Charlotte Lennox, â??The Art of Coquettryâ?•

Description

[CHARLOTTE LENNOX]

â??The Art of Coquettryâ?•

Ye lovely Maids, whose yet unpractisâ??d Hearts
Neâ??er felt the Force of Loveâ??s resistless Darts;
Who justly set a Value on your Charms,
Power all your Wish, but Beauty all your Arms:
Who oâ??er Mankind wouâ??d fain exert your Sway,
And teach the lordly Tyrant to obey.
Attend my Rules to you alone addrest,
Deep let them sink in every female Breast.
The Queen of Love herself my Bosom fires,
Assists my Numbers, and my Thoughts inspires.
Me she instructed in each secret Art,
How to enslave, and keep the vanquishâ??d Heart;
When the stolâ??n Sigh to heave, or drop the Tear,
The melting Languish, the obliging Fear;
Half-stifled Wishes, broken, kind Replies,
And all the various Motions of the Eyes.
To teach the Fair by different Ways to move
The softenâ??d Soul, and bend the Heart to Love.
Proud of her Charms, and conscious of her Face,
The haughty Beauty calls forth every Grace;
With fierce Defiance throws the killing Dart,
By Force she wins, by Force she keeps the Heart.
The witty Fair on nobler Game pursues,
Aims at the Head, but the rapt Soul subdues.
The languid Nymph enslaves with softer Art,
With sweet Neglect she steals into the Heart;
Slowly she moves her swimming Eyes around,
Conceals her Shaft, but meditates the Wound:
Her gentle Languishments the Gazers move,
Her Voice is Musick, and her Looks are Love.
Thoâ?? not to all Heaven does these Gifts impart,
Whatâ??s theirs by Nature may be yours by Art.
But let your Airs be suited to your Face,
Nor to a Languish tack a sprightly Grace.
The short round Face, brisk Eyes, and auburn Hair,

Must smiling Joy in every Motion wear;
Her quick unsettled Glances deal around,
Hide her Design, and seem by Chance to wound.
Dark rolling Eyes a Languish may assume,
And tender Looks and melting Airs become:
The pensive Head upon the Hand reclinâ??d,
As if some sweet Disorder fillâ??d the Mind.
Let the heavâ??d Breast a struggling Sigh restrain,
And seem to stop the falling Tear with Pain.
The Youth, who all the soft Distress believes,
Soon wants the kind Compassion which he gives.
But Beauty, Wit, and Youth may sometimes fail,
Nor always oâ??er the stubborn Soul prevail.
Then let the fair One have recourse to Art,
And, if not vanquish, undermine the Heart.
First from your artful Looks with studious Care,
From mild to grave, from tender to severe.
Oft on the careless Youth your Glances dart,
A tender Meaning let each Look impart.
Wheneâ??er he meets your Looks with modest Pride,
And soft Confusion turn your Eyes aside,
Let a soft Sigh steal out, as if by Chance,
Then cautious turn, and steal another Glance.
Caught by these Arts, with Pride and Hope elate,
The destinâ??d Victim rushes on his Fate:
Pleasâ??d, his imaginâ??d Victory pursues,
And the kind Maid with softenâ??d Glances views;
Contemplates now her Shape, her Air, her Face,
And thinks each Feature wears an added Grace;
â??Till Gratitude, which first his Bosom proves,
By slow Degrees is ripenâ??d into Love.
â??Tis harder still to fix than gain a Heart;
Whatâ??s won by Beauty, must be kept by Art.
Too kind a Treatment the blest Lover cloys,
And oft Despair the growing Flame destroys:
Sometimes with Smiles receive him, sometimes Tears,
And wisely balance both his Hopes and Fears.
Perhaps he mourns his ill-requited Pains,
Condemns your Sway, and strives to break his Chains;
Behaves as if he now your Scorn defyâ??d,
And thinks at least he shall alarm your Pride:
But with Indifference view the seeming Change,
And let your Eyes after new Conquests range;
While his torn Breast with jealous Fury burns,
He hopes, despairs, hates, and adores by Turns;
With Anguish now repents the weak Deceit,
And powerful Passion bears him to your Feet.
Strive not the jealous Lover to perplex,
Ill suits Suspension with that haughty Sex;

Rashly they judge, and always think the worst,
And Love is often banishâ??d by Distrust.
To these an open free Behaviour wear,
Avoid Disguise, and seem at least sincere.
Wheneâ??er you meet affect a glad Surprize,
And give unmelting Softness to your Eyes:
By some unguarded Word your Love reveal,
And anxiously the rising Blush conceal.
By Arts like these the Jealous you deceive,
Then most deluded when they most believe.
But while in all you seek to raise Desire,
Beware the fatal Passion you inspire:
Each soft intruding Wish in Time reprove,
And guard against the sweet Envader Love.
Not for the tender were these Rules designâ??d,
Who in their Faces show their yielding Mind:
Eyes that a native Languishment can wear,
Whose Smiles are artless, and whose Blush sincere;
But the gay Nymph who Liberty can prize,
And vindicate the Triumph of her Eyes:
Who oâ??er Mankind a haughty Rule maintains,
Whose Wit can manage what her Beauty gains:
Such by these Arts their Empire may improve,
And what they lost by Nature gain by Love.

NOTES:

Title Coquettry â??Playful and insincere flirtation; flirtatious behaviorâ?• (*OED*).

9 *Queen of Love* Venus in the Roman tradition; Aphrodite in the Greek tradition.

25 *Nymphâ??* Any of a class of semi-divine spirits, imagined as taking the form of a maiden inhabiting the sea, rivers, mountains, woods, trees, etc., and often portrayed in poetry as attendants on a particular godâ?• (*OED*).

28 *Shaft* â??Of an arrowâ?• (*OED*).

33 *Airs â??*A personâ??s demeanour, bearing, or appearanceâ?• (*OED*).

65 *Bosom* â??The breast considered as the seat of thoughts and feelingsâ?• (*OED*).

87 *Behaviour* â??External appearance; elegance of mannersâ?• (Johnson).

SOURCE: ***Poems on Several Occasions*** **(London, 1747), pp. 61-67. [Google Books]**

Edited by Lilian Suarez