

Anna Seward, "Written by Miss Anna Seward in the blank Leaves of her own Poems presented by her to William Newton"

## Description

ANNA SEWARD

Written by Miss ANNA SEWARD in the blank Leaves of her own Poems, presented by her to WILLIAM NEWTON, Native of a Village upon Tideswell Moor, near Monsaldale in the Peak

Thou gentle Bard, on whose internal sight  
Genius has pour'd her many " colour'd light;  
With whom the loveliest of the Virtues dwell,  
And wave their halcyon plumes around thy cell,  
Tho' wayward Fortune has not deign'd to throw    5  
One gaudy trophy on thy pensive brow,  
With conscious dignity thy tree-born soul  
Disdains to court her insolent controul;  
And tho' proud Fame no sunny glance has shed  
On the low roof that screens thy modest head,    10  
The same exalted spirit scorns to wail  
Her echoes silent in thy lonely vale.

Yet, while one votary of the Muses blames  
Th' unjust neglect of the capricious dames,  
Still may she stimulate that noble pride,    15  
Which rather seeks in humblest roof to hide  
The shining gifts that lavish Genius gave,  
Than, courting Fortune's smile, commence her slave;  
Than climb Parnassus' steep and thorny ways,  
And drop the rose of Peace to grasp the  
bays.    20

Thy quiet haunts Reflection loves to trace  
Thro' walks of savage, or of smiling, grace;  
And pleas'd she finds the scenes, that gave thee birth,  
Types of thy lot, thy talents, and thy worth.

As conscious Memory, with reverted glance,    25  
Roves o'er the wild and mountainous expanse,  
Her faithful traces to my sight restore





Warm with the bosom joys that Fame's bright meed excel.

## NOTES:

**Title** *WILLIAM NEWTON, Native of a Village upon Tideswell Moor, near Monsaldale in the Peak* William Newton (1750–1830), a laboring-class poet often referred to as ‘the Peak Minstrel’ was a friend of Anna Seward, who encouraged him in his writing and corresponded with him until her death. He lived near the village of Tideswell in the valley of Monsal Dale in the Peak District of Derbyshire, England.

**3** *the loveliest of the Virtues* The seven Christian virtues consisting of four cardinal virtues from ancient Greek philosophy which are prudence, justice, temperance (meaning restriction or restraint), and courage (or fortitude) and three theological virtues which are faith, hope, and charity (or love). We do not know which virtues Anna Seward considered “the loveliest.”

**4** *halcyon* Calm, tranquil, prosperous, joyful.

**13** *Muses* In Greek Mythology, nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne who are the goddesses of the inspiration of literature, science, and the arts.

**19** *Parnassus* The home of the Muses; a mountain in Greece that became known as the home of poetry, music, and learning.

**28** *Moor* A tract of open uncultivated upland area characterized by low growing vegetation.

**32** *lime-kiln* A furnace, used for making quicklime for making plaster and cement.

**43** *convolving* Rolling or winding together.

**61** *hay-cocks* Conical mounds of hay.

**68** *Sombrous* Gloomily dark; shadowy; dimly lighted, somber.

**70** *pensile* “Situating on a steep downward slope (QED).”

**75** *Edwin* Anna Seward's poetic epistolary name for William Newton.

**81** *Chatterton* Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), English poet who came from an underprivileged background, similar to William Newton. Chatterton, who was unable to find a patron for his art, lived in extreme poverty and took his life by drinking arsenic before his eighteenth birthday.

**91** *contumelious* Scornful and insulting.

**114** *tarrience* Delay, lingering.

**Source:** *The Gentleman's Magazine* (March, 1785), p. 213.

*Edited by Irina Auerbuch*