[Mrs. Letches], â??Evening Reflections on Brandon-Hillâ?•

Description

[MRS. LETCHES]

â??Evening Reflections on Brandon-Hillâ?•

Soft pleasing Twilight! welcome is thy glad
Approach to weary man! he, forgetful still
Of all the toils succeeding days present him,
Salutes thee as the grey-clad harbinger
Of solemn sable night. Brutes do thee homageâ??
With silent cheerfulness attend thy mild
Inviting. Evâ??n the lovely featherâ??d race,
Whose grateful melody makes groves and vales
Echo, yet cease their warbling, unoppressâ??d
With Care, repose their feeble frames, unconscious
Of ill, or snares by artful fowlers spread
To allure their innocence, or rash intent
Of inquisitive boys, invaders rude
Of liberty! on dew-besprinkled bough; â??
Press fond the senseless clod with filial love:
Than these; what transport must the bosoms swell
Of *Africâ??s* sons, forlorn mal-treated tribe,
When Heavâ??nâ??s Majestic emblem they behold
Withdraw his radiance thence, to illuminate
Other worlds! When even their base oppressors
Content, permit them to recline their torturâ??d
Frames on beds, *inferior* far to those
Preparâ??d for pamperâ??d steeds. So absolute,
O Night! hast thou dominion oâ??er the
Petty tyrant? Makâ??st him forget the
Oblivious draught infused! *Men they*
Doomâ??infringing justice and *humanityâ??*to
Feel the powerful scourge, and groan beneath
Unnatural tyranny, which God abhors.â??
O merciful Disposer of events!
Inspire the breasts of the â??*Noble few*,â?• foes
To *cruelty* and *avarice*, to crush their
Dreadful power! that distant nations may
Learn of Britainâ??s Senate, *Justice* and *Mercy*.

NOTES:

Author *Mrs. Letches* This attribution is based on an inscription on the title page in what appears to be a contemporary hand (see ESTC T42632). She published anonymously as â??A Ladyâ?• in Bristol, one of the centers of the Atlantic â??triangleâ?• trade, and her personal history remains unknown. Throughout the eighteenth century, Bristolâ??s booming port not only transported goods but also enslaved African people to the Americas and West Indies. At this same time, Bristol boasted a large abolitionist movement that Mrs. Letches clearly contributed to. She dedicated her volume to â??the Inhabitants of Bristolâ?• (iii).

Title *Brandon-Hill* St. Brandonâ??s Hill is located close to Bristol city center in southwest England. It is possibly the oldest municipal open space in the country.

4 *harbinger* â??One that goes before and announces the approach of some one; a forerunnerâ?• (*OED*).

5 *sable* Black.

9 *warbling* â??Singing or making tuneful melody with sweet quavering notesâ?• (*OED*).

15 *filial* â??Of or pertaining to a son or daughterâ?• (*OED*).

18 *Heavâ??nâ??s Majestic emblem* The sun.

31 *Noble few* Abolitionists.

34 *Britainâ??s Senate* Parliament.

SOURCE: ***Poems on Several Occasions*** **(Bristol, 1792), pp. 7-8. [Google Books]**

Edited by Sherry Portillo