Now, Now The Mirth Comes
Now, Now The Mirth Comes

Christmas Poetry

by

Robert Herrick

*Christ's Birth.*

One Birth our Saviour had; the like none yet
Was, or will be a second like to it.

*The Virgin Mary.*

To work a wonder, God would have her shown,
At once, a Bud, and yet a Rose full-blowne.

Compiled and Edited By
Douglas D. Anderson
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Now, Now Comes The Mirth
Christmas Poetry by Robert Herrick
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Remarkable insights into the customs of the Christmastide in the 17th century were recorded by the English poet and Anglican priest Robert Herrick, born in 1591 in Cheapside, London. His father, Nicholas Herrick, a prosperous goldsmith, committed suicide when Robert was a year old. The will of Nicholas Herrick indicated that he was in poor health.

It appears that Robert received his early education at the Westminster School, and in 1607 became apprenticed to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, who was a goldsmith and jeweller to the king. The apprenticeship ended when Robert entered St John's College, Cambridge. He received his Bachelors degree in 1617 and his Masters degree in 1620. It is said that some of Herrick's poetic manuscripts exist from his college years.

For the next few years, he supported himself by composing poetry, some of which was set to music. He was a member of the Sons of Ben, a group of Cavalier poets centered around an admiration for the works of Ben Jonson. Herrick had for his early friends Ben Jonson, Seldon, the eminent composer William Lawes, and Endymion Porter, groom of the chamber to the King, and many others of similar tastes. Both Lawes and Porter would be the subjects of poems written by Herrick in the coming years. Jonson, too, would be the subject of numerous poems, four of which are found in the Appendix under the section title “Sons of Ben.”

In 1623, he was ordained a deacon and priest in the Anglican Church, and, in 1627, as his chaplain, Herrick accompanied the duke of Buckingham on his unsuccessful expedition to the Isle of Rhé. In 1629, he became vicar of the parish of Dean Prior, Devon, where he would remain for nearly 20 years, and where he wrote some of his best work. Well-known for his writing style, Husk remarked:

Few writers have been so thoroughly conversant with the popular superstitions of their time, or have so pleasantly interwoven them into their poetry, as Herrick; hence his verses have a life-like character and charm which leads captive every reader.

One example of the popular superstitions of the time would be this verse:

Let the superstitious wife
Neer the childs heart lay a knife:
Point be up, and Haft be downe;
(While she gossips in the towne)
This 'mongst other mystick charms
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Keeps the sleeping child from harms.

It has been written that many of his poems reflect a Carpe Diem (“Seize The Day!”) philosophy. One poem that would represent this would be “To Be Merry:"

Let's now take our time;
While we're in our Prime;
And old, old Age is a farre off:
For the evill evill dayes
Will come on apace;
Before we can be aware of.

But as would be the case of many, the English Civil War took its toll on Herrick, a Royalist. In Hesperides, we find many poems dedicated to Charles the King and Charles the Prince:

T O T H E K I N G,
Upon his taking of Leicester.

This Day is Yours, Great CHARLES! and in this War
Your Fate, and Ours, alike Victorious are.
In her white Stole; now Victory do's rest
Enspher'd with Palm on Your Triumphant Crest.
Fortune is now Your Captive; other Kings
Hold but her hands; You hold both hands and wings.

It is said that he refused to signed the pledge to the Solemn League and Covenant, and as a result, he was removed from his post as vicar in 1648.

On leaving Dean Prior — deeply regretted by his parishioners, who styled him their "ancient and famous poet" — Herrick moved to London, where he settled down at his "beloved Westminster." This removal, however, was clearly a troubling event in the life of the 57-year-old vicar, as evidence by poems found in the Appendix under the heading, “On his expulsion from Dean Prior.”

He considered that his reputation rested on his Hesperides, a collection of lyric poetry, and the much shorter His Noble Numbers, spiritual works, published together in 1648. He wrote:

Live by thy Muse thou shalt; when others die
Leaving no Fame to long Posterity:
When Monarchies trans-shifted are, and gone;
Here shall endure thy vast Dominion.
Several similar verses are found in *Hesperides*, a few of which are reproduced in the Appendix (“His Legacy”).

Many of his short poems show us old Christmas customs, as Vizetelly notes:
Among all our English poets, the one, who has left us by far the most complete contemporary picture of the Christmas season, was a country clergyman of the reign of Charles I., who held a small living in a remote part of Devonshire.

Herrick was also the author of many well-known romantic poems, including "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time", which begins:

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.

The full text of this poem appears in the Appendix.

The famous first line became the subject of several paintings, including this one by John William Waterhouse, (1909). Source: Wikipedia.

Herrick's work was well known to later authors. Washington Irving, in the "Christmas Day" sketch from his well-known *Old Christmas*, included the following passage:

The service was followed by a Christmas carol, which Mr. Bracebridge himself had constructed from a poem of his favourite author, Herrick; and it had been adapted to an old church melody by Master Simon. As there were several good voices among the household, the effect was extremely pleasing; but I was particularly gratified by the exaltation of heart, and sudden sally of grateful feeling, with which the worthy Squire delivered one stanza: his eyes glistening, and his voice rambling out of all the bounds of time and tune:

'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltlesse mirth,
And giv'st me wassaile bowles to drink,
Spiced to the brink:
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand
That soiles my land;
And giv' st me for my bushell sowne,
Twice ten for one.

This is an excerpt from a longer poem, "A Thanksgiving To God, For His House." The full poem is found in the Appendix.

It is unknown whether or not Herrick wrote any substantial volume of poetry after the publication of *Hesperides* in 1648, but only a very few have yet been found, and none after 1649. Most consider it unlikely that his pen was silent in the 25 years until his death.

In the years following his removal from Dean Prior in 1648, deprived of income, he lived a life of penury and dependence. This poem from *Hesperides* perhaps reflects the feelings he would experience during these years:

**Once poore, still penurious.**
Goes the world now, it will with thee goe hard:
The fattest Hogs we grease the more with Lard.
To him that has, there shall be added more;
Who is penurious, he shall still be poore.

However, with the restoration of Charles II. in 1662, he was again restored to his modest position in Devon. He resided there until his death in October 1674 at the age of eighty-three. He was a life-long bachelor, and penned several poems concerning this decision, including this one, titled “His Answer to a Question:”

Some would know
Why I so
Long still doe tarry,
And ask why
Here that I
Live, and not marry?

Thus I those
Doe oppose;
What man would be here,
Slave to Thrall,
If at all
He could live free here?

It is believed that many of the women mentioned in his romantic poetry were fictional.
Christmas Poetry By Robert Herrick

For more of Herrick’s poetry, see The Works of Robert Herrick by Anniina Jokinen. This site also has a short biography of Herrick. (URL: http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/herrick/herribib.htm)

See also “The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick,” http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk/; this site contains a biography, plus the complete text of Herrick’s Hesperides and Noble Numbers: http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk/Hesperides%20and%20His%20Noble%20Numbers.txt

Sources:


William Henry Husk, Songs of the Nativity (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868)

Francis Turner Palgrave, ed., “A Selection From The Lyrical Poems Of Robert Herrick”, circa 1876; Project Gutenberg Etext #1211 (http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/1211)

http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/herrick/pollardlife.htm

Henry Vizetelly, Christmas With The Poets (London: David Bogue, 1851).


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Editor's Note

Editing of this compilation was nearly complete when I discovered a new website concerning Robert Herrick. The site is called “The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick,” http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk/ (School of English Literature, Newcastle University); it contains the complete text of Herrick’s *Hesperides and Noble Numbers,* and other excellent resources. Their intent is to publish two annotated volumes of Herrick’s poetry: *Hesperides and Noble Numbers,* and a second volume containing Herrick’s other poetry found in manuscript. The intent is to have the volumes published by Oxford University Press, according to their website. No expected date of publication is given. Recommended.

Throughout the text, you will find references such as “Henry Vizetelly notes ...”, etc. To ease the flow of writing, the full citation is found in the Sources, which occurs near the end of this compilation.

I have reproduced each poem as found, including spelling and punctuation. Other errors only are my own, and I am mindful of the advice of William Hone (1823):

"... I am bound to confess the existence of a few errors, not affecting the sense, that were discovered too late for correction, though in sufficient time to enable me to affirm, as a warning to others, that the worst editor of an author’s writings is himself."

In a similar vein, Herrick writes “To the generous Reader” in *Hesperides:*

See, and not see; and if thou chance t'espie
Some Aberrations in my Poetry;
Wink at small faults, the greater, ne'rthelesse
Hide, and with them, their Fathers nakedness.
Let's doe our best, our Watch and Ward to keep
Homer himself, in a long work, may sleep.

Additional poetry, recordings, and a large number of hymns, carols and other songs of the Christmas-tide are also available at my website, *The Hymns and Carols of Christmas,* www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com.

Douglas D. Anderson
Tigard, Oregon, USA
May 14, 2007
Christmas Eve

Come Bring The Noise

On Christmas Eve


Come bring the noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psalteries\(^1\) play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a teending.\(^2\)

Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here,
The while the meat is a shredding
For the rare mince-pie
And the plums standing by,
To fill the paste that's a kneeding.

Husk's Note:

On this eve our ancestor's were wont to lay a log of wood upon the fire, called a Yule-clog, or log, or Christmas block, to illuminate the house. It was a custom to preserve a portion of this block until the next year, with which to light the new block, and the omission to do so was deemed unlucky. The practice still prevails in many parts of the country.

\(^1\) A type of guitar.

\(^2\) Husk gives "Kindling." Bullen gives "burning."
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Also found in A. H. Bullen, *A Christmas Garland*, p. 154, who notes that “When a piece of last year’s Christmas log was preserved, the household reckoned itself secure from the assaults of hobgoblins,” quoting Herrick’s poem that begins “Kindle the Christmas brand ....”

Note from Henry Vizetelly, *Christmas With The Poets*:

[This] poem is descriptive of the ceremony attending the bringing in the Christmas or Yule log, a custom of very ancient date; yet, nevertheless, this is the first occasion that we find allusion to it in the writings of our earlier poets.

Also found in Burton Egbert Stevenson, *ed., The Home Book of Verse, Volume 1* (New York: Henry Holt And Company, 1912); Project Gutenberg Etext #2619.

Artwork on the following two pages:


2. Bringing in the Yule Log, by Henry G. Wells from Bullen:

"Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing.”
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

“Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing.”
Come, Guard This Night  
On Christmas Eve  
Another Ceremony  

Source: William Henry Husk, Songs of the Nativity (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868)

Come, guard this night the Christmas pie,  
That the thief, though ne'er so sly,  
With his flesh-hooks don't come nigh  
To catch it.

From him who all alone sits there,  
Having his eyes still in his ear,  
And a deal of nightly fear,  
To watch it.

Husk’s Note:

The Christmas pie alluded to in these lines was not, as many might suppose, a mince-pie – such as a Christmas pie as Little Jack Horner sat eating in his corner – but a much more elaborate and extensive compound of good things in use amongst our forefathers in olden times. The records of the Worshipful Company of Salters of London contain a receipt written in 1394, in the reign of Richard II [1367-1400], instructing the cooks of that age how “For to make a moost choyce paaste of gamys to be eaten at ye feast of Chrystemasse,” a copy of which, in modern spelling, is here presented for the delectation of the reader.

“For to make a most choice pastry of game to be eaten at the Feast of Christmas.

“Take Pheasant, Hare, and Chicken, or Capon, of each one; with two Partridges, two Pigeons, and two Conies; and smite them in pieces, and pick clean away therefrom all the bones that ye may, and therewith do them into a foyle$^3$ of good paste, made craftily in the likeness of a bird’s body, and with the livers and hearts, two kidneys of sheep, and forces$^4$ and eyren$^5$ made into balls. Cast

3. Crust.
5. Eggs.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

thereto powder of pepper, salt, spice, eyseli⁶ and fungus⁷ pickled; and then take the bones and let them seethe in a pot to make a good broth therefor, and do it into the foyle of paste, and close it up fast and bake it well, and so serve it forth, with the head of one of the birds stuck at one end of the foyle and a great tail at the other, and divers of his long feathers set in cunningly all about him.”

Christmas pies of large dimensions, prepared somewhat in the same way, continue to be made in some parts of Yorkshire, and from their use being principally confined to that country are commonly called “Yorkshire pies.”

This custom of sitting up to preserve the Christmas pie from depredators is not mentioned elsewhere than in these lines.

Another To The Maids

Wash your hands, or else the fire
Will not teend⁸ to your desire;
Unwashed hands, ye maidens know,
Dead the fire, though ye blow.

Editor's Note:

This and the preceding two poems, occur in a group of four in a row under the title “Ceremonies for Christmasse” in Hesperides. The one that follows is “Another” (first line: “Wassaile the Trees, that they may beare”). It appears below on page 31.


6. Vinegar.
7. Mushrooms.
8. Kindle
In numbers, and but these few,
I sing thy birth, oh JESU!
Thou pretty Baby, born here,
With sup’rabundant scorn here;
Who for thy princely port here,
    Hadst for thy place
Of birth, a base
Out-stable for thy court here.

Instead of neat enclosures
Of interwoven osiers;
Instead of fragrant posies
Of daffadils and roses,
Thy cradle, kingly stranger,
    As gospel tells,
    Was nothing else,
But, here, a homely manger.

But we with silks (not cruels;)^9
With sundry precious jewels,
And lily-work will dress thee;
And as we dispossess thee
Of cloths, we’ll make a chamber,
    Sweet babe, for thee,
    Of ivory,
And plaster’d round with amber.

“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

The Jews, they did disdain thee;  
But we will entertain thee  
With glories to await here,  
Upon thy princely state here,  
And more for love than pity:  
    From year to year  
    We’ll make thee, here,  
A free-born of our city.

A Christmas Carol

A Christmas Carol, Sung To The King

In The Presence At Whitehall

Note: This poem occurs in that section of Hesperides titled His Noble Numbers.


Chorus.

What sweeter music can we bring,  
Than a carol, for to sing  
The birth of this our heavenly King?  
Awake the voice! Awake the string!  
Heart, ear, and eye, and everything,  
Awake! the while the active finger  
Runs divisions with the singer.

From the flourish they come to the song.

1. Dark and dull night, fly hence away,  
And give the honour to this day,  
That sees December turn’d to May.

10. Charles I.
2. If we may ask the reason, say
The why and wherefore all things here
Seem like the springtime of the year?

3. Why does the chilling winter's morn
Smile like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like to a mead new-shorn,
Thus on the sudden?

4. Come and see
The cause why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis He is born whose quickening birth
Gives life and lustre public mirth
To heaven and the under-earth.

Chorus. We see Him come, and know Him ours,
Who with His sunshine and His showers
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

1. The Darling of the world is come,
And fit it is we find a room
To welcome Him.

2. The nobler part
Of all the house here, is the heart.

Chorus. Which we will give him; and bequeath
This holly and this ivy wreath,
To do him honour who's our King,
The Lord of all this revelling.

Note:

In Hesperides, Herrick adds the following: The Musicall Part was composed by M. Henry Lawes.

This poem is immediately followed in His Noble Numbers by two New Year's carols: “The New Yeeres Gift, or Circumcisions Song sung to the King in the Presence at White Hall” and “Another New-yeeres Gift, or Song for the Circumcision.” Both poems appear below.
Tell Us, Thou Cleere And Heavenly Tongue

A Caroll To The King.
Sung at Whitehall.

Alternate Title: The Star Song

Note: This poem occurs in that section of Hesperides titled His Noble Numbers.


Tell us, thou cleere and heavenly tongue,
   Where is the Babe but lately sprung?
Lies he the lillie-banks among?

2. Or say, if this new Birth of ours
   Sleeps, laid within some ark of flowers,
   Spangled with deaw-light; thou canst cleere
   All doubts, and manifest the where.

3. Declare to us, bright star, if we shall seek
   Him in the morning's blushing cheek,
   Or search the beds of spices through,
   To find him out?

   Star. No, this ye need not do;
   But only come and see Him rest,
   A princely Babe, in's mother's brest.

   Chor. He's seen! He's seen! why then around
   Let's kisse the sweet and holy ground;
   And all rejoyce that we have found
   A King, before conception, crown'd.

4. Come then, come then, and let us bring
   Unto our prettie twelfth-tide King,
   Each one his severall offering.

   Chor: And when night comes wee'l give him wassailing;
   And that his treble honours may be seen,
   Wee'l chuse him King, and make his mother Queen.
Christmas Poetry By Robert Herrick

Note:

In the text from Sandys, the first and fourth verses contained three lines; the second and third contained four lines.

Sandys' Note: This [is] from Herrick's Poems, 2 vols. Edinb. 1823. Herrick was born in 1591, and the first edition of the "Hesperides" was published in 1648.

Note from Joshua Sylvestre:

This delightful carol is by the author of the preceding [Robert Herrick]. The concluding lines, with their allusion to wassailing, represent very well the spirit of the season in old times, -- a mixture of devotion and thankfulness, with a little worldly, yet harmless, rejoicing.

No news of navies burnt at seas;
No noise of late spawn'd tittyries;
No closet plot or open vent,
That frights men with a Parliament:
No new device or late-found trick,
To read by th' stars the kingdom's sick;
No gin to catch the State, or wring
The free-born nostril of the King,
We send to you; but here a jolly
Verse crown'd with ivy and with holly;
That tells of winter's tales and mirth
That milk-maids make about the hearth;
Of Christmas sports, the wassail-bowl,
That tost up, after fox-i'-th'-hole;\(^\text{11}\)
Of blind-man-buff, and of the care
That young men have to shoe the mare;
Of twelfth-tide cakes, of pease and beans,
Wherewith ye make those merry scenes,
Whenas ye chuse your king and queen,
And cry out, \textit{Hey for our town green}!
Of ash-heaps, in the which ye use
Husbands and wives by streaks to chuse;
Of crackling laurel, which fore-sounds
A plenteous harvest to your grounds;
Of these, and such like things, for shift,
We send instead of New-year's gift.
Read then, and when your faces shine

\(^{11}\) One of several Christmas games mentioned in these few lines.
With buxom\textsuperscript{12} meat and cap’ring wine,  
Remember us in cups full crown’d,  
And let our city-health go round,  
Quite through the young maids and the men,  
To the ninth number, if not ten;  
Until the fired chestnuts leap  
For joy to see the fruits ye reap,  
From the plump chalice and the cup  
That tempts till it be tossed up. –  
Then as ye sit about your embers,  
Call not to mind those fled Decembers;  
But think on these, that are t’ appear,  
As daughters to the instant year;  
Sit crowned with rose-buds, and carouse,  
Till Liber Pater\textsuperscript{13} twirls the house  
About your ears, and lay upon  
The year, your cares, that’s fled and gone:  
And let the russet swains the plough  
And harrow hang up resting now;  
And to the bag-pipe all address,  
Till sleep takes place of weariness.  
And thus throughout, with Christmas plays,  
Frolic the full twelve holidays.

\textbf{Note:}

Concerning the reference to “Of ash-heaps, in the which ye use,” Bullen notes at page 270:

"William Browne (in one of his sonnets to Celia) alludes to this curious mode of divination

“If, forced by our sighs, the flame shall fly  
Of our kind love and get within thy rind,  
Be wary, gentle Bay, and shriek riot high  
When thou dost such unusual fervour find:  
Suppress the fire, for, should it take thy leaves,

\textsuperscript{12} Tender.  
\textsuperscript{13} Father Bacchus."
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Their crackling would betray us and thy glory.”

Works, ed. Hazlitt, ii. 288.

On the topic of Christmas games, Herrick writes, in Hesperides:

**Upon Tuck, Epigr.**

At Post and Paire, or Slam, Tom Tuck would play
This Christmas, but his want wherewith, sayes Nay.

---

The New-yeeres Gift, or Circumcisions Song,
Sung to the King in the Presence at White-Hall.

**Source:** Robert Herrick, *Hesperides and His Noble Numbers, 1648*

**Note:** This poem occurs in that section of *Hesperides* titled *His Noble Numbers.*

P

Prepare for Songs; He’s come, He’s come;
And be it sin here to be dumb,
And not with Lutes to fill the roome.

2. Cast Holy Water all about,
And have a care no fire gos out,
But 'cense the porch, and place throughout.

3. The Altars all on fier be;
The Storax fries; and ye may see,
How heart and hand do all agree,
To make things sweet. Chor. Yet all less sweet then He.

4. Bring Him along, most pious Priest,
And tell us then, when as thou seest
His gently-gliding, Dove-like eyes,
And hear’st His whim’ring, and His cries;
How canst thou this Babe circumcise?
5. Ye must not be more pitifull then wise;
For, now unlesse ye see Him bleed, 
Which makes the Bapti'me; 'tis decreed, 
The Birth is fruitlesse: Chor. Then the work God speed.

1. Touch gently, gently touch; and here 
Spring Tulips up through all the yeere; 
And from His sacred Bloud, here shed, 
May Roses grow, to crown His own deare Head.

Chor. Back, back again; each thing is done 
With zeale alike, as 'twas begun; 
Now singing, homeward let us carrie 
The Babe unto His Mother Marie; 
And when we have the Child commended 
To her warm bosome, then our Rites are ended.

“Composed by M. Henry Lawes”

Note: Herrick was not forgetful of his friends, and would compose the following, found in Hesperides:

To M. Henry Lawes, the excellent 
Composer of his Lyricks.

Touch but thy Lire (my Harrie) and I heare 
From thee some raptures of the rare Gotire. 
Then if thy voice commingle with the String 
I heare in thee rare Laniere to sing; 
Or curious Wilson: Tell me, canst thou be 
Less then Apollo, that ursurpst such Three? 
Three, unto whom the whole world give applause; 
Yet their Three praises, praise but One; that’s Lawes.

This poem, “The New-yeers Gift,” was immediately preceded by “A Christmas Caroll, sung to the King in the Presence at White-Hall” and followed by “Another New-yeers Gift, or Song for the Circumcision.”
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Another New-yeeres Gift, or Song for the Circumcision

Source: Robert Herrick, *Hesperides and His Noble Numbers*, 1648
Note: This poem occurs in that section of *Hesperides* titled His Noble Numbers.

Hence, hence prophane, and none appeare
With any thing unhallowed, here:
No jot of Leven must be found
Conceal’d in this most holy Ground:

2. What is corrupt, or sowr’d with sin,
Leave that without, then enter in;
Chor. But let no Christmas mirth begin
Before ye purge, and circumcise
Your hearts, and hands, lips, eares, and eyes.

3. Then, like a perfum’d Altar, see
That all things sweet, and clean may be:
For, here’s a Babe, that (like a Bride)
Will blush to death, if ought be spi’d
Ill-scenting, or unpurifi’d.

   Chor. The room is cens’d: help, help t’invoke
   Heaven to come down, the while we choke
   The Temple, with a cloud of smoke.

4. Come then, and gently touch the Birth
Of Him, who’s Lord of Heav’n and Earth;

5. And softly handle Him: y’ad need,
Because the prettie Babe do’s bleed.
Poore-pittied Child! Who from Thy Stall
Bring’st, in Thy Blood, a Balm, that shall
Be the best New-yeares Gift to all.

1. Let’s blesse the Babe: And, as we sing
His praise; so let us blesse the King:
Chor. Long may He live, till He hath told
His New-yeeres trebled to His old:
And, when that's done, to re-aspire
A new-borne Phoenix from His own chast fire.

The New-Year's Gift

Note: This poem occurs in that section of *Hesperides* titled *His Noble Numbers*.

Let others look for pearl and gold,
Tissues, or tabbies manifold:
One only lock of that sweet hay
Whereon the blessed baby lay,
Or one poor swaddling-clout, shall be
The richest New-Year's gift to me.

To His Saviour. The New Year's Gift

Note: This poem occurs in that section of *Hesperides* titled *His Noble Numbers*.

That little pretty bleeding part
Of foreskin send to me:
And I'll return a bleeding heart,
For New-Year's gift to Thee.

Rich is the gem that Thou did'st send,
Mine's faulty too and small;
But yet this gift Thou wilt commend
Because I send Thee all.
Now, now the mirth comes,
With the cake full of plums,
Where Bean’s the king of the sport here;
Besides we must know,
The pea also
Must revel, as queen, in the court here.

Begin then to choose,
This night as ye use,
Who shall for the present delight here,
Be a king by the lot,
And who shall not
Be Twelfth-day queen for the night here.

Which known, let us make
Joy-sops with the cake;
and let not a man then be seen here,
Who, unurg’d, will not drink,
To the base from the brink,
A health to the king and queen here.

Next crown the bowl full
With the gentle lamb’s-wool
Add sugar, nutmeg, and ginger,
With store of ale too;
And thus ye must do
To make the wassail a swinger.

14. “Lamb's wool” is a compound of strong beer, roasted apples, sugar and spice.
Give then to the king
And queen wassailing;
And, though with ale ye be wet here,
Yet part ye from hence
As free from offense,
As when ye innocent met here.

Compare: This version from William Sandys (1833): Twelfe Night
http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/twelfe_night.htm

Husk's Note:

The Twelfth Cake was formerly made full of plums, amongst which were placed a bean and a pea. The cake being cut into slices and distributed amongst the company, he to whose lot fell the piece containing the bean was the King, whilst she who obtained the piece holding the pea became the Queen, for the evening. This ceremony was also formerly practised in France, under the name of “La Roi de la Feve.”

Also found in A. H. Bullen, A Christmas Garland (London: John C. Nimmo, 1885), pp. 229-30. Concerning the reference to "Where bean's the king of the sport here," Bullen notes:

"A bean and pea were enclosed in the Twelfth-cake. When the cake was divided, he who got the slice containing the bean was king of the feast, and the girl to whose lot the pea fell was queen. This Twelfth-tide custom existed in France as early as the thirteenth century. See some interesting remarks in the preface to Sandys' Christmas Carols (pp. lxxvi—ix.)."

Concerning the reference to "With gentle lambs-wool," Bullen notes

"Lambs-wool consisted of strong nappy ale, in which roasted crab-apples were pressed. Nares conjectures that the name was derived from the liquor's “smoothness and softness, resembling the wool of lambs.”

William Hone in his The Every Day Book, has this discussion about the derivation of “Lamb's-wool:”

It is mentioned by a writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine," that lamb's-wool is a constant ingredient at a merry-making on Holy Eve, or on the evening before All Saints-day in Ireland. It is made there, he says, by bruising roasted apples, and mixing them with ale, or sometimes with milk. "Formerly, when the superior ranks were not too refined for these periodical meetings of jollity, white wine was frequently substituted for ale. To lamb's-wool, apples and nuts are added as a necessary part of
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

the entertainment; and the young folks amuse themselves with burning nuts in pairs on the bar of the grate, or among the warm embers, to which they give their name and that of their lovers, or those of their friends who are supposed to have such attachments; and from the manner of their burning and duration of the flame, &c. draw such inferences respecting the constancy or strength of their passions, as usually promote mirth and good humour.” Lamb’s-wool is thus etymologized by Vallancey: —"The first day of November was dedicated to the angel presiding over fruits, seeds, &c. and was therefore named La Mas Ubhal, that is, the day of the apple fruit, and being pronounced lamasool, the English have corrupted the name to lamb's-wool.”

The full note is found at:
http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Hone/lambswool.htm

Apples play other roles during the Christmastide. See the discussion of “wassailing the trees,” below.

Concerning the practices of the Epiphany generally, see:

- “January 4 – Prepare for Twelfth Day” - William Hone, The Every Day Book (2 Volumes, 1825 & 1827)
  http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Hone/january_4__prepare_for_twelfth-day.htm
- “January 5 – Eve of Epiphany” - William Hone, The Every Day Book (2 Volumes, 1825 & 1827)
  http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Hone/january_5__eve_of_epiphany.htm
  http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Hone/january_6__epiphany.htm
- “Twelfth Day Ceremonies” - William Sandys, Christmas Carols Ancient And Modern (1833)
  http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Images/Sandys/twelfth_day_ceremonies.htm
  http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Brands/twelfth_day.htm

In the appendix is a poem included solely for the sake of the similarity of its first line to the first line of this poem: “To live merrily, and to trust to Good Verses.”
St. Distaff's Day

Partly Work and Partly Play

Saint Distaff's Day

Or, The Morrow After Twelfth Day

Source: William Henry Husk, Songs of the Nativity (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868)

Partly work and partly play
Ye must, on St. Distaff's day;
From the plough soon free your team,
Then come home and fodder them;
If the maids a spinning go,
Burn the flax and fire the tow.
Bring in pails of water then,
Let the maids bewash the men.
Give St. Distaff all the right,
Then bid Christmas sport good night,
And next morrow every one
To his own vocation

Husk's Note:

It is scarcely necessary to observe that the name of St. Distaff will not be found in the calendar. The name was applied to this day as being that on which, as the first after the Christmas holidays, the women resumed the distaff and recommenced their usual employment. As, after a cessation from work, people are sometimes reluctant either to resume it themselves, or to allow others to do so, so it appears to have been customary on this day for the indolent amongst the men to set fire to the flax and tow of the more industrious of the fair sex, in retaliation for which the damsels brought pails of water and threw over the men.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Candlemas Eve and Day

Down With The Rosemary, And So

Candlemas Eve
[February 1st]

Source: William Henry Husk, Songs of the Nativity (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868)

Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and mistletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye deck's the Christmas hall;
That so the superstitious find
Not one least branch there left behind:
For look! How many leaves there be
Neglected there (Maids, trust to me),
So many goblins you shall see.

Husk's Note:

On this day the Christmas ceremonies, which had lingered on after Twelfth-day, finally closed, and all traces of them were removed. The custom long prevailed, and there must be many still living who can remember the evergreens with which our churches were decorated at Christmas, remaining until Candlemas [February 2nd].

Down With The Rosemary and Bays

Candlemas Eve
[February 1st]

Source: William Henry Husk, Songs of the Nativity (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868)

Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletow;\(^{15}\)

---

15. According to Henry Vizetelly, “this is the first reference to the mistletoe, in its quality of a Christmas evergreen, that we have met with in the writings of our early poets.”
Instead of holly now upraise
   The greener box for show.

The holly hitherto did sway,
   Let box now domineer,
Until the dancing Easter day,
   Or Easter's Eve appear.

Then youthful box which now hath grace
   Your houses to renew,
Grown old, surrender must his place
   Unto the crisped yew.

When yew is out, then birth comes in,
   And many flowers beside,
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,
   To honour Whitsuntide.

Green rushes then, and sweetest bents,
   With cooler oaken boughs,
Come in for comly ornaments,
   To readorn the house.

Thus times do shift; Each thing his turn doth hold;
New things succeed, As former things grow old.

**Husk's Note:**

On this day the Christmas ceremonies, which had lingered on after Twelfth-day, finally closed, and all traces of them were removed. The custom long prevailed, and there must be many still living who can remember the evergreens with which our churches were decorated at Christmas, remaining until Candlemas [February 2nd].

**Editor's Note:**

This poem, and the two that follow, appeared as a group, in this order, in *Hesperides.*
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”


Candlemas Eve

Words by ROBERT HERRICK, 1591-1674. Tune from an old Gallery Book. (Communicated by REV. L. J. T. DARWALL.)

1. Down with the rosemary and bays, Down with the mistletoe; Instead of holly, now upraise The greener box, for show.

2. The holly hither to did stay; Let box now domineer. Until the dancing Easter day, Or Easter’s eve appear.

3. Then youthful box, which now hath grace Your houses to renew, Grown old, surrender must his place Unto the crisped yew.

4. When yew is out, then birch comes And many flowers beside, In, both of a fresh and fragrant kin, To honour Whitsuntide.

5. Green rushes then, and sweetest bents, With cooler oaken boughs, Come in for comedy ornaments, To adorn the house.

6. Thus times do shift; each thing his turn doth hold; New things succeed, as former things grow old.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Kindle The Christmas Brand

Candlemas Day

[February 2]

Source: William Henry Husk, Songs of the Nativity (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868)

K
indle the Christmas brand, and then
Till sunset let it burn;
Which quench’d then lay it up again
Till Christmas next

Part must be kept wherewith to teend¹
The Christmas log next year;
And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischief (there).

Husk's Notes:

The custom noticed in the first of these extracts is here again more particularly mentioned, and a reason for its observance given.

On [Christmas] eve our ancestor's were wont to lay a log of wood upon the fire, called a Yule-clog, or log, or Christmas block, to illuminate the house. It was a custom to preserve a portion of this block until the next year, with which to light the new block, and the omission to do so was deemed unlucky. The practice still prevails in many parts of the country.

Henry Vizetelly notes that: “In Herrick's time it was customary with the country people to prolong the merriment of the Christmas season until Candlemas Day — a circumstance referred to in the following couplet: —

Candlemas Day

End now the white-loaf and the pie,
And let all sports with Christmas die.
Wassail!

Give Way, Give Way, Ye Gates, And Win

The Wassaile


Give way, give way, ye gates, and win
An easie blessing to your bin
And basket, by our entring in.

2. May both with manchet stand repleat,
Your larders, too, so hung with meat,
That thou a thousand, thousand eat.

3. Yet ere twelve moones shall whirl about
Their silv’rie spheres, ther’s none may doubt
But more’s sent in then was serv’d out.

4. Next, may your dairies prosper so,
As that your pans no ebbe may know;
But if they do, the more to flow.

5. Like to a solemne sober stream,
Bankt with all lilies, and the cream
Of sweetest cowslips filling them.

6. Then may your plants be prest with fruit,
Nor bee or hive you have be mute,
But sweetly sounding like a lute.


17. A small loaf of fine wheaten bread. The founder of the Hospital of St. Cross, near Winchester, directed that every stranger calling should receive a manchet of bread and a cup of ale; a custom which is, it is believed, still kept up. [1868]

18. Or: That thereof them and folk may eat.

“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

7. Next, may your duck and teeming hen
   Both to the cocks-tread say, Amen;
   And for their two eggs render ten.

8. Last, may your harrows, shares, and ploughes,
   Your stacks, your stocks, your sweetest mowes,
   All prosper by your virgin-vowes.

9. Alas! we blesse, but see none here
   That brings us either ale or beere;
   In a drie-house all things are neere.

10. Let's leave a longer time to wait,
    Where rust and cobwebs bind the gate;
    And all life here with needy fate;

11. Where chimneys do for ever weepe,
    For want of warmth, and stomachs keepe
    With noise the servants eyes from sleep.

12. It is in vain to sing, or stay
    Our free feet here, but we'll away;
    Yet to the lares this we'll say;

13. The time will come, when you'll be sad,
    And reckon this for fortune bad,
    T'ave lost the good ye might have had.

Sandys' Note:

This [is] from Herrick’s Poems, 2 vols. Edinb. 1823. Herrick was born in 1591, and the first edition of the "Hesperides" was published in 1648.

William Henry Husk notes:

"Was-haile," and "Drink-heil" were the usual phrases of quaffing amongst the Anglo-Saxons, and were equivalent to the modern expressions "Good health," and "I drink to you." The custom of young women going about on New-year's Eve from house to house with a wassail bowl containing a composition of ale, nutmeg, sugar, toast, and roasted crab apples (sometimes called Lambs-wool) prevailed for ages. The bearers presented the bowl to the inmates of the houses where they called, sang some verses, and received in return a small gratuity.
Selden, in his Table-talk, has made this custom the subject of a curious comparison. "The Pope," he says, "in sending relics to Princes, does as wenches do to their Wassels at New Year's tide -- they present you with a cup, and you must drink of a slabby stuff, but the meaning is, you must give them money, ten times more than its is worth."

Prior to the suppression of the monasteries it was the custom for the wassail bowl to be placed on the Abbot's table and circulated amongst the community, under the title of *Poculum Caritatis* -- the Cup of Charity, or Love. This custom is still preserved amongst us, and the very name retained, in the Loving Cup of civic banquets, and the Grace Cup of the universities.

The Wassail song here presented is the production of Robert Herrick, — "the jovial Herrick" as the late Douglas Jerrold aptly named him — and appears to describe the visit of a set of Wassailers to the house of some person who refused them admission.


*Also found in A. H. Bullen, A Christmas Garland* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1885), pp. 17173-5. Bullen notes: "Manchet was fine wheaten bread."

*Also see*

- "Wassailing! - Notes On The Songs And Traditions"

  [http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Hone/january_6__epiphany.htm](http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Hone/january_6__epiphany.htm)
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

The Wassail Bowl


Next I'll cause my hopeful lad,
If a wild apple can be had,
To crown the hearth;
Lar thus conspiring with our mirth;
Then to infuse
Our browner ale into the cruse;
Which, sweetly spiced, we'll first carouse
Unto the Genius of the house.

Then the next health to friends of mine.
Loving the brave Burgundian wine,
High sons of pith,
Whose fortunes I have frolick'd with;
Such as could well
Bear up the magic bough and spell;
And dancing 'bout the mystic Thyrse,
Give up the just applause to verse;

To those, and then again to thee,
We'll drink, my Wickes, until we be
Plump as the cherry,
Though not so fresh, yet full as merry
As the cricket,
The untamed heifer, or the pricket,20
Until our tongues shall tell our ears,
We're younger by a score of years.

________________________
20. The buck in his second year, according to Vizetelly.
Thus, till we see the fire less shine
From th’ embers than the kitling’s eyne,
We’ll still sit up,
Sphering about the wassail cup,
To all those times
Which gave me honour for my rhymes;
The coal once spent, we’ll then to bed,
Far more than night bewearied.

Editor’s Note:

This is an excerpt from the longer poem “His age, dedicated to his peculiar friend, M. John Wickes, under the name of Posthumus” found in Francis Turner Palgrave, ed., “A Selection From The Lyrical Poems Of Robert Herrick” (Dec. 1876). The full poem is found in the Appendix.

Wassailing The Trees

In Bullen, we find this curious rhyme from Herrick concerning the ancient tradition of “Wassailing The Trees:”

Another

Wassail the trees, that they may bear
You many a plum and many a pear:
For more or less fruits they will bring,
As you do give them wassailing.

Henry Vizetelly also takes notes of this verse and custom, writing that this is a practice from Devonshire and other cider countries, and “consisted of throwing the dregs of the Wassail-bowl against the stems of the best bearing fruit trees, on the eve of Twelfth-day.”
Concerning this wassailing custom, Bullen writes at page 266:

This custom was kept up till the end of the last century. Brand relates that in 1790 a Cornish man informed him it was the custom for the Devonshire people on the eve of Twelfth Day to go after supper into the orchard with a large milk-pan full of cyder with roasted apples in it. Each person took what was called a clayen cup, i.e. an earthenware cup full of cyder, and standing under each of the more fruitful trees, sung —

“Health to thee, good apple-tree,
Well to bear, pocket-fulls, hat-fulls,
Peck-fulls, bushel-bag-fulls.”

After drinking part of the contents of the cup, he threw the rest, with the fragments of the roasted apples, at the trees, amid the shouting of the company. Another song sung on such occasions was

“Here’s to thee, old apple-tree,
Whence thou may’st bud, and whence thou may’st blow,
And whence thou may’st bear apples enow
Hats full! caps full!
Bushel-bushel-sacks full,
And my pockets full, too, huzza!”

It is supposed that the custom was a relic of the sacrifice to Pomona. This verse was also found in Henry Vizetelly, who notes:

"The custom of Wassailing the fruit trees on the eve of Twelfth-day has been before alluded to. It seems to have been the practice on the part of the Devonshire farmers, to proceed to their orchards in the evening, accompanied by their farm servants, where they carried with them a large pitcher or milk-pail filled with cyder, with roasted apples hissing therein. They forthwith encircled one of the best bearing trees, and drunk the following toast three times. The remains of the wassailing liquor was then thrown against the trees, under the idea that a fruitful year would be the result."

Vizetelly then quotes the verse above: "Here’s to thee, old apple-tree...."


21. Pomona was the Roman Goddess offruiting trees and orchards.
Christmas Poetry By Robert Herrick


**Editor's Note:**

Also see

- “Apple Howling”
- “Firing At The Apple Trees” (Hazlett's 1905 edition of Brands *Popular Antiquities*).
  [http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Brands/firing_at_the_apple_trees.htm](http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Text/Brands/firing_at_the_apple_trees.htm)
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Other Poems of the Christmastide

A Song to the Maskers

Come down, and dance ye in the toyle
Of pleasures, to a Heate;
But if to moisture, Let the oyle
Of Roses be your sweat.

2. Not only to your selves assume
These sweets, but let them fly;
From this, to that, and so Perfume
E’ne all the standers by.

3 As Goddesse Isis (when she went,
Or glided through the street)
Made all that touch’t her with her scent,
And whom she touch’t, turne sweet.

Note: William Sandys, in his Introduction to Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern (1833) touches frequently on the Masque as a form of entertainment during the Christmastide (http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Images/Sandys/christmas_carols_introduction.htm).

Also see Ben Jonson's “Christmas, His Masque” (http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Poetry/christmas_his_masque.htm)
True Hospitality

Source: Henry Vizetelly, Christmas With The Poets (London: David Bogue, 1851).

Till I shall come again, let this suffice,  
I send my salt, my sacrifice  
To thee, thy lady, younglings, and as far  
As to thy Genius and thy Lar,22  
To the worn threshold, porch, hall, parlour, kitchen,  
The fat-fed smoking temple, which in  
The wholesome savour of thy mighty chines,  
Invites to supper him who dines:  
Where laden spits, warp’d with large ribs of beef,  
Not represent, but give relief  
To the lank stranger and the sour swain,  
Where both may feed and come again;  
For no black-bearded Vigil from thy door  
Beats with a button'd-staff the poor;  
But from thy warm love-hatching gates, each may  
Take friendly morsels, and there stay  
To sun his thin-clad members, if he likes;  
For thou no porter keep'st who strikes.  
No comer to thy roof his guest-rite wants;  
Or, staying there, is scourged with taunts  
Of some rough groom, who, yirk'd with corns, says, 'Sir,  
'You've dipp'd too long i' th' vinegar;  
'And with our broth and bread and bits, Sir friend,  
'You've fared well; pray make an end;  
'Two days you've larded here; a third, ye know,  
'Makes guests and fish smell strong; pray go  
'You to some other chimney, and there take  
'Essay of other giblets; make  
'Merry at another's hearth; you're here  
'Welcome as thunder to our beer;  
'Manners knows distance, and a man unrude  
'Would soon recoil, and not intrude

22. A elfish spirit.
"Now, Now The Mirth Comes"

'His stomach to a second meal.'--No, no,
Thy house, well fed and taught, can show
No such crabb'd vizard: Thou hast learnt thy train
With heart and hand to entertain;
And by the arms-full, with a breast unhid,
As the old race of mankind did,
When either's heart, and either's hand did strive
To be the nearer relative;
Thou dost redeem those times: and what was lost
Of ancient honesty, may boast
It keeps a growth in thee, and so will run
A course in thy fame's pledge, thy son.
Thus, like a Roman Tribune, thou thy gate
Early sets ope to feast, and late;
Keeping no currish waiter to affright,
With blasting eye, the appetite,
Which fain would waste upon thy cates, but that
The trencher creature marketh what
Best and more suppling piece he cuts, and by
Some private pinch tells dangers nigh,
A hand too desp'rate, or a knife that bites
Skin-deep into the pork, or lights
Upon some part of kid, as if mistook,
When checked by the butler's look.
No, no, thy bread, thy wine, thy jocund beer
Is not reserved for Trebius here,
But all who at thy table seated are,
Find equal freedom, equal fare;
And thou, like to that hospitable god,
Jove, joy'st when guests make their abode
To eat thy bullocks thighs, thy veals, thy fat
Wethers, and never grudged at.
The pheasant, partridge, gotwit, reeve, ruff, rail,
The cock, the curlew, and the quail,
These, and thy choicest viands, do extend
Their tastes unto the lower end
Of thy glad table; not a dish more known
To thee, than unto any one:
But as thy meat, so thy immortal wine
   Makes the smirk face of each to shine,
And spring fresh rose-buds, while the salt, the wit,
   Flows from the wine, and graces it;
While Reverence, waiting at the bashful board,
   Honours my lady and my lord.
No scurril jest, no open scene is laid
   Here, for to make the face afraid;
But temp’rate mirth dealt forth, and so discreet-
   Ly, that it makes the meat more sweet,
And adds perfumes unto the wine, which thou
   Dost rather pour forth, than allow
By cruse and measure; thus devoting wine,
   As the Canary isles were thine;
But with that wisdom and that method, as
   No one that’s there his guilty glass
Drinks of distemper, or has cause to cry
   Repentance to his liberty.

Note from Vizetelly:

   Although [this] poem contains no immediate reference to the Christmas season, still, the pictures which it presents of the hospitality of the period, and the character of the entertainment met with at the table of a county gentleman, of the reign of Charles I., render it peculiarly applicable to that particular season of the year, when open-handed liberality, such as it commemorates, is in the ascendant.

Editor’s Note:

   This is an excerpt from a longer poem, *A Panegyric to Sir Lewis Pemberton*; see “A Selection From The Lyrical Poems Of Robert Herrick.” The full poem is reproduced in the Appendix.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

A Hymn To The Lares


I t was, and still my care is,
To worship ye, the Lares,
With crowns of greenest parsley,
And garlic chives not scarcely;
For favours here to warm me.
And not by fire to harm me;
For gladding so my heart here
With inoffensive mirth here;
That while the Wassail bowl here
With north-down ale doth trowl here,
No syllable doth fall here,
To mar the mirth at all here.
For which, O chimney-keepers!
I dare not call ye sweepers,
So long as I am able
To keep a country table,
Great be my fare, or small cheer,
I'll eat and drink up all here.

Note:

In this context, the Lares are a domestic spirit, similar to the English Brownie or the Scandinavian Tomte (Nisse). Lares were originally the deified spirits of Roman family ancestors; it was thought they could still play a part in domestic affairs. They evolved into deities protecting the house and the family — household gods — and were represented by small statues. See: “The Lares,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lares](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lares), accessed November 27, 2006.
The Bell Man

Source: Henry Vizetelly, Christmas With The Poets (London: David Bogue, 1851).

From noise of scare-fires\textsuperscript{23} rest ye free,
From murders Benedicto!
From all mischances that may fright
Your pleasing slumbers in the night:
Mercy secure ye all, and keep
The goblin from ye, while ye sleep.
Past one o'clock, and almost two,
My masters all, "Good day to you."

Notes:

William Henry Husk gives us this portrait of the Bellman:

The functionary known in bygone times as the Bellman was a kind of night watchman, who, in addition to his staff and lantern, carried a bell, and at a certain period of the year was wont to arouse the slumbering inhabitants of the town to listen to some such effusion as that now printed. For this service (?) he looked for some gratuity at Christmas.

Likewise Henry Vizetelly tell us:

In Herrick’s time, the Watchman and Bellman were one and the same. The latter appellation arose, we expect, from its being the practice of these ancient guardians of the night to carry with them a large bell, either for the purpose of summoning assistance when required, or else to enable them the more effectually to disturb the slumbers of those who, snug asleep, cared very little to know how the hours happened to be progressing. Now-a-days the Bellman is quite a Christmas character. The office is generally usurped by the beadle or parish constable, who constitutes himself Bellman for one day in the year, viz., Boxing Day [December 26], in the hope that, by the presentation of some miserable doggerel rhymes to his "worthy masters," the inhabitants of the parish, of which he is so important an officer, he may reap a rich and unmerited reward.

\textsuperscript{23} Alarms of fire.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

In Hesperides, Herrick had one other poem titled "The Bell-man":

   Along the dark, and silent night,
   With my Lantern, and my Light,
   And the tinkling of my Bell,
   Thus I walk, and this I tell:
   Death and dreadfulnesse call on,
   To the gen'rall Session;
   To whose dismall Barre, we there
   All accompts must come to cleere:
   Scores of sins w'ave made here many,
   Wip't out few, (God knowes) if any.
   Rise ye Debters then, and fall
   To make paiment, while I call.
   Ponder this, when I am gone;
   By the clock 'tis almost One.

And there is this final example, titled “Cock-crow:”

   Bell-man of Night, if I about shall go
   For to deny my Master, do thou crow.
   Thou stop'st S. Peter in the midst of sin;
   Stay me, by crowing, ere I do begin;
   Better it is, premonish'd, for to shun
   A sin, then fall to weeping when 'tis done.

And Husk recalled Milton's mention in his "Il Penseroso," of
   "The belman's drowsy charm
   To bless the doors from nightly harm."

Concerning the Bell Man, see the notes concerning the carol “The Moon Shines Bright” (also known as “The Bellman's Song”):

http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Notes_On_Carols/moon_shines_bright_notes.htm
Here Ends

Now, Now The Mirth Comes

Christmas Poetry

by

Robert Herrick
Appendix

Editor’s Note:

The poems in this Appendix are included for a variety of reasons. Some are here because they are the full poems from which excerpts appear above. Others amplify themes mentioned above, such as Herrick’s choice of bachelorhood. And three appear “just because.”

On Bachelorhood

No Spouse but a Sister.

A bachelour I will
Live as I have liv’d still,
And never take a wife
To crucifie my life:
But this I’le tell ye too,
What now I meane to doe;
A Sister (in the stead
Of Wife) about I’le lead;
Which I will keep embrac’d,
And kisse, but yet be chaste.

Single life most secure.

Suspicion, Discontent, and Strife,
Come in for Dowrie with a Wife.

Another.

Love he that will; it best likes me,
To have my neck from Loves yoke-free.
To his Tomb-maker.

Go I must; when I am gone,
Write but this upon my Stone;
Chaste I liv'd, without a wife,
That's the Story of my life.
Strewings need none, every flower
Is in this word, Batchelour.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

The Sons Of Ben:

Upon Ben. Johnson.

Here lies Johnson with the rest
Of the Poets; but the Best.
Reader, wou'dst thou more have known?
Aske his Story, not this Stone.
That will speake what this can't tell
Of his glory. So farewell.

An Ode for him.

Ah Ben!
Say how, or when
Shall we thy Guests
Meet at those Lyrick Feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the triple Tunne?
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each Verse of thine
Out-did the meate, out-did the frolick wine.

My Ben

Or come agen:
Or send to us,
Thy wits great over-plus;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it;
Lest we that Tallent spend:
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock; the store
Of such a wit the world sho'd have no more.
His Prayer to Ben. Johnson.

1. When I a Verse shall make,
   Know I have praid thee,
   For old Religions sake,
   Saint Ben to aide me.

2. Make the way smooth for me,
   When I, thy Herrick,
   Honouring thee, on my knee
   Offer my Lyrick.

3. Candles Ile give to thee,
   And a new Altar;
   And thou Saint Ben, shalt be
   Writ in my Psalter.
"Now, Now The Mirth Comes"

To the reverend shade of his religious Father.

That for seven Lusters I did never come
To doe the Rites to thy Religious Tombe:
That neither haire was cut, or true teares shed
By me, o’r thee, (as justments to the dead)
Forgive, forgive me; since I did not know
Whether thy bones had here their Rest, or no.
But now 'tis known, Behold; behold, I bring
Unto thy Ghost, th’Effused Offering:
And look, what Smallage, Night-shade, Cypresse, Yew,
Unto the shades have been, or now are due,
Here I devote; And something more then so;
I come to pay a Debt of Birth I owe.
Thou gav’st me life, (but Mortall;) For that one
Favour, Ile make full satisfaction;
For my life mortall, Rise from out thy Herse,
And take a life immortall from my Verse.

Note: This is a poem Herrick wrote to the father he never knew (his father died when he was an infant).
Concerning His Life In Devon and On His Expulsion

Discontents in Devon.

More discontents I never had
Since I was born, then here;
Where I have been, and still am sad,
In this dull Devon-shire:
Yet justly too I must confess;
I ne’r invented such
Ennobled numbers for the Press,
Then where I loath’d so much.

His content in the Country.

Here, here I live with what my Board,
Can with the smallest cost afford.
Though ne’r so mean the Viands be,
They well content my Prew and me.
Or Pea, or Bean, or Wort, or Beet,
What ever comes, content makes sweet:
Here we rejoyce, because no Rent
We pay for our poore Tenement:
Wherein we rest, and never feare
The Landlord, or the Usurer.
The Quarter-day do’s ne’r affright
Our Peacefull slumbers in the night.
We eate our own, and batten more,
Because we feed on no mans score:
But pitie those, whose flanks grow great,
Swel’d with the Lard of others meat.
We blesse our Fortunes, when we see
Our own beloved privacie:
And like our living, where w’are known
To very few, or else to none.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Dean-bourn, a rude River in Devon, by which sometimes he lived.

Dean-bourn, farewell; I never look to see
Deane, or thy warty incivility.
Thy rockie bottome, that doth teare thy streams
And makes them frantick, ev’n to all extreames;
To my content, I never sho’d behold,
Were thy streames silver, or thy rocks all gold.
Rockie thou art; and rockie we discover
Thy men; and rockie are thy wayes all over.
O men, O manners; Now, and ever knowne
To be A Rockie Generation!
A people currish; churlish as the seas;
And rude (almost) as rudest Salvages.
With whom I did, and may re-sojourne when
Rockes turn to Rivers, Rivers turn to Men.

Note: “Rockes turn[ed] to Rivers” in 1662 when Herrick was restored to his position in Dean Prior.

Upon the troublesome times.

1. O! Times most bad,
Without the scope
Of hope
Of better to be had!

2. Where shall I goe,
Or whither run
To shun
This publique overthrow?
3. No places are
(This I am sure)
Secure
In this our wasting Warre.

4. Some storms w'ave past;
Yet we must all
Down fall,
And perish at the last.

His returne to London.

From the dull confines of the drooping West,
To see the day spring from the pregnant East,
Ravisht in spirit, I come, nay more, I flie
To thee, blest place of my Nativitie!
Thus, thus with hallowed foot I touch the ground,
With thousand blessings by thy Fortune crown'd.
O fruitfull Genius! that bestowest here
An everlasting plenty, yeere by yeere.
O Place! O People! Manners! fram'd to please
All Nations, Customes, Kindreds, Languages!
I am a free-born Roman; suffer then,
That I amongst you live a Citizen.
London my home is: though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment;
Yet since cal'd back; henceforward let me be,
O native countrey, repossest by thee!
For, rather then I'le to the West return,
I'le beg of thee first here to have mine Urn.
Weak I am grown, and must in short time fall;
Give thou my sacred Reliques Buriall.
"Now, Now The Mirth Comes"

His Legacy

Lyrick for Legacies.

Gold I've none, for use or show,  
Neither Silver to bestow  
At my death; but thus much know,  
That each Lyrick here shall be  
Of my love a Legacie,  
Left to all posterity.  
Gentle friends, then doe but please,  
To accept such coynes as these;  
As my last Remembrances.

Upon his Verses.

What off-spring other men have got,  
The how, where, when, I question not.  
These are the Children I have left;  
 Adopted some; none got by theft.  
But all are toucht (like lawfull plate)  
And no Verse illegitimate.

Poetry perpetuates the Poet.

Here I my selfe might likewise die,  
And utterly forgotten lye,  
But that eternall Poetrie  
Repullulation gives me here  
Unto the thirtieth thousand yeere,  
When all now dead shall re-appeare.
Duty to Tyrants.

Good princes must be pray’d for: for the bad
They must be borne with, and in rev’rence had.
Doe they first pill thee, next, pluck off thy skin?
Good children kisse the rods, that punish sin.
Touch not the Tyrant; Let the Gods alone
To strike him dead, that but usurps a Throne.

TO THE KING,
To cure the Evill.

To find that Tree of Life, whose Fruits did feed,
And Leaves did heale, all sick of humane seed:
To finde Bethesda, and an Angel there,
Stirring the waters, I am come; and here,
At last, I find, (after my much to doe)
The Tree, Bethesda, and the Angel too:
And all in Your Blest Hand, which has the powers
Of all those suppling-healing herbs and flowers.
To that soft Charm, that Spell, that Magick Bough,
That high Enchantment I betake me now:
And to that Hand, (the Branch of Heavens faire Tree)
I kneele for help; O! lay that hand on me,
Adored Cesar! and my Faith is such,
I shall be heal’d, if that my King but touch.
The Evill is not Yours: my sorrow sings,
Mine is the Evill, but the Cure, the Kings.

Note: The “cure” would come in 1662 with the Restoration of the monarchy. Herrick wrote several other poems that relate to this conflict.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Upon the Bishop of Lincolne's Imprisonment.

Never was Day so over-sick with showres,
But that it had some intermitting houres.
Never was Night so tedious, but it knew
The Last Watch out, and saw the Dawning too.
Never was Dungeon so obscurely deep,
Wherein or Light, or Day, did never peep.
Never did Moone so ebbe, or seas so wane,
But they left Hope-seed to fill up againe.
So you, my Lord, though you have now your stay,
Your Night, your Prison, and your Ebbe; you may
Spring up afresh; when all these mists are spent,
And Star-like, once more, guild or Firmament.
Let but That Mighty Cesar speak, and then,
All bolts, all barres, all gates shall cleave; as when
That Earth-quake shook the house, and gave the stout
Apostles, way (unshackled) to goe out.
This, as I wish for, so I hope to see;
Though you (my Lord) have been unkind to me:
To wound my heart, and never to apply,
(When you had power) the meanest remedy:
Well; though my griefe by you was gall'd, the more;
Yet I bring Balme and Oile to heal your sore.

Note: The Bishop’s name was not given by Herrick, but was possibly John Williams (1582–1650) a Royalist clergyman and political advisor to King James I and later King Charles I. He served as Keeper of the Great Seal (also known as Lord Keeper or Lord Chancellor) 1621-1625, Bishop of Lincoln 1621-1641, and Archbishop of York 1641-1650. He was twice imprisoned, the second time by Parliament in 1641.
To the Virgins, to make much of Time.

Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a flying:
And this same flower that smiles to day,
To morrow will be dying.

2. The glorious Lamp of Heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a getting;
The sooner will his Race be run,
And neerer he's to Setting.

3. That Age is best, which is the first,
When Youth and Blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

4. Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, goe marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

Note: A portion of this poem is cited in the text above.

No Paines, no Gaines.

If little labour, little are our gaines:
Mans fortunes are according to his paines.

Note: Until I read Hesperides, I had not known the origin of this often-quoted title or the full text. I include the couplet to clarify Herrick’s intent, since it is usually misused.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

A Thanksgiving to God, for his House.

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell
A little house, whose humble Roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the sparres of which I lie
Both soft, and drie;
Where Thou my chamber for to ward
Hast set a Guard
Of harmlesse thoughts, to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my Fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my doore
Is worn by’th poore,
Who thither come, and freely get
Good words, or meat:
Like as my Parlour, so my Hall
And Kitchin’s small:
A little Butterie, and therein
A little Byn,
Which keeps my little loafe of Bread
Unchipt, unbleed:
Some brittle sticks of Thorne or Briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coale I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confesse too, when I dine,
The Pulse is Thine,
And all those other Bits, that bee
There plac’d by Thee;
The Worts, the Purslain, and the Messe
Of Water-cresse,
Which of Thy kindnesse Thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved Beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering Hearth
With guiltlesse mirth;
And giv'st me Wassaile Bowles to drink,
Spic'd to the brink.
Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand,
That soiles my land;
And giv'st me, for my Bushell sowne,
'Twice ten for one:
Thou mak'st my teeming Hen to lay
Her egg each day:
Besides my healthfull Ewes to beare
Me twins each yeare:
The while the conduits of my Kine
Run Creame, (for Wine.)
All these, and better Thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankfull heart;
Which, fir'd with incense, I resigne,
As wholly Thine;
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

Note: A portion of this poem is cited in the text above.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

His age, dedicated to his peculiar friend, M. John Wickes, under the name of Posthumus.

Ah Posthumus! Our yeares hence flye,
And leave no sound; nor piety,
Or prayers, or vow
Can keepe the wrinkle from the brow:
But we must on,
As Fate do's lead or draw us; none,
None, Posthumus, co'd ere decline
The doome of cruell Proserpine.

2. The pleasing wife, the house, the ground
Must all be left, no one plant found
To follow thee,
Save only the Curst-Cipresse tree:
A merry mind
Looks forward, scornes what's left behind:
Let's live, my Wickes, then, while we may,
And here enjoy our Holiday.

3. W've seen the past-best Times, and these
Will nere return, we see the Seas,
And Moons to wain;
But they fill up their Ebbs again:
But vanisht man,
Like to a Lilly-lost, nere can,
Nere can repullulate, or bring
His dayes to see a second Spring.
4. But on we must, and thither tend,  
Where Anchus and rich Tullus blend  
Their sacred seed:  
Thus has Infernall Jove decreed;  
We must be made,  
Ere long, a song, ere long, a shade.  
Why then, since life to us is short,  
Lets make it full up, by our sport.

5. Crown we our Heads with Roses then,  
And 'noint with Tirian Balme; for when  
We two are dead,  
The world with us is buried.  
Then live we free,  
As is the Air, and let us be  
Our own fair wind, and mark each one  
Day with the white and Luckie stone.

6. We are not poore; although we have  
No roofs of Cedar, nor our brave  
Baiae, nor keep  
Account of such a flock of sheep;  
Nor Bullocks fed  
To lard the shambles: Barbels bred  
To kisse our hands, nor do we wish  
For Pollio's Lampries in our dish.

7. If we can meet, and so conferre,  
Both by a shining Salt-seller;  
And have our Roofe,  
Although not archt, yet weather prooe,  
And seeling free,  
From that cheape Candle baudery:  
We're eate our Beane with that full mirth,  
As we were Lords of all the earth.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

8. Well then, on what Seas we are tost,
   Our comfort is, we can’t be lost.
   Let the winds drive
   Our Barke; yet she will keepe alive
   Amidst the deepes;
   ’Tis constancy (my Wickes) which keepes
   The Pinnace up; which though she erres
   I’th' Seas, she saves her passengers.

9. Say, we must part (sweet mercy blesse
   Us both i’th Sea, Camp, Wildernesse)
   Can we so farre
   Stray, to become lesse circular,
   Then we are now?
   No, no, that selfe same heart, that vow,
   Which made us one, shall ne’r undoe;
   Or ravell so, to make us two.

10. Live in thy peace; as for my selfe,
    When I am bruised on the Shelfe
    Of Time, and show
    My locks behung with frost and snow:
    When with the reume,
    The cough, the ptisick, I consume
    Unto an almost nothing; then,
    The Ages fled, Ile call agen:

11. And with a teare compare these last
    Lame, and bad times, with those are past,
    While Baucis by,
    My old leane wife, shall kisse it dry:
    And so we’l sit
    By’th’fire, foretelling snow and slit,
    And weather by our aches, grown
    Now old enough to be our own
12. True Calenders, as Pusses eare  
   Washt o're, to tell what change is neare  
   Then to asswage  
   The gripings of the chine by age;  
   I'le call my young  
   Iülus to sing such a song  
   I made upon my Julia's brest;  
   And of her blush at such a feast.

13. Then shall he read that flowre of mine  
    Enclos'd within a christall shrine:  
    A Primrose next;  
    A piece, then of a higher text:  
    For to beget  
    In me a more transcendant heate,  
    Then that insinuating fire,  
    Which crept into each aged Sire.

14. When the faire Hellen, from her eyes,  
    Shot forth her loving Sorceries:  
    At which I'le reare  
    Mine aged limbs above my chaire:  
    And hearing it,  
    Flutter and crow, as in a fit  
    Of fresh concupiscence, and cry,  
    No lust theres like to Poetry.

15. Thus frantick crazie man (God wot)  
    Ile call to mind things half forgot:  
    And oft between,  
    Repeat the Times that I have seen!  
    Thus ripe with tears,  
    And twisting my Iülus hairs;  
    Doting, Ile weep and say (In Truth)  
    Baucis, these were my sins of youth.
```
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

16. Then next Ile cause my hopefull Lad
(If a wild Apple can be had)
To crown the Hearth,
(Larr thus conspiring with our mirth)
Then to infuse
Our browner Ale into the cruse:
Which sweetly spic't, we'l first carouse
Unto the Genius of the house.

17. Then the next health to friends of mine
(Loving the brave Burgundian wine)
High sons of Pith,
Whose fortunes I have frolickt with:
Such as co'd well
Bear up the Magick bough, and spel:
And dancing 'bout the Mystick Thyrse,
Give up the just applause to verse:

18. To those, and then agen to thee
We'l drink, my Wickes, untill we be
Plump as the cherry,
Though not so fresh, yet full as merry
As the crickit;
The untam'd Heifer, or the Pricket,
Untill our tongues shall tell our ears,
W'are younger by a score of years.

19. Thus, till we see the fire lesse shine
From th'embers, then the kitlings eyne,
We'l still sit up,
Sphering about the wassail cup,
To all those times,
Which gave me honour for my Rhimes,
The cole once spent, we'l then to bed,
Farre more then night bewearied.

Note: A portion of this poem is cited in the text above.
```
A Panegerrick to Sir Lewis Pemberton.

Till I shall come again, let this suffice,
I send my salt, my sacrifice
To Thee, thy Lady, younglings, and as farre
As to thy Genius and thy Larre;
To the worn Threshold, Porch, Hall, Parlour, Kitchin,
The fat-fed smoking Temple, which in
The wholesome savour of thy mighty Chines
Invites to supper him who dines,
Where laden spits, warp't with large Ribbs of Beefe,
Not represent, but give reliefe
To the lanke-Stranger, and the sowre Swain;
Where both may feed, and come againe:
For no black-bearded Vigil from thy doore
Beats with a button'd-staffe the poore:
But from thy warm-love-hatching gates each may
Take friendly morsels, and there stay
To Sun his thin-clad members, if he likes,
For thou no Porter keep'st who strikes.
No commer to thy Roofe his Guest-rite wants;
Or staying there, is scourg'd with taunts
Of some rough Groom, who (yirkt with Corns) sayes, Sir
Y'ave dipt too long i'th' Vinegar;
And with our Broth and bread, and bits; Sir, friend,
Y'ave farced well, pray make an end;
Two dayes y'ave larded here; a third, yee know,
Makes guests and fish smell strong; pray go
You to some other chimney, and there take
Essay of other giblets; make
Merry at anothers hearth; y'are here
Welcome as thunder to our beere:
Manners knowes distance, and a man unrude
Wo'd soon recoile, and not intrude
His Stomach to a second Meale. No, no,
Thy house, well fed and taught, can show
No such crab'd vizard: Thou hast learnt thy Train,
With heart and hand to entertain:
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

And by the Armes-full (with a Brest unhid)
As the old Race of mankind did,
When eithers heart, and eithers hand did strive
To be the nearer Relative:
Thou do'st redeeme those times; and what was lost
Of antient honesty, may boast
It keeps a growth in thee; and so will runne
A course in thy Fames-pledge, thy Sonne.
Thus, like a Roman Tribune, thou thy gate
Early setts ope to feast, and late:
Keeping no currish Waiter to affright,
With blasting eye, the appetite,
Which fain would waste upon thy Cates, but that
The Trencher-creature marketh what
Best and more suppling piece he cuts, and by
Some private pinch tels danger's nie
A hand too desp'rate, or a knife that bites
Skin deepe into the Porke, or lights
Upon some part of Kid, as if mistooke,
When checked by the Butlers look.
No, no, thy bread, thy wine, thy jocund Beere
Is not reserv'd for Trebius here,
But all, who at thy table seated are,
Find equall freedome, equall fare;
And Thou, like to that Hospitable God,
Jove, joy'st when guests make their abode
To eate thy Bullocks thighs, thy Veales, thy fat
Weathers, and never grudged at.
The Phesant, Partridge, Gotwit, Reeve, Ruffe, Raile,
The Cock, the Curlew, and the quaile;
These, and thy choicest viands do extend
Their taste unto the lower end
Of thy glad table: not a dish more known
To thee, then unto any one:
But as thy meate, so thy immortall wine
Makes the smirk face of each to shine,
And spring fresh Rose-buds, while the salt, the wit
Flowes from the Wine, and graces it:
While Reverence, waiting at the bashfull board,
Honours my Lady and my Lord.
No scurrile jest; no open Scane is laid
Here, for to make the face affraid;
But temp'rate mirth dealt forth, and so discreet-
ly that it makes the meate more sweet;
And adds perfumes unto the Wine, which thou
Do'st rather poure forth, then allow
By cruse and measure; thus devoting Wine,
As the Canary Isles were thine:
But with that wisdome, and that method, as
No One that's there his guilty glasse
Drinks of distemper, or ha's cause to cry
Repentance to his liberty.
No, thou know'st order, Ethicks, and ha's read
All Oeconomicks, know'st to lead
A House-dance neatly, and can'st truly show,
How farre a Figure ought to go,
Forward, or backward, side-ward, and what pace
Can give, and what retract a grace;
What Gesture, Courtship; Comliness agrees,
With those thy primitive decrees,
To give subsistance to thy house, and proofe,
What Genii support thy roofe,
Goodnes and Greatnes; not the oaken Piles;
For these, and marbles have their whiles
To last, but not their ever: Vertues Hand
It is, which builds, 'gainst Fate to stand.
Such is thy house, whose firme foundations trust
Is more in thee, then in her dust,
Or depth, these last may yeeld, and yearly shrinke,
When what is strongly built, no chinke
Or yawning rupture can the same devour.
But fixt it stands, by her own power,
And well-laid bottome, on the iron and rock,
Which tryes, and counter-stands the shock,
And Ramme of time and by vexation growes
The stronger: Vertue dies when foes
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Are wanting to her exercise, but great
And large she spreads by dust, and sweat
Safe stand thy Walls, and Thee, and so both will,
Since neithers height was rais’d by th’ill
Of others; since no Stud, no Stone, no Piece,
Was rear’d up by the Poore-mans fleece:
No Widowes Tenement was rackt to guild
Or fret thy Seeling, or to build
A Sweating-Closset, to annoint the silke-
soft-skin, or bath in Asses milke:
No Orphans pittance, left him, serv’d to set
The Pillars up of lasting Jet,
For which their cryes might beate against thine eares,
Or in the dampe Jet read their Teares.
No Planke from Hallowed Altar, do’s appeale
To yond’ Star-chamber, or do’s seale
A curse to Thee, or Thine; but all things even
Make for thy peace, and pace to heaven.
Go on directly so, as just men may
A thousand times, more sweare, then say,
This is that Princely Pemberton, who can
Teach man to keepe a God in man:
And when wise Poets shall search out to see
Good men, They find them all in Thee.

Note: A portion of this poem is cited in the text above.
To live merrily, and to trust to Good Verses.

Now is the time for mirth,
Nor cheek, or tongue be dumbe:
For with the flowrie earth,
The golden pomp is come.

The golden Pomp is come;
For now each tree do's weare
(Made of her Pap and Gum)
Rich beads of Amber here.

Now raignes the Rose, and now
Th'Arabian Dew besmears
My uncontrolled brow,
And my retorted haires.

Homer, this Health to thee,
In Sack of such a kind,
That it wo'd make thee see,
Though thou wert ne'r so blind.

Next, Virgil, Ile call forth,
To pledge this second Health
In Wine, whose each cup's worth
An Indian Common-wealth.

A Goblet next Ile drink
To Ovid; and suppose,
Made he the pledge, he'd think
The world had all one Nose.

Then this immensive cup
Of Aromatike wine,
Catullus, I quaffe up
To that Terce Muse of thine.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Wild I am now with heat;  
O Bacchus! coole thy Raies!  
Or frantick I shall eate  
Thy Thyrse, and bite the Bayes.

Round, round, the roof do’s run;  
And being ravisht thus,  
Come, I will drink a Tun  
To my Propertius.

Now, to Tibullus, next,  
This flood I drink to thee:  
But stay; I see a Text,  
That this presents to me.

Behold, Tibullus lies  
Here burnt, whose smal return  
Of ashes, scarce suffice  
To fill a little Urne.

Trust to good Verses then;  
They onely will aspire,  
When Pyramids, as men,  
Are lost, i’th’funerall fire.

And when all Bodies meet  
In Lethe to be drown’d;  
Then onely Numbers sweet,  
With endless life are crown’d.

Note: This poem is included due to its similarity to the poem that begins: “Now, Now The Mirth Comes.”
The Two Following
are included for the sole reason of the reflection I see in my mirror each morning:

To a Gentlewoman objecting to him his gray haires.

Am I despis'd, because you say,
And I dare sweare, that I am gray?
Know, Lady, you have but your day:
And time will come when you shall weare
Such frost and snow upon your haire:
And when (though long it comes to passe)
You question with your Looking-glasse;
And in that sincere Christall seek,
But find no Rose-bud in your cheek:
Nor any bed to give the shew
Where such a rare Carnation grew.
Ah! then too late, close in your chamber keeping,
It will be told
That you are old;
By those true teares y’are weeping.

Upon his gray haires.

Fly me not, though I be gray,
Lady, this I know you’l say;
Better look the Roses red,
When with white commingled.
Black your haires are; mine are white;
This begets the more delight,
When things meet most opposite:
As in Pictures we descry,
Venus standing Vulcan by.
“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

Sources


Robert Herrick, *Hesperides and His Noble Numbers,* [http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk/Hesperides%20and%20His%20Noble%20Numbers.txt](http://herrick.ncl.ac.uk/Hesperides%20and%20His%20Noble%20Numbers.txt), 1648


*The Works of Robert Herrick* by Anniina Jokinen. This site also has a short biography of Herrick. ([http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/herrick/herribib.htm](http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/herrick/herribib.htm))


### “Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

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“Now, Now The Mirth Comes”

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