

# Matthew Prior, “The Wandering Pilgrim”

## Description

MATTHEW PRIOR

“The Wandering Pilgrim, or, *Will Piggot’s Merry Petition to be Sir Thomas Frankland’s Porter*”

Humbly address’d to Sir THOMAS FRANKLAND, Bart. Post-Master, and Pay-Master-General to Queen ANNE.

I.

WILL PIGGOT must to *Coxwould* go,  
To live, alas! in Want,  
Unless Sir THOMAS say No, no,  
Th’ Allowance is too scant.

II.

The gracious Knight full well does weet,                    5  
Ten Farthings ne’er will do  
To keep a Man each Day in Meat,  
Some Bread to Meat is due.

III.

A *Rechabite* poor WILL must live,  
And drink of ADAM’s Ale,    10  
Pure Element, no Life can give,  
Or mortal Soul regale.

IV.

Spare Diet, and Spring-water clear,  
Physicians hold are good;  
Who diets thus need never fear                                    15  
A Fever in the Blood.

V.

Gra’mency, Sirs, y’ are in the right,  
Prescriptions All can sell,  
But he that does not eat can’t sh\*\*\*  
Or piss, if good Drink fail.    20

VI.

But pass — The *AEsculapian* Crew,  
Who eat and quaff the best,

They seldom miss to bake and brew,  
Or lin to break their Fast.

VII.

Cou'd *Yorkshire*-Tyke but do the same, 25  
Then He like Them might thrive;  
But, FORTUNE, FORTUNE, cruel DAME,  
To starve Thou do'st Him drive.

VIII.

In WILL's Old Master's plenteous Days, 30  
His Mem'ry e'er be blest;  
What need of speaking in his Praise?  
His Goodness stands confest.

IX.

At his fame'd Gate stood Charity,  
In lovely sweet Array;  
CERES, and Hospitality, 35  
Dwelt there both Night and Day.

X.

But to conclude, and be concise,  
Truth must WILL's Voucher be;  
Truth never yet went in Disguise,  
For naked still is She. 40

XI.

There is but One, but One alone,  
Can set the PILGRIM free,  
And make him cease to pine and moan;  
O FRANKLAND it is THEE.

XII.

Oh! save him from a dreary Way, 45  
To *Coxwould* he must hye,  
Bereft of thee he wends astray,  
At *Coxwould* he must die.

XIII.

Oh! let him in thy Hall but stand,  
And wear a Porter's Gown, 50  
Duteous to what Thou may'st command,  
Thus WILLIAM's Wishes crown.

**NOTES:**

**Subtitle** Porter “A gatekeeper or doorkeeper,” in this case for the building which houses the PostmasterGeneral’s offices.

**Dedication** *Sir Thomas Frankland* 2nd Baronet (1665-1726), politician, served as joint Postmaster General from 1691-1715; *Queen Anne* Reigned 1702-1714.

**1** *Will Piggot* “This merry Petition was written by Mr. Prior, for Will Piggot to obtain the Porter’s Place” [Author’s Note]; *Coxwold* Coxwold, “Twelve Miles, North, beyond the City of York” [Author’s Note].

**4** *scant* “Existing or available in inadequate or barely sufficient amount, quantity, or degree; stinted in measure, not abundant” (*OED*).

**5** *weet* “To know, to know of something” (*OED*).

**6** *Farthing* “The quarter of a penny” (*OED*).

**9** *Rechabite* “According to the Old Testament and Hebrew scriptures: A member of an Israelite family descended from Rehab, which refused to drink wine, live in houses or cultivate fields and vineyards (see Jeremiah 35)” (*OED*).

**10** *ADAM’s Ale* “Water, (as a drink)” (*OED*).

**17** *Gra’mercy* “The salutation ‘thanks’ or ‘thank you.’ Hence in phrases, as *worth gramercy*, worth giving thanks for, of some value or importance” (*OED*).

**21** *Aesculapian* “Relating to medicine or doctors” (*OED*).

**22** *quaff* “To drink (a liquid) copiously or in a large draught” (*OED*).

**24** *lin* “To cease, leave off” (*OED*).

**25** *Yorkshire-Tyke* “A person from Yorkshire” (*OED*).

**27** *FORTUNE* “Chance, hap, or luck, regarded as a cause of events and changes in men’s affairs. Often...personified as a goddess, ‘the power supposed to distribute the lots of life according to her own humour’ (Johnson)” (*OED*).

**35** *CERES* Roman Goddess of agriculture.

**43** *pine* “Physical pain, discomfort, or suffering” (*OED*).

**46** *hye* “Go quickly” (*OED*).

**47** *Bereft* “Deprived of” (*OED*); *wends* “To go, proceed...in an unhurried manner or by indirect route” (*OED*).

**SOURCE:** *Poems on Several Occasions, Volume the Second, Fourth Edition (London 1742), pp. 95-97.*  
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*Edited by Belinda Ortiz*