

Classic Poetry Series

William Collins
- poems -

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William Collins(1721 - 1759 (Restoration&18th Century 1660-1785))

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester on the twenty-fifth of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warton has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester College, where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His English exercises were better than his Latin.

He first courted the notice of the publick by some verses To a Lady weeping, published in The Gentleman's Magazine.

In 1740 he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College; but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a Commoner of Queen's College, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was in about half a year elected a Demy of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a Bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the University; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He designed many works, but his great fault was irresolution, or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man, doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation or remote enquiries. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning, and I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth, and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor. But probably not a page of the History was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now and then odes and other poems, and did something, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition chearful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's Poeticks, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the

country. He shewed me the guineas safe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust. The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness. Collins, who, while he 'studied to live,' felt no evil but poverty, no sooner 'lived to study' than his life was assailed by more dreadful calamities, disease and insanity.

Having formerly written his character, while perhaps it was yet more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

"Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction and subjects of fancy, and by indulging some peculiar habits of thought was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens.

'This was, however, the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness and the novelty of extravagance were always desired by him, but were not always attained. Yet as diligence is never wholly lost, if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced in happier moments sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery, and perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.

'His morals were pure, and his opinions pious; in a long continuance of poverty and long habits of dissipation it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said that at least he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that

his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

'The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunatics, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death in 1756 came to his relief.

'After his return from France the writer of this character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernible in his mind by any but himself, but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to the school; when his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a Man of Letters had chosen, "I have but one book," said Collins, "but that is the best."

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester in his last illness by his learned friends Dr. Warton and his brother, to whom he spoke with disapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not sufficiently expressive of Asiatick manners, and called them his 'Irish Eclogues.' He shewed them at the same time an ode inscribed to 'Mr. John Hume' on the superstitions of the Highlands, which they thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found.

His disorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgement nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel soon after his uncle's death, and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthensome to himself.

To what I have formerly said of his writings may be added that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

A Song From Shakespeare's Cymbeline Sung By Guiderus And Ar

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb

Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each op'ning sweet, of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear,
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove:
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew:
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft at ev'ning hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid:
With hoary moss, and gather'd flow'rs,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds, and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell,
Or midst the chase on ev'ry plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed:
Belov'd, till life could charm no more;
And mourn'd, till Pity's self be dead.

William Collins

An Epistle Addressed To Sir Thomas Hanmer, On His Edition Of Shakspeare's Works

WHILE, born to bring the Muse's happier days,
A patriot's hand protects a poet's lays,
While nurs'd by you she sees her myrtles bloom,
Green and unwither'd o'er his honour'd tomb;
Excuse her doubts, if yet she fears to tell
What secret transports in her bosom swell.
With conscious awe she hears the critic's fame,
And blushing hides her wreath at Shakespeare's name.
Hard was the lot those injur'd strains endur'd,
Unown'd by Science, and by years obscur'd;
Fair Fancy wept; and echoing sighs confess'd
A fixt despair in every tuneful breast.
Not with more grief the afflicted swains appear,
When wintry winds deform the plenteous year;
When ling'ring frosts the ruin'd seats invade
Where Peace resorted, and the Graces play'd.

Each rising art by just gradation moves,
Toil builds on toil and age on age improves:
The Muse alone unequal dealt her rage,
And grac'd with noblest pomp her earliest stage.
Preserv'd through time, the speaking scenes impart
Each changeful wish of Phædra's tortured heart;
Or paint the curse that mark'd the Theban's (1) reign,
A bed incestuous, and a father slain.
With kind concern our pitying eyes o'erflow;
Trace the sad tale and own another's woe.

To Rome remov'd, with wit secure to please,
The comic Sisters kept their native ease;
With jealous fear, declining Greece beheld
Her own Menander's art almost excell'd;
But every Muse essay'd to raise in vain
Some labour'd rival of her tragic strain:
Illyssus' laurels, though transferr'd with toil,
Droop'd their fair leaves, nor knew the unfriendly soil.

As Arts expir'd, resistless Dullness rose;
Goths, priests, or Vandals—all were Learning's foes,
Till Julius (2) first recall'd each exil'd maid;
And Cosmo owned them in the Etrurian shade:
Then, deeply skill'd in love's engaging theme,
The soft Provençal pass'd to Arno's stream:
With graceful ease the wanton lyre he strung;
Sweet flow'd the lays—but love was all he sung.
The gay description could not fail to move;
For, led by Nature, all are friends to love.

But Heaven, still various in its works, decreed
The perfect boast of time should last succeed.
The beauteous union must appear at length,
Of Tuscan fancy, and Athenian strength:
One greater Muse Eliza's reign adorn,
And even a Shakespeare to her fame be born!

Yet ah! so bright her morning's opening ray,
In vain our Britain hop'd an equal day!
No second growth the western isle could bear,
At once exhausted with too rich a year.
Too nicely Jonson knew the critic's part;
Nature in him was almost lost in art.
Of softer mould the gentle Fletcher came,
The next in order as the next in name.
With pleas'd attention, 'midst his scenes we find
Each glowing thought that warms the female mind;
Each melting sigh, and every tender tear;
The lover's wishes, and the virgin's fear.
His (3) every strain the Smiles and Graces own;
But stronger Shakespeare felt for man alone:
Drawn by his pen, our ruder passions stand
The unrivall'd picture of his early hand.

With (4) gradual steps and slow, exacter France
Saw Art's fair empire o'er her shores advance:
By length of toil a bright perfection knew,
Correctly bold, and just in all she drew:
Till late Corneille, with Lucan's (5) spirit fir'd,
Breath'd the free strain, as Rome and he inspir'd:
And classic judgment gain'd to sweet Racine,

The temperate strength of Maro's chaster line.

But wilder far the British laurel spread,
And wreaths less artful crown our Poet's head.
Yet he alone to every scene could give
The historian's truth, and bid the manners live.
Wak'd at his call I view, with glad surprise,
Majestic forms of mighty monarchs rise.
There Henry's trumpets spread their loud alarms;
And laurell'd Conquest waits her hero's arms.
Here gentle Edward claims a pitying sigh,
Scarce born to honours, and so soon to die!
Yet shall thy throne, unhappy infant, bring
No beam of comfort to the guilty king:
The time (6) shall come when Glo'ster's heart shall bleed,
In life's last hours, with horror of the deed;
When dreary visions shall at last present
Thy vengeful image in the midnight tent:
Thy hand unseen the secret death shall bear;
Blunt the weak sword, and break th' oppressive spear!

Where'er we turn, by Fancy charm'd, we find
Some sweet illusion of the cheated mind.
Oft, wild of wing, she calls the soul to rove
With humbler nature, in the rural grove;
Where swains contented own the quiet scene,
And twilight fairies tread the circled green:
Dress'd by her hand, the woods and valleys smile;
And Spring diffusive decks th' enchanted isle.

O more than all in powerful genius blest,
Come, take thine empire o'er the willing breast!
Whate'er the wounds this youthful heart shall feel,
Thy songs support me, and thy morals heal!
There every thought the Poet's warmth may raise;
There native music dwells in all the lays.
O might some verse with happiest skill persuade,
Expressive picture to adopt thine aid!
What wondrous draught might rise from every page!
What other Raphaels charm a distant age!

Methinks e'en now I view some free design

Where breathing Nature lives in every line;
Chaste and subdu'd the modest lights decay,
Steal into shades, and mildly melt away.
And see where Antony, (7) in tears approv'd,
Guards the pale relics of the chief he lov'd;
O'er the cold corse the warrior seems to bend,
Deep sunk in grief, and mourns his murder'd friend!
Still as they press, he calls on all around,
Lifts the torn robe, and points the bleeding wound.

But who (8) is he whose brows exalted bear
A wrath impatient and a fiercer air?
Awake to all that injur'd worth can feel,
On his own Rome he turns th' avenging steel;
Yet shall not war's insatiate fury fall
(So heaven ordains it) on the destin'd wall.
See the fond mother, 'midst the plaintive train,
Hung on his knees, and prostrate on the plain!
Touch'd to the soul, in vain he strives to hide
The son's affection, in the Roman's pride;
O'er all the man conflicting passions rise;
Rage grasps the sword, while Pity melts the eyes.

Thus generous Critic, as thy Bard inspires,
The sister Arts shall nurse their drooping fires;
Each from his scenes their stores alternate bring;
Blend the fair tint, or wake the vocal string;
Those Sibyl-leaves, the sport of every wind,
(For Poets ever were a careless kind)
By thee dispos'd, no farther toil demand,
But, just to Nature, own thy forming hand.

So spread o'er Greece, the harmonious whole unknown,
E'en Homer's numbers charmed by parts alone.
Their own Ulysses scarce had wander'd more,
By winds and waters cast on every shore:
When, rais'd by fate, some former Hanmer join'd
Each beauteous image of the boundless mind;
And bade, like thee, his Athens ever claim
A fond alliance with the Poet's name. □

- 1 The Oedipus of Sophocles.
- 2 Julius II, the immediate predecessor of Leo X.
- 3 Their characters are thus distinguished by Mr. Dryden.
- 4 About the time of Shakspeare, the poet Hardy was in great repute in France. He wrote, according to Fontenelle, six hundred plays. The French poets after him applied themselves in general to the correct improvement of the stage, which was almost totally disregarded by those of our own country, Jonson excepted.
- 5 The favourite author of the elder Corneille.
- 6 Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
Intactum Pallanta, &c. Virg.
- 7 See the Tragedy of Julius Cæsar.
- 8 Coriolanus. See Mr. Spence's Dialogue on the Odyssey.

William Collins

Antistrophe

Thou who such weary Length hast past,
Where wilt thou rest, mad Nymph, at last?
Say, wilt thou shroud in haunted Cell,
Where gloomy Rape and Murder dwell?
Or in some hollow'd Seat,
'Gainst which the big Waves beat,
Hear drowning Sea-men's Cries in Tempests brought!
Dark Pow'r, with shudd'ring meek submitted Thought
Be mine, to read the Visions old,
Which thy awak'ning Bards have told:
And lest thou meet my blasted View,
Hold each strange Tale devoutly true;
Ne'er be I found, by Thee o'eraw'd,
In that thrice-hallow'd Eve abroad,
When Ghosts, as Cottage-Maids believe,
Their pebbled Beds permitted leave,
And Goblins haunt from Fire, or Fen,
Or Mine, or Flood, the Walks of Men!

O Thou whose Spirit most possest
The sacred Seat of Shakespear's Breast!
By all that from thy Prophet broke,
In thy Divine Emotions spoke:
Hither again thy Fury deal,
Teach me but once like Him to feel:
His Cypress Wreath my Meed decree,
And I, O Fear, will dwell with Thee!

William Collins

Dirge In Cymbeline

SUNG BY GUIDERUS AND ARVIGARUS OVER FIDELE, SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

TO fair Fidele's grassy tomb

Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen;
No goblins lead their nightly crew;
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds, and beating rain,
In tempests shake thy sylvan cell;
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell;

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Belov'd till life can charm no more,
And mourn'd till Pity's self be dead.

William Collins

Eclogue The First Selim

SCENE, a Valley near Bagdat TIME, the Morning

'Ye Persian maids, attend your poet's lays,
And hear how shepherds pass their golden days:
Not all are blest, whom fortune's hand sustains
With wealth in courts, nor all that haunt the plains:
Well may your hearts believe the truths I tell;
'Tis virtue makes the bliss, where'er we dwell.'
Thus Selim sung, by sacred Truth inspired;
No praise the youth, but hers alone, desired.
Wise in himself, his meaning songs conveyed
Informing morals to the shepherd maid,

Or taught the swains that surest bliss to find,
What groves nor streams bestow, a virtuous mind.
When sweet and odorous, like an eastern bride,
The radiant morn resumed her orient pride,
When wanton gales along the valleys play,
Breathe on each flower, and bear their sweets away:
By Tigris' wandering waves he sat, and sung
This useful lesson for the fair and young.

'Ye Persian dames,' he said, 'to you belong,
Well may they please, the morals of my song;

No fairer maids, I trust, than you are found,
Graced with soft arts, the peopled world around!
The morn that lights you to your loves supplies
Each gentler ray delicious to your eyes:
For you those flowers her fragrant hands bestow,
And yours the love that kings delight to know.
Yet think not these, all beauteous as they are,
The best kind blessings heaven can grant the fair!
Who trust alone in beauty's feeble ray,
Balsora's pearls have more of worth than they;
Drawn from the deep, they sparkle to the sight,
And all-unconscious shoot a lustrous light:
Such are the maids and such the charms they boast,
By sense unaided or to virtue lost.

Self-flattering sex! your hearts believe in vain
That love shall blind when once he fires the swain,
Or hope a lover by your faults to win,
As spots on ermine beautify the skin.
Who seeks secure to rule, be first her care
Each softer virtue that adorns the fair,
Each tender passion man delights to find,
The loved perfections of a female mind.
`Blest were the days when Wisdom held her reign,
And shepherds sought her on the silent plain;
With Truth she wedded in the secret grove,
The fair-eyed Truth, and daughters blessed their love.

`O haste, fair maids, ye Virtues, come away,
Sweet Peace and Plenty lead you on your way!
The balmy shrub for you shall love our shore,
By Ind excelled or Araby no more.

`Lost to our fields, for so the fates ordain,
The dear deserters shall return again.
O come thou, Modesty, as they decree,
The rose may then improve her blush by thee.
Here make thy court amidst our rural scene,
And shepherd-girls shall own thee for their queen.
With thee be Chastity, of all afraid,
Distrusting all, a wise suspicious maid,
But man the most -- not more the mountain doe
Holds the swift falcon for her deadly foe.
Cold is her breast, like flowers that drink the dew;
A silken veil conceals her from the view.
No wild desires amidst thy train be known,
But Faith, whose heart is fixed on one alone;
Desponding Meekness with her down-cast eyes,
And friendly Pity full of tender sighs;
And Love the last: by these your hearts approve,
These are the Virtues that must lead to love.'
Thus sung the swain, and eastern legends say
The maids of Bagdat verified the lay:

Dear to the plains, the Virtues came along,
The shepherds loved, and Selim blessed his song.

Eclogue The Fourth Agib

SCENE, a Mountain in Circassia TIME, Midnight

In fair Circassia, where, to love inclined,
Each swain was blest, for every maid was kind!
At that still hour, when awful midnight reigns,
And none but wretches haunt the twilight plains;
What time the moon had hung her lamp on high,
And passed in radiance through the cloudless sky:
Sad o'er the dews two brother shepherds fled,
Where wildering fear and desperate sorrow led.
Fast as they pressed their flight, behind them lay
Wide ravaged plains and valleys stole away.
Along the mountain's bending sides they ran,
Till faint and weak Secander thus began.

SECANDER

O stay thee, Agib, for my feet deny,
No longer friendly to my life, to fly.
Friend of my heart, O turn thee and survey,
Trace our sad flight through all its length of way!
And first review that long-extended plain,
And yon wide groves, already passed with pain!
Yon ragged cliff whose dangerous path we tried,
And last this lofty mountain's weary side!

AGIB

Weak as thou art, yet hapless must thou know
The toils of flight, or some severer woe!
Still as I haste, the Tartar shouts behind,
And shrieks and sorrows load the saddening wind:
In rage of heart, with ruin in his hand,
He blasts our harvests and deforms our land.
Yon citron grove, whence first in fear we came,
Droops its fair honours to the conquering flame:
Far fly the swains, like us, in deep despair,
And leave to ruffian bands their fleecy care.

SECANDER

Unhappy land, whose blessings tempt the sword,
In vain, unheard, thou call'st thy Persian Lord!
In vain thou court'st him, helpless to thine aid,
To shield the shepherd and protect the maid.
Far off in thoughtless indolence resigned,
Soft dreams of love and pleasure soothe his mind:
Midst fair sultanas lost in idle joy,
No wars alarm him and no fears annoy.

AGIB

Yet these green hills, in summer's sultry heat,
Have lent the monarch oft a cool retreat.

Sweet to the sight is Zabran's flowery plain,
And once by maids and shepherds loved in vain!
No more the virgins shall delight to rove
By Sargis' banks or Irwan's shady grove:
On Tarkie's mountain catch the cooling gale,
Or breathe the sweets of Aly's flowery vale:
Fair scenes! but ah! no more with peace possessed,
With ease alluring and with plenty blest.
No more the shepherds' whitening tents appear,
Nor the kind products of a bounteous year;
No more the date with snowy blossoms crowned,
But Ruin spreads her baleful fires around.

SECANDER

In vain Circassia boasts her spicy groves,
For ever famed for pure and happy loves;
In vain she boasts her fairest of the fair,
Their eyes' blue languish and their golden hair!
Those eyes in tears their fruitless grief must send;
Those hairs the Tartar's cruel hand shall rend.

AGIB

Ye Georgian swains that piteous learn from far

Circassia's ruin and the waste of war:

Some weightier arms than crooks and staves prepare,
To shield your harvests and defend your fair:
The Turk and Tartar like designs pursue,
Fixed to destroy and steadfast to undo.
Wild as his land, in native deserts bred,
By lust incited or by malice led,
The villain-Arab, as he prowls for prey,
Oft marks with blood and wasting flames the way;
Yet none so cruel as the Tartar foe,
To death inured and nursed in scenes of woe.

He said, when loud along the vale was heard
A shriller shriek and nearer fires appeared:
The affrighted shepherds through the dews of night,
Wide o'er the moonlight hills, renewed their flight.

William Collins

Eclogue The Second Hassan

SCENE, the Desert TIME, Mid-day

10 In silent horror o'er the desert-waste
The driver Hassan with his camels passed.
One cruse of water on his back he bore,
And his light scrip contained a scanty store;
A fan of painted feathers in his hand,
To guard his shaded face from scorching sand.
The sultry sun had gained the middle sky,
And not a tree and not an herb was nigh.
The beasts with pain their dusty way pursue,
Shrill roared the winds and dreary was the view!
20 With desperate sorrow wild, the affrighted man
Thrice sighed, thrice struck his breast, and thus began:
`Sad was the hour and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way.
`Ah! little thought I of the blasting wind,
The thirst or pinching hunger that I find!
Bethink thee, Hassan, where shall thirst assuage,
When fails this cruse, his unrelenting rage?
Soon shall this scrip its precious load resign,
Then what but tears and hunger shall be thine?

30 `Ye mute companions of my toils, that bear
In all my griefs a more than equal share!
Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
Or moss-crowned fountains mitigate the day,
In vain ye hope the green delights to know,
Which plains more blest or verdant vales bestow.
Here rocks alone and tasteless sands are found,
And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.
Sad was the hour and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way.
40 `Cursed be the gold and silver which persuade
Weak men to follow far-fatiguing trade.
The Lily-Peace outshines the silver store,
And life is dearer than the golden ore.
Yet money tempts us o'er the desert brown,
To every distant mart and wealthy town:
Full oft we tempt the land and oft the sea;

And are we only yet repaid by thee?
Ah! why was ruin so attractive made,
Or why fond man so easily betrayed?
50 Why heed we not, whilst mad we haste along,
The gentle voice of Peace or Pleasure's song?
Or wherefore think the flowery mountain's side,
The fountain's murmurs and the valley's pride,
Why think we these less pleasing to behold
Than dreary deserts, if they lead to gold?
Sad was the hour and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way.
`O cease, my fears! all frantic as I go,
When thought creates unnumbered scenes of woe,

60 What if the lion in his rage I meet!
Oft in the dust I view his printed feet:
And fearful! oft, when Day's declining light
Yields her pale empire to the mourner Night,
By hunger roused, he scours the groaning plain,
Gaunt wolves and sullen tigers in his train:
Before them death with shrieks directs their way,
Fills the wild yell and leads them to their prey.
Sad was the hour and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!

70 `At that dead hour the silent asp shall creep,
If aught of rest I find, upon my sleep;
Or some swoll'n serpent twist his scales around,
And wake to anguish with a burning wound.
Thrice happy they, the wise contented poor,
From lust of wealth and dread of death secure.
They tempt no deserts and no griefs they find;
Peace rules the day, where reason rules the mind.
Sad was the hour and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way.

80 `O hapless youth! for she thy love hath won,
The tender Zara, will be most undone!
Big swelled my heart and owned the powerful maid,
When fast she dropped her tears, as thus she said:
`` Farewell the youth whom sighs could not detain,
`` Whom Zara's breaking heart implored in vain;
`` Yet as thou goest, may every blast arise,
`` Weak and unfelt as these rejected sighs!

`` Safe o'er the wild, no perils mayst thou see,
`` No griefs endure, nor weep, false youth, like me."
O let me safely to the fair return,
Say with a kiss, she must not, shall not mourn.
Go teach my heart to lose its painful fears,
Recalled by Wisdom's voice and Zara's tears.'

He said, and called on heaven to bless the day,
When back to Schiraz' walls he bent his way.

William Collins

Eclogue The Third Abra

SCENE, a forest TIME, the Evening

In Georgia's land, where Tefflis' towers are seen,
In distant view along the level green,
While evening dew enrich the glittering glade,
And the tall forests cast a longer shade,
Amidst the maids of Zagen's peaceful grove,
Emyra sung the pleasing cares of love.
Of Abra first began the tender strain,
Who led her youth with flocks upon the plain.
At morn she came those willing flocks to lead,
Where lilies rear them in the watery mead;

From early dawn the livelong hours she told,
Till late at silent ev'n she penned the fold.
Deep in the grove beneath the secret shade,
A various wreath of odorous flowers she made.
Gay-motleyed pinks and sweet jonquils she chose,
The violet-blue that on the moss-bank grows;
All-sweet to sense, the flaunting rose was there;
The finished chaplet well-adorned her hair.
Great Abbas chanced that fated morn to stray,
By love conducted from the chase away;

Among the vocal vales he heard her song,
And sought the vales and echoing groves among.
At length he found and wooed the rural maid:
She knew the monarch, and with fear obeyed.
Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
And every Georgian maid like Abra loved.
The royal lover bore her from the plain,
Yet still her crook and bleating flock remain:
Oft as she went, she backward turned her view,
And bade that crook and bleating flock adieu.

Fair happy maid! to other scenes remove,
To richer scenes of golden power and love!
Go leave the simple pipe and shepherd's strain,
With love delight thee, and with Abbas reign.

Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
And every Georgian maid like Abra loved.
Yet midst the blaze of courts she fixed her love
On the cool fountain or the shady grove;
Still with the shepherd's innocence her mind
To the sweet vale and flowery mead inclined,

And oft as spring renewed the plains with flowers,
Breathed his soft gales and led the fragrant hours,
With sure return she sought the sylvan scene,
The breezy mountains and the forests green.
Her maids around her moved, a duteous band!
Each bore a crook all-rural in her hand.
Some simple lay of flocks and herds they sung;
With joy the mountain and the forest rung.
Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
And every Georgian maid like Abra loved.
And oft the royal lover left the care
And thorns of state, attendant on the fair:
Oft to the shades and low-roofed cots retired,
Or sought the vale where first his heart was fired;
A russet mantle, like a swain, he wore,
And thought of crowns and busy courts no more.
Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
And every Georgian maid like Abra loved.
Blest was the life that royal Abbas led:
Sweet was his love and innocent his bed.

What if in wealth the noble maid excel;
The simple shepherd girl can love as well.
Let those who rule on Persia's jewelled throne,
Be famed for love and gentlest love alone:
Or wreath, like Abbas, full of fair renown,
The lover's myrtle with the warrior's crown.
Oh happy days! the maids around her say,
Oh haste, profuse of blessings, haste away!

Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
And every Georgian maid like Abra loved.

William Collins

Epode

In earliest Grece to Thee with partial Choice,
The Grief-full Muse address her infant Tongue;
The Maids and Matrons, on her awful Voice,
Silent and pale in wild Amazement hung.

Yet he the Bard who first invok'd thy Name,
Disdain'd in Marathon its Pow'r to feel:
For not alone he nurs'd the Poet's flame,
But reach'd from Virtue's Hand the Patriot's Steel.

But who is He whom later Garlands grace,
Who left a-while o'er Hybla's Dews to rove,
With trembling Eyes thy dreary Steps to trace,
Where Thou and Furies shar'd the baleful Grove?

Wrapt in thy cloudy Veil th' Incestuous Queen
Sigh'd the sad Call her Son and Husband hear'd,
When once alone it broke the silent Scene,
And He the Wretch of Thebes no more appear'd.

O Fear, I know Thee by my throbbing Heart,
Thy with'ring Pow'r inspir'd each mournful Line,
Tho' gentle Pity claim her mingled Part,
Yet all the Thunders of the Scene are thine!

William Collins

How Sleep The Brave

HOW sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

William Collins

In The Downhill Of Life

In the downhill of life, when I find I'm declining,
May my lot no less fortunate be
Than a snug elbow-chair can afford for reclining,
And a cot that o'erlooks the wide sea;
With an ambling pad-pony to pace o'er the lawn,
While I carol away idle sorrow,
And blithe as the lark that each day hails the dawn
Look forward with hope for tomorrow.

With a porch at my door, both for shelter and shade too,
As the sunshine or rain may prevail;
And a small spot of ground for the use of the spade too,
With a barn for the use of the flail;
A cow for my dairy, a dog for my game,
And a purse when a friend wants to borrow;
I'll envy no Nabob his riches or fame,
Nor what honours may wait him tomorrow.

From the bleak northern blast may my cot be completely
Secured by a neighbouring hill;
And at night may repose steal upon me more sweetly
By the sound of a murmuring rill;
And while peace and plenty I find at my board,
With a heart free from sickness and sorrow,
With my friends may I share what today may afford,
And let them spread the table tomorrow.

And when I at last must throw off this frail cov'ring
Which I've worn for threescore years and ten,
On the brink of the grave I'll not seek to keep hov'ring,
Nor my thread wish to spin o'er again;
But my face in the glass I'll serenely survey,
And with smiles count each wrinkle and furrow;
As this old worn-out stuff, which is threadbare today,
May become everlasting tomorrow.

William Collins

O D E, To A Lady On The Death Of Colonel R O S S In The Action Of Fontenoy

1.

W H I L E, lost to all his former Mirth,
Britannia's Genius bends to Earth,
 And mourns the fatal Day:
While stain's with Blood he strives to tear
Unseemly from his Sea-green Hair
 The Wreaths of chearful May:

2.

The Thoughts which musing Pity pays,
And fond Remembrance loves to raise,
 Your faithful Hours attend:
Still Fancy to Herself unkind,
Awakes to Grief the soften'd Mind,
 And points the bleeding Friend.

3.

By rapid Scheld's descending Wave
His Country's Vows shall bless the Grave,
 Where'er the Youth is laid:
That sacred Spot the Village Hind
With ev'ry sweetest Turf shall bind,
 And Peace protect the Shade.

4.

Blest Youth, regardful of thy Doom,
Aërial Hands shall build thy Tomb,
 With shadowy Trophies crown'd:
Whilst Honor bath'd in Tears shall rove
To sigh thy Name thro' ev'ry Grove,
 And call his Heros round.

5.

The warlike Dead of ev'ry Age,
Who fill the fair recording Page,
 Shall leave their sainted Rest:
And, half-reclining on his Spear,
Each wond'ring Chief by turns appear,
 To hail the blooming Guest.

6.

Old Edward's Sons, unknown to yield,
Shall croud from Cressy's laurell'd Field,
 And gaze with fix'd Delight:
Again for Britain's Wrongs they feel,
Again they snatch the gleamy Steel,
 And wish th'avenging Fight.

7.

But lo where, sunk in deep Despair,
Her Garments torn, her Bosom bare,
 Impatient Freedom lies!
Her matted Tresses madly spread,
To ev'ry Sod, which warps the Dead,
 She turns her joyless Eyes.

8.

Ne'er shall she leave that lowly Ground
Till Notes of Triumph bursting round
 Proclaim her Reign restor'd:
Till William seek the sad Retreat,
And bleeding at her sacred Feet,
 Present the sated Sword.

9.

If, weak to sooth so soft an Heart,
These pictur'd Glories nought impart,
 To dry thy constant Tear:
If yet, in Sorrow's distant Eye,
Expos'd and pale thou see'st him lie,

Wild War insulting near:

10.

Where'er from Time Thou court'st Relief.
The Muse shall still, with social Grief,
Her gentlest Promise keep:
Ev'n humble Harting's cottag'd Vale
Shall learn the sad repeated Tale,
And bid her Shepherds weep.

William Collins

Ode

HOW sleep the Brave, who sink to Rest,
By all their Country's Wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy Fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd Mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter Sod,
Than Fancy's Feet have ever trod.

2.

By Fairy Hands their Knell is rung,
By Forms unseen their Dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a Pilgrim grey,
To bless the Turf that wraps their Clay,
And Freedom shall a-while repair,
To dwell a weeping Hermit there!

William Collins

Ode On The Poetical Character

As once, if not with light regard,
I read aright that gifted bard,
(Him whose school above the rest
His loveliest Elfin Queen has blest,)
One, only one, unrival'd fair,
Might hope the magic girdle wear,
At solemn tourney hung on high,
The wish of each love-darting eye;

Lo! to each other nymph in turn applied,
As if, in air unseen, some hov'ring hand,
Some chaste and angel-friend to virgin-fame,
With whisper'd spell had burst the starting band,
It left unblest her loath'd dishonour'd side;
Happier, hopeless fair, if never
Her baffled hand with vain endeavour
Had touch'd that fatal zone to her denied!
Young Fancy thus, to me divinest name,
To whom, prepar'd and bath'd in Heav'n,
The cest of amplest pow'r is giv'n:
To few the god-like gift assigns,
To gird their blest prophetic loins,
And gaze her visions wild, and feel unmix'd her flame!

The band, as fairy legends say,
Was wove on that creating day,
When He, who call'd with thought to birth
Yon tented sky, this laughing earth,
And dress'd with springs, and forests tall,
And pour'd the main engirthing all,
Long by the lov'd enthusiast woo'd,
Himself in some diviner mood,
Retiring, sate with her alone,
And plac'd her on his sapphire throne,
The whiles, the vaulted shrine around,
Seraphic wires were heard to sound,
Now sublimest triumph swelling,
Now on love and mercy dwelling;

And she, from out the veiling cloud,
Breath'd her magic notes aloud:
And thou, thou rich-hair'd youth of morn,
And all thy subject life was born!
The dang'rous Passions kept aloof,
Far from the sainted growing woof:
But near it sate ecstatic Wonder
List'ning the deep applauding thunder:
And Truth, in sunny vest array'd,
By whose the tarsel's eyes were made
All the shad'wy tribes of mind,
In braided dance their murmurs join'd,
And all the bright uncounted Pow'rs
Who feed on Heav'n's ambrosial flow'rs.
Where is the bard, whose soul can now
Its high presuming hopes avow?
Where he who thinks, with rapture blind,
This hallow'd work for him design'd?

High on some cliff, to Heav'n up-pil'd,
Of rude access, of prospect wild,
Where, tangled round the jealous steep,
Strange shades o'erbrow the valleys deep,
And holy genii guard the rock,
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock,
While on its rich ambitious head,
An Eden, like his own, lies spread.
I view that oak, the fancied glades among,
By which as Milton lay, his ev'ning ear,
From many a cloud that dropp'd ethereal dew,
Nigh spher'd in Heav'n its native strains could hear:
On which that ancient trump he reach'd was hung;
 Thither oft his glory greeting,
 From Waller's myrtle shades retreating,
With many a vow from Hope's aspiring tongue,
My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue;
 In vain--such bliss to one alone,
 Of all the sons of soul was known,
 And Heav'n, and Fancy, kindred pow'rs,
 Have now o'erturn'd th' inspiring bow'rs,
Or curtain'd close such scene from ev'ry future view.

William Collins

Ode To Evening

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales,
O nymph reserv'd, while now the bright-hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:
Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd bat,
With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,
As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid compos'd,
To breathe some soften'd strain,
Whose numbers stealing thro' thy dark'ning vale
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow, I hail
Thy genial lov'd return!
For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and elves
Who slept in flow'rs the day,
And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the fresh'ning dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.
Then lead, calm vot'ress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallow'd pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.
But when chill blust'ring winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds, and swelling floods,
And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw

The gradual dusky veil.
While Spring shall pour his show'rs, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve;
 While Summer loves to sport
 Beneath thy ling'ring light;
While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter, yelling thro' the troublous air,
 Affrights thy shrinking train,
 And rudely rends thy robes;
So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipp'd Health,
 Thy gentlest influence own,
 And hymn thy fav'rite name!

William Collins

Ode To Fear

Thou, to whom the world unknown
With all its shadowy shapes, is shown;
Who seest, appalled, the unreal scene,
While fancy lifts the veil between:
Ah fear! ah frantic fear!
I see, I see thee near.
I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye!
Like thee I start; like thee disordered fly.
For, lo, what monsters in thy train appear!
Danger, whose limbs of giant mould
What mortal eye can fixed behold?
Who stalks his round, an hideous form,
Howling amidst the midnight storm;
Or throws him on the ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep;
And with him thousand phantoms joined,
Who prompt to deeds accursed the mind:
And those, the fiends, who, near allied,
O'er nature's wounds, the wrecks, preside;
Whilst vengeance, in the lurid air,
Lifts her red arm, exposed and bare:
On whom that ravening brood of fate,
Who lap the blood of sorrow, wait:
Who, fear, this ghastly train can see,
And look not madly wild, like thee?

Epode

In earliest Greece, to thee, with partial choice,
The grief-full muse addrest her infant tongue;
The maids and matrons, on her awful voice,
Silent and pale, in wild amazement hung.

Yet he, the bard who first invoked thy name,
Disdained in Marathon its power to feel;
For not alone he nursed the poet's flame,
But reached from virtue's hand the patriot's steel.

But who is he whom later garlands grace,
Who left awhile o'er Hybla's dews to rove,

With trembling eyes thy dreary steps to trace,
Where thou and furies shared the baleful grove?

Wrapt in thy cloudy veil, the incestuous queen
Sighed the sad call her son and husband heard,
When once alone it broke the silent scene,
And he, the wretch of Thebes, no more appeared.

O fear, I know thee by my throbbing heart:
Thy withering power inspired each mournful line:
Though gentle pity claim her mingled part,
Yet all the thunders of the scene are thine!

Anistrophe

Thou who such weary lengths hast past,
Where wilt thou rest, mad nymph, at last?
Say, wilt thou shroud in haunted cell,
Where gloomy rape and murder dwell?
Or, in some hollowed seat,
'Gainst which the big waves beat,
Hear drowning seamen's cries, in tempests brought?
Dark power, with shuddering meek submitted thought,
Be mine to read the visions old
Which thy awakening bards have told:
And, lest thou meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true;
Ne'er be I found, by thee o'erawed,
In that thrice hallowed eve, abroad,
When ghosts, as cottage maids believe,
Their pebbled beds permitted leave;
And goblins haunt, from fire, or fen,
Or mine, or flood, the walks of men!
O thou, whose spirit most possest
The sacred seat of Shakespeare's breast!
By all that from thy prophet broke,
In thy divine emotions spoke;
Hither again thy fury deal,
Teach me but once more like him to feel:
His cypress wreath my meed decree,
And I, O fear, will dwell with thee!

Ode To Liberty

STROPHE.

WHO shall wake the Spartan Fife,
And call in solemn Sounds to Life,
The Youths, whose Locks divinely spreading,
Like vernal Hyacinths in sullen Hue,
At once the Breath of Fear and Virtue shedding,
Applauding Freedom, lov'd of old to view?
What New Alcæus, Fancy-blest,
Shall sing the Sword, in Myrtles drest,
At Wisdom's Shrine a-while its Flame concealing,
(What Place so fit to seal a Deed renown'd?)
Till she her brightest Lightnings round revealing,
It leap'd in Glory forth, and dealt her prompted Wound!
O Goddess, in that feeling Hour,
When most its Sounds would court thy Ears,
Let not my Shell's misguided Pow'r,
E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful Tears.
No, Freedom, no, I will not tell,
How Rome, before thy weeping Face,
With heaviest Sound, a Giant-statue, fell,
Push'd by a wild and artless Race,
From off its wide ambitious Base,
When Time his Northern Sons of Spoil awoke,
And all the blended Work of Strength and Grace,
With many a rude repeated Stroke,
And many a barb'rous Yell, to thousand Fragments broke.

EPODE.

2.

Yet ev'n, where'er the least appear'd,
Th'admiring World thy Hand rever'd;
Still 'midst the scatter'd States around,
Some Remnants of Her Strength were found;
They saw by what escap'd the Storm,
How wond'rous rose her perfect Form;
How in the great the labour'd Whole,

Each mighty Master pour'd his Soul!
For sunny Florence, Seat of Art,
Beneath her Vines preserv'd a part,
Till They, whom Science lov'd to name,
(O who could fear it?) quench'd her Flame.
And lo, an humbler Relick laid
In jealous Pisa's Olive Shade.
See small Marino joins the Theme,
Tho' least, not last in thy Esteem:
Strike, louder strike th'ennobling Strings
To those, whose Merchant Sons were Kings;
To Him, who deck'd with pearly Pride,
In Adria weds his green-hair'd Bride;
Hail Port of Glory, Wealth, and Pleasure,
Ne'er let me change this Lydian Measure:
Nor e'er her former Pride relate,
To sad Liguria's bleeding State.
Ah no! more pleas'd thy Haunts I seek,
On wild Helvetia's Mountains bleak:
(Where, when the favor'd of thy Choice,
The daring Archer heard thy Voice;
Forth from his Eyrie rous'd in Dread,
The rav'ning Eagle northward fled.)
Or dwell in willow'd Meads more near,
With Those to whom thy Stork is dear:
Those whom the Rod of Alva bruis'd.
Whose Crown a British Queen refus'd!
The Magic works, Thou feel'st the Strains,
One holier Name alone remains;
The perfect Spell shall then avail,
Hail Nymph, ador'd by Britain, Hail!

A N T I S T R O P H E.

Beyond the Measure vast of Thought,
The Works, the Wizzard Time has Wrought!
The Gaul, 'tis held of antique Story,
Saw Britain lin'd to his now adverse Strand,
No Sea between, nor Cliff sulime and hoary,
He pass'd with unwet Feet thro' all our Land.
To the blown Baltic then, they say,
The wild Waves found another way,

Where Orcas howls, his wolfish Mountains rounding,
Till all the banded West at once 'gan rise,
A wide wild Storm ev'n Nature's self confounding,
With'ring her Giant Sons with strange uncouth Surprise.
This pillar'd Earth so firm and wide,
By Winds and inward Labors torn,
In Thunders dread was push'd aside,
And down the should'ring Billows born.
And see, like Gems, her laughing Train,
The little Isles on ev'ry side,
Mona, once hid from those who search the Main'
Where thousand Elfin Shapes abide,
And Wight who checks the west'ring Tide,
For Thee consenting Heav'n has each bestow'd,
A fair Attendant on her sov'reign Pride:
To Thee this blest Divorce she ow'd,
For thou hast made her Vales thy lov'd, thy last Abode!

S E C O N D E P O D E .

Then too, 'tis said, an hoary Pile,
'midst the green Navel of our Isle,
Thy Shrine in some religious Wood,
O Soul-enforcing Goddess stood!
There oft the painted Native's Feet,
Were wont thy Form celestial meet:
Tho' now with hopeless Toil we trace
Time's backward Rolls, to find its place;
Whether the fiery-tressed Dane,
Or Roman's self o'erturn'd the Fane,
Or in what Heav'n-left Age it fell,
[']Twere hard for modern Song to tell.
Yet still, if Truth those Beams infuse,
Which guide at once, and charm the Muse,
Beyond yon braided Cloudes that lie,
Paving the light-embroider'd Sky:
Amidst the bright pavilion'd Plains,
The beauteous Model still remains.
There happier than in Islands blest,
Or Bow'rs by Spring or Hebe drest;
The Chiefs who fill our Albion's Story,
In warlike Weeds, retir'd in Glory,

Hear their consorted Druids sing
Their Triumphs to th'immortal String.
How may the Poet now unfold,
What never Tongue or Numbers told?
How learn delighted, and amaz'd,
What Hands unknown that Fabric rais'd?
Ev'n now before his favor'd Eyes,
In Gothic Pride it seems to rise!
Yet Græcia's graceful Orders join,
Majestic thro' the mix'd Design;
The secret Builder knew to chuse,
Each sphere-found Gem of richest Hues:
Whate'er Heav'n's purer Mold contains,
When nearer Suns emblaze its Veins;
There on the Walls the Patriot's Sight,
May ever hang with fresh Delight,
And, grav'd with some Prophetic Rage,
Read Albion's Fame thro' ev'ry Age.
Ye Forms Divine, ye Laureate Band,
That near her inmost Altar stand!
Now Sooth Her, to her blissful Train
Blithe Concord's social Form to gain:
Concord, whose Myrtle Wand can steep
Ev'n Anger's blood-shot Eyes in Sleep:
Before whose breathing Bosom'd Balm,
Rage drops his Steel, and Storms grow calm;
Here let our Sires and Matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravag'd Shore.
Our Youths, enamour'd of the Fair,
Play with the Tangles of her Hair,
Till in one loud applauding Sound,
The Nations shout to Her around,
O how supremely art thou blest,
Thou, Lady, Thou shalt rule the West!

William Collins

Ode To M E R C Y

S T R O P H E.

O THOU, who sit'st a smiling Bride
By Valour's arm'd and awful Side,
Gentlest of Sky-born Forms, and best ador'd:
Who oft with Songs, divine to hear,
Win'st from his fatal Grasp the Spear,
And hid'st in Wreaths of Flow'rs his bloodless Sword!
Thou who, amidst the deathful Field,
By Godlike Chiefs alone beheld,
Oft with thy Bosom bare art found,
Pleading for him the Youth who sinks to Ground:
See, Mercy, see, with pure and loaded Hands,
Before thy Shrine my Country's Genius stands,
And decks thy Altar still, tho' pierc'd with many a Wound!

A N T I S T R O P H E.

When he whom ev'n our Joys provoke,
The Fiend of Nature join'd his Yoke,
And rush'd in Wrath to make our Isle his Prey,
Thy Form, from out thy sweet Abode,
O'ertook Him on his blasted Road,
And stop'd his Wheels, and look'd his Rage away.
I see recoil his sable Steeds,
That bore Him swift to Salvage Deeds,
Thy tender melting Eyes they own;
O Maid, for all thy Love to Britain shown,
Where Justice bars her Iron Tow'r,
To Thee we build a roseate Bow'r,
Thou, Thou shalt rule our Queen, and share our Monarch's Throne!

William Collins

Ode To P E A C E

O Thou, who bad'st thy Turtles bear
Swift from his Grasp thy golden Hair.
 and sought'st thy native Skies:
When War, by Vultures drawn from far,
To Britain bent his Iron Car,
 And bad his Storms arise!

2.

Tir'd of his rude tyrannic Sway,
Our Youth shall fix some festive Day,
 His sullen Shrines to burn:
But Thou who hear'st the turning Spheres,
What Sounds may charm thy partial Ears,
 And gain thy blest Return!

3.

O Peace, thy injur'd Robes up-bind,
O rise, and leave not one behind
 Of all thy beamy Train:
The British Lion, Goddess sweet,
Lies stretch'd on Earth to kiss thy Feet,
 And own thy holier Reign.

4.

Let others court thy transient Smile,
But come to grace thy western Isle,
 By warlike Honour led!
And, while around her Ports rejoice,
While all her Sons adore thy Choice,
 With Him for ever wed!

William Collins

Ode To Pity

O THOU, the Friend of Man assign'd,
With balmy Hands his Wounds to bind,
 And charm his frantic Woe:
When first Distress with Dagger keen
Broke forth to waste his destin'd Scene,
 His wild unsated Foe!

2.

By Pella's Bard, a magic Name,
By all the Griefs his Thoughts could frame,
 Receiue my humble Rite:
Long, Pity, let the Nations view
Thy sky-worn Robes of tend'rest Blue,
 And Eyes of dewy Light!

3.

But wherefore need I wander wide
To old Ilissus' distant Side,
 Deserted Stream, and mute?
Wild Arun too has heard thy Strains,
And Echo, 'midst my native Plains,
 Been sooth'd by Pity's Lute.

4.

There first the Wren thy Myrtles shed
On gentlest Otway's infant Head,
 To Him thy Cell was shown;
And while He sung the Female heart,
With Youth's soft Notes unspoil'd by Art,
 Thy Turtles mix'd their own.

5.

Come, Pity, come, by Fancy's Aid,
Ev'n now my Thoughts, relenting Maid,
 Thy Temple's Pride design:
Its Southern Site, its Truth compleat
Shall raise a wild Enthusiast Heat,
 In all who view the Shrine.

6.

There Picture's Toils shall well relate,
How Chance, or hard involving Fate,
O'er mortal Bliss prevail:
The Buskin'd Muse shall near her stand,
And sighing prompt her tender Hand,
With each disastrous Tale.

7.

There let me oft, retir'd by Day,
In Dreams of Pasion melt away,
Allow'd with Thee to dwell:
There waste the mournful Lamp of Night,
Till, Virgin, Thou again delight
To hear a British shell!

William Collins

Ode To Simplicity

O thou, by Nature taught
To breathe her genuine thought
In numbers warmly pure, and sweetly strong;
Who first on mountains wild,
In Fancy, loveliest child,
Thy babe, or Pleasure's, nurs'd the pow'rs of song!

Thou, who with hermit heart,
Disdain'st the wealth of art,
And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trailing pall,
But com'st a decent maid,
In Attic robe array'd,
O chaste, unboastful nymph, to thee I call!

By all the honey'd store
On Hybla's thymy shore;
By all her blooms, and mingled murmurs dear;
By her whose lovelorn woe
In ev'ning musings slow
Sooth'd sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear:

By old Cephisus deep,
Who spread his wavy sweep
In warbled wand'rings round thy green retreat;
On whose enamell'd side,
When holy Freedom died,
No equal haunt allur'd thy future feet.

O sister meek of Truth,
To my admiring youth,
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse!
The flow'rs that sweetest breathe,
Tho' Beauty cull'd the wreath,
Still ask thy hand to range their order'd hues.

While Rome could none esteem
But virtue's patriot theme,
You lov'd her hills, and led her laureate band;
But stay'd to sing alone

To one distinguish'd throne,
And turn'd thy face, and fled her alter'd land.

No more, in hall or bow'r,
The passions own thy pow'r;
Love, only love her forceless numbers mean;
For thou hast left her shrine,
Nor olive more, nor vine,
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

Tho' taste, tho' genius bless
To some divine excess,
Faints the cold work till thou inspire the whole;
What each, what all supply,
May court, may charm our eye;
Thou, only thou canst raise the meeting soul!

Of these let others ask,
To aid some mighty task,
I only seek to find thy temp'rate vale;
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature, learn my tale.

William Collins

Ode Written In The Beginning Of The Year 1746

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.
By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

William Collins

The Manners - An O D E

FAREWELL, for clearer Ken design'd,
The dim-discover'd Tracts of Mind:
Truths which, from Action's Paths retir'd,
My silent Search in vain requir'd!
No more my Sail that Deep explores,
No more I search those magic Shores,
What Regions part the World of Soul,
Or whence thy Streams, Opinion, roll:
If e'er I round such Rairy Field,
Some Pow'r impart the Spear and Shield,
At which the Wizzard Passions fly,
By which the giant Follies die!

Farewell the Porch, whose Roof is seen,
Arch'd with th'enlivening Olive's Green:
Where Science, prank'd in tissued Vest,
By Reason, Pride, and Fancy drest,
Comes like a Bride so trim array'd,
To wed with Doubt in Plato's Shade!

Youth of the quick uncheated Sight,
Thy Walks, Observance, more invite!
O Thou, who lov'st that ampler Range,
Where Life's wide Prospects round thee change,
And with her mingling Sons ally'd,
Throw'st the prattling Page aside:
To me in Converse sweet impart,
To read in Man the native Heart,
To learn, where Science sure is found,
From Nature as she lives around:
And gazing oft her Mirror true,
By turns each shifting Image view!
Till meddling Art's officious Lore,
Reverse the lessons taught before,
Alluring [him] from a safer Rule,
To dream in her enchanted School;
Thou Heav'n, whate'er of Great we boast,
Hast blest this social Science most.

Retiring hence to thoughtful Cell,
As Fancy breathes her potent Spell,
Not vain she finds the charmful Task,

In Pageant quaint, in motley Mask,
 Behold before her musing Eyes,
 The countless Manners round her rise;
 While ever varying as they pass,
 To some Contempt applies her Glass:
 With these the white-rob'd Maids combine,
 And those the laughing Satyrs join!
 But who is He whom now she views,
 In Robe of wild contending Hues?
 Thou by the Passions nurs'd, I greet
 The comic Sock that binds thy Feet!
 O Humour, Thou whose Name is known,
 To Britain's favor'd Isle alone:
 Me too amidst thy Band admit,
 There where the young-eyed healthful Wit,
 (Whose Jewels in his crisped Hair
 Are plac'd each other's Beams to share,
 Whom no Delights from Thee divide)
 In Laughter loos'd attends thy Side!
 By old Miletus who so long
 Has ceas'd his Love-inwoven Song:
 By all you taught the Tuscan Maids,
 In chang'd Italia's modern Shades:
 By Him, whose Knight's distinguish'd Name
 Refin'd a Nation's Lust of Fame;
 Whose Tales ev'n now, with Echos sweet,
 Castilia's Moorish Hills repeat:
 Or Him, whome Seine's blue Nymphs deplore,
 In watchet Weeds on Gallia's Shore,
 Who drew the sad Sicilian Maid,
 By Virtues in her Sire betray'd:
 O Nature boon, from whom proceed
 Each forceful Thought, each prompted Deed;
 If but from Thee I hope to feel,
 On all my Heart imprint thy Seal!
 Let some retreating Cynic find,
 Those oft-turn'd Scrolls I leave behind,
 The Sports and I this Hour agree,
 To rove thy Scene-full World with Thee!

William Collins

The Passions. An Ode To Music

When Music, heav'nly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Throng'd around her magic cell,
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possess beyond the Muse's painting;
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturb'd, delighted, rais'd, refin'd:
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fir'd,
Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspir'd,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatch'd her instruments of sound;
And as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each, for madness rul'd the hour,
Would prove his own expressive pow'r.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
Ev'n at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rush'd; his eyes, on fire,
In lightnings own'd his secret stings;
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair
Low sullen sounds his grief beguil'd;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure;
Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!

Still would her touch the strain prolong,
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,

She call'd on Echo still thro' all the song;
And where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at ev'ry close,
And Hope enchanted smil'd, and wav'd her golden hair.

And longer had she sung,-but with a frown
Revenge impatient rose;
He threw his blood-stain'd sword in thunder down
And with a with'ring look
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe.
And ever and anon he beat
The doubling drum with furious heat;
And tho' sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied,
Yet still he kept his wild unalter'd mien,
While each strain'd ball of sight seem'd bursting from his head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were fix'd,
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of diff'ring themes the veering song was mix'd,
And now it courted Love, now raving call'd on Hate.

With eyes uprais'd, as one inspir'd,
Pale Melancholy sate retir'd,
And from her wild sequester'd seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Pour'd thro' the mellow horn her pensive soul:
And, dashing soft from locks around,
Bubbling runnels join'd the sound;
Thro' glades and glooms the mingled measure stole;
Or o'er some haunted stream with fond delay
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

But oh, how alter'd was its sprightlier tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,

Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call to faun and dryad known!
The oak-crown'd sisters, and their chaste-ey'd queen,
Satyrs, and sylvan boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green;
Brown Exercise rejoic'd to heal,
And Sport leapt up, and seiz'd his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial.
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand address;
But soon he saw the brisk awak'ning viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he lov'd the best.
They would have thought, who heard the strain,
They saw in Tempe's vale her native maids
Amidst the vestal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kiss'd the strings,
Love fram'd with Mirth a gay fantastic round;
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound,
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O Music, sphere-descended maid,
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid,
Why, goddess, why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As in that lov'd Athenian bow'r
You learn'd an all-commanding pow'r,
Thy mimic soul, O nymph endear'd,
Can well recall what then it heard.
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to Virtue Fancy, Art?
Arise as in that eider time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording sister's page.-
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age,

Ev'n all at once together found,
Cæcilia's mingled world of sound.
O bid our vain endeavours cease,
Revive the just designs of Greece,
Return in all thy simple state,
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

William Collins