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# E L E G I E S.

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BY

WILLIAM MASON, M.A.

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The SECOND EDITION.

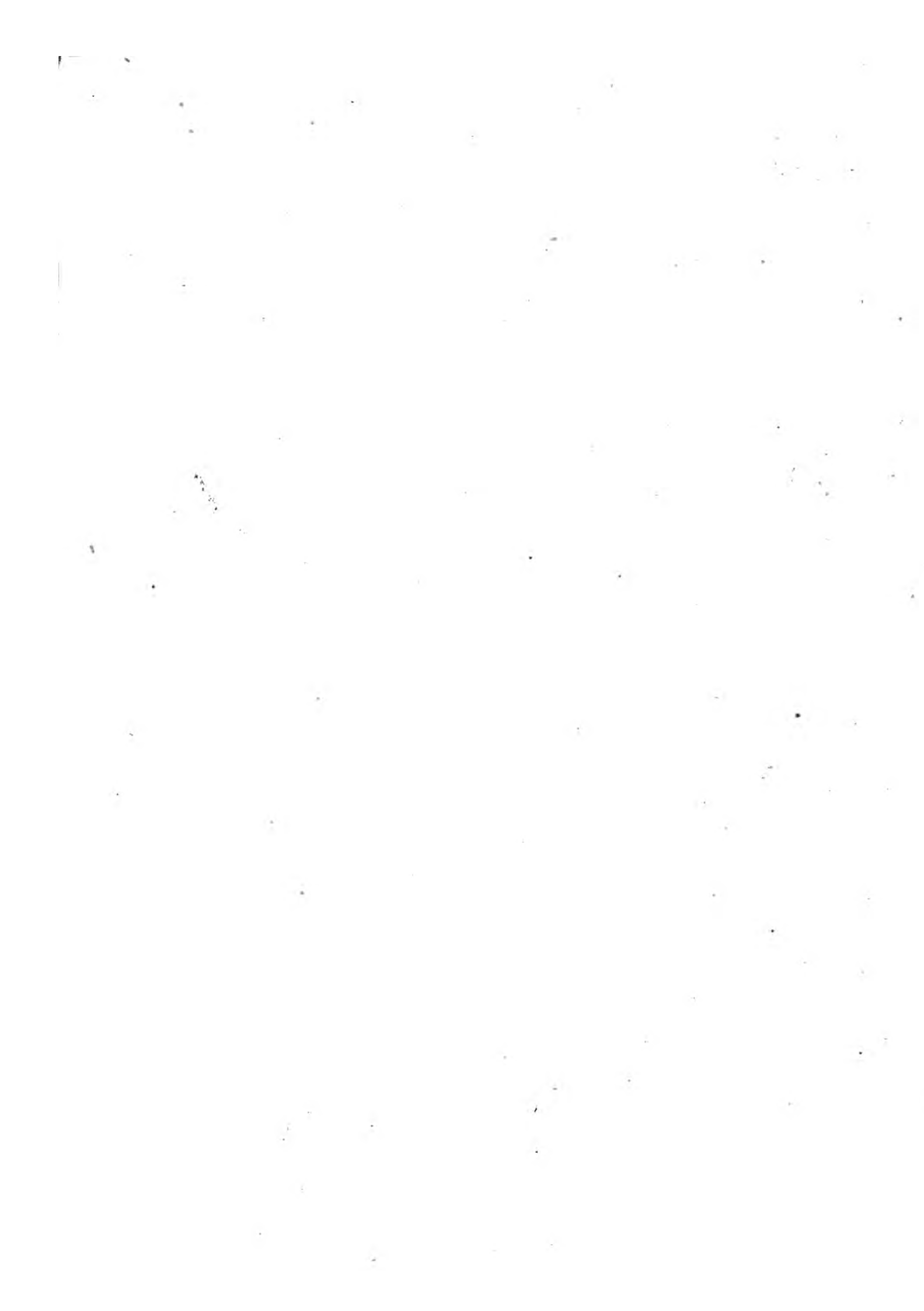


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L O N D O N,

Printed for ROBERT HORSFIELD, at the Crown in Ludgate-Street:  
Sold by R. and J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall; and C. MARSH, at Charing-Cross.  
Also by W. THURLBOURN and J. WOODYER in Cambridge; W. TESSEY-  
MAN, in York; and W. WARD, in Sheffield.

MDCCLXIII.



## E L E G Y I.

*To a YOUNG NOBLEMAN**Leaving the University.*

**E**'ER yet, ingenuous Youth, thy steps retire  
 From Cam's smooth margin, and the peaceful vale.

Where Science call'd thee to her studious quire,

And met thee musing in her cloysters pale ;

O! let thy friend (and may he boast the name)

Breath from his artless reed one parting lay ;

A lay like this thy early Virtues claim,

And this let voluntary Friendship pay.

Yet know, the time arrives, the dangerous time,  
 When all those Virtues, opening now so fair,  
 Transplanted to the world's tempestuous clime,  
 Must learn each Passion's boisterous breath to bear.  
 There, if Ambition pestilent and pale,  
 Or Luxury should taint their vernal glow ;  
 If cold Self-interest, with her chilling gale,  
 Should blast th'unfolding blossoms e'er they blow ;  
 If mimic hues, by Art, or Fashion spread,  
 Their genuine, simple colouring should supply,  
 O! with them may these laureate honors fade ;  
 And with them (if it can) my Friendship die.  
 Then do not blame, if, tho' thyself inspire,  
 Cautious I strike the panegyric string ;  
 The Muse full oft pursues a meteor fire,  
 And, vainly venturous, soars on waxen wing.

Too actively awake at Friendship's voice,

The Poet's bosom pours the fervent strain,

Till sad Reflexion blames the hasty choice,

And oft invokes Oblivion's aid in vain.

Call we the Shade of POPE, from that blest bower

Where thron'd he sits with many a tuneful Sage;

Ask, if he ne'er bemoans that hapless hour

When ST. JOHN's name \* illumin'd Glory's page?

Ask, if the wretch, who dar'd his mem'ry stain,

Ask, if his country's, his religion's foe

Deserv'd the meed that MARLBRO' fail'd to gain,

The deathless meed, he only could bestow?

N O T E.

\* Alluding to this couplet of Mr. POPE's,  
 To CATO VIRGIL paid one honest line,  
 O let my Country's friends *illumine* mine.

The Bard will tell thee, the misguided praise  
     Clouds the cœlestial sunshine of his breast ;  
 Ev'n now, repentant of his erring Lays,  
     He heaves a sigh amid the realms of rest.  
 If POPE thro' friendship fail'd, indignant view,  
     Yet pity DRYDEN ; hark, whene'er he sings,  
 How Adulation drops her courtly dew  
     On titled Rhymers, and inglorious Kings.  
 See, from the depths of his exhaustless mine,  
     His glittering stores the tuneful Spendthrift throws ;  
 Where Fear, or Interest bids, behold they shine ;  
     Now grace a CROMWELL'S, now a CHARLES'S brows.  
 Born with too generous, or too mean a heart,  
     DRYDEN ! in vain to thee those stores were lent :  
 Thy sweetest numbers but a trifling Art ;  
     Thy strongest diction idly eloquent.

The simplest Lyre, if Truth directs its Lays,  
     Warbles a melody ne'er heard from thine:  
 Not to disgust with false, or venal praise,  
     Was PARNELL'S modest fame, and may be mine.  
 Go then, my Friend, nor let thy candid breast  
     Condemn me, if I check the plausible string;  
 Go to the wayward world; compleat the rest;  
     Be, what the purest Muse would wish to sing.  
 Be still thyself; that open path of Truth,  
     Which led thee here, let Manhood firm pursue;  
 Retain the sweet simplicity of Youth,  
     And, all thy virtue dictates, dare to do.  
 Still scorn, with conscious pride, the mask of Art;  
     On vices front let fearful caution lour,  
 And teach the diffident, discreeter part  
     Of knaves that plot, and fools that fawn for Power.



So, round thy brow when Age's honours spread,  
 When Death's cold hand unstrings thy MASON's lyre,  
 When the green turf lies lightly on his head,  
 Thy worth shall some superior bard inspire :  
 He, to the amplest bounds of Time's domain,  
 On Rapture's plume shall give thy Name to fly ;  
 For trust, with reverence trust this \* Sabine strain :  
 " The Muse forbids the virtuous Man to die."

Written in 1753.

N O T E.

\* ——— Dignum laude Virum.  
 Musa vetat mori. HORACE.

## E L E G Y II.

*Written in the GARDEN  
of a FRIEND.*

**W**HILE o'er my head this laurel-woven bower  
 Its arch of glittering verdure wildly flings,  
 Can Fancy slumber? can the tuneful Power,  
 That rules my lyre, neglect her wonted strings?  
 No; if the blighting East deform'd the plain,  
 If this gay bank no balmy sweets exhal'd,  
 Still should the grove re-echo to my strain,  
 And friendship prompt the theme, where beauty fail'd.

For

For he, whose careless art this foliage drest,  
     Who had these twisting braids of woodbine bend,  
 He first, with truth and virtue, taught my breast  
     Where best to chuse, and best to fix a friend.  
 How well does Mem'ry note the golden day,  
     What time, reclin'd in Marg'rets studious glade,  
 My mimic reed first tun'd the \* Dorian Lay,  
     “ Unseen, unheard, beneath an hawthorn shade ?”  
 'Twas there we met ; the Muses hail'd the hour ;  
     The same desires, the same ingenuous arts  
 Inspir'd us both ; we own'd and blest the power  
     That join'd at once our studies, and our hearts.

## N O T E.

\* MUSÆUS, the first Poem which the Author published, written while he was a Scholar of St. John's College in Cambridge.

O! since those days, when Science spread the feast,  
 When emulative Youth its relish lent,  
 Say, has one genuine Joy e'er warm'd my breast?  
 Enough; if Joy was his, be mine Content.  
 To thirst for praise his temperate Youth forbore;  
 He fondly wish'd not for a Poet's name;  
 Much did he love the Muse, but Quiet more,  
 And, tho' he might command, he slighted Fame.  
 Hither, in manhood's prime, he wisely fled  
 From all that Folly, all that Pride approves;  
 To this soft scene a tender Partner led;  
 This laurel shade was witness to their loves.  
 " Begone," he cry'd, " Ambition's air-drawn plan;  
 " Hence with perplexing pomp, unwieldy wealth:  
 " Let me not seem, but be the happy man,  
 " Possess of Love, of Competence, and Health."

Smiling he spake, nor did the Fates withstand ;  
 In rural arts the peaceful moments flew :  
 Say, lovely Lawn ! that felt his forming hand,  
 How soon thy surface shone with verdure new,  
 How soon obedient FLORA brought her store,  
 And o'er thy breast a shower of fragrance flung :  
 VERTUMNUS came ; his earliest blooms he bore,  
 And thy rich fides with waving purple hung :  
 Then to the sight, he call'd yon stately spire,  
 He pierc'd th'opposing oak's luxuriant shade ;  
 Bad yonder crowding hawthorns low retire,  
 Nor veil the glories of the golden mead.  
 Hail, sylvan wonders, hail ; and hail the hand,  
 Whose native taste thy native charms display'd,  
 And taught one little acre to command  
 Each envied happiness of scene, and shade.

Is there a hill, whose distant azure bounds  
 The ample range of Scarfsdale's proud domain,  
 A mountain hoar, that yon wild Peak furrounds,  
 But lends a willing beauty to thy plain?  
 And, lo! in yonder path I spy my friend;  
 He looks the guardian genius of the grove,  
 Mild as \* the fabled Form that whilom deign'd,  
 At MILTON's call, in Harefield's haunts to rove.

## N O T E.

\* See the Description of the Genius of the Wood, in MILTON's Arcades.

For know, by lot, from Jove, I am the Power  
 Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower;  
 To nurse the Saplings tall, and curl the grove  
 With ringlets quaint, &c.

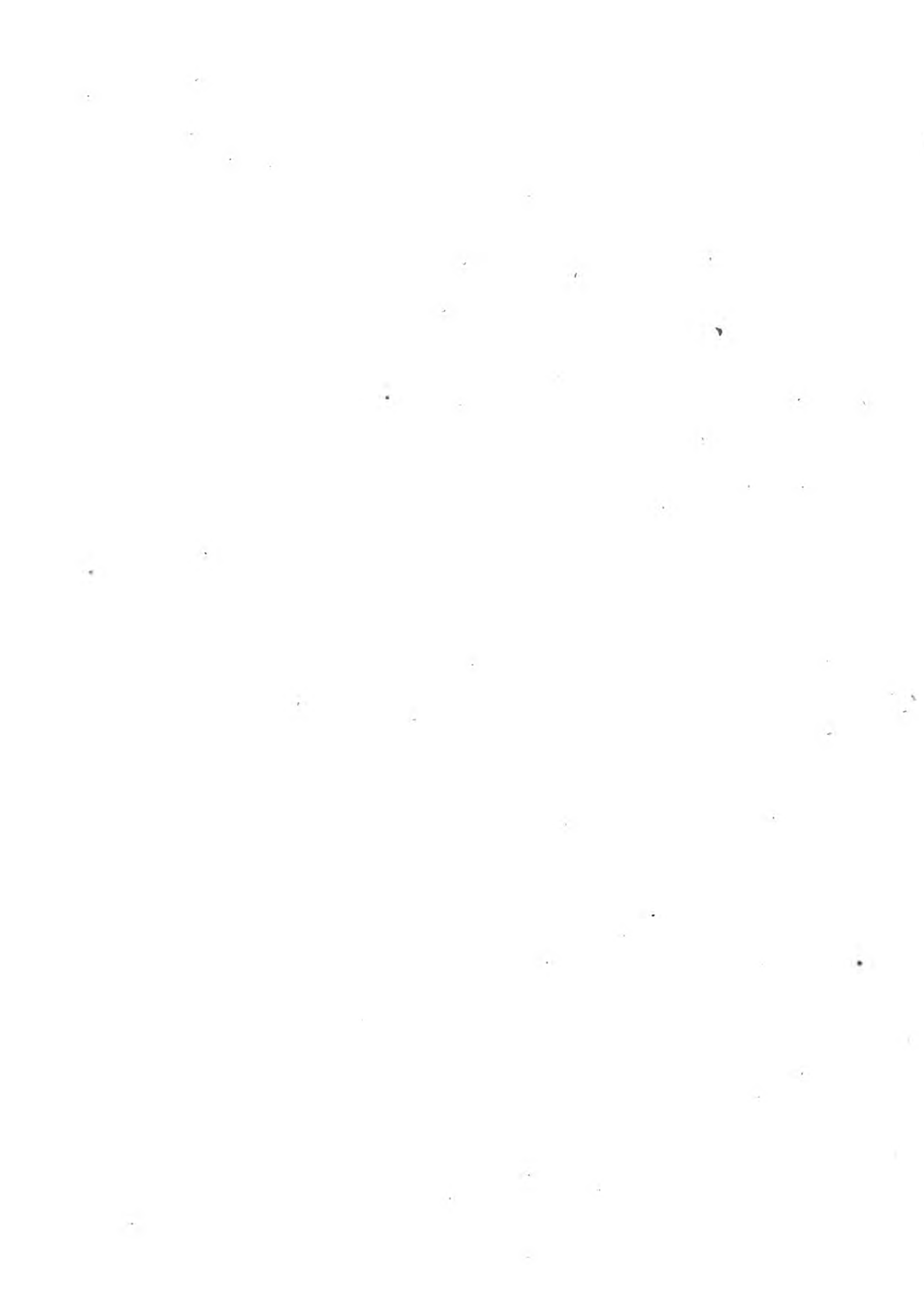
Blest Spirit, come! tho' pent in mortal mould,  
 I'll yet invoke thee by that purer name ;  
 O come, a Portion of thy blifs unfold,  
 From Folly's maze my wayward step reclaim.  
 Too long, alas, my inexparienc'd youth,  
 Misled by flattering Fortune's specious tale,  
 Has left the rural reign of Peace, and Truth,  
 The huddling brook, cool cave, and whispering vale.  
 Won to the world, a candidate for praise,  
 Yet, let me boast, by no ignoble art,  
 Too oft the public ear has heard my lays,  
 Too much its vain applause has touch'd my heart ;  
 But now, e'er Custom binds his powerful chains,  
 Come, from the base enchanter set me free,  
 While yet my soul its first, best taste retains,  
 Recall that soul to reason, peace, and thee.

Teach me, like thee, to muse on Nature's page,  
 To mark each wonder in Creation's plan,  
 Each mode of being trace, and, humbly sage,  
 Deduce from these the genuine powers of Man;  
 Of Man, while warm'd with reason's purer ray,  
 No tool of policy, no dupe to pride;  
 Before vain Science led his taste astray;  
 When conscience was his law, and God his guide.  
 This let me learn, and learning let me live  
 The lesson o'er. From that great Guide of Truth  
 O may my suppliant soul the boon receive  
 To tread thro' age the footsteps of thy youth.

Written in 1758.

ELEGY





## E L E G Y III.

*On the DEATH of a LADY.*

**T**H E midnight clock has toll'd; and hark, the bell  
 Of Death beats flow! heard ye the note profound?  
 It pauses now; and now, with rising knell,  
 Flings to the hollow gale its fullen sound.  
 Yes \* \* \* is dead. Attend the strain,  
 Daughters of Albion! Ye that, light as air,  
 So oft have tript in her fantastic train,  
 With hearts as gay, and faces half as fair:

For

For she was fair beyond your brightest bloom :  
 (This Envy owns, since now her bloom is fled)  
 Fair as the Forms that, wove in Fancy's loom,  
 Float in light vision round the Poet's head.  
 Whene'er with soft serenity she smil'd,  
 Or caught the orient blush of quick surprize,  
 How sweetly mutable, how brightly wild,  
 The liquid lustre darted from her eyes?  
 Each look, each motion wak'd a new-born grace,  
 That o'er her form its transient glory cast :  
 Some lovelier wonder soon usurp'd the place,  
 Chas'd by a charm still lovelier than the last.  
 That bell again ! It tells us what she is :  
 On what she was no more the strain prolong :  
 Luxuriant Fancy pause : an hour like this  
 Demands the tribute of a serious Song.

MARIA claims it from that fable bier,  
 Where cold and wan the slumberer rests her head ;  
 In still small whispers to reflection's ear,  
 She breathes the solemn dictates of the Dead.  
 O catch the awful notes, and lift them loud ;  
 Proclaim the theme, by Sage, by Fool rever'd ;  
 Hear it, ye Young, ye Vain, ye Great, ye Proud !  
 'Tis Nature speaks, and Nature will be heard.  
 Yes, ye shall hear, and tremble as ye hear,  
 While, high with health, your hearts exulting leap :  
 Ev'n in the midst of pleasure's mad career,  
 The mental Monitor shall wake and weep.  
 For say, than \* \* \* 's propitious star,  
 What brighter planet on your births arose ;  
 Or gave of Fortune's gifts an ampler share,  
 In life to lavish, or by death to lose !

Early to lose ; while, born on busy wing,  
     Ye sip the nectar of each varying bloom :  
 Nor fear, while basking in the beams of spring,  
     The wintry storm that sweeps you to the tomb.  
 Think of her Fate ! revere the heav'nly hand  
     That led her hence, though soon, by steps so slow ;  
 Long at her couch Death took his patient stand,  
     And menac'd oft, and oft withheld the blow :  
 To give Reflection time, with lenient art,  
     Each fond delusion from her soul to steal ;  
 Teach her from Folly peaceably to part,  
     And wean her from a world she lov'd so well.  
 Say, are ye sure his Mercy shall extend  
     To you so long a span ? Alas, ye sigh :  
 Make then, while yet ye may, your God your friend,  
     And learn with equal ease to sleep or die !

Nor think the Muse, whose sober voice ye hear,  
 Contracts with bigot frown her fullen brow ;  
 Casts round Religion's orb the mists of fear,  
 Or shades with horrors, what with smiles should glow.  
 No ; she would warm you with seraphic fire,  
 Heirs as ye are of heav'n's eternal day ;  
 Would bid you boldly to that heav'n aspire,  
 Not sink and slumber in your cells of clay.  
 Know, ye were form'd to range yon azure field,  
 In yon æthereal founts of blifs to lave ;  
 Force then, secure in Faith's protecting shield,  
 The Sting from Death, the Vict'ry from the Grave.  
 Is this the bigot's rant ? Away ye Vain,  
 Your hopes, your fears in doubt, in dulness steep :  
 Go sooth your souls in sickness, grief, or pain,  
 With the sad solace of eternal sleep.

Yet will I praise you, triflers as ye are,  
 More than those Preachers of your fav'rite creed,  
 Who proudly swell the brazen throat of War,  
 Who form the Phalanx, bid the battle bleed ;  
 Nor wish for more : who conquer, but to die.  
 Hear, Folly, hear ; and triumph in the tale :  
 Like you, they reason ; not, like you, enjoy  
 The breeze of blifs, that fills your filken fail :

## N O T E.

In a book of *French verses*, entitled *Oeuvres du Philosophe de sans Souci*, and lately reprinted at *Berlin* by authority, under the title of *Poesies Diverses*, may be found an epistle to Marshal KEITH, written professedly against the immortality of the Soul. By way of specimen of the whole, take the following lines.

De l'avenir, cher KEITH, jugeons par le passé ;  
 Comme avant que je fusse il n'avoit point pensé,  
 De meme, apres ma mort, quand toutes mes parties  
 Par le corruption feront aneanties,  
 Par un meme destin il ne pensera plus ;  
 Non, rien n'est plus certain, soyons-en convaincu &c.

It is to this epistle, that the rest of the Elegy alludes.

On Pleasure's glitt'ring stream ye gayly steer

Your little course to cold oblivion's shore :

They dare the storm, and, through th'inclement year,

Stem the rough surge, and brave the torrent's roar.

Is it for Glory ? that just Fate denies.

Long must the Warrior moulder in his shroud,

E'er from her trump the heav'n-breath'd accents rise,

That lift the Hero from the fighting croud.

Is it his grasp of Empire to extend ?

To curb the fury of insulting foes ?

Ambition, cease : the idle contest end :

'Tis but a Kingdom thou canst win or lose.

And why must murder'd myriads lose their all,

(If Life be all) why desolation lour,

With famish'd frown, on this affrighted ball,

That thou may'st flame the meteor of an hour ?



Go wiser ye, that flutter Life away,  
     Crown with the mantling Juice the goblet high ;  
 Weave the light dance, with festive freedom gay,  
     And live your moment, since the next ye die.  
 Yet know, vain Scepticks, know, th'Almighty mind,  
     Who breath'd on Man a portion of his fire,  
 Bad his free Soul, by earth nor time confin'd,  
     To Heav'n, to Immortality aspire.  
 Nor shall the Pile of Hope, his Mercy rear'd,  
     By vain Philosophy be e'er destroy'd:  
 Eternity, by all or wish'd or fear'd,  
     Shall be by all or suffer'd or enjoy'd.

Written in 1760.

F I N I S.