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The Lady of the Manor (Next died the Lady)

George Crabbe

Next died the Lady who yon Hall possessed;
And here they brought her noble bones to rest.
In Town she dwelt:- forsaken stood the Hall:
Worms ate the floors. the tapestry fled the wall.
No fire the kitchens cheerless grate displayed;
No cheerful light the long-closed sash conveyed;
The crawling worm, that turns a summer-fly,
Here spun his shroud and laid him up to die
The winter-death:— upon the bed of sate,
The bat shrill-shrieking wooed his flickering mate;
To empty rooms the curious came no more,
From empty cellars turned the angry poor,
And surly beggars cursed the ever-bolted door.
To one small room the steward found his way,
Where tenants follow'd to complain and pay;
Yet no complaint before the Lady came,
The feeling servant spared the feeble dame;
Who saw her farms with his observing eyes,
And answer'd all requests with his replies:—
She came not down, her falling groves to view;
Why should she know, what one so faithful knew?
Why come, from many clamorous tongues to hear,
What one so just might whisper in her ear?
Her oaks or acres, why with care explore;
Why learn the wants, the sufferings of the poor;
When one so knowing all their worth could trace,
And one so piteous govern'd in her place ?
Lo! now, what dismal Sons of Darkness come,
To bear this Daughter of Indulgence home;
Tragedians all, and well-arranged in black!
Who nature, feeling, force, expression lack;
Who cause no tear, but gloomily pass by,
And shake their sables in the wearied eye,

That turns disgusted from the pompous scene,
Proud without grandeur, with profusion, mean!
The tear for kindness post affection owes;
For worth deceased the sigh from reason flows;
E'en well-feign'd passion for our sorrows call,
And real tears for mimic miseries fall:
But this poor farce has neither truth nor art,
To please the fancy or to touch the heart;
Unlike the darkness of the sky, that pours
On the dry ground its fertilising showers;
Unlike to that which strikes the sould with dread,
When thunders roar and forky fires are shed...



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