ELEGY

WRITTEN

IN A COUNTRY CHURCH YARD.

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY THOMAS GRAY.

New York:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
285 Broadway
1853.

Contents.

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Among the most finished and classical compositions in English poetry, we must certainly rank the Poems of Thomas Gray. Few as they are, the mere triflings of a man of letters, who prided himself less on being a scholar, than on sustaining the easy, desultory character of a gentleman, they have sufficed to place his fame above all danger from either the petulance of criticism, or the caprices of taste. What Dr. Johnson admitted with regard to the Elegy in a Country Churchyard may, without any restriction, be applied to his works: the merit of their author is now so generally appreciated, the public suffrages concurring with the competent decision of criticism, that it has become "vain to blame," if not "useless to praise him."

The Elegy is, perhaps, the most popular poem in the language. It is the favorite recitation of every school-boy; and he who has once committed it to memory is not willing ever to forget it. Hackneyed as it is, and, what is still worse for the effect of a poem, imitated and parodied as it has been times without number, it still retains its original power to call up those pleasing and pensive associations which the charm of the sentiment, and

the perfect grace of the versification, are adapted to excite. While his other productions slowly gained the public attention, the Elegy, when it first found its way into some of the periodical publications, was read and copied with avidity; and upon its being subsequently printed, speedily ran through eleven editions. It was translated into Latin verse by three different classical scholars, and five have translated it into Greek. Gray himself expressed surprise at the rapidity of the sale, and indignant at the neglect with which, what he deemed superior productions, his Odes, had been received, attributed the popularity of the Elegy entirely to its subject, saying, "that the public would have received it as well had it been written in prose." In this he deceived himself. The Elegy is not the most perfect of his poems, nor does it display the most original genius. It unquestionably owed much of the interest it immediately excited to its being accommodated, in its turn of thought and moral, to the capacity of childhood, and to the universal instinct of human nature. But then, it is in imparting this permanent charm to commonplace sentiments, and in rescuing back to poetry, subjects which have become unaffecting from their mere triteness and familiarity, that the power of real genius is sometimes most unequivocally exhibited. In his Elegy, Gray has, in this respect, achieved what no second writer has been able to succeed in doing; and his merit cannot be shown more strikingly by any circumstance than by the vast distance at which he has been able to place all his imitators.

But in fact, though the Elegy is less elaborated than several of his poems, there are other causes to which it owes its deserved popularity. This, more than any other of his works, was probably written under the influence of strong feeling, and of the vivid impressions of the beautiful in the scenery of nature. The date

of its composition, although it was not finished till some years after, is the period at which his mind was overspread with melancholy, in consequence of the loss of his amiable and accomplished friend, West. The scenes amid which it was composed were well adapted to soothe and cherish that contemplative sadness which, when the wounds of grief are healing, it is a luxury to indulge. In the secluded and romantic churchyard where his remains are, in fulfilment of his own request, deposited, there still stands a majestic yew-tree, which would seem to claim on the ground of high probability, to be viewed as the very one described by the poet. A monument consisting of a large stone sarcophagus on a lofty base erected to his memory in Stoke Park, contiguous to the spot, bears record that he is buried amid the scenes which inspired his lays. On two of its sides are inscribed stanzas taken from the Elegy; and it is inevitable to believe, that the "rugged elms," the "yew-tree's shade," the "wood now smiling in scorn," there described, are the same as form the picturesque features of the landscape. Besides this, there are expressions in the poem so minutely accurate as descriptive of the objects and sounds of rural nature, that nothing but actual observation could have suggested the nice selection of the precise epithets by which they are characteristically discriminated. These delicate touches will scarcely admit of being formally particularized; but, in "the nodding beech

> That wreathes its old, fantastic *root* so high,"

in "the swallow twittering from the straw-built shed," in the line describing the returning herd, and in the drowsy tinklings of the folded sheep falling upon the ear at intervals, so different from the quick busy tinkling of sheep in the field,—the lover of nature will not fail to recognize the marks of actual observation, as well

as of exquisite taste. No poem is richer in specimens of the picturesque force of language.

Before the Epitaph, Mr. Gray originally inserted a very beautiful stanza, which was printed in some of the first editions, but afterwards omitted, because he thought that it was too long a parenthesis in this place. The lines however are, in themselves, exquisitely fine, and demand preservation:

> "There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
> By hands unseen are showers of violets found
> The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
> And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

The following stanza was also written by Gray for this poem, but for some reason subsequently rejected.

> "Hark! how the sacred calm that breathes around,
> Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease;
> In still small accents whispering from the ground,
> A grateful earnest of eternal peace."

The odes of Gray display the same taste and feeling, but they are certainly in a more elevated strain of composition. There is little propriety in the neatly turned compliment which ascribes

> "A Pindar's rapture [to] the lyre of Gray."

Gray has written two poems, which he designates Pindaric Odes. These constitute nearly the whole of his resemblance to Pindar. The productions of genius, at periods in the history of society so remote, can seldom admit of being brought into comparison; and Pindar is of all ancient bards, perhaps, the most inaccessible to either rivals or imitators.

The "Long Story" is an exquisite *jeu d'esprit:* its elegant

playfulness reminds us of the best productions in the same style of Cowper; and lets us more than almost any other of his poems, into the secret of Gray's native character. Lord Orford is said to have asserted, that Gray never wrote anything easily but "things of humor,"—that "humor was his natural and original turn." Without subscribing exactly to the perfect correctness of this opinion, we may gather from his Letters, that he had that natural vivacity of temper, which, added to a keen perception of the ridiculous, and a *naïve* manner of expression, would incline him, in his familiar moments, to this unbending of the faculties. In his conversation, too, we are told, Gray was apt to be satirical. With what zest he luxuriated in the utmost poignancy of sarcasm and ridicule when he chose to give license to his pen, is, indeed, sufficiently evinced by the three lampoons which are now incorporated with his Odes and his Elegy. These would by no means bear out the assertion that satire was his forte, but they concur to show that it was a species of writing in which his taste did not forbid him to indulge, and in which his talents would doubtless have enabled him to excel. In his correspondence, however, he is only playful; and if his humor does not often sparkle into wit, it still more rarely degenerates into the malignity of satire. But we are anticipating our sketch of his character.

Thomas Gray was born in London, Dec. 26, 1716. He received his education at Eton, under Mr. Antrobus, his maternal uncle, then one of his assistant masters: it was here that he contracted a friendship with Horace Walpole and the son of West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland. From Eton he went to Cambridge, and was entered a pensioner at Peter-house in 1734; but having no taste for mathematical studies, he did not become a candidate for academical honors. Both while at Eton, and during his res-

idence at Cambridge, he was indebted for his entire support to the affection and firmness of his mother, who, out of her share of the proceeds of a trade in which her little capital was vested previously to her marriage, in partnership with her sister, in what was then called an India warehouse, (the profits of which were fortunately secured to her sole benefit by articles of agreement,) discharged all her own personal expenses, as well as those entailed by her children. Gray's father, a man of the most violent passions, and, judging from his brutal treatment of his wife, of unprincipled character, not only refused all assistance, but even endeavored to force her to give up the shop, on which she depended for the means of procuring a liberal education for her son, in order, as was supposed, to gain possession of her money. To the exemplary presence of mind of his admirable mother, Gray had already owed the preservation of his life. All the rest of her children died in their infancy from suffocation, produced, we are told, by fulness of blood. Thomas was attacked with a paroxysm of a similar kind, which was removed by his mother's promptly opening a vein with her own hand.* She lived to see her affectionate exertions and solicitudes well repaid, to witness the rising fame, and to receive the grateful attentions of that only surviving son. She died at the age of sixty-seven; and, after her decease, which took place in 1753, Gray, says Mr. Mason, "seldom mentioned his mother without a sigh."

Gray left Cambridge in 1738, with the intention of applying himself to the study of the law; but he was easily induced to relinquish this design on receiving an invitation to accompany his friend Mr. Walpole to the continent. They proceeded together

* These facts are stated by the Rev. Mr. Mitford, in his Life of Gray, prefixed to the quarto edition of his works, London, 1816.

through France to Italy, and passed the winter of 1739–40 at Florence: they afterwards visited Rome and Naples, and were proceeding to explore other parts of that classical region; but at Reggio, an unfortunate difference took place between the two friends, occasioned, according to Walpole's own statement, by Gray's being "too serious a companion" for a dissipated young man, just let loose from the restraints of college. It is probable that Walpole's irregularities drew from his graver friend remonstrances in too indignantly severe, perhaps too authoritative a tone to be brooked with temper; and they were resented in terms which Gray could never quite forgive. A separation took place, and Gray pursued his travels alone to Venice, where he spent some weeks, and returned to England in September, 1741.

Two months after his arrival, his father died, and his widow, left with a scanty income, retired to the house of one of her sisters, Mrs. Rogers, at Stoke, near Windsor. Gray now returned to Cambridge, the conveniences of a college life being better suited than an independent establishment, to the narrowed state of his finances. Here, in 1742, he was admitted to the degree of bachelor in the civil law. Cambridge had as a residence no attractions for him beyond its literary advantages. About this period, he first sedulously applied himself to poetical composition. He had no serious pursuit to call forth the ardor of his mind; and, "alas!" he says in a letter to his friend West, "alas for one who has nothing to do but to amuse himself!" His Ode to Spring was written early in June, during a visit to his mother at Stoke. He addressed it to that same accomplished correspondent; but it never reached him. West was at the time numbered with the dead, his tender frame having sunk beneath the pressure of sickness and domestic sorrows. The Ode on the prospect of Eton, the Hymn to Adversity, and the Elegy in a Country Churchyard,

were written soon after, evidently under the influence of the melancholy feelings inspired by the loss of his early friend. The Ode first appeared in 1747, published by Dodsley. The Elegy was not published till 1750, when, having found its way into the magazines, the author requested Mr. Walpole, with whom he now again corresponded on familiar terms, to put it into the hands of Dodsley.

The Ode on the Progress of Poesy, and the Bard, were written in 1755. The latter, however, remained for some time in an unfinished state, till his accidentally seeing a blind harper performing on a Welsh harp, "again," as he tells us, "put his ode in motion, and brought it to a conclusion." In 1757, Gray had the honor of declining the office of poet laureate on the death of Cibber. "The office," he says in a letter to Mason, "has always humbled the possessor hitherto:—if he were a poor writer, by making him more conspicuous; and if he were a good one, by setting him at war with the little fry of his own profession; for there are poets little enough even to envy a poet laureate." The office was accepted by Whitehead.

In January, 1759, the British Museum was opened to the public, and Gray, during three subsequent years, continued to reside in London for the purpose of daily repairing to its library, employing the greater part of his time in reading and transcribing. He visited Scotland in the summer of 1765, where he became acquainted with Dr. Beattie, in whom he found, to use his own expression, "a poet, a philosopher, and a good man." In 1768, Gray received, without solicitation, through the favor of the Duke of Grafton, the appointment of Professor of Modern Languages and History at the University of Cambridge; a place of some emolument, for which, six years before, he had been "spirited up" to apply to Lord Bute, on the death of Mr. Turner, but without

success. On the Duke's installation into the chancellorship of the University in the following year, Gray composed the Ode for Music, which was performed in the senate-house on the occasion.

It was his intention, on obtaining the professorship, to read lectures; but the declining state of his health, and his excessive fastidiousness with regard to his own compositions, concurred to prevent his ever realizing this design. His rigid abstemiousness could not avert the attacks of hereditary gout, to which he now became increasingly subject, and which left behind a painful degree of debility, and an habitual depression of spirits. The uneasiness he felt at holding the professorship without discharging its duties, had at one time made him resolve upon resigning the office. But he did not hold it long. On the 24th of July, 1771, while at dinner in the college hall, he was seized with a sudden nausea and faintness, symptomatic of an attack of gout in the stomach. A few days after, he suffered a repetition of the attack with aggravated violence, followed by frequent convulsion fits, and on the 30th of July, he expired in his fifty-fifth year.

The account of Gray, given by one of his contemporaries, to the general accuracy of which all his biographers have subscribed, represents him as "perhaps the most learned man in Europe." He was equally acquainted with the elegant and the profound parts of science, and that not superficially, but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy; and was a great antiquary. He was deeply read in Dugdale, Hearne, and Spelman, and was a complete master of heraldry. His skill in zoology and entomology was extremely accurate; and during the latter part of his life, he found time to resume the botanical studies of his early years. His taste in music, we

are told, was excellent, being formed on the study of the great Italian masters contemporary with Pergolesi, and he performed on the harpsichord. In painting he was a connoisseur, and architecture at one time received a considerable portion of his studious attention. But classical literature was his favorite pursuit: to this he applied with constant, unwearied assiduity; and he is generally allowed the merit of having been a profound as well as an elegant scholar. The notes upon various Greek authors, which he has left behind him, bear the marks of patient labor and accurate judgment. His criticisms are replete with philosophical discrimination, and discover, like everything else that proceeded from his pen, the most refined and delicate taste.

Gray is described as in person small, but well made, very nice and exact in his dress, in conversation lively, and possessing a singular facility of expression. By his intimate friends he appears to have been tenderly esteemed. To strangers he observed a reserve and precision of deportment which seemed to bespeak the reverse of sociability, while his polished language, which might be mistaken by them for a studied style, together with his effeminate and what were thought finical manners, subjected him to the charge of affectation. His fastidiousness too would sometimes betray itself in the visible expression of contempt; and he was satirical; but we do not learn that either his contempt or his sarcasm was ever bestowed inappropriately, or without just provocation. His general conduct was marked by urbanity and cheerfulness; his mind never contracted "the rust of pedantry." Dr. Beattie says, "he had none of the airs of either a scholar or a poet." He was capable too of warm friendship, and such a man could not be an unamiable man. On the contrary, he is spoken of as an ornament to society.

It is charged upon his character as a weakness, that, like Con-

greve, while he himself owed all his distinction to his mental endowments and literary attainments, he "could not bear to be considered only as a man of letters; and though without birth, or fortune, or station, his desire was to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman who read for his amusement." There is a passage in one of his letters which partly confirms, and at the same time throws some light on this representation. "To find one's self business," he writes, "I am persuaded is the great art of life. I am never so angry as when I hear my acquaintance wishing they had been bred to some poking profession, or employed in some office of drudgery; as if it were pleasanter to be at the command of other people, than at one's own; and as if they could not go, unless they were wound up; yet I know and feel what they mean by this complaint; it proves that some spirit, something of genius (more than common) is required to teach a man how to employ himself." Is it more than candid to conclude that his unwillingness to be regarded as a man of letters, arose from that dislike of ostentatious pretension which distinguishes the man of thorough learning from the pedant, while what he saw in the University of professional vulgarity made him set the more value on the character of the gentleman? And in this who will say that Gray was not right?

Epitaph

ON

MR. GRAY'S MONUMENT

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

BY MR. MASON.

No more the Grecian Muse unrival'd reigns,
To Britain let the nations homage pay!
She boasts a Homer's fire in Milton's strains,
A Pindar's rapture in the lyre of Gray.

Illustrations.

ENGRAVED BY R. S. GILBERT, PHILADELPHIA.

STANZAS.	PAINTERS.
I.	G. Barret.
II.	Copley Fielding.
III.	J. Constable, R. A.
IV.	G. Cattermole.
V.	J. Constable, R. A.
VI.	T. Stothard, R. A.
VII.	P. Dewint.
VIII.	W. Boxall.
IX.	S. A. Hart, A. R. A.
X.	G. Cattermole.
XI.	J. Constable, R. A.
XII.	Thomas Landseer.
XIII.	Frank Howard.
XIV.	W. Westall, A. R. A.
XV.	A. W. Callcott, R. A.
XVI.	J. H. Nixon.
XVII.	A. Cooper, R. A.
XVIII.	W. Mulready, R. A.
XIX.	J. W. Wright.
XX.	Charles Landseer.
XXI.	J. J. Chalon, A. R. A.
XXII.	H. Howard, R. A.
XXIII.	R. Westall, R. A.
XXIV.	J. W. Wright.
XXV.	Copley Fielding.
XXVI.	G. Barret.
XXVII.	Thales Fielding.
XXVIII.	C. R. Stanley.
XXIX.	W. Collins, R. A.
XXX.	Frank Howard.
XXXI.	H. Howard, R. A.
XXXII.	S. A. Hart, A. R. A.

The vignette on the title-page is a view of Stoke-Poges church, Buckinghamshire, the churchyard of which is the scene of this celebrated poem, and near which is a monument erected to the memory of Gray by the late John Penn, Esq., of Stoke Park. The drawing, by John Constable, Esq., R. A., has been kindly offered to the editor since the publication of the former edition, and is in the possession of Samuel Rogers, Esq.

The tomb of the Poet is at the south-east corner of the chancel, near that of his aunt, Mrs. Mary Antrobus.

THE great improvement that has taken place, within a few years, in the art of Engraving on Wood, as well as its general adoption, in some measure superseding the use of Copper and Steel, led to the present attempt to apply this mode of embellishment to a Poem of such general and deserved celebrity, and which appeared to afford the greatest scope for the talents of the artist.

The ELEGY itself has long been universally acknowledged as one of the most elegant compositions which the English language ever produced.

The following testimony to its great merit is not, perhaps, generally known, and will not here be inappropriately introduced.

General Wolfe received a copy on the eve of the assault on Quebec; he was so struck with its beauty, that he is said to have exclaimed, that he would have preferred being its author, to that of being the victor in the projected attack in which he so gloriously lost his life.

The favour with which this edition may be received, will be entirely owing to the talents of the eminent artists who have so kindly seconded the Editor, if he may apply such a word, in his wish to produce a specimen of beautiful and appropriate illustration in this branch of the Fine Arts; and to them he begs to return his sincerest thanks.

JOHN MARTIN.

LONDON,
Oct. 10th, 1834

THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping Owl does to the Moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,

Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,

Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,

The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

v

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,

The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,

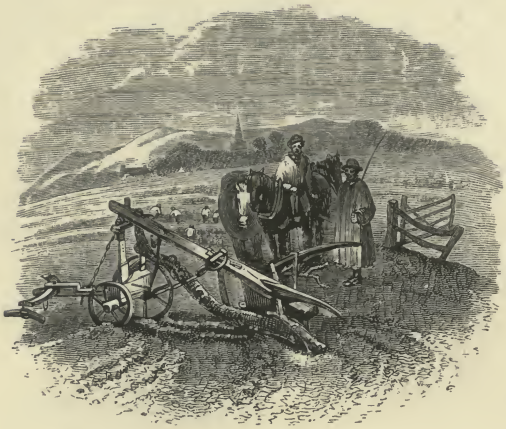
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,

No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

The dead

VI

For them, no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees, the envied kiss to share.



VII

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield;

Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;

How jocund did they drive their team a-field!

How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

VIII

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

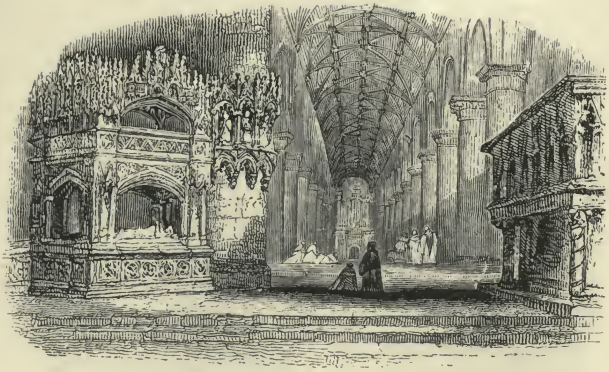
XX

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,

And all that beauty, all that wealth, e'er gave,

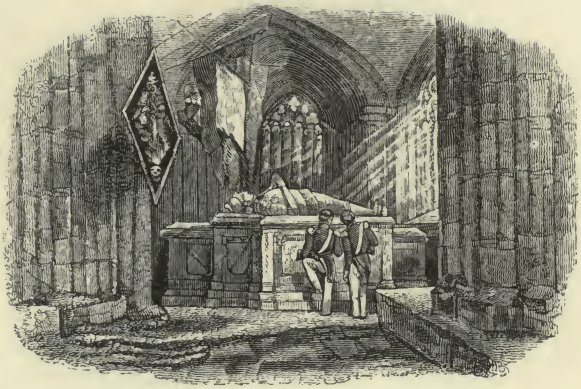
Await, alike, th' inevitable hour;—

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.



x

Nor you, ye proud! impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise;
Where, through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.



XI

Can storied urn, or animated bust,

Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?

Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust?

Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

XII

Perhaps, in this neglected spot, is laid
Some heart, once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

XIII

But Knowledge, to their eyes, her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

XXV

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

xv

Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast.
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute, inglorious Milton,—here may rest;
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

innocent
free from guilt

XVII

Th' applause of listening senates to command ;
The threats of pain and ruin to despise ;
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

XVIII

Their lot forbad : nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

XVIII

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide;
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame;
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride,
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

XIX

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,

Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;

Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life,

They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

xx

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

XXI

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

XXII.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,

This pleasing, anxious being e'er resign'd;

Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,

Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

XXIII

On some fond breast the parting soul relies;
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries;
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

XXIV

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If, 'chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate;

XXV

Haply, some hoary-headed swain may say:

"Oft have we seen him, at the peep of dawn,

Brushing, with hasty steps, the dews away,

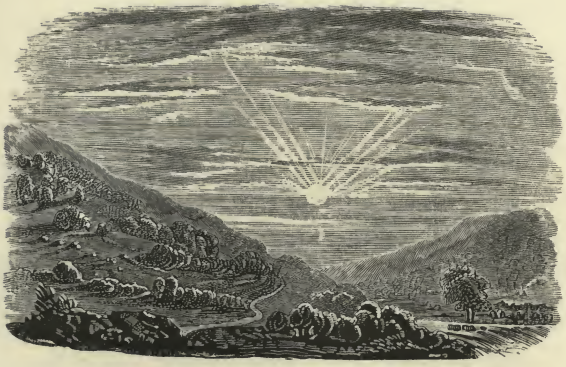
To meet the Sun upon the upland lawn.

XXVI

"There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length, at noontide, would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

XXVII

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling, as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies, he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.



XXVIII

"One morn, I miss'd him on the 'custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
Another came,—nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood, was he;

XXXIX

"The next, with dirges due, in sad array,
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

XXX

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown;
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

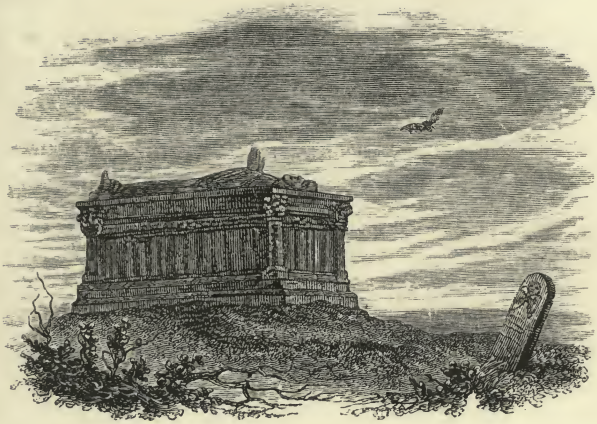
XXXI

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;

Heaven did a recompense as largely send:

He gave to Misery all he had—a tear;

He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.



XXXII

No further seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode:
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

ODES.

On the Spring.

Lo! where the rosy bosom'd Hours,
  Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long expecting flowers,
  And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
  The untaught harmony of Spring:
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool Zephyrs through the clear blue sky
  Their gather'd fragrance fling.

Where'er the oaks thick branches stretch
  A broader browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
  O'ercanopies the glade,

Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the muse shall sit, and think
  (At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardor of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
  How indigent the great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care;
  The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how through the peopled air
  The busy murmur glows!
The insect-youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
  And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gayly gilded trim
  Quick-glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's sober eye
  Such is the race of Man:

And they that creep, and they that fly,
  Shall end where they began.
Alike the Busy and the Gay
But flutter through life's little day,
  In Fortune's varying colors dress'd:
Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chill'd by Age, their airy dance
  They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear, in accents low,
  The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
  A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
  No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
  We frolic while 'tis May.

On the Death of a Favorite Cat,

DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD FISHES.

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
  The azure flowers that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
  Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
  The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
  She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
  The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armor's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple to the view
  Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw;
A whisker first, and then a claw,
  With many an ardent wish,
She stretch'd, in vain, to reach the prize
What female heart can gold despise?
  What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
  Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by and smiled),
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
  She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood,
She mew'd to every watery God,
  Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd:
Nor cruel *Tom*, nor *Susan* heard.
  A favorite has no friend!

From hence ye beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
  And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
  Nor all that glisters, gold.

On a Distant Prospect of Eton College.

Ἄνθρωπος, ἱκανὴ πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν.

MENANDER.

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
  That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful science still adores
  Her Henry's* holy shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights the' expanse below
  Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
  His silver-winding way:

* King Henry the Sixth, founder of the College.

Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
  Ah, fields beloved in vain!
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
  A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
  As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
  To breathe a second spring.

Say, father Thames, for thou hast seen
  Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green,
  The paths of pleasure trace;
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm, thy glassy wave?
  The captive linnet which enthral?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed
  Or urge the flying ball?

While some, on earnest business bent,
  Their murmuring labors ply
'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint
  To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
  And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
  And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
  Less pleasing when possess'd;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
  The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health, of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
  And lively cheer, of vigor born!
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
  That fly the' approach of morn.

Alas! regardless of their doom,
  The little victims play;
No sense have they of ills to come,
  Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see, how all around 'em wait
The ministers of human fate,
  And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, show them where in ambush stand,
To seize their prey the murderous band!
  Ah, tell them they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
  The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
  And Shame that skulks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy, with rankling tooth,
  That inly gnaws the secret heart;
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,
  And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
  Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
  And grinning Infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try
And hard Unkindness' altered eye,
  That mocks the tear it forced to flow;
And keen Remorse, with blood defiled,
And moody Madness laughing wild
  Amid severest woe.

Lo! in the vale of years beneath,
  A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
  More hideous than their queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every laboring sinew strains,
  Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo! Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
  And slow consuming Age.

To each his sufferings: all are men,
  Condemn'd alike to groan;
The tender for another's pain,
  The' unfeeling for his own.
Yet, ah! why should they know their fate,
Since sorrow never comes too late,
  And happiness too swiftly flies?
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more;—where ignorance is bliss,
  'Tis folly to be wise.

To Adversity.

———Ζῆνα———

. . . . . .

Τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μαος
Θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

ÆSCHYLUS.

DAUGHTER of Jove, relentless power,
Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour
The bad affright, afflict the best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain,
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy sire to send on earth
  Virtue, his darling child, design'd,
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,
  And bade to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou badest her know,
And from her own she learn'd to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
  Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
  And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer friend, the flattering foe;
By vain Prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd,
  Immersed in rapturous thought profound,

And Melancholy, silent maid,
  With leaden eye that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend;
Warm Charity, the general friend,
  With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly pleasing tear.

  Oh! gently on thy suppliant's head,
    Dread goddess, lay thy chastening hand!
  Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
    Not circled with the vengeful band
  (As by the impious thou art seen)
  With thundering voicè and threatening mien,
  With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty:

  Thy form benign, oh goddess, wear,
    Thy milder influence impart,
  Thy philosophic train be there
    To soften, not to wound my heart.

The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love, and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a Man.

The Progress of Poesy.

A PINDARIC ODE.

Φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς
Δὲ τὸ πὰν ἑρμηνέων
Χατίζει.

PINDAR.

I. 1.

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,[1]
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:

1 "Awake, my glory: awake, lute and harp." DAVID'S PSALMS.
VARIATION.—"Awake, my lyre: my glory, wake."

Pindar styles his own poetry, with its musical accompaniments, *Αἰοληΐς μολπή*, *Αἰόλιδες χορδαὶ*, *Αἰολίδων πνοαὶ αὐλῶν*, Æolian song, Æolian strings, the breath of the Æolian flute.

The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which give life and lustre to all it touches, are here described; its quiet majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers; and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swoln and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions.

The laughing flowers that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

I. 2.

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,[1]
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War
Has curb'd the fury of his car,
And dropp'd his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptred hand[2]

[1] Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar.
[2] This is a weak imitation of some beautiful lines in the same ode.

Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

I. 3.

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,[1]
Temper'd to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet green
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
On Cytherea's day
With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures
Frisking light in frolic measures;
Now pursuing, now retreating,
  Now in circling troops they meet:
To brisk notes in cadence beating,
  Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:
  Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay.

[1] Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.

With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way:
O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move
The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.

II. 1.

Man's feeble race what ills await![1]
Labor, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate!
The fond complaint, my song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he given in vain the heavenly muse?
Night and all her sickly dews,
Her spectres wan and birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky;
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts of war.

[1] To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the day, by its cheerful presence, to dispel the gloom and terrors of the night.

II. 2.

In climes beyond the solar road,[1]
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The muse has broke the twilight gloom
To cheer the shivering native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,
In loose numbers wildly sweet,
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.
Her track, where'er the goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
The' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

[1] Extensive influence of poetic genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations: its connection with liberty, and the virtues that naturally attend on it. [See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welsh fragments, the Lapland and American songs, &c.]

"Extra anni solisque vias—"
VIRGIL.

"Tutta lontana dal camin del sole."
PETRARCH.

II. 3.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,[1]
Isles, that crown the' Ægean deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering labyrinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of anguish!
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around;
Every shade and hallow'd fountain
Murmur'd deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.

Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had travelled in Italy, and formed their taste there. Spenser imitated the Italian writers; Milton improved on them: but this school expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since.

☞ Gray has been long dead: the Poets of the present day rather imitate the Italian and early English Poets than the French.

Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
  And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

III. 1.

  Far from the sun and summer gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,[1]
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
  To him the mighty mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless child
Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled.
"This pencil take (she said), whose colors clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy;
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

[1] "Nature's Darling," Shakspeare.

III. 2.

Nor second He, that rode sublime[1]
Upon the seraph wings of Ecstacy,
The secrets of the' abyss to spy,
He pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time:
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,[2]
Where angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two coursers of etherial race,
With necks in thunder clothed,[3] and long-resounding pace.

1 Milton.

2 "For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone. This was the appearance of the glory of the Lord." Ezek. i. 20, 26, 28.

3 "Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" Job.—This verse and the foregoing are meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhymes.

III. 3.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more——[1]
  Oh! lyre divine, what daring spirit
  Wakes thee now? Though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
  That the Theban eagle bare,[2]
Sailing with supreme dominion
  Through the azure deep of air:

[1] We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's Day; for Cowley, who had merit, yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony, for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason indeed, of late days, has touched the true chords, and with a masterly hand, in some of his choruses; above all in the last of Caractacus:

"Hark; heard ye not yon footstep dread?" &c.

[2] Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον. Olymp. ii. 159. Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamor in vain below, while it pursues its flight, regardless of their noise.

Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
  Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun:
  Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

The Bard.

A PINDARIC ODE.

This Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the Bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.

I. 1.

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
Confusion on thy banners wait;
Though fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.
Helm nor hauberk's twisted mail,[1]
Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!"

[1] The hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion.

Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
  Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side[1]
  He wound with toilsome march his long array.
Stout Glo'ster[2] stood aghast in speechless trance:
  "To arms!" cried Mortimer,[3] and couch'd his quivering
    lance.

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
  Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the poet stood;

[1] Snowdon was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract: it included all the highlands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway.

[2] Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford; married at Westminster, May 2, 1290, to Joan de Acres or Acon (so called from having been born at Acon in the Holy Land) second daughter of King Edward.—He died 1295.

[3] Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore.

They both were Lord Marchers, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the king in this expedition.

(Loose his beard, and hoary hair[1]
Stream'd like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
"Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert-cave,
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they wave
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3.

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hush'd the stormy main:
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.

[1] The image was taken from a well-known picture by Raphael, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel.

On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,[1]
Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof the' affrighted ravens sail;
The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.[2]
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs a grisly band,
I see them sit, they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.[3]

[1] The shores of Caernarvonshire opposite to the isle of Anglesey.

[2] Camden and others observe, that eagles used annually to build their aerie among the rocks of Snowdon, which from thence (as some think) were named by the Welsh Craigian-eryri, or the crags of the eagles. At this day the highest point of Snowdon is called the Eagle's Nest. That bird is certainly no stranger to this island, as the Scots, and the people of Cumberland, Westmoreland, &c. can testify: it even has built its nest in the peak of Derbyshire. (See Willoughby's Ornithology, published by Ray.)

[3] See the Norwegian Ode (the Fatal Sisters) that follows.

II. 1.

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, through Berkley's roof that ring,[1]
Shrieks of an agonizing king!
She-wolf of France,[2] with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heaven.[3] What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with flight combined,
And sorrow's faded form, and solitude behind.

[1] Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley Castle.
[2] Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous queen.
[3] Triumphs of Edward the Third in France.

II. 2.

"Mighty victor, mighty Lord!
Low on his funeral couch he lies![1]
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable warrior fled?[2]
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm, that in thy noontide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising morn.
Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,[3]
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

[1] Death of that king, abandoned by his children, and even robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and his mistress.

[2] Edward the Black Prince, dead some time before his father.

[3] Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign. See Froissart, and other contemporary writers.

II. 3.

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,[1]
The rich repast prepare,
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,[2]
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,[3]

[1] Richard the Second, as we are told by Archbishop Scroop and the confederate Lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older writers, was starved to death. The story of his assassination, by Sir Piers of Exon, is of much later date.

[2] Ruinous wars of York and Lancaster.

[3] Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, &c., believed to be murdered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar.

Revere his consort's faith,[1] his father's fame,[2]
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.[3]
Above, below, the rose of snow,[4]
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
The bristled boar in infant-gore[5]
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er the' accursed loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1.

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.[6]
(The web is wove. The work is done.)

1 Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her husband and her crown.

2 Henry the Fifth.

3 Henry the Sixth, very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the crown.

4 The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster.

5 The silver boar was the badge of Richard the Third; whence he was usually known in his own time by the name of *the Boar*.

6 Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The

Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unbless'd, unpitied, here to mourn:
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
  Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight!
  Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.[1]
All hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail![2]

III. 2.

"Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear:

heroic proof she gave of her affection for her lord is well known. The monuments of his regret and sorrow for the loss of her, are still to be seen at Northampton, Gaddington, Waltham, and other places.

[1] It was the common belief of the Welsh nation, that King Arthur was still alive in Fairyland, and would return again to reign over Britain.

[2] Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied, that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the house of Tudor.

And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,[1]
Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play!
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;[2]
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and, soaring as she sings,
Waves in the eye of heaven her many-color'd wings.

III. 3.

"The verse adorn again
Fierce war, and faithful love,

[1] Speed, relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, ambassador of Poland, says, "And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert orator no less with her stately port and majestical deporture, than with the tartnesse of her princelie checkes."

[2] Taliessin, chief of the bards, flourished in the sixth century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration among his countrymen.

And truth severe, by fairy fiction drest.
  In buskin'd measures move[1]
Pale grief, and pleasing pain,
With horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
  A voice, as of the cherub-choir,[2]
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,[3]
  That lost in long futurity expire.
Fond impious man, think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
  Raised by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
  And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me! with joy I see
  The different doom our fates assign.
Be thine despair, and sceptred care,
  To triumph, and to die, are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

[1] SHAKSPEARE. [2] MILTON.
[3] The succession of poets after Milton's time.

For Music.

(IRREGULAR.)

Performed in the Senate-House at Cambridge, July 1, 1769, at the installation of the Duke of Grafton, as Chancellor of the University.

I.

"HENCE, avaunt, ('tis holy ground)
Comus, and his midnight-crew,
And Ignorance with looks profound,
And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,
Mad sedition's cry profane,
Servitude that hugs her chain,
Nor in these consecrated bowers
Let painted Flattery hide her serpent-train in flowers.

Nor Envy base, nor creeping Gain,
Dare the Muse's walk to stain,
While bright-eyed Science watches round:
Hence, away, 'tis holy ground!"

II.

From yonder realms of empyrean day
  Bursts on my ear the indignant lay:
There sit the sainted sage, the bard divine,
  The few, whom genius gave to shine
Through every unborn age, and undiscover'd clime.
  Rapt in celestial transport they:
  Yet hither oft a glance from high
  They send of tender sympathy
To bless the place, where on their opening soul
  First the genuine ardor stole.
'Twas Milton struck the deep-toned shell,
And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,
And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

III.

"Ye brown o'erarching groves,
That contemplation loves,
Where willowy Camus lingers with delight!
Oft at the blush of dawn
I trod your level lawn,
Oft woo'd the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
With Freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy."

IV.

But hark! the portals sound, and pacing forth
With solemn steps and slow,
High potentates, and dames of royal birth,
And mitred fathers in long order go:
Great Edward, with the lilies on his brow[1]
From haughty Gallia torn,

[1] Edward the Third, who added the fleur de lys of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity College.

And sad Chatillon, on her bridal morn[1]
That wept her bleeding Love, and princely Clare,[2]
And Anjou's heroine, and the paler rose,[3]
The rival of her crown and of her woes,
And either Henry there,[4]
The murder'd saint, and the majestic lord,
That broke the bonds of Rome.
(Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
Their human passions now no more,

[1] Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon, comte de St. Paul in France; of whom tradition says, that her husband Audemar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, was slain at a tournament on the day of his nuptials. She was the foundress of Pembroke College or Hall, under the name of Aula Mariæ de Valentia.

[2] Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, was wife of John de Burg, son and heir to the Earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by Joan Acres, daughter of Edward the First. Hence the poet gives her the epithet of *princely*. She founded Clare Hall.

[3] Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, foundress of Queen's College. The poet has celebrated her conjugal fidelity in "The *Bard*," epode 2d, line 13th.

Elizabeth Widville, wife of Edward the Fourth, hence called the paler rose, as being of the house of York. She added to the foundation of Margaret of Anjou.

[4] Henry the Sixth and Eighth. The former the founder of King's, the latter the greatest benefactor to Trinity College.

Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb.)
All that on Granta's fruitful plain
Rich streams of regal bounty pour'd,
And bade these awful fanes and turrets rise,
To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning come:
And thus they speak in soft accord
The liquid language of the skies:

V.

"What is grandeur, what is power?
Heavier toil, superior pain.
What the bright reward we gain?
The grateful memory of the good.
Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
The bee's collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still small voice of gratitude."

VI.

Foremost and leaning from her golden cloud
The venerable Margaret see![1]
"Welcome, my noble son, (she cries aloud)
To this, thy kindred train, and me:
Pleased in thy lineaments we trace
A Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace.[2]
Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
The flower unheeded shall descry,
And bid it round heaven's altars shed
The fragrance of its blushing head:
Shall raise from earth the latent gem
To glitter on the diadem.

VII.

"Lo! Granta waits to lead her blooming band,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, she

1 Countess of Richmond and Derby: the mother of Henry the Seventh, foundress of St. John's and Christ's Colleges.

2 The Countess was a Beaufort, and married to a Tudor: hence the application of this line to the Duke of Grafton, who claims descent from both these families.

No vulgar praise, no venal license flings;
  Nor dares with courtly tongue refined
Profane thy inborn royalty of mind:
  She reveres herself and thee.
With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow,
The laureate wreath, that Cecil wore, she brings,[1]
  And to thy just, thy gentle hand,
  Submits the fasces of her sway,
While spirits bless'd above and men below
Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay.

VIII.

"Through the wild waves as they roar,
  With watchful eye and dauntless mien,
    Thy steady course of honor keep,
Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore:
  The star of Brunswick smiles serene,
    And gilds the horrors of the deep."

[1] Lord Treasurer Burleigh was chancellor to the University in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The Fatal Sisters.

FROM THE NORSE TONGUE.

To be found in the Orcades of Thormodus Torfæus; Hafniæ, 1697, folio: and also in Bartholinus, p. 617. lib. 3. c. i. 4to.

Vitt er orpit fyrir valfalli, &c.

In the eleventh century *Sigurd*, Earl of the Orkney Islands, went with a fleet of ships and a considerable body of troops into Ireland, to the assistance of *Sictryg with the silken beard*, who was then making war on his father-in-law *Brian*, King of Dublin: the earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and *Sictryg* was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of *Brian*, their king, who fell in the action. On Christmas day (the day of the battle), a native of Caithness in Scotland saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till looking through an opening in the rocks he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sang the following dreadful song; which when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped six to the north, and as many to the south. These were the *Valkyriur*, female

divinities, servants of *Odin* (or *Woden*) in the Gothic mythology. Their name signifies *Choosers of the slain.* They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands: and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to *Valkalla*, the hall of *Odin*, or paradise of the brave: where they attended the banquet, and served the departed heroes with horns of mead and ale.

Now the storm begins to lower,
(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare),
Iron sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darken'd air.

Glittering lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe and Randver's bane.

See the grisly texture grow!
('Tis of human entrails made)
And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles dipp'd in gore,
  Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a monarch bore,
  Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista, black terrific maid,
  Sangrida, and Hilda, see,
Join the wayward work to aid:
  'Tis the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
  Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
  Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)
  Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
  Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of Fate we tread,
  Wading through the' ensanguined field,
Gondula, and Geira, spread
  O'er the youthful king your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
  Ours to kill and ours to spare:
Spite of danger he shall live.
  (Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the desert beach
  Pent within its bleak domain,
Soon their ample sway shall stretch
  O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless earl is laid,
  Gored with many a gaping wound:
Fate demands a nobler head;
  Soon a king shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep,
  Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep:
  Strains of immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,
  Clouds of carnage blot the sun.
Sisters, weave the web of death.
  Sisters, cease; the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
  Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands;
  Triumph to the younger king.

Mortal, thou that hearest the tale,
  Learn the tenor of our song.
Scotland, through each winding vale
  Far and wide the notes prolong.

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed:
Each her thundering falchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry hurry to the field!

The Descent of Odin.

FROM THE NORSE TONGUE.

The original is to be found in Bartholinus, De Causis contemnendæ Mortis; Hafniæ, 1689, quarto, p. 632.

Upreis Odinn allda gautr, &c.

Uprose the king of men with speed,
And saddled straight his coal-black steed:
Down the yawning steep he rode,
That leads to Hela's drear abode.[1]

[1] Niflheliar, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old age, or by any other means than in battle. Over it presided Hela, the goddess of death. Mason.

Hela, in the Edda, is described with a dreadful countenance, and her body half flesh-color, and half blue. Gray.

Him the dog of darkness spied;[1]
His shaggy throat he open'd wide,
While from his jaws, with carnage fill'd,
Foam and human gore distill'd:
Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin;
And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
The father of the powerful spell.
Onward still his way he takes
(The groaning earth beneath him shakes),
Till full before his fearless eyes
The portals nine of hell arise.

Right against the eastern gate,
By the moss-grown pile he sate;
Where long of yore to sleep was laid
The dust of the prophetic maid.

[1] The Edda gives this dog the name of Managarmar. He fed upon the lives of those that were to die. MASON.

Facing to the northern clime,
Thrice he traced the Runic rhyme;
Thrice pronounced, in accents dread,
The thrilling verse that wakes the dead;
Till from out the hollow ground
Slowly breathed a sullen sound.

PROPHETESS.

What call unknown, what charms presume
To break the quiet of the tomb?
Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,
And drags me from the realms of night?
Long on these mouldering bones have beat
The winter's snows, the summer's heat,
The drenching dews, and driving rain!
Let me, let me sleep again.
Who is he, with voice unblest,
That calls me from the bed of rest?

ODIN.

A traveller, to thee unknown,
Is he that calls, a warrior's son.
Thou the deeds of light shalt know;
Tell me what is done below,[1]
For whom yon glittering board is spread,
Dress'd for whom yon golden bed?

PROPHETESS.

Mantling in the goblet see
The pure beverage of the bee:
O'er it hangs the shield of gold;
'Tis the drink of Balder bold:
Balder's head to death is given.
Pain can reach the sons of heaven!
Unwilling I my lips unclose:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

1 Odin was anxious about the fate of his son Balder, who had dreamed he was soon to die. He was killed by Odin's other son, Hoder, who was himself slain by Vali, the son of Odin and Rinda, consonant with this prophecy. *See the Edda.*

ODIN.

Once again my call obey,[1]
Prophetess, arise, and say,
What dangers Odin's child await,
Who the author of his fate?

PROPHETESS.

In Hoder's hand the hero's doom;
His brother sends him to the tomb.

[1] Women were looked upon by the Gothic nations as having a peculiar insight into futurity; and some there were that made profession of magic arts and divination. These travelled round the country, and were received in every house with great respect and honor. Such a woman bore the name of Volva Seidkona or Spakona. The dress of Thorbiorga, one of these prophetesses, is described at large in Eirik's Rauda Sogu (apud Bartholin. lib. i. cap. iv. p. 688). "She had on a blue vest spangled all over with stones, a necklace of glass beads, and a cap made of the skin of a black lamb lined with white cat-skin. She leaned on a staff adorned with brass, with a round head set with stones; and was girt with an Hunlandish belt, at which hung her pouch full of magical instruments. Her buskins were of rough calfskin, bound on with thongs studded with knobs of brass, and her gloves of white cat-skin, the fur turned inwards," &c. They were also called *Fiolkyngi*, or *Fiolkunnug*, i. e. Multiscia; and *Visindakona*, i. e. Oraculorum Mulier; *Nornir*, i. e. Parcæ. GRAY.

Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

ODIN.

Prophetess, my spell obey,
Once again arise, and say,
Who the' avenger of his guilt,
By whom shall Hoder's blood be spilt?

PROPHETESS.

In the caverns of the west,
By Odin's fierce embrace compress'd,
A wondrous boy shall Rinda bear,
Who ne'er shall comb his raven-hair,[1]
Nor wash his visage in the stream,
Nor see the sun's departing beam,
Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile
Flaming on the funeral pile.

[1] King Harold made (according to the singular custom of his time) a solemn vow never to *clip or comb his hair*, till he should have extended his sway over the whole country. *Herbert's Iceland. Translat.* p. 39.

Now my weary lips I close:
Leave me, leave me to repose.

ODIN.

Yet awhile my call obey;
Prophetess, awake, and say,
What virgins these, in speechless woe,[1]
That bend to earth their solemn brow,
That their flaxen tresses tear,
And snowy veils that float in air?
Tell me whence their sorrows rose;
Then I leave thee to repose.

PROPHETESS.

Ha! no traveller art thou,
King of men, I know thee now;
Mightiest of a mighty line——

[1] "It is not certain," says Mr. Herbert, "what Odin means by the question concerning the weeping virgins; but it has been supposed that it alludes to the embassy afterwards sent by Frigga to try to redeem Balder from the infernal regions, and that Odin betrays his divinity by mentioning what had not yet happened." *Iceland. Translat.* p. 48.

ODIN.

No boding maid of skill divine
Art thou, nor prophetess of good;
But mother of the giant brood![1]

PROPHETESS.

Hie thee hence, and boast at home,
That never shall inquirer come
To break my iron-sleep again;
Till Lok has burst his tenfold chain;[2]
Never, till substantial night
Has reassumed her ancient right;
Till wrapp'd in flames, in ruin hurl'd,
Sinks the fabric of the world.

[1] In the Latin, "mater trium gigantum:" probably Angerbode, who from her name seems to be "no prophetess of good;" and who bore to Loke, as the Edda says, three children, the wolf Fenris, the great serpent of Midgard, and Hela, all of them called giants in that system of mythology. MASON.

[2] Lok is the evil being, who continues in chains till the *twilight of the gods* approaches: when he shall break his bonds, the human race, the stars, and sun shall disappear; the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies: even Odin himself and his kindred deities shall perish. MASON.

The Triumphs of Owen.*

A FRAGMENT.

From Mr. Evans's Specimens of the Welsh Poetry: London, 1764, quarto, p. 25, and p. 127. Owen succeeded his father Griffith app Cynan in the principality of North Wales, A.D. 1137. This battle was fought in the year 1157. *Jones's Relics*, vol. ii. p. 36.

OWEN's praise demands my song,
Owen swift and Owen strong;
Fairest flower of Roderic's stem,
Gwyneth's[1] shield, and Britain's gem.

* The original Welsh of the above poem was the composition of Gwalchmai the son of Melir, immediately after Prince Owen Gwynedd had defeated the combined fleets of Iceland, Denmark, and Norway, which had invaded his territory on the coast of Anglesea.

[1] North Wales.

He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours;
Lord of every regal art,
Liberal hand, and open heart.

Big with hosts of mighty name,
Squadrons three against him came;
This the force of Eirin hiding,
Side by side as proudly riding,
On her shadow long and gay
Lochlin[1] ploughs the watery way;
There the Norman sails afar
Catch the winds and join the war:
Black and huge along they sweep,
Burdens of the angry deep.

Dauntless on his native sands
The dragon son of Mona stands;[2]

[1] Denmark.

[2] The red dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners. MASON.

In glittering arms and glory dress'd,
High he rears his ruby crest.
There the thundering strokes begin,[1]
There the press, and there the din;
Talymalfra's rocky shore
Echoing to the battle's roar.
Check'd by the torrent tide of blood,
Backward Meinai rolls his flood;
While, heap'd his master's feet around,
Prostrate warriors gnaw the ground.

Where his glowing eyeballs turn,
Thousand banners round him burn,
Where he points his purple spear,
Hasty, hasty rout is there,
Marking with indignant eye
Fear to stop, and shame to fly.

1 "It seems (says Dr. Evans, p. 26,) that the fleet landed in some part of the firth of Menai, and that it was a kind of mixed engagement, some fighting from the shore, others from the ships; and probably the great slaughter was owing to its being low water, and that they could not sail.

There confusion, terror's child,
Conflict fierce, and ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair, and honorable death.

* * * * * * * * *

The Death of Hoel.

Selected from the Gododin of Aneurin,* styled the Monarch of the Bards He flourished about the time of Taliessin, A.D. 570. See Mr. Evans's Specimens, p. 71 and 73.

HAD I but the torrent's might,
With headlong rage and wild affright
Upon Deïra's squadrons hurl'd[1]
To rush, and sweep them from the world!

* Aneurin with the flowing Muse, King of Bards, brother to Gildas Albanius the historian, lived under Mynyddawg of Edinburgh, a prince of the North, whose Eurdorchogion, or warriors wearing the golden torques, three hundred and sixty-three in number, were all slain, except Aneurin and two others, in a battle with the Saxons at Cattraeth, on the eastern coast of Yorkshire. His Gododin, an heroic poem written on that event, is perhaps the oldest and noblest production of that age." Jones's Relics, vol. i. p. 17.

[1] The kingdom of Deïra included the counties of Yorkshire, Durham, Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland.

Too, too secure in youthful pride,
By them, my friend, my Hoel, died,
Great Cian's son: of Madoc old
He ask'd no heaps of hoarded gold;
Alone in nature's wealth array'd,
He ask'd and had the lovely maid.

To Cattraeth's vale in glittering row,
Thrice two hundred warriors go:
Every warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honor deck,
Wreathed in many a golden link:
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's ecstatic juice.
Flush'd with mirth and hope they burn:
But none from Cattraeth's vale return,
Save Aëron brave, and Conan strong,
(Bursting through the bloody throng)
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall.

HAVE ye seen the tusky boar,[1]
Or the bull with sullen roar,
On surrounding foes advance?
So Caràdoc bore his lance.

CONAN'S name, my lay, rehearse,
Build to him the lofty verse,
Sacred tribute of the bard,
Verse, the hero's sole reward.
As the flame's devouring force;
As the whirlwind in its course;
As the thunder's fiery stroke,
Glancing on the shiver'd oak;
Did the sword of Conan mow
The crimson harvest of the foe.

[1] This and the following short fragment ought to have appeared among the Posthumous Pieces of Gray; but it was thought preferable to insert them in this place with the preceding fragment from the Gododin.

Epitaph

ON MRS. CLARKE.

Lo! where this silent marble weeps,
A friend, a wife, a mother sleeps:
A heart, within whose sacred cell
The peaceful virtues loved to dwell.
Affection warm, and faith sincere,
And soft humanity were there.
In agony, in death resign'd,
She felt the wound she left behind.
Her infant image here below
Sits smiling on a father's woe:

Whom what awaits, while yet he strays
Along the lonely vale of days?
A pang, to secret sorrow dear;
A sigh; an unavailing tear;
Till time shall every grief remove,
With life, with memory, and with love.

Epitaph

ON SIR WILLIAM WILLIAMS.

Written at the request of Mr. Frederick Montagu, who intended to have inscribed it on a monument at Bellisle, at the siege of which Sir W. Williams was killed, 1761.

HERE, foremost in the dangerous paths of fame,
Young Williams fought for England's fair renown;
His mind each Muse, each Grace adorn'd his frame,
Nor envy dared to view him with a frown.

At Aix, his voluntary sword he drew,
There first in blood his infant honor seal'd;
From fortune, pleasure, science, love, he flew,
And scorn'd repose when Britain took the field.

With eyes of flame, and cool undaunted breast,
Victor he stood on Bellisle's rocky steeps—
Ah, gallant youth! this marble tells the rest,
Where melancholy friendship bends, and weeps.

Sonnet

ON THE DEATH OF MR. WEST.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require:
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men:
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:
To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

A Long Story.

In the year 1750, Mr. Gray finished his celebrated Elegy, and communicated it to his friend Mr. Walpole, whose good taste was too much charmed to suffer him to withhold the sight of it from his acquaintance; accordingly it was shown about for some time in manuscript, and received with all the applause it so justly merited. Amongst the rest of the fashionable world, Lady Cobham, who resided at Stoke-Pogis, and to whom the mansion-house and park belonged, had read and admired it Wishing to be acquainted with the author, her relation Miss Speed, and Lady Schaub then at her house, undertook to bring this about, by making him the first visit. He had been accustomed to spend his summer vacations from Cambridge, at the house occupied by Mrs. Rogers his aunt, whither his mother and her sister, Miss Antrobus, had also retired, situated at the entrance upon Stoke Common, called West End, and about a mile from the manor house. He happened to be from home when the ladies arrived at the sequestered habitation, and when he returned, was not a little surprised to find, written on one of his papers in the parlor, the following note: "Lady Schaub's compliments to Mr. Gray; she is sorry not to have found him at home, to tell him that Lady Brown is very well." Such a compliment necessitated him to return the visit; and as the beginning of the acquaintance seemed to

have a romantic character, he very soon composed the following ludicrous account of the adventure, for the amusement of the ladies in question, which he entitled, "A Long Story."

In Britain's isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands:[1]
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employed the power of fairy hands

To raise the ceiling's fretted height,[2]
Each pannel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages, that lead to nothing.

[1] In the 16th century, the house belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon, and to the family of Hatton. On the death of Lady Cobham, 1760, the estate was purchased from her executors by the late Hon. Thomas Penn, Lord Proprietary of Pennsylvania: his son, the present John Penn, Esq., finding the interior of the ancient mansion in a state of considerable decay, it was taken down in the year 1789, with the exception of a wing, which was preserved, partly for the sake of its effect as a ruin, harmonizing with the churchyard, the poet's house, and the surrounding scenery.

[2] The style of building called Queen Elizabeth's is here admirably described, both with regard to its beauties and defects; the third and fourth stanzas delineate the fantastic manners of the time with equal truth and humor

Full oft within the spacious walls,
  When he had fifty winters o'er him,
My grave Lord-keeper[1] led the brawls:[2]
  The seals and maces danced before him.

His bushy beard, and shoestrings green,
  His high crown'd hat and satin doublet,
Moved the stout heart of England's queen,
  Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very first beginning!
  Shame of the versifying tribe!
Your history whither are you spinning?
  Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is (and that's enough),
  From whence one fatal morning issues

[1] Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing.

[2] Brawls were figure-dances then in fashion.

A brace of warriors, not in buff,
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

The first came cap-a-pee from France,[1]
Her conquering destiny fulfilling,
Whom meaner beauties eye askance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other amazon[2] kind heaven
Had arm'd with spirit, wit, and satire;
But Cobham had the polish given,
And tipp'd her arrows with good nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air—
Coarse panegyrics would but tease her,
Melissa is her "nom de guerre."
Alas, who would not wish to please her!

[1] The Lady's husband, Sir Luke Schaub, had been ambassador at Paris some years before.

[2] Miss Harriet Speed, Lady C.'s relation, afterwards married to the Count de Viry, Sardinian envoy at the court of London.

With bonnet blue and capuchine,
  And aprons long, they hid their armor;
And veil'd their weapons, bright and keen,
  In pity to the country farmer.

Fame, in the shape of Mr. Purt,[1]
  (By this time all the parish know it)
Had told that thereabouts there lurk'd
  A wicked imp they call a poet:

Who prowl'd the country far and near,
  Bewitch'd the children of the peasants,
Dried up the cows, and lamed the deer,
  And suck'd the eggs, and killed the pheasants.

My lady heard their joint petition,
  Swore by her coronet and ermine,
She'd issue out her high commission
  To rid the manor of such vermin.[2]

1 The Rev. Mr. Purt, tutor to the Duke of Bridgwater, then at Eton school.
2 Henry the Fourth, in the fourth year of his reign, issued out the following

The heroines undertook the task,
  Through lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventured,[1]
Rapp'd at the door, nor stay'd to ask,
  But bounce into the parlor enter'd.

The trembling family they daunt,
  They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle,
Rummage his mother, pinch his aunt,
  And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle:

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
  Each creek and cranny of his chamber,
Run hurry-skurry round the floor,
  And o'er the bed and tester clamber;

commission against this species of *vermin*:—"And it is enacted, that no master-*rimour*, *minstrel*, or *other vagabond*, be in any wise sustained in the land of Wales to make commoiths, or gatherings upon the people there."

[1] The walk from Stoke old mansion, to the house occupied by the poet's family, is peculiarly retired. The house is the property of Captain Salter, and it has belonged to his family for many generations. It is a charming spot for a summer residence, but has undergone great alterations and improvements since Gray gave it up in 1758.

Into the drawers and china pry,
  Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
Under a teacup he might lie,
  Or, creased, like dog's-ears, in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,
  The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,
Convey'd him underneath their hoops
  To a small closet in the garden.

So rumor says: (who will, believe?)
  But that they left the door ajar,
Where, safe and laughing in his sleeve,
  He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy. He little knew
  The power of magic was no fable;
Out of the window, whisk, they flew,
  But left a spell upon the table.[1]

[1] The *note* which the ladies left upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle,
  The poet felt a strange disorder;
Transparent bird-lime form'd the middle,
  And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the apparatus,
  The powerful pot-hooks did so move him
That, will he, nill he, to the great house,
  He went, as if the devil drove him.

Yet on his way (no sign of grace,
  For folks in fear are apt to pray)
To Phœbus he preferr'd his case,
  And begg'd his aid that dreadful day.

The godhead would have back'd his quarrel;
  But with a blush, on recollection,
Own'd that his quiver and his laurel
  'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The court was sat, the culprit there,
  Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping,
The lady Janes and Joans repair,
  And from the gallery[1] stand peeping:

Such as in silence of the night
  Come (sweep) along some winding entry,
(Tyacke[2] has often seen the sight)
  Or at the chapel door stood sentry:[3]

In peaked hoods and mantles tarnish'd,
  Sour visages enough to scare ye,
High dames of honor once, that garnish'd
  The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary.

[1] The music-gallery, which overlooked the hall.

[2] The housekeeper. Her name which has hitherto, in ALL editions of Gray's Poems, been written Styack, is corrected from her gravestone in the churchyard, and the accounts of contemporary persons in the parish. *Housekeepers* are usually styled Mrs.; the final s, doubtless caused the name to be misapprehended and misspelt.

[3] The old chapel, the door of which was at the opposite extremity of the hall.

The peeress comes. The audience stare,
And doff their hats with due submission:
She curtsies, as she takes her chair
To all the people of condition.

The bard, with many an artful fib,
Had in imagination fenced him,
Disproved the arguments of Squib,[1]
And all that Groom[1] could urge against him.

But soon his rhetoric forsook him,
When he the solemn hall had seen;
A sudden fit of ague shook him,
He stood as mute as poor Macleane,[2]

Yet something he was heard to mutter,
"How in the Park beneath an old tree

[1] The former has h'therto been styled *groom* of the chamber, and the latter *steward*, but the legend on a gravestone, *close to Tyacke's*, is to the memory of *William* Groom, and appears to offer evidence that Gray mistook the *name* of the one for the *office* of the other.

[2] A famous highwayman hanged the week before.

(Without design to hurt the butter,
Or any malice to the poultry),

"He once or twice had penn'd a sonnet;
Yet hoped that he might save his bacon:
Numbers would give their oaths upon it,
He ne'er was for a conjurer taken."

The ghostly prudes with hagged face
Already had condemn'd the sinner.
My lady rose, and with a grace—
She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.

"Jesu-Maria! Madam Bridget,
Why, what can the viscountess mean?
(Cried the square-hoods in woful fidget)
The times are alter'd quite and clean

"Decorum's turn'd to mere civility;
Her air and all her manners show it.

Commend me to her affability!
  Speak to a commoner and poet!"

[HERE FIVE HUNDRED STANZAS ARE LOST.]

And so God save our noble king,
  And guard us from long-winded lubbers,
That to eternity would sing,
  And keep my lady from her rubbers.

Translation of a Passage from Statius.

THEB. LIB. VI. VER. 704–724.

This translation, which Gray sent to West, consisted of about a hundred and ten lines. Mr. Mason selected twenty-seven lines, which he published, as Gray's first attempt in English verse.

THIRD in the labors of the disc came on,
With sturdy step and slow, Hippomedon;
Artful and strong he poised the well-known weight,
By Phlegyas warn'd, and fired by Mnestheus' fate,
That to avoid, and this to emulate.
His vigorous arm he tried before he flung,
Braced all his nerves, and every sinew strung,
Then, with a tempest's whirl, and wary eye,
Pursued his cast, and hurl'd the orb on high;

The orb on high tenacious of its course,
True to the mighty arm that gave it force,
Far overleaps all bound, and joys to see
Its ancient lord secure of victory.
The theatre's green height and woody wall
Tremble ere it precipitates its fall;
The ponderous mass sinks in the cleaving ground,
While vales and woods and echoing hills rebound.—
As when from Ætna's smoking summit broke,
The eyeless Cyclops heaved the craggy rock;
Where Ocean frets beneath the dashing oar,
And parting surges round the vessel roar;
'Twas there he aim'd the meditated harm,
And scarce Ulysses scaped his giant arm.
A tiger's pride the victor bore away,
With native spots and artful labor gay,
A shining border round the margin roll'd,
And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold.

CAMBRIDGE, May 8, 1736.

The Alliance of Education and Government.

A FRAGMENT.

"Instead of compiling tables of chronology and natural history, why did not Mr. Gray apply the powers of his genius to finish the philosophic poem of which he has left such an exquisite specimen?" GIBBON.

ESSAY I.

——Πόταγ' ὦ γαθέ· τὰν γαρ ἀοιδὰν
Ὄυτι πω εἰς Ἀΐδαν γε τὸν εκλελάθοντα φυλαξεῖς.
THEOCRITUS, ID. I. 63.

As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
Whose barren bosom starves her generous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains,
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins:
And as in climes, where winter holds his reign,
The soil, though fertile, will not teem in vain,
Forbids her gems to swell, her shades to rise,
Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies.
So draw mankind in vain the vital airs,
Unform'd, unfriended, by those kindly cares,

That health and vigor to the soul impart,
Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart:
So fond instruction on the growing powers
Of nature idly lavishes her stores,
If equal justice with unclouded face
Smile not indulgent on the rising race,
And scatter with a free though frugal hand,
Light golden showers of plenty o'er the land:
But tyranny has fix'd her empire there,
To check their tender hopes with chilling fear,
And blast the blooming promise of the year.
  This spacious animated scene survey,
From where the rolling orb, that gives the day,
His sable sons with nearer course surrounds
To either pole, and life's remotest bounds,
How rude soe'er the' exterior form we find,
Howe'er opinion tinge the varied mind,
Alike to all, the kind, impartial Heaven
The sparks of truth and happiness has given.

With sense to feel, with memory to retain,
They follow pleasure, and they fly from pain;
Their judgment mends the plan their fancy
The' event presages, and explores the cause;
The soft returns of gratitude they know,
By fraud elude, by force repel the foe;
While mutual wishes, mutual woes endear
The social smile and sympathetic tear.

Say, then, through ages by what fate confined
To different climes seem different souls assign'd?
Here measured laws and philosophic ease
Fix, and improve the polish'd arts of peace;
There industry and gain their vigils keep,
Command the winds, and tame the' unwilling deep:
Here force and hardy deeds of blood prevail;
There languid pleasure sighs in every gale.
Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar
Has Scythia breathed the living cloud of war;
And, where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway
Their arms, their kings, their gods were roll'd away.

As oft have issued, host impelling host,
The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast.
The prostrate south to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles, and her golden fields:
With grim delight the brood of winter view
A brighter day, and heavens of azure hue
Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.
Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,
Why yet does Asia dread a monarch's nod,
While European freedom still withstands
The' encroaching tide that drowns her lessening lands;
And sees far off, with an indignant groan,
Her native plains, and empires once her own?
Can opener skies and suns of fiercer flame
O'erpower the fire that animates our frame;
As lamps, that shed at eve a cheerful ray,
Fade and expire beneath the eye of day?
Need we the influence of the northern star
To string our nerves, and steel our hearts to war?

And, where the face of nature laughs around
Must sickening virtue fly the tainted ground?
Unmanly thought! what seasons can control,
What fancied zone can circumscribe the soul,
Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,
By reason's light on resolution's wings,
Spite of her frail companion, dauntless goes
O'er Libya's deserts and through Zembla's snows?
She bids each slumbering energy awake,
Another touch, another temper take,
Suspends the' inferior laws that rule our clay:
The stubborn elements confess her sway;
Their little wants, their low desires, refine,
And raise the mortal to a height divine.

Not but the human fabric from the birth
Imbibes a flavor of its parent earth:
As various tracts enforce a various toil,
The manners speak the idiom of their soil.
An iron race the mountain cliffs maintain,
Foes to the gentler genius of the plain:

For where unwearied sinews must be found
With side-long plough to quell the flinty ground,
To turn the torrent's swift-descending flood,
To brave the savage rushing from the wood,
What wonder, if, to patient valor train'd,
They guard with spirit, what by strength they gain'd?
And while their rocky ramparts round they see,
The rough abode of want and liberty,
(As lawless force from confidence will grow)
Insult the plenty of the vales below?
What wonder, in the sultry climes, that spread
Where Nile redundant o'er his summer bed
From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,
And broods o'er Egypt with his watery wings,
If with adventurous oar and ready sail,
The dusky people drive before the gale;
Or on frail floats to neighboring cities ride,
That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide

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Stanzas to Mr. Bentley.

Mr. Bentley had made a set of designs for Mr. Gray's Poems, particularly a headpiece to the Long Story. The original drawings are in the library at Strawberry Hill.

In silent gaze the tuneful choir among,
  Half pleased, half blushing, let the Muse admire,
While Bentley leads her sister art along,
  And bids the pencil answer to the lyre.

See, in their course, each transitory thought
  Fix'd by his touch a lasting essence take;
Each dream, in fancy's airy coloring wrought
  To local symmetry and life awake!

The tardy rhymes that used to linger on,
  To censure cold, and negligent of fame,
In swifter measures animated run,
  And catch a lustre from his genuine flame.

Ah! could they catch his strength, his easy grace,
  His quick creation, his unerring line;
The energy of Pope they might efface,
  And Dryden's harmony submit to mine.

But not to one in this benighted age
  Is that diviner inspiration given,
That burns in Shakspeare's or in Milton's page,
  The pomp and prodigality of heaven.

As when, conspiring in the diamond's blaze,
  The meaner gems, that singly charm the sight,
Together dart their intermingled rays,
  And dazzle with a luxury of light.

Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
  My lines a secret sympathy "impart;"
And as their pleasing influence "flows confest,"
  A sigh of soft reflection "heaves the heart."

* * * * * * * * * *

Sketch of his own Character.

WRITTEN IN 1761, AND FOUND IN ONE OF HIS POCKET BOOKS.

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune;
He had not the method of making a fortune:
Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd;
No very great wit, he believed in a God:
A post or a pension he did not desire,
But left church and state to Charles Townshend and Squire.[1]

[1] At that time Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and afterwards Bishop of St. David's.

On the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude.

Left unfinished by Mr. Gray. With additions by Mr. Mason, distinguished by inverted commas.

Now the golden morn aloft
  Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermeil cheek and whisper soft
  She woos the tardy spring:
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
  Frisking ply their feeble feet;

Forgetful of their wintry trance,
  The birds his presence greet:
But chief, the sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstasy;
And, lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Rise, my soul! on wings of fire,
  Rise the rapturous choir among;
Hark! 'tis nature strikes the lyre,
  And leads the general song:
Warm let the lyric transport flow,
Warm as the ray that bids it glow;
And animates the vernal grove
With health, with harmony, and love."

Yesterday the sullen year
  Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the music of the air,
  The herd stood drooping by:

Their raptures now that wildly flow,
No yesterday nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries
With forward and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past misfortune's brow
  Soft reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of sorrow throw
  A melancholy grace;
While hope prolongs our happier hour
Or deepest shades, that dimly lour,
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where rosy pleasure leads,
  See a kindred grief pursue;
Behind the steps that misery treads,
  Approaching comfort view:
The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;

And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of life.

See the wretch, that long has toss'd
  On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigor lost,
  And breathe and walk again:
The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise.

Humble quiet builds her cell,
  Near the source whence pleasure flows;
She eyes the clear crystalline well,
  And tastes it as it goes.
"While" far below the "madding" crowd
"Rush headlong to the dangerous flood,"
Where broad and turbulent it sweeps,
"And" perish in the boundless deeps.

Mark where indolence, and pride,
"Soothed by flattery's tinkling sound,"
Go, softly rolling, side by side,
Their dull but daily round:
"To these, if Hebe's self should bring
The purest cup from pleasure's spring,
Say, can they taste the flavor high
Of sober, simple, genuine joy?

"Mark ambition's march sublime
Up to power's meridian height;
While pale-eyed envy sees him climb,
And sickens at the sight.
Phantoms of danger, death, and dread,
Float hourly round ambition's head;
While spleen, within his rival's breast,
Sits brooding on her scorpion nest.

"Happier he, the peasant, far,
From the pangs of passion free,

That breathes the keen yet wholesome air
  Of rugged penury.
He, when his morning task is done,
Can slumber in the noontide sun;
And hie him home, at evening's close,
To sweet repast, and calm repose.

"He, unconscious whence the bliss,
  Feels, and owns in carols rude,
That all the circling joys are his,
  Of dear Vicissitude.
From toil he wins his spirits light,
From busy day the peaceful night;
Rich, from the very want of wealth,
In heaven's best treasures, peace and health."

THE END.