

[Mrs. Letches], "Evening Reflections on Brandon-Hill"

**Description**

[MRS. LETCHES]

**• Evening Reflections on Brandon-Hill •**

Soft pleasing Twilight! welcome is thy glad  
Approach to weary man! he, forgetful still  
Of all the toils succeeding days present him,  
Salutes thee as the grey-clad harbinger  
Of solemn sable night. Brutes do thee  
homageâ€™” 5

With silent cheerfulness attend thy mild  
Inviting. Evâ€™n the lovely featherâ€™d race,  
Whose grateful melody makes groves and vales  
Echo, yet cease their warbling, unoppressâ€™d  
With Care, repose their feeble frames,  
unconscious 10

Of ill, or snares by artful fowlers spread  
To allure their innocence, or rash intent  
Of inquisitive boys, invaders rude  
Of liberty! on dew-besprinkled bough; â€™”  
Press fond the senseless clod with filial love: 15

Than these; what transport must the bosoms swell  
Of Africâ€™s sons, forlorn mal-treated tribe,  
When Heavâ€™nâ€™s Majestic emblem they behold  
Withdraw his radiance thence, to illuminate  
Other worlds! When even their base oppressors 20

Content, permit them to recline their torturâ€™d  
Frames on beds, inferior far to those  
Preparâ€™d for pamperâ€™d steeds. So absolute,  
O Night! hast thou dominion oâ€™er the  
Petty tyrant? Makâ€™st him forget the 25

Oblivious draught infused! Men they  
Doomâ€™ infringing justice and humanityâ€™”to  
Feel the powerful scourge, and groan beneath  
Unnatural tyranny, which God abhors.â€™”  
O merciful Disposer of events! 30

Inspire the breasts of the "Noble few," foes  
To cruelty and avarice, to crush their  
Dreadful power! that distant nations may  
Learn of Britain's Senate, Justice and Mercy.

**NOTES:**

**Author** *Mrs. Letches* This attribution is based on an inscription on the title page in what appears to be a contemporary hand (see ESTC T42632). She published anonymously as "A Lady" in Bristol, one of the centers of the Atlantic "triangle" trade, and her personal history remains unknown. Throughout the eighteenth century, Bristol's booming port not only transported goods but also enslaved African people to the Americas and West Indies. At this same time, Bristol boasted a large abolitionist movement that Mrs. Letches clearly contributed to. She dedicated her volume to "the Inhabitants of Bristol" (iii).

**Title** *Brandon-Hill* St. Brandon's Hill is located close to Bristol city center in southwest England. It is possibly the oldest municipal open space in the country.

**4** *harbinger* "One that goes before and announces the approach of some one; a forerunner" (QED).

**5** *sable* Black.

**9** *warbling* "Singing or making tuneful melody with sweet quavering notes" (QED).

**15** *filial* "Of or pertaining to a son or daughter" (QED).

**18** *Heaven's Majestic emblem* The sun.

**31** *Noble few* Abolitionists.

**34** *Britain's Senate* Parliament.

**SOURCE:** *Poems on Several Occasions* (Bristol, 1792), pp. 7-8. [Google Books]

**Edited by** Sherry Portillo