Mary Leapor, â??The Temple of Loveâ?•

Description

MARY LEAPOR

â??The Temple of Loveâ?•

When lonely Night composâ??d the drowsy Mind,
And hushâ??d the Bosom of the weary Hind,
Pleasâ??d with plain Nature and with simple Life,
I read the Scenes of *Shoreâ??s* deluded Wife,
Till my faint Spirits sought a silent Bed,
And on its Pillow dropâ??d my aking Head;
Then Fancy ever to her *Mira* kind,
Preparâ??d her Phantoms for the roving Mind.

Behold a Fabrick rising from the Ground,
To the soft Timbrel and the Citternâ??s Sound:
Corinthian Pillars the vast Building hold,
Of polishâ??d Silver and *Peruvian* Gold;
In four broad Arches spread the shining Doors,
The blazing Roofs enlighten all the Floors:
Beneath a sparkling Canopy that shone
With *Persian* Jewels, like a Morning Sun
Wrapâ??d in a Robe of purest *Tyrian* Dye,
*Cytheraâ??*s Image met the ravishâ??d Eye,
Whose glowing Features wouâ??d in Paint beguile:
So well the Artist drew her mimick Smile;
Her shining Eyes confessâ??d a sprightly Joy;
Upon her Knees reclinâ??d her wanton Boy;
On the bright Walls, around her and above,
Were drawn the Statutes and the Arts of Love:
These taught the silent Language of the Eye,
The broken Whisper and amusing Lye;
The careless Glance peculiar to the Fair,
And Vows for Lovers, that dissolve in Air;
The graceful Anger, and the rolling Eyes;
The practisâ??d Blush and counterfeit Surprise,
The Language proper for pretending Swains;
And fine Description for imaginâ??d Pains;
The friendly Caution and designing Ease,
And all the Arts that ruin while they please.

Now entred, followâ??d by a splendid Train,
A blooming Damsel and a wealthy Swain;
The gaudy Youth in shining Robes arrayâ??d,
Behind him followâ??d the unthinking Maid:
Youth in her Cheek like opâ??ning Roses sprung,
Her careless Tresses on her Shoulders hung.
Her Smiles were chearful as enlivâ??ning *May*;
Her Dress was careless, and her Eyes were gay;
Then to soft Voices and melodious Sound
The Board was spread, the sparkling Glasses crownâ??d:
The sprightly Virgin in a Moment shines
In the gay Entrails of the eastern Mines;
Then Pride comes in with Patches for the Fair,
And spicy Odours for her curling Hair:
Rude Riot in a crimson Vest arrayâ??d,
With smooth-facâ??d Flattâ??ry like a Chamber-maid:
Soft Pomp and Pleasure at her Elbow stand,
And Folly shakes the Rattles in her Hand.

But now her feeble Structure seemâ??d to shake,
Its Basis tremblâ??d and its Pillars quake;
Then rushâ??d Suspicion through the lofty Gate,
With heart-fick Loathing led by ghastly Hate;
And foaming Rage, to close the horrid Band,
With a drawn Poniard in her shaking Hand.
Now like an Earthquake shook the reeling Frame,
The Lamps extinguish in a purple Flame:
One universal Groan was heard, and then
The Cries of Women and the Voice of Men:
Some roar out Vengeance, some for Mercy call;
And Shrieks and Tumult fill the dreadful Hall.

At length the Spectres vanishâ??d from my Sight,
Again the Lamps resumâ??d a feeble Light;
But changâ??d the Place: No Splendor there was shown,
But gloomy Walls that Mirth had never known;
For the gay Dome where Pleasure usâ??d to dwell,
Appearâ??d an Abbey and a doleful Cell;
And here the sad, the ruinâ??d Nymph was found,
Her Robe disorderâ??d and her Locks unbound,
While from her Eyes the pearly Drops of Woe,
Washâ??d her pale Cheek where Roses usâ??d to blow:
Her blue and trembling Lips preparâ??d to breathe
The Sighs that made her swelling Bosom heave;
Thus stupid with her Grief she sat and prest
Her lily Hands across her pensive Breast;
A Group of ghastly Phantoms stood behind,
Whose Task it is to wreck the guilty Mind:

Wide-mouthâ??d Reproach with Visage rude and thin,
And hissing Scandal made a hideous Din;
Remorse that darted from her deadly Wings,
Invenomâ??d Arrows and a thousand Stings:
Then with pale Cheeks and with a ghastly Stare,
Peepâ??d oâ??er her Shoulder hollow-eyâ??d Despair;
Whose Hand extended bore a bleeding Heart,
And Death behind her shook his threatâ??ning Dart:
These Forms with Horror fillâ??d my aking Breast,
And from my Eye-lids drove the Balm of Rest;
I woke and found old Night her Course had run,
And left her Empire to the rising Sun.

NOTES:

4 *Scenes of Shoreâ??s deluded Wife* A reference to *The Tragedy of Jane Shore* (1714), a play by Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718) based on the life an intrigues of Elizabeth (â??Janeâ?•) Shore (c. 1445-c. 1557), a mistress of King Edward IV.

9 *Fabrick* â??A buildingâ?• (*OED*).

10 *Timbrel* â??An instrument of the percussion familyâ?• (*OED*); *Cittern* â??An instrument of the lute familyâ?• (*OED*).

11 *Corinthian Pillars* â??The name of one of the three Grecian [architectural] orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian), of which it is the lightest and most ornateâ?• (*OED*).

17 *Tyrian Dye* Alludes to â??the purple or crimson dye anciently made at Tyre from certain molluscsâ?• (*OED*).

18 *Cythera* A reference to Aphrodite, Greek goddess of love who, according to legend, was born on the island of Cythera.

19 *beguile* â??Deceiveâ?• (*OED*).

22 *wanton Boy* Cupid.

64 *Tumult* â??Commotion leading to a riotâ?• (*OED*).

69 *Dome* â??A stately buildingâ?• (*OED*).

70 *doleful* â??Sorrowfulâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems Upon Several Occasions* (London, 1748), pp. 162-66. [Google Books]

Edited by Angela Vu