

Nicholas Amhurst, "To Mrs. Centlivre at that time dangerously ill"

Description

[NICHOLAS AMHURST]

"To Mrs. CENTLIVRE at that time dangerously ill"

Struck with a Passion for unhappy ROWE,
To whom so many finish'd Scenes we owe,
I paid my Tribute to his mighty Name,
A Stranger to his Person but by Fame:
The Man, but not the Author was unknown, 5
Oft have I made his well-wrought Verse my own;
Oft have I wept his dying Hero's Cause,
And shook the echoing Dome with loud Applause:
From hence alone my grateful Sorrows rise,
Hence the prompt Tears overflow my swelling Eyes; 10
But double Pangs thy mournful Bosom rend,
I lose the Poet only, you the Friend.
You knew the secret Virtues of his Heart,
How void it was of every treacherous Art;
Search'd the vast hidden Treasures of his Mind, 15
And weep in him the Loss to all Mankind.
GARTH follow'd soon, from the unsparing Grave,
Not his own Art his mortal Life could save!
Two Bards at once the Tyrant swept away,
To feed the Worm, and mix with vulgar Clay; 20
Nor yet content, unbounded in his Rage,
Of THEE too he attempts to rob the Age.
Insulting Death! oh stop thy savage Hand,
Reverse, tremendous Power, the rash Command;
Already you have given us too much Grief, 25
Be kind at last, and minister Relief;
Stop our forboding Tears, assuage our Pain,
And give CENTLIVRE back to Health again.

NOTES:

Title *Centlivre* Susanna Centlivre (1669-1723), English poet, playwright, and actress.

1 *Rowe* Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718), Poet Laureate (1715-1718), playwright and editor.

8 *Dome* "A building, a house, a fabrick" (Johnson).

11 *Pangs* A sudden access of keen feeling or emotion• (OED).

12 *You the friend* Centlivre and Rowe were frequent collaborators; both Centlivre and Amhurst dedicated tributes to Rowe in 1719.

14 *Art* Cunning• (Johnson).

17 *Garth* Samuel Garth (1661-1719), English poet and physician.

18 *Art* Skill in applying the principles of a special science• (OED).

19 *Bards* A lyric or epic poet• (OED); here references to Rowe and Garth.

27 *assuage* Common form of assuage in 16-18thc.• (OED).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1723), pp. 68-69. [Google Books]

Edited by Jerry Andersen