

George Berkeley (1685-1753), Verses On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America (1728)

THE MUSE, disgusted at an age and clime
Barren of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time,
Producing subjects worthy fame.

In happy climes, where from the genial sun 5
And virgin earth such scenes ensue,
The force of art by nature seems outdone,
And fancied beauties by the true;

In happy climes, the seat of innocence, 10
Where nature guides and virtue rules,
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
The pedantry of courts and schools:

There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of empire and of arts, 15
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly flame did animate her clay, 20
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way;
The first four acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.