Sarah Fyge Egerton, â??To Mr. Norris, on his Idea of Happinessâ?•

Description

SARAH FYGE EGERTON

â??*To Mr.* Norris, *on his Idea of Happiness*â?•

I.

If Pythagorick notions would agree,
With sublimated Christianity;
What mighty Soul, shall I allow,
Informs thy Body now;
For when did such appear,
Sure the belovâ??d Discipleâ??s Soul is here.
Not usâ??d since then, but kept above,
And taught a more extatick Love;
The Understanding more inlargâ??d and free,
Each generous Faculty
Refinâ??d, Improvâ??d, made more compleat,
In the seraphick Seat.
The brightest warmest of thâ?? exalted Quire,
Flaming with Rays of beatifick Fire;
Such seems thy elevated Soul to be,
And not the usual sort gave to Mortality.

II.

The great, the Eternal God of Love,
Took Pity on us from above;
He could no longer see,
Our Souls wrapt in Obscurity:
But sent thee like, a bright celestial Ray,
To clear our Sight, and to direct the Way;
To the Etherial Courts of Bliss,
The only great, and lasting Happiness.
The active native Principle of Love,
We found did move
By an internal Influence,
But â??twas toward some object of the Sense:
Effects and Causes were not understood,
We only knew we wisht for Good,
And would with Joy each glimpse pursue,

Resolve to fasten there, and think â??twas true.
In vain we thought our Love was fixt,
For all those Joys were intermixt
With Disappointments and Deceit,
Our strugling Souls themselves did cheat:
Still they desirâ??d and lovâ??d, but were not blest,
Nor found they Rest,
Till thy bright Pen markt out the happy Prize,
Taught us at once to love and to be wise.

III.

Thou dost dissect our weak distemperâ??d Soul,
Discoverâ??st the Disease and makâ??st us whole;
Prescribâ??st such Methods, which if we obey,
We shall no longer doat on Clay,
Which long our vitiated Souls have fed,
But shall have Appetite to Celestial Bread.
We shall no longer fondly play,
With Trifles on the way,
But climb the Hill with a delightful hast,
And feast our Souls at thy divine Repast.
But lest, like doubtful or unthankful Guest,
We should neglect the Royal Feast;
Thou, to incourage our appearance there,
Hast kindly given us a Bill of Fare.

IV.

By powerful Energy of Thoughts divine,
Thou didst thy Soul raise and refine,
With strong Impulse it did upward move,
Mounting on eager Wings of Love;
Through all thâ?? inferior Courts it made its way,
To the bright Spring of everlasting day;
Did all the amazing Glories see,
And what it shouâ??d hereafter be,
Saluted by the soft Seraphick Quire,
Whoâ??s Anthems all its Faculties inspire,
But flasht to might Rays of sacred Fire.
For the refulgent Glories were too great,
It could not bear such Raptures yet,
Till Immortality had made it more compleat:
It could no longer stay, no longer view,
Then down again it flew,
Did with Angelick Radiance shine,
Inspirâ??d with Sapience divine.
It doth its bright Etherial Voyage tell,

And in what Bliss departed Souls do dwell:
All this in pure and pregnant Elegance we hear,
Plain as Corporeal Organs can declare,
That when we read thy Lines we almost think weâ??re there.

NOTES:

Title The reference is to John Norris (1657-1711), Anglican priest and philosopher and his poem titled â??An Idea of Happiness, in a Letter to a Friend enquiring wherein the Greatest Happiness attainable by Man in this Life does consistâ?• (1684) (*Britannica*).

1 *Pythagorick* â??Of, relating to, or characteristic of Pythagoras, his followers, or their philosophyâ?• (*OED*).

12 *seraphick Seat* This appears to be a reference to heaven, where seraphim â??hover above the throne of Godâ?• (*OED*).

13 *Quire* â??Figurative of angelsâ?• (*OED*).

45 *vitiated* â??Corrupted, spoiledâ?• (*OED*).

48 *Trifles* Insignificant things (*OED*).

50 *Repast* â??Figurative, as the type of something providing nourishment for the spirit, intellect, etc.â?• (*OED*).

54 *Bill of Fare* â??Menu; a programmeâ?• (*OED*).

66 *refulgent* â??Illustriousâ?• (*OED*).

72 *Sapience* â??Spiritual wisdom, knowledge of divine thingsâ?• (*OED*).

76 *Corporeal* â??Of the nature of the animal body as opposed to the spirit; physical; bodily; mortalâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions, Together with* a *Pastoral*, By Mrs. S. F. (London, [1703]), pp. 27-31. [Google Books]

Edited by Madison Maraspini