

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)

1 *A Ballad, on the Game of Traffick*

My Lord, to find out who must deal,
Delivers cards about,
But the first knave does seldom fail
To find the doctor out.

But then his honour cry'd, gadzooks! 5
And seem'd to knit his brow:
For on a knave he never looks
But h' thinks upon Jack How.

My lady, though she is no player,
Some bungling partner takes, 10
And, wedg'd in corner of a chair,
Takes snuff, and holds the stakes.

Dame Floyd looks out in grave suspense
For pair-royals and sequents;
But, wisely cautious of her pence, 15
The castle seldom frequents.

Quoth Herries, fairly putting cases,
I'd won it on my word,
If I had but a pair of aces,
And could pick up a third. 20

But Weston has a new-cast gown
On Sundays to be fine in,
And, if she can but win a crown,
'Twill just new dye the lining.

"With these is parson Swift, 25
"Not knowing how to spend his time,

“Does make a wretched shift,
“To deafen them with puns and rhyme.”

1699

(From *The Works of the Rev. Jonathan Swift*. Arranged by Thomas Sheridan, with Notes, Historical and Critical. A New Edition, in Nineteen Volumes, Corrected and Revised by John Nichols. Vol. 8. London, 1801)