

Anti-Printing Poem by an Unknown Hand, Published in 1820

The Banished Printer to His Trade – A Parody

Submitted by Chris Hunt

Compositor of printing name!  
Quit! Oh quit your wooden frame!  
Working, starving, idling, drinking  
Oh the gain, the loss of printing!  
Cease, fond printer, cease your trade,  
And shun the laws for printers made!

Hark! they sentence; - judges say,  
'Libel printer, go away!'  
What is this embitters life?  
Starves my children, kills my wife,  
Sends me abroad for punishment?  
Tell me my trade – 'tis banishment!

England recedes; it disappears --  
France opens to my eyes! my ears  
With foreign accents ring:  
Lend, lend your ships! I sail! I fly!  
O judge! where is thy victory?  
O law! where is thy sting?

The above poem was attached to a letter to the editor, which stated:

I trespass upon your time and patience with an ode, intended to convey a faint idea of the inky breathings of an aspiring letter-press printer, who was fully conversant, and even deeply versed, in the 'black arts'; and being considered too noxious a weed to remain in the garden of England was transplanted into a more degenerate soil. Leaving it to your candour to determine whether the 'setting-up' will warrant its being 'sent to press', I remain, sir, with grateful acknowledgements for your encouragement. X.

Source Drakard's Stamford News January 7<sup>th</sup> 1820 p4/c3

*Note* We shall never know the author of this poem, although its contents almost certainly mirrored the views of the Editor of the Stamford News, Mr Drakard.