Elizabeth Tollet, â??To a Gentleman in Loveâ?•

Description

ELIZABETH TOLLET

â??To a Gentleman in Love.â?•

Say, in what gentle Sounds, what healing Strain,
The friendly Muse shall sooth the wounded Swain?
Thy self, the Muses Servant, best may know
To mourn in moving Verse the latent Woe:
Such Verse where Fear and humble Passion speak,
Where crowding Thoughts in soft Confusion break,
With faltâ??ring Eloquence the Fair might move,
Thoâ?? cold as Northern Snows to mutual Love.
Thoâ?? that perhaps thou hast in vain essayâ??d:
The Muse, at best, is but a faithless Aid;
So Princes by Auxiliars are betrayâ??d.
Lonely tho wanderâ??st where the founding Stones
Of *Balliolâ??s* Walls return thy hollow Groans;
Or where *Severusâ??* Work describes the Bound
Of *Roman* Conquests on the *British* Ground.
The ruinâ??d Pile stood threatening oâ??er the Waste;
Prodigious Monument of Greatness past!
Hither perhaps the pensive Lover goes,
To shun his chearful Friends, and Speak his Woes.
How art thou changâ??d? Thou! who wert always known,
With modest Wit our tempâ??rate Mirth to crown.
What? Cannot Politicks and deep Debate
What menaces the Church, or shakes the State,
How great *Eugenius* clouds the waning Moon,
What *Spain* intends, or they who drink the *Rhone*,
From thy unquiet Breast these Cares remove?
This â??tis, unhappy Youth! to be in Love.

Or when thy jocund Friends the Board surround,
With rural Stores and native Liquors crownâ??d,
Such as the *British* Swains, industrious, drain,
From blushing Apples, or the bearded Grain;
The love-sick Youth discovers his Suprize,
By faded Cheeks and unregarding Eyes:
By rising Sighs which heave his struggling Breast,
And wandâ??ring Speech with sudden Pause supprest.
All Smile; and some with friendly Anger chide,

Some pity thy Distress, but most deride:
While you sit by, with careless Head reclinâ??d;
The only Fair employs your absent Mind.
We by your Doctrines may perhaps improve
For we, alas! are Hereticks in Love:
We may wish Vows of Constancy make bold;
But you *de Jure* loveâ??â??to have and hold.

Amantem *languor & silentium*

Arguit, *& latere*

Petitus *imo spiritus.*

Hor. Epod.

NOTES:

2 *Swain* â??A country gallant or loverâ?• *(OED).*

12 *Auxiliars* Subordinates.

14 *Balliol* A college of Oxford University, founded before 1268.

15 *Severusâ?? Work* The Wall of Severus, also known as â??Hadrianâ??s Wall;â?• built to defend the northwestern frontier of the Roman empire. Emperor Septimius Severus (reigned 193â??211 AD) is said to have fortified Hadrianâ??s original turf wall with stone around 208 AD *(Encyclopedia Britannica).*

25 *Eugenius* Probably a reference to Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736), Austrian general and statesman who figured prominently as an ally of England in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14) and the War of the Polish Succession (1733-35).

26 *they who drink the Rhone* The French, who were known for a â??wine made from grapes grown in the RhÃ´ne valley, esp. in the region between Lyons and Avignon Franceâ?• *(OED).*

42 *Hereticks* Those â??who maintains theological or religious opinions at variance with the â??catholicâ?? or orthodox doctrine of the Christian Churchâ?• *(OED).*

43 *Constancy* â??Steadfastness of attachment to a person or cause; faithfulness, fidelityâ?• *(OED).*

44 *De Jure* Archaic spelling of the French phrase â??du jour,â?• which means â??of the dayâ?• *(OED).*

Postscript *â??*Where my listlessness, my silences, and the sighs/ That were drawn from the depths of my heart, proved my love-sick stateâ?• (from *Epode* 11, ll. 9-10, by Quintus Horatius Flaccus [65-8 BC], published in 30 BC).

Source: ***Poems on Several Occasions. With Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII:*** **An Epistle (London, 1755), pp. 28-30. [Google Books]**

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