

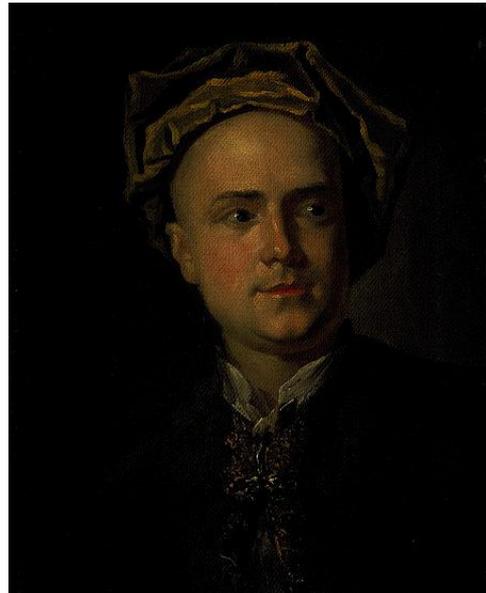
Butterfly and Snail.

All upstarts, insolent in place,
Remind us of their vulgar race.

A butterfly, but born one morning,
Sat on a rose, the rosebud scorning.
His wings of azure, jet, and gold,
Were truly glorious to behold;
He spread his wings, he sipped the dew,
When an old neighbour hove in view—
The snail, who left a slimy trace
Upon the lawn, his native place.

"Adam," he to the gard'ner cried,
"Behold this fellow by my side;
What is the use with daily toil
To war with weeds, to clear the soil,
And with keen intermittent labour
To graft and prune for fruit with flavour
The peach and plum, if such as he,
Voracious vermin, may make free?
Give them the roller or the rake,
And crush as you would crush a snake."

The snail replied: "Your arrogance
Awakes my patience from its trance;
Recalls to mind your humble birth,
Born from the lowliest thing on earth.
Nine times has Phoebus, with the hours,
Awakened to new life, new flowers,
Since you were a vile crawling thing!
Though now endowed with painted wing,
You then were vilest of the vile—
I was a snail, but housed the while;
Was born a snail, and snail shall die;
And thou, though now a butterfly,
Will leave behind a baneful breed
Of caterpillar sons—thy seed."



John Gay - 1685 - 1732

The Owls and Sparrow.

Two pompous owls together sat
In the solemnity of chat:

"Respect to wisdom, all is fled;
The Grecian sages all are dead.
They gave our fathers honour due;
The dignity of owls they knew.
Upon our merit they conferred
The title of 'The Athenian bird.'"

"Brother, they did; you reason right,"
Answered his chum with winking sight.
"For Athens was the seat of learning.
Academicians were discerning.
They placed us on Minerva's helm,
And strove with rank to overwhelm
Our worth, which now is quite neglected,—
Ay, a cock-sparrow's more respected."

A sparrow who was passing by,
And heard the speech, made this reply:
"Old chaps, you were at Athens graced,
And on Minerva's helm were placed,
And we all know the reason why.
Of all the birds beneath the sky,
They chose you forth the lot to show
What they desired their schools to know,
The emptiness of solemn looks.
You teach it better than the books.
Would you be thought of wit and worth,
And be respected upon earth,
Humble your arrogance of mind,
Go to the farmers, and there find
A welcome—foe to mice and rats.
And live the rivals of the cats."