

**SPECIMENS OF
MACARONIC POETRY.
PUGNA PORCORUM**

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WILLIAM SANDYS & P. PORCIUM

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Macaronic Poetry.

LONDON: RICHARD BECKLEY, 42, PICCADILLY.
1831.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following collection comprises the best specimens of Macaronic poetry, containing a few that are but little known; and although in some instances the difficult nature of the composition may be the principal recommendation to notice, yet in others will be found genuine wit and humour. The substance of this introduction has already appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine in the course of last year.

Previously to mentioning the Macaronic authors, it may not be out of character to refer shortly to some other peculiar and affected styles of writing, having some affinity to their labours. Many of the examples will probably be familiar to the reader, and others will readily suggest themselves.

The classic writers contain specimens of accidental alliteration, as

Ἐν πάλῳ κενώλυσσι, πάλῳ μέρῳσι ἀσπῶσιν.

Homar.

Ἐνεκέ σ', οἱ ἴσασιν Ἑλλήσιν Ἰου.

Medea, Euripid.

Infans namque pudor prohibebat plura profari.

Horace.

Libera lingua loquantur ludis liberalibus.

Nævius.

Nor must we overlook Cicero's unlucky line,

O fortunatam natam me consule Roman,

which, with the satirist's remark upon it, is well known to the readers of Juvenal, though probably only to a small

portion of those who are so fond of using the "si sic omnia."

But affected alliteration alone is akin to the present purpose, as the line of Ennius—

O Tite, tute, Tati, tibi tanta, Tyranne, tulisti :

to which may be added,

Machina multa minax minitatur maxima muris ;

and

At Tuba terribili tonitru taratantara trusit.

The following are attributed to Porson :—

Cane decane cane, ne tu cane cane decane,
De cane sed canis cane decane cane.

The lines on Cardinal Wolsey are old acquaintance.—

Begot by butchers, but by bishops bred,
How high his Highness holds his haughty head!

The lipogrammatists were writers who excluded some particular letter of the alphabet from their compositions, like skilful chess-players giving up a piece to an inferior antagonist. Of these, Tryphiodorus, a Greek poet and grammarian of Egypt, in the sixth century, was the most laborious. Anxious to outdo Homer, he wrote a poem on the destruction of Troy, in twenty-four books, from the first of which the *α* was carefully excluded; from the second book the *β*, and so on through the alphabet. D'Israeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," mentions a prose work by Fulgentius, in twenty-three chapters, wherein a similar system of exclusion is adopted for the Latin alphabet: also an ode of Pindar, where the letter *ε* is purposely omitted; and five novels by Lopes de Vega, the first of which is without the letter *a*, the second without *e*, &c. Gregorio Leti presented a discourse to the Academy of the Humorists at Rome, wherein the letter *r* was excluded; and a friend having requested a copy as a literary curiosity, he replied by a copious answer of seven pages, written in the same manner. An anecdote given by D'Israeli, after stating that the Orientalists have this literary folly, may illustrate these lipogrammatists.

"A Persian poet read to the celebrated Jami a gazel of his own composition, which Jami did not like: but the writer replied, it was, notwithstanding, a curious sonnet, for the letter *Alif* was not to be found in any one of the words! Jami sarcastically replied, 'You can do a better thing yet—take away *all the letters* from every word you have written.'"

In the *Anthologia Græca*, edit. H. Steph. i. 58, are poems in praise of Bacchus, and of Apollo, on a different plan. They consist of twenty-four lines, each word in the first line beginning with *α*, in the second line with *β*, and so on, *c. gr.* (from poem to Bacchus.)

Εἰς Βάκχον.

Μίλωνος βασιλῆα φίλονος, κροφίονος,
 Αβραάμου, ἄγχιονος, ἀδελφονος, ἀγλιπύρονος,
 Βασίονος, βήμιονος, βακχίονος, βορραχίονος,
 Γαβριονος, γαβριονος, γαβριονος, γαβριονος,
 Δαυιδῆ, δαυιδος, δευτεροδαυιδῆ, δαυιδος, &c.

There are some English lines in the same style, ridiculing the siege of Belgrade, beginning—

An Austrian army awfully array'd,
 Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade.

Lord North, a polished courtier in the time of James the First, wrote a set of sonnets, each beginning with a successive letter of the alphabet. A pedantic specimen appears in the Bannatyne Ancient Scottish Poems, being one of the stanzas from "Ane New Yere Gift, To the Quene, quhen scho come first hame, 1562," by Alexander Scott.

Fresch, fulgent, flurist, fragrant flour, formois,
 Lantern to lufe, of ladeis lamp and lot,
 Cherie maist chaist, cheif charbucl and chois;
 Smaill sweet smaragde, smelling but smit of smot;
 Noblest natour, nurice to nurtour not,
 This dull indyte, dulce, dowble dasy deir,
 Sent be thy sempill servand *Sanderis Scott*,
 Greiting grit God to grant thy Grace guid year.

This sort of absurdity is humorously exposed by Kennedy in his invective addressed to Dunbar. St. 37.

Deilbeir, thy speir of weir, but feir thow yeild,
 Hangit, mangit, eddir-stangit, stryndie *stultorum*;

To me, maist he, Kennedie, and fie the field,
 Pickit, wickit, strickit, convickit, lamp *lullardorum*,
 Diffamit, schamit, blamit *primus Paganorum* ;
 Out, out, I schout, upon that snout that snevellis,
 Tail-teller, rebellar, indwellar with the divellis,
 Spink, sink, with stink *ad Tartara Termagorum*.

After this jargon it may be allowable, as a relief, to introduce a song founded on the peculiarity of the *Newcastle burr*, published in a provincial collection in December 1791. It purports to be an address from one of the rooks, which then built their nests on the vane of the Exchange, to the good people of *Burcastle*.

Rough roll'd the roaring river's stream,
 And rapid ran the rain,
 When Robert Rutter dreamt a dream,
 Which rack'd his heart with pain :
 He dreamt there was a raging bear
 Rush'd from the rugged rocks ;
 And strutting round with horrid stare,
 Breath'd terror to the brocks.*
 But Robert Rutter drew his sword,
 And rushing forward right,
 The horrid creature's thrapple gor'd,
 And barr'd his rueful spite.
 Then, stretching forth his brawny arm
 To drag him to the stream,
 He grappled grizzle, rough and warm,
 Which rous'd him from his dream.

Even the learned Aldhelm indulges in some curious fancies. In the Preface to his poem *De Laude Virginum*, consisting of thirty-eight lines, the first and last lines contain the same words, but in the last they are retrograde. The respective lines begin with the successive letters of the first line, and finish with those of the last line : thus, the first and last lines, and the collected initial and final letters of the lines, consist of the same words ; but in the last line they occur backwards, and the final letters must be read upwards. There is a curiously complicated acrostick cross by Rabanus, containing thirty-five lines, and each of them thirty-five letters ; but to explain this properly,

* Badgers.

would require a plan or copy. This cross will remind the reader of the fantastically shaped poems mentioned in the Spectator, as axes, altars, eggs, &c. of which a Greek poet called Theodoric, is said to have been the inventor. Nash, in his invective against Gabriel Harvey, says, "he had writ verses in all kinds; in form of a pair of gloves, a pair of spectacles, and a pair of pothooks," &c. Mr. Warren, of No. 30, Strand, should take a hint from this and treat the public with a set of verses in honour of his "shining river" of blacking in the shape of a boot-jack. Anagrams are sometimes ingenious, but generally in prose, and therefore foreign to the present purpose. They will remind us of the numerous beings now to be met with, especially east of Charing Cross, with their hands in their coat-pockets, and arms a-kimbo: all the limbs are there, but not in the right places. We may consider them as peripatetic anagrams—of gentlemen I was about to add; but gentlemen do not walk in this way. There is a well-known story in The Spectator, of a lover of Lady Mary Boon, who, after six months' hard study, contrived to anagrammatize her as Moll Boon; and upon being told by his mistress, indignant at such a metamorphosis, that her name was Mary Bohun, he went mad.

Rhopalic verses (from *ῥοπαλον*, the club of Hercules) begin with a monosyllable, and gradually increase, as,

Rem tibi confeci, doctissime, dulcisonoram.
Spes Deus æternæ stationis conciliator.

And,

Ex quibus insignis pulcherrima Deiopœia.

Virg.

Also,

Ἦ μάλακ' Ἀργεῖδ' ἠμφογεῖς, ἰλιδαίμεν.

Il. γ. 182.

The following line is the reverse.

Vectigalibus armamenta referre jubet Rex.

Another class consists of Palindromes, (from *πάλιν* and *δρομήν*) sometimes called Sotadic verses, from Sotades, who is said to have invented them: though a higher authority is sometimes given, as the first specimen, according to one account, was the extemporary effusion of an unfortunate demon, when carrying most unwillingly, a certain portly

canon of Combremer, from Bayeux to Rome. It reads the same, whether backwards or forwards,

Signa te, signa, temerè me tangis et angis,
Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor.

Other examples are,

Si bene te tua laus taxat, sua lautè tenebis.
Sole medere pede, ode, perede melos.

Also,

Et necat eger amor non Roma rege tacente,
Roma reges una non anus eger amor,

where the word *non* serves as a pivot.

In the following line, every word is a palindrome :

Odo teast mulum, mappam madidam tenet Anna.

There is a well-known Greek inscription, occurring on the font at Sandbach in Cheshire, and other places, among which, it is said, is the Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople.

Νίψον ἀνεπίστατον, μὴ μίσην ἔφηον.

A lawyer once chose for his motto "Si nummi immunis." And in the time of Queen Elizabeth, a noble lady who had been forbidden to appear at Court in consequence of some suspicions against her, took for the device on her seal, the Moon, partly obscured by a Cloud, and the motto, "Ablata at alba." Taylor, the water poet, writes,

Lewd did I live and evil I did dwell.

There is an enigma occasionally to be found in Ladies' Albums, in which the initials of five palindromic words are to be sought for to form the required answer : they may be discovered with little attention :

First find out a word that doth silence proclaim,
And that backwards and forwards is always the same,
Then next you must find out a feminine name,
That backwards and forwards is always the same ;
An act, or a writing on parchment, whose name
Both backwards and forwards is always the same ;
A fruit that is rare, whose botanical name
Read backwards and forwards is always the same ;