David Mallet, â??The Discoveryâ?•

Description

DAVID MALLET

â??The Discoveryâ?•

Upon reading some Verses, written by a young Lady at a Boarding-School. Sept. 1760.

Apollo lately sent to know,
If he had any sons below;
For, by the trash he long has seen
In male and female Magazine,
A hundred quires not worth a groat,
The race must be extinct, he thought.

His messenger to court repairs;
Walks softly with the croud up stairs:
But when he had his errand told,
The courtiers sneerâ??d, both young and old.
Augustus knit his royal brow,
And bade him let *Apollo* know it,
That from his infancy till now,
He lovâ??d nor poetry nor poet.

His next adventure was the park,
When it grew fashionably dark:
There beauties, boobies, strumpets, rakes,
Talkâ??d much of commerce, whist and stakes;
Who tips the wink, who drops the card:
But not one word of verse or bard.

The stage, APOLLOâ??s old domain,
Where his true sons were wont to reign,
His courier now past frowning by:
Ye modern DURFEYS tell us why.

Slow, to the city last he went:
There, all was prose, of cent per cent.
There, alley-omnium, script, and bonus,
(Latin, for which a Muse would stone us,
Yet honest GIDEONâ??s classic stile)

Made our poor Nuntio stare and smile.

And now the clock had struck eleven:
The messenger must back to Heaven;
But, just as he his wings had tyâ??d,
Lookâ??d up *Queen-Square*, the North-east side.
A blooming Creature there he found,
With pen and ink and books around,
Alone and writing by a taper:
He read unseen, then stole her paper.
It much amusâ??d him on his way;
And reaching Heaven by break of day,
He shewâ??d APOLLO what he stole.
The God perusâ??d, and likâ??d the whole:
Then, calling for his pocket-book,
Some right celestial vellum took;
And what he with a sun-beam there
Writ down, the Muse thus copies fair:
â??If I no men my sons must call,
Hereâ??s one fair Daughter worth â??em all:
Mark then the sacred words that follow,
SOPHIAâ??S mineâ?• â??â?? so signâ??d

APOLLO.

NOTES:

1 *Apollo â??*God of light, poetry and musicâ?• (*OED*).

5 *quires* â??A small book or pamphlet consisting of a set of four sheets folded in two to form eight leaves;â?• also â??a short poem, treatiseâ?• *(OED)*; *groat â??*The English groat coined in 1351â??2 was made equal to four penceâ?• *(OED).*

8 *croud* Variant of â??crowd.â?•

11 *Augustus* Founder of the Roman Empire; here a reference to King George II (reigned 1727-1760).

17 *boobies â??*A childish, foolish, inept, or blundering personâ?• *(OED)*; *strumpet* A female prostitute; (also) a mistress, a concubine *(OED)*; *rake* â??A fashionable or stylish man of dissolute or promiscuous habitsâ?• (*OED*).

23 *frowning* â??Disapprovingâ?• *(OED).*

24 *DURFEYS* Alluding to Thomas dâ??Urfey (1653â??1723), a Restoration-era playwright, best known for his songs and contributions to the ballad opera as a theatrical form.

26 *cent per cent* That is, â??totally, completelyâ?• (*OED*).

27 *alley-omnium* Possibly figurative for â??all the marbles.â?•

29 *GIDEON* Military leader, judge, and prophet in the Hebrew Bible; see Judges 6-8.

30 *Nuntio* Variant of â??nuncio,â?• â??a papal ambassador to a foreign court or governmentâ?• (*OED*).

34 *Queen-Square* A fashionable neighborhood in north London in the mid-century period.

38 *read* Corrected from â??redâ?• in the original text.

44 *vellum â??*A fine kind of parchment prepared from the skins of calves (lambs or kids) and used especially for writing, painting, or bindingâ?• (*OED*).

50 *SOPHIA* Greek name meaning â??wisdom;â?• also referring to Athena, the goddess of wisdom.

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1762), pp. 14-16. [Google Books]

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