

Classic Poetry Series

Oliver Goldsmith

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774)

Irish poet, dramatist and essayist, Oliver Goldsmith was born either in Pallas, County Longford or Elphin, Roscommon. He was the second son of an Anglican clergyman, and spent much of his childhood at Lissoy which he drew on when writing *The Deserted Village*. He had a severe attack of smallpox at the age of eight which left him badly disfigured for life. In 1744 he went as a sizar to Trinity College, Dublin, ran away in 1746, but returned to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1749. After several false starts in choosing a career, a generous uncle sent him in 1752 to Edinburgh University to study medicine. Instead of taking a degree he travelled throughout Europe, from which travels he drew on in *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). In 1756 he returned destitute to London, and practised as a physician in Southwark and as an usher in Peckham. He corrected proofs for Samuel Richardson and drifted into the profession of hack writer for Ralph Griffiths proprietor of the *Monthly Review*. In 1759 he published his first substantial work, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, which documents what he felt to be the decline of the fine arts in mid-eighteenth-century Europe, owing to the lack of enlightened patronage and the bad influence of criticism and scholarship. From this time onwards he earned substantial amounts of money from his writing, contributing to *The Busy Body*, *The Monthly Review*, and *The Critical Review* amongst others. His plays, particularly *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), were immensely popular. However he was extravagant in taste and generous to a fault, and so died leaving debts of £2000. He never married, but had a long and close relationship with Mary Horneck.

His prose, drama and poetry are distinguished by their exceptionally high standard as well as by their variety in style and subject matter. His poetic style has been deemed harmonious and pure, and his drama unique in its transcendence of ethical or social criticism. His prose works are characterised by humour and astute observation.

An Elegy On The Death Of A Mad Dog

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song;
And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran—
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad—
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wond'ring neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost its wits
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light
That showed the rogues they lied,—
The man recovered of the bite,
The dog it was that died!

Oliver Goldsmith

An Elegy On The Glory Of Her Sex, Mrs Mary Blaize

Good people all, with one accord
Lament for Madam Blaize,
Who never wanted a good word,—
From those who spoke her praise.

The needy seldom passed her door,
And always found her kind;
She freely lent to all the poor,—
Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighbourhood to please
With manners wondrous winning;
And never followed wicked ways,—
Unless when she was sinning.

At church, in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumbered in her pew,—
But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux and more;
The king himself has followed her,—
When she has walked before.

But now her wealth and finery fled,
Her hangers-on cut short all;
The doctors found, when she was dead,—
Her last disorder mortal.

Let us lament in sorrow sore,
For Kent Street well may say
That had she lived a twelvemonth more,—
She had not died today.

Oliver Goldsmith

Memory

O MEMORY, thou fond deceiver,
Still importunate and vain,
To former joys recurring ever,
And turning all the past to pain:

Thou, like the world, th' oppress'd oppressing,
Thy smiles increase the wretch's woe:
And he who wants each other blessing
In thee must ever find a foe.

Oliver Goldsmith

Retaliation: A Poem

1 Of old, when Scarron his companions invited,
2 Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united;
3 If our landlord supplies us with beef, and with fish,
4 Let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best dish:
5 Our Dean shall be venison, just fresh from the plains;
6 Our Burke shall be tongue, with a garnish of brains;
7 Our Will shall be wild fowl, of excellent flavour,
8 Our Cumberland's sweet-bread its place shall obtain,
9 And Douglas is pudding, substantial and plain:
10 Our Garrick's a salad, for in him we see
11 Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltness agree:
12 To make out the dinner, full certain I am,
13 That Ridge is an anchovy, and Reynolds is lamb;
14 That Hickey's a capon, and by the same rule,
15 Magnanimous Goldsmith, a gooseberry fool:
16 At a dinner so various, at such a repast,
17 Who'd not be a glutton, and stick to the last:
18 Here, waiter, more wine, let me sit while I'm able,
19 'Till all my companions sink under the table;
20 Then with chaos and blunders encircling my head,
21 Let me ponder, and tell what I think of the dead.

22 Here lies the good Dean, re-united with earth,
23 Who mixt reason with pleasure, and wisdom with mirth:
24 If he had any faults, he has left us in doubt,
25 At least, in six weeks, I could not find 'em out;
26 Yet some have declar'd, and it can't be denied 'em,
27 That sly-boots was cursedly cunning to hide 'em.

28 Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
29 We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much;
30 Who, born for the Universe, narrow'd his mind,
31 And to party gave up, what was meant for mankind.
32 Tho' fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,
33 To persuade Tommy Townsend to lend him a vote;
34 Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
35 And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;
36 Tho' equal to all things, for all things unfit,
37 Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit:
38 For a patriot too cool; for a drudge, disobedient,
39 And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.
40 In short, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd, or in place, sir,
41 To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

42 Here lies honest William, whose heart was a mint,
43 While the owner ne'er knew half the good that was in't;
44 The pupil of impulse, it forc'd him along,
45 His conduct still right, with his argument wrong;
46 Still aiming at honour, yet fearing to roam,
47 The coachman was tipsy, the chariot drove home;
48 Would you ask for his merits, alas! he had none,
49 What was good was spontaneous, his faults were his own.

50 Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at,
51 Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!
52 What spirits were his, what wit and what whim,
53 Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb;
54 Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball,
55 Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all?
56 In short so provoking a devil was Dick,
57 That we wish'd him full ten times a day at Old Nick.
58 But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
59 As often we wish'd to have Dick back again.

60 Here Cumberland lies having acted his parts,
61 The Terence of England, the mender of hearts;
62 A flattering painter, who made it his care
63 To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.
64 His gallants were all faultless, his women divine,
65 And comedy wonders at being so fine;
66 Like a tragedy queen he has dizen'd her out,
67 Or rather like tragedy giving a rout.
68 His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
69 Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud
70 And coxcombs alike in their failings alone,
71 Adopting his portraits are pleas'd with their own.
72 Say, where has our poet this malady caught,
73 Or wherefore his characters thus without fault?
74 Say was it that vainly directing his view,
75 To find out men's virtues and finding them few,
76 Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,
77 He grew lazy at last and drew from himself?

78 Here Douglas retires from his toils to relax,
79 The scourge of impostors, the terror of quacks:
80 Come all ye quack bards, and ye quacking divines,
81 Come and dance on the spot where your tyrant reclines,
82 When Satire and Censure encircl'd his throne,
83 I fear'd for your safety, I fear'd for my own;
84 But now he is gone, and we want a detector,
85 Our Dodds shall be pious, our Kenricks shall lecture;
86 Macpherson write bombast, and call it a style,
87 Our Townshend make speeches, and I shall compile;
88 New Lauders and Bowers the Tweed shall cross over,
89 No countryman living their tricks to discover;
90 Detection her taper shall quench to a spark,
91 And Scotchman meet Scotchman and cheat in the dark.

92 Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can,
93 An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;
94 As an actor, confest without rival to shine,
95 As a wit, if not first, in the very first line,
96 Yet with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
97 The man had his failings, a dupe to his art;

98 Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread,
99 And beplaster'd, with rouge, his own natural red.
100 On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
101 'Twas only that, when he was off, he was acting:
102 With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
103 He turn'd and he varied full ten times a-day;
104 Tho' secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick,
105 If they were not his own by finessing and trick;
106 He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
107 For he knew when he pleas'd he could whistle them back.
108 Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,
109 And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame;
110 'Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,
111 Who pepper'd the highest, was surest to please.
112 But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,
113 If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
114 Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, and Woodfalls so grave,
115 What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave?
116 How did Grub-street re-echo the shouts that you rais'd,
117 While he was beroscious'd, and you were beprais'd?
118 But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
119 To act as an angel, and mix it with skies:
120 Those poets, who owe their best fame to his skill,
121 Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will.
122 Old Shakespeare, receive him, with praise and with love,
123 And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above.

124 Here Hickey reclines, a most blunt, pleasant creature,
125 And slander itself must allow him good-nature:
126 He cherish'd his friend, and he relish'd a bumper;
127 Yet one fault he had, and that one was a thumper:
128 Perhaps you may ask if the man was a miser?
129 I answer, no, no, for he always was wiser;
130 Too courteous, perhaps, or obligingly flat;
131 His very worst foe can't accuse him of that.
132 Perhaps he confided in men as they go,
133 And so was too foolishly honest; ah no!
134 Then what was his failing? come tell it, and burn ye,
135 He was, could he help it? a special attorney.

136 Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
137 He has not left a wiser or better behind;
138 His pencil was striking, resistless and grand,
139 His manners were gentle, complying and bland;
140 Still born to improve us in every part,
141 His pencil our faces, his manners our heart:
142 To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
143 When they judg'd without skill he was still hard of hearing:
144 When they talk'd of their Raphaels, Corregios and stuff,
145 He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.

Oliver Goldsmith

The Deserted Village

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visits paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, where every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er your green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene;
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made;
How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree:
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down!
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong look of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village; sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms—But all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain:
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But choked with sedges works its weedy way.
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers, in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlet's rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt and all I saw;
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations passed,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,

Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels round befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way;
All, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His Heaven commences ere the world be past!

Sweet was the sound when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watchdog's voice that bayed the whisp'ring wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age for bread
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,

More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt, for all.
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service passed, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,

The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind; or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,
For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around,
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the signpost caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place:
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay, —
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendours! Could not all
Relieve the tottering mansion from its fall!
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,

Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined:
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies:
While thus the land adorned for pleasure, all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are passed, for charms are frail,
When time advances and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.

Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed,
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed;
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourged by famine, from the smiling land
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden, and a grave.

Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped—what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow creature's woe.
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign
Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in a village plenty blessed,
Has wept at tales of innocence distressed;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deploras that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!

Ah, no!—To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,

Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure passed,
Hung round their bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.
The good old sire, the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou cursed by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse thy pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own;
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till, sapped their strength, and every part unsound,

Down, down they sink, and spread the ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land:
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth; with thy persuasive strain
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him that states of native strength possessed,
Though very poor, may still be very blessed;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

Oliver Goldsmith

The Deserted Village, A Poem

1 Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
2 Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,
3 Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
4 And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd:
5 Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
6 Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
7 How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
8 Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
9 How often have I paus'd on every charm,
10 The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
11 The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
12 The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
13 The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
14 For talking age and whisp'ring lovers made!
15 How often have I blest the coming day,
16 When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
17 And all the village train, from labour free,
18 Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;
19 While many a pastime circled in the shade,
20 The young contending as the old survey'd;
21 And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
22 And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
23 And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
24 Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;
25 The dancing pair that simply sought renown
26 By holding out to tire each other down:
27 The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
28 While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
29 The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
30 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
31 These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these
32 With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please:
33 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
34 These were thy charms--but all these charms are fled.

35 Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
36 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
37 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
38 And desolation saddens all thy green:
39 One only master grasps the whole domain,
40 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
41 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
42 But, chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way;
43 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
44 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
45 Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
46 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;
47 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
48 And the long grass o'ertops the mould'ring wall;
49 And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
50 Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

51 Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
52 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
53 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
54 A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
55 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
56 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

57 A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
58 When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
59 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
60 Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more:
61 His best companions, innocence and health;
62 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

63 But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train
64 Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
65 Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
66 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
67 And every want to opulence allied,
68 And every pang that folly pays to pride.
69 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
70 Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
71 Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
72 Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green,--
73 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
74 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

75 Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
76 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
77 Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
78 Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,
79 And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
80 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
81 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
82 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

83 In all my wand'rings round this world of care,
84 In all my griefs--and God has giv'n my share--
85 I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
86 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
87 To husband out life's taper at the close,
88 And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
89 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
90 Amidst the swains to show my booklearn'd skill,
91 Around my fire an evening group to draw,
92 And tell of all I felt and all I saw;
93 And as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue,
94 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
95 I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
96 Here to return, and die at home at last.

97 O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,

98 Retreats from care, that never must be mine!
99 How happy he who crowns in shades like these
100 A youth of labour with an age of ease;
101 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
102 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
103 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
104 Explore the mine, or tempt the dang'rous deep;
105 No surly porter stands in guilty state,
106 To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
107 But on he moves to meet his latter end,
108 Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
109 Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
110 While resignation gently slopes the way;
111 And, all his prospects bright'ning to the last,
112 His heav'n commences ere the world be past!

113 Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
114 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
115 There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
116 The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
117 The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
118 The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
119 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
120 The playful children just let loose from school,
121 The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
122 And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind,--
123 These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
124 And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
125 But now the sounds of population fail,
126 No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
127 No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
128 For all the bloomy flush of life is fled!
129 All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
130 That feebly bends beside the plashy spring:
131 She, wretched matron, forc'd in age for bread,
132 To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
133 To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
134 To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
135 She only left of all the harmless train,
136 The sad historian of the pensive plain.

137 Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
138 And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
139 There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
140 The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
141 A man he was to all the country dear,
142 And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
143 Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
144 Nor e'er had changed, nor wish'd to change, his place;
145 Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,
146 By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
147 Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,

148 More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
149 His house was known to all the vagrant train;
150 He chid their wand'rings but reliev'd their pain;
151 The long remember'd beggar was his guest,
152 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
153 The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
154 Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
155 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
156 Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
157 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
158 Shoulder'd his crutch and show'd how fields were won.
159 Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
160 And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
161 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
162 His pity gave ere charity began.

163 Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
164 And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
165 But in his duty prompt at every call,
166 He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all;
167 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
168 To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
169 He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
170 Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

171 Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
172 And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd
173 The rev'rend champion stood. At his control
174 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
175 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
176 And his last falt'ring accents whisper'd praise.

177 At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
178 His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
179 Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
180 And fools who came to scoff remain'd to pray.
181 The service past, around the pious man,
182 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
183 E'en children follow'd with endearing wile,
184 And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile.
185 His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest:
186 Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest:
187 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
188 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
189 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
190 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
191 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
192 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

193 Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
194 With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
195 There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,

196 The village master taught his little school.
197 A man severe he was, and stern to view;
198 I knew him well, and every truant knew;
199 Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
200 The day's disasters in his morning face;
201 Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee
202 At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
203 Full well the busy whisper circling round
204 Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.
205 Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
206 The love he bore to learning was in fault;
207 The village all declar'd how much he knew;
208 'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too:
209 Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
210 And ev'n the story ran that he could gauge.
211 In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,
212 For, ev'n though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
213 While words of learned length and thundering sound
214 Amazed the gazing rustics rang'd around;
215 And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
216 That one small head could carry all he knew.

217 But past is all his fame. The very spot
218 Where many a time he triumph'd is forgot.
219 Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
220 Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
221 Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,
222 Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
223 Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
224 And news much older than their ale went round.
225 Imagination fondly stoops to trace
226 The parlour splendours of that festive place;
227 The white-wash'd wall, the nicely-sanded floor,
228 The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
229 The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
230 A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
231 The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
232 The Twelve Good Rules, the Royal Game of Goose;
233 The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
234 With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
235 While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
236 Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

237 Vain transitory splendours! could not all
238 Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
239 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
240 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
241 Thither no more the peasant shall repair
242 To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
243 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
244 No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
245 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,

246 Relax his pond'rous strength, and lean to hear;
247 The host himself no longer shall be found
248 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
249 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
250 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

251 Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
252 These simple blessings of the lowly train;
253 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
254 One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
255 Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
256 The soul adopts, and owns their firstborn sway;
257 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
258 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd.
259 But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
260 With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd--
261 In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
262 The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
263 And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
264 The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.

265 Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
266 The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
267 'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
268 Between a splendid and a happy land.
269 Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
270 And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
271 Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
272 And rich men flock from all the world around.
273 Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
274 That leaves our useful products still the same.
275 Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
276 Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
277 Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
278 Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
279 The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
280 Has robb'd the neighb'ring fields of half their growth:
281 His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
282 Indignant spurns the cottage from the green:
283 Around the world each needful product flies,
284 For all the luxuries the world supplies;
285 While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure all,
286 In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

287 As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,
288 Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
289 Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
290 Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
291 But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
292 When time advances, and when lovers fail,
293 She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
294 In all the glaring impotence of dress.

295 Thus fares the land by luxury betray'd:
296 In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
297 But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
298 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
299 While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,
300 The mournful peasant leads his humble band,
301 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
302 The country blooms--a garden and a grave.

303 Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
304 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
305 If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd
306 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
307 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
308 And ev'n the bare-worn common is denied.

309 If to the city sped--what waits him there?
310 To see profusion that he must not share;
311 To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
312 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
313 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
314 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
315 Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
316 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
317 Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
318 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
319 The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign
320 Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train:
321 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
322 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
323 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
324 Sure these denote one universal joy!
325 Are these thy serious thoughts?--Ah, turn thine eyes
326 Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.
327 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
328 Has wept at tales of innocence distress;
329 Her modest looks the cottage might adorn
330 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:
331 Now lost to all--her friends, her virtue fled,
332 Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
333 And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
334 With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
335 When idly first, ambitious of the town,
336 She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

337 Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,--
338 Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
339 Ev'n now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
340 At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!

341 Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
342 Where half the convex world intrudes between,

343 Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
344 Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
345 Far different there from all that charm'd before,
346 The various terrors of that horrid shore:
347 Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
348 And fiercely shed intolerable day;
349 Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
350 But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
351 Those pois'nous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
352 Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
353 Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
354 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
355 Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
356 And savage men more murd'rous still than they;
357 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
358 Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
359 Far different these from every former scene,
360 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
361 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
362 That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

363 Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
364 That call'd them from their native walks away;
365 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
366 Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
367 And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
368 For seats like these beyond the western main,
369 And shudd'ring still to face the distant deep,
370 Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep!
371 The good old sire the first prepar'd to go
372 To new found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
373 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
374 He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
375 His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
376 The fond companion of his helpless years,
377 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
378 And left a lover's for a father's arms.
379 With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
380 And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose,
381 And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
382 And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
383 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
384 In all the silent manliness of grief.

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386 How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!
387 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
388 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
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390 Boast of a florid vigour not their own.
391 At every draught more large and large they grow,
392 A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;

393 Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
394 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

395 Ev'n now the devastation is begun,
396 And half the business of destruction done;
397 Ev'n now, methinks, as pond'ring here I stand,
398 I see the rural virtues leave the land.
399 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
400 That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
401 Downward they move, a melancholy band,
402 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
403 Contented toil, and hospitable care,
404 And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
405 And piety, with wishes placed above,
406 And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
407 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
408 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
409 Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
410 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
411 Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
412 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
413 Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
414 That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
415 Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
416 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
417 Farewell, and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
418 On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
419 Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
420 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
421 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
422 Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;
423 Aid slighted truth, with thy persuasive strain
424 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
425 Teach him that states of native strength possess,
426 Though very poor, may still be very blest;
427 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
428 As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
429 While self-dependent power can time defy,
430 As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

Oliver Goldsmith

The Traveller; or, A Prospect of Society (excerpt)

...

But where to find that happiest spot below
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease:
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam,
His first, best country ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Tho' patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind;
As different good, by Art or Nature given,
To different nations makes their blessings even.

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at Labour's earnest call:
With food as well the peasant is supplied
On Idra's cliffs as Arno's shelvy side;
And though the rocky-crested summits frown,
These rocks by custom turn to beds of down.
From Art more various are the blessings sent,--
Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content.
Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
That either seems destructive of the rest.
Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails,
And honour sinks where commerce long prevails.
Hence every state, to one lov'd blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone.
Each to the favourite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends:
Till carried to excess in each domain,
This favourite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies:
Here for a while my proper cares resign'd;
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

Far to the right, where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends:
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride;
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between

With venerable grandeur mark the scene.

Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.
Whatever fruits in different climes are found,
That proudly rise or humbly court the ground;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession descks the varied year;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die;
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear;
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign:
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;
And e'en in penance planning sins anew.
All evils here contaminate the mind
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs; not far removed the date,
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state;
At her command the palace learnt to rise,
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies,
The canvas glow'd, beyond e'en nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form;
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail;
While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,
But towns unmann'd, and lords without a slave:
And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
For these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The pasteboard triumph and the cavalcade,
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd;
The sports of children satisfy the child.
Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind:

As in those domes where Caesars once bore sway,
Defac'd by time and tott'ring in decay,
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wond'ring man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile....

Oliver Goldsmith

When Lovely Woman Stoops To Folly

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is—to die.

Oliver Goldsmith