

In Britain's Isle, no matter where, An ancient pile of buildings stands: The Huntingdons and Hattons there Employ'd the power of Fairy hands To raise the ceiling's fretted height, Each pannel in achievements cloathing, Rich windows that exclude the light, And passages, that lead to nothing. Full oft within the spacious walls, When he had fifty winters o'er him, My grave Lord-Keeper led the Brawls; The Seal, and Maces, danc'd before him. His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green, His high-crown'd hat, and satin-doublet, Mov'd the stout heart of England's Queen, Tho' Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it. What, in the very first beginning! Shame of the versifying tribe! Your Hist'ry whither are you spinning? Can you do nothing but describe? A House there is, (and that's enough) From whence one fatal morning issues A brace of Warriors, not in buff, But rustling in their silks and tissues. The first came cap-a-pe from France Her conqu'ring destiny fulfilling, Whom meaner beauties eye askance, And vainly ape her art of killing. The other Amazon kind heaven Had armed with spirit, wit, and satire: But COBHAM had the polish given And tip'd her arrows with good-nature. To celebrate her eyes, her air - Coarse panegyricks would but tease her. Melissa is her Nom de Guerre. Alas, who would not wish to please her! With bonnet blue and capucine, And aprons long they hid their armour, And veil'd their weapons bright and keen In pity to the country-farmer. Fame, in the shape of Mr. Purt, (By this time all the parish know it) Had told, that thereabouts there lurk'd A wicked Imp they call a Poet, Who prowl'd the country far and near, Bewitch'd the children of the peasants, Dried up the cows, and lam'd the deer, And suck'd the eggs and kill'd the pheasants. My Lady heard their joint petition, Swore by her coronet and ermine, She'd issue out her high commission To rid the manour of such vermin. The Heroines undertook the task, Thro' lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventur'd, Rap'd at the door nor stay'd to ask, But bounce into the parlour enter'd. The trembling family they daunt, They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle, Rummage his Mother, pinch his Aunt, And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle. Each hole and cupboard they explore, Each creek and cranny of his chamber, Run hurry-skurry round the floor, And o'er the bed and tester clamber, Into the Drawers and China pry, Papers and books, a huge Imbroglio! Under a tea-cup he might lie, Or creased, like dogs-ears, in a folio. On the first marching of the troops The Muses, hopeless of his pardon, Convey'd him underneath their hoops To a small closet in the garden. So Rumour says. (Who will, believe.) But that they left the door a-jarr, Where, safe and laughing in his sleeve, He heard the distant din of war. Short was his joy. He little knew The power of Magick was no fable. Out of the window, whisk, they flew, But left a spell upon the table. The words too eager to

unriddle, The poet felt a strange disorder: Transparent birdlime
form'd the middle, And chains invisible the border. So cunning was
the Apparatus, The powerful pothooks did so move him, That, will he,
nill he, to the Great-house He went, as if the Devil drove him. Yet
on his way (no sign of grace, For folks in fear are apt to pray) To
Phoebus he prefer'd his case, And begged his aid that dreadful day.
The Godhead would have back'd his quarrel, But, with a blush on
recollection, Own'd that his quiver and his laurel ' Gaint four
such eyes were no protection. The Court was sate, the Culprit there,
Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping The Lady Janes and Joans
repair, And from the gallery stand peeping: Such as in silence of the
night Come (sweep) along some winding entry (Styack² has often seen
the sight) Or at the chappel-door stand sentry; In peaked hoods and
mantles tarnish'd, Sour visages, enough to scare ye, High dames of
honour once, that garnish'd The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary.
The Peeress comes. The Audience stare, And doff their hats with due
submission: She curtsies, as she takes her chair, To all the people
of condition. The bard with many an artful fib, Had in imagination
fenc'd him, Disproved the arguments of Squib,³ And all that Groom⁴
could urge against him. But soon his rhetorick forsook him, When he
the solemn hall had seen; A sudden fit of ague shook him, He stood as
mute as poor Macleane.⁵ Yet something he was heard to mutter, ' 'How
in the park beneath an old-tree (Without design to hurt the butter,
Or any malice to the poultry,) ' 'He once or twice had pen'd a
sonnet; Yet hop'd that he might save his bacon: Numbers would give
their oaths upon it, He ne'er was for a conj' rer taken.' ' The
ghostly Prudes with hagg'd face Already had condemn'd the sinner. My
Lady rose, and with a grace - She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.
‘ ‘Jesu-Maria! Madam Bridget, Why, what can the Viscountess mean?’ ’
(Cried the square Hoods in woeful fidget) ‘ ‘The times are altered
quite and clean! ‘ ‘Decorum’ s turned to mere civility; Her air and
all her manners show it. Command me to her affability! Speak to a
Commoner and Poet!’ ’ [Here 500 Stanzas are lost.] And so God save
our noble King, And guard us from long-winded Lubbers, That to
eternity would sing, And keep my Lady from her Rubbers.