

Reply to Lord Byron's "Fare thee Well"

Mary Cockle

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REPLY
TO
LORD BYRON'S
"FARE THEE WELL."

OH stay thy dang'rous pen—nor seek to move,
With the false pleadings of repentant love!
Wake not again the retrospective sigh,
Or the wild tear of trembling agony,
Taught by THY hand in bitterness to flow
From the FULL chalice of *domestic woe!*

Can HE , who spurn'd affection's sacred chains,
Who scorns all laws, and whom no fear restrains;
Who, coldly vicious, whilst the nuptial flow'r
Shed its chaste beauties o'er the *bridal hour* ,
Left its rich graces, blighted and forlorn,
Like Spring's young rose—bud drooping o'er its thorn;
Can HE now plead affection's slighted vow,
And bid—in mock'ry bid—the tear—drop flow
At the soft impulse of a Father's name?
That Father who forsook a Father's claim;
Before his Daughter's tongue had learn'd to form,
With infant innocence, resistless charm,
The lisp'd—out pray'r, that e'en to him had brought
Perchance the blessing of one better thought,
Recall'd the wanderer, all his faults forgiv'n,
And led him back to *peace* —to *hope* —and *heav'n* .
Oh! should she learn, in reason's opening hour,
The dang'rous graces, the misleading pow'r,
Of those perverted gifts, in mercy lent,
Man's noblest boast, or direst punishment;
Then ask with DOUBTING , but with ANXIOUS eye,
Whilst her young bosom heaves the unconscious sigh,
If such there be, whose talents misemploy'd
Have made the early paradise a void;
If such there CAN be, who, like *Thee* possest
Of every power *to bless* , and *to be blest* ,
Threw from his hand the *pearl of matchless price* ,
The sterling ore, and sought the dross of vice;
Ask what the Mother's beating breast must prove,
'Midst all the throbbings of maternal love;
When, with averted cheek and downcast eye,
With fault'ring voice, she shuns the *just* reply,
Lest infant innocence should trembling frame
The unconscious wish to learn to hate thy name.

Ah hapless Mother! rich in every charm,
To win the proudest, or the coldest warm;
And richer still in every mental store,

Reply to Lord Byron's "Fare thee Well"

Of cultur'd science, and of ancient lore;
Though, with unsparing hand, the virtues wove
Their graceful flowers amidst the wreaths of love;
Scarce had they open'd to the morning ray,
In the short influence of a summer-day,
When *he* , who WELL , with BOASTING pride, might own
THIS wreath the fairest that his fame has won,
Threw from his breast, the blushing child of May,
"And cast it, like a loathsome weed, away."

Talk not of sever'd love—of ties disjoin'd—
What ties can fetter, or what laws can bind
The slave of vice—of passions uncontroul'd?—
Proud in his errors—in his wand'rings bold ,—
Bound by no duty —to no feelings just —
Nor *man his friend —nor Providence his trust ;*
Yet blest with gifts, which, in their proper use,
The imperishable laurel would produce—
With *talents* , that in virtue's better way
Had shed around him glory's brightest ray;
With *wit* , that might have lent a charm to sense,
Beyond the Muse's dangerous eloquence;
Warm with the sophist's fire—the sceptic's art,
To *charm* the fancy—but *corrupt the heart* .

Perhaps, when retrospection's painful hour
Marks thy lone wand'rings on some distant shore,
When even pleasure's voice shall cease to charm;
Reflection, pointing to *one* angel form,
In blest communion with her kindred skies,
Whilst soft for thee, her whisper'd prayers arise,
Shall tell thee WHERE , with *supplicating love* ,
She breathes thy pardon here , and asks it from ABOVE .

C.

Newcastle, April 16th .