Mary Barber, â??An Unanswerable Apology for the Richâ?•

Description

[MARY BARBER]

â??An Unanswerable Apology for the Richâ?•

All-bounteous Heavâ??n, *Castalio* cries,
With bended Knees, and lifted Eyes,
When shall I have the Powâ??r to bless,
And raise up Merit in Distress?

How do our Hearts deceive us here!
He gets ten thousand Pounds a Year.
With this the pious Youth is able
To build, and plant, and keep a Table.
But then the Poor he must not treat:
Who asks the Wretch, that wants to eat?
Alas! to ease their Woes he wishes;
But cannot live without *Ten* Dishes:
Thoâ?? *Six* would serve as well, â??tis true;
But one must live, as others do.
He now feels Wants unknown before,
Wants still increasing with his Store.
The good *Castalio* must provide
Brocade, and Jewels, for his Bride.
Her Toilet shines with Plate embossâ??d;
What Sums her Lace and Linen cost!
The Cloaths that must his Person grace,
Shine with Embroidery, and Lace.
The costly Pride of *Persian* Looms,
And *Guidoâ??s* Paintings, grace his Rooms.
His Wealth *Castalio* will not waste;
But must have evâ??ry thing in *Taste.*
Heâ??s an OEconomist confest;
But what he buys, must be the best:
For common Use a Set of Plate;
Old China, when he dines in State;
A Coach and Six, to take the Air;
Besides a Chariot, and a Chair.
All these important Calls supplyâ??d,
Calls of Necessity, not Pride,
His Incomeâ??s regularly spent;

He scarcely saves to pay his Rent.
No Man alive would do more Good,
Or give more freely, if he couâ??d.
He grieves, wheneâ??er the Wretched sue;
But what can poor *Castalio* do?

Would Heavâ??n but send ten thousand more,
Heâ??d give â??â?? just as he did before.

NOTES:

1 *Castalio* Identity untraced; Barberâ??s pseudonym suggests a male form of â??Castilian,â?• characteristic of the spring Castalia, sacred in antiquity to Apollo and the Muses as a source of poetic inspiration *(OED).*

10 *Wretch* â??An unfortunate or unhappy personâ?• *(OED).*

18 *Brocade* â??A rich fabric with a raised pattern, typically with gold or silver threadâ?• *(OED).*

23 *Persian Looms* Expensive textiles imported from areas that belonged to the Persian Empire, or modern day Iran.

24 *Guidoâ??s paintings* Probably a reference to Guido Reni (1575-1642), a prolific Italian Baroque painter whose works were popular in eighteenth-century England. Charles I, for example, had more paintings by Reni than any other artist in his collection. *(England and the Italian Renaissance).*

27 *OEconomist* Archaic spelling of economist.

30 *China* â??Household tableware or other objects made from China or a similar materialâ?• *(OED).*

31 *A Coach and Six* â??A carriage drawn by six horsesâ?• *(OED).*

32 *Chariot* â??A stately or triumphal carriageâ?• *(OED); Chair* â??An enclosed chair for conveying one person, carried between horizontal poles by two portersâ?• *(OED).*

39 *sue* â??Appeal formally to a person for somethingâ?• *(OED).*

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1735), pp. 17-19. [Google Books]

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