

Mary Barber, "An Unanswerable Apology for the Rich"

Description

[MARY BARBER]

"An Unanswerable Apology for the Rich"

All-bounteous Heaven, *Castalio* cries,
With bended Knees, and lifted Eyes,
When shall I have the Power to bless,
And raise up Merit in Distress?

How do our Hearts deceive us here!	5
He gets ten thousand Pounds a Year.	
With this the pious Youth is able	
To build, and plant, and keep a Table.	
But then the Poor he must not treat:	
Who asks the Wretch, that wants to eat?	10
Alas! to ease their Woes he wishes;	
But cannot live without <i>Ten</i> Dishes:	
Though <i>Six</i> would serve as well, 'tis true;	
But one must live, as others do.	
He now feels Wants unknown before,	15
Wants still increasing with his Store.	
The good <i>Castalio</i> must provide	
Brocade, and Jewels, for his Bride.	
Her Toilet shines with Plate embossed;	
What Sums her Lace and Linen cost!	20
The Cloaths that must his Person grace,	
Shine with Embroidery, and Lace.	
The costly Pride of <i>Persian</i> Looms,	
And <i>Guido's</i> Paintings, grace his Rooms.	
His Wealth <i>Castalio</i> will not waste;	25
But must have every thing in <i>Taste</i> .	
He's an Economist confest;	
But what he buys, must be the best:	
For common Use a Set of Plate;	
Old China, when he dines in State;	30
A Coach and Six, to take the Air;	
Besides a Chariot, and a Chair.	
All these important Calls supply'd,	
Calls of Necessity, not Pride,	
His Income's regularly spent;	35

He scarcely saves to pay his Rent.
No Man alive would do more Good,
Or give more freely, if he couâ??d.
He grieves, wheneâ??er the Wretched sue;
But what can poor *Castalio* do?

40

Would Heavâ??n but send ten thousand more,
Heâ??d give â??â?? just as he did before.

NOTES:

1 *Castalio* Identity untraced; Barberâ??s pseudonym suggests a male form of â??Castilian,â?? characteristic of the spring Castalia, sacred in antiquity to Apollo and the Muses as a source of poetic inspiration (*OED*).

10 *Wretch* â??An unfortunate or unhappy personâ?• (*OED*).

18 *Brocade* â??A rich fabric with a raised pattern, typically with gold or silver threadâ?• (*OED*).

23 *Persian Looms* Expensive textiles imported from areas that belonged to the Persian Empire, or modern day Iran.

24 *Guidoâ??s paintings* Probably a reference to Guido Reni (1575-1642), a prolific Italian Baroque painter whose works were popular in eighteenth-century England. Charles I, for example, had more paintings by Reni than any other artist in his collection. (*England and the Italian Renaissance*).

27 *OEconomist* Archaic spelling of economist.

30 *China* â??Household tableware or other objects made from China or a similar materialâ?• (*OED*).

31 *A Coach and Six* â??A carriage drawn by six horsesâ?• (*OED*).

32 *Chariot* â??A stately or triumphal carriageâ?• (*OED*); *Chair* â??An enclosed chair for conveying one person, carried between horizontal poles by two portersâ?• (*OED*).

39 *sue* â??Appeal formally to a person for somethingâ?• (*OED*).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1735), pp. 17-19. [Google Books]

Edited by Nikolas Refanidis