

John Bancks, "The Wish"

Description

JOHN BANCKS

•The Wish•

In dire Machine, of quadrate Figure,
 Expos'd to all the pinching Rigour
 Of Hunger, Poverty, and Cold,
 I by my Bum, and Belly hold;
 Pendant, betwixt the Earth and Skie, 5
 Like dying Thief " tho' not so high;
 Branded with Weaver's odious Name,
 Thro' all the World, a Mark of shame.
 In this forlorn, neglected Station,
 For me to think of Alteration; 10
 And, like a true son of *Apollo*,
 To wish for what will never follow;
 Must be, I think, by all allow'd
 A Project highly just and good.
 So many of the rhymeing Tribe 15
 Their Means and course of Life prescribe;
 And tho', 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. 20
 'Tis Prudence never to Despair,
 Tho' all our Stars against us are;
 For if the Mind but keeps *Decorum*,
 We're in the Number *Beatorum*.
 Tho' some may blame me to begin 25
 With what is oft the Root of sin;
 Since that must make the Mare to go,
 I'll wish, as other People do,
 For Money, the Delight of Kings,
 The Queen of Men, and Queen of Things. 30
 Of this, I'd have sufficient store,
 (For who's respected when he's poor?)
 Enough for all the Needs of Life,

Both of my self, and of a Wife.

If Heav^{en} a little more should give, 35

Than what may serve us just to Live,
A common Stock the Rest should be
Between my Kindred, Friends, and me.

But here I^m whisper^d by the Muse,
Who, if she might be bold to chuse, 40
Could wish ^{would} please impartial Fate
To let it be a Free Estate.

For having heard how hard ^{tis} found
For Bards to make the Year go round:
That sometimes *Pegasus* is rash, 45

And flies away from heaps of Cash:
That oft^{er} Poetic Influence
Deprives the Mind of common Sense;
And makes, amidst a croud of Fancies,
The Poet Act Extravagancies: 50

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, 55
Next Quarter the Defect may mend.

The next Thing in my Inventory,
Shall be a Wife ^{“ A Husband^s Glory “}
The greatest Curse, or greatest Blessing,
We^{re} capable of e^{mer} Possessing. 60

Tho^{some} perhaps, may Reasons bring
To prove a Wife a needless Thing;
I can^t be brought to their Opinion,
Nor care I for their Proofs an Onion.

Since Woman was for Man design^d, 65
I think ^{tis} fit they should be joyn^d:
And therefore hoping to be Blest,
I^{ll} wish for her among the rest.

Besides, I am not quite so stupid,
As not to fear the Force of *Cupid*: 70

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.
^{Tis} like, if he were not so busy, 75

75

Most Men unmarried might be easy:
Old Maids might then be very plenty;
And scarce a married Wife in Twenty:

Strophon would not for *Delia* Mourn;

Nor *Daphnis* Sigh for Love's return; 80

But whilst he makes such Work about them,
There's few can be Content without them;

For when he thoroughly does his Duty,
Wry Necks and crooked Backs make Beauty.

Since then he Rules so absolute, 85

'Tis vain for Mortals to Dispute:

For Man to love a Woman is
As natural, as *Welshman* Cheese:

And if I love, I'll have a Wife,

Because I chuse an honest Life. 90

Well 'tis agreed "But now let's see

What sort of Woman she must be;

I'll have her Modest, Brisk and Young,

And Woman all "except her Tongue:

As Pious as the very best; 95

Yet not a Bigot to her Priest:

Good-natur'd, Gentle, full of Duty,

And Mistress of a little Beauty:

So Witty, Secret, and Discreet,

That Wife and Friend, in one might meet. 100

Her Portion "be it great or small,

Or, if Fate please, be none at all.

My Former Wish shall this prevent,

If I've enough, I'll be Content:

Tho' few are easy in their Station, 105

For once I'll step besides the Fashion.

When *Hymen* has the Business done,

And she and I are join'd in one;

For fear my dearest Bride should mutter,

Because I've got no where to put her; 110

As well as to divert my Mind,

If e'er my Charmer prove unkind;

I'll have a pleasant Country Seat,

By Nature made, for Love's retreat:

A purling Stream should murmur by, 115

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: 120
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 exhilarate, 125

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. 130

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 135

The Door, should make it Safe, and Private:
In fine, Iâ€™d have to makeâ€™t compleat,
Nothing superfluous, all Things neat:
â€™t would be a kind of petty Throne,
If â€™t were a Manour, and my own. 140

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, 145

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. 150

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 â€™ if I must have any, 155
They should be Sober, and not many:

A Couple would sufficient be,
My Wife a Maid, a Man for me.

A FriendTMs a Thing so seldom known,
It's very hard to meet with one; 160

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 tTMexcuse:
With these ITMd evTMry Day converse, 165

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; 170

To them ITMd straight repair for Rest,
And leave my Sorrows in their Breast.
To welcome these, ITMd spread my Board
With what the Country would afford:
A Cheerful, but a modTMrate Glass 175

Should, as a sign of Friendship, pass
Thus far my pensive Mind had gone,
And, thinking evTMry Thing my own,
To Rapture I was almost brought,
Till stopping to correct a Thought, 180

I found tTMwas 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 *quadrant* Something which is square or rectangular in shape, in this case a weaver's hand loom (*OED*).

5 *Pendant* Suspended, in a hanging position (*QED*).

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

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

27 *that must make the Mare to go* Money makes the mare to go is a proverbial phrase that means without money little can be achieved (*QDP*).

42 *Free Estate* Freehold, the permanent and absolute tenure of land or property with freedom to

dispose of it at willâ€•(QED).

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

49 *croud* Archaic spelling of crowd.

70 *Cupid* In Roman Mythology, the god of loveâ€•(QED).

101 *Portion* Marriage portion, dowryâ€•(QED).

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

113 *Country Seat* 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€•(QED).

120 *Bower* Idealized abodeâ€•(QED).

121 *Quire* Archaic spelling of choirâ€•(QED).

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

133 *should* Emended from shold (printer's error).

134 *Dial* Sundial.

173 *Board* A table spread for a repastâ€•(QED).

182 *Chimaera* An unreal creature of the imaginationâ€•(QED).

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

Edited by Devin Logan

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