

FRIENDS BEYOND

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plough,
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, lie in Mellstock churchyard now!

"Gone," I call them, gone for good, that group of local hearts and
heads;

Yet at mothy curfew-tide,
And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes it back from walls and
leads,

They've a way of whispering to me--fellow-wight who yet abide -

In the muted, measured note
Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's stillicide:

"We have triumphed: this achievement turns the bane to antidote,
Unsuccesses to success,
- Many thought-worn eyes and morrows to a morrow free of thought.

"No more need we corn and clothing, feel of old terrestrial stress;
Chill detraction stirs no sigh;
Fear of death has even bygone us: death gave all that we possess."

W. D.--"Ye mid burn the wold bass-viol that I set such vallie by."

Squire.--"You may hold the manse in fee,

You may wed my spouse, my children's memory of me may decry."

Lady.--"You may have my rich brocades, my laces; take each household key;

Ransack coffer, desk, bureau;

Quiz the few poor treasures hid there, con the letters kept by me."

Far.--"Ye mid zell my favourite heifer, ye mid let the charlock grow,

Foul the grinterns, give up thrift."

Wife.--"If ye break my best blue china, children, I shan't care or ho."

All. --"We've no wish to hear the tidings, how the people's fortunes shift;

What your daily doings are;

Who are wedded, born, divided; if your lives beat slow or swift.

"Curious not the least are we if our intents you make or mar,

If you quire to our old tune,

If the City stage still passes, if the weirs still roar afar."

- Thus, with very gods' composure, freed those crosses late and soon

Which, in life, the Trine allow

(Why, none witteth), and ignoring all that haps beneath the moon,

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plough,
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, murmur mildly to me now.