

From a local newspaper printed just before the Revel
(no ref.) - taken from Mrs. J. Higman's Album, RLM

ODE TO ENDEAVOUR

[The editor is not responsible for any Anachronisms]

Burlesia! Butlesia! (1)
House of the youthful Muse, (2)
To think that minds historical
Thy legends could abuse!
●
Butlesia! Butlesia!
Thy meadows fair I see
Covered with Benedictine Monks (3)
Employed in drinking tea!
●
St. Dunstan and St. Joseph
Are standing in the van,
Conversing with Benignus-
A most superior man
●
What matter, when the Muse is fair,
If history be unkind;
Such little things cannot upset
an educated mind.
●
Methinks I see the proud array
Of Pageantry and Arms.
(Who can resist the blandishments
Of Woad seductive charms?) (4)
●
The lists are full
Each gallant knight,
In shining armour girt,
(O tell me, gentle reader,
Did the Briton wear a shirt?).
●
A herald sounds a trumpet,
Reads a challenge in blank verse,
Then thunder on the Celtic plain
Fitz-Hubert and Fitz-Urse. (5)
●
Their impact makes the welkin ring,
Their gallant steeds recoil
And now with battle-axe they strive
Each other's blows to foil.
●
"Far Splendor Dex!" King Arthur cries (6),
'Vae Vietis! screams the crowd, (7)
As backwards o'er his saddle flies
Fitz-Urse the Over-proud.
●
But now Sir Lancelot takes the field. (8)
A breathless silence reigns.
Who is the Strager Knight who e'en
Du Lake quite worthy deigns.
●
Dark is his coal-black armour,
His gallant steed is white

A single 'Plume of Feathers'
Waves in the mid-day light.
●
Neither by shield or token
Can men tell who you are?
"O yentre sans gris," the Knight replies;
"I'm Henry of Navarre" (9)
●
The Battle fiercely rages,
The Lists are stained with blood,
Both knights collapse together
With a far resounding thud.
●
"By the great Gods jujitsu, (10)
O grant a stomach throw." (11)
Then like a bullet from the sling (12)
Du Lake doth hurtling go.
●
"O Arnidieu!" King Arthur cries
(;Twas Valois' favourite oath); (13)
I'm sure Sir Gorfell Barnes (14)
To miss such prowess would be loath.
●
But now the combat's over.
Queen Gwenny dries her eyes, (15)
To meet a Bourbon at the Court!
Of Arthur's a surprise! (16)
●
"O! Honi soit qui mal y pense!" (17)
King Henry doth exclaim,
As Lancelot consolation seeks
With little Miss Elaine (18)
●
The Tourney's gone. The distant moor
Presents another scene
St. Patrick
A-wearing of the green (19)
●
But gentle reader, pause awhile -
Of Patricks there were two-
Now, did the real St. Patrick
Come to Avalon, think you?
●
Benignus was an Irish monk, (20)
Who died in Tipperary-
Thus far we are historical;
The rest is legendary.
●
They brought a bone of St. Benen-
The tibia for preference-
And laid it in the Abbey here,
With ritual and with reverence.
●
St. Dunstan is another whom (21)
Your poets much delight in;
He looks a trifle awkward
In the cope of Richard Whyting.
●

But, ladies fair, what matters
 If the Revel gives you pleasure, (22)
 Whether with Lady Guenevere
 St. Dunstan treads a measure?
 ●
 Whether King Arthur, who we know
 Is nothing but Apollo,
 A Brit-Welsh chieftain, can with ease
 Anachronisms swallow? (23)
 ●
 Whether King Henry of Navarre,
 A character in Dumas,
 Can with the science of Japan,
 Make Lancelot feel a stumor. (24)
 ●
 But lest we over-capricious seem, (25)
 In this we make a stand,
 To praise those who the White Rose wear,
 "Thy subjects to Command"
 TRISTRAM

Notes

- (1) Butlesia. Butleigh, a small village
- (2) Possibly means a local writer
- (3) Did not perform in the 6th century C.f. Fecamp
- (4) Woad a sort of purple chiffon, most effective for dress lengths
- (5) The names sound Norman. But what matter?
- (6) The remark would sound equally well from the lips of Saladin, William Rufus, or John Strange Winter
- (7) Vac Victis: a popular saying among the Roman youth: "Good-bye, little yellow bird".
- (8) Sir Lancelot du Lake, a portly middle-aged respectable ruffian; would have figured in the "People" had it been published.
- (9) Henry of Navarre, a character in fiction, C.f. Stanley Weyman
- (10) Jujutsu and Kenjitsu, two twin Bretheren. " But by the proud Eurotas Is our dear native home".
- (11) Painful in the extreme. Ch. 5, sec. 432. [Ed.]
- (12) This is a metaphor
- (13) Henry of Valois. Third Henry and last Valois sometime King of Poland.
- (14) The Di--, I mean Brighton Hotel Agency Court.
- (15) C.f. Tennyson
- (16) C.f. Mark Twain.
- (17) You see, French came easy to him.
- (18) A sort of "Country Girl" and "Lady Madcap" combined. All for Lancelot.
- (19) A celebrated naturalist
- (20) St. Benin a disciple of St. Patrick. Wm od Malmesbury makes Patrick come to Glastonbury. Legend of course suggests: Why should not Benen come too, and be made an Abbot? Nothing easier
- (21) St. Dunstan: for further information C.f. Ingolsby Legends. But who will be "Nick, in the guise of a damsel passing fair".
- (22) Please accept this, the only intimation.
- (23) We have no intention of apologising for the rhymes.
- (24) Stumor: It is rather hard to define this word.
- (25) The footnotes are most important, since the allusions are so fearfully obscure.

The last line of the poem refers to the quotation from Shakespeare's Henry VI - 'the Neville's are thy subjects to command'. This motto is engraved above the fireplace in the entrance hall to Butleigh Court.

Another motto used by the Squire was "Ne vile Velis" - a pun on the name Neville - and it appeared on the ceiling of the Dining room - it means "nothing distasteful or vulgar" - the personal motto of Thomas Neville (1544-1614) Master of Trinity College, Cambridge and Dean of Canterbury Cathedral.