Matthew Prior, â??To a Gentleman in Love. A Taleâ?•

Description

MATTHEW PRIOR

â??To a Young Gentleman *in* Love. A Taleâ?•

From publick Noise and factious Strife,
From all the busie Ills of Life,
Take me, My CELIA, to Thy Breast;
And lull my wearied Soul to Rest:
For ever, in this humble Cell,
Let Thee and I, my Fair One, dwell;
None enter else, but LOVEâ??â??and He
Shall bar the Door, and keep the Key.

To painted Roofs, and shining Spires
(Uneasie Seats of high Desires)
Let the unthinking Many croud,
That dare be Covetous and Proud:
In golden Bondage let Them wait,
And barter Happiness for State:
But Oh! My CELIA, when Thy Swain
Desires to see a Court again;
May Heavâ??n around This destinâ??d Head
The choicest of its Curses shed:
To sum up all the Rage of Fate,
In the Two Things I dread and hate;
Mayâ??st Thou be False, and I be Great.

Thus, on his CELIAâ??s panting Breast,
Fond CELADON his Soul exprest;
While with Delight the lovely Maid
Receivâ??d the Vows, She thus repaid:

Hope of my Age, Joy of my Youth,
Blest Miracle of Love and Truth!
All that couâ??d eâ??er be counted Mine,
My Love and Life long since are Thine:
A real Joy I never knew;
â??Till I believâ??d Thy Passion true:
A real Grief I neâ??er can find;
â??Till Thou provâ??st Perjurâ??d or Unkind.

Contempt, and Poverty, and Care,
All we abhor, and all we fear,
Blest with Thy Presence, I can bear.
Throâ?? Waters, and throâ?? Flames Iâ??ll go,
Suffâ??rer and Solace of Thy Woe:
Trace Me some yet unheard-of Way,
That I Thy Ardour may repay;
And make My constant Passion known,
By more than Woman yet has done.

Had I a Wish that did not bear
The Stamp and Image of my Dear;
Iâ??d pierce my Heart throâ?? evâ??ry Vein,
And Die to let it out again.
No: VENUS shall my Witness be,
(If VENUS ever lovâ??d like Me)
That for one Hour I wouâ??d not quit
My Shepherdâ??s Arms, and this Retreat,
To be the PERSIAN Monarchâ??s Bride,
Partâ??ner of all his Powâ??r and Pride;
Or Rule in Regal State above,
Mother of Gods, and Wife of JOVE.

O happy these of Human Race!
But soon, alas! our Pleasures pass.
He thankâ??d her on his bended Knee;
Then drank a Quart of Milk and Tea;
And leaving her adorâ??d Embrace,
Hastenâ??d to Court, to beg a Place.
While She, his Absence to bemoan,
The very Moment He was gone,
Callâ??d THYRSIS from beneath the Bed;
Where all this time He had been hid.

MORAL

WHILE Men have these Ambitious Fancies;
And wanton Wenches read Romances;
Our Sex willâ??â??What? Out with it. Lye;
And Theirâ??s in equal Strains reply.
The Moral of the Tale I sing
(A Posy for a Wedding Ring)
In this short Verse will be confinâ??d:
Love is a Jest; and Vows are Wind.

NOTES:

15 *Swain* A shepherd, here figured as a young lover or suitor.

23 *CELADON* A pastoral name for a shepherd.

33 *provâ??st* Have proved to be; *Perjurâ??d â??*A person that has committed or is guilty of perjury; that has deliberately broken an oath, promise, etc.â?• (*OED*).

47 *VENUS* â??The ancient Roman goddess of beauty and loveâ?• (*OED*).

54 *Wife of JOVE* â??Jove, *a poetical equivalent of Jupiter, name of the highest deity of the ancient Romans*; Joveâ??s wife is Juno, a woman of stately beautyâ?• (*OED*).

63 *THYRSIS* A pastoral name for a shepherd; used by Virgil in his Seventh Eclogue.

70 *Posy* â??A small bunch of flowersâ?¦a nosegay or small bouquetâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: ***Poems on Several Occasions*** **(London, 1718), p. 99-101. [Google Books]**

Edited by Kaori Okamoto