

Classic Poetry Series

George Dyer
- poems -

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George Dyer(1755 - 1841)

George Dyer was an English classicist and a prolific writer.

Life

He was educated at Christ's Hospital, and attended Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He edited the Delphin Classics, a 143-volume set of Greek and Latin works published by Abraham John Valpy at which task his editorial labors were so excessive as to induce near total blindness. He also wrote poetry, and authored a number of tracts on the plight of England's poor and on reform of the political system.

Radical

He shared many ideas with radical writers of the time. His doctrine of benevolence advised a moral obligation to the poor, during a time when the interest in the lower classes was subsiding. He had an impact on authors such as William Godwin, but also gave critical and moral support to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth.

Nicholas Roe's chapter on Dyer in The politics of nature: Wordsworth and some contemporaries shows Dyer to have been an important model for Wordsworth and Coleridge in the way he brought politics to bear on the poetry of nature and imagination. Dyer's influence represents, for Roe the answer to current historians who believe that the Romantics turned their backs on history in their search for a transcendent nature. The poet thus seems to have revenged himself on claims of insignificance.

Anecdotes

There are a number of stories associated with George Dyer particularly regarding his myopia and his notable eccentricities. These stories were famously told by two of his well known friends Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb. Lamb in his Elia essay Amicus Redivivus relates an incident in which Dyer, after a visit to the Lamb household in Islington, walked the wrong way on the pathway and went right into the New River, nearly drowning himself in the process. Leigh Hunt

tells a similarly story regarding Dyer, in which after spending the evening at the Hunt's for dinner, he inadvertently left with only one shoe. Apparently Dyer's missing shoe went unnoticed by him until he arrived home and he returned to the Hunt household after midnight, awakening everyone, to retrieve his missing shoe which was finally located under a table.

Another incident relating to Dyer concerns a preface which he wrote for his Poems published in 1802, and is described in detail by E. V. Lucas in his Life of Charles Lamb. It seems that on rereading one of the first prints of his book, Dyer claimed that there was a significant error in reasoning contained on the first page of the preface. Dyer rushed to the printer and at no small expense to himself had a number of prints redone. These stories can be found particularly in Hunt's Autobiography, the Essays of Elia, the Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb, and The Life of Charles Lamb by E.V. Lucas.

After A Tour At The Close Of Autumn

Now farewell, summer's fervid sky,
That, while the sun thro' Cancer rides
With chariot slow, and fever'd eye,
Scorches the beach-clad forest sides!
And farewell earlier autumn's sober ray,
Which, the warm labours of the sickle o'er,
Could make the heart of swain industrious gay,
Viewing in barn secure his wheaten store,
What time the social hours mov'd blithe along,
Urg'd by the nut-brown ale, and jolly harvest-song.

What different scenes around me rise!
Now midst a naked scene I roam,
Where the rude haunt in hillocks lies,
Where the rash sportsman frights the grove.
Ah! cruel sport; ah! pain-awak'ning sound!
How hoarse your death-note to his list'ning ear,
Who late, wild-warbled-music floating sound,
Blest the wild warblers of the rising year;
Who, as each songster strain'd his little throat,
Grateful himself would try the soft responsive note.

Yet still in autumn's fading form
The tender melting charm we chace,
(Such as, love's season past still warm
The sober matron's modest face)
Mild-beaming suns, oft hid by fleeting clouds,
Blue mantled skies, light fringed with golden hues,
Brooks, whose swoln waters mottled leaves o'erspread;
Fields, where the plough, its steady course pursues;
And woods, whose many-shining leaves might move
Fancy's poetic hand to paint some orange grove.

Oh! still, for fancy is a child,
Still with the circling hours I play,
And feast on hips and blackberries wild,
As truant school-boy gay;
Or eager plunge in cool pellucid stream,
Heedless, that Summer's sultry day is fled;

Or muse, as breathes the flute, the rural theme,
Such theme as fancy's song may yet bestead;
Or stretch'd at ease will teach the list'ning groves
In tuneful Maro's strains, some rosy rustic loves.

Now bear me to the distant wood;
Or bear me to the silent stream,
Where erst I stray'd in serious mood,
Lost in some rapt'rous dream,
To me, Oh! Hornsey, what retreat so fair?
What shade to me so consecrate as thine?
And, on thy bank, poor streamlet, did I care
For all the spring-haunts of the tunefull nine?
Ah! pleasures, how ye lengthen, as ye fade,
As spreads the sun's faint orb at twilight's dubious shade.

For, Oh! pale stream, how many a tear
I mingled in thy waters slow!
For, mid the blossoms of its spring,
Youth has its tale of woe!
And thus thro' life — for what is human life?
A changeful day, a motley-tinctur'd scene;
How quick succeed the hours of peace and strife!
How sombre tints o'erspread the chearful green!
E'en while faint hope lights up her brightest sky,
She wavers midst her doubts, and learns to heave a sigh.

But, lo! the sun now seeks the west,
And, see! the distant landscape dies—
And, now with anxious cares opprest
I view yon dome arise.
Ah! soon, too soon I give the faint adieu,
And my song sleeps, as fades the cheerful day;
Soon shall the dusky city bound my view,
And hag-eyed Spleen November's call obey:
Ye fields, ye groves, whose every charm could please,
Ye gentle friends, adieu, and farewell, rural ease.

Yet fields, and groves, and gentle friends,
When memory bids, shall re-appear,
Quick, where she lifts her wand, ascend
The long departed year;

The choirs, whose warblings charm'd the youthful spring,
And summer's glittering tribes, and all that now
Of autumn fades, their mingled charms shall bring,
And the full year mid winter's reign shall glow;
While fancy, as the vision'd forms arise,
Shall pencil woods, and groves, and fields, and purple skies.

George Dyer

Freedom And Peace

When long thick Tempests waste the Plain
And Lightnings cleave an angry Sky,
Sorrow invades each anxious Swain—
And trembling Nymphs to shelter fly!
But let the Sun illumine the skies,
They hail his beam with grateful eyes.

So, when fierce ZEAL a Nation rends,
And stern INJUSTICE rules the Throne,
Beneath the Yoke meek VIRTUE bends,
And modest TRUTH is heard to groan!
But, when fair FREEDOM'S Star appears,
Hush'd are their sighs and calm'd their fears.

And who, when Nations long oppress'd
Decree to curb th' Oppressor's pride,
And Patriot Virtues fire the breast,
Who shall the gen'rous ardour chide?
What shall withstand the great Decree,
When a brave Nation WILL BE FREE?

Thus GREECE repell'd her num'rous foes;
Thus BRITAIN curb'd a STUART'S race;
Thus GALLIA'S Sons to Glory rose,
Heralds of Peace to future days;
And thus MAY ALL the Nations rise,
And shout their Triumphs to the skies!

The Wars of ages thus decided,
Commerce shall bless each smiling Land;
And Man from Man no more divided,
In Peace shall live, a friendly band!
But Tyrants, with their glare of pow'r,
Like Meteors fall—to rise no more!

Then blooming Youths and Sages hoary
Shall sing the deeds of ancient days,
And tender Virgins learn the story,
And Children lisp their Grandsire's praise;
The Heav'ns shall smile and Earth be gay,
If PEACE with FREEDOM rule the day!

George Dyer

Greatest Of Beings! Source Of Life!

Greatest of beings! Source of life!
Sovereign of air, and earth, and sea!
All nature feels thy power, and all
A silent homage pays to Thee.

Children, whose little minds, unformed,
Ne'er raised a tender thought to heaven;
And men, whom reason lifts to God,
Though oft by passion downward driven;

Those too who bend with age and care,
And faint and tremble near the tomb,
Who, sickening at the present scenes,
Sigh for that better state to come;

All, great Creator! all are thine;
All feel thy providential care;
And through each varying stage of life,
Alike thy constant pity share.

And whether grief oppress the heart,
Or whether joy elate the breast,
Or life still keep its little course,
Or death invite the heart to rest:

All are thy messengers; and all
Thy sacred pleasure, Lord! obey:
And all are training man to dwell
Nearer to bliss, and nearer Thee.

George Dyer

Ode Addressed To Dr. Robert Anderson, Of Heriot's Green, Edinburgh.

I.

Where is the KING of SONGS? He sleeps in death:
No more around him press the warrior-throng;
He rolls no more the death-denouncing song;
Calm'd is the storm of war, and hush'd the poet's breath.
Yes! Anderson, he sleeps: but Carron's stream
Still seems responsive to his awful lyre;
And oft where Clutha's winding waters gleam,
Shall pilgrim-poets burn with kindred fire.
Sunk are Balclutha's walls, and shatter'd low
The fort high-beetling, gem of Roman pride;
Sleeps too Fingal, and sleeps th' Imperial foe,
Each in his narrow dwelling doom'd to bide.
Quench'd is the poet's eye — but shines his name,
As thro' a broken cloud the sun's far-darting flame.

II.

Where now DUNBAR? The bard has run his race:
But glitters still the GOLDEN TERGE on high;
Nor shall the thunder storm that sweeps the sky,
'Mid its wide waste, the glorious orb deface.
DUNKELD, no more the heaven-directed chaunt
Within thy sainted wall may sound again.
But thou, as once a poet's favourite haunt—
Shalt live in DOUGLAS' pure Virgilian strain;
While time devours the castle's towering wall,
And roofless abbies pine, low tottering to their fall.

III.

Oh! Tweed, say, does thy rolling stream betide
The patriot's ardour, or the bigot's rage?
In union dost thou distant friends engage?
Or flow, a boundary river, to divide?
If love direct, roll on, thou generous stream,
Thy banks, oh! Tweed, I kiss, and hail thee friend:
But while thy waters, serpent-winding gleam,
Should serpent treacheries on thy course attend,

Thy banks disdainful would I rove along,
Tho' every bard that sings, should raise thee in his song.

IV.

But no, my friend: I read thy candid page,
And catch the fervor of thy generous mind,
Be mine, with chaplets Scotian brows to bind,
While England's bards thy studious hours engage.
The Highland nymph shall melt with England's lay;
And English swains be charm'd with Scotia's song;
Tho' rude the language, yet to themes so gay,
The softest powers of melody belong.
Still Ramsay, shall thy GENTLE SHEPHERD please,
Still, BURNS, thy rustic mirths, and amorous minstrelsies.

V.

When shall I view again with ravish'd sight,
As when with thee, my Anderson, I stray'd,
And all the wonder-varying scene survey'd,
Seas, hills, and city fair from Calton's height?
When hear, (for Scotia's rhymes ah! soon shall fail)
Some Ednam bard awake the trembling string,
Some tuneful youth of charming Tiviot-dale,
Some Kelso songstress love's dear raptures sing?
Language may change; but song shall never die,
Till beauty fail to charm, till love forget to sigh.

George Dyer

Ode I. Visions

INTRODUCTION.

Yes, Mysta, yes — me much thy fables please,
Thy dreams of other days, and other climes:
For truths and kind affections with thy rhymes
Commix, inwoven well: — be thine to seize
The Poet's ground, the high aethereal way;
Mine the terrestrial walk: nor me hath age
Yet chill'd, tho' stealing on; and so I stray
Into thy upper grounds, like palmer sage.
Here let us kindly meet, and the world see,
How friends may differ much, and yet may much agree.

Me too thy Spenser pleases, and his song
Lur'd me to Fairy-land: there I did meet
King Arthur and St. George, in converse sweet,
Of their achievements proud, and labours long,
And gentlest charities, and lineage high:
From diff'rent lands they come, to diff'rent ways
They go, yet come and go as friends; so I,
Thy reas'nings heard, will now unfold what says
My secret guide; and should's't thou ask of me,
Why he near Isis taught, I will explain to thee.

It was, because he knew in early years,
I bath'd my limbs in Camus, classic stream;
And that I might unthinking lightly deem
Of those two kindred streams, his bright compeers:
For well my genius knew, in days of yore,
How bookmen oft, rivals in pedant pride,
Would over-rate each his own college lore,
And each the others minstrelsies deride;
Hence oft to Isis now my steps he leads,
To muse upon her banks, and tread her flowery meads.

And there he taught me still that stream to love,
Wherein long since my young limbs laved were;
For that great Spenser, Milton, Cowley, there,
Dryden and Gray, whilom were wont to rove,
And were baptiz'd, as in some wizard stream;

And will'd, too, I should ponder well and long,
That Chaucer, of old British bards supreme,
In Isis wash'd; but that the Prince of Song,
Immortal Shakespeare, Nature's fav'rite child,
Bath'd in no classic stream, but ranged the mountains wild.

VISIONS.

In that blithe season, when on every spray
Life lifts the fluttering wing, and warms each flower,
In muse-frequented, fancy-colour'd bower,
Sleeps prisoner, lock'd in visions deep, I lay:
Cherwell, fair river, flow'd the bower beside,
Moist'ning the bank, as wont, with kisses sweet;
While Isis pour'd along her silver tide,
Her kindred stream in kind embrace to meet:
Ah! thus, I cried, as now these streams combine,
Might man with fellow-man in friendly union join.

The stately sun had left his mid-day throne,
And on the waters play'd his sloping beam;
Silent awhile the feather'd warblers seem,
And faint with heat the daisied meadows shone.
Soon as soft slumbers had ensnar'd my eyes,
I heard a voice which spoke in accent strong:
'Bright scenes shall rise successive: man be wise,
And mark each shadowy form which glides along:'
All is now still; a lighter landscape shines,
Of Nature's gayest green, of Beauty's softest lines.

One Vision soon is past, when I behold
A POWER descend, that nine fair virgins led:
A glory beams from his ambrosial head,
Bright are his eyes, his sandals shine with gold;
Down his young form a golden vestment flows;
His golden harp with skill is aptly strung.
And now with musings deep his visage glows,
While all around in mute expectance hung;
But when the minstrel strikes the harmonic lyre,
What high-wrought raptures seize that sacred sister choir!

What pencil may describe those virgins fair,
Their mystic forms, their eyes ethereal light?

When poesy's and music's powers unite,
Who may their many-mingling charms declare?
These damsels now by turns responsive sing,
Then wake in chorus, harp, and pipe, and lute,
Sound the gay timbrels, shrill the cymbals ring,
As different sounds their different genius suit.
Thus Nature ever various loves to please,
Thus from mixt forms calls forth her wond'rous harmonies.

Their song was proud — of gods, and heroes brave;
Of Jove loud-thundering, and his awful queen;
And her that virgin rare, of sylvan mien;
And beauty's goddess, sprung from ocean's wave;
Nor less of her, the warrior, from whose eye
Beams wisdom, gorgon-terrors from whose breast,
Nor less of him, that God, the tempest high
Who lifts, or calms at will, its rage to rest;
Of all who fill the empyreal plain,
Or thro' the skies, earth, fire, and water, boundless reign.

Beside a beech, list'ning with his rude throng,
Hung Orpheus, master of the melting lyre;
And near old Hesiod, and the vagrant sire,
Blind Homer, who so rous'd th' heroic song,
The glory of great Greece: others were there,
Bards, fam'd thro' Greece, still of illustrious names,
Some Roman, who those muses smiles wont share,
(Some now ingulph'd in time, unknown to fame)
Foremost of whom, Ennius, of distant age,
With Maro, polished bard, and with Lucretius sage.

But quickly now successive to my view,
Far different forms, and different scenes unfold,
Suns empyrean-bright, and skies of gold,
Hills ever green, and fields of heavenly hue;
And far away, two wide extended streams,
Sacred the names, and dear to eastern lore;
(More stately move not in the poet's dreams)
Roll their proud waves beside the silent shore,
And hark! a thousand songs to Mithra rise,
Luxuriant as the fields, and glowing as the skies.

The rapturous notes fill every sacred bower,
Till now, as slumbering, clos'd the eye of day:
Then pour'd the nightingale his liquid lay,
Perch'd on a branch beside his favourite flower.
And near that flower his eyes are glittering bright;
And near that flower his notes so wildly rove,
As tho' his little breast with fond delight
Would break, for blooming ROSA was his love.
Thou sweetest flower, oh! still thy stay prolong,
Oh! sweetest bird, still pour that soothing, melting song.

Here gay, o'er wine, with each a dainty dame,
Hafez and Sadi sat; nor far away
Rose Cassem, far renown'd for classic lay;
And Abilola, bard of loftier name;
And he, that shepherd, who gave Israel law,
And he who glorious rul'd, their tuneful king;
And such as taught in prophets schools, and saw
Visions, and wak'd inspired the mystic string,
The first of whom, Isaiah, nor less he
Who moraliz'd in song, thro' the blest Araby.

Now, as just rais'd from fiery surge, behold
Beings, monstrous gods, by God and man accurs'd,
Satan, arch-fiend, and Moloch, mad with thirst
Of human blood, and Mammon gorg'd with gold;
And other forms, huge, hideous, hateful, base;
Gods once of Egypt, or Phoenicia's coast,
Or Syrias, with Belial's beastly race,
Mail'd with dark panoply, a dreadful host!
Furious as fiery storms from Etna rise,
Which deluge all the land, and purple all the skies.

'Gainst Heaven's high King, I saw them waging war;
I saw them plung'd headlong to deepest hell;
I saw them plotting machinations fell,
Plotting, tho' fall'n, in Pandaemonium far:
And against whom those machinations vile?
'Gainst man, and his long feeble progeny.
I saw the tempter give — with baleful smile;
I saw the tempted take the gift and die.
Ah! splendid horrors all; but short their stay;

How like a thunder-storm, that growls, and dies away!

Chang'd is the scene. — Now towering forms I view,
With limbs of giant size, they march along;
Loud they pour forth the hoarse prophetic song;
Bold is their front; their eyes of sullen blue.
Louder and louder bursts their martial strain,
(Clash their rude shields responsive to the sound)
As now embattling fierce, they scour the plain,
Where grisly foemen groaning bite the ground.
'Joy to the brave' — I hear the bardie cry;
'Shout, shout (the day is won) the song of victory.'

And now the rites begin, dark groves among,
Long consecrate in wood-crown'd isle most fair;
Tuisto and Mannus all due honours share;
(The Gods of nations claim the warriors song)
But her in hymns accordant long and loud,
Hertha, the all-prolific source of life,
Her most they celebrate in vestments proud,
High-thron'd in chariot bright: hush'd is all strife;
And war has dropp'd his lance; for all around
The goddess fills the groves, and terrors rock the ground.

Now flutter forms fantastic, dimly seen,
Fays, Genii, Monsters, Spirits, a motley band,
And he, who whilom rul'd through fairy-land,
That merry, pranking king, and elfin queen.
'Oh! stay thee, Oberon — lo! a gentle knight
Implores thy aid, on val'rous deeds intent;
True to his love, and panting for the fight,
On great emprise to lands far-distant bent.'
Oberon is stay'd; and 'take that horn,' he cries,
And 'take that sacred ring and every danger flies.'

And lo! a castle rears its stupendous wall,
And fiery dragons guard the building round;
Ah! who would dare to tread infernal ground?
The knight has dar'd: no terrors may appal:
Though hell were in that place, he must advance:
Deep foams his fiery steed, and prances high,
Till by the terror of his flaming lance,

Close lock'd in death those raving monsters lie.
Loud sounds his horn: wide the gates open spread;
And proud he enters thro', and towers his crested head.

And, oh! what freezing scenes to view unfold!
How stare, with horror wild, his stony eyes!
What piteous howlings, what heart-rending cries!
Stound are his ears; his blood runs shivering cold!
Here deep enthral'd lies many a lady bright,
Ah! doom'd by giant curs'd to writhe in pain,
Or yield, vile service, to his damn'd delight,
Who deep-retir'd here holds his dev'lish reign:
But by the knight's stout arm the monster fell,
Has felt the stroke of death and hastens down to hell.

'Now, ladies, take heaven's ever-blessed boon,
Freedom is yours: God speed you on your way:'
And now the knight shall hail th' all-glorious day:
High his desert, and he shall triumph soon:
A princess bright (such honours crown the brave)
In pride of youth awaits thy wish'd return;
Full many a fair, Sir Knight, 'twas thine to save;
Nor vainly did that breast with glory burn.
But lo! the fairy scene eludes my sight,
Fled is the princess fair, and fled the valorous knight.

But hark! the master of the Runic rhyme
Strikes the rude shell and wakes the mystic lay:
And see! the KING OF MEN pursues his way.
To try Varthrudnis' art in things sublime.
Now Gothic lore is beaming on my sight;
Now sacred truth enchains my wond'ring mind;
Whence earth, and heav'n, and all those worlds of light;
The mighty gods and heroes of mankind;
Who drives morn's rising car, and evening's low;
Whence all the flowers that bloom, and all the herbs that grow:

And what that stream, which gods divides from earth;
And whose that arm, which durst with Odin war;
Whence Godhead's source, and Niflhil thence how far;
And whence that old Bergelmer owes his birth;
And where Valhalla, seat of noble men,

Who bravely fought, and durst in youth to bleed;
And where that nameless winter holds its reign,
Which must some new created world precede;
And where yon sun shall hide, when mighty THOR
Shall, midst a world in flames, extinguish ruthless WAR.

But lo! now glimmers thro' the thicken'd air,
Helmets, and shields, and many a sparkling lance;
And see those SISTERS grim! quick they advance!
Orkney for woe! Erin for woe prepare!
Lo! north and south those dragon-sisters fly!
Grim-visag'd terror scowls on all the plain—
And hark! those ponderous groans, that lengthening cry!
The cry, the groan of many a warrior slain!
Oh! scene of horrors, close upon my eyes!
Sped are those grisly dames: and lo! that vision flies.

Dark now the scene, and lengthening still the land!
'Tis Caledonia. — How her forests frown!
Picts, like bees swarming thick, see rushing down
Southward, and now in hosts embattled stand!
Soon Fingal's spirit stalks, while Ossian's song
Rouses, such power have sounds, the martial flame;
Here Bruce's, Baliol's, rival armies throng;
There pensive Wallace with his faithful Graham:
Now border-chiefs, and Danish now arise:
And dauntless, tho' in pangs, hear how great Ragnar dies.

But ruffian squadrons still embattle round,
And guilty conquest has distain'd the field:
Heralds of peace — must they to fury yield?
Shall unarm'd victims feel the dastard's wound?
Yes! they have fall'n, the bards, fair Cambria's pride,
Truth's tuneful priests — with heaven they left the prayer;
And not unmourn'd the blameless victims died;
See beck'ning spirits hover in the air;
While brave Aneurin mourns his Hoel slain;
And pity droops the head at soft Llewellyn's strain.

Thus do these visionary pageants gleam;
Some quick retire, others as quick arise,
(As those bright forms to Jacob from the skies,

Past, and repast, gilding his midnight dream.)
Ah! scenes that do but live in fiction's eye,
Yet can, like charms, beguile a life of woe.
Too true to truth, who would each day-dream fly,
Who, rob'd in wisdom, fancy's worlds forego?
Return, ye fabled forms, if ye can please,
Oh! still, ye visions, rise, and wrap my soul in ease.

Now all is past; and not a being seen;
While silence reigns (as when in spring, a shower
Sheds on the meadows round, its fruitful store,
And leaves the grateful landscape all serene)
But soon — thus changeful is the life of man—
My genius leads me to a secret cave,
Form'd by proportion's nicest, truest plan,
And ocean rolls beside the placid wave.
Straight as I enter, oh! what sweet surprise
Has seiz'd my raptur'd heart, and fill'd my ravish'd eyes!

There art had cull'd from nature's stores divine;
There plac'd in brilliant rows with studious care,
Whatever boasts the sea, of treasures rare;
Whate'er of sparkling ore conceals the mine;
The branching coral, red, and white, and blue,
The silvery pearl, the crystal bright and clear,
Em'ralsds of green, the ruby's scarlet hue,
The pride of climes, and blossoms of the year;
All that could please and charm a gazer's eyes:
For here, though small the spot, did seem a paradise.

By nymphs attended, here a sylvan maid,
(Cities she fled, and spurn'd the chain of love;
Her love, to range the mountain, stream, and grove)
Finds rest and coolness in the quiet shade;
And near, an aged dame of power supreme,
Prolific parent she, the sov'reign high
Of the world's boundless realms, yet fond did seem
Of simplest chaplet, cull'd from meadows nigh.
How mild her eye! — Thus beams the morning light—
But all the goddess-form swells full upon my sight!

'Be thine,' she said, and gaz'd upon the flowers,

With looks which wisdom mixt with love express'd,
'With many a dazzling scene thy mind to feast;
To follow fiction through her magic bowers;
To trip with Fancy in her airy dance,
With tiptoe revelries, and wild surprise;
To mark each pageant in its proud advance
From shadowy deeps, and visionary skies:
Sweet are the haunts, wherever genius roves,
Through fields of vision'd bliss, or academic groves.

'Sooth'd into softness by the melting song,
Charm'd into reverence by the mighty theme,
Be thine to kindle at each muse's dream,
To hail with reverence all the tuneful throng.
Theirs be the praise — nor slender be the praise—
To make new worlds — to burst the bounds of time—
Their stately monument of fame to raise—
And on the heart to bind the mystic rhyme—
Bold their design, each daring charm to seize,
And rouse to wonder, where they mean to please.

'Thine be the warblings of the peaceful lyre,
Peaceful, but not inglorious; thine to sing,
The morning's glittering eye — the virgin spring—
—The power of beauty — freedom's holy fire;
To guide the youthful poet on his way;
—To rouse the virtues — soothe the soul of pain.'—
Enough — if Genius may but feel the lay;
Enough, if friendship but approve the strain:
And if, for life's short day-dream soon shall fly,
The muse may charm a pang, or check a rising sigh.

George Dyer

Ode Iv: On The Morning

Child of the light, fair morning hour,
Who smilest o'er yon purple hill!
I come to woo thy cheering pow'r,
Beside this murm'ring rill.
Nor I alone — a thousand songsters rise
To meet thy dawning, and thy sweets to share;
While ev'ry flow'r that scents the honied air,
Thy milder influence feels, and sheds its brightest dies.

And let me hear some village swain
Whistle in rustic glee along;
Or hear some true love's gentle pain
Breath'd from the milkmaid's song.
Wild are those notes, but sweeter far to me
Than the soft airs borne from Italian groves:
To which the wanton muse and naked loves
Strike the wild lyre, and dance in gamesome glee.

And rosy health, for whom so long
Mid sleepless nights I've sigh'd in vain,
Shall throw her airy vestment on,
And meet me on the plain.
Gay laughing nymph, that loves a morning sky;
That loves to trip across the spangled dews;
And with her finger dipp'd in brightest hues,
My faint cheek shall she tinge, and cheer my languid eye.

Then will I taste the morn's sweet hour,
And, singing, bless the new-born day;
Or, wand'ring in Amanda's bow'r,
Rifle the sweets of May:
And to my song Amanda shall attend,
And take the posie from the sylvan muse;
For sure the virtuous fair will not refuse
The muse's modest gifts, her tribute to a friend.

George Dyer

Ode On The Spring

See where the rosy-footed Spring
Dances forth in trim array,
Blithe as an Eastern bridal Queen,
To wed the lamp of day.
And see! where rising nature homage pays,
And all her breathing incense pour along;
The softest gales, the shrillest warblers lays,
The streams sweet murmur, and the poets song,
All, all are thine! Earth, Air, and Sea, and Sky,
All wake for thee, fair Spring, their sweetest minstrelsy.

I too the gentle influence feel,
And join the rapt'rous choral song;
And touch the lyre as soft I steal,
Oh Cam! — thy banks along.
Tho' on those banks no myrtle breathes perfume,
No rose unfolds its blushing beauties there,
No tulip there displays its gaudy bloom,
No stately lily decks the gay parterre;
Enclos'd within the garden's bright domain,
These all in Eastern pride still hold their golden reign.

Yet nature o'er the simple scene
Scatters wild beauties bright and gay,
As up they spring, a numerous train,
As fair and sweet as they.
To me the violet hath a balmy sweet,
To me the kingcup scatters golden hues,
E'en in the primrose modest beauties meet,
E'en the meek daisy can instruct the muse:
Mid fields in silent wonder she can stand,
And ev'n in field-flow'rs trace a master's matchless hand.

And see! the sportive sun-beams play,
Dancing on the crisped stream;
While thousand insects, light and gay,
Swift o'er the surface skim.
Nor does in vain the stately cygnet sail,
Nor roving bees buz on the flowery brink,

Nor fishes down the silver current steal,
Nor little songsters on the margin drink,
And playful oft their glossy pinions ply,
While with their feather'd mates they vernal gambols try.

Oh Spring! — I love thy gentle reign;—
Yet I will leave thee, gentle Spring,
If so his wisdom shall ordain
Who reigns, thy smiling King.
Yes, all thy clouds and skies of silver hues,
Thy meads, and vales, soft gales, and glossy bloom,
I'll leave them all, so friendly to the muse,
Should but thy Sov'reign say, Behold! I come.
And shatter'd too might sleep this feeble lyre,
Might I but hear, and view, and join th' immortal choir.

What tho' I love thee, Spring-tide fair,
Yet there's a brighter Spring above;
Gay laughs the Sun the livelong year,
And all is light and love.
There gales immortal sweetness breathe around;
There shine fair-smiling fruits and golden flowers,
Cherish'd, luxuriant on the laughing ground,
With Heav'n's own dews, and pure ambrosial show'rs.
There happy beings rest, their conquest won,
And reap from heavenly trees a never-with'ring crown.

George Dyer

Ode VII: On Liberty

Hail! more refulgent than the morning star,
Gay queen of bliss, fair daughter of the sky,
I woo thee, Freedom! May I hope from far
To catch the brightness of thy raptur'd eye?
While not unseemly streams thy zoneless vest,
Thy wild locks dancing to the frolic wind;
And, borne on flying feet, thou scorn'st to rest,
Save where meek truth her modest seat may find.
Hail! radiant from divine, blest Liberty!
Where'er thou deign'st to rove, oh! let me rove with thee.

Say, dost thou choose to tread the mountain's brow,
Or haunt meand'ring stream, or wanton plain?
Up the steep mountain's height with thee I'll go;
Or wake by river's brink the merry strain:
Or o'er the laughing plain I'll trip along,
A simple swain, 'midst hinds and virgins gay;
And still will chant to thee the even-song,
Unwearied with the raptures of the day.
And e'en when lock'd in sleep's soft arms I lie,
Still flatt'ring dreams shall wake the midnight ecstasy.

Or dost thou choose to wear the sober veil
Of mild philosophy, and walk unseen,
Serenely grave, along the cloister pale,
Or in the pensive grove, or shaven green:
Then will I tend thee on thy secret way,
And from thy musing catch the patriot flame,
Gentle and clear, as the sun's smiling ray
At dawn, yet warm, as his meridian beam,
When wond'ring nations feel the piercing rays,
And think they view their God, and kindle into praise.

Such wast thou seen by Isis' silver flood,
In converse sweet with Locke, immortal sage;
Such too by Cam with him, whose bosom glow'd
With thy sweet raptures, and the muses rage.
Nor less with him, who bore to distant climes
His country's love, and o'er her mis'ries sigh'd;

Brave injur'd patriot he, in evil times
Who nobly liv'd, and not ignobly died.
Whol nobly liv'd, whose name shall ever live,
While zeal in Britain glows, while freedom shall survive.

With Jebb and Price thou pass'dst the studious hour,
And stor'dst with gen'rous truths their ample mind;
Thou bad'st them glow, with patriot zeal; and more,
Thou bad'st them glow with low of human kind.
And oh! fair queen, still think for Albion's weal!
Still with our Parrs and Masons, still abide!
Still may those gen'rous friends thine influence feel,
Alike in manners' and; in worth allied.
When civil broils an injur'd nation rend,
Be thou fair learning's pride, the muse's constant friend.

So shall my Disney still thy call obey,
And deck the patriot's tomb with wreathes of fame;
And still o'er classic fields shall Porson stray,
And Aikin still adore his Howard's name:
May Fitzroy too the gen'rous transport share;
And rais'd by love of thee and love of truth,
View Liberty's long lustre mild and clear,
Till its full orb illumine Britannia's youth.
And I, the meanest of the tuneful throng,
On Cam's fair banks will chant to thee the grateful song.

Or dost thou from Columbus' blissful plains,
Invite thy Paine, to rouse the languid hearts
Of Albion's foes, and through their feeble veins
Dart the electric fire, which quick imparts
Passions, which make them wonder, while they feel.
Auspicious queen! still shew thy beauteous face,
Till Britons kindle into rapture—

Or dost thou, sweet enthusiast! choose to warm
With more than manly fire the female breast?
And urge thy Wollstonecraft to break the charm,
Where beauty lies in durance vile opprest
Then will I from my Jebb's fair pages prove,
That female minds might teach a patriot throng,
Or 'on the Loire's sweet banks' with Williams rove;

Or hear thee warble in Laetitia's song;
Or see thee weep in Charlotte's melting page;
And from Macaulay learn to scourge a venal age.

Or dost thou, near Maria's early tomb,
Clad like the muse of sorrow, dropp a tear.
Oh! I will kiss that sacred drop, and roam
To strew the cypress on Maria's bier.
Or I will hear thee, fair Melpomene,
In my own Charlotte's pensive notes complain.
Faithful to thee, though pensive—

Or art thou wont to couch with lion pride
Near Britons genius, slumb'ring as in ire;
Waiting what time thy children shall abide
Thy noblest form, and glow with purest fire?
Sweet slumb'rer rest! yet shall the times be found,
When Britain's bards shall wake no venal strain,
Her prophets give no more a double sound;
No more her patriots thirst for sordid gain:
And lawless zeal shall fink to endless shame,
Nor longer keep thy seat, nor bear thy sacred name

But shouldst thou scorn at length Britannia's isle,
Then would I pass with Penn the dang'rous sea
Yes! I would hasten to some happier soil,
Where tyrants hold no rule, no slaves obey.
There would I woo thee, goddess, heav'nly fair;
Sing my wild notes to thee, where'er I roam;
Britons no more the muse's praise should share,
Tyrants abroad, and miscreants at home—
E'en Britain's friend would publish Britain's shame;
While barb'rous tribes should hear, and scorn a Briton's name—

But shouldst thou e'en from Britain speed thy way,
On Gallia's plains still linger with delight;
And while her patriots hail this sacred day ,
Oh! aid their counsels, end their battles fight;
May tyrants ne'er, those murd'ers of the world,
Austria's proud Lord, and Prussia's faithless king,
Their blood-stain'd banners to the air unfurl'd,
O'er freedom's sons the note of triumph sing;

Still with the great resolve the Polish heroes fire,
To live in thine embrace, or at thy feet expire.

George Dyer

On Revisiting The Scenes Of Earlier Life

— whom I met in earlier day,
Following, as SCIENCE led the way,
And warmly hail'd a gen'rous name
Glowing with FREEDOM'S sacred flame,
What time, by Cam's slow-gliding stream,
I mus'd at ease the pensive theme;
Or, as in some Aonian Grove,
Where Bards ecstatic lov'd to rove,
I struck, at FANCY'S call, the Classic Lyre,
And felt, or seem'd to feel, some Prophet's holy fire!

We saw no Alps in grandeur climb,
Nor Ocean rous'd to thought sublime,
No Mountain-torrents roll'd around,
Nor Rocks gave out the mystic sound:
Yet clear was Morning's earliest Light,
The Star of Evening mild and bright;
And, lofty on his mid-day throne,
The Sun, in beauty glorious, shone;
Sweet was the Gale that brush'd the wavy field,
And NATURE'S simplest forms could charms unnumber'd yield!

But now no more! — for time has sped,
And many a golden Day-dream fled;
While backward as I turn my eye,
Friends, now no more, awake the sigh;
And, ah, as swift the Rivers glide,
To lose themselves in Ocean's tide;
And, as the Birds forget to sing,
And Trees put off the dress of Spring,
So thou, my Friend, art hast'ning on to death,
And I shall cease from Song, and soon resign my breath!

But, rise some scenes of fresh delight—
Some vision'd bliss still charm my sight;
And, long as aught of Life shall last,
Let some new Day-dream chace the past;
Still fire me, FREEDOM'S ardent throng,
And fill me, soul-enchancing Song;

Still, FRIENDSHIP, deign with me to rest,
And raise your Altar in my Breast!
But, when the nobler Virtues cease to fire,
Oh, thou, ye Visions, close, and Life itself expire!

George Dyer

On The Return Of A Festival

While War through kindred nations roams,
With fiery eye and blood-stain'd spear,
And Pity, on the warrior's tombs,
Hangs the pale wreath, and drops a tear,—
While thousands bleed,—while thousands die,
Let Britons heave the generous sigh.

Mirth hails in vain the festal day,
The Muse in vain prepares the song,
The note of triumph dies away,
And horror chills the poet's tongue;
For thousands bleed,—for thousands die,
And Britons heave the generous sigh.

By all the gallant warriors slain,—
By all the tender hearts, that mourn
The widow'd and the orphan train,
We pray, sweet Peace, thy blest return.
But, oh! while thousand Britons die,
Let Britons heave the generous sigh.

George Dyer

The Balance. To Thomas Brand Hollis.

Ancient and modern story both proclaim,
How poor the poet's trade, though proud the name;
Shew proud advent'urers, hurl'd from regions bright,
Absorb'd and blasted by excess of light.
Did mighty Homer traffic with his lay?
He sometimes earn'd a dinner for his pay.
Thus liv'd the bard; and how the muse has sigh'd,
When she recorded how the poet died!

In Italy each high-born songster gay
Trimm'd the spruce sonnet, and light roundelay.
Tasso was learn'd, and labour'd much and long,
And Ariosto traded with his song;
Yet, ah! their learned toil how ill repaid!
How mean their earnings from the tuneful trade!
Nor couldst thou, Portugal! thy Camoens save
From pinching want, and an untimely grave.

And did not Chatterton, that child of care,
Still plough in hope, and only reap despair?
And Butler, piper to that laughing age,
Starve before kings, and curse his merry page?
And how in secret Pity droop'd the head,
As pining Otway rested with the dead!

What boots the gentleman, who deigns to write,
Your squire of epigram, and rhyming knight,
Such as with am'rous hearts, and lucky vein,
Penn'd the light song in Charles's merry reign?
Of such could I with ease collect a score,
And throw you in some lords, as many more.
But what mere poetry in trade will do,
Let Spenser tell, and learned Milton too.

Lo! in the BALANCE then of common sense
I weigh the claims of poetry and pence:
And thus the matter stands: whoe'er shall choose,
Clover'd in riches, to invoke his muse,
No hazard runs; perhaps he gains some end;

Pleases himself, his mistress, or his friend;
Still unperplex'd about the cares of life,
Unscar'd by duns, uncraz'd with child or wife,
Verse is a play-thing; houses, monies, lands,
All well secur'd in some right trusty hands;
Half through the day, half through the night may sit,
Play his snug game at chess, or game at wit;
Flaunt with the gay, and revel with the great,
Call Boileau dunce, and laugh at POET'S FATE.
Different his lot, a fortune yet unmade,
Who, as apprentic'd, calls his verse a trade,
Thinking, good easy man, to serve his time
To duteous sentiment, and plodding rhyme;
Then flourish, a bold master-bard, and then,
Reck'ning the honest earnings of his pen,
Fondly expects, his learned labour past,
To sit down snug, and live in peace at last;
As some sat city-squire, releas'd from care,
Steals from the counter to his easy chair.

And thus between extremes I take my stand,
And hold the BALANCE with impartial hand:
The scale, in which the weight's prepond'rance lies,
Wants not my humble mite of sympathies.
The scale that mounts aloft, and kicks the beam,
Claims the poor tribute of my soothing theme;
Counsels, that sad experience can dispense,
And all my little stock of common sense.

George Dyer

To A Lady, Requesting Some Verses On The Birth Of Her Sister's First Born Child

Damzell, right wel ye wot, that I of yore
Forlorne the hilles, and plaines, and silver springes,
And oaten pipe, a fon at tuneful lore,
And now am close — ypent o'er auncient thinges;
(Eld that mought michel muse, is slowe to sing)
Stil ye, as in dispite, persyste to saie,
My sister's newe-born sonne fit subject bringes:
Colin, be once againe, as whilome gaie,
The litell frenne is come, and claymes your roundelaie.

Heare tho' my roundelaie; or rather heare
What youthly I heard by browne Sibyl sung,
Beside an impe, y-rock'd by moder deare;
Whyles I, as fix'd by spel, y-wondering hung,
To weet, what wysdome flow'd from Beldame's tongue.
The powers of hearbes she couth, als fortunes told;
And now fro meddled hearbes shee juices prest
In mazer mirke and brade; and eke shee roll'd
Upwardes her blacke bold eyen, as with Heav'n's counsels blest.

The juices meynt, she ever and anon
Into hem dipt her finger, and eche time
With fixt arch eie prophetic gazine on,
Touch'd that Impe's face, redding a charmed rime—
'—With Genius rathe, but ne too hie to climbe—
—With so moche richesse, as a wight mought crave—
—With wizzard lear, but moe of motherr sense—
—With so much beautie, as man neede have—
—And witt, that ne can give no honest heart offence.

'—A warrfare brave, but ne in bloodie fielde—
(In vallie lowlie lyves lyfe's lustie tree)
—Caution to warre with daunger, dreed to yelde—
—In Love's sweet Faerie-Lond awhyle to bee—
Tho gang to Hymen's court with buxom glee:
Lo! in the welkin bryghte a bickerying cloud;
Joyaunce aye linckt with bale, pleasaunce with payne;

Musyc mote han its notes both lowe and lowde;
And Lyfe is an excheat; and Death to all gives shrowd.'

Tho louting revrendly with matron grace,
Shee took the gentle parent by the hond;
And castyng with prophetic eyne her face,
Sain'd mystic meanings, but in language blond:—
'Thilke impe ben true-love's gage, if ryght I trace:
Heart linckt with heart, and minde with mind agree;—
Lyfe is a traveil; keepe peregall pace;
Thus your true-lover's knott entrayled bee,
Wyles I a priestess stond, and againe marrie yee.

'An take this ring, fro faerie lond ybrought;
And it so charmed been, as fewe may tel;
Your finger ring with ilk, ne less your thought;
Use it ne wrong, and ilk wil use ye wel:
Heales deadly bale, I weet; and south can quel
That inborn feend; sprights itt can putt to flyghte,
The caytiffs of this world, and broode of hell;
Y-spredds in dungeon dark a cheary lyght;
And into distant dayes deigns straunge seraphic sight.

'I drem'd a dreame — oh! sweete dame, what a dreame!
Beares, gryfones, tygers, lyons, rampant soche
In forme; with foregn blood yet swelt, they seme
Bursting amaine, and I ywonder'd mucche;
Yet moe, to see them live, as by some touch
Of Demogorgon, and for fyghte upspring;
And they wil fyghten: wo worth each one's clutch!
Ne brede hem, dame; I plyghte mee by thinkle ring,
Soche fyghtes shall ne'er your Impe into no daunger bring.

'On a blacke mountain's side a Dragon drere
His long long length yspredd; dreadful to see!
To warre no needes beseme him to requere;
Yet cause and umpire of that warre was hee;
And he itt kent, I wot, with ravenous glee,
And held in clutch a globe, ywrought with gold,
Which salvage beastes eied mochel greedilee:—
There the world's valour, sweet ye behold:
That prize been theirs; long live your Impe for virtue bold.'

Lady, yf my song flows not as of yore,
Know, Colin, no nis Colin never more;
He mote ne, con ne, pipe, as heretofore:
Weleaway! leave seely olde man, to muse on auncient lore.'

George Dyer

To An Enthusiast

Were you, my friend, some nimble-winged thing,
That could with eagle speed extend your flight,
Then might you range the world,
Then pierce each lonely place.

Whether 'twere lazar house, or dungeon drear,
Or hill, or beetling cliff, or time-worn cave,
Where Misery sat and sigh'd
Her troubles, still unseen;

And here, perchance, at eve her hollow eye
On the hard stone at times might dropp the tear—
At once the dame, who mourn'd
Her hapless children's fate;

Then had you, gentle friend, the chemic art
Of some young bee, that roves from flow'r to flow'r;
How fondly might you rove!
What balmy sweets inhale!

Then, blest employment! with what tender skill,
Wondering, might you those honey'd treasures mix;
And form a sovereign balm
To heal the mourner's heart!

Were you, my friend, some dart-emitting God,
Like him, who pierc'd in Grecia mortal hearts;
How might you range the world,
And find each gladsome place!

Whether 'twas village-green, or city gay,
How might you roving find each cheerful scene,
Where youths and maidens smile,
And carol thro' the day!

And when, perchance, with joy-illumin'd eye,
Thoughtless of love, they frolick'd in the dance,
How might you throw your dart,
And flit unseen away!

Then you again might change your tiny form,
Stand forth the God, protector of the fair,
Your head with roses crown'd,
And in your hand a torch!

Then might you light the lovers on their way,
Then sing the song, that should endear their hearts,
'Till they should love, and love,
And still grow old in love!

Ah! could you fondly climb yon orient sun,
Ride on his beam, and travel round the world,
How might you, crown'd with light,
Cheer all the nations round!

Yes! Friend, were you like that refulgent sun,
How might you in your daily course dispense
Light, liberty, and love,
Still travelling to bliss!

Were you — but cease, Enthusiast, cease your speed;
For what avail, O man, fantastic flights?
Why muse ideal deeds,
Heedless of what is true?

You are not bee, nor sun, nor sprite, nor god:
You are a humble, weak, unwinged thing,
The frail inhabitant
Of this poor clod of earth!

And has not this poor earth, that very spot,
Where thou art wont to rove, enough of range?
Ah! where would'st thou move?
Behold your proper sphere!

Cease then, Enthusiast: thy slender bark,
How should it hope to cross the mighty sea?
Keep close to shore — or, ah!
Thy bark shall founder soon.

To Dr. Priestly, On His Going To America

Had I the key that ope's the golden doors,
That hide the Heavenly Muse from earthly gaze,
Sweet Poesy, I'd haunt thy choicest bowers,
And crown fair Science with immortal bays;
And I would bear my PRIESTLY'S name along,
In rich harmonic streams of never-ending song.

But needs the sacred Sun, supremely bright,
The less resplendent light of meaner fires?
So Genius shines with pure unborrow'd light,
So Virtue lives, when ev'n the Muse expires:
To distant lands fair Fame shall wait on thee,
And Melancholy stay, and think and weep with me.

George Dyer

To The Cam

Soon shall the young ambrosial spring
Wanton forth, in garlands gay,
And, spreading soft her virgin wing,
Shall wed the Lord of Day.
Soon shall reviving Nature homage yield,
And, breathing incense, lead her tuneful train
O'er hill and dale, soft vale, and cultur'd field;
The bard, the lover, and the jocund swain,
Their new-born joys shall sing; earth, sea, and sky,
All wake for thee, fair Spring, their sweetest minstrelsy.

What though the winds, and sleety shower,
May seem awhile to hush the grove?
Soon, wak'd by Nature's living power,
Shall breath the voice of love!
The lark gay mount, to hail the purple dawn,
And its clear matin carol thro' the sky,
The throstle's mellow warblings cheer the morn,
The linnet softly trill on hawthorn nigh;
The mists shall vanish soon, and soon the breeze
Kiss every glowing flower, and fan the trembling trees.

I, too, the cheering warmth shall feel,
And join the rapturous choral song,
Musing smooth numbers, as I steal,
O Cam! thy banks along.
Tho' near thy banks no myrtle breathe perfume,
No rose unfold its blushing beauties near,
Tho' here no stately tulip spread its bloom,
Nor towering lily deck the gay parterre:
(Inclos'd within the garden's fair domain,
These all, in eastern pride, shall hold their golden reign:)

Yet wild flowers o'er the fruitful scene,
Warm'd by the touch of gentle May,
Shall rise, obedient to their queen,
In simple beauty gay.
To me the violet sheds the richest sweet,
To me the king-cup shines with brightest hues;

The primrose pale, like modest virtue neat,
E'en the meek daisy, can instruct the Muse:
Roving with silent eyes, she loves to stand,
And in the field-flow'r views a more than master's hand.

E'en now the sun-beam, dazzling bright,
Quick dances on the crisped stream;
And soft, tho' fleeting gales invite
The fond poetic dream.
Nor does in vain the swan majestic sail,
Nor glittering insect range the rushy brink;
Nor the fish sporting down the current steal,
And the light songsters on the margin drink;
Then, wild with bliss, shiver the painted wing,
And to their feather'd loves their sweetest wood-notes sing.

Yet must we leave thy blooming reign:—
And short that reign, thou lovely Spring—
What time Fate's high decrees ordain,
Or wills the sovereign King!
Yes, all thy shadowy clouds, thy rainbow hues,
Thy flowers, and songs, thy gales, and glossy bloom,
All must be left, tho' friendly to the Muse;
And man, poor man, lie down in cheerless gloom;
That season cold of death shall chill his tongue,
Nor beauty's smile return, that wak'd the vernal song.

But speed the hours on restless wing?
Must love's light season flit away?
Then hail, O man, the coming spring,
And seize the sweets of May;
Where now the bard of Camus' classic stream,
The skilful hand that wak'd th' Aeolian lyre?
Ah! sleeps with him the spring-enamour'd theme:
From him the loves, and 'Venus' train' retire,—
He too, who trac'd the crystal streams of light,
And Nature's spacious fields, great Newton, sleeps in night.

No more he treads this hallow'd ground,
Nor tracks in thought yon boundless sky;
Ah! Science can but gaze around,
Then, like the Muse, shall die.

Oh! quit then, Fancy, queen of songs and wiles,
The pearl-enamell'd grot, the moss-grown cell,
Thy many thousand hills, and purple isles,
And deign, oh! deign, near sedgy Cam to dwell;
Still let the song of love the valleys cheer,
And blooming Science spread fair spring-time all the year.

George Dyer

Verses Occasioned By The Death Of John Armstrong, A.M.

From Lomond's light-blue lake, and verdant isles,
Long-winding glens, and rude romantic woods,
And hills, that hide their summits in the clouds,
Light, as a vessel borne by western gales,
I journey'd, musing many a rural theme.
The hours I counted not, as nimble-wing'd
They circling flew, soft smiling, as they pass'd:
Thy mansion, gentle THOMSON! I approach,
The sweet retreat of poesy and love;
Thy friendly converse, and the grateful smiles
Of fair LOUISA, cheer me, while around
Thy prattlers play. — 'Oh! may domestic bliss,'
Thus pray'd my soul, 'here fix its lasting seat.'

Then o'er poetic ground with thee I rove,
Scenes fancy-colour'd: bright before me rise
Beauty's rich Garden: soon, a mourner pale,
I tread the Vale of Pity: till the House
Of Ridicule pours forth her wanton tribe.
Soon circling high I climb the mount sublime,
Round whose bold top the muttering thunders roll,
And forked lightnings flash: with tremulous joy
The height I reach: then look triumphant down:
Till Fancy, pointing with her fairy wand,
Calls me to range her wild-enchanted bowers,
'Mid visionary forms, and shadowy scenes.
Enthusiast sweet! Oh, I could wander still
With her, the muse of Spencer, and no less
Of him, who Scotia's fairy regions sung,
From every clime would crop some fragrant flower,
Till Superstition, opening all her stores,
And gazing on me with a mother's eye,
Should bless her fondling's large credulities.

But now from Fancy's magic wilds I go
To Nature's living green: straight I repose
As wont, my head, where I may best survey

The various landscape: full before me rises
A row of well-rang'd buildings, and beyond
A thick umbrageous wood: down the fair vale
The sylvan Teath devolves her rapid stream,
As hastening on to tell the stately Forth,
E'er she commix her stores, how fair a scene
She pass'd at Deanston: on her sloping side
Towers a proud castle, beauteous in decay:
High on the bank it frowns, and still o'erlooks
The modest stream, as seeming yet to boast
Of ancient grandeur. — Here the sated eye
Inquires no farther: thence the moral muse
Pours forth the strain: — 'Ah! thus shall human greatness
Sit like a mourner; thus in ruins lie
All that is mortal.'

Now, once more I seek
Domestic scenes, as tho' to smooth the brow
Ruffled by too much musing: — Stern-ey'd Fate:
Say didst thou doubt my heart's sincerity?
Think, that I did but moralise in song,
A formal minstrel? that, whene'er of death
I ponder, thou resolvest to o'ertake me,
And, with blood-reeking dart, to point my eye
To some fresh victim? 'Mortal here is death.'—
I see! I see! while softly falls the tear;
Yes, Armstrong falls, and pity drops the tear.
Relentless Tyrant! like a vernal flower
I view him fall, thine easy-yielding prey:
Blossom of early genius, blighted soon,
Industry, like a self-destroying insect,
Beating itself to dust; a sacred love
Of Freedom, like the vestal's purer flame,
Sparkling tho' life, that but with life expires:
These tell what Armstrong was; these still proclaim
How Armstrong lives in Friendship's faithful breast.

But, Thomson, let us hear the warning voice:
'— Whatever schemes thy mind may meditate,
Dispatch with well-tim'd zeal; but yet that zeal
Let matron prudence guide: for in the grave
Satire shall dropp the scourge; sage history

Cease to instruct; and rapture-breathing song,
To silence hush'd, delight the world no more.'

George Dyer

Written In The Cloisters Of Christ's-Hospital In London.

Now cease the sad complaining strain,
Now hush'd be PITY'S tender sigh,
While Memory wakes her fairy train,
And young delight sits laughing by;
Return, each hour of rosy hue,
In wreathy smiles, and garlands gay,
As when on playful wing ye flew,
When every month was blithe as May;
When young Invention wak'd his mimic powers,
And Genius, wand'ring wild, sigh'd for enchanted bowers.

Then too in antic vestment dress'd,
Pastime would blithsome trip along,
Throwing around the gibe, or jest,
Satire enrhymed, or simple song,
And merry Mischief oft would weave
His wanton tricks for little hearts,
Nor love his tender votary grieve,
Soft were his hands, nor keen his darts:
While Friendship felt th' enthusiast's glow,
Would give her half of bliss, and take her share of woe.

And though around my youthful spring
Many a low'ring storm might rise,
Hope her soul-soothing strain would sing,
And quickly brightened up the skies;
How sweetly pass'd my youth's gay prime!
For not untuneful was my tongue;
And as I tried the classic rhyme,
The critic school-boy prais'd my song.
Nor did mine eye not catch the splendid ray,
That promis'd fair to gild Ambition's distant day.

Ah! pleasing, gloomy, cloister shade,
Still, still this wavering breast inspire!
Here lost in rapturous trance I stray'd,
Here view'd with horror visions dire:

For soon as day dark-veil'd his head,
With hollow cheek, and haggard eye,
Pale ghosts would flit from cold death-bed,
And stalk with step terrific by:
Till the young heart would freeze with wild affright,
And store the dismal tale to cheer a winter's night.

Yet ah! what means the silent tear?
Why e'en mid joy this bosom heave?
Ye long-lost scenes, enchantments dear?
Lo! now I wander o'er your grave.
—Yet fly ye hours of rosy hue,
And bear away the bloom of years!
And quick succeed ye sickly crew,
Of doubts and pains of hopes and fears!
Still will I ponder Fate's unalter'd plan:
Nor, tracing back the Child, forget that I am Man.

George Dyer