

•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 Heav'n with their blunted spite: • 10
Beelzebub gave his harlot PRIDE,
To match whose charms he Hell defy'd;
ENVY by *Baël* then was given,
Foe to herself, to earth, and Heav'n;
AV'ICE 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

Avowâ??d which fair he honourâ??d most.

The turn at length to *Satan* came
To bumper round *his* darling flame;
â??I own that all your toasts,â?• he cried,
â??Are beauties long approvâ??d and tryâ??d, 40
But Iâ??ll give one, in whom alone
The quintessence of Hell is shown,
INGRATITUDE! â?? of vices *first*,
Most infamous, and most accurst,
That fiend in grain! that *hydra*-pest! 45
(Behold her image on my breast)
To her Hellâ??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 VIRTUEâ??s shade dare cross her way;
Eâ??en Hell itself, when she appears,
A more than double darkness wears; â??
Then in a bumper toast the *belle*, 55
As *premier* beauty here in Hell .â?•
The fiends aloud the toast proclaim,
And Hell rethunders with her name;
â??INGRATITUDE! of vices *first*,
Most *infamous*, and most accurst.â?• 60
York.

NOTES:

Title *Toasts* â??Any person, male or female, whose health is proposed and drunk toâ?• (OED).

1 *Satan* â??In Christian theology: the proper name of the Devil, the supreme embodiment or spirit of evilâ?• (OED).

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

4 *carousing* â??To drink a full bumper to his or her healthâ?• (OED).

6 *draughts* â??The drawing of liquid into the mouth or down the throat; an act of drinkingâ?• (OED); *gall* â??A wind of considerable strengthâ?• (OED)

7 *bumpers* â??A cup or glass of alcoholic drink filled to the brim, esp. for a toastâ?• (OED).

11 *Beelzebub* â??In the Bible, the prince of the devilsâ?• (Britannica).

13 *BaÅl* 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 (OED).

36 *Avow'd* To declare, affirm (OED).

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

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

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 (OED).

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Edited by Alban Fenn