

With hum'rous MARTIAL tickling as he stung;
Elab'rate TERENCE, studious where he smil'd,
Familiar PLAUTUS, regularly wild;
With frequent visits there I would survey,
And read, and meditate the hours away. . . .⁴

...

THUS, till the year recedes, I'd be employ'd,
Ease, health and friendship happily enjoy'd;
But when the vernal Sun revolves its ray,
Melting hoar Winter with her rage away.
When vocal groves a gay perspective yield,
And a new verdure springs from field to field;
With the first larks I'd to the plains retire,
For rural pleasures are my chief desire.⁵

...

I'D have some handsome seat⁶ not far
from town,
The prospect beauteous, and the taste my own;
The fabric modern, faultless the design,
Not large, not yet immoderately fine;
But neat economy my mansion boast,
Nor should convenience be in beauty lost;
Each part should speak superior skill and care,
And all the artist be distinguish'd there. . . .

GRANT me, kind heaven, the nymph still
form'd to please,⁷
Impassionate as infants when at ease;
Fair as the op'ning rose; her person small,
Artless⁸ as parent *Eve* before her fall;
Courteous as angels, unreserv'dly kind,
Of modest carriage, and the chastest mind;
Her temper sweet, her conversation keen,
Not wildly gay, but soberly serene;
Not talkative, not apt to take offence,
With female softness join'd to manly sense;
Her dress and language elegantly plain,

⁴ Church continues the list of writers and scientists he would study: Pope, Shakespeare, Milton, Addison, Lyttleton, Dryden, Young, Gay, Waller, Thomson, Tillotson, Butler, Newton, Locke, and Boerhaave.

⁵ Many wealthy men in colonial America who lived in urban centers had country homes, often large farms, where they would spend the warmer months.

⁶ house.

⁷ Church envisions his ideal wife.

⁸ Ingenuous; without wiles or manipulativeness.

Not sluttish, forward, prodigal or vain;
Not fond to govern, but by CHOICE obeys;
True to my arms in body and in soul,
As the touch-needle⁹ to the attractive pole.
Caution, oppos'd to charms like these, were vain,
And man would glory in the silken chain;
Unlike the sensual wish that burns and stains,
But where the purest admiration reigns;
Give me, O ! give me such superior love,
Before the nectar of the gods above;
Then time on downy wings would steal away,
And love still be the business of the day.

...

BUT is the Almighty ever bound to please?
Rul'd by my wish, or studious of my ease?
Shall I determine where his frowns shall fall,
And fence my grotto from the lot of all?
Prostrate, his sovereign wisdom I adore,
Intreat his mercy, but I dare no more:
No constant joys mortality attend,
But sorrows violate, and cares offend;
Heaven wisely mixt our pleasures with alloy,
And gilds our sorrows with a ray of joy;
Life without storms a stagnant pool appears,
And grows offensive with unruffled years;
An active state is virtue's proper sphere,
To do and suffer is our duty here:
Foes to encounter, vices to disdain,
Pleasures to shun, and passions to restrain;
To sly temptation's open, flowery road,
And labor to be obstinately good.

THEN, blest is he who takes a calm survey,
Of all the events that paint the checker'd day;
Content, that blessing makes the balance even,
And pozes fortune by the scale of heaven.

I'LL let no future ill my peace destroy,
Or cloud the aspect of a present joy;
He who directed and dispens'd the past,
O'errules the present, and shall guide the last:

⁹ Touch-needle [chemistry]: small bar of gold and silver used to determine the purity of gold and silver articles by comparing streaks made by the article and the bar on a touchstone.

