Anonymous, "Sonnet, on the Inhabitants of London"

Description

ANONYMOUS

"Sonnet, on the Inhabitants of LONDON"

5

10

In London scarce a bird but may be found:

The sun-ey'd eagle borne on lofty wing,

Linnets that adulate the smile of Spring,

And ravens croaking with portentous sound:

Owls wrapt in dulness, crows tow'rd carrion bound,

Parrots whose squalling notes incessant ring,

Swallows that dare to chatter near a King,

And gabbling geese nice students wish were drown'd:

Mud-haunting ducks that dabble in the street,

Fine birds of paradise with little feet,

Peacocks that spread a gaudy-painted fan;

Grain-raking poultry, enemies to flow'rs,

The stork imperious that all things devours,

A phoenix there would be an honest man.

NOTES:

3 Linnets A type of finch known for its pleasant song with quick trills and tweets; adulate "To flatter in an obsequious or sycophantic manner, to fawn on" (OED).

4 portentous "Ominous, threatening" (OED).

10 birds of paradise A family of birds found throughout the islands of New Guinea which are recognizable by the males' highly elaborate plumage.

13 imperious "Exercising a commanding influence; ruling, sovereign, dominant" (OED).

14 *Phoenix* A bird in Greek mythology that was characteristically long lived and went through cycles of death and rebirth from its ashes. Also an early symbol of Christianity.

Source: The Gentleman's Magazine (July, 1777), p. 345.

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