

Mary Leapor, "The Charms of Anthony"

by admin - Thursday, November 07, 2019

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MARY LEAPOR

"The Charms of Anthony"

YE Swains, attend; let ev'ry Nymph be near;
Be still, ye Rivers, that the Swains may hear:
Ye Winds, be calm, and brush with softer Wing,
We mean the Charms of *Anthony* to sing;
See all around the list'ning Shepherds throng; 5
O help, ye Sisters of immortal song.

LUCY.

Sing, *Phebe*, sing what Shepherd rules the Plain,
Young *Colin's* Envy, and *Aminda's* Pain:
Whom none can rival when he mows the Field,
And to whose Flute the Nightingale must yield. 10

PHEBE.

'Tis *Anthony* — 'tis he deserves the Lay,
As mild as Ev'ning, and as Morning gay;
Not the fresh Blooms on yonder Codling-tree,
Not the white Hawthorn half so fair as he;
Nor the young Daisy dress'd in Morning Dew; 15
Nor the Pea Blossom wears a brighter Hue.

LUCY.

None knows like him to strew the wheaten Grain,
Or drive the Plough-share o'er the fertile Plain;
To raise the Sheaves, or reap the waving Corn,
Or mow brown Stubble in the early Morn. 20

PHEBE.

How mild the Youth, when on a sultry Day

In yonder Vale we turn'd the fragrant Hay:
How on his Voice the list'ning Shepherds hung,
Not tuneful *Stella* half so sweetly sung.

LUCY.

Whether he binds the Sheaf in twisted Band, 25
Or turns the Pitch-fork on his nimble Hand;
He's sure to win a Glance from ev'ry Eye,
While clumsy *Colin* stands neglected by.

PHEBE.

His curling Locks by far more lovely shew,
Than the white Wig on Squire *Fopling's* Brow; 30
And when the Shepherd on a rainy Day,
Weaves for his Hat a Wisp of flow'ry Hay,
The scarlet Feather not so gay appears,
Which on his Crown Sir *Ambrose Fino* wears.

LUCY.

For *Anthony Meriah* leaves her Cow, 35
And stands to gape at him upon the Mow:
While he (for who but must that Wench despise?)
Throws Straws and Cobwebs on her staring Eyes.

PHEBE.

To the Back-door I saw proud *Lydia* hie,
To see the Team with *Anthony* go by; 40
He slily laugh'd, and turn'd him from the Door,
I thought the Damsel would have spoke no more.

LUCY.

Me once he met, 'twas when from yonder Vale,
Each Morn I brought the heavy milking Pail:
He took it from my Head, and with a Smile 45
Reach'd out his Hand, and help'd me o'er the Stile.

PHEBE.

As I was dancing late amongst the Crew,
A yellow Pippin o'er my Head he threw:
Sue bit her Lips, and *Barbareta* frown'd;

And *Phyllis* look'd as tho' she wou'd have swoon'd. 50

Thus sung the Maids till *Colinet* came by,
And *Rodrigo* from weeding of the Rye;
Each took his Lass, and sped 'em to the Town,
To drink cool Cider at the *Hare* and *Hound*:
The Damsels simper like the sparkling Beer, 55
And *Colin* shines till *Anthony* is near.

NOTES:

1 *Swain* "A country or farm labourer, frequently a shepherd; a country lover"; *Nymph* "Spirits... taking the form of a maiden inhabiting the sea, rivers, mountains, woods, trees, etc.; a beautiful young woman" (*OED*).

6 *Sisters of immortal song* The Muses of Greek mythology: "Each of the nine goddesses regarded as presiding over and inspiring learning and the arts" (*OED*).

7 *Phebe* This and other names used in the poem are stereotypical names used in pastoral verse.

10 *Nightingale* In poetry, a symbol of "melodious song" (*OED*).

13 *Codling-tree* A kind of apple tree.

18 *Plough-share* "The large pointed blade of a plough" (*OED*).

19 *Sheaves* "Large bundles in which it is usual to bind cereal plants after reaping" (*OED*).

30 *Fopling* Variation of "fop," "a foolish person; one who is foolishly attentive to and vain of his appearance, dress, or manners" (*OED*).

36 *Mow* "A heap of grain or hay in a barn" (*OED*).

39 *hie* "Haste, speed" (*OED*).

46 *Stile* Steps or rungs allowing "passage over or through a fence, while forming a barrier to the passage of sheep or cattle" (*OED*).

48 *A yellow Pippin o'er my Head he threw* A variation on the custom in ancient Greece in which "apples were presented to sweethearts as a proffer or declaration of love...oftentimes apples were tossed or thrown" in this context (McCartney, "How the Apple Became the Token of Love," p. 70).

54 *Hare and Hound* A tavern or pub, possibly alluding to a passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which Phoebus and Daphne are figured as hound and hare respectively (Book I, ll. 521-525).

55 *simper* "To glimmer, shimmer, twinkle" (*OED*).

Source: *Poems Upon Several Occasions* (London, 1748), pp. 249-252. [Google Books]

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