

Mary Leapor, "The Charms of Anthony"

Description

MARY LEAPOR

"The Charms of Anthony"

YE Swains, attend; let ev'ry Nymph be near;
Be still, ye Rivers, that the Swains may hear:
Ye Winds, be calm, and brush with softer Wing,
We mean the Charms of *Anthony* to sing;
See all around the list'ning Shepherds throng; 5
O help, ye Sisters of immortal song.

LUCY.

Sing, *Phebe*, sing what Shepherd rules the Plain,
Young *Colin*'s Envy, and *Aminda*'s Pain:
Whom none can rival when he mows the Field,
And to whose Flute the Nightingale must yield. 10

PHEBE.

'Tis *Anthony* 'tis he deserves the Lay,
As mild as Ev'ning, and as Morning gay;
Not the fresh Blooms on yonder Codling-tree,
Not the white Hawthorn half so fair as he;
Nor the young Daisy dress'd in Morning Dew; 15
Nor the Pea Blossom wears a brighter Hue.

LUCY.

None knows like him to strew the wheaten Grain,
Or drive the Plough-share o'er the fertile Plain;
To raise the Sheaves, or reap the waving Corn,
Or mow brown Stubble in the early Morn. 20

PHEBE.

How mild the Youth, when on a sultry Day
In yonder Vale we turn'd the fragrant Hay:
How on his Voice the list'ning Shepherds hung,
Not tuneful *Stella* half so sweetly sung.

LUCY.

Whether he binds the Sheaf in twisted Band, 25
Or turns the Pitch-fork on his nimble Hand;
Heâ??s sure to win a Glance from evâ??ry Eye,
While clumsy *Colin* stands neglected by.

PHEBE.

His curling Locks by far more lovely shew, 30
Than the white Wig on Squire *Fopling*â??s Brow;
And when the Shepherd on a rainy Day,
Weaves for his Hat a Wisp of flowâ??ry Hay,
The scarlet Feather not so gay appears,
Which on his Crown Sir *Ambrose Fino* wears.

LUCY.

For *Anthony Meriah* leaves her Cow, 35
And stands to gape at him upon the Mow:
While he (for who but must that Wench despise?)
Throws Straws and Cobwebs on her staring Eyes.

PHEBE.

To the Back-door I saw proud *Lydia* hie, 40
To see the Team with *Anthony* go by;
He slily laughâ??d, and turnâ??d him from the Door,
I thought the Damsel would have spoke no more.

LUCY.

Me once he met, â??twas when from yonder Vale, 45
Each Morn I brought the heavy milking Pail:
He took it from my Head, and with a Smile
Reachâ??d out his Hand, and helpâ??d me oâ??er the Stile.

PHEBE.

As I was dancing late amongst the Crew, 50
A yellow Pippin oâ??er my Head he threw:
Sue bit her Lips, and *Barbarett*a frownâ??d;
And *Phillis* lookâ??d as thoâ?? she wouâ??d have swoonâ??d.

Thus sung the Maids till *Colinet* came by, 55
And *Rodrigo* from weeding of the Rye;
Each took his Lass, and sped â??em to the Town,
To drink cool Cider at the *Hare* and *Hound*:
The Damsels simper like the sparkling Beer,
And *Colin* shines till *Anthony* is near.

NOTES:

1 Swain A country or farm labourer, frequently a shepherd; a country lover; **Nymph** Spirits taking the form of a maiden inhabiting the sea, rivers, mountains, woods, trees, etc.; a beautiful young woman (OED).

6 Sisters of immortal song The Muses of Greek mythology: Each of the nine goddesses regarded as presiding over and inspiring learning and the arts (OED).

7 Phebe This and other names used in the poem are stereotypical names used in pastoral verse.

10 Nightingale In poetry, a symbol of melodious song (OED).

13 Codling-tree A kind of apple tree.

18 Plough-share The large pointed blade of a plough (OED).

19 Sheaves Large bundles in which it is usual to bind cereal plants after reaping (OED).

30 Fopling Variation of fop, a foolish person; one who is foolishly attentive to and vain of his appearance, dress, or manners (OED).

36 Mow A heap of grain or hay in a barn (OED).

39 hie Haste, speed (OED).

46 Stile Steps or rungs allowing passage over or through a fence, while forming a barrier to the passage of sheep or cattle (OED).

48 A yellow Pippin *er my Head he threw* A variation on the custom in ancient Greece in which apples were presented to sweethearts as a proffer or declaration of love; oftentimes apples were tossed or thrown in this context (McCartney, *How the Apple Became the Token of Love*, p. 70).

54 Hare and Hound A tavern or pub, possibly alluding to a passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which Phoebus and Daphne are figured as hound and hare respectively (Book I, ll. 521-525).

55 simper To glimmer, shimmer, twinkle (OED).

Source: *Poems Upon Several Occasions* (London, 1748), pp. 249-252. [Google Books]

Edited by Angel Johnson