THE GRAVE;
By ROBERT BLAIR:
To which is added
GRAY'S ELEGY
In a Country Church Yard.
WITH NOTES
Moral, Critical, and Explanatory.

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P R E F A C E.

As every son and daughter of Adam must sooner or later die, and their bodies be consigned to the gloomy mansions of the grave, it is highly necessary, and may be truly profitable, for every one, whether young or old, rich or poor, seriously to reflect on the brevity of life, the certainty of death, and that eternal world, on the brink of which they are hourly standing.

In the following well-known Poem, (written by a clergyman in Edinburgh, and first published in the year 1747) many important admonitions are held out, and solemn truths inculcated, worthy the regard and remembrance of all; most of the characters which mankind sustains in the present state, many of the pursuits of men in general while here below, together with the vanity and emptiness of every earthly pleasure and enjoyment, are depicted in the most lively and striking colours.

Let the young and gay learn hence to be serious, and redeem their time, knowing that the days are evil; let the rich and great learn hence, the folly of ambition and trusting in abundance, knowing that riches take them-

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1 Mr. Hervey, in his Meditations among the Tombs, page 59, quotes this poem, and says, as his opinion and recommendation of it, "see a valuable poem, entitled the Grave"—Heron, also, in his 35th Letter on Literature, just published, particularly notices this poem, and takes no small pains to recommend the perusal of it, as a close imitation of Shake speare's style and manner. See Letters on Literature, page 276.

2 It is divided into two parts, to prevent its appearing too long and tedious.

3 Ephesians, xv. 16.
selves wings and flee away*: Let persons of all ages and
stations in life, learn hence the necessity of being always
ready for their last great change, knowing there is no
work, nor device, nor knowledge in the Grave, whither
are we going.

The Grave has eloquence: its lectures teach
In silence, louder than divines can preach!
Hear what it says—ye sons of folly hear,
It speaks to you, lend an attentive ear.—Moore.

Respecting Gray's Elegy, it must be acknowled-
edged, though far from being altogether faultless, it is
confessedly interesting, natural, and pathetic, and strongly
addresses the tender feelings of every humane and discern-
ing reader.

Dr. Johnson, in his Lives of the Poets, speaking of the
works of Mr. Gray, makes the following remarks upon
this poem:

"In the character of his Elegy, I rejoice to concur
with the common reader; for by the common sense of
readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all
the refinements of subtlety, and the dogmatism of
learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical
honours.

"The Church-yard abounds with images which find
a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which
every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas be-

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* Proverbs, xxiii. 5.  
5 Eccles. ix. 10.  
"ginning.
"ginning. Yet even these bones, are to me original; I
have never seen the notions in any other place: yet he
that reads them here, persuades himself that he has
always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it
had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him."

This Elegy has, doubtless, been much read, and highly
esteemed, for the smoothness of its numbers, and the
melancholy pleasure it generally affords to an attentive
and sympathizing mind: but though said to be written
in a church-yard, where even the most gay, thoughtless,
and inconsiderate, are naturally led to be grave and se-
rious, it is to be regretted so little appears throughout
it, to inculcate and enforce those solemn, important,
and interesting reflections, a walk among the tombs is
peculiarly calculated to suggest, respecting death and a
future state.

Should the occasional notes now first added to these
much admired poems, prove entertaining and instruc-
tive, and make them more useful, edifying, and accepta-
ble, especially to younger minds, the Editor's wishes will
be fully gratified.

Nov. 3, 1785,

G. WRIGHT.

6 Dr. Johnson calls it, the far-fam'd Elegy in a Church-yard.
7 The man how blest! who, sick of gaudy scenes,
(Scenes apt to thrust between us and ourselves)
Is led by choice to take his favorite walk
Beneath Death's gloomy, silent, cyprefa shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastick ray;
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit the vaults, and dwell among the tombs.

Night Thoughts.
The following extract from an elegiac poem on the death of Mr. Gray, written by a sympathizing friend, being an imitation of, and alluding to the ensuing Elegy, may not improperly accompany it.

*Tis done, 'tis done—the iron hand of pain,
With ruthless fury and corrosive force,
Racks every joint, and seizes every vein;
He sinks, he groans, he falls a lifeless corpse.

Thus fades the flow'r, nipp'd by the frozen gale,
Tho' once so sweet, so lovely to the eye;
Thus the tall oaks, when boist'rous storms assail,
Torn from the earth, a mighty ruin lie.

Ye sacred fisters of the plaintive verse,
Now let the stream of fond affection flow;
O pay your tribute o'er the slow-drawn hearse,
With all the manly dignity of woe.

Oft when the curfew tolls its parting knell,
With solemn pause yon church-yard's gloom survey,
While sorrow's sighs, and tears of pity tell,
How just the moral of the poet's lay,

O'er his lone grave, in Contemplation's guise,
Oft let the pilgrim drop a silent tear;
Oft let the shepherd's tender accents rise,
Big with the sweets of each revolving year.

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3 Mr. Gray died at Cambridge in a convulsion fit, July 3rd, 1771.
4 See the beginning of this Elegy.
THE

GRAVE.

PART THE FIRST.

It is appointed unto men once to die,
And after death the judgment.
THE ARGUMENT.

The Author's choice of his subject; Invocation, address to the Almighty; the Grave described; an ancient country church portrayed; Ghosts make their appearance; a school-boy passing through a church-yard by moonlight, finely depicted; the tombs visited by a widow; apostrophe addressed to the Grave; the sweets of friendship; mortifying questions to human pride; embalming the dead, and pompous funerals, cruel irony; an address to undertakers, commonly called death hunters; time destroys all the works of men; the grave buries all distinctions; the frailty of beauteous charms; strength overcome by sickness; philosophers, orators, and physicians, alike subdued by all-conquering Death; the miser, a truly despicable character; covetousness, its dreadful effects; the vanity of riches; the departure of a thoughtless soul awfully represented; the solemnity of death, with suitable and interesting reflections.
O ye timorous souls! that are terrified at the sound of the passing bell; that turn pale at the sight of an opened grave; and scarce behold a coffin or a scull without a shuddering horror; cry mightily to the Father of your spirits for faith in his dear Son 10.—Hervey’s Meditations.

While some affect the sun, and some the shade,
Some flee the city, some the hermitage 11;
Their aims as various, as the roads they take
In journeying thro’ life;—the task be mine,
To paint the gloomy horrors of the Tomb;
Th’ appointed place of rendezvous, where all
These travellers meet 12.—Thy succours I implore,
Eternal King! whose potent arm sustains
The keys of hell and death 13.—The Grave; dread thing!
Men shiver when thou’rt named: Nature appall’d,

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10 'Tis faith disarms destruction—
   Believe, and shew the reason of a man;
   Believe, and taste the pleasure of a god;
   Believe, and look with triumph in the tomb.
   Night Thoughts.

11 The poet here evidently refers to the various subjects (particularly public and private life, solitude and society, the town and country) which have been, or still are celebrated by poetic writers.

12 Job, xxx. 23.
13 Rev. i. 18
Shakes off her wonted firmness.—Ah! how dark
Thy long-extended realms, and rueful waftes!
Where nought but Silence reigns, and Night, dark Night,
Dark as was Chaos, ere the infant Sun
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams
15
Athwart the gloom profound.—The sickly taper,
By glimm'ring thro' thy low-brow'd misty vaults,
(Furr'd round with mouldy damp's, and ropy flime,) lets fall a supernumerary horror,
And only serves to make thy night more irksome.

Well do I know thee by thy trusty Yew,
Cheerless, unfashionable plant 14! that loves to dwell
'Midst sculls and coffins, epitaphs and worms:
Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades,
Beneath the wan, cold moon (as fame reports)
Embody'd, thick, perform their mystic rounds 15.
No other merriment, dull tree! is thine.

See yonder hallow'd Fane;—the pious work
Of names once fam'd, now dubious or forgot,
And bury'd midst the wreck of things which were;
There lie inter'd the more illustrious dead 16.

14 Many country church-yards have yew trees planted in them. Various reasons are assigned for this custom; one of the most probable is, this tree being an evergreen, may in some respect be esteemed no unfit emblem of the immortality of the soul, as it never dies.
15 How populous! how vital is the grave!—
This is creation's melancholy vault;
The vale funereal, the sad cypresg gloom;
The land of apparitions, empty shades!—Night Thoughts.

Now melancholy spectres visit the ruins of ancient monasteries, and frequent the solitary mansions of the dead.—Hervey on the Night.
16 I pore upon the inscriptions, and am just able to pick out, that these are the remains of the rich and the renowned; no vulgar dead are deposited here. Hervey on the Tombs.

The
The wind is up:—hark! how it howls!—Methinks,
Till now, I never heard a sound so dreary:
Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's soul bird, Rook'd in the spire, screams loud; the gloomy ailes, Black plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of scutcheon,
And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound,
Laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults,
The mansions of the dead.—Rous'd from their flumbers,
In grim array the grisy spectres rife,
Grin horrible, and, obstinately fullen,
Pafs and repafs, hush'd as the foot of Night.
Again the screech-owl shrieks—ungracious found!
I'll hear no more; it make one's blood run chill.

Quite round the pile, a row of reverend elms,
(Coæval near with that) all ragged shew,
Long lafh'd by the rude winds. Some rift half down
Their branchless trunks; others so thin at top,
That scarce two crows can lodge in the same tree.
Strange things, the neighbours say, have happen'd here;
Wild shrieks have issu'd from the hollow tombs;
Dead men have come again, and walk'd about;
And the great bell has toll'd unrung, untouch'd.

17 The screech-owl chiefly frequents old ruined buildings, and is
often heard among the walls of ancient country churches.
18 Now dreary forms, in fullen state, flalk along the gloom; or,
swifter than lightning, glide along the shade; they pafs and repafs in
unsubstantial images, along the forfaken galleries, or take their deter-
mined stand over some lamented grave.—Hevey on the Night.
19 See an elegant description of a country church in the Beauties of
Hervey, juft published.
20 Now voices more than mortal are heard from the echoing vaults,
and groans issu from the hollow tombs.—Ibid.
(Such tales their cheer at wake or gossipping,
When it draws near to witching time of night.)

Oft in the lone Church yard at night I've seen,
By glimpse of moonshine chequering thro' the trees,
The school boy, with his fatchel in his hand,
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,
And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones,
(With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown,)
That tell in homely phrase who lie below 21.
Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears,
The sound of something purring at his heels 22;
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,
'Till, out of breath, he overtakes his fellows,
Who gather round and wonder at the tale
Of horrid Apparition tall and ghastly,
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand
O'er some new-open'd grave; and (strange to tell!) 70
Evansishes at crowing of the cock 23.

The new-made Widow, too, I've sometimes 'spy'd,
Sad sight! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead:
Liftles, she crawls along in doleful black,
While bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,
Fast falling down her now untailed cheek.
Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man
She drops; whilst busy meddling Memory,

21 Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deckt,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.—Gray's Elegy.

22 See the frontispiece.

23 The above description has met with universal approbation, and is
doubtles one of the most natural and pleasing pictures throughout the
whole poem.

In
THE GRAVE.

In barbarous succession, musters up
The past endearments of their softer hours,
Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks
She sees him, and indulging the fond thought,
Cling yet more closely to the senseless turf,
Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way.

INVINDIOUS GRAVE!—how dost thou rend in sunder
Whom love has knit, and sympathy made one?
A tie more stubborn far than Nature's band.
FRIENDSHIP! mysterious cement of the soul;
Sweetner of life, and folder of society,
I owe thee much. Thou hast deserved from me,
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.
Oft have I prov'd the labours of thy love,
And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,
Anxious to please.—Oh! when my friend and I
In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,
Hid from the vulgar eye, and fat us down

24 The following sentiments in a late publication entitled, *The Guide to Domestic Happiness*, may serve as an illustration of the poet's description of a widow's grief: "When a husband is carried to the grave, we at once find excuses for every weakness, and palliations of every fault; we recollect a thousand endearments, which before glided off our minds without impression; a thousand favours unrepaid; a thousand duties unperform'd; and wish, vainly wish, for his return, not so much that we may receive as below happiness."

25 Dr. Young happily expresses the poignant grief of surviving relatives on the death of those they dearly loved, by saying,

When such friends part, 'tis the survivor dies.

Night Thoughts.

26 A gen'rous friendship no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one resentment glows;
One should our inte'rests and our passions be;
My friend must hate the man that injures me.

Pope's Homer.

27 Uniter, or strengthenener. See Johnson's Dictionary.
THE GRAVE.

Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,
Where the pure limpid stream has slid along
In grateful errors thro' the underwood,
Sweet murmuring; methought the shrill-tongu'd thrush
Mended his song of love; the footy blackbird
Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note:
The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose
Assum'd a dye'more deep; whilst ev'ry flower
Vye'd with its fellow-plant in luxury
Of dres—Oh! then the longest summer's day
Seem'd too much in hate; still the full heart
Had not imparted half: 'twas happiness
Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed,
Not to return, how painful the remembrance!

DULL GRAVE!—thou spoil'ft the dance of youthful blood,
Strik'ft out the dimple from the cheek of Mirth,
And ev'ry smirking feature from the face;
Branding out laughter with the name of madness.
Where are the jesters now? the men of health,
Complementsly pleasant? Where's the droll,
Whose ev'ry look and gesture was a joke
To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,
And made ev'n thick-lip'd musings melancholy
To gather up her face into a smile

28 Dr. Young, speaking of the happiness of true friendship, thus expresses himself.

Celestial happiness when'er she stoops
To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
And one alone, to make her sweet amends
For absent heaven—the bosom of a friend;
Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft,
Each other's pillow to repose divine.—Night Thoughts.
THE GRAVE.

Before she was aware? Ah! sullen now,
And dumb as the green turf that covers them 29.

WHERE are the mighty thunderbolts of war?
The Roman Cæsars, and the Grecian Chiefs,
The boast of story? Where the hot-brain’d youth,
Who the Tiara at his pleasure tore
From Kings of all the then discover’d globe,
And cry’d, forsooth, because his arm was hamper’d,
And had not room enough to do its work?
Alas! how slim, dishonourably slim,
And cram’d into a space we blush to name!
Proud Royalty! how alter’d in thy looks!
How blank thy features, and how wan thy hue 30!
SON of the morning whither art thou gone?
Where hast thou hid thy many-spangled head,
And the majestic menace of thine eyes
Felt from afar? Pliant and powerless now,
Like new-born infant wound up in his swathes,
Or victim tumbled flat upon its back,
That throbs beneath the sacrificer’s knife 31.
Mute, must thou bear the strife of little tongues,
And coward insults of the base-born crowd,
That grudge a privileged thou never hadst,
But only hop’d for in the peaceful GRAVE,

29 Say, ye gay candidates for comic scenes,
Where are your mimic Foots and Shuters now,
Who lately kept your features in a grin?

30 I thank you, ye relics of founding titles and magnificent names; ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world than all the volumes of my library: your nobility arrayed in a winding sheet, your grandeur mouldering in an urn, are the most indubitable proofs of the nothingness of all created things.—Hervey on the Tombs.

31 The lamb.
Of being unmolested and alone.  
Arabia’s gums and odoriferous drugs;
And honours by the heralds duly paid,
In mode and form ev’n to a very scruple;
Oh! cruel irony! these come too late,
And only mock whom they were meant to honour.
Surely there’s not a dungeon slave that’s bury’d
In the highway, unshrould and uncoffin’d,
But lies as soft and sleeps as sound as he.
Sorry pre-eminence of high decent,
Above the vulgar born to rot in state.

But see! the well-plum’d hearse comes nodding on
Stately and slow: and properly attended
By the whole fable tribe, that painful watch
The sick man’s door, and live upon the dead,
By letting out their perfons by the hour,
To mimic sorrow, where the heart’s not fad.
How rich the trappings! now they’re all unfurl’d,
And glittering in the sun; triumphant entries

———

32 Here the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Job, iii. 17.
33 The poet here alludes to the Egyptian method of embalming the dead.
34 In this house appointed for all living, the servant was equally accommodated and lodged in the same story with his master; the poor indigent lay as softly, and slept as soundly, as the most opulent possessor.
Hervey’s Meditations.
35 Dr. Young happily expresses the vanity and emptiness of all human grandeur in the following beautiful lines, well adapted for a general inscription on the tombs of the rich and great:
Earth’s highest station ends in, Here he lies;
And dust to dust, concludes her noblest song.
Night Thoughts.
36 Dr. Watts, in his Elegy on Mr. Gunston, thus elegantly describes the appearance of the plume-decked hearse;
Solemn and slow it moves unto the tomb,
While weighty sorrows nod on every plume.
THE GRAVE.

Of Conquerors, and Coronation poms,
In glory scarce exceed. Great gluts of people
Retard th' unwieldy show: whilst from the casements,
And houses' tops, ranks behind ranks, close wedg'd,
Hang bellying o' er. But tell us, why this waste,
Why this ado in earthing up a carcase
That's fall'n into disgrace, and in the nostril
Smells horrible—Ye Undertakers, tell us,
'Midst all the gorgeous figures you exhibit,
Why is the principal conceal'd, for which
You make this mighty flir—'Tis wisely done:
What would offend the eye in a good picture,
The painter casts discreetly into shades.

Proud Lineage, now how little thou appear'st
Below the envy of the private man!
Honour, that meddlesome, officious ill,
Purfues thee e'en to death; nor there stops short;
Strange perEcution! when the Grave itself
Is no protection from rude sufferance.

Absurd to think to over-reach the Grave,
And from the wreck of names to rescue ours.
The best concerted scheme men lay for fame
Die faft away; only themselves die fafter.
The far-fam'd Sculptor, and the laurell'd Bard,
Those bold insurancers of deathless fame,
Supply their little feeble aids in vain.

37 Pompous funerals are as ridiculous as they are unnecessary; ridiculous in respect to the living, except in the views of those who reap pecuniary advantage from them, and unnecessary respecting the dead, who are the principal subject and occasions of them.
38 Praisies on tombs are titles vainly spent;
A man's good name is his best monument.
THE GRAVE.

The tapering Pyramid th’ Ægyptian’s pride, And wonder of the world, whose spiky top
Has wounded the thick cloud, and long outliv’d
The angry shaking of the winter’s storm;
Yet spent at last by th’ injuries of heaven,
Shatter’d with age, and furrow’d o’er with years,
The mystic cone with hieroglyphics crusted,
At once gives way. Oh! lamentable sight!
The labour of whole ages tumbles down,
A hideous and misshapen length of ruins:
Sepuchral columns wrestle but in vain
With all-subduing Time; her cank’ring hand
With calm, delib’rate malice wasteth them:
Worn on the edge of days, the brahs consumes,
The bufto moulders, and the deep-cut marble,
Unsteady to the feel, gives up its charge.

AMBITION, half convicted of her folly,
Hangs down her head, and reddens at the tale.

39 Am即使 the general wreck of all the works of men, this thought should strike us:

Virtue alone outbuilds the pyramids;
Her monuments shall last, when Egypt’s fall.—Night Thoughts.

40 Sic tranfit gloria mundi.

41 Well might Shakespeare say, and have it engraved on his monument, as a proof of the infallibility of all human things.

The cloud-capt towers,
The gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples,
The great globe itself; Yeas, all that it inherits,
Shall dissolve,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.

42 * * * * * * * Death is Victory;
It binds in chains the raging ills of life;
Luft and ambition, wrath and avarice,
Dragg’d at his chariot wheels, applaud his power.

Night Thoughts.

HERE
THE GRAVE.

Here all the mighty Troublers of the earth,
Who swam to fav'reign rule thro' seas of blood;
Th' oppressive, sturdy, man-destroying Villains,
Who ravag'd kingdoms, and laid empires waste,
And, in a cruel wantonness of power,
Thinn'd flates of half their people, and gave up
To want the rest; now, like a storm that's spent,
Lie hush'd 43, and meanly sneak behind the covert 44. 215
Vain thought! to hide them from the general scorn
That haunts and doggs them like an injured ghost
Implacable.—Here, too, the Petty Tyrant,
Whose scant domains Geographer ne'er notic'd,
And, well for neighbouring grounds, of arm as short, 220
Who fix'd his iron talons on the poor,
And grip'd them like some lordly beast of prey;
Deaf to the forceful cries of gnawing Hunger,
And piteous plaintive voice of Misery;
(As if a Slave was not a shred of nature,
Of the same common nature with his Lord;)
Now tame and humble, like a child that's whip'd,
Shakes hands with dust, and calls the worm his kind
man 45;
Nor pleads his rank and birthright. Under ground,
Precedency's a jest; Vassal and Lord,
Grossly familiar, side by side consume 46.

When

43 Mors sola fatetur
Quantula furt hominum corpuscula,—fuv.
44 Where are the Alexanders and Cæsars, so fam'd for conquest
Once? Where are they now?—
Nature provides for all one common grave,
The last retreat of the distrest and brave,
45 The Grave unites, there e'en the Great find rest,
And blended lie th' oppressor and th' oppressed.—Pope.
46 The following lines, as an antidote against pride, are very ex-
pressive, and worthy to be remembered and attended to by all:
THE GRAVE.

When self-esteem, or other's adulation,
Would cunningly persuade us we are something
Above the common level of our kind;
The Grave gainsays the smooth-completion'd flattery,
And with blunt truth acquaints us what we are.

Beauty—thou pretty plaything, dear deceit!
That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,
And gives it a new pulse unknown before,
The Grave discredits thee: thy charms expung'd,
Thy roset faded, and thy lilies soiled,
What hast thou more to boast of? Will thy lovers
Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee homage?
Methinks I see thee with thy head now laid,
Wistful forst upon thy damask cheek
The high-fed Worm, in lazy volumes roll'd,
Riots unfear'd.—For this was all thy caution?

I dreamt, that buried with my fellow clay,
Close by a common Beggar's side I lay;
And as so mean an object shock'd my pride,
Thus like a corpse of consequence, I cry'd;
Scoundrel! begone, and henceforth touch me not,
More manners learn, and at a distance rot.
Scoundrel! then, with an haughtier tone cried he,
Proud lump of earth! I scorn thy words and thee;
Here all are equal, now thy cale is mine,
This is my rotting-place, and that is thine.

Well might Job exclaim, upon reflecting on the shortness and
uncertainty of human life, and the frailty of man; I have said to cor-
rupition, thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.
Job, xvii. 14.

Forma bonum fragile est.—Ovid.

On beauteous charms no more, ye Fair! depend,
The grave does all, without distinction, blend;
All prefs alike to that same goal the tomb,
Where wrinkled Laura dimles at Chloe's bloom.

See Hervey's address to Florella, in his Meditations among the
THE GRAVE.

For this thy painful labours at thy glass\(^{51}\),
T’improve those charms and keep them in repair,
For which the spoiler thanks thee not\(^{52}\)? Foul feeder!
Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,
And leave as keen a relish on the sense.
Look how the fair one weeps!—the conscious tears
Stand thick as dew-drops on the bells of flowers:
Honest effusion! the swoln heart in vain
Works hard, to put a gloss on its distress.

Strength, too—thou furry and less gentle boast,
Of those that loud laugh at the village ring,
A fit of common sickness pulls thee down
With greater ease than e’er thou didst the stripling
That rashly dar’d thee to th’ unequal fight.—
What groan was that I heard?—Deep groan indeed!
With anguish heavy laden.—Let me trace it.—
From yonder bed it comes, where the strong man,
By stronger arm belabour’d, gasps for breath
Like a hard-hunted beast. How his great heart
Beats thick! his roomy breast by far too scant
To give the lungs full play,—What now avail
The strong-built, finewy limbs, and well-spread shoulders!
See how he tugs for life, and lays about him,
Mad with his pains!—Eager he catches hold

\(^{51}\) Ye blooming virgins, beautiful and fair,
To yonder mould’ring place of sculls repair,
And learn how frail the charms of beauty are.

Solitary Walks.

\(^{52}\) Learn hence, ye lively and engaging Fair,
To make your minds your chief and greatest care;
For death ere long will close the brightest eyes,
But heav’n-born Virtue never, never dies.

Rural Christian
Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,
Just like a creature drowning; hideous sight!
Oh! how his eyes stand out, and stare full ghastly!
Whilst the distemper's rank and deadly venom
Shoots like a burning arrow cross his bowels,
And drinks his marrow up.——Heard you that groan?
It was his last.—See how the great Goliath,
Just like a child that brawl'd itself to rest,
Lies still.—What mean'st thou then, O mighty
Boaster,
To vaunt of nerves of thine? What means the Bull,
Unconscious of his strength, to play the coward,
And flee before a feeble thing like man,
That, knowing well the slackness of his arm,
Trusts only in the well-invented knife?

With Study pale, and midnight vigils spent,
The flar-surveying Sage close to his eye
Applies the sight-invigorating Tube,
And travelling through the boundless length of space,
Marks well the courses of the far-seen orbs
That roll with regular confusion there,
In ecstasies of thought. But ah! proud Man!
Great heights are hazardous to the weak head;
Soon, very soon, thy firmest footing fails;
And down thou drop'st into that darksome place,

Where nor device nor knowledge ever came.

Here the Tongue-warrior lies disabled now,
Disarm'd, dishonour'd, like a wretch that's gagged.

53 Well does a late celebrated writer say respecting death,—So strong is the tyrant's arm, that nothing can resist its force; so true his aim, that nothing can evade the blow.

Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs.

44 The Telescope.

55 Eccles. ix. 10.

And
THE GRAVE.

And cannot tell his ills to passers by.

Great men of language—Whence this mighty change; 300
This dumb despair, and drooping of the head?
Thou strong Persuasion hung upon thy lip,
And fly insinuation's softer arts
In ambush lay upon thy flowing tongue;
Alas! how chop-fall'n now? Thick mist and silence
Reft, like a weary cloud, upon thy breast
Unceasing.—Ah! where is the lifted arm,
The strength of action, and the force of words,
The well-turn'd period, and the well-turn'd voice,
With all the lesser ornaments of phrase?

Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been;
Raz'd from the book of Fame; or, more provoking,
Perchance some hackney, hunger-bitten Scribbler,
Inflicts thy memory, and blots thy tomb
With long flat narrative, or duller rhymes,
With heavy halting pace that drawl along;
Enough to rotte a dead man into rage,
And warm with red resentment the wan cheek.

HERE the great masters of the HEALING-ART,
These mighty mock defrauders of the TOMB,
Spite of their JULEPS and CATHOLICONS,
Resign their fate.—Proud ÆSCULAPIUS' son!
Where are thy boasted implements of Art,
And all thy well-cram'd magazines of Health?

56 Orators.
57 Too many epitaphs, both in prose and verse, are to be met
with upon tombstones, as illiterate and unmeaning as others are ridic
fulous and adulatory.
58 An apostrophe to deceased physicians, founded on that common
maxim, Physician, heal thyself.
Nor
Nor hill, nor vale, as far as ships could go,
Nor margin of the gravel bottom'd brook,
Escap'd thy rifling hand:—from stubborn shrubs
Thou wrung'ft their shy-retiring virtues out,
And vex'd them in the fire; nor fly, nor infect,
Nor writhy snake, escap'd thy deep research.
But why this Apparatus? Why this cost?
Tell us, thou doughty keeper from the Grave,
Where are thy Recipies and Cordials now,
With the long lift of vouchers for thy cures?
Alas! thou speak'ft not.—The bold impostor
Looks not more silly when the cheat's found out.

Here the lank Miser, worst of felons,
Who meanly stole, (discreditable shift,)
From back and belly too, their proper cheer,
Eas'd of a task it irk'd the wretch to pay
To his own carcase, now lies cheaply lodged,
By clam'rous Appetites no longer teaz'd,
Nor tedious bills of charges and repairs.
But ah! where are his rents, his comings-in?
Ay! now you've made the rich man poor indeed!
Robb'd of his Gods, what has he left behind?
Oh, cursed luft of Gold! when for thy fake,

59 In vain physicians strive to save
Themselves or patients from the grave;
In vain we court the doctor's art
To ward off Death's unerring dart;
For, as death came thro' Adam's fall,
So death must be the lot of all.—

Romans, v. 12.

60 Here terminate Ambition's airy schemes,
The fyren Pleasure here allures no more;
Here growing Advise drops her golden dreams,
And life's fantastic trifles all are o'er.

The
THE GRAVE.

The fool throws up his interest in both worlds: First starv'd in this, then damn'd in that to come. 61

How shocking must thy summons be, O DEATH; 350
To him that is at ease in his possessions;
Who counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnished for that world to come 62!
In that dread moment, how the frantic Soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain!—How withfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer her's!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh! might she lay to wash away her stains,
And fit her for her passage.—Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves is big with horror.—But the Foe,
Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track, but presses on;
Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin 63.

SURE 'tis a serious thing to DIE! My soul!
What a strange moment must it be, when near
Thy journey's end, thou hast the gulf in view!
That awful gulf, no mortal e'er repass'd

61 The sacred scriptures declare, the love of money is the root of all evil, and that covetousness is idolatry. 1. Tim. vi. 10. Colos. iii. 5.
63 The above representation of a departing soul is truly pathetic and sublime, and deservedly quoted by the late Rev. Mr. Hervey in his Meditations, page 59.
THE GRAVE.

To tell what's doing on the other side.
Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight, And every life-string bleeds at thought of parting; For part they must; BODY and SOUL must part:
Fond couple! link'd more close than wedded pair.
THIS wings its way to its Almighty Source,
The Witness of its actions, now its Judge;
THAT drops into the dark and noisome GRAVE,
Like a disabled pitcher of no use.

64 'Tis not the stoick's lesson, got by rote,
The pomp of words and pedant dissertation,
That can support thee in that hour of terror:
Books have taught cowards to talk nobly of it:
But when the trial comes, they start, and stand aghast.

Rowe's Fair Penitent.

65 Acts xvii. 31.
Dr. Watt's meditations on the dissolution of the body are happily expressed in the following lines:
And must this body die?
This mortal frame decay?
And must these active limbs of mine
Lie mould'ring in the clay?
Corruption, earth, and worms,
Shall but refine this flesh,
'Till my triumphant spirit comes,
To put it on afar.
God, my Redeemer, lives,
And often from the skies
Looks down, and watches all my dust,
'Till he shall bid it rise.—Hymn 110. book II.

66 How low and inferior is the author's simile respecting the lifeless body to that of St. Paul's, in I. Cor. xv. 42, 43.—It is SOWN IN corruption, it is RAISED IN incorruption; it is SOWN a natural body, it is RAISED a spiritual body; it is SOWN in WEAKNESS, it is RAISED in power; it is SOWN in dishonour, it is RAISED in glory.
"As the tree falleth, there it shall lie;
As death leaves, judgment will find us."
THE ARGUMENT.

Annihilation an absurdity, encourages the blackest crimes; Suicide, and its dreadful consequences; true bravery consists in patiently waiting till our change comes; the state of the dead a secret; description of a sexton, or grave-digger; his thoughtlessness and inconsideration, a pitiable circumstance; the folly of the living in not considering their latter end; the swiftness and secrecy of time; the world described; death the common lot of all; rich and poor of every age and nation alike subject to its stroke; the happiness of Adam before his fall; the shortness of it; sin the origin of every evil in the world; death represented as an insatiable glutton; the grave described; the resurrection of the dead; Christ's resurrection, a pledge of ours; the folly of meeting death with reluctance; the end of a good man happily portrayed; conclusion.
All is steadfast and immovable beyond the Grave; whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack; a seal will be set to our condition, by the hand of everlasting Mercy, or inflexible Justice.—Hervey’s Meditations.

If Death was nothing, and nought after Death;
If when men died, at once they ceas’d to be,
Returning to the barren womb of Nothing,
Whence first they sprung, then might the Debauchee
Untrembling mouth the Heaven’s.—Then might the Drunkard
Reel over his full bowl, and, when ’tis drain’d,
Fill up another to the brim, and laugh
At the poor bugbear Death:—Then might the wretch
That’s weary of the world, and tir’d of life,
At once give each inquietude the flip,
By feasting out of being when he pleas’d,
And by what way, whether by hemp or steel.
Death’s thousand doors stand open. Who could force
The ill-pleas’d guest to fit out his full time,
Or blame him if he goes?—Sure he does well,

67 See Dr. Young’s soliloquy on the supposition of annihilation, in his Night Thoughts, Night 7, line 653.
That helps himself as timely as he can, When able.—But if there is an hereafter, And that there is, Conscience, uninfluenc'd, And suffer'd to speak out, tells ev'ry man, Then must it be an awful thing to die: More horrid yet to die by one's own hand.

Self-murder!—name it not: our island's shame; That makes her the reproach of neighbouring states, Shall Nature, swerving from her earliest dictate, Self-preservation, fall by her own act? Forbid it, Heaven.—Let not, upon disgust, The shameless hand be fully crimson'd o'er With blood of its own lord.—Dreadful attempt! Ju'st reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage To rush into the presence of our Judge; As if we challeng'd him to do his worst, And matter'd not his wrath.—Unheard-of tortures Must be reserv'd for such: these herd together; The common damn'd shun their society, And look upon themselves as Fiends lest foul. Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd; How long, how short, we know not:—this we know, Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,

68 Addison very justly observes in his tragedy of Cato, 'Tis Heav'n itself points out an hereafter, And intimates Eternity to Man.

69 Suicide is doubtless a crime of the deepest dye; for as we did not bring ourselves into being, we have no right to hurry ourselves out of it. He only who created us, has a just authority to destroy us, if he sees fit. Vide Harries's Address on Suicide.

70 The poet here, endeavouring to paint self-murder in the blackest colours, indulges a falso idea of wicked spirits in hell; as if some esteem'd themselves better than others, which the scriptures no where intimate, or lead us to suppose.

71 Is there not an appointed time for men upon earth?—Job, vii. 1. Eccle. iii. 2.
THE GRAVE.

Nor dare to stir till Heav'n shall give permission: Like Sent'ries that must keep their des'tin'd stand, And wait th' appointed hour, till they're reliev'd; Tho'se only are the Brav'e that keep their ground, And keep it to the last. To run away Is but a coward's trick. To run away From this world's ills, that, at the very worst, Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend our'selves, By boldly vent'ring on a world unknown, And plunging headlong in the dark;—'tis mad; No phrenzy half so desperate as this.

Tell us, ye dead; will none of you, in pity To those you left behind, disclose the secret? Oh! that some courteous ghost would blab it out; What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be. I've heard, that souls departed, have sometimes Forewarn'd men of their death:—'Twas kindly done, To knock, and give th' alarm.—But what means This stinted charity?—'Tis but lame kindness That does its work by halves.—Why might you not Tell us what 'tis to die?—Do the strict laws Of your society forbid your speaking
Upon a point so nice?—I'll ask no more: Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine Enlightens but your'selves. Well—'tis no matter;

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72 Job, xiv. 14.
73 Suicides are often, and not improperly, brought in by juries, non compos mentis.
74 * * * * * No notice they give,
Nor tell us where, nor how they live;
As if bound up by solemn fate,
To keep this secret of their fate;
To tell their joys nor pains to none,
That man might live by faith alone.

A very
THE GRAVE.

A very little time will clear up all,
And make us learn'd as you are and as close.

Death's shafts fly thick: here falls the Village swain,
And there his pamper'd Lord. The cup goes round:
And who so artful as to put it by?  
'Tis long since Death had the majority;
Yet strange! The living lay it not to heart.

See yonder maker of the dead man's bed,
The Sexton, hoary-headed chronicle,
Of hard, unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole
A gentle tear, with mattock in his hand,
Digs thro' whole rows of kindred and acquaintance,
By far his juniors.—Scarce a scull's cast up,
But well he knew its Owner, and can tell
Some passage of his life.—Thus hand in hand
The lot has walk'd with Death twice twenty years,
And yet ne'er Yonker on the green laughs louder
Or clubs a smuttier tale:—When Drunkards meet,
None sings a merrier catch, or lends a hand
More willing to his cup.—Poor wretch! he minds not,
That soon some trusty brother of the trade
Shall do for him, what he has done for thousands.

75 Death's fatal stroke no mortal can withstand,
None can elude or stay the tyrant's hand.—Rural Christian.
76 Isa. lviii. 1.
77 The author here seems to have in view the grave-digger in the
Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.
78 To have mortality ever before our eyes without thinking of it,
is surely the worst stupidity a rational being can discover. Dr. Young
seems well assured of this truth when he thus expresses himself,
Ah me! too long I sat at nought the swarm
Of friendly warning, which around me flew;
And smil'd unsmitten.—Smile my cause to smile.

Night Thoughts.

79 'Tis a common and melancholy observation, and too frequently confirmed, that none seem less affected with the thoughts of death, than those
THE GRAVE.

On this side, and on that, men see their friends drop off, like leaves in autumn; yet launch out into fantastic schemes, which the long Livers in the world's hale and undegenerate days could scarce have leisure for.—Fools that we are, never to think of death and of ourselves at the same time: as if to learn to die were no concern of ours.—Oh! more than fottish, for creatures of a day in gameome mood, to frolic on Eternity's dread brink unapprehensive; when, for aught we know, the very first swoln surge shall sweep us in. Think we, or think we not, time hurries on with a restless, unremitting stream; yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief, that slides his hand under the miser's pillow, and carries off his prize.—What is this world? what, but a spacious burial-field unwall'd, strew'd with death's spoils, the spoils of animals savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones. The very turf on which we tread once liv'd; and we that live must lend our carcases

those who have mortality most frequently presented to their view, such as, physicians undertakers, &c.

80 The longer we live, the more reason we shall have to acknowledge and lament this melancholy truth.

81 Well might Dr. Young in his Night Thoughts say,

All men think all men mortal but themselves.

Learn to live well, that thou mayst die loo too,

To live and die is all we have to do.—Denham.

82 Man is like a tenant at will, liable to be (and often is) turned out of his earthly tenement, the body, at a moment's warning; therefore he should make it his daily study to be always ready for the awful summons, agreeable to the admonitions of divine revelation, Mark, xiii. 35, 36, Matthew, xxiv. 44.

83 Matt. xxv. 13. 2 Pet. iii. 10.

84 Whole buried towns support the dancer's heel.

Night Thoughts.

The
To cover our own offspring; in their turns,
They, too, must cover theirs.—’Tis Here all meet; 490
The shiv’ring Icelander, and sun-burnt Moor;
Men of all climes, that never met before;
And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.
Here the proud Prince, and Favourite yet prouder,
His Sov’rign’s keeper, and the people’s scourge, 495
Are huddled out of sight.—Here lie abash’d
The great Negotiators of the earth,
And celebrated Masters of the balance,
Deep read in stratagems and wiles of courts; 486
Now vain their Treaty-skill.—Death scorns to treat.
Here the o’erloaded slave flings down his burthen
From his gall’d shoulders;—and when the cruel Tyrant,
With all his guards and tools of power about him,
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,
Mocks his short arm;—and quick as thought escapes 505
Where Tyrants vex not, and the weary rest.

Here the warm Lover, leaving the cool shade,
The tell-tale Echo, and the babbling stream,
(Time out of mind the fav’rite seats of Love,)
Faft by his gentle mistrefs lays him down,
Unblasted by foul tongue.—Here friends and foes
Lie close, unmindful of their former feuds. 88
The lawn-rob'd Prelate and plain Presbyter,
Ere-while that stood aloof, as shy to meet,
Familiar mingle here, like sister streams
That some rude interposing rock had split.

Here is the large-limb'd Peasant:—Here the Child
Of a span long that never saw the sun,
Nor press'd the nipple, strangled in Life's porch.
Here is the Mother, with her sons and daughters;
The barren Wife, and long-demurring Maid,
Whose lonely unappropriated sweets
Smil'd like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff;
Not to be come at by the willing hand.
Here are the Prude severe, and gay Coquet,
The sober Widow, and the young green Virgin,
Cropp'd like a rofe before 'tis fully blown,
Or half its worth disclos'd. Strange medley here!

Here garrulous Old Age winds up his tale;
And jovial Youth of lightsome vacant heart 89,
Whose every day was made of melody,
Hears not the voice of mirth 90.——The shrill-tongu'd Shrew,
Meek as the turtle-dove, forgets her chiding.
Here are the wife, the generous, and the brave;
The just, the good, the worthless, the profane,
The downright clown, and perfectly well bred;
The fool, the churl, the scoundrel, and the mean,
The supple statesman, and the patriot stern;

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89 Miha fenam ac Juvenum densantur funera.—Hor.
90 Here youth and age in silence meet,
   And death's pale vict'ry is complete.
The wrecks of Nations, and the spoils of Time,
With all the lumber of six thousand years.

Poor Man!—how happy once in thy first state!
When yet but warm from thy great Maker’s hand,
He stamp’d thee with his image, and, well-pleas’d,
Smil’d on his last fair work. —Then all was well.
Sound was the body, and the soul serene;
Like two sweet instruments, ne’er out of tune,
That play their several parts.—Nor head, nor heart,
Offer’d to ache; nor was there cause they should;
For all was pure within: no fell remorse,
Nor anxious castings-up of what might be,
Alarm’d his peaceful bosom.—Summer seas
Shew not more smooth, when kifs’d by southern winds,
Just ready to expire.—Scarce importun’d,
The generous soil, with a luxurious hand,
Offer’d the various produce of the year,
And ev’ry thing most perfect in its kind.
Blessed! thrice blessed days!—But, ah! how short!
Bless’d as the pleasing dreams of Holy Men;
But fugitive like those, and quickly gone.

Oh! flipp’ry state of things!—What sudden turns!
What strange vicissitudes in the first leaf
Of man’s fad history!—To-day most happy,
And ere to-morrow’s sun has set, most abject.
How scant the space between these vast extremes!

91 Gen. i. 27.
92 Gen. ii. 9.
93 To-day he’s honour’d, and in vaft esteem,
To-morrow not a beggar values him;
To-day he’s grand, majestic, all delight.
Ghastly and pale before to-morrow night.
Thus far'd it with our Sire:—Not long h' enjoy'd
His paradise—Scarce had the happy tenant
Of the fair spot due time to prove its sweets,
Or sum them up, when strait he must be gone;
Ne'er to return again.—And must he go?
Can nought compound for the first dire offence
Of erring man?—Like one that is condemn'd,
Fain would he trifle time with idle talk,
And parley with his fate.—But 'tis in vain—
Not all the lavish odours of the place
Offer'd in incense can procure his pardon,
Or mitigate his doom.—A mighty Angel
With flaming sword forbids his longer stay,
And drives the loiterer forth; nor must he take
One last and farewell round.—At once he loth
His glory and his God.—If mortal now,
And sorely maim'd, no wonder.—Man has sinn'd.
Sick of his blis, and bent on new adventures,
Evil he needs would try: nor try'd in vain.
(Dreadful experiment! destructive measure!
Where the worst thing could happen, is success.)
Alas! too well he sped: the Good he scorn'd
Stalk'd off reluctant like an ill-us'd ghost,
Not to return;—or if it did, its visits,
Like those of Angels, short and far between:
Whilst the black Daemon, with his hell-cap'd train,
Admitted once into its better room,
Grew loud and mutinous, nor would be gone;
Lording it o'er the Man: who now too late
Saw the rash error, which he could not mend:
An error fatal not to him alone,

94 Gen. iii. 24.
95 See Milton's Paradise lost; book x. line 845.
96 Gen. iii. 23.
But to his future fons, his fortune’s heirs 97.
Inglorious bondage!—Human nature groans
Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel,
And its vast body bleeds thro’ every vein.

What havoc hast thou made, foul monster, Sin! 600
Greatest and first of Ills.—The fruitful parent
Of woes of all dimensions!—But for thee
Sorrow had never been 98.—All-noxious Thing,
Of vilest nature!—Other sorts of Evils
Are kindly circumcised, and have their bounds. 605
The fierce Volcano, from his burning entrails,
That belches molten Stone, and globes of Fire,
Involv’d in pitchy clouds of Smoke and Flench,
Mars the adjacent fields for some leagues round,
And there it flops 99.—The big-swoln Inundation,
Of mischief more diffusive, raving loud,
Buries whole tracts of country, threat’ning more;
But that, too, has its shore it cannot pass 100.
More dreadful far than these, Sin has laid waste,
Not here and there a country, but a World 101: 611
Dispatching at a wide-extended blow
Entire mankind; and for their fates defacing
A whole Creation’s beauty with rude hands 102;

97 Rom. v. 18.
98 Milton thus describes the effects of Adam’s sin in his inimitable poem, entitled Paradise Lost:

. . . . . . the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.

99 Mount Aetna.
100 Thus faith the Almighty to the restless ocean, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.—Job, xxxviii. 11.
101 Rom. v. 12.
102 Rom. viii. 22.

Blasting
THE GRAVE.

Blafting the foodful grain, the loaded branches,
And marking all along its way with ruin. 620
Accursed Thing!—Oh! where shall Fancy find
A proper name to call Thee by, expressive
Of all thy horrors? Pregnant womb of Ills!
Of temper so transcendently malign,
That toads and serpents of most deadly kind,
Compar'd to thee, are harmless.—Sicknèsses
Of every size and symptom, racking pains,
And bluest plagues are thine.—See how the Fiend
Profusely scatters the contagion round!
Whilst deep-mouth'd Slaughter, bellowing at her heels,
Wades deep in blood new spilt; yet for to-morrow 631
Shapes out new work of great uncommon daring,
And inly pines 'till the dread blow is struck.

But hold:—I've gone too far; too much discover'd
My Father's nakedness, and Nature's shame.—
Here let me pause, and drop an honest tear,
One burst of filial duty and condolence,
O'er all those ample deserts Death hath spread;
This Chaos of mankind.—O great Man-eater!
Whose ev'ry day is Carnival, not sated yet!
Unheard-of Epicure! without a fellow!
The veriest Gluttons do not always cram;
Some intervals of abstinence are sought
To edge the appetite: Thou seest none.

103 Gen. iii. 17, 18.
104 Milton speaking of the entrance of sin and death into paradise, upon
our first parents eating the forbidden fruit, says,

. . . . . they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature,
Sooner or later.—Paradise Lost, book x.
105 Death's a devourer of quotidian prey.—Night Thoughts.

Methinks
Methinks the countless swarms thou haft devour'd,
And thousands that each hour thou gobblest up,
This, less than this, might gorge thee to the full;
But, ah! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more:
Like one, whose days defrauded of his meals,
On whom lank Hunger lays her skinny hand,
And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings;
As if diseases, massacres, and poison,
Famine, and war, were not thy Caterers.

But know, that thou must render up the dead,
And with high int'rest too.—They are not thine;
But only in thy keeping for a season,
Till the great promis'd day of Reinstallation;
When loud diffusive sound of brazen trump
Of strong-lung'd Cherub, shall alarm thy Captives,
And rouse the long, long sleepers into life,
Day-light and liberty.—
Then must thy gates fly open, and reveal
The mines that lay long forming under ground,
In their dark cells immur'd; but now full ripe,
And pure as silver from the crucible,
That twice has flood the torture of the fire
And inquisition of the forge.—We know
Th' illustrious Deliverer of mankind,
The Son of God, thee foil'd.—Him in thy pow'r
Thou couldst not hold:—self-vigorous he rose,
And shaking off thy fetters, soon retook
Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent:
(Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall!)

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106 Mors janua vitae.—Virg.
107 Matt. xxiv. 31. Theil. iv. 16.
108 I. Cor. xv. 52.
109 Heb. ii. 14, 15.
THE GRAVE.

Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,
And shew'd himself alive to chosen Witnesses,
By proofs so strong, that the most flow assenting
Had not a scruple left. This having done,
He mounted up to heav'n.—Methinks I see him
Climb the aerial height, and glide along
Athwart the sev'ring clouds: but the faint eye,
Flung backward in the chase, soon drops its hoid,
Difabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.
Heav'n's portals wide expand to let him in;
Nor are his friends shut out: as some great Prince
Not for himself alone procures admission,
But for his train.—It was his Royal will,
That where he is, there should his followers be.
Death only lies between.—A gloomy path!
Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears:
But not untrod nor tedious; the fatigue
Will soon go off: besides, there's no by-road
To blifs.—Then why, like ill-condition'd children,
Start we at transient hardships in the way
That leads to purer air, and softer skies,
And a ne'er setting sun?—Fools that we are!
We wish to be where sweets unwith'ring bloom;

111 John, xvii. 24.
112 Death and his image rising in the brain,
Bear faint resemblance, never are alike;
Fear shakes the pencil, fancy loves excels,
Dark ignorance is lavish of her shades,
And these the formidable picture draw.—Night Thoughts.
113 Dr. Young very beautifully expresses the real Christian's sentiments respecting the last enemy of Nature, or rather happily describes what death is to every true believer in Christ, in the following words:
Death is the portal to eternal life,
This king of terrors is the prince of peace.
_Night Thoughts._
But
THE GRAVE.

But strict our wish revoke, and will not go.  
So have I seen, upon a summer's ev'n,  
Fast by a riv'let's brink a young'flet play:  
How wishfully he looks to stem the tide!  
This moment resolute, next unresolv'd:  
At last he dips his foot; but as he dips,  
His fears redouble, and he runs away  
From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now  
Of all the flow'rs that paint the farther bank,  
And smil'd so sweet of late.—Thrice welcome Death!  
That after many a painful bleeding flep  
Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe  
On the long-wish'd-for shore 114.—Prodigious change!  
Our bane turn'd to a blesling!—Death, difarm'd,  
Loses his fellness quite 115.—All thanks to Him  
Who scourg'd the venom out 116.—Sure the last end  
Of the good man is Peace 117!—How calm his exit!  
Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,  
Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft.  
Behold him in the evening tide of life,  
A life well spent, whose early care it was  
His riper years should not upbraid his green:  
By unperceiv'd degrees he wears away;  
Yet, like the sun, seems larger at his setting:  
High in his faith and hopes) look how he reaches  
After the prize in view! and, like a bird  
That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get away:

114 . . . Life's a debtor to the grave;  
    Dark lattice! letting in eternal day.—Night Thoughts.  
115 Well may a dying Christian join with an inspired apostle in crying  
    out, O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?—I. Cor.  
    xv. 55.  
116 I. Cor. xv. 57.  
117 I sa. lvii. 2.

Whilst
WHILST the glad gates of light are wide expanded
To let new glories in, the first fair fruits
Of the vast-coming harvest.—THEN! Oh, THEN!
Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,
Shrunk to a thing of nought.—Oh! how he longs
To have his passport sign'd, and be dismiss'd 118:
'Tis done! and now he's happy!—The glad SOUL
Has not a with uncrown'd.—Ev'n the lag FLESH
RESTS too in HOPE of meeting once again
Its better half, never to funder more 119;
Nor shall it hope in vain 120;—The time draws on
When not a single spot of burial earth,
Whether on land, or in the spacious sea,
But must give back its long-committed dust
Inviolate 121;—and faithfully shall these
Make up the full account; not the least atom
Embezzl'd, or mislaid, of the whole tale.
Each SOUL shall have a BODY ready furnish'd;
And each shall have his own.—Hence ye profane!
Ask not, how this can be?—Sure the same Pow'r
That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,
Can re-assemble the loose scatter'd parts,
And put them as they were 122.—Almighty God
Has done much more; nor is his arm impair'd
Through length of days: and what he can, he will:
His Faithfulness stands bound to see it done 123.

118 II. Cor. v. 4.
119 Psalms, xvi. 19.
120 1. Cor. xv. 52.
121 Rev. xx. 13.
122 What the Almighty has declared in his word shall come to
pass, however human reason may not be able to investigate the manner
how, or the means by which it shall be effected. Pope very justly ob-
servers, "Man was not made to question but adore."—Essay on Man.
THE GRAVE.

When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring dust, (Not unattentive to the call) shall wake:
And ev'ry joint posses its proper place,
With a new elegance of form, unknown
To its first state.—Nor shall the conscious Soul
Mistake its partner, but amidst the crowd,
Singling its other half, into its arms
Shall rush with all th' impatience of a man
That's new come home, who, having long been absent,
With haste runs over ev'ry different room,
In pain to see the whole. Thrice-happy meeting!
Nor Time, nor Death, shall ever part them more.
'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night;
We make the Grave our bed, and then are gone.

Thus at the shut of ev'n, the weary Bird
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
Cow's down, and dozes till the dawn of day,
Then claps his well-fledg'd wings, and bears away.

124 . . . . Death is the crown of life;
    Were death denied, poor man would live in vain;
    Death wounds to cure; we fall; we rise; we reign.

125 Philip, iii. 21.
126 I. Thes. iv. 17.
127 Isa. lvii. 2.
128 Man, thoughtless man! whose moments quickly fly,
    Wakes but to sleep again, and lives to die;
    And when this present fleeting life is o'er,
    Man dies to live and lives to die no more.

Solitary Walks.

Happy, thrice happy they, who meet death only as a sleep, out of which they have good ground to hope they shall awake to life eternal.

Thus sings the late pious Dr. Watts, in his 117th psalm:
    My flesh shall slumber in the ground,
    Till the last trumpet's joyful sound,
    Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,
    And in my favour's image rise.

An
AN

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

By Mr. GRAY.
THE ARGUMENT.

A summer's evening described; its calmness disturbed by the beetle, sheepbells, and owl; country church-yard portrayed, with its sleeping tenants; the vanity of ambition, power and beauty; the folly of pompous epitaphs and inscriptions; true merit obscured by penury; rustic poverty not to be despised; love of life natural to all; what the poet's fate may be in some future period, related by old age, with his epitaph.
AN ELEGY.

The Time,—A Summer's Evening.

I.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herd's wind slowly o'er the lea;
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

II.

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

III.

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her sacred bow'r,
Moleft her ancient solitary reign.

129 A bell which used to be rung every evening by order of William the Conqueror, as a signal for all persons to rake out their fires, and put out their lights.

130 Every reader, who is an attentive observer of rural nature must confess, while he cannot but admire, the beauty and natural colouring of this elegant description of a summer's eve.

IV. Beneath
AN ELEGY

IV.

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.

V.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall route them from their lowly bed.

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 kis 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 afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

---

131 The term for ever laid, as it tends to mislead weak minds, to question the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, should be altered to forgotten laid.

132 The following stanza was inserted in the first edition of this poem, but afterwards excluded:

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

133 Requiescant in pace.

134 This picture of domestic happiness, or nuptial felicity, in rural life, is natural, interesting, and pathetic. See Thomson's Winter, line 310, for a similar description.

VIII. Let
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 135.

IX.
The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow’r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave,
Await alike th’ inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave 136.

X.
Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem’ry o’er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro’ 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 Flatt’ry soothe the dull, cold ear of Death 137?

XII.
Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have lway’d,
Or wak’d to extasy the living lyre 138.

XIII. But

135 The rich and great have no more reason to despise the poor
and abject, than the latter have to envy the former, as both stand equal-
ly in need of the assistance of each other; in this respect, the labour of
the one, and the wages of the other, may be suitably contrasted.
136 Earth’s highest station ends in, Here he lies,
And dust to dust concludes her noblest song.—Night Thoughts.
137 The mockery of tombstone panegyric or venal epitaphs, on the
merits of deceased nobility, is here justly exposed.
138 Many a poor man has possessed such a genius and abilities
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 139.

XIV.

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. 140.

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 141.

XVI.

Th' applause of lift'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their his t'ry in a nation's eyes,

as would have enabled the brightest characters, and adorned the most elevated stations; but indigence has obscured his talents and confined him within the narrow circle of a country village; yet still he might be a worthy and useful member of society, though a stranger to nobility and influence.

139 Poverty may suppress the sentiments, but cannot alter the feelings or disposition of a truly noble, generous and aspiring mind.

140 The following lines, taken from an edition of Gray's Poems published in Dublin, are no indifferent parody on the above stanza;
Full many a lark, high tow'ring to the sky,
Unheard, unheeded, greets th' approach of light;
Full many a star, unseen by mortal eye,
With twinkling luftre glimmers thro' the night.

141 See a Criticism on This Elegy, published by Cadell.
WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD. 49

XVII.
Their lot forbade; nor circumscrib’d alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin’d;
Forbade to wade thro’ slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of Mercy on mankind ¹⁴²;

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 keep the noiseless tenor of their way ¹⁴³.

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 ¹⁴⁴.

XXII. For

¹⁴² The more exalted the station, the greater are the opportunities of doing good or evil among mankind at large.

¹⁴³ The wisdom of Providence is conspicuous in suitng the mind to the station, and giving content where he does not see fit to bestow wealth.

¹⁴⁴ The following common, and no improper epitaph, however...
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 ling'ring look behind? 145

XXIII.

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,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires 146.

XXIV.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead,
Doft 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 hafty steps the dews away,
† To meet the sun upon the upland lawn,

plain it may be accounted, is frequently to be met with in country church-yards:

As I am now, so you must be.
Prepare in time to follow me.

N. B. A suitable admonition to every reader, whether young or old, rich or poor.

145 However this may be applicable to mankind in general in the views of death, it seems inconsistent with the apostle's language in Phil. i. 28. Having a desire to depart.

146 The two last lines of this stanza are somewhat ambiguous; neither the truths of revelation, nor the dictates of right reason, support the sentiments, or countenance the extravagant ideas they hold out. Well may they be said by the Author of the Criticism on this Elegy, to contain a position at which Experience revolts, Credulity hesitates, and even Fancy falters.

XXVI. 'There
XXVI.
' There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
  ' That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
  ' His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
  ' And pore upon the brook that babbles by 147.

XXVII.
' Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
  ' Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
  ' Now drooping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn,
  ' Or craz'd with care, or crost'd in hopeles's love.

XXVIII.
' One morn I mis'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.

XXIX.
' The next, with dirges due, in fad array,
  ' Slow thro' 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 148.

147 The following stanza appeared in the first edition of this poem, but have been since omitted.
  Him have we seen the green wood side along,
  While o'er the heath we past, our labour done;
  Oft as the wood-lark pip'd her farewell song,
  With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.

148 The following lines were inserted here in the early editions of this work:
  There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
  By hands unseen are show'rs of violets found;
  The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
  And little footsteps lightly trip the ground.
The EPI T A P H.

I.
HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown;
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

II.
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 149.

III.
No farther seek his merits to discofe,
Nor draw his frailties from their dread abode 150.
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God 151.

149 The poet here seems to have in view Dr. Young's Estimate of a real friend:
Poor is the friendless master of a world,
A world in purchase for a friend is gain.—Night Thoughts.
150 De mortuis nil nisi bonum.
151 The idea of the bosom of his God being the abode of his merits and frailties, evidently refers either to the book of remembrance spoken of in Malachi, iii. 16. or the wife man's awful declaration in the xiith of Ecclesiastes and 14th verse: For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

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