

The Forerunners

THE harbingers are come. See, see their mark;
White is their colour, and behold my head.
But must they have my brain? must they dis-park
Those sparkling notions, which therein were bred?
 Must dullness turn me to a clod?
Yet have they left me, Thou art still my God.

Good men ye be, to leave me my best room,
Ev'n all my heart, and what is lodged there:
I pass not, I, what of the rest become,
So Thou art still my God, be out of fear.
 He will be pleased with that ditty;
And if I please him, I write fine and witty.

Farewell sweet phrases, lovely metaphors.
But will ye leave me thus? when ye before
Of stews and brothels only knew the doors,
Then did I wash you with my tears, and more,
 Brought you to Church well dresed and clad:
My God must have my best, ev'n all I had.

Lovely enchanting language, sugar-cane,
Honey of roses, whither wilt thou fly?
Hath some fond lover tic'd thee to thy bane?
And wilt thou leave the Church, and love a sty?
 Fie, thou wilt soil thy broider's coat,
And hurt thyself, and him that sings the note.

Let foolish lovers, if they will love dung,
And canvas, not with arras, clothe their shame:
Let folly speak in her own native tongue.
True beauty dwells on high: ours is a flame
 But borrow'd thence to light us thither.
Beauty and beauteous words should go together.

Yet if you go, I passe not; take your way:
For, Thou art still my God, is all that ye
Perhaps with more embellishment can say,
Go birds of spring: let winter have his fee,
 Let a bleak paleness chalk the door,
So all within be livelier then before.