

David Mallet, "The Discovery"

Description

DAVID MALLET

"The Discovery"

*Upon reading some Verses, written by a young
Lady at a Boarding-School. Sept. 1760.*

Apollo lately sent to know,
If he had any sons below;
For, by the trash he long has seen
In male and female Magazine,
A hundred quires not worth a groat, 5
The race must be extinct, he thought.

His messenger to court repairs;
Walks softly with the croud up stairs:
But when he had his errand told,
The courtiers sneer'd, both young and old. 10
Augustus knit his royal brow,
And bade him let *Apollo* know it,
That from his infancy till now,
He lov'd nor poetry nor poet.

His next adventure was the park, 15
When it grew fashionably dark:
There beauties, boobies, strumpets, rakes,
Talk'd much of commerce, whist and stakes;
Who tips the wink, who drops the card:
But not one word of verse or bard. 20

The stage, APOLLO's old domain,
Where his true sons were wont to reign,
His courier now past frowning by:
Ye modern DURFEYS tell us why.

Slow, to the city last he went: 25
There, all was prose, of cent per cent.
There, alley-omnium, script, and bonus,
(Latin, for which a Muse would stone us,
Yet honest GIDEON's classic stile)

Made our poor Nuntio stare and smile. 30

And now the clock had struck eleven:
 The messenger must back to Heaven;
 But, just as he his wings had tyê??d,
 Lookê??d up *Queen-Square*, the North-east side.
 A blooming Creature there he found, 35
 With pen and ink and books around,
 Alone and writing by a taper:
 He read unseen, then stole her paper.
 It much amusê??d him on his way;
 And reaching Heaven by break of day, 40
 He shewê??d APOLLO what he stole.
 The God perusê??d, and likê??d the whole:
 Then, calling for his pocket-book,
 Some right celestial vellum took;
 And what he with a sun-beam there 45
 Writ down, the Muse thus copies fair:
 ê??If I no men my sons must call,
 Hereê??s one fair Daughter worth ê??em all:
 Mark then the sacred words that follow,
 SOPHIAê??S mineê?• ê??ê?? so signê??d 50

APOLLO.

NOTES:

- 1 *Apollo* ê??God of light, poetry and musicê?• (OED).
- 5 *quires* ê??A small book or pamphlet consisting of a set of four sheets folded in two to form eight leaves;ê?• also ê??a short poem, treatiseê?• (OED); *groat* ê??The English groat coined in 1351ê??2 was made equal to four penceê?• (OED).
- 8 *croud* Variant of ê??crowd.ê?•
- 11 *Augustus* Founder of the Roman Empire; here a reference to King George II (reigned 1727-1760).
- 17 *boobies* ê??A childish, foolish, inept, or blundering personê?• (OED); *strumpet* A female prostitute; (also) a mistress, a concubine (OED); *rake* ê??A fashionable or stylish man of dissolute or promiscuous habitsê?• (OED).
- 23 *frowning* ê??Disapprovingê?• (OED).
- 24 *DURFEYS* Alluding to Thomas dâ??Urfey (1653ê??1723), a Restoration-era playwright, best known for his songs and contributions to the ballad opera as a theatrical form.
- 26 *cent per cent* That is, ê??totally, completelyê?• (OED).
- 27 *alley-omnium* Possibly figurative for ê??all the marbles.ê?•
- 29 *GIDEON* Military leader, judge, and prophet in the Hebrew Bible; see Judges 6-8.

30 *Nuntio* Variant of *nuncio*; a papal ambassador to a foreign court or government (OED).

34 *Queen-Square* A fashionable neighborhood in north London in the mid-century period.

38 *read* Corrected from *red* in the original text.

44 *vellum* A fine kind of parchment prepared from the skins of calves (lambs or kids) and used especially for writing, painting, or binding (OED).

50 *SOPHIA* Greek name meaning wisdom; also referring to Athena, the goddess of wisdom.

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1762), pp. 14-16. [Google Books]

Edited by Rafe Kassim