Anonymous, â??Sonnet to Mr. Herschel, on his many Astronomical Discoveriesâ?•

Description

ANONYMOUS

â??SONNET to Mr. Herschel, on his many Astronomical Discoveriesâ?•

Herschel, all hail! For thee the tuneful Nine
Joyous to add to thy increasing fame
(As thou to Newtonâ??s and to Georgeâ??s name)
Of choicest flowers a chaplet shall entwine.
Haste then, and fly to Windsorâ??s air benign
Fair Avon bartering for silver Thame:
Long teach, if length there be to human frame,
New stars to glitter, and new suns to shine.
And when the day shall come, as come it must,
Which by degrees shall dim thy piercing eye,
Bid Vision, Science, Reason, Herschel, die,
And consecrate his mortal part to dust;
Then may thy spirit, with new glory crownâ??d,
Inherit all the worlds which thou hast found.

NOTES:

Title *Mr. Herschel* Sir William Herschel was a German-born, British astronomer (1738-1822). He discovered the planet Uranus in 1781 (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* online). *The Gentlemanâ??s Magazine*â??s editors provide the source for this poem: â??From Matyâ??s Review,â?• which was also titled *A New Review with Literary Curiosities and Literary Intelligence*. This periodical was published from 1782-1786 by Henry Maty, the under librarian at the British Museum (Google Books).

1 *the tuneful nine* The nine muses of arts and sciences in Greek mythology.

3 *Newtonâ??s* Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1726/7), the famous British physicist and mathematician; *Georgeâ??s* George III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain (1738-1820), who reigned as king from 1760 until his death. In 1782 George III appointed Herschel the Kingâ??s Astronomer (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* online).

4 *chaplet* â??A wreath for the head, usually a garland of flowers or leaves, also of gold, precious stones, etc.; a circlet, coronalâ?• (*OED*).

5 *Windsor* â??The Round Tower at Windsor is said to be intended for Mr. Herschelâ??s observatory, whose studies hitherto have been prosecuted at Bathâ?• [Authorâ??s Note]. Windsor Castle, a royal residence, was

renovated by George III.

6 *Avon* Herschel lived in Bath, on the Avon River; *Thame* Windsor Castle is located on the Thames River.

Source: *The Gentlemanâ??s Magazine* (February, 1783), p. 161.

Edited by Miriam deQuadros White