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Original Poems And Translations, By John Dryden, Esq; Now First Collected and Publish'd together, In Two Volumes

Containing Translations, Epistles, Prologues, Epilogues, Elegies, Epitaphs, And Songs

Dryden, John

London, 1743

Epilogue, spoken by the same.

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Visual Library

So Poetry, which is in *Oxford* made
An Art, in *London* only is a Trade.
There haughty Dunces, whose unlearned Pen
Could ne'er spell Grammar, would be reading Men.
Such build their Poems the *Lucretian* way;
So many huddled Atoms make a Play;
And if they hit in Order by some Chance,
They call that Nature, which is Ignorance.
To such a Fame let mere Town-Wits aspire,
And their gay Nonsense their own Cits admire.
Our Poet, could he find Forgiveness here,
Would wish it rather than a *Plaudit* there.
He owns no Crown from those *Prætorian* Bands,
But knows that Right is in the Senate's Hands.
Not impudent enough to hope your Praise,
Low at the Muses Feet his Wreath he lays,
And, where he took it up, resigns his Bays.
Kings make their Poets whom themselves think fit,
But 'tis your Suffrage makes authentick Wit.

EPILOGUE, *spoken by the same.*

NO poor *Dutch* Peasant, wing'd with all his Fear,
Flies with more haste, when the *French* Arms draw near,
Then we with our Poetick Train come down,
For refuge hither, from th' infected Town:
Heav'n for our Sins this Summer has thought fit
To visit us with all the Plagues of Wit.
A *French* Troop first swept all things in its way;
But those hot *Monsieurs* were too quick to stay:
Yet, to our Cost, in that short time, we find
They left their Itch of Novelty behind.

Th'

Th' *Italian* Merry-Andrews took their place,
And quite debauch'd the Stage with lewd Grimace:
Instead of Wit, and Humours, your Delight
Was there to see two Hobby-horses fight;
Stout *Scaramoucha* with Rush Lance rode in,
And ran a Tilt at Centaur *Arlequin*.
For Love you heard how amorous Asses bray'd,
And Cats in Gutters gave their Serenade.
Nature was out of Count'nance, and each Day
Some new-born Monster shewn you for a Play.
But when all fail'd, to strike the Stage quite dumb,
Those wicked Engines call'd Machines are come.
Thunder and Lightning now for Wit are play'd,
And shortly Scenes in *Lapland* will be laid:
Art Magick is for Poetry profest;
And Cats and Dogs, and each obscener Beast,
To which *Ægyptian* Dotards once did bow,
Upon our *English* Stage are worshipp'd now.
Witchcraft reigns there, and raises to Renown
Macbeth, and *Simon Magus* of the Town,
Fletcher's despis'd, your *Johnson*'s out of Fashion,
And Wit the only Drug in all the Nation.
In this low Ebb our Wares to you are shown;
By you those staple Authors worth is known;
For Wit's a Manufacture of your own.
When you, who only can, their Scenes have prais'd,
We'll boldly back, and say, their Price is rais'd.

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