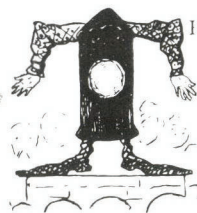


# THE MAGIC LANTERN

OR  
WORDS WORDS WORDS

An edited version of a poem from *Fun and Earnest or Rhymes with Reason* by Darcy W Thompson.  
Published by Griffith and Farrow of St. Pauls Churchyard, London in 1865. From the collection of John Townsend.



THE Lady Katharine de Velours,

She lives in style; and Lady Kitty

Is very learned, and very demure,

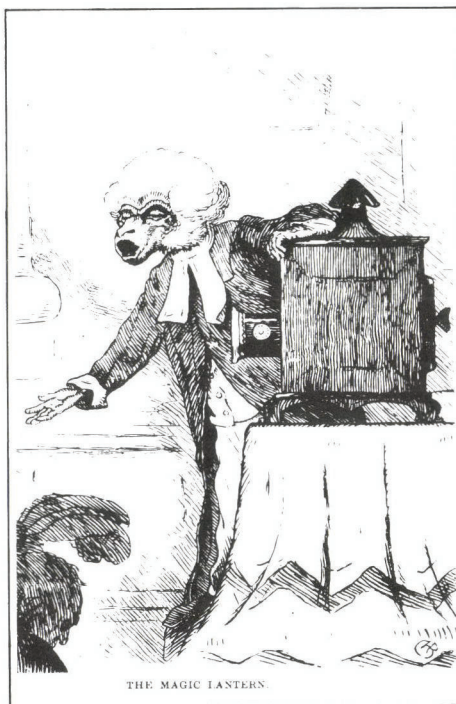
And once, they say, was rather pretty.

Once only I had the honour to get  
To Purreigh Manor an invitation;  
To meet a most distinguish'd set  
Of noble friends to education.  
Sir Foozle Poodle of Berkeley Hall;  
Lord Leveret, son of Earl Marchwater;  
General Sir Perroquet McCawl,  
With pretty Polly, his youngest daughter.

The Manor chaplain, Mr. Rook;  
The blushing curate, Mr. Co; ;  
The great Parsee, Sir Bubble-y-jook,  
And squires and M.P.s not a few.  
The thing was verging on ennui,  
When rang the bell, the guests to call  
To where a lecture was to be  
Deliver'd in the servants' hall.  
Scarce in our chairs had we lean'd back,  
When up the room came gravely slow,  
Be-wigg'd and clad in learned black,  
Signor Dottore Giacomo.

There was, as far as I could tell,  
A something queer in Signor Giaco;  
And as he pass'd, there was a smell  
Of most uncommonly strong tobacco.  
The room was dark, but I could see  
A magic lantern on a stand:  
The Doctor held what seem'd to me  
A slide of glass in either hand.  
Suddenly, in my ears the sound  
Of a shrill squeaky voice was dinning;  
And in an hour myself I found  
No wiser than at the beginning.  
To understand one single word  
I had been utterly unable;  
The Doctor surely, I infer'd,  
Was fresh from Bedlam or from Babel.  
He ceased: a lighted chandelier  
Dispell'd the temporary gloom;  
Stifled applause or murmuring cheer  
Of thankfulness ran through the room.

The General rose his legs to stretch,  
Then whisper'd softly to his daughter,  
"Tell what's-his-name to go and fetch  
"A glass of something and soda water."  
Lord Leveret said, "'Twas twuly gwand,  
"Upon his word, and monst'wous pwetty;  
"And calculated to expand  
"Enquiring minds," said Lady Kitty.



Said Lady Kitty, "If that be so,  
"Pray rise and make some observation:  
"The shortest lecture would, you know,  
"Confer a very great obligation."  
Sir Foozle rose and said: "No doubt,  
"Aftaw, my fwiends, what you have seen,  
"You'd like to know a little about  
"The histowry of this stwange machine.  
A man invented this machine  
"A vewy, vewy long while ago;  
A clevah fellah he must have been,  
"But what his name was—I don't know.  
The use is simple, if you knew;  
"You open or you shut this lid;  
You put the slides in; and you do—  
"Exactly what the Signor did.

The ancient Bwitons, savage men,  
"Knew little or nothing at all about it;  
They had no magic lantern then;  
"But they contwived to do without it.  
And Julius Cæsar, I'll be bound,  
"When first he c'woss'd the sea to Dovah,  
This sawt of thing would not have found  
"If he had search'd all Bwитай ovah.  
Our wude forefathers then, you see,  
"Were not so well off quite as we aw;  
Which is, of course, to you and me  
"A vewy consolatory ideaw."

Now I must own a truth unpleasant,  
Which I am blushing to recall;  
The plain fact is, of all then present  
*None had seen anything at all.*  
The learned Signor Giacomo,  
Or, in plain English, Master Jacko,  
Had taken, I for certain know,  
Something *besides* his strong tobacco.  
So, tho' he possibly had rehearsed  
Descriptions true of every slide,  
He had forgotten at the first  
To light the little lamp inside.  
And worthy Giacomo as yet  
Scarce in his speech was ankle-deep  
Before my Lady and her set  
Were snoring some, and all asleep.  
And those who dared not sleep or snore,  
Staring at nothing, bewilder'd sat,  
And might have seen as much, or more,  
If they had stared inside my hat.  
And so, whenever a speaker now  
Makes long half hours of every minute,  
Havering a kind of bow-wow-wow,  
Dull, pompous stuff with nothing in it;  
When words are thick as peas, and thought  
Like currants in school-dumplings spread,  
I think, why, surely, *he's* forgot  
The light inside *his* lantern-head.