[Mary Barber], â??To a Lady, who invited the Author into the Countryâ?•

Description

[MARY BARBER]

â??To a Lady, who invited the Author into the Countryâ?•

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,
Or listen to some bubbling Spring;
If Fate had givâ??n me Leave to roam!
But Citizens must stay at Home.

WEâ??RE lonesome since you went away,
And should be dead â??â?? but for our Tea;
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,
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;
Thoâ?? heâ??s so *stoically* stout,
Iâ??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
His lovâ??d *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?

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

Stifled with Smoke, and stunnâ??d with Noise
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;
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,
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,
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]**

Edited by Ashley-Nicole Cortez