

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving
von Ossietzky May Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Liebermann Korolenko
Sachs Poe de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



The publishing house **tredition** has created the series **TREDITION CLASSICS**. It contains classical literature works from over two thousand years. Most of these titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades.

The book series is intended to preserve the cultural legacy and to promote the timeless works of classical literature. As a reader of a **TREDITION CLASSICS** book, the reader supports the mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion.

The symbol of **TREDITION CLASSICS** is Johannes Gutenberg (1400 – 1468), the inventor of movable type printing.

With the series, **tredition** intends to make thousands of international literature classics available in printed format again – worldwide.

All books are available at book retailers worldwide in paperback and in hardcover. For more information please visit: www.tredition.com



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, **tredition** offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. **tredition** is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

The Parish Register

George Crabbe

Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: George Crabbe

Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)

ISBN: 978-3-8495-0483-0

www.tredition.com

www.tredition.de

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

“THE PARISH REGISTER”, by GEORGE CRABBE (1754-1832) {1}
IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

Tum porro puer (ut saevis projectus ab undis,
Navita) nudus humi jacet infans indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, -
Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut aequum est,
Cui tantum in vita restat transire malorum.
LUCRETIUS, De Rerum Natura, lib.5

THE ARGUMENT.

The Village Register considered, as containing principally the Annals of the Poor - State of the Peasantry as meliorated by Frugality and Industry - The Cottage of an industrious Peasant; its Ornaments - Prints and Books - The Garden; its Satisfactions - The State of the Poor, when improvident and vicious - The Row or Street, and its Inhabitants - The Dwellings of one of these - A Public House - Garden and its Appendages - Gamesters; rustic Sharpers &c. - Conclusion of the Introductory Part.

BAPTISMS.

The Child of the Miller’s Daughter, and Relation of her Misfortune - A frugal Couple; their Kind of Frugality - Plea of the Mother of a natural Child; her Churching - Large Family of Gerard Ablett: his apprehensions: Comparison between his state and that of the

wealthy Farmer his Master: his Consolation - An Old Man's Anxiety for an Heir: the Jealousy of another on having many - Characters of the Grocer Dawkins and his Friend; their different Kinds of Disappointment - Three Infants named - An Orphan Girl and Village School-mistress - Gardener's Child: Pedantry and Conceit of the Father: his botanical Discourse: Method of fixing the Embryo-fruit of Cucumbers - Absurd Effects of Rustic Vanity: observed in the names of their Children - Relation of the Vestry Debate on a Foundling: Sir Richard Monday - Children of various Inhabitants - The poor Farmer - Children of a Profligate: his Character and Fate - Conclusion.

The year revolves, and I again explore
The simple Annals of my Parish poor;
What Infant-members in my flock appear,
What Pairs I bless'd in the departed year;
And who, of Old or Young, or Nymphs or Swains,
Are lost to Life, its pleasures and its pains.
No Muse I ask, before my view to bring
The humble actions of the swains I sing. -
How pass'd the youthful, how the old their days;
Who sank in sloth, and who aspired to praise;
Their tempers, manners, morals, customs, arts,
What parts they had, and how they 'mploy'd their parts;
By what elated, soothed, seduced, depress'd,
Full well I know-these Records give the rest.
Is there a place, save one the poet sees,
A land of love, of liberty, and ease;
Where labour wearies not, nor cares suppress
Th' eternal flow of rustic happiness;
Where no proud mansion frowns in awful state,
Or keeps the sunshine from the cottage-gate;
Where young and old, intent on pleasure, throng,
And half man's life is holiday and song?
Vain search for scenes like these! no view appears,
By sighs unruffled or unstain'd by tears;
Since vice the world subdued and waters drown'd,
Auburn and Eden can no more be found.
Hence good and evil mixed, but man has skill

And power to part them, when he feels the will!
 Toil, care, and patience bless th' abstemious few,
 Fear, shame, and want the thoughtless herd pursue.
 Behold the Cot! where thrives th' industrious swain,
 Source of his pride, his pleasure, and his gain;
 Screen'd from the winter's wind, the sun's last ray
 Smiles on the window and prolongs the day;
 Projecting thatch the woodbine's branches stop,
 And turn their blossoms to the casement's top:
 All need requires is in that cot contain'd,
 And much that taste untaught and unrestrain'd
 Surveys delighted; there she loves to trace,
 In one gay picture, all the royal race;
 Around the walls are heroes, lovers, kings;
 The print that shows them and the verse that sings.
 Here the last Louis on his throne is seen,
 And there he stands imprison'd, and his Queen;
 To these the mother takes her child, and shows
 What grateful duty to his God he owes;
 Who gives to him a happy home, where he
 Lives and enjoys his freedom with the free;
 When kings and queens, dethroned, insulted, tried,
 Are all these blessings of the poor denied.
 There is King Charles, and all his Golden Rules,
 Who proved Misfortune's was the best of schools:
 And there his Son, who, tried by years of pain,
 Proved that misfortunes may be sent in vain.
 The Magic-mill that grinds the gran'nams young,
 Close at the side of kind Godiva hung;
 She, of her favourite place the pride and joy,
 Of charms at once most lavish and most coy,
 By wanton act the purest fame could raise,
 And give the boldest deed the chastest praise.
 There stands the stoutest Ox in England fed;
 There fights the boldest Jew, Whitechapel bred;
 And here Saint Monday's worthy votaries live,
 In all the joys that ale and skittles give.
 Now, lo! on Egypt's coast that hostile fleet,
 By nations dreaded and by NELSON beat;

And here shall soon another triumph come,
A deed of glory in a deed of gloom;
Distressing glory! grievous boon of fate!
The proudest conquest at the dearest rate.
On shelf of deal beside the cuckoo-clock,
Of cottage reading rests the chosen stock;
Learning we lack, not books, but have a kind
For all our wants, a meat for every mind.
The tale for wonder and the joke for whim,
The half-sung sermon and the half-groan'd hymn.
No need of classing; each within its place,
The feeling finger in the dark can trace;
"First from the corner, farthest from the wall,"
Such all the rules, and they suffice for all.
There pious works for Sunday's use are found;
Companions for that Bible newly bound;
That Bible, bought by sixpence weekly saved,
Has choicest prints by famous hands engraved;
Has choicest notes by many a famous head,
Such as to doubt have rustic readers led;
Have made them stop to reason *why?* and *how?*
And, where they once agreed, to cavil now.
Oh! rather give me commentators plain,
Who with no deep researches vex the brain;
Who from the dark and doubtful love to run,
And hold their glimmering tapers to the sun;
Who simple truth with nine-fold reasons back,
And guard the point no enemies attack.
Bunyan's famed Pilgrim rests that shelf upon;
A genius rare but rude was honest John;
Not one who, early by the Muse beguiled,
Drank from her well the waters undefiled;
Not one who slowly gained the hill sublime,
Then often sipp'd and little at a time;
But one who dabbled in the sacred springs,
And drank them muddy, mix'd with baser things.
Here to interpret dreams we read the rules,
Science our own! and never taught in schools;
In moles and specks we Fortune's gifts discern,

And Fate's fix'd will from Nature's wanderings learn.
 Of Hermit Quarll we read, in island rare,
 Far from mankind and seeming far from care;
 Safe from all want, and sound in every limb;
 Yes! there was he, and there was care with him.
 Unbound and heap'd, these valued tomes beside,
 Lay humbler works, the pedlar's pack supplied;
 Yet these, long since, have all acquired a name:
 The Wandering Jew has found his way to fame;
 And fame, denied to many a labour'd song,
 Crowns Thumb the Great, and Hickathrift the strong.
 There too is he, by wizard-power upheld,
 Jack, by whose arm the giant-brood were quell'd:
 His shoes of swiftness on his feet he placed;
 His coat of darkness on his loins he braced;
 His sword of sharpness in his hand he took,
 And off the heads of doughty giants stroke:
 Their glaring eyes beheld no mortal near;
 No sound of feet alarm'd the drowsy ear;
 No English blood their Pagan sense could smell,
 But heads dropt headlong, wondering why they fell.
 These are the Peasant's joy, when, placed at ease,
 Half his delighted offspring mount his knees.
 To every cot the lord's indulgent mind
 Has a small space for garden-ground assign'd;
 Here - till return of morn dismiss'd the farm -
 The careful peasant plies the sinewy arm,
 Warm'd as he works, and casts his look around
 On every foot of that improving ground :
 It is his own he sees; his master's eye
 Peers not about, some secret fault to spy;
 Nor voice severe is there, nor censure known; -
 Hope, profit, pleasure, - they are all his own.
 Here grow the humble cives, and, hard by them,
 The leek with crown globose and reedy stem;
 High climb his pulse in many an even row,
 Deep strike the ponderous roots in soil below;
 And herbs of potent smell and pungent taste,
 Give a warm relish to the night's repast.

Apples and cherries grafted by his hand,
And cluster'd nuts for neighbouring market stand.
Nor thus concludes his labour; near the cot,
The reed-fence rises round some fav'rite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,
Proud hyacinths, the least some florist's prize,
Tulips tall-stemm'd and pounced auriculas rise.
Here on a Sunday-eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem, and gaily they agree.
What, though fastidious ears may shun the speech,
Where all are talkers, and where none can teach;
Where still the welcome and the words are old,
And the same stories are for ever told;
Yet theirs is joy that, bursting from the heart,
Prompts the glad tongue these nothings to impart;
That forms these tones of gladness we despise,
That lifts their steps, that sparkles in their eyes;
That talks or laughs or runs or shouts or plays,
And speaks in all their looks and all their ways.
Fair scenes of peace! ye might detain us long,
But vice and misery now demand the song;
And turn our view from dwellings simply neat,
To this infected Row, we term our Street.
Here, in cabal, a disputatious crew
Each evening meet; the sot, the cheat, the shrew;
Riots are nightly heard: - the curse, the cries
Of beaten wife, perverse in her replies;
While shrieking children hold each threat'ning hand,
And sometimes life, and sometimes food demand:
Boys, in their first-stol'n rags, to swear begin,
And girls, who heed not dress, are skill'd in gin:
Snarers and smugglers here their gains divide;
Ensnaring females here their victims hide;
And here is one, the Sibyl of the Row,
Who knows all secrets, or affects to know.
Seeking their fate, to her the simple run,
To her the guilty, theirs awhile to shun;

Mistress of worthless arts, depraved in will,
Her care unblest and unrepaid her skill,
Slave to the tribe, to whose command she stoops,
And poorer than the poorest maid she dupes.
Between the road-way and the walls, offence
Invades all eyes and strikes on every sense;
There lie, obscene, at every open door,
Heaps from the hearth, and sweepings from the floor,
And day by day the mingled masses grow,
As sinks are disembogued and kennels flow.
There hungry dogs from hungry children steal;
There pigs and chickens quarrel for a meal;
Their drowsied infants wail without redress,
And all is want and woe and wretchedness;
Yet should these boys, with bodies bronzed and bare,
High-swoln and hard, outlive that lack of care -
Forced on some farm, the unexerted strength,
Though loth to action, is compell'd at length,
When warm'd by health, as serpents in the spring,
Aside their slough of indolence they fling.
Yet, ere they go, a greater evil comes -
See! crowded beds in those contiguous rooms;
Beds but ill parted, by a paltry screen
Of paper'd lath, or curtain dropt between;
Daughters and sons to yon compartments creep,
And parents here beside their children sleep:
Ye who have power, these thoughtless people part,
Nor let the ear be first to taint the heart.
Come! search within, nor sight nor smell regard;
The true physician walks the foulest ward.
See on the floor, where frousy patches rest!
What nauseous fragments on yon fractured chest!
What downy dust beneath yon window-seat!
And round these posts that serve this bed for feet;
This bed where all those tatter'd garments lie,
Worn by each sex, and now perforce thrown by!
See! as we gaze, an infant lifts its head,
Left by neglect and burrow'd in that bed;
The Mother-gossip has the love suppress'd

An infant's cry once waken'd in her breast;
And daily prattles, as her round she takes
(With strong resentment), of the want she makes.
Whence all these woes? - From want of virtuous will,
Of honest shame, of time-improving skill;
From want of care t'employ the vacant hour,
And want of every kind but want of power.
Here are no wheels for either wool or flax,
But packs of cards - made up of sundry packs;
Here is no clock, nor will they turn the glass,
And see how swift th' important moments pass;
Here are no books, but ballads on the wall,
Are some abusive, and indecent all;
Pistols are here, unpair'd; with nets and hooks,
Of every kind, for rivers, ponds, and brooks;
An ample flask, that nightly rovers fill
With recent poison from the Dutchman's still;
A box of tools, with wires of various size,
Frocks, wigs, and hats, for night or day disguise,
And bludgeons stout to gain or guard a prize.
To every house belongs a space of ground,
Of equal size, once fenced with paling round;
That paling now by slothful waste destroyed,
Dead gorse and stumps of elder fill the void;
Save in the centre-spot, whose walls of clay
Hide sots and striplings at their drink or play:
Within, a board, beneath a tiled retreat,
Allures the bubble and maintains the cheat;
Where heavy ale in spots like varnish shows,
Where chalky tallies yet remain in rows;
Black pipes and broken jugs the seats defile,
The walls and windows, rhymes and reck'nings vile;
Prints of the meanest kind disgrace the door,
And cards, in curses torn, lie fragments on the floor.
Here his poor bird th' inhuman Cocker brings,
Arms his hard heel and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds.
Struck through the brain, deprived of both his eyes,

The vanquished bird must combat till he dies;
 Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
 And reel and stagger at each feeble blow:
 When fallen, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
 His blood-stain'd arms, for other deaths assumes;
 And damns the craven-fowl, that lost his stake,
 And only bled and perished for his sake.
 Such are our Peasants, those to whom we yield
 Praise with relief, the fathers of the field;
 And these who take from our reluctant hands
 What Burn advises or the Bench commands.
 Our Farmers round, well pleased with constant gain,
 Like other farmers, flourish and complain. -
 These are our groups; our Portraits next appear,
 And close our Exhibition for the year.

WITH evil omen we that year begin:
 A Child of Shame, - stern Justice adds, of Sin,
 Is first recorded; - I would hide the deed,
 But vain the wish; I sigh, and I proceed:
 And could I well th'instructive truth convey,
 'Twould warn the giddy and awake the gay.
 Of all the nymphs who gave our village grace,
 The Miller's daughter had the fairest face:
 Proud was the Miller; money was his pride;
 He rode to market, as our farmers ride,
 And 'twas his boast, inspired by spirits, there,
 His favourite Lucy should be rich as fair;
 But she must meek and still obedient prove,
 And not presume, without his leave, to love.
 A youthful Sailor heard him; - "Ha!" quoth he,
 "This Miller's maiden is a prize for me;
 Her charms I love, his riches I desire,
 And all his threats but fan the kindling fire;
 My ebbing purse no more the foe shall fill,
 But Love's kind act and Lucy at the mill."
 Thus thought the youth, and soon the chase began,

Stretch'd all his sail, nor thought of pause or plan:
 His trusty staff in his bold hand he took,
 Like him and like his frigate, heart of oak;
 Fresh were his features, his attire was new;
 Clean was his linen, and his jacket blue:
 Of finest jean his trousers, tight and trim,
 Brush'd the large buckle at the silver rim.
 He soon arrived, he traced the village-green,
 There saw the maid, and was with pleasure seen;
 Then talk'd of love, till Lucy's yielding heart
 Confess'd 'twas painful, though 'twas right to part.
 "For ah! my father has a haughty soul;
 Whom best he loves, he loves but to control;
 Me to some churl in bargain he'll consign,
 And make some tyrant of the parish mine:
 Cold is his heart, and he with looks severe
 Has often forced but never shed the tear;
 Save, when my mother died, some drops expressed
 A kind of sorrow for a wife at rest: -
 To me a master's stern regard is shown,
 I'm like his steed, prized highly as his own;
 Stroked but corrected, threatened when supplied,
 His slave and boast, his victim and his pride."
 "Cheer up, my lass! I'll to thy father go,
 The Miller cannot be the Sailor's foe;
 Both live by Heaven's free gale, that plays aloud
 In the stretch'd canvass and the piping shroud;
 The rush of winds, the flapping sails above,
 And rattling planks within, are sounds we love;
 Calms are our dread; when tempests plough the deep,
 We take a reef, and to the rocking sleep."
 "Ha!" quoth the Miller, moved at speech so rash,
 "Art thou like me? then where thy notes and cash?
 Away to Wapping, and a wife command,
 With all thy wealth, a guinea in thine hand;
 There with thy messmates quaff the muddy cheer,
 And leave my Lucy for thy betters here."
 "Revenge! revenge!" the angry lover cried,
 Then sought the nymph, and "Be thou now my bride."

Bride had she been, but they no priest could move
 To bind in law the couple bound by love.
 What sought these lovers then by day by night?
 But stolen moments of disturb'd delight;
 Soft trembling tumults, terrors dearly prized,
 Transports that pain'd, and joys that agonised;
 Till the fond damsel, pleased with lad so trim,
 Awed by her parent, and enticed by him,
 Her lovely form from savage power to save,
 Gave - not her hand - but ALL she could she gave.
 Then came the day of shame, the grievous night,
 The varying look, the wandering appetite;
 The joy assumed, while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
 The forced sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs;
 And every art, long used, but used in vain,
 To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.
 Too eager caution shows some danger's near,
 The bully's bluster proves the coward's fear;
 His sober step the drunkard vainly tries,
 And nymphs expose the failings they disguise.
 First, whispering gossips were in parties seen,
 Then louder Scandal walk'd the village - green;
 Next babbling Folly told the growing ill,
 And busy Malice dropp'd it at the mill.
 "Go! to thy curse and mine," the Father said,
 "Strife and confusion stalk around thy bed;
 Want and a wailing brat thy portion be,
 Plague to thy fondness, as thy fault to me; -
 Where skulks the villain?" -
 "On the ocean wide
 My William seeks a portion for his bride." -
 "Vain be his search; but, till the traitor come,
 The higgler's cottage be thy future home;
 There with his ancient shrew and care abide,
 And hide thy head, - thy shame thou canst not hide."
 Day after day was pass'd in pains and grief;
 Week follow'd week, - and still was no relief:
 Her boy was born - no lads nor lasses came
 To grace the rite or give the child a name;

Nor grave conceited nurse, of office proud,
Bore the young Christian roaring through the crowd:
In a small chamber was my office done,
Where blinks through paper'd panes the setting sun;
Where noisy sparrows, perch'd on penthouse near,
Chirp tuneless joy, and mock the frequent tear;
Bats on their webby wings in darkness move,
And feebly shriek their melancholy love.
No Sailor came; the months in terror fled!
Then news arrived - He fought, and he was DEAD!
At the lone cottage Lucy lives, and still
Walks for her weekly pittance to the mill;
A mean seraglio there her father keeps,
Whose mirth insults her, as she stands and weeps;
And sees the plenty, while compell'd to stay,
Her father's pride, become his harlot's prey.
Throughout the lanes she glides, at evening's close,
And softly lulls her infant to repose;
Then sits and gazes, but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon the rippling of the brook;
And sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow:
And she too murmurs, and begins to find
The solemn wanderings of a wounded mind.
Visions of terror, views of woe succeed,
The mind's impatience, to the body's need;
By turns to that, by turns to this a prey,
She knows what reason yields, and dreads what madness may.
Next, with their boy, a decent couple came,
And call'd him Robert, 'twas his father's name;
Three girls preceded, all by time endear'd,
And future births were neither hoped nor fear'd:
Blest in each other, but to no excess,
Health, quiet, comfort, form'd their happiness;
Love all made up of torture and delight,
Was but mere madness in this couple's sight:
Susan could think, though not without a sigh,
If she were gone, who should her place supply;
And Robert, half in earnest, half in jest,

Talk of her spouse when he should be at rest:
 Yet strange would either think it to be told,
 Their love was cooling or their hearts were cold.
 Few were their acres, - but, with these content,
 They were, each pay-day, ready with their rent:
 And few their wishes - what their farm denied,
 The neighbouring town, at trifling cost, supplied.
 If at the draper's window Susan cast
 A longing look, as with her goods she pass'd,
 And, with the produce of the wheel and churn,
 Bought her a Sunday - robe on her return;
 True to her maxim, she would take no rest,
 Till care repaid that portion to the chest:
 Or if, when loitering at the Whitsun-fair,
 Her Robert spent some idle shillings there;
 Up at the barn, before the break of day,
 He made his labour for th' indulgence pay:
 Thus both - that waste itself might work in vain -
 Wrought double tides, and all was well again.
 Yet, though so prudent, there were times of joy,
 (The day they wed, the christening of the boy.)
 When to the wealthier farmers there was shown
 Welcome unfeign'd, and plenty like their own;
 For Susan served the great, and had some pride
 Among our topmost people to preside:
 Yet in that plenty, in that welcome free,
 There was the guiding nice frugality,
 That, in the festal as the frugal day,
 Has, in a different mode, a sovereign sway;
 As tides the same attractive influence know,
 In the least ebb and in their proudest flow;
 The wise frugality, that does not give
 A life to saving, but that saves to live;
 Sparing, not pinching, mindful though not mean,
 O'er all presiding, yet in nothing seen.
 Recorded next a babe of love I trace!
 Of many loves, the mother's fresh disgrace. -
 "Again, thou harlot! could not all thy pain,
 All my reproof, thy wanton thoughts restrain?"

"Alas! your reverence, wanton thoughts, I grant,
Were once my motive, now the thoughts of want;
Women, like me, as ducks in a decoy,
Swim down a stream, and seem to swim in joy.
Your sex pursue us, and our own disdain;
Return is dreadful, and escape is vain.
Would men forsake us, and would women strive
To help the fall'n, their virtue might revive."
For rite of churching soon she made her way,
In dread of scandal, should she miss the day: -
Two matrons came! with them she humbly knelt,
Their action copied and their comforts felt,
From that great pain and peril to be free,
Though still in peril of that pain to be;
Alas! what numbers, like this amorous dame,
Are quick to censure, but are dead to shame!
Twin-infants then appear; a girl, a boy,
Th' overflowing cup of Gerard Ablett's joy:
One had I named in every year that passed
Since Gerard wed! and twins behold at last!
Well pleased, the bridegroom smiled to hear - "A vine
Fruitful and spreading round the walls be thine,
And branch-like be thine offspring!" - Gerard then
Look'd joyful love, and softly said "Amen."
Now of that vine he'd have no more increase,
Those playful branches now disturb his peace:
Them he beholds around his tables spread,
But finds, the more the branch, the less the bread;
And while they run his humble walls about,
They keep the sunshine of good humour out.
Cease, man, to grieve! thy master's lot survey,
Whom wife and children, thou and thine obey;
A farmer proud, beyond a farmer's pride,
Of all around the envy or the guide;
Who trots to market on a steed so fine,
That when I meet him, I'm ashamed of mine;
Whose board is high upheaved with generous fare,
Which five stout sons and three tall daughters share.
Cease, man, to grieve, and listen to his care.

A few years fled, and all thy boys shall be
 Lords of a cot, and labourers like thee:
 Thy girls unportion'd neighb'ring youths shall lead
 Brides from my church, and thenceforth thou art freed:
 But then thy master shall of cares complain,
 Care after care, a long connected train;
 His sons for farms shall ask a large supply,
 For farmers' sons each gentle miss shall sigh;
 Thy mistress, reasoning well of life's decay,
 Shall ask a chaise, and hardly brook delay;
 The smart young cornet, who with so much grace
 Rode in the ranks and betted at the race,
 While the vex'd parent rails at deed so rash,
 Shall d**n his luck, and stretch his hand for cash.
 Sad troubles, Gerard! now pertain to thee,
 When thy rich master seems from trouble free;
 But 'tis one fate at different times assign'd,
 And thou shalt lose the cares that he must find.
 "Ah!" quoth our village Grocer, rich and old,
 "Would I might one such cause for care behold!"
 To whom his Friend, "Mine greater bliss would be,
 Would Heav'n take those my spouse assigns to me."
 Aged were both, that Dawkins, Ditchem this,
 Who much of marriage thought, and much amiss;
 Both would delay, the one, till - riches gain'd,
 The son he wish'd might be to honour train'd;
 His Friend - lest fierce intruding heirs should come,
 To waste his hoard and vex his quiet home.
 Dawkins, a dealer once, on burthen'd back
 Bore his whole substance in a pedlar's pack;
 To dames discreet, the duties yet unpaid,
 His stores of lace and hyson he convey'd:
 When thus enriched, he chose at home to stop,
 And fleece his neighbours in a new-built shop;
 Then woo'd a spinster blithe, and hoped, when wed,
 For love's fair favours and a fruitful bed.
 Not so his Friend; - on widow fair and staid
 He fix'd his eye, but he was much afraid;
 Yet woo'd; while she his hair of silver hue

Demurely noticed, and her eye withdrew:
 Doubtful he paused - "Ah! were I sure," he cried,
 No craving children would my gains divide;
 Fair as she is, I would my widow take,
 And live more largely for my partner's sake."
 With such their views some thoughtful years they pass'd,
 And hoping, dreading, they were bound at last.
 And what their fate? Observe them as they go,
 Comparing fear with fear and woe with woe.
 "Humphrey!" said Dawkins, "envy in my breast
 Sickens to see thee in thy children blest:
 They are thy joys, while I go grieving home
 To a sad spouse, and our eternal gloom:
 We look despondency; no infant near,
 To bless the eye or win the parent's ear;
 Our sudden heats and quarrels to allay,
 And soothe the petty sufferings of the day:
 Alike our want, yet both the want reprove;
 Where are, I cry, these pledges of our love?
 When she, like Jacob's wife, makes fierce reply,
 Yet fond - Oh! give me children, or I die:
 And I return - still childless doom'd to live,
 Like the vex'd patriarch - Are they mine to give?
 Ah! much I envy thee thy boys, who ride
 On poplar branch, and canter at thy side;
 And girls, whose cheeks thy chin's fierce fondness know,
 And with fresh beauty at the contact glow."
 "Oh! simple friend," said Ditchem, "wouldst thou gain
 A father's pleasure by a husband's pain?
 Alas! what pleasure - when some vig'rous boy
 Should swell thy pride, some rosy girl thy joy;
 Is it to doubt who grafted this sweet flower,
 Or whence arose that spirit and that power?
 "Four years I've wed; not one has passed in vain;
 Behold the fifth! behold a babe again!
 My wife's gay friends th' unwelcome imp admire,
 And fill the room with gratulation dire:
 While I in silence sate, revolving all
 That influence ancient men, or that befall;