

George Canning (1770-1827) & John Hookham Frere (1769-1846)

1 *The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder*

FRIEND OF HUMANITY.

Needy knife-grinder, whither are you going?  
Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order,  
Bleak blows the blast; your hat has got a hole in't,  
So have your breeches!

“Weary knife-grinder! Little think the proud ones, 5  
Who in their coaches roll along the turnpike  
Road, what hard work 'tis crying all day, ‘Knives and  
Scissors to grind O!’

“Tell me, knife-grinder, how you came to grind knives?  
Did some rich man tyrannically use you? 10  
Was it the squire or parson of the parish?  
Or the attorney?

“Was it the squire for killing of his game? or  
Covetous parson for his tithes distraining?  
Or roguish lawyer made you lose your little 15  
All in a law-suit?

“(Have you not read the ‘Rights of Man,’ by Tom Paine?)  
Drops of compassion tremble on my eyelids,  
Ready to fall as soon as you have told your  
Pitiful story.” 20

KNIFE-GRINDER.

“Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir,  
Only last night a-drinking at the ‘Chequers,’  
This poor old hat and breeches, as you see, were  
Torn in the scuffle.

“Constable came up for to take me into 25

