

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,   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   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,   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   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   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   15  
A Fever in the Blood.

V.

Gracious mercy, Sirs, ye are in the right,  
Prescriptions All can sell,  
But he that does not eat can’t sh\*\*\*  
Or piss, if good Drink fail.   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   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.

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

VIII.

In WILLâ€™s Old Masterâ€™s plenteous Days,  
His Memâ€™ry eâ€™mer be blest;   Â 30  
What need of speaking in his Praise?  
His Goodness stands confest.

IX.

At his fameâ€™d Gate stood Charity,  
In lovely sweet Array;  
CERES, and Hospitality,   Â 35  
Dwelt there both Night and Day.

X.

But to conclude, and be concise,  
Truth must WILLâ€™s Voucher be;  
Truth never yet went in Disguise,  
For naked still is She.   Â 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,   Â 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 Porterâ€™s Gown,   Â 50  
Duteous to what Thou mayâ€™st command,  
Thus WILLIAMâ€™s Wishes crown.

**NOTES:**

**Subtitle** Porter – A gatekeeper or doorkeeper, in this case for the building which houses the Postmaster General’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 (QED).

**5** *weet* – To know, to know of something (QED).

**6** *Farthing* – The quarter of a penny (QED).

**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) (QED).

**10** *ADAM’s Ale* – Water, (as a drink) (QED).

**17** *Gra* – The salutation – thanks or – thank you. Hence in phrases, *asorth gramercy*, worth giving thanks for, of some value or importance (QED).

**21** *Aesculapian* – Relating to medicine or doctors (QED).

**22** *quaff* – To drink (a liquid) copiously or in a large draught (QED).

**24** *lin* – To cease, leave off (QED).

**25** *Yorkshire-Tyke* – A person from Yorkshire (QED).

**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) (QED).

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

**43** *pine* – Physical pain, discomfort, or suffering (QED).

**46** *hye* – Go quickly (QED).

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

**SOURCE:** *Poems on Several Occasions, Volume the Second, Fourth Edition (London 1742), pp. 95-97.* [Google Books]

*Edited by Belinda Ortiz*