

# RECORDS

OF THE

## PRESTON OYSTER

AND

## PARCHED PEA CLUB,

1773-1841.

(Reprinted from the Preston Chronicle.)

"Since then the heart and the stomach are so nearly allied, it follows conclusively that what affects the one must sympathetically affect the other. Now it is an equally incontrovertible fact, that of all offerings to the stomach, there is none more grateful than the testaceous marine animal, commonly known by the vulgar name of Oyster."—*Knickerbocker's History of New York.*

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## RECORDS

OF THE

### PRESTON OYSTER AND PARCHED PEA CLUB.

In "the good old times," at least in so much of them as was left to our grandfathers and grandmothers between eighty and ninety years ago, there flourished in Preston a convivial society called "The Oyster and Parched Pea Club." Whitaker, Baines, Whittle, and Hardwick have not condescended to notice this "institution of our ancestors," but, as we have been favoured by one of the surviving members of the club with an inspection of its records and voluminous papers, we doubt not we can extract from them something to interest modern Prestonians. The number of members in the early stages of the society was limited to a dozen. They were among the leading inhabitants of the town. As they appear to have been of one political party, and as for a long time after the establishment no stranger was admitted to its meetings, it is not unlikely that, though conviviality might be a main object in meeting, there would, sometimes, be topics discussed of more than local interest, and possibly now and then a Jacobite toast honoured with a bumper.

The records are often of a very formal character. The meetings were weekly; an account was kept of the attendance at each meeting, and often a list made out of the absentees. Vacancies in the ranks were filled up by ballot, and an intimation given to a candidate of his enrolment. The letters of persons accepting membership or office in the jovial coterie are worthy of being placed side by side with the communications of successful generals acknowledging the thanks of parliament for services in the field, so high-flown are the terms in which the honour is spoken of. One gentleman writes to Mr. Speaker:—

Friargate, Dec. 14th, 1779.

Dear sir,—Being this day informed by Mr. Pedder and Mr. Barton that the gentlemen of the Oyster Club have done me the honour to elect me a member, I find myself quite at a loss to express the grateful sensations which their unanimous suf-



frages have impressed on my mind. I must, therefore, beg the favour that you would convey my acknowledgments to the president and all the other members in such language as you may think most proper, and, at the same time, to assure them that, by a due observance of the rules of the society, and by every friendly and convivial communication in my power, I shall endeavour at all times to prevent their having the smallest reason to repent of their choice.—I have the honour to subscribe myself, dear sir, your very much obliged and most faithful servant,  
J. H.—.

At the time when the records begin, viz., in 1773, Mr. Nabb, the town clerk of the borough, was the president of the club, or rather "the Speaker," as he was usually termed. There were then, in addition to the Speaker, an officer termed Oystericus, whose duty it was to order and look after the oysters, which then came "by fleet," from London, a secretary, an auditor, a deputy auditor, and a Poet Laureate, or rhymesmith as he was generally termed. In after years the number of members was enlarged, additional officers were appointed, and now and then an office was created for some particular individual. Among the officers subsequently appointed were the following:—Cellarius, who had to provide "port of first quality," a chaplain, there being, nearly always, at least one reverend member, a surgeon-general, a master of the *rolls* (to look to the provision of bread and butter), a "swig" master, whose title expresses his duty, a clerk of the *peas* (an office always held by one of the Gorst family), a minstrel, a master of the jewels, a physician in ordinary, &c., &c. On the occasion of one appointment to the office of Cellarius, the gentleman honoured with the confidence of the club was requested to take as much care of the club as he did of himself.

The members used to dine with one another, and sometimes accepted the invitations of other gentlemen. An incident occurred on one of these visits, which will show the mode in which the club preserved its dignity, how it proceeded against a peccant member, and the mock solemnity with which its decisions were enforced. The members of the club agreed to dine at Mr. Hugh Norris's, at Longton. At the next meeting of the club it was entered on the minutes that on the

30th January, 1776, the club met at Longton, pursuant to their order of the 15th instant, and dined at Mr. Norris's, where a very good dinner was provided, and excellent ale.

N.B.—It having been three weeks hard frost the company walked over the ice at Penwortham.

There was, however, one drawback to this pleasurable visit. A complaint was made that one of the party had on the way

spoken disrespectfully of the Speaker, and after deliberating on the offence it was ordered

That Mr. Butler, the poet laureate, be arraigned and fined at the next club, for an insult offered to Mr. Speaker, as they were coming on the road, in having, with more wit than deference, insinuated that a ducking chair, placed at the road side, would be a fit seat for the said Speaker.

At the next meeting it is recorded that

Mr. Butler not attending at this club, to take his trial, pursuant to the above order (tho' the same was read to him and he was charged to be present), Mr. Speaker issued his warrant, and despatched the Messenger in Ordinary, with the black rod, to bring him into court. But Mr. Butler still thought proper to decline attending, but as he faithfully promised to be present at the next meeting, this society indulge him with that time.

He did come the following week, when we learn that

Mr. Butler was tried for the above offence, and, upon a full hearing, was found guilty, and fined one bottle of wine.

Among the papers is a document endorsed "12th Feb., 1776. The charge and conviction of Mr. Butler." This is an elaborate paper, in legal phraseology, beginning "Preston, in the county of Lancaster. Oyster Club to wit. John Nabb, gentlemen, Speaker or president of the said club, exhibiteth this, his charge and complaint, against Richard Butler, gentleman, one of the members of the said club, for that he the said Richard Butler did," and it proceeds to narrate the charge as above as an act of disrespect, which the Speaker was very sensible, "would tend manifestly to the diminution of his power and authority," and if it went unpunished would be an evil example to other members of the said club, "and nothing but confusion and discord would reign among them," so to preserve and maintain "good order and decorous behaviour," he was to be "tried by his brethren" of the club, who, as we have said, fined him a bottle of wine.

It is said that in March, 1776, Mr. Speaker produced "his old favourite black stick, which was part of the regalia of this club very much shattered and broke, which was occasioned by his exerting himself and using it to preserve the public peace and protect the fair; it is unanimously voted that it be preserved amongst the other curiosities of this society; and the Rev. Mr. Gibson having this evening presented a very handsome stick for the use of the Speaker for the time being, he had the hearty thanks of the club, and it is ordered that a plate of silver be provided as a top for it." The gentleman who afterwards attended to the "heading and mounting" of this "staff or mace" had a special vote of thanks for his attention.



The rhymesmith was not always at his post when wanted. One of the papers preserved is a "warrant" signed by Mr. Nabb as President of the club directing the "messenger in ordinary to this society to apprehend and take the body of William Barton, now strayed from his duty on Parnassus, and bring him forthwith into court to do and perform such things as his office requires." A year or two afterwards, on the occasion of the issue of a similar missive, the missing "rhymesmith" endorsed the warrant with the remark "12 Bishops will bail any man. But ——— offers as bail 12 young ladies in whose custody the same ——— is now most happily placed." Some of the laureate's effusions are appended.

At the meeting on the 22nd April, 1778, Mr. Dalrymple "presented the society with an excellent cork screw, knife, and brush, to be kept and used in remembrance of him."

The following were the rules and "Articles of the Oyster Club :—

That a barrel of oysters be provided every Monday night, during the winter season, at the equal expence of the members. To be opened exactly at half-past 7 o'clock, at Thomas Harrison's.

Every member not attending to forfeit 2d. an evening, such forfeits to be collected at the end of the season, and disposed of as the majority of the company may direct.

That a bill be called for each night, at 10 o'clock, of which every member present is to pay a proportionable part.

No strangers or other persons than members to be admitted.

Every member on having a son born, shall pay a gallon, and a daughter, half a gallon, of port to his brethren of the club, within a month of the birth of such child, at any public house he shall chuse.

Experience shows where rules are deficient, so in a few years a defect was found out in the rules of the club, and in October, 1775, at the first meeting for the season, it is recorded :—

Upon reading the laws and orders of this club relating to forfeitures and payments upon particular contingencies, a great many of the members were surprised to find that no member, upon his marriage, was obliged and ordered to pay or give to his fellow members some quantity of wine. It is, therefore, now agreed and ordered that every member of this club who shall hereafter be married, shall upon such his marriage, or as soon after as shall be thought convenient by the Speaker of this house, pay and allow for the use of the members of this club, two gallons of wine, to be drunk at such house as the new married man shall appoint.

It is regularly entered when these marriage treats took place, and also when any "little strangers" had their births celebrated. Many, whose "births" are thus "registered" in the records of the Preston Oyster Club, have long since departed this life at a good old age. Many are yet alive, no longer young.

In November, 1784, it is recorded that the club did not meet regularly the two preceding winters, but was now resumed under the old regulations, except that instead of the oyster barrel being opened at half-past seven, eight o'clock was fixed, and the rule for the total exclusion of all strangers was so far relaxed, that "any member having a friend at his house, or other gentleman, not residents of Preston, whom he wishes to introduce, and who, he thinks, will be agreeable to the society, be at liberty to bring him or them on any club night."

There is among the documents about this date, a communication, which, it is only fair to state, is not in a lady's hand. Whether it be a *bona fide* communication from the ladies, through their amanuensis, or whether it be merely a hit at the exclusiveness and want of gallantry of the old Jacobites we must not venture to determine, but leave the question, like other disputed points such as the authorship of Junius's letters and the route of a Roman iter, for the judgment of posterity. It is as follows :—

The ladies of the Toughey [toffee] Club were rather disappointed at not receiving, by the hands of the respectable messenger dispatched by the still more respectable members of the Oyster Club, a few oysters. They are just sitting down after the fatigues of the evening, and take the liberty of reminding the worthy members of the Oyster Club, that oysters were not made for man alone. The ladies have sent to the venerable president a small quantity of sweets, to be distributed as he in his wisdom shall think fit.

Monday evening.

The members of the club were not unconcerned about the fair sex, and in their devotions to them, they, upon some occasions, even neglected their duty to the club ! It is recorded, in October, 1800, that

It appearing that the club has, this evening, been deprived of the attendance of at least six of its members, in consequence of the invitations of Mr. P——, one of the society, it was moved that Mr. P—— give that number of bottles of port to the club, on his next appearance ; but Mr. Speaker, in his great clemency, is pleased to mitigate the fine to two bottles. And let the members be admonished not to suffer their private hospitalities to interfere with their duties to the institutions of this society in future.



Mr. P—— paid the fine, and “received the admonition from the chairman with all proper submission.” Again, in February, 1803, there is the entry:—

It appearing that the club has several evenings been deprived of the attendance of some of its members, in consequence of the hospitalities of Mr. C——, one of the society, it was moved that Mr. C—— give as many bottles of wine to the club as he has given invitations for a Monday, on his next appearance. And let the members *once more* be admonished not to suffer their private hospitalities to interfere with their duties to the institutions of this society in future.

And it appearing that Mr. R—— A—— was privy to the invitations which have so much injured the attendance at this club, it is further moved that he be fined two bottles of wine.

On the 28th February there is an entry:—

Mr. C—— and Mr. A—— appearing in their places, the entry of the last night was read, and Mr. C—— being ordered to pay two bottles, and Mr. A—— one bottle of wine, they paid their bottles, and it is hoped they will not forget the lenity of the club.

The members dined together once a-year; the accounts of some of the dinners are entered in the books, and we must do the diners the justice of saying that in days when topping was more common than at present they were not very heavy wine bibbers. At the annual dinner, in 1790, it is recorded that each member then paid 11s. for his share of the oysters he had had, and that the funds available for the dinner were £1 0s. 10d. from fines, 10s. from four absentees, who paid 2s. 6d. each when they could not attend; two sums of 2s. 6d. for wagers, 10s. a “fine” for a son, and 5s. a “fine” for a daughter, a balance of 8s. in the treasurer’s hands, and 1s. 6d. each for 14 dinners, making a total of £3 9s. 10d., but less 11s. to be returned to a member paid by mistake, making £3 8s. 10d. Mrs. Harrison’s bill was fourteen dinners at 2s. 6d. each, £1 15s.; seven bottles of port, 14s. (2s. a bottle!); one bottle of sherry, 8s.; oranges, 4s.; olives, 2s.; fruit and crackers, 4s. 4d.; making a total of £3 5s. 4d., and leaving 3s. 6d. in hand, which was given to Mrs. Harrison for servants. The year after, 14 again dined; this time at Mr. Scott’s; the bill was fourteen dinners, £1 15s.; ten bottles of wine (port), £1; two bottles of sherry, 5s.; one bottle of olives, 2s.; ale, 4s.; raisins, plums, almonds, nuts, oranges, &c., 6s. 8d., total, £3 12s. 8d. A balance of 4s. 8d. was given to the servants. In later years the entertainments were somewhat more costly.

A part of the duty of the secretary of the club was to record the wagers made, which was usually a bottle or

so many bottles of wine, a few bowls of punch, dinners for the club, or “a rump and dozen.” The wagers are on various subjects; among others one old gentleman bets a bottle of wine that he walks a mile in a quarter of an hour; other wagers were that Mr. A. was heavier than Mr. B.; that Miss —— was 23 years old; that one young lady was not an inch taller than another; that a certain gentleman did not kill a brace of partridges before a given day; about elections; that Mr. —— would never be married to Miss ——; and often there were wagers as to which of two disputants would be married first. On one occasion a gallant colonel bet a reverend gentleman three bottles of wine that three of the then company (14 gentlemen of whom 9 were bachelors) would be married before that day twelve months. One wager bet in December, 1812, was five guineas to one that Bonaparte would neither be killed nor taken prisoner before the succeeding Candlemas. One entry is in 1802:—“The members and their visitors, at this meeting, being all bachelors, Mr. C—— entertained the club with a song, and after discussing the subject of matrimony, Mr. M—— was bold enough to bet Mr. G—— a dinner and wine, for all the club, that he (Mr. M.) is married before any of the company present, as witness their hands, J. W. M——, S. G——.”

When one of the gentlemen of the party was married in 1809, it was ordered that the wager be claimed of Mr. M. It would appear that there had been a little remissness about observing the rules regarding the “fines” at marriages, for on the occasion of this marriage it was ordered that the resolution of October 2, 1775, (given above) should be copied from the old book into the current minute book, which was done, and it was followed by another resolution “that this rule is *unrepealed* and *unrepealable*, and it is moved that Mr. —— appoint the time and place, at which this society are to have the honour of enjoying two gallons of wine at his expense; otherwise that he do stand committed without bail or main prize.” It was then added that the bridegroom has the Speaker’s *permission* to name the 29th inst. for the treat! If the invitation to the wine, on the occasion of a wedding, did not come at once, such a resolution as the following was passed:—“The secretary is directed to signify to Mr. ——, that this club are desirous to congratulate him on his late marriage, at such time and place as he shall appoint, according to the ancient usage of the society.” This, of course, brought a letter inviting the club to the bridegroom’s house. Though they met for joviality the club would not allow trifling, and even about wagers there was a notion of business, for on one occasion “it was determined *una voce* that Mr. —— and Mr. —— be fined one bottle of wine each, for having so long engaged the attention of the club, and for having offered a wager which was neither accepted nor settled.”



In the year 1795, a sad calamity threatened the club. Its arrangements were upset by a cause at which, in these days of railways, we are inclined to smile. The club had always met on a Monday evening, but there was danger that another night would have to be chosen. It is recorded that:—

Mr. Oystericus having, at this meeting, communicated to Mr. Speaker and the club a letter received from Mr. Carter, stating his apprehension, from the day of the waggon leaving town being altered, that he cannot supply the club with oysters on the days heretofore accustomed, and the club having taken into consideration the importance of this subject, Mr. Speaker has been pleased to recommend, and the club have ordered that it be referred to Mr. Greaves and Mr. Cowburn to make the proper inquiries as to the most eligible mode of the club being accommodated with oysters on the usual day, and to make their report thereon to Mr. Oystericus, at or before the next meeting of this club, who is requested to give such directions in consequence thereof, as to him shall seem proper.

The difficulty appears to have been overcome in some way or other not recorded, for the club continued to meet on the Monday evening for many years afterwards. Upon a few occasions when they met, there were no oysters, owing to a long frost, or other accident. Peas and port then constituted, we suppose, the entertainment.

It is recorded that, on the last day of the year 1798, the members had a merry evening. The following is the entry:—

This evening the club, in a proper manner, expressed their obligations to Mr. Oystericus, for his conduct in the chair on the third of December instant, and congratulated him in a proper manner thereon, and this day being the last of the year 1798, the sitting continued until the commencement of the year 1799, according to the ancient and laudable custom of this society, and the new year was ushered in by the musical exertions of Mr. Grimshaw and Mr. W. Cross, two of the worthy members of this club. And the thanks of the society were unanimously voted to our respectable and honourable Speaker for the very able and impartial manner in which he has filled the chair during the late and all former years; and, on the motion of the Speaker, the thanks of the club were voted to the other officers of this society. The Speaker was also graciously pleased to express, in the most handsome terms, his entire approbation of the members in general who constitute this society, and to congratulate them upon the commencement of a new year.

The Speaker, on this occasion, was Mr. Greaves. We have omitted to state that by the rules of the club the Speaker was entitled to one privilege,—he was allowed to pay double the amount of the penalty of any ordinary member on his marriage, or any addition to his family, or on any occasion when a “fine” was inflicted on him!

In 1801, a resolution was passed, admonishing the chaplain for his non-attendance, and desiring him, to attend better “to ensure to the society the great edification and pleasure arising from his regular appearance.”

Even then the age was one of “progress,” of which the members were not slow to take advantage. In November, 1803, the club requests Mr. Oystericus “to order the oysters to be sent in future by the coach instead of the waggon.”

There was still some grumbling of party-giving interfering with the club. A solemn record appears that “Mr. A—, Mr. C—, and Mr. A— partook of an excellent barrel of oysters this evening, and had to lament that the hospitality of Mr. G— and Mr. Y— occasioned so long a list of absent members.”

In March, 1806, the auditor was presented with a pair of spectacles, mounted in silver, and in a handsome case.

In 1814 Mr. Jas. Pedder presented to the club “a piece of oak, part of the quarter deck of the *Victory*, the ship in which the immortal Nelson fought and conquered on the 21st October, 1805, set in the lid of a handsome silver snuff box.” The master of the jewel office having neglected to supply the box with snuff, was on one occasion fined a bottle of wine. At the dissolution of the club, this box reverted to the donor. It is now in the possession of John Bickerstaff, Esq., of this town, who purchased it at the recent sale of Mr. E. Pedder's effects, at Ashton Park.

In February, 1815, some of the members of the club began to prefer the society of their families at their own fireside to that of their fellow-members at the club, whereupon a resolution was passed censuring the married members for their irregular attendance, and directing that a petition to the wives of the said members should be drawn up, praying them to allow their husbands to attend the club! Some “chaffing” resolutions followed on this subject.

In November, 1816, there is an entry that no peas were supplied to the club, upon which the Speaker ordered the secretary to reprimand the Clerk of the *peas* for his neglect of duty.

In the same month the club passed a resolution respecting a public improvement then being agitated, and “approved very much of the proposed alteration of the road to Lancaster, through the Shambles to Gallows Hill, notwithstanding the great opposition from the inhabitants of Friargate.”



In December, 1824, it was communicated to the meeting that the Gas Light Company was in a most prosperous state; it was moved that each shareholder of the company, who was a member of the club, should contribute, at the next meeting, a bottle of wine.

The minutes of the society are continued until 1841, when it ceased to meet, but in the later period of its history there are few entries of much interest.

We have mentioned the rhymesmiths' efforts. Many of their effusions are preserved. They are not, as a rule, of much merit, but upon a few occasions the Rev. T. Wilson, the head master of the Clitheroe Grammar School, a classical scholar and a true poet, who was an honorary member of the club, and who attended its meetings sometimes, acted as deputy "rhymesmith." One of his poems, now before us, in his hand-writing, is replete with that humour for which he was so remarkable, almost every line sparkling with a pun, but the humour is a little too broad for publication in an age that is somewhat more refined than its predecessors. The first of the following pieces we copy from his own hand-writing. Those of our readers who have seen the exceedingly interesting volume published by the Chetham Society, "Wilson's Miscellanies," edited by the Rev. Canon Raines, of Milnrow, with the judgment and care which that painstaking antiquary devotes to all his works, will know that it has been published in that volume. The next two are not Mr. Wilson's manuscript, but we have no doubt they are his, and have been copied by the gentleman who was then rhymesmith, whom Mr. Wilson "assisted." The last one is in Mr. Wilson's own hand-writing. With these extracts we must close our account of an institution that in its day was much appreciated by the members, whose meetings were the merriest, and where, doubtless, often the toast, the song, and the joke "kept the table in a roar."

The lines, as published by Mr. Raines, somewhat vary from the club manuscript, especially in the early part. Six lines in Mr. Raines's copy are not in the one in the archives of the club, but we include them, distinguishing them by placing them within brackets.

# THE RHYMESMITH'S ADDRESS TO THE CLUB, IN 1808.

I hope that your rhymesmith you'll fully excuse  
For engaging, *so late* in the season his muse.  
But, in truth, I *did* call her, and call'd her again,  
Yet all invocations, I found, were in vain.  
She said that in Scotland a job she had got,  
A job most congenial—to help Mr. Scott.\*  
Tho' to him at the first she was shy—yet grew frisky,  
When he'd given her a bottle of excellent whiskey.  
She next was invol'd to the Laureate's abode,  
Who begg'd her best aid in his annual ode:  
But here she was peevish, and pouting, and shy,  
And call'd him Dunce, Blockhead, an arrant *Goose Pye*.†  
But soon he repress'd this abuse of the slut,  
When he'd brought into view, and then opened his *Butt*.  
She will'd down two bottles—(the muse is not slack)—  
And declar'd it a butt of superlative sack.  
Then she belch'd out the ode, with some labour and sweat,  
Which deserves to the *Sack* but, at least to be set.  
Then I humbly petition'd for me she'd begin,  
But first she demanded a noggin of gin:  
She drank off her gin, then deliver'd in Verse,  
The lines which I now shall beg leave to rehearse.

Dear Brethren, to what shall I liken our Club?  
We're *Pipe-staves* hoop'd firmly and forming a *Tub*.  
In fraternity thus when so closely we link,  
We're qualify'd better for holding *more drink*.  
Our rules are the pegs which have fix'd us all fast,  
And thus hoop'd and well pegg'd, sure this union will last.  
But lest we should warp, if expos'd to dry weather,  
Our President moistens, and keeps us together.  
And if fermentation should fail, by degrees  
'Tis promoted afresh, by a handful of *Peas*.  
[We've peas on the board too, where'er we meet,  
And constantly constitute part of our treat:  
The peas are served up, with this sensible view,  
Because finish the *P's*, and of course we're in *Q*.]  
When each takes his place—we're a magical ring,  
And, as conj'rors, can work any wonderful thing.  
We spirits can call up, tho' closely confined,  
And at all times are ready in raising the wind.  
As wind we can raise, then, pray where is the wonder,

\* Afterwards Sir Walter Scott.

† Mr. Pye was then the laureate, but he was no poet, in the true sense of the term, hence Mr. Wilson's rather severe hits.



If sometimes we imitate Jupiter's thunder?  
 But should tempests arise, and our vent-pegs fly out,  
 And our blasts, in full force make a terrible bout;  
 Their rage we soon soften, and quell them with ease,  
 By referring for aid to the clerk of the *Peas*.  
 Like *Aeolus*, *He* the foul winds can command,  
 For he bears, by commission, the reins in his hand.  
 He summons, at will, every boist'rous rover,  
 Does summary justice, or binds them all over.  
 Next consider, how wisely we make, to our Club,  
 The oysters essential—they dwell in a tub.  
 Confin'd every one, in their separate shells,  
 More contented they rest than the nuns in their cells.  
 A something monastic appears amongst oysters,  
 For gregarious they live, yet they sleep in their cloisters.  
 'Tis observed too, that oysters, when placed in their barrel,  
 Will never presume with their stations to quarrel.  
 They still make the best of their present condition,  
 Tho' preference is due to the middle position.  
 When the top is turn'd downward, the highest must fall.  
 And the lowest will rise to the top of them all.  
 Not so with the middlemost—their situation  
 No change can experience, or feel degradation.  
 [The middlemost, too, their bland juices bestow,  
 On their poor piping brethren embedded below.]  
 From this let us learn what an oyster can tell us,  
 And we all shall be better and happier fellows.  
 Acquiesce in your stations whenever you've got 'em,  
 Be not proud at the top, nor repine at the bottom,  
 But happiest they in the middle who live,  
 And have something to lend, and to spend, and to give.

## SONG

*Hammered out by the Rhymesmith of the Oyster Club, Preston,  
 to be set to music and sung by Mr. Speaker,  
 on New Year's Day, 1805.*

## 1.

While Britain's bold sons make their enemies tremble,  
 And Ocean's wide bounds their dominion obey,  
 See here chosen Britons with rapture assemble  
 To taste of the tribute old Ocean must pay.  
 To live like a Lord, is a blessing, but We,  
 True Britons, must live like the Lords of the Sea.

## 2.

Give Frenchmen their frogs, and soup meagre, and salad,  
 In porcelain, or plate, till the appetite palls,  
 But Neptune, who knows a true Englishman's palate,  
 Still serves up his dainties in stout wooden walls.  
 As drunk as a Lord, is a proverb, but We  
 May drink like a fish, as the Lords of the Sea.

## 3.

Smoke and shells, like a battle, surround us, you'd wonder,  
 While grape lets out blood for our liquor apace,  
 Hot shot our desert, and our music the thunder  
 Of broadsides tremendous, the true "thorough base."  
 Let Fame sound her trumpet in chorus, but We  
 Will trumpet like Tritons, and Lords of the Sea.

## ODE

*Hammered out by the Rhymesmith of the Oyster Club, Candle-  
 mas, 1807. By Order of the Speaker.*

## 1.

The Bard would fain exchange, alack!  
 For precious gold,—his crown of laurel,  
 His sackbut,—for a butt of sack,  
 His vocal shell,—for oyster barrel.

## 2.

Far other diet for his case  
 The Speaker's learned skill hath chosen;  
 Not more unlike, a size and ace,  
 Or parched Peas and Rump-and-Dozen.

## 3.

"Of wit and sense take half a Grain,  
 "Rhymes, quirks, and quibbles everlasting,  
 "And let him pound and beat his brain  
 "Ut fiat Oda—Sunat Fasting."

## 4.

Great Sir! apply your pow'r and skill  
 To cheer your Poet's visage sallow;  
 Your Auditor might gild the pill,  
 Cellarius assist the swallow.

## 5.

So, should your Rhymesmith's anvil ring  
 With music meet for merry fellows,  
 And he, as happy as a King,  
 Would sing Old Rose, and burn the bellows.

A portion of the verses presented to the club by the  
 Rhymesmith, in 1806, will show the anti-Gallican feeling  
 that then prevailed:—

How, in such times, can bards contrive  
 To keep the Muses' flame alive,  
 And wake the vocal lyre,  
 When such dismay o'er Europe spreads,  
 When clouds are thick'ning o'er our heads,  
 Ready to burst in fire?

Yet, undismayed, amidst the strife,  
 Let us to festive joys give life,  
 Nor mind yon tyrant fell;  
 Nelson has made the seas our own,  
 Then gulp your well-fed oysters down,  
 And give the French the shell.