

[Mary Barber], "To a Lady, who invited the Author into the Country"

Description

[MARY BARBER]

"To a Lady, who invited the Author into the Country"

HOW gladly, Madam, would I go,
To see your Gardens, and *Chateau*;
From thence the fine Improvements view,
Or walk your verdant Avenue;
Delighted, hear the Thrushes sing, 5
Or listen to some bubbling Spring;
If Fate had given me Leave to roam!
But Citizens must stay at Home.

WE'RE lonesome since you went away,
And should be dead but for our Tea; 10
That *Helicon* of female Wits;
Which fills their Heads with rhyming Fits!
This Liquor seldom heats the Brain,
But turns it oft, and makes us vain;
With Fumes supplies Imagination, 15
Which we mistake for Inspiration.
This makes us cramp our Sense in Fetters,
And teaze our Friends with chiming Letters.

I GRIEVE your Brother has the Gout;
Though he's so *stoically* stout, 20
I've heard him mourn his Loss of Pain,
And wish it in his Feet again.
What Woe poor Mortals must endure,
When Anguish is their only Cure!

STREPHON is ill; and I perceive 25
His loved *Elvira* grows so grave,
I fear, like *Niobe*, her Moan
Will turn herself and me to Stone.
Have I not cause to dread this Fate,
Who scarce so much as smile of late? 30

WHILST lovely landscapes you survey,
And peaceful pass your Hours away,
Refresh'd with various blooming Sweets;
I'm sick of Smells and dirty Streets,

Stifled with Smoke, and stunnâ??d with Noise 35
 Of evâ??ry Thing â??- but my own Boys;
 Throâ?? Rounds of *plodding* doomâ??d to run,
 And very seldom see the Sun:
 Yet sometimes powâ??rful Fancy reigns,
 And glads my Eyes with sylvan Scenes; 40
 Where Time, enamourâ??d, slacks his Pace,
 Enchanted by the warbling Race;
 And, in Atonement for his Stay,
 Throâ?? Cities hurries on the Day.

O! WOULD kind Heavâ??n reverse my Fate, 45
 Give me to quit a Life I hate,
 To flowâ??ry Fields I soon would fly:
 Let others stay â??- to *cheat* and *lye*.
 There, in some blissful Solitude,
 Where eating Care should neâ??er intrude, 50
 The Muse should do the Country Right,
 And paint the glorious Scenes *you* slight.

Dublin, 1728

NOTES:

2 *Chateau* A stately residence or estate.

8 *Citizens* In this context, city-dwellers.

11 *Helicon* â??Name of a mountain once sacred to the Muses from Greek mythology, often used allusively in reference to poetic inspirationâ?• (OED).

17 *Fetters* â??Anything that confines, impedes, or restrains; a check, restraintâ?• (OED).

19 *Gout* â??A specific constitutional disease occurring in fits, usually hereditary and in male subjects; characterized by painful inflammation of the smaller jointsâ?• (OED).

25 *Strephon* Common masculine name used for male lover in pastoral poetry (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

26 *Elvira* A proper feminine name of Germanic origin (Online Dictionary).

27 *Niobe* â??Of ancient Greek origin refers to an inconsolably bereaved woman, a weeping womanâ?• (OED).

40 *sylvan* Relating to a wood or woods (Johnson).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1735), pp.135-38. [Hathi Trust]

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