

Elizabeth Tollet, "The Portrait"

Description

ELIZABETH TOLLET

"The Portrait"

Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
Vita - - - - - Hor.

On what would I my Wishes fix?	
"Tis not upon a Coach and Six:	
"Tis not your rich Brocades to wear;	
"Tis not on Brilliants in my Ear.	
"Tis not to hurry up and down	5
To Tunbridge, Epson, Kensington;	
Much less to rub my wakeful Eyes	
At Basset, till the Sun should rise:	
Had I a Foe I meant to curse,	
Nay, Rival, I should not wish her worse,	10
For once, to tell you what's the Lot	
I like, I've told you what 'tis not;	
A lazy Life I first would choose,	
A lazy Life best suits the Muse:	
A few choice Books of every Sort;	15
But none that meddle with the Court.	
Small Thoughts for Cloaths; 'tis all a Case:	
They'll neither mend nor spoil my Face.	
Money! Enough to serve my Ends:	
An Hackney to go see my Friends;	20
That I may laugh if Fops pass by,	
And they not know my Livery,	
Friends that in any Dress would come;	
To whom I should always be at home:	
My Table still should cover'd be,	25
On this Side Books, on that Bohea;	
While we sip on, and never debate	
Matters of Scandal, or of State.	
For Horace tells us, as you know,	
"Tis Sweet to fool it <i>a propos</i> .	30

Dulce est desipere in loco. Hor.

NOTES:

Epigraph *Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella* â??Life may be laid out as if it were depicted on a votive tabletâ?• (Horace, *Satires*, 2:1, ll. 3-4); Horaceâ??s *Satires* were â??published in 35 BCEâ?• (*Oxford Bibliographies*).

6 Tunbridge Affluent town in Kent, England; *Epsom* Market town in Surrey; *Kensington* Royal palace in London.

8 Basset â??An obsolete game of cards, resembling Faro, first played in Veniceâ?• (*OED*).

20 Hackney â??A horse-drawn carriage which is let out for hireâ?• (*OED*).

21 Fops â??One who is foolishly attentive to and vain of his appearance, dress, or mannersâ?• (*OED*).

22 Livery â??The dress, uniform, or insigniaâ?by which a family, etc., may be identifiedâ?• (*OED*).

26 Bohea â??Name given in the early eighteenth century to finest kind of black teaâ?• (*OED*).

29 Horace (65-8 BC), Latin lyric poet and satirist under the emperor Augustus.

30 a propos â??To the purposeâ?• (*OED*).

Postscript *Dulce est desipere in loco* â??It is sweet to be silly at the appropriate timeâ?• (Horace, *Odes*, 4:12, l. 27).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions. With Ann Boleyn to King Henry VIII. An Epistle* (London, 1755), pp. 33-34. [[Google Books](#)]

Edited by Donna Hang