

**THE AGE; A
COLLOQUIAL
SATIRE**

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The age; a colloquial satire by Philip James Bailey

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PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

**THE AGE; A
COLLOQUIAL
SATIRE**

THE AGE;

A

COLLOQUIAL SATIRE.

BY

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY.

AUTHOR OF "FESTUS."

BOSTON:

TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LVIII.

AUTHOR'S EDITION.

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THE AGE;
A Colloquial Satire.

Interlocutors :—CRITIC, YOUNG AUTHOR, and MUTUAL FRIEND.

Scene—TOWN; AN EDITOR'S ROOM.

AUTHOR.

HERE are you two, no doubt in deep debate,
And close confab, upon affairs of state.

FRIEND.

By no means.

AUTHOR.

You are busy?

CRITIC.

Pray, sit down.

Two hours for chat, still.

AUTHOR.

Then, you are leaving town?

CRITIC.

I homewards, too. We "rail" together
Part of the way, at least.

AUTHOR.

This brilliant weather
Raises anticipations in my mind
Of country joys delicious in their kind.

CRITIC.

There's nothing like it for one's health, I find.
Unconquered Kent! I come to thee again—
Famous for cherries, apples, hops, strong men,
And pretty girls, and every thing that's good,
And the Martello Towers, and underwood,
And Roman roads, and cricket; Shakspeare's Cliff,
And many other things, I dare say, if
I knew them, but I don't; and so, it ends,
With—famous for good dinners and good friends.

AUTHOR.

God speed you both. I fear I've cut the thread,
Like Atropos, of your discoursing, dead.

CRITIC.

No. We were merely skimming o'er the topics
 Which fill men's mouths from England to the tropics,
 And raise their wrath from Polar e'en to Torrid zone—
 From Arctic to Antarctic (still more horrid zone)
 Much as the flying fish pursues his way
 On wing and fin, up and down, night and day,
 In desultory movement.

FRIEND.

That's to say
 From actions seeking motives we must tend
 Backwards; and forwards, if we seek an end.

CRITIC.

But what's this scroll?

AUTHOR.

We'll speak about it afterwards—
 As soon as I perceive your thoughts turn laughterwards.
 One hour ago, I passed the great Leviathan—
 That monstrous little craft, whose hull is higher than
 The masts of most ships, looming 'mid the fogs,
 Like a huge kennel for the Isle of Dogs;
 And my thoughts darted, lightlike, o'er the seas
 To India and her mutinous Sipahis—

That tyrant thought, which robs the land of ease,
 And duly proves—for all we there have been—
 There's nothing certain but the unforeseen.

CRITIC.

That is the question which has superseded,
 Justly, all others, howsoever they needed
 Discussion: church rates, ballot, and reform,
 All veil their heads before the eastern storm.
 And truly, as regards domestic policy,
 Chiefly reform, I think we all the folly see,
 Of hurrying on a constitutional question,
 Which might endanger old Squire Bull's digestion.

FRIEND.

He's somewhat apoplectic; and we are undone
 If all the country blood should fly to London,

CRITIC.

Whatever luck he had, or fortune missed,
 There's no man happy like the egotist;
 On what Bull deems his rights Bull will insist.

FRIEND.

Rather thickheaded sometimes as a nation,
 But then his roar beats all bulls out of Bashan.

AUTHOR.

Then there's the Ballot.

CRITIC.

Ballot has its partizans,
The favourite makeshift of some timid artisans,
Who form, although a most important class,
One only segment of the social mass ;
Wherein is seen, in all its odd variety,
That pudding-stone formation called Society.
Beside the Crown, the peers, and cleric hierarchy,
Law, army, navy, physic, state and squirearchy,
Fundholders, landowners, farmers, bankers, millocrats,
Officials, manufacturers, merchants, tillocrats,
Called frequently by Chartists the shopocracy—
Most numerous of all ranks in our Democracy :
And numbering many good and thoughtful men,
Illustrious for plain dealing, now and then ;
Clerks and assistants, labourers of every kind,—
Must have their rightful interests borne in mind.
Not all these ranks have votes, but all dispense
A broadly graduated influence ;
And each, a petty despot in its way,
Striving to rule the whole, must yet obey
The general weal ; consulting for the best
The will of others—workmen with the rest ;