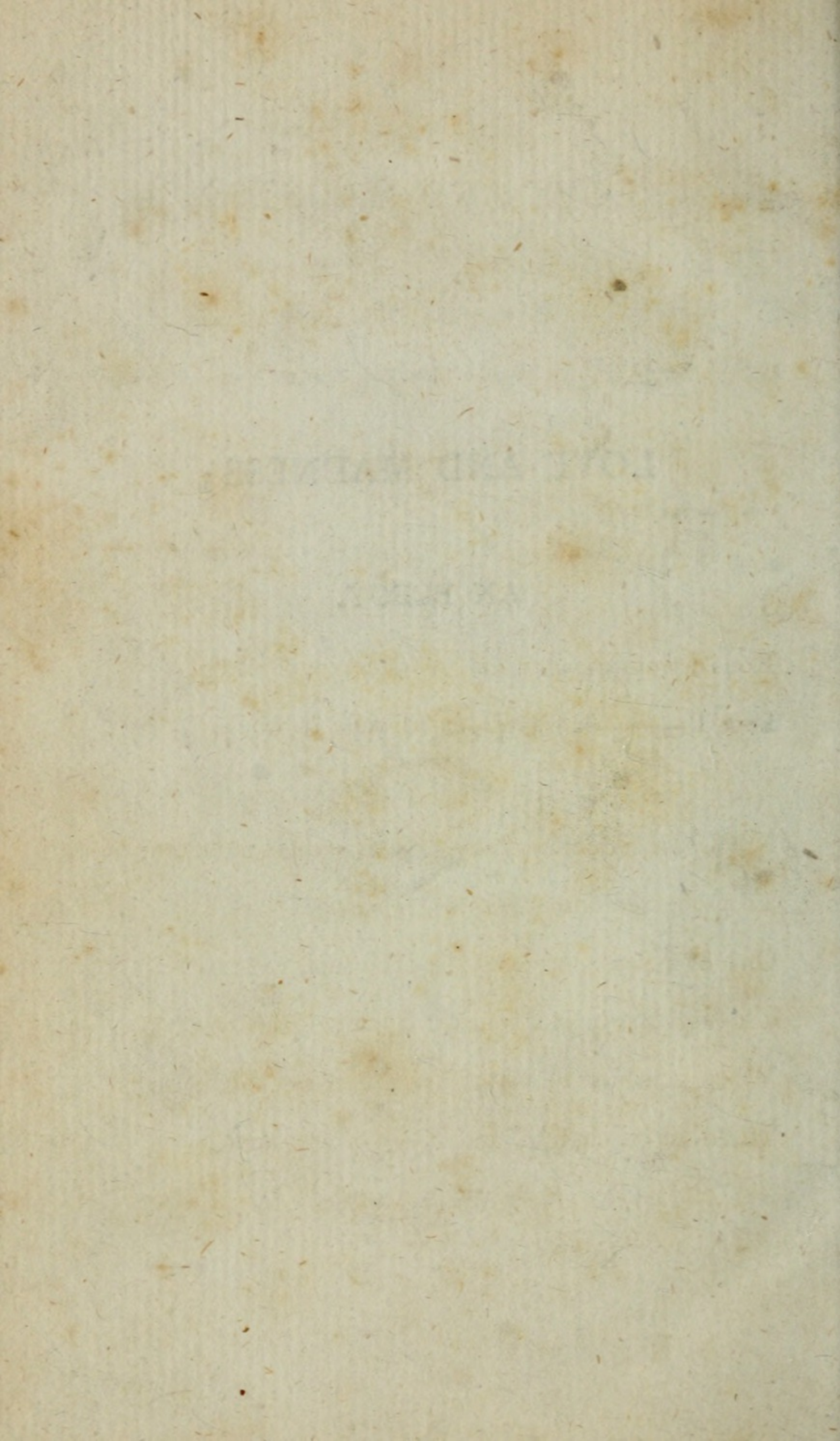


LOVE AND MADNESS ;

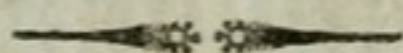
AN ELEGY.



LOVE AND MADNESS;

AN ELEGY.

WRITTEN IN 1795.



HARK! from the battlements of yonder tower*

The solemn bell has toll'd the midnight hour!

Rous'd from drear visions of distemper'd sleep,

Poor B——k wakes—in solitude to weep!

“ Cease, Mem'ry, cease (the friendless mourner cried),
To probe the bosom too severely tried! 6

Oh! ever cease, my pensive thoughts, to stray

Through the bright fields of Fortune's better day;

When youthful Hope, the music of the mind,

Tun'd all its charms, and E——n was kind! 10

* Warwick Castle.

“ Yet, can I cease, while glows this trembling frame,
In sighs to speak thy melancholy name !
I hear thy spirit wail in every storm !
In midnight shades I view thy passing form !
Pale as in that sad hour, when doom'd to feel, 15
Deep in thy perjur'd heart, the bloody steel !

“ Demons of Vengeance ! ye at whose command
I grasp'd the sword with more than woman's hand,
Say ye, did Pity's trembling voice controul,
Or horror damp the purpose of my soul ? 20
No ! my wild heart sat smiling o'er the plan,
Till Hate fulfill'd what baffled Love began !

“ Yes ; let the clay-cold breast, that never knew
One tender pang, to generous Nature true,
Half mingling pity with the gall of scorn, 25
Condemn this heart, that bled in love forlorn !

“ And ye, proud fair, whose souls no gladness warms,
Save Rapture’s homage to your conscious charms!

Delighted idols of a gaudy train! 30

Ill can your blunter feelings guess the pain,

When the fond faithful heart, inspir’d to prove

Friendship refin’d, the calm delight of love,

Feels all its tender strings with anguish torn,

And bleeds at perjur’d Pride’s inhuman scorn! 35

“ Say, then, did pitying Heav’n condemn the deed,

When vengeance bade thee, faithless lover! bleed?

Long had I watch’d thy dark foreboding brow,

What time thy bosom scorn’d its dearest vow!

Sad, though I wept the friend, the lover chang’d, 40

Still thy cold look was scornful, and estranged,

Till from thy pity, love, and shelter thrown,

I wander’d, hopeless, friendless, and alone!

“ Oh! righteous Heav’n! ’twas then my tortur’d soul
First gave to wrath unlimited controul! 45

Adieu the silent look! the streaming eye!

The murmur’d plaint! the deep heart-heaving sigh!

Long slumbering Vengeance wakes to better deeds;

He shrieks, he falls, the perjur’d Lover bleeds!

Now the last laugh of agony is o’er, 50

And pale in blood he sleeps, to wake no more!

“ ’Tis done! the flame of hate no longer burns;
Nature relents; but, ah! too late returns!

Why does my soul this gush of anguish feel?

Trembling and faint, I drop the guilty steel! 55

Cold on my heart the hand of terror lies;

And shades of horror close my languid eyes!—

“ Oh! ’twas a deed of Murder’s deepest grain!

Could B——k’s soul so true to wrath remain?

A friend long true, a once fond lover fell!— 60

Where Love was foster'd, could not Pity dwell?

“ Unhappy youth! while yon pale crescent glows
To watch on silent Nature's deep repose,
Thy sleepless spirit, breathing from the tomb,
Foretells my fate, and summons me to come! 65
Once more I see thy sheeted spectre stand,
Roll the dim eye, and wave the paly hand!

“ Soon may this fluttering spark of vital flame
Forsake its languid melancholy frame!
Soon may these eyes their trembling lustre close, 70
Welcome the dreamless night of long repose!
Soon may this woe-worn spirit seek the bourne
Where, lull'd to slumber, Grief forgets to mourn!”