

*Upon Appleton House*¹
To my Lord Fairfax
THE HOUSE

i

Within this sober Frame expect
Work of no Foreign Architect;
That unto Caves the Quarries drew,
And Forests did to Pastures hew;
Who of his great Design in pain
Did for a Model vault his Brain,
Whose Columns should so high be raised
To arch the Brows that on them gazed.

ii

Why should of all things Man unruled
Such unproportioned dwellings build?
The Beasts are by their Dens expressed:
And Birds contrive an equal Nest;
The low roofed Tortoises do dwell
In cases fit of Tortoise-shell:
No Creature loves an empty space;
Their Bodies measure out their Place.

iii

But He, superfluously spread,
Demands more room alive than dead.
And in his hollow Palace goes
Where Winds (as he) themselves may lose.
What need of all this Marble Crust
T'impark the wanton Mote of Dust,
That thinks by Breadth the World t'unite
Though the first Builders failed in Height?²

iv

But all things are composèd here
Like Nature, orderly and near:

¹Appleton, or Nun Appleton House (the land having come to the Fairfax family from a dissolved Cistercian nunnery) was rebuilt by the first Lord Fairfax in 1637-38, but not completed until 1650, when the third Lord Fairfax, distinguished Parliamentary general, retired. For some time between 1651 and 1653 Marvell was tutor to the General's daughter, Mary.

²A reference to the Tower of Babel

In which we the Dimensions find
Of that more sober Age and Mind,
When larger-sized Men did stoop
To enter at a narrow loop³;
As practicing, in doors so strait,
To strain themselves through Heaven's Gate.

v

And surely when the after Age
Shall hither come in Pilgrimage,
These sacred Places to adore,
By Vere⁴ and Fairfax trod before,
Men will dispute how their Extent
Within such dwarfish Confines went:
And some will smile at this, as well
As Romulus his Bee-like Cell⁵.

vi

Humility alone designs
Those short but admirable Lines,
By which, ungirt and unconstrained,
Things greater are in less contained.
Let others vainly strive t'immure
The Circle in the Quadrature⁶!
These holy Mathematics can
In ev'ry Figure equal Man.

vii

Yet thus the laden House does sweat,
And scarce endures the Master great:
But where he comes the swelling Hall
Stirs, and the Square grows Spherical⁷;

³The small architectural opening whose name was the basis of the modern coinage, "loophole".

⁴Fairfax married Anne Vere, daughter of Sir Horace Vere.

⁵A small thatched hut anciently preserved on Palatine Hill in Rome as the house of Romulus.

⁶I.e., square the circle.

⁷The central part of Appleton House was surmounted by a cupola.

More by his Magnitude distressed,
Than he is by its straitness pressed:
And too officiously it slights
That in itself which him delights.

viii

So Honor better Lowness bears,
Than That unwonted Greatness wears:
Height with a certain Grace does bend,
But low Things clownishly ascend.
And yet what needs there here Excuse,
Where ev'ry Thing does answer Use?
Where neatness nothing can condemn,
Nor Pride invent what to contemn?

ix

A Stately Frontispiece⁸ Of Poor
Adorns without the open Door:
Nor less the Rooms within commends
Daily new Furniture Of Friends.
The House was built upon the Place
Only as for a Mark Of Grace;
And for an Inn to entertain
Its Lord a while, but not remain.

x

Him Bishops-Hill, or Denton may,
Or Bilbrough⁹, better hold than they:
But Nature here hath been so free
As if she said "Leave this to me."
Art would more neatly have defaced
What she had laid so sweetly waste;
In fragrant Gardens, shady Woods,
Deep Meadows, and transparent Floods.

xi

While with slow Eyes we these survey,
And on each pleasant footstep stay,
We opportunely may relate

⁸This word referred originally to the principal face or front of a building, especially the decorated entrance.

⁹Bishop's Hill, Denton, and Bilbrough were other Fairfax properties.

The progress of this House's Fate.
A Nunnery first gave it birth.
For Virgin Buildings oft brought forth.
And all that Neighbor-Ruin shows
The Quarries whence this dwelling rose.

ITS HISTORY: ISABEL THWAITES
(*Great-great-grandmother of the general*)

xii

Near to this gloomy Cloister's Gates
There dwelt the blooming Virgin Thwaites,
Fair beyond Measure, and an Heir
Which might Deformity make fair.
And oft She spent the Summer Suns
Discoursing with the Subtle Nuns.
Whence in these Words one to her weaved,
(As 'twere by Chance) Thoughts long conceived.

xiii

"Within this holy leisure we
Live innocently as you see.
These Walls restrain the World without,
But hedge our Liberty about.
These Bars inclose the wider Den
Of those wild Creatures, called Men.
The Cloister outward shuts its Gates,
And, from us, locks on them the Grates.

xiv

"Here we, in shining Armour white,
Like Virgin- Amazons do fight.
And our chaste Lamps we hourly trim¹⁰,
Lest the great Bridegroom find them dim.
Our Orient Breaths perfumed are
With incense of incessant Prayer.
And Holy-water of our Tears
Most strangely our Complexion clears.

xv

¹⁰In Matthew, XXV, 1-13, the wise virgins did not hourly trim their lamps (this would imply they were burning them continuously) but kept them full of oil and trimmed them only at midnight, when the Bridegroom arrived unexpectedly. "Hourly" refers to the offices in the *Book of Hours*, from "Prime" to "Compline".

“Not Tears of Grief; but such as those
With which calm Pleasure overflows;
Or Pity, when we look on you
That live without this happy Vow.
How should we grieve that must be seen
Each one a Spouse, and each a Queen;
And can in Heaven hence behold
Our brighter Robes and Crowns of Gold?

xvi

“When we have prayed all our Beads,
Some One the holy Legend reads;
While all the rest with Needles paint
The Face and Graces of the Saint.
But what the Linen can’t receive
They in their Lives do interweave.
This Work the Saints best represents;
That serves for Altar’s Ornaments.

xvii

“But much it to our work would add
If here your hand, your Face we had:
By it we would our Lady touch;
Yet thus She you resembles much.
Some of your Features, as we sewed,
Through ev’ry Shrine should be bestowed.
And in one Beauty we would take
Enough a thousand Saints to make.

xviii

“And (for I dare not quench the Fire
That me does for your good inspire)
'Twere Sacrilege a Man t’admit
To holy things, for Heaven fit.
I see the Angels in a Crown
On you the Lillies show’ring down:
And round about your Glory breaks,
That something more than human speaks.

xix

“All Beauty, when at such a height,
Is so already consecrate.
Fairfax I know; and long ere this
Have mark’d the Youth, and what he is.

But can he such a Rival seem
For whom you Heav'n should disesteem?
Ah, no! and 'twould more Honor prove
He your *Devoto* were, than Love.

xx

“Here live belovèd, and obeyed:
Each one your Sister, each your Maid.
And, if our Rule seem strictly penned,
The Rule it self to you shall bend.
Our Abbess too, now far in Age¹¹,
Doth your succession near presage.
How soft the yoke on us would lie,
Might such fair Hands as yours it tie!

xxi

“Your voice, the sweetest of the Choir,
Shall draw Heav'n nearer, raise us higher.
And your Example, if our Head,
Will soon us to perfection lead.
Those Virtues to us all so dear,
Will straight grow Sanctity when here:
And that, once sprung, increase so fast
Till Miracles it work at last.

xxii

“Nor is our Order yet so nice,
Delight to banish as a Vice.
Here Pleasure Piety doth meet;
One perfecting the other Sweet.
So through the mortal fruit we boil
The Sugars uncorrupting Oil:
And that which perished while we pull,
Is thus preservèd clear and full¹².

xxiii

“For such indeed are all our Arts;
Still handling Natures finest Parts.

¹¹The story of Thwaite's rescue was well-known and Marvell's audience would recognize this as a lie; the Prioress was young and nowhere near retirement.

¹²A recipe for making fruit preserves: boiling in sugar “uncorrupts” the dead (“pulled” through a cloth sieve) fruit.

Flow'rs dress the Altars; for the Clothes,
The Sea-born Amber we compose;
Balms for the grieved we draw; and pastes
We mold, as Baits for curious tastes.
What need is here of Man? unless
These as sweet Sins we should confess.

xxiv

“Each Night among us to your side
Appoint a fresh and Virgin Bride;
Whom if Our Lord at midnight find,
Yet Neither¹³ should be left behind.
Where you may lie as chaste in Bed,
As Pearls together billeted.
All Night embracing Arm in Arm,
Like Crystal pure with Cotton warm.

xxv

“But what is this to all the store
Of Joys you see, and may make more!
Try but a while, if you be wise:
The Trial neither Costs, nor Ties.”
Now Fairfax seek her promised faith:
Religion that dispensèd hath;
Which She hence forward does begin;
The Nuns smooth Tongue has sucked her in.

xxvi

Oft, though he knew it was in vain,
Yet would he valiantly complain.
“Is this that Sanctity so great,
An Art by which you finel'er cheat
Hypocrite Witches, hence avaunt,
Who though in prison yet enchant!
Death only can such Thieves make fast,
As rob though in the Dungeon cast.

xxvii

“Were there but, when this House was made,
One Stone that a just Hand had laid,
It must have fallen upon her Head
Who first Thee from thy Faith misled.

¹³Matthew, XXIV, 40-1. “One shall be taken and the other left.”

And yet, how well soever meant,
With them 'twould soon grow fraudulent:
For like themselves they alter all,
And vice infects the very Wall.

xxviii

“But sure those Buildings last not long,
Founded by Folly, kept by Wrong.
I know what Fruit their Gardens yield,
When they it think by Night concealed.
Fly from their Vices. 'Tis thy 'state,
Not Thee, that they would consecrate.
Fly from their Ruin. How I fear
Though guiltless lest thou perish there.”

xxix

What should he do? He would respect
Religion, but not Right neglect:
For first Religion taught him Right,
And dazzled not but cleared his sight.
Sometimes resolved his Sword he draws,
But reverenceth then the Laws:
For Justice still that Courage led;
First from a Judge, then Soldier bred.

xxx

Small Honor would be in the Storm.
The Court him grants the lawful Form;
Which licenced either Peace or Force,
To hinder the unjust Divorce.
Yet still the Nuns his Right debarred,
Standing upon their holy Guard.
Ill-counseled Women, do you know
Whom you resist, or what you do?

xxxi

Is not this he whose Offspring fierce
Shall fight through all the Universe;
And with successive Valor try
France, Poland, either Germany;
Till One¹⁴, as long since prophesied,

¹⁴General Lord Fairfax, Marvell's employer, victor in the first Civil War. "Either Germany": at the time, there were two Germanies, High and Low.

His Horse through conquered Britain ride?
Yet, against Fate, his Spouse they kept;
And the great Race would intercept.

xxxii

Some to the Breach against their Foes
Their Wooden Saints in vain oppose
Another bolder stands at push
With their old Holy-Water Brush.
While the disjointed Abbess threads
The jingling Chain-shot of her Beads.
But their lowd'st Cannon were their Lungs;
And sharpest Weapons were their Tongues.

xxxiii

But, waving these aside like Flies,
Young Fairfax through the Wall does rise.
Then th' unfrequented Vault appeared,
And superstitions vainly fear'd.
The Relics false were set to view;
Only the Jewels there were true.
But truly bright and holy Thwaites
That weeping at the Altar waits.

xxxiv

But the glad Youth away her bears,
And to the Nuns bequeaths her Tears:
Who guiltily their Prize bemoan,
Like Gipsies that a Child hath stol'n.
Thenceforth (as when th' enchantment ends
The Castle vanishes or rends)
The wasting Cloister with the rest
Was in one instant dispossessed.

xxxv

At the demolishing, this Seat
To Fairfax fell as by Escheat.
And what both Nuns and Founders willed
'Tis likely better thus fulfilled,
For if the Virgin proved not theirs,
The Cloister yet remainèd hers.
Though many a Nun there made her vow,
'Twas no Religious-House till now.

THE FLOWER GARDEN

xxxvi

From that blessed Bed the Hero came,
Whom France and Poland yet does fame:
Who, when retired here to Peace,
His warlike Studies could not cease;
But laid these Gardens out in sport
In the just Figure of a Fort;
And with five Bastions it did fence,
As aiming one for ev'ry Sense.

xxxvii

When in the East the Morning Ray
Hangs out the Colors of the Day,
The Bee through these known Alleys hums,
Beating the *Dian* with its Drums.
Then Flowers their drowsy Eyelids raise,
Their Silken Ensigns each displays,
And dries its Pan yet dank with Dew,
And fills its Flask with Odors new.

xxxviii

These, as their Governor goes by,
In fragrant Volleys they let fly;
And to salute their Governess
Again as great a charge they press:
None for the Virgin Nymph; for She
Seems with the Flow'rs a Flow'r to be.
And think so still! though not compare
With Breath so sweet, or Cheek so fair.

xxxix

Well shot ye Firemen! Oh how sweet,
And round your equal Fires do meet;
Whose shrill report no Ear can tell,
But Echoes to the Eye and smell.
See how the Flow'rs, as at Parade,
Under their Colors stand displayed:
Each Regiment in order grows,
That of the Tulip, Pink, and Rose.

xl

But when the vigilant Patrol
Of Stars walks round about the Pole,
Their Leaves, that to the stalks are curled,
Seem to their Staves the Ensigns furd.

Then in some Flow'rs belovèd Hut
Each Bee as Sentinel is shut;
And sleeps so too: but, if once stirred,
She runs you through, nor asks the Word.

xli

Oh Thou, that dear and happy Isle
The Garden of the World ere while,
Thou Paradise of four Seas,
Which Heaven planted us to please,
But, to exclude the World, did guard
With wat'ry if not flaming Sword;
What luckless Apple did we taste,
To make us Mortal, and Thee Waste.

xlii

Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet Militia restore,
When Gardens only had their Towers,
And all the Garrisons were Flowers,
When Roses only Arms might bear,
And Men did rosy Garlands wear?
Tulips, in several Colors barred,
Were then the Switzers of our Guard.

xliii

The Gardener had the Soldier's place,
And his more gentle Forts did trace.
The Nursery of all things green
Was then the only Magazine.
The Winter Quarters were the Stoves,
Where he the tender Plants removes.
But War all this doth overgrow:
We Ord'nance Plant and Powder sow.

xliv

And yet there walks one on the Sod
Who, had it pleasèd him and God,
Might once have made our Gardens spring
Fresh as his own and flourishing.
But he preferred to the Cinque Ports
These five imaginary Forts:
And, in those half-dry Trenches, spanned
Pow'r which the Ocean might command.

xlvi

For he did, with his utmost Skill,
Ambition weed, but Conscience till.
Conscience, that Heaven-nursèd Plant,
Which most our Earthly Gardens want.
A prickling leaf it bears, and such
As that which shrinks at ev'ry touch;
But Flow'rs eternal, and divine,
That in the Crowns of Saints do shine.

xlvi

The sight does from these Bastions ply,
Th' invisible Artillery;
And at proud Cawood-Castle seems
To point the Battery of its Beams.
As if it quarreled in the Seat
Th' Ambition of its Prelate great.
But o'er the Meads below it plays,
Or innocently seems to gaze.

THE RIVER MEADOWS

(Before the Flood)

xlvii

And now to the Abyss I pass
Of that unfathomable Grass,
Where Men like Grasshoppers appear,
But Grasshoppers are Giants there:
They, in there squeaking Laugh, contemn
Us as we walk more low then them:
And, from the Precipices tall
Of the green spires, to us do call.

xlviii

To see Men through this Meadow Dive,
We wonder how they rise alive.
As, under Water, none does know
Whether he fall through it or go.
But, as the Mariners that sound,
And show upon their Lead the Ground,
They bring up Flow'rs so to be seen,
And prove they've at the Bottom been.

xlix

No Scene that turns with Engines strange
Does oft'ner than these Meadows change,
For when the Sun the Grass hath vext,
The tawny Mowers enter next;

Who seem like Israelites to be,
Walking on foot through a green Sea.
To them the Grassy Deeps divide,
And crowd a Lane to either Side.

l

With whistling Sythe, and Elbow strong,
These Massacre the Grass along¹⁵:
While one, unknowing, carves the Rail,
Whose yet unfeathered Quills her fail.
The Edge all bloody from its Breast
He draws, and does his stroke detest;
Fearing the Flesh untimely mowed
To him a Fate as black forebode.

li

But bloody Thestylis¹⁶, that waits
To bring the mowing Camp their Cates,
Greedy as Kites has trust it up,
And forthwith means on it to sup:
When on another quick She lights,
And cries, he call'd us Israelites;
But now, to make his saying true,
Rails rain for Quails, for Manna Dew.

lii

Unhappy Birds! what does it boot
To build below the Grasses Root;
When Lowness is unsafe as Height,
And Chance o'ertakes what 'scapeth spite?
And now your Orphan¹⁷ Parents' Call
Sounds your untimely Funeral.
Death-Trumpets creak in such a Note,
And 'tis the Sourdine in their Throat.

liii

Or sooner hatch or higher build:

¹⁵They cut as close to the ground as possible, laying the grass out “at full length”.
The Rail is the Corncrake,

¹⁶Thestylis was a country-girl in Virgil's second Eclogue. She brought a salad of garlic and wild thyme to the reapers at harvest.

¹⁷Marvell employs the connotation of the Greek root *orphanos*, which means “bereaved”. A sourdine is a mute for a trumpet.

The Mower now commands the Field;
In whose new Traverse seemeth wrought
A Camp of Battle newly fought:
Where, as the Meads with Hay, the Plain
Lyes quilted o'er with Bodies slain:
The Women that with forks it fling,
Do represent the Pillaging.

liv

And now the careless Victors play,
Dancing the Triumphs of the Hay;
Where every Mowers wholesome Heat
Smells like an Alexander's Sweat.
Their Females fragrant as the Mead
Which they in Fairy Circles tread:
When at their Dance's End they kiss,
Their new-made Hay not sweeter is.

lv

When after this 'tis pil'd in Cocks,
Like a calm Sea it shows the Rocks:
We wond'ring in the River near
How Boats among them safely steer.
Or, like the Desert Memphis Sand,
Short Pyramids of Hay do stand.
And such the Roman Camps do rise
In Hills for Soldiers' Obsequies.

lvi

This Scene again withdrawing brings
A new and empty Face of things¹⁸;
A leveled space, as smooth and plain,
As Cloths for Lilly stretched to stain.
The World when first created sure

¹⁸The change of scene recalls the earlier "traverse", which puns on "the crossing of the path of mowers by the women who will bind up the sheaths" and "the curtain in a Masque or court spectacle". The hay has been carted, leaving a leveled plain of stubble. The "cloths for Lilly" were canvases for the Dutch painter, Peter Lely; the "table rase" is the *tabula rasa*, the erased slate or clean writing surface, with a pun on "razed", meaning "shaved"; the "Toril at Madril" is the bull-ring at Madrid; the Levellers were extremists on the Parliamentary side in the first phase of the Civil War, who preached the abolition of all rank and privilege; Sir William D'Avenant in Book II, Canto vi of his epic *Gondibert*, describes a set of panels on the Creation of the World, which showed the subjection of cattle to mankind, both created on the sixth day; "Looking-Glass" is plate glass; "Multiplying Glasses" is the microscope.

Was such a Table *rase* and pure.
Or rather such is the *Toril*
Ere the Bulls enter at Madril.

Ivii

For to this naked equal Flat,
Which Levellers take Pattern at,
The Villagers in common chase
Their Cattle, which it closer raze;
And what below the Scythe increased
Is pinched yet nearer by the Beast.
Such, in the painted World, appeared
D'Avenant with th'Universal Herd.

Iviii

They seem within the polished Grass
A landscape drawn in Looking-Glass.
And shrunk in the huge Pasture show
As spots, so shaped, on Faces do.
Such Fleas, ere they approach the Eye,
In Multiplying Glasses lie.
They feed so wide, so slowly move,
As Constellations do above.

THE RIVER MEADOWS

(In Flood)

lix

Then, to conclude these pleasant Acts,
Denton sets ope its Cataracts;
And makes the Meadow truly be
(What it but seemed before) a Sea.
For, jealous of its Lords long stay,
It tries t'invite him thus away.
The River in it self is drowned,
And Isle's th' astonished Cattle round.

lx

Let others tell the Paradox,
How Eels now bellow in the Ox;
How Horses at their Tails do kick,
Turned as they hang to Leeches quick¹⁹;
How Boats can over Bridges sail;
And Fishes do the Stables scale.

¹⁹It was believed in Marvell's day that isolated horse-ponds had creatures in them engendered spontaneously from horsehairs. Marvell appears to be mocking this belief.

How Salmons trespassing are found;
And Pikes are taken in the Pound.

lxi

But I, retiring from the Flood,
Take Sanctuary in the Wood;
And, while it lasts, my self embark
In this yet green, yet growing Ark;
Where the first Carpenter might best
Fit Timber for his Keel have Pressed,
And where all Creatures might have shares,
Although in Armies, not in Pairs.

THE WOOD

lxii

The double Wood of ancient Stocks
Linked in so thick, an Union locks,
It like two Pedigrees appears,
On one hand Fairfax, th' other Veres:
Of whom though many fell in War,
Yet more to Heaven shooting are:
And, as they Natures Cradle decked,
Will in green Age her Hearse expect.

lxiii

When first the Eye this Forest sees
It seems indeed as Wood not Trees:
As if their Neighborhood so old
To one great Trunk them all did mold.
There the huge Bulk takes place, as meant
To thrust up a Fifth Element;
And stretches still so closely wedged
As if the Night within were hedged.

lxiv

Dark all without it knits; within
It opens passable and thin;
And in as loose an order grows,
As the Corinthian Porticoes²⁰.
The Arching Boughs unite between
The Columns of the Temple green;
And underneath the winged Choirs
Echo about their tunèd Fires.

²⁰The Romans used the Corinthian column much more than the Greeks, building below the entablature and spacing the columns much wider apart.

lxv

The Nightingale does here make choice
To sing the Trials of her Voice.
Low Shrubs she sits in, and adorns
With Music high the squatted Thorns.
But highest Oaks stoop down to hear,
And list'ning Elders prick the Ear.
The Thorn, lest it should hurt her, draws
Within the Skin its shrunken claws.

lxvi

But I have for my Music found
A Sadder, yet more pleasing Sound:
The Stock-doves whose fair necks are graced
With Nuptial Rings their Ensigns chaste;
Yet always, for some Cause unknown,
Sad pair unto the Elms they moan.
O why should such a Couple mourn,
That in so equal Flames do burn!

lxvii

Then as I careless on the Bed
Of gelid Strawberries do tread,
And through the Hazels thick espy
The hatching Throstle's shining Eye,
The Heron from the Ashes top,
The eldest of its young lets drop,
As if it Stork-like did pretend
That Tribute to its Lord to send.

lxviii

But most the Hewel's wonders are,
Who here has the Holt-felsters²¹ care.
He walks still upright from the Root,
Meas'ring the Timber with his Foot;
And all the way, to keep it clean,
Doth from the Bark the Wood-moths glean.
He, with his Beak, examines well
Which fit to stand and which to fell.

lxix

The good he numbers up, and hacks;

²¹Woodpecker (hewel = hew-hole) and lumberjack (holtfelster = a holt or wood-feller)

As if he marked them with the Ax.
But where he, tinkling with his Beak,
Does find the hollow Oak to speak,
That for his building he designs,
And through the tainted Side he mines.
Who could have thought the tallest Oak
Should fall by such a feeble Stroke!

Ixx

Nor would it, had the Tree not fed
A Traitor-worm, within it bred.
(As first our Flesh corrupt within
Tempt impotent and bashful Sin.)
And yet that Worm triumphs not long,
But serves to feed the Hewel's young.
While the Oak seems to fall content,
Viewing the Treason's Punishment.

Ixxi

Thus I, easy Philosopher,
Among the Birds and Trees confer:
And little now to make me wants
Or of the Fowls, or of the Plants.
Give me but Wings as they, and I
Straight floating on the Air shall fly:
Or turn me but, and you shall see
I was but an inverted Tree.

Ixxii

Already I begin to call
In their most-learned Original:
And where I Language want, my Signs
The Bird upon the Bough divines;
And more attentive there doth sit
Then if She were with Lime-twigs knit.
No Leaf does tremble in the Wind
Which I returning cannot find.

Ixxiii

Out of these scattered Sibyls Leaves
Strange Prophecies my Fancy weaves:
And in one History consumes,
Like Mexique-Paintings, all the Plumes.
What Rome, Greece, Palestine, ere said
I in this light Mosaic read.
Thrice happy he who, not mistook,

Hath read in Nature's mystic Book.

Ixxiv

And see how Chance's better Wit
Could with a Mask my studies hit!
The Oak-Leaves me embroider all,
Between which Caterpillars crawl:
And Ivy, with familiar trails,
Me licks, and clasps, and curls, and hales.
Under this antick Cope I move
Like some great Prelate of the Grove,

Ixxv

Then, languishing with ease, I toss
On Pallets swoll'n of Velvet Moss;
While the Wind, cooling through the Boughs,
Flatters with Air my panting Brows.
Thanks for my Rest, ye Mossy Banks,
And unto you, cool Zephyrs, Thanks,
Who, as my Hair, my Thoughts too shed,
And winnow from the Chaff my Head.

Ixxvi

How safe, methinks, and strong, behind
These Trees have I encamped my Mind;
Where Beauty, aiming at the Heart,
Bends in some Tree its useless Dart;
And where the World no certain Shot
Can make, or me it toucheth not.
But I on it securely play,
And gall its Horsemen all the Day.

Ixxvii

Bind me ye Woodbines in your 'twines,
Curl me about, ye gadding Vines,
And Oh so close your Circles lace,
That I may never leave this Place:
But, lest your Fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your Silken Bondage break,
Do you, O Brambles, chain me too,
And courteous Briars, nail me though.

Ixxviii

Here in the Morning tie my Chain,
Where the two Woods have made a Lane;
While, like a Guard on either side,
The Trees before their Lord divide;

This, like a long and equal Thread,
Betwixt two Labyrinths does lead.
But, where the Floods did lately drown,
There at the Ev'ning stake me down.

THE RIVER AFTER THE FLOOD

lxxix

For now the Waves are fal'n and dried,
And now the Meadows fresher dyed;
Whose Grass, with moister color dashed,
Seems as green Silks but newly washed.
No Serpent new nor Crocodile
Remains behind our little Nile;
Unless its self you will mistake,
Among these Meads the only Snake.

lxxx

See in what wanton harmless folds
It ev'ry where the Meadow holds;
And its yet muddy back doth lick,
Till as a Crystal Mirror slick;
Where all things gaze themselves, and doubt
If they be in it or without.
And for his shade which therein shines,
Narcissus like, the Sun too pines.

lxxxi

Oh what a Pleasure 'tis to hedge
My Temples here with heavy sedge;
Abandoning my lazy Side,
Stretched as a Bank unto the Tide;
Or to suspend my sliding Foot
On th' Osiers underminèd Root,
And in its Branches tough to hang,
While at my Lines the Fishes twang!

MARY FAIRFAX

lxxxii

But now away my Hooks, my Quills,
And Angles, idle Utensils.
The young Maria walks to night:
Hide, trifling Youth, thy Pleasures slight.
'Twere shame that such judicious Eyes
Should with such Toys a Man surprize;
She that already is the Law
Of all her Sex, her Age's Awe.

Ixxxiii

See how loose Nature, in respect
To her, its self doth recollect;
And every thing so whisht and fine,
Starts forthwith to its *bonne mine*.
The Sun himself, of Her aware,
Seems to descend with greater Care,
And lest She see him go to Bed,
In blushing Clouds conceals his Head.

Ixxxiv

So when the Shadows laid asleep
From underneath these Banks do creep,
And on the River as it flows
With Eben Shuts²² begin to close;
The modest Halcyon comes in sight,
Flying betwixt the Day and Night;
And such an horror²³ calm and dumb,
Admiring Nature does benumb;

Ixxxv

The viscous Air, wheresoe're She fly,
Follows and sucks her Azure dye;
The gellying Stream compacts below,
If it might fix her shadow so;
The Stupid Fishes hang, as plain
As Flies in Crystal overta'en,
And Men the silent Scene assist,
Charmed with the saphire-winged Mist,

Ixxxvi

Maria such, and so doth hush
The World, and through the Evening rush.
No new-born Comet such a Train
Draws through the Sky, nor Star new-slain.
For straight those giddy Rockets fail,
Which from the putrid Earth exhale,
But by her Flames, in Heaven tried,
Nature is wholly vitrified.

²²Ebony shutters.

²³From the Latin *horrores*, trembling: religious awe. Since horror connotes trembling, "calm horror" is an oxymoron.

lxxxvii

'Tis She that to these Gardens gave
That wondrous Beauty which they have;
She straightness on the Woods bestows;
To Her the Meadow sweetness owes;
Nothing could make the River be
So Crystal-pure but only She;
She yet more Pure, Sweet, Straight, and Fair,
Than Gardens, Woods, Meads, Rivers are.

lxxxviii

Therefore what first She on them spent,
They gratefully again present.
The Meadow Carpets where to tread;
The Garden Flowers to Crown Her Head;
And for a Glass the limpid Brook,
Where She may all her Beauties look;
But, since She would not have them seen,
The Wood about her draws a Screen.

lxxxix

For She, to higher Beauties raised,
Disdains to be for lesser praised.
She counts her Beauty to converse
In all the Languages as hers;
Not yet in those herself employs
But for the Wisdom, not the Noise;
Nor yet that Wisdom would affect,
But as 'tis Heaven's Dialect.

xc

Blest Nymph! that couldst so soon prevent
Those Trains by Youth against thee meant—
Tears (wat'ry Shot that pierce the Mind;)
And Sighs (Loves Cannon charged with Wind;)
True Praise (That breaks through all defense;)
And feigned complying Innocence;
But knowing where this Ambush lay,
She 'scaped the safe, but roughest Way.

xc

This 'tis to have been from the first
In a Domestic Heaven nursed,
Under the Discipline severe
Of Fairfax, and the starry Vere;
Where not one object can come nigh

But pure, and spotless as the Eye;
And Goodness doth itself entail
On Females, if there want a Male.

xcii

Go now fond Sex that on your Face
Do all your useless Study place,
Nor once at Vice your Brows dare knit
Lest the smooth Forehead wrinkled sit
Yet your own Face shall at you grin,
Thorough the black-bag of your Skin;
When knowledge only could have filled
And Virtue all those Furrows tilled.

xciii

Hence She with Graces more divine
Supplies beyond her Sex the Line;
And, like a sprig of Mistletoe,
On the Fairfacian Oak does grow;
Whence, for some universal good,
The Priest shall cut the sacred Bud;
While her glad Parents most rejoice,
And make their Destiny their Choice.

xciv

Meantime, ye Fields, Springs, Bushes, Flowers,
Where yet She leads her studious Hours,
(Till Fate her worthily translates,
And find a Fairfax for our Thwaites)
Employ the means you have by Her,
And in your kind yourselves prefer;
That, as all Virgins She precedes,
So you all Woods, Streams, Gardens, Meads.

xcv

For you Thessalian Tempe's Seat
Shall now be scorned as obsolete;
Aranjuez, as less, disdained;
The Bel-Retiro as constrained;
But name not the Idalian Grove,
For 'twas the Seat of wanton Love;
Much less the Dead's Elysian Fields,
Yet nor to them your Beauty yields.

xcvi

'Tis not, what once it was, the World;

But a rude heap together hurled;
All negligently overthrown,
Gulfs, Deserts, Precipices, Stone.
Your lesser World contains the same.
But in more decent Order tame;
You Heaven's Center, Nature's Lap.
And Paradise's only Map.

EPILOGUE

xcvii

But now the Salmon-Fishers moist
Their leathern Boats begin to hoist;
And, like Antipodes in Shoes,
Have shod their Heads in their Canoes.
How Tortoise like, but not so slow,
These rational Amphibii go!
Let's in: for the dark Hemisphere
Does now like one of them appear.