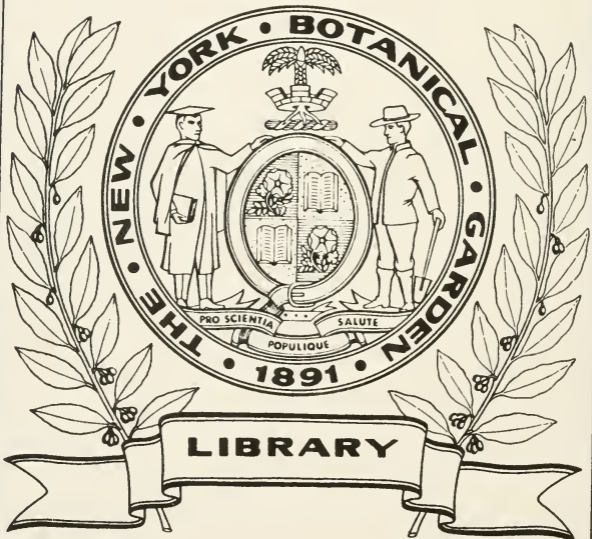




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THE
FABLES
OF
FLORA,

BY

Dr. LANGHORNE.

Elizabeth deane. W^{ms} Low.

..... Sylvas, saltusque sequamur
Intactos. VIRGIN.

To which is prefixed

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

By F. BLAGDON, Esq.

—◆—
LONDON:

PRINTED FOR B. CROSBY AND CO.
STATIONERS' COURT, PATERNOSTER ROW,
BY J. SWAN, 76, FLEET STREET.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the following Poems, the plan of Fable is somewhat enlarged, and the province so far extended, that the original NARRATIVE and MORAL may be accompanied with imagery, description, and sentiment. The scenery is formed in a department of Nature adapted to the genius and disposition of POETRY; where she finds new objects, interests, and connexions, to exercise her fancy and her powers. If the execution, therefore, be unsuccessful, it is not the fault of the Plan, but of the Poet.

MAY 16 1973



LIFE

OF

DR. LANGHORNE.

OF all classes of literature, it is generally admitted, that none is more pleasing to writers, or more interesting to readers of taste, than biographical accounts of characters who have been eminent for their learning or their talents. Indeed, this sort of knowledge has ever been sought after with avidity, for it is to the biography of departed eminence, when composed with characteristic truth, that posterity must refer for examples of every quality and action that is praiseworthy, great, and glorious. But, of all others, the lives of poets have ever proved particularly entertaining; because, as Horace justly observes, they are born, but not made. "*Poeta nascitur, non fit;*" and because, in all ages, they have from the greatest to those of the most meagre pretensions, generally experienced the utmost extremes of good and evil, the most extraordinary vicissitudes and shades of calamity.

Gibbon has observed, that "the nobility of the Spencers has been illustrated and enriched by the trophies of a Marlborough, but that the *Fairy Queen* is the most precious jewel in their coronet;" by which he evidently means, that titles receive additional lustre, when those to whom they descend, or are given, possess poetical qualifications. It therefore follows, that these qualifications, when united with piety and genius, are holden by the world in such deservedly high estimation, that no earthly recompense can reflect on them additional grandeur.

But the labours of the necrologist, though excessive, are, when weighed in the scale of impartiality and justice, generally found

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deficient. They are often executed from mercenary motives, by men, "who write to share the fame of the deceased;" by near relatives, from whom an exposure of the faults of their object cannot be expected, and whose pictures are all lucid and brilliant, without those touches of shade which afford a proper contrast to a mass of splendour. On the other hand, if the life of a man of eminence be written by a stranger, who is emulous to acquire for his own productions that portion of applause to which all who write aspire, we are led to expect that his biography will be tinged with a degree of envious asperity:—we have seen, that the immortal Pope could not refrain from envying, and even persecuting, those who aspired to the favour of the Muses*; and we have no reason to assert, notwithstanding our boasted progress in illumination and theophily, that the present is more liberal than preceding ages. The most material imperfection, however, in lives of deceased characters, composed by persons unconnected with their families, is a want of proper and authentic materials, from which alone an imperishable wreath should be formed, for the tombs of those whose characters and abilities entitle them to our attentive consideration. Such was the case with respect to Dr. JOHN LANGHORNE; for, though many attempts have been made to write his biography, they have all, in a great degree, failed, by omitting very interesting incidents in his mortal career. Indeed, the materials of the writers were so scanty and unconnected, that the public have, till very lately, been unacquainted even with his ancestors, his birth, and his education.

But, at length, these deficiencies have been supplied in a brief, though interesting, account, written by his son, the Rev. J. T. LANGHORNE, vicar of Harmondsworth and Drayton, Middlesex; and we now learn, that our author's father was the Rev. JOSEPH LANGHORNE, who held a living in Lincolnshire, but who died at an early age, leaving a widow and four children, of which the doctor was the youngest.

* Vide a very interesting and uncommonly cheap volume, entitled a "Dictionary of Celebrated Women, by Matilda Betham," articles THOMAS.

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He was born at Kirkby-Stephen, Westmorland, in March, 1735, and was only four years old at the death of his father, when his mother, being in circumstances far from affluent, gave him the first rudiments of education, which he afterwards completed at Appleby. His progress in classical learning is a striking instance, to the many on record, of what is to be effected by perseverance and a desire for study; he having been able, at the early age of thirteen, to read and construe the Greek Testament.

At the age of eighteen, having acquired a perfect knowledge of ancient literature, and his circumstances being inadequate to his expectations, he engaged himself as a private tutor in a family near Ripon, where he wrote "Studley Park, an Elegy written amongst the Ruins of Pontefract Castle, and an Ode to the River Eden," all of which being considered by their author as nothing more than juvenile efforts, were despised by him, though they really possess a considerable portion of merit. Studley Park was written in praise of a beautiful spot, and perhaps with a hope of finding a patron in its possessor, in which, however, having failed, he did not retain the poem in his collection; but it is now before the public, and by no means diminishes the reputation he has gained.

He afterwards became an assistant at the free-school in Wakefield, where he soon acquired deacon's orders, and gained much popularity as a preacher. In 1759, he was engaged as a preceptor to the sons of R. Cracroft, Esq. of Hackthorn, Lincolnshire, and here he soon gave a proof of the liberality of his heart, by publishing a volume of poems for the benefit of a reduced gentleman in distress. In the preface to this volume he feelingly observes, "If any one, into whose hands this work shall fall, should be dissatisfied with his purchase, let him remember that it is published for the relief of a gentleman in distress; and that he has not thrown away five shillings in the purchase of a worthless book, but contributed so much to the assistance of indigent merit. I had rather have my readers feel that pleasure which arises from the sense of having done one

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virtuous deed, than all they can enjoy from the works of poetry and wit."

Having a desire to take the degree of bachelor of divinity, he entered himself, in 1760, at Clare Hall, where he wrote the poems on the accession and marriage of his present majesty, which are now published in the tale of "Solyman and Almena."

As, by the statutes of the university of Cambridge, a person may take his degrees without being compelled to become a resident, Mr. Langhorne was enabled to continue in the family of Mr. Crant, where, from a congeniality of sentiment, an attachment of the most tender nature originated between him and Miss Ann, the second daughter of that gentleman. This young lady was very accomplished, and, by her love for study, formed a striking contrast to the generality of modern females. She devoted much attention to the cultivation of the elegant arts, and, under the tuition of Mr. Langhorne, she became proficient in the Italian language. It also appears, that she peculiarly excelled in that delightful, that heavenly science, which

" ————— can soften steel and stone,
Make tigers tame, and huge leviathans
Forsake unsounded deeps and dance on sands."

And this being her favourite study, our readers will readily conceive the impression it must have made on a heart of far less sensibility than that of Mr. Langhorne; for justly has it been observed, that

"The man who hath no music in his soul,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

The situation, however, in which this gentleman was placed can only be conceived, to its full extent, by those who have been in a similar predicament. Such can form a just idea of the feelings of our author, who, although possessed of all the facility of eloquence and gentlemanly manners which result from a liberal education and a mind of sensibility, although he found his heart overflowing with the sub-

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limest sensation, yet it was long ere he could acquire sufficient resolution to make a declaration of his passion to her, who was the favourite daughter of his opulent employer. At length, however, he made known his feelings, and the result was a strong, though secret, attachment on the part of his pupil, who, from prudential motives and an apprehension, probably well founded, that the great disproportion of their circumstances would preclude the consent of her family to such a union, at first gave a direct refusal to his solicitations. Mr. Langhorne, however, by addressing to her some odes, elegies, and amatory expostulations, happily kept up the flame which he had elicited, and she remained

“Constant as courage to the brave in battle,
Constant as martyrs burning for their gods.”

But the disappointment which he had experienced rendering his situation at Hackthorn insupportable, he, in 1761, removed to Dagenham, in Essex, where he officiated as a curate, and though, like most men of talents and genius, he was obliged to depend on his exertions for support, yet he devoted a considerable portion of time to cultivate the friendship of the Muses, who had already adopted him as their favoured pupil. In 1759, he wrote the “Death of Adonis, a Pastoral Elegy, from Bion*,” which, I think, though I have never observed it particularly noticed in any criticism on his works, is one of the most charming of his poetical compositions. For instance, what can be prettier than the frantic address of Venus to the already dead Adonis.

“Yet stay, lov'd youth, a moment, ere we part,
Oh, let me kiss thee, hold thee to my heart!
A little moment, dear Adonis, stay
And kiss thy Venus, ere those lips are clay.”

* It was my intention to contrast some passages of this Elegy with extracts from a very elegant prose translation of Bion, by Edward du Bois, Esq. published in 1799, but the limits in which this memoir must be confined frustrates my inclination.

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Let those dear lips by mine once more be prest,
Till thy last breath expire into my breast;
Then, when life's ebbing pulse scarce, scarce can move,
I'll catch thy soul, and drink thy dying love;
That last-left pledge shall sooth my tortur'd breast, &c."

The "Tears of Music," in memory of Handel, he wrote in 1760; the "Hymn to Hope," in 1761; and the "Viceroy and Visions of Fancy," in 1762. It appears, that Lord Halifax, the lord lieutenant of Ireland, to whom the "Viceroy" was addressed, did not even thank the author for the compliment.

In the "Visions of Fancy," which is one of his most celebrated pieces, we perceive the state of his mind at that period; a state of love almost subdued by despair, yet relying for relief on hope. These elegies, particularly the first and third, are extremely elegant and harmonious:

In the same year he composed his "Letters on Religious Retirement, Melancholy, and Enthusiasm;" and "Solyman and Almena;" and having dedicated the former to Bishop Warburton, he soon gained the attention of that prelate. It was in consequence of the notice he received from him, that he wrote the "Letters supposed to have passed between Theodosius and Constantia," which are highly esteemed for the purity of their style and elegance of their doctrine.

Having, in the year 1764, obtained the appointment of curate and lecturer of St. John's, Clerkenwell, he removed to the metropolis, and shortly afterwards published two volumes of "Sermons," which, however, had enemies as well as admirers. The "Tracts on Religious Philosophy" are likewise sound, elegant, and useful discourses, which strongly exhibit the pleasures arising from the practice of virtue, exclusive of the interposition of Divine will.

About this period he formed a connection with the proprietor of the Monthly Review, which continued, with little intermission, till his decease; and those who can form an idea of the duties of such an engagement, when they are discharged with independence, will conceive that the doctor must have acquired by it many friends,

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and not a few enemies. Amongst the latter was Hugh Kelly, who published a poem which contained a very illiberal invective against him; particularly the accusation of damning, in the Review, all works of excellence, and praising his own. It is proper, however, that the public should know (and I have been assured of the fact on undisputed authority) that, in all the established Reviews, no author is suffered to write an account of his own work. On the contrary, if he furnish sketches, or hints, of his own publication, they are rigidly examined, and corrected by the editor with the strictest impartiality. But to return to the subject of our memoir: in the year 1765, he was appointed by Dr. Hurd, the present bishop of Worcester, assistant preacher at Lincoln's Inn; and, in the same year, he published his "Letters on the Eloquence of the Pulpit." They were followed by a poem in favour of the Scotch, called "Genius and Valour," which, by opposing the "Prophecy of Famine" of Churchill, drew upon him the enmity of that satyrist; the attack, however, did not deprive him of any portion of his credit. On the contrary, he was rewarded, in 1766, by the university of Edinburgh, with the degree of doctor in divinity.

At length, in 1767, the doctor was united to Miss Ann Cracroft, with whom, for five years, he had kept up an incessant correspondence; and the letters were, after her decease, and by her particular request, published under the title of "Letters to Eleonora."

Soon after his marriage a living was purchased at Blagdon, Somersetshire, to which the doctor retired with his beloved companion. But his happiness was of short duration; for, at the end of eighteen months, Mrs. Langhorne, in the most awful trial to which a female is exposed, forfeited her existence, leaving an infant son, now the Rev. J. T. Langhorne, already mentioned.

The impression which the loss of such an accomplished partner made upon the mind of the doctor was extreme; and in order to bury the recollection of past felicity, he retired to Folkstone, and resided with his elder brother, the Rev. W. Langhorne: here he

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published his poem, entitled "The Enlargement of the Mind," which is in praise of paternal affection.

It was in this retirement that he succeeded, with the assistance of his brother, in making a complete translation of the "Lives of Plutarch;" an undertaking evidently executed with consummate ability, and which will render any other translation superfluous. He employed the first years of his widowhood in lamentations for the loss of his accomplished lady, by composing some interesting verses written at Sandgate Castle: he also wrote some beautiful stanzas to the late Mr. Scott, of Amwell, who had experienced a similar domestic misfortune; and this brought on an intimacy between the two gentlemen, which continued during their lives.

About this time he published the "Letters supposed to have passed between St. Evremond and Waller;" and "Frederic and Pharamond;" while, in the same year, 1771, he completely established his reputation as a poet, by the publication of those charming "Fables" which form the subject of the present volume. The plan of the fable, according to the just explanation given by the author himself, "is here enlarged, and the province so far extended, that the original narrative and moral may be accompanied with imagery, description, and sentiment. The scenery is formed in a department of nature, adapted to the genius and disposition of poetry, where she finds new objects, interests, and connections to exercise her fancy and her powers." In addition to this statement, all readers of taste will concur in the justice of the following remarks by Mr. Langhorne, junior: "The rural imagery on which the fables are grounded, had not been before adapted to that species of poetry; and the moral is so naturally interwoven with the narrative, that its effect is more forcible and more pleasing than when unconnected with the relation. Impersonation may certainly be applied, with as much reason, to the vegetable as to the animal creation, if the characteristic attributes of each plant or flower are faithfully marked, and the unity of the fable is maintained. The

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beautiful fields of vegetative nature afford an ample range for the poet and the moralist; and since every avenue which leads to knowledge, and unlocks the sources of moral truth, requires to be disclosed, the mode of conveying instruction, by allegorising the scenery of nature, must be considered as an acquisition to literature; not only as it extends the province of the poetic genius, but as tending to inspire just and rational sentiments of virtue."

His poem, entitled "The Origin of the Veil," was also written in 1771, while he was on a visit at Potton, in Bedfordshire; and returning, in 1772, to his native county, he married the daughter of ——— Thompson, Esq. a magistrate, who resided near Brough. With her he made a short tour through part of France, and, on his return, he retired to his parsonage at Blagdon, where he passed the remainder of his days.

In 1773, he was put in the commission of the peace, and at the importunity of his friend and coadjutor, Dr. Burn, he wrote the "Country Justice," a poem, in three parts. He also translated, from the Italian, "A Historical Dissertation on the ancient Republics of Italy."

It is a very remarkable circumstance in the life of this author, that, in less than four years after his marriage, his second wife experienced the same fate as his first:

" 'Tis thus that Heaven its empire does maintain,
It may afflict, but man may not complain."

She left him a daughter, whom, by will, he confided to the care of Mrs. Gillman, a lady whose friendship he had gained by some poetical compliments.

By his interest with the Bouverie family, he was, in 1777, presented to a prebend in the cathedral of Wells, and would have experienced the highest dignities in his profession, if, in the death of Mr. York, for whom the seals were intended, the doctor had not lost a patron from whom he had received the strongest professions of friendship. But

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“ Fortune that with malicious joy,
Does man, her slave, oppress ;
Proud of her office to destroy,
Is seldom pleased to bless ;”

and though it might be expected that the doctor's fortitude would have been proof against such adventitious reverses, yet he never wholly recovered this disappointment, but sunk into a decline, which lasted three years, and terminated his existence on the 1st of April, 1779, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

During his illness, however, he wrote “Owen of Carron,” which is considered as one of his most finished poetical pieces. It is extremely pathetic, and, from its distressing catastrophe, proves uncommonly interesting.

The different productions of Dr. Langhorne have been critically examined by Dr. Anderson, whose liberal and candid remarks do honour to his erudition and discernment. In short, the rank of the doctor, as a writer, may be accurately estimated from the following paragraph.

“As a poet, his compositions are distinguished by undoubted marks of genius; a fine imagination, and a sensible heart. Imagery and enthusiasm, the great essentials of poetry, inspire all his works, and place them far above the strain of vulgar compositions. The tenderness of love and the soft language of complaint were adapted to his genius, as well as elevation of thought, opulence of imagery, and the highest beauties of poetry. But the qualities for which he is chiefly distinguished, are imagination, pathos, and simplicity, animated sentiment, pertinence of allusion, warmth and vivacity of expression, and a melodious versification. His sentimental productions are exquisitely tender and beautiful; his descriptive compositions show a feeling heart and a warm imagination; and his lyric pieces are pregnant with the genuine spirit of poetical enthusiasm: but his style, in the midst of much splendor and strength, is sometimes harsh and obscure, and may be censured as

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deficient in ease and distinctness. His chief faults are redundant decoration, and an affectation of false and unnecessary ornament. He is not always contented with that concise and simple language which is sufficient to express his sentiments, but is tempted to indulge in superfluous diction, by the fascinating charms of novelty and harmony. By giving way to the luxury of words, and immoderate embellishment, he sometimes, though rarely, violates simplicity, and becomes unavoidably inaccurate and redundant. His sentiments, however, are always just, often new, and generally striking. A great degree of elegance and classical simplicity runs through all his compositions; and his descriptions of nature, rural imagery, pictures of private virtue, and pastoral innocence, have a judicious selection of circumstances, a graceful plainness of expression, and a happy mixture of pathos and sentiment, which mark the superior poet.

“As an author, he is more esteemed for his poetic than his prosaic productions, though candour must admit the latter possess such a degree of fancy, sentiment, and erudition, as entitles them to a more general approbation than they have hitherto received; for, of the numerous prose works he wrote, none have been in great request since his death, except ‘Solyman and Almena, Theodosius and Constantia, and Plutarch’s Lives,’ which have gone through several editions.”

He wrote a dramatic piece, in 1765, entitled “The Fatal Prophecy;” but in this he was less successful than in any of his other productions. Indeed, it does not appear to be calculated for representation.

The private character of Dr. Langhorne, in the several departments of life, was such as to entitle his memory to that respect which society in general must ever retain for an affectionate parent, a disinterested friend, and a benevolent man.





FABLE I.

THE SUN-FLOWER AND THE IVY.

As duteous to the place of prayer
Within the convent's lonely walls,
The holy sisters still repair,
What time the rosy morning calls:

So fair, each morn, so full of grace,
 Within their little garden reared,
The flower of PHŒBUS turned her face
 To meet the POWER she loved and feared.

And where, along the rising sky,
 Her God in brighter glory burned,
Still there her fond observant eye,
 And there her golden breast she turned.

When calling from their weary height
 On western waves his beams to rest,
Still there she sought the parting sight,
 And there she turned her golden breast.

But soon as night's invidious shade
 Afar his lovely looks had borne,
With folded leaves and drooping head,
 Full sore she grieved, as one forlorn.

Such duty in a flower displayed
The holy sisters smiled to see,
Forgave the Pagan rites it paid,
And loved its fond idolatry.

But painful still, though meant for kind,
The praise that falls on Envy's ear!
O'er the dim window's arch intertwined,
The canker'd IVY chanced to hear.

And "See," she cried, "that specious flower,
" Whose flattering bosom courts the sun,
" The pageant of a gilded hour,
" The convent's simple hearts hath won!

" Obsequious meanness! ever prone
" To watch the patron's turning eye;
" No will, no motion of its own!
" 'Tis this they love, for this they sigh:

- “ Go, splendid sycophant! no more
“ Display thy soft seductive arts!
“ The flattering clime of courts explore,
“ Nor spoil the convent’s simple hearts.
- “ To me their praise more justly due,
“ Of longer bloom, and happier grace!
“ Whom changing months unaltered view,
“ And find them in my fond embrace.”
- “ How well,” the modest flower replied,
“ Can ENVY’s wrested eye elude
“ The obvious bounds that still divide
“ Foul FLATTERY from fair GRATITUDE.
- “ My duteous praise each hour I pay,
“ For few the hours that I must live;
“ And give to him my little day,
“ Whose grace another day may give.

“ When low this golden form shall fall
“ And spread with dust its parent plain;
“ That dust shall hear his genial call,
“ And rise, to glory rise again.

“ To thee, my gracious power, to thee
“ My love, my heart, my life are due!
“ Thy goodness gave that life to be;
“ Thy goodness shall that life renew.

“ Ah me! one moment from thy sight
“ That thus my truant-eye should stray!
“ The God of glory sets in night;
“ His faithless flower has lost a day.”

Sore grieved the flower, and drooped her head;
And sudden tears her breast bedewed:
Consenting tears the sisters shed,
And, wrapt in holy wonder, viewed.

With joy, with pious pride elate,

“Behold,” the aged abbess cries,

“An emblem of that happier fate

“Which heaven to all but us denies.

“Our hearts no fears but duteous fears,

“No charm but duty’s charm can move;

“We shed no tears but holy tears

“Of tender penitence and love.

“See there the envious world pourtrayed

“In that dark look, that creeping pace!

“No flower can bear the Ivy’s shade;

“No tree support its cold embrace.

“The oak that rears it from the ground,

“And bears its tendrils to the skies,

“Feels at his heart the rankling wound,

“And in its poisonous arms he dies.”

Her moral thus the matron read,
 Studious to teach her children dear,
And they by love, or duty led,
 With pleasure heard, or seemed to hear.

Yet one less duteous, not less fair,
 (In convents still the tale is known)
The fable heard with silent care,
 But found a moral of her own.

The flower that smiled along the day,
 And droop'd in tears at evening's fall;
Too well she found her life display,
 Too well her fatal lot recall.

The treacherous Ivy's gloomy shade,
 That murdered what it most embraced,
Too well that cruel scene conveyed
 Which all her fairer hopes effaced.

Her heart with silent horror shook;
With sighs she sought her lonely cell:
To the dim light she cast *one* look:
And bade *once more* the world *farewell*.





FABLE II.

THE EVENING PRIMROSE.

THERE are that love the shades of life,
And shun the splendid walks of Fame;
THere are that hold it rueful strife
To risk AMBITION'S losing game:

That far from ENVY's lurid eye
The fairest fruits of GENIUS rear,
Content to see them bloom and die
In Friendship's small but kindly sphere.

Than vainer flowers though sweeter far,
The Evening Primrose shuns the day;
Blooms only to the western star,
And loves its solitary ray.

In EDEN's vale an aged hind,
At the dim twilight's closing hour,
On his time-smoothed staff reclined,
With wonder viewed the opening flower.

“ Ill-fated flower, at eve to blow,”
In pity's simple thought he cries,
“ Thy bosom must not feel the glow
“ Of splendid suns, or smiling skies.

“ Nor thee, the vagrants of the field,
“ The hamlet’s little train behold;
“ Their eyes to sweet oppression yield,
“ When thine the falling shades unfold.

“ Nor thee the hasty shepherd heeds,
“ When love has filled his heart with cares,
“ For flowers he rifles all the meads,
“ For waking flowers—but thine forbears.

“ Ah! waste no more that beauteous bloom
“ On night’s chill shade, that fragrant breath,
“ Let smiling suns those gems illumine!
“ Fair flower, to live unseen is death.”

Soft as the voice of vernal gales
That o’er the bending meadow blow,
Or streams that steal through even vales,
And murmur that they move so slow:

Deep in her unfrequented bower,
Sweet Philomela poured her strain;
The bird of eve approved her flower,
And answered thus the anxious swain.

Live unseen!

By moonlight shades, in valleys green,
Lovely flower, we'll live unseen.
Of our pleasures deem not lightly,
Laughing day may look more sprightly,
But I love the modest mien,
Still I love the modest mien
Of gentle ev'ning fair, and her star-trained queen.

Didst thou, shepherd, never find,
Pleasure is of pensive kind?
Has thy cottage never known
That she loves to live alone?
Dost thou not at evening hour
Feel some soft and secret power,

Gliding o'er thy yielding mind,
Leave sweet serenity behind;
While all disarmed, the cares of day
Steal through the falling gloom away?
Love to think thy lot was laid
In this undistinguished shade.
Far from the world's infectious view,
Thy little virtues safely blew.
Go, and in day's more dangerous hour,
Guard thy emblematic flower.





F A B L E III.

THE LAUREL AND THE REED.

THE Reed* that once the shepherd blew
On old CEPHISUS' hallowed side,
To SYLLA'S cruel bow applied,
Its inoffensive master slew.

* The reeds on the banks of the Cephisus, of which the shepherds made their pipes, Sylla's soldiers used for arrows.

Stay, bloody soldier, stay thy hand,
Nor take the shepherd's gentle breath:
Thy rage let innocence withstand;
Let music soothe the thirst of death.

He frowned—He bade the arrow fly—
The arrow smote the tuneful swain;
No more its tone his lip shall try,
Nor wake its vocal soul again.

CEPHISUS, from his sedgy urn,
With woe beheld the sanguine deed:
He mourned, and, as they heard him mourn,
Assenting sighed each trembling Reed.

“Fair offspring of my waves, he cried;
“That bind my brows, my banks adorn,
“Pride of the plains, the rivers' pride,
“For music, peace, and beauty born!

“ Ah! what, unheedful have we done!
“ What demons here in death delight?
“ What fiends that curse the social sun?
“ What furies of infernal night?

“ See, see, my peaceful shepherds bleed!
“ Each heart in harmony that vied,
“ Smote by its own melodious Reed,
“ Lies cold, along my blushing side.

“ Back to your urn, my waters, fly;
“ Or find in earth some secret way;
“ For horror dims yon conscious sky,
“ And hell has issued into day.”

Through DELPHI'S holy depth of shade
The sympathetic sorrows ran;
While in his dim and mournful glade
The genius of her groves began:

“ In vain CEPHISUS sighs to save
“ The swain that loves his watry mead,
“ And weeps to see his reddening wave,
“ And mourns for his perverted Reed:

“ In vain my violated groves
“ Must I with equal grief bewail,
“ While desolation sternly roves,
“ And bids the sanguine hand assail.

“ God of the genial stream, behold
“ My laurel shades of leaves so bare!
“ Those leaves no poet’s brows enfold,
“ Nor bind APOLLO’S golden hair.

“ Like thy fair offspring, misapplied,
“ Far other purpose they supply;
“ The murderer’s burning cheek to hide,
“ And on his frownful temples die.

“ Yet deem not these of PLUTO’S race,
“ Whom wounded NATURE sues in vain;
“ Pluto disclaims the dire disgrace,
“ And cries, indignant, “ They are men.”





FABLE IV.

THE GARDEN ROSE AND THE WILD ROSE.

AS DEE, whose current free from stain,
Glides fair o'er MERIONETH'S plain,
By mountains forced his way to steer
Along the lake of PIMBLE MERE,

Darts swiftly through the stagnant mass,
His waters trembling as they pass,
And leads his lucid waves below,
Unmixed, unsullied as they flow—
So clear through life's tumultuous tide,
So free could THOUGHT and FANCY glide;
Could HOPE as sprightly hold her course,
As first she left her native source,
Unsought in her romantic cell
The keeper of her dreams might dwell.

But ah! they will not, will not last—
When life's first fairy stage is past,
The glowing hand of HOPE is cold;
And FANCY lives not to be old.
Darker, and darker all before;
We turn the former prospect o'er;
And find in MEMORY's faithful eye
Our little stock of pleasures lie.

Come, then; thy kind recesses ope!
Fair keeper of the dreams of HOPE!
Come with thy visionary train;
And bring my morning scenes again!

To ENON'S wild and silent shade,
Where oft my lonely youth was laid;
What time the *woodland* GENIUS came,
And touched me with his holy flame.—

Or, where the hermit, BELA, leads
Her waves through solitary meads;
And only feeds the desert-flower,
Where once she soothed my slumbering hour:
Or roused by STAINMORE'S wintry sky,
She wearies echo with her cry;
And oft, what storms her bosom tear,
Her deeply-wounded banks declare.

Where EDEN's fairer waters flow,
By MILTON's bower, or OSTY's brow,
Or BROCKLEY's alder-shaded cave,
Or, winding round the Druid's grave,
Silently glide, with pious fear
To sound his holy slumbers near.—

To these fair scenes of FANCY's reign,
O MEMORY! bear me once again:
For, when life's varied scenes are past,
'Tis simple Nature charms at last.

'Twas thus of old a poet prayed;
Th' indulgent power his prayer approved,
And, ere the gathered Rose could fade,
Restored him to the scenes he loved.

A Rose, the poet's favourite flower,
From FLORA's cultured walks he bore;
No fairer bloomed in ESHER's bower,
Nor PRIOR's charming CHLOE wore.

No fairer flowers could FANCY twine
To hide ANACREON's snowy hair;
For there ALMERIA's bloom divine,
And ELLIOT's sweetest blush was there.

When she, the pride of courts, retires,
And leaves for shades, a nation's love,
With awe the village maid admires,
How WALDEGRAVE looks, how WALDE-
GRAVE MOVES.

So marvelled much in ENON's shade
The flowers that all uncultured grew,
When there the splendid Rose displayed
Her swelling breast, and shining hue.

Yet one, that oft adorned the place
Where now her gaudy rival reigned,
Of simpler bloom, but kindred race,
The pensive EGLANTINE complained.—

“Mistaken youth,” with sighs she said,
“From nature and from me to stray!
“The bard, by splendid forms betrayed,
“No more shall frame the purer lay.

“Luxuriant, like the flaunting Rose,
“And gay the brilliant strains may be,
“But far, in beauty, far from those,
“That flowed to nature and to me.”

The poet felt with fond surprise,
The truths the sylvan critic told;
And “though this courtly Rose,” he cries,
“Is gay, is beautiful to behold;

“ Yet, lovely flower, I find in thee
“ Wild sweetness which no words express,
“ And charms in thy simplicity,
“ That dwell not in the pride of dress.”







FABLE V.

THE VIOLET AND THE PANSY.

SHEPHERD, if near thy artless breast
The God of fond desires repair;
Implore him for a gentle guest,
Implore him with unwearied prayer.

Should beauty's soul-enchancing smile,
Love-kindling looks, and features gay,
Should these thy wandering eye beguile,
And steal thy wareless heart away;

That heart shall soon with sorrow swell,
And soon the erring eye deplore,
If in the beauteous bosom dwell
No gentle virtue's genial store.

Far from his hive one summer-day
A young and yet unpractised bee,
Borne on his tender wings away,
Went forth the flowery world to see.

The morn, the noon, in play he passed,
But when the shades of evening came,
No parent brought the due repast,
And faintness seized his little frame.

By nature urged, by instinct led,
The bosom of a flower he sought,
Where streams mourned round a mossy bed,
And violets all the bank enwrought.

Of kindred race, but brighter dies,
On that fair bank a Pansy grew,
That borrowed from indulgent skies
A velvet shade and purple hue.

The tints that streamed with glossy gold,
The velvet shade, the purple hue,
The stranger wondered to behold,
And to its beauteous bosom flew.

Not fonder haste the lover speeds,
At evening's fall, his fair to meet,
When o'er the hardly-bending meads
He springs on more than mortal feet.

Nor glows his eye with brighter glee,
When stealing near her orient breast,
Than felt the fond enamoured bee,
When first the golden bloom he prest.

Ah! pity much his youth untried,
His heart in beauty's magic spell!
So never passion thee betide,
But where the genial virtues dwell,

In vain he seeks those virtues there;
No soul-sustaining charms abound:
No honeyed sweetness to repair
The languid waste of life is found.

An aged bee, whose labours led
Thro' those fair springs, and meads of gold,
His feeble wing, his drooping head
Beheld, and pitied to behold.

“ Fly, fond adventurer, fly the art
“ That courts thine eye with fair attire;
“ Who smiles to win the heedless heart,
“ Will smile to see that heart expire.

“ This modest flower of humbler hue,
“ That boasts no depth of glowing dyes,
“ Arrayed in unbespangled blue,
“ The simple cloathing of the skies—

“ This flower, with balmy sweetness blest,
“ May yet thy languid life renew:”
He said, and to the Violet’s breast
The little vagrant faintly flew.







Stothard Pub by *E. & S. Harding* Pall Mall Oct 20 *Birrell*

FABLE VI.

—◆—
THE QUEEN OF THE MEADOW AND THE
CROWN IMPERIAL.

FROM BACTRIA'S vales, where beauty blows
Luxuriant in the genial ray;
Where flowers a bolder gem disclose,
And deeper drink the golden day:

From BACTRIA'S vales to BRITAIN'S shore
What time the CROWN IMPERIAL came,
Full high the stately stranger bore
The honours of his birth and name.

In all the pomp of eastern state,
In all the eastern glory gay,
He bade, with native pride elate,
Each flower of humbler birth obey.

O, that the child unborn might hear,
Nor hold it strange in distant time,
That freedom even to flowers was dear,
To flowers that bloomed in Britain's clime!

Through purple meads, and spicy gales,
Where STRYMON'S* silver waters play,
While far from hence their goddess dwells,
She rules with delegated sway.

The Ìonian Strymon.

That sway the CROWN IMPERIAL sought,
With high demand and haughty mien:
But equal claim a rival brought,
A rival called the MEADOW'S QUEEN.

“ In climes of orient glory born,
“ Where beauty first and empire grew;
“ Where first unfolds the golden morn,
“ Where richer falls the fragrant dew:

“ In light's ethereal beauty drest,
“ Behold,” he cried, “ the favoured flower,
“ Which FLORA'S high commands invest
“ With ensigns of imperial power!

“ Where prostrate vales, and blushing meads,
“ And bending mountains own his sway,
“ While PERSIA'S lord his empire leads,
“ And bids the trembling world obey;

“ While blood bedews the straining bow,
“ And conquest rends the scattered air,
“ ’Tis mine to bind the victor’s brow,
“ And reign in envied glory there.

“ Then lowly bow, ye British flowers!
“ Confess your monarch’s mighty sway,
“ And own the only glory yours,
“ When fear flies trembling to obey.”

He said, and sudden o’er the plain,
From flower to flower a murmur ran,
With modest air, and milder strain,
When thus the MEADOW’S QUEEN began.

“ If vain of birth, of glory vain,
“ Or fond to bear a regal name,
“ The pride of folly brings disdain,
“ And bids me urge a tyrant’s claim:

“ If war my peaceful realms assail,
“ And then, unmoved by pity’s call,
“ I smile to see the bleeding vale,
“ Or feel one joy in nature’s fall.

“ Then may each justly vengeful flower
“ Pursue her Queen with generous strife,
“ Nor leave the hand of lawless power
“ Such compass on the scale of life.

“ One simple virtue all my pride!
“ The wish that flies to misery’s aid;
“ The balm that stops the crimson tide*,
“ And heals the wounds that war has made.”

* The property of that flower.

Their free consent by Zephyrs borne,
The flowers their MEADOW'S QUEEN obey;
And fairer blushes crowned the morn,
And sweeter fragrance filled the day.





FABLE VII.

THE WALL-FLOWER.

“ WHY loves my flower, the sweetest flower
“ That swells the golden breast of May,
“ Thrown rudely o’er this ruined tower,
“ To waste her solitary day?

“ Why, when the mead, the spicy vale,
“ The grove and genial garden call,
“ Will she her fragrant soul exhale,
“ Unheeded on the lonely wall?

“ For never sure was beauty born
“ To live in death’s deserted shade!
“ Come, lovely flower, my banks adorn,
“ My banks for life and beauty made.”

Thus PITY waked the tender thought,
And by her sweet persuasion led,
To seize the hermit-flower I sought,
And bear her from her stony bed.

I sought—but sudden on mine ear
A voice in hollow murmurs broke,
And smote my heart with holy fear—
The GENIUS *of the Ruin* spoke.

-
- “ From thee be far th’ ungentle deed,
“ The honours of the dead to spoil,
“ Or take the sole remaining meed,
“ The flower that crowns their former toil!
- “ Nor deem that flower the garden’s foe,
“ Or fond to grace this barren shade;
“ ’Tis NATURE tells her to bestow
“ Her honours on the lonely dead.
- “ For this, obedient Zephyrs bear
“ Her light seeds round yon turret’s mold,
“ And undispersed by tempests there,
“ They rise in vegetable gold.
- “ Nor shall thy wonder wake to see
“ Such desart scenes distinction crave;
“ Oft they have been, and oft shall be
“ Truth’s, Honour’s, Valour’s, Beauty’s grave.

“ Where longs to fall that rifted spire,
“ As weary of th’ insulting air;
“ The poet’s thought, the warrior’s fire,
“ The lover’s sighs are sleeping there.

“ When that too shakes the trembling ground,
“ Borne down by some tempestuous sky,
“ And many a slumbering cottage round
“ Startles—how still their hearts will lie!

“ Of them who, wrapt in earth so cold,
“ No more the smiling day shall view,
“ Should many a tender tale be told;
“ For many a tender thought is due.

“ Hast thou not seen some lover pale,
“ When evening brought the pensive hour,
“ Step slowly o’er the shadowy vale,
“ And stop to pluck the frequent flower?

“ Those flowers he surely meant to strew
“ On lost affection’s lowly cell;
“ Though there, as fond remembrance grew,
“ Forgotten, from his hand they fell.

“ Has not for thee the fragrant thorn
“ Been taught her first rose to resign?
“ With vain but pious fondness borne
“ To deck thy NANCY’S honoured shrine!

“ ’Tis NATURE pleading in the breast,
“ Fair memory of her works to find;
“ And when to fate she yields the rest,
“ She claims the monumental mind.

“ Why, else, the o’ergrown paths of time
“ Would thus the lettered sage explore,
“ With pain these crumbling ruins climb,
“ And on the doubtful sculpture pore?

“ Why seeks he with unwearied toil
“ Through death’s dim walks to urge his way,
“ Reclaim his long-asserted spoil,
“ And lead OBLIVION into day?”

“ ’Tis NATURE prompts, by toil or fear
“ Unmoved, to range thro’ death’s domain:
“ The tender parent loves to hear
“ Her children’s story told again.

“ Treat not with scorn, his thoughtful hours,
“ If haply near these haunts he stray;
“ Nor take the fair enlivening flowers
“ That bloom to cheer his lonely way.”





FABLE VIII.

THE TULIP AND THE MYRTLE*.

'T WAS on the border of a stream
A gayly-painted Tulip stood,
And, gilded by the morning beam,
Surveyed her beauties in the flood.

* This fable was first published in a Collection of Letters, supposed to have passed between St. Evremond and Waller.

And sure, more lovely to behold,
Might nothing meet the wistful eye,
Than crimson fading into gold,
In streaks of fairest symmetry.

The beauteous flower with pride elate,
Ah me! that pride with beauty dwells!
Vainly affects superior state,
And thus in empty fancy swells.

“ O lustre of unrivalled bloom!
“ Fair painting of a hand divine!
“ Superior far to mortal doom,
“ The hues of heaven alone are mine!

“ Away, ye worthless, formless race!
“ Ye weeds, that boast the name of flowers!
“ No more my native bed disgrace,
“ Unmeet for tribes so mean as yours!

“ Shall the bright daughter of the Sun
“ Associate with the shrubs of earth?
“ Ye slaves, your sovereign’s presence shun!
“ Respect her beauties and her birth.

“ And thou, dull, sullen ever-green!
“ Shalt thou my shining sphere invade?
“ My noon-day beauties beam unseen,
“ Obscured beneath thy dusky shade!”

“ Deluded flower!” the Myrtle cries,
“ Shall we thy moment’s bloom adore?
“ The meanest shrub that you despise,
“ The meanest flower has merit more.

“ That daisy in its simple bloom,
“ Shall last along the changing year;
“ Blush on the snow of winter’s gloom,
“ And bid the smiling spring appear.

“The violet, that, those banks beneath,
“Hides from thy scorn its modest head,
“Shall fill the air with fragrant breath,
“When thou art in thy dusty bed.

“Even I, who boast no golden shade,
“Am of no shining tints possess’d,
“When low thy lucid form is laid,
“Shall bloom on many a lovely breast.

“And he, whose kind and fostering care
“To thee, to me, our beings gave,
“Shall near his breast my flowrets wear,
“And walk regardless o’er thy grave.

“Deluded flower, the friendly screen
“That hides thee from the noon-tide ray,
“And mocks thy passion to be seen,
“Prolongs thy transitory day.

“But kindly deeds with scorn repaid,
“No more by virtue need be done:
“I now withdraw my dusky shade,
“And yield thee to thy darling sun.”

Fierce on the flower the scorching beam
With all its weight of glory fell;
The flower exulting caught the gleam,
And lent its leaves a bolder swell.

Expanded by the searching fire,
The curling leaves the breast disclose;
The mantling bloom was painted higher,
And every latent charm exposed.

But when the sun was sliding low,
And evening came, with dews so cold;
The wanton beauty ceased to blow,
And sought her bending leaves to fold.

Those leaves, alas! no more would close;
Relaxed, exhausted, sickening, pale;
They left her to a parent's woes,
And fled before the rising gale.





Pub. by E. S. Hartung, Coll. Mott.

FABLE IX.

THE BEE-FLOWER*.

COME, let us leave this painted plain;
This waste of flowers that palls the eye:
The walks of NATURE'S wilder reign
Shall please in plainer majesty.

* This is a species of the Orchis, which is found in the barren and mountainous parts of Lincolnshire, Worcestershire, Kent and

Through those fair scenes, where yet she owes
Superior charms to BROCKMAN'S art,
Where, crowned with elegant repose,
He cherishes the social heart—

Through those fair scenes we'll wander wild,
And on yon pastured mountains rest;
Come, brother dear! come, Nature's child!
With all her simple virtues blest.

'The sun far-seen on distant towers,
And clouding groves and peopled seas,
And ruins pale of princely bowers
ON BEACHEBOROUGH'S airy heights shall
please.

Hertfordshire. Nature has formed a Bee apparently feeding on the breast of the flower with so much exactness, that it is impossible, at a very small distance, to distinguish the imposition. For this purpose she has observed an economy different from what is found in most other flowers, and has laid the petals horizon-

Nor lifeless there the lonely scene;
The little labourer of the hive,
From flower to flower, from green to green,
Murmurs, and makes the wild alive.

See, on that flowrets velvet breast,
How close the busy vagrant lies!
His thin-wrought plume, his downy breast,
Th' ambrosial gold that swells his thighs!

Regardless, whilst we wander near,
Thrifty of time, his task he plies;
Or sees he no intruder near?
And rest in sleep his weary eyes?

tally. The genus of the Orchis, or Satyrion, she seems professedly to have made use of for her paintings, and on the different species has drawn the perfect forms of different insects, such as Bees, Flies, Butterflies, &c.

Perhaps his fragrant load may bind

His limbs;—we'll set the captive free—
I sought the living Bee to find,
And found the picture of a Bee.

Attentive to our trifling selves,

From thence we plan the rule of all;
Thus NATURE with the fabled elves
We rank, and these her *Sports* we call.

Be far, my friends, from you, from me,

Th' unhallowed term, the thought profane,
That LIFE'S MAJESTIC SOURCE may be
In idle Fancy's trifling vein.

Remember still, 'tis NATURE'S plan

Religion in your love to find;
And know, for this, she first in man
Inspired the imitative mind.

As conscious that affection grows,
Pleased with the pencil's mimic power*;
That power with leading hand she shows,
And paints a Bee upon a flower.

Mark, how that rooted mandrake wears
His human feet, his human hands!
Oft, as his shapely form he tears,
Aghast the frightened ploughman stands.

See where, in yonder orient stone,
She seems ev'n with herself at strife,
While fairer from her hand is shown
The pictured, than the native life.

* The well-known Fables of the Painter and the Statuary that fell in love with objects of their own creation, plainly arose from the idea of that attachment, which follows the imitation of agreeable objects, to the objects imitated.

HELVETIA'S rocks, SABRINA'S waves,
Still many a shining pebble bear,
Where oft her studious hand engraves
The perfect form, and leaves it there.

O long, my PAXTON *, boast her art;
And long her laws of love fulfil:
To thee she gave her hand and heart,
To thee, her kindness and her skill!

* An ingenious Portrait Painter in Rathbone Place.





F A B L E X.

. THE WILDING AND THE BROOM.

IN yonder green wood blows the Broom;
Shepherds, we'll trust our flocks to stray,
Court Nature in her sweetest bloom,
And steal from Care one summer-day.

From him* whose gay and graceful brow
 Fair-handed HUME with roses binds,
 We'll learn to breathe the tender vow,
 Where slow the fairy FORTHA winds.

And, oh! that he† whose gentle breast
 In Nature's softest mould was made,
 Who left her smiling works imprest
 In characters that cannot fade.

That he might leave his lowly shrine,
 Though softer there the Seasons fall—
 They come, the sons of verse divine,
 They come to Fancy's magic call.

—————“ What airy sounds invite
 “ My steps, not unreluctant, from the depth
 “ Of SHENE's delightful groves? Reposing there

* WILLIAM HAMILTON of Bangour.

† THOMSON.

“ No more I hear the busy voice of men
“ Far-toiling o’er the globe—save to the call
“ Of soul-exalting poetry, the ear
“ Of death denies attention. Roused by her,
“ The genius of sepulchral silence opes
“ His drowsy cells, and yields us to the day.
“ For thee, whose hand, whatever paints the spring,
“ Or swells on summer’s breast, or loads the lap
“ Of autumn, gathers heedful—Thee whose rites
“ At nature’s shrine with holy care are paid
“ Daily and nightly, boughs of brightest green,
“ And every fairest rose, the god of groves,
“ The queen of flowers, shall sweeter save for thee.
“ Yet not if beauty only claim thy lay,
“ Tunefully trifling. Fair philosophy,
“ And nature’s love, and every moral charm
“ That leads in sweet captivity the mind
“ To virtue—ever in thy nearest cares
“ Be these, and animate thy living page
“ With truth resistless, beaming from the source

“Of perfect light immortal—Vainly boast
“That golden Broom its sunny robe of flowers:
“Fair are the sunny flowers; but, fading soon
“And fruitless, yield the forester’s regard
“To the well-loaded Wilding—Shepherd, there
“Behold the fate of song, and lightly deem
“Of all but moral beauty.”

—————“Not in vain”——

I hear my HAMILTON reply,
(The torch of fancy in his eye)
“’Tis not in vain,” I hear him say,
“That nature paints her works so gay;
“For, fruitless though that fairy broom,
“Yet still we love her lavish bloom.
“Cheered with that bloom, yon desert wild
“Its native horrors lost, and smiled.
“And oft we mark her golden ray
“Along the dark wood scatter day.

“ Of moral uses take the strife;
“ Leave me the elegance of life.
“ Whatever charms the ear or eye,
“ All beauty and all harmony;
“ If sweet sensations these produce,
“ I know they have their moral use.
“ I know that NATURE’S charms can move
“ The springs that strike to VIRTUE’S love.”







FABLE XI.

THE MISLETOE AND THE PASSION-FLOWER.

IN this dim cave a druid sleeps,
Where stops the passing gale to moan;
The rock he hollowed o'er him weeps,
And cold drops wear the fretted stone.

In this dim cave, of different creed,
A hermit's holy ashes rest:
The school-boy finds the frequent bead,
Which many a formal matin blest.

That truant-time full well I know,
When here I brought, in stolen hour,
The Druid's magic Mistletoe,
The holy hermit's Passion-flower.

The offerings on the mystic stone
Pensive I laid, in thought profound,
When from the cave a deepening groan
Issued, and froze me to the ground.

I hear it still—Dost thou not hear?
Does not thy haunted fancy start?
The sound still vibrates through mine ear—
The horror rushes on my heart.

Unlike to living sounds it came,
Unmixed, unmelodised with breath;
But, grinding through some scrannel frame,
Creaked from the bony lungs of death.

I hear it still—"Depart," it cries;
"No tribute bear to shades unblest:
"Know, here a bloody Druid lies,
"Who was not nursed at Nature's breast.

"Associate he with demons dire,
"O'er human victims held the knife,
"And pleased to see the babe expire,
"Smiled grimly o'er its quivering life.

"Behold his crimson-streaming hand
"Erect!—his dark, fixed, murderous eye!"
In the dim cave I saw him stand;
And my heart died—I felt it die.

I see him still—Dost thou not see
The haggard eye-ball's hollow glare?
And gleams of wild ferocity
Dart through the sable shade of hair?

What meagre form behind him moves,
With eye that rues th'invading day;
And wrinkled aspect wan, that proves
The mind to pale remorse a prey?

What wretched—Hark—the voice replies,
“Boy, bear these idle honours hence!
“For, here a guilty hermit lies,
“Untrue to Nature, Virtue, Sense.

“Though Nature lent him powers to aid
“The moral cause, the mutual weal;
“Those powers he sunk in this dim shade,
“The desperate suicide of zeal.

“Go, teach the drone of saintly haunts,
“Whose cell’s the sepulchre of time;
“Though many a holy hymn he chaunts,
“His life is one continued crime.

“And bear them hence, the plant, the flower;
“No symbols those of systems vain!
“They have the duties of their hour;
“Some bird, some insect to sustain.”





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