Ode to Evening.

By Collins, William .

If aught of oaten stop or pastoral song

May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,

Like thy own solemn springs,

Thy springs, and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun

Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,

With brede ethereal wove,

O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat

With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,

Or where the beetle winds

His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,

Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:

Now teach me, maid composed,

To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers stealing through thy dark'ning vale

May not unseemly with its stillness suit,

As, musing slow, I hail

Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows

His paly circlet, at his warning lamp

The fragrant hours, and elves

Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge

And sheds the fresh'ning dew, and lovelier still,

The pensive pleasures sweet

Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,

Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,

Whose walls more awful nod

By thy religious gleams.

Or if chill blust'ring winds or driving rain

Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut

That from the mountain's side

Views wilds and swelling floods

And hamlets brown and dim-discovered spires,

And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all

Thy dewy fingers draw

The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,

And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve;

While Summer loves to sport

Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;

Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,

Affrights thy shrinking train

And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,

Shall fancy, friendship, science, smiling peace,

Thy gentlest influence own,

And love thy favourite name!