

Am Lit texts - 3



The New England Primer

Anne Bradstreet (1612?-72)

From "The Prologue"

5

I am obnoxious to each carping tongue
Who says my hand a needle better fits,
A poet's pen all scorn I should thus wrong,
For such despite they cast on female wits;
If what I do prove well, it won't advance,
They'll say it's stol'n, or else it was by chance.

"To My Dear and Loving Husband"

If ever two were one, then surely we¹.
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee.
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole Mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East² doth hold.
My love is such that Rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay.
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persever³
That when we live no more, we may live ever.
Notes

1] we: Anne's husband was Simon Bradstreet (1603-97). They were married in England in 1628.

2] the east: East Indies.

3] persever: likely accented on the second syllable.