

POETICAL
MISCELLANIES,

Consisting of

ORIGINAL POEMS

AND

TRANSLATIONS.

By the best Hands.

Publiſh'd by Mr. STEELE.

L O N D O N:

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THE
WIFE of *BATH*
HER
PROLOGUE,
From *CHAUCER*.



Behold the Woes of Matrimonial Life,
And hear with Rev'rence an experienc'd Wife!

To dear-bought Wisdom give the
Credit due,

And think, for once, a Woman tells you true.

In all these Trials I have born a Part ;

I was my self the Scourge that caus'd the Smart ;

For, since Fifteen, in Triumph have I led
Five Captive Husbands from the Church to Bed.

Christ saw a Wedding once, the Scripture says,
And saw but one, 'tis thought, in all his Days;
Whence some infer, whose Conscience is too nice,
No pious Christian ought to marry twice.

But let them read, and solve me, if they can,
The Words addrest to the *Samaritan*:
Five times in lawful Wedlock she was join'd;
And sure the certain Stint was ne'er defin'd.

Encrease and multiply was Heav'ns Command,
And that's a Text I clearly understand.
This too, *Let Men their Sires and Mothers leave,*
And to their dearer Wives for ever cleave.
More Wives than One by *Solomon* were try'd,
Or else the *Wise*st of Mankind's bely'd.

I've

MISCELLANIES. 5

I've had, my self, full many a merry Fit,
 And trust in Heav'n I may have many yet.
 For when my transitory Spouse, unkind
 Shall die, and leave his woful Wife behind,
 I'll take the next good Christian I can find. }

Paul, knowing One cou'd never serve our Turn,
 Declar'd 'twas better far to Wed, than Burn ;
 There's Danger in assembling Fire and Tow,
 I grant 'em that, and what it means you know.
 The same Apostle too has elsewhere own'd
 No Precept for Virginitie he found :
 'Tis but a Counsel—and we Women still
 Take which we like, the Counsel, or our Will.

I Envy not their Bliss, if He or She
 Think fit to live in perfect Chastity,
 Pure let them be, and free from Taint of Vice ;
 I, for a few flight Spots, am not so nice.

Heav'n calls us different Ways, on these bestows
One proper Gift, another grants to those:
Not ev'ry Man's oblig'd to sell his Store,
And give up all his Substance to the Poor;
Such as are perfect, may, I can't deny;
But by your Leave, Divines, so am not I.

Full many a Saint, since first the World began,
Liv'd an unspotted Maid in spite of Man:
Let such (a God's Name) with fine Wheat be fed,
And let us honest Wives eat Barley Bread.
For me, I'll keep the Post assign'd by Heav'n,
And use the copious Talent it has giv'n;
Let my good Spouse pay Tribute, do me Right,
And keep an equal Reck'ning ev'ry Night;
His proper Body is not his, but mine;
For so said *Paul*, and *Paul's* a sound Divine.

Know then, of those five *Husbands* I have had,
Three were just tolerable, two were bad.

The

MISCELLANIES. 7

The three were Old, but rich and fond beside,
And toil'd most piteously to please their Bride:
But since their Wealth (the best they had) was mine,
The rest, without much Loss, I cou'd resign.
Sure to be lov'd, I took no Pains to please,
Yet had more Pleasure far than they had Ease.

Presents flow'd in apace: With Show'rs of Gold,
They made their Court, like *Jupiter* of old.
If I but smil'd, a sudden Youth they found,
And a new Falsie seiz'd them when I frown'd.

Ye Sov'reign Wives! give Ear, and understand;
Thus shall ye speak, and exercise Command.
For never was it giv'n to Mortal Man,
To lye so boldly as we Women can.
Forswear the Fact, tho' seen with both his Eyes,
And call *your Maids* to Witness how he lies.

Hark old Sir *Paul* ('twas thus I us'd to say)
Whence is our Neighbour's Wife so rich and gay?

Treated, carels'd, where-e'er she's pleas'd to roam---
I sit in Tatters, and immur'd at home!
Why to her House do'st thou so oft repair?
Art thou so Amorous? Is she so fair?
If I but see a Cousin or a Friend,
Lord! how you swell, and rage like any Fiend!
But you reel home, a drunken beastly Bear,
Then preach till Midnight in your easie Chair;
Cry Wives are false, and ev'ry Woman evil,
And give up all that's Female to the Devil.

If poor (you say) she drains her Husband's Purse;
If rich, she keeps her Priest, or something worse;
If highly born, intolerably vain;
Vapours and Pride by turns possess her Brain:
Now gayly Mad, now fow'rly Splenatick,
Freakish when well, and fretful when she's Sick.
If fair, then Chast she cannot long abide,
By pressing Youth attack'd on ev'ry side.
If foul, her Wealth the lusty Lover lures,
Or else her Wit some Fool-Gallant procures,

Or else she Dances with becoming Grace,
Or Shape excuses the Defects of Face.
There swims no Goose so gray, but, soon or late,
She finds some honest Gander for her Mate.

Horses (thou say'st) and Asses, Men may try,
And sound suspected Vessels ere they buy,
But Wives, a random Choice, untry'd they take;
They dream in Courtship, but in Wedlock wake.
Then, nor 'till then, the Veil's remov'd away,
And all the Woman glares in open Day.

You tell me, to preserve your Wife's good Grace,
Your Eyes must always languish on my Face,
Your Tongue with constant Flatt'ries feed my Ear,
And tag each Sentence with, *My Life! my Dear!*
If, by strange Chance, a modest Blush be rais'd,
Be sure my fine Complexion must be prais'd:
My Garments always must be new and gay,
And Feasts still kept upon my Wedding-Day:
Then

Then must my Nurse be pleas'd, and Fav'rite Maid,
And endless Treats, and endless Visits paid,
To a long Train of Kindred, Friends, Allies;
All this thou say'st, and all thou say'st are Lies.

On *Jenkin* too you cast a squinting Eye ;
What? can our Prentice raise your Jealousie?
Fresh are his ruddy Cheeks, his Forehead fair,
And like the burnish'd Gold his curling Hair.
But clear that wrinkled Brow, and quit thy Sorrow,
I'd scorn your Prentice, shou'd you die to-morrow.

Why are thy Chests all lockt? On what Design?
Are not thy Worldly Goods and Treasure mine?
Sir, I'm no Fool: Nor shall you, by *St. John*,
Have Goods and Body to your self alone.
One you shall quit---in spight of both your Eyes---
I heed not, I, the Bolts, the Locks, the Spies.
If you had Wit, you'd say, " Go where you will,
" Dear Spouse, I credit not the Tales they tell.
" Take

MISCELLANIES. 11

“ Take all the Freedoms of a married Life;
“ I know thee for a virtuous, faithful Wife.

Lord! When you have enough, what need you
How merrily soever Others fare? [care
Tho' all the Day I take and give Delight,
Doubt not, sufficient will be left at Night.
'Tis but a just and rational Desire,
To light a Taper at a Neighbour's Fire.

There's Danger too, you think, in rich Array,
And none can long be modest that are gay.
The Cat, if you but finge her Tabby Skin,
The Chimney keeps, and sits content within;
But once grown sleek, will from her Corner run,
Sport with her Tail, and wanton in the Sun;
She licks her fair round Face, and frisks abroad
To show her Furr, and to be *Catterwaw'd*.

Lo thus, my Friends, I wrought to my Desires
These three right Ancient Venerable Sires.

I told 'em, *Thus you say*, and *thus you do*——
And told 'em false, but *Jenkin* swore 'twas true.
I, like a Dog, cou'd bite as well as whine;
And first complain'd, whenc'er the Guilt was mine.
I tax'd them oft with Wenching and Amours,
When their weak Legs scarce dragg'd 'em out of
Doors;
And swore the Rambles that I took by Night,
Were all to spy what Damsels they bedight.
That Colour brought me many Hours of Mirth;
For all this Wit is giv'n us from our Birth:
Heav'n gave to Woman the peculiar Grace
To spin, to weep, and cully Human Race.
By this nice Conduct and this prudent Course,
By Murmuring, Wheedling, Stratagem and Force,
I still prevail'd, and wou'd be in the right,
Or Curtain-Lectures made a restless Night.
If once my Husband's Arm was o'er my Side,
What? so familiar with your Spouse? I cry'd:
I levied first a Tax upon his Need,
Then let him-----'twas a *Nicety* indeed!

Let all Mankind this certain Maxim hold,
 Marry who will, our *Sex* is to be Sold!
 With empty Hands no Tassels you can lure,
 But fulsom Love for Gain we can endure:
 For Gold we love the Impotent and Old,
 And heave, and pant, and kifs, and cling for Gold.
 Yet with Embraces, Curfes oft I mixt,
 Then kist again, and chid and rail'd betwixt.
 Well, I may make my Will in Peace, and die,
 For not one Word in their Arrears am I.
 To drop a dear Dispute I was unable,
 Ev'n tho' the Pope himself had fate at Table.
 But when my Point was gain'd, then thus I spoke,
 " *Billy*, my dear! how sheepishly you look?
 " Approach my Spouse, and let me kifs thy Cheek;
 " Thou should'st be always thus, resign'd and meek!
 " Of *Job's* great Patience since so oft you preach,
 " Well shou'd you practise, who so well can teach.
 " 'Tis something difficult I must allow,
 " But I, my dearest, will instruct you how.
 " Great

- " Great is the Blessing of a prudent Wife,
" Who puts a Period to Domestick Strife!
" One of us two must rule, and one obey,
" And since in Man right Reason bears the Sway,
" Let that frail Thing, weak Woman, have her way.
" The Wives of all our Race have ever rul'd
" Their tender Husbands, and their Passions cool'd.
" Fye, 'tis unmanly thus to sigh and groan;
" What? wou'd you have me to your self alone?
" Why take me Love! take all and ev'ry part!
" Here's your Revenge! you love it at your Heart.
" Wou'd I vouchsafe to sell what Nature gave,
" You little think what Custom I cou'd have?
" But see! I'm all your own---nay hold---for Shame!
" What means my Dear---indeed---you are to blame.

Thus with my first three Lords I past my Life;
A very Woman, and a very Wife!
What Sums from these first Spouses I cou'd raise,
Procur'd young Husbands in my riper Days.

Tho'

Tho' past my Bloom, not yet decay'd was I,
 Wanton and wild, and chatter'd like a Pyc.
 In Country Dances most I did excell,
 And sung as sweet as Evening *Philomel*.
 To clear my Quail-pipe, and refresh my Soul,
 Full oft I drain'd the Spicy Nut-brown Bowl
 Of luscious Wines, that youthful Blood improve,
 And warm the swelling Veins to Feats of Love.
 For 'tis as sure as Cold ingenders Hail,
 A Liqu'rish Mouth must have a Lech'rous Tail;
 Wine lets no Lover unrewarded go,
 As all true Gamesters by Experience know.

But oh good Gods! whenc'er a Thought I cast,
 On all the Joys of Youth and Beauty past,
 To find in Pleasures I have had my Part,
 Still warms me to the Bottom of my Heart.
 This wicked World was once my dear Delight;
 Now all my Conquests, all my Charms good night!
 The Flour consum'd, the best that now I can
 Is e'en to make my Markets of the Bran.

My fourth dear Spouse was not exceeding true;
He kept, 'twas thought, a private Mifs or two:
But all that Score I paid---As how? you'll say,
Not with my Body, in a filthy way——
But I so drest, and danc'd, and drank, and din'd;
And view'd a Friend, with Eyes so very kind,
As stung his Heart, and made his Marrow fry
With burning Rage, and frantic Jealousie.
His Soul, I hope, enjoys perpetual Glory,
For here on Earth I was his Purgatory.
Oft, when his Shoe the most severely wrung,
He put on careless Airs, and sat and sung.
How sore I gall'd him, only Heav'n cou'd know,
And he that felt, and I that caus'd the Woe.
He dy'd when last from Pilgrimage I came,
With other Gossips, from *Jerusalem*,
And now lies buried underneath a Rood,
Fair to be seen, and rear'd of honest Wood.
A Tomb, indeed, with fewer Sculptures grac'd,
Than that *Mausolus'* Pious Widow plac'd,

Or

Or where inshrined the great *Darius* lay;
 But Cost on Graves is meerly thrown away.
 The Pit fill'd up, with Turf we cover'd o'er,
 So blest the good Man's Soul, I say no more.

Now for my fifth lov'd Lord, the last and best;
 (Kind Heav'n afford him everlasting Rest)
 Full hearty was his Love, and I can shew
 The Tokens on my Ribs, in Black and Blue:
 Yet, with a Knack, my Heart he cou'd have won,
 While yet the Smart was shooting in the Bone.
 How quaint an Appetite in Women reigns!
 Free Gifts we scorn, and love what costs us Pains:
 Let Men avoid us, and on them we leap;
 A glutted Market makes Provision cheap.

In pure good Will I took this jovial Spark,
 Of *Oxford* he, a most egregious Clerk:
 He boarded with a Widow in the Town,
 A trusty Gossip, one Dame *Alison*.

Full

Full well the Secrets of my Soul she knew,
Better than e'er our Parish Priest cou'd do.
To her I told whatever did befall;
Had but my Husband Pitt against a Wall,
Or done a thing that might have cost his Life,
She---and my Neice---and one more worthy Wife
Had known it all: What most he wou'd conceal,
To these I made no Scruple to reveal.
Oft has he blush'd from Ear to Ear for Shame,
That e'er he told a Secret to his Dame.

It so befell, in Holy Time of *Lent*,
That oft a Day I to this Gossip went;
(My Husband, thank my Stars, was out of Town)
From House to House we rambled up and down,
This Clerk, my self, and my good Neighbour *Alice*,
To see, be seen, to tell, and gather Tales;
Visits to ev'ry Church we daily paid,
And march'd in ev'ry holy Masquerade,
The Stations duly, and the Vigils kept;
Not much we fasted, but scarce ever slept.

At Sermons too I shone in Scarlet gay;
The waisting Moth ne'er spoil'd my best Array;
The Cause was this; I wore it ev'ry Day. }

'Twas when fresh *May* her early Blossoms yields
The Clerk and I were walking in the Fields.
We grew so intimate, I can't tell how,
I pawn'd my Honour and ingag'd my Vow,
If e'er I laid my Husband in his Urn,
That he, and only he, shou'd serve my Turn.
We strait struck Hands; the Bargain was agreed;
I still have shifts against a Time of Need:
The Mouse that always trusts to one poor Hole,
Can never be a Mouse of any Soul.

I vow'd, I scarce cou'd sleep since first I knew him,
And drust be sworn he had Bewitch'd me to him:
If e'er I slept, I dream'd of him alone,
And Dreams foretel, as Learned Men have shown: }
All this I said; but Dream, Sirs, I had none. }

I follow'd but my crafty Crony's Lorc,
Who bid me tell this Lye — and twenty more.

'Thus Day by Day, and Month by Month we past;
It pleas'd the Lord to take my Spouse at last!
I tore my Gown, I soil'd my Locks with Dust,
And beat my Breasts, as wretched Widows---must.
Before my Face my Handkerchief I spread,
To hide the Flood of Tears I did *not* shed.
The good Man's Coffin to the Church was born;
Around, the Neighbours, and my Clerk too, mourn.
But as he march'd, good Gods! he show'd a Pair
Of Legs and Feet, so clean, so strong, so fair!
Of twenty Winters Age he seem'd to be;
I (to say truth) was twenty more than he:
But vig'rous still, a lively buxom Dame,
And had a wond'rous Gift to quench a Flame.
A Conjuror once that deeply cou'd divine,
Assur'd me, *Mars* in *Taurus* was my Sign.
As the Stars order'd, such my Life has been:
Alas, alas, that ever Love was Sin! Fair

Fair *Venus* gave me Fire and sprightly Grace,
And *Mars* Assurance, and a dauntless Face.
By Vertue of this pow'rful Constellation,
I follow'd always my own Inclination.

But to my Tale : A Month scarce pass'd away,
With Dance and Song we kept the Nuptial Day.
All I possess'd I gave to his Command,
My Goods and Chattels, Mony, House, and Land :
But oft repented, and repent it still ;
He prov'd a Rebel to my Sov'reign Will :
Nay once by Heav'n he struck me on the Face :
Hear but the Fact, and judge your selves the Case.

Stubborn as any Lionness was I :
And knew full well to raise my Voice on high ;
As true a Rambler as I was before,
And wou'd be so, in spite of all he swore.
He, against this, right sagely wou'd advise,
And old Examples set before my Eyes ;

Tell how the *Roman* Matrons led their Life,
Of *Gracchus*' Mother, and *Duilius*' Wife;
And chose the Sermon, as befeem'd his Wit,
With some grave Sentence out of Holy Writ.
Oft wou'd he fay, Who builds his House on Sands,
Pricks his blind Horse acrofs the Fallow Lands,
Or lets his Wife abroad with Pilgrims roam,
Deserves a Fool's-Cap and long Ears at home.
All this avail'd not; for whoc'er he be
That tells my Faults, I hate him mortally:
And so do Numbers more, I'll boldly fay,
Men, Women, Clergy, Regular and Lay.

My Spouse (who was, you know, to Learning bred)
A certain Treatise oft at Evening-Read,
Where divers Authors (whom the Dev'l confound
For all their Lies) were in one Volume bound.
Valerius, whole; and of *St. Jerome*, Part;
Chrysippus and *Tertullian*; *Ovid's Art*;
Solomon's Proverbs, *Heloïsa's Loves*;
And many more than sure the Church approves.

More Legends were there here, of wicked Wives,
 Than good, in all the *Bible* and *Saint's-Lives*.
 Who drew the *Lion Vanquish'd*? 'Twas a *Man*.
 But cou'd we Women write as Scholars can,
 Men shou'd stand mark'd with far more Wickedness,
 Than all the Sons of *Adam* cou'd redress.
 Love seldom haunts the Breast where Learning lies,
 And *Venus* sets when *Mercury* does rise.
 Those play the Scholars who can't play the Men;
 And use that Weapon which they have, their Pen;
 When old, and past the Relish of Delight,
 Then down they sit, and in their Dotage write,
 That not one Woman keeps her Marriage Vow.
 (This by the Way, but to my Purpose now.)

It chanc'd my Husband on a Winter's Night
 Read in this Book, aloud, with strange Delight,
 How the first Female (as the Scriptures show)
 Brought her own Spouse and all his Race to Woe;
 How *Samson's* Heart false *Dalilah* did move,
 His Strength, his Sight, his Life, were lost for Love.

Then how *Alcides* dy'd, whom *Dejanire*
 Wrapt in th' envenom'd Shirt, and set on Fire.
 How curst *Eryphile* her Lord betray'd,
 And the dire Ambush *Clytemnestra* laid.
 But what most pleas'd him was the *Cretan* Dame,
 And Husband-Bull---Oh monstrous! fie, for Shame!

He had by Heart the whole Detail of Woe
Xantippe made her good Man undergo;
 How oft she scolded in a Day, he knew,
 How many Pisspots on the Sage she threw;
 Who took it patiently, and wip'd his Head;
Rain follows Thunder, that was all he said.

He read how *Arius* to his Friend complain'd
 A fatal *Tree* was growing in his Land,
 On which three Wives successively had twin'd
 A sliding Noose, and waver'd in the Wind.
 Where grows this Plant (reply'd the Friend) oh
 For better Fruit did never Orchard bear: [where?

Give

MISCELLANIES. 25

Give me some Slip of this most blisful Tree,
And in my Garden planted shall it be!

Then how two Wives their Lord's Destruction ^{[prove,}
Thro' Hatred one, and one thro' too much Love;
That for her Husband mix'd a Poys'nous Draught;
And this for Lust an am'rous Philtre bought,
The nimble Juice soon seiz'd his giddy Head,
Frantic at Night, and in the Morning dead.

How some with Swords their sleeping Lords have ^{[slain,}
And some have hammer'd Nails into their Brain;
And some have drench'd them with a deadly Potion;
All this he read, and read with great Devotion.

Long time I heard, and swell'd, and blush'd, and ^{[frown'd,}
But when no End of these vile Tales I found,
When still he read, and laugh'd, and read again,
And half the Night was thus consum'd in vain;

Provok'd

Provok'd to Vengeance, three large Leaves I tore,
 And with one Buffet fell'd him on the Floor.
 With that my Husband in a Fury rose,
 And down he settled me with hearty Blows:
 I groan'd, and lay extended on my Side;
 Oh thou hast slain me for my Wealth (I cry'd)
 Yet I forgive thee — Take my last Embrace.
 He wept, kind Soul! and stoop'd to kiss my Face;
 I took him such a Box as turn'd him blue,
 Then sigh'd and cry'd, *Adieu my Dear, adieu!*

But after many a hearty Struggle past,
 I condescended to be pleas'd at last.
 Soon as he said, My Mistress and my Wife,
 Do what you list the Term of all your Life:
 I took to Heart the Merits of the Cause,
 And stood content to rule by wholesome Laws;
 Receiv'd the Reins of Absolute Command,
 With all the Government of House and Land;
 And Empire o'er his Tongue, and o'er his Hand.

As

MISCELLANIES. 27

As for the Volume that revil'd the Dames,
'Twas torn to Fragments, and condemn'd to Flames.

Now Heav'n on all my Husbands gone, bestow
Pleasures above, for Tortures felt below :
That Rest they wish'd for, grant them in the Grave,
And bless those Souls my Conduct help'd to save !

