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WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE

LYRICAL BALLADS

1798

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND APPENDIX
CONTAINING WORDSWORTH'S PREFACE OF 1800

BY

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NOTE

EXCEPT that the *Errata* of 1798 have been incorporated in the text, and the lines numbered, this is *verbatim et literalim* a reprint of the original edition of the Lyrical Ballads, 1798. A page and a half of Advertisement of books 'Published for Joseph Cottle, Bristol', have been omitted at end; in 1800, when writing to Biggs and Cottle, Wordsworth said: 'N.B. It is my *particular desire* that no advertisements of Books be printed at the end of the volume.' (See *Longman MSS.*, ed. W. Hale White, p. 31.) The pagination goes wrong after page 69 owing to the substitution of *The Nightingale* for a shorter poem, *Lenti*, after some few copies had been printed off. Coleridge, in a letter to Biggs (Cottle's partner), asks him to be careful that the last word of the line

O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
be correctly given, 'woods', and not 'wood', as in 'some of the copies'. This letter (giving corrections for the 1800 edition) thus seems further evidence (Mr. W. Hale White, p. 44, thinks) that 'alterations must have been made in the 1798 edition while it was passing through the press'.

On p. 19 (*A. M.* line 200) 'Off darts the Spectre-ship' was printed 'Oft darts, &c.' and altered with a pen to 'Off' in all extant copies except three (says Mr. R. A. Potts, quoted by Mr. Hutchinson in his edition, p. lv).

H. I.

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INTRODUCTION

THE volume of *Lyrical Ballads* made its appeal in 1798 to a small and unprepared public; it had to create the taste by which it was enjoyed.

We can infer its progress from the facts that in 1800 a new edition, enlarged to two volumes, came forth; that this was followed by another edition, again revised carefully, in 1802; and that this in due course was reprinted, without further significant change, in 1805; after which the Wordsworthian poems were merged in the larger, classified, collections of 1815 and 1820; while Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, in a further revised form and with the marginal gloss added, was transferred to the *Sibylline Leaves* of 1817.

The Ballad as a humble literary type had a certain vogue towards the end of the eighteenth century. It covered the crudest realism as well as the most fantastical romance, and varied in style and treatment as widely as in subject-matter and level of culture. But it hardly held full rank as serious poetry. It was not considered to belong to the literature of culture, but rather to the ruder poetry of the common people. Hence the very title of the new 'experiment', *Lyrical Ballads*, marked somewhat emphatically the limited pretensions of the supposed single author. Moreover, if we set aside the *Ancient Mariner* as avowedly archaic (and therefore as deliberately uncouth), and if we also

exclude the 'Few Other Poems' mentioned thus generally on the title-page of the volume, as distinguished from the bulk of the ballads by the author himself, these *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798 seemed to come in one special way under the usual uncultured-ballad category: their language was plain even to the extreme of baldness. This, added to the elemental simplicity of the subject-matter and treatment, seemed to have produced something of a shock to sympathetically-minded readers. As in 1579-80 Sir Philip Sidney dared not 'allow' the Shepherd's 'Framing of his style in an old rusticke language', so in 1798 even the kindest disposed critics of the new poetical experiments found difficulty in 'allowing' either the Mariner's grotesque archaisms or the balladist's rustic simplicity of language. Spenser's attempt failed, just so far as his new diction was itself artificial and insincere; Wordsworth's, on the contrary, resting itself on nature and simple truth, succeeded to a very considerable extent in modifying the 'peccant humours' of a poetic diction that had become unnatural and false.

Nor was the diction the only new thing about these *Lyrical Ballads*, although it was the difference most dwelt upon in the Advertisement prefixed to the collection. They were distinguished no less by a special choice of subject-matter and a special mode of treatment.

Men of a time that had seen the poems of Joseph Warton and Shenstone, and the Percy Ballads, were not unprepared to look at experiments in an old form of narrative verse; they were not unused to reflective

poems such as Gray's *Elegy*, that professed to relate the short and simple annals of the poor, or Crabbe's *Village*, that protested against 'meehanic echoes of the Mantuan song', and dealt realistically with the life of the lower classes; but they were hardly prepared for lyric poems that treated the simplest themes with a new emotional interest, which seemed to derive no inspiration either from the poetry of literary convention or from the ballads of quasi-popular origin.

We now recognize that there were certain spiritual affinities between the new poems and the earlier work of William Blake (*Poetical Sketches*, 1783), as there were more obvious traces of sympathy with some of the work of Burns; but the songs of Blake had fallen upon deaf ears, and were unknown save to a few, while the poetry of Burns was also a thing apart—not only as the quite abnormal and phenomenal production of an inspired ploughman, but also as being mainly rustic song in a distinct and almost foreign dialect. Hence the claim of these new poems to be a new departure both in language and in handling was not intermingled with questions of concurrent types of poetry. They asked to be judged by a new standard, which, if accepted, implied the acceptance of new ideals, affecting both the form and the moral attributes of a considerable range of poetic material. Looking back, we can see that ultimately they largely made good their claim. The name of Darwin is no longer venerable in poetry. The verse written after 1798 is seen to have come under new influences that have prevailed more or less down to our own day.

It must be remembered, too, that these poetic principles, first thought out in 1796-7 and exemplified in 1798, were not only new to the readers of the book; they constituted for the author himself (rather than the authors themselves) a declaration of a new poetic faith. This was certainly the main reason for the carefully preserved anonymity of the work. The single author (as he seemed to be) claimed to have been experimenting, feeling his way to new poetic effects. The public were asked to judge whether the poems justified the novel principles that underlay them. It cannot be said that the principles were at first fully set forth as conceived by the poet. By comparing Wordsworth's various prefaces and critical essays we shall see how he stated and amplified from time to time the general grounds of his poetical convictions.¹

¹ In the present edition the first three prefaces—all that count, so far as the *Lyrical Ballads* proper are concerned—are given in full. The necessity for doing this is due to the fact that in most of the collected editions of Wordsworth's poems since the first one of 1815 Wordsworth himself printed what he headed: 'Preface To the Second Edition of Several of the foregoing Poems, published, with an additional volume, under the title of LYRICAL BALLADS.' Any one reading this would be justified in assuming that the preface thus entitled was the original preface of 1800, and would estimate Wordsworth's critical attitude accordingly. But it is nothing of the kind. This 1815 reprint was made, with the omission of the second paragraph, which refers to Coleridge, and with slight verbal changes, from the Preface to the edition of *Lyrical Ballads* of 1805. This 1805 edition was a mere reprint of the really definitive edition of 1802, in which Wordsworth had enlarged the Preface as it stood in 1800 from forty-one pages to sixty-four. Hence it is necessary to study the Advertisement of 1798, the Preface of 1800, and the

His theoretic statements never quite explained either his real position or indeed his practice, for his aim was controversial rather than expository. In the *Biographia* (1817) Coleridge has not any difficulty in demonstrating this; nor in showing that it was the prefaces rather than the poems themselves that formed the main rock of critical offence.

Wordsworth's attack upon poetic diction has rather overshadowed his no less important reform in regard to the subject-matter of poetry. This latter innovation has to be considered in connexion with the general humanitarian and realistic movement of the time. For his poetry was in the closest relation to his own life, in fact it was his own life; and his life before 1798 had been active no less than contemplative. Rousseau and Godwin had been his earliest teachers in regard to social theory, and Rousseau had further deepened his feeling for nature, animate and inanimate. He was in 1798 still in partial sympathy with the more advanced philosophic thought of his day upon the question of man's relation to his fellow men. But, making full allowances for external influences from books and from current thought, it was his own meditative bent, his sense that he was, 'else sinning greatly, a consecrated spirit,' that had the greatest share in building up his poetic ideals

Preface of 1802 (with its appendix on *Poetic Diction*), to arrive at some clear notion of the development of the poet's opinions, as modified under the stress of criticism and of fuller thought. It will be seen that Wordsworth himself, by this inaccurate heading to the Appendix of 1815, is responsible for the error that has been perpetuated in editions since 1815.

and determining his aims in life. He was convinced that the poet should strive to bring his work at all times into relation with life as it actually was lived; that Verse should 'build a princely throne on humble truth'; and that by the 'shaping power of imagination' it should afford solace in sorrow and add a deeper joy in gladness. His themes were to be found accordingly in the incidents of ordinary existence. The extravagance or unreality of romance was unnecessary: the 'moving accident' was not his trade; he only sought to pipe a simple song for simple hearts, by giving 'a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents'. Hence it was that he wrote for the *Lyrical Ballads*—though he did not publish it until 1819—his most typical poem of *Peter Bell*, in which he carefully counterpoised by a series of perfectly natural and everyday incidents the supernatural happenings of the *Ancient Mariner*, and called attention to his aim by the challenging motto: 'Brutus can start a spirit as soon as Caesar!' Even his most childish ballads are a part of his poetic attitude to life. To himself, the childishness or triviality of some among his themes mattered nothing—perhaps rather the possession of these apparent defects added significance—if a moral emotion underlay the situations when rightly regarded. His contemporaries were able to grant that 'suspension of unbelief' that the most extravagant fictions of romantic supernaturalism required: they found it less easy to accord the emotional belief that these transcripts from simple human experience demanded.

Wonderful poem though the *Ancient Mariner* is, it was

‘professedly written in imitation of the style, as well as the spirit, of the elder poets’, and made no claim to offer a new model such as Wordsworth considered his own work to present. Yet to Coleridge as to Wordsworth the great aim of poetry was to bring the mind of man into closer relation with God ‘who is our home’. In the *Prelude* Wordsworth lays this down :

Our destiny, our being’s heart and aim,
Is with Infinitude, and only there.—(VI. 604).

They sought to achieve this end by different means: Coleridge by stirring our sense of the mystery that wraps life round, and by handling the supernatural with imaginative vividness: Wordsworth by touching ‘the human heart by which we live’, through a faithful though impassioned realism. The two poets, with whom indeed Dorothy Wordsworth should be included as the ‘handmaid and interpreter of nature’ for her less alert though more deeply reflective brother and his friend, were so interfused with each other’s thought that it is not possible to separate every thought and ascribe every phrase in this little volume to its real originator, any more than it is possible to assign the spark to the flint or to the steel that when struck together produce it. Had Wordsworth never known Coleridge, had Coleridge never known Wordsworth, we should never have had the essential Wordsworth, the essential Coleridge, that we have; the history of English literature would have been far different, and far poorer.¹

¹ Their contemporary admirers realized this. Sir George Beaumont, before ever he met Wordsworth, presented the

If there is one quality that more than all others interpenetrates Wordsworth's poetry it is 'natural piety'. This, and not mere power and truth of natural description, differentiates him. Rousseau felt the sensuous charm of nature as deeply as Wordsworth did; Burns felt it and described it as intensely; so in a milder way did Cowper; but neither Rousseau nor Burns nor Cowper quite felt in nature what Wordsworth found in it—the healing balm and the spiritual stimulus. A poet who saw life stripped of its externals; who beheld in nature a type of universal truth and divine justice; who disregarded the artificial, the merely ornate, the conventional adjuncts of delineation and expression; above all, who lived by 'Admiration, Hope, and Love'; this poet had found a new principle which moved him to utter poetic truth; and from this principle, once clearly apprehended, he never consciously swerved. The function of the poet, he felt, was to interpret truth; yet not in the crude manner of so-called didactic poetry, which versifies unimpeachable precepts bearing on the conduct of life; on the contrary, imagination was to transfigure universal nature, even in its meanest forms; for in everything, rightly looked at, there is a moral lesson to be learnt. Poetry thus handled becomes the revelation of nature and the teaching of life. In other words, he sought to encourage

Appleshwaite property to him to bring him near Greta Hall, where Coleridge was living in 1803. See *Memorials of Coleridge*, I. xii; Dykes Campbell's *Life of S. T. C.*, p. 150; Pater's two essays in *Appreciations*; and Dowden's 'Coleridge as a Poet' in *New Studies*.

the meditative attitude of mind, that tends to look below the shows of things to the larger forces and truths latent there. He did not always succeed; but of his failures we need not speak; they are as nothing in the account of his gifts to men.

Let us now turn to consider the present volume. The text is a literal reprint (with only line-numberings added), page for page and line for line, of the original octavo edition, as it came in September, 1798, from the press at Bristol of Joseph Cottle, whose name originally stood on the title-page as publisher and is found in a few copies. For some obscure reason—ostensibly because the sale was slow—Cottle transferred the greater part of the 500 copies that formed the edition to Messrs. Arch, of London. Cottle's copyright passed to the London publisher, Longman, from whom Cottle subsequently begged it back, and gave it to Wordsworth. The history of the inception of the collection was told in after years by Wordsworth in the note on 'We are Seven' that he dictated to Miss Fenwick (printed in his Works); and Coleridge in the *Biographia Literaria* (Vol. I, Chap. iv; Vol. II, Chap. xiv) discusses the occasion of the *Lyrical Ballads*, and the objects originally proposed. Only a portion can be quoted here, but the whole should be studied, with the Fenwick note, and Wordsworth's prefaces, by any one wishing to understand the matter. Coleridge (Chap. xiv) says:—'During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a

faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moon-light or sun-set diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such, as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves.

‘In this idea originated the plan of the “Lyrical Ballads;” in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as

his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand' . . . 'In this form the "Lyrical Ballads" were published; and were presented by him, as an *experiment*, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest, which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart.'

Coleridge thus restates the position, which Wordsworth had somewhat confused at first by the unhappy expression in his Advertisement about 'the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society'. It must be confessed that this definition did give the scoffer an opening, but Wordsworth seems to have meant really no more than he says in the *Excursion* (Bk. I):—

much did he see of men,
 Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
 Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
 Essential and eternal in the heart,
 That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
 Exist more simple in their elements,
 And speak a plainer language.

Coleridge also discusses another of Wordsworth's questionable dicta, concerning which may be quoted Coventry Patmore's saying, that 'Wordsworth's erroneous critical views of the necessity of approximating the language of poetry, as much as possible, to that of prose, especially by the avoidance of grammatical inversions, arose from his having overlooked the necessity of manifesting, as well as moving in, the bonds of verse'. (Prefatory Study on English Metrical Law, in *Amelia*, &c., p. 12.) Whether all Coleridge's very consistent narration is not an afterthought, and due to the impression left on his mind by the works produced, has been questioned, but not very profitably. It gives us the earliest and fullest and most intelligible account of the matter. At the same time we may feel certain that the poetry of Wordsworth is in no sense the calculated product of any critical theory; for (as has been said above) it is obviously the spontaneous outcome of his own heart, his whole bent of mind, and his general outlook upon life.

In 1800 a second edition of the first volume, with a new volume of equal size and of even greater merit, came forth. The following Table shows the changes in order of the contents of Vol. I:—

Order 1798	Order 1800	Order 1802	Order 1805	Vol. & Page 1815 ed.	1815 & 1820 Classification	Vol. & Page 1820
1. Ancient Mariner	23rd	19th	C.	ii. 81	Sent. and Refl.	iv. 86
2. Foster-Mother	7th	6th	C.	i. 85	Juvenile Poems	i. 130
3. Lines left	6th	15th	C.	i. 322	Imagination	ii. 144
4. Nightingale	17th	12th		i. 113	Sent. and Refl.	iv. 105
5. Female Vagrant	13th	4th		ii. 119	ditto	iv. 112
6. Goody Blake	8th	11th		i. 26	Per. of Childhood	i. 22
7. Lines written	12th	14th		i. 22	ditto	i. 18
8. Simon Lee	15th	10th		ii. 117	Sent. and Refl.	iv. 110
9. Anecdote	11th	9th		ii. 35	Imagination	ii. 204
10. We are Seven	10th	8th		i. 111	Affections	i. 192
11. Early Spring	16th	5th		i. 174	ditto	i. 235
12. The Thorn	9th	omitted		i. 179	ditto	i. 241
13. Flock	5th	18th		(ii. 136)	Sent. and Refl.	iv. 127
14. Dungeon (S. T. C.)	14th	16th		(ii. 137)		iv. 128
15. Mad Mother	22nd	vol. ii		ii. 102	ditto	iv. 75
16. Idiot Boy	20th	1st		ii. 104	ditto	iv. 77
17. Richmond (div. 1800)	18th } 19th }	vol. ii		ii. 313	Old Age	iv. 238
18. Expostulation	1st	2nd		i. 137	Affections	i. 188
19. Tables turned	2nd	3rd		ii. 73	Imagination	ii. 268
20. Old Man	3rd	vol. ii				
21. Forsaken Indian	4th	20th				
22. Convict	omitted					
23. Tintern	24th	17th	C.			
1800. Love (S. T. C.)	21st					

As in third edition, although in Wordsworth's own copy of 1802 (Longman MSS.), he noted 'Insert "Love after the "Nightingale"'. He also intalled 'S. T. C.' where marked C. in left margin of this column.

A glance at this table will show how carefully Wordsworth ordered his music. When he came to classify the poems for the two-volume collection of 1815 he grouped these under the various headings that cause such working of the spirit for the earnest Wordsworthian. Thus, the Yew-tree-seat lines were among the Poems Proceeding from (shortened in 1820 to 'of') Sentiment and Reflection. As noted in the table, the definitive order was really reached in 1802, and it may come as a surprise to some readers to be told that the edition of 1805 bears few of the marks of editorial attention such as was given by Wordsworth and his sister (who seems to have looked specially after Coleridge's portion also) to the edition of 1802. In fact this edition of 1802, and not (as usually assumed) the edition of 1805, is the definitive edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

We have also to note that the contents of the second volume—following fast upon the first edition, and embodying the work of the Goslar sojourn as well as the firstfruits of the Grasmere migration—should be regarded as a portion of this great poetical 'experiment', now past the experimental stage. The text of 1798 should be studied first, then one of the three following editions, if not all three. They all differ—but 1800 and 1802 importantly—in countless minute particulars. For one thing, the title-page of 1802 was made more explicit: 'Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and other Poems.' Wordsworth's name was given as the author on the title-page of 1800, and Coleridge's share was acknowledged not only in the Preface, but also in a

singularly outspoken note on the A. M. that was cancelled in 1802.

A list of the contents of Vol. II, 1800, with the **paging** in brackets, follows:—Hart-leap Well (1); There was a Boy, &c. (14); The Brothers, a Pastoral Poem (19); Ellen Irwin, or the Braes of Kirtle (46); Strange fits of passion I have known, &c. (50); Song (52: She dwelt among); A Slumber did my spirit seal, &c. (53); The Waterfall and the Eglantine (54); The Oak and the Broom, a Pastoral (58); Lucy Gray (64); The Idle Shepherd-Boys, or Dungeon-Gill Force, a Pastoral (69); 'Tis said that some have died for love, &c. (76); Poor Susan (80); Inscription for the spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwent-Water (82); Inscription for (in 1802 this became: Lines written with a pencil upon a stone in the wall of) the House (an Outhouse) on the Island at Grasmere (84); To a Sexton (86); Andrew Jones (89); The two Theives, or the last stage of Avarice (92); A whirlblast from behind the Hill, &c. (96); Song for the wandering Jew (98); Ruth (103); Lines written with a Slate-Pencil upon a Stone, &c. (117); Lines written on a Tablet in a School (120); The two April Mornings (123); The Fountain, a Conversation (127); Nutting (132); Three years she grew in sun and shower, &c. (136); The Pet Lamb, a Pastoral (139); Written in Germany on one of the coldest days of the Century (144); The Childless Father (147); The Old Cumberland Beggar, a Description (151); Rural Architecture (163); A Poet's Epitaph (165); A Character (169); A Fragment (171); Poems [five] on the Naming of Places

(177-196); Michael, a Pastoral (199; simply named 'Michael' in 1802); notes to The Brothers and to Michael, completed the volumes.

What strikes one on reading this list is the very marked increase in lyrical work of the highest quality. The first volume furnished two lyrics (I heard a thousand blended notes; and Simon Lee) to the 'Golden Treasury'; this second volume gave six more (A slumber did my spirit seal: At the corner of Wood Street; She dwelt among the untrodden ways; Three years she grew; We talked with open heart; and When Ruth was left half desolate): a garland of poesy that the world would not willingly let die!

It will be noticed that in the 1798 volume the paging goes wrong after page 69. This is because Coleridge's poem of *Lenti* was only suppressed (for fear of recognition) at the last moment, after it had been printed off, and the *Nightingale*, a longer piece, substituted. We do not regret the change, but nevertheless the right of *Lenti* to be esteemed an original Lyrical Ballad may be readily admitted. *Peter Bell*, though not published till 1819, is even more important in this connexion.

Lastly, the Prefaces of 1800 and 1802 are given synoptically in the Appendix. To save space, I have worked much as Wordsworth himself may have done when enlarging his preface, for I have taken the text of 1800 as a basis, and have marked every variation, even the most trifling and mechanical, as it occurs.

Wordsworth's original copy, with many of the additions pasted in, is among the *Longman MSS.* (edited by Mr. W. Hale White), and I possess a copy of 1802,

in which the late Mr. Dykes Campbell transcribed or indicated most carefully all Wordsworth's additions from the Longman copy of 1800. This has been of service to me in the troublesome endeavour to achieve accuracy. So far as the skilful printers and readers of the Clarendon Press can make it, this reprint is accurate. The proofs have been minutely collated with the originals several times.

For a discussion of the critical questions raised in these Prefaces the student should examine the *Biographia Literaria*. Among later writings there are Pater's two essays, in *Appreciations*; Mr. Symons's *Romantic School*; M. Legouis's *Early Life of Wordsworth*; Professor Sir W. Raleigh's *Wordsworth*; Professor Dowden's *New Studies*, and editions of Wordsworth; also Mr. T. Hutchinson's valuable edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, and of the two Wordsworth volumes of *Poems* of 1807; Mr. Dykes Campbell's edition of the *Poems of Coleridge*; Mr. Nowell Smith's collection of Wordsworth's *Literary Criticism* (in the Oxford Library of Prose and Poetry); and Prof. G. Sampson's annotated reprint of the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1805. Other useful helps might be named, but this list may serve. The important thing is to read the poems and prefaces themselves!

H. L.

LYRICAL BALLADS.

WITH

A FEW OTHER POEMS.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR J. & A. ARCH, GRACECHURCH-STREET.

1798.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The evidence of this fact is to be sought, not in the writings of Critics, but in those of Poets themselves.

The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the

gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness : they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that such readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way of their gratification ; but that, while they are perusing this book, they should ask themselves if it contains a (natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents ;) and if the answer be favourable to the author's wishes, that they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed it must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. It is apprehended, that the more conversant the reader is with our elder writers, and with those in modern times who have been the most successful in painting manners and passions, the fewer complaints of this kind will he have to make.

An accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is

mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself; but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire. Of the other poems in the collection, it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends. The poem of the Thorn, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story. The Rime of the Ancient Marinere was profes-

sedly written in imitation of the *style*, as well as of the spirit of the elder poets ; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these three last centuries. The lines entitled Expostulation and Reply, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy.

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THE RIME
OF THE
ANCIENT MARINER,
IN
SEVEN PARTS.

ARGUMENT.

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole ; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean ; and of the strange things that befell ; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

THE RIME
OF THE
ANCYENT MARINERE,
IN SEVEN PARTS.

I.

It is an aneyent Marinere,
And he stoppeth one of three :
“ By thy long grey beard and thy glittering eye
“ Now wherefore stoppest me ?

“ The Bridegroom’s doors are open’d wide
“ And I am next of kin ;
“ The Guests are met, the Feast is fet,—
“ May’st hear the merry din.—

But still he holds the wedding-guest—

There was a Ship, quoth he—

10

“Nay, if thou’st got a laughsome tale,

“Marinere ! come with me.”

He holds him with his skinny hand,

Quoth he, there was a Ship—

“Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon !

“Or my Staff shall make thee skip.

He holds him with his glittering eye—

The wedding guest stood still

And listens like a three year’s child :

The Marinere hath his will.

20

The wedding-guest sate on a stone,

He cannot chuse but hear :

And thus spake on that ancyent man,

The bright-eyed Marinere.

The Ship was cheer'd, the Harbour clear'd—
 Merrily did we drop
 Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
 Below the Light-house top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
 Out of the Sea came he : 50
 And he shone bright, and on the right
 Went down into the Sea.

Higher and higher every day,
 Till over the mast at noon—
 The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Bride hath pac'd into the Hall,
 Red as a rose is she ;
 Nodding their heads before her goes
 The merry Minstralsy. 40

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot chuse but hear :
 And thus spake on that ancyent Man,
 The bright-eyed Marinere.

Listen, Stranger ! Storm and Wind,
 A Wind and Tempest strong !
 For days and weeks it play'd us freaks—
 Like Chaff' we drove along.

Listen, Stranger ! Mist and Snow,
 And it grew wond'rous cauld :
 And Ice mast-high came floating by
 As green as Emerald.

50

And thro' the drifts the snowy clifts
 Did send a dismal sheen ;
 Ne shapes of men ne beasts we ken—
 The Ice was all between.

The Ice was here, the Ice was there,
 The Ice was all around ;
 It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd—
 Like noises of a swound. 60

At length did cross an Albatross,
 Thorough the Fog it came ;
 And an it were a Christian Soul,
 We hail'd it in God's name.

The Mariners gave it biscuit-worms,
 And round and round it flew :
 The Ice did split with a Thunder-fit ;
 The Helmsman steer'd us thro'.

And a good south wind sprung up behind,
 The Albatross did follow ; 70
 And every day for food or play
 Came to the Marinere's hollo !

In mist or cloud on mast or shroud
It perch'd for vespers nine,
Whiles all the night thro' fog-smoke white
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

“God save thee, ancient Marinere!
“From the fiends that plague thee thus—
“Why look'st thou so?”—with my cross bow
I shot the Albatross.

II.

The Sun came up upon the right,
Out of the Sea came he ;
And broad as a weft upon the left
Went down into the Sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet Bird did follow
Ne any day for food or play
Came to the Marinere's hollo !

And I had done an hellish thing
And it would work 'em woe :
For all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird
That made the Breeze to blow.

Ne dim ne red, like God's own head,
 The glorious Sun uprist :
 Then all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird
 That brought the fog and mist.
 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay
 That bring the fog and mist.

The breezes blew, the white foam flew,
 The furrow follow'd free : 100
 We were the first that ever burst
 Into that silent Sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the Sails dropt down,
 'Twas sad as sad could be
 And we did speak only to break
 The silence of the Sea.

All in a hot and copper sky
 The bloody sun at noon,
 Right up above the mast did stand,
 No bigger than the moon. 110

Day after day, day after day,
 We stuck, ne breath ne motion,
 As idle as a painted Ship
 Upon a painted Ocean.

Water, water, every where
 And all the boards did shrink ;
 Water, water, every where,
 Ne any drop to drink.

The very deeps did rot : O Christ !
 That ever this should be ! 120
 Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
 Upon the slimy Sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
 The Death-fires danc'd at night :
 The water, like a witch's oils,
 Burnt green and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were
 Of the Spirit that plagued us so :
 Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us
 From the Land of Mist and Snow. 130

And every tongue thro' utter drouth
 Was wither'd at the root :
 We could not speak no more than if
 We had been choked with soot.

Ah wel-a-day ! what evil looks
 Had I from old and young ;
 Instead of the Cross the Albatross
 About my neck was hung.

III.

I saw a something in the Sky
 No bigger than my fist ; 140
At first it seem'd a little speck
 And then it seem'd a mist :
It mov'd and mov'd, and took at last
 A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
 And still it ner'd and ner'd ;
And, an it dodg'd a water-sprite,
 It plung'd and tack'd and veer'd.

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd

Ne could we laugh, ne wail :

150

Then while thro' drouth all dumb they stood

I bit my arm and suck'd the blood

And cry'd, A sail ! a sail !

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd

Agape they hear'd me call :

Gramercy ! they for joy did grin

And all at once their breath drew in

As they were drinking all.

She doth not tack from side to side—

Hither to work us weal

160

Withouten wind, withouten tide

She steddies with upright keel.

The western wave was all a flame,
 The day was well nigh done !
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun ;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

And strait the Sun was fleck'd with bars
 (Heaven's mother send us grace) 170
 As if thro' a dungeon grate he peer'd
 With broad and burning face.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she neres and neres !
 Are those *her* Sails that glance in the Sun
 Like restless gossameres ?

Are these *her* naked ribs, which fleek'd
 The sun that did behind them peer?
 And are these two all, all the crew,
 That woman and her fleshless Pheere? 150

His bones were black with many a crack,
 All black and bare, I ween;
 Jet-black and bare, save where with rust
 Of mouldy damps and charnel crust
 They're patch'd with purple and green.

Her lips are red, *her* looks are free,
Her locks are yellow as gold:
 Her skin is as white as leprosy,
 And she is far liker Death than he:
 Her flesh makes the still air cold. 190

The naked Hulk alongside came
 And the Twain were playing dice ;
 " The Game is done ! I've won, I've won !"
 Quoth she, and whistled thrice.

A gust of wind sterte up behind
 And whistled thro' his bones ;
 Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth
 Half-whistles and half-groans.

With never a whisper in the Sea
 Off darts the Spectre-ship ;
 While clombe above the Eastern bar
 The horned Moon, with one bright Star
 Almost atween the tips.

One after one by the horned Moon
 (Listen, O Stranger ! to me)
 Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang
 And curs'd me with his ee.

Four times fifty living men,
 With never a sigh or groan.
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump 210
 They dropp'd down one by one.

Their fouts did from their bodies fly,—
 They fled to bliss or woe ;
 And every soul it pass'd me by,
 Like the whiz of my Cross-bow.

IV.

“ I fear thee, ancyeut Marinere !

“ I fear thy skinny hand ;

“ And thou art long and lank and brown

“ As is the ribb'd Sea-sand.

“ I fear thee and thy glittering eye

220

“ And thy skinny hand so brown—

Fear not, fear not, thou wedding guest !

This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all all alone

Alone on the wide wide Sea ;

And Christ would take no pity on

My soul in agony.

The many men so beautiful,
 And they all dead did lie !
 And a million million flimy things 230
 Liv'd on—and so did I.

I look'd upon the rotting Sea,
 And drew my eyes away ;
 I look'd upon the eldritch deck,
 And there the dead men lay.

I look'd to Heaven, and try'd to pray ;
 But or ever a prayer had gusht,
 A wicked whisper came and made
 My heart as dry as dust.

I clos'd my lids and kept them close, 210
 Till the balls like pulses beat ;
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,
 And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
 Ne rot, ne reek did they ;
 The look with which they look'd on me,
 Had never pass'd away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
 A spirit from on high : 250
 But O ! more horrible than that
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye !
 Seven days, seven nights I saw that curse
 And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky
 And no where did abide :
 Softly she was going up
 And a star or two befide—

Her beams bemock'd the sultry main
 Like morning frosts yspread ; 260
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
 The charmed water burnt away
 A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
 I watch'd the water-snakes :
 They mov'd in tracks of shining white ;
 And when they rear'd, the elfish light
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
 I watch'd their rich attire : 270
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
 They coil'd and swam : and every track
 Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare :
A spring of love gusht from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware !
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray ; 280
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

 V.

✓
 O sleep, it is a gentle thing
 Belov'd from pole to pole !
 To Mary-queen the praise be yeven
 She sent the gentle sleep from heaven
 That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck
 That had so long remain'd,
 I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew
 And when I awoke it rain'd.

290

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
 My garments all were dank ;
 Sure I had drunken in my dreams
 And still my body drank.

I mov'd and could not feel my limbs,
 I was so light, almost
 I thought that I had died in sleep,
 And was a blessed Ghost.

300

The roaring wind ! it roar'd far off,
 It did not come anear ;
 But with its sound it shook the sails
 That were so thin and sere.

The upper air bursts into life,
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen
 To and fro they are hurried about :
 And to and fro, and in and out
 The stars dance on between.

The coming wind doth roar more loud ; 310
 The sails do sigh, like sedge :
 The rain pours down from one black cloud
 And the Moon is at its edge.

Hark ! hark ! the thick black cloud is cleft,
 And the Moon is at its side :
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 The lightning falls with never a jag
 A river steep and wide.

The strong wind reach'd the ship : it roar'd
 And dropp'd down, like a stone ! 320
 Beneath the lightning and the moon
 The dead men gave a groan.

They groan'd, they stir'd, they all uprose,
 Ne spake, ne mov'd their eyes :
 It had been strange, even in a dream
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steer'd, the ship mov'd on :
 Yet never a breeze up-blew ;
 The Mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
 Where they were wont to do : 330

They rais'd their limbs like lifeless tools—
 We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me knee to knee :
 The body and I pull'd at one rope.
 But he said nought to me—
 And I quak'd to think of my own voice
 How frightful it would be !

The day-light dawn'd— they dropp'd their arms,
 And cluster'd round the mast : 310
 Sweet sounds rose slowly thro' their mouths
 And from their bodies pass'd.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
 Then darted to the sun :
 Slowly the sounds came back again
 Now mix'd, now one by one.

Sometimes a dropping from the sky
 I heard the Lavrock sing ;
 Sometimes all little birds that are
 How they seem'd to fill the sea and air 350
 With their sweet jargonings,

And now 'twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute ;
 And now it is an angel's song
 That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceas'd : yet still the sails made on
 A pleasant noise till noon,
 A noise like of a hidden brook
 In the leafy month of June,
 That to the sleeping woods all night 360
 Singeth a quiet tune.

Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest !

“ Marinere ! thou hast thy will :

“ For that, which comes out of thine eye, doth make

“ My body and soul to be still.”

Never sadder tale was told

To a man of woman born :

Sadder and wiser thou wedding-guest !

Thou'lt rise to morrow morn.

Never sadder tale was heard

370

By a man of woman born :

The Mariners all return'd to work

As silent as before.

The Mariners all 'gan pull the ropes,

But look at me they n'old :

Thought I, I am as thin as air—

They cannot me behold.

Till noon we silently sail'd on
 Yet never a breeze did breathe :
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship 380
 Mov'd onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep
 From the land of mist and snow
 The spirit slid : and it was He
 That made the Ship to go.
 The sails at noon left off their tune
 And the Ship stood still also.

The sun right up above the mast
 Had fix'd her to the ocean :
 But in a minute she 'gan stir 390
 With a short uneasy motion—
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then, like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound :
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell into a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,
 I have not to declare ;
 But ere my living life return'd,
 I heard and in my soul discern'd
 Two voices in the air.

460

“ Is it he ? quoth one, “ Is this the man ?
 “ By him who died on cross,
 “ With his cruel bow he lay'd full low
 “ The harmless Albatross,
 “ The spirit who 'bideth by himself
 “ In the land of mist and snow,
 “ He lov'd the bird that lov'd the man
 “ Who shot him with his bow.

410

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew :
Quoth he the man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.

VI.

FIRST VOICE.

“ But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
“ Thy soft response renewing—
“ What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
“ What is the Ocean doing ?

SECOND VOICE.

“ Still as a Slave before his Lord,
“ The Ocean hath no blast :
“ His great bright eye most silently
“ Up to the moon is cast—

“ If he may know which way to go.

“ For she guides him smooth or grim.

“ See, brother, see ! how graciously

“ She looketh down on him.

FIRST VOICE.

“ But why drives on that ship so fast

“ Withouten wave or wind ?

SECOND VOICE.

“ The air is cut away before,

“ And closes from behind.

430

“ Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high.

“ Or we shall be belated :

“ For slow and slow that ship will go,

“ When the Marinere's trance is abated.”

I woke, and we were sailing on
 As in a gentle weather :
 'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high ;
 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter : 440
 All fix'd on me their stony eyes
 That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never pass'd away :
 I could not draw my een from theirs
 Ne turn them up to pray.

And in its time the spell was snapt,
 And I could move my een :
 I look'd far-forth, but little saw
 Of what might else be seen. 450

Like one, that on a lonely road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round, walks on
And turns no more his head :
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breath'd a wind on me,
Ne sound ne motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea
In ripple or in shade.

460

It rais'd my hair, it fann'd my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
 Yet she sail'd softly too :
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
 On me alone it blew.

O dream of joy ! is this indeed
 The light-house top I see ? 470
 Is this the Hill ? Is this the Kirk ?
 Is this mine own countrée ?

We drifted o'er the Harbour-bar,
 And I with sobs did pray—
 “ O let me be awake, my God !
 “ Or let me sleep alway ! ”

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly it was strewn !
 And on the bay the moon light lay,
 And the shadow of the moon. 480

The moonlight bay was white all o'er,
 Till rising from the same,
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 Like as of torches came.

A little distance from the prow
 Those dark-red shadows were :
 But soon I saw that my own flesh
 Was red as in a glare.

I turn'd my head in fear and dread,
 And by the holy rood,
 The bodies had advanc'd, and now
 Before the mast they stood.

490

They lifted up their stiff right arms,
 They held them frait and tight ;
 And each right-arm burnt like a torch,
 A torch that's borne upright,
 Their stony eye-balls glitter'd on
 In the red and smoky light.

I pray'd and turn'd my head away
 Forth looking as before. 500

There was no breeze upon the bay,
 No wave against the shore.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
 That stands above the rock :
 The moonlight steep'd in silentness
 The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,
 Till rising from the same
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colours came. 510

A little distance from the prow
 Those crimson shadows were :
 I turn'd my eyes upon the deck—
 O Christ ! what saw I there ?

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat :
 And by the Holy rood
 A man all light, a seraph-man,
 On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand :
 It was a heavenly sight : 520
 They stood as signals to the land.
 Each one a lovely light :

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand,
 No voice did they impart—
 No voice ; but O ! the silence sank,
 Like music on my heart.

Eftsones I heard the dash of oars,
 I heard the pilot's cheer :
 My head was turn'd perforce away
 And I saw a boat appear. 530

Then vanish'd all the lovely lights :
 The bodies rose anew :
 With silent pace, each to his place,
 Came back the ghastly crew.
 The wind, that shade nor motion made,
 On me alone it blew.

The pilot, and the pilot's boy
 I heard them coming fast :
 Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy,
 The dead men could not blast.

540

I saw a third—I heard his voice :
 It is the Hermit good !
 He singeth loud his godly hymns
 That he makes in the wood,
 He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood.

VII.

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the Sea,
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
He loves to talk with Mariners 550
That come from a far Contrée,

He kneels at morn and noon and eve—
He hath a cushion plump :
It is the moss, that wholly hides
The rotted old Oak-stump.

The Skiff-boat ne'rd : I heard them talk,

“Why, this is strange, I trow !

“Where are those lights so many and fair

“That signal made but now ?

“Strange, by my faith ! the Hermit said— 560

“And they answer'd not our cheer.

“The planks look warp'd, and see those sails

“How thin they are and sere !

“I never saw aught like to them

“Unless perchance it were

“The skeletons of leaves that lag

“My forest brook along :

“When the Ivy-tod is heavy with snow,

“And the Owlet whoops to the wolf below

“That eats the she-wolf's young.

“ Dear Lord ! it has a fiendish look—

(The Pilot made reply)

“ I am a-fear’d.—“ Push on, push on !

“ Said the Hermit cheerily.

The Boat came closer to the Ship,

But I ne spake ne stirr’d !

The Boat came close beneath the Ship,

And strait a sound was heard !

Under the water it rumbled on,

Still louder and more dread :

580

It reach’d the Ship, it split the bay :

The Ship went down like lead.

Stunn’d by that loud and dreadful sound,

Which sky and ocean smote :

Like one that hath been seven days drown’d

My body lay afloat :

But, swift as dreams, myself I found
 Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the Ship,
 The boat spun round and round : 590
 And all was still, save that the hill
 Was telling of the sound.

I mov'd my lips : the Pilot shriek'd
 And fell down in a fit.
 The Holy Hermit rais'd his eyes
 And pray'd where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
 Who now doth crazy go,
 Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while
 His eyes went to and fro, 600
 "Ha ! ha !" quoth he—" full plain I see,
 "The devil knows how to row."

And now all in mine own Countrée
 I stood on the firm land !
 The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat,
 And seareely he could stand.

“ O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy Man !
 The Hermit cross'd his brow—
 “ Say quick,” quoth he, “ I bid thee say
 “ What manner man art thou ?

610

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
 With a woeful agony,
 Which forc'd me to begin my tale
 And then it left me free.

Since then at an uncertain hour,
 Now oftimes and now fewer,
 That anguish comes and makes me tell
 My ghastly aventure.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;
 I have strange power of speech ; 620
 The moment that his face I see
 I know the man that must hear me ;
 To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
 The Wedding-guests are there ;
 But in the Garden-bower the Bride
 And Bride-maids singing are :
 And hark the little Vesper-bell
 Which biddeth me to prayer.

O Wedding-guest ! this soul hath been 630
 Alone on a wide wide sea :
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the Marriage-feast.

'Tis sweeter far to me

To walk together to the Kirk

With a goodly company.

To walk together to the Kirk

And all together pray,

While each to his great father bends, 640

Old men, and babes, and loving friends,

And Youths, and Maidens gay.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell

To thee, thou wedding-guest !

He prayeth well who loveth well

Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best.

All things both great and small :

For the dear God, who loveth us,

He made and loveth all. 650

The Marinere, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone ; and now the wedding-guest
Turn'd from the bridegroom's door.

He went, like one that hath been stum'd
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

TUE

FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE, *working*

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

I never saw the man whom you describe.

MARIA.

'Tis strange ! he spake of you familiarly
As mine and Albert's common Foster-mother.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

Now blessings on the man, who'er he be,
That joined your names with mine ! O my sweet lady,
As often as I think of those dear times
When you two little ones would stand at eve
On each side of my chair, and make me learn
All you had learnt in the day : and how to talk

In gentle phrase, then bid me sing to you— 10
 'Tis more like heaven to come than what *has* been.

MARIA.

O my dear Mother! this strange man has left me
 Troubled with wilder fancies, than the moon
 Breeds in the love-sick maid who gazes at it,
 Till lost in inward vision, with wet eye
 She gazes idly!—But that entrance, Mother!

FOSTER-MOTHER.

Can no one hear? It is a perilous tale!

MARIA.

No one.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

My husband's father told it me,
 Poor old Leoni!—Angels rest his soul!
 He was a woodman, and could fell and saw 20
 With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam
 Which props the hainging wall of the old chapel?
 Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree

He found a baby wrapt in mosses, lined
 With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool
 As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,
 And reared him at the then Lord Velez' cost.
 And so the babe grew up a pretty boy,
 A pretty boy, but most unteachable—
 And never learnt a prayer, nor told a bead, 30
 But knew the names of birds, and mocked their notes,
 And whistled, as he were a bird himself:
 And all the autumn 'twas his only play
 To get the seeds of wild flowers, and to plant them
 With earth and water, on the stumps of trees.
 A Friar, who gathered simples in the wood,
 A grey-haired man—he loved this little boy,
 The boy loved him—and, when the Friar taught him,
 He soon could write with the pen : and from that time,
 Lived chiefly at the Convent or the Castle. 40
 So he became a very learned youth.
 But Oh ! poor wretch !—he read, and read, and read,
 'Till his brain turned—and ere his twentieth year,

He had unlawful thoughts of many things :
 And though he prayed, he never loved to pray
 With holy men, nor in a holy place—
 But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,
 The late Lord Velez ne'er was wearied with him.
 And once, as by the north side of the Chapel
 They stood together, chained in deep discourse, 50
 The earth heaved under them with such a groan,
 That the wall tottered, and had well-nigh fallen
 Right on their heads. My Lord was sorely frightened :
 A fever seized him, and he made confession
 Of all the heretical and lawless talk
 Which brought this judgment : so the youth was seized
 And cast into that hole. My husband's father
 Sobbed like a child—it almost broke his heart :
 And once as he was working in the cellar,
 He heard a voice distinctly ; 'twas the youth's, 60
 Who sung a doleful song about green fields,
 How sweet it were on lake or wild savannah,
 To hunt for food, and be a naked man,

And wander up and down at liberty.
 He always doted on the youth, and now
 His love grew desperate ; and defying death,
 He made that cunning entrance I described :
 And the young man escaped.

MARIA.

'Tis a sweet tale :
 Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,
 His rosy face besoiled with unwiped tears.— 70
 And what became of him ?

FOSTER-MOTHER.

He went on ship-board
 With those bold voyagers, who made discovery
 Of golden lands. Leoni's younger brother
 Went likewise, and when he returned to Spain,
 He told Leoni, that the poor mad youth,
 Soon after they arrived in that new world,
 In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,
 And all alone, set sail by silent moonlight

Up a great river, great as any sea,
And ne'er was heard of more : but 'tis supposed, 80
He lived and died among the savage men.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN

A YEW-TREE

WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE,

ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE,

YET COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT.

—Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb;
What if these barren boughs the bee not loves;
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

—————Who he was
That piled these stones, and with the mossy sod

First covered o'er, and taught this aged tree, 10
Now wild, to bend its arms in circling shade,
I well remember.—He was one who own'd
No common soul. In youth, by genius nurs'd,
And big with lofty views, he to the world
Went forth, pure in his heart, against the taint
Of dissolute tongues, 'gainst jealousy, and hate,
And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect : and so, his spirit damped
At once, with rash disdain he turned away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul 20
In solitude.—Stranger ! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him ; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper :
And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downward eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life :

And lifting up his head, he then would gaze 30
 On the more distant scene; how lovely 'tis
 Thou seest, and he would gaze till it became
 Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
 The beauty still more beautiful. Nor, that time,
 Would he forget those beings, to whose minds,
 Warm from the labours of benevolence,
 The world, and man himself, appeared a scene
 Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh
 With mournful joy, to think that others felt
 What he must never feel: and so, lost man! 40
 On visionary views would fancy feed,
 Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
 He died, this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
 Of young imagination have kept pure,
 Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know, that pride,
 Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
 Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt

For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used ; that thought with him 50
Is in its infancy. The man, whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
The least of nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O, be wiser thou !
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

St

THE NIGHTINGALE; *opposition to milt*

idea of nightingale

A CONVERSATIONAL POEM, WRITTEN IN APRIL,

1798.

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen Light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy Bridge!
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still.
A balmy night! and tho' the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find 10

A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
 And hark ! the Nightingale begins its song,
 " Most musical, most melancholy " * Bird !
 A melancholy Bird ? O idle thought !
 In nature there is nothing melancholy.
 — But some night-wandering Man, whose heart was pierc'd
 With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
 Or slow distemper or neglected love,
 (And so, poor Wretch ! fill'd all things with himself
 And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale 20
 Of his own sorrows) he and such as he
 First nam'd these notes a melancholy strain ;
 And many a poet echoes the conceit,

* " *Most musical, most melancholy.*" This passage in Milton possesses an excellence far superior to that of mere description : it is spoken in the character of the melancholy Man, and has therefore a *dramatic* propriety. The Author makes this remark, to rescue himself from the charge of having alluded with levity to a line in Milton : a charge than which none could be more painful to him, except perhaps that of having ridiculed his Bible.

Poet, who hath been building up the rhyme
 When he had better far have stretch'd his limbs
 Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell
 By sun or moonlight, to the influxes
 Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
 Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
 And of his fame forgetful ! so his fame :30
 Should share in nature's immortality,
 A venerable thing ! and so his song
 Should make all nature lovelier, and itself
 Be lov'd, like nature !—But 'twill not be so ;
 And youths and maidens most poetical
 Who lose the deep'ning twilights of the spring
 In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
 Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
 O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains. :39
 My Friend, and my Friend's Sister ! we have learnt
 A different lore : we may not thus profane
 Nature's sweet voices always full of love

And joyance ! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
 That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
 With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
 As he were fearful, that an April night
 Would be too short for him to utter forth
 His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
 Of all its music ! And I know a grove
 Of large extent, hard by a castle huge 50
 Which the great lord inhabits not : and so
 This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
 And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
 Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
 But never elsewhere in one place I knew
 So many Nightingales : and far and near
 In wood and thicket over the wide grove
 They answer and provoke each other's songs—
 With skirmish and capricious passagings,
 And murmurs musical and swift jug jug 60
 And one low piping sound more sweet than all—

Stirring the air with such an harmony,
 That should you close your eyes, you might almost
 Forget it was not day ! On moonlight bushes,
 Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclos'd,
 You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
 Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
 Glistning, while many a glow-worm in the shade
 Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle maid

Who dwelleth in her hospitable home 70
 Hard by the Castle, and at latest eve,
 (Even like a Lady vow'd and dedicate
 To something more than nature in the grove)
 Glides thro' the pathways : she knows all their notes,
 That gentle Maid ! and oft, a moment's space,
 What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
 Hath heard a pause of silence : till the Moon
 Emerging, hath awaken'd earth and sky

With one sensation, and those wakeful Birds
 Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy, 80
 As if one quick and sudden Gale had swept
 An hundred airy harps ! And she hath watch'd
 Many a Nightingale perch giddily
 On blosmy twig still swinging from the breeze,
 And to that motion tune his wanton song,
 Like tipsy Joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler ! till to-morrow eve,
 And you, my friends ! farewell, a short farewell !
 We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
 And now for our dear homes.—That strain again ! 90
 Full fain it would delay me !—My dear Babe,
 Who, capable of no articulate sound,
 Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
 How he would place his hand beside his ear,
 His little hand, the small forefinger up,
 And bid us listen ! And I deem it wise

To make him Nature's playmate. He knows well
The evening star : and once when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain 99
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream)
I hurried with him to our orchard plot,
And he beholds the moon, and hush'd at once
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes that swam with undropt tears
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam ! Well -
It is a father's tale. But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate Joy ! Once more farewell, 109
Sweet Nightingale ! once more, my friends ! farewell.

THE
FEMALE VAGRANT. *Napoleonic War*

By Derwent's side my Father's cottage stood,
(The Woman thus her artless story told)
One field, a flock, and what the neighbouring flood
Supplied, to him were more than mines of gold.
Light was my sleep : my days in transport roll'd :
With thoughtless joy I stretch'd along the shore
My father's nets, or watched, when from the fold
High o'er the cliffs I led my fleecy store,
A dizzy depth below ! his boat and twinkling oar.

My father was a good and pious man, 10
An honest man by honest parents bred,
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said :
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read ;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

Can I forget what charms did once adorn
My garden, stored with pease, and mint, and thyme, 20
And rose and lilly for the sabbath morn ?
The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime ;
The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time :
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied ;
The cowslip-gathering at May's dewy prime ;
The swans, that, when I sought the water-side,
From far to meet me came, spreading their snowy pride.

The staff I yet remember which upbore
 The bending body of my active sire ;
 His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore 30
 When the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire ;
 When market-morning came, the neat attire
 With which, though bent on haste, myself I deck'd ;
 My watchful dog, whose starts of furious ire,
 When stranger passed, so often I have check'd ;
 The red-breast known for years, which at my casement
 peck'd.

The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
 Ah ! little marked, how fast they rolled away :
 Then rose a mansion proud our woods among,
 And cottage after cottage owned its sway, 40
 No joy to see a neighbouring house, or stray
 Through pastures not his own, the master took ;
 My Father dared his greedy wish gainsay ;
 He loved his old hereditary nook,
 And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.

But, when he had refused the proffered gold,
 To cruel injuries he became a prey,
 Sore traversed in whate'er he bought and sold :
 His troubles grew upon him day by day,
 Till all his substance fell into decay. 50
 His little range of water was denied ;*
 All but the bed where his old body lay,
 All, all was seized, and weeping, side by side,
 We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.

Can I forget that miserable hour,
 When from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
 Peering above the trees, the steeple tower,
 That on his marriage-day sweet music made ?
 Till then he hoped his bones might there be laid,
 Close by my mother in their native bowers : 60
 Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed,—
 I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers,
 Glimmer'd our dear-loved home, alas ! no longer ours !

* Several of the Lakes in the north of England are let out to different Fishermen, in parcels marked out by imaginary lines drawn from rock to rock.

There was a youth whom I had loved so long,
 That when I loved him not I cannot say.
 'Mid the green mountains many and many a song
 We two had sung, like little birds in May.
 When we began to tire of childish play
 We seemed still more and more to prize each other :
 We talked of marriage and our marriage day ; 70
 And I in truth did love him like a brother,
 For never could I hope to meet with such another.

His father said, that to a distant town
 He must repair, to ply the artist's trade.
 What tears of bitter grief till then unknown !
 What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed !
 To him we turned :—we had no other aid.
 Like one revived, upon his neck I wept,
 And her whom he had loved in joy, he said
 He well could love in grief: his faith he kept ; 80
 And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

Four years each day with daily bread was blest,
 By constant toil and constant prayer supplied.
 Three lovely infants lay upon my breast ;
 And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
 And knew not why. My happy father died
 When sad distress reduced the children's meal :
 Thrice happy ! that from him the grave did hide
 The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
 And tears that flowed for ills which patience could
 not heal.

'Twas a hard change, an evil time was come ;
 We had no hope, and no relief could gain.
 But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
 Beat round, to sweep the streets of want and pain.
 My husband's arms now only served to strain
 Me and his children hungering in his view :
 In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain :
 To join those miserable men he flew ;
 And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

There foul neglect for months and months we bore,
 Nor yet the crowded fleet its anchor stirred. 101
 Green fields before us and our native shore,
 By fever, from polluted air incurred,
 Ravage was made, for which no knell was heard.
 Fondly we wished, and wished away, nor knew,
 'Mid that long sickness, and those hopes deferr'd,
 That happier days we never more must view :
 The parting signal streamed, at last the land withdrew,

But from delay the summer calms were past,
 On as we drove, the equinoctial deep 110
 Ran mountains-high before the howling blast.
 We gazed with terror on the gloomy sleep
 Of them that perished in the whirlwind's sweep,
 Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
 Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
 That we the mercy of the waves should rue.
 We reached the western world, a poor, devoted crew.

Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
 All that is dear *in* being! better far
 In Want's most lonely cave till death to pine, 120
 Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
 Or in the streets and walks where proud men are,
 Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
 Than dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
 Protract a curst existence, with the brood
 That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's blood.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
 Disease and famine, agony and fear,
 In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
 It would thy brain unsettle even to hear. 130
 All perished—all, in one remorseless year,
 Husband and children! one by one, by sword
 And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
 Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
 A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.

Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
 By the first beams of dawning light impress'd,
 In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main.
 The very ocean has its hour of rest,
 That comes not to the human mourner's breast. 140
 Remote from man, and storms of mortal care,
 A heavenly silence did the waves invest ;
 I looked and looked along the silent air,
 Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

Ah ! how unlike those late terrific sleeps !
 And groans, that rage of racking famine spoke,
 Where looks inhuman dwelt on festering heaps !
 The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke !
 The shriek that from the distant battle broke !
 The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host 150
 Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
 To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish toss'd,
 Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost !

Yet does that burst of woe congeal my frame,
 When the dark streets appeared to heave and gape,
 While like a sea the storming army came,
 And Fire from Hell reared his gigantic shape,
 And Murder, by the ghastly gleam, and Rape
 Seized their joint prey, the mother and the child !
 But from these crazing thoughts my brain, escape ! 160
 —For weeks the balmy air breathed soft and mild,
 And on the gliding vessel Heaven and Ocean smiled.

Some mighty gulph of separation past,
 I seemed transported to another world :—
 A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
 The impatient mariner the sail unfur'd,
 And whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
 The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home,
 And from all hope I was forever hurled.
 For me—farthest from earthly port to roam 170
 Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might
 come.

And oft, robb'd of my perfect mind, I thought
 At last my feet a resting-place had found :
 Here will I weep in peace, (so fancy wrought,)
 Roaming the illimitable waters round ;
 Here watch, of every human friend disowned,
 All day, my ready tomb the ocean-flood —
 To break my dream the vessel reached its bound :
 And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
 And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.

By grief enfeebled was I turned adrift, 181
 Helpless as sailor cast on desert rock ;
 Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
 Nor dared my hand at any door to knock.
 I lay, where with his drowsy mates, the cock
 From the cross timber of an out-house hung ;
 How dismal tolled, that night, the city clock !
 At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
 Nor to the beggar's language could I frame my tongue.

So passed another day, and so the third : 190
 Then did I try, in vain, the crowd's resort,
 In deep despair by frightful wishes stirr'd,
 Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort :
 There, pains which nature could no more support,
 With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall ;
 Dizzy my brain, with interruption short
 Of hideous sense ; I sunk, nor step could crawl,
 And thence was borne away to neighbouring hospital.

Recovery came with food : but still, my brain
 Was weak, nor of the past had memory. 200
 I heard my neighbours, in their beds, complain
 Of many things which never troubled me ;
 Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
 Of looks where common kindness had no part,
 Of service done with careless cruelty,
 Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
 And groans, which, as they said, would make a dead
 man start.

These things just served to stir the torpid sense,
 Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
 Memory, though slow, returned with strength; and thence
 Dismissed, again on open day I gazed, 211
 At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
 The lanes I sought, and as the sun retired,
 Came, where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
 The wild brood saw me weep, my fate enquired,
 And gave me food, and rest, more welcome, more desired.

My heart is touched to think that men like these,
 The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief:
 How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
 And their long holiday that feared not grief, 220
 For all belonged to all, and each was chief.
 No plough their finews strained; on grating road
 No wain they drove, and yet, the yellow sheaf
 In every vale for their delight was stowed:
 For them, in nature's meads, the milky udder flowed.

Semblance, with straw and panniered ass, they made
 Of potters wandering on from door to door :
 But life of happier sort to me pourtrayed,
 And other joys my fancy to allure ;
 The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor 230
 In barn uplighted, and companions boon
 Well met from far with revelry secure,
 In depth of forest glade, when jocund June
 Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

But ill it suited me, in journey dark
 O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch :
 To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
 Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch ;
 The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
 The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill, 240
 And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
 Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill :
 Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

What could I do, unaided and unblest ?
 Poor Father ! gone was every friend of thine :
 And kindred of dead husband are at best
 Small help, and, after marriage such as mine,
 With little kindness would to me incline.
 Ill was I then for toil or service fit :
 With tears whose course no effort could confine, 250
 By high-way side forgetful would I sit
 Whole hours, my idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

I lived upon the mercy of the fields,
 And oft of cruelty the sky accused ;
 On hazard, or what general bounty yields,
 Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
 The fields I for my bed have often used :
 But, what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
 Is, that I have my inner self abused,
 Foregone the home delight of constant truth, 260
 And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

Three years a wanderer, often have I view'd,
In tears, the sun towards that country tend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude :
And now across this moor my steps I bend--
Oh ! tell me whither—-for no earthly friend
Have I.—-She ceased, and weeping turned away,
As if because her tale was at an end
She wept ;—because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay. 270

GOODY BLAKE,
AND
HARRY GILL.
A TRUE STORY.

Oh ! what's the matter ? what's the matter ?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill ?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still.
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine :
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
 'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ; 10
 The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
 His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
 At night, at morning, and at noon,
 'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
 Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
 His teeth they chatter, chatter still.

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
 And who so stout of limb as he ?
 His cheeks were red as ruddy clover,
 His voice was like the voice of three. 20
 Auld Goody Blake was old and poor,
 Ill fed she was, and thinly clad ;
 And any man who pass'd her door,
 Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling,
 And then her three hours' work at night !
 Alas ! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
 It would not pay for candle-light.

—This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire,
 Her hut was on a cold hill-side, 30
 And in that country coals are dear,
 For they come far by wind and tide.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
 Two poor old dames, as I have known,
 Will often live in one small cottage,
 But she, poor woman, dwelt alone.
 'Twas well enough when summer came,
 The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
 Then at her door the *canty* dame
 Would sit, as any linnet gay. 40

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh ! then how her old bones would shake !
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead ;
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed,
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

Oh joy for her ! when e'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout,
And scatter'd many a lusty splinter,
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile before-hand, wood or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
 And made her poor old bones to ache,
 Could any thing be more alluring,
 Than an old hedge to Goody Blake? 60
 And now and then, it must be said,
 When her old bones were cold and chill,
 She left her fire, or left her bed,
 To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
 This trespass of old Goody Blake,
 And vow'd that she should be detected,
 And he on her would vengeance take.
 And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
 And to the fields his road would take, 70
 And there, at night, in frost and snow,
 He watch'd to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand ;
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble-land.
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'Tis Goody Blake,
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill.

80

Right glad was he when he beheld her :
Stick after stick did Goody pull,
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The bye-road back again to take,
He started forward with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast, 90
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, "I've caught you then at last!"
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And kneeling on the sticks, she pray'd
To God that is the judge of all.

She pray'd, her wither'd hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
"God! who art never out of hearing,
"O may he never more be warm!" 100
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray,
Young Harry heard what she had said,
And icy-cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
 That he was cold and very chill :
 His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
 Alas ! that day for Harry Gill !
 That day he wore a riding-coat,
 But not a whit the warmer he :
 Another was on Thursday brought,
 And ere the Sabbath he had three.

110

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
 And blankets were about him pimm'd ;
 Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
 Like a loose casement in the wind.
 And Harry's flesh it fell away ;
 And all who see him say 'tis plain,
 That, live as long as live he may,
 He never will be warm again.

120

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old ;
But ever to himself he mutters,
“ Poor Harry Gill is very cold.”
A-bed or up, by night or day ;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.

L I N E S

WRITTEN AT A SMALL DISTANCE FROM MY HOUSE,
AND SENT BY MY LITTLE BOY TO THE
PERSON TO WHOM THEY ARE
ADDRESSED.

It is the first mild day of March :
Each minute sweeter than before,
The red-breast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My Sister ! ('tis a wish of mine)
 Now that our morning meal is done, 10
 Make haste, your morning task resign ;
 Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you, and pray,
 Put on with speed your woodland dress,
 And bring no book, for this one day
 We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
 Our living Calendar :
 We from to-day, my friend, will date
 The opening of the year. 20

Love, now an universal birth,
 From heart to heart is stealing,
 From earth to man, from man to earth,
 —It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
 Than fifty years of reason ;
 Our minds shall drink at every pore
 The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts may make,
 Which they shall long obey ; 30
 We for the year to come may take
 Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
 About, below, above ;
 We'll frame the measure of our souls,
 They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my sister ! come, I pray,
 With speed put on your woodland dress,
 And bring no book ; for this one day
 We'll give to idleness. 40

SIMON LEE,
THE OLD HUNTSMAN,
WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS
CONCERNED.

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old man dwells, a little man,
I've heard he once was tall.
Of years he has upon his back,
No doubt, a burthen weighty ;
He says he is three score and ten,
But others say he's eighty.

A long blue livery-coat has he,
That's fair behind, and fair before ; 10
Yet, meet him where you will, you see
At once that he is poor.
Full five and twenty years he lived
A running huntsman merry ;
And, though he has but one eye left,
His cheek is like a cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And no man was so full of glee ;
To say the least, four counties round
Had heard of Simon Lee ; 20
His master's dead, and no one now
Dwells in the hall of Ivor ;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead ;
He is the sole survivor.

His hunting feats have him bereft
 Of his right eye, as you may see :
 And then, what limbs those feats have left
 To poor old Simon Lee !
 He has no son, he has no child,
 His wife, an aged woman, 30
 Lives with him, near the waterfall,
 Upon the village common.

And he is lean and he is sick,
 His little body's half awry
 His ancles they are swoln and thick
 His legs are thin and dry.
 When he was young he little knew
 Of husbandry or tillage ;
 And now he's forced to work, though weak.
 —The weakest in the village. 40

He all the country could outrun,
 Could leave both man and horse behind ;
 And often, ere the race was done,
 He reeled and was stone-blind.
 And still there's something in the world
 At which his heart rejoices ;
 For when the chiming hounds are out,
 He dearly loves their voices !

Old Ruth works out of doors with him,
 And does what Simon cannot do ; 50
 For she, not over stout of limb,
 Is stouter of the two.
 And though you with your utmost skill
 From labour could not wean them,
 Alas ! 'tis very little, all
 Which they can do between them.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
 Not twenty paces from the door,
 A scrap of land they have, but they
 Are poorest of the poor. 60

This scrap of land he from the heath
 Enclosed when he was stronger ;
 But what avails the land to them,
 Which they can till no longer ?

Few months of life has he in store,
 As he to you will tell,
 For still, the more he works, the more
 His poor old ancles swell.

My gentle reader, I perceive
 How patiently you've waited, 70
 And I'm afraid that you expect
 Some tale will be related.

O reader ! had you in your mind
 Such stores as silent thought can bring,
 O gentle reader ! you would find
 A tale in every thing.
 What more I have to say is short,
 I hope you'll kindly take it ;
 It is no tale ; but should you think,
 Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

80

One summer-day I chanced to see
 This old man doing all he could
 About the root of an old tree,
 A stump of rotten wood.
 The mattock totter'd in his hand ;
 So vain was his endeavour
 That at the root of the old tree
 He might have worked for ever.

“ You’re overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool ” to him I said ; 90
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffer’d aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I sever’d,
At which the poor old man so long
And vainly had endeavour’d.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done. 100
—I’ve heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning.
Alas ! the gratitude of men
Has oftner left me mourning.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS,

SHewing HOW THE ART OF LYING MAY BE

TAUGHT.

I have a boy of five years old,
His face is fair and fresh to see ;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we stroll'd on our dry walk,
Our quiet house all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran ;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore, 10
My pleasant home, when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
To think, and think, and think again :
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

My boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress !
And oftentimes I talked to him.
In very idleness. 20

The young lambs ran a pretty race ;
The morning sun shone bright and warm :
" Kilve," said I, " was a pleasant place,
" And so is Liswyn farm.

“ My little boy, which like you more,”
 I said and took him by the arm—
 “ Our home by Kilve’s delightful shore,
 “ Or here at Liswyn farm ? ”

“ And tell me, had you rather be,”
 I said and held him by the arm, 30
 “ At Kilve’s smooth shore by the green sea,
 “ Or here at Liswyn farm ? ”

In careless mood he looked at me,
 While still I held him by the arm,
 And said, “ At Kilve I’d rather be
 “ Than here at Liswyn farm.”

“ Now, little Edward, say why so ;
 My little Edward, tell me why ; ”
 “ I cannot tell, I do not know.”
 “ Why this is strange,” said I. 40

"For, here are woods and green-hills warm ;
 "There surely must some reason be
 "Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
 "For Kilve by the green sea."

At this, my boy, so fair and slim,
 Hung down his head, nor made reply ;
 And five times did I say to him,
 "Why? Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
 It caught his eye, he saw it plain— 50
 Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
 A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
 And thus to me he made reply ;
 "At Kilve there was no weather-cock.
 "And that's the reason why."

Oh dearest, dearest boy ! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

WE ARE SEVEN.

A simple child, dear brother Jim,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl,
She was eight years old, she said ;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That cluster'd round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad ;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair.
—Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
 "How many may you be?"
 "How many? seven in all," she said,
 And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they, I pray you tell?"
 She answered, "Seven are we,
 "And two of us at Conway dwell,
 "And two are gone to sea.

20

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
 "My sister and my brother,
 "And in the church-yard cottage, I
 "Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
 "And two are gone to sea,
 "Yet you are seven: I pray you tell
 "Sweet Maid, how this may be?"

Then did the little Maid reply,
 “ Seven boys and girls are we ; 30
 “ Two of us in the church-yard lie,
 “ Beneath the church-yard tree.”

“ You run about, my little maid,
 “ Your limbs they are alive ;
 “ If two are in the church-yard laid,
 “ Then ye are only five.”

“ Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
 The little Maid replied,
 “ Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
 “ And they are side by side. 40

“ My stockings there I often knit,
 “ My ’kerchief there I hem ;
 “ And there upon the ground I sit—
 “ I sit and sing to them.

" And often after sunset, Sir,
 " When it is light and fair,
 " I take my little porringer,
 " And eat my supper there.

" The first that died was little Jane ;
 " In bed she moaning lay, 50
 " Till God released her of her pain,
 " And then she went away.

" So in the church-yard she was laid,
 " And all the summer dry,
 " Together round her grave we played,
 " My brother John and I.

" And when the ground was white with snow,
 " And I could run and slide,
 " My brother John was forced to go,
 " And he lies by her side." 60

“How many are you then,” said I,

“If they two are in Heaven?”

The little Maiden did reply,

“O Master! we are seven.”

“But they are dead; those two are dead!

“Their spirits are in heaven!”

’Twas throwing words away; for still

The little Maid would have her will,

And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

L I N E S

WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it griev'd my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose-tufts, in that sweet bower,
 The periwinkle trail'd its wreathes ; 10
 And 'tis my faith that every flower
 Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd :
 Their thoughts I cannot measure,
 But the least motion which they made,
 It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
 To catch the breezy air ;
 And I must think, do all I can,
 That there was pleasure there. 20

If I these thoughts may not prevent,
 If such be of my creed the plan,
 Have I not reason to lament
 What man has made of man ?

THE
T H O R N.

I.

There is a thorn ; it looks so old,
In truth you'd find it hard to say,
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two-years' child,
It stands erect this aged thorn ;
No leaves it has, no thorny points ;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens it is overgrown.

10

II.

Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown
 With lichens to the very top,
 And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
 A melancholy crop :
 Up from the earth these mosses creep,
 And this poor thorn they clasp it round
 So close, you'd say that they were bent
 With plain and manifest intent,
 To drag it to the ground ;
 And all had joined in one endeavour
 To bury this poor thorn for ever.

20

III.

High on a mountain's highest ridge,
 Where oft the stormy winter gale
 Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
 It sweeps from vale to vale ;
 Not five yards from the mountain-path,

This thorn you on your left espy ;
 And to the left, three yards beyond,
 You see a little muddy pond 30
 Of water, never dry ;
 I've measured it from side to side :
 'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

IV.

And close beside this aged thorn,
 There is a fresh and lovely sight,
 A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
 Just half a foot in height.
 All lovely colours there you see,
 All colours that were ever seen,
 And mossy network too is there, 40
 As if by hand of lady fair
 The work had woven been,
 And cups, the darlings of the eye,
 So deep is their vermilion dye.

V.

Ah me ! what lovely tints are there !
 Of olive-green and scarlet bright,
 In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
 Green, red, and pearly white.
 This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss
 Which close beside the thorn you see, 50
 So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
 Is like an infant's grave in size
 As like as like can be :
 But never, never any where,
 An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI.

Now would you see this aged thorn,
 This pond and beauteous hill of moss,
 You must take care and chuse your time
 The mountain when to cross.
 For oft there sits, between the heap 60

That's like an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery ! oh misery !
"Oh woe is me ! oh misery !"

VII.

At all times of the day and night
This wretched woman thither goes,
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows ;
And there beside the thorn she sits
When the blue day-light's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery ! oh misery !
"Oh woe is me ! oh misery !"

VIII.

“ Now wherefore thus, by day and night,
 “ In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
 “ Thus to the dreary mountain-top 80
 “ Does this poor woman go ?
 “ And why sits she beside the thorn
 “ When the blue day-light’s in the sky,
 “ Or when the whirlwind’s on the hill,
 “ Or frosty air is keen and still,
 “ And wherefore does she cry ?—
 “ Oh wherefore ? wherefore ? tell me why
 “ Does she repeat that doleful cry ? ”

IX.

I cannot tell ; I wish I could ;
 For the true reason no one knows, 90
 But if you’d gladly view the spot,
 The spot to which she goes ;
 The heap that’s like an infant’s grave,

The pond—and thorn, so old and grey,
 Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
 And if you see her in her hut,
 Then to the spot away!—
 I never heard of such as dare
 Approach the spot when she is there.

X.

“ But wherefore to the mountain-top 160
 “ Can this unhappy woman go,
 “ Whatever star is in the skies,
 “ Whatever wind may blow? ”
 Nay rack your brain—'tis all in vain,
 I'll tell you every thing I know ;
 But to the thorn, and to the pond
 Which is a little step beyond,
 I wish that you would go :
 Perhaps when you are at the place
 You something of her tale may trace. 110

XI.

I'll give you the best help I can :
 Before you up the mountain go,
 Up to the dreary mountain-top,
 I'll tell you all I know.

'Tis now some two and twenty years,
 Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
 Gave with a maiden's true good will
 Her company to Stephen Hill ;
 And she was blithe and gay,
 And she was happy, happy still
 Whene'er she thought of Stephen Hill.

120

XII.

And they had fix'd the wedding-day,
 The morning that must wed them both :
 But Stephen to another maid
 Had sworn another oath :
 And with this other maid to church

Unthinking Stephen went—
 Poor Martha! on that woful day
 A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
 Into her bones was sent : 130
 It dried her body like a cinder,
 And almost turn'd her brain to tinder.

XIII.

They say, full six months after this,
 While yet the summer-leaves were green,
 She to the mountain-top would go,
 And there was often seen.
 'Tis said, a child was in her womb,
 As now to any eye was plain :
 She was with child, and she was mad,
 Yet often she was sober sad 140
 From her exceeding pain.
 Oh me! ten thousand times I'd rather
 That he had died, that cruel father!

XIV.

Sad ease for such a brain to hold
 Communion with a stirring child !
 Sad ease, as you may think, for one
 Who had a brain so wild !
 Last Christmas when we talked of this,
 Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
 That in her womb the infant wrought
 About its mother's heart, and brought
 Her senses back again :
 And when at last her time drew near,
 Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

150

XV.

No more I know, I wish I did,
 And I would tell it all to you ;
 For what became of this poor child
 There's none that ever knew :
 And if a child was born or no,

There's no one that could ever tell ; 160
 And if 'twas born alive or dead,
 There's no one knows, as I have said,
 But some remember well,
 That Martha Ray about this time
 Would up the mountain often climb.

XVI.

And all that winter, when at night
 The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
 'Twas worth your while, though in the dark.
 The church-yard path to seek :
 For many a time and oft were heard 170
 Cries coming from the mountain-head,
 Some plainly living voices were,
 And others, I've heard many swear,
 Were voices of the dead :
 I cannot think, whate'er they say,
 They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVII.

But that she goes to this old thorn,
 The thorn which I've described to you,
 And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
 I will be sworn is true.

180

For one day with my telescope,
 To view the ocean wide and bright,
 When to this country first I came,
 Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
 I climbed the mountain's height :
 A storm came on, and I could see
 No object higher than my knee.

XVIII.

'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain,
 No screen, no fence could I discover,
 And then the wind ! in faith, it was
 A wind full ten times over.
 I looked around, I thought I saw

190

A jutting crag, and off I ran,
 Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
 The shelter of the crag to gain,
 And, as I am a man,
 Instead of jutting crag, I found
 A woman seated on the ground.

XIX.

I did not speak—I saw her face,
 Her face it was enough for me ; 200
 I turned about and heard her cry,
 “ O misery ! O misery ! ”
 And there she sits, until the moon
 Through half the clear blue sky will go,
 And when the little breezes make
 The waters of the pond to shake,
 As all the country know,
 She shudders and you hear her cry,
 “ Oh misery ! oh misery ! ”

XX.

“ But what’s the thorn? and what’s the pond? 210

“ And what’s the hill of moss to her?

“ And what’s the creeping breeze that comes

“ The little pond to stir?”

I cannot tell; but some will say

She hanged her baby on the tree,

Some say she drowned it in the pond,

Which is a little step beyond,

But all and each agree,

The little babe was buried there,

Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

220

XXI.

I’ve heard the scarlet moss is red

With drops of that poor infant’s blood;

But kill a new-born infant thus!

I do not think she could.

Some say, if to the pond you go,

And fix on it a steady view,
 The shadow of a babe you trace,
 A baby and a baby's face,
 And that it looks at you ;
 Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain 230
 The baby looks at you again.

XXII.

And some had sworn an oath that she
 Should be to public justice brought ;
 And for the little infant's bones
 With spades they would have sought.
 But then the beauteous hill of moss
 Before their eyes began to stir ;
 And for full fifty yards around,
 The grass it shook upon the ground ;
 But all do still aver 240
 The little babe is buried there,
 Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXIII.

I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is, the thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
To drag it to the ground.
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright, 250
That I have heard her cry,
“Oh misery! oh misery!
“O woe is me! oh misery!”

THE
LAST OF THE FLOCK.

In distant countries I have been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown
Weep in the public roads alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad high-way, I met ;
Along the broad high-way he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet.
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad ;
And in his arms a lamb he had. 10

He saw me, and he turned aside,
 As if he wished himself to hide :
 Then with his coat he made essay
 To wipe those briny tears away.
 I follow'd him, and said, " My friend
 " What ails you ? wherefore weep you so ?"
 —" Shame on me, Sir ! this lusty lamb,
 He makes my tears to flow.
 To-day I fetched him from the rock ;
 He is the last of all my flock. 20

When I was young, a single man,
 And after youthful follies ran,
 Though little given to care and thought,
 Yet, so it was, a ewe I bought :
 And other sheep from her I raised,
 As healthy sheep as you might see,
 And then I married, and was rich
 As I could wish to be ;
 Of sheep I number'd a full score,
 And every year encreas'd my store. 30

Year after year my stock it grew,
 And from this one, this single ewe,
 Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
 As sweet a flock as ever grazed !
 Upon the mountain did they feed ;
 They throve, and we at home did thrive.
 —This lusty lamb of all my store
 Is all that is alive :
 And now I care not if we die,
 And perish all of poverty.

40

Ten children, Sir ! had I to feed,
 Hard labour in a time of need !
 My pride was tamed, and in our grief,
 I of the parish ask'd relief.
 They said I was a wealthy man ;
 My sheep upon the mountain fed,
 And it was fit that thence I took
 Whereof to buy us bread :”

“ Do this ; how can we give to you,”

They cried, “ what to the poor is due ? ”

50

10*

I sold a sheep as they had said,
 And bought my little children bread,
 And they were healthy with their food ;
 For me it never did me good.
 A woeful time it was for me,
 To see the end of all my gains,
 The pretty flock which I had reared
 With all my care and pains,
 To see it melt like snow away !
 For me it was a woeful day.

60

Another still ! and still another !
 A little lamb, and then its mother !
 It was a vein that never stopp'd,
 Like blood-drops from my heart they dropp'd.
 Till thirty were not left alive
 They dwindled, dwindled, one by one,
 And I may say that many a time
 I wished they all were gone :
 They dwindled one by one away ;
 For me it was a woeful day.

70

To wicked deeds I was inclined,
 And wicked fancies cross'd my mind,
 And every man I chanc'd to see,
 I thought he knew some ill of me
 No peace, no comfort could I find,
 No ease, within doors or without,
 And crazily, and wearily,
 I went my work about.
 Oft-times I thought to run away :
 For me it was a woeful day.

80

Sir ! 'twas a precious flock to me,
 As dear as my own children be ;
 For daily with my growing store
 I loved my children more and more.
 Alas ! it was an evil time ;
 God cursed me in my sore distress,
 I prayed, yet every day I thought
 I loved my children less ;
 And every week, and every day,
 My flock, it seemed to melt away.

90

They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see !
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a weather, and a ewe :
And then at last, from three to two :
And of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one,
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas ! and I have none :
To-day I fetched it from the rock :
It is the last of all my flock."

THE DUNGEON.

And this place our forefathers made for man !
 This is the process of our love and wisdom,
 To each poor brother who offends against us—
 Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty ?
 Is this the only cure ? Merciful God ?
 Each pore and natural outlet shrivell'd up
 By ignorance and parching poverty,
 His energies roll back upon his heart,
 And stagnate and corrupt ; till changed to poison, 9
 They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot ;
 Then we call in our pamper'd mountebanks—
 And this is their best cure ! uncomforted

And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
 And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
 Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,
 By the lamp's dismal twilight ! So he lies
 Circled with evil, till his very soul
 Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
 By sights of ever more deformity !

With other ministrations thou, O nature ! 20
 Healest thy wandering and distempered child :
 Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
 Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
 Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,
 Till he relent, and can no more endure
 To be a jarring and a dissonant thing,
 Amid this general dance and minstrelsy :
 But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
 His angry spirit healed and harmonized
 By the benignant touch of love and beauty. 30

THE
MAD MOTHER.

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair,
Her eye-brows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main,
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone ;
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the green-wood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among ;
And it was in the English tongue. 10

" Sweet babe ! they say that-I am mad,
 But nay, my heart is far too glad ;
 And I am happy when I sing
 Full many a sad and doleful thing :
 Then, lovely baby, do not fear !
 I pray thee have no fear of me,
 But, safe as in a cradle, here
 My lovely baby ! thou shalt be,
 To thee I know too much I owe ;
 I cannot work thee any woe.

20

A fire was once within my brain ;
 And in my head a dull, dull pain ;
 And fiendish faces one, two, three,
 Hung at my breasts, and pulled at me.
 But then there came a sight of joy ;
 It came at once to do me good ;
 I waked, and saw my little boy,
 My little boy of flesh and blood ;
 Oh joy for me that sight to see !
 For he was here, and only he.

30

Suck, little babe, oh suck again !
 It cools my blood ; it cools my brain ;
 Thy lips I feel them, baby ! they
 Draw from my heart the pain away.
 Oh ! press me with thy little hand ;
 It loosens something at my chest ;
 About that tight and deadly band
 I feel thy little fingers press'd.
 The breeze I see is in the tree ;
 It comes to cool my babe and me. 40

Oh ! love me, love me, little boy !
 Thou art thy mother's only joy ;
 And do not dread the waves below,
 When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go ;
 The high crag cannot work me harm,
 Nor leaping torrents when they howl ;
 The babe I carry on my arm,
 He saves for me my precious soul ;
 Then happy lie, for blest am I ;
 Without me my sweet babe would die. 50

Then do not fear, my boy ! for thee
 Bold as a lion I will be ;
 And I will always be thy guide,
 Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
 I'll build an Indian bower ; I know
 The leaves that make the softest bed :
 And if from me thou wilt not go,
 But still be true 'till I am dead,
 My pretty thing ! then thou shalt sing,
 As merry as the birds in spring.

60

Thy father cares not for my breast,
 'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest :
 'Tis all thine own ! and if its hue
 Be changed, that was so fair to view,
 'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove !
 My beauty, little child, is flown ;
 But thou wilt live with me in love,
 And what if my poor cheek be brown ?
 'Tis well for me ; thou canst not see
 How pale and wan it else would be.

70

Dread not their taunts, my little life !
 I am thy father's wedded wife ;
 And underneath the spreading tree
 We two will live in honesty.
 If his sweet boy he could forsake,
 With me he never would have stay'd :
 From him no harm my babe can take,
 But he, poor man ! is wretched made,
 And every day we two will pray
 For him that's gone and far away. 80

I'll teach my boy the sweetest things ;
 I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
 My little babe ! thy lips are still,
 And thou hast almost suck'd thy fill.
 —Where art thou gone my own dear child ?
 What wicked looks are those I see ?
 Alas ! alas ! that look so wild,
 It never, never came from me :
 If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
 Then I must be for ever sad. 90

Oh ! smile on me, my little lamb !
For I thy own dear mother am.
My love for thee has well been tried :
I've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade,
I know the earth-nuts fit for food ;
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid ;
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away !
And there, my babe ; we'll live for aye. 100

THE
IDIOT BOY.

THE
 I D I O T B O Y.

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
 The moon is up—the sky is blue,
 The owlet in the moonlight air,
 He shouts from nobody knows where ;
 He lengthens out his lonely shout,
 Halloo ! halloo ! a long halloo !

—Why bustle thus about your door,
 What means this bustle, Betty Foy ?
 Why are you in this mighty fret ?
 And why on horseback have you set 10
 Him whom you love, your idiot boy ?

Beneath the moon that shines so bright,
 Till she is tired, let Betty Foy
 With girt and stirrup fiddle-faddle :
 But wherefore set upon a saddle
 Him whom she loves, her idiot boy ?

There's scarce a soul that's out of bed :
 Good Betty ! put him down again ;
 His lips with joy they burr at you,
 But, Betty ! what has he to do
 With stirrup, saddle, or with rein ?

20

The world will say 'tis very idle,
 Bethink you of the time of night :
 There's not a mother, no not one,
 But when she hears what you have done,
 Oh ! Betty she'll be in a fright.

But Betty's bent on her intent,
 For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
 Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
 Is sick, and makes a piteous moan, 30
 As if her very life would fail.

There's not a house within a mile,
 No hand to help them in distress :
 Old Susan lies a bed in pain,
 And sorely puzzled are the twain,
 For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband's at the wood,
 Where by the week he doth abide.
 A woodman in the distant vale :
 There's none to help poor Susan Gale, 40
 What must be done ? what will betide ?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her pony, that is mild and good,
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,
And by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has up upon the saddle set,
The like was never heard of yet,
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.

50

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge that's in the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand,
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a hurly-burly now 60
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The boy who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, "Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
"Come home again, nor stop at all,
"Come home again, whate'er befall, 70
"My Johnny do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head, and with his hand.
And proudly shook the bridle too,
And then ! his words were not a few.
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the pony's side,
On which her idiot boy must ride, 80
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the pony moved his legs,⁷
Oh ! then for the poor idiot boy !
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left-hand you may see,
The green bough's motionless and dead ;
The moon that shines above his head 90
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee.
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship,
Oh ! happy, happy, happy John.

And Betty's standing at the door,
And Betty's face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim ; 100
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her idiot boy,
 What hopes it sends to Betty's heart !
 He's at the guide-post—he turns right,
 She watches till he's out of sight,
 And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
 As loud as any mill, or near it,
 Meek as a lamb the pony moves,
 And Johnny makes the noise he loves, 110
 And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale :
 And Johnny's in a merry tune,
 The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
 And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
 And on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree,
 For of this pony there's a rumour,
 That should he lose his eyes and ears,
 And should he live a thousand years, 120
 He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks !
 And when he thinks his pace is slack ;
 Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
 Yet for his life he cannot tell
 What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
 And far into the moonlight dale,
 And by the church, and o'er the down,
 To bring a doctor from the town, 130
 To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
 Is in the middle of her story,
 What comfort Johnny soon will bring,
 With many a most diverting thing,
 Of Johnny's wit and Johnny's glory.

And Betty's still at Susan's side :
 By this time she's not quite so flurried ;
 Demure with porringer and plate
 She sits, as if in Susan's fate
 Her life and soul were buried.

140

But Betty, poor good woman ! she,
 You plainly in her face may read it,
 Could lend out of that moment's store
 Five years of happiness or more,
 To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well,
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears, 150
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
“As sure as there’s a moon in heaven,”
Cries Betty, “he’ll be back again ;
“They’ll both be here, ’tis almost ten,
“They’ll both be here before eleven.”

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
The clock gives warning for eleven ;
’Tis on the stroke—“If Johnny’s near,”
Quoth Betty “he will soon be here, 160
“As sure as there’s a moon in heaven.”

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
 And Johnny is not yet in sight,
 The moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
 But Betty is not quite at ease :
 And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
 On Johnny vile reflections cast :
 " A little idle sauntering thing !"
 With other names, an endless string, 170
 But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
 That happy time all past and gone,
 " How can it be he is so late ?
 " The doctor he has made him wait,
 " Susan ! they'll both be here anon."

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
 And Betty's in a sad quandary ;
 And then there's nobody to say
 If she must go or she must stay : 180
 —She's in a sad quandary.

The clock is on the stroke of one ;
 But neither Doctor nor his guide
 Appear along the moonlight road,
 There's neither horse nor man abroad,
 And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan she begins to fear
 Of sad mischances not a few,
 That Johnny may perhaps be drown'd,
 Or lost perhaps, and never found ; 190
 Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
 With, "God forbid it should be true!"
 At the first word that Susan said
 Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
 "Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

"I must be gone, I must away,
 "Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
 "Susan, we must take care of him,
 "If he is hurt in life or limb"—
 "Oh God forbid!" poor Susan cries.

200

"What can I do?" says Betty, going.
 "What can I do to ease your pain?
 "Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay:
 "I fear you're in a dreadful way,
 "But I shall soon be back again."

" Good Betty go, good Betty go,
 " There's nothing that can ease my pain."
 Then off she hies, but with a prayer
 That God poor Susan's life would spare, 210
 Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
 And far into the moonlight dale ;
 And how she ran, and how she walked,
 And all that to herself she talked,
 Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
 In great and small, in round and square,
 In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
 In bush and brake, in black and green, 220
 'Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where,

She's past the bridge that's in the dale,
And now the thought torments her sore,
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon that's in the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

And now she's high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide ;
There's neither Johnny nor his horse,
Among the fern or in the gorse ;
There's neither doctor nor his guide.

230

“ Oh saints ! what is become of him ?
“ Perhaps he's climbed into an oak,
“ Where he will stay till he is dead :
“ Or sadly he has been misled,
“ And joined the wandering gypsey-folk.

" Or him that wicked pony's carried
 " To the dark cave, the goblins' hall,
 " Or in the castle he's pursuing,
 " Among the ghosts, his own undoing ; 240
 " Or playing with the waterfall."

At poor old Susan then she railed,
 While to the town she posts away ;
 " If Susan had not been so ill,
 " Alas ! I should have had him still,
 " My Johnny, till my dying day."

Poor Betty ! in this sad distemper,
 The doctor's self would hardly spare,
 Unworthy things she talked and wild,
 Even he, of cattle the most mild, 250
 The pony had his share.

And now she's got into the town,
And to the doctor's door she hies ;
'Tis silence all on every side ;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap,
The doctor at the casement shews,
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze : 260
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

“ Oh Doctor ! Doctor ! where's my Johnny ? ”
“ I'm here, what is't you want with me ? ”
“ Oh Sir ! you know I'm Betty Foy,
“ And I have lost my poor dear boy,
“ You know him—him you often see ;

"He's not so wise as some folks be,"
 "The devil take his wisdom!" said
 The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
 "What, woman! should I know of him?" 270
 And, grumbling, he went back to bed.

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
 "Here will I die; here will I die;
 "I thought to find my Johnny here,
 "But he is neither far nor near,
 "Oh! what a wretched mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about,
 Which way to turn she cannot tell.
 Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
 If she had heart to knock again; 280
 --The clock strikes three-- a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
 No wonder if her senses fail,
 This piteous news so much it shock'd her,
 She quite forgot to send the Doct̄or,
 To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
 And she can see a mile of road,
 "Oh cruel! I'm almost three-score :
 "Such night as this was ne'er before,
 "There's not a single soul abroad."

290

She listens, but she cannot hear
 The foot of horse, the voice of man :
 The streams with softest sound are flowing,
 The grass you almost hear it growing,
 You hear it now if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
 Are shouting to each other still :
 Fond lovers, yet not quite hob nob,
 They lengthen out the tremulous sob, 300
 That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
 Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin ;
 A green-grown pond she just has pass'd,
 And from the brink she hurries fast,
 Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps :
 Such tears she never shed before :
 " Oh dear, dear pony ! my sweet joy !
 " Oh carry back my idiot boy ! 310
 " And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head :
“ The pony he is mild and good,
“ And we have always used him well ;
“ Perhaps he’s gone along the dell,
“ And carried Johnny to the wood.”

Then up she springs as if on wings ;
She thinks no more of deadly sin ;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be. 320
To drown herself therein.

Oh reader ! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his horse are doing !
What they’ve been doing all this time.
Oh could I put it into rhyme.
A most delightful tale pursuing !

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought !
He with his pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star, 330
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And still and mute, in wonder lost,
All like a silent horseman-ghost,
He travels on along the vale.

And now, perhaps, he's hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he !
Yon valley, that's so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen, 340
A desert wilderness will be.

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
 And like the very soul of evil,
 He's galloping away, away,
 And so he'll gallop on for aye,
 The bane of all that dread the devil.

I to the muses have been bound,
 These fourteen years, by strong indentures :
 Oh gentle muses ! let me tell
 But half of what to him befel, 350
 For sure he met with strange adventures.

Oh gentle muses ! is this kind ?
 Why will ye thus my suit repel ?
 Why of your further aid bereave me ?
 And can ye thus unfriended leave me ?
 Ye muses ! whom I love so well.

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
 Which thunders down with headlong force,
 Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
 As careless as if nothing were, 360
 Sits upright on a feeding horse ?

Unto his horse, that's feeding free,
 He seems, I think, the rein to give :
 Of moon or stars he takes no heed ;
 Of such we in romances read.
 —'Tis Johnny ! Johnny ! as I live.

And that's the very pony too.
 Where is she, where is Betty Foy ?
 She hardly can sustain her fears ;
 The roaring water-fall she hears, 370
 And cannot find her idiot boy.

Your pony's worth his weight in gold.
 Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy !
 She's coming from among the trees,
 And now, all full in view, she sees
 Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.

And Betty sees the pony too :
 Why stand you thus Good Betty Foy ?
 It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
 'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
 He whom you love, your idiot boy.

380

She looks again—her arms are up—
 She screams—she cannot move for joy :
 She darts as with a torrent's force,
 She almost has o'erturned the horse,
 And fast she holds her idiot boy.

And Johnny burrs and laughs aloud,
Whether in cunning or in joy,
I cannot tell ; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs, 390
To hear again her idiot boy.

And now she's at the pony's tail,
And now she's at the pony's head,
On that side now, and now on this,
And almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again,
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy,
She's happy here, she's happy there,
She is uneasy every where ; 400
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy !
The little pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

“ Oh ! Johnny, never mind the Doctor :
“ You’ve done your best, and that is all.”
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the pony’s head 410
From the loud water-fall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her :
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The pony, Betty, and her boy,
 Wind slowly through the woody dale :
 And who is she, be-times abroad,
 That hobbles up the steep rough road ? 420
 Who is it, but old Susan Gale ?

Long Susan lay deep lost in thought,
 And many dreadful fears beset her,
 Both for her messenger and nurse :
 And as her mind grew worse and worse,
 Her body it grew better.

She turned, she toss'd herself in bed,
 On all sides doubts and terrors met her ;
 Point after point did she discuss ;
 And while her mind was fighting thus, 430
 Her body still grew better.

" Alas ! what is become of them ?
 " These fears can never be endured,
 " I'll to the wood."—The word scarce said,
 Did Susan rise up from her bed,
 As if by magic cured.

Away she posts up hill and down,
 And to the wood at length is come,
 She spies her friends, she shouts a greeting ;
 Oh me ! it is a merry meeting, 440
 As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
 While our four travellers homeward wend :
 The owls have hooted all night long,
 And with the owls began my song,
 And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
 Cried Betty, "Tell us Johnny, do,
 "Where all this long night you have been,
 "What you have heard, what you have seen, 450
 "And Johnny, mind you tell us true."

Now Johnny all night long had heard
 The owls in tuneful concert strive ;
 No doubt too he the moon had seen :
 For in the moonlight he had been
 From eight o'clock till five.

And thus to Betty's question, he
 Made answer, like a traveller bold,
 (His very words I give to you,)
 "The cocks did crow to-whoop, to-whoop, 460
 "And the sun did shine so cold."
 —Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
 And that was all his travel's story.

L I N E S

WRITTEN NEAR RICHMOND, UPON THE THAMES.

AT EVENING.

How rich the wave, in front, imprest
With evening-twilight's summer hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent path pursues !
And see how dark the backward stream !
A little moment past, so smiling !
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterer beguiling.

Such views the youthful bard allure,
 But, heedless of the following gloom, 10
 He deems their colours shall endure
 'Till peace go with him to the tomb.
 —And let him nurse his fond deceit,
 And what if he must die in sorrow !
 Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
 Though grief and pain may come to-morrow ?

Glide gently, thus for ever glide,
 O Thames ! that other bards may see,
 As lovely visions by thy side
 As now, fair river ! come to me. 20
 Oh glide, fair stream ! for ever so ;
 Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
 'Till all our minds for ever flow,
 As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought ! yet be as now thou art,
 That in thy waters may be seen
 The image of a poet's heart,
 How bright, how solemn, how serene !
 Such heart did once the poet bless,
 Who, pouring here a * *later* ditty. 30
 Could find no refuge from distress,
 But in the milder grief of pity.

Remembrance ! as we glide along,
 For him suspend the dashing oar,
 And pray that never child of Song
 May know his freezing sorrows more.
 How calm ! how still ! the only sound,
 The dripping of the oar suspended !
 —The evening darkness gathers round
 By virtue's holiest powers attended. 40

* Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written. I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

EXPOSTULATION

AND

R E P L Y .

-
- .. Why William, on that old grey stone,
.. Thus for the length of half a day,
.. Why William, sit you thus alone,
.. And dream your time away ?
- .. Where are your books ? that light bequeath'd
.. To beings else forlorn and blind !
.. Up ! Up ! and drink the spirit breath'd
.. From dead men to their kind.

“ You look round on your mother earth,
 “ As if she for no purpose bore you : 10
 “ As if you were her first-born birth,
 “ And none had lived before you ! ”

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
 When life was sweet I knew not why,
 To me my good friend Matthew spake,
 And thus I made reply.

“ The eye it cannot chuse but see,
 “ We cannot bid the ear be still ;
 “ Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
 “ Against, or with our will. 20

“ Nor less I deem that there are powers,
 “ Which of themselves our minds impress,
 “ That we can feed this mind of ours,
 “ In a wise passiveness.

“Think you, mid all this mighty sum

“Of things for ever speaking,

“That nothing of itself will come,

“But we must still be seeking?”

“—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,

“Conversing as I may,

30

“I sit upon this old grey stone,

“And dream my time away.”

THE TABLES TURNED ;

AN EVENING SCENE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT.



Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks.
Why all this toil and trouble?
Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double.

The sun above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow,
Through all the long green fields has spread.
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books ! 'tis a dull and endless strife,
 Come, hear the woodland linnet, 10
 How sweet his music ; on my life
 There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark ! how blithe the throstle sings !
 And he is no mean preacher ;
 Come forth into the light of things,
 Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
 Our minds and hearts to bless—
 Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
 Truth breathed by cheerfulness. 20

One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man ;
 Of moral evil and of good.
 Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which nature brings ;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things ;
—We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art ;
Close up these barren leaves ;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

OLD MAN TRAVELLING ;

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY,

A SKETCH.



The little hedge-row birds,
 That peck along the road, regard him not.
 He travels on, and in his face, his step,
 His gait, is one expression ; every limb,
 His look and bending figure, all bespeak
 A man who does not move with pain, but moves
 With thought—He is insensibly subdu'd
 To settled quiet : he is one by whom
 All effort seems forgotten, one to whom
 Long patience has such mild composure given, 10
 That patience now doth seem a thing, of which
 He hath no need. He is by nature led

To peace so perfect, that the young behold
With envy, what the old man hardly feels.
— I asked him whither he was bound, and what
The object of his journey ; he replied
“ Sir ! I am going many miles to take
“ A last leave of my son, a mariner,
“ Who from a sea-fight has been brought to
 Falmouth,
And there is dying in an hospital.”

THE COMPLAINT
 OF A FORSAKEN
 INDIAN WOMAN.

[*When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions ; he is left behind, covered over with Deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he is unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the Desert : unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other Tribes of Indians. It is unnecessary to add that the females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work,*

Hearne's Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. *When the Northern Lights, as the same writer informs us, vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise. This circumstance is alluded to in the first stanza of the following poem.]*

THE COMPLAINT,

§c.

Before I see another day,
 Oh let my body die away !
 In sleep I heard the northern gleams ;
 The stars they were among my dreams ;
 In sleep did I behold the skies,
 I saw the crackling flashes drive ;
 And yet they are upon my eyes,
 And yet I am alive. ·

Before I see another day,
 Oh let my body die away !

10

My fire is dead : it knew no pain :
 Yet is it dead, and I remain.
 All stiff with ice the ashes lie ;
 And they are dead, and I will die.
 When I was well, I wished to live,
 For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire ;
 But they to me no joy can give,
 No pleasure now, and no desire.
 Then here contented will I lie ;
 Alone I cannot fear to die.

20

Alas ! you might have dragged me on
 Another day, a single one !
 Too soon despair o'er me prevailed ;
 Too soon my heartless spirit failed ;
 When you were gone my limbs were stronger,
 And Oh how grievously I rue,
 That, afterwards, a little longer,
 My friends, I did not follow you !
 For strong and without pain I lay,
 My friends, when you were gone away.

30

My child ! they gave thee to another,
 A woman who was not thy mother.
 When from my arms my babe they took,
 On me how strangely did he look !
 Through his whole body something ran,
 A most strange something did I see ;
 —As if he strove to be a man,
 That he might pull the sledge for me.
 And then he stretched his arms, how wild !
 Oh mercy ! like a little child. 40

My little joy ! my little pride !
 In two days more I must have died.
 Then do not weep and grieve for me :
 I feel I must have died with thee.
 Oh wind that o'er my head art flying,
 The way my friends their course did bend,
 I should not feel the pain of dying,
 Could I with thee a message send.
 Too soon, my friends, you went away :
 For I had many things to say. 50

I'll follow you across the snow,
 You travel heavily and slow :
 In spite of all my weary pain,
 I'll look upon your tents again.
 My fire is dead, and snowy white
 The water which beside it stood ;
 The wolf has come to me to-night,
 And he has stolen away my food.
 For ever left alone am I,
 Then wherefore should I fear to die ? 60

My journey will be shortly run,
 I shall not see another sun,
 I cannot lift my limbs to know
 If they have any life or no.
 My poor forsaken child ! if I
 For once could have thee close to me,
 With happy heart I then would die,
 And my last thoughts would happy be.
 I feel my body die away,
 I shall not see another day. 70

THE CONVICT.

The glory of evening was spread through the west ;
 —On the slope of a mountain I stood,
 While the joy that precedes the calm season of rest
 Rang loud through the meadow and wood.

“ And must we then part from a dwelling so fair ? ”
 In the pain of my spirit I said,
 And with a deep sadness I turned, to repair
 To the cell where the convict is laid.

The thick-ribbed walls that o’ershadov the gate
 Resound ; and the dungeons unfold : 10
 I pause ; and at length, through the glimmering grate,
 That outcast of pity behold.

His black matted head on his shoulder is bent,
 And deep is the sigh of his breath,
 And with stedfast dejection his eyes are intent
 On the fetters that link him to death.

'Tis sorrow enough on that visage to gaze,
 That body dismiss'd from his care ;
 Yet my fancy has pierced to his heart, and pourtrays
 More terrible images there. 20

His bones are consumed, and his life-blood is dried,
 With wishes the past to undo ;
 And his crime, through the pains that o'erwhelm him,
 descried,
 Still blackens and grows on his view.

When from the dark synod, or blood-reeking field,
 To his chamber the monarch is led,
 All soothers of sense their soft virtue shall yield,
 And quietness pillow his head.

But if grief, self-consumed, in oblivion would doze,
 And conscience her tortures appease, 30
 'Mid tumult and uproar this man must repose ;
 In the comfortless vault of disease.

When his fetters at night have so press'd on his limbs,
 That the weight can no longer be borne,
 If, while a half-slumber his memory bedims,
 The wretch on his pallet should turn,

While the jail-mastiff howls at the dull clanking chain,
 From the roots of his hair there shall start
 A thousand sharp punctures of cold-sweating pain,
 And terror shall leap at his heart. 40

But now he half-raises his deep-sunken eye,
 And the motion unsettles a tear ;
 The silence of sorrow it seems to supply,
 And asks of me why I am here.

- ‘ Poor victim ! no idle intruder has stood
 “ With o’erweening complacence our state to compare.
 “ But one, whose first wish is the wish to be good,
 “ Is come as a brother thy sorrows to share.
- “ At thy name though compassion her nature resign.
 “ Though in virtue’s proud mouth thy report be a
 stain, 50
- “ My care, if the arm of the mighty were mine,
 “ Would plant thee where yet thou might’st blossom
 again.”

L I N E S

WRITTEN A FEW MILES ABOVE

TINTERN ABBEY,

ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING
A TOUR,*July 13, 1798.*

Five years have passed ; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters ! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a sweet inland murmur.*—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles
above Tintern.

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Among the woods and copses lose themselves,
 Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb
 The wild green landscape. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
 Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
 Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem, 20
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
 Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
 The hermit sits alone.

Though absent long,
 These forms of beauty have not been to me,

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
 And passing even into my purer mind 30
 With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure ; such, perhaps,
 As may have had no trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life ;
 His little, nameless, unremembered acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight 40
 Of all this unintelligible world
 Is lighten'd :—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

If this

50

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft,
 In darkness, and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless day-light : when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart.
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee
 O sylvan Wye ! Thou wanderer through the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint, 60
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again :
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when
 first

I came among these hills : when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams, 70
 Wherever nature led : more like a man
 Flying from something that he dreads, than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
 And their glad animal movements all gone by,)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me 80
 An appetite : a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, or any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is
 past,
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur : other gifts
 Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompence. For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour 90
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power

To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean, and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man, 100
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains ; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
 Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,*

* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young, the exact expression of which I cannot recollect.

And what perceive : well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, 110
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

Nor, perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
 For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
 Of this fair river ; thou, my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while 120
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister ! And this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray

The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy : for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men, 130
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
 And let the misty mountain winds be free
 To blow against thee : and in after years,
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind 140
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place

For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; Oh ! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
 And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance,
 If I should be, where I no more can hear
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
 Of past existence, wilt thou then forget 150
 That on the banks of this delightful stream
 We stood together ; and that I, so long
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
 Unwearied in that service : rather say
 With warmer love, oh ! with far deeper zeal
 Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
 That after many wanderings, many years
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
 More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake. 160

END.

ERRATA.¹

Page

- 10 for "fog smoke-white," read "fog-smoke white."
18 "those," read "these."
50 Omit the comma after "loveth well."
140 after "clanking hour," place a comma.
202 omit the sixth line from the bottom,
" And the low corses coming from the trees "

¹ [*Corrected in this reprint.*]



NOTES

PAGE 1. In 1800 on pp. 1 and 5 the title became: 'The Ancient Mariner. A Poet's Reverie.' In the revised copy of 1800 (from which the printer worked for ed. 1802) 'A Poet's Reverie' is carefully erased (perhaps in deference to C. Lamb's protest) on p. 5, but on the half-title, p. 1, it was overlooked, and remained there in edd. 1802 and 1805. The 'Argument' and the text underwent considerable alteration in 1800, but in 1802 the most significant change was the correction of a misprint, 'agency', into 'agony', in a line ('That agency returns') which replaced l. 616. The 'Argument' was omitted in 1802 and 1805. The student should compare the final (and much enriched) text, as given in 1817 in *Sibylline Leaves* (and in modern editions), with the first version. The chief early changes may be briefly noted from the 1800 text here, under the following five heads:—

i. Diminished archaism: Ancient, Mariner, choose, minstrelsy, cold (l. 50, cauld), emerald, nor (*for ne*), as if (an, l. 47), without a (ll. 161, 428), between (atween, l. 203), ghastly (eldritch, l. 234), April hoar-frost spread (l. 260), given (yeven, l. 286), skylark (Lavroek, l. 348), laid (lay'd, l. 405), eyes (een, l. 445; rhyme-word changed, l. 448). But soon (Eftsones, l. 527), &c.

ii. Diminished quaintness or grotesqueness: l. 47 became 'And Southward still for days and weeks'; l. 60: 'A wild and ceaseless sound'; l. 83: 'Still hid in mist; and on the left'; l. 320; 'Yet now the Ship mov'd on'. (Line 16 changed in 1817).

iii. Diminished matter-of-factness or realism : ll. 139-40 replaced by a new stanza :

So past a weary time ; each throat
Was parch'd, and glaz'd each eye,
When, looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

(L. 65 was changed in 1817 to 'It ate the food it ne'er had eat'.)

iv. Diminished horror : ll. 177-8 became :

Are those *her* Ribs, through which the Sun
Did peer, as thro' a grate?

and l. 180 : That Woman, and her Mate? (Lines 181-85 went out in 1817, and ll. 189-90 were then modified.) ll. 337-8 were replaced by :

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
Be calm, thou wedding guest!
'Twas not those souls, that fled in pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :'

v. Diminished iteration : 1800 edition omits ll. 362-77 ; 481-502 ; and 531-36.

Wordsworth's contributions : 'Much the greatest part of the story' (Wordsworth told Miss Fenwick) 'was Mr. Coleridge's invention, but certain parts I suggested ; for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings'. W. had been reading about albatrosses in Shelvocke's *Voyages*, and suggested that Coleridge should represent the mariner as killing one 'on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of those regions take upon them to avenge the crime'. W. also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men. The lines 218-9 were by Wordsworth, who also claimed

to have written lines 17-20. But on the whole, W. 'had very little share in the composition of it, for I soon found' (he told Dyce) 'that the style of Coleridge and myself would not assimilate'. The note that Wordsworth appended to the A. M. in 1800 will be found in Mr. Dykes Campbell's ed. of Coleridge's *Poems*, p. 596, with much other matter.

Coleridge's sources: These cannot be certainly identified, but some of them may perhaps be noted, at least as having furnished unconscious suggestions. Some of his archaisms, and to some extent his metrical forms, came from Percy's modified ballad of 'Sir Cauline'; other archaisms have been traced to Chaucer. There is a spell-driven vessel in *Macbeth*, and a 'man forbid', under a fatal ban: 'Though his bark shall not be lost, Yet it shall be tempest-tost'. Another echo of Shakespeare may be in the voices of the element that recall Ariel's spirit music. The voyages of the Elizabethan seamen and early arctic explorers, and the legend of the Flying Dutchman; the story of the Wandering Jew, like that of Cain, that had so strange an interest for the men of Coleridge's time (see De Quincey's *Wks.*, xiii. 195, ed. Masson); the descriptions of the calenture and its delirium; the Antic Deaths of Holbein's grim woodcuts and of the Emblematisers, dicing for the souls of men; the binding power of the eye of fascination; the personifications of mediaeval allegory (Mr. Hutchinson refers to the description of Ydelnesse in the *Romunt of the Rose*, ll. 539-640, as having possibly suggested the nightmare-woman); the symbolism and figures and pious ejaculations of mediaeval religion; the seraph-bands of mediaeval art; the eerie atmosphere, the 'hand of glory', and the spectre-lore of romance; the ballad-tone of the north countree, and the covenanters' kirk; the Quantock scenery, with the restless gossameres, and the singing of brooks in summer nights; the pains of sleeplessness and the horror of troubled dreams; the marvels seen from shipboard, such

as that 'beautiful white cloud of foam at momentarily intervals' coursing by the side of the vessel (see *Satyrane's Letters*, in *Biog.* p. 245), and the 'little stars of flame' that 'danced and sparkled and went out in it'; the doctrine of the new humanitarianism, and the mysticism of the Coleridgean faith, summing all in the lesson of Divine love:—these may be some of the elements out of which this wondrous poem was wrought.

PAGE 18. 'those' occurs twice on the page and has been twice corrected to 'these' (see *Errata*, p. 211). It should be noted, however, that in 1800 this correction in 1798 *Errata* was ignored, and 'those' was left as the reading in lines 177, 179.

PAGE 53. *The Foster-Mother's Tale*. An excerpt from Coleridge's tragedy of *Osorio* (1797). In 1800 lines 1-16 (to 'idly!') and ll. 69-70 were omitted.

PAGE 59. The *Lines left upon a Seat*, &c., indicate the growth of Wordsworth's philosophic opinions to the large humanity shown in the *Tintern* poem. He worked over these *Lines* very carefully from time to time, introducing modifications, in 1800 especially. Thus, 'genius' (l. 13) became 'Science': ll. 18-19 were expanded to six lines by a simile (dropped in 1802). In 1815 the 'glancing sandpiper' became

the sand-lark, restless Bird,
Piping along the margin of the lake.

But in 1820 the 'glancing sandpiper' was restored. In 1800 after l. 34 a new line

When Nature had subdued him to herself
was interposed.

PAGE 63. *The Nightingale*. By Coleridge; replacing *Leviti*. Ed. 1800 omits ll. 64-9 ('On moonlight' to 'love-torch'). The 'most gentle maid' of l. 69 was Miss Ellen Cruikshank, sister of Coleridge's friend whose 'dream' was said to have

been one of the predisposing causes of the *Ancient Mariner*. The castle was Enmore Castle.

PAGE 69, *b. The Female Vagrant*. This poem was begun in 1793, and underwent very thorough revision for the edition of 1802, but was further cut down in 1815. In 1820 some parts were restored, but the harsh Landlord was handled less severely than in the earlier versions, written before W. had become a 'lost leader'. Indeed the poem of 1798 breathes the spirit of the revolutionary Wordsworth, but with a difference. Beaupuy had said to him (pointing to a starving peasant-girl), 'It is against *that* we are fighting': and W's poem utters a kindred protest against 'what man has made of man', as seen in the horrors of war and the miseries and 'crime' of the poorer classes. This poem finally became part of the longer and quite early poem entitled *Guilt and Sorrow*, which, like the *Borderers*, W. kept by him for many years, and considerably modified before publication in its full extent in 1842.

PAGE 85. *Goody Blake, &c.* W. gives his view of the aim of this poem in his Preface. In 1820 he changed ll. 29-33 to

Remote from sheltering village-green
Upon a bleak hill-side, she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.

PAGE 95. *Lines, &c.* This poem has been cited as if it embodied in carefully measured language one of the poet's main philosophical tenets, but is it, after all, much more than an expression of his ecstatic delight that 'summer is icumen in': that the 'first mild day in March', after a bleak winter, has at last arrived? External nature and the heart of man alike seem dowered with new gifts of life and new powers of enjoyment, and this new joy is poured forth in terms of 'natural piety'. Is not this abandonment of self to the ecstasy of faith—a faith that 'all's well with the world' if we surrender our whole selves to the feelings inspired, and not

any set philosophic dogma—what we mean when we speak of W's 'gift of rest' to men?

Edward—a syllabic equivalent for Basil—was Basil Montagu's son, who had been staying with the Wordsworths, first at Racedown and later at Alfoxden: the 'boy of five years old', to whom our sympathies go out when he prefers Kilve without a weather-cock to Liswyn with one!

PAGE 98. The text of *Simon Lee* underwent certain changes. In 1802 the fourth stanza (ll. 25-32) was placed after l. 59. In 1820 the first two lines of this stanza were replaced as in 1798, but the following lines became:

And Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
When he was young (&c. as ll. 36-40).

Then came ll. 41-8 without alteration, after which ll. 33-6, were changed to

But he is lean and he is sick,
His dwindled body half awry,
Rests upon ancles swoln, &c.

and the stanza was completed by ll. 29-32. In 1820 ll. 4-12 were also omitted.

PAGE 105. The *Anecdote for Fathers* was criticized by Coleridge (1817), and W. tried to meet the objections by alterations in later years. Mr. Hutchinson says that W. 'partly masks the truth' by substituting Kilve (a village near Alfoxden) for Racedown, and Llysven (John Thelwall's farm on the Wye) for Alfoxden. The final reflection has a resemblance of manner to that at the close of *Simon Lee*, and the thought—could I but teach, &c.—foreshadows the 'best Philosopher' of the great *Ode*.

PAGE 110. *We are Seven* illustrates W's definition of poetry as expressing 'emotion recollected in tranquillity', for the incident occurred at Goodrich Castle in 1793 and the poem

was written in 1798. The first stanza was by Coleridge, and 'dear Brother Jim' (who was cut out in 1815) jocularly alluded to James Tobin. In *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 146, Prof. Bradley propounds a new view of this poem.

PAGE 115. These lines are, in a sense, a pendant to the train of thought in the *Female Vagrant* and *Simon Lee*, as *The Last of the Flock* is likewise. In 1820 l. 22 became: 'If such be nature's holy plan'.

PAGE 117. *The Thorn* came in for criticism in the early days. The story was devised by W. to fit the landscape, with a view to illustrating the power of imagination. In 1800-5 a long note—amplifying the statement in the 'Advertisement' of ed. 1798—describes the type of man who is supposed to tell the story: a retired captain of a small coaster, unemployed, superstitious and credulous, ready to retail any 'yarn' concerning local scandal. Thus the poem complies with the theoretic 'language of conversation in the middle and lower classes' as an experiment in dramatic diction, and is at the same time implicitly a psychological study of a self-revealed character. Some touches—e.g. the telescope—suggest the seafaring narrator. Yet we cannot help inquiring whether, without this Advertisement, we should have suspected the existence of this garrulous intermediary between us and the story; and if not, whether he is to be regarded as relevant and necessary. We do not think of the speaker, but of the story: a true lyrical ballad, realistic and intense. No one can get the ring of that terrible moan out of his ears, or fail to see in thought that form of misery beside the wind-swept thorn. As usual, the text underwent change. ll. 104-14 were struck out in 1820, and 'Old Father Simpson' (l. 149) became 'grey-haired Wilfred of the glen'—a somewhat un-Wordsworthian alteration.

PAGE 139. *The Dungeon* is an excerpt from Coleridge's *Osorio*. Omitted 1802.

PAGE 141. *The Mad Mother* might almost be viewed as a dramatic monologue by the poor woman whose story formed the groundwork of *Ruth*. It is curious to note the number of ways in which our poets dealt with the theme of mental derangement.

PAGE 149. *The Idiot Boy* is an example of the way in which W. went to an extreme in order to enforce his view of a principle. Maternal love is one of the greatest glories of the human race, therefore let us take it as manifested towards the least human object—the idiot child. In regard to such children, too, the affections are found in greater simplicity and purity among the lower classes, as W. maintained, for the poor cherish an idiot child when parents of higher rank might put it away from sight in some asylum. Thus the poem has value from the point of view of W's theory. Whether it has equal value as a poem may be questioned, but poetic values must be 'felt in the blood, and felt along the heart' of each one of us.

PAGE 180. These *Lines* were divided at l. 16 in 1800, and the second portion headed: 'Written near Richmond upon the Thames'. In 1802 this became the secondary title, and the heading *Remembrance of Collins*. The two pieces, with other matter, were also shifted to the second volume, to make room for the extended Preface. The poem was originally composed in 1789.

PAGE 183. *Expostulation, &c.* This and the following poem (*The Tables Turned*) arose, we are told in the Advertisement, from a conversation with a friend (probably William Hazlitt), but W. changes the person in the former poem, connecting it definitely with his old teacher (partly drawn from William Taylor, the 'gray-haired man of glee'), while in the latter the philosophic and over-bookish friend may have been the object of exhortation. As 'philosophic pronouncements', these poems seem to be on a par with the *Lines* (p. 95) evoked

by 'the first mild day of March'. They express a point of view, not a formal opinion.

PAGE 189. In 1800 the sub-title became the heading, and the words *Old Man Travelling*: were omitted. In 1815 the poem ended with l. 14. But in vol. ii of 1800 the poem of *The Old Cumberland Beggar* had been published, and the final details were then felt to be unnecessary.

PAGE 193. Another beautiful example of the power of maternal love, and the still sad music of life and death.

PAGE 197. *The Convict*. Omitted 1800 and never reprinted by W. In the *Athenæum* of 27 Aug. 1904, Mr. R. A. Potts printed the first version of what he justly describes as this 'curiously immature composition', which he unearthed from the *Morning Post* of Dec. 14, 1797, where it is signed 'Mortimer'. This was Coleridge's assumed name sometimes, whence Mr. Potts conjectured that W. had given C. a copy and that C. had sent it to the paper in his own name to appease the editorial craving for 'copy'. There is a final set of four lines after l. 52 :—

Vain wish! Yet misdeem not that vainly I grieve—
When vengeance has quitted her grasp on thy frame,
My pity thy children and wife shall relieve
From the dangers that wait round the dwellings of shame.

PAGE 201. *Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, &c.* This poem is a spiritual autobiography that sums up in a few lines much of the essential Wordsworth of the *Prelude*. Note that line 20 (corrected in this reprint) is an erratum, corrected in the Errata 1798 and struck out 1800. In 1802 ll. 13-14 were altered into:—

Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
Among the woods and copses, nor disturb
The wild green landscape.

In 1820 l. 33 began : As have no slight or trivial, &c.

The line from Young is in the *Night Thoughts* (vi. 424):
'And half-create the wondrous world they see'.

In 1800 Wordsworth added the following 'Note to the Poem on Revisiting the Wye, p. 201.—I have not ventured to call this Poem an Ode; but it was written with a hope that in the transitions, and the impassioned music of the versification, would be found the principal requisites of that species of composition.'

NOTE ON APPENDIX. In 1802 Wordsworth elaborated his views on "what is usually called Poetic Diction" (see page 242, line 3), in a note that will be found in any of the collected editions.

APPENDIX

WORDSWORTH'S PREFACE OF 1800, WITH A COLLATION OF THE ENLARGED PREFACE OF 1802.

PREFACE [1800]

THE First Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment¹ which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems : I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure : and on the other hand¹ I was well aware¹ that by those who should dislike them they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that I have pleased a greater number, than I ventured to hope I should please.

For the sake of variety¹ and from a consciousness of my own weakness¹ I was induced to request the assistance of a Friend, who furnished me with the Poems of the ANCIENT MARINER, the FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE, the NIGHTINGALE, the DUNGEON, and the Poem entitled LOVE. I should not, however, have requested this assistance, had I not believed that the poems² of my Friend would in a great measure have the same

¹ 1802: experiment, . . . hand, . . . aware, . . . variety, . . . weakness,

² 1802: Poems

tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance in the colours of our style ; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems from a belief, that³ if the views, with which they were composed, were indeed realized, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the multiplicity³ and in the quality of its moral relations : and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory, upon which the poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, because⁴ I knew that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems : and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because adequately to display my opinions⁴ and fully to enforce my arguments would require a space wholly disproportionate to the nature of a preface. For to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence, of which I believe it susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved ; which⁵ again could not be determined, without pointing out, in what manner language and the human mind act and react on each other, and without retracing the revolutions not of literature alone⁵ but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence ; yet I am sensible, that there would be some impropriety in

³ 1802 : that, if the views with which they were composed were . . . multiplicity, and

⁴ 1802 : because . . . opinions,

⁵ 1802 : which, again, . . . re-act . . . revolutions, . . . alone.

abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those, upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association,⁶ that he not only thus apprizes the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different æras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus Terence and Lucretia, and that of Statius or Claudian,⁷ and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which by the act of writing in verse an Author in the present day⁸ makes to his Reader; but I am certain it will appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted.⁹ I hope therefore the Reader will not censure me, if I attempt to state what I have proposed to myself to perform,⁹ and also, (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant

⁶ 1802: association;

1802: Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius (*also corrected in Errata of 1800*) . . . Claudian;

⁸ 1802: Author, . . . day,

⁹ 1802 inserts (from 1798) after 'contracted.': They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. . . . perform;

feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from the most dishonorable accusation which can be brought against an Author, namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained¹⁰ prevents him from performing it.

The principal object then¹⁰ which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to make the incidents of common life interesting¹¹ by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation¹² the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that situation¹³ our elementary feelings exist¹³ in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations¹³ are more easily comprehended; and are more durable; and lastly, because in that situation¹⁴ the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language

¹⁰ 1802: ascertained, . . . object, then,

¹¹ 1802 changes 'to make the incidents . . . interesting' to: to chuse incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men; and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by

¹² 1802: chosen, because in that condition, the

¹³ 1802: because in that condition of life . . . co-exist . . . simplicity, . . . contemplated, . . . occupations,

¹⁴ 1802: condition . . . language, too,

too¹⁴ of these men is adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the action¹⁵ of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly¹⁶ such a language arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings is a more permanent and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites¹⁶ of their own creation.*

I cannot¹⁷ be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge¹⁷ that this defect where it exists, is more dishonorable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at

* It is worth while here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

¹⁵ 1802: influence

¹⁶ 1802: Accordingly, such a language, . . . feelings, . . . permanent, . . . language, . . . and their art, . . . expression, . . . tastes, and fickle appetites,

¹⁷ 1802: I cannot, however, . . . acknowledge, that this defect,

least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I mean to say, that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If in this opinion I am mistaken¹⁸ I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who¹⁹ being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings: and as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives²⁰ to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so by the repetition and continuance of this act feelings connected with important subjects²⁰ will be nourished, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much organic sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced that by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits we shall describe objects and utter sentiments of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, his taste exalted, and his affections ameliorated.²⁰

¹⁸ 1802: mistaken,

¹⁹ 1802: a man, who . . . sensibility, had

²⁰ 1802: and, . . . representatives to each other we discover what is really important to men, so, . . . this act, our feelings will be connected . . . subjects, till at length, if we be possessed of much sensibility, . . . produced, that, by . . . habits, . . . objects, and utter sentiments, . . . in some degree enlightened, and his affections ameliorated.

I have said that each of these poems has a purpose. I have also informed my Reader what this purpose will be found principally to be : namely, to illustrate²¹ the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement. But speaking in less general language,²² it is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature. This object I have endeavoured in these short essays to attain by various means ; by tracing the maternal passion through many of its more subtle windings, as in the poems of the *IDIOT BOY* and the *MAD MOTHER* ; by accompanying the last struggles of a human being²³ at the approach of death, cleaving in solitude to life and society, as in the Poem of the *FORSAKEN INDIAN* ; by shewing, as in the Stanzas entitled *WE ARE SEVEN*, the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion ; or by displaying the strength of fraternal, or to speak more philosophically, of moral attachment when early associated with the great and beautiful objects of nature, as in *THE BROTHERS* ; or, as in the incident of *SIMON LEE*, by placing my Reader in the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensations another and more salutary impression than we are accustomed to receive from them. It has also been part of my general purpose to attempt to sketch characters under the influence of less impassioned feelings, as in²⁴ the *OLD MAN TRAVELLING*, *THE TWO THIEVES*, etc. characters of which the elements are simple, belonging rather to nature than to manners, such as exist now²⁵ and will probably always exist,

²¹ 1802 : namely to illustrate

²² 1802 : But, speaking in language somewhat more appropriate,

²³ 1802 : human being, at the

²⁴ 1802 : feelings, as in the *TWO APRIL MORNINGS*, *THE FOUNTAIN*, *THE*

²⁵ 1802 : exist now, and

and which from their constitution may be distinctly and profitably contemplated. I will not abuse the indulgence of my Reader by dwelling longer upon this subject; but it is proper that I should mention one other circumstance which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation²⁶ and not the action and situation to the feeling. My meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible by referring my Reader to the Poems entitled *POOR SUSAN* and the *CHILDLESS FATHER*, particularly to the last Stanza of the latter Poem.

I will not suffer a sense of false modesty to prevent me from asserting, that I point my Reader's attention to this mark of distinction far²⁶ less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of excitement²⁷ without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know that²⁸ one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me²⁹ that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes unknown to former times³⁰ are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily

²⁶ 1802: situation, . . . distinction, far

²⁷ 1802: of being excited

²⁸ 1802: know, that . . . another, in

²⁹ 1802: appeared to me, that ³⁰ 1802: causes, . . . times, are

taking place, and the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident³¹ which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespear and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation³² I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble effort with which I have endeavoured to counteract it; and³³ reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it which are equally inherent and indestructible; and did I not further add to this impression a belief³⁴ that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed by men of greater powers and with far more distinguished success.³⁵

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that I may not be censured for not having performed what I never attempted. Except³⁶ in a very few instances the Reader will find no personifications of abstract ideas in these volumes, not that I mean to censure

³¹ 1802: incident, which ³² 1802: stimulation, I

³³ 1802: and, ³⁴ 1802: belief, that

³⁵ 1802: opposed, by men of greater powers,

³⁶ 1802 replaces Except in a very few interest him likewise: by: The Reader will find that personifications of abstract

such personifications : they may be well fitted for certain sorts of composition, but in these Poems I propose to myself to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men, and I do not find that such personifications make any regular or natural part of that language. I wish to keep my Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Not but that I believe that others who pursue a different track may interest him likewise :³⁶ I do not interfere with their claim, I only wish to prefer a different claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction ; I have taken as much pains to avoid it as others ordinarily take to produce it ; this I have done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. I do not know how without being culpably particular I can give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which I wished these poems to be written than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject, consequently³⁷ I hope it will be found that

ideas rarely occur in these volumes ; and, I hope, are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. I have proposed to myself to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men ; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such ; but I have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep my Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. I am, however, well aware that others who pursue a different track may interest him likewise ;

³⁷ 1802 : consequently,

there is³⁸ in these Poems little falsehood of description, and that my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something I must have gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely³⁹ good sense ; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets⁴⁰ till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a Poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics⁴¹ who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject⁴² if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him⁴³ that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose⁴³ when prose is

³⁸ 1802 : consequently, I hope that there is

³⁹ 1802 : namely, good

⁴⁰ 1802 : Poets, till

⁴¹ 1802 : critics, ⁴² 1802 : reject, if

⁴³ 1802 : prove to him, . . . of prose,

well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. I have not space for much quotation ; but, to illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who by their reasonings have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

“ In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire :
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
 Or chearful fields resume their green attire :
 These ears, alas ! for other notes repine ;
A different object do these eyes require ;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine ;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire ;
 Yet Morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men :
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear ;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear
And weep the more because I weep in rain.”

It will easily be perceived that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics : it is equally obvious⁴⁴ that⁴⁵ except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word “ fruitless ” for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

Is there then,⁴⁶ it will be asked, no essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition ?

⁴⁴ 1802: obvious, ⁴⁵ 1802: that,

⁴⁶ 1802: From ‘Is there then’ to ‘essential difference.’ re-

I answer that there neither is nor can be any essential difference.⁴⁶ We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; *Poetry sheds no tears "such as Angels weep," but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial Ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what I have been saying on the strict affinity of metrical language

* I here use the word "Poetry" (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and ⁴⁷ Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre.⁴⁸

placed by: By the foregoing quotation I have shewn that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and I have previously asserted that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. I will go further. I do not doubt that it may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.

⁴⁷ 1802: of Poetry and Matter of fact, or Science.

⁴⁸ 1802: is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a *strict* antithesis; because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

with that of prose, and paves the way for other distinctions⁴⁹ which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that⁵⁰

⁴⁹ 1802 : for other artificial distinctions

⁵⁰ 1802 : after 'I answer that' inserts over 350 lines, dovetailing the close of the long insertion into the remainder of the sentence ('the distinction of' &c.) continued on p. 242.

I answer that the language of such Poetry as I am recommending is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men ; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life : and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have ? Whence is it to come ? And where is it to exist ? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters : it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments : for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests : it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the Pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems I now present to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of the highest importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, I would remind such persons, that, whatever may be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what

they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure : and our moral feelings influencing, and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, I ask what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate excitement.

But, whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him, must, in liveliness and truth, fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself. However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him, by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving plea-

sure. Here, then, he will apply the principle on which I have so much insisted, namely, that of selection; on this he will depend for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who deems himself justified when he substitutes excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for Rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, hath said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who has an adequate notion of the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe.

an acknowledgment the more sincere because it is not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathize with pain it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of Science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions which by habit become of the nature of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which without any other discipline than that of our daily life we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of Science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of Science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct

sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of Science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after." He is the rock of defence of human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying every where with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are every where; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present, but he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the Science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective Sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called Science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What I have thus far said applies to Poetry in general ; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters ; and upon this point it appears to have such weight that I will conclude, there are few persons, of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet, or belonging simply to Poets in general, to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language ; but still it may be proper and necessary when the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring my Reader to the description which I have before given of a Poet. Among the qualities which I have enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what I have there said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected ? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these ; with the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe ; with storm and sun-shine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of the passions of men. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly ? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language, when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which depends upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height, and, in order to excite

the distinction of rhyme and metre⁵¹ is regular and uniform, and not,⁵² like that which is produced by what is usually called poetic diction, arbitrary⁵³ and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case⁵⁴ the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion, whereas in the other the metre⁵⁴ obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, why, professing these opinions have I written in verse? To this in the first place I reply,⁵⁵ because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing whether in prose or verse, the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature, from which I am at liberty to supply myself with endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, granting⁵⁶ for a moment that whatever is

rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; for, as it may be proper to inform the Reader,

⁵¹⁻³ 1802: the distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and not like that which is produced by what is usually called poetic diction, arbitrary, and

⁵⁴ 1802: case, the . . . whereas, in the other, the metre

⁵⁵ 1802: To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what I have already said, I reply in the first place, because,

⁵⁶ 1802: Now, supposing . . . condemned, if . . . charm, which, by . . . nations, is

interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why am I to be condemned⁵⁶ if to such description I have endeavoured to superadd the charm which by the consent of all nations is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this⁵⁷ it will be answered, that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre⁵⁸ unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that by such deviation more will be lost from the shock which will be thereby given to the Reader's associations⁵⁸ than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who thus⁵⁹ contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly under-rate the power of metre in itself, it might perhaps⁶⁰ be almost sufficient to observe that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a more naked and simple style than⁶⁰ what I have aimed at, which poems have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and⁶¹ all that I am now attempting is⁶¹ to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But I might point out various causes why, when the

⁵⁷ 1802: To this, by such as are unconvinced by what I have already said, it may be answered,

⁵⁸ 1802: metre, unless . . . associations,

⁵⁹ 1802: those who still contend

⁶⁰ 1802: it might perhaps, as far as relates to these Poems, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are . . . than I have aimed at,

⁶¹ 1802: and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to ustify

style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who is sensible of the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure. Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind ; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order. But ⁶² if the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed when in an unexcited or ⁶³ a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture ⁶⁴ of ordinary feeling. This ⁶⁵ may be illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of *Clarissa Harlowe*, or the *Gamester*. While *Shakespeare's*

⁶² 1802 : But, if

⁶³ 1802 : accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state,

⁶⁴ 1802 : intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true, and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language in a certain degree of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The metre of the old Ballads is very artless ; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion, and, I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them.

⁶⁵ 1802 : This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing

writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us as pathetic beyond the bounds of pleasure —an effect which ⁶⁶ is in a great degree to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a systematic defence of the theory upon which these poems are written, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; I mean the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds⁶⁷ and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: It is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude, are perceived, depend our taste

⁶⁶ 1802: an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed

⁶⁷ 1802: minds.

and our moral feelings. It would not have been a useless employment to have applied this principle to the consideration of metre, and to have shown that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to have pointed out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings : it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity : the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion,⁶⁸ similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on ; but the emotion, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, from various causes is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. Now ⁶⁹ if Nature be thus cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment a being thus employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson thus held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an over-balance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ 1802 : an emotion, kindred to that which

⁶⁹ 1802 : Now, if

⁷⁰ 1802 : similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely, all these

all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling which always will be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry ; while in lighter compositions⁷¹ the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. I might perhaps include all which it is *necessary* to say upon this subject by affirming what few persons will deny, that of two descriptions⁷² either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once. We see that Pope by the power of verse alone, has contrived to render the plainest common sense interesting, and even frequently to invest it with the appearance of passion. In consequence of these convictions I related in metre the Tale of GOODY BLAKE and HARRY GILL, which is one of the rudest of this collection. I wished to draw attention to the truth that the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous. The truth is an important one ; the fact (for it is a *fact*) is a valuable illustration of it. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been communicated to many hundreds of people who would never have heard of it, had it not been narrated as a Ballad, and in a more impressive metre than is usual in Ballads.

Having thus⁷³ adverted to a few of the reasons why I have written in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading

⁷¹ 1802 : while, in lighter compositions, the ease

⁷² 1802 : that, of two descriptions, either

⁷³ 1802 : Having thus explained a few

my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest ; and it is for this reason that I request the Reader's permission to add a few words with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, sometimes from diseased impulses I may have written upon unworthy subjects ; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular ⁷⁴ words, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt⁷⁵ that in some instances feelings even of the ludicrous may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men ; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself : for his own feelings are his stay and support, and if he sets them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind loses all confidence in itself⁷⁶ and becomes utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the Reader ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and perhaps in a much greater degree : for there can be no presumption in saying⁷⁷ that it is not probable he will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning

⁷⁴ 1802 : particular words and phrases, from which

⁷⁵ 1802 : Hence I have no doubt, that,

⁷⁶ 1802 : itself,

⁷⁷ 1802 : in saying. that

through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other ; and above all, since he is so much less interested in the subject, he may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as I have detained my Reader, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies of which Dr. Johnson's Stanza is a fair specimen.

“ I put my hat upon my head,
And walk'd into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.”

Immediately under these lines I will place one of the most justly admired stanzas of the “ *Babes in the Wood*.”

“ These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down ;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town.”

In both ⁷⁸ of these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, “ the Strand,” and “ the Town,” connected with none but the most familiar ideas ; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference ? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words ; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair

⁷⁸ 1802 : In both these stanzas

parallelism is not to say⁷⁹ this is a bad kind of poetry, or this is not poetry,⁸⁰ but this wants sense ; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to anything interesting ; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses : Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus ? Why take pains to prove that an Ape is not a Newton when it is self-evident that he is not a man.⁸⁰

I have one request to make of my Reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, "I myself do not object to this style of composition or this or that expression, but to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous." This mode of criticism⁸¹ so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment⁸² is almost universal : I have therefore to request⁸³ that the Reader would abide independently by his own feelings, and that if he finds himself affected he would not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author by any single composition has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that, on other occasions where we have been displeased, he nevertheless may not have written ill or absurdly ; and, further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us with more care than we should otherwise have

⁷⁹ 1802 : not to say, this is

⁸⁰ 1802 : poetry ; but this wants . . . man ?

⁸¹ 1802 : criticism, so

⁸² 1802 : judgment, is

⁸³ 1802 : request,

bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce in a high degree to the improvement of our own taste: for an *accurate* taste in Poetry⁸⁴ and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned⁸⁵ not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest⁸⁵ that if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous,⁸⁵ and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

I know nothing would have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view as to have shewn of what kind the pleasure is, and how the pleasure is produced⁸⁶ which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from what I have here endeavoured to recommend;⁸⁶ for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition⁸⁶ and what can I do more for him? The power of any art is limited⁸⁷ and he will suspect that if I propose to furnish him with new friends it is only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honorable bigotry for the objects which have

⁸⁴ 1802: poetry, and

⁸⁵ 1802: mentioned, . . . suggest, that, if . . . erroneous; and that

⁸⁶ 1802: how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly . . . recommend: for . . . composition; and what

⁸⁷ 1802: limited; and he will suspect, that . . . new friends, it is

long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is a host of arguments in these feelings; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But⁸⁸ would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, I might have removed many obstacles, and assisted my Reader in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible that poetry may give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. But this⁸⁹ part of my subject I have been obliged altogether to omit: as it has been less my present aim to prove that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, than to offer reasons for presuming, that, if the object which I have proposed to myself were adequately attained, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I have proposed to myself: he will determine how far I have attained this object; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining; and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the public.

⁸⁸ 1802: But, would

⁸⁹ 1802: This part of my subject I have not altogether neglected; but it has been less my present aim to prove, that



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