

THE TRAGEDY OF THE DESERTED VILLAGE

By

Oliver Goldsmith.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DESERTED VILLAGE HERE
APPLIES WITH EQUAL FORCE TO IRISH, HIGH-
LAND SCOTCH OR ACADIAN EVICTIONS.

I'll fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes or lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them as a breath has made
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride
When once destroyed can never be supplied.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all the green;
One only master grasps the whole domain
And half a tillage stints the smiling plain;

No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way
Along thy glades a solitary guest,
The hollow sounding bittern guards its nest.

Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies
And tires their echoes with unweari'd cries,
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all
And the long grass, o'ertops the mould'ring wall;
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away, thy children leave the land.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began
When every rood of ground maintained its man,
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required but gave no more;
His best companions innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.