“To a Young Lady Playing at Chess”
Rev. Richard Polwhele

Take heed, my fair-one, how you play;
With Black and Red in trim array,
   To push, or to resist –
Ah! one false step (be not deceived)
By you can never be retrieved,
   Or your antagonist.

Pawns— (‘tis plain truth the Muse alleges),
Pawns, in one sense, are doubtless pledges:
   And lo! If set in motion,
Straight onwards they pursue their track
Through thick and thin, nor e’er come back –
   Then manage them with caution

The powerful Queen upon the wing,
with checks as she assails the King,
   Bids resolution flag;
And Bishops cringe, and bow, and bless;
And Knights for ladies in distress
   Ride up and down, zigzag.

In days of old, the Knight, ‘tis said,
Was fond to woo the simple maid
   ‘Midst bowering shades and brooks;
Picturing his Castle built in air,
To cheat her with the gaudy glare –
   Your Castles are but Rooks.

And now, in stale-mate or in scholars,
Whether you play for love or dollars,
   The game may terminate:
And, though you labour thus you lose,
You get your head from out the noose:
   But marriage is – check-mate!

Citation Reference