

## John Ogilvie, "Jupiter and the Clown. A Fable"

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JOHN OGILVIE

### "Jupiter and the Clown. A Fable"

Envy! thou Fiend, whose venom'd sting  
Still points to Fame's aspiring wing;  
Whose breath, blue sulphur's blasting steam,  
Whose eye the basilisk's lightning-gleam;  
Say, through the dun ile's solemn round, 5  
Where Death's dread foot-step prints the ground,  
Lovest thou to haunt the yawning tomb,  
And crush fallen Grandeur's dusty plume?  
Or, where the wild Hyaena's yell  
Rings thro' the hermit's cavern'd cell, 10  
Moves thy black wing its devious flight?  
(The wing that bloats the cheek of Night)  
There oft beneath some hoary wall  
Thy stings are dipt in scorpion's gall;  
Thence whizzing springs the forky dart, 15  
And spreads its poison to the heart.

Hence all th' unnumber'd cares of life,  
Hence malice, fury, rapine, strife;  
Hence all exclaim on partial fate;  
Hence pale Revenge, and stern Debate; 20  
Hence man (to every passion prone)  
Sees much, loves all;---but hates his own.

Now, Delia, should the chance to know  
Some trifling fool, —perhaps—a beau,  
The fair at once implores the skies, 25  
With glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes;  
O, hear your Votary's earnest prayer,  
Ye guardian angels of the fair!  
Make but this charming creature prove  
A victim to the power of love: 30  
'Tis this, Ye Gods, I would implore!

And grant but this;--- I ask no more.

The prayer is heard (what power delays  
To grant her suit when Delia prays!)  
The beau is caught, he swears, and bows, 35  
Protests, and snuffs, and sweats, and vows  
By all the oaths the fool can swear,  
That never creature was so fair:  
Then adds a thousand more, to tell  
That never mortal loved so well. 40

The prize is gain'd---the pleasure o'er;  
Lace, bag, and snuff-box charm no more:  
No bosom feels the killing smart,  
No side-long glance betrays the heart,  
No fan conceals a rival's fears, 45  
No cheek is stain'd with spiteful tears.  
On new delights her passions fix,  
A court perhaps, or coach and six,  
She wants a ball, and justly vain,  
Admires a title,---or a cane. 50

But ere our reader's patience fail,  
'Tis time we now begin our tale.

An honest Farmer, old and sage,  
(Sure wisdom still attends on age)  
One morning rose, when all was fair, 55  
And joyous breathed the scented air.  
Waked by the Zephyr's tepid wing,  
Aurora, fragrant as the Spring,  
Rose from her couch, the busy Hours  
Stole from their crimson-curtain'd bowers; 60  
Loose was her robe of saffron hue,  
Her locks diffused ambrosial dew;  
The sky's broad gates at once unfold,  
The light cloud flames with cinctured gold;  
The woodland gleams, the silver stream 65  
Waves to the broad sun's fluttering beam;  
The feather'd people sing their love,  
And music rings along the grove.

Elate, the happy clown surveyed  
The field wide-opening thro' the shade; 70  
The green ears rustling to the gale  
Shot thro' to thin night's ruffled veil;

Slow rose to sight the new-born day,  
Slow crept the lingering shades away,  
'Till o'er the broad hill's summit dun 75  
Obliquely glanc'd the mounting sun;  
And all-illumed with rushing light,  
The swelling landskip burst to sight.

As the fond Mother's panting breast  
Throbs o'er her infant hush'd to rest, 80  
Warm in his little hut, the boy  
Flutters elate with rising joy;  
As by her gentle pressure sway'd,  
Swings soft and slow the sleepy bed;  
Wild Fancy whispers in her ear, 85  
She whirls away the rolling year!  
Youth, manhood comes! she marks afar  
A robe, a mitre, or a f—r!  
Her heart leaps quick! elate with pride!  
Each prude's insulting dress outvied! 90  
Each neighbour's booby son, unseen,  
Gnaws the pale lip with fruitless spleen!  
Sudden she starts! some rival dress'd,  
Swims in the loosely-floating vest,  
Her bosom heaves a sullen groan:---- 95  
Ah! was that charming suit *my own!*

Such joy ( soon check'd with killing smart)  
Shot thro' the swain's exulting heart;  
He hears the reaper's sprightly song:  
The rustling sickle sweeps along; 100  
His barns with swelling sheaves are stored,  
Gay Plenty crowns the festive board;  
He cries in triumph, with a smile,  
"For hopes like these who would not toil,  
That neither flatter, nor beguile?" 105  
Just as he spoke the word,---behold  
A gaudy thing, o'erlaid with gold,  
Came fluttering by!--so nicely clad,  
With powder'd wig, and laced brocade;  
So gay, so rich (though strange to tell!) 110  
No butterfly look'd half so well.

Struck with the glittering vest he wore,  
The clown's rude eye-ball stared him o'er;  
Sly Envy mark'd the secret snare,  
The pick'd a chosen dart with care; 115

Of power to edge the quickest pain;----  
Then plunged it reeking in his brain.  
Inflamed with fury and surprize,  
Red Anger flashes from his eyes  
"Must I (he cryed and scratch'd his head) 120  
Supply this prattling thing with bread?  
Must Farmers sweat, and wear their cloaths,  
To furnish equipage for beaux?  
We, Drudges doom'd to ceaseless toil,  
For others tear the stubborn soil, 125  
Our thoughts suspense and fears inflame,  
Wretched and curs'd beyond a name;  
While these amid' the balmy bower,  
Spend in soft ease the fleeting hour;----  
How fine they look! what charms they show, 130  
Ah! would to heav'n I was a Beau!"

Soft Pity touch'd th' Almighty Sire:  
Jove heard, and granted his desire.  
At once his furrow'd brow was smooth,  
In all the blooming pride of youth; 135  
His hair in wavy ringlets flow'd,  
His cheek with fine vermilion glow'd;  
Not like our modern pigmy race,  
With wither'd limbs, and meagre face,  
But plump and pruce he'd match'd a score; 140  
Such were the Beaux in days of yore.  
Gay pleasure danc'd in every limb,  
He skimm'd along with airy swim;  
The God, propitious to his prayer,  
Gave the soft look, and graceful air; 145  
But wrapt in his dreams of bliss, the Fool  
Forgot his pocket, and his soul.

When thus transform'd, our glittering Beau  
Surveyed himself from top to toe,  
Stuck at the change with vast surprize, 150  
He stares, and scarce believed his eyes.  
But when he found that all was sure,  
He cock'd his hat, and frown'd, and swore;  
Applauded by the wondering throng,  
The sullen Heroe strode along: 155  
And while the swains in rude amaze  
Mark his high port with stupid gaze,  
Like Jove with solemn pace he trod,  
And deign'd—, yet scarcely deign'd,---to nod.

But now to town he takes his way, 160  
And sees the court, the park, the play;  
Attends the Fair, admir'd by all,  
Leads the gay dance, and rules the ball.  
"Heav'ns! what a shape! fair Daphne cries,  
How fine his mien! how bright his eyes!" 165  
Thus all admire the charms they see,  
His cane that dangled at his knee,  
His box and hat they view together,---  
Some prais'd the paint, and some the feather;  
No english taylor's clumsy fist 170  
E'er match'd the sleeve that graced his wrist;  
The lace,---from Brussels last;--- by chance  
He pick'd the brilliant up in France.  
His coat so trim! so neat his shoe!  
His limbs so shaped to strut, or— bow! 175  
Fashion, you'd swear, to show her power,  
Had left dear Paris half an hour.

But, ah! with grief the muse proceeds:  
What power can mend the vulgar's deeds!  
One night a coachman set him down, 180  
Then rudely ask'd him— half a crown.

He search'd his pocket;---what a curse?  
His pocket held---an empty purse!  
What should he do!---all aid withdrawn!  
Cane, box, and watch, were sent to pawn; 185  
His brilliant too ('t had vex'd a saint)  
Gained a few crowns—and cent per cent!  
No friend his money can afford:  
He gamed,---a sharper swept the board.

Then scorn'd by all,---in deep despair, 190  
To Jove once more he made his prayer,  
And begg'd the God to ease his pain,  
And give him back his plough again.

#### NOTES:

**Title** *Jupiter* "The supreme deity of the ancient Romans" (*OED*); *Clown* "A countryman, rustic" (*OED*).

**4** *basilisk* "A fabulous reptile;... ancient authors stated that its hissing drove away all other serpents, and that its breath, and even its look, was fatal" (*OED*).

5 *dun ile's* [Unable to trace.]

18 *rapine* "The act or practice of seizing and taking away by force the property of others; plunder" (*OED*).

27 *Votary* "A person who has dedicated himself or herself to religious service by taking vows; a monk or nun" (*OED*).

35 *beau* "Suitor of a lady," but also "a man who gives particular, or excessive, attention to dress" (*OED*).

57 *Zephyr* "A gentle, mild wind or breeze" (*OED*).

58 *Aurora* "The (Roman) goddess of dawn, represented as rising with rosy fingers from the saffron-coloured bed of Tithonus" (*OED*).

64 *cinctured* "Girdled" (*OED*).

88 *mitre* "The headdress of a priest" (*OED*); *f--r* Likely "fur," "worn as a mark of office or state" (*OED*).

123 *equipage for beaux* Articles of dress and ornament for young men (*OED*).

133 *Jove* "A poetical equivalent of Jupiter...the highest deity of the ancient Romans" (*OED*)

143 *swim* "The smooth gliding movement of the body" (*OED*).

147 *pocket* "Any small bag or pouch worn on the person" (*OED*).

173 *brilliant* "A diamond of the finest cut" (*OED*).

187 *cent per cent* "Profit" (*OED*).

189 *sharper* "A fraudulent gamester, a cheat" (*OED*).

**SOURCE:** *A Collection of Poems on Several Subjects* (London, 1762), pp. 120-28. [Google Books]

*Edited by Jordan Young*

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