Frances Maria Cowper, â??Love of Solitudeâ?•

Description

[â??FRANCES MARIA COWPERâ??]

â??Love of Solitudeâ?•
Vanity of Worldly Pleasure

While others, lost in pleasureâ??s guilty round,
Blast the glad season of their fleeting youth,
Let me in solitary joys abound,
Fond of the paths of piety and truth:
Give me in Wisdomâ??s volume to descry
The mysteries of love and grace divine,
By Scripture taught, with penetrating eye
To scan the world aright, and to resign.

Deluded world! infatuated throng!
To spurn the treasure that no force destroys,
Nor see the baneful weed that lurks among
The fairest bloom of your embitterâ??d joys.
Amid the clamours of the loudest mirth,
Thoughts in unwelcome guise will oft have part,
Will promp the wish, thâ?? involuntary sigh,
â??And rouse reflection in the gayest heart.â?•

Bear me, ye guardians of the mind sincere,
To scenes sequesterâ??d from the haunts of men;
The pensive soul with evâ??ry grace prepare,
Sacred to Virtue and her blissful train:
With these conversing, and by these renewâ??d,
Neâ??er shall I feel ambitionâ??s lawless sway,
But in the paths my earliest steps pursuâ??d,
In search of Wisdomâ??s pleasures safely stray.

Come, holy Wisdom, favâ??rite gift of God!
With thine attendant grace, Humility;
Descend, bright visitant! and make abode
Where museful Melancholy waits for thee.
Ah, what avails fair Indiaâ??s shining store,
The purple treasures of the gorgeous East?
What joy, to quit the charms of regal power,
To dwell with thee, thou soul-enlightâ??ning guest!

Not the attractive voice of worldly fame,
Nor syren sound of dullest flattery,
Could tempt my heart thy labours to disclaim,
Or slight the blessings that belong to thee.
How has my soul in secret wish prefferâ??d
The lonely walk and solitary shade,
The painted vanities of life abhorrâ??d,
And all the pageantry that pomp displayâ??d!

Joyless the gilded equipage I viewâ??d,
The dull variety of senseless show;
The worldâ??s gay path without delight pursuâ??d,
Nor felt the transports that from grandeur flow.
Slave to the wretched worldâ??s imposing forms,
See Sacharissa deckâ??d in gold brocade;
She owns that grandeur has no real charms,
And sighs for virtue in the sylvan shade.

NOTES:

28 ***â??****museful* â??â?•Absorbed in thought; thoughtful, pensiveâ?• (*OED*).

30 â??*purple* â??Characterized by richness or abundance; splendid, gloriousâ?• (*OED*).

34 â??*syren* Aâ?? Greek mythology creature that lured sailors to their deaths with its enchanting song.

46 â??*Sacharissa* Pâ??ossibly a reference to Lady Dorothy Sidney (1617-1684), the beloved â??Sacharissaâ?• of many love lyrics by Edmund Waller (1606-1687). In one portrait by Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641), she appears as a finely dressed shepherdess.

Source: ***Original Poems, on Various Occasions. By a Lady*** **(London 1792), pp.11-13. [Google Books]**

Edited by Grazzia Menendez