

The Miser*Morning Post and Gazetteer* (23 December 1799). Rpt. 1804, 1806.

MISER! why countest thou thy treasure?
 Thy ill got hoards of paltry gold!
 Hast thou a throb of secret pleasure,
 When Conscience whispers, soft and slow,
 'These are the spoils^a that from Oppression flow, 5
 'For which thy FAME is sold!'

Why dost thou gloat^b on useless ore?
 Thou hast no joy in all thy wealth;
 Thou never heard'st^c the simple^d poor
 Bless thy BENEVOLENCE, and cry – 10
 While Gratitude^e illumines the uprais'd eye,
 'Heav'n grant **THEE** years of *Health!*'

Why dost thou, in the gloom of night,
 While loud the tempest^f rages wide,
 Tremble with honor's cold affright? 15
 And, grasping ev'ry shining woe,
 To some dark nook, with fault'ring footsteps go,
 The^g useless heaps to hide?

Dost thou not hear the thunder's voice,
 Reproving Heav'n's just vengeance, speak? 20
 Dost thou not hear the Fiends rejoice,
 While on thy tott'ring roof obscure,
 The tears of outrag'd Nature whelming pour,
 To chill thy wither'd cheek?

See thy lean frame, thy sunken eyes, 25
 Behold thy victor DEATH, and know,
 That when the wretched MISER dies,
 No bosom pities – on his tomb
 No graceful^h wreathⁱ of Spring shall ever bloom,
 No tear of friendship flow! 30

Forgotten! or, if not, abhorr'd,
 Can all thy treasures, left behind,
 Bid MEMORY thy toil reward –
 Or meek RELIGION breathe to Heav'n
 One pray'r that thou may'st ever be forgiv'n, 35
 O! MISCREANT UNKIND!

Thou that wouldst live belov'd, caress'd,
 Let sweet Humanity be giv'n
 By **THEE** to e'en a FOE distress'd;
 But when^j the child of VIRTUE sighs, 40

When^k GENIUS to thy *open threshold* flies,
Know, 'tis the PATH TO HEAV'N!

LAURA MARIA

The Mince Pie^l

Morning Post and Gazetteer (27 December 1799); *Whitehall Evening Post* (31 December 1799–2 January 1800). Rpt. as 'The Mince-Pye', 1804.

HAIL, SAV'RY COMPOUND! luscious to the taste;
 The school-boy's heart delighting! sweet reward
 Of many a tedious hour in^a penance sad
 And lab'ring erudition. Oft hast thou
 Been brought to view by strong anticipation, 5
 When poring over books, or conning loath
 The lesson of dull grammar. When at school
 The scanty table nothing did present
 But *suet dumplings*, or hard *mutton* boil'd,
 How has thy minc'd-meat danc'd before the eyes 10
 Of greedy visionary! how possess'd
 The mazes of his brain! then to his view
 Did his dear HOME return; his parents' smiles,
 His evening visits, and perhaps his joy
 At Play house, where the busy *Pantomime* 15
 Bewitch'd the time away. Then to return
 To sup, to eat MINCE PIES! drink luscious wine!
 To keep the list'ning circle *list'ning* still
 'Till after midnight, when the little ELF
 On his soft pillow, DREAMS OF SCHOOL AGAIN!^b 20

TABITHA

Modern Female Fashions

Morning Post and Gazetteer (28 December 1799). Rpt. as 'Female Fashions for 1799', 1806.

A FORM, as lank as^a any taper fine,
 A head like half pint bason;
 Where golden cords and band^b entwine,
 As rich as fleece of JASON!

A pair of shoulders, strong and wide, 5
 Breast-works of size resisting;^c
 Bare arms, long dangling by the side,
 And shoes, of ragged listing!^l

Cravats, like towels thick and broad,
 Long tippets made of bear skin; 10
 Muffs, that a RUSSIAN might applaud,
 And *rouge* to tint^d a fair skin.

His only comfort, and his friend –
But mark the sequel, – and attend. 10

This Farmer, as the story's^c told,
Was somewhat cross, and somewhat old;
His was the *wintry* hour of life,
While *Summer* smil'd before his *Wife*;
He was both splenetic and crusty, 15
She, buxom, blooming, blithe, and lusty!^d
A contrast, rather form'd to cloy
The zest of matrimonial joy!

'Twas CHRISTMAS TIME, the PEASANT throng
Assembled gay, with dance and song, 20
The *Farmer's* kitchen long had been
Of annual sports the busy scene;
The wood fire blaz'd, the chimney wide
Presented seats on either side;
Long rows of wooden *trenchers*, clean, 25
Bedeck'd with *holly boughs*, were seen;
The shining tankard's foamy ale
Gave *spirits* to the *goblin* tale,
And many a rosy cheek grew pale. }

It happen'd that, some sport to shew 30
The ceiling held – a MISTLETOE:
A magic bough, and well design'd
To prove the coyest maiden *kind*.
A magic bough, which DRUIDS old
In^e sacred mysteries enroll'd; 35
And which, or gossip FAME's a liar,
Still warms the soul with vivid fire,
Still promises a store of bliss, –
While *bigots*¹ snatch their *idol's* kiss.

This MISTLETOE was doom'd to be 40
The talisman of destiny;
Beneath its ample boughs, we're told,
Full many a timid swain grew bold;
Full many a roguish eye askance
Beheld it with impatient glance; 45
And many a ruddy cheek confest
The triumphs of the beating breast;
And many a rustic rover sigh'd
Who ask'd the kiss – and was *denied*.

First MARG'RY smil'd, and gave her lover 50
A kiss – then thank'd her stars, '*twas over!*

Next KATE, with a reluctant pace,
 Was led towards^f the mystic place;
 Then SUE, a merry laughing jade.
 A dimpled, yielding blush display'd;^g 55
 While JOAN her CHASTITY to shew
 Wish'd *the 'bold knaves* would serve her so!
 SHE'D 'TEACH *the rogues such wanton play*,
 And well she *could, she knew the way!*

The FARMER, mute with jealous care, 60
 Sat sullen in his wicker chair;
 Hating the noisy gamesome host,
 Yet fearful to resign his post;
 He envied all their sportive strife,
 But most he watch'd his blooming *wife*; 65
 And trembled, lest her steps should go,
 Incautious, near THE MISTLETOE.

Now HODGE, a youth of rustic grace,
 With form athletic, manly face,
 On MISTRESS HOMESPUN turn'd his eye, 70
 And breath'd a soul-declaring sigh;
 Old HOMESPUN mark'd his list'ning fair,
 And nestled in his wicker chair;
 HODGE swore she might *his heart command*,
 The PIPE was dropp'd from HOMESPUN's hand! 75
 HODGE prest her slender waist around,
 The FARMER check'd his draught, and frown'd;
 And now beneath the MISTLETOE
 'Twas MISTRESS HOMESPUN's turn to go,
 Old SURLY shook his wicker chair – 80
 And sternly utter'd, – *'Let her dare!'*

HODGE, to the FARMER's wife declar'd
 Such *husbands* never should be spar'd;
 Swore, they deserv'd the *worst* disgrace,
 That lights upon the wedded race; 85
 And vow'd, that night he would not go,
 Unblest, beneath the MISTLETOE.
 The merry group all recommend
 A harmless *kiss*, the strife to end:
 '*Why not?*' says MARG'RY, 'who would fear, 90
 'A dang'rous moment *once a year?*
 SUSAN observ'd, that '*antient* folks
 'Were seldom pleas'd by^h *youthful* jokes.'
 But KATE, who, till that fatal hour,
 Had held o'er HODGE unrivall'd pow'r, 95
 With curving lip, and head aside,

Look'd down and smil'd in conscious pride,
Then, anxious to conceal her care,
She humm'd – WHAT FOOLS SOME WOMEN ARE!

Now, MISTRESS HOMESPUN, sorely vex'd, 100
By pride and jealous rage perplex'd;
And angry, that her peevish spouse
Should doubt her matrimonial vows;
But, *most of all*, resolved to make
An envious RIVAL'S bosom ache, 105
Commanded HODGE to let her go,
Nor lead her near the Mistletoe;
'Why should you ask it *o'er and o'er*?'
Cried she, '*we've been there TWICE BEFORE!*'

'Tis thus, to check a RIVAL'S sway, 110
That WOMEN oft THEMSELVES betray!
While, VANITY alone pursuing,
They rashly prove THEIR OWN UNDOING!

LAURA MARIA

Modern Male Fashions¹

Morning Post and Gazetteer (3 January 1800). Rpt. as 'Male Fashions for 1799',
1806.

CROPS,² like *Hedge hogs*, high-crown'd Hats,
Whiskers, like *Jew MOSES*;
Collars padded,³ thick Cravats,
And Cheeks as red as roses.

Faces painted deepest^b brown, 5
Waistcoats strip'd and gaudy;
Sleeves, thrice doubled, thick with down,
And Straps, to brace the body!

Short Great Coats, that reach the knees,
Boots like French *Postillion*;³ 10
Meant the *lofty*^c *race* to please,
But laugh'd at by the million.

Square-to'd Shoes, with silken Strings;
Pantaloons, tight^d fitting;
Fingers, deck'd with golden^e Rings, 15
And Small-cloaths, made of Knitting.

Bludgeons, like a Pilgrim's Staff,
Or Canes, as slight as OSIERS;⁴
Doubled Hose, to the THE CALF,
And swell the bills of HOSIERS!^f 20

- Is it in chambers, silken drest,
 At tables with profusion's^b heap;
 Is it on pillows soft to rest,
 In dreams of long and balmy sleep?
 Ah! no! 15
- 'Tis in the rushy HUT obscure,
 Where POVERTY'S low sons endure,
 And, scarcely daring to repine,
 On a straw pallet mute recline,
 O'erwhelm'd with woe! 20
- Is it to flaunt in warm attire,
 To laugh and feast,^c and dance, and sing,
 To crowd around the blazing fire,
 And make the roof with revels ring?
 Ah! no! 25
- 'Tis on the prison's flinty floor –,
 'Tis where the deaf'ning whirlwinds roar,
 'Tis when the sea boy, on the mast,
 Hears the wave bounding to the blast,
 And looks below! 30
- Is it in chariots gay to ride,
 To crowd the splendid midnight ball,
 To revel in luxurious pride,
 While pamper'd vassals wait your call?^d
 Ah! no! 35
- 'Tis in a cheerless, naked room,
 Where MIS'RY'S victims wait their doom,
 Where a fond MOTHER famish'd dies,
 While forth a frantic FATHER flies,
 MAN'S desprate foe! 40
- Is it where, prodigal and weak,
 The silly spendthrift scatters gold,
 Where eager *folly* hastes to seek
 The sordid wanton, false and bold?^e
 Ah! no! 45
- 'Tis in the silent spot obscure,
 Where, forc'd *all* sorrows to endure,
 Pale GENIUS learns, *Oh lesson sad!*
 To court the *vain*, and on the *bad*
False praise bestow!^f 50
- Is it where GAMESTERS, thronging round,
 Their shining heaps of wealth display?
 Where FASHION'S^g giddy tribes are found,
 Sporting their senseless^h hours away?

Ah! no! 55
 'Tis where neglected GENIUSⁱ sighs,
 Where HOPE, exhausted, silent dies,
 Where MERIT starves, by PRIDE oppress'd,
 'Till ev'ry stream that warms the breast
 FORBEARS TO FLOW!^j 60

Mistress Gurton's Cat. A Domestic Tale

Evening Mail (6–8 January 1800); *Morning Post and Gazetteer* (8 January 1800).
 Rpt. *LT*, 1806.

OLD MISTRESS GURTON had a CAT,
 A *Tabby*, loveliest of the race!
 Sleek as a doe, and tame, and fat,
 With velvet paws, and whisker'd face!^a
 There never was a finer creature 5
 Among^b the varying whims of Nature!

All lik'd GRIMALKIN,^l passing well!
 Save MISTRESS GURTON; and, 'tis said,^c
 She oft with furious ire would swell,
 When, thro' neglect, or hunger keen, 10
 PUSS with a pilfer'd scrap was seen,
 Swearing beneath the pent-house shed.
 Sometimes new milk GRIMALKIN stole,
 And sometimes upset the bowl;^d
 Old China broke; or scratch'd the^e Dame 15
 And brought the race of CATS^f to shame
 By serenades and midnight melodies,
 While MISTRESS GURTON could not close her eyes!^g
 And many a time this CAT was curst,
 Of squalling, crabbed,^h thieving things, the worst! 20
 Wish'd *dead!* and menanc'd with a *string* –
 For CATS of such scant fame '*deserv'd to swing!*'

One day, *report*, for ever busy,
 Resolv'd to make DAME GURTON easy;
 A neighbour came, with solemn look, 25
 And thus, the dismal tidings broke –
 'Know ye' that poor GRIMALKIN died
 'Last night, upon the pent-house side?ⁱ
 'Poor PUSS! I vow it grieves me sore,
 'Never to see thy beauties more! 30
 'Never again to hear thee *pur*,
 'To stroke thy back, of *Zebra* fur!
 'To see thy em'rald eyes so bright,
 'Flashing around their lust'rous light
 'Amid the solemn shades of night.'^k } 35

'O! Cease!' exclaim'd DAME GURTON, straight,
 'Has my poor *Puss* been torn away?
 'Alas! how cruel is my fate!
 'How shall I pass the tedious day?
 'Where shall her mourning Mistress find 40
 'So sweet a Cat! so meek! so kind?
 'So fine^m a mouser! such a beauty,
 'So orderly, so veryⁿ true,
 'That, ev'ry gentle task of duty
 'The dear domestic creature knew! 45
 'Not cross, like *vulgar Cats*, was she,
 'Hers, was the mildest tend'rest heart;
 'She knew no little *cattish* art;
 'But seem'd the very *Queen of CATS* to be!^o
 'I cannot bear the loss! I cannot^p part 50
 'From poor GRIMALKIN kind! *the darling of my heart.*
 And now DAME GURTON, bath'd in tears,

With a *black top-knot* vast, appears!
 Some say, that a *black gown* she wore –
 As many oft have done before – 55
 For *Beings*, valu'd less, I ween,
 Than was,^q of *Tabby Cats*, the fav'rite Queen!

But lo! soon after, one fair day,
 PUSS, who had only been a roving,
 Across the pent-house took her way, 60
 To see her Dame, so sad, and loving!
 Eager to greet the mourning fair,
 She enter'd by a window, where
 A china bowl of luscious cream
 Was quiv'ring in the sunny beam! 65

PUSS, who was somewhat tir'd and dry,
 And somewhat fond of bev'rage sweet,
 Beholding such a tempting treat,
 Resolv'd its depth to try –^r
 But FATE, unfriendly, did that hour controul – 70
 She overset the *cream*, and *smash'd the GILDED bowl!*

As MISTRESS GURTON heard the thief –
 She started from her easy chair,
 And, quite unmindful of her grief,
 Began aloud to swear! 75
 'Curse that voracious beast!' she cried,
 'Here, SUSAN, bring a cord –
 'I'll hang the nasty hateful^s creature –
 'The veriest plague e'er form'd by nature!'

And MISTRESS GURTON kept her word – 80
And poor GRIMALKIN died!

Thus, often we, with anguish sore –
The DEAD, in clam'rous grief deplore,
Who, were they once alive again
Would meet with little, but *disdain* –^t 85
For friends, whom trifling faults can sever,
Are *valud most* – when LOST FOR EVER!

TABITHA BRAMBLE

Anacreontic. To Henry

Morning Post and Gazetteer (11 January 1800). Rpt. untitled, 1804; as 'Anacreontic', 1806.

THE DAY IS PAST! The sultry WEST
Its golden curtain closes!
My mossy couch is gayly drest –
With leaves of Summer roses –
FOR THEE! 5

The Day is past! The silv'ry Moon
Will light the shad'wy mountain soon;
Then come, *my LOVE*, let soft delight
Give downy wings to fleeting night –
WITH ME! 10

The Day is past! the rising dews
Spangle the meadows over;
Where buds retint their faded hues,
To greet the wand'ring *Lover* –
LIKE THEE! 15

The Gossamer its silver thread
Winds round the *Glow worm's* twinkling head;
The *Beetle* sounds its drony horn –
And pearl-drops all the flow'rs adorn –
FOR ME! 20

The purple VINE its branches bends,
The bow'r of LOVE confining;
And there the *rosy GOD* attends –
An ivy wreath entwining –
FOR THEE! 25

The golden goblets, foaming round,
Seem with impatient streams to bound;
Haste, haste, my *Truant*, let thy lip

The cup of Heav'nly nectar sip,		
	WITH ME!	30
But let not low and base desire		
Degrade thy bosom's feeling!		
Let LOVE illumine his sacred fire,		
The light of TRUTH revealing,		
	FOR THEE!	35
Let vulgar, <i>common natures</i> rove		
In paths of sordid, sensual Love;		
But know, the frozen, grov'ling mind –		
Nor FRIEND nor MISTRESS ^a e'er shall find,		
	IN ME!	40
	SAPPHO ¹	

The Ingredients which Compose Modern Love¹

Morning Post and Gazetteer (14 January 1800). Rpt. *Lady's Monthly Museum* (December 1800), pp. 496–7, by 'T. B.'

TWENTY glances, twenty tears,		
Twenty hopes – and twenty fears,		
Twenty times assail your door –		
And if denied – come <i>twenty more!</i>		
Twenty letters, perfum'd sweet:		5
Twenty nods in every street,		
Twenty oaths, and twenty lies –		
Twenty smiles – and <i>twenty sighs:</i>		
Twenty times, in jealous rage,		
Twenty beauties to engage.		10
Twenty tales, to whisper low,		
Twenty <i>billet doux</i> , ² to shew;		
Twenty times a day, to pass		
Before a flatt'ring <i>looking glass!</i>		
Twenty times to stop your coach,		15
With twenty words of fond reproach;		
Twenty days of keen vexations,		
Twenty – OPERA assignations.		
Twenty nights, behind the scenes,		
To dangle after mimic Queens;		20
Twenty times down <i>Rotten Row</i> , ³		
With twenty <i>painted hags</i> to go;		
Twenty such lovers may be found,		
Sighing for – <i>twenty thousand pounds!</i>		
But, take my word, ye GIRLS of <i>sense</i> ,		25
You'll find them <i>not worth</i> TWENTY PENCE!		

TABITHA BRAMBLE, *Spinster*

2. *guardian God*: Cupid.

‘Anacreontic’

1. *ATALANTA*: in Greek mythology, Atalanta races men who would be her suitors on the understanding that if one could beat her she would marry him; if not she would kill him.
2. *HEBE’S*: Roman goddess of youth.
3. *DAPHNE’S*: a nymph, whose name means ‘laurel’, who was pursued by Apollo; to escape him she is transformed into a laurel tree.

‘The Mince Pie’

1. *The Mince Pie*: This poem appears in the *Whitehall Evening Post* printed beneath Robinson’s 1791 poem ‘To the Myrtle’, which is unsigned. In 1804 this poem appears unsigned. The ‘Tabitha’ signature in both papers and the juxtaposition with an older Robinson poem strongly indicates Robinson’s authorship – especially since her ‘Modern Female Fashions’ appeared in the *Morning Post and Gazetteer* the next day with the ‘Tabitha Bramble’ signature. The poem does not appear in 1806.

‘Modern Female Fashions’

1. *listing*: cloth border.
2. *clocks*: embroidered decorations on stockings.
3. *OTAEITLAN*: Tahitian.

‘The Mistletoe’

1. *bigots*: superstitious religious fanatics.

‘Modern Male Fashions’

1. *Modern Male Fashions*: Curiously, this poem appears – without attribution but under the title ‘Modern Male Fashions’ – in the July 1820 issue of *La Belle Assemblée; being Bell’s Court and Fashionable Magazine*, p. 33.
2. *CROPS*: short haircuts.
3. *Postillion*: heavily reinforced boots for riding.
4. *OSIERS*: willow twigs.
5. *Curricles*: light two-wheeled carriages drawn by two horses.
6. *Rotten Row*: a fashionable road in Hyde Park for parading on horses or in carriages, a corruption of ‘route de roi’.
7. *Commons*: Doctors’ Commons, buildings where civil law suits, such as divorce cases, were deliberated.

‘The Wintry Day’

1. *The Wintry Day*: In 1804 Maria Elizabeth Robinson gives a footnote: ‘This poem has given rise to the exertions of Mrs. Cosway’s genius, who, a few months previously to Mrs. Robinson’s death, painted a beautiful set of subjects from it, – inscribed to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales. ‘The Wintry Day’ by Maria Cosway (1760–1838), Italian-English artist, musician and intimate friend of Thomas Jefferson, is reprinted in *Mary Robinson: Selected Poems*, ed. J. Pascoe (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2000), pp. 16–17.

‘Mistress Gurton’s Cat’

1. *GRIMALKIN*: a name for an old female cat, but also an epithet for a ill-tempered old woman; Shakespeare uses the proper name ‘Graymalkin’ as the name for the feline familiar of one of the witches in *Macbeth* (I.i.8); also used as a cat’s name in Matthew Prior’s poem ‘When the Cat is Away, the Mice may Play’ (1709) and in Henry Fielding’s novel *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749).

‘Anacreontic. To Henry’

1. *SAPPHO*: the *Morning Post* gives a footnote here: ‘If we mistake not, these stanzas are from the pen of the Poetess whom the *tribunal of British literature* has honoured with *this title*. Since Robinson was poetry editor of the *Morning Post* at this time, she likely wrote this footnote in order to identify herself as the author and to reassert her claim to the sobriquet.

‘The Ingredients which Compose Modern Love’

1. *The Ingredients ... Modern Love*: This poem appeared unsigned years later, with lines 21–2 omitted, in the *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, 10 (1827), p. 456.
2. billet doux: love letter (French).
3. Rotten Row: see note 6 to ‘Modern Male Fashions’ above, p. 428.

‘The Gamester’

1. *L. M.*: In the *Morning Post* version, the signature is ‘LAURA MARIA.’

‘Nimrod – A Tale for Sportsmen’

1. *NIMROD*: see Genesis 10:9; Nimrod is ‘a mighty hunter before the Lord.’

‘The Poor Singing Dame’

1. *The Poor Singing Dame*: On the day this poem appeared, Coleridge wrote a letter to Southey that included Robinson’s poem ‘Jasper’ (below, pp. 46–50) with the recommendation that Southey include it in the *Annual Anthology*, calling Robinson ‘a woman of undoubted Genius’. Coleridge remarked of ‘The Poor Singing Dame’: ‘There was a poem of her’s in this Morning’s paper which both in metre and matter pleased me much – She