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# ORATION

ON THE

Virtues of the Old Women,

AND THE

PRIDE of the YOUNG ;

With a Direction for Young MEN what  
sort of WOMEN to take, and for WO-  
MEN what sort of MEN to marry.

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Wives Clerk.



G L A S G O W,  
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M D C C X C V I.

*An ORATION on the Virtues of the Old WOMEN, &c.*

**T**HE madness of this unmuzzled age has driven me to mountains of thoughts, and a continual meditation; it is enough to make an auld wife rin redwood, and drive a body beyond the halter's end of ill-nature, to see what I see, and hear what I hear: Therefore the hinges of my anger are broke and the bands of my good and mild nature are burst in two, the door of civility is laid quite open, plain speech and mild admonition is of none effect; nothing must be used now but thunder-bolts of reproach tartly trimmed in a tantalizing stile, roughly redd up and manufactured thro' an auld Matrou's mouth, who is indeed but frail in the teeth, but will squeeze surprisngly with her auld gums until her very chaft blades crack in the crushing of your vice.

I shall branch out my discourse into four heads;

First, What I have seen, and been witness to.

Secondly, What I now see, and am witness to.

Thirdly, What I have heard, does hear, and cannot help; I mean the difference between the old women and the young.

Fourthly, Conclude with an advice to young men and young women how to avoid the buying of Janet Juniper's stinking butter\*, which will have a rotten rift on their stomach as long as they live.

First, The first thing then, I see and observe is, That a whene daft giddy-headed, cock-nosed, juniper-nebbed mothers, bring up a whene sky-racket dancing daughters, a' bred up to be ladies, without so much as the breadth of their lufe of land, it's an admiration to me where the lairds are a' to come frae that's to be coupled to them; work! na, na, my bairn must not work, she's to be a lady, they ca' her miss, I must have her ears bor'd says old Mumps the mother; thus the poor pet is brought up like a motherless lamb, or a parrot in a cage; they learn no-

\* A nick-name to the wife's daughter that no man will marry because stuff'd full of laziness, self-conceit and stinking pride; or if she be married she'll ly like stinking butter on his stomach while she lives.

thing but prick and sew, and fling their feet when the fiddle plays, so they become a parcel of yellow-faced female taylors, unequal matches for country-men, Flanders babies, brought up in a box, and must be carried in a basket, knows nothing but pinching poverty, hunger and pride, can neither milk kye, muck a byre, card, spin, nor yet keep a cow from a corn-rigg; the most of such are as blind penny-worths, as buying pigs in pocks, and ought only to be matched with Tacket-makers, Tree-trimmers, and Male-taylors, that they may be male and female agreeable in trade, since their piper faced fingers are not for hard labour; yet they might also pass on a pinch for a black Sutor's wife, for the stitching of white seams round the mouth of a lady's shoe, or with Barbers or Bakers they might be buckled, because of their muslin mouth and pinch-beck speeches, when barm is scant they can blow up their bread with fair wind, and when the razor is rough, can trim their chafts with a fair tale, oil their peruke with her white lips, and powder the beaus pow with a French puff; they are all versed in all the sciences of flattery, musical-tunes, horn-pipes, and country dances, tho' perfect in none but the reel of Gammon.

Yet that be they, the fickle farmer fixes his fancy upon a bundle of clouts, a skeleton of bones, Maggy and the mutch, like twa fir-sticks and a pickle tow, neither for his plate nor his pow; very unproper plenshing, neither for his profit nor her pleasure, to plout her hands thro' Hawkey's caff-cog is a hateful hardship for Mammy's pet, and will hack a' her hands. All this have I seen and heard, and been witness to, but my pen being a-goose-quill, cannot expose their names nor place of abode, but warns the working men out of their way.

Secondly, I see another sort, who can work and maun work till they be married and become mistress themselves; but as the husband receives them, the thrift leaves them; before that, they wrought as for a wager, they span as for a premium, busked as for a brag, scoured their din-skins as a wauker does wot-

sted blankets, kept as mims in the mouth as a minister's wife, comely as Diana, chaste as Susanna, yet the whole of their toil is the trimming of their rigging, tho' their hulls be everlastingly in a leaking condition; their backs and their bellies are box'd about with the fins of a big fish, six petticoats, a gown and apron, besides a side fark down to the ankle-bones, ah! what monstrous rags are here, what a cloth is consumed for the covering to one pair of buttocks; I leave it to the judgment of any ten tailors in town, if thirty pair of mien's breeches may not be cut from a little above the easing of Bessy's bum, and this makes her a motherly woman, as stately a fabric as ever strade to market or mill.

But when she's married, she turns a madam, her mistress did not work much, and why should she? Her mother tell'd ay she wad be a lady, but cou'd never show where her lands lay; but when money is all spent, credit broken, and conduct out of keeping, a when babling buby bairns crying piece minny, porech minny, the witlefs wanton waster is at her wit's end. Work now or want, and do not say that the world has war'd you; but lofty Noddle, your giddy-headed mother has led you astray, by learning you to be a lady before you was fit to be a servant-lafs, by teaching you laziness instead of hard labour, by giving you such a high conceit of yourself, that no body thinks any thing of you now, and you may judge yourself to be one of those that wise people call Little-worth; but after all, my dear dirty-face, when you begin the world again, be perfectly rich before you be gentle, work hard for what you gain, and you'll ken better how to guide it, for pride is an unperfect fortune, and a ludicrous life will not last long.

Another sort I see, who has got more silver than sense, more gold than good nature, more muslins and means than good manners; tho' a sack can hold their silver, six houses and a half cannot contain their ambitious desires: Fortunatus's wonderful purse would fail in fetching in the fourth part of their worldly wants, and the children imitate their mo-

thers, chattering like hungry cranes, crying still, I want, I want, ever craving, wilfully wasting, till all be brought to a doleful dish of desolation, and with cleanness of teeth, a full breast, an empty belly, big pockets without pence, pinching penury, perfect poverty, drouth, hunger, want of money and friends both, old-age, dim-eyes, feeble joints, without shoes or clothes, the real fruits of a bad marriage, which brings thoughtless Fops to both faith and repentance in one day.

Thirdly, another thing I see, hear, and cannot help, is the breeding, of bairns and bringing them up like bill-stirks, they gie them wealth of meat, but no manners; but when I was a bairn, If I did not bend to obedience, I ken mysel what I got; which learned me what to gi' mine again; if they had tell'd me tuts or prute-no, I laid them o'er my knee and a com'd crack for crack o'er their hurdies like a knock bleaching a harn web; till the red wats stood on their hips, this brought obediënce into my house, and banish'd dods and ill-nature out at the door; I dang the de'il out o' them, and dadded them like a wet dish-clout till they did my bidding; but now the bairns are brought up to spit fire in their mither's face, and cast dirt at their auld daddies; How can they be good who never saw a sample of it; or reverence old age, who practised no precepts in their youth; How can they love their parents who gave them black poison instead of good principles? Who shewed them no good, nor taught them no duties? No marvel such children despise old age, and reverence their parents as an old horse does his father.

Fourthly, The last prevailing evil which I see, all men may hear, but none strive to help, the banishment of that noble holy day, called the Sabbath, which has been blasted by a whirl-wind from the south; I am yet alive, who saw this hurricane coming thro' the walled city near Solway in the South; it being on a Sunday, and a beautiful sun-shine day amongst some foul weeks in harvest weather, which caused the Lord Mayor of that place to work hard and

put in the whole fields of wheat harvest, and the priests of that church commended him therefore. Because the season was backward, why should no man be disobedient? And this infection is come here also, surely the loss of this Sabbath-day will be counted a black Saturday to some; when I walk in the fields, I know it not but by the stopping of the plow when in the city, only by the closeness of a few shop doors and the sound of the bells; degenerate ideas of religion indeed! when the high praise is sounded only by bell metal, *A sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal*, is it not come to pass, the taverns roar like *Ætna's* mouth; children follow their gaming, and old sinners their strolling about, nothing stopt but coal-carts and common carriers, the Sabbath lasts no longer than the sermon, and the sermon is measured by a little sand in a glass; many, too many frequent the church, seemingly only to show their antic dress with heads of a monstrous form, more surprizing than those described by Aristotle, as for length exceeding that of an asses head, ears and all, and ah how humbling would it be to see their heads struck into such forms, &c.

They disdain now to ride on pads as of old, or to be hobbled on a horse's hurdies, but must be hurled behind the tail, safely seated in a leather conveyance, and there they fly swiftly as in the chariot of Aminadab.

They will not speak the mother language of their native country, but must have southern oaths, refined like raw sugar thro' the mills of cursing, finely polished and fairly struck in the profane mint of London, into a perfect form of slunkey language; even the very wild Arabs from the mountain tops, who have not yet got English to profane his Maker's name will cry *Cot, Cot*; hateful it is to hear them swear who cannot speak, O! strange alteration since the days of old, the downfall of Popery and the Prelate's decay, when reformation was alive, and religion in taste and fashion; the people during the Sabbath were all packed up in closets, and their children kept

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within doors, when every city appeared as a sanctuary, nothing to be heard in the streets but the sound of prayer on the right hand, and the melodious sound of psalms on the left.

Now is the days of counting, scribbling, riding of horses, and the sound of the post-horn come; surely there will be trade now, and none will miss prosperity when every day is a fair; I add no more on this head, that every one claim a right to his own set time, &c.

Another grievance of the female offenders I cannot omit, which attracts men's fancy and is the cause of his fall; I mean Flighters who has got a little of the means of Mammon, more silver than sense, more bold than good nature, haughtiness for humility, value themselves as a treasure incomprehensible, their heads and heart of Ophir-gold, their hips of silver and their whole body as set about with precious stones, great and many are the congresses of their courtship, and the solemnizing of their marriage is like the conclusion of a peace after a bloody and tedious war.

And what is she after all, yea her poor penny will never be exhausted, it must be laid out in lunacy and craziness, she must have fine teas and the tuther thing: when pregnancy and the spueing of porech approach, then the prophecies of her death; as she hatches the egg, she embraces laziness; then O the bed, the bed nothing like the bed for a bad wife; her body becomes as par-boiled, being so bed-ridden! this rots their children in the brewing, and buries them in the bringing up, yea some mothers are so beastly, as they wet the bed and blame the child therefore; yet such lazy wives live long; and their children soon die; their far fetched feigned sickness soon renders the husband to the substance of one sixpence, he becomes poor and hen-peck't under such peticoat government.

But when I Janet was a Janet and had the judgment of my own house, my husband was thrice happy, I never held him down, he was above me day and night, I sat late and rose early, kept a full house and a rough back, when summer came we minded

winter's cauld, we had peace ay at Porech-time, and harmony through the day; we supp'd our sowens supper-time with a seasonable heat, and went to bed good bairns, kend naething but stark love and kindness, we wrought for riches, and our age and earthly stores increased alike, we hated pride and loved peace, he died with a good name, I let you ken live, but not as many do, not so lordly of my braes as some are of their belly? and was not my life strange by that now practised? Come help yourself you hillokat livers and avoid it.

Now after all, if a poor man want a perfect wife let him wale a well blooded hissie, wi' braid shoulders and thick about the haunches, that has been lang servant in ae house, though twice or thrice away an ay fied back, that's well liked by the bairns and the bairns' mither, that's nae way cankard to the can nor kicks the colley-dogs among her feet, that wad let a' brute beasts live, but rats, mice, lice, flae-neets and bugs, that bites the wee bairns in their cradles that carefully comb the young things' head washes their faces and claps their cheeks, snites the snorter frae their nose as they were a' her ain, that's the lass that will make a good wife; for them that aunts the young bairns will ay be kind to auld-foul an they had them.

And ony hale hearted wholesome hissie that want to halter a good husband, never tak a widow's ae for a' the wifely gates in the warid will be in him for want of a father to teach him manly actions neither take a four looking sumf wi' a muckle mouth and a wide guts, who will eat like a horse and so like a sow, suffer none to sup but himself, eat your meat and the bairns' baith; when hungry angry, when fu' full of pride, ten sacks will not hold his fauc though a pea-shap will hold his silver: But go tak your chance, and if cheated channer net on me, for fashionable folk flee to fashionable things, for lust brutish blind, and fond love as blear-ey'd. I add no more says Janet; so be it, said Humphray the Cler.