SEWARD'S WORKS.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ANNA SEWARD;

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HER LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE.

EDITED BY

WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

The name of Anna Seward has for many years held a high rank in the annals of British literature; and the public has a right to claim, upon the present occasion, some brief memorials of her by whom it was distinguished. As the tenor of her life was retired, though not secluded, and uniform, though not idle, the task of detailing its events can neither be tedious nor uninstructive.

Miss Seward's father was the Reverend Thomas Seward, Rector of Eyam, in Derbyshire, Prebendary of Salisbury, and Canon Residentiary of Lichfield. In his youth he travelled as tutor with Lord Charles Fitzroy, third son of the Duke of Grafton, a hopeful young nobleman, who died upon his travels in 1739. Mr Seward returned to England, and soon after married Miss Elizabeth Hunter, daughter of Mr Hunter, head-master of the school at Lich-

field, the preceptor of Johnson, and other eminent literary characters. Mr Seward, upon his marriage, settled at his rectory of Eyam. In 1747, the second year of his marriage, Miss Seward was born. She had several sisters, and one brother; but none survived the period of infancy except Miss Sarah Seward, whom her sister and parents were to lament at a later and more interesting stage of existence.

Mr Seward was himself a poet; and a manuscript collection of his fugitive pieces is now lying before me, the bequest of my honoured friend, when she entrusted me with the task I am now endeavouring to discharge. Several of these effusions were printed in Dodsley's Collection, volume second, towards the close. Mr Seward was also an admirer of our ancient drama; and, in 1750, published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, which, though falling beneath what is expected from the accuracy and investigation of later dramatic editors, evinces a scholar-like degree of information, and a high relish for the beauties of his authors. Thus accomplished himself, the talents of his eldest daughter did not long escape his complacent observation. He early

introduced her to Milton and to Shakespeare; and I have heard her say, that she could repeat passages from the Allegro before she was three years old. It were absurd to suppose that she could comprehend this poem, even at a much later period of infancy; but our future taste does not always depend upon the progress of our understanding. The mechanism, the harmony of verse, the emotions which, though vague and indescribable, it awakens in children of a lively imagination and a delicate ear, contribute, in many instances, to imbue the infant mind with a love of poetry, even before they can tell for what they love it. Miss Seward was one of these gifted minds which catches eagerly at the intellectual banquet.—The romantic hills of Derbyshire, where the village of Eyam is situated, favoured the instructions of her father. His pupil imbibed a strong and enthusiastic partiality for mountainous scenery, and in general for the pleasures of landscape, which was a source of enjoyment during her after life. Her father's taste was rigidly classical; and the authors to whom Miss Seward was introduced, were those of Queen Anne's reign. She was early familiar with Pope,

Young, Prior, and their predecessor, Dryden; and, in later life, used to make little allowance for poetry of an older date, excepting only that of Shakespeare and Milton.

The desire of imitating the compositions which gave her pleasure, very early displayed itself. Anna Seward attempted metrical versions of the Psalms, and even exercised herself in original composition, before she was ten years old. An Address to the First Fine Day of a Backward Spring, which has been preserved from these early days, intimates considerable command of numbers and language, though the ideas cannot be called original.

About 1754, Mr Seward removed with his family to Lichfield, which continued ever afterwards to be his daughter's residence, although varied, during her father's life, by occasional visits to his rectory at Eyam. Lichfield, the birth-place of Johnson and of Garrick, and, necessarily, the residence of a body of learned and well-educated clergy attached to its cathedral, had been long distinguished by its classical pretensions. These were at this time exalted by its being the residence of the celebrated Dr Darwin, who soon distinguished

and appreciated the talents of our youthful poetess. Some lines had been shewn to him, which he thought so far superior to her age, that he conceived they must have been written, or greatly improved, by her father. He contrived to engage her upon a poetic theme when Mr Seward was absent, and the result of the experiment having ascertained the originality of her talents, Dr Darwin thought them worthy of attentive cultivation. At this time, however, literature was deemed an undesirable pursuit for a young lady in Miss Seward's situation,—the heiress of an independent fortune, and destined to occupy a considerable rank in society. Her mother, though an affectionate parent, and an excellent woman, possessed no taste for her daughter's favourite amusements; and even Mr Seward withdrew his countenance from them, probably under the apprehension that his continued encouragement might produce in his daughter that dreaded phænomenon, a learned lady. Poetry was prohibited, and Miss Seward resorted to other amusements, and to the practice of ornamental needle-work, in which she is said to have excelled. Thus rolled on time for nearly ten years after her father had

settled in Lichfield. When it is considered that her attachment to literary pursuits bordered even upon the romantic, the merit of sacrificing them readily to the inclination of her parents, deserves our praise. But other incidents occurred in her own life, and that of a confidential friend, that called for stronger exertions of prudence, self-denial, and submission to parental authority. There are, in Miss Seward's letters during this period, passages which shew great firmness and steadiness of mind, and a capacity of compelling feelings, which nature, and perhaps early cultivation, had strung to a keen tone, to submit to the dictates of prudence and of duty. I regret that many of the lessons which she taught her own heart, and that of her friend, must be withheld from the public, lest, even at this distance of time, the incidents to which they relate might injure the feelings of any concerned in them.

In 1764, a heavy calamity took place in Mr Seward's family. Miss Sarah Seward, his younger daughter, had been for some time on the eve of forming a matrimonial connection with Mr Porter, a merchant at Leghorn, brother to Mrs

Lucy Porter of Lichfield, and son-in-law, of course, to the celebrated Dr Johnson. Miss Anna Seward was to have accompanied her sister to Italy, and already anticipated, with delight, the pleasure of treading classical ground, of viewing the paintings of Raphael, and wandering among the groves of Valambrosa. These flattering prospects were clouded by the sickness and death of the young and lovely bride. An affecting account of this distressing calamity occurs among the following extracts from Miss Seward's correspondence. Mr Porter appears afterwards to have intimated a wish to transfer his attachment to the surviving sister, but it was not encouraged. When time had softened the recollection of this domestic loss, Miss Seward made her sister's death the subject of an elegy, which forms the first article in this collection of her poetry. The blank in her domestic society was supplied by the attachment of Miss Honora Sneyd, then residing in her family, and often mentioned in the ensuing volumes. This young lady was afterwards married to the ingenious Mr Edgeworth.

After the death of Miss Sarah Seward, her sister's society became indispensable to her pa-

rents, and she was never separated from them. Offers of matrimonial establishments occurred, and were rejected, in one instance entirely, and in others chiefly, from a sense of filial duty. As she was now of an age to select her own society and studies, Miss Seward's love of literature was indulged; and the sphere in which she moved was such as to increase her taste for its pursuits. Dr Darwin, Mr Day, whose opinions formed singular specimens of English philosophy, Mr Edgeworth, Sir Brooke Boothby, and other names well known in the literary world, then formed part of the Lichfield society. The celebrated Dr Johnson was an occasional visiter of their circles; but he seems, in some respects, to have shared the fate of a prophet in his own country. Neither Dr Darwin nor Miss Seward were partial to the great moralist. There was, perhaps, some aristocratic prejudice in their dislike, for the despotic manners of Dr Johnson were least likely to be tolerated where the lowness of his origin was in fresh recollection. At the same time, Miss Seward was always willing to do justice to his native benevolence, and to the powerful grasp of his intellectual powers, and possessed many anecdotes of his conversa-

tion, which had escaped his most vigilant recorders. These she used to tell with great humour, and with a very striking imitation of the sage's peculiar voice, gesture, and manner of delivery.

Miss Seward's poetical powers appear to have lain dormant, or to have been only sparingly exercised, until her acquaintance with Lady Miller, whose fanciful and romantic institution at Bath Easton, was then the subject of public attention. A concise account of this poetical association, which was graced by the names of Anstey and of Hayley, forms the preface to a poem which Miss Seward afterwards dedicated to the memory of its accomplished foundress. The applause of this selected circle gave Miss Seward courage to commit some of her essays to the press; and the public received with great favour the elegiac commemorations of André and of Cook. The first of these subjects was dictated by Miss Seward's personal friendship for the brave and unfortunate sufferer, who had sought to drown in the duties of his dangerous profession, the recollection of an ill-fated attachment to her friend, Miss Sneyd. The Elegy on Captain Cook was dictated by those feel-

ings of admiration and gratitude, which, in common with Europe at large, Miss Seward felt for the firm and benevolent character of the dauntless navigator, and for his tragical destiny. It would be too much to claim for these productions, the warm interest which they excited while the melancholy events which they celebrated were glowing in the general recollection; but, even when the advantage which they derived from their being suited to "the form and pressure of the time" has passed away, they convey a high impression of the original powers of their author.

While Miss Seward's fame increased, it had the advantage, which she highly prized, of extending her acquaintance among those who were candidates for literary reputation. Many of the most distinguished she added to the circle of her friends. I need barely mention Mr Hayley, Mr Mundy, the author of two most beautiful poems on Needwood Forest; Mr Crowe, author of the descriptive poem called Lewesdone-Hill; Dr Whaley, Mr Fellowes, and many other persons of acknowledged talent and learning, with whom she maintained, through life, a constant correspondence. Miss Seward was an

entire stranger to that paltry jealousy which too often disturbs the harmony of the literary world. She gave, with her whole soul, her applause to contemporary merit, and was not easily daunted in its defence. A love and admiration for existing genius was a leading feature in her character. She was at all times ready with her advice, her encouragement, her purse, if necessary, to assist those whom timidity or indigence prevented from asserting their right to public notice. Nor would she readily admit the preference claimed for more ancient poets over those of her own century. "Many," she says, in a letter now before me, "excel me in the power of writing verse; perhaps scarcely one in the vivid and strong sensibility of its excellence, or in the ability to estimate its claims—ability arising from a fifty years sedulous and discriminating study of the best English poets, and of the best translations from the Greek, Roman, and Italian. A masculine education cannot spare from professional study, and the necessary acquisition of languages, the time and attention which I have bestowed on the compositions of my countrymen. When the accumulating suffrage of centuries shall have mellowed the growing

fame of the authors of this age, their equals, perhaps their superiors, at a future period, will be contrasting the superiority of this and the last century, with the littleness of recent and contemporary merit."

It cannot be denied, that Miss Seward's friendships and partialities fortified her in the persuasion thus expressed. In friendship, indeed, she was an enthusiast, of which she gave, in 1778, an example too remarkable to be passed over, even in these brief biographical notices. In the summer of that year, the Countess of Northesk visited Lichfield, to consult Dr Darwin for the benefit of her health, then sinking rapidly by hemorrhage. The poetical physician became deeply interested in the fate of a lovely and amiable young woman, distinguished by her sufferings and her patience; and the same circumstances produced a strong attachment on the part of Miss Seward. Of this interest and attachment, a proof was nearly made, of a kind so very remarkable, that I will tell it in Miss Seward's own words.

"One evening, after a long and intense reverie, he said,—'Lady Northesk, an art was practised in former years, which the medical

world has very long disused; that of injecting blood into the veins by a syringe, and thus repairing the waste of diseases like yours. Human blood, and that of calves and sheep, were used promiscuously. Superstition attached impiety to the practice. It was put a stop to in England by a bull of excommunication from some of our popish princes, against the practitioners of sanguinary injection. That it had been practised with success, we may, from this interdiction, fairly conclude, else restraint upon its continuance must have been superfluous. We have a very ingenious watch-maker here, whom I think I could instruct to form a proper instrument for that purpose, if you chose to submit to the experiment.' She replied cheerfully, that she had not the least objection, if he thought it eligible.

"Miss Seward then said, 'If the trial should be determined upon, perhaps Lady Northesk would prefer a supply from an healthy human subject, rather than from an animal. My health is perfect, neither am I conscious of any lurking disease, hereditary or accidental. I have no dread of the lancet, and will gladly spare, from time to time, such a portion from my veins

to Lady Northesk, as Dr Darwin shall think proper to inject.'

"He seemed much pleased with the proposal, and this amiable patient expressed gratitude far above the just claim of the circumstance. Dr Darwin said he would consult his pillow about it.

"The next day, when Miss S. called upon Lady N., the doctor took her previously into his study, telling her, that he had resigned all thoughts of trying the experiment upon Lady Northesk; that it had occurred to him as a last resource to save an excellent woman, whose disorder, he feared, was beyond the reach of medicine; "but," added he, "the construction of a proper machine is so nice an affair, the least failure in its power of acting so hazardous, the chance, at least from the experiment, so precarious, that I do not choose to stake my reputation upon the risque. If she die, the world will say I killed Lady Northesk, though the London and Bath physicians have pronounced her case hopeless, and sent her home to expire. They have given her a great deal too much medicine. I shall give her very little. Their system of nutritious food, their gravy jel-

lies, and strong wines, I have already changed for milk, vegetables, and fruit. No wines ever; no meat, no strong broth, at present. If this alteration of diet prove unavailing, her family and friends must lose her."

"It was not unavailing; she gathered strength under the change from day to day. The disease abated, and in three weeks she pursued her journey to Scotland, a convalescent, full of hope for herself, of grateful veneration towards her physician, whose skill had saved her from the grave; and full also of over-rating thankfulness to Miss S. for the offer she had made. With her Lady Northesk regularly corresponded, from that time till her sudden and deplorable death."—*Memoirs of Dr Darwin*, by ANNA SEWARD. Lond. 1804, pp. 110–114.

In the year 1780, Mrs Seward died, and the care of attending her surviving parent devolved entirely upon his daughter. This was soon embittered by a frequent recurrence of paralytic and apoplectic affections, which broke Mr Seward's health, and gradually impaired the tone of his mind. His frame resisted these repeated assaults for ten years, during which, Miss Seward had the melancholy satisfaction to see,

that, even when he had lost consciousness of every thing else, her father retained a sense of her constant and unremitting attentions. There is, in one of her poems, some verses expressive of his situation, while claiming for him a rank among the bards of her favourite city:

Source of my life, it will not prove
A vain essay of filial love,
Here, if a right thy daughter claim
To rank with theirs thy honour'd name,
Whose silver lyre's harmonious sound
Made lovely Lichfield classic ground,
Though now thy vital lamp's faint light
Gleams on the verge of its long night,
Dull, dim, and weak its social blaze,
And pale its intellectual rays.
While duteous love, with anxious aim,
Guards from rude blasts its quivering flame,
Through yet a few more quiet years,
That bring to thee nor pains nor fears,
O! be it mine to cheer and warm
Thy drooping heart, thy helpless form!

In 1790 this scene closed, by the death of Mr Seward. His daughter remained mistress of an easy and independent fortune, and continued to inhabit the Bishop's Palace at Lichfield, which had been long her father's residence, and was her's until her death.

While engaged in attendance upon her father, Miss Seward, besides other occasional pieces, published, in 1782, her poetical novel, entitled Louisa, which was favourably received, and passed rapidly through several editions. Other pieces, chiefly on occasional topics, fell from her pen; some of which found their way to the public, and others are now, for the first time, printed from manuscripts. The beauties of Llangollen Vale, with the talents, virtues, and accomplishments of the ladies who have so long honoured it with their residence, claimed and obtained commemoration. Its inmates were among those whom Miss Seward valued most highly, and the regard was reciprocal.

Without pausing to trace the progress of her less important works, it is proper to mention the Collection of Original Sonnets published in 1799. They were intended to restore the strict rules of the legitimate sonnet, and contain some beautiful examples of that species of composition. Less praise is due to the Translations from Horace, in the same publication, which, being rather paraphrases than translations, can hardly be expected to gratify those

whose early admiration has been turned to the original.

In 1804, the death of Dr Darwin, who had encouraged the first notes of her lyre, and from whom, perhaps, it had borrowed some of its peculiar intonations, induced Miss Seward to give the public a biographical sketch of her early friend. Her Life of Dr Darwin ought, however, rather to have been entitled, anecdotes of the early part of his life, and of the society of Lichfield, while it was the place of his residence. Although written upon a desultory plan, and in a style disfigured by the use of frequent inversions and compounded epithets, the Memoir has preserved much curious and interesting literary anecdote. The history of Mr Day is told with a liveliness which these defects have not obscured, and contains a useful lesson, though humbling to the pride of human wisdom, since no prejudices of bigotry, or of fashion, ever led a votary into so many absurdities as this gentleman successfully achieved, while professing to be guided only by the pure light of reason and philosophy. In this publication also, Miss Seward laid her claim to the first fifty verses in the Botanic Garden, which

she had written in compliment to Dr Darwin, and which he had inserted in his poem without any acknowledgement. The correctness of Miss Seward's statement is proved by the publication of the verses with her name, in some periodical publications, previous to the appearance of Dr Darwin's poem; and the disingenuous suppression of the aid of which he availed himself, must remain a considerable stain upon the character of the poet of Flora.

After the publication of the Sonnets, Miss Seward did not undertake any large poem. Yet she continued to pour forth her poetical effusions upon such occasions as interested her feelings, or excited her imagination. These efforts were, however, unequal to those of her earlier muse. Age was now approaching with its usual attendants, declining health, and the loss of friends summoned from the stage before her. Yet her interest in literature and poetry continued unabated; and she maintained an unrelaxed correspondence, not only with her former friends, but with those later candidates for poetical distinction, whose exertions she approved of. Among these, she distinguished with her highest regard, Mr Robert

Southey, and used to mention, as the most decided symptom of degenerate taste, the inadequate success of his sublime epic, Madoc. On this subject she used to quote, as a parallel instance of rash judgment, a passage from Waller's Letters. "The old blind school-master, John Milton, hath published a tedious poem on the Fall of Man—if its length be not considered as merit, it has no other."

In summer 1807, the editor, upon his return from London, visited Miss Seward, with whom he had corresponded occasionally for some years. Robertson observes, that, in a female reign, the queen's personal charms are a subject of importance; and, as the same rule may apply to the case of a female author, this may be no improper place to mention the impression which her appearance and conversation were calculated to make upon a stranger.—They were, indeed, well worth a longer pilgrimage. Miss Seward, when young, must have been exquisitely beautiful; for, in advanced age, the regularity of her features, the fire and expression of her countenance, gave her the appearance of beauty, and almost of youth. Her eyes were auburn, of the precise shade

and hue of her hair, and possessed great expression. In reciting, or in speaking with animation, they appeared to become darker; and, as it were, to flash fire. I should have hesitated to state the impression which this peculiarity made upon me at the time, had not my observation been confirmed by that of the first actress of this or any other age, with whom I lately happened to converse on our deceased friend's expressive powers of countenance.—Miss Seward's tone of voice was melodious, guided by excellent taste, and well suited to reading and recitation, in which she willingly exercised it. She did not sing, nor was she a great proficient in music, though very fond of it, having studied it later in life than is now usual. Her stature was tall, and her form was originally elegant; but having broken the *patella* of the knee by a fall in the year 1768, she walked with pain and difficulty, which increased with the pressure of years.

The great command of literary anecdote which Miss Seward possessed, her ready perception both of the serious and ludicrous, and her just observation and original taste, rendered her society delightful. She entered into every topic

with the keenness and vivacity of youth, and it was difficult to associate the idea of advanced years either with her countenance or conversation. The possessor of such quick feelings seldom escapes the portion of pain with which all earthly good is alloyed and tempered. With the warmest heart for her friends, and an unbounded enthusiasm in their service, Miss Seward united a sensibility to coldness, or to injuries real or supposed, which she permitted to disturb her more than was consistent with prudence or with happiness. The same tone of mind rendered her jealous of critical authority, when exercised over her own productions, or those of her friends. Her prepossessions upon literary points were also very strong.—She admired the lofty and energetic tone of Milton; and the passages of Shakespeare to which she gave the preference, were those which partook of the same character. But although she admitted the superiority of these masters of the lyre, her taste for ornament exceeded the simplicity of their models, and was chiefly gratified, in modern poetry at least, by a more laboured and ornate style of composition. For Darwin, her early friend, and per-

haps her preceptor in the art of poetry, she claimed a higher rank among the poets of Britain than the judges of literature are at present inclined to allow him. There is a fashion in poetry, which, without increasing or diminishing the real value of the materials moulded upon it, does wonders in facilitating its currency, while it has novelty, and is often found to impede its reception when the mode has passed away. It is with such verses as with the ancient defensive armour:

> ——————— The fashion of the fight
> Has thrown its gilt, and gaudy plumes aside,
> For modern fopperies.

Miss Seward was in practice trained and attached to that school of picturesque and florid description, of lofty metaphor and bold personification, of a diction which inversion and the use of compound epithets rendered as remote as possible from the tone of ordinary language, which was introduced, or at least rendered fashionable, by Darwin, but which was too remote from common life, and natural expression, to retain its popularity. Yet her taste, though perhaps over-dazzled by the splendour

which she adopted in her own compositions, readily admitted the claims of Pope, Collins, Gray, Mason, and of all those bards who have condescended to add the graces of style and expression to poetical thought and imagery. But she particularly demanded beauty, elegance, or splendour of language; and was unwilling to allow that sublimity or truth of conception could atone for poverty, rudeness, or even simplicity, of expression. To Spenser, and the poets of his school, she lent a very unwilling ear; and what will, perhaps, best explain my meaning, she greatly preferred the flowing numbers and expanded descriptions of Pope's Iliad to Cowper's translation, which approaches nearer to the simple dignity of Homer. These peculiarities of taste, Miss Seward was always ready to defend; nor was it easy for the professors of an opposite faith to sustain either the art of her arguments, or the authorities which her extensive acquaintance with the best British classics readily supplied. She has left, among other manuscripts, a Defence of Pope's Odyssey against Spence, in which she displays much critical acumen, and has decidedly the better of the Professor. I ought,

however, to add, that two circumstances qualified Miss Seward's taste for the picturesque. When she wrote upon subjects in which her feelings were deeply interested, she forgot the "tiara and glittering zone" of the priestess of Apollo, in the more natural effusions of real passion. The song which begins,

"To thy rocks, stormy Lannow, adieu,"

seems to have been composed under such influence. The partiality with which Miss Seward regarded the poetical attempts of her friends, formed another class of exceptions to her peculiar taste for the magnificent in poetry. She found, with an ingenuity which the subject sometimes rendered wonderful, reasons for liking what her prejudices in favour of the author had previously determined her to admire. Her literary enthusiasm, ardent as it was, became in such cases tempered and qualified by the yet keener interest she felt in those friends whom she valued; and, if this caused an occasional anomaly in her critical system, those who have experienced its benefit, may be pardoned for quoting it as an illustration of the kindly warmth of her heart.

That warmth was not alone displayed in regard for friends in the same rank of life, and cultivating similar studies. Her benevolence was universally felt among those to whom it afforded active and important support, as well as those whose pursuits it aided, and whose feelings it gratified. But it is not the purpose of this slight sketch either to enter into the merits of Miss Seward's poetry, or to descend minutely into her personal character. The reader has, in these volumes, enough for forming an opinion upon the first point, and many passages from which he may ground his own authentic conclusions concerning the energy of the talents and worth of the heart by which they were dictated. I return to the narrative, which these cursory observations have interrupted.

For a year or two preceding 1807, Miss Seward had been occasionally engaged in arranging and preparing for the press the edition of her poems which is now given to the public. She had reconsidered them individually, and made such additions and corrections as she conceived necessary. This subject was repeatedly mentioned in her correspondence, and the pub-

lication would have taken place during Miss Seward's life-time, if some difficulties had not occurred to delay it. These were in the course of being removed; and it is probable the volumes would soon have gone to the press, had the state of Miss Seward's health permitted her to superintend their progress. But her constitution, infirm for several years, was now rapidly declining. In harvest, 1807, she was assailed by a scorbutic disorder, which affected her blood and whole system in a degree most painfully irritating, banishing sleep, and rendering waking hours almost intolerable.—Her spirit continued, however, to struggle against its assaults, and she entered, by advice of her physicians, upon a course of alterative medicine, which, it was supposed, might alleviate or remove her complaint. But the disorder proved invincible; and, in March 1809, the editor had the pain of receiving the last farewell of his honoured friend. It is written at intervals, and the hand-writing gradually degenerates from the distinct and beautiful manuscript which Miss Seward used to write, into a scrawl so feebly traced, as to be nearly illegible.

"You may believe, dear and admired friend, it was no trivial cause, no idle procrastination, that kept me silent four months and a week to a letter of yours, the humour, wit, and kindness of which recompensed its delay. Early in our late Siberian December, I was proposing to address you, when a violent fever, with alarming hæmorhage, seized my weak frame. During five nights and days, it put my life into peril. In all that time, I was unable to swallow the least atom of solids, whilst my thirst was raging and unquenchable. On the 6th day, the fever abated, and some degree of appetite returned; but the disease has shook my weak frame to its foundation. The fever abated, but is not yet subdued. Sometimes I have a few hours intermission, but my pulse remaining at 90, and 60 is my pulse of health, the medical people will not consent to my taking the bark. Much writing is forbid me; indeed, its effect is sufficiently forewarning, since, the moment I begin to think intensely, the pen falls from my hand, a lethargic sensation creeps over me, and I doze. Not more than by a page a day shall I attempt to proceed with this snail of an epistle. I had two reasons for wishing to have written to you

sooner; gratitude, and the desire of presenting you with one of the three copies which my poetic friend, Mr Mundy, has sent me to present to three chosen friends. Though printed, it is not published, and consequently unpurchaseable."

"*Monday, 13th of March.*

"So far was written Monday the 6th of this month, when again the lethargy crept on. I fell asleep, and awoke in a raging fever and high delirium. Next day, after a dreadful night, the physician ordered me to lose six ounces of blood, and that not in the slightest degree abating the fever, he took six ounces more on the eve, and all without effect. I feel all the props of my life giving way; and probably this is the last time I shall ever write any thing in the shape of a letter; but I have procured a frank, and am unwilling it should be useless. It is for Thursday next. Considering my pains, my raging thirst, my utter debility, it would be a mercy if I should not be in existence on that day.

"If I knew where to find you, I would send the copy of Mundy's Poems, but I am loth to

put you to the expence of its carriage, except I should send it to you in London. I am not able to add more than what I think will be my last benediction on you and yours. O! what a blessing is a sudden death! I always prayed for it, but am not worthy to have my prayer granted.

"I thank you for all your kindness, and for the delightful hours your talents have given me.

"Affectionately your friend,

"A. SEWARD."

"It is Thursday, and each intervening day since I closed my letter has taken large death-strides upon me."

This melancholy letter was too true an augury of the event which it anticipated. Upon Thursday the 23d of March, 1809, Miss Seward was seized with an universal stupor, which continued until the 25th, at six o'clock in the evening, when she expired. Her friends, a term which comprehends many names distinguished in British literature, must long lament this accomplished woman. The poems in which she survives to the public, although containing vi-

vid traces of genius, will serve but to remind those who were honoured with her acquaintance, of the loss which they have sustained of her ardent love of literature, her disinterested and candid defence of its best interests, of the amiable and enthusiastic warmth of her friendship, and the innate benevolence of her heart.

The arrangement of Miss Seward's fortune was left under the charge of her residuary legatee, Thomas White, Esq. residing in the Close of Lichfield, and Charles Simpson, Esq. of the same city; the former connected with her by relationship, and both still more by kindness and intimacy. To the present editor she bequeathed her literary performances, and particularly the works she had so long intended for the press, with the instructions, as well as under the exception, contained in the following posthumous letter:

"Dear Sir,

"In my last and lately-executed will, I have bequeathed to you the exclusive copy-right of those compositions in verse and prose which I mean shall constitute a miscellaneous edition of my works. This bequest consists of my writings

in verse which have passed the press, together with those that are yet unpublished; also a collection of juvenile letters from the year 1762, to June 1768, together with four sermons, and a critical dissertation.

"The verse consists of two half-bound volumes quarto, full of manuscript compositions; and, at this time, of six manuscript books, sewn together in the form of quarto volumes. With these I desire may be blended my poems which have already been regularly and separately published; printed copies of which will be found tied up with the manuscript verse, and from those printed copies I desire the press for this edition may be struck. Some slight alterations in the printed copies are inserted in my own hand-writing, to which I request you will have the goodness to attend in your survey of the proof sheets. I wish the printed and manuscript poems may succeed each other in the miscellany according to the successive periods at which they were written; to which end there are specified directions to the printer through their whole course. With these you will find, and to these I desire may succeed in the miscellany, the three first books of an epic poem raised on the basis of Fenelon's Te-

lemachus, but in very excursive paraphrase, harmonizing, as I flattered myself, with the style of Pope's Homer. I once hoped to have compleated the poem, and that, in such a completion, it might have formed no unacceptable conclusion to the adventures of the young and royal hero left unfinished in the Odyssey. More indispensable claims upon my attention frustrated that purpose. Abortive as it proved, those of my classical friends who have examined the three books, assure me that their contents are, poetically, equal to any thing I have written.

"With the above-named compositions, you will meet with a little collection of my late dear father's poetry, with references to more of it published anonymously in Dodsley's Miscellany. I wish you to admit this collection, together with his poems in Dodsley, into the edition I have bequeathed to you, and that it may succeed to my own poems.

"To these metrical volumes, I wish the juvenile letters may be added, succeeding the poetic volumes as in Warburton's edition of Pope's works. I refer the critical dissertation, defending Pope's Odyssey against the erroneous criticisms of Spence, to your judgement, that, when you have read the tract, you may publish or sup-

press it, as you think best. If the former be your choice, it should follow the juvenile letters, being, as it was, the production of my youthful years. Last, the four sermons, unless you think it better to publish them by themselves at a different period, rather than that they should form a part of this collective edition. I wish it to be printed in small octavo.

"Twelve quarto and manuscript volumes of my letters, from the year 1784, to the present day, I have bequeathed to Mr A. Constable. They are copies of such letters, or parts of letters, as, after they were written, appeared to me worth the attention of the public. Large as the collection is, it does not include a twelfth part of the letters I have written from the said period. *

"To Mr Constable, rather than to yourself, have they been bequeathed, on account of the political principles which, during many past years, they breathed. Fervent indeed, and uni-

* I owe Mr Constable my thanks for having offered me the unlimited use of this collection, for drawing up the present memoir. The bounds I had prescribed to myself, did not admit of my profiting to a great extent by his liberality.

form, was my abhorrence of the dreadful system in our cabinet, which has reduced the continent to utter vassalage, and endangered the independence of Great Britain. Yet I know these opinions are too hostile to your friendships and connections with the belligerent party, for the possibility of it being agreeable to you to become the editor of those twelve epistolary volumes.

"I shall address a posthumous letter to Mr Constable on their subject, expressing my desire that he publish two volumes annually, not classing them to separate correspondents, but allowing them to succeed each other in the order of time as they stand in the collection.

"This letter has been written beneath the pressure of much pain and illness. I am in a state which induces me to believe you will, ere long, receive this testimony of my regard, confidence, and gratitude, for all the attention with which you have honoured me; above all, for your kind visit. May health and length of days be yours, with leisure to employ, from time to time, your illustrious muse. And now, dear sir, a long, a last adieu!

"ANNA SEWARD."

I have, in every material respect, punctually complied with the wishes of my deceased friend. I have exercised the latitude indulged to me of omitting the prose compositions, and also the poems of the late Mr Seward, as it was judged adviseable to limit the size of this publication to three volumes. The imitation of Telemachus is also omitted; and, in publishing the correspondence, every thing is retrenched which has reference to personal anecdote. I am aware that, in this particular, I have not consulted the taste of the age; but, in my opinion, nothing less important than the ascertainment of historical fact justifies withdrawing the veil from the incidents of private life. I would not willingly have this suppression misconstrued. There is not a line in my possession but might be published with honour to her who bequeathed me the manuscripts, and with justice to those named in them; and those in Mr Constable's possession, being more generally of a literary nature, are still less liable to exception. But few can remember the feelings, passions, and prejudices of their earlier career, without feeling reluctance to their being brought before the public; and, in some late instances, the parties concerned might have

remonstrated with the editor, like the dethroned monarch with his insulting accuser:

> ——————— And must I ravel out
> My weaved-up follies ———————
> If thy offences were upon record,
> Would it not shame thee in so fair a troop
> To read a lecture of them?

The poetry has been published precisely according to Miss Seward's directions. To the numerous friends of Miss Seward, these volumes will form an acceptable present; for, besides their poetical merit, they form a pleasing register of her sentiments, her feelings, and her affections. The general reception they may meet with is more dubious, since collections of occasional and detached poems have rarely been honoured with a large share of public favour. Should Miss Seward's poetry be admitted as an exception, it will add much to the satisfaction which I feel in the faithful discharge of the task entrusted to me by the bequest of the amiable and highly-accomplished author

EXTRACTS

FROM

MISS SEWARD'S

LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE.

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LICHFIELD, OCT. 1762.

THERE is surely, my dear friend, a certain magnetism which attracts dispositions to those which resemble them, and, in some sort, supplies the place of long experienced good qualities. Let us recollect our first conversations with people whose age and situation in life had parity with ours. It is, perhaps, not often that any of them shall be found to have passed in absolute indifference, though the degree of attraction or repulsion in each might be widely different.

I am strongly tempted to rely upon this involuntary bias. Young as I am, my experience must be very limited; but hitherto I have not often found

these first-sight impressions deceive me. On the contrary, the disappointments I have met with in my friendships generally resulted from people with whom circumstances of mutual convenience had united me in a slow progressive regard, which had gradually subdued the force of primary impressions that were not in their favour.

Yet I must not permit you to suppose that my youthful, perhaps enthusiastic credulity, extends so far as to adopt the idea, either in friendship or love, of the one only kindred spirit destined to subdue our hearts, if of the other sex, or to engross our whole stock of amity, if of our own; but I do religiously believe that Nature, or rather the God of Nature, has formed the human mind into different classes, and that there can be no enduring happiness in any connection for dispositions which are not of the same order of mind.

In love, the impermanent pleasures of the eye eternally mislead uncongenial spirits into bands which are legally indissoluble. Hence that matrimonial infelicity which we often see exist between persons, neither of whom are unamiable; where each, in a better-suited connection, might have found that comfort which they lost, by not attending to the dissimilarity of their tastes and pursuits; a dissimilarity which ought to have shewn them the impossibility of

finding it in each other's society, and have restrained them from wandering out of their own class.

Friendship, less influenced than love by the intoxication of the eye, is less apt to lead the soul out of her bounds; yet sometimes, in the choice of friends, even thinking minds are dazzled by the glitter of superficial attractions, and caught by the fascination of a smile; and oftener still, as I before observed, circumstances of convenience, consciousness of obligation, or reverence for imputed virtues, shall over-rule the want of native sympathy in the formation of friendship.

Such friendship, however, is mighty apt to be suddenly dissolved. Their acquaintance wonder, and the parties themselves wonder at the ease with which they had mutually renounced communication, that, from its frequency, might well be supposed to have been important to their happiness. But, in reality, there is little marvel in the matter. Friendship not having, like marriage, a legal indissolubility, the connection which convenience or accident had formed, we are not to wonder if convenience or accident dissolves.

Still less ought we to wonder that attachments quickly vanish which were founded upon the airy nothings of superficial attractions. They are, indeed, but as "the baseless fabric of a vision." Yet it were well, if, like a vision, they left no wreck behind.—

Alas! they are too apt to leave wrecks, most properly so called, which shall prove, through life, the long-repented folly of ill-placed confidence.

And now, dear Emma, are you not ready to ask your friend wherefore she moralizes thus sententiously, at an age when it is more natural, perhaps more pleasing, to feel lively impressions, than to analyze them? There is a wherefore. I have been called romantic. It is my wish that you should better know the heart in which you possess so lively an interest.

My sensibilities are poignant;—my credulity has all the warmth of youthful ingenuousness; but, in truth, the romance of your friend's disposition did not survive her last robe-coat above a couple of years.

That fervent inclination, which, in our first interview, seemed to attach us mutually, has, I flatter myself, a very different foundation from the giddy violence of novel-reading misses, who plight their first-sight friendships with solemn earnestness, because they think it pretty and becoming to have plighted friendships, and because their vanity pants to impart the conquests of the preceding ball. Such nymphs should have this motto on their samplers:

> "We swear eternal truth—but say, my friend,
> "What day, next week, th' eternity shall end?"

I can recollect, ah! it is not such an age ago, when

I protested friendship a little in this style; when my pleased heart swelled with conscious importance at the idea of exciting tender sighs and penseroso glances at fourteen, and longed to disclose the triumph.

Though this was in my sallad days, as Cleopatra says, "when I was green in judgement," yet, believe me, I still blush for that solemn farce of professed confidence which introduced the disclosure of the mighty secret.

Our minds have, I trust, more lasting bands of union. They are, shall I not venture to say, amiable, generous, and sincere; and, what will secure duration to these bands of the same class? Amity towards each other descends to us by inheritance; our mothers passed the halcyon days of youth together. Loveliness was around them as a light, and envy never made them shrink from the lustre of each other's graces. They said, when last they met, a little before the death of your excellent parent, "our children will love each other." Shall they be mistaken? My heart says no! and I dare trust the kind response of yours.

* * * * * * * * *

P. S. You talked of reading the New Eloisa; throw it aside, I beseech you.

LICHFIELD, OCT. 1762.

MY dear Emma acknowledges, that, in her eyes, Capt. L—— is something more than handsome;—that he has interested her attentions; yet she hopes this impression will never amount to love, because she fears he is fickle and libertine, practised also in the wiles of pretended attachment. She even acknowledges that, were she convinced of the reality of his affection, and the purity of his morals, she should yet fear that his mind is not of the congenial class.

Ah! then, let us beg of Fate to nip this passion in the bud; for passion, I am afraid, it already is. O! the dangerous influence of the eye! Justly does Clarissa exclaim, "Wicked, wicked misleader!"

You ask me, if I expected implicit obedience when I bade you throw aside Eloisa. I cannot say I did, but I meant to hint my opinion of its very softening tendency.

It is a book which all young men should read, and the young women avoid, except they have been educated in the flutter of high life. The Lady Harriots of the age, of whom that excellent poem in Dodsley,

"The Modern Fine Lady," is so exact a portrait, might perhaps do well to soften their vain and selfish hearts, by the impassioned and beautiful pages of the Eloisa; since love, in its most enthusiastic excess, has no hazard to principle and to happiness so desperate as pride; boundless dissipation and unprincipled extravagance being in their train.

I said also, that I thought our young men should read Eloisa, and these are my reasons. Among the modern youth, satiric contempt of tender attachment has succeeded to the enamoured Quixotism of former times. With that sex, since chastity, unfortunately for it, is not the point of honour, no guard can be substituted for masculine purity, so likely to preserve it from the fatal effects of debauched habits, as a fervent and constant passion for a refined and amiable woman. But love has no foe so formidable as ridicule; and the natural passions are, in general, found to be less potent than the artificial ones, if the latter are inspired and hallowed by fashion. As an antidote to the bane of her satire, I would present to our male youth the Eloisa of Rousseau.

When that same arbitrary, though fickle power, gave her sanction to enamoured Constancy, it was better for the morality and for the happiness of both sexes; but now, that she shrinks from the bosom of our young men, blighted by the dread laugh of fa-

shionable circles, what is the consequence? Nature may be perverted, but she cannot be subdued. Constitutional fervour, so much stronger in that sex than in ours, snatches at casual and indiscriminate gratification.

Habits of sensuality once established, the heart becomes cold and impenetrable amidst the indelicate indulgence of the senses, and loses all power of sympathizing truly and equally, with the genuine and joy-bestowing tenderness of uncorrupted sensibility. The libertine is not aware how much of real voluptuousness his libertinism costs him.

Were I a parent, I would infinitely rather that my son's talents were buried in obscurity with a breeding wife and a scanty fortune, dead to wealth and fame, but alive, in every nerve, to domestic comfort and affection, than see him in an elegant drawing-room, yawning under the ennui of exhausted pleasures, and in the (at best to him) insipid society of a rich wife, whose (perhaps) amiable qualities not having previously seized his heart, and warmed his imagination, want power to inspirit his attention or awaken his tenderness.

Such lethargy is an incurable disease of the soul, and would prove more fatal to his virtue and to his happiness, than all the thorns of care and anxiety with which inauspicious fortune might surround the roses of his youth.

As a preservation from such wretched insensibility, when I have sons, they shall read Eloisa; but, for my daughters, should I have daughters, amidst the pure, the gentle, the affectionate sentiments which their domestic education must necessarily inspire, they will have too much sensibility not to render an increase of it by such means, dangerous to their peace, perhaps to their fame and safety. Without having read the softening Eloisa, they will bring a larger portion of tenderness to the arms of their husband, than they can have a tolerable chance of seeing returned by the modern race of men.

Beneath the impression of these ideas, you will not wonder that I wish this fascinating book had not, at this juncture, fallen into the hands of one of the most affectionate and gentle of her sex, abounding, as it does, with lavish fuel to a kindling attachment.

I knew you would not like the two last volumes so well as the former. If you have finished the fourth, tell me if you do not feel some how disgusted with Clara's passion? She, who had so long been acquainted with the amiable philosopher!—Confidante to both the lovers!—Herself married in the intervening period! Then, to see the widow's passion come lagging, like a distanced horse, when the ardent race of love, which St Preaux and the lovely Eloisa had run, was just finished! It appears to me strange and unnatural.

In the sphere of friendship, Clara shone with unclouded light; but an unreciprocal passion for the lover of Eloisa seems not congenial to a turn of mind more sprightly than tender, more reasonable than enamoured; and it sullies the lustre of her exertions to make them happy, while it was probable they might be united, and to save them from themselves, when their separation became necessary.

I see the author's design, that it was to exalt the constancy of St Preaux; but I think a new object had better have been introduced for that purpose.

We will take our leave, for the present, of these philosophic lovers; but I must not take my leave of you without some notice of the conclusion of your letter, in which you tell me, that you shall expect reciprocal confidence, and proceed to question me about the situation of my own heart.

I meant to have gratified this obliging curiosity in my present letter; but it is already long, and, were I now to resign the pen to egotism, that prating gossip would be likely enough to swell it into voluminous extent. There is no end of the tissues which, Arachne-like, she spins out of her own bowels. A page or two, in my next, may perhaps find room for her cobwebs. Adieu!

LICHFIELD, Nov. 1762.

* * * * * * * * *

I am glad you approve my reasoning respecting the Eloisa, though you had not resolution to take my advice of throwing it aside; that you agree with me in thinking the study of those tender pages best confined to our male youth, upon whom a little enthusiasm might be of infinite use in checking the fashionable prevalence of Epicurean love.

Estimable and honoured through the ages which have elapsed since his death, has been the character of Petrarch, a young Italian ecclesiastic, and one of the most celebrated poets of that country. He preserved a tender and hopeless passion for the beautiful, the virtuous, the wedded Laura, during 30 years; and, at the expiration of that time, was a sincere mourner for her death, which happened from that dire contagion, the plague, then raging at Avignon. Laura was a native of that city, from whose environs Petrarch could never tear himself after he had, during his visit there, accidentally beheld her, the then too charming bride of a young French nobleman.

He often used to retire to a romantic valley in the neighbourhood, to sooth his troubled passions by the composition of his celebrated sonnets, and to render vocal all its echoes.

I am told no ingenious traveller visits Avignon without exploring the Vale of Vaucluse; and, with the thrill of local enthusiasm, tracing up the windings of the crystal Sorgue to their source in that fountain, whose waters, of an immeasurable depth, sleep in a spacious cavern that seems scooped in the rocks, and is overshadowed by their summits.

This fountain, with the surrounding scenery, and the charms of Laura, whose summer residence was in that valley, are immortalized by the beauty of the sonnets, which paint them in all the glow of poetic colouring.

A gentleman danced with me at our last assembly, who had explored this valley, and seemed pleased to see me eagerly listen to his descriptions of its features. He also contrived to give me some idea of those applauded sonnets. I long to see a fine translation * of them into our own language.

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* At the period in which these letters were written, Sir William Jones had not published his Miscellany, containing such very beautiful specimens, in English, of the ideas and style of that elegant Italian poet. Neither was his history then so known as it is now.

How I regretted every summons to rejoin the dance with a partner so capable of making the conversational interlude the most agreeable part of the evening's amusement! He was a stranger, and, though he looked like a gentleman, the graces of countenance and figure were not his; he danced very indifferently, yet, believe me, I would not have exchanged my partner for any of the handsome militaries that made the ball so gay.

While he talked to me of a poet so renowned, so enamoured, and so faithful; of Vaucluse and of Laura, the following apostrophe to Petrarch's memory, in Lyttleton's enchanting Monody, rushed upon my spirit, and increased the animation with which I listened:

Arise, O Petrarch! from th' Elysian bowers,
With never-fading myrtles twined,
And fragrant with ambrosial flowers,
Where, to thy Laura, thou again art joined!
Arise! and hither bring the silver lyre!
Tuned by thy skilful hand,
To the soft notes of elegant desire,
With which, o'er many a land,
Was spread the fame of thy disastrous love!

If Petrarch was not happy, he was illustrious. Fruitless regrets, and tender sorrows, whose indulgence sooths, though it cannot avail, are not misery; and, having a tendency to refine and exalt the spirit

above the gross gratifications of indiscriminate connections, are a thousand times more desirable than the pleasures, falsely so called, of a gay dissipated young man of the present age, who laughs at sentiment, and fancies he knows the sex.

Never may the peace of any friend of mine be dependent upon such a being! I am, &c.

LICHFIELD, Nov. 1762.

* * * * * * * * *

YOU enquire after our studies. We have been lately engaged in exploring the inestimable treasure which had, during so many ages, lain concealed in the darkness of the Erse language. Macpherson has kindly and ably drawn aside the curtain, and the venerable bards, the mighty heroes, the maids of Caledonia and Ierne, with the spirits of the airy halls, come forward, and, with just and graceful dignity, assert their claims to ancient honours, and to an high station on classic ground.

I find fastidious people affect to question the originality of Ossian; but we have the sanction of Lord

Lyttleton's opinion, with that of other learned men, to abet the force of our conviction that the bold ideas, and sublime imagery of these fragments, are not the composition of modern genius, though it may have drawn out, enlarged, blended, and connected them. There is a daring spirit in this work, resembling that of the sacred writings; a great blaze of imagination, but it is the random fire of the ruder ages.

Stranger, as was the author of these sombre dramas, to the sciences and arts, even to agriculture itself, and therefore excluded from the immense resources which they yield to the poet; yet, by the force of native genius, the grandly simple objects, which an uncultivated, and almost desert country could produce, are found sufficient for the sublimest purposes of illustration, description, and imagery. We must add, however, by the aid of superstition, which supplied the old bard with very fine machinery from the changing form of the clouds, and from the evolutions of the Aurora Borealis.

Sweet was the harp, and lofty was its tone,
To which the bards of Scotia's ancient race
Warbled, in notes majestic, soft, and full,
The tales of other times;—her hardy sons,
Fleet in the chace, and warring with the chiefs
Of green Ierne!—Yet, I ween, there are,
Who, coldly listening to the lofty songs,
Pronounce them cloying; that they still present
A round of the same images; the sun,

The moon and stars, the mists, the blast, the storm,
And raging whirlwind; with the reedy lake,
Grey stream, and barren hill, and broken rock,
And heath, and starting roe, and aged tree,
That waves its branches o'er the mossy stone,
Which, frequent rising in the hunter's path,
Guards breathless chiefs, dim in the narrow house;
And ocean darkly rolling, or, beneath
The beam of morn, blue gleaming, far and wide;
With ships that bound before the swelling gale,
And clouds, whose spirits talk on midnight winds.

These, as the voice of Candour will confess,
Are limited resources; yet she deems
The cold complaint inaccurate. We know
Objects that seem the same to the dull powers
Of common observation, in new lights
Presented, bring the susceptible mind,
Warmly awake to picturesque effect,
And all its nice varieties, no sense
That blunts the spirit by satiety.

Have I not seen the young Hortensius stand
Musing, with folded arms and raptured gaze,
On those effects, so simple, yet sublime,
Of light and shadow? while an heap of stones,
Piled rudely in the corner of a cave,
Had caught his eye, as glanced the setting sun
Into the gloomy arch. So 'tis with those
Whose quick perceptions catch the varied tints
Of coyly shifting radiance, from the powers
Of poetry, that paints. They little heed
How frequently an object meets their gaze,
If seen in new position; or if light
More soft, or brilliant, strike upon the form,
Or half involved in deeper shade it stands.

You see my pen took the whim of concluding in numbers its observations on Ossian's poetry. And now let the objects of the imagination recede, and the affairs of the heart resume their place on my paper. Those of mine were sufficiently discussed in my last letter.

The business of yours is much more interesting, because it is more full of hazard. I am in the quiet harbour of a probably life-long absence from him to whose pilotism I had resigned my sensibility on the dangerous sea of love; but we kept, as you see, pretty near the coast, and the worst evil I had to encounter, on a voyage which reason must deem a fruitless one, was the pain of absence. Disappointment I could not know, since no illusive Hymeneal hopes had hung out false lights in my brain-built watch-tower. But, for you, I fear the rocks and quicksands of an improsperous and unequal marriage; a marriage of mental inequality, which is the very worst sort.

You start, and repeat what you said in your last, that you do not think there is any strong attachment on either side. He has not yet declared himself your lover; he has "only been attentive, respectful, insinuating!"

Dangerous wretch!—For is he not a libertine? and do we not know, from the destiny and feelings of one dear and amiable friend, from those pensive

smiles which so superficially cover an aching heart, how incompetent even the kindness of a libertine husband to the happiness of a woman of delicacy!

A being of this order may temporarily assume that softness of manners, which a very little observation would teach him is necessary to subdue the heart of such a woman as yourself; but he is incapable, after they have obtained their purpose, of preserving this refined respect and engaging tenderness. The habits of his life militate against them, and those will resume all their wounding coarseness in the bosom of security.

If he should treat you, after marriage, with tolerable kindness and good nature, it is the best you have reasonably to expect. What counterpoise, in the scale of happiness, can be formed by that *best* against the delights you must renounce in the morning of your youth?—the bright prospects of hope, whose animating charm is heightened by uncertainty; and those precious hours from seventeen to twenty-one, which an intelligent young woman will employ in such a cultivation of her talents, as shall accomplish her for a companion to a man of sense and knowledge; for the momentous task of educating her children properly when she becomes a mother, and give her the pleasing power of diffusing the spirit of intellectual refinement wherever she goes, and of providing better resources against the

lassitude of declining life, than can be supplied by that annihilator of ideas, the card-table?

My dearest friend, take your resolution in time. Love is seldom to be subdued, except at its first onset; and every hour, by which you prolong your stay within eye-shot of the enemy, renders the victory more doubtful. Justly does Madame d'Enclos observe, that, "in the amorous warfare, the Parthian exercise is the best discipline."

Determine, therefore, to quit Shrewsbury as soon as possible. London, however, is not the best place of retreat. An attached heart, in the absence of its object, may find that solitude in crowded rooms, and in the whirl of dissipation, which, in quiet though not absolute retirement, the attentions of friendship will, with industrious kindness, preclude; conscious that the solitude of abstracted musing presents fuel to the dangerous fires of hazardous or ineffectual love.

Return to Lichfield to me for the remainder of the winter! We will banish all mention of Mr L——, which is a much better method than abusing him. We will read ingenious authors, who shall rather give our minds new ideas from the stores of science and observation, than increase the susceptibility of our hearts. We will even venture to criticise, as well as admire those authors, since the brightest gem has some sullying vein, and since the sun itself has its spots.

The little Honora, who recites with the most perfect justness, and whose comprehension is wonderful in such a child, shall read to us while we work, and so cultivate her own fast-springing talents, while she amuses and improves us.

The winter evenings, thus beguiled, will not seem long. We shall not sigh for the viol and the harp to drown the noise of storms, which we shall not hear, or of the drops from the eaves, which we shall not count.

Without possessing much of that faculty called genius, my sister has a very intelligent mind; her taste for poetry, and for every kind of ingenious composition, is delicate, judicious, and awakened.

Yes! my dear Emma, we will employ ourselves from morn to midnight, and the idea of Mr L. shall quickly fade away:

> "For mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell,
> "It fell upon a little western flower,
> "Before milk-white, now purple with Love's wound,
> "And maidens call it love in idleness."

Adieu! adieu!

LICHFIELD, JAN. 1763.

THERE are, as you justly observe, other faults in the Eloisa besides its too softening influence upon the female heart, and the unpleasant effect of Clara's passion for the philosopher, so visibly introduced for the purpose of giving eclat to his constancy, which, though forsaken and renounced by Eloisa, he still preserves. I like that he should be put to a test of that sort, by the attentions of a charming woman; but that woman should not have been Clara.

We must greatly regret the affectation of singularity, which betrays so fine a writer into vain attempts of reconciling irreconcilable contrarieties; that the eccentric fervours of a luxuriant imagination should so often bewilder his better sense in the labyrinths of sophistry, till the distinctions of right and wrong are blended and lost.

Yet insensibility alone can doubt that this work abounds with the enchanting effusions of true genius; and prejudice only will attempt to deny that we find an infinite number of remarks, as just as they are new, interspersed through its pages, for the wise regulation of human conduct in the interesting and varied situations of real life.

Two of St Preaux' letters to Lord B——, and one to Mrs Orbe, are not, as beautiful compositions, excelled by any thing I have read. The first describes his return to Vevai, to Clarens, and Eloisa, after an eight years' absence, when, in that interval, she was become a wife and mother.

Ah! what a touching history does that letter contain of the genuine feelings, the strong conflicting agitations of an impassioned heart, in the most trying of all imaginable situations!

The other letter to Lord B. has very different features; I know not whether of more excellence, for that, perhaps, is not possible, but certainly of more sublimity. It contains the history of the expedition to Meillerie. St Preaux' solemn apostrophe to Eloisa is striking past expression, on shewing her the cypher of her name on the rocks, which he had engraven, in a thousand places, so many years before, interwoven with enamoured verses, characteristic of his then situation.

How we tremble for them both, when he ventures to remind her of the time he had past in contemplating her idea beneath those very rocks, when they were covered with snow, and surrounded by frozen torrents; the dreary silence only interrupted by the howl of the wintry winds, and, at intervals, by the cries of the crow, and the screams of the eagle

Then, in their return across the lake, the horrid

temptation which seizes St Preaux to plunge into its waters with a mistress, irrecoverably lost to his hopes, yet still so passionately adored! and the mutual and final conflicts, in the boat, of a passion with so much difficulty vanquished!

The third letter is addressed to Mrs Orbe. It speaks to her of his dream; of that fatal and impalpable veil it represented! Surely no language, even with all the heightening powers of poetry, can bind the attention, the imagination, and the heart, in stronger fetters than those by which they are chained in perusing those three epistles!

Not any instance of supernatural agency in Shakespeare or Milton; not the ghost of Fingal in Ossian, that fleets to Connal on the midnight blast, as he lay beneath the aged tree, when dim and in tears it stood, and stretched its pale hand over the hero!—nor "the spirit which passed before the face of Job in the silence of the night, when deep sleep had fallen on men, and when, though it stood still, he could not discern the form thereof!"—Not any, nor all of these, have more of that sublimity produced by a mixture of pathos, horror, and obscurity, than the impenetrable veil which foretells the death of Eloisa.

You delight me by promising to dedicate your first leisure to the perusal of the Caledonian bard. Infinitely harmonious, though not measured, his mourn-

ful strains will be soothing to your ear, and his sombre imagery graceful in your eye. These strains are in poetry, what the tones of the Æolian harp are in music.

Perhaps you may not find your attention quite so much wrapt as mine in the perusal; for I have a natural prepossession in favour of Ossianic scenery; born, and nursed as I was, in the craggy heights of Derbyshire, and remaining there till six years old.

Immense mountains, dusky beneath the parching and unshaded beams of summer, and, in the fading year, partially or wholly swallowed up by autumnal mists, or covered, for a long duration, by winter's snows; the blue and narrow stream, rushing from the stony hills, frowning rocks, broken and vast, silent and lonely vallies,—these were the objects that met my infant eyes, and stampt on my young imagination an awful reverence of their dignity.

Blended society has a very exhilarating effect upon my spirits. Under its influence, I become heedless and volatile; but the instant I am alone, or conversing freely with my sister, or with any friend, whose taste has sympathy with mine, the sombre graces resume all their influence, their original possession, in my mind.

You will imagine, then, how poetry of this kind must interest and charm me. I feel myself at home

upon the heaths of Malmor, by the roaring torrents of Clutha, and on the green hills of Inisfail.

Adieu!

LICHFIELD, FEB. 1763.

You tell me I had but too faithfully conceived the situation of your mind, on going into public circles; and you tell me also, that he, whose image thus perpetually intrudes on your imagination, has been repeatedly, by your order, denied admittance on his morning visits, though you could not see him walk up to the door, and return from it, as you sat reading in the parlour, without very distressing emotion; that, but for my reasoning on the subject, you know not if you could have kept your resolution. Ah! how it gratifies me to hope that I may have been the means of preserving my friend from a destiny so unworthy of her virtues

You saw him afterwards at the play, and replied to the regrets he expressed about never finding you at home, only by a distant curtsy. Brava! my charming heroine! The victory, seldomest and hardest to be obtained, will be yours.

Of what flowers shall I twine your wreath of triumph? The warrior has his laurel, the poet his bays, and the lovers have their myrtle; but of the amaranth, the unfading amaranth, should her garland be formed, in whose consideration the peace of the future has prevailed over the delights of the present.

You insist upon my saying more of myself in this letter; observe, that you hear I have often written verses, and question me concerning their subjects. There will be no great difficulty in obeying you. Self-love, which has neither soul-harrowing sorrow, nor cutting mortification, to reveal, seldom finds the path of egotism thorny. Your partial estimation of my talents, and your question about my verses, now point to that path. If your attention should grow weary in following me through its mazes, you must thank yourself.

It is true that I have written verses, but it is not true that I have written them often. A propensity of that sort appeared early in my infancy. At first my father encouraged it, but my mother threw cold water on the rising fires; and even my father ceased to smile encouragement upon these attempts after my 16th year, in which Dr Darwin unluckily told him, that his daughter's verses were better than his; a piece of arch injustice to my father's muse, which disgusted him with mine.

Some few people, besides yourself, have fancied that I had genius. Whether they are, or are not mistaken, it cannot be for me to determine; but certainly Lichfield is now an inauspicious soil for nourishing to maturity that sensitive plant.

It is true I dwell on classic ground. Within the walls which my father's family inhabits, in this very dining-room, the munificent Mr Walmesley, with the taste, the learning, and the liberality of Mæcenas, administered to rising genius the kind nutriment of attention and praise. Often to his hospitable board were the school-boys, David Garrick and Samuel Johnson, summoned. The parents of the former were of Mr Walmesley's acquaintance; but those of the latter did not move in his sphere.

It was rumoured that my mother's father, Mr Hunter, had a boy of marked ability upon his forms. The huge, over-grown, mis-shapen, and probably dirty stripling was brought before the most able scholar and the finest gentleman in Lichfield, or its environs, who, perceiving far more ability than even rumour had promised, placed him at his table, not merely to gratify a transient curiosity, but to assure him of a constant welcome.

Two or three evenings every week, Mr Walmesley called the stupendous stripling, and his livelier companion, David Garrick, who was a few years younger, to his own plentiful board. There, in the hours

of convivial gaiety, did he delight to wave every restraint of superiority formed by rank, affluence, polished manners, and the dignity of advanced life; and there, "as man to man, as friend to friend," he drew forth the different powers of each expanding spirit, by the vivid interchange of sentiment and opinion, and by the cheering influence of generous applause.

Another circumstance combined to heighten the merit of this patronage. Mr Walmesley was a zealous Whig. My grandfather, then master of the free school, perceiving Johnson's abilities, had, to his own honour, taken as much pains with him as with the young gentlemen whose parents paid an high price for their pupilage; but my grandfather was a Jacobite, and Sam. Johnson had imbibed his master's absurd zeal for the forfeit rights of the house of Stuart; and this, though his father had very loya principles; but the anxiety attendant on penurious circumstances, probably left old Johnson little leisure or inclination to talk on political subjects.

His son, I am told, even at that early period of life, maintained his opinions, on every subject, with the same sturdy, dogmatical, and arrogant fierceness with which he now overbears all opposition to them in company.

At present, we can well conceive the probability of his dogmatism being patiently supported by at-

tending admirers, awed by the literary eminence on which he stands. But how great must have been Mr Walmesley's love of genius; how great his generous respect for its dependent situation, that could so far restrain a naturally impetuous temper, as to induce him to suffer insolent sallies from the son of an indigent bookseller, and on a subject which, so handled by people of his own rank, he would have dashed back in their faces with no small degree of asperity!

My father wrote the following epitaph on Mr Walmesley: I send it to you, because it is what epitaphs so seldom are,—characteristic. I am sure you will be interested in conceiving a just idea of the first patron of our modern Roscius, and of the illustrious author of the Rambler:

Reader, if Science, Truth, and Reason charm,
If social charities thy bosom warm;
If smiling Bounty ope thy heart and door,
If Justice style thee guardian of the poor;
Firm to Britannia's liberties and laws,
If Freedom fire thee in their sacred cause,
With sympathetic grief these relics see,
Yet think not Walmesley dead—he lives in thee.

But, if thy country's rights thou would'st betray,
And barter laws for arbitrary sway;
If, Briton-born, thy soul's a Gallic slave,
Start from his tomb he would, and call thee fool and knave.

Prior tells us, that every man of ability should,

either by the compass, the pencil, the pen, or the sword, leave his name in life's visit. With all Mr Walmesley's knowledge, accomplishments, taste, and munificence, not having stept out in any public line of literature, his name must have passed into oblivion, had he not been the first who distinguished his illustrious townsmen.

By that circumstance, he rendered his memory immortal as the talents he drew forth. While Johnson and Garrick are remembered, their first patron will not be forgotten. Who is there of a soul so grovelling, as would not wish for their memories an honourable immortality?

> "Fame is the spur which the clear spirit doth raise,
> "That last infirmity of noble minds!"

How inconceivable, then, is the idiotism of short-sighted pride, which affects to associate only with people of a certain rank, and which induces the gentlemen, as they call themselves, to preclude from their reputation the glory of having been able to discern genius, and to raise it from obscurity!

I speak not from any selfish consideration. Whatever little talents I may possess, they have not to struggle up to the notice of my neighbours from the gloom of an inferior station. My father is a gentleman by birth and by his profession; a scholar by

education; and, being canon of this cathedral, his daughter necessarily converses on terms of equality with the proudest inhabitants of our little city; but they perceive nothing of those uncommon talents with which your partiality has invested her.

Attention and praise are the summer-suns that must unfold and ripen the germs of imagination, ere they can possibly produce fruit worthy the taste of the public.

Had it been my lot to have been animated by the smiles, and sustained and encouraged in my studies, and in my little sallies of poetic invention, by the applause of a Walmesley, I might perhaps have ventured myself among the candidates for the literary palms.

But may it not be better as it is? Let me be contented with being happy, without sighing that I am not distinguished. Ah! who knows from what painful solicitudes my obscurity may have preserved me!

My epistle grows long. You were, however, snatched from the mazes through which the pleasure of talking about myself might have led you, by my pen having started back into brighter and more interesting scenes; scenes that, once passing beneath this roof, have stamped a local distinction upon the palace of the Bishop of Lichfield, beyond the power of the crosier or the mitre to bestow.

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LICHFIELD, FEB. 1763.

YOU say you know many who profess to admire the Rambler, and yet declare war against poetry.—'Tis very likely; the family of the pretenders is numerous: but, be assured, the incapacity of comprehending the excellencies of Johnson's Essays must be inevitable to those who have no taste for poetry.

It is not the rhymes or measures of poetry which are either unintelligible or disgusting to the tribe of the prosers; but it is the imagery, whose strength and grace they can no more perceive than they can discern the beauty of Raphael's, or the force of Michael Angelo's figures. It is the resemblance between objects, which, when shadowed forth in metaphor, they cannot trace; it is these which puzzle, and make them say, with truth, to the poet:

> "Thou see'st a form I cannot see,
> Which hurries thee away."

Now, no poetry is more lavish in the use of imagery and metaphor than the prose of Samuel Johnson.

I conceive the possibility even of people who have a tuneless ear, and an insensible imagination, receiving genuine pleasure from Shakespeare's plays, provided such people possess strong common sense; and this notwithstanding the higher poetic graces of figure and allusion, of which they can have so little comprehension, and in which the plays of Shakespeare so luxuriantly abound; since, to incident, to character, to humour, sometimes to wit, and always to the force of those passions, strongly delineated, and whose influence is universal, the merest prosers are awakened. No palate, capable of relishing any intellectual food, but may feed with avidity at the table of that mighty master, upon which, kings and pedlars, ghosts and jesters, witches and tapsters, pathos and obscenity, murder and fun, are served up in exhaustless variety.

It is not so with Milton, or the Johnson of this century. Neither of their writings contain any of that universally acceptable ingredient, humour.—Their pens always remain in the higher latitudes of abstract ideas, of ornamented and figurative language. The comprehension of the prosers have neither respiration nor inspiration on these mental heights.

If I have spoken ludicrously of that blended mass of character and style which constitutes the drama

of Shakespeare, you must not, therefore, suppose that I meant any reflection on the greatest and dearest of our fine writers.

The world is exactly that motley mixture; and, to the world, it is the highest duty of the dramatic poet to hold a faithful mirror, which ought to reflect something, at least, of all which is found there.

To every capacity, not fastidiously diseased by the senseless jargon of the ancients respecting the dignity of the drama, and the indispensability of its unities, how much more interesting is the concourse of men and women in Shakespeare's tragedies, than the synods of heroes and heroines exhibited by those dramatic poets who bend their vassal fancy to the despot Aristotle, as he sits on the shelves of the pedants, his dusty throne clothed in the majesty of elapsed ages!

How coldly does that Grecian critic sacrifice the lively interest created by a concentered display of more striking events than could have happened in the course of a few hours, and by the introduction of the varied manners resulting from a bold change of scene from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom!—How coldly, I say, does he sacrifice them to the imaginary difficulty of an audience accompanying their poet through his local transitions, and when he outstrips the slow foot of Time!

Few are the instances, though there have been some,

where any period of any man's life, not exceeding a few hours, has been sufficiently eventful to preserve the dramatist, who represents it, from the necessity of substituting common-place sentiments for awakening incidents, and frigid declamation for the warm sallies of the heart, kindling beneath the impression of new and trying situations. When I first began to read, with a discriminating propensity, and to compare the unfettered plans of Shakespeare with the more correct and regular, though infinitely less interesting ones, of his celebrated rivals, it appeared to me, that he was not more happy in the superiority of his genius to theirs, than in his bold contempt of the restrictions to which they submitted. It was this contempt which enabled him to shew us, in the course of a single play, a group of characters, who, instead of declaiming about and about one interesting event, occupying the space only of a few hours, exhibit, in different views, their characteristic peculiarities, beneath the animating force of various and contrasted circumstances, which demand the supposed elapse of weeks, perhaps months, and sometimes even years, that they may be arranged naturally, and produce their proper effect.

Thus, when several striking events in the lives of interesting persons, whether real or imaginary, are brought to the eye in a dramatic focus, their effect

is like that of the sun's rays collected in a burning glass, and the sensibilities of the audience catch fire.

The other day I conversed with a gentleman, who spoke to me of having lately heard our great Johnson declaim, in a large circle, upon the frigid consequences that must generally result from the poet's adherence to the Grecian rules for the drama.

Amongst other plain reasons against their necessity, this gentleman told me, Johnson strongly insisted that it was more easy for the imagination to pursue Posthumus from London to Rome, and back again as rapidly to the British coast, than it was to consider the stage as the palace of Cymbeline; that, if the imagination cannot accommodate itself to these local changes, and pass, at will, over any given portion of time, it will never, for a moment, present to us Mrs Cibber as Imogen, nor allow us to shed one tear over sorrows, of whose fiction it will, with dull vigilance, perpetually remind us.

It flatters me that my juvenile convictions on this subject meet the sanction of his approbation whose reasoning is all truth and day-light, when passion and prejudice do not warp its ingenuousness, and darken its lustre.

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LICHFIELD, FEB. 1763.

YOU say you are proud of the vivacity with which you have resumed your employments, to the exclusion of tender musings. You have a right to be so. It is beyond my hopes that you should so soon have shaken off this unwholesome mist from the morning sun of your youth.

The last words of that sentence bring to my recollection a pleasing little poem, to which, in infancy, I have often listened with delight from the lips of my mother, who used frequently to repeat it as she sat at work. She had learnt it from a lady who was the friend of her youth.

Wholly without literary curiosity, as she never saw it printed, so she never asked after the author; consequently, could give me no information on that subject. She had never taken the trouble of copying it; therefore was it mine as it was hers, by oral tradition, before I attained my tenth year. Its easy and tuneful numbers charmed my ear; and, with a great deal of giddy vivacity on a thousand occasions, I had yet an inherent fondness for seeing the perspectives of opening life through the clare-oscure

a meditative fancy, particularly where the sombre tints were ultimately prevalent.

Behold this little orphan ode, which I have searched for in vain through the pages of our poets:

How gaily is, at first, begun
  Our lives' uncertain race!
While that sprightly morning sun,
With which we first set out to run,
  Enlightens all the place!

How pleasing the world's prospect lies;
  How tempting to look through!
Parnassus to the poet's eyes,
Nor Beauty, with her sweet surprise,
  Can more inviting shew.

How promising the book of fate,
  Till rightly understood!
While partial hopes such lots create,
As do the youthful fancy cheat,
  With all that's great and good!

How fair the first ideas move,
  That wander in our mind!
How full the joy, how fair the love,
Which does that early season move,
  Like flowers the western wind!

Our sighs are then but vernal air,
  But April-drops our tears;
Which, swiftly passing, all grows fair,
While Beauty compensates our care,
  And Youth each vapour clears.

But, ah! too soon, alas! we climb,
  Scarce feeling we ascend,
The gently-rising hill of Time;
From whence, with grief, we view that prime,
  And all its sweetness end.

The dye once cast—our fortune known,
  Fond expectation past;
The seeds, that former years had sown,
To crops of late repentance grown,
  Thro' which we toil at last.

Then every care's a driving harm
  That helps to bear us down;
While fading smiles no more can charm,
But every tear's a wintry storm,
  And every look a frown.

Till, by succeeding ills opprest,
  For joys we hoped to find,
By age all rumpled and undrest,
We gladly sink us down to rest,
  Leave following crowds behind.

I do not apprehend this engaging poem to be either of very early or very late date; for it has neither the stiff quaintness which we see in the compositions of the second class of poets, in times long past, nor the polished accuracy of those who stand high on that line in the present century.

The ode opens beautifully, and the exclamations in the third and fourth stanza have the force of truth, and all the charm of pathetic sweetness, except that the pretty simile, which concludes the

fourth verse, wants verbal perspicuity. It means, evidently enough, that love and joy play upon the mind in that early season of life, like the western wind upon flowers; but,

"Like flowers the western wind,"

is a hard, and, under every license, an inadmissible inversion, while it hints, not expresses, the sense.

Till within the last half-century, poets seemed content to convey their ideas to the reader somewhat abortively. Shakespeare continually does it, and has therefore given scope to commentators, *ad infinitum*. They had spared themselves much fruitless trouble by recollecting that the privilege of hinting, instead of expressing a similitude, an image, or a reflection, was much claimed at that period, and, indeed, long after, and that Shakespeare availed himself of it very lavishly.

The remaining stanzas in this my favourite little ode, appear to me poetically faultless; as, alas! they are too certainly just. The eighth forms a fine antithesis to the fifth.

By the words, "second class of poets," in one of the above sentences, I by no means meant those of moderate genius; but I think no writer can justly, and, on deliberation, be deemed first-rate, if another, on his own line, is confessedly his superior.

Among our English poets, and of those only, alas! can I judge, the first class seems formed by those who are at the head of some particular branch in their science;—as Spencer of the allegoric; Shakespeare of the dramatic; Milton of the epic; Butler of the burlesque; Dryden, Pope, and Sam. Johnson, of the ethic, heroic, and satiric; Thomson of the descriptive; Prior of the narrative and epigrammatic; Gray of the lyric and elegiac; Shenstone of the pastoral.

Admitting the justice of my criterion for the formation of the first poetic classes amongst our authors, it must yet be confessed, that there are, in the second, bards of more exalted genius than some whose names have a right to be arranged in the first, as being first in their line of writing. For instance, Collins and Mason are much greater poets than Butler or Shenstone; but then they have, in Gray, a superior in their line, the lyric; and Butler and Shenstone have no equal in theirs, the burlesque and the pastoral. Pope's pastorals are more brilliant, but brilliance is out of character in that department.—They are less tender, less simple, less easy, and, therefore, as pastorals, less excellent. Gay's are vulgar, without being humourous. There can be nothing interesting to poetic readers in the genuine ideas of clodpoles and blowsy milk-maids, if the characters themselves are not rendered at least laugh-

able amidst their coarse employments and rude wassaling.

In Shenstone's poems we see the elegant, yet natural ideas of a man of imagination, taste, and sensibility, who, though versed in polite learning, is not ideally, but literally, devoted to the simplicity of pastoral life; superintending the health and safety of his own flocks and herds; leading the ductile pathway through the loveliest glade; the vagrant rill in those winding channels, so dear to beauty; and nourishing, in the bosom of his own vale, all the delicacy of social and friendly intercourse, and all the sweetness of enamoured affection.

I do not attempt to send you news; since neither love nor marriage, novel prosperity, or recent misfortune, have produced any change since I wrote to you last, in the situation or sentiments of those who interest you in our little city; and it is time to bid you adieu. My sister has brought my work-bag, with her own, down stairs for the evening. My father and mother are gone out to a card-party. The curtains are dropt, and the chill white world shut out. The candles shine chearily, and the fire burns bright in the clean hearth. Little Honora draws her chair to the table as I write, Hawksworth's Almoran and Hamet open in her hand. What a beautiful story!—How sublime its moral! Honora looks at me, her eyes sparkling with intellectual avidity.—

The young mind must not be deprived of its evening nutriment.

LICHFIELD, JUNE 1763.

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MY imagination paints, with all the animation of probable hope, the venerable remains of Roman antiquity, and the finest paintings on the globe; the beauty of Raphael, the grace of Guido, the tints of Titian, and the majesty of Michael Angelo; and such landscapes!

> "Whate'er Loraine light touch'd with softning hue,
> Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew."

While nature, in a climate which has been called her garden, shall show me scenes transcending the utmost powers of the pencil. We shall find them on the banks of the silver Arno, and in his glowing vallies encircled by woods, compared to whose heights, variety, and extent, the groves of Britain are thickets.

What a striking image of the sylvan luxuriance

of Italy is presented to us in a simile of Milton's, for the fallen angels:

> "Stretched on the oblivious pool of Erebus,
> ——————— as they lay entranced,
> Thick as autumnal leaves, that strew the brooks
> Of Valambrosa, where the Etrurian shades
> High over-arched embower."

I have heard my father say, that, when he was in Italy with Lord Charles Fitzroy, they travelled through Valambrosa in autumn, after the leaves had began to fall, and that their guide was obliged to try what was land and what water, by pushing a long pole before him, which he carried in his hand, the vale being so very irriguous, and the leaves so totally covering the surface of the streams.

In a country, sultry as Italy, when the trees are in full leaf, how grateful to the senses must be their lavish shade, in that valley, eternally fresh and green, from the springs that gush around their roots, and whose very branch finds a mirror in the shining waters!

Then the orchestra of the Italian cities!—their celebrated orchestra! But, beneath my expectations of its graces, no very warm enthusiasm kindles in my bosom. As to the powers of execution, both in the vocal and instrumental line, unprejudiced judges assure me, the best Italian performers find their way

to England; and what spirit that has melted, chilled, and glowed beneath the influence of Handel's strains of those different and contrasting passions, awakened to so much energy by his lofty harmonies, and angelic airs, can be more than transiently pleased with the cloying sweetness of one eternal love-song, varied only by the fury of aj ealous rant? I speak of the serious opera. The burlesque, or even convivial music of any country, is not much to my taste; and, in the graver line, can the most perfect tones of voice and instrument, the silver heights of the clear soprano, the trill, the shake, the brilliant execution, the artful and "long-drawn cadence," make amends for the sameness of their melodies, and the poverty respecting air, that renders their drumming basses contemptible?

After all, to what numbers do the Italian delicacies, as they are called, more than recompence the want of Handelian variety, pathos, and sublimity! Our polite people, it seems, desert the oratorios, and swarm in the opera-house.

It is a national disgrace; but I think it will not be a lasting one. Nature, and the generous perceptions, must awaken from this musical frivolity into which the sorcery of fashion, and the cunning of the Italian masters, have plunged them. The eclat of sublime genius, in almost every science, seems doomed to suffer a long suppression, ere it rises to its just le-

vel. Shakespeare's plays were, in a great measure, banished our stage, and, consequently, were familiar only to the few, from the time of Charles II., till Mr Garrick recalled them; and Milton had no general attention till Addison brought him forward.

Surely those who do really prefer an opera to an oratorio, must be more pleased with the modern tragedies than with those of Shakespeare! A trivial and effeminate taste will prevail alike in every science.

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LICHFIELD, JAN. 1764.

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AND so, my gentle Emma, you stood rebuked in the presence of two divines, for your preference of the Ramblers to the Spectators, which, it seems, they told you was little to be expected from the delicacy of female taste. Had I been present, they would have found me saucy enough to observe to them, that, if Johnson had, instead of being now alive, been dead as many years as Addison, they would themselves, with the whole literary world, have joined you in this preference.

Let us examine the subject still farther; and, as my last letter hovered with you over a little blossoming myrtle, an ornament of the Lichfield groves, we will, if you please, wander beneath the shade of that majestic oak which took its first root in this valley, was transplanted while yet a sapling, and now spreads wide its ample arms in the forests of literature. But, to drop the metaphor, which, by the way, does not run very well on all four, the words valley and forest forming an imperfect sentence; the first being literally the birth-place of Johnson, the second figuratively shadowing forth his present situation in the learned world; but whip such pedants, even if this letter were to be read to scholars, who shall demand precision in the allusions of an imagination which has but just imbibed the warmth of twenty summers. Alas! of the soft and musically-sounding teens, I took an eternal farewell the 12th of last December.

It was the unpleasantest birth-day I ever experienced; a sort of funereal sadness hung about my heart, and reflection tolled the knell of departed girlhood. But you will reproach me, that, after having promised to lead you amidst the branches of the great literary oak, I yet linger beneath the willows of egotism.

We will hasten from under their shade, and unite in pondering at the strange inaccuracy of general opinion, concerning the writings of our illustrious

Lichfieldian. They are allowed to abound in matter, and to have great force, but are deemed rough and inharmonious. We hear much of the elegance and mellifluent construction of Addison's language, and of the hard, unmanagable style of Samuel Johnson.

Now, that his long and uncommon words, derived from the dead languages, and so lavishly interwoven with his own, have sometimes an unhappy, and even ridiculous effect upon the flow of his periods, must be granted; but that they, in general, give them added grace and sweetness, is no less true. Greek and Latin being so much higher voweled than English, a liberal intermixture of words, springing from their roots, must surely render the style more graceful and sonorous.

> "The tongues, united, sweeter sounds produce,
> "Like Chian mixed with the Falernian juice."
>
> ADDISON, from Horace.

The language of Addison appears to me as only possessing distinguished excellence from comparing it with that of his contemporary writers; and even then we should except some of them, Bolingbroke and Swift for instance, who wrote prose at least as well; that, compared with the style of our present best essayists, it is neither remarkably perspicuous nor remarkably musical. He often uses more words than are necessary to express his sense, and that ha-

bit has always a tendency to confuse and enfeeble his diction. Then he frequently finishes his sentence with insignificant words, such as, *with*,—*it*,—*upon*, —*against*, &c., which produce the same effect upon the ear, as the eye perceives from a jerk, or sudden stop in motion. Such a paltry termination cuts the sentence off in a sharp angle, and utterly precludes that roundness, that majestic sweep of sound, in which the Johnsonian periods so generally close: periods that my ear finds of such full and satisfying harmony, as not to need either rhyme or measure to add more sweetness. In truth, rhyme and measure are but the body of poetry, not its spirit, and its spirit breathes through all the pages of the Rambler.

I am tempted to cite a passage from each of these celebrated writers, as specimens of their different style, still farther to confirm your conviction how strange the prejudice which induces people to fancy that the superiority, in point of elegance, remains with Addison. I shall draw my quotation from him, out of the twenty-third number of the Spectator, Addison's signature; its subject, the mischiefs occasioned by a malicious character. From Johnson, on the pleasures which result from the influence of good humour. Rambler, vol. III. No. 72.

You will find the words in Italics which strike me as forming the inelegance of Addison's style; and you will perceive that the words within hooks constitute its redundance.

Addison.

"[There is] nothing [that] more betrays a base, ungenerous spirit, than [the] giving [of] secret stabs to a man's reputation. Lampoons and satires, [that are] written with wit and spirit, are like poisoned darts, which not only inflict a wound, but make it incurable. For this reason, I am very much troubled when I see the talents of humour and ridicule in the possession of an ill-natured man. There cannot be a greater gratification to a barbarous [and inhuman] wit, than to *stir up* sorrow in the heart of a private person; to raise uneasiness among near relations, and to expose whole families to derision *at the same time* that he remains unseen and undiscovered. If, besides the accomplishments of being witty and ill-natured, a man is vicious *into the bargain*, he is one of the most mischievous creatures that can enter into a civil society. His satire will then chiefly fall upon those who ought to be most exempt *from it*."

Johnson.

"Good humour may properly be termed the balm of being, the quality to which all that adorns or elevates life must owe its power of pleasing. Without good humour, learning and bravery can be only formidable, and confer that superiority which swells

the heart of the lion in the desert, where he roars without reply, and ravages without resistance. Without good humour, virtue may indeed awe by its dignity, and amaze by its brightness, but must always be viewed at a distance, and will scarcely gain a friend, or attract an imitator.

"Good humour may be defined an *habit* of being pleased, a constant and perennial softness of manners, easiness of approach, and suavity of disposition; like that which every man perceives in himself, when the first transports of new felicity have subsided, and his thoughts are only kept in motion by a slow succession of soft impulses. Good humour is a state between gaiety and unconcern; the act or emanation of a mind at leisure to regard the gratification of another.

"It is imagined by many, that, whenever they aspire to please, they are required to be merry, to shew the gladness of their souls by flights of pleasantry and sudden bursts of laughter, and to lose all reflection in overflowing jollity. But, though these men may be courted for a time, and heard with admiration and applause, they seldom delight us long. We enjoy them a little, and then retire to easiness and good humour; as the eye gazes a while on eminences glittering with the sun, but soon turns aching away to verdure and to flowers."

These passages, from Johnson's Rambler, form, in

my opinion, a perfect example of a beautiful and faultless style, in which no syllable could be transposed, to which not one could be added, and from which there could not one be taken away, without a diminution either of conciseness, perspicuity, or beauty. In one respect, and only one, the passages on good humour differ from the generality of Johnson's writings. Excepting the word *suavity*, they do not contain, neither indeed does the whole essay contain, one Latinism that is not in common use.

Observe with how much more grace and elegance the periods flow, than in the quotation from Addison, with its *giving of stabs*, its *stirring up*, and its *into the bargain*.

Alas! how much is it to be lamented that Johnson, who could so clearly perceive, and so eloquently display, the influence of the pleasing quality upon individual and upon general happiness, that, like mercy, it is "twice blessed," should himself indulge such an habitual, such a malicious moroseness, as to make it impossible to place any confidence in the duration of his smiles and approachability; that, like an ill-conditioned mastiff, nobody can be sure, even in the instant when he seems stroked into tameness and kind familiarity, that he will not seize upon the self-esteem of his auditors, and worry it unmercifully, and this without any provocation, or at least any adequate provocation!

I beg to be understood, that I confine my prediction of the inevitable preference which Johnson's best style will, in future, obtain over Addison's, to the essays on serious subjects which each has written. In sly and humourously playful satire, Addison remains, and will perhaps for ever remain, unrivalled. Johnson seldom attempts that line of composition, and when he attempts it, he fails. Neither has he any power to assume the language and manner of writing that belong to country esquires, coquettish misses, and saucy chamber-maids. Every thing Johnson writes, bears the stamp and image of his own peculiar style,

> By sentiments nor pert nor coarse concealed,
> Too great to stoop, too splendid to be veiled.

LICHFIELD, JAN. 1764.

SINCE you compliment my criticisms with possessing some power of discrimination, I feel disposed to lose my attention to the loud storms and gloomy horizon of this cheerless evening, by imparting the reflections which arose last night in my mind, as I read

another of Addison's Spectators to my sister and Honora. We had searched for one on the subject, so beautifully discussed in the Rambler, from which my last letter gave you extracts, and found it in the second volume, No. 169.

The language of this elder-born essay is not only less elegant, but some of the observations, and those the most material, did not appear to my sister, or myself, at all just; yet the remarks in the three first sentences are equally true with those I quoted from the Rambler. They are, however, by no means equally ingenious.

The observation in the fourth paragraph is of a more discriminating nature than those that precede it, which are very much on the surface; and which the commonest understanding, if it reflects at all on the advantages of good nature, must make for itself. Johnson's definition displays the latent essence and happy effects of this pleasing quality, by an investigation which genius only could make, but which, when made, good sense will instantly perceive and acknowledge to be just.

There is, however, ingenuity, as I observed above, in the fourth paragraph of Addison's definition; in the observation, that "good breeding is a kind of artificial humanity, or, in other words, (Addison is mighty fond of expressing the same thing several different ways) an imitation and mimickry of good

nature." "It is affability, complaisance, and easiness of temper, reduced into an art."

With his usual verbal redundance, he proceeds to tell us, "that these exterior shews and appearances of humanity render a man wonderfully popular and beloved, when they are founded upon real good nature; but, without it, are like hypocrisy in religion, or a bare form of holiness, which, when it is discovered, makes a man more detestable than professed impiety."

Now, this last appears to us a very mistaken assertion, astonishing from a writer who had lived in the gay and busy world, and must have had perpetual opportunities of perceiving, that politeness, so far from making an ill-natured man more detestable, is the only thing which can render him supportable. It is a silver cord, whose firmness we may trust; secure that, in the social hour, it will bind the malevolent passions at the bottom of the polite man's heart, and prevent them from darting out upon our self-esteem, and upon the pleasures of conversation.

We think this author no less mistaken when he supposes, upon the same ground, that hypocrisy in religion makes people more detested than professed impiety.

That such hypocrisy is more criminal than avowed disbelief, will be granted, because it adds falsehood to the ingratitude of irreligion; but surely,

however odious, it is in the eyes of men less offensive than avowed impiety, which defies every law, both human and divine, which insults the understanding, and shocks the sensibility of the better part of mankind.

Religious hypocrisy, at least, evinces respect for the institution it takes the trouble of seeming to venerate, and spares the always implied stigma of weak credulity, which the scoff of the infidel throws upon such as avow faith in their religion, and trust in its promises.

So it is with the politeness of an ill-natured man. We are conscious that he is likely enough to satirize our words, and misrepresent our actions. But, as his character is known, the good will probably despise his malice, and not think worse of us for its effusions in our disfavour, and we shall not be insulted with the visible marks of his contempt. We shall mingle with him in society without terror lest our delicacy should be brutally lacerated. We have, therefore, internal evidence that the decision of this writer is erroneous, and that good breeding is an admirable substitute for good nature, where the genuine virtue cannot be found.

After reprobating this substitute, our author, instead of exhorting us to acquire the reality, while we scorn the seeming, declares, that "nothing is capable of forcing up this good quality in the mind

where it does not grow of itself; that it is one of the blessings of an happy constitution, which education may improve, but not produce."

How impolitic, how strange is this assertion, proceeding from the pen of a professed moralist! since it totally does away the virtue of good nature, reducing it to a mere involuntary propensity, and teaching the naturally fierce and implacable to despair of being able to humanize their temper; nay, even persuading them to scorn the adoption of those manners, by which it might be restrained from disturbing the peace of the company in which they mix.

I trust Mr Addison is wholly mistaken on this subject; that, though it proves a much more arduous task to destroy the malignant passions than to restrain their imperious sallies in public, yet that reason and religion may, in time, render a disposition naturally morose, gentle, forbearing, and benevolent.

It is disclaiming the free agency of man, it is fatalism, to urge that any vice, however inherent in our natures, is unconquerable. It would be thought no excuse for debauchery, that a man should tell us he is naturally lascivious, gluttonous, and greedy of wine; for injustice, that he has an innate covetousness; and, for murder, that he is constitutionally cruel. And yet, if native ill propensities of every kind are not to be subdued, he is more unfortunate than criminal.

Addison is declaiming very superficially through this paper, strangely inattentive to the deduction which necessarily proceeds from his assertion. Nobody will suspect him of being intentionally an enemy to the interests of morality. Certainly he would have been one of the first to controvert the doctrine, that nothing is capable of forcing up chastity, temperance, justice, and mercy, in any human bosom, where they are not natives of the soil; and yet every evil propensity must be alike conquerable, though some may, with more difficulty than others, be overcome.

Good nature, as defined, and justly defined, by this author, is but another word for that charity which the gospel so strongly inculcates, since he tells us, that "a being, whose best actions must be seen (as he oddly expresses it) with some grains of allowance, cannot be too mild, moderate, and forgiving; that, amongst all the monstrous characters in human nature, there is none so odious, so exquisitely ridiculous, as that of a severe and rigid temper in a worthless man."

Mildness and sweetness of manners, under the name of charity, are, by the gospel, considered of so much importance, that, without them, every other virtue is declared unavailing; and it is there more frequently and more fervently inculcated than any other duty. For what purpose inculcated, if, where

it is not inherent, it cannot be obtained? And why does a moral philosopher praise and teach us to admire a good quality, which he tells us either exists constitutionally, or does not exist at all? Since, if that assertion be true, our admiration cannot edify or avail us any thing.

But let us, judging in this instance better for ourselves, hope and believe, that an originally ill-natured being may, by the force of reason, and by the consciousness how much it is his duty as a Christian, and his interest as a member of society, soften and illuminate these rigid and dark propensities, till he changes their nature into mildness and universal good will.

Addison allows the possibility of an ill-natured man being polite. Surely he should have reflected that we are creatures of habit, and that it is a great step gained to become capable of restraining a bad disposition, from any motive whatever:

> "For, seeming blest, we grow to what we seem."

Why should this celebrated moralist deny to reason and religion the power of influencing the ill-natured to become genuinely benevolent, since he allows that the force of education, and of social policy, are sufficient to induce them to assume those manners which imitate benevolence? and surely an higher de-

gree of self-interest, the interest of their eternal welfare, might still more forcibly lead them to acquire the real virtue.

In this same essay, the author makes an enthusiastic eulogium on a trait of parading benevolence, instanced by Xenophon, in his imaginary character of an excellent monarch. It is here produced by Addison, as an illustration of the beauty of that generous virtue; the merit of which virtue, the immediately preceding sentence, in that Spectator, had wholly done away. Behold the sublime instance of refined humanity!

A great prince desires, on his death-bed, that, instead of being, after the custom of the ancients, enshrined in gold and silver, his body may be buried in the ground; that, while his soul was returned to him who gave it, his corporeal part, mingling with the earth, might become beneficial to mankind.

In my opinion, this request disgraces, by its frivolity, the greatness of genuine benevolence. A sumptuous monument for him, whose life had been polluted by vice, is monstrous; and it is ridiculous when it covers the remains of one whose existence had passed away without exertion, however unstained by flagrant vices. But a splendid tomb, when it keeps alive the remembrance of the virtuous, has a tendency to induce men to imitate that excellence, which their curiosity had led them to contemplate. The

seeing its memory thus honourably perpetuated, is likely to be of much more benefit to mankind than the remote, the trivial, the ludicrous advantage procured by a single carcass producing, after a long process of putrefaction, a few paltry vegetables.

I apprehend that the request is not only ridiculous, when alleged as "an instance of that overflowing humanity which could not have entered into the imagination of any writer who had not a soul filled with great ideas," but that the idea itself is unphilosophic. The human frame in a putrescent state, mingling with the earth, is, I have heard, more likely to become a nuisance than a benefit to the living; and the consumption of dead bodies on the funeral pile is alleged to have been a custom highly advantageous to the health of the ancients. So we will take our leave of this panegyric on carrot and turnip generosity, which was not, after all, likely to produce good carrots and turnips.

It is too late to discuss other subjects. Good night!

LICHFIELD, FEB. 1764.

I ENTER my protest totally, yes totally, against the decision at your late conversation respecting

Shakespeare's supposed deficiency in tenderness and fire, when he speaks in the character of a lover, and concerning his want of intimacy with the nature of the most prevalent of all the passions.

Surely his advocate in your circle ought not to have given up an inch of ground on this subject; not allowed that Shakespeare's lovers were an atom less natural, less animated, than his kings, his princes, his heroes, or his statesmen.

That, in the enamoured character, he is often seduced into jingling a rhyme, and playing with a verbal conceit, is true; but I think it is not true that his lovers, more frequently than his other personages, turn out of the path of nature and passion, to follow those will-a-wisps of the fancy.

It appears to me, that Shakespeare often conveys more truly impassioned affection in a very few words, or in a short sentence, than are contained in most of the florid harangues of our modern dramatists, and this even where the passion between the sexes is not meant to be the master-tint of the portrait.

To give an instance,—Coriolanus comes not forward in Shakespeare's play, any more than in history, as an impassioned lover or husband, but as the insulted hero, who violently, though not ignobly, revenges himself upon his ungrateful country; and yet the author makes us feel, in four lines, that, however patrician haughtiness and jealous honour might be

the leading traits in the character of Coriolanus, yet that love, love of the most fervent kind, struggled with them for dominion in that proud heart, and obtained a final triumph.

You remember the scene in which the mother and wife of the banished consul bear to him, at Corioli, the supplicating embassy of humbled Rome, after he had led the Volscians triumphant to her very gates, was made the enemy's general, and styled Coriolanus.

Listen to the stern and injured warrior, when he first beholds these formidable interposers, and judge if Shakespeare uniformly considered the passion of love as of weak and subordinate influence in the conduct of life. The fair ambassadors appear at the moment in which he is solemnly declaring that he will not listen to any farther overtures from his thankless country; and he proceeds:—

> "Ha! what shout is this?
> Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow
> At the same time 'tis made?—I will not.——
> My wife comes foremost—then the honour'd mould
> In which this trunk was framed; and in her hand
> The grandchild to her blood!—But out affection!
> All bond and privilege of nature break!
> Let it be virtue to be obstinate!——[*Virgilia curtsies.*
> What is that curtsy worth?—or those dove's eyes,
> Which can make gods forsworn?"

After farther endeavours to stimulate his own resistance, he grows tender again, exclaiming,—

> ——————— O! for a kiss,
> Long as my exile!—sweet as my revenge!

Does Shakespeare want intimacy with the tender passions? Affection triumphs;—Coriolanus yields; and is murdered by the Volscians for what they consider as his apostasy.

* * * * * * * * *

LICHFIELD, FEB. 1764.

FROM a reputed connoisseur in the fine arts, I can present you with an observation, which is a perfect counterpart to the late decision you transmitted to me from the literary party at Lady B———'s, concerning Shakespeare's lack of skill in conceiving and uttering amorous sentiments.

This connoisseur maintained, last night, in our drawing-room, amidst a large company, that Handel wanted delicacy and tenderness in his compositions; yes, he advanced it, though familiar with the elegant and enamoured sweetness which breathes through

all the strains of the delicious Acis and Galatea;—with the "Return, O God of Hosts,"—" the "Pious Orgies,"—" O Sleep, why dost thou leave me,"—" Father of Heaven;"—and, in short, with a countless number of accompanied recitatives and airs, which equally display an unmatched talent for melting softness and tender persuasion.

The ingenious Mr S———, whose fine voice and perfect expression do so much justice to the vocal music of Handel, was on my side in warmly defending the claims of that great master to an equal degree of excellence in the delicate and pathetic, as in the spirited and sublime composition. It was acknowledged that we came off victorious in that controversy.

After the dispute was closed, I mentioned a circumstance that gives an uncommon degree of credit to one of Handel's pathetic songs. A deceased clerical friend of my father's had given his female, as well as his male children, literary educations, though he could not leave them fortunes. One of these daughters passed a few days with us when I was in my sixteenth year, in her road to town, whither she was going, in order to superintend the education of two little girls of consequence, whose mother had then lately died.

The governess-elect was not much more than twenty; her figure low, and ill formed; her complexion pale, and of an olive tint; her face flat; her

mouth wide; and she had so extreme a squint, that one eye appeared almost turned into her head. With this repulsive exterior, she had a very pleasing address; her tone of voice, in speaking, was interesting, and there was an attic spirit in her conversation.

She went with us to pass an evening at Mr Howard's, where it is always so pleasant to pass evenings. After supper, the moon shining splendidly upon the gloom of a calm night, it was proposed that we should adjourn to a pretty arched grotto, formed of shells and fossils, in this gentleman's garden. The grotto stands on the edge of a little velvet lawn, planted with shrubs and trees, which have clumps of flowers around their base. This lawn slopes down to a large pool, and, as we do not see its termination, it appears from the grotto like a considerable river.

The moon was shedding a shower of diamonds in the water, and edging with silver the highest leaves of the trees. Singing was proposed while we were in the grotto; and our agreeable guest being solicited, favoured us with the two single verses of that beautiful duet in Athaliah:

> "Cease thy anguish, smile once more,
> Let thy tears no longer flow!"

Her voice was of the most liquid softness, and she expressed those honied and ever-soothing notes in a

style the most enchantingly touching. Tears of delight streamed down my cheeks as I listened, and I fancied it impossible to feel an anguish so keen as might not be soothed and comforted by the persuasive sweetness with which she uttered,

> "No!—No!
> Let thy tears no longer flow!"——&c.

When the song was over, Mr H———d exclaimed, "My dear young lady, whenever you shall wish to subdue a heart, let this song be your weapon of attack, and it will be impossible you should meet an invulnerable shield."

When we returned to the stronger light of the candles, in the supper-room, all the personal defects of the syren were vanished; at least, I saw them no longer.

In a few weeks after, we heard that Mr L——— had married his children's governess, and that the bride and groom had travelled through Shrewsbury to their seat in Wales, with a superb equipage, and a great retinue of servants.

A friend of mine, intimate with Mrs L———'s sister, has since told me, that when this lucky young woman had been about a month in Mr L———'s family, as governess, (yet, as she had properly stipulated, treated by himself and his company as a gentlewoman,) the house being full of guests, it was one

evening proposed that the song should go round. When the governess was called upon, she sung the very air whose witching sweetness had, in the grotto, taken prisoner every faculty of my young imagination.

Her sister told my friend, that was the first time Mr L——— had heard her sing. He had shewn little attention to the charms of her conversation. The emanations of genius and of knowledge are, to the generality of what are called polite men and women, but as colours to the blind. We do not find it so with vocal music; where there is any ear, it speaks to the passions, and their influence is universal.

The next morning, Mr L——— offered to the acceptance of the songstress, in his own proper person, an attractive figure, a creditable degree of intellect, at least for a man of fashion, a good character, and a splendid fortune.

If Handel had wanted sweetness and delicacy in his strains, it is not probable that such great effect would have been produced by an air of his, warbled through lips so little Medicean.

I inclose a little musical recipe for love-sick melancholy. The first verse is an old ditty to a gay and pleasing tune. The remaining stanzas are mine, following the lead of the original in its pretty, though quaint idea. I have found not only pleasure, but use, in singing to myself, as I worked or walked, these anti-sorrowful strains. They impart that exhilara-

tion of spirits to a young female heart, beneath the experienced fickleness of the other sex, which wine is said to produce in the slighted swain, and without the mischiefs of ebriety, and with more permanent counteraction to weak despondence.

But, to any thing resembling despondence, my regrets never amounted, or they had been past the reach of a sing-song restorative. In truth, they had no darker hue than a little pensive and peevish languor, stealing at intervals over my cheerfulness; yet why should I suffer the slightest dejection to pale, for an instant, the fires of my youth? Too glowing are my friendships for my heart to stand in need of nourishing the dull lamp of fruitless love, lest its mansion should grow chill and dreary from the frost of indifference.

Quenched then, for ever, be this sickly flame!—and surely, the gentler and more cheering influence of unmixed amity and universal benevolence, which make the good of numbers their own, shall more than supply its place, and more than recompence its extinction.

"Florio, by all the powers above,
Plighted to me eternal love;
And, as a rose adorned my breast,
He on a leaf the vow imprest!
But, while the winds did round us play,
Vow, leaf, and promise, blew away!"

For this, when summer mornings glow,
O! shall I veil their beams in woe?
And, mid the rosy hours of youth,
Weep and repine o'er vanish'd truth?
No! let me hail the shining day,
Blithe as the lark that meets its ray.

Beauty and health have joys, that prove
Balm for the wounds of slighted love;
And, when a faithful lover gains
The heart, a false one's pride disdains,
Ungrateful Damon may deplore
What vain regret shall ne'er restore.

Julia to Florio then shall say,
"Vow, leaf, and promise, blew away!"
And to those winds I gave my grief,
That bore the love-recorded leaf;
Nor do I chide the gales or thee,
Since thou art false—and I am free!

And till return those hours of prime,
Borne on the onward stream of Time,
Yes, till the spring restores to me
That very leaf inscribed by thee,
Scorning thy sighs, shall Julia say,
"Vow, leaf, and promise, blew away!"

You will, perhaps, observe, that this spirited little song does not exactly suit the nature of an attachment which was never plighted; nay, whose very existence was hardly, by either party, confessed to the other. No matter! it is joyous, and it cheers my spirits; it is triumphant, and it liberates my heart!

Adieu!

LICHFIELD, APRIL 1764.

AT last he is here,—this brother elect!—We had heard of his being arrived in London a week before; but he fixed not with his sister the period at which she would see him, mentioning business that might detain him more than a fortnight.

My mother had engaged half Lichfield to play at cards with her on Wednesday se'nnight. About one o'clock that day, Mrs Porter sent to inform us, that her brother was that instant arrived, and would accompany her hither to tea. She was one of the party engaged here, so neither of them could be ignorant that, upon this plan, the first interview must be witnessed by twenty pair of curious eyes. But it was not for us to make that an objection. Unluckily, Mrs Porter's recommendation had transpired, and was become a card-table theme. Nothing can be a secret if my father is to know it, so frank are his communications. We had been unpleasantly conscious of this publicity.

On the message being delivered, sweet Sarah's serenity became considerably discomposed during a few minutes. "Some natural tears she dropt;" but

soon smiled them away. The elements seemed in unison with her feelings; for the sun was just then looking mildly through one of those vernal showers in which the present April has been so rich. Look, love, said I, that calm and gilded rain promises flowers and fruits in abundance; may those kindred tears prepare thy mind, as that shower prepares the earth, for the flowers and fruits of wedded happiness!

I stood by her toilet while she dressed. It was with no particular attention. If she was longer about that operation than usual, it was from absence, not from solicitude. She sighed often; and once or twice exclaimed,—"Ah! Heaven!" in a pensive and languid tone, and with an emphatic shake of the head, as she put on her light hat and ribbands.

"Bless me!" said I, "one would think thou wert adorning a victim, and not a mistress. If that idea has passed across thy mind, prithee, put a stop to this business at once!—Study a pretty harangue of dismissal, full of esteem, wayward heart, and so forth."

Behold us then in the drawing-room. Every body arrived, except the most interesting among the guests.—A loud rap at the hall door! A deep carmine spread over my Sarah's cheek, not generally crimson.

"That cheek, a stranger to the rose,
That best in ruddy milk-maids glows;

The courtlier lily opens there,
With all that's soft, and all that's fair."

Restrained smiles pursed up the face of many a waning virgin of the company, till it looked like a thin pikelet, half toasted.

The drawing-room door opens!—and in rustles, in all the pomp of blue and white tissue and Brussels lace, and with the most satisfied air, our honest friend, Mrs Porter, led by the intended,—a thin, pale personage, somewhat below the middle height, with rather too much stoop in the shoulders, and a little more withered, by Italian suns, than are our English sober bachelors, after an elapse of only forty years, in a black velvet coat, and a waistcoat richly embroidered with coloured flowers upon gold tissue; a bag wig, in crimp buckle, powdered white as the new-shorn fleece.

An unfortunate idea of a mountebank doctor, produced by the black velvet coat and gold waistcoat, gave me some difficulty in managing my risible muscles.

Mr Porter's features are not irregular; his teeth very fine, though in a mouth which, being rather concave than convex, seldom shews them, and he looks extremely clean. The great desideratum, perceived at first view, is the air of a gentleman, which I have often seen liberally and gracefully diffused

about some of our English merchants. It was here in vain to look for it; neither did the tone of his voice, in speaking, please me. These are, in my estimation, most important personalities; mind having so much to do in producing the one, and in harmonizing the other.

You know the Lichfield young women do not play at cards. Six or seven of us were loitering at the windows and round the card-tables,—expectation too busy with us for us to be busy with our needles. The beau was presented by his sister to every one in turn, and judiciously made no particular address to my sister. He said, gallantly enough, that he had pleasure in seeing his native country the richest in beauty of any nation through whose cities he had passed.

Our glowing Nannette was there, with her large and languishing hazle eyes, warm cheek, and the tender fascination of her smile. Eliza W———, in all her acquiline beauty, and with that air of grandeur, though hardly yet sixteen, whose form so often reminds me of a passage in Ossian: "Lovely, with her raven-hair, is the white-bosomed daughter of Sorglan." She also, whose charms are in their summer-ripeness, whose name seems to have been prophetic of her seldom-equalled beauty, the celebrated Helen White; yet has her cast of countenance more of Raphael's Madona, than of that less-chastened

loveliness with which imagination invests the faithless wife of Menelaus.

Miss A——— also was in the group; of shape correct, and of air sprightly, with my sister, the fair bride-elect, whose form is so light and elegant, whose countenance has so much modest intelligence, and, by her side, Honora, "fresh and beautiful as the young day-star, when he bathes his fair beams in the dews of spring." Often, when Mr Porter's attention was otherwise engaged, she looked up in my sister's face with eyes moistened by solicitous tenderness.

This dear child will not live; I am perpetually fearing it, notwithstanding the clear health which crimsons her cheek and glitters in her eyes. Such an early expansion of intelligence and sensibility partakes too much of the angelic, too little of the mortal nature, to tarry long in these low abodes of frailty and of pain, where the harshness of authority, and the impenetrability of selfishness, with the worse mischiefs of pride and envy, so frequently agitate by their storms, and chill by their damps, the more ingenious and purer spirits, scattered, not profusely, over the earth.

This child seems angel before she is woman; how consummate shall she be if she should be woman before she is actually angel! What delight must then result to me from the consciousness that my sister and myself have been instrumental in the cultivation

of talents and of virtues, in which the imagination, the sensibility, and warm disdain of every grovelling propensity, which are, I flatter myself, characteristic of one monitress, shall be united with the sweetness, the unerring discretion, and self-command of the other! She will, by all those who know how to appreciate excellence, be acknowledged, like Miranda, "to have been formed of every creature's best."

But how I have wandered from a subject, certainly more important to me at present, even than all the (perhaps) flattering promises which the future makes in the glance, the tear, the smile of my Honora! Yet it is one thing to be important to one's feelings, and another to bear them away on the light wings of heart-expanding Hope. But descend, thou excursive pen, from these visionary altitudes, upon the firm, though not flowery ground, of this projected marriage!

After tea, Mr Porter talked and attended chiefly to me. Declining cards, and my father and mother engaged in them, it became a duty of politeness to shew attention to some of the family he came to visit. It must have distressed my sister to have been singled out for this purpose. Yet, so prone are folk to gather opinions, as they gather flowers, from the surface, instead of implanting them in their minds, by taking them up from the roots, that I saw in the half-suppressed, but significant smiles of our guests,

that they thought the elder sister likely to bear away the Hymeneal wreath from the milder brow of the appointed fair-one.

Our party broke up at nine. Mr and Mrs Porter supped, by engagement, with their relation, Mr White. A few of my mother's intimates, with our beauteous Helen, staid supper here. The instant the brother and sister were decamped, every body spoke at once, and all in jocose invective upon your poor friend's mischievous eyes, as they called them.

Sarah, smiling, claimed of me the promise I had asked of her, viz. that she might accompany me into Italy. She claimed it with a rising blush, and a tremulous motion in the eye-lid, visible only to my searching glance, "which knows each line and trick of her sweet countenance;" but to that glance it discovered a little latent chagrin, so natural to the delicacy of virgin-pride.

Ah! sweet one, thought I, thou wilt never go into Italy under the Porter auspices, if thou goest not a principal of the party. However, you may be sure no such premature and needless assertion escaped my lip; yet, vexed at an undiscerning idea of such apparently general influence, I warmly declaimed upon its absurdity.

Honora gazed upon me while I was speaking, with eyes which bore animated assent to my protest, and then turned them, with a smile of scorn, upon the

group, who were interrupting me with laughing, but earnest and clamorous dissention. Throwing my arms round Honora's neck, and kissing her, I exclaimed, "Here is this child looking down upon you all as the idlest dupes existing, to a style of behaviour which, being otherwise, the man must have had too coarse a mind for the endurance of a woman of delicacy." Helen vowed she would find it all out at her uncle W———'s. We shall know, added she, what our Italian prince thinks of these rival sisters. "Rival!" I could have beat her.

Conceive this provoking Helen, rushing in as we were at breakfast, the ensuing day, her fine face all in a glow, her hands spread: "It is verily, and even so!—this irresistible madame Anne! Sarah must wear the willow, but I think it will not be with a very aching heart." "No, indeed!" said the sweet maid, with a look of blended, or rather instantaneously changing sensation, the result of which was ineffable. It was a gleam of disdain, immediately softening into the most affectionate sweetness, as her eyes remained fixed on me.

I asked Helen on what grounds she built her mighty probable conclusion. "My uncle W——," replied she, "told me he had asked Mr Porter how he liked Mr and Mrs Seward?" "Extremely!" "And Miss Seward?" "I think her charming." (And Helen ran on in a string of hyperbole which I

have no inclination to repeat.) "The youngest?"—"She seems a modest, pleasing young woman."

"Now, for all this," cried out Honora, "I don't believe he likes Nancy best." I called her wiser than the aged, and grew so saucy to my mother, that she looked grave, and took her pinch of snuff first at one nostril, and then at the other, with swift and angry energy, and her eyes began to grow dark and to flash. 'Tis an odd peculiarity; but the balls of my mother's eyes change from brown into black, when she feels either indignation or bodily pain.

Reports of this imaginary preference of the eldest sister spread rapidly through our little city; and, before night, it was asserted that he had made proposals in form to Miss Seward.

Messages of enquiry concerning our healths only passed between us and the Porters through the course of that day; but, at eleven the next morning, the brother and sister called upon us to go with them to Mrs Porter's new house, just built, but not yet inhabited. He looked much better; the mountebank had vanished with the black velvet. Helen joined our party. Mr Porter's whole attentions were devoted to Sarah; and Honora and I exulted not a little over Helen about her prediction. He took an opportunity of frankly offering his hand and heart to her acceptance, ere we reached home, where he passed the remainder of the day with us.

The general misconstruction of his civility to me had been much in his favour. Hence maiden-pride was busy with its whisper, that now rejection, on her part, would be deemed dislike on his, and preference of another. So this circumstance acted as a powerful counterpoise to the quack-doctor impression given by the black velvet and fine waistcoat, which I had not been able to forbear imparting to her. She owned her heart had recoiled a little from the unusual *tout-ensemble* produced by those habiliments. How much better did he look in his brown coat!

Behold him an accepted lover! and a very pressing one. He wants to hurry the nuptials, saying he must be in Italy before winter. I am afraid I see about him an impolite impatience of contradiction; a proud, not an enamoured jealousy, and a considerable degree of peevishness. Heaven protect my sweet Sarah's peace!

When people are tolerably happy, how dangerous is a material change in the habits of life! Ah! what halcyon days have this dear girl and I passed with our little Honora, beneath the fair spires of tranquil Lichfield! How immaterial were the clouds of an horizon so azure! Some violence of temper, and vapourish despondency, from causes provokingly trivial, on my mother's part, some absurdities on my father's; yet, left so much to ourselves, and perfectly

aware of the value of time, how interesting have been our employments, how animated our pleasures!

You enquire after the duration of my enfranchisement from the fetters of love. My heart has not resumed them; but, indeed, all its sensations have, of late, been absorbed in my sister's impending destiny.

The continual disgust you express to the joyless crowds and dissipation of London, is worthy of an ingenuous mind, to which domestic pleasures are, above all others, dear. Remember you have a relation in Lichfield, who would be happy to receive you into her family.

In the dread of disappointment, I hardly dare trust myself with an idea so agreeable, which flatters me with seeing you every day, and often all the day, when I am in England.

In England!—Ah! now that my continental vision approaches its realization, I begin to tremble at the thought how large a tract of seas and shores, mountains and plains, must shortly divide me from the home of my youth!—from my parents!—from my dear Honora!—That, during two long years, I shall not see the rising sun slant his beams into the lake of Stowe Valley, or change into pale gold the stone of the cathedral turrets. Yet, though tempted, like the swallows, into warmer climates afar off, my wings, any more than theirs, will not be cropt. I can fly back again when I please. But Sarah, my dear Sa-

rah! she must be borne back by permission, and in a cage! a golden one, 'tis true, but still a cage.

However, if she enters it, most voluntary will be that entrance. After my mother, good literal being, had ceased her expressions of wonder that he could so distinguish her Anna, yet like her Sarah best, she desired she would reject Mr Porter's addresses, if they were not perfectly agreeable to her. She sent for my father, and desired him to join her in this request, which he did willingly and earnestly; and since, on some alarming appearances of a fretful and despotic disposition, they have warmly and solemnly adjured her to break off the affair. But, alas! she is become attached, and partial to him in the extreme.

By this generous adjuration, our parents have proved themselves really parents, making their child's happiness their first object. Whenever it is otherwise, a miserable proof is exhibited of human depravity.

Adieu! adieu!—This Hymeneal gale begins to blow cold and ungenial upon my once warm hopes, and "all their fires grow pale."

LICHFIELD, JUNE 2, 1764.

O! my kind friend, this dear creature is dangerously ill!—a violent fever! Thursday next was fixed for her marriage. About three o'clock yesterday morning, I was awakened by her taking my hand, and telling me that she was very ill. Her dear hands felt of a parching heat, and so did her forehead and temples.

I called assistance instantly. We are all very much alarmed. Medicine has hitherto unsuccessfully contended with the disease, which I am afraid gains ground instead of abating. Her spirits have been too much hurried for a constitution so delicate. Yet her youth!—I must hope, for O! I cannot endure the thoughts of her being torn from us!

We are a sad, sad family—distracted with fears, that we dare not communicate to each other. I will not, while any hope remains, send away this letter; that, if it please Heaven to restore the dear sufferer, you may be spared those grievous apprehensions which your sympathy will excite, should you know our situation before you are informed that it terrors are removed.

Thursday Morning.—Congratulate me, dearest Emma!—the intended bridal-day has arisen auspiciously, averting from my Sally's bosom the arrows of death, whose aim has been deprecated with our prayers and tears. There is a remission in this cruel fever;—a balmy moisture upon her temples, bosom, and hands. She breathes freely; is able to sit up in an arm-chair; to smile with her wonted serenity, and cheerfully to tell us that she shall soon be well.

Parched and exhausted as I was with weeping and watching through four days and nights, hope has proved a restoring cordial. I leave you, that I may refresh myself by combing my dishevelled hair, and washing from my eye-lids the traces of those bitter tears.

Thursday Night.—O! my friend, our hopes are vanished!—While I was changing my gown, and preparing to carry neatness and a cheerful countenance to my dear sister's arm-chair, she relapsed;—the fever came back with redoubled violence!

In the distraction with which the servants fled different ways to recall the medical people, there was no thought of me. Nobody came near my apartment to reveal the sad tidings, and I entered the sick room with all the alacrity of hope. What did I behold there?—Alas! my precious sister sunk back in her bed, just recovering from a fainting fit!—sweet Honora supporting with her arm the dear sufferer's

head, her silent tears falling, in large drops, upon her Sally's pillow; my father and mother standing by the bed-side, the deepest woe in their countenance. Mr Porter sitting in the window, leaning upon his hand, which covered his forehead.

The dear creature opened her languid eyes, and, looking at me earnestly,—" My Nancy, you are dressed—are you going out?—do not leave me long." —" Alas, no! there was no thought of going out. I left you, my love, to put on clean clothes, that I might look comfortable to you, flattering myself that you were greatly better; nobody came to tell me that you were not so well again."

She sighed, and waved her dear hand emphatically, as if she had said,—The days of our happiness here are passed away!

Saturday Morning.—Ah!—she has grown worse and worse, though by slow degrees. Dr D. says, when the fever returned, it was with a fatal change in its nature, from inflammatory to putrid, and that he has very little hope of saving her. O! my friend, may your heart never feel the anguish with which mine is at this instant torn!

How much would Mr Porter be to be pitied if he had strong sensibilities!—so near calling such a blessing his, and to have it thus torn from him! but his sensations seem more like vexation than grief.

My father's sanguine and cheerful disposition will

not suffer him to think his darling so ill as she too surely is. My mother, my poor mother!—she has heard that a clergyman in Worcestershire, of the name of Bayley, has frequently administered James' Powder with success, in very dangerous cases.

She has just sent a chaise and four full speed, to conjure him to return hither in it, on an errand of life or death. We have all eagerly caught at this possibility, and are flattering ourselves with hopes which, I fear, are but as the straws at which drowning wretches catch. Is it likely that a private gentleman should know a better method of administering that medicine than a physician of D.'s acknowledged skill?

Sunday.—Mr Bayley is come; he arrived at ten this morning. The instant he came into the room, my mother rushed to him, and, falling on her knees, clasped her arms wildly around him, exclaiming, in the piercing accent of anguish,—" Dear angel-man, save my child!'

He burst into floods of humane tears, as he raised her from the ground. They went instantly into the sick chamber—but O! he gives us not more hope than Dr D. If the fever had but continued inflammatory!—but here all evacuation is pernicious. He joins the doctor in advising musk medicines instead of the powders. Adieu! adieu!

Wednesday Morning.—I have hardly strength to

tell you—it is pronounced, she cannot survive this night; there is no balm in Gilead!—Pray for us that we may be supported under this severe chastisement of Almighty power!

GOTHAM, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE,
JUNE 23, 1764.

I HAVE sat almost an hour at the writing-table, my hands crossed upon this paper, unable to take up the pen; that pen which I used to seize with such glad alacrity, when it was to convey my thoughts to you! Now, spiritless, afflicted, weary, my mind presents only scenes of mournful recollection; or, hovering over the silent and untimely grave of my sister, perceives nothing but a drear vacuity.

Your last letter came to me when my heart laboured under one of the keenest paroxysms of its late anguish. The funeral bell was tolling, and the dear, dear remains were everlastingly passing away from our habitation. Six of her young companions, in white raiment, the emblem of her purity, drowned in tears, bore, with trembling hands, the pall that covered that dim form, which, but a little, little fort-

night before, had walked amidst them with the light step of youth and gaiety. Yes, upon the very lawn over which they were then slowly walking in grieved and awful silence, interrupted only by the solemn death-bell.

Thus vanish our hopes!—thus cold is the bridal-bed of my dear sister! No sun-beam shall pierce its dark recess, "till the last morn appear."

In a few days after this sad scene was closed, we came hither, to the village-retirement of my excellent uncle and aunt, Martin. Pious tranquillity broods over the kind and hospitable mansion, and the balms of sympathy, and the cordials of devotion, are here poured into our torn hearts.

At times, I can scarce persuade myself that I shall see her no more!—for O! how perfect was our amity! Upon that tender, instinctive affection, which grew with our growth, was engrafted esteem the most established, and confidence the most entire.—One bed!—one heart!—one soul! Even the difference of our dispositions became a cement to our friendship; her gentleness tempered my impetuosity; her natural composure caught animation from her sister's sprightliness;—"our studies, our amusements, our taste the same." O heavy, heavy loss! yet bow thy stubborn grief, O my spirit! and remember the reason thou hadst to fear for her happi-

ness in that union, from which she was so awfully snatched away.

Cut off, as she was, in the bloom of life, yet nothing could be more resigned. Sickness, pain, and the extremest bodily weakness, had not power to extinguish, or even to abate, the pure flame of her devotion; yet all was calm and rational, for she had no delirium through the course of her illness. When her eyes were closed to open no more; when she seemed insensible to outward objects, she continued fervent in prayer, nay, in thanksgiving to her God. She repeated the Lord's prayer often, and several verses out of the Scriptures which were applicable to her expiring situation. In these repetitions, her voice, though low, and interrupted by the pausings of weakness, was distinct. I am sure she had a foretaste of the everlasting happiness which was soon to recompence, ten thousand fold, the mortal struggle.

She expressed unwillingness to take the musk medicines, which, I am afraid, were disagreeable to her. Yet, when my father and mother solicited, she opened her mouth and swallowed them, without shewing any more reluctance.

Her partial affection for me was almost the latest yearning of her gentle spirit. As I sat by her weeping, the morning of the final day, and saw her lie pale and stretched out, her sweet eyes unable to open, she said, in a low voice, when we had all thought her

invisible to every earthly recollection,—" Speak, my Nancy; let me once more hear that dear voice, ever welcome to me!"

O! how those words yet vibrate on my ear! I repeat them to myself many times in every day and night, endeavouring to imitate the sweet mournful accent in which they fell upon my soul with indelible impression.

My father was agonized by the loss of this, the darling of his heart; but it is amazing how soon the native cheerfulness of his temper has arisen from beneath the blow. My mother, at first, bore it better. She directed the funeral; and the business which it created seemed to have rendered her spirits collected, and to have dried the source of her tears; but, when that was over, a deep severe dejection succeeded, which nothing seems of power to comfort or to cheer.

My cousin, Miss Martin, is of my sister's age, and was deservedly beloved by her above all her other companions, next to myself and Honora. She grieves for our loss and her own with passionate tenderness.

Honora, young as she is, has shared all my sorrow. If she is but spared me, I shall not be quite bereaved. It will not be wholly in vain that I shall say, Return, blest days! Adieu! adieu!

GOTHAM, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE,
JUNE 27, 1764.

WITH what kind anxiety do you enquire of me if our sorrows soften? Mine do soften, my dear creature; participation has been their balm.

Upon a pleasant grass-plat, in my uncle's garden, stands a fine old mulberry-tree, of extensive and luxuriant shade, beneath which we all used to sit, reading and working, in the happy days that are flown.

There is an austerity in my mother's grief, which, in a great measure, keeps us silent in her presence. We see my father cheerful, and fear to open afresh the wound of his heart, by even alluding to any thing which must recall the image of her he has lost. So, in these summer heats, we hasten to the mulberry shade. It is there that her name is ever on our lips. We recollect her looks, her voice, her gesture, her sentiments. We search for the passages in our poets of which she was most enamoured, and her accents return upon our ear as we read them; and thus do we extract the bitterness with which unpartaken sorrow broods over the laceration of its tenderest ties.

How comfortable is it that we can pass many hours

of every day exempt from the intermixture of society with indifferent people, who would soon be tired of this eternal looking-back to the past, and recalling the image of the everlasting absent! They would fancy it right to force our thoughts into other channels. Mistaken idea! which yet, against experience, maintains its ground.

We are never weary of our heart-affecting theme, equally interesting to all the three. It, in some measure, restores to us the angelic friend we have lost. She seems yet to mix in our conversations. We take delight in assuring ourselves that her spirit hovers round us, and receives a part of its happiness from the consciousness how tenderly she is yet beloved, how incessantly remembered by those who were dearest to her on earth. Ah! I hope they will one day be re-united to her in a state, the felicity of which will have its completion in the conviction of its permanence!

Early next week I shall accompany my father to Eyam, his living in Derbyshire. During the last week of our residence there, Mr Porter means to join us, whom we left behind with his sister. After he has passed some days with us there, we shall all re-assemble at Lichfield.—Changed Lichfield! Ah! how miserably changed! With what different sensations, to what I used to feel, shall I catch the first glimpse of its spires from the neighbouring hills!—

those spires, never till then, after absence, beheld with less than rapture.

But, as to Derbyshire, I shall feel a mournful sweetness in returning to the mountain-heights of that village, in whose bosom my sister and myself first saw light, and where we sported away the hours of infancy till I was six, she five, years old; and which we have re-visited together of late years, passing frequently some of the summer months in that romantic retreat.

Much, however, shall I lose in not having Honora with me, whom my mother cannot spare, since my father has no gratification in recalling the past, in "overtaking the wings of Time," and in bringing back, arrayed in all the softening hues of recollection,

> ———" the hours, the days,
> The years, that saw us happy."

I am afraid that men, in general, feel little of all this. Ah! rather than my destiny should ever be united to one whose spirit is proof against these pensive luxuries, may I never change the name my Sally bore! lest the habit of suppressing sensibilities which cannot be partaken, change the nature of that heart, on whose softness her image, and the remembrance of her virtues, is so deeply impressed, and to which you are unalienably dear.

P. S. This letter is short, but you shall hear from me more at large after I get to Eyam.

EYAM, DERBYSHIRE, JULY, 1764.

THE fortnight, passed beneath my native rocks, has not elapsed without interest. Little as I expected gratifications of that sort, the sorrows of my heart have been soothed by sympathy.

There are some liberal-minded people in this village, by no means a small one. Mr L—— is an excellent young man, intelligent and familiar with the writings of our best authors. He was often the companion and guide of our exploring rambles in this romantic country, when my father used to be here during some weeks of the former summers, with both his daughters. Mr L—— indulges me in recalling traces of my Sally amid the rocks, and in the shady depths of those sequestered vallies which were so dear to her taste.

But I have met with sympathy yet more animated and indulgent, in another gentleman here, whose more advanced life, and the gayer manner in which his youth was spent, little promised this softness of

spirit. He is the eldest son of the esquire of our village. The late Duke of Devonshire procured him an ensign's commission when he was only sixteen, and made him page to the duchess when himself became lord-lieutenant of Ireland.

It happened that he was always with the regiment when I went to Eyam after I grew up. Indeed I never, till now, saw him since the commencement of my existence, when my father, in the triumph of parental pleasure, took him, then a military youth scarce twenty, into the nursery, and put me into his arms before I had been born three hours. After a series of military services, behaving gallantly as aid-de-camp to General Howard, in the last war, and obtaining the rank of major, Mr W—— beat his sword into a ploughshare, and lives as a private gentleman and justice of the peace, chiefly upon the income for which he sold his commission, since a very large family, and his father's expensive habits, have left his patrimonial property small. He is joint house-keeper with his sister, a widow lady of genteel fortune, whose life has been eventful, and called forth uncommon exertions of that prudence, spirit, and virtue, which adorn her character.

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I spoke to you of our ride home last night by moonlight. Major W——, and his sister, Mrs T——, accompanied my father and myself to dine and sup

with a friendly old bachelor, whose mansion is situated behind yonder large and rocky mountain, that fronts, a quarter of a mile distant, the window of the apartment in which I am now writing.

The good old bachelor's retreat is defended on the west from wintry storms by this immense hill, which rises immediately from the back part of his house.—The house stands on a terrace, about half way down the hill, shaded by that hill, and by the umbrage of luxuriant plantations, from these scorching heats, which, since our arrival here, have been so intense, and which are now darting their noon-tide fervours over our mountains.

The front of Mr Oxley's bowery little mansion overlooks a sweet romantic, though narrow valley. The opposite hill is covered very richly with woods, beautifully intermixed with sloping corn fields.—Above that hill a vast ridge of rocks arises, over whose summits stretches the black and dreary East Moor, which seems to give stern protection to the cultivated and smiling scene beneath. My favourite river, the Derwent, rolls its clear and amber waves in the bosom of this valley. The Derwent waters are said to receive that tinge from the peculiar colour of the clay on the hills amid which they rise. The banks of this river, along its course through our romantic country, are every where shaded by a fringe of shrubby underwood, alders, and nut-trees, whose

overhanging branches touch the waves as they wander by. The amber tint of the river becomes this dark foliage, which is so luxuriant upon its banks, and which changes a defect into a beauty.

The rural mansion I am describing, is low-roofed and long. It stands on the brink of this lovely valley, which has a back-ground so wild, desert, and sublime. A pretty grassy terrace, about ten yards broad, and an hundred long, extends parallel with the front of the house, and then the hill descends abruptly, and almost perpendicularly, to the river side. Upon this terrace, and under the parlour windows, stand a row of bee-hives. I am sure you love bees, for I love them infinitely. Their cheerful, active industry; the order and regularity with which, in their different departments, they promote the common good, must have attracted the pleased attention of every mind which has any congeniality to qualities so estimable.

When my sister and myself used to pass serene days in my uncle Astley's patriarchal habitation at Famhorn, near Lichfield, we often brought chairs and our work upon the grass-plot, and sat by the hives, attentive to the little busy creatures, and all their various occupations. We were delighted to observe the legs of one loaded, as they returned to the hive, with yellow wax; another with globules of water about their head, legs, and wings; another

with the richer, and more glutinous honey which these insects draw up the tubes of the flowers with their little proboscis.

It was then that we used so frequently to repeat those beautiful lines in Milton which describe a bee-hive and its virtuous commonwealth:

> ——————————— "The bees
> In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
> Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
> In clusters. They, among fresh dews and flowers,
> Fly to and fro; or, on the smoothed plank,
> The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
> New rubb'd with balm, expatiate and confer
> Their state affairs."

What a divine poet is Milton!—The grace with which he speaks of common and minute objects equals in its degree the sublimity of his demoniac and angelic descriptions.

Picturesque scenery abounds every where in this country. Our own village wants not its striking features, and boasts a Salvatorial dale and glen; but attempting to describe them now, this letter would be longer than suits my swiftly-wasting interval of leisure.

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LICHFIELD, AUG. 1764.

How strange is it that I returned to Lichfield a whole month ago, and have not written to you in the interim; not even acknowledged one of the kindest and dearest of your letters! Alas! my averseness to take up the pen yet remains undiminished.

You express a desire to know how we bore the tearing-open, as you emphatically call it, of our recent wound, by a re-entrance beneath this roof, over which the shadows of death had so lately brooded. We were all of us deeply, my mother terribly, affected.

> "In vain I looked around
> O'er all the well-known ground,
> My Sally's wonted footsteps to descry!
> Where oft we used to walk,
> Where oft, in tender talk,
> We saw the summer sun go down the sky;
> Nor by yon fountain's side,
> Nor where its waters glide
> Along the valley, can she now be found;
> O'er all the pleasing prospect's verdant bound,
> No more my mournful eye
> Can aught of her espy,
> But the sad sacred earth, where her dear relics lie."

Those charming lines of Lord Lyttleton's are as a

mirror, in which you will see reflected the feelings of your Anna's heart on returning to the mansion of her youth and happiness; yet you needed it not; your heart would suggest, your sensibility paint them.

But the pleasure of seeing my Honora again, of weeping upon her neck, and of mingling our tears, was, and yet remains, a great and increasing consolation.

It was an extreme effort of resolution to resume my apartment—the scene, during many years, of pleasing hopes and perfect confidence; during thirteen succeeding days and nights, the scene of dread suspense; of the struggles of improbable hope against despair; of parental anguish; of fond compassion, torturing because unavailing; of blasted expectation; of expiring loveliness!

Immediately on my arrival, I desired my mother to allot me some other room, for I should never, I said, be able to inhabit that again. She observed, it was a charming apartment, and, consisting of three rooms, was very convenient for my employments; that it would be better if I could teach my heart to find satisfaction in seeing Honora occupy what once was Sally's dressing-room. I perceived the justness of the remark, and felt a foretaste of the consolation which would result from that last circumstance.

The dear girl, who was present, said, with a tender smile, "It may be melancholy, but it will not be

lonely; and surely the sooner you get over the first shock of re-entering that apartment, the better; let us go to the room your sister loved!"

Ah! exclaimed I, and wept, but it must be immediately then; long preparation and reflection will but increase my reluctance.

We went up stairs; I hurried through the passage, moulding, in the throes of anguish, Honora's arm, on which I leaned. On opening the door, the bed! the chairs! the bureau! the dressing-table! every separate piece of furniture seemed to bear the stamp and image of her we have lost.

We sat down, and wept during some time in passionate silence. Honora then led me to the window, and made me observe how beautifully the setting sun had gilded those spires, whose illumination our departed friend used to contemplate with delight. She pointed out to me from those windows, every pleasing object that my sister used to observe, and said, "We will love them more than ever for her sake."

At that instant I felt that in this apartment, of all other places, I should be most contented, most consoled.

Honora proposed requesting my mother's permission, as she had her friend Miss Hammond with her, that we might sup where we were, without quitting the room for an instant till the next morning.

With what an insight into the human passions is

this dear creature born! All that others gain from experience seems hers by intuition.

I inclose an elegy * which I wrote upon the late sad event, in the course of a few days after my return home. Most part of it was composed upon that pleasant terrace where we used to read and work on the calm summer days!

LICHFIELD, SEPT. 1764.

A SILENCE longer than I proposed is, on my part, the less regretted, because I have a near prospect of conversing with you personally. In October, my long-existing wish is to be indulged of seeing the great Babylon. It is true this desire slumbered the instant my Sally sickened, but it has awakened beneath my mother's proposal, that Nannette and myself, accompanied by her father and Mrs A. S——, should pass a few months in London. We are to have lodgings near your brother's house in ——— Square.

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* See the first poem in the author's Miscellaneous Poems.

Curiosity has no wish so fervent and interesting on this occasion, as the hope of seeing and conversing with you, and of sharing with yourself and Nannette the gratifications of the ear and eye. I shall leave my mother with confidence, in the tender care and attention of Honora.

You will not expect to hear from me again in the interim, since I am to set out, in a few days, for the habitation of one of the most interesting and agreeable of women, with whom I shall reside till the bustle of our races is overpast. On my return home, there will be a necessity for my writing to several friends whom I am not soon to see.

You are not personally acquainted with this engaging Mrs L——, to whom I am going, and who has changed her situation and place of abode, without having changed her name, married, as she is, to her cousin, Mr L——.

She was, during many years, some of which were prior to my existence, the soul of every thing that was gay and agreeable at Lichfield. Eclipsing all the women, she had many enemies amongst her own sex; and, to say truth, though her temper was remarkably sweet, her wit was a little unmerciful. She could not resist the temptation of amusing herself and her company, with the awkwardness, the singularity, the foibles, and the faults of her acquaintance. She could not spare them even in those

whom she loved, and with whose distress, of every kind, she could sincerely sympathize.

A combination so uncommon, of softness and irony, gave rise to almost universal accusations of insincerity from her own sex. The men forgave, and indeed understood her better; imputing these sallies of raillery, which spared no one's absurdity, to their true cause, an irresistible propensity to amuse the present company, and to inspirit the passing moment.

Both sexes were drawn to her as by fascination; even those women who were loudest in their invectives against the satire they dreaded. But she was the model of them all respecting dress and fashion; and, in her presence, envy and resentment were soothed, or laughed out of all their acrimony.

She has married her kindred spirit as to wit. He has more than any person I know, except herself.—In him it is such an absorbing propensity, that, for my life, I could never find out whether or not he had knowledge or taste for the arts, or for works of genius. He always gives a jocose and generally a ludicrous turn to every subject, as it arises. Such, at least, I have ever found him; but she can be as agreeably serious as she is enchantingly lively; has read much more than the generality of women; and, though without poetic talent, or critical attention to

that charming art, is alive to the beauties of poetic composition.

Mr L———, the farthest in the world from being an enthusiast in any other part of his character, has, from the time he was fourteen, loved her with the Quixotism of former ages. Without hope for himself, he beheld her successively engaged by several different rivals. David Garrick was the lover of her early youth. When he quitted Lichfield to become a theatrical adventurer, he had her promise to be his the instant his situation became profitable, and brilliant enough to outweigh, in the breast of her uncle, the objections to his profession. This uncle had declared he would give his favourite neice five thousand pounds, if she married with his consent. That is said to be the fortune which some years afterwards he left her.

Contrary to her advice, the lover made premature proposals, and was rejected with a disdain which his high spirit could not brook, though the probable consequence of his own indiscretion. Ungenerously did he resent her desire of postponing their union, rather than disoblige one of the kindest friends and guardians, in her indulgent uncle, since she foresaw that every proud objection would, in time, be overborne and lost in the blaze of his growing celebrity. But unreasonably mortified pride on the part of the lover, and the charms of the fair Violetta, obliterated

the remembrance of those graces, once so passionately adored. I was not in being at this period, but I learned the circumstances, partly from my mother, and partly from Mrs L—— herself, some years before she married, when, in my dawning womanhood, she honoured me with her friendship and confidence.

After David Garrick's marriage, from amidst an herd of admirers, and several rejected lovers, she resigned her attention to two gentlemen in succession, who would either of them have been an eligible connection. What prevented their taking place, I do not exactly know; but imagine, that, being conscious of possessing an heart as capable of feeling passion as her talents and graces were of inspiring it, she durst not, when standing on the brink, dare to leap the matrimonial gulph, unassisted by that potent little deity ordained to rule her fate.

Behold this heart of hers once again delivered, with all its vivacity, and all its softness, to a Mr Y——s, one of the most lovely and engaging of men; but he had a rich, covetous, and obstinate old relation, who, declaring that gentleman his heir, had other and higher views for him.

As he was old and invalid, our lovers thought it prudent to wait an event that seemed probable and near, rather than disoblige a wretch who would assuredly have revenged the offence by disinheritance.

Several years elapsed in this suspense, till, at

length, death exchanged it for certainty. But alas! the capricious tyrant of the tomb suffered this withered and worthless weed

> "Still longer to infest the earth—and called
> His worm to riot on that rose, so red,
> Unfaded ere it fell."

Thus was the heart of this charming woman a second time lacerated; the then disappointment proved more severe, because it had no resources in the dignity and exertion which a sense of injury inspires. Many were the tears with which, in secret, she embalmed the memory of this unfortunate lover. I have seen her shed them passionately over a miniature picture of Mr Y——s', which presented the most beautiful and interesting countenance I ever beheld. Yet, in company, her native vivacity and playful spirit continually burst, like the sun, through the clouds of her sorrows.

When time began to blunt the sharpness of this secret grief, then it was that her engaging cousin first perceived the gleams of hope breaking in upon the gloom of fruitless and concealed wishes. I ought to have informed you, that, during their ungenial empire, he was said to have been as grave as he afterwards became gay; but I knew him not till he had resumed his native hilarity, beneath the warm influence of mutual love.

Miss L——, no longer young, did not cease to be eminently attractive. Her lover was in his bloom, and very handsome, with graceful and insinuating, though gay manners. Yet was it three or four years before she could so far forget him she had lost, as to reward a constancy so distinguished.

At length she married Mr L——; and, losing her, our little city became the field of dead souls, instead of dead bodies, which, as you have heard, is the real meaning of its name, derived from the legendary battle fought in the time of the Romans, upon a hill near the town, where three contending kings, with their armies, lost their lives, and strewed the field with their dead.

You know with how much devotion our Lichfield Minerva, your ingenious and excellent friend, Miss B——d, has been attached to Mrs L——, from the moment they first met, three years prior to the marriage of the latter. This attachment, which seems to pass the bounds of friendship and the love of women, is extraordinary in a disposition so generally even and placid as Miss B——d's, and considering the striking dissimilarity of character in the two friends. In one respect, it has been a disadvantage to that young lady, since, with an elevated and solid understanding, it has injured her native manners, by producing a studied imitation of what cannot happily be imitated,—those peculiar graces which adorn Mrs

L———; whose form is elegant; whose features, though never beautiful, were always infinitely agreeble; whose good-humour delights; whose lively spirits hazard every thing for wit; whose melting pity for all one's inquietudes, with its bewitching vouchers, her April tears, make it impossible to remember having been the victim of her irony; whose air is modest, even to shyness, yet whose address is gay; whose virtues are genuine; whose reputation malice and envy could never lastingly impeach, yet whose conversation is often almost libertine; who felt with enthusiasm those tender passions which she continually amused her circles, by placing in a ridiculous and burlesque point of view, at whatever expence of delicacy that view was obtained; and in whom these contrarieties were so happily blended, as to render all she said and did graceful and becoming.

You see that, of a character so curiously original, no imitation is likely to be fortunate. Mis B——d's imitative aim is confined only to the air of person, the look, and manner of speaking; but it is a too visibly studied resemblance to please.

Miss B——d has a more nervous understanding, more extensive knowledge of books, and a more elevated imagination; but she has no portion of that arch and playful wit which is so native in her friend; neither will her mild, yet inflexible principles of delicacy and discretion permit her those agreeable

foibles that give grace and ease to the air and address which she has so faithfully, though (since not suited to her more solid character) not fortunately copied.

Mrs L——, from the time I was fourteen to the present hour, invariably indulged me with testimonies of her partial tenderness. Stability, where she has no duties to fulfil, is not reckoned amongst the number of her virtues.

This apparent fickleness probably arises from her friends not having taught themselves to take her as she is,—to their groundless expectation of being exempted, because she loves them, from the sallies of her wit. Often have people said to me, "You flatter yourself about Miss L——, and have faith in her professions of friendship; be assured, she diverts herself and her company as much at your expence as at any person's." My reply was generally to this effect,—"Inevitably! the leopard cannot change her spots, neither would she be so beautiful without them. I give Miss L—— leave to laugh at me, so long as she will give herself leave to love me."

LICHFIELD, FEB. 13, 1765.

I WISH in vain for a Claude, and Salvatorial pencil, to delineate the promised landscape of my native rocks and hills in Derbyshire. Take it, however, in the best tints of your friend's recollection.

Eyam, though but a village, is near a mile in length, and considerably populous. It sweeps, in a waving line, among the mountains, upon a kind of natural terrace, perhaps a quarter of a mile in breadth. From the stupendous Middleton, or Eyam-Dale, for the two places contend which of their names it shall bear, and which dale lies in the road between Buxton and Chatsworth, we ascend to Eyam up a steep and narrow lane, about 300 yards, and enter near the middle of the village. On the right hand, to its eastern termination, the mountain, in whose bosom it stands, is crossed by another, and still higher mountain This mountain rises opposite the back part of the parsonage, new-fronted by my father, who made it an excellent house to little purpose, having never been his home since it was finished.

The top of this eastern elevation, so majestic and picturesque amidst all its barren brownness, presents

us, on ascending it, with the eagle's view of several lovely vallies, separated from each other by a number of smaller hills, winding down to the right, along the range of those vales; and, at about four miles distance, the eye perceives the palace of Chatsworth, rising, in golden beauty, from beneath its dark and pendant woods, which are flanked by a ridge of grey, stony, and bleak mountains. The epithet golden for Chatsworth, is, as to appearance, literally just, since the yellowish colour of the beautiful stone of which it is built, and the gilt window frames, make the edifice, even at that distance, when the sun shines upon it, seem as if it were built of pale gold.

Though Chatsworth has not apartments * sufficiently spacious for a ducal palace, yet is its exterior the most elegantly magnificent I have ever beheld. Here are no wings or bow-windows, which, however internally pleasant, seem to me excrescent deformities on the outward appearance. Here is no frittering into parts, no obtrusive grandeur of appertaining offices, but the eye, at once, perceives one fair and perfect whole. Its mingled lightness and strength, the invariable result of exquisite proportion, recall to my memory Milton's description of Pandæ-

* They have been much enlarged since the present duke's marriage, an event to which this letter was previous.

monium, whenever I first discern Chatsworth from the neighbouring hills:

> "Behold, out of the earth, a fabric large
> Rise, like an exhalation!———

Stoke, Mr Simpson's light and beautiful villa, is another Chatsworth, in miniature; it has the same simple grace, the same exemption from protuberant parts, and from the impertinent grandeur of offices; is built also of the same warm-tinted stone. It stands upon a green surrounding lawn, half way down the other side of this East Mountain, to whose top I have led you.

At Stoke we find all the romantic beauties of mountainous scenery, except that there are no cataracts. The steeply-sloping walks of the sylvan gardens wind their course down the remainder of the hill. At its foot, the rocky channel of the rapid and frothing Derwent produces, by its frequent shallows, a hoarse murmur of waters, audible in every apartment of that thrice-lovely villa, and to which we find so much pleasure in listening during the summer heats.

Horace has a charming ode, in which he speaks of his own villa, near the loud falls of the river Anio, and upon the banks of the Albunean Lake. He calls it "the resounding house of Albunea." Stoke al-

ways reminds me of that villa, whose situation is finely introduced when Lord Lyttleton enumerates the haunts of the muses, in his beautiful Monody. After observing that they left their Grecian and Latian shades to open all their stores to the mind of his Lucy, beneath the mountains of Campden, he proceeds:

> "Nor then did Pindus, or Castalia's plain,
> Nor Aganippi's fount your steps detain,
> Or in the Thespian vallies did you play;
> Nor then on Mincio's bank,
> Beset with osiers dank,
> Nor where Clitumnus rolls his gentle stream;
> Nor where, through hanging woods,
> Steep Anio pours his floods,
> Nor yet where Meles and Illissus stray."——

But see what prevalence have these more polished orders of sublimity and beauty to seduce us from the ruder scenes of unassisted nature! Let us return to the village, now that we have had a distant view of Chatsworth, and a nearer one of Stoke.

The south side of my native mansion, the parsonage, (which stands by the church, in nearly the centre of the village) looks upon a mountainous knoll, whose surface is always green; the sheep which feed upon it have made it glossy and smooth as a bowling-turf. From childhood have I delighted to observe, amidst the gradual clearing of a foggy-day, the mists which had enveloped the head of this

round and lesser mountain, rolling away by degrees, and its bright green summit peeping through them, and imbibing the soft gilding of the sun-beams. Its height, above the village, is moderate. It is called the Cliff, and its top affords a level and lawny walk, of about an hundred and fifty yards extent, before it descends. The summit overlooks that stupendous Middleton, or, more properly, Eyam-Dale, so well known to those who make excursions from Buxton, This dale is narrow, and the vast and steril rocks rise. on each side, to a sublime height. No beauty of wood or field softens the barren grandeur of the scene. It is here that the sterner graces have built their aeries; here that the seasons suffer no visible alteration, except when the craggy steeps are covered with snow, and shoot forth millions of their pensile and of their horrent icicles. The towers and turrets of these lofty rocks are, however, continually growing less and less distinct, picturesque, and noble; broken and ravaged, as from time to time they are, and will farther be, for the purposes of building, and of making and mending roads, and this by the force of gunpowder, and by the perpetual consumption of the ever-burning lime-kilns. They, and the smelting-houses in this dale, sully the summer skies with their convolving smoke; but, in the night, they are very fine, emitting their lurid flames, which seem so many small volcanos. The great

turnpike road between Buxton and Matlock passes through this dale, on the edge of a clear and sparkling rill, that huddles through its white limestone channel.

The middle part of our long-extended village stands on the brink of a dell, which has different and softer features. It is deep, abrupt, and rocky, still narrower than the savage dale, but grassy and sylvan, the haunt of the vernal linnet, and of the autumnal red-breast. The descent from the village, though extremely steep, is a smooth green turf, interspersed with the straggling nut-tree, the alder, and mountain-ash. The bottom is scarcely five yards wide, so immediately rise the perpendicular rocks on the opposite side, curtained with wild shrubs, only that a few bare parts appear, in fantastic points, and perforated arches, through which, by glimpses, we catch the horizon. In wet weather, a small rill passes along the bottom of this dell; but, in summer, its channel is generally dry, and its pebbles are left to bleach in the sun. Pines wave over the tops of these opposite rocks, and cliffs and fields descend from them gradually to the farther and right-hand termination of the village, which is considerably higher than its centre.

This grassy dingle curves round to the left, till it meets the sterner and frowning dale, which seems to say to its verdure and its umbrage,—" Here shall

your wanton growth be arrested, dried up, and withered."

The village of Eyam was one of the last, if it were not the very last place in England visited by that dire contagion in 1666, the year after that in which, in the city of London, Death, on his pale horse, trampled on three thousand victims in one ghastly night. Mr Mompesson was then rector of Eyam, and in the vigour of his youth. He had married a beautiful young lady, by whom he had a boy and girl, of three and four years old. The plague was brought thither in patterns of cloth sent from London to a tailor in our village. It raged with great violence, and swept away four-fifths of the inhabitants. This village is now much more thinly peopled, owing to the exhausted state of the lead-mines. Their wealth, during the last century, and early part of the present, occasioned the environs of Eyam, their thick-sown little towns and hamlets, to swarm with inhabitants.

On the commencement of the contagion, Mrs Mompesson threw herself, with her babes, at the feet of her husband, to supplicate his flight from that devoted place, but not even the tears and entreaties of a beloved wife could induce him to desert his flock in these hours of danger and dismay. Equally fruitless were his persuasions that she would retire with her infants. The result of this pathetic contest was

a resolve to remove their children, and abide together the fury of the pestilence.

My father is in possession of authentic copies of three letters * from Mr Mompesson, taken, as appears by the dates, at the time the originals were written. One of them is to his children, designed for their perusal in riper years; the other to his patron, Sir George Saville; and the third to his uncle, Mr Beilby, of York. The two first were written during the rage of the distemper, the last after it had subsided. Mr Mompesson, constantly visiting and praying by the sick,

> "Drew, like Marseilles' good bishop, purer breath,
> When nature sickened, and each gale was death."

From a rational belief, that assembling in the church for public worship during the summer heats, would

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* The late William Seward, Esq. who, in 1795, published "Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons," obtained from Mr Longston, of Eyam, copies of these three letters. They will be found in the second volume of those compilations; but they are introduced in a cold, uninteresting manner. Though he personally examined the scenery, neither his heart nor his imagination seem to have caught the least glow from vestiges so likely to have warmed them. He does not even mention the beautiful, romantic dingle, and calls its perforated rock, from whence Mr Mompesson performed divine service during the contagion, "a cavern near Eyam, called at this day Cucklet Church."

spread and increase the infection, he agreed with his afflicted parishioners that he should read prayers to them three times in the week, and deliver his two sermons on the Sabbath from one of the perforated arches in the rocks of the verdant dingle, before described. By his directions, they ranged themselves on the grassy declivity, near the bottom, a yard distant from each other; the dell being so narrow, a speaker from that rock might be distinctly heard.

Do you not see this dauntless minister of God stretching forth his hands from the rock, and preaching to his alarmed and distressed flock in that little wilderness? How solemn, how pathetic, must have been his exhortations in those terrific hours!

The church-yard soon ceased to afford room for the dead, which were afterwards buried in a heathy hill above the village. Curious travellers * take pleasure in visiting those tumuli, and in examining their yet distinct remains; also in descending from the cliffs, which brow the summit of the dingle, into the excavated rock from which Mr Mompesson performed divine service during that awful visitation. The consecrated rock is called Cucklet Church, by the villagers, to this day.

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* The great and good Howard visited Eyam the year before he last left England, to examine the vestiges of that pestilential calamity which it had endured, and the records of virtues which resembled his own.

We find, from united medical testimony, that the effects of the plague are very various; sometimes producing a parched, raging, and delirious fever;—sometimes profuse and caustic perspiration, in which life dissolves. In other instances, the tokens, as they are called, formed by a livid spot, about the breadth of half-a-crown, and of impenetrable hardness, appear when the patient is in apparent health, and mark the grave's inevitable victim; since, when the tokens wear that appearance, the infected never survive longer than a very few hours, and often remain without perceptible disorder till the moment of expiration. If they are only discoloured, without being hard, if they suppurate, the patient generally recovers.

Mr Mompesson remained in health during the whole time of the contagion; but Providence saw fit to put his fortitude to severer trial than if he had seen the plague-spot indurated upon his own body.

Amongst other precautions against the disease, Mrs Mompesson had prevailed upon her husband to suffer an incision to be made in his leg, and kept open. One day she observed appearances in the wound which induced her belief that the contagion had found a vent that way, and that, consequently, the danger was over as to him; the digestion of the sore being a certain sign of recovery. Instead of being shocked that the pestilence had entered her

house, and that her weakness, for she was not in health, must next endure its fury, she expressed the most rapturous gratitude to Heaven for the apprehended deliverance of him, whom more than her life she loved. His letters, though he seems to think her conviction groundless concerning his having taken the disease, make grateful mention of that disinterested joy.

Mrs Mompesson, however, soon after sickened of the plague, and expired in her husband's arms, in the 27th year of her age. Her monument is now in Eyam church-yard, protected by iron rails, and with the inscription distinct. Her great grand-daughter's pious visit to the tomb of her excellent ancestress, when I was at Eyam with my father in my 16th year, proved the commencement of a friendship between that very accomplished lady and myself, which I think will cease only with the life of one of us. *

Upon the first appearance of the pestilence in Eyam, Mr Mompesson wrote to the then Earl of Devonshire, residing at Chatsworth, to say, that he believed it possible to prevail upon his parishioners to confine themselves within the limits of the village,

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* That friendship did remain to the time of Mrs Mompesson's death, in the autumn 1798. She died unmarried, and regretted by all who knew her, for she was worthy the name of *Mompesson.*

provided his grace would exert himself to induce the country round to supply them with necessaries, leaving such provisions as might be requested, in appointed places, and at appointed hours, upon the neighbouring hills.

The proposal was punctually complied with; and it is most remarkable, that when the pestilence became beyond conception terrible, not a single inhabitant attempted to pass the deathful bounds of the village, though a regiment of soldiers could not, in that rocky and open country, have detained them against their will; much less could any watch, which might have been set by the neighbourhood, have effected that infinitely important purpose.

By the influence of this exemplary man, the result of his pious and affectionate virtue, the rest of the county of Derby escaped the plague; not one of the very nearly neighbouring towns, hamlets, or even a single house, being infected beyond the limits of Eyam village, though the distemper remained there more than seven months.

Dr Mead, in the last edition of his book on poisons, has recorded the prudence of Mr Mompesson's conduct in the care he took to prevent, as much as possible, the contagion from spreading, and by his exertions to procure the most approved medicines from the faculty in London, for the use of his infected parishioners.

Some years afterwards, Mr Mompesson obtained the prebend of York and Southwell, and the rectory of Eakring, in Nottinghamshire. He married his second wife in 1679, Mrs Nuby, widow of Charles Nuby, Esq. by whom he had two daughters. She was a remarkably ingenious woman. The deanery of Lincoln was offered to him, but he declined it in favour of his friend, Dr Fuller, to whom he had promised his interest, and by which interest the doctor obtained that deanery. Thus were piety, fortitude, honour, and generosity, blended in his character. He died in the year 1708. His memory ought never to die; it should be immortal as the spirit which made it worthy to live.

Your heart will expand over this faithful picture of elevated worth,

> "Of courage, that outshines, in its white hue,
> The sanguine colour of the soldier's daring."

In the summer 1757, five labouring men, inhabitants of Eyam, were digging amongst the plague-graves on the heathy mountain above the village, to make potatoe-ground for a cottage which had been built there. They came to something which had the appearance of having once been linen. Conscious of its situation, they instantly buried it again; but, in a few days, they all sickened of a putrid fever, and

three out of the five died. It was so contagious, that the sick could procure no attendance out of their own family. The disease proved mortal to seventy persons of Eyam.

My father, who had two years before been appointed canon of Lichfield, was residing with his family in that city, at the period when the subtle, unextinguished, though much abated power of this superlatively dreadful disease awakened from the dust, in which it had slumbered ninety-one years.

All is silence from Shrewsbury. Mr S——— is gone to Bath, which surely he would not have done, if his daughter's health had seemed in an alarming state. But O! why is she silent?—she said she would write to me. Adieu! adieu!

LICHFIELD, FEB. 25, 1765.

No wish shall be disappointed which you can form, and I can gratify. This packet brings you the requested copies of Mr Mompesson's letters. You will find them pious, affectionate, mournful, and pathetic, though without the grace of elegant style: we often meet in them a stiff and quaint phraseology.

At that period, English prose had not attained the easy flow which adorns it without diminishing its strength; and which, from the habit of graceful expression and harmonious period, clothes the rising ideas in spontaneous eloquence.

I grow more and more alarmed about Nanette, from her yet continued and portentous silence. O! I hope she will not swell the instances of the ambition of Death,

> "To call his victims from the fairest fold,
> And sheath his shafts in all the pride of life."

[From the Rev. William Mompesson, Rector of Eyam, in Derbyshire, to his children, George and Elizabeth Mompesson. Written during the time of the plague being in that village.]

EYAM, AUGUST, 1666.

DEAR HEARTS,

THIS brings you the doleful news of your dearest mother's death; the greatest loss that could befall you. I am deprived of a kind and loving consort,

and you are bereaved of the most indulgent mother that ever poor little children had. But we must comfort ourselves in God, with this consideration,—the loss is only ours; our sorrow is her gain, which should sustain our drooping spirits. I assure myself that her rewards and her joys are unutterable. Dear children, your blessed mother lived an holy life, and made a comfortable end, though by means of the sore pestilence, and she is now invested with a crown of righteousness.

My children, I think it may be useful to you to have a narrative of your dear mother's virtues, that the knowledge thereof may teach you to imitate her excellent qualities. In the first place, let me recommend to you her piety and devotion, which were according to the exact principles of the church of England. In the next place, I can assure you, she was composed of modesty and humility, which virtues did possess her dear soul in a most exemplary manner. Her discourse was ever grave and meek, yet pleasant also; a vaunting and immodest word was never heard to come out of her mouth. Again, I can set out in her two other virtues, with no little confidence, viz. charity and frugality. She never valued any thing she had, when the necessities of a poor neighbour did require it, but had a bountiful spirit towards all distressed and indigent persons;—yet she was never lavish or profuse, but carefully,

constantly, and commendably frugal. She never liked the company of tattling women, and abhorred the wandering custom of going from house to house, that wastefully spending of precious time, for she was ever busied in useful occupations. Yet, though thus prudent, she was always kind and affable; for, while she avoided those whose company could not instruct or benefit her, and would not unbosom herself to any such, she dismissed and avoided them with civility.

I do believe, my dear hearts, upon sufficient grounds, that she was the kindest wife in the world, and think, from my soul, that she loved me ten times better than she did herself; for she not only resisted my earnest entreaties, that she would fly with you, dear children, from this place of death, but, some few days before it pleased God to visit my house, she perceived a green matter to come from the issue in my leg, which she fancied a symptom that the distemper, raging amongst us, had gotten a vent that way, from whence she assured herself that I was passed the malignity of the disease, whereat she rejoiced exceedingly, amidst all the danger with which her near approach to me was attended, whom she believed to be infected.

Now I will tell you my thoughts of this business. I think she was mistaken in the nature of that discharge which she saw; certainly it was the salve that made it look so green; yet her rejoicing on that ac-

count was a strong testimony of her love to me; for it is clear she cared not for her own peril, so I were safe.

Farther, I can assure you, my sweet babes, that her love to you was little inferior to that which she felt for me; since, why should she thus ardently desire my longer continuance in this world of sorrows, but that you might have the protection and comfort of my life?

You little imagine with what delight she used to talk of you both, and the pains that she took when you sucked your milk from her breasts, is almost incredible. She gave a strong testimony of her love for you, when she lay upon her death-bed. A few hours before she expired, I brought her some cordials, which she told me plainly she was not able to take. I entreated she would take them, for your dear sakes. At the mention of your names, she, with difficulty, lifted herself up and took them, which was to let me understand, that, while she had any strength left, she would embrace an opportunity of testifying her affection to you.

Now I will give you an exact account of the manner of her death. It is certain she had, for some time, had symptoms of a consumption, and her flesh was considerably wasted thereby. However, being surrounded with infected families, she doubtless got the distemper from them. Her natural strength

being impaired, she could not struggle with the disease, which made her illness so very short. Upon being seized, she shewed much contrition for the errors of her life, and often cried out,—"One drop of my Saviour's blood, to save my soul!"

At the beginning of her sickness, she earnestly desired me not to come near her, lest I should receive harm thereby; but I can assure you I did not desert her, but, thank God, stood to my resolution not to leave her in her sickness, who had been so tender a nurse to me in her health. Blessed be God, that he enabled me to be so helpful and consoling to her, for which she was not a little thankful.

No worldly business was, during her illness, any disturbance to her; for she only minded making her call and election sure; and she asked pardon of her maid-servant for having sometimes given her an angry word.

I gave her several sweating antidotes, which had no kind operation, but rather scalded and inflamed her more, whereupon her dear head was distempered, which put her upon many incoherencies. I was much troubled thereat, and propounded to her several questions in divinity, as by whom, and upon what account, she expected salvation, and what assurances she had of the certainty thereof. Though in all other things she talked at random, yet, to these religious questions, she gave me as rational and wel-

come answers as I could desire; and, at those times, I bade her repeat after me certain prayers and ejaculations, which she always did with much devotion, which was no little comfort and admiration to me, that God should be so good and gracious to her.

A little before her dear soul departed, she desired me to pray with her again. I went to her, and asked her how she did? Her answer was, that she was but looking when the good hour should come. Thereupon we went to prayers, and she made her responses from the common prayer-book as perfectly as if she had been in perfect health, and an amen to every pathetic expression. When we had ended our prayers for the visitation of the sick, we made use of those out of the Whole Duty of Man; and when I heard her say nothing, I urged,—My dear, dost thou mind? She answered, "Yes," and it was the last word she spoke.

I question not, my dear hearts, that the reading of this account will cause many a salt tear to spring from your eyes; yet let this comfort you,—your dear mother is a saint in heaven.

I could have told you of many more of her excellent virtues; but I hope you will not in the least question my testimony, if, in a few words, I tell you that she was pious and upright in all her conversation.

Now, to that most blessed God, who bestowed

upon her all these graces, be ascribed all honour, glory, and dominion, the just tribute of all created beings, for evermore! Amen!

WILLIAM MOMPESSON.*

Eyam, August 31, 1666.

[From the Rev. William Mompesson, Rector of Eyam, in Derbyshire, to his patron, Sir George Saville, afterwards Lord Halifax. Written when the plague was in that village.]

EYAM, SEPT. 1, 1666.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

This letter brings you the saddest tidings that ever my pen could write. The "destroying angel" has been in my habitation;—my dearest wife was stricken, and is gone to her everlasting rest, invested, as

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* The pious author of the above letter could not suppose it would be comprehended by infants of four and five years old. He certainly meant it should be preserved for their inspection in riper years, when the consciousness that it had been written under the immediate impressions of the affecting scene it describes, would add force to the precepts and to the example it holds forth.

I trust, with a crown of glory, having made a most pious and happy end.

Indeed, had she loved herself as well as she loved me, she had fled, at my entreaty, with her sweet babes, from the pit of destruction; but she was resolved to die a martyr to my interest. My drooping spirits are much refreshed with her joys, which, I assure myself, are unutterable.

This paper, sir, is to bid you an hearty farewell for ever, and to bring you my thanks for all your noble favours; and I hope you will believe a dying man, that I have as much love as honour for you;—that I bend my feeble knees to the God of Heaven, that you, my dear lady, her children, and their children, may be blessed with happiness external, internal, and eternal; and that the same blessings may fall upon my Lady Sunderland and her family.

Dear sir, let your dying chaplain recommend this truth to you and yours,—that no happiness or solid comfort can be secured in this vale of tears, but from living a pious life. I pray you, dear sir, to retain this rule—Never to do that thing upon which you dare not first ask the blessing of God upon the success thereof.

Sir, I have made bold with your name in my will for an executor; and I hope you will not take it ill. Others are joined with you, that will take from you all the trouble. Your favourable aspect will, I know, be a great comfort to my distressed orphans. I am

not desirous that they should be great, but good; and it is my earnest request, that they may be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Sir, I thank God that I am willing to shake hands, in peace, with all the world; and I have comfortable assurances that he will accept me for the sake of his Son, and I find God more good than ever I imagined, and wish that his goodness were not so much abused and contemned.

I desire you would be pleased to make choice of an humble, pious man to succeed me in this parsonage. Could I see your face before I depart hence, I would inform you which way I think he may live comfortably among these people, which would be a satisfaction to me before I die.

Dear sir, I beg your prayers, and those of your family, that I may not be daunted or appalled by the powers of hell; that I may have dying graces, and be found in a dying posture; and, with tears, I entreat, that when you are praying for fatherless and motherless infants, you would then remember my two pretty babes.

Sir, pardon the rude style of this paper, and if my head be discomposed, you cannot wonder at me; however, be pleased to believe that I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obliged, most affectionate,

and grateful servant,

WILLIAM MOMPESSON.

[From the Rev. William Mompesson, Rector of Eyam, in Derbyshire, to his uncle, John Beilby, Esq. of York.]

EYAM, Nov. 20, 1666.

DEAR SIR,

I suppose this letter will seem no less than a miracle, proving that my habitation is *inter vivos*.—Being unwilling to affright you with a paper from my own hands, I have gotten a friend to transcribe these lines.

I know you are sensible of my lone condition, of my loss of the kindest wife in the world, whose life was truly inimitable, and her end most comfortable. She was in an excellent posture of preparation when Death gave the summons, which fills me with assurances that she is now invested with a crown of righteousness.

By too sad experience, I find the maxim verified, "*Bonum magis carendo quam fruendo cernitur.*" Had I been as thankful as my condition did deserve of me, I might yet have had my dearest in my bosom. But now, farewell all happy days! and God grant that I may repent of my great ingratitude!

The condition of this place hath been so dreadful, that I persuade myself it exceeded all history and example. I may truly say, our town was become a Golgotha, the place of sculls; and, had there not been a small remnant of us left, we had been as Sodom, and like unto Gomorah. My ears never heard such doleful lamentations,—my nose never smelt such noisome smells,—and my eyes never beheld such ghastly spectacles. Here have been seventy-six families visited within my parish, out of which died 259 persons.

Blessed be God, our fears are now over, none having died of the infection since the 11th of October, nor is there any one under present suspicion; and all the pest-houses have been several weeks empty.

I intend, if it please God, to spend most of this week in seeing all woollen-clothes fumed and purified, as well for the satisfaction as for the safety of the country. Here hath been such burying of goods, as the like was surely never known; and, indeed, I think in this we have been too precise. For my own part, I have hardly left myself apparel to shelter my body from the cold, and have wasted more than need, for example's sake merely.

As to myself, I never was in better health than during the whole time of this dreadful visitation; neither can I think that I have had any certain symptom of the disease. My man-servant had the

distemper. Upon the tumour appearing, I gave him several chemical antidotes, which had a very kind operation; and, with the blessing of God, they kept the venom from the heart, and after the tumour broke, he was very well. My maid hath continued in health, which was a great mercy; for, had she quailed, I should have been ill set to have washed and got provisions for myself.

I know I have had your prayers, and question not but I have fared the better for them; and conclude that the prayers of good people have rescued me from the jaws of death. Certainly I had been in the dust, if omnipotency had not been conquered by holy violence. *

I have largely tasted the goodness of my Creator; since, blessed be God, the grim looks of Death did never yet affright me. I always had a firm faith that my dear babes would do well, which made me willing to leave this unkind and froward world. Yet I hope I shall esteem it a mercy that my desires of being, like my dear wife, translated to a better place, were frustrated. God grant that I may wait with

* This was well meant, but it sounds absurd and shocking. Religious enthusiasm is too prone to violate that subdued and sacred awe with which the mind ought to contemplate the dispensations of the Deity. Mr Mompesson's heart and conduct were all that does honour to human nature, and to the religion he professed.

patience for my change, and make a right use of his punishments, and of his mercies; for, if the first have been severe, so have the last been sweet and comfortable!

I perceive, by a letter from Mrs Newby, that you have much and most kindly concerned yourself for my welfare. Indeed, I made no question of possessing your true affection. Be assured, that, in the midst of my great troubles, you were often in my thoughts.

Be pleased, sir, to accept the grateful presentment of my kindest respects, imparting the same to your good wife, and to all my dear relations.

A line from your hand would be welcome to, dearest sir,

Your sorrowful, and truly affectionate nephew,

WILLIAM MOMPESSON.

[The former series of Letters resumed.]

LICHFIELD, MARCH 27, 1764.

WITH a sorrowing heart, a confused brain, and a trembling hand, I take up the pen to thank you, dear-

est Emma, for your kind, though mournful letter of yesterday. It arrived a few hours after the sad tidings came announcing the fatal period of our beloved friend's indisposition, which, notwithstanding a few foreboding fears, rising at intervals in my mind, was apparently nothing more than a common cold and cough. Transient only were my apprehensions, and it is certain, neither her father, nor any of her friends at Shrewsbury, had an idea of her being in danger, till within a few days of her setting out.—Gen. Severn thought worse of her complaints than those who hourly beheld her, and persuaded the family she was in, to suffer him to take her with him to Bath, that her father, who was there, might carry her directly to Bristol. Alas! she lived not to reach its balmy springs! On alighting from the general's chaise at Bath, she fainted away in her father's arms; and, growing instantly too ill to be removed, died at three the ensuing morning. Alas! that father! my heart bleeds for him. O! that he had taken her to Bristol when he went to Bath, a week or two after we all left London! But who could foresee the sad necessity? She made so light of her complaints! I had a letter from him yesterday. It is full upon the sad circumstances. Blotted with his tears, the writing is already almost effaced by mine.

Alas! dear Emma, is it so soon come to this?—Little did I imagine that she, who so lately wept

over my sister's bier, would, ere the year came round, press her own. But one year since, we beheld them both in the bloom of sprightly youth,

"Without a care, a sorrow, or a fear,"

gay and smiling, the delight of all that beheld them. "But now the spoiler is fallen upon their summer-fruits and upon their vintage." No sighs, however, can recall the past!—no lamentation awake them from their deep, everlasting slumber. No! let us not say everlasting; for it ill becomes us, the heirs of immortal hope, to use that word, fit only for the lip of the cold despairing materialist.

Emma—if it is indeed (as surely it shall be) given us, in the world of light and life, to know and love the companions of our mortal state, let us think of her we have recently lost, emerging at once from the dimness of a mortal decline, and from the bitterness of death—a merciful God speaking pardon to all her frailties, and confirming her unalloyed and ever-during felicity! Imagine, amidst the bright angelic host, one gentle beatified spirit hailing the new inhabitant of heaven; imagine that she shall discover, amidst the encircling splendours of immortal beauty, the friend of her youth—the sweet companion of her innocent pleasures in this world; a world which had been to them, the few hours of preparatory sickness excepted, the pleasing, though the

faint dawn of being, now brightened into that day which shall bring no sorrow, and which shall know no night.

How selfish then our murmurs!—Yet who, or what, can stifle the sighs of nature? or, at once, disperse the gloom arising from the consciousness, that, through a perhaps long course of delightless years, we shall not behold the beloved of our hearts? —Yet let us endeavour, by the solemn aids of reason and religion, to submit cheerfully to the doom which we cannot reverse—and, by the soft assistance of hope and tender imagination, to gild and irradiate even the dark mansions of the grave.

Another consolation remains to us from the early, and apparently premature death of those we love. Observation has already taught me, that youth, amidst all its rash hopes and giddy indiscretions, is, in general, more amiable than middle or advanced life.—

> "The world's infections—few bring back, at eve,
> Immaculate, the manners of the morn."

Quitting this mournful subject, let me observe, that scarce any thing, except our mutual loss, pressing forward to my pen, could thus long have prevented my expressing how welcome the assurance you give me, that, so soon as these March winds are

over, you will come down to Lichfield, be our guest some weeks, and remain with your aunt in this city during the ensuing summer.

How delightful had this intelligence been, if ill health had not suggested the scheme, and if such tidings had arrived in cheerfuller hours! Dearly are they consoling even in these. Whatever our sorrows, whatever our consolations, it is, at least, sweet to reflect, that we shall share them together, as the vernal day rolls on.

"O Emma! I am sick of many griefs:"—My hopes for Mr T——'s happiness and my own are vanished as a dream. His guardians, somewhat incredibly, declare that the expences of his education, the purchase of his commissions, and the port at which he has lived since he went into the army, have reduced his original fortune to little more than half what it was. He is not yet twenty-four—has not been an officer more than four years—has never gamed, nor had libertine expences—and what is become of what ought to have been the savings of so long a minority?—But there is no redress.

By the officiousness of mistaken friends, I have endured needless vexation, and an added weight of grief. Their informations caused my father to question me upon this subject—to be angry at the correspondence which I acknowledged—to write an ill-judged letter to Mr T——, and violently to insist

on the dissolution of an engagement which we had mutually agreed to renounce, of our own accord, if the guardian-eclaircissement proved what it does prove.

This storm arose in our little domestic atmosphere the day after I sent you the large packet with the Mompesson records. In the interval, your poor friend has been obliged to "abide the hourly shot of angry eyes;" and Mr T——'s delicacy has been wounded to no sort of purpose. My mother, however, behaved with extreme kindness in this business.—Of the particulars you shall know more when we meet.

Pray bring the letter with you which you received from our dear deceased friend since we all separated. Alas! she lived not to receive mine: it arrived at Shrewsbury the morning after she left it. Being sent to Bath, her father returned it to me with an unbroken seal. I wrote the instant I heard she was worse, expecting, from day to day, that she would herself write to me, being in my debt for a long epistle, written a little before we went to town, when she was upon a visit at B——. I hope to heaven she did not think I knew how ill she was, and continued silent—Yet, Oh! that I had written sooner!—Honora is extremely grieved for the loss of one so near and dear to her.

Adieu!—May I soon receive you in amended

health and spirits; for joy, or even cheerfulness, must, till that moment, be unknown to the heart of your friend!

LICHFIELD, APRIL 5, 1765.

FROM the date of my dear Emma's letter, it ought to have reached me yesterday. As I flatter myself you will set out very soon, I write by return of post. Sorry am I that you are so much indisposed. We expected you every day this passed week, and grew impatient of a delay, which alarmed our apprehensions, and disappointed our hopes. Yet we would not that you should run hazards, by undertaking the journey before it is thought proper.

Amongst many sorrows, I ought to be thankful for enjoying, in so eminent a degree, what is allowed to be the primal blessing—a perfect state of health. It often astonishes me to perceive, that not all the anguish I endured for my sister's illness and death—the regret I have felt from the wreck of my heart's lately revived hopes—nor this additional affliction, in the loss of poor Nanette, have at all impaired my constitution. Let me thankfully acknowledge the preciousness of a gift which is bestowed thus libe-

rally but on few, and for which many more worthy languish in vain.

It certainly enables us more speedily to conquer every unavailing grief; nay often dispels the gloom ere we wish it dispelled; for I have, at times, desired, alas! perhaps criminally, to keep my sorrows more incessantly waking, and loathed the returning dawn of my habitual cheerfulness, the probable result of invincible health:—Invincible I may well call it, which has stood the shock of such afflictions! Often have I exclaimed, in the words of Isaiah, "O that my head were as water, my eyes as a fountain of tears!" But it was very wrong.

Perhaps nothing is less reconcileable to reason than the immoderate grief of a Christian over the tomb of those he loves. Would it not be idle and ridiculous to lament for being a single hour absent from a friend with whom we were to pass our lives? Yet is the comparison inadequate; since how far a greater disparity, than that of a single hour to the longest life, is there between the most protracted period of human existence and the immeasurable space of eternity!

We know, we feel this; yet I am unhappy; and you, Emma, pine and droop beneath our late deprivation. Why, why is it so? Alas! it is the voice of Nature, that arbitrary contemner of our noblest reason—of our best hopes, that incessantly presses upno our attention one mournful image—

> "The sensible warm motion, now become
> A kneaded clod."——

Too much in vain is it urged by religious faith, that the spirit is beatified—still does the frail mortal weep the dissolution of its kindred clay!

I did not hear the fatal prognostic which, you say, our dear friend uttered to Mr M——, on the eve of our leaving town. If I had, it would have extremely shocked me. Doubtless he is much grieved, who could not behold her with indifference whose tender attention his pleasing qualities had deeply engaged.

Remember us all to your brother and sister: Her mild eyes, I well know, have paid the tribute of many tears to her departed friend and cousin.

It will not surely be long ere the soft Favonius shall breathe upon our vales—For thee may he arise with every healing power!

GOTHAM, AUG. 1767.

I WRITE to you from the retired, and yet cheerful mansion of piety and peace, where our family have been in the habit of passing a month every

two years; except my father, who contrives to be at some water-drinking place for his health, though generally so excellent, while the rest of us inhabit this scene, much too quiet and uniform for his lively spirits and social taste.

For myself, though truly I should never have chosen to quit Lichfield for Gotham, yet, when duty leads me thither, I can support its tranquillity without ennui. Here none come who are anxiously expected—none go away, for whom our sighs are responsive to the closing door. This is not the Abyssinian Hill—but it is the dear retreat which sheltered and soothed my desolation, when death had robbed me of an only sister, and when the wounds of that fatal stroke were all bleeding fresh.

The convenient old parsonage is uncommonly light and cheerful. Its fire-places have odd little extra windows near them, which are the blessings of employment in cold or gloomy days. A rural garden encircles the house. In its front, a short flagged walk divides two grass-plats, and leads to a little wicket-gate, arched over with ivy, that opens into the fold-yard. A narrow gravel walk extends along the front of the house, and under the parlour windows. Opposite them, and upon the larger grass-plat, stands that venerable and expansive mulberry tree, which shaded us from the summer heats, when, in the hours of sorrow, my cousin, Miss Martin, Ho-

nora, and myself, resorted thither to indulge our mournful recollections. Every other visit we have, through life, paid to this quiet scene, was, as it is now, in autumn.

Behind the house lies the kitchen-garden, and across it a pebbly path which leads into the churchyard. Ah! what a difference between our stately cathedral and this simple edifice—

> "The plainest roof that Piety could raise,
> And only vocal with its Maker's praise!"—

When the tuneless bell calls us to Sunday's service, what a contrast, in these rude and moss-greened walls, to the long and vaulted aisles—the pealing organ—the beautiful and full-voiced choir, and all the soul-exalting enthusiasm which results to a lover of music from choral devotion and Gothic magnificence!

But here the religious heart pours forth its unassisted devotion in the plain pews, and at the rustic altar, surrounded by humble villagers; their only finery the crowded posey, whose pinks and roses, mixed with flowering thyme and southernwood, are twisted closely round by a plenitude of packthread, and diffuse a fragrance more cheering and grateful to my sense than the cambric handkerchiefs of fashionable ladies, sprinkled with costly essence and perfumed water.

Nothing can be more uniform, more simple, than the manner in which we pass our time; and in which week after week glides smoothly, yet swiftly, away, and seems, on retrospect, to have been scarce so many days. This is from the want of various faces, varied employments, and of incidents, to mark the progress of time, and divide one day from another on the memory.

We rise at seven. At eight, my aunt and cousin, my mother, Honora, and myself, meet at our neat and cheerful breakfast. That dear, kind-hearted saint, my uncle, has his milk earlier, and retires, for the morning, to his study. At nine, we adjourn to my aunt's apartment above stairs, where one reads aloud to the rest, who are at work. At twelve, my uncle summons us to prayers in the parlour. When they are over, the family disperses, and we young ones either walk or write till dinner. That appears at two. At four, we resume my aunt's apartment. Its large and lightsome window commands, it is true, no other prospect than the churchyard over the garden wall, and the village below, which is broad and grassy, with houses thinly scattered. Now, in the latter end of August, the evening spectacle, from seven to eight, is truly pleasing and joyous. A majestic old elm stands in the middle of the green-sward, circled round by a mossy seat, and is the rendezvous of the village youths and

maidens, when the labours of the day are past. Some of the young men wrestle; some play at quoits; and others sit on the bench, and talk to the lasses. It is impossible to express the satisfaction I have in beholding these natural and innocent pleasures,—

"Scene of athletic sports and whisper'd vows."

When we quit this dear apartment, to take an evening walk, it is always with a degree of reluctance, even when the sun shines golden on the little dark wood, a mile from us, and on Weldon Hill, which overlooks a rich valley, watered by the smooth and silver Trent, and crowned by the town of Nottingham and its stately castle. To this hill, when we can prevail on ourselves to quit our book, and the sight of these rural lovers, we generally walk; except the local attractions of our traditionary Cuckow-bush lead us a less pleasant way, through a narrow path, over a large ploughed field, to a clump of trees, resembling our Borocap hill, and which, ancient story says, the wise villagers planted to hedge in the cuckow. How I love these old tales, and to visit the places which are said to remain in their commemoration!

Have you read Churchill's whimsical poem, which he named after this village—his Gotham? where we find the following odd burden recurring perpetually:

> "Rejoice, ye happy Gothamites, rejoice!
> Lift up your voice on high, a mighty voice!
> The praises of so great, so good a king,
> Shall Churchill reign, and shall not Gotham sing?"

'Tis a strange random business, without plan, without story, without moral; but it contains beautiful, as well as unaccountable lines.—Instance:

> "Let fragrant shrubs be brought, with every flower
> That decks the field, the garden, and the bower;
> From the dwarf daisy, that, like infant, clings,
> And fears to leave the earth from whence she springs,
> To that proud giantess of garden race,
> Who, madly rushing to the sun's embrace,
> O'er-tops her fellows in the aspiring aim,
> Demands his wedded love, and bears his name."

What pity that a genius so animated, which ought to have lived for all times, and have been a citizen of the world, should have chosen to exist for a period only, by directing his whole attention to party satire, and wasting his glowing vigour upon personal philippics!

Many would think it a bathos in subject, to quit a satirized senate and its celebrated poet, to resume the diary of an obscure village, and to talk of its unassuming pastor—to tell you that the hour between supper and bed-time is enlivened, and turned to excellent mental account, by my uncle's energe-

tic conversation, which is always upon religious, literary, or moral subjects. At half past ten, he calls in his servants to join our vesper devotions, which close the peaceful and unvaried day, resigning us to sleep, as tranquil as itself.

Your agreeable image is often so obliging to visit my slumbers; a favour for which I am always grateful to her gentleman-usher, Mr Morpheus.

GOTHAM, SEPT. 1767.

ON my word, a constant visiter!—Mr N——— yesterday morning,—this morning,—and every morning! What say you to being a nabobess? Thou art the very woman to fascinate a luxurious Asiatic taste; full made; majestic, with the lillyan softness in thy long-cut eyes. Gold and silver muslins, and pearls and diamonds, will suit thy empress kind of figure. But has he, who can bestow them, made an interest in thy heart? If he has not, if he cannot, then disdain, I pray thee, the glittering baubles!

Your friend, Miss B——d, with her host of virtues, her reserved frankness and serene cheerfulness, with looks that promise a mine of excellence, of

compliant duty, of ever varied intelligence, might, without hazard to her peace, or disappointment to her husband, marry with esteem only; her looks will not have flattered him; but you must never marry without impassioned preference. Eyes, that dwell with so much softness on their object, as to flatter a hermit, were he to be honoured with your attention, must, I insist upon it, have flattered a husband into tender expectations, which superior intelligence, cheerful acquiescence, and the most punctilious sense of duty, would be, of themselves, incompetent to satisfy. I mean, if he were himself attached to his bride with any thing resembling passion. It is true, the chances are extremely against a woman ever marrying, who resolves not to approach the altar of Hymen without she is led thither by a man whom she prefers to all the rest of his sex. But, to a female mind, that can employ itself ingeniously, that is capable of friendship, that is blessed with affluence, where are the evils of celibacy? For my part, I could never imagine that there were any, at least compared to the ennui, the chagrin, the preclusion, which hearts, cast in the warm mould of passion, must feel in a marriage of mere esteem.

But, waving these momentous essentials, I shall talk to you of the little circumstances that inspirit or stupify the passing hour. I have obtained a spinnet from Nottingham, and placed it where no musi-

cal instrument has appeared time immemorial—in my uncle's tapestry parlour, which he and the rest of the family now consider as the *sanctum sanctorum* of Cecilia, and whither I retire to pay my uninterrupted orisons.

To be sure, the little tinkler is a wretched substitute for my dear harpsichord. It so much resembles a frying-pan, that, if it was not past swarming-time, the bees would certainly glide in when the noon-tide warmth invites an open window. Two strings are already broken, so that my hapless lessons and songs are truly maimed and miserable.

This village has no neighbourhood, and, in itself, no prospect. The roads are deep and dirty, in winter scarce passable. My fair cousin, Miss Martin, is really very near being very handsome. Here she is most completely buried through the dreary months. You used to admire her eyes, which promise tenderness as lavishly as your own, and to praise the sunny tint of her nut-brown and shining tresses. Her understanding is considerably above the common level; but native diffidence, and enthusiastic partiality for her friends, make her opinions, her taste and judgement, camelion-like, take all their tints from the sentiments of her favourites, and she is uneasy if her very night-ribbon is not tied like theirs.

——————" On their head, no toy,
But is her pattern, her affection; their

> Unthought-of habits of attire, she follows
> For her most serious decking."

Dear girl! heavily, with her, must drag the cold and darkened months!—No sister, no companion out of the parental character! She tells us that she always weeps for joy at the sight of the first daisy, and welcomes and talks to, and hails the little blessed harbinger of brighter days, her days of liberty as well as of light.

We dined at Nottingham yesterday. That town is finely situated; the rich valley below; the castle on an eminence so noble; the Collec-woods, the river, are beautiful objects; yet the town itself, at the distance of a mile or two, looks like an immense brick-hill, especially on one approach, being built on the side of a hill, with red houses, tier above tier.

And to-morrow we dine at the beautiful village of Clifton, with the clergyman's wife of the place, Mrs L———r, a plump, lively, round little woman, of healthy cheek and sparkling eye. We will not boast of her knowledge, her taste, or her sentiments; but an honest, frank, and friendly heart, with good common sense, and even jocund cheerfulness, make her a most desirable neighbour in such a lone retreat.—She defies the clay and the mire of these deep roads, and the winds and the rains of winter. Welcome to a social spirit, even of the most superior order, is the sight of a cheerful human face in a country re-

tirement, whatever be its lack of varied intelligence. Welcome is the sound of a cheerful voice, though it may not convey wit or erudition, or even droll humour, which is often possessed by people of very moderate understanding, and, where it is genuine, recompenses in amusement every other deficiency of the intellects. But, even of this, we must not boast in our friend Mrs L———r.

Her husband is of the order of the oddities, and one of those lank, lean parsons which are sowed so thick over this country; most of them the starveling curates of their fat and jolly rectors, who live in gayer scenes, and leave their clay-sunk parishes to the cheapest journeyman they can procure. Mr L——r has every characteristic of his brethren but their poverty, for the rectory is fat, though its pastor is lean; yet, by his meagre and rueful countenance, one should suspect his purse as empty as it must in reality be full. Their house is one of the neatest parsonages in the kingdom, which they have furnished elegantly. Its situation charming. They are each good humoured and hospitable. He is as quiet as she is sprightly. Without children, they seem to have none of the cares of life, nor to want any of its pleasures which are beyond their reach. She reads no curtain-lectures upon his jockying over to Nottingham to read the news three times a week; and she may visit her neighbours, and entertain them at

her house, whenever she pleases. We, in this the hey-day of our youth and sensibility, should turn away with disdain from such exemptions and such pleasures; but they have happiness, guiltless happiness; surely then it matters little what are the ingredients which form it!

> "O! happiness, our being's end and aim,
> Good, pleasure, ease, content,—whate'er thy name!"

this honest couple do certainly possess thee. She will laugh, and give and eat good dinners, and he will read newspapers, and chew tobacco in peace, to their last hour. Shall I promise to love you to mine? —You must alter extremely before I can be in danger of breaking my word. Adieu!

GOTHAM, OCT. 1767.

MR HINCKLEY'S clerk is arrived from Lichfield upon business to my uncle, and returns thither tomorrow morning. I feel impelled to send you a little letter by him, though we are so soon to meet and to enjoy each other's conversation, *viva voce*, through

many ensuing months, perhaps years; yes, on the Abyssinian Hill, beneath the shade of that majestic and sacred pile which crowns it. On Monday we bend our course towards Lichfield; lovely, interesting Lichfield! where the sweetest days of my youth have passed—the days of prime:

> "The best of days which crown our life,
> That light upon the eye-lids dart,
> And melting joys upon the heart."

Nor are they yet all passed away;—it is at least, if not spring, high summer with you and I, who have not yet attained our twenty-fourth year.

Does it not seem some merit of the temper, that Honora and myself have been so tranquil and cheerful in this scene, when the idea of exchanging it for another inspires us with so much delight?

I begin to count the hours till Monday morning; yet this pleasure of expectation, perhaps more sweet and vivid than any reality which can crown it, is not without alloy, not without a mixture of regret. My amiable cousin will feel her retirement more lonely and deprived, for having had it enlivened, during a whole month, by society so dear to her. That consciousness is painful. How I wish she might be permitted to return with us! but my aunt and uncle will not hear of it.

It is evening. Half an hour ago my fair cousin

and myself were walking on the grass-plat, upon which our chamber window looks. The sun was setting splendidly; but, looking up, I saw an object more bright, more lovely—the face of my beauteous Honora at the open casement, packing up a little box which we were to take home with us. She leaned forward, bending upon me her fine eyes, luminous with joy, then lifted them up with a smile of delight, and clasped her dear hands together. I need not observe that it was the thoughts of our approaching return which produced this silent eloquence of pleasure. She would have restrained it, I well know, from respect to poor Miss Martin's very opposite sensations, had not that dear girl's eyes, heavy with regret, been fixed upon the ground, and therefore incapable of seeing an emanation whose lustre must have pained her.

Ah! to how many gay and fashionable nymphs would our joy be unaccountable in returning to a home so quiet, to a life so uniform! They would think it only one degree more supportable than village solitude, and worthy only of a cold preference. So they must think, since neither balls, nor plays, nor lovers, await our arrival. We want them not. It is enough for us, that, in the scene we love, we can have reading, music, friendship, the company of Emma, and a few more beings like her, who diffuse the spirit of pleasure wherever they approach; and

with whom "all seasons, and their change, all please alike." The poet goes on to say,

> "Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet."

So shall I, so will Honora say, when we rise on Monday morning—the morning that is to light us back to Lichfield!—to you!

LICHFIELD, JAN. 17, 1768.

I HEARD, with concern, that you were far from well, before I received your last letter confirming that unwelcome intelligence; but no langour of the body can depress the fervour and kindness of your spirit, when writing to those you love. For the proof now before me that it cannot, believe me sincerely grateful.

It is suspected, by a few of us here, that fine company and fine dinners do not agree with you.—Lucy is happier in her domestic circle at S———d, but we miss you both extremely.

In a state of health so unconfirmed, the parade of ceremonial visits in the B———n neighbourhood

must be oppressive. Your aunt B——d's poor fireside is certainly your element. I say poor, because you know the old lady is the foe of good fires, and that the little room, of three doors, is an almost Lapland atmosphere; but I know that friendship, serene spirits, every elegant ingenuity, and every social virtue, have lately been the inhabitants of that chilly region, and no where flourish so well: As if they had been natives of the climate, they will not bear transplanting. Return then, Emma and Lucy, with all your intellectual handmaids, return!

I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that I have not done my purposed duty in calling upon your aunt, in the absence of her interesting nieces. My little fellow-student in music has a sorry time of it, now you are both away; exposed, without her kind screens, to the hourly shot of peevish eyes, that are always on the search for occasion to find fault. The dear child is so ductile and good, as to merit the indulgence she does not meet from that discontented aunt of yours. I want to see, and speak a word of comfort to her, and to shew attention to the old lady, that I may escape dark looks when you return —But these insurmountable snow-drifts!—and they were preceded by the most dangerous slipperiness. Never was January in a more rugged mood: Yet Honora and I do not wish to bate him an icicle;—

"For our clean hearth is bright with fire;"

and the foot of Friendship will track the snows, and slide hither on the ice.

You are amongst the great: Yet do I entirely trust the sincerity of your avowed lassitude, in those long, expensive, and restrained repasts, in that circle, formal and female, which succeeds in the drawing-room. I conceive the pain of suppressed yawns, and your listenings and longings for the emancipating coach.

B——n is called a mighty good neighbourhood, surrounded, as it is, with the seats of noblemen and gentlemen of opulent fortune; but such a vicinity to splendour cannot be rationally desired by us of the middle station, and of moderate income. To such, the haughty condescension of high-life gentry is a miserable recompense for the fuss of visiting, and for the expence and trouble of entertaining them; since few of that elevated class have sense enough to feel, and to shew that they perceive what constitutes the real equality of human beings. Even of those who do not carry about them the perpetual consciousness of their fine houses, their menials, and their equipages, we may find their equals in worth and ability in our own sphere. Never was there, or man, or woman, possessed at once of a sound understanding and a generous heart, who, born in private life, ever sought and preferred the society of the great to that of people who were on a level with

themselves. The desire of being the fag-end, or the head of our company, is equally contemptible. Disparity of age in marriage, disparity of understanding in friendship, and disparity of rank in company, is always undesirable.

People of distinction, who see themselves sought and courted by those of private birth and moderate fortune, generally know the precise value of the homage they receive; that it is not paid to their abilities, or their virtues, but to their rank and wealth; and if they suffer the company of their silly worshippers, it is only to divert themselves with such paltry ambition, and to ridicule it amongst their own class.

You remember the pompous parson of C———r and his foolish wife, whom we heard their neighbour, Lord N——h, ridicule, for ordering their servants to deny them in a morning to the ladies and gentlemen of the town, and to admit only the country families.

So your fine people are all for the opera, and call oratorios a heavy lumber of doleful noise; can bear no music but Italian; and assert that Handel tears the ear with the profusion of his discords! They declaim upon the power of the ancient music over the passions, which had no discords, and to which all the combinations of harmony were unknown.

You have too much real feeling for the enchanting science, to credit the slanders of vitiated taste, or to

be dazzled by conclusions drawn from mistaken facts. Collins finishes his beautiful Ode on the Power of Music over the Passions, with a seeming preference of mere melody, grounded on the vast effects which, we are told, it produced in ancient Greece.

Now we know, that all poems, whatever their length, even the Iliad, was sung, instead of read, in their places of public resort. It must have been but a sort of recitative, in which the twenty-four books of the Iliad could have been sung. The effects of their meagre music, and of their rich poetry, have been blended, and those effects attributed to the first, which were, in reality, produced solely by the second, to which it was probably little more than a vehicle.

There may certainly be harmony without discords; but its unvaried sweetness would soon satiate. The desire of obtaining it is similar to Queen Elizabeth's request, that there might be no shades in her picture.

The most vivid pleasures of all our senses result from contrast. If we delight in umbrageous vales, verdant fields, and crystal waters, we feel the delight arise with treble poignance, when we find them at the foot of rugged rocks, and encircled by barren mountains.

When Handel is harsh, the harshness is either picturesque of distress or of horror; or else designed

to prepare the ear and the soul to receive more exquisite pleasure from the gay triumphant airs, or the soft delicious melodies that succeed.

But needless, I am persuaded, this attempt to guard you from fashionable heresy to the inimitable excellencies of the greatest musical composer the world has ever produced. Your sensibilities have secured your admiration. Were you condemned, in future, to listen only to the lazy and monotonous sweetness of the Italian song, you would always recollect the varied sensations and thrilling pleasures with which his dulcet strains and sublime chorusses have inspired you, and to his surely immortal fame be, like the seraph Abdiel, a

> "———Faithful friend,
> Amidst the many faithless."

POEMS.

POEMS

BY

ANNA SEWARD.

THE VISIONS,

AN ELEGY.*

WITH languid step and heart by sorrow torn,
Haunt of my youth, I wander thro' thy grove,
My loved ALINDA'S fate incessant mourn,
And drop my blighted garlands as I rove.

* This Poem was written on the terrace walk of the Palace garden at Lichfield, soon after the death of the Author's only sister, who died at 19, on the eve of her intended marriage.

This, and all other Poems of this Collection marked j, were written between the age of 17 and 23.

Yet e'en these rankling woes some respite find,
  And on the smiling landscape sooth'd I gaze,
Where joy's wild music cheers the drooping mind,
  As Nature's warblers swell the song of praise.

The blooming trees bend o'er the glassy stream,
  In June's gay pride they wave their flowing heads;
While, from the setting sun, a golden gleam
  O'er these green fields the soften'd radiance sheds.

But ah! behold the transient glories fly,
  And on the fair horizon steals a cloud,
A few cold drops fall from the louring sky,
  And mute the plumy warblers, late so loud!

What means this sudden damp—this awful gloom,
  This more than usual presage of the soul?
All things are silent as ALINDA's tomb,
  All but the death-bell's melancholy toll!

From the rent earth why starts that horrid shade?
  O! from its power my shrinking spirit save!
Why thus in dread funereal garb array'd,
  The shroud,—the pall,—the vestments of the grave?

O'er the wan brow the shadowy crape is bound,
  And withering flowers in mournful wreaths are
    twined,

That willows, yew, and cypress buds surround,
With dark, warp'd leaves unfragrant and declin'd.

Her cheek all bloodless, and all dim her eye,
With hollow tone, she cries,—" Behold Despair!
" She bids thee ceaseless heave th' heart-rending sigh,
" And shed eternally the bitter tear.

" A glowing sun, in Summer splendour gay,
" Soft gales, that scatter fragrance as they rove,
" The beauteous flowers, that drink the humid ray,
" 'Mid the wild transports of the vocal grove,

" Have they a charm for thee?—and still remains,
" Deep in thy breast, fond joy's congenial tide?
" Springing at Beauty's glance and Pleasure's strains,
" Do her bright streams thro' Sorrow's mansion glide?

" See'st thou this rose? its gay, its crimson glow
" Faded and gone, and all its fragrance fled!
" This sullied lily, once, with breast of snow,
" Was the chaste glory of its verdant bed.

" Yet this the lily, this the splendent rose
" ALINDA gather'd on her jocund way,

" When her fair cheek could rival bloom disclose,
" When her eyes beam'd with health's enlivening ray.

" Beneath this shade she cropt the glowing flowers,
" Herself a fairer flower," that Death has cropt,
" From this lov'd bank, where oft, in happy hours,
" She raised each stem whose sickly blossom dropt.

" Mark'd every charm of Nature's varying year,
" Of Fancy's lucid orb each hue refined,
" And all that lifts the spirit, warm and clear,
" High o'er th' inert, the common mass of mind.

" Where is she now?—within the narrow cell,
" Pale, cold, and sunk, she lies in dread repose!
" Then, JULIA, bid thy joys a long farewell!
" Young as thou art, in youth's gay hours they close."

I hear no more;—the spectre's hollow tone
Sinks in the wind that howls along the glade,
And darkness o'er its ghastly form has thrown,
Gloom following gloom, impenetrable shade.

Cold as the falling dews, tear chasing tear,
Streams on my folded hands!—yet I remain,

Transfix'd with anguish at the doom severe,
  While night and horror gather on the plain.

Silent and mournful has the lingering hour
  Beheld me plunged in Sorrow's deadly dreams;
But now, while soften'd winds forget to roar,
  On a cloud's edge the star of evening beams;

And now, emerging, all the stellar fires
  Light the dark cope, as with unnumber'd eyes;
Yet soon, before night's ample orb, retires
  Each lesser glory that illumes the skies.

Circled with shadowy hills the grassy vale,
  Thro' plenteous dews, shines silver'd by her light,
While the embosom'd lake, beneath the gale,
  Reflects her lustre, tremulously bright.

Ah see! a form, than yon full orb benign
  Of lustre more benevolent appears!
And, as she glides from an o'ershadowing pine,
  My earnest eyes dispense their gathering tears.

"To the meek words of Patience listen calm,
  "Lone child of Sorrow," the kind vision cries;

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l. 11. *Grassy vale*—The Vale of Stowe, which slopes down from Lichfield Cathedral.

" Receive on thy pierced heart my healing balm,
" And to my voice attune thy soften'd sighs!

" Wilt thou from Heav'n receive the nectar'd draught
" Of bliss, yet start if in the mingled bowl
" Rise the alloying griefs that fate has brought,
" Commission'd from above, to wean thy soul?

" Medicinal, tho' sharp, the blended woe.—
" Thou, who hast been most happy, bow resign'd!
" For man no more unfading roses blow,
" Winter lays waste his year, and grief his mind.

" But Heav'n, that sends abroad the breath of Spring
" T' expand the foliage, and disclose the flowers,
" Shall to the sorrowing mind sweet comforts bring,
" And warmly renovate its fainting powers.

" Two sister-handmaids to the Will Divine,
" For this blest purpose, quit the seraph train;
" Thro' me, thro' Patience, first its mercies shine;
" O gently listen, and no more complain!

" Yield to my influence, my behests obey,
" So shall the lenient hand of Time to thee
" Lead pious Cheerfulness, fair child of day,
" Whom the Dread Voice has bade succeed to me.

" Again her comforts shall thy breast pervade,
" Tho' clouds of sorrow have eclipsed their ray,
" And she will chace each dark and deadly shade,
" Till life's fresh paths shall brighten on thy way.

" Thy soul, humiliated, now feels and mourns
" The tarriance short of giddy joy below;
" But guard thee well, when jocund she returns,
" Against the meteor-fires that round her glow.

" To many a dangerous path those fires shall lead,
" While through luxuriant scenes with thee she roves,
" Where snares for Innocence infest the meads,
" Circean-banquets rise, and syren-groves.

" Stain'd is the spirit, following Luxury's lure,
" Cold is the heart, by earthly pride made hard,
" And 'gainst the cold, the thankless, and impure,
" The everlasting gates of bliss are barr'd.

" While to the kind, warm heart, resign'd sedate,
" The blooming wreaths of happiness are given,
" For peace on earth and joys immortal wait
" Good-will to Man and confidence in Heaven."

Now melts the vision in the moon's pale beam,
And o'er my soul serener thoughts arise,

Grief prompts no more her ineffectual stream,
  And swell no longer her convulsive sighs.

But let me haste the deeper woes to sooth,
  That press so hard on life's declining years,
With filial fondness sedulously smooth
  My parents' thorny pillow, steep'd in tears.

The bridal vestments waited to array,
  In emblematic white, their duteous maid;
But ne'er for them arrived that festal day;
  Their sweet, crush'd lily low in earth is laid.

O! she was all parental Hopes desire,
  To gild declining life with softest light;
Ill can my frailer mind's impetuous fire
  Compensate her mild soul's eternal flight!

And yet, on their lone couch, this heart sincere,
  With tender love, shall shed some bless'd relief,
Watch for the moment when its voice may cheer,
  And joy to mark the ebbing tide of grief.

And young HONORA, in each rising charm
  Of form and mind, the pious task shall aid;

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l. 19. *Young Honora*—Miss Honora Sneyd, since Mrs Edgeworth, the daughter of Edward Sneyd, Esq. She was adopted

O! like their loved ALINDA, soft and warm,
Glows this transplanted flower that decks their shade.

Scarce o'er her head are thirteen summers flown,
Yet clear intelligence, unswerving truth,
And every soothing sympathy, have thrown
Meridian lustre o'er her morn of youth.

And dost thou stretch, dear maid, those gentle arms,
Smile through thy tears, in pity's hallow'd guile?
Shield me, my love, from woe's o'erwhelming harms,
Thy tears are balm, and peace is in thy smile.

Thy tender accents, on my grief-chill'd soul
Fall, like the vernal breath on wintry bowers,
When, from the fleecy clouds, that lightly roll,
Silent and mild descend the sunny showers.

And since in Thee, to every worth alive,
The sacred energies of Friendship burn,
Thy love, my dear HONORA, shall revive
The joys that faded o'er ALINDA's urn. (j.)

---

by Mr and Mrs Seward, and educated in their family. In her 18th year she became the object of the brave, unfortunate Major André's unalienable attachment.

KNOWLEDGE,

A POEM IN THE MANNER OF SPENCER.

Is there a joy that gilds our stormy days,
For which the soul of man so much should pine
As heaven-born Knowledge? Yet her sacred rays
Are as the diamond's, and by art must shine;
The latent beams more exquisitely fine
In some of highest worth, yet all require
Industrious care, or lost the light divine
Ordain'd to wake each elegant desire
That shall to all that's fair, and great, and good aspire.

While yet unknown the principles of art,
Impervious veils must shroud its radiance clear;
When sluggish ignorance surrounds the heart
No lustres can pervade the darkness drear,
But all as colours to the blind appear;
Where Pleasure's tint, celestial, rosy red,
Majestic purple, scarlet, hue of war,

The undulating mantle of the mead,
And Heaven's gay robe, a dark, unmingled mass is
spread.

There glows in man a principle innate,
Of powerful bias, which to good, or ill,
Low, or exalted, must direct his state,
And one fixed purpose of the soul fulfill,
As early choice, to habit grown, shall will;
If, like the lark that mounts the orient beam,
His wing he not expand, aspiring still
To Wisdom's sun, whence light and beauty stream,
He sinks in murky caves, where owls and ravens
scream.

Youth is life's spring, the seed-time, when the mind
Fosters each new idea planted there;
If we neglect to sow the grain refined,
No future pains can raise a harvest fair;
And memory, warm and soft in early year
As yielding wax, disused, grows cold and hard,
Nor aught retains of each impression rare,
Which, when retain'd, acquire the high reward
Bestow'd by star-crown'd Fame on timely studious
bard.

Mild Sensibility, whose trembling light
Has rarely fail'd to shine in youthful breast,

Resisted, chill'd, withdraws her influence bright,
From the dull spirit, in its stagnant rest;
She flies!—and with her flies each lovely guest,
From her deriving all their noblest powers,
Genius and Truth, in sun-gilt mantle drest,
Love, Friendship, Pity, all that speed the hours,
And strew the path of life with ever blooming flowers.

PORTRAIT

OF

MISS LEVETT.*

THO' lovely Stella's pleasing features show
Nor Phydian symmetry, nor Titian glow,
Yet Mind imparts, their transient charms to foil,
Life to her glance, and magic to her smile.

When serious tender, and when gay serene,
Consummate elegance in all her mien,
To her the youth from vaunted beauty flies,
And for the Graces, in their favourite, sighs,
They, in the very ribbons that o'ershade
Her lively brows, her auburn tresses braid,

* Then of Lichfield, and afterwards wife of the Rev. Richard Levett. This picture, in verse, was drawn by the author at eighteen.

Infuse, with playful spirit, all their own,
The power resistless of the Cyprian zone.

Her dress, her air, her accent to attain,
See emulative fair-ones strive in vain!
While sires and matrons in attention vie,
And watch the rising archness in her eye.
E'en envious maids, in life's deserted wane,
Look half as pleased as if beloved again;
Lose, as they listen, all their sullen cares,
Remit their scandal, and neglect their prayers.
Round the grave Scholiast as her spirit plays,
Behold him chace it thro' its brilliant maze,
And, sexual pride subdued, at length disown
The Salique Law for Wit and Fancy's throne! (j.)

ELEGY

ADDRESSED TO CORNET V———,

IN THE AUTUMN 1765.

Ere yet thou seek'st Ierne's jocund shore,
Pensive I wave this tributary lay;
Confess thy Julia must the fate deplore,
That soon shall lead thee o'er the wat'ry way.

Tinged with no blush, she boasts herself thy friend,
That gentle name, from dangerous wishes free!
Yet will no merit from the boast pretend,
For who, who would not be the friend of thee?

While youth and bloom, and dignity combine,
All that can interest, all that can adorn,
To manly grace attempering softness join,
Life's noon-tide lustres in her orient morn.

The lights of intellect around thee thrown,
Thy modest virtues every where the theme!—
Strange, if the coldest maid should blush to own
Desert so high awakes her owed esteem.

Love's fairy visions for a while are gay,
A little, little while, when they are new,
But soon the sweet enchantment fades away,
Transient as summer morn's exhaling dew.

Ah, then approach a throng of secret woes,
To faithless hope the varied pang succeeds;
The thorny pillow banishes repose;
The wounded heart inevitably bleeds.

Yes, bleed it must, and bleed at every vein,
When the pale brood, of Disappointment born,
Attendants oft on Love's tyrannic reign,
Teach the lost maid her living death to mourn.

If my presaging soul aright divine,
Such the sad lot I am ordain'd to prove,
Should I, rash votary at that dangerous shrine,
Receive the rose-deck'd chains of guileful love!

No wreaths of amaranth he weaves for me,
Then guarded rise my gay, my youthful hours!
Calm be my thoughts, my artless bosom free
From the sharp thorns of transitory flowers!

But, happier amity, pervade my breast,
With tranquil empire, thro' these vernal years,
While, in Horatio's trusting friendship blest,
Mine his prosperity, and mine his cares.

This sympathizing heart implores the task
To sooth thee, drooping in thy native clime;
Give then the precious confidence I ask,
The tender records of the vanish'd time!

My pitying spirit shall partake thy pains,
And griefs divided lose their power to blight;
Watch the lone sigh, that steals to Gallia's plains,
Where Beauty mourns thy much unwilling flight.

Ah! pale no more thy star of love should gleam,
Could my soul's wishes its soft orb command,
But point in purest light each languid beam,
And on the azure zenith shining stand.

O! may unblemish'd Honour guard thy fame,
And plumy Conquest triumph on thy sword;
Thine be each meed the milder virtues claim,
Health, Peace, and Plenty, hand-maids of thy board!

---

l. 8. *The tender records*—The author had heard, and believed, that her friend was attached, at the time this poem was written, to a young lady at Angiers.

When ardent Youth, and rosy Love are flown,
O ! e'en thy graces cannot bribe their stay !
As Joy had brighten'd in thy radiant noon,
May soft Contentment gild thy closing day !
And when thou soarest from these veering spheres,
From busy Life, and from its silent bourne,
Thine be the bliss, that change nor period fears,
In the blest regions of the nightless morn. (j.)

THE

HAY-FIELD,

A MORNING SCENE.

The joys, gay Spirit of the social plain,
And useful labours, renovate my strain,
Rising, it vibrates to thy oaten reed,
And sings the artless pleasures of the mead.
No frown the Muse from Truth and Nature fears,
Tho' pale Refinement sicken as she hears.

Now is it June's bright morn, and Beauty twines
The glowing wreaths that deck her thousand shrines;
On the lark's wing, sweet music hails the day,
And o'er the sun-beam pours his liquid lay;
While the blithe Spirit of the social plain
Leads Health, and Love, and Gladness in his train.

Crown'd with her pail, light rocking as she steps,
Along the fresh moist grass, young Lucy trips.

The rustic vest is from her ancle drawn,
Yet catches many a dew-drop of the lawn.
Warm on her downy cheek health's deepest glow,
And in her eyes its lavish lustres flow;
And in her voice its wildly-warbled song
Floats, and returns the echoing glades among.
Her nut-brown tresses wanton on the gale,
Her breath perfumes afresh the blossom'd vale.

Nine blooming maidens meet her in the grove,
And ask and tell the tender tale of love;
With their prone fork and mystic scroll they frame,
Tracing on sand each heart-recorded name.
O'er the bared shoulder hangs the idle rake,
And busy Fancy paints the coming wake;
But from the lip th' unfinish'd periods break,
And joy's warm blushes deeper tinge the cheek;
For, see th' expected youths, in manhood's pride,
Stoutly are striding down the mountain's side;
High o'er the rapid brook at once they bound,
And gay good-morrows thro' the plain resound!

And now is Labour busy in the dale;
The cow stands duteous by the cleanly pail,
Where the rich milk descends in eddying tides,
Pure as the virgin hands thro' which it glides.

The youths, with short'ning arm and bending head,
Sweep their bright scythes along the shiver'd mead;

Three blithsome maids the grassy treasure shake,
Three draw, with gentle hand, the thrifty rake;
And three, 'mid carol sweet and jocund tale,
Scatter the breathing verdure to the gale.

Where yonder cottages' ascending smoke,
In spiral columns, wreaths the sun-gilt oak;
The careful parents of the village dwell,
And dress the savoury pottage in the cell;
Their little rosy girls and boys prepare
The steaming breakfast thro' the vale to bear.

See, with pleased looks, gay Ceres' happy train
Watch their young donors loaded on the plain,
Inhale the grateful fumes that round them rise,
Mark their slow, heedful step and earnest eyes,
The chubby hands that grasp the circling rim,
Where health's warm viand rises to the brim.
Light on the violet bank recline the band,
And take the present from the willing hand;
With eager appetite, and poignant taste,
Thank the kind bearers, and enjoy the feast.

Yon tall white spire, that rises 'mid the trees,
Courting, with golden vane, the passing breeze,
A peal, far heard, sends merry down the dale,
The notes of triumph tell a bridal tale.

The hallow'd green sod the swift river laves,
Dark alders trembling o'er the sunny waves ;
Its ripling breast receives each measured round,
Mellowing the shrillness of the silver sound.

Our youthful lovers hail th' harmonious noise,
And Hope anticipates their bridal joys ;
Pours all her magic influence on the scene,
Laughs in their eyes, and triumphs in their mien.
Sportful their infant friends around them rove,
And all is frolic, innocence, and love.

May equal bliss the varying year adorn,
And gild the labours of each future morn !
Whether the wanton hours, that lead the spring,
Catch silver rain-drops from her shining wing,
Or zoneless Summer, flaunting o'er the meads,
Empurpled bloom, and richest fragrance sheds ;
Or auburn Autumn, from her full lap, throws
The mellow fruits upon the bending boughs ;
Or Winter, with his dark relentless train,
Wind, snow, and sleet, shall desolate the plain ;
Howl o'er the hill, and as the river raves,
In drear stagnation warp th' arrested waves.
Yes, may the days of bloom and ripeness find
Such joys rewarding each untainted mind ;
And, in the rage of the severer hours,
May balmy Comfort, with assuasive powers,

Present the stores by former toil amass'd,
Pile the warm hearth, and dress the neat repast;
Bid sport and song prepare the gladsome rite,
Then smooth the pillow through the stormy night!
Thus Health and Love the varying year shall crown,
While Truth and Nature smile, tho' pale Refinement
frown.

INSCRIPTION

For an Urn in a Gentleman's Garden, amid the Mountainous Parts of Scotland, where two Lovers had been killed by the fall of an impending Precipice.

Blow, Winter-wind, these desert rocks around,
No blight from thee my cypress garland fears!
Away ye months, with light and roses crown'd!
But, melting April, steep it in thy tears!
Here the fond lover to his fair one told
The tale of tenderness and gay delight,
When, from its base, th' incumbent mountain roll'd,
And Beauty, Youth, and Love, were whelm'd in night.
Ah! gentle stranger, pensive o'er me bend,
Who, in these deathful scenes, am doom'd to prove,
A sad memorial of the timeless end,
And living grave, of Beauty, Youth, and Love!

LOVE ELEGIES AND EPISTLES. *

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

ELEGY.

DREARY and dark, in autumn's wane,
The mournful evening falls,
And hollow winds and chilling rain
Beat fast upon the walls.

* These little poems were written in the early youth of the author. They describe an attachment between a lady of birth, rank, beauty, and talents, the daughter of wealthy parents, and a gentleman, much her inferior in family and station, without fortune, and her equal only in intellect, merit, and affection. Nor is the situation entirely imaginary; the author was entrusted with the perusal of a prose correspondence between that unhappy pair, which bore the same sort of relation to the ensuing poems, as the real letters between Abelard and Eloisa bear to Pope's Love-Epistle, "Eloisa to Abelard."

From the drench'd caves' incumbent tops,
With wet and weltering sound,
At intervals, the heavy drops
Plash on the wat'ry ground.

Time was, ah, well-remember'd time!
When wintry blasts severe,
More welcome than the vernal prime,
Were music to my ear.

When many an evening's stormy hour,
Emillia, pass'd with thee,
I thank'd the rain, and wind's loud roar,
That banish'd all but me.

Now my sick soul these wintry glooms
Oppress with cruel sway,
Since my life's light no more illumes
Dark eve, or sullen day.

With folded arms, by waning fires,
I hear the howling wind,
And sigh that faithful fond desires
Congenial winter find.

Yes, long I sit by waning fires,
And heavy eave-drops count;
My heart no sprightlier sound requires,
Or listless spirits want.

For sprightly sounds discordant rise,
Where cherish'd woes are dear,
They but insult the lover's sighs,
Insult his starting tear.

Yet, yet my soul might better bear
These absent weeks forlorn,
Did not presaging clouds of fear
Lour on thy wish'd return.

Authority's yet dreaded power,
Goaded by busy foes,
May wait on that eventful hour,
And bring a train of woes.

Beneath this dread, by waning fires,
I muse the night away;
This dread, that 'gainst my peace conspires,
Resist it as I may.

O! let thy pen my throbbing heart
With softest balm assuage,
And better hopes, with love impart,
To chase the sad presage!

So shall I bless the minutes' course,
How slow soe'er they move,
Since bring they must the day, perforce,
That gives me back my love.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

EPISTLE.

CAN words, O loveliest of thy sex! express
My soul's devotion in its wild excess?
This hand, extended, might as soon contain
The mighty waters of the boundless main.

Tender and ardent is that heart of thine,
But ah! not pierced,—not rapt,—not lost as mine!
What man e'er shone on woman's dazzled gaze
As thou on mine, bright sun-beam of my days!
Tho' every youthful charm were round him placed,
Narcissus boasted, or Adonis graced.

Hope, Love, and Extacy's adorning sway,
Inert and pale, upon my senses lay,
Till, on their dull expanse, in floods of light,
Stream'd those dear eyes—a day upon my night!

Shed kindling graces o'er my altering frame,
Till I nor look, nor seem, nor am the same.
Thus all my thoughts, with secret force, persuade,
Had ne'er on me these melting glances play'd;
The honour'd object of thy tender cares,
Whose now changed form a love-born magic wears,
No more had lived, than life could be retain'd,
When nor by air nor aliment sustain'd;
A human shape indeed might breathe and move,
Some dim resemblance of the man you loved;
But, had his eyes been found indeed the same,
Untouch'd by Passion's soul-enkindling flame?
Source of that glow of intellect refined,
That meets the efflux of thy fervent mind!
The same his lip, without its conscious smiles,
Gay progeny of hope, and tender wiles?
Thro' life's dull path plodding their destined way,
In the trite business of the vapid day,
Would equal grace his listless limbs have crown'd,
As when o'er the unburden'd earth they bound,
Seek, with elastic speed, her gladdening sight,
Who speaks in music, and who moves in light?
Ah no! such cold privation had assign'd
His form unlovely, as opake his mind.

In the dun slip, a garden falsely call'd,
Narrow and long, with dusty brick enwall'd,

Behind the crowded streets, whose mansions high
Breathe the thick smoke, that shrowds the summer
sky,
If there a hapless rose-tree meets the view,
How faint its odour, and how dim its hue!
A dusky red each rivell'd orbit wears,
And tinged with livid yellowness appears.
Borne where th' exhaling scents perfume the dawn,
From glowing border, or from verdant lawn,
Where soft showers fall, and tepid breezes blow,
And setting suns in golden radiance flow,
What living bloom the swelling globes array!
What rich luxuriance loads the bending spray!
Its poignant sweets the stealing gales disclose,
And Flora boasts the splendour of her rose.

So boasts Emillia of the form and face
Love, and her charms, endow'd with all their grace,
That lost to them, no eye had e'er allured
A canker'd rose, by sunless walls immured.

Light of my life, with all thy cloudless rays,
Shine ever thus, and gild my future days;
Still shed those vital beams, whose blest controul
My frame illumined, and inspired my soul!

ELEGY.

EMILLIA EMBROIDERING—AND JEALOUS.

My partial friends, ye praise the mimic flowers,
Which from my hand, in gay creation, rise;
But, ah! this little talent's flatter'd powers
No pleasing gleam of self-applause supplies.

Vainly ye descant on the golden light,
Vainly the soft and blended shades ye praise;
Observe my florets swell upon the sight,
And curve, and float from their entwining sprays.

Fatal to me has proved this native sense
Of grace and beauty, that their brilliant glow
Taught my obedient needle to dispense,
And lead their wavy lines in easy flow.

But for that treacherous sense, with calm survey,
These eyes Evander's charming form had met,

Then had my peaceful night, my jocund day,
Escaped delusive joy, and long regret;

This sad distrust, these cruel pangs unfelt,
That shroud the vernal mornings as they shine,
Now that EVANDER's eyes no longer melt
In tender passion, as they gaze on mine;

Now, that he wastes in idle cares the days,
Who once long ages deem'd each absent hour;
Now, that a rival nymph so often strays,
With air embarrass'd, round EVANDER's bower. (j.)

EPISTLE.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

O! WHY this ceaseless, cruel, strange distrust,
To thy own charms, and my vow'd faith unjust?
Ingrate!—with what impatience did I dart
On these expected scriptures of thy heart!
Yet while my lips their seal unbroken press'd,
A latent dread rose sickening in my breast;
Since, ah! too oft, of late, the sullen eye,
The air repulsive, the upbraiding sigh,
Repress'd—no not repress'd my fond desires,
But fed their rising flame with gloomy fires.

And now, as if 'twere not enough of pain,
That long, long tracts of hill, and dale, and plain,
Rise separating, and force our hearts to prove
The sick dejection of divided love;
Doubts that from shadowy causes wildly flow,
Change sick dejection to corrosive woe.

Conscious of all its torture on my soul,
Thou pourest honey in the venom'd bowl
Of causeless jealousy, of needless strife,
Dark suicides on all the joys of life!
But long it is since sweetness unallay'd
Was to my thirsty, glowing lip convey'd
In that diurnal draught, thy hands consign
To him, whose heart, irrevocably thine,
Resents, and dreads, sighs, shudders, and deplores,
To death desires thee, and to guilt adores.

Away, ye murmurs!—do not dazzling charms,
Each grace that gay, triumphant beauty arms,
Wit, genius, affluence, and pride, unite
To quench my daring hopes in endless night;
Bid her avoid his sight, and scorn his truth,
Whose lot obscure o'er-shades her radiant youth;
And who her peace too generously prefers
To join his yet improsp'rous fate with hers,
Till Time and Industry disperse the gloom,
In which relentless Fortune shrouds his home?

But O! she would forsake her summer-bower,
Tho' fierce winds howl, and clouds tempestuous lour,
Commit to all their rage her tender form,
And share with him the pelting of the storm!

Then with whate'er injustice she upbraid,
Whate'er my shock'd, recoiling sense invade,

Indifference, perfidy, or latent art,
Charged thus remorseless on my faithful heart,
That fears to lead her where the tempest blows,
And glooms impend of deep-involving woes,
Yet, O my soul! the dread arraignment bear,
Nor cherish anger, nor admit despair;
Since, if she ceased to love, her rage would cease,
The heart emancipated sinks to peace,
Calls calm disdain and silence to its aid,
And, once renouncing, will no more upbraid!

Come then, ye sweet and bitter pages, come,
Traced by the hand that must award my doom;
By thine, EMILLIA, despot of my soul,
My life's adorner, and my fate's controul.

Then, tho' deplore I must these doubts insane,
Their dire reproaches, their presages vain,
Still every wild, injurious thought of thine,
While thy dear heart-strings round my image twine,
I will endure;—and deprecate the scorn,
Of jealous love, not cold indifference, born;
Appease this seeming—O! but seeming hate,
Know I am loved, and compromise with Fate.

ELEGY.

EMILLIA TO EVANDER—IN RENEWED JEALOUSY.

The wailful accents of an heart in pain,
The sigh prophetic, the upbraiding tear—
Can their obtrusive sorrows hope to gain
My wandering lover's cold, reluctant ear?

My lover!—I renounce th' expression vain;—
How vain, ingrate! thy alienated eyes
To Lydia's flatter'd pride too well explain,
Thy soft attentions, thy desiring sighs.

Once they were mine;—but they are mine no more!
Yet how I prized them all too well thou know'st;
Well as I know complaint will ne'er restore
My powerless eyes the empire they have lost.

This younger, gayer rival, who obtains
The vows, long-pledged to me—will her light heart

Thrill with the pleasures, tremble with the pains
Thy griefs inflict, or that thy joys impart?

Tho' Time has still, in all their power to please,
Left the unfaded graces of thy form,
Yet oh! his iron hand must shortly seize
That air, that look, with love and transport warm.

Seize them with blighting force, ere LYDIA's youth,
And scanty stock of beauty, scanty sure!
Shall pass away;—then can'st thou trust her truth?
Hope for attachment permanent and pure?

Hope it from such an heart, from such a mind,
When thy yet lovely form dim age assails,
And, from their now meridian course declined,
Shrouds all thy graces in his icy veils?

Ah, no!—disparity, the scorner's jest,
Shall gloom with sad distrust each passing day,
And to the pillow of thy midnight rest
The wounding thorns of jealousy convey.

Thy grieved remonstrance then will LYDIA hear?
Vouchsafe to sooth thee e'en with faithless vows?
Check, for EVANDER's peace, her gay career,
And shun the pleasures honour disallows?

O! when th' uplifted eye-brow's steady scorn
Shall rack thy fondness, and confirm thy fears,
Each hope of thine to soften, or to warn,
Vain as my sighs, and wasted as my tears,

Then of the throes, that now my bosom swell,
Perfidious! shalt thou feel how sharp the pain,
And my proud rival shall avenge me well
On all thy broken vows and cold disdain!

EPISTLE.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

Ah! can'st thou say contemptuously I smiled
When thou, with flashing eye and vehemence wild,
Solemn did'st urge that I would bend no more
My steps to Lydia's interdicted door?—

Smile!—yes, I might, but no contemptuous air
Breath'd hated insult on my angry fair;
Well might I smile, that dread of Lydia's charms
Thy dear, tumultuous, jealous heart alarms!

Lydia thy rival!—O resistless power
Of that momentous, consecrated hour,
When in thy soften'd eye's seducing gaze
I read the transports of my future days,
Can its remembrance, all my soul that fires,
E'en in thy absence kindling fierce desires,

Permit a momentary wish to prove
The base apostacy of grov'ling love?

As soon my wandering steps should desperate roam
Far from these blooming shades, my youth's loved
home,
Where winding vallies wave in golden pride,
Thro' tufted banks, where glassy rivers glide;
Where fleecy flocks the green hill's side adorn,
Gay linnets warbling from the blossom'd thorn,
And each wide mead, and little sloping field
To numerous herds the silver'd herbage yield;
These would I leave, as soon, for some rude shore,
Vex'd by the stormy sea's incessant roar;
Or seek the clime, whose frowning aspect shocks,
Where arid heaths stretch lonely o'er the rocks,
And but one narrow stream's chill waters pour,
In straight blue line, along the russet moor,
Or, at the foot of mountains, bare and pale,
Obliquely huddles down the stony vale;
While all the phantoms, which the desert haunt,
Danger, and Dread, and Misery, and Want,
In blank sterility's abhorr'd domain,
With houseless solitude and silence reign.

Yet be my home such scene of dire alarms,
If e'er I seek thy rival's meaner charms;

Nor must thou dream that aught of insult dwelt
In that spontaneous smile's imputed guilt.
Contempt of thee !—O ! never could it rise,
E'en in contending Beauty's jealous eyes !
Thy sex's envy may produce their hate
Of those eclipsing charms that round thee wait;
Man's selfish pride, for daring to reprove,
With undissembled scorn, presumptuous love;
But none were ever, for an instant, free
From insuppressive reverence of thee;
And could thy dear EVANDER's lip reveal
What yet nor slighted love nor envy feel ?—

The luckless smile, that did thy rage inspire,
Was anger, melting in enamour'd fire,
Beneath that childish frown upon thy brow,
And eager claim of a superfluous vow.

It was those ever-varying traits, combined,
Of face, of form, of temper, and of mind;
Those infant graces, with the ripen'd charms,
That full-blown youth in gay resplendence warms;
Yes, 'twas their fascinating union fired
My daring passion, which so high aspired;
Else had this heart, by calmer wishes sway'd,
To thy bright self a safer homage pay'd;
Awed by thy wit, thy birth, thy beauty's rays,
Had view'd thy form with less tumultuous gaze.

But thou, infatuating foe of peace!
Thou dear, child-woman! by thy strange caprice,
Join'd to thy charms, thy talents proud controul,
And softness, stealing o'er my captive soul,
Hast left me no alternative to prove,
But death, or madness, if I lose thy love.

ELEGY.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

Thou say'st my love is reasonless, to spare
No glance, no smile, that ceremonies crave,
To Being masculine, ere yet he bear,
White on his brow, the blossoms of the grave.

I own the charge;—for ah! do I not know
The power of each bright glance, each lovely smile?
That dangerous transport, or that cureless woe,
Seizes the heart, their melting sweets beguile?

Thy early looks, thy early smiles on me
Shone unimpassion'd; no enamour'd ray
Shot thro' my fever'd senses, to decree
Death, or possession, to the future day.

Yet so essential to my peace they grew,
All was delightless where they failed to flow,

Tho' too serenely shining on my view
To bid one thought with rising passion glow.

Not then arisen the dazzling, magic light,
Which now for me the Summer's sun adorns
With lustre, ah! so exquisitely bright,
That all the rays, gilding his splendid morns,

Robb'd of its effluence, seem to my sick soul,
Dim as the April dawn, with clouds begirt,
Clouds, that but catch, as thro' the skies they roll,
One wat'ry gleam, to edge their dusky skirt.

"Unreasonable!"—alas! thou know'st not how,
How much unreasonable!—for O! 'tis more
Than yet rapacious passion durst avow,
Than love delirious ever knew before!—

Then, if thou would'st the balm of life should steal
Soft o'er my lids, when night's dun sceptre sways;
That health's warm beams disease's mists repel
Through my or few, or many coming days,

Guard, towards all others, guard thy lips, thine eyes,
Cold be to them the hopes thy graces bring!
Thy glance,—the sun in winter's icy skies,
Thy smile,—the first pale ray of tardy Spring! (j.)

EPISTLE.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

YES, my EMILLIA, I can say with truth,
Had EMMA'S HENRY really stain'd his youth
With those dark crimes his jealousy assumed,
By murder branded, and to exile doom'd,
Passion sincere had forced him to dissuade
From sharing fate so dire, the noble maid;
Prompted each plea he urges to remove
The dread resolve of such disastrous love,
Short of the base reproach, the Cynic sneer,
And boasted fondness for a lovelier fair,
Closing the trial, needless and severe.

Too well I know thy heart, which fate inspires
With EMMA'S softness, ELOISA'S fires,
Has deem'd my rack'd affection's guardian fear
To snatch thee, from thy calm, and sunny sphere,

Down to the clime, where clouds and whirlwinds
spread,
A faithless scruple, and a coward dread;
That thou for me would'st every ill endure,
When, drear as Winter, as its tempests sure,
Reproach and penury, around us flow,
And quench our marriage torch in floods of woe.

Thou dar'st remind me, in a covert threat,
Of the proud scorn devoted HAMMOND met,
Who, when he own'd his terrors to involve
Her he adored in selfish love's resolve,
Till the depriving frowns of Fate should cease,
And his walls glow with competence and peace,
Heard her impute to dull indifference' power
The generous scruple of that ill-starr'd hour;
Saw her their long-twined bands of fondness tear,
Rush to another's arms, and leave him to despair.

Me thou remindest of that cruel scorn,
Of female pride, and causeless vengeance born.
I feel the latent meaning most unkind,
And thee, injurious maid, in turn, remind,
That poor, forsaken, ruin'd HAMMOND died
The victim of his DELIA'S faithless pride.

And let thy rage, with fancied wrongs insane,
Steel every thought with DELIA'S proud disdain;

The instant thou shalt feel thy heart can bear
The doom congenial of my last despair;
Feel that remorse no pang'd regret shall raise,
To blast the quiet of thy future days. (j.)

ELEGY.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

WHY dart those eyes their scornful fires on me?
What is my crime, unjust EMILLIA, say?—
Yes, I am guilty!—but no guilt towards thee
My conscious sighs, my starting tears betray.

This heart its thankless coldness should deplore,
Too beauteous despot, at an higher shrine,
Lost, as I seem, in life's meridian hour,
To all created excellence but thine.

Yon gorgeous sun, no more my light by day,
For me the moon's soft, shadowy shining vain;
Me, nor the rose delights, in bright array,
Me, nor the silver lily of the plain.

Before thy charms the blooming season fades,
A love delirious, with tyrannic sway,

Absorbs my every thought, my soul pervades,
Thy frown my darkness, and thy smile my day!

Then may injurious jealousy be driven
Far from thy heart, and all its peace return!
Instruct me to reform my crime to Heaven,
But love me dearer for the guilt I mourn! (j.)

EPISTLE.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

O! THOU art absent, and resentment's power
Forsakes EVANDER in this lonely hour;
His weak resolves dispersed, he sees not now
The angry knitting of thy scornful brow;
Forgets that its dear curves, by Nature made
Those beamy eyes to soften and to shade,
And graceful, in that kind assignment, look
As alders bending o'er the glassy brook,
To his afflicted sight so lately rose
Deform'd by fancied wrongs, and causeless woes.
Now present only to his mental sight
Those orbs, that roll in floods of dewy light,
Tempering beneath his gaze their dazzling ray,
Like bright stars waning at the dawn of day;
To his internal ear, from that sweet tongue,
No sounds less melting than the syren's song,

Such, as in days long fled, resistless stole
Through every thrill'd perception of his soul;
Yes, only such, thy boundless power to prove,
Brings the recording spirit of his love.

ELEGY.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

I WISH in vain!—too distant thou
To hear thy lover's plaintive voice;
Enchantress, wert thou present now,
To urge his oft repeated vow,
Would'st thou his drooping soul rejoice?

Would'st thou extend thy snowy arms,
And clasp him to thy fragrant breast?
Sooth every dread that yet alarms
From cruel Fate's impending harms,
And lull corroding cares to rest?

Blest recompense for years of pain!—
Come, Angel, come, with look benign,
Come to the heart, whose warm disdain
Would spurn a crown and regal train,
Opposed to one soft glance of thine!

But O! too oft Reflection arms
Against my peace, and sullen dwells
On my scant dole of all the charms,
Whose power eye-govern'd woman warms,
And her enamour'd wish impells.

I grudge thee then that auburn hair,
Which thy transparent brow adorns,
Thy thrilling smile, thy graceful air,
A voice, to soften stern despair,
A cheek, that shames the summer morns.

But O! much more than all, my heart
Breathes o'er those orbs its jealous sighs;
Those orbs, that rays of genius dart,
That love's resistless powers impart,
Those smiling, chiding, fatal eyes.

EPISTLE.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

O! NEVER did thy glowing pen bestow,
To sooth my soul's inevitable woe,
So much by generous trusting faith inspired,
So much by ardent, banish'd love desired,
Free from the cold alloy of doubts and fears,
And all the sullying drops of jealous tears,
Since first our eyes those conscious glances cast,
That met dissolved and blended as they pass'd.

The precious tenderness these lines impart,
Falls on my sick, alarmed, and longing heart,
Like dews on flowers by sultry noon-beams dry,
Like balmy sleep on Labour's closing eye.

But this long absence!—Countless are its pains,
Sprung from the thought, how fast our being wanes,

How scant its span!—that weeks and months must
roll
Towards love, and life's dark and avoidless goal,
Ere Time the ravish'd happiness restores
To pass together some of those few hours,
Forming the short, irrevocable day,
Which stays for none, and fleets so swift away.

ELEGY.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

EMILLIA, thou art far away,
  And languid creep the vacant hours;
Yet, when the last mild evening chased,
  With yellow light, the recent showers,

Their wonted path my slow steps found,
  The green and shady lanes among,
That wind around the sylvan cot,
  The cot with ivy curtains hung.

Soft setting sun-beams gently glanced
  O'er the young leaves a sweet farewell;
But ah! to these delightless eyes
  How vacant seem'd the bloomy cell

Tho' gilded by that vernal light,
  Tho' linnets warbled in the gale,
A lone and wintry look it wore,
  And silence seem'd to shroud the vale.

Thy little faithful dog I met,
  Saw him the circling lanes explore,
Rush down the glades, then up the steps
  Spring to thy closed and silent door;

With eager eye and plaintive whine,
  Snuff thro' each chink the passing air;
Ah! little wretch, I mournful cried,
  Thy lovely mistress is not there!

Slowly he walk'd away, and hung
  His sullen head,—and nothing cared
How oft I call'd to tempt his stay,
  And sooth the peevish grief I shared.

He left me near the silent door,
  No more half-open'd to thy friend
When dull the clouds of Evening lour,
  And fast her heavy dews descend;

Or drizzling rains, that often weep,
  When winds no longer bend the spray,

The moist and early vanish'd sun,
  That shrinks from April's wayward day.

Now, in that little hall's dear grate,
  No social embers glow the while,
To us so kindly to disclose
  The mutual glance, the tender smile.

Protecting walls !—asylum blest,
  From every influence unkind!
The rigour of inclement skies,
  The rigour of th' unfeeling mind;

From Pride and Avarice' taunting sneer,
  Authority's yet dreaded frown,
Whose chidings loud the gentle voice
  Of Love's persuasive pleadings drown.

That sylvan cottage is thine own,
  A tender mother's kind bequest;
Far from thy haughty father's power,
  'Twill give us shelter, food, and rest.

Till that was thine, thou know'st full well
  I pleaded 'gainst my self to thee,
Opposing thy too generous love,
  Which dared the last distress for me.

But now, that shelter, food, and rest,
  May meet us in this ivy bower,
Come to these faithful longing arms,
  And scorn the curbs of Pride and Power!

The busy bustling haunts of men,
  Thy lover shall for thee resign;
For us the Winter's hearth shall glow,
  For us the Summer sun will shine.

The great ones court thee for their bride;
  With thee, in ceremonial glare,
They would the pomps of life divide,
  For that the world proclaims thee fair.

Ah! it is vanity, not love,
  That bids them prize thy matchless charms;
But love alone, and love like mine,
  Deserves the heaven of those soft arms.

But can that tender yielding soul
  Its generous warfare long maintain,
Defy constraint, and haste to seek
  The shelter of these arms again?

O yes! while Memory's power remains,
  Her glowing images shall prove,
In thy dear breast, the constant guards,
  When Force would disunite our love.

ELEGY.

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

WILD florets tremble o'er the shadow'd stream,
  Low in the winding, and irriguous vale,
While, blazing at high noon, the solar beam
  Flames on the mountain top, and fires the gale.
Here, then, in silence, through the summer day,
Glide, bright with hope, enamour'd hours away.

For now my love-devoted soul at rest,
  Hails all the lonely graces of the scene;
Hails them in soft, confiding fondness blest,
  And leaves Ambition to her anxious spleen.
Her pomps, her triumphs, disregarded shine,
While fair EMILLIA's melting heart is mine.

Would I this lock of my EMILLIA's hair,
  Floating in golden threads upon the breeze,

Resign for all Ambition's votaries wear,
  For all they pine to see a rival seize?
Ah, no! dear pledge of Love and Hope, that pour
Their precious essence on this rosy hour!

Fate will restore thee, angel, kind and bright
  As Spring's gay morning on the troubled sea,
That heaved and surged thro' the long, stormy night,
  Like my tumultuous soul when far from thee,
By thy vain doubts disturb'd and jealous throes,
Darkening our perils by superfluous woes.

The clouds disperse! our long-disastrous love,
  Trembling beneath pale Ruin's hovering wings,
Emerges from their shade!—O! may it prove
  No meteor-fire, that now before us springs,
But a mild pole-star to the dear retreat,
Where Peaoe and Competence our steps shall greet.

O! to gaze on thee all the summer's day,
  Hear thy sweet accents charm the winter eve,
And through the hours of slumber's stealing sway
  Thy balmy breathings on my cheek perceive!
What full reward for every woe, that shed
Gloom on th' impassion'd years, irrevocably fled! (j.)

EVANDER TO EMILLIA.

'Tis o'er!—the bright star like a meteor fire,
An instant shone, then vanish'd from our sight!
Fierce, in unbaffled rule, paternal ire
Quenches its beams in everlasting night.
With guardian care a dying mother strove
To shield from penury resistless love;
But that kind care a father's proud disdain
Meets with derision's smile, and sternly proves it vain.

O! pitiless of spirit!—but away,
Ye weak complaints, ye unavailing groans!
Now, stung by Disappointment's madd'ning sway,
Scruples, and fears, my desperate love disowns.
Oft did they wound thee;—I abjure their crimes!
Extinct all hope of more propitious times,
Long years of wasted youth elapsed I see,
And former terrors curse—e'en tho' they throbb'd
for thee.

Her hovering ghost, whose violated boon
Sought from the scourge of power our loves to save,
Shall see us meet,—now,—in this night's pale noon,
And lock our hands across her sacred grave.
There thy decisive vows my soul shall claim;
By the last silence of her mouldering frame,
By Death's dark shrines and unresisted power,
That only his dread stroke shall e'er divide us more.

Still can EMILLIA's heart, like mine, desire?
Then Fate in vain may spread her direst loom;
Nor yet, if Persecution light her pyre,
Shall its fierce flames our destin'd joys consume.
A robe of pure asbestos we can wear,
And while the raging fires around us glare,
With arms entwined our solemn steps shall move,
Safe in the shielding garb, supplied by faithful love.

All that affrights the prosperous and the vain,
Reproach, with taunting lip, and scornful brow,
And shuddering penury, and fever'd pain,
To blast the powers of life, the spirit bow;
The bed of death, the dim funereal gloom,
A timeless pall, an unlamented doom,
Clasp'd in each other's arms, be firmly scorn'd,
Nor ought of wealth and pride, for love renounced,
be mourn'd!

Then shall I gaze on my EMILLIA's form
Through the long summer's day and winter's night;
Her smile my sun, her frown my only storm,
Her health and love, my sources of delight;
Her grave, my quiet bed of lasting rest,
Where power, and hate, no longer shall molest,
Reproach and penury no more dismay,
While undivided sleeps our earthly-hapless clay.

HONORA,

AN ELEGY. *

HONORA fled, I seek her favourite scene
With hasty step, as I should meet her there;
The hasty step and the disorder'd mien
Fond expectation's anxious semblance wear.

This bowery terrace, where she frequent stray'd,
And frequent cull'd for me the floral wreath,
That tower, that lake,—yon willow's ample shade,
All, all the vale her spirit seems to breathe.

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* Written on the terrace walk in the palace garden, Lichfield, the day on which Miss Honora Sneyd left that place for a month's residence in Shropshire, May 1769.

l. 7. *Willow's ample shade*—This celebrated willow of Stowe Valley, from its very uncommon magnitude, excites the attention of naturalists. It is of recorded dearness to Dr Johnson, whence a mistaken idea arose that he had planted it.

I seize the loved resemblance it displays,
With mixture strange of anguish and delight;
I bend on vacancy an earnest gaze,
Where strong illusion cheats my straining sight.

But ah, it fades!—and no relief I find,
Save that which silence, memory, hope confer;
Too soon the local semblance leaves my mind,
E'en where each object seem'd so full of her.

And Memory, only Memory, can impart
The dear enduring image to my view;
Has she not drawn thee, loveliest, on my heart
In faithful tints, and permanent as true?

Transcending all associate forms disclose
Of evanescent likeness; or each grace
The breathing pencil's happiest effort throws
O'er the bright lines that imitate thy face.

As much too fix'd as theirs too fleeting found,
The pencil but one look, one gesture brings;
But varying charms, each accent's thrilling sound
From Recollection's juster portrait springs.

Be then th' embosom'd image only sought,
Since perfect only can its magic prove!
O! rise with all Honora's sweetness fraught,
Vivid, and perfect, as her Anna's love.

Shew me how fair she seems, when on the gale
Her waving locks, in soft luxuriance, play;
As lightly bounding down the dewy vale,
She pours her rival beauties on the day!

How fair, e'en when displeasure's darkening frown,
And scorn itself are lovely on her brow;
Like summer shades, that sweep the vale adown,
Pass o'er the flowers, and heighten all their glow;

Yet fairer, when her brightening spirit spreads,
In blest vicissitude, the cheering ray,
As Sensibility, quick veering, sheds
Its clouds and sun-shine o'er her April-day.

But fairest when her vermeil lips disclose,
In many a magic smile and melting tone,
The varied accent through the pearly rows,
That proves the mental graces all her own.

THE ANNIVERSARY.

WRITTEN JUNE 1769.

Ah, lovely Lichfield! that so long hast shone
In blended charms, peculiarly thine own;
Stately, yet rural; through thy choral day,
Though shady, cheerful, and though quiet, gay;
How interesting, how loved, from year to year,
How more than beauteous did thy scenes appear!
Still, as the mild Spring chased the wintry gloom,
Devolved her leaves, and waked her rich perfume,
Thou, with thy fields and groves around thee spread,
Lift'st, in unlessen'd grace, thy spiry head;
But many a loved inhabitant of thine
Sleeps where no vernal sun will ever shine.

Why fled ye all so fast, ye happy hours,
That saw Honora's eyes adorn these bowers?
These darling bowers, that much she loved to hail,
The spires, she call'd "the Ladies of the Vale!"

Fairest, and best!—Oh! can I e'er forget
To thy dear kindness my eternal debt?
Life's opening paths how tenderly it smooth'd,
The joys it heighten'd, and the pains it sooth'd?
No, no! my heart its sacred memory bears,
Bright 'mid the shadows of o'erwhelming years;
When mists of deprivation round me roll,
'Tis the soft sun-beam of my clouded soul.

Ah, dear HONORA! that remember'd day,
First on these eyes when shone thy early ray!
Scarce o'er my head twice seven gay springs had gone,
Scarce five o'er thy unconscious childhood flown,
When, fair as their young flowers, thy infant frame
To our glad walls an happy inmate came.
O! summer morning, of unrivall'd light,
Fate wrapt thy rising in prophetic white!
June, the bright month, when Nature joys to wear
The livery of the gay, consummate year,
Gave that envermeil'd day-spring all her powers,
Gemm'd the light leaves, and glow'd upon the flowers;
Bade her plumed nations hail the rosy ray
With warbled orisons from every spray.
Purpureal Tempe, not to thee belong
More poignant fragrance, or more jocund song.

Thrice happy day! thy clear auspicious light
Gave "future years a tincture of thy white;"

Well may her strains thy votive hymn decree,
Whose sweetest pleasures found their source in thee;
The purest, best that memory explores,
Safe in the past's inviolable stores.—
The ardent progress of thy shining hours
Beheld me rove through Lichfield's verdant bowers,
Thoughtless and gay, and volatile and vain,
Circled by nymphs, and youths, a frolic train;
Though conscious that a little orphan child
Had to my parents' guidance, kind and mild,
Recent been summon'd, when disease and death
Shed dark stagnation o'er her mother's breath.
While eight sweet infants' wailful cries deplore
What not the tears of innocence restore;
And while the husband mourn'd his widow'd doom,
And hung despondent o'er the closing tomb,
To us this loveliest scion he consign'd,
Its beauty blossoming, its opening mind.

His heart-felt loss had drawn my April tears,
But childish, womanish, ambiguous years
Find all their griefs as vanishing as keen,
Youth's rising sun soon gilds the showery scene.

On the expected trust no thought I bent,
Unknown the day, unheeded the event.
One sister dear, from spleen, from falsehood free,
Rose to the verge of womanhood with me;

Gloom'd by no envy, by no discord jarr'd,
Our pleasures blended, and our studies shared;
And when with day and waking thoughts they closed,
On the same couch our agile limbs reposed.

Amply in friendship by her virtues blest,
I gave to youthful gaiety the rest;
Considering not how near the period drew
When that transplanted branch should meet our view,
Whose intellectual fruits were doom'd to rise,
Food of the future's heart-expanding joys;
Born to console me when, by Fate severe,
The Much Beloved should press a timeless bier,
My friend, my sister, from my arms be torn,
Sickning and sinking on her bridal morn;
While Hymen, speeding from this mournful dome,
Should drop his darken'd torch upon her tomb.

'Twas eve;—the sun, in setting glory dress'd,
Spread his gold skirts along the crimson west;
A Sunday's eve!—Honora, bringing thee,
Friendship's soft Sabbath long it rose to me,
When on the wing of circling seasons borne,
Annual I hail'd its consecrated morn.

---

l. 12. *Much beloved*—Miss Sarah Seward, who died in her 19th year, and on the verge of her purposed nuptials.

In the kind interchange of mutual thought,
Our home myself and gentle sister sought;
Our pleasant home, round which th' ascending gale
Breathes all the freshness of the sloping vale;
On her green verge the spacious walls arise,
View her fair fields, and catch her balmy sighs;
See her near hills the bounded prospect close,
And her blue lake in glassy breadth repose.

With arms entwined, and smiling as we talk'd,
To the maternal room we careless walk'd,
Where sat its honour'd mistress, and with smile
Of love indulgent, from a floral pile
The gayest glory of the summer bower
Cull'd for the new-arrived,—the human flower,
A lovely infant-girl, who pensive stood
Close to her knees, and charm'd us as we view'd.

O! hast thou mark'd the Summer's budded rose,
When 'mid the veiling moss its crimson glows?
So bloom'd the beauty of that fairy-form,
So her dark locks, with golden tinges warm,
Play'd round the timid curve of that white neck,
And sweetly shaded half her blushing cheek.

---

l. 3. *Pleasant home*—The Bishop's Palace at Lichfield.

O! hast thou seen the star of eve on high,
Through the soft dusk of Summer's balmy sky,
Shed its green light, and in the glassy stream
Eye the mild reflex of its trembling beam?
So look'd on us, with tender, bashful gaze,
The destined charmer of our youthful days;
Whose soul its native elevation join'd
To the gay wildness of the infant mind,
Esteem and sacred confidence impress'd
While our fond arms the beauteous child caress'd.

Dear Sensibility! how soon thy glow
Dyed that fair cheek, and gleam'd from that young
brow!
How early, Generosity, you taught
The warm disdain of every grov'ling thought,
Round sweet HONORA, e'en in infant youth,
Shed the majestic light of spotless truth;
Bid her for others' sorrow pour the tear,
For others' safety feel th' instinctive fear;
But for herself, scorning the impulse weak,
Meet every danger with unaltering cheek;
And through the generally unmeaning years
Of heedless childhood, to thy guardian cares,
Angelic Friendship, her young moments give,
And heedless of herself for others live.

ODE TO CONTENT.

MILD as the star-beam on the silent wave,
  Soft as the tints of yon etherial bow,
That bends its bright arch o'er the dark concave,
  And bids the storm its destined limit know,
Do thou, Content, with equal step sedate,
Rise o'er the mind's dim clouds, and break the storms
      of Fate!

O! welcome as the spirit of the morn,
  Whose diamond eyes prelude a golden day,
Choir'd by the linnets from the blossom'd thorn,
  The green hill yellowing in her dewy ray,
As o'er its timid bosom soft she glides,
Silvering the winding rill, that warbles down its sides!

While, with a loosen'd zone, gay Pleasure strays,
  Crowning with rosy wreaths the frolic hours,

While busy Fame collects immortal bays,
  And Hope reclines in amaranthine bowers,
Round thee, Content, health-breathing sweets exhale,
As crops thy gentle hand yon lilies of the vale.

On fair HONORA may thy influence shine
  For her thy cheek with purest blushes glow!
More does she prize one halcyon plume of thine
  Than all that decks Ambition's jewel'd brow.
Near her may thy light steps perpetual rove
With the associate forms of Fancy, Truth, and Love!

EPISTLE

TO

MISS HONORA SNEYD.—WRITTEN, SEPT. 1770. *

ALONE, beneath these bowers, last night I stray'd,
The spires high peering o'er their green arcade;
There see thy friend delusion's power employ
To bid one faithless moment gleam with joy;
For this thy name pervades the twilight gloom,
Borne by soft echoes round the sacred dome.
I call'd HONORA in that cheerful tone,
Which oft pursued, when for an instant flown,
And always brought thee back, with lively air,
The rising thought, or sprightly song to share.
Ah! dearest, mark thou, with a pitying smile,
The flattering, soothing, self-deceiving guile!

---

* Miss H. Sneyd was then at Bristol, on account of a consumptive complaint.

Back on the half-closed door I turn'd mine eye,
And taught my heart to fancy thou wert nigh;
That, as thou'rt wont, at Love's alarm'd request,
Thou hadst return'd to seek a warmer vest,
To shield thee from the dangers evening brings,
Chill gales, and night-dews on her humid wings;
That I should see thee glide the steps adown
Fleet in the haste, with which thou still wert prone
Again to seek the friend, who never yet
Thy wish'd return with heart ungladden'd met.

Yet, why, thou urgest, by deception gain
A mimic joy, that must increase the pain
When Disappointment brings her sick chagrin
To lone Privation's melancholy scene?
But O! each varied species Sorrow knows
Endured for thee, HONORA, welcome grows
More than or festal wit, or syren air,
Which thou, my life's adorner, dost not share.

Calm were the gales, the Moon, serenely bright,
Shed her white efflux thro' the noon of night,
And the long shadows of the spires were drawn
Distinct, with all their turrets, on the lawn.

Raised to their summit, my enthusiast eyes
Hail'd those loved witnesses of all my joys;

Of each expanding charm that crown'd thy youth,
Beauty and wit, and elegance and truth;
Warm hopes and smiles gilding the happy years,
Dimm'd but by transient Sorrow's April-tears.
O! how those pleasures deck'd the rising days,
Winter's pale dawn, and Summer's kindling rays!
Shall e'er again, I cried, in thrilling strains,
Such orient mornings tinge yon golden vanes?

Fatigued, at length, on those proud heights to dwell,
On the moist, silver'd ground my glances fell;
But still each thought with fair HONORA staid,
Who late, enervate, from her Lichfield stray'd;
Seeking, where Bristol's tepid fountains rise,
The health that fled beneath our colder skies.
Then thus again, in half-formed accents, stole
Th' impassion'd dictates of her ANNA's soul.

Ah! sure she must, at those soft springs, regain
The strength that wasted on her favourite plain!
Their lenient power the fever's course shall break,
That dyed with hectic flash her lovely cheek;
Parch'd that moist lip, and from its vermeil hue
Exhaled energic Health's ambrosial dew;
And, banishing the Wood-Nymph's airy grace,
Sunk the light step in Languor's stealing pace;

Bade the warm sense of Pleasure fade and cloy,
And veil'd the facile smile of Youth and Joy.

Yet that she will return, my soul divines,
Bright o'er its fears that dear dependence shines;
Return, with frame unclouded by disease,
With sense of pleasure, and the wish to please.

Thus, to the downcast eye of musing thought,
Fondness and Hope their glowing visions brought;
Charm'd to anticipate, with cheering powers,
The sweet revival of those happy hours,
When, brief or long, the ever-gladden'd day
Left on our pillows, as it stole away,
Not one regret, save for its rapid flight,
And not a fear, but lest some cruel blight,
From injured health, or accidental harm,
Deny the successor its power to charm,
And shroud that ardent Spirit which explores
Science' bright fanes, and Fancy's fairy bowers.

So, while the past and future were combined
In the light chains, by Hope and Memory twined,
Up to those conscious spires I look'd once more,
Whispering my heart that Heaven would soon restore
Honora to her loved domestic scene,
With Health's clear spirit glowing thro' her mien.

Surprised, I saw their spiral summits hazed,
Dim, and more dim, receding as I gazed;
And scarce a minute passed, ere in a cloud
The mist convolving, form'd a total shroud.
Damp on my heart the dark'ning omen fell,
And rising tears within my eye-lids swell.
So late this moon-deck'd night, high o'er the fanes,
When not a breeze crept on the neighbouring plains,
Sat tracing their fair forms in state serene,
With shadowy pencil, on the silver'd green.
And now,—but let me not my peace resign,
Grim Superstition, at thy sable shrine!
Demon of Night, and baseless terror fly,
Nor charge with omens the capricious sky!
Vows not Honora that the vital flame
Relumes its course thro' her late languid frame?
Yes,—the light form, the fair expressive face,
Assume their pristine bloom, their nameless grace.
Soon shall my soul that fervid spirit find
Darting each varied effluence of mind;
And since in those dear veins the purple tide
Begins once more in even streams to glide,
My gladden'd eye, in Hope's perspective cast,
Sees future days enchanting as the past;
As blest a consciousness the sun illume,
And gild the dimness of the wintry gloom;

Shed wonted lustre o'er the Spring's soft hours,
And deck in brighter glow her rising flowers;
While sweeter still the woodland pours its strains,
And morns as roseate tinge yon golden vanes.

ELEGY

WRITTEN AT THE SEA-SIDE,

AND ADDRESSED TO

MISS HONORA SNEYD.

I WRITE, HONORA, on the sparkling sand!—
The envious waves forbid the trace to stay:
HONORA's name again adorns the strand!
Again the waters bear their prize away!

So Nature wrote her charms upon thy face,
The cheek's light bloom, the lip's envermeil'd dye,
And every gay, and every witching grace,
That Youth's warm hours, and Beauty's stores supply.

But Time's stern tide, with cold Oblivion's wave,
Shall soon dissolve each fair, each fading charm;
E'en Nature's self, so powerful, cannot save
Her own rich gifts from this o'erwhelming harm.

Love and the Muse can boast superior power,
Indelible the letters they shall frame;
They yield to no inevitable hour,
But will on lasting tablets write thy name.

EPISTLE

TO

MISS HONORA SNEYD, MAY 1772.

WRITTEN IN A SUMMER EVENING, FROM THE GRAVE OF A SUICIDE. *

It suits the temper of my soul to pour
Fond, fruitless plaints beneath the lonely bower,
Here, in this silent glade, that childhood fears,
Where the love-desperate maid, of vanish'd years,
Slung her dire cord between the sister trees,
That slowly bend their branches to the breeze,
And shade the bank that screens her mouldering form,
From the swart Dog-Star, and the wintry storm.

* This spot is known to the inhabitants of Lichfield by the name of Bessy Banks' Grave. When the author walked thither, in the year 1791, she found the two trees, which stood on each side the tumulus, had been recently cut down, and deplored a devastation which she almost fancied sacrilegious.

Ah! dear Honora, summer sheds again
Music, and fragrance, light, and bloom, in vain,
While my sick heart thy smiles no longer cheer,
Nor melt thine accents on my listening ear.
An hour has finish'd its appointed date,
Since on this lone recorded turf I sate.—
How quiet is the green seclusion found!
How deep the solitude that broods around!
No labouring hinds on yonder meads appear,
No human voice, no distant step, I hear;
Yet the sweet linnets warble on the bough,
And tender ringdoves languishingly coo;
The nearly-meeting trees, with plenteous spray,
Arch o'er the darkling lane that winds away
Far to the right.—In front, the silent fields
Now shadows sweep, now evening radiance gilds;
While, to the left, soft sun-beams, as they wane,
Yellow the green paths of the lonely lane;
Where lavish hedgerows boast the wilding's bloom,
Where briar-roses shed their rich perfume;
And gadding woodbines, as their branches wave,
Waft all their fragrance to the hapless grave.

Ah! much I grieve that summer hours consume,
Unshared by thee, the rival of their bloom;
Hours that soft joys should thro' the heart infuse,
And steep the eye-lids in their balmy dews.

To thee, Honora, sister of my soul,
To thee be all their blessings as they roll!
And yet, at times, let kind regret be thine,
Steal o'er thy charms, and shade them as they shine,
For that thy Anna, from her friend away,
Sighs 'mid the glories of the summer day!

Thou say'st,——To me, now destined to remain
In the joy-hallow'd groves, and conscious plain,
Less irksome must our grieved disunion prove,
Than rise to thee the pains of absent love,
Torn as thou art, in all thy tender truth,
From the dear haunts of our long happy youth;
But sure, of parted friends, her lot we find
Pressing the heaviest on the mournful mind,
Who lingers where each object seems array'd
In the fair semblance of the absent maid;
Where bowers and lawns her stamp and image bear,
At once, alas! so distant, and so near!
And, to the aching heart, and tearful eye,
Stand the mute spectres of departed joy.

TIME PAST.

WRITTEN JAN. 1773.

RETURN, blest years! when not the jocund Spring,
Luxuriant Summer, nor the amber hours
Calm Autumn gives, my heart invoked, to bring
Joys, whose rich balm o'er all the bosom pours;
When ne'er I wish'd might grace the closing day,
One tint purpureal, or one golden ray;
When the loud storms, that desolate the bowers,
Found dearer welcome than Favonian gales,
And Winter's bare, bleak fields than Summer's
flowery vales.

Yet not to deck pale hours with vain parade,
Beneath the blaze of wide-illumined dome;
Not for the bounding dance;—not to pervade
And charm the sense with music;—nor, as roam
The mimic passions o'er theatric scene,
To laugh, or weep;—O! not for these, I ween,
But for delights, that made the heart their home,

Was the grey night-frost on the sounding plain
More than the sun invoked, that gilds the grassy lane.

Yes, for the joys that trivial joys excel,
My loved HONORA, did we hail the gloom
Of dim November's eve;—and, as it fell,
And the bright fire shone cheerful round the room,
Dropt the warm curtains with no tardy hand;
And felt our spirits and our hearts expand;
List'ning their steps, who still, where'er they come,
Make the keen stars, that glaze the settled snows,
More than the sun invoked when first he tints the rose.

Affection,—Friendship,—Sympathy,—your throne
Is winter's glowing hearth;—and ye were ours,
Thy smile, HONORA, made them all our own.
Where are they now?—alas! their choicest powers
Faded at thy retreat;—for thou art gone,
And many a dark, long eve I sigh alone,
In thrill'd remembrance of the vanish'd hours,
When storms were dearer than the balmy gales,
And the grey barren fields than green luxuriant vales.

LICHFIELD,

AN ELEGY.

WRITTEN MAY 1781.

DISTINGUISH'D city!—round thy lofty spires
Bellona's spears, and Phœbus' golden lyres,
Threw gleams of glory, whose unfading flame,
Amidst thy country's annals, gilds thy name.

Has Beauty made thee its peculiar care,
Bade thee arise pre-eminently fair?
Or do remember'd days, that swiftly flew,
When life and all her blooming joys were new,

---

l. 1. *Distinguish'd city*—Whose name, and city-arms testify her military honours in ancient times. Addison's father being Dean of Lichfield, the infancy of that celebrated author was probably passed in her bosom; and it is well known what eminent men, in later days, were educated beneath her walls.

To my thrill'd spirit emulously bring
Illusions brighter than the shining Spring?

Yet, independent of their glowing spell,
Around thy spires exclusive graces dwell;
For there alone the blended charms prevail
Of city stateliness, and rural dale.
High o'er proud towns where Gothic structures rise,
How rare the freshness of unsullied skies!
Oft cling to choral walls the mansions vile,
Unseemly blots upon the graceful pile!
Here not one squalid, mouldering cell appears,
To mar the splendid toil of ancient years;
But, from the basis to the stately height,
One free and perfect whole it meets the sight,
Adorn'd, yet simple, though majestic, light;
While, as around that waving basis drawn,
Shines the green surface of the level lawn,
Full on its breast the spiral shadows tall,
Unbroken, and in solemn beauty, fall.

Near fanes, superb as these, how seldom found
Exemption from the city's mingled sound;
The iron rattling in the heavy drays,
The rumbling coaches, and the whirling chaise;
The clank of weary steeds, released the rein,
That slowly seek the neighbouring pond, or plain;

The town-cries, dinning from the crowded mart,
And the loud hammers of assiduous art!
Here (only when the organ's solemn sound
Shall swell, or sink, the vaulted roofs around,
While, from the full-voiced choir, the echoes bear
The pealing anthem through the circling air,)
No ruder voice the noon-day silence knows,
Than birds soft warbling 'mid luxuriant boughs.
For now in graceful freedom flow the trees,
That skirt the lawn, and wanton in the breeze.
Their light arcades in soft perspective throw
Stowe's shelter'd fields, that gently slope below;—
Th' embosom'd lake, that, curling to the gale,
Shines, the clear mirror of the sylvan vale;
While on its bank, to humble virtue kind,
Where still the poor man's prayers acceptance find,
The mouldering tower, that 'mid the shade appears,
Green with the gather'd moss of countless years.

---

l. 9. The trees of the cathedral walk at Lichfield are flowering limes, so beautiful when their branches are left to grow naturally. It is, however, only very lately that the tasteless custom has been renounced of lopping them to form a straight line at top. A barbarism, which existed when Major André was at Lichfield, and to which he alludes, with so much playful elegance, in the second of those charming letters subjoined to the Monody.

l. 17. *Mouldering tower*—Stowe Church, said to be the mother church of this city, is older than its cathedral.

There his pale corse may quiet shelter crave,
As swells th' unequal turf with many a grave;
And there the suns of summer-evening look,
There tinge the waters of its huddling brook.

We mark the villa, rising near the lake,
And fairer she, that 'midst the verdant brake,
From sultry gleam, and wintry tempest shrill,
Stands softly curtain'd on the eastern hill;
The suburb-cots, that to the right extend,
And, half embower'd in village-semblance, bend
Towards the lone, rustic spire, that stands serene
Upon the south-hill top, and awes the smiling scene;
While, save that to the left, o'er sloping fields,
Her soft, blue glimpse the distant country yields,
Closed are the gentle hills, that curve around,
And form the beauteous valley's early bound;
Throw every single feature it displays
Distinct and forward on the placid gaze;

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l. 5. *The villa*—Two elegant houses, one at the foot, the other near the top of that umbrageous rising, which soon, but beautifully, bounds this valley to the east. They were built in the year 1756, by a lady of the Aston family, of whom frequent mention is made in Dr Johnson's letters to Mrs Piozzi, when she was Mrs Thrale.

l. 11. *Rustic spire*—Green-Hill Church, belonging to the city.

Where nought disturbs, as soft the landscape glows,
Its silent graces in their sweet repose.

Now blends the liberal Spring thro' all the scene
The blossoms, silvering 'mid their tender green;
With king-cups gay each swelling mead she fills,
And strews them yellow o'er the circling hills.

Yet more majestic fanes may meet my gaze,
And vallies, winding in a richer maze,
But ah! 'tis those remember'd days that flew,
When life and all her golden joys were new,
That, beaming o'er the thrill'd remembrance, bring
Illusions brighter than the lucid Spring.
Compared with them, May's rosy morning spreads
No poignant sweetness from her violet beds;
Dim her bright noon, and rude her softest gale,
And June's purpureal evening cold and pale.

Days, that delight so vivid knew to bring,
Why did ye hasten on so swift a wing?
Ye taught angelic Friendship to impart
Sweets from a lovely sister's feeling heart.

---

l. 20. *Lovely sister*—Miss Sarah Seward. She died in her 19th year. The first poem in this collection is an Elegy to her memory.

Mild was my SARAH as the vernal hours
That ope the tender almond's blushing flowers;
And O! blest days of Pleasure's soft increase,
That rose in gladness, and that set in peace,
Ye saw HONORA, loveliest of the maids
That deck'd our winter dome, our summer shades!
What sweetness beaming o'er that peerless face!
O'er that light form what animated grace!
How did that mind's warm energies disdain
Whate'er allures the haughty and the vain!
How spurn the tinsel claims of wealth and birth!
How cherish every gleam of wit and worth!
What varying charms, in turn, ascendance gain'd,
And in her voice, her air, her glances reign'd!
Ninon's gay spirit, gladness to inspire,
Lucretia's modesty, Cornelia's fire;
O! of all hours was she!—Those hours are past,
And the wide world contains her not!—such haste
Make happy times to join the vanish'd train,
That shadow'd o'er by grief, or rack'd by pain,
In mercy fled:—but you, in light array'd,
Why paused you not in Lichfield's bloomy shade?
Why set your suns so soon, whose kindling rays
Made all the summer of my youthful days?

When first this month, stealing from half-blown bowers,
Bathed the young cowslip in her sunny showers,

Pensive I travell'd, and approach'd the plains,
That met the bounds of Severn's wide domains.
As up the hill I rose, from whose green brow
The village church o'erlooks the vale below,
O! when its rustic form first met my eyes,
What wild emotions swell'd the rising sighs!
Stretch'd the pain'd heart-strings with the utmost force
Grief knows to feel, that knows not dire remorse;
For there—yes there,—its narrow porch contains
My dear HONORA's cold and pale remains,
Whose lavish'd health, in youth, and beauty's bloom,
Sunk to the silence of an early tomb.

* * * *.

Thus, as I journied, grieved Reflection rose
To meet the lone memorial of my woes,
HONORA's timeless grave;—then first beheld,
Since, in that little porch, beside the field,
It sunk neglected, while no stone remains
To guard the sacred relics it contains.

The wearied steeds, in languid pace and slow,
Indulged the rising luxury of woe;
With drooping neck, as they had shared my pain,
Lingering they passed the solitary fane.

---

l. 4. *Village church*—Weston, on the edge of Shropshire.

Swift-rushing tears my straining eye-balls glazed,
And thus my Spirit whispered as I gazed.

" O! fairest among women!—dark and deep,
Beneath that rude stone arch, thy lasting sleep!
With all her woodland choir, resounding clear,
The voice of Morning does not pierce thine ear;
Gay Evening Suns, in Summer-glory drest,
In vain look golden on thy bed of rest,
Since from those rayless eyes their splendours fail
To lift the dim impenetrable veil!

" How early rose the intellectual powers
In bloom, in strength, that shamed maturer hours!
On that dear lip what mute attention hung,
As dropt the precept from the Sage's tongue,
While from his fruitful mind, in Science train'd,
She caught the sense, ere language half explain'd!
How soon did Genius all her soul engage!
How glow'd those eyes along the Poet's page!
What generous goodness taught that now cold heart
To bear in others' joys so warm a part;
Pour o'er another's woe the ready tear;
Watch by the couch of pain with tender fear;
Each wish prevent, each injury forgive,
" And, heedless of herself, for others live!"

"And is this all of my HONORA's fate?
O! wasted thus!—O! transient thus the date
Of every excellence, that e'er combined
To breathe perfection on the female mind!

"Serene the day, and balmy is the gale;
Spring's lucid hues are glistening o'er the vale;
Blue gleams the lake the circling trees between,
And one sweet blackbird hymns the smiling scene.
Thus mildly bright the hours of promise shine,
But O! an all-resisting woe is mine;
My soul not e'en the hours of promise cheer,
And vernal music sickens on my ear;
Peace, little warbler! mute forsake thy spray,
Intrusive all the sweetness of thy lay;
Or cease thy strain that cannot sooth my woes!
Or wake HONORA from her long repose."

Then roll'd the wheels, descending to the plain,
Swift from the silent hill and rustic fane;
Me to the life-warm scene they soon convey'd,
When glad'ning eyes the mists of grief pervade.

---

l. 7. *The lake.* A fine sheet of water near Weston-Hall, belonging to Lord Bradford.

l. 19. *Life-warm scene*—Newport, the residence of the author's amiable friend, Mrs Short.

But to this vale restored, where all I see,
My dear HONORA, seems so full of thee;
Where not indeed thy pale remains are laid,
But, warm with life, thou seem'st to deck the glade,
I half reproach my heart, that gayer hours
Beheld it yielding to the social powers;
When the kind glance, and smile of friendship stole,
At intervals, thy image from my soul!

Ye shades of Lichfield, will ye always bring
Illusions brighter than the shining spring?
O! ere these eyes, that all our haunts explore
With fond affection's gaze, shall ope no more,
Lose not of her one consecrated trace,
Whose image gives you this exclusive grace!
Present it still, by Memory's potent aids,
Ye choral turrets, and ye arching shades!
Waft her remember'd voice in every gale!
Wear her etherial smile, thou lovely vale,
When Spring, in wayward April's veering days,
Shoots the spruce foliage from the naked sprays;
When Summer bids, thro' ev'ry splendid hour,
Consummate beauty glow in ev'ry bower;
When Autumn, turning back her golden eyes,
Of parting Summer asks his varied dyes,

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l. 1. *This vale.*—Strow Valley, Lichfield.

With which she decks, but ah! to vanish soon,
Her saffron morning, her pellucid noon;
Nay, e'en when Winter sheds o'er the dim plains
His shrouding snows, loud winds, and beating rains!

Then, should or Fame, or Pleasure, to my ear
Whisper that Talent blooms neglected here,
Lure to the circles where congenial fire
Might Emulation's generous warmth inspire;
Yet here the spirit of departed joy
Shall chain my step, shall fascinate my eye;
Chace with his local spells awakening powers,
Each languid consciousness of wasted hours;
And o'er the present all that lustre cast
That beams reflected from the fairer past.

INVOCATION

TO THE

GENIUS OF SLUMBER.

WRITTEN, OCT. 1787.

SPIRIT of Dreams, that when the dark hours steep
In the soft dews of life-embalming sleep,
Our busy senses, canst restore the lost,
The loved, the mourn'd, from Death's mysterious coast,
Propitious lately to my votive lay,
And the lone musing of the joyless day,
From 'whelming years, and from sepulchral night,
Thou gav'st HONORA to my slumbering sight:
Deck'd in those varied graces that array'd
In youth's first bloom, the fair ingenuous maid;
In all those pure affections gladd'ning powers,
That wing'd with joy the animated hours,
Alike when her sweet converse welcome made
Morn's rising light, and Evening's stealthy shade;

The months with flowers adorn'd, with radiance warm
The vernal day, and e'en the wintry storm.
She look'd, as in those golden years foregone,
Spoke, as when love attuned each melting tone;
When, by my side, her cautious steps she moved,
Watching the friend solicitously loved,
Whose youthful strength, in one disastrous day,
Had fall'n to luckless accident a prey,
And needed much, to save from future harm,
The eye attentive, the supporting arm.
Remember'd looks, ye rays of Friendship's flame,
Long my soul's light, and guardians of my frame!

Why, visionary Power, so seldom kind
To the deprived, the life-retracing mind;
Withholding oft, 'mid thy obtrusive swarm,
My day-dream's idol, fair HONORA's form?
O! when thou giv'st it, then, and only then,
Lost to my woes, I live with her again.
Again on me those soft'ning eye-balls shine!
I hear her speak! I feel her arm on mine!
Real as fair, the tender pleasures glow,
Sweet, as the past was potent to bestow,
Freed from that sense which shrouds with dire controul
Volition's image in a cypress stole;

That tells me, searching wide creation o'er,
My dear HONORA I shall find no more;
That on her lonely grave, and mouldering form,
Six dreary winters poured the ruthless storm,
Violent and dark as my soul's primal woe
When first I found that beauteous head laid low.
On that unshrined, yet ever-sacred spot,
By faithless Love deserted and forgot,
Six bloomy springs their crystal light have show'd,
Their sun-gilt rains in fragrant silence flow'd,
Mild as my sorrows (calm'd by passing years)
Time-soften'd sighs, and time-assuaged tears.

Once, as the taper's steady light convey'd
Upon the white expanse the graceful shade
Of sweet HONORA's face, the traces fair
My anxious hand pursued, and fixed them there;
To throw, in spite of Fate's remorseless crimes,
Soft soothing magic o'er succeeding times.
For this dear purpose, near my couch I placed
The shade, by Love assiduously traced;
And, while no sullen curtain drops between,
The image consecrates the sombrous scene;
Serenely sweet it stands,—at morn, at eve,
The first, last object these fond eyes perceive
And still my heart, and oft my lips address
The shadowy form of her who lived to bless.

Now strikes the midnight clock ;—the taper gleams
With the faint flash of half-expiring beams,
And soon that lovely semblance shall recede,
And Sleep's dim veils its thrilling powers impede.
I feel their balmy, kind, resistless charms
Creep o'er my closing eyes,—I fold my arms,
Breathing in murmurs thro' the paly gloom,
" Come to my dreams, my lost HONORA, come !
Back as the waves of Time benignly roll,
Shew thy bright face to my enchanted soul !"

MONODY

ON MRS RICHARD VYSE,

ADDRESSED TO HER HUSBAND, SINCE GENERAL VYSE. *

I.

'Tis gloom, and silence all!—where late so gay
The strains of pleasure in each gale were borne;
Where white-robed Truth had fix'd her stedfast sway,
And love's bright florets deck'd the rising morn.
How constantly, beneath yon shade,
The little, rosy Comforts play'd!
While to the warblings of the plumy choir
Responsive transport struck her golden lyre!—
Thou dashing stream, swift hurrying down the glade,
Oft has thy clear and sparkling wave convey'd

* This poem was written the day before that lady's funeral, and in view of the villa where she died, in the Vale of Stowe, near Lichfield.

The balmy whispers tender thoughts inspire,
As shed the bridal star its gay enamour'd fire.

II.

Now through the vale a sullen stillness reigns,
The shades embrown'd by woe,
Frown o'er the house of death!—the blasted plains
No more with beauty glow!
Or is it Sorrow's misty shower
That dims the hue of every flower,
Draws from the lake the livid gleam,
And hears the ominous raven scream?—
Round ANNA's bower the damps of horror rise,
And shroud the splendours of the azure skies,
Since she, who brighten'd summer's charms,
Is torn in life's gay bloom,
From young RICARDO's widow'd arms,
The victim of the tomb.
To that loved bower she shall no more return!
Bend your dark tops, ye pines, and guard her sacred
urn!

III.

Ah! gentle pair, your bliss was too refined,
Too subtly sweet, too exquisite to last;
For ne'er shall man unfading pleasures find,
Where Grief, and Pain, may breathe the withering
blast.

How dire the ravage in that hour
When sunk, beneath their baleful power,
Each joy, bright springing from congenial taste,
From warm impassion'd Love, from Friendship chaste;
From Plenty, summon'd by approving Fate,
To glide serenely through your open gate;
From all that softens life, from all that cheers,
And nurses Eden's rose in this chill vale of tears

IV.

Rash man was made to mourn:—exempt alone
Who transport ne'er have felt;
Whose hearts, girt round by Dulness' leaden zone,
Nor Love, nor Pity melt;
On whose dead calm of vacant hours
Nor Rapture beams, nor Anguish lours.—
Lone mourner o'er thy Anna's grave,
Since Youth and Love were weak to save,
Thy fruitless sorrows with this truth controul,
Soft whispering to thy fond, thy faithful soul,
That all the woes, which shroud thy noon-tide rays,
Bend thee to earth, and lay thy prospects waste;
Are borne for her, whose fair, unclouded days
Of wintry storm had never felt the blast;
The large arrears of grief she must have paid,
Had she not early sunk in death's eternal shade.

V.

O ! think, had fell disease assaulted thee,
The rushing fever, or the slow decline,
These sufferings had been hers—this agony
Wrung her mild bosom, that now tortures thine;
And shall not her far happier doom
Gild, with its seraph rays, thy gloom?
Since sun-eyed Faith empowers thee to pervade
The dreary grave's incumbent shade;
Lift its dark curtains from the regions bright,
And see thy love ascend her throne of light,
Where bliss, that ne'er shall end, and ne'er can cloy,
Succeeds your nuptial year of seldom equall'd joy.

TO

MRS COLTMAN OF HULL.

OCTOBER 1772.

BRIGHT as the dew-drop on the brow of morn,
Fair as the lily by the fountain side,
Sweet as the damask rose-bud, newly born
On verdant banks, where glassy rivers glide,

Thou, ISABELLA, in the vale of life,
Far from Ambition's paths art charm'd to stray,
Shunning the haunts of pride and envious strife,
Each Muse, each Grace, companions of thy way.

Thy winter's cheerful hearth, thy summer suns,
May attic wit and virtue still adorn!
Brightning thy destin'd hour-glass as it runs,
Crowning thy night with peace, with joy thy morn!

Long may Hygeia lead thee to her springs,
And with full draughts thy glowing lip bedew!
And while Prosperity her garland brings,
May nought that blesses bid thee once adieu!

RECEIPT

FOR A SWEET JAR.

THROUGH freezing hours would you pervade your rooms
With each fine odour of the summer-blooms,
Learn from the Muse to form the fragrant spell,
And bid her rhymes its artful process tell.

When Spring's first sweets the pendant violets pour,
Strew, with unsparing hand, that lovely flower;
When Fraxanella's spicy sighs exhale,
And pale Syringas languish on the gale;
When all the aromatic tribe entwine
Their vernal garlands round Hygeia's shrine,
Crop the rich spoils beneath the noon-day sun,
And be with these thy grateful task begun!
Then when the nymph, that decks the glowing year,
Bids to the day her loveliest boast appear,

As her gay rose expands its crimson gems,
Of the bright offspring rob the parent stems;
From noon to noon the splendid foliage lay,
The added heaps shall added sweets convey;
And scarce less liberally, to swell thy hoard,
Her spikes let azure lavender afford;
From orange-groves be silvery blooms consign'd,
With starry jessamine of scent refined.
From the soft umbrage of Idalian bowers
Bid graceful myrtles shed their blossom'd showers;
And, emulous of raspberry's tempting sweet,
Let mignionets their floral sisters greet.
With cinnamon let cloves and mace descend,
And in the marble vase their virtues blend,
One ounce of each;—and then, with sparing hand,
Bid luscious musk his potent scent expand,
A few small grains;—dispersing 'mid the rest,
No sick'ning odours shall the sense molest,
But, when time mellows their too cloying power,
They shall increase the sweets of spice and flower.

Yet liberal most the snowy mineral spread
Between each layer, in sparkling plenty shed,
Since where bright Salt her crystalines extends,
She brings an active host of powerful friends,
To whose pervading and protecting sway,
Fell Dissolution yields his languid prey.

And you, who wish your breathing flowers may rise
With scent primeval, on December's skies,
Still, as you spread them, every layer between,
Profusely let this white preserver gleam,
While scantier sprinklings of the spicy dust,
By art thus blended, aid the poignant gust.

And let each rising morn behold with care
Thy busy fingers mix each former layer;
And be that task renew'd when setting light
Resigns her faded empire to the night.

So shall no taint pollute thy treasured flowers,
No must offensive foil their fragrant powers;
But odours, rich as those of Saba's vale,
Rise on hybernal Albion's bleakest gale,
Sweets, which the breath of her gay months excells,
While in thy vase eternal summer dwells.

INVOCATION

TO THE SHADE OF PETRARCH, AND TO THE SPIRITS OF THE PERSIAN POETS,

ON THEIR COMPOSITIONS BEING TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, BY SIR WILLIAM JONES.*

Boast of Italian plains, that once did'st rove
Where lucid Sorga leads her winding wave
From its deep fountain in Valclusa's grove,
Whose lavish laurels in her waters lave,

Thou, who so oft hast struck the silver shell
To hopeless Love, and wedded Laura's charms,
See passing ages yet enchanted dwell,
On thy sweet verse, and feel thy soft alarms!

Ah! sacred shade of that enamour'd youth,
Still shall thy myrtles bloom with fairest hue,

---

* This was written when first Sir William's Oriental Miscellany appeared.

While one kind tear descends from tender Truth,
Again each fading blossom to renew.

But share those myrtles with that minstrel bland,
Whose skill afresh hath strung thy silver lyre,
And taught the echoes of his native land
The plaint harmonious of thy fond desire.

With him your bright poetic honours share,
You that awaked the song on Mithra's plains,
Breath'd your wild warblings on the fragrant air,
And at the fount of light illumed your strains.

The veils that hid you thro' the rounds of time
From European eyes, are torn away,
And all the fire of oriental rhyme
Glows in our isle with undiminish'd ray.

Spirits of eastern bards, where'er shall rove
Your British guardian, from your musky vales,
Sun-hallow'd hills, and each odorous grove,
Bring the rich incense that perfumes your gales!

O'er his young head the spicy treasures blend,
And from your brightest gems a crown obtain!
On him may all the tribute stores descend
Who hung with Persian wreaths the Albion Muses'
fane!

ODE

TO WILLIAM BOOTHBY, ESQ.

WRITTEN IN THE SUMMER 1775.

Ere yet Alexis bend his purposed way
  The Peak's rude rocks and devious vales among,
O! may he pause, and, listening to my lay,
  Accept the moral precept of the song!
And ye, blest sisters of th' inspiring spring,
Too partial, cease to wander and to sing
  Where Arethusa's silver fountain flows!
Or, if Castalian plains ye haunt, ah, bend
Your steps where rival scenes extend,
  And every varied tint of beauty glows,
Mix'd with the spirit of the mountain gale,
Whose stolen perfumes float and wanton o'er the
    vale!

There, under pendant rocks, his amber flood,
  As Hebrus swift, impetuous Derwent pours;
And now, beneath the broad, incumbent wood,
  Silent and smooth and deep, he laves the shores;
Till, gaily rushing from his darksome way,
His foamy waters glitter on the day,
  Resistless, dashing o'er each rugged mound;
And still, on his umbrageous bank, he shows
Woodbines and harebells and the musky rose,
  The heavy, velvet wild bees murmuring sound.
His every grace that decks Pieria's clime,
Green vale, and steepy hill, and broken rock sublime.

Here, in meanders swift, the silver Wie
  Wantons around the Naiads of his wave,
Thro' scenes, where mighty Nature's spirit free
  Each coy and wood-wild grace luxuriant gave.
Behold, in lucid beauty, from the tide
Rise his kind nymphs, and for the race that glide

---

l. 13. *Silver Wie*—The river Wie runs through Mensaldale, the loveliest of the Peak Vallies, and through the rich meads below Bakewell, where it winds and curves with capricious wantonness. The waters of the Derwent have a tint of amber, which seems to suit the dark and luxuriant foliage on their banks, and is well contrasted by the white foam, almost perpetually formed by its rocky channel. The clearness of the Wie is still more beautiful. Hence it becomes the mirror of the exquisite scenery on its borders.

With sinuous track, and in their eddies play,
Ask mercy!—Wilt thou then, with barbarous care,
Th' unreal insect, false and fair,
Seductive fling along their glassy way?
Hasten, ye Muses, from Sicilian glades,
The guiltless tenants guard of these all-lovely shades!

And may your strains a purer joy impart,
And cruel purposes in pity melt!
Humane of song! O steal into his heart,
Till life-destroying hopes no more are felt!
Tell him how much profaned that eye benign,
By Nature form'd with other fires to shine,
Love's ardent beam, and Mercy's dewy ray,
How much profaned, when, with inhuman lour,
Its deathful level streams!—ah, pour
The sacred strain, and save the tender prey!
Avert each cruel, unresisted blow,
Tell him, no laureate meeds for such achievements grow!

Of wasted hours may generous minds beware,
Nor fatal be their strength, their skill, their speed!
Link'd with the Graces, lo, the Nine appear!
Hark, how they warn thee from each ruthless deed!
Now, while thy life's purpureal moments reign,
Rove with these guardian nymphs, hill, dale, and plain!

Their zones shall gird thee, and their lays inspire,
Storing each sense with permanent delight;
That, when thy youth has wing'd its flight,
When faded all the tints of gay desire,
On the mild evening of thy vital day
Science and Taste may shine with cloud-dispelling ray!

ODE*

TO BROOKE BOOTHBY, ESQ. AFTERWARDS SIR BROOKE BOOTHBY.

Not yet is it reveal'd, ye sacred Nine,
If, with humane accordance to my lay,
Ye rear'd, in Peak's sweet vales, your rocky shrine,
And lured Alexis from the sylvan prey.—
That late his brother's chorded shell
Ye struck, its charming numbers tell;
They bear the symbols of your quire,
Aonian sweetness, Attic fire;
So prompt with happiest melody to flow
When your Hilario strikes the lyre;
And with the clearest light to glow,
As gay or pensive themes his song inspire.—

---

* This Ode is an answer to Mr Boothby's verses on the preceding Ode, which verses he sent to the author from Tunbridge.

All uninvoked, upon HILARIO's brows,
Each rival Muse and Grace her loveliest garland
throws.

Flying from shades, which veil the sultry day,
From gales, that breathe the essence of the spring,
From streams, where pearly-wristed Naiads play,
From echoes, faithful to each tuneful string,
The muses seek yon garish plain,
Haunt of the frolic and the vain.—
Forsaken Nine! HILARIO there
Leads in light dance a mortal fair,
And all your soft and silver harps are drown'd
Amid the viol's scrannel noise,
And hautboy's loud, metallic sound,
Skilless, yet suiting well such vulgar joys,
As, with the wanderer, ye reluctant rove
Far from poetic plain, or Learning's hallow'd grove.

For the moist, orient lustres, as they stream,
Sloping and trembling on the mazy rill,
The splendours of the white meridian beam,
That warms the vale, and flames upon the hill,
Eve's crimson throne, and golden rays,
The lustre's many-pointed blaze

---

l. 8. *Garish plain*—Tunbridge.

A noon-day night profusely pours,
Of gaudy violated hours;
And for the shining locks, the rural crown,
The wavy robe, so light and free,
That flows thy agile limbs adown,
And decks thy smiling brow, Simplicity,
Quaint Fashion, by her own trim fingers drest,
Pranks, with a vacant smile, her stiff, fantastic vest.

Ah! more than potent is the myrtle chain,
Since Folly can a heart like thine ensnare!
While kindred Genius views thee with disdain,
Loit'ring, and listening to each idiot fair.
Resigning thus thy wasted day,
Exclusive own Love's magic sway,
If thus his fires delusive lead
Thy charmed foot to marshy mead,
Where sinks its languid step, tho' form'd to gain
The height sublime, where brightly glows,
Above the gems that deck the vain,
The sweet, unfading, scientific rose:
But thou, since meaner garlands bind thy brows,
Boast not those rival claims thy despot disallows!

---

l. 22. In allusion to his verses which maintain that love may subsist with rival passions. See the elegant edition of his Poems, published 1796, by Cadell, page 59.

The strongest bias of the youthful soul
  Love's dark magnetic instantly can turn;
Behold the Bacchanal forsake his bowl,
  The fierce grow gentle, and the stoic burn!
    Sylvan Diana's cruel sports
    Too long thy graceful brother courts;
    But ah! though deaf to JULIA'S lay,
    Had one bright nymph adjured his stay,
Would the warm youth have sought the buskin'd train?
    Ah no! attentive to her sigh,
    Their echoing horns might wind in vain;
No shaft of his had fleeted thro' the sky;
The victim in the sacrificer found,
Pierced by a keener dart, had spared the purposed wound.

And do not now the Nine successless plead,
  From scenes, where only syren pleasures sing,
HILARIO'S steps they might assiduous lead
  Back to his wonted haunt, their hallow'd spring?
    In vain applause her pæan breathes,
    And ardent knowledge twines her wreaths;
    For him extracts each pedant thorn,
    Ere yet his brows those wreaths adorn.
Ah me! the magic of enamour'd smiles,
    The tender glance, disorder'd air,

With all the soft voluptuous wiles,
That wind round lofty souls the fatal snare,
Shall mock thy late proud boast, and force thee own
Thy baby Godhead sits despotic on his throne.

SONGS.

THE COUNTRY MAID,

A PASTORAL BALLAD.

An easy heart adorns the vale,
  And gilds the lonely plain;
No sighs of mine increase the gale,
  No peevish tears the rain.
From happy dreams, the orient beams
  Awake my soul to pleasure;
With cheek that glows, I milk my cows,
  And bless the flowing treasure.

To tend the flock thro' summer's day
  Is surely no disgrace;

A wreath of leaves from noon-tide ray
  Defends my shaded face.
Industrious heed the hours shall speed
  On pinions gay and light;
The rising thought, with virtue fraught,
  Shall consecrate their flight.

A maple dish, a cedar spoon,
  Seem fair and sweet to me,
When, on a violet bank, at noon,
  I sit, and dine with glee.
From crystal rill my cup I fill,
  And praise the bounteous giver;
Nor with the great would change my state,
  But dwell in vales for ever.

I love to mark the sultry hour,
  When Phœbus ardent glows,
How deeply still are plain and bower
  In undisturb'd repose;
All but the rills, that down the hills
  Their glittering waters fling,
And round the bowers, on sweet, wild flowers,
  The bees, that murmuring cling.

When eve's grey mantle veils the sun,
  And hill's late gilded height;

When green banks whiten, as the moon
  Sheds wide her milky light,
I mark the vales and shadowy dales,
  In soft perspective showing;
Their winding streams, beneath her beams,
  In trembling lustre flowing.

Then homeward my pleased steps I bend
  To yonder ivied cottage,
Where parents dear and gentle friend
  Prepare the savoury pottage.
The wholesome fare, the pious prayer,
  Conclude my day so pleasant!
Ye rich and proud, confess aloud
  Right happy such a peasant. (j.)

SONG.*

FLORIO, by all the Powers above,
" Plighted to me eternal love;
" And as a rose adorn'd my breast,
" He on its leaf the vow impress'd;
" But, while the winds did round us play,
" Vow, leaf, and promise blew away."

For this, when summer mornings glow,
O! shall I veil their beams in woe?
And 'mid the rosy hours of youth,
Weep and repine o'er vanish'd truth?
No! let me hail the shining day,
Blithe as the lark, that meets its ray.

Beauty and Health have joys that prove
Balm for the wounds of slighted love;

* The first verse is from an old ballad.

And when a faithful lover gains
The heart, a false one now disdains,
Ungrateful Damon may deplore
What vain regret shall ne'er restore.

Celia to Florio then shall say,
" Vow, leaf, and promise, blew away;"
And to those winds I gave my grief,
That bore the love-recorded leaf;
Nor do I chide the gales, or thee,
Since thou art false—and I am free!

And, till return those hours of prime,
Borne on the onward stream of time;
Yes, till the spring restores to me
That very leaf inscribed by thee,
Scorning thy sighs, shall Celia say,
" Vow, leaf, and promise, blew away!"

ACHILLES,*

A

CANZONET.

RECITATIVE.

ACHILLES roams the damp and sounding shore,
Nor hears th' approaching tempest's sullen roar;
Indignant mourns, by rage and anguish toss'd,
His honour stain'd, his fair Briseis is lost!

AIR.—BASS.

Mix'd with the rising wind his groan;—
Mark it, proud Troy! the welcome sound
Respites thine altars and thy throne,
Tho' fierce Tydides thunder round.

AIR.—AMOROSO.

ACHILLES.

"My Maid, my black-eyed Maid," deprived of thee,
Life has no joy, and love no charm for me!

* Written on request, for music.

AIR.—BRAVOURA.

Tyrant, 'tis well!—in baffled combat long
Thy vanquish'd myriads shall avenge this wrong!

PRECEDING AIR RESUMED.

But ah! nor love, nor glory, now I boast,
Brightly they shone, now darken'd each, and lost.

CHORUS.

Hero, to thee shall great revenge remain,
And Grecian armies strew the Trojan plain!

SONG.

The mute grey fields, and leafless bowers
Now vainly wait the vernal hours;
Yet vernal hours to them will come,
Awake the song, and ope the bloom.

To me more dear than vernal hours
To mute grey fields and leafless bowers,
Were Damon's accents, Damon's strain,
But Damon speaks, nor sings again!

On him hath closed the silent door
Shall never, never open more,
And on my heart, by nought consoled,
The trembling hand of Hope is cold!
And bleak fields suit, and suits this iron sky
The lonely spirit of departed joy.

SONG.

RECITATIVE.

My Stella sleeps, the sultry hour
Seals her soft eye-lids in the bower,
And see, the snowy rose she wore
Is fallen upon the verdant floor.

AIR.

Ah Rose, thou hast fled from a throne
Where thy fairness and scent are out-done,
And the graces that rival thy own
Thy envy has taught thee to shun.

And O! since thy thorns might annoy
A breast all the graces adorn,
To the mansion of love and of joy,
Pale Rover! thou shalt not return.

SONG.

On a mount a cottage stands
Half way down the sunny side,
And a little vale commands
Where the glassy waters glide.
There ascends a curtain'd hill,
From the stormy north it shields;
At its foot a church and mill,
Clustering hedgerows, narrow fields.

Pleasant, pleasant is the scene
When the spring and summer shine,
Yet within that cot, I ween,
Dwells a fairer love of mine.
Her sweet smile a spirit pours
Which, when blooming seasons fail,
Lovelier makes than summer bowers
Winter's grey and naked vale.

BALLAD.

I WAKE and weep, when wintry winds
Are howling loud upon the lea,
And louder blasts my fancy finds
For William, on the foaming sea;
But, calming soon the pictured storm,
Sweet hopes into my bosom creep,
And tell me, summer breezes warm
Shall waft him safely o'er the deep.

Four years, on India's sultry coast,
Has war's rude voice my love detain'd;
While here, to every pleasure lost,
His Mary's languid form remain'd;
And o'er the steep rock still to lean,
Still eager watch each gliding sail,
That languid form is duly seen,
At ruddy morn, and evening pale.

But ah! no handkerchief I mark
Stream from the deck in crimson dye!
Dear signal! wanting thee, the bark
Is hail'd by many a mournful sigh.
Its shouts discordant seem to me,
That echo from the stony pier,
Since William's face I cannot see,
Since William's voice I cannot hear.

SONG

OF THE

FAIRIES TO THE SEA-NYMPHS.

HASTEN, from your coral caves,
Every nymph that sportive laves
In the green sea's oozy wells,
And gilds the fins, and spots the shells!
Hasten, and our morrice join,
Ere the gaudy morning shine!

Rising from the foamy wave,
Instant now your aid we crave;
Come, and trip like our gay band,
Traceless on the amber sand.
Haste! or we must hence away,
Yet an hour, and all is day!

At your bidding, from our feet
Shall the ocean monsters fleet,

Sea-nettle and sting-fish glide
Back upon the refluent tide.
    Haste! the dawn has streak'd the cloud,
    Haste! the village cock has crow'd.

See! the clouds of night retire,
Hesper gleams with languid fire!
Quickly then our revel join,
The blush of morn is on the brine!
    Loiterers, we must hence away,
    Yonder breaks the orb of day.

SONG

ADAPTED TO THE NEW AIR

IN PLEYEL'S GRAND CONCERTANTE.

BLEAK gloomy winds will surely rise,
  When autumn hastes away;
Ah! so shall swell my rising sighs,
  So wintry grow my day.

Lost to my view, when Cloe's form
  No more adorns this shade;
Then, O then, must Sorrow's storm
  My drooping soul invade.

Fast falling tears bedew the ground
  When dark November lours,
Nor yet less lavish will be found,
  These eyes' descending showers.

Doom'd when I feel my sick'ning heart
  To wail its vanish'd joys;
Now, e'en now, the dreaded smart
  My present bliss destroys.

Cease, Fancy, cease the golden prime
  Of Love's delights to veil;
Cease to present the cruel time
  When every joy must fail!

Live while we may,—'tis all we can,
  And shun the thought that mourns!
Crown with roses life's short span,
  But lean not on their thorns!

SONG.

In sylvan scenes, when Laura hails
  The flowers that deck the grove,
Ye Dryads, in the passing gales,
  O ! whisper to my love !
And tell her, as she smiling views
  The beauteous vernal train,
How short a time their splendid hues
  And breathing sweets remain.

Soft in the dells, when silver streams
  From bubbling fountains stray,
Ye Naiads, guide the waking dreams
  That o'er her fancy stray !
And when she sees, thro' meads and groves,
  The waters swiftly glide,
Inspire the thought, that youthful hours
  No longer tarriance bide !

Then, Venus, come! and tell the Fair
  Those rosy hours are thine;
And bid her snowy hands prepare
  The marriage wreath to twine.
Since flowers and streams, and youth and love,
  So rapid fleet away,
O teach my Laura to improve
  The time that will not stay!

BALLAD.

Hast thou escaped the cannon's ire,
Loud thundering o'er the troubled main?
Hast thou escaped the fever's fire,
That burnt so fierce on India's plain?
Then, William, then I can resign,
With scarce one sigh, the blooming grace,
Which in thy form was wont to shine,
Which made so bright thy youthful face.

That face grows wan by sultry clime,
By watching dim those radiant eyes;
But Valour gilds the wrecks of Time,
Tho' youth decays, tho' beauty flies;
An honest heart is all to me,
Nor soil, nor time, makes that look old;
And dearer shall the jewel be
Than youth, or beauty, fame, or gold.

SONG.

I.

THE stormy ocean roving,
My William seeks the foe;
Ah me! the pain of loving,
To war when lovers go!

II.

O! why my locks so yellow,
Should rosy garlands bind,
When trembles yonder willow,
As blows the sullen wind?

III.

Ye nymphs, who feel no anguish,
My garlands gay ye wove,
But I in absence languish,
And fear for him I love.

IV.

Nor yet the sprays of willow
Shall wave my temples o'er,
But weeds, that ocean's billow
Leaves dark upon the shore.

V.

Pale willows suit the sorrow
The fair forsaken knows;
Fierce War has wing'd the arrow
That wounds my soul's repose.

VI.

Sad on the beach I linger,
And watch the altering sea;
But no cold doubts shall injure,
My love is true to me!

VII.

Yet, till rest crown my pillow,
Till peace my love restore,
Be mine the weeds yon billow
Leaves dark upon the shore!

ADDRESS TO HOPE.

SONG.

THOU sun of the spirit, dispersing each cloud,
When the sad sense of danger my bosom would shroud,
Not Spring, as she chases the Winter's loud storm,
Ever blest the chill earth with a lustre so warm.
O! how had I borne the dire thoughts of the fray,
When War's cruel voice call'd my lover away,
Had'st not thou, gentle Hope, veil'd the battles' increase,
And bent thy soft beams on the harbour of Peace!

To cheer and irradiate a bosom like mine,
Can the splendour of Glory be potent as thine?
It plays on the crest of the hero, but shews
Red traces of danger thro' legions of foes;

It gilds e'en destruction, I know, to the brave,
But to love, what can brighten the gloom of the grave?
Then do thou draw a veil o'er the battle's fierce gleams,
And on Safety's dear harbour O! bend thy soft beams!

And now, gentle Hope, art thou faithful as kind,
Not false were thy fires while they shone on my mind;
My hero returns!—the dread danger is o'er,
And, crown'd with new laurels, he speeds to the shore;
Yet to light the dim Future, sweet Hope, do not cease,
Thro' life let thy torch be the guard of my peace;
That still it may gild the warm day-spring of youth,
As it shone on his safety, now shine on his truth.

SONG.

My Celia vow'd, at early dawn,
To meet me on the blossom'd lawn;
And now the dewy light of morn,
Arising, gems the silver thorn;
But, hush'd in sleep, my fair one now
Forgets, alas! her tender vow!

Gay linnets carol from the hill,
And sparkling flows the mountain rill;
Wild rose and woodbine scent the gale,
And breathe their perfumes thro' the vale;
But, hush'd in sleep, my charmer laid,
Forgets the tender vow she made.

Come, lovely nymph, they seem to say,
Adorn with us the rising day!

For charms like thine alone can bring
The joys that crown the breathing Spring;
In vain her songs, her beauties rise,
If faithless Slumber seals those eyes!

SONG.

HERE is the bank I loved so well,
  But all its flowers are shrunk away!
And here the lately verdant dell,
  Where I and Henry used to stray!

Ah me! I sigh, and look around,
  No marks of what it was remain,
Save yon rude rock, that wept and frown'd,
  When gay the bower, and green the plain!

While happy, under summer skies,
  We gazed upon its dropping brow,
I little thought how soon these eyes
  With as perpetual tears should flow.

If once this heart to love were cold,
  And man's base falsehood could divine,
O! I would sell my youth for gold,
  My marriage vow at Plutus' shrine.

Then alter'd looks I should not mourn,
  The faithless glance I should not see;
The false one leave me, or return,
  'Twould then be all the same to me.

'Tis not the blast, that piercing blows,
  'Tis not the rains, that beating pour;
I mourn not what their rage may do,
  To thin my flock, and blight my bower.

Nor nightly were my bosom bare
  To all their wild inclemency,
I would not shed this bitter tear,
  But Henry's love grows cold to me!

Pass a few months, and we behold
  Time lead again the blooming Spring,
But ne'er shall Time to hearts grown cold,
  Again the vanish'd kindness bring.

SONG,

FROM METASTATIO.

Mild breeze, when thou shalt fan my fair,
Tell her a sigh augments thy gales;
But to reveal the source forbear,
From whence thy gentle breath exhales.

Clear stream, if thou her step shalt meet,
Say, with a tear thy currents swell,
But do not to the nymph repeat,
From whose enamour'd lid it fell.

SONG.

In the mid-day of summer, and far from the shade,
Beneath a steep rock, a young shepherd was laid;
The roses of beauty had paled on his face,
Yet each look was expressive, each motion was grace.
Thus flow'd his soft numbers;—and strange that a swain,
With such eyes, and such numbers, should languish in vain!

Ye fierce beams of noon, on my bosom that dart,
How languid your heat to the flames in my heart!
The breezes attemper the fervours of day,
But what can my passion for Chloris allay?
Not the wild breath of Anger its fires can assuage,
Not the ice of Indifference extinguish its rage.

That frozen indifference unpitied I mourn,
Neglected I leave her, unmark'd I return;

No sigh for my pain, and no smile for my joy,
No transport can melt her, no anger annoy;
Yet still, self-supported, tho' hopeless my flame,
Like the lamp monumental, 'tis ever the same.

SONG

OF A NORTHERN LOVER, IN WINTER.

The dark winds are blowing around the rude hill,
And the ice of the evening has crusted the rill;
Thy waves, O Loch Lomond! can glitter no more,
But in dim, stony fragments incumber thy shore.

And now for the moon, looking mild on the brook,
Swift lights of the north thro' the zenith are struck;
Those flashes, pale streaming, will guide my lone way,
And the steps of a lover in safety convey.

Then louder the wings of the winter may sound,
And the frost's cutting arrows dart keener around,
So the white shrouding flakes of the snow are withheld,
From the mine of the heath, and the lake of the field

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l.11. *Flakes of the snow*—Snow, covering mines, pits, and pools, slightly frozen, in mountainous countries, is imminently dangerous, especially where there are no turnpike roads.

SONG.

If stormy, o'er enamell'd vales,
Keen Eurus sweeps with blighting sway,
When Zephyr's mild and balmy gales
Had waked the bloom of orient May,

That orient bloom at once is lost,
She droops forlorn in silent bowers;
And sighs, amid untimely frost,
For glowing suns and silver showers.

So droops my heart, that trembling feels
The power of Stella's icy scorn;
Each rising joy her frown repels,
And wintry grows my summer morn.

Ah, Stella! cold and cruel maid!
Eternal shall that winter prove?
And wretched in the lonely glade
Must injured Truth despair of Love?

PASTORAL BALLAD.

O! SHARE my cottage, dearest maid!
  Beneath a mountain, wild and high,
It nestles in a silent glade,
  And a clear river wanders by.
Each tender care, each honest art,
  Shall chase all future want from thee,
If thy sweet lips consent impart
  To climb these craggy hills with me.

Far from the city's vain parade,
  No scornful brow shall there be seen;
No dull Impertinence invade,
  Nor Envy base, nor sullen Spleen;
The shadowy rocks, that circle round,
  From storms shall guard our sylvan cell,
And there shall every joy be found
  That loves in peaceful vales to dwell.

When late the tardy sun shall peer,
  And faintly gild yon little spire;

When nights are long, and frosts severe,
  And our clean hearth is bright with fire,
Sweet tales to read! sweet songs to sing!
  O! they shall drown the wind and rain,
E'en till the soften'd season bring
  Merry spring-time back again!

Then hawthorns, flowering in the glen,
  Shall guard the warbling feather'd throng;
Nor boast the busy haunts of men
  So fair a scene, so sweet a song.
Thy arms the new-yean'd lamb will shield,
  And to the sunny shelter bear,
While, o'er the rough and breathing field,
  My hands impel the gleaming share.

Ne'er doubt our wheaten ears will rise,
  And full their yellow harvest grow;
Then taste with me the sprightly joys
  That Love and Industry bestow!
Their jocund power can banish strife,
  Her clouds no passing day will see,
Since all the leisure hours of life
  Shall still be spent in pleasing thee.

SONG.

From thy waves, stormy Lannow, I fly;
From the rocks, that are lash'd by their tide;
From the maid, whose cold bosom, relentless as they,
Has wreck'd my warm hopes by her pride!—
Yet lonely and rude as the scene,
Her smile to that scene could impart
A charm, that might rival the bloom of the vale—
But away, thou fond dream of my heart!
From thy rocks, stormy Lannow, I fly!

Now the blasts of the winter come on,
And the waters grow dark as they rise!
But 'tis well!—they resemble the sullen disdain
That has lour'd in those insolent eyes.
Sincere were the sighs they represt,
But they rose in the days that are flown!
Ah, nymph! unrelenting and cold as thou art,
My spirit is proud as thine own.
From thy rocks, stormy Lannow, I fly!

Lo! the wings of the sea-fowl are spread
To escape the loud storm by their flight;
And these caves will afford them a gloomy retreat
From the winds and the billows of night;
Like them, to the home of my youth,
Like them, to its shades I retire;
Receive me, and shield my vex'd spirit, ye groves,
From the pangs of insulted desire!
  To thy rocks, stormy Lannow, adieu!

GLEE.

Now Spring wakes the May-morn, the sweetest of hours
Calls the lark to the sun-beam, the bee to the flowers;
Calls Youth, Love, and Beauty to hail the new day,
And twine their gay garlands in honour of May;
Yet hope not, amid the soft pleasures they bring,
That moments so jocund will pause on their wing!

Obey, my fair LAURA, the summons that breathes
In the hue of the trees, in the scent of the wreaths,
In the song of the woodlands, for love is the lay,
And lustre and perfume are types of his sway;
More tuneful his accents, more rosy his spring,
And O! not less rapid the flight of his wing!

ODE TO EUPHROSYNE,

AN EPITHALAMIUM

ON THE MARRIAGE OF DOCTOR D— AND MISS M—.

DAUGHTER of Heaven, and friend of earth,
Who fear'st no cloud upon thy rosy light,
Parent of Health, and Wit, and Mirth,
Dispensing permanence to gay delight,
EUPHROSYNE, this sacred hour,
Consecrate the mutual vow!—
Impassion'd Love must twine his wreath in vain,
And vainly gild the nuptial chain,
If thou should'st rove more favour'd scenes among,
Goddess of my rising song!
Of texture frail then would each joy be form'd,
And care must chill the hearts enamour'd transport
warm'd.

Queen of the dimpled smile, be near,
Thy influence on the bridal garland breathe!

Since oft the buds of nightshade darkly peer
Beneath the sprays of that envermeil'd wreath,
Too prone are Grief, Disease, and Care,
To slide those mournful emblems there;
And oft, with pallid lip and furrow'd brows,
Jealousy remorseless throws
Fires on the marriage flame, which soon expand,
And change it to a livid brand;
But thou, gay Goddess, with auspicious mien
Hymen's bright torch can'st guard, his blooming garland screen.

Come then, on the morning gale,
Chasing every demon pale!
So flies the mist when Phœbus gleams,
Pierced thro' and thro' with arrowy beams
Come then, and the lovers hail,
Worthy all thy dear caressing,
Liveliest smile, and fondest blessing!—
Venus bade the youth inherit
Love, and virtues that endure;
Flames, which fired the lover's spirit,
When time was young, and faith was pure.
Not gay LEANDER with more ardour warm
When his firm nerves each rising dread withstood;
When, braving night,—the sea,—the howling storm,
He plough'd the billows of the Euxine flood.

This plighted pair should midnight waves divide,
As bold an arm would stem the loud, conflicting tide.

A deep glen hides his chosen maid,
The tender flower of that sequester'd vale;
In the sweet lily's charms array'd,
When from the sun its folding leaves conceal
The bending cups of purest snow,
Whence its lavish perfumes flow.
So dwells, beneath that modest air,
A soul, as her complexion fair,
As her quick blush, and sunny tresses warm;
Mindless to fear, or practise harm,
No cold distrust repels its fervent glow,
Closes her liberal hand, or shades her smiling brow.

Credulity, of Virtue born,
With the swift-springing drop of pity's dew,
In mild simplicity, adorn,
And shed o'er her ripe youth their freshest hue;
While Taste, arranging Fancy's stores,
A clear libation gently pours
Incessant on the texture of her mind;
By the sparkling streams refined
From rust opake, and from the misty stains
Which languid indolence retains.
Haste then, Euphrosyne, and bless the shrines,
Where the dear artless maid her plighted hand resigns!

Be the faithful, generous pair,
Goddess, thy incessant care!
Wave thou still, with jocund mirth,
Thy light wand o'er their glowing hearth,
Where drops no briny tear!
Wave it, when wintry storms are yelling
Loud around their cheerful dwelling;
When summer rays, the year adorning,
Bless each mountain, dale, and plain,
Light again the crystal morning,
Gild the splendent noon again;
Or tinge the purple clouds of beauteous eve,
Slowly that fade into the stealing night.—
O! may each veering scene from thee receive
White tints of peace, and pleasure's ruddy light!
Since absent thou, how dim our youthful days,
Thou, who canst more illume the gorgeous, solar
blaze!

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN FOR THE TRAGEDY OF BRAGANZA.

On Britain's stage, when Roman Portia charms,
And female grace with manly courage arms,
Each sex alike her daring virtues fire,
The fair exult, and all the brave admire.
Beyond her Brutus' life the public weal
Nobly she loves, and animates his zeal,
But soon the o'er-strain'd cords of courage break,
And fatal madness triumphs o'er the wreck.

More self-sustain'd, pride of a recent age,
Louisa's radiance gilds the historic page,
Her portrait here, display'd in faithful light,
A virgin muse exhibits to your sight.
She pleads the unpractised hand of truant Youth,
But boasts the sacred patronage of Truth.

Oft have you wept ELFRIDA's fancied woes,
Charm'd with each virtue that her bard bestows;
While Truth indignant fled the varnish'd theme,
He cloth'd the faithless fair with worth supreme;
Each shrinking voice confess'd the touch refined,
That chased the Ethiop blackness of her mind.
O! let those tears for bright LOUISA stream,
Around whose brows the genuine virtues beam!

Contempt of death, in Freedom's glorious cause,
By sterner manhood shown, demands applause;
Such glorious heights when softer woman soars,
Awaken'd Sympathy her tribute pours;
The heart's quick throb, sweet sigh, and raptured tear,
For Love and Beauty, that so greatly dare.

Oft has your rigid justice been disarm'd
When graceful CLEOPATRA spoke and charm'd.
Still the imperial criminal inspires
Some kind compassion for unhallow'd fires,
Tho' worlds ill-lost o'erwhelm her hero's fame,
And victim millions curse the guilty flame;
Yet still, beneath her self-inflicted fate,
You feel her guilty, but confess her great;

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l. 22. *Her self-inflicted fate*—Her death, by the application of the Asp.

Own the rash deed high-soul'd,—in that dark time
Stampt with no dire reproach, no impious crime.
Long years of error thus the generous mourn,
When Courage clasps the expiatory urn.

A purer spirit now demands acclaim,
True patriot virtue in a female frame,
And more than Roman firmness.—In that cause,
Ye Britons, mitigate the critics' laws!
For her dear sake, who your own spirit breathes,
Adorn her poet with your honour'd wreaths!
On you his hopes, on you his fears await,
Your smile is glory, and your frown is fate.

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN FOR MR PENN. *

WITH Nature's truth, be it the actor's care,
By turns, each passion's varied form to wear;
Assume the joy, the grief, the fear, the rage,
That charm, and thrill, and fire the scenic page;
Bid Rowe, bid Otway's magic softness rise,
Steal o'er his form, and languish in his eyes;
Melt in his voice, till Memory hints no more
The woes unreal; but, with forfeit power,
Resigns her empire o'er the yielding soul
To sighs and tears she ceases to controul.

* An itinerant performer of great ability, whom indiscretion, and an extravagant wife, had prevented from attaining better situations, which his talents would have adorned. This prologue was spoken by him very finely, for his benefit, at Birmingham, in the spring 1782.

Take heed that energy, sublimely strong,
Imbibe the meteor-fires of gloomy Young;
When, as scorn'd love paternal envy goads,
Fierce PERSEUS invocates the dire abodes;
To aid grim Vengeance, calls their demon hosts
From the red confines of sulphureous coasts;
Or, when fell ZANGA'S sable hand shall spread
"Eternal curtains round ALONZO'S bed."

Now, as the powers of later genius shine,
And JEPHSON glows along his nervous line,
Ne'er may unskilful acting cloud the rays,
Inferior only to his Shakespear's blaze!
Whether, with every anguish Love can feel,
Braganza tremble at th' impending steel;
Or the devoted Narbonne's passions lead,
Headlong and fierce, to the accursed deed,
While rolls the thunder, and the lightnings glare
On the proud Filiacide's upstarting hair.

In scenes like these, the just performer draws
The fixed attention, and the mute applause;
Yet most his powers enkindle rising fame
From mighty SHAKESPEAR'S orb of solar flame.

But real grief, the scenic Proteus knows,
Will blunt the mimic joys, the mimic woes.

How hard to breathe, tho' loftiest themes inspire,
The monarch's dignity, the warrior's fire ;
The phrenzied passion, in its dreariest glare,
Love's tender grace, and Hope's energic air,
When sharp Distress, the bane of studious Art,
Sits, like a vulture, on the bleeding heart.

Long 'twas my fate its ravenous tooth to feel,
Yet, unrepining, every pang conceal;
But, at the public smile, the bird of prey
Spreads his dark wing, and swiftly flies away.

With generous voice, and liberal hands, that know
Warmly to praise, and nobly to bestow,
My honour'd patrons, your protecting power,
So kindly active in this anxious hour,
Soft in my recent wounds pours oil and wine,
And bids the health of peace once more be mine!

PROLOGUE

TO THE CIRCASSIAN,

WRITTEN IN AUTUMN 1782.

SLOW from an ebon throne's majestic height,
A beauteous form glides mournful on my sight,
The floating purple, and the lofty mien,
Proclaim the empress of the tragic scene;
Divine Melpomene!—aggrieved she stands,
Tears fast descending on her folded hands;
The showery clouds thus dim the azure skies,
Thus round the moon the misty halos rise.

But soft!—the Muse of Anguish sighing speaks,
Faint on my ear the murmuring accent breaks;
Low hollow gales the plaintive sounds convey,
And thus the mourner says,—or seems to say:

" Can then the tender female bosom prove
" A keener pang than disappointed love?

" Ah me! for light Thalia more than shares
" My darling Sheridan's devoted cares!
" On her vain brows his lavish wreaths are thrown,
" His thousand radiant gems emblaze her zone.

" What tho' her bounty gave to his bright wand
" O'er each gay grace of wit supreme command,
" Yet, with sublimer force, my chemic fire
" With proud distinction deck'd his sacred lyre;
" To purest gold its warbling wires I turn'd,
" When their sweet lays o'er lifeless Garrick mourn'd.

" And once he sung, in elevated strain,
" My charms superior, and my right to reign;
" When, with the majesty my impulse throws
" In chasten'd splendour, on the poet's brows,
" He bade the tears, that stream'd o'er Asia's Queen,
" Flow soft in real Sorrow's lonely scene:
" And, while they melt the heart, inspire its zeal
" To sooth by pity, or by bounty heal.
" Ah! soon he smiled those graceful tears away,
" And for my frolic Rival wore the lay.

---

l. 8. *Proud distinction*—Parody of one of the lines in Mr Sheridan's Monody on Garrick.

l. 11. *Elevated strain*—See his fine Epilogue to Semiramis.

" Yet let me hope the jocund pride of youth
" Alone has warpt from me his love and truth;
" That soon the rover may again be mine,
" And with unfading laurels deck my shrine.

" To-night an humbler hand the meed bestows,
" And on my shrine the cypress garland throws.
" O! may the fost'ring breath of public praise,
" Preserve from cruel blight the votive sprays!"

I hear no more—for, with a pensive smile,
Slow glides the Muse down yonder winding isle.

May you, ye brave, ye wise, ye good, ye fair,
Fulfil, with suffrage kind, her fervent prayer!
And since no force of wit, or comic art,
Can shut to Sorrow's plaint the British heart,
Hope whispers that your praise may bless the Bard,
His first ambition, and his bright reward.

PROLOGUE

TO

THE FORTUNATE DISAPPOINTMENT. *

To teach our ductile youth the pleasing art,
Whose powers persuasive steal into the heart,
When graceful motion, and when accent just,
Prove faithful ever to the writer's trust,
No idle aim, no light design betrays,
For virtue smiles on generous thirst of praise ;
And oft exterior elegance we find
Give added influence to the noble mind !
Since warmest glow the emulative fires,
If, while our sense approves, our taste admires.

But more important, more exalted views
Prompt the kind efforts of our moral muse.

* A play written by Mrs Short, then of Newport, and represented by the pupils of her seminary.

Still (that the youthful maid each fault may scorn,
Of cold reserve, or baser malice born)
Bid fair Ingenuousness each thought reveal,
To the mild guardians of her studied weal,
Whom long experience has empower'd to know,
When fleeting pleasures lead to lasting woe.

Thus, while forewarn'd by them, ye shun the bowers
Where serpents lurk beneath the gaudy flowers,
Oft will their cares the passing hour employ
To ope for you the springs of genuine joy;
Point the safe track where Life's worst perils cease,
The ways of pleasantness, the paths of peace.

EPILOGUE

TO

THE FORTUNATE DISAPPOINTMENT.

To-night the scene display'd what secret smart,
What self-reproach must wound the virgin's heart,
Rashly who dares from monitory eyes
Veil her increasing passions, as they rise!—
Ah thankless!—cold!—she has no middle choice,
But long repentance, or enduring vice,
Eliza's tears, or the detested guile
Of artful Caroline's betraying smile;
Fault leads to fault, till all the soul's defiled,
And in base woman, ends the cunning child.

Eliza,* drooping, seems a blighted rose,
That, while each sister-bud in beauty blows,
Deep in its core the cankering worm receives,
Whose sickly slime cements the yellowing leaves.

---

* Eliza and Caroline, characters in the play.

Thus Disingenuousness, with chill controul,
Contracts the worth, the gladness of the soul;
Dims all the rays that light the artless eye,
Pales the soft cheek, and prompts the secret sigh.

But guilty Caroline we shuddering view,
Like the fell spider, weave her treacherous clue.
Emblem of hearts, where Envy's venom swells,
That dark, sly, solitary reptile dwells;
Bane to the heedless insect of the meads,
That near the gleaming maze of viscous threads
Waves the light wing, which now no more shall bear
The entangled victim thro' the sunny air.

Thus spirits mischievous, who ne'er can prove
Joys, or of sisterly, or social love,
Stung by their conscious worthlessness, prepare,
For others' peace, the smooth insidious snare.

O! be it ours to watch each thought betimes,
Ere errors grow, by habit, into crimes!
To think the counsels guardian friends impart
Best shield from ill the inexperienced heart;
Cherish each virtuous impulse, and improve
To fairest flowers the seeds of duteous love!

Flowers of the mind, ye fear no winter's rage,
Grace our gay prime, adorn our fading age,

If still, to strengthen their yet fragile stems,
And in unfading colours tint their gems,
Enlivening Gratitude, and generous Truth,
Shine the warm day-stars of our rising youth.

---

l. 2. *Gems*—A term in botany for the first buds of flowers.

COMPLAINT

OF AN ARABIAN LOVER.

ODE.

WIDE o'er the drowsy world, incumbent Night,
  Sullen and drear, his sable wing has spread!
The waning moon, with interrupted light,
  Gleams cold and misty on my fever'd bed!
Cold as she is, to her my bursting heart
Shall pour its waste of woe, its unavailing smart.

Thro' the long hours—ah me! how long the hours!
  My restless limbs no balmy languors know;
Grieved tho' I am, yet grief's assuaging showers
  From burning eye-balls still refuse to flow;
Love's jealous fires, kindled by Aza's frown,
Not the vast watery world, with all its waves can
    drown.

---

l. 11. *Jealous fires*—A critical friend of the author's seemed to doubt whether a *frown* kindling *fire* was just metaphor; but,

Slow pass the stars along the night's dun plain!
  Still in their destined sphere serene they move;
Nor does their mild effulgence shine in vain,
  Like the fierce blazes of neglected love:
But this—this pang dissolves the galling chain!
Aza, a broken heart defies thy fix'd disdain!

---

since it is poetically orthodox to say that the flame of love is lighted by the sunny ray of a smile, that of jealousy may certainly be said to enkindle from the lightning of a frowning eye. There are lurid and dismal fires, as well as bright and cheerful ones.

BLINDNESS,

A POEM.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF AN ARTIST, WHO LOST HIS SIGHT BY THE GUTTA SERENA, IN HIS TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR, AND WHO WAS THEREFORE OBLIGED TO CHANGE HIS PROFESSION FOR THAT OF MUSIC.

Long for my circling years the Lord of Day
Illumed creation with his glorious ray;
And long of youth and health the rosy hours
Saw liberal toil, with promissory powers,
Preparing, against faded age, the peace
Of modest competence, when strength might cease.
Then,—as with cheerful hope my earnest sight
Imbibed the blessings of the sacred light,
Slow on that sight the mists preclusive stole;
Dim and more dim the gathering shadows roll,

Till, with the last thick drop, the visual boon
Sunk into darkness 'mid the blaze of noon!

How have I loved the changeful year to trace,
Each laughing beauty, each terrific grace;
To see warm Spring her vital influence pour,
Green the bleak field, and gild the balmy shower;
Tint the young foliage with her tenderest hue,
And feed the opening flowers with richest dew!

Charm'd did I see bright Summer climb the sky,
Leave half the river's pebbly channel dry,
On breathing meads the fragrant haycocks pile,
Till the ripe Year's consummate glories smile:—

View'd jocund Autumn rear her rival sheaves,
With gold and purple tip the unfaded leaves;
Crown amber morning with serenest noons,
And night's dark zenith with protracted moons;
Shake the rich fruit from every loaded bough,
And with the wheaten wreath adorn her brow;
Till colder gales the paled horizon roam,
And stain and smear the gold-empurpled bloom,
While sweeping fogs, conglobing as they pass,
Bend with their silent drops the long coarse grass,
And change, as on screen'd plat it timid blows,
To livid hue the lone and lingering rose;

Bare the rude thorns on all the russet hills,
And crust with ice the borders of the rills;—
Pensive I mark'd, when, with reverted eyes,
Disorder'd garments and foreboding sighs,
The last fair season left hill, dale, and plain,
The yielded victims of the iron reign:—

Saw Winter rove the dun and whistling heath,
Swoln floods arresting with petrific breath,
Send round the mountains all his winds to howl,
Pale the slow morn, and bid the long night scowl;
But ah! the glowing hearth, the neat repast,
Derided oft the despot's power to blast,
Since, if without his furious storms might pass,
Boom thro' the vales, and rattle on the glass,
Within was the gay talk, the flowing bowl,
And Friendship's smile, that summer of the soul!

Beloved vicissitudes! to me ye live
Only on memory's record;—yet ye give
The retrospective pleasure, ne'er to rise
To the sad few, of ever-rayless eyes,
Whose infant orbs, not opening on the light,
From night maternal sprung to ceaseless night;
Lost to their sense each charm kind Nature shews,
That dawns and spreads, that varies and that glows.

Then grateful let me prove, indulged to find
Exemption from those pangs which rack the mind,
Springing from foil'd solicitude to reach
What Genius cannot paint, nor Wisdom teach;
Pangs which the fruitless thirst to know inspires
With ever-craving, never-fed desires!

Comparing thus severer with severe,
Arrested be my groan, exhaled my tear!
Yet, yet Creation stands a blank to me,
Her face now cover'd with a sable sea;
Still am I doom'd thro' life's rough paths to stray,
A long, deprived, and desolated way.

But, to relieve inevitable woes,
To my internal sight auspicious rose
A beauteous pair:—Music, the nymph sublime,
With stores increasing from the morn of Time;
Such melodies as, slowly rising, stole
On Saul's distracted sense with sweet controul,
Till frantic Rage and fell Despair were flown,
And Hope resumed her abdicated throne.

Thus, Music, it was thine, by high behest,
To charm and tranquillize the stormy breast,
Ere harmony began her mazy rounds,
Blending accordant with discordant sounds,
Till thro' the ear the mingled currents roll,
One sweet, one perfect, one revolving whole;

Its charm with melody and verse combined,
And bade thee, Music, reign o'er every mind.
Rebellious only theirs, who breathe and move,
Palsied to sympathy and dead to love;
Dull as the rank, gross weeds, that feed and sleep,
Where silent Lethe's opiate waters creep.

Nymph of all climes by Nature, and thy code,
By Art invented, thro' the wide abode
Of civilized existence, power obtains
Social to spread th' intelligible strains.
While varying language, in each foreign clime,
Is only known by study and by time,
One are thy symbols, and where'er they come,
At once perceived, escape the Babel doom.
" Sphere-born," thou com'st from black Despair to save,
And sooth me fall'n into a living grave.

Another comes, of mission more benign,
In mortal semblance, tho' with soul divine!
And whose the form the gentle Seraph wears,
Scattering her roses o'er this vale of tears?
Example bright to these degenerate times,
Dark with the Ethiop stains of female crimes;
She, whom no levity allures to stray
Near e'en the confines of the faithless way;

Who sooths the wretched and the hungry feeds,
Heaven calls her MERCY, but Earth names her
LEEDS;
This morning star, this fair, diffusive light,
That sparkles by, and gilds my live-long night.

VERSES,

SENT WITH SOME ORNAMENTS FOR THE HAIR TO MISS MARGARET KNOWLES,

ON HER RECOVERY FROM INOCULATION FOR THE SMALL POX, IN HER 17TH YEAR. WRITTEN IN THE SPRING.

NYMPH, for the giver's sake, thy tresses bind
With these slight tokens of her wishes kind,
Mix'd with her praise for having dared disarm
The dread contagion of its power to harm,
Furrow the cheeks, and blast their rising bloom,
Or prove the loathsome escort to the tomb.
Now, blithe as morning larks, thy steps shall stray,
Fearless, tho' beauty's demon cross thy way.
His fell effluvia, when it loads the gale,
Thy rosy breath untainted may inhale,
And waft thy pious gratitude to Heaven,
Who with the bane, the antidote has given.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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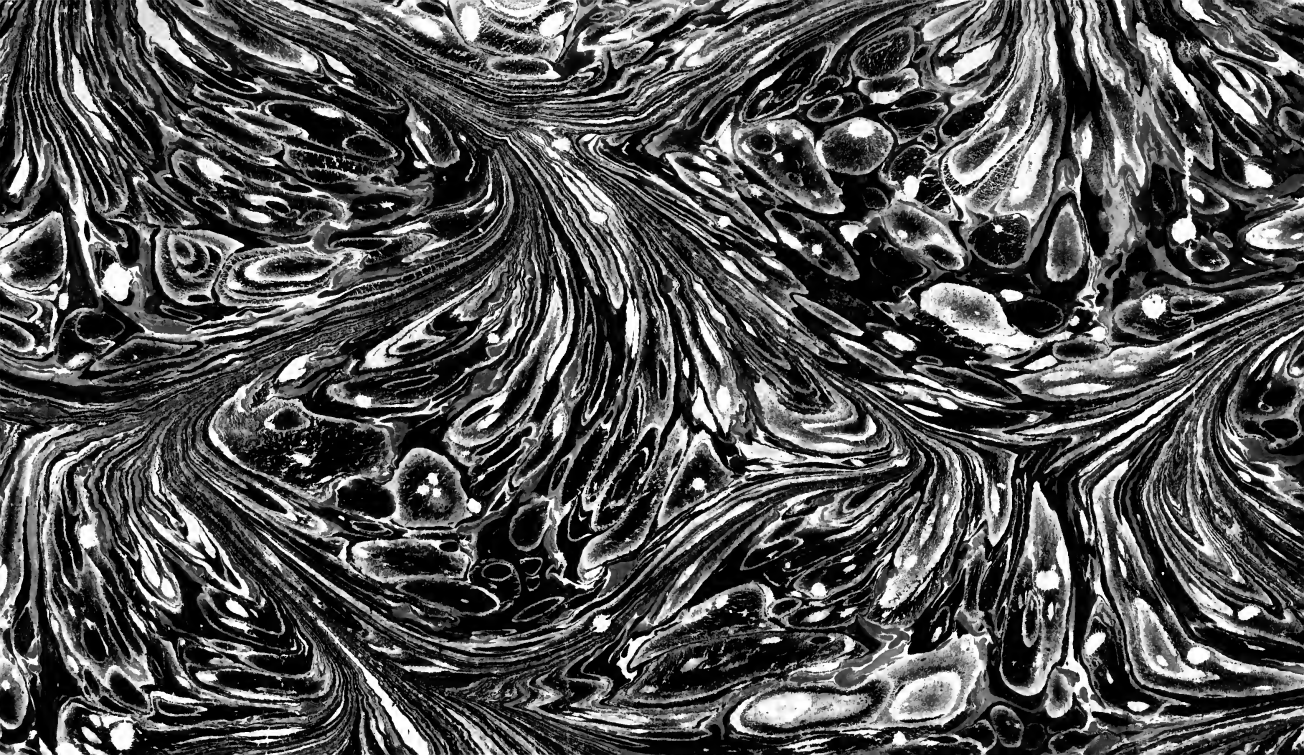

Seward, Anna
Poetical works