

**THE POETICAL WORKS OF
THOMAS GRAY: ENGLISH
AND LATIN, ILLUSTRATED**

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The Poetical Works of Thomas Gray: English and Latin, Illustrated by Thomas Gray

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AND LATIN, ILLUSTRATED**

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
THOMAS GRAY

ENGLISH AND LATIN

Illustrated

THE ETON EDITION



LONDON:
GRIFFIN, BOHN, AND CO
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LIFE OF GRAY.



THOMAS GRAY, the subject of the present narrative, was the fifth child of Mr. Philip Gray, a citizen and money-scrivener of London.* His grandfather was also a merchant in good repute in the same place. The maiden name of his mother was Dorothy Antrobus. Thomas Gray was born in Cornhill, the 26th of December, 1716,

* Gray's father, Mr. Cole tells us, in his MS. Collection, had been an Exchange-broker; but the fortune he had acquired of about £10,000 was greatly hurt by the fire in Cornhill; so that Mr. Gray, many years ago, sunk a good part of what was left, and purchased an annuity, to have a fuller income. He also says that Gray's property amounted at his death to above £7,000. In a copy of Gray's Poems which was Sir James Mackintosh's, and subsequently mine, he had calculated, in a blank leaf, the amount of Gray's property, and made it nearly about the sum above mentioned. "His income," he writes, "about £700 per annum, which (more than forty years ago) was no inconsiderable sum."

and was the only one of twelve children who survived, the rest dying in their infancy; and he owed his life entirely to the tenderness and courage of his mother, who, we are told, removed the paroxysms that attacked him by opening a vein with her own hand. Of the character of his father it is painful to speak: a long and unrestrained indulgence in the violent passions of his temper seems at last to have perverted the natural feelings of his heart, and ended in that malignity of disposition, that made the parent and husband the enemy of his own family. Such was the cruelty of his treatment to his wife, that she sought the advice of an eminent civilian, A.D. 1735, as a protection to her person and fortune: and it appears by the document preserved, among other things, that *she alone provided for every thing for her son while at Eton School and at Peter-House College, without being any charge to her husband; that he daily treated her in the most inhuman manner, threatening to pursue her with all the vengeance possible, and that he will ruin himself, to undo her and his only son; but that she was resolved, if possible, to bear all this, not to leave her shop or trade, for the sake of her son, to be able to assist in the maintenance of him at the University, since his father would not. No wonder that the memory of this admirable woman was ever preserved with the utmost tenderness by Gray.*

Mason says, that he seldom mentioned his mother without a sigh. After his death, her gowns and wearing apparel were found in a trunk in his apartments, just as she had left them. It seemed as if he could never take the resolution to open it, in order to distribute them to his female relatives, to whom by his will he bequeathed them. It was towards the close of his life, in a letter which he wrote to his friend Mr. Nicholls, that we find this feeling still existing in all its force:—"I had written," he says, "to inform you that I had discovered a thing very little known; which is, that in one's whole life, one can never have more than a single mother: you may think this obvious, and what you call a trite observation. You are a green gosling! I was, at the same age, very near as wise as you, and yet I never discovered this, with full evidence and conviction I mean, till it was too late. It is thirteen years ago, and seems but as yesterday; and every day I live, it sinks deeper into my heart."

Gray was educated at Eton, under the protection of Mr. Antrobus, his maternal uncle, who was at the time assistant to Dr. George. Mr. Nicholls once asked Gray, if he recollected when he first perceived in himself any symptoms of poetry. He answered, "He believed it was when at *Eton*: he began to take pleasure in reading Virgil for his own amusement, and not in school hours as a