

Various Poems

Epitaphs

Verses upon the Stanley Tomb at Tong Written upon the east end of the tomb

- Ask who lies here, but do not weep.
He is not dead; he doth but sleep.
This stony register is for his bones;
His fame is more perpetual than these stones,
5 And his own goodness, with himself being gone,
Shall live when earthly monument is none.

Written upon the West end thereof

- Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
Nor sky-aspiring pyramids our name.
The memory of him for whom this stands
Shall outlive marble and defacers' hands.
5 When all to time's consumption shall be given,
Stanley for whom this stands shall stand in heaven.

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On Ben Jonson

Master Ben Jonson and Master William Shakespeare being
merry at a tavern, Master Jonson having begun this for
his epitaph:

Here lies Ben Jonson
That was once one,
he gives it to Master Shakespeare to make up who
presently writes:
Who while he lived was a slow thing,
And now, being dead, is nothing.

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An Epitaph on Elias James

When God was pleased, the world unwilling yet,
Elias James to nature paid his debt,
And here repositeth. As he lived, he died,
The saying strongly in him verified:
5 `Such life, such death'. Then, a known truth to tell,
He lived a godly life, and died as well.

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An extemporary epitaph on John Combe, a noted usurer

Ten in the hundred here lies engraved;
A hundred to ten his soul is not saved.
If anyone ask who lies in this tomb,
`O ho!' quoth the devil, `tis my John-a-Combe.'

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Another Epitaph on John Combe

He being dead, and making the poor his heirs,
William Shakespeare after writes this for his epitaph:

Howe'er he live Ad judge not,
John Combe shall never be forgot
While poor hath memory, for he did gather
To make the poor his issue; he, their father,
5 As record of his tilth and seed
Did crown him in his latter deed.

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Upon the King

At the foot of the effigy of King James I, before his *Works* (1616)

Crowns have their compass; length of days, their date;
Triumphs, their tombs; felicity, her fate.
Of more than earth can earth make none partaker,
But knowledge makes the king most like his maker.

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Epitaph on Himself

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust encloseÁd here.
Blessed be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones.