



E P I S T L E

TO THE

Right Hon^{ble}. the Countess of HERTFORD,

AT PERCY LODGE:

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR MDCCXLIV.

BY THE SAME.

YOU ask me, madam, if the muse
From Colebrooke still my steps pursues:
Take then (but first your patience lend)
Her story thus from end to end.

She, that at Bath, so debonair,
Sung gallant Damon and his fair,
To beauteous Townsend tun'd her lyre,
And did, at Pelham's fight, inspire
Strains, that her Lincoln's self forgives
(You see the daring poet lives!)

She, that at Percy-Lodge so late
From morn to night was us'd to prate,

Almost

Almost impertinent and rude,
 Unbidden would herself intrude
 With tale, and epigram, and song,
 To waft the chearful hours along,
 Whilst I, o'erjoy'd myself to view
 Alive, and with my lord and you,
 Not once could check her merry vein,
 Her unpremeditated strain,
 And did, from heedless joy, neglect
 To greatness every grave respect;
 This muse, I say, inconstant grown,
 Forsook me, when I came to town;
 Friend to my fortune, she withdrew,
 When I left Percy-Lodge and you.

Since then, in vain I ask her aid,
 In vain her cruelty upbraid;
 The town, she says, was ne'er her choice;
 If there she tries to raise her voice,
 Her strains are to their theme unjust,
 Or drown'd in noise, or choak'd with dust.

Her plea is good. The muse's theme,
 Like the pure, bright, harmonious stream,
 Ne'er but in rural channels flows;
 Cities and bards are endless foes.

Resolv'd Parnassus' top to climb,
 * And there to build the lofty rhyme,

* Part of a Verse of Milton's.

I to fam'd Claremont's height aspire,
 To borrow thence poetic fire,
 To waft, like Cooper's-Hill, its name
 On wings of everlasting fame;
 Or, (if that bold attempt be vain)
 Your partial ear to entertain.

I mount my chaise, the space between,
 Fancy anticipates the scene,
 And Vanity, officious maid,
 Thus offers her self-pleasing aid;
 " Poor Vanbrugh's plan is out of date,
 " And Garth but saw its rising state,
 " His verse with tuneful fable rung,
 " But left its real charms unsung;
 " But now, to my transported eyes,
 " In full maturity will rise
 " The bowers, the temples, and the groves,
 " That Kent has plann'd, and Pelham loves.
 At length, awaken'd from my dream,
 My eyes behold the real theme,
 And the gay sketch, that fancy drew,
 They find more amiably true.

On a neat structure now they rest,
 Where rural plainness is express'd,
 With harvests stor'd, compact, and warm,
 And, tho' Palladian, yet a farm,
 Whence cars, in rustic order drawn,
 Pass and repass the sloping lawn,

While

While flocks, in fleecy groups around,
 Or, moving, crop the daisy'd ground,
 Or, sunk beneath the tufted trees,
 Turn, languid, to the noontide breeze.
 The lustier herds, in glare of day,
 Bask, and imbibe the sunny ray.

While these I view, on humid wings
 The sultry south a tempest brings,
 Black clouds invest the low'ring skies,
 And all the beauteous vision flies.
 Now from the thick-descending rain
 I drive across the darken'd plain,
 And leave the lovely scene behind,
 That just began to charm my mind.

How rare does pleasure stand the test!
 With patience now I arm my breast,
 And, in a moralizing vein,
 With thoughts like these my grief restrain:
 " The skies are clear, when storms are o'er,
 " Again smooth waves salute the shore,
 " Each sun but sets to rise again,
 " And gild with morn the dewy plain;
 " This hour, perhaps, hope cheats the mind,
 " The next, an equal joy we find."

Just so; the house a shelter lends,
 Within I find the best of friends,
 Spence, whose soft bosom oft has known
 To make another's woe her own;

She

She now, with hospitable grace,
 Compassionates my present case,
 Asks of your health, and hears with joy,
 How you your growing strength employ
 In rural cares and exercise;
 And kind congratulations rise,
 When on my favourite theme I dwell,
 And Beauchamp's rising virtues tell.
 Fondly the vanity I share,
 And recollect my pleasing care,
 That, with parental aid combin'd,
 Founded the structure of his mind:
 So boastful builders call their own
 Works, where they laid the first rude stone.

The storm subsides, the mount I gain,
 Thence dart my eyes across the plain.
 Full swelling to the sight, I found
 First holy Paul's majestic round,
 Thro' wide Augusta's smok; and now
 Rose lofty Windsor's tow'rd brow;
 Here glitter streams of vulgar names,
 There slowly winds imperial Thames,
 On his green banks, in level line,
 Here spacious Hampton's turrets shine,
 Whose windows kindling at the ray
 Of Sol, beam back redoubled day;
 Towns, villages, and pointed spires,
 And smok thick-wreath'd from cottage-fires,

And planted villas, intervene,
 To grace the sweetly-vary'd scene.
 O'er all my eyes transported range,
 With every glance the visions change,
 Till, drawn by beauties nearer home,
 Along the lovely park I roam,
 Now skim the walk, descend the glade,
 Then plunge into the deepest shade.
 Here flourish sweets in mingled bloom,
 There (worthy ancient Greece or Rome)
 Fair temples, opening to the sight,
 Surprise each turn with new delight:
 In pleasure lost, I wish to gaze
 At once a thousand different ways,
 Awful or pleasing, every part
 Expands the soul, or glads the heart,
 Great, open, liberal, unconfin'd,
 Just emblem of its master's mind,
 Who knows unequall'd state to shew,
 Yet, gracious, stoops to all below.

Beneath a hill, whose hoary brow
 Ne'er felt the wound of scythe or plow,
 (Along whose wild and heathy side
 Britannia's ^b naval heroes ride,
 When they, with colours wide display'd,
 That proud Iberia's sons upbraid,

^b About that time the crew of the Centurion were expected to pass by from Portsmouth with the prize-money taken from the Acapulca ship.

In tawny troop, from India's shore,
 Guard in rough pomp their captive ore)
 Mid circling waters lies an isle,
 Whose verdant shores reflected smile
 With Flora's painted hues; above,
 Soft-bosom'd in a shady grove,
 A dome, but half reveal'd to sight,
 Chequers the boughs with Parian white.

If chance from hence at evening fair
 The rising song soft steals on air,
 Which to the well-according strings
 The skillful voice sweet-warbling sings,
 The passing swain suspended stands,
 And, wondering, lifts to heaven his hands,
 Doubts if beneath some leafy spray
 Soft Philomela pours her lay,
 Or some blest spirit from above
 Enchants with harmony the grove;
 Nor guesses that the tuneful art,
 Which awes and charms his simple heart,
 Is hers, whose bounty loves to bless
 Sad sickening want, and lone distress,
 And hers the sweet enchanting song,
 To whom the listening groves belong,
 And all, that her Newcastle's art
 In boundless fondness can impart,
 Each level walk, each shelving glade,
 Whate'er employs the labourer's spade,

Whate'er

Whate'er rewards his patient toil,
And makes the barren desert smile.

This isle in tempting prospect stands,
Thither I stretch my eyes and hands,
Eager the farther shore to gain,
But stretch my hands and eyes in vain.
For hark! the threat'ning winds arise,
Again with clouds obscure the skies,
And tell my baffled hopes, that this
Is an enchanted isle of bliss,
Now in near prospect blooming fair,
And now involv'd in black despair!

My chaise regain'd, I cross the plain,
When lo! the sun beams forth again.
Hope, gay impostor, points the way,
Where, near the road, fair Esther lay;
And who at Esther would not stay?
I turn'd. Retiring from the town,
The noble owner just came down.
I saw the gate behind him close,
Then murmur'd at this short repose
From cares for Britain's safety shewn,
Grudg'd his repose, who guards my own!

I now pursue my former way,
And with my journey ends this day
Of hope, and fear, and pain, and pleasure,
Of all my other days the measure!

Yours a more even tenor know,
And scarce perceive an ebb or flow.

The

The cause is plain. To fortune's gale
 You, cautious, never spread a sail;
 Safe in your port, content at home,
 You ne'er for painful pleasure roam,
 And think it folly, if not sin,
 One night to sojourn at an inn.
 Nay, when the Atlas of our state
 Throws off for you a nation's weight,
 In courtly terms your ear to greet,
 And cast himself beneath your feet,
 You (like Egeria) in your grott
 Or seek he must, or finds you not.
 More cautious still, e'en when retir'd,
 By wits nor censur'd, nor admir'd,
 You say, (tho' every art your friend)
 You dare to no one art pretend.
 Your fear is just. Each state and nation
 Assigns to woman reputation,
 While man asserts his wider claim,
 Jealous proprietor of fame.
 Yet sure, without offence, you may
 On nature's open leaf display
 Your harmless unambitious skill,
 To sink a grott, or slope a hill,
 A dell with flowers adorn, or lead
 A winding rill along the mead,
 Or bid opposing trees be join'd,
 In hospitable league intwin'd,

Without

Without their leave, whose madness dares
 Rouze human states to cruel wars;
 Or, if the Bourbon of the air
 Against your feather'd folk declare
 Fell war, betake you to th' alliance
 Of net or gun, and bid defiance
 To every robber, small or great,
 That would disturb your calm retreat.

· O may kind heaven propitious smile
 On every art that can beguile
 A son's long absence from your fight,
 And render back that just delight!
 From those distracting dire alarms,
 That set a jarring world in arms,
 From tainted air's infectious breath,
 Where flies unseen the dart of death,
 His steps, ye guardian angels, guide,
 And turn the fatal shaft aside!
 Return'd, his parent's bliss to crown,
 And make, all earth can give, their own,
 Like Smithson's, may his manly heart
 Act not the vain, but generous part,
 Call drooping art from her recess,
 With health, and ease, and fame to bless!

O may, like his, his riper age
 With caution tread the civil stage,
 Like him, th' enchanted cup put by,
 And every vain temptation fly,

Of

Of power, or pension, place, or name;
 If meant state-traps, that sink to shame;
 Yet his just Prince, without a bribe,
 Love—more than all the venal tribe!

But from these themes I now refrain,
 Reserv'd to grace a future strain.
 For I have trespass'd on your time,
 And see a tedious length of rhyme.
 What must it then appear to you?
 Respectful most this short adieu.



S O M E T H O U G H T S

O N

BUILDING and PLANTING,

T O

Sir JAMES LOWTHER, Bart.

OF LOWTHER-HALL.

BY THE SAME.

W H E N stately structures Lowther grace,
 Worthy the owner and the place,
 Fashion will not the works direct,
 But Reason be the Architect.

Ready