

## Alexander Pennecuik, "The Trial of the Muir-Cock"

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ALEXANDER PENNECUIK

“The Trial of the Muir-Cock”

Judges, of old, amongst the feather'd flock,  
A diet held to try this mad muir-cock,  
Who stood indicted by a learn'd gormaw,  
The eagle's advocate and flisk of law:  
His crimes were very great and very gross, 5  
Enough to sink the muir, and blast the moss,

INDICTMENT.

Muir-Cock, you stand accus'd of being a cheat,  
Using bad means to purchase drink and meat;  
Though you was early consecrate a priest, 10  
Sham'd godly birds, and turn'd a drunken beast.  
Deny'd the eagle's title to the crown;  
And from two rich well feather'd nests pull'd down;  
Was stigmatiz'd before the high sanhedrim,  
But their correction made you grow more slim. 15  
Of late you laid a most pernicious plot,  
For liquor to your all devouring throat;  
By hellish arts your purpose brought about,  
Marry'd a simple bird to your suspected pout:  
Though she were virtuous, still it would be said, 20  
She had a pimping, though a preaching dad:  
Which being prov'd by verdict of assize,  
The pannel's either banished or dies.  
The jury gave a formidable stroke,  
And sentence thus went out against the cock. 25

THE SENTENCE.

Muir-cock, for this high aggravated crime,  
We banish you into a foreign clime.  
Gled, take him to the peak of Teneriff,

There nail his foot; and to augment his grief, 30  
Set drink at distance from him for a mock,  
Till vultures wonder and devour the COCK.

**NOTES:**

- 2** diet “A day fixed for a particular meeting or assembly (Scottish)” (*OED*).
- 3** *gormaw* “The cormorant” (*Dictionaries of the Scots Language*).
- 22** assize “The jury (Scottish)” (*OED*).
- 23** pannel “The accused” (*Dictionaries of the Scots Language*).
- 29** *Gled* “The common kite” (*Dictionaries of the Scots Language*); *the peak of Teneriff* Mt. Teide, a volcano on Tenerife, the largest island of Spain’s Canary Islands.

**SOURCE:** *A Collection of Scots Poems on Several Occasions* (Edinburgh, 1769), pp. 48-49. [Google Books]

*Edited by Daisy Downie*