Thomas Tickell, â??To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addisonâ?•

Description

THOMAS TICKELL

â??To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addisonâ?•

IF, dumb too long, the drooping muse hath stayâ??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!
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 soulâ??s best part for ever to the grave!
How silent did his old companions tread,
By mid-night lamps, the mansions of the dead,
Throâ?? breathing statues, then unheeded things,
Throâ?? rows of warriors, and throâ?? walks of kings!
What awe did the slow solemn knell inspire;
The pealing organ, and the pausing choir;
The duties by the lawn-robâ??d prelate paid;
And the last words, that dust to dust conveyâ??d!
While speechless oâ??er thy closing grave we bend,
Accept these tears, thou dear departed friend,
Oh gone for ever, take this long adieu;
And sleep in peace, next thy lovâ??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,
And grave with faithful epitaphs thy stone.
If eâ??er from me thy lovâ??d memorial part,
May shame afflict this alienated heart;
Of thee forgetful if I form a song,
My lyre be broken, and untunâ??d my tongue,
My grief be doubled from thy image free,
And mirth a torment, unchastisâ??d by thee.
Oft let me range the gloomy isles alone
Sad luxury! to vulgar minds unknown,
Along the walls where spreading marbles show

What worthies form the hallowâ??d mould below;
Proud names, who once the reigns of empire held;
In arms who triumphâ??d; or in arts excellâ??d;
Chiefs, gracâ??d with scars, and prodigal of blood;
Stern patriots, who for sacred freedom stood;
Just men, by whom impartial laws were given;
And saints who taught, and led, the way to heavâ??n;
Neâ??er to these chambers, where the mighty rest,
Since their foundation, came a nobler guest;
Nor eâ??er was to the bowâ??rs of bliss conveyâ??d
A fairer spirit or more welcome shade,
In what new region, to the just assignâ??d,
What new employments please thâ?? unbodyâ??d mind;
A winged virtue, through the ethereal sky
From world to world unwearyâ??d does he fly?
Or curious trace the long laborious maze
Of heavenâ??s decrees, where wondâ??ring angels gaze?
Does he delight to hear bold seraphs tell
How Michael battlâ??d, and the dragon fell;
Or mixt with milder cherubim, to glow
In hymns of love, not ill essayâ??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!
When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,
When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,
In silent whispâ??rings purer thoughts impart,
And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart;
Lead through the paths thy virtue trod before,
Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more.
That awful form, which, so ye heavâ??ns decree,
Must still be lovâ??d and still deplorâ??d by me;
In nightly visions seldom fails to rise,
Or rousâ??d by fancy, meets my waking eyes.
If business calls, or crowded courts invite;
Thâ?? unblemishâ??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;
His shape oâ??ertakes me in the lonely grove:
â??Twas there of just and good he reasonâ??d strong,
Clearâ??d some great truth, or raisâ??d some serious song:
There patient showâ??d us the wise course to steer,
A candid censor, and a friend severe;
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,

Rearâ??d by bold chiefs of Warwickâ??s noble race.
Why, once so lovâ??d, when eâ??er thy bowâ??r appears,
Oâ??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 evâ??ning breeze!
His image thy forsaken bowâ??rs restore;
Thy walks and airy prospects charm no more;
No more the summer in thy glooms allayâ??d,
Thy evening breezes, and thy noon-day shade.
From other ills, however fortune frownâ??d;
Some refuge in the museâ??s art I found;
Reluctant now I toucht the trembling string
Bereft of him, who taught me how to sing;
And these sad accents, murmurâ??d oâ??er his urn,
Betray that absence, they attempt to mourn.
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 thâ?? unfinishâ??d song!
These works divine, which on his death-bed laid
To thee, O Craggs, thâ?? expiring sage conveyâ??d,
Great, but ill omenâ??d monument of fame,
Nor he survivâ??d to give, nor thou to claim.
Swift after him thy social spirit flies,
And close to his, how soon ! thy coffin lies.
Blest pair! whose union future bards shall tell
In future tongues: each others boast! farewel,
Farewel! whom joinâ??d in fame in friendship tryâ??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 Addisonâ??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 â??*The sound made by a bell when struck or rung, esp. when rung slowly and solemnly (as) for a death or at a funeralâ?• (*OED*).

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

17 *lawn-robâ??d prelate* Lawn is an Italian fabric from which the sleeves of a bishop or archbishopâ??s robe were made (*OED*).

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

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

32 *mirth â??*Merriment, hilarity, laughterâ?• (*OED*).

35 *marbles* Presumably marble statues of statesmen.

39 *prodigal* Extravagant.

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

54 *Michael battlâ??d, and the dragon fell* An allusion to Revelation 12:7-8: â??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 heavenâ?•; *battlâ??d* Emended from â??battelâ??dâ?• in the copy text (printerâ??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 *censor* 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]**

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