



Three Men Conversing

By Geoff Brown

This is an authentic eighteenth century conversation using words and phrases which have fallen out of use. You may need to consult the glossary at the end to interpret the italicised text.

- Jake "You know what 'appened to me today lads?"
- Jem "Did you have a spot of canoodlin' in the *House of Venus* again? You're a bugger for *the apple-dumpling shop* Jake."
- Jake "Thou's a lewd bugger Jem. It's thee not me that's a lecher and got thyself *frenchified* by that *laced mutton* in Bristol."
- George "Aye, Jake's right...*Bring your arse to an anchor* Jem and let's hear Jake's tale."
- Jem "Hang an arse...I know Jake's a *bagpipe* so I think I'd better *pump ship* afore he starts."
- George "I wager he's gone *to flay the fox* as *he's full as a goat*."
- Jem "I'm back...I know I sometimes *piss more than I drink* but neither of you is my *whither-go-ye* so leave me be."
- George "Tha does *talk like an apothecary* Jem but we are all friends here so *flash the gentleman* and let Jake speak."
- Jake "This afternoon I went into St Mary's to hide as I saw that big *paddy-whack* I owes money too fast approaching. I crouched down in the last pew just as that old crow of a parson climbed up to the *cackle tub* to practice his sermon. He looked like he was *going up a ladder to bed* and I had to lie low as he ranted and raved for a full hour about his depraved and ungodly flock. As he came to his mighty fire and brimstone ending I saw him *milk the pigeon* and

invoke God almighty to strike down any of his parishioners who had transgressed. Do you know what then transpired?

George No, what happened Jake?

Jake "There was a loud clap of thunder and the *black cattle* fell down the steps of the *cackle tub* and cracked his pate on the stone flags below. I knew as soon as look at him that he'd *hopped the twig* so I left the *gospel shop* and went straight to the constable to report what I'd seenthat the *paddy-whack* had killed the parson. So Fergus McKinley is now safely in irons and I can buy you two another mug of ale!

Conversation Exactly 350 Words

Glossary

House of Venus – a brothel

Apple-dumpling shop – a woman's bosom

Frenchified – infected with the pox

Laced mutton – a whore

Bring your arse to an anchor – sit down

Hang an arse – hold back

Bagpipe – long-winded

Pump ship – urinate

Flay the fox – vomit

Full as a goat – very drunk

Piss more than I drink – brag

Whither-go-ye – wife

Talk like an apothecary- talk nonsense

Flash the gentleman – pretend to be a gentleman

Paddy-whack – Irishman

Cackle tub – pulpit

Going up a ladder to bed - being hanged

Black cattle - parson

Milk the pigeon – attempt the impossible

Hopped the twig – died

Gospel shop - church