

**from The First Epistle of the Second
Book of Horace, imitated (1737)
By Alexander Pope (England)**

Time was, a sober Englishman wou'd knock
His servants up, and rise by five a clock,
Instruct his Family in ev'ry rule,
Line And send his Wife to Church, his Son to school.
5 To worship like his Fathers was his care;
To teach their frugal Virtues to his Heir;
To prove, that Luxury could never hold;
And place, on good Security, his Gold.
Now Times are chang'd, and one Poetick Itch
10 Has seiz'd the Court and City, Poor and Rich:
Sons, Sires, and Grandsires, all will wear the Bays,
Our Wives read Milton, and our Daughters Plays,
To Theatres, and to Rehearsals throng,
And all our Grace at Table is a Song.
15 I, who so oft renounce the Muses, lye,
Not ---'s self e'er tells more *Fibs* than I;
When, sick of Muse, our follies we deplore,
And promise our best Friends to ryme no more;
We wake next morning in a raging Fit,
20 And call for Pen and Ink to show our Wit.
He serv'd a 'Prenticeship, who sets up shop;
Ward try'd on Puppies; and the Poor, his Drop;
Ev'n Radcliff's Doctors travel first to France,
Nor dare to practise till they've learn'd to dance.
25 Who builds a Bridge that never drove a pyle?
(Should Ripley venture, all the World would smile)

But those who cannot write, and those who can,
All ryme, and scrawl, and scribble, to a man.
Yet Sir, reflect, the mischief is not great;
30 These Madmen never hurt the Church or State:
Sometimes the Folly benefits mankind;
And rarely Av'rice taints the tuneful mind.
Allow him but his Play-thing of a Pen,
He ne'er rebels, or plots, like other men:
35 Flight of Cashiers, or Mobs, he'll never mind;
And knows no losses while the Muse is kind.
To cheat a Friend, or Ward, he leaves to Peter;
The good man heaps up nothing but mere metre,
Enjoys his Garden and his Book in quiet;
40 And then-- a perfect Hermit in his Diet.
Of little use the Man you may suppose,
Who says in verse what others say in prose;
Yet let me show, a Poet's of some weight,
And (tho' no soldier) useful to the State.
45 What will a Child learn sooner than a song?
What better teach a Foreigner the tongue?
What's long or short, each accent where to place,
And speak in publick with some sort of grace.
I scarce can think him such a worthless thing,
50 Unless he praise some monster of a King,
Or virtue, or Religion turn to sport,
To please a lewd, or un-believing Court.