

Thomas Tickell, "To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addison"

Description

THOMAS TICKELL

"To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addison"

IF, dumb too long, the drooping muse hath stay'd,
And left her debt to Addison unpaid,
Blame not her silence, Warwick, but bemoan,
And judge, oh judge, my bosom by your own.
What mourner ever felt poetic fires! 5
Slow comes the verse that real woe inspires:
Grief unaffected suits but ill with art,
Or flowing numbers with a bleeding heart.
Can I forget the dismal night that gave
My soul's best part for ever to the grave! 10
How silent did his old companions tread,
By mid-night lamps, the mansions of the dead,
Thro' breathing statues, then unheeded things,
Thro' rows of warriors, and thro' walks of kings!
What awe did the slow solemn knell inspire; 15
The pealing organ, and the pausing choir;
The duties by the lawn-rob'd prelate paid;
And the last words, that dust to dust convey'd!
While speechless o'er thy closing grave we bend,
Accept these tears, thou dear departed friend, 20
Oh gone for ever, take this long adieu;
And sleep in peace, next thy lov'd Montagu.
To strew fresh laurels let the task be mine,
A frequent pilgrim, at thy sacred shrine;
Mine with true sighs thy absence to bemoan, 25
And grave with faithful epitaphs thy stone.
If e'er from me thy lov'd memorial part,
May shame afflict this alienated heart;
Of thee forgetful if I form a song,
My lyre be broken, and untun'd my tongue, 30
My grief be doubled from thy image free,
And mirth a torment, unchastis'd by thee.
Oft let me range the gloomy isles alone
Sad luxury! to vulgar minds unknown,
Along the walls where spreading marbles show 35

What worthies form the hallow'd mould below;
 Proud names, who once the reigns of empire held;
 In arms who triumph'd; or in arts excell'd;
 Chiefs, grac'd with scars, and prodigal of blood;
 Stern patriots, who for sacred freedom stood; 40
 Just men, by whom impartial laws were given;
 And saints who taught, and led, the way to heav'n;
 Ne'er to these chambers, where the mighty rest,
 Since their foundation, came a nobler guest;
 Nor e'er was to the bow'rs of bliss convey'd 45
 A fairer spirit or more welcome shade,
 In what new region, to the just assign'd,
 What new employments please th' unbody'd mind;
 A winged virtue, through the ethereal sky
 From world to world unweary'd does he fly? 50
 Or curious trace the long laborious maze
 Of heaven's decrees, where wond'ring angels gaze?
 Does he delight to hear bold seraphs tell
 How Michael battl'd, and the dragon fell;
 Or mixt with milder cherubim, to glow 55
 In hymns of love, not ill essay'd below?
 Or dost thou warn poor mortals left behind,
 A task well suited to thy gentle mind?
 Oh ! if sometimes thy spotless form descend;
 To me, thy aid, thou guardian genius, lend! 60
 When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,
 When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,
 In silent whisp'ring purer thoughts impart,
 And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart;
 Lead through the paths thy virtue trod before, 65
 Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more.
 That awful form, which, so ye heav'n's decree,
 Must still be lov'd and still deplor'd by me;
 In nightly visions seldom fails to rise,
 Or rous'd by fancy, meets my waking eyes. 70
 If business calls, or crowded courts invite;
 Th' unblemish'd statesman seems to strike my sight;
 If in the stage I seek to sooth my care;
 I meet his soul which breathes in Cato there;
 If pensive to the rural shades I rove; 75
 His shape o'ertakes me in the lonely grove:
 'Twas there of just and good he reason'd strong,
 Clear'd some great truth, or rais'd some serious song:
 There patient show'd us the wise course to steer,
 A candid censor, and a friend severe; 80
 There taught us how to live; and, oh ! too high
 The price for knowledge, taught us how to die.
 Thou hill, whose brow the antique structures grace,

Rear'd by bold chiefs of Warwick's noble race.
 Why, once so lov'd, when e'er thy bow'r appears, 85
 O'er my dim eye-balls glance the sudden tears!
 How sweet were once thy prospects fresh and fair,
 Thy sloping walks, and unpolluted air!
 How sweet the glooms beneath thy aged trees,
 Thy noon tide shadow, and thy evening breeze! 90
 His image thy forsaken bow'rs restore;
 Thy walks and airy prospects charm no more;
 No more the summer in thy glooms allay'd,
 Thy evening breezes, and thy noon-day shade.
 From other ills, however fortune frown'd;
 95
 Some refuge in the muse's art I found;
 Reluctant now I toucht the trembling string
 Bereft of him, who taught me how to sing;
 And these sad accents, murmur'd o'er his urn,
 Betray that absence, they attempt to mourn. 100
 Oh! must I then, now fresh my bosom bleeds
 And Craggs in death to Addison succeeds,
 The verse, begun to one lost friend, prolong;
 And weep a second in th' unfinished song!
 These works divine, which on his death-bed laid 105
 To thee, O Craggs, th' expiring sage convey'd,
 Great, but ill omen'd monument of fame,
 Nor he surviv'd to give, nor thou to claim.
 Swift after him thy social spirit flies,
 And close to his, how soon ! thy coffin lies. 110
 Blest pair! whose union future bards shall tell
 In future tongues: each others boast! farewell,
 Farewel! whom join'd in fame in friendship try'd,
 No chance could sever, nor the grave divide.

NOTES:

Title *The Earl of Warwick* Edward Rich, 7th Earl of Warwick (1698-1721), was a British aristocrat and the stepson of Joseph Addison. His early death makes him a relatively unknown historical figure. Warwick and Addison seem to have been estranged for some years preceding Addison's death, at which point they reunited; *Addison* Joseph Addison (1672-1719), a leading periodical essayist, dramatist, and poet.

1 dumb Lacking the faculty of speech (*OED*).

15 knell • The sound made by a bell when struck or rung, esp. when rung slowly and solemnly (as) for a death or at a funeral • (*OED*).

16 peal • A stroke on or ringing of a bell as a call or summons, esp. to prayer or church • (*OED*).

17 lawn-robe • *prelate* Lawn is an Italian fabric from which the sleeves of a bishop or archbishop's robe were made (*OED*).

22 *Montagu* Ralph Montagu, 1st Duke of Montagu (1638-1709), was an English noble and evidently a friend of Addison's who had died a decade earlier.

30 *lyre* A plucked stringed musical instrument (*OED*).

32 *mirth* • Merriment, hilarity, laughter • (*OED*).

35 *marbles* Presumably marble statues of statesmen.

39 *prodigal* Extravagant.

45 *bower* • A dwelling, a habitation; esp. an ideal abode. Now chiefly poetic • (*OED*).

54 *Michael battl'd, and the dragon fell* An allusion to Revelation 12:7-8: • And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, / And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven •; *battl'd* Emended from • battel • in the copy text (printer's error).

55 *Cherubim* Plural of cherub, a kind of angel.

70 *fancy* Creative imagination (*OED*).

74 *Cato* Addison wrote *Cato, A Tragedy* in 1712. It takes its name from Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis (95-46 BC), an ancient Roman orator, stoic philosopher, and senator known as Cato the Younger who committed suicide as his enemy, Julius Caesar, overthrew the Roman Republic. The play is a sober work on the value of individual liberty and republicanism.

80 *ensor* A person who exercises supervision or judgement over the conduct or morals of others (*OED*).

98 *Bereft* Lacking.

102 *Craggs* James Craggs the Younger (1686-1721), an English statesman who died a few months before Addison.

SOURCE: *The Works of the most celebrated Minor Poets. Volume the Second. Containing the Works of George Stepney, Esq; William Walsh, Esq; Thomas Tickell, Esq.* (London, 1749), pp. 237-240. [ECCO]

Edited by John Lisovsky