Mary Masters, â??On Beautyâ?•

Description

MARY MASTERS

â??On Beautyâ?•

Sure, Beauty is a Light Divine,
That does with awful Lustre shine;
Rises more strong at evâ??ry View,
And does the proudest Hearts subdue.
Where is the Man, that durst defy 5
The blooming Cheek and dazling Eye;
The lovely Shape, the winning Air,
And graceful Motions of the Fair?
Stoicks themselves could find no Arms
â??Gainst Beautyâ??s bright tremendous Charms: 10
This CATO by Example provâ??d,
A rigid Stoick, yet he lovâ??d:
And both his amâ??rous Sons displayâ??d
Their rival Flames for one fair Maid.
Beauty still triumphs oâ??er the Schools, 15
With all their Philosophick Rules;
She breaks their surest best Defence,
Reason, the feeble Guard of Sense.

All feel her Force, her Laws obey,
Compellâ??d to own her potent Sway. 20
But â??tis thâ?? unblemishâ??d Form I praise,
Where VIRTUE shines with equal Rays!
For Beauty, stainâ??d, has lost her Powâ??r,
And, VIRTUE gone, she charms no more.

NOTES:

2 *Lustre* â??The quality or condition of shining by reflected light; sheen, refulgence; glossâ?• (*OED*).

4 *subdue* â??To bring (an enemy, people, territory, etc.) into subjection by conquest or physical forceâ?• (*OED).*

5 *durst* Past tense of â??dare.â?•

9 *Stoicks* â??One who practices repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure or pain, and patient endurranceâ?• (*OED*).

11 *CATO* Cato the Younger (95-46BCE), Roman statesman and famous follower of stoicism. Catoâ??s intended first marriage to Aemilia Lepida was possibly motivated by love, though she ended up marrying Scipio, to whom she was previously betrothed (*Britannica*).

13-14 Masters is using Joseph Addisonâ??s popular play, *Cato, a Tragedy* (1712) as her source here as Addison exercised â??considerable literary licenseâ?• by creating a plot line in which Catoâ??s sons, Portius and Marcus, vied for the love of a woman named Lucia. See Nathan Wolloch, â??Cato the Younger in the Enlightenment,â?• *Modern Philology*, vol. 106, no. 1 (August 2008), p. 67.

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1733), pp. 60-61. [*Google Books*]

Edited by Itzel Rodriguez