

Biography

- ✦ *Mary Collier was born near Midhurst, Sussex on an unknown date.*
- ✦ *However, she was baptized in Lodswoth, Sussex, on October 9th 1688.*
- ✦ *We don't know much about Collier's life, but what is mostly drawn from 'Some remarks on the author's life drawn by herself.'*
- ✦ *She worked as a Washerwoman until she was sixty-three then moved to a farmhouse in Hampshire.*
- ✦ *With fallen health, she retired "to pass the Relict of my days in Piety, Purity, Peace and an Old Maid" (Collier, v).*
- ✦ *Died in October of 1762*



Biography pt.2

- ✿ *Collier did not attend school because she had to work to help support her poor family.*
- ✿ *After her mother died at a young age, it was her responsibility to care for her father who's health was rapidly deteriorating.*
- ✿ *She never married and lived alone until she died*



The Woman's Labour an Epistle To Mr. Stephen Duck Background

- ✦ *Considered one of the first feminist critiques in English literature.*
- ✦ *Written in response to Stephen Duck who announced working women in the fields to be lazy.*
- ✦ *Collier argued against Duck's assertion by saying that women actually work much harder than men in most aspects. Including their for their employers and families and still get less pay.*



The Woman's Labour
an
Epistle To Mr. Stephen Duck

[6]

No Learning ever was bestow'd on me ;
My Live was always spent in Drudgery :
And not alone ; alas ! with Grief I find,
It is the Portion of poor Woman-kind.
Oft have I thought as on my Bed I lay,
Eas'd from the tiresome Labours of the Day,
Our first Extraction from a Mafs refin'd,
Could never be for Slavery design'd ;
Till Time and Custom by degrees destroy'd
That happy State our Sex at first enjoy'd.
When Men had us'd their utmost Care and Toil,
Their Recompence was but a Female Smile ;
When they by Arts or Arms were render'd Great,
They laid their Trophies at a Woman's Feet ;
They, in those Days, unto our Sex did bring
Their Hearts, their All, a Free-will Offering ;
And as from us their Being they derive,
They back again should all due Homage give.

THE
Woman's Labour
AN
EPISTLE
TO
MR. STEPHEN DUCK;
IN ANSWER to his late Poem, call'd
THE THRESHER'S LABOUR

To which are added,
The Three WISE SENTENCES,
TAKEN FROM
The First Book of ESDRAS, Ch. III. and IV.

By *MARY COLLIER*,
Now a WASHING-WOMAN, at Petersfield in Hampshire.

LONDON,
Printed for the AUTHOR ; and sold by J. ROBERTS,
in Warwick-Lane ; and at the Pamphlet-Shops near
the Royal Exchange. 1739.
Price Six Pence

The Woman's Labour
an
Epistle To Mr. Stephen Duck

[16]

Our tender Hands and Fingers scratch and
tear :

All this, and more, with Patience we must
bear.

Colour'd with Dirt and Filth we now appear ;
Your threshing *footy Peas* will not come near.
All the Perfections Woman once could boast,
Are quite obscur'd, and altogether lost.

