

**GRAY: POEMS
PUBLISHED IN 1768**

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Gray: Poems Published in 1768 by Arthur F. Bell

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P R E F A C E .

I HAVE sought in the notes to the text of Gray's edition of 1768 here reprinted to avoid the quotation of numerous parallel passages, the discussion of minor questions of interpretation, and the collection of literary details, which would befit a complete edition of his work. Moreover, from Mitford to Tovey this task has been carried on by a race of editors with far greater learning, diligence, and opportunity than I can claim. Gray really does not often need comment to render him intelligible to our day, though his own boggled over his obscurities; and no comment can win for him the love of those readers who fail to care for him without it. I hope, however, I have left no serious difficulty unillustrated by the views of my predecessors, or any other attainable means of elucidation.

In dealing with the text of Gray, the keenest eyes and sharpest brains seem to grow oddly dull

at times, and I fear my very modest qualities and ambitions will not exempt me from a darkness that has often led better men astray. On doubtful points the MSS. have been, however, specially consulted, and I have gratefully to acknowledge the help of Mr. Percy Simpson in this matter, one of several wherein I have had the advantage of his scholarship and courtesy.

I have to thank Professor E. de Sélincourt, the general editor of this series, for much kindly encouragement and helpful criticism; Mr. G. D. Hobson, M.A., for a facsimile of the 'redbreast' verse of the Elegy and for first calling my attention to the variant there given; Mr. R. W. Chapman, M.A., for much patience and advice; and Messrs. George Bell & Sons for permission to quote from their edition of Gray's *Letters*.

ARTHUR F. BELL.

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