

Address Spoken by Miss Fontenelle on her Benefit Night, December 4th, 1793,  
at the Theatre, Dumfries.

Still anxious to secure your partial favour,  
And not less anxious, sure, this night, than ever,  
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,  
'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better;  
So sought a poet, roosted near the skies,  
Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;  
Said, nothing like his works was ever printed;  
And last, my prologue-business slyly hinted.  
"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes,  
"I know your bent-these are no laughing times:  
Can you-but, Miss, I own I have my fears-  
Dissolve in pause, and sentimental tears;  
With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence,  
Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Repentance;  
Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand,  
Waving on high the desolating brand,  
Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land?"

I could no more-askance the creature eyeing,  
"D'ye think," said I, "this face was made for crying?  
I'll laugh, that's poz-nay more, the world shall know it;  
And so, your servant! gloomy Master Poet!"

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,  
That Misery's another word for Grief:  
I also think-so may I be a bride!  
That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,  
Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye;  
Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive-  
To make three guineas do the work of five:  
Laugh in Misfortune's face-the beldam witch!  
Say, you'll be merry, tho' you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,  
Who long with jiltish airs and arts hast strove;  
Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,  
Measur'st in desperate thought-a rope-thy neck-  
Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,  
Peerest to meditate the healing leap:  
Would'st thou be cur'd, thou silly, moping elf?  
Laugh at her follies-laugh e'en at thyself:  
Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,  
And love a kinder-that's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;  
And as we're merry, may we still be wise.