

“R.”, “The Toasts. A Fable.”

Description

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The Toasts. A Fable

Satan one day (one night I mean,
For days in Hell are seldom seen)
At *Pandemonium* in state

Among his peers carousing sat,
To celebrate our parents

fall 5

In draughts of liquid fire and gall;
The toasts in bumpers flew around,
The palace roofs the toasts resound,
And all was noise, yet all unite

To pelt Heaven with their blunted spite: “

10

Beelzebub gave his harlot PRIDE,

To match whose charms he Hell defy;

ENVY by *Baal* then was given,

Foe to herself, to earth, and Heaven;

AVRICE was *Mammon*'s toast, a vice

15

Would make a Hell of Paradise: “

My toast, cries *Ashteroth*, shall be

That *Janus*-prude, HYPOCRISY;

And mine, quo *Belial*, “ IDLENESS,

Whose charms both fiends and men confess;”

20

Dear IDLENESS! to whom we owe

Myriads on myriads here below; “

Dagon gave FALSEHOOD, a mean jest,

Still mask'd, and cloath'd in rainbow-vest;

A will o' the wisp, that leads

astray, 25

A coward vice, that dreads the day; “

Moloch gave blood-stain'd CRUELTY, “

And *Thammuz*, INFIDELITY;

But to *that* toast they all objected

As one, no fiend there

recollected, 30

(For, tho' such weeds on earth may grow,

There are no infidels below);

Thammuz on this, "since change he must,"

Gave that sweet creature, Madam LUST:

In short, each demon, in his

toast, 35

Avow'd which fair he honour'd most.

The turn at length to *Satan* came

To bumper round *his* darling flame;

"I own that all your toasts," he cried,

"Are beauties long approv'd and

try'd, 40

But I'll give one, in whom alone

The quintessence of Hell is shown,

INGRATITUDE! "of vices *first*,

Most infamous, and most accurst,

That fiend in grain! that *hydra-*

pest! 45

(Behold her image on my breast)

To her Hell's empire owes its birth,

To her I owe those swarms from earth;

When other vices rule the mind,

VIRTUE, by fits, may entrance

find, 50

But let INGRATITUDE bear sway,

Not VIRTUE's shade dare cross her way;

Even Hell itself, when she appears,

A more than double darkness wears; "

Then in a bumper toast the *belle*

, 55

As *premier* beauty here in Hell ."

The fiends aloud the toast proclaim,

And Hell rethunders with her name;

"INGRATITUDE! of vices *first*,

Most *infamous*, and most

accurst. 60

York.

NOTES:

Title *Toasts* – Any person, male or female, whose health is proposed and drunk to (OED).

1 *Satan* – In Christian theology: the proper name of the Devil, the supreme embodiment or spirit of evil (OED).

3 *Pandemonium* – A place represented by Milton in *Paradise Lost* as the capital of hell, containing the council chamber of the Evil Spirits (OED).

4 *carousing* – To drink a full bumper to his or her health (OED).

6 *draughts* – The drawing of liquid into the mouth or down the throat; an act of drinking (OED); *gall* – A wind of considerable strength (OED)

7 *bumpers* – A cup or glass of alcoholic drink filled to the brim, esp. for a toast (OED).

11 *Beelzebub* – In the Bible, the prince of the devils (Britannica).

13 *Baal* A Canaanite god; one of the seven princes of Hell.

15 *AVARICE* – Inordinate desire of acquiring and hoarding wealth (OED); *Mammon* The personification of avarice and greed in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Book I, line 678); sometimes figured as one of the seven princes of Hell (OED).

17 *Ashteroth* Variant of – Astaroth – who, along with Lucifer and Beelzebub, made up the evil trinity in Hell (*The Occult Encyclopedia*).

18 *Janus* Ancient Roman deity, – regarded as the doorkeeper of heaven, as guardian of doors and gates, and as presiding over the entrance upon or beginning of things (OED).

19 *Belial* – The spirit of evil personified; used from early times as a name for the Devil or one of the fiends, and by Milton as the name of one of the fallen angels (*Paradise Lost*, Book I, line 490) (OED).

22 *Myriads* – A countless number of specified things, – here alluding to souls in Hell (OED).

23 *Dagon* – The national deity of the ancient Philistines; represented with the head, chest, and arms of a man, and the tail of a fish; – also referenced by Milton in *Paradise Lost* (Book I, line 462).

24 *rainbow-vest* Colourful clothing.

25 *will o' the wisp* – A phosphorescent light seen hovering or floating at night over marshy ground (OED).

27 *Moloch* – A Canaanite deity associated in biblical sources with the practice of child sacrifice (Britannica).

28 *Thammuz* – A Syrian deity – and minor demon, also represented in Milton's parade of demons in Hell (*Paradise Lost* Book I, line 446) (OED).

32 *infidels* – A disbeliever in religion or divine revelation generally (QED).

36 *Avow* – To declare, affirm (QED).

42 *quintessence* – The most perfect embodiment of a certain type of person or thing (QED).

43 *INGRATITUDE* – Mortal sin is ingratitude towards the most constant love; it is the adultery of the soul (QED).

45 *hydra-pest* – And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy (Revelations 13:1-10).

58 *Rethunders* – To make a loud, echoing sound like that of thunder; to resound. Frequently poetic (QED).

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Edited by Alban Fenn