel where those spirits flow,
And work them higher, as to us they go. 30

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In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth seems join'd unto the sky:
So, in this hemisphere, our utmost view
Is only bounded by our king and you:
Our sight is limited where you are join'd,
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That, though your orbs of different greatness be,
Yet both are for each other's use disposed,
His to enclose, and yours to be enclosed. 40
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptiness had come between.
Well may he then to you his cares impart,
And share his burden where he shares his heart.
In you his sleep still wakes; his pleasures find
Their share of business in your labouring mind.
So when the weary sun his place resigns,
He leaves his light, and by reflection shines.

Justice, that sits and frowns where public laws
Exclude soft mercy from a private cause, 50
In your tribunal most herself does please;
There only smiles because she lives at ease;
And, like young David, finds her strength the more,
When disencumber'd from those arms she wore.
Heaven would our royal master should exceed
Most in that virtue which we most did need;
And his mild father (who too late did find
All mercy vain but what with power was join'd)
His fatal goodness left to fitter times,
Not to increase, but to absolve, our crimes: 60
But when the heir of this vast treasure knew
How large a legacy was left to you
(Too great for any subject to retain),
He wisely tied it to the crown again:
Yet, passing through your hands, it gathers more,
As streams, through mines, bear tincture of their ore.
While empiric politicians use deceit,
Hide what they give, and cure but by a cheat;
You boldly show that skill which they pretend,
And work by means as noble as your end: 70
Which should you veil, we might unwind the clew,
As men do nature, till we came to you.



And as the Indies were not found, before
Those rich perfumes, which, from the happy shore,
The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,
Whose guilty sweetness first their world betray'd;
So by your counsels we are brought to view
A rich and undiscover'd world in you.
By you our monarch does that fame assure,
Which kings must have, or cannot live secure: 80
For prosperous princes gain their subjects' heart,
Who love that praise in which themselves have part.
By you he fits those subjects to obey,
As heaven's eternal Monarch does convey
His power unseen, and man to his designs,
By his bright ministers the stars, inclines.

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Our setting sun, from his declining seat,
Shot beams of kindness on you, not of heat:
And, when his love was bounded in a few
That were unhappy that they might be true, 90
Made you the favourite of his last sad times,
That is a sufferer in his subjects' crimes:
Thus those first favours you received, were sent,
Like heaven's rewards in earthly punishment.
Yet fortune, conscious of your destiny,
Even then took care to lay you softly by;
And wrapp'd your fate among her precious things,
Kept fresh to be unfolded with your king's.
Shown all at once, you dazzled so our eyes,
As new born Pallas did the gods surprise, 100
When, springing forth from Jove's new-closing wound,
She struck the warlike spear into the ground;
Which sprouting leaves did suddenly enclose,
And peaceful olives shaded as they rose.

How strangely active are the arts of peace,
Whose restless motions less than war's do cease!
Peace is not freed from labour but from noise;
And war more force, but not more pains employs;
Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,
That, like the earth, it leaves our sense behind; 110
While you so smoothly turn and roll our sphere,
That rapid motion does but rest appear.
For, as in nature's swiftness, with the throng
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,
All seems at rest to the deluded eye,
Moved by the soul of the same harmony,—
So, carried on by your unwearied care,
We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.
Let envy then those crimes within you see,
From which the happy never must be free; 120
Envy, that does with misery reside,
The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.
Think it not hard, if at so cheap a rate
You can secure the constancy of fate,
Whose kindness sent what does their malice seem,
By lesser ills the greater to redeem.
Nor can we this weak shower a tempest call,
But drops of heat, that in the sunshine fall.



You have already wearied fortune so,
She cannot further be your friend or foe; 130
But sits all breathless, and admires to feel
A fate so weighty, that it stops her wheel.
In all things else above our humble fate,
Your equal mind yet swells not into state,
But, like some mountain in those happy isles,
Where in perpetual spring young nature smiles,
Your greatness shows: no horror to affright,
But trees for shade, and flowers to court the sight:
Sometimes the hill submits itself a while
In small descents, which do its height beguile: 140
And sometimes mounts, but so as billows play,
Whose rise not hinders, but makes short our way.
Your brow, which does no fear of thunder



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know,

Sees rolling tempests vainly beat below;
And, like Olympus' top, the impression wears
Of love and friendship writ in former years.
Yet, unimpair'd with labours, or with time,
Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.
Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,
And measure change, but share no part of it. 150
And still it shall without a weight increase,
Like this new year, whose motions never cease.
For since the glorious course you have begun
Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,
It must both weightless and immortal prove,
Because the centre of it is above.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 31: 'Hyde:' the far-famed historian Clarendon.]

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SATIRE ON THE DUTCH.[32]

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1662.

As needy gallants, in the scrivener's hands,
Court the rich knaves that gripe their mortgaged lands;
The first fat buck of all the season's sent,
And keeper takes no fee in compliment;
The dotage of some Englishmen is such,
To fawn on those who ruin them—the Dutch.
They shall have all, rather than make a war
With those, who of the same religion are.
The Straits, the Guinea-trade, the herrings too;
Nay, to keep friendship, they shall pickle you. 10
Some are resolved not to find out the cheat,
But, cuckold-like, love them that do the feat.
What injuries soe'er upon us fall,



Yet still the same religion answers all.
Religion wheedled us to civil war,
Drew English blood, and Dutchmen's now would spare.
Be gull'd no longer; for you'll find it true,
They have no more religion, faith! than you.
Interest's the god they worship in their state,
And we, I take it, have not much of that 20
Well monarchies may own religion's name,
But states are atheists in their very frame.
They share a sin; and such proportions fall,
That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to them all.
Think on their rapine, falsehood, cruelty,
And that what once they were, they still would be.
To one well-born the affront is worse and more,
When he's abused and baffled by a boor.
With an ill grace the Dutch their mischiefs do;
They've both ill nature and ill manners too. 30
Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation;
For they were bred ere manners were in fashion:
And their new commonwealth has set them free
Only from honour and civility.
Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,
Than did their lubber state mankind bestride.
Their sway became them with as ill a mien,
As their own paunches swell above their

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chin.

Yet is their empire no true growth but humour,
And only two kings'[33] touch can cure the tumour. 40
As Cato fruits of Afric did display,
Let us before our eyes their Indies lay:
All loyal English will like him conclude;
Let Caesar live, and Carthage be subdued.

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 32: 'Satire:' the same nearly with his prologue to 'Amboyna.']

[Footnote 33: 'Two kings:' alluding to projected union between France and England.]

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TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS,[34]

ON THE MEMORABLE VICTORY GAINED BY THE DUKE OVER THE HOLLANDERS,
JUNE 3, 1665. AND ON HER JOURNEY AFTERWARDS INTO THE NORTH.

Madam,
When, for our sakes, your hero you resign'd
To swelling seas, and every faithless wind;
When you released his courage, and set free
A valour fatal to the enemy;
You lodged your country's cares within your breast
(The mansion where soft love should only rest):
And, ere our foes abroad were overcome,
The noblest conquest you had gain'd at home.
Ah, what concerns did both your souls divide!
Your honour gave us what your love denied: 10
And 'twas for him much easier to subdue
Those foes he fought with, than to part from you.
That glorious day, which two such navies saw,
As each unmatched might to the world give law.
Neptune, yet doubtful whom he should obey,
Held to them both the trident of the sea:
The winds were hush'd, the waves in ranks were cast,



As awfully as when God's people pass'd;
Those, yet uncertain on whose sails to blow,
These, where the wealth of nations ought to flow. 20
Then with the duke your highness ruled the day:
While all the brave did his command obey,
The fair and pious under you did pray.
How powerful are chaste vows! the wind and tide
You bribed to combat on the English, side.
Thus to your much-loved lord you did convey
An unknown succour, sent the nearest way.
New vigour to his wearied arms you brought
(So Moses was upheld while Israel fought),
While, from afar, we heard the cannon play,[35] 30
Like distant thunder on a shiny day.
For absent friends we were ashamed to fear
When we consider'd what you ventured there.
Ships, men, and arms, our country might restore,
But such a leader could supply no more.
With generous thoughts of conquest he did burn,
Yet fought not more to vanquish than return.
Fortune and victory he did pursue,
To bring them as his slaves to wait on you.
Thus beauty ravish'd the rewards

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of fame, 40

And the fair triumph'd when the brave o'ercame.
Then, as you meant to spread another way
By land your conquests, far as his by sea,
Leaving our southern clime you march'd along
The stubborn North, ten thousand Cupids strong.
Like commons the nobility resort
In crowding heaps, to fill your moving court:
To welcome your approach the vulgar run,
Like some new envoy from the distant sun;
And country beauties by their lovers go, 50
Blessing themselves, and wondering at the show.
So when the new-born Phoenix first is seen,
Her feather'd subjects all adore their queen;
And while she makes her progress through the east,
From every grove her numerous train's increased;
Each poet of the air her glory sings,
And round him the pleased audience clap their wings.

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 34: 'The Duchess:' daughter to the great Earl of Clarendon; married privately to Duke of York. For account of this victory, see Hume or Macaulay. The duchess accompanied the duke to Harwich, and thence made a progress north-wards, referred to here.]

[Footnote 35: 'Heard the cannon play:' the cannon were heard in London a hundred miles from Lowestoff where the battle was fought.]

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ANNUS MIRABILIS:

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666.

AN HISTORICAL POEM.

* * * * *

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ENSUING POEM, IN A LETTER TO THE HONOURABLE SIR ROBERT HOWARD.

Sir,—I am so many ways obliged to you, and so little able to return your favours, that, like those who owe too much, I can only live by getting further into your debt. You have not only been careful of my fortune, which was the effect of your nobleness, but you have been solicitous of my reputation, which is that of your kindness. It is not long since I gave you the trouble of perusing a play for me, and now, instead of an acknowledgment, I have given you a greater, in the correction of a poem. But since you are to bear this persecution, I will at least give you the encouragement of a martyr; you could never suffer in a nobler cause. For I have chosen the most heroic subject which any poet could desire: I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, progress, and successes, of a most just and necessary war; in it, the care, management, and prudence of our king; the conduct and valour of a royal admiral, and of two incomparable generals; the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories, the result of all. After this I have, in the Fire, the most deplorable, but withal the greatest, argument that can be imagined:

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the destruction being so swift, so sudden, so vast and miserable, as nothing can parallel in story. The former part of this poem, relating to the war, is but a due expiation for my not having served my king and country in it. All gentlemen are almost obliged to it; and I know no reason we should give that advantage to the commonalty of England, to be foremost in brave actions, which the nobles of France would never suffer in their peasants. I should not have written this but to a person who has been ever forward to appear in all employments, whither his honour and generosity have called him. The latter part of my poem, which describes the Fire, I owe, first to the piety and fatherly affection of our monarch to his suffering subjects; and, in the second place, to the courage, loyalty, and magnanimity of the city: both which were so conspicuous, that I wanted words to celebrate them as they deserve. I have called my poem Historical, not Epic, though both the actions and actors are as much heroic as any poem can contain. But since the action is not properly one, nor that accomplished in the last successes, I have judged it too bold a title for a few stanzas, which are little more in number than a single Iliad, or the longest of the Aeneids. For this reason (I mean not of length, but broken action, tied too severely to the laws of history) I am apt to agree with those who rank Lucan rather among historians in verse, than Epic poets: in whose room, if I am not deceived, Silius Italicus, though a worse writer, may more justly be admitted. I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble, and of greater dignity, both for the sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us; in which I am sure I have your approbation. The learned languages have certainly a great advantage of us, in not being tied to the slavery of any rhyme; and were less constrained in the quantity of every syllable, which they might vary with spondees or dactyls, besides so many other helps of grammatical figures, for the lengthening or abbreviation of them, than the modern are in the close of that one syllable, which often confines, and more often corrupts, the sense of all the rest. But in this necessity of our rhymes, I have always found the couplet verse most easy, though not so proper for this occasion: for there the work is sooner at an end, every two lines concluding the labour of the poet; but in quatrains he is to carry it further on, and not only so, but to bear along in his head the troublesome sense of four lines together. For those who write correctly in this kind must needs acknowledge, that the last line of the stanza is to be considered in the composition of the first. Neither can we give ourselves the liberty of making any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme, or concluding with a word which is not current English, or using the variety of female rhymes; all which our fathers practised: and for the female

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rhymes, they are still in use among other nations; with the Italian in every line, with the Spaniard promiscuously, with the French alternately; as those who have read the *Alarique*, the *Pucelle*, or any of their later poems, will agree with me. And besides this, they write in Alexandrius, or verses of six feet; such as amongst us is the old translation of Homer by Chapman: all which, by lengthening of their chain, makes the sphere of their activity the larger. I have dwelt too long upon the choice of my stanza, which you may remember is much better defended in the preface to *Gondibert*; and therefore I will hasten to acquaint you with my endeavours in the writing. In general, I will only say, I have never yet seen the description of any naval fight in the proper terms which are used at sea: and if there be any such, in another language, as that of Lucan in the third of his *Pharsalia*, yet I could not avail myself of it in the English; the terms of art in every tongue bearing more of the idiom of it than any other words. We hear indeed among our poets, of the thundering of guns, the smoke, the disorder, and the slaughter; but all these are common notions. And certainly, as those who, in a logical dispute, keep in general terms, would hide a fallacy; so those who do it in any poetical description, would veil their ignorance.

Descriptas servare vices operumque colores,
Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, Poeta salutor?

For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn: and if I have made some few mistakes, it is only, as you can bear me witness, because I have wanted opportunity to correct them; the whole poem being first written, and now sent you from a place, where I have not so much as the converse of any seaman. Yet though the trouble I had in writing it was great, it was more than recompensed by the pleasure. I found myself so warm in celebrating the praises of military men, two such especially as the prince^[36] and general, that it is no wonder if they inspired me with thoughts above my ordinary level. And I am well satisfied, that, as they are incomparably the best subject I ever had, excepting only the royal family, so also, that this I have written of them is much better than what I have performed on any other. I have been forced to help out other arguments; but this has been bountiful to me: they have been low and barren of praise, and I have exalted them, and made them fruitful; but here—*Omnia sponte sua reddit justissima tellus*. I have had a large, a fair, and a pleasant field; so fertile that, without my cultivating, it has given me two harvests in a summer, and in both oppressed the reaper. All other greatness in subjects is only counterfeit; it will not endure the test of danger; the greatness of arms is only real; other greatness burdens a nation with its weight, this supports it with its strength. And as it is the happiness of the age, so it is the

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peculiar goodness of the best of kings, that we may praise his subjects without offending him. Doubtless, it proceeds from a just confidence of his own virtue, which the lustre of no other can be so great as to darken in him; for the good or the valiant are never safely praised under a bad or a degenerate prince. But to return from this digression to a further account of my poem; I must crave leave to tell you, that as I have endeavoured to adorn it with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution. The composition of all poems is, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or wit-writing (if you will give me leave to use a school-distinction) is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after: or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or ideas of those things which it designs to represent. Wit written is that which is well designed, the happy result of thought, or product of imagination. But to proceed from wit, in the general notion of it, to the proper wit of an heroic or historical poem; I judge it chiefly to consist in the delightful imaging of persons, actions, passions, or things. It is not the jerk or sting of an epigram, nor the seeming contradiction of a poor antithesis (the delight of an ill-judging audience in a play of rhyme) nor the jingle of a more poor Paronomasia; neither is it so much the morality of a grave sentence, affected by Lucan, but more sparingly used by Virgil; but it is some lively and apt description, dressed in such colours of speech, that it sets before your eyes the absent object, as perfectly, and more delightfully than nature. So then the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving or moulding of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression. For the two first of these, Ovid is famous among the poets; for the latter, Virgil. Ovid images more often the movements and affections of the mind, either combating between two contrary passions, or extremely discomposed by one. His words therefore are the least part of his care; for he pictures nature in disorder, with which the study and choice of words is inconsistent. This is the proper wit of dialogue or discourse, and consequently of the drama, where all that is said is to be supposed the effect of sudden thought; which, though it excludes not the quickness of wit in repartees, yet admits not a too curious election of words, too frequent allusions, or use of tropes, or, in fine, anything that shows remoteness

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of thought or labour in the writer. On the other side, Virgil speaks not so often to us in the person of another, like Ovid, but in his own: he relates almost all things as from himself, and thereby gains more liberty than the other, to express his thoughts with all the graces of elocution, to write more figuratively, and to confess as well the labour as the force of his imagination. Though he describes his Dido well and naturally, in the violence of her passions, yet he must yield in that to the Myrrha, the Biblis, the Althaea, of Ovid; for as great an admirer of him as I am, I must acknowledge, that if I see not more of their souls than I see of Dido's, at least I have a greater concernment for them: and that convinces me that Ovid has touched those tender strokes more delicately than Virgil could. But when action or persons are to be described, when any such image is to be set before us, how bold, how masterly are the strokes of Virgil! We see the objects he presents us with in their native figures, in their proper motions; but so we see them, as our own eyes could never have beheld them so beautiful in themselves. We see the soul of the poet, like that universal one of which he speaks, informing and moving through all his pictures:

—Totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno so corpore miscet.

We behold him embellishing his images, as he makes Venus breathing beauty upon her son Aeneas.

—lumenque juventae
Purpureum, et laetos oculis afflarat honores:
Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo
Argentum Pariusve lapis circundatur auro.

See his Tempest, his Funeral Sports, his Combat of Turnus and Aeneas: and in his Georgics, which I esteem the divinest part of all his writings, the Plague, the Country, the Battle of the Bulls, the Labour of the Bees, and those many other excellent images of nature, most of which are neither great in themselves, nor have any natural ornament to bear them up: but the words wherewith he describes them are so excellent that it might be well applied to him, which was said by Ovid, *Materiam superabat opus*: the very sound of his words has often somewhat that is connatural to the subject; and while we read him, we sit, as in a play, beholding the scenes of what he represents. To perform this, he made frequent use of tropes, which you know change the nature of a known word, by applying it to some other signification; and this is it which Horace means in his epistle to the Pisos:

Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum—

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But I am sensible I have presumed too far to entertain you with a rude discourse of that art, which you both know so well, and put into practice with so much happiness. Yet before I leave Virgil, I must own the vanity to tell you, and by you the world, that he has been my master in this poem: I have followed him everywhere, I know not with what success, but I am sure with diligence enough: my images are many of them copied from him, and the rest are imitations of him. My expressions also are as near as the idioms of the two languages would admit of in translation. And this, sir, I have done with that boldness, for which I will stand accountable to any of our little critics, who, perhaps, are no better acquainted with him than I am. Upon your first perusal of this poem, you have taken notice of some words which I have innovated (if it be too bold for me to say refined) upon his Latin; which, as I offer not to introduce into English prose, so I hope they are neither improper, nor altogether inelegant in verse; and, in this, Horace will again defend me.

Et nova, fictaque nuper, habebunt verba fidem, si
Graeco fonte cadunt, parce detorta—

The inference is exceeding plain: for if a Roman poet might have liberty to coin a word, supposing only that it was derived from the Greek, was put into a Latin termination, and that he used this liberty but seldom, and with modesty; how much more justly may I challenge that privilege to do it with the same prerequisites, from the best and most judicious of Latin writers! In some places, where either the fancy or the words were his, or any other's, I have noted it in the margin, that I might not seem a plagiarist; in others I have neglected it, to avoid as well tediousness, as the affectation of doing it too often. Such descriptions or images well wrought, which I promise not for mine, are, as I have said, the adequate delight of heroic poesy; for they beget admiration, which is its proper object; as the images of the burlesque, which is contrary to this, by the same reason beget laughter: for the one shows nature beautified, as in the picture of a fair woman, which we all admire; the other shows her deformed, as in that of a leper, or of a fool with distorted face and antique gestures, at which we cannot forbear to laugh, because it is a deviation from nature. But though the same images serve equally for the Epic poesy, and for the historic and panegyric, which are branches of it, yet a several sort of sculpture is to be used in them. If some of them are to be like those of Juvenal, *Stantes in curribus AEmiliani*, heroes drawn in their triumphal chariots, and in their full proportion; others are to be like that of Virgil, *Spirantia mollius oera*: there is somewhat more of softness and tenderness to be shown in them. You will soon find I write not this without concern. Some, who have seen a paper of verses, which I wrote last year to her Highness the Duchess, have accused

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them of that only thing I could defend in them. They said, I did *humi serpere*, that I wanted not only height of fancy, but dignity of words, to set it off. I might well answer with that of Horace, *Nunc non erat his locus*; I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression, and the smoothness of measure, rather than the height of thought; and in what I did endeavour, it is no vanity to say I have succeeded. I detest arrogance; but there is some difference betwixt that and a just defence. But I will not further bribe your candour, or the reader's. I leave them to speak for me; and, if they can, to make out that character, not pretending to a greater, which I have given them.

And now, sir, it is time I should relieve you from the tedious length of this account. You have better and more profitable employment for your hours, and I wrong the public to detain you longer. In conclusion, I must leave my poem to you with all its faults, which I hope to find fewer in the printing by your emendations. I know you are not of the number of those, of whom the younger Pliny speaks; *Nec sunt parum multi, qui carpere amicos suos judicium vocant*: I am rather too secure of you on that side. Your candour in pardoning my errors may make you more remiss in correcting them; if you will not withal consider that they come into the world with your approbation, and through your hands. I beg from you the greatest favour you can confer upon an absent person, since I repose upon your management what is dearest to me, my fame and reputation; and therefore I hope it will stir you up to make my poem fairer by many of your blots; if not, you know the story of the gamester who married the rich man's daughter, and when her father denied the portion, christened all the children by his surname, that if, in conclusion, they must beg, they should do so by one name, as well as by the other. But since the reproach of my faults will light on you, it is but reason I should do you that justice to the readers, to let them know, that, if there be anything tolerable in this poem, they owe the argument to your choice, the writing to your encouragement, the correction to your judgment, and the care of it to your friendship, to which he must ever acknowledge himself to owe all things, who is, sir, the most obedient, and most faithful of your servants,

JOHN DRYDEN.

From Charlton in Wiltshire, Nov. 10, 1666.

* * * * *

1 In thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home and cruel when abroad:
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own;
Our King they courted, and our merchants awed.

2 Trade, which, like blood, should circularly flow,
 Stopp'd in their channels, found its freedom lost:
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
 And seem'd but shipwreck'd on so base a coast.



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- 3 For them alone the heavens had kindly heat;
In eastern quarries ripening precious dew:
For them the Idumaeon balm did sweat,
And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew.
- 4 The sun but seem'd the labourer of the year;
Each waxing moon supplied her watery store,
To swell those tides, which from the line did bear
Their brimful vessels to the Belgian shore.
- 5 Thus mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,
And swept the riches of the world from far;
Yet stoop'd to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong:
And this may prove our second Punic war.
- 6 What peace can be, where both to one pretend?
(But they more diligent, and we more strong)
Or if a peace, it soon must have an end;
For they would grow too powerful, were it long.
- 7 Behold two nations, then, engaged so far
That each seven years the fit must shake each land:
Where France will side to weaken us by war,
Who only can his vast designs withstand.
- 8 See how he feeds the Iberian with delays,
To render us his timely friendship vain:
And while his secret soul on Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Spain.
- 9 Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them, whose cause he seems to take in hand;
And prudently would make them lords at sea,
To whom with ease he can give laws by land.
- 10 This saw our King; and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanced to and fro:
He grieved the land he freed should be oppress'd,
And he less for it than usurpers do.
- 11 His generous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay;
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew,
Not to be gather'd but by birds of prey.



- 12 The loss and gain each fatally were great;
And still his subjects call'd aloud for war;
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
Each, other's poise and counterbalance are.
- 13 He first survey'd the charge with careful eyes,
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain;
Yet judged, like vapours that from limbecks rise,
It would in richer showers descend again.
- 14 At length resolved to assert the watery ball,
He in himself did whole Armadoes bring:
Him aged seamen might their master call,
And choose for general, were he not their king.
- 15 It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey;
So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.
- 16 To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.



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- 17 Whether they unctuous exhalations are,
Fired by the sun, or seeming so alone:
Or each some more remote and slippery star,
Which loses footing when to mortals shown.
- 18 Or one, that bright companion of the sun,
Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born king;
And now a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring.
- 19 Victorious York did first with famed success,
To his known valour make the Dutch give place:
Thus Heaven our monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his royal race.
- 20 But since it was decreed, auspicious King,
In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doom'd that Lawson[37] should be slain.
- 21 Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,
Whom sea-green Sirens from the rocks lament;
Thus as an offering for the Grecian state,
He first was kill'd who first to battle went.
- 22 Their chief blown up in air, not waves, expired,
To which his pride presumed to give the law:
The Dutch confess'd Heaven present, and retired,
And all was Britain the wide ocean saw.
- 23 To nearest ports their shatter'd ships repair,
Where by our dreadful cannon they lay awed:
So reverently men quit the open air,
When thunder speaks the angry gods abroad.
- 24 And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the rising sun:
And precious sand from southern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.
- 25 Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
Their waylaid wealth to Norway's coasts they bring:
There first the north's cold bosom spices bore,
And winter brooded on the eastern spring.



26 By the rich scent we found our perfumed prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie;
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

27 Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake the unequal war:
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

28 These fight like husbands, but like lovers those:
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy:
And to such height their frantic passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy.

29 Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them fly:
Some precious by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.

30 And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In Heaven's inclemency some ease we find:
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

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- 31 Nor wholly lost[38] we so deserved a prey;
For storms repenting part of it restored:
Which, as a tribute from the Baltic sea,
The British ocean sent her mighty lord.
- 32 Go, mortals, now; and vex yourselves in vain
For wealth, which so uncertainly must come:
When what was brought so far, and with such pain,
Was only kept to lose it nearer home.
- 33 The son, who twice three months on th' ocean tost,
Prepared to tell what he had pass'd before,
Now sees in English ships the Holland coast,
And parents' arms in vain stretch'd from the shore.
- 34 This careful husband had been long away,
Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn;
Who on their fingers learn'd to tell the day
On which their father promised to return.
- 35 Such are the proud designs of human kind,
And so we suffer shipwreck every where!
Alas, what port can such a pilot find,
Who in the night of fate must blindly steer!
- 36 The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill,
Heaven, in his bosom, from our knowledge hides:
And draws them in contempt of human skill,
Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides.
- 37 Let Munster's prelate[39] ever be accurst,
In whom we seek the German faith in vain:
Alas, that he should teach the English first,
That fraud and avarice in the Church could reign!
- 38 Happy, who never trust a stranger's will,
Whose friendship's in his interest understood!
Since money given but tempts him to be ill,
When power is too remote to make him good.
- 39 Till now, alone the mighty nations strove;
The rest, at gaze, without the lists did stand:
And threatening France, placed like a painted Jove,
Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand.



- 40 That eunuch guardian of rich Holland's trade,
Who envies us what he wants power to enjoy;
Whose noisy valour does no foe invade,
And weak assistance will his friends destroy.
- 41 Offended that we fought without his leave,
He takes this time his secret hate to show:
Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive,
As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe.
- 42 With France, to aid the Dutch, the Danes unite:
France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave,
But when with one three nations join to fight,
They silently confess that one more brave.
- 43 Lewis had chased the English from his shore;
But Charles the French as subjects does invite:
Would Heaven for each some Solomon restore,
Who, by their mercy, may decide their right!
- 44 Were subjects so but only by their choice,
And not from birth did forced dominion take,
Our prince alone would have the public voice;
And all his neighbours' realms would deserts make.

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- 45 He without fear a dangerous war pursues,
Which without rashness he began before:
As honour made him first the danger choose,
So still he makes it good on virtue's score.
- 46 The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,
Who, in that bounty, to themselves are kind:
So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise,
And in his plenty their abundance find.
- 47 With equal power he does two chiefs[40] create,
Two such as each seem'd worthiest when alone;
Each able to sustain a nation's fate,
Since both had found a greater in their own.
- 48 Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,
Yet neither envious of the other's praise;
Their duty, faith, and interest too the same,
Like mighty partners equally they raise.
- 49 The prince long time had courted fortune's love,
But once possess'd, did absolutely reign:
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove,
And conquer'd first those beauties they would gain.
- 50 The Duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain,
That Carthage, which he ruin'd, rise once more;
And shook aloft the fasces of the main,
To fright those slaves with what they felt before.
- 51 Together to the watery camp they haste,
Whom matrons passing to their children show:
Infants' first vows for them to heaven are cast,
And future people bless them as they go.
- 52 With them no riotous pomp, nor Asian train,
To infect a navy with their gaudy fears;
To make slow fights, and victories but vain:
But war severely like itself appears.
- 53 Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,
They make that warmth in others they expect;
Their valour works like bodies on a glass,
And does its image on their men project.



54 Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,
In number, and a famed commander, bold:
The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear,
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold.

55 The Duke, less numerous, but in courage more,
On wings of all the winds to combat flies:
His murdering guns a loud defiance roar,
And bloody crosses on his flag-staffs rise.

56 Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight;
Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air:
The Elean plains could boast no nobler sight,
When struggling champions did their bodies bare.

57 Borne each by other in a distant line,
The sea-built forts in dreadful order move:
So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,
But lands unfix'd, and floating nations strove.

58 Now pass'd, on either side they nimbly tack;
Both strive to intercept and guide the wind:
And, in its eye, more closely they come back,
To finish all the deaths they left behind.



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59 On high-raised decks the haughty Belgians ride,
Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go:
Such port the elephant bears, and so defied
By the rhinoceros, her unequal foe.

60 And as the build, so different is the fight;
Their mounting shot is on our sails design'd:
Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light,
And through the yielding planks a passage find.

61 Our dreaded admiral from far they threat,
Whose batter'd rigging their whole war receives:
All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,
He stands, and sees below his scatter'd leaves.

62 Heroes of old, when wounded, shelter sought;
But he who meets all danger with disdain,
Even in their face his ship to anchor brought,
And steeple-high stood propt upon the main.

63 At this excess of courage, all amazed,
The foremost of his foes awhile withdraw:
With such respect in enter'd Rome they gazed,
Who on high chairs the god-like fathers saw.

64 And now, as where Patroclus' body lay,
Here Trojan chiefs advanced, and there the Greek
Ours o'er the Duke their pious wings display,
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek.

65 Meantime his busy mariners he hastes,
His shatter'd sails with rigging to restore;
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before.

66 Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,
More fierce the important quarrel to decide:
Like swans, in long array his vessels show,
Whose crests advancing do the waves divide.

67 They charge, recharge, and all along the sea
They drive, and squander the huge Belgian fleet;
Berkeley[41] alone, who nearest danger lay,
Did a like fate with lost Creusa meet.



- 68 The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they ashamed to leave:
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.
- 69 In the English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader's fame:
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And, slumbering, smile at the imagined flame.
- 70 Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie;
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run;
Vast bulks which little souls but ill supply.
- 71 In dreams they fearful precipices tread:
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore:
Or in dark churches walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.
- 72 The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,
Till from their main-top joyful news they hear
Of ships, which by their mould bring new supplies,
And in their colours Belgian lions bear.



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- 73 Our watchful general had discern'd from far
This mighty succour, which made glad the foe:
He sigh'd, but, like a father of the war,
His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow.
- 74 His wounded men he first sends off to shore,
Never till now unwilling to obey:
They, not their wounds, but want of strength deplore,
And think them happy who with him can stay.
- 75 Then to the rest, Rejoice, said he, to-day;
In you the fortune of Great Britain lies:
Among so brave a people, you are they
Whom Heaven has chose to fight for such a prize.
- 76 If number English courages could quell,
We should at first have shunn'd, not met, our foes,
Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell:
Courage from hearts and not from numbers grows.
- 77 He said, nor needed more to say: with haste
To their known stations cheerfully they go;
And all at once, disdaining to be last,
Solicit every gale to meet the foe.
- 78 Nor did the encouraged Belgians long delay,
But bold in others, not themselves, they stood:
So thick, our navy scarce could steer their way,
But seem'd to wander in a moving wood.
- 79 Our little fleet was now engaged so far,
That, like the sword-fish in the whale, they fought:
The combat only seem'd a civil war,
Till through their bowels we our passage wrought.
- 80 Never had valour, no not ours, before
Done aught like this upon the land or main,
Where not to be o'ercome was to do more
Than all the conquests former kings did gain.
- 81 The mighty ghosts of our great Harries rose,
And armed Edwards look'd with anxious eyes,
To see this fleet among unequal foes,
By which fate promised them their Charles should rise.



82 Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear,
And raking chase-guns through our sterns they send:
Close by their fire ships, like jackals appear
Who on their lions for the prey attend.

83 Silent in smoke of cannon they come on:
Such vapours once did fiery Cacus^[42] hide:
In these the height of pleased revenge is shown,
Who burn contented by another's side.

84 Sometimes from fighting squadrons of each fleet,
Deceived themselves, or to preserve some friend,
Two grappling AEtnas on the ocean meet,
And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

85 Now at each tack our little fleet grows less;
And like maim'd fowl, swim lagging on the main:
Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
While they lose cheaper than the English gain.

86 Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,
Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
And, with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind.



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87 The dastard crow that to the wood made wing,
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud caws her craven kind does bring,
Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird.

88 Among the Dutch thus Albemarle[43] did fare:
He could not conquer, and disdain'd to fly;
Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Caesar, decently to die.

89 Yet pity did his manly spirit move,
To see those perish who so well had fought;
And generously with his despair he strove,
Resolved to live till he their safety wrought.

90 Let other muses write his prosperous fate,
Of conquer'd nations tell, and kings restored;
But mine shall sing of his eclipsed estate,
Which, like the sun's, more wonders does afford.

91 He drew his mighty frigates all before,
On which the foe his fruitless force employs:
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore
Remote from guns, as sick men from the noise.

92 His fiery cannon did their passage guide,
And following smoke obscured them from the foe:
Thus Israel safe from the Egyptian's pride,
By flaming pillars, and by clouds did go.

93 Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,
But here our courages did theirs subdue:
So Xenophon once led that famed retreat,
Which first the Asian empire overthrew.

94 The foe approach'd; and one for his bold sin
Was sunk; as he that touch'd the ark was slain:
The wild waves master'd him and suck'd him in,
And smiling eddies dimpled on the main.

95 This seen, the rest at awful distance stood:
As if they had been there as servants set
To stay, or to go on, as he thought good,
And not pursue, but wait on his retreat.



96 So Lybian huntsmen, on some sandy plain,
From shady coverts roused, the lion chase:
The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
And slowly moves, unknowing to give place.

97 But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail, and swiftly turns him round;
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground.

98 Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night;
Now hissing waters the quench'd guns restore;
And weary waves, withdrawing from the fight,
Lie lull'd and panting on the silent shore:

99 The moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,
Where, while her beams like glittering silver play,
Upon the deck our careful general stood,
And deeply mused on the succeeding day.

100 That happy sun, said he, will rise again,
Who twice victorious did our navy see:
And I alone must view him rise in vain,
Without one ray of all his star for me.

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- 101 Yet like an English general will I die,
And all the ocean make my spacious grave:
Women and cowards on the land may lie;
The sea's a tomb that's proper for the brave.
- 102 Restless he pass'd the remnant of the night,
Till the fresh air proclaimed the morning nigh:
And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,
With paler fires beheld the eastern sky.
- 103 But now, his stores of ammunition spent,
His naked valour is his only guard;
Rare thunders are from his dumb cannon sent,
And solitary guns are scarcely heard.
- 104 Thus far had fortune power, here forced to stay,
Nor longer durst with virtue be at strife:
This as a ransom Albemarle did pay,
For all the glories of so great a life.
- 105 For now brave Rupert from afar appears,
Whose waving streamers the glad general knows:
With full spread sails his eager navy steers,
And every ship in swift proportion grows.
- 106 The anxious prince had heard the cannon long,
And from that length of time dire omens drew
Of English overmatch'd, and Dutch too strong,
Who never fought three days, but to pursue.
- 107 Then, as an eagle, who, with pious care
Was beating widely on the wing for prey,
To her now silent eyrie does repair,
And finds her callow infants forced away:
- 108 Stung with her love, she stoops upon the plain,
The broken air loud whistling as she flies:
She stops and listens, and shoots forth again,
And guides her pinions by her young ones' cries.
- 109 With such kind passion hastes the prince to fight,
And spreads his flying canvas to the sound;
Him, whom no danger, were he there, could fright,
Now absent every little noise can wound.



- 110 As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry,
And gape upon the gather'd clouds for rain,
And first the martlet meets it in the sky,
And with wet wings joys all the feather'd train.
- 111 With such glad hearts did our despairing men
Salute the appearance of the prince's fleet;
And each ambitiously would claim the ken,
That with first eyes did distant safety meet.
- 112 The Dutch, who came like greedy hinds before,
To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield,
Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar,
And sheets of lightning blast the standing field.
- 113 Full in the prince's passage, hills of sand,
And dangerous flats in secret ambush lay;
Where the false tides skim o'er the cover'd land,
And seamen with dissembled depths betray.
- 114 The wily Dutch, who, like fallen angels, fear'd
This new Messiah's coming, there did wait,
And round the verge their braving vessels steer'd,
To tempt his courage with so fair a bait.

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- 115 But he, unmoved, contemns their idle threat,
Secure of fame whene'er he please to fight:
His cold experience tempers all his heat,
And inbred worth doth boasting valour slight.
- 116 Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
And he the substance, not the appearance chose
To rescue one such friend he took more pride,
Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes.
- 117 But when approach'd, in strict embraces bound,
Rupert and Albemarle together grow;
He joys to have his friend in safety found,
Which he to none but to that friend would owe.
- 118 The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supplied,
Now long to execute their spleenful will;
And, in revenge for those three days they tried,
Wish one, like Joshua's, when the sun stood still.
- 119 Thus reinforced, against the adverse fleet,
Still doubling ours, brave Rupert leads the way:
With the first blushes of the morn they meet,
And bring night back upon the new-born day.
- 120 His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,
And his loud guns speak thick like angry men:
It seem'd as slaughter had been breathed all night,
And Death new pointed his dull dart again.
- 121 The Dutch too well his mighty conduct knew,
And matchless courage since the former fight;
Whose navy like a stiff-stretch'd cord did show,
Till he bore in and bent them into flight.
- 122 The wind he shares, while half their fleet offends
His open side, and high above him shows:
Upon the rest at pleasure he descends,
And doubly harm'd he double harms bestows.
- 123 Behind the general mends his weary pace,
And sullenly to his revenge he sails:
So glides some trodden serpent on the grass,
And long behind his wounded volume trails.



124 The increasing sound is borne to either shore,
And for their stakes the throwing nations fear:
Their passions double with the cannons' roar,
And with warm wishes each man combats there.

125 Plied thick and close as when the fight begun,
Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away;
So sicken waning moons too near the sun,
And blunt their crescents on the edge of day.

126 And now reduced on equal terms to fight,
Their ships like wasted patrimonies show;
Where the thin scattering trees admit the light,
And shun each other's shadows as they grow.

127 The warlike prince had sever'd from the rest
Two giant ships, the pride of all the main;
Which with his one so vigorously he prest,
And flew so home they could not rise again.

128 Already batter'd, by his lee they lay,
In rain upon the passing winds they call:
The passing winds through their torn canvas play,
And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall.



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129 Their open'd sides receive a gloomy light,
Dreadful as day let into shades below:
Without, grim Death rides barefaced in their sight,
And urges entering billows as they flow.

130 When one dire shot, the last they could supply,
Close by the board the prince's mainmast bore:
All three now helpless by each other lie,
And this offends not, and those fear no more.

131 So have I seen some fearful hare maintain
A course, till tired before the dog she lay:
Who, stretch'd behind her, pants upon the plain,
Past power to kill, as she to get away.

132 With his loll'd tongue he faintly licks his prey;
His warm breath blows her flix^[44] up as she lies;
She trembling creeps upon the ground away,
And looks back to him with beseeching eyes.

133 The prince unjustly does his stars accuse,
Which hinder'd him to push his fortune on;
For what they to his courage did refuse,
By mortal valour never must be done.

134 This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes,
And warns his tatter'd fleet to follow home;
Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,
Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome.

135 The general's force, as kept alive by fight,
Now not opposed, no longer can pursue:
Lasting till heaven had done his courage right;
When he had conquer'd he his weakness knew.

136 He casts a frown on the departing foe,
And sighs to see him quit the watery field:
His stern fix'd eyes no satisfaction show,
For all the glories which the fight did yield.

137 Though, as when fiends did miracles avow,
He stands confess'd e'en by the boastful Dutch:
He only does his conquest disavow,
And thinks too little what they found too much.



138 Return'd, he with the fleet resolved to stay;
No tender thoughts of home his heart divide;
Domestic joys and cares he puts away;
For realms are households which the great must guide.

139 As those who unripe veins in mines explore,
On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,
And know it will be gold another day:

140 So looks our monarch on this early fight,
Th' essay and rudiments of great success;
Which all-maturing time must bring to light,
While he, like Heaven, does each day's labour bless.

141 Heaven ended not the first or second day,
Yet each was perfect to the work design'd;
God and king's work, when they their work survey,
A passive aptness in all subjects find.

142 In burden'd vessels first, with speedy care,
His plenteous stores do seasoned timber send;
Thither the brawny carpenters repair,
And as the surgeons of maim'd ships attend.



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143 With cord and canvas from rich Hamburg sent,
His navy's molted wings he imp's once more:
Tall Norway fir, their masts in battle spent,
And English oak, sprung leaks and planks restore.

144 All hands employ'd, the royal work grows warm:
Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm.
And some on bells of tasted lilies play.

145 With gluey wax some new foundations lay
Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung:
Some arm'd, within doors upon duty stay,
Or tend the sick, or educate the young.

146 So here some pick out bullets from the sides,
Some drive old oakum through each seam and rift:
Their left hand does the calking-iron guide,
The rattling mallet with the right they lift.

147 With boiling pitch another near at hand,
From friendly Sweden brought, the seams instops:
Which well paid o'er, the salt sea waves withstand,
And shakes them from the rising beak in drops.

148 Some the gall'd ropes with dauby marline bind,
Or sear-cloth masts with strong tarpaulin coats:
To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind,
And one below their ease or stiffness notes.

149 Our careful monarch stands in person by,
His new-cast cannons' firmness to explore:
The strength of big-corn'd powder loves to try,
And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore.

150 Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men,
And ships which all last winter were abroad;
And such as fitted since the fight had been,
Or, new from stocks, were fallen into the road.

151 The goodly London in her gallant trim
(The Phoenix daughter of the vanish'd old).
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.



152 Her flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire;
The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

153 With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves;
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

154 This martial present, piously design'd,
The loyal city give their best-loved King:
And with a bounty ample as the wind,
Built, fitted, and maintain'd, to aid him bring.

155 By viewing Nature, Nature's handmaid, Art,
Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow:
Thus fishes first to shipping did impart,
Their tail the rudder, and their head the prow.

156 Some log perhaps upon the waters swam,
An useless drift, which, rudely cut within,
And, hollow'd, first a floating trough became,
And cross some rivulet passage did begin.



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157 In shipping such as this, the Irish kern,
And untaught Indian, on the stream did glide:
Ere sharp-keel'd boats to stem the flood did learn,
Or fin-like oars did spread from either side.

158 Add but a sail, and Saturn so appear'd,
When from lost empire he to exile went,
And with the golden age to Tiber steer'd,
Where coin and commerce first he did invent.

159 Rude as their ships was navigation then;
No useful compass or meridian known;
Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,
And knew no North but when the Pole-star shone.

160 Of all who since have used the open sea,
Than the bold English none more fame have won:
Beyond the year, and out of heaven's high way,
They make discoveries where they see no sun.

161 But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,
Shall in this age to Britain first be shown,
And hence be to admiring nations taught.

162 The ebbs of tides and their mysterious flow,
We, as art's elements, shall understand,
And as by line upon the ocean go,
Whose paths shall be familiar as the land.

163 Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,
By which remotest regions are allied;
Which makes one city of the universe,
Where some may gain, and all may be supplied.

164 Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
And view the ocean leaning on the sky:
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.

165 This I foretell from your auspicious care,
Who great in search of God and nature grow;
Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,
Since best to praise his works is best to know.



- 166 O truly royal! who behold the law
And rule of beings in your Maker's mind:
And thence, like limbecks, rich ideas draw,
To fit the levell'd use of human-kind.
- 197 But first the toils of war we must endure,
And from the injurious Dutch redeem the seas.
War makes the valiant of his right secure,
And gives up fraud to be chastised with ease.
- 168 Already were the Belgians on our coast,
Whose fleet more mighty every day became
By late success, which they did falsely boast,
And now by first appearing seem'd to claim.
- 169 Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,
They knew to manage war with wise delay:
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross,
And by their pride their prudence did betray.
- 170 Nor stay'd the English long; but, well supplied,
Appear as numerous as the insulting foe:
The combat now by courage must be tried,
And the success the braver nation show.

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171 There was the Plymouth squadron now come in,
Which in the Straits last winter was abroad;
Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been,
And on the midland sea the French had awed.

172 Old expert Allen,[45] loyal all along,
Famed for his action on the Smyrna fleet:
And Holmes, whose name shall live in epic song,
While music numbers, or while verse has feet.

173 Holmes, the Achates of the general's fight;
Who first bewitch'd our eyes with Guinea gold;
As once old Cato in the Roman sight
The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold.

174 With him went Spragge, as bountiful as brave,
Whom his high courage to command had brought:
Harman, who did the twice-fired Harry save,
And in his burning ship undaunted fought.

175 Young Hollis, on a Muse by Mars begot,
Born, Caesar-like, to write and act great deeds:
Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,
His right hand doubly to his left succeeds.

176 Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn:
And, though to me unknown, they sure fought well
Whom Rupert led, and who were British born.

177 Of every size an hundred fighting sail:
So vast the navy now at anchor rides,
That underneath it the press'd waters fail,
And with its weight it shoulders off the tides.

178 Now anchors weigh'd, the seamen shout so shrill,
That heaven and earth and the wide ocean rings:
A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill,
And rests in those high beds his downy wings.

179 The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw,
And durst not bide it on the English coast:
Behind their treacherous shallows they withdraw,
And there lay snares to catch the British host.



180 So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
Deep ambush'd in her silent den does lie:
And feels far off the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly.

181 Then if at last she find him fast beset,
She issues forth and runs along her loom:
She joys to touch the captive in her net,
And drags the little wretch in triumph home.

182 The Belgians hoped, that, with disorder'd haste,
Our deep-cut keels upon the sands might run:
Or, if with caution leisurely were past,
Their numerous gross might charge us one by one.

183 But with a fore-wind pushing them above,
And swelling tide that heaved them from below,
O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move,
And with spread sails to welcome battle go.

184 It seem'd as there the British Neptune stood,
With all his hosts of waters at command.
Beneath them to submit the officious flood;
And with his trident shoved them off the sand.



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- 185 To the pale foes they suddenly draw near,
And summon them to unexpected fight:
They start like murderers when ghosts appear,
And draw their curtains in the dead of night.
- 186 Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,
The midmost battles hastening up behind,
Who view far off the storm of falling sleet,
And hear their thunder rattling in the wind.
- 187 At length the adverse admirals appear;
The two bold champions of each country's right:
Their eyes describe the lists as they come near,
And draw the lines of death before they fight.
- 188 The distance judged for shot of every size,
The linstocks touch, the ponderous ball expires:
The vigorous seaman every port-hole plies,
And adds his heart to every gun he fires!
- 189 Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side,
For honour, which they seldom sought before!
But now they by their own vain boasts were tied,
And forced at least in show to prize it more.
- 190 But sharp remembrance on the English part,
And shame of being match'd by such a foe,
Rouse conscious virtue up in every heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so.
- 191 Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain,
Which did two generals' fates, and Caesar's bear:
Each several ship a victory did gain,
As Rupert or as Albemarle were there.
- 192 Their batter'd admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthank'd by ours for his unfinish'd fight;
But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew,
Who call'd that Providence which we call'd flight.
- 193 Never did men more joyfully obey,
Or sooner understood the sign to fly:
With such alacrity they bore away,
As if to praise them all the States stood by.



194 O famous leader[46] of the Belgian fleet,
Thy monument inscribed such praise shall wear,
As Varro, timely flying, once did meet,
Because he did not of his Rome despair.

195 Behold that navy, which a while before,
Provoked the tardy English close to fight,
Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,
As larks lie, dared, to shun the hobby's flight.

196 Whoe'er would English monuments survey,
In other records may our courage know:
But let them hide the story of this day,
Whose fame was blemish'd by too base a foe.

197 Or if too busily they will inquire
Into a victory which we disdain;
Then let them know the Belgians did retire
Before the patron saint[47] of injured Spain.

198 Repenting England this revengeful day
To Philip's manes did an offering bring:
England, which first by leading them astray,
Hatch'd up rebellion to destroy her King.



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- 199 Our fathers bent their baneful industry,
To check a, monarchy that slowly grew;
But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,
Whose rising power to swift dominion flew.
- 200 In fortune's empire blindly thus we go,
And wander after pathless destiny;
Whose dark resorts since prudence cannot know,
In vain it would provide for what shall be.
- 201 But whate'er English to the bless'd shall go,
And the fourth Harry or first Orange meet;
Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe,
And him detesting a Batavian fleet.
- 202 Now on their coasts our conquering navy rides,
Waylays their merchants, and their land besets:
Each day new wealth without their care provides;
They lie asleep with prizes in their nets.
- 203 So, close behind some promontory lie
The huge leviathans to attend their prey;
And give no chase, but swallow in the fry,
Which through their gaping jaws mistake the way.
- 204 Nor was this all: in ports and roads remote,
Destructive fires among whole fleets we send:
Triumphant flames upon the water float,
And out-bound ships at home their voyage end.
- 205 Those various squadrons variously design'd,
Each vessel freighted with a several load,
Each squadron waiting for a several wind,
All find but one, to burn them in the road.
- 206 Some bound for Guinea, golden sand to find,
Bore all the gauds the simple natives wear;
Some for the pride of Turkish courts design'd,
For folded turbans finest Holland bear.
- 207 Some English wool, vex'd in a Belgian loom,
And into cloth of spungy softness made,
Did into France, or colder Denmark, doom,
To ruin with worse ware our staple trade.



208 Our greedy seamen rummage every hold,
Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest;
And, as the priests who with their gods make bold,
Take what they like, and sacrifice the rest.

209 But ah! how insincere are all our joys!
Which, sent from heaven, like lightning make no stay;
Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,
Or grief, sent post, o'ertakes them on the way.

210 Swell'd with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted power to cross,
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low,
And feed their envious eyes with English loss.

211 Each element His dread command obeys,
Who makes or ruins with a smile or frown;
Who, as by one he did our nation raise,
So now he with another pulls us down.

212 Yet London, empress of the northern clime,
By an high fate thou greatly didst expire;
Great as the world's, which, at the death of time
Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by fire!



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213 As when some dire usurper[48] Heaven provides,
To scourge his country with a lawless sway;
His birth perhaps some petty village hides,
And sets his cradle out of fortune's way.

214 Till fully ripe his swelling fate breaks out,
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on:
His prince, surprised at first, no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

215 Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,
Which, in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire,
And straight to palaces and temples spread.

216 The diligence of trades and noiseful gain,
And luxury more late, asleep were laid:
All was the night's; and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of nature did invade.

217 In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose;
And first few scattering sparks about were blown,
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose.

218 Then in some close-pent room it crept along,
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed;
Till the infant monster, with devouring strong,
Walk'd boldly upright with exalted head.

219 Now like some rich or mighty murderer,
Too great for prison, which he breaks with gold;
Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear,
And dares the world to tax him with the old:

220 So 'scapes the insulting fire his narrow jail,
And makes small outlets into open air:
There the fierce winds his tender force assail,
And beat him downward to his first repair.

221 The winds, like crafty courtesans, withheld
His flames from burning, but to blow them more:
And every fresh attempt he is repell'd
With faint denials weaker than before.



222 And now no longer letted[49] of his prey,
He leaps up at it with enraged desire:
O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
And nods at every house his threatening fire.

223 The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend,
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice:
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

224 Our guardian angel saw them where they sate
Above the palace of our slumbering king:
He sigh'd, abandoning his charge to fate,
And, drooping, oft look'd back upon the wing.

225 At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze
Call'd up some waking lover to the sight;
And long it was ere he the rest could raise,
Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night.

226 The next to danger, hot pursued by fate,
Half-clothed, half-naked, hastily retire:
And frightened mothers strike their breasts too late,
For helpless infants left amidst the fire.



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227 Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near;
Now murmuring noises rise in every street:
The more remote run stumbling with their fear,
And in the dark men jostle as they meet.

228 So weary bees in little cells repose;
But if night-robbers lift the well-stored hive,
An humming through their waxen city grows,
And out upon each other's wings they drive.

229 Now streets grow throng'd and busy as by day:
Some run for buckets to the hallow'd quire:
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play;
And some more bold mount ladders to the fire.

230 In vain: for from the east a Belgian wind
His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent;
The flames impell'd soon left their foes behind,
And forward with a wanton fury went.

231 A quay of fire ran all along the shore,
And lighten'd all the river with a blaze:
The waken'd tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.

232 Old father Thames raised up his reverend head,
But fear'd the fate of Simois would return:
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed,
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

233 The fire, meantime, walks in a broader gross;
To either hand his wings he opens wide:
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross,
And plays his longing flames on the other side.

234 At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take;
Now with long necks from side to side they feed:
At length, grown strong, their mother-fire forsake,
And a new colony of flames succeed.

235 To every nobler portion of the town
The curling billows roll their restless tide:
In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies, unopposed, for prey divide.



236 One mighty squadron with a side-wind sped,
Through narrow lanes his cumber'd fire does haste,
By powerful charms of gold and silver led,
The Lombard bankers and the 'Change to waste.

237 Another backward to the Tower would go,
And slowly eats his way against the wind:
But the main body of the marching foe
Against the imperial palace is design'd.

238 Now day appears, and with the day the King,
Whose early care had robb'd him of his rest:
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring,
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast.

239 Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke
With gloomy pillars cover all the place;
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks, that drive against his sacred face.

240 More than his guards, his sorrows made him known,
And pious tears, which down his cheeks did shower;
The wretched in his grief forgot their own;
So much the pity of a king has power.

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- 241 He wept the flames of what he loved so well,
And what so well had merited his love:
For never prince in grace did more excel,
Or royal city more in duty strove.
- 242 Nor with an idle care did he behold:
Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress;
He cheers the fearful, and commends the bold,
And makes despairers hope for good success.
- 243 Himself directs what first is to be done,
And orders all the succours which they bring,
The helpful and the good about him run,
And form an army worthy such a king.
- 244 He sees the dire contagion spread so fast,
That, where it seizes, all relief is vain:
And therefore must unwillingly lay waste
That country, which would else the foe maintain.
- 245 The powder blows up all before the fire:
The amazed flames stand gather'd on a heap;
And from the precipice's brink retire,
Afraid to venture on so large a leap.
- 246 Thus fighting fires a while themselves consume,
But straight, like Turks forced on to win or die,
They first lay tender bridges of their fume,
And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly.
- 247 Part stay for passage, till a gust of wind
Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet:
Part creeping under ground their journey blind,
And climbing from below their fellows meet.
- 248 Thus to some desert plain, or old woodside,
Dire night-hags come from far to dance their round;
And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride,
Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground.
- 249 No help avails: for hydra-like, the fire
Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way;
And scarce the wealthy can one half retire,
Before he rushes in to share the prey.



250 The rich grow suppliant, and the poor grow proud;
Those offer mighty gain, and these ask more:
So void of pity is the ignoble crowd,
When others' ruin may increase their store.

251 As those who live by shores with joy behold
Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh;
And from the rocks leap down for shipwreck'd gold,
And seek the tempests which the others fly:

252 So these but wait the owners' last despair,
And what's permitted to the flames invade;
Even from their jaws they hungry morsels tear,
And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade.

253 The days were all in this lost labour spent;
And when the weary king gave place to night,
His beams he to his royal brother lent,
And so shone still in his reflective light.

254 Night came, but without darkness or repose,—
A dismal picture of the general doom,
Where souls, distracted when the trumpet blows,
And half unready, with their bodies come.



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255 Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wandering friends:
Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends.

256 Those who have none, sit round where once it was,
And with full eyes each wanted room require;
Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
As murder'd men walk where they did expire.

257 Some stir up coals, and watch the vestal fire,
Others in vain from sight of ruin run;
And, while through burning labyrinths they retire,
With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

258 The most in fields like herded beasts lie down,
To dews obnoxious on the grassy floor;
And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
Sad parents watch the remnants of their store.

259 While by the motion of the flames they guess
What streets are burning now, and what are near;
An infant waking to the paps would press,
And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

260 No thought can ease them but their sovereign's care,
Whose praise the afflicted as their comfort sing:
Even those whom want might drive to just despair,
Think life a blessing under such a king.

261 Meantime he sadly suffers in their grief,
Out-weeps an hermit, and out-prays a saint:
All the long night he studies their relief,
How they may be supplied, and he may want.

262 O God, said he, thou patron of my days,
Guide of my youth in exile and distress!
Who me, unfriended, brought'st by wondrous ways,
The kingdom of my fathers to possess:

263 Be thou my judge, with what unwearied care
I since have labour'd for my people's good;
To bind the bruises of a civil war,
And stop the issues of their wasting blood.



264 Thou who hast taught me to forgive the ill,
And recompense, as friends, the good misled;
If mercy be a precept of thy will,
Return that mercy on thy servant's head.

265 Or if my heedless youth has stepp'd astray,
Too soon forgetful of thy gracious hand;
On me alone thy just displeasure lay,
But take thy judgments from this mourning land.

266 We all have sinn'd, and thou hast laid us low,
As humble earth from whence at first we came:
Like flying shades before the clouds we show,
And shrink like parchment in consuming flame.

267 O let it be enough what thou hast done;
When spotted Deaths ran arm'd through every street,
With poison'd darts which not the good could shun,
The speedy could out-fly, or valiant meet.

268 The living few, and frequent funerals then,
Proclaim'd thy wrath on this forsaken place;
And now those few who are return'd again,
Thy searching judgments to their dwellings trace.

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- 269 O pass not, Lord, an absolute decree,
Or bind thy sentence unconditional!
But in thy sentence our remorse foresee,
And in that foresight this thy doom recall.
- 270 Thy threatenings, Lord, as thine thou mayst revoke:
But if immutable and fix'd they stand,
Continue still thyself to give the stroke,
And let not foreign foes oppress thy land.
- 271 The Eternal heard, and from the heavenly quire
Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword;
And bade him swiftly drive the approaching fire
From where our naval magazines were stored.
- 272 The blessed minister his wings display'd,
And like a shooting star he cleft the night:
He charged the flames, and those that disobey'd
He lash'd to duty with his sword of light.
- 273 The fugitive flames chastised went forth to prey
On pious structures, by our fathers rear'd;
By which to heaven they did affect the way,
Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard.
- 274 The wanting orphans saw, with watery eyes,
Their founder's charity in dust laid low;
And sent to God their ever-answered cries,
For He protects the poor, who made them so.
- 275 Nor could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long,
Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise:
Though made immortal by a poet's song;
And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise.
- 276 The daring flames peep'd in, and saw from far
The awful beauties of the sacred quire:
But since it was profaned by civil war,
Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire.
- 277 Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came,
And widely opening did on both sides prey:
This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
If only ruin must enlarge our way.



278 And now four days the sun had seen our woes:
Four nights the moon beheld the incessant fire:
It seem'd as if the stars more sickly rose,
And farther from the feverish north retire.

279 In th' empyrean heaven, the bless'd abode,
The Thrones and the Dominions prostrate lie,
Not daring to behold their angry God;
And a hush'd silence damps the tuneful sky.

280 At length the Almighty cast a pitying eye,
And mercy softly touch'd his melting breast:
He saw the town's one half in rubbish lie,
And eager flames drive on to storm the rest.

281 An hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipt above;
Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,
And hoods the flames that to their quarry drove.

282 The vanquish'd fires withdraw from every place,
Or, full with feeding, sink into a sleep:
Each household genius shows again his face,
And from the hearths the little Lares creep.



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283 Our King this more than natural change beholds;
With sober joy his heart and eyes abound:
To the All-good his lifted hands he folds,
And thanks him low on his redeemed ground.

284 As when sharp frosts had long constrain'd the earth,
A kindly thaw unlocks it with mild rain;
And first the tender blade peeps up to birth,
And straight the green fields laugh with promised grain:

285 By such degrees the spreading gladness grew
In every heart which fear had froze before:
The standing streets with so much joy they view,
That with less grief the perish'd they deplore.

286 The father of the people open'd wide
His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed:
Thus God's anointed God's own place supplied,
And fill'd the empty with his daily bread.

287 This royal bounty brought its own reward,
And in their minds so deep did print the sense,
That if their ruins sadly they regard,
'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence.

288 But so may he live long, that town to sway,
Which by his auspice they will nobler make,
As he will hatch their ashes by his stay,
And not their humble ruins now forsake.

289 They have not lost their loyalty by fire;
Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,
That from his wars they poorly would retire,
Or beg the pity of a vanquish'd foe.

290 Not with more constancy the Jews of old,
By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,
Their royal city did in dust behold,
Or with more vigour to rebuild it went.

291 The utmost malice of their stars is past,
And two dire comets, which have scourged the town,
In their own plague and fire have breathed the last,
Or dimly in their sinking sockets frown.



292 Now frequent trines the happier lights among,
And high-raised Jove, from his dark prison freed,
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
Will gloriously the new-laid work succeed.

293 Methinks already from this chemic flame,
I see a city of more precious mould:
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
With silver paved, and all divine with gold.

294 Already labouring with a mighty fate,
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow,
And seems to have renew'd her charter's date,
Which Heaven will to the death of time allow.

295 More great than human now, and more august,
Now deified she from her fires does rise:
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,
And opening into larger parts she flies.

296 Before, she like some shepherdess did show,
Who sat to bathe her by a river's side;
Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.



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297 Now, like a maiden queen, she will behold,
From her high turrets, hourly suitors come;
The East with incense, and the West with gold,
Will stand, like suppliants, to receive her doom!

298 The silver Thames, her own domestic flood,
Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train;
And often wind, as of his mistress proud,
With longing eyes to meet her face again.

299 The wealthy Tagus, and the wealthier Rhine,
The glory of their towns no more shall boast;
And Seine, that would with Belgian rivers join,
Shall find her lustre stain'd, and traffic lost.

300 The venturous merchant who design'd more far,
And touches on our hospitable shore,
Charm'd with the splendour of this northern star,
Shall here unlade him, and depart no more.

301 Our powerful navy shall no longer meet,
The wealth of France or Holland to invade;
The beauty of this town without a fleet,
From all the world shall vindicate her trade.

302 And while this famed emporium we prepare,
The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,
That those, who now disdain our trade to share,
Shall rob like pirates on our wealthy coast.

303 Already we have conquer'd half the war,
And the less dangerous part is left behind:
Our trouble now is but to make them dare,
And not so great to vanquish as to find.

304 Thus to the Eastern wealth through storms we go,
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more;
A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 36: Prince Rupert and General Monk, Duke of Albemarle.]

[Footnote 37: 'Lawson:' Sir John Lawson, rear admiral of the red, killed by a ball that wounded him in the knee.]

[Footnote 38: 'Wholly lost:' the Dutch ships on their return home, being separated by a storm, the rear and vice-admirals of the East India fleet, with four men of war, were taken by five English frigates. Soon after, four men of war, two fire-ships, and thirty merchantmen, being driven out of their course, joined our fleet instead of their own, and were all taken. These things happened in 1665.]

[Footnote 39: 'Munster's prelate:' the famous Bertrand Von Der Chalen, Bishop of Munster, excited by Charles, marched twenty thousand men into the province of Overijssel, under the dominion of the republic of Holland, where he committed great outrages.]

[Footnote 40: 'Two chiefs:' Prince Rupert and Monk.]

[Footnote 41: 'Berkeley:' Vice-admiral Berkeley fought till his men were all killed, and was found in the cabin dead and covered with blood.]

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[Footnote 42: 'Cacus:' see Virgil in Cowper's translation, 2d vol. of this edition.]

[Footnote 43: 'Albemarle:' Monk.]

[Footnote 44: 'Flix:' old word for hare fur.]

[Footnote 45: 'Allen:' Sir Thomas Allen, admiral of the white. 'The Achates:' Sir Robert Holmes was rear-admiral of the white.]

[Footnote 46: 'Leader:' De Ruyter.]

[Footnote 47: 'Patron saint:' St James, on whose day the victory was gained.]

[Footnote 48: 'Usurper:' this seems a reference to Cromwell; if so, it contradicts Scott's statement quoted above in the 'Life.']

[Footnote 49: 'Letted:' hindered.]

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AN ESSAY UPON SATIRE.

BY ME DRYDEN AND THE EARL OF MULGRAVE,[50] 1679.

How dull, and how insensible a beast
Is man, who yet would lord it o'er the rest!
Philosophers and poets vainly strove
In every age the lumpish mass to move:
But those were pedants, when compared with these,
Who know not only to instruct, but please.
Poets alone found the delightful way,
Mysterious morals gently to convey
In charming numbers; so that as men grew
Pleased with their poems, they grew wiser too. 10
Satire has always shone among the rest,
And is the boldest way, if not the best,
To tell men freely of their foulest faults;
To laugh at their vain deeds, and vainer thoughts.
In satire too the wise took different ways,
To each deserving its peculiar praise.
Some did all folly with just sharpness blame,
Whilst others laugh'd and scorn'd them into shame.
But of these two, the last succeeded best,
As men aim rightest when they shoot in jest. 20



Yet, if we may presume to blame our guides,
And censure those who censure all besides,
In other things they justly are preferr'd.
In this alone methinks the ancients err'd,—
Against the grossest follies they declaim;
Hard they pursue, but hunt ignoble game.
Nothing is easier than such blots to hit,
And 'tis the talent of each vulgar wit:
Besides, 'tis labour lost; for who would preach
Morals to Armstrong,[51] or dull Aston teach? 30
'Tis being devout at play, wise at a ball,
Or bringing wit and friendship to Whitehall.
But with sharp eyes those nicer faults to find,
Which lie obscurely in the wisest mind;
That little speck which all the rest does spoil,
To wash off that would be a noble toil;
Beyond the loose writ libels of this age,
Or the forced scenes of our declining stage;
Above all censure too, each little wit
Will be so glad to see the greater hit; 40
Who, judging better, though concern'd the most,

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Of such correction, will have cause to boast.
In such a satire all would seek a share,
And every fool will fancy he is there.
Old story-tellers too must pine and die,
To see their antiquated wit laid by;
Like her, who miss'd her name in a lampoon,
And grieved to find herself decay'd so soon.
No common coxcomb must be mentioned here:
Not the dull train of dancing sparks appear; 50
Nor fluttering officers who never fight;
Of such a wretched rabble who would write?
Much less half wits: that's more against our rules;
For they are fops, the other are but fools.
Who would not be as silly as Dunbar?
As dull as Monmouth, rather than Sir Carr?[52]
The cunning courtier should be slighted too,
Who with dull knavery makes so much ado;
Till the shrewd fool, by thriving too, too fast,
Like AESop's fox becomes a prey at last. 60
Nor shall the royal mistresses be named,
Too ugly, or too easy to be blamed,
With whom each rhyming fool keeps such a pother,
They are as common that way as the other:
Yet sauntering Charles, between his beastly brace,[53]
Meets with dissembling still in either place,
Affected humour, or a painted face.
In loyal libels we have often told him,
How one has jilted him, the other sold him:
How that affects to laugh, how this to weep; 70
But who can rail so long as he can sleep?
Was ever prince by two at once misled,
False, foolish, old, ill-natured, and ill-bred?
Earnely[54] and Aylesbury[55] with all that race
Of busy blockheads, shall have here no place;
At council set as foils on Danby's[56] score,
To make that great false jewel shine the more;
Who all that while was thought exceeding wise,
Only for taking pains and telling lies.
But there's no meddling with such nauseous men; 80
Their very names have tired my lazy pen:

'Tis time to quit their company, and choose
Some fitter subject for sharper muse.

First, let's behold the merriest man alive[57]
Against his careless genius vainly strive;
Quit his dear ease, some deep design to lay,
'Gainst a set time, and then forget the day:
Yet he will laugh at his best friends, and be
Just as good company as Nokes and Lee.[58]
But when he aims at reason or at rule, 90
He turns himself the best to ridicule;
Let him at business ne'er so earnest sit,
Show him but mirth, and bait that mirth with wit;
That shadow of a jest shall be enjoy'd,
Though he left all mankind to be destroy'd.
So cat transform'd sat gravely and demure,
Till mouse appear'd, and thought himself secure;
But soon the lady had him in her eye,
And from her friend did just as oddly

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fly.

Reaching above our nature does no good; 100
We must fall back to our old flesh and blood;
As by our little Machiavel we find
That nimblest creature of the busy kind,
His limbs are crippled, and his body shakes;
Yet his hard mind which all this bustle makes,
No pity of its poor companion takes.
What gravity can hold from laughing out,
To see him drag his feeble legs about,
Like hounds ill-coupled? Jowler lugs him still
Through hedges, ditches, and through all that's ill. 110
'Twere crime in any man but him alone,
To use a body so, though 'tis one's own:
Yet this false comfort never gives him o'er,
That whilst he creeps his vigorous thoughts can soar;
Alas! that soaring to those few that know,
Is but a busy grovelling here below.
So men in rapture think they mount the sky,
Whilst on the ground the entranced wretches lie:
So modern fops have fancied they could fly.
As the new earl,[59] with parts deserving praise, 120
And wit enough to laugh at his own ways,
Yet loses all soft days and sensual nights,
Kind nature checks, and kinder fortune slights;
Striving against his quiet all he can,
For the fine notion of a busy man.
And what is that at best, but one whose mind
Is made to tire himself and all mankind?
For Ireland he would go; faith, let him reign;
For if some odd, fantastic lord would fain
Carry in trunks, and all my drudgery do, 130
I'll not only pay him, but admire him too.
But is there any other beast that lives,
Who his own harm so wittingly contrives?
Will any dog that has his teeth and stones,
Refinedly leave his bitches and his bones,
To turn a wheel, and bark to be employ'd,
While Venus is by rival dogs enjoy'd?
Yet this fond man, to get a statesman's name,
Forfeits his friends, his freedom, and his fame.



Though satire, nicely writ, with humour stings 140
But those who merit praise in other things;
Yet we must needs this one exception make,
And break our rules for silly Tropos'[60] sake;
Who was too much despised to be accused,
And therefore scarce deserves to be abused;
Raised only by his mercenary tongue,
For railing smoothly, and for reasoning wrong,
As boys, on holidays, let loose to play,
Lay waggish traps for girls that pass that way;
Then shout to see in dirt and deep distress 150
Some silly cit in her flower'd foolish dress:
So have I mighty satisfaction found,
To see his tinsel reason on the ground:
To see the florid fool despised, and know it,
By some who scarce have words enough to show it:
For sense sits silent, and condemns for weaker

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The finer, nay sometimes the wittier speaker:
But 'tis prodigious so much eloquence
Should be acquired by such little sense;
For words and wit did anciently agree, 160
And Tully was no fool, though this man be:
At bar abusive, on the bench unable,
Knave on the woolsack, fop at council-table.
These are the grievances of such fools as would
Be rather wise than honest, great than good.

Some other kind of wits must be made known,
Whose harmless errors hurt themselves alone;
Excess of luxury they think can please,
And laziness call loving of their ease:
To live dissolved in pleasures still they feign, 170
Though their whole life's but intermitting pain:
So much of surfeits, headaches, claps are seen,
We scarce perceive the little time between:
Well-meaning men who make this gross mistake,
And pleasure lose only for pleasure's sake;
Each pleasure has its price, and when we pay
Too much of pain, we squander life away.

Thus Dorset, purring like a thoughtful cat,
Married, but wiser puss ne'er thought of that:
And first he worried her with railing rhyme, 180
Like Pembroke's mastives at his kindest time;
Then for one night sold all his slavish life,
A teeming widow, but a barren wife;
Swell'd by contact of such a fulsome toad,
He lugg'd about the matrimonial load;
Till fortune, blindly kind as well as he,
Has ill restored him to his liberty;
Which he would use in his old sneaking way,
Drinking all night, and dozing all the day;
Dull as Ned Howard,[61] whom his brisker times 190
Had famed for dulness in malicious rhymes.

Mulgrave had much ado to 'scape the snare,
Though learn'd in all those arts that cheat the fair:



For after all his vulgar marriage mocks,
With beauty dazzled, Numps was in the stocks;
Deluded parents dried their weeping eyes,
To see him catch his Tartar for his prize;
The impatient town waited the wish'd-for change,
And cuckolds smiled in hopes of sweet revenge;
Till Petworth plot made us with sorrow see, 200
As his estate, his person too was free:
Him no soft thoughts, no gratitude could move;
To gold he fled from beauty and from love;
Yet, failing there, he keeps his freedom still,
Forced to live happily against his will:
'Tis not his fault, if too much wealth and power
Break not his boasted quiet every hour.

And little Sid,[62] for simile renown'd,
Pleasure has always sought but never found:
Though all his thoughts on wine and women fall, 210
His are so bad, sure he ne'er thinks at all.
The flesh he lives upon is rank and strong,
His meat and mistresses are kept too long.

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But sure we all mistake this pious man,
Who mortifies his person all he can:
What we uncharitably take for sin,
Are only rules of this odd capuchin;
For never hermit under grave pretence,
Has lived more contrary to common sense;
And 'tis a miracle we may suppose, 220
No nastiness offends his skilful nose:
Which from all stink can with peculiar art
Extract perfume and essence from a f—t.
Expecting supper is his great delight;
He toils all day but to be drunk at night:
Then o'er his cups this night-bird chirping sits,
Till he takes Hewet and Jack Hall[63] for wits.

Rochester I despise for want of wit,
Though thought to have a tail and cloven feet;
For while he mischief means to all mankind, 230
Himself alone the ill effects does find:
And so like witches justly suffer shame,
Whose harmless malice is so much the same.
False are his words, affected is his wit;
So often he does aim, so seldom hit;
To every face he cringes while he speaks,
But when the back is turn'd, the head he breaks:
Mean in each action, lewd in every limb,
Manners themselves are mischievous in him:
A proof that chance alone makes every creature, 240
A very Killigrew[64] without good nature.
For what a Bessus[65] has he always lived,
And his own kickings notably contrived!
For, there's the folly that's still mix'd with fear,
Cowards more blows than any hero bear;
Of fighting sparks some may their pleasures say,
But 'tis a bolder thing to run away:
The world may well forgive him all his ill,
For every fault does prove his penance still:
Falsely he falls into some dangerous noose, 250
And then as meanly labours to get loose;
A life so infamous is better quitting,



Spent in base injury and low submitting.
I'd like to have left out his poetry;
Forgot by all almost as well as me.
Sometimes he has some humour, never wit,
And if it rarely, very rarely, hit,
'Tis under so much nasty rubbish laid,
To find it out's the cinderwoman's trade;
Who for the wretched remnants of a fire, 260
Must toil all day in ashes and in mire.
So lewdly dull his idle works appear,
The wretched texts deserve no comments here;
Where one poor thought sometimes, left all alone,
For a whole page of dulness must atone.

How vain a thing is man, and how unwise!
Even he, who would himself the most despise!
I, who so wise and humble seem to be,
Now my own vanity and pride can't see;
While the world's nonsense is so sharply shown, 270
We pull down others' but to raise our own;
That we may angels seem, we paint them

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elves,
And are but satires to set up ourselves.
I, who have all this while been finding fault,
Even with my master, who first satire taught;
And did by that describe the task so hard,
It seems stupendous and above reward;
Now labour with unequal force to climb
That lofty hill, unreach'd by former time;
'Tis just that I should to the bottom fall, 280
Learn to write well, or not to write at all.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 50: 'Mulgrave:' Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. It was for this satire, the joint composition of Dryden and Sheffield, that Rochester hired bravoës to cudgel Dryden.]

[Footnote 51: 'Armstrong:' Sir Thomas Armstrong, a notorious character of the time—hanged at Tyburn.]

[Footnote 52: 'Carr:' Sir Carr Scrope, a wit of the time.]

[Footnote 53: 'Beastly brace:' Duchess of Portsmouth and Nell Gwynn.]

[Footnote 54: 'Earnely:' Sir John Earnely, one of the lords of the treasury.]

[Footnote 55: 'Aylesbury:' Robert, the first Earl of Aylesbury.]

[Footnote 56: 'Danby:' Thomas, Earl of Danby, lord high-treasurer of England.]

[Footnote 57: 'Merriest man alive:' Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury.]

[Footnote 58: 'Nokes and Lee:' two celebrated comedians in Charles II.'s reign.]

[Footnote 59: 'New earl:' Earl of Essex.]

[Footnote 60: 'Tropos:' Sir William Scroggs. See Macaulay.]

[Footnote 61: 'Ned Howard:' Edward Howard, Esq., a dull writer. See Butler's works.]

[Footnote 62: 'Sid:' brother to Algernon Sidney.]

[Footnote 63: 'Hewet and Jack Hall:' courtiers of the day.]

[Footnote 64: 'Killigrew:' Thomas Killigrew, many years master of the revels, and groom of the chamber to King Charles II.]

[Footnote 65: 'Bessus:' a remarkable cowardly character in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of 'A King and no King.']

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ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.[66]

TO THE READER.

It is not my intention to make an apology for my poem: some will think it needs no excuse, and others will receive none. The design I am sure is honest: but he who draws his pen for one party, must expect to make enemies of the other. For wit and fool are consequence of Whig and Tory; and every man is a knave or an ass to the contrary side. There is a treasury of merits in the Fanatic church, as well as in the Popish; and a pennyworth to be had of saintship, honesty, and poetry, for the lewd, the factious, and the blockheads: but the longest chapter in Deuteronomy has not curses enough for an Anti-Bromingham. My comfort is, their manifest prejudice to my cause will render their judgment of

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less authority against me. Yet if a poem have genius, it will force its own reception in the world. For there is a sweetness in good verse, which tickles even while it hurts; and no man can be heartily angry with him who pleases him against his will. The commendation of adversaries is the greatest triumph of a writer, because it never comes unless extorted. But I can be satisfied on more easy terms: if I happen to please the more moderate sort, I shall be sure of an honest party, and, in all probability, of the best judges; for the least concerned are commonly the least corrupt. And I confess I have laid in for those, by rebating the satire (where justice would allow it), from carrying too sharp an edge. They who can criticise so weakly as to imagine I have done my worst, may be convinced, at their own cost, that I can write severely, with more ease than I can gently. I have but laughed at some men's follies, when I could have declaimed against their vices; and other men's virtues I have commended, as freely as I have taxed their crimes. And now, if you are a malicious reader, I expect you should return upon me that I affect to be thought more impartial than I am. But if men are not to be judged by their professions, God forgive you Commonwealth's-men for professing so plausibly for the government. You cannot be so unconscionable as to charge me for not subscribing my name; for that would reflect too grossly upon your own party, who never dare, though they have the advantage of a jury to secure them. If you like not my poem, the fault may possibly be in my writing (though it is hard for an author to judge against himself); but more probably it is in your morals, which cannot bear the truth of it. The violent on both sides will condemn the character of Absalom, as either too favourably or too hardly drawn. But they are not the violent whom I desire to please. The fault on the right hand is to extenuate, palliate, and indulge; and to confess freely, I have endeavoured to commit it. Besides the respect which I owe his birth, I have a greater for his heroic virtues; and David himself could not be more tender of the young man's life, than I would be of his reputation. But since the most excellent natures are always the most easy, and, as being such, are the soonest perverted by ill counsels, especially when baited with fame and glory; it is no more a wonder that he withstood not the temptations of Achitophel, than it was for Adam not to have resisted the two devils, the serpent and the woman. The conclusion of the story I purposely forbore to prosecute, because I could not obtain from myself to show Absalom unfortunate. The frame of it was cut out but for a picture to the waist; and if the draught be so far true, it is as much as I designed.

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Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconciliation of Absalom to David. And who knows but this may come to pass? Things were not brought to an extremity where I left the story: there seems yet to be room left for a composure; hereafter there may be only for pity. I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope with Origen, that the devil himself may at last be saved. For which reason, in this poem, he is neither brought to set his house in order, nor to dispose of his person afterwards as he in wisdom shall think fit. God is infinitely merciful; and his vicegerent is only not so, because he is not infinite.

The true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction. And he who writes honestly is no more an enemy to the offender, than the physician to the patient, when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate disease; for those are only in order to prevent the surgeon's work of an *Ense rescindendum*, which I wish not to my very enemies. To conclude all; if the body politic have any analogy to the natural, in my weak judgment, an act of oblivion were as necessary in a hot distempered state, as an opiate would be in a raging fever.

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 66: See 'Life' for explanation for circumstances; and the key at the close of the poem, for the real names of this satire.]

* * * * *

PART I.

—Si propius stes
Te capiet magis—

In pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,
Before polygamy was made a sin;
When man on many multiplied his kind,
Ere one to one was cursedly confined;
When nature prompted, and no law denied
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;
Then Israel's monarch after Heaven's own heart,
His vigorous warmth did variously impart
To wives and slaves; and wide as his command,
Scatter'd his Maker's image through the land. 10



Michal, of royal blood, the crown did wear;
A soil ungrateful to the tiller's care:
Not so the rest; for several mothers bore
To god-like David several sons before.
But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,
No true succession could their seed attend.
Of all the numerous progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave, as Absalom:
Whether inspired by some diviner lust,
His father got him with a greater gust; 20
Or that his conscious destiny made way,
By manly beauty to imperial sway.
Early in foreign fields he won renown,
With kings and states allied to Israel's crown:
In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,

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And seem'd as he were only born for love.
Whate'er he did, was done with so much ease,
In him alone 'twas natural to please:
His motions all accompanied with grace;
And Paradise was open'd in his face. 30
With secret joy indulgent David view'd
His youthful image in his son renew'd:
To all his wishes nothing he denied;
And made the charming Annabell[67] his bride.
What faults he had (for who from faults is free?)
His father could not, or he would not see.
Some warm excesses which the law forbore,
Were construed youth that purged by boiling o'er;
And Amnon's murder by a specious name,
Was call'd a just revenge for injured fame. 40
Thus praised and loved, the noble youth remain'd,
While David undisturb'd in Sion reign'd.
But life can never be sincerely blest:
Heaven punishes the bad, and proves the best.
The Jews, a headstrong, moody, murmuring race,
As ever tried the extent and stretch of grace;
God's pamper'd people, whom, debauch'd with ease,
No king could govern, nor no god could please;
(Gods they had tried of every shape and size,
That god-smiths could produce, or priests devise): 50
These Adam-wits,[68] too fortunately free,
Began to dream they wanted liberty;
And when no rule, no precedent was found,
Of men by laws less circumscribed and bound;
They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
And thought that all but savages were slaves.
They who, when Saul was dead, without a blow,
Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forego;
Who banish'd David did from Hebron bring,
And with a general shout proclaim'd him king: 60
Those very Jews, who, at their very best,
Their humour more than loyalty express'd,
Now wonder'd why so long they had obey'd
An idol monarch, which their hands had made;
Thought they might ruin him they could create,



Or melt him to that golden calf—a state.
But these were random bolts: no form'd design,
Nor interest made the factious crowd to join:
The sober part of Israel, free from stain,
Well knew the value of a peaceful reign; 70
And, looking backward with a wise affright,
Saw seams of wounds dishonest to the sight:
In contemplation of whose ugly scars,
They cursed the memory of civil wars.
The moderate sort of men thus qualified,
Inclined the balance to the better side;
And David's mildness managed it so well,
The bad found no occasion to rebel.
But when to sin our biass'd nature leans,
The careful devil is still at hand with means; 80
And providently pimps for ill desires:
The good old cause revived a plot requires.
Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
To raise up commonwealths, and ruin kings.

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The inhabitants of old Jerusalem
Were Jebusites; the town so call'd from them;
And theirs the native right—
But when the chosen people grew more strong,
The rightful cause at length became the wrong;
And every loss the men of Jebus bore, 90
They still were thought God's enemies the more.
Thus worn or weaken'd, well or ill content,
Submit they must to David's government:
Impoverish'd and deprived of all command,
Their taxes doubled as they lost their land;
And, what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
Their gods disgraced, and burnt like common wood.
This set the heathen priesthood in a flame;
For priests of all religions are the same.
Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be, 100
Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
In his defence his servants are as bold,
As if he had been born of beaten gold.
The Jewish rabbins, though their enemies,
In this conclude them honest men and wise:
For 'twas their duty, all the learned think,
To espouse his cause by whom they eat and drink.
From hence began that Plot, the nation's curse,
Bad in itself, but represented worse;
Raised in extremes, and in extremes decried: 110
With oaths affirm'd, with dying vows denied;
Not weigh'd nor winnow'd by the multitude;
But swallow'd in the mass, unchew'd and crude.
Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies,
To please the fools, and puzzle all the wise.
Succeeding times did equal folly call,
Believing nothing, or believing all.
The Egyptian rites the Jebusites embraced,
Where gods were recommended by their taste.
Such savoury deities must needs be good, 120
As served at once for worship and for food.
By force they could not introduce these gods;
For ten to one in former days was odds.
So fraud was used, the sacrificer's trade:
Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade.
Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews,
And raked for converts even the court and stews:



Which Hebrew priests the more unkindly took,
Because the fleece accompanies the flock,
Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay 130
By guns, invented since full many a day:
Our author swears it not; but who can know
How far the devil and Jebusites may go?
This Plot, which fail'd for want of common sense,
Had yet a deep and dangerous consequence:
For as, when raging fevers boil the blood,
The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
And every hostile humour, which before
Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;
So several factions from this first ferment, 140
Work up to foam, and threat the government.

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Some by their friends, more by themselves thought wise,
Opposed the power to which they could not rise.
Some had in courts been great, and, thrown from thence,
Like fiends were harden'd in impenitence.
Some, by their monarch's fatal mercy, grown,
From pardon'd rebels, kinsmen to the throne,
Were raised in power and public office high;
Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.

Of these, the false Achitophel was first; 150
A name to all succeeding ages cursed:
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high, 160
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won,
To that unfeather'd two-legg'd thing, a son; 170
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try;
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate;
Resolved to ruin, or to rule the state.
To compass this, the triple bond[69] he broke;
The pillars of the public safety shook;
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke:
Then seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves, in factious times, 180



With public zeal to cancel private crimes!
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will!
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own!
Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abethdin
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean,
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress; 190
Swift of despatch, and easy of access.
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown,
With virtues only proper to the gown;
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
From cockle, that oppress'd the noble seed;
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
And Heaven had wanted one immortal song.
But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's

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land.

Achitophel, grown weary to possess 200
A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,
Disdain'd the golden fruit to gather free,
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since,
He stood at bold defiance with his prince;
Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulk'd behind the laws.
The wish'd occasion of the plot he takes;
Some circumstances finds, but more he makes;
By buzzing emissaries fills the ears 210
Of listening crowds with jealousies and fears
Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
And proves the king himself a Jebusite.
Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well
Were strong with people easy to rebel.
For, govern'd by the moon, the giddy Jews
Tread the same track, when she the prime renews;
And once in twenty years, their scribes record,
By natural instinct they change their lord.
Achitophel still wants a chief, and none 220
Was found so fit as warlike Absalom.
Not that he wish'd his greatness to create,
For politicians neither love nor hate:
But, for he knew his title not allow'd,
Would keep him still depending on the crowd:
That kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be
Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
Him he attempts with studied arts to please,
And sheds his venom in such words as these:

Auspicious prince! at whose nativity 230
Some royal planet ruled the southern sky;
Thy longing country's darling and desire;
Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire:
Their second Moses, whose extended wand
Divides the seas, and shows the promised land:
Whose dawning day, in every distant age,
Has exercised the sacred prophet's rage:
The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,
The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!



Thee, Saviour, thee the nation's vows confess, 240
And, never satisfied with seeing, bless:
Swift, unbespoken poms thy steps proclaim,
And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.
How long wilt thou the general joy detain,
Starve and defraud the people of thy reign!
Content ingloriously to pass thy days,
Like one of virtue's fools that feed on praise;
Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
Grow stale, and tarnish with our daily sight?
Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be 250
Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the tree.
Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolution of their fate:
Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill,
(For human good depends on human will,)
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,

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And from the first impression takes the bent:
But if, unseized, she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting folly far behind.
Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize, 260
And spreads her locks before her as she flies.
Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,
Not dared when fortune called him to be king,
At Gath an exile he might still remain,
And Heaven's anointing oil had been in vain.
Let his successful youth your hopes engage;
But shun the example of declining age:
Behold him setting in his western skies,
The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise.
He is not now, as when on Jordan's sand 270
The joyful people throng'd to see him land,
Covering the beach and blackening all the strand;
But, like the prince of angels, from his height
Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd light:
Betray'd by one poor Plot to public scorn:
(Our only blessing since his cursed return:)
Those heaps of people which one sheaf did bind,
Blown off and scatter'd by a puff of wind.
What strength can he to your designs oppose,
Naked of friends, and round beset with foes? 280
If Pharaoh's doubtful succour he should use,
A foreign aid would more incense the Jews:
Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring;
Foment the war, but not support the king:
Nor would the royal party e'er unite
With Pharaoh's arms to assist the Jebusite;
Or if they should, their interest soon would break,
And with such odious aid make David weak.
All sorts of men, by my successful arts,
Abhorring kings, estrange their alter'd hearts 290
From David's rule: and 'tis their general cry—
Religion, commonwealth, and liberty.
If you, as champion of the public good,
Add to their arms a chief of royal blood,
What may not Israel hope, and what applause
Might such a general gain by such a cause?



Not barren praise alone—that gaudy flower,
Fair only to the sight—but solid power:
And nobler is a limited command,
Given by the love of all your native land, 300
Than a successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark.

What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
When flattery soothes, and when ambition blinds?
Desire of power, on earth a vicious weed,
Yet sprung from high, is of celestial seed:
In God 'tis glory; and when men aspire,
'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.
The ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
Too full of angels' metal in his frame, 310
Unwarily was led from virtue's ways,
Made drunk with honour, and debauch'd with praise.
Half loath, and half consenting to the



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ill,

For royal blood within him struggled still,
He thus replied:—And what pretence have I
To take up arms for public liberty?
My father governs with unquestion'd right,
The faith's defender, and mankind's delight;
Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws;
And Heaven by wonders has espoused his cause. 320
Whom has he wrong'd, in all his peaceful reign?
Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?
What millions has he pardon'd of his foes,
Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose!
Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good;
Inclined to mercy, and averse from blood.
If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,
His crime is God's beloved attribute.
What could he gain his people to betray,
Or change his right for arbitrary sway? 330
Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign
His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.
If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
The dog-star heats their brains to this disease.
Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
Turn rebel and run popularly mad?
Were he a tyrant, who by lawless might
Oppress'd the Jews, and raised the Jebusite,
Well might I mourn; but nature's holy bands
Would curb my spirits, and restrain my hands: 340
The people might assert their liberty;
But what was right in them were crime in me.
His favour leaves me nothing to require,
Prevents my wishes, and outruns desire.
What more can I expect while David lives?
All but his kingly diadem he gives:
And that—But here he paused; then, sighing, said—
Is justly destined for a worthier head.
For when my father from his toils shall rest,
And late augment the number of the blest, 350
His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,
Or the collateral line, where that shall end.
His brother, though oppress'd with vulgar spite,
Yet dauntless, and secure of native right,



Of every royal virtue stands possess'd;
Still dear to all the bravest and the best.
His courage foes—his friends his truth proclaim;
His loyalty the king—the world his fame.
His mercy even the offending crowd will find;
For sure he comes of a forgiving kind. 360
Why should I then repine at Heaven's decree,
Which gives me no pretence to royalty?
Yet, oh! that fate, propitiously inclined,
Had raised my birth, or had debased my mind;
To my large soul not all her treasure lent,
And then betray'd it to a mean descent!
I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,
And David's part disdains my mother's mould.
Why am I scantied by a niggard birth?
My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth; 370
And, made for empire, whispers me within,
Desire of greatness is a god-like sin.

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Him staggering so, when hell's dire agent found,
While fainting virtue scarce maintain'd her ground,
He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies:

The eternal God, supremely good and wise,
Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain;
What wonders are reserved to bless your reign!
Against your will your arguments have shown,
Such virtue's only given to guide a throne. 380
Not that your father's mildness I condemn;
But manly force becomes the diadem.
'Tis true he grants the people all they crave;
And more perhaps than subjects ought to have:
For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame,
And more his goodness than his wit proclaim.
But when should people strive their bonds to break,
If not when kings are negligent or weak?
Let him give on till he can give no more,
The thrifty Sanhedrim shall keep him poor; 390
And every shekel which he can receive,
Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.
To ply him with new plots shall be my care;
Or plunge him deep in some expensive war;
Which, when his treasure can no more supply,
He must with the remains of kingship buy
His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears
Call Jebusites, and Pharaoh's pensioners;
Whom when our fury from his aid has torn,
He shall be naked left to public scorn. 400
The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
My arts have made obnoxious to the state;
Turn'd all his virtues to his overthrow,
And gain'd our elders to pronounce a foe.
His right, for sums of necessary gold,
Shall first be pawn'd, and afterwards be sold;
Till time shall ever-wanting David draw,
To pass your doubtful title into law;
If not, the people have a right supreme
To make their kings, for kings are made for them. 410
All empire is no more than power in trust,
Which, when resumed, can be no longer just.
Succession, for the general good design'd,
In its own wrong a nation cannot bind:



If altering that the people can relieve,
Better one suffer than a nation grieve.
The Jews well know their power: ere Saul they chose,
God was their king, and God they durst depose.
Urge now your piety, your filial name,
A father's right, and fear of future fame; 420
The public good, that universal call,
To which even Heaven submitted, answers all.
Nor let his love enchant your generous mind;
'Tis nature's trick to propagate her kind.
Our fond begetters, who would never die,
Love but themselves in their posterity.
Or let his kindness by the effects be tried,
Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.
God said, he loved your father; could he bring
A better proof, than to anoint him king?



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It surely show'd he loved the shepherd well,
Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.
Would David have you thought his darling son?
What means he then to alienate the crown?
The name of godly he may blush to bear:
Is't after God's own heart to cheat his heir?
He to his brother gives supreme command,
To you a legacy of barren land;
Perhaps the old harp, on which he thrums his lays,
Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise. 440
Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,
Already looks on you with jealous eyes;
Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,
And marks your progress in the people's hearts;
Though now his mighty soul its grief contains:
He meditates revenge who least complains;
And like a lion, slumbering in the way,
Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,
His fearless foes within his distance draws,
Constrains his roaring, and contracts his paws; 450
Till at the last his time for fury found,
He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground;
The prostrate vulgar passes o'er and spares,
But with a lordly rage his hunters tears.
Your case no tame expedients will afford:
Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,
Which for no less a stake than life you draw;
And self-defence is nature's eldest law.
Leave the warm people no considering time:
For then rebellion may be thought a crime. 460
Avail yourself of what occasion gives,
But try your title while your father lives:
And that your arms may have a fair pretence,
Proclaim you take them in the king's defence;
Whose sacred life each minute would expose
To plots, from seeming friends, and secret foes.
And who can sound the depth of David's soul?
Perhaps his fear, his kindness may control.
He fears his brother, though he loves his son,
For plighted vows too late to be undone. 470
If so, by force he wishes to be gain'd:



By women's lechery to seem constrain'd.
Doubt not; but, when he most affects the frown,
Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.
Secure his person to secure your cause:
They who possess the prince possess the laws.

He said, and this advice above the rest,
With Absalom's mild nature suited best;
Unblamed of life, ambition set aside,
Not stain'd with cruelty, nor puff'd with pride, 480
How happy had he been, if destiny
Had higher placed his birth, or not so high!
His kingly virtues might have claim'd a throne,
And bless'd all other countries but his own.
But charming greatness since so few refuse,
'Tis juster to lament him than accuse.
Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,

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With blandishments to gain the public love:
To head the faction while their zeal was hot,
And popularly prosecute the Plot. 490
To further this, Achitophel unites
The malcontents of all the Israelites:
Whose differing parties he could wisely join,
For several ends to serve the same design.
The best—and of the princes some were such—
Who thought the power of monarchy too much;
Mistaken men, and patriots in their hearts;
Not wicked, but seduced by impious arts.
By these the springs of property were bent,
And wound so high, they crack'd the government. 500
The next for interest sought to embroil the state,
To sell their duty at a dearer rate,
And make their Jewish markets of the throne;
Pretending public good, to serve their own.
Others thought kings an useless heavy load,
Who cost too much, and did too little good.
These were for laying honest David by,
On principles of pure good husbandry.
With them join'd all the haranguers of the throng,
That thought to get preferment by the tongue. 510
Who follow next a double danger bring,
Not only hating David, but the king;
The Solyimaeen rout; well versed of old
In godly faction, and in treason bold;
Cowering and quaking at a conqueror's sword,
But lofty to a lawful prince restored;
Saw with disdain an Ethnic plot begun,
And scorn'd by Jebusites to be outdone.
Hot Levites headed these; who pull'd before
From the ark, which in the Judges' days they bore, 520
Resumed their cant, and with a zealous cry,
Pursued their old beloved theocracy:
Where Sanhedrim and priest enslaved the nation,
And justified their spoils by inspiration:
For who so fit to reign as Aaron's race,
If once dominion they could found in grace?
These led the pack; though not of surest scent,



Yet deepest mouth'd against the government.
A numerous host of dreaming saints succeed,
Of the true old enthusiastic breed: 530
'Gainst form and order they their power employ,
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.
But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little, and who talk too much.
These out of mere instinct, they knew not why,
Adored their fathers' God and property;
And by the same blind benefit of fate,
The Devil and the Jebusite did hate:
Born to be saved, even in their own despite,
Because they could not help believing right. 540

Such were the tools: but a whole Hydra more
Remains of sprouting heads too long to score.
Some of their chiefs were princes of the land:
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
A man so various, that he seem'd

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to be

Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon: 550
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
So over violent, or over civil,
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded but desert. 560
Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late;
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laugh'd himself from court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
For, spite of him the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel:
Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left.

Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
Of lords, below the dignity of verse. 570
Wits, warriors, commonwealth's-men, were the best:
Kind husbands, and mere nobles, all the rest.
And therefore, in the name of dulness, be
The well-hung Balaam and cold Caleb free:
And canting Nadab let oblivion damn,
Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb.
Let friendship's holy band some names assure;
Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure.
Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place,
Whom kings no titles gave, and God no grace: 580
Not bull-faced Jonas, who could statutes draw
To mean rebellion, and make treason law.
But he, though bad, is follow'd by a worse,
The wretch who Heaven's anointed dared to curse;
Shimei, whose youth did early promise bring



Of zeal to God and hatred to his king,
Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,
And never broke the Sabbath but for gain;
Nor ever was he known an oath to vent,
Or curse, unless against the government. 590
Thus heaping wealth by the most ready way
Among the Jews, which was to cheat and pray;
The city, to reward his pious hate
Against his master, chose him magistrate.
His hand a vane^[70] of justice did uphold;
His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.
During his office treason was no crime;
The sons of Belial had a glorious time:
For Shimei, though not prodigal of self,
Yet loved his wicked neighbour as himself. 600
When two or three were gather'd to declaim
Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them;

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And if they cursed the king when he was by,
Would rather curse than break good company.
If any durst his factious friends accuse,
He pack'd a jury of dissenting Jews;
Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause
Would free the suffering saint from human laws.
For laws are only made to punish those 610
Who serve the king, and to protect his foes.
If any leisure time he had from power
(Because 'tis sin to misemploy an hour),
His business was, by writing to persuade,
That kings were useless and a clog to trade;
And, that his noble style he might refine,
No Rechabite more shunn'd the fumes of wind.
Chaste were his cellars, and his shrivel board
The grossness of a city feast abhorr'd;
His cooks with long disuse their trade forgot; 620
Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot.
Such frugal virtue malice may accuse,
But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews;
For towns, once burnt, such magistrates require
As dare not tempt God's providence by fire.
With spiritual food he fed his servants well,
But free from flesh that made the Jews rebel:
And Moses' laws he held in more account,
For forty days of fasting in the mount.
To speak the rest who better are forgot, 630
Would tire a well-breathed witness of the plot.
Yet Corah, thou shalt from oblivion pass;
Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,
High as the serpent of thy metal made,
While nations stand secure beneath thy shade.
What though his birth were base, yet comets rise
From earthly vapours, ere they shine in skies.
Prodigious actions may as well be done
By weaver's issue, as by prince's son.
This arch attestor for the public good 640
By that one deed ennobles all his blood.
Who ever ask'd the witness's high race,
Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen grace?



Ours was a Levite, and as times went then,
His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen.
Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither choleric was, nor proud.
His long chin proved his wit; his saint-like grace
A church vermilion, and a Moses' face.
His memory miraculously great, 650
Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat;
Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
For human wit could never such devise.
Some future truths are mingled in his book;
But where the witness fail'd, the prophet spoke.
Some things like visionary flights appear;
The spirit caught him up the Lord knows where;
And gave him his rabbinical degree,
Unknown to foreign university.
His judgment yet his memory did excel; 660
Which pieced his wondrous evidence so

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well,

And suited to the temper of the times,
Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes.
Let Israel's foes suspect his heavenly call,
And rashly judge his wit apocryphal;
Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made;
He takes his life who takes away his trade.
Were I myself in witness Corah's place,
The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace,
Should whet my memory, though once forgot, 670
To make him an appendix of my plot.
His zeal to heaven made him his prince despise,
And load his person with indignities.
But zeal peculiar privilege affords,
Indulging latitude to deeds and words:
And Corah might for Agag's murder call,
In terms as coarse as Samuel used to Saul.
What others in his evidence did join,
The best that could be had for love or coin,
In Corah's own predicament will fall: 680
For witness is a common name to all.

Surrounded thus with friends of every sort,
Deluded Absalom forsakes the court:
Impatient of high hopes, urged with renown,
And fired with near possession of a crown.
The admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,
And on his goodly person feed their eyes.
His joy conceal'd he sets himself to show;
On each side bowing popularly low:
His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames, 690
And with familiar ease repeats their names.
Thus form'd by nature, furnish'd out with arts,
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts.
Then, with a kind compassionating look,
And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoke,
Few words he said; but easy those and fit,
More slow than Hybla-drops, and far more sweet.

I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate;
Though far unable to prevent your fate:
Behold a banish'd man for your dear cause 700



Exposed a prey to arbitrary laws!
Yet oh! that I alone could be undone,
Cut off from empire, and no more a son!
Now all your liberties a spoil are made;
Egypt and Tyrus intercept your trade,
And Jebusites your sacred rites invade.
My father, whom with reverence yet I name,
Charm'd into ease, is careless of his fame;
And bribed with petty sums of foreign gold,
Is grown in Bathsheba's embraces old; 710
Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys,
And all his power against himself employs.
He gives, and let him give, my right away:
But why should he his own and yours betray?
He, only he, can make the nation bleed,
And he alone from my revenge is freed.
Take then my tears (with that he wiped his eyes),
'Tis all the aid my present power supplies:
No court-informer can these arms accuse;
These arms may sons against their fathers use: 720
And 'tis my wish, the next successor's reign,
May make no other Israelite complain.



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Youth, beauty, graceful action seldom fail;
But common interest always will prevail:
And pity never ceases to be shown
To him who makes the people's wrongs his own.
The crowd, that still believe their kings oppress,
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless:
Who now begins his progress to ordain
With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train: 730
From east to west his glories he displays,
And, like the sun, the promised land surveys.
Fame runs before him as the morning-star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar:
Each house receives him as a guardian god,
And consecrates the place of his abode.
But hospitable treats did most commend
Wise Issachar, his wealthy western friend.
This moving court, that caught the people's eyes,
And seem'd but pomp, did other ends disguise: 740
Achitophel had form'd it, with intent
To sound the depths, and fathom where it went,
The people's hearts, distinguish friends from foes,
And try their strength, before they came to blows.
Yet all was colour'd with a smooth pretence
Of specious love, and duty to their prince.
Religion, and redress of grievances,
Two names that always cheat, and always please,
Are often urged; and good king David's life
Endanger'd by a brother and a wife. 750
Thus in a pageant show a plot is made;
And peace itself is war in masquerade.
O foolish Israel! never warn'd by ill!
Still the same bait, and circumvented still!
Did ever men forsake their present ease,
In midst of health imagine a disease;
Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,
Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree?
What shall we think? Can people give away,
Both for themselves and sons, their native sway? 760
Then they are left defenceless to the sword
Of each unbounded, arbitrary lord:
And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,
If kings unquestion'd can those laws destroy.
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just,



And kings are only officers in trust,
Then this resuming covenant was declared
When kings were made, or is for ever barr'd.
If those who gave the sceptre could not tie,
By their own deed, their own posterity, 770
How then could Adam bind his future race?
How could his forfeit on mankind take place?
Or how could heavenly justice damn us all,
Who ne'er consented to our father's fall?
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand.
Add, that the power for property allow'd
Is mischievously seated in the crowd;
For who can be secure of private right,
If sovereign sway may be dissolved by might? 780

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Nor is the people's judgment always true:
The most may err as grossly as the few?
And faultless kings run down by common cry,
For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.
What standard is there in a fickle rout,
Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out?
Nor only crowds but Sanhedrims may be
Infected with this public lunacy,
And share the madness of rebellious times,
To murder monarchs for imagined crimes. 790
If they may give and take whene'er they please,
Not kings alone, the Godhead's images,
But government itself at length must fall
To nature's state, where all have right to all.
Yet, grant our lords the people kings can make,
What prudent men a settled throne would shake?
For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,
That change they covet makes them suffer more.
All other errors but disturb a state;
But innovation is the blow of fate. 800
If ancient fabrics nod, and threat to fall,
To patch their flaws, and buttress up the wall,
Thus far 'tis duty: but here fix the mark;
For all beyond it is to touch the ark.
To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
Is work for rebels, who base ends pursue;
At once divine and human laws control,
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole,
The tampering world is subject to this curse,
To physic their disease into a worse. 810

Now what relief can righteous David bring?
How fatal 'tis to be too good a king!
Friends he has few, so high the madness grows;
Who dare be such must be the people's foes.
Yet some there were, even in the worst of days;
Some let me name, and naming is to praise.

In this short file Barzillai first appears;
Barzillai, crown'd with honour and with years.



Long since, the rising rebels he withstood
In regions waste beyond the Jordan's flood: 820
Unfortunately brave to buoy the state;
But sinking underneath his master's fate:
In exile with his godlike prince he mourn'd;
For him he suffer'd, and with him return'd.
The court he practised, not the courtier's art:
Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart,
Which well the noblest objects knew to choose,
The fighting warrior, and recording muse.
His bed could once a fruitful issue boast;
Now more than half a father's name is lost. 830
His eldest hope, with every grace adorn'd,
By me, so Heaven will have it, always mourn'd,
And always honour'd, snatch'd in manhood's prime
By unequal fates, and providence's crime:
Yet not before the goal of honour won,
All parts fulfill'd of subject and of son:
Swift was the race, but short the time to run.
O narrow circle, but of power divine,

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Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line!
By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known, 840
Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own:
Thy force infused the fainting Tyrians propp'd;
And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopp'd.
O ancient honour! O unconquer'd hand,
Whom foes unpunish'd never could withstand!
But Israel was unworthy of his name;
Short is the date of all immoderate fame.
It looks as Heaven our ruin had design'd,
And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind.
Now, free from earth, thy disencumber'd soul 850
Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole:
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring,
To aid the guardian angel of thy king.

Here stop, my muse, here cease thy painful flight:
No pinions can pursue immortal height:
Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
And tell thy soul she should have fled before:
Or fled she with his life, and left this verse
To hang on her departed patron's hearse?
Now take thy steepy flight from heaven, and see 860
If thou canst find on earth another he:
Another he would be too hard to find;
See then whom thou canst see not far behind.
Zadoc the priest, whom, shunning power and place,
His lowly mind advanced to David's grace.
With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,
Of hospitable soul, and noble stem;
Him[71] of the western dome, whose weighty sense
Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence.
The prophets' sons, by such example led, 870
To learning and to loyalty were bred:
For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend.
To these succeed the pillars of the laws,
Who best can plead, and best can judge a cause.
Next them a train of loyal peers ascend;
Sharp-judging Adriel, the Muses' friend,



Himself a Muse: in Sanhedrim's debate
True to his prince, but not a slave of state:
Whom David's love with honours did adorn, 880
That from his disobedient son were torn.
Jotham, of piercing wit, and pregnant thought;
Endued by nature, and by learning taught
To move assemblies, who but only tried
The worse awhile, then chose the better side:
Nor chose alone, but turn'd the balance too,—
So much the weight of one brave man can do.
Hushai, the friend of David in distress;
In public storms of manly steadfastness:
By foreign treaties he inform'd his youth, 890
And join'd experience to his native truth.
His frugal care supplied the wanting throne—
Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:
'Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow;
But hard the task to manage well the low;
For sovereign power is too depress'd

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or high,

When kings are forced to sell, or crowds to buy.
Indulge one labour more, my weary muse,
For Amiel: who can Amiel's praise refuse?
Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet 900
In his own worth, and without title great:
The Sanhedrim long time as chief he ruled,
Their reason guided, and their passion cool'd:
So dexterous was he in the crown's defence,
So form'd to speak a loyal nation's sense,
That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small,
So fit was he to represent them all.
Now rasher charioteers the seat ascend,
Whose loose careers his steady skill commend:
They, like the unequal ruler of the day,[72] 910
Misguide the seasons, and mistake the way;
While he withdrawn, at their mad labours smiles,
And safe enjoys the sabbath of his toils.

These were the chief, a small but faithful band
Of worthies, in the breach who dared to stand,
And tempt the united fury of the land:
With grief they view'd such powerful engines bent,
To batter down the lawful government.
A numerous faction, with pretended frights,
In Sanhedrims to plume the regal rights; 920
The true successor from the court removed;
The plot, by hireling witnesses, improved.
These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,
They show'd the King the danger of the wound;
That no concessions from the throne would please,
But lenitives fomented the disease:
That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,
Was made the lure to draw the people down:
That false Achitophel's pernicious hate
Had turn'd the Plot to ruin church and state: 930
The council violent, the rabble worse:
That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.

With all these loads of injuries oppress'd,
And long revolving in his careful breast
The event of things, at last his patience tired,



Thus, from his royal throne, by Heaven inspired,
The god-like David spoke; with awful fear,
His train their Maker in their master hear.

Thus long have I, by native mercy sway'd,
My wrongs dissembled, my revenge delay'd: 940
So willing to forgive the offending age;
So much the father did the king assuage.
But now so far my clemency they slight,
The offenders question my forgiving right:
That one was made for many, they contend;
But 'tis to rule; for that's a monarch's end.
They call my tenderness of blood, my fear:
Though manly tempers can the longest bear.
Yet, since they will divert my native course,
'Tis time to show I am not good by force. 950
Those heap'd affronts that haughty subjects bring,
Are burdens for a camel, not a king.
Kings are the public pillars of the state,

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Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight:
If my young Samson will pretend a call
To shake the column, let him share the fall:
But oh, that yet he would repent and live!
How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
With how few tears a pardon might be won
From nature, pleading for a darling son! 960
Poor, pitied youth, by my paternal care,
Raised up to all the height his frame could bear!
Had God ordain'd his fate for empire born,
He would have given his soul another turn:
Gull'd with a patriot's name, whose modern sense
Is one that would by law supplant his prince;
The people's brave, the politician's tool;
Never was patriot yet, but was a fool.
Whence comes it, that religion and the laws
Should more be Absalom's than David's cause? 970
His old instructor, ere he lost his place,
Was never thought endued with so much grace.
Good heavens, how faction can a patriot paint!
My rebel ever proves my people's saint.
Would they impose an heir upon the throne,
Let Sanhedrims be taught to give their own.
A king's at least a part of government;
And mine as requisite as their consent:
Without my leave a future king to choose,
Infers a right the present to depose. 980
True, they petition me to approve their choice:
But Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice.
My pious subjects for my safety pray,
Which to secure, they take my power away.
From plots and treasons Heaven preserve my years,
But save me most from my petitioners!
Insatiate as the barren womb or grave,
God cannot grant so much as they can crave.
What then is left, but with a jealous eye
To guard the small remains of royalty? 990
The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,
And the same law teach rebels to obey:
Votes shall no more establish'd power control,



Such votes as make a part exceed the whole.
No groundless clamours shall my friends remove,
Nor crowds have power to punish ere they prove;
For gods and god-like kings their care express,
Still to defend their servants in distress.
O that my power to saving were confined!
Why am I forced, like Heaven, against my mind; 1000
To make examples of another kind?
Must I at length the sword of justice draw?
Oh, cursed effects of necessary law!
How ill my fear they by my mercy scan!
Beware the fury of a patient man!
Law they require, let law then show her face;
They could not be content to look on grace,
Her hinder parts, but with a daring eye
To tempt the terror of her front and die.
By their own arts 'tis righteously decreed, 1010
Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.

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Against themselves their witnesses will swear,
Till, viper-like, their mother-plot they tear;
And suck for nutriment that bloody gore,
Which was their principle of life before.
Their Belial with their Beelzebub will fight:
Thus on my foes, my foes shall do me right.
Nor doubt the event: for factious crowds engage,
In their first onset, all their brutal rage.
Then let them take an unresisted course; 1020
Retire, and traverse, and delude their force;
But when they stand all breathless, urge the fight,
And rise upon them with redoubled might—
For lawful power is still superior found;
When long driven back, at length it stands the ground.

He said: The Almighty, nodding, gave consent;
And peals of thunder shook the firmament.
Henceforth a series of new time began,
The mighty years in long procession ran:
Once more the god-like David was restored, 1030
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

* * * * *

PART II.

“Si quis tamen haec quoque, si quis captus amore leget.”

TO THE READER.

In the year 1680, Mr Dryden undertook the poem of Absalom and Achitophel, upon the desire of King Charles the Second. The performance was applauded by every one; and several persons pressing him to write a second part, he, upon declining it himself, spoke to Mr Tate^[73] to write one, and gave him his advice in the direction of it; and that part beginning with

“Next these, a troop of busy spirits press,”

and ending with



“To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee,”

containing near two hundred verses, mere entirely Mr Dryden’s composition, besides some touches in other places.

DERRICK.

* * * * *

Since men like beasts each other’s prey were made,
Since trade began, and priesthood grew a trade,
Since realms were form’d, none sure so cursed as those
That madly their own happiness oppose;
There Heaven itself and god-like kings, in vain
Shower down the manna of a gentle reign;
While pamper’d crowds to mad sedition run,
And monarchs by indulgence are undone.
Thus David’s clemency was fatal grown,
While wealthy faction awed the wanting throne. 10
For now their sovereign’s orders to contemn
Was held the charter of Jerusalem;
His rights to invade, his tributes to refuse,
A privilege peculiar to the Jews;
As if from heavenly call this licence fell,
And Jacob’s seed were chosen to rebel!



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Achitophel with triumph sees his crimes
Thus suited to the madness of the times;
And Absalom, to make his hopes succeed,
Of flattering charms no longer stands in need; 20
While fond of change, though ne'er so dearly bought,
Our tribes outstrip the youth's ambitious thought;
His swiftest hopes with swifter homage meet,
And crowd their servile necks beneath his feet.
Thus to his aid while pressing tides repair,
He mounts and spreads his streamers in the air.
The charms of empire might his youth mislead,
But what can our besotted Israel plead?
Sway'd by a monarch, whose serene command
Seems half the blessing of our promised land: 30
Whose only grievance is excess of ease;
Freedom our pain, and plenty our disease!
Yet, as all folly would lay claim to sense,
And wickedness ne'er wanted a pretence,
With arguments they'd make their treason good,
And righteous David's self with slanders load:
That arts of foreign sway he did affect,
And guilty Jebusites from law protect,
Whose very chiefs, convict, were never freed,
Nay, we have seen their sacrificers bleed! 40
Accusers' infamy is urged in vain,
While in the bounds of sense they did contain;
But soon they launch into the unfathom'd tide,
And in the depths they knew disdain'd to ride.
For probable discoveries to dispense,
Was thought below a pension'd evidence;
Mere truth was dull, nor suited with the port
Of pamper'd Corah when advanced to court.
No less than wonders now they will impose,
And projects void of grace or sense disclose. 50
Such was the charge on pious Michal brought,—
Michal that ne'er was cruel, even in thought,—
The best of queens, and most obedient wife,
Impeach'd of cursed designs on David's life!
His life, the theme of her eternal prayer,
'Tis scarce so much his guardian angel's care.
Not summer morns such mildness can disclose,
The Hermon lily, nor the Sharon rose.
Neglecting each vain pomp of majesty,



Transported Michal feeds her thoughts on high. 60
She lives with angels, and, as angels do,
Quits heaven sometimes to bless the world below;
Where, cherish'd by her bounties' plenteous spring,
Reviving widows smile, and orphans sing.
Oh! when rebellious Israel's crimes at height,
Are threaten'd with her Lord's approaching fate,
The piety of Michal then remain
In Heaven's remembrance, and prolong his reign!

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Less desolation did the pest pursue,
That from Dan's limits to Beersheba flew; 70
Less fatal the repeated wars of Tyre,
And less Jerusalem's avenging fire.
With gentler terror these our state o'erran,
Than since our evidencing days began!
On every cheek a pale confusion sate,
Continued fear beyond the worst of fate!
Trust was no more; art, science useless made;
All occupations lost but Corah's trade.
Meanwhile a guard on modest Corah wait,
If not for safety, needful yet for state. 80
Well might he deem each peer and prince his slave,
And lord it o'er the tribes which he could save:
Even vice in him was virtue—what sad fate,
But for his honesty had seized our state!
And with what tyranny had we been cursed,
Had Corah never proved a villain first!
To have told his knowledge of the intrigue in gross,
Had been, alas! to our deponent's loss:
The travell'd Levite had the experience got,
To husband well, and make the best of's Plot; 90
And therefore, like an evidence of skill,
With wise reserves secured his pension still;
Nor quite of future power himself bereft,
But limbos large for unbelievers left.
And now his writ such reverence had got,
'Twas worse than plotting to suspect his Plot.
Some were so well convinced, they made no doubt
Themselves to help the founder'd swearers out.
Some had their sense imposed on by their fear,
But more for interest sake believe and swear: 100
Even to that height with some the frenzy grew,
They raged to find their danger not prove true.

Yet, than all these a viler crew remain,
Who with Achitophel the cry maintain;
Not urged by fear, nor through misguided sense,—
Blind zeal and starving need had some pretence;
But for the good old cause, that did excite
The original rebels' wiles—revenge and spite.
These raise the plot, to have the scandal thrown
Upon the bright successor of the crown, 110



Whose virtue with such wrongs they had pursued,
As seem'd all hope of pardon to exclude.
Thus, while on private ends their zeal is built,
The cheated crowd applaud, and share their guilt.

Such practices as these, too gross to lie
Long unobserved by each discerning eye,
The more judicious Israelites unspell'd,
Though still the charm the giddy rabble held.
Even Absalom, amidst the dazzling beams
Of empire, and ambition's flattering dreams, 120
Perceives the plot, too foul to be excused,
To aid designs, no less pernicious, used.
And, filial sense yet striving in his breast,
Thus to Achitophel his doubts express'd:

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Why are my thoughts upon a crown employ'd.
Which, once obtain'd, can be but half enjoy'd?
Not so when virtue did my arms require,
And to my father's wars I flew entire.
My regal power how will my foes resent,
When I myself have scarce my own consent! 130
Give me a son's unblemish'd truth again,
Or quench the sparks of duty that remain.
How slight to force a throne that legions guard
The task to me! to prove unjust, how hard!
And if the imagined guilt thus wound my thought,
What will it when the tragic scene is wrought!
Dire war must first be conjured from below,
The realm we rule we first must overthrow;
And, when the civil furies are on wing,
That blind and undistinguish'd slaughters fling, 140
Who knows what impious chance may reach the king?
Oh, rather let me perish in the strife,
Than have my crown the price of David's life!
Or if the tempest of the war he stand,
In peace, some vile officious villain's hand
His soul's anointed temple may invade;
Or, press'd by clamorous crowds, myself be made
His murderer; rebellious crowds, whose guilt
Shall dread his vengeance till his blood be spilt.
Which, if my filial tenderness oppose, 150
Since to the empire by their arms I rose,
Those very arms on me shall be employ'd,
A new usurper crown'd, and I destroy'd:
The same pretence of public good will hold,
And new Achitophels be found as bold
To urge the needful change—perhaps the old.

He said. The statesman with a smile replies,
A smile that did his rising spleen disguise:
My thoughts presumed our labours at an end;
And are we still with conscience to contend? 160
Whose want in kings as needful is allow'd,
As 'tis for them to find it in the crowd.
Far in the doubtful passage you are gone,
And only can be safe by pressing on.
The crown's true heir, a prince severe and wise,
Has view'd your motions long with jealous eyes,



Your person's charms, your more prevailing arts,
And mark'd your progress in the people's hearts,
Whose patience is the effect of stinted power,
But treasures vengeance for the fatal hour; 170
And if remote the peril he can bring,
Your present danger's greater from the king.
Let not a parent's name deceive your sense,
Nor trust the father in a jealous prince!
Your trivial faults if he could so resent,
To doom you little less than banishment,
What rage must your presumption since inspire!
Against his orders you return from Tyre.
Nor only so, but with a pomp more high,
And open court of popularity, 180
The factious tribes.—And this reproof from thee!
The prince replies; Oh, statesman's winding skill,
They first condemn that first advised the ill!



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Illustrious youth! returned Achitophel,
Misconstrue not the words that mean you well;
The course you steer I worthy blame conclude,
But 'tis because you leave it unpursued.
A monarch's crown with fate surrounded lies,
Who reach, lay hold on death that miss the prize.
Did you for this expose yourself to show, 190
And to the crowd bow popularly low?
For this your glorious progress next ordain,
With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train?
With fame before you, like the morning star,
And shouts of joy saluting from afar?
Oh, from the heights you've reach'd but take a view,
Scarce leading Lucifer could fall like you!
And must I here my shipwreck'd arts bemoan?
Have I for this so oft made Israel groan?
Your single interest with the nation weigh'd, 200
And turn'd the scale where your desires were laid;
Even when at helm a course so dangerous moved
To land your hopes, as my removal proved.—

I not dispute, the royal youth replies,
The known perfection of your policies;
Nor in Achitophel yet grudge or blame
The privilege that statesmen ever claim;
Who private interest never yet pursued,
But still pretended 'twas for others good:
What politician yet e'er 'scaped his fate, 210
Who, saving his own neck, not saved the state?
From hence, on every humorous wind that veer'd,
With shifted sails a several course you steer'd.
What form of sway did David e'er pursue,
That seem'd like absolute, but sprung from you?
Who at your instance quash'd each penal law,
That kept dissenting factious Jews in awe;
And who suspends fix'd laws, may abrogate,
That done, form new, and so enslave the state.
Even property whose champion now you stand, 220
And seem for this the idol of the land,
Did ne'er sustain such violence before,
As when your counsel shut the royal store;
Advice, that ruin to whole tribes procured,
But secret kept till your own banks secured.



Recount with this the triple covenant broke,
And Israel fitted for a foreign yoke;
Nor here your counsel's fatal progress stay'd,
But sent our levied powers to Pharaoh's aid.
Hence Tyre and Israel, low in ruins laid, 230
And Egypt, once their scorn, their common terror made.
Even yet of such a season can we dream,
When royal rights you made your darling theme.
For power unlimited could reasons draw,
And place prerogative above the law;
Which, on your fall from office, grew unjust,
The laws made king, the king a slave in trust:
Whom with state-craft, to interest only true,
You now accuse of ills contrived by you.



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To this hell's agent: Royal youth, fix here, 240
Let interest be the star by which you steer.
Hence to repose your trust in me was wise,
Whose interest most in your advancement lies.
A tie so firm as always will avail,
When friendship, nature, and religion fail;
On ours the safety of the crowd depends;
Secure the crowd, and we obtain our ends,
Whom I will cause so far our guilt to share,
Till they are made our champions by their fear.
What opposition can your rival bring, 250
While Sanhedrims are jealous of the king?
His strength as yet in David's friendship lies,
And what can David's self without supplies?
Who with exclusive bills must now dispense,
Debar the heir, or starve in his defence.
Conditions which our elders ne'er will quit,
And David's justice never can admit.
Or forced by wants his brother to betray,
To your ambition next he clears the way;
For if succession once to nought they bring, 260
Their next advance removes the present king:
Persisting else his senates to dissolve,
In equal hazard shall his reign involve.
Our tribes, whom Pharaoh's power so much alarms,
Shall rise without their prince to oppose his arms;
Nor boots it on what cause at first they join,
Their troops, once up, are tools for our design.
At least such subtle covenants shall be made,
Till peace itself is war in masquerade.
Associations of mysterious sense, 270
Against, but seeming for, the king's defence:
Even on their courts of justice fetters draw,
And from our agents muzzle up their law.
By which a conquest if we fail to make,
'Tis a drawn game at worst, and we secure our stake.

He said, and for the dire success depends
On various sects, by common guilt made friends.
Whose heads, though ne'er so differing in their creed,
I' th' point of treason yet were well agreed.
'Mongst these, extorting Ishban first appears, 280
Pursued by a meagre troop of bankrupt heirs.



Blest times when Ishban, he whose occupation
So long has been to cheat, reforms the nation!
Ishban of conscience suited to his trade,
As good a saint as usurer ever made.
Yet Mammon has not so engross'd him quite,
But Belial lays as large a claim of spite;
Who, for those pardons from his prince he draws,
Returns reproaches, and cries up the cause.
That year in which the city he did sway, 290
He left rebellion in a hopeful way,
Yet his ambition once was found so bold,
To offer talents of extorted gold;
Could David's wants have so been bribed, to shame
And scandalize our peerage with his name;
For which, his dear sedition he'd

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forswear,

And e'en turn loyal to be made a peer.
Next him, let railing Rabsheka have place,
So full of zeal he has no need of grace;
A saint that can both flesh and spirit use, 300
Alike haunt conventicles and the stews:
Of whom the question difficult appears,
If most i' th' preacher's or the bawd's arrears.
What caution could appear too much in him
That keeps the treasure of Jerusalem!
Let David's brother but approach the town,
Double our guards, he cries, we are undone.
Protesting that he dares not sleep in 's bed
Lest he should rise next morn without his head.

Next[74] these, a troop of busy spirits press, 310
Of little fortunes, and of conscience less;
With them the tribe, whose luxury had drain'd
Their banks, in former sequestrations gain'd;
Who rich and great by past rebellions grew,
And long to fish the troubled streams anew.
Some future hopes, some present payment draws,
To sell their conscience and espouse the cause.
Such stipends those vile hirelings best befit, 318
Priests without grace, and poets without wit.
Shall that false Hebronite escape our curse,
Judas, that keeps the rebels' pension-purse;
Judas, that pays the treason-writer's fee,
Judas, that well deserves his namesake's tree;
Who at Jerusalem's own gates erects
His college for a nursery of sects;
Young prophets with an early care secures,
And with the dung of his own arts manures!
What have the men of Hebron here to do?
What part in Israel's promised land have you?
Here Phaleg the lay-Hebronite is come, 330
'Cause like the rest he could not live at home;
Who from his own possessions could not drain
An omer even of Hebronitish grain;
Here struts it like a patriot, and talks high
Of injured subjects, alter'd property:
An emblem of that buzzing insect just,



That mounts the wheel, and thinks she raises dust.
Can dry bones live? or skeletons produce
The vital warmth of cuckoldising juice?
Slim Phaleg could, and at the table fed, 340
Return'd the grateful product to the bed.
A waiting-man to travelling nobles chose,
He his own laws would saucily impose,
Till bastinadoed back again he went,
To learn those manners he to teach was sent.
Chastised he ought to have retreated home,
But he reads politics to Absalom.
For never Hebronite, though kick'd and scorn'd,
To his own country willingly return'd.
—But leaving famish'd Phaleg to be fed, 350
And to talk treason for his daily bread,
Let Hebron, nay let hell, produce a man
So made for mischief as Ben-Jochanan.
A Jew of humble parentage was he,

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By trade a Levite, though of low degree:
His pride no higher than the desk aspired,
But for the drudgery of priests was hired
To read and pray in linen ephod brave,
And pick up single shekels from the grave.
Married at last, but finding charge come faster, 360
He could not live by God, but changed his master:
Inspired by want, was made a factious tool,
They got a villain, and we lost a fool.
Still violent, whatever cause he took,
But most against the party he forsook;
For renegadoes, who ne'er turn by halves,
Are bound in conscience to be double knaves.
So this prose-prophet took most monstrous pains
To let his masters see he earn'd his gains.
But, as the devil owes all his imps a shame, 370
He chose the apostate for his proper theme;
With little pains he made the picture true,
And from reflection took the rogue he drew.
A wondrous work, to prove the Jewish nation
In every age a murmuring generation;
To trace them from their infancy of sinning,
And show them factious from their first beginning.
To prove they could rebel, and rail, and mock,
Much to the credit of the chosen flock;
A strong authority which must convince, 380
That saints own no allegiance to their prince;
As 'tis a leading-card to make a whore,
To prove her mother had turn'd up before.
But, tell me, did the drunken patriarch bless
The son that show'd his father's nakedness?
Such thanks the present church thy pen will give,
Which proves rebellion was so primitive.
Must ancient failings be examples made?
Then murderers from Cain may learn their trade.
As thou the heathen and the saint hast drawn, 390
Methinks the apostate was the better man:
And thy hot father, waving my respect,
Not of a mother-church but of a sect.
And such he needs must be of thy inditing;

This comes of drinking asses' milk and writing.
If Balak should be call'd to leave his place,
As profit is the loudest call of grace,
His temple, dispossess'd of one, would be
Replenished with seven devils more by thee.

Levi, thou art a load, I'll lay thee down, 400
And show Rebellion bare, without a gown;
Poor slaves in metre, dull and addle-pated,
Who rhyme below even David's psalms translated;
Some in my speedy pace I must outrun,
As lame Mephibosheth the wizard's son:
To make quick way I'll leap o'er heavy blocks,
Shun rotten Uzza, as I would the pox;
And hasten Og and Doeg to rehearse,
Two fools that crutch their feeble sense on verse:
Who, by my muse, to all succeeding times 410
Shall live in spite of their own doggrel rhymes.

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Doeg, though without knowing how or why,
Made still a blundering kind of melody;
Spurr'd boldly on, and dash'd through thick and thin,
Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in;
Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And, in one word, heroically mad:
He was too warm on picking-work to dwell,
But fagoted his notions as they fell,
And if they rhymed and rattled, all was well. 420
Spiteful he is not, though he wrote a satire,
For still there goes some thinking to ill-nature:
He needs no more than birds and beasts to think,
All his occasions are to eat and drink.
If he call rogue and rascal from a garret,
He means you no more mischief than a parrot;
The words for friend and foe alike were made,
To fetter them in verse is all his trade.
For almonds he'll cry whore to his own mother:
And call young Absalom king David's brother. 430
Let him be gallows-free by my consent,
And nothing suffer, since he nothing meant.
Hanging supposes human soul and reason—
This animal's below committing treason:
Shall he be hang'd who never could rebel?
That's a preferment for Achitophel.
The woman.....
Was rightly sentenced by the law to die;
But 'twas hard fate that to the gallows led
The dog that never heard the statute read. 440
Railing in other men may be a crime,
But ought to pass for mere instinct in him:
Instinct he follows, and no further knows,
For to write verse with him is to transpose.
'Twere pity treason at his door to lay,
Who makes heaven's gate a lock to its own key:[75]
Let him rail on, let his invective muse
Have four and twenty letters to abuse,
Which, if he jumbles to one line of sense,
Indict him of a capital offence. 450
In fireworks give him leave to vent his spite—
Those are the only serpents he can write;
The height of his ambition is, we know,
But to be master of a puppet-show;



On that one stage his works may yet appear,
And a month's harvest keeps him all the year.

Now stop your noses, readers, all and some,
For here's a tun of midnight work to come;
Og, from a treason-tavern rolling home,
Round as a globe, and liquor'd every chink, 460
Goodly and great he sails behind his link;
With all this bulk there's nothing lost in Og,
For every inch that is not fool is rogue:
A monstrous mass of foul corrupted matter,
As all the devils had spued to make the batter.
When wine has given him courage to blaspheme,
He curses God, but God before cursed him;
And if man could have reason, none has more,
That made his paunch so rich, and him so poor.
With wealth he was not trusted, for Heaven

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knew 470

What 'twas of old to pamper up a Jew;
To what would he on quail and pheasant swell,
That even on tripe and carrion could rebel?
But though Heaven made him poor (with reverence speaking),
He never was a poet of God's making;
The midwife laid her hand on his thick skull,
With this prophetic blessing—Be thou dull;
Drink, swear, and roar, forbear no lewd delight
Fit for thy bulk—do anything but write:
Thou art of lasting make, like thoughtless men, 480
A strong nativity—but for the pen!
Eat opium, mingle arsenic in thy drink,
Still thou mayst live, avoiding pen and ink.
I see, I see, 'tis counsel given in vain,
For treason botch'd in rhyme will be thy bane;
Rhyme is the rock on which thou art to wreck,
'Tis fatal to thy fame and to thy neck:
Why should thy metre good king David blast?
A psalm of his will surely be thy last.
Dar'st thou presume in verse to meet thy foes, 490
Thou whom the penny pamphlet foil'd in prose?
Doeg, whom God for mankind's mirth has made,
O'ertops thy talent in thy very trade;
Doeg to thee, thy paintings are so coarse,
A poet is, though he's the poet's horse.
A double noose thou on thy neck dost pull,
For writing treason, and for writing dull;
To die for faction is a common evil,
But to be hang'd for nonsense is the devil:
Hadst thou the glories of thy king express'd, 500
Thy praises had been satire at the best;
But thou in clumsy verse, unlick'd, unpointed,
Hast shamefully defied the Lord's anointed:
I will not rake the dunghill for thy crimes,
For who would read thy life that reads thy rhymes?
But of king David's foes, be this the doom,
May all be like the young man Absalom;
And, for my foes, may this their blessing be,
To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee!



Achitophel, each rank, degree, and age, 510
For various ends neglects not to engage;
The wise and rich, for purse and counsel brought,
The fools and beggars, for their number sought:
Who yet not only on the town depends,
For even in court the faction had its friends;
These thought the places they possess'd too small,
And in their hearts wish'd court and king to fall:
Whose names the muse disdaining, holds i' the dark,
Thrust in the villain herd without a mark;
With parasites and libel-spawning imps, 520
Intriguing fops, dull jesters, and worse pimps.
Disdain the rascal rabble to pursue,
Their set cabals are yet a viler crew:
See where, involved in common smoke, they sit;
Some for our mirth, some for our satire fit:
These, gloomy, thoughtful, and on mischief bent,
While those, for mere good-fellowship,

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frequent

The appointed club, can let sedition pass,
Sense, nonsense, anything to employ the glass;
And who believe, in their dull honest hearts, 530
The rest talk reason but to show their parts;
Who ne'er had wit or will for mischief yet,
But pleased to be reputed of a set.

But in the sacred annals of our plot,
Industrious Arod never be forgot:
The labours of this midnight-magistrate,
May vie with Corah's to preserve the state.
In search of arms, he fail'd not to lay hold
On war's most powerful, dangerous weapon—gold.
And last, to take from Jebusites all odds, 540
Their altars pillaged, stole their very gods;
Oft would he cry, when treasure he surprised,
'Tis Baalish gold in David's coin disguised;
Which to his house with richer relics came,
While lumber idols only fed the flame:
For our wise rabble ne'er took pains to inquire,
What 'twas he burnt, so 't made a rousing fire.
With which our elder was enrich'd no more
Than false Gehazi with the Syrian's store;
So poor, that when our choosing-tribes were met, 550
Even for his stinking votes he ran in debt;
For meat the wicked, and, as authors think,
The saints he choused for his electing drink;
Thus every shift and subtle method past,
And all to be no Zaken at the last.

Now, raised on Tyre's sad ruins, Pharaoh's pride
Soar'd high, his legions threatening far and wide;
As when a battering storm engender'd high,
By winds upheld, hangs hovering in the sky,
Is gazed upon by every trembling swain— 560
This for his vineyard fears, and that, his grain;
For blooming plants, and flowers new opening these,
For lambs yeand lately, and far-labouring bees:
To guard his stock each to the gods does call,
Uncertain where the fire-charged clouds will fall:
Even so the doubtful nations watch his arms,



With terror each expecting his alarms.
Where, Judah! where was now thy lion's roar?
Thou only couldst the captive lands restore;
But thou, with inbred broils and faction press'd, 570
From Egypt needst a guardian with the rest.
Thy prince from Sanhedrims no trust allow'd,
Too much the representers of the crowd,
Who for their own defence give no supply,
But what the crown's prerogatives must buy:
As if their monarch's rights to violate
More needful were, than to preserve the state!
From present dangers they divert their care,
And all their fears are of the royal heir;
Whom now the reigning malice of his foes 580
Unjudged would sentence, and e'er crown'd depose.
Religion the pretence, but their decree
To bar his reign, whate'er his faith



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shall be!

By Sanhedrims and clamorous crowds thus press'd,
What passions rent the righteous David's breast!
Who knows not how to oppose or to comply—
Unjust to grant, or dangerous to deny!
How near, in this dark juncture, Israel's fate,
Whose peace one sole expedient could create,
Which yet the extremest virtue did require, 590
Even of that prince whose downfall they conspire!
His absence David does with tears advise,
To appease their rage. Undaunted he complies.
Thus he, who, prodigal of blood and ease,
A royal life exposed to winds and seas,
At once contending with the waves and fire,
And heading danger in the wars of Tyre,
Inglorious now forsakes his native sand,
And like an exile quits the promised land!
Our monarch scarce from pressing tears refrains, 600
And painfully his royal state maintains,
Who now, embracing on the extremest shore,
Almost revokes what he enjoin'd before:
Concludes at last more trust to be allow'd
To storms and seas than to the raging crowd!
Forbear, rash muse! the parting scene to draw,
With silence charm'd as deep as theirs that saw!
Not only our attending nobles weep,
But hardy sailors swell with tears the deep!
The tide restrain'd her course, and more amazed, 610
The twin-stars on the royal brothers gazed:
While this sole fear—
Does trouble to our suffering hero bring,
Lest next the popular rage oppress the king!
Thus parting, each for the other's danger grieved,
The shore the king, and seas the prince received.
Go, injured hero! while propitious gales,
Soft as thy consort's breath, inspire thy sails;
Well may she trust her beauties on a flood,
Where thy triumphant fleets so oft have rode! 620
Safe on thy breast reclined, her rest be deep,
Rock'd like a Nereid by the waves asleep;
While happiest dreams her fancy entertain,
And to Elysian fields convert the main!



Go, injured hero! while the shores of Tyre
At thy approach so silent shall admire,
Who on thy thunder still their thoughts employ,
And greet thy landing with a trembling joy!

On heroes thus the prophet's fate is thrown,
Admired by every nation but their own; 630
Yet while our factious Jews his worth deny,
Their aching conscience gives their tongue the lie.
Even in the worst of men the noblest parts
Confess him, and he triumphs in their hearts,
Whom to his king the best respects commend
Of subject, soldier, kinsman, prince, and friend;
All sacred names of most divine esteem,
And to perfection all sustain'd by him;
Wise, just, and constant, courtly without art,
Swift to discern and to reward desert;



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640

No hour of his in fruitless ease destroy'd,
But on the noblest subjects still employ'd:
Whose steady soul ne'er learn'd to separate
Between his monarch's interest and the state;
But heaps those blessings on the royal head,
Which he well knows must be on subjects shed.

On what pretence could then the vulgar rage
Against his worth and native rights engage?
Religious fears their argument are made—
Religious fears his sacred rights invade! 650
Of future superstition they complain,
And Jebusitic worship in his reign:
With such alarms his foes the crowd deceive,
With dangers fright, which not themselves believe.

Since nothing can our sacred rites remove,
Whate'er the faith of the successor prove:
Our Jews their ark shall undisturb'd retain,
At least while their religion is their gain,
Who know by old experience Baal's commands
Not only claim'd their conscience, but their lands; 660
They grudge God's tithes, how therefore shall they yield
An idol full possession of the field?
Grant such a prince enthroned, we must confess
The people's sufferings than that monarch's less,
Who must to hard conditions still be bound,
And for his quiet with the crowd compound;
Or should his thoughts to tyranny incline,
Where are the means to compass the design?
Our crown's revenues are too short a store,
And jealous Sanhedrims would give no more. 670

As vain our fears of Egypt's potent aid,
Not so has Pharaoh learn'd ambition's trade,
Nor ever with such measures can comply,
As shock the common rules of policy;
None dread like him the growth of Israel's king,
And he alone sufficient aids can bring;
Who knows that prince to Egypt can give law,
That on our stubborn tribes his yoke could draw:



At such profound expense he has not stood,
Nor dyed for this his hands so deep in blood; 680
Would ne'er through wrong and right his progress take,
Grudge his own rest, and keep the world awake,
To fix a lawless prince on Judah's throne,
First to invade our rights, and then his own;
His dear-gain'd conquests cheaply to despoil,
And reap the harvest of his crimes and toil.
We grant his wealth vast as our ocean's sand,
And curse its fatal influence on our land,
Which our bribed Jews so numerously partake,
That even an host his pensioners would make. 690
From these deceivers our divisions spring,
Our weakness, and the growth of Egypt's king;
These, with pretended friendship to the state,
Our crowds' suspicion of their prince create;
Both pleased and frighten'd with the specious cry,
To guard their sacred rites and property.

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To ruin thus the chosen flock are sold,
While wolves are ta'en for guardians of the fold;
Seduced by these, we groundlessly complain,
And loathe the manna of a gentle reign: 700
Thus our forefathers' crooked paths are trod—
We trust our prince no more than they their God.
But all in vain our reasoning prophets preach,
To those whom sad experience ne'er could teach,
Who can commence new broils in bleeding scars,
And fresh remembrance of intestine wars;
When the same household mortal foes did yield,
And brothers stain'd with brothers' blood the field;
When sons' cursed steel the fathers' gore did stain,
And mothers mourn'd for sons by fathers slain! 710
When thick as Egypt's locusts on the sand,
Our tribes lay slaughter'd through the promised land,
Whose few survivors with worse fate remain,
To drag the bondage of a tyrant's reign:
Which scene of woes, unknowing we renew,
And madly, even those ills we fear, pursue;
While Pharaoh laughs at our domestic broils,
And safely crowds his tents with nations' spoils.
Yet our fierce Sanhedrim, in restless rage,
Against our absent hero still engage, 720
And chiefly urge, such did their frenzy prove,
The only suit their prince forbids to move,
Which, till obtain'd, they cease affairs of state,
And real dangers waive for groundless hate.
Long David's patience waits relief to bring,
With all the indulgence of a lawful king,
Expecting still the troubled waves would cease,
But found the raging billows still increase.
The crowd, whose insolence forbearance swells,
While he forgives too far, almost rebels. 730
At last his deep resentments silence broke,
The imperial palace shook, while thus he spoke—

Then Justice wait, and Rigour take her time,
For lo! our mercy is become our crime:
While halting Punishment her stroke delays,



Our sovereign right, Heaven's sacred trust, decays!
For whose support even subjects' interest calls,
Woe to that kingdom where the monarch falls!
That prince who yields the least of regal sway,
So far his people's freedom does betray. 740
Right lives by law, and law subsists by power;
Disarm the shepherd, wolves the flock devour.
Hard lot of empire o'er a stubborn race,
Which Heaven itself in vain has tried with grace!
When will our reason's long-charm'd eyes uncloze,
And Israel judge between her friends and foes?
When shall we see expired deceivers' sway,
And credit what our God and monarchs say?
Dissembled patriots, bribed with Egypt's gold,
Even Sanhedrims in blind obedience hold; 750
Those patriots falsehood in their actions

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see,

And judge by the pernicious fruit the tree.
If aught for which so loudly they declaim,
Religion, laws, and freedom, were their aim,
Our senates in due methods they had led,
To avoid those mischiefs which they seem'd to dread:
But first, e'er yet they propp'd the sinking state,
To impeach and charge, as urged by private hate,
Proves that they ne'er believed the fears they press'd,
But barbarously destroy'd the nation's rest! 760
Oh! whither will ungovern'd senates drive,
And to what bounds licentious votes arrive?
When their injustice we are press'd to share,
The monarch urged to exclude the lawful heir;
Are princes thus distinguish'd from the crowd,
And this the privilege of royal blood?
But grant we should confirm the wrongs they press,
His sufferings yet were than the people's less;
Condemn'd for life the murdering sword to wield,
And on their heirs entail a bloody field. 770
Thus madly their own freedom they betray,
And for the oppression which they fear make way;
Succession fix'd by Heaven, the kingdom's bar,
Which once dissolved, admits the flood of war;
Waste, rapine, spoil, without the assault begin,
And our mad tribes supplant the fence within.
Since then their good they will not understand,
'Tis time to take the monarch's power in hand;
Authority and force to join with skill,
And save the lunatics against their will. 780
The same rough means that 'suage the crowd, appease
Our senates raging with the crowd's disease.
Henceforth unbiass'd measures let them draw
From no false gloss, but genuine text of law;
Nor urge those crimes upon religion's score,
Themselves so much in Jebusites abhor.
Whom laws convict, and only they, shall bleed,
Nor pharisees by pharisees be freed.
Impartial justice from our throne shall shower,
All shall have right, and we our sovereign power. 790



He said, the attendants heard with awful joy,
And glad presages their fix'd thoughts employ;
From Hebron now the suffering heir return'd,
A realm that long with civil discord mourn'd;
Till his approach, like some arriving God,
Composed and heal'd the place of his abode;
The deluge check'd that to Judea spread,
And stopp'd sedition at the fountain's head.
Thus, in forgiving, David's paths he drives,
And, chased from Israel, Israel's peace contrives. 800
The field confess'd his power in arms before,
And seas proclaim'd his triumphs to the shore;
As nobly has his sway in Hebron shown,
How fit to inherit godlike David's throne.
Through Sion's streets his glad arrival's spread,
And conscious faction shrinks her snaky head;
His train their sufferings think o'erpaid



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to see

The crowd's applause with virtue once agree.
Success charms all, but zeal for worth distress'd,
A virtue proper to the brave and best; 810
'Mongst whom was Jothran—Jothran always bent
To serve the crown, and loyal by descent;
Whose constancy so firm, and conduct just,
Deserved at once two royal masters' trust;
Who Tyre's proud arms had manfully withstood
On seas, and gather'd laurels from the flood;
Of learning yet no portion was denied,
Friend to the Muses and the Muses' pride.
Nor can Benaiah's worth forgotten lie,
Of steady soul when public storms were high; 820
Whose conduct, while the Moor fierce onsets made,
Secured at once our honour and our trade.
Such were the chiefs who most his sufferings mourn'd,
And view'd with silent joy the prince return'd;
While those that sought his absence to betray,
Press first their nauseous false respects to pay;
Him still the officious hypocrites molest,
And with malicious duty break his rest.

While real transports thus his friends employ,
And foes are loud in their dissembled joy, 830
His triumphs, so resounded far and near,
Miss'd not his young ambitious rival's ear;
And as when joyful hunters' clamorous train,
Some slumbering lion wakes in Moab's plain,
Who oft had forced the bold assailants yield,
And scatter'd his pursuers through the field,
Disdaining, furls his mane and tears the ground,
His eyes inflaming all the desert round,
With roar of seas directs his chasers' way,
Provokes from far, and dares them to the fray: 840
Such rage storm'd now in Absalom's fierce breast,
Such indignation his fired eyes confess'd.
Where now was the instructor of his pride?
Slept the old pilot in so rough a tide,
Whose wiles had from the happy shore betray'd,
And thus on shelves the credulous youth convey'd?
In deep revolving thoughts he weighs his state,



Secure of craft, nor doubts to baffle fate;
At least, if his storm'd bark must go adrift,
To balk his charge, and for himself to shift, 850
In which his dexterous wit had oft been shown,
And in the wreck of kingdoms saved his own.
But now, with more than common danger press'd,
Of various resolutions stands possess'd,
Perceives the crowd's unstable zeal decay
Lest their recanting chief the cause betray,
Who on a father's grace his hopes may ground,
And for his pardon with their heads compound.
Him therefore, e'er his fortune slip her time.
The statesman plots to engage in some bold crime 860
Past pardon—whether to attempt his bed,
Or threat with open arms the royal head,
Or other daring method, and unjust,

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That may confirm him in the people's trust.
But failing thus to ensnare him, nor secure
How long his foil'd ambition may endure,
Plots next to lay him by as past his date,
And try some new pretender's luckier fate;
Whose hopes with equal toil he would pursue,
Nor care what claimer's crown'd, except the true. 870
Wake, Absalom! approaching ruin shun,
And see, O see, for whom thou art undone!
How are thy honours and thy fame betray'd,
The property of desperate villains made!
Lost power and conscious fears their crimes create,
And guilt in them was little less than fate;
But why shouldst thou, from every grievance free,
Forsake thy vineyards for their stormy sea?
For thee did Canaan's milk and honey flow,
Love dress'd thy bowers, and laurels sought thy brow; 880
Preferment, wealth, and power thy vassals were,
And of a monarch all things but the care.
Oh! should our crimes again that curse draw down,
And rebel-arms once more attempt the crown,
Sure ruin waits unhappy Absalom,
Alike by conquest or defeat undone.
Who could relentless see such youth and charms
Expire with wretched fate in impious arms?
A prince so form'd, with earth's and Heaven's applause,
To triumph o'er crown'd heads in David's cause: 890
Or grant him victor, still his hopes must fail,
Who, conquering, would not for himself prevail;
The faction whom he trusts for future sway,
Him and the public would alike betray;
Amongst themselves divide the captive state,
And found their hydra-empire in his fate!
Thus having beat the clouds with painful flight,
The pitied youth, with sceptres in his sight
(So have their cruel politics decreed),
Must by that crew, that made him guilty, bleed! 900
For, could their pride brook any prince's sway,
Whom but mild David would they choose to obey?
Who once at such a gentle reign repine,



The fall of monarchy itself design:
From hate to that their reformations spring,
And David not their grievance, but the king.
Seized now with panic fear the faction lies,
Lest this clear truth strike Absalom's charm'd eyes,
Lest he perceive, from long enchantment free,
What all beside the flatter'd youth must see: 910
But whate'er doubts his troubled bosom swell,
Fair carriage still became Achitophel,
Who now an envious festival installs,
And to survey their strength the faction calls,—
Which fraud, religious worship too must gild.
But oh! how weakly does sedition build!
For lo! the royal mandate issues forth,
Dashing at once their treason, zeal, and mirth!
So have I seen disastrous chance invade,
Where careful emmets had their forage laid, 920

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Whether fierce Vulcan's rage the furzy plain
Had seized, engender'd by some careless swain;
Or swelling Neptune lawless inroads made,
And to their cell of store his flood convey'd;
The commonwealth broke up, distracted go,
And in wild haste their loaded mates o'erthrow:
Even so our scatter'd guests confusedly meet,
With boil'd, baked, roast, all justling in the street;
Dejecting all, and ruefully dismay'd,
For shekel without treat or treason paid. 930
Sedition's dark eclipse now fainter shows,
More bright each hour the royal planet grows,
Of force the clouds of envy to disperse,
In kind conjunction of assisting stars.
Here, labouring muse! those glorious chiefs relate,
That turn'd the doubtful scale of David's fate;
The rest of that illustrious band rehearse,
Immortalized in laurell'd Asaph's verse:
Hard task! yet will not I thy flight recall,
View heaven, and then enjoy thy glorious fall. 940

First write Bezaliel, whose illustrious name
Forestalls our praise, and gives his poet fame.
The Kenites' rocky province his command,
A barren limb of fertile Canaan's land;
Which for its generous natives yet could be
Held worthy such a president as he.
Bezaliel, with each grace and virtue fraught,
Serene his looks, serene his life and thought;
On whom so largely nature heap'd her store,
There scarce remain'd for arts to give him more! 950
To aid the crown and state his greatest zeal,
His second care that service to conceal;
Of dues observant, firm to every trust,
And to the needy always more than just;
Who truth from specious falsehood can divide,
Has all the gownsmen's skill without their pride.
Thus crown'd with worth, from heights of honour won,
Sees all his glories copied in his son,
Whose forward fame should every muse engage—



Whose youth boasts skill denied to others' age. 960
Men, manners, language, books of noblest kind,
Already are the conquest of his mind;
Whose loyalty before its date was prime,
Nor waited the dull course of rolling time:
The monster faction early he dismay'd,
And David's cause long since confess'd his aid.

Brave Abdael o'er the prophet's school was placed—
Abdael with all his father's virtue graced;
A hero who, while stars look'd wondering down,
Without one Hebrew's blood restored the crown. 970
That praise was his; what therefore did remain
For following chiefs, but boldly to maintain
That crown restored? and in this rank of fame,
Brave Abdael with the first a place must claim.
Proceed, illustrious, happy chief! proceed,
Foreseize the garlands for thy brow decreed,
While the inspired tribe attend with noblest

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strain

To register the glories thou shalt gain:
For sure the dew shall Gilboa's hills forsake,
And Jordan mix his stream with Sodom's lake; 980
Or seas retired, their secret stores disclose,
And to the sun their scaly brood expose,
Or swell'd above the cliffs their billows raise,
Before the muses leave their patron's praise.

Eliab our next labour does invite,
And hard the task to do Eliab right.
Long with the royal wanderer he roved,
And firm in all the turns of fortune proved.
Such ancient service and desert so large
Well claim'd the royal household for his charge. 990
His age with only one mild heiress bless'd,
In all the bloom of smiling nature dress'd,
And bless'd again to see his flower allied
To David's stock, and made young Othniel's bride.
The bright restorer of his father's youth,
Devoted to a son's and subject's truth;
Resolved to bear that prize of duty home,
So bravely sought, while sought by Absalom.
Ah, prince! the illustrious planet of thy birth,
And thy more powerful virtue, guard thy worth! 1000
That no Achitophel thy ruin boast;
Israel too much in one such wreck has lost.

Even envy must consent to Helon's worth,
Whose soul, though Egypt glories in his birth,
Could for our captive-ark its zeal retain.
And Pharaoh's altars in their pomp disdain:
To slight his gods was small; with nobler pride,
He all the allurements of his court defied;
Whom profit nor example could betray,
But Israel's friend, and true to David's sway. 1010
What acts of favour in his province fall
On merit he confers, and freely all.

Our list of nobles next let Amri grace,
Whose merits claim'd the Abethdin's high place;
Who, with a loyalty that did excel,



Brought all the endowments of Achitophel.
Sincere was Amri, and not only knew,
But Israel's sanctions into practice drew;
Our laws, that did a boundless ocean seem,
Were coasted all, and fathom'd all by him. 1020
No rabbin speaks like him their mystic sense,
So just, and with such charms of eloquence:
To whom the double blessing does belong,
With Moses' inspiration, Aaron's tongue.

Than Sheva none more loyal zeal have shown,
Wakeful as Judah's lion for the crown;
Who for that cause still combats in his age,
For which his youth with danger did engage.
In vain our factious priests the cant revive;
In vain seditious scribes with libel strive 1030
To inflame the crowd; while he with watchful eye
Observes, and shoots their treasons as they fly;
Their weekly frauds his keen replies detect;
He undeceives more fast than they infect:
So Moses, when the pest on legions prey'd,
Advanced his signal, and the plague was stay'd.



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Once more, my fainting muse! thy pinions try,
And strength's exhausted store let love supply.
What tribute, Asaph, shall we render thee?
We'll crown thee with a wreath from thy own tree! 1040
Thy laurel grove no envy's flash can blast;
The song of Asaph shall for ever last.

With wonder late posterity shall dwell
On Absalom and false Achitophel:
Thy strains shall be our slumbering prophets' dream,
And when our Sion virgins sing their theme;
Our jubilees shall with thy verse be graced,
The song of Asaph shall for ever last.

How fierce his satire loosed! restrain'd, how tame!
How tender of the offending young man's fame! 1050
How well his worth, and brave adventures styled,
Just to his virtues, to his error mild!
No page of thine that fears the strictest view,
But teems with just reproof, or praise as due;
Not Eden could a fairer prospect yield,
All Paradise without one barren field:
Whose wit the censure of his foes has pass'd—
The song of Asaph shall for ever last.

What praise for such rich strains shall we allow?
What just rewards the grateful crown bestow? 1060
While bees in flowers rejoice, and flowers in dew,
While stars and fountains to their course are true;
While Judah's throne, and Sion's rock stand fast,
The song of Asaph and the fame shall last!

Still Hebron's honour'd, happy soil retains
Our royal hero's beauteous, dear remains;
Who now sails off with winds nor wishes slack,
To bring his sufferings' bright companion back.
But e'er such transport can our sense employ,
A bitter grief must poison half our joy; 1070
Nor can our coasts restored those blessings see
Without a bribe to envious destiny!
Cursed Sodom's doom for ever fix the tide
Where by inglorious chance the valiant died!
Give not insulting Askelon to know,
Nor let Gath's daughters triumph in our woe;



No sailor with the news swell Egypt's pride,
By what inglorious fate our valiant died.
Weep, Arnon! Jordan, weep thy fountains dry!
While Sion's rock dissolves for a supply. 1080

Calm were the elements, night's silence deep,
The waves scarce murmuring, and the winds asleep;
Yet fate for ruin takes so still an hour,
And treacherous sands the princely bark devour;
Then death unworthy seized a generous race,
To virtue's scandal, and the stars' disgrace!
Oh! had the indulgent powers vouchsafed to yield,
Instead of faithless shelves, a listed field;
A listed field of Heaven's and David's foes,
Fierce as the troops that did his youth oppose, 1090
Each life had on his slaughter'd heap retired,

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Not tamely, and unconquering, thus expired:
But destiny is now their only foe,
And dying, even o'er that they triumph too;
With loud last breaths their master's 'scape applaud,
Of whom kind force could scarce the fates defraud;
Who for such followers lost, O matchless mind!
At his own safety now almost repined!
Say, royal Sir! by all your fame in arms,
Your praise in peace, and by Urania's charms, 1100
If all your sufferings past so nearly press'd,
Or pierced with half so painful grief your breast?

Thus some diviner muse her hero forms,
Not soothed with soft delights, but toss'd in storms;
Nor stretch'd on roses in the myrtle grove,
Nor crowns his days with mirth, his nights with love,
But far removed in thundering camps is found,
His slumbers short, his bed the herbless ground.
In tasks of danger always seen the first,
Feeds from the hedge, and slakes with ice his thirst, 1110
Long must his patience strive with fortune's rage,
And long-opposing gods themselves engage;
Must see his country flame, his friends destroy'd,
Before the promised empire be enjoy'd.
Such toil of fate must build a man of fame,
And such, to Israel's crown, the godlike David came.

What sudden beams dispel the clouds so fast,
Whose drenching rains laid all our vineyards waste?
The spring, so far behind her course delay'd,
On the instant is in all her bloom array'd; 1120
The winds breathe low, the element serene;
Yet mark what motion in the waves is seen!
Thronging and busy as Hyblaeon swarms,
Or straggled soldiers summon'd to their arms,
See where the princely bark in loosest pride,
With all her guardian fleet, adorns the tide!
High on her deck the royal lovers stand,
Our crimes to pardon, e'er they touch'd our land.



Welcome to Israel and to David's breast!
Here all your toils, here all your sufferings rest. 1130

This year did Ziloah rule Jerusalem,
And boldly all sedition's surges stem,
Howe'er encumber'd with a viler pair
Than Ziph or Shimei to assist the chair;
Yet Ziloah's loyal labours so prevail'd,
That faction at the next election fail'd,
When even the common cry did justice found,
And merit by the multitude was crown'd:
With David then was Israel's peace restored,
Crowds mourn'd their error, and obey'd their lord. 1140

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A KEY TO BOTH PARTS OF ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

Aldael—General Monk, Duke of Albemarle.

Abethdin—The name given, through
this poem, to a Lord-Chancellor
in general.

Absalom—Duke of Monmouth, natural
son of King Charles II.

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Achitophel—Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury.

Adriel—John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave.

Agag—Sir Edmundbury Godfrey.

Amiel—Mr Seymour, Speaker of the House of Commons.

Amri—Sir Heneage Finch, Earl of Winchelsea, and Lord Chancellor.

Annabel—Duchess of Monmouth.

Arod—Sir William Waller.

Asaph—A character drawn by Tate for Dryden, in the second part of this poem.

Balaam—Earl of Huntingdon.

Balak—Barnet.

Barzillai—Duke of Ormond.

Bathsheba—Duchess of Portsmouth.

Benaiah—General Sackville.

Ben Jochanan—Rev. Samuel Johnson.

Bezaliel—Duke of Beaufort.

Caleb—Ford, Lord Grey of Werk.

Corah—Dr Titus Oates.

David—King Charles II.

Doeg—Elkanah Settle, the city poet.

Egypt—France.

Eliab—Sir Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington.

Ethnic-Plot—The Popish Plot.

Gath—The Land of Exile, more particularly Brussels, where King Charles II. long resided.

Hebrew Priests—The Church of England Clergy.

Hebron—Scotland.

Helon—Earl of Feversham, a Frenchman by birth, and nephew to Marshal Turenne.

Hushai—Hyde, Earl of Rochester.

Ishban—Sir Robert Clayton, Alderman, and one of the City Members.

Ishbosheth—Richard Cromwell.

Israel—England.

Issachar—Thomas Thynne, Esq., who was shot in his coach.

Jebusites—Papists.

Jerusalem—London.

Jews—English.

Jonas—Sir William Jones, a great lawyer.

Jordan—Dover.

Jotham—Saville, Marquis of Halifax.

Jothram—Lord Dartmouth.

Judas—Mr Ferguson, a canting teacher.

Mephibosheth—Pordage.



Michal—Queen Catharine.

Nadab—Lord Howard of Escrick.

Og—Shadwell.

Othniel—Henry, Duke of Grafton,
natural son of King
Charles II. by the Duchess of Cleveland.

Phaleg—Forbes.

Pharaoh—King of France.

Rabsheka—Sir Thomas Player, one
of the City Members.

Sagan of Jerusalem—Dr Compton,
Bishop of London, youngest son
to the Earl of Northampton.

Sanhedrim—Parliament.

Saul—Oliver Cromwell.

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Sheva—Sir Roger Lestrangle.

Shimei—Slingsby Bethel, Sheriff of London in 1680.

Sion—England.

Solymaeen Rout—London Rebels.

Tyre—Holland.

Uzza—Jack Hall.

Zadoc—Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Zaken—A Member of the House of Commons.

Ziloah—Sir John Moor, Lord Mayor in 1682.

Zimri—Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 67: ‘Annabel:’ Lady Ann Scott, daughter of Francis, third Earl of Buccleuch.]

[Footnote 68: ‘Adam-wits:’ comparing the discontented to Adam and his fall.]

[Footnote 69: ‘Triple bond:’ alliance between England, Sweden, and Holland; broken by the second Dutch war through the influence of France and Shaftesbury.]

[Footnote 70: ‘Vare:’ *i.e.*, wand, from Spanish *vara*.]

[Footnote 71: ‘Him:’ Dr Dolben, Bishop of Rochester.]

[Footnote 72: ‘Ruler of the day:’ Phaeton.]

[Footnote 73: The second part was written by Mr Nahum Tate, and is by no means equal to the first, though Dryden corrected it throughout. The poem is here printed complete.]

[Footnote 74: 'Next:' from this to the line, 'To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee,' is Dryden's own.]

[Footnote 75: 'Who makes,' &c.: a line quoted from Settle.]

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THE MEDAL.[76]

A SATIRE AGAINST SEDITION.

EPISTLE TO THE WHIGS.

For to whom can I dedicate this poem with so much justice as to you? It is the representation of your own hero: it is the picture drawn at length, which you admire and prize so much in little. None of your ornaments are wanting; neither the landscape of your Tower, nor the rising sun; nor the Anno Domini of your new sovereign's coronation. This must needs be a grateful undertaking to your whole party; especially to those who have not been so happy as to purchase the original. I hear the graver has made a good market of it: all his kings are bought up already; or the value of the remainder so enhanced, that many a poor Polander, who would be glad to worship the image, is not able to go to the cost of him, but must be content to see him here. I must confess I am no great artist; but sign-post painting will serve the turn to remember a friend by, especially when better is not to be had. Yet, for your comfort, the lineaments are true; and though he sat not five times to me, as he did to B., yet I have consulted history, as the Italian painters do when they would draw a Nero or a Caligula: though they have not seen the man, they can help their imagination by a statue of him, and find out the colouring from Suetonius and Tacitus. Truth is, you might have spared one side of your Medal: the head would be seen to more advantage if it were placed on a spike of the Tower, a little nearer to the sun, which would then break out to better purpose.

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You tell us in your preface to the "No-Protestant Plot",^[77] that you shall be forced hereafter to leave off your modesty: I suppose you mean that little which is left you; for it was worn to rags when you put out this Medal. Never was there practised such a piece of notorious impudence in the face of an established government. I believe when he is dead you will wear him in thumb rings, as the Turks did Scanderbeg; as if there were virtue in his bones to preserve you against monarchy. Yet all this while you pretend not only zeal for the public good, but a due veneration for the person of the king. But all men who can see an inch before them, may easily detect those gross fallacies. That it is necessary for men in your circumstances to pretend both, is granted you; for without them there could be no ground to raise a faction. But I would ask you one civil question, what right has any man among you, or any association of men (to come nearer to you), who, out of parliament, cannot be considered in a public capacity, to meet as you daily do in factious clubs, to vilify the government in your discourses, and to libel it in all your writings? Who made you judges in Israel? Or how is it consistent with your zeal for the public welfare, to promote sedition? Does your definition of loyal, which is to serve the king according to the laws, allow you the licence of traducing the executive power with which you own he is invested? You complain that his majesty has lost the love and confidence of his people; and by your very urging it, you endeavour what in you lies to make him lose them. All good subjects abhor the thought of arbitrary power, whether it be in one or many: if you were the patriots you would seem, you would not at this rate incense the multitude to assume it; for no sober man can fear it, either from the king's disposition or his practice; or even, where you would odiously lay it, from his ministers. Give us leave to enjoy the government and the benefit of laws under which we were born, and which we desire to transmit to our posterity. You are not the trustees of the public liberty; and if you have not right to petition in a crowd, much less have you to intermeddle in the management of affairs; or to arraign what you do not like, which in effect is everything that is done by the king and council. Can you imagine that any reasonable man will believe you respect the person of his majesty, when it is apparent that your seditious pamphlets are stuffed with particular reflections on him? If you have the confidence to deny this, it is easy to be evinced from a thousand passages, which I only forbear to quote, because I desire they should die and be forgotten. I have perused many of your papers; and to show you that I have, the third part of your "No-Protestant Plot" is much of it stolen from your dead author's pamphlet, called the "Growth of Popery;" as manifestly as Milton's "Defence of the English People" is from Buchanan "De jure

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regni apud Scotos:" or your first Covenant and new Association from the holy league of the French Guisards. Any one who reads Davila, may trace your practices all along. There were the same pretences for reformation and loyalty, the same aspersions of the king, and the same grounds of a rebellion. I know not whether you will take the historian's word, who says it was reported, that Poltrot, a Huguenot, murdered Francis Duke of Guise, by the instigations of Theodore Beza; or that it was a Huguenot minister, otherwise called a Presbyterian (for our church abhors so devilish a tenet), who first writ a treatise of the lawfulness of deposing and murdering kings of a different persuasion in religion: but I am able to prove, from the doctrine of Calvin, and principles of Buchanan, that they set the people above the magistrate; which, if I mistake not, is your own fundamental, and which carries your loyalty no further than your liking. When a vote of the House of Commons goes on your side, you are as ready to observe it as if it were passed into a law; but when you are pinched with any former, and yet unrepealed act of parliament, you declare that in some cases you will not be obliged by it. The passage is in the same third part of the "No-Protestant Plot," and is too plain to be denied. The late copy of your intended Association, you neither wholly justify nor condemn; but as the Papists, when they are unopposed, fly out into all the pageantries of worship, but in times of war, when they are hard pressed by arguments, lie close intrenched behind the Council of Trent: so now, when your affairs are in a low condition, you dare not pretend that to be a legal combination, but whensoever you are afloat, I doubt not but it will be maintained and justified to purpose. For, indeed, there is nothing to defend it but the sword: it is the proper time to say anything when men have all things in their power.

In the mean time, you would fain be nibbling at a parallel betwixt this Association, and that in the time of Queen Elizabeth.[78] But there is this small difference betwixt them, that the ends of one are directly opposite to the other: one with the queen's approbation and conjunction, as head of it; the other, without either the consent or knowledge of the king, against whose authority it is manifestly designed. Therefore you do well to have recourse to your last evasion, that it was contrived by your enemies, and shuffled into the papers that were seized; which yet you see the nation is not so easy to believe as your own jury; but the matter is not difficult to find twelve men in Newgate who would acquit a malefactor.

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I have only one favour to desire of you at parting, that when you think of answering this poem, you would employ the same pens against it, who have combated with so much success against Absalom and Achitophel: for then you may assure yourselves of a clear victory, without the least reply. Rail at me abundantly; and, not to break a custom, do it without wit: by this method you will gain a considerable point, which is, wholly to waive the answer of my arguments. Never own the bottom of your principles, for fear they should be treason. Fall severely on the miscarriages of government; for if scandal be not allowed, you are no freeborn subjects. If God has not blessed you with the talent of rhyming, make use of my poor stock, and welcome: let your verses run upon my feet; and for the utmost refuge of notorious blockheads, reduced to the last extremity of sense, turn my own lines upon me, and, in utter despair of your own satire, make me satirize myself. Some of you have been driven to this bay already; but, above all the rest, commend me to the nonconformist parson, who writ the "Whip and Key." I am afraid it is not read so much as the piece deserves, because the bookseller is every week crying help at the end of his Gazette, to get it off. You see I am charitable enough to do him a kindness, that it may be published as well as printed; and that so much skill in Hebrew derivations may not lie for waste-paper in the shop. Yet I half suspect he went no further for his learning, than the index of Hebrew names and etymologies, which is printed at the end of some English Bibles. If Achitophel signifies the brother of a fool, the author of that poem will pass with his readers for the next of kin. And perhaps it is the relation that makes the kindness. Whatever the verses are, buy them up, I beseech you, out of pity; for I hear the conventicle is shut up, and the brother[79] of Achitophel out of service.

Now, footmen, you know, have the generosity to make a purse for a member of their society, who has had his livery pulled over his ears, and even protestant socks are bought up among you, out of veneration to the name. A dissenter in poetry from sense and English will make as good a Protestant rhymers, as a dissenter from the Church of England a Protestant parson. Besides, if you encourage a young beginner, who knows but he may elevate his style a little above the vulgar epithets of profane, and saucy jack, and atheistic scribbler, with which he treats me, when the fit of enthusiasm is strong upon him: by which well-mannered and charitable expressions I was certain of his sect before I knew his name. What would you have more of a man? He has damned me in your cause from Genesis to the Revelations; and has half the texts of both the Testaments against me, if you will be so civil to yourselves as to take him for your interpreter; and not to take them for Irish witnesses. After all, perhaps you will tell me, that you retained him only for the opening of your cause, and that your main lawyer is yet behind. Now, if it so happen he meet with no more reply than his predecessors, you may either conclude that I trust to the goodness of my cause, or fear my adversary, or disdain him, or what you please; for the short of it is, it is indifferent to your humble servant, whatever your party says or thinks of him.



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Of all our antic sights and pageantry,
Which English idiots run in crowds to see,
The Polish[80] Medal bears the prize alone:
A monster, more the favourite of the town
Than either fairs or theatres have shown.
Never did art so well with nature strive;
Nor ever idol seem'd so much alive:
So like the man; so golden to the sight,
So base within, so counterfeit and light.
One side is fill'd with title and with face; 10
And, lest the king should want a regal place,
On the reverse, a tower the town surveys;
O'er which our mounting sun his beams displays.
The word, pronounced aloud by shrieval voice,
Laetamur, which, in Polish, is rejoice.
The day, month, year, to the great act are join'd:
And a new canting holiday design'd.
Five days he sate, for every cast and look—
Four more than God to finish Adam took.
But who can tell what essence angels are, 20
Or how long Heaven was making Lucifer?
Oh, could the style that copied every grace,
And plough'd such furrows for an eunuch face,
Could it have form'd his ever-changing will,
The various piece had tired the graver's skill!
A martial hero first, with early care,
Blown, like a pigmy by the winds, to war.
A beardless chief, a rebel, e'er a man:
So young his hatred to his prince began.
Next this (how wildly will ambition steer!) 30
A vermin wriggling in the usurper's ear.
Bartering his venal wit for sums of gold,
He cast himself into the saint-like mould;
Groan'd, sigh'd, and pray'd, while godliness was gain—
The loudest bagpipe of the squeaking train.
But, as 'tis hard to cheat a juggler's eyes,
His open lewdness he could ne'er disguise.
There split the saint: for hypocritic zeal
Allows no sins but those it can conceal.
Whoring to scandal gives too large a scope: 40
Saints must not trade; but they may interlope:



The ungodly principle was all the same;
But a gross cheat betrays his partner's game.
Besides, their pace was formal, grave, and slack;
His nimble wit outran the heavy pack.
Yet still he found his fortune at a stay:
Whole droves of blockheads choking up his way;
They took, but not rewarded, his advice;
Villain and wit exact a double price.
Power was his aim: but, thrown from that pretence, 50
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence;
And malice reconciled him to his prince.
Him, in the anguish of his soul he served;
Rewarded faster still than he deserved.
Behold him now exalted into trust;
His counsel's oft convenient, seldom just.
Even in the most sincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging still to be a knave.

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The frauds he learn'd in his fanatic years
Made him uneasy in his lawful gears; 60
At best, as little honest as he could,
And, like white witches[81], mischievously good.
To his first bias longingly he leans;
And rather would be great by wicked means.
Thus framed for ill, he loosed our triple hold[82];
Advice unsafe, precipitous, and bold.
From hence those tears! that Ilium of our woe!
Who helps a powerful friend, forearms a foe.
What wonder if the waves prevail so far,
When he cut down the banks that made the bar? 70
Seas follow but their nature to invade;
But he by art our native strength betray'd.
So Samson to his foe his force confess'd,
And, to be shorn, lay slumbering on her breast.
But when this fatal counsel, found too late,
Exposed its author to the public hate;
When his just sovereign, by no impious way
Could be seduced to arbitrary sway;
Forsaken of that hope he shifts his sail,
Drives down the current with a popular gale; 80
And shows the fiend confess'd without a veil.
He preaches to the crowd that power is lent,
But not convey'd, to kingly government;
That claims successive bear no binding force,
That coronation oaths are things of course;
Maintains the multitude can never err,
And sets the people in the papal chair.
The reason's obvious: interest never lies;
The most have still their interest in their eyes;
The power is always theirs, and power is ever wise. 90
Almighty crowd, thou shortenest all dispute—
Power is thy essence; wit thy attribute!
Nor faith nor reason make thee at a stay,
Thou leap'st o'er all eternal truths, in thy Pindaric way!
Athens, no doubt, did righteously decide,
When Phocion and when Socrates were tried:
As righteously they did those dooms repent;
Still they were wise whatever way they went.



Crowds err not, though to both extremes they run;
To kill the father, and recall the son. 100
Some think the fools were most, as times went then,
But now the world's o'erstock'd with prudent men.
The common cry is even religion's test—
The Turk's is at Constantinople best;
Idols in India; Popery at Rome;
And our own worship only true at home:
And true, but for the time 'tis hard to know
How long we please it shall continue so.
This side to-day, and that to-morrow burns;
So all are God Almighty in their turns. 110
A tempting doctrine, plausible and new;
What fools our fathers were, if this be true!
Who, to destroy the seeds of civil war,
Inherent right in monarchs did declare:
And, that a lawful power might never cease,
Secured succession to secure our peace.

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Thus property and sovereign sway, at last,
In equal balances were justly cast:
But this new Jehu spurs the hot-mouth'd horse—
Instructs the beast to know his native force; 120
To take the bit between his teeth, and fly
To the next headlong steep of anarchy.
Too happy England, if our good we knew,
Would we possess the freedom we pursue!
The lavish government can give no more:
Yet we repine, and plenty makes us poor.
God tried us once; our rebel-fathers fought,
He glutted them with all the power they sought:
Till, master'd by their own usurping brave,
The free-born subject sunk into a slave. 130
We loathe our manna, and we long for quails;
Ah, what is man when his own wish prevails!
How rash, how swift to plunge himself in ill!
Proud of his power, and boundless in his will!
That kings can do no wrong, we must believe;
None can they do, and must they all receive?
Help, Heaven! or sadly we shall see an hour,
When neither wrong nor right are in their power!
Already they have lost their best defence—
The benefit of laws which they dispense. 140
No justice to their righteous cause allow'd;
But baffled by an arbitrary crowd.
And medals graved their conquest to record,
The stamp and coin of their adopted lord.

The man[83] who laugh'd but once, to see an ass
Mumbling make the cross-grain'd thistles pass,
Might laugh again to see a jury chaw
The prickles of unpalatable law.
The witnesses, that leech-like lived on blood,
Sucking for them was medicinally good; 150
But when they fasten'd on their fester'd sore,
Then justice and religion they forswore,
Their maiden oaths debauch'd into a whore.
Thus men are raised by factions, and decried;
And rogue and saint distinguish'd by their side.



They rack even Scripture to confess their cause,
And plead a call to preach in spite of laws.
But that's no news to the poor injured page;
It has been used as ill in every age,
And is constrain'd with patience all to take: 160
For what defence can Greek and Hebrew make?
Happy who can this talking trumpet seize;
They make it speak whatever sense they please:
'Twas framed at first our oracle to inquire;
But since our sects in prophecy grow higher,
The text inspires not them, but they the text inspire.

London, thou great emporium of our isle,
O thou too bounteous, thou too fruitful Nile!
How shall I praise or curse to thy desert?
Or separate thy sound from thy corrupted part? 170
I call thee Nile; the parallel will stand;
Thy tides of wealth o'erflow the fatten'd land;
Yet monsters from thy large increase we

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find,

Engender'd on the slime thou leav'st behind.
Sedition has not wholly seized on thee,
Thy nobler parts are from infection free.
Of Israel's tribes thou hast a numerous band,
But still the Canaanite is in the land.
Thy military chiefs are brave and true;
Nor are thy disenchanted burghers few. 180
The head[84] is loyal which thy heart commands,
But what's a head with two such gouty hands?
The wise and wealthy love the surest way,
And are content to thrive and to obey.
But wisdom is to sloth too great a slave;
None are so busy as the fool and knave.
Those let me curse; what vengeance will they urge,
Whose ordures neither plague nor fire can purge?
Nor sharp experience can to duty bring,
Nor angry Heaven, nor a forgiving king! 190
In gospel-phrases, their chapmen they betray;
Their shops are dens, the buyer is their prey.
The knack of trades is living on the spoil;
They boast even when each other they beguile.
Customs to steal is such a trivial thing,
That 'tis their charter to defraud their king.
All hands unite of every jarring sect;
They cheat the country first, and then infect.
They for God's cause their monarchs dare dethrone,
And they'll be sure to make his cause their own. 200
Whether the plotting Jesuit laid the plan
Of murdering kings, or the French Puritan,
Our sacrilegious sects their guides outgo,
And kings and kingly power would murder too.

What means their traitorous combination less,
Too plain to evade, too shameful to confess!
But treason is not own'd when 'tis descried;
Successful crimes alone are justified.
The men, who no conspiracy would find,
Who doubts, but had it taken, they had join'd, 210
Join'd in a mutual covenant of defence;
At first without, at last against their prince?
If sovereign right by sovereign power they scan,



The same bold maxim holds in God and man:
God were not safe, his thunder could they shun,
He should be forced to crown another son.
Thus when the heir was from the vineyard thrown,
The rich possession was the murderer's own.
In vain to sophistry they have recourse:
By proving theirs no plot, they prove 'tis worse— 220
Unmask'd rebellion, and audacious force:
Which, though not actual, yet all eyes may see
'Tis working in the immediate power to be.
For from pretended grievances they rise,
First to dislike, and after to despise;
Then, Cyclop-like, in human flesh to deal,
Chop up a minister at every meal:
Perhaps not wholly to melt down the king,
But clip his regal rights within the ring.
From thence to assume the power of peace and war, 230

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And ease him, by degrees, of public care.
Yet, to consult his dignity and fame,
He should have leave to exercise the name,
And hold the cards, while commons play'd the game.
For what can power give more than food and drink,
To live at ease, and not be bound to think?
These are the cooler methods of their crime,
But their hot zealots think 'tis loss of time;
On utmost bounds of loyalty they stand,
And grin and whet like a Croatian band, 240
That waits impatient for the last command.
Thus outlaws open villainy maintain,
They steal not, but in squadrons scour the plain;
And if their power the passengers subdue,
The most have right, the wrong is in the few.
Such impious axioms foolishly they show,
For in some soils republics will not grow:
Our temperate isle will no extremes sustain,
Of popular sway or arbitrary reign;
But slides between them both into the best, 250
Secure in freedom, in a monarch blest:
And though the climate, vex'd with various winds,
Works through our yielding bodies on our minds.
The wholesome tempest purges what it breeds,
To recommend the calmness that succeeds.

But thou, the pander of the people's hearts,
O crooked soul, and serpentine in arts,
Whose blandishments a loyal land have whored,
And broke the bonds she plighted to her lord;
What curses on thy blasted name will fall! 260
Which age to age their legacy shall call;
For all must curse the woes that must descend on all.
Religion thou hast none: thy mercury
Has pass'd through every sect, or theirs through thee.
But what thou giv'st, that venom still remains,
And the pox'd nation feels thee in their brains.
What else inspires the tongues and swells the breasts
Of all thy bellowing renegado priests,
That preach up thee for God, dispense thy laws,



And with thy stum ferment their fainting cause? 270
Fresh fumes of madness raise; and toil and sweat
To make the formidable cripple great.
Yet, should thy crimes succeed, should lawless power
Compass those ends thy greedy hopes devour,
Thy canting friends thy mortal foes would be,
Thy God and theirs will never long agree;
For thine, if thou hast any, must be one
That lets the world and human kind alone:
A jolly god that passes hours too well
To promise heaven, or threaten us with hell; 280
That unconcern'd can at rebellion sit,
And wink at crimes he did himself commit.
A tyrant theirs; the heaven their priesthood paints
A conventicle of gloomy, sullen saints;
A heaven like Bedlam, slovenly and sad,
Foredoom'd for souls with false religion mad.



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Without a vision poets can foreshow
What all but fools by common sense may know:
If true succession from our isle should fail,
And crowds profane with impious arms prevail, 290
Not thou, nor those thy factious arts engage,
Shall reap that harvest of rebellious rage,
With which thou flatterest thy decrepit age.
The swelling poison of the several sects,
Which, wanting vent, the nation's health infects,
Shall burst its bag; and, fighting out their way,
The various venoms on each other prey.
The presbyter, puff'd up with spiritual pride,
Shall on the necks of the lewd nobles ride:
His brethren damn, the civil power defy; 300
And parcel out republic prelacy.
But short shall be his reign: his rigid yoke
And tyrant power will puny sects provoke;
And frogs and toads, and all the tadpole train,
Will croak to heaven for help, from this devouring crane.
The cut-throat sword and clamorous gown shall jar,
In sharing their ill-gotten spoils of war:
Chiefs shall be grudged the part which they pretend;
Lords envy lords, and friends with every friend
About their impious merit shall contend. 310
The surly commons shall respect deny,
And jostle peerage out with property.
Their general either shall his trust betray,
And force the crowd to arbitrary sway;
Or they, suspecting his ambitious aim,
In hate of kings shall cast anew the frame;
And thrust out Collatine that bore their name.

Thus inborn broils the factions would engage,
Or wars of exiled heirs, or foreign rage,
Till halting vengeance overtook our age: 320
And our wild labours, wearied into rest,
Reclined us on a rightful monarch's breast.

—“Pudet haec opprobria, vobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.”

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 76: 'The Medal:' see 'Life.']

[Footnote 77: A pamphlet vindicating Lord Shaftesbury from being concerned in any plotting designs against the King. Wood says, the general report was, that it was written by the earl himself.]

[Footnote 78: When England, in the sixteenth century, was supposed in danger from the designs of Spain, the principal people, with the queen at their head, entered into an association for the defence of their country, and of the Protestant religion, against Popery, invasion, and innovation.]

[Footnote 79: 'Brother:' George Cooper, Esq., brother to the Earl of Shaftesbury, was married to a daughter of Alderman Oldfield; and, being settled in the city, became a great man among the Whigs and fanatics.]

[Footnote 80: 'Polish:' Shaftesbury was said to have entertained hopes of the crown of Poland.]

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[Footnote 81: 'White witches:' who wrought good ends by infernal means.]

[Footnote 82: 'Loosed our triple hold:' our breaking the alliance with Holland and Sweden, was owing to the Earl of Shaftesbury's advice.]

[Footnote 83: 'The Man:' Crassus.]

[Footnote 84: 'The head,' &c.: alluding to the lord mayor and the two sheriffs: the former, Sir John Moor, being a Tory; the latter, Shute and Pilkington, Whigs.]

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RELIGIO LAICI; OR, A LAYMAN'S FAITH.

AN EPISTLE.

THE PREFACE.

A Poem with so bold a title, and a name prefixed from which the handling of so serious a subject would not be expected, may reasonably oblige the author to say somewhat in defence, both of himself and of his undertaking. In the first place, if it be objected to me, that, being a layman, I ought not to have concerned myself with speculations which belong to the profession of divinity; I could answer, that perhaps laymen, with equal advantages of parts and knowledge, are not the most incompetent judges of sacred things; but in the due sense of my own weakness and want of learning, I plead not this: I pretend not to make myself a judge of faith in others, but only to make a confession of my own. I lay no unhallowed hand upon the ark, but wait on it, with the reverence that becomes me, at a distance. In the next place, I will ingenuously confess, that the helps I have used in this small treatise, were many of them taken from the works of our own reverend divines of the Church of England: so that the weapons with which I combat irreligion, are already consecrated; though I suppose they may be taken down as lawfully as the sword of Goliath was by David, when they are to be employed for the common cause against the enemies of piety. I intend not by this to entitle them to any of my errors, which yet I hope are only those of charity to mankind; and such as my own charity has caused me to commit, that of others may more easily excuse. Being naturally inclined to scepticism in philosophy, I have no reason to impose my opinions in a subject which is above it; but whatever they are, I submit them with all reverence to my mother church, accounting them no farther mine, than as they are authorised, or at least uncondemned by her. And, indeed, to secure myself on this side, I have used the necessary precaution of showing this paper, before it was published, to a judicious and learned friend, a man indefatigably zealous in the service of the church and state; and whose writings have highly deserved of both. He was pleased to approve the body of



the discourse, and I hope he is more my friend than to do it out of complaisance: it is true he had too good a taste to like it all; and amongst some other faults recommended to my second view, what I have written perhaps too boldly on St Athanasius, which he advised

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me wholly to omit. I am sensible enough that I had done more prudently to have followed his opinion: but then I could not have satisfied myself that I had done honestly not to have written what was my own. It has always been my thought, that heathens who never did, nor without miracle could, hear of the name of Christ, were yet in a possibility of salvation. Neither will it enter easily into my belief, that before the coming of our Saviour the whole world, excepting only the Jewish nation, should lie under the inevitable necessity of everlasting punishment, for want of that revelation, which was confined to so small a spot of ground as that of Palestine. Among the sons of Noah we read of one only who was accursed; and if a blessing in the ripeness of time was reserved for Japhet (of whose progeny we are), it seems unaccountable to me, why so many generations of the same offspring, as preceded our Saviour in the flesh, should be all involved in one common condemnation, and yet that their posterity should be entitled to the hopes of salvation: as if a bill of exclusion had passed only on the fathers, which debarred not the sons from their succession: or that so many ages had been delivered over to hell, and so many reserved for heaven; and that the devil had the first choice, and God the next. Truly I am apt to think, that the revealed religion which was taught by Noah to all his sons, might continue for some ages in the whole posterity. That afterwards it was included wholly in the family of Shem is manifest; but when the progenies of Ham and Japhet swarmed into colonies, and those colonies were subdivided into many others, in process of time their descendants lost by little and little the primitive and purer rites of divine worship, retaining only the notion of one Deity; to which succeeding generations added others: for men took their degrees in those ages from conquerors to gods. Revelation being thus eclipsed to almost all mankind, the light of nature, as the next in dignity, was substituted; and that is it which St Paul concludes to be the rule of the heathens, and by which they are hereafter to be judged. If my supposition be true, then the consequence which I have assumed in my poem may be also true; namely, that Deism, or the principles of natural worship, are only the faint remnants or dying flames of revealed religion in the posterity of Noah: and that our modern philosophers—nay, and some of our philosophising divines—have too much exalted the faculties of our souls, when they have maintained that by their force mankind has been able to find out that there is one supreme agent or intellectual Being which we call God: that praise and prayer are his due worship; and the rest of those deducements, which I am confident are the remote effects of revelation, and unattainable by our discourse, I mean as simply considered, and without the benefit of divine illumination. So that we have not lifted up ourselves to God, by the weak pinions of our reason,

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but he has been pleased to descend to us; and what Socrates said of him, what Plato writ, and the rest of the heathen philosophers of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah. That there is something above us, some principle of motion, our reason can apprehend, though it cannot discover what it is by its own virtue. And, indeed, it is very improbable, that we, who by the strength of our faculties cannot enter into the knowledge of any Being, not so much as of our own, should be able to find out by them, that supreme nature, which we cannot otherwise define than by saying it is infinite; as if infinite were definable, or infinity a subject for our narrow understanding. They who would prove religion by reason, do but weaken the cause which they endeavour to support: it is to take away the pillars from our faith, and to prop it only with a twig; it is to design a tower like that of Babel, which, if it were possible, as it is not, to reach heaven, would come to nothing by the confusion of the workmen. For every man is building a several way; impotently conceited of his own model and his own materials: reason is always striving, and always at a loss; and of necessity it must so come to pass, while it is exercised about that which is not its own proper object. Let us be content at last to know God by his own methods; at least, so much of him as he is pleased to reveal to us in the sacred Scriptures: to apprehend them to be the Word of God is all our reason has to do; for all beyond it is the work of faith, which is the seal of Heaven impressed upon our human understanding.

And now for what concerns the holy bishop Athanasius; the preface of whose creed seems inconsistent with my opinion; which is, that heathens may possibly be saved. In the first place, I desire it may be considered that it is the preface only, not the creed itself, which, till I am better informed, is of too hard a digestion for my charity. It is not that I am ignorant how many several texts of Scripture seemingly support that cause; but neither am I ignorant how all those texts may receive a kinder and more mollified interpretation. Every man who is read in Church history, knows that belief was drawn up after a long contestation with Arius, concerning the divinity of our blessed Saviour, and his being one substance with the Father; and that thus compiled, it was sent abroad among the Christian Churches, as a kind of test, which whosoever took was looked upon as an orthodox believer. It is manifest from hence, that the heathen part of the empire was not concerned in it; for its business was not to distinguish betwixt Pagans and Christians, but betwixt Heretics and true Believers. This, well considered, takes off the heavy weight of censure, which I would willingly avoid, from so venerable a man; for if this proportion, "whosoever will be saved," be restrained only to those to whom it was intended, and for whom it was composed, I mean

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the Christians; then the anathema reaches not the heathens, who had never heard of Christ, and were nothing interested in that dispute. After all, I am far from blaming even that prefatory addition to the creed, and as far from cavilling at the continuation of it in the Liturgy of the Church, where, on the days appointed, it is publicly read: for I suppose there is the same reason for it now, in opposition to the Socinians, as there was then against the Arians; the one being a heresy, which seems to have been refined out of the other; and with how much more plausibility of reason it combats our religion, with so much more caution it ought to be avoided: therefore the prudence of our Church is to be commended, which has interposed her authority for the recommendation of this creed. Yet to such as are grounded in the true belief, those explanatory creeds, the Nicene and this of Athanasius, might perhaps be spared; for what is supernatural will always be a mystery, in spite of exposition; and for my own part, the plain Apostles' creed is most suitable to my weak understanding, as the simplest diet is the most easy of digestion.

I have dwelt longer on this subject than I intended, and longer than perhaps I ought; for having laid down, as my foundation, that the Scripture is a rule; that in all things needful to salvation it is clear, sufficient, and ordained by God Almighty for that purpose, I have left myself no right to interpret obscure places, such as concern the possibility of eternal happiness to heathens: because whatsoever is obscure is concluded not necessary to be known.

But, by asserting the Scripture to be the canon of our faith, I have unavoidably created to myself two sorts of enemies: the Papists indeed, more directly, because they have kept the Scriptures from us what they could; and have reserved to themselves a right of interpreting what they have delivered under the pretence of infallibility: and the Fanatics more collaterally, because they have assumed what amounts to an infallibility, in the private spirit; and have detorted those texts of Scripture which are not necessary to salvation, to the damnable uses of sedition, disturbance, and destruction of the civil government. To begin with the Papists, and to speak freely, I think them the less dangerous, at least in appearance to our present state; for not only the penal laws are in force against them, and their number is contemptible, but also their peers and commons are excluded from parliament, and consequently those laws in no probability of being repealed. A general and uninterrupted plot of their clergy, ever since the Reformation, I suppose all Protestants believe; for it is not reasonable to think but that so many of their orders, as were outed from their fat possessions, would endeavour a re-entrance against those whom they account heretics. As for the late design, Mr Coleman's letters, for aught I know, are the best evidence; and what they discover, without wiredrawing their sense, or

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malicious glosses, all men of reason conclude credible. If there be anything more than this required of me, I must believe it as well as I am able, in spite of the witnesses, and out of a decent conformity to the votes of parliament; for I suppose the Fanatics will not allow the private spirit in this case. Here the infallibility is at least in one part of the government; and our understandings as well as our wills are represented. But to return to the Roman Catholics, how can we be secure from the practice of Jesuited Papists in that religion? For not two or three of that order, as some of them would impose upon us, but almost the whole body of them are of opinion, that their infallible master has a right over kings, not only in spirituals but temporals. Not to name Mariana, Bellarmine, Emanuel Sa, Molina, Santare, Simancha,[85] and at least twenty others of foreign countries; we can produce of our own nation, Campian, and Doleman or Parsons; besides, many are named whom I have not read, who all of them attest this doctrine, that the pope can depose and give away the right of any sovereign prince, *si vel paulum deflexerit*, if he shall never so little warp: but if he once comes to be excommunicated, then the bond of obedience is taken off from subjects; and they may, and ought to drive him, like another Nebuchadnezzar, *ex hominum Christianorum dominatu*, from exercising dominion over Christians; and to this they are bound by virtue of divine precept, and by all the ties of conscience, under no less penalty than damnation. If they answer me, as a learned priest has lately written, that this doctrine of the Jesuits is not *de fide*; and that consequently they are not obliged by it, they must pardon me, if I think they have said nothing to the purpose; for it is a maxim in their church, where points of faith are not decided, and that doctors are of contrary opinions, they may follow which part they please; but more safely the most received and most authorised. And their champion Bellarmine has told the world, in his Apology, that the king of England is a vassal to the pope, *ratione directi domini*, and that he holds in villanage of his Roman landlord: which is no new claim put in for England. Our chronicles are his authentic witnesses, that King John was deposed by the same plea, and Philip Augustus admitted tenant. And which makes the more for Bellarmine, the French king was again ejected when our king submitted to the church, and the crown was received under the sordid condition of a vassalage.

It is not sufficient for the more moderate and well-meaning Papists, of which I doubt not there are many, to produce the evidences of their loyalty to the late king, and to declare their innocency in this plot: I will grant their behaviour in the first to have been as loyal and as brave as they desire; and will be willing to hold them excused as to the second, I mean when it comes to my turn, and after my betters; for it is

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a madness to be sober alone, while the nation continues drunk: but that saying of their father Cres. is still running in my head, that they may be dispensed with in their obedience to an heretic prince, while the necessity of the times shall oblige them to it: for that, as another of them tells us, is only the effect of Christian prudence; but when once they shall get power to shake him off, an heretic is no lawful king, and consequently to rise against him is no rebellion. I should be glad, therefore, that they would follow the advice which was charitably given them by a reverend prelate of our church; namely, that they would join in a public act of disowning and detesting those Jesuitic principles; and subscribe to all doctrines which deny the pope's authority of deposing kings, and releasing subjects from their oath of allegiance: to which I should think they might easily be induced, if it be true that this present pope has condemned the doctrine of king-killing, a thesis of the Jesuits maintained, amongst others, *ex cathedra*, as they call it, or in open consistory.

Leaving them, therefore, in so fair a way, if they please themselves, of satisfying all reasonable men of their sincerity and good meaning to the government, I shall make bold to consider that other extreme of our religion—I mean the Fanatics, or Schismatics, of the English Church. Since the Bible has been translated into our tongue, they have used it so, as if their business was not to be saved, but to be damned by its contents. If we consider only them, better had it been for the English nation that it had still remained in the original Greek and Hebrew, or at least in the honest Latin of St Jerome, than that several texts in it should have been prevaricated, to the destruction of that government which put it into so ungrateful hands.

How many heresies the first translation of Tindal produced in few years, let my Lord Herbert's history of Henry VIII. inform you; insomuch, that for the gross errors in it, and the great mischiefs it occasioned, a sentence passed on the first edition of the Bible, too shameful almost to be repeated. After the short reign of Edward VI., who had continued to carry on the Reformation on other principles than it was begun, every one knows that not only the chief promoters of that work, but many others, whose consciences would not dispense with Popery, were forced, for fear of persecution, to change climates: from whence returning at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, many of them who had been in France, and at Geneva, brought back the rigid opinions and imperious discipline of Calvin, to graft upon our Reformation: which, though they cunningly concealed at first, as well knowing how nauseously that drug would go down in a lawful monarchy, which was prescribed for a rebellious commonwealth, yet they always kept it in reserve; and were never wanting to themselves either in court or parliament, when either they had any prospect of a

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numerous party of fanatic members of the one, or the encouragement of any favourite in the other, whose covetousness was gaping at the patrimony of the Church. They who will consult the works of our venerable Hooker, or the account of his life, or more particularly the letter written to him on this subject by George Cranmer, may see by what gradations they proceeded: from the dislike of cap and surplice, the very next step was admonitions to the parliament against the whole government ecclesiastical: then came out volumes in English and Latin in defence of their tenets: and immediately practices were set on foot to erect their discipline without authority. Those not succeeding, satire and railing was the next: and Martin Mar-prelate, the Marvel of those times, was the first Presbyterian scribbler, who sanctified libels and scurrility to the use of the good old cause: which was done, says my author, upon this account; that their serious treatises having been fully answered and refuted, they might compass by railing what they had lost by reasoning; and, when their cause was sunk in court and parliament, they might at least hedge in a stake amongst the rabble: for to their ignorance all things are wit which are abusive; but if Church and State were made the theme, then the doctoral degree of wit was to be taken at Billingsgate: even the most saint-like of the party, though they durst not excuse this contempt and vilifying of the government, yet were pleased, and grinned at it with a pious smile; and called it a judgment of God against the hierarchy. Thus sectaries, we may see, were born with teeth, foul-mouthed and scurrilous from their infancy: and if spiritual pride, venom, violence, contempt of superiors, and slander, had been the marks of orthodox belief, the presbytery and the rest of our schismatics, which are their spawn, were always the most visible church in the Christian world.

It is true, the government was too strong at that time for a rebellion; but, to show what proficiency they had made in Calvin's school, even then their mouths watered at it: for two of their gifted brotherhood, Hacket[86] and Coppinger, as the story tells us, got up into a pease-cart and harangue the people, to dispose them to an insurrection, and to establish their discipline by force: so that however it comes about, that now they celebrate Queen Elizabeth's birth-night as that of their saint and patroness; yet then they were for doing the work of the Lord by arms against her; and in all probability they wanted but a fanatic lord mayor and two sheriffs of their party to have compassed it.

Our venerable Hooker, after many admonitions which he had given them, towards the end of his preface breaks out into this prophetic speech:— "There is in every one of these considerations most just cause to fear, lest our hastiness to embrace a thing of so perilous consequence (meaning the Presbyterian discipline) should cause posterity to feel those evils, which as yet are more easy for us to prevent, than they would be for them to remedy."

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How fatally this Cassandra has foretold, we know too well by sad experience: the seeds were sown in the time of Queen Elizabeth, the bloody harvest ripened in the reign of King Charles the Martyr; and, because all the sheaves could not be carried off without shedding some of the loose grains, another crop is too like to follow; nay, I fear it is unavoidable, if the conventiclers be permitted still to scatter.

A man may be suffered to quote an adversary to our religion, when he speaks truth; and it is the observation of Maimbourg, in his "History of Calvinism," that wherever that discipline was planted and embraced, rebellion, civil war, and misery attended it. And how, indeed, should it happen otherwise? Reformation of Church and State has always been the ground of our divisions in England. While we were Papists, our holy father rid us, by pretending authority out of the Scriptures to depose princes; when we shook off his authority, the sectaries furnished themselves with the same weapons, and out of the same magazine, the Bible; so that the Scriptures, which are in themselves the greatest security of governors, as commanding express obedience to them, are now turned to their destruction; and never since the Reformation has there wanted a text of their interpreting to authorise a rebel. And it is to be noted, by the way, that the doctrines of king-killing and deposing, which have been taken up only by the worst party of the Papists, the most frontless flatterers of the pope's authority, have been espoused, defended, and are still maintained by the whole body of nonconformists and republicans. It is but dubbing themselves the people of God, which it is the interest of their preachers to tell them they are, and their own interest to believe; and, after that, they cannot dip into the Bible, but one text or another will turn up for their purpose: if they are under persecution, as they call it, then that is a mark of their election; if they flourish, then God works miracles for their deliverance, and the saints are to possess the earth.

They may think themselves to be too roughly handled in this paper; but I, who know best how far I could have gone on this subject, must be bold to tell them they are spared: though at the same time I am not ignorant that they interpret the mildness of a writer to them, as they do the mercy of the government; in the one they think it fear, and conclude it weakness in the other. The best way for them to confute me is, as I before advised the Papists, to disclaim their principles and renounce their practices. We shall all be glad to think them true Englishmen when they obey the king, and true Protestants when they conform to the church discipline.

It remains that I acquaint the reader, that these verses were written for an ingenious young gentleman,[87] my friend, upon his translation of "The Critical History of the Old Testament," composed by the learned Father Simon: the verses, therefore, are addressed to the translator of that work, and the style of them is, what it ought to be, epistolary.



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If any one be so lamentable a critic as to require the smoothness, the numbers, and the turn of heroic poetry in this poem, I must tell him, that if he has not read Horace, I have studied him, and hope the style of his epistles is not ill imitated here. The expressions of a poem designed purely for instruction, ought to be plain and natural, and yet majestic: for here the poet is presumed to be a kind of lawgiver, and those three qualities which I have named, are proper to the legislative style. The florid, elevated, and figurative way is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul, by showing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life or less: but instruction is to be given by showing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reasoned into truth.

* * * * *

Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is reason to the soul: and as on high,
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here; so reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
So pale grows reason at religion's sight; 10
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.
Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause, to nature's secret head;
And found that one first principle must be:
But what, or who, that UNIVERSAL HE:
Whether some soul encompassing this ball,
Unmade, unmoved; yet making, moving all;
Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leap'd into form, the noble work of chance;
Or this Great All was from eternity; 20
Not even the Stagyrte himself could see;
And Epicurus guess'd as well as he:
As blindly groped they for a future state;
As rashly judged of providence and fate:
But least of all could their endeavours find
What most concern'd the good of human kind:
For happiness was never to be found,
But vanish'd from them like enchanted ground.
One thought Content the good to be enjoy'd—
This every little accident destroy'd: 30
The wiser madmen did for Virtue toil—

A thorny, or at best a barren soil:
In Pleasure some their glutton souls would steep;
But found their line too short, the well too deep;
And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep.
Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,
Without a centre where to fix the soul:
In this wild maze their vain endeavours end:
How can the less the greater comprehend?
Or finite reason reach Infinity? 40
For what could fathom God were more than He.

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The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground;
Cries [Greek: eureka], the mighty secret's found:
God is that spring of good; supreme and best;
We made to serve, and in that service blest;
If so, some rules of worship must be given,
Distributed alike to all by Heaven:
Else God were partial, and to some denied
The means his justice should for all provide.
This general worship is to praise and pray: 50
One part to borrow blessings, one to pay:
And when frail nature slides into offence,
The sacrifice for crimes is penitence.
Yet since the effects of Providence, we find,
Are variously dispensed to human kind;
That vice triumphs, and virtue suffers here—
A brand that sovereign justice cannot bear—
Our reason prompts us to a future state:
The last appeal from fortune and from fate;
Where God's all-righteous ways will be declared— 60
The bad meet punishment, the good reward.

Thus man by his own strength to heaven would soar,
And would not be obliged to God for more.
Vain, wretched creature, how art thou misled,
To think thy wit these God-like notions bred!
These truths are not the product of thy mind,
But dropp'd from heaven, and of a nobler kind.
Reveal'd religion first inform'd thy sight,
And reason saw not, till faith sprung the light.
Hence all thy natural worship takes the source: 70
'Tis revelation what thou think'st discourse.
Else how com'st thou to see these truths so clear,
Which so obscure to heathens did appear?
Not Plato these, nor Aristotle found:
Nor he whose wisdom oracles renown'd.
Hast thou a wit so deep, or so sublime,
Or canst thou lower dive, or higher climb?
Canst thou by reason more of Godhead know
Than Plutarch, Seneca, or Cicero?
Those giant wits, in happier ages born, 80
When arms and arts did Greece and Rome adorn,
Knew no such system: no such piles could raise
Of natural worship, built on prayer and praise,



To one sole God.
Nor did remorse to expiate sin prescribe,
But slew their fellow-creatures for a bribe:
The guiltless victim groan'd for their offence;
And cruelty and blood was penitence.
If sheep and oxen could atone for men,
Ah! at how cheap a rate the rich might sin! 90
And great oppressors might Heaven's wrath beguile,
By offering His own creatures for a spoil!

Darest thou, poor worm, offend Infinity?
And must the terms of peace be given by thee?
Then thou art Justice in the last appeal;
Thy easy God instructs thee to rebel:
And, like a king remote, and weak, must take
What satisfaction thou art pleased to make.

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But if there be a Power too just and strong
To wink at crimes, and bear unpunish'd wrong, 100
Look humbly upward, see His will disclose
The forfeit first, and then the fine impose:
A mulct thy poverty could never pay,
Had not Eternal Wisdom found the way:
And with celestial wealth supplied thy store:
His justice makes the fine, His mercy quits the score.
See God descending in thy human frame;
The Offended suffering in the offender's name:
All thy misdeeds to Him imputed see,
And all His righteousness devolved on thee. 110
For, granting we have sinn'd, and that the offence
Of man is made against Omnipotence,
Some price that bears proportion must be paid,
And infinite with infinite be weigh'd.
See then the Deist lost: remorse for vice
Not paid; or paid, inadequate in price:
What further means can reason now direct,
Or what relief from human wit expect?
That shows us sick; and sadly are we sure
Still to be sick, till Heaven reveal the cure: 120
If, then, Heaven's will must needs be understood
(Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good),
Let all records of will reveal'd be shown;
With Scripture all in equal balance thrown,
And our one Sacred Book will be that one.

Proof needs not here, for whether we compare
That impious, idle, superstitious ware
Of rites, lustrations, offerings, which before,
In various ages, various countries bore,
With Christian faith and virtues, we shall find 130
None answering the great ends of human kind,
But this one rule of life, that shows us best
How God may be appeased, and mortals blest.
Whether from length of time its worth we draw,
The word is scarce more ancient than the law:
Heaven's early care prescribed for every age;
First, in the soul, and after, in the page.
Or, whether more abstractedly we look,
Or on the writers, or the written book,
Whence, but from Heaven, could men unskill'd in arts, 140

In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.

If on the Book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent heathens prove the story true:
The doctrine, miracles; which must convince,
For Heaven in them appeals to human sense:
And though they prove not, they confirm the cause, 150
When what is taught agrees with Nature's laws.

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Then for the style, majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line:
Commanding words; whose force is still the same
As the first fiat that produced our frame.
All faiths beside, or did by arms ascend;
Or, sense indulged, has made mankind their friend:
This only doctrine does our lusts oppose—
Unfed by Nature's soil, in which it grows;
Cross to our interests, curbing sense, and sin; 160
Oppress'd without, and undermined within,
It thrives through pain; its own tormentors tires;
And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
To what can reason such effects assign,
Transcending nature, but to laws divine?
Which in that sacred volume are contain'd;
Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordain'd.

But stay: the Deist here will urge anew,
No supernatural worship can be true:
Because a general law is that alone 170
Which must to all, and every where be known:
A style so large as not this Book can claim,
Nor aught that bears Reveal'd Religion's name.
'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's birth
Is gone through all the habitable earth:
But still that text must be confined alone
To what was then inhabited, and known:
And what provision could from thence accrue
To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new?
In other parts it helps, that ages past, 180
The Scriptures there were known, and were embraced,
Till sin spread once again the shades of night:
What's that to these who never saw the light?

Of all objections this indeed is chief
To startle reason, stagger frail belief:
We grant, 'tis true, that Heaven from human sense
Has hid the secret paths of Providence:
But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy may
Find even for those bewilder'd souls a way.
If from His nature foes may pity claim, 190
Much more may strangers who ne'er heard His name.
And though no name be for salvation known,
But that of his Eternal Son alone;



Who knows how far transcending goodness can
Extend the merits of that Son to man?
Who knows what reasons may His mercy lead;
Or ignorance invincible may plead?
Not only charity bids hope the best,
But more the great apostle has express'd:
That if the Gentiles, whom no law inspired, 200
By nature did what was by law required;
They, who the written rule had never known,
Were to themselves both rule and law alone:
To nature's plain indictment they shall plead;
And by their conscience be condemn'd or freed.
Most righteous doom! because a rule reveal'd
Is none to those from whom it was conceal'd.
Then those who follow'd reason's dictates right,
Lived up, and lifted high their natural

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light;

With Socrates may see their Maker's face, 210
While thousand rubric-martyrs want a place.
Nor does it balk my charity to find
The Egyptian bishop[88] of another mind:
For though his creed eternal truth contains,
'Tis hard for man to doom to endless pains
All who believed not all his zeal required;
Unless he first could prove he was inspired.
Then let us either think he meant to say
This faith, where publish'd, was the only way;
Or else conclude that, Arius to confute, 220
The good old man, too eager in dispute,
Flew high; and as his Christian fury rose,
Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose.

Thus far my charity this path has tried,
(A much unskilful, but well meaning guide:)
Yet what they are, even these crude thoughts were bred
By reading that which better thou hast read,
Thy matchless author's work: which thou, my friend,
By well translating better dost commend;
Those youthful hours which, of thy equals most 230
In toys have squander'd, or in vice have lost,
Those hours hast thou to nobler use employ'd;
And the severe delights of truth enjoy'd.
Witness this weighty book, in which appears
The crabbed toil of many thoughtful years,
Spent by thy author, in the sifting care
Of Rabbins' old sophisticated ware
From gold divine; which he who well can sort
May afterwards make algebra a sport:
A treasure, which if country curates buy, 240
They Junius and Tremellius[89] may defy;
Save pains in various readings, and translations;
And without Hebrew make most learn'd quotations.
A work so full with various learning fraught,
So nicely ponder'd, yet so strongly wrought,
As nature's height and art's last hand required:
As much as man could compass, uninspired.
Where we may see what errors have been made
Both in the copiers' and translators' trade;

How Jewish, Popish interests have prevail'd, 250
And where infallibility has fail'd.

For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,
Have found our author not too much a priest:
For fashion-sake he seems to have recourse
To Pope, and Councils, and Tradition's force:
But he that old traditions could subdue,
Could not but find the weakness of the new:
If Scripture, though derived from heavenly birth,
Has been but carelessly preserved on earth;
If God's own people, who of God before 260
Knew what we know, and had been promised more,
In fuller terms, of Heaven's assisting care,
And who did neither time nor study spare,
To keep this Book untainted, unperplex'd,
Let in gross errors to corrupt the text,
Omitted paragraphs, embroil'd the

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sense,

With vain traditions stopp'd the gaping fence,
Which every common hand pull'd up with ease:
What safety from such brushwood-helps as these!
If written words from time are not secured, 270
How can we think have oral sounds endured?
Which thus transmitted, if one mouth has fail'd,
Immortal lies on ages are entail'd:
And that some such have been, is proved too plain,
If we consider interest, church, and gain.

O but, says one, tradition set aside,
Where can we hope for an unerring guide?
For since the original Scripture has been lost,
All copies disagreeing, maim'd the most,
Or Christian faith can have no certain ground, 280
Or truth in Church Tradition must be found.

Such an omniscient Church we wish indeed:
'Twere worth both Testaments, cast in the Creed:
But if this mother be a guide so sure,
As can all doubts resolve, all truth secure,
Then her infallibility, as well
Where copies are corrupt or lame, can tell;
Restore lost canon with as little pains,
As truly explicate what still remains:
Which yet no Council dare pretend to do; 290
Unless, like Esdras, they could write it new:
Strange confidence still to interpret true,
Yet not be sure that all they have explain'd
Is in the blest original contain'd!
More safe, and much more modest 'tis to say,
God would not leave mankind without a way:
And that the Scriptures, though not every where
Free from corruption, or entire, or clear,
Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, entire,
In all things which our needful faith require. 300
If others in the same glass better see,
'Tis for themselves they look, but not for me:
For my salvation must its doom receive,
Not from what others, but what I believe.



Must all tradition then be set aside?
This to affirm were ignorance or pride.
Are there not many points, some needful sure
To saving faith, that Scripture leaves obscure?
Which every sect will wrest a several way,
For what one sect interprets, all sects may. 310
We hold, and say we prove from Scripture plain,
That Christ is God; the bold Socinian
From the same Scripture urges he's but man.
Now, what appeal can end the important suit?
Both parts talk loudly, but the rule is mute.

Shall I speak plain, and in a nation free
Assume an honest layman's liberty?
I think, according to my little skill,
To my own Mother Church submitting still,
That many have been saved, and many may, 320
Who never heard this question brought in play.
Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,
Plods on to heaven, and ne'er is

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at a loss;

For the strait gate would be made straiter yet,
Were none admitted there but men of wit.
The few by nature form'd, with learning fraught,
Born to instruct, as others to be taught,
Must study well the sacred page; and see
Which doctrine, this or that, does best agree
With the whole tenor of the work divine: 330
And plainliest points to Heaven's reveal'd design:
Which exposition flows from genuine sense;
And which is forced by wit and eloquence.
Not that tradition's parts are useless here,
When general, old, disinterest'd, and clear:
That ancient Fathers thus expound the page,
Gives Truth the reverend majesty of age:
Confirms its force, by biding every test;
For best authority's next rules are best.
And still the nearer to the spring we go, 340
More limpid, more unsoil'd, the waters flow.
Thus first traditions were a proof alone,
Could we be certain such they were, so known:
But since some flaws in long descent may be,
They make not truth but probability.
Even Arius and Pelagius durst provoke
To what the centuries preceding spoke.
Such difference is there in an oft-told tale:
But Truth by its own sinews will prevail.
Tradition written, therefore, more commends 350
Authority, than what from voice descends:
And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
Rolls down to us the sacred history:
Which from the Universal Church received,
Is tried, and after for itself believed.

The partial Papists would infer from hence,
Their Church, in last resort, should judge the sense.
But first they would assume, with wondrous art,
Themselves to be the whole, who are but part,
Of that vast frame the Church; yet grant they were 360
The handers down, can they from thence infer
A right to interpret? or would they alone
Who brought the present, claim it for their own?

The Book's a common largess to mankind;
Not more for them than every man design'd:
The welcome news is in the letter found;
The carrier's not commissioned to expound;
It speaks itself, and what it does contain
In all things needful to be known is plain.

In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance, 370
A gainful trade their clergy did advance:
When want of learning kept the laymen low,
And none but priests were authorised to know:
When what small knowledge was, in them did dwell;
And he a god, who could but read and spell:
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail;
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail:
But still expounded what she sold or gave;
To keep it in her power to damn and save.
Scripture was scarce, and as the market

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went, 380

Poor laymen took salvation on content;
As needy men take money, good or bad:
God's Word they had not, but th' priest's they had.
Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
The lawyer still was certain to be paid.
In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well,
That by long use they grew infallible.
At last a knowing age began to inquire
If they the Book, or that did them inspire:
And making narrower search, they found, though late, 390
That what they thought the priest's, was their estate;
Taught by the will produced, the written Word,
How long they had been cheated on record.
Then every man who saw the title fair,
Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share:
Consulted soberly his private good,
And saved himself as cheap as e'er he could.

'Tis true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence),
This good had full as bad a consequence:
The Book thus put in every vulgar hand, 400
Which each presumed he best could understand,
The common rule was made the common prey;
And at the mercy of the rabble lay.
The tender page with horny fists was gall'd;
And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd.
The spirit gave the doctoral degree:
And every member of a company
Was of his trade, and of the Bible free.

Plain truths enough for needful use they found;
But men would still be itching to expound: 410
Each was ambitious of the obscurest place,
No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from grace.
Study and pains were now no more their care;
Texts were explain'd by fasting and by prayer:
This was the fruit the private spirit brought;
Occasion'd by great zeal and little thought.
While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,
About the sacred viands buzz and swarm.
The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood,



And turns to maggots what was meant for food. 420
A thousand daily sects rise up and die;
A thousand more the perish'd race supply;
So all we make of Heaven's discover'd will,
Is, not to have it, or to use it ill.
The danger's much the same; on several shelves
If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.

What then remains, but, waiving each extreme,
The tides of ignorance and pride to stem?
Neither so rich a treasure to forego;
Nor proudly seek beyond our power to know: 430
Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe are few and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need,
And every man will make himself a creed;
In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say:
For 'tis not likely we should higher

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soar

In search of heaven, than all the Church before:
Nor can we be deceived, unless we see
The Scripture and the Fathers disagree. 440
If, after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will):
'Tis some relief, that points not clearly known,
Without much hazard may be let alone:
And after hearing what our Church can say,
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
For points obscure are of small use to learn:
But common quiet is mankind's concern. 450

Thus have I made my own opinions clear;
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear:
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse I chose,
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose:
For while from sacred truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's or Tom Shadwell's rhymes will serve.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 85: 'Not to name Mariana, Bellarmine,' &c.: all Jesuits and controversial writers in the Roman Catholic Church.]

[Footnote 86: Hacket was a man of learning; he had much of the Scriptures by heart, and made himself remarkable by preaching in an enthusiastic strain. In 1591, he made a great parade of sanctity, pretended to divine inspiration, and visions from God.]

[Footnote 87: The son of the celebrated John Hampden. He was in the Ryehouse Plot, and fined L15,000, which was remitted at the Revolution.]

[Footnote 88: 'Bishop:' Athanasius.]

[Footnote 89: 'Junius and Tremellius:' Francis Junius and Emanuel Tremellius, two Calvinist ministers, who, in the sixteenth century, joined in translating the Bible from Hebrew into Latin.]

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THRENODIA AUGUSTALIS:

A FUNERAL PINDARIC POEM, SACRED TO THE HAPPY MEMORY OF KING CHARLES II.

I.

Thus long my grief has kept me dumb:
Sure there's a lethargy in mighty woe,
Tears stand congeal'd, and cannot flow;
And the sad soul retires into her inmost room:
Tears, for a stroke foreseen, afford relief;
But, unprovided for a sudden blow,
Like Niobe we marble grow;
And petrify with grief.

Our British heaven was all serene,
No threatening cloud was nigh,
Not the least wrinkle to deform the sky;
We lived as unconcern'd and happily
As the first age in Nature's golden scene;
Supine amidst our flowing store,
We slept securely, and we dreamt of more:
When suddenly the thunder-clap was heard,
It took us unprepared and out of guard,
Already lost before we fear'd.

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The amazing news of Charles at once were spread,
At once the general voice declared,
 “Our gracious prince was dead.”
No sickness known before, no slow disease,
To soften grief by just degrees:
But like a hurricane on Indian seas,
 The tempest rose;
 An unexpected burst of woes;
With scarce a breathing space betwixt—
This now becalm’d, and perishing the next.
As if great Atlas from his height
Should sink beneath his heavenly weight,
And with a mighty flaw, the flaming wall
 (At once it shall),
Should gape immense, and rushing down, o’erwhelm this nether ball;
So swift and so surprising was our fear:
Our Atlas fell indeed, but Hercules was near.

II.

His pious brother, sure the best
 Who ever bore that name!
Was newly risen from his rest,
 And, with a fervent flame,
His usual morning vows had just address’d
 For his dear sovereign’s health;
 And hoped to have them heard,
 In long increase of years,
In honour, fame, and wealth:
Guiltless of greatness thus he always pray’d,
Nor knew nor wish’d those vows he made,
On his own head should be repaid.
Soon as the ill-omen’d rumour reach’d his ear,
 (Ill news is wing’d with fate, and flies apace,)
 Who can describe the amazement of his face!
Horror in all his pomp was there,
Mute and magnificent without a tear:
And then the hero first was seen to fear.
Half unarray’d he ran to his relief,
So hasty and so artless was his grief:



Approaching greatness met him with her charms
Of power and future state;
But look'd so ghastly in a brother's fate,
He shook her from his arms.
Arrived within the mournful room, he saw
A wild distraction, void of awe,
And arbitrary grief unbounded by a law.
God's image, God's anointed lay
Without motion, pulse, or breath,
A senseless lump of sacred clay,
An image now of death.
Amidst his sad attendants' groans and cries,
The lines of that adored, forgiving face,
Distorted from their native grace;
An iron slumber sat on his majestic eyes.
The pious duke—Forbear, audacious Muse!
No terms thy feeble art can use
Are able to adorn so vast a woe:
The grief of all the rest like subject-grief did show,
His like a sovereign did transcend;
No wife, no brother, such a grief could know,
Nor any name but friend.

III.

O wondrous changes of a fatal scene,
Still varying to the last!
Heaven, though its hard decree was past,
Seem'd pointing to a gracious turn again:
And death's uplifted arm arrested in its haste.

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Heaven half repented of the doom,
And almost grieved it had foreseen,
What by foresight it will'd eternally to come.
Mercy above did hourly plead
For her resemblance here below;
And mild forgiveness intercede
To stop the coming blow.
New miracles approach'd the ethereal throne,
Such as his wondrous life had oft and lately known,
And urged that still they might be shown.
On earth his pious brother pray'd and vow'd,
Renouncing greatness at so dear a rate,
Himself defending what he could,
From all the glories of his future fate.
With him the innumerable crowd
Of armed prayers
Knock'd at the gates of Heaven, and knock'd aloud;
The first well-meaning rude petitioners,
All for his life assail'd the throne,
All would have bribed the skies by offering up their own.
So great a throng not Heaven itself could bar;
'Twas almost borne by force as in the giants' war.
The prayers, at least, for his reprieve were heard;
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd:
Against the sun the shadow went;
Five days, those five degrees, were lent
To form our patience and prepare the event.
The second causes took the swift command,
The medicinal head, the ready hand,
All eager to perform their part;
All but eternal doom was conquer'd by their art:
Once more the fleeting soul came back
To inspire the mortal frame;
And in the body took a doubtful stand,
Doubtful and hovering like expiring flame,
That mounts and falls by turns, and trembles o'er the brand.

IV.



The joyful short-lived news soon spread around,
Took the same train, the same impetuous bound:
The drooping town in smiles again was dress'd,
Gladness in every face express'd,
Their eyes before their tongues confess'd.
Men met each other with erected look,
The steps were higher that they took;
Friends to congratulate their friends made haste;
And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd:
Above the rest heroic James appear'd—
Exalted more, because he more had fear'd:
His manly heart, whose noble pride
Was still above
Dissembled hate or varnish'd love,
Its more than common transport could not hide;
But like an eagle^[90] rode in triumph o'er the tide.
Thus, in alternate course,
The tyrant passions, hope and fear,
Did in extremes appear,
And flash'd upon the soul with equal force.
Thus, at half ebb, a rolling sea
Returns and wins upon the shore;
The watery herd, affrighted at the roar,
Rest on their fins awhile, and stay,
Then backward take their wondering way:
The prophet wonders more than they,
At prodigies but rarely seen before,
And cries, A king must fall, or kingdoms



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change their sway.

Such were our counter-tides at land, and so
Presaging of the fatal blow,
In their prodigious ebb and flow.
The royal soul, that, like the labouring moon,
By charms of art was hurried down,
Forced with regret to leave her native sphere,
Came but awhile on liking here:
Soon weary of the painful strife,
And made but faint essays of life:
An evening light
Soon shut in night;
A strong distemper, and a weak relief,
Short intervals of joy, and long returns of grief.

V.

The sons of art all medicines tried,
And every noble remedy applied;
With emulation each essay'd
His utmost skill, nay more, they pray'd:
Never was losing game with better conduct play'd.
Death never won a stake with greater toil,
Nor e'er was fate so near a foil:
But like a fortress on a rock,
The impregnable disease their vain attempts did mock;
They mined it near, they batter'd from afar
With, all the cannon of the medicinal war;
No gentle means could be essay'd,
'Twas beyond parley when the siege was laid:
The extremest ways they first ordain,
Prescribing such intolerable pain,
As none but Caesar could sustain:
Undaunted Csesar underwent
The malice of their art, nor bent
Beneath whate'er their pious rigour could invent:
In five such days he suffer'd more
Than any suffer'd in his reign before;
More, infinitely more, than he,
Against the worst of rebels, could decree,
A traitor, or twice pardon'd enemy.
Now art was tried without success,



No racks could make the stubborn malady confess.
The vain insurers of life,
And they who most perform'd and promised less,
Even Short and Hobbes[91] forsook the unequal strife.
Death and despair were in their looks,
No longer they consult their memories or books;
Like helpless friends, who view from shore
The labouring ship, and hear the tempest roar;
So stood they with their arms across;
Not to assist, but to deplore
The inevitable loss.

VI.

Death was denounced; that frightful sound
Which even the best can hardly bear,
He took the summons void of fear;
And unconcern'dly cast his eyes around;
As if to find and dare the grisly challenger.
What death could do he lately tried,
When in four days he more than died.
The same assurance all his words did grace;
The same majestic mildness held its place:
Nor lost the monarch in his dying face.
Intrepid, pious, merciful, and brave,
He look'd as when he conquer'd and forgave.

VII.

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As if some angel had been sent
To lengthen out his government,
And to foretell as many years again,
As he had number'd in his happy reign,
So cheerfully he took the doom
Of his departing breath;
Nor shrunk nor stepp'd aside for death;
But with unalter'd pace kept on,
Providing for events to come,
When he resign'd the throne.
Still he maintain'd his kingly state;
And grew familiar with his fate.
Kind, good, and gracious to the last,
On all he loved before his dying beams he cast:
Oh, truly good, and truly great,
For glorious as he rose, benignly so he set!
All that on earth he held most dear,
He recommended to his care,
To whom both Heaven,
The right had given
And his own love bequeathed supreme command:
He took and press'd that ever loyal hand
Which could in peace secure his reign,
Which could in wars his power maintain,
That hand on which no plighted vows were ever vain.
Well for so great a trust he chose
A prince who never disobey'd:
Not when the most severe commands were laid;
Nor want, nor exile with his duty weigh'd:
A prince on whom, if Heaven its eyes could close,
The welfare of the world it safely might repose.

VIII.

That king^[92] who lived to God's own heart,
Yet less serenely died than he:
Charles left behind no harsh decree
For schoolmen with laborious art
To salve from cruelty:
Those for whom love could no excuses frame,
He graciously forgot to name.
Thus far my Muse, though rudely, has design'd
Some faint resemblance of his godlike mind:
But neither pen nor pencil can express



The parting brothers' tenderness:
Though that's a term too mean and low;
The blest above a kinder word may know.
But what they did, and what they said,
The monarch who triumphant went,
The militant who staid,
Like painters, when their heightening arts are spent,
I cast into a shade.
That all-forgiving king,
The type of Him above,
That inexhausted spring
Of clemency and love;
Himself to his next self accused,
And asked that pardon—which he ne'er refused:
For faults not his, for guilt and crimes
Of godless men, and of rebellious times:
For an hard exile, kindly meant,
When his ungrateful country sent
Their best Camillus into banishment:
And forced their sovereign's act—they could not his consent.
Oh, how much rather had that injured chief
Repeated all his sufferings past,
Than hear a pardon begg'd at last,
Which, given, could give the dying no relief!
He bent, he sunk beneath his grief:
His dauntless heart would fain have held
From weeping, but his eyes rebell'd.
Perhaps the godlike hero in his breast
Disdain'd, or was ashamed to show,
So weak, so womanish a woe,
Which yet the brother and the friend so plenteously confess'd.



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IX.

Amidst that silent shower, the royal mind
An easy passage found,
And left its sacred earth behind:
Nor murmuring groan express'd, nor labouring sound,
Nor any least tumultuous breath;
Calm was his life, and quiet was his death.
Soft as those gentle whispers were,
In which the Almighty did appear;
By the still voice the prophet^[93] knew him there.
That peace which made thy prosperous reign to shine,
That peace thou leavest to thy imperial line,
That peace, oh, happy shade, be ever thine!

X.

For all those joys thy restoration brought,
For all the miracles it wrought,
For all the healing balm thy mercy pour'd
Into the nation's bleeding wound,
And care that after kept it sound,
For numerous blessings yearly shower'd,
And property with plenty crown'd;
For freedom, still maintain'd alive—
Freedom! which in no other land will thrive—
Freedom! an English subject's sole prerogative,
Without whose charms even peace would be
But a dull, quiet slavery:
For these and more, accept our pious praise;
'Tis all the subsidy
The present age can raise,
The rest is charged on late posterity:
Posterity is charged the more,
Because the large abounding store
To them and to their heirs, is still entail'd by thee.
Succession of a long descent
Which chastely in the channels ran,
And from our demi-gods began,
Equal almost to time in its extent,
Through hazards numberless and great,
Thou hast derived this mighty blessing down,
And fix'd the fairest gem that decks the imperial crown
Not faction, when it shook thy regal seat,



Not senates, insolently loud,
Those echoes of a thoughtless crowd,
Not foreign or domestic treachery,
Gould warp thy soul to their unjust decree.
So much thy foes thy manly mind mistook,
Who judged it by the mildness of thy look:
Like a well-temper'd sword it bent at will;
But kept the native toughness of the steel.

XI.

Be true, O Clio, to thy hero's name!
But draw him strictly so,
That all who view the piece may know.
He needs no trappings of fictitious fame:
The load's too weighty: thou mayest choose
Some parts of praise, and some refuse:
Write, that his annals may be thought more lavish than the Muse.
In scanty truth thou hast confined
The virtues of a royal mind,
Forgiving, bounteous, humble, just, and kind:
His conversation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
Were such, dead authors could not give;
But habitudes of those who live;
Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive:
He drain'd from all, and all they knew;
His apprehension quick, his judgment true:
That the most learn'd, with shame, confess
His knowledge more, his reading only less.



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XII.

Amidst the peaceful triumphs of his reign,
What wonder if the kindly beams he shed
Revived the drooping Arts again;
If Science raised her head,
And soft Humanity, that from rebellion fled!
Our isle, indeed, too fruitful was before;
But all uncultivated lay
Out of the solar walk and Heaven's highway;
With rank Geneva weeds run o'er,
And cockle, at the best, amidst the corn it bore.
The royal husbandman appear'd,
And plough'd, and sow'd, and till'd;
The thorns he rooted out, the rubbish clear'd,
And bless'd the obedient field:
When straight a double harvest rose;
Such as the swarthy Indian mows;
Or happier climates near the line,
Or Paradise manured and dress'd by hands divine.

XIII.

As when the new-born Phoenix takes his way,
His rich paternal regions to survey,
Of airy choristers a numerous train
Attends his wondrous progress o'er the plain;
So, rising from his father's urn,
So glorious did our Charles return;
The officious Muses came along—
A gay harmonious quire, like angels ever young:
The Muse that mourns him now, his happy triumph sung,
Even they could thrive in his auspicious reign;
And such a plenteous crop they bore
Of purest and well-winnow'd grain,
As Britain never knew before.
Though little was their hire, and light their gain,
Yet somewhat to their share he threw;
Fed from his hand, they sung and flew,
Like birds of Paradise that lived on morning dew.
Oh, never let their lays his name forget!
The pension of a prince's praise is great.
Live, then, thou great encourager of arts!
Live ever in our thankful hearts;



Live blest above, almost invoked below;
Live and receive this pious vow,
Our patron once, our guardian angel now!
Thou Fabius of a sinking state,
Who didst by wise delays divert our fate,
When faction like a tempest rose,
In death's most hideous form,
Then art to rage thou didst oppose,
To weather-out the storm:
Not quitting thy supreme command,
Thou held'st the rudder with a steady hand,
Till safely on the shore the bark did land:
The bark that all our blessings brought,
Charged with thyself and James, a doubly royal fraught.

XIV.

Oh, frail estate of human things,
And slippery hopes below!
Now to our cost your emptiness we know,
For 'tis a lesson dearly bought,
Assurance here is never to be sought.
The best, and best beloved of kings,
And best deserving to be so,
When scarce he had escaped the fatal blow
Of faction and conspiracy,
Death did his promised hopes destroy:
He toil'd, he gain'd, but lived not to enjoy.
What mists of Providence are these,
Through which we cannot see!

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So saints, by supernatural power set free,
Are left at last in martyrdom to die;
Such is the end of oft-repeated miracles.
Forgive me, Heaven, that impious thought!
'Twas grief for Charles, to madness wrought,
That question'd thy supreme decree.
Thou didst his gracious reign prolong,
Even in thy saints' and angels' wrong,
His fellow-citizens of immortality:
For twelve long years of exile borne,
Twice twelve we number'd since his blest return:
So strictly wert thou just to pay,
Even to the dribble of a day.
Yet still we murmur and complain,
The quails and manna should no longer rain;
Those miracles 'twas needless to renew;
The chosen stock has now the promised land in view.

XV.

A warlike prince ascends the regal state,
A prince long exercised by fate:
Long may he keep, though he obtains it late!
Heroes in Heaven's peculiar mould are cast,
They and their poets are not form'd in haste;
Man was the first in God's design, and man was made the last.
False heroes, made by flattery so,
Heaven can strike out, like sparkles, at a blow;
But ere a prince is to perfection brought,
He costs Omnipotence a second thought.
With toil and sweat,
With hardening cold, and forming heat,
The Cyclops did their strokes repeat,
Before the impenetrable shield was wrought.
It looks as if the Maker would not own
The noble work for His,
Before 'twas tried and found a masterpiece.

XVI.



View, then, a monarch ripen'd for a throne!
Alcides thus his race began,
O'er infancy he swiftly ran;
The future god at first was more than man:
Dangers and toils, and Juno's hate,
Even o'er his cradle lay in wait;
And there he grappled first with fate:
In his young hands the hissing snakes he press'd,
So early was the deity confess'd.
Thus by degrees he rose to Jove's imperial seat;
Thus difficulties prove a soul legitimately great.
Like his, our hero's infancy was tried;
Betimes the Furies did their snakes provide;
And to his infant arms oppose
His father's rebels, and his brother's foes;
The more oppress'd, the higher still he rose:
Those were the preludes of his fate,
That form'd his manhood, to subdue
The Hydra of the many-headed hissing crew.

XVII.

As after Numa's peaceful reign,
The martial Ancus did the sceptre wield,
Furbish'd the rusty sword again,
Resumed the long-forgotten shield,
And led the Latins to the dusty field;
So James the drowsy genius wakes
Of Britain, long entranced in charms,
Restive and slumbering on its arms:
'Tis roused, and with a new-strung nerve, the spear already shakes,
No neighing of the warrior steeds,

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No drum, or louder trumpet, needs
To inspire the coward, warm the cold—
His voice, his sole appearance makes them bold.
Gaul and Batavia dread the impending blow;
Too well the vigour of that arm they know;
They lick the dust, and crouch beneath their fatal foe.
Long may they fear this awful prince,
And not provoke his lingering sword;
Peace is their only sure defence,
Their best security his word:
In all the changes of his doubtful state,
His truth, like Heaven's, was kept inviolate,
For him to promise is to make it fate.
His valour can triumph o'er land and main;
With broken oaths his fame he will not stain;
With conquest basely bought, and with inglorious gain.

XVIII.

For once, O Heaven! unfold thy adamant book;
And let his wondering senate see,
If not thy firm immutable decree,
At least the second page of strong contingency;
Such as consists with wills originally free:
Let them with glad amazement look
On what their happiness may be:
Let them not still be obstinately blind,
Still to divert the good thou hast design'd,
Or with malignant penury,
To starve the royal virtues of his mind.
Faith is a Christian's and a subject's test,
O give them to believe, and they are surely blest!
They do; and with a distant view I see
The amended vows of English loyalty.
And all beyond that object, there appears
The long retinue of a prosperous reign,
A series of successful years,
In orderly array, a martial, manly train.
Behold even the remoter shores,
A conquering navy proudly spread;



The British cannon formidably roars,
While starting from his oozy bed,
The asserted Ocean rears his reverend head;
To view and recognise his ancient lord again:
And with a willing hand, restores
The fasces of the main.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 90: 'An eagre:' a tide swelling above another tide—observed on the River Trent.]

[Footnote 91: 'Short and Hobbes:' two physicians who attended on the king.]

[Footnote 92: 'King:' King David.]

[Footnote 93: 'The prophet:' Elijah.]

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VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS, PARAPHRASED.

CREATOR SPIRIT, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit every pious mind;
Come, pour thy joys on human kind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee.

O source of uncreated light,
The Father's promised Paraclete!
Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire,
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;
Come, and thy sacred unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing!

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Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sevenfold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty hand,
Whose power does heaven and earth command:
Proceeding Spirit, our defence,
Who dost the gifts of tongues dispense,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence!

Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control,
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,
Then lay thy hand, and hold them down!

Chase from our minds the infernal foe,
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And, lest our feet should step astray,
Protect and guide us in the way.

Make us eternal truths receive,
And practise all that we believe:
Give us thyself, that we may see
The Father, and the Son, by thee.

Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend the Almighty Father's name
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee!

* * * * *

THE HIND AND THE PANTHER.

A POEM, IN THREE PARTS.

—Antiquam exquirite matrem.
Et vera incesso patuit Dea.
VIRG.

* * * * *

PREFACE.

The nation is in too high a ferment for me to expect either fair war, or even so much as fair quarter, from a reader of the opposite party. All men are engaged either on this side or that; and though conscience is the common word, which is given by both, yet if a writer fall among enemies, and cannot give the marks of *their* conscience, he is knocked down before the reasons of his own are heard. A preface, therefore, which is but a bespeaking of favour, is altogether useless. What I desire the reader should know concerning me, he will find in the body of the poem, if he have but the patience to peruse it. Only this advertisement let him take beforehand, which relates to the merits of the cause. No general characters of parties (call them either Sects or Churches) can be so fully and exactly drawn, as to comprehend all the several members of them; at least all such as are received under that denomination. For example, there are some of the Church by law established, who envy not liberty of conscience to Dissenters, as being well satisfied that, according to their own principles, they ought not to persecute them. Yet these, by reason of their fewness, I could not distinguish from the numbers of the rest, with whom they are embodied in one common name. On the other side, there are many of our sects, and more indeed than I could reasonably have hoped, who have withdrawn themselves from the communion of the Panther, and embraced this gracious indulgence of his Majesty in point of toleration. But neither

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to the one nor the other of these is this satire any way intended: it is aimed only at the refractory and disobedient on either side. For those who are come over to the royal party are consequently supposed to be out of gun-shot. Our physicians have observed, that, in process of time, some diseases have abated of their virulence, and have in a manner worn out their malignity, so as to be no longer mortal; and why may not I suppose the same concerning some of those who have formerly been enemies to kingly government, as well as Catholic religion? I hope they have now another notion of both, as having found, by comfortable experience, that the doctrine of persecution is far from being an article of our faith.

It is not for any private man to censure the proceedings of a foreign prince; but, without suspicion of flattery, I may praise our own, who has taken contrary measures, and those more suitable to the spirit of Christianity. Some of the Dissenters, in their addresses to his Majesty, have said, "that he has restored God to his empire over conscience." I confess I dare not stretch the figure to so great a boldness; but I may safely say, that conscience is the royalty and prerogative of every private man. He is absolute in his own breast, and accountable to no earthly power, for that which passes only betwixt God and him. Those who are driven into the fold are, generally speaking, rather made hypocrites than converts.

This indulgence being granted to all the sects, it ought in reason to be expected, that they should both receive it, and receive it thankfully. For, at this time of day, to refuse the benefit, and adhere to those whom they have esteemed their persecutors, what is it else, but publicly to own, that they suffered not before for conscience-sake, but only out of pride and obstinacy, to separate from a church for those impositions, which they now judge may be lawfully obeyed? After they have so long contended for their classical ordination (not to speak of rites and ceremonies) will they at length submit to an episcopal? If they can go so far, out of complaisance to their old enemies, methinks a little reason should persuade them to take another step, and see whither that would lead them.

Of the receiving this toleration thankfully I shall say no more, than that they ought, and I doubt not they will consider from what hand they received it. It is not from a Cyrus, a heathen prince, and a foreigner, but from a Christian king, their native sovereign; who expects a return in specie from them, that the kindness, which he has graciously shown them, may be retaliated on those of his own persuasion.

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As for the poem in general, I will only thus far satisfy the reader, that it was neither imposed on me, nor so much as the subject given me by any man. It was written during the last winter, and the beginning of this spring; though with long interruptions of ill health and other hindrances. About a fortnight before I had finished it, his Majesty's declaration for liberty of conscience came abroad; which, if I had so soon expected, I might have spared myself the labour of writing many things which are contained in the third part of it. But I was always in some hope, that the Church of England might have been persuaded to have taken off the penal laws and the test, which was one design of the poem, when I proposed to myself the writing of it.

It is evident that some part of it was only occasional, and not first intended: I mean that defence of myself, to which every honest man is bound, when he is injuriously attacked in print; and I refer myself to the judgment of those who have read the Answer to the Defence of the late King's Papers, and that of the Duchess (in which last I was concerned), how charitably I have been represented there. I am now informed both of the author and supervisors of this pamphlet, and will reply, when I think he can affront me; for I am of Socrates's opinion, that all creatures cannot. In the mean time let him consider whether he deserved not a more severe reprehension than I gave him formerly, for using so little respect to the memory of those whom he pretended to answer; and at his leisure, look out for some original treatise of humility, written by any Protestant in English; I believe I may say in any other tongue: for the magnified piece of Duncomb on that subject, which either he must mean, or none, and with which another of his fellows has upbraided me, was translated from the Spanish of Rodriguez; though with the omission of the seventeenth, the twenty-fourth, the twenty-fifth, and the last chapter, which will be found in comparing of the books.

He would have insinuated to the world, that her late Highness died not a Roman Catholic. He declares himself to be now satisfied to the contrary, in which he has given up the cause; for matter of fact was the principal debate betwixt us. In the mean time, he would dispute the motives of her change; how preposterously, let all men judge, when he seemed to deny the subject of the controversy, the change itself. And because I would not take up this ridiculous challenge, he tells the world I cannot argue: but he may as well infer, that a Catholic cannot fast, because he will not take up the cudgels against Mrs James, to confute the Protestant religion.

I have but one word more to say concerning the poem as such, and abstracting from the matters, either religious or civil, which are handled in it. The first part, consisting most in general characters and narration, I have endeavoured to raise, and give it the majestic turn of heroic poesy. The second being matter of dispute, and chiefly concerning Church authority, I was obliged to make as plain and perspicuous as possibly I could; yet not wholly neglecting the numbers, though I had not frequent occasions for the magnificence of verse. The third, which has more of the nature of domestic conversation, is, or ought to be, more free and familiar than the two former.

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There are in it two episodes, or fables, which are interwoven with the main design; so that they are properly parts of it, though they are also distinct stories of themselves. In both of these I have made use of the commonplaces of satire, whether true or false, which are urged by the members of the one Church against the other: at which I hope no reader of either party will be scandalized, because they are not of my invention, but as old, to my knowledge, as the times of Boccace and Chaucer on the one side, and as those of the Reformation on the other.

* * * * *

PART I.

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forced to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

Not so her young; for their unequal line
Was hero's make, half human, half divine. 10
Their earthly mould obnoxious was to fate,
The immortal part assumed immortal state.
Of these a slaughter'd army lay in blood,
Extended o'er the Caledonian wood,
Their native walk; whose vocal blood arose,
And cried for pardon on their perjured foes.
Their fate was fruitful, and the sanguine seed,
Endued with souls, increased the sacred breed.
So captive Israel multiplied in chains,
A numerous exile, and enjoy'd her pains. 20
With grief and gladness mix'd, the mother view'd
Her martyr'd offspring, and their race renew'd;
Their corpse to perish, but their kind to last,
So much the deathless plant the dying fruit surpass'd.

Panting and pensive now she ranged alone,
And wander'd in the kingdoms once her own,
The common hunt, though from their rage restrain'd
By sovereign power, her company disdain'd;
Grinn'd as they pass'd, and with a glaring eye



Gave gloomy signs of secret enmity. 30
'Tis true, she bounded by, and tripp'd so light,
They had not time to take a steady sight;
For truth has such a face and such a mien,
As to be loved needs only to be seen.

The bloody Bear, an independent beast,
Unlick'd to form, in groans her hate express'd.
Among the timorous kind the quaking Hare[94]
Profess'd neutrality, but would not swear.
Next her the buffoon Ape[95], as Atheists use,
Mimick'd all sects, and had his own to choose: 40
Still when the Lion look'd, his knees he bent,
And paid at church a courtier's compliment.
The bristled Baptist Boar, impure as he,



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But whiten'd with the foam of sanctity,
With fat pollutions fill'd the sacred place,
And mountains levell'd in his furious race;
So first rebellion founded was in grace.
But since the mighty ravage, which he made
In German forests, had his guilt betray'd,
With broken tusks, and with a borrow'd name; 50
He shunn'd the vengeance, and conceal'd the shame:
So lurk'd in sects unseen. With greater guile
False Reynard[96] fed on consecrated spoil:
The graceless beast by Athanasius first
Was chased from Nice, then by Socinus nursed:
His impious race their blasphemy renew'd,
And nature's King through nature's optics view'd.
Reversed they view'd him lessen'd to their eye,
Nor in an infant could a God descry:
New swarming sects to this obliquely tend, 60
Hence they began, and here they all will end.

What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
If private reason hold the public scale?
But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
O teach me to believe thee thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than thyself reveal'd;
But her alone for my director take, 70
Whom thou hast promised never to forsake!
My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;
My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,
Follow'd false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am;
Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame.
Good life be now my task; my doubts are done:
What more could fright my faith, than Three in One?
Can I believe Eternal God could lie 80
Disguised in mortal mould and infancy?
That the great Maker of the world could die?



And after that trust my imperfect sense,
Which calls in question His Omnipotence?
Can I my reason to my faith compel,
And shall my sight, and touch, and taste rebel?
Superior faculties are set aside;
Shall their subservient organs be my guide?
Then let the moon usurp the rule of day,
And winking tapers show the sun his way; 90
For what my senses can themselves perceive,
I need no revelation to believe.
Can they who say the Host should be descried
By sense, define a body glorified?
Impassable, and penetrating parts?
Let them declare by what mysterious arts
He shot that body through the opposing might
Of bolts and bars impervious to the light,
And stood before his train confess'd in open sight.
For since thus wondrously he pass'd, 'tis plain, 100
One single place two bodies did contain.
And sure the same Omnipotence as well
Can make one body in more places dwell.
Let reason, then, at her own quarry fly,
But how can finite grasp infinity?



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'Tis urged again, that faith did first commence
By miracles, which are appeals to sense,
And thence concluded, that our sense must be
The motive still of credibility.
For latter ages must on former wait, 110
And what began belief must propagate.

But winnow well this thought, and you shall find
'Tis light as chaff that flies before the wind.
Were all those wonders wrought by power divine,
As means or ends of some more deep design?
Most sure as means, whose end was this alone,
To prove the Godhead of the Eternal Son.
God thus asserted, man is to believe
Beyond what sense and reason can conceive,
And for mysterious things of faith rely 120
On the proponent, Heaven's authority.
If, then, our faith we for our guide admit,
Vain is the farther search of human wit;
As when the building gains a surer stay,
We take the unuseful scaffolding away.
Reason by sense no more can understand;
The game is play'd into another hand.
Why choose we, then, like bilanders,[97] to creep
Along the coast, and land in view to keep,
When safely we may launch into the deep? 130
In the same vessel which our Saviour bore,
Himself the pilot, let us leave the shore,
And with a better guide a better world explore.
Could he his Godhead veil with flesh and blood,
And not veil these again to be our food?
His grace in both is equal in extent,
The first affords us life, the second nourishment.
And if he can, why all this frantic pain
To construe what his clearest words contain,
And make a riddle what he made so plain? 140
To take up half on trust, and half to try,
Name it not faith, but bungling bigotry.
Both knave and fool the merchant we may call,
To pay great sums, and to compound the small:
For who would break with Heaven, and would not break for all?
Rest, then, my soul, from endless anguish freed:
Nor sciences thy guide, nor sense thy creed.

Faith is the best insurer of thy bliss;
The bank above must fail before the venture miss.

But heaven and heaven-born faith are far from thee, 150
Thou first apostate^[98] to divinity.
Unkennell'd range in thy Polonian plains;
A fiercer foe the insatiate Wolf^[99] remains.
Too boastful Britain, please thyself no more,
That beasts of prey are banish'd from thy shore:
The Bear, the Boar, and every savage name,
Wild in effect, though in appearance tame,
Lay waste thy woods, destroy thy blissful bower,
And, muzzled though they seem, the mutes devour.
More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race 160
Appear with belly gaunt and famish'd face:

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Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,
Close clapp'd for shame; but his rough crest he rears,
And pricks up his predestinating ears.
His wild disorder'd walk, his haggard eyes,
Did all the bestial citizens surprise.
Though fear'd and hated, yet he ruled awhile,
As captain or companion of the spoil.
Full many a year[100] his hateful head had been 170
For tribute paid, nor since in Cambria seen:
The last of all the litter 'scaped by chance,
And from Geneva first infested France.
Some authors thus his pedigree will trace,
But others write him of an upstart race:
Because of Wickliff's brood no mark he brings,
But his innate antipathy to kings.
These last deduce him from th' Helvetian kind,
Who near the Lemman lake his consort lined:
That fiery Zuinglius first th' affection bred, 180
And meagre Calvin bless'd the nuptial bed.
In Israel some believe him whelp'd long since,
When the proud Sanhedrim oppress'd the prince;
Or, since he will be Jew, derive him higher,
When Corah with his brethren did conspire
From Moses' hand the sovereign sway to wrest,
And Aaron of his ephod to divest:
Till opening earth made way for all to pass,
And could not bear the burden of a class.
The Fox and he came shuffled in the dark, 190
If ever they were stow'd in Noah's ark:
Perhaps not made; for all their barking train
The Dog (a common species) will contain.
And some wild curs, who from their masters ran,
Abhorring the supremacy of man,
In woods and caves the rebel race began.

O happy pair, how well have you increased!
What ills in Church and State have you redress'd!
With teeth untried, and rudiments of claws,
Your first essay was on your native laws: 200



Those having torn with ease, and trampled down,
Your fangs you fasten'd on the mitred crown,
And freed from God and monarchy your town.
What though your native kennel^[101] still be small,
Bounded betwixt a puddle^[102] and a wall;
Yet your victorious colonies are sent
Where the north ocean girds the continent.
Quicken'd with fire below, your monsters breed
In fenny Holland, and in fruitful Tweed:
And, like the first, the last affects to be 210
Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
As, where in fields the fairy rounds are seen,
A rank, sour herbage rises on the green;
So, springing where those midnight elves advance,
Rebellion prints the footsteps of the dance.
Such are their doctrines, such contempt they show
To Heaven above and to their prince below,
As none but traitors and blasphemers know.
God, like the tyrant of the skies, is



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placed,

And kings, like slaves, beneath the crowd debased. 220
So fulsome is their food, that flocks refuse
To bite, and only dogs for physic use.
As, where the lightning runs along the ground,
No husbandry can heal the blasting wound;
Nor bladed grass, nor bearded corn succeeds,
But scales of scurf and putrefaction breeds:
Such wars, such waste, such fiery tracks of dearth
Their zeal has left, and such a teemless earth,
But, as the poisons of the deadliest kind
Are to their own unhappy coasts confined; 230
As only Indian shades of sight deprive,
And magic plants will but in Colchos thrive;
So Presbytery and pestilential zeal
Can only nourish in a commonweal.

From Celtic woods is chased the wolfish crew;
But ah! some pity even to brutes is due:
Their native walks methinks they might enjoy,
Curb'd of their native malice to destroy.
Of all the tyrannies on human kind,
The worst is that which persecutes the mind. 240
Let us but weigh at what offence we strike;
'Tis but because we cannot think alike.
In punishing of this, we overthrow
The laws of nations and of nature too.
Beasts are the subjects of tyrannic sway,
Where still the stronger on the weaker prey.
Man only of a softer mould is made,
Not for his fellows' ruin, but their aid:
Created kind, beneficent, and free,
The noble image of the Deity. 250

One portion of informing fire was given
To brutes, the inferior family of heaven:
The Smith Divine, as with a careless beat, 253
Struck out the mute creation at a heat:
But when arrived at last to human race,
The Godhead took a deep-considering space;
And to distinguish man from all the rest,
Unlock'd the sacred treasures of his breast;



And mercy mix'd with reason did impart,
One to his head, the other to his heart: 260
Reason to rule, and mercy to forgive;
The first is law, the last prerogative.
And like his mind his outward form appear'd,
When, issuing naked, to the wondering herd,
He charm'd their eyes; and, for they loved, they fear'd:
Not arm'd with horns of arbitrary might,
Or claws to seize their furry spoils in fight,
Or with increase of feet to o'ertake them in their flight:
Of easy shape, and pliant every way;
Confessing still the softness of his clay, 270
And kind as kings upon their coronation day:
With open hands, and with extended space
Of arms, to satisfy a large embrace.
Thus kneaded up with milk, the new-made man
His kingdom o'er his kindred world began:
Till knowledge misapplied, misunderstood,

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And pride of empire, sour'd his balmy blood.
Then, first rebelling, his own stamp he coins;
The murderer Cain was latent in his loins:
And blood began its first and loudest cry, 280
For differing worship of the Deity.
Thus persecution rose, and further space
Produced the mighty hunter of his race[103].
Not so the blessed Pan his flock increased,
Content to fold them from the famish'd beast:
Mild were his laws; the Sheep and harmless Hind 286
Were never of the persecuting kind.
Such pity now the pious pastor shows,
Such mercy from the British Lion flows,
That both provide protection from their foes.

O happy regions, Italy and Spain,
Which never did those monsters entertain!
The Wolf, the Bear, the Boar, can there advance
No native claim of just inheritance.
And self-preserving laws, severe in show,
May guard their fences from the invading foe.
Where birth has placed them, let them safely share
The common benefit of vital air.
Themselves unharmful, let them live unharm'd;
Their jaws disabled, and their claws disarm'd: 300
Here, only in nocturnal howlings bold,
They dare not seize the hind, nor leap the fold.
More powerful, and as vigilant as they,
The Lion awfully forbids the prey.
Their rage repress'd, though pinch'd with famine sore,
They stand aloof, and tremble at his roar:
Much is their hunger, but their fear is more.
These are the chief: to number o'er the rest,
And stand, like Adam, naming every beast,
Were weary work; nor will the muse describe 310
A slimy-born and sun-begotten tribe;
Who far from steeples and their sacred sound,
In fields their sullen conventicles found.
These gross, half-animated lumps I leave;
Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive.



But if they think at all, 'tis sure no higher
Than matter, put in motion, may aspire:
Souls that can scarce ferment their mass of clay;
So drossy, so divisible are they,
As would but serve pure bodies for allay: 320
Such souls as shards produce, such beetle things
As only buzz to heaven with evening wings;
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance,
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.
They know not beings, and but hate a name;
To them the Hind and Panther are the same.

The Panther[104] sure the noblest, next the Hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind;
Oh, could her inborn stains be wash'd away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey! 330
How can I praise, or blame, and not offend,
Or how divide the frailty from the friend?
Her faults and virtues lie so mix'd,



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that she

Nor wholly stands condemn'd, nor wholly free.
Then, like her injured Lion, let me speak;
He cannot bend her, and he would not break.
Unkind already, and estranged in part,
The Wolf begins to share her wandering heart.
Though unpolluted yet with actual ill,
She half commits, who sins but in her will. 340
If, as our dreaming Platonists report,
There could be spirits of a middle sort,
Too black for heaven, and yet too white for hell,
Who just dropt half way down, nor lower fell;
So poised, so gently she descends from high,
It seems a soft dismissal from the sky.
Her house not ancient, whatsoe'er pretence
Her clergy heralds make in her defence.
A second century not half-way run,
Since the new honours of her blood begun. 350
A Lion[105] old, obscene, and furious made
By lust, compress'd her mother in a shade;
Then, by a left-hand marriage, weds the dame,
Covering adultery with a specious name:
So Schism begot; and Sacrilege and she,
A well match'd pair, got graceless Heresy.
God's and king's rebels have the same good cause,
To trample down divine and human laws:
Both would be call'd reformers, and their hate
Alike destructive both to Church and State: 360
The fruit proclaims the plant; a lawless prince
By luxury reform'd incontinence;
By ruins, charity; by riots, abstinence.
Confessions, fasts, and penance set aside,
Oh, with what ease we follow such a guide,
Where souls are starved, and senses gratified!
Where marriage pleasures midnight prayers supply,
And matin bells, a melancholy cry,
Are tuned to merrier notes, Increase and multiply.
Religion shows a rosy-colour'd face; 370
Not batter'd out with drudging works of grace:
A down-hill reformation rolls apace.
What flesh and blood would crowd the narrow gate,
Or, till they waste their pamper'd paunches, wait?

All would be happy at the cheapest rate.

Though our lean faith these rigid laws has given,
The full-fed Mussulman goes fat to heaven;
For his Arabian prophet with delights
Of sense allured his eastern proselytes.
The jolly Luther, reading him, began 380
To interpret Scriptures by his Alcoran;
To grub the thorns beneath our tender feet,
And make the paths of Paradise more sweet;
Bethought him of a wife ere half way gone,
For 'twas uneasy travelling alone;
And, in this masquerade of mirth and love,
Mistook the bliss of heaven for Bacchanals above.
Sure he presumed of praise, who came to stock
The ethereal pastures with so fair a flock,
Burnish'd, and battenning on their food, to show 390

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Their diligence of careful herds below.

Our Panther, though like these she changed her head,

Yet, as the mistress of a monarch's bed,

Her front erect with majesty she bore,

The crosier wielded, and the mitre wore.

Her upper part of decent discipline

Show'd affectation of an ancient line;

And Fathers, Councils, Church, and Church's head,

Were on her reverend phylacteries read.

But what disgraced and disavow'd the rest, 400

Was Calvin's brand, that stigmatized the beast.

Thus, like a creature of a double kind,

In her own labyrinth she lives confined.

To foreign lands no sound of her is come,

Humbly content to be despised at home.

Such is her faith, where good cannot be had,

At least she leaves the refuse of the bad:

Nice in her choice of ill, though not of best,

And least deform'd, because reform'd the least.

In doubtful points betwixt her differing friends, 410

Where one for substance, one for sign contends,

Their contradicting terms she strives to join;

Sign shall be substance, substance shall be sign.

A real presence all her sons allow,

And yet 'tis flat idolatry to bow,

Because the Godhead's there they know not how.

Her novices are taught that bread and wine

Are but the visible and outward sign,

Received by those who in communion join.

But the inward grace, or the thing signified, 420

His blood and body, who to save us died;

The faithful this thing signified receive:

What is't those faithful then partake or leave?

For what is signified and understood,

Is, by her own confession, flesh and blood.

Then, by the same acknowledgment, we know

They take the sign, and take the substance too.

The literal sense is hard to flesh and blood,

But nonsense never can be understood.



Her wild belief on every wave is toss'd; 430
But sure no Church can better morals boast:
True to her king her principles are found;
O that her practice were but half so sound!
Steadfast in various turns of state she stood,
And seal'd her vow'd affection with her blood:
Nor will I meanly tax her constancy,
That interest or obligation made the tie
Bound to the fate of murder'd monarchy.
Before the sounding axe so falls the vine,
Whose tender branches round the poplar twine. 440
She chose her ruin, and resign'd her life,
In death undaunted as an Indian wife:
A rare example! but some souls we see
Grow hard, and stiffen with adversity:
Yet these by fortune's favours are undone;
Resolved into a baser form they run,
And bore the wind, but cannot bear the sun.
Let this be nature's frailty, or her fate,
Or Isgrim's[106] counsel, her new-chosen mate;
Still she's the fairest of the fallen crew, 450
No mother more indulgent, but the true.

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Fierce to her foes, yet fears her force to try,
Because she wants innate authority;
For how can she constrain them to obey,
Who has herself cast off the lawful sway?
Rebellion equals all, and those who toil
In common theft, will share the common spoil.
Let her produce the title and the right
Against her old superiors first to fight;
If she reform by text, even that's as plain 460
For her own rebels to reform again.
As long as words a different sense will bear,
And each may be his own interpreter,
Our airy faith will no foundation find:
The word's a weathercock for every wind:
The Bear, the Fox, the Wolf, by turns prevail;
The most in power supplies the present gale.
The wretched Panther cries aloud for aid
To Church and Councils, whom she first betray'd;
No help from Fathers or Tradition's train: 470
Those ancient guides she taught us to disdain,
And, by that Scripture, which she once abused
To reformation, stands herself accused.
What bills for breach of laws can she prefer,
Expounding which she owns herself may err?
And, after all her winding ways are tried,
If doubts arise, she slips herself aside,
And leaves the private conscience for the guide.
If then that conscience set the offender free,
It bars her claim to Church authority. 480
How can she censure, or what crime pretend,
But Scripture may be construed to defend?
Even those, whom for rebellion she transmits 483
To civil power, her doctrine first acquits;
Because no disobedience can ensue,
Where no submission to a judge is due;
Each judging for himself, by her consent,
Whom thus absolved she sends to punishment.
Suppose the magistrate revenge her cause,
'Tis only for transgressing human laws. 490
How answering to its end a Church is made,
Whose power is but to counsel and persuade?
Oh, solid rock, on which secure she stands!
Eternal house, not built with mortal hands!



Oh, sure defence against the infernal gate,—
A patent during pleasure of the state!

Thus is the Panther neither loved nor fear'd,
A mere mock queen of a divided herd;
Whom soon by lawful power she might control,
Herself a part submitted to the whole. 500
Then, as the moon who first receives the light
By which she makes our nether regions bright,
So might she shine, reflecting from afar
The rays she borrow'd from a better star;
Big with the beams which from her mother flow,
And reigning o'er the rising tides below:
Now, mixing with a savage crowd, she goes,
And meanly flatters her inveterate foes;
Ruled while she rules, and losing every hour
Her wretched remnants of precarious power. 510

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One evening, while the cooler shade she sought,
Revolving many a melancholy thought,
Alone she walk'd, and look'd around in vain,
With rueful visage, for her vanish'd train:
None of her sylvan subjects made their court;
Levees and couchees pass'd without resort.
So hardly can usurpers manage well 517
Those whom they first instructed to rebel.
More liberty begets desire of more;
The hunger still increases with the store.
Without respect they brush'd along the wood,
Each in his clan, and, fill'd with loathsome food,
Ask'd no permission to the neighbouring flood.
The Panther, full of inward discontent,
Since they would go, before them wisely went;
Supplying want of power by drinking first,
As if she gave them leave to quench their thirst.
Among the rest, the Hind, with fearful face,
Beheld from far the common watering place,
Nor durst approach; till, with an awful roar, 530
The sovereign Lion[107] bade her fear no more.
Encouraged thus she brought her younglings nigh,
Watching the motions of her patron's eye,
And drank a sober draught; the rest amazed
Stood mutely still, and on the stranger gazed;
Survey'd her part by part, and sought to find
The ten-horn'd monster in the harmless Hind,
Such as the Wolf and Panther had design'd.
They thought at first they dream'd; for 'twas offence
With them to question certitude of sense, 540
Their guide in faith: but nearer when they drew,
And had the faultless object full in view,
Lord, how they all admired her heavenly hue!
Some, who before her fellowship disdain'd,
Scarce, and but scarce, from in-born rage restrain'd,
Now frisk'd about her, and old kindred feign'd.
Whether for love or interest, every sect
Of all the savage nation show'd respect.
The viceroy Panther could not awe the herd; 549
The more the company, the less they fear'd.
The surly Wolf with secret envy burst,
Yet could not howl; (the Hind had seen him first:)
But what he durst not speak the Panther durst.



For when the herd, sufficed, did late repair,
To ferny heaths, and to their forest lair,
She made a mannerly excuse to stay,
Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way:
That, since the sky was clear, an hour of talk
Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.
With much good-will the motion was embraced, 560
To chat a while on their adventures pass'd:
Nor had the grateful Hind so soon forgot
Her friend and fellow-sufferer in the Plot.
Yet, wondering how of late she grew estranged,
Her forehead cloudy, and her countenance changed,
She thought this hour the occasion would

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present

To learn her secret cause of discontent,
Which well she hoped might be with ease redress'd,
Considering her a well-bred civil beast,
And more a gentlewoman than the rest. 570
After some common talk what rumours ran,
The lady of the spotted muff began.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 94: 'Hare:' the Quakers.]

[Footnote 95: 'Ape:' latitudinarians in general.]

[Footnote 96: 'Reynard:' the Arians.]

[Footnote 97: 'Bilanders:' an old word for a coasting boat.]

[Footnote 98: 'First Apostate:' Arius.]

[Footnote 99: 'Wolf:' Presbytery.]

[Footnote 100: 'Many a year:' referring to the price put on the head of
wolves in Wales.]

[Footnote 101: 'Kennel:' Geneva.]

[Footnote 102: 'Puddle:' its lake.]

[Footnote 103: 'Mighty hunter of his race:' Nimrod.]

[Footnote 104: 'Panther:' Church of England.]

[Footnote 105: 'Lion:' Henry VIII.]

[Footnote 106:
'Isgrim:' the wolf.]

[Footnote 107: 'Lion:' James II.]



PART II.

Dame, said the Panther, times are mended well,
Since late among the Philistines[108] you fell.
The toils were pitch'd, a spacious tract of ground
With expert huntsmen was encompass'd round;
The enclosure narrow'd; the sagacious power
Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour.
'Tis true, the younger Lion[109] 'scaped the snare,
But all your priestly Calves[110] lay struggling there,
As sacrifices on their altar laid;
While you, their careful mother, wisely fled, 10
Not trusting destiny to save your head;
For, whate'er promises you have applied
To your unfailing Church, the surer side
Is four fair legs in danger to provide.
And whate'er tales of Peter's chair you tell,
Yet, saving reverence of the miracle,
The better luck was yours to 'scape so well.

As I remember, said the sober Hind,
Those toils were for your own dear self design'd,
As well as me, and with the self-same throw, 20
To catch the quarry and the vermin too.
(Forgive the slanderous tongues that call'd you so.)
Howe'er you take it now, the common cry
Then ran you down for your rank loyalty.
Besides, in Popery they thought you nursed,
As evil tongues will ever speak the worst,
Because some forms, and ceremonies some
You kept, and stood in the main question dumb.
Dumb you were born indeed; but thinking long
The Test[111] it seems at last has loosed your tongue. 30

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And to explain what your forefathers meant,
By real presence in the sacrament,
After long fencing push'd against the wall.
Your salvo comes, that he's not there at all:
There changed your faith, and what may change may fall.
Who can believe what varies every day,
Nor ever was, nor will be at a stay?

Tortures may force the tongue untruths to tell,
And I ne'er own'd myself infallible,
Replied the Panther: grant such presence were, 40
Yet in your sense I never own'd it there.
A real virtue we by faith receive,
And that we in the sacrament believe.
Then, said the Hind, as you the matter state,
Not only Jesuits can equivocate;
For real, as you now the word expound,
From solid substance dwindles to a sound.
Methinks an AEsop's fable you repeat;
You know who took the shadow for the meat:
Your Church's substance thus you change at will, 50
And yet retain your former figure still.
I freely grant you spoke to save your life;
For then you lay beneath the butcher's knife.
Long time you fought, redoubled battery bore,
But, after all, against yourself you swore;
Your former self: for every hour your form
Is chopp'd and changed, like winds before a storm.
Thus fear and interest will prevail with some;
For all have not the gift of martyrdom.

The Panther grinn'd at this, and thus replied: 60
That men may err was never yet denied.
But, if that common principle be true,
The canon, dame, is levell'd full at you.
But, shunning long disputes, I fain would see
That wondrous wight Infallibility.
Is he from Heaven, this mighty champion, come;
Or lodged below in subterranean Rome?



First, seat him somewhere, and derive his race,
Or else conclude that nothing has no place.

Suppose (though I disown it), said the Hind, 70
The certain mansion were not yet assign'd;
The doubtful residence no proof can bring
Against the plain existence of the thing.
Because philosophers may disagree
If sight by emission or reception be,
Shall it be thence inferr'd, I do not see?
But you require an answer positive,
Which yet, when I demand, you dare not give;
For fallacies in universals live.
I then affirm that this unfailing guide 80
In Pope and General Councils must reside;
Both lawful, both combined: what one decrees
By numerous votes, the other ratifies:
On this undoubted sense the Church relies.
'Tis true, some doctors in a scantier space,
I mean, in each apart, contract the place.
Some, who to greater length extend the line,
The Church's after-acceptation join.
This last circumference appears too wide;

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The Church diffused is by the Council tied; 90
As members by their representatives
Obliged to laws which Prince and Senate gives.
Thus some contract, and some enlarge the space:
In Pope and Council, who denies the place,
Assisted from above with God's unfailing grace?
Those canons all the needful points contain;
Their sense so obvious, and their words so plain,
That no disputes about the doubtful text
Have hitherto the labouring world perplex'd.
If any should in after-times appear, 100
New Councils must be call'd, to make the meaning clear:
Because in them the power supreme resides;
And all the promises are to the guides.
This may be taught with sound and safe defence;
But mark how sandy is your own pretence,
Who, setting Councils, Pope, and Church aside,
Are every man his own presuming guide.
The Sacred Books, you say, are full and plain.
And every needful point of truth contain:
All who can read interpreters may be: 110
Thus, though your several Churches disagree,
Yet every saint has to himself alone
The secret of this philosophic stone.
These principles your jarring sects unite,
When differing doctors and disciples fight.
Though Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, holy chiefs,
Have made a battle royal of beliefs;
Or, like wild horses, several ways have whirl'd
The tortured text about the Christian world;
Each Jehu lashing on with furious force, 120
That Turk or Jew could not have used it worse;
No matter what dissension leaders make,
Where every private man may save a stake:
Ruled by the Scripture and his own advice,
Each has a blind by-path to Paradise;
Where, driving in a circle, slow or fast,
Opposing sects are sure to meet at last.
A wondrous charity you have in store
For all reform'd to pass the narrow door:



So much, that Mahomet had scarcely more. 130
For he, kind prophet, was for damning none;
But Christ and Moses were to save their own:
Himself was to secure his chosen race,
Though reason good for Turks to take the place,
And he allow'd to be the better man,
In virtue of his holier Alcoran.

True, said the Panther, I shall ne'er deny
My brethren may be saved as well as I:
Though Huguenots condemn our ordination,
Succession, ministerial vocation; 140
And Luther, more mistaking what he read,
Misjoins the sacred body with the bread:
Yet, lady, still remember, I maintain,
The Word in needful points is only plain.



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Needless, or needful, I not now contend,
For still you have a loop-hole for a friend;
Rejoin'd the matron: but the rule you lay
Has led whole flocks, and leads them still astray,
In weighty points, and full damnation's way.
For did not Arius first, Socinus now, 150
The Son's Eternal Godhead disavow?
And did not these by gospel texts alone
Condemn our doctrine, and maintain their own?
Have not all heretics the same pretence
To plead the Scriptures in their own defence?
How did the Nicene Council then decide
That strong debate? was it by Scripture tried?
No, sure; to that the rebel would not yield;
Squadrons of texts he marshall'd in the field:
That was but civil war, an equal set, 160
Where piles with piles[112], and eagles eagles met.
With texts point-blank and plain he faced the foe.
And did not Satan tempt our Saviour so?
The good old bishops took a simpler way;
Each ask'd but what he heard his father say,
Or how he was instructed in his youth,
And by tradition's force upheld the truth.

The Panther smiled at this; and when, said she,
Were those first Councils disallow'd by me?
Or where did I at sure Tradition strike, 170
Provided still it were apostolic?

Friend, said the Hind, you quit your former ground,
Where all your faith you did on Scripture found:
Now 'tis Tradition join'd with Holy Writ;
But thus your memory betrays your wit.

No, said the Panther, for in that I view,
When your tradition's forged, and when 'tis true.
I set them by the rule, and, as they square,
Or deviate from, undoubted doctrine there,
This oral fiction, that old faith declare. 180

Hind: The Council steer'd, it seems, a different course;
They tried the Scripture by Tradition's force:
But you Tradition by the Scripture try;
Pursued by sects, from this to that you fly,



Nor dare on one foundation to rely.
The Word is then deposed, and in this view,
You rule the Scripture, not the Scripture you.
Thus said the dame, and, smiling, thus pursued:
I see Tradition then is disallow'd,
When not evinced by Scripture to be true, 190
And Scripture, as interpreted by you.
But here you tread upon unfaithful ground;
Unless you could infallibly expound:
Which you reject as odious Popery,
And throw that doctrine back with scorn on me.
Suppose we on things traditive divide,
And both appeal to Scripture to decide;
By various texts we both uphold our claim,
Nay, often ground our titles on the same:
After long labour lost, and time's expense, 200
Both grant the words, and quarrel for

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the sense.

Thus all disputes for ever must depend;
For no dumb rule can controversies end.
Thus, when you said, Tradition must be tried
By Sacred Writ, whose sense yourselves decide,
You said no more, but that yourselves must be
The judges of the Scripture sense, not we.
Against our Church-Tradition you declare,
And yet your clerks would sit in Moses' chair;
At least 'tis proved against your argument, 210
The rule is far from plain, where all dissent.

If not by Scriptures, how can we be sure,
Replied the Panther, what Tradition's pure?
For you may palm upon us new for old:
All, as they say, that glitters, is not gold.

How but by following her, replied the dame,
To whom derived from sire to son they came;
Where every age does on another move,
And trusts no farther than the next above;
Where all the rounds like Jacob's ladder rise, 220
The lowest hid in earth, the topmost in the skies.

Sternly the savage did her answer mark,
Her glowing eye-balls glittering in the dark,
And said but this: Since lucre was your trade,
Succeeding times such dreadful gaps have made,
'Tis dangerous climbing: to your sons and you
I leave the ladder, and its omen too.

Hind: The Panther's breath was ever famed for sweet;
But from the Wolf such wishes oft I meet:
You learn'd this language from the Blatant Beast, 230
Or rather did not speak, but were possess'd.
As for your answer, 'tis but barely urged:
You must evince Tradition to be forged;
Produce plain proofs: unblemish'd authors use
As ancient as those ages they accuse;
'Till when 'tis not sufficient to defame:
An old possession stands, 'till elder quits the claim.
Then for our interest, which is named alone



To load with envy, we retort your own,
For when Traditions in your faces fly, 240
Resolving not to yield, you must decry.
As when the cause goes hard, the guilty man
Excepts, and thins his jury all he can;
So when you stand of other aid bereft,
You to the Twelve Apostles would be left.
Your friend the Wolf did with more craft provide
To set those toys, Traditions, quite aside;
And Fathers too, unless when, reason spent,
He cites them but sometimes for ornament.
But, madam Panther, you, though more sincere, 250
Are not so wise as your adulterer:
The private spirit is a better blind,
Than all the dodging tricks your authors find.
For they, who left the Scripture to the crowd,
Each for his own peculiar judge allow'd;
The way to please them was to make them proud.
Thus, with full sails, they ran upon the shelf:
Who could suspect a cozenage from himself?

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On his own reason safer 'tis to stand,
Than be deceived and damn'd at second-hand. 260
But you, who Fathers and Traditions take,
And garble some, and some you quite forsake,
Pretending Church-authority to fix,
And yet some grains of private spirit mix,
Are like a mule, made up of differing seed,
And that's the reason why you never breed;
At least not propagate your kind abroad,
For home dissenters are by statutes awed.
And yet they grow upon you every day,
While you, to speak the best, are at a stay, 270
For sects, that are extremes, abhor a middle way.
Like tricks of state, to stop a raging flood,
Or mollify a mad-brain'd senate's mood:
Of all expedients never one was good.
Well may they argue, nor can you deny,
If we must fix on Church authority,
Best on the best, the fountain, not the flood;
That must be better still, if this be good.
Shall she command who has herself rebell'd?
Is Antichrist by Antichrist expell'd? 280
Did we a lawful tyranny displace,
To set aloft a bastard of the race?
Why all these wars to win the Book, if we
Must not interpret for ourselves, but she?
Either be wholly slaves, or wholly free.
For purging fires Traditions must not fight;
But they must prove Episcopacy's right.
Thus those led horses are from service freed;
You never mount them but in time of need.
Like mercenaries, hired for home defence, 290
They will not serve against their native prince.
Against domestic foes of hierarchy
These are drawn forth, to make fanatics fly;
But, when they see their countrymen at hand,
Marching against them under Church-command,
Straight they forsake their colours, and disband.



Thus she, nor could the Panther well enlarge
With weak defence against so strong a charge;
But said: For what did Christ his Word provide,
If still his Church must want a living guide? 300
And if all saving doctrines are not there,
Or sacred penmen could not make them clear,
From after ages we should hope in vain
For truths, which men inspired could not explain.

Before the Word was written, said the Hind,
Our Saviour preach'd his faith to human kind:
From his apostles the first age received
Eternal truth, and what they taught believed.
Thus by Tradition faith was planted first;
Succeeding flocks succeeding pastors nursed. 310
This was the way our wise Redeemer chose
(Who sure could all things for the best dispose),
To fence his fold from their encroaching foes.
He could have writ himself, but well foresaw
The event would be like that of Moses' law;
Some difference would arise, some doubts

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remain,

Like those which yet the jarring Jews maintain.
No written laws can be so plain, so pure,
But wit may gloss, and malice may obscure;
Not those indited by his first command, 320
A prophet graved the text, an angel held his hand.
Thus faith was ere the written word appear'd,
And men believed not what they read, but heard.
But since the apostles could not be confined
To these, or those, but severally design'd
Their large commission round the world to blow,
To spread their faith, they spread their labours too.
Yet still their absent flock their pains did share;
They hearken'd still, for love produces care,
And, as mistakes arose, or discords fell, 330
Or bold seducers taught them to rebel,
As charity grew cold, or faction hot,
Or long neglect their lessons had forgot,
For all their wants they wisely did provide,
And preaching by epistles was supplied:
So great physicians cannot all attend,
But some they visit, and to some they send.
Yet all those letters were not writ to all;
Nor first intended but occasional,
Their absent sermons; nor if they contain 340
All needful doctrines, are those doctrines plain.
Clearness by frequent preaching must be wrought:
They writ but seldom, but they daily taught.
And what one saint has said of holy Paul,
"He darkly writ," is true, applied to all.
For this obscurity could Heaven provide
More prudently than by a living guide,
As doubts arose, the difference to decide?
A guide was therefore needful, therefore made;
And, if appointed, sure to be obey'd. 350
Thus, with due reverence to the Apostle's writ,
By which my sons are taught, to which submit;
I think those truths their sacred works contain,
The Church alone can certainly explain;
That following ages, leaning on the past,
May rest upon the Primitive at last.
Nor would I thence the Word no rule infer,

But none without the Church-interpreter.
Because, as I have urged before, 'tis mute,
And is itself the subject of dispute. 360
But what the Apostles their successors taught,
They to the next, from them to us is brought,
The undoubted sense which is in Scripture sought.
From hence the Church is arm'd, when errors rise,
To stop their entrance, and prevent surprise;
And, safe entrench'd within, her foes without defies.
By these all festering sores her Councils heal,
Which time or has disclosed, or shall reveal;
For discord cannot end without a last appeal.
Nor can a Council national decide, 370
But with subordination to her guide;
(I wish the cause were on that issue tried.)

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Much less the Scripture; for suppose debate
Betwixt pretenders to a fair estate,
Bequeath'd by some legator's last intent;
(Such is our dying Saviour's Testament:)
The will is proved, is open'd, and is read;
The doubtful heirs their differing titles plead:
All vouch the words their interest to maintain,
And each pretends by those his cause is plain. 380
Shall then the Testament award the right?
No, that's the Hungary for which they fight;
The field of battle, subject of debate;
The thing contended for, the fair estate.
The sense is intricate, 'tis only clear
What vowels and what consonants are there.
Therefore 'tis plain, its meaning must be tried
Before some judge appointed to decide.

Suppose, the fair apostate said, I grant,
The faithful flock some living guide should want, 390
Your arguments an endless chase pursue;
Produce this vaunted leader to our view,
This mighty Moses of the chosen crew.

The dame, who saw her fainting foe retired,
With force renew'd, to victory aspired;
And, looking upward to her kindred sky,
As once our Saviour own'd his Deity,
Pronounced his words:—"She whom ye seek am I,"
Nor less amazed this voice the Panther heard,
Than were those Jews to hear a God declared. 400
Then thus the matron modestly renew'd:
Let all your prophets and their sects be view'd,
And see to which of them yourselves think fit
The conduct of your conscience to submit:
Each proselyte would vote his doctor best,
With absolute exclusion to the rest:
Thus would your Polish diet disagree,
And end, as it began, in anarchy:
Yourself the fairest for election stand,
Because you seem crown-general of the land: 410



But soon against your superstitious lawn
Some Presbyterian sabre would be drawn:
In your establish'd laws of sovereignty
The rest some fundamental flaw would see,
And call rebellion gospel-liberty.
To Church-decrees your articles require
Submission modified, if not entire.
Homage denied, to censures you proceed:
But when Curtana[113] will not do the deed.
You lay that pointless clergy-weapon by, 420
And to the laws, your sword of justice, fly.
Now this your sects the more unkindly take
(Those prying varlets hit the blots you make),
Because some ancient friends of yours declare,
Your only rule of faith the Scriptures are,
Interpreted by men of judgment sound,
Which every sect will for themselves expound;
Nor think less reverence to their doctors due
For sound interpretation, than to you.
If then, by able heads, are understood 430
Your brother prophets, who reform'd



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abroad;

Those able heads expound a wiser way,
That their own sheep their shepherd should obey.
But if you mean yourselves are only sound,
That doctrine turns the Reformation round,
And all the rest are false reformers found;
Because in sundry points you stand alone,
Not in communion join'd with any one;
And therefore must be all the Church, or none.
Then, till you have agreed whose judge is best, 440
Against this forced submission they protest:
While sound and sound a different sense explains,
Both play at hardhead till they break their brains;
And from their chairs each other's force defy,
While unregarded thunders vainly fly.
I pass the rest, because your Church alone
Of all usurpers best could fill the throne.
But neither you, nor any sect beside,
For this high office can be qualified,
With necessary gifts required in such a guide. 450
For that which must direct the whole must be
Bound in one bond of faith and unity:
But all your several Churches disagree.
The consubstantiating Church and priest
Refuse communion to the Calvinist:
The French reform'd from preaching you restrain,
Because you judge their ordination vain;
And so they judge of yours, but donors must ordain.
In short, in doctrine, or in discipline,
Not one reform'd can with another join: 460
But all from each, as from damnation, fly;
No union they pretend, but in Non-Popery.
Nor, should their members in a Synod meet,
Could any Church presume to mount the seat,
Above the rest, their discords to decide;
None would obey, but each would be the guide:
And face to face dissensions would increase;
For only distance now preserves the peace.
All in their turns accusers, and accused:
Babel was never half so much confused: 470
What one can plead, the rest can plead as well;
For amongst equals lies no last appeal,



And all confess themselves are fallible.
Now since you grant some necessary guide,
All who can err are justly laid aside:
Because a trust so sacred to confer 476
Shows want of such a sure interpreter;
And how can he be needful who can err?
Then, granting that unerring guide we want,
That such there is you stand obliged to grant: 480
Our Saviour else were wanting to supply
Our needs, and obviate that necessity.
It then remains, the Church can only be
The guide, which owns unfailing certainty;
Or else you slip your hold, and change your side,
Relapsing from a necessary guide.
But this annex'd condition of the crown,
Immunity from errors, you disown;
Here then you shrink, and lay your weak

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pretensions down.

For petty royalties you raise debate; 490
But this unfailing universal state
You shun; nor dare succeed to such a glorious weight;
And for that cause those promises detest
With which our Saviour did his Church invest;
But strive to evade, and fear to find them true,
As conscious they were never meant to you:
All which the Mother Church asserts her own,
And with unrivall'd claim ascends the throne.
So, when of old the Almighty Father sate
In council, to redeem our ruin'd state, 500
Millions of millions, at a distance round,
Silent the sacred consistory crown'd,
To hear what mercy, mix'd with justice, could propound:
All prompt, with eager pity, to fulfil
The full extent of their Creator's will.
But when the stern conditions were declared,
A mournful whisper through the host was heard,
And the whole hierarchy, with heads hung down,
Submissively declined the ponderous proffer'd crown.
Then, not till then, the Eternal Son from high 510
Rose in the strength of all the Deity:
Stood forth to accept the terms, and underwent
A weight which all the frame of heaven had bent.
Nor he himself could bear, but as Omnipotent.
Now, to remove the least remaining doubt,
That even the blear-eyed sects may find her out,
Behold what heavenly rays adorn her brows,
What from his wardrobe her beloved allows
To deck the wedding-day of his unspotted spouse.
Behold what marks of majesty she brings; 520
Richer than ancient heirs of eastern kings!
Her right hand holds the sceptre and the keys,
To show whom she commands, and who obeys:
With these to bind, or set the sinner free,
With that to assert spiritual royalty.

One in herself, not rent by schism,[114] but sound,
Entire, one solid shining diamond;
Not sparkles shatter'd into sects like you:
One is the Church, and must be to be true:



One central principle of unity. 530
As undivided, so from errors free,
As one in faith, so one in sanctity.
Thus she, and none but she, the insulting rage
Of heretics opposed from age to age:
Still when the giant-brood invades her throne,
She stoops from heaven, and meets them half way down,
And with paternal thunder vindicates her crown.
But like Egyptian sorcerers you stand,
And vainly lift aloft your magic wand,
To sweep away the swarms of vermin from the land: 540
You could like them, with like infernal force,
Produce the plague, but not arrest the course.
But when the boils and blotches, with disgrace 543
And public scandal, sat upon the face,
Themselves attack'd, the Magi strove



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no more,

They saw God's finger, and their fate deplore;
Themselves they could not cure of the dishonest sore.
Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread,
Like the fair ocean from her mother-bed;
From east to west triumphantly she rides, 550
All shores are water'd by her wealthy tides.
The Gospel-sound, diffused from pole to pole,
Where winds can carry, and where waves can roll,
The self-same doctrine of the sacred page
Convey'd to every clime, in every age.

Here let my sorrow give my satire place,
To raise new blushes on my British race;
Our sailing-ships like common sewers we use,
And through our distant colonies diffuse
The draught of dungeons, and the stench of stews, 560
Whom, when their home-bred honesty is lost,
We disemboque on some far Indian coast:
Thieves, panders, paillards,[115] sins of every sort;
Those are the manufactures we export;
And these the missionaries our zeal has made:
For, with my country's pardon be it said,
Religion is the least of all our trade.

Yet some improve their traffic more than we;
For they on gain, their only god, rely,
And set a public price on piety. 570
Industrious of the needle and the chart,
They run full sail to their Japonian mart;
Prevention fear, and, prodigal of fame,
Sell all of Christian,[116] to the very name;
Nor leave enough of that, to hide their naked shame.

Thus, of three marks, which in the Creed we view,
Not one of all can be applied to you: 577
Much less the fourth; in vain, alas! you seek
The ambitious title of Apostolic:
God-like descent! 'tis well your blood can be
Proved noble in the third or fourth degree:
For all of ancient that you had before,
(I mean what is not borrow'd from our store)



Was error fulminated o'er and o'er;
Old heresies condemn'd in ages past,
By care and time recover'd from the blast.

'Tis said with ease, but never can be proved,
The Church her old foundations has removed,
And built new doctrines on unstable sands:
Judge that, ye winds and rains: you proved her, yet she stands. 590
Those ancient doctrines charged on her for new,
Show when and how, and from what hands they grew.
We claim no power, when heresies grow bold,
To coin new faith, but still declare the old.
How else could that obscene disease be purged,
When controverted texts are vainly urged?
To prove tradition new, there's somewhat more
Required, than saying, 'twas not used before.
Those monumental arms are never stirr'd,
Till schism or heresy call down Goliah's sword. 600

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Thus, what you call corruptions, are, in truth,
The first plantations of the Gospel's youth;
Old standard faith: but cast your eyes again,
And view those errors which new sects maintain,
Or which of old disturb'd the Church's peaceful reign;
And we can point each period of the time,
When they began, and who begot the crime;
Can calculate how long the eclipse endured,
Who interposed, what digits were obscured:
Of all which are already pass'd away, 610
We know the rise, the progress, and decay.

Despair at our foundations then to strike,
Till you can prove your faith Apostolic;
A limpid stream drawn from the native source;
Succession lawful in a lineal course.
Prove any Church, opposed to this our head,
So one, so pure, so unconfinedly spread,
Under one chief of the spiritual state,
The members all combined, and all subordinate.
Show such a seamless coat, from schism so free, 620
In no communion join'd with heresy.
If such a one you find, let truth prevail:
Till when your weights will in the balance fail:
A Church unprincipled kicks up the scale.
But if you cannot think (nor sure you can
Suppose in God what were unjust in man)
That He, the fountain of eternal grace,
Should suffer falsehood, for so long a space,
To banish truth, and to usurp her place:
That seven successive ages should be lost, 630
And preach damnation at their proper cost;
That all your erring ancestors should die,
Drown'd in the abyss of deep idolatry:
If piety forbid such thoughts to rise,
Awake, and open your unwilling eyes:
God hath left nothing for each age undone,
From this to that wherein he sent his Son:
Then think but well of him, and half your work is done.
See how his Church, adorn'd with every grace, 639
With open arms, a kind forgiving face,
Stands ready to prevent her long-lost son's embrace.
Not more did Joseph o'er his brethren weep,

Nor less himself could from discovery keep,
When in the crowd of suppliants they were seen,
And in their crew his best-loved Benjamin.
That pious Joseph in the Church behold,
To feed your famine,[117] and refuse your gold:
The Joseph you exiled, the Joseph whom you sold.

Thus, while with heavenly charity she spoke,
A streaming blaze the silent shadows broke; 650
Shot from the skies; a cheerful azure light:
The birds obscene to forests wing'd their flight,
And gaping graves received the wandering guilty sprite.

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Such were the pleasing triumphs of the sky,
For James his late nocturnal victory;
The pledge of his Almighty Patron's love,
The fireworks which his angels made above.
I saw myself the lambent easy light
Gild the brown horror, and dispel the night:
The messenger with speed the tidings bore; 660
News, which three labouring nations did restore;
But Heaven's own Nuntius was arrived before.

By this, the Hind had reach'd her lonely cell,
And vapours rose, and dews unwholesome fell.
When she, by frequent observation wise,
As one who long on heaven had fix'd her eyes,
Discern'd a change of weather in the skies;
The western borders were with crimson spread,
The moon descending look'd all flaming red;
She thought good manners bound her to invite 670
The stranger dame to be her guest that night.
'Tis true, coarse diet, and a short repast,
(She said) were weak inducements to the taste
Of one so nicely bred, and so unused to fast:
But what plain fare her cottage could afford,
A hearty welcome at a homely board,
Was freely hers; and, to supply the rest,
An honest meaning, and an open breast:
Last, with content of mind, the poor man's wealth,
A grace-cup to their common patron's health. 680
This she desired her to accept, and stay
For fear she might be wilder'd in her way,
Because she wanted an unerring guide;
And then the dew-drops on her silken hide
Her tender constitution did declare,
Too lady-like a long fatigue to bear,
And rough inclemencies of raw nocturnal air.
But most she fear'd that, travelling so late,
Some evil-minded beasts might lie in wait,
And, without witness, wreak their hidden hate. 690

The Panther, though she lent a listening ear,
Had more of lion in her than to fear:
Yet, wisely weighing, since she had to deal
With many foes, their numbers might prevail,
Return'd her all the thanks she could afford,



And took her friendly hostess at her word:
Who, entering first her lowly roof, a shed
With hoary moss, and winding ivy spread,
Honest enough to hide an humble hermit's head,
Thus graciously bespoke her welcome guest: 700
So might these walls, with your fair presence blest,
Become your dwelling-place of everlasting rest;
Not for a night, or quick revolving year;
Welcome an owner, not a sojourner.
This peaceful seat my poverty secures;
War seldom enters but where wealth allures:
Nor yet despise it; for this poor abode
Has oft received, and yet receives a God;
A God victorious of the Stygian race
Here laid his sacred limbs, and sanctified the place, 710
This mean retreat did mighty Pan contain:
Be emulous of him, and pomp disdain,
And dare not to debase your soul to gain.

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The silent stranger stood amazed to see
Contempt of wealth, and wilful poverty:
And, though ill habits are not soon controll'd,
A while suspended her desire of gold.
But civilly drew in her sharpen'd paws,
Not violating hospitable laws;
And pacified her tail, and lick'd her frothy jaws. 720

The Hind did first her country cates provide;
Then couch'd herself securely by her side.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 108: 'Philistines:' the Cromwellians, &c.]

[Footnote 109: 'Younger lion:' Charles II.]

[Footnote 110: 'Priestly calves,' &c.: this alludes to the Commons voting in 1641 that all deans, chapters, &c. should be abolished.]

[Footnote 111: 'The Test:' the Test Act, passed in 1672, enjoined the abjuration of the real presence in the sacrament.]

[Footnote 112: 'Piles, &c.:' the Roman arms—*pili* and eagles.]

[Footnote 113: 'Curtana:' the name of King Edward the Confessor's sword, without a point, an emblem of mercy, and carried before the king at the coronation.]

[Footnote 114: 'Not rent by schism:' marks of the Catholic Church from the Nicene creed.]

[Footnote 115: 'Paillards:' a French word for licentious persons.]

[Footnote 116: 'Sell all of Christian,' &c.: it is said that the Dutch, in order to secure to themselves the whole trade of Japan, trample on the cross, and deny the name of Jesus.]

[Footnote 117: 'Feed your famine:' the renunciation of the Benedictines to the abbey lands.]



PART III.

Much malice, mingled with a little wit,
Perhaps may censure this mysterious writ:
Because the Muse has peopled Caledon
With Panthers, Bears, and Wolves, and beasts unknown,
As if we were not stock'd with monsters of our own.
Let AEsop answer, who has set to view
Such kinds as Greece and Phrygia never knew;
And mother Hubbard,[118] in her homely dress,
Has sharply blamed a British Lioness;
That queen, whose feast the factious rabble keep, 10
Exposed obscenely naked and asleep.
Led by those great examples, may not I
The wanted organs of their words supply?
If men transact like brutes, 'tis equal then
For brutes to claim the privilege of men.

Others our Hind of folly will indite,
To entertain a dangerous guest by night.
Let those remember, that she cannot die
Till rolling time is lost in round eternity;
Nor need she fear the Panther, though untamed, 20
Because the Lion's peace[119] was now proclaim'd:
The wary savage would not give offence,
To forfeit the protection of her prince;
But watch'd the time her vengeance

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to complete,

When all her furry sons in frequent senate met;
Meanwhile she quench'd her fury at the flood,
And with a lenten salad cool'd her blood.
Their commons, though but coarse, were nothing scant,
Nor did their minds an equal banquet want.
For now the Hind, whose noble nature strove 30
To express her plain simplicity of love,
Did all the honours of her house so well,
No sharp debates disturb'd the friendly meal.
She turn'd the talk, avoiding that extreme,
To common dangers past, a sadly-pleasing theme;
Remembering every storm which toss'd the state,
When both were objects of the public hate,
And dropp'd a tear betwixt for her own children's fate.

Nor fail'd she then a full review to make
Of what the Panther suffer'd for her sake: 40
Her lost esteem, her truth, her loyal care,
Her faith unshaken to an exiled heir,[120]
Her strength to endure, her courage to defy;
Her choice of honourable infamy.
On these, prolixly thankful, she enlarged;
Then with acknowledgment herself she charged;
For friendship, of itself an holy tie,
Is made more sacred by adversity.
Now should they part, malicious tongues would say,
They met like chance companions on the way, 50
Whom mutual fear of robbers had possess'd;
While danger lasted, kindness was profess'd;
But that once o'er, the short-lived union ends;
The road divides, and there divide the friends.

The Panther nodded when her speech was done,
And thank'd her coldly in a hollow tone:
But said her gratitude had gone too far
For common offices of Christian care.
If to the lawful heir she had been true,
She paid but Caesar what was Caesar's due. 60
I might, she added, with like praise describe
Your suffering sons, and so return your bribe:
But incense from my hands is poorly prized;



For gifts are scorn'd where givers are despised.
I served a turn, and then was cast away;
You, like the gaudy fly, your wings display,
And sip the sweets, and bask in your great patron's day.

This heard, the matron was not slow to find
What sort of malady had seized her mind:
Disdain, with gnawing envy, fell despite, 70
And canker'd malice stood in open sight:
Ambition, interest, pride without control,
And jealousy, the jaundice of the soul;
Revenge, the bloody minister of ill,
With all the lean tormentors of the will.
'Twas easy now to guess from whence arose
Her new-made union with her ancient foes,
Her forced civilities, her faint embrace,
Affected kindness with an alter'd face:
Yet durst she not too deeply probe the wound, 80
As hoping still the nobler parts were sound:
But strove with anodynes to assuage the smart,
And mildly thus her medicine did impart.



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Complaints of lovers help to ease their pain;
It shows a rest of kindness to complain;
A friendship loath to quit its former hold;
And conscious merit may be justly bold.
But much more just your jealousy would show,
If others' good were injury to you:
Witness, ye heavens, how I rejoice to see 90
Rewarded worth and rising loyalty!
Your warrior offspring that upheld the crown.
The scarlet honour of your peaceful gown,
Are the most pleasing objects I can find,
Charms to my sight, and cordials to my mind:
When virtue spooms before a prosperous gale,
My heaving wishes help to fill the sail;
And if my prayers for all the brave were heard,
Caesar should still have such, and such should still reward.

The labour'd earth your pains have sow'd and till'd; 100
'Tis just you reap the product of the field:
Yours be the harvest, 'tis the beggar's gain
To glean the fallings of the loaded wain.
Such scatter'd ears as are not worth your care,
Your charity, for alms, may safely spare,
For alms are but the vehicles of prayer.
My daily bread is literally implored;
I have no barns nor granaries to hoard.
If Caesar to his own his hand extends,
Say which of yours his charity offends: 110
You know he largely gives to more than are his friends.
Are you defrauded when he feeds the poor?
Our mite decreases nothing of your store.
I am but few, and by your fare you see
My crying sins are not of luxury.
Some juster motive sure your mind withdraws,
And makes you break our friendship's holy laws;
For barefaced envy is too base a cause.

Show more occasion for your discontent;
Your love, the Wolf, would help you to invent: 120
Some German quarrel, or, as times go now,
Some French, where force is uppermost, will do.
When at the fountain's head, as merit ought
To claim the place, you take a swilling draught,
How easy 'tis an envious eye to throw,



And tax the sheep for troubling streams below;
Or call her (when no farther cause you find)
An enemy possess'd of all your kind!
But then, perhaps, the wicked world would think,
The Wolf design'd to eat as well as drink. 130

This last allusion gall'd the Panther more,
Because indeed it rubb'd upon the sore.
Yet seem'd she not to wince, though shrewdly pain'd:
But thus her passive character maintain'd.

I never grudged, whate'er my foes report,
Your flaunting fortune in the Lion's court.
You have your day, or you are much belied,
But I am always on the suffering side:
You know my doctrine, and I need not say,
I will not, but I cannot disobey. 140
On this firm principle I ever stood;
He of my sons who fails to make it good,
By one rebellious act renounces to my blood.

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Ah, said the Hind, how many sons have you,
Who call you mother, whom you never knew!
But most of them who that relation plead,
Are such ungracious youths as wish you dead.
They gape at rich revenues which you hold,
And fain would nibble at your grandame Gold;
Inquire into your years, and laugh to find 150
Your crazy temper shows you much declined.
Were you not dim and doted, you might see
A pack of cheats that claim a pedigree,
No more of kin to you, than you to me.
Do you not know, that for a little coin,
Heralds can foist a name into the line?
They ask you blessing but for what you have;
But once possess'd of what with care you save,
The wanton boys would piss upon your grave.

Your sons of latitude that court your grace, 160
Though most resembling you in form and face.
Are far the worst of your pretended race.
And, but I blush your honesty to blot,
Pray God you prove them lawfully begot:
For in some Popish libels I have read,
The Wolf has been too busy in your bed;
At least her hinder parts, the belly-piece,
The paunch, and all that Scorpio claims, are his.
Their malice too a sore suspicion brings;
For though they dare not bark, they snarl at kings: 170
Nor blame them for intruding in your line;
Fat bishoprics are still of right divine.

Think you your new French proselytes[121] are come
To starve abroad, because they starved at home?
Your benefices twinkled from afar;
They found the new Messiah by the star:
Those Swisses fight on any side for pay,
And 'tis the living that conforms, not they.
Mark with what management their tribes divide,
Some stick to you, and some to the other side, 180
That many churches may for many mouths provide.
More vacant pulpits would more converts make;
All would have latitude enough to take:
The rest unbeneficed your sects maintain;
For ordinations without cures are vain,



And chamber practice is a silent gain.
Your sons of breadth at home are much like these;
Their soft and yielding metals run with ease:
They melt, and take the figure of the mould;
But harden and preserve it best in gold. 190

Your Delphic sword, the Panther then replied,
Is double-edged, and cuts on either side.
Some sons of mine, who bear upon their shield
Three steeples argent in a sable field,
Have sharply tax'd your converts, who unfed
Have follow'd you for miracles of bread;
Such who themselves of no religion are,
Allured with gain, for any will declare.
Bare lies with bold assertions they can face;
But dint of argument is out of place. 200

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The grim logician puts them in a fright;
'Tis easier far to flourish than to fight.
Thus our eighth Henry's marriage they defame;
They say the schism of beds began the game,
Divorcing from the Church to wed the dame:
Though largely proved, and by himself profess'd,
That conscience, conscience would not let him rest:

I mean, not till possess'd of her he loved,
And old, uncharming Catherine was removed.
For sundry years before he did complain, 210
And told his ghostly confessor his pain.
With the same impudence without a ground,
They say, that look the Reformation round,
No Treatise of Humility is found.
But if none were, the gospel does not want;
Our Saviour preach'd it, and I hope you grant,
The Sermon on the Mount was Protestant.

No doubt, replied the Hind, as sure as all
The writings of Saint Peter and Saint Paul:
On that decision let it stand or fall. 220
Now for my converts, who, you say, unfed,
Have follow'd me for miracles of bread;
Judge not by hearsay, but observe at least,
If since their change their loaves have been increased.
The Lion buys no converts; if he did,
Beasts would be sold as fast as he could bid.
Tax those of interest who conform for gain,
Or stay the market of another reign:
Your broad-way sons would never be too nice
To close with Calvin, if he paid their price; 230
But, raised three steeples higher, would change their note,
And quit the cassock for the canting-coat.
Now, if you damn this censure, as too bold,
Judge by yourselves, and think not others sold.

Meantime my sons, accused by fame's report,
Pay small attendance at the Lion's court,
Nor rise with early crowds, nor flatter late;



For silently they beg who daily wait.
Preferment is bestow'd, that comes unsought;
Attendance is a bribe, and then 'tis bought. 240
How they should speed, their fortune is untried;
For not to ask, is not to be denied.
For what they have, their God and king they bless,
And hope they should not murmur, had they less.
But if reduced, subsistence to implore,
In common prudence they should pass your door.
Unpitied Hudibras,[122] your champion friend,
Has shown how far your charities extend.
This lasting verse shall on his tomb be read,
"He shamed you living, and upbraids you dead." 250

With odious atheist names[123] you load your foes;
Your liberal clergy why did I expose?
It never fails in charities like those.
In climes where true religion is profess'd,
That imputation were no laughing jest.
But imprimatur,[124] with a chaplain's name,
Is here sufficient licence to defame.
What wonder is't that black detraction thrives?
The homicide of names is less than lives;
And yet the perjured murderer survives. 260



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This said, she paused a little, and suppress'd
The boiling indignation of her breast.
She knew the virtue of her blade, nor would
Pollute her satire with ignoble blood:
Her panting foe she saw before her eye,
And back she drew the shining weapon dry.
So when the generous Lion has in sight
His equal match, he rouses for the fight;
But when his foe lies prostrate on the plain,
He sheaths his paws, uncurls his angry mane, 270
And, pleased with bloodless honours of the day,
Walks over and disdains the inglorious prey.
So James, if great with less we may compare,
Arrests his rolling thunderbolts in air!
And grants ungrateful friends a lengthen'd space,
To implore the remnants of long-suffering grace.

This breathing-time the matron took; and then
Resumed the thread of her discourse again.
Be vengeance wholly left to powers divine,
And let Heaven judge betwixt your sons and mine: 280
If joys hereafter must be purchased here
With loss of all that mortals hold so dear,
Then welcome infamy and public shame,
And, last, a long farewell to worldly fame.
'Tis said with ease, but, oh, how hardly tried
By haughty souls to human honour tied!
O sharp convulsive pangs of agonizing pride!
Down then, thou rebel, never more to rise,
And what thou didst, and dost, so dearly prize,
That fame, that darling fame, make that thy sacrifice. 290
'Tis nothing thou hast given, then add thy tears
For a long race of unrepenting years:
'Tis nothing yet, yet all thou hast to give:
Then add those may-be years thou hast to live:
Yet nothing still; then poor, and naked come:
Thy father will receive his unthrift home,
And thy blest Saviour's blood discharge the mighty sum.

Thus (she pursued) I discipline a son,
Whose uncheck'd fury to revenge would run:
He champs the bit, impatient of his loss, 300
And starts aside, and flounders at the Cross.
Instruct him better, gracious God, to know,



As thine is vengeance, so forgiveness too:
That, suffering from ill tongues, he bears no more
Than what his sovereign bears, and what his Saviour bore.

It now remains for you to school your child,
And ask why God's anointed he reviled;
A king and princess dead! did Shimei worse?
The cursor's punishment should fright the curse:
Your son was warn'd, and wisely gave it o'er, 310
But he who counsel'd him has paid the score:
The heavy malice could no higher tend,
But woe to him on whom the weights descend.
So to permitted ills the Demon flies;
His rage is aim'd at him who rules the skies:
Constrain'd to quit his cause, no succour found,
The foe discharges every tire around,
In clouds of smoke abandoning the fight;
But his own thundering peals proclaim his flight.



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In Henry's change his charge as ill succeeds; 320
To that long story little answer needs:
Confront but Henry's words with Henry's deeds.
Were space allow'd, with ease it might be proved,
What springs his blessed Reformation moved.
The dire effects appear'd in open sight,
Which from the cause he calls a distant flight,
And yet no larger leap than from the sun to light.

Now let your sons a double paeon sound,
A Treatise of Humility is found.
'Tis found, but better it had ne'er been sought, 330
Than thus in Protestant procession brought.
The famed original through Spain is known,
Rodriguez' work, my celebrated son,
Which yours, by ill-translating, made his own;
Conceal'd its author, and usurp'd the name,
The basest and ignoblest theft of fame.
My altars kindled first that living coal;
Restore, or practice better, what you stole:
That virtue could this humble verse inspire,
'Tis all the restitution I require. 340

Glad was the Panther that the charge was closed,
And none of all her favourite sons exposed.
For laws of arms permit each injured man,
To make himself a saver where he can.
Perhaps the plunder'd merchant cannot tell
The names of pirates in whose hands he fell;
But at the den of thieves he justly flies,
And every Algerine is lawful prize.
No private person in the foe's estate
Can plead exemption from the public fate. 350
Yet Christian laws allow not such redress;
Then let the greater supersede the less.
But let the abettors of the Panther's crime
Learn to make fairer wars another time.
Some characters may sure be found to write
Among her sons; for 'tis no common sight,
A spotted dam, and all her offspring white.

The savage, though she saw her plea controll'd,
Yet would not wholly seem to quit her hold,
But offer'd fairly to compound the strife, 360



And judge conversion by the convert's life.
'Tis true, she said, I think it somewhat strange,
So few should follow profitable change:
For present joys are more to flesh and blood,
Than a dull prospect of a distant good.
'Twas well alluded by a son of mine
(I hope to quote him is not to purloin),
Two magnets, heaven and earth, allure to bliss;
The larger loadstone that, the nearer this:
The weak attraction of the greater fails; 370
We nod a while, but neighbourhood prevails:
But when the greater proves the nearer too,
I wonder more your converts come so slow.
Methinks in those who firm with me remain,
It shows a nobler principle than gain.

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Your inference would be strong, the Hind replied,
If yours were in effect the suffering side:
Your clergy's sons their own in peace possess,
Nor are their prospects in reversion less.
My proselytes are struck with awful dread; 380
Your bloody comet-laws hang blazing o'er their head;
The respite they enjoy but only lent,
The best they have to hope, protracted punishment.
Be judge yourself, if interest may prevail,
Which motives, yours or mine, will turn the scale.
While pride and pomp allure, and plenteous ease,
That is, till man's predominant passions cease,
Admire no longer at my slow increase.

By education most have been misled;
So they believe, because they so were bred. 390
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man.
The rest I named before, nor need repeat:
But interest is the most prevailing cheat,
The sly seducer both of age and youth;
They study that, and think they study truth.
When interest fortifies an argument,
Weak reason serves to gain the will's assent;
For souls, already warp'd, receive an easy bent.
Add long prescription of establish'd laws, 400
And pique of honour to maintain a cause,
And shame of change, and fear of future ill,
And zeal, the blind conductor of the will;
And chief among the still-mistaking crowd,
The fame of teachers obstinate and proud,
And, more than all, the private judge allow'd;
Disdain of Fathers which the dance began,
And last, uncertain whose the narrower span,
The clown unread, and half-read gentleman.

To this the Panther, with a scornful smile: 410
Yet still you travel with unwearied toil,
And range around the realm without control,
Among my sons for proselytes to prowl,
And here and there you snap some silly soul.
You hinted fears of future change in state;
Pray heaven you did not prophesy your fate!
Perhaps you think your time of triumph near,



But may mistake the season of the year;
The Swallow's^[125] fortune gives you cause to fear.

For charity, replied the matron, tell 420
What sad mischance those pretty birds befell.

Nay, no mischance, the savage dame replied,
But want of wit in their unerring guide,
And eager haste, and gaudy hopes, and giddy pride.
Yet, wishing timely warning may prevail,
Make you the moral, and I'll tell the tale.

The Swallow, privileged above the rest
Of all the birds, as man's familiar guest,
Pursues the sun in summer, brisk and bold,
But wisely shuns the persecuting cold: 430
Is well to chancels and to chimneys known,

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Though 'tis not thought she feeds on smoke alone.
From hence she has been held of heavenly line,
Endued with particles of soul divine.
This merry chorister had long possess'd
Her summer seat, and feather'd well her nest:
Till frowning skies began to change their cheer,
And time turn'd up the wrong side of the year;
The shedding trees began the ground to strow
With yellow leaves, and bitter blasts to blow. 440
Sad auguries of winter thence she drew,
Which by instinct, or prophecy, she knew:
When prudence warn'd her to remove betimes,
And seek a better heaven, and warmer climes.

Her sons were summon'd on a steeple's height,
And, call'd in common council, vote a flight;
The day was named, the next that should be fair:
All to the general rendezvous repair,
They try their fluttering wings, and trust themselves in air.
But whether upward to the moon they go, 450
Or dream the winter out in caves below,
Or hawk at flies elsewhere, concerns us not to know.

Southwards, you may be sure, they bent their flight,
And harbour'd in a hollow rock at night:
Next morn they rose, and set up every sail;
The wind was fair, but blew a mackerel gale:
The sickly young sat shivering on the shore,
Abhorr'd salt water never seen before,
And pray'd their tender mothers to delay
The passage, and expect a fairer day. 460

With these the Martin readily concurr'd,
A church-begot, and church-believing bird;
Of little body, but of lofty mind,
Round-bellied, for a dignity design'd,
And much a dunce, as Martins are by kind.
Yet often quoted Canon-laws, and Code,
And Fathers which he never understood;
But little learning needs in noble blood.



For, sooth to say, the Swallow brought him in,
Her household chaplain, and her next of kin: 470
In superstition silly to excess,
And casting schemes by planetary guess:
In fine, short-wing'd, unfit himself to fly,
His fears foretold foul weather in the sky.

Besides, a Raven from a wither'd oak,
Left of their lodging, was observed to croak.
That omen liked him not; so his advice
Was present safety, bought at any price;
A seeming pious care, that cover'd cowardice.
To strengthen this, he told a boding dream 480
Of rising waters, and a troubled stream,
Sure signs of anguish, dangers, and distress,
With something more, not lawful to express:
By which he slily seem'd to intimate
Some secret revelation of their fate.
For he concluded, once upon a time,
He found a leaf inscribed with sacred rhyme,
Whose antique characters did well denote
The Sibyl's hand of the Cumaean

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grot:

The mad divineress had plainly writ, 490
A time should come (but many ages yet),
In which, sinister destinies ordain,
A dame should drown with all her feather'd train,
And seas from thence be call'd the Chelidonian main.
At this, some shook for fear, the more devout
Arose, and bless'd themselves from head to foot.

'Tis true, some stagers of the wiser sort
Made all these idle wonderments their sport:
They said, their only danger was delay,
And he, who heard what every fool could say, 500
Would never fix his thought, but trim his time away.
The passage yet was good; the wind, 'tis true,
Was somewhat high, but that was nothing new,
No more than usual equinoxes blew.
The sun, already from the Scales declined,
Gave little hopes of better days behind,
But change, from bad to worse, of weather and of wind.
Nor need they fear the dampness of the sky
Should flag their wings, and hinder them to fly
'Twas only water thrown on sails too dry. 510
But, least of all, philosophy presumes
Of truth in dreams, from melancholy fumes:
Perhaps the Martin, housed in holy ground,
Might think of ghosts that walk their midnight round,
Till grosser atoms, tumbling in the stream
Of fancy, madly met, and clubb'd into a dream:
As little weight his vain presages bear,
Of ill effect to such alone who fear:
Most prophecies are of a piece with these,
Each Nostradamus can foretell with ease: 520
Not naming persons, and confounding times,
One casual truth supports a thousand lying rhymes.

The advice was true; but fear had seized the most,
And all good counsel is on cowards lost.
The question crudely put to shun delay,
'Twas carried by the major part to stay.



His point thus gain'd, Sir Martin dated thence
His power, and from a priest became a prince.
He order'd all things with a busy care,
And cells and refectories did prepare, 530
And large provisions laid of winter fare:
But now and then let fall a word or two
Of hope, that Heaven some miracle might show,
And for their sakes the sun should backward go;
Against the laws of nature upward climb, 535
And, mounted on the Ram, renew the prime:
For which two proofs in sacred story lay,
Of Ahaz' dial, and of Joshua's day.
In expectation of such times as these,
A chapel housed them, truly call'd of ease: 540
For Martin much devotion did not ask:
They pray'd sometimes, and that was all their task.

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It happen'd, as beyond the reach of wit
Blind prophecies may have a lucky hit,
That this accomplish'd, or at least in part,
Gave great repute to their new Merlin's art.
Some Swifts, the giants of the Swallow kind,
Large-limb'd, stout-hearted, but of stupid mind
(For Swisses, or for Gibeonites design'd),
These lubbers, peeping through a broken pane, 550
To suck fresh air, survey'd the neighbouring plain;
And saw (but scarcely could believe their eyes)
New blossoms flourish, and new flowers arise;
As God had been abroad, and, walking there,
Had left his footsteps, and reform'd the year:
The sunny hills from far were seen to glow
With glittering beams, and in the meads below
The burnish'd brooks appear'd with liquid gold to flow.
At last they heard the foolish Cuckoo sing,
Whose note proclaim'd the holiday of spring. 560

No longer doubting, all prepare to fly,
And repossess their patrimonial sky.
The priest before them did his wings display;
And that good omens might attend their way,
As luck would have it, 'twas St Martin's day.

Who but the Swallow triumphs now alone?
The canopy of heaven is all her own:
Her youthful offspring to their haunts repair,
And glide along in glades, and skim in air,
And dip for insects in the purling springs, 570
And stoop on rivers to refresh their wings.
Their mothers think a fair provision made,
That every son can live upon his trade:
And, now the careful charge is off their hands,
Look out for husbands, and new nuptial bands:
The youthful widow longs to be supplied;
But first the lover is by lawyers tied
To settle jointure-chimneys on the bride.
So thick they couple, in so short a space,
That Martin's marriage-offerings rise apace.
Their ancient houses running to decay,
Are furbish'd up, and cemented with clay; 580
They teem already; store of eggs are laid,
And brooding mothers call Lucina's aid.

Fame spreads the news, and foreign fowls appear
In flocks to greet the new returning year,
To bless the founder, and partake the cheer.

And now 'twas time (so fast their numbers rise)
To plant abroad, and people colonies.
The youth drawn forth, as Martin had desired 590
(For so their cruel destiny required),
Were sent far off on an ill-fated day;
The rest would needs conduct them on their way,
And Martin went, because he fear'd alone to stay.



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So long they flew with inconsiderate haste,
That now their afternoon began to waste;
And, what was ominous, that very morn
The sun was enter'd into Capricorn;
Which, by their bad astronomer's account,
That week the Virgin balance should remount. 600
An infant moon eclipsed him in his way,
And hid the small remainders of his day.
The crowd, amazed, pursued no certain mark;
But birds met birds, and jostled in the dark:
Few mind the public in a panic fright;
And fear increased the horror of the night.
Night came, but unattended with repose;
Alone she came, no sleep their eyes to close:
Alone, and black she came; no friendly stars arose.

What should they do, beset with dangers round, 610
No neighbouring dorp,[126] no lodging to be found,
But bleak plains, and bare unhospitable ground.
The latter brood, who just began to fly,
Sick-feather'd, and unpractised in the sky,
For succour to their helpless mother call:
She spread her wings; some few beneath them crawl;
She spread them wider yet, but could not cover all.
To augment their woes, the winds began to move,
Debate in air, for empty fields above,
Till Boreas got the skies, and pour'd amain 620
His rattling hailstones mix'd with snow and rain.

The joyless morning late arose, and found
A dreadful desolation reign around—
Some buried in the snow, some frozen to the ground.
The rest were struggling still with death, and lay
The Crows' and Ravens' rights, an undefended prey:
Excepting Martin's race; for they and he
Had gain'd the shelter of a hollow tree:
But soon discover'd by a sturdy clown,
He headed all the rabble of a town, 630
And finish'd them with bats, or poll'd them down.
Martin himself was caught alive, and tried
For treasonous crimes, because the laws provide
No Martin there in winter shall abide.
High on an oak, which never leaf shall bear,
He breathed his last, exposed to open air;

And there his corpse, unblest'd, is hanging still,
To show the change of winds with his prophetic bill.

The patience of the Hind did almost fail;
For well she mark'd the malice of the tale;[127] 640
Which ribald art their Church to Luther owes;
In malice it began, by malice grows;
He sow'd the Serpent's teeth, an iron-harvest rose.
But most in Martin's character and fate,
She saw her slander'd sons, the Panther's hate,
The people's rage, the persecuting state:
Then said, I take the advice in friendly part;
You clear your conscience, or at least your heart:
Perhaps you fail'd in your foreseeing skill,
For Swallows are unlucky birds to kill:



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650

As for my sons, the family is bless'd,
Whose every child is equal to the rest;
No Church reform'd can boast a blameless line;
Such Martins build in yours, and more than mine:
Or else an old fanatic^[128] author lies,
Who summ'd their scandals up by centuries.
But through your parable I plainly see
The bloody laws, the crowd's barbarity;
The sunshine that offends the purblind sight:
Had some their wishes, it would soon be night. 660
Mistake me not; the charge concerns not you:
Your sons are malcontents, but yet are true,
As far as non-resistance makes them so;
But that's a word of neutral sense, you know,
A passive term, which no relief will bring,
But trims betwixt a rebel and a king.

Rest well assured, the Pardelis replied,
My sons would all support the regal side,
Though Heaven forbid the cause by battle should be tried.

The matron answer'd with a loud Amen, 670
And thus pursued her argument again.
If, as you say, and as I hope no less,
Your sons will practise what yourselves profess,
What angry power prevents our present peace?
The Lion, studious of our common good,
Desires (and kings' desires are ill withstood)
To join our nations in a lasting love;
The bars betwixt are easy to remove;
For sanguinary laws were never made above.
If you condemn that prince of tyranny, 680
Whose mandate forced your Gallic friends to fly,
Make not a worse example of your own;
Or cease to rail at causeless rigour shown,
And let the guiltless person throw the stone.
His blunted sword your suffering brotherhood
Have seldom felt; he stops it short of blood:
But you have ground the persecuting knife,
And set it to a razor edge on life.
Cursed be the wit, which cruelty refines,



Or to his father's rod the scorpion's joins! 690
Your finger is more gross than the great monarch's loins.
But you, perhaps, remove that bloody note,
And stick it on the first reformer's coat.
Oh, let their crime in long oblivion sleep!
'Twas theirs indeed to make, 'tis yours to keep.
Unjust, or just, is all the question now;
'Tis plain, that not repealing you allow.

To name the Test would put you in a rage;
You charge not that on any former age,

But smile to think how innocent you stand, 700
Arm'd by a weapon put into your hand,
Yet still remember that you wield a sword
Forged by your foes against your sovereign lord;
Design'd to hew the imperial cedar down,
Defraud succession, and dis-heir the crown.
To abhor the makers, and their laws approve,
Is to hate traitors, and the treason love.
What means it else, which now your children say,
We made it not, nor will we take away?



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Suppose some great oppressor had by slight 710
Of law, disseised your brother of his right,
Your common sire surrendering in a fright;
Would you to that unrighteous title stand,
Left by the villain's will to heir the land?
More just was Judas, who his Saviour sold;
The sacrilegious bribe he could not hold,
Nor hang in peace, before he render'd back the gold.
What more could you have done, than now you do,
Had Oates and Bedlow, and their plot been true?
Some specious reasons for those wrongs were found; 720
Their dire magicians threw their mists around,
And wise men walk'd as on enchanted ground.
But now when time has made the imposture plain
(Late though he follow'd truth, and limping held her train),
What new delusion charms your cheated eyes again?
The painted harlot might a while bewitch,
But why the hag uncased, and all obscene with itch?

The first Reformers were a modest race;
Our peers possess'd in peace their native place;
And when rebellious arms o'erturn'd the state, 730
They suffer'd only in the common fate:
But now the Sovereign mounts the regal chair,
And mitred seats are full, yet David's bench is bare.
Your answer is, they were not dispossess'd;
They need but rub their metal on the test
To prove their ore: 'twere well if gold alone
Were touch'd and tried on your discerning stone;
But that unfaithful Test unsound will pass
The dross of atheists, and sectarian brass:
As if the experiment were made to hold 740
For base production, and reject the gold.
Thus men ungodded may to places rise,
And sects may be preferr'd without disguise:
No danger to the Church or State from these;
The Papist only has his writ of ease.
No gainful office gives him the pretence
To grind the subject, or defraud the prince.
Wrong conscience, or no conscience, may deserve
To thrive, but ours alone is privileged to starve.
Still thank yourselves, you cry; your noble race 750
We banish not, but they forsake the place;

Our doors are open: true, but ere they come,
You toss your 'censing Test, and fume the room;
As if 'twere Toby's^[129] rival to expel,
And fright the fiend who could not bear the smell.

To this the Panther sharply had replied;
But having gain'd a verdict on her side,
She wisely gave the loser leave to chide;
Well satisfied to have the But and Peace,
And for the plaintiff's cause she cared the less, 760
Because she sued in *forma pauperis*;
Yet thought it decent something should be said;
For secret guilt by silence is betray'd.
So neither granted all, nor much denied,
But answer'd with a yawning kind of pride:

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Methinks such terms of proffer'd peace you bring,
As once AEneas to the Italian king:
By long possession all the land is mine;
You strangers come with your intruding line,
To share my sceptre, which you call to join. 770
You plead, like him, an ancient pedigree,
And claim a peaceful seat by fate's decree.
In ready pomp your sacrificer stands,
To unite the Trojan and the Latin bands,
And, that the league more firmly may be tied,
Demand the fair Lavinia for your bride.
Thus plausibly you veil the intended wrong,
But still you bring your exiled gods along;
And will endeavour, in succeeding space,
Those household puppets on our hearths to place. 780
Perhaps some barbarous laws have been preferr'd;
I spake against the Test, but was not heard;
These to rescind, and peerage to restore,
My gracious Sovereign would my vote implore:
I owe him much, but owe my conscience more.

Conscience is then your plea, replied the dame,
Which, well inform'd, will ever be the same.
But yours is much of the chameleon hue,
To change the dye with every distant view.
When first the Lion sat with awful sway, 790
Your conscience taught your duty to obey:
He might have had your Statutes and your Test;
No conscience but of subjects was profess'd.
He found your temper, and no farther tried,
But on that broken reed, your Church, relied.
In vain the sects assay'd their utmost art,
With offer'd treasure to espouse their part;
Their treasures were a bribe too mean to move his heart.
But when, by long experience, you had proved,
How far he could forgive, how well he loved; 800
A goodness that excell'd his godlike race,
And only short of Heaven's unbounded grace;
A flood of mercy that o'erflow'd our isle,
Calm in the rise, and fruitful as the Nile;
Forgetting whence our Egypt was supplied,
You thought your sovereign bound to send the tide:
Nor upward look'd on that immortal spring,



But vainly deem'd, he durst not be a king:
Then Conscience, unrestrain'd by fear, began
To stretch her limits, and extend the span; 810
Did his indulgence as her gift dispose,
And made a wise alliance with her foes.
Can Conscience own the associating name,
And raise no blushes to conceal her shame?
For sure she has been thought a bashful dame.
But if the cause by battle should be tried,
You grant she must espouse the regal side:
O Proteous Conscience, never to be tied!
What Phoebus from the Tripod shall disclose,
Which are, in last resort, your friends or foes? 820
Homer, who learn'd the language of the sky,
The seeming Gordian knot would soon untie;
Immortal powers the term of Conscience know,
But Interest is her name with men below.



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Conscience or Interest be 't, or both in one,
The Panther answer'd in a surly tone,
The first commands me to maintain the crown,
The last forbids to throw my barriers down.
Our penal laws no sons of yours admit,
Our Test excludes your tribe from benefit. 830
These are my banks your ocean to withstand,
Which, proudly rising, overlooks the land;
And, once let in, with unresisted sway,
Would sweep the pastors and their flocks away.
Think not my judgment leads me to comply
With laws unjust, but hard necessity;
Imperious need, which cannot be withstood,
Makes ill authentic, for a greater good.
Possess your soul with patience, and attend:
A more auspicious planet may ascend; 840
Good fortune may present some happier time,
With means to cancel my unwilling crime;
(Unwilling, witness all ye Powers above!)
To mend my errors, and redeem your love:
That little space you safely may allow;
Your all-dispensing power protects you now.

Hold, said the Hind, 'tis needless to explain;
You would postpone me to another reign;
Till when you are content to be unjust:
Your part is to possess, and mine to trust. 850
A fair exchange proposed of future chance,
For present profit and inheritance.
Few words will serve to finish our dispute;
Who will not now repeal, would persecute.
To ripen green revenge your hopes attend,
Wishing that happier planet would ascend.
For shame let Conscience be your plea no more:
To will hereafter, proves she might before;
But she's a bawd to gain, and holds the door.

Your care about your banks infers a fear 860
Of threatening floods and inundations near;
If so, a just reprise would only be
Of what the land usurp'd upon the sea;
And all your jealousies but serve to show
Your ground is, like your neighbour-nation, low.
To intrench in what you grant unrighteous laws,

Is to distrust the justice of your cause;
And argues that the true religion lies
In those weak adversaries you despise.

Tyrannic force is that which least you fear; 700
The sound is frightful in a Christian's ear:
Avert it, Heaven! nor let that plague be sent
To us from the dispeopled continent.

But piety commands me to refrain;
Those prayers are needless in this monarch's reign.
Behold! how he protects your friends oppress'd,
Receives the banish'd, succours the distress'd:
Behold, for you may read an honest open breast.
He stands in day-light, and disdains to hide
An act, to which by honour he is tied, 880
A generous, laudable, and kingly pride.
Your Test he would repeal, his peers restore;
This when he says he means, he means no more.



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Well, said the Panther, I believe him just,
And yet——
And yet, 'tis but because you must;
You would be trusted, but you would not trust.
The Hind thus briefly; and disdain'd to enlarge
On power of kings, and their superior charge,
As Heaven's trustees before the people's choice: 890
Though sure the Panther did not much rejoice
To hear those echoes given of her once loyal voice.

The matron woo'd her kindness to the last,
But could not win; her hour of grace was past.
Whom, thus persisting, when she could not bring
To leave the Wolf, and to believe her king,
She gave her up, and fairly wish'd her joy
Of her late treaty with her new ally:
Which well she hoped would more successful prove,
Than was the Pigeon's and the Buzzard's love. 900
The Panther ask'd what concord there could be
Betwixt two kinds whose natures disagree?
The dame replied: 'Tis sung in every street,
The common chat of gossips when they meet;
But, since unheard by you, 'tis worth your while
To take a wholesome tale, though told in homely style.

A plain good man,[130] whose name is understood
(So few deserve the name of plain and good),
Of three fair lineal lordships stood possess'd,
And lived, as reason was, upon the best. 910
Inured to hardships from his early youth,
Much had he done, and suffer'd for his truth:
At land and sea, in many a doubtful fight,
Was never known a more adventurous knight,
Who oftener drew his sword, and always for the right.

As fortune would (his fortune came, though late)
He took possession of his just estate:
Nor rack'd his tenants with increase of rent;
Nor lived too sparing, nor too largely spent;
But overlook'd his hinds; their pay was just, 920
And ready, for he scorn'd to go on trust:
Slow to resolve, but in performance quick;
So true, that he was awkward at a trick.
For little souls on little shifts rely,



And coward arts of mean expedients try;
The noble mind will dare do anything but lie.
False friends, his deadliest foes, could find no way
But shows of honest bluntness, to betray:
That unsuspected plainness he believed;
He looked into himself, and was deceived. 930
Some lucky planet sure attends his birth,
Or Heaven would make a miracle on earth;
For prosperous honesty is seldom seen
To bear so dead a weight, and yet to win.
It looks as fate with nature's law would strive,
To show plain-dealing once an age may thrive:
And, when so tough a frame she could not bend,
Exceeded her commission to befriend.

This grateful man, as Heaven increased his store.
Gave God again, and daily fed his poor. 940
His house with all convenience was purvey'd;
The rest he found, but raised the fabric where he pray'd;
And in that sacred place his beauteous wife
Employ'd her happiest hours of holy life.

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Nor did their alms extend to those alone,
Whom common faith more strictly made their own;
A sort of Doves[131] were housed too near their hall,
Who cross the proverb, and abound with gall.
Though some, 'tis true, are passively inclined,
The greater part degenerate from their kind; 950
Voracious birds, that hotly bill and breed,
And largely drink, because on salt they feed.
Small gain from them their bounteous owner draws;
Yet, bound by promise, he supports their cause,
As corporations privileged by laws.

That house which harbour to their kind affords,
Was built, long since, God knows for better birds;
But fluttering there, they nestle near the throne,
And lodge in habitations not their own,
By their high crops and corny gizzards known. 960
Like Harpies, they could scent a plenteous board,
Then to be sure they never fail'd their lord:
The rest was form, and bare attendance paid;
They drank, and ate, and grudgingly obey'd.
The more they fed, they raven'd still for more;
They drain'd from Dan, and left Beersheba poor.
All this they had by law, and none repined;
The preference was but due to Levi's kind;
But when some lay-preferment fell by chance,
The gourmands made it their inheritance. 970
When once possess'd, they never quit their claim;
For then 'tis sanctified to Heaven's high name;
And, hallow'd thus, they cannot give consent,
The gift should be profaned by worldly management.

Their flesh was never to the table served;
Though 'tis not thence inferr'd the birds were starved;
But that their master did not like the food,
As rank, and breeding melancholy blood.
Nor did it with his gracious nature suit,
Even though they were not Doves, to persecute: 980
Yet he refused (nor could they take offence)
Their glutton kind should teach him abstinence.
Nor consecrated grain their wheat he thought,
Which, new from treading, in their bills they brought:
But left his hinds each in his private power,
That those who like the bran might leave the flour.



He for himself, and not for others, chose,
Nor would he be imposed on, nor impose;
But in their faces his devotion paid,
And sacrifice with solemn rites was made, 990
And sacred incense on his altars laid.

Besides these jolly birds, whose corpse impure
Repaid their commons with their salt-manure;
Another farm^[132] he had behind his house,
Not overstock'd, but barely for his use:
Wherein his poor domestic poultry fed,
And from his pious hands received their bread.
Our pamper'd Pigeons, with malignant eyes,
Beheld these inmates, and their nurseries:

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Though hard their fare, at evening, and at morn, 1000
A cruise of water and an ear of corn;
Yet still they grudged that modicum, and thought
A sheaf in every single grain was brought.
Fain would they filch that little food away,
While unrestrain'd those happy gluttons prey.
And much they grieved to see so nigh their hall,
The bird that warn'd St Peter of his fall;
That he should raise his mitred crest on high,
And clap his wings, and call his family
To sacred rites; and vex the ethereal powers 1010
With midnight matins at uncivil hours:
Nay more, his quiet neighbours should molest,
Just in the sweetness of their morning rest.
Beast of a bird, supinely when he might
Lie snug and sleep, to rise before the light!
What if his dull forefathers used that cry,
Could he not let a bad example die?
The world was fallen into an easier way;
This age knew better than to fast and pray.
Good sense in sacred worship would appear 1020
So to begin, as they might end the year.
Such feats in former times had wrought the falls
Of crowing Chanticleers[133] in cloister'd walls.
Expell'd for this, and for their lands, they fled;
And sister Partlet,[134] with her hooded head,
Was hooted hence, because she would not pray a-bed.
The way to win the restive world to God,
Was to lay by the disciplining rod,
Unnatural fasts, and foreign forms of prayer:
Religion frights us with a mien severe. 1030
'Tis prudence to reform her into ease,
And put her in undress to make her please;
A lively faith will bear aloft the mind,
And leave the luggage of good works behind.

Such doctrines in the Pigeon-house were taught:
You need not ask how wondrously they wrought:
But sure the common cry was all for these,
Whose life and precepts both encouraged ease.



Yet fearing those alluring baits might fail,
And holy deeds o'er all their arts prevail; 1040
(For vice, though frontless, and of harden'd face,
Is daunted at the sight of awful grace;)
An hideous figure of their foes they drew,
Nor lines, nor looks, nor shades, nor colours true;
And this grotesque design exposed to public view.
One would have thought it some Egyptian piece,
With garden-gods, and barking deities,
More thick than Ptolemy has stuck the skies.
All so perverse a draught, so far unlike,
It was no libel where it meant to strike. 1050
Yet still the daubing pleased, and great and small,
To view the monster, crowded Pigeon Hall.
There Chanticleer was drawn upon his knees
Adoring shrines, and stocks of sainted trees:
And by him, a misshapen, ugly race;
The curse of God was seen on every face:
No Holland emblem could that malice mend,
But still the worse the look, the fitter for a fiend.



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The master of the farm, displeased to find
So much of rancour in so mild a kind, 1060
Enquired into the cause, and came to know,
The passive Church had struck the foremost blow;
With groundless fears and jealousies possess'd,
As if this troublesome intruding guest
Would drive the birds of Venus from their nest;
A deed his inborn equity abhorr'd;
But Interest will not trust, though God should plight his word.

A law,[135] the source of many future harms,
Had banish'd all the poultry from the farms;
With loss of life, if any should be found 1070
To crow or peck on this forbidden ground.
That bloody statute chiefly was design'd
For Chanticleer the white, of clergy kind;
But after-malice did not long forget
The lay that wore the robe and coronet.
For them, for their inferiors and allies,
Their foes a deadly Shibboleth devise:
By which unrighteously it was decreed,
That none to trust or profit should succeed,
Who would not swallow first a poisonous wicked weed:[136] 1080
Or that, to which old Socrates was cursed,
Or henbane juice to swell them till they burst.

The patron (as in reason) thought it hard
To see this inquisition in his yard,
By which the Sovereign was of subjects' use debarr'd.
All gentle means he tried, which might withdraw
The effects of so unnatural a law:
But still the Dove-house obstinately stood
Deaf to their own and to their neighbours' good;
And which was worse, if any worse could be, 1090
Repented of their boasted loyalty:
Now made the champions of a cruel cause.
And drunk with fumes of popular applause;
For those whom God to ruin has design'd,
He fits for fate, and first destroys their mind.

New doubts indeed they daily strove to raise,
Suggested dangers, interposed delays;
And emissary Pigeons had in store,
Such as the Meccan prophet used of yore,



To whisper counsels in their patron's ear; 1100
And veil'd their false advice with zealous fear.
The master smiled to see them work in vain,
To wear him out, and make an idle reign:
He saw, but suffer'd their protractive arts,
And strove by mildness to reduce their hearts:
But they abused that grace to make allies,
And fondly closed with former enemies;
For fools are doubly fools, endeavouring to be wise.

After a grave consult what course were best,
One, more mature in folly than the rest, 1110
Stood up, and told them, with his head aside,
That desperate cures must be to desperate ills applied:
And therefore, since their main impending fear
Was from the increasing race of Chanticleer,

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Some potent bird of prey they ought to find,
A foe profess'd to him, and all his kind:
Some haggard Hawk, who had her eyrie nigh,
Well pounced to fasten, and well wing'd to fly;
One they might trust, their common wrongs to wreak:
The Musquet and the Coystrel were too weak, 1120
Too fierce the Falcon; but, above the rest,
The noble Buzzard[137] ever pleased me best;
Of small renown, 'tis true; for, not to lie,
We call him but a Hawk by courtesy.
I know he hates the Pigeon-house and Farm,
And more, in time of war has done us harm:
But all his hate on trivial points depends;
Give up our forms, and we shall soon be friends.
For Pigeons' flesh he seems not much to care;
Cramm'd chickens are a more delicious fare. 1130
On this high potentate, without delay,
I wish you would confer the sovereign sway:
Petition him to accept the government,
And let a splendid embassy be sent.

This pithy speech prevail'd, and all agreed,
Old enmities forgot, the Buzzard should succeed.

Their welcome suit was granted soon as heard,
His lodgings furnish'd, and a train prepared,
With B's upon their breast, appointed for his guard.
He came, and crown'd with great solemnity; 1140
God save king Buzzard, was the general cry.

A portly prince, and goodly to the sight,
He seem'd a son of Anak for his height:
Like those whom stature did to crowns prefer:
Black-brow'd, and bluff, like Homer's Jupiter:
Broad-back'd, and brawny-built for love's delight;
A prophet form'd to make a female proselyte.
A theologue more by need than genial bent;
By breeding sharp, by nature confident.
Interest in all his actions was discern'd; 1150
More learn'd than honest, more a wit than learn'd:



Or forced by fear, or by his profit led,
Or both conjoin'd, his native clime he fled:
But brought the virtues of his heaven along;
A fair behaviour, and a fluent tongue.
And yet with all his arts he could not thrive;
The most unlucky parasite alive.
Loud praises to prepare his paths he sent,
And then himself pursued his compliment;
But by reverse of fortune chased away, 1160
His gifts no longer than their author stay:
He shakes the dust against the ungrateful race,
And leaves the stench of ordures in the place.
Oft has he flatter'd and blasphemed the same;
For in his rage he spares no sovereign's name:
The hero and the tyrant change their style
By the same measure that they frown or smile.
When well received by hospitable foes,
The kindness he returns, is to expose:
For courtesies, though undeserved and great, 1170

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No gratitude in felon-minds beget;
As tribute to his wit, the churl receives the treat.
His praise of foes is venomously nice;
So touch'd, it turns a virtue to a vice:
"A Greek, and bountiful, forewarns us twice."
Seven sacraments he wisely does disown,
Because he knows Confession stands for one;
Where sins to sacred silence are convey'd,
And not for fear, or love, to be betray'd:
But he, uncall'd, his patron to control, 1180
Divulged the secret whispers of his soul;
Stood forth the accusing Satan of his crimes,
And offer'd to the Moloch of the times.
Prompt to assail, and careless of defence,
Invulnerable in his impudence,
He dares the world; and, eager of a name,
He thrusts about, and jostles into fame.
Frontless, and satire-proof, he scours the streets,
And runs an Indian-muck at all he meets.
So fond of loud report, that not to miss 1190
Of being known (his last and utmost bliss)
He rather would be known for what he is.

Such was, and is, the Captain of the Test,
Though half his virtues are not here express'd;
The modesty of fame conceals the rest.
The spleenful Pigeons never could create
A prince more proper to revenge their hate:
Indeed, more proper to revenge, than save;
A king, whom in his wrath the Almighty gave:
For all the grace the landlord had allow'd, 1200
But made the Buzzard and the Pigeons proud;
Gave time to fix their friends, and to seduce the crowd.
They long their fellow-subjects to enthrall,
Their patron's promise into question call,
And vainly think he meant to make them lords of all.

False fears their leaders fail'd not to suggest,
As if the Doves were to be dispossess'd;
Nor sighs, nor groans, nor goggling eyes did want;



For now the Pigeons too had learn'd to cant.
The house of prayer is stock'd with large increase; 1210
Nor doors nor windows can contain the press:
For birds of every feather fill the abode;
Even Atheists out of envy own a God:
And, reeking from the stews, adulterers come,
Like Goths and Vandals to demolish Rome.
That Conscience, which to all their crimes was mute,
Now calls aloud, and cries to persecute:
No rigour of the laws to be released,
And much the less, because it was their Lord's request:
They thought it great their Sovereign to control, 1220
And named their pride, nobility of soul.

'Tis true, the Pigeons, and their prince elect,
Were short of power, their purpose to effect:
But with their quills did all the hurt they could,
And cuff'd the tender Chickens from their food:
And much the Buzzard in their cause did stir,
Though naming not the patron, to infer,
With all respect, he was a gross idolater.

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But when the imperial owner did espy,
That thus they turn'd his grace to villany, 1230
Not suffering wrath to discompose his mind,
He strove a temper for the extremes to find,
So to be just, as he might still be kind;
Then, all maturely weigh'd, pronounced a doom
Of sacred strength for every age to come.
By this the Doves their wealth and state possess,
No rights infringed, but licence to oppress:
Such power have they as factious lawyers long
To crowns ascribed, that Kings can do no wrong.
But since his own domestic birds have tried 1240
The dire effects of their destructive pride,
He deems that proof a measure to the rest,
Concluding well within his kingly breast,
His fowls of nature too unjustly were oppress'd.
He therefore makes all birds of every sect
Free of his farm, with promise to respect
Their several kinds alike, and equally protect.
His gracious edict the same franchise yields
To all the wild increase of woods and fields,
And who in rocks aloof, and who in steeples builds: 1250
To Crows the like impartial grace affords,
And Choughs and Daws, and such republic birds:
Secured with ample privilege to feed,
Each has his district, and his bounds decreed;
Combined in common interest with his own,
But not to pass the Pigeon's Rubicon.

Here ends the reign of this pretended Dove;
All prophecies accomplish'd from above,
From Shiloh comes the sceptre to remove.
Reduced from her imperial high abode, 1260
Like Dionysius to a private rod,
The Passive Church, that with pretended grace
Did her distinctive mark in duty place,
Now touch'd, reviles her Maker to his face.

What after happen'd is not hard to guess:
The small beginnings had a large increase,
And arts and wealth succeed, the secret spoils of peace.
'Tis said, the Doves repented, though too late,
Become the smiths of their own foolish fate:
Nor did their owner hasten their ill hour; 1270



But, sunk in credit, they decreased in power:
Like snows in warmth that mildly pass away,
Dissolving in the silence of decay.

The Buzzard, not content with equal place,
Invites the feather'd Nimrods of his race;
To hide the thinness of their flock from sight,
And all together make a seeming goodly flight:
But each have separate interests of their own;
Two Czars are one too many for a throne.
Nor can the usurper long abstain from food; 1280
Already he has tasted Pigeons' blood:
And may be tempted to his former fare,
When this indulgent lord shall late to heaven repair.
Bare bending times, and moulting months

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may come,
When, lagging late, they cannot reach their home;
Or, rent in schism (for so their fate decrees),
Like the tumultuous college of the bees,[138]
They fight their quarrel, by themselves oppress'd;
The tyrant smiles below, and waits the falling feast.

Thus did the gentle Hind her fable end, 1290
Nor would the Panther blame it, nor commend;
But, with affected yawnings at the close,
Seem'd to require her natural repose:
For now the streaky light began to peep;
And setting stars admonish'd both to sleep.
The dame withdrew, and, wishing to her guest
The peace of heaven, betook herself to rest.
Ten thousand angels on her slumbers wait,
With glorious visions of her future state.

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 118: 'Mother Hubbard:' Mother Hubbard's tale, written by Spenser.]

[Footnote 119: 'Lion's peace:' liberty of conscience, and toleration of all religions.]

[Footnote 120: 'Exiled heir:' the Duke of York, while opposed by the favourers and abettors of the Bill of Exclusion, was obliged to retire from London.]

[Footnote 121: 'French proselytes:' the French refugees that came into England after the revocation of the edict of Nantes.]

[Footnote 122: 'Hudibras:' Butler.]

[Footnote 123: 'Atheist names:' alluding here and afterwards to Stillingfleet's attacks on Dryden.]

[Footnote 124: 'Imprimatur:' the Bishop of London and his chaplains had formerly the examination of all books, and none could be printed without their imprimatur, or licence.]

[Footnote 125: 'Swallow:' this story is supposed to refer to a meeting of Roman Catholics held in the Savoy to deliberate on King James' measures, when Father Petre (M. Martin) induced them to join the king's side, and to remain in England.]

[Footnote 126: 'Dorp:' hamlet.]

[Footnote 127: 'The tale:' a parable of the fate of the Papists, soon fulfilled.]

[Footnote 128: 'Old fanatic:' Century White, a vehement writer on the Puritan side.]

[Footnote 129: 'Toby's:' Tobit; see Apocrypha.]

[Footnote 130: 'A plain good man:' a character of King James II.]

[Footnote 131: 'Doves:' the clergy of the Church of England, and other religions dissenting from that of Rome.]

[Footnote 132: 'Another farm,' &c.: this alludes to the Popish priests, whom the king particularly favoured.]

[Footnote 133: 'Chanticleers:' friars.]

[Footnote 134: 'Partlet:' nuns.]

[Footnote 135: 'A law:' penal laws against Popish recusants.]

[Footnote 136: 'Wicked weed:' the Test Act.]

[Footnote 137: 'Buzzard:' Bishop Burnet.]

[Footnote 138: 'College of the bees:' College of Physicians.]



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MAC FLECKNOE.[139]

All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long;
In prose and verse, was own'd, without dispute,
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase;
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state: 10
And, pondering which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried, 'Tis resolved; for nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense. 20
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty:
Thoughtless as monarch oaks, that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley[140] were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology. 30
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And, coarsely clad in Norwich drugget, came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung,
When to king John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-timed oars before the royal barge,



Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial charge; 40
And big with hymn, commander of an host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets toss'd.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharpen'd thumb, from shore to shore
The trebles squeak for fear, the basses roar:
Echoes from Pissing-Alley, Shadwell call,
And Shadwell they resound from Aston-Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast that floats along. 50
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St Andre's[141] feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not even the feet of thy own Psyche's[142] rhyme:
Though they in number as in sense excel;
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton[143] forswore
The lute and sword, which he in triumph bore,
And vow'd he ne'er would act Villerius more.

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Here stopp'd the good old sire, and wept for joy, 60
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dulness he was made.

Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclined),
An ancient fabric raised to inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:
A watch-tower once; but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains:
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise, 70
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys,
Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturb'd by watch, in silence sleep.
Near these a Nursery[144] erects its head,
Where queens are form'd, and future heroes bred;
Where unfledged actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks their tender voices try,
And little Maximins the gods defy.
Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear; 80
But gentle Simkin[145] just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanish'd minds:
Pure clinches the suburban muse affords,
And Panton[146] waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously design'd his Shadwell's throne.
For ancient Decker[147] prophesied long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense:
To whom true dulness should some Psyches owe, 90
But worlds of Misers[148] from his pen should flow;
Humourists and hypocrites it should produce,
Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.[149]

Now Empress Fame had publish'd the renown
Of Shadwell's coronation through the town.
Roused by report of fame, the nations meet,
From near Bunhill, and distant Watling Street.
No Persian carpets spread the imperial way,
But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay:
From dusty shops neglected authors come, 100
Martyrs of pies, and reliques of the bum.



Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby[150] there lay,
But loads of Shadwell almost choked the way.
Bilk'd stationers for yeomen stood prepared,
And Herringman[151] was captain of the guard.
The hoary prince in majesty appear'd,
High on a throne of his own labours rear'd.
At his right hand our young Ascanius sate,
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state.
His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace, 110
And lambent dulness play'd around his face.
As Hannibal did to the altars come,
Sworn by his fire, a mortal foe to Rome;
So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
That he till death true dulness would



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maintain;

And, in his father's right, and realm's defence,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The king himself the sacred unction made,
As king by office, and as priest by trade.
In his sinister hand, instead of ball, 120
He placed a mighty mug of potent ale;
Love's Kingdom[152] to his right he did convey,
At once his sceptre and his rule of sway;
Whose righteous lore the prince had practised young,
And from whose loins recorded Psyche sprung.
His temples, last, with poppies were o'erspread,
That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head.
Just at the point of time, if fame not lie,
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook, 130
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
The admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honours of his head,
And from his brows damps of oblivion shed,
Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:

Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbadoes on the western main; 140
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne;
Beyond Love's kingdom let him stretch his pen!—
He paused, and all the people cried, Amen.
Then thus continued he: My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let Virtuosos[153] in five years be writ;
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit. 150
Let gentle George[154] in triumph tread the stage,
Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,
And in their folly show the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence,



And justify their author's want of sense.
Let them be all by thy own model made
Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own. 160
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name.
But let no alien Sedley^[155] interpose,
To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose.^[156]
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst cull,
Trust nature, do not labour to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and, in each line,
Sir Formal's^[157] oratory will be thine:
Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill. 170
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,

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By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
Let Father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:
What share have we in nature, or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in prince Nicander's[158] vein,
Or swept the dust in Psyche's humble strain? 180
Where sold he bargains, whip-stitch, kiss my a—e,
Promised a play, and dwindled to a farce?
When did his muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
As thou whole Etheridge dost transfuse to thine?
But so transfused, as oil and waters flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humours to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way to dulness 'tis inclined: 190
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain-belly make pretence
Of likeness; thine's a tympany of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
Thy tragic muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite. 200
In thy felonious heart though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen lambics, but mild Anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command,
Some peaceful province in Acrostic land.
There thou mayst wings display and altars[159] raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or, if thou wouldst thy different talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute. 210



He said; but his last words were scarcely heard:
For Bruce and Longville[160] had a trap prepared,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 139: 'Mac Flecknoe:' Richard Flecknoe, from whom this poem derives its name, was an Irish priest, and author of plays.]

[Footnote 140: 'Heywood and Shirley:' play writers in Queen Elizabeth's time.]

[Footnote 141: 'St Andre:' a famous French dancing-master.]

[Footnote 142: 'Psyche:' an opera of Shadwell's.]

[Footnote 143: 'Singleton:' a musician of the time.]

[Footnote 144: 'Nursery:' a theatre for training actors.]

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[Footnote 145: 'Simkin:' a character of a cobbler, in an interlude.]

[Footnote 146: 'Panton:' a famous punster.]

[Footnote 147: 'Decker:' Thomas Decker, a dramatic poet of James I.'s reign.]

[Footnote 148: 'Worlds of Misers:' 'The Miser' and 'The Humourists' were two of Shadwell's comedies.]

[Footnote 149: 'Raymond' and 'Bruce:' the first of these is an insipid character in 'The Humourists'; the second, in 'The Virtuoso.']

[Footnote 150: 'Ogleby:' translator of Virgil.]

[Footnote 151: 'Herringman:' Henry Herringman, a bookseller; see 'Life.']

[Footnote 152: 'Love's Kingdom:' this is the name of the only play of Flecknoe's, which was acted, but miscarried in the representation.]

[Footnote 153: 'Virtuoso:' a play of Shadwell's.]

[Footnote 154: 'Gentle George:' Sir George Etheredge.]

[Footnote 155: 'Alien Sedley:' Sir Charles Sedley was supposed to assist Shadwell in writing his plays.]

[Footnote 156: 'Epsom prose:' alluding to Shadwell's play of 'Epsom Wells.']

[Footnote 157: 'Formal:' a character in 'The Virtuoso.']

[Footnote 158: 'Nicander:' a character of a lover in Shadwell's opera of 'Psyche.']

[Footnote 159: 'Wings and altars:' forms in which old acrostics were cast. See Herbert's 'Temple.']

[Footnote 160: 'Bruce and Longville:' two characters in Shadwell's 'Virtuoso.']

* * * * *

BRITANNIA REDIVIVA:

A POEM ON THE PRINCE, BORN JUNE 10, 1688.

Our vows are heard betimes! and Heaven takes care
To grant, before we can conclude the prayer:



Preventing angels met it half the way,
And sent us back to praise, who came to pray.

Just on the day, when the high-mounted Sun
Did furthest in his northern progress run,
He bended forward, and even stretch'd the sphere
Beyond the limits of the lengthen'd year,
To view a brighter sun in Britain born;
That was the business of his longest morn; 10
The glorious object seen, 'twas time to turn.

Departing Spring could only stay to shed
Her bloomy beauties on the genial bed,
But left the manly Summer in her stead,
With timely fruit the longing land to cheer,
And to fulfil the promise of the year.
Betwixt two seasons comes the auspicious heir,
This age to blossom, and the next to bear.

Last solemn Sabbath[161] saw the Church attend,
The Paraclete in fiery pomp descend; 20
But when his wondrous octave[162] roll'd again,
He brought a royal infant in his train.
So great a blessing to so good a king,
None but the Eternal Comforter could bring.



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Or did the mighty Trinity conspire,
As once in council, to create our sire?
It seems as if they sent the new-born guest
To wait on the procession of their feast;
And on their sacred anniverse decreed
To stamp their image on the promised seed. 30
Three realms united, and on one bestow'd,
An emblem of their mystic union show'd:
The Mighty Trine the triple empire shared,
As every person would have one to guard.

Hail, son of prayers! by holy violence
Drawn down from heaven; but long be banish'd thence,
And late to thy paternal skies retire:
To mend our crimes, whole ages would require;
To change the inveterate habit of our sins,
And finish what thy godlike sire begins. 40
Kind Heaven, to make us Englishmen again,
No less can give us than a patriarch's reign.

The sacred cradle to your charge receive,
Ye seraphs, and by turns the guard relieve;
Thy father's angel, and thy father join,
To keep possession, and secure the line;
But long defer the honours of thy fate:
Great may they be like his, like his be late;
That James this running century may view,
And give his son an auspice to the new. 50

Our wants exact at least that moderate stay:
For see the Dragon[163] winged on his way,
To watch the travail,[164] and devour the prey.
Or, if allusions may not rise so high,
Thus, when Alcides[165] raised his infant cry,
The snakes besieged his young divinity:
But vainly with their forked tongues they threat;
For opposition makes a hero great.
To needful succour all the good will run, 60
And Jove assert the godhead of his son.

O still repining at your present state,
Grudging yourselves the benefits of fate,
Look up, and read in characters of light
A blessing sent you in your own despite.



The manna falls, yet that celestial bread
Like Jews you munch, and murmur while you feed.
May not your fortune be, like theirs, exiled,
Yet forty years to wander in the wild!
Or if it be, may Moses live at least, 70
To lead you to the verge of promised rest!

Though poets are not prophets, to foreknow
What plants will take the blight, and what will grow,
By tracing Heaven, his footsteps may be found:
Behold! how awfully he walks the round!
God is abroad, and, wondrous in his ways,
The rise of empires, and their fall surveys;
More, might I say, than with an usual eye,
He sees his bleeding church in ruin lie,
And hears the souls of saints beneath his altar cry. 80
Already has he lifted high the Sign,[166]
Which crown'd the conquering arms of Constantine;
The Moon[167] grows pale at that presaging sight,
And half her train of stars have lost their light.



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Behold another Sylvester,[168] to bless
The sacred standard, and secure success;
Large of his treasures, of a soul so great,
As fills and crowds his universal seat.
Now view at home a second Constantine;
(The former too was of the British line;)[169] 90
Has not his healing balm your breaches closed,
Whose exile many sought, and few opposed?
Or, did not Heaven by its eternal doom
Permit those evils, that this good might come?
So manifest, that even the moon-eyed sects
See whom and what this Providence protects.
Methinks, had we within our minds no more
Than that one shipwreck on the fatal Ore,[170]
That only thought may make us think again,
What wonders God reserves for such a reign. 100
To dream that Chance his preservation wrought,
Were to think Noah was preserved for nought;
Or the surviving eight were not design'd
To people Earth, and to restore their kind.

When humbly on the royal babe we gaze,
The manly lines of a majestic face
Give awful joy: 'tis Paradise to look
On the fair frontispiece of Nature's book:
If the first opening page so charms the sight,
Think how the unfolded volume will delight! 110

See how the venerable infant lies
In early pomp; how through the mother's eyes
The father's soul, with an undaunted view,
Looks out, and takes our homage as his due.
See on his future subjects how he smiles,
Nor meanly flatters, nor with craft beguiles;
But with an open face, as on his throne,
Assures our birthrights, and assumes his own.
Born in broad day-light, that the ungrateful rout
May find no room for a remaining doubt; 120
Truth, which itself is light, does darkness shun,
And the true eaglet safely dares the sun.

Fain would the fiends[171] have made a dubious birth,
Loath to confess the Godhead clothed in earth:
But sicken'd, after all their baffled lies,



To find an heir-apparent of the skies:
Abandon'd to despair, still may they grudge,
And, owning not the Saviour, prove the judge.

Not great AEneas[172] stood in plainer day,
When, the dark mantling mist dissolved away, 130
He to the Tyrians show'd his sudden face,
Shining with all his goddess mother's grace:
For she herself had made his countenance bright,
Breathed honour on his eyes, and her own purple light.

If our victorious Edward,[173] as they say,
Gave Wales a prince on that propitious day,
Why may not years, revolving with his fate,
Produce his like, but with a longer date;
One, who may carry to a distant shore
The terror that his famed forefather bore? 140

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But why should James or his young hero stay
For slight presages of a name or day?
We need no Edward's fortune to adorn
That happy moment when our prince was born:
Our prince adorns his day, and ages hence
Shall wish his birth-day for some future prince.

Great Michael, prince of all the ethereal hosts,
And whate'er inborn saints our Britain boasts;
And thou, the adopted patron of our isle,[174]
With cheerful aspects on this infant smile: 150
The pledge of Heaven, which, dropping from above,
Secures our bliss, and reconciles his love.

Enough of ills our dire rebellion wrought,
When to the dregs we drank the bitter draught;
Then airy atoms did in plagues conspire,
Nor did the avenging angel yet retire,
But purged our still increasing crimes with fire,
Then perjured plots, the still impending Test,
And worse—but charity conceals the rest:
Here stop the current of the sanguine flood; 160
Require not, gracious God, thy martyrs' blood;
But let their dying pangs, their living toil,
Spread a rich harvest through their native soil:
A harvest ripening for another reign,
Of which this royal babe may reap the grain.

Enough of early saints one womb has given;
Enough increased the family of Heaven:
Let them for his and our atonement go;
And, reigning blest above, leave him to rule below.

Enough already has the year foreshow'd 170
His wonted course, the sea has overflow'd,
The meads were floated with a weeping spring,
And frighten'd birds in woods forgot to sing:
The strong-limb'd steed beneath his harness faints,
And the same shivering sweat his lord attaints.
When will the minister of wrath give o'er?



Behold him at Araunah's threshing-floor:[175]
He stops, and seems to sheathe his flaming brand,
Pleased with burnt incense from our David's hand.
David has bought the Jebusite's abode, 180
And raised an altar to the living God.

Heaven, to reward him, makes his joys sincere;
No future ills nor accidents appear,
To sully and pollute the sacred infant's year.
Five months to discord and debate were given:
He sanctifies the yet remaining seven.
Sabbath of months! henceforth in him be blest,
And prelude to the realm's perpetual rest!

Let his baptismal drops for us atone;
Lustrations for offences not his own. 190
Let Conscience, which is Interest ill disguised,
In the same font be cleansed, and all the land baptized.



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Unnamed as yet;[176] at least unknown to fame:
Is there a strife in Heaven about his name,
Where every famous predecessor vies,
And makes a faction for it in the skies?
Or must it be reserved to thought alone?
Such was the sacred Tetragrammaton.[177]
Things worthy silence must not be reveal'd;
Thus the true name of Rome was kept conceal'd,[178]
To shun the spells and sorceries of those 200
Who durst her infant majesty oppose.
But when his tender strength in time shall rise
To dare ill tongues, and fascinating eyes;
This isle, which hides the little Thunderer's fame,
Shall be too narrow to contain his name:
The artillery of heaven shall make him known;
Crete[179] could not hold the god, when Jove was grown.

As Jove's increase, who from his brain was born,[180]
Whom arms and arts did equally adorn, 210
Free of the breast was bred, whose milky taste
Minerva's name to Venus had debased;
So this imperial babe rejects the food
That mixes monarch's with plebeian blood:
Food that his inborn courage might control,
Extinguish all the father in his soul,
And, for his Estian race, and Saxon strain,
Might reproduce some second Richard's reign.
Mildness he shares from both his parents' blood:
But kings too tame are despicably good: 220
Be this the mixture of this regal child,
By nature manly, but by virtue mild.

Thus far the furious transport of the news
Had to prophetic madness fired the Muse;
Madness ungovernable, uninspired,
Swift to foretell whatever she desired.
Was it for me the dark abyss to tread,
And read the book which angels cannot read?
How was I punish'd, when the sudden blast,[181]
The face of heaven, and our young sun o'ercast! 230
Fame, the swift ill, increasing as she roll'd,
Disease, despair, and death, at three reprises told;
At three insulting strides she stalk'd the town,
And, like contagion, struck the loyal down.

Down fell the winnow'd wheat; but, mounted high,
The whirlwind bore the chaff, and hid the sky.
Here black rebellion shooting from below
(As earth's gigantic brood by moments grow[182])
And here the sons of God are petrified with woe:
An apoplex of grief: so low were driven 240
The saints, as hardly to defend their heaven.

As, when pent vapours run their hollow round,
Earthquakes, which are convulsions of the ground,
Break bellowing forth, and no confinement brook,
Till the third settles what the former shook;
Such heavings had our souls; till, slow and late,
Our life with his return'd, and Faith prevail'd on Fate.
By prayers the mighty blessing was implored,
To prayers was granted, and by prayers restored.



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So, ere the Shunamite^[183] a son conceived, 250
The prophet promised, and the wife believed.
A son was sent, the son so much desired;
But soon upon the mother's knees expired.
The troubled seer approach'd the mournful door,
Ran, pray'd, and sent his pastoral staff before,
Then stretch'd his limbs upon the child, and mourn'd,

Thus Mercy stretches out her hand, and saves
Desponding Peter sinking in the waves.

As when a sudden storm of hail and rain 260
Beats to the ground the yet unbearded grain,
Think not the hopes of harvest are destroy'd
On the flat field, and on the naked void;
The light unloaded stem, from tempest freed,
Will raise the youthful honours of his head;
And soon, restored by native vigour, bear
The timely product of the bounteous year.

Nor yet conclude all fiery trials past:
For Heaven will exercise us to the last;
Sometimes will check us in our full career, 270
With doubtful blessings, and with mingled fear;
That, still depending on his daily grace,
His every mercy for an alms may pass,
With sparing hands will diet us to good;
Preventing surfeits of our pamper'd blood.
So feeds the mother bird her craving young
With little morsels, and delays them long.

True, this last blessing was a royal feast;
But where's the wedding-garment on the guest?
Our manners, as religion were a dream, 280
Are such as teach the nations to blaspheme.
In lusts we wallow, and with pride we swell,
And injuries with injuries repel;
Prompt to revenge, not daring to forgive,
Our lives unteach the doctrine we believe.
Thus Israel sinn'd, impenitently hard,
And vainly thought the present ark their guard;^[184]
But when the haughty Philistines appear,
They fled, abandon'd to their foes and fear;
Their God was absent, though his ark was there. 290

Ah! lest our crimes should snatch this pledge away,
And make our joys the blessings of a day!
For we have sinn'd him hence, and that he lives,
God to his promise, not our practice gives.
Our crimes would soon weigh down the guilty scale,
But James and Mary, and the Church, prevail.
Nor Amalek can rout the chosen bands,[185]
While Hur and Aaron hold up Moses' hands.

By living well, let us secure his days;
Moderate in hopes, and humble in our ways, 300
No force the free-born spirit can constrain,
But charity and great examples gain.
Forgiveness is our thanks for such a day:
'Tis god-like God in his own coin to pay.



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But you, propitious queen, translated here,
From your mild heaven, to rule our rugged sphere,
Beyond the sunny walks, and circling year:
You, who your native climate have bereft
Of all the virtues, and the vices left;
Whom piety and beauty make their boast, 310
Though beautiful is well in pious lost;
So lost, as star-light is dissolved away,
And melts into the brightness of the day;
Or gold about the regal diadem,
Lost to improve the lustre of the gem.
What can we add to your triumphant day?
Let the great gift the beauteous giver pay.
For should our thanks awake the rising sun,
And lengthen, as his latest shadows run,
That, though the longest day, would soon, too soon be done. 320
Let angels' voices with their harps conspire,
But keep the auspicious infant from the quire;
Late let him sing above, and let us know
No sweeter music than his cries below.

Nor can I wish to you, great Monarch, more
Than such an annual income to your store;
The day which gave this Unit, did not shine
For a less omen, than to fill the Trine.
After a prince, an admiral beget;
The Royal Sovereign wants an anchor yet. 330
Our isle has younger titles still in store,
And when the exhausted land can yield no more,
Your line can force them from a foreign shore.

The name of Great your martial mind will suit;
But justice is your darling attribute:
Of all the Greeks, 'twas but one hero's [186] due,
And, in him, Plutarch prophesied of you.
A prince's favours but on few can fall,
But justice is a virtue shared by all.

Some kings the name of conquerors have assumed, 340
Some to be great, some to be gods presumed;
But boundless power and arbitrary lust
Made tyrants still abhor the name of just;
They shunn'd the praise this godlike virtue gives,
And fear'd a title that reproach'd their lives.



The Power, from which all kings derive their state,
Whom they pretend, at least, to imitate,
Is equal both to punish and reward;
For few would love their God, unless they fear'd.

Resistless force and immortality 350
Make but a lame, imperfect, deity:
Tempests have force unbounded to destroy,
And deathless being, even the damn'd enjoy;
And yet Heaven's attributes, both last and first,
One without life, and one with life accurst:
But justice is Heaven's self, so strictly he,
That could it fail, the Godhead could not be.
This virtue is your own; but life and state
Are one to Fortune subject, one to Fate:
Equal to all, you justly frown or smile; 360
Nor hopes nor fears your steady hand beguile;
Yourself our balance hold, the world's our isle.

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 161: 'Solemn Sabbath:' Whit-Sunday.]

[Footnote 162: 'Wondrous octave:' Trinity Sunday.]

[Footnote 163: 'The Dragon:' alluding only to the Commonwealth party, here and in other places of the poem.]

[Footnote 164: 'The travail:' see Rev. xii. 4.]

[Footnote 165: 'Alcides:' Hercules.]

[Footnote 166: 'Sign:' the sign of the cross, as denoting the Roman Catholic faith.]

[Footnote 167: 'The moon:' the Turkish crescent.]

[Footnote 168: 'Another Sylvester:' the Pope in James II.'s time is here compared to him that governed the Romish Church in the time of Constantine.]

[Footnote 169: 'British line:' St Helen, mother of Constantine the Great, was an Englishwoman.]

[Footnote 170: 'Fatal Ore:' the sandbank on which the Duke of York had like to have been lost in 1682, on his voyage to Scotland, is known by the name of Lemman Ore.]

[Footnote 171: 'Fiends:' the malcontents who doubted the truth of the birth are here compared to the evil spirits that tempted our Saviour in the wilderness.]

[Footnote 172: 'AEneas:' see Virgil; AEneid, I.]

[Footnote 173: 'Edward:' Edward the Black Prince, born on Trinity Sunday.]

[Footnote 174: 'Patron of our isle:' St George.]

[Footnote 175: 'Araunah's threshing-floor:' alluding to the passage in 1 Kings xxiv.]

[Footnote 176: 'Unnamed as yet:' the prince was christened but not named when this poem was published.]

[Footnote 177: 'Tetragrammaton:' Jehovah, or the name of God, unlawful to be pronounced by the Jews.]



[Footnote 178: 'Rome was kept concealed:' some authors say, that the true name of Rome was kept a secret.]

[Footnote 179: 'Crete:' Candia, where Jupiter was born and bred secretly.]

[Footnote 180: 'Brain was born:' Pallas or Minerva, said by the poets to have sprung from the brain of Jove, and to have been bred up by hand, as was this young prince.]

[Footnote 181: 'Sudden blast:' the sudden false report of the prince's death.]

[Footnote 182: 'Moments grow:' those giants are feigned to have grown fifteen yards every day.]

[Footnote 183: 'Shunamite:' see 2 Kings iv.]

[Footnote 184: 'Ark their guard:' see 1 Sam. iv. 10.]

[Footnote 185: 'Amalek can rout the chosen bands:' see Exod. xviii. 8.]

[Footnote 186: Aristides, surnamed the Just.]

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END OF FIRST VOLUME.