Apology, The.

By Finch, Anne (Countess of Winchilsea) .

'Tis true, I write; and tell me by what rule

I am alone forbid to play the fool,

To follow through the groves a wandering muse,

And feigned ideas for my pleasures choose?

Why should it in my pen be held a fault,

Whilst Myra paints her face, to paint a thought?

Whilst Lamia to the manly bumper flies,

And borrowed spirits sparkle in her eyes,

Why should it be in me a thing so vain

To heat with poetry my colder brain?

But I write ill, and therefore should forbear.

Does Flavia cease now at her fortieth year

In every place to let that face be seen

Which all the town rejected at fifteen?

Each woman has her weakness; mine indeed

Is still to write, though hopeless to succeed.

Nor to the men is this so easy found;

Even in most works with which the wits abound

(So weak are all since our first breach with Heaven)

There's less to be applauded than forgiven.