Stephen Duck, â??On Two Young Ladies leaving the Countryâ?•

Description

STEPHEN DUCK

â??On Two Young Ladies leaving the Countryâ?•

SAY, lovely Nymphs! who fly from rural Sweets,
To noisy Crowds, thick Air, and smoaky Streets,
Do Balls, or Plays, your graceful Steps invite?
Can Balls, or Plays, like *Richmond* Groves, delight?
No tuneful PHILOMEL, in Town, complains,
To charm your listâ??ning Ear with varyâ??d Strains;
No fragrant Gales refresh the sickâ??ning Fields,
No chearful flowâ??ry Scenes the City yields:
But Mists, and lambent Fogs, where-eâ??er you pass,
Shall cloud the Graces, that adorn your Face;
While those bright Eyes, like sullyâ??d Gems, appear,
Or Stars, just glimmâ??ring throâ?? the dusky Air.

NOR will you only Change of Beauty find;
Illusive Scenes will mock your pensive Mind:
In cloudless Mornings, when youâ??ve drank your Tea,
And read a Page in SHERLOCK, or in â??â?? GAY;
Perhaps your Thoughts, transported, here may rove,
And, to your Mind, present the blissful Grove:
Youâ??ll think to walk by silver *Thames*â??s Shore;
Or trace the verdant Mead, as heretofore:
When at the Door, the rural Vision flies,
Smoak, Coaches, Fops, and Carmen meets your Eyes:
Straight back youâ??ll turn, vexâ??d with the fruitless Search;
Bid ROBERT call a Chair, and go to *Church*.

NOTES:

4 *Richmond Groves* In the early eighteenth century, Richmond upon Thames was still considered a rural retreat from London, offering open spaces, groves of trees, and prospects from Richmond Hill.

5 *PHILOMEL* â??A poetic or literary name for the nightingale (in allusion to the myth of the maiden Philomelaâ??s transformation into that bird)â?• (*OED*).

9 *lambent* â??Playing lightly upon or gliding over a surfaceâ?• (*OED*).

16 *SHERLOCK* William Sherlock (c. 1641-1707), Anglican clergyman and religious writer, his *A Practical Discourse Concerning Death* (1689) went to many editions in the eighteenth century; *GAY* John Gay (1685-1732), poet and dramatist.

20 *verdant* Green-hued (*OED*).

22 *Fops* Foolish and vain persons, typically applied to men (*OED*); *Carmen* â??Member of a Company of the City of London concerned with transportationâ?• (*OED)*.

24 *ROBERT* The Footman [Authorâ??s note]; *Chair* â??An enclosed chair or covered vehicle for one person, carried on poles by two men; a sedanâ?• (*OED*).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1736), pp. 158-59. [Google Books]

Edited by Clementine Johnson