Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Digitale Sammlung der Badischen Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Poems

Poems on several occasions

Gay, John

Edinburgh, 1773

The mad dog. A tale

urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-263885

Visual Library

THE

MADDOG,

A TALE.

A PRUDE, at morn and ev'ning pray'r,
Had worn her velvet cuſhion bare;
Upward ſhe taught her eyes to roll,
As if ſhe watch'd her ſoaring ſoul;
And when devotion warm'd the crowd,
None ſung, or ſmote their breaſt ſo loud:
Pale Penitence had mark'd her face
With all the meagre ſigns of grace.
Her maſs-book was compleatly lin'd
With painted ſaints of various kind:
But when in ev'ry page ſhe view'd
Fine ladies who the fleſh ſubdu'd;
As quick her beads ſhe counted o'er,
She cry'd——ſuch wonders are no more!
She choſe not to delay confeſſion,
To bear at once a year's tranſgreſſion,
But ev'ry week ſet all things ev'n,
And balanc'd her account with Heav'n.

Behold her now in humble guiſe,
Upon her knees with downcaſt eyes
Before the prieſt: She thus begins,
And ſobbing, blubbers forth her ſins:
Who could that tempting man reſiſt?
My virtue languiſh'd, as he kiſs'd;
I ſtrove——'till I could ſtrive no longer:
How can the weak ſubdue the ſtronger?
The father aſk'd her where and when?
How many? and what ſort of men?
By what degrees her blood was heated?
How oft the frailty was repeated?
Thus have I ſeen a pregnant wench
All flush'd with guilt before the bench,
The judges (wak'd by wanton thought)
Dive to the bottom of her fault,
They leer, they ſimper at her ſhame,
And make her call all things by name.
And now to ſentence he proceeds,
Preſcribes how oft to tell her beads;
Shows her what ſaints could do her good,
Doubles her faſts to cool her blood.
Eas'd of her ſins, and light as air,
Away ſhe trips perhaps to prayer:
'Twas no ſuch thing. Why then this haſte?
The clock has ſtruck, the hour is paſt,
And on the ſpur of inclination,
She ſcorn'd to bilk her aſſignation.
Whate'er ſhe did, next week ſhe came,
And piouſly confeſs'd the ſame;
The prieſt, who female frailties pity'd,
Firſt chid her, then her ſins remitted.

But did ſhe now her crime bemoan
In penitential ſheets alone?
And was no bold, no beaſtly fellow
The nightly partner of her pillow?
No, none: For next time in the grove
A bank was conſcious of her love.
Confeſſion-day was come about,
And now again it all muſt out.
She ſeems to wipe her twinkling eyes.
What now, my child? the Father cries.
Again, ſays ſhe!——with threatning looks,
He thus the proſtrate dame rebukes.
Madam, I grant there's ſomething in it,
That virtue has th' unguarded minute;
But pray now tell me what are whores,
But women of unguarded hours?
Then you muſt ſure have loſt all ſhame.
What, ev'ry day, and ſtill the ſame.
And no fault elſe! 'tis ſtrange to find
A woman to one ſin confin'd!
Pride is this day her darling paſſion,
The next day ſlander is in faſhion;
Gaming ſucceeds; if fortune croſſes,
Then Virtue's mortgag'd for her loſſes;
By uſe her fav'rite vice ſhe loaths,
And loves new follies like new cloaths:
But you, beyond all thought unchaſte,
Have all ſin center'd near your waiſt!
Whence is this appetite ſo ſtrong?
Say, Madam, did your mother long?
Or is it luxury and high diet
That won't let virtue ſleep in quiet?

She tells him now with meekeſt voice,
That ſhe had never err'd by choice,
Nor was there known a virgin chaſter,
Till ruin'd by a ſad diſaſter.
That ſhe a fav'rite lap-dog had,
Which (as ſhe ſtroak'd and kiſs'd) grew mad;
And on her lip a wound indenting,
Firſt ſet her youthful blood fermenting.
The prieſt reply'd, with zealous fury,
You ſhould have ſought the means to cure ye.
Doctors by various ways, we find,
Treat theſe diſtempers of the mind.
Let gaudy ribbands be deny'd,
To her, who rayes with ſcornful pride;
And if religion crack her notions,
Lock up her volumes of devotions;
But if for man her rage prevail,
Barr her the ſight of creatures male.
Or elſe, to cure ſuch venom'd bites,
And ſet the ſhatter'd thoughts arights,
They ſend you to the ocean's ſhore,
And plunge the patient o'er and o'er.
The dame reply'd, Alas! in vain
My kindred forc'd me to the main;
Naked, and in the face of day;
Look not, ye fiſhermen, this way!
What virgin had not done as I did?
My modeſt hand, by nature guided,
Debarr'd at once from human eyes
The ſeat where female honour lies,
And though thrice dipt from top to toe,
I ſtill ſecur'd the poſt below,

And guarded it with graſp ſo faſt
Not one drop through my fingers paſt;
Thus owe I to my baſhful care,
That all the rage is ſettled there.
Weigh well the projects of mankind;
Then tell me, Reader, canſt thou find
The man from madneſs wholly free?
They all are mad——ſave you and me.
Do not the ſtateſman, fop, and wit,
By daily follies prove they're bit?
And when the briny cure they try'd,
Some part ſtill kept above the tide?
Some men (when drench'd beneath the wave)
High o'er their heads their fingers ſave;
Thoſe hands by mean extortion thrive,
Or in the pocket lightly dive:
Or more expert in pilf'ring vice,
They burn and itch to cog the dice.
Plunge in a courtier; ſtrait his fears
Direct his hands to ſtop his ears.
And now truth ſeems a grating noiſe,
He loves the ſland'rer's whiſp'ring voice;
He hangs on flatt'ry with delight,
And thinks all fulſome praiſe is right.
All women dread a wat'ry death:
They ſhut their lips to hold their breath,
And though you duck them ne'er ſo long,
Not one ſalt drop e'er wets their tongue;
'Tis hence they ſcandal have at will,
And that this member ne'er lies ſtill.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK
Baden-Württemberg

ECLOGUES.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK
Baden-Württemberg

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK
Baden-Württemberg