

"The Lady's Dressing-Room"

By Jonathan Swift

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The
Lady's
Dressing-Room
To which is added, A
POEM
ON
Cutting down the Old Thorn at *Market Hill*.
By the Rev. Dr. S____T.

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Five Hours (and who can do it less in?)
By haughty *Caelia* spent in Dressing;
The Goddess from her Chamber issues
Array'd in Lace, Brocade and Tissues:
Strephon , who found the Room was void,
And *Betty* otherwise employ'd
Stole in, and took a strict Survey,
Of all the Litter, as it lay.
Whereof, to make the Matter clear,
An *Inventory* follows here.

And first, a dirty Smock appear'd
Beneath the Armpits well besmear'd
Strephon , the Rogue, display'd it wide,
And turn'd it round on ev'ry Side:
In such a Case, few Words are best,
And *Strephon* bids us guess the rest;
But swears how damnably the Men lye,
In calling *Caelia* sweet and cleanly.

Now listen, while he next produces
The various Combs for various Uses,
Fill'd up with Dirt so closely fixt,
No Brush cou'd force a Way betwixt.
A Paste of Composition rare,
Sweat, Dandriff, Powder, Lead and Hair
A Forehead-Cloath with Oyl upon't
To smooth the Wrinkles on her Front:
Here, Alum Flower to stop the Steams,
Exhal'd from sour unsavoury Streams;
There, Night-Gloves made of *Tripsey's* Hide,
Bequeath'd by *Tripsey* when she dy'd
With Puppy-Water, Beauty's Help,
Distill'd from *Tripsey's* darling Whelp
Here gally-pots and Vials plac't,
Some fill'd with Washes, some with Paste;
Some with Pomatums, Paints, and Slops,
And Ointments good for scabby Chops.
Hard by, a filthy Bason stands
Foul'd with the scou'ring of her Hands;
The Bason takes whatever comes,
The Scrapings from her Teeth and Gums,
A nasty Compound of all Hues,
For here she spits, and here she spues.

But O! it turn'd poor *Strephon's* Bowels,
When he beheld and smelt the Towels;
Begumm'd besmatter'd, and beslim'd;

With Dirt, and Sweat and Ear-wax grim'd.
No Object *Strephon's* Eye escapes;
Here, Pettycoats in frowsy Heaps;
Nor be the Handkerchiefs forgot,
All varnish'd o'er with Snuff and Snot.
The Stockings why should I expose
Stain'd with the Moisture of her Toes;,
Or greasy Coifs, and Pinders reeking,
Which *Caelia* slept at least a Week in
A Pair of Tweezers next he found
To pluck her Brows in Arches found;
Or Hairs that sink the Forehead low,
Or on her Chin like Bristles grow.

The Virtues we must not let pass,
Of *Caelia's* magnifying Glass;
When frighted *Strephon* cast his Eye on't,
It shew'd the Visage of a Gyant:
A Glass that can to Sight disclose
The smallest Worm in *Caelia's* Nose,
And faithfully direct her Nail
To squeeze it out from Head to Tail;
For, catch it nicely by the Head,
It must come out, alive or dead.

Why *Strephon* , will you tell the rest?
And must you needs describe the Chest?
That careless Wench! No Creature warn her,
To move it out from yonder Corner
But leave it standing full in Sight,
For you to exercise your Spite!
In vain the Workman shew'd his Wit,
With Rings and Hinges counterfeit
To make it seem in this Disguise,
A Cabinet to vulgar Eyes;
Which *Strephon* ventured to look in,
Resolv'd to go thro' *thick and thin* ,
He lifts the Lid: There need no more,
He smelt it all the Time before.

As, from within *Pandora's* Box,
When *Epimetheus* op'd the Locks
A sudden universal Crew
Of human Evils, upward flew;
He still was comforted to find,
That *Hope* at last remain'd behind.

So, *Strephon* , lifting up the Lid,

To view what in the Chest was hid,
Teh Vapours flew from out the Vent;
But *Strephon* , cautious, never meant
The Bottom of the *Pan* to grope
And foul his Hands in search of *Hope* .

O! NE'ER may such a vile Machine
Be once in *Caelia's* Chamber seen!
O! may she better learn to keep

"Those Secrets of the hoary Deep!", [Secrets_of_the_hoary_deep](#)

As Mutton-Cutlets, *prime of Meat* ,
Which tho' with Art you salt and beat,
As Laws of Cookery Require,
And roast them at the clearest Fire;
If from *a-down* the hopeful Chops,
The Fat upon a Cinder drops,
To stinking Smoke it turns the Flame,
Pois'ning the Flesh from whence it came,
And up exhales a greazy Stench,
For which you curse the careless Wench:
So, Things which must not be exprest,
When *plumpt* into the reeking Chest
Send up an excremental Smell,
To taint the Parts from whence they fell;
The Pettycoats and Gown perfume,
And waft a Stink round ev'ry Room.

THUS finishing his grand Survey,
The Swain disgusted slunk away.
Repeating in his amorous Fits,
Oh! *Caelia, Caelia, Caelia,* , shits!

But *Vengeance*, Goddess, never sleeping,
Soon punish'd *Strephon* for his peeping.
His foul Imagination links
Each Dame he sees with all her Stinks;
And, if unsavoury Odours Fly,
Conceives a Lady standing by.
All Women his Description fits,
And both Ideas jump like Wits,
by vicious Fancy coupled fast,
And still appearing in *Contrast* .

I PITY wretched *Strephon* , blind
To all the Charms of Woman-Kind.
Should I the *Queen of Love* refuse,
Because she rose from stinking Ooze?

To him that looks behind the Scene,
Statira's but some pocky Quean.

When *Caelia* all her Glory shows,
If *Strephon* would but stop his Nose,
who now so impiously blasphemes
Her Ointments, Daubs, and Paints, and Creams;
With which he makes so foul a Rout;
He soon would learn to think like me,
And bless his ravish'd Eyes to see
Such Order from Confusion sprung,
Such gaudy *Tulips* rais'd from *Dung* .

Footnotes

Secrets_of_Milton[Swift's copy.]