# Mary Barber, â??A True Taleâ?•

## Description

MARY BARBER

**â??A True TALEâ?•**

A Mother, who vast Pleasure finds
In modelling her Childrens Minds;
With whom, in exquisite Delight,
She passes many a Winter Night;
Mingles in evâ??ry Play, to find
What Byas Nature gave the Mind;
Resolving thence to take her Aim,
To guide them to the Realms of Fame;
And wisely make those Realms their Way
To Regions of eternal Day;
Each boistâ??rous Passion to controul,
And early humanize the Soul;
In simple Tales, beside the Fire,
The noblest Notions would inspire:
Her Children, conscious of her Care,
Transported, hung around her Chair.

OF Scripture-Heroes she would tell,
Whose Names they lispâ??d, ere they could spell:
The Mother then, delighted, smiles;
And shews the Story on the Tiles.

AT other Times, her Themes would be
The Sages of Antiquity;
Who left immortal Names behind,
By proving Blessings to their Kind.
Again, she takes another Scope,
And tells of Aâ??DDISON,â?? and Pâ??OPE.

STUDIOUS to let her Children know
*The various Turns of Things below*; â??-
How Virtue here was oft oppresâ??d,
To shine more glorious with the Blessâ??d;
Told Tâ??ULLYâ??â??sâ?? â??and the Gâ??RACCHIâ??â??sâ?? Dâ??oom,
The Patriots, and the Pride of â??*Rome*.
Then blessâ??d the â??*Drapier*â??â??s happier Fate,
Who â??*savâ??d*, aâ??nd lives to *â??guardâ??* the State.

SOME Comedies gave great Delight,
And entertainâ??d them many a Night:
Others could no Admittance find,
Forbid, as Poison to the Mind:
Those Authors Wit and Sense, said she,
But heighten their Impiety.

THIS â??happy Mother met, one Day,
The Book of Fables, writ by GAY;
And told her Children, Hereâ??s a Treasure,
A Fund of Wisdom, and of Pleasure!
Such Morals, and so finely writ;
Such Decency, good Sense, and Wit!
Well has the Poet found the Art,
To raise the Mind, and mend the Heart.

HER favâ??rite Son the Volume seizâ??d;
And, as he read, seemâ??d highly pleasâ??d;
Made such Reflections evâ??ry Page;
The Mother thought above his Age;
Delighted read, but scarce was able
To finish the concluding Fable.

WHAT â??ails my Child? the Mother cries:
Whose Sorrows now have fillâ??d your Eyes?
O dear Mamma, can he want Friends,
Who writes for such exalted Ends?
Oh base, degenâ??rate human Kind!
Had I a Fortune to my Mind,
Should Gâ??AY â??complain? But now, alas!
Throâ?? what a World am I to pass?
Where Friendship is an empty Name,
And Merit scarcely paid in Fame?

RESOLVâ??D â??to lull his Woes to Rest,
She tells him, He should hope the best:
This has been yet Gâ??AYâ??â??s Case, I own;
But now his Meritâ??s amply known.
Content that tender Heart of thine:
Heâ??ll be the Care of Câ??AROLINE.
Who thus instructs the royal Race,
Must have a Pension, or a Place.

MAMMA, â??if you were Qâ??UEEN, â??says he,
And such a Book were writ for me,
I find â??tis so much to your Taste,
That Gâ??AYâ?? would keep his Coach at least.

MY â??Son, what you suppose, is true:
I see its Excellence in you.
Poets who write to mend the Mind,
A royal Recompence should find.
But I am barrâ??d by Fortuneâ??s Frowns,
From the best Privilege of Crowns;
The glorious, godlike Powâ??r to bless,
And raise up Merit in Distress.

BUT, dear Mamma, I long to know,
Were you the Qâ??UEENâ??, what youâ??d bestow.

WHAT Iâ??d bestow, says she, my Dear?
At least, â??*a thousand Pounds a Year*.

**NOTES:**

**â??26â??** â??*ADDISON* Joseph Addison (â??1672-1719â??), popular periodical essayist, poet, and dramatist; â?? *POPE* Alexander Pope (1688-1744), poet, satirist, and translator of Homer (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

**31** â??*TULLY* Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC-43 BC)â??, a Roman orator who was executed by his political enemies; *the GRACCHIâ??s Doom* Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, (169-164? BC-133 BC), â??Roman tribune who sponsored agrarian reforms to restore the class of independent farmers and who was assassinated in a riot sparked by his senatorial opponentsâ?•, and his brother, Gaius Sempronius Gracchus â??(160-153 BC?-121BC), â??Roman tribune who reenacted the agrarian reforms of his brotherâ?• and who committed suicide before his political enemies could execute him (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

**33** â??â??*the Drapierâ??s happy fate* A reference to Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), who published a series of seven pamphlets known as *Drapierâ??s Letters* (1724-1725) that was â??part of a successful campaign to prevent the imposition of a new, and debased, coinage on Irelandâ?• (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

**42** â??*The Book of Fables writ by GAY* John Gay (â??1685-1735)â??, English poet and dramatist, whose â?? *Fablesâ??* was published in 1727 and dedicated to William, Duke of Cumberland, the six-year-old son of the newly-crowned King George II (1683-1760) and Queen Caroline.

**54â??** *the concluding Fable* â??Fable L: The Hare and many Friendsâ?• was the last of the 50 poems that make up Gayâ??s *Fables*.

**70** *Heâ??ll be the care of CAROLINE* â??In dedicating *Fables* to Prince William, Gay was hoping to court favor with the Princeâ??s mother, Queen Caroline (1683-1737), known to be a patron of the arts. In the end, he was offered the post of Gentleman Usher to Princess Louisa, then two years old. Feeling snubbed, Gay declined the position.

**Source: *Poems on Several Occasionsâ??* (London, 1735), pp. 7-12. [Google Books]**

*Edited by Autumn Goldstein Harris*