John Bancks, â??The Wishâ?•

Description

JOHN BANCKS

â??The Wishâ?•

In dire Machine, of quadrate Figure,
Exposâ??d to all the pinching Rigour
Of Hunger, Poverty, and Cold,
I by my Bum, and Belly hold;
Pendant, betwixt the Earth and Skie,
Like dying Thief â?? thoâ?? not so high;
Branded with Weaverâ??s odious Name,
Throâ?? all the World, a Mark of shame.
In this forlorn, neglected Station,
For me to think of Alteration;
And, like a true son of *Apollo*,
To wish for what will never follow;
Must be, I think, by all allowâ??d
A Project highly just and good.
So many of the rhimeing Tribe
Their Means and course of Life prescribe;
And thoâ??, because they wish for too much,
Dame Fortune seldom cares to do much;
Yet Fancy gives them such a Prop,
They still Rhime on, and live by Hope.
â??Tis Prudence never to Despair,
Thoâ?? all our Stars against us are;
For if the Mind but keeps *Decorum*,
Weâ??re in the Number *Beatorum*.
Thoâ?? some may blame me to begin
With what is oftâ?? the Root of sin;
Since that must make the Mare to go,
Iâ??ll wish, as other People do,
For Money, the Delight of Kings,
The Queen of Men, and Queen of Things.
Of this, Iâ??d have sufficient store,
(For whoâ??s respected when heâ??s poor?)
Enough for all the Needs of Life,
Both of my self, and of a Wife.
If Heavâ??n a little more should give,

Than what may serve us just to Live,
A common Stock the Rest should be
Between my Kindred, Friends, and me.
But here Iâ??m whisperâ??d by the Muse,
Who, if she might be bold to chuse,
Could wish â??twould please impartial Fate
To let it be a Free Estate.
For having heard how hard â??tis found
For Bards to make the Year go round:
That sometimes *Pegasus* is rash,
And flies away from heaps of Cash:
That oftâ?? Poetic Influence
Deprives the Mind of common Sense;
And makes, amidst a croud of Fancies,
The Poet Act Extravagancies:
She fearing this might be my Lot,
If Master of my All I got,
Believes it will be more secure
To have my yearly Income sure:
That if by chance, my Stock I spend,
Next Quarter the Defect may mend.
The next Thing in my Inventory,
Shall be a Wife â?? A Husbandâ??s Glory â??
The greatest Curse, or greatest Blessing,
Weâ??re capable of eâ??er Possessing.
Thoâ?? some, perhaps, may Reasons bring
To prove a Wife a needless Thing;
I canâ??t be brought to their Opinion,
Nor care I for their Proofs an Onion.
Since Woman was for Man designâ??d,
I think â??tis fit they should be joynâ??d:
And therefore hoping to be Blest,
Iâ??ll wish for her among the rest.
Besides, I am not quite so stupid,
As not to fear the Force of *Cupid*:
Cupid, that Fowling, Shooting Boy,
Who hampers all in his Decoy;
And makes us Love, with Dart and Bow,
Whether we willing are, or no.
â??Tis like, if he were not so busy,
Most Men unmarryâ??d might be easy:
Old Maids might then be very plenty;
And scarce a marryâ??d Wife in Twenty:
Strephon would not for *Delia* Mourn;
Nor *Daphnis* Sigh for Loveâ??s return;
But whilst he makes such Work about â??em,
Thereâ??s few can be Content without â??em;
For when he throughly does his Duty,

Wry Necks and crooked Backs make Beauty.
Since then he Rules so absolute,
â??Tis vain for Mortals to Dispute:
For Man to love a Woman is
As natural, as *Welshman* Cheese:
And if I love, Iâ??ll have a Wife,
Because I chuse an honest Life.
Well â??tis agreed â?? But now letâ??s see
What sort of Woman she must be;
Iâ??d have her Modest, Brisk and Young,
And Woman all â?? except her Tongue:
As Pious as the very best;
Yet not a Bigot to her Priest:
Good-naturâ??d, Gentle, full of Duty,
And Mistress of a little Beauty:
So Witty, Secret, and Discreet,
That Wife and Friend, in one might meet.
Her Portion â?? be it great or small,
Or, if Fate please, beâ??t none at all.
My Former Wish shall this prevent,
If Iâ??ve enough, Iâ??ll be Content:
Thoâ?? few are easy in their Station,
For once Iâ??d step besides the Fashion.
When *Hymen* has the Business done,
And she and I are joynâ??d in one;
For fear my dearest Bride should mutter,
Because Iâ??ve got no where to put her;
As well as to divert my Mind,
If eâ??er my Charmer prove unkind;
Iâ??d have a pleasant Country Seat,
By Nature made, for Loveâ??s retreat:
A purling Stream should murmur by,
And Woods, and Meadows should be nigh:
The Woods, at Noon, for Shade Iâ??d use;
At Night, the Meads should please the Muse.
My Garden fillâ??d with Trees and Flowâ??rs
Should yield an hundred shady Bowers:
And all the tuneful, featherâ??d Quire
Should dwell therein, to wake my Lyre.
Here, if the Fumes of too much Study
Should make the Spring of Fancy muddy;
My Spirits Iâ??d exhilerate,
In Consort with my lovely Mate:
Our Conversation, soft and kind,
Should turn on what came first in Mind:
Yet so weâ??d always wind the String up,
That Love alone, the Rear should bring up.
My House should be of comely Size,

I think the Ground should round it rise:
Itâ??s little Front should meet the Morn,
And that, a Dial should adorn:
A Court, before you could arrive at
The Door, should make it Safe, and Private:
In fine, Iâ??d have to makeâ??t compleat,
Nothing superfluous, all Things neat:
â??Twould be a kind of petty Throne,
If â??twere a Manour, and my own.
Were I to chuse my Furniture,
Iâ??d have whatâ??s Needful, and no more:
But whilst I wanted not for Treasure,
My Spouse in this should use her Pleasure:
For if we cross a Womanâ??s Fancy,
We know what spiteful Things she can say.
Of the best Books Iâ??d have a few,
Whose Wit and Sense, would still be New:
Both Ancient, of establishâ??d Fame:
And Modern of a rising Name.
These Iâ??d on all Occasions use,
Tâ??inform, or please me, or amuse:
From these Iâ??d choicest Maxims draw,
And make them, of my Life, the Law.
For Servants Ââ?? if I must have any,
They should be Sober, and not many:
A Couple would sufficient be,
My Wife a Maid, a Man for me.
A Friendâ??s a Thing so seldom known,
â??Tis very hard to meet with one;
Yet I might chuse, I would have two,
Of my own Sex, Good, Wise, and True:
Who could direct an infant Muse;
Knew when to blame, and when tâ??excuse:
With these Iâ??d evâ??ry Day converse,
To them each rising Thought rehearse;
Their Judgment should the Sentence give
To which should Die, and which should Live.
In Fortunes Mazes, if perplext,
Or with Domestic Troubles vext;
To them Iâ??d straight repair for Rest,
And leave my Sorrows in their Breast.
To welcome these, Iâ??d spread my Board
With what the Country would afford:
A Chearful, but a modâ??rate Glass
Should, as a sign of Friendship, pass
Thus far my pensive Mind had gone,
And, thinking evâ??ry Thing my own,
To Rapture I was almost brought,

â??Till stopping to correct a Thought, 180
I found â??twas all a Dream, a Fable,
A false Chimaera, nothing stable;
Still in the *Loom* I must remain,
All higher Thoughts, I doubt, are vain.

NOTES:

1 q*uadrate* â??Something which is square or rectangular in shape,â?• in this case a weaverâ??s hand loom (*OED*).

5 *Pendant* Suspended, â??in a hanging positionâ?• (*OED*).

11 *Apollo* Greek god associated with poetry *(Britannica).*

24 *Beatorum* Latin: prosperous, of the blessed.

27 *that must make the Mare to go* â??Money makes the mare to goâ?• is a proverbial phrase that means â??without money little can be achievedâ?• (*ODP*).

42 *Free Estate* Freehold, the â??permanent and absolute tenure of land or property with freedom to dispose of it at willâ?• (*OED*).

45 *Pegasus* In Greek Mythology, the winged horse that is â??often represented as the favourite steed of the Muses, bearing poets on their flights of poetic inspirationâ?• (*OED*).

49 *croud* Archaic spelling of â??crowd.â?•

70 *Cupid* â??In Roman Mythology, the god of loveâ?• (*OED*).

101 *Portion* Marriage portion, â??dowryâ?• (*OED*).

107 *Hymen* â??In Greek and Roman mythology: The god of marriage, represented as a young man carrying a torch and veilâ?• (*OED*).

113 *Country Seat* â??A (large) country house and estate inhabited by a family belonging to the nobility, landed gentry, or other wealthy class, usually as its principal rural residenceâ?• (*OED*).

120 *Bower* â??Idealized abodeâ?• (*OED*).

121 *Quire* Archaic spelling of â??choirâ?• (*OED*).

122 *Lyre* â??A stringed instrument of the harp kind, used by the Greeks for accompanying song and recitationâ?• (*OED*).

133 *should* Emended from â??sholdâ?• (printerâ??s error).

134 *Dial* Sundial.

173 *Board* â??A table spread for a repastâ?• (*OED*).

182 *Chimaera* â??An unreal creature of the imaginationâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *The Weavers Miscellany: Or, Poems on Several Subjects* (London, 1730), pp. 9-15. [Google Books]

Edited by Devin Logan