Jane Cave, â??Written by Desire of a Lady, on an angry, petulant Kitchen-Maidâ?•

Description

JANE CAVE

â??Written by Desire of a Lady, on an angry, petulant Kitchen-Maidâ?•

Good Mistress Dishclout, whatâ??s the matter?
Why hereâ??the spoon, and thereâ??the platter?
What demon causes all this lowâ??ring,
Black as the pot you oft are scowâ??ring?
Hot as the fire you daily light,
Your speech with low invectives blight,
While rage impregnates evâ??ry vein,
And dies the face *one crimson stain*.
Sure some one has a word misplacâ??d,
Or lookâ??d not equal to your taste,
Or, is this just the time youâ??ve chose,
Your great acquirements to disclose,
Display the graces of your tongue,
Shew with what eloquence â??tis hung,
As dog, rogue, scoundrel, scrub, what not,
And twenty more, Iâ??ve quite forgot;
Which prove to a demonstration
Youâ??ve had a libâ??ral education;
Such titles must enchant the ear,
And make the bounteous donor dear;
But while these bounties are dispensing,
I wish Iâ??d learnâ??d the art of fencing,
Least while at John you aim to throw,
My nob should chance to catch the blow;
Then I should get a broken pate,
And marks of violence I hate.
Good Mistress Dishclout condescend
To hear the counsel of a friend;
When next you are disposâ??d to brawl,
Pray let the scullâ??ry hear it all,
And learn to know, your fittest place
Is with the dishes and the grease,
And when you are inclinâ??d to battle,
Engage the skimmer, spit, or kettle,
Or any other kitchen guest,

Which you in wisdom might think best.

NOTES:

1 *Mistress Dishclout* Proverbial for a kitchen-maid; a dishclout is a â??cloth used for washing dishesâ?• (*OED*).

3 *lowâ??ring â??*Frowning, scowling, sullennessâ?• (*OED*).

6 *invectives* â??A violent attack in wordsâ?• (*OED*).

14 S*hew* Show. Johnson notes that the word is â??frequently written *shew*; but since it is always pronounced and often written *show*â?¦[he has] adjusted the orthography to the pronunciationâ?• (Johnson).

15 *rogue* â??A dishonest, unprincipled personâ?• (*OED*); *scrub* Of low birth, base, â??a mean fellowâ?• (Johnson).

20 *dear â??*Belovedâ?• (*OED*).

24 *nob* Colloquially, â??the headâ?• (*OED*).

25 *pate* â??The head. Now commonly used in contempt or ridiculeâ?• (Johnson).

30 *scullâ??ry* â??The place where common utensils, as kettles or dishes, are cleaned and keptâ?• (Johnson).

34 *skimmer* â??A shallow vessel with which the scum is taken offâ?• (Johnson); *spit* â??Long prong on which meat is driven to be turned before the fireâ?• (Johnson); *kettle* â??A pot or caldronâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Various Subjects, Entertaining, Elegiac, and Religious,* (Winchester, 1783), pp. 49-51. [Hathi Trust]

Edited by Kristine Van Dusen