

A Country Life

LXI. A Country-life.

How Sacred and how Innocent
A Country-life appears,
How free from Tumult, Discontent,
From Flattery or Fears!
This was the first and happiest Life,
When man enjoy'd himself;
Till Pride exchanged Peace for Strife,
And Happiness for Pelf.
'Twas here the Poets were inspir'd,
And sang their Mysteries;
And while the listning World admir'd,
Mens Minds did civilize.
That Golden Age did entertain
No Passion but of Love;
The thoughts of Ruling and of Gain
Did ne're their Fancies move.
None then did envy Neighbour's wealth,
Nor Plot to wrong his bed:
Happy in Friendship and in Health,
On Roots, not Beasts, they fed.
They knew no Law nor Physick then,
Nature was all their Wit.
And if there yet remain to men
Content, sure this is it.
What Blessings doth this World afford
To tempt or bribe desire?
For Courtship is all Fire and Sword,
Who would not then retire?
Then welcome dearest Solitude,
My great Felicity;
Though some are pleas'd to call thee rude,
Thou art not so, but we.

Such as do covet only rest
A Cottage will suffice:
Is it not brave to be possess
Of Earth but to despise?
Opinion is the rate of things,
From hence our Peace doth flow;
I have a better Fate then Kings,
Because I think it so.
When all the stormy World doth wear,
How unconcern'd am I:
I cannot fear to tumble lower
That never could be high.
Secure in these unenvi'd walls
I think not on the State,
And pity no mans case that falls
From his Ambition's height,
Silence and Innocence are safe;
A heart that's nobly true
At all these little Arts can laugh
That do the World subdue.
While others Revel it in State,
Here I'll contented sit,
And think I have as good a Fate
As Wealth and Pomp admit.
Let some in Courtship take delight,
And to th' Exchange resort;
There Revel out a Winter's night,
Not making Love, but Sport.
These never knew a noble Flame,
'Tis Lust, Scorn, or Design:
While Vanity playes all their Game,
Let Peace and Honour mine.
When the inviting Spring appears,
To Hide-Parke let them go,
And hasting thence be full of fears
To lose Spring-Garden shew.
Let others (nobler) seek to gain

In Knowledge happy Fate,
And others busie them in vain
To study wayes of State.
But I, resolved from within,
Confirmed from without,
In Privacy intend to spin
My future Minutes out.
And from this Hermitage of mine
I banish all wild toyes,
And nothing that is not Divine
Shall dare to tempt my Joyes.
There are below but two things good,
Friendship and Honesty,
And only those alone I would
Ask for Felicity.
In this retir'd Integrity,
Free from both War and noise,
I live not by Necessity,
But wholly by my Choice.