

Commonplace Book
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Oroonoko; Or The Royal Slave: Aphra Behn; 1789

“They brought her thus to Court; and the King, who had caus’d a very rich Bath to be prepar’d, was led into it, where he sat under a Canopy, in State, to receive this long’d-for Virgin; whom he having commanded to be brought to him, they (after disrobing her) led her to the Bath, and making fast the Doors, left her to descend. The King, without more Courtship, bad her throw off her Mantle, and come to his Arms. But *Imoinda*, all in Tears, threw herself on the Marble, on the Brink of the Bath, and besought him to hear her. She told him, as she was a Maid, how proud of the Divine Glory she should have been, of having it in her Power to oblige her King: but as by the Laws he could not, and from his Royal Goodness would not take from any Man his wedded Wife; so she believ’d she should be the occasion of making him commit a great Sin, if she did not reveal her State and Condition; and tell him she was another’s, and could not be so happy to be his.”

Anne Bradstreet: The author to her book (1678)

Thou ill-form'd offspring of my feeble brain,
 Who after birth did'st by my side remain,
 Till snatht from thence by friends, less wise than true
 Who thee abroad, expos'd to publick view
 Made thee in raggs, halting to th' press to trudge,
 Where errors were not lessened (all may judge)
 At thy return my blushing was not small,
 My rambling brat (in print) should mother call,
 I cast thee by as one unfit for light,
 Thy Visage was so irksome in my sight;
 Yet being mind own, at length affection would
 Thy blemishes amend, if so I could:
 I'd wash'd thy face, but more defects I saw,
 And rubbing off a spo, still made a flaw.
 I stretcht thy joynts to make thee even feet,
 Yet still thou run'st more hobling then is meet;
 In better dress to trim thee was my mind,
 But nought save home-spun Cloth, i'th' house I find
 In this array, 'mongst Vulgars mayst thou roam
 In Critick's hands, beware thou dost not come;
 And take thy way where yet thou art not known,
 If for thy Father ask, say, thou hadst none:
 And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,
 Which caus'd her thus to send thee out of door.

Gulliver's Travels: Jonathan Swift (1726)

The emperor of Lilliput, attended by several of the nobility, comes to see the author in his confinement. The emperor's person and habit described. Learned men appointed to teach the author their language. He gains favour by his mild disposition. His pockets are searched, and his sword and pistols taken from him.

When I found myself on my feet, I looked about me, and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country around appeared like a continued garden, and the enclosed fields, which were generally forty feet square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods of half a stang, and the tallest trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven feet high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scene of a city in a theatre

Mistress of Riverdale: Rosalie Calvert; 12 August 1803

Dear Parents,

...In my last letter I wrote you that we were going to Bath in a few days and Mrs. Law was supposed to accompany us. However, on returning to Mount Albion to make further arrangements, I had a kind of a miscarriage (I don't know enough about all this to be sure that it was one). It weakened me so that I didn't think I could stand the fatigue of the trip, which is long and tiring. So I decided to come here (to Riversdale) instead. I am taking plenty of exercise and a cold shower bath every day, which has completely restored me. I am feeling better now than I have in three years.

The Interesting Narrative: Olaudah Equiano; 1789

Our first care, after refreshment, was to make ourselves tents to lodge in, which we did as well as we could with some sails we had brought from the ship. We then began to think how we might get from this place, which was quite uninhabited; and we determined to repair our boat, which was very much shattered, and to put to sea in quest of a ship or some inhabited island. It took us up however eleven days before we could get the boat ready for sea in the manner we wanted it, with a sail and other necessities. When we had got all things prepared the captain wanted me to stay on shore while he went to sea in quest of a vessel to take all the people off the key; but this I refused; and the captain and myself, with five more, set off in the boat towards New Providence. We had no more than two musket load of gunpowder with us if any thing should happen; and our stock of provisions consisted of three gallons of rum, four of water, some salt beef, some biscuit; and in this manner we proceeded to sea.

Jefferson's Literary Commonplace Book:

That we shall die, we know, 'tis but the Time,
And drawing Days out, that Men stand upon.
And he that cuts off twenty Years of Life,
Cutts of so many Years of fearing Death.
Grant that & then is Death a Benefit.

Julius Caesar Act 3 Scene 2

Sonnet by Mary Tighe (Poem from Recitation)

As nearer I approach this fatal day
Which makes all mortal cares appear so light,
Time seems on swifter wing to speed his flight,
And Hope's fallacious visions fade away;
While to my fond desires, at length I say,
Behold, how quickly melted from your sight
The promised objects you esteemed so bright
When love was all your song and life looked gay!
Now let us rest in peace! Those hours are past,
And with them, all the agitating train
By which hope led the wandering, cheated soul;
Wearing, she seeks repose and owns at last
How signs, and tears, and youth were spent in vain
While languishing she mourned in folly's sad control.