Mary Darwall, â??Elegy on a much lamented Friend, Who died in Autumn, 1759â?•

Description

[MARY DARWALL]

â??ELEGY on a much lamented Friend, Who died in Autumn, 1759â?•

Yet the dull Death-bell smites my trembling Ear;
Yet *Fancy* sickens oâ??er *Fideliaâ??s* Bier;
Ye weeping Muses, wake the mournful Lyre!
Ye laughing *Loves*, and jocund *Sports*, retire!
Fantastic *Mirth*, and all the smiling Train
Of fair *Festivity*, forsake the Plain!
While gloomy *Grief*, and evâ??ry chearless Powâ??r,
Throw darker Horrors oâ??er this Midnight Hour.
Votâ??ries of Woe, your painful Dirges sing!
No more the Muse attunes the sprightly String.
All, all the Scenes of Joy and Beauty fly,
Clouds dim the Sun, and Tears bedew the Sky:
Fideliaâ??s Loss see *Natureâ??s* self bewail!
Weep in the Stream, and languish in the Gale!
No more the vocal Natives of the Grove
Chear the dark Shades, or chant their Songs of Love.
No more the Shepherds pipe, the Virgins sing;
No More the Vales with various Echoes ring:
But pale, and sad, each rural Nymph appears,
With Locks neglected, Eyes be-dimâ??d with Tears.
â??*Fideliaâ??s* dead!â?• they cry, and all around â??
â??*Fidelia* dead!â?• the cavernâ??d Rocks rebound.
Accept, dear Shade, this fondly streaming Tear,
That Friendship sheds on thy untimely Bier.
Ah! what did thy superior Worth avail?
Still, still opposâ??d by *Fortuneâ??s* adverse Gale;
Throâ?? Life aspersâ??d by *Envyâ??s* blackâ??ning Breath,
Pursuâ??d by *Malice* to the Gates of Death;
There, only there the painful Scene was oâ??er,
All Wrongs forgot, and *Anguish* wept no more.
There cold, and peaceful, dear *Fidelia* sleeps;
No more with palid *Care* long Vigils keeps;
And there shall sleep, in equal Night inurnâ??d,
The *Friend* that lovâ??d her, and the *Fool* that scornâ??d.
There, wrapt in Shade impervious, *Newton* lies;

There lifeless *Lelyâ??s* Hand, and *Myraâ??s* Eyes;
There *Thomsonâ??s* Harp forgets the moral Song,
Deaf *Handelâ??s* Ear, and silent *Miltonâ??s* Tongue.
There evâ??n this Heart, which melts to strains of Woe,
Shall cease to grieve, these streaming Eyes to flow:
This weary Clay, to *Deathâ??s* cold Arms consignâ??d,
Shall give to kindred Skies thâ?? immortal Mind.

NOTES:

1 *Death-bell* â??A bell rung at a personâ??s death or funeralâ?• (*OED*).

4 *jocund* â??Feeling, expressing, or communicating mirth or cheerfulnessâ?• (*OED*); *Lyre* â??A stringed instrument of the harp kind, used by the Greeks for accompanying song and recitationâ?• (*OED*).

9 *Votâ??ries* Devotees; *Dirges* â??A song sung at the burial of, or in commemoration of the deadâ?• (*OED*).

13 *bewail* â??To wail over, to utter wailings or cries of sorrow over the deadâ?• (*OED*).

18 *Vales* Valleys.

19 *Nymph* â??Any of a class of semi-divine spirits, imagined as taking the form of a maiden inhabiting the sea, rivers, mountains, woods, trees, etc., and often portrayed in poetry as attendants on a particular godâ?• (*OED*).

24 *Bier* â??The movable stand on which a corpse, whether in a coffin or not, is placed before burial; that on which it is carried to the graveâ?• (*OED*).

33 *inurnâ??d* â??To put (the ashes of a cremated body) in an urn; hence *transferred*, to entomb, bury, interâ?• (*OED*).

35 *Newton* Sir Issac Newton (1642-1727), â??English physicist and mathematician, who was the culminating figure of the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth centuryâ?• (*Encylopaedia Britannica*).

36 *Lely* Sir Peter Lely, (1618-1680), Dutch-born â??Baroque portrait painter known for his Van Dyck-influenced likenesses of the mid-seventeenth century English aristocracyâ?• (*Encylopaedia Britannica*); *Myra* Likely a reference to St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, â??one of the most popular minor saints commemorated in the Eastern and Western churches and now traditionally associated with the festival of Christmasâ?• (*Encylopaedia Britannica*).

37 *Thomson* James Thomson, (1700-1748), Scottish poet, best known for his long poem, *The Seasons;* â??An Ode on Aeolusâ??s Harpâ?• is likely referenced in this line (*Encylopaedia Britannica*).

38 *Handel* George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), â??German-born composer of the late Baroque era, noted particularly for his operas, oratorios, and instrumental compositionsâ?• (*Encylopaedia Britannica*); *Milton* John Milton, (1608-1674), â??poet, pamphleteer, and historianâ?• (*Encylopaedia Britannica*).

Source: *Original Poems on Several Occasions. By Miss Whateley* (London 1764), pp. 23-25. [*Google Books*]

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