

## LINES ON THE ANCIENT YEW IN DARLEY CHURCH YARD

Thou art an interesting tree,  
The fact's beyond dispute,  
Thy monster trunk and giant bows  
And intersecting roots,  
Rearing in solemn grandeur,  
Thy patriarchal head,  
Reigning in midnight dimness,  
O'er the regions of the dead.  
Beneath thy shade my fancy paints,  
The seed that gave thee birth,  
Or the hand that laid thy stem,  
Within its mother earth,  
That seed it died to give thee life,  
And upward bid thee soar,  
The hand was paralyzed in death,  
In the past days of yore.  
Thou lived when tyrant monarch's,  
Held their despotic sway,  
And Cromwell led his army,  
In battle's fierce array.  
When feudal Lords their banquets spread,  
With revelry and mirth,  
And peasantry in olden times,  
A milder name for serfs.  
When civil war spread o'er the land,  
And left its prints in blood,  
And heaps of ruin marked the sight,  
Where once proud castle's stood.  
But civil war has hushed its din,  
Along our peaceful shore,  
Despotic monarch's ceased to rule,  
And Cromwell is no more.  
Yet why hast thou so long been spared,  
To grace this hallowed spot,  
And lightning's flash and tempest's rage,  
Have seemed to harm thee not.  
While many strong and noble trees,  
The Ash, the Elm, the Oak,  
With stern reluctance have succumbed,  
Beneath the woodman's stroke.  
Was it thy position,  
That fenced thy stem around,  
Or that thy roots were firmly laid,  
In consecrated ground.  
Or is it o'er this sacred dust,  
Thou hast a charge to keep,  
And o'er the sleeping forms of men,  
Thy mute like Virgil keep.  
Around thy base with solemn awe,  
And measured steps I tread,  
And fear to desecrate these mounds,  
Where lie the sleeping heads,  
Of Darley's noble care-worn sons,  
Who live their little day  
They paid the debt of nature,  
And calmly passed away.  
Beneath thy sombre shadows,  
And prostrate at they feet,  
The young, the old, the rich, the poor.  
The friend, the foe all meet.  
The servant with the master lies,  
The mistress with the maid,  
The worm alike must feed on all,  
Beneath thy silent shade.



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Undated postcard

Destroying time's relentless hand,  
Hath marked thee for its prey,  
Those iron cramps that span thy bows,  
Are tokens of decay.  
And though for centuries thou has lived,  
And mocked life's fleeting day,  
This sleeping dust shall rise and live,  
When thou art passed away.  
Old unassuming Darley,  
How tranquil are thy scenes,  
Thou can'st not boast of rocks and hills,  
But meadows fresh and green.  
I love to seek thy calm retreat,  
From worldly cares set free,  
To walk amongst thy sleeping dead,  
And view thy ancient tree.

Mr Samuel Barker  
Masson Farm, Matlock Bath



1907 postcard



Tim Hills 1999