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Poems

Poems and fables

Gay, John

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Fable XII

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And did ye scream with harsher sound,
 Those faults in you had ne'er been found:
 To all apparent beauties blind,
 Each blemish strikes an envious mind.

Thus in assemblies have I seen
 A nymph of brightest charms and mien,
 Wake envy in each ugly face;
 And buzzing scandal fills the place.

F A B L E XII.

CUPID, HYMEN, and PLUTUS.

AS Cupid in Cythera's grove
 Employ'd the lesser powers of love;
 Some shape the bow, or fit the string;
 Some give the taper shaft its wing,
 Or turn the polish'd quiver's mold,
 Or head the darts with temper'd gold:

Amidst their toil and various care,
 Thus Hymen, with assuming air,
 Address'd the god. Thou purblind chit,
 Of aukward and ill-judging wit,
 If matches are no better made,
 At once I must forswear my trade.
 You send me such ill-coupled folks,
 That 'tis a shame to sell them yokes.
 They squabble for a pin, a feather,
 And wonder how they came together.

The husband's silent, dogged, shy;
 The wife grows flippant in reply.
 He loves command, and due restriction;
 And she as well likes contradiction:
 She never slavishly submits;
 She'll have her will, or have her fits.
 He this way tugs, she t'other draws;
 The man grows jealous, and with cause.
 Nothing can save him but divorce;
 And here the wife complies of course.

When, says the boy, had I to do
 With either your affairs, or you?
 I never idly spend my darts;
 You trade in mercenary hearts,
 For settlements the lawyer's feed;
 Is my hand witness to the deed?
 If they like cat and dog agree,
 Go rail at Plutus, not at me.

Plutus appear'd, and said, 'Tis true,
 In marriage gold is all their view:
 They seek not beauty, wit, or sense;
 And love is seldom the pretence.
 All offer incense at my shrine,
 And I alone the bargain sign.
 How can Belinda blame her fate?
 She only ask'd a great estate.
 Doris was rich enough, 'tis true;
 Her Lord must give her title too:
 And ev'ry man, or rich or poor,
 A fortune asks, and asks no more.

Av'rice, whatever shape it bears,
Must still be coupled with its cares.

F A B L E XIII.

The tame STAG.

AS a young Stag the thicket past,
The branches held his antlers fast;
A clown, who saw the captive hung,
Across the horns his halter flung.
Now safely hamper'd in the cord,
He bore the present to his lord.
His lord was pleas'd; as was the clown,
When he was tipt with half a crown.
The Stag was brought before his wife;
The tender lady begg'd his life.
How sleek the skin! how speck'd like ermine!

Sure never creature was so charming!
At first within the yard confin'd,
He flies and hides from all mankind;
Now bolder grown, with fix'd amaze
And distant awe presumes to gaze;
Munches the linen on the lines,
And on a hood or apron dines:
He steals my little master's bread,
Follows the servants to be fed:
Nearer and nearer now he stands,
To feel the praise of patting hands;

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