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THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM COWPER,

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

BY THE
REV. H. F. CARY, A.M.

TWO VOLUMES COMPLETE IN ONE.

VOL. I.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

WILLIAM COWPER was born, on the fifteenth of November 1731, in the rectory house at Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire. His father, John, rector of that place and one of the chaplains to George the Second, was the son of Spencer Cowper, chief justice of Chester, and Judge in the Court of Common Pleas; and nephew to Earl Cowper, Lord Chancellor of England. His mother, Annie, daughter of Roger Donne, Esquire, of Ludham Hall, in Norfolk, was sprung from a family not less respectable, but most distinguished for having produced the witty and eloquent divine and poet of that name. Of seven children, William and John alone survived their parents. The mother died, at the age of thirty-four, in November 1737. The impression made by this bereavement on the spirits of her son was never effaced; at the distance of fifty years he assured a friend that scarcely a week passed in which he did not think of her; and the sight of her picture called forth such a strain of lamentation as the liveliest sense of his loss only could have awakened. On her death he was placed under the care of Dr. Pitman, of Market Street, a few miles distant from his home. Here he remained for two years, till a complaint in his eyes, that threatened him with blindness, made it necessary that he should be removed to the house of a female oculist in London. From hence, at the end of two years, he was put to school at Westminster, under Doctor Nichols, where, at the age of fourteen, the small-pox seized him, and had the effect of removing the imperfection in his sight, though his eyes

always continued to be subject to inflammation. From this age, when he translated an elegy of Tibullus, he dated his first beginning to "dabble in rhyme." The Reverend Walter Bagot, who was one of his school-fellows, and who, on a renewal of their intimacy in after life, became one of the steadiest and most zealous of his friends, told me that in those early days he prognosticated to Cowper his future excellence as a poet. One night, when they were at the playhouse together, Cowper pointed out to him a lady on whom he had fixed his affections, and whom he called his cousin. This was, no doubt, Theodora Cowper, to whom he addressed the love-verses that have been published since his death, and to whom her father forbade his being united on account of their being so nearly related in blood. Mr. Bagot was of opinion that the malady he afterwards laboured under, arose from disappointment in this affair; but such was his strong constitutional tendency to the disorder, that it would be difficult to determine what cause at first excited it.

On leaving school, he was articled for three years to Mr. Chapman, a solicitor; and in 1752, took chambers in the Temple, but made little progress in his legal studies. In 1756 he lost his father, who had married again, but left no family by his second wife.

In the same year he contributed some papers to the "Connoisseur," a periodical work conducted by Colman and Thornton, his school-fellows at Westminster.

In one of his letters, he speaks of having, while in the Temple, "produced several half-penny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to be popular." It is to be regretted that any such production by the author of *John Gilpin* should have perished. A more laborious, but less valuable work, in which he engaged, was a version of Voltaire's *Henriad*. Of this he translated four books for his brother, who had undertaken the task for the editor of the "Grand Magazine." On perusing the whole as it appears in that miscellany for the years 1759-60, I have not been able to discover any part that I could ascribe to Cowper, or that is equal to the few lines he wrote on the death of his favourite young friend, Sir William Russell.

At his father's death he found his means of support but scanty, and wanted resolution to attempt increasing them by professional exertions. Some powerful friends at this juncture obtained for him a nomination to the offices of reading-clerk and clerk of private committees to the House of Lords. He was now perplexed between his wish to accept these employments and his fear of being unequal to the duties of them, when another office of much less value, that of clerk of the journals to the same house, happened to fall vacant, and in the hope of being more competent to fill it, he willingly exchanged for it the other two. Still his anxiety, though somewhat lessened, was far from being removed; a public exhibition of himself under any circumstances, to use his own words, was like mortal poison to him: and when a dispute about his appointment rendered it necessary that he should appear before the lords in order to prove his competence, the dread came on him with such force that he lost his reason, and, if his own recollections of the case are to be trusted, made repeated attempts at self-destruction. It was now no longer safe to leave him in his own keeping; and accordingly, in December 1763, he was consigned to the care of Doctor Cotton, of St. Alban's, author of the "Visions in Verse," a physician, whose humanity and intellectual endowments well fitted him for the management of those afflicted like Cowper. His own account of what he suffered, and of the sins by which he had provoked so terrible a visitation, is full of all the horrors that a disordered imagination could impart to it.

In about a year and a half he had recovered sufficiently to remove to Huntingdon, a place recommended as a desirable abode for him by its nearness to Cambridge, where his brother resided on a fellowship of Bene't College. At Huntingdon he soon contracted an intimacy with the family of the Reverend Mr. Unwin. The son of this gentleman, then a student at Cambridge, was so much interested by his appearance on seeing him at church, that one morning when the service was over he accosted him, and finding that his conversation answered to the expectations he had raised, gladly introduced him to the acquaintance of his parents. The father was a man of learn-

ing, good sense, and remarkable simplicity; the mother, though of station no higher than the daughter of a tradesman at Ely, was endowed with a well cultivated understanding, and, as Cowper termed it, the politeness of a duchess. From a frequent visitor, it was not long before he became their constant inmate: a change in his mode of life recommended not less by convenience than inclination; for in his lodgings he had already contrived to spend, in less than three months, a year's income. With what satisfaction to himself his days were now passed may be seen from the following passages in his letters: "March 11th, 1766. The lady in whose house I live is so excellent a person, and regards me with a friendship so truly Christian, that I could almost fancy my mother restored to life again, to compensate to me for all the friends I have lost and all my connexions broken." "October 20th, 1776. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful teacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day, and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but, if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord, make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most musical performers. After tea, we sally forth in good earnest; Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we generally make this exercise in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are called to prayers. I need not tell you that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness, and accordingly we are happy." He adds, that

he had had serious thoughts about taking orders; but observes, that every new convert is apt to think himself called upon for that purpose, and that it had pleased God, by means which there was no need to particularise, to give him full satisfaction as to the propriety of declining it.

When the death of the elder Unwin, by a fall from his horse, determined the widow to leave Huntingdon, Cowper resolved on accompanying her; and in the autumn of 1767, they fixed themselves at Olney, in Buckinghamshire, whither they were drawn chiefly by their esteem for Mr. Newton, Curate of that place, and the author of many devotional works. In such society the fervour of Cowper's piety was not likely to be moderated. He joined, with more zeal than was consistent with the tranquillity so desirable for one of his temperament, in ministering to the spiritual and temporal wants of his poorer neighbours, by great numbers of whom he was unfortunately surrounded.

In March, 1770, he lost his brother, whom, during his last moments, he congratulated himself with having made a convert to his own views of religion.

But his mind was now strained beyond its due pitch. In about three years he was again attacked by insanity, which at last settled into the form of religious despair, made only more gloomy by the too lively and confident hopes that had preceded it. From this time to the end of his life there prevailed in his mind, with a few short intermissions, a dreadful persuasion that he was for ever ejected and shut out from the presence of his Maker. It was in vain that his friends endeavoured to reason him out of so fatal an error. No argument availed to shake him in the belief of his utter and irreversible reprobation. It was, indeed, present to his thoughts at different times with different degrees of intensity. Occasionally he could forget himself in the ordinary occupations or amusements of a secluded life, could divert himself with gardening, carpentering, or landscape-drawing, and enjoy his book or the company of his acquaintance and friends. But though, like Orestes pursued by the Furies, he was sometimes allowed a short respite, it was never, like him, in the temple; for not the least of his

misery was, that he thought himself forbidden to enter a church or to pray. Yet during all this time he appears to have been rendered only the more gentle, beneficent, and strict in his conduct by the sufferings he underwent. He charges himself with no fault. He assigns no cause, and could have assigned none, for his rejection. All he had to say was, that "there was a mystery in his destruction, and that in time it would be explained." If we should seek for instance to show the probability of a future life, from the unhappiness to which good men are exposed in the present, it would be difficult to fix on one more convincing than that of Cowper.

In 1780, Newton exchanged Olney for another benefice, and, on quitting it, recommended him to the regard of Mr. Bull, a dissenting minister at Newport Pagnel, a man of humane and cheerful spirit, who was thenceforward his frequent visitor, and at whose suggestion he amused himself with translating the mystical poetry of Madame Guyon. With almost all his earlier friends, his intercourse had been broken off by illness or absence. From Mr. Bagot I heard that he was for many years ignorant what had become of his old school-fellow; and others, no doubt, remained in the same uncertainty as to his fate. His kinsman, Joseph Hill, the faithful and generous manager of his pecuniary concerns, was the only one of his youthful associates with whom he maintained a correspondence uninterrupted, except during the paroxysms of his disorder. Yet even to him he did not intimate his design of becoming an author, when the first volume of his poems, with a preface by Mr. Newton, was committed to the press in the summer of 1781. It was thus not till his fiftieth year that one of the most popular of English poets made his first appearance before the world.

He sent a copy of his book, with a letter, to Colman, and another to Thurlow, who had been his fellow-clerk with Chapman, the solicitor, and with whom he had lived on terms of great intimacy. Cowper predicted to him that he would one day be Lord Chancellor, and the prediction was now fulfilled. As to Colman, he had become a patentee of one of the play-houses, and was perhaps equally possessed with an opinion of

his own importance. Neither of them noticed the gift or the letter; a neglect too galling to be endured patiently even by Cowper, who revenged himself in some verses bitterly satirical, lately published, for the first time, by Mr. Southey. Both made some reparation by subsequent kindness, but not, I fear, till the celebrity of the "Task" had made it an honour to be known to the writer.

In the same year he published anonymously *Anti-Thelyphthora*, a short poem in ridicule of a book called *Thelyphthora* by his cousin the Reverend Martin Madan, in which the lawfulness of polygamy had been gravely proposed for consideration. The poem has lately been discovered by the diligence of Mr. Southey, who has spared no pains to investigate every particular relating to Cowper.

His first volume had been composed principally during the preceding winter by the encouragement of Mrs. Unwin, who was well pleased to see him employed in any occupation that prevented his mind from preying upon itself. For the next, published in 1785, and which included the "Task," we are indebted to another female adviser, with whom accident brought him acquainted. This lady, the widow of Sir Robert Austen, being seen by him to enter with her sister, then living near Olney, into a shop opposite his window, engaged his attention so forcibly that he desired Mrs. Unwin to invite them to join their party at tea. The wish had no sooner been complied with than his natural diffidence made him repent having expressed it; but he soon found himself quite at ease with his new guest, whose manners and conversation proved to be no less attractive than her appearance. The familiarity, thus begun, speedily grew into so close an intimacy that Lady Austen became the tenant of the next house, and the inseparable companion of her new neighbours. For her voice, with which she accompanied her performance on the harpsichord, he wrote several of his songs: from her story of John Gilpin's adventure, he composed his admirable ballad; her playful repartee recommended to him the sofa they were sitting on as a subject for his pen, and thus gave birth to the "Task;" and at her suggestion he engaged in a blank-verse translation of Homer. At last, the

two ladies, either from jealousy or some other cause, could no longer live in harmony together; and the removal of Lady Austen was the consequence. The void, thus made, was soon filled by his cousin, the widow of Sir Thomas Hesketh and sister of Theodora Cowper. She had shared the gaiety of his youth; and now, after the death of her husband, returned to cheer the sadness and adversity of his declining life. There appears to have been in the conversation of Cowper as in that of Swift, a fascination not easy for the female heart to resist. In both it was exerted involuntarily; but of one the influence was disastrous, of the other gentle and serene. Lady Hesketh was first his guest, and then took a house, that she might be near him, at Olney. The two other ladies had prompted his muse to some of her happiest flights. To Lady Hesketh is due the praise of having been one of those who most succeeded in calling forth the epistolary talent, in which he so much excelled. The easy and unaffected style of his letters, the gratitude and tenderness they discover for his friends, the exquisite sallies of humour always regulated by a nice sense of decorum, the graceful and unexpected turns given to the most trivial things, his just manner of thinking on all subjects of a more serious kind, excepting that in which his delusion is concerned, and even the interest excited by that strange delusion itself, all contribute to make these writings, never intended to be read by any but those to whom they were addressed, the most delightful in their way of any that the English language has produced.

In November 1786, he removed with Mrs. Unwin to a more commodious habitation in the adjacent village of Weston. Some of the sprightliest and most pleasing of his shorter poems are addressed to the Throckmortons, a Roman Catholic family, who were now his near neighbours, and for whom he felt the utmost cordiality: so little did his religious sentiments abate his kindness for those of a different persuasion.

About this time, Mr. Rose, a gentleman on his way from the University of Glasgow to London, called on him, partly as he supposed out of curiosity, but with the ostensible motive of returning him the thanks of the Scotch Professors for his two

volumes. A repetition of the visit led to a correspondence productive of mutual esteem.

In 1787 he had a violent attack of his constitutional malady, that lasted about eight months, during which time any face, except Mrs. Unwin's, was an insupportable grievance to him. By an allusion in the sense of hearing, incidental to his disorder, he imagined that he heard words addressed to him from without, which were indeed the shaping of his own organs, or rather (for they usually came to him at first waking out of sleep) the relic of his dreams. These sounds he was naturally inclined to interpret in accordance with his predominant fancy, how little relation soever they might have borne to it in the perception of an indifferent hearer. For his better assurance, he communicated them to a schoolmaster at Olney, named Teedon, who seems to have been as incapable of judging as himself; and by the construction put on them by this man, he was partly determined as to their real import.

On recovering, his hours were again given to Homer; and when so employed, went on, as he tells us in the Preface, with a smooth and easy flight.

The translation having been completed and published by subscription in 1791, his next engagement was an edition of Milton, to be embellished with the designs of Fuseli, already known to him as a scholar and critic, by some brief but excellent remarks on his Homer. For the edition of Milton he undertook to select notes from preceding commentators, to add some of his own, to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text. This brought him acquainted with Hayley, who, happening at the same time to have entered on a similar undertaking, proposed to him a junction of their labours, in which he readily concurred. There were some points in which the character of Hayley bore a resemblance to that of Cowper; a lively sympathy, a devotional turn, an extreme fondness for literary retirement, and a high tone of gentlemanly good-breeding. On his first visit, when Mrs. Unwin was seized with a paralytic attack, he won the affections of his host by his anxiety for her recovery, and the means he suggested for

effecting it. In the following summer, they were both prevailed on to leave their quiet home for the first and only time when they were able to exercise a will of their own, on a long expedition to Eartham in Sussex, the beautiful residence of Hayley. But the journey was reluctantly undertaken, and performed with difficulty. Cowper, who had never seen a mountain, thought himself on mountains among the hills of Sussex, and longed again for the flats of Olney and the Ouse. Here, in pursuance of their work on Milton, the two poets joined in translating the *Adamo of Andreini*, an Italian drama, from which it was first suggested by Voltaire that the original conception of *Paradise Lost* might have been derived. Two years after this, when I visited Hayley at Eartham, he was full of Cowper and Milton; he led me to an eminence crowned with laburnums, where his friend delighted to walk, and showed me the characteristic portrait of him painted by Romney. In twenty-five years more, when I found him in old age and solitude at Felpham, the same picture was before him, and he pointed to it and said, "There is our idol."

In 1794, after much solicitation from his friends, a pension of three hundred pounds was obtained for Cowper from government, through the intervention of Lord Spencer. But it came too late; Mrs. Unwin had now fallen into a state of insensibility, and he cared not for good fortune in which she could not participate. Much of her little property had been already consumed; although their slender means of subsistence were helped out by the contributions of friends, and by the profits derived from his works.

For the remainder of his life, he was either sunk in despondency, or haunted by imaginary terrors. In the same year it was thought advisable by Dr. Willis, that he should be removed from Weston. His young kinsman, John Johnson, who had been his frequent guest, his amanuensis, and his favourite companion, undertook to convey him and Mrs. Unwin into Norfolk, where many of his maternal relations were settled, and henceforth tended him with the care of an affectionate son. Sometimes he beguiled him of his sorrows by putting in his

way the translation of Homer, which he had before begun to revise and alter, and on which he now continued to occupy himself; at other times, by reading to him his own poems, or some lighter work of fiction, the only books he could listen to. The translation, when he had corrected or rather re-written it, lost much of its original vigour. He was, till within a short time of his end, master of himself enough to translate many Greek epigrams, and to compose some Latin verses and a few short pieces in English not inferior to those he had formerly produced, but deeply marked with the melancholy that oppressed him.

Mrs. Unwin died at Dereham in Norfolk, in December 1796. He went to take a last view of her corpse, started away with a vehement expression of sorrow, and never after spoke of her. No object now was able to give him pleasure. Fear and regret assailed him by turns. He would fain have recalled days which, while they were passing, appeared to be loaded with misery; and was filled with apprehensions lest he should either be deserted or carried off suddenly, he knew not by whom or whither.

After trying a residence at different places in Norfolk, he was, in December 1799, fixed at Dereham. The beginning of the next year, symptoms of dropsy appeared in his feet and ancles. Soon after, he became so feeble as not to bear motion in a carriage, and by the end of March was confined to his bedroom. As his sufferings through life had been alleviated by female tenderness, the same care followed him to the last. On the night of April the twenty-fourth, Miss Perowne, a lady who assisted Johnson in watching over him, offered him a cordial which he declined, saying, "What can it signify?" After this, he spoke no more. The next day he was released by a quiet expiration. He was buried at Dereham, in the same church with Mrs. Unwin, where each has a monument, and an epitaph by Hayley.

Cowper was of a middle height, with limbs strongly framed; hair of light brown, eyes of a bluish grey, and ruddy complexion. It is impossible to regard without wonder the mix-

ture of imbecility and power exhibited in his mind. With the weakness of an infant, scared at shadows and agonised by dreams; when the pen was in his hand, he became another being, who could give a charm to the homeliest features of nature, or the commonest objects of domestic life; could raise sport out of trifles, and in his graver moods exert a force like that of the prophet sent to awaken mankind out of delusions more serious than his own.

TABLE TALK.

“Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,
Abjicito.”

HOR. Lib. i. Epist. 13.

TABLE TALK.

A. You told me, I remember, glory, built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt;
The deeds, that men admire as half divine,
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple, tears
The laurel that the very lightning spares;
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant that, men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war;
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward his memory, dear to every muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
His portion in the good that Heaven bestows;
And when recording History displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts, that fought and died,
Where duty placed them, at their country's side;
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,

Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.

But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch, to naught but his ambition true,
Who, for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself station'd on a towering rock,
To see a people scatter'd like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels;
Then view him self-proclaim'd in a gazette
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet.
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced!
The glass that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
And Death's own scythe, would better speak his power;
Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade;
Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
The same their occupation and success.

A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man;
Kings do but reason on the self-same plan:
Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

B. Seldom, alas! the power of logic reigns
With much sufficiency in royal brains;
Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
Man made for kings! Those optics are but dim
That tell you so;—say, rather, they for him.
That were, indeed, a king-eunobling thought,
Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
The diadem, with mighty projects lined
To catch renown by ruining mankind,

Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,
Just what the toy will sell for—and no more.

Oh! bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood!
To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward;
Keep Vice restrain'd behind a double guard;
To quell the faction that affronts the throne,
By silent magnanimity alone;
To nurse with tender care the thriving arts;
Watch every beam Philosophy imparts;
To give Religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope;
With close fidelity, and love unfeign'd,
To keep the matrimonial bond unstain'd;
Covetous only of a virtuous praise;
His life a lesson to the land he sways;
To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw;
To sheath it in the peace-restoring close
With joy beyond what victory bestows;—
Blest country! where these kingly glories shine,
Blest England! if this happiness be thine!

A. Guard what you say; the patriotic tribe
Will sneer and charge you with a bribe.—*B.* A bribe?
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,
To lure me to the baseness of a lie:
And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast,)
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.
Those arts be theirs, who hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign.

A. Your smooth enlogium to one crown address'd,
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.

B. Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
Ask'd, when in Hell, to see the royal jail;

Approved their method in all other things :—
 “ But where, good sir, do you confine your kings ?”
 “ There,” said his guide, “ the group is full in view.”
 “ Indeed ?” replied the Don, “ there are but few.”
 His black interpreter the charge disdain’d—
 “ Few, fellow ?—there are all that ever reign’d.”
 Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
 The guilty and not guilty both alike :
 I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
 And we can readily refute it here ;
 While Alfred’s name, the father of his age,
 And the Sixth Edward’s grace the historic page.
 A. Kings then, at last, have but the lot of all :
 By their own conduct they must stand or fall.
 B. True. While they live the courtly laureat pays
 His quit-rent ode, his peppercorn of praise ;
 And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,
 Adds, as he can, his tributary mite :
 A subject’s faults a subject may proclaim,
 A monarch’s errors are forbidden game !
 Thus, free from censure, overawed by fear,
 And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
 The fleeting forms of majesty engage
 Respect, while stalking o’er life’s narrow stage ;
 Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
 And ask, with busy scorn, Was this the man ?
 I pity kings, whom Worship waits upon,
 Obsequious from the cradle to the throne ;
 Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,
 And binds a wreath about their baby brows ;
 Whom Education stiffens into state,
 And Death awakens from that dream too late.
 Oh ! if Servility with supple knees,
 Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please ;

If smooth Dissimulation, skill'd to grace
 A devil's purpose with an angel's face ;
 If smiling peeresses, and simpering peers,
 Encompassing his throne a few short years ;
 If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,
 That wants no driving, and disdains the lead ;
 If guards, mechanically form'd in ranks,
 Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,
 Shouldering and standing as if struck to stone,
 While condescending majesty looks on ;—
 If monarchy consist in such base things,
 Sighing, I say again, I pity kings !

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
 E'en when he labours for his country's good ;
 To see a band, call'd patriot for no cause,
 But that they catch at popular applause,
 Careless of all the anxiety he feels,
 Hook disappointment on the public wheels ;
 With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
 Most confident, when palpably most wrong ;—
 If this be kingly, then farewell for me
 All kingship ; and may I be poor and free !

To be the table talk of clubs up stairs,
 To which the unwash'd artificer repairs,
 To indulge his genius after long fatigue,
 By diving into cabinet intrigue ;
 (For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
 To him is relaxation and mere play ;)—
 To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,
 But to be rudely censured when they fail ;
 To doubt the love his favourites may pretend,
 And in reality to find no friend ;
 If he indulge a cultivated taste.
 His galleries with the works of art well graced,

To hear it call'd extravagance and waste ;
 If these attendants, and if such as these,
 Must follow royalty, then welcome ease ;
 However humble and confined the sphere,
 Happy the state that hast not these to fear.

A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have dwelt
 On situations that they never felt,
 Start up sagacious, cover'd with the dust
 Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
 And prate and preach about what others prove,
 As if the world and they were hand and glove.
 Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares ;
 They have their weight to carry, subjects their's ;
 Poets, of all men, ever least regret
 Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.
 Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
 The mighty plan, oraacular, in verse,
 No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
 Should claim my fix'd attention more than you.

B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
 To turn the course of Helicon that way ;
 Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
 Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
 Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
 The leathern ears of stock-jobbers and Jews.

A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
 To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.
 When ministers and ministerial arts,
 Patriots, who love good places at their hearts,
 When admirals, extoll'd for standing still,
 Or doing nothing with a deal of skill ;
 Generals, who will not conquer when they may,
 Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay ;
 When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,
 Though Discontent alone can find out where ;

When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
 I hear—as mute as if a syren sung.
 Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains
 A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains :
 That were a theme might animate the dead,
 And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

B. The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude
 Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
 They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,
 Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
 Liberal in all things else, yet Nature here
 With stern severity deals out the year.
 Winter invades the spring, and often pours
 A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers ;
 Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
 Ungenial blasts attending curl the streams :
 The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
 With double toil, and shiver at their work.
 Thus with a rigour, for his good design'd,
 She rears her favourite man of all mankind.
 His form robust and of elastic tone,
 Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone,
 Supplies with warm activity and force
 A mind well-lodged, and masculine of course.
 Hence Liberty, sweet Liberty inspires
 And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
 Patient of constitutional control,
 He bears it with meek manliness of soul ;
 But, if Authority grow wanton, woe
 To him that treads upon his free-born toe ;
 One step beyond the boundary of the laws
 Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.
 Thus proud Prerogative, not much revered,
 Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard ;

And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.

Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not form'd like us, with such herculean powers,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of misery far away.
He drinks his simple beverage with a gust,
And, feasting on an onion and a crust,
We never feel the alacrity and joy
With which he shouts and carols *Vive le Roi*,
Fill'd with as much true merriment and glee,
As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.

Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that he has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid;
Bids equity throughout his works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale;
He can encourage Slavery to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.

A. Freeman and slave, then, if the case be such,
Stand on a level; and you prove too much:
If all men indiscriminately share
His fostering power and tutelary care,
As well be yoked by Despotism's hand
As dwell at large in Britain's charter'd land.

B No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains, beneath her happy reign,
The growth that Nature meant she should attain;
The varied fields of science, ever new,
Opening, and wider opening on her view,

She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
 While no base fear impedes her in her course.
 Religion, richest favour of the skies,
 Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes;
 No shades of superstition blot the day,
 Liberty chases all that gloom away;
 The soul emancipated, unoppress'd,
 Free to prove all things, and hold fast the best,
 Learns much; and to a thousand listening minds
 Communicates with joy the good she finds:
 Courage, in arms, and ever prompt to show
 His manly forehead to the fiercest foe,
 Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
 His spirits rising as his toils increase,
 Guards well what arts and industry have won,
 And Freedom claims him for her first-born son.
 Slaves fight for what were better cast away—
 The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway;
 But they that fight for freedom undertake
 The noblest cause mankind can have at stake:—
 Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
 A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.
 O Liberty! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
 The poet's muse, his passion, and his theme;
 Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse;
 Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse;
 Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
 Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires:
 Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,
 And I will sing, if Liberty be there;
 And I will sing at Liberty's dear feet,
 In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.
 A. Sing where you please; in such a cause I grant
 An English poet's privilege to rant;

But is not Freedom—at least, is not ours—
 Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,
 Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping every mound,
 Spread anarchy and terror all around ?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
 For bounding or curvetting in his course ?
 Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
 He break away, and seek the distant plain ?
 No. His high mettle, under good control,
 Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.

Let Discipline employ her wholesome arts ;
 Let magistrates, alert, perform their parts ;
 Not skulk, or put on a prudential mask,
 As if their duty were a desperate task :
 Let active laws apply the needful curb
 To guard the Peace, that Riot would disturb ;
 And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,
 Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
 When Tumult lately burst his prison door,
 And set plebeian thousands in a roar ;
 When he usurp'd Authority's just place,
 And dared to look his master in the face ;
 When the rude rabble's watchword was—destroy,
 And blazing London seem'd a second Troy,—
 Liberty blush'd, and hung her drooping head ;
 Beheld their progress with the deepest dread ;
 Blush'd, that effects like these she should produce,
 Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
 She loses in such storms her very name,
 And fierce Licentiousness should bear the blame.

Incomparable gem ! thy worth untold ;
 Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold ;
 May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
 Betray thee, while professing to defend !

Prize it, ye ministers ; ye monarchs, spare ;
Ye patriots guard it with a miser's care !

A. Patriots, alas ! the few that have been found
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene, when Chatham died.

B. Not so : the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him Demosthenes was heard again ;
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain ;
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose ;
And every venal stickler for the yoke
Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.

Such men are raised to station and command,
When Providence means mercy to a land.
He speaks, and they appear ; to Him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow ;
To manage with address, to seize with power
The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
So Gideon earn'd a victory not his own ;
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.

Poor England ! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear.
Thee nations hunt ; all mark thee for a prey ;
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay.
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex'd,
Once Chatham saved thee ; but who saves thee next ?

Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
 All that should be the boast of British song.
 'Tis not the wreath that once adorn'd thy brow,
 The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.
 Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,
 Patterns of every virtue, every grace,
 Confess'd a God; they knelt before they fought,
 And praised Him in the victories He wrought.
 Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
 Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;
 Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
 Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
 The stream that feeds the wellspring of the heart
 Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
 Than Virtue quickens with a warmth divine
 The powers that Sin has brought to a decline.

A. The inestimable estimate of Brown
 Rose like a paper-kite, and charm'd the town;
 But measures, plann'd and executed well,
 Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
 He trod the very self-same ground you tread,
 And Victory refuted all he said.

B. And yet his judgment was not framed amiss;
 Its error, if it err'd, was merely this—
 He thought the dying hour already come,
 And a complete recovery struck him dumb.

But that effeminaey, folly, lust,
 Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must;
 And that a nation shamefully debased
 Will be despised, and trampled on at last,
 Unless sweet Penitence her powers renew,
 Is truth, if history itself be true.
 There is a time, and Justice marks the date,
 For long-forbearing Clemency to wait;

That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt
 Is punish'd, and down comes the thunderbolt :
 If Mercy *then* put by the threatening blow,
 Must she perform the same kind office *now* ?
 May she ! and, if offended Heaven be still
 Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.
 'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
 The tempest of tumultuary joys,
 Nor is it yet despondence and dismay,
 Will win her visits, or engage her stay ;
 Prayer only, and the penitential tear,
 Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)
 In prostitution sinks the sense of shame ;
 When infamous Venality, grown bold,
 Writes on his bosom, *to be let or sold* ;
 When Perjury, that Heaven-defying vice,
 Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,
 Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,
 To turn a penny in the way of trade ;
 When Avarice starves (and never hides his face)
 Two or three millions of the human race,
 And not a tongue inquires how, where, or when,
 Though conscience will have twinges now and then ;
 When profanation of the sacred cause,
 In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
 Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fall'n, and lost
 In all that wars against that title most ;—
 What follows next, let cities of great name,
 And regions long since desolate, proclaim.
 Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,
 Speak to the present times, and times to come ;
 They cry aloud in every careless ear,
 Stop, while ye may ; suspend your mad career !

O learn, from our example and our fate,
 Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late!
 Not only Vice disposes and prepares
 The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares
 To stoop to Tyranny's usurp'd command,
 And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand
 (A dire effect, by one of nature's laws
 Unchangeably connected with its cause;)

But Providence Himself will intervene,
 To throw His dark displeasure o'er the scene.
 All are His instruments: each form of war,
 What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
 Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
 The storms that upset the joys of life,
 Are but His rods to scourge a guilty land,
 And waste it, at the bidding of His hand.
 He gives the word, and Mutiny soon roars
 In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores;
 The standards of all nations are unfurl'd;
 She has one foe, and that one foe the world.
 And if he doom that people with a frown,
 And mark them with a seal of wrath press'd down,
 Obduracy takes place; callous and tough,
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof:
 Earth shakes beneath them, and Heaven roars above;
 But nothing scares them from the course they love.
 To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
 That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
 With mad rapidity and unconcern,
 Down to the gulf from which is no return.
 They trust in navies, and their navies fail—
 God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail!
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies;
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies;

But all they trust in withers, as it must,
 When He commands in whom they place no trust.
 Vengeance, at last, pours down upon their coast
 A long despised, but now victorious, host ;
 Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
 The noble sweep of all their privilege ;
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock ;
 Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach :
 Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach ?

B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
 The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
 Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
 Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
 If human woes her soft attention claim,
 A tender sympathy pervades the frame ;
 She pours a sensibility divine
 Along the nerve of every feeling line.
 But if a deed, not tamely to be borne,
 Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
 The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,
 The storm of music shakes the astonish'd crowd.
 So, when remote futurity is brought
 Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
 A terrible sagacity informs
 The poet's heart ; he looks to distant storms ;
 He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers ;
 And, arm'd with strength surpassing human powers,
 Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
 And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
 Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
 Of prophet and of poet was the same ;
 Hence British poets, too, the priesthood shared,
 And every hallow'd Druid was a bard.

But no prophetic fires to me belong;
I play with syllables, and sport in song.

A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
To set a distich upon six and five,
Where Discipline helps opening buds of sense,
And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
I was a poet too; but modern taste
Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
Thus, all success depending on an ear,
And thinking I might purchase it too dear,
If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
And truth cut short to make a period round,
I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse
Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.

B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit;
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
When Labour and when Dulness, club in hand,
Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's stand,
Beating alternately, in measured time,
The clock-work tintinabulum of rhyme,
Exact and regular the sounds will be;
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

From him who rears a poem lank and long,
To him who strains his all into a song:—
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
All birks and braes, though he was never there;
Or, having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains;

A prologue interdash'd with many a stroke—
 An art contrived to advertise a joke,
 So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
 Not in the words, but in the gap between :
 Manner is all in all—whate'er is writ—
 The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.

To dally much with subjects mean and low,
 Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
 Neglected talents rust into decay,
 And every effort ends in pushpin play.
 The man that means success, should soar above
 A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove ;
 Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
 The fruit of all her labour is whipt-cream :
 As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
 Stoop'd from his highest pitch to pounce a wren ;
 As if the poet, purposing to wed,
 Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Ages elapsed ere Homer's lamp appear'd,
 And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard.
 To carry nature lengths unknown before,
 To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more.
 Thus Genius rose and set at order'd times,
 And shot a dayspring into distant climes,
 Ennobling every region that he chose :
 He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose ;
 And, tedious years of Gothic darkness pass'd,
 Emerged, all splendour, in our isle at last.
 Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
 Then show far off their shining plumes again.

A. Is genius only found in epic lays ?
 Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise :
 Make their heroic powers your own at once,
 Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.

B. These were the chief : each interval of night
 Was graced with many an undulating light.
 In less illustrious bards his beauty shone—
 A meteor, or a star ; in these the sun.

The nightingale may claim the topmast bough,
 While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
 Like him, unnoticed, I, and such as I,
 Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly.
 Perch'd on the meagre produce of the land,
 An ell or two of prospect we command ;
 But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
 Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
 Had faded, poetry was not an art ;
 Language, above all teaching, or, if taught,
 Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
 Elegant as simplicity, and warm
 As ecstacy, unmanacled by form ;
 Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
 By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
 Was natural as the flowing stream,
 And yet magnificent—a God the theme !
 That theme on earth exhausted, though above
 'Tis found as everlasting as His love,
 Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things—
 The feast of heroes, and the wrath of kings ;
 But still, while Virtue kindled his delight,
 The song was moral, and so far was right.
 'Twas thus, till Luxury seduced the mind
 To joys less innocent, as less refined ;
 Then Genius danced a bacchanaul ; he crown'd
 The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
 His brows with ivy, rush'd into the field
 Of wild imagination, and there reel'd,

The victim of his own lascivious fires,
 And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.
 Anacreon, Horace play'd in Greece and Rome
 This Bedlam part; and others, nearer home.
 When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reign'd
 The proud protector of the power he gain'd,
 Religion, harsh, intolerant, austere,
 Parent of manners, like herself, severe,
 Drew a rough copy of the Christian face,
 Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace;
 The dark and sullen humour of the time
 Judged every effort of the muse a crime;
 Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,
 Was lumber in an age so void of taste:
 But when the second Charles assumed the sway,
 And arts revived beneath a softer day,
 Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,
 The mind, released from too constrain'd a nerve,
 Flew to its first position, with a spring
 That made the vaulted roofs of Pleasure ring.
 His court the dissolute and hateful school
 Of Wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
 Swarm'd with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
 With brutal lust as ever Circe made.
 From these a long succession, in the rage
 Of rank obscenity, debauch'd their age;
 Nor ceased, till, ever anxious to redress
 The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
 The muse instructed a well-nurtured train
 Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
 And claim the palm for purity of song,
 That Lewdness had usurp'd, and worn so long.
 Then decent Pleasantry and sterling Sense,
 That neither gave nor would endure offence,

Whipp'd out of sight, with satire just and keen,
The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.

In front of these came Addison. In him
Humour in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and attic taste, combined,
To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well-disciplined, complete, compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace,
That, quite eclipsing Pleasure's painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
E'en on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch,)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art;
And every warbler has his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile,
At Folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.

A. Are we then left—*B.* Not wholly in the dark;
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road,
Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad.

Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one;
Short his career, indeed, but ably run.
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours;

And, like a scatter'd seed at random sown,
 Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
 Lifted at length, by dignity of thought,
 And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
 He laid his head in Luxury's soft lap,
 And took too often there his easy nap.
 If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
 'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
 Surly, and slovenly, and bold, and coarse,
 Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
 Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
 Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
 He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
 And so disdain'd the rules he understood,
 The laurel seem'd to wait on his command;
 He snatch'd it rudely from the Muses' hand.

Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
 Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower;
 Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
 The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads;
 She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
 With music, modulating all their notes;
 And charms the woodland scenes, and wilds unknown,
 With artless airs and concerts of her own;
 But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
 Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence.
 Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
 Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
 Faney, that from the bow that spans the sky
 Brings colours dipp'd in Heaven, that never die:
 A soul exalted above Earth, a mind
 Skill'd in the characters that form mankind;
 And, as the Sun in rising beauty dress'd,
 Looks to the westward from the dappled east,

And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
 Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close ;
 An eye like his to catch the distant goal ;
 Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
 Like his, to shed illuminating rays
 On every scene and subject it surveys :
 Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
 And the world cheerfully admits the claim.

Pity Religion has so seldom found
 A skilful guide into poetic ground !
 The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to stray,
 And every Muse attend her in her way.
 Virtue, indeed, meets many a rhyming friend,
 And many a compliment politely penn'd ;
 But, unattired in that becoming vest
 Religion weaves for her, and half undress'd,
 Stands in the desert, shivering and forlorn,
 A wintry figure, like a wither'd thorn.
 The shelves are full, all other themes are sped ;
 Hackney'd and worn to the last flimsy thread,
 Satire has long since done his best ; and curst
 And loathsome Ribaldry has done his worst ;
 Fancy has sported all her powers away
 In tales, in trifles, and in children's play ;
 And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
 Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
 'Twere new, indeed, to see a bard all fire,
 Touch'd with a coal from Heaven, assume the lyre,
 And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
 With more than mortal music on his tongue,
 That He, who died below, and reigns above,
 Inspires the song, and that His name is Love.

For, after all, if merely to beguile,
 By flowing numbers, and a flowery style,

The tedium that the lazy rich endure,
 Which now and then sweet poetry may cure ;
 Or, if to see the name of idle self,
 Stamp'd on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,
 To float a bubble on the breath of Fame,
 Prompt his endeavour, and engage his aim,
 Debased to servile purposes of pride,—
 How are the powers of genius misapplied !
 The gift, whose office is the Giver's praise,
 To trace Him in His word, His works, His ways !
 Then spread the rich discovery, and invite
 Mankind to share in the divine delight,
 Distorted from its use and just design,
 To make the pitiful possessor shine,
 To purchase, at the fool-frequented fair
 Of Vanity, a wreath for self to wear,
 Is profanation of the basest kind--
 Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.

A. Hail ! Sternhold, then ; and Hopkins, hail !—*B.* Amen.
 If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen ;
 If acrimony, slander, and abuse
 Give it a charge to blacken and traduce ;
 Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's case,
 With all that Fancy can invent to please,
 Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
 One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,
 To dash the pen through all that you prescribe.

B. No matter ;—we could shift when they were not ;
 And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

¶ **quid loquar audiendum.**

Hor. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.



SING, muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a muse to grace it with a song,)
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Error twines round human hearts;
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine!
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine;
Truths, that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.

Not all, whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end;
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear;
Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display
Shines as it runs; but, grasp'd at, slips away.

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse;

Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
 Say, to what bar amenable were man?
 With nought in charge, he could betray no trust;
 And, if he fell, would fall because he must;
 If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
 His recompense, in both, unjust alike.
 Divine authority, within his breast,
 Brings every thought, word, action, to the test;
 Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
 As Reason, or as Passion, takes the reins.
 Heaven from above, and Conscience from within,
 Cries in his startled ear—"Abstain from sin!"
 The world around solicits his desire,
 And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire;
 While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
 Peace follows Virtue, as its sure reward;
 And Pleasure brings, as surely, in her train,
 Remorse, and Sorrow, and vindictive Pain.

Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
 Must be supplied with objects of his choice.
 Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
 Or present, or in prospect, meets his sight;
 These open on the spot their honeyed store;
 Those call him loudly to pursuit of more.
 His unexhausted mine the sordid vice
 Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.
 Here various motives his ambition raise—
 Power, pomp, and splendor, and the thirst of praise;
 Their Beauty woos him with expanded arms;
 E'en Bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined
 Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
 Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,
 Or lead him devious from the path of truth;



Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.

Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air!
O what a dying, dying close was there!
'Tis harmony, from yon sequester'd bower,
Sweet harmony, that soothes the midnight hour!
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course, the enchantment was begun;
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That Virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?
Ye devotees to your adored employ,
Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above,
Heaven's harmony is universal love;
And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
Leave Vice and Folly unsubdued behind.

Gray dawn appears; the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain.
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs;
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,
True beagle as the stanchest hound he keeps.
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean;
The joy, the danger, and the toil o'er pays—
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.
Again impetuous to the field he flies;
Leaps every fence but one—there falls and dies.
Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmiss'd, but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
 Lights of the world, and stars of human race;
 But, if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
 Prodigious, ominous, and view'd with fear;
 The comet's baneful influence is a dream;
 Your's real, and pernicious in the extreme.
 What then!—are appetites and lusts laid down
 With the same ease that man puts on his gown?
 Will Avarice and Concupiscence give place,
 Charm'd by the sounds—Your Reverence, or, your Grace?
 No. But his own engagement binds him fast;
 Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,
 What atheists call him—a designing knave,
 A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave
 Oh! laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
 A cassock'd huntsman, and a fiddling priest!
 He from Italian songsters takes his cue:
 Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
 He takes the field; the master of the pack
 Cries—Well done, Saint!—and claps him on the back.
 Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
 To stand a waymark in the road to bliss?
 Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
 His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
 Go, cast your orders at your Bishop's feet,
 Send your dishonour'd gown to Monmouth-street;
 The sacred function in your hands is made—
 Sad sacrilege!—no function, but a trade!

Occidius is a pastor of renown;
 When he has pray'd and preach'd the sabbath down,
 With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
 Quavering and semiquavering care away.
 The full concerto swells upon your ear;
 All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear

The Babylonian tyrant, with a nod,
 Had summon'd them to serve his golden god ;
 So well that thought the employment seems to suit ;
 Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
 O fie ! 'tis evangelical and pure :
 Observe each face, how sober and demure !
 Ecstasy sets her stamp on every mien ;
 Chins fall'n, and not an eyeball to be seen.
 Still I insist, though music heretofore
 Has charm'd me much (not e'en Oecidius more,)
 Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
 For sabbath evenings, and, perhaps, as sweet.

Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
 Resort to this example as a rock—
 There stand, and justify the foul abuse
 Of sabbath hours with plausible excuse ?
 If apostolic gravity be free
 To play the fool on Sundays, why not we ?
 If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
 As inoffensive, what offence in cards ?
 Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay ;
 Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

Oh Italy ! thy sabbaths will be soon
 Our sabbaths, elosed with mummery and buffoon.
 Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
 Ours parcel'd out, as thine have ever been,
 God's worship and the mountebank between.
 What says the prophet ? Let that day be blest
 With holiness and consecrated rest.
 Pastime and business both it should exclude,
 And bar the door the moment they intrude ;
 Nobly distinguish'd above all the six
 By deeds in which the world must never mix.
 Hear him again. He calls it a delight,

A day of luxury, observed aright;
 When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest,
 Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
 But triflers are engaged, and cannot come;
 Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*

O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain—
 The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again!
 Cards with what rapture, and the polish'd die,
 The yawning chasm of indolence supply!
 Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
 Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
 Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
 The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
 Where Night, down-stooping from her ebon throne,
 Views constellations brighter than her own:
 'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined,
 The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.
 Innocent!—Oh! if venerable Time
 Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,
 Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,
 Let Comus rise archbishop of the land;
 Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
 Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.

Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
 The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
 Rufillus, exquisitely formed by rule,
 Not of the moral, but the dancing school,
 Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
 As tragical as others at his own.
 He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
 Then kill a constable, and drink five more;
 But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
 And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
 Go, fool; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
 Your cause before a bar you little dread;

But know, the law, that bids the drunkard die,
 Is far too just to pass the trifler by.
 Both baby-featured, and of infant size,
 View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
 Folly and Innocence are so alike,
 The difference, though essential, fails to strike.
 Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
 A simpering countenance, and a trifling air ;
 But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
 Delights us, by engaging our respect.

Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,
 Receives from her both appetite and treat ;
 But, if he play the glutton, and exceed,
 His benefactress blushes at the deed.
 For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,
 Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
 Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare !
 Heaven bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and fair.
 Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,
 Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan :
 He snuffs far off the anticipated joy ;
 Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ ;
 Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat ;
 Oh, nauseous !—an emitic for a whet !
 Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good ?
 Temperance were no virtue if He could.

That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
 Are hurtful, is a truth confess'd by all.
 And some, that seem to threaten virtue less,
 Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess.

Is man, then, only for his torment plac'd,
 The centre of delights he may not taste ?
 Like fabled Tantalus, condemn'd to hear
 The precious stream still purling in his ear,

Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition and perpetual thirst?
No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense!
The precept that enjoins him abstinence
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid
In every bosom where her nest is made,
Hatch'd by the beams of Truth, denies him rest,
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
No pleasure? Are domestic comforts dead?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame?
All these belong to virtue, and all prove
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity, that the poor
Stand starved at your inhospitable door?
Or, if yourself, too scantily supplied,
Need help, let honest industry provide.
Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart:
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
No pleasure? Has some sickly eastern waste
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast?
Can British Paradise no scenes afford
To please her sated and indifferent lord?
Are sweet Philosophy's enjoyments run
Quite to the lees? And has Religion none?
Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,
And judge you from the kennel and the sty.
Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
Ye are bid, begg'd, besought to entertain.
Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off
Obscene, to swill and wallow at a trough?

Envy the beast, then, on whom Heaven bestows
Your pleasures, with no curses in the close !

Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice
Unnerves the moral pow'rs, and mars their use ;
Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,
And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
The heart, surrender'd to the ruling power
Of some ungovern'd passion every hour,
Finds, by degrees, the truths that once bore sway,
And all their deep impressious wear away ;
So coin grows smooth, in traffic current pass'd,
Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last.

The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide,
In rushes folly with a full-moon tide,
Then welcome errors of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon ;
So sophistry cleaves close to, and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be imposed on, and then are :
And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
Not more industrious are the just and true,
To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due—
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth—
Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race
To hide the shocking features of her face.
Her form with dress and lotion they repair ;,
Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.

The sacred implement I now employ
 Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy :
 A trifle, if it move but to amuse ;
 But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse,
 Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
 It stabs at once the morals of a land.

Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
 Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads ;
 Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
 Snivelling and drivelling folly without end ;
 Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
 With sentimental frippery and dream,
 Caught in a delicate soft silken net
 By some lewd earl, or rake-hell baronet :
 Ye pimps, who under Virtue's fair pretence,
 Steal to the closet of young innocence,
 And teach her, unexperienced yet and green,
 To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen ;
 Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
 With some cold moral think to quench the fire :
 Though all your engineering proves in vain,
 The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again ;
 O that a verse had power and could command
 Far, far away these flesh-flies of the land ;
 Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
 And suck, and leave a craving maggot there !
 Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
 And cover'd with a fine-spun specious veil,
 Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust
 And relish of their pleasure all to lust.

But the muse, eagle-pinion'd, has in view
 A quarry more important still than you ;
 Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away,
 Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius! all the Muses weep for thee,
But every tear shall scald thy memory.
The Graces, too, while Virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and curst the priest.
Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth,
Greybeard corrupter of our listening youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
That so refined it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son;
To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own!*
Now, while the poison all high life pervades,
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
That thy worse part, thy principles, live yet:
One sad epistle thence may cure mankind
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.

'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The Mind impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
That Education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong;
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong;
And, without discipline, the favourite child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
But we, as if good qualities would grow
Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow;
We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek;
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week;
And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.

From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home,
 And thence, with all convenient speed, to Rome;
 With reverend tutor clad in habit lay,
 To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day;
 With memorandum book for every town,
 And every post, and where the chaise broke down;
 His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
 With much to learn, but nothing to impart,
 The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
 Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands.
 Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,
 With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare,
 Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
 And steeples towering high, much like our own;
 But show peculiar light, by many a grin
 At popish practices observed within.

Ere long some bowing, smirking, smart abbé
 Remarks two loiterers, that have lost their way;
 And being always primed with *politesse*
 For men of their appearance and address,
 With much compassion undertakes the task,
 To tell them more than they have wit to ask;
 Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
 Such as, when legible, were never read,
 But, being canker'd now, and half worn out,
 Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt;
 Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows—
 Defective only in his Roman nose;
 Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
 Models of Herculean pots and pans;
 And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
 Nor ancient, will be so—preserved with care.

Strange the recital! from whatever cause
 His great improvement and new light he draws,

The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,
But teems with powers he never felt before :
Whether increased momentum, and the force
With which, from elime to elime, he sped his course,
(As axles sometimes kindle as they go,)
Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow,
Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,
Fresh'ning his lazy spirits as he ran,
Unfolded genially and spread the man ;
Returning, he proclaims, by many a grace,
By shrugs, and strange contortions of his face,
How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce, that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
And wisdom falls before exterior grace ;
We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please,
Are qualities that seem to comprehend
Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend ;
Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind,
Though busy, trifling ; empty, though refined ;
Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
With indolence and luxury, is trash :
While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side.
Learning itself, received into a mind
By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
Serves but to lead philosophers astray,
Where children would with ease discern the way ;
And of all arts sagacious dupes invent
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is—Scripture warp'd from its intent.

The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased
 If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased ;
 But if the rogue have gone a cup too far,
 Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
 It suffers interruption and delay,
 And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
 When some hypothesis, absurd and vain,
 Has filled with all its fumes a critic's brain,
 The text, that sorts not with his darling whim,
 Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
 The will made subject to a lawless force,
 All is irregular and out of course ;
 And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
 Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.

A critic on the sacred book should be
 Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free :
 Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
 From fancy's influence, and intemperate zeal ;
 But above all (or let the wretch refrain,
 Nor touch the page he cannot but profane,)
 Free from the domineering power of lust ;
 A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,
 Thou god of our idolatry, the Press ?
 By thee, religion, liberty, and laws,
 Exert their influence, and advance their cause ;
 By thee, worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befel,
 Diffused, make Earth the Vestibule of Hell :
 Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise,
 Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies ;
 Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
 Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
 'Till half mankind were, like himself, possess'd.

Philosophers who darken and put out
 Eternal truth by everlasting doubt ;
 Church quacks, with passion under no command,
 Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
 Discoverers of they know not what, confined
 Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind ;
 To streams of popular opinion drawn,
 Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
 The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
 Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound.
 Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood,
 Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome food.
 The propagated myriads spread so fast,
 E'en Leuwenhoek himself would stand aghast,
 Employ'd to calculate the enormous sum,
 And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.
 Is this hyperbole ? The world well known,
 Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
 From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes ;
 And, therefore, prints :—himself but half deceived,
 Till others have the soothing tale believed.
 Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
 As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line.
 Hence the same word, that bids our lusts obey,
 Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
 If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
 Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend :
 If languages and copies all cry, No—
 Somebody proved it centuries ago.
 Like trout pursued, the critic in despair
 Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there :
 Woman, whom custom has forbid to fly
 The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why,)

With all the simple and unletter'd poor,
 Admire his learning, and almost adore.
 Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
 With such fine words familiar to his tongue.

Ye ladies ! (for indifferent in your cause,
 I should deserve to forfeit all applause.)
 Whatever shocks or gives the least offence
 To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense
 (Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide,)
 Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,
 Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
 Committed once into the public arms
 The baby seems to smile with added charms
 Like something precious ventured far from shore,
 'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
 He views it with complacency supreme,
 Solicits kind attention to his dream ;
 And daily more enamour'd of the cheat,
 Kneels, and asks Heaven to bless the dear deceit.
 So one, whose story serves at least to show
 Men loved their own productions long ago,
 Wooed an unfeeling statue for his wife,
 Nor rested till the gods had given it life.
 If some mere driveller suck the sugar'd fib,
 One that still needs his leading-string and bib,
 And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
 In praise applied to the same part—his head :
 For 'tis a rule that holds forever true,
 Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,
 Affable, humble, diffident, and mild,
 Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke ;
 Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.

The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
 A muleteer's the man to set him right :
 First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,
 Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.

Tell him he wanders ; that his error leads
 To fatal ills ; that, though the path he treads
 Be flowery, and he sees no cause of fear,
 Death and the pains of Hell attend him there :
 In vain ; the slave of arrogance and pride
 He has no hearing on the prudent side.
 His still refuted quirks he still repeats ;
 New raised objections with new quibbles meets ;
 Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,
 He dies disputing, and the contest ends ;
 But not the mischiefs : they, still left behind,
 Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.
 Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill ;
 Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will ;
 And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
 First put it out, then take it for a guide.
 Halting on crutches of unequal size,
 One leg by truth supported, one by lies ;
 They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
 Secure of nothing—but to lose the race.

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
 And these, reciprocally, those again.
 The mind and conduct mutually imprint
 And stamp their image in each other's mint :
 Each, sire and dam of an infernal race,
 Begetting and conceiving all that's base.

None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
 Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.
 For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wing,
 Or when it first forsakes the elastic string,

It err but little from the intended line,
 It falls at last far wide of his design
 So he, who seeks a mansion in the sky,
 Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye ;
 That prize belongs to none but the sincere,
 The least obliquity is fatal here.

With caution taste the sweet Circean cup :
 He that sips often, at last drinks it up.
 Habits are soon assumed ; but when we strive
 To strip them off, 'tis being flay'd alive,
 Call'd to the temple of impure delight,
 He that abstains, and he alone, does right.
 If a wish wander that way, call it home ;
 He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
 But, if you pass the threshold, you are caught ;
 Die then, if power Almighty save you not !
 There hardening, by degrees, till double steel'd,
 Take leave of nature's God, and God reveal'd ;
 Then laugh at all you trembled at before ;
 And, joining the freethinker's brutal roar,
 Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—
 That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense ;
 If clemency revolted by abuse
 Be damnable, then, damn'd without excuse.

Some dream that they can silence when they will,
 The storm of passion, and say, *Peace—be still ;*
 But “ *Thus far and no farther,*” when address'd
 To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
 Implies authority that never can,
 That never ought to be the lot of man.

But, Muse, forbear ; long flights forebode a fall ;
 Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.

Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies !
 He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies.

And he that *will* be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as Hell shall bind him fast.
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss
For ever, and for ever? No—the Cross!
There, and there only (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if earth bear so base a slave;)
There, and there only, is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair;
No mockery meets you, no deception there.
The spells and charms that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.

I am no preacher; let this hint suffice,
The Cross once seen is death to every vice:
Else He that hung there suffer'd all His pain,
Bled, groan'd, and agonized, and died in vain.

TRUTH.

Pensantur trutinâ.

Πορ. Lib. ii Epist. I.

TRUTH.

MAN, on the dubious waves of error toss'd,
His ship half-founder'd, and his compass lost,
Sees, far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land ;
Spreads all his canvass, every sinew plies ;
Pants for't, aims at it, enters it, and dies !
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams ;
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell :—
He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell.

Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it ! Wherefore hard ?
He that would win the race must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course ;
Else, though unequal'd to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way : if you choose the wrong,
Take it and perish ; but restrain your tongue ;
Charge not, with light sufficient, and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.

O how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan !
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile ;
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.

Inscribed above the portal, from afar
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-quickening words—BELIEVE AND LIVE.
 Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,
 Despise the plain direction, and are lost.
 Heaven on such terms! they cry, with proud disdain;
 Incredible, impossible, and vain!
 Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey;
 And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.
 These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
 Some thought of immortality remains;
 The rest, too busy or too gay to wait
 On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
 Sport for a day, and perish in a night,
 The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
 Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
 Had he seduced a virgin, wrong'd a friend,
 Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end?
 Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
 From the strict duties of the sacred day?
 Sit long and late at the carousing board?
 (Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord :)
 No; the man's morals were exact; what then?
 'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
 His virtues were his pride; and that one vice
 Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
 He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
 A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.
 The self-applauding bird, the peacock, sec,
 Mark what a sumptuous Pharisee is he!
 Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
 His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold;

He treads as if, some solemn music near,
 His measured steps were govern'd by his ear ;
 And seems to say—Ye meaner fowl, give place ;
 I am all splendour, dignity, and grace !

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
 Though he too has a glory in his plumes.
 He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien
 To the close copse, or far-sequester'd green,
 And shines without desiring to be seen.
 The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
 Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain ;
 Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,
 Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.
 What is all righteousness that men devise,
 What—but a sordid bargain for the skies ?
 But Christ as soon would abdicate His own,
 As stoop from Heaven to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
 Book, beads, and maple-dish his meagre stock ;
 In shirt of hair, and weeds of canvass dress'd,
 Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has bless'd,
 Adust with stripes told out for every crime,
 And sore tormented long before his time ;
 His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid ;
 His praise postponed, and never to be paid ;
 See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,
 With all that bigotry adopts inspired,
 Wearing out life in his religious whim,
 Till his religious whimsey wears out him.
 His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
 You think him humble—God accounts him proud :
 High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
 Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
 My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
 Have purchased Heaven, and prove my title good.

Turn eastward now, and Fancy shall apply
 To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
 The Brahmin kindles on his own bare head
 The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade :
 His voluntary pains, severe and long,
 Would give a barbarous air to British song ;
 No grand inquisitor could worse invent,
 Than he contrives to suffer, well content.

Which is the saintlier worthy of the two ?
 Past all dispute, yon anchorite, say you.
 Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name ?
 I say the Brahmin has the fairer claim.
 If sufferings, scripture nowhere recommends,
 Devised by self to answer selfish ends,
 Give saintsship, then all Europe must agree
 Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
 And prejudice have left a passage clear,)
 Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,
 And poison'd every virtue in them both.
 Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean ;
 Humility may clothe an English Dean ;
 That grace was Cowper's—his, confess'd by all—
 Though plac'd in golden Durham's second stall.
 Not all the plenty of a Bishop's board,
 His palace and his lacqueys, and " My Lord !"
 More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
 Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice :
 It thrives in misery, and abundant grows,
 In misery fools upon themselves impose.

But why, before us Protestants, produce
 An Indian mystic, or a French recluse ?
 Their sin is plain ; but what have we to fear,
 Reform'd and well instructed ? You shall hear.

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features show
 She might be young some forty years ago,
 Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
 Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
 Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
 To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
 With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
 The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
 And sails, with lappet-head and mincing airs,
 Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.
 To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
 She yet allows herself that boy behind :
 The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
 With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,
 His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
 Which future pages yet are doom'd to share,
 Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
 And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,
 Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
 Though not a grace appears, on strictest search,
 But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.
 Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
 And tells, not always, with an eye to truth,
 Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,
 Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name ;
 Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
 And drank the little bumper every day.
 Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,
 Censorious, and her every word a wasp,
 In faithful memory she records the crimes
 Or real, or fictitious, of the times ;
 Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
 And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
 Of malice fed while flesh is mortified :
 Take, Madam, the reward of all your prayers
 Where hermits and where Brahmins meet with theirs!
 Your portion is with them. Nay, never frown ;
 But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

Artist, attend ! your brushes and your paint—
 Produce them—take a chair—now draw a Saint.
 Oh sorrowful and sad ! the streaming tears
 Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears !
 Is this a saint ? Throw tints and all away—
 True Piety is cheerful as the day ;
 Will weep, indeed, and heave a pitying groan
 For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of saints in view ?
 Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew ?
 To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
 Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth ?
 Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
 From servile fear, or be the more enslaved ?
 To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more ?
 The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove ;
 Or, if a chain, the golden one of love :
 No fear attends to quench his glowing fires ;
 What fear he feels, his gratitude inspires.
 Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,
 Recompense ill ? He trembles at the thought.
 His Master's interest and his own, combined,
 Prompt every movement of his heart and mind ;
 Thought, word, and deed his liberty evince ;
 His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

Man's obligations infinite, of course
 His life should prove that he perceives their force ;

His utmost he can render is but small ;
 The principle and motive all in all.
 You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
 From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,
 Genteel in figure, easy in address,
 Moves without noise, and swift as an express,
 Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
 Expert in all the duties of his place :
 Say, on what hinge does his obedience move ?
 Has he a world of gratitude and love ?
 No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play ;
 He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay :
 Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
 Tom quits you, with—"Your most obedient, Sir."

The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
 Watches your eye, anticipates command ;
 Sighs if, perhaps, your appetite should fail ;
 And, if he but suspects a frown, turns pale ;
 Consults all day your interest and your ease,
 Richly rewarded if he can but please ;
 And, proud to make his firm attachment known,
 To save your life would nobly risk his own.

Now which stands highest in your serious thought ?
 Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought ;
 One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
 Exceeds ten thousand mercenary deeds.

Thus Heaven approves, as honest and sincere,
 The work of generous love and filial fear ;
 But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge
 Scorns the base hirling, and the slavish drudge.

Where dwell these matchless saints ?—old Curio cries ;
 E'en at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
 The favour'd few—the enthusiast you despise.

And pleased at heart, because on holy ground,
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
Reproach a people with his single fall,
And cast his filthy raiment at them all.
Attend!—an apt similitude shall show
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
Shakes it again and faster to the ground;
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.
Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed;
Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case,
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dress'd,
By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,
Offer him warmth, security, and rest;
Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
He hears the tempest howling in the trees;
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
While danger past is turn'd to present joy.
So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels:
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
Lash'd into foaming waves begins to roar;
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him—charges him with every wrong—
Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
And death or restitution is the word:

The last impossible, he fears the first,
 And, having well deserved, expects the worst.
 Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home;
 Oh! for a shelter from the wrath to come!
 Crush me, ye rocks; ye falling mountains hide,
 Or bury me in ocean's angry tide:—
 The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
 I dare not—And you need not, God replies;
 The remedy you want I freely give:
 The Book shall teach you—read, believe, and live!
 'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more;
 Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore:
 And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
 Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
 A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise;
 Hence the complexion of his future days,
 Hence a demeanour holy and unspeak'd,
 And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblamable and just,
 Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust:
 They never sin—or if (as all offend)
 Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
 The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
 A slight gratuity atones for all.
 For though the Pope has lost his interest here,
 And pardons are not sold, as once they were,
 No Papist more desirous to compound,
 Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
 That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
 Mercy is infinite, and man is weak;
 The future shall obliterate the past,
 And heaven, no doubt, shall be their home at last.

Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear—
 He has no hope who never had a fear;

And he that never doubted of his state,
 He may, perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare ;
 Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
 The Frenchman first in literary fame,
 (Mention him, if you please. Voltaire?—The same.)
 With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
 Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died ;
 The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew ;
 An infidel, in health, but what when sick ?
 Oh ! then a text would touch him at the quick :
 View him at Paris in his last career ;
 Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere ;
 Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
 And fumed with frankincense on every side,
 He begs their flattery with his last breath,
 And smother'd in't at last, is praised to death !

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
 Pillow and bobbins of her little store ;
 Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
 Shuffling her threads about, the livelong day,
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and, at night,
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;
 She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
 Has little understanding, and no wit,
 Receives no praise ; but though her lot be such
 (Toilsome and indigent,) she renders much ;
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew ;
 And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
 Her title to a treasure in the skies.

O happy peasant ! O unhappy bard !
 His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward ;

He praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come,
 She never heard of, half a mile from home :
 He, lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
 She, safe in the simplicity of hers.

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
 In science, win one inch of heavenly ground.
 And is it not a mortifying thought,
 The poor should gain it, and the rich should not ?
 No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
 One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret ;
 Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer,
 Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there.

Not that the Former of us all, in this,
 Or aught He does, is govern'd by caprice ;
 The supposition is replete with sin,
 And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
 Not so—the silver trumpet's heavenly call
 Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all :
 Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
 No slaves on earth more welcome were than they :
 But royalty, nobility, and state,
 Are such a dead preponderating weight,
 That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem,)
 In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
 'Tis open, and ye cannot enter.—Why ?
 Because ye will not, Conyers would reply :
 And he says much that many may dispute
 And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
 O bless'd effect of penury and want,
 The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant !
 No soil like poverty for growth divine,
 As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
 Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
 To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head :

To them the sounding jargon of the schools
 Seems what it is—a cap and bells for fools :
 The light they walk by, kindled from above,
 Shows them the shortest way to life and love :
 They, strangers to the controversial field,
 Where deists, always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,
 And never check'd by what impedes the wise,
 Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unletter'd small :
 Ye have much cause for envy—but not all.
 We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
 And one who wears a coronet and prays ;
 Like gleamings of an olive tree, they show
 Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

How readily upon the Gospel plan,
 That question has its answer—What is man ?
 Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch ;
 An instrument, whose chords, upon the stretch,
 And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
 Yield only discord in his Maker's ear :
 Once the bless'd residence of truth divine,
 Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
 Where, in his own oracular abode,
 Dwelt visibly the light-creating God ;
 But made long since, like Babylon of old,
 A den of mischiefs never to be told :
 And she, once mistress of the realms around,
 Now scatter'd wide, and nowhere to be found,
 As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne,
 By native power and energy her own,
 As Nature, at her own peculiar cost,
 Restore to man the glories he has lost.
 Go—bid the winter cease to chill the year,
 Replace the wand'ring comet in his sphere,

Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd-for hour)
 The self-restoring arm of human power.
 But what is man in his own proud esteem?
 Hear him—himself the poet and the theme;
 A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
 His mind his kingdom, and his will his law;
 Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
 Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
 Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
 And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a god!
 So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form,
 The song magnificent—the theme a worm!
 Himself so much the source of his delight,
 His Maker has no beauty in his sight.
 See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd,
 Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,
 His passions tamed and all at his control,
 How perfect the composure of his soul!
 Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
 O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail:
 His books well trimm'd, and in the gayest style,
 Like regimental coxcombs, rank and file,
 Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
 And teach him notions splendid as themselves:
 The Bible only stands neglected there,
 Though that of all most worthy of his care;
 And like an infant troublesome awake,
 Is left to sleep, for peace and quiet sake.

What shall the man deserve of humankind,
 Whose happy skill and industry combined
 Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
 The Bible an imposture and a cheat?
 The praises of the libertine profess'd,
 The worst of men—and curses of the best.

Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes ;
 The dying, trembling at the awful close ;
 Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd,
 The thousands whom the world forbids to rest,
 Where should they find (those comforts at an end
 The Scripture yields,) or hope to find, a friend ?
 Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
 And seeking exile from the sight of men,
 Bury herself in solitude profound,
 Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
 Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
 Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.
 The jury meet, the coroner is short,
 And lunacy the verdict of the court.
 Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
 Such lunacy is ignorance alone ;
 They knew not, what some Bishops may not know,
 That Scripture is the only cure of woe.
 That field of promise, how it flings abroad
 Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road !
 The soul, reposing on assured relief,
 Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
 Forgets her labour as she toils along,
 Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word, that, like the polish'd share,
 Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
 Kills, too, the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,
 That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
 Oh ! that unwelcome voice of heavenly love
 Sad messenger of mercy from above ;
 How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
 Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear !
 His will and judgment at continual strife,
 That civil war imbitters all his life :

In vain he points his powers against the skies,
 In vain he closes or averts his eyes,
 Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware,
 And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.

Though various foes against the truth combine,
 Pride, above all, opposes her design ;
 Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
 The subtlest serpent, with the loftiest crest,
 Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,
 Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.

And is the soul indeed so lost ? she cries,
 Fall'n from her glory, and too weak to rise ?
 Torpid and dull, beneath a frozen zone,
 Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own ?
 Grant her indebted to what zealots call
 Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all ;
 Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
 Some love of virtue, and some power of praise ;
 Can lift herself above corporeal things,
 And, soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,
 Possess herself of all that's good or true,
 Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
 Past indiscretion is a venial crime ;
 And if the youth, unmellow'd yet by time,
 Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,
 Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
 Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
 And meliorate the well-concocted juice.
 Then conscious of her meritorious zeal,
 To Justice she may make her bold appeal,
 And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,
 The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
 Here then how Mercy, slighted and defied,
 Retorts the affront against the crown of Pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd,
 And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.
 The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought,
 Is not for you—the righteous need it not.
 Seest thou yon harlot wooing all she meets,
 The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,
 Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
 Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn :
 The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
 Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee.
 Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift—
 That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,
 Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both ?
 Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
 For ignorance of what they could not know ?
 That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
 Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.
 Truly not I—the partial light men have,
 My creed persuades me, well employ'd, may save ;
 While he that scorns the noonday beam perverse,
 Shall find the blessing, unimproved, a curse.
 Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
 Left sensuality and dross behind,
 Possess, for me, their undisputed lot,
 And take unenvied the reward they sought.
 But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
 Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.
 Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
 Celestial, though they know not whence it came,
 Derived from the same source of light and grace,
 That guides the Christian in his swifter race :
 Their judge was Conscience, and her rule their law ;
 That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,

Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow,
 From what they knew, to what they wish'd to know.
 But let not him, that shares a brighter day,
 Traduce the splendor of a noontide ray,
 Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
 And deem his base stupidity no crime ;
 The wretch who slights the bounty of the skies,
 And sinks, while favour'd with the means to rise,
 Shall find them rated at their full amount,
 The good he scorn'd all carried to account.

Marshalling all his terrors as he came,
 Thunder and earthquake, and devouring flame,
 From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,
 Life for obedience, death for every flaw.
 When the great Sovereign would His will express,
 He gives a perfect rule : what can He less ?
 And guards it with a sanction as severe
 As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear :
 Else His own glorious rights He would disclaim,
 And man might safely trifle with his name.
 He bids him glow with unremitting love
 To all on earth, and to Himself above ;
 Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous tongue,
 The thought that meditates a brother's wrong ;
 Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
 His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark ! universal nature shook and groan'd,
 'Twas the last trumpet ! see the Judge enthroned !
 Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
 Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
 What ! silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?
 That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,
 Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
 That all your virtues cannot purchase now.

All joy to the believer! He can speak—
Trembling, yet happy; confident, yet meek.
Since the dear hour that brought me to Thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but Thine,
Nor hoped, but in Thy righteousness divine:
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;
How'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart:
Cleansed in Thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good;
I cast them at Thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon Thee;
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.
Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crown'd, and Faith receives the prize.

EXPOSTULATION.

VOL. I.—8

Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tibi
Dona sines?

Virg.

EXPOSTULATION.

Why weeps the Muse for England? What appears,
In England's case, to move the Muse to tears?
From side to side of her delightful isle
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?
Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer
A new-found luxury not seen in her?
Where under Heaven is pleasure more pursued,
Or where does cold reflection less intrude?
Her fields a rich expense of wavy corn,
Pour'd out from Plenty's overflowing horn;
Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies
The fervour and the force of Indian skies;
Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits
To pour his golden tide through all her gates
Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice
Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice,
Forbid in vain to push his daring way
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day;
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
From the world's girdle to the frozen pole;
The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets;
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets;
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports;
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again;

All speak her happy :—let the Muse look round
 From East to West, no sorrow can be found ;
 Or only what, in cottages confined,
 Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.
 Then wherefore weep for England? What appears,
 In England's case, to move the Muse to tears?

The prophet wept for Israel ; wish'd his eyes
 Were fountains fed with infinite supplies :
 For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong ;
 There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue ;
 Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools,
 As interest biass'd knaves, or fashion fools ;
 Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door ;
 Oppression, labouring hard to grind the poor ;
 The partial balance, and deceitful weight ;
 The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate ;
 Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
 And the dull service of the lip were there.
 Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,
 By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,
 Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart
 To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art,
 Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
 As silly pride and idleness produce ;
 Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flounced around,
 With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
 They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton eye,
 And sigh'd for every fool that flutter'd by.

He saw his people slaves to every lust,
 Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust ;
 He heard the wheels of an avenging God
 Groan heavily along the distant road ;
 Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass,
 To let the military deluge pass ;

Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd,
 Her princes captive, and her treasures spoil'd ;
 Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
 Stamp'd with his foot, and smote upon his thigh :
 But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain,
 Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
 And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
 Ears long accustom'd to the pleasing lute :
 They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme,
 Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream ;
 With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours,
 Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.

Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
 Till penitence had purged the public stain,
 And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,
 Return'd them happy to the land they loved ;
 There, proof against prosperity, awhile
 They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
 And had the grace in scenes of peace to show
 The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of woe.
 But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
 A long immunity from grief and pain,
 And after all the joys that Plenty leads,
 With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds.

When He that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,
 In form a man, in dignity a God,
 Came, not expected in that humble guise,
 To sift and search them with unerring eyes,
 He found conceal'd beneath a fair outside,
 The filth of rottenness, and worm of pride ;
 Their piety a system of deceit,
 Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat ;
 The Pharisee the dupe of his own art,
 Self idolized, and yet a knave at heart.

When nations are to perish in their sins,
 'Tis in the church the leprosy begins:
 The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
 To watch the fountain and preserve it clear,
 Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
 While others poison what the flock must drink;
 Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
 Infuses lies and errors of his own;
 His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,
 And, tainted by the very means of cure,
 Catch from each other a contagious spot,
 The foul forerunner of a general rot.
 Then Truth is hush'd, that Heresy may preach,
 And all is trash that Reason cannot reach:
 Then God's own image, on the soul impress'd,
 Becomes a mockery, and a standing jest;
 And faith, the root whence only can arise
 The graces of a life that wins the skies,
 Loses at once all value and esteem,
 Pronounced by greybeards a pernicious dream;
 Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth,
 Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth;
 While truths, on which eternal things depend,
 Find not, or hardly find, a single friend:
 As soldiers watch the signal of command,
 They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand;
 Happy to fill religion's vacant place
 With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.
 Such, when the Teacher of His church was there,
 People and priest, the sons of Israel were;
 Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
 And import of their oracles divine;
 Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
 And yet exalted above God's own word;

They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puff'd up with gifts they never understood.
He judg'd them with as terrible a frown
As if not love, but wrath, had brought Him down ;
Yet He was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs.
Through all He spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man ;
And tricks and turns that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.
The astonish'd vulgar trembled while he tore
The mask from faces never seen before ;
He stripp'd the impostors in the noonday sun,
Show'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun ;
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept ;
The temple and its holy rites profaned
By mummeries He that dwelt in it disdain'd ;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Wash'd with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from every taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
When Obstinaey once has conquer'd Grace.
They saw distemper heal'd, and life restored,
In answer to the fiat of his word ;
Confess'd the wonder, and with daring tongue
Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.
They knew, by sure prognostic seen on high,
The future tone and temper of the sky ;
But grave dissemblers ! could not understand
That Sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.

Ask now of history's authentic page,
And call up evidence from every age ;

Display with busy and laborious hand
 The blessings of the most indebted land ;
 What nation will you find, whose annals prove
 So rich an interest in Almighty love ?
 Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day
 A people planted, water'd, blest as they ?
 Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim
 The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name ;
 Their freedom purchased for them at the cost
 Of all their hard oppressors valued most ;
 Their title to a country not their own,
 Made sure by prodigies till then unknown ;
 For them the state they left made waste and void ;
 For them the states to which they went, destroy'd ;
 A cloud to measure out their march by day,
 By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way ;
 That moving signal summoning, when best,
 Their host to move, and when it stay'd, to rest.
 For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
 The dews condensed into angelic food,
 Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
 And Time forbid to touch them as he flew ;
 Streams, swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand,
 While they pass'd through to their appointed land ;
 Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,
 And graced with clear credentials from above ;
 Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing ;
 Their God their Captain,* Lawgiver, and King ;
 Crown'd with a thousand victories, and at last
 Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast,
 In peace possessing what they won by war,
 Their name far publish'd, and revered as far ;

* Vide Joshua v. 14.

Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd
With all that man e'er wish'd, or Heaven bestow'd ?

They, and they only among all mankind,
Received the transcript of the Eternal mind ;
Were trusted with His own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of His cause ;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By power divine, and skill that could not err.
Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome ;
And the twelve standards of the tribes, unfurl'd,
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.
Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol god, within ;
View'd a Deliverer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state ;
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree.
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flower of Israel's infamy full blown ;
Thence date their sad declension and their fall,
Their woes not yet repeal'd, thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favour'd land, look where we may.
Philosophy, indeed, on Grecian eyes
Had pour'd the day, and clear'd the Roman skies ;

In other climes, perhaps, creative Art,
 With power surpassing theirs perform'd her part,
 Might give more life to marble, or might fill
 The glowing tablets with a juster skill,
 Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes
 With all the embroidery of poetic dreams ;
 'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan
 That Truth and Mercy had reveal'd to man ;
 And while the world beside, that plan unknown,
 Deified useless wood, or senseless stone,
 They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers,
 And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
 The last of nations now, though once the first,
 They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
 Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn :
 If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
 Peel'd, scatter'd, and exterminated thus,
 If Vice received her retribution due,
 When we were visited, what hope for you ?
 When God arises with an awful frown
 To punish lust, or pluck presumption down ;
 When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
 Pleasure o'ervalued, and His grace despised,
 Provoke the vengeance of His righteous hand,
 To pour down wrath upon a thankless land,
 He will be found impartially severe,
 Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.

Oh Israel, of all nations most undone !
 Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone ;
 Thy temple, once thy glory, fall'n and rased,
 And thou a worshipper e'en where thou may'st ;
 Thy services, once holy without spot,
 Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot ;

Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
 No longer Levites, and their lineage lost ;
 And thou thyself o'er every country sown,
 With none on earth that thou canst call thine own ;
 Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,
 Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust ;
 Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears ;
 Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears ;
 But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
 And fling their foam against thy chalky shore ?
 Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
 And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—
 Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
 Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none ?
 Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
 None interposes now to succour thee.
 Countries indebted to thy power, that shine
 With light derived from thee, would smother thine :
 Thy very children watch for thy disgrace—
 A lawless brood and curse thee to thy face.
 Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,
 With sums Peruvian mines could never clear ;
 As if, like arches built with skilful hand,
 The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand.

The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
 Speed us away to battle and to fame !
 Thy mariners explore the wide expanse,
 Impatient to desery the flags of France :
 But though they fight, as thine have ever fought,
 Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.
 Thy senate is a scene of civil jar
 Chaos of contrarities at war ;
 Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
 Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight ;

Where Obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
 To disconcert what Policy has plann'd;
 Where Policy is busied all night long
 In setting right what Faction has set wrong;
 Where flails of oratory thrash the floor,
 That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
 Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
 Tax'd till the brow of Labour sweats in vain;
 War lays a burden on the reeling state,
 And peace does nothing to relieve the weight;
 Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
 And sighing millions prophesy the close.

Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well,
 So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
 Thou canst not read with readiness and ease
 Providence adverse in events like these?
 Know then that heavenly wisdom on this ball
 Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all;
 That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man
 Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
 He first conceives, then perfects his design,
 As a mere instrument in hands divine:
 Blind to the working of that secret power
 That balances the wings of every hour,
 The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
 Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
 States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,
 E'en as His will and His decrees ordain;
 While honour, virtue, piety bear sway,
 They flourish; and as these decline, decay:
 In just resentment of His injured laws,
 He pours contempt on them and on their cause;
 Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
 The web of every scheme they have at heart;

Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
 The pillars of support, in which they trust,
 And do His errand of disgrace and shame
 On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
 None ever yet impeded what He wrought,
 None bars Him out from his most secret thought:
 Darkness itself before His eye is light,
 And Hell's close mischief naked in His sight.

Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incurred
 His anger, who can waste thee with a word,
 Who poises and proportions sea and land,
 Weighing them in the hollow of His hand,
 And in whose awful sight all nations seem
 As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?
 Hast thou (a sacrilege His soul abhors)
 Claim'd all the glory of thy prosperous wars?
 Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
 Of His just praise, to lavish it on them?
 Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told,
 A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
 That no success attends on spears and swords
 Unbless'd, and that the battle is the Lord's?—
 That courage is His creature; and dismay
 The post that at His bidding speeds away,
 Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue
 With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,
 To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
 And teach the combatant a woman's part?
 That He bids thousands fly when none pursue,
 Saves as He will by many or by few,
 And claims for ever, as His royal right,
 The event and sure decision of the fight?

Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,
 Exported slavery to the conquer'd East?

Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread,
 And raised, thyself, a greater in their stead?
 Gone thither arm'd and hungry, return'd full,
 Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
 A despot big with power obtain'd by wealth,
 And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth?
 With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
 But left their virtues and thine own behind?
 And, having truck'd thy soul, brought home the fee,
 To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?

Hast thou, by statute, shov'd from its design
 The Saviour's feast, His own bless'd bread and wine,
 And made the symbols of atoning grace
 An office key, a picklock to a place,
 That infidels may prove their title good
 By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
 A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
 Of all that grave apologists may write;
 And though a Bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
 He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
 And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
 Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
 While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
 Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look'd within?

Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with disgrace,
 And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face
 (For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
 Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
 When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow;
 And never of a sabler hue than now;)
 Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience sear'd,
 Despising all rebuke, still persevered,
 And, having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice
 That cried, Repent!—and gloried in thy choice?

Thy fastings, when calamity at last
 Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast,
 What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a power
 In lighter diet at a later hour,
 To charm to sleep the threat'ning of the skies
 And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?
 The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends
 The stroke that a vindictive God intends,
 Is to renounce hypocrisy; to draw
 Thy life upon the pattern of the law;
 To war with pleasure, idolized before;
 To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
 All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
 Is wooing mercy by renew'd offence.

Hast thou within thee sin that, in old time,
 Brought fire from heaven, the sex-abusing crime,
 Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace,
 Baboons are free from, upon human race?
 Think on the fruitful and well-water'd spot,
 That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
 Where Paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth,
 Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth,
 Or, in His words who damn'd the base desire,
 Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;
 Then Nature, injured, scandalized, defiled,
 Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on, and smiled;
 Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,
 And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
 And farther still the form'd and fix'd design
 To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest,
 Against an innocent unconscious breast:
 The man that dares traduce, because he can
 With safety to himself, is not a man.

An individual is a sacred mark,
 Not to be pierced in play, or in the dark;
 But public censure speaks a public foe,
 Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
 From mean self-interest and ambition clear,
 Their hope in Heaven, servility their scorn,
 Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
 Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,
 Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love,
 As meek as the man Moses, and withal
 As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,
 Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
 Holy and unpolluted:—are thine such?
 Except a few with Eli's spirit bless'd,
 Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.

Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,
 For ears and hearts that he can hope to please?
 Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
 Will hear, perhaps, thy salutary strain:
 Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
 Speak but the word, will listen and return.
 Alas! not so: the poorest of the flock
 Are proud, and set their faces as a rock;
 Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
 God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
 The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
 Are more intelligent at least,—try them.
 Oh vain inquiry! they without remorse
 Are altogether gone a devious course:
 Where beckoning Pleasure leads them, wildly stray;
 Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.

Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
 Review thy dim original and prime.

This island, spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,
The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast,
And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd ;
For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.
While yet thou wast a groveling puling chit,
Thy bones not fashioned, and thy joints not knit,
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now.
His victory was that of orient light,
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.
Thy language at this distant moment shows
How much the country to the conqueror owes ;
Expressive, energetic, and refined,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind.
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame ;
Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide,
And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride ;
He sow'd the seeds of order where he went,
Improved thee far beyond his own intent,
And, while he ruled thee by the sword alone,
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
Needs only to be seen to be admired ;
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,
Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight ;
Thy Druids struck the well-hung harps they bore
With fingers deeply dyed in human gore ;
And while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath.
Who brought the lamp that, with awakening beams,
Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,

Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,
 Babblers of ancient fables, leaves a doubt :
 But still light reach'd thee ; and those gods of thine,
 Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
 Fell broken and defaced at his own doer,
 As Dagon in Philistia long before.
 But Rome with sorceries and magic wand
 Soon raised a cloud, that darken'd every land ;
 And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog
 Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog.
 Then priests with bulls and briefs, and shaven crowns,
 And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
 Legates and delegates with powers from Hell,
 Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well ;
 And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
 Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.*
 Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack,
 Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack,
 And, when he laid them on the scent of blood,
 Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
 Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,
 That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
 They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
 His worthless absolution all the prize.
 Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore,
 That ever dragg'd a chain or tugg'd an oar ;
 Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
 Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
 Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress
 Found thee a goodly sponge for power to press.
 Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
 Provoked and harrass'd, in return plagu'd thee ;
 Call'd thee away from peaceable employ,
 Domestic happiness and rural joy,

* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.



To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
 In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.
 Thy parliaments adored on bended knees
 The sovereignty they were convened to please ;
 Whate'er was ask'd, too timid to resist,
 Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd ;
 And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd,
 And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,
 Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,
 He was a traitor by the general voice.
 Oh slave ! with powers thou didst not dare exert,
 Verse can not stoop so low as thy desert !
 It shakes the sides of splenetic Disdain,
 Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
 To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,
 That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee ;
 When other nations flew from coast to coast,
 And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.
 Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust !
 Blush if thou canst ; not petrified, thou must :
 Act but an honest and a faithful part ;
 Compare what then thou wast with what thou art :
 And, God's disposing providence confess'd,
 Obduracy itself must yield the rest. —
 Then thou art bound to serve Him, and to prove,
 Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.

Has He not hid thee, and thy favor'd land,
 For ages safe beneath His shelt'ring hand,
 Given thee His blessing on the clearest proof,
 Bid nations leagu'd against thee stand aloof,
 And charged Hostility and Hate to roar
 Where else they would, but not upon thy shore ?
 His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain
 Baptized her fleet Invincible in vain ;

Her gloomy monarch, doubtful, and resign'd
 To every pang that racks an anxious mind,
 Ask'd of the waves that broke upon his coast,
 What tidings? and the surge replied—All lost!
 And when the Stuart leaning on the Scot,
 Then too much fear'd, and now too much forgot,
 Pierced to the very center of the realm,
 And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
 'Twas but to prove how quickly, with a frown,
 He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee down.
 Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd,
 Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
 Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
 And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
 'Tis thus, extending His tempestuous arm,
 Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
 While his own Heaven surveys the troubled scene,
 And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
 Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
 Pours out a flood of splendor upon thine;
 Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays
 As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
 True freedom is where no restraint is known,
 That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown,
 Where only vice and injury are tied,
 And all from shore to shore is free beside.
 Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary towers
 Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,
 That won a nymph on that immortal plain,
 Like her the fabled Phœbus wooed in vain:
 He found the laurel only—happier you,
 The unfading laurel, and the virgin too!*

* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King Jehn, by the barons, at Runnymede, near Windsor.

Now think, if Pleasure have a thought to spare ;
If God himself be not beneath her care ;
If Business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause an hour to read a serious rhyme ;
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
Or expectation of the next, give leave ;
Oh ! think, if chargeable with deep arrears
For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,
The beams of heavenly truth have swell'd the debt.
When persecuting zeal made royal sport
With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
Enjoy'd the show, and danced about the stake ;
The sacred book, its value understood,
Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
Seem to reflection of a different race ;
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,
In such a cause they could not dare to fear ;
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
Nor spare a life too short to reach the skies.
From them to thee, convey'd along the tide
Their streaming hearts pour'd freely, when they died,
Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
What dotage will not Vanity maintain,
What web too weak to catch a modern brain ?
The moles and bats in full assembly find,
On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.
And did they dream, and art thou wiser now ?
Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.
Wisdom and Goodness are twin-born, one heart
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.

So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
 Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,
 And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
 Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High ;
 By such a change thy darkness is made light,
 Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might ;
 And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,
 Who found thee nothing, form'd thee for His praise.
 To praise Him is to serve Him, and fulfil,
 Doing and suffering, His unquestion'd will ;
 'Tis to believe what men, inspired of old,
 Faithful, and faithfully inform'd, unfold :
 Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
 To take for truth what cannot but be true ;
 To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
 And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart ;
 Happy the man there seeking and there found,
 Happy the nation where such men abound.

How shall a verse impress thee? by what name
 Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame?
 By theirs, whose bright example unimpeach'd
 Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd,
 Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires?
 Or His, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires?
 Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age
 Whom all the vanities they scorn'd engage!
 And his, that Seraphs tremble at, is hung
 Disgracefully on every trifer's tongue,
 Or serves the champion in forensic war
 To flourish and parade with at the bar.
 Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
 If interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee!
 By every charm, that smiles upon her face,
 By joys possess'd and joys still held in chase,

If dear society be worth a thought,
 And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
 Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,
 Held by the tenure of His will alone,
 Like angels in the service of their Lord,
 Remain with thee, or leave thee, at His word ;
 That gratitude and temperance in our use
 Of what He gives, unsparing and profuse,
 Secure the favour, and enhance the joy,
 That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.

But, above all, reflect, how cheap soe'er
 Those rights, that millions envy thee, appear,
 And, though resolved to risk them, and swim down
 The tide of pleasure, heedless of His frown,
 That blessings truly sacred, and when given
 Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heaven,
 The word of prophecy, those truths divine,
 Which make that Heaven, if thou desire it, thine,
 (Awful alternative ! believed, beloved,
 Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved,)
 Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside
 With cold disgust or philosophic pride ;
 And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
 Error, and darkness occupy their place.

A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
 Not quickly found, if negligently sought,
 Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,
 Endur'st the brunt, and dar'st defy them all :
 And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise
 A bolder still, a contest with the skies ?
 Remember, if He guard thee, and secure,
 Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure ;
 But if He leave thee, though the skill and power
 Of nations, sworn to spoil thee and devour,

Were all collected in thy single arm,
 And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,
 That strength would fail, opposed against the push
 And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

Say not (and if the thought of such defence
 Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)
 What nation amongst all my foes is free
 From crimes as base as any charged on me?
 Their measure fill'd, they too shall pay the debt,
 Which God, though long forborne, will not forget.
 But know that Wrath divine, when most severe,
 Makes Justice still the guide of his career,
 And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,
 Them without light, and thee without a cloud,

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
 Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;
 And while at intervals a cold blast sings
 Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
 My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
 A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.
 I know the warning song is sung in vain;
 That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain;
 But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd
 A blessing to my country and mankind,
 Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home
 A flock so scatter'd and so wont to roam,
 Then place it once again between my knees;
 The sound of truth will then be sure to please;
 And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
 In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
 Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

H O P E .

————— doceat iter, et sacra estia pandas.
VIRG. EN. 6.

H O P E .

ASK what is human life—the sage replies,
With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,
Closing at last in darkness and despair.
The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
And nowhere, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand,
As fortune, vice, or folly may command ;
As in a dance the pair that take the lead
Turn downward and the lowest pair succeed,
So shifting and so various is the plan,
By which Heaven rules the mix'd affairs of man :
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud ;
Business is labour, and man's weakness such,
Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much ;
The very sense of it foregoes its use,
By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.
Youth lost in dissipation we deplore,
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore ;
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.

Dangling his cane about and taking snuff,
 Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff!—
 O querulous and weak!—whose useless brain
 Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain;
 Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
 Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste;
 Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
 And youth invigorate that frame again,
 Renew'd desire would grace with other speech
 Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.

For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
 That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
 See Nature gay, as when she first began
 With smiles alluring her admirer man;
 She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
 Earth glitters with the drops the night distils;
 The Sun obedient at her call appears,
 To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears;
 Banks clothed with flowers, groves fill'd with sprightly
 sounds,
 Thy yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
 Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field,
 Where'er they flow, now seen and now conceal'd;
 From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet,
 Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
 Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,
 Or Pride can look at with indifferent eyes,
 All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
 Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice!
 Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
 And she gives largely more than he requires;
 Not that his hours devoted all to Care,
 Hollow-eyed Abstinence, and lean Despair,
 The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,
 She holds a paradise of rich delight;

But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
 To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere,
 To banish hesitation, and proclaim
 His happiness her dear, her only aim.
 'Tis grave Philosophy's absurdest dream,
 That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem,
 That only shadows are dispensed below,
 And earth has no reality but woe.

Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,
 As youth or age persuades ; and neither true.
 So Flora's wreath through colour'd crystal seen,
 The rose or lily appears blue or green ;
 But still the imputed tints are those alone
 The medium represents, and not their own.

To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,
 To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
 Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
 To fill the dull vacuity till four,
 And, just when evening turns the blue vault grey,
 To spend two hours in dressing for the day ;
 To make the Sun a bauble without use,
 Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce ;
 Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
 Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not ;
 Through mere necessity to close his eyes
 Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise,
 Is such a life, so tediously the same,
 So void of all utility or aim,
 That poor JONQUIL, with almost every breath,
 Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death :
 For he, with all his follies, has a mind
 Not yet so blank or fashionably blind,
 But now and then, perhaps, a feeble ray
 Of distant wisdom shoots across his way ;

By which he reads, that life without a plan,
 As useless as the moment it began,
 Serves merely as a soil for discontent
 To thrive in—an incumbrance, ere half spent
 Oh ! weariness beyond what asses feel,
 That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel ;
 A dull rotation, never at a stay,
 Yesterday's face twin image of to-day ;
 While conversation, an exhausted stock,
 Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
 No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out
 With academic dignity devout,
 To read wise lectures, vanity the text :
 Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next ;
 For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd,
 Is vanity surpassing all the rest.

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
 Yet seldom sought where only to be found,
 While passion turns aside from its due scope,
 The inquirer's aim, that remedy is Hope.
 Life is His gift, from whom whate'er life needs,
 With every good and perfect gift proceeds ;
 Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake,
 Royally, freely, for His bounty's sake ;
 Transient, indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
 And yet the seed of an immortal flower,
 Design'd in honour of His endless love,
 To fill with fragrance His abode above ;
 No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
 And, howsoever shadowy, no dream ;
 Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
 Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.

Men deal with life as children with their play,
 Who first misuse, then cast their toys away ;

Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator had no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above ;
To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in His paternal care.
If, led from earthly things to things divine,
His creatures thwart not His august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature, employ'd in her allotted place,
Is hand-maid to the purposes of Grace ;
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen, by blessings understood ;
That bliss, reveal'd in scripture, with a glow
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deem'd substantial since the fall,
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use ;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives, with ehemic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,

On steady wings sails through the immense abyss,
 Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
 And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
 With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
 Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
 The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
 Hope ! nothing else can nourish and secure
 His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.
 Hope ! let the wretch once conscious of the joy,
 Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
 Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
 What treasures centre, what delights in thee.
 Had he the gems, the spices, and the land
 That boasts the treasure, all at his command,
 The fragrant grove, the inestimable mine,
 Were light, when weigh'd against one smile of thine.

Though, clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms,
 He shines with all a cherub's artless charms,
 Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
 Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt ;
 His passions, like the watery stores that sleep
 Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
 Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
 To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
 From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
 Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
 The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
 The free republic of the whip-gig state.
 If one, his equal in athletic frame,
 Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
 Dare step across his arbitrary views,
 An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues ;
 The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
 Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand, prevails.

Now see him launch'd into the world at large ;
If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
Though short, too long, the price he pays for all.
If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead,
But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.
Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees,
Punctually paid for lengthening out disease ;
No COTTON, whose humanity sheds rays,
That make superior skill his second praise.
If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
His date of life, so likely to be short ;
A soldier may be anything, if brave,
So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
Such stuff the world is made of ; and mankind
To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resign'd,
Insist on, as if each were his own Pope,
Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope.
But Conscience, in some awful silent hour,
When captivating lusts have lost their power,
Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
Reminds him of religion, hated theme !
Starts from the down on which she lately slept,
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept :
Shows with a pointing finger, but no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
And life abused, and not to be suborn'd.
Mark these, she says ; these, summon'd from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the bar ;
There find a Judge inexorably just,
And perish there, as all presumption must.
Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)
Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live ;

Born capable, indeed, of heavenly truth ;
 But down to latest age from earliest youth,
 Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
 The plough of wisdom never entering there.
 Peace (if insensibility may claim
 A right to the meek honours of her name)
 To men of pedigree, their noble race,
 Emulous always of the nearest place
 To any throne, except the throne of grace.
 Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains
 Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains ;
 Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,
 And ask, and fancy they find blessings there.
 Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
 To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
 To exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
 For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
 May now and then their velvet cushions take,
 And seem to pray for good example's sake ;
 Judging, in charity, no doubt, the town
 Pious enough, and having need of none.
 Kind souls ! to teach their tenantry to prize
 What they themselves, without remorse, despise :
 Nor hope have they, nor fear of aught to come,
 As well for them had prophecy been dumb ;
 They could have held the conduct they pursue,
 Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew ;
 And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,
 Is a pearl, cast—completely cast away.
 They die.—Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport,
 All the grim honours of his ghastly court.
 Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
 Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow :
 The busy heralds hang the sable scene
 With mournful scuteheons, and dim lamps between ;

Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
 But they that wore them move not at the sound;
 The coronet, placed idly at their head,
 Adds nothing now to the degraded dead;
 And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier,
 Can only say—Nobility lies here.
 Peace to all such!—'twere pity to offend,
 By useless censure, whom we cannot mend;
 Life without hope can close but in despair,
 'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.

As, when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
 Both may be lost, yet each in his own way;
 So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
 In vain Opinion's waste, and dangerous wild;
 Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
 Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
 But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,
 Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;
 And he that blames what they have blindly chose,
 Incurs resentment for the love he shows.

Say, botanist, within whose province fall
 The cedar and the hyssep on the wall,
 Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,
 What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?
 Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,
 Distinguish every cultivated kind;
 The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
 And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
 Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
 Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
 If wild in nature, and not duly found,
 Gethsemane! in thy dear hallow'd ground,
 That cannot bear the blaze of scripture light,
 Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,

Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,
(O cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant weeds.

Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays;
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains;
Would give relief of bed and board to none,
But guests that sought it in the appointed ONE:
And they might enter at his open door,
E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.
He sent a servant forth by every road,
To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high, and low,
An ordinance it concern'd them much to know.

If after all some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace?
No! the decree was just and without flaw;
And He that made, had right to make the law;
His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrain'd,
The wrong was his, who wrongfully complain'd.

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With Him, the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which His love confirms
The largess He bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with His will your lot ensures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, Do this, and live.
Love is not pedlar's trumpery bought and sold:
He *will* give freely, or He *will* withhold;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not;

He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
 That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
 Will trust Him for a faithful generous part,
 Not set a price upon a willing heart.
 Of all the ways that seem to promise fair
 To place you where His saints His presence share,
 This only can ; for this plain cause, express'd
 In terms as plain, Himself has shut the rest.
 But oh, the strife, the bickering, and debate,
 The tidings of unpurchased Heaven create !
 The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
 All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
 From stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound ;
 And beaux, adept in everything profound,
 Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
 Such is the clamor of rooks, daws, and kites,
 The explosion of the levell'd tube excites,
 Where mouldering abbey-walls o'erhang the glade,
 And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade,
 The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
 Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
 And seem to warn him never to repeat
 His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

Adieu ! Vinoso cries, ere yet he sips
 The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
 Adieu to all morality ! if Grace
 Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
 The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
 If I mistake not—Blockhead ! with a fork !
 Without good works, whatever some may boast,
 Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
 My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
 That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes
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With nice attention, in a righteous scale,
 And save or damn as these or those prevail.
 I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
 And silence every fear with—God is just.
 But if perchance on some dull drizzling day
 A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
 If thus the important cause is to be tried,
 Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side ;
 I soon recover from these needless frights,
 And God is merciful—sets all to rights.
 Thus between justice, as my prime support,
 And merey, fled to as the last resort,
 I glide and steal along with Heaven in view,
 And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.

I never will believe, the Colonel cries,
 The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
 Who make the good Creator on their plan
 A being of less equity than man.
 If appetite, or what divines call lust,
 Which men comply with, e'en because they must,
 Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure ?
 Then theirs no doubt, as well as mine, is sure,
 If sentence of eternal pain belong
 To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
 Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail
 A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
 My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean
 By Athanasian nonsense, or Nieene)—
 My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
 And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.

Right says an Ensign ; and for aught I see,
 Your faith and mine substantially agree ;
 The best of every man's performance here
 Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.

A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair.
 Honesty shines with great advantage there,
 Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
 A decent caution and reserve at least.
 A soldier's best is courage in the field,
 With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd.
 Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay ;
 A hand as liberal as the light of day.
 The soldier thus endow'd, who never shrinks
 Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks,
 Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
 Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.
 Sir Smug, he cries (for lowest at the board,
 Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
 His shoulders witnessing, by many a shrug,
 How much his feelings suffer'd, sat Sir Smug,)
 Your office is to winnow false from true ;
 Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, What think you ?
 Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
 Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
 Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies,
 Is still found fallible, however wise ;
 And differing judgments serve but to declare,
 That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
 Of all it ever was my lot to read,
 Of critics now alive, or long since dead,
 The book of all the world that charm'd me most
 Was—well-a-day, the title-page was lost.
 The writer well remarks, a heart that knows
 To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows,
 With prudence always ready at our call,
 To guide our use of it, is all in all.
 Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store,
 I superadd a few essentials more ;

But these, excuse the liberty I take,
 I waive just now, for conversation's sake.—
 Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,
 And add Right Reverend to Smug's honour'd name.

And yet our lot is given us in a land
 Where busy arts are never at a stand ;
 Where Science points her telescopic eye,
 Familiar with the wonders of the sky ;
 Where bold Inquiry, diving out of sight,
 Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light ;
 Where nought eludes the persevering quest,
 That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest.

But above all, in her own light array'd,
 See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd !
 The sacred book no longer suffers wrong,
 Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue ;
 But speaks with plainness, art could never mend,
 What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
 God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
 Live from His lips, and spread the glorious sound :
 That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,
 The trumpet of a life-restoring day ;
 'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
 And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.
 And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
 Her sons* to pour it on the farthest north :
 Fired with a zeal peculiar, *they* defy
 The rage and rigor of a polar sky,
 And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
 On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

O blest within the inclosure of your rocks,
 Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks ;
 No fertilizing streams your fields divide,
 That show reversed the villas on their side ;

* The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland. See Krantz.



No groves have ye ; no cheerful sound of bird,
 Or voice of turtle, in your land is heard ;
 Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
 Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell :
 But Winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown,
 Sits absolute on his unshaken throne ;
 Piles up his stores amid the frozen waste,
 And bids the mountains he has built stand fast ;
 Beckons the legions of his storms away
 From happier scenes, to make your land a prey ;
 Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
 And seems to share it with the distant Sun.
 Yet Truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle !
 And Peace, the genuine offspring of her smile :
 The pride of letter'd Ignorance, that binds
 In chains of error our accomplish'd minds,
 That decks, with all the splendor of the true,
 A false religion, is unknown to you.
 Nature, indeed, vouchsafes for our delight
 The sweet vicissitudes of day and night ;
 Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
 Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here ;
 But brighter beams than his who fires the skies
 Have risen, at length, on your admiring eyes,
 That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
 From which our nicer optics turn away.

Here see the encouragement Grace gives to vice,
 The dire effect of mercy without price !
 What were they ? What some fools are made by art,
 They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
 The gross idolatry blind Heathens teach
 Was too refined for them, beyond their reach.
 Not e'en the glorious Sun, though men revere
 The monarch most that seldom will appear,

And though his beams, that quicken where they shine,
 May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,—
 Not e'en the Sun, desirable as rare,
 Could bend one knee, engage one votary there.
 They were, what base Credulity believes
 True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
 The full-gorged savage, at his nauseous feast,
 Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest;
 Was one whom Justice, on an equal plan
 Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
 Might almost have indulged with an escape,
 Chargeable only with a human shape.

What are they now? Morality may spare
 Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there:
 The wretch who once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd,
 And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
 Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
 Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays;
 Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
 Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
 And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.
 Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing;
 Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring;
 And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
 Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand
 On what foundation virtue is to stand,
 If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift,
 And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift;
 The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes
 Glistening at once with pity and surprise,
 Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
 Of one whose birth was in a land of light,
 Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
 And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
 The common care that waits on all beside,
 Wild as if Nature there, void of all good,
 Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood,
 (Yet charge not Heavenly skill with having plann'd
 A plaything world, unworthy of His hand,)
 Can see His love, though secret evil lurks
 In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on His works;
 Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
 Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.

Hard task, indeed, o'er arctic seas to roam!
 Is hope exotic?—grows it not at home?
 Yes, but an object, bright as orient morn,
 May press the eye too closely to be borne;
 A distant virtue we can all confess,
 It hurts our pride, and moves our envy, less.

Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek
 I slur a name a poet must not speak)
 Stood pilloried on Infamy's high stage,
 And bore the pelting scorn of half an age;
 The very butt of Slander, and the blot
 For every dart that Malice ever shot.
 The man that mention'd *him*, at once dismiss'd
 All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd, and hiss'd;
 His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
 And Perjury stood up to swear all true;
 His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
 His speech rebellion against common sense;
 A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule,
 And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
 The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd;
 Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.

Now, Truth, perform thine office; waft aside
 The curtain drawn by Prejudice and Pride,

Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.

He loved the World that hated him : the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere :
Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life ;
And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.

He follow'd Paul ; his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same.
Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease ;
Like him he labour'd, and like him content
To bear it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.
Blush, Calumny ! and write upon his tomb,
If honest Eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which, aim'd at him, have pierced the offended skies !
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored,
Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord !

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he who must have pleasure, come what will :
He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture, indeed, is plain ; but God and he
On Scripture ground are sure to disagree ;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than this his Maker has seen fit to give ;
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain ;
Contrived to suit frail Nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.

By this, with nice precision of design,
 He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,
 That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
 And where his danger and God's wrath begin
 By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
 His well-pois'd estimate of right and wrong;
 And finds the modish manners of the day,
 Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan Caprice decrees,
 With what materials, on what ground you please;
 Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
 If not that hope the Scripture has required.
 The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
 With which hypocrisy for ever teems
 (Though other follies strike the public eye,
 And raise a laugh,) pass unmolested by;
 But if, unblamable in word and thought,
 A *man* arise, a man whom God has taught,
 With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
 And all the love of the beloved John,
 To storm the citadels they build in air,
 And smite the untemper'd wall; 'tis death to spare;
 To sweep away all refuges of lies,
 And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
 LAMA SABACTHANI before their eyes;
 To prove, that without Christ all gain is loss,
 All hope despair, that stands not on his cross;
 Except the few his God may have impress'd,
 A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
 There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
 That folly ends where genuine hope begins,
 And he that finds his Heaven must lose his sins.
 Nature opposes, with her utmost force,
 This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce;

And while religion seems to be her view,
 Hates with a deep sincerity *the true* :
 For this, of all that ever influenced man,
 Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began,
 This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
 But makes him, if at all, completely free ;
 Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
 Of an eternal, universal war ;
 Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
 Scorns, with the same indifference, frowns and smiles ;
 Drives through the realms of Sin, where riot reels,
 And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels !
 Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
 Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
 Insensible of Truth's all-mighty charms,
 Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms !
 While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,
 His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
 Mighty to parry and push by God's word
 With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
 Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
 And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of Hope, immortal Truth ! make known
 Thy deathless wreath and triumphs all thine own :
 The silent progress of thy power is such,
 Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
 That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
 And none can teach them, but whom thou hast taught.
 O see me sworn to serve thee, and command
 A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
 That, while I trembling trace a work divine,
 Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
 And light, and shade, and every stroke be thine.
 If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
 If ever, when he sigh'd, hast sigh'd again,

If ever on thy eyelid stood the tear,
That pity had engender'd, drop one here.
This man was happy—had the world's good word,
And with it every joy it can afford ;
Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life ;
Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
Good breeding and good grace gave all a grace,
And whether at the toilette of the fair
He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there,
Or if in masculine debate he shared,
Ensured him mute attention and regard.
Alas ! how changed. Expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined ;
Those awful syllables—hell, death, and sin,
Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works within ;
That Conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart.
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends ;
Hard task ! for one who lately knew no care,
And harder still as learnt beneath despair ;
His hours no longer pass unmark'd away,
A dark importance saddens every day ;
He hears the notice of the clock, perplex'd,
And cries, Perhaps eternity strikes next ;
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear :
His grief the world of all her power disarms,
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms :
God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
Now by the voice of his experience true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.

Now let the bright reverse be known abroad ;
Say, man's a worm, and power belongs to God.

As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,
Expects, in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his misspent years ;
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightning play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies :
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear ;
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks :
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him, whom Hope has with a touch made whole.
'Tis Heaven, all Heaven, descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings ;
'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,
'Tis God Himself triumphant in his heart.
O welcome now the sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are call'd to employ
Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy ;
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.

These are Thy glorious works, eternal Truth
The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth ;

These move the censure and illiberal grin
Of fools, that hate Thee and delight in sin :
But these shall last when night has quenched the pole,
And Heaven is all departed as a scroll.
And when, as Justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these Thy glorious works, and they who share
That hope which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.

Happy the Bard (if that fair name belong
To him that blends no fable with his song,
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,
And, while they captivate, inform the mind :
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,
And fruit reward his honourable toil :
But happier far, who comfort those that wait
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallow'd gate :
Their language simple, as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek ;
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste ;
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
The abundant harvest, recompense divine,
Repays their work—the gleanings only mine.

CHARITY.

Quo nihil majus meliusve terris
Fata donavêre, bonique divi ;
Nec d'auri, quamvis redeant in aurum
Tempora prisceum.

Hor. Lib. iv. Ode 2.



CHARITY.

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait
On man's most dignified and happiest state,
Whether we name thee Charity or Love,
Chief grace below, and all in all above,
Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)
A task I venture on, impell'd by thee :
O never seen but in thy blest effects,
Or felt but in the soul that Heaven selects ;
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
And though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.

God, working ever on a social plan,
By various ties attaches man to man :
He made at first, though free and unconfined,
One man the common father of the kind ;
That every tribe, though placed as He sees best
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,
Differing in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When COOK—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust,—
Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own,

Wherever he found man, to nature true,
 The rights of man were sacred in his view ;
 He sooth'd with gifts, and greeted with a smile,
 The simple native of the new-found isle ;
 He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood
 The tender argument of kindred blood,
 Nor would endure that any should control
 His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.

But though some nobler minds a law respect,
 That none shall with impunity neglect,
 In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
 To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
 While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
 See Cortez odious for a world enslaved !
 Where wast thou then, sweet Charity ? where then,
 Thou tutelary friend of helpless men ?
 Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,
 Or building hospitals on English ground ?
 No !—Mammon makes the World his legatee
 Through fear, not love ; and Heaven abhors the fee.
 Wherever found (and all men need thy care,)
 Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.
 The hand, that slew till it could slay no more,
 Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore.
 Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
 As vain imperial Philip on his own,
 Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,
 That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart,
 Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,
 For scorning what they taught him to detest.
 How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze
 Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways ;
 God stood not, though He seemed to stand, aloof ;
 And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof ;

The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
 The fretting plague is in the public purse,
 The canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state,
 Starved by that indolence their mines create.

Oh could their ancient Incas rise again,
 How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!
 Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see
 The robber and the murderer weak as we?
 Thou, that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
 Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
 Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
 Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
 We come with joy from our eternal rest,
 To see the oppressor in his turn oppress'd.
 Art thou the God, the thunder of whose hand
 Roll'd over all our desolated land,
 Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
 And made the mountains tremble at his frown?
 The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,
 And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.
 'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
 And Vengeance executes what Justice wills.

Again—the band of commerce was design'd
 To associate all the branches of mankind;
 And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
 Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
 Wise to promote whatever end He means,
 God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes:
 Each climate needs what other climes produce,
 And offers something to the general use;
 No land but listens to the common call,
 And in return receives supply from all.
 'Tis genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
 Cheers what were else an universal shade,

Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,
 And softens human rock-work into men.
 Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,
 Steps forth to fashion and refine the race;
 Not only fills Necessity's demand,
 But overcharges her capacious hand :
 Capricious Taste itself can crave no more
 Than she supplies from her abounding store ;
 She strikes out all that Luxury can ask,
 And gains new vigour at her endless task.
 Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
 The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre ;
 From her the canvass borrows light and shade,
 And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
 She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
 Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,
 And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
 Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of Art, and Art thrives most
 Where Commerce has enrich'd the busy coast ;
 He catches all improvements in his flight,
 Spreads foreign wondrous in his country's sight,
 Imports what others have invented well,
 And stirs his own to match them, or excel.
 'Tis thus reciprocating, each with each,
 Alternately the nations learn and teach ;
 While Providence enjoins to every soul
 A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heaven speed the canvass, gallantly unfur'd
 To furnish and accommodate a world,
 To give the pole the produce of the sun,
 And knit the unsocial climates into one !—
 Soft airs, and gentle heavings of the wave,
 Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save,

To succour wasted regions, and replace
 The smile of Opulence in Sorrow's face!—
 Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
 Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
 Charg'd with a freight transcending in its worth
 The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,
 That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
 A herald of God's love to Pagan lands!
 But, ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
 For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
 Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span,
 And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
 The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
 All bonds of nature in that moment end;
 And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
 A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
 The sable warrior, frantic with regret
 Of her he loves, and never can forget,
 Loses, in tears, the far-receding shore,
 But not the thought, that they must meet no more;
 Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
 What has he left that he can yet forego?
 Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
 He feels his body's bondage in his mind;
 Puts off his generous nature; and, to suit
 His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.

O most degrading of all ills, that wait
 On man, a mourner in his best estate!
 All other sorrows Virtue may endure,
 And find submission more than half a cure;
 Grief is itself a medicine, and bestow'd
 To improve the fortitude that bears the load,
 To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,
 The path of Wisdom, all whose paths are peace;

But slavery!—Virtue dreads it as her grave :
 Patience itself is meanness in a slave ;
 Or if the will and sovereignty of God
 Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
 And snap the chain the moment when you may.
 Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
 That has a heart and life in it, Be free ;
 The beasts are charter'd—neither age nor force
 Can quell the love of freedom in a horse :
 He breaks the cord that held him at the rack ;
 And, conscious of an unencumber'd back,
 Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein ;
 Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane ;
 Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs ;
 Nor stops till overleaping all delays,
 He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.

Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian name,
 Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame ;
 Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
 Expedience as a warrant for the deed ?
 So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
 To quit the forest and invade the fold ;
 So may the ruffian who, with ghostly glide,
 Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside ;
 Not he, but his emergency forced the door,
 He found it inconvenient to be poor.
 Has God then given his sweetness to the cane,
 Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain ?
 Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
 Unless his right to rule it be dismissed ?
 Impudent blasphemy ! So Folly pleads,
 And, Avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.
 But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
 That man make man his prey because he *must* ;

Still there is room for pity to abate,
 And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
 A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
 The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
 That souls have no discriminating hue,
 Alike important in their Maker's view ;
 That none are free from blemish since the fall,
 And Love divine has paid one price for all.
 The wretch, that works and weeps without relief,
 Has One that notices his silent grief.
 He, from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
 Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
 Considers *all* injustice with a frown ;
 But *marks* the man that treads his fellow down.
 Begone !—the whip and bell in that hard hand
 Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command.
 Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
 To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
 Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod ;
 To smite the poor is treason against God.

Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,
 While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd,
 We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil,
 Murmuring, and weary of our daily toil,
 Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade,
 Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade :
 Else who would lose, that had the power to improve,
 The occasion of transmuting fear to love ?
 Oh ! 'tis a godlike privilege to save,
 And he that scorns it is himself a slave.
 Inform his mind ; one flash of heavenly day
 Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.
 "Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,
 And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.

Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
 While gratitude and love made service sweet,
 My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,
 Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
 I was a bondman on my native plain,
 Sin forged, and Ignorance made fast, the chain;
 Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
 Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;
 Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more
 For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;
 Serving a benefactor I am free,
 At my best home, if not exiled from thee.

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
 A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
 The swell of pity, not to be confined
 Within the scanty limits of the mind,
 Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
 A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:
 These have an ear for his paternal call,
 Who makes some rich for the supply of all;
 God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ;
 And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.

O could I worship aught beneath the skies,
 That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,
 Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
 Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
 With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
 As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.
 Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
 The peep of Morning shed a dawning light,
 Again, when evening in her sober vest,
 Drew the gray curtain of the fading west,
 My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,
 For the chief blessings of my fairest days:

But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,
 But His who gave thee, and preserves thee mine :
 Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly
 A captive bird into the boundless sky,
 This triple realm adores thee—thou art come
 From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
 We feel thy force still active, at this hour
 Enjoy immunity from priestly power,
 While Conscience, happier than in ancient years,
 Owns no superior but the God she fears.
 Propitious spirit, yet expunge a wrong
 Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long.
 Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts that share
 The fears and hopes of a commercial care.
 Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
 To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt ;
 But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
 Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood ;
 And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
 Where covert guile and artifice abound.
 Let just restraint, for public peace design'd,
 Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind ;
 The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
 But let insolvent Innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despised of men,
 Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen ;
 Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed
 Should be the guerdon of a noble deed ;
 I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
 (Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
 I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.
 Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
 Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
 VOL. I.—13

To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
To seek a nobler amid scenes of woe,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach—
That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage—
Speaks a divine ambition and a zeal
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
O that the voice of clamor and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hush'd in favour of thy generous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee!
Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with Nature all his way;
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep Inquiry recommends;
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control;
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,
That cheers the silent journey of the night,
And brings at his return a bosom charged
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.
The treasured sweets of the capacious plan
That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him with a pleasure always new;
He, too, has a connecting power, and draws
Man to the centre of the common cause,
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
With a new medium and a purer light.
All truth is precious, if not all divine;
And what dilates the powers must needs refine.

He reads the skies, and, watching every change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range;
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail.
A prouder station on the general scale.
But Reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought;
The lamp of revelation, only, shows
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
That man, in nature's richest mantle clad,
And graced with all philosophy can add,
Though fair without, and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride;
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that, falling, he shall rise no more,
Unless the Power that bade him stand restore.
This is indeed philosophy; this known,
Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own;
And without this, whatever he discuss;
Whether the space between the stars and us;
Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea;
The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still:
Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes
Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
Self-knowledge truly learn'd, of course implies
The rich possession of a nobler prize;
For self to self, and God to man reveal'd,
(Two themes to Nature's eye for ever seal'd,)
Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace
From the same centre of enlightening grace.
Here stay thy foot; how copious and how clear,
The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here!

Hark ! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
 Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills,
 Winding a secret or an open course,
 And all supplied from an eternal source.
 The ties of Nature do but feebly bind ;
 And Commerce partially reclaims mankind ;
 Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,
 May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride ;
 But, while his province is the reasoning part,
 Has still a veil of midnight on his heart :
 'Tis Truth divine, exhibited on earth,
 Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm and fancy flows,
 What will not argument sometimes suppose ?)
 An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind,
 Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
 Let Supposition lend her aid once more,
 And land some grave optician on the shore :
 He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
 Close to the part where vision ought to be ;
 But finds, that, though his tubes assist the sight,
 They cannot give it, or make darkness light.
 He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
 A sense they know not, to the wondering crowd ;
 He talks of light, and the prismatic hues,
 As men of depth in erudition use ;
 But all he gains for his harangue is—Well,—
 What monstrous lies some travellers will tell !

The soul, whose sight all-quickening grace renews,
 Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
 As diamonds stripp'd of their opaque disguise,
 Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
 She speaks of Him, her Author, Guardian, Friend,
 Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,

In language warm as all that love inspires,
And in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.
She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys ;
Though Wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all :
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long ;
And, from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence.
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres ;
The truth she loves, a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream.
The danger they discern not, they deny ;
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.
Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child :
She makes excuses where she might condemn ;
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them :
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
The worst suggested, she believes the best ;
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased ;
She rather waives than will dispute her right,
And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.

Such was the portrait an Apostle drew,
The bright original was one he knew ;
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one, that holds communion with the skies,
 Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
 And once more mingles with us meaner things,
 'Tis e'en as if an Angel shook his wings :
 Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
 That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
 So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
 The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
 Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvass furl'd,
 In some safe haven of our western world,
 'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
 The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,
 To lull the painful malady with alms ;
 But charity, not feign'd, intends alone
 Another's good—theirs centre in their own ;
 And, too short lived to reach the realms of peace,
 Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
 Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
 Is rather careless of a sister's fame :
 Her superfluity the poor supplies,
 But, if she touch a character, it dies.
 The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,
 She deems all safe, for she has paid the price :
 No charity but alms aught values she,
 Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.
 How many deeds, with which the world has rung,
 From Pride, in league with Ignorance, have sprung !
 But God o'errules all human follies still,
 And bends the tough materials to His will.
 A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
 Has left some hundreds without home or food ;
 Extravagance and Avarice shall subscribe,
 While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.

The brief proclaim'd, it visits every pew,
 But first the Squire's, a compliment but due :
 With slow deliberation he unties
 His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes,
 And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
 Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm ;
 Till finding, what he might have found before,
 A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
 Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,
 He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
 Gold to be sure !—Throughout the town 'tis told.
 How the good Squire gives never less than gold.
 From motives such as his, though not the best,
 Springs in due time supply for the distress'd ;
 Not less effectual than what love bestows,
 Except—that office clips it as it goes.

But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
 And wound the grace I mean to recommend.
 (Though vice, derided with a just design,
 Implies no trespass against love divine,)
 Once more I would adopt the graver style ;
 A teacher should be sparing of his smile.

Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
 Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame ;
 He hides behind a magisterial air
 His own offences, and strips others bare ;
 Affects, indeed, a most humane concern,
 That men, if gently tutor'd, will not learn ;
 That mulish Folly, not to be reclaim'd
 By softer methods, must be made ashamed ;
 But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)
 Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
 Most satirists are, indeed, a public scourge ;
 Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge ;

Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,
 The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
 Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
 By lean Despair, upon an empty purse,
 The wild assassins start into the street,
 Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
 No skill in swordmanship, however just,
 Can be secure against a madman's thrust!
 And even Virtue, so unfairly match'd,
 Although immortal, may be prick'd or seratch'd.
 When scandal has new minted an old lie,
 Or tax'd Invention for a fresh supply,
 'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears
 Gathering around it with erected ears:
 A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd;
 Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud;
 Just as the sapience of an author's brain
 Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.
 Strange! how the frequent interjeeted dash
 Quickens a market, and helps off the trash;
 The important letters that include the rest
 Serve as a key to those that are suppress'd;
 Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
 The world is charm'd and Serib escapes the law.
 So when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
 Worms may be caught by either head or tail;
 Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
 They meet with little pity to redress;
 Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,
 Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence
 To Peace and Charity, is mere pretence:
 A bold remark, but which, if well applied,
 Would humble many a towering poet's pride.

Perhaps, the man was in a sportive fit,
 And had no other play-place for his wit ;
 Perhaps enchanted with the love of fame,
 He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame ;
 Perhaps, whatever end he might pursue,
 The cause of virtue could not be his view.
 At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes ;
 The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise,
 But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
 That, while they please, possess us with alarms :
 So have I seen (and hasten'd to the sight
 On all the wings of holiday delight,)
 Where stands that monument of ancient power
 Named with emphatic dignity the Tower,
 Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small,
 In starry forms disposed upon the wall :
 We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
 That brass and steel should make so fine a show ;
 But though we praise the exact designer's skill,
 Account them implements of mischief still.

No works shall find acceptance in that day
 When all disguises shall be rent away,
 That square not truly with the Scripture plan,
 Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.
 As He ordains things sordid in their birth
 To be resolved into their parent earth ;
 And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
 Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs ;
 So self starts nothing, but what tends apace
 Home to the goal, where it began the race.
 Such as our motive is, our aim must be ;
 If this be servile, that can ne'er be free :
 If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
 We glorify that self, not Him we ought ;

Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The Judge of all men owes them no regard.
True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against hope, and, in the rudest scene,
Storms but enliven its unfading green ;
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look at Him, who form'd us and redeem'd,
So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd ;
To see a God stretch forth His human hand,
To uphold the boundless scenes of His command ;
To recollect that, in a form like ours,
He bruised beneath His feet the infernal powers,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath He won so dearly in our name ;
That, throned above all height, He condescends
To call the few that trust in Him His friends ;
That, in the Heaven of heavens, that space He deems
Too scanty for the exertion of His beams,
And shines, as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below ;
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like Him the soul, thus kindled from above,
Spreads wide her arms of universal love ;
And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,
Includes creation in her close embrace.
Behold a Christian !—and without the fires
The Founder of that name alone inspires,
Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,
To make the shining prodigy complete,
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat !
Were love, in these the world's last dotting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,

The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold
Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold ;
Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease ;
And e'en the dipp'd and sprinkled live in peace :
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest.
The statesman, skill'd in projects dark and deep,
Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep ;
His budget often fill'd, yet always poor,
Might swing at ease behind his study door,
No longer prey upon our annual rents,
Or scare the nation with its big contents :
Disbanded legions freely might depart,
And slaying man would cease to be an art.
No learned disputants would take the field,
Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield ;
Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,
Pelting each other for the public good.
Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love ;
And I might spare myself the pains to show
What few can learn, and all suppose they know.

Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
With many a wild indeed but flowery spray,
In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
The attention Pleasure has so much engross'd.
But if, unhappily deceived, I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let Charity forgive me a mistake,
That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

CONVERSATION

Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
Nec percussa juvant fluctû tam litora, nec quæ
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.

VING. ECL. 5.

CONVERSATION.

THOUGH Nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To every man his modicum of sense,
And Conversation, in its better part,
May be esteem'd a gift, and not an art,
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
Words learn'd by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse ;
Not more distinct from harmony divine,
The constant creaking of a country sign.
As Alphabets in ivory employ,
Hour after hour, the yet unletter'd boy,
Sorting and puzzling, with a deal of glee,
Those seeds of science call'd his A B C ;
So language in the mouths of the adult,
Witness its insignificant result,
Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth,
And, if it weigh the importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought !
But all shall give account of every wrong,
Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue ;

Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
 Or sell their glory at a market-price;
 Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
 The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.

There is a prurience in the speech of some,
 Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb .
 His wise forbearance has their end in view,
 They fill their measure, and receive their due.
 The Heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
 Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
 Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
 And shut up every satyr in his den.
 O come not ye near innocence and truth,
 Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth !
 Infectious as impure, your blighting power
 Taints in its rudiments the promised flower ;
 Its odour perish'd, and its charming hue,
 Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.
 Not e'en the vigorous and headlong rage
 Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
 Affords a plea allowable or just
 For making speech the pamperer of lust ;
 But when the breath of age commits the fault,
 'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
 So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
 No longer fruitful, and no longer green ;
 The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
 Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.

Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife ;
 Some men have surely, then, a peaceful life ;
 Whatever subject occupy discourse,
 The feats of Vestris, or the naval force,
 Asseveration, blustering in your face,
 Makes contradiction such a hopeless case.

In every tale they tell, or false or true,
 Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
 They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
 With oaths like rivets forced into the brain ;
 And e'en when sober truth prevails throughout,
 They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
 A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
 Who though devout, yet bigotry had none,
 Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
 With adjurations every word impress,
 Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
 God's name so much upon his lips, a priest ;
 Bowed at the close with all his graceful airs,
 And begg'd an interest in his frequent prayers.

Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,
 Henceforth associate in one common herd ;
 Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,
 Pronounce your human form a false pretence ;
 A mere disguise, in which a devil lurks,
 Who yet betrays his secret by his works.

Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
 And make colloquial happiness your care,
 Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate ;—
 A duel in the form of a debate.
 The clash of arguments and jar of words,
 Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
 Decide no question with their tedious length,
 For opposition gives opinion strength,
 Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
 And put the peaceably-disposed to death.
 O thwart me not, sir Soph, at every turn,
 Nor carp at every flaw you may discern ;
 Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
 I am not surely always in the wrong :

'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
 A fool must now and then be right by chance.
 Not that all freedom of dissent I blame,
 No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
 A disputable point is no man's ground;
 Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
 Discourse may want an animated—No,
 To brush the surface, and to make it flow;
 But still remember, if you mean to please,
 To press your point with modesty and ease
 The mark, at which my juster aim I take,
 Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
 Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
 Knots and impediments make something hitch;
 Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
 Your thread of argument is snapp'd again;
 The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
 Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too,
 Vociferated logic kills me quite,—
 A noisy man is always in the right;
 I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
 Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
 And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
 Reply discreetly—To be sure—no doubt!

DUBIUS is such a scrupulous good man—
 Yes—you may catch him tripping, if you can.
 He would not, with a peremptory tone,
 Assert the nose upon his face his own;
 With hesitation admirably slow,
 He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
 His evidence, if he were call'd by law
 To swear to some enormity he saw,
 For want of prominence and just relief,
 Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.

Through constant dread of giving Truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense ;
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not ;
What he remembers, seems to have forgot ;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centering at last in having none at all.
Yet, though he tease and balk your listening ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear ;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool.
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach ;
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.
Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay ;
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear, and strong ;
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course ;
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump :
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn ;
And, though self-idolized in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain, and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride ;
Few contentious but engender spite,
And those the most, where neither has a right.

The point of honour has been deem'd of use,
To teach good manners and to curb abuse ;
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear,
And, at the bottom, barbarous still and rude,
We are restrain'd, indeed, but not subdued.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure.
And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end ;
That now and then a hero must decease,
That the surviving world may live in peace.
Perhaps, at last, close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low ;
That men engage in it compell'd by force,
And fear, not courage, is its proper source.
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,
To rush into a fixed eternal state,
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shivering to the bar
With all the guilt of such unnatural war ;
Whatever Use may urge, or Honour plead,
On Reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude and surly? No—
A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
Will not affront me ; and no other can.
Were I empower'd to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well-loaded fists ;

A Trojan combat would be something new,
 Let DARES beat ENTELLUS black and blue;
 Then each might show, to his admiring friends,
 In honourable bumps his rich amends.
 And carry, in contusions of his skull,
 A satisfactory receipt in full.

A story, in which native humour reigns,
 Is often useful, always entertains :
 A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
 May furnish illustration, well applied ;
 But sedentary weavers of long tales
 Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
 'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
 To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
 And echo conversations dull and dry,
 Embellish'd with—*He said*, and *so said I*.
 At every interview their route the same,
 The repetition makes attention lame :
 We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
 And in the saddest part cry—*Droll indeed!*
 The path of narrative with care pursue,
 Still making probability your clue ;
 On all the vestiges of truth attend,
 And let *them* guide you to a decent end.

Of all ambitions man may entertain,
 The worst that can invade a sickly brain,
 Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
 And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
 Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
 Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
 Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
 Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
 A great retailer of this curious ware
 Having unloaded and made many stare,

Can this be true?—an arch observer cries,—
 Yes (rather moved,) I saw it with these eyes;
 Sir! I believe it on that ground alone;
 I could not, had I seen it with my own.

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
 The language plain, and incidents well link'd;
 Tell not as new what every body knows,
 And, new or old, still hasten to a close;
 There, centring in a focus round and neat,
 Let all your rays of information meet.
 What neither yields us profit nor delight
 Is like a nurse's lullaby at night;
 Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
 Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.

The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
 Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
 The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
 Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.
 Such often, like the tube they so admire,
 Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.
 Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
 Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
 Thy worst effect is banishing, for hours,
 The sex whose presence civilizes ours:
 Thou art, indeed, the drug a gardener wants,
 To poison vermin that infest his plants;
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
 As to despise the glory of our kind,
 And show the softest minds and fairest forms
 As little mercy, as he grubs and worms?
 They dare not wait the riotous abuse,
 Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
 When wine has given indecent language birth,
 And forced the floodgates of licentious mirth;

For scaborn Venus her attachment shows
 Still to that element from which she rose,
 And with a quiet, which no fumes disturb,
 Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.

The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose,
 In contact inconvenient, nose to nose.
 As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
 Touch'd with a magnet, had attracted his.
 His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,
 Proves, after all, a wind-gun's airy charge—
 An extract of his diary—no more—
 A tasteless journal of the day before.
 He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,
 Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stepp'd home again,
 Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
 With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
 I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
 Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now.

I cannot talk with civit in the room,
 A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume;
 The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
 Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show?
 His odoriferous attempts to please
 Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees;
 But we that make no honey, though we sting,
 Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
 'Tis wrong to bring into a mix'd resort,
 What makes some sick, and others *à-la-mort*.
 An argument of cogence, we may say,
 Why such a one should keep himself away.

A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,
 Quite as absurd, though not so light as he;
 A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
 An oracle within an empty cask,

The solemn fop ; significant and budge ;
 A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge ;
 He says but little, and that little said,
 Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
 His wit invites you by his looks to come,
 But when you knock it never is at home ;
 'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
 Some handsome present, as your hopes presage ;
 'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
 An absent friend's fidelity and love,
 But when unpack'd your disappointment groans
 To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones.

Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
 In making known how oft they have been sick,
 And give us, in recitals of disease,
 A doctor's trouble, but without the fees ;
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
 How an emetic or cathartic sped ;
 Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
 Nose, ears, and eyes, seem present on the spot.
 Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
 Victorious seem'd, and now the doctor's skill ;
 And now—alas for unseen mishaps !
 They put on a damp nightcap and relapse !
 They thought they must have died, they were so bad ;
 Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.

Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
 You always do too little or too much :
 You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,
 Your elevated voice goes through the brain ;
 You fall at once into a lower key,
 That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humble-bee.
 The southern sash admits too strong a light,
 You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.

He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
 To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
 Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish ;
 With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish :
 He takes what he at first profess'd to loathe,
 And in due time feeds heartily on both ;
 Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
 He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
 Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
 Himself should work that wonder, if he can—
 Alas ! his efforts double his distress,
 He likes yours little, and his own still less.
 Thus, always teasing others, always teased,
 His only pleasure is—to be displeas'd.

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
 Of fancied scorn and undeserv'd disdain,
 And bear the marks, upon a blushing face,
 Of needles shame, and self-impos'd disgrace.
 Our sensibilities are so acute,
 The fear of being silent makes us mute.
 We sometimes think we could a speech produce
 Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose ;
 But being tried, it dies upon the lip,
 Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip :
 Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
 Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.
 Few Frenchmen of this evil have complain'd ;
 It seems as if we Britons were ordain'd ;
 By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
 To fear each other, fearing none beside.
 The cause, perhaps, inquiry may desery,
 Self-searching with an introverted eye,
 Conceal'd within an unsuspected part,
 The vainest corner of our own vain heart :
 VOL. I.—15

For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme ;
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place ;
But counterfeit is blind, and seulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear :
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by Vanity produced and nursed.
The circle form'd, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate ;
Yes, Ma'am, and no, Ma'am, utter'd softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go ;
Each individual, suffering a constraint
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint,
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry ;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection, and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh ;
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Fill'd up, at last, with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed :
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,

And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,
 Recovering what we lost we know not how,
 The faculties, that seem'd reduced to nought,
 Expression and the privilege of thought.

The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
 I give him over as a desperate case.
 Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
 Never, if honest ones, when death is sure ;
 And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
 A mere fox-follower never is reclaim'd.
 Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
 Whose only fit companion is his horse,
 Or if deserving of a better doom,
 The noble beast judged otherwise, his groom.
 Yet e'en the rogue that serves him though he stand,
 To take his honour's orders, cap in hand,
 Prefers his fellow-grooms, with much good sense,
 Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
 If neither horse nor groom affect the Squire,
 Where can, at last, his jockeyship retire ?
 O ! to the club, the scene of savage joys,
 The school of coarse good fellowship and noise ;
 There, in the sweet society of those
 Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
 Let him improve his talent if he can,
 Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.

Man's heart had been impenetrably seal'd
 Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,
 Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
 Given him a soul, and bade him understand ;
 The reasoning power vouchsafed of course inferr'd
 The power to clothe that reason with His word ;
 For all is perfect that God works on earth,
 And He that gives conception aids the birth.

If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,
What uses of His boon the Giver would.
The Mind, dispatch'd upon her busy toil,
Should rage where Providence has bless'd the soil;
Visiting every flower with labour meet,
And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,
She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
That good diffused may more abundant grow,
And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
That fills the listening lover with delight,
Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,
To learn the twittering of a meaner bird?
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
That odious libel on a human voice?
No—Nature, unsophisticate by man,
Starts not a-side from her Creator's plan;
The melody, that was at first design'd
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,
Is note for note deliver'd in our ears,
In the last scene of her six thousand years.
Yet Fashion, leader of a chattering train,
Whom man for his own hurt permits to reign,
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
And would degrade her votary to an ape,
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
Holds a usurp'd dominion o'er his tongue;
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And, when accomplish'd in her wayward school,
Calls gentlemen whom she has made a fool.
'Tis an unalterable-fix'd decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,

That Heaven and Hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,
God and His attributes (a field of day
Where 'tis an Angel's happiness to stray,)
Fruits of His love and wonders of His might,
Be never named in ears esteem'd polite.
That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
Shall stand proscribed a madman or a knave,
A close designer not to be believed,
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.
Oh folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
Is it incredible, or can it seem
A dream to any, except those that dream,
That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire,
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire?
Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies;
That air of insolence affronts your God,
You need his pardon, and provoke his rod:
Now, in a posture that becomes you more
Than that heroic strut assumed before,
Know, your arrears with every hour accrue
For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
Acquainted with the woes, that fear or shame,
By Fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
Have proved them truths too big to be express'd.
Go seek on revelation's hallow'd ground,
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found;
Touch'd by that power that you have dared to mock,
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,

Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.

It happen'd on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our Surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event ;
They spake of Him they loved, of Him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurr'd perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enrich'd them still the more ;
They thought Him, and they justly thought Him, one
Sent to do more than He appeared to have done ;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wonder'd he should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,
And ask'd them, with a kind, engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.
Inform'd, He gather'd up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all He said,
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That reaching home, the night, they said, is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here.—
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord !
Did not our hearts feel all He deign'd to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way ?

Now theirs was converse, such as it behoves
 Man to maintain, and such as God approves :
 Their views, indeed, were indistinct and dim,
 But yet successful, being aim'd at Him.
 Christ and His character their only scope,
 Their object, and their subject, and their hope,
 They felt what it became them much to feel,
 And, wanting Him to loose the sacred seal,
 Found Him as prompt, as their desire was true,
 To spread the new-born glories in their view.

Well—what are ages and the lapse of time
 Match'd against truths, as lasting as sublime ?
 Can length of years on God himself exact,
 Or make that fiction, which was once a fact ?
 No—marble and recording brass decay,
 And, like the graver's memory, pass away ;
 The works of man inherit, as is just,
 Their author's frailty, and return to dust :
 But truth divine for ever stands secure,
 Its head is guarded, as its base is sure :
 Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years,
 The pillar of the eternal plan appears,
 The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
 Built by the Architect, who built the skies.
 Hearts may be found, that harbour at this hour
 That love of Christ in all its quickening power ;
 And lips unstain'd by folly or by strife,
 Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
 Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
 A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
 O days of Heaven, and nights of equal praise,
 Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
 When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet
 Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,

Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
 Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come,
 And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
 Upon the lap of covenanted Rest.

What, always dreaming over heavenly things,
 Like angel-heads in stone, with pigeon-wings?
 Canting and whining out, all day, the word,
 And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
 Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,
 Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
 Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
 And chase the splenetic dull hours away;
 Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
 Who waits for Heaven ere he becomes divine,
 Leaves saints to enjoy those altitudes they teach,
 And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.

Well spoken, Advocate of sin and shame,
 Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
 Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right,
 The fix'd fee-simple of the vain and light?
 Can hopes of Heaven, bright prospects of an hour,
 That come to waft us out of Sorrow's power,
 Obscure or quench a faculty, that finds
 Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?
 Religion curbs, indeed, its wanton play,
 And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,
 But gives it usefulness unknown before,
 And, purifying, makes it shine the more.
 A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,
 A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight;
 Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,
 'Tis always active on the side of truth;
 Temperance and peace insure its healthful state,
 And make it brightest at its latest date,

Oh ! I have seen (nor hope, perhaps, in vain,
 Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
 A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
 Who never saw the sword he could not wield :
 Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
 Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed ;
 A man that would have foil'd at their own play
 A dozen would-be's of the modern day ;
 Who, when occasion justified its use,
 Had wit as bright, as ready to produce ;
 Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
 Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
 His rich materials, and regale your ear
 With strains it was a privilege to hear :
 Yet above all, his luxury supreme,
 And his chief glory was the Gospel theme ;
 There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
 His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,
 Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
 But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more, perhaps, than folly ought,
 When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
 Suppose *themselves* monopolists of sense,
 And wiser men's ability pretence.
 Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,
 Such men are not forgot as soon as cold,
 Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,
 Embalm'd for ever in its own perfume.
 And to say truth, though in its early prime,
 And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,
 Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
 That in the valley of decline are lost,
 And Virtue with peculiar charms appears,
 Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years ;

Yet Age, by long experience well inform'd,
Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd,
That fire abated which impels rash Youth,
Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
And claims a reverence in its shortening day,
That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
The fruits of Age, less fair, are yet more sound,
Than those a brighter season pours around;
And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
Through wintry rigours unimpair'd endure.

What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,
And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear;
That fire is catching, if you draw too near;
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.
To tremble (as the creature of an hour
Ought at the view of an Almighty power)
Before His presence, at whose awful throne
All tremble in all worlds, except our own;
To supplicate His mercy, love His ways,
And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
Though common sense, allow'd a casting voice,
And free from bias, must approve the choice,
Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,
And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
But that disease, when soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
It views the truth with a distorted eye,
And either warps or lays it useless by;
'Tis narrow, self-ish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause;

And while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,
 Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies.
 'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
 In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,
 Shines in the dark, but, usher'd into day,
 The stench remains, the lustre dies away.

True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
 Of hearts in union, mutually disclosed;
 And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
 Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright.
 Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,
 Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
 A dark confederacy against the laws
 Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause:
 They build each other up with dreadful skill,
 As bastions set point blank against God's will;
 Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
 Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out:
 Call legions up from Hell to back the deed,
 And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.
 But souls that carry on a bless'd exchange
 Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,
 And with a fearless confidence make known
 The sorrows, sympathy esteems its own,
 Daily derive increasing light and force
 From such communion in their pleasant course,
 Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
 Meet their opposers with united strength,
 And, one in heart, in interest, and design,
 Gird up each other to the race divine.

But Conversation, choose what theme we may,
 And chiefly when religion leads the way,
 Should flow, like waters after summer showers,
 Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.

The Christian, in whose soul, though now distress'd,
 Lives the dear thought of joys he once possess'd,
 When all his glowing language issued forth,
 With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,
 Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
 Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,
 Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
 Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.
 The song of Sion is a tasteless thing,
 Unless when, rising on a joyful wing,
 The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
 And give the strain the compass it demands.
 Strange tidings these to tell a world, who treat
 All but their own experience as deceit!
 Will they believe, though credulous enough,
 To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
 That there are bless'd inhabitants of earth,
 Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
 Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
 From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,
 Their very language of a kind, that speaks
 The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,
 Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,
 As Tully with philosophy once dealt,
 And in the silent watches of the night,
 And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
 The social walk, or solitary ride,
 Keep still the dear companion at their side?
 No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
 God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
 With such a jest, as fill'd with hellish glee
 Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;
 But veneration or respect finds none,
 Save from the subjects of that work alone.

The world, grown old, her deep discernment shows,
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace ;
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
And finds hypocrisy close lurking there ;
And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
Concludes his unfeign'd love of him a feint.
And yet, God knows, look human nature through
(And in due time the world shall know it too,)
That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,
That after man's defection laid all waste,
Sincerity towards the heart-searching God
Has made the new-born creature her abode,
Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls,
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
Sincerity ! why 'tis his only pride ;
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
He knows that God demands his heart entire,
And gives Him all His just demands require.
Without it his pretensions were as vain,
As, having it, he deems the world's dislain ;
That great defect would cost him not alone
Man's favourable judgment, but his own ;
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear,
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
Retort the charge, and let the world be told
She boasts a confidence she does not hold ;
That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
A cold misgiving, and a killing dread :
That while in health the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short ;
That sick she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie ;
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That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,
 She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,
 Her utmost reach, historical assent,
 The doctrine's warp'd to what they never meant ;
 That truth itself is in her head as dull
 And useless as a candle in a skull,
 And all her love of God a groundless claim,
 A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.
 Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
 And all her censures of the work of grace,
 Are insincere, meant only to conceal
 A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel ;
 That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
 And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.

A poet does not work by square or line,
 As smiths or joiners perfect a design ;
 At least we moderns, our attention less,
 Beyond the example of our sires digress,
 And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
 Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
 The world and I fortuitously met ;
 I owed a trifle, and have paid the debt ;
 She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,
 And, having struck the balance, now proceed.
 Perhaps, however, as some years have pass'd
 Since she and I conversed together last,
 And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
 Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
 Great changes and new manners have occur'd,
 And blest reforms, that I have never heard,
 And she may now be as discreet and wise,
 As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
 Sobriety, perhaps, may now be found,
 Where once Intoxication press'd the ground ;

The subtle and injurious may be just,
And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust ;
Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd ;
Charity may relax the miser's fist ;
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
It has, indeed, been told me (with what weight,
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state,)
That fables old, that seem'd for ever mute,
Reviv'd, are hastening into fresh repute,
And gods and goddesses, discarded long,
Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song,
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again ;
That certain feasts are instituted now,
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow ;
That all Olympus through the country roves,
To consecrate our few remaining groves,
And Echo learns politely to repeat
The praise of names for ages obsolete ;
That having proved the weakness, it should seem,
Of revelation's ineffectual beam,
To bring the passions under sober sway,
And give the moral springs their proper play,
They mean to try what may at last be done,
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
And whether Roman rites may now produce
The virtues of old Rome for English use.
May much success attend the pious plan,
May Mercury once more embellish man,
Grace him again with long-forgotten arts,
Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts,
Make him athletic as in days of old,
Learn'd at the bar, in the palaestra bold,

Divest the roughest sex of female airs,
 And teach the softer not to copy theirs :
 The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught
 Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.
 'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,
 For us plain folks, and all who side with us,
 To build our altar, confident and bold,
 And say, as stern Elijah said of old,
 The strife now stands upon a fair award,
 If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord :
 If He be silent, faith is all a whim,
 Then Baal is the God, and worship him.

Digression is so much in modern use,
 Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
 Some never seem so wide of their intent,
 As when returning to the theme they meant ;
 As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
 Make every parish but their own their home.
 Though such continual zigzags in a book,
 Such drunken reelings, have an awkward look,
 And I had rather creep to what is true,
 Than rove and stagger with no mark in view ;
 Yet to consult a little seem'd no crime,
 The freakish humour of the present time :
 But now, to gather up what seems dispersed,
 And touch the subject I design'd at first,
 May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
 Best for the public, and my wisest part.
 And first, let no man charge me that I mean
 To close in sable every social scene,
 And give good company a face severe,
 As if they met around a father's bier ;
 For tell some men, that pleasure all their bent,
 And laughter all their work, is life misspent,

Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.
To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scatter'd rocks and opening shades,
And, while it shows the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks inspires.
Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure ;
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
Pursues the course that Truth and Nature teach ;
No longer labours merely to produce
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use :
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,
While all the happy man possess'd before,
The gift of nature, or the classic store,
Is made subservient to the grand design,
For which Heaven form'd the faculty divine.
So, should an idiot, while at large he strays,
Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays,
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes ;
But let the wise and well-instructed hand
Once take the shell beneath his just command,
In gentle sounds it seems as it complain'd
Of the rude injuries it late sustain'd,
Till tuned at length to some immortal song,
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours His praise along.

RETIREMENT.

———— studiis florens ignobilis oti.
Verg. Geor. Lib. 4.

RETIREMENT.

HACKNEY'D in business, wearied at that oar,
Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego;
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
Where all his long anxieties forgot
Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er,
And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of Ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
And, having lived a trifter, die a man.
Thus Conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,
And calls a creature form'd for God alone,
For Heaven's high purposes, and not his own,
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
From what debilitates and what inflames,
From cities, humming with a restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
Where works of man are cluster'd close around,
And works of God are hardly to be found,

To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,
 Traces of Eden are still seen below,
 Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,
 Remind him of his Maker's power and love.
 'Tis well if, look'd for at so late a day,
 In the last scene of such a senseless play,
 True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
 And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
 Souls, that have long despised their heavenly birth,
 Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
 For threescore years employ'd, with ceaseless care,
 In catching smoke, and feeding upon air,
 Conversant only with the ways of men,
 Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
 Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart,
 Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,
 And, draining its nutritious powers to feed
 Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.

Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
 If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
 Sick of the service of a world that feeds
 Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
 We can escape from Custom's idiot sway,
 To serve the Sovereign we were born to obey.
 Then sweet to muse upon his skill display'd
 (Infinite skill) in all that He has made!
 To trace in Nature's most minute design,
 The signature and stamp of power divine,
 Contrivance intricate, express'd with ease,
 Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
 The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
 Within the small dimensions of a point,
 Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
 His mighty work, who speaks and it is done.

The Invisible, in things scarce seen, reveal'd,
To whom an atom is an ample field ;
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
These hatch'd, and those resuscitated worms,
New life ordain'd and brighter scenes to share,
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,
More hideous foes than Fancy can devise ;
With helmet-heads, and dragon scales adorn'd,
The mighty myriads, now securely scorn'd,
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth :
Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers pour'd, at His command,
From urns that never fail, through every land ;
These like a deluge, with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course ;
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales ;
Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails ;
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,
The crescent moon, the diadem of night ;
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space—
At such a sight to catch the Poet's flame,
And, with a rapture like his own exclaim,
These are Thy glorious works, Thou Source of good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood !
Thine, and upheld by Thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair ;
Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Adored and praised in all that Thou hast wrought.
Absorb'd in that immensity I see,
I shrink abased, and yet aspire to Thee ;

Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day,
 Thy words, more clearly than Thy works display,
 That, while Thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
 I may resemble Thee, and call Thee mine.

O blest proficiency! surpassing all
 That men erroneously their glory call,
 The recompense that arts or arms can yield,
 The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
 Compared with this sublimest life below,
 Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show?
 Thus studied, used, and consecrated thus,
 On earth what is, seems form'd, indeed, for us:
 Not as the plaything of a froward child,
 Pretful, unless diverted and beguiled,
 Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
 Of pride, ambition, or impure desires,
 But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
 From mighty means to more important ends,
 Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
 Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
 And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,
 Earth made for man, and man himself for Him.

Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,
 A superstitious and monastic course:
 Truth is not local; God alike pervades
 And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
 And may be fear'd amidst the busiest scenes,
 Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.
 But 'tis not easy, with a mind like ours,
 Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,
 And in a world where, other ills apart,
 The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
 To limit Thought, by nature prone to stray
 Wherever freakish Fancy points the way;

To bid the pleadings of Self-love be still,
 Resign our own, and seek our Maker's will ;
 To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
 Our conduct with the laws engraven there ;
 To measure all that passes in the breast,
 Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test ;
 To dive into the secret deeps within,
 To spare no passion and no favourite sin,
 And search the themes, important above all,
 Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.
 But leisure, silence, and a mind released
 From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,
 How to secure, in some propitious hour,
The point of interest, or the post of power,
 A soul serene, and equally retired
 From objects too much dreaded or desired,
 Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
 At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Opening the map of God's extensive plan,
 We find a little isle, this life of man ;
 Eternity's unknown expanse appears
 Circling around and limiting his years.
 The busy race examine and explore
 Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
 With care collect what in their eyes excels,
 Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells ;
 Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
 And happiest he that groans beneath his weight :
 The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
 And every hour sweeps multitudes away ;
 They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
 Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
 A few forsake the throng ; with lifted eyes
 Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
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Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Seal'd with His signet, whom they serve and love ;
Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,
And, unregretted, are soon snatch'd away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use ;
The love of change, that lives in every breast,
Genius and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its votary to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize,
That courts display before ambitious eyes ;
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,
What'er enchants them, are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest, where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.
With eager step, and carelessly array'd,
For such a cause the Poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight,
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,

All, all alike transport the glowing Bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
O Nature ! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections, at whose word they rose,
Next to that Power, who form'd thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light, though I should miss renown,
And, poring on thy page, whose every line
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enrich'd by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use,
Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by ;
His hours of leisure and recess employs
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.

The lover, too, shuns business and alarms,
Tender idolater of absent charms.
Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers,
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs ;
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
And every thought that wanders is a crime.
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
And weeps a sad libation in despair ;
Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,
Wins in return an answer of disdain.
As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech,

In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Straightening its growth by such a strict embrace ;
So Love, that clings around the noblest minds,
Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds ;
The suitor's air, indeed, he soon improves,
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
Refines his speech, and fashions his address ;
But farewell promises of happier fruits,
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits ;
Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake ;
Who will may pant for glory and excel,
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell !
Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
May least offend against so pure a flame,
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
Can least brook management, however mild,
Yet let a Poet (poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms)
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
Pastoral images and still retreats,
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams,
Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
Conspire against thy peace with one design,
Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.

Up—God has form'd thee with a wiser view,
 Not to be led in chains, but to subdue ;
 Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
 Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
 Woman indeed, a gift He would bestow
 When He design'd a Paradise below,
 The richest earthly boon His hands afford,
 Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
 Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
 Collect the scatter'd truths that study gleans,
 Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
 No longer give an image all thine heart ;
 Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
 'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.

Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN, whose skill
 Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
 Gives melancholy up to Nature's care,
 And sends the patient into purer air,
 Look where he comes—in this embower'd alcove
 Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move :
 Lips busy, and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
 Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
 Interpret to the marking eye distress,
 Such as its symptoms can alone express,
 That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
 Could argue once, could jest or join the song,
 Could give advice, could censure or commend,
 Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
 Renounce alike its office and its sport,
 Its brisker and its graver strains fall short ;
 Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
 And, like a summer brook, are past away.
 This is a sight for Pity to peruse,
 Till she resemble faintly what she views,

Till Sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least :
Job felt it, when he groan'd beneath the rod
And the barb'd arrows of a frowning God ;
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
Blest, rather eurst, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of close-hammer'd steel,
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds that deem derided pain a treat,
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit that puppet-prompters might inspire,
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul that never felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing :
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at its expense, is slender praise ;
He, that has not usurp'd the name of man,
Does all, and deems too little all, he can,
To assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes ;
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright ;
The screws reversed (a task which, if He please,
God in a moment executes with ease,)
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,

Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weals,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye
That passes all he sees unheeded by ;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss His chastening hand.
Too thee the dayspring and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine ;—
Yet seek Him, in His favour life is found,
All bliss beside a shadow or a sound :
Then Heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull Earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth ;
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlook'd no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice ;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

Ye groves (the statesman at his desk exclaims,
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,)

My patrimonial treasure, and my pride,
Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide,
Receive me languishing for that repose,
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once (ah! those regretted days,
When boyish innocence was all my praise!)
Hour after hour delightfully allot
To studies then familiar, since forgot,
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardour as I mused along;
Nor seldom, as propitious Heaven might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I press'd
His undissembling virtue to my breast;
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts that, while they seem to stay
A falling empire, hasten its decay.
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come;
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends my choice:
We meet, at last, in one sincere desire,
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.
'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate,
The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or plating rush,
How fair is Freedom?—he was always free:
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,

To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize:
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile express'd,
In Freedom lost so long, now repossess'd;
The tongue, whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows, indeed, that whether dress'd or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature, in every form, inspires delight,
But never mark'd her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs that almost escape the inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he pass'd,
Seem all created since he travell'd last.
Master of all the enjoyments he design'd,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he, that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look-out for distant land,
Nor quits, till evening watch, his giddy stand,

Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the Squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires ;
Nor yet the Parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home ;
Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near ;
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend :
A man, whom marks of condescending grace
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place :
Who comes when call'd, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause ;
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence ;
On whom he rests well-pleas'd his weary powers,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force,
But nowhere with a current so serene,
Or half so clear as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss ;
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here ;
No happiness is felt, except the true,
That does not charm the more for being new.
This observation, as it chanced, not made,
Or, if the thought occur'd, not duly weigh'd,
He sighs—for, after all, by slow degrees
The spot he loved has lost the power to please ;
To cross his ambling pony, day by day,
Seems, at the best, but dreaming life away ;

The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
 He views it not, or sees no beauty there;
 With aching heart, and discontented looks,
 Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
 But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
 A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
 He chides the tardiness of every post,
 Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
 Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
 'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
 Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,
 Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
 That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,
 Tight boxes, neatly sash'd, and in a blaze
 With all a July sun's collected rays,
 Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
 Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
 O sweet retirement! who would balk the thought
 That could afford retirement, or could not?
 'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,—
 The second milestone fronts the garden gate;
 A step if fair, and, if a shower approach,
 You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
 There prison'd in a parlour snug and small,
 Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
 The man of business, and his friends, compress'd,
 Forget their labours, and yet find no rest;
 But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
 From every window, and the fields are green;
 Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
 And what could a remoter scene show more?
 A sense of elegance we rarely find
 The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,

And ignorance of better things makes man,
 Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can ;
 And he that deems his leisure well bestow'd
 In contemplation of a turnpike road,
 Is occupied as well, employs his hours
 As wisely, and as much improves his powers,
 As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
 With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste.
 Yet hence, alas ! insolvencies ; and hence
 The unpitied victim of ill-judg'd expense,
 From all his wearisome engagements freed,
 Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.

Your prudent grandmamas, ye modern belles,
 Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge-wells,
 When health required it, would consent to roam,
 Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home.
 But, now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
 Ingenious to diversify dull life,
 In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
 Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
 And all, impatient of dry land, agree
 With one consent to rush into the sea.—
 Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
 Much of the power and majesty of God.
 He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
 That shines, and rests, as infants smile and sleep ;
 Vast as it is, it answers, as it flows,
 The breathings of the lightest air that blows ;
 Curling and whitening over all the waste,
 The rising waves obey the increasing blast,
 Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
 Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,
 Till He, that rides the whirlwind, checks the rein,
 Then all the world of waters sleeps again.—

Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
 Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
 Votaries of Pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
 Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
 O grant a Poet leave to recommend
 (A Poet fond of Nature, and your friend)
 Her slighted works to your admiring view ;
 Her works must needs excel, who fashion'd you.
 Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
 With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,
 Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,
 To waste unheard the music of his strains,
 And deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,
 That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,
 Mark well the finish'd plan without a fault,
 The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,
 Earth's millions daily fed, a world employ'd
 In gathering plenty yet to be enjoy'd,
 Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise
 Of God, beneficent in all His ways ;—
 Graced with such wisdom, how would beauty shine !
 Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.

Anticipated rents, and bills unpaid,
 Force many a shining youth into the shade,
 Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
 And play the fool but at a cheaper rate.
 There, hid in loathed obscurity, removed
 From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
 He just endures, and, with a sickly spleen,
 Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
 Nature, indeed, looks prettily in rhyme ;
 Screams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime ;
 The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
 Are musical enough in Thomson's song ;

And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
 When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets;
 He likes the country, but in truth must own,
 Most likes it, when he studies it in town.

Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame,
 I pity, and must, therefore, sink the name,
 Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
 And always, ere he mounted, kiss'd his horse.
 The estate his sires had own'd in ancient years,
 Was quickly distanced, match'd against a peer's.
 Jack vanish'd, was regretted, and forgot;
 'Tis wild good-nature's never-failing lot.
 At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
 By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
 My lord, alighting at his usual place,
 The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
 Jack knew his friend, but hoped, in that disguise,
 He might escape the most observing eyes,
 And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,
 Curried his nag, and look'd another way.
 Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,
 'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
 O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
 He press'd him much to quit his base employ;
 His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
 Influence and power, were all at his command.
 Peers are not always generous as well-bred,
 But Granby was—meant truly what he said.
 Jack bow'd, and was obliged—confess'd 'twas strange,
 That so retired he should not wish a change,
 But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
 And his old stint—three thousand pounds a year.

Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe;
 Some seeking happiness not found below;

Some to comply with humour, and a mind
 To social scenes by nature disinclined;
 Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust;
 Some self-impoverish'd, and because they must;
 But few, that court Retirement, are aware
 Of half the toils they must encounter there.

Lucrative offices are seldom lost
 For want of powers proportion'd to the post:
 Give even a dunce the employment he desires,
 And he soon finds the talents it requires;
 A business with an income at his heels
 Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
 But in his arduous enterprise to close
 His active years with indolent repose,
 He finds the labours of that state exceed
 His utmost faculties—severe indeed.
 'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
 But not to manage leisure with a grace;
 Absence of occupation is not rest;
 A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.
 The veteran steed, excused his task at length,
 In kind compassion of his failing strength,
 And turn'd into the park or mead to graze,
 Exempt from future service all his days,
 There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
 Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind:
 But when his lord would quit the busy road,
 To taste a joy like that he had bestow'd,
 He proves, less happy than his favour'd brute,
 A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
 Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
 As natural as, when asleep, to dream;
 But reveries (for human minds will act,)
 Specious in show, impossible in fact,

Those flimsy webs, that break as soon as wrought,
Attain not to the dignity of thought ;
Nor yet the swarms, that occupy the brain
Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign ;
Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
Whence, and what are we ? to what end ordain'd ?
What means the drama by the world sustain'd ?
Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
Is duty a mere sport, or an employ ?
Life an intrusted talent, or a toy ?
Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture, say,
Cause to provide for a great future day,
When, earth's assign'd duration at an end,
Man shall be summon'd, and the dead attend ?
The trumpet—will it sound ? the curtain rise,
And show the august tribunal of the skies,
Where no prevarications shall avail,
Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
And conscience and our conduct judge us all ?
Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
To learned cares, or philosophic toil,
Though I revere your honourable names,
Your useful labours and important aims,
And hold the world indebted to your aid,
Enrich'd with the discoveries ye have made ;
Yet let me stand excused if I esteem
A mind employ'd on so sublime a theme,
Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
And outline of the present transient state,
And, after poising her adventurous wings,
Settling at last upon eternal things,

Far more intelligent, and better taught
The strenuous use of profitable thought,
Than ye, when happiest, and enlighten'd most,
And highest in renown, can justly boast.

A mind unnerv'd, or indispos'd to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes, as when it stands.
Books, therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves ;
Nor those, in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show ;
Nor his, who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laugh'd His word to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab Religion with a sly side-thrust ;
Nor those of learned philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark ;
But such as Learning, without false pretence,
The friend of Truth, the associate of sound Sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment labouring in the Scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use :
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste ;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,

Till authors hear, at length, one general cry,
 Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
 The loud demand, from year to year the same,
 Beggars invention, and makes Fancy lame ;
 Till force itself, most mournfully jejune,
 Calls for the kind assistance of a tune ;
 And novels (witness every month's review)
 Belie their name, and offer nothing new,
 The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
 Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
 Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,
 Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.

Friends (for I cannot stint, as some have done,
 Too rigid in my view, that name to one ;
 Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast
 Will stand advanced a step above the rest :
 Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,
 But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—
 Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
 But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
 Well-born, well disciplined, who, placed apart
 From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
 And, though the world may think the ingredients odd,
 The love of virtue, and the fear of God !
 Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,
 A temper rustic as the life we lead,
 And keep the polish of the manners clean,
 As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene.
 For solitude, however some may rave,
 Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
 A sepulchre, in which the living lie,
 Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
 I praise the Frenchman,* his remark was shrewd—
 How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude !

* Bruyere.

But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper—solitude is sweet.
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
Can save us always from a tedious day,
Or shine the dullness of still life away ;
Divine communion, carefully enjoy'd,
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
O sacred art ! to which alone life owes
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close,
Scorn'd in a world, indebted to that scorn
For evils daily felt, and hardly borne.
Not knowing thee, we reap, with bleeding hands,
Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,
And, while Experience cautions us in vain,
Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
Lost by abandoning her own relief :
Murmuring and ungrateful Discontent,
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant ;
Those humours, tart as wines upon the fret,
Which idleness and weariness beget ;
These, and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast,
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
Divine communion chases, as the day
Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.
See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,
Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,
To distant eaves the lonely wanderer flies,
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
Hear him, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, yet rejoice ;
No womanish or wailing grief has part,
No, not a moment, in his royal heart ;

'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
 Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake :
 His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
 The sense of merey kindles into praise,
 And wilds, familiar with a lion's roar,
 Ring with ecstasie sounds unheard before :
 'Tis love like his, that can alone defeat
 The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

Religion does not censure or exclude
 Unnumber'd pleasures harmlessly pursued ;
 To study culture, and with artful toil
 To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil ;
 To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
 The grain, or herb, or plant, that each demands ;
 To cherish virtue in an humble state,
 And share the joys your bounty may create ;
 To mark the matchless workings of the power
 That shuts within its seed the future flower,
 Bids these in elegance of form excel,
 In colour these, and those delight the smell,
 Sends Nature forth the daughter of the skies,
 To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes ;
 To teach the canvass innocent deceit,
 Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—
 These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
 That leave no stain upon the wing of Time.

Me poetry (or, rather, notes that aim
 Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)
 Employs, shut out from more important views,
 Fast by the banks of the slow winding Ouse ;
 Content if thus sequester'd I may raise
 A monitor's, though not a Poet's praise,
 And while I teach an art too little known,
 To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS;

OR, TITHING TIME, AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a COUNTRY CLERGYMAN, complaining of the disagreeableness of the Day annually appointed for receiving the Dues at the Parsonage.

COME, ponder well—for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong—
The troubles of a worthy priest,
The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of a year,
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe,
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of frights and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth, the sorrow of such days
Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes, and he that pays,
Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a score.

“And how does Miss and Madam do,
The little boy and all?”
“All tight and well. And how do you,
“Good Mr. What-d-ye-call?”

The dinner comes, and down they sit:
Were e'er such hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet, not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins:
 "Come, neighbours, we must wag—"
 The money chinks, down drop their chins,
 Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
 And one of storms of hail,
 And one of pigs that he has lost
 By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, "A rarer man than you
 In pulpit none shall hear:
 But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
 You sell it plaguy dear."

O why are farmers made so coarse,
 Or clergy made so fine?
 A kick, that scarce would move a horse,
 May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;
 'Twould cost him, I dare say,
 Less trouble taking twice the sum,
 Without the clowns that pay.

 SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.,

On his emphatical and interesting Delivery of the defence of WARREN
 HASTINGS, Esq., in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,
 Legends prolix delivers in the ears
 (Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers
 Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
 Expending late, on all that length of plea,
 Thy generous powers, but silence honour'd thee,
 Mute as ere gazed on orator or bard,

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
 Both heart and head ; and could'st with music sweet
 Of attic phrase and senatorial tone,
 Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
 Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
 Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own*.

LINES

ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN,

Author of "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two Poets* (Poets, by report,
 Not oft so well agree,) .
 Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
 Conspire to honour thee

They best can judge a Poet's worth,
 Who oft themselves have known
 The pangs of a poetic birth
 By labours of their own.

* Alluding to the poem by Mr. Hayley, which accompanied this.

We, therefore, pleased extol thy song,
Though various, yet complete ;
Rich in embellishment as strong,
And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise,
Though, could our hearts repine,
At any Poet's happier lays,
They would—they must, at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even DARWIN'S wit
With an unjaundiced eye ;

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,
And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
Unworthy of his own.

ON MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER-HANGINGS.

THE Birds put off their every hue,
To dress a room for MONTAGU.
The Peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
His rainbows and his starry eyes ;
The Pheasant plumes, which round in fold
His mantling neck with downy gold ;
The Cock, his arch'd tail's azure show ;
And, river-blanch'd, the Swan, his snow.

All tribes beside, of Indian name,
That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
Where rises and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither dashing shower,
Nor blasts, that shake the dripping bower,
Shall drench again or discompose,
But, screen'd from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendour ever new,
Safe with protecting MONTAGU.

To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigour move,
Like Pallas springing arm'd from Jove ;
Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
Which Labour of his frown beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile ;
Wit flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrude on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright ;
Well-tutor'd Learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty, looks,
Their order on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that, to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind—

All these to MONTAGU's repair,
 Ambitious of a shelter there.
 There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
 Their ruffled plumage calm refit
 (For stormy troubles loudest roar
 Around their flight who highest soar,)
 And in her eye, and by her aid,
 Shine safe without a fear to fade.

She thus maintains divided sway
 With yon bright regent of the day;
 The plume and Poet both, we know,
 Their lustre to his influence owe;
 And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
 Both Poet saves, and plume, from fading.

V E R S E S

Supposed to be written by ALEXANDER SELKIRK, during his solitary
 abode in the ISLAND of JUAN FERNANDEZ.

I AM monarch of all I survey,
 My right there is none to dispute;
 From the centre all round to the sea,
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
 O Solitude! where are the charms
 That sages have seen in thy face?
 Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
 Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
 I must finish my journey alone,
 Never hear the sweet music of speech—
 I start at the sound of my own.

The beasts that roam over the plain,
 My form with indifference see;
 They are so unacquainted with man,
 Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
 Divinely bestow'd upon man,
 O, had I the wings of a dove,
 How soon would I taste you again!
 My sorrows I then might assuage
 In the ways of religion and truth,
 Might learn from the wisdom of age,
 And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasures untold
 Resides in that heavenly word
 More precious than silver and gold,
 Or all that this earth can afford.
 But the sound of the church-going bell
 These valleys and rocks never heard,
 Never sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
 Or smiled when a sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
 Convey to this desolate shore
 Some cordial endearing report
 Of a land I shall visit no more.
 My friends, do they now and then send
 A wish or a thought after me?
 O tell me I yet have a friend,
 Though a friend I am never to see!

How fleet is the glance of the mind!
 Compared with the speed of its flight,
 The tempest itself lags behind,
 And the swift-winged arrows of light.

When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there ;
But, alas ! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair ;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought !
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

THE CAST-AWAY.

[March 20, 1799.]

OBSCUREST night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roar'd ;
When such a destined wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
 Expert to swim, he lay ;
 Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
 Or courage die away :
 But waged with death a lasting strife,
 Supported by despair of life.

He shouted ; nor his friends had fail'd
 To check the vessel's course,
 But so the furious blast prevail'd,
 That, pitiless perforce,
 They left their outcast mate behind,
 And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford ;
 And, such as storms allow,
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delay'd not to bestow :
 But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
 Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
 Their haste himself condemn,
 Aware that flight, in such a sea,
 Alone could rescue them :
 Yet bitter felt it still, to die
 Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives who lives an hour
 In ocean, self-upheld :
 And so long he, with unspent power,
 His destiny repell'd :
 And ever, as the minutes flew,
 Entreated help, or cried—" Adieu !"

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more :
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No Poet wept him : but the page *
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear :
And tears by bards or heroes shed,
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date :
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's ease.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone ;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone :
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

ON THE
PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ.

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP
• OF ENGLAND.

ROUND THURLOW'S head, in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,
And Genius shed his rays.

See ! with united wonder cried
The experienced and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
With all the skill of age !

Discernment, eloquence, and grace
Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise !
He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain,
Ere yet he starts, is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
What all had deem'd his own.

ODE TO PEACE.

COME, Peace of mind, delightful guest !
 Return, and make thy downy nest
 Once more in this sad heart :
 Nor riches I, nor power, pursue,
 Nor hold forbidden joys in view ;
 We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
 From avarice and ambition free,
 And pleasure's fatal wiles ?
 For whom, alas ! dost thou prepare
 The sweets that I was wont to share,
 The banquet of thy smiles ?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
 The Heaven that thou alone canst make ?
 And wilt thou quit the stream
 That murmurs through the dewy mead,
 The grove, and the sequester'd shed,
 To be a guest with them ?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
 For thee I gladly sacrificed
 Whate'er I loved before ;
 And shall I see thee start away,
 And, helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
 Farewell ! we meet no more ?

HUMAN FRAILTY.

WEAK and irresolute is man ;
 The purpose of to-day,
 Woven with pains into his plan,
 To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent, and smart the spring,
 Vice seems already slain ;
 But Passion rudely snaps the string,
 And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
 Finds out his weaker part ;
 Virtue engages his assent,
 But Pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise,
 Through all his art we view ;
 And while his tongue the charge denies,
 His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length,
 And dangers little known,
 A stranger to superior strength,
 Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail,
 To reach the distant coast ;
 The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,
 Or all the toil is lost.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day ;
 I only wish 'twould come
 (As who knows but, perhaps, it may ?)
 A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
 On t'other side the Atlantic,
 I always held them in the right,
 But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
 That man shall be my toast,
 If breaking windows be the sport,
 Who bravely breaks the most.

But O ! for him my fancy culls
 The choicest flowers she bears,
 Who constitutionally pulls
 Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
 Though some folks can't endure them,
 Who say the mob are mad outright,
 And that a rope must cure them.

A rope ! I wish we patriots had
 Such strings for all who need 'em—
 What ! hang a man for going mad !
 Then farewell British freedom.

ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE

RECORDED IN "THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA."

OH, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
 To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
 In vain, recorded in historic page,
 They court the notice of a future age:
 Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
 Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand;
 Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
 And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child, as playful children use,
 Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
 The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
 There goes my Lady, and there goes the Squire,
 There goes the Parson, oh! illustrious spark,
 And there, scarce illustrious, goes the Clerk!

 REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE,

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
 The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
 The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
 To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
 With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
 While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
 So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
 And your Lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,
 That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
 Which amounts to possession, time out of mind.

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
 Your Lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
 As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short,
 Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your Lordship a moment suppose
 ('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be again,)
 That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
 Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
 With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
 That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
 And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then shifting his side (as a lawyer knows how,)
 He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes :
 But what were his arguments few people know,
 For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his Lordship decreed, with a grave solemn tone,
 Decisive and clear, without one *if* or *but*—
 That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
 By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut!

ON THE BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S
LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS., BY THE MOB, IN THE MONTH
OF JUNE, 1780.

So then—these, the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw !

And MURRAY sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
And many a treasure more,
The well-judged purchase, and the gift,
That graced his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
The loss was *his alone* ;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of *his own*.

ON THE SAME.

WHEN wit and genius meet their doom
In all devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome,
And bid us fear the same.

O'er MURRAY'S loss the Muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee, that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.*

THUS says the prophet of the Turk,
Good Mussulman, abstain from pork;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication.
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
Had he the sinful part express'd,
They might with safety eat the rest;

* It may be proper to inform the reader, that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the "Leeds Journal," without the Author's privity.

But for one piece they thought it hard
 From the whole hog to be debarr'd ;
 And set their wit at work to find
 What joint the prophet had in mind.

Much controversy straight arose,
 These choose the back, the belly those :
 By some 'tis confidently said
 He meant not to forbid the head ;
 While others at that doctrine rail,
 And piously prefer the tail.
 Thus, conscience freed from every clog,
 Mahometans eat up the hog.

You laugh—'tis well:—the tale applied
 May make you laugh on t'other side.
 Renounce the world—the Preacher cries ;—
 We do—a multitude replies.
 While one as innocent regards
 A snug and friendly game at cards ;
 And one, whatever you may say,
 Can see no evil in a play ;
 Some love a concert, or a race ;
 And others, shooting and the chase.
 Reviled and loved, renounced and follow'd,
 Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallow'd ;
 Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
 Yet likes a slice as well as he ;
 With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
 Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

ON THE DEATH

OF MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON'S BULFINCH.

YE nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
 With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
 O share Maria's grief!
 Her favourite, even in his cage,
 (What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
 Assassin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
 The egg was laid from which he sprung,
 And, though by nature mute,
 Or only with a whistle blest,
 Well taught, he all the sounds express'd
 Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
 Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
 His bosom of the hue
 With which aurora decks the skies,
 When piping winds shall soon arise,
 To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
 Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
 No cat had leave to dwell;
 And Bully's cage supported stood
 On props of smoothest shaven wood,
 Large-built and latticed well.

234 LADY THROCKMORTON'S BULFINCH.

Well-latticed—but the grate, alas !
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
 For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
 The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole : all seem'd secure :
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
 Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long-back'd, long-tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
 And badger-colour'd hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore ;
 And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
 Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest ;
 In sleep he seem'd to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And screaming at the sad presage,
 Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went—
 Ah, Muse ! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued ;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—
 He left poor Bully's beak.

He left it—but he should have ta'en—
 That beak, whence issued many a strain
 Of such mellifluous tone,
 Might have repaid him well, I wote,
 For silencing so sweet a throat,
 Fast set within his own.

Maria weeps—the Muses mourn—
 So when, by Bacchanalians torn
 On Thracian Hebrus' side,
 The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
 His head alone remain'd to tell
 The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE.

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,
 Which Mary to Anna convey'd;
 The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,
 And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
 And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,
 To weep for the buds it had left with regret,
 On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
 For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,
 And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
 I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
 Some act by the delicate mind,
 Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
 Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
 Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile ;
 And the tear that is wiped with a little address,
 May be follow'd, perhaps, by a smile.

 THE DOVES.

REASONING at every step he treads,
 Man yet mistakes his way,
 While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
 Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wander'd late,
 And heard the voice of love ;
 The turtle thus address'd her mate,
 And sooth'd the listening Dove :

Our mutual bond of faith and truth
 No time shall disengage,
 Those blessings of our early youth
 Shall cheer our latest age :

While innocence without disguise,
 And constancy sincere,
 Shall fill the circles of those eyes
 And mine can read them there,

Those ills, that wait on all below
Shall ne'er be felt by me ;
Or gently felt, and only so,
As being shared with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,
Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
And press thy wedded side,
Resolved an union form'd for life
Death never shall divide.

But oh ! if, fickle and unchaste,
(Forgive a transient thought,)
Thou couldst become unkind at last,
And scorn thy present lot,

No need of lightnings from on high,
Or Kites with cruel beak ;
Denied the endearments of thine eye,
This widow'd heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,
Soft as the passing wind,
And I recorded what I heard,
A lesson for mankind.

A F A B L E .

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
 Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,
 And, on her wickerwork high mounted,
 Her chickens prematurely counted,
 (A fault philosophers might blame
 If quite exempted from the same,)
 Enjoy'd at ease the genial day ;
 'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,
 The Legislature call'd it May,
 But suddenly a wind as high
 As ever swept a wintry sky,
 Shook the young leaves about her ears,
 And fill'd her with a thousand fears,
 Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
 And spread her golden hopes below.
 But, just at eve, the blowing weather
 And all her fears were hush'd together :
 And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
 'Tis over, and the brood is safe
 (For ravens, though, as birds of omen,
 They teach both conjurers and old women,
 To tell us what is to befall,
 Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
 The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,
 Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,
 And destined all the treasure there
 A gift to his expecting fair,
 Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,
 And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
In every change both mine and yours :
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape ;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.
Fate steals along with silent tread,
Found oftenest in what least we dread ;
Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

A C O M P A R I S O N .

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
Both speed their journey with a restless stream ;
The silent pace with which they steal away,
No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay ;
Alike irrevocable both when past,
And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
Though each resemble each in every part,
A difference strikes at length the musing heart ;
Streams never flow in vain ; where streams abound,
How laughs the land with various plenty crown'd !
But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
Neglected leaves a dreary waste behind.

A N O T H E R .

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream that winds through yonder glade,
 Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—
 Silent and chaste she steals along,
 Far from the world's gay busy throng;
 With gentle yet prevailing force,
 Intent upon her destined course;
 Graceful and useful all she does,
 Blessing and blest where'er she goes,
 Pure bosom'd as that watery glass,
 And Heaven reflected in her face.

 T H E P O E T ' S N E W - Y E A R ' S G I F T .

TO MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON.

MARIA ! I have every good
 For thee wish'd many a time,
 Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
 More prudent, or more sprightly,
 Or more ingenious, or more freed
 From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour, then, not yet possess'd,
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already blest,
To thy whole heart's desire ?

None here is happy but in part ;
Full bliss is bliss divine :
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish on some fair future day,
Which Fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
I wish it all fulfill'd.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau,*
If birds confabulate or no ;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable ;
And e'en the child, who knows no better
Than to interpret, by the letter,
A story of a Cock and Bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.

* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables, which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses ?

It chanced, then, on a winter's day,
But warm, and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestal sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
Assembled on affairs of love,
And, with much twitter and much chatter,
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bulfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And, silence publicly enjoin'd,
Deliver'd briefly thus his mind.

My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet.

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing, and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:

Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado;
My dear Dick Redeap, what say you?

Dick heard, and, tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.

Their sentiments, so well express'd,
 Influenced mightily the rest,
 All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.
 But though the birds were thus in haste,
 The leaves came on not quite so fast,
 And Destiny, that sometimes bears
 An aspect stern on man's affairs,
 Not altogether smiled on theirs.
 The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
 Now shifted east, and east by north ;
 Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
 Could shelter them from rain or snow,
 Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
 Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled ;
 Soon every father bird and mother
 Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,
 Parted without the least regret,
 Except that they had ever met,
 And learn'd in future to be wiser
 Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses ! the tale that I relate
 This lesson seems to carry—
 Choose not alone a proper mate,
 But proper time to marry.

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,
 When, 'scaped from literary cares,
 I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
 And high in pedigree,
 (Two nymphs,* adorn'd with every grace,
 That spaniel found for me,)

Now wanton'd, lost in flags and reeds,
 Now, starting into sight,
 Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
 With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
 His lilies newly blown;
 Their beauties I intent survey'd,
 And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought
 To steer it close to land;
 But still the prize, though nearly caught,
 Escaped my eager hand.

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
With fix'd considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd ;
Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discern'd,
And, plunging, left the shore.

I saw him, with that lily cropp'd,
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, the world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed :
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed :

But chief, myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE
PLANT.

AN Oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining, in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded :—

Ah, hapless wretch ! condemn'd to dwell
For ever in my native shell ;
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease ;
But toss'd and buffeted about,
Now *in* the water and now *out*.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine !
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast-rooted against every rub.
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough ;
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied.

When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants call'd sensitive grow there ?
No matter when—a Poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.

You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion

To wish myself the rock I view,
 Or such another dolt as you :
 For many a grave and learned clerk,
 And many a gay unletter'd spark,
 With curious touch examines me,
 If I can feel, as well as he ;
 And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
 Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think
 Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't !)
 In being touch'd, and crying—Don't !

A Poet, in his evening walk,
 O'erheard and check'd this idle talk,
 And your fine sense, he said, and yours,
 Whatever evil it endures,
 Deserves not, if so soon offended,
 Much to be pitied or commended.
 Disputes, though short, are far too long;
 Where both alike are in the wrong ;
 Your feelings in their full amount,
 Are all upon your own account.

You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
 Complain of being thus exposed ;
 Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
 Save when the knife is at your throat,
 Wherever driven by wind or tide,
 Exempt from every ill beside.

And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
 Who reckon every touch a blemish,
 If all the plants that can be found
 Embellishing the scene around,
 Should droop and wither where they grow,
 You would not feel at all—not you.
 The noblest minds their virtue prove
 By pity, sympathy and love :

These, these are feelings truly fine,
 And prove their owner half divine.
 His censure reach'd him as he dealt it,
 And each, by shrinking, show'd he felt it.

THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION

OH, happy shades—to me unblest!
 Friendly to peace, but not to me!
 How ill the scene that offers rest,
 And heart that cannot rest, agree!

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
 Those alders quivering to the breeze,
 Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
 And please, if anything could please.

But fix'd unalterable Care
 Forgoes not what she feels within;
 Shows the same sadness everywhere,
 And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
 While Peace possess'd these silent bowers
 Her animating smile withdrawn,
 Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley, musing, slow ;
They seek like me the secret shade,
But not like me to nourish woe !

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
Alike admonish not to roam ;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
And those of sorrows yet to come.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY .

WHAT Nature, alas ! has denied
To the delicate growth of our isle,
Art has in a measure supplied,
And Winter is deck'd with a smile.
See, Mary, what beauties I bring
From the shelter of that sunny shed,
Where the flowers have the charms of the Spring,
Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,
Where Flora is still in her prime,
A fortress to which she retreats
From the cruel assaults of the clime.
While earth wears a mantle of snow,
These pinks are as fresh and as gay,
As the fairest and sweetest that blow
On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
 The frowns of a sky so severe !
 Such Mary's true love, that has lived
 Through many a turbulent year.
 The charms of the late blowing rose
 Seem'd graced with a livelier hue,
 And the winter of sorrow best shows
 The truth of a friend, such as you.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE

THE lady thus address'd her spouse—
 What a mere dungeon is this house !
 By no means large enough ; and was it,
 Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
 Those hangings with their worn out graces,
 Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
 Are such an antiquated scene,
 They overwhelm me with the spleen.
 —Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
 Makes answer quite beside the mark :
 No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
 Engaged myself to be at home,
 And shall expect him at the door,
 Precisely when the clock strikes four.

You are so deaf, the lady cried
 (And raised her voice, and frown'd beside,)

You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
 What shall I do to make you hear?

Dismiss poor Harry? he replies;
 Some people are more nice than wise;
 For one slight trespass all this stir?
 What if he did ride whip and spur,
 'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse
 Will never look one hair the worse.

Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
 Child! I am rather hard of hearing—
 Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl:
 I tell you, you can't hear at all!
 Then, with a voice exceeding low,
 No matter if you hear or no.

Alas! and is domestic strife,
 That sorest ill of human life.
 A plague so little to be fear'd,
 As to be wantonly incur'd,
 To gratify a fretful passion,
 On every trivial provocation?
 The kindest and the happiest pair
 Will find occasion to forbear;
 And something, every day they live,
 To pity, and perhaps, forgive.
 But if infirmities, that fall
 In common to the lot of all,
 A blemish or a sense impair'd,
 Are crimes so little to be spared,
 Then farewell all that must create
 The comfort of the wedded state;
 Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
 And tumult, and intestine war.

The love that cheers life's latest stage,
 Proof against sickness and old age,

Preserved by virtue from declension,
 Becomes not weary of attention ;
 But lives, when that exterior grace,
 Which first inspired the flame, decays.
 'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
 To faults compassionate or blind,
 And will with sympathy endure
 Those evils it would gladly cure :
 But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
 Shows love to be a mere profession ;
 Proves that the heart is none of his,
 Or soon expels him if it is.

 THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCED from home and all its pleasures,
 Afric's coast I left forlorn,
 To increase a stranger's treasures,
 O'er the raging billows borne.
 Men from England bought and sold me,
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;
 But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
 Minds are never to be sold.

Still, in thought, as free as ever,
 What are England's rights, I ask,
 Me from my delights to sever,
 Me to torture—me to task ?
 Fleecy locks and black complexion
 Cannot forfeit Nature's claim ;
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards;
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there One who reigns on high?
Has He bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from His throne, the sky?
Ask Him if your knotted scourges,
Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
Agents of His will to use?

Hark! He answers—wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks;
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which He speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
Where His whirlwinds answer—No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
Crossing, in your barks, the main;
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart;
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart;

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

—
Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.
—

I OWN I am shoc'k at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see?
What! give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea?

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes,
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains;
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will,
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners, likewise, would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said ;
But while they get riches by purchasing Blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks ?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint :
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest
Had once his integrity put to the test ;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, Sir, like you, and answer'd—"Oh no !
What ! rob our good neighbour ? I pray you don't go ;
Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread,
Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

"You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we'll have ;
If you will go with us you shall have a share,
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom ponder'd—"I see they will go :
Poor man ! what a pity to injure him so
Poor man ! I would save him his fruit if I could,
But staying behind will do him no good.

"If the matter depended alone upon me,
His apples might hang till they dropp'd from the tree ;
But, since they will take them, I think I'll go too ;
He will lose none by me, though I get a few."

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
 And went with his comrades the apples to seize ;
 He blamed and protested, but join'd in the plan :
 He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of Spring,
 Asleep at the dawn of the day,
 I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
 So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
 I dream'd that, on ocean afloat,
 Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
 While the billows high-lifted the boat,
 And the fresh-blowing breeze never fail'd

In the steerage a woman I saw,
 Such at least was the form that she wore,
 Whose beauty impress'd me with awe,
 Ne'er taught me by woman before.
 She sat, and a shield at her side
 Shed light like a sun on the waves,
 And, smiling divinely, she cried—
 "I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then raising her voice to a strain,
 The sweetest that ear ever heard,
 She sung of the slave's broken chain,
 Wherever her glory appear'd.

Some clouds, which had over us hung,
Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought, while she liberty sung,
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus, swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a demon, her enemy, stood—
Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
A scourge, hung with lashes, he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as, approaching the land,
That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And, the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts, that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide?
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which served my weak thought for a guide—
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves,
For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptered rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
 Had cheer'd the village with his song,
 Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
 Nor yet when eventide was ended,
 Began to feel, as well he might,
 The keen demands of appetite ;
 When, looking eagerly around,
 He spied, far off, upon the ground,
 A something shining in the dark,
 And knew the glow-worm by his spark ;
 So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
 He thought to put him in his crop.
 The worm, aware of his intent,
 Harangued him thus, right eloquent :

Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,
 As much as I your minstrelsy,
 You would abhor to do me wrong,
 As much as I to spoil your song ;
 For 'twas the self-same Power divine
 Taught you to sing, and me to shine ;
 That you with music, I with light,
 Might beautify and cheer the night.

The songster heard his short oration,
 And warbling out his approbation,
 Released him, as my story tells,
 And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn
 Their real interest to discern ;
 That brother should not war with brother,
 And worry and devour each other ;

But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting, in each other's case,
The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name,
Who studiously make peace their aim ;
Peace both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps, and him that flies.

ON A GOLDFINCH

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

TIME was when I was free as air,
The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink, the morning dew ;
I perch'd at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel, were all in vain,
And of a transient date ;
For, caught and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
Soon pass'd the wiry grate

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
 And thanks for this effectual close
 And cure of every ill !
 More cruelty could none express ;
 And I, if you had shown me less,
 Had been your prisoner still.

THE PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

THE Pine-Apples, in triple row,
 Were basking hot, and all in blow ;
 A Bee of most discerning taste
 Perceived the fragrance, as he pass'd ;
 On eager wing the spoiler came,
 And search'd for crannies in the frame,
 Urg'd his attempt on every side,
 To every pane his trunk applied ;
 But still in vain, the frame was tight,
 And only pervious to the light :
 Thus having wasted half the day,
 He trimm'd his flight another way.

Methinks, I said, in thee I find
 The sin and madness of mankind.
 To joys forbidden man aspires,
 Consumes his soul with vain desires ;
 Folly the spring of his pursuit,
 And disappointment all the fruit.
 While Cynthia ogles, as she passes,
 The nymph between two chariot glasses,
 She is the Pine-Apple, and he
 The silly unsuccessful Bee.

The maid who views, with pensive air,
The show-glass fraught with glittering ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets;
Like thine, her appetite is keen,
But ah, the cruel glass between!

Our dear delights are often such,
Exposed to view, but not to touch;
The sight our foolish heart inflames,
We long for pine-apples in frames;
With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers;
But they whom Truth and Wisdom lead,
Can gather honey from a weed.

H O R A C E .

BOOK II. ODE X.

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
Of adverse Fortune's power;
Not always tempt the distant deep,
Nor always timorously creep
Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
The little and the great,
Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
Imbittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power
Of wintry blasts; the loftiest tower
Comes heaviest to the ground;
The bolts that spare the mountain's side,
His cloud-capt eminence divide,
And spread the ruin round.

The well-inform'd philosopher
Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
And hopes, in spite of pain;
If Winter bellow from the north,
Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,
And Nature laughs again.

What if thine Heaven be overcast,
The dark appearance will not last;
Expect a brighter sky.
The god that strings the silver bow,
Awakes sometimes the Muses too,
And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
Thy magnanimity display,
And let thy strength be seen;
But O! if fortune fill thy sail
With more than a propitious gale,
Take half thy canvass in.

A REFLECTION

ON THE FOREGOING ODE.

AND is this all? Can Reason do no more
 Than bid me shun the deep, and dread the shore?
 Sweet Moralist! afloat on life's rough sea,
 The Christian has an art unknown to thee.
 He holds no parley with unmanly fears;
 Where duty bids, he confidently steers,
 Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
 And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.

 THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

THE nymph must lose her female friend,
 If more admired than she—
 But where will fierce contention end,
 If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
 Appear'd two lovely foes,
 Aspiring to the rank of queen—
 The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon redden'd into rage,
 And, swelling with disdain,
 Appeal'd to many a Poet's page
 To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
 A fair imperial flower ;
 She seem'd design'd for Flora's hand,
 The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
 The goddess chanced to hear,
 And flew to save, ere yet too late,
 The pride of the parterre.

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,
 And yours the statelier mien :
 And, till a third surpasses you,
 Let each be deem'd a queen.

Thus sooth'd and reconciled, each seeks
 The fairest British fair ;
 The seat of empire is her checks,
 They reign united there.

 IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

HEU inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,
 Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest !
 Sed fines ultrâ solitos discordia tendit,
 Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessûs,
 Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas ;
 Hic sibi regales Amaryllis candida cultûs,
 Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsitâ superbia tangunt,
 Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinû,
 Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatûm,
 Jusque suum multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et celso vertice nutat,
 Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,
 Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usûs
 Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipsa gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,
 Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes.
 Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,
 Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus, inquit;
 Et tibi, principibus qui solet, esse, color;
 Et donec vineat quædam formosior ambas,
 Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham,
 Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit;
 Hanc penés imperium est, nihil optant amplius, hujus
 Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.

 THE POPLAR FIELD.

THE poplars are fell'd, farewell to the shade,
 And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
 The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
 Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed, since I last took a view
 Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
 And now in the grass behold they are laid,
 And the tree is my seat, that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
 Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
 And the scene, where his melody charm'd me before,
 Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hastening away,
 And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
 With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
 Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
 To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
 Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see
 Have a being less durable even than he.*

* Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner:

The change both my heart and my fancy employs—
 I reflect on the frailty of man, and his joys;
 Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,
 Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

POPULÆ cecidit gratissima copia silvæ.
 Conticuère susurri, omnisque evauit umbra.
 Nullæ jam levibus se miscent frondibus auræ,
 Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi! bis senos dum luctu torqueor annos,
 His cogor silvis suctoque carere recessu,
 Cum serò rediens, stratasque in gramine cernens,
 Inscdi arboribus, sub queis errare solebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus? Felicior illum
 Silva tegit, duræ nondum permissa bipenni;
 Scilicet exustos colles camposque patentes
 Odit, et indignans et non rediturus abiit.

Sed qui succisas doleo succidar et ipse,
 Et priùs huic parilis quàm creverit altera silva
 Flebor, et, exequiis parvis donatus, habebo
 Defixum lapidem tumulique cubantis acervum.

Tam subitò periisse videns tam digna manere,
 Agnosco humanas sortes et tristia fata—
 Sit licèt ipse brevis, voluerique simillimus umbræ,
 Est homini brevior citiùsque obitura voluptas.

THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM COWPER,

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

BY THE
REV. H. F. CARY, A.M.

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THE TASK.

BOOK I.—THE SOFA.

ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa. A school-boy's ramble. A walk in the country. The scene described. Rural sounds as well as sights delightful. Another walk. Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected. Colonnades commended. Alcove, and the view from it. The Wilderness. The Grove. The Thresher. The necessity and the benefits of exercise. The works of nature superior to, and, in some instances, inimitable by, art. The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure. Change of scene sometimes expedient. A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced. Gipsies. The blessings of civilized life. That state most favourable to virtue. The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai. His present state of mind supposed. Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities. Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured. Fête champêtre. The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

THE TASK.

BOOK I.—THE SOFA.

I SING the Sofa. I, who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
The occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile;
The hardy chief, upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birthday of Invention; weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms:
And such, in ancient halls and mansions drear,

May still be seen ; but perforated sore,
 And drill'd in holes the solid oak is found,
 By worms voracious eaten through and through.

At length a generation more refined
 Improved the simple plan ; made three legs four,
 Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
 And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd,
 Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
 Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
 And woven close, or needlework sublime.
 There might ye see the peony spread wide,
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
 Lapdog and lambkin with black, staring eyes,
 And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
 With Nature's varnish ; sever'd into stripes,
 That interlaced each other, these supplied
 Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
 The new machine, and it became a chair.
 But restless was the chair ; the back erect
 Distress'd the weary loins, that felt no ease ;
 The slippery seat betray'd the sliding part
 That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
 Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
 These for the rich ; the rest, whom Fate had placed
 In modest mediocrity, content
 With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides,
 Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
 With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
 Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fix'd,
 If cushion might be call'd, what harder seem'd
 Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.
 No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
 In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood

Ponderous and fix'd by its own massy weight,
 But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,
 An alderman of Cripplegate contrived;
 And some ascribe the invention to a priest,
 Burly, and big, and studious of his ease.
 But, rude at first, and not with easy slope
 Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,
 And bruised the side; and, elevated high,
 Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.
 Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires
 Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
 'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
 Ingenious Fancy, never better pleased
 Than when employ'd to accommodate the Fair,
 Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
 The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
 And in the midst an elbow it received,
 United, yet divided, twain at once.
 So sit two Kings of Brentford on one throne;
 And so two citizens, who take the air,
 Close pack'd, and smiling, in a chaise and one.
 But relaxation of the languid frame
 By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
 Was bliss reserved for happier days. So slow
 The growth of what is excellent; so hard
 To attain perfection in this nether world.
 Thus first Necessity invented stools,
 Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
 And Luxury the accomplish'd Sofa last.
 The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he
 Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour,
 To sleep within the carriage more secure,

His legs depending at the open door.
 Sweet sleep enjoys the Curate in his desk,
 The tedious Rector drawling o'er his head ;
 And sweet the Clerk below. But neither sleep
 Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead ;
 Nor his, who quits the box at midnight hour,
 To slumber in the carriage more secure ;
 Nor sleep enjoy'd by Curate in his desk ;
 Nor yet the dozings of the Clerk, are sweet,
 Compared with the repose the Sofa yields.

O may I live exempted (while I live
 Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
 From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe
 Of libertine Excess. The Sofa suits
 The gouty limb, 'tis true ; but gouty limb,
 Though on a Sofa, may I never feel :
 For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
 Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep,
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm
 Of thorny boughs ; have loved the rural walk
 O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,
 E'er since, a truant boy, I pass'd my bounds,
 To enjoy a ramble on the banks of 'Thames ;
 And still remember, nor without regret
 Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
 How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
 Still hungering, pennyless, and far from home,
 I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
 Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss
 The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
 Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite
 Disdains not ; nor the palate, undepraved
 By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.
 No Sofa then awaited my return ;

Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and, though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers, as he goes,
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep;
A tooth, or auburn lock, and, by degrees,
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot,
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence;
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect: scenes that soothed
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose age this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft, upon yon eminence, our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow moving, and beside

His labouring team, that swerved not from the track.
 The sturdy swain, diminish'd to a boy!
 Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
 Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er,
 Conducts the eye along his sinuous course,
 Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
 Stand, never overlook'd, our favourite elms,
 That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
 While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
 That as with molten glass inlays the vale,
 The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
 Displaying on its varied side the grace
 Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
 Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
 Just undulates upon the listening ear,
 Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.
 Scenes must be beautiful, which, daily view'd,
 Please daily, and whose novelty survives
 Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:
 Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
 Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
 The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
 That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
 Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
 The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
 And lull the spirit, while they fill the mind;
 Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
 And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
 Nor less composure waits upon the roar
 Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
 Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
 Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
 Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length

In matted grass, that with a livelier green
 Betrays the secret of their silent course.
 Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
 But animated Nature sweeter still,
 To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
 Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
 The livelong night: nor these alone, whose notes
 Nice-finger'd Art must emulate in vain,
 But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
 In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
 The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,
 That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
 Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
 Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
 And only there, please highly for their sake.
 Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
 Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
 Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,
 Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself:
 More delicate, his timorous mate retires.
 When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
 Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
 The task of new discoveries falls on me.
 At such a season, and with such a charge
 Once went I forth: and found, till then unknown
 A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
 'Tis perch'd upon the green hill top, but close
 Environ'd with a ring of branching elms,
 That overhang the thatch, itself, unseen,
 Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
 With foliage of such dark, redundant growth,
 I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*

And, hidden as it is, and far remote
 From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
 In village or in town, the bay of curs
 Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
 And infants clamorous whether pleased or pain'd,
 Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
 Here, I have said, at least I should possess
 The Poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
 The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
 Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
 Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
 Its elevated site forbids the wretch
 To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
 He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
 And, heavy laden, brings his beverage home,
 Far fetch'd and little worth; nor seldom waits,
 Dependant on the baker's punctual call,
 To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
 Angry, and sad, and his last crust consumed.
 So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest!*
 If solitude make scant the means of life,
 Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,
 Be still a pleasing object in my view;
 My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
 Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,
 Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
 Our fathers knew the value of a screen
 From sultry suns; and, in their shaded walks
 And long protracted bowers, enjoy'd, at noon,
 The gloom and coolness of declining day.
 We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,

And range an Indian waste without a tree.
 Thanks to Benevolus*—he spares me yet
 These chesnuts ranged in corresponding lines;
 And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
 The obsolete prolixity of shade.

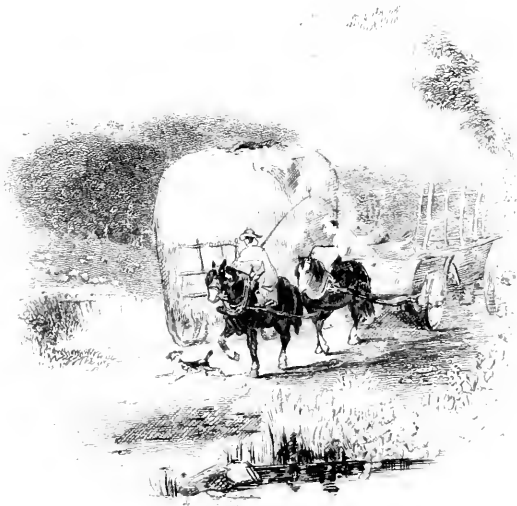
Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
 A sudden steep upon a rustic bridge,
 We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
 Their pendant boughs, stooping as if to drink.
 Hence, ankle deep in moss and flowery thyme,
 We mount again, and feel at every step
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
 Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
 Disfigures earth; and, plotting in the dark,
 Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
 That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
 That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
 The grand retreat from injuries impress'd
 By rural carvers, who with knives deface
 The panels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
 In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
 So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
 Beats in the breast of man, that e'en a few,
 Few transient years, won from the abyss abhorr'd
 Of blank oblivion, seems a glorious prize,
 And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;
 And, posted on this speculative height,
 Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
 Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
 At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
 The middle field; but, scatter'd by degrees,

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston Underwood.

Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There from the sunburnt hayfield homeward creeps
The loaded wain ; while, lighten'd of its charge,
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by ;
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team,
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the grey, smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine
Within the twilight of their distant shades ;
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some,
And of a wannish grey ; the willow such,
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash, far-stretching his umbrageous arm ;
Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech, of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime, at dewy eve
Diffusing odours ; nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and, ere Autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright
O'er these, but far beyond, (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interposed between,)
The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the re-ascent ; between them weeps



A little Naiad her impoverish'd urn
 All Summer long, which Winter fills again
 The folded gates would bar my progress now.
 But that the Lord* of this enclosed demesne,
 Communicative of the good he owns,
 Admits me to a share; the guiltless eye
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
 Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun?
 By short transition we have lost his glare,
 And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
 Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
 Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice,
 That yet a remnant of your race survives.
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof
 Re-echoing pious anthems! while, beneath,
 The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
 Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
 Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
 Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
 And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves
 Play wanton, every moment, every spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced, and spirits cheer'd
 We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks,
 With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
 Deception innocent—give ample space
 To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
 Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
 We may discern the thresher at his task.
 Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
 That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
 Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
 The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist

* See the foregoing note, page 19.

Of atoms, sparkling in the noon-day beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,
And sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,
But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel,
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolveny upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious; oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation: e'en the oak
Thrives by the rade concussion of the storm:
He seems, indeed, indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder: but the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.
The law by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man, the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When Custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need; the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest,

To which he forfeits e'en the rest he loves.
 Not such the alert and active. Measure life
 By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
 And theirs alone seem worthy of the name.
 Good health, and, its associate in the most,
 Good temper ; spirits prompt to undertake,
 And not soon spent, though in an arduous task ;
 The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs ;
 E'en age itself seems privileged in them
 With clear exemption from its own defects.
 A sparkling eye, beneath a wrinkled front,
 The veteran shows, and, gracing a grey beard
 With youthful smiles, descends towards the grave,
 Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
 Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
 Who oftenest sacrifice are favour'd least.
 The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,
 Is Nature's dictate. Strange ! there should be found,
 Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
 Renounce the odours of the open field
 For the unscented fictions of the loom ;
 Who, satisfied with only pencill'd scenes,
 Prefer to the performance of a God
 The inferior wonders of an artist's hand !
 Lovely, indeed, the mimic works of Art,
 But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
 None more admires, the painter's magic skill ;
 Who shows me that which I shall never see,
 Conveys a distant country into mine,
 And throws Italian light on English walls :
 But imitative strokes can do no more
 Than please the eye—sweet Nature, every sense.
 The air salubrious of her lofty hills,

The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
 And music of her woods—no works of man
 May rival these ; these all bespeak a power
 Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
 Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast ;
 'Tis free to all—'tis every day renew'd ;
 Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
 He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long
 In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
 To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank
 And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
 Escapes at last to liberty and light :
 His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue ;
 His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires ;
 He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
 And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
 He does not scorn it, who has long endured
 A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
 Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
 With acrid salts ; his very heart athirst
 To gaze at Nature in her green array,
 Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
 With visions prompted by intense desire :
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left
 Far distant, such as he would die to find—
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns ;
 The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown
 And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
 And mar the face of Beauty, when no cause
 For such immeasurable woe appears,
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
 Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own
 It is the constant revolution, stale

And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
 That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
 A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
 Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,
 No smartness in the jest; and wonders why.
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
 Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.
 The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
 To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
 Her mingled suits and sequences; and sits,
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
 And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
 Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
 Between supporters; and, once seated, sit,
 Through downright inability to rise,
 Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
 These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en these
 Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
 That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
 They love it and yet loathe it; fear to die,
 Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
 Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
 The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
 Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
 And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
 The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
 The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
 That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
 Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
 Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.

The peasant, too, a witness of his song,
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
 But save me from the gaiety of those
 Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed ;
 And save me too from theirs, whose haggard eyes
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
 For property stripp'd off by cruel chance ;
 From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made so various, that the mind
 Of desultory man, studious of change,
 And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
 Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
 Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
 Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
 Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
 Delight us ; happy to renounce awhile,
 Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
 That such short absence may endear it more.
 Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
 That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts,
 Above the reach of man. His hoary head,
 Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
 Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
 Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
 A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
 And at his feet the baffled billows die.
 The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,
 And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
 And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
 Yields no displeasing ramble ; there the turf



Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs,
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin, trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A serving maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores; and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy, too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
And never smiled again! And now she roams
The dreary waste: there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, asks never—Kate is crazed

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or at best of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!

They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place ;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange ! that a creature, rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature ; and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit, and himself
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil !
Yet even these, though, feigning sickness oft,
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note,
When safe occasion offers ; and with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag,
Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;
And, breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,
Need other physic none to heal the effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.
Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many ; but supply
Is obvious, plac'd within the easy reach

Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
Here Virtue thrives, as in her proper soil ;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she springs spontaneous) in remote
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all ; but gentle, kind,
By culture tamed, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole ;
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot ;
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust !
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school, in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards the Antarctic. E'en the favour'd isles
So lately found, although the constant sun
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue ; and, inert
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
In manners—victims of luxurious ease.
These, therefore, I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches ; and enclosed
In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd
By navigators uninform'd as they,
Or plough'd, perhaps, by British bark again :
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,

Thee, gentle savage !* whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity, perhaps,
Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past ; and thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms ? And, having seen our state,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music ; are thy simple friends,
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,
As dear to thee as once ? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with ours ?
Rude as thou art, (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show,)
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot,
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
Thus Fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
She tells me, too, that duly every morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the watery waste

* Omai.

For sight of ship from England. Every speck
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.

But though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may, perhaps, thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft: in proud, and gay,
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds,
In gross and pamper'd cities, sloth and lust,
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach: and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst.

There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
 A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
 All her reflected features. Bacon there
 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
 Nor does the chisel occupy alone
 The powers of sculpture, but the style as much ;
 Each province of her art her equal care.
 With nice incision of her guided steel
 She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
 So sterile with what charms so'er she will,
 The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
 Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots ?
 In London. Where her implements exact,
 With which she calculates, computes, and scans
 All distance, motion, magnitude ; and now
 Measures an atom, and now girds a world ?
 In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
 So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied
 As London—opulent, enlarged, and still
 Increasing London ? Babylon of old
 Not more the glory of the earth than she,
 A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.
 She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two
 That so much beauty would do well to purge ;
 And show this Queen of Cities, that so fair
 May yet be foul ; so witty, yet not wise.
 It is not seemly, nor of good report,
 That she is slack in discipline ; more prompt
 To avenge than to prevent the breach of law :
 That she is rigid in denouncing death
 On petty robbers, and indulges life

And liberty, and oft-times honour too,
 To speculators of the public gold :
 That thieves at home must hang ; but he, that puts
 Into his overgorged and bloated purse
 The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
 Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
 That, through profane and infidel contempt
 Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul
 And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
 The total ordinance and will of God ;
 Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
 And centring all authority in modes
 And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
 Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
 And knees and hassocks are well nigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town.
 What wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves ?
 Possess ye, therefore, ye who, borne about
 In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
 But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
 But such as art contrives, possess ye still
 Your element ; there only can ye shine ;
 There only minds like yours can do no harm.
 Our groves were planted to console at noon
 The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
 The moon-beam, sliding softly in between
 The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish ;
 Birds warbling, all the music. We can spare
 The splendour of your lamps ; they but eclipse
 Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
 Our more harmonious notes ; the Thrush departs

Scared, and the offended Nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth ;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

THE TASK.

BOOK II.—THE TIMEPIECE.

ARGUMENT.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book. Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow. Prodigies enumerated. Sicilian earthquakes. Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin. God the agent in them. The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved. Our own late miscarriages accounted for. Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainebleau. But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation. The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons. Petit-maitre parson. The good preacher. Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb. Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved. Apostrophe to popular applause. Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with. Sum of the whole matter. Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity. Their folly and extravagance. The mischiefs of profusion. Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.



THE TASK.

BOOK II.—THE TIMEPIECE.

O FOR a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own; and having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations, who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And worse than all, and most to be deplored
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mersey with a bleeding heart

Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.
 Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
 And having human feelings, does not blush,
 And hang his head, to think himself a man?
 I would not have a slave to till my ground,
 To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
 And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
 That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
 No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
 Just estimation prized above all price,
 I had much rather be myself the slave,
 And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
 We have no slaves at home—then why abroad?
 And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave
 That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
 Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
 Receive our air, that moment they are free;
 They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
 That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then,
 And let it circulate through every vein
 Of all your empire; that, where Britain's power
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social intercourse,
 Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
 Between the nations in a world, that seems
 To toll the deathbell of its own decease,
 And, by the voice of all its elements,
 To preach the general doom.* When were the winds
 Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
 When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?

* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.

Fires from beneath, and meteors* from above,
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,
 Have kindled beacons in the skies; and the old
 And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
 More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
 And Nature† with a dim and sickly eye
 To wait the close of all? But grant her end
 More distant, and that prophecy demands
 A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet;
 Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
 Displeasure in His breast, who smites the earth
 Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
 And 'tis but seemly that, where all deserve
 And stand exposed by common peccancy
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
 And brethren in calamity should love.

Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
 Lie scatter'd, where the shapely column stood.
 Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
 The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
 Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,
 Suffer a syncopé and solemn pause;
 While God performs upon the trembling stage
 Of His own works His dreadful part alone.
 How does the earth receive Him?—with what signs
 Of gratulation and delight, her King?
 Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
 Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
 Disclosing Paradise where'er He treads?

* August 18th, 1783.

† Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

She shakes at His approach. Her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns, roars beneath His foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For He has touch'd them. From the extremest point
Of elevation down into the abyss
His wrath is busy, and His frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise ;
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid ; and the fix'd and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with vertiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted ; and, with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,
Look'd to the sea for safety ? They are gone,
Gone with the reflux wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people ! Ancient towers,

And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes,
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.
Who, then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom! whom they that lose thee so regret,
That e'en a judgment, making way for thee,
Seems, in their eyes, a merey for thy sake?

Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame
Kindled in Heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And in the furious inquest, that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste His fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws
A plague into his blood; and cannot use
Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise to o'erwhelm him; or, if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And, needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
What then!—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd Isle
Moved not, while theirs was rock'd, like a light skiff,
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But, where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts

Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spared not them,
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!

Happy the man, who sees a God employ'd
In all the good and ill that checker life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not His eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns, (since from the least
The greatest oft originate;) could chance
Find place in His dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart His plan;
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In Nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
And, having found His instrument, forgets,
Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men
That live an atheist life: involves the Heavens
In tempests; quits His grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs His mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells

Of homogeneal and discordant springs
 And principles ; of causes, how they work,
 By necessary laws, their sure effects ;
 Of action and re-action : he has found
 The source of the disease that Nature feels
 And bids the world take heart, and banish fear.
 Thou fool ! will thy discovery of the cause
 Suspend the effect, or heal it ? Has not God
 Still wrought by means since first He made the world ?
 And did He not of old employ His means
 To drown it ? What is His creation less
 Than a capacious reservoir of means
 Form'd for His use, and ready at His will ?
 Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve ; ask of Him,
 Or ask of whomsoever He has taught ;
 And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all !

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—
 My country ! and, while yet a nook is left,
 Where English minds and manners may be found,
 Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
 Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd
 With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
 I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
 And fields without a flower, for warmer France,
 With all her vines : nor for Ausonia's groves
 Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.
 To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
 Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
 Upon thy foes, was never meant my task :
 But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
 Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
 As any thunderer there. And I can feel
 Thy follies too ; and with a just disdain
 Frown at effeminate, whose very looks

Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet;
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?
Time was, when it was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children. Praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen
Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe, upon the lap
Of smiling Victory, that moment won,
And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame!
They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those suns are set. O rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.
Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,

That no rude savour maritime invade
 The nose of nice nobility! Breathe soft,
 Ye clarionets; and softer still, ye flutes;
 That winds and waters, lull'd by magic sounds,
 May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore!
 True, we have lost an empire—let it pass!
 True; we may thank the perfidy of France,
 That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
 With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
 And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state!
 A brave man knows no malice, but at once
 Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
 And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.
 And, shamed as we have been, to the very beard
 Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved
 Too weak for those decisive blows, that once
 Ensured us mastery there, we yet retain
 Some small pre-eminence; we justly boast
 At least superior jockeyship, and claim
 The honours of the turf as all our own!
 Go, then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
 And show the shame ye might conceal at home,
 In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate,
 Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—
 'Tis generous to communicate your skill
 To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd:
 And under such preceptors who can fail?
 There is a pleasure in poetic pains,
 Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
 The expedients and inventions multiform
 To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
 Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
 To arrest the fleeting images that fill
 The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,

And force them sit, till he has pencill'd off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;
Then, to dispose his copies with such art
That each may find its most propitious light,
And shine by situation hardly less
Than by the labour and the skill it cost,
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address from themes of sad import,
That, lost in his own musings, happy man !
He feels the anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But, ah ! not such
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
Fastidious, or else listless, or, perhaps,
Aware of nothing arduous in a task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
Their least amusement where he found the most.
But is amusement all ? Studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay ?
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch ;
But where are its sublimer trophies found ?
What vice has it subdued ? Whose heart reclaim'd
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform ?
Alas ! Leviathan is not so tamed ;
Laugh'd at, he laughs again ; and, stricken hard,
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore—(and I name it fill'd
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
The pulpit—(when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,
Spent all his force and made no proselyte)—
I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth; there stands
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speak out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd, himself, in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect!
Are all such teachers?—would to Heaven all were!
But hark—the doctor's voice!—fast wedged between
Two empiries he stands, and with swoln cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and, defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs!
He teaches those to read whom schools dismiss'd,

And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
 And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
 The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
 He grinds divinity of other days
 Down into modern use; transforms old print
 To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
 Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.
 Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware?
 O, name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,
 That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.
 He, doubtless, is in sport, and does but droll,
 Assuming thus a rank unknown before—
 Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church.

I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
 Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
 That he is honest in the sacred cause.
 To such I render more than mere respect,
 Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
 But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
 In conversation frivolous, in dress
 Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse;
 Frequent in park with lady at his side,
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes;
 But rare at home, and never at his books,
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round
 Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;
 Ambitious of preferment, for its gold,
 And well prepared, by ignorance and sloth,
 By infidelity and love of world,
 To make God's work a sinecure; a slave
 To his own pleasures and his patron's pride;

From such apostles, O ye mitred heads
 Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
 On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
 His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
 In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
 And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
 And natural in gesture; much impress'd
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
 May feel it too; affectionate in look,
 And tender in address, as well becomes
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.
 Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
 The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
 And then skip down again; pronounce a text,
 Cry—hem; and, reading what they never wrote
 Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
 And with a well-bred whisper close the scene!

In man or woman, but far most in man,
 And most of all in man that ministers
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
 Object of my implacable disgust.
 What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
 A silly, fond conceit of his fair form,
 And just proportion, fashionable mien,
 And pretty face, in presence of his God?
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
 As with the diamond on his lily hand,
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,

When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and, instead of truth,
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
Therefore, avaunt all attitude, and stare,
And start theatric, practised at the glass!
I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all besides,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admired
By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform'd,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the press'd nostril, spectacle-bestrud.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves;
And, having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not!
Forth comes the pocket mirror.—First we stroke
An eyebrow; next compose a stragglng lock;
Then, with an air most gracefully perform'd,
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand depending low:
The better hand, more busy, gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
With opera-glass, to watch the moving scene,
And recognise the slow-retiring fair.—
Now, this is fulsome, and offends me more
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;

But how a body so fantastic, trim,
 And quaint, in its deportment and attire,
 Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negotiates between God and man,
 As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
 Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
 Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
 To court a grin, when you should woo a soul.
 To break a jest, when pity would inspire
 Pathetic exhortation; and to address
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
 When sent with God's commission to the heart!
 So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
 Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
 And I consent you take it for your text,
 Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
 No! he was serious in a serious cause,
 And understood too well the weighty terms
 That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
 To conquer those, by jocular exploits,
 Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.

O Popular Applause! what heart of man
 Is proof against thy sweet, seducing charms?
 The wisest and the best feel urgent need
 Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
 But, swell'd into a gust—who then, alas!
 With all his canvass set, and inexpert,
 And, therefore, heedless, can withstand thy power?
 Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald
 Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
 And craving poverty, and in the bow
 Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,
 Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
 The bias of the purpose. How much more

Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as Adoration breathes?
Ah! spare your idol! think him human still.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too!
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,
Drew from the stream below. More favour'd, we
Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain head.
'To them it flow'd much mingled and defiled
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illusive of philosophy, so call'd,
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain to filter off a crystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
The thirst, than slaked it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth
And spring-time of the world; ask'd, Whence is man?
Why form'd at all? and wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore Him? Will He hear, accept, and bless?
Or does He sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone
A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,
Defective and unsanction'd, proved too weak
'To omd the roving appetite, and lead
Blind Nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,

Explains all mysteries except her own,
 And so illuminates the path of life,
 That fools discover it, and stray no more.
 Now tell me, dignified and sapient Sir,
 My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
 Of Academus—is this false or true?
 Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
 If Christ, then why resort, at every turn,
 To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
 Of man's occasions, when in Him reside
 Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd store?
 How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preach'd!
 Men that, if now alive, would sit content
 And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
 Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
 Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too!

And thus it is.—The pastor, either vain
 By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
 To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt
 Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
 Or unenlightened, and too proud to learn;
 Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach;
 Perverting often by the stress of lewd
 And loose example, whom he should instruct;
 Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace
 The noblest function, and discredits much
 The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
 For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
 Below the exigence, or be not back'd
 With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
 Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
 Or be dishonour'd, in the exterior form
 And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks

As move derision, or by foppish airs
 And histrionic mummery, that let down
 The pulpit to the level of the stage;
 Drops from the lips, a disregarded thing.
 The weak, perhaps, are moved, but are not taught,
 While prejudice in men of stronger minds
 Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.
 A relaxation of religion's hold
 Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
 Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapp'd,
 The laity run wild.—But do they now?
 Note their extravagance, and be convinced.

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive
 A wooden one; so we, no longer taught
 By monitors that mother church supplies,
 Now make our own. Posterity will ask
 (If e'er posterity see verse of mine)
 Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,
 What was a monitor in George's days?
 My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
 Of whom I needs must augur better things,
 Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
 Productive only of a race like ours,
 A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.
 We wear it at our backs. There, closely braced
 And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
 The prominent and most unsightly bones,
 And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
 Sovereign and most effectual to secure
 A form, not now gymnastic as of yore,
 From rickets and distortion, else our lot.
 But thus admonish'd, we can walk erect—
 One proof at least of manhood! while the friend
 Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.

Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with every moon. The sycophant,
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date;
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived:
And, making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through every change that Fancy, at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;
And, studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little used,
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires:
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows
A form as splendid as the proudest there,
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
A man o' the town dines late, but soon enough,
With reasonable forecast and dispatch,
To ensure a side-box station at half price.
You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!
The rout is Folly's circle, which she draws

With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
There we grow early grey, but never wise;
There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
Solicit pleasure, hopeless of success;
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports which only childhood could excuse.
There they are happiest, who dissemble best
Their weariness; and they the most polite,
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She that asks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)
Make just reprisals; and with cringe and shrug,
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
To her who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed excesses she can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlackey'd; who, in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all that held their routs in Juno's heaven.—
So fare we in this prison-house—the world;
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.

They gaze upon the links that hold them fast,
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
Then shake them in despair, and dance again!

Now basket up the family of plagues
That waste our vitals; peculation, sale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel;
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.
Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred, within the memory of no few,
A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,
A people, such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use:
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the slippery prey: unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred band
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
Profusion, deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature, and of worst effects,
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,
And warps the consciences of public men,
Till they can laugh at Virtue; mock the fools
That trust them; and in the end disclose a face
That would have shock'd Credulity herself,
Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—
Since all alike are selfish, why not they?

This does Profusion, and the accursed cause
Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth,
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head,
Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lips; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
The head of modest and ingenuous worth,
That blush'd at its own praise; and press the youth
Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care a thriving, vigorous plant;
The mind was well inform'd, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
That one among so many overleap'd
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke:
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
As left him not till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.
But Discipline, a faithful servant long,
Declined, at length, into the vale of years:
A palsy struck his arm; his sparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age; his voice, unstrung
Grew tremulous, and moved derision more

Than reverence in perverse, rebellious youth
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend ; and Discipline at length,
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.
Then Study languish'd, Emulation slept,
And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene
Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,
His cap well-lined with logic not his own,
With parrot-tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
Then compromise had place, and scrutiny
Became stone blind ; precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued ;
The curbs invented for the mulish mouth
Of headstrong youth were broken ; bars and bolts
Grew rusty by disuse ; and massy gates
Forgot their office, opening with a touch ;
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,
The tassel'd cap and the spruce band a jest,
A mockery of the world ! What need of these
For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
With belted waist, and pointers at their heels,
Than in the bounds of duty ? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot ;
And such expense as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports
And vicious pleasures ; buys the boy a name
That sits a stigma on his father's house,
And clings through life inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games

Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
 The lewd, vain world, that must receive him soon,
 Add to such erudition, thus acquired,
 Where science and where virtue are profess'd?
 They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task
 That bids defiance to the united powers
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
 Now blame we most the nurselings or the nurse?
 The children crook'd, and twisted, and deform'd,
 Through want of care; or her, whose winking eye
 And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood?
 The nurse, no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
 She needs herself correction; needs to learn
 That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
 The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—
 Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
 A man of letters, and of manners too!
 Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears
 When gay Good-nature dresses her in smiles.
 He graced a college,* in which order yet
 Was sacred; and was honour'd, loved, and wept
 By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
 Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd
 With such ingredients of good sense, and taste
 Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
 With such a zeal to be what they approve,
 That no restraints can circumscribe them more
 Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
 Nor can example hurt them: what they see

* Bene't Coll. Cambridge.

Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.

See, then, the quiver broken and decay'd,
In which are kept our arrows! Rusting there
In wild disorder, and unfit for use;
What wonder, if, discharged into the world,
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine.
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war,
With such artillery arm'd. Vice parries wide
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birthplace and his dam? The country mourns
Mourns because every plague that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of the edifice, that Policy has raised,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath, at every turn.
Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
Found, too, where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the robed pedagogue! Else let the arraign'd
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.
So when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm,
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,

Polluting Egypt; gardens, fields, and plains
Were cover'd with the pest; the streets were fill'd;
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook;
Nor palaces, nor even chambers 'scaped;
And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.—THE GARDEN.

ARGUMENT.

Self-recollection and reproof. Address to domestic happiness. Some account of myself. The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise. Justification of my censures. Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher. The question, What is truth? answered by other questions. Domestic happiness addressed again. Few lovers of the country. My tame hare. Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden. Pruning. Farming. Greenhouse. Sowing of flower seeds. The country preferable to the town, even in the winter. Reasons why it is deserted at that season. Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement. Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.—THE GARDEN.

As one, who long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain, seeking home ;
Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half despairing of escape ;
If chance at length he find a greensward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease ,
So I, designing other themes, and call'd
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide: in country, city, seat
Of academic fame, (howe'er deserved,)
Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.
But now with pleasant pace a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,
If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and sounding boards reflect
Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,

Nor conversant with men or manners much,
 Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
 Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
 For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,
 And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose,
 Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
 My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains;
 Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft
 And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
 Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;
 There, undisturb'd by Folly, and apprized
 How great the danger of disturbing her,
 To muse in silence, or at least confine
 Remarks, that gall so many, to the few
 My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
 Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss
 Of Paradise that hast survived the fall!
 Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
 Or tasting long enjoy thee! too infirm,
 Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
 Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
 Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup;
 Thou art the nurse of Virtue! in thine arms
 She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
 Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.
 Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
 That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
 And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
 Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support;
 For thou art meek and constant, hating change
 And finding, in the calm of truth-tried love,
 Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.

Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!
Till prostitution elbows us aside
In all our crowded streets; and senates seem
Convened for purposes of empire less,
Than to release the adult'ress from her bond.
The adult'ress! what a theme for angry verse!
What provocation to the indignant heart,
That feels for injured love! but I disdain
The nauseous task, to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame!
No:—let her pass, and, charioted along
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways;
The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white,
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now of character unsmirch'd,
And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,
Not to be pass'd: and she that had renounced
Her sex's honour was renounced herself
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard, perhaps, on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not received:
But was a wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught the unblemish'd to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men, too, were nice of honour in those days,
And judged offenders well. 'Then he that sharp'd,
And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she required
His every nerve in action and at stretch,
Paid, with the blood that he had basely spared

The price of his default. But now—yes, now—
 We are become so candid and so fair,
 So liberal in construction, and so rich
 In Christian charity, (good-natured age!)
 That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
 Transgress what laws they may. Well-dress'd, well-bred,
 Well-equipaged, is ticket good enough
 To pass us readily through every door.
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
 (And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet,)
 May claim this merit still—that she admits
 The worth of what she mimics with such care,
 And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
 But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,
 Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
 And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
 Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
 There was I found by One who had himself
 Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore,
 And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
 With gentle force soliciting the darts,
 He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.
 Since then, with few associates, in remote
 And silent woods I wander, far from those
 My former partners of the peopled scene;
 With few associates, and not wishing more.
 Here much I ruminatè, as much I may,
 With other views of men and manners now
 Than once, and others of a life to come.
 I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
 Each in his own delusions; they are lost

In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues ;
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created, only like the fly
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,
To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known ; and call the rant
A history ; describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That He who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation ; travel Nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars ; why some are fix'd
And planetary some ; what gave them first

Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with Nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs, and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity, too,
That, having wielded the elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume, and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic who thus spend it? all for smoke—
Eternity for bubbles proves, at last,
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a power, who swears
That He will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reckoning, that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
Defend me, therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!
'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd, and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,—

THE GARDEN.

'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases: what's the world to you?
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,
As sweet as charity, from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meandering there
And catechise it well; apply thy glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own: and, if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath;
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point,
That seems half quenched in the immense abyss:
Such powers I boast not, neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage,
Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.
God never meant that man should scale the Heavens
By strides of human wisdom, in His works,
Though wondrous: He commands us in His word
To seek Him rather, where His mercy shines.
The mind, indeed, enlighten'd from above,
Views Him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect; acknowledges with joy

His manner, and with rapture tastes His style.
 But never yet did philosophic tube,
 That brings the planets home into the eye
 Of Observation, and discovers, else
 Not visible, His family of worlds,
 Discover Him that rules them; such a veil
 Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
 And dark in things divine. Full often, too,
 Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
 Of Nature, overlooks her Author more;
 From instrumental causes proud to draw
 Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.
 But if His word once teach us, shoot a ray
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
 Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
 Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized
 In the pure fountain of eternal love,
 Has eyes indeed; and, viewing all she sees
 As meant to indicate a God to man,
 Gives *Him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
 Learning has borne such fruit, in other days,
 On all her branches; piety has found
 Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
 Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
 Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,
 And in His word sagacious. Such too thine,
 Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
 And fed on manna! And such thine, in whom
 Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
 Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,
 And sound integrity, not more than famed
 For sanctity of manners undefiled.

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades

Like the fair flower dishevell'd in the wind;
 Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream.
 The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
 And we, that worship him, ignoble graves.
 Nothing is proof against the general curse
 Of vanity, that seizes all below.
 The only amaranthine flower on earth
 Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.
 But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
 To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
 And wherefore? Will not God impart His light
 To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis His joy,
 His glory, and His nature to impart.
 But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
 Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
 What's that which brings contempt upon a book,
 And him who writes it, though the style be neat,
 The method clear, and argument exact?—
 That makes a minister in holy things
 The joy of many, and the dread of more,
 His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—
 That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
 Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
 What pearl is it, that rich men cannot buy,
 That learning is too proud to gather up;
 But which the poor, and the despised of all,
 Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
 Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

O friendly to the best pursuits of man,
 Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
 Domestic life in rural pleasure pass'd!
 Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets;
 Though many boast thy favours, and affect
 To understand and choose thee for their own.

But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
 E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,
 Though placed in Paradise, (for earth has still
 Some traces of her youthful beauty left,)
 Substantial happiness for transient joy.
 Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
 The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,
 By every pleasing image they present,
 Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
 Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;
 Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight
 To fill with riot, and defile with blood.
 Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
 We persecute, annihilate the tribes
 That draw the sportsman over hill and dale,
 Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares;
 Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
 Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;
 Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
 Be quell'd in all our summer-months' retreats;
 How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
 Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
 Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
 And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek
 For their own sake its silence, and its shade.
 Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
 Susceptible of pity, or a mind
 Cultured, and capable of sober thought,
 For all the savage din of the swift pack,
 And clamours of the field?—Detested sport,
 That owes its pleasures to another's pain;
 That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
 Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued

With eloquence, that agonies inspire,
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!
Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!
Well—one at least is safe. One shelter'd here
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at last familiar; she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes—thou may'st eat thy bread, and lick the hand
That feeds thee; thou may'st frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire secure
To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd;
For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledged
All that is human in me to protect
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave;
And, when I place thee in it, sighing say,
I knew at least one here that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle; and who justly in return
Esteems that busy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and, perhaps, his pen,
Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,
And Nature in her cultivated trim
Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—
Can he want occupation, who has these?
Will he be idle, who has much to enjoy?
Me, therefore, studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,
Not waste it, and aware that human life

Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
 When He shall call His debtors to account,
 From whom are all our blessings, business finds
 E'en here: while sedulous I seek to improve,
 At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,
 The mind He gave me; driving it, though slack
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work
 By causes not to be divulged in vain,
 To its just point—the service of mankind.
 He that attends to his interior self,
 That has a heart and keeps it; has a mind
 That hungers, and supplies it; and who seeks
 A social, not a dissipated life,
 Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve
 No unimportant, though a silent, task.
 A life all turbulence and noise, may seem,
 To him that leads it, wise, and to be praised;
 But wisdom is a pearl with most success
 Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
 He that is ever occupied in storms,
 Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
 Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequester'd man
 Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
 Whether inclement seasons recommend
 His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
 With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,
 Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
 Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
 Well chosen, and not sullenly perused
 In selfish silence, but imparted oft,
 As aught occurs, that she may smile to hear,
 Or turn to nourishment, digested well.
 Or if the garden with its many cares,

All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard Labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loitering lazily, if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskillful strength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself. No works, indeed,
That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,
Servile employ; but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees
That meet, (no barren interval between,)
With pleasure more than e'en their fruits afford;
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel
These, therefore, are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific powers,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he spare the soft
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measured distances, that air and sun,
Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,
And hence e'en Winter fills his wither'd hand
With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.*
Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd,

* "Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma."—VIRG

And wise precaution, which a clime so rude
 Makes needful still ; whose Spring is but the child
 Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods
 Discovering much the temper of her sire.
 For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
 Maternal nature had reversed its course,
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles ;
 But, once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.
 He, therefore, timely warn'd himself, supplies
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
 As the Sun peeps, and vernal airs breathe mild,
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare
 So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
 That toiling ages have but just matured,
 And at this moment unassay'd in song.
 Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,
 Their eulogy ; those sang the Mantuan Bard,
 And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains ;
 And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye
 The solitary shilling. Pardon, then,
 Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame !
 The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,
 Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
 Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
 Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,
 Impregnated with quick-fermenting salts,

And potent to resist the freezing blast :
For, ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf,
Deciduous, and when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily, therefore, and with prudent heed,
He seeks a favour'd spot ; that where he builds
The agglomerated pile his frame may front
The Sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
The ascending damps ; then leisurely impose,
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.
What longest binds the closest, forms secure
The shapely side, that, as it rises, takes,
By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves ;
The uplifted frame compact at every joint,
And overlaid with clear translucent glass,
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls.
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
Diffused, attain the service : when, behold !
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,
And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
Asks egress ; which obtain'd, the overcharged
And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,

In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank ;
And, purified, rejoices to have lost
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
The impatient fervour, which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
The auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fomentation, and invite the seed.
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well filled with well-prepared
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,
And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds.
These on the warm and genial earth, that hides
The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and, as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.
Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick,
And spreading wide their spongy lobes ; at first
Pale, wan, and livid ; but assuming soon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish ;
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,

And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,
Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
'These have their sexes! and, when summer shines,
'The bee transports the fertilizing meal
From flower to flower, and e'en the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.
Not so when winter scowls. Assistant Art
Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (since Luxury must have
His dainties, and the world's more numerous half
Lives by contriving delicates for you,)
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,
That, day and night, are exercised, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
That ye may garnish your profuse regales
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies,
Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
'Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts,
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises, while he guards his tender trust;
And oft, at last, in vain. 'The learn'd and wise,
Sarcastic, would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and, like its theme, the fruit
Of too much labour, worthless when produced.
Who loves a garden loves a greenhouse too.

Unconscious of a less propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle, and the snows descend
The spiry myrtle, with unwithering leaf,
Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange and the paler lime,
Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
The amomum there with intermingling flowers
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours; and the spangled beau,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of every leaf, that can endure
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite
Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these; the Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraia: foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade, as if convened
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flower,
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;
And so, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,
The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,

And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen
 In every flash of his far-beaming eye.
 Nor taste alone and well-contrived display
 Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace
 Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
 Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
 And more laborious; cares on which depends
 Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.
 The soil must be renew'd, which, often wash'd,
 Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
 And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
 Close interwoven where they meet the vase
 Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch
 Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
 Must be detach'd, and, where it strews the floor,
 Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
 Contagion, and disseminating death.
 Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
 Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
 Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased,
 The scent regaled; each odoriferous leaf,
 Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad
 Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
 All healthful, are the employs of rural life,
 Reiterated as the wheel of time
 Runs round; still ending, and beginning still.
 Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,
 That, softly swell'd and gaily dress'd, appears
 A flowery island, from the dark green lawn
 Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due
 To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
 Here, also, grateful mixture of well-match'd
 And sorted hues (each giving each relief,

And by contrasted beauty shining more)
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home ;
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
Without it, all is Gothic as the scene
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath ; where Industry mispent,
But proud of his uncouth, ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth ; with suns and moons
Of close-ramm'd stones has charged the encumber'd soil,
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He, therefore, who would see his flowers disposed
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole ; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceived display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid
Of the smooth-shaven prop, and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused
And lowly creeping, modest, and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen :
Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well



The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank society of weeds,
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
The impoverish'd earth; an overbearing race,
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.

O blest seclusion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot, indeed, to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil; proving still
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease
By vicious Custom, raging uncontroll'd
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce Temptation, seconded within
By traitor Appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe.
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here?
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace,
No loose or wanton, though a wandering, Muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,
And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
Allured by my report: but sure no less,
That self-condemn'd they must neglect the prize,
And, what they will not taste, must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and, when we praise,

Advance it into notice, that, its worth
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.
I, therefore, recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety, and sacred truth,
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd
Should best secure them, and promote them most;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfin'd, whom I extol.
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,
Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,
To grace the full pavilion. His design
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,
Is free to all men—universal prize.
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want
Admirers, and be destined to divide
With meaner objects e'en the few she finds!
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,
She loses all her influence. Cities, then,
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfum'd
By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamour, and whose very silence charms;
To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse,

That metropolitan volcanoes make,
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long;
And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,
And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels?
They would be, were not madness in the head,
And folly in the heart; were England now,
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,
Who had survived the father, served the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful lord
Is but a transient guest, newly arrived,
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile,
Then advertised, and auctioneer'd away.
The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight,
Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints,
That never tire, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes!
The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
Of our forefathers—a grave, whisker'd race,
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot; where, more exposed,

It may enjoy the advantage of the north,
And aguish east, till time shall have transform'd
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks;—the lake in front becomes a lawn;
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise;
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades—
E'en as he bids! The enraptured owner smiles.
'Tis finish'd; and yet, finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan,
That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
Labour'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the **Heaven**
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy!
And now, perhaps, the glorious hour is come,
When, having no stake left, no pledge to endear
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
To serve his country. Ministerial grace
Deals him out money from the public chest;
Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse
Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
To be refunded duly when his vote,
Well-managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price.
O innocent, compared with arts like these,
Crape, and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball
Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
One drop of Heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,

Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content,
 So he may wrap himself in honest rags
 At his last gasp; but could not for a world
 Fish up his dirty and dependant bread
 From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
 Sordid and sickening at his own success.

Ambition, avarice, penury incur'd
 By endless riot, vanity, the lust
 Of pleasure and variety, dispatch,
 As duly as the swallows disappear,
 The world of wandering Knights and Squires to town.
 London ingulfs them all! The shark is there,
 And the shark's prey: the spendthrift, and the leech
 That sucks him: there the sycophant, and he
 Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,
 Begg a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail
 And groat per diem if his patron frown.
 The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp
 Were character'd on every statesman's door,
 "*Batter'd and bankrupt fortunes mended here.*"
 These are the charms that sully and eclipse
 The charms of Nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
 That lean, hard-handed Poverty inflicts,
 The hope of better things, the chance to win,
 The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
 That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing
 Unpeople all our counties of such herds
 Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose,
 And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
 And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

O thou resort and mart of all the earth,
 Checker'd with all complexions of mankind,
 And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
 Much that I love, and more that I admire,

And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
That pleasest and yet shock'st me, I can laugh,
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
And therefore, more obnoxious at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard His Abraham plead in vain

THE TASK.

BOOK IV.—THE WINTER EVENING.

ARGUMENT.

The post comes in. The newspaper is read. The world contemplated at a distance. Address to Winter. The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones. Address to Evening. A brown study. Fall of snow in the evening. The wagoner. A poor family piece. The rural thief. Public-houses. The multitude of them censured. The farmer's daughter: what she was, what she is. The simplicity of country manners almost lost. Causes of the change. Desertion of the country by the rich. Neglect of magistrates. The militia principally in fault. The new recruit and his transformation. Reflection on bodies corporate. The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.



THE TASK.

BOOK IV.—THE WINTER EVENING.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
And, having dropped th' expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But O th' important budget! usher'd in

With such heart-shaking music, who can say
 What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
 Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
 Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
 And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
 Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,
 The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
 I burn to set th' imprisoned wranglers free,
 And give them voice and utterance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
 And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
 Not such his evening who, with shining face,
 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed
 And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
 Outcolds the ranting actor on the stage:
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
 Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
 Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
 This folio of four pages, happy work!
 Which not e'en critics criticise; that holds
 Inquisitive Attention, while I read,
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the Fair,
 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
 What is it, but a map of busy life,
 Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,

That tempts Ambition. On the summit see
The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them ! At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence, in soft
Meanders lubricate the course they take ;
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
To engross a moment's notice ; and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness ! it claims at least this praise :
The dearth of information and good sense,
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here ;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost ;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion ; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean, plunder'd of their sweets
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,
Ethereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
'Tis pleasant, through the loop-holes of retreat.
To peep at such a world ; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd ;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates

At a safe distance, where the dying sound
 Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
 Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
 The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
 To some secure and more than mortal height,
 That liberates and exempts me from them all.
 It turns submitted to my view, turns round
 With all its generations; I behold
 The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
 Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
 Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
 And avarice that make man a wolf to man;
 Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
 By which he speaks the language of his heart,
 And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
 He travels and expatiates, as the Bee
 From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
 The manners, customs, policy, of all
 Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
 He sucks intelligence in every clime,
 And spreads the honey of his deep research
 At his return—a rich repast for me.
 He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
 Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
 Discover countries, with a kindred heart
 Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,
 Thy scatter'd hair with sleet-like ashes fill'd,
 Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
 Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
 Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne

A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way ;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art ! Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning East,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy West ; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates ;
No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors
'Till the street rings ; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake :
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair ;
A wreath, that cannot fade, or flowers, that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The Poet's or Historian's page, by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest ;

The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice, symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still,
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal;
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoy'd, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at His awful name, or deem His praise
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with Memory's pointing wand,
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlook'd for, life preserved, and peace restored,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
O evenings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
The Sabine Bard. O evenings, I reply,
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined, and with nobler truths.
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is Winter hideous in a garb like this ?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
To throw him into feeling; or the smart
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile ?
The self-complacent actor, when he views
(Stealing a side-long glance at a full house)
The slope of faces, from the floor to the roof,
(As if one master-spring controll'd them all,)
Relax'd into a universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there, that speaks a joy
Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.
'Time, as he passes us, has a Dove's wing,
Unsoil'd, and swift, and of a silken sound;
But the world's 'Time is 'Time in masquerade !
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes; and, where the Peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most ;
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The backstring and the bib, assume the dress

Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
 Of card-devoted time, and night by night,
 Placed at some vacant corner of the board,
 Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
 But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
 Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
 As he that travels far, oft turns aside
 To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
 Which seen delights him not; then, coming home,
 Describes and prints it, that the world may know
 How far he went for what was nothing worth;
 So I, with brush in hand, and pallet spread,
 With colours mixed for a far different use,
 Paint cards, and dolls, and every idle thing
 That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
 Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
 Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
 With matron step slow moving, while the Night
 Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employ'd
 In letting fall the curtain of repose
 On bird and beast, the other charged for man
 With sweet oblivion of the cares of day:
 Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,
 Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems;
 A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
 Suffices thee; save that the Moon is thine
 No less than hers, not worn, indeed, on high
 With ostentatious pageantry, but set
 With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
 Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
 Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
 Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
 And, whether I devote thy gentle hours

To books, to music, or the poet's toil ;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit ;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command, whom man was born to please,
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures, too, begin. But me, perhaps,
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight: such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers ;
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one ; I am conscious, and confess
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has Fancy ludicrous and wild
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amused have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach

'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers; and snapping short
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within!
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarcely noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives

Gladly the thickening mantle ; and the green
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side ;
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves ; that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels ; and, in its sluggish pace,
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow,
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
O happy ! and in my account denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou !
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels, indeed,
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse ; and the unhealthful east,

That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care ;
Thy wagon is thy wife ; and the poor beasts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly ! rude as thou appear'st,
Yet shew that thou hast mercy ! which the great,
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad, and fed but sparely, time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well ;
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands,
And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil ;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
Dangled along, at the cold finger's end,
Just when the day declined ; and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf, half eaten without sauce
Of savory cheese, or butter costlier still ;
Sleep seems their only refuge ; for alas,
Where penury is felt, the thought is chain'd,

And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few !
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious Parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
Skillet, and old carved chest, from public sale.
'They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands; but other boast have none
'To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg,
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous Importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to suppliants who would blush
To wear a tatter'd garb, however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused
Because deserving, silently retire !
But be ye of good courage! 'Time itself
Shall much befriend you. 'Time shall give increase;
And all your numerous progeny, well-train'd
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.
But poverty with most, who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe;
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.

Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge,
Plash'd neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,
An ass's burden, and, when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrench'd the door, however well secured,
Where Chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home; themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety, that prompts
His every action, and imbrates the man.
O for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own; who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love!

Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the sties
That law has licensed, as makes 'Temperance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom : the craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil ;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough ; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk ! The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard :
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme ; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance ; in that, of pride ;
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame !
Behold the schools, in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill !—'tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine ; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.

But censure profits little : vain the attempt
 To advertise in verse a public pest,
 That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
 His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
 The excise is fatten'd with the rich result
 Of all this riot ; and ten thousand casks,
 For ever dribbling out their base contents,
 Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
 Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
 Drink, and be mad, then ! 'Tis your country bids
 Gloriously drunk, obey the important call ;
 Her cause demands the assistance of your throats ;—
 Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fallen upon those happier days
 That poets celebrate ; those golden times,
 And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,
 And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.
 Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
 That felt their virtues : Innocence, it seems,
 From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves ;
 The footsteps of Simplicity, impress'd
 Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing,)
 Then were not all effaced : then speech profane,
 And manners profligate, were rarely found,
 Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
 Vain wish ! those days were never. Airy dreams
 Sat for the picture : and the poet's hand,
 Imparting substance to an empty shade,
 Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
 Grant it : I still must envy them an age
 That favour'd such a dream ; in days like these
 Impossible, when Virtue is so scarce,
 That to suppose a scene where she presides,
 Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.

No: we are polish'd now. The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost!
Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft,
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
Ill propp'd upon French heels; she might be deem'd
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs:
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels,
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care!

The town has tinged the country; and the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural; but, alas!
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now!
Time was when in the pastoral retreat
The unguarded door was safe; men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder, heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,
And slumbers unalarm'd! Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polish'd arms be primed with care,

And drop the night-bolt:—ruffians are abroad;
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
E'en daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The licence of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office, and, themselves intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike he trembles; and sets free,
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,

The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it! he has touch'd
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wild fowl or venison; and his errand speeds.

But faster far, and more than all the rest
A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark
Of public virtue, ever wish'd removed,
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
'The clown, the child of Nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures; now and then
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair;
Is balloted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
A bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what. 'The task perform'd,
'That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,

Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,
 He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
 Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well:
 He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
 He steps right onward, martial in his air,
 His form, and movement; is as smart above
 As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
 His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
 And, his three years of heroship expired,
 Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
 He hates the field in which no life or drum
 Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;
 And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
 'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
 But, with his clumsy port, the wretch has lost
 His ignorance and harmless manners too.
 To swear, to game, to drink; to show at home,
 By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,
 The great proficiency he made abroad;
 To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends;
 To break some maiden's and his mother's heart;
 To be a pest where he was useful once;
 Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now.

Man in society is like a flower
 Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
 His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
 Shine out; there only reach their proper use.
 But man, associated and leagued with man
 By regal warrant, or self-join'd by bond
 For interest-sake, or swarming into claus
 Beneath one head for purposes of war,
 Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
 And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
 Fades rapidly, and, by compression marr'd,

Contracts defilement not to be endured.
Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate, perhaps,
In all their private functions, once combined,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature; and, disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial Justice red.
Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school, where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.

But, slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never framed a wish, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural; rural too
The first-born efforts of my youthful Muse,
Sportive and jingling her poetic bells,
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.

No Bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
Then Milton had, indeed, a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue,
To speak its excellence. I danced for joy.
I marvell'd much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder; and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost, because not sooner found.
Thee too, enamour'd of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last
With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wish'd that I had known,
Ingenuous Cowley! and, though now reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools;
I still revere thee, courtly though retired;
'Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,
Not unemploy'd; and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all; the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man,
Infused at the creation of the kind.
And, though the Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of His hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found

Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in His works,
And all can taste them : minds, that have been form'd
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
E'en in the stiling bosom of the town,
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled,
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint,
That Nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
The Frenchman's darling;* are they not all proofs
That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnish'd with the means of life.

* Mignonette.

And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds,
To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct; overhead
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at Nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,
And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown; hail, rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument, or fame;
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs, dignity; to judges, sense;
To artists, ingenuity and skill;
To me, an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and, ere long,
Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

THE TASK.

BOOK V.—THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

ARGUMENT.

A frosty morning. The foddering of cattle. The woodman and his dog. The poultry. Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall. The Empress of Russia's palace of ice. Amusements of monarchs:—war, one of them. Wars, whence; and whence monarchy. The evils of it. English and French loyalty contrasted. The Bastille, and a prisoner there. Liberty the chief recommendation of this country. Modern patriotism questionable, and why. The perishable nature of the best human institutions. Spiritual liberty not perishable. The slavish state of man by nature. Deliver him, Deist, if you can. Grace must do it. The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated. Their different treatment. Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free. His relish of the works of God. Address to the Creator.



THE TASK.

BOOK V.—THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

'Tis morning; and the Sun, with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon; while the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportion'd limb
Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they design'd to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and, as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents
And coarser grass up-spearing o'er the rest,

Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And, fledged with icy feathers, nod superb,
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass:
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care
Lest storms should upset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.

Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe,
And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear;
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then, with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.

Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The Sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves,
To seize the fair occasion; well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and, thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared,
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity, the Coek foregoes
His wonted strut; and, wading at their head,
With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrench'd.
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought; the imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie cover'd close; and berry-bearing thorns,
That feed the Thrush, (whatever some suppose,)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long-protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts; self-buried ere they die.
The very Rooks and Daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now
Repays their labour more; and, perch'd aloft

By the wayside, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away.
Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below.
No frost can bind it there. Its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist,
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroider'd banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops,
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam; there, emboss'd and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats

As she, with all her rules, can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ!
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the North. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost Bees to her maternal ear:
In such a palace Poetry might place
The armory of winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there:
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoin'd, nor other cement ask'd
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side: a watery light
Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From Heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers, that fear'd no enemy but warmth,

Blush'd on the panels. Mirror needed none
 Where all was vitreous; but, in order due,
 Convivial table and commodious seat
 (What seem'd, at least, commodious seat) were there;
 Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.
 The same lubricity was found in all:
 And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
 And soon to slide into a stream again.
 Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
 Of undesign'd severity, that glanced
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
 'Twas durable; as worthless as it seem'd
 Intrinsically precious; to the foot
 Treacherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings. Some have play'd
 At hewing mountains into men, and some
 At building human wonders mountain-high.
 Some have amused the dull sad years of life
 (Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,)
 With schemes of monumental fame; and sought,
 By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
 Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.
 Some seek diversion in the tented field,
 And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
 But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
 Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
 To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
 Of heroes whose infirm and baby minds
 Are gratified with mischief; and who spoil,
 Because men suffer it, their toy the world.

When Babel was confounded, and the great

Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder, and assign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal; and He bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care: they plough'd and sow'd
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze
Cain had already shed a brother's blood:
The deluge wash'd it out; but left unquench'd
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim;
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters; and, ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some,
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.

Thus war began on earth : these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest for strength,
For stratagem, for courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader ; him they served in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare ?
Or who so worthy to control themselves,
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes ?
Thus war, affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made King.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness ; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That, being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink, and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty, that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice ; and, besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, " Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise !"
They roll themselves before him in the dust ;
Then most deserving, in their own account,

When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus, by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet; and, ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges, born
To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,
And sweating in his service. His caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning; and they think the same.
Thus Kings were first invented, and thus Kings
Were burnish'd into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp;
Storks among Frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
Strange, that such folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence fit only for a god,
Should ever drivell out of human lips,
E'en in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made.
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some, whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,

Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because deliver'd down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up, like other men,
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given, or wrong sustain'd,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of Poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and, reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang

His thorns with streamers of continual praise?
We, too, are friends to loyalty. We love
The King who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content with them: him we serve
Freely and with delight who leaves us free:
But, recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And King in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still;
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of Kings, between your loyalty and ours.
We love the man, the paltry pageant you;
We, the chief patron of the commonwealth;
You, the regardless author of its woes:
We, for the sake of liberty, a King;
You, chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a King to be beloved
Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.
Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will

Of a superior, he is never free.
 Who lives, and is not weary of a life
 Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
 The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
 And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
 Deserves, at least, applause for her attempt,
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
 Not often unsuccessful: power usurp'd
 Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
 But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
 All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts;
 The surest presage of the good they seek.*
 Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
 To France than all her losses and defeats,
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,
 Her house of bondage worse than that of old
 Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille.
 Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts;
 Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,
 That monarchs have supplied from age to age
 With music, such as suits their sovereign ears,
 The sighs and groans of miserable men!
 There's not an English heart that would not leap
 To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
 'That e'en our enemies, so oft employ'd
 In forging chains for us, themselves were free.

* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

For he, who values Liberty, confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There, like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone
To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;
And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect that, though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball:
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight:—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious Woe
Contrives, hard-shifting, and without her tools;—
To read, engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own:—
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated Spider, till the pamper'd pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend:—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door;

Then downward and then upward, then aslant
 And then alternate ; with a sickly hope
 By dint of change to give his tasteless task
 Some relish ; till the sum, exactly found
 In all directions, he begins again :—
 Oh comfortless existence ! hemm'd around
 With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
 And beg for exile, or the pangs of death ?
 That man should thus encroach on fellow man,
 Abridge him of his just and native rights,
 Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
 Upon the endearments of domestic life
 And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
 And doom him, for, perhaps, a heedless word,
 To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
 Moves indignation, makes the name of King
 (Of King whom such prerogative can please)
 As dreadful as the Manichean god,
 Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.

'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
 Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume ;
 And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
 Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
 Is evil : hurts the faculties, impedes
 Their progress in the road of science ; blinds
 The eyesight of discovery ; and begets,
 In those that suffer it, a sordid mind,
 Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
 To be the tenant of man's noble form.
 Thee, therefore, still, blameworthy as thou art,
 With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
 By public exigence, till annual food
 Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
 Thee I account still happy, and the chief

Among the nations, seeing thou art free;
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine:
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art,
To give thee what politer France receives
From Nature's bounty—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.
Yet being free, I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains nowhere patiently; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then, with double pain,
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And, if I must bewail the blessing lost,
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would, at least, bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere;
In scenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!
But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.

Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
 And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
 Deep, in his soft credulity, the stamp
 Design'd by loud declaimers on the part
 Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
 Incurs derision for his easy faith
 And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough :
 For when was public virtue to be found,
 Where private was not? Can he love the whole,
 Who loves no part? he be a nation's friend,
 Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
 Who slights the charities for whose dear sake
 That country, if at all, must be beloved ?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
 For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
 And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
 So loose to private duty, that no brain,
 Healthful and undisturb'd by factions fumes,
 Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
 Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades
 Dispersed the shackles of usurp'd control,
 And hew'd them link from link. Then Albion's sons
 Were sons indeed. They felt a filial heart
 Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs ;
 And, shining, each in his domestic sphere,
 Shone brighter still, once call'd to public view.
 'Tis therefore many, whose sequester'd lot
 Forbids their interference, looking on,
 Anticipate perforce some dire event ;
 And, seeing the old castle of the state,
 That promised, once, more firmness, so assail'd,
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
 Stand motionless expectants of its fall.

All has its date below ; the fatal hour
Was register'd in Heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too : the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock :
A distant age asks where the fabric stood ;
And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and Hell confederate take away :
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind ;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven.
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them His,
And are august ; but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word,
That, finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not His glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose the Artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had He not Himself

Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And, still designing a more glorious far,
Doom'd it as insufficient for His praise.
These, therefore, are occasional, and pass.
Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office served, they must be swept away
Not so the labours of His love: they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is Paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits He sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge,
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is Liberty; a flight into His arms,
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod, so draws him with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward: his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose

He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul
In Heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not, from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience? He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune, and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,
And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave;
But unrepealable, enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:
What none can prove a forgery, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
But spurious and shortlived; the puny child
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foil'd
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause,

Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd;
 With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
 And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
 Covering his shame from his offended sight.

“Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
 “And stored the earth so plenteously with means
 “To gratify the hunger of his wish;
 “And doth He reprobate, and will He damn
 “The use of His own bounty? making first
 “So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
 “So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
 “Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
 “Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
 “Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
 “The teacher's office, and dispense at large
 “Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
 “Attend to their own music? have they faith
 “In what, with such solemnity of tone
 “And gesture, they propound to our belief?
 “Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
 “Is but an instrument, on which the priest
 “May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
 “The unequivocal, authentic deed,
 “We find sound argument, we read the heart.”

Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
 To excuses in which reason has no part)
 Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
 To live on terms of amity with vice,
 And sin without disturbance. Often urged,
 (As often, as libidinous discourse
 Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
 Of theological and grave import,)
 They gain at last his unreserved assent;
 Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge

Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but foster'd his disease;
'Tis desperate; and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obey'd, to guide his steps
Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise:
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose
Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high-sounding brass,
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts Truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.
The *still small voice* is wanted. He must speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect;
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had, indeed, ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,

And He, by means in philosophic eyes
 Trivial, and worthy of disdain, achieves
 The wonder; humanizing what is brute
 In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
 Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
 By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
 Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,
 Receive proud recompence. We give in charge
 Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic Muse,
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
 To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
 To guard them, and to immortalize her trust:
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
 To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,
 Have fall'n in her defence. A patriot's blood,
 Well spent in such a strife, may earn, indeed,
 And for a time ensure, to his loved land
 The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
 But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
 And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
 In confirmation of the noblest claim,
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,
 To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
 Yet few remember them. They lived unknown,
 'Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,
 And chased them up to Heaven. Their ashes flew—
 No marble tells us whither. With their names
 No Bard embalms and sanctifies his song:
 And History, so warm on meaner themes,
 Is cold on this. She execrates, indeed,

The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.*

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor, perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy,
With a propriety that none can feel
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to Heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—"My Father made them all!"
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds, a world
So clothed with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast, or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates Nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you.
He is, indeed, a freeman: free by birth

* See Hume.

Of no mean city, plann'd or ere the hills
 Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea
 With all his roaring multitude of waves.
 His freedom is the same in every state;
 And no condition of this changeful life,
 So manifold in cares, whose every day
 Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:
 For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
 Nor penury can cripple or confine.
 No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
 With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
 His body bound, but knows not what a range
 His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
 Whom God delights in, and in whom He dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
 His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before:
 Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart,
 Made pure, shall relish, with divine delight,
 'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
 Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
 It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
 From inland regions to the distant main.
 Man views it, and admires; but rests content
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
 But not its Author. Unconcern'd who form'd
 The Paradise he sees, he finds it such,
 And, such well pleased to find it, asks no more.
 Not so the mind that has been touch'd from Heaven,
 And in the school of sacred wisdom taught

To read his wonders in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for His
Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise ;
Praise that, from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees Him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she own'd before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms
Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man,
That nightly fill the skies with silent pomp,
Sweet conference ; inquires what strains were they
With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts,
“ That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
“ Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
“ If from your elevation, whence ye view
“ Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
“ And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
“ Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race
“ Favour'd as ours ; transgressors from the womb,
“ And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,
“ And to possess a brighter Heaven than yours ?

"As one who, long detain'd on foreign shores,
 "Pants to return, and when he sees afar
 "His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks
 "From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
 "Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
 "So I, with animated hopes, behold,
 "And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
 "That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
 "Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home
 "From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
 "Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
 "That give assurance of their own success,
 "And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend."

So reads he Nature whom the lamp of truth
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
 Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,
 With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
 But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
 With means that were not till by Thee employ'd,
 Worlds that had never been, hadst Thou in strength
 Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
 They are Thy witnesses, who speak Thy power
 And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
 That hear not, or receive not their report.
 In vain Thy creatures testify of Thee,
 Till Thou proclaim Thyself. Theirs is, indeed,
 A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of Thine,
 That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn
 And with the boon gives talents for its use.
 Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
 Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
 Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death
 The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.
 We give to Chance, blind Chance, ourselves as blind

The glory of Thy work ; which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But Chance is not ; or is not where Thou reign'st :
Thy Providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be, that works but to confound)
'To mix her wild vagaries with Thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing, while we can,
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome ; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure,
Made such by Thee, we love Thee for that cause
For which we shunn'd and hated Thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from Heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touch'd them ; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all Thy works ;
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that bless'd moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind His own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears His power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
'Their only point of rest, eternal Word !
From Thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.

From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But O, Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst; without Thee we are poor;
And with Thee rich 'take what Thou wilt away.

THE TASK.

BOOK VI.—THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

ARGUMENT.

Bells at a distance: their effect. A fine noon in winter. A sheltered walk. Meditation better than books. Our familiarity with the course of Nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is. The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described. A mistake concerning the course of Nature corrected. God maintains it by an unremitted act. The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reprov'd. Animals happy, a delightful sight. Origin of cruelty to animals. That it is a great crime, proved from Scripture. That proof illustrated by a tale. A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them. Their good and useful properties insisted on. Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the Author on animals. Instances of man's extravagant praise of man. The groans of the creation shall have an end. A view taken of the restoration of all things. An invocation and an invitation of Him who shall bring it to pass. The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness. Conclusion.

THE TASK.

BOOK VI.—THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

THERE is, in souls, a sympathy with sounds ;
And as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave ;
Some chord, in unison with what we hear,
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on !
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where Memory slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seem'd not always short ; the rugged path,
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet feeling present evils, while the past

Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wish time spent revoked,
That we might try the ground again where once
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
We miss'd that happiness we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,
A father, whose authority in show
When most severe, and mustering all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand
That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age, allured
By every gilded folly, we renounced
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent
That converse which we now, in vain, regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps, more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed
The playful humour; he could now endure,
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all, pray oft amiss,
And, seeking grace to improve the prize they hold,
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.
The night was winter, in his roughest mood;





The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon,
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale ;
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd :
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men ;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

Knowledge a rude unprofitable mass,
 The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
 Till smooth'd, and squared, and fitted to its place,
 Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
 Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
 Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits
 Holds an unthinking multitude enthral'd.
 Some to the fascination of a name
 Surrender judgment, hoodwink'd. Some the style
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
 Of error leads them, by a tune entranced:
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
 The insupportable fatigue of thought;
 And swallowing, therefore, without pause or choice,
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
 But trees and rivulets, whose rapid course
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
 And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
 And lanes in which the primrose, ere her time,
 Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and Truth,
 Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
 By slow solicitation, seize at once
 The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can Power divine perform,
 More grand than it produces year by year,
 And all in sight of inattentive man?
 Familiar with the effect, we slight the cause,
 And, in the constancy of Nature's course,
 The regular return of genial months,
 And renovation of a faded world,
 See nought to wonder at. Should God again,

As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual Sun,
How would the world admire! But speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle; but, seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that moved,
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
Through the imperceptible meandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impress'd
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And, more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost
Then each, in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
In streaming gold; syringa, ivory pure;
The scentless and the scented rose; this red,
And of an humbler growth, the other* tall,
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighbouring cypress, or more sable yew,
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
That the wind severs from the broken wave;
The lilac, various in array, now white,

* The Guelder-rose.

Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if,
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved
Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;
Copious of flowers, the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late;
Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,
That scarce a leaf appears. Mezerion too,
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths, investing every spray;
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
Her blossoms; and, luxuriant above all,
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.
These have been, and these shall be in their day;
And all this uniform, uncolour'd scene
Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
And flush into variety again.
From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes
The grand transition, that there lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are His
That makes so gay the solitary place
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,
That cultivation glories in, are His.
He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshals all the order of the year;

He marks the bounds which winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury ; in its case,
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,
Uninjured, with inimitable art ;
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say that in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements received a law
From which they swerve not since. That under force
Of that controlling ordinance they move,
And need not His immediate hand who first
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
The encumbrance of His own concerns, and spare
The great Artificer of all that moves
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitting vigilance and care,
As too laborious and severe a task.
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
To span Omnipotence, and measure might
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's Sun go down.
But how should matter occupy a charge,
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause ?
The Lord of all, Himself through all diffused,
Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
By which the mighty process is maintain'd,

Who sleeps not—is not weary ; in whose sight
 Slow circling ages are as transient days ;
 Whose work is without labour ; whose designs
 No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts ;
 And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
 Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
 With self-taught rights, and under various names,
 Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
 And Flora, and Vertumnus ; peopling earth
 With tutelary goddesses and gods
 That were not ; and commending as they would
 To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
 But all are under one. One spirit—His
 Who bore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
 Rules universal Nature. Not a flower
 But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
 Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
 Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
 And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
 In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
 The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.
 Happy who walks with Him ! whom what he finds
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
 Or what he views of beautiful or grand
 In Nature, from the broad majestic Oak
 To the green blade, that twinkles in the Sun,
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,
 Makes all still fairer. As with Him no scene
 Is dreary, so with Him all seasons please.
 Though winter had been none had man been true,
 And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,
 Yet not in vengeance ; as this smiling sky,
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,

And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream,
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

Who, then, that has a mind well strung, and tuned
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,
Would waste attention at the checker'd board,
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and countermarching, with an eye
As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridged
And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?
Nor envies he aught more their idle sport
Who pant with application misapplied
To trivial toys, and, pushing ivory balls
Across a velvet level, feel a joy
Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
Its destined goal, of difficult access.
Nor deems he wiser him who gives his noon
To Miss, the Mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks
The polish'd counter, and approving none;
Or promising, with smiles, to call again.
Nor him who, by his vanity seduced,
And soothed into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction: station'd there
As duly as the Langford of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease;
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,

Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate,
That he has let it pass—but never bids.

Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The Sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather Kingcups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with Daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous Hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the Stockdove, unalarm'd,
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth,
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm Sun,
The Squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play:
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush
And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,

Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding Fawn, that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee ;
The Horse as wanton, and almost as fleet,
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops, and snorts, and, throwing high his heels
Starts to the voluntary race again ;
The very Kine, that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving first from one
That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
To give such act and utterance as they may
To ecstasy, too big to be suppress'd—
These, and a thousand images of bliss
With which kind Nature graces every scene
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,
A far superior happiness to theirs,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call
Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never King was since.
God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures summon'd from their various haunts
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
Or bounded only by a law whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel

And own—the law of universal love.
He ruled with meekness, they obey'd with joy ;
No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness, on his part who ruled the whole,
Begot a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marr'd all ; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witness'd ! Every heart,
Each animal, of every name, conceived
A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
And, conscious of some danger, either fled
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driven from Paradise ; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just, in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,

Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They fear'd, and as His perfect image loved.
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontroll'd;
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain:
The Lion tells him—I am monarch here;—
And, if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man; those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection. Witness at his foot
The Spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge;
Witness the patient Ox, with stripes and yells
Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,
To madness; while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury, spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing Horse;
With unsuspecting readiness he takes

His murderer on his back, and, push'd all day
 With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life
 To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.
 So little mercy shows who needs so much !
 Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
 Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
 He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
 (As if barbarity were high desert)
 The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
 Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
 The honours of his matchless Horse his own.
 But many a crime deem'd innocent on earth
 Is register'd in Heaven; and these, no doubt,
 Have each their record, with a curse annexed.
 Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
 But God will never. When He charged the Jew
 To assist his foe's downfallen beast to rise;
 And when the bush-exploring boy, that seized
 The young, to let the parent bird go free;
 Proved He not plainly, that His meaner works
 Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
 All, in the universal Father's love?
 On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
 The charter was conferr'd by which we hold
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim,
 O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.
 But read the instrument, and mark it well:
 The oppression of a tyrannous control
 Can find no warrant there. Feed, then, and yield
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute!
 The Governor of all, Himself to all
 So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
 The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp

Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,
Not seldom, His avenging arm, to smite
The injurious trampler upon Nature's law,
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike
The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode. Her opportune offence
Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause,
And makes the task His own. Inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed,
(If such who plead for Providence may seem
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.
Where England, stretch'd towards the setting sun,
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he
Of God and goodness, Atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journey'd; and his chance was, as he went,
To join a traveller of far different note,
Evander, famed for piety, for years
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face, too, was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,

O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high
The charity that warm'd his heart was moved
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harshly thunder'd forth, or rudely press'd,
But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
"And dost thou dream," the impenetrable man
Exclaim'd, "that me the lullabies of age,
"And fantasies of dotards such as thou
"Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
"Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
"Need no such aid as superstition lends,
"To steel their hearts against the dread of death."
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,
And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought
Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave.
But, though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational his steed
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
Or e'er his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.
The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd
By medicine well applied; but without grace
The heart's insanity admits no cure.
Enraged the more, by what might have reform'd
His horrible intent, again he sought
Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,
With sounding whip, and rowels dyed in blood.
But still in vain. The Providence, that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beast,

Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake.
And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere
Incurable obduracy evinced,
His rage grew cool; and pleased, perhaps, to have earn'd
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of some complacency he resumed
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, still where he was left
Fix'd motionless, and petrified with dread.
So on they fared. Discourse on other themes
Ensuing seem'd to obliterate the past;
And tamer far for so much fury shown,
(As is the course of rash and fiery men,)
The rude companion smiled, as if transform'd.
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.
The impious challenger of Power divine
Was now to learn that Heaven, though slow to wrath,
Is never with impunity defied.
His Horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd.
Rush'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, stood.
At once the shock unseated him: he flew
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier; and immersed
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
The death he had deserved, and died alone.
So God wrought double justice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.

An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged, perhaps, with venom, that intrudes,
A visitor unwelcome into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,
Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
The sum is this. If man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in His sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye, therefore, who love merey, teach your sons
To love it too. The springtime of our years
Is soon dishonour'd and defiled in most
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;

And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of Grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which, having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable; and God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what He deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help than we on theirs.
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with the expertness of the brutes in theirs
Are oft-times vanquish'd and thrown far behind.
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment, in the port
And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill
We could not teach, and must despair to learn.
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
To quadruped instructors, many a good
And useful quality, and virtue too,
Rarely exemplified among ourselves.
Attachment never to be wean'd, or changed
By any change of fortune; proof alike
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp; and gratitude for small
And trivial favours, lasting as the life,
And glistening even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration mad; content to hear
(O wonderful effect of music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
(For was it less? What Heathen would have dared
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel? Who, that was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him; and while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too
That His most holy book from whom it came,
Was never meant, was never used before,
To buckram out the memory of a man.
But hush!—the Muse, perhaps, is too severe;
And, with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgment than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House,
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George!
—Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,
When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made

The idol of our worship while he lived
The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre, too small, shall suffocate
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified: for there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp, and stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act.
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day,
And call'd the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry tree was hung with blooming wreaths;
The mulberry tree stood centre of the dance;
The mulberry tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.
So 'twas a hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd,
Doubtless, much edified, and all refresh'd.
—Man praises man. The rabble, all alive
From tipping benches, cellars, stalls, and sties,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes,
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
To gaze in his eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave

Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy ;
 While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
 The gilded equipage, and turning loose
 His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
 Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the state!
 No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.
 Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
 That finds out every crevice of the head
 That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
 Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
 And his own cattle must suffice him soon.
 Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
 And dedicate a tribute, in its use
 And just direction sacred, to a thing
 Doom'd to the dust, or lodged already there.
 Encomium in old time was poet's work ;
 But poets, having lavishly long since
 Exhausted all materials of the art,
 The task now falls into the public hand ;
 And I, contented with an humble theme,
 Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down
 The vale of Nature, where it creeps and winds
 Among her lovely works with a secure
 And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
 If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
 And I am recompensed, and deem the toils
 Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
 May stand between an animal and woe,
 And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.
 The groans of Nature in this nether world,
 Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
 Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung
 Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
 The time of rest, the promised sabbath, comes.

Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.
For He, whose ear the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon His sultry march,
When sin hath moved Him, and His wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious in His chariot paved with love;
And what His storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch:
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,
That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a task more arduous still.

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,

Exults to see its thirstily curse repeal'd;
 The various seasons woven into one,
 And that one season an eternal spring.
 The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
 For there is none to covet, all are full.
 The lion, and the libbard, and the bear
 Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
 Together, or all gambol in the shade
 Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man
 Lurks in the Serpent now: the mother sees,
 And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
 Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
 All creatures worship man, and all mankind
 One Lord, one Father. Error has no place:
 That creeping pestilence is driven away;
 The breath of Heaven has chased it. In the heart
 No passion touches a discordant string,
 But all is harmony and love. Disease
 Is not: the pure and uncontaminate blood
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
 One song employs all nations; and all cry,
 "Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us!"
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
 Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;
 See Salem built, the labour of a God!
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth

Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
 Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
 Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there : *
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
 And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
 Praise is in all her gates. Upon her walls,
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
 Kneels with the native of the farthest west;
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,
 And worships. Her report has travelled forth
 Into all lands. From every clime they come
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
 O Sion! an assembly such as earth
 Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.
 Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once
 Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
 So God has greatly purposed; who would else
 In His dishonour'd works Himself endure
 Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
 Hasten, then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
 Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
 A world that does not dread and hate His laws
 And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair
 The creature is that God pronounces good,
 How pleasant in itself what pleases Him.
 Here every drop of honey hides a sting;
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers;
 And e'en the joy, that haply some poor heart

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic Scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

Derives from Heaven, pure as the fountain is,
 Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint
 From touch of human lips, at best impure.
 O for a world in principle as chaste
 As this is gross and selfish! over which
 Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
 That govern all things here, shouldering aside
 The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her
 To seek a refuge from the tongue of Strife
 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men:
 Where Violence shall never lift the sword,
 Nor Cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears:
 Where he that fills an office shall esteem
 The occasion it presents of doing good
 More than the perquisite: where Law shall speak
 Seldom, and never but as Wisdom prompts,
 And Equity; not jealous more to guard
 A worthless form, than to decide aright:
 Where Fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
 Nor smooth Good-breeding (supplemental grace)
 With lean performance ape the work of Love!

Come, then, and, added to Thy many crowns,
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
 Thou who alone art worthy! It was Thine
 By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth;
 And Thou hast made it Thine by purchase since,
 And overpaid its value with thy blood.
 Thy saints proclaim Thee King; and in their hearts
 Thy title is engraven with a pen
 Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.
 Thy saints proclaim Thee King; and Thy delay
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
 The dawn of Thy last advent, long-desired,

Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long,
"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"
The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,
And aims them at the shield of Truth again.
The veil is rent—rent too by priestly hands,
That hides Divinity from mortal eyes;
And all the mysteries to Faith proposed,
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside
As useless, to the moles and to the bats.
They now are deem'd the faithful, and are praised,
Who, constant only in rejecting Thee,
Deny Thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.
Blind, and in love with darkness! yet e'en these
Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee
Thy name adoring, and then preach Thee man!
So fares Thy church. But how Thy church may fare,
The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike
To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain:
For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war
With Conscience and with Thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth.
To prey upon each other: stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down
The features of the last degenerate times,

Exhibit every lineament of these.
Come, then, and, added to Thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to Thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world!

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come ;
Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice ; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness ; bespeak him one
Content, indeed, to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The World o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects, more illustrious in her view ;
And, occupi'd as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not :
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies ; and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in Contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a Heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,
And censur'd oft as useless. Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows ; and the bird
That flutters least is longest on the wing.
Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—None.

His warfare is within. There unfatigued
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds
Perhaps the self-approving haughty World,
That, as she sweeps him with her whistling silks,
Scarcely deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
When, Isaac-like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
And think on her who thinks not for herself.
Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns
Of little worth, an idler in the best,
If, author of no mischief, and some good,
He seek his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.
Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an encumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
His sphere, though humble, if that humble sphere
Shine with his fair example; and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow, and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works
From which at least a grateful few derive
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe;
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country, recompenses well

The state beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure, and in the scale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.
The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,
Must drop, indeed, the hope of public praise;
But he may boast, what few that win it can,
That, if his country stand not by his skill,
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite Refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all the offence.
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode,
Because that World adopts it. If it bear
The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
And be not costly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and for decorum sake
Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the test of conscience, and a heart
Not soon deceived; aware that what is base
No polish can make sterling; and that vice,
Though well perfumed and elegantly dress'd,
Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flowers,
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance, than for fair attire.
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care
Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approved
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away! and so, at last,
My share of duties decently fulfill'd,
May some disease, not tardy to perform

Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It shall not grieve me then, that once, when call'd
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task ; but soon, to please her more,
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,
Let fall the unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit ;
Roved far, and gather'd much : some harsh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested ; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth ;
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.
But all is in His hand, whose praise I seek.
In vain the Poet sings, and the world hears,
If He regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart ;
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.

TIROCINIUM;

OR,

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον ὁη παιδείας ὀρθη τροφη.

PLATO.

Δοχη πολιτειας ἀπασης, νεων τροφα.

DIOD. LAERT

TO THE
REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,
RECTOR OF STOCK, IN ESSEX,
THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,
THE FOLLOWING
P O E M,
RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION
IN PREFERENCE TO
AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,
IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,
WILLIAM COWPER.

OLNEY, Nov. 6, 1784.

TIROCINIUM.

It is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form, indeed, the associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind ;
That form, the labour of Almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a freeborn will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne ;
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her the Memory fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from every distant age ;
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more ;
Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil ;
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil ;
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged ;
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.
For her the Fancy, roving unconfined,
The present Muse of every pensive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.
At her command winds rise, and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore ;

With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
 Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
 For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife
 That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,
 Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
 Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,
 Condemns, approves, and, with a faithful voice,
 Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth
 To yon fair Sun, and his attendant Earth?
 And, when descending he resigns the skies,
 Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,
 Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,
 And owns her power on every shore he laves?
 Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
 Fruitful and young as in their first career?
 Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
 Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze;
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
 Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
 Dye them, at last, in all their glowing hues.
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
 Power misemploy'd, munificence misplaced,
 Had not its Author dignified the plan,
 And crown'd it with the majesty of man.
 Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
 Finds, in a sober moment, time to pause,
 To press the important question on his heart,
 "Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
 If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave;

Endued with reason, only to desery
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
 With passions, just that he may prove with pain
 The force he spends against their fury, vain;
 And if, soon after having burnt by turns
 With every lust with which frail Nature burns,
 His being end where death dissolves the bond,
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;
 Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,
 Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,
 And, useless while he lives and when he dies,
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths, that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,
 Are not important always as dear-bought,
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
 A childish waste of philosophic pains;
 But truths, on which depends our main concern,
 That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
 Shine by the side of every path we tread
 With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
 'Tis true, that if to trifle life away
 Down to the sunset of their latest day,
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
 Were all that Heaven required of humankind,
 And all the plan their destiny design'd,
 What none could reverence all might justly blame,
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
 But Reason heard, and Nature well perused,
 At once the dreaming mind is disabused.
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
 Reflect His attributes who placed them there,
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing Mind;

'Tis plain the creature, whom He chose to invest
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
 Received his nobler nature, and was made
 Fit for the power in which he stands array'd;
 That first or last, hereafter if not here,
 He too might make his Author's wisdom clear,
 Praise Him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,
 Suffer His justice in a world to come.
 This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied
 To prove a consequence by none denied,
 That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
 Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
 That, taught of God, they may, indeed, be wise,
 Nor, ignorantly wandering, miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most
 A quickness, which in later life is lost:
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
 Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare;
 And wisely store the nursery by degrees
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
 Neatly secured from being soil'd or torn,
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
 A book (to please us at a tender age
 'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page)
 Presents the prayer the Saviour deign'd to teach,
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.
 Lispering our syllables, we scramble next
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text;
 And learn with wonder how this world began,
 Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man:

Points which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.
O thou, whom borne on Fancy's eager wing
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
Witty, and well-employ'd, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables His slighted word;
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame;
Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober grey,
Revere the man, whose PILGRIM marks the road,
And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.
'Twere well with most, if books, that could engage
Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age;
The man, approving what had charm'd the boy,
Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy;
And not with curses on his heart who stole
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
The stamp of artless piety impress'd
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with scorn, though once received with awe:
And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,
That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,
Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams unworthy of a man.
'Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Assert the native evil of his heart,

His pride resents the charge, although the proof*
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough :
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
 The young apostate sickens at the view,
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,
 Opposed against the pleasures Nature loves !
 While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
 She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
 Time was, he closed as he began the day
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray :
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part ;
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
 A Power, confess'd so lately on his knees.
 But now farewell all legendary tales,
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails ;
 Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves ;
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves.
 Priests have invented, and the world admired
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspired ;
 Till Reason, now no longer overawed,
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud ;
 And, common sense diffusing real day,
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away.
 Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
 Learn from expert inquiries after truth ;
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.

* See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

And thus, well tutor'd only while we share
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care ;
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,*
 But sound religion sparingly enough ;
 Our early notices of truth, disgraced,
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once ;
 That in good time the stripling's finish'd taste
 For loose expense, and fashionable waste,
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last ;
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
 In infidelity and lewdness men.
 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
 That authors are most useful pawn'd or sold ;
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart ;
 There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
 His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
 Detain their adolescent charge too long ;
 The management of tyros of eighteen
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.

* The Author begs leave to explain :—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or, indeed, understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the Heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture, which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

The stout tall captain, whose superior size
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,
With them is courage; his effrontery wit.
His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes
Transport them, and are made their favourite themes.
In little bosoms such achievements strike
A kindred spark: they burn to do the like.
Thus, half-accomplish'd ere he yet begin
To show the peeping down upon his chin;
And, as maturity of years comes on,
Made just the adept that you design'd your son;
To ensure the perseverance of his course,
And give your monstrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,
Where no regard of ord'nances is shown
Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.
Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking-bout,
Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:
Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
With packhorse constancy we keep the road,
Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells.
'True to the jingling of our leader's bells.

To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think :
And such an age as ours balks no expense,
Except of caution, and of common sense ;
Else, sure, notorious fact, and proof so plain,
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
I blame not those who, with what care they can,
O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan ;
Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promise a work of which they must despair.
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
A ubiquarian presence and control,
Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi stray'd,
Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd ?
Yes—ye are conscious ; and on all the shelves
Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.
Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men ;
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils not to be endured, endure,
Lest power exerted, but without success,
Should make the little ye retain still less.
Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth ;
And in the firmament of fame still shines
A glory, bright as that of all the signs,
Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines
Peace to them all ! those brilliant times are fled,
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
Our striplings shine, indeed, but with such rays
As set the midnight riot in a blaze ;

And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.

Say, Muse, (for, education made the song,
No Muse can hesitate, or linger long,)
What causes move us, knowing, as we must,
That these *menageries* all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the play-place of our early days;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone,
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved, subsisting still;
The bench on which we sat, while deep employ'd,
Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd;
The little ones, unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot;
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee;

And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
 That they must soon learn Latin, and to box ;
 Then, turning, he regales his listening wife
 With all the adventures of his early life :
 His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise ;
 In bilking tavern bills, and spounging plays ;
 What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,
 How he was flogg'd, or had the luck to escape ;
 What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
 Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
 Retracing thus his *frolics*, ('tis a name
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame.)
 He gives the local bias all its sway :
 Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,
 And destines their bright genius to be shown
 Just in the scene where he display'd his own.
 The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
 To be as bold and forward as he ought ;
 The rude will scuttle through with ease enough,
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
 Ah, happy designation, prudent choice.
 The event is sure : expect it, and rejoice !
 Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child.
 The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.
 The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
 Excused the encumbrance of more solid worth,
 Are best disposed of where with most success
 They may acquire that confident address,
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
 Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
 With so much reason all expect from them.
 But families of less illustrious fame,
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,

Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
 What dream they of, that with so little care
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
 They dream of little Charles or William graced
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist;
 They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
 The father, who designs his babe a priest,
 Dreams him episcopally such at least;
 And, while the playful jockey scours the room
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride
 In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.
 Events improbable and strange as these,
 Which only a parental eye foresees,
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
 But how? resides such virtue in that air,
 As must create an appetite for prayer?
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,
 To take the lead, and be the foremost still
 In all true worth and literary skill?
 “Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught
 “The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
 “Church-ladders are not always mounted best
 “By learned clerks, and Latinists profess’d.
 “The exalted prize demands an upward look,
 “Not to be found by poring on a book.
 “Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
 “Is more than adequate to all I seek.
 “Let erudition grace him, or not grace,
 “I give the bauble but the second place;

“ His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
 “ Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.
 “ A friend, whate’er he studies or neglects,
 “ Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.
 “ His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—
 “ There dawns the splendour of his future years ;
 “ In that bright quarter his propitious skies
 “ Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
 “ *Your Lordship*, and *Your Grace!* what school can
 “ A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech? [teach
 “ What need of Homer’s verse or Tully’s prose,
 “ Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?
 “ Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
 “ Who starve upon a dog’s-ear’d Pentateuch;—
 “ ‘The parson knows enough, who knows a Duke.’”
 Egregious purpose! worthily begun
 In barbarous prostitution of your son;
 Press’d on *his* part by means that would disgrace
 A scrivener’s clerk, or footman out of place,
 And ending, if at last its end be gain’d,
 In sacrilege, in God’s own house profaned.
 It may succeed; and, if his sins should call
 For more than common punishment, it shall;
 The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
 The *royal letters* are a thing of course,
 A King that would, might recommend his horse;
 And Deans, no doubt, and Chapters, with one voice,
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
 Behold your Bishop! well he plays his part,
 Christian in name, and infidel in heart,

Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
A piece of mere church-furniture at best ;
To live estranged from God his total scope,
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
But fair although and feasible it seem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream ;
For Providence, that seems concern'd to exempt
The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace ;
And therefore 'tis that, though the sight be rare,
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound ;
The most disinterested and virtuous minds,
In early years connected, time unbinds ;
New situations give a different cast
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;
And he, that seem'd our counterpart at first,
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,
Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known.
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
'Twere wiser, sure, to inspire a little heart
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,

Than set your son to work at a vile trade
For wages so unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile resort,
That are of chief and most approved report,
To such base hopes in many a sordid soul,
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass—
That with a world, not often over-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—
Contributes most, perhaps, to enhance their fame;
And Emulation is its specious name.
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns;
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage, if he fail,
Deems his reward too great, if he prevail,
And labours to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth;
And felt alike by each, advances both:
But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh. for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt;

Hurt too, perhaps, for life ; for early wrong,
 Done to the nobler part, affects it long ;
 And you are staunch, indeed, in learning's cause
 If you can crown a discipline that draws
 Such mischiefs after it with much applause.

Connexion form'd for interest, and endear'd
 By selfish views thus censured and cashier'd ;
 And emulation, as engendering hate,
 Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate :
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,
 The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.
 Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
 Beyond a size that can be managed well,
 Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
 And small academies win all the praise ?
 Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
 I praise a school as Pope a government ;
 So take my judgment in his language dress'd,
 "Whate'er is best administer'd is best."
 Few boys are born with talents that excel,
 But all are capable of living well.
 Then ask not, whether limited or large ?
 But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge :
 If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
 While *morals* languish, a despised concern,
 The great and small deserve one common blame,
 Different in size, but in effect the same.
 Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most ;
 Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
 For there the game they seek is easiest found ;
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.

If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,
 Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill ;
 As, wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will ;
 The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share ;
 But if, with all his genius, he betray,
 Not more intelligent than loose and gay,
 Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame ;
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread ;
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.

O 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,
 By all whom sentiment has not abused ;
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
 Of those who never feel in the right place ;
 A sight surpass'd by none that we can show,
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below ;
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
 How !—turn again to tales long since forgot,
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest !—Why not ?
 He will not blush that has a father's heart,
 To take, in childish plays, a childish part ;
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy ;
 Then why resign into a stranger's hand
 A task as much within your own command,
 That God and nature, and your interest too,
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you ?
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown [own ?
 For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your

This second weaning, needless as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his !
The indented stick, that loses day by day
Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away,
Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,
With what intense desire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
Harmless, and safe, and natural as they are,
A disappointment waits him even there:
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,
His favourite stand between his father's knees,
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And, least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by absence chill'd into respect.
Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired,
Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesired?
Thou well deservest an alienated son,
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;
None that, in thy domestic snug recess,
He had not made his own with more address,
Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,
And better never learn'd, or left behind.
Add too, that thus estranged, thou canst obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again ;
That here begins with most that long complaint
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
A parent pours into regardless ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race ;
While every worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves ;
So numerous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy ;
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;
E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend,
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend ;
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions, and control their tide ;
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
To impress a value, not to be erased,
On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste,
And seems it nothing in a father's eye,
That unimproved those many moments fly ?
And is he well content his son should find
No nourishment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined ?
For such is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hackneys in the schooling trade :
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
Of syntax truly, but with little more ,

Dismiss their cares, when they dismiss their flock,
Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,
Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,
To improve this diet, at no great expense,
With savoury truth and wholesome common sense ;
To lead his son, for prospects of delight,
To some not steep though philosophic height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size ;
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all ;
To show him in an insect or a flower
Such microscopic proof of skill and power,
As, hid from ages past, God now displays,
To combat atheists with in modern days ;
To spread the earth before him, and commend,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote ;
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame ;
And, more than all, with commendation due,
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire.
Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears,
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
When health demands it, of athletic sort,
Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,
And more than one, perhaps, that I have seen—
An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally tied,
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
Too busy to intend a meaner care,
Than how to enrich thyself, and next thine heir ;
Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none to impart :—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad ;
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad ;
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men ;
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force ;
And his address, if not quite French in ease,
Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to please ;
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts ;
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts ;
Unpatronized, and therefore little known,
Wise for himself and his few friends alone—
In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee ;
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth ;
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
The force of discipline, when back'd by love ;
To double all thy pleasure in thy child.
His mind inform'd, his morals undefiled.
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below,
Ner taint his speech with meanesses, design'd
By footman Tom for witty and refined.
There, in his commerce with the liveried herd,
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd ;
For since (so fashion dictates) all who claim
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,

Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
(And they that can afford the expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,)
Great cause occurs to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand;
A point secured, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound,
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools that have outlived all just esteem,
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme—
But, having found him, be thou Duke or Earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
Despised by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly than the same neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant, upon all his future pains;
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not, then, to solitary meals;
But recollect that he has sense, and feels;
And that, possessor of a soul refined,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.

And, if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit ;
Offend not him, whom modesty restrains
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains ;
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath ;
Nor frown unless he vanish with the cloth.
And, trust me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hired or bound to teach ;
Much trash unutter'd, and some ills undone,
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Because, forsooth, thy courage has been tried
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side ;
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That anything but vice could win thy love ;
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chain'd to the routs that she frequents for life ;
Who, just when industry begins to snore,
Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door ;
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile, e'en shifting as thou mayest,
Not very sober though, nor very chaste ;—
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
A trifler vain, and empty of all good ;
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,

Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
The most seducing, and the oftenest seen)
May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
Not yet, perhaps, incurably impress'd :
Where early rest makes early rising sure,
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;
Or, if it enter, soon starv'd out again :
Where all the attention of his faithful host,
Discreetly limited to two at most,
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air :
Where stillness aiding study, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last
In settled habit and decided taste.
But whom do I advise ! The fashion-led,
The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,
Whom care and cool deliberation suit
Not better much than spectacles a brute ;
Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,
Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;
Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay to have any of their own.
But courage, man ! methought the Muse replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide :
The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautions, to the dust,
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust ;

And, while on public nurseries they rely,
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
 Irrational in what they thus prefer,
 No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
 But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
 May here and there prevent erroneous choice ;
 And some, perhaps, who, busy as they are,
 Yet make their progeny their dearest care,
 (Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
 Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach,)
 Will need no stress of argument to enforce
 The expedience of a less adventurous course :
 The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn ;
 But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.

To you, then, tenants of life's middle state,
 Securely placed between the small and great,
 Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains
 Two-thirds of all the virtue that remains.
 Who, wise yourselves, desire your son should learn
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
 Look round you on a world perversely blind ;
 See what contempt is fallen on humankind ;
 See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
 Great titles, offices, and trusts, disgraced,
 Long lines of ancestry renown'd of old,
 Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold ;
 See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge
 Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large ;
 See great commanders making war a trade,
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made ;
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy ;
 Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves
 With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves ,

See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
With infamy too nauseous to be named,
Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,
Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curses and with nonsense hung,
Now flush'd with drunk'ness, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a sample of last night's regale ;
See volunteers in all the vilest arts,
Men well-endow'd, of honourable parts,
Design'd by Nature wise, but self-made fools ;
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school-bred, the boy be virtuous still ;
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark :
As here and there a twinkling star descried
Serves but to show how black is all beside.
Now look on him whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And say, My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
And trust for safety to a stranger's care :
What character, what turn thou wilt assume
From constant converse with I know not whom ;
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose,
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk, foreseen, forbids—

Free too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course—
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
Thou canst not! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands, in his way;
Then, only govern'd by the self-same rule
Of natural pity, send him not to school.
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
And hopest thou not ('tis every father's hope)
That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort, to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy grey hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware, then, how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.
His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
Secure it thine; its key is in thine hand.
If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
But, if thou guard its sacred chambers sure
From vicious inmates, and delights impure,
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last;

Or, if he prove unkind, (as who can say
 But, being man, and therefore frail, he may,)
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

O! barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
 Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' the
 Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms, [land?
 Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?
 —A captious question, Sir, (and yours is one),
 Deserves an answer similar, or none.

Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
 (Appriz'd that he is such) a careless boy,
 And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
 Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?
 Survey our schools and colleges, and see
 A sight not much unlike my simile.
 From education, as the leading cause,
 The public character its colour draws;
 Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
 Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
 And, though I would not advertise them yet,
 Nor write on each—*This Building to be let*,
 Unless the world were all prepared to embrace
 A plan well worthy to supply their place;
 Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
 To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
 (Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,
 Or better managed, or encouraged less.

YARDLEY OAK.

[1791.]

SURVIVOR sole, and hardly such, of all
That once lived here, thy brethren, at my birth,
(Since which I number threescore winters past,)
A shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd, perhaps,
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
Relies of ages! could a mind, imbued
With truth from Heaven, created thing adore,
I might with reverence kneel, and worship thee

It seems idolatry with some excuse,
When our forefather Druids in their oaks
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
Unpurified by an authentic act
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.

Thou wast a bauble once, a cup and ball
Which babes might play with; and the thievish Jay
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.
But Fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil
Design'd thy cradle; and a skipping Deer,
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.

So Fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
 Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search
 Of argument, employ'd too oft amiss,
 Sifts half the pleasure of short life away!

Thou fell'st mature; and, in the loamy clod
 Swelling with vegetative force extinct,
 Didst burn thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins,
 Now stars; two lobes, protruding, pair'd exact;
 A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
 And, all the elements thy puny growth
 Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.

Who lived when thou wast such? Oh! couldst thou
 As in Dodona once thy kindred trees [speak,
 Oracular, I would not curious ask
 The future, best unknown, but, at thy mouth
 Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.

By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
 The clock of history, facts and events
 Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
 Recovering, and mis-stated setting right:—
 Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!

Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods
 And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
 For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
 O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous flocks
 That grazed it stood beneath that ample cope
 Uncrowded, yet safe shelter'd from the storm.
 No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived
 Thy popularity, and art become
 (Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
 Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.

While thus through all the stages thou hast push'd
 Of treeship—first a seedling, hid in grass;
 Then twig; then sapling; and, as century roll'd

Slow after century, a giant-bulk
 Of girth enormous, with moss-cushion'd root
 Upheaved above the soil, and sides emboss'd
 With prominent wens globose—till, at the last,
 The rottenness which Time is charged to inflict
 On other mighty ones found also thee.

What exhibitions various hath the world
 Witness'd of mutability in all
 That we account most durable below !
 Change is the diet on which all subsist,
 Created changeable, and change, at last,
 Destroys them. Skies uncertain now the heat
 Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam
 Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds—
 Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,
 Invigorate by turns the springs of life
 In all that live—plant, animal, and man,
 And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,
 Fine passing thought, e'en in her coarsest works,
 Delight in agitation, yet sustain
 The force that agitates not unimpair'd ;
 But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause
 Of their best tone their dissolution owe.

Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
 The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
 From almost nullity into a state
 Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
 Slow, into such magnificent decay.
 Time was, when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
 Could shake thee to the root—and time has been
 When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
 Thou hadst, within thy bole, solid contents
 That might have ribb'd the sides and plank'd the deck
 Of some flagg'd admiral ; and tortuous arms,

The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present
 To the four-quarter'd winds, robust and bold,
 Warp'd into tough knee-timber many a load!*
 But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days
 Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
 The bottomless demands of contest waged
 For senatorial honours. Thus to Time
 The task was left to whittle thee away
 With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
 Noiseless, an atom, and an atom more,
 Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,
 Achieved a labour which had, far and wide,
 By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.

Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self
 Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that seems
 An huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,
 Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,
 Thou temptest none, but rather much forbidd'st
 The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.
 Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
 A quarry of stout spurs and knotted fangs,
 Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp
 The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.

So stands a kingdom, whose foundation yet
 Fails not, in virtue and in wisdom laid,
 Though all the superstructure, by the tooth
 Pulverised of venality, a shell
 Stands now, and semblance only of itself!

Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off
 Long since, and rovers of the forest wild,
 With bow and shaft, have burnt them. Some have left

* Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.

A splinter'd stump, bleach'd to a snowy white ;
 And some, memorial none where once they grew.
 Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
 Proof not contemptible of what she can,
 Even where death predominates. The spring
 Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force
 Than yonder upstarts of the neighbouring wood,
 So much thy juniors, who their birth received
 Half a millennium since the date of thine.

But since, although well qualified by age
 To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
 May be expected from thee, seated here
 On thy distorted root, with hearers none,
 Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform,
 Myself the oracle, and will discourse
 In my own ear such matter as I may.

One man alone, the father of us all,
 Drew not his life from woman ; never gazed,
 With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
 On all around him ; learn'd not by degrees,
 Nor owed articulation to his ear ;
 But, moulded by his Maker into man
 At once, upstood intelligent, survey'd
 All creatures, with precision understood
 Their purport ; uses, properties, assign'd
 To each his name significant, and, fill'd
 With love and wisdom, render'd back to Heaven
 In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
 He was excused the penalties of dull
 Minority. No tutor charged his hand
 With the thought-tracing quill, or task'd his mind
 With problems. History, not wanted yet,
 Lean'd on her elbow, watching Time, whose course
 Eventful, should supply her with a theme.

SONNET,

ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

[June 2, 1792.]

HAYLEY—thy tenderness fraternal shown
 In our first interview, delightful guest!
 To Mary, and me for her dear sake distress'd,
 Such as it is has made my heart thy own,
 Though heedless now of new engagements grown;
 For threescore winters make a wintry breast,
 And I had purpos'd ne'er to go in quest
 Of Friendship more, except with God alone.
 But thou hast won me; nor is God my foe
 Who, ere this last afflictive scene began,
 Sent thee to mitigate the dreadful blow,
 My brother, by whose sympathy I know
 Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,
 Not more to admire the Bard than love the man.

ON THE

RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE,
OUT OF NORFOLK,

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN ANN BODHAM.

O THAT those lips had language! Life has pass'd
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
 The same, that oft in childhood solaccd me;

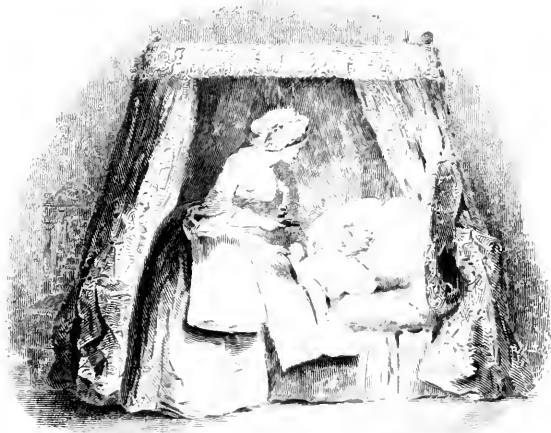
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
“ Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away !”
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrance of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here !
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a Mother lost so long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own :
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My Mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss ;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone,
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more !
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.

What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
 By expectation every day beguiled,
 Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
 I learn'd at last submission to my lot;
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capt,
 'Tis now become a history little known,
 That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.
 Shortlived possession! but the record fair,
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd;
 All this, and more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks
 That humour, interposed, too often makes;
 All this still legible in memory's page,
 And still to be so to my latest age,
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may;



Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorn'd in Heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile,)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee, to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the shore
"Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar,"*
And thy loved Consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force

* Garth.

Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
 Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he !
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
 My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
 From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
 'The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
 And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
 His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again ;
 To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
 Without the sin of violating thine ;
 And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,
 'Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
 Thysel removed, thy power to soothe me left.

AN EPISTLE

TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE.

MADAM,
 A STRANGER's purpose in these lays
 Is to congratulate, and not to praise.
 To give the creature the Creator's due
 Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
 From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
 Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
 A coin by Craft for Folly's use design'd,
 Spurious, and only current with the blind.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown :
No traveller e'er reach'd that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain ;
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread,
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of His love,
That, hard by nature, and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls His grace design'd
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, " Go, spend them in a vale of tears."'
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air !
O salutary streams, that murmur there !
These flowing from the fount of grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil, indeed, their feet annoys ;
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys ;
An envious world will interpose its frown,
To mar delights superior to its own ;
And many a pang, experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin :
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim :
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.
Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste !

No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
 But the chief Shepherd even there is near;
 Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
 Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
 Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
 And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.
 So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
 And drouth on all the drooping herbs around.

TO THE
 REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

UNWIN, I should but ill repay
 The kindness of a friend,
 Whose worth deserves as warm a lay
 As ever friendship penn'd,
 Thy name omitted in a page
 That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union form'd, as mine with thee,
 Not rashly, nor in sport,
 May be as fervent in degree,
 And faithful in its sort,
 And may as rich in comfort prove,
 As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
 The bud of peach or rose,
 Adorns, though differing in its kind,
 The stock whereon it grows,
 With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,
 As if produced by Nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,
I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
Lest this should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be—in a plan
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart;
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blazed by art.
No Muses on these lines attend;
I sink the Poet in the friend.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ

DEAR JOSEPH—five and twenty years ago—
Alas! how time escapes:—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas, therefore, much the same in ancient days,)
Good lack! we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:
And, were I call'd to prove the assertion true,
One proof should serve—a reference to you.
Whence comes it, then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occur'd to kindle strife,

We find the friends we fancied we had won,
 Though numerous once, reduced to few or none ?
 Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch ?
 No ; gold they seem'd, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
 Swinging the parlour-door upon its hinge,
 Dreading a negative, and overawed
 Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
 Go, fellow !—whither ?—turning short about—
 Nay, stay at home, you're always going out.
 'Tis but a step, Sir, just at the street's end.—
 For what ?—An't please you, Sir, to see a friend.—
 A friend ! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—
 Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart—
 And fetch my cloak ; for though the night be raw,
 I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
 And was his plaything often when a child ;
 But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
 Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made ;
 Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
 The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
 Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
 Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain
 To prove an evil of which all complain,
 (I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)
 One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
 Once on a time an emperor, a wise man,
 No matter where, in China or Japan,
 Decreed that whosoever should offend
 Against the well-known duties of a friend,

Convicted once should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.

O happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law, like that which I relate,
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY

THE swallows in their torpid state
Compose their useless wing,
And bees in hives as idly wait
The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream
The wildest wind that blows,
Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,
Secure of their repose.

But man, all feeling and awake,
 The gloomy scene surveys ;
 With present ills his heart must ache,
 And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,
 Bids me and Mary mourn ;
 But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,
 And whispers your return.

Then April, with her sister May,
 Shall chase him from the bowers,
 And weave fresh garlands every day,
 To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear, that speaks regret
 Of happier times, appear,
 A glimpse of joy, that we have met,
 Shall shine and dry the tear.

ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE.

[January, 1793.]

In language warm as could be breathed or penn'd,
 Thy picture speaks the original my friend ;
 Not by those looks that indicate thy mind—
 They only speak thee friend of all mankind ;
 Expression here more soothing still I see,
 That friend of *all* a partial friend to *me*.





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CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON, (NOW MRS. COURTNEY.)

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—
 And meet, perhaps, never again ;
 The sun of that moment is set,
 And seems to have risen in vain.
 Catharina has fled like a dream—
 (So vanishes pleasure, alas !)
 But has left a regret and esteem
 That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,
 Catharina, Maria, and I,
 Our progress was often delay'd
 By the Nightingale warbling nigh.
 We paused under many a tree,
 And much was she charm'd with a tone
 Less sweet to Maria and me,
 Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
 And gave them a grace so divine
 As only her musical tongue
 Could infuse into numbers of mine.
 The longer I heard, I esteem'd
 The work of my fancy the more,
 And e'en to myself never seem'd
 So tuneful a Poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
 In number the days of the year,
 Catharina, did nothing impede,
 Would feel herself happier here ;

For the close-woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than aught that the city can show.

So it is when the mind is endued
With a well-judging taste from above,
Then, whether embellish'd or rude,
'Tis Nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuse,
May even our wonder excite,
But groves, hills, and valleys, diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since, then, in the rural recess
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
The scene of her sensible choice!
To inhabit a mansion remote
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual-note
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home,
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
As oft as it suits her to roam,
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear;
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold
 That title now too trite and old,
 A man, oncé young, who lived retired
 As hermit could have well desired,
 His hours of study closed at last,
 And finish'd his concise repast,
 Stopp'd his cruse, replaced his book
 Within its customary nook,
 And, staff in hand, set forth to share
 The sober cordial of sweet air,
 Like Isaac, with a mind applied
 To serious thought at evening-tide.
 Autumnal rains had made it chill,
 And from the trees, that fringed his hill,
 Shades slanting at the close of day
 Chill'd more his else delightful way;
 Distant a little mile he spied
 A western bank's still sunny side,
 And right toward the favour'd place
 Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
 In hope to bask a little yet,
 Just reach'd it when the sun was set.

Your hermit, young and jovial Sirs,
 Learns something from whate'er occurs—
 And hence, he said, my mind computes
 The real worth of man's pursuits.
 His object chosen, wealth or fame,
 Or other sublunary game,

Imagination to his view
 Presents it deck'd with every hue
 That can seduce him not to spare
 His powers of best exertion there,
 But youth, health, vigour to expend
 On so desirable an end.

Ere long approach life's evening shades,
 The glow that fancy gave it fades;
 And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
 That first engaged him in the chase.

True, answer'd an angelic guide,
 Attendant at the senior's side—
 But whether all the time it cost
 To urge the fruitless chase be lost,
 Must be decided by the worth
 Of that which call'd his ardour forth.
 Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,
 Must cause him shame or discontent;
 A vicious object still is worse;
 Successful there, he wins a curse!
 But he, whom e'en in life's last stage
 Endeavours laudable engage,
 Is paid at least in peace of mind,
 And sense of having well design'd;
 And if, ere he attain his end,
 His Sun precipitate descend,
 A brighter prize than that he meant
 Shall recompense his mere intent.
 No virtuous wish can bear a date
 Either too early or too late.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat ;
 My shrubs, displaced from that retreat,
 Enjoy'd the open air ;
 Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
 Had been their mutual solace long,
 Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing,
 That flutter loose on golden wing,
 And frolic where they list ;
 Strangers to liberty, 'tis true :
 But that delight they never knew,
 And, therefore, never miss'd.

But Nature works in every breast
 With force not easily suppress'd :
 And Dick felt some desires,
 That, after many an effort vain,
 Instructed him at length to gain
 A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd to invite
 The freeman to a farewell flight :
 But Tom was still confined :
 And Dick, although his way was clear,
 Was much too generous and sincere
 To leave his friend behind.

So, settling on his cage, by play,
 And chirp, and kiss, he seem'd to say
 You must not live alone—
 Nor would he quit that chosen stand
 Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
 Return'd him to his own.

Oh ye, who never taste the joys
 Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,
 Fandango, ball, and rout!
 Blush, when I tell you how a bird
 A prison with a friend preferr'd
 To liberty without.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,
 Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
 Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
 Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
 Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
 That he may follow them through brake and brier,
 Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
 Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
 A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,
 Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
 Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;

And where the land slopes to its watery bourn,
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn;
Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed;
Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from every spray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack;
Now, therefore, issued forth the spotted pack
With tails high-mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes,
For which, alas! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The Sun, accomplishing his early march,
His lamp now planted on Heaven's topmost arch,
When, exercise and air my only aim,
And heedless whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang,
All Kilwick and all Dingleberry* rang.

Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom press'd
The herb, as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest;
Nor noise was heard, but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
Gan make his instrument of music speak,

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

And from within the wood that crash was heard,
 Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,
 The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that grazed,
 All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
 Admiring, terrified, the novel strain ; [again ;
 Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round
 But, recollecting with a sudden thought,
 That flight, in circles urged, advanced them nought,
 They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
 And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustom'd long,
 Perceives in everything that lives a tongue ;
 Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
 Have speech for him, and understood with ease ;
 After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
 He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all ;
 Knows what the freshness of their hue implies
 How glad they catch the largess of the skies ;
 But, with precision nicer still, the mind
 He scans of every locomotive kind ;
 Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
 That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame ;
 The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
 Have all articulation in his ears ;
 He spells them true by intuition's light,
 And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,
 To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused ; surveying every face
 Thou hadst supposed them of superior race ;
 Their periwigs of wool, and fears combined,
 Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
 That sage they seem'd, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
 Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out ;

Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
 Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths ;
 When thus a mutton, statelier than the rest,
 A ram, the ewes and wethers sad address'd.

Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
 Sounds such as these so worthy to be fear'd.
 Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
 In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
 And from their prison-house below arise,
 With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
 I could be much composed, nor should appear,
 For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
 Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders roll'd
 All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
 Or, heard we that tremendous bray alone,
 I could expound the melancholy tone ;
 Should deem it by our old companion made,
 The ass ; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,
 And being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
 Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
 But ah ! those dreadful yells what soul can hear
 That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear ?
 Demons produce them, doubtless ; brazen-claw'd,
 And fang'd with brass, the demons are abroad ;
 I hold it, therefore, wisest and most fit,
 That, life to save, we leap into the pit.

Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,
 But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

How ! leap into the pit our life to save ?
 To save our life leap all into the grave ?
 For can we find it less ? Contemplate first
 The depth, how awful ! falling there, we burst :
 Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall
 In part abate, that happiness were small ;

For with a race like theirs no chance I see
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
Of demons utter'd, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
We have at least commodious standing here.
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast,
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, close attended at his heels
By panting dog, tired man, and spatter'd horse,
Through mere good fortune, took a different course.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following, that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

TO JOHN JOHNSON,

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE
BUST OF HOMER.

[May, 1793.]

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son, by me!
 When I behold this fruit of thy regard,
 The scultpured form of my old favourite Bard,
 I reverence feel for him, and love for thee.
 Joy too and grief. Much joy that there should be
 Wise men and learn'd, who grudge not to reward
 With some applause my bold attempt and hard,
 Which others scorn: critics by courtesy.
 The grief is this, that, sunk in Homer's mine,
 I lose my precious years, now soon to fail,
 Handling his gold, which howsoe'er it shine,
 Proves dross when balanced in the Christian scale.
 Be wiser thou—like our forefather DONNE,
 Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

 BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

WHEN the British warrior Queen,
 Bleeding from the Roman rods,
 Sought, with an indignant mien,
 Counsel of her country's gods;

Sage beneath a spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief:

Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize.
Harmony the path to fame.

Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew,
Thy posterity shall sway;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they.

Such the Bard's prophetic words,
 Pregnant with celestial fire,
 Bending as he swept the chords
 Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
 Felt them in her bosom glow:
 Rush'd to battle, fought and died;
 Dying, hurl'd them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
 Heaven awards the vengeance due;
 Empire is on us bestow'd,
 Shame and ruin wait for you.

 HEROISM.

THERE was a time when Ætna's silent fire
 Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire;
 When, conscious of no danger from below,
 She tower'd a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
 No thunders shook, with deep intestine sound,
 The blooming groves that girdled her around;
 Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines,
 (Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines,
 The peasant's hopes, and not in vain assured,
 In peace upon her sloping sides matured.
 When on a day, like that of the last doom,
 A conflagration labouring in her womb,
 She teem'd and heaved with an infernal birth,
 That shook the circling seas and solid earth.

Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
 And hang their horrors in the neighbouring skies,
 While through the Stygian veil, that blots the day,
 In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
 But, oh ! what Muse, and in what powers of song,
 Can trace the torrent as it burns along ?
 Havock and devastation in the van,
 It marches o'er the prostrate works of man,
 Vines, olives, herbage, forests, disappear,
 And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
 See it an uninform'd and idle mass ;
 Without a soil to invite the tiller's care,
 Or blade, that might redeem it from despair.
 Yet time at length (what will not time achieve ?)
 Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
 Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
 And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
 O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,
 O charming Paradise of short-lived sweets !
 The self-same gale, that wafts the fragrance round,
 Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound :
 Again the mountain feels the imprison'd foe,
 Again pours ruin on the vale below.
 Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
 That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
 Who write in blood the merits of your cause,
 Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,
 Glory your aim, but justice your pretence ;
 Behold, in Ætna's emblematic fires,
 The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires !

Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,
 And tells you where ye have a right to reign,

A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
 Studios of peace, their neighbours', and their own.
 Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue
 Their only crime—vicinity to you!

The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
 Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road;
 At every step beneath their feet they tread
 The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!

Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
 Before them, and behind a wilderness.

Famine, and Pestilence, her first-born son,
 Attend to finish what the sword begun;
 And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,
 And Folly pays, resound at your return.

A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
 Of heartfelt joys, succeeds not soon again,
 And years of pining indigence must show
 What scourges are the gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
 (Such is his thirst of opulence and ease,)
 Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
 Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
 Rebuilds the towers that smoked upon the plain,
 And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce, and reviving art,
 Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part;
 And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more,
 That wealth within is ruin at the door.

What are ye, monarchs, laurel'd heroes, say,
 But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway?
 Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroider'd robe,
 Deplores the wasted regions of her globe;
 And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,
 To prove you there destroyers, as ye are.

O place me in some Heaven-protected isle,
 Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile;
 Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
 No crested warrior dips his plume in blood;
 Where Power secures what Industry has won:
 Where to succeed is not to be undone;
 A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,
 In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign!

 ON FRIENDSHIP.

—
 "Amicitia nisi inter bonos esse non potest."
 CICERO.

—
 [1782.]

WHAT virtue can we name, or grace,
 But men unqualified and base
 Will boast it their possession?
 Profusion apes the noble part
 Of liberality of heart,
 And dulness, of discretion.

But as the gem of richest cost
 Is ever counterfeited most,
 So, always, imitation
 Employs the utmost skill she can
 To counterfeit the faithful man,
 The friend of long duration.

Some will pronounce me too severe,
But long experience speaks me clear ;
Therefore, that censure scorning,
I will proceed to mark the shelves
On which so many dash themselves,
And give the simple warning.

Youth, unadmonish'd by a guide,
Will trust to any fair outside,—
An error soon corrected ;
For who but learns, with riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected ?

But here again a danger lies,
Lest, thus deluded by our eyes,
And taking trash for treasure,
We should, when undeceived, conclude
Friendship imaginary good,
A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair ;
Nor should it seem distressful,
If, either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
We sought it unsuccessful.

No friendship will abide the test
That stands on sordid interest
And mean self-love erected ;
Nor such as may awhile subsist
'Twixt sensualist and sensualist,
For vicious ends connected.

Who hopes a friend, should have a heart
Himself, well furnish'd for the part,
And ready on occasion
To show the virtue that he seeks ;
For 'tis an union that bespeaks
A just reciprocation.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
By ceaseless sharp corrosion :
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
With hope of permanent delight ;
The secret just committed
They drop, through mere desire to prate,
Forgetting its important weight,
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams.
If envy chance to creep in ;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,
So jealousy looks forth distress'd,
On good that seems approaching ;
And, if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name
(Unless belied by common fame)
Are sadly prone to quarrel;
To deem the wit a friend displays
So much of loss to their own praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renown'd for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling;
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And tell you 'twas a special jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Beware of tattlers; keep your ear
Close stopp'd against the tales they bear,—
Fruits of their own invention;
The separation of chief friends
Is what their kindness most intends;
Their sport is your dissension.

Friendship that wantonly admits
A joco-serious play of wits
In brilliant altercation,
Is union such as indicates,
Like Hand-in-Hand insurance plates,
Danger of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as a needle to the pole;
Yet shifting, like the weather,
The needle's constancy forego
For any novelty, and show
Its variations rather.

Insensibility makes some
Unseasonably deaf and dumb,
When most you need their pity ;
'Tis waiting till the tears shall fall
From Gog and Magog in Guildhall,
Those playthings of the City.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete :
The attempt would scarce be madder,
Should any, from the bottom, hope
At one huge stride to reach the top
Of an erected ladder.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics,
Without an effervescence,
Such as of salts with lemon-juice,
But which is rarely known to induce,
Like that, a coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life :
But even those who differ
Only on topics left at large,
How fiercely will they meet and charge !
No combatants are stiffer.

To prove, alas ! my main intent,
Needs no great cost of argument,
No cutting and contriving ;
Seeking a real friend, we seem
To adopt the chymist's golden dream,
With still less hope of thriving.

Then judge, or ere you choose your man,
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
See that no disrespect of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection.

It is not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone,
To finish a great building;
The palace were but half complete,
Could he by any chance forget
The carving and the gilding.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
First rivets our attention;
So manners, decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
Must save it from declension.

The man who hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves, by thumping on your back,
His sense of your great merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
To pardon or to bear it.

Some friends make this their prudent plan—
“Say little, and hear all you can;”
Safe policy, but hateful:
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

They whisper trivial things, and small:
But, to communicate at all
 Things serious, deem improper;
Their feculence and froth they show,
But keep the best contents below,
 Just like a simmering copper.

These samples (for, alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
 Of evils yet unmention'd;)
May prove the task, a task indeed,
In which 'tis much if we succeed,
 However well-intention'd.

Pursue the theme, and you shall find
A disciplined and furnish'd mind
 To be at least expedient;
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
 A principal ingredient.

True friendship has, in short, a grace
More than terrestrial in its face,
 That proves it Heaven-descended;
Man's love of woman not so pure,
Nor, when sincerest, so secure
 To last till life is ended.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON,
ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE

"AD LIBRUM SUUM."

[February, 1790.]

MARIA, could Horace have guess'd
 What honour awaited his ode
 To his own little volume address'd,
 The honour which you have bestow'd,—
 Who have traced it in characters here,
 So elegant, even, and neat,
 He had laugh'd at the critical sneer
 Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer, if you please, he had said,
 A nymph shall hereafter arise
 Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
 The glory your malice denies ;
 Shall dignity give to my lay,
 Although but a mere bagatelle ;
 And even a Poet shall say,
 Nothing ever was written so well.

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S
INSTANCE.

Go—thou art all unfit to share
The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,
Aware of wintry storms,
And woodpeckers explore the sides
Of rugged oaks for worms.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn
With frictions of her fleece;
And here I wander, eve and morn,
Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah!—I could pity thee exiled
From this secure retreat—
I would not lose it to be styled
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight;
Thy pleasure is to show
Thy magnanimity in fight,
Thy prowess—therefore go—

I care not whether east or north;
So I no more may find thee;
The angry muse thus sings thee forth,
And claps the gate behind thee.

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON.

THE NIGHT OF THE SEVENTENTH OF MARCH,
1789.

WHEN, long sequester'd from his throne,
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign,

Then Loyalty, with all his lamps
New trimm'd, a gallant show !
Chasing the darkness and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell, of streets or squares,
Which form'd the chief display,
These most resembling cluster'd stars,
'Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of Heaven.

So fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves, on high
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession join'd,
And all the banners been unfurl'd
That heralds e'er design'd,

For no such sight had England's Queen
Forsaken her retreat,
Where George recover'd, made a scene,
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undescried,
How much the object of her love
Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
In aid of her design——
Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before
To veil a deed of thine!

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,
Resolved to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes,
That night, except her own.

Arrived, a night like noon she sees,
And hears the million hum;
As all by instinct, like the bees,
Had known their sovereign come.

Pleased she beheld aloft portray'd
On many a splendid wall,
Emblems of health, and heavenly aid,
And George the theme of all:

Unlike the ænigmatic line,
So difficult to spell,
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine,
The night his city fell.

Soon, wat'ry grew her eyes and dim,
But with a joyful tear;
None else, except in prayer for him,
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
Like those in fable feign'd,
And seem'd by some magician's art
Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there, she knew,
Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders in her view,
Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirit cheer'd,
And through the cumbrous throng,
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,
Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
The sea-maid rides the waves,
And, fearless of the billowy scene,
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
She view'd the sparkling show;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
Like that, once seen, suffice,
Heaven grant us no such future sight,
Such previous woe the price!

ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S
HAPPY RECOVERY.

I RANSACK'D, for a theme of song,
Much ancient chronicle, and long ;
I read of bright embattled fields,
Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,
Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast
Prowess to dissipate a host ;
Through tomes of fable and of dream
I sought an eligible theme,
But none I found, or found them shared
Already by some happier Bard.

To modern times, with truth to guide
My busy search, I next applied ;
Here cities won, and fleets dispersed,
Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,
Deeds of unperishing renown,
Our fathers' triumphs and our own.

Thus, as the bee, from bank to bower
Assiduous sips at every flower,
But rests on none, till that be found
Where most nectareous sweets abound,
So I from theme to theme, display'd
In many a page historic, stray'd,
Siege after siege, fight after fight,
Contemplating with small delight,
(For feats of sanguinary hue
Not always glitter in my view ;)
Till, settling on the current year,
I found the far-sought treasure near.

A theme for poetry divine,
 A theme to ennoble even mine,
 In memorable eighty-nine.

The Spring of eighty-nine shall be
 An æra cherish'd long by me,
 Which joyful I will oft record,
 And thankful, at my frugal board ;
 For then the clouds of eighty-eight,
 That threaten'd England's trembling state
 With loss of what she least could spare,
 Her sovereign's tutelary care,
 One breath of Heav'n, that cried—Restore !
 Chased, never to assemble more :
 And for the richest crown on earth,
 If valued by its wearer's worth,
 The symbol of a righteous reign
 Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possess'd
 Our Queen's long-agitated breast ;
 Such joy and peace as can be known
 By sufferers like herself alone,
 Who losing, or supposing lost,
 The good on earth they valued most,
 For that dear sorrow's sake forego
 All hope of happiness below,
 Then suddenly regain the prize,
 And flash thanksgivings to the skies !

O Queen of Albion, queen of isles !
 Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,
 The eyes that never saw thee, shine
 With joy not unallied to thine ;
 Transports not chargeable with art
 Illume the land's remotest part,

And strangers to the air of courts,
 Both in their toils and at their sports,
 The happiness of answer'd prayers,
 That gilds thy features, show in theirs.

If they, who on thy state attend,
 Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,
 'Tis but the natural effect
 Of grandeur that ensures respect;
 But she is something more than Queen,
 Who is beloved where never seen.

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

[1786.]

THIS cap, that so stately appears,
 With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
 Which seems, by the crest that it rears,
 Ambitious of brushing the sky:
 This cap to my cousin I owe,
 She gave it, and gave me beside,
 Wreathed into an elegant bow,
 The ribbon with which it is tied:

This wheel-footed studying chair,
 Contrived both for toil and repose,
 Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,
 In which I both scribble and dose,
 Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes
 And rival in lustre of that
 In which, or astronomy lies,
 Fair Cassiopeia sat:

These carpets so soft to the foot,
Caledonia's traffic and pride!
Oh, spare them, ye knights of the boot,
Escaped from a cross-country ride!
This table and mirror within,
Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
And periwig nicely adjust :

This movable structure of shelves,
For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
The gayest I had to produce ;
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
My poems enchanted I view,
And hope, in due time, to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too :

This china, that decks the alcove,
Which here people call a buffet,
But what the gods call it above,
Has ne'er been reveal'd to us yet:
These curtains, that keep the room warm
Or cool, as the season demands,
Those stoves that for pattern and form,
Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands.

All these are not half that I owe
To One, from our earliest youth
To me ever ready to show
Benignity, friendship, and truth ;
For Time, the destroyer declared,
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods
 And chattels of leisure and ease,
 I indulge my poetical moods
 In many such fancies as these;
 And fancies I fear they will seem—
 Poets' goods are not often so fine;
 The Poets will swear that I dream
 When I sing of the splendour of mine.

TO MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM,

ON RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE,
 MADE BY HERSELF.

[May 4, 1793.]

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
 When I was young, and thou no more
 Than plaything for a nurse,
 I danced and fondled on my knee,
 A kitten both in size and glee,
 I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here;
 But not of love;—that gem's too dear
 For richest rogues to win it;
 I, therefore, as a proof of love,
 Esteem thy present far above
 The best things kept within it.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN

[December 17, 1781.]

DEAR ANNA, between friend and friend,
 Prose answers every common end;
 Serves, in a plain and homely way,
 To express the occurrence of the day;
 Our health, the weather, and the news;
 What walks we take, what books we choose;
 And all the floating thoughts we find
 Upon the surface of the mind.

But when a Poet takes the pen,
 Far more alive than other men,
 He feels a gentle tingling come
 Down to his finger and his thumb,
 Derived from Nature's noblest part,
 The centre of a glowing heart:
 And this is what the world, which knows
 No flights above the pitch of prose,
 His more sublime vagaries slighting,
 Denominates an itch for writing.
 No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
 To catch the triflers of the time,
 And tell them truths divine and clear,
 Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear;
 Who labour hard to allure and draw
 The loiterers I never saw,
 Should feel that itching, and that tingling,
 With all my purpose intermingling,
 To your intrinsic merit true,
 When call'd to address myself to you.

Mysterious are His ways, whose power
 Brings forth that unexpected hour,
 When minds, that never met before,
 Shall meet, unite, and part no more :
 It is the allotment of the skies,
 The hand of the Supremely Wise,
 That guides and governs our affections,
 And plans and orders our connexions :
 Directs us in our distant road,
 And marks the bounds of our abode.
 Thus we were settled when you found us,
 Peasants and children all around us,
 Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
 Deep in the abyss of Silver-End.*
 Thus Martha, e'en against her will,
 Perched on the top of yonder hill ;
 And you, though you must needs prefer
 The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre,†
 Are come from distant Loire, to choose
 A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
 This page of Providence quite new,
 And now just opening to our view,
 Employs our present thoughts and pains,
 To guess and spell what it contains :
 But, day by day, and year by year,
 Will make the dark enigma clear ;
 And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
 Like other scenes already past,
 With proof, that we, and our affairs,
 Are part of a Jehovah's cares :

* An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.

† Lady Austen's residence in France.

For God unfolds, by slow degrees,
The purport of His deep decrees ;
Sheds, every hour, a clearer light
In aid of our defective sight ;
And spreads, at length, before the soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate, in vain.

Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, though luminous your eye
By looking on the bud, descry,
Or guess, with a prophetic power,
The future splendour of the flower ?
Just so, the Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiae can educe
Events of most important use ;
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great to small :
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began ?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation ;
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
An harbinger of endless good.

Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small :

But merely to remark, that ours,
 Like some of Nature's sweetest flowers,
 Rose from a seed of tiny size,
 That seem'd to promise no such prize ;
 A transient visit intervening,
 And made almost without a meaning,
 (Hardly the effect of inclination,
 Much less of pleasing expectation,)
 Produced a friendship, then begun,
 That has cemented us in one ;
 And placed it in our power to prove,
 By long fidelity and love,
 That Solomon has wisely spoken ;
 " A three-fold cord is not soon broken."

TO MRS. KING,

ON HER KIND PRESENT TO THE AUTHOR; A PATCH-
 WORK COUNTERPANE OF HER OWN MAKING.

[August 14, 1790.]

THE Bard, if e'er he feel at all,
 Must sure be quicken'd by a call
 Both on his heart and head,
 To pay with tuneful thanks the care
 And kindness of a Lady fair
 Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
 On Ida's barren top sublime,
 (As Homer's Epic shows,)
 Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,
 Without the aid of sun or showers,
 For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
 Is that which, in the scorching day,
 Receives the weary swain
 Who, laying his long scythe aside,
 Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,
 'Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see !
 Looms numberless have groan'd for me !
 Should every maiden come
 To scramble for the patch that bears
 The impress of the robe she wears,
 The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue !
 This bright display of every hue
 All in a moment fled !
 As if a storm should strip the bowers
 Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers—
 Each pocketing a shred.

'Thanks, then, to every gentle fair
 Who will not come to peck me bare
 As bird of borrow'd feather ;
 And thanks to One above them all,
 The gentle Fair of Pertenhall,
 Who put the whole together.

SONNET.

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[April 16, 1792.]

Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
 Hears thee, by cruel men and impious, call'd
 Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the enthrall'd
 From exile, public sale, and Slavery's chain.
 Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
 Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.
 Thou hast achieved a part; hast gain'd the ear
 Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;
 Hope smiles, Joy springs, and, though cold Caution pause
 And weave delay, the better hour is near
 That shall remunerate thy toils severe
 By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.
 Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
 From all the Just on earth, and all the Blest above

 TO DR. AUSTIN,

OF CECIL STREET, LONDON.

[May 26, 1792.]

AUSTIN! accept a grateful verse from me,
 The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.
 Loved by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind
 Pleasing requital in my verse may find;

Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,
 Immortalizing names which else had died :
 And O! could I command the glittering wealth
 With which sick kings are glad to purchase health!
 Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
 Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
 I would not recompense his art with less,
 Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.
 Friend of my friend!* I love thee, though unknown,
 And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

 SONNET,

TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.

On his picture of me in Crayons, drawn at Earham, in the 61st year
 of my age, and in the months of August
 and September, 1792.

[October, 1792.]

ROMNEY, expert infallibly to trace
 On chart or canvass, not the form alone
 And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
 The mind's impression too on every face—
 With strokes that time ought never to erase,
 Thou hast so pencil'd mine that, though I own
 The subject worthless, I have never known
 The artist shining with superior grace.

* Hayley.

But this I mark—that symptoms none of woe
 In thy incomparable work appear.
 Well—I am satisfied it should be so,
 Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;
 For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see
 When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

TO MRS. UNWIN.

[May, 1793.]

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,
 Such aid from Heaven as some have feign'd they drew,
 An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
 And undebased by praise of meaner things,
 That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
 I may record thy worth with honour due,
 In verse as musical as thou art true,
 And that immortalizes whom it sings.
 But thou hast little need. There is a book
 By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
 On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
 A chronicle of actions just and bright;
 There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
 And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

TO MARY.

[Autumn of 1793.]

THE twentieth year is well nigh past,
 Since first our sky was overcast;
 Ah, would that this might be the last!
 My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
 I see thee daily weaker grow—
 'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
 My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
 For my sake restless heretofore,
 Now rust disused, and shine no more;
 My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
 The same kind office for me still,
 Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
 My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,
 And all thy threads with magic art
 Have wound themselves about this heart,
 My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
 Like language utter'd in a dream!
 Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
 My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For, could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently press'd, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest
Upheld by two; yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though press'd with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show,
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past.
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

TO THE MARCH IN SCIPIO. WRITTEN WHEN
THE NEWS ARRIVED.

[September, 1782.]

TOLL for the brave !
The brave that are no more !
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore !

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was upset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
His last sea-fight is fought ;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock ;
She sprang no fatal leak ;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath ;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes,
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full-charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er ;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more

STANZAS,

Subjoined to the YEARLY BILL of MORTALITY of the Parish of
ALL-SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON,* Anno Domini 1787.

“Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres.” HORACE.

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls, and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine or did plague prevail,
That so much death appears?

No; these were vigorous as their sires;
Nor plague nor famine came:
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waives his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,
And some are mark'd to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.

* Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,
I pass'd—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth
With which I charge my page;
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.

No present health can health insure
For yet an hour to come;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can always baulk the tomb.

And O! that, humble as my lot,
And scorn'd as is my strain,
These truths, though known, too much forgot,
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk with all his heart,
And, ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And answer all—Amen!

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

“ Quod adest, memento
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
Ritu feruntur.” HORACE.

Improve the present hour, for all beside
Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
As I can number in my punctual page,
And item down the victims of the past ;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,
On which the press might stamp him next to die ;
And, reading here his sentence, how replete
With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye !

Time then would seem more precious than the joys
In which he sports away the treasure now ;
And prayer more seasonable than the noise
Of drunkard, or the music-drawing bow.

Then, doubtless, many a trifer, on the brink
Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
Foreed to a pause, would feel it good to think,
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah, self-deceived! Could I prophetic say
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
The rest might then seem privileged to play;
But, naming *none*, the Voice now speaks to *ALL*.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
They bound, and airy, o'er the sunny glade—
One falls—the rest, wide scatter'd with affright,
Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,
Still need repeated warnings, and, at last,
A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,
Die self-accused of life run all to waste?

Sad waste! for which no after-thrift atones;
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
Dew-drops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living! by the mouths be taught
Of all these sepulchres, instructors true,
That, soon or late, death also is your lot,
And the next opening grave may yawn for you

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—“Placidâque ibi demum morte quievit.”

· VIRGIL.

There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

‘O most delightful hour by man

“Experienced here below,

‘The hour that terminates his span,

“His folly, and his woe!

“Worlds should not bribe me back to tread

“Again life’s dreary waste,

‘To see again my day o’erspread

“With all the gloomy past.

‘My home henceforth is in the skies,

“Earth, seas, and sun, adieu!

‘All Heaven unfolded to my eyes,

“I have no sight for you.”

So spake Aspasio, firm possess’d

Of faith’s supporting rod;

Then breathed his soul into its rest,

The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
Sincere on Virtue's side;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized; by that he fear'd,
He hated, hoped, and loved;
Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd,
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
And evil felt within:
But, when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last
Call'd up from earth to Heaven,
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,
By gales of blessing driven.

His joys be *mine*, each reader cries,
When my last hour arrives:
They shall be yours, my verse replies,
Such only be your lives.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1790.

“Ne commonentem recta sperne.”

BUCHANAN

Despise not my good counsel.

HE who sits from day to day,
 Where the prison'd lark is hung,
 Heedless of his loudest lay,
 Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman, in his round,
 Nightly lifts his voice on high,
 None accustom'd to the sound
 Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and Clerk,
 Yearly in my song proclaim
 Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
 And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,
 Publishing to all aloud—
 Soon the grave must be your home,
 And your only suit, a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
 Oft repeated in your ears,
 Seems to sound too much in vain,
 Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth by all confess'd
Of such magnitude and weight,
Grow, by being oft impress'd,
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,
Hear it often as we may;
New as ever seem our sins,
Though committed every day.

Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hel,
These alone, so often heard,
No more move us than the bell,
When some stranger is interr'd.

O then, ere the turf or tomb
Cover us from every eye,
Spirit of instruction come,
Make us learn that we must die

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

“Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!”

VIRGIL.

Happy the mortal, who has traced effects
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
And Death, and roaring Hell's voracious fires.

THANKLESS for favours from on high,
Man thinks he fades too soon ;
Though 'tis his privilege to die,
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
His best concerns aright,
Would gladly stretch life's little span
To ages, if he might.

To ages, in a world of pain,
To ages, where he goes
Gall'd by Affliction's heavy chain,
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,
Enamour'd of its harm !
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the World her magic power?
Why deem we Death a foe?
Recoil from weary life's best hour,
And covet longer woe?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft
Her tale of guilt renews:
Her voice is terrible, though soft,
And dread of death ensues.

Then, anxious to be longer spared,
Man mourns his fleeting breath:
All evils then seem light, compared
With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him; there's the fear
That prompts the wish to stay:
He has incurr'd a long arrear,
And must despair to pay.

Pay!—follow Christ, and all is paid;
His death your peace ensures;
Think on the grave where *He* was laid,
And calm descend to *yours*.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

“ De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.”

CIC. DE LEG.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

HE lives, who lives to God alone,
 And all are dead beside ;
 For other source than God is none,
 Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
 His love as best we may ;
 To make His precepts our delight,
 His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
 Of giddy joys comprised,
 Is falsely named, and no such thing,
 But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
 Who only live to prove
 For what poor toys they can disclaim
 An endless life above ?

Who much diseased, yet nothing feel ;
Much menaced, nothing dread ;
Have wounds which only God can heal,
Yet never ask His aid ?

Who deem His house a useless place,
Faith, want of common sense ;
And ardour in the Christian race,
A hypocrite's pretence ?

Who trample order ; and the day
Which God asserts His own,
Dishonour with unhallow'd play,
And worship Chance alone ?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd
On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unblest'd
With life that cannot die ;

Such want it ; and that want, uncured
Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assured
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course !
Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profaned without remorse,
And mercy cast away.

INSCRIPTION

For a Stone erected at the sowing of a Grove of Oaks at Chillington
the Seat of T. GIFFARD, Esq., 1790.

[June, 1790.]

OTHER stones the era tell,
When some feeble mortal fell;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of earth.

Which shall longest brave the sky,
Storm and frost—these oaks or I?
Pass an age or two away,
I must moulder and decay,
But the years that crumble me
Shall invigorate the tree,
Spread its branch, dilate its size,
Lift its summit to the skies.

Cherish honour, virtue, truth,
So shalt thou prolong thy youth.
Wanting these, however fast
Man be fix'd, and form'd to last,
He is lifeless even now,
Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

IN MEMORY

OF THE LATE JOHN THORNTON, ESQ.

[November, 1790.]

POETS attempt the noblest task they can
 Praising the Author of all good in man ;
 And, next, commemorating worthies lost,
 The dead in whom that good abounded most.

Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
 Famed for thy probity from shore to shore,
 Thee, THORNTON! worthy in some page to shine
 As honest, and more eloquent than mine,
 I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
 The world, no longer thy abode, not thee.
 Thee to deplore, were grief mispent indeed ;
 It were to weep that goodness has its meed,—
 That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
 And glory for the virtuous, when they die.

What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,
 Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
 Sweet as the privilege of healing woe,
 By virtue suffer'd, combating below ?
 That privilege was thine : Heaven gave thee means
 To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
 Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
 As midnight, and despairing of a morn.
 Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
 Restless as his who toils and sweats for food.

Avarice, in thee, was the desire of wealth
 By rust unperishable, or by stealth ;
 And if the genuine worth of gold depend
 On application to its noblest end,
 Thine had a value, in the scales of Heaven,
 Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
 And, though God made thee of a nature prone
 To distribution boundless of thy own,—
 And still, by motives of religious force,
 Impell'd thee more to that heroic course,—
 Yet was thy liberality discreet,
 Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat ;
 And, though in act unwearied, secret still,
 As in some solitude the summer rill
 Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
 And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen

Such was thy charity ; no sudden start,
 After long sleep, of passion in the heart,
 But steadfast principle, and, in its kind,
 Of close relation to the Eternal Mind,
 Traced easily to its true source above,—
 To Him, whose works bespeak his nature, Love.

Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
 This record of thee for the Gospel's sake ;
 That the incredulous themselves may see
 Its use and power exemplified in Thee.

VERSES

TO THE MEMORY OF DR. LLOYD.

Translated from the Latin as spoken at the Westminster Election
next after his decease.

OUR good old friend is gone,—gone to his rest,
Whose social converse was itself a feast.
O ye of riper age, who recollect
How once ye loved, and eyed him with respect,
Both in the firmness of his better day,
While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,
And when, impair'd by time, and glad to rest,
Yet still, with looks in mild complacence drest,
He took his annual seat, and mingled here
His sprightly vein with yours—now drop a tear.
In morals blameless as in manners meek,
He knew no wish that he might blush to speak,
But, happy in whatever state below,
And richer than the rich in being so,
Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed
At length from One,* as made him rich indeed
Hence, then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here,
Go, gamish merit in a brighter sphere,—
The brows of those whose more exalted lot
He could congratulate, but envied not.

Light lie the turf, good Senior! on thy breast.
And tranquil as thy mind was, be thy rest!
Though, living, thou hadst more desert than fame,
And not a stone, now, chronicles thy name.

* He was usher and under-master of Westminster near fifty years,
and retired from his occupation when he was near seventy, with a
handsome pension from the King.

EPITAPH

ON MRS M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON.

[1791.]

LAURELS may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
 But happiest they who win the world to come :
 Believers have a silent field to fight,
 And their exploits are veil'd from human sight.
 They, in some nook, where, little known, they dwell
 Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell ;
 Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
 And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

 EPITAPH ON "FOP,"

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

[August, 1792.]

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
 Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim.
 No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
 And, though no hound, a martyr to the chase—
 Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice,
 Your haunts no longer echo to his voice ;
 This record of his fate exulting view,
 He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.

“Yes,”—the indignant shade of Fop replies—
 “And worn with vain pursuit man also dies.”

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue.
 Nor swifter greyhound follow,—
 Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
 Nor ear heard huntsman's hollo' ;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
 Who, nursed with tender care,
 And to domestic bounds confined,
 Was still a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
 His pittance every night,
 He did it with a jealous look,
 And, when he could, would bite

His diet was of wheaten bread,
 And milk, and oats, and straw ;
 Thistles, or lettuces instead,
 With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled
 On pippins' russet peel,
 And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
 Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
 Whereon he loved to bound,—
 To skip and gambol like a fawn,
 And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years, and five round-rolling moons,
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now, beneath this walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come :

He, still more aged, feels the shocks
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

LINES,

Composed for a Memorial of ASHLEY COWPER, Esq., immediately
after his death, by his Nephew WILLIAM, of Weston.

[June, 1788.]

FAREWELL! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;
In life's last stage (O! blessings rarely found,)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd;
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter; and, lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half suppress'd,
Love *shall* be satisfied, and veil the rest.

HYMN,

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,
 In Heaven, Thy dwelling-place,
 From infants made the public care,
 And taught to seek Thy face.

Thanks for Thy word, and for Thy day,
 And grant us, we implore,
 Never to waste, in sinful play,
 Thy holy sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear,—but O impart
 To each desires sincere,
 That we may listen with our heart,
 And learn as well as hear.

For if vain thoughts the mind engage
 Of older far than we,
 What hope, that, at our heedless age,
 Our minds should e'er be free ?

Much hope, if Thou our spirits take
 Under Thy gracious sway,
 Who canst the wisest wiser make,
 And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss Thy Word bestows,
 A sun that ne'er declines ;
 And be thy mercies shower'd on *those*
 Who placed us where it shines.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN
GILPIN;

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE
INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband Captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we.

He soon replied—I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linendraper bold
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the Callender
Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin—That's well said;
And, for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin, at his horse's side,
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride.
But soon came down again:

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came: for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore;
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty, screaming, came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise.

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then, over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed:

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, Fair and softly, John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So, stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly
Like streamer long and gay,
'Till, loop and button falling both
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And ev'ry soul cried out, Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around,—
He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw!

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back,
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols did he play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton, his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—
They all at once did cry ;
The dinner waits, and we are tired :
Said Gilpin—So am I!

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there ;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So, like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong ;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
'Till at his friend the Callender's
His horse at last stood still.

The Callender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him :

What news ? what news ? your tidings tell ;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all ?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke,
And thus unto the Callender
In merry guise he spoke :

I came because your horse would come ;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.

The Callender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig :
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit,—
My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away,
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.

Said John, It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.

So, turning to his horse, he said,
I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.

Ah! luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why? they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:—

Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking as before,
That Gilpin rode a race:

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town ;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he ;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see !

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE.

I. THE GLOW-WORM.

BENEATH the hedge, or near the stream,
A worm is known to stray,
That shows by night a lucid beam,
Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,
From whence his rays proceed ;
Some give that honour to his tail,
And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of might,
That kindles up the skies,
Gives *him* a modicum of light
Proportion'd to his size.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,
By such a lamp bestow'd,
To bid the traveller, as he went,
Be careful where he trod:

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
Might serve, however small,
To show a stumbling stone by night,
And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine
Is legible and plain,
'Tis Power almighty bids him shine,
Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme
Teach humbler thoughts to you,
Since such a reptile has its gem,
And boasts its splendour too.

II. THE JACKDAW.

THERE is a bird who, by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note
Might be supposed a crow ;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where, bishoplike, he finds a perch
And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
From what point blows the weather;
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees
The bustle and the raree-show
That occupy mankind below,
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall.
No; not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its motley rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs, and its business,
Is no concern at all of his,
And says—what says he?—Caw.

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men;
And, sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine
And such a head between 'em.

III. THE PARROT.

In painted plumes superbly dress'd,
 A native of the gorgeous east,
 By many a billow toss'd;
 Poll gains at length the British shore,
 Part of the captain's precious store,
 A present to his toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferr'd
 To teach him now and then a word,
 As Poll can master it;
 But 'tis her own important charge
 To qualify him more at large,
 And make him quite a wit.

Sweet Poll! his doating mistress cries,
 Sweet Poll! the mimic bird replies;
 And calls aloud for sack.
 She next instructs him in the kiss;
 'Tis now a little one, like Miss,
 And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears;
 And, listening close with both his ears,
 Just catches at the sound,
 But soon articulates aloud,
 Much to the amusement of the crowd,
 And stuns the neighbours round.

A querulous old woman's voice
His humorous talent next employs ;
 He scolds and gives the lie.
And now he sings, and now is sick,
Here, Sally, Susan, come, come quick,
 Poor Poll is like to die!

Belinda and her bird! 'tis rare
To meet with such a well-match'd pair,
 The language and the tone,
Each character in every part
Sustain'd with so much grace and art,
 And both in unison.

When children first begin to spell,
And stammer out a syllable,
 We think them tedious creatures ;
But difficulties soon abate
When birds are to be taught to prate,
 And women are the teachers.

IV. THE CRICKET.

LITTLE inmate, full of mirth,
Chirping on my kitchen hearth,
Wheresoe'er be thine abode,
Always harbinger of good,
Pay me for thy warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet ;
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be express'd,
Inoffensive, welcome guest!
While the rat is on the scout,
And the mouse with curious snout,
With what vermin else infest
Every dish, and spoil the best;
Frisking thus before the fire,
Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
Form'd as if akin to thee,
Thou surpassest, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are;
Theirs is but a summer's song,
Thine endures the winter long,
Unimpair'd, and shrill, and clear,
Melody throughout the year.

Neither night, nor dawn of day,
Puts a period to thy play:
Sing then—and extend thy span
Far beyond the date of man.
Wretched man, whose years are spent
In repining discontent,
Lives not, aged though he be,
Half a span, compared with thee.

V. RECIPROCAL KINDNESS,

THE PRIMARY LAW OF NATURE.

ANDROCLÉS, from his injured lord, in dread
 Of instant death, to Libya's desert fled :
 Tired with his toilsome flight, and parch'd with heat,
 He spied at length a cavern's cool retreat ;
 But scarce had given to rest his weary frame,
 When, hugest of his kind, a lion came :
 He roar'd, approaching : but the savage din
 To plaintive murmurs changed—arrived within,
 And, with expressive looks, his lifted paw
 Presenting, aid implored from whom he saw.
 The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
 Dared not awhile afford his trembling hand,
 But bolder grown, at length inherent found
 A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
 The cure was wrought ; he wiped the sanious blood,
 And firm and free from pain the lion stood.
 Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day
 Regales his inmate with the parted prey.
 Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepared,
 Spread on the ground, and with a lion shared :
 But thus to live—still lost—sequester'd still—
 Scarce seem'd his lord's revenge an heavier ill.
 Home ! native home ! O might he but repair !
 He must—he will, though death attends him there.
 He goes, and doom'd to perish, on the sands
 Of the full theatre unpitied stands :
 When, lo ! the self-same lion from his cage
 Flies to devour him, famish'd into rage.

He flies, but viewing, in his purposed prey,
The man, his healer, pauses on his way,
And, soften'd by remembrance into sweet
And kind composure, crouches at his feet.

Mute with astonishment, the assembly gaze :
But why, ye Romans ? Whence your mute amaze ?
All this is natural : Nature bade him rend
An enemy ; she bids him spare a friend.

VI. THE THRACIAN.

THRACIAN parents at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But, with undissembled mirth,
Place him breathless on his bier.

Greece and Rome, with equal scorn,
“ O the savages ! ” exclaim,
“ Whether they rejoice or mourn,
“ Well entitled to the name ! ”

But the cause of this concern,
And this pleasure, would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

VII. A MANUAL,

MORE ANCIENT THAN THE ART OF PRINTING, AND
NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY CATALOGUE.

THERE is a book, which we may call
(Its excellence is such)
Alone a library, though small ;
The ladies thumb it much.

Words none, things numerous it contains :
And, things with words compared,
Who needs be told, that has his brains,
Which merits most regard ?

Oftimes its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast ;
And open'd, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

Nor name, nor title, stamp'd behind,
Adorns its outer part :
But all within 'tis richly lined,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands, that secret hoard
Oft visit : and the fair
Preserve it, in their bosoms stored,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implements of every size
And form'd for various use
(They need but to consult their eyes)
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page,
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such, from age.

The full-charged leaf, which next ensues,
Presents, in bright array,
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth supply
What their occasions ask,
Who, with a more discerning eye,
Perform a nicer task.

But still, with regular decrease,
From size to size they fall,
In every leaf grow less and less,
The last are least of all.

O! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space, is here!
This volume's method and intent
How luminous and clear!

It leaves no reader at a loss
Or posed, whoever reads:
No commentator's tedious gloss,
Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er;
 No book is treasured there,
 Nor yet in Granta's numerous store,
 That may with this compare.

No!—rival none in either host
 Of this was ever seen,
 Or, that contents could justly boast,
 So brilliant and so keen.

VIII. AN ENIGMA.

A NEEDLE, small as small can be,
 In bulk and use surpasses me,
 Nor is my purchase dear;
 For little, and almost for nought,
 As many of my kind are bought
 As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
 And are procured at little cost,
 The labour is not light;
 Nor few artificers it asks,
 All skilful in their several tasks
 To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
 A second draws it into wire,
 The shears another plies—

Who clips in length the brazen thread
 For him who, chafing every shred,
 Gives all an equal size.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
 The knob with which it must be crown'd,
 His follower makes it fast,
 And, with his mallet and his file
 To shape the point, employs awhile
 The seventh and the last.

Now, therefore, Ædipus! declare
 What creature, wonderful and rare,
 A process that obtains
 Its purpose with so much ado,
 At last produces?—tell me true,
 And take me for your pains!

IX. SPARROWS, SELF-DOMESTICATED

IN TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

NONE ever shared the social feast,
 Or as an inmate or a guest,
 Beneath the celebrated dome,
 Where once Sir Isaac had his home,

Who saw not (and with some delight
Perhaps he view'd the novel sight)
How numerous, at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there, in every nook and cell
Where such a family may dwell,
Sure as the vernal season comes
Their nests they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which, kindly given, may serve with food
Convenient their unfeather'd brood;
And oft as with its summons clear
The warning bell salutes their ear,
Sagacious listeners to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call.
Arrived, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge;
A single doit would overpay
The expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place?

X. FAMILIARITY DANGEROUS.

As in her ancient mistress' lap
 The youthful tabby lay,
 They gave each other many a tap,
 Alike disposed to play.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
 And, with protruded claws,
 Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
 Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
 She shakes her to the ground
 With many a threat, that she shall bleed
 With still a deeper wound.

But, Lydia, bid thy fury rest ;
 It was a venial stroke :
 For she that will with kittens jest
 Should bear a kitten's joke.

 XI. INVITATION TO THE REDBREAST.

SWEET bird, whom the winter constrains—
 And seldom another it can—
 To seek a retreat while he reigns
 In the well-shelter'd dwellings of man,

Who never can seem to intrude,
Though in all places equally free,
Come, oft as the season is rude,
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
My windows shall show thee a feast:
For, taught by experience, I know
Thee mindful of benefit long;
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

Then, soon as the swell of the buds
Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
Or where it shall please thee to sing.
And shouldst thou, compell'd by a frost,
Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
Only pay as thou pay'dst me before.

Thus music must needs be confess'd
To flow from a fountain above;
Else how should it work in the breast
Unchangeable friendship and love?
And who on the globe can be found,
Save your generation and ours,
That can be delighted by sound,
Or boasts any musical powers?

XII. STRADA'S NIGHTINGALE.

THE shepherd touch'd his reed; sweet Philomel
 Essay'd, and oft essay'd to catch the strain,
 And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
 The numbers, echo'd note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
 A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
 And soon (for various was his tuneful store)
 In loftier tones defied the simple bird.

She dared the task, and, rising as he rose,
 With all the force that passion gives inspired,
 Return'd the sounds awhile, but in the close
 Exhausted fell, and at his feet expired.

Thus strength, not skill, prevail'd. O fatal strife,
 By thee, poor songstress, playfully begun;
 And, O sad victory, which cost thy life,
 And he may wish that he had never won!

XIII. ODE ON THE DEATH OF A LADY,

WHO LIVED ONE HUNDRED YEARS, AND DIED ON
 HER BIRTHDAY, 1728.

ANCIENT dame, how wide and vast,
 To a race like ours, appears,
 Rounded to an orb at last,
 All thy multitude of years!

We, the herd of human kind,
Frailer, and of feebler powers ;
We, to narrow bounds confined,
Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
Perish even from the womb;—
Swifter than a shadow flee,—
Nourish'd but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
Lurk in all that we enjoy ;
Some that waste us by degrees,
Some that suddenly destroy.

And, if life o'erleap the bourn
Common to the sons of men,
What remains, but that we mourn,
Dream, and doat, and drivel then ?

Fast as moons can wax and wane,
Sorrow comes; and, while we groan,
Pant with anguish, and complain,
Half our years are fled and gone.

If a few, (to few 'tis given,)
Lingering on this earthly stage,
Creep and halt with steps uneven,
To the period of an age,—

Wherefore live they, but to see
Cunning, arrogance, and force,
Sights lamented much by thee,
Holding their accustom'd course ?

Oft was seen, in ages past,
All that we with wonder view ;
Often shall be to the last ;
Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate, content
Should propitious Heaven design
Life for us as calmly spent,
Though but half the length of thine

XIV. THE CAUSE WON.

Two neighbours furiously dispute ;
A field—the subject of the suit.
Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
With which the combatants engage,
'Twere hard to tell who covets most
The prize—at whatsoever cost.
The pleadings swell. Words still suffice :
No single word but has its price.
No term but yields some fair pretence
For novel and increased expense.

Defendant thus becomes a name,
Which he that bore it may disclaim,
Since both, in one description blended,
Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

XV. THE SILKWORM.

THE beams of April, ere it goes,
A worm, scarce visible, disclose ;
All winter long content to dwell
The tenant of his native shell.
The same prolific season gives
The sustenance by which he lives,
The mulberry leaf, a simple store,
That serves him—till he needs no more !
For, his dimensions once complete,
Thenceforth none ever sees him eat ;
Though till his growing time be past,
Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
That hour arrived, his work begins :
He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins ;
Till circle upon circle wound
Careless around him and around,
Conceals him with a veil, though slight,
Impervious to the keenest sight.
Thus self-enclosed, as in a cask,
At length he finishes his task ;
And, though a worm when he was lost,
Or caterpillar at the most,
When next we see him, wings he wears,
And in papilio pomp appears !
Becomes oviparous ; supplies
With future worms and future flies
The next ensuing year—and dies !

Well were it for the world, if all
Who creep about this earthly ball,
Though shorter-lived than most he be,
Were useful in their kind as he.

XVI. DENNER'S OLD WOMAN.

IN this mimic form of a matron in years,
 How plainly the pencil of Denner appears!
 The matron herself, in whose old age we see
 Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she!
 No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low,
 No wrinkle, or deep-furrow'd frown on the brow!
 Her forehead indeed is here circled around
 With locks like the ribbon with which they are bound;
 While glossy and smooth, and as soft as the skin
 Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin;
 But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
 Or that indicates life in its winter—is here;
 Yet all is express'd with fidelity due,
 Nor a pimple or freckle conceal'd from the view.

Many, fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
 For the labours of art, to the spectacle haste.
 The youths all agree, that could old age inspire
 The passion of love, hers would kindle the fire;
 And the matrons with pleasure confess that they see
 Ridiculous nothing or hideous in thee.
 The nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a decline,
 O wonderful woman! as placid as thine.

Strange magic art! which the youth can engage
 To peruse, half-enamour'd, the features of age;
 And force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
 That she, when as old, shall be equally fair!
 How great is the glory that Denner has gain'd,
 Since Apelles not more for his Venus obtain'd!

XVII. THE MAZE.

FROM right to left, and to and fro,
 Caught in a labyrinth you go.
 And turn, and turn, and turn again,
 To solve the mystery, but in vain;
 Stand still, and breathe, and take from me
 A clew, that soon shall set you free!
 Not Ariadne, if you meet her,
 Herself could serve you with a better.
 You enter'd easily——find where——
 And make with ease your exit there!

XVIII. NO SORROW PECULIAR TO THE
SUFFERER.

THE lover, in melodious verses,
 His singular distress rehearses;
 Still closing with a rueful cry,
 "Was ever such a wretch as I?"
 Yes! thousands have endured before
 All thy distress; some, haply, more
 Unnumber'd Corydons complain,
 And Strephons, of the like disdain;
 And if thy Chloe be of steel,
 Too deaf to hear, too hard to feel;
 Not her alone that censure fits,
 Nor thou alone hast lost thy wits.



1839
Thomson

