

1819
CHARACTER OF CHARLES BROWN
John Keats

Keats, John (1795-1821) - Widely regarded as the most talented of the English romantic poets, Keats, whose work was poorly received during his lifetime, could not have foreseen his later recognition. Ironically, he wrote for his own epitaph: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Character of Charles Brown (1819) - Opening lines: He is to weet a melancholy carle: / Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair ...

CHARACTER OF CHARLES BROWN**I**

He is to weet a melancholy carle:
Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair
As hath the seeded thistle when in parle
It holds the Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair
Its light balloons into the summer air;
Therto his beard had not begun to bloom,
No brush had touch'd his chin or razor sheer;
No care had touch'd his cheek with mortal doom,
But new he was and bright as scarf from Persian loom. -

II

Ne cared he for wine, or half-and-half;
Ne cared he for fish or flesh or fowl,
And sauces held he worthless as the chaff,
He 'sdeigned the swine-head at the wassail-bowl;
Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl,

Ne with sly Lemans in the scorner's chair;
But after water-brooks this Pilgrim's soul
Panted, and all his food was woodland air
Though he would oft-times feast on gilliflowers rare. -

III

The slang of cities in no wise he knew,
Tipping the wink to him was heathen Greek;
He sipp'd no olden Tom or ruin blue,
Or nantz or cherry-brandy drank full meek
By many a damsel hoarse and rouge of cheek;
Nor did he know each aged watchman's beat,
Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek
For curled Jewesses with ankles neat,
Who as they walk abroad make tinkling with their feet. -

THE END