



"THE PLOUGHMAN HOMEWARD PLODS HIS WEARY WAY."

1873—DECEMBER—31 days.

THE MOON'S CHANGES.		Sec Rises & Sets.	Moon Rises & Sets.	☾
Full Moon, 4th, 4:59 pm.	New Moon, 15th, 6:49 ev.			
Leas Quar. 11th, 9:41 a.m.	First Quar. 25th, 4:5 a.m.			
1 M	Ebenezer Elliott (the "Corn-Law Rhymist," died, 1848.	7 46r	11	
2 Tu	Louis Napoleon declared Emperor of France, 1852.—Abdicated, 1870.	3 53e	12	
3 W	Battle of Hohenlinden, and defeat of the Austrians by the French, 1800.	7 48r	6 45 13	
4 Th	Latham House surrendered, 1645.—In the year previous it had been heroically defended for three months by Charlotte, Countess of Derby.	3 52e	⊙	
5 F	The first admiral of the United States (Farragut) was nominated in 1863.	7 51r	4 57 15	
6 S		3 50e	5 36 16	
7 S	2nd Sunday in Advent.	7 54r	6 44 17	
8 M	Richard Baxter died, 1691.	3 50e	7 57 18	
9 Tu	"I preached as never sure to preach again, And as a dying man to dying men."	7 56r	9 12 19	
10 W		3 49e	10 24 20	
11 Th	James II. abdicated by flight, 1688. (He died in exile at St. German's, 1701.)	7 59r	11 34 21	
12 F	Sir Mark Isambard Brunel (engineer of the Thames Tunnel) died, 1849.	3 40e	After Mid- night 22	
13 S	Dr. Johnson, the "Leviathan of Literature," died, 1784.	8 0r	A.M. 23	
14 S	3rd Sunday in Advent.	3 49e	1 50 24	
15 M	13th.—James V. of Scotland died, 1542.—His dying words were, "It came with a loss, and it will go with me," alluding to the intelligence brought to him that his wife was delivered of a daughter, the heiress of the crown, and to the fact of the crown having come into his family by the daughter of King Robert Bruce.	8 1r	3 3 25	
16 Tu	In the year 1829, a soldier was flogged to death at York.	3 50e	4 17 26	
17 W	The obnoxious stamp-duty on almanacs was abolished in 1834.	8 3r	5 35 27	
18 Th		3 50e	6 53 28	
19 F		8 4r	8 11 29	
20 S		3 51e	Sets F. 1 30	
21 S	4th Sunday in Advent.	8 5r	5 14 2	
22 M	There died at Eastwell, in 1850, a poor working man, named Richard Plantagenet, who was believed to be a son of Richard III., killed at the battle of Bosworth Field.	3 52e	6 38 3	
23 Tu	Hugh Miller (geologist) died, 1856.	8 6r	8 5 4	
24 W		3 53e	9 33 5	
25 Th	CHRISTMAS DAY.	8 7r	10 59 6	
26 F	"I love to see this day well kept by rich and poor."—WASHINGTON IRVING.	3 54e	After Mid- night 7	
27 S	Gray (poet) born, 1716.	8 7r	A.M. 8	
28 S	1st Sunday after Christmas.	3 56e	1 44 9	
29 M	Rev. T. R. Malthus (political economist) died at Bath, 1834.	8 8r	3 8 10	
30 Tu	"Day brings day; month, month; and year the year."—THOMSON.	3 58e	4 34 11	
31 W		8 8r	5 57 12	

NOTES TO THE ABOVE ILLUSTRATION.

THOMAS GRAY, an eminent English poet, was the son of a scrivener in London, and was born in the year 1716. His mother, to whom he was indebted for that education which elicited his brilliant talents, seemed to have been a woman of most amiable character, and whose energy supplied to the child that deficiency which the improvidence of his father—a man of hard and violent disposition—would have occasioned. Gray was sent to Eton, his maternal uncle being a teacher there; and his intimacy with Horace Walpole, whose friendship was so valuable to him in after life, commenced at Eton.

In the year 1743 Gray was sent to the university of Cambridge, where he addressed himself with great assiduity to languages and poetry, acquiring a favourable reputation as a classical scholar, but neglecting mathematics and philosophy, which he particularly detested. At Cambridge Gray was considered by his fellow collegians as unduly fastidious, and amongst other peculiarities he was remarkably fearful of fire, and always kept a ladder of ropes in his bed room. Some mischievous brother collegians knew this, and in the middle of a dark night roused him with the cry of "Fire! Fire!"—the staircase, they said, was in flames. Up went the window, and Gray hastened down his rope-ladder, as quick as possible, into a tub of water which had been placed at the bottom to receive him! The joke, it is said, cured Gray of his fears, but he would not forgive it, and immediately changed his college. Leaving the university in 1748, without taking a degree in arts, he returned to London, and entered the Inner Temple with the view of studying for the bar; it did not, however, accord with his tastes, and the next year he escaped from it by accepting an invitation from Walpole to accompany him in a tour of Europe. They travelled together in France and Italy during two years; but a misunderstanding between them brought Gray back to London in 1741. In the following year he took the degree of B.C.L., and settled himself permanently at Cambridge, leaving it only to make occasional tours in Scotland, Wales, or Westmoreland. His "Letters," describing these excursions, are remarkable for elegance and precision, for correct and extensive observation, and for a dry scholastic humour peculiar to the poet. It was now that Walpole sought to revive their early friendship—a wish which was cordially responded to by Gray, who maintained the friendly intercourse during his life. Gray's energies henceforth were devoted entirely to literature; and his leisure was carried to maturity few of the literary schemes which he admirably commenced, his "Letters," published after his death, amply prove his poetical activity. It was not until 1747 that his "Ode to Eton College" was first printed; and the publication of the "Elegy, written in a country Church-yard," in 1751, would probably have been delayed much longer, but for the previous issue of a surreptitious

* Gray's epitaph on his mother bears mournful witness to the love he bore her, and testifies to the remembrance of her kindness. It is as follows:—
"Dorothy Gray, widow, the careful, tender mother of many children, one of whom had the misfortune to survive her."

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