Elizabeth Tollet, â??To my Brother at St. Johnâ??s College in Cambridgeâ?•

Description

ELIZABETH TOLLET

â??*To my Brother at St.* Johnâ??s *College in* Cambridgeâ?•

Blest be the Man, who first the Method found
In Absence to discourse, and paint a Sound!
This Praise old *Greece* to *Tyrian Cadmus* gives;
And still the Author by thâ?? Invention lives:
Still may he live, and justly famous be,
Whose Art assists me to converse with thee!
All Day I pensive sit, but not alone;
And have the best Companions when Iâ??ve none:
I read great *Tully*â??s Page, and wondâ??ring find
The heavâ??nly Doctrine of thâ?? immortal Mind;
An Axiom first by Parent Nature taught,
An inborn Truth, which proves itself by Thought.
But when the Sun declines the Task I change,
And round the Walls and antick Turrets range;
From hence a varyâ??d Scene delights the Eyes,
See ! here *Augusta*â??s massive Temples rise,
There Meads extend, and Hills support the Skies;
See ! there the Ships, an anchorâ??d Forest ride,
And either *Indiaâ??s* Wealth enrich the Tide.

Thrice happy you, in Learningâ??s other Seat!
No noisy Guards disturb your blest Retreat:
Where, to your Cell retirâ??d, you know to choose
The wisest Author, or the sweetest Muse.
Let useful Toil employ the busy Light,
And steal a restless Portion from the Night;
With Thirst of Knowledge wake before the Day,
Prevent the Sun, and chide his tardy Ray:
When chearful Larks their early Anthem sing,
And opâ??ning Winds refreshing Odours bring;
When from the Hills you see the Morning rise,
As fresh as *Lansdownâ??s* Cheeks, and bright as *Windhamâ??s* Eyes.

But when you leave your Books, as all must find
Some Ease requirâ??d tâ??indulge the labâ??ring Mind;
With such Companions mix, such Friendships make,

As not to choose what you must soon forsake:
Mark well thy Choice; let Modesty, and Truth,
And constant Industry adorn the Youth.
In Books good Subjects for Discourse are found;
Such be thy Talk when friendly Tea goes round:
Mirth more than Wine the drooping Spirits chears,
Revives our Hopes, and dissipates our Fears;
From *Circe*â??s Cup, immeasurâ??d Wine, refrain,
Start backward, and reject thâ?? untasted Bane.

Perhaps to neighbâ??ring Shades you now repair,
To look abroad and taste the scented Air:
Survey the useful Labours of the Swain,
The tedded Grass, and Sheaves of ripenâ??d Grain;
The loaded Trees with blushing Apples gracâ??d,
Or hardy Pears, which scorn the wintry Blast.
Or see the sturdy Hinds from Harvest come,
To waste the setting Suns in rural Mirth at Home.
Now on the Banks of silver *Cam* you stray;
While throâ?? the twisted Boughs the Sun-Beams play,
And the clear Stream reflects the trembling Ray.

Think, when you tread the venerable Shade,
Here *Cowley* sung, and tuneful *Prior* playâ??d.
O! would the Muse thy youthful Breast inspire
With charming Raptures and Poetick Fire!
Then thou mightâ??st sing, (who better claims thy Lays?)
A tributary Strain to *Oxford*â??s Praise:
Thy humble Verse from him shall Fame derive,
And gracâ??d with *Harley*â??s Name for ever live.
First sing the Man in constant Temper found,
Unmovâ??d when Fortune smilâ??d, undaunted when she frownâ??d.
A Mind above Rewards, serenely great,
And equal to the Province of the State:
Thence let thy Muse to private Life descend,
Nor in the Patriotâ??s Labours lose the Friend.

NOTES:

3 *Tyrian Cadmus* Greek mythological figure who founded the city of Thebes. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, Cadmus was also responsible for introducing the Phoenician alphabet to the Greeks. Tollet follows the tradition that Cadmus came from Tyre (*Britannica*).

9 *Tully* Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE), Roman statesman and philosopher. Tollet appears to reference Ciceroâ??s *Tusculan Disputations*, Book I of which addresses the immortality of the soul.

11 *Axiom* â??A proposition that commends itself to general acceptanceâ?• (*OED*).

14 a*ntick* â??Grotesque or fantastic ornamental representation of a person, animal, or thingâ?• (*OED*).

16 *Augusta* Ancient Roman name for London.

17 *Meads* Meadows.

31 *Lansdown* Mary Granville (nee Villiers) (c. 1668-1735), married George Granville, Baron Lansdowne (1666-1735) in 1711; *Windham* Probably Elizabeth Grenville, (nee Wyndham) (1719-1769), artist and writer, married George Grenville (1712-1770) in 1749.

37 *Industry â??*Intelligent or clever working; skill, ingenuity, or cleverness in the execution of anythingâ?• (*OED*).

42 *Circeâ??s Cup* â??In Greek and Latin mythology the name of an enchantress who dwelt in the island of Aea, and transformed all who drank of her cup into swine; often used allusivelyâ?• (*OED*).

44 *repair* â??To return to or from a specified placeâ?• (*OED*).

46 *Swain* A shepherd figure in pastoral poetry.

50 *Hinds* â??Agricultural labourersâ?• (*OED*).

52 *Cam* The town of Cambridge lies on the River Cam (*Britannica*).

56 *Cowley* Abraham Cowley, (1618-1667), poet and essayist â??who wrote poetry of a fanciful, decorous nature,â?•; *Prior* Matthew Prior, 1664â??1721, English poet and diplomat (*Britannica*). Cowley and Prior attended Cambridge colleges, St. Johnâ??s and Trinity College respectively.

60, 62 *Oxfordâ?¦Harley* Both references are to Robert Harley, 1st earl of Oxford, (1661-1724, London), â??British statesman who headed the Tory ministry from 1710 to 1714â?• (*Britannica*).

SOURCE: ***Poems On Several Occasions with Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII An Epistle,*** **Second Edition (London, 1760), pp. 25-27. [Google Books]**

Edited by Gabriela Torres