

C L O A C I N A

C L O A C I N A;

A

C O M I - T R A G E D Y.

*For us, and for our Tragedy,  
Here stooping to your Clemency,  
We beg your Hearing patiently.*

SHAKESPEARE.

---

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C L O A C I N A

TO

E \_\_\_\_\_ V \_\_\_\_\_, Esquire

DEAR SIR,

WHEN I consulted your opinion on a little poetical stricture I published in a Morning Paper, in consequence of some late despicable dramatic productions, you encouraged me to extend my plan. You suggested, however, that the popular mistake of accommodating literary compositions to the foolish refinements and reigning prejudices of the times, was by no means confined to the Theatres; but that writings of every craft were tinctured with that servile obedience to a specious and capacious taste, which must ever disgrace the character of the Muses, and subject their freedom to suspicion. I sincerely respect your judgment, and shall be always thankful for its assistance. The Stage, Sir, I remember, you particularly remarked, in its present abject and declining situation, can never answer any rational purpose of national reformation and instruction for which it was originally instituted, while every indiscriminate and unwarrantable sacrifice is made to harmony of numbers, extravagant bombast, and florid declamation. Scenes judiciously drawn from Nature (you observed) will always interest the heart, as Philosophy awakens the understanding: but you insisted, that our modern Drama had neither Nature nor Philosophy to support it; that *sound* and *glare* were at present the predominating distinctions, and that no censure on its many absurdities could be absolutely unpardonable, while the *romantic insipidities* of the Opera were servilely imitated on one hand, and the *gingerbread fripperies* of the booths of Bartholomew stupidly adopted on the other.

On these grounds, Sir, I have treated the Stage with freedom. An abler writer would have given additional poignancy to the satire of this little piece; but no pen can be greatly at a loss, where the field for criticism is so extensive and luxuriant, the inconsistencies it attempts to expose in general terms so numerous and glaring, and the errors of Dramatic Writers so richly deserving the severest reprehension.

In departing, Sir, from the limits I originally prescribed myself, I have taken some freedom with literary characters in a separate line. I cannot be persuaded, however, that my exceptions to their mistakes betray either a singularity of sentiment or a confinement of understanding. Men of the most indisputable judgement have always condemned every *studied*, *affected* sacrifice to *mode*, both in speaking and writing; and I conceive it must generally be admitted, the two characters I have particularly distinguished in my *Temple of Cloacina*, labour under many ridiculous consignments of nature. A senator who engages to serve a people, has great and extensive obligations. If such a man consults the temporary entertainment of his hearers at the expence of sincerity and duty, there are views in which he must be considered a traitor to his trust, in spite of all flattering disguises. And if an Author of eminence indulges a pedantic prejudice for a

C L O A C I N A

mechanical stile, in preference to natural argument and liberal investigation, he *may* be charged with *neglecting* the *credit* of the schools, if his formality does not *disgrace* it. Respecting any license I may have taken with an *empty treaties* on Education, or the works of Infidels and Sceptics, I appeal to the majority of mankind for their countenance and protection; and remain,

SIR,  
*Your affectionate and faithful*  
*Friend and Servant,*  
The A U T H O R.

*Colchester, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1775.*

*P. S.* I begin my Play with the Vth Act, because I find it fashionable to make the four first Acts of no importance at all.

C L O A C I N A

P R O L O G U E

TO

C L O A C I N A

AUTHOR *and* MANAGER.

AUTHOR.

*Hoping, good sir, your honour likes the Play  
I left last month, I humbly wait to-day,  
Some Critics say my plan's immensely fine!  
You read the piece? ----*

MANAGER.

*No, dam'me, not a line.  
Think what I've felt who read your vile Address:  
Dull as Divines who preach to empty pews,  
You torture Sense, and massacre the Muse;  
Oppress my nerves, and discompose my brain:  
Friend, I beseech thee, take thy piece again.  
Sooner shall M\_\_\_\_\_y write with Shakespeare's pen,  
The bench of Bishops vote like honest men,  
Declaiming Patriots seek to save the land,  
Than Wits peruse vile plays by Dunces plann'd.  
Sir, if your piece was wrote by classic rules,  
Tho' cold as ice 'twould pass some critics schools;  
But then so quaint your Title-Page appears —  
Here, take it back, and save my chandeliers:\*  
Such gods as are with beans and bacon fed,  
"Would keep a dreadful pother over head;"  
And damn the Play before the second scene,  
Tho' Aldridge danced an Allemande between.*

\*English Pronunciation

AUTHOR.

*Indeed, great Sir, I strive to please the town  
 With all that leads to profit and renown.  
 A March and Tempest raise my scenes in turn,  
 a Dirge, a Ghost, an Altar and an Urn.  
 Can fine description make the Critics roar?  
 I've a sea-beach where surges lash the shore.  
 The pale moon riding thro' the sadden'd sky,  
 Will make nice men clap who know no reason why,  
 Then shield me, shield me with a patron's wing,  
 Be Yates my goddess, Smith my raving king;  
 Let drums and fifes precede my dread close-stools,  
 It runs nine nights my judgement to a fool's.*

MANAGER.

*Thou think'st, perhaps, because I condescend  
 To curse thy Play, I'll hear thee prate, my friend?  
 No ---- cease thy jargon ---- Zounds! I'll hear no more:  
 This my house, and that, Sir, ---- that's the door.  
 Sir, since you take such unbecoming airs,  
 And doubt my taste, I'll shew you to the stairs:  
 Sooner then let such half-starv'd wits prescribe,  
 I'll write myself, and ruin all your tribe.  
 Sir --- no excuse, but leave me while thou'rt well;  
 Hence to thy hut, and shrink within thy shell:  
 And mark my words; if henceforth from this day,  
 Thou dar'st, rash man, insult me with thy Play,  
 Though all the Bards of Greece and Rome conspire  
 To teach thy Muse some just dramatic fire,  
 Boldly I'll act a part which none shall blame;  
 Grasp ---- grasp it thus ---- and dash it to the flame.*

AUTHOR.

*Sir, let me beg one word before I go,  
 To calm this wrath ---*

MANAGER.

*I tell thee, fellow, no.  
 Plead thus again, I'll crush thee with a frown; -----*

C L O A C I N A

*The man withdrew and thus address'd the town.*

*"Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*"When Sense and Nature yield to Epic song,*

*"That man's awake who dreams the stage is wrong.*

*"When drums and turbans, pageantry and glare,*

*"Transform each proud jack-pudding to a play'r;*

*"When wild grimace and barbarous starts control*

*"Each graceful art that once could win the soul;*

*"Let Satire strike ---- affect her scourging pen,*

*"And strive to laugh such Monsters into Men.*

C L O A C I N A

C L O A C I N A

ACT V. SCENE I

*The curtain draws and discovers COMMON SENSE in a languid, drooping posture, supported by NATURE and PHILOSOPHY.*

COMMON SENSE.

Give, give me my hartshorn, quickly cut my stays;  
I'm sick, I'm faint, I'm stabb'd by modern plays.  
Expell'd the stage, the Pulpit and the Bar,  
Taste broke my heart, and chain'd me to her car;  
Taste taught the world to treat my name with scorn;  
For taste, I wander'd, desolate, forlorn:  
O'er desert wilds, bleak hills, and mountains bare,  
Sought bitter bread, and found a scanty share;  
Endur'd contempt, and poverty and pain,  
Nay begg'd an alms, yet bowed my knees in vain.  
First I implored relief from sound divines,  
Critics who praise fat beef and dainty chimes:  
They gravely shook their heads --- then strok'd their bands,  
And wish'd me much success in foreign lands:  
Ask'd if I built my fame on classic ground?  
Confess'd their doubts, and left me as they found.  
Next I besought the sages of the law;  
They read my case, and pointed out the flaw;  
Declar'd their pious zeal for pounds and pence,  
And frankly told me, Cash was Common Sense.  
My third rebuke 'tis needless to declare,  
You felt my fate, and wept my fortune there:  
Tortur'd by bards who trade in tragic rhyme,  
Down---down I sink, and perish in my prime.  
To distant times let weeping Nature tell,  
"I lov'd her once, not wisely, but too well."  
Preferr'd her charms to all the pompous lore  
The schools prescribe, and school-taught men adore;  
But false refinement, barbarous arts, controul'd,  
And Common Sense was mix'd with common mould.  
What have I felt from ev'ry classic clown?  
Johnson found staves, and Stanhope knock'd me down.  
Dramatic wits then smote me thick and thin,

C L O A C I N A

And left me thus a victim to their sin.  
Awhile my shade must linger here below,  
To find if Murphy “knock’d so hard or no.”  
Awhile my shade must suffer grief in heav’n,  
To think poor Hoole can never be forgiv’n.

PHILOSOPHY.

Tho’ frantic scribes have dragg’d thee from thy throne,  
Tho’ CLOACINA hears their vows alone,  
Do not, with sighs and sobs, and black despair,  
*Give to the howling winds thy scatter’d hair.*  
My deep researches some relief may find,  
Is thy pulse faint, and languishing and low?  
Balm for thy wounds, and physick for thy mind.  
*Damp sheets* will make thy fine secretions flow.  
Are thy bones rack’d, thy nerves oppress’d with pain?  
*One drunken fillip* brings thee round again.  
As some great Sage, when seas in tempests boil,  
Calms their hoarse thunders --- *with a quart of oil.*

*Enter POETRY in Chains, clad in compleat Steel; the GRACES with watchmens great coats and leather doublets, following at a distance.*

NATURE and COMMON SENSE *start back, and wring their hands in agony of sorrow.*

NATURE.

Ah wretched sight, my friend oppress’d with chains!  
Then all is lost, and CLOACINA reigns.  
Is it for this, my dear, much-injur’d maid,  
You left the hermit’s grot and sylvan shade?  
Is it for this you sought the fields of fame,  
To weep in bonds, and tinge your cheek with shame?

AIR.

*I wak’d thee once at dewy dawn,  
Reclin’d in myrtle bowers;  
Led thy sweet flocks along the lawn,  
And gave thee all my flowers.*

*You gathered my roses in spring,  
In summer you danc’d in my ray;*

*And the Grace of autumn would sing  
When winter had swept them away.*

*Now taste and refinement contend  
To seduce with each plausible plea,  
But you never shall find such a friend,  
Nor so faithful a mistress as me.*

*My sedgy banks and fairy streams,  
That prompt such soft poetic dreams,  
In woods and vales retir'd;  
At eve my sweetly solemn calls,  
Near cloistered-cells and abbey-walls,  
Thy gentle breast inspir'd.*

*You wander'd far from busy towns,  
The sheep-bells on the distant downs  
Would charm thy ravish'd ear;  
The rock, the rill, the hoarse cascade,  
The sunny hill, and silent glade,  
Would draw thy footsteps near.*

*Smit with the charms of scatter'd farms,  
The wild notes of the spray,  
In ev'ry mead you tun'd the reed,  
And frolick'd life away.*

*At length I miss'd thy sylvan song,  
And mourn'd thy transformation long,  
Thro' each declining age;  
Then heard thy muse supply'd the stalls,  
Hung up her harp on Bedlam walls,  
And died upon the Stage.*

#### POETRY.

Would I were dead, and free from savage men,  
Who mock my woes, and kill me with their pen;  
Then should I sleep with all the gentle train,  
Who lov'd my laws, and dignify'd my reign:  
Then should I fear no ills from savage foes,  
Who bind in verse, and execute in prose;  
Like specious Burke, who talks without design,  
As Indians paint, because their tints are fine;  
Like Guildhall wits, who take rank weeds for flowers,

Spell some wild phrase, and marvel at their powers.  
 Since taste first flourish'd, all my charms decay'd,  
 I chang'd my name, and liv'd in Masquerade.  
 Arm'd *cap a-pié* with pond'rous swords and shields,  
 Fierce as bold Knights who stalk thro' *Bunhill-fields*,  
 This nodding plume in martial pomp surrounds  
 My glitt'ring helm, that weighs a dozen pounds,  
 Dazzles the crowd, and makes the children stare,  
 While old wives bellow - *Lord, how fine you are!*  
 In wintry nights I pass my dread campaigns  
 'Midst fire and tempests, thunderbolts and chains;  
 In rumbling verse am oft obliged to tell,  
 How fields were lost, and heroes went to hell:  
 But then my rhimes in softer accents flow,  
 They leave the light, they seek the shades below.  
 Quench'd the warm heart, eclips'd the brilliant brain,  
 They bite the earth, they strew th' ensanguin'd plain,  
 Heave their last sigh, compleat their mortal sands,  
 Visit grim Styx, or hail th' Elysian lands;  
 In act the first are decently interr'd  
 To raise the plot, and rise again the third:  
 E'en *authors* thus can cheat old Charon's wherry,  
 And bring the scoundrels back alive and merry.

Suppose king Pontus (understand me right)  
 Suppose king Pontus swears by Jove he'll fight;  
 Suppose king Pontus is in battle slain,  
 I call king Pontus back to life again;  
 Then the war rages, then the potlids roar,  
 He's up! he's down! he *skims* along the floor;  
 Then martial tumults rend the vaulted skies,  
 And thus he falls, and then *he dies --- he dies!*  
 As some large jack, entangled with his bait,  
 Darts down the wave, and struggles with his fate,  
 Convuls'd with pain awhile he stands at bay,  
 Then starts, and pants, and gently fades away.

Sharp are my pangs, and dreadful is the purge,  
 When long processions introduce the dirge;  
 When queens so chaste and vestals of renown,  
 Who hold their favours cheap at half a crown,  
 Sing pious strains around some mournful bier,  
 What would I give that not a soul could hear?  
 What would I give I give to see my tyrants dine  
 On musty steaks, and drink infernal wine;  
 Converse with Hottentots, and shave with Jews,

Act their own plays, which actors all refuse,  
 Chaunt their base songs with bunters round St. Paul's,  
 Keep some blind shop, and paste them to the walls;  
 With plays and ballads mend their fractured panes,  
 And scrawl in dungeons, while I droop in chains?

In antient times, each actor would regard  
 Dramatic works, and strive to please the bard.  
 Now, sad reverse! When first I shew my head,  
 One's sick abroad, and t'other's sick in bed:  
 This begs excuse, and vows he cannot play;  
 That finds his genius lies another way;  
 Protests each scene can entertain and teach,  
 But then the rhyme is much above his reach;  
 So chaste, so rich, so soft, and so sublime,  
 He'd gladly play some part, some future time,  
 Such is my shame, my torture, my disgrace,  
 From slaves I feed – the dull dramatic race,  
 Who feast on Shakespeare's bright immortal dreams,  
 As insects flourish in the solar beams.  
 In health great Shakespeare pays their taylor's bills,  
 Supplies the sick with gallipots and pills;  
 Redeems their pawns, or pays the surgeon's fee,  
 From spunging bailiffs sets the captives free;  
 When drunk, will kindly treat them with a whore,  
 Ingrateful atoms! Can a bard do more?  
 His wealth I gave him, gave without control,  
 To charm the heart, and animate the soul;  
 Subdue the passions with a master's skill,  
 Conduct bright fancy up th' eternal hill,  
 Direct the path fair Science loves to soar,  
 And fix his fame till time shall be no more.  
 Then *Sense* and *Nature* lov'd my tuneful laws,  
 Then fair *Philosophy* would plead my cause;  
 His genuine works like Scripture-truths are plann'd,  
 Who runs may read, who reads must understand;  
 His works great Nature and the Nine adorn'd,  
 But Shakespeare sleeps, and Poetry is scorn'd.  
 Now venal bards subvert my first design,  
 Debase the mute as vintners dash their wine;  
 With *sounds* seduce a taste-corrupted age,  
 And build a brothel, where they sink a stage.  
 As S\_\_\_\_\_n left his C\_\_\_\_\_r H\_\_\_\_\_e to shade  
 Merchants distressed, and gentlemen decay'd,  
 Now turn'd to dust can disregard their tears,  
 And feed the pimps of prostituted peers.

C L O A C I N A

N A T U R E .

Ill fare the man, if such a man there be,  
Who robs the generous, and enslaves the free;  
Steals from the muse a mercenary song,  
And drags in chains the fetter'd line along.  
Ne'er shall her smiles his clay-cold bosom fill,  
Ne'er shall her smiles inform his venal quill,  
Nor rustic song, nor proud heroic strain,  
Shall bless the bard who sadly sings for gain.  
The day shall dawn, the lark salute the spring,  
High noon advance, and groves and vallies ring;  
At ev'ning shade the blackbirds notes prevail,  
The bird of night shall cheer the lonely dale;  
Nor morn, nor noon, nor night, shall charm the swain,  
Shall bless the bard who sadly sings for gain.  
Long have I mourn'd th' accumulated ills  
You feel from moonshine verse, and savage trills;  
From dull descriptions, spiritless and dry,  
The pale moon riding through the sadden'd sky;  
The sea-girt rocks, where foaming surges roar,  
To wash the shells and pebbles of the shore;  
But when the sea-fowls scream discordant strains,  
I'm cut with grief, and murder'd to the brains.

COMMONSENSE.

Farewell to all that charms and mends the heart;  
This night, my friends, we part, for ever part,  
Weapons more fatal far than swords and guns  
Dispatch my shade --- dread CLOACINA'S sons!  
This night the counsels with her dark divan,  
And ere to-morrow's dawn completes her plan;  
That all who bend before her filthy shrine,  
Shall write like men who boast a right divine;  
That all whose works her liberal praises sing,  
Shall write like men, who write like any thing.  
I faint - I fall - support me to a chair -  
Take this last sigh - and -- close my eyes with care:  
When dead and bury'd, bear me still in mind.

ALL.

Oh grief of griefs! we will not stay behind.

C L O A C I N A

SCENE II.

*A tumultuous Assembly of Conspirators of all Orders, Senators, Lawyers, Divines, Authors of many Denominations, and little Wits without Number, all caballing together. A vacant Throne erected for the Goddess, who rises from a Trap-Door in an unseemly Condition, amidst a formidable Body-Guard of Night-Men, with Links, Chamber-pots, and other Emblems of Dignity.*

*After Silence is proclaimed thrice, STANOPEPOSES harangues as follows:*

“I beg leave to lay before this respectable, thrice honourable,  
“thrice elegant, and thrice *graceful* Assembly, a complete System  
“of Education to qualify a gentleman for a court, whom no haber-  
“dasher will trust behind his counter.”

*[Here STANOPEPOSES consults that amiable equilibrium of position which Corporal Trim preferred when reading the Sermon to Dr. Slop and Mr. Shandy; and thus proceeds.]*

Dread sirs, -----‘tis thus I—teach—the —world —in—prose;  
Young man of wisdom—never pick thy nose:  
Nor hope to find thro’ life propitious gales,  
Unless thou cleanse thy teeth – and clip thy nails.  
Important truths for polished wits to know,  
That teeth will perish, and that nails will grow.

*[All. Excellent! Excellent!*

‘Tis strange to think what learned lengths I’ve run,  
To find sound maxims for a trav’ling son:  
I taught the boy this grand, immortal creed,  
When lips are greasy, wipe them while you feed;  
With taste sublime, O wash thy filthy face;  
And learn the *graces* with a *graceful grace*.

CHORUS.

*Goddess! Hear this suppliant pray’r,  
Take four volumes to thy care;  
Paper’s soft as need to be,  
Worthy him, and worthy thee.*

I taught my son to keep one foot before,  
And one behind, when bowing to a w\_\_\_\_\_e;  
To mind his sink was not too quick, too slow,  
Too long – too short—too high—nor yet too low;

*[ALL. Fine! Marvelously fine!*

C L O A C I N A

To bend his body in a graceful line,  
To dance, to dress, to drink, and to design.  
My son, said I, be crafty as knave,  
Cringe like a fool, and flatter like a slave;  
Neglect all principle to shew your parts;  
Caress the polish'd, spurn the vulgar race,  
And learn the *graces* with a *graceful grace*.

*[A general applause, clapping hands, rattling of sticks, etc.]*

CHORUS.

*Goddess! hear this suppliant pary'r,  
Take four volumes to thy care;  
Books from common sense so free,  
Worthy him, and worthy thee.*

I teach my boy in these persuasive strains,  
“Renounce your feelings, and confound your brains:  
“If e'er you valu'd maxims wrote by me,  
“Don't be a man, but only seem to be.  
“To sacred taste religiously attend;  
“The wise, are born for that important end:  
“Externals only make a man divine;  
“Dress like a duke, and like a duke you'll shine.  
“Taste makes the courtier grace the polish'd sphere,  
“Taste makes a puppy equal to a peer:  
“To Taste alone let Gospel-truths give place,  
“And learn the *graces* with a *graceful grace*.”

CHORUS.

*Goddess! hear this suppliant pary'r,  
Take four volumes to thy care;  
Volumes, all the wise agree,  
Worthy him, and worthy thee.*

STANOPEPOSIS *sits down, and the volumes are laid in great state upon the altar.*

C L O A C I N A

JOHNSONODDLE *rises. An universal* "hear him! hear him! hear him!"

Admit, great Queen, a paucity of words  
On three grand subjects,--men-- and beasts, -- and birds,  
From one, who left a cultivated clime  
For savage lands--and thus employ'd his time.

[ALL. *Go it, go it, go it.*

Zounds! blood and thunder! rascals! what d'ye mean?  
The first who shouts shall witness to my spleen;  
I'll knock him down, by all the gods below,  
And gods above shall justify the blow.  
These sonorous thunders, heterogeneous sirs,  
May, and must stagger deep philosophers;  
But still my mind is erudite and clear,  
And thus I publish each refin'd idea.

In warmth of period, native genius shines;  
I love short stops---and strict mechanic lines;  
Sharp as the thorn, and blooming as the rose,  
High as the Alps, and frigid as the snows;  
Firm as a rock, transparent as a spring,  
Chaste as a maid, and *perfect* as a king;  
Bright as the day, and dazzling as the sun,  
Sweet as a tart, and spicy as a bun;  
Fierce as a lion, bold as any bear,  
Ripe as a plumb, and mellow as a pear.  
Thus much premis'd, proceed we to our tour;  
The *land* was *barren* -- as the *soil* was *poor*;  
Men wanted meat, and cattle wanted hay,  
Birds wanted roosts, and so they fled away.

[*He sits down with much solemnity.*

BUSKEBUSBO *comes forward.*

BUSKEBUSBO.

Thrice happy he whose rosy-finger'd hours  
Glide in cool grots and aromatic bowers;  
The vulture care shall ne'er corrode his breast  
Nor green-ey'd jealousy his dreams insert;  
Nor envy wet her sharp, envenom'd dart,  
Nor pallid fear debilitate his heart;  
Nor dark despair provide infernal chain,  
Nor canker'd malice give tormenting pains;  
But tranquil hope shall all his thoughts supply,  
And dancing joy anticipate the sky.  
Sir, Mr. Speaker, gentlemen may laugh,

I'll not regard it – I am too wise by half:  
 And, Sir, I *say*, what old Dan Shakespeare *sung*,  
 “*Let gall'd jades wince, my withers are unwrung.*”  
 Sir, fools may jeer – but wits despise them all,  
 As some large dogs make water on the small.  
 Some members, Sir, give sly, satiric wipes,  
 As boys sunk cobblers with tobacco pipes;  
 But, Sir, I heed such envious foes no more  
 Than drunkards reck'nings round an alehouse door:  
 As some fat butcher, bred in Leadenhall,  
 Whose galligaskins serve for slate and all,  
 Scores on the grease the profits of his trade,  
 Then wipes the uncouth cyphers into shade.  
 Sir, Mr. Speaker, men may smile and smile,  
 Yet dread my wit, and tremble at my stile;  
 As Felix trembled at the speech of Paul  
 Whose sound oration play'd the deuce and all.  
 Ye laugh at truths ye have not sense to feel;  
 Yet know, Achilles had a mortal heel;  
 And David's pebble laid Goliath low,  
 Who laugh'd to scorn the threat'nings of the foe.  
 Have ye not read how pigmy giants strove,  
 With impious aim, to scale the walls of Jove ?  
 Have ye not read (ye must have read it oft)  
 How Satan's legions tumbled from aloft?  
 Have ye not read, that strength o'er craft prevails,  
 That Sampson's brushwood sing'd the foxes tails?  
 Have ye not read, *to bring my periods square*,  
 Sampson got *shav'd*, and perish'd in despair?  
 Thus kings are crush'd, and ministers are *shav'd*,  
 Who hurt the state, and have not well behav'd;  
 Who sink a nation with assiduous zeal,  
 Who share the plunder of the common-weal;  
 Who yet neglect the patriot's pious pray'r,  
 To pawn his soul --- and triumph in a snare.  
 Who takes a place, Sir, ought to go to hell,  
 When private pensions suit a slave as well.  
 But, Sir, I'm free from all such venal sin:  
 Sir, I'll keep out - 'till, Sir, I'm taken in;  
 And teach the crowd who love to hear me talk,  
 Men of sound wisdom choose the private walk;  
 That *private* walk, where *shouting crowds* appear,  
 And sweaty nightcaps taint the atmosphere;  
 That private walk which leads to public fame,  
 When patriots turn to dust, from whence they came.

*[Here his voice is drowned, he sits down in a passion.]*

C L O A C I N A

*Now TRAGEDY in the Character of CATHERINE CODFISH, raving to the extent of her lungs, puts the assembly into the most terrible confusion.*

CATHERINE CODFISH.

Yes, men and gods shall witness to my woe;  
My voice shall ride upon the whirlwind's blast,  
And talk with stars that lend immortal light  
To high Olympus' brow. O night! dark night!  
Eclipse this earth with one eternal shade;  
Drive back the sun with desolation's frown,  
And dash out all his beams. Come, death; come, hell;  
Let bellowing grief assist the howling winds,  
And direful shrieks at midnight's fun'ral hour  
Infest the troubled air. Hags mount your brooms.  
Ghosts, quit your clay-cold shrouds: Infernal sprites,  
Attend my tale of blood and civil broil.  
These eyes beheld it; there tempestuous eyes  
Hung lowring o'er the fence, and shar'd the fate  
of War. Where Thames' black stream in stinking state  
Salutes the muddy shore; the water-nymphs  
Have fix'd their court, and Billingsgate's its name.  
There Mars in triumph drives his fiery car!  
There mutton fists in furious combat join!  
There drunken wh---s engage with harpy claws,  
While desolation reigns. Queens with short pipes,  
Who smoke Virginia's plant, and quaff the juice  
Of Calvert's malt, or British gin imbibe,  
With oaths obscene, and shrill discordant pipes,  
And martial sounds promote the general fray.  
Now bloody noses stream with sanguine floods,  
And now black eyes unite with bloated gills,  
And livid cheeks, and tresses stiff with gore,  
To call deformity with all her snakes  
To fancy's mental eye. Moll Mackrell fell  
Beneath th' Herculean fist of Kitty Carp,  
While Sukey Salmon dealt her blows about,  
And drove two stumps from Philly Flounder's jaw.  
Then Patty Plaice drove headlong on the foe,  
Plumpt Dolly Dab o'er Sukey Salmon's stall,  
And gnash'd her teeth with rage. Not Sally Soal,  
With all her might, could quell the dreadful storm.  
Witness, ye Gods, how many fought and fell,  
Laid their opponents flat, and pegg'd them well;  
What blows and bruises, kicks and cuffs prevail'd,

C L O A C I N A

'Till strength was wearied, and 'till day-light fail'd:  
Then gin and beer, and smutty jokes went round,  
And all the battle ceas'd, and ev'ry care was drown'd.

COMEDY *bursts into an horse-laugh*

*Odds bottles and glasses, odds pistols and powder,  
Let me first laugh myself, and the crowd will laugh louder.  
Zounds! Damn it, Col'nel, curse my cloth you'll win her,  
And virtuous worth can earn a daily dinner.*

[She swears.

[She preaches.

*[She sobs as if her heart were breaking, and CLOACINA  
gives orders to lift her out of the assembly.*

*[Now everything grows tumultuous, many members speaking together.]*

"I rise to speak"--"I first address'd the chair"-  
"Hip! hallo, waiter, bring some capillaire"-  
"Madam, I'll write large books in time to come" ---  
"Ma'am, I stand forth to prove a vacuum." --  
"What phantom's that! -----

*[The ghost of Common Sense rises in the midst of them.*

"Good heav'n forgive our sins!  
"It moves! It speaks! hark! hark! it now begins."

COMONSENSE.

Bethink ye, scoundrels, of your crimes,  
Most vile of all offences;  
Ye stabb'd me many thousand times  
By murd'ring Moods and Tenses.

I'm COMMON SENSE, ye stupid dogs;  
Why stand ye thus affrighted,  
Like monkish drones, and learned logs,  
Or Gothic slaves benighted?

The filthy goddess you adore,  
Delights to plague Apollo;  
But tho' she sent my shade before,  
All, all your works shall follow.

C L O A C I N A

*[Exeunt omnes in direful confusion, tumbling over each, scattering wigs, tearing ruffles, demolishing upper garments, shouting, raving, screaming, kicking, shoving, elbowing, etc. etc. amidst the smoke and thundering of CLOACINA's throne, which envelopes the whole assembly.]*

SCENE the Last.

*Enter APPLECARTIBUS, weeping.*

Ah woe is me! no tears can now avail!  
In vain my sighs are wafted on the gale!  
Thro' streets and lanes in vain my voice I try;  
Fain would I sell my fruit, but none will buy.  
Who can describe a wretched maiden's case!  
Who paint the sorrows of her fallen face!  
Who with waste paper shall supply her stall,  
Since CLOACINA now engrosses all?  
There was a time (ye list'ning gods draw near,  
Attend a tale "that knows nor art nor fear")  
When wit and wisdom flourish'd in their prime,  
For clean waste paper, gods, there was a time!  
Then Plays and Poems all my wants supply'd,  
Within this barrow would young Ammon ride;  
Old Clytus self, with martial fifes and drums,  
Would lend a leaf to fortify my plumbs.  
Yes, happy days! in all the pomp of storm,  
Dread Dionysius kept my codlings warm.  
When summer's sun to distant climes retires,  
Great Teribazus kindly lit my fires.  
Heroes and demi-gods my cabbage boil'd,  
Dryden and Lee in fun'ral state were pil'd,  
Apollo clapp'd his hands, and Shakespeare's spirit smil'd.

*Enter M A G G O T M O N G O R O S, in a passion.*

Where shall I hide me? whither shall I run,  
For cart-rope, poison, pistol, sword or gun?  
Around this globe, this congregated ball,  
Let thunders rattle, red-hot lightnings fall;  
Be pole and centre in one ruin hurl'd,  
And *shadowy* darkness *sackcloth* all the world.  
Then may no ray of silver light be seen  
To lead the fairy revels o'er the green,  
To call the sportsman to the early chase,

C L O A C I N A

To wake the warblings of the feather'd race,  
*To teach the little fishes how to swim,*  
Since man's unblest, be all as curst as him.  
And as for me, by Jove's brown beard I swear,  
I'll stamp and rant, and kick, and fling, and stare;  
From morn 'till night I'll sing some direful strain,  
'Till clean waste paper's plentiful again.  
Like some tall steeple rock'd with tempests dire,  
As high as Sarum's pinnacle, or higher;  
When winds and clouds, and hail, and rain, and snow,  
Knock down the chimneys, lay the pantiles low;  
Or like some mount with flames internal torn,  
Too strong, too fierce, too mighty to be borne;  
Like *all these things* my breast must writhe in pain,  
'Till clean waste paper's plentiful again.  
Curs'd be the goddess, CLOACINA nam'd,  
She seiz'd the plays which H---le and F-----n fram'd':  
What learned tribes bow down beneath her yoke!  
See H\_\_\_me and M\_\_\_y on her altars *smoke!*  
E'en B\_\_\_te himself, sweet bard, of pious skill,  
Adores her shrine, and worships with good will.  
In days of yore, reflection still can please,  
Dramatic writers wrap'd my rotten cheese;  
My bacon slices greas'd each learned line,  
My rank salt butter taught *their* scenes to *shine!*  
But, sad reverse! those happy times arc o'er,  
Cheese, bacon, butter, now in vain implore  
For plays to wrap them round, as heretofore.

*Enter* S A U S A G E S T I S.

*A pair of bellows, a charcoal pan, a link of hog puddings, marching in solemn procession.*

S A U S A G E S T I S.

Why do ye wander far from house and home?

B O T H.

To weep the fate of dullness and of Rome:  
We weep to think our trickling tears descend,  
Without -or guide -or counsellor - or friend.  
Adown our checks fast flow the dewy drops,  
Because we want waste paper in our shops,  
Because our plays nine nights can rant and roar,

Then sink to rest, and cram the common shore.

S A U S A G E S T I S.

Hear me, sweet friends, your ears awhile incline,  
 Share all my griefs, and mingle tears with mine.  
 Since cold December rul'd with iron sway,  
 Fast barr'd the floods, and bid their currents stay,  
 With frosty finger check'd the rough cascade,  
 And scatter'd bleak winds thro' the sylvan glade;  
 On ev'ry cottage, barn, and house and land,  
 Bid blust'ring Boreas take his nightly stand:  
 Since these events, my nights have pass'd in pain,  
 And still shall pass, 'till Sol returns again.  
 In Newgate-street a wrinkled mansion stands,  
 Whose age denotes it rear'd by antient hands,  
 Near which I once (compell'd by famine's call)  
 In wintry days long kept a sausage stall.  
 There in sweet peace I fed the vagrant clans,  
 There lousy beggars lick'd my greasy pans.  
 The minstrel quaint who plays in low degree,  
 Would rest his wooden leg, and dine with me.  
 When ev'ning shadows veil'd the face of things,  
 My fine black puddings fed dramatic kings:  
 Clear paper lanterns which the stage supply'd,  
 Shed a kind gleam to light me while I fry'd.  
 For me great bards sublimest plays would write,  
 My farthing candles brought their works to light;  
 My farthing candles shew'd the path to fame,  
 Warm'd their cold thoughts, and taught them how to flame.  
 Oft have I read (may heav'n forgive the crime)  
 With transport read of Queens who died *in rhyme*;  
 Oft have I read (with spectacles on nose)  
 Of bouncing blades, who cut and thrust in prose;  
 Men who could dance a march, with sword and shield,  
 And drive plain English frighten'd from the field.  
 Thrice happy times! (and thrice forlorn my lot,  
 To feel those times can never be forgot)  
 When learned wits could wintry nights prolong,  
 And ev'ry stall grew brighter for the song.  
 Now CLOACINA (strange tyrannic days)  
 Claims ev'ry leaf of all our modern plays:  
 Extends her sceptre o'er the realms of wit,  
 And sends each page to darkness and the pit.  
 The weeping muse, with weighty woes o'ercome,  
 Confines her favours to the Critic's bum:

C L O A C I N A

As some large fishes swallow up the small,  
Dread CLOACINA thus engrosses all.

*Enter CLOACINA.*

*A large procession following; Authors in black coats and grizzle wigs, Two and two;  
Stage darkened; many obstreperous explosions behind The scenes; solemn music, etc.*

CLOACINA.

Avaunt, I say; avaunt, ye mongrels vile,  
Or this right hand shall scourge ye rank and file.  
Ye think, perhaps, ye base infernal crew,  
Ye make me mad; but curse me if ye do.  
By all the thunders, of my dread close-stool,  
I'll make ye read the play of Master II ----,  
And gripe ye all with strong convulsive throws,  
If once compell'd to class ye with my foes.  
Ingrateful slaves! own CLOACINA's kind,  
Tho' much she takes, how much is left behind !  
Have I not left (nay doubt it if ye dare)  
Have I not left the speeches of a *May'r*?  
He's my dear son, and one I scarce can spare;  
Yet, Sirs, accept the genius of a *May'r*:  
Great thoughts unfinish'd, small ones half begun,  
Squib, poem, essay, paragraph and pun,  
Refin'd epistles, wrote in foreign tours;  
Accept all these, for these, my friends, are yours.  
Nor these alone I give. To me belong  
Sweet-scented novels, forty thousand strong;  
Sermons and travels rear'd beneath my smiles,  
And one *big section* of the Western Isles:  
Tho' Hobbs and St. John give my soul delight,  
I'll not be rash, perhaps they are *your* right.

*(To APPLECARTIBUS)*

Voltaire's White Bull is your's with all my heart;  
The paper's good, and suits an apple cart.  
And as for you *(to SAUSAGESTIS)* be still black pudding fry'd,  
By sad soft sermons *about* SUICIDE.  
They make good lanterns.

SAUSAGESTIS.

Yes, I've try'd a few.

CLOACINA *to* MAGGOTMONGOROS.

C L O A C I N A

And, what is more, will hold salt butter too.  
All these I grant ye, wherefoe'er ye find,  
Rotting in heaps, or scatter'd in the wind:  
But if ye rashly dare provoke my rage,  
By all that stinks, an oath both sound and sage,  
On my brown altars ev'ry work shall glow,  
She spake, and speaking sought the shades below.

*CLOACINA descends in smoke --- a rumbling noise as before.*

THE END