

**Classic Poetry Series**

**William Mickle**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

## William Mickle(1735 - 1788)

William Mickle's father was the minister of Langholm, Dumfries-shire. Mickle was educated in Edinburgh.

When he was fifteen he entered the brewery business. His father bought the business and when he passed away Mickle inherited it. His devotion to literature though kept him away from business matters leading him to bankruptcy.

In 1763 he went to London. Two years later he published a poem called The Concubine

He joined the Clarendon Press as a corrector.

Mickle translated The Lusiad of Camoens into couplets. The whole work was published in 1775. His reputation and fame grew with this translation. He was appointed secretary to Commodore Johnstone and visited Lisbon in 1779, where he was feted and the king of Portugal gave a public reception for him

When he returned to London he was employed as an agent responsible for distributing prize money. The amount he received for this along with the earnings from his translations assured him of a comfortable income.

William Julius Mickle died in 1788.

# Cumnor Hall

The dewes of summer nighte did falle,  
The moone (sweete regente of the skye)  
Silver'd the walles of Cumnor Halle,  
And manye an oake that grewe therebye.

Nowe noughte was hearde beneath the skies,  
(The soundes of busye lyfe were stille,)  
Save an unhappie ladie's sighes,  
That issued from that lonelye pile.

"Leicester," shee cried, "is thys thy love  
That thou so oft has sworne to mee  
To leave mee in thys lonelye grove,  
Immurr'd in shameful privitie?"

"No more thou com'st with lover's speede,  
Thy once-beloved bryde to see;  
But bee shee alive, or bee shee deade,  
I feare (sterne earle's) the same to thee.

"Not so the usage I receiv'd,  
When happye in my father's halle;  
No faithlesse husbände then me griev'd,  
No chilling feares did mee appall.

"I rose up with the chearful morne,  
No lark more blith, no flow'r more gaye;  
And, like the birde that hauntes the thorne,  
So merrylye sung the live-long daye.

"If that my beautye is but smalle,  
Among court ladies all despis'd;  
Why didst thou rend it from that halle,  
Where (scorneful earle) it well was priz'de?"

"And when you first to mee made suite,  
How fayre I was you oft would saye!  
And, proude of conquest--pluck'd the fruite,  
Then lefte the blossom to decaye.

"Yes, nowe neglected and despis'd,  
The rose is pale--the lilly's deade--  
But hee that once their charmes so priz'd,  
Is sure the cause those charms are fledde.

"For knowe, when sick'ning grieffe doth preye  
And tender love's repay'd with scorne,  
The sweetest beautye will decaye--  
What flow'ret can endure the storme?

"At court I'm tolde is beauty's throne,  
Where everye lady's passing rare;  
That eastern flow'rs, that shame the sun,  
Are not so glowing, not soe fayre.

"Then, earle, why didst thou leave the bedds  
Where roses and where lillys vie,  
To seek a primrose, whose pale shades  
Must sicken--when those gaudes are bye?

"Mong rural beauties I was one,  
Among the fields wild flow'rs are faire;  
Some countrie swayne might mee have won,  
And thoughte my beautie passing rare.

"But, Leicester, (or I much am wronge)  
Or tis not beautye lures thy vowes;  
Rather ambition's gilded crowne  
Makes thee forget thy humble spouse.

"Then, Leicester, why, again I pleade,  
(The injur'd surelye may repyne,)  
Why didst thou wed a countrie mayde,  
When some fayre princesse might be thyne?

"Why didst thou praise my humble charmes,  
And, oh! then leave them to decaye?  
Why didst thou win me to thy armes,  
Then leave me to mourne the live-long daye?

"The village maidens of the plaine

Salute me lowly as they goe;  
Envious they marke my silken trayne,  
Nor thinke a countesse can have woe.

"The simple nymphs! they little knowe,  
How farre more happy's their estate--  
To smile for joye--than sigh for woe--  
To be contente--than to be greate.

"Howe farre lesse bleste am I than them?  
Dailye to pyne and waste with care!  
Like the poore plante, that from its stem  
Divided--feeles the chilling ayre.

"Nor (cruel ear!) can I enjoye  
The humble charmes of solitude;  
Your minions proude my peace destroye,  
By sullen frownes or pratings rude.

"Laste nyghte, as sad I chanc'd to straye,  
The village deathe-bell smote my eare;  
They wink'd asyde, and seem'd to saye,  
Countesse, prepare--thy end is neare.

"And nowe, while happye peasantes sleepe,  
Here I set lonelye and forlorne;  
No one to soothe mee as I weepe,  
Save phylomel on yonder thorne.

My spirits flag--my hopes decaye--  
Still that dreade deathe-bell smites my eare;  
And many a boding seems to saye,  
Countess, prepare--thy end is neare."

Thus sore and sad that ladie griev'd,  
In Cumnor Halle so lone and dreare;  
And manye a heartefelte sighe shee heav'd  
And let falle manye a bitter teare.

And ere the dawne of daye appear'd,  
In Cumnor Hall so lone and dreare,  
Full manye a piercing screame was hearde,

And manye a crye of mortal feare.

The death-belle thrice was hearde to ring,  
An aërial voyce was hearde to call,  
And thrice the raven flapp'd its wyng  
Arounde the tow'rs of Cumnor Hall.

The mastiffe howl'd at village doore,  
The oaks were shatter'd on the greene;  
Woe was the houre--for never more  
That haplesse countesse e'er was seene.

And in that manor now no more  
Is chearful feaste and sprightly balle;  
For ever since that drearye houre  
Have spirits haunted Cumnor Hall.

The village maides, with fearful glance,  
Avoid the antient mossgrowne walle;  
Nor ever leade the merrye dance,  
Among the groves of Cumnor Halle.

Full manye a travellor oft hath sigh'd,  
And pensive wepte the countess' falle,  
As wand'ring onwards they've espied  
The haunted tow'rs of Cumnor Halle.

William Mickle

# There's Nae Luck About The House

And are ye sure the news is true?  
And are ye sure he's weel?  
Is this a time to think o' wark?  
Mak haste, lay by your wheel;  
Is this the time to spin a thread  
When Colin's at the door?  
Reach me my cloak, I'll to the quay  
And see him come ashore.  
For there's nae luck about the house,  
There's nae luck at a',  
There's little pleasure in the house  
When our gudeman's awa.

And gie to me my bigonet,  
My bishop's satin gown;  
For I maun tell the bailie's wife  
That Colin's come to town.  
My Turkey slippers maun gae on,  
My stockings pearly blue;  
It's a' to pleasure my gudeman,  
For he's baith leel and true.  
For there's nae luck about the house,  
There's nae luck at a',  
There's little pleasure in the house  
When our gudeman's awa.

Rise, lass, and mak a clean fire side,  
Put on the muckle pot,  
Gie little Kate her button gown,  
And Jock his Sunday coat;  
And mak their shoon as black as slaes,  
Their hose as white as snaw,  
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,  
For he's been lang awa.  
For there's nae luck about the house,  
There's nae luck at a',  
There's little pleasure in the house  
When our gudeman's awa.

There's twa fat hens upo' the bauk,  
Been fed this month and mair,  
Mak haste and thraw their necks about,  
That Colin weel may fare;  
And mak the table neat and clean,  
Gar ilka thing look braw,  
For wha can tell how Colin fared  
When he was far awa?  
Ah, there's nae luck about the house,  
There's nae luck at a',  
There's little pleasure in the house  
When our gudeman's awa.

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,  
His breath like cauler air,  
His very foot has music in't  
As he comes up the stair!  
And will I see his face again,  
And will I hear him speak?  
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,  
In troth I'm like to greet.  
For there's nae luck about the house,  
There's nae luck at a',  
There's little pleasure in the house  
When our gudeman's awa.

If Colin's weel, and weel content,  
I hae nae mair to crave--  
And gin I live to keep him sae,  
I'm blest aboon the lave.  
And will I see his face again,  
And will I hear him speak?  
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,  
In troth I'm like to greet.  
For there's nae luck about the house,  
There's nae luck at a',  
There's little pleasure in the house  
When our gudeman's awa.

William Mickle