

Rhythms Against
Martin Marprelate

*Ordo sacerdotum fatuo turbatur ab omni,
Labitur & passim religionis bonos.*

Since reason (Martin) cannot stay thy pen,
We'll see what rime will do; have at thee, then.

A dizzard late skipped out upon our stage,
But in a sack, that no man might him see,
And though we know not yet the paltry page,
Himself hath Martin made his name to be;
A proper name, and for his feats most fit;
The only thing wherein he hath showed wit.

Who knoweth not that apes, men martins call,
Which beast this baggage seems, as 'twere himself,
So as both nature, nurture, name and all,
Of that's expressed in this apish elf,
Which I'll make good to Martin Mar-all's face,
In three plain points, and will not bate an ace.

For first, the ape delights with mops and mows,
And mocketh prince and peasants all alike;
This jesting jack that no good manner knows,
With his ass heels presumes all states to strike,
Whose scoffs so stinking in each nose doth smell,
As all mouths say of dolts he bears the bell.

Sometimes his chaps do walk in points too high,
Wherein the ape himself a woodcock tries,
Sometimes with flouts he draws his mouth awry,
And swears by his ten bones, and falsely lies,
Wherefore be what he will, I do not pass;
He is the paltriest ape that ever was.

Such fleering, leering, jarring fool's bo-peep,
Such ha-has, teehees, wehees, wild colt's play;
Such sohos, whoops, and hallows, hold and keep,
Such rangings, ragings, revellings, roister's ray,
With so foul mouth, and knave at every catch,
'Tis some knave's nest did surely Martin hatch.

Now out he runs with cuckoo, king of May,
Then in he leaps with a wild morris-dance,
Now strikes he up Dame Lawson's lusty lay,
Then comes Sir Geoffrey's ale-tub tapped by chance,
Which makes me guess (and I can shrewdly smell)
He loves both tone and tother passing well.

Then straight as though he were distracted quite,
He chafeth like a cutpurse laid in ward,

And rudely rails with all his main and might,
Against both knights and lords without regard,
So as Bridewell must tame his drunken fits,
And Bedlam help to bring him to his wits.

But Martin, why in matters of such weight,
Dost thou thus play the daw and dancing fool?
O sir (quoth he) this is a pleasant bait
For men of sorts, to train them to my school.
Ye noble states, how can you like hereof,
A shameless ape at your sage heads should scoff?

Good nobby, now leave scribbling in such matters;
They are no tools for fools to tend unto.
Wise men regard not what mad monkeys patters;
'Twere trim a beast should teach men what to do.
Now Tarleton's dead, the consort lacks a vice;
For knave and fool, thou may'st bear prick and price.

The sacred sect and perfect pure precise,
Whose cause must be by Scogan's jests maintained,
Ye show although that purple, apes disguise,
Yet apes are still, and so must be disdained;
For though your lion's looks weak eyes escapes,
Your babbling books bewrays you all for apes.

The next point is, apes use to toss and tear
What once their fiddling fingers fasten on,
And climb aloft, and cast down everywhere,
And never stays till all that stands be gone.
Now whether this in Martin be not true,
You wiser heads, mark here what doth ensue.

What is it not that Martin doth not rent?
Caps, tippetts, gowns, black chimers, rotchets white,
Communion books and Homilies, yea so bent
To tear, as women's wimples feel his spite;
Thus tearing all, as all apes use to do,
He tears withal the church of Christ in two.

Mark now what things he means to tumble down,
For to this point to look is worth the while
In one that makes no choice twixt cap and crown;
Cathedral churches he would fain untile,
And snatch up bishops' lands, and catch away
All gain of learning for his prowling prey.

And think you not he will pull down at length
As well the top from tower, as cock from steeple?
And when his head hath gotten some more strength,
To play with prince as now he doth with people?
Yes, he that now saith, Why should bishops be?
Will next cry out, Why kings? The Saints are free.

The German boors with clergymen began,
But never left till prince and peers were dead;
Jack Leyden was a holy, zealous man,
But ceased not till the crown was on his head;
And Martin's mate, Jack Straw, would always ring
The clergy's faults, but sought to kill the king.

Oh that, quoth Martin, chwere a nobleman!
A vaunt vile villain; 'tis not for such swads,
And of the Council, too; mark, princes, then,
These rooms are raught at by these lusty lads,
For apes must climb, and never stay their wit,
Until on top of highest hills they sit.

What mean they else, in every town to crave
Their priest and king like Christ himself to be?
And for one pope, ten thousand popes to have,
And to control the highest he or she?
Ask Scotland that, whose king so long they crossed
As he was like his kingdom to have lost.

Beware, ye states and nobles of this land,
The clergy is but one of these men's butts;
The ape at last on master's neck will stand,
Then gag betime these gaping greedy guts,
Lest that too soon, and then too late, ye feel
He strikes at head, that first began with heel.

The third trick is, what apes by flattering ways
Cannot come by, with biting they will snatch;
Our Martin makes no bones, but plainly says
Their fists shall walk, they will both bite and scratch.
He'll make their hearts to ache, and will not fail;
Where pen cannot, their pen-knife shall prevail.

But this is false; he saith he did but mock.
A fool he was that so his words did scan,
He only meant with pen their pates to knock;
A knave he is, that so turns cat in pan.
But Martin, swear and stare as deep as hell,
Thy sprite, thy spite and mischievous mind doth tell.

The thing that neither pope, with book nor bull,
Nor Spanish king with ships could do, without,
Our Martins here at home will work at full,
If prince curb not betimes that rabble rout,
That is, destroy both church and state and all,
For if tone fail, the other needs must fall.

Thou England, then, whom God doth make so glad,
Through gospel's grace and prince's prudent reign,
Take heed lest thou at last be made as sad
Through Martin's makebates' marring, to thy pain,
For he mars all, and maketh naught, nor will,

Save lies and strife, and works for England's ill.

And ye grave men that answer Martin's mows,
He mocks the more, and you in vain lose times;
Leave apes to dogs to bait, their skins to crows,
And let old Lanam lash him with his rimes;
The beast is proud when men weigh his inditings;
Let his works go the way of all waste writings.

Now, Martin, you that say you will spawn out
Your broiling brats in every town to dwell,
We will provide in each place for your rout
A bell and whip, that apes do love so well,
And if ye skip, and will not weigh the check,
We'll have a springe and catch you by the neck.

And so, adieu, mad Martin Mar-the-land,
Leave off thy work, and *More Work*, hear'st thou me?
Thy work's naught worth; take better work in hand;
Thou marr'st thy work, & thy work will mar thee;
Work not anew, lest it doth work thy wrack,
And thou make work for him that work doth lack.

And this I warn thee, Martin's Monkey's-face,
Take heed of me; my rime doth charm thee bad,
I am a rimer of the Irish race,
And have already rimed thee staring mad,
But if thou ceasest not thy bald jests still to spread,
I'll never leave till I have rimed thee dead.

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