Katherine Philips (1632-1664)

**A Married State (1646)**

A married state affords but little ease;
The best of husbands are so hard to please:
This in wives' careful\(^1\) faces you may spell,\(^2\)
Though they dissemble their misfortunes well.
A virgin state is crowned with much content,
It's always happy as it's innocent:
No blustering husbands to create your fears,
No pangs of childbirth to extort\(^3\) your tears,
No children's cries for to offend your ears,
Few worldly crosses\(^4\) to distract your prayers.
Thus are you freed from all the cares that do
Attend on matrimony, and a husband too.
Therefore, Madam, be advised by me:
Turn, turn apostate\(^5\) to love's levity.
Suppress wild nature if she dare rebel,
There's no such thing as leading apes in hell.\(^6\)

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1 careful: full of care
2 spell: observe
3 extort: extract forcibly
4 crosses: troubles
5 apostate: religious traitor
6 leading apes in hell: the proverbial fate of spinsters