Mary Barber, â??Written for a Gentlewoman in Distress. To her Grace ADELIDA, Dutchess of Shrewsburyâ?•

Description

[MARY BARBER]

â??Written for a Gentlewoman in Distress. To her Grace ADELIDA, Dutchess of Shrewsburyâ?•

Might I inquire the Reasons of my Fate,
Or with my Maker dare expostulate;
Did I, in prospâ??rous Days, despise the Poor,
Or drive the friendless Stranger from my Door?
Was not my Soul pourâ??d out for the Distressâ??d?
Did I not vindicate the Poor oppressâ??d?
Did not the Orphanâ??s Cry with me prevail?
Did I not weep the Woes I could not heal?
Why then, Thou gracious, Thou all-powâ??rful God,
Why do I feel thâ?? Oppressorâ??s *Iron Rod?*
Why thus the Scorners cruel Taunts endure,
Who basely fret the Wounds, they will not cure?
O Thou, whose Mercy does to All extend,
Say, shall my Sorrows never, never, end?
Let not my Tears for ever, fruitless, flow;
Commiserate a Wretch, oâ??erwhelmâ??d with Woe;
No longer let Distress my Bosom tear:
O shield me from the Horrors of Despair!

Forgive me, Madam, that I thus impart
The Throbs, the Anguish, of a breaking Heart.
Oft, when my wearyâ??d Eyes can weep no more,
To sooth my Woes, I read your Letters oâ??er.
Goodness, and Wit, and Humour, there I find;
And view with Joy those Pictures of your Mind;
With Pleasure on the lovâ??d Resemblance gaze,
Till peaceful Slumbers on my Eye-lids seize.
Then, then, Imagination glads my Sight
With transient Images of past Delight;
My aking Heart of evâ??ry Care beguiles;
Then TALBOT lives, and ADELIDA smiles.

Delightful Forms! why will you fleet away,
And leave me to the Terrors of the Day?
In vain from Reason I expect Relief;

For sad Reflection doubles evâ??ry Grief.
Some of my Friends in Deathâ??s cold Arms I see;
Others, tho, living, yet are dead to me?
Of Friends, and Children both, I am bereft,
And soon must lose the only Blessing left;
A Husband formâ??d for Tenderness and Truth,
The lovâ??d, the kind Companion of my Youth;
With him, throâ?? various Storms of Fate I passâ??d;
Relentless Fate!â??And must we part at last?
O King of Terrors, I invoke thy Powâ??r;
Oh! stand between me and that dreadful Hour;
From that sad Hour thy wretched Suppliant save;
Oh! shield me from it!â??Hide me in the Grave!

NOTES:

Title *ADELIDA, Dutchess of Shrewsbury* Adelhilda Talbot (*nÃ©e* Palleotti) (1660-1726), married Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, in 1705.

2 *expostulate* â??To argue or debateâ?• (*OED*).

10 *Iron Rod* â??A symbol of power or tyrannyâ?• (*OED*).

16 *Wretch* â??A miserable, unhappy, or unfortunate personâ?• (*OED*).

30 *TALBOT* Charles Talbot, Duke and twelfth Earl of Shrewsbury (1660-1718). English statesman and leading figure in the Glorious Revolution, in support of William and Mary. Also played a key role in the â??peaceful successionâ?• of George I in 1714 (*Britannica)*.

43 *King of Terrors* â??Death personifiedâ?• (*OED*).

45 *Suppliant* â??A person who makes a humble or earnest plea to another, especially to a person in power or authorityâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: Mary Barber, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London,1735), pp. 51-53. [*Google Books*]

Edited by Madelyn Yukich