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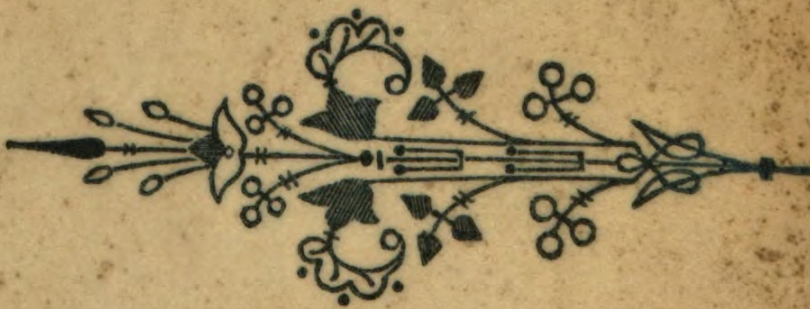
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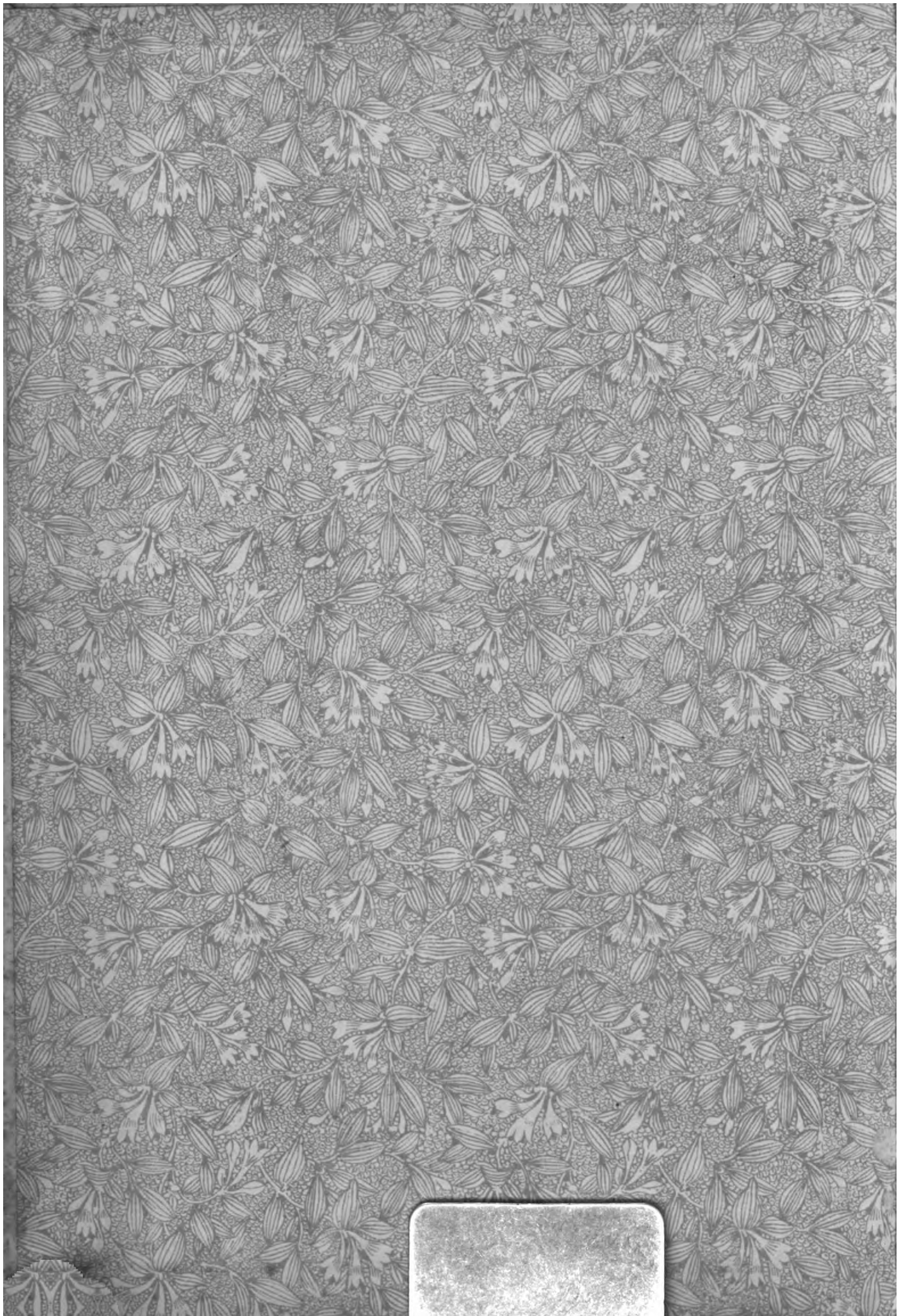
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GRAY'S ELEGY



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GRAY'S EL

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AND

A *FACSIMILE* OF THE FAIR
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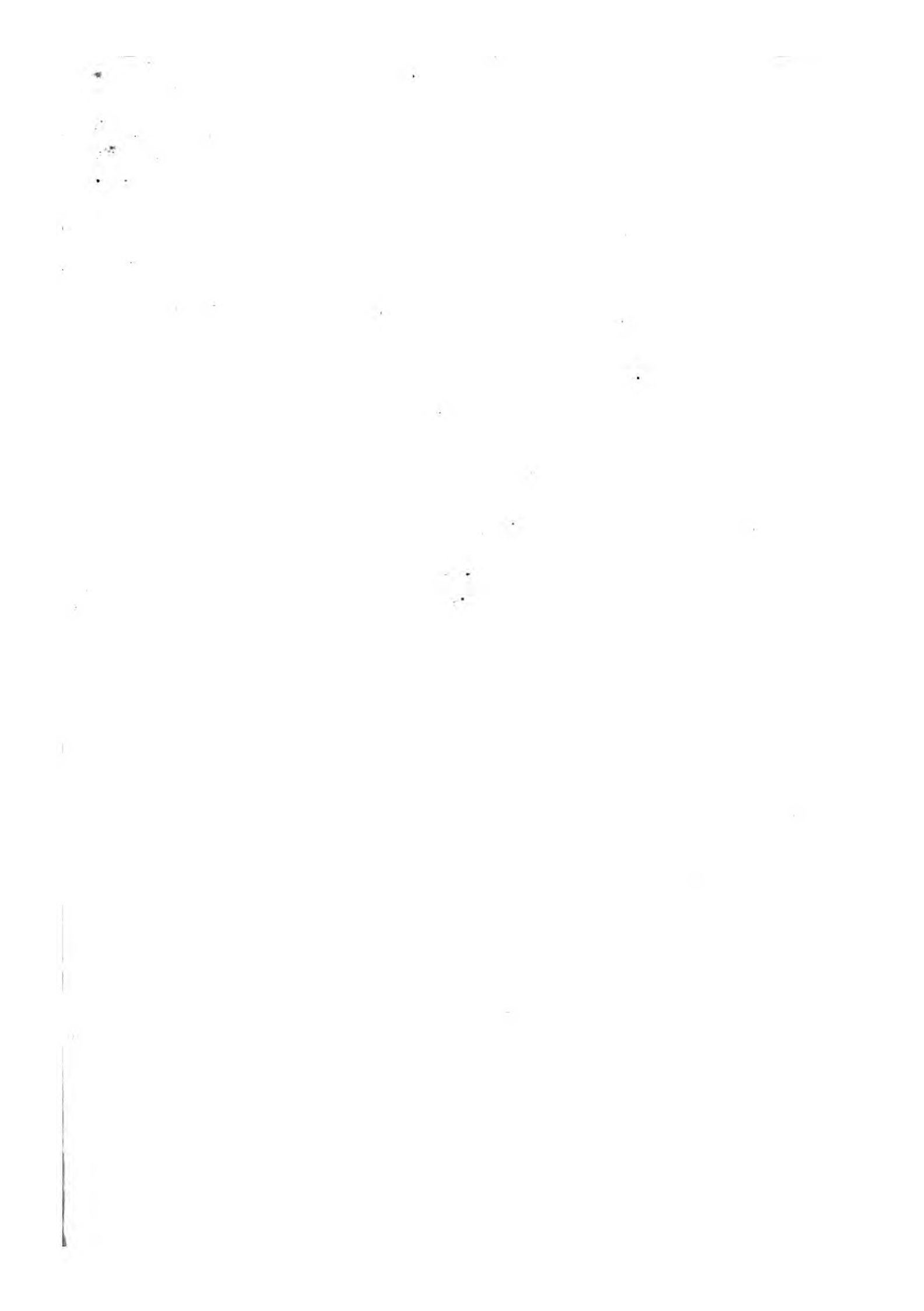
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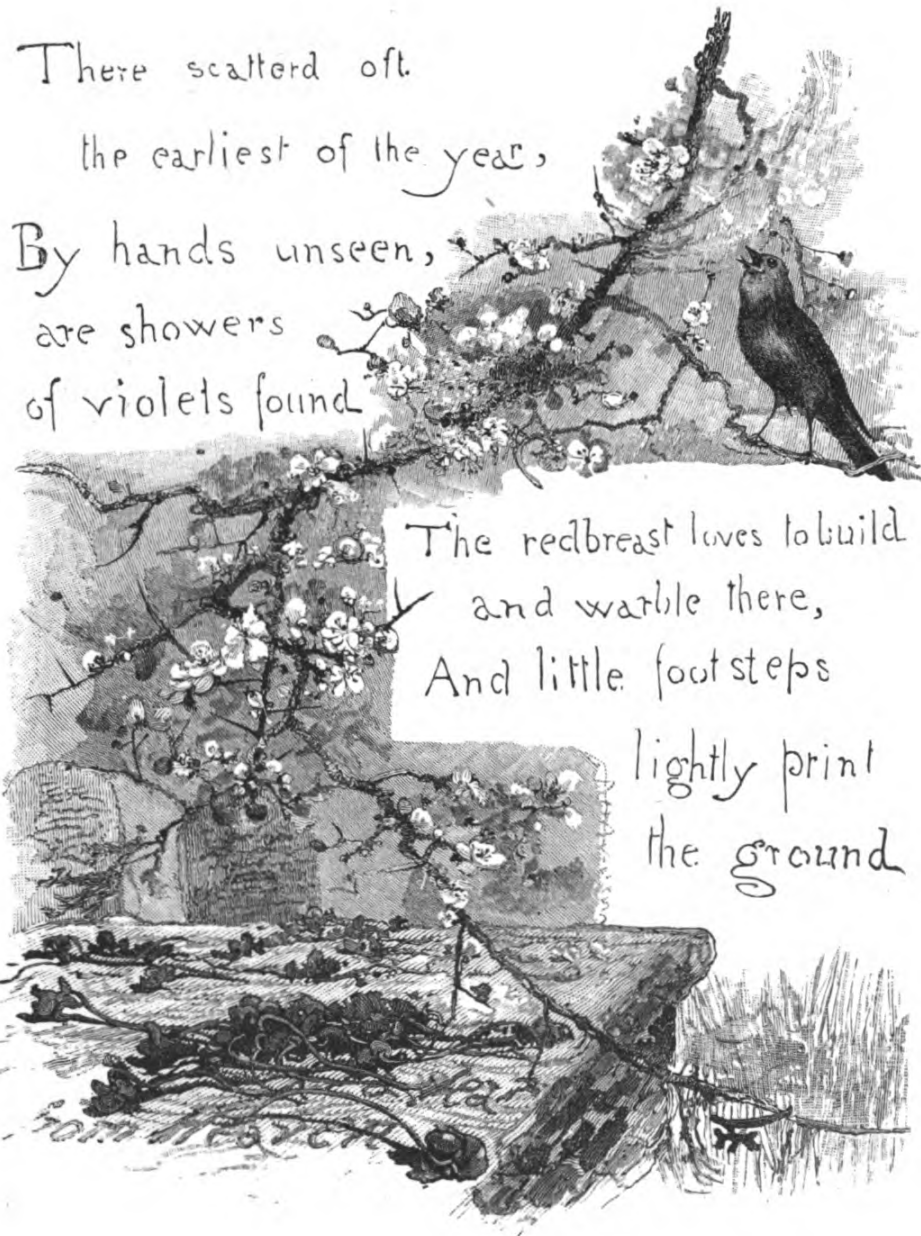
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There scattered oft
the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen,
are showers
of violets found

The redbreast loves to build
and warble there,
And little footsteps
lightly print
the ground

A REJECTED VERSE.

REPRINTED FROM THE EARLY EDITIONS.

ELEGY

Written in a Country Churchyard.

BY

THOMAS GRAY.

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY FENN.



LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK,
62 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Drawn and Engraved under the supervision of **GEORGE T. ANDREW.**



Many of the illustrations in this edition of Gray's Elegy are from sketches taken at STOKES POGIS, the scene of the poem, by Mr. FENN, and all of them were made especially for this edition.



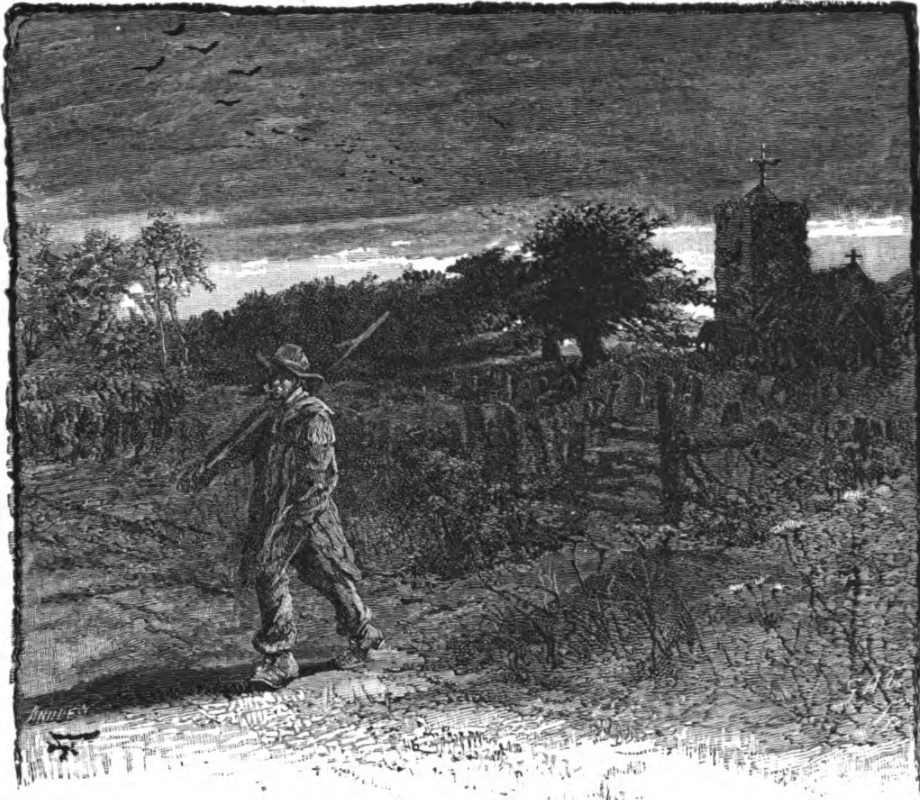
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ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.





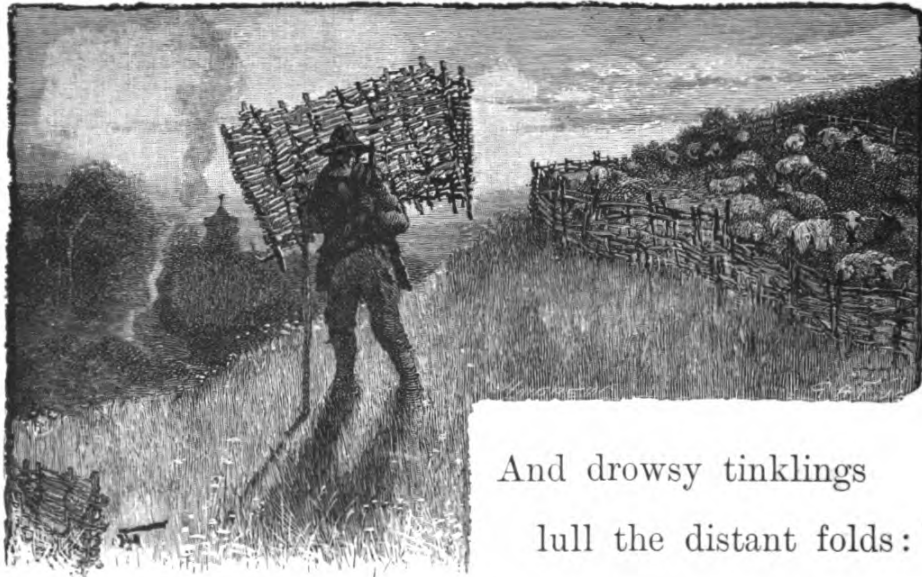
THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day ;
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea ;
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.



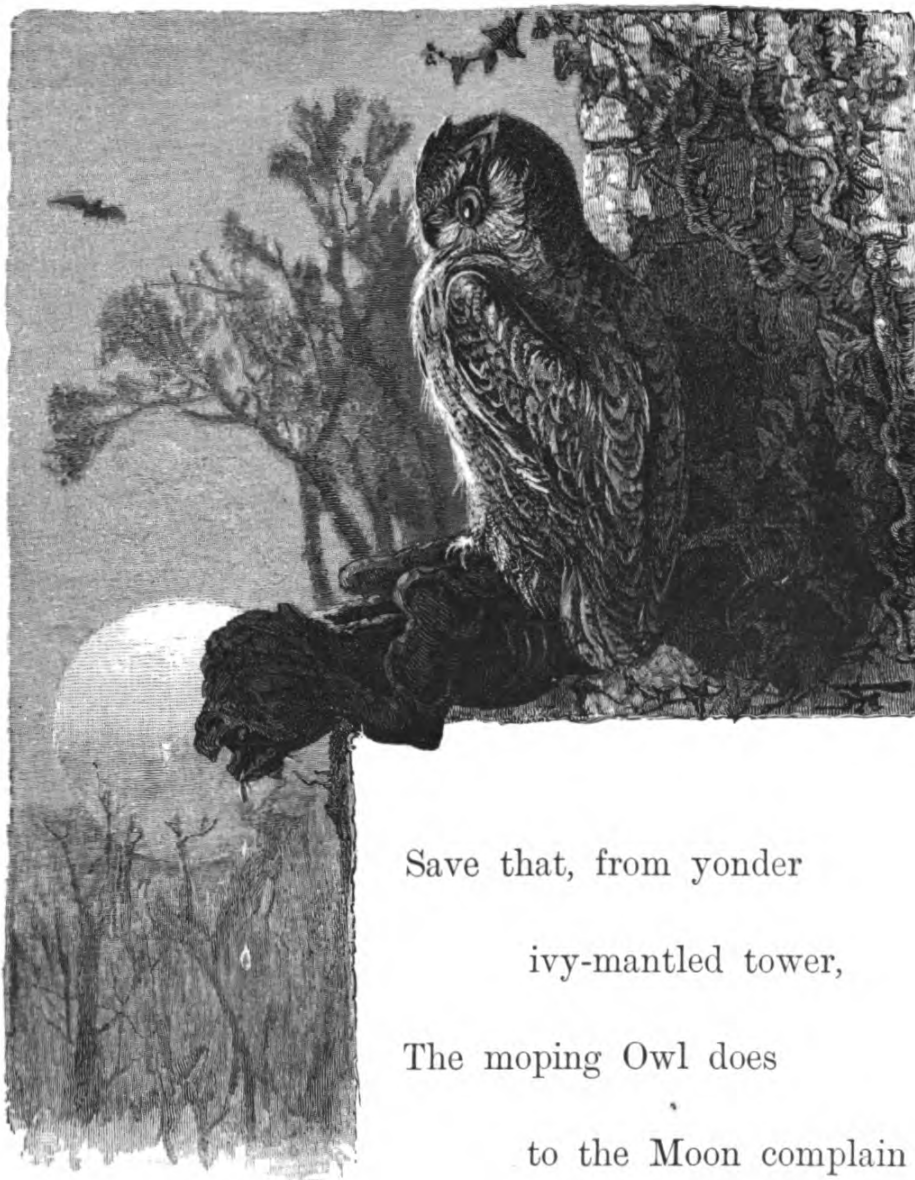
Now fades the glimmering landscape
on the sight,



And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,



And drowsy tinklings
lull the distant folds:

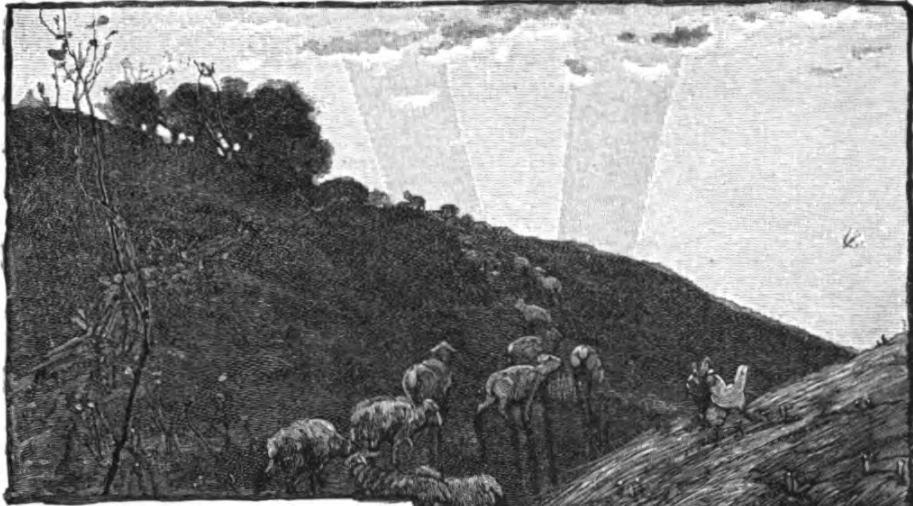


Save that, from yonder
ivy-mantled tower,
The moping Owl does
to the Moon complain

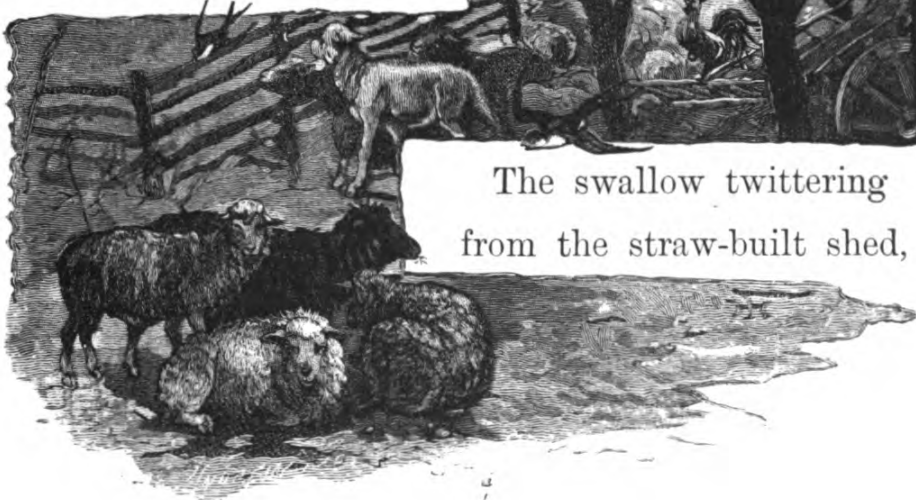
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.



Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.



The breezy call
of incense-breathing Morn,

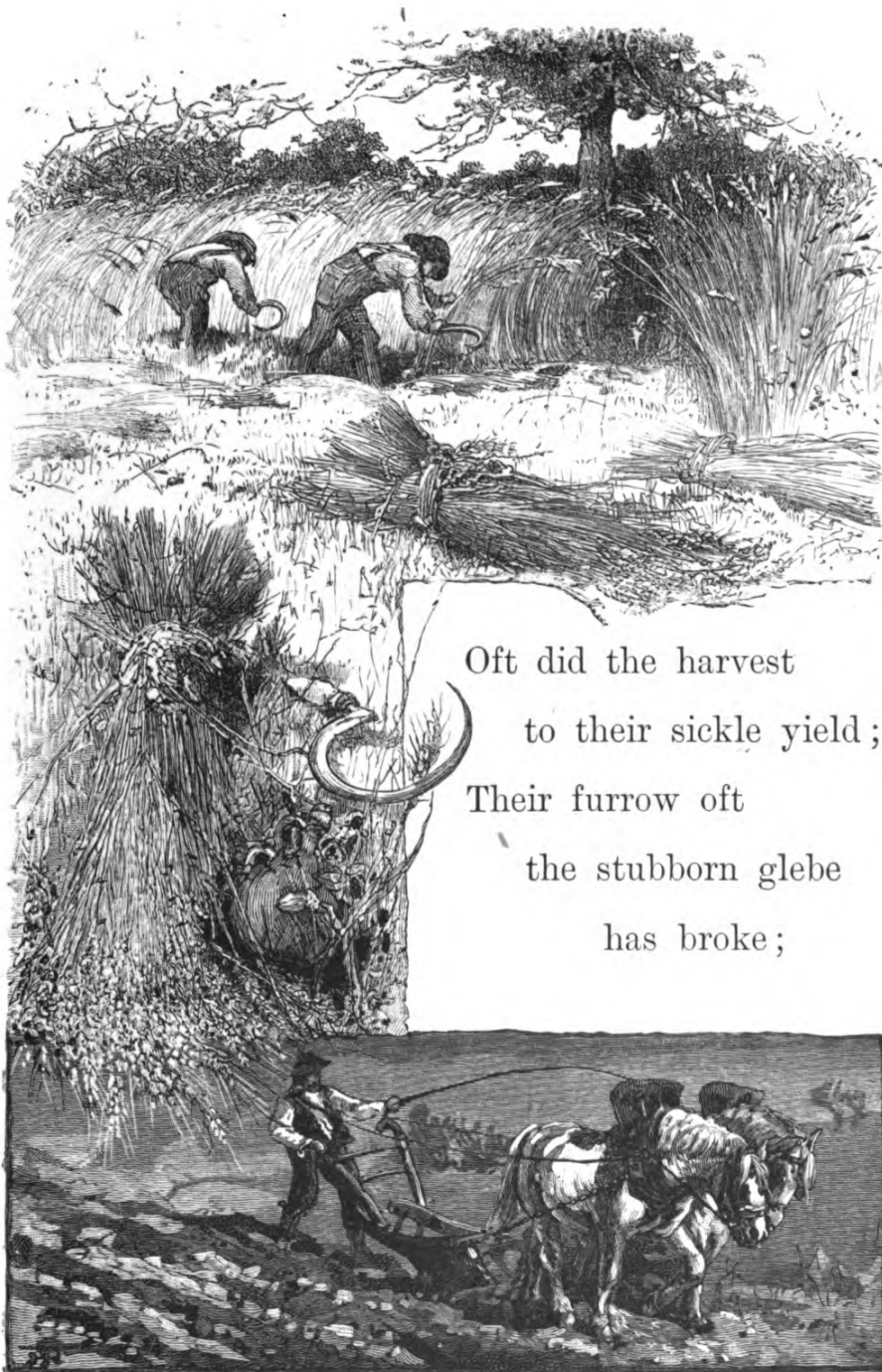


The swallow twittering
from the straw-built shed,

The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.



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



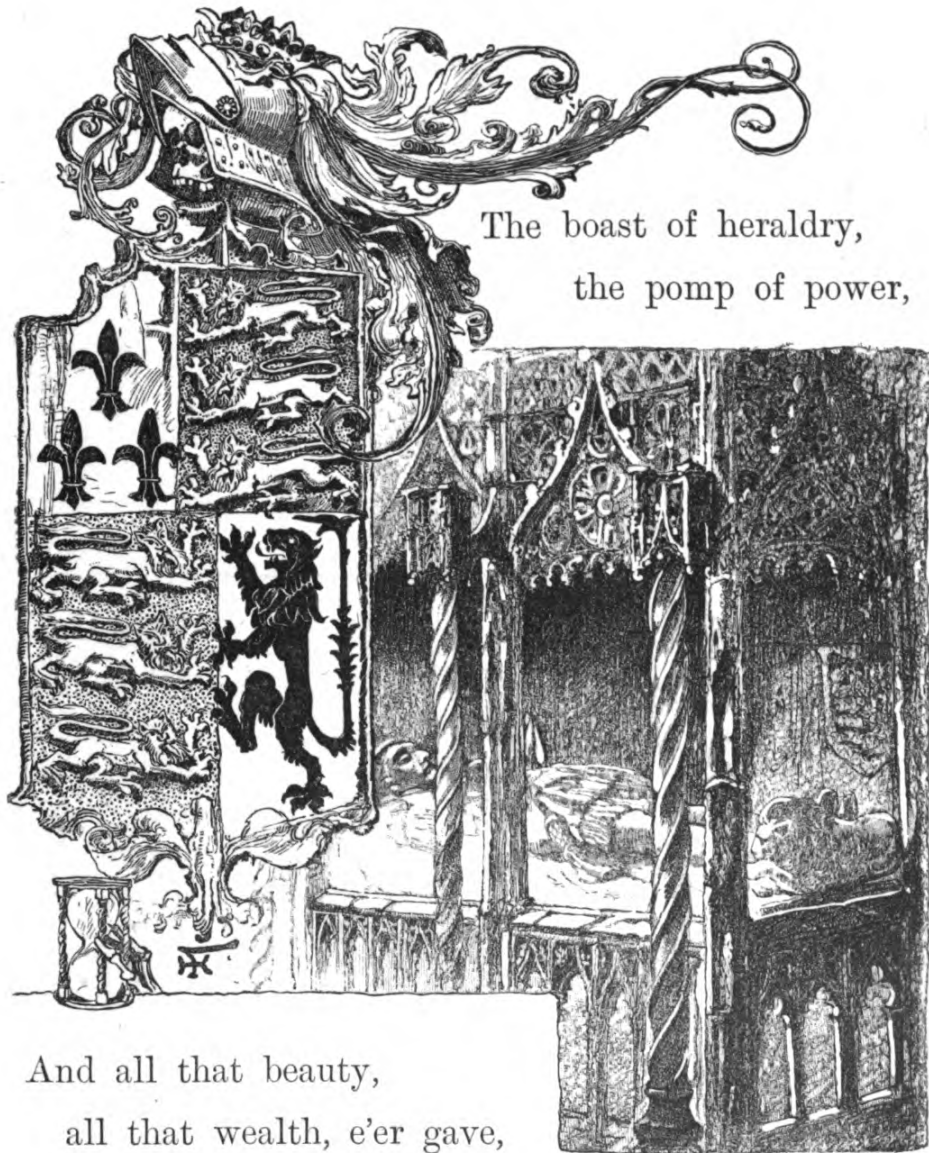
Oft did the harvest
to their sickle yield ;
Their furrow oft
the stubborn glebe
has broke ;

How jocund did they drive their team a-field!

How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

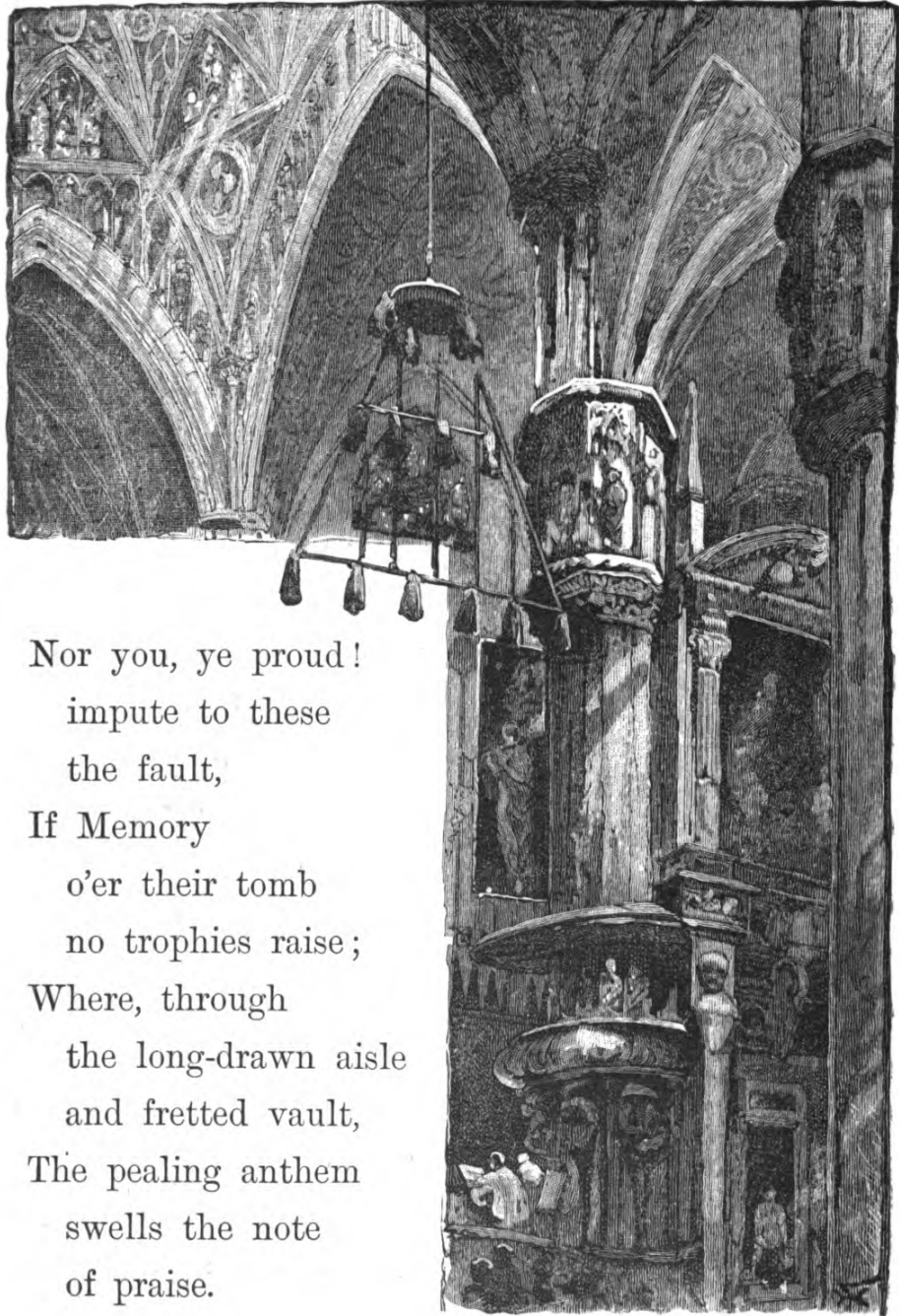


Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

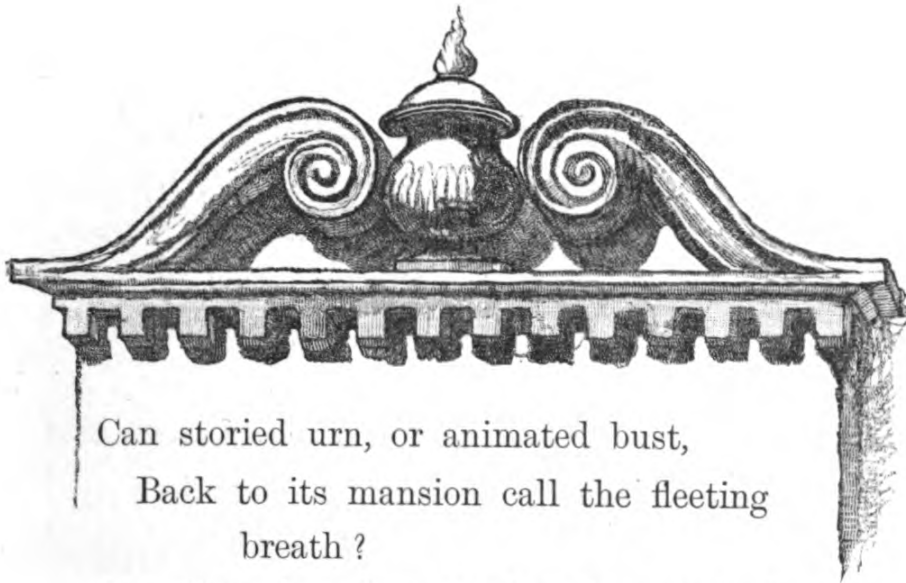


The boast of heraldry,
the pomp of power,

And all that beauty,
all that wealth, e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour;—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.



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

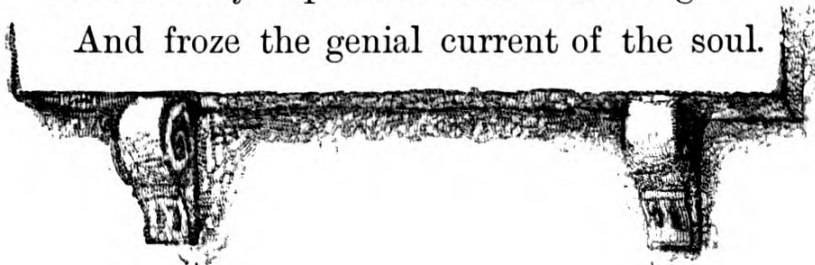


Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting
breath ?

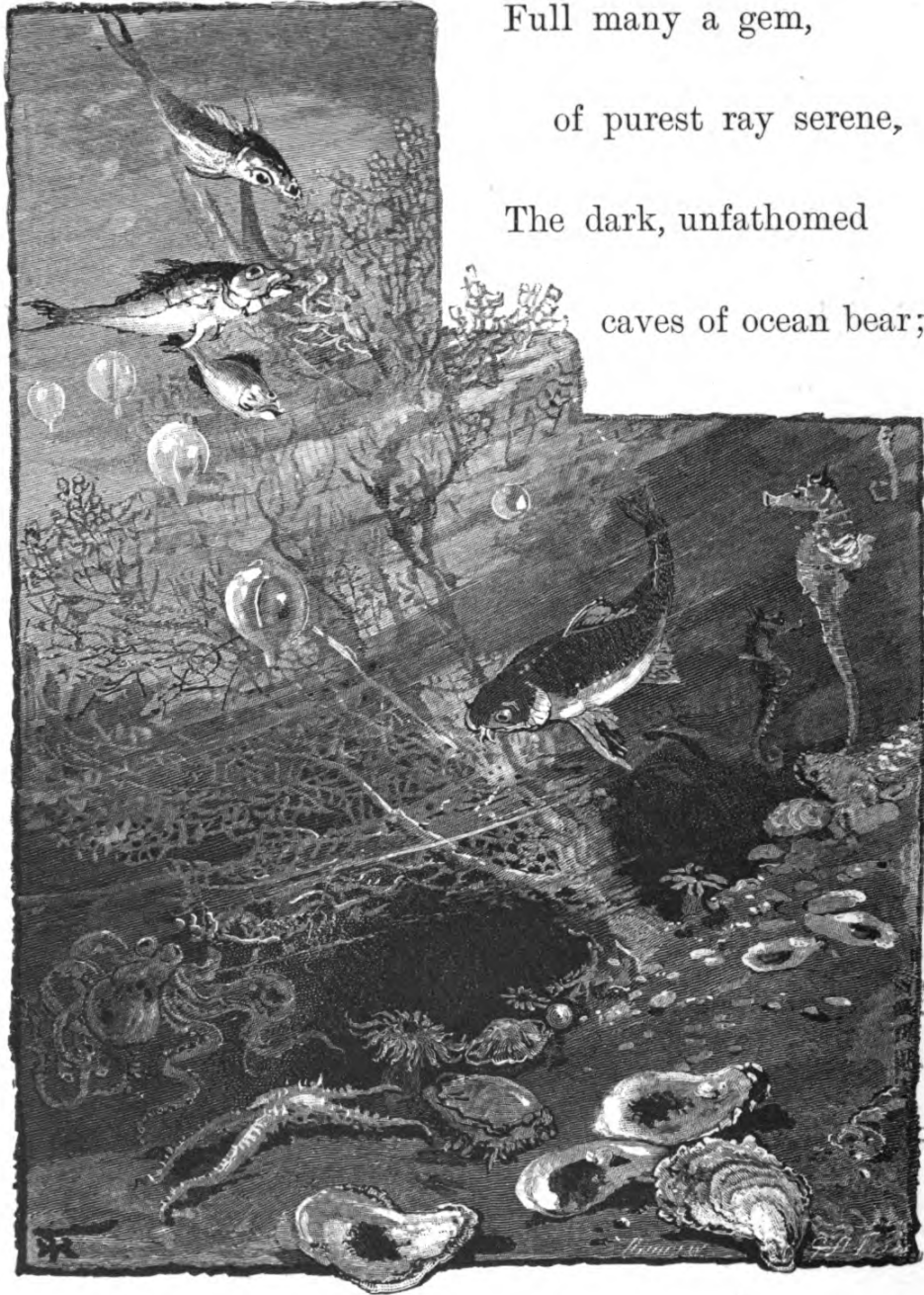
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust?
Or Flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of Death?

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

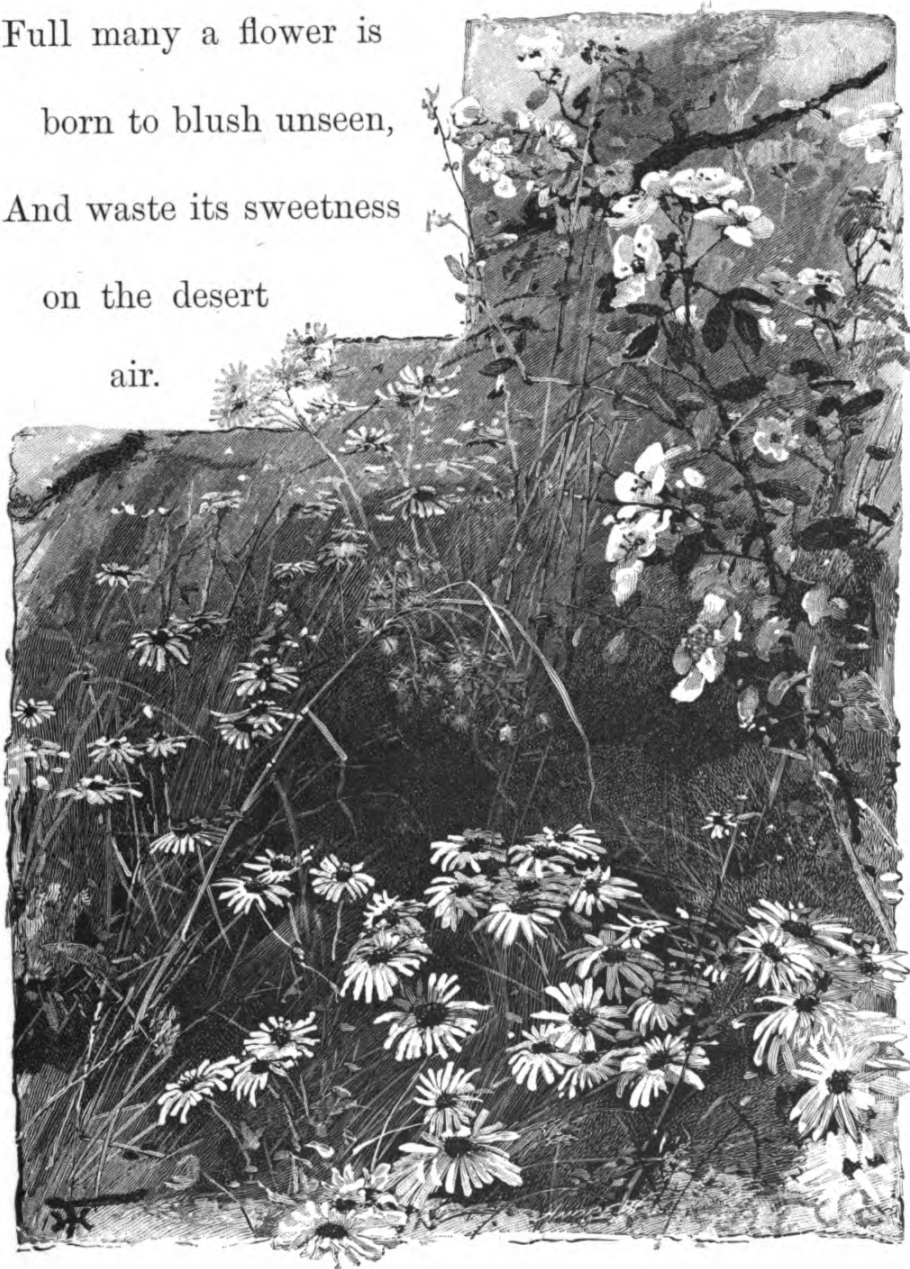
But Knowledge, to their eyes, her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage
And froze the genial current of the soul.



Full many a gem,
of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed
caves of ocean bear;



Full many a flower is
born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness
on the desert
air.





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

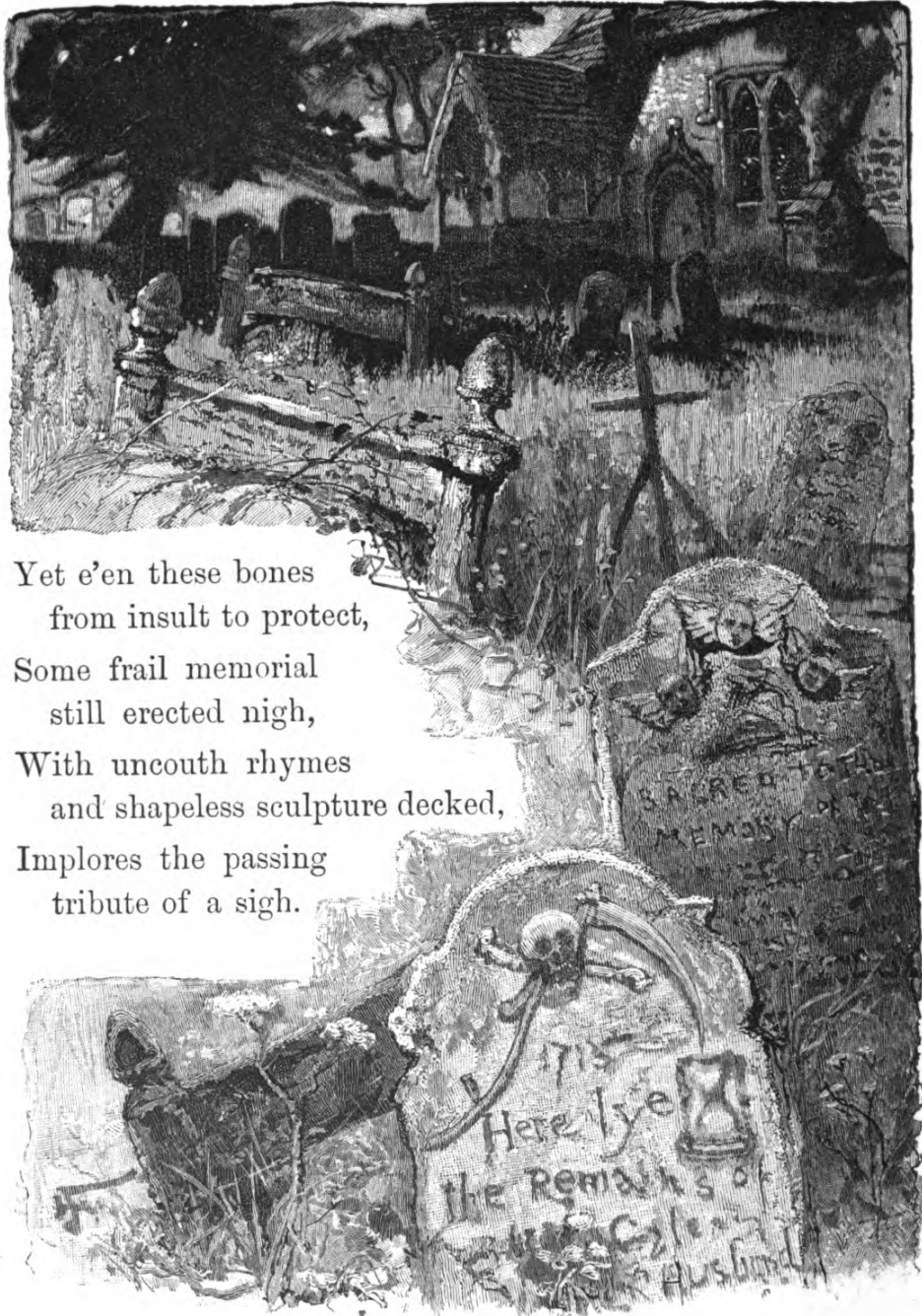
The applause of listening senates to command;
The threats of pain and ruin to despise;
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,—

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

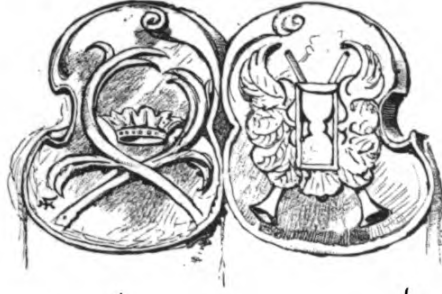
The struggling pangs of conscious Truth to hide;
To quench the blushes of ingenuous Shame;
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride,
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.



Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life,
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.



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



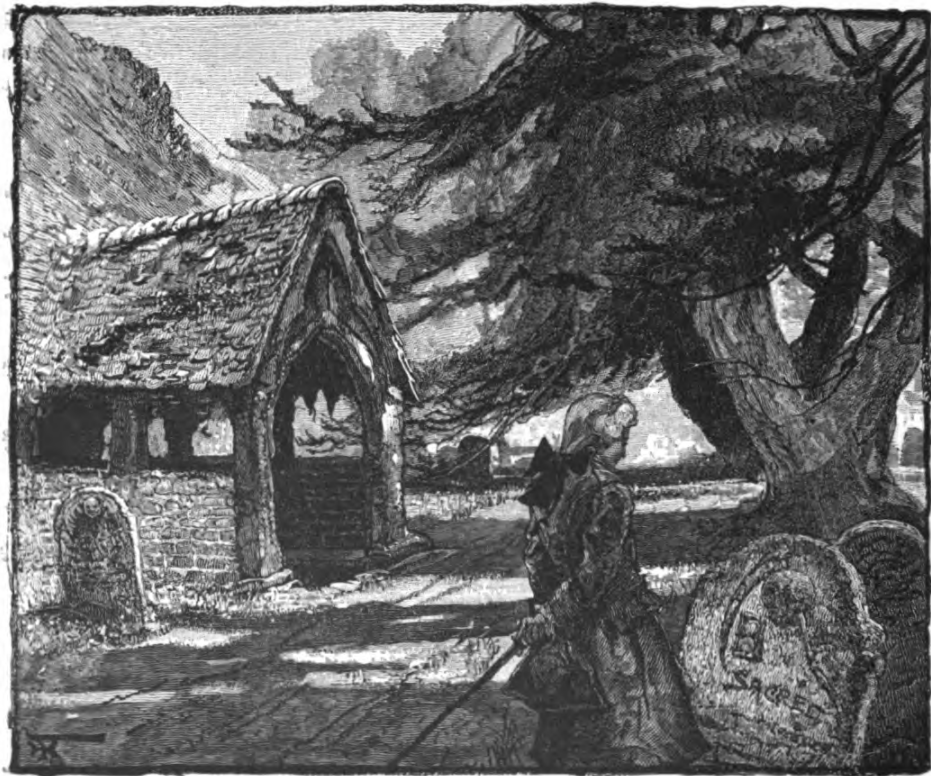
Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply ;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned ;
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind ?



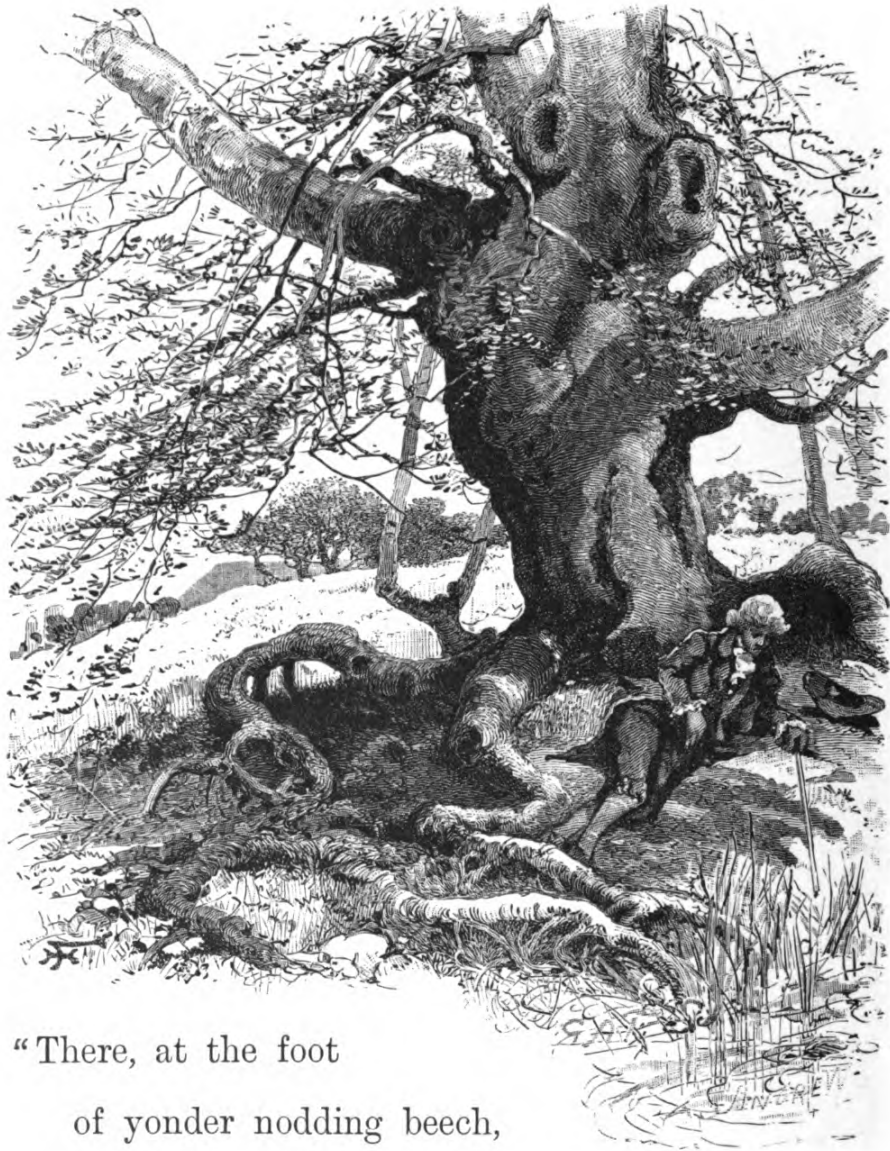
On some fond breast the parting soul relies ;
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries ;
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

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

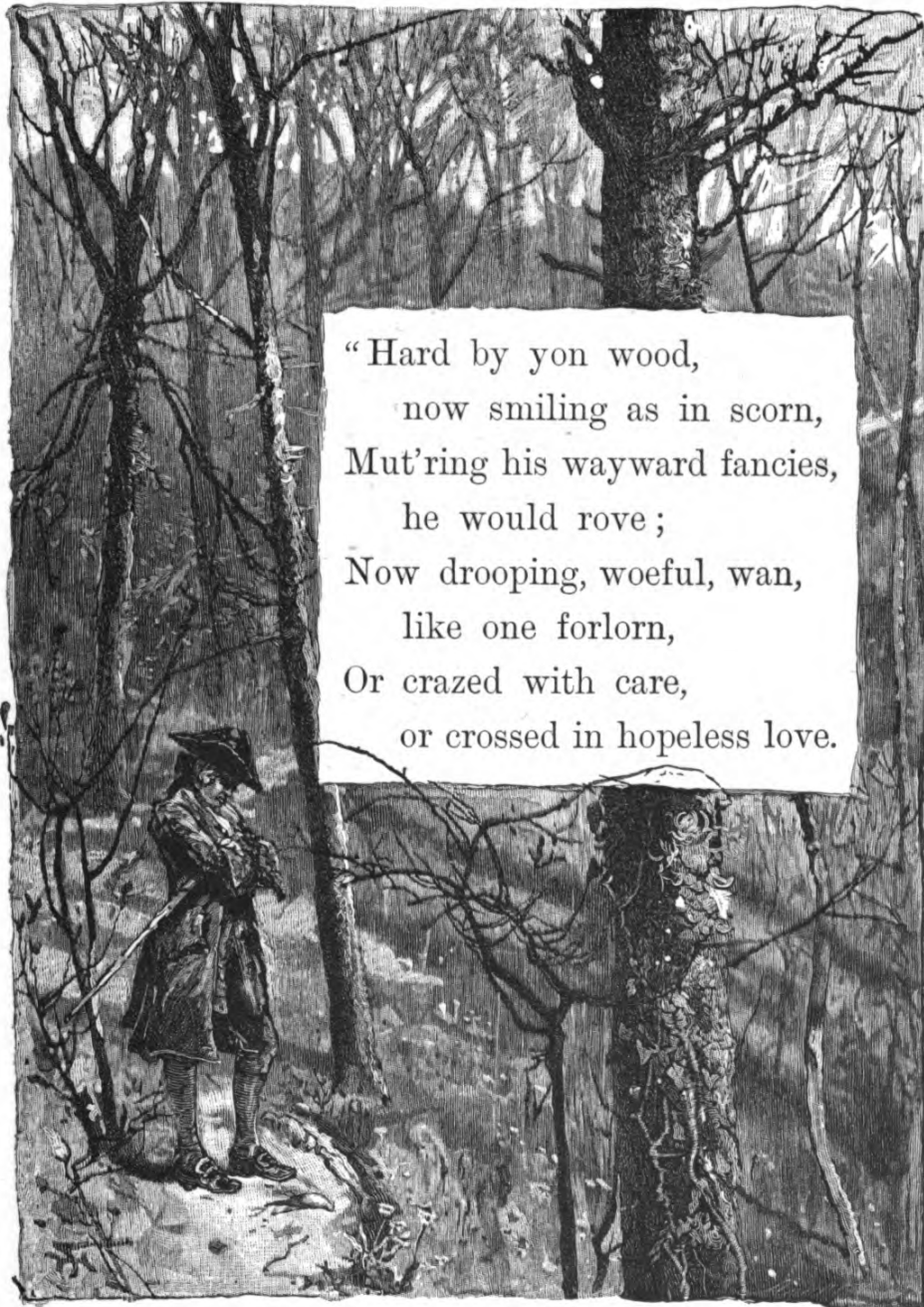




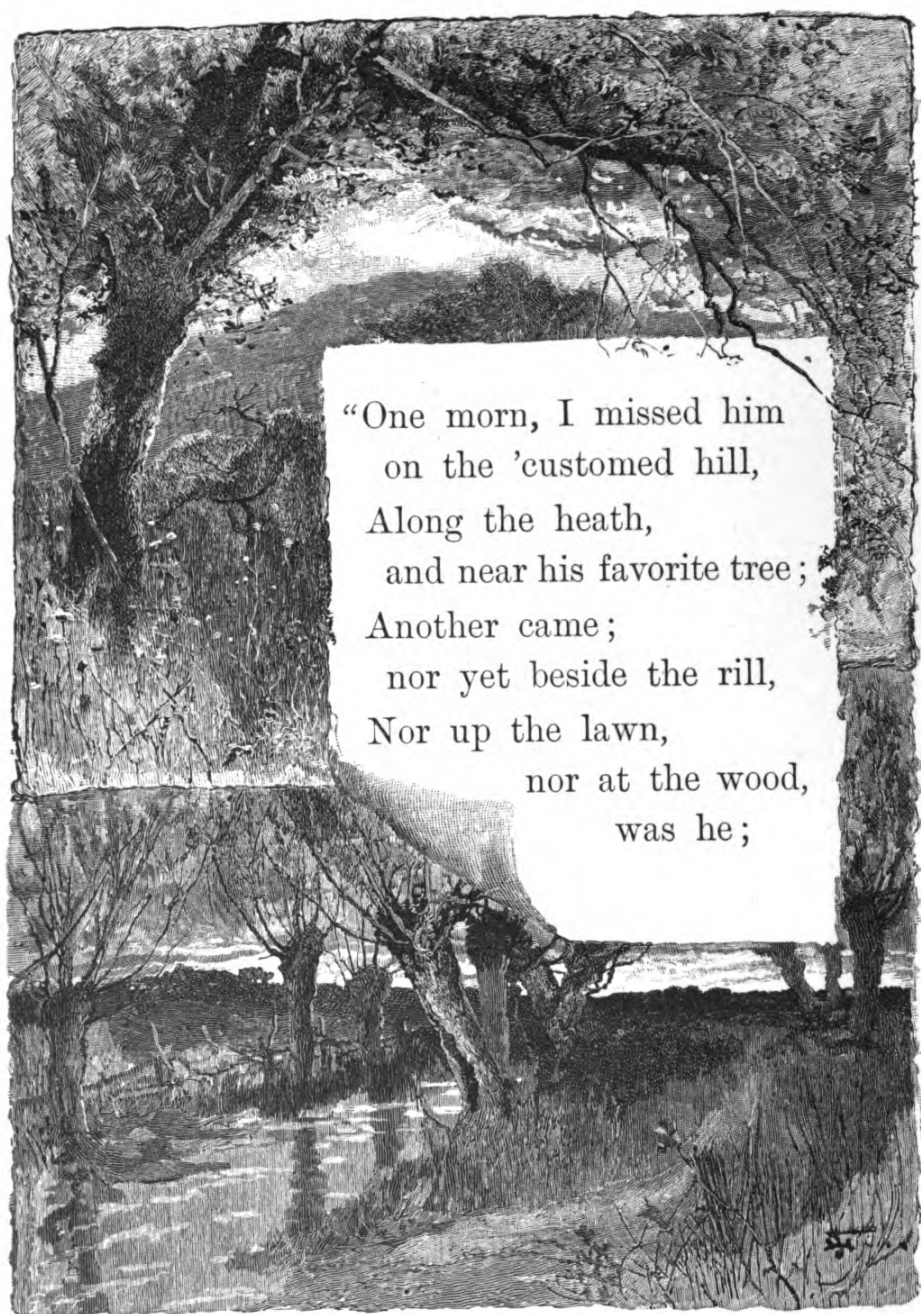
Haply, some hoary-headed swain may say:
 "Oft have we seen him, at the peep of dawn,
Brushing, with hasty steps, the dews away,
 To meet the Sun upon the upland lawn.



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



“Hard by yon wood,
now smiling as in scorn,
Mut’ring his wayward fancies,
he would rove ;
Now drooping, woeful, wan,
like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care,
or crossed in hopeless love.



“One morn, I missed him
on the 'customed hill,
Along the heath,
and near his favorite tree;
Another came;
nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn,
nor at the wood,
was he;

“The next, with dirges due, in sad array,
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read — for thou canst read — the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.”



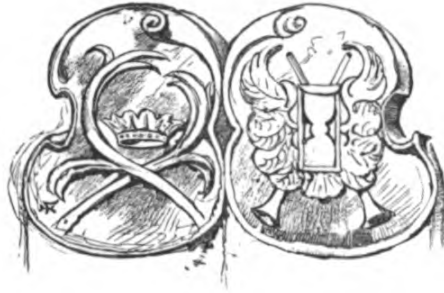
THE EPITAPH.

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

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had — a tear;
He gained from Heaven — 't was all he wished —
a friend.

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





BOTH as a literary curiosity, and to perpetuate them, the publishers have reprinted, as an addition to this edition of Gray's Elegy, the following verses, which appeared in the original editions, but which were subsequently omitted by the author.

THE REJECTED VERSES.

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

Him have we seen the greenwood side along,
While o'er the heath we hied, our labor done,
Oft as the woodlark piped her farewell song,
With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.

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

The stanza beginning,

“Hark! how the sacred calm that breathes around,”

finds its proper place as the fourth in the Elegy. It is acknowledged by Mason and others to be equal to any in the poem. The cause of its rejection by the author is manifest, and shows that it was not from his having disapproved it. From two preceding, and a following stanza, which were rejected with it, he withdrew two ideas, and some lines, which he transferred and worked up in other parts of the Elegy, thus leaving this fine stanza insulated; and because it so became unfitted for the particular place for which he had first designed it, he dropped it altogether.

The stanza beginning, —

“Him have we seen the greenwood side along,”

completes the account of the Poet's day, following naturally the verse,

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

for “without it,” as Mason observes, “we have only his morning walk, and his noontide repose.”

The third stanza, —

“There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,” —

Mr. Gray originally inserted before the “Epitaph,” but afterwards omitted, because he thought it was too long a parenthesis in this place.

These three stanzas are in themselves exquisitely fine, and demand preservation.

