Mary Alcock, â??The Air Balloonâ?•

Description

MARY ALCOCK

â??The Air Balloonâ?•

No more of Phaeton let poets tell,
I care not where he drove nor where he fell;
No more Iâ??ll wish for famâ??d Auroraâ??s car,
To drive me forth, high as the morning star;
In Air Balloon to distant realms I go,
â??And leave the gazing multitude below.â?•

No more Iâ??ll hear of Venus and her doves,
Nor Cupid flying with the little loves;
Nor would I now in Junoâ??s chariot ride
In princely pomp, with peacock by my side;
In higher state, in Air Balloon I go,
Iâ??d have the gods and goddesses to know.

No more in oriental language fair
Iâ??ll read of Genii wafting through the air;
Nor longer will I seek (by Persian wrought)
A carpet, to transport me by a thought;
Enough for me in Air Balloon to go,
And leave thâ?? enquiring multitude below.

No more of Pegasus (unruly steed)
To reach Parnassusâ?? Mount, shall I have need;
Nor will I now the Muses favour court,
To shew me Pindusâ?? Hill, their chief resort;
To these fair realms in Air Balloon I go,
And leave the grovâ??ling multitude below.

No more shall Fancy now (betwitching fair!)
Erect me castles, floating in the air;
Such vague, such feeble structures I despise,
Iâ??ll kick them down as I ascend the skies;
For higher far in Air Balloon I go,
And leave the wondâ??ring multitude below.

No longer, now, at distance need I try
To trace each planet with perspective eye;
Nor longer wish, with fairies from afar,
To slide me gently down on falling star;
For up or down with equal ease I steer,
And view with naked eye the splendid sphere.

Alas poor Newton! late for learning famâ??d,
Nor more shall thy researches eâ??er be namâ??d;
For greater Newtons now each day shall soar,
High up to Heaven, and new worlds explore;
Since swift, in Air Balloons, aloft we go,
And leave the stupid multitude below.

No more the terrors of the deep I fear;
Alike to me, if friend be far or near;
This sea-girt isle I distant leave behind,
Visit each kingdom and survey mankind;
For now with ease in Air Balloon I ride,
No more compellâ??d to wait for wind or tide.

Hail, happy lovers! late by distance curst,
(Of all the worldly tortures sure the worst)
No more condemnâ??d an absence to deplore,
And, sighing, breathe your vows from shore to shore;
For through the air, swift in Balloons ye roll,
â??And waft yourselves from India to the pole.â?•

In vain may party rage assail mine ear;
If war or peace, alike Iâ??m free from care;
Should plague or pestilence infect the land,
The purest regions are at my command;
Where safe from harm, in Air Balloon I go,
And leave the sickly multitude below.

No more of judge or jury will I hear,
The laws of land extend not to the air;
Nor bailiff now my spirits can affright,
For up I mount, and soon am out of sight;
Thus, screenâ??d from justice, in Balloon I go,
And leave thâ?? insolvent multitude below.

How few the worldly evils now I dread,
No more confinâ??d this narrow earth to tread;
Should fire, or water, spread destruction drear,
Or earthquake shake this sublunary sphere,
In Air Balloon to distant realms I fly,
And leave the creeping world to sink and die.

NOTES:

1 *Phaeton* **â??**Sun God of Greek myth whom Zeus struck down after nearly scorching the Earthâ?• (*Britannica*).

3 *Aurora* **â??**Personification of dawn in Roman mythologyâ?• (*Britannica*).

6 A translated line from Virgil, probably sourced from the title page of a popular periodical, *The Adventurer* (1788), â??On ventâ??rous wing in quest of praise I go,/And leave the gazing multitude below.â?•

7 *Venus* Roman goddess of love and beauty (*Britannica*).

8 *Cupid* Roman god of love who used arrows to inspire passion and love (*Britannica*).

9 *Juno* Roman goddess of birth and marriage (*Britannica*).

14 *Genii* Plural of â??Genius,â?• guardian spirits (*Brittanica*).

15 *wrought* â??Createdâ?• (*OED*).

19 *Pegasus* Winged horse of Greek mythology (*OED*).

20 *Parnassusâ?? Mount* Mythical â??source of literary, esp. poetic inspirationâ?• (*OED*).

21 *Muses* â??The nine goddesses regarded as presiding over and inspiring learning and the artsâ?• (*OED*).

22 *Pindusâ?? Hill* Principal mountain range of mainland Greece (*Britannica*).

37 *Newton* Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), English mathematician, physicist, astronomer, and theologian (*Britannica*).

45 *sea-girt isle* England and Scotland.

54 A slight variation of Alexander Popeâ??s (1688-1744) line from *Eloisa and Abelard* (1717), â??And waft a sigh from *Indus* to the *Pole*â?• (l.58).

57 *pestilence* â??A fatal epidemicâ?• (*OED*).

63 *bailiff* â??An officer of justiceâ?• (*OED*).

70 *sublunary* â??Earthly; terrestrialâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems, &c. &c.* (London, 1799) pp. 107-11. [*Google Books*]

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