

Mary Barber, “To Dr. Richard Helsham. Upon my Recovery from a dangerous Fit of Sickness”•

Description

[MARY BARBER]

“To Dr. Richard Helsham. Upon my Recovery from a dangerous Fit of Sickness”•

For fleeting Life recall’d, for Health restor’d,
Be first the God of Life and Health ador’d;
Whose boundless Mercy claims this Tribute due:
And next to Heav’n, I owe my Thanks to you;
To you, who feel the Ease your Medicines give, 5
And, in reviving Patients, doubly live;
You, who from Nature’s Dictates never stray;
But wisely wait, till she points out the Way:
Where-e’er she leads, unerring, you pursue
Her mazy System, opening to your View. 10

In you reviv’d we RATCLIFF’S Genius see,
Heighten’d by Learning and Humanity.
With Ease all Nature’s Secrets you explore,
And to the noblest Heights of Science soar.
Your Thoughts, unbounded, travel with the Sun; 15
And see attendant Worlds around him run;
Which trace their distant Courses thro’ the Sky,
Nor fly his Throne too far, nor press too nigh.
The wise and wondrous Laws you clearly know,
Which rule those Worlds above, and this below. 20
The World of Life, which we obscurely see,
In all its Wonders, is survey’d by thee:
And thou in ev’ry Part canst something find,
To praise thy Maker, and to bless thy Kind:
Quick to discern, judicious to apply, 25
Your Judgment clear, and piercing, as your Eye:
Ev’n Medicines, in your wise Prescriptions, please;
And are no more the Patient’s worst Disease.
Goodness, and Skill, and Learning less than thine,
Rais’d AESCULAPIUS to the Realms divine. 30

NOTES:

Title *Dr. Richard Helsham* (1683-1738), Irish physician and natural philosopher; like Barber, he was also a member of Jonathan Swift’s Dublin circle.

11 *RATCLIFF* John Radcliffe (1650-1714), physician and politician, served as royal physician to William and Mary.

18 *nigh* — Close at hand, nearby• (OED).

25 *judicious* — Proceeding from or showing sound judgement; done with or marked by discretion, wisdom, or good sense• (OED).

30 *AESCULAPIUS* Greek god of medicine.

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1735), pp. 30-31. [Google Books]

Edited by Ivan Li