

The Common Touch

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*Popular Literature from the Elizabethans
to the Restoration*

Volume I

Paul A. Scanlon and Adrian Roscoe

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Popular Literature from the Elizabethans to the Restoration,
Volume I

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INTRODUCTION

This two-volume anthology of English popular literature is not meant to replace existing texts that cover writing from the same periods. It can, instead, be read alongside them because it offers work hitherto neither collected nor studied in university courses. It shows that, while established figures caught the attention of the more educated classes, a new largely urban reading public was growing among England's less privileged people who were unfamiliar with the writings of Spenser, Jonson, Milton or Pope. It is also a reminder that the class of people who had created the ballad tradition did not simply disappear with the rise of literacy and printing any more than those who had created medieval drama. It seems clear that if modern scholarship is to provide a complete picture of literary activity during these years (from the beginning of the Elizabethan Age to the middle of the eighteenth century), then a substantial body of writing—formerly the concern mainly of antiquarians and specialist scholars—needs exposure and attention. Certainly, after immersion in literary domains both popular and laurelled, students as well as the general reader can only emerge better informed than they are at present.

Selection for curriculum and textbooks has long been shaped and approved by generally accepted critical criteria. But critical criteria, like hemlines in dress or fads in diet, are sometimes fickle and prone to change. Romanticism generally dismissed the certainties of Pope and Dryden, and who among Donne's contemporaries in the seventeenth century would have tipped him for acclaim in the twentieth?

Inclusion, as Ruskin reminds us, involves exclusion, hence the fact that a great deal of writing during these times has failed to be accepted into the literary canon. Sidney, Wyatt, Surrey, Pope, Dryden and Milton have succeeded but not the broadside ballads. Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson are favoured, but not the Robin Hood playlets or even—extraordinarily—the comedy of *Mucedorus*, an all-time runaway hit unmatched until Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* in modern times.

Political and social change, literacy, education (or lack of it), religion and morality, the economic climate and international exchange—these all impinge on taste and fashion. As *The Common Touch* shows, societies becoming literate and prosperous and keen to create new grammars of life

and governance might well find their literary sensibilities changing as they move from oral modes to a variety of written forms.

A further point is that our own age's *zeitgeist* is markedly democratic in spirit. A desire to reflect the lives and culture of all social levels (though long ago seen in Wordsworth and Coleridge, for example) has become insistent. From this perspective, then, the literature we currently teach from the Elizabethans to the Augustans seems seriously unrepresentative, especially when modern technology and scholarship are helping us to reveal the astonishing range of their literary output—not just from the universities and court circles but from the urban and rural masses expressing themselves at weddings, worship and funerals, in farm and field and tavern. While religious militants passionately fought their denominational corners, ordinary folk were thronging to watch burnings and hangings or wanting news of witch trials and notorious murders—in a word, all the human interest material that would eventually comprise the content of journals and newspapers.

Experience also shows that our contemporary reader of English literature, largely unacquainted with Latin and Greek (in another manifestation of shifting taste), finds much of the periods' major writings, whether the satires of Pope and Dryden or the epics of Milton, difficult of access. In these circumstances, the sheer diversity and grass roots nature of work collected here should provide a welcome relief as well as useful instruction.

Thus *The Common Touch* seeks to fill out a picture hitherto incomplete. Among other types of popular literature, various ballads such as "The Great Boobee," "A Caveat for Cut-purses" and "The Cucking of a Scould" are included. Robin Hood's exploits are also offered, as well as the folk comedy *Mucedorus* and selections from the Newgate chronicles. There is much fun and joking in *Coffee-House Jests* and high adventure can be found in the tales of American buccaneers.

The editors trust, then, that this anthology, with its concise sectional introductions, copious footnotes and extensive bibliography, will open new vistas on an era of history already celebrated for its legendary outpouring of more illustrious forms of literature.

While attempting, as far as possible, to preserve textual authenticity, reader accessibility has been taken into account. Hence capitalization and italicization have been normalized, along with the letters "u" and "v." A number of minor alterations have also been silently made. All else remains virtually as it was in the original texts.

A Caveat for Cut-purses.

With a warning to all purse-carriers : Shewing the confidence of the field, and the castle-hill of the lass ; With necessary admonitions for them both, till the King-man get the one, and the Digger take the other.

To the tune of *Parley-guinea*.



M^eisters and friends and godly people draw
and look to your purses, so that I say, (near
God though little money there you to hear,
it will move to get them to lose their engt
pon off have been told
hold the ground and the land,

And when before of the cut-purse he hold 2
Then if you see he had another meet on the cutse,
Who both give you warning, for and the Cut-purse,
Youth, youth thou hadst better been flaved by thy
Thou live to be hang'd for cutting a purse. (Nause)

It hath been prophesied to men of my Country,
that after me here are the curse of this curse,
Sithke was so gilty, why shold it be unto
us if the purseres or platters of these,
Chances have had

Demes that were fad
of Westmunder hill, pen the platters between :
Them who should be free be free from this curse,
Except them my poor selfe is for cutting the Purse,
Youth, youth, &c.

At Worcester his hunting tow'rn am aben in the Vale,
A Knight at your hunting side there dwain his 3
Against the gods armes he went to battle,
and is left, i'p'le to die, his party in the place 1
Gone once from the meet.

Or judgment is great !
a Judge there old is in a fact party of the meet,
Oh Lord for thy mercy how wicked or worse,
Are cheverel to ensure their necks for a purse 1
Youth, youth, &c.

At Worcester am I returned, quare at the meet,
The angry bick proprie fad body to make,
Penwode the Calibas at Worcester,
They bick to the stars-sheafes perfit to take,
Gip the whitest of great
At a better place

At Court and in Carlisle, before the King aler
Attack then for purser must I bear the curse,
This only belong to the curring Cut-purse,
Youth, youth thou hadst better been flaved by thy
Thou live to be hang'd for cutting a purse. (N)

Title-page from "A Caveat for Cut-purses"

Merie Tales of
the mad men of
Gotam.
Gathered to gether by A.B.
of Phisick Doc-
tore.



Title-page from the *Merie Tales of the Mad Men of Gotam*



Woodcut from the title-page of *The Apprehension
and Confession of Three Notorious Witches*

THE
Witch of the Woodlands :
Or, The
Coblers New Translation ;
Written by L. P.

Here Robin the Cobler for his former evils,
Was punisht worst then Faustus was with de-
vils.



London, Printed for John Stafford, dwelling at the Sign
of the George at Fleet-Bridge, 1658.

Title-page from *The Witch of the Woodlands*

BROADSIDE BALLADS

The broadside ballad—a short, rhymed narrative, usually set to a familiar tune—was one of the most popular types of printed literature in England from the end of the Middle Ages until the late seventeenth century. It has been estimated that more than 4,000 were published during the Elizabethan period alone. Although the names of some of the writers are known (probably the most famous being Martin Parker), the vast majority were composed by anonymous hacks, working for various London print-shops, situated around St. Paul's Churchyard, Bridewell and Fleet Street.

Since the early thirteenth century, the Crown had issued proclamations on matters of public importance, posting them on walls and doors in places of popular assembly. This practice became well-established for other sorts of notices over the following centuries, with commercial publishers later adopting the same format for ballads—a single twelve-by-nine-inch folio page, commonly known as a broadsheet or broadside. As well as the text itself, each one generally included a title, a sub-title, the name of the tune and several woodcut illustrations. They were then sold up and down the country by itinerant pedlars (called ballad-mongers) or on street corners by noisy hawkers. Bought for about a penny, they were sung by groups in alehouses and homes or by individuals as they worked in the fields or performed at fairs—that is, broadside ballads were sung by almost anyone and could be found just about everywhere.

These widely-affordable song-sheets captured all the extraordinary events of contemporary life, what we would now call news: wars, crimes, natural disasters and supernatural occurrences, lovers' laments and marital rivalry, religious and political strife—the author seldom failing to accompany them with a dire warning or stern moral advice. One can imagine the enthusiasm with which they were received, whether in the market-place or by the family hearth. But no matter how popular they were or whatever the subject, each inevitably fell from favour, to be eventually discarded and, in most cases, lost forever. Their heyday was clearly the first part of the seventeenth century, after which corantos, newsbooks and similar literary fare began replacing them as purveyors of current affairs. And by the end of the century, with the appearance of the prose periodical, the days of broadside ballads for such purposes were definitely numbered.

While some of the more educated members of society apparently took great pleasure in this genre, others (at least before friends or perhaps those of a more pious cast) dismissed them as pieces of “riffe raffe.” It was only around the middle years of the century, partly in an attempt to preserve the old black-letter Gothic style print, that they were given more serious attention, mainly by antiquarians such as Samuel Pepys and Robert Harley, 1st Earl of Oxford and Mortimer. Pepys collected more than 1,800 ballads, cut and bound into five scrapbooks, which now reside in The Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, while the Roxburghe Collection, as Harley’s became known, of some 1,500 ballads, is part of the British Library. Much of the later work in this tradition, including Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and Child’s *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898), is unquestionably indebted to these and other such collections of the Restoration Age.

Against Filthy Writing, and Such Like Delighting¹

What meane the rimes that run thus large in every shop to sell?
 With wanton sound, and filthie sense, me thinke it gree²s not well.
 We are not ethnuckles,³ we forsooth,⁴ at least professe not so
 Why range we then to ethnuckles trade? Come bak, where wil ye goe?
 Tel me is Christ, or Cupide Lord? Doth God or Venus reigne?
 And whose are wee? Whom ought wee serve? I aske it, answer plaine
 If wanton Venus, then go forth, if Cupide, keep your trade
 If God, or Christ, come bak the best, or sure you will be made
 Doth God? Is he the Lord in deed? And should we him obey?
 Then his commaundement ought to guide, all that wee doo or say
 But shew me his commaundement then, thou filthy writer thou
 Let seet,⁵ I cease, if not, geve place, or shameles shew thee now.

¹ Probably published in 1562. Thomas Brice (1536-1571), a Church of England clergyman and poet, is best known as the author of *A Compendious Register in Metre, Conteining the Names, and Pacient Suffrynges of the Members of Jesus Christ*. Several other books, entered in the Stationers’ Register and most likely of a pious nature, are attributed to him, including *The Couurte of Venus Moralized*. But nothing further is known of them.

² Pleases.

³ Heathens.

⁴ In truth (*forsooth*).

⁵ Let’s see it.

We are not foes to musicke wee, a mis⁶ your man⁷ doth take us
 So frendes to thinges corrupt and vile, you all shall never make us
 If you denie them such to bee, I stand to prove it I,
 If you confesse (defend them not) why then doo you reply?
 But such they bee I will mainteine, which yet you bothe defend
 And iudge them fooles, that them mislike; would God you might amend
 But, substance onely I regarde, let accidencis⁸ go
 Both you and wee, bee that wee bee, I therfore leave it so
 And yet I wishe your tearmes in deed, upon some reason stayd
 If mine be not, reprove them right,⁹ Ile blot that I have sayd
 And that I wrote, or now doo wrighte, against you as may seeme
 What cause I had, and have, I yelde, to modest men to deeme¹⁰
 I wishe you well I doo protest, (as God will, I will so)
 I cannot helpe, as frend ye wot,¹¹ nor will not hurt as so
 But for the vile corrupting rimes, which you confesse¹² to wrighte
 My soule and hart abhorres their sence, as far from my delight
 And those that use them for their glee,¹³ as you doo vaunte ye will
 I tell you plainly what I think, I iudge thee to bee ill
 This boasting late in part hath causd, mee now to say my minde
 Though challenges of yours also, in every place I finde.

Thomas Brice.

Imprinted at London by Iohn Alde for Edmond Halley and are to be solde
 in Lumbard strete at the signe of the Egle.

⁶ Amiss.

⁷ Without giving names, the poet is apparently rebuking some ballad-maker and his supporter.

⁸ Accidentals, non-essential elements.

⁹ Prove them wrong.

¹⁰ Judge.

¹¹ Know.

¹² Admit.

¹³ Entertainment.

The Cucking of a Scould¹⁴

To the tune of, *The Merchant of Emden*.

A wedded wife there was,
I wis^o of yeeres but yong,
But if you thinke she wanted wit,^o know
Ile sweare she lackt no tongue.

Just seventeene yeeres of age,
This woman was no more,
Yet she would scold with any one,
From twenty to threescore.

The cucking of a scold,
The cucking of a scold,
Which if you will but stay to heare
The cucking of a scold.

As nimble as an eele,
This womans tongue did wag,
And faster you shall have it runne,
Then any ambling nag.

But without mighty wrong,
She would not shew her skill.
But if that she were moved once^o once provoked
The sport was not so ill.

The cucking, &c.

Each man might quickl[y] know,
When as the game begun
But none could tell you for his life,
What time she would have done.

She was a famous scould,
A dainty^o scould in graine,^o worthy, excellent / by nature, out-and-out
A stouter scould was never bred

¹⁴ Although the first printing of this anonymous ballad is thought to be about 1630, it may well have appeared much earlier than this. The tune is from one of Thomas Deloney's ballads, dated 1594, commonly known as *The Merchantman*. After due process of law, elaborate ceremonies such as the one presented here, concluding with the ducking of a scold, were not uncommon. "To cuck" is to punish by immersing someone in water while confined in a cuck-ing-stool.

Nor borne in Turne-gaine Lane.¹⁵
The cucking, &c.

Upon a time it chanc'd,
And she did thus alledge,^o
A neighbours maid had taken halfe
Her dish-clout^o from the hedge:
For which great trespassse done,
This wrong for to requite,
She scolded very hansomely,
Two daies and one whole night.

The cucking, &c.

claim

dish-cloth

Which something did molest^o
The neighbours round about:
But this was nothing to the fits
That she would thunder out.
But once, the truth to tell,
Worse scolding did she keepe,
For waking of her little dog,
That in the sun did sleepe.

The cucking, &c.

annoy

Six winter dayes together,
From morning eight a clocke,
Untill the evening that each one
Their doores began to lock:
She scolded for this wrong,
Which she accounted great,
And unto peace and quietnesse
No man could her intreat.

The cucking, &c.

So that this little devill,
With her unquiet tongue,
Continually both far and neere,
Molested old and yong.
But yet soone after this,

¹⁵ Turne-gaine (or Turnagain) Lane, a cul-de-sac near Billingsgate fish market, was famous at the time for its boisterous and colourful street-traders, especially fishwives.

She made a greater brawle,^o
Against the constable, that did
But pisse against her wall.

The cucking, &c.

a noisy quarrel

She cal'd him beastly knave,
And filthy jacke^o for this,
And said that every cuckold now
Against her wall must pisse:
And in most raging sort,
She rail'd at him so long.
He made a vow he would revenge
This most outragious wrong.

The cucking, &c.

low-bred, ill-mannered fellow

And first of all behold,
He clapt her in the cage,
Thinking thereby her devillish tongue,
He would full well asswage.
But now worse then before,
She did to brawling fall.
The constable and all the rest
She vildy^o did miscall.

The cucking, &c.

vilely

Thus night and day she sent
Such brawling from her brest,
That ner'a neighbour in the towne
Could take one houres rest.
Which when the justice knew,
This judgement than^o gave he,
That she upon a cucking stoole
Should iustly punisht be.

The cucking, &c.

then (often used interchangably)

Upon three market dayes,
This penance she should bide,
And every thing fit for the same,
The officers did provide:
An hundred archers good,
Did first before her goe,

A hundred and five nimble shot
Went next unto the roe.[◦]
Theucking, &c.

in a row

An hundred armed men
Did also follow there:
The which did guard the gallant scould
With piercing pikes and spears:
And trumpets sounding sweete
In order with them comes
A company most orderly,
With pleasant phifes and drums.

Theucking, &c.

And forty parrats then,
On sundry pearches hie.[◦]
Were carried eke[◦] before the scould,
Most fine and orderly:
And last of all a mighty wispe[◦]
Was borne before her face.
The perfect tokens of a scould
Well knowne in every place.
Theucking, &c.

*high
also*

sign

Then was the scould her selfe,
In a wheele-barrow brought,
Stripped naked to the smocke,
As in that case she ought:
Neats tongues[◦] about her necke
Were hung in open show;
And thus unto the fucking stoole
This famous scould did goe.
Theucking, &c.

Ox-tongues

Then fast within the chaire
She was most finely bound,
Which made her scold excessively,
And said she should be drown'd.
But every time that she
Was in the water dipt,
The drums & trumpets sounded brave,[◦]

splendidly

For ioy the people skipt.
The cucking, &c.

Six times when she was duckt
Within the water cleare,
That like unto a drowned rat,
She did in sight appeare.
The iustice thinking then
To send her straight away,
The constable she called knave,
And knav'd him all the day.

The cucking, &c.

Upon which words, I wot,^o
They duckt her straight againe
A dozen times ore head and eares:
Yet she would not refraine,
But still revil'd them all.
Then to't againe they goe,
Till she at last held up her hands,
Saying, Ile no more doe so.

The cucking, &c.

Then was she brought away,
And after for her life,^o
She never durst begin to scould
With either man or wife.
And if that every scould
Might have so good a diet,^o
Then should their neighbours every day
Be sure to live in quiet,
The cucking of a scould,
The cucking of a scould
Which if you will but stay to heare
The cucking of a scould.

know

for the rest of her life

punishment

Printed at London by G. P.¹⁶

¹⁶ Perhaps either George Potter or George Purslowe, who printed during the years 1599-1616 and 1614-1632 respectively.

The Great Boobee¹⁷

To a pleasant new tune; or, *Salengers Round.*

My friends if you will understand
 my fortunes what they are
 I once had cattel, house and land,
 but now am never the near,^o *have lost everything*
 My father left a good estate
 as I may tell to thee,
 I couzened^o was of all I had
 like a great Boobee. *cheated*

I went to school with a good intent,
 and for to learn my book,
 And all the day I went to play,
 in it I never did look,
 Full seven years, or very nigh,
 as I may tell to thee,
 I could hardly say my Christ-cross-row¹⁸
 like a great Boobee.

My father then in all the haste,
 did set me to the plow,
 And for to lash the horse about,
 indeed I knew not how;
 My father took his whip in his hand,
 and soundly lashed me
 He call'd me fool and country clown
 and great Boobee.

¹⁷ Undated and of unknown authorship, this popular ballad was probably written before the English Civil War (though possibly published during or after it) because the Long Parliament, at that time, suppressed the Bear Garden and other forms of public entertainment.

During the Elizabethan Age and afterwards the countryman in London was a common object of derision in both prose and verse. One of the two woodcuts depicts a traveller with a walking stick being approached by a gallant in white ruffles and collar, wearing a sword.

¹⁸ The alphabet, arranged in the form of a Latin cross, contained in a “horn-book.”

But I did from my vather¹⁹ run,
 for I will plow no more,
Because he hath so slashed me,
 and made my side so sore:
But I will go to London town,
 zome vashions for to see
When I came there they call'd me clown
 and great Boobee.

Then did I walk in haste to Pauls,^o
the steeple for to view
Because I heard some people say,
it should be builded new,²⁰
Then I got up unto the top,
the city for to see,
It was so high it made me cry
like a great Boobee.

From thence I went to Westminst[er,]^o
and for to see the tombs,²¹ *Westminster Abbey*
Oh, said I, what a house is here
with an infinite sight^o of rooms?
Sweetly the Abby-bells did ring
it was a fine zight to see,

¹⁹ Father. Dialectal and viewed as characteristic of a countryman from, say, Somerset or Dorset. See also such words below as "zome" and "vashions."

²⁰ The steeple of St. Paul's was struck by lightning in 1561 and largely destroyed.

²¹ Since the Middle Ages, many of England's aristocracy were buried inside chapels of Westminster Abbey, while monks and prominent lay figures were interred in the cloisters and other areas.

Me thoughts I was going to heaven in a string²²
like a great Boobee.

The second part, to the same tune.

But as I went along the street,
the most part of the day
Many gallants^o did I meet *men* (in this case) *of fashion and pleasure*
methoughts they were very gay,
I blew my nose, and pist my hose^o *stockings*
some people did me see,
They said I was a beastly fool,
and a great Boobee.

Next day I through Pie-corner²³ past,
the roast-meat on the stall
Invited me to take a taste
my money was but small,
The meat I pickt, the cook me kickt
as I may tell to thee
He beat me zore, and made me rore
like a great Boobee.

As I through Smithfield²⁴ lately walkt
a gallant lass I met
Familiarly with me she talkt
which I cannot forget,
She proffered me a pint of wine
me thought she was wondrous free,
To the tavern then I went with her
like a great Boobee.

She told me we were near of kin,
and call'd for wine good store,^o *of good quality*
Before the reckoning^o was brought in, *bill*

²² That is, wafted by the music of the bells. For a somewhat similar account, see below, p. 254.

²³ At the corner of Giltspur Street and Cock Lane in Smithfield, Pye Corner was considered one of London's most disreputable locations.

²⁴ One of the oldest markets in London and a favourite place for public gatherings of all social levels.

my cousin prov'd a whore
 My purse she pickt, and went away
 my cousin cozened me
 The vintner kickt me out of door
 like a great Boobee.

At the Exchange²⁵ when I came there,
 I saw most gallant things
 I thought the pictures living²⁶ were
 of all our English kings,
 I doft my hat, and made a leg° *deep bow*
 and kneeled on my knee
 The people laught, and call'd me fool,
 and great Boobee.

To Paris Garden²⁷ then I went,
 where there was great resort,
 My pleasure was my punishment,
 I did not like the sport.
 The Garden bull with his stout horns
 on high then tossed me;
 I did bewray myself with fear° *betrayed my fear*
 like a great Boobee.

The bear-heard° went to save me then, *bear-herder*
 the people flockt about,
 I told all the bear-garden men,
 my guts were almost out,
 They said I stunk most grievously
 no man would pitty me,
 They call'd me witless fool and ass,
 and great Boobee.

²⁵ Founded in 1665, the Royal Exchange was not only one of the earliest stock exchanges in Europe, but contained many fine shops and merchants' establishments.

²⁶ That is, portraits of prominent figures displayed there, particularly of those associated with the Exchange.

²⁷ Located at Southwark, across the River Thames, Paris Garden was the most popular bear-garden of the Elizabethan Age. The Queen herself was very fond of this entertainment and overruled Parliament when it attempted to ban the sport on Sundays. Other animals, particularly bulls (as here), were also baited by well-trained hunting dogs.

Then ore the water did I pass
as you shall understand,
I dropt into the Thames alasse
before I came to land,
The water-man^o did help me out,
and thus did say to me,
Tis not thy fortune to be drown'd
thou great Boobee.

But I have learned so much wit^o
 shall shorten all my cares,
If I can but a license get
 to play before the bears,
Twill be a gallant place indeed,
 as I may tell to thee,
Then who dares call me fool or ass,
 or great Boobee.

FINIS

London, printed for R.I. Entred according to o[r]der.²⁸

A Briefe Sonet Declaring the Lamentation of Beckles²⁹

To the tune of *Labandalashotte*.³⁰
My loving good neighbours, that comes to beholde,
Me sillie³¹ poore Beckles, in cares manyfolde,
In sorrow all drowned, which floated of late,

²⁸ There is a further seventeenth-century edition similar in character, printed “for F. Coles, in *VVine-street*, on *Safforn-hill* [sic], near *Hatton-Garden*.” Although its publication date has been variously placed, it is probably of the early Restoration.

²⁹ The sub-title reads: *A Market Towne in Suffolke Which Was in the Great Winde Vpon S. Andrews Eue [i.e. 29 November] Pitifully Burned with Fire to the Value by Estimation of Tweentie Thousande Pounds. And to the Number of Fourscore Dwelling Houses, Besides a Great Number of Other Houses. 1586.*

The term sonnet (or sonet) could also refer at this time to any short poem, especially of a lyrical nature.

³⁰ Although there is no evidence that this tune was popular then, it was attached to *A Song of King Edgar*, "shewing how he was deceived of his Loue" (Ambrose Phillips *Collection of Old Ballads* 1723).

³¹ Deserving of compassion or sympathy

With teares all bedewed, at my wofull state,
 With fire so consumed,³² most wofull to vewe,
 Whose spoile^o thy poore people, for ever may rue³³ *damage or injury*
 When well you have vewed my total decay,
 And pittie have pierced, your heartes as it may,
 Say thus my good neighbours that God in his ire,
 For sinne hath consumed poor Beckles with fire.

For one onely parish, myselfe I mought vaunt,^o *might boast*
 To match with the bravest, for who but will graunt?
 The sea and the countrey, me sitting so nyne,
 The fresh water river, so sweete running by,
 My medowes and commons, such prospect of health,
 My fayers in somer, so garnisht with wealth,
 My market so served, with corne, flesh, and fish,
 And all kinde of victuals, that poore men would wish,
 That who but knewe Beckles, with sighing may saye,
 Would God of his mercie, had sparde my decaye.^o *downfall, destruction*

But O my destruction, O most dismal day,
 My temple is spoyled, and brought in decay,
 My marketsted^o burned, my beautie defaced,
 My wealth overwhelmed, my people displaced, *market-place*
 My musicke is wayling, my mirth it is moone,^o *moaning*
 My ioyes are departed, my comfort is gone,
 My people poore creatures, are mourning in woe,
 Still wandring not wotting,^o which way for to goe. *knowing*
 Like sillie poore Troians, whom Sinon betrayde,³⁴
 But God of thy mercy, releeve them with ayde.

O daye most unluckie, the winde lowde^o in skie, *howling*
 The water harde frozen,³⁵ the houses so drye,

³² A fire broke out in the chimney of a small house and, fanned by the gale-force winds, spread rapidly to other houses in the town. In the margin of the next stanza is the following note: "A rude felowe by fiering his chimney procured their calamitie."

³³ Grieve, regret.

³⁴ By deceiving the Trojans regarding the purpose of the giant wooden horse left behind by the Greeks, Sinon, a Trojan captive, brought about the destruction of the city and its people.

³⁵ The River Waveney, on which Beckles lies, had frozen solid early that year.