

Anonymous, "To Mr. C-T-BY"

Description

ANONYMOUS

“To Mr. C T BY”

Ne sit ancilla tibi amor pudori, &c.
Horace, Book II. Ode IV. Imitated

Smit with a spider-brusher’s face,
Think not thy passion a disgrace,
Nor look to dâ€™d dejected;
Where is thy ancient valour fled?
Nay â€“ never blush, and hang thy head, ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ 5
Like Bobadil detected.

When Cupid wills his darts to fly,
From corner of a cookmaid’s eye,
The stoutest may be taken;
And whilst she stirs the kitchen fire, ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ 10
Kindling her cheeks, and his desire,
His heart may melt like bacon.

Then blush not at thâ€™ ignoble flame,
Heroes of old have done the same,
Tho’ great within the trenches; ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ 15
Achilles, Ajax, and the Czar,
Softenâ€™d the rugged brow of war
In private with their wenchens.

Courage, dear boy, return once more,
Leave not Cindrilla to deplore, ^ 20
Whom thy sweet air bewitches;
Her mop, her brush, neglected lieâ€™
She can nor make or bake a pieâ€™
Scarce see to wash her dishes.

Wilt thou no more frequent the green? ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ 25
With folded arms no more be seen,
Thy own sweet person viewing?
O how she longs to see thee there,

With wrinkled boot, and turnâ€™d-up hair,
Tho' to her own undoing! 30

And then to hear thee talk so fine,
Of horses, wâ€™s, and where to dine,
In neat set phrase so charmingâ€™
Cindrilla swears her heart is won,
That sheâ€™s resolvâ€™d to be undone, 35
And give her mistress warning.

The misses may be pert and sneer,
But servants, thoâ€™ in common geer,
Stuff gowns, and coarser jacket,
May yet conceal as fair a skin, 40
Be as provocative to sin,
And make not half the racket.

Besides, who knows, thy love may be
Of noble blood, in low degree,
Tho' now with scarce a rag on; 45
Some fairy, envious of her worth,
Doomâ€™d her to labour from her birth,
Sprung from renownâ€™d Pendragon.

Come then to thy Cindrilla's arms,
Bedizenâ€™d in her Sunday charms, 50
No gaudy silks and sattins;
But new-starchâ€™d cap, and tuckâ€™d-up gown,
With red and white thatâ€™s all her own,
Stuff petticoat, and pattins.

Pardon, if in these lyric lays 55
I trumpet forth Cindrillaâ€™s praise,
Her beauty thoâ€™ uncommon;
With fourscore years upon my head,
Thou hast but little cause to dread
A poor infirm old woman. 60

NOTES:

Title Unable to identify addressee. This poem is preceded by a letter to Mr. Urban recommending publication, dated 1733 Bristol, Aug. 20 and signed Z.

Epigraph *Ne sit ancilla tibi amor pudori* "Do not let love for a maidservant be your shame;" Horace, *Book II. Ode IV* "To Xanthias Phocæus," in which Horace consoles his friend for falling in love with his servant girl.

1 spider-brusher A servant.

3 *dejected* – Depressed in spirits, downcast, disheartened, low spirited (QED).

4 *valour* – Bravery (QED).

6 *Bobadil* A reference to a character in Ben Jonson's play, *Every Man in his Humour* (1598); – a blustering braggart who pretends prowess (QED).

16 *Achilles* – Briseis [Author's note]. A figure in Homer's *Iliad*. She was captured by Achilles during the Trojan War and became his lover; *Ajax* – Tecmessa [Author's note]. Ajax killed Tecmessa's father during the Trojan War and took her captive. Their union produced a son, Eurysaces; *Czar* – Catherine, the wife of a Swedish serjeant [Author's note]. Czar Peter III (1728-1762) was emperor of Russia from January to July of 1762. He was overthrown by his wife, who became Catherine the Great (1729-1796), reigned from 1762-1796 (*Britannica*).

20 *Cindrilla* Variant of Cinderella; the most popular version of the Cinderella story in the eighteenth century was the English translation of Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passe* (1697).

37 *pert* – Impertinent, cheeky (QED).

38 *geer* Clothing.

48 *Pendragon* Probably a reference to Uther Pendragon, legendary King of the Britons and supposed father of King Arthur; here a reference to the theme of illegitimate conception.

50 *Bedizen* – To dress out especially in vulgar or gaudy fashion (QED).

SOURCE: *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 54, part II (September 1784), p. 694. [J. Paul Leonard Library]

Edited by Jhadeeja Shahida Vaz