

Anne Finch, â??Manâ??s Injustice towards Providenceâ?•

Description

ANNE FINCH

â??Manâ??s Injustice towards Providenceâ?•

A Thriving *Merchant*, who no Loss sustainâ??d,
In little time a mighty Fortune gainâ??d.
No Pyrate seizâ??d his still returning Freight;
Nor foundring Vessel sunk with its own Weight:
No Ruin enterâ??d through disseverâ??d Planks; 5
No Wreck at Sea, nor in the Publick Banks.
Aloft he sails, above the Reach of Chance,
And doâ??s in Pride, as fast as Wealth, advance.
His Wife too, had her Town and Country-Seat,
And rich in Purse, concludes her Person Great. 10
A Duchess wears not so much Gold and Lace;
Then â??tis with Her an undisputed Case,
The finest Petticoat must take the Place.
Her Rooms, anew at evâ??ry Christâ??ning drest,
Put down the Court, and vex the City-Guest. 15
Grinning *Malottos* in true Ermin stare;
The best *Japan*, and clearest *China Ware*
Are but as common *Delft* and *English Laquar* there.
No Luxuryâ??s by either unenjoyâ??d,
Or cost withheld, thoâ?? awkwardly employâ??d. 20
How comes this Wealth? a Country Friend demands,
Who scarce couâ??d live on Product of his Lands.
How is it that, when Trading is so bad
That some are Broke, and some with Fears run Mad,
You can in better State yourself maintain, 25
And your Effects still unimpairâ??d remain!
My *Industry*, he cries, is all the Cause;
Sometimes I interlope, and slight the Laws:
I wiser Measures, than my Neighbours, take,
And better speed, who better Bargains make. 30
I knew, the *Smyrna-Fleet* wouâ??d fall a Prey,
And therefore sent no Vessel out that way:
My busy Factors prudently I chuse,
And in streight Bonds their Friends and Kindred noose:
At Home, I to the Publick Sums advance, 35
Whilst, under-hand in Fee with hostile *France*,
I care not for your *Tourvills*, or *Du-Barts*,

No more than for the Rocks, and Shelves in Charts:
 My own sufficiency creates my Gain,
 Raisâ??d, and securâ??d by this unfailing Brain. 40
 This idle Vaunt had scarcely past his Lips,
 When Tydings came, his ill-provided Ships
 Some throâ?? the want of Skill, and some of Care,
 Were lost, or back returnâ??d without their Fare.
 From bad to worse, each Day his State declinâ??d, 45
 â??Till leaving Town, and Wife, and Debts behind,
 To his Acquaintance at the Rural Seat
 He Sculks, and humbly sues for a Retreat.
 Whence comes this Change, has Wisdom left that Head,
 (His Friend demands) where such right Schemes were bred? 50
 What Phrenzy, what Delirium mars the Scull,
 Which fillâ??d the Chests, and was it self so full?
 Here interrupting, sadly he Replyâ??d,
 In Meâ??s no Change, but Fate must all Things guide;
 To Providence I attribute my Loss. 55

*Vain-glorious Man doâ??s thus the Praise engross,
 When Prospâ??rous Days around him spread their Beams:
 But, if revolvâ??d to opposite Extreams,
 Still his own Sence he fondly will prefer,
 And Providence, not He, in his Affairs must Err! 60*

NOTES:

- 6 Publick Banks** The Bank of England was founded in 1694 primarily to fund Englandâ??s war with France. â??The original Royal Charter of 1694, granted by King William and Queen Mary, explained that the Bank was founded to â??promote the public Good and Benefit of our Peopleâ??â?• (www.bankofengland.co.uk).
- 16 Malottos** Variation of â??mulattoes;â?• persons â??of mixed black and white ancestryâ?• (OED); *Ermin* Garment or accessory made from the fur of a stoat (OED).
- 17 Japan** â??A varnish of exceptional hardness, which originally came from Japanâ?• (OED); *China Ware* Dishes, tableware, or other goods of Chinese origin (OED).
- 18 Delft** Pottery glazed with tin, â??decorated with blue designs on a white backgroundâ?|primarily produced in Delft, Hollandâ?• (OED).
- 31 Smyrna-Fleet** Refers to Franceâ??s ambush of the Smyrna convoy in 1693 during War of the Grand Alliance, or Nine Yearsâ?? War, resulting in the loss of many merchant ships; or possibly to the English attack in 1672 on a Dutch fleet in the same region, instigating the third Anglo-Dutch war (*Britannica; Maritime Stepping Stones*).
- 33 Factors** â??An agent who buys and sells, or transacts other business, on behalf of another person or companyâ?• (OED).
- 34 noose** Here a verb, â??to bind or constrainâ?• (OED).

37 *Tourvills* Anne-Hilarion de Contentin, Comte de Tourville (1642-1701), a French admiral under King Louis XIV. He commanded many battles in France's wars against the Dutch, English, and other allied nations, including the attack on the Smyrna convoy (*Britannica*); *Du-Barts* Jean Bart (1650-1702), a French privateer and naval officer under Louis XIV. He served as a lieutenant in the War of the Grand Alliance and was made a member of the nobility in 1696 (*Britannica*).

38 *charts* A shortening of "sea-chart," a map used by ship navigators (*OED*).

41 *Vaunt* "A boasting statement or brag" (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1714), pp. 208-211. [HathiTrust]

Edited by Sabrina George