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FUNERAL SERMON,

O N T H E

D E A T H

O F T H E

Hon. RICHARD STOCKTON, Esq.

PRINCETON, March 2, 1781.

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T R E N T O N: M D C C L X X X I
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Mrs. Stockton, whose poetical talents are generally known, and, whatever I may say in their favour, will be better judged of by the following little pieces of composition, has favoured us with a short elegy to the memory of her husband, and a sudden production, the effusion of her heart while watching by his bed, which, I am persuaded, the publick will not be displeas'd to see at the end of his funeral sermon.

WH Y does the sun in usual splendor rise
To pain, with hated light, my aching eyes?

Let sable clouds inshroud his shining face,
And murmuring winds re-echo my distress;
Be Nature's beauty with sad glooms o'erspread,
To mourn my *Lucius* number'd with the dead.

Mute is that *tongue* which listening senates charm'd,
Cold is that *breast* which every virtue warm'd.
Drop fast my tears, and mitigate my woe;
Unlock your springs, and never cease to flow:
For worth like his demands this heart-felt grief,
And drops like these can only yield relief.

O! greatly honour'd in the lists of fame!
He dignified the judge's, statesman's name!
How ably he discharg'd each publick trust,
In counsel firm, in executing just,
Can best be utter'd by his country's voice,
Whose approbation justified their choice.*

* That is, their approbation of the manner in which he executed his trust, justified their choice, which raised him to it.

And now their grateful tears shed round his hearth,
A nobler tribute yield, than loftiest verse.

But ah ! lamented shade ! thy private life,
(Thy weeping children, thy afflicted wife
Can testify) was mark'd with every grace
That e'er illumin'd or adorn'd the place
Of *husband, father, brother, master, friend,*
And swell those sorrows now which ne'er shall end.

Can we forget how patiently he bore
The various conflicts of *the trying hour* ;
While *meechness, faith, and piety* refin'd,
And steadfast *hope* rais'd his exalted mind
Above the sufferings of this mortal state,
And help'd his soul in smiles to meet her fate ?
O fatal hour ! severely felt by me—
The last of earthly joy my eyes shall see !
The friend, the lover, every tender name
Torn from my heart, the deepest anguish claim.
Drop fast my tears, and mitigate my woe ;
Unlock your springs, and never cease to flow :
For worth like his demands this heart-felt grief ;
And drops like these can only yield relief.
To me in vain shall chearful spring return,
And tuneful birds salute the purple morn.
Autumn in vain present me all her stores ;
Or summer court me with her fragrant bowers—
Those fragrant bowers were planted by his hand !
And now neglected and unprun'd must stand.

Ye stately elms and lofty cedars mourn !
Slow through your avenues you saw him borne,
The friend who rear'd you, never to return.

Ye muses ! whom he lov'd and cherish'd too,
 Bring from your groves the cypress and the yew,
 Deck, with unfading wreaths, his sacred tomb,
 And scatter roses of immortal bloom.

Goddeſs of ſorrow ! tune each mournful air ;
 Let all things pay the tributary tear ;
*For worth like his demands this heart-felt grief,
 And tears alone can yield a ſad relief.*

Morven, March 9th, 1781.

*A ſudden production of Mrs. Stockton's in one of
 thoſe many anxious nights in which ſhe watch-
 ed with Mr. Stockton in his laſt illneſs.*

I.

SLEEP, balmy ſleep, has clos'd the eyes of all
 But me ! ah me ! no reſpite can I gain ;
 Tho' darkneſs reigns o'er the terreſtrial ball,
 Not one ſoft ſlumber cheats this vital pain.

II.

All day in ſecret ſighs I've pour'd my ſoul,
 My downy pillow, us'd to ſcenes of grief,
 Beholds me now in floods of ſorrow roll,
 Without the power to yield his pains relief :

III.

While through the ſilence of this gloomy night,
 My aching heart reverb'rates every groan ;
 And watching by that glimmering taper's light,
 I make each ſigh, each mortal pang my own.

IV.

IV.

But why should I implore sleep's friendly aid ?
 O'er me her poppies shed no ease impart ;
 But dreams of dear *departing joys* invade,
 And rack with fears my sad prophetick heart.

V.

But vain is prophesy when death's approach,
 Thro' years of pain, has sap'd a *dearer* life,
 And makes me, coward like, myself reproach,
 That e're I knew the tender name of wife.

VI.

Oh! could I take the fate to him assign'd !
 And leave the helpless family their head !
 How pleas'd, how peaceful, to my lot resign'd,
 I'd quit the nurse's station for the bed.

VII.

O death ! thou canker-worm of human joy !
 Thou cruel foe to sweet domestick peace !
 He soon shall come, who shall thy shafts destroy ;
 And cause thy dreadful ravages to cease. •

VIII.

Yes, the Redeemer comes to wipe the tears,
 The briny tears, from every weeping eye.
 And death and sin, and doubts, and gloomy fears,
 Shall all be lost in endless victory.

