ELEGY IV.

To an OFFICER.

Written at Rome, 1756.

FROM Latian fields, the manſions of Renown,
Where fix'd the Warrior God his fated ſeat;
Where infant Heroes learnt the martial frown,
And little hearts for genuine glory beat;

What for my friend, my ſoldier, ſhall I frame?
What nobly glowing verſe that breathes of arms,
To point his radiant path to deathleſs fame,
By great examples, and terrific charms?

Quirinus firſt, with bold, collected bands,
The ſinewy ſons of ſtrength, for empire ſtrove;
Beneath his thunder bow'd th' aſtoniſh'd lands,
And temples roſe to Mars, and to Feretrian Jove.

War

War taught contempt of death, contempt of pain,
And hence the Fabii, hence the Decii come:
War urg'd the ſlaughter, tho' ſhe wept the ſlain,
Stern War, the rugged nurſe of virtuous Rome.

But not from antique fables will I draw,
To fire thy feeling ſoul, a dubious aid,
Tho' now, ev'n now, they ſtrike with rev'rent awe,
By Poets or Hiſtorians ſacred made.

Nor yet to thee the babling Muſe ſhall tell
What mighty Kings with all their legions wrought,
What cities ſunk, and ſtoried nations fell
When Cæſar, Titus, or when Trajan fought,

From private worth, and Fortune's private ways
Whilſt o'er yon hill th' exalted [a] Trophy ſhows
To what vaſt heights of incorrupted praiſe
The great, the ſelf-ennobled Marius roſe.

From ſteep Arpinum's rock-inveſted ſhade,
From hardy Virtue's emulative ſchool
His daring flight th' expanding Genius made,
And by obeying nobly learnt to rule.

Abaſh'd, confounded, ſtern Iberia groan'd,
And Afric trembled to her utmoſt coaſts;
When the proud land its deſtin'd Conqueror own'd
In the new Conſul, and his veteran hoſts.

[a] *The trophies of* Marius, *now erected before the Capitol.*

Yet Chiefs are madmen, and Ambition weak,
And mean the joys the laurel'd harveſts yield,
If Virtue fail. Let Fame, let Envy ſpeak
Of Capſa's walls, and Sextia's watry field.

But ſink for ever, in oblivion caſt,
Diſhoneſt triumphs, and ignoble ſpoils.
Minturnæ's Marſh ſeverely paid at laſt
The guilty glories gain'd in civil broils.

Nor yet his vain contempt the Muſe ſhall praiſe
For ſcenes of poliſh'd life, and letter'd worth;
The ſteel-rib'd Warrior wants not Envy's ways
To darken theirs, or call his merits forth,

Witneſs yon Cimbrian Trophies!—Marius, there
Thy ample pinion found a ſpace to fly;
As the plum'd eagle ſoaring ſails in air,
In upper air, and ſcorns a middle ſky.

Thence too thy country claim'd thee for her own,
And bade the Sculptor's toil thy acts adorn,
To teach in characters of living ſtone
Eternal leſſons to the youth unborn.

For wiſely Rome her warlike Sons rewards
With the ſweet labours of her Artiſts' hands;
He wakes her Graces, who her empire guards,
And both Minervas join in willing bands.

O why, Britannia, why untrophied paſs
The patriot deeds thy godlike Sons diſplay,
Why breathes on high no monumental braſs,
Why ſwells no Arc to grace Culloden's Day ?

Wait we till faithleſs France ſubmiſſive bow
Beneath that Hero's delegated ſpear,
Whoſe light'ning ſmote Rebellion's haughty brow,
And ſcatter'd her vile rout with horror in the rear ?

O Land of Freedom, Land of Arts, aſſume
That graceful dignity thy merits claim ;
Exalt thy Heroes like imperial Rome,
And build their virtues on their love of fame.

So ſhall the modeſt worth, which checks my friend,
Forget its bluſh when rous'd by Glory's charms ;
From breaſt to breaſt the generous warmth deſcend,
And ſtill new trophies riſe, at once, to Arts, and Arms.