

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)