Eliza Daye, â??Soliliquyâ?•

Description

ELIZA DAYE

â??Soliloquyâ?•

NATURE! in all correct, thy hand we trace,
And oâ??er thy carpet hail a beauteous race;
Each have their station, each have their native home,
In adverse soils and climes they find a tomb:
Some in the open lawn, delighted seem
To look with vigour on the sunâ??s full beam:
Whilst some retiring, hide the modest head,
And screen their beauties in the sheltâ??ring shade:
Some dare the summit of the mountainâ??s brow,
And others humbly seek the vale below:
Some oâ??er the parched heath minutely spread,
Whilst some, best flourish in the watâ??ry mead;
Deep in the soil others are firmly struck,
Some lightly flaunt upon the sedgy brook,
Others on rocks can independent thrive,
And in rich soil alone can others live.
The gardâ??ner marks the stations each demand:
Refinâ??d by cultivationâ??s skilful hand,
Which marks their graces with a clearer line,
And draws each forth more pointedly to shine.

By Providence to different lots assignâ??d,
A bent so various takes the human mind,
And education marks the native worth,
And boldly calls the leading feature forth,
It fires the hero, or instructs the sage,
To save his country, or reform the age;
It leads thâ?? ambitious to the public eye,
Or fits the humble for retirementâ??s joy;
Refines the pleasures of the social scene,
Or teaches industry the art of gain;
Opens the depth of science unconfinâ??d,
Researches for the philosophic mind;
It gives the gay, more graceful to be seen,
Swim on the surface of each trifling scene;
It can its proper views to fancy give,

And by thâ?? applause of ages bid it live.

Oh happy they! whose lot throâ?? lifeâ??s designâ??d,
To suit what nature gave, and art refinâ??d,
Let gloryâ??s radiant form the soldier shield,
And courage lead him to the hostile field;
Give sensibility its social joy,
And for lifeâ??s trials arm cold apathy.
Fortune and favouring friends may genius see,
All feel the native powers of fancy free;
Oh! were the human lot disposed so,
This were a world of joy, scarce mixâ??d with woe;
But ah! full oft we see the torturâ??d mind,
Destinâ??d to trials of ungenial kind,
Where without arms tâ??oppose, stern foes invade,
And all its native virtues seem to fade;
The feeling shed not still the tear of joy,
Nor cold disdain meets careless apathy;
Bright genius roves not still without restraint,
Nor always free his favorite scenes to paint;
But evils check the wing he lightly spread,
Then warm imagination too must fade.
Reflection in this solitary scene,
Engraves for me the solemn truth within,
As on the moss-grown rock now seated here,
Painâ??d memory finds the source of many a tear.

NOTES:

4 *climes* â??A tract or region of the earth; now often considered in relation to its distinctive climateâ?• (*OED*).

11 *heath* â??Open uncultivated ground; a wildernessâ?• (*OED*).

12 *watâ??ry mead* A wet, â??marshyâ?• meadow (*OED*).

14 *sedgy* â??Covered or bordered with sedge,â?• that is, various â??course grassy, rush-like plantsâ?• (*OED*).

25 *sage* â??Of a person: wise, discreet, judiciousâ?• (*OED*).

41 *sensibility* â??The quality of being readily and strongly affected by emotional or artistic influences and experiencesâ?• (*OED*).

43 *Fortune* â??Chance, hap, or luck, regarded as a cause of events and changes in oneâ??s affairsâ?• (*OED*).

44 *fancy* Imagination.

SOURCE: ***Poems on Various Subjects*** **(Liverpool, 1798), pp. 164-67. [Google Books]**

Edited by Ruby Schneider