

Anonymous, "Epilogue"

Description

ANONYMOUS

"Epilogue"

Hard is the task to trace the poet's life,
Where praise and censure ever are at strife;
Where wit and weakness in succession reign
And hold, by turns, the enthusiast in their train.
He (to whose rapid eye the Muse hath given
To glance from Heaven to earth, then earth to Heaven,
O'erlooks all vulgar arts and sober rules,
And leaves the world to knaves and thriving fools:
By all admired, rewarded, and cared,
No future cares perplex his anxious breast;
No gloomy wants the smiling hours overcast,
He paints each year propitious as the last;
Whilst his warm heart, forever unconfin'd,
Expands for all the wants of all mankind.
Hence private griefs from virtuous weakness flow;
Hence social pleasures prove domestic woe.
Oft on this spot the Muse, with solemn mien,
And artful sadness, fills the tragic scene;
The well-feign'd sorrows your attention gain,
Whilst the prompt tear attests the pleasing pain:
But our sad story needs no poet's art
To tutor grief, and heave the swelling heart.
To you the deep distress is not unknown,
And, Britons, you have made the cause your own.
O may your gentle bosoms never prove
The untimely loss of those you dearly love!
Since thus your feeling hearts the aid supply
To sooth the widow's pangs, and orphan's sigh.

NOTES:

6 "To glance" | "Heaven" • Quotation from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (V.i.1842).
The original reads: "The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling, / Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to Heaven."

9 *carest* Caressed.

24 *Britons* British people.

SOURCE: *The Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1777), pp. 286-87.

Edited by Cydnei Jordan