



A N
E L E G Y

W R O T E I N A
Country Church Yard .



L O N D O N :
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Advertisement.

THE following POEM came into my Hands by Accident, if the general Approbation with which this little Piece has been spread, may be call'd by so slight a Term as Accident. It is this Approbation which makes it unnecessary for me to make any Apology but to the Author : As he cannot but feel some Satisfaction in having pleas'd so many Readers already, I flatter myself he will forgive my communicating that Pleasure to many more.

The EDITOR.



A N
E L E G Y, &c.

THE *Curfeu* tolls the Knell of parting Day,
The lowing Herd winds slowly o'er the Lea,
The Plow-man homeward plods his weary Way,
And leaves the World to Darknefs, and to me.

Now fades the glimmering Landscape on the Sight,
And all the Air a folemn Stillnefs holds ;
Save where the Beetle wheels his droning Flight,
And drowfy Tinklings lull the diftant Folds.

Save that from yonder Ivy-mantled Tow'r
The mopeing Owl does to the Moon complain
Of fuch, as wand'ring near her facred Bow'r,
Moleft her ancient folitary Reign.

Beneath

Beneath those rugged Elms, that Yew-Tree's Shade,
 Where heaves the Turf in many a mould'ring Heap,
 Each in his narrow Cell for ever laid,
 The rude Forefathers of the Hamlet sleep.

The breezy Call of Incense-breathing Morn,
 The Swallow twitt'ring from the Straw-built Shed,
 The Cock's shrill Clarion, or the ecchoing Horn,
 No more shall wake them from their lowly Bed.

For them no more the blazing Hearth shall burn,
 Or busy Houfwife ply her Evening Care :
 No Children run to liſp their Sire's Return,
 Or climb his Knees the envied Kiſs to ſhare.

Oft did the Harveſt to their Sickle yield,
 Their Furrow oft the ſtubborn Glebe has broke ;
 How joꝛund did they they drive their Team afield !
 How bow'd the Woods beneath their ſturdy Stroke !

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.

The

The Boast of Heraldry, the Pomp of Pow'r,
And all that Beauty, all that Wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable Hour.

The Paths of Glory lead but to the Grave.

Forgive, ye Proud, th' involuntary Fault,
If Memory to these no Trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn Isle and fretted Vault
The pealing Anthem swells the Note of Praise.

Can storied Urn or animated Bust
Back to its Mansion call the fleeting Breath?
Can Honour's Voice provoke the silent Dust,
Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold Ear of Death!

Perhaps in this neglected Spot is laid
Some Heart once pregnant with celestial Fire,
Hands that the Reins of Empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to Extacy the living Lyre.

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.

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.

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.

Th' Applause of list'ning Senates to command,
 The Threats of Pain and Ruin to despise,
 To scatter Plenty o'er a smiling Land,
 And read their Hist'ry in a Nation's Eyes

Their Lot forbid : 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,

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.

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 Tenor of their Way.

Yet ev'n these Bones from Insult to protect
 Some frail Memorial still erected nigh,
 With uncouth Rhimes and shapeless Sculpture deck'd,
 Implores the passing Tribute of a Sigh.

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 dye.

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 ling'ring Look behind !

On some fond Breast the parting Soul relies,
 Some pious Drops the closing Eye requires ;
 Ev'n from the Tomb the Voice of Nature cries
 Awake, and faithful to her wonted Fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
 Dost in these Lines their artless Tale relate ;
 If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
 Some hidden Spirit shall inquire thy Fate,
 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.
 ' There at the Foot of yonder nodding Beech
 ' That wreathes its old fantastic Roots so high,
 ' His listless Length at Noontide wou'd he stretch,
 ' And pore upon the Brook that babbles by.
 ' Hard by yon Wood, now frowning as in Scorn,
 ' Mutt'ring his wayward Fancies he wou'd rove,
 ' Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
 ' Or craz'd with Care, or cross'd in hopeless Love.
 ' One Morn I miss'd him on the custom'd Hill,
 ' Along the Heath, and near his fav'rite Tree ;
 ' Another came; nor yet beside the Rill,
 ' Nor up the Lawn, nor at the Wood was he,

‘ ‘ The next with Dirges due in sad Array
 ‘ ‘ Slow thro’ the Church-way Path we saw him borne,
 ‘ ‘ Approach and read (for thou can’st read) the Lay,
 ‘ ‘ Grav’d on the Stone beneath yon aged Thorn.

The E P I T A P H.

*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.*

*Large was his Bounty, and his Soul sincere,
 Heav’n did a Recompence as largely send :
 He gave to Mis’ry all he had, a Tear :
 He gain’d from Heav’n (’twas all he wish’d) a Friend.*

*No farther 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.*