

The King and the Miller



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from George Bickham, Jr., *The Musical Entertainer*
(London, 1738)

How happy a state does the miller possess !
Who wou'd be no greater, nor fears to be less
On his mill and himself he depends for support,
Which is better than servilely cringing at court.

What tho' he all dusty and whit'ned does go ?
The more he's bepowder'd, the more like a beau
A clown in his drefs may be honester far,
Than a courtier who struts in his garter and star.

Tho' his hands are so daub'd, they're not fit to be seen,
The hands of his betters are not very clean
A palm more polite may as dirtily deal,
Gold in handling will stick to the fingers like meal

What if, when a pudding for dinner he lacks,
He cribs without scruple from other men's sacks
In this of right noble example he brags,
Who borrow as freely from other men's bags.

Or should he endeavour to heap an estate,
In this too he mimics the tools of the state,
Whose aim is alone their coffers to fill,
And all his concern's to bring grist to his mill.

He eats when he's hungry, and drinks when he's dry,
And down when he's weary contented does lie
Then rises up cheerful to work and to sing
If so happy a miller, then who'd be a king