

1631

**AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS
OF WINCHESTER**

John Milton

Milton, John (1608-1674) - English poet and prose writer who is one of the most highly regarded figures in world literature and is widely considered the greatest poet since Shakespeare. Often called the "Puritan Poet," he had many of the good traits of the Puritans as well as many of the bad and spent much of his life immersed in political and religious controversy. An Epitaph on Marchioness of Winchester (1631) - One of Milton's early minor poems. This is one of many works Milton wrote while he was at Cambridge.

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER

An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester

This rich Marble doth enterr
 The honour'd Wife of Winchester,
 A Vicounts daughter, an Earls heir,
 Besides what her vertues fair
 Added to her noble birth,
 More then she could own from Earth.
 Summers three times eight save one
 She had told, alas too soon,
 After so short time of breath,
 To house with darknes, and with death.
 Yet had the number of her days
 Bin as compleat as was her praise,
 Nature and fate had had no strife
 In giving limit to her life.
 Her high birth, and her graces sweet,
 Quickly found a lover meet;
 The Virgin quire for her request
 The God that sits at marriage feast;
 He at their invoking came
 But with a scarce-wel-lighted flame;
 And in his Garland as he stood,
 Ye might discern a Cipress bud.
 Once had the early Matrons run
 To greet her of a lovely son,
 And now with second hope she goes,
 And calls Lucina to her throws;
 But whether by mischance or blame
 Atropos for Lucina came;
 And with remorsles cruelty,
 Spoil'd at once both fruit and tree:
 The haples Babe before his birth
 Had burial, yet not laid in earth,
 And the languisht Mothers Womb
 Was not long a living Tomb.
 So have I seen som tender slip
 Sav'd with care from Winters nip,
 The pride of her carnation train,
 Pluck't up by som unheedy swain,
 Who onely thought to crop the flowr

New shot up from vernall showr;
 But the fair blossom hangs the head
 Side-ways as on a dying bed,
 And those Pearls of dew she wears,
 Prove to be presaging tears
 Which the sad morn had let fall
 On her hast'ning funerall.
 Gentle Lady may thy grave
 Peace and quiet ever have;
 After this thy travail sore
 Sweet rest sease thee evermore,
 That to give the world encrease,
 Shortned hast thy own lives lease;
 Here besides the sorrowing
 That thy noble House doth bring,
 Here be tears of perfect moan
 Weept for thee in Helicon,
 And som Flowers, and som Bays,
 For thy Hears to strew the ways,
 Sent thee from the banks of Came,
 Devoted to thy vertuous name;
 Whilst thou bright Saint high sit'st in glory,
 Next her much like to thee in story,
 That fair Syrian Shepherdess,
 Who after yeers of barrenes,
 The highly favour'd Joseph bore
 To him that serv'd for her before,
 And at her next birth much like thee,
 Through pangs fled to felicity,
 Far within the boosom bright
 Of blazing Majesty and Light,
 There with thee, new welcom Saint,
 Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
 With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
 No Marchioness, but now a Queen.

THE END