

Eighteenth-Century English Labouring-Class Poets

1700-1740

Edited by
William Christmas



ROUTLEDGE


*EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH
LABOURING-CLASS POETS
1700–1800*

VOLUME I
1700–1740

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I dedicate this book to my mother, Maribeth Hanson Christmas, in memoriam.



Stephen Duck.

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GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

These three volumes represent the range of labouring-class poetry in the English language and its dialect variants published during the eighteenth century. A collection of this scale has never been attempted before, and it therefore provides an opportunity to consider the origins, achievements, functions, and the reception history of this category of verse. The fifty or so poets whose work is brought together here represent not only individual voices and histories, but a tradition of writing that was an integral part of the eighteenth-century literary scene.

Asked too many times 'where he got his poetry from' John Clare once retorted 'I kicked it out of the clods'.¹ It might be argued that to categorise poetry as 'labouring-class' is to invite a sardonic response of this kind. After all, under such overlapping titles as the eighteenth-century term 'peasant poets', or Robert Southey's Romantic-period term 'uneducated poets', or the Victorian (and recently revived) term 'self-taught' poets, or indeed our own preferred term 'labouring-class poets', these authors have been fetishised and fussed over for as long as they have been around. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that such categorisations have been a hindrance to them, and it has undoubtedly distorted their critical reception. They have been repeatedly invoked in cultural and political debate, whether as pawns in the game of patronly power-broking, literary novelty-acts, or as 'natural' homegrown versions of the 'noble savage'. For some, they have been exemplars of the virtues of hard work and self-reliance; for others, they offer evidence of proletarian resistance and cultural vitality. Though not all these models of labouring-class poetry have necessarily undermined their independence, one thing these writers have rarely been allowed is simply to be *poets*. Robert Southey, their first chronicler, believed that their cultivation was a matter of charity, their publication an opportunity for readers to take pleasure at 'seeing how much intellectual enjoyment had been attained in humble life, and in very unfavourable circumstances'.² The sense here that elite values are those to which the humble ought to aspire now seems paternalistic and over-secure, while its implicit voyeurism might help to explain why Clare on another gloomy day used the word 'peep show' to describe his exposed position in the literary world.³ Many eighteenth-century poets were damaged, professionally or personally, by the ways in which their work was presented to the public: the

prevailing model of ‘natural genius’ seemed to deny them both agency and achievement, while praising their work for all the wrong reasons.

We have organised this collection around the category of ‘labouring-class poetry’, then, not to sustain the stereotypes that I have sketched here, but to recover a richer and more diverse tradition among these poets, and to recognise that poets from economically marginalised backgrounds were not just lumped together by patrons, publishers and readers, but often saw themselves as belonging to an identifiable tradition. As some of the intertextual allusions in these volumes show, there were strong sympathetic links and identifications between these poets, and one poet often inspired another. It is possible to identify a developing ‘canon’ within the tradition. There is a clear sense of beginning, with the rise of Stephen Duck and the workplace poets of the 1730s in England, and of Allan Ramsay and the vernacular tradition in Scotland in about the same period. Both these events also had pre-histories. Particular phases in the tradition’s development may be discerned, such as the stand-offs with patrons later in the century, or the radicalisation of much labouring-class verse following the American War of Independence and especially the French Revolution. By the end of the century certain key figures —notably Chatterton and Burns—had attained iconic significance within the tradition, and one labouring-class poet could address another as ‘brother bard and fellow labourer’.⁴

Labouring-class poetry was thus a distinctive tradition in the eighteenth century both on its own and on others’ terms, and in some ways it forms an alternative literary history, alongside and overlapping with the more familiar, canonical one. Since we are engaged in rediscovering many poets who have been neglected since their first publications, we have tried to be inclusive in our understanding of what constitutes a ‘labouring-class’ poet. Almost all the poets in this collection, to put things at their simplest, came from lower-class or working families and did not receive a classical or university education. Some were artisans or otherwise worked independently (such as the coffee-house keeper John Freeth, Vol. III), whilst others were wage-labourers of various kinds, or itinerant sellers. Most had no regular access to the materials of intellectual culture, and the ingenuity, opportunism and sheer luck involved in their getting access to books would undoubtedly repay Southey’s curiosity. For some, their labouring-class status was a fact that they worked with as best they could. For others, it was a badge of identification, a declaration of purpose. For others still, it was a selling point, a means of getting published or entering, even challenging the public domain. Some of the poets in the present series rose to, and settled into, literary respectability, while others struggled and failed to find a place in the literary world, or rapidly returned to their original roles.

The question of what is meant by ‘English’ labouring-class poetry should be considered here. Our primary purpose, in this series and in its nineteenth-century companion, has been to represent a tradition of labouring-class poetry that

emerged in England in the early eighteenth-century. It would be simply impossible to do this, however, without including, in particular, Scottish texts. Scotland was the 'engine' of British folk and popular verse culture in the eighteenth century. It was also the richest region of Britain for labouring-class poets, especially after 1786 when Burns published his first collection and established himself as the single most important figure within this tradition. We therefore include material by Scottish authors (and where appropriate Irish and Welsh poets using English), though an independent collection of Scottish labouring-class poetry, in particular, remains a desideratum, to supplement the valuable work of anthologists from D. H. Edwards to Tom Leonard.⁵

If the terms 'labouring-class' and 'English' need comment, so too does the question of *value* in a collection of this sort. Historically, the considerable interest there has been in labouring-class poetry has not always extended to a recognition of literary merit. Critics have taken pleasure in some of the dialect and local material, and historians have noted the documentary value of Duck and Collier's 'labour' poems, for example. Several exceptional figures have recently been 'canonised', most notably John Clare, Mary Leapor and Ann Yearsley. However, in our searches through the many volumes of labouring-class poetry published in the period we have found a great deal more that has literary merit, and although we often include material here for historical reasons of one kind or another, we have tried to find 'good' as well as historically 'interesting' texts, and we hope that these volumes will contribute to a literary as well as a historical re-evaluation. The labouring-class poets bring new perspectives to a whole range of historical and cultural issues, from women's work in the harvest, debated by Stephen Duck and Mary Collier (Vol. I), to the slave trade, considered from a range of viewpoints later in the century (Vol. III).

In preparing these volumes and their nineteenth-century companions, finally, the sheer amount of material published by labouring-class poets took us by surprise. When we had pooled our research and completed our searches of source materials, we found that we had identified well over a thousand labouring-class poets published in Britain between 1700 and 1900. Clearly not even two three-volume collections can fully represent a tradition as rich and extensive as this, and we shall pursue our researches further in future selections and studies of labouring-class poetry. In the meantime, we have posted our draft bio-bibliography of these poets on the internet, for the benefit of readers who wish to follow up this project and find out more. The address for this expanding resource is: <<http://human.ntu.ac.uk/clare/elsie.html>>.

John Goodridge
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NOTES

1. Quoted in Ronald Blythe, *Talking About John Clare* (Nottingham: Trent Editions, 1999), p. 51.
2. Robert Southey, *The Lives and Works of the Uneducated Poets [1831]*, ed J.S. Childers (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 11–12.
3. Mark Storey (ed), *The Letters of John Clare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 215.
4. *Letters of John Clare*, pp. 302–3.
5. D.H. Edwards (ed) *Modern Scottish Poets, with Biographical and Critical Notices* (Brechin: D.H. Edwards, 1880–97), 16 vols; Tom Leonard (ed), *Radical Renfrew* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990).

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Stephen Duck, the thresher-poet from Wiltshire, who, in a matter of months in late 1730, found himself a London literary celebrity and the object of royal patronage, dominates labouring-class poetry in the period 1700–40. The sensation that surrounded Duck's entrance into court life, and the multiple printings of his pirated poems (seven editions appeared in rapid succession in London between September and December, 1730) contributed to what might profitably be described as a 'media event' in the sense used by William Warner of a single media product having far reaching cultural effects.¹ Duck and his first pirated poems would indeed have profound effects on literary culture in general, and labouring-class poetry in particular, over the next half century.

However, it must be emphasized that, by 1730, a labourer composing and publishing verses was hardly an unprecedented phenomenon. The history of published plebeian poetry does not begin with Duck, nor does it begin in 1700 for that matter. Other labourers, like the shoemaker-poet Richard Rigbey (*fl.* 1682–1702), found their way into print before the century break and, when Pope abused Ned Ward (q.v.) publicly, one of the ways he did so was to link him to John Taylor (1580–1653), the Thames waterman, who 'wrote fourscore books in the reign of *James I* and *Charles I* and afterwards (like Mr. *Ward*) kept a Publick-house in *Long Acre*'.² Prior to the publication of *The Dunciad* (1728), Ward had never done anything specific to provoke Pope; in fact, Pope patronized Ward's Bacchus tavern on occasion. The reference to Pope in 'Truth without Dissembling' (q.v.), published in 1717, signals Ward's High-church anxiety concerning Pope's political allegiances but lacks the vulgarity typically heaped on Pope by the Grubstreet hacks. But for Pope, the issue was merely a case of guilt-by-association. Ward represented one of those non-gentlemanly writers who had successfully fashioned a career in letters in the early decades of the century, and so was damned with the dunces. By the late 1720s, Ward had built a reputation as a poet and miscellaneous writer, and it remains interesting that Pope felt it needed tearing down.

If Ward represents one kind of labouring-class poet before Duck (the aspiring professional), others included in this volume represent several equally significant varieties. Although there is evidence that Jane Holt was employed for a time as a domestic servant, she might more accurately be described as 'self-taught'³ than

'labouring-class'. But the two descriptors often go hand-in-hand as will be evident in the many references these poets make linking their educational deficiencies to the hardships of poverty and a life of labour. In Holt's case, however, working in the home of William Wright, Recorder of Oxford, allowed her access to a library (a key factor in the emergence of many labouring-class poets throughout the century), which she seems to have exploited well, judging by the elaborate poetic use she makes of Shakespeare in '[A Fairy Tale] Sent with a pair of China Basons', and by her engagement with Pythagorean and Cartesian philosophical traditions in other poems. The Irish bricklayer, Henry Nelson, seems to have specialized in procession poems, chronicling the annual celebration for the tailors and other trade guilds in 1720s Dublin. Nelson could hardly have made a living from these broadsheet publications, if in fact he was paid for his efforts at all. Yet it seems to have been important that 'one of the Brethren' was responsible for these annual verse commemorations. Edward Chicken and the anonymous 'clothier-poet' both appear to have been composing their respective poems in the years just before Duck's emergence. They were both from the north of England, and both gave voice to the customary practices, social mores, and working lives of local labouring-class people of this geographic locale—often incorporating northern dialect terms and phraseology into their octo-syllabic couplets. In this, Chicken, the anonymous 'clothier-poet', and even the Robert Dodsley of *Servitude* (1729) prefigure aspects of the occupational specificity that became associated with Duck because of 'The Thresher's Labour', a poem that was imitated by a number of labouring-class poets in the 1730s.

Broader historical trends lay behind this rise in plebeian poetic production in the early decades of the century, and also contributed to the literary controversy surrounding Duck in 1730. First, the expansion of the literary marketplace and the concomitant professionalization of literature that occurred after 1695, when the last of the repressive government licensing acts was allowed to lapse, would progressively open up the closed 'republic of letters' dominated in this period by educated men like Dryden, Addison, Swift, and Pope. Brean Hammond notes that 'the decades following 1660 [form] a period of English cultural history in which a relatively rapid shift from patronage to marketing as the primary way of financing imaginative writing was accomplished; a period of growth and demand for...literary products.'⁴ Ned Ward might well be the first labouring-class writer who seized the opportunities offered by these cultural changes. With no connections, and no recourse to aristocratic patronage, Ward was left to his own devices to exploit this growing demand for 'literary products'. After initial failure, Ward achieved success with *A Trip to Jamaica* (1698), a fantastic travel narrative clearly designed to capitalize on the fashion for such texts in this period. In addition, with his monthly periodical the *London Spy* (1699-1700), Ward secured a readership among the growing coffee-house crowd. Ward succeeded by prostrating himself at the feet of an established literary market, completely by-

passing what Hammond identifies as the ‘transitional phase’ for financing imaginative writing: subscription publishing, a mode favoured by labouring-class poets (and their supporters) throughout the century.⁵ Rising literacy rates among the middling classes with money to spend on what they read meant there was a steadily growing market of readers to tap into. This class of consumer usually dominates the lengthy subscribers’ lists that often appeared in the prefatory apparatus to volumes of poetry published by labouring-class authors, but is often overlooked in the modern critical tendency to call attention to important aristocratic or literary figures from those lists.

Closely tied to these trends in literacy and the changing economics of print was the neoclassical cultural interest in natural poetic genius. As it relates to poetry, the history of the concept of natural genius is largely a record of the relationship between the notion that poetic talent is innate, and ideas about bookish learning and ‘art’ to improve the poet born. In the early century period, Joseph Addison’s delineation of the concept of natural genius in *Spectator* no. 160 (1711) speaks to the growing cultural interest in such types. Addison argued for an important distinction in this essay between two classes of geniuses: those ‘great natural Genius’s that were never disciplined and broken by Rules of Art’ (such as Homer and Pindar), and those ‘great Genius’s...that have formed themselves by Rules, and submitted the Greatness of their natural Talents to the Corrections and Restraints of Art’ (such as Plato, Virgil, Milton, and Bacon).⁶ Though both classes are characterised as ‘great’, Addison’s essay works in subtle ways to privilege the ‘radical’ view that poets were born rather than made, a notion neatly captured in the popular Latin proverb of the period, *Poeta nascitur non fit*. Addison’s conception of natural genius provided labouring-class poets with a powerful resource for answering their polite detractors, as Mary Masters did in the following lines addressed to a gentleman critic: ‘Whate’er I write, whatever I impart,/Is simple Nature unimprov’d by Art’. But, whereas Duck’s handlers believed in the 1730s that the natural poet could be improved with books and education, later in the century—following the vogue for expressive theories of poetry and poetic primitivism (captured in the popularity of Ossian, for example)—it was considered a mistake to corrupt the innately gifted poet with bookish learning.⁷

What Addison’s theorising did for the popularisation of natural genius in the early decades of the century, Joseph Spence’s enthusiasm did for the practical problem of finding and identifying real life examples. By the late 1720s, Spence held the distinguished post of Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and spent much time travelling the countryside on horseback following up reports of natural genius. It was in early September 1730, that Spence met Duck at Winchester just after Duck’s poems had been read to the Queen, and she had conferred a pension and a house in Richmond on him. Spence spent a week with Duck, essentially subjecting him to a series of tests designed to evaluate his natural poetic talent

and his character. Spence's notes from these meetings, which have survived, show that Duck availed himself admirably, as Spence gushed to Pope that 'I am just full of the Man' after the first night's conversation.⁸ Following his interviews with Spence (who remained a lifelong friend), Duck's life changed rapidly after his move to Richmond.

Duck's fantastic translation from agricultural labourer to court-poet, together with the appearance of multiple editions of his early pirated poems, touched off a media event in London that was sustained at least until the publication of Duck's authorised *Poems on Several Occasions* in 1736. It is difficult to separate the man from his work in the context of identifying what Warner would term the 'media production' central to the event. That is, Duck appears to have been as much a product offered up to literary London as were his poems; perhaps for self-serving reasons on Spence's part, whose promotion of Duck was nevertheless in the service of Spence's own research on natural genius, or on the Queen's part in her ongoing battle with the wits, as Betty Rizzo has suggested.⁹ Though hardly an original story, Richardson's *Pamela* was remarkable in and of itself whereas Duck's poems were largely remarkable because they were written by an uneducated agricultural labourer. The facts of Duck's background—his relative youth, rural origins, life of poverty, lack of standardised education, and the wonder of a thresher reading Milton—became central features in marketing his pirated work in the early 1730s. For example, the short, sometimes spurious, biography of Duck that introduced the first edition of *Poems on Several Subjects* (1730, q.v.) makes reference to all of these traits, and the frontispiece that accompanied the seventh and later editions (included here) traded on Duck's former labouring life to prompt curiosity in his poems. In effect, Duck was packaged with his poems, commodified for consumption by literate society in London and beyond.

The media response to Duck's success was almost instantaneous. From October to December, Duck was a fixture of the major London journals, and pamphlet-style poems denigrating and praising him flew from the press. The current poet laureate, Laurence Fusden, had died at the end of September, leaving Caroline with a major literary court position to fill. Because of his current celebrity and proximity to the Queen, Duck was immediately hyped as a favourite for the position. The *Grub-street Journal* kept the pressure on the thresher-poet and his court supporters with critical essays and satiric epigrams in almost every issue. Pope contributed the following lines to the number for 12 November:

Shall Royal praise be rhym'd by such a ribald,
As fopling C[ibbe]r, or Attorney T[ibbal]d?
Let's rather wait one year for better luck;
One year may make a singing Swan of Duck.
Great G[od]! such servants since thou well can'st lack,
Oh! save the Salary, and drink the Sack!¹⁰

Though Duck endured a deal of abuse, and though both Pope and Swift twisted their satiric blades in the open wounds of social class and literary merit, the wits realized that Duck was ultimately harmless, merely a visible symptom of a larger cultural malaise. Government patronage that left the best poets of the day without court appointment or annuity (or banished to Ireland), and a Whig administration (Walpole's) intent upon managing the literary propaganda machine were the ultimate targets of Scriblerian satire in this period. At all events, Pope's private relationship with Duck seems to have been more congenial. Pope allowed in a letter to Gay that 'the honest industrious *Thresher* not unaptly represents *Pains* and *Labour*', and the two men met several times at Richmond after the heated public debate about the laureateship had cooled.¹¹

Lower forms of criticism also proliferated from the press, most often penned by hacks calling themselves 'Drake', a satirical pseudonym probably meant to feminise Duck for his close association with the Queen. Duck was advised by Dr Alured Clarke not to respond to any of this mud-slinging in print, but he didn't need to, as supporters continued to fight for Duck's reputation in the face of the onslaught. For example, Spence's own pamphlet, *A Full and Authentick Account of Stephen Duck*, appeared anonymously in early 1731, and, though Spence tried to deny any knowledge of its publication, he clearly hoped it would help his friend.¹² Even the bricklayer-poet, Robert Tattersal, himself envious of Duck's court position, noted in an epistle addressed to Duck four years later that

Thou fear'st no Scribler's mercenary Noise,
The paultry Sounds of popular Applause;
But thou, secure beyond the Power of Fate,
Regardless of their Love, defy'st their Hate.

Although Colley Cibber gained the laureateship, the media attention probably helped keep Duck's poems in demand. In a letter dated 25 October 1730, Clarke describes several other aspects of this attention, including the exchanges in the press between Duck's patrons and the booksellers, and the multiple piracies of Duck's early poems:

[Erasmus] Jones, the publisher, had advertised against Stephen's own advertisement, on which my brother has made him recant in three several papers, and acknowledge his edition of the poems to be spurious, and beg pardon of Mr. Duck and the public, and has withal got five guineas of him for Stephen; for it seems Jones is very poor, and got but little for the copy of Roberts, who printed it, as he thought, from a genuine copy, and has promised that no more editions shall be published. But it seems there is another copy pirated from the spurious one. Upon the whole, we could not do better for him, considering there is no *effectual* way of coming at such people by law.¹³

Of course, when Clarke concludes ‘we could not do better for him’ he means the five guineas his brother squeezed from the bookseller Jones, but in hindsight, Duck’s patrons probably could not have done a better job of what later generations would call ‘public relations’. The source of the leak of Duck’s early poems has not been identified; but it is clear that the pirated poems could be conveniently dismissed as ‘spurious’ at the same time they continued to appear in London and Dublin (through 1733), effectively keeping Duck’s name and work circulating while Duck prepared his revised poems for publication. Promotion also continued in the interim as new effusions by Duck, sanctioned by his patrons, appeared in pamphlet-style form and in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*.¹⁴

It was during these years, too, that the ‘repetitions and simulations’ stage of the Duck media event began to unfold in the form of a rising number of labouring-class poets entering print culture, most with ambitions of court preferment or, at the very least, a career change. Within months of Duck’s poems hitting the streets of London, John Bancks packaged a small collection of his work as *The Weaver’s Miscellany* (q.v.). This volume represents the most brazen attempt to capitalise on Duck’s success because of its timing and Bancks’s opportunistic self-construction in ‘The Introduction’ as a former ploughboy and weaver (no contemporary sources corroborate Bancks’s agricultural experience, and he had only been a weaver’s apprentice for a short time) and a natural genius (he carefully minimizes the education he gleaned at a nonconformist school). Robert Dodsley returned to print in 1732 with *A Muse in Livery* (which went to two editions); John Frizzle addressed Duck in verse in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*; Robert Tattersal published the two parts of his *Bricklayer’s Miscellany* in 1734–5; and Mary Collier’s *The Woman’s Labour* finally made it into print in 1739, though it was written much earlier. These are the major labouring-class poets of the 1730s who were attentive to the Duck media event, and who used it in various ways, and to varying degrees, to enter the print marketplace themselves. Bancks and Dodsley successfully fashioned new careers—Dodsley with Pope’s financial backing, and Bancks at least without Pope’s public derision. Tattersal and Collier both wrote accomplished poems chronicling the travails of their workaday lives (included here), and, though Tattersal seems to have harboured Parnassian aspirations, it seems neither poet was ever sufficiently successful to abandon manual labour entirely. Of this group of poets, only Collier does not eulogize Caroline or seek to reproduce Duck’s example. Her reasons for composing, and then later publishing, her poem remain largely ideological, as she attempts to right the wrongs of Duck’s representation of female agricultural workers in ‘The Thresher’s Labour’. *The Woman’s Labour* might be the most altruistic labouring-class poetic response to Duck in the period (in the sense that she is not addressing Duck in order to further her own poetic career). But her poem nevertheless exists because of—and adds an important new dimension to—the Duck media event.

However, not every plebeian poet who published in the 1730s was beholden to the Duck media event for his or her entrance into print culture. Peter Aram, a Yorkshire gardener by trade, and Mary Masters, the daughter of an apparently unsupportive petty school-master, both published work in 1733, but neither poet imitates, responds to, or refers to Duck in any way. Aram's long topographical poem, *Studley-Park*, was excerpted and first appeared anonymously in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in December, 1732. The poem gained full publication the following year in the antiquarian Thomas Gent's *Antient and Modern History of the Loyal Town of Rippon*. As Aram makes clear in the opening lines, his debt is to a locodescriptive poetic tradition that extends from Waller to Denham through Pope's *Windsor-Forest* to Garth. If Mary Masters read Duck's work, or was in any way influenced to publish either because of his success or because the cultural climate was right in the years immediately following, she never lets on. She does, however, sound one of the familiar notes associated with plebeian authorship in the period: lack of formal education. In her preface, Masters records that 'the Author of the following Poems never read a Treatise of Rhetorick, or an Art of Poetry, nor was ever taught her English Grammar'. Like Holt, Masters more closely fits the appellation 'self-taught' and, perhaps because of the literate quality of her verse and her later associations with Edward Cave and Samuel Johnson, she was never linked to Duck or to other labouring-class poets by her contemporaries.

The effects of what I am calling the Duck media event were felt long after 1740, as Duck often appears as the benchmark by which the work and potential of other plebeian poets were measured. An anonymous reviewer of the shoemaker John Bennet's (q.v.) first volume noted he was 'in company with the most renowned poetasters of the present century, under the banner of the late illustrious Stephen Duck'.¹⁵ Indeed, Duck did carry a sort of cultural banner for non-traditional poets hoping to be heard, and such late-century references speak to the enduring power of Duck's example. However, the movement toward expressive poetry and the vogue for poetic primitivism would result in a devaluing of Duck's work by the 1780s. In a letter to her friend and fellow literary patron, Elizabeth Montagu, concerning their protégée Ann Yearsley (q.v.), Hannah More wrote that '*Stephen* was an excellent Bard as a Thrasher, but as the Court Poet, and rival of Pope, detestable'.¹⁶ Not surprisingly, Yearsley was given fewer books and did not receive the same encouragement to self-improve that Duck had. As a 'romantic kind of poetry' (to use Johnson's phrase) came to supplant the Augustan, neoclassical kind, Robert Burns (q.v.) emerged as the heir to Duck's mantle. Burns, in effect, became the new 'peasant hero' for the next generations of labouring-class poets, and he also gained a greater degree of high-culture critical acceptance.¹⁷ Yet even Burns, and the myth of the 'Heav'n Taught Ploughman', owed something to the intense publicity that occurred in the 1730s, centred around the emergence of Stephen Duck.

Statistical evidence from the three volumes in this series speaks not only to the importance of Duck's example, but also to the cultural establishment of the category of labouring-class authorship in the eighteenth century. Thirteen poets are included in this volume, seven of which are concentrated in the decade after Duck's initial success, and the number of labouring-class poets rises exponentially as the century progresses, a fact illustrated by the subsequent volumes of this series. Volume II, which also covers a forty-year period, includes twenty poets, and Volume III, which covers only twenty years, includes thirty poets. These numbers certainly suggest that John Langhorne was in earnest when, in 1763, he applied to the readership of the *Monthly Review* to stop sending him poetry written by 'unlettered candidates for fame'.¹⁶ That the number of published plebeian poets increases dramatically over the course of the century is perhaps not so surprising, but that these poets often produced remarkable verse in all the major and minor poetic kinds of the period just might be.

NOTES

1. See William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684–1750* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998), esp. pp. 176–230. In his account of the *Pamela* media event ten years later, Warner identifies the criteria that define such events in the eighteenth century, criteria that can be readily found in the Duck controversies of 1730. First, the event 'begins with a media production', a product offered up to the market for consumption (p. 178). Interest in this product 'feeds upon itself', producing a pervasive sense that you are missing out unless you are attending to or consuming it in some way (p. 178). Finally, such widespread culture interest 'triggers repetitions and simulations' as it also becomes the subject of intense critical commentary (p. 178). Warner emphasises that, in his view, a 'media event' ought to be treated as a 'real' event in that it 'carries genuine effects into culture' (p. 179).
2. Pope first depicted Ward among the frogs in Chapter VI of *Peri Bathous; or, The Art of Sinking in Poetry* (1728). The passage quoted is from *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729), Book II, note to l. 323. See *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 397. For Taylor, see Bernard Capp, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
3. By 'self-taught' I mean to call attention to the literary self-consciousness and autodidactic context of much labouring-class poetic production. See Brian Maidment, *The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self-Taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain* (Manchester and New York: Carcanet Press Ltd., 1987), p. 13; and John Goodridge, introduction to *The Independent Spirit: John Clare and the self-taught tradition*, ed. John Goodridge (Helpston: The John Clare Society and The Margaret Grainger Memorial Trust, 1994), p. 15.

4. Brean S. Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing in England, 1670–1740: 'Hackney for Bread'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 249.
5. Hammond, *Professional Imaginative Writing in England*, p. 70.
6. [Joseph Addison], *Spectator*, no. 160, 3 September 1711, in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Bond, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), II, pp. 127, 129.
7. For a full discussion of the permutations in the concept of poetic natural genius in the eighteenth century, see Jefferson Matthew Carter, *The Unlettered Muse: The Uneducated Poets and the Concept of Natural Genius in Eighteenth-Century England* (PhD dissertation, University of Arizona, 1972).
8. Joseph Spence to Pope, 11 September 1730, in *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), III, p. 133. For Spence's shorthand notes from his interviews with Duck, see James Osborn, 'Spence, Natural Genius, and Pope', *Philological Quarterly*, 45 (January, 1966), 123–44.
9. See Betty Rizzo, 'The Patron as Poet-Maker: The Politics of Benefaction', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 20 (1990), 244–5.
10. *Grub-street Journal*, no. 45, 12 November 1730. For attribution, see *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, p. 811.
11. Pope to Gay, 23 October 1730, in *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, VI, p. 143.
12. The pamphlet was published in March 1731, three months after Spence left England for the Continent. In a letter to his mother from Lyon, dated 5 June 1731, he disingenuously denies authorship but notes, 'if it can be of any service to honest Stephen any way, I should not be sorry for the scandal that I may undergo for it' (*Letters from the Grand Tour*, ed. Slava Klima (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), p. 53).
13. Mrs Katherine Byerly Thomson, *Memoirs of the Court and Times of King George the Second, and His Consort Queen Caroline* (London: H. Colburn, 1850), I, p. 203.
14. 'On the Queen's Grotto' and 'Ingredients to make a Sceptic' both appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for 1732 (p. 1121) and 1733 (p. 207) respectively. Duck also published *To his Royal Highness, the Duke of Cumberland on his Birthday* (1732), *Truth and Falsehood* (1734), and *A Poem on the Marriage of His Serene Highness the Prince of Orange* (1734) in this period.
15. *The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature*, 37 (January 1774), 473.
16. More to Montagu, 27 September [1784], in *The Female Spectator: English Women Writers before 1800*, ed. Mary R. Mahl and Helene Koon (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 279.
17. Annette Wheeler Cafarelli, 'The Romantic "Peasant" Poets and their Patrons', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 26 (1995), 83.
18. *The Monthly Review* 29 (July 1763), 75.

CHRONOLOGY, 1700–1740

- 1700 Death of Dryden.
- 1701 Act of Settlement establishes Hanoverian Succession. War of the Spanish Succession begins.
- 1702 Death of William III; Anne, daughter of James II, ascends the throne. Defoe, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. *The Daily Courant*, the first daily newspaper in England, founded.
- 1704 Marlborough's victory at Blenheim. Gibraltar captured. Newton, *Opticks*. Swift, *Tale of a Tub*.
- 1707 Act of Union unites England and Scotland.
- 1709 Steele begins *The Tatler* (to 1711).
- 1710 Attempt to impeach Bishop Henry Sacheverell collapses Marlborough-Godolphin ministry. Tory Ministry appointed under Harley and Bolingbroke.
- 1711 Occasional Conformity Act passed. Marlborough dismissed. South Sea Company created. Addison and Steele, *The Spectator* (to 1712). Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*.
- 1712 Stamp Act. Newcomen and Savery develop the first commercially successful steam engine used in the collieries. Handel settles in England.
- 1713 Treaty of Utrecht concludes War of the Spanish Succession, Britain gains Gibraltar, Minorca, territory in North America and the West Indies, and acquires the right to supply slaves to the Spanish Empire. Swift installed as Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Pope, *Windsor-Forest*. Gay, *The Shepherd's Week*.
- 1714 Death of Queen Anne; beginning of the House of Hanover when George I proclaimed King. Whig administration formed under Lord Stanhope. Schism Act. Charity School movement, set in motion by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1699, now teaching 20,000 poor

CHRONOLOGY

- English children. Scriblerus Club meets regularly in Arbuthnot's quarters at St. James Palace. Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*.
- 1715 Harley and Bolingbroke impeached. The Riot Act. Jacobite rising in Scotland under the Earl of Mar. Rowe named poet laureate. Pope's translation of the *Iliad of Homer*.
- 1716 The 'Old Pretender', James Francis Edward, flees Scotland after England fails to rise in support. Septennial Act .
- 1717 Stanhope ministry formed. Beginning of Freemasonry with the establishment of the first Grand Lodge in London.
- 1718 Act for Transportation of Convicts to North America. Repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts. Fahrenheit makes a mercury thermometer in Amsterdam. Laurence Eusden named poet laureate. Prior, *Poems on Several Occasions*.
- 1719 Peerage Bill. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. Haywood, *Love in Excess*. Death of Addison.
- 1720 Declatory Act asserts authority of Parliament over Ireland. South Sea Bubble financial crisis, directors of the South Sea Company expelled from the House of Commons and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Aislabie, committed to the Tower.
- 1721 Robert Walpole becomes Prime Minister, begins a period of Whig political dominance known as the Robinocracy (1721-42). Death of Prior.
- 1722 Atterbury Plot exposed as Walpole attempts to impeach Bishop Atterbury for his contact with the Old Pretender.
- 1724 Swift, *Drapier's Letters*.
- 1725 Death of Peter the Great. Pope's translation of the *Odyssey of Homer*.
- 1726 Riots by weavers in Devon and Gloucestershire leads to Act to prevent unlawful combinations of workmen in the woollen industry. Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*. Thomson, *Winter*.
- 1727 Death of George I; his son becomes George II. Death of Newton.
- 1728 Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*. Pope, *The Dunciad*.
- 1729 Treaty of Seville. Methodist Society formed. Death of Congreve. Pope, *The Dunciad Variorum*.
- 1730 Cibber named poet laureate. Thomson, *The Seasons*. Fielding, *Tom Thumb*.

- 1731 First issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine* (to 1914). Death of Defoe.
- 1732 The Hat Act, mercantilistic regulation of trade. Hogarth, *The Harlot's Progress*. Death of Gay.
- 1733 Pope, *An Essay on Man*. Hogarth, *The Rake's Progress*.
- 1736 Gin Act.
- 1737 Death of Queen Caroline. Stage Licensing Act imposes government control on the London theatres.
- 1738 Wiltshire clothiers' riot. John Wesley's conversion experience propels Methodist movement.
- 1739 Beginning of Anglo-Spanish War in the Caribbean. Parliamentary demand for war with Spain leads to War of Jenkin's Ear. Whitefield's first preaching tour of North America.
- 1740 War of Austrian Succession. Thomson, 'Rule, Britannia' first performed in the masque of *Alfred*. Richardson, *Pamela*.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The authors in this volume are those whose first relevant publication appeared in the period 1700–40, and they are arranged chronologically, according to the publication date of the first poem included. In the interest of showing individual poetic development and avoiding authorial overlap between volumes, work by those poets whose careers extended beyond 1740 is also included here. Hence, later poems by Stephen Duck and Mary Collier are given chronologically under author headings, rather than appearing in a later volume within the series.

To the best of my knowledge, no manuscript sources survive for any of the poems given in this volume. I have used first editions as my copy texts unless otherwise indicated. Discussion of textual history and variation has been relegated to the ‘Text’ headnotes within the ‘Endnotes’ section. Obvious compositor’s and other typographical errors have been silently corrected, and volume errata lists, where available and relevant, have been followed. Substantive emendations to the copy text—such as restored lines or altered phrasing—are also noted in the ‘Endnotes’.

Poetic texts have been reproduced largely as they appeared in their original edition. Eighteenth-century orthographic variation has been maintained, as has period typographical variation (italics, capitalisation, small capitals.). Only capitals used for emphasis, and in titles and headings, and the use of quotation marks, have been standardized.

Additional bibliographic and textual information about the poets in this volume can be found on-line at:

< <http://human.ntu.ac.uk/clare/elsie.htm> >



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EDWARD WARD (1667–1731)

Ned Ward was one of those early professional writers (Pope's derogatory term was 'hack') who managed to fashion a career as a journalist, poet, and pamphleteer without the benefit of patronage, and so influenced the development of a new literature in England that was driven more by the realities of the market than the ideals of art. Most of what we know about Ward comes from his own voluminous output. He was born in 1667 in Leicestershire, where his ancestors were apparently of some means and property. For reasons unknown, the family removed to Oxfordshire when Ward was young, and, by 1691, probably when Ward reached his majority, he had set out for London (Troyer, p. 9).

His first attempt at making writing pay was a poem titled *The Poet's Ramble after Riches, or a Night's Transactions upon the Road Burlesqu'd* (1691) written after Butler's popular satiric style in *Hudibras* (1663). The poem did not do well, and Ward was persuaded to take passage on a ship to Jamaica in January 1697, as much to escape his creditors as to seek adventure and fortune. He returned within the year, sans fortune, but the experience provided the subject of his first successful literary venture. *A Trip to Jamaica*, a satiric sixteen-page prose pamphlet, appeared in 1698 and quickly went through six editions. Ward's literary and cultural acumen is in evidence here as this small, affordable pamphlet capitalised on the reading public's penchant for travel narratives and fascination with the exotic. Ward followed up this success with other pamphlets in a similar mode, including the first number of *The London Spy*, a satiric monthly aimed at the coffee-house crowd. Ward completed eighteen installments, finally bringing the venture to a close in May 1700. *The London Spy* was so popular that his subsequent writings over the next decade were advertised with the title-page phrase 'By the Author of the London Spy' (Troyer, p. 30).

Though Ward never sold his pen to party or faction, around this period he began to enter the fray of political discourse that swirled in London at the turn of the century. Throughout his life, Ward towed the High-church Tory line, and heaped abuse on Low-church Whigs and dissenters at every opportunity. In *A Journey to Hell* (1700), Ward set about attacking not only dissenting ministers, but also apothecaries and physicians, unscrupulous bookseller/publishers, lawyers, and others. Ward began issuing his most ambitious political poem, *Hudibras Redivivus*, in serial form in August 1705. Because of a thinly veiled, somewhat

vulgar portrait of Queen Anne, whom Ward accused of 'not acting on her fine words (which he characterized as "Wind")', he was taken into custody on 7 February 1706. This warning, however, was not heeded; *Hudibras Redivivus* continued to appear in regular installments. On 13 June, Ward was again arrested and this time it was more serious, as he was brought up on charges of 'Publishing several Scandalous and Seditious Libels', and sentenced on 14 November to pay a fine and stand in the pillory on two separate occasions (Troyer, pp. 94–5). Despite his punishment, Ward continued to train his pen in favour of the High-church party in countless publications over the next twenty-five years.

Ward's contemporary biographers often noted that he was a man of 'low extraction' who did not have the benefit of formal education (Cibber, p. 293; Jones et al, p. 736). These facts alone might be enough to secure his inclusion in the tradition of plebeian publishing in this period. But Ward was also famously both tavern keeper and vintner. The exact chronology of his working life is somewhat sketchy, though it appears he entered the trade at the height of his success as a journalist in 1712. He had published well over one hundred pieces by this time, but, as Troyer speculates, the precariousness of the life of a political pamphleteer and poet likely influenced Ward to seek a more steady, and perhaps socially acceptable, position (pp. 170–1). In *The Poetical Entertainer*, no. 4, Ward makes reference to opening an alchouse in Clerkenwell. In 1717 Ward moved to the Bacchus Tavern in Moorfields, something of a move up the trade ladder, as he notes himself in the occupation-specific poem published three years later, *The Delights of the Bottle, or the Compleat Vintner* (1720), extracted below. Giles Jacob recorded that 'of late Years [Ward] has kept a publick House in the City (but in a genteel way) and with his Wit, Humour, and good Liqueur has afforded his Guests a pleasurable Entertainment; especially the High-Church Party, which is compos'd of Men of his Principles, and to whom he is very much oblig'd for their constant Resort' (p. 225). Ward remained host at the Bacchus for roughly the next thirteen years, giving it up sometime between August 1729 and October 1730 (Troyer, p. 202). In the preface to a poem published in November 1730, Ward gives his address as 'the British Coffee-House in Fullwood's Rents, near Gray's Inn'. But Ward never published a descriptive account of his life at the coffee-house, an odd omission given that he wrote copiously about everything else around him in such a timely fashion. He died at Gray's Inn on the night of 22 June 1731; his death was noticed in the first number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

FURTHER READING

Theophilus Cibber, et al, eds., *The Lives of the Poets of Great-Britain and Ireland* (London, 1753)

Giles Jacob, *The Poetical Register*, (London, 1723), II, pp. 225–6

Stephen Jones, et al, eds., *Biographia Dramatica*, (1812), I, pp. 736–7

Howard William Troyer, *Ned Ward of Grub Street* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968).

From *A Journey to Hell: or, a Visit paid to the Devil. A Poem*
(1700)

The Preface

Since a Poet, in a piece of Satyr, like a Passionate Man in a Skirmish, may by accident offend those he never designed to meddle with, the Author, lest People should think he has too far jested with an Edge-Tool, has thought fit to declare, that he had no other Intention in the following Poem, than to apply it as a Carpenter does his Axe, when, to the hazard of its Edge, he strikes at those stubborn and irregular Knots which are a discredit to the Tree, and lessen the value of the Timber: Or as a Surgeon handles his Lancet, when he lays open a corrupt Member, which is both troublesome and scandalous to the sound parts of the Body. It is evident enough, there is no Church in the World but what has received some Blemishes from her Priests, meaning some few, who, for want of either Learning, Prudence, or Piety, have been a dishonour to their Function, such only I accuse; and I hope, should I blame Peter for denying his Master, or Judas for betraying Him, the rest of the Apostles would have no reason to be angry. If I am condemn'd for Arraigning 'em in the Lower Regions, which some of 'em have good reason to hope was prepar'd only for us Laymen, I have only this to say, that I am not the first that has plac'd a vicious Clergyman in the Infernal Territories; for Michael Angelo, the Famous Roman Painter, in his Resurrection in St. Peter's Chapel, had the presumption to paint a Cardinal in Hell, so very like the grave Father he represented, that every body knew the Picture, which put the good Old Gentleman under so great a Dissatisfaction, that he complain'd to the Pope, and desir'd he would Command it should be rub'd out; who told him, he was got quite out of his Jurisdiction, saying, If he had been but a step on this side, he could have released him from Purgatory, but having not the Keys of Hell, from thence there could be no Redemption.

The next part of my Apology, is to the Learned Professors both of Law and Physick, for whom (as well as the Orthodox Clergy of the English Church) I have a peculiar Veneration, who cannot be insensible what swarms of hungry and unskilful Practicers in both Sciences there are, who fraudulently prey upon the honest Labours of the Publick, at such only is this Satyr pointed, who support themselves basely by others Ruin, and have no just Prospect, for want of true Knowledge in their Business, to preserve themselves from Beggary, but by often bringing others into it; one side plunging their Clients further into Trouble, instead of helping them out; and the other, instead of recovering their Patients of Curable Distempers, will, if they be Poor, thro' neglect; or if Rich, by delays of Cure, for Interest sake, be the Death of

some, and the undoing of others, to their whole Lives Misery. Therefore, since it as essentially relates to the Comforts of the Life of Man, to know what other People are, as well as what he himself should be, I thought it no Ill Task to Communicate to the World what knowledge of Mankind I have gather'd from my own Experience; the Good wont hurt us, 'tis the Bad we must be Cautious how we deal with; for which reason, I have herein separated the Wicked from the Godly, representing only the former, to show Youth what Monsters in Humane Shape they must expect to meet with in this World, tho' of the most Noble Professions: Therefore, my whole Design is only to make Men careful with what Priests they trust their Souls; with what Lawyers their Estates; and with what Physicians their Bodies. And if this Part of my Undertaking succeed well, and that the World is pleas'd with it, they shall hear further from me on the same Subject; for in this I had not room to half finish my Design. So Farewel.

Part I. CANTO I [The Poet Visits Hades]

When *Western* Clouds involv'd the God of Light,
 And all the *Eastern* starry Orbs look'd bright;
 When Sots their Tavern Bacchanals begun,
 And *Thetis* at a draught drank up the Sun;
 Whilst *Luna* with her Silver Horns drew near, 5
 To bless the Night, and bear Dominion here.
 'Twas then that I, my better self, my Soul
 Broke loose, and thro' my Prison Casements stole,
 And glad I'd shifted off my Earthly Chains,
 Danc'd like a flaming Vapour round the Plains. 10
 I then thro' Brakes and over Whirl-Pools flew,
 Till tir'd with only superficial view;
 Then into Holes and Crannies did I dive,
 Where Badger, Fox, and sundry Vermine live;
 Where Moles were labouring to enlarge their Homes 15
 And buzzing Bees made Musick o'er their Combs.
 Farther I darted thro' the porous Earth,
 To seek that Womb whence Nature had her Birth,
 But found the hidden Mistery far too great,
 And for a Human Soul too intricate: 20
 Causes with sundry Causes mix'd I found,
 Each Matrix did with proper Seeds abound,
 But why those Seeds their likeness shou'd produce,
 Their Form preserve, be still the same in use,
 My shallow Reason neither see or knew, 25
 But found each Cause did the Decrees pursue,
 Of some Eternal Pow'r beyond dim Reasons view.

Thro' deeper Caverns still I forc'd my way,
 Where useless Dregs of the old Chaos lay, 30
 Involv'd in Night, remote, and never seen by Day.
 Where Plagues and Pestilential Fumes were pent,
 Till Heav'ns Decree shoul'd give 'em fatal vent:
 Where greater Serpents do the less devour,
 And Human-like, contend for Sov'reign Pow'r: 35
 Where Streams thro' subteranean Channels run,
 And fight with Winds far distant from the Sun;
 Whose violent Shocks the World can scarce survive,
 But trembles at the very strokes they give.
 And where Heavens Judgments in subjection lay,
 Ready the dreadful Trumpet to Obey, 40
 And work the World's destruction at the last sad Day.
 Thus thro' Nights deep Avenues did I pass,
 Where all was rude as in the unform'd Mass.
 Thro' Death's remoter frightful Vaults I went,
 Where ghastly Sprights their Follies past lament, 45
 And in despairing Sighs such Discord make,
 No Soul could hear, but of their Grief partake,
 Dreading from thence their sad remove each Hour,
 To endless Pains, where Time shall be no more.
 So the poor Thief, when seiz'd for his Offence, 50
 Finds his own Conscience Judge and Evidence.
 And thus, before he to the Bar shall come,
 Dreads with sad Terror his succeeding Doom.

I forward press'd, bemoaning of their Case,
 Freed from my Earth, Death ask'd me for no Pass, 55
 But boldly shot the Adamantine Gates
 Without repulse, unquestion'd by the Fates
 Who busie sate, with Distaff, Reel, and Knife,
 Spining and cutting Man's short Threads of Life.
 O'er scorching Sands, where fiery Seeds lay hid, 60
 I Travell'd, till the *Avernuan* Hills I spy'd,
 High were their gloomy Heads, the trodden Path as wide.
 I ventur'd forwards till to *Stryx* I came,
 Which shone like humid Vapours in a flame;
 Its poysonous Fumes so fatal and impure, 65
 None but Immortal Spirits can endure.
 I stood a while, and ponder'd by the Lake
 Upon the frightful Voyage I had still to take.

Part I. CANTO VI [The Physicians in Hades]

Soon as the Scribes were to their Torments gone,
 I heard another Crow come trampling on;
 Grave Seigniors led the *Æsculapian* Rout,
 Some crying, Oh! The Stone, some, Oh! The Gout;
 Holding in ev'ry Interval a Chat, 5
 Of *Acids*, *Alkalies*, and Hell knows what.
 Some boasting of a *Nostrum* of his own,
 To all the College but himself unknown.
 Another prais'd an universal Slop,
 Made from the sweepings of a Drugster's Shop; 10
 Whose wond'rous Vertues may be seen in Print,
 Tho' he that made it never know what's in't.
 Another wisely had acquir'd an Art,
 To make a Man Immortal by a Squirt.
 Some with two Talents were profusely blest, 15
 And seem'd to study least, what they profest,
 In earnest Poetry, and Physick but in jest.
 One hop'd by Satyr he himself should raise
 To the same Honour some had done by Praise,
 But angry seem'd because he lost his Aim, 20
 And did th' Ingratitude of Princes blame,
 Who gave not that Reward he might in Justice claim.
 As they mov'd forwards great Complaints they made
 Against the crafty Pharmaceutick Trade;
 Bad were their Med'cines, and too great their Price, 25
 Little their Care, and ign'rant their Advice;
 Who from the Bills they fill'd had found a way
 To seem as Wise, and be as Rich as they.
 Ne'er fear, says one, a Project I'll advance
 Shall bring them back to their first Ignorance. 30
 The Means propos'd were neither wise, nor fair,
 A frothy Thought that vanish'd into Air,
 And left the wrinkled Consult in a deep despair.
 Graduates and Emp'ricks here did well agree,
 And kindly mix'd, like Gold and Mercury. 35
 Both had their Bands, their Canes Japan'd with black,
 Each in their Carriage had the same grave Knack,
 'Twas hard to know the Doctor from the Quack.
 Both skill'd to sift the Patients Worth, or Want,

And furnish'd were alike with Chamber-Cant: 40
 Both could advance their Cane-heads to their Nose,
 And bid the Nurse take off, or lay on Cloths;
 Judge the sick Pulse, pursuant to the Rule,
 And ask the Patient when he'd last a Stool:
 Both talk'd alike, alike did understand, 45
 Each had hard Words as Plenty at Command;
 But that which some small distance had begot,
 One knew from whence deriv'd, the other not.
 The Emperick therefore in Dispute oft yields,
 And gives the College D[un]ce the Mast'ry of *Moorfields*. 50
 Thus he that's Sick to either may address,
 For both administer with like Success,
 The Quack oft kills, the Doctor does no less.
 Next these a Troop of Med'cine Mongers went
 With Cordials in their Hands, they should not faint, 55
 Who rail'd against the College Dons, and swore
 Themselves as Wise as those that went before.
 One much disturb'd his Brethren were opprest,
 Attention begg'd, and thus he spoke his best:
 Thro' Zeal to's Trade, he rashly did begin, 60
 Speaking as if on Earth he still had been:
 If to our Wrong, Physicians stoop so low,
 To keep a Med'cine Warehouse, let 'em know,
 We'll practice Physick till we kill and slay
 As many Thousands in a Year as they. 65
 The Poor they promis'd should have Med'cines free,
 Instead of that the Upper-World may see,
 They make 'em pay great Rates for as bad Goods as we.
 Therefore in just Revenge let's drive at all,
 Advise, Bleed, Purge, and no Phisician call: 70
 Thus into obstinate Resolves they broke,
 And wisely, like Apothecaries, spoke,
 We will do what we will, and let them see,
 As long as we don't care, pray what care we.

St. *Barth'lomew's* Physicians next came up, 75
 Some bred *Tom-Fools*, and some to Dance the Rope:
 One Month employ'd i'th' Business of the Fair,
 And th' other Eleven stroling Doctors were.
 Of Learning these no Portion had, or Sence,
 Their only Gift was downright Impudence: 80

Chiefly in *Germany* and *Holland* born,
 But *England's* Plague, and their own Country's Scorn.
 The Poor Fools Idol, and the Wiseman's Scoff;
 Yet often cur'd what Learned Heads left off.
 With these were Sow-Gelders, and Tooth-Drawers mixt, 85
 And Barber-Surgeons here and there betwixt.
 Some round their Necks had Chains and Medals got,
 For Curing some strange Prince of God knows what:
 Others who Bulls, and Bores, and Colts had Gelt,
 Wore Silver Horse-shoes on a Scarlet Belt. 90
 Whilst Spoon-Promoters with the rest came on,
 Adorn'd with Sets of good sound Teeth they'd drawn.
 Illit'rate all, from painful Study freed,
 Scarce one could Write, and very few could read.
 Themselves they extol'd, on others heaping Blame, 95
 Their Bills and common Talk were much the same;
 When e'er they spoke their barren Nonsense shew,
 They little had to say, and less to do.
 Some from the Loom, some from the Last arose,
 Others from making or from mending Cloaths. 100
 Pretending all such useful Truths they'd found
 In Physick's Riddle, which but few expound,
 That was most pleasant, speedy, safe and sure,
 And in the twinkling of an Eye would Cure
 The worst disease on Earth, that Mortal cou'd endure. 105

Close to the Bar they now began to Crowd,
 Hoping for Mercy; very low they bow'd.
 The Judge being tir'd, did for some Hours adjourn,
 And left 'em there to wait the Court's Return.

Part II. CANTO VI [The Poets in Hades]

These were succeeded by a numerous Throng,
 Who scan'd their Paces as they march'd along,
 Some in their Hands had Songs, and some Lampons,
 Some Read, whilst others Sung *White-Fryars* Tunes.
 Amongst 'em, here and there, a stanch'd old Wit, 5
 Who long had stood the Censure of the Pit,
 Emphatically mouthing to the rest,
 Some Madman's Rant, or some Fools barren Jest:

Repeating all things like a Man Inspir'd,
 Storming or Smiling as the Sence requir'd. 10
 Some who had Lyrick'd o'er a lucky Strain,
 Look'd as if lately Rig'd in *Drury-Lane*;
 Whilst others, banter'd by their Jilting Muse,
 Appear'd in Thread-bare Coats and rusty Shooes,
 Yet all had Swords hung on strange aukward ways, 15
 From Poet *Ninny* to the worthy Bays;
 Not wore as Soldiers do their Arms, to fight,
 But for distinction, as an Author's Right,
 Who tho' he hurts sometimes, yet hates to kill,
 And never Wounds but with a Goose's Quill. 20

The mungril Scriblers, who could stand no Test,
 Bow'd low with Veneration to the rest,
 Entreating some grave *Seignior* to peruse,
 A Leathern Satyr against Wooden Shooes;
 Or else a Poem, praising to the Skies, 25
 The Cook that first projected Farthing-Pics,
 Crying it was not heighten'd to his Power,
 Because he loosely writ it in an Hour;
 The angry Bard with sundry Trifles teaz'd,
 Made it much worse, and then the Fool was pleas'd. 30

Some about preference of Wit fell out,
 And made a Riot in the Rhiming Rout,
 Wounding each other with Poetick Darts,
 And rail'd like *Billingsgates* to show their Parts;
 Each envious Wasp stung t'other at no rate, 35
 Expressing not his Judgment, but his Hate.
 Thus did the Partial Criticks all run Mad,
 And fiercely struggl'd for what neither had;
 As Whores their Reputations oft defend,
 And for a Good Name, which they want, contend; 40
 Whilst ev'ry stander-by the Feud derides,
 Takes neither part, but ridicules both sides.
 When round the Bar *Apollo's* Sons were spread,
 And Proclamation was for Silence made.
 Hell's Advocate began his just Report, 45
 Op'ning their Accusations to the Court.

May'd please your Lordship—————
 —————these the Taglines are,
 Who softly Write, and very hardly Fare;
 They tune their Words as *Tubal* did his Shells, 50
 And Chime 'em as a Green-Bird does his Bells:
 Their Muses leisure wait, and Rave by fits,
 By some call'd Madmen, by themselves call'd Wits;
 Who, to improve, and please a vicious Age,
 Lampoon'd the Pulpit, and debauch'd the Stage; 55
 And with convincing Arguments profest,
 Wit was best relish'd in a Bawdy Jest;
 Writ wanton Songs would fire a Virgin's Blood,
 And make her covet what's against her good:
 Laid such obscene Intrigues in ev'ry Play, 60
 That sent warm Youth with lustful Thoughts away.
 And when thus guilty, a defence could urge,
 And justifie those Ills they ought to scourge.

These are the Flatt'ners, who with fulsome lies
 Made Knaves seem honest, and rich Fools seem wise 65
 Misplac'd the Epithets, Great, Good, and Just,
 Us'd them as Masks to cover Pride and Lust:
 Virtues to each vain gilded Fop they gave,
 Made Niggards Generous and Cowards Brave;
 Found Charms and Graces for each homely She, 70
 And highly prais'd each Jilt of Quality;
 Made her all Beauty, Innocence Divine,
 And like a Goddess in their Poems shine,
 Who whilst they sung her Praise, in Fact was lewd,
 And lawless Pleasures ev'ry Hour pursu'd; 75
 If lib'ral of her Gold they'd give her Charms,
 Thus fold their Praise as Heralds do their Arms.

The World they cheated into base Mistakes,
 And gull'd 'em with a thousand Rhiming Knacks;
 With Fancies, witty Flirts, and musing Dreams, 80
 Extravagantly heighten'd to Extreems.
 If Praise they writ, then ev'ry partial Line,
 Shou'd make the *Bristol* Stone like Diamond Shine;
 Or vouch a Nosegay of some Lady's Farts,
 More fragrant than a Rose, to show their Parts. 85
 Their Works are all false Mirrors, where Men see

Not what they are, but what they cannot be:
 Such luscious Flatt'ries flowing from each Pen,
 As make their Patrons Gods, not Mortal Men.
 Thus some affecting Grandeur, by a Cheat 90
 Are often made so Popular and Great.
 As the proud *Sapho* did, by Parrots praise,
 Himself above all Humane Glory raise;
 And by his subtle and amusing Fraud,
 Procur'd the Veneration of a God. 95
 So are the Prisoners at the Bar (my Lords)
 A jingling Consort of deceitful Birds,
 Who sung about the World, like common Fame,
 Hyperboles of Praise to each great Name,
 And made those Actions Glorious which deserv'd but Shame. 100

The lewd Great Man, that banter'd Holy Writ,
 And ridicul'd Religion, was a Wit;
 For all things render'd able, tho' for nothing fit.

Sublime his Notions, and refin'd his Thoughts,
 Their Dedications wip'd away all Blots, 105
 And made the wild young Fop an Angel without Fau'ts.

The Patron of his Gold profusely free,
 To indulge himself in his Debauchery,
 Was generously Great, to a laudable degree.

If too much love of Money was his Vice, 110
 He did the Pleasures of the World despise,
 And was with them no less than Provident and Wise.

Tho' ne'er so vile, if th'Muses Friends they were,
 For every Vice a Virtue shou'd appear,
 Poem and Dedications kept their Honours clear. 115

If they writ Satyr, 'twas their only Care
 To represent things blacker than they were;
 Nay, clap a Sable Vizard on the brightest Fair:

Make the best Creatures to their Lash submit,
 Render each Virtuous She a Counterfeit, 120
 And Stile the Pious Virgin but a Hipocrite.

The saving Man as Niggard they'll accuse,
 The gen'rous Worthy they can call Profuse,
 Thus all that's Good and Just, when e'er they please, abuse.

The sober Student is a Bookish Dunce, 125
 The Wit that's free spends too much Brains at once,
 And he that's Brave or Bold, is but a Flash or Bounce.

Religion, when they please, is but a Trick,
 The Priests are Hounds that hunt a Bishoprick,
 Who for the same Reward wou'd truly serve Old Nick. 130

Thus Cause or Person, whether bad or good,
 That in their biass'd Path of Interest stood,
 Were without Merit prais'd, or falsly render'd Lewd.

Thus, may it please your Lordship, have I run
 Thro' the chief Ills their biass'd Pens have done, 135
 And must conclude, 'tis now the Bench's part
 To give the Rhiming Paupers their desert.

Their Accusations being all made plain,
 The Judge himself austerely thus began.

You who by Nature had such Gifts allow'd, 140
 As rais'd your Minds above the common Crowd.
 When thus enrich'd, to condescend so low
 As stoop to Railing, or to Flatt'ry bow,
 Shame on your Cow'rdly Souls, to so abuse
 That *Genius* giv'n you for a nobler use. 145

To've heighten'd Virtue should have been your Task,
 And show'd the Strumpet Vice without her Mask.
 To've giv'n the Wise Respect, taught Fools more Wit,
 Reprov'd, and not have rais'd vain Self-Conceit;
 By Flatt'ring some for Int'rest, who abhor 150
 Those very Virtues you have prais'd 'em for,
 Whilst the Great Soul who true desert contains,
 Is render'd Odious by your envious Pens.
 For these Offences, which your Charge makes plain,
 Destructive to the common Peace of Man, 155
 This Sentence I Decree—————

To Hell's remotest Caves ye shall be sent,
 In woful Verse you shall your Crimes recant,
 And Criticising Devils shall your Souls Torment.

Nay, further, to encrease your wretched State, 160
 Shall write in praise of Bailiffs, whom you hate,
 And humbly, in your Poems, stile 'em Good and Great.

Brisk Clarret, and th' obliging Miss dispraise;
 Thus shall you Scribble 'gainst your Wills both ways,
 And ev'ry Imp shall make Bumfodder of your Lays. 165

Part II. CANTO VII [The Printers and the Booksellers in Hades]

This Scene being ended, and the Poets gone,
 After some space a new Parrade came on;
 A Throng of angry Ghosts that next drew near,
 Large as a *Persian* Army did appear; 5
 Each to the rest show'd Envy in his Looks,
 Some Writings in their Hands, some printed Books.
 The learn'd Contents of which they knew no more,
 Than the Calves Skins their sundry Volumes wore,
 Down from the bulky Folio to the Twenty-Four.
 As they press'd on, confus'dly in a Crowd, 10
Piracy, Piracy, they cry'd aloud,
 What made you print my Copy, Sir, says one,
 You're a meer Knave, 'tis very basely done.
 You did the like by such, you can't deny,
 And therefore you're as great a Knave as I. 15
 By their own Words I found alike they were,
 The Dev'l a Barrel better Herring there.
 Printers, their Slaves, b'ing mix'd amongst the rest,
 Betwixt 'em both arose a great Contest:
 Th' ungrateful *Bibliopoles* swoln big with Rage, 20
 Did thus their servile *Typographs* engage:
 You Letter-picking Juglers at the Case,
 And you Illit'rate Slaves that work at Press;
 How dare you thus unlawfully invade
 Our Properties, and trespass on our Trade, 25
 Print Copies for your selves, and fill the Town,
 Instead of ours, with Pamphlets of your own;

Publish upon your own Accounts each Day,
 And buy our Authors off with better Pay?
 How can you justifie such Wrongs as these, 30
 When both, by right, shou'd bow your Heads and Knees,
 To Write and Print for us, and at what rates we please?

This Arrogance inflam'd the Printing Crew,
 And from their Tongues these sharp reflections drew:
 Ye poultry Tribe, we bow our Heads to you! 35
 Pray when, or how, became this Homage due?
 What has possess'd your Noddles with this Dream?
 Our Trade's an Art soars high i'th'World's esteem:
 'Tis we the Labours of the Learn'd disperse,
 And diffuse Knowledge thro' the Universe, 40
 We give new Light, Obscurities remove,
 All Sciences preserve, the same improve;
 Which were it not for us would quickly die,
 And must in dark Oblivion bury'd lie.
 Nay, I may boldly say, the Church and State 45
 Are by our means supported and made great:
 Yet Gratitude obliges us to give,
 Preference to Authors, 'tis by them we live.
 We did at first, and still alone can do
 Their Bus'ness, and no Aid require of you, 50
 Who were at first but Hawkers, and no more,
 Imploy'd to range the Town and Country o'er;
 Travel'd with Asses to convey your Books,
 And kept no Shop but Panniers, Bags, and Pokes.
 Thus trudg'd to Markets, strol'd to cv'ry Fair, 55
 Open'd your Wallets on the Ground, and there,
 Amongst Hogs, Pigs, and Geese expos'd your learned Ware.
 Thus you at first were neither more nor less,
 Than servile Pedlars to the fruitful Press;
 No Copies cou'd ye buy, no Charter boast, 60
 But now alas, those good old Times are lost.

Corners of Streets, and Gateways in the Town,
 Were chosen Places where your Stocks were shown;
 There sate like Women with their Curds and Whey,
 Had none, or very little Rent to pay: 65
 Sold Ballads, Peny-Books, poor Fools to please,
Tom Thumb's old tales, or such like Whims as these.