

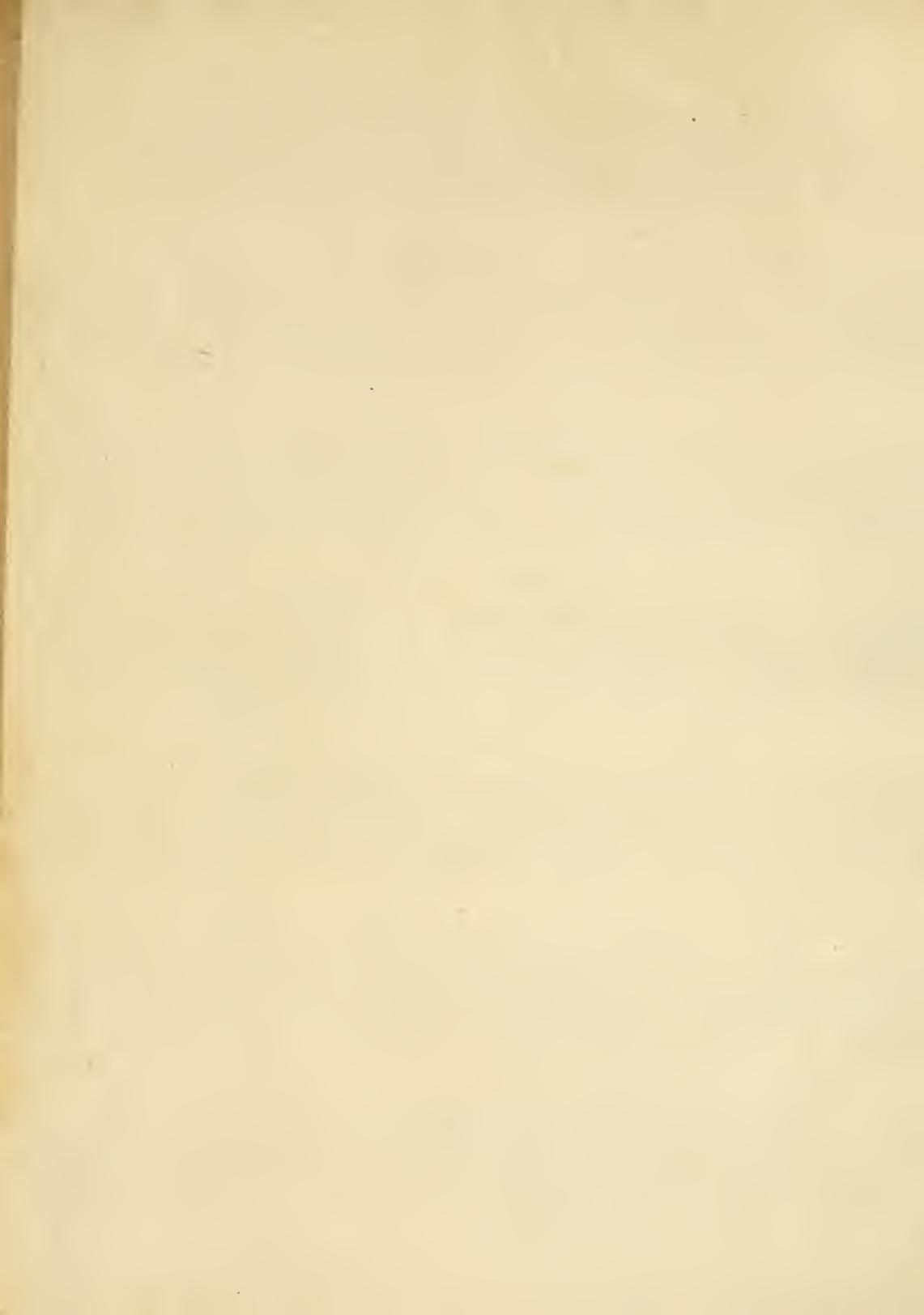
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The emigrants

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THE
EMIGRANTS.

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THE
EMIGRANTS,

A

POEM,

IN

TWO BOOKS.

First edition

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

1793.

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T O

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

THERE is, I hope, some propriety in my addressing a Composition to you, which would never perhaps have existed, had I not, amid the heavy pressure of many sorrows, derived infinite consolation from your Poetry, and some degree of animation and of confidence from your esteem.

The following performance is far from aspiring to be considered as an imitation of your inimitable Poem, "THE TASK;" I am perfectly sensible, that it belongs not to a feeble and feminine hand to draw the Bow of Ulysses.

The force, clearness, and sublimity of your admirable Poem; the felicity, almost peculiar to your genius, of giving to the most familiar objects dignity and effect, I could never hope to

a

reach

reach; yet, having read "*The Task*" almost incessantly from its first publication to the present time, I felt that kind of enchantment described by Milton, when he says,

" *The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
 " So charming left his voice, that he awhile
 " Thought him still speaking.*" —

And from the force of this impression, I was gradually led to attempt, in Blank Verse, a delineation of those interesting objects which happened to excite my attention, and which even pressed upon an heart, that has learned, perhaps from its own sufferings, to feel with acute, though unavailing compassion, the calamity of others.

A Dedication usually consists of praises and of apologies; my praise can add nothing to the unanimous and loud applause of your country. She regards you with pride, as one of the few, who, at the present period, rescue her from the imputation of having degenerated in Poetical talents; but in the form of Apology, I should have much to say, if I again dared to plead the pressure of evils, aggravated by their long continuance, as an excuse for the defects of this attempt.

Whatever

Whatever may be the faults of its execution, let me vindicate myself from those, that may be imputed to the design.— In speaking of the Emigrant Clergy, I beg to be understood as feeling the utmost respect for the integrity of their principles; and it is with pleasure I add my suffrage to that of those, who have had a similar opportunity of witnessing the conduct of the Emigrants of all descriptions during their exile in England; which has been such as does honour to their nation, and ought to secure to them in ours the esteem of every liberal mind.

Your philanthropy, dear Sir, will induce you, I am persuaded, to join with me in hoping, that this painful exile may finally lead to the extirpation of that reciprocal hatred so unworthy of great and enlightened nations; that it may tend to humanize both countries, by convincing each, that good qualities exist in the other; and at length annihilate the prejudices that have so long existed to the injury of both.

Yet it is unfortunately but too true, that with the body of the English, this national aversion has acquired new force by the dreadful scenes which have been acted in France during

the last summer—even those who are the victims of the Revolution, have not escaped the odium, which the undistinguishing multitude annex to all the natives of a country where such horrors have been acted: nor is this the worst effect those events have had on the minds of the English; by confounding the original cause with the wretched catastrophes that have followed its ill management; the attempts of public virtue, with the outrages that guilt and folly have committed in its disguise, the very name of Liberty has not only lost the charm it used to have in British ears, but many, who have written, or spoken, in its defence, have been stigmatized as promoters of Anarchy, and enemies to the prosperity of their country. Perhaps even the Author of “The Task,” with all his goodness and tenderness of heart, is in the catalogue of those, who are reckoned to have been too warm in a cause, which it was once the glory of Englishmen to avow and defend—The exquisite Poem, indeed, in which you have honoured Liberty, by a tribute highly gratifying to her sincerest friends, was published some years before the demolition of regal despotism in France, which, in the fifth book, it seems

to foretell—All the truth and energy of the passage to which I allude, must have been strongly felt, when, in the Parliament of England, the greatest Orator of our time quoted the sublimest of our Poets—when the eloquence of Fox did justice to the genius of Cowper.

I am, dear SIR,

With the most perfect esteem,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

Brightelmstone, May 10, 1793.

Lately Published,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

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THE
EMIGRANTS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

B O O K I.

*SCENE, on the Cliffs to the Eastward of the Town of
Brightbelmstone in Suffex.*

TIME, a Morning in November, 1792.

SLOW in the Wintry Morn, the struggling light
Throws a faint gleam upon the troubled waves ;
Their foaming tops, as they approach the shore
And the broad surf that never ceasing breaks
On the innumeros pebbles, catch the beams
Of the pale Sun, that with reluctance gives
To this cold northern Isle, its shorten'd day.
Alas ! how few the morning wakes to joy !
How many murmur at oblivious night
For leaving them so soon ; for bearing thus

B

Their

Their fancied blifs (the only blifs they taſte !),
 On her black wings away !—Changing the dreams
 That ſooth'd their ſorrows, for calamities
 (And every day brings its own ſad proportion)
 For doubts, diſeaſes, abject dread of Death,
 And faithleſs friends, and fame and fortune loſt ;
 Fancied or real wants ; and wounded pride,
 That views the day ſtar, but to curſe his beams.

Yet He, whoſe Spirit into being call'd
 This wond'rous World of Waters ; He who bids
 The wild wind liſt them till they daſh the clouds,
 And ſpeaks to them in thunder ; or whoſe breath,
 Low murmuring o'er the gently heaving tides,
 When the fair Moon, in ſummer night ſerene,
 Irradiates with long trembling lines of light
 Their undulating ſurface ; that great Power,

Who

Who, governing the Planets, also knows
 If but a Sea-Mew falls, whose nest is hid
 In these incumbent cliffs; He surely means
 To us, his reasoning Creatures, whom He bids
 Acknowledge and revere his awful hand,
 Nothing but good: Yet Man, misguided Man,
 Mars the fair work that he was bid enjoy,
 And makes himself the evil he deplors.
 How often, when my weary soul recoils
 From proud oppression, and from legal crimes
 (For such are in this Land, where the vain boast
 Of equal Law is mockery, while the cost
 Of seeking for redress is sure to plunge
 Th' already injur'd to more certain ruin
 And the wretch starves, before his Counsel pleads)
 How often do I half abjure Society,

And sigh for some lone Cottage, deep embower'd
 In the green woods, that these steep chalky Hills
 Guard from the strong South West; where round their base
 The Beach wide flourishes, and the light Ash
 With slender leaf half hides the thymy turf!—
 There do I wish to hide me; well content
 If on the short grass, strewn with fairy flowers,
 I might repose thus shelter'd; or when Eve
 In Orient crimson lingers in the west,
 Gain the high mound, and mark these waves remote
 (Lucid tho' distant), blushing with the rays
 Of the far-flaming Orb, that sinks beneath them;
 For I have thought, that I should then behold
 The beauteous works of God, unspoil'd by Man
 And less affected then, by human woes
 I witness'd not; might better learn to bear

Those

Those that injustice, and duplicity
 And faithlessness and folly, fix on me :
 For never yet could I derive relief;
 When my swol'n heart was bursting with its sorrows,
 From the sad thought, that others like myself
 Live but to swell affliction's countless tribes !
 —Tranquil seclusion I have vainly sought ;
 Peace, who delights in solitary shade,
 No more will spread for me her downy wings,
 But, like the fabled Danaïds—or the wretch,
 Who ceaseless, up the steep acclivity,
 Was doom'd to heave the still rebounding rock,
 Onward I labour ; as the baffled wave,
 Which yon rough beach repulses, that returns
 With the next breath of wind, to fail again.—
 Ah ! Mourner—cease these wailings : cease and learn,

That

That not the Cot sequester'd, where the briar
 And wood-bine wild, embrace the mossy thatch,
 (Scarce seen amid the forest gloom obscure!)
 Or more substantial farm, well fenced and warm,
 Where the full barn, and cattle fodder'd round
 Speak rustic plenty; nor the statelier dome
 By dark firs shaded, or the aspiring pine,
 Close by the village Church (with care conceal'd
 By verdant foliage, lest the poor man's grave
 Should mar the smiling prospect of his Lord),
 Where offices well rang'd, or dove-cote stock'd,
 Declare manorial residence; not these
 Or any of the buildings, new and trim
 With windows circling towards the restless Sea,
 Which ranged in rows, now terminate my walk,
 Can shut out for an hour the spectre Care,

That

That from the dawn of reason, follows still
 Unhappy Mortals, 'till the friendly grave
 (Our sole secure asylum) "ends the chace."

Behold, in witness of this mournful truth,
 A group approach me, whose dejected looks,
 Sad Heralds of distress! proclaim them Men
 Banish'd for ever and for conscience sake
 From their distracted Country, whence the name
 Of Freedom misapplied, and much abus'd
 By lawless Anarchy, has driven them far
 To wander; with the prejudice they learn'd
 From Bigotry (the Tut'refs of the blind),
 Thro' the wide World unshelter'd; their sole hope,
 That German spoilers, thro' that pleasant land
 May carry wide the desolating scourge
 Of War and Vengeance; yet unhappy Men,

Whate'er

Whate'er your errors, I lament your fate :
 And, as disconsolate and sad ye hang
 Upon the barrier of the rock, and seem
 To murmur your despondence, waiting long
 Some fortunate reverse that never comes ;
 Methinks in each expressive face, I see
 Discriminated anguish ; there droops one,
 Who in a moping cloister long consum'd
 This life inactive, to obtain a better,
 And thought that meagre abstinence, to wake
 From his hard pallet with the midnight bell,
 To live on eleemosynary bread,
 And to renounce God's works, would please that God.
 And now the poor pale wretch receives, amaz'd,
 The pity, strangers give to his distress,
 Because these strangers are, by his dark creed,

Condemn'd

Condemn'd as Heretics—and with sick heart
 Regrets² his pious prison, and his beads.—
 Another, of more haughty port, declines
 The aid he needs not ; while in mute despair
 His high indignant thoughts go back to France,
 Dwelling on all he lost—the Gothic dome,
 That vied with splendid palaces³ ; the beds
 Of silk and down, the silver chalices,
 Vestments with gold enwrought for blazing altars ;
 Where, amid clouds of incense, he held forth
 To kneeling crowds the imaginary bones
 Of Saints suppos'd, in pearl and gold enchas'd,
 And still with more than living Monarchs' pomp
 Surrounded ; was believ'd by mumbling bigots
 To hold the keys of Heaven, and to admit
 Whom he thought good to share it—Now alas !

He, to whose daring soul and high ambition
 The World seem'd circumscrib'd; who, wont to dream
 Of Fleuri, Richelieu, Alberoni, men
 Who trod on Empire, and whose politics
 Were not beyond the grasp of his vast mind,
 Is, in a Land once hostile, still prophan'd
 By disbelief, and rites un-orthodox,
 The object of compassion—At his side,
 Lighter of heart than these, but heavier far
 Than he was wont, another victim comes,
 An Abbé—who with less contracted brow
 Still smiles and flatters, and still talks of Hope;
 Which, sanguine as he is, he does not feel,
 And so he cheats the sad and weighty pressure
 Of evils present;——Still, as Men misled
 By early prejudice (so hard to break),

I mourn

I mourn your sorrows ; for I too have known
 Involuntary exile ; and while yet
 England had charms for me, have felt how fad
 It is to look across the dim cold sea,
 That melancholy rolls its refluxing tides
 Between us and the dear regretted land
 We call our own—as now ye pensive wait
 On this bleak morning, gazing on the waves
 That seem to leave your shore ; from whence the wind
 Is loaded to your ears, with the deep groans
 Of martyr'd Saints and suffering Royalty,
 While to your eyes the avenging power of Heaven
 Appears in awful anger to prepare
 The storm of vengeance, fraught with plagues and death.
 Even he of milder heart, who was indeed
 The simple shepherd in a rustic scene,

And, 'mid the vine-clad hills of Languedoc,
 Taught to the bare-foot peasant, whose hard hands
 Produc'd the nectar he could seldom taste,
 Submission to the Lord for whom he toil'd ;
 He, or his brethren, who to Neustria's sons
 Enforc'd religious patience, when, at times,
 On their indignant hearts Power's iron hand
 Too strongly struck ; eliciting some sparks
 Of the bold spirit of their native North ;
 Even these Parochial Priests, these humbled men,
 Whose lowly undistinguish'd cottages
 Witness'd a life of purest piety,
 While the meek tenants were, perhaps, unknown
 Each to the haughty Lord of his domain,
 Who mark'd them not ; the Noble scorning still
 The poor and pious Priest, as with slow pace

He

He glided thro' the dim arch'd avenue
Which to the Castle led; hoping to cheer
The last sad hour of some laborious life
That hasten'd to its close—even such a Man
Becomes an exile; staying not to try
By temperate zeal to check his madd'ning flock,
Who, at the novel sound of Liberty
(Ah! most intoxicating sound to slaves!),
Start into licence—Lo! dejected now,
The wandering Pastor mourns, with bleeding heart,
His erring people, weeps and prays for them,
And trembles for the account that he must give
To Heaven for souls entrusted to his care.—
Where the cliff, hollow'd by the wintry storm,
Affords a seat with matted sea-weed strewn,
A softer form reclines; around her run,

On the rough shingles, or the chalky bourn,
 Her gay unconscious children, soon amus'd ;
 Who pick the fretted stone, or glossy shell,
 Or crimson plant marine : or they contrive
 The fairy vessel, with its ribband sail
 And gilded paper pennant : in the pool,
 Left by the salt wave on the yielding sands,
 They launch the mimic navy—Happy age !
 Unmindful of the miseries of Man !—
 Alas ! too long a victim to distress,
 Their Mother, lost in melancholy thought,
 Lull'd for a moment by the murmurs low
 Of fullen billows, wearied by the task
 Of having here, with swol'n and aching eyes
 Fix'd on the grey horizon, since the dawn
 Solicitously watch'd the weekly sail

From

From her dear native land, now yields awhile
 To kind forgetfulness, while Fancy brings,
 In waking dreams, that native land again!
 Versailles appears—its painted galleries,
 And rooms of regal splendour, rich with gold,
 Where, by long mirrors multiply'd, the crowd
 Paid willing homage—and, united there,
 Beauty gave charms to empire—Ah! too soon
 From the gay visionary pageant rous'd,
 See the sad mourner start!—and, drooping, look
 With tearful eyes and heaving bosom round
 On drear reality—where dark'ning waves,
 Urg'd by the rising wind, unheeded foam
 Near her cold rugged feat:—To call her thence
 A fellow-sufferer comes: dejection deep
 Checks, but conceals not quite, the martial air,

And

And that high consciousness of noble blood,
 Which he has learn'd from infancy to think
 Exalts him o'er the race of common men :
 Nurs'd in the velvet lap of luxury,
 And fed by adulation—could *he* learn,
 That worth alone is true Nobility ?
 And that *the peasant* who, “ amid ' the sons
 “ Of Reason, Valour, Liberty, and Virtue,
 “ Displays distinguish'd merit, is a Noble
 “ Of Nature's own creation !” —If even here,
 If in this land of highly vaunted Freedom,
 Even Britons controvert the unwelcome truth,
 Can it be relish'd by the sons of France ?
 Men, who derive their boasted ancestry
 From the fierce leaders of religious wars,
 The first in Chivalry's emblazon'd page ;

· Who

Who reckon Gueslin, Bayard, or De Foix,
 Among their brave Progenitors? *Their* eyes,
 Accustom'd to regard the splendid trophies
 Of Heraldry (that with fantastic hand
 Mingles, like images in feverish dreams,
 " Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire,"
 With painted puns, and visionary shapes;),
 See not the simple dignity of Virtue,
 But hold all base, whom honours such as these
 Exalt not from the crowd⁶—As one, who long
 Has dwelt amid the artificial scenes
 Of populous City, deems that splendid shows,
 The Theatre, and pageant pomp of Courts,
 Are only worth regard; forgets all taste
 For Nature's genuine beauty; in the lapse
 Of gushing waters hears no soothing sound,

Nor listens with delight to fighting winds,
 That, on their fragrant pinions, waft the notes
 Of birds rejoicing in the trangled copse ;
 Nor gazes pleas'd on Ocean's silver breast,
 While lightly o'er it sails the summer clouds
 Reflected in the wave, that, hardly heard,
 Flows on the yellow sands : so to *his* mind,
 That long has liv'd where Despotism hides
 His features harsh, beneath the diadem
 Of worldly grandeur, abject Slavery seems,
 If by that power impos'd, slavery no more :
 For luxury wreathes with silk the iron bonds,
 And hides the ugly rivets with her flowers,
 Till the degenerate triflers, while they love
 The glitter of the chains, forget their weight.
 But more the Men', whose ill acquir'd wealth

Was

Was wrung from plunder'd myriads, by the means
 Too often legaliz'd by power abus'd,
 Feel all the horrors of the fatal change,
 When their ephemeral greatness, marr'd at once
 (As a vain toy that Fortune's childish hand
 Equally joy'd to fashion or to crush),
 Leaves them expos'd to universal scorn
 For having nothing else; not even the claim
 To honour, which respect for Heroes past
 Allows to ancient titles; Men, like these,
 Sink even beneath the level, whence base arts
 Alone had rais'd them;—unlamented sink,
 And know that they deserve the woes they feel.

Poor wand'ring wretches! whosoe'er ye are,
 That hopeless, houseless, friendless, travel wide
 O'er these bleak ruffet downs; where, dimly seen,

The solitary Shepherd shiv'ring tends
 His dun discolour'd flock (Shepherd, unlike
 Him, whom in song the Poet's fancy crowns
 With garlands, and his crook with vi'lets binds);
 Poor vagrant wretches! outcasts of the world!
 Whom no abode receives, no parish owns;
 Roving, like Nature's commoners, the land
 That boasts such general plenty: if the sight
 Of wide-extended misery softens yours
 Awhile, suspend your murmurs!—here behold
 The strange vicissitudes of fate—while thus
 The exil'd Nobles, from their country driven,
 Whose richest luxuries were their's, must feel
 More poignant anguish, than the lowest poor,
 Who, born to indigence, have learn'd to brave
 Rigid Adversity's depressing breath!—

Ah!

Ah! rather Fortune's worthless favourites!
 Who feed on England's vitals—Pensioners
 Of base corruption, who, in quick ascent
 To opulence unmerited, become
 Giddy with pride, and as ye rise, forgetting
 The dust ye lately left, with scorn look down
 On those beneath ye (tho' your *equals* once
In fortune, and in worth superior still,
 They view the eminence, on which ye stand,
 With wonder, not with envy; for they know
 The means, by which ye reach'd it, have been such
 As, in all honest eyes, degrade ye far
 Beneath the poor dependent, whose sad heart
 Reluctant pleads for what your pride denies);
 Ye venal, worthless hirelings of a Court!
 Ye pamper'd Parasites! whom Britons pay

For

For forging fetters for them ; rather here
 Study a lesson that concerns ye much ;
 And, trembling, learn, that if oppress'd too long,
 The raging multitude, to madness stung,
 Will turn on their oppressors ; and, no more
 By founding titles and parading forms
 Bound like tame victims, will redress themselves !
 Then swept away by the resistless torrent,
 Not only all your pomp may disappear,
 But, in the tempest lost, fair Order sink
 Her decent head, and lawless Anarchy
 O'erturn celestial Freedom's radiant throne ;—
 As now in Gallia ; where Confusion, born
 Of party rage and selfish love of rule,
 Sully the noblest cause that ever warm'd
 The heart of Patriot Virtue^s—There arise

The infernal passions ; Vengeance, seeking blood,
And Avarice ; and Envy's harpy fangs
Pollute the immortal shrine of Liberty,
Dismay her votaries, and disgrace her name.
Respect is due to principle ; and they,
Who suffer for their conscience, have a claim,
Whate'er that principle may be, to praise.
These ill-starr'd Exiles then, who, bound by ties,
To them the bonds of honour ; who resign'd
Their country to preserve them, and now seek
In England an asylum—well deserve
To find that (every prejudice forgot,
Which pride and ignorance teaches), we for them
Feel as our brethren ; and that English hearts,
Of just compassion ever own the sway,
As truly as our element, the deep,

. Obeys

Obeys the mild dominion of the Moon—
 This they *have* found; and may they find it still!
 Thus may'st thou, Britain, triumph!—May thy foes,
 By Reason's gen'rous potency subdued,
 Learn, that the God thou worshipp'st, delights
 In acts of pure humanity!—May thine
 Be still such bloodless laurels! nobler far
 Than those acquir'd at Cressy or Poitiers,
 Or of more recent growth, those well bestow'd
 On him who stood on Calpe's blazing height
 Amid the thunder of a warring world,
 Illustrious rather from the crowds he sav'd
 From flood and fire, than from the ranks who fell
 Beneath his valour!—Actions such as these,
 Like incense rising to the Throne of Heaven,
 Far better justify the pride, that swells

In

In British bosoms, than the deafening roar
Of Victory from a thousand brazen throats,
That tell with what success wide-wasting War
Has by our brave Compatriots thinned the world.

END OF BOOK I.

E

NOTES TO THE FIRST BOOK.

¹ “ ENDS the chace.”]—I have a confused notion, that this expression, with nearly the same application, is to be found in Young: but I cannot refer to it.

² “ Regrets his pious prison and his beads.”]—Left the same attempts at misrepresentation should now be made, as have been made on former occasions, it is necessary to repeat, that nothing is farther from my thoughts, than to reflect invidiously on the Emigrant Clergy, whose steadiness of principle excites veneration, as much as their sufferings compassion. Adversity has now taught them the charity and humility they perhaps wanted, when they made it a part of their faith, that salvation could be obtained in no other religion than their own.

³ “ The splendid palaces.”]—Let it not be considered as an insult to men in fallen fortune, if these luxuries (undoubtedly inconsistent with their profession) be here enumerated—France is not the only country, where the splendour and indulgences of the higher, and the poverty and depression of the inferior Clergy, have alike proved injurious to the cause of Religion.

⁴ See the finely descriptive Verses written at Montauban in France in 1750, by Dr. Joseph Warton. Printed in Dodley's Miscellanies, Vol IV. page 203.

⁵ “ Who amid the fons

“ Of Reason, Valour, Liberty, and Virtue,

“ Displays distinguished merit, is a Noble

“ Of Nature’s own creation.”]—

These lines are Thomson’s, and are among those sentiments which are now called (when used by living writers), not common-place declamation, but sentiments of dangerous tendency.

6 “ Exalt not from the crowd.”]—It has been said, and with great appearance of truth, that the contempt in which the Nobility of France held the common people, was remembered, and with all that vindictive asperity which long endurance of oppression naturally excites, when, by a wonderful concurrence of circumstances, the people acquired the power of retaliation. Yet let me here add, what seems to be in some degree inconsistent with the former charge, that the French are good masters to their servants, and that in their treatment of their Negro slaves, they are allowed to be more mild and merciful than other Europeans.

7 “ But more the Men.”]—The Financiers and Fermiers Generaux are here intended. In the present moment of clamour against all those who have spoken or written in favour of the first Revolution of France, the declaimers seem to have forgotten, that under the reign of a mild and easy tempered Monarch, in the most voluptuous Court in the world, the abuses by which men of this description were enriched, had arisen to such height, that their prodigality exhausted the immense resources of France : and, unable to supply the exigencies of Government, the Ministry were compelled to call Le Tiers Etat ; a meeting that gave birth to the Revolution, which has since been so ruinously conducted.

8 “ The breast of Patriot Virtue.”]—This sentiment will probably *renew* against me the indignation of those, who have an interest in asserting that no such virtue any where exists.

THE
EMIGRANTS.

BOOK THE SECOND.

Quippe ubi fas verum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem
Tam multæ scelerum facies; non ullus aratro
Dignus honos: squalent abductis arva colonis,
Et curva rigidum falces consistunt in enses
Hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum
Vicinæ ruptis inter se legibus urbes
Arma ferunt: sævit toto Mars impius orbe.

GEOR. lib. I.

B O O K II.

SCENE, on an Eminence on one of those Downs, which afford to the South a View of the Sea; to the North of the Weald of Sussex.

TIME, an Afternoon in April, 1793.

LONG wintry months are past; the Moon that now
Lights her pale crescent even at noon, has made
Four times her revolution; since with step,
Mournful and slow, along the wave-worn cliff,
Pensive I took my solitary way,
Loft in despondence, while contemplating
Not my own wayward destiny alone,
(Hard as it is, and difficult to bear!)
But in beholding the unhappy lot

OF

Of the lorn Exiles; who, amid the storms
 Of wild disastrous Anarchy, are thrown,
 Like shipwreck'd sufferers, on England's coast,
 To see, perhaps, no more their native land,
 Where Desolation riots: They, like me,
 From fairer hopes and happier prospects driven,
 Shrink from the future, and regret the past.
 But on this Upland scene, while April comes,
 With fragrant airs, to fan my throbbing breast,
 Fain would I snatch an interval from Care,
 That weighs my wearied spirit down to earth;
 Courting, once more, the influence of Hope
 (For " Hope " still waits upon the flowery prime)
 As here I mark Spring's humid hand unfold
 The early leaves that fear capricious winds,
 While, even on shelter'd banks, the timid flowers

Give

Give, half reluctantly, their warmer hues
 To mingle with the primroses' pale stars.
 No shade the leafless cypresses yet afford,
 Nor hide the mossy labours of the Thrush,
 That, startled, darts across the narrow path ;
 But quickly re-assur'd, resumes his task,
 Or adds his louder notes to those that rise
 From yonder tufted brake ; where the white buds
 Of the first thorn are mingled with the leaves
 Of that which blossoms on the brow of May.

Ah ! 'twill not be :—So many years have pass'd,
 Since, on my native hills, I learn'd to gaze
 On these delightful landscapes ; and those years
 Have taught me so much sorrow, that my soul
 Feels not the joy reviving Nature brings ;
 But, in dark retrospect, dejected dwells

On human follies, and on human woes.—

What is the promise of the infant year,
 The lively verdure, or the bursting blooms,
 To those, who shrink from horrors such as War
 Spreads o'er the affrighted world? With swimming eye,
 Back on the past they throw their mournful looks,
 And see the Temple, which they fondly hop'd
 Reason would raise to Liberty, destroy'd
 By ruffian hands; while, on the ruin'd mass,
 Flush'd with hot blood, the Fiend of Discord sits
 In savage triumph; mocking every plea
 Of policy and justice, as she shews
 The headless corpse of one, whose only crime
 Was being born a Monarch—Mercy turns,
 From spectacle so dire, her swol'n eyes;
 And Liberty, with calm, unruffled brow

Magnanimous,

Magnanimous, as conscious of her strength
 In Reason's panoply, scorns to disdain
 Her righteous cause with carnage, and resigns
 To Fraud and Anarchy the infuriate crowd.—

What is the promise of the infant year
 To those, who (while the poor but peaceful hind
 Pens, unmolested, the increasing flock
 Of his rich master in this sea-fenc'd isle)
 Survey, in neighbouring countries, scenes that make
 The sick heart shudder; and the Man, who thinks,
 Blush for his species? *There*, the trumpet's voice
 Drowns the soft warbling of the woodland choir;
 And violets, lurking in their turfy beds
 Beneath the flow'ring thorn, are stain'd with blood.
 There fall, at once, the spoiler and the spoil'd;
 While War, wide-ravaging, annihilates

The hope of cultivation ; gives to Fiends,
 The meagre, ghastly Fiends of Want and Woe,
 The blasted land—There, taunting in the van
 Of vengeance-breathing armies, Insult stalks ;
 And, in the ranks, “ ‘Famine, and Sword, and Fire,
 “ Crouch for employment.”—Lo ! the suffering world,
 Torn by the fearful conflict, shrinks, amaz’d,
 From Freedom’s name, usurp’d and misapplied,
 And, cow’ring to the purple Tyrant’s rod,
 Deems *that* the lesser ill—Deluded Men !
 Ere ye prophane her ever-glorious name,
 Or catalogue the thousands that have bled
 Resisting her ; or those, who greatly died
 Martyrs to *Liberty*—revert awhile
 To the black scroll, that tells of regal crimes
 Committed to destroy her ; rather count

The

The hecatombs of victims, who have fallen
 Beneath a single despot ; or who gave
 Their wasted lives for some disputed claim
 Between anointed robbers : ² Monsters both !
 “ ³ Oh ! Polish'd perturbation—golden care ! ”
 So strangely coveted by feeble Man
 To lift him o'er his fellows ;—Toy, for which
 Such showers of blood have drench'd th' affrighted earth—
 Unfortunate *bis* lot, whose luckless head
 Thy jewel'd circlet, lin'd with thorns, has bound ;
 And who, by custom's laws, obtains from thee
 Hereditary right to rule, uncheck'd,
 Submissive myriads : for untemper'd power,
 Like steel ill form'd, injures the hand
 It promis'd to protect—Unhappy France !
 If e'er thy lilies, trampled now in dust,

And

And blood-bespotted, shall again revive
 In silver splendour, may the wreath be wov'n
 By voluntary hands; and Freemen, such
 As England's self might boast, unite to place
 The guarded diadem on *his* fair brow,
 Where Loyalty may join with Liberty
 To fix it firmly.—In the rugged school
 Of stern Adversity so early train'd,
 His future life, perchance, may emulate
 That of the brave Bernois †, so justly call'd
 The darling of his people; who rever'd
 The Warrior less, than they ador'd the Man!
 But ne'er may Party Rage, perverse and blind,
 And base Venality, prevail to raise
 To public trust, a wretch, whose private vice
 Makes even the wildest profligate recoil;

And

And who, with hireling ruffians leagu'd, has burst
 The laws of Nature and Humanity !
 Wading, beneath the Patriot's specious mask,
 And in Equality's illusive name,
 To empire thro' a stream of kindred blood—
 Innocent prisoner !—most unhappy heir
 Of fatal greatness, who art suffering now
 For all the crimes and follies of thy race ;
 Better for thee, if o'er thy baby brow
 The regal mischief never had been held :
 Then, in an humble sphere, perhaps content,
 Thou hadst been free and joyous on the heights
 Of Pyrennean mountains, shagg'd with woods
 Of chesnut, pine, and oak : as on these hills
 Is yonder little thoughtless shepherd lad,
 Who, on the slope abrupt of downy turf

Reclin'd

Reclin'd in playful indolence, sends off
 The chalky ball, quick bounding far below ;
 While, half forgetful of his simple task,
 Hardly his length'ning shadow, or the bells'
 Slow tinkling of his flock, that supping tend
 To the brown fallows in the vale beneath,
 Where nightly it is folded, from his sport
 Recal the happy idler.—While I gaze
 On his gay vacant countenance, my thoughts
 Compare with his obscure, laborious lot,
 Thine, most unfortunate, imperial Boy !
 Who round thy fullen prison daily hear'st
 The savage howl of Murder, as it seeks
 Thy unoffending life : while sad within
 Thy wretched Mother, petrified with grief,
 Views thee with stony eyes, and cannot weep !—

Ah !

Ah! much I mourn thy sorrows, hapless Queen!
 And deem thy expiation made to Heaven
 For every fault, to which Prosperity
 Betray'd thee, when it plac'd thee on a throne
 Where boundless power was thine, and thou wert rais'd
 High (as it seem'd) above the envious reach
 Of destiny! Whate'er thy errors were,
 Be they no more remember'd; tho' the rage
 Of Party swell'd them to such crimes, as bade
 Compassion stifle every sigh that rose
 For thy disastrous lot—More than enough
 Thou hast endur'd; and every English heart,
 Ev'n those, that highest beat in Freedom's cause,
 Disclaim as base, and of that cause unworthy,
 The Vengeance, or the Fear, that makes thee still
 A miserable prisoner!—Ah! who knows,

From sad experience, more than I, to feel
 For thy desponding spirit, as it sinks
 Beneath procrastinated fears for those
 More dear to thee than life ! But eminence
 Of misery is thine, as once of joy ;
 And, as we view the strange vicissitude,
 We ask anew, where happiness is found ?——
 Alas ! in rural life, where youthful dreams
 See the Arcadia that Romance describes,
 Not even Content resides !—In yon low hut
 Of clay and thatch, where rises the grey smoke
 Of smold'ring turf, cut from the adjoining moor,
 The labourer, its inhabitant, who toils
 From the first dawn of twilight, till the Sun
 Sinks in the rosy waters of the West,
 Finds that with poverty it cannot dwell ;

For

For bread, and scanty bread, is all he earns
 For him and for his household—Should Disease,
 Born of chill wintry rains, arrest his arm,
 Then, thro' his patch'd and straw-stuff'd casement, peeps
 The squalid figure of extremest Want ;
 And from the Parish the reluctant dole,
 Dealt by th' unfeeling farmer, hardly saves
 The ling'ring spark of life from cold extinction :
 Then the bright Sun of Spring, that smiling bids
 All other animals rejoice, beholds,
 Crept from his pallet, the emaciate wretch
 Attempt, with feeble effort, to resume
 Some heavy task, above his wasted strength,
 Turning his wistful looks (how much in vain!)
 To the deserted mansion, where no more
 The owner (gone to gayer scenes) resides,

Who made even luxury, Virtue; while he gave

The scatter'd crumbs to honest Poverty.—

But, tho' the landscape be too oft deform'd

By figures such as these, yet Peace is here,

And o'er our vallies, cloath'd with springing corn,

No hostile hoof shall trample, nor fierce flames

Wither the wood's young verdure, ere it form

Gradual the laughing May's luxuriant shade;

For, by the rude sea guarded, we are safe,

And feel not evils such as with deep sighs

The Emigrants deplore, as they recal

The Summer past, when Nature seem'd to lose

Her course in wild distemperature, and aid,

With seasons all revers'd, destructive War.

Shuddering, I view the pictures they have drawn

Of desolated countries, where the ground,

Stripp'd

Stripp'd of its unripe produce, was thick strewn
 With various Death—the war-horfe falling there
 By famine, and his rider by the sword.
 The moping clouds fail'd heavy charg'd with rain,
 And bursting o'er the mountains misty brow,
 Deluged, as with an inland sea, the vales^s;
 Where, thro' the fullen evening's lurid gloom,
 Rising, like columns of volcanic fire,
 The flames of burning villages illum'd
 The waste of water; and the wind, that howl'd
 Along its troubled surface, brought the groans
 Of plunder'd peasants, and the frantic shrieks
 Of mothers for their children; while the brave,
 To pity still alive, listen'd aghast
 To these dire echoes, hopeless to prevent
 The evils they beheld, or check the rage,

Which

Which ever, as the people of one land
 Meet in contention, fires the human heart
 With savage thirst of kindred blood, and makes
 Man lose his nature; rendering him more fierce
 Than the gaunt monsters of the howling waste.

Oft have I heard the melancholy tale,
 Which, all their native gaiety forgot,
 These Exiles tell—How Hope impell'd them on,
 Reckless of tempest, hunger, or the sword,
 Till order'd to retreat, they knew not why,
 From all their flattering prospects, they became
 The prey of dark suspicion and regret⁶:
 Then, in despondence, sunk the unnerv'd arm
 Of gallant Loyalty—At every turn
 Shame and disgrace appear'd, and seem'd to mock
 Their scatter'd squadrons; which the warlike youth,

Unable

Unable to endure, often implor'd,
 As the last act of friendship, from the hand
 Of some brave comrade, to receive the blow
 That freed the indignant spirit from its pain.
 To a wild mountain, whose bare summit hides
 Its broken eminence in clouds; whose steep
 Are dark with woods; where the receding rocks
 Are worn by torrents of dissolving snow,
 A wretched Woman, pale and breathless, flies!
 And, gazing round her, listens to the sound
 Of hostile footsteps—No! it dies away:
 Nor noise remains, but of the cataract,
 Or furly breeze of night, that mutters low
 Among the thickets, where she trembling seeks
 A temporary shelter—clasping close
 To her hard-heaving heart her sleeping child,

All she could rescue of the innocent groupe
 That yesterday surrounded her—Escap'd
 Almost by miracle ! Fear, frantic Fear,
 Wing'd her weak feet: yet, half repentant now
 Her headlong haste, she wishes she had staid
 To die with those affrighted Fancy paints
 The lawless soldier's victims—Hark ! again
 The driving tempest bears the cry of Death,
 And, with deep sudden thunder, the dread sound
 Of cannon vibrates on the tremulous earth ;
 While, bursting in the air, the murderous bomb
 Glares o'er her mansion. Where the splinters fall,
 Like scatter'd comets, its destructive path
 Is mark'd by wreaths of flame !—Then, overwhelm'd
 Beneath accumulated horror, sinks
 The desolate mourner ; yet, in Death itself,

True to maternal tendernefs, ſhe tries
 To ſave the unconſcious infant from the ſtorm
 In which ſhe periſhes ; and to protect
 This laſt dear object of her ruin'd hopes
 From prowling monſters, that from other hills,
 More inacceſſible, and wilder waſtes,
 Lur'd by the ſcent of ſlaughter, follow fierce
 Contending hoſts, and to polluted fields
 Add dire increaſe of horrors—But alas !
 The Mother and the Infant periſh both !—

The feudal Chief, whoſe Gothic battlements
 Frown on the plain beneath, returning home
 From diſtant lands, alone and in diſguiſe,
 Gains at the fall of night his Caſtle walls,
 But, at the vacant gate, no Porter fits
 To wait his Lord's admittance !—In the courts

All is drear silence!—Guessing but too well
 The fatal truth, he shudders as he goes
 Thro' the mute hall; where, by the blunted light
 That the dim moon thro' painted casements lends,
 He sees that devastation has been there:
 Then, while each hideous image to his mind
 Rises terrific, o'er a bleeding corse
 Stumbling he falls; another interrupts
 His staggering feet—all, all who us'd to rush
 With joy to meet him—all his family
 Lie murder'd in his way!—And the day dawns
 On a wild raving Maniac, whom a fate
 So sudden and calamitous has robb'd
 Of reason; and who round his vacant walls
 Screams unregarded, and reproaches Heaven!—
 Such are thy dreadful trophies, savage War!

And

And evils such as these, or yet more dire,
 Which the pain'd mind recoils from, all are thine—
 The purple Pestilence, that to the grave
 Sends whom the sword has spar'd, is thine; and thine
 The Widow's anguish and the Orphan's tears!—
 Woes such as these does Man inflict on Man;
 And by the closet murderers, whom we style
 Wise Politicians, are the schemes prepar'd,
 Which, to keep Europe's wavering balance even,
 Depopulate her kingdoms, and consign
 To tears and anguish half a bleeding world!—

Oh! could the time return, when thoughts like these
 Spoil'd not that gay delight, which vernal Suns,
 Illuminating hills, and woods, and fields,
 Gave to my infant spirits—Memory come!
 And from distracting cares, that now deprive

Such scenes of all their beauty, kindly bear
 My fancy to those hours of simple joy,
 When, on the banks of Arun, which I see
 Make its irriguous course thro' yonder meads,
 I play'd; unconscious then of future ill !
 There (where, from hollows fring'd with yellow broom,
 The birch with silver rind, and fairy leaf,
 Aflant the low stream trembles) I have stood,
 And meditated how to venture best
 Into the shallow current, to procure
 The willow herb of glowing purple spikes,
 Or flags, whose sword-like leaves conceal'd the tide,
 Startling the timid reed-bird from her nest,
 As with aquatic flowers I wove the wreath,
 Such as, collected by the shepherd girls,
 Deck in the villages the turfey shrine,

And

And mark the arrival of propitious May.—
 How little dream'd I then the time would come,
 When the bright Sun of that delicious month
 Should, from disturb'd and artificial sleep,
 Awaken me to never-ending toil,
 To terror and to tears!—Attempting still,
 With feeble hands and cold desponding heart,
 To save my children from the o'erwhelming wrongs,
 That have for ten long years been heap'd on me!—
 The fearful spectres of chicane and fraud
 Have, Proteus like, still chang'd their hideous forms
 (As the Law lent its plausible disguise),
 Pursuing my faint steps; and I have seen
 Friendship's sweet bonds (which were so early form'd,
 And once I fondly thought of amaranth
 Inwove with silver seven times tried) give way,

And

And fail ; as these green fan-like leaves of fern
 Will wither at the touch of Autumn's frost.
 Yet there *are those*, whose patient pity still
 Hears my long murmurs ; who, unwearied, try
 With lenient hands to bind up every wound
 My wearied spirit feels, and bid me go
 " Right onward "—a calm votary of the Nymph,
 Who, from her adamantine rock, points out
 To conscious rectitude the rugged path,
 That leads at length to Peace !—Ah ! yes, my friends
 Peace will at last be mine ; for in the Grave
 Is Peace—and pass a few short years, perchance
 A few short months, and all the various pain
 I now endure shall be forgotten there,
 And no memorial shall remain of me,
 Save in your bosoms ; while even *your* regret

Shall

Shall lose its poignancy, as ye reflect
 What complicated woes that grave conceals !
 But, if the little praise, that may await
 The Mother's efforts, should provoke the spleen
 Of Priest or Levite ; and they then arraign
 The dust that cannot hear them ; be it yours
 To vindicate my humble fame ; to say,
 That, not in selfish sufferings absorb'd,
 " I gave to misery all I had, my tears^s."
 And if, where regulated sanctity
 Pours her long orisons to Heaven, my voice
 Was seldom heard, that yet *my prayer* was made
 To him who hears even silence ; not in domes
 Of human architecture, fill'd with crowds,
 But on these hills, where boundless, yet distinct,
 Even as a map, beneath are spread the fields
 His bounty cloaths ; divided here by woods,

And

And there by commons rude, or winding brooks,
 While I might breathe the air perfum'd with flowers,
 Or the fresh odours of the mountain turf;
 And gaze on clouds above me, as they fail'd
 Majestic: or remark the reddening north,
 When bickering arrows of electric fire
 Flash on the evening sky—I made my prayer
 In unison with murmuring waves that now
 Swell with dark tempests, now are mild and blue,
 As the bright arch above; for all to me
 Declare omniscient goodness; nor need I
 Declamatory essays to incite
 My wonder or my praise, when every leaf
 That Spring unfolds, and every simple bud,
 More forcibly impresses on my heart
 His power and wisdom—Ah! while I adore
 That goodness, which design'd to all that lives

Some taste of happiness, my soul is pain'd
 By the variety of woes that Man
 For Man creates—his blessings often turn'd
 To plagues and curses: Saint-like Piety,
 Misled by Superstition, has destroy'd
 More than Ambition; and the sacred flame
 Of Liberty becomes a raging fire,
 When Licence and Confusion bid it blaze.
 From thy high throne, above yon radiant stars,
 O Power Omnipotent! with mercy view
 This suffering globe, and cease thy creatures cease,
 With savage fangs, to tear her bleeding breast:
 Restrain that rage for power, that bids a Man,
 Himself a worm, desire unbounded rule
 O'er beings like himself: Teach the hard hearts
 Of rulers, that the poorest hind, who dies
 For their unrighteous quarrels, in thy fight

Is equal to the imperious Lord, that leads
 His disciplin'd destroyers to the field.—
 May lovely Freedom, in her genuine charms,
 Aided by stern but equal Justice, drive
 From the enfanguin'd earth the hell-born fiends
 Of Pride, Oppression, Avarice, and Revenge,
 That ruin what thy mercy made so fair !
 Then shall these ill-starr'd wanderers, whose sad fate
 These desultory lines lament, regain
 Their native country ; private vengeance then
 To public virtue yield ; and the fierce feuds,
 That long have torn their defoliated land,
 May (even as storms, that agitate the air,
 Drive noxious vapours from the blighted earth)
 Serve, all tremendous as they are, to fix
 The reign of Reason, Liberty, and Peace !

NOTES TO THE SECOND BOOK.

¹ “HOPE waits upon the flowery prime.”]—

“Famine, and Sword, and Fire, crouch for employment.”]—

SHAKSPEARE.

² “Monsters both!”]—Such was the cause of quarrel between the Houses of York and Lancaster; and of too many others, with which the page of History reproaches the reason of man.

³ “Oh! polish’d perturbation!—golden care!”] SHAKSPEARE.

⁴ “The brave Bernois.”]—Henry the Fourth of France. It may be said of this monarch, that had all the French sovereigns resembled him, despotism would have lost its horrors; yet he had considerable failings, and his greatest virtues may be chiefly imputed to his education in the School of Adversity.

⁵ “Delug’d, as with an inland sea, the vales.”]—From the heavy and incessant rains during the last campaign, the armies were often compelled to march for many miles through marshes overflowed; suffering the extremities of cold and fatigue. The peasants frequently misled them; and, after having passed these inundations at the hazard of their lives, they were sometimes under the necessity of crossing them a second and a third time; their evening quarters after such a day of exertion were often in a wood without shelter; and their repast, instead of bread, unripe corn, without any other preparation than being mashed into a sort of paste.

“The

6 "The prey of dark suspicion and regret."—It is remarkable, that notwithstanding the excessive hardships to which the army of the Emigrants was exposed, very few in it suffered from disease till they began to retreat; then it was that despondence consigned to the most miserable death many brave men who deserved a better fate; and then despair impelled some to suicide, while others fell by mutual wounds, unable to survive disappointment and humiliation.

7 "Right onward."—MILTON, Sonnet 22d.

8 "I gave to misery all I had, my tears."—GRAY.

THE END.



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