

Mary Masters, "The Female Triumph"

Description

MARY MASTERS

•The Female Triumph•

Â SWELLâ€™™D with vain Learning, vainer man conceives,
That â€™tis with him the bright Minerva lives;
That she descends to dwell with him alone,
And in his Breast erects her Starry throne:
Pleasâ€™™d with his own, to Female Reason blind, Â 5
Fansys all Wisdom in his Sex confinâ€™™d.
Proudly they boast of Philosophick rules,
Of Modes and Maxims taught in various Schools,
And look on Women as a Race of Fools.
But if CALISTAâ€™™s perfect soul they knew, Â 10
Theyâ€™™d own their Error, and her Praise pursue.
Centered in her the brightest Graces meet,
Treasures of Knowledge and rich mines of Wit.
Her Thoughts are beautiful, refinâ€™™d and new,
Polishâ€™™d her language and her Judgment true; Â 15
Each Word deliverâ€™™d with that soft address,
That as she speaks the melting Sounds we bless.
O! I could praise her without doing wrong,
Could to the subject raise my daring Song;
Were I enrichâ€™™d with PRIORâ€™™s Golden Vein, Â 20
Â 20
Her I would Sing in an exalted Strain;
Her Merit in the noblest Verse proclaim,
And raise my own upon CALISTAâ€™™s fame:
Her elevated Sense, her Voice, her Mien,
Her innate Goodness, and her Air
Serene, Â 25
Should in my Lays to future Ages shine,
And some new Charm appear in evâ€™™ry Line.

Fir'd with the Theme how great would be the Flight?
In what unbounded Numbers should I write!
Each Line, each Word, would more majestic grow, Â 30
And evâ€™™ry Page with finished Beauty glow.

But me alas the *tuneful Nine* disdain,

Scorn my rude Verse, and mock my feeble Strain:
No kind Poetick Pow'r descend to fill
My humble breast, and guide my trembling Quill: Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 35
My Thoughts, in rough and artless Terms exprest,
Are incorrect and negligently drest.
Yet sure my just ambition all must own
The well-chose Subject has my Judgment shown
And in the weak Attempt my great Design is known. Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 40

NOTES:

- 2 *Minerva* Ancient Roman goddess of wisdom and war (www.newworldencyclopedia.org).
- 10 *Calista* Potential reference to a female contemporary or companion of the author; Latin feminine form of the Greek name *Calisto* (www.theoi.com).
- 20 *Prior* Contemporary poet Matthew Prior (1664-1721), known in the period for his facility with meter and rhyme.
- 24 *Mien* *â€œ*The look, bearing, manner, or conduct of a person, as showing character, mood*â€•(QED)*.
- 32 *Tuneful Nine* The Greek muses.

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1733), pp. 8-10.

Edited by Taryn Osborne