

Written In Friars Carse Hermitage: On Nithside

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
 Be thou clad in russet weed,
 Be thou deckt in silken stole,
 Grave these counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
 Sprung from night,-in darkness lost;
 Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
 Fear not clouds will always lour.

As Youth and Love with sprightly dance,
 Beneath thy morning star advance,
 Pleasure with her siren air
 May delude the thoughtless pair;
 Let Prudence bless Enjoyment's cup,
 Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
 Life's meridian flaming nigh,
 Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
 Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
 Check thy climbing step, elate,
 Evils lurk in felon wait:
 Dangers, eagle-pinioned, bold,
 Soar around each cliffy hold!
 While cheerful Peace, with linnet song,
 Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'ning close,
 Beck'ning thee to long repose;
 As life itself becomes disease,
 Seek the chimney-nook of ease;
 There ruminat with sober thought,
 On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought,
 And teach the sportive youngers round,
 Saws of experience, sage and sound:
 Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
 The grand criterion of his fate,
 Is not,-Arth thou high or low?
 Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
 Did many talents gild thy span?
 Or frugal Nature grudge thee one?
 Tell them, and press it on their mind,
 As thou thyself must shortly find,
 The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
 To virtue or to Vice is giv'n,
 Say, to be just, and kind, and wise-
 There solid self-enjoyment lies;
 That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
 Lead to be wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
 To the bed of lasting sleep, -
 Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
 Night, where dawn shall never break,
 Till future life, future no more,
 To light and joy the good restore,
 To light and joy unknown before.
 Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
 Quod the Beadsman of Nithside.