



[The following curious poem was found amongst the papers at Wasing Place, and is published with the kind permission of Mr. Mount].

## A DIALOGUE

Between a Country Gentleman and a Farmer, representing the true State of the Quarrel that hath long subsisted at *Aldermaston*, with fuitable Reflections.

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### GENTLEMAN.

NEIGHBOUR well met ; the truth I fain wou'd learn  
Of some Reports that give me great Concern.  
Of late strange Rumours have affail'd my Ears,  
That fill my Mind with ill-portending Fears.  
Thofe Feuds that *Aldermaston* Town divide.—  
Spring they from real Wrongs, or wounded Pride ?  
In Language plain, with free and honest Heart,  
The Cause of Quarrel with your Priest impart.

### FARMER.

Good Sir, you wou'd too hard a Task command,  
Had I more Words, more ready Wit at Hand  
Than a plain Farmer, who can ne'er aspire  
To argue Matters with a Priest, or 'Squire.  
When to excess of Rage our Minds are wrought,  
All Parties that contend, may be in Fault.  
Now my Mind's free from partial Love or Hate,  
I'll try with Truth my Story to relate.  
We Farmers with our Priest at Variance are ;  
The Cause of this I'll honestly declare.  
If we can him the chief Aggreffor deem,  
Can *he*, relentless, hope our just Esteem ?  
His Tongue was not from vile Abuse restrain'd :  
This the Ill-Will of many Neighbours gain'd.  
His Restless Temper ever interferes  
In all Concerns, a Medler he appears.  
His Railing does us simple Swains provoke  
To some rough Answer, or too free a Joke.  
When he shou'd gen'ral Truths in Public teach,  
He does against our Persons plainly preach,  
Good Ministers, that tenderly reprove,  
To Penitence, and not Repentment, move.  
Though rude in Speech, with Passion over-warm,  
He thinks he does his Duty well perform.  
Many good Qualities to him belong ;  
But if his Heart be good, his Head is wrong.

His Mind with much Book-Learning is supply'd ;  
His Zeal for Truth difcretion does not guide.

A childifh Cause, unworthy to be nam'd,  
His Breaft of late with bitter Rage inflam'd.  
To rear our May-pole, and new ornament  
This Standard, all our Farmers did content.  
This Pole was long our Pride, long flood before  
(Though now a Nuifance call'd) our Curate's Door.  
He fum'd, he rav'd, much Mifchief did foretel  
From Lightning's Blatt to All that near it dwell.  
To the Great Houfe he ran ; infus'd the Flame  
Into the 'Squire and his believing Dame.  
Led by the prefent Feelings of the Heart,  
They with blind Zeal espoufe their Paffor's Part.  
The Lady foon this Flame by Letters fpread,  
And almost robb'd our Tradefmen of their Bread.  
Can you, good Sir, approve fo rafh a Deed ?  
This wild Attempt did not at laft fucceed.  
Her Female Friend, with better Thoughts inspir'd,  
Yielding to Charity, with Writing tir'd,  
Did to the Tradefmen help in need afford,  
And on Submiffion to her Grace reftor'd.  
Why were the 'Squire and Dame fo much enrag'd ?  
They fhould as Mediators have engag'd :  
Their milder Influence would have All fubdued ;  
No Strife or factious Riot had enfued.  
Of Opposition 'tis the fad Event,  
Men do much Mifchief, and too late repent,  
'Tis true, the May-pole oft has given Birth  
To much unfeafon'd and indecent Mirth.  
Moft Villagers are riotous and bold,  
And Farmers are not born to be controul'd.  
Our Prieft hath us prefented, through fome Grudge,  
As grand Defaulters, to a Reverend Judge.  
This Act the Doors of Peace hath clofely barr'd,  
And all our fondeft Hopes of Union marr'd.  
We now defer our proper Houfe of Pray'r.  
Like ftraggling Sheep to diftant Folds repair.  
While thus unfix'd and angry is the Mind,  
From our own Shepherd, can we Comfort find ?  
'Tis felf defence alone, a Reason fair,  
That makes me thefe unwelcome Truths declare.  
In what a fad diftracted State we live !  
Can you, good Sir, fome fage Inftitution give ?

*GENTLEMAN.*

What Ills from Pride and headftiong Paffions flow !  
Thefe are the Source and Origin of Woe.  
By Pride from Innocence the Angels fell :

And can fuch Rage in Heav'nly Bofoms dwell ?  
 Ambition damps the Joys of focial Life,  
 And fows through ev'ry Rank the Seeds of Strife.  
 See ! an Efquire, a Prielt, (refpectful Names !)  
 Yeomen and Tradefmen join'd by loving Dames,  
 About a *May-pole* in Rebellion rife !  
 Whilft all their Neighbours ftare with wild Surprife.  
 Where is Man's Reafon ?—From what foolifh Things,  
 What idle Trifles, ferious Mifchief fprings !  
 Cou'd I the 'Squire and his brave Mate pourtray  
 Againft a ruftic Band in bold Array,  
 And at their fide the hoary Champion draw :—  
 Who wou'd not Laugh that fuch a Picture faw ?  
 But when we make Reflections grave and deep,  
 To fee a Prielt expos'd, who wou'd not Weep ?  
 To raife a Laughter was not my Intent ;  
 To work a Senfe of Shame is all I meant.  
 'Tis my Hoart's Wifh that Civil Difcord ceafe,  
 And Reafon's Voice attune the Soul to Peace.  
 Whom in this Quarrel can we blamelefs call ?  
 An uncomplying Spirit rules you all.  
 O ! that my Verfe had Charms to mend your Faults,  
 And move unquiet Souls to better Thoughts !  
 Let your good Senfe by Charity be fhewn,  
 'Twill cover Others Faults, and hide your Own.  
 View not fmall Foibles with too keen an Eye,  
 'Tis a Man's Praife to pafs Tranfgreffions by.  
 Where Education hath matur'd the Mind,  
 There greater Virtues we expect to find.  
 The Prielt, the 'Squire, and the Partner of his Life,  
 Shou'd firft ftep forth and terminate the Strife.  
 To ev'ry Farmer let the Curate fend,  
 His beft Refpects, and treat him as a Friend,  
 The Yeoman's honeft Heart with Joy may burn,  
 And all the Dues of Gratitude return.  
 The Worthy 'Squire with lib'ral Heart and Hand  
 (His gen'rous Spoufe will not his Wifh withftand)  
 The chief Inhabitants fhould entertain,  
 And let the matchlefs Singers lead the Train :  
 Thus Peace and Harmony will be reftored again.