Stephen Duck, “To His Royal Highness The Duke of Cumberland, on His Birth-Day”

Description

STEPHEN DUCK

Â â€œTo His Royal HighnessÂ The Duke of CUMBERLAND, on His Birth-Dayâ€•

Twelve times hath SOL his annual Race begun,
Since JOVE descended from his radiant Throne:
Around the pendent Globe, the God pursuâ€™d
His circling March, and human Actions viewâ€™d;
But grievâ€™d that *Virtue* droopâ€™d her languid Head, Â 5
While *Vice* from Clime to Clime contagious spread;
Back, to his native Seat, he sternly flies;
And sends and Edict throâ€™ the spacious Skies,
To call thâ€™ Ethereal Powâ€™rs: Swift flew his Word;
Thâ€™ Ethereal Powâ€™rs, as swift, attend their Lord. Â 10
Upon *Olympus*â€™ Top the Synod met,
Where, high inthronâ€™d the thundâ€™ring Monarch sat;
And, with a Nod, that shook the Spheres, he swore,
The Minor Gods should visit Earth no more. Â What, must your earthly Sons, MINERVA cryâ€™d, Â 15
Explore their doubtful Way without a Guide?
If PALLAS must no more to Mortals go,
Let PALLAS beg a Substitute below,
Worthy to rule the World, whose noble Mind
May copy out the Gods to human Kind. Â 20
She lowly bowâ€™d; and JOVE, consenting, smilâ€™d;
Go, form, said he, this new-imaginâ€™d Child:
Collect the best Materials, where you will;
And let us see, for once, MINERVAâ€™S Skill.
He said; she hastens oâ€™er the bright Abodes, Â 25
Selecting each Perfection of the Gods:
From Mars she warlike Strength and Courage took;
But softenâ€™d them with VENUSâ€™ graceful Look:
To these she added HERMESâ€™ Eloquence, Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â

own superior Sense: Â 30
Some of Apolloâ€™s piercing Rays she stole;
And while the MUSES playâ€™d, she she formâ€™d a Soul.
When thus composâ€™d the bright Ingredients lay,
She nobly drest them in Eternal Clay;
Jove touchâ€™d the Mass with enlivâ€™ning Hand, Â 35
And vital Warmth inspirâ€™d a CUMBERLAND.

Â NOTES:

Title *Duke of CUMBERLAND* Prince William Augustus (1726-1765), third son of King George II, appointed as Duke in 1726. At an early age he became known for his astute physical courage and ability. He would later lead the decisive Battle of Culloden against the Jacobite rebels in January, 1746 (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

1 *SOL* â€œThe sun (personified)â€• (*OED*).

2 *JOVE* Latin name for *Jupiter, the highest god of the* ancient Romans; the equivalent of Zeus in the Greek tradition (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

11 *Olympusâ€™ Top* Known as Mount Olympus. The home of gods and goddesses in ancient mythology (*Encyclopedia Britannica)*; *Synod* â€œAn assembly, convention, or council of any kindâ€• (*OED*).

15 *MINERVA* â€œA Roman goddess, regarded as the patron of handicrafts and the arts, and later also of wisdom and prowess in war, identified from an early period with the Greek Atheneâ€• (*OED*).

17 *PALLAS* An epithet for Athena, the goddess of war, handicraft, and practical reason. â€œPallasâ€• refers to her warrior side; according to legend, Pallas was a friend and sparring partner accidentally killed by Athena.

27 *Mars* â€œThe god of war of the ancient Romans, ranking in importance next to Jupiter, and identified from an early period with the Greek god Aresâ€• (*OED*).

28 *VENUS*Â Roman goddess of love and beauty (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

29 *HERMES* â€œA deity, the son of Zeus and Maia, represented as the messenger of the gods, the god of science, commerce, eloquence, and many of the arts of lifeâ€• (*OED*).

31 *Apollo* Roman god of beauty, music, and poetry (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

***Â* Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1738), pp. 97-98. [*Google Books*]**

Edited by Christian Ferrey