



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

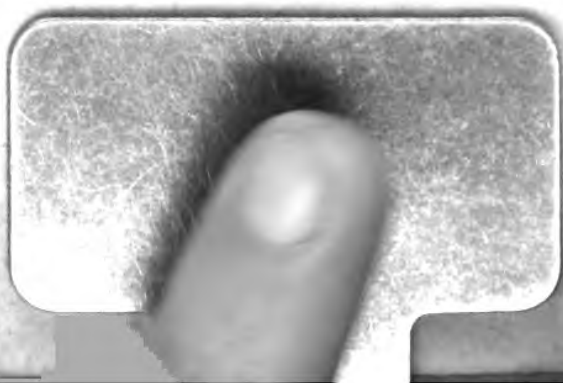
<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



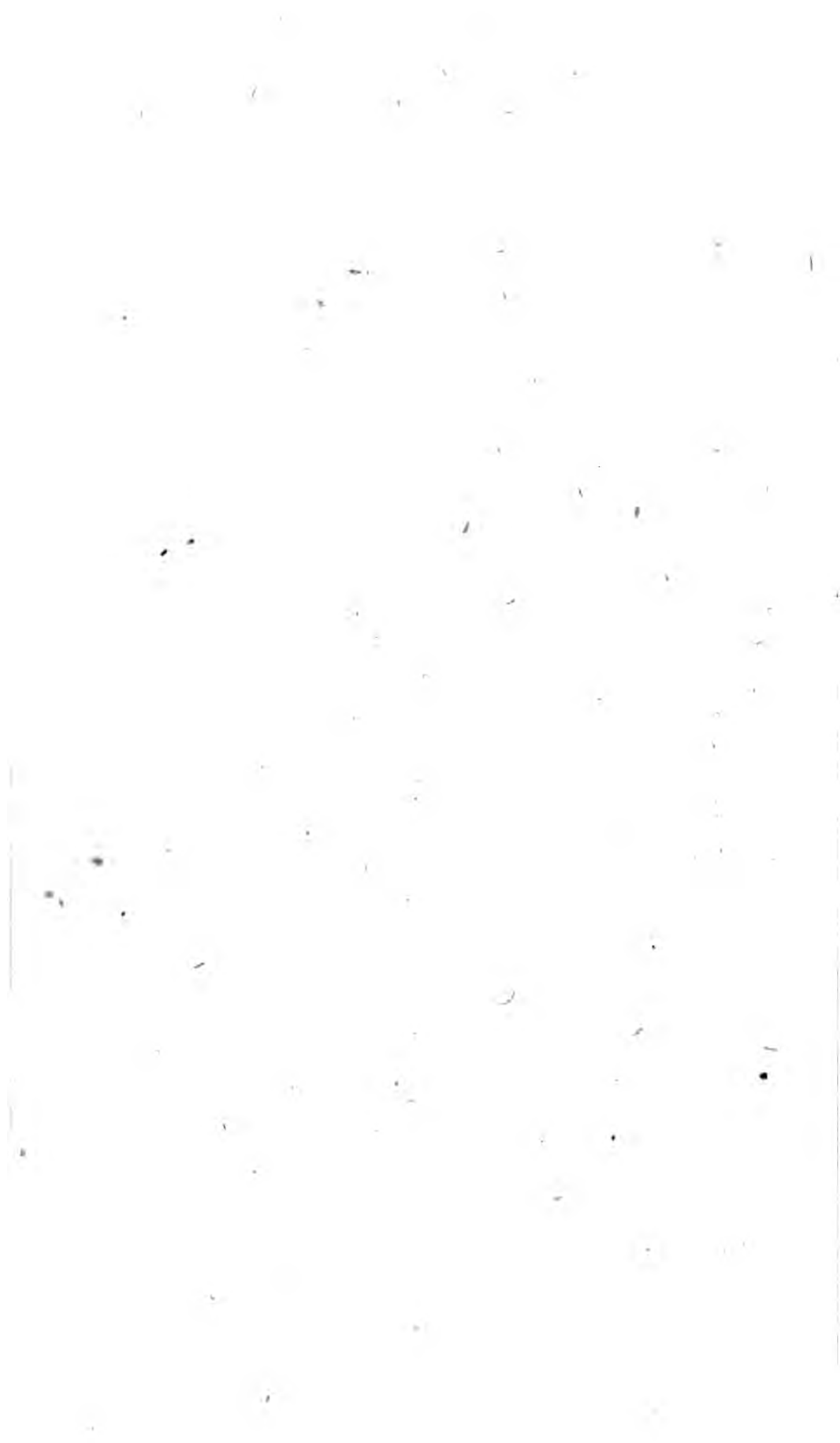
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

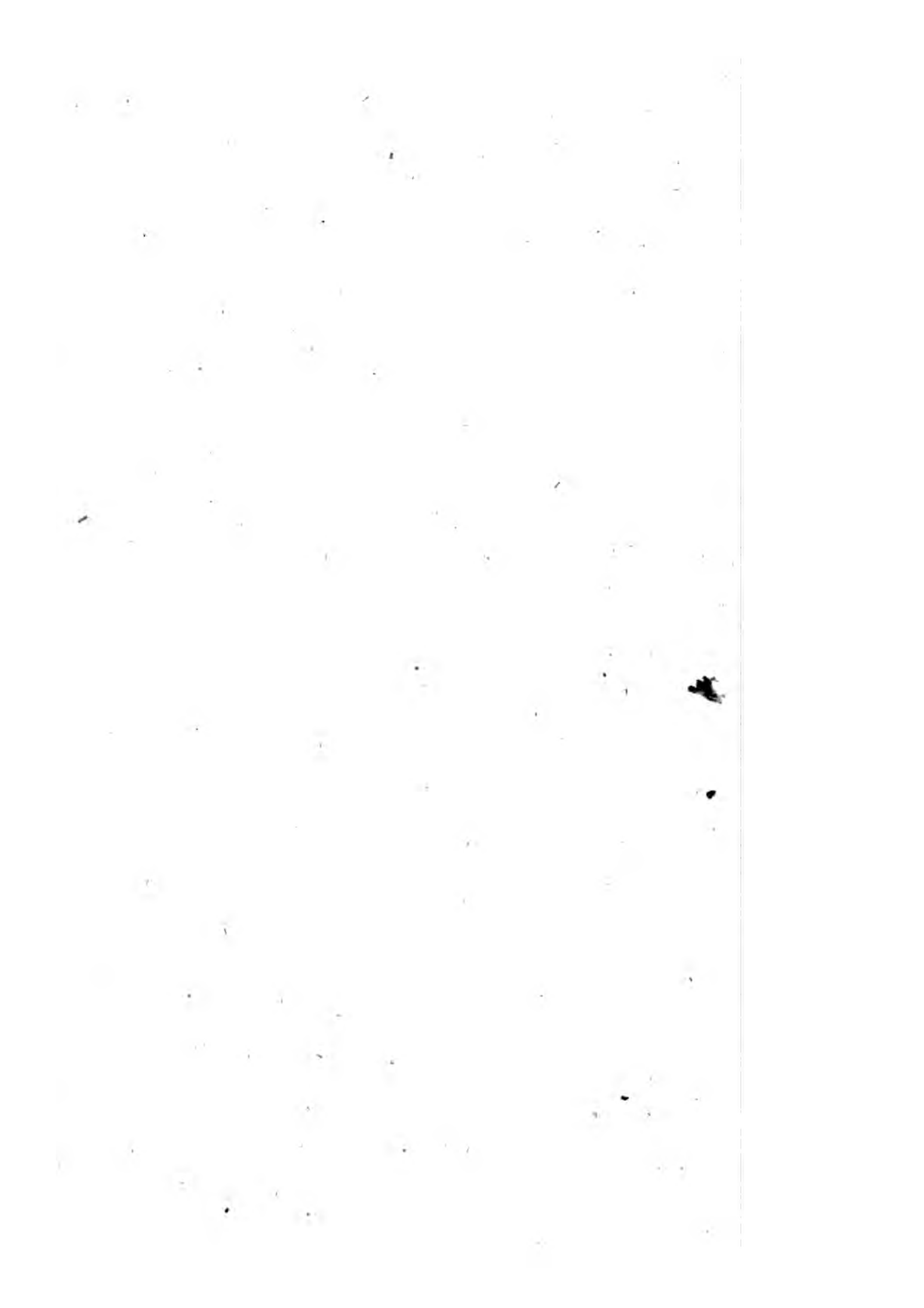


2804 f 163









P R E F A C E S,
B I O G R A P H I C A L
A N D
C R I T I C A L,
T O T H E
W O R K S
O F T H E
E N G L I S H P O E T S.
B Y S A M U E L J O H N S O N.

V O L U M E T H E T E N T H.

L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D B Y J . N I C H O L S :

F O R C . B A T H U R S T , J . B U C K L A N D , W . S T R A H A N , J . R I V I N G -
T O N A N D S O N S , T . D A V I E S , T . P A Y N E , L . D A V I S , W . O W E N ,
B . W H I T E , S . C R O W D E R , T . C A S L O N , T . L O N G M A N ,
B . L A W , C . D I L L Y , J . D O D S L E Y , J . W I L K I E , J . R O B -
S O N , J . J O H N S O N , T . L O W N D E S , G . R O B I N S O N ,
T . C A D E L L , J . N I C H O L S , E . N E W B E R Y ,
T . E V A N S , J . R I D L E Y , R . B A L D W I N ,
G . N I C O L , L E I G H A N D S O T H E B Y ,
J . B E W , N . C O N A N T , J . M U R R A Y ,
W . F O X , J . B O W E N .

M D C C L X X X I .



Inn Duckworth 1782

P R E F A C E S

T O

Y O U N G, D Y E R,
M A L L E T, S H E N S T O N E,
A K E N S I D E, L Y T T E L T O N,
W E S T, A N D G R A Y.

VOL. X.

a 2

1. $\frac{1}{x^2} = x^{-2}$

2.

3. $\frac{1}{x^3} = x^{-3}$

4. $\frac{1}{x^4} = x^{-4}$

5. $\frac{1}{x^5} = x^{-5}$

6.

7.

Y O U N G.

THE following Life was written, at my request, by a gentleman who had better information than I could easily have obtained; and the publick will perhaps wish that I had solicited and obtained more such favours from him.

“ Dear Sir,

In consequence of our different conversations about authentick materials for the Life of Young, and in consequence of your fears lest, for want of proper

A

infor-

information, you might say any thing of the father which should hurt the son, I send you the following detail. It is not, I confess, immediately in the line of my profession; but hard indeed is our fate at the bar, if we may not call a few hours now-and-then our own.

Of great men something must always be said to gratify curiosity. Of the great author of the *Night Thoughts* much has been told of which there never could have been proofs; and little care appears to have been taken to tell that of which proofs, with little trouble, might have been procured.

E D.

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham, near Winchester, in June 1681. He was the son of Edward Young, at that time Fellow of Winchester College and Rector of Upham; who was the son of Jo. Young of Woodhay in Berkshire, styled by Wood *gentleman*. In September 1682 the Poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by bishop Ward. On the childishness of Ward, his duties were necessarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that, at a visitation of Sprat, July the 12th, 1686, the Prebendary preached a Latin sermon, afterwards published, with which the Bishop was so pleased, that he told the Chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the

worst prebends in their church. In consequence of his merit and reputation, or of the interest of lord Bradford (to whom, in 1702, he dedicated two volumes of sermons), he was, some time after, appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanry of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, says, he was chaplain and clerk of the closet to the late Queen, who honoured him by standing godmother to the Poet. His fellowship of Winchester he resigned in favour of one Mr. Harris, who married his only daughter. The Dean died at Sarum, after a short illness, in 1705, in the sixty-third year of his age. On the Sunday after his decease Bishop Burnet preached at the cathedral, and began his sermon with saying, ‘ Death has
“ been

“ been of late walking round us, and
 “ making breach upon breach upon us,
 “ and has now carried away the head of
 “ this body with a stroke; so that he,
 “ whom you saw a week ago distributing
 “ the holy mysteries, is now laid in the
 “ dust. But he still lives in the many
 “ excellent directions he has left us, both
 “ how to live and how to die.”

The Dean placed his son upon the foundation at Winchester College, where he had himself been educated. At this school Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birth-day, the period at which those upon the foundation are superannuated. Whether he did not betray his abilities early in life, or his masters had not skill enough to discover in their pupil any marks of ge-

nus for which he merited reward, or no vacancy at Oxford afforded them an opportunity to bestow upon him the reward provided for merit by William of Wykeham; certain it is, that to an Oxford fellowship our Poet did not succeed. By chance, or by choice, New College does not number among its Fellows him who wrote the *Night Thoughts*.

On the 13th of October, 1703, he was entered an Independent Member of New College, that he might live at little expence in the Warden's lodgings, who was a particular friend of his father, till he should be qualified to stand for a fellowship at All-souls. In a few months the warden of New College died. He

then removed to Corpus. The President of this College, from regard also for his father, invited him thither, in order to lessen his academical expences. In 1708 he was nominated to a law fellowship at All-souls by Archbishop Tennison, into whose hands it came by devolution.—Such repeated patronage, while it justifies Burnet's praise of the father, reflects credit on the conduct of the son. The manner in which it was exerted seems to prove that the father did not leave behind him much wealth.

On the 23d of April 1714, Young took his degree of Batchelor of Civil Laws, and his Doctor's degree on the 10th of June 1719.

Soon after he was elected at All-souls he discovered, it is said, an inclination to take pupils. Whether he ever commenced tutor is not known. None has hitherto boasted to have received his academical instruction from the author of the *Night Thoughts*. It is certain that his college was proud of him no less as a scholar than as a poet; for, in 1716, when the foundation of the Codrington Library was laid, two years after he had taken his Bachelor's degree, he was appointed to speak the Latin oration, which is at least particular for being dedicated in English *To the Ladies of the Codrington Family*. To these he says, that "he was unavoidably flung into a singularity, by being obliged to write an
epistle-

epistle-dedicatory void of common-place, and such an one as was never published before by any author whatever;—that this practice absolved them from any obligation of reading what was presented to them;—and that the bookseller approved of it, because it would make people stare, was absurd enough, and perfectly right.” Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works; and prefixed to an edition by Curll and Tonson, in 1741, is a letter from Young to Curll (if Curll may be credited), dated December the 9th, 1739, wherein he says he has not leisure to review what he formerly wrote, and adds, “ I have not the *Epistle to Lord Lansdowne*. If you will take my ad-
 “ vice,

“ vice, I would have you omit that, and
“ the oration on *Codrington*. I think the
“ collection will sell better without
“ them.”

There are who relate, that, when first Young found himself independent, and his own master at All-souls, he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became. The authority of his father, indeed, had ceased by his death in 1705; and Young was certainly not ashamed to be patronized by the infamous Wharton. But Wharton befriended in Young, perhaps, the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors must be patronized only by virtuous peers, who shall point them out?

Yet

Yet Pope is said by Ruffhead to have told Warburton, that “ Young had much of a sublime genius, though without common sense; so that his genius, having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombast. This made him, pass a *foolish youth*, the sport of peers and poets: but his having a very good heart enabled him to support the clerical character when he assumed it, first with decency, and afterwards with honour.”

They who think ill of Young's morality in the early part of his life, may perhaps be wrong, but Tindal could not err in his opinion of Young's warmth and ability in the cause of religion. Tindal used

to

to spend much of his time at All-souls. "The other boys," said the atheist, "I can always answer, because I always know whence they have their arguments, which I have read an hundred times; but that fellow Young is continually pestering me with something of his own." After all, Tindal and the censurers of Young may be reconcilable. Young might, for two or three years, have tried that kind of life, in which his natural principles would not suffer him to wallow long. If this were so, he has left behind him not only his evidence in favour of virtue, but the potent testimony of experience against vice.

Young

Young perhaps ascribed the good fortune of Addison to the *Poem to his Majesty*, presented, with a copy of verses, to Somers; and hoped that he also might soar to wealth and honours on wings of the same kind. His first poetical flight was when Queen Anne called up to the House of Lords the sons of the Earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, and added, in one day, ten others to the number of Peers. In order to reconcile the people to one at least of the new Lords, he published in 1712 *An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne*. In this composition the poet pours out his panegyrick with the extravagance of a young man, who thinks his present
 stock

stock of wealth will never be exhausted.

The poem seems intended also to reconcile the publick to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done by shewing that men are slain in war, and that in peace *harvests wave and commerce swells her sail*. If this be humanity, it is not politicks. Another purpose of this epistle appears to have been to prepare the publick for the reception of some tragedy of his own. His Lordship's patronage, he says, will not let him *repent his passion for the stage*;—and the particular praise bestowed on *Othello* and *Oroonoko* seems to shew that some such character as *Zanga* was even then
in

in contemplation. The affectionate mention of the death of his friend Harrison of New College, at the close of this poem, is an instance of Young's art, which displayed itself so fully thirty years afterwards in the *Night Thoughts*, of making the publick a party in his private sorrow.

Should justice call upon you to censure this poem, it ought at least to be remembered that he did not insert it into his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have seen, he advises its omission. The bookfellers, in the present Body of English Poetry, should have distinguished what was deliberately rejected by the respective authors. This I shall be careful to do with regard to
 Young.

Young. “ I think, says he, the following
“ pieces in *four* volumes to be the most
“ excuseable of all that I have written ;
“ and I wish *less apology* was needful for
“ these. As there is no recalling what
“ is got abroad, the pieces here re-
“ published I have revised and corrected,
“ and rendered them as *pardonable* as it
“ was in my power to do.”—Shall the
gates of repentance be shut only against
literary sinners ?

When Addison published *Cato* in
1713, Young had the honour of prefix-
ing to it a recommendatory copy of
verses. This is one of the pieces which
the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not
republish.

On the appearance of his *Poem on the Last Day*, Addison did not return Young's compliment; but *The Englishman* of October 29, 1713, which was probably written by Addison, speaks handsomely of this poem. The *Last Day* was published soon after the peace. The vice-chancellor's *imprimatur* (for it was first printed at Oxford) is dated May the 19th, 1713. From the Exordium Young appears to have spent some time on the composition of it. While other bards *with Britain's hero set their souls on fire*, he draws, he says, a deeper scene. Marlborough *had been* considered by Britain as her *hero*; but, when the *Last Day* was published, female cabal had blasted for a time the laurels of Blenheim. This

poem was probably finished by Young as early as 1710; for part of it is printed in the *Tatler*. It was inscribed to the Queen, in a dedication, which, for some reason, he did not admit into his works. It tells her, that his only title to the great honour he now does himself is the obligation he formerly received from her royal indulgence. Of this obligation nothing is now known. Young is said to have been engaged at a settled stipend as a writer for the Court. Yet who shall say this with certainty? In all modern periods of this country, the writers on one side have been regularly called Hirelings, and on the other Patriots.

Of

Of the dedication, however, the complexion is clearly political. It speaks in the highest terms of the late peace;—it gives her Majesty praise indeed for her victories, but says that the author is more pleased to see her rise from this lower world, soaring above the clouds, passing the first and second heavens, and leaving the fixed stars behind her;—nor will he lose her there, but keep her still in view through the boundless spaces on the other side of Creation, in her journey towards eternal bliss, till he behold the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her still onward from the stretch of his imagination, which tires in her pursuit, and falls back again to earth.

The Queen was soon called away from this lower world, to a place where human praise or human flattery are of little consequence. If Young thought the dedication contained only the praise of truth, he should not have omitted it in his works. Was he conscious of the exaggeration of party? Then he should not have written it. The poem itself is not without a glance to politicks, notwithstanding the subject. The cry that the church was in danger, had not yet subsided. The *Last Day*, written by a layman, was much approved by the ministry and their friends.

Before the Queen's death, *The Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love*, was sent into the world. This poem is founded

on the execution of lady Jane Gray and her husband lord Guilford in 1554—a story chosen for the subject of a tragedy by Edmund Smith, and wrought into a tragedy by Rowe. The dedication of it to the countess of Salisbury does not appear in his own edition. He hopes it may be some excuse for his presumption that the story could not have been read without thoughts of the Countess of Salisbury, though it had been dedicated to another. “To behold,” he proceeds, “a person *only* virtuous, stirs in us a prudent regret; to behold a person *only* amiable to the sight, warms us with a religious indignation; but to turn our eyes on a Countess of Salisbury, gives us pleasure and improve-

Y O U N G.

it works a sort of miracle
the bias of our nature
from sin, and makes our
and affections converts
and promoters of our
every was as ready for th
ours, and was at least

the 27th, 1714, Pop
friend Jervas, that he is
Oxford—that every
concerned for the Queen
no panegyricks were
King. Nothing like
taken place between
for, soon after the ev
ventions, Young publish
late Queen's death, an

Y O

jefty's accession to
scribed to Addison
the Lords Justices.
obligation which he
ceived from Anne, th
aim at something of t
George. Of the poe
seems to have been, to
the same extravagant
for a King as for a Queen
at the very outset of a
that the Gods bless his
such a King, is some
praise. Neither was
of his *excusable* piece
it in his works.

Young's father had
ted with Lady Anne

“ ment ; it works a sort of miracle, oc-
 “ casions the bias of our nature to fall
 “ off from sin, and makes our very
 “ senses and affections converts to our
 “ religion, and promoters of our duty.”
 His flattery was as ready for the other
 sex as for ours, and was at least as well
 adapted.

August the 27th, 1714, Pope writes
 to his friend Jervas, that he is just ar-
 rived from Oxford—that every one was
 much concerned for the Queen’s death,
 but that no panegyrics were ready yet
 for the King. Nothing like friendship
 had yet taken place between Pope and
 Young ; for, soon after the event which
 Pope mentions, Young published a poem
 on the late Queen’s death, and his Ma-
 jefty’s

jefty's accession to the throne. It is inscribed to Addison, then secretary to the Lords Justices. Whatever was the obligation which he had formerly received from Anne, the poet appears to aim at something of the same sort from George. Of the poem the intention seems to have been, to shew that he had the same extravagant strain of praise for a King as for a Queen. To discover, at the very outset of a foreigner's reign, that the Gods bless his new subjects in such a King, is something more than praise. Neither was this deemed one of his *excuseable pieces*. We do not find it in his works.

Young's father had been well acquainted with Lady Anne Wharton, the first wife

of Thomas Wharton, Esq; afterwards Marquis of Wharton—a Lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller. To the Dean of Sarum's vifitation fermon, already mentioned, were added some copies of verses “ by that “ excellent poetefs Mrs. Anne Wharton,” upon its being tranflated into English, at the instance of Waller, by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the fon of his old friend. In him, during the fhort time he lived, Young found a patron, and in his diffolute defcendant a friend and a companion. The Marquis died in April 1715. The beginning of the next year the young Marquis fet out upon his travels, from which he returned in about a twelve-

twelvemonth. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland; where, says the *Biographia*, “on the score of his extraordinary qualities, he had the honour done him of being admitted, though under age, to take his seat in the House of Lords.”

With this unhappy character we might have presumed, almost without evidence, that Young went to Ireland. From his Letter to Richardson on *Original Composition*, it is clear he was, at some period of his life, in that country. “I remember,” says he, in that Letter, speaking of Swift, “as I and others were taking with him an evening walk, about a mile out of *Dublin*, he stopt short; we passed on; but, perceiving
“ he

“ he did not follow us, I went back,
 “ and found him fixed as a statue, and
 “ earnestly gazing upward at a noble
 “ elm, which in its uppermost branches
 “ was much withered and decayed.
 “ Pointing at it, he said, “ I shall be
 “ like that tree, I shall die at top.”—

A note from Wharton, among Swift's Letters, clearly shews that this visit to Ireland was paid when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron.

From *The Englishman* it appears that a tragedy by Young was in the theatre so early as 1713; yet *Busiris* was not brought upon Drury-Lane Stage till 1719. It was inscribed to the Duke of Newcastle, “ because the late instances he

“ had

“ had received of his Grace’s undeserved
 “ and uncommon favour, in an affair of
 “ some consequence, foreign to the thea-
 “ tre, had taken from him the privilege
 “ of chusing a patron.” The Dedic-
 tion he afterwards suppressed.—This was
 followed in the year 1721 by *The Re-
 venge*. Left at liberty now to chuse his
 patron, he dedicated this famous trage-
 dy to the Duke of Wharton. “ Your
 “ Grace,” says the Dedication, “ has
 “ been pleased to make yourself acces-
 “ sary to the following scenes, not only
 “ by suggesting the most beautiful inci-
 “ dent in them, but by making all pos-
 “ sible provision for the success of the
 “ whole.”

That

That his Grace should have suggested the incident to which he alludes, whatever that incident be, is not unlikely. The last mental exertion of the unhappy superannuated young man, in his quarters at Lerida in Spain, was some scenes of a tragedy on the story of Mary Queen of Scots.

Dryden dedicated *Marriage à la Mode* to Wharton's infamous relation Rochester; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but as the promoter of his fortune. Young concludes his address to Wharton thus—"My present fortune is his bounty, and my future his care; which I will venture to say will be always remembered to his honour, since he, I know, intended
 " his

“ his generosity as an encouragement to
 “ merit, though, through his very par-
 “ donable partiality to one who bears
 “ him so sincere a duty and respect, I
 “ happen to receive the benefit of it.”

That he ever had such a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this Dedication from his works. He should have remembered, that he at the same time concealed his obligation to Wharton for *the most beautiful incident* in what is surely not his least beautiful composition. The passage just quoted is, in a poem afterwards addressed to Walpole, literally copied :

Be this thy partial smile from censure free;
 ’Twas meant for merit, though it fell on

me.

While

While Young, who, in his *Love of Fame*, complains grievously how often *dedications wash an Æthiopian white*, was painting an amiable Duke of Wharton in perishable prose, Pope was perhaps beginning to describe the *scorn and wonder of his days* in lasting verse.

To the patronage of such a character, had Young studied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have trusted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for something material; and his Grace's regard for Young, added to his *Lust of Praise*, procured to All-souls College a donation, which is not forgotten by the Dedication of *The Revenge*.

It will surprize you to see me cite second Atkins, Case 136, Stiles *versus* the
Attor-

Attorney General, 14 March 1740, as authority for the Life of a Poet. But biographers do not always find such certain guides as the oaths of those they record. Chancellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities granted by the Duke of Wharton to Young were for legal considerations. The first was dated the 24th of March, 1719, and accounted for his Grace's bounty in a stile princely and commendable, if not legal—
 “ considering that the publick good is
 “ advanced by the encouragement of
 “ learning and the polite arts, and being
 “ pleased therein with the attempts of
 “ Dr. Young, in consideration thereof,
 “ and of the love he bare him, &c.”
 The second was dated the 10th of July, 1722. Young, on his examination, swore
 that

that he quitted the Exeter family, and refused an annuity of 100 *l.* which had been offered him for his life, if he would continue tutor to Lord Burleigh, upon the pressing solicitations of the Duke of Wharton, and his Grace's assurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It also appeared that the Duke had given him a bond for 600 *l.* dated the 15th of March, 1721, in consideration of his taking several journies, and being at great expences, in order to be chosen member of the House of Commons at the Duke's desire, and in consideration of his not taking two livings of 200 *l.* and 400 *l.* in the gift of All-soul's College, on his Grace's promises of serving and advancing him in the world.

This

This attempt to get into Parliament was at Cirencester, where Young stood a contested election. His Grace discovered in him talents for oratory as well as for poetry. Nor was this judgement wrong. Young, after he took orders, became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the Biographia, deserted. As he was preaching in his turn at St. James's, he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This so affected the feelings of the preacher, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears.—But to pursue his poetical life.

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addison, in a Letter addressed to their

common friend Tickell. For the secret history of the following lines, if they contain any, it is now vain to seek :

*In joy once join'd, in sorrow, now, for
years—*

Partner in grief, and brother of my
tears,

Tickell, accept this verse, thy mourn-
ful due.

In 1719 appeared a *Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job*. Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the seals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the author's opinion may be gathered from his Letter to Curll: " You seem, in the Col-
" lection you propose, to have omitted
" what I think may claim the first place
" in it; I mean a *Translation from Part*

“*of Job*, printed by Mr. Tonson.” The Dedication, which was only suffered to appear in Tonson’s edition, while it speaks of his present retirement, seems to make an unusual struggle to escape from retirement. It is addressed, in no common strain of flattery, to a Lord Chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of his Satires it would not have been difficult to fix the dates without the assistance of first editions, which, as you had occasion to observe in the Life of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We must then have referred to the Poems, to find when they were written. For these internal notes of time we should not have referred in vain. The first Satire laments that

“Guilt’s chief foe in Addison is fled;”
and the second, addressing himself,
asks,

Is thy ambition sweating for a rhyme,
Thou unambitious fool, at this late
time?

A fool at *forty* is a fool indeed.

The Satires were originally published separately in folio, and these passages fix the appearance of the first to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young seldom suffered his pen to dry, after he had once dipped it in poetry, we may conclude that he began his Satires soon after he had written the *Paraphrase on Job*. The last was certainly finished in the beginning of the year 1726; for in December 1725 the
King,

King, in his passage from Helvoetsluys, escaped with great difficulty from a storm by landing at Rye; and the conclusion of the Satire turns the escape into a miracle, in such an encomiastick strain of compliment as poetry too often seeks to pay to royalty. From the sixth of these poems we learn,

Midst empire's charms, how Carolina's
heart

Glow'd with the love of virtue and of
art :

since the grateful poet tells us in the next couplet,

Her favour is diffus'd to that degree,
Excess of goodness! it has dawn'd on
me.

Of the nature of this favour we must

now rest contented in ignorance. The fifth Satire, *on Women*, was not published till 1727; and the sixth not till 1728.

To these Poems, when he gathered them into one publication under the title of *The Universal Passion*, he prefixed a Preface, in which he observes, that “no man can converse much in the world but, at what he meets with, he must either be insensible or grieve, or be angry or smile. Now to smile at it, and turn it into ridicule,” adds he, “I think most eligible, as it hurts ourselves least, and gives vice and folly the greatest offence.—Laughing at the misconduct of the world, will, in a great measure, ease us of any more disagreeable passion about it. One passion is more effectually driven out
“ by

“ by another than by reason, whatever
 “ some teach.” So wrote, and so of
 course thought the lively and witty Sa-
 tirist at the grave age of almost fifty,
 who, many years earlier in life, wrote
 the *Last Day*. After all, Swift pro-
 nounced of these Satires, that they should
 either have been more angry, or more
 merry. Is it not somewhat singular
 that Young preserved, without any pal-
 liation, this Preface, so bluntly deci-
 sive in favour of laughing at the
 world, in the same collection of his
 works which contains the mournful, an-
 gry, gloomy *Night Thoughts*?

At the conclusion of the Preface he
 applies Plato's beautiful fable of the
Birth of Love to modern poetry, with

the addition, “ that Poetry, like Love,
“ is a little subject to Blindness, which
“ makes her mistake her way to prefer-
“ ments and honours; and that she re-
“ tains a dutiful admiration of her fa-
“ ther’s family; but divides her favours,
“ and generally lives with her mother’s
“ relations.” Poetry, it is true, did not
lead Young to preferments or to ho-
nours; but was there not something like
blindness sometimes in the flattery which
he forced her, and her sister Prose, to
utter? He always, indeed, made her
entertain a most dutiful admiration of
riches; but surely Young, though near-
ly related to Poetry, had no connexion
with her whom Plato makes the mother
of Love. The frequent bounties his

gratitude records, and the fortune he left behind him, clearly show that he could not complain of being related to Poverty. By *The Universal Passion* he acquired no vulgar fortune, more than three thousand pounds. A sum not much less had already been swallowed up in the South Sea. For this loss he took the vengeance of an author. His Muse makes poetical use more than once of a *South-sea Dream*.

It is related by Mr. Spence, in his Manuscript Anecdotes, on the authority of Mr. Rawlinson, that Young, upon the publication of his *Universal Passion*, received from the Duke of Grafton two thousand pounds; and that, when

creased, in this. Whatever it was, the poet thought he deserved it;—for he was not ashamed to acknowledge what, without his acknowledgement, would now perhaps never have been known :

My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire.

The streams of royal bounty, turn'd by thee,

Refresh the dry domains of poesy.

If the purity of modern patriotism term Young a pensioner, it must at least be confessed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was ushered in by Young with *Ocean, an Ode*. The hint of it was taken from the royal speech, which recommended the increase
and.

and encouragement of the seamen; that they might be *invited, rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the service of their country*;—a plan which humanity must lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing, to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an *Ode to the King, Pater Patriæ*, and an *Essay on Lyrick Poetry*. It is but justice to confess, that though the booksellers have now, for some reason, revived them both, he preserved neither of them; and that the ode itself, which in the first edition and in the present consists of seventy-three stanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted passages is *a Wish*, that concluded

cluded the poem, which few would have suspected Young of forming, and of which few, after having formed it, would confess their shame by suppression.

It is whimsical that he, who was soon to bid adieu to rhyme, should fix upon a measure in which rhyme abounds even to satiety. Of this he said, in his *Essay on Lyrick Poetry*, prefixed to the Poem, “For the more *harmony* likewise I chose
 “the frequent return of rhyme, which
 “laid me under great difficulties. But
 “difficulties, overcome, give grace and
 “pleasure. Nor can I account for the
 “*pleasure of rhyme in general* (of which
 “the moderns are too fond) but from
 “this truth.” But the moderns surely
 deserve

deserve not much censure for their fondness of what, by his own confession, affords pleasure, and abounds in harmony.

About this time he entered into Orders; and in April 1728, soon after he put on the gown, he was appointed chaplain to George the Second.

The tragedy of *The Brothers*, which was already in rehearsal, he immediately withdrew from the stage. The managers resigned it with some reluctance to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The Epilogue to *The Brothers*, the only appendage to any of his three plays which he added himself, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an *historical* Epilogue. Finding that *Guilt's*
dread-

dreadful close his narrow scene denied, he, in a manner, continues the tragedy in the Epilogue, and relates how Rome revenged the shade of Demetrius, and punished Perseus for this night's deed.

Of this change of profession something is told by the biographer of Pope, which places the easiness and simplicity of Young in a singular light. When he determined on Orders, he did not address himself to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the best instructions in Theology, but to Pope; who, in a youthful frolick, advised the diligent perusal of *Thomas Aquinas*. With this treasure Young retired from interruption to an obscure place in the suburbs. His poetical guide to godli-
ness

ness hearing nothing of him during half a year, and apprehending he might have carried the jest too far, sought after him, and found him just in time to prevent what Ruffhead calls *an irretrievable derangement*.

That attachment to his favourite study which made him think a poet the surest guide in his new profession, left him little doubt whether poetry was the surest path to its honours and preferments. Not long indeed after he took Orders, he published in prose, *A true Estimate of Human Life*, dedicated, notwithstanding the Latin quotations with which it abounds, to the Queen; and a sermon preached before the House of Commons, 1729, on the martyrdom of

D

King

King Charles, entitled *An Apology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Government*. But his old friends the Muses were not forgotten. In 1730 he sent into the world *Imperium Pelagi; a Naval Lyric, written in Imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occasioned by His Majesty's Return from Hanover, September 1729, and the succeeding Peace*. It is inscribed to the Duke of Chandos. In the Preface we are told, that the Ode is the most spirited kind of Poetry, and that the Pindaric is the most spirited kind of Ode. "This I speak," he adds, "at my own very great peril. But truth has an eternal title to our confession, though we are sure to suffer by it." Let it not be forgotten that this was one of his pieces



pieces which the author of the *Night Thoughts* deliberately refused to own.

Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he published two Epistles to Pope, *concerning the Authors of the Age*, 1730. Of these poems one occasion seems to have been an apprehension lest, from the liveliness of his satires, he should not be deemed sufficiently serious for promotion in the Church.

In July 1730 he was presented by his College to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire. In April 1732 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. His connexion with this Lady arose from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Ann

Wharton, who was coheirefs of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley in Oxfordshire.

We may naturally conclude that he now gave himself up in some measure to the comforts of his new connexion, and to the expectations of that preferment which he thought due to his poetical talents, or, at least, to the manner in which they had fo frequently been exerted.

The next production of his Muse was *The Sea-piece*, in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an *Extempore Epigram* on Voltaire; who, when he was in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealous English poet, Milton's allegory of *Sin and Death*—

You

You are so witty, profligate and thin,
At once we think thee Milton, Death,
and Sin.

From a passage in the poetical Dedication of his *Sea-piece* to Voltaire, it seems that his extemporaneous reproof (if it must be extemporaneous), for what few will now affirm Voltaire to have deserved any reproof, was something longer than a distich, and something more gentle than this distich.

No stranger, Sir, though born in foreign
climes.

On *Dorset* downs, when Milton's page,
With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,
Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with
gentle rhymes?

By *Dorset downs* he probably meant Mr. Dodington's feat. In Pitt's Poems is *An Epistle to Dr. Edward Young, at Eastbury in Dorsetshire, on the Review at Sarum, 1722.*

While with your Dodington retir'd you
fit,

Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy
and wit, &c.

In 1734 he published *The foreign Address, occasioned by the British Fleet and the Posture of Affairs. Written in the Character of a Sailor.* This Ode consisted of forty-five stanzas. It is not to be found in the author's four volumes; and the editors of the present collection of English poetry have, for once, followed the decision of the author. Of all the pieces
which

which Young condemned as inexcusable, this alone has escaped that posthumous infertion, which, in truth, it little merited. He now appears to have given up all hopes of overtaking Pindar, and perhaps to have thought of turning his ambition to some original species of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal farewell to Ode :

My shell which Clio gave, which *Kings*
applaud,

Which Europe's bleeding genius call'd
abroad,

Adieu !

In a species of poetry altogether his own he next tried his skill, and succeeded.

Of his wife he was deprived in 1740. She was soon followed by an amiable

daughter, the child of her former husband, who was just married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife*. How suddenly their deaths happened, and how nearly together, none who has read the *Night Thoughts* (and who has not read them?) needs to be informed.

Infatiate Archer! could not one suffice?

Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my
peace was slain;

And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had
fill'd her horn.

To the sorrow Young felt at his losses we are indebted for these poems. There is a pleasure sure in sadness which

* The Irish Peerage, if authentic, in the account of Lord Palmerston's family, somewhat confuses this business; but I take what I have related to be the fact.

mourners only know. Of these poems the three or four first have been perused perhaps more eagerly, and more frequently, than the latter. When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his grief was naturally either diminished or exhausted. We find the same religion, the same piety; but we hear less of Philander and of Narcissa.

Mrs. Temple died *in her bridal hour* at Nice. He, with the rest of her family, accompanied her to the continent.

He flew, he snatch'd her from the rigid
North,

And bore her nearer to the fun.

The poet seems to dwell with more melancholy on the deaths of Philander and Narcissa, than of his wife. He who runs and reads may remember, that in

the

the *Night Thoughts* Philander and Narcissa are often mentioned, and often lamented. To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory must have been charged with distinct passages. This Lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living.

That domestick grief is, in the first instance, to be thanked for these ornaments to our language it is impossible to deny. Nor would it be common hardiness to contend that worldly discontent had no hand in these joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet am I by no means sure that, at any rate, we should not have had something of the same colour from Young's pencil, notwithstanding the liveliness of his satires. In so long a life, causes for discontent

content and occasions for grief must have occurred. It is not clear to me that his Muse was not sitting upon the watch for the first which happened. *Night Thoughts* were not uncommon to her, even when first she visited the poet, and at a time when he himself was remarkable neither for gravity nor gloominess. In his *Last Day*, almost his earliest poem, he calls her the *melancholy Maid*,

—whom dismal scenes delight,
Frequent at tombs and in the realms
of Night.

And in the prayer which concludes the second book of the same poem—

—Oh! permit the gloom of solemn
night
To sacred thought may forcibly invite.
Oh!

Oh! how divine to tread the milky way,
To the bright palace of Eternal Day!

Still, is it altogether fair to dress up the poet for the man, and to bring the gloominess of the *Night Thoughts* to prove the gloominess of Young, and to shew that his genius, like the genius of Swift, was in some measure the fullen inspiration of discontent?

Whether you think with me, I know not; but the famous *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* has always stricken me as favouring more of female weakness than of manly reason. Censure is not heard beneath the tomb any more than praise. *De mortuis nil nisi verum—De vivis nil nisi bonum*—would approach much nearer to good sense. After all, the few hand-
I
fulls

fulls of remaining dust which once composed the body of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, feel not much concern whether Young passes now for a man of sorrow, or for a *fellow of infinite jest*. To this favour must come the whole family of Yorick.—His immortal part, wherever that now dwells, is still less solicitous on this head. But to a son of worth and sensibility it is of some little consequence whether contemporaries believe, and posterity be taught to believe, that his debauched and reprobate life cast a Stygian gloom over the evening of his father's days, saved him the trouble of feigning a character completely detestable, and succeeded at last in bringing his *grey hairs with sorrow to the grave*.

The

The humanity of the world, little satisfied with inventing perhaps a melancholy disposition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in support of their invention, and chooses that Lorenzo should be Young's own son. The Biographia pretty roundly asserts this to be the fact; of the absolute impossibility of which the Biographia itself, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a strange turn of mind, who will hereafter peruse the *Night Thoughts* with less satisfaction; who will wish they had still been deceived; who will quarrel with me for discovering that no such character as Lorenzo ever yet disgraced human nature, or broke a father's heart. Yet would these admirers of the sublime
and

and terrible be offended, should you set them down for cruel and for savage.

Of this report, inhuman to the surviving son, if it be untrue, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proofs? Perhaps it is clear from the performance itself. From the first line to the last of the *Night Thoughts* no one expression can be discovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the second *Night* I find an expression which betrays something else; that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is possible, of his former companions; one of the Duke of Wharton's set. The Poet styles him *gay Friend*—an appellation not very natural from a pious incensed father to such

such a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his son.

But let us see how he has sketched this dreadful portrait, from the sight of some of whose features the artist himself must have turned away with horror!—A subject more shocking, if his only child really sat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid story told of which, Young composed a short Poem of fourteen lines in the early part of life, which he did not think deserved to be republished.

In the first *Night*, the address to the Poet's supposed son is,

Lorenzo, Fortune makes her court to
thee.

In the fifth *Night*—

And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime
Of life? To hang his airy nest on high?

Is this a picture of the son of the rector
of Wellwyn?

Eighth Night—

In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd
far)—

which even now does not apply to his
son.

In *Night* five—

So wept Lorenzo fair Clariffa's fate,
Who gave that angel-boy on whom he
dotes,
And died to give him, orphan'd in his
birth!

At the beginning of the fifth *Night* we find—

Lorenzo! to recriminate is just.

I grant the man is vain who writes for
praise.

But, to cut short all enquiry, if any one of these passages, if any passage in the poems, be applicable, my friend shall pass for Lorenzo. The son of the author of the *Night Thoughts* was not old enough, when the *Night Thoughts* were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The *Night Thoughts* were begun immediately after the mournful events of 1740. The first *Nights* appear in the Stationers' books as the property of Robert Doddsley, in 1742. The Preface to *Night Seven* is dated July the
7th,

7th, 1744. The marriage, in consequence of which the supposed Lorenzo was born, happened in April 1732. Young's child was not born till June 1733. In 1740 this Lorenzo, this finished infidel, this *father*, to whose education Vice had for some years put the last hand, was only *seven* years old. An anecdote of this cruel sort, so open to contradiction, so impossible to be true, who could propagate? Thus easily are blasted the reputations of the living and of the dead.

Who then was Lorenzo? exclaim the readers I have mentioned. If he was not his son, was he not his nephew, his cousin?

These are questions which I do not pretend to answer. For the sake of human nature, I could wish Lorenzo to have been only the creation of the Poet's fancy. That this was the case, many expressions in the *Night Thoughts* would seem to prove, did not a passage in *Night Eight* appear to shew that he had somebody in his eye for the ground-work at least of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may be feigned characters; but a writer does not feign a name of which he only gives the initial letter:

Tell not Calista. She will laugh thee
dead,

Or send thee to her hermitage with L—.

The Biographia, not satisfied with pointing out the son of Young, in that
son's

son's life-time, as his father's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the history of the son, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Oxford for misbehaviour, and of his long labouring under the displeasure of his father. How such anecdotes, were they true, tend to illustrate the Life of Young, it is not easy to discover. If the son of the author of the *Night Thoughts* was indeed forbidden his college for a time at one of our universities, the author of *Paradise Lost* was disgracefully ejected from the other, with the additional indignity of publick corporal correction. From juvenile follies who is free? Were Nature to indulge the son of Young with a second youth, and to leave him

at the same time the experience of that which is past, he would probably pass it differently (who would not?); he would certainly be the occasion of less uneasiness to his father;—but, from the same experience, he would as certainly be treated in a different manner by his father. Young was a poet; poets (with reverence be it spoken) do not make the best parents. Fancy and imagination seldom deign to stoop from their heights; always stoop unwillingly to the low level of common duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they pursue their rapid flight beyond the ken of mortals, and descend not to earth but when obliged by necessity. The prose of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poetry.

Yet

Yet the son of Young would almost sooner, I know, pass for a Lorenzo, than see himself vindicated, at the expence of his father's memory, from follies which, if it was blameable in a boy to have committed them, it is surely praiseworthy in a man to lament, and certainly not only unnecessary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of Edward Young an anecdote which wanders among readers is not true, that he was Fielding's *Parson Adams*. The original of that famous painting was William Young. He too was a clergyman. He supported an uncomfortable existence by translating for the booksellers from Greek; and, if he was not his own friend, was at least no man's enemy.

enemy. Yet the facility with which this report has gained belief in the world, argues (were it not sufficiently known) that the author of the *Night Thoughts* bore some resemblance to *Adams*.

Of the *Night Thoughts*, notwithstanding their author's professed retirement, all are inscribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned himself from Earls and Dukes, from Speakers of the House of Commons, Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and Chancellors of the Exchequer. In *Night Eight* the politician plainly betrays himself—

Think no post needful that demands a
knave.

When

When late our civil helm was shifting
 hands,
 So P— thought : think better if you
 can.

Yet it must be confessed, that at the
 conclusion of *Night* Nine, weary perhaps
 of courting earthly patrons, he tells his
 soul,

Henceforth

Thy *patron* he, whose diadem has dropt
 Yon gems of heaven; Eternity thy prize;
 And leave the racers of the world their
 own.

The Fourth *Night* was addressed by
 “ a much-indebted Muse ” to the Ho-
 nourable Mr. Yorke, now Lord Hard-
 wicke ; who meant to have laid the Muse

under still greater obligations, by the living of Shenfield in Effex, if it had become vacant.

The First *Night* concludes with this passage—

Dark, though not blind, like thee,
Meonides ;

Or Milton, thee. Ah ! could I reach
your strain ;

Or his who made Meonides our own !
Man too he fung. Immortal man I fing.
Oh had he prest his theme, pursued the
track

Which opens out of darknes into day !
Oh had he mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd, where I fink, and fung immor-
tal man—

How had it blest mankind, and rescued
me !

To the author of these lines Dr. War-
ton chose, in 1756, to dedicate his *Essay*
on the Writings and Genius of Pope, which
attempted (whether justly or not) to
pluck from Pope his *Wing of Fire*, and
to reduce him to a rank at least one de-
gree lower than the class of English poets.
Though the first edition of this *Essay* was,
for particular reasons, suppressed; ano-
ther was printed. The Dedication still re-
mained. To suppose therefore that Young
approved of Warton's opinion of Pope
is not unnatural. Yet the author of the
passage just quoted would scarcely coun-
tenance, by patronage, such an attack
upon the fame of him whom he invokes
as his Muse. Part of Pope's Third Book
of the *Odysssey*, deposited in the Museum,
is

is written upon the back of a Letter signed *E. Young*, which is clearly the hand-writing of our Young. The Letter, dated only May the 2d, seems obscure; but there can be little doubt that the friendship he requests was a literary one *, and that he had the highest literary opinion of Pope.

“ Dear Sir,

May the 2d.

“ Having been often from home, I
“ know not if you have done me the
“ favour of calling on me. But, be
“ that as it will, I much want that in-
“ stance of your friendship I mentioned
“ in my last; a friendship I am very sen-
“ sible I can receive from no one but
“ yourself. I should not urge this thing

* I am told that it was a Prologue for one of his Tragedies.

“ so much but for very particular rea-
 “ sons; nor can you be at a loss to con-
 “ ceive how a *trifle of this nature* may
 “ be of serious moment to me; and
 “ while I am in hopes of the great ad-
 “ vantage of your advice about it, I
 “ shall not be so absurd as to make any
 “ further step without it. I know you
 “ are much engaged, and only hope to
 “ hear of you at your entire leisure.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most faithful

“ and obedient Servant,

“ E. YOUNG.”

Nay, even after Pope's death, he says,
 in *Night Seven* :

Pope, who could'st make immortals,
 art thou dead?

Either

Either Warton, then, dedicated his book to a patron who disapproved its doctrine; or Young, in his old age, bartered for a dedication an opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he could best form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three short passages, which stand almost together in *Night Four*, should not be excluded. They afford a picture, by his own hand; from the study of which my readers may choose to form their own opinion of the features of his mind, and the complexion of his life.

Ah me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old so gracious (and let that suffice),
My very master knows me not.

I've



I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.



When in his courtier's ears I pour my plaint,
 They drink it as the Nectar of the Great ;
 And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-
 morrow.



Twice-told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
 Court-favour, yet untaken, I besiege.



If this song lives, Posterity shall know,
 One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
 Who thought ev'n gold might come a day too
 late ;

Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his scheme
 For future vacancies in church or state.

By these extraordinary Poems, writ-
 ten after he was sixty, of which I have
 been

been led to say so much, I hope, by the wish of doing justice to the living and the dead, it was the desire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he published himself, *The Works of the Author of the Night Thoughts*. While it is remembered that from these he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial to the cause of virtue, or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be published, he would only appear perhaps in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicat- or : he would not pass for a worse christian, or for a worse man.—His dedications, after all, he had no right to
sup-

suppress. They all, I believe, speak, not a little to the credit of his gratitude, of favours received; and I know not whether the author, who has once solemnly printed an acknowledgement of a favour, should not always print it.

Is it to the credit or to the discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his *Night Thoughts* the *French* are particularly fond?

Of the *Epitaph on Lord Aubrey Beauclerk*, dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in this *Body of English Poetry*, and that I am sorry to find it there.

Notwithstanding the farewell which he seemed to have taken in the *Night Thoughts* of every thing which bore the least resemblance to ambition, he dipped

F again

again in politics. In 1745 he wrote *Reflections on the publick Situation of the Kingdom, addressed to the Duke of Newcastle*—impatient, as it appears, to behold

A pope-bred Princeling crawl ashore,
And whistle cut-throats, with those swords
that scrap'd

Their barren rocks for wretched suste-
nance,

To cut his passage to the British throne.

This political poem might be called a *Night Thought*. Indeed it was originally printed as the conclusion of the *Night Thoughts*, though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed to the second edition of *Howe's Devout Meditations* is a Letter from Young, dated January 19,

1752,

1752, addressed to Archibald Macaulay, Esq; thanking him for the book, which he says “ he shall never lay far out of
 “ his reach ; for a greater demonstration
 “ of a sound head and a sincere heart he
 “ never saw.”

In 1753, when *The Brothers* had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the stage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by servility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconsiderable sum, as a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. To this sum he hoped the profits of *The Brothers* would amount. In his calculation he was deceived ; but the Society were not losers by the bad success of the play. The author made up the

sum he intended, which was a thousand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a prose publication, entitled, *The Centaur not fabulous, in six Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue.* The Conclusion is dated November 29, 1754. In the third Letter is described the death-bed of the *gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont.* His last words were—“ My principles have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife!” Either Altamont and Lorenzo were the same, or Young was unlucky enough to know two characters who bore no little resemblance to each other in perfection of wickedness.

The Old Man's Relapse, occasioned by an Epistle to Walpole, if it was written by Young, which I much doubt, must have been written very late in life. It has been seen, I am told, in a Miscellany published thirty years before his death.—In 1758 he exhibited *The Old Man's Relapse* in more than words, by again becoming a dedicator, and publishing a sermon addressed to the King.

The Letter in prose on *Original Composition*, addressed to Richardson the author of *Clarissa*, appeared in 1759. He, who employed his pious pen for almost the last time in doing justice to the exemplary death-bed of Addison, might probably, at the close of his own life, afford no unuseful lessons for the deaths of others.

The few lines which stand in this edition as *sent by Lord Melcombe to Dr. Young, not long before his Lordship's Death*, were indeed so sent, but were only an introduction to what was there meant by *the Muse's latest spark*. The poem is necessary, whatever may be its merit, since the Preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his *Tusculum La Trappe*.

“ Love thy country, wish it well,
 Not with too intense a care,
 'Tis enough, that, when it fell,
 Thou its ruin didst not share.

Envy's censure, Flattery's praise,
 With unmov'd indifference view;
 Learn to tread Life's dangerous maze,
 With unerring Virtue's clue.

Void

Void of strong desire and fear,
Life's wide ocean trust no more ;
Strive thy little bark to steer
With the tide, but near the shore.

Thus prepar'd, thy shorten'd sail
Shall, whene'er the winds increase,
Seizing each propitious gale,
Waft thee to the Port of Peace.

Keep thy conscience from offence,
And tempestuous passions free,
So, when thou art call'd from hence,
Easy shall thy passage be ;

Easy shall thy passage be,
Chearful thy allotted stay,
Short the account 'twixt God and thee ;
Hope shall meet thee on the way ;

Truth shall lead thee to the gate,
Mercy's self shall let thee in,
Where its never-changing state
Full perfection shall begin."

The Poem was accompanied by a Letter.

" *La Trappe*, the 27th Oct. 1761.

" Dear Sir,

" You seemed to like the ode I sent
" you for your amusement; I now send
" it you as a present. If you please to
" accept of it, and are willing that our
" friendship should be known, when we
" are gone, you will be pleased to leave
" this among those of your own papers,
" that may possibly see the light, by a
" posthumous publication. God send
" us health while we stay, and an easy
" journey. My dear Dr. Young,

" Yours, most cordially,

" MELCOMEE."

In 1762, a short time before his death, Young published *Resignation*. Notwithstanding the manner in which it was forced from him by the world, criticism has treated it with no common severity. If it shall be thought not to deserve the highest praise, on the other side of fourscore by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praise been merited? To *Resignation* was prefixed an Apology for its appearance: to which more credit is due than to the generality of such apologies, from Young's unusual anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. In his will, dated February 1760, he desires of his executors, *in a particular manner*, that all his manuscript books and writings

writings whatever might be burned, except his book of accounts.

In September 1764 he added a kind of codicil, wherein he made it his dying intreaty to his housekeeper, to whom he left 1000 *l.* “ that all his
“ manuscripts might be destroyed as
“ soon as he was dead, which would
“ greatly oblige her deceased *friend.*”

It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly friendships, to know that Young, either by surviving those he loved, or by outliving their affections, could only recollect the names of two friends, this poor woman and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it may serve to repress that testamentary pride, which too often seeks for founding names and
titles,

titles, to be informed that the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not blush to leave a legacy to his “friend Henry Stevens, “a hatter at the Temple-gate.” Of these two remaining friends, one went before Young. But, at eighty-four, “where,” as he says in *The Centaur*, “is that world “into which we were born?”

The same humility which marked a housekeeper and a hatter for the friends of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, had before bestowed the same title on his footman, in an epitaph in his *Church-yard* upon James Barker, dated 1749, which I am glad to find in this collection of his works.

Young and his housekeeper were ridiculed, with more ill-nature than wit, in
I a kind

a kind of novel published by Kidgell in 1755, called *The Card*, under the names of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Fufby. Kidgell had been Young's curate.

In April 1765, at an age to which few attain, a period was put to the life of Young. Much is told in the *Biographia*, which I know not to have been true, of the manner of his burial—of the master and children of a charity-school, which he founded in his parish, who neglected to attend their benefactor's corpse; and of a bell which was not caused to toll as often as bells usually toll. Had that humanity, which is here lavished upon things of little consequence either to the living or to the dead, been shewn in its proper place to
the

the living, I should have had less to say about Lorenzo. They who lament that these misfortunes happened to Young, forget the praise he bestows upon Socrates, in the Preface to *Night Seven*, for resenting his friend's request about his funeral.

After his death, Doddsley published a novel called *Eliza*, of which I have been told that Young was the author.

The curious reader of Young's Life will naturally inquire to what it was owing, that, though he lived almost forty years after he took Orders, which included one whole reign uncommonly long, and part of another, he was never thought worthy of the least preferment. The author of the *Night Thoughts* ended his days upon a Living which came to him

“above that concern for it, on your
 “own account, which, on that of the
 “Public, is sincerely felt by

“Your loving Brother,

“THOS. CANT.”

At last, at the age of fourscore, he was appointed, in 1761, Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager.

One obstacle must have stood not a little in the way of that preferment after which his whole life panted. Though he took Orders, he never intirely shook off Politics. He was always the Lion of his master Milton, *parwing to get free his binder parts*. By this conduct, if he gained some friends, he made many enemies.

Besides,

Besides, in the latter part of life, Young was fond of holding himself out for a man retired from the world. The same line which contains *oblitus meorum*, contains also *obliviscendus & illis*. The brittle chain of worldly friendship and patronage is broken as effectually, when one goes beyond the length of it, as when the other does. To the vessel which is sailing from the shore it only appears that the shore also recedes; in life it is truly thus. He who retires from the world, will find himself, in reality, deserted as fast, if not faster, by the world. The public is not to be treated as the vain coxcomb treats his mistress—to be threatened with desertion, in order to increase fondness.

Young seems to have been taken at his word. Notwithstanding his frequent complaints of being neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himself enamoured. Alexander assigned no palace for the residence of Diogenes, who boasted his surly satisfaction with his tub.

Of the domestic manners and petty habits of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, I hoped to have given you an account from the best authority;—but who shall dare to say, To-morrow I will be wise or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular thing? Upon enquiring for his housekeeper, I learned that she was buried two days before I reached the town of her abode.

In

In a Letter from Tſcharner, a noble foreigner, to Count Haller, Tſcharner ſays, he has lately ſpent four days with Young at Wellwyn, where the author taſtes all the eaſe and pleaſure mankind can deſire. “ Every thing about him
 “ ſhews the man, each individual being
 “ placed by rule. All is neat without
 “ art. He is very pleaſant in converſa-
 “ tion, and extremely polite.”

This, and more, may poſſibly be true; but Tſcharner’s was a firſt viſit, a viſit of curioſity and admiration, and a viſit which the author expected.

The attention Young beſtowed upon the peruſal of books is not unworthy imitation. When any paſſage pleaſed him, he appears to have folded down

Such, my good friend, is the account I have been able to collect of Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have just transcribed be necessary for you, is the sincere wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your greatly obliged Friend,

HERBERT CROFT, Jun.™

Lincoln's Inn,
Sept. 1780.



OF



OF Young's Poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth, and sometimes rugged; his stile is sometimes concatenated, and sometimes abrupt; sometimes diffusive, and sometimes concise. His plan seems to have started in his mind at the present moment, and his thoughts appear the effects of chance, sometimes ad-

verse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgement.

He was not one of the writers whom experience improves, and who observing their own faults become gradually correct. His Poem on the *Last Day*, his first great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and few are mean, yet the whole is languid; the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception; but the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of the **LAST DAY** makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a
general

general obscurity of sacred horror, that oppresses distinction, and disdains expression.

His story of *Jane Grey* was never popular. It is written with elegance enough, but *Jane* is too heroick to be pitied.

The *Universal Passion* is indeed a very great performance. It is said to be a series of Epigrams; but if it be, it is what the author intended: his endeavour was at the production of striking distichs and pointed sentences; and his distichs have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points the sharpness of resistless truth. His characters are often selected with discernment, and drawn with nicety; his illustrations are often happy,
and

and his reflections often just. His species of satire is between those of Horace and of Juvenal; he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images. He plays, indeed, only on the surface of life; he never penetrates the recesses of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry is exhausted by a single perusal; his conceits please only when they surprize.

To translate he never condescended, unless his *Paraphrase on Job* may be considered as a version; in which he has not, I think, been unsuccessful: he indeed favoured himself, by chusing those parts which most easily admit the ornaments of English poetry.

He

He had least success in his lyric attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only turgid.

In his *Night Thoughts* he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions, a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed
and

and restrained by regard to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese Plantation, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity.

His last poem was the *Resignation*; in which he made, as he was accustomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and succeeded better than in his *Ocean* or his *Merchant*. It was very falsely represented as a proof of decaying faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in his highest vigour.

His Tragedies not making part of this Collection, I had forgotten, till Mr. Steevens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking, that he seemed to have one favourite catastrophe, as his three Plays all concluded with lavish suicide; a method by which, as Dryden remarked, a poet easily rids his scene of persons whom he wants not to keep alive. In *Busiris* there are the greatest ebullitions of imagination; but the pride of Busiris is such as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life to raise either grief, terror, or indignation. The *Revenge* approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore keeps possession of the stage: the first design seems suggested

gested by *Othello*; but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral observations are so introduced, and so expressed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of *The Brothers* I may be allowed to say nothing, since nothing was ever said of it by the Publick.

It must be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or selection. When he lays hold of an illustration, he pursues it beyond expectation, sometimes happily, as in his parallel of *Quicksilver* with *Pleasure*, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a Lady, of whose praise he would have been justly

proud, and which is very ingenious, very subtle, and almost exact; but sometimes he is less lucky, as when, in his *Night Thoughts*, having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, floating in space, might be called the *cluster* of Creation, he thinks on a cluster of grapes, and says, that they all hang on the great Vine, drinking the *nectareous juice of immortal Life*.

His conceits are sometimes yet less valuable; in the *Last Day*, he hopes to illustrate the re-assembly of the atoms that compose the human body at the *Trump of Doom*, by the collection of bees into a swarm at the tinkling of a pan.

The

The Prophet says of Tyre, that *her Merchants are Princes*; Young says of Tyre in his *Merchant*,

Her merchants Princes, and each *deck*
a Throne.

Let burlesque try to go beyond him.

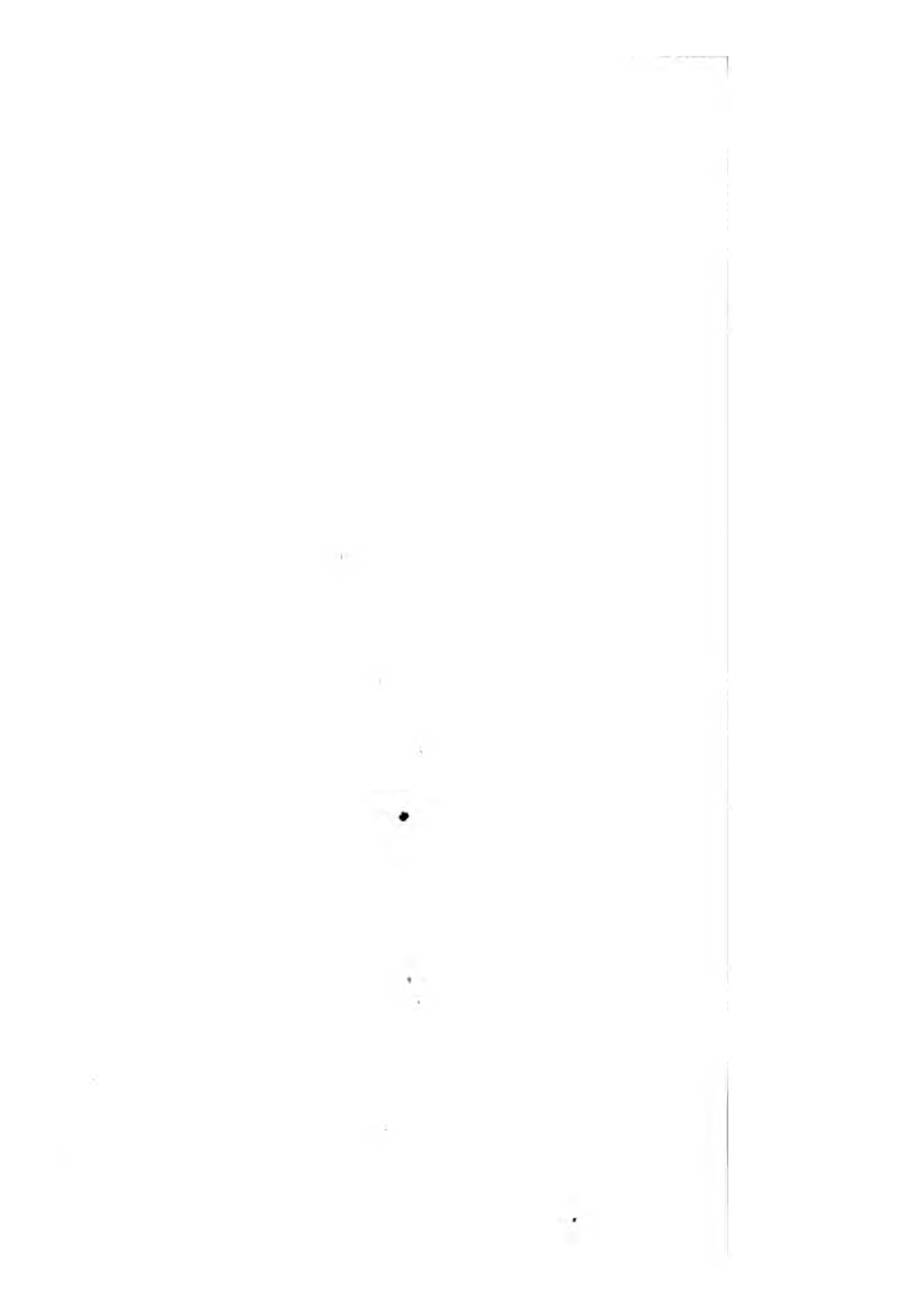
He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, *Climes were paid down.* Antithesis is his favourite. *They for kindness hate*; and *because she's right, she's ever in the wrong.*

His versification is his own; neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any resemblance to those of former writers: he picks up no hemistichs, he
copies

copies no favourite expressions; he seems to have laid up no stores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous suggestions of the present moment. Yet I have reason to believe that, when once he had formed a new design, he then laboured it with very patient industry, and that he composed with great labour, and frequent revisions.

His verses are formed by no certain model; for he is no more like himself in his different productions than he is like others. He seems never to have studied prosody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But, with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet.





D Y E R.

JOHN DYER, of whom I have no other account to give than his own Letters, published with Hughes's correspondence, and the notes added by the editor, have afforded me, was born in 1700, the second son of Robert Dyer of Aberglasney in Caermarthenshire, a solicitor of great capacity and note.

He passed through Westminster-school under the care of Dr. Freind, and was then called home to be instructed in his father's profession. But his father died

A

soon,

soon, and he took no delight in the study of the law, but, having always amused himself with drawing, resolved to turn painter, and became pupil to Mr. Richardson, an artist then of high reputation, but now better known by his books than by his pictures.

Having studied awhile under his master, he became, as he tells his friend, an itinerant painter, and wandered about South Wales and the parts adjacent; but he mingled poetry with painting; and about 1727 printed *Grongar Hill* in Lewis's Miscellany.

Being, probably, unsatisfied with his own proficiency, he, like other painters,

tra-

travelled to Italy; and coming back in 1740, published the *Ruins of Rome*.

If his poem was written soon after his return, he did not make much use of his acquisitions, whatever they might be; for decline of health, and love of study, determined him to the church. He therefore entered into orders; and, it seems, married about the same time a lady of the name of *Enfor*; “whose
“grand-mother,” says he, “was a Shake-
“speare, descended from a brother of
“every body’s Shakespeare;” by her, in 1756, he had a son and three daughters living.

His ecclesiastical provision was a long time but slender. His first patron, Mr. Harper, gave him, in 1741, Calthorp in Leicestershire of eighty pounds a year,

on which he lived ten years, and then exchanged it for Belchford in Lincolnshire of seventy-five. His condition now began to mend. In 1752, Sir John Heathcote gave him Coningsby, of one hundred and twenty pounds a year; and afterwards the Chancellor added Kirkby, of one hundred and ten. He complains that the repair of the house at Coningsby, and other expences, took away the profit.

About the time of his removal to Coningsby he published the *Fleece*, his greatest poetical work; of which I will not suppress a ludicrous story. Dodfley the bookseller was one day mentioning it to a critical visiter, with more expectation of success than the other could easily

easily admit. In the conversation the author's age was asked; and being represented as advanced in life, *He will,* said the critick, *be buried in woollen.*

He did not indeed long survive that publication, nor long enjoy the increase of his preferments; for in 1758 he died.

Dyer is not a poet of bulk or dignity sufficient to require an elaborate criticism. *Grongar Hill* is the happiest of his productions: it is not indeed very accurately written; but the scenes which it displays are so pleasing, the images which they raise so welcome to the mind, and the reflections of the writer so consonant to the general sense or experience
of

of mankind, that when it is once read, it will be read again.

The idea of the *Ruins of Rome* strikes more but pleases less, and the title raises greater expectation than the performance gratifies. Some passages, however, are conceived with the mind of a poet; as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating Edifices, he says,

— — At dead of night
The hermit oft, 'midst his orisons, hears,
Aghast, the voice of Time disparting
towers.

Of *The Fleece*, which never became popular, and is now universally neglected, I can say little that is likely to recall it to attention. The woolcomber and the poet appear to me such discor-

dant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to *couple the serpent with the fowl*. When Dyer, whose mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmost, by interesting his reader in our native commodity, by interspersing rural imagery and incidental digressions, by cloathing small images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of delusion, the meanness naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture, sink him under insuperable oppression; and the disgust which blank verse, encumbering and encumbered, superadds to an unpleasing subject, soon repels the reader, however willing to be pleased.

Let

Let me however honestly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of censure. I have been told that Akenfide, who, upon a poetical question, has a right to be heard, said, “That he would regulate his opinion of the reigning taste by the fate of Dyer’s *Fleece*; for, if that were ill-received, he should not think it any longer reasonable to expect fame from excellence.”



M A L L E T.

OF DAVID MALLET, having no written memorial, I am able to give no other account than such as is supplied by the unauthorized loquacity of common fame, and a very slight personal knowledge.

He was by his original one of the Macgregors, a clan that became, about sixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, so formidable and so infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition; and when they were all to denominate themselves anew, the father, I

suppose, of this author called himself Malloch.

David Malloch was, by the penury of his parents, compelled to be *Janitor* of the High School at Edinburgh; a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he surmounted the disadvantages of his birth and fortune; for when the duke of Montrose applied to the College of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, Malloch was recommended; and I never heard that he dishonoured his credentials.

When his pupils were sent to see the world, they were intrusted to his care; and having conducted them round the common circle of modish travels, he
re-

returned with them to London, where, by the influence of the family in which he resided, he naturally gained admission to many persons of the highest rank, and the highest character, to wits, nobles, and statesmen.

Of his works, I know not whether I can trace the series. His first production was *William and Margaret* *; of which, though it contains nothing very striking or difficult, he has been envied the reputation; and plagiarism has been boldly charged, but never proved.

Not long afterwards he published the *Excursion* (1728); a desultory and capri-

* Mallet's *William and Margaret* was printed in Aaron Hill's *Plain Dealer*, N^o 36, July 24, 1724. In its original state it was very different from what it is in this Collection.

4 M A L L E T.

cious view of such scenes of Nature as his fancy led him, or his knowledge enabled him, to describe. It is not devoid of poetical spirit. Many of the images are striking, and many of the paragraphs are elegant. The cast of diction seems to be copied from Thomson, whose *Seasons* were then in their full blossom of reputation. He has Thomson's beauties and his faults.

His poem on *Verbal Criticism* (1733) was written to pay court to Pope, on a subject which he either did not understand or willingly misrepresented; and is little more than an improvement, or rather expansion, of a fragment which Pope printed in a Miscellany long before he engrafted it into a regular poem. There is in this piece more pertness than wit,
and

and more confidence than knowledge. The versification is tolerable, nor can criticism allow it a higher praise.

His first tragedy was *Eurydice*, acted at Drury-Lane in 1731; of which I know not the reception nor the merit, but have heard it mentioned as a mean performance. He was not then too high to accept a Prologue and Epilogue from Aaron Hill, neither of which can be much commended.

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch *Malloch* to English *Mallet*, without any imaginable reason of preference

which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country I know not; but it was remarked of him, that he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend.

About this time Pope, whom he visited familiarly, published his *Essay on Man*, but concealed the author; and when Mallet entered one day, Pope asked him slightly what there was new. Mallet told him, that the newest piece was something called an *Essay on Man*, which he had inspected idly; and seeing the utter inability of the author, who had neither skill in writing nor knowledge of his subject, had tossed it away. Pope, to punish his self-conceit, told him the secret.

A new

A new edition of the works of Bacon being prepared (1740) for the press, Mallet was employed to prefix a Life, which he has written with elegance, perhaps with some affectation; but with so much more knowledge of history than of science, that when he afterwards undertook the Life of Marlborough, Warburton remarked, that he might perhaps forget that Marlborough was a general, as he had forgotten that Bacon was a philosopher.

When the prince of Wales was driven from the palace, and, setting himself at the head of the opposition, kept a separate Court, he endeavoured to increase his popularity by the patronage of literature, and made Mallet his under-secretary,

with a salary of two hundred pounds a year: Thomson likewise had a pension; and they were associated in the composition of the Masque of *Alfred*, which in its original state was played at Cliefden in 1740; it was afterwards almost wholly changed by Mallet, and brought upon the stage at Drury-Lane in 1751, but with no great success.

Mallet, in a familiar conversation with Garrick, discoursing of the diligence which he was then exerting upon the *Life of Marlborough*, let him know that in the series of great men, quickly to be exhibited, he should *find a niche* for the hero of the theatre. Garrick professed to wonder by what artifice he could be introduced; but Mallet let him

him know, that, by a dexterous anticipation, he should fix him in a conspicuous place. “Mr. Mallet,” says Garrick, in his gratitude of exultation, “have you left off to write for the stage?” Mallet then confessed that he had a drama in his hands. Garrick promised to act it; and *Alfred* was produced.

The long retardation of the Life of the duke of Marlborough shews, with strong conviction, how little confidence can be placed in posthumous renown. When he died, it was soon determined that his story should be delivered to posterity; and the papers supposed to contain the necessary information were delivered to the lord Moleworth, who had been his favourite in Flanders. When

Molef-

Molefworth died, the same papers were transferred with the same design to Sir Richard Steele, who in some of his exigencies put them in pawn. They then remained with the old dutchess, who in her will assigned the task to Glover and Mallet, with a reward of a thousand pounds, and a prohibition to insert any verses. Glover rejected, I suppose, with disdain the legacy, and devolved the whole work upon Mallet; who had from the late duke of Marlborough a pension to promote his industry, and who talked of the discoveries which he made; but left not, when he died, any historical labours behind him.

While he was in the Prince's service he published *Mustapha*, with a Prologue

by Thomson, not mean, but far inferior to that which he had received from Mallet for *Agamemnon*. The Epilogue, said to be written by a friend, was composed in haste by Mallet, in the place of one promised, which was never given. This tragedy was dedicated to the Prince his master. It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1739, and was well received, but was never revived.

In 1740, he produced, as has been already mentioned, the masque of *Alfred*, in conjunction with Thomson.

For some time afterwards he lay at rest. After a long interval, his next work was *Amyntor and Theodora* (1747), a long story in blank verse; in which it cannot be denied that there is copiousness and elegance of language, vigour of sentiment,

ment, and imagery well adapted to take possession of the fancy. But it is blank verse. The first sale was not great, and it is now lost in forgetfulness.

Mallet, by address or accident, perhaps by his dependance on the Prince, found his way to Bolingbroke; a man whose pride and petulance made his kindness difficult to gain, or keep, and whom Mallet was content to court by an act, which, I hope, was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandestinely printed an unauthorised number of the pamphlet called the *Patriot King*, Bolingbroke, in a fit of useless fury, resolved to blast his memory, and employed Mallet (1747) as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not spirit, to re-
fuse

fuse the office; and was rewarded, not long after, with the legacy of lord Bolingbroke's works.

Many of the political pieces had been written during the opposition to Walpole, and given to Franklin, as he supposed, in perpetuity. These, among the rest, were claimed by the will. The question was referred to arbitrators; but when they decided against Mallet, he refused to yield to the award; and by the help of Millar the bookseller published all that he could find, but with success very much below his expectation.

In 1753, his masque of *Britannia* was acted at Drury-Lane, and his tragedy of *Elvira* in 1763; in which year he was

appointed keeper of the book of Entries for ships in the port of London.

In the beginning of the last war, when the nation was exasperated by ill success, he was employed to turn the publick vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a letter of accusation under the character of a *Plain Man*. The paper was with great industry circulated and dispersed; and he for his seasonable intervention had a considerable pension bestowed upon him, which he retained to his death.

Towards the end of his life he went with his wife to France; but after a while, finding his health declining, he returned alone to England, and died in April 1765.

He was twice married, and by his first wife had several children. One daughter, who

who married an Italian of rank named Cilefia, wrote a tragedy called *Almida*, which was acted at Drury-Lane. His second wife was the daughter of a nobleman's steward, who had a considerable fortune, which she took care to retain in her own hands.

His stature was diminutive, but he was regularly formed; his appearance, till he grew corpulent, was agreeable, and he suffered it to want no recommendation that dress could give it. His conversation was elegant and easy. The rest of his character may, without injury to his memory, sink into silence.

As a writer, he cannot be placed in any high class. There is no species of composition in which he was eminent.

His

His Dramas had their day, a short day, and are forgotten : his blank verse seems to my ear the echo of Thomson. His Life of Bacon is known as it is appended to Bacon's volumes, but is no longer mentioned. His works are such as a writer, bustling in the world, shewing himself in publick, and emerging occasionally from time to time into notice, might keep alive by his personal influence ; but which, conveying little information, and giving no great pleasure, must soon give way, as the succession of things produces new topicks of conversation, and other modes of amusement.



S H E N S T O N E.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE,
the son of Thomas Shenstone
and Anne Pen, was born in November
1714, at the Leafowes in Hales-Owen,
one of those insulated districts which,
in the division of the kingdom, was ap-
pended, for some reason not now disco-
verable, to a distant county; and which,
though surrounded by Warwickshire and
Worcestershire, belongs to Shropshire,
though perhaps thirty miles distant from
any other part of it.

A

He

He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of the *School-mistress* has delivered to posterity; and soon received such delight from books, that he was always calling for new entertainment, and expected that when any of the family went to market a new book should be brought him, which, when it came, was in fondness carried to bed and laid by him. It is said, that when his request had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood of the same form, and pacified him for the night.

As he grew older, he went for a while to the Grammar-school in Hales-Owen, and was placed afterwards with Mr. Crumpton, an eminent school-master at
Soli-

Solihul, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress.

When he was young (June 1724) he was deprived of his father, and soon after (August 1726) of his grandfather; and was, with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, left to the care of his grandmother, who managed the estate.

From school he was sent in 1732 to Pembroke-College in Oxford, a society which for half a century has been eminent for English poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name there ten years, though he took no degree. After the first four years he put on the Civilian's gown, but with-

out shewing any intention to engage in the profession.

About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the reverend Mr. Dolman of Brome in Staffordshire, whose attention he always mentioned with gratitude.

At Oxford he employed himself upon English poetry; and in 1737 published a small Miscellany, without his name.

He then for a time wandered about, to acquaint himself with life; and was sometimes at London, sometimes at Bath, or any other place of publick resort; but he did not forget his poetry. He published in 1740 his *Judgement of Hercules*, addressed to Mr. Lyttelton, whose
 inte-

interest he supported with great warmth at an election : this was two years afterwards followed by the *School-mistress*.

Mr. Dolman, to whose care he was indebted for his ease and leisure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to escape it a while, and lived at his house with his tenants, who were distantly related ; but finding that imperfect possession inconvenient, he took the whole estate into his own hands, more to the improvement of its beauty than the increase of its produce.

Now began his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition of rural elegance : he began from this time to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to

entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgement and such fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, or to stagnate where it will be seen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden, demands any great powers of mind, I will not enquire; perhaps a fullen and surly speculator may think such performances rather the sport than

the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of Nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed by the most supercilious observer to him, who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.

This praise was the praise of Shensstone; but, like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttelton was his neighbour and his rival, whose empire, spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the *petty State* that *appeared behind it*. For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees

8 S H E N S T O N E.

the Leafowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception ; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain. Where there is emulation there will be vanity, and where there is vanity there will be folly.

The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye ; he valued what he valued merely for its looks ; nothing raised his indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.

His house was mean, and he did not improve it ; his care was of his grounds.

When he came home from his walks he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof; but could spare no money for its reparation.

In time his expences brought clamours about him, that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's song; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fawns and fairies. He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that spent its oil in blazing. It is said, that if he had lived a little longer he would have been assisted by a pension: such bounty could not have been ever more properly bestowed; but that it was ever asked

is

is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.

He died at the Leafowes, of a putrid fever, about five on Friday morning, February 11, 1763; and was buried by the side of his brother in the church-yard of Hales-Owen.

He was never married, though he might have obtained the lady, whoever she was, to whom his *Pastoral Ballad* was addressed. He is represented by his friend Doddsley as a man of great tenderness and generosity, kind to all that were within his influence; but, if once offended, not easily appeased; inattentive to œconomy, and careless of his expences; in his person larger than the middle size, with something clumsy in
his

his form ; very negligent of his cloaths, and remarkable for wearing his grey hair in a particular manner ; for he held that the fashion was no rule of dress, and that every man was to suit his appearance to his natural form.

His mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active ; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.

His life was unstained by any crime ; the Elegy on *Jessy*, which has been supposed to relate an unfortunate and criminal amour of his own, was known by his friends to have been suggested by the story of Miss Godfrey in Richardson's *Pamela*.

What

What Gray thought of his character, from the perusal of his Letters, was this:

“ I have read too an octavo volume of
 “ Shenstone’s Letters. Poor man! he
 “ was always wishing for money, for
 “ fame, and other distinctions; and his
 “ whole philosophy consisted in living
 “ against his will in retirement, and in a
 “ place which his taste had adorned;
 “ but which he only enjoyed when
 “ people of note came to see and com-
 “ mend it: his correspondence is about
 “ nothing else but this place and his own
 “ writings, with two or three neighbour-
 “ ing clergymen, who wrote verses too.”

His poems consist of elegies, odes, and ballads, humorous fallies, and moral pieces.

His

His conception of an Elegy he has in his Preface very judiciously and discriminatedly explained. It is, according to his account, the effusion of a contemplative mind, sometimes plaintive, and always serious, and therefore superior to the glitter of flight ornaments. His compositions suit not ill to this description. His topicks of praise are the domestick virtues, and his thoughts are pure and simple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The peace of solitude, the innocence of inactivity, and the unenvied security of an humble station, can fill but a few pages. That of which the essence is uniformity will be soon described. His Elegies have therefore too much resemblance of each other.

The

The lines are sometimes, such as Elegy requires, smooth and easy; but to this praise his claim is not constant: his diction is often harsh, improper, and affected; his words ill-coined, or ill-chosen, and his phrase unskilfully inverted.

The Lyrick Poems are almost all of the light and airy kind, such as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From these, however, *Rural Elegance* has some right to be excepted. I once heard it praised by a very learned lady; and though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffused with too much verbosity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philosophical argument and poetical spirit.

Of the rest I cannot think any excellent; the *Skylark* pleases me best, which has however more of the epigram than of the ode.

But the four parts of his *Pastoral Ballad* demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is pastoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the *kids*, which it is not necessary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is selection, and he ought to shew the beauties without the grossness of the country life. His stanza seems to have been chosen in imitation of *Rowe's Despairing Shepherd*.

In the first part are two passages, to which if any mind denies its sympathy,
it

it has no acquaintance with love or nature :

I priz'd every hour that went by,
 Beyond all that had pleas'd me before ;
 But now they are past, and I sigh,
 And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

When forc'd the fair nymph to forgo,
 What anguish I felt in my heart !
 Yet I thought—but it might not be so,
 'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.

She gaz'd, as I slowly withdrew ;
 My path I could hardly discern ;
 So sweetly she bade me adieu,
 I thought that she bade me return.

In the second this passage has its prettiness, though it be not equal to the former :

I have

I have found out a gift for my fair ;

I have found where the wood-pigeons breed ;

But let me that plunder forbear,

She will say 'twas a barbarous deed :

For he ne'er could be true, she averr'd,

Who could rob a poor bird of its young ;

And I lov'd her the more, when I heard

Such tendernefs fall from her tongue.

In the third he mentions the common places of amorous poetry with some address :

'Tis his with mock passion to glow ;

'Tis his in smooth tales to unfold,

How her face is as bright as the snow,

And her bosom, be sure, is as cold :

How the nightingales labour the strain,

With the notes of his charmer to vie ;

How they vary their accents in vain,

Repine at her triumphs, and die.

In the fourth I find nothing better
than this natural strain of Hope :

Alas! from the day that we met,

What hope of an end to my woes?

When I cannot endure to forget

The glance that undid my repose.

Yet Time may diminish the pain :

The flower, and the shrub, and the tree,

Which I rear'd for her pleasure in vain,

In time may have comfort for me.

His *Levities* are by their title exempted from the severities of criticism; yet it may be remarked, in a few words, that his humour is sometimes gross, and seldom spritely.

Of the Moral Poems the first is the *Choice of Hercules*, from Xenophon. The numbers are smooth, the diction elegant,

gant, and the thoughts just; but something of vigour perhaps is still to be wished, which it might have had by brevity and compression. His *Fate of Delicacy* has an airy gaiety, but not a very pointed general moral. His blank verses, those that can read them may probably find to be like the blank verses of his neighbours. *Love and Honour* is derived from the old ballad, *Did you not hear of a Spanish Lady*—I wish it well enough to wish it were in rhyme.

The *School-mistress*, of which I know not what claim it has to stand among the Moral Works, is surely the most pleasing of Shenstone's performances. The adoption of a particular stile, in light and short compositions, contributes

butes much to the increase of pleasure : we are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the sentiments, of the original author in the stile, and between them the mind is kept in perpetual employment.

The general recommendation of Shenstone is easiness and simplicity ; his general defect is want of comprehension and variety. Had his mind been better stored with knowledge, whether he could have been great, I know not ; he could certainly have been agreeable.



A K E N S I D E.

MARK AKENSIDE was born on the ninth of November, 1721, at Newcastle upon Tyne. His father, Mark, was a butcher of the Presbyterian sect; his mother's name was Mary Lumsden. He received the first part of his education at the grammar-school of Newcastle; and was afterwards instructed by Mr. Wilson, who kept a private academy.

At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify him-

A

self

self for the office of a dissenting minister, and received some assistance from the fund which the Dissenters employ in educating young men of scanty fortune. But a wider view of the world opened other scenes, and prompted other hopes: he determined to study physic, and repaid that contribution, which, being received for a different purpose, he justly thought it dishonourable to retain.

Whether, when he resolved not to be a dissenting minister, he ceased to be a Dissenter, I know not. He certainly retained an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called and thought liberty; a zeal which sometimes disguises from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it possesses,

an

A K E N S I D E. 3

an envious desire of plundering wealth or degrading greatness; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an impetuous eagerness to subvert and confound, with very little care what shall be established.

Akenfide was one of those poets who have felt very early the motions of genius, and one of those students who have very early stored their memories with sentiments and images. Many of his performances were produced in his youth; and his greatest work, *The Pleasures of Imagination*, appeared in 1744. I have heard Dodfley, by whom it was published, relate, that when the copy was offered him, the price demanded for it, which was an

hundred and twenty pounds, being such as he was not inclined to give precipitately, he carried the work to Pope, who, having looked into it, advised him not to make a niggardly offer; for *this was no every-day writer.*

In 1741 he went to Leyden, in pursuit of medical knowledge; and three years afterwards (May 16, 1744) became doctor of physick, having, according to the custom of the Dutch Universities, published a thesis, or dissertation. The subject which he chose was *the Original and Growth of the Human Fœtus*; in which he is said to have departed, with great judgement, from the opinion then established, and to have
deli-

delivered that which has been since confirmed and received.

Akenfide was a young man, warm with every notion that by nature or accident had been connected with the sound of liberty, and by an excentricity which such dispositions do not easily avoid, a lover of contradiction, and no friend to any thing established. He adopted Shaftesbury's foolish assertion of the efficacy of ridicule for the discovery of truth. For this he was attacked by Warburton, and defended by Dyson: Warburton afterwards reprinted his remarks at the end of his dedication to the Freethinkers.

The result of all the arguments which have been produced in a long and eager

discussion of this idle question, may be easily collected. If ridicule be applied to any position as the test of truth, it will then become a question whether such ridicule be just; and this can only be decided by the application of truth, as the test of ridicule. Two men, fearing, one a real and the other a fancied danger, will be for a while equally exposed to the inevitable consequences of cowardice, contemptuous censure, and ludicrous representation; and the true state of both cases must be known, before it can be decided whose terror is rational, and whose is ridiculous; who is to be pitied, and who to be despised.

A K E N S I D E. 7

In the revival of his poem, which he died before he had finished, he omitted the lines which had given occasion to Warburton's objections.

He published, soon after his return from Leyden (1745), his first collection of odes; and was impelled by his rage of patriotism to write a very acrimonious epistle to Pulteney, whom he stigmatizes, under the name of Curio, as the betrayer of his country.

Being now to live by his profession, he first commenced physician at Northampton, where Dr. Stonehouse then practised, with such reputation and success, that a stranger was not likely to gain ground upon him. Aken-

having deafened the place with clamours for liberty, removed to Hampstead, where he resided more than two years, and then fixed himself in London, the proper place for a man of accomplishments like his.

At London he was known as a poet, but was still to make his way as a physician; and would perhaps have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr. Dyson, with an ardour of friendship that has not many examples, allowed him three hundred pounds a year. Thus supported, he advanced gradually in medical reputation, but never attained any great extent of practice, or eminence of popularity. A physician in a great city seems to be the mere play-
thing

thing of Fortune ; his degree of reputation is, for the most part, totally casual : they that employ him, know not his excellence ; they that reject him, know not his deficiency. By an acute observer, who had looked on the transactions of the medical world for half a century, a very curious book might be written on the *Fortune of Physicians*.

Akenfide appears not to have been wanting to his own success : he placed himself in view by all the common methods ; he became a Fellow of the Royal Society ; he obtained a degree at Cambridge, and was admitted into the College of Physicians ; he wrote little poetry, but published, from time to time, medical essays and observations ;
he

he became physician to St. Thomas's Hospital; having read the Gualstonian Lectures in Anatomy, he began to give, for the Cronian Lecture, a history of the revival of Learning, from which he soon desisted; and, in conversation, he very eagerly forced himself into notice by an ambitious ostentation of elegance and literature.

His Discourse on the Dysentery (1764) was considered as a very conspicuous specimen of Latinity, which entitled him to the same height of place among the scholars as he possessed before among the wits; and he might perhaps have risen to a greater elevation of character, but that his studies were
ended

ended with his life, by a putrid fever, June 23, 1770, in the forty-ninth year of his age.



AKENSIDE is to be considered as a didactick and lyrick poet. His great work is the *Pleasures of Imagination*; a performance which, published, as it was, at the age of twenty-three, raised expectations which were not afterwards very amply satisfied. It has undoubtedly a just claim to very particular notice, as an example of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquisitions, of a young mind stored with

with images, and much exercised in combining and comparing them.

With the philosophical or religious tenets of the author I have nothing to do; my business is with his poetry. The subject is well-chosen, as it includes all images that can strike or please, and thus comprises every species of poetical delight. The only difficulty is in the choice of examples and illustrations, and it is not easy in such exuberance of matter to find the middle point between penury and satiety. The parts seem artificially disposed, with sufficient coherence, so as that they cannot change their places without injury to the general design.

His

His images are displayed with such luxuriance of expression, that they are hidden, like Butler's Moon, by a *Veil of Light*; they are forms fantastically lost under superfluity of dress. *Pars minima est ipsa Puella sui*. The words are multiplied till the sense is hardly perceived; attention deserts the mind, and settles in the ear. The reader wanders through the gay diffusion sometimes amazed, and sometimes delighted; but, after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and laid hold on nothing.

To his versification justice requires that praise should not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is perhaps superior to any other writer
of

of blank verse; his flow is smooth, and his pauses are musical; but the concatenation of his verses is commonly too long continued, and the full close does not recur with sufficient frequency. The sense is carried on through a long intertexture of complicated clauses, and as nothing is distinguished, nothing is remembered.

The exemption which blank verse affords from the necessity of closing the sense with the couplet, betrays luxuriant and active minds into such indulgence, that they pile image upon image, ornament upon ornament, and are not easily persuaded to close the sense at all. Blank verse will therefore, I fear, be too often found in description exuberant,

rant, in argument loquacious, and in narration tiresome.

His diction is certainly so far poetical as it is not prosaick, and so far valuable as it is not common. He is to be commended as having fewer artifices of disgust than most of his brethren of the blank song. He rarely either recalls old phrases or twists his metre into harsh inversions. The sense however of his words is strained; when *he views the Ganges from Alpine heights*; that is, from mountains like *the Alps*. And the pedant surely intrudes, but when was blank verse without pedantry? when he tells how *Planets absolve the stated round of Time*.

It

It is generally known to the readers of poetry that he intended to revise and augment this work, but died before he had completed his design. The reformed work as he left it, and the addition which he had made, are very properly retained in this collection. He seems to have somewhat contracted his diffusion; but I know not whether he has gained in closeness what he has lost in splendor. In the additional book, the *Tale of Solon* is too long.

His other poems are now to be considered; but a short consideration will dispatch them. It is not easy to guess why he addicted himself so diligently to lyric poetry, having neither the ease and airiness of the lighter, nor
 2 the

the vehemence and elevation of the grander ode. When he lays his ill-fated hand upon his harp, his former powers seem to desert him; he has no longer his luxuriance of expression, nor variety of images. His thoughts are cold, and his words inelegant. Yet such was his love of lyrics, that, having written with great vigour and poignancy his *Epistle to Curio*, he transformed it afterwards into an ode disgraceful only to its author.

Of his odes nothing favourable can be said; the sentiments commonly want force, nature, or novelty; the diction is sometimes harsh and uncouth, the stanzas ill-constructed and unpleasant, and the rhymes dissonant, or unskilfully dis-

posed, too distant from each other, or arranged with too little regard to established use, and therefore perplexing to the ear, which in a short composition has not time to grow familiar with an innovation.

To examine such compositions singly, cannot be required; they have doubtless brighter and darker parts: but when they are once found to be generally dull, all further labour may be spared; for to what use can the work be criticised that will not be read?



LYTTELTON.

GEORGE LYTTELTON, the son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley in Worcestershire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eaton, where he was so much distinguished, that his exercises were recommended as models to his school-fellows.

From Eaton he went to Christchurch, where he retained the same reputation of superiority, and displayed his abilities to the publick in a poem on *Blenheim*.

He was a very early writer, both in verse and prose. His *Progress of Love*, and his *Persian Letters*, were both written when he was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young man is very visible in both. The Verses cant of shepherds and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and the Letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward.

He staid not long at Oxford; for in 1728 he began his travels, and saw France and Italy. When he returned he obtained a seat in parliament, and soon distinguished himself among the most
eager

eager opponents of Sir Robert Walpole, though his father, who was one of the Admiralty, always voted with the Court.

For many years the name of George Lyttelton was seen in every account of every debate in the House of Commons. He opposed the standing army; he opposed the excise; he supported the motion for petitioning the King to remove Walpole. His zeal was considered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant; and when Walpole was at last driven from his places, every effort was made by his friends, and many friends he had, to exclude Lyttelton from the Secret Committee.

4 LYTTELTON.

The Prince of Wales, being (1737) driven from St. James's, kept a separate court, and opened his arms to the opponents of the ministry. Mr. Lyttelton was made his secretary, and was supposed to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. He persuaded his master, whose business it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patronage. Mallet was made under-secretary, and Thomson had a pension. For Thomson Lyttelton always retained his kindness, and was able at last to place him at ease.

Moore courted his favour by an apologetical poem, called *The Trial of Selim*, for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raised great hopes,

hopes, that at last were disappointed.

Lyttelton now stood in the first rank of opposition; and Pope, who was incited, it is not easy to say how, to increase the clamour against the ministry, commended him among the other patriots. This drew upon him the reproaches of Fox, who, in the house, imputed to him as a crime his intimacy with a lampooner so unjust and licentious. Lyttelton supported his friend, and replied, that he thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of so great a poet.

While he was thus conspicuous, he married (1741) Miss Lucy Fortescue of Devonshire, by whom he had a son, the

6 L Y T T E L T O N.

late lord Lyttelton, and two daughters, and with whom he appears to have lived in the highest degree of connubial felicity: but human pleasures are short; she died in childbed about five years afterwards, and he solaced his grief by writing a long poem to her memory.

He did not however condemn himself to perpetual solitude and sorrow; for, after a while, he was content to seek happiness again by a second marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich; but the experiment was unsuccessful.

At length, after a long struggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were distributed among his conquerors. Lyttelton was made (1744) one of the Lords of the Treasury; and from that

LYTTELTON. 7

time was engaged in supporting the schemes of the ministry.

Politicks did not, however, so much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance. He had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity; but he thought the time now come when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies, being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true, and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach (1747), by *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul*; a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to

fabricate a specious answer. This book his father had the happiness of seeing, and expressed his pleasure in a letter which deserves to be inserted.

“ I have read your religious treatise
 “ with infinite pleasure and satisfaction.
 “ The stile is fine and clear, the argu-
 “ ments close, cogent, and irresistible.
 “ May the King of kings, whose glo-
 “ rious cause you have so well defended,
 “ reward your pious labours, and grant
 “ that I may be found worthy through
 “ the merits of Jesus Christ, to be an
 “ eye-witness of that happiness which I
 “ don’t doubt he will bountifully bestow
 “ upon you. In the mean time, I shall
 “ never cease glorifying God for having.

“ en-

L Y T T E L T O N. 9

“endowed you with such useful talents,
“and giving me so good a son.

“Your affectionate father,

“THOMAS LYTTTELTON.”

A few years afterwards (1751), by the death of his father, he inherited a baronet's title with a large estate, which, though perhaps he did not augment, he was careful to adorn, by a house of great elegance and expence, and by great attention to the decoration of his park.

As he continued his exertions in parliament, he was gradually advancing his claim to profit and preferment; and accordingly was made in time (1754) conferrer and privy counsellor: this place
he

he exchanged next year for the great office of chancellor of the Exchequer; an office, however, that required some qualifications which he soon perceived himself to want.

The year after, his curiosity led him into Wales; of which he has given an account, perhaps rather with too much affectation of delight, to Archibald Bower, a man of whom he had conceived an opinion more favourable than he seems to have deserved, and whom, having once espoused his interest and fame, he never was persuaded to disown. Bower, whatever was his moral character, did not want abilities; attacked as he was by an universal outcry, and that outcry, as it seems, the echo of truth, he kept his ground;

ground; at last, when his defences began to fail him, he sallied out upon his adversaries, and his adversaries retreated.

About this time Lyttelton published his *Dialogues of the Dead*, which were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it seems, of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation; and when they have met, they too often part without conclusion. He has copied *Fenelon* more than *Fontenelle*.

When they were first published they were kindly commended by the *Critical Reviewers*; and poor Lyttelton, with humble gratitude, returned his acknowledgements in a note which I have read;

acknow-

acknowledgements either for flattery or justice.

When, in the latter part of the last reign, the inauspicious commencement of the war made the dissolution of the ministry unavoidable, Sir George Lyttelton, losing his employment, with the rest, was recompensed with a peerage; and rested from political turbulence in the House of Lords.

His last literary production was his *History of Henry the Second*, elaborated by the searches and deliberations of twenty years, and published with such anxiety as only vanity can dictate.

The story of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three

times, and many sheets four or five times. The booksellers paid for the first impression; but the charges and repeated operations of the Press were at the expence of the author, whose ambitious accuracy is known to have cost him at least a thousand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764, a second edition of them in 1767, a third edition in 1768, and the conclusion in 1771.

Andrew Reid, a man not without considerable abilities, and not unacquainted with letters or with life, undertook to persuade Lyttelton, as he had persuaded himself, that he was master of the secret of punctuation; and, as fear begets credulity, he was employed,
 I know

I know not at what price, to point the pages of *Henry the Second*. The book was at last pointed and printed, and sent into the world. Lyttelton took money for his copy, of which, when he had paid the *Pointer*, he probably gave the rest away ; for he was very liberal to the indigent.

When time brought the *History* to a third edition, Reid was either dead or discarded ; and the superintendence of typography and punctuation was committed to a man originally a comb-maker, but then known by the stile of Dr. Saunders. Something uncommon was probably expected, and something uncommon was at last done ; for to the edition of Dr. Saunders is appended,

what

what the world had hardly seen before, a list of errors of nineteen pages.

But to politicks and literature there must be an end. Lord Lyttelton had never the appearance of a strong or of a healthy man; he had a slender uncompact frame, and a meagre face: he lasted however sixty years, and then was seized with his last illness. Of his death a very affecting and instructive account has been given by his physician, which will spare me the task of his moral character.

“ On Sunday evening the symptoms
 “ of his lordship’s disorder, which for
 “ a week past had alarmed us, put on
 “ a fatal appearance, and his lordship
 “ believed himself to be a dying man.

“ From

“ From this time he suffered by restlessness rather than pain ; and though his nerves were apparently much flut-tered, his mental faculties never seemed stronger, when he was thoroughly awake.

“ His lordship’s bilious and hepatic complaints seemed alone not equal to the expected mournful event ; his long want of sleep, whether the consequence of the irritation in the bowels, or, which is more probable, of causes of different kind, accounts for his loss of strength, and for his death very sufficiently.

“ Though his lordship wished his approaching dissolution not to be lingering, he waited for it with resignation.

“ tion. He said, “ It is a folly, a
 “ keeping me in misery, now to attempt
 “ to prolong life ;” yet he was easily
 “ persuaded, for the satisfaction of
 “ others, to do or take any thing
 “ thought proper for him. On Satur-
 “ day he had been remarkably better,
 “ and we were not without some hopes
 “ of his recovery.

“ On Sunday, about eleven in the
 “ forenoon, his lordship sent for me,
 “ and said he felt a great hurry, and
 “ wished to have a little conversation
 “ with me in order to divert it. He
 “ then proceeded to open the fountain
 “ of that heart, from whence goodness
 “ had so long flowed as from a copious
 “ spring. “ Doctor,” said he, “ you
 B “ shall

“ shall be my confessor : when I first set
“ out in the world, I had friends who
“ endeavoured to shake my belief in the
“ Christian religion. I saw difficulties
“ which staggered me ; but I kept my
“ mind open to conviction. The evi-
“ dences and doctrines of Christianity,
“ studied with attention, made me a
“ most firm and persuaded believer of
“ the Christian religion. I have made
“ it the rule of my life, and it is the
“ ground of my future hopes. I have
“ erred and sinned ; but have repented,
“ and never indulged any vicious habit.
“ In politicks, and publick life, I have
“ made publick good the rule of my
“ conduct. I never gave counsels which
“ I did not at the time think the best.

“ I have

“ I have seen that I was sometimes in
 “ the wrong, but I did not err designed-
 “ ly. I have endeavoured, in private
 “ life, to do all the good in my power,
 “ and never for a moment could in-
 “ dulse malicious or unjust designs
 “ upon any person whatsoever.”

“ At another time he said, “ I must
 “ leave my soul in the same state it was
 “ in before this illness; I find this a very
 “ inconvenient time for solicitude about
 “ any thing.”

“ On the evening, when the symp-
 “ toms of death came on, he said, “ I
 “ shall die; but it will not be your
 “ fault.” When lord and lady Valentia
 “ came to see his lordship, he gave
 “ them his solemn benediction, and

“ said, “ Be good, be virtuous, my lord;
 “ you must come to this.” Thus he
 “ continued giving his dying benedic-
 “ tion to all around him. On Monday
 “ morning a lucid interval gave some
 “ small hopes, but these vanished in the
 “ evening; and he continued dying,
 “ but with very little uneasiness, till
 “ Tuesday morning, August 22, when
 “ between seven and eight o’clock he
 “ expired, almost without a groan.”

His lordship was buried at Hagley;
 and the following inscription is cut on
 the side of his lady’s monument :

“ This unadorned stone was placed here
 “ By the particular desire and express
 “ directions of the late Right Honourable
 “ GEORGE Lord LYTTLETON,
 “ Who died August 22, 1773, aged 64.”

Lord

Lord Lyttelton's Poems are the works of a man of literature and judgement, devoting part of his time to versification. They have nothing to be despised, and little to be admired. Of his *Progress of Love*, it is sufficient blame to say that it is pastoral. His blank verse in *Blenheim* has neither much force nor much elegance. His little performances, whether Songs or Epigrams, are sometimes spritely and sometimes insipid. His epistolary pieces have a smooth equability, which cannot much tire, because they are short, but which seldom *elevates* or *surprizes*. But from this censure ought to be excepted his *Advice to Belinda*, which, though for the most part written when he was very young,

con-

contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorously expressed, and shews a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raised to excellence.



W E S T.

GILBERT WEST is one of the writers of whom I regret my inability to give a sufficient account; the intelligence which my enquiries have obtained is general and scanty.

He was the son of the reverend Dr. West; perhaps him who published *Pindar* at Oxford about the beginning of this century. His mother was sister to Sir Richard Temple, afterwards lord Cobham. His father, purposing to educate him for the Church, sent him first to Eaton, and afterwards to Oxford; but he was seduced to a more airy mode

of life, by a commission in a troop of horse procured him by his uncle.

He continued some time in the army; though it is reasonable to suppose that he never sunk into a mere foldier, nor ever lost the love or much neglected the pursuit of learning; and afterwards, finding himself more inclined to civil employment, he laid down his commission, and engaged in business under the lord Townshend, then secretary of state, with whom he attended the king to Hanover.

His adherence to lord Townshend ended in nothing but a nomination (May 1729) to be clerk-extraordinary of the Privy Council, which produced no immediate profit; for it only placed him in a state of expectation and right of succession,
and

and it was very long before a vacancy admitted him to profit.

Soon afterwards he married, and settled himself in a very pleasant house at Wickham in Kent, where he devoted himself to learning, and to piety. Of his learning this Collection exhibits evidence, which would have been yet fuller if the dissertations which accompany his version of Pindar had not been improperly omitted. Of his piety the influence has, I hope, been extended far by his *Observations on the Resurrection*, published in 1747, for which the University of Oxford created him a Doctor of Laws by diploma (March 30, 1748); and perhaps it may not be without effect to tell, that he read prayers every evening to his family. Crashaw is now not the

only maker of verses to whom may be given the two venerable names of *Poet and Saint*.

He was very often visited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, used at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table, and literary conversation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham Lyttelton received that conviction which produced his *Dissertation on St. Paul*.

Mr. West's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without success, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more extensive power
of

of superintendence than it was thought proper to allow him.

In time, however, his revenue was improved; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkships of the Privy Council (1752), and Mr. Pitt at last had it in his power to make him treasurer of Chelsea Hospital.

He was now sufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed: nor could it secure him from the calamities of life; he lost (1755) his only son; and the year after (March 26), a stroke of the palsy brought to the grave one of the few poets to whom the grave needed not to be terrible.

His poems are in this Collection neither selected nor arranged as I should

have directed, had either the choice or the order fallen under my care or notice.

His *Institution of the Garter* is improperly omitted; instead of the mock tragedy of Lucian, the version from Euripides, if both could not be inserted, should have been taken. Of the *Imitations of Spenser*, one was published before the version of *Pindar*, and should therefore have had the first place.

Of his translations I have only compared the first Olympick Ode with the original, and found my expectation surpassed, both by its elegance and its exactness. He does not confine himself to his author's train of stanzas; for he saw that the difference of the languages required a different mode of

verfi-

verification. The first strophe is eminently happy; in the second he has a little strayed from Pindar's meaning, who says, *if thou, my soul, wishest to speak of games, look not in the desert sky for a planet hotter than the sun, nor shall we tell of nobler games than those of Olympia.* He is sometimes too paraphractical. Pindar bestows upon Hiero an epithet, which, in one word, signifies *delighting in horses*; a word which, in the translation, generates these lines:

Hiero's royal brows, whose care
 Tends the courser's noble breed,
 Pleas'd to nurse the pregnant mare,
 Pleas'd to train the youthful steed.

Pindar says of Pelops, that *he came alone in the dark to the White Sea; and West,*

Near the billow-beaten side
Of the foam-besilver'd main,
Darkling, and alone, he stood :

which however is less exuberant than the former passage.

A work of this kind must, in a minute examination, discover many imperfections; but West's version, so far as I have considered it, appears to be the product of great labour and great abilities.

His *Institution of the Garter* (1742), which is omitted in this Collection, is written with sufficient knowledge of the

manners that prevailed in the age to which it is referred, and with great elegance of diction ; but, for want of a process of events, neither knowledge nor elegance preserve the reader from weariness.

His *Imitations of Spenser* are very successfully performed, both with respect to the metre, the language, and the fiction ; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the sentiments, and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amusements at once. But such compositions are not to be reckoned among the great achievements of intellects, because their effect is local and temporary ; they appeal not to reason or passion, but to memory, and pre-
suppose

suppose an accidental and artificial state of mind. An Imitation of Spenser is nothing to a reader, however acute, by whom Spenser has never been perused. Works of this kind may deserve praise, as proofs of great industry, and great nicety of observation; but the highest praise, the praise of genius, they cannot claim. The noblest beauties of art are those of which the effect is co-extended with rational nature, or at least with the whole circle of polished life; what is less than this can be only pretty, the plaything of fashion, and the amusement of a day.

THERE



THERE is in the *Adventurer* a paper of verses given to one of the authors as Mr. West's, and supposed to have been written by him, which, having been left out by the compilers, it is proper to insert here. It should not be concealed, however, that this Elegy is printed with Mr. Jago's name in Doddsley's Collection, and is mentioned as his in a Letter of Shenstone's. Perhaps West gave it without naming the author; and Hawkefworth, receiving it from him, thought it his; for his he thought it, as he told me, and as he tells the publick.

E L E G Y,

Occasioned by shooting a BLACKBIRD
on Valentine's-Day.

The sun had chac'd the winter's snow,
And kindly loos'd the frost-bound foil;
The melting streams began to flow,
And plowmen urg'd their annual toil.

'Twas then amid the vernal throng,
Whom Nature wakes to mirth and love,
A Blackbird rais'd his am'rous song,
And thus it echo'd through the grove.

“ O! fairest of the feather'd train,
“ For whom I sing, for whom I burn;
“ Attend with pity to my strain,
“ And grant my love a kind return.

“ See, see, the winter's storms are flown,
“ And Zephyrs gently fan the air!
“ Let us the genial influence own,
“ Let us the vernal pastime share.

“ The

- “ The Raven plumes his jetty wing,
“ To please his croaking paramour;
“ The Larks responsive love-tales sing,
“ And tell their passions as they soar.
“ But trust me, love, the Raven’s wing
“ Is not to be compar’d with mine;
“ Nor can the Lark so sweetly sing
“ As I, who strength with sweetness join.
“ With thee I’ll prove the sweets of love,
“ With thee divide the cares of life;
“ No fonder husband in the grove,
“ Nor none than thee a happier wife.
“ I’ll lead thee to the clearest rill,
“ Whose streams among the pebbles stray;
“ There will we sit and sip our fill,
“ Or on the flow’ry border play.
“ I’ll guide thee to the thickest brake,
“ Impervious to the school-boy’s eye:
“ For thee the plaster’d nest I’ll make,
“ And on thy downy pinions lie.
“ To get thee food I’ll range the fields,
“ And cull the best of ev’ry kind;
“ Whatever nature’s bounty yields,
“ Or love’s assiduous care can find.
“ And

“ And when my lovely mate would stray,
 “ To taste the summer’s sweets at large,
 “ At home I’ll wait the live-long day,
 “ And tend at home our infant charge.

“ When prompted by a mother’s care
 “ Thy warmth shall form th’ imprison’d
 “ young,
 “ With thee the task I’ll fondly share,
 “ Or cheer thy labours with my song.”

He ceas’d his song. The melting dame
 With tender pity heard his strain;
 She felt, she own’d a mutual flame,
 And hasten’d to relieve his pain.

He led her to the nuptial bow’r,
 And nestled closely to her side,
 The happiest bridegroom in that hour,
 And she the most enamour’d bride.

Next morn he wak’d her with a song—
 “ Arise! behold the new-born day!
 “ The Lark his maddin peal has rung;
 “ Arise, my love, and come away!”

Together

Together through the fields they stray'd,
 And to the verdant riv'let's side,
 Renew'd their vows, and hopp'd and play'd,
 With honest joy and decent pride.

But, O! my Muse with pain relates
 The mournful sequel of my tale:
 Sent by an order of the Fates,
 A gunner met them in the vale.

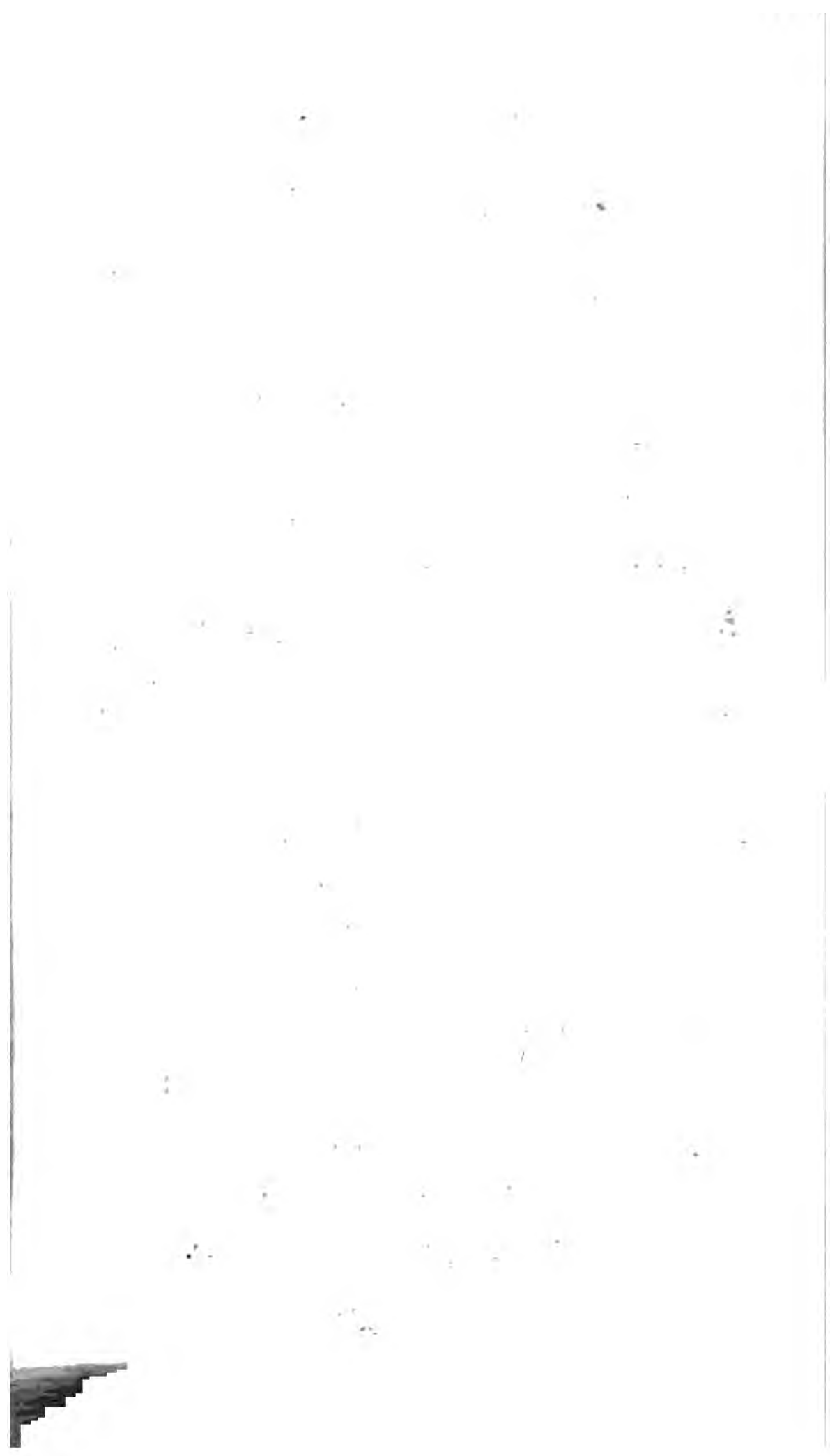
Alarm'd, the lover cry'd, " My dear,
 " Haste, haste away; from danger fly!
 " Here, gunner, take thy vengeance, here!
 " O! spare my love, and let me die."

At him the gunner took his aim;
 The aim he took was much too true;
 O! had he chose some other game,
 Or shot as he had us'd to do! *

Divided pair! forgive the wrong,
 While I with tears your fate rehearse:
 I'll join the widow's plaintive song,
 And save the lover in my verse.

* Never having killed any thing before or since.





G R A Y.

THOMAS GRAY, the son of Mr. Philip Gray, a scrivener of London, was born in Cornhill, November 26, 1716. His grammatical education he received at Eaton under Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother; and when he left school, in 1734, entered a pensioner at Peterhouse in Cambridge.

The transition from the school to the college is, to most young scholars, the time from which they date their years of manhood, liberty, and happiness; but

Gray seems to have been very little delighted with academical gratifications; he liked at Cambridge neither the mode of life nor the fashion of study, and lived sullenly on to the time when his attendance on lectures was no longer required. As he intended to profess the Common Law, he took no degree.

When he had been at Cambridge about five years, Mr. Horace Walpole, whose friendship he had gained at Eaton, invited him to travel with him as his companion. They wandered through France into Italy; and Gray's Letters contain a very pleasing account of many parts of their journey. But unequal friendships are easily dissolved: at Florence they quarrelled, and parted; and
Mr.

Mr. Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look however without prejudice on the world, we shall find that men, whose consciousness of their own merit sets them above the compliances of servility, are apt enough in their association with superiors to watch their own dignity with troublesome and punctilious jealousy, and in the fervour of independence to exact that attention which they refuse to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel, and the rest of their travels was doubtless more unpleasant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner suitable to his own little fortune, with only an occasional servant.

He returned to England in September 1741, and in about two months afterwards buried his father; who had, by an injudicious waste of money upon a new house, so much lessened his fortune, that Gray thought himself too poor to study the law. He therefore retired to Cambridge, where he soon after became Bachelor of Civil Law; and where, without liking the place or its inhabitants, or pretending to like them, he passed, except a short residence at London, the rest of his life.

About this time he was deprived of Mr. West, the son of a chancellor of Ireland, a friend on whom he appears to have set a high value, and who deserved his esteem by the powers which
he

he shews in his Letters, and in the Ode to *May*, which Mr. Mason has preserved, as well as by the sincerity with which, when Gray sent him part of *Agrippina*, a tragedy that he had just begun, he gave an opinion which probably intercepted the progress of the work, and which the judgement of every reader will confirm. It was certainly no loss to the English stage that *Agrippina* was never finished.

In this year (1742) Gray seems first to have applied himself seriously to poetry; for in this year were produced the *Ode to Spring*, his *Prospect of Eaton*, and his *Ode to Adversity*. He began likewise a Latin poem, *de Principiis cogitandi*.

It seems to be the opinion of Mr. Mason, that his first ambition was to have excelled in Latin poetry : perhaps it were reasonable to wish that he had prosecuted his design ; for though there is at present some embarrassment in his phrase, and some harshness in his Lyrick numbers, his copiousness of language is such as very few possess ; and his lines, even when imperfect, discover a writer whom practice would quickly have made skilful.

He now lived on at Peterhouse, very little solicitous what others did or thought, and cultivated his mind and enlarged his views without any other purpose than of improving and amusing himself ; when Mr. Mason, being elected fellow

fellow of Pembroke-hall, brought him a companion who was afterwards to be his editor, and whose fondness and fidelity has kindled in him a zeal of admiration, which cannot be reasonably expected from the neutrality of a stranger and the coldness of a critick.

In this retirement he wrote (1747) an ode on the *Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat*; and the year afterwards attempted a poem of more importance, on *Government and Education*, of which the fragments which remain have many excellent lines.

His next production (1750) was his far-famed *Elegy in the Church-yard*, which, finding its way into a Magazine,

first, I believe, made him known to the publick.

An invitation from lady Cobham about this time gave occasion to an odd composition called *a Long Story*, which, though perhaps it adds little to Gray's character, I am not pleased to find wanting in this Collection. It will therefore be added to this Preface.

Several of his pieces were published (1753), with designs, by Mr. Bentley; and, that they might in some form or other make a book, only one side of each leaf was printed. I believe the poems and the plates recommended each other so well, that the whole impression was soon bought. This year he lost his mother.

Some

Some time afterwards (1756) some young men of the college, whose chambers were near his, diverted themselves with disturbing him by frequent and troublesome noises. This insolence, having endured it a while, he represented to the governors of the society, among whom perhaps he had no friends; and, finding his complaint little regarded, removed himself to Pembroke-hall.

In 1757 he published *The Progress of Poetry* and *The Bard*, two compositions at which the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement. Some that tried them confessed their inability to understand them, though Warburton said that they were understood as well as the works of Milton

ton

ton and Shakespeare, which it is the fashion to praise. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praise. Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them from neglect, and in a short time many were content to be shewn beauties which they could not see.

Gray's reputation was now so high, that, after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refusing the laurel, which was then bestowed on Mr. Whitehead.

His curiosity, not long after, drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the Museum, where he resided near three years, reading and transcribing; and, so far as can be discovered, very little affected by two odes on *Oblivion* and *Obscurity*, in which his

Lyrick

Lyrick performances were ridiculed with much contempt and much ingenuity.

When the Professor of Modern Languages at Cambridge died, he was, as he says, *cockered and spirited up*, till he asked it of lord Bute, who sent him a civil refusal; and the place was given to Mr. Brocket, the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

His constitution was weak, and believing that his health was promoted by exercise and change of place, he undertook (1765) a journey into Scotland, of which his account, so far as it extends, is very curious and elegant; for as his comprehension was ample, his curiosity extended to all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and

all the monuments of past events. He naturally contracted a friendship with Dr. Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philosopher, and a good man. The Mareschal College at Aberdeen offered him the degree of Doctor of Laws, which, having omitted to take it at Cambridge, he thought it decent to refuse.

What he had formerly solicited in vain, was at last given him without solicitation. The Professorship of Languages became again vacant, and he received (1768) an offer of it from the duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death; always designing lectures, but never reading them; uneasy at his neglect of duty, and appealing
his

his uneasiness with designs of reformation, and with a resolution which he believed himself to have made of resigning the office, if he found himself unable to discharge it.

Ill health made another journey necessary, and he visited (1769) Westmoreland and Cumberland. He that reads his epistolary narration wishes, that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by studying at home that we must obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

His travels and his studies were now near their end. The gout, of which he had sustained many weak attacks, fell upon his stomach, and, yielding to no
medi-

medicines, produced strong convulsions, which (July 30, 1771) terminated in death.

His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Mason has done, from a nameless writer; and am as willing as his warmest friend to believe it true.

“ Perhaps he was the most learned
 “ man in Europe. He was equally ac-
 “ quainted with the elegant and pro-
 “ found 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 antiqua-
 “ rian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals,
 “ politics, made a principal part of his
 “ study;



“ study ; voyages and travels of all sorts
“ were his favourite amusements ; and
“ he had a fine taste in painting, prints,
“ architecture, and gardening. With
“ such a fund of knowledge, his con-
“ versation must have been equally in-
“ structing and entertaining ; but he was
“ also a good man, a man of virtue and
“ humanity. There is no character
“ without some speck, some imperfec-
“ tion ; and I think the greatest defect
“ in his was an affectation in delicacy,
“ or rather effeminacy, and a visible
“ fastidiousness, or contempt and dis-
“ dain of his inferiors in science. He
“ also had, in some degree, that weak-
“ ness which disgusted Voltaire so much
“ in Mr. Congreve : though he seemed

“ to value others chiefly according to
“ the progress they had made in know-
“ ledge, yet he could not bear to be
“ considered himself merely as a man
“ of letters; and though without birth,
“ or fortune, or station, his desire was
“ to be looked upon as a private inde-
“ pendent gentleman, who read for his
“ amusement. Perhaps it may be said,
“ What signifies so much knowledge,
“ when it produced so little? Is it worth
“ taking so much pains to leave no me-
“ morial but a few poems? But let it
“ be considered that Mr. Gray was, to
“ others, at least innocently employed;
“ to himself, certainly beneficially. His
“ time passed agreeably; he was every
“ day making some new acquisition in
“ science;

“ science; his mind was enlarged, his
“ heart softened, his virtue strengthen-
“ ed; the world and mankind were
“ shewn to him without a mask; and he
“ was taught to consider every thing as
“ trifling, and unworthy of the atten-
“ tion of a wise man, except the pur-
“ suit of knowledge and practice of
“ virtue, in that state wherein God hath
“ placed us.”

To this character Mr. Mason has added a more particular account of Gray's skill in zoology. He has remarked, that Gray's effeminacy was affected most *before those whom he did not wish to please*; and that he is unjustly charged with making knowledge his sole reason of preference, as he paid his esteem to none

B

whom

whom he did not likewise believe to be good.

What has occurred to me, from the slight inspection of his Letters in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgement cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all, but that he was fastidious and hard to please. His contempt however is often employed, where I hope it will be approved, upon scepticism and infidelity. His short account of Shaftesbury I will insert.

“ You say you cannot conceive how
“ lord Shaftesbury came to be a philo-
“ sopher in vogue; I will tell you: first,
“ he

“ he was a lord ; fecondly, he was as
“ vain as any of his readers ; thirdly,
“ men are very prone to believe what
“ they do not underftand ; fourthly, they
“ will believe any thing at all, provided
“ they are under no obligation to believe
“ it ; fifthly, they love to take a new
“ road, even when that road leads no
“ where ; fixthly, he was reckoned a
“ fine writer, and feems always to mean
“ more than he faid. Would you have
“ any more reafons ? An interval of above
“ forty years has pretty well deftroyed
“ the charm. A dead lord ranks with
“ commoners : vanity is no longer in-
“ terefted in the matter ; for a new road
“ is become an old one.”

Mr. Mason has added, from his own knowledge, that though Gray was poor, he was not eager of money; and that, out of the little that he had, he was very willing to help the necessitous.

As a writer he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces first rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it arose in the train of composition; and he had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastick foppery, to which my kindness for a man of learning and of virtue wishes him to have been superior.





GRAY'S Poetry is now to be considered; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confess that I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life.

His ode on *Spring* has something poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has of late arisen a practice of giving to adjectives, derived from substantives, the termination of participles; such as the *cultured* plain, the *desied* bank; but I was sorry to see, in the lines of a scholar like Gray, the *bonied* Spring. The morality is natu-

ral, but too stale; the conclusion is pretty.

The poem on the *Cat* was doubtless by its author considered as a trifle, but it is not a happy trifle. In the first stanza *the azure flowers that blow*, shew resolutely a rhyme is sometimes made when it cannot easily be found. *Selima*, the *Cat*, is called a nymph, with some violence both to language and sense; but there is good use made of it when it is done; for of the two lines,

What female heart can gold despise?

What cat's averse to fish?

the first relates merely to the nymph, and the second only to the cat. The sixth stanza contains a melancholy truth, that *a favourite has no friend*; but the
last

last ends in a pointed sentence of no relation to the purpose; if *what glistered* had been *gold*, the cat would not have gone into the water; and, if she had, would not less have been drowned.

The *Prospect of Eaton College* suggests nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to father *Thames*, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile. Father *Thames* has no better means of knowing than himself. His epithet *buxom health* is not elegant; he seems not to understand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common use: finding in Dryden *honey redolent of Spring*, an expres-

sion that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making *gales* to be *redolent of joy and youth*.

Of the *Ode on Adversity*, the hint was at first taken from *O Diva, gratum quæ regis Antium*; but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his sentiments, and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetical and rational, I will not by slight objections violate the dignity.

My process has now brought me to the *wonderful Wonder of Wonders*, the two Sister Odes; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common sense at first universally rejected them, many
 have

have been since persuaded to think themselves delighted. I am one of those that are willing to be pleased, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of the *Progress of Poetry*.

Gray seems in his rapture to confound the images of *spreading sound* and *running water*. A *stream of musick* may be allowed; but where does *Musick*, however *smooth and strong*, after having visited the *verdant vales*, *rowl down the steep amain*, so as that *rocks and nodding groves rebel to the roar*? If this be said of *Musick*, it is nonsense; if it be said of *Water*, it is nothing to the purpose.

The second stanza, exhibiting Mars's car and Jove's eagle, is unworthy of
further

further notice. Criticism disdains to chase a school-boy to his common places.

To the third it may likewise be objected, that it is drawn from Mythology, though such as may be more easily assimilated to real life. Idalia's *velvet-green* has something of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. *Many-twinkling* was formerly censured as not analogical; we may say *many-spotted*, but scarcely *many-spotting*. This stanza, however, has something pleasing.

Of the second ternary of stanzas, the first endeavours to tell something, and would have told it, had it not been
crossed

crossed by Hyperion: the second describes well enough the universal prevalence of Poetry; but I am afraid that the conclusion will not rise from the premises. The caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are not the residences of *Glory* and *generous Shame*. But that Poetry and Virtue go always together is an opinion so pleasing, that I can forgive him who resolves to think it true.

The third stanza sounds big with *Delphi*, and *Egean*, and *Ilissus*, and *Meander*, and *hallowed fountain* and *solemn sound*; but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous splendor which we wish away. His position is at last false: in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom

whom he derives our first school of Poetry, Italy was over-run by *tyrant power* and *coward vice*; nor was our state much better when we first borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the first gives a mythological birth of Shakespeare. What is said of that mighty genius is true; but it is not said happily: the real effects of his poetical power are put out of sight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is sufficient to fill the mind, fiction is worse than useless; the counterfeit debases the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindness, if we suppose it caused by study in the formation of his poem, a supposition surely allowable, is poetically true, and
hap-

happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two coursers*, has nothing in it peculiar; it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

The Bard appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original; and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgement is right. There is in *The Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival disgusts

gufts us with apparent and unconquerable falfehood. *Incredulus odi.*

To felect a fingular event, and fwell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of fpectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forfakes the probable may always find the marvellous; and it has little ufe, we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find fomething to be imitated or declined. I do not fee that *The Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political.

His ftanzas are too long, efpecially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its meafures, and confequently before it can receive pleasure

sure from their consonance and recurrence.

Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to rush abruptly upon his subject, that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong*.

Is there ever a man in all Scotland—

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, *ruin, ruthless, helm nor hauberk*, are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity.

In the second stanza the *Bard* is well described; but in the third we have the puerilities of obsolete mythology. When we are told that *Cadwallo hush'd the stormy main*, and that *Modred made huge Plinlimmon*

limmon bow his cloud-top'd head, attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was first heard, was heard with scorn.

The *weaving* of the *winding sheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the northern Bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers, as the art of spinning the thread of life in another mythology. Theft is always dangerous; Gray has made weavers of his slaughtered bards, by a fiction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to *Weave the warp*, and *weave the woof*, perhaps with no great propriety; for it is by crossing the *woof* with the *warp* that men *weave* the *web* or piece; and the first line was dearly bought

by the admission of its wretched correspondent, *Give ample room and verge enough.* He has, however, no other line as bad.

The third stanza of the second ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The personification is indistinct. *Thirst* and *Hunger* are not alike; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, should have been discriminated. We are told, in the same stanza, how *towers* are *fed*. But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be observed that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had, without expence of thought.

These odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments;

C

they

they strike rather than please; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harshness. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble.* He has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease or nature.

To say that he has no beauties would be unjust: a man like him, of great learning and great industry, could not but produce something valuable. When he pleases least, it can only be said that a good design was ill directed.

His

His translations of Northern and Welsh Poetry deserve praise; the imagery is preserved, perhaps often improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

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 subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The *Church-yard* abounds with images which find a mirrour in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo. The four stanzas beginning *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.



A LONG



A L O N G S T O R Y *.

IN Britain's isle, no matter where,
 An antient pile of building stands :
 The Huntingdons and Hattons there
 Employ'd the power of Fairy hands

* When Mr. Gray had put his last hand to the celebrated Elegy in the Country Church-yard, he communicated it to his friend Mr. Walpole, whose good taste was too much charmed with it to suffer him to with-hold the sight of it from his acquaintance ; accordingly it was shewn about for some time in manuscript, and received with all the applause it so justly merited. Amongst the rest of the fashionable world, for to those only it was at present communicated, Lady Cobham, who now lived at the mansion-house at Stoke-Pogis, had read and admired it. She wished to be acquainted with the author ; accordingly her relation Miss Speed and Lady Schaub, then at her house, undertook to bring this about by making him the first visit. He happened to be from home when the Ladies arrived at his Aunt's solitary mansion ; and, when he returned, was surprized to find, written on one of his

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

papers in the parlour where he usually read, 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." This necessarily obliged him to return the visit, and soon after induced him to compose a ludicrous account of this little adventure, for the amusement of the Ladies in question. He wrote it in ballad measure, and entitled it a Long Story: when it was handed about in manuscript, nothing could be more various than the opinions concerning it; by some it was thought a master-piece of original humour, by others a wild and fantastic farrago; and when it was published, the sentiments of good judges were equally divided about it. See Mr. Mason's Memoirs, vol. III. p. 125.

† The mansion-house at Stoke-Pogis, then in the possession of Viscountess Cobham. The style of building, which we now call Queen Elizabeth's, is here admirably described, both with regard to its beauties and defects; and the third and fourth stanzas delineate the fantastic manners of her time with equal truth and humour. The house formerly belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton. M.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
 When he had fifty winters o'er him,
 * My grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls;
 The seal and maces danc'd before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
 His high-crown'd hat, and fatten doublet,
 Mov'd the stout heart of England's Queen,
 Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very first beginning!
 Shame of the verifying 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

* Sir Christopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing. G.—Brawls were a sort of figure-dance, then in vogue, and probably deemed as elegant as our modern Cotillions, or still more modern Quadrilles. M.

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

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

The other Amazon 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 teaze her.
Melissa is her *Nom de Guerre*.
Alas, who would not wish to please her!

* The reader is already apprised who these Ladies were ;
the two descriptions are prettily contrasted ; and nothing can
be more happily turned than the compliment to Lady Cob-
ham in the eighth stanza. M.

With

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

Fame, in the shape of * Mr. P—t,
(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 lam'd the deer,
And suck'd the eggs, and kill'd 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.

* I have been told that this Gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mr. Gray's in the country, was much displeas'd at the liberty here taken with his name; yet, surely, without any great reason. M.

The Heroines undertook the task,
 Thro' lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventur'd,
 Rap'd at the door, nor stay'd to ask,
 But bounce into the parlour enter'd.

The trembling family they daunt,
 They flirt, they fing, 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;

Into the drawers and china pry,
 Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
 Under a tea-cup he might lie,
 Or creas'd, like dogs-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 Rumour says : (who will, believe.)
But that they left the door a-jar,
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.

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 fat, the culprit there,
Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping
The Lady Janes and Joans repair,
And from the gallery stand peeping :

Such

Such as in filence of the night
 Come (fweep) along fome winding entry,
 * (Styack has often feen the fight)
 Or at the chapel-door ftand centry:

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

The Peerefs comes. The audience ftare,
 And doff their hats with due fubmiffion:
 She curtfies, as fhe takes her chair,
 To all the people of condition.

The Bard, with many an artful fib,
 Had in imagination fenc'd him,
 Disprov'd the arguments of † Squib,
 And all that ‡ Groom could urge againft him.

* The Houfe-keeper. G. † Groom of the Chamber. G.
 ‡ The Steward, G.

But soon his rhetorick forsook him,
 When he the solemn hall had seen ;
 A sudden fit of ague shook him,
 He stood as mute as poor * Maclean.

Yet something he was heard to mutter,
 “ How in the Park, beneath an old tree,
 “ (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 conj'rer taken.”

The ghostly prudes with hagg'd † face
 Already had condemn'd the sinner.

* A famous highwayman, hanged the week before. G.

† Hagg'd, *i. e.* the face of a witch or hag ; the epithet Hagard has been sometimes mistaken, as conveying the same idea ; but it means a very different thing, viz. wild and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed hawk, called an Hagard. M.

My

My Lady rose, and with a grace—
 She smil'd, and bid him come to dinner *.

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

“ Decorum's turn'd to mere civility;
 “ Her air and all her-manners shew it.
 Commend me to her affability!
 “ Speak to a Commoner and Poet!”

[*Here 500 Stanzas are lost.*]

* Here the story finishes; the exclamation of the Ghosts which follows is characteristic of the Spanish manners of the age, when they are supposed to have lived; and the 500 stanzas, said to be lost, may be imagined to contain the remainder of their long-winded expostulation. M.

And

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.



O D E

O D E F O R M U S I C K,

Performed in the Senate-House at Cambridge,
 July 1, 1769, at the Installation of his Grace
 Augustus-Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton,
 Chancellor of the Univerfity.

I.

“ H E N C E, avaut ('tis holy ground),
 “ Comus, and his midnight-crew,
 “ And Ignorance with looks profound,
 “ And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,
 “ Mad Seditiōn's cry profane,
 “ Servitude that hugs her chain,
 “ Nor in thefe confecrated bowers
 “ Let painted Flattery hide her ſerpent-train
 “ in flowers.
 “ Nor Envy baſe, nor creeping Gain,
 “ Dare the Muſe's walk to ſtain,

D

“ While

“ While bright-eyed Science watches round :

“ Hence, away, 'tis holy ground !”

II.

From yonder realms of empyrean day

Bursts on my ear th' indignant lay :

There sit the fainted 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-ton'd 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’er-arching 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-ey’d
 “ Melancholy.”

IV.

But hark ! the portals found, 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

* Edward the Third; who added the Fleur de lys of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity College.

From haughty Gallia torn,
 And * fad Chatillon, on her bridal morn
 That wept her bleeding Love, and princely
 † Clare,
 And ‡ Anjou's Heroine, and § the paler Rose,

* 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*.

† Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, was wife of John de Burg, son and heir of the Earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward the First. Hence the Poet gives her the epithet of Princely. She founded Clare Hall.

‡ Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, foundress of Queen's College. The Poet has celebrated her conjugal fidelity in a former Ode.

§ 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.

The

The rival of her crown and of her woes,
 And * either Henry there,
 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,
 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 ?

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

- “ 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 Marg’ret see!

- “ Welcome, my noble Son (she cries aloud),
 “ To this, thy kindred train, and me :
 “ Pleas’d in thy lineaments we trace
 “ A † Tudor’s fire, a Beaufort’s grace.
 “ Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
 “ The flower unheeded shall descry,

* Countess of Richmond and Derby; the mother of Henry the Seventh, foundress of St. John’s and Christ’s Colleges.

† 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.

“ And

“ 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
 “ No vulgar praise, no venal incense flings ;
 “ Nor dares with courtly tongue refin’d
 “ 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,
 “ And to thy just, thy gentle hand
 “ Submits the Fasces of her sway,
 “ While Spirits blest above and Men below
 “ Join with glad voice the loud symphonious
 lay.

* Lord Treasurer Burleigh was Chancellor of the University, in the reign of Q. Elizabeth.

“ Throug

VIII.

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



