

HENRY BLYTH'S CONTRACT.

CONTAINING

An Account of the Way and Manner
of his Wooing his Lads, in a fine and
elegant Discourse to the Minister's
Wife, his Mistrefs.



EDINBURGH:

Printed and Sold by J. MORREN, East Campbell's
Close, Cowgate.

1800.

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WELL Maistris, fan I'm come out o' Dundee, I could get nathing to gi' the horse draff in, at the skull: your women ay tak's his trough to keep sand in for scouring their fushicads i' the bink; well I wat he's a good beast, God bless him, that I dinna' forspeak him, and is as well forquainted wi' me, as if I had been seven year's in's company. In troth, Maistris, folk has ay need to deflect fat they are doing; for the day as I'm comin alongs the cassaway o' Dundee, the laird's brother, that cam here, cry'd me up and ga' me a bicker, and comin out I fell down the stair, an' maist brook my neck, but be a providence I sav'd the barm. And you ken maistris, fan I'm ridin down by the Pow, upo' Maistris Fushicad, she an I crakin together, an I no mindin fat she's sayin, tines my pisse, and gaes foret till I'm about a mile an a bittokie fra't; an minds, says I, good faith maistris, I've tint my pisse, and maun gae back for't again. Hout you're a fool cushie, let it gang there, it was nae meikle worth. Was nae meikle worth, cothie, saul maistris, it was as good a pisse as e'er was in a poor beast, an I wadnae geed for my halveys see yet, sae I gaed my wa's back, and gat it jist far I fand it.

Now maistris, as you was sayin, I'll gi' you a prescriptification o' my life. First, fan I cam to the world, as soon's I grew a body, my father was dissolved to set me to the school to learn to dispel; and a chapman coming by, he bought me *the Chief End of Man*, and a *Prognostication*; but I bein contravenable ran awa' and ged to the waist mill, an helped the millar: for he greed with the auld lady to uphad a' the gaun gear and she furnis'd him wi' a woman, an gat the o'ercome to herfell: sae this way I misglekit a' my learniment. Well, fan I was bat a hal-lang lad, I began to think how I shou'd come thro'

the world, an ye ken the best way was to disjoin myself to a half-marrow, after the orderly custom o' the land, fan lads and lasses bein desolv'd to marry, cothie; Lord grant prosperity, generation, mortification an divulsion to a' them that gangs that gate, cothie. Now always maistris, I'll tell you the thing I'm gaun to tell you. The lass's sister that married Fushicam's guidfather, that dwalls down o' the laird o' Thing's land, began to look at me an I to her, an after they scorned us together, her uncle a very disponsable woman, bids me meet her at the kirk-yard o' fushicad upo' Sunday. Well afar aff as I cam near hand, I thought it was a market, and putting my hand i' fushicad for something to the custom-wife, I mindet it was Sunday, and that there was nae ocafen, but men an' women a' thro' ither: Well, I comes in by an sits down by the tent-side amo' them, an puts my bonnet as the rest did; fae by that time the lass that shou'd ha' been mine, cam in by, an' as she was sittin down, I'll ne'er forget it, ane o' the men wi' the black cloket necks contrarified out o' the beuk, *That if a man was ordain'd for a thing he wadna get swin byt'*. Well, that ga' me som hartin fae wi' took a chappin o' ale at the tent-side, an cry'd in by upo' John Fushicad that was pishin at the east-gavel, (his brother's sister's married to my Lord Kinghern's henwife, I believe his name's Lyon,) an' ga' him a part o't. Then says I, cothie, sin there's but a defusion here, we'll sit an tak out our drink, an' confer the greement till we meet at the bridal that's to be upo' Tyfday, cothie, fae here's e'en to you lass; I thank you lad, a twell its onforfaid o' me, fae an you binna as unwilling to tak me, cothie, as I'm to tak you, let's e'en mak an end o't on Tyfday, cothie; conformably we forgathers in the afternoon, fan lads has gotten in their stuff, an begin to grow ramage wi' the foup drink; we devinced upon the matter; an consponded to be contrived. Well, I was to gi' up

our names to the kirk-sessions, an p^{ay} fit-filler to the box to keep from getting on upo' the stool of repentance for a twalmonth to com: an fornens, that I was to get threty marks wi' her an a mare, an a' my fees were to be laid to that, if I dyd first, a' my things were to be hers, an if she dyd neest, a' my things were to be mine; the bairns were to be divided amon' the first end o' the gear: the lads were to be elder than a' the lasses, bat the lasses war to com in before the lads in the tallification as John Fallow laid it down upo' write.

Well, twa three days afterhend, she coms to me, upo' a day fan I'm at the plough, an says Henry, cothie, ye ken fat we did at the kirk-yard an the bridal, you're a gay conspectable wark lad, an I hae been tried in barns an byrs, an can put my hand to a thing, cushie, as well's my neibers. An sae I convolv'd, that fin' it was the way that other folk did, an' her kist was well made up wi' affacns, I just arrefts her to meet me at Forgan the morn: sae I ged my wa' hame, musted my head, an made ready a clean o'erlay, my purit handit fark, a staff an a blue bannet o' my head, an rises as soon as the cock gat upo' the kitchen, an cam on the king's highway to Forgan, an be the sun was haf an ell frae the list I was at the Orchard, an sam meets I but just my lord i' the teeth. Ho, good day Henry, cothie, fat is your will, my lord, cothie. Ha' you got a wife, yet Henry cothie? De'il ane hae you gotten yoursel yet, my lord, cothie. Fat makes you so soon up, cothie? P've been takin in some meal Henry cothie. Indeed my lord cothie, an youwad list up that house to your ducat it wad cost you less travel. How wad you do that Henry cothie? My lord, cothie, gar John Bushicad your officer raise the ground, an send in filler for tows to the balties o' Dundee, an shoot them in beneath the foundation, an cut trees to let it o'er the brig, we'll carry it up in a forenoon, an make it twa cupple higher,

an strike thro' a thru-art, an it were but to see a sick beast. He gat up wi' a gaff o' laughter, an says, well control'd Henry cothie, I'll gie you three dollars to grieve the wark. My lord cothie, I'll seek naething bat the cloth Elspit Fushicad your honour's widow's tenant's wife reids me, but the world's making a tournament upo' her, an the corn no casting up good years, you've meddl'd wi' a' her gear, ilka hilt an hair o't, cothie, sae it contains your honour to gi' me disatisfaction: well Henry cothie, there's my hand and a sixpence that I'll see you wrang'd. Well God detain and dissolve your honour, cothie: sae I recover'd my bannet an disaluted lam, an coms to the house for the neibers was sitting i' the fire, proving an perverting the desairs o' the kintry, an fan they saw me O welcome Henry, here to your health an luck to the bargain. Drink, it's welcome, cothie, in good faith I wish't a well, I wat I thank you in conscience, I wish we ne'er want war, let never sorrow gang so near your heart.

Well maistris, I think she's a gay lassie, an she binna a war man nor her father, I'll be right well set upo' her; well I wat she tak's it weel a kind, for her mother was as able a barn man as e'er held wind to the corn. The house I was to tak ran just down by the water-side, it was a gay neat misdeamable house, wi' a butt an a ben, an a fire-side, an a close that wad hadden a swine, the fire flood just i' the mids o' the floor, an the sun came in at the wa' windock fan the lads got their dorder meat, with a disproportionall yard that wad hae sawn six firlots o' bear. Just as we're previncing an disclosing up by comes Fushicam that dwalls down at the Brigend, an sais, This man maun pay for his house an yard twenty marks, cothie. Saul, sir chamberlain, cothie, an ycu winna tak twenty pund, keep them to yoursell cothie. Well Henry, cothie, lick my thing, an lay it to yours, an sin it is sae, that it maun be nae ither way, than

it sude be, an if you'r defiable, let's put black upo' site upon't. He tak's out a lang thing that fok use to do fan they gae about the way o' things, an scraps upo' paper a' the dissolvemnts an tenemnts o' the takins, an bade me pit to my name; stir, cothie, I'm nae beuk'd learn'd. Well then cothie, pit to your hand to my fushicad before witnesses, an I'll describe for you.

The las's seein a' this, says, a' the sint a bit I'll tak him, cushie, for he's a fool. I bein magvocat an cor-reminous wi' the soup drink, an always bein tiralent, cothie, faul cummer, cothie, conscience cothie, gif I were as magstragvagant an glaustrous as other lads, I shou'd ken whether you're a man or a lad, an mak you never to work a turn after this deficient day, gae your gates in a vengeableness, cothie. Sae maistris there is nae great skaith, for my maister gart her pay the haf of the lawin, an said, sin you winna intend the marriage, he shana' be the cost, for fat ever has been betwin you you've ay as mickle o' him as he has o' you. But she cudna thrive, for she gat the young laird wi' bairn, and died i' the bearing o't. For women maistris, are fair thing'd whiles fan they tak it on; for your own woman disabus'd me the last year because I wadna claw the cow, to gar her milk come down, and keep her frae slingin, they ca'd me frae heaven to hell about it; I was i' the mean time delvin out the ministers butt, an brok my wark loom; an ga'n to seek a lean o' the beadle's, they ran in before me, an gar'd his wife cry, com in by Henry an get the fashion of the house. Sae I ged in by, an thinkin she was ga'n to gi' me cheese an bread, or some thing that wadna speak to me; but she gae me sic a hurl I ne'er gat the like o't, sin the day that Andrew Fushicam's daughter, a bangster quean, met me i' the dyke an jam'd me, because me an my master John Galons coost divots upo' Sunday thro' ignorance. I cou'd nae displunge a sport as folk will do i' their cassin, but slang her down an misgrugl'd a' her apron

by meir rackliffness; she was fae angry that she ruggit out a' my fushicad, an made me bald, that I hae never been like other folk till this deficient day. Sae, maistris, I never drew up wi' anither, till I was sent to my lord Fushicad's house wi' apples, beyond Aberdeen, for the bred water is, that you winna see a hill on the tither side o't; sae, as I'm in my lord's house, ben coms our Lady Anne, a bonny lassie wi' a black fushicad on her head, an her face fu' o' black splaches, an says, Henry cushie, there's a groat to ye, an kifs that lasfs at the wheel; as I was strivin, we tumbld down between a kiff an the wa', an gat nae skouth to win out for twa hours, but gin we had been as lang the gither, I shou'd a gotten a kifs whether she wad or no, for I never left her till I gart her cry; an if she had staid there till now, nae misdoubts I might hae married her.

Now maistris, I'm your man an the minister's, an if he consist frae pitting me awa, I wiuna bide, for I cou'd live wi' you a' my days, he speaks fae mony good words. He obstru~~ct~~ed me the last day that I wad rise again; an I said, cothie, stir I'se believe as other 'onest fo'ks do; an indeed, stir, cothie, the beuk o' *Poggary*, find just as you say, an the o'erturn o't was ay three things, for it tell'd, that though ane lay down in the gutter, an prayed to God to tak him out o' the gutter, yet an he made nae maughts o' himself, he would lie till he died, an God wad raise him up for a' that. If I were good o' the members, maistris, I might ha' learn'd a' my questions out o' that beuk, for there was a' things in that beuk, an the o'er turning o't was ay three things; there was cats an pipers in't, an slups an swine, an horn'd beasts on women, an mony things, but I'm a mind to learn yet; for though we be alder the day than we'll be the morn, fo'ks are only detacked about my age, just like Mr Francis Fushicad, that same day the beadle's

you ken maistris, you sent me to the officer's wife to harrow her wheat i' the Diverlane a' afternoon; sae as I was tellin you, by com's his honour ridin on a hawk, an a horse on's arm, an thinkin I was as auld as the officer's wife, says good day, honest man, can you set me upo' a mauken hereabout, the de'il a bit o' me is an honest man, cothie, an please your honour cothie, I'm but the minister's lad, an I'm laborin this honest woman's butt, her guidman's sae trachled wi' my lord's wark, that we maun pit him alike wi's neighbours. Indeed, lad cothie, the gentels taks a hantle uphaddin. Ay, ay, sir, cothie, bat an gentle fo'ks was semple folks, an semple to'ks was gentle fo'ks, semple fo'k wad be like gentle fo'k, an gentle fo'k wad be like semple folk, wi' that up gat a flock o' Fushicads, and it gets wa's at the gallop.

I'll no contain you any longer, maistris, for I'm a mind to confet a wife gin the world dinna mend, for we canna get naething but fat we buy, an de'il hed wi' hae to buy it wi'. I had sins a idle life fan I was a malicious man, an shot our guns at the moon to learn us to had aff the whigs at *Botswell-bridg*; we had nae wark than bat to lay down our things on the ground, an com back and fore; yet gin ony mist to tak his neighbour's thing instead o' his ain, he gat o'er the crown.

Well maistris, this be your leave, an I wifs as well, an very wise fo'k says, That be a'ft likes, an it bina the tae way it will be the tither; an that we'll hae king or queen, or some ither thing, or else naething at a', an then fo'ks canna readily be out o' condition.

*Now honest lad, poor Hendry's dead,
And a' his neighbour's got cheese and bread,
Then some did groan and shake their head,
When this they saw,
But when they gat so large a feed,
Cbae'd grief awa'.*

F I N I S.