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Poems moral and religious



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John Balesworth

POEMS,
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS.

BY JACOB COWEN.

Sunt Lachrymæ rerum, mentem MORTALIA tangunt.
VIRGIL.

SECOND EDITION.

Carlisle:

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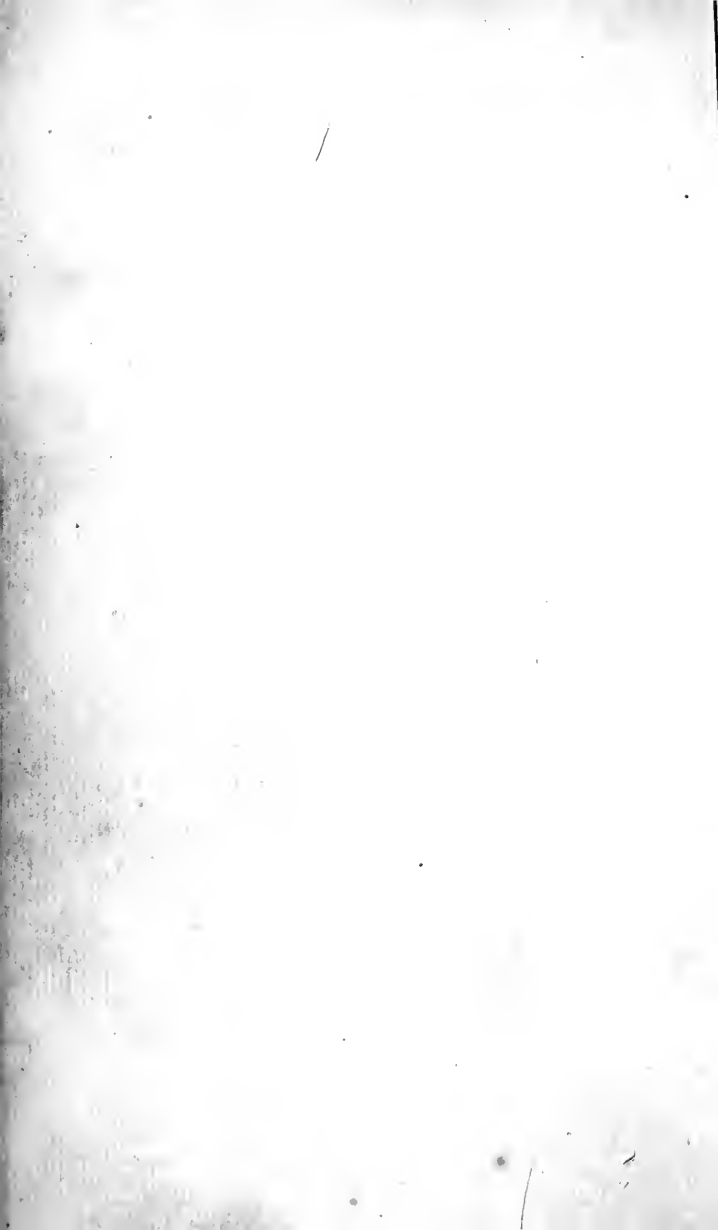
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INTRODUCTION.

 THE following Poems were first sent to the Press in 1800, by a friend of the Author, whose name was not then affixed to the title-page: nor had the Author an opportunity of superintending them as they passed through a very inaccurate provincial Press; it is probable, therefore, that many errors, and some looseness of expression, have crept into them, which ought not to be charged upon the writer. 

The partiality of Friends led to their first publication; and, being out of print, Friendship again seeks to buoy them up a little longer on the "ever-flowing stream of Time," which so rapidly hurries much more

durable things than “the frail fancies of a Poet’s brain” into the unfathomable gulph of oblivion :—

“What does not fade? the tower that long had stood
 The crash of Thunder and the warring winds,
 Shook by the slow, but sure destroyer, Time,
 Now hangs in doubtful ruins o’er its base.”

Nothing is stable here. No one was more sensible of it than the Author of these Poems; the truth of his doctrine is already exemplified in himself—he has long since descended to the Grave.

JACOB COWEN was born at BIGLANDS, in the County of CUMBERLAND, in 1722, and died in May, 1807, at the advanced age of 85 Years. The whole of his long life was passed in the secluded villages of his native County: he ate the bread of industry; was naturally serious and fond of retirement; and wisely spent his leisure hours (as his Poems manifest) in the contemplation of the littleness of this world, and the great change which all flesh is heir to. In early life he married MARY DONALD, of West-Newton, Cumberland, by whom he had a numerous family; and the small patrimonial estate which he resided upon, was

handed down to his eldest son, without increase or diminution, as inherited from a long line of ancestors ; who, true to the prejudices and feelings too often to be found in rural life, were equally inimical to alteration or improvement.

The Editor of the original Edition thus speaks of Mr. COWEN and his works :—

“ From the character which he (the Editor) has been able to obtain of the Author, he finds that he is a serious and well-disposed Gentleman, unambitious to shine in the world ; who has long since chosen a calm and peaceful retirement, where he can, without disturbance, enjoy the solacing sweets of serious meditation, and the serenity of mind arising from the retrospect of a life well-spent, and a conscience void of offence.

“ The Poems will best describe his turn of mind. They, in a very powerful manner, invite us to the practice of every virtue. The Poetry is respectable, the sentiments strong and energetic. The arguments for the immortality of the soul, and the cheering hopes

of a future state of felicity for the virtuous, are derived from the truest sources.

“In this age of Infidelity every attempt to stem its devastating progress is laudable; and the Editor entertains the pleasing satisfaction of thinking that the Author’s time has not been misemployed, nor his labour in vain.

“He teaches us that there is a heaven, and an eternity of happiness for those who seek it sincerely and labour for it. He employs the force of Reason and the light of Scripture in impressing this momentous truth, and exhorts us to keep ourselves aloof from the intoxicating pleasures and cares of this life;—to shake off the unsubstantial golden dreams that perpetually surround our fancy, and to employ our nobler powers to diviner purposes.

“He exhorts us, by a near view of the Grave and Eternity, to subdue our passions into devotion—that devotion which leads us to speak and act like the children of God, and gives us a sacred fortitude, a

blessed superiority of soul over all our foolish fears, and all the reproaches of sinful men.”

Mr. COWEN wrote a great variety of minor pieces which were not included in this small volume ; and the greater part of them have since either disappeared altogether, or been too widely scattered for present recovery. The following specimen of another style, but of a highly virtuous and moral tendency, is rescued from the memory of one of his descendants, now far advanced in the vale of years :—

“ MY CONFESSION.

“ I’m not High-Church, nor Low-Church, nor Tory, nor Whig,
 “ Nor a flustering Coxcomb, nor a formal old Prig ;
 “ Not eternally talking, nor silently quaint,
 “ No profligate Sinner, nor pragmatic Saint ;
 “ I think freely, I own, yet I firmly believe,
 “ I’m not fond of my judgment, nor pin’d on white sleeve ;
 “ To sift Truth from all rubbish I do what I can,
 “ And God knows, if I err, I am but a Man.
 “ I can laugh at a jest if not plac’d out of time,
 “ Can excuse a mistake, but not flatter a crime.
 “ Any faults of my friends I would scorn to expose,
 “ And detest private scandal, though cast on my foes.
 “ No man’s person I hate, if his conduct I blame,
 “ I can censure a vice without stabbing a name ;

“ To no party I'm slave, no mob treason I sing,
“ I doat on my country, and am liege to my King.
“ Length of days I desire, yet, with my last breath,
“ I'm in hopes to betray no mis-reading of Death ;
“ And as to the way after Death to be trod,
“ I submit to the WILL of a MERCIFUL GOD.”

This, the most rigid critic must acknowledge, is well expressed ; and the creed is so good that the more generally it is adopted the better.

It is only necessary to add, that the present Re-print is intended for private circulation only, and not for sale.

Carlisle, August, 1824.

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE.

SINCE we are doom'd the path of Life to tread,
And after this another will succeed ;
May we, before the fleeting Season's past,
Prepare for *that* which will for ever last ;
Our path through this, though narrow and perplex,
Presents a pleasing prospect in the next :
This must be trod, though thorns impede the way,
Whilst in this jarring, bustling world we stay :
If no temptations lead us to the wrong,
Be not dismay'd; the journey is not long,—
The struggling conflict shortly will be o'er,
When we shall tread this mazy round no more.
Life is but short, yet merits our esteem,
Though oft compar'd unto a transient dream ;
Yet surely 'tis the blissful season given,
To train us for the happiness of heaven,

Not here to dream, or trifle with our fate,
 Since this is man's probationary state ;
 The soul should be both active and awake,
 When Happiness Eternal's at the stake :
 Though short the span, 'tis all the time we have,
 To seek that bliss which lies beyond the grave,
 To form our lives by Virtue's sacred plan,
 To worship God, and justice do to man ;
 To guard the rising passions of the mind,
 To bend them right, if they are wrong inclin'd :
 What though they are a fierce rebellious crowd,
 Bold and imperious, positive and loud ?
 'Tis Reason's task their fury to restrain,
 Not to destroy—they were not given in vain.
 'Tis ours to check them when they do rebel,
 They're friends to Virtue if they're manag'd well.
 What manly virtues from the passions rise ?
 When fix'd in Nature their foundation lies :
 Restrain'd and govern'd well by Virtue's laws,
 They're active, faithful servants in her cause :
 But if upon their necks you throw the rein,
 They promise pleasure, but they pay in pain.
 They lead us through a maze of wild extremes,
 Of errors, follies, and fantastic dreams :
 Which are so far from giving real joy,
 They blast our pleasures, and our peace destroy ;
 But when the mind by Virtue is subdu'd,
 And no imperious passions do intrude—

When all these sons of strife are charm'd to rest,
 What calm celestial peace inspires the breast?
 Then is the time to fix us in the right,
 When Heav'n illumes the soul with sacred light,
 Leans from the realms of bliss, and points the way
 To yon bright regions of eternal day ;
 The mind is then, for doing good, prepar'd,
 To follow Virtue for its own reward :
 That inward peace, which always does attend
 The good through life, and crowns his latter end
 With happiness, which ever will remain,
 When Nature sickens, and when Time is slain.
 'Tis God alone can guard the good from fear,
 When every sign of dissolution's near ;
 Can cheer the soul, and bid our hopes arise,
 Through every threat'ning aspect of the skies.

Suppose the general conflagration nigh,
 When sable clouds involve the concave sky,
 When dreadful light'nings, darting through the gloom,
 Foretel the world's inexorable doom ;
 When awful peals of thunder rolling round,
 Alarm us with their dire tremendous sound :
 How dreadful is this elemental strife !
 Threat'ning destruction to the world of life ;
 All Nature shudd'ring to the dark profound,
 The tott'ring mountains and the groaning ground,
 Are dire presages of the future fate,

Of this great ball, though now it rolls in state ?
 Though full five thousand circuits it has run,
 Through its wide orbit, round the central sun :
 Suppose it now dissolving in the flame,
 Would not the bliss of angels be the same ?
 Would not the virtuous soul with hope serene,
 Survey this awful and tremendous scene ?

Then are not Angel's souls dislodg'd from clay,
 Whose purer essence Time will not decay ?
 For when the soul shall quit this dark abode,
 Can you suppose that image of his God,
 Which unto man his great Creator gave,
 Will sleep in dust, and moulder in the grave ?
 That breath of life which did from God descend,
 Must be immortal ; therefore, knows no end.
 If these are Sacred Truths, the case is plain,
 Man was not sent into this world in vain ;
 This life in sloth or indolence to spend ;
 'Twas given him for a more important end :
 To worship God and do what good he can,
 Are the peculiar tasks assign'd to man :
 In this short life our conduct here below,
 Must fit us for eternal bliss, or woe :
 Since man is blest with an immortal mind,
 And for eternal happiness design'd ;
 If thus distinguish'd, his degen'rate race,
 He must be train'd and tutor'd for the place ;

His soul prepar'd by virtuous actions here,
For happiness in you sublimer sphere ;
Must lay his vice and follies all aside,
Nor hope to enter Heaven thus qualified :
A slave to vice, or by his passions led,
With all his crimes fresh-blooming on his head :
Or if admitted to the sacred place,
Unfit companion for th' Angelic race ;
Who hopes in Heaven true happiness to find,
To Virtue here, must consecrate his mind.
It is to those a blessing to be born,
Whose virtuous actions do their lives adorn,
That when the closing scene of Life draws nigh,
They may have nothing else to do but die.
How easy then is the transition made,
When Virtue has a sure foundation laid !
To leave this world for an immortal crown,
To sleep in peace, to lay his burden down,
Must be a consolation to the blest,
Whose labour's ended, to retire to rest.
This pond'rous load of clay to leave behind,
Which but retards the progress of the mind ;
Which checks the soul in its ethereal flight,
From these dark regions, to the realms of Light.

SERIOUS REFLECTIONS
UPON VIEWING THE TOMBS, GRAVES, &c. IN
AIKTON CHURCH-YARD.

EVENING I.

“See from these tombs, as from an humble shrine,
TRUTH, radiant goddess, sallies on my soul,
And puts Delusion’s dusky train to flight,
Dispels the mists our sultry passions raise
From objects low, terrestrial, and obscene,
And shews the real estimate of things.”

YOUNG.

THE silent evening here, I often spend
Alone, or sometimes with a serious friend ;
Here to reflect on man’s approaching doom,
Divine Instruction echoes from the tomb :
From sleeping dust may be collected here,
An useful lesson to a heart sincere.
These monumental stones erected nigh,
This truth confirms, that man was born to die ;
Whose very birth declares his death begun,
Just as the dawn fortels the setting sun :
Yet when the last tremendous hour may be,
Is what no human wisdom can foresee ;

The scene may close, the curtain may be drawn,
 For aught we know, before to-morrow's dawn—
 This life's a debt we must to nature pay,
 Then where's the difference if discharg'd to-day?
 To-morrow, or when eighty years are past,
 'Twill seem a short contracted span at last.
 Our task perform'd it matters not how soon,
 Would we complain if call'd to rest at noon?
 Or tempest-toss'd where raging billows roar,
 Too soon to gain some hospitable shore;
 In deep distress, in sickness or in pain,
 Are we not glad some kind relief to gain?
 So, when the various toils of life shall end,
 May we not look on Death as on a friend?
 Serenely pleas'd when ev'ry danger's past,
 To sleep beneath this friendly shade at last.
 This solemn truth is evidently clear,
 Short and precarious is our station here;
 Life, with its fleeting pleasures, flies away,
 And all around us hastens to decay;
 Though health and youthful vigour yet remain,
 And the warm blood flows brisk in every vein,
 Life smoothly glides and steals away our prime,
 (So softly treads the downy feet of time,)
 We scarce perceive till our meridian's o'er,
 And when once past, it will return no more:
 Though you in some exalted station live,
 Possess of all this transient world can give,

Be not deceiv'd, nor think your bliss complete,
 When Fortune smiles, she often smiles deceit ;
 Amidst the pomp that glitters here below,
 May lie conceal'd some hidden cause of woe—
 Contending passions may disturb our rest,
 Or Guilt may raise a tempest in the breast ;
 A truth, too oft by sad experience found,
 Whene'er we tread upon forbidden ground :
 What need we ask if this or that be sin—
 Consult that faithful monitor within ;
 Who whispers truth into the list'ning ear,
 And feeling heart, that's honest and sincere.
 True Happiness, you sons of folly know,
 Is seldom found by mortals here below ;
 This transient world is not by Heaven design'd,
 A place of rest for man's immortal mind,
 The virtuous soul aspiring still to rise,
 Pants for immortal bliss above the skies,
 Nor leaves on earth one ling'ring wish behind :
 Earth is but earth, though it's to gold refin'd.
 His hope's in Heaven—nor will he vainly trust,
 What mouldering time consumes to native dust,
 Nor from external things expect to find,
 That inward peace which warms the virtuous mind ;
 Which nought on earth can give, nor yet controul,
 That calm, celestial sunshine of the soul,
 Which flows from virtue and a conscience clear—
 'The only bliss we can inherit here :

What's honour, wealth, or popular esteem ?
 The flimsy phantoms of Life's busy dream :
 Whatever vain Ambition may pretend,
 They're mere delusive bubbles in the end.
 Suppose your name in Fame's broad list enroll'd,
 The dream's soon ended and the story told,
 The heart that pants for Fame, must cease to beat—
 Then what avails it to be rich, or great ?
 Your flatt'ring hopes one moment here suspend,
 Of human greatness, see the final end !
 Who but of late was struggling here to rise,
 This Epitaph informs you where he lies.
 Cold Earth the sable cov'ring of his head,
 The slimy snail creeps slowly o'er his bed ;
 Enough, indeed, to check all human pride,
 If you but cast one serious glance aside :
 How low is vain Ambition tumbled down !
 This is the final end of proud renown !
 The fatal period of all human bliss,
 Even crowns and sceptres come at last to this.
 Then cease to wonder at the change you see,
 'Twill shortly be the case with you and me ;
 Alike materials do this frame compose,
 By nature weak, and worn with num'rous woes ;
 Though hopes and fears by turns may intervene,
 Approaching Death will close the chequer'd scene ;
 We may be from our dearest pleasures torn,
 Before the cock proclaims the rising morn.

Since all things here are fleeting at the best,
 Where is the rock whereon the soul may rest?
 Collect your wand'ring hopes, and strive to find
 That happiness which centres in the mind ;
 That peace which happiness we justly call,
 Must come from Virtue, if it comes at all !
 The very source from whence our bliss must spring,
 For conscious guilt's a stranger to the thing ;
 He's only blest, who keeps in Virtue's road,
 Who stands prepar'd to die—to meet his God !
 For though temptations compass him around,
 The Christian hero firmly keeps his ground ;
 His post maintains, whilst God himself commands,
 Under whose banner he securely stands,
 Nor danger fears, prepar'd to meet his foes,
 To conquer, or to die in Virtue's cause !
 Convinc'd who leads a life of Virtue here,
 May welcome death—they nothing have to fear.
 Transporting thought ! what happiness is this ?
 The good must die to live in endless bliss !

Whilst thoughts like these do in our bosoms rise,
 The distant landscape fades before our eyes ;
 The Sun's resplendant rays have given place
 To the Moon's less illuminated face ;
 The gathering gloom admonishes away,
 And thus concludes our walk and evening lay.

EVENING II.

“ The man how blest who sick of gaudy scenes,
 As led by choice, to take his fav’rite walks,
 Beneath Death’s gloomy silent cypress shade :
 To view his monuments, to weigh his dust,
 Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs.”

YOUNG.

NEXT Evening being quite serene and fair,
 We to the sacred place again repair ;
 The setting Sun at the decline of day,
 Had ting’d the mountains with his golden ray,
 When we approach’d to take a closer view,
 And our reflections once again renew.
 Then stop! said I, survey this solemn scene,
 These sculptur’d stones, and graves array’d in green.
 The narrow cells which round this path are spread,
 These are the peaceful mansions of the dead :
 Where wearied Nature takes her last repose,
 From this vain world—its num’rous train of woes.
 Perhaps some dear-departed friend is laid,
 To sleep in peace beneath this awful shade ;
 Some dear companion of your happiest life,
 A tender parent, or beloved wife ;
 Perhaps a darling son, or daughter dear,
 Lies buried, with your hopes, in silence here :

Be that your case, it is not your's alone,
 Nor think you feel a pang to me unknown ;
 When love sincere is rooted in the heart,
 By time confirm'd, I own it's hard to part ;
 To check our tears, and inward grief controul,
 Demand the firmest fortitude of soul :
 Though Nature bends beneath a load of grief,
 Yet Heaven, we hope, will surely send relief.
 Who wipes the tears of Innocence distress'd,
 And lifts the burden from the virtuous breast ;
 Will mitigate the sorrows that we feel,
 The wounds of our afflicted bosoms heal ;
 If we for his Divine assistance call,
 Who lov'd, who griev'd, who bled, who died for all,
 With patience bend to Heaven's afflicting rod,
 And our dependence firmly fix on God.
 Though we may linger yet awhile behind,
 Death is the certain fate of all mankind,
 And very short the interval between
 The dawn of life, and its last closing scene ;
 No stage in human life from danger's free,
 Eighty is mortal—so is twenty-three.
 Then do not grieve, nor let one falling tear,
 Bedew the silent dust which slumbers here :
 Indulgent Heav'n, whose providential eye,
 Perhaps, saw some impending danger nigh,
 Our friend remov'd before the tempest spread,
 Or broke its raging fury on his head :

Who knows our weakness will remove the cause,
 Or kindly draw the curtain o'er our woes :
 If we on Him with full assurance rest,
 Who wisely governs all things for the best,
 'Tis just (whene'er the Sacred Mandate's given,)
 We should resign unto the will of Heav'n,
 At whose decree shall man presume to mourn ?
 Who sprang from dust, shall unto dust return.
 For this important change may we prepare,
 Since human life hangs on a slender hair ;
 The thread once broke, the fatal die is cast,
 Our doom determin'd when we breathe our last :
 But yet suppress your grief, while I impart
 The sweetest consolation to the heart.
 Confirm'd in this, the dead in Christ shall rise,
 To meet their blest Redeemer in the skies ;
 Though this frail fabric moulder and decay,
 Tho' heaven, and earth, and stars should melt away :
 Be well-assur'd of this important truth—
 The soul shall flourish in immortal youth,
 To share the bliss of Christ's redeeming love,
 With Saints and Angels in the realms above !

EVENING III.

“A friend’s monument, is a friend’s legacy, and a richer to the considerate, than any parchment can convey.” LIFE’S REV.

THESE silent realms, let me once more survey,
 Where Death his sceptre wields with awful sway,
 Where the pale subjects of his gloomy reign,
 Lie scatter’d round me o’er his dark domain ;
 Who but of late in youthful vigour shone,
 Now mould’ring lie, beneath some broken stone,
 In Earth’s cold bosom, from our sight convey’d,
 To the dark gloom of this tremendous shade.

Here let me muse, and fix a thoughtful eye,
 Where, rapt in dust, the sacred atoms lie
 Of my departed friend—whose last remains
 This solemn, silent spot of peace, contains.
 Life’s tedious load, he dragg’d, full eighty years,
 Through all its changing scenes of hopes and fears ;
 The dreary vale he pass’d through various fate,
 In this precarious, fluctuating state.
 One while with joyful, pleasing prospects crown’d,
 Elate with hope—then sunk in grief profound :
 Toss’d, like the floating bark, before the wind,
 As various passions actuate the mind.

This Life's a struggling conflict at the best,
 Through toils and dangers lies the road to rest ;
 Yet blessings oft from seeming ills arise,
 And bring true wisdom to the truly wise :
 The man who adverse Fortune never knew,
 One half the scenes of Nature can but view ;
 The most instructive lesson we can find,
 Flows from afflictions, to the virtuous mind :
 Afflictions are not ills, since they are given
 By the unerring hand of bounteous Heaven ;
 They fall upon the truly good and wise,
 To give those latent virtues exercise
 Which in the calms of life do lie conceal'd,—
 In adverse fortunes are to light reveal'd.
 Mark well the Good ! his station where you will,
 The humble vale, or top of Fortune's hill ;
 Whether with wealth, with power and plenty blest,
 With toils, with cares, or poverty opprest ;
 Unmov'd he views the fluctuating scene,
 With mind unruff'd, and a soul serene ;
 Not all the snares that in his path are spread,
 Nor threat'ning dangers rolling o'er his head,
 Can stop, disturb, or daunt his steady mind,
 To Peace, to Virtue, and to Heaven resign'd.
 If at his death no fun'ral pomp's display'd,
 Nor tattling stoue to tell you where he's laid,
 The sweet reflection on a life well-spent,
 Supplies both Epitaph and Monument ;

Who in this Life his part hath acted well,
 May sleep securely in his humble cell—
 Till Heaven shall deign to wake his slumb'ring dust,
 To bliss Eternal, with the good and just.

But when, alas ! will these reflections end ?
 Can I forget my dear-departed friend ?
 The sad rememb'rance yet renews my pain,
 We're parted, yet in hopes to meet again
 In yon bright region, in a happier clime,
 Beyond the far-expanded waste of Time,
 Where Joy's eternal spring for ever flows,
 And Happiness no intermission knows :
 Yet Nature's weak, and oft disharmoniz'd,
 And frets at losing what we over-priz'd ;
 Which Heaven but lent—then why should we complain
 When the blest Donor takes his own again ?
 Or on his grave to drop one tender tear,
 Whose life was honest, virtuous, and sincere :
 Since all are blest who virtuous lives have led,
 Then where's the cause of mourning for the dead ?
 Shall man to whom the gift of life is given,
 (The most distinguish'd favourite of Heaven,
 With Reason blest ; yet seldom Reason's right,)
 Presume to censure wisdom Infinite ?
 Scarce wise enough thy ignorance to see,
 So wide the diff'rence 'tween thy God and thee ;

Thou canst not see through his mysterious plan,
 Perfection's not the attribute of man ;
 A frail attenuated child of dust,
 Shall *he* inform his Maker what is just ?
 Instruct him when to strike, and when to spare,
 Since all alike are his peculiar care.
 Submissive bend to his Almighty power,
 On whom we are dependent ev'ry hour ;
 Since ev'ry blessing which to man can fall,
 Must flow from GOD, the sov'reign Lord of all ;
 Our stubborn wills to Him may we resign,
 Who claims obedience by a Right Divine.
 So Reason speaks, if we would hear *her* voice,
 No cause to grieve but rather to rejoice ;
 The body dies, this truth you may believe,
 Just when the virtuous soul begins to live ;
 Resign'd to Heaven, I with my friend will part,
 Who shar'd my counsels, pleasures, and my heart :
 In hopes to meet again the man I lov'd,
 In happiness and virtue much improv'd :
 The woe which Disappointment often brings,
 From our false views and estimate of things,
 With Patience by his virtuous mind was born,
 He view'd their pointless stings with modest scorn :
 When Fortune's standard glitter'd in the wind,
 Hung with those trifles which allure mankind ;
 Where wealth and honour, power and pleasure shone,
 As by that partial, fickle goddess drawn,

In glaring colours, and delusive charms,
 To tempt unguarded mortals to her arms,
 Their gilded baits could no temptation bring,
 To him who knew the shadow from the thing :
 One gleam of Hope which conscious Virtue knows,
 Outweighs the fleeting favours she bestows ;
 For who pursues her with too anxious care,
 May grasp a shade, or fill his arms with air ;
 No more substantial blessings hope to find,
 Who follow phantoms, fleeting in the wind,
 Which mock our hopes, and from our wishes fly,
 Or if possess'd they in possession die :
 A striking proof and evidence of this,
 The Soul was meant for happier scenes of bliss,
 Which somewhere in the realms of space must lie,
 If not on earth, above the starry sky,
 Where Hope aspiring leaves the world below,
 Where useless trifles make a pompous show.
 This vale of tears, this magazine of toys,
 Of shadows, bubbles, empty air and noise,
 Which ne'er could charm, disturb, or break his rest,
 Who in himself was more supremely blest,
 Than they who in the shining courts remain,
 Where discord, faction, and confusion reign.
 No wealth, he saw, could purchase peace of mind,
 And guilty pleasures left a sting behind ;
 That golden prop which luxury sustain'd
 Was oft by fraud or by oppression gain'd ;

But that which honest toil and pains acquir'd,
 The virtuous sometimes gain'd what he desir'd.
 A frugal plenty and a calm retreat,
 Far from the noise and grandeur of the great,
 Where all the wise and good could choose to rest,
 Who are content to be obscurely blest.

Tho' future times should not afford his name
 One single echo from the trump of Fame,
 Because no court or camp he ever prov'd,
 But from their noise and clamour far remov'd ;
 Yet shall his memory be dear to those
 Who live in silence and in peace repose,
 Who still prefer to grandeur, price, and show,
 A cottage in some rural vale below ;
 That lofty hill where curs'd Ambition stands,
 And all her vot'ries, with uplifted hands,
 Do offer incense, at her tott'ring shrine,
 Yet peace, O Virtue! ever will be thine ;
 He now is blest, remote from anxious strife,
 Who through the various scenes of fleeting life,
 Did for the regions of the blest repair,
 And now resigns the burthen of his care.

EVENING IV.

“The thought of Death is the directing helm of life, and he bespeaks wreck who lays that thought aside.”

LIFE'S REV.

FROM Folly's thoughtless scenes withdraw,
 And here reflect with me,
 A period of your pride and show,
 This solemn scene must be.
 In human life no rank nor state,
 One moment stands secure ;
 But all are subject, soon or late,
 To Death's all-conquering power.
 Heroes, and kings, and subjects die,
 Here all one fate they have,
 Their undistinguish'd atoms lie,
 And mingle in the grave.
 Here tyrants from oppression cease,
 And here the slave shall gain
 A happy and a safe release
 From sorrow and from pain ;
 The wicked with the good and just,
 Lie in this silent shade,
 What rising heaps of mould'ring dust,
 On each cold bosom's laid !

The rich may here survey their fate,
 And learn to understand,
 Each must exchange his vast estate,
 For scarce six feet of land :
 Then cast not a disdainful eye
 Upon the poor distrest,
 Since shortly thou as low must lie,
 In humble dust to rest.
 Impartial Heaven whose care extends
 Alike to all mankind,
 All for the same important ends
 And purposes design'd :
 Though Fortune hath her smiles withdrawn,
 And clos'd her partial hand,
 At the last awful morning's dawn,
 As naked thou must stand :
 Why in this world would man be great,
 Since all that he can have,
 Is but a future winding sheet,
 A coffin and a grave ?
 Ambition's vain and airy dream,
 Is to its period drawn,
 Each tow'ring and aspiring scheme,
 Is blasted in its dawn.
 Reflect ! and view yon faded flower,
 'Twas blown and in its pride—
 In one revolving fleeting hour,
 It bow'd its head and died.

Such is the fate of mortal man,
 Tho' blooming in his prime,
 So flies each portion of his span,
 Upon the wings of Time.
 How slender is the veil between
 Us, and that future state
 Of life, that lies behind the scene
 Of an eternal date !
 Perhaps I never more may see,
 To-morrow's rising Sun ;
 'Tis only known, O Lord, to thee,
 How near my glass is run.
 Then let not my reflections cease,
 But humbly view the bed,
 Where I ere long do hope, in peace,
 To rest my weary head ;
 Till Nature's universal groan,
 When into chaos hurl'd,
 This mould'ring heap, the Soul alone,
 Survives a wrecking world.
 When each revolving orb that rolls,
 In pathless fields of air,
 Shall shake and tremble to their poles,
 And dreadful light'nings glare ;
 How striking is this awful proof,
 The time is drawing nigh,
 Yon solemn temple's lofty roof,
 Shall soon in ruins lie ;

When each resplendent, glitt'ring gate,
 Is melting from its bands,
 And all the regal pomp and state,
 Where yon proud palace stands,
 Dissolving to an heap of dust,
 Each spire and lofty wall,
 Each monumental marble bust,
 Is tott'ring to its fall.

When Time its rapid course has run,
 And dawns that awful day,
 This earth with yonder radiant sun
 And stars shall melt away.
 When quite dissolv'd this earthly ball,
 And rolling orbs of Heaven,
 'Twill be but to the virtuous soul,
 A joyful signal given :
 To re-unite the waking dust,
 In yon cold dark abode,
 Which long repos'd the sacred trust,
 Of an indulgent God.

From yawning graves the just shall rise,
 With heavenly rays to shine,
 In scenes of bliss above the skies
 Eternal and Divine.

EVENING V.

“ They who continually think of Death, are the only persons who do not fear it.” PLATO.

HAVE we not here a useful lesson read,
 Collected from the ashes of the dead ?
 If in their dust we can some prudence find,
 To mend the heart and to improve the mind,
 Or, by reflection, if we wisdom gain,
 These thoughtful Evening walks are not in vain,
 Which we in serious contemplation spend,
 They shew us our original, and end ;
 Our future selves as in a glass we see,
 Both what we were, we are, and soon must be ;
 The broken earth, heav'd by the sexton's spade,
 The frail materials of which man is made,
 Bids us prepare before it be too late,
 To meet this awful messenger of Fate ;
 Whose ghastly emblem stands in armour drest,
 His fatal dart prepar'd to wound thy breast—
 Yet do not start, nor view with wild surprise,
 The haggard skeleton before our eyes,
 Tho' silent—he conveys this Truth to thee,
 Remember man ! thou must be such as he.

The glass supported by his clattering hand,
 Seems to foretel when time has run its sand,
 Approaching death will end all human strife,
 His scythe's prepar'd to cut the thread of life ;
 Yet why dismay'd ? the good have nought to fear,
 Though Death should end his mortal being here,
 What though the Sun no more on him should shine,
 That thinking, throbbing particle divine
 Which came from God, enjoys a brighter ray,
 Where no dark gloom obscures the face of day.
 What beams of light illumine the blest abode
 Of Angels, which surround the throne of God ;
 Man cannot see that clear celestial light,
 Till Death remove the veil which clouds the sight,
 Till Heaven shall deign to set the prisoner free,
 A veil of dust precludes the light from thee :
 Shall we not then invoke his friendly aid,
 To smooth the passage and remove the shade,
 To guard us through this doleful vale of tears,
 Confirm our hopes and mitigate our fears ?
 The Vale of Death by us frail mortals ey'd,
 Appears most awful, dismal, dark, and wide ;
 'Tis our weak sight which magnifies the gloom,
 And plants those spectres in or near the tomb :
 If we live well and for our last prepare,
 The King of Terrors wears a milder air,
 He smiles on Virtue, tho' on Vice he frown'd,
 'Tis guilt alone that gives him power to wound,

Guilt, arms with terror his tremendous eye,
 And whets the sword that hangs upon his thigh ;
 That cause remov'd, the dire effects will cease,
 A life of virtue always ends in peace :
 Think not this mighty monarch of the grave,
 Supreme in power, can he the soul enslave ;
 Look round his realms, his dark domains survey,
 His subjects are but heaps of mould'ring clay ;
 Death breaks the clods which from the dust began,
 The brittle clay-built cottage of the man ;
 The dire disease contracted in the womb,
 Pursues it from the cradle to the tomb :
 The virtuous soul is from corruption free,
 And life immortal's in reserve for thee ;
 Dislodg'd from clay the man is yet alive,
 Which to eternal ages will survive :
 Mark well ! the admonition which I give,
 That by reflection you may learn to live.

In early life the seeds of wisdom sow,
 Experience is the soil whereon they grow ;
 If we in action carefully pursue,
 Such as will bear a retrospective view,
 Who wisdom plants on Virtue's fruitful soil,
 Is sure to reap the fruits of all his toil ;
 In doing good your prime of life engage,
 'Twill spare your penitential tears in age,
 Prevent your blushes, easy make your bed,
 When Time has scatter'd snow upon your head.

Calm and serene he views the setting sun,
 Whose task is ended and his work well done,
 Who spends the day in doing what is right,
 Sweet are his peaceful slumbers in the night ;
 So blest is he, who drawing near his last,
 Can look with pleasure on his actions past,
 Who by the sacred rules of Virtue lives,
 That peace enjoys which conscious Vice ne'er gives,
 Though Vice may bloom and flourish here below,
 His pomp is but the gilding of his woe ;
 He vainly hopes for peace or seeks for rest,
 While Guilt presents a dagger to his breast.
 In what condition is his tortur'd mind,
 Who starts with fear at every breath of wind ?
 The very breeze which whispers o'er his head,
 Disturbs his peace when conscious Virtue's fled :
 There's no rebuke so powerful to controul
 The mind, as when conviction strikes the soul,
 When fell remorse, whose arguments are strong,
 And conscience tells us we have acted wrong,
 When we from Virtue into Error fall,
 That tyrant Guilt makes cowards of us all.
 The soul unmann'd, the face with blushes spread,
 Who can sustain or raise the drooping head ?
 The aid of Heaven iuvoked in this extreme,
 God is in mercy, as in might supreme ;
 He will regard each penitential tear,
 Spontaneous flowing from a heart sincere,

Stretch forth his hand the helpless to restore ;
Give him thy heart, and he requires no more.
When God's your friend, you need no longer mourn,
Then Peace with conscious Virtue will return,
When reconcil'd to Him, whose power can save
The Soul ; and smooth your passage to the grave.

EVENING VI.

Among the actors on Life's busy stage,
 See thoughtless youth and unreflecting age :
 One represents the follies of the times,
 And modish vice collects from foreign climes,
 The other vainly dreaming to the last,
 Yet ne'er reflects upon his actions past ;
 Whilst those who strive in Virtue to excel,
 Receive the just reward of acting well.

SINCE man is wiser by reflection made,
 When Night's dim curtain overspreads the plains,
 True wisdom learn in this sequester'd shade,
 Among those tombs where solemn silence reigns.
 Surrounded by the bones of those who trod
 Of late, the busy, active scenes of life,
 Man may converse familiar with his God,
 Retir'd from crouds, from tumults, and from strife ;
 May he not learn to fix a just esteem,
 On fleeting things in all their pomp array'd ?
 Since Life itself is nothing but a dream,
 A man at best is but a fleeting shade.

This is a truth which cannot be deny'd,
 " All human things are subject to decay,"
 The most distinguish'd son of earthly pride,
 Is but the transient vision of a day ;
 Tho' now he's flatter'd by a servile crowd,
 Weak as himself, as foolish, and as vain,
 To-morrow's dawn may wrap him in his shroud,
 Then what's the use of all this pompous train ?
 No splendid pomp, no equipage he needs,
 To train up useless servants at command,
 Who in the humble path of Virtue treads,
 To guard his passage to the heavenly land.
 An honest heart will serve him in the way,
 And conscious Virtue prove his surest friend,
 Safely conduct him to the realm of day,
 And make him happy at his journey's end.
 Then why the bustle that is often made,
 For fleeting things as fickle as the wind ?
 While we pursue a visionary shade,
 The most important task is left behind.
 Can man who is convinc'd that he must die,
 Stand thoughtless, unprepar'd to meet the dart ?
 Can he supinely in dull languour lie,
 Until the fatal point shall pierce his heart ?
 Who knows the worth of an immortal soul,
 Can be regardless how his time he spends,
 Who unimprov'd can see the minutes roll,
 On which eternal happiness depends.

May we not learn from this reflective view,
These vain delusive phantoms to despise,
When we too oft with eager haste pursue,
Until the bubble breaks before our eyes?
Aspire, my soul, leave this fantastic scene,
With just ambition may our hopes arise,
This world is for the soul a place too mean,
And hope too low that lurks beneath the skies.
Spring from this earth, and stretch thy pinions wide
Through yielding æther to a land unknown,
Hope thy companion, Providence thy guide,
To realms of bliss which may be all thy own.
Though man's a poor dependent being here,
Whose body to this humble shrine we trust,
May be an angel in a happier sphere,
When this frail cottage moulders into dust.
If we improve the time which Heaven has lent,
Our hopes on God alone will find repose,
At the conclusion of a life well spent,
When the last Evening of this life shall close.

THE GREAT MAN.

MR. ADDISON in his prose writings somewhere observes, that if angels were to look into the ways of mankind, and give in their catalogue of worthies, it would differ much from that which any of our species would draw up. We are dazzled with the splendour of titles, the ostentation of learning, the noise of victories, &c. They on the contrary see the philosopher in the cottage, who possesses his soul with patience and thankfulness, under the pressure of what little minds call poverty and distress. The evening walk of a wise man is more illustrious to their sight than the march of a general at the head of an hundred thousand men.

A contemplation of God's works, a generous concern for the good of mankind, and unfeigned exercise for humility, only denominate men great and glorious.

SHOULD Angels leave their blissful seats on high,
 And o'er this world cast an impartial eye,
 Survey the actions of mankind, and then
 Give in their catalogue of worthy men,
 'Twould differ much from what vain mortals draw,
 Of tyrants who have kept the world in awe,
 Who boast of sieges and of battles won,
 Nations enslav'd, and mighty realms undone,
 By their successful arms, and conquering sword,
 Brought vanquish'd slaves beneath one common lord ;

Tho' high in fame they eminently shine,
 Cæsar and Churchill in the martial line,
 Of laurels still adorn the victor's brow,
 They bloom yet on the Grecian mad-man too.
 These are the mighty men we heroes call,
 Fame's noisy trumpet echoes round the ball
 Their glorious deeds—would Angels call them good,
 Whose hands are stain'd and garments roll'd in blood ?
 We're dazzl'd with the splendour of the great,
 His pompous title and his large estate ;
 Troops of attendants croud his spacious hall,
 While cringing vassals round him prostrate fall,
 Profusion shines on his luxurious board,
 Does this declare the greatness of my lord ?
 He drinks in gold, perhaps, and dines on plate,
 While Famine is imploring at his gate ;
 He sees that smiling plenty which abounds,
 Profusely thrown to his voracious hounds ;
 Whilst they in pamper'd luxury are fed,
 The neigh'ring poor are languishing for bread :
 If this is greatness may my wish prevail,
 Grant me a cottage in some rural vale ;
 My wants supply'd, or if I wish for more,
 To keep the stranger or relieve the poor,
 My humble station let who will deride,
 I'll scorn his pomp and supercilious pride.

Nor shall my censure too severely fall,
 Mark well ! this picture was not drawn for all.
 The rich and great may have the justest claim,
 To lasting honour and immortal fame ;
 Whose gen'rous heart his bounty can extend,
 His king, his country, and religion's friend,
 In Virtue's cause, his wealth and power bestow,
 He acts the part of Providence below,
 Who checks tyrannic power, and breaks his rod,
 And is on earth a substitute of God.
 Were such in power, he well deserves command,
 Who deals out blessings with a liberal hand ;
 To such, if injured innocence complain,
 He finds redress, nor asks relief in vain ;
 Near such if honest poverty reside,
 He comfort finds and has his wants supply'd,
 To clothe the naked and the hungry feed,
 These social virtues make him great indeed.

Does not another class our notice claim ?
 Is not the learn'd a candidate for fame ?
 Who seeks for knowledge to enrich his mind,
 To know himself, and then to know mankind,
 To learn true wisdom from the good and wise,
 Virtue to know, and known to exercise :
 From good examples rules of life to draw,
 To worship God, and feel for other's woe.

If Virtue be the only thing you seek,
 It may be found, tho' you're unskill'd in Greek,
 The good to Heaven may find the narrow way,
 Who ne'er so much as heard of Algebra.

Yet do not think sound learning I despise,
 Of great advantage to the good and wise ;
 Who Nature's wondrous secrets can display,
 And to his God due adoration pay,
 Praise to his merit must be justly due,
 To him that's learned, wise, and virtuous too ;
 Whose bosom glows with universal love,
 Even such, impartial angels must approve ;
 Who see the sage tho' in his humble cell,
 Where Peace and conscious Virtue deigns to dwell,
 Greatly support his soul when he's oppress'd
 With poverty, and seemingly distress.

The evening walk of him that's truly wise,
 More glorious and illustrious in their eyes,
 Than he who proudly marches to command,
 An hundred thousand men in martial band :
 To love his God, and fill his gen'rous mind
 With Friendship, and the love of all mankind :
 These humble virtues rightly understood,
 Can only make men glorious, great, and good.

[Faint handwritten signature or initials]

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