

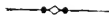


W I N T E R

BY

JAMES THOMSON

ILLUSTRATED



Boston

ESTES AND LAURIAT

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1-12

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WINTER.

SEE. Winter comes to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train ;
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these
my theme ;
These, that exalt the soul to solemn thought
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred
glooms !

The Seasons.

Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wandered through your rough
domain ;

Trod the pure virgin snows, myself as pure ;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent
burst ;

Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brewed,
In the grim evening sky. Thus passed the
time.

Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Looked out the joyous Spring, looked out, and
smiled.

To thee, the patron of this first essay,
The Muse, O Wilmington! renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year :
Skimmed the gay Spring ; on eagle-pinions
borne.

Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise ;
Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy
gale ;

And now among the wintry clouds again,

Winter.

Rolled in the doubling storm, she tries to
soar ;

To swell her note with all the rushing winds ;
To suit her sounding cadence to the floods ;

As is her theme, her numbers wildly great :
Thrice happy could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description, and with manly
thought.

Nor art thou skilled in awful schemes alone,
And how to make a mighty people thrive ;

But equal goodness, sound integrity,

A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul

Amid a sliding age ; and, burning strong,

Not vainly blazing, for thy country's weal,

A steady spirit regularly free —

These, each exalting each, the statesman
light

Into the patriot ; these, the public hope

And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse

Record what envy dares not flattery call.

Now when the cheerless empire of the
sky

To Capricorn the Centaur-Archer yields,

And fierce Aquarius stains the inverted year ;

The Seasons.

Hung o'er the farthest verge of heaven, the
sun

Scarce spreads o'er ether the dejected day.
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Through the thick air; as, clothed in cloudy
storm,

Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern
sky :

And, soon-descending, to the long dark night,
Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.
Nor is the night unwished; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy, the dubious day forsake.
Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
Deep-tinged and damp, and congregated
clouds,

And all the vapoury turbulence of heaven,
Involve the face of things. Thus Winter
falls,

A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease.
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.





Winter.

The cattle droop ; and o'er the furrowed land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun-discoloured
flocks,

Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm ;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling
brook

And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening Fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains
obscure

Drive through the mingling skies with vapour
foul ;

Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the
woods,

That grumbling wave below. The unsightly
plain

Lies a brown deluge ; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven,

The Seasons.

Each to his home, retire ; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool ;
The cattle from the untasted fields return,
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted
stalls,

Or ruminatè in the contiguous shade.

Thither the household feathery people crowd,
The crested cock, with all his female train,
Pensive and dripping ; while the cottage-hind
Hangs o'er the enlivening blaze, and taleful
there

Recounts his simple frolic : much he talks,
And much he laughs, nor recks the storm
that blows

Without, and rattles on his humble roof.

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent
swelled,

And the mixed ruin of its banks o'erspread,
At last the roused-up river pours along :
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sound-
ing far ;

Winter.

Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent : till again, constrained
Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid
stream ;



There gathering triple force, rapid and deep,
It boils and wheels and foams and thunders
through.

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing
hand

The Seasons.

Rolls round the seasons of the changeful
year,
How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the
soul,
That sees astonished, and astonished sings!
Ye too, ye winds, that now begin to blow
With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to
you.
Where are your stores, ye powerful beings!
say,
Where your aerial magazines, reserved
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm?
In what far distant region of the sky,
Hushed in deep silence, sleep you when 't is
calm?

When from the pallid sky the Sun descends
With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb,
Uncertain wanders, stained; red fiery streaks
Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds
Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet
Which master to obey: while rising slow,
Blank, in the leaden-coloured east, the Moon
Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns.

Winter.

Seen through the turbid fluctuating air,
The stars obtuse emit a shivering ray ;
Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening
blaze.

Snatched in short eddies, plays the withered
leaf ;

And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
With broadened nostrils to the sky upturned,
The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
E'en as the matron, at her nightly task,
With pensive labour draws the flaxen thread,
The wasted taper and the crackling flame
Foretell the blast. But chief the plummy race,
The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They picked their scanty fare, a blackening
train

Of clamorous rooks thick urge their weary
flight,

And seek the closing shelter of the grove.
Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and screams along the
land.

The Seasons.

Loud shrieks the soaring hern ; and with wild
wing

The circling sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.
Ocean, unequal pressed, with broken tide
And blind commotion heaves ; while from the
shore,

Eat into caverns by the restless wave,
And forest-rustling mountain, comes a voice,
That solemn-sounding bids the world prepare.
Then issues forth the storm with sudden
burst.

And hurls the whole precipitated air
Down in a torrent. On the passive main
Descends the ethereal force, and with strong
gust

Turns from its bottom the discoloured deep.
Through the black night, that sits immense
around,

Lashed into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn.
Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult swelled, surge above surge,
Burst into chaos with tremendous roar.

And anchored navies from their stations drive,



Winter.

Wild as the winds across the howling waste
Of mighty waters : now the inflated wave
Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
Into the secret chambers of the deep,
The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their head.
Emerging thence again, before the breath
Of full exerted heaven they wing their course,
And dart on distant coasts ; if some sharp
rock,

Or shoal insidious break not their career,
And in loose fragments fling them floating
round.

Nor less at land the loosened tempest
reigns.

The mountain thunders ; and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark wayfaring stranger breathless toils,
And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vexed, and
sheds

What of its tarnished honours yet remain ;
Dashed down, and scattered, by the tearing
wind's

The Seasons.

Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
The whirling tempest raves along the plain ;
And on the cottage thatched, or lordly roof,
Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid
base.
Sleep frightened flies ; and round the rocking
dome,
For entrance eager, howls the savage blast.
Then too, they say, through all the burdened
air,
Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and
distant sighs,
That, uttered by the Demon of the night,
Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.
Huge uproar lords it wide. The clouds,
commixed
With stars, swift gliding, sweep along the
sky.
All Nature reels : till Nature's king, who oft
Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully serene, commands a calm ;
Then straight, air, sea, and earth are hushed
at once.

Winter.

As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary
clouds,

Slow meeting, mingle into solid gloom.

Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in
sleep,

Let me associate with the serious Night,

And Contemplation, her sedate compeer ;

Let me shake off the intrusive cares of day,

And lay the meddling senses all aside.

Where now, ye lying vanities of life!

Ye ever tempting, ever cheating train!

Where are you now? and what is your
amount?

Vexation, disappointment, and remorse :

Sad, sickening thought! and yet deluded man,

A scene of crude disjointed visions past,

And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,

With new-flushed hopes, to run the giddy
round.

· Father of light and life! thou Good Su-
preme!

O teach me what is good! teach me thyself!

Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,

From every low pursuit! and feed my soul

The Seasons.

With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue
pure —

Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!

The keener tempests come: and fuming
dun

From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend; in whose capacious
womb

A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congealed.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gathered
storm.

Through the hushed air the whitening shower
descends,

At first thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the
day

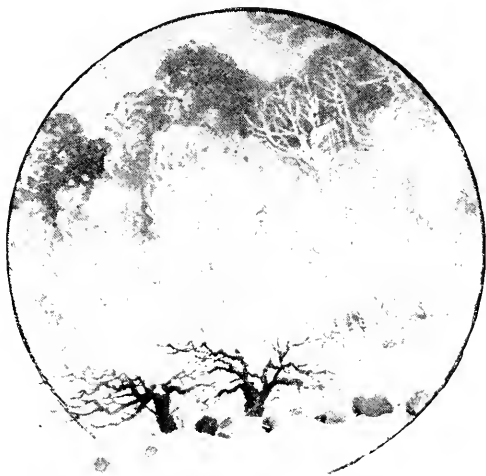
With a continual flow. The cherished fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.

'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow
melts

Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid
sun

Winter.

Faint from the west emits its evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide



The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-
ox
Stands covered o'er with snow, and then de-
mands

The Seasons.

The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little
boon

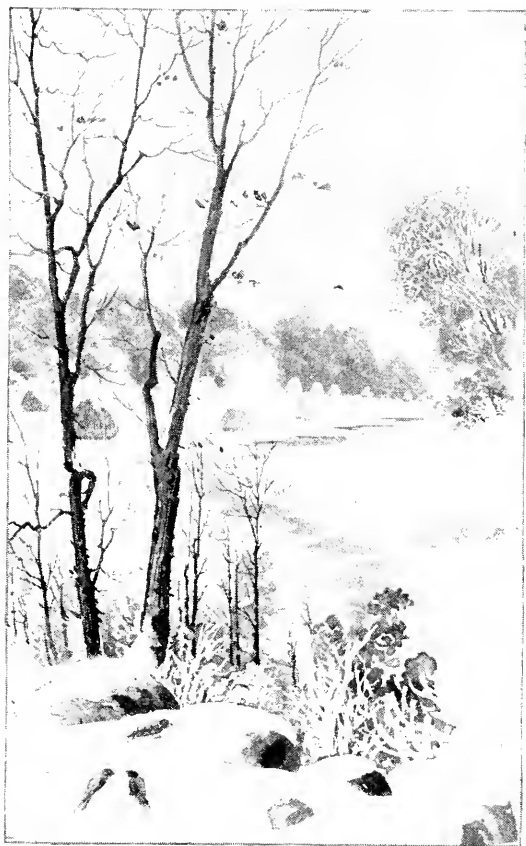
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats ; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth ; then, hopping o'er the
floor,

Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where
he is ;

Till more familiar grown, the table-crums
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The
hare,

Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares and
dogs,

And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,



Winter.

Urged on by fearless want. The bleating
kind

Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening
earth,

With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dis-
persed,

Dig for the withered herb through heaps of
snow.

Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be
kind,

Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens

With food at will; lodge them below the
storm,

And watch them strict: for from the bellow-
ing east,

In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing

Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains

In one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,

Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,

The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward
urged,

The valley to a shining mountain swells,

Tipped with a wreath high-curling in the sky.

As thus the snows arise, and, foul and fierce,

The Seasons.

All Winter drives along the darkened air,
In his own loose-revolving fields, the swain
Disastered stands ; sees other hills ascend,
Of unknown joyless brow ; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain :
Nor finds the river, nor the forest, hid
Beneath the formless wild ; but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray ;
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
Stung with the thoughts of home ; the
thoughts of home

Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour
forth

In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul!
What black despair, what horror fills his
heart!

When for the dusky spot, which fancy feigned
His tufted cottage, rising through the snow,
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track and blessed abode of
man ;

While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.



Winter.

Then throng the busy shapes into his mind,
Of covered pits, unfathomably deep,
A dire descent! beyond the power of frost ;
Of faithless bogs ; of precipices huge,
Smoothed up with snow ; and, what is land
unknown,

What water, of the still unfrozen spring,
In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
Where the fresh fountain from the bottom
boils.

These check his fearful steps ; and down he
sinks,

Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death ;
Mixed with the tender anguish nature shoots
Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm ;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!

Nor wife, nor children more shall he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every
nerve

The Seasons.

The deadly winter seizes ; shuts up sense ;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows, a stiffened corse,
Stretched out, and bleaching in the northern
blast.

Ah! little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence sur-
round ;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy
mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste ;
Ah! little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death,
And all the sad variety of pain.
How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
How many pine in want, and dungeon-
glooms ;
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the
cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery. Sore pierced by wintry winds,

Winter.

How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty. How many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse ;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height
of life,

They furnish matter for the tragic Muse.
Even in the vale, where wisdom loves to
dwell,

With friendship, peace, and contemplation
joined,

How many, racked with honest passions,
droop

In deep retired distress. How many stand
Around the death-bed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought
fond man

Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills
That one incessant struggle render life,
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would stand appalled,
And heedless rambling Impulse learn to
think ;

The conscious heart of Charity would warm,

The Seasons.

And her wide wish Benevolence dilate ;
The social tear would rise, the social sigh ;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.

And here can I forget the generous band,
Who, touched with human woe, redressive
searched

Into the horrors of the gloomy jail—
Unpitied, and unheard, where Misery moans ;
Where Sickness pines ; where thirst and hun-
ger burn,

And poor misfortune feels the lash of vice?
While in the land of liberty, the land
Whose every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom, little tyrants raged ;
Snatched the lean morsel from the starving
mouth ;

Tore from cold wintry limbs the tattered
weed ;

Even robbed them of the last of comforts,
sleep ;

The free-born Briton to the dungeon chained,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevailed,

At pleasure marked him with inglorious
stripes ;

Winter.

And crushed out lives, by secret barbarous
ways,
That for their country would have toiled or
bled.



O great design! if executed well,
With patient care, and wisdom-tempered zeal.
Ye sons of mercy! yet resume the search;
Drag forth the legal monsters into light.
Wrench from their hands oppression's iron
rod,

The Seasons.

And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Much still untouched remains; in this rank
age,

Much is the patriot's weeding hand required.
The toils of law (what dark insidious men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
And lengthen simple justice into trade),
How glorious were the day that saw these
broke,

And every man within the reach of right!

By wintry famine roused, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains which the shining Alps,
And wavy Apennines, and Pyrenees,
Branch out stupendous into distant lands,
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave,
Burning for blood, bony and gaunt and grim,
Assembling wolves in raging troops descend;
And, pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north-wind sweeps the glossy
snow.

All is their prize. They fasten on the steed,
Press him to earth, and pierce his mighty
heart.

Nor can the bull his awful front defend,

Winter.

Or shake the murdering savages away.
Rapacious, at the mother's throat they fly,
And tear the screaming infant from her
breast.

The godlike face of man avails him naught.
Even beauty, force divine! at whose bright
glance

The generous lion stands in softened gaze,
Here bleeds, a hapless undistinguished prey.
But if, apprised of the severe attack,
The country be shut up, lured by the scent,
On churchyards drear (inhuman to relate!)
The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig
The shrouded body from the grave; o'er
which,
Mixed with foul shades and frightened ghosts,
they howl.

Among those hilly regions, where, embraced
In peaceful vales the happy Grisons dwell,
Oft, rushing sudden from the loaded cliffs,
Mountains of snow their gathering terrors
roll.

From steep to steep, loud-thundering, down
they come,

The Seasons.

A wintry waste in dire commotion all ;
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and
swains,
And sometimes whole brigades of marching
troops,
Or hamlets sleeping in the dead of night,
Are deep beneath the smothering ruin
whelmed.

Now, all amid the vigours of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while, without,
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat
Between the groaning forest and the shore,
Beat by the boundless multitude of waves,
A rural, sheltered, solitary scene :
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me
sit,
And hold high converse with the mighty
dead ;

Sages of ancient time, as gods revered,
As gods beneficent, who blessed mankind
With arts, and arms, and humanised a world.
Roused at the inspiring thought, I throw aside
The long-lived volume ; and, deep-musing,
hail



Winter.

The sacred shades, that, slowly rising, pass
Before my wondering eyes. First Socrates,
Who, firmly good in a corrupted state,
Against the rage of tyrants single stood,
Invincible ; calm reason's holy law,
That voice of God within the attentive mind,
Obeying, fearless, or in life, or death :
Great moral teacher ! Wisest of mankind !
Solon the next, who built his commonweal
On equity's wide base ; by tender laws
A lively people curbing, yet undamped
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,
Whence in the laurelled field of finer arts
And of bold freedom, they unequalled shone —
The pride of smiling Greece, and human-kind.
Lycurgus then, who bowed beneath the force
Of strictest discipline, severely wise,
All human passions. Following him, I see,
As at Thermopylæ he glorious fell,
The firm devoted chief, who proved by deeds
The hardest lesson which the other taught.
Then Aristides lifts his honest front ;
Spotless of heart, to whom the unflattering
voice

The Seasons.

Of Freedom gave the noblest name of Just ;
In pure majestic poverty revered :

Who, even his glory to his country's weal
Submitting, swelled a haughty rival's fame.
Reared by his care, of softer ray appears
Cimon, sweet-souled : whose genius, rising
strong,

Shook off the load of young debauch : abroad
The scourge of Persian pride, at home the
friend

Of every worth and every splendid art ;
Modest, and simple, in the pomp of wealth.
Then the last worthies of declining Greece,
Late called to glory, in unequal times,
Pensive appear. The fair Corinthian boast,
Timoleon, tempered happy, mild and firm,
Who wept the brother while the tyrant bled :
And, equal to the best, the Theban Pair,
Whose virtues, in heroic concord joined,
Their country raised to freedom, empire,
fame :

He too, with whom Athenian honour sunk,
And left a mass of sordid lees behind —
Phocion the Good : in public life severe,

Winter.

To virtue still inexorably firm ;
But when, beneath his low illustrious roof,
Sweet peace and happy wisdom smoothed his
brow

Not friendship softer was, nor love more
kind :

And he, the last of old Lycurgus' sons,
The generous victim to that vain attempt,
To save a rotten state, Agis, who saw
Even Sparta's self to servile avarice sunk.
The two Achaian heroes close the train :
Aratus, who awhile relumed the soul
Of fondly lingering liberty in Greece ;
And he, her darling, as her latest hope,
The gallant Philopœmen ; who to arms
Turned the luxurious pomp he could not cure ;
Or toiling in his farm, a simple swain ;
Or, bold and skilful, thundering in the field.

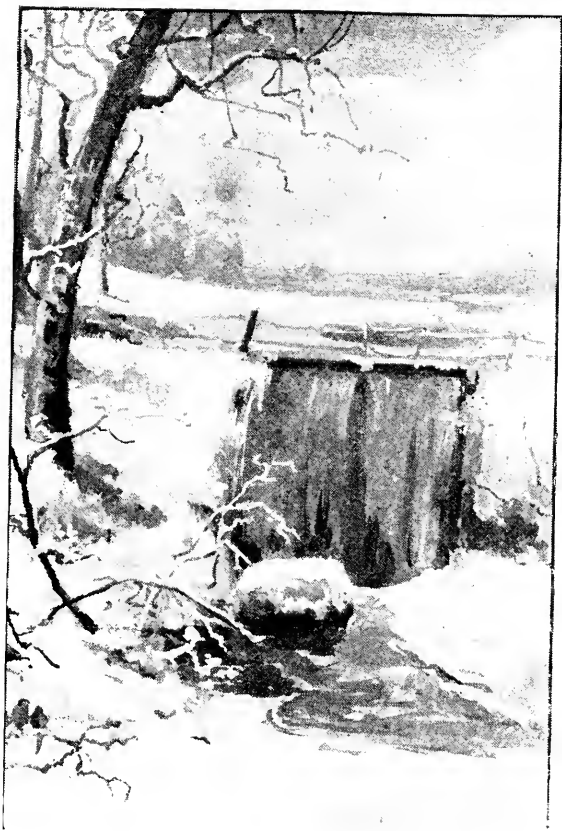
Of rougher front, a mighty people come,
A race of heroes ! in those virtuous times
Which knew no stain, save that with partial
flame

Their dearest country they too fondly loved.
Her better founder first, the light of Rome,

The Seasons.

Numa, who softened her rapacious sons :
Servius the king, who laid the solid base
On which o'er earth the vast republic spread.
Then the great consuls venerable rise :
The public father who the private quelled,
As on the dread tribunal sternly sad ;
He whom his thankless country could not
lose.

Camillus, only vengeful to her foes ;
Fabricius, scorner of all-conquering gold ;
And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough :
Thy willing victim, Carthage, bursting loose
From all that pleading Nature could oppose,
From a whole city's tears, by rigid faith
Imperious called, and honour's dire command ;
Scipio, the gentle chief, humanely brave,
Who soon the race of spotless glory ran,
And, warm in youth, to the poetic shade
With friendship and philosophy retired ;
Tully, whose powerful eloquence awhile
Restrained the rapid fate of rushing Rome ;
Unconquered Cato, virtuous in extreme ;
And thou, unhappy Brutus, kind of heart,
Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urged,



Lifted the Roman steel against thy friend.
Thousands, besides, the tribute of a verse
Demand; but who can count the stars of
heaven?

Who sing their influence on this lower world?

Behold, who yonder comes! in sober state,
Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun:
'T is Phœbus' self, or else the Mantuan swain.
Great Homer too appears, of daring wing,
Parent of song! and equal by his side,
The British Muse: joined hand in hand they
walk,

Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame.
Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful
touch

Pathetic drew the impassioned heart, and
charmed

Transported Athens with the moral scene;
Nor those who, tuneful, waked the enchanting
lyre.

First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like
yours.

The Seasons.

Silence, thou lonely power, the door be thine!
See on the hallowed hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes
 deign

To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,
Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay.
Or from the Muses' hill will Pope descend,
To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,
And with the social spirit warm the heart?
For though not sweeter his own Homer sings,
Yet is his life the more endearing song.

 Where art thou, Hammond? thou, the
 darling pride,

The friend and lover of the tuneful throng.
Ah why, dear youth, in all the blooming prime
Of vernal genius, where disclosing fast
Each active worth, each manly virtue lay,
Why wert thou ravished from our hope so
 soon?

What now avails that noble thirst of fame
Which stung thy fervent breast? that treasured
 store
Of knowledge early gained? that eager zeal

Winter.

To serve thy country, glowing in the band
Of youthful patriots, who sustain her name?
What now, alas! that life-diffusing charm
Of sprightly wit? that rapture for the Muse,
That heart of friendship, and that soul of joy,
Which bade with softest light thy virtues
smile?

Ah! only showed, to check our fond pursuits,
And teach our humbled hopes that life is
vain!

Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter-glooms, with friends of pliant
soul,

Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired:
With them would search, if Nature's bound-
less frame

Was called, late-rising from the void of
night,

Or sprung eternal from the eternal mind;
Its life, its laws, its progress, and its end.

Hence larger prospects of the beauteous
whole

Would, gradual, open on our opening minds;
And each diffusive harmony unite

The Seasons.

In full perfection, to the astonished eye.
Then would we try to scan the moral world,
Which, though to us it seems embroiled,
 moves on

In higher order; fitted and impelled
By Wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
In general good. The sage historic Muse
Should next conduct us through the deeps of
 time:

Show us how empire grew, declined, and fell,
In scattered states; what makes the nations
 smile,

Improves their soil, and gives them double
 suns;

And why they pine beneath the brightest
 skies,

In Nature's richest lap. As thus we talked,
Our hearts would burn within us, would
 inhale

That portion of divinity, that ray
Of purest heaven, which lights the public
 soul

Of patriots and of heroes. But if doomed,
In powerless humble fortune, to repress

Winter.

These ardent risings of the kindling soul ;
Then, even superior to ambition, we
Would learn the private virtues ; how to
glide



Through shades and plains, along the smooth-
est stream
Of rural life : or, snatched away by hope,
Through the dim spaces of futurity,
With earnest eye anticipate those scenes

The Seasons.

Of happiness and wonder, where the mind,
In endless growth and infinite ascent,
Rises from state to state, and world to world.
But when with these the serious thought is
 foiled,
We, shifting for relief, would play the shapes
Of frolic fancy; and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never joined before,
Whence lively wit excites to gay surprise;
Or folly-painting Humour, grave himself,
Calls laughter forth, deep-shaking every
 nerve.

Meantime the village rouses up the fire;
While well attested, and as well believed,
Heard solemn, goes the goblin story round;
Till superstitious horror creeps o'er all.
Or, frequent in the sounding hall, they wake
The rural gambol. Rustic mirth goes round;
The simple joke that takes the shepherd's
 heart,
Easily pleased: the long loud laugh, sincere;
The kiss, snatched hasty from the side-long
 maid,

Winter.

On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep ;
The leap, the slap, the haul ; and, shook to
notes

Of native music, the respondent dance.

Thus jocund fleets with them the Winter-
night.

The city swarms intense. The public
haunt,

Full of each theme and warm with mixed dis-
course,

Hums indistinct. The sons of riot flow

Down the loose stream of false enchanted
joy,

To swift destruction. On the rankled soul

The gaming fury falls ; and in one gulf

Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace.

Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.

Upsprings the dance along the lighted dome,

Mixed and evolved a thousand sprightly ways ;

The glittering court effuses every pomp ;

The circle deepens ; beamed from gaudy
robes,

Tapers, and sparkling gems, and radiant eyes,

A soft effulgence o'er the palace waves :

The Seasons.

While, a gay insect in his summer-shine,
The fop, light fluttering, spreads his mealy
wings.

Dread o'er the scene, the ghost of Hamlet
stalks ;

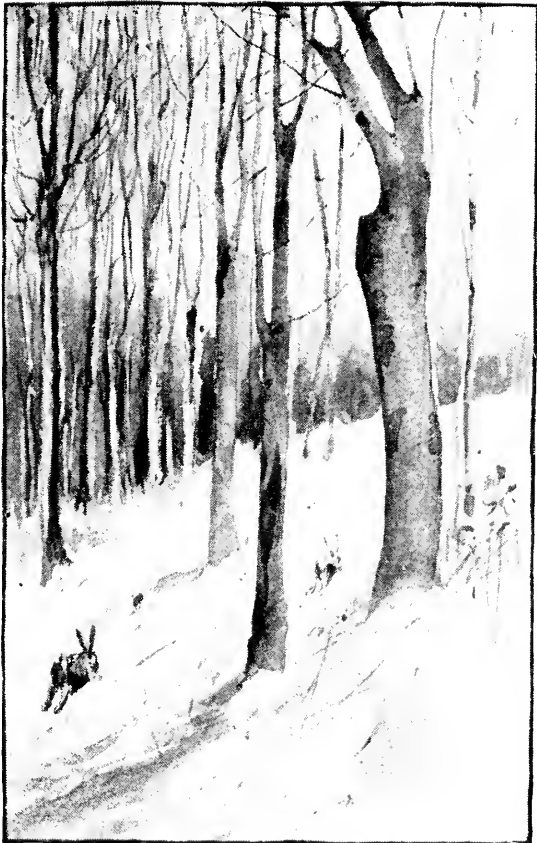
Othello rages ; poor Monimia mourns ;
And Belvidera pours her soul in love.
Terror alarms the breast ; the comely tear
Steals o'er the cheek : or else the comic Muse
Holds to the world a picture of itself,
And raises sly the fair impartial laugh.
Sometimes she lifts her strain, and paints the
scenes.

Of beauteous life ; whate'er can deck man-
kind,

Or charm the heart, in generous Bevil showed.

O Thou, whose wisdom, solid, yet refined,
Whose patriot-virtues, and consummate skill
To touch the finer springs that move the
world,

Joined to whate'er the Graces can bestow,
And all Apollo's animating fire,
Give thee, with pleasing dignity, to shine
At once the guardian, ornament, and joy,



Winter.

Of polished life ; permit the rural Muse,
O Chesterfield, to grace with thee her song!
Ere to the shades again she humbly flies,
Indulge her fond ambition, in thy train
(For every Muse has in thy train a place),
To mark thy various full-accomplished mind :
To mark that spirit, which, with British scorn,
Rejects the allurements of corrupted power ;
That elegant politeness, which excels,
Even in the judgment of presumptuous France,
The boasted manners of her shining court ;
That wit, the vivid energy of sense,
The truth of Nature, which, with Attic point
And kind well-tempered satire, smoothly keen,
Steals through the soul, and without pain
corrects.

Or, rising thence, with yet a brighter flame,
O let me hail thee on some glorious day,
When to the listening senate, ardent, crowd
Britannia's sons to hear her pleaded cause.
Then dressed by thee, more amiably fair,
Truth the soft robe of mild persuasion wears ;
Thou to assenting reason giv'st again
Her own enlightened thoughts ; called from
the heart, 59

The Seasons.

The obedient passions on thy voice attend;
And even reluctant party feels awhile
Thy gracious power, as through the varied
maze

Of eloquence, now smooth, now quick, now
strong,

Profound and clear, you roll the copious
flood.

To thy loved haunt return, my happy
Muse:

For now, behold, the joyous Winter days,
Frosty, succeed; and through the blue serene,
For sight too fine, the ethereal nitre flies;
Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
Storing afresh with elemental life.

Close crowds the shining atmosphere; and
binds

Our strengthened bodies in its cold embrace,
Constringent; feeds, and animates our blood;
Refines our spirits, through the new-strung
nerves,

In swifter sallies darting to the brain,
Where sits the soul, intense, collected, cool,
Bright as the skies, and as the season keen.

Winter.

All Nature feels the renovating force
Of Winter, only to the thoughtless eye
In ruin seen. The frost-concocted glebe



Draws in abundant vegetable soul,
And gathers vigour for the coming year;
A stronger glow sits on the lively cheek
Of ruddy fire; and luculent along
The purer rivers flow, their sullen deeps,
Transparent, open to the shepherd's gaze,

The Seasons.

And murmur hoarser at the fixing frost.

What art thou, frost? and whence are thy
 keen stores

Derived, thou secret all-invading power,

Whom even the illusive fluid cannot fly?

Is not thy potent energy, unseen,

Myriads of little salts, or hooked, or shaped

Like double wedges, and diffused immense

Through water, earth, and ether? hence at
 eve,

Steamed eager from the red horizon round,

With the fierce rage of Winter deep suffused,

An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool

Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career

Arrests the bickering stream. The loosened
 ice,

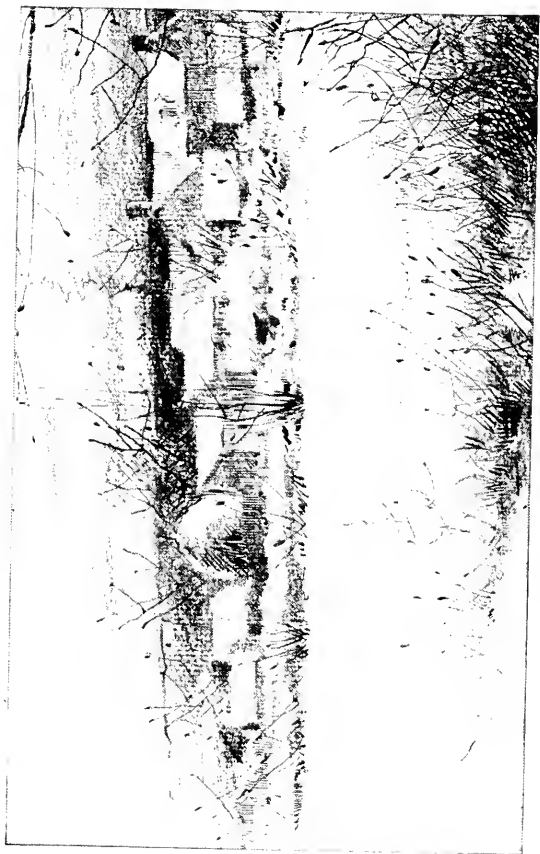
Let down the flood, and half dissolved by
 day,

Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank

Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed
 stone,

A crystal pavement, by the breath of Heaven

Cemented firm; till, seized from shore to
 shore,





Winter.

The whole imprisoned river growls below.
Loud rings the frozen earth, and, hard, reflects
A double noise; while, at his evening watch,
The village dog deters the nightly thief;
The heifer lows; the distant water-fall
Swells in the breeze; and, with the hasty
tread

Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
Shakes from afar. The full ethereal round,
Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
Shines out intensely keen; and, all one cope
Of starry glitter, glows from pole to pole.
From pole to pole the rigid influence falls,
Through the still night, incessant, heavy,
strong,

And seizes Nature fast. It freezes on;
Till Morn, late rising o'er the drooping
world,

Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears
The various labour of the silent night:
Prone from the dripping eave, and dumb
cascade

Whose idle torrents only seem to roar,
The pendent icicle; the frost-work fair,

The Seasons.

Where transient hues and fancied figures
rise ;

Wide-spouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
A livid tract, cold-gleaming on the morn ;
The forest bent beneath the plummy wave ;
And by the frost refined, the whiter snow,
Incrusted hard, and sounding to the tread
Of early shepherd, as he pensive seeks
His pining flock, or from the mountain top,
Pleased with the slippery surface, swift de-
scends.

On blithesome frolics bent, the youthful
swains.

While every work of man is laid at rest,
Fond o'er the river crowd, in various sport
And revelry dissolved ; where mixing glad,
Happiest of all the train, the raptured boy
Lashes the whirling top. Or, where the
Rhine

Branched out in many a long canal extends,
From every province swarming, void of care,
Batavia rushes forth : and as they sweep,
On sounding skates, a thousand different
ways

Winter.

In circling poise, swift as the winds, along,
The then gay land is maddened all to joy.
Nor less the northern courts, wide o'er the
snow,



Pour a new pomp. Eager, on rapid sleds,
Their vigorous youth in bold contention
wheel
The long-resounding course. Meantime, to
raise

The Seasons.

The manly strife, with highly blooming
 charms,

Flushed by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
Or Russia's buxom daughters, glow around.

Pure, quick, and sportful is the wholesome
 day ;

But soon elapsed. The horizontal sun,
Broad o'er the south, hangs at his utmost
 noon,

And ineffectual strikes the gelid cliff :

His azure gloss the mountain still maintains,
Nor feels the feeble touch. Perhaps the vale
Relents awhile to the reflected ray ;

Or from the forest falls the clustered snow,
Myriads of gems, that in the waving gleam
Gay-twinkle as they scatter. Thick around
Thunders the sport of those, who with the
 gun,

And dog impatient bounding at the shot,
Worse than the season, desolate the fields ;
And, adding to the ruins of the year,
Distress the footed or the feathered game.

But what is this? our infant Winter sinks,
Divested of his grandeur, should our eye

Winter.

Astonished shoot into the frigid zone ;
Where, for relentless months, continual
Night
Holds o'er the glittering waste her starry
reign.

There, through the prison of unbounded
wilds,
Barred by the hand of Nature from escape,
Wide roams the Russian exile. Naught
around
Strikes his sad eye, but deserts lost in snow,
And heavy-loaded groves, and solid floods,
That stretch, athwart the solitary vast,
Their icy horrors to the frozen main ;
And cheerless towns far distant, never blessed,
Save when its annual course the caravan
Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay,
With news of human-kind. Yet there life
glows ;
Yet cherished there, beneath the shining
waste,
The furry nations harbour : tipped with jet,
Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they
press ;

The Seasons.

Sables, of glossy black ; and dark-embrowned,
Or beauteous freaked with many a mingled
hue,
Thousands besides, the costly pride of courts.
There, warm together pressed, the trooping
deer
Sleep on the new-fallen snows ; and, scarce
his head
Raised o'er the heapy wreath, the branching
elk
Lies slumbering sullen in the white abyss.
The ruthless hunter wants nor dogs nor toils,
Nor with the dread of sounding bows he
drives
The fearful, flying race ; with ponderous
clubs,
As, weak, against the mountain-heaps they
push
Their beating breast in vain, and piteous
bray,
He lays them quivering on the ensanguined
snows,
And with loud shouts rejoicing bears them
home.



Winter.

There, through the piny forest, half-absorpt,
Rough tenant of these shades, the shapeless
bear,

With dangling ice all horrid, stalks forlorn ;
Slow-paced, and sourer as the storms increase,
He makes his bed beneath the inclement
drift,

And, with stern patience, scorning weak com-
plaint,

Hardens his heart against assailing want.

Wide o'er the spacious regions of the
north,

That see Boötes urge his tardy wain,
A boisterous race, by frosty Caurus pierced,
Who little pleasure know and fear no pain,
Prolific swarm. They once relumed the
flame

Of lost mankind in polished slavery sunk ;
Drove martial horde on horde, with dreadful
sweep

Resistless rushing o'er the enfeebled south,
And gave the vanquished world another form.
Not such the sons of Lapland : wisely they
Despise the insensate barbarous trade of war ;

The Seasons.

They ask no more than simple Nature gives ;
They love their mountains, and enjoy their
storms.

No false desires, no pride-created wants,
Disturb the peaceful current of their time ;
And, through the restless ever tortured maze
Of pleasure, or ambition, bid it rage.

Their reindeer form their riches. These their
tents.

Their robes, their beds, and all their homely
wealth

Supply, their wholesome fare, and cheerful
cups.

Obsequious at their call, the docile tribe
Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl them
swift

O'er hill and dale, heaped into one expanse
Of marbled snow, or far as eye can sweep
With a blue crust of ice unbounded glazed.
By dancing meteors then, that ceaseless
shake

A waving blaze refracted o'er the heavens,
And vivid moons, and stars that keener play
With double lustre from the radiant waste,

Winter.

Even in the depth of polar night, they find
A wondrous day — enough to light the chase,
Or guide their daring steps to Finland fairs.
Wished Spring returns; and, from the hazy
south,



While dim Aurora slowly moves before,
The welcome sun, just verging up at first,
By small degrees extends the swelling curve;
Till seen at last for gay rejoicing months,
Still round and round his spiral course he
winds,

The Seasons.

And as he nearly dips his flaming orb,
Wheels up again, and reascends the sky.
In that glad season, from the lakes and
floods,

Where pure Niemi's fairy mountains rise,
And, fringed with roses, Tenglio rolls his
stream,

They draw the copious fry. With these, at
eve,

They, cheerful, loaded to their tents repair ;
Where, all day long in useful cares employed,
Their kind unblemished wives the fire pre-
pare.

Thrice happy race! by poverty secured
From legal plunder and rapacious power ;
In whom fell interest never yet has sown
The seeds of vice : whose spotless swains
ne'er knew

Injurious deed, nor, blasted by the breath
Of faithless love, their blooming daughters
woe.

Still pressing on, beyond Tornéa's lake,
And Hecla flaming through a waste of snow,
And farthest Greenland, to the pole itself,



Winter.

Where, failing gradual, life at length goes out,
The Muse expands her solitary flight ;
And, hovering o'er the wild stupendous scene,
Beholds new seas beneath another sky.
Throned in his palace of cerulean ice,
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court ;
And through his airy hall the loud misrule
Of driving tempest is forever heard :
Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath ;
Here arms his winds with all-subduing frost ;
Moulds his fierce hail, and treasures up his
 snows.

With which he now oppresses half the globe.

Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's
 coast,

She sweeps the howling margin of the main ;
Where undissolving, from the first of time,
Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky ;
And icy mountains high on mountains piled,
Seem to the shivering sailor from afar
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Projected huge and horrid, o'er the surge,
Alps frown on Alps ; or rushing hideous
 down,

The Seasons.

As if old chaos was again returned,
Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury : but, in all its rage
Of tempest taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chained,
And bid to roar no more : a bleak expanse,
Shagged o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and
void

Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies conscious southward. Miserable they,
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun ;
While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold
frost,

The long, long night, incumbent o'er their
heads,

Falls horrible. Such was the Briton's fate,
As with first prow (what have not Britons
dared!)

He for the passage sought, attempted since
So much in vain, and seeming to be shut
By jealous Nature with eternal bars.

In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,

Winter.

And to the stony deep his idle ship
Immediate sealed, he, with his hapless crew,
Each full exerted at his several task,
Froze into statues; to the cordage glued



The sailor, and the pilot to the helm.

Hard by these shores, where scarce his
freezing stream

Rolls the wild Oby, live the last of men;

The Seasons.

And half-enlivened by the distant sun,
That rears and ripens man, as well as plants,
Here human nature wears its rudest form.

Deep from the piercing season sunk in caves,
Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,
They waste the tedious gloom. Immersed
in furs,

Doze the gross race : nor sprightly jest, nor
song,

Nor tenderness, they know : nor aught of life,
Beyond the kindred bears that stalk without :
Till morn at length, her roses drooping all,
Sheds a long twilight brightening o'er their
fields,

And calls the quivered savage to the chase.

What cannot active government perform,
New-moulding man? Wide-stretching from
these shores,

A people savage from remotest time,
A huge neglected empire, one vast mind,
By Heaven inspired, from Gothic darkness
called.

Immortal Peter! first of monarchs! he
His stubborn country tamed, her rocks, her
fens.

Winter.

Her floods, her seas, her ill-submitting sons ;
And while the fierce barbarian he subdued,
To more exalted soul he raised the man.
Ye shades of ancient heroes, ye who toiled
Through long successive ages to build up
A labouring plan of state, behold at once
The wonder done! behold the matchless
 prince!
Who left his native throne, where reigned till
 then
A mighty shadow of unreal power ;
Who greatly spurned the slothful pomp of
 courts ;
And roaming every land, in every port
His sceptre laid aside, with glorious hand
Unwearied plying the mechanic tool,
Gathered the seeds of trade, of useful arts,
Of civil wisdom, and of martial skill.
Charged with the stores of Europe home he
 goes :
Then cities rise amid the illumined waste ;
O'er joyless deserts smiles the rural reign ;
Far-distant flood to flood is social joined ;
The astonished Euxine hears the Baltic roar ;

The Seasons.

Proud navies ride on seas that never foamed
With daring keel before ; and armies stretch
Each way their dazzling files, repressing here
The frantic Alexander of the north,
And awing there stern Othman's shrinking
sons.

Sloth flies the land, and ignorance, and vice,
Of old dishonour proud : it glows around,
Taught by the royal hand that roused the
whole,

One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade :
For what his wisdom planned, and power en-
forced,

More potent still, his great example showed.

Muttering, the winds at eve, with blunted
point,

Blow hollow-blustering from the south. Sub-
dued,

The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.

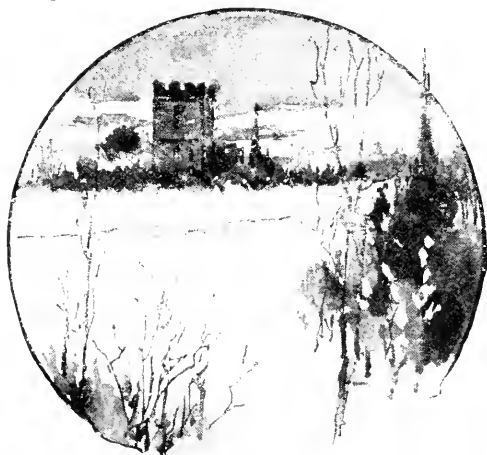
Spotted the mountains shine ; loose sleet de-
scends,

And floods the country round. The rivers
swell,

Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,

Winter.

O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once ;
And, where they rush, the wide-resounding
plain



Is left one slimy waste. Those sullen seas,
That washed the ungenial pole, will rest no
more
Beneath the shackles of the mighty north ;
But, rousing all their waves, resistless heave.

The Seasons.

And hark! the lengthening roar continuous
runs

Athwart the rifted deep: at once it bursts,
And piles a thousand mountains to the
clouds.

Ill fares the bark with trembling wretches
charged,

That, tossed amid the floating fragments,
moors

Beneath the shelter of an icy isle,

While night o'erwhelms the sea, and horror
looks

More horrible. Can human force endure
The assembled mischiefs that besiege them
round?

Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting weariness,
The roar of winds and waves, the crush of
ice,

Now ceasing, now renewed with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main.
More to embroil the deep, Leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful sport,
Tempest the loosened brine; while, through
the gloom,



Winter.

Far from the bleak inhospitable shore,
Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famished monsters, there awaiting wrecks.
Yet Providence, that ever-waking eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate.

'T is done! — dread Winter spreads his
latest glooms,

And reigns, tremendous, o'er the conquered
year.

How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! Horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictured life: pass some few
years,

Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent
strength,

Thy sober Autumn, fading into age,

And pale, concluding Winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene Ah! whither now are
fled

Those dreams of greatness? those unsolid
hopes

The Seasons.

Of happiness? those longings after fame?
Those restless cares? those busy, bustling
days?

Those gay-spent, festive nights? those veer-
ing thoughts,

Lost between good and ill, that shared thy
life?

All now are vanished! virtue sole survives. —
Immortal, never-failing friend of man,

His guide to happiness on high. And see!
'Tis come, the glorious morn! the second
birth

Of heaven and earth! awakening Nature
hears

The new creating word, and starts to life,
In every heightened form, from pain and
death

Forever free. The great eternal scheme,
Involving all, and in a perfect whole
Uniting, as the prospect wider spreads,
To reason's eye, refined, clears up apace.

Ye vainly wise! ye blind presumptuous! now,
Confounded in the dust, adore that power
And Wisdom oft arraigned: see now the
cause

Winter.

Why unassuming Worth in secret lived,
And died neglected: why the good man's
share



In life was gall and bitterness of soul:
Why the lone widow and her orphans pined
In starving solitude: while Luxury,
In palaces, lay straining her low thought,

The Seasons.

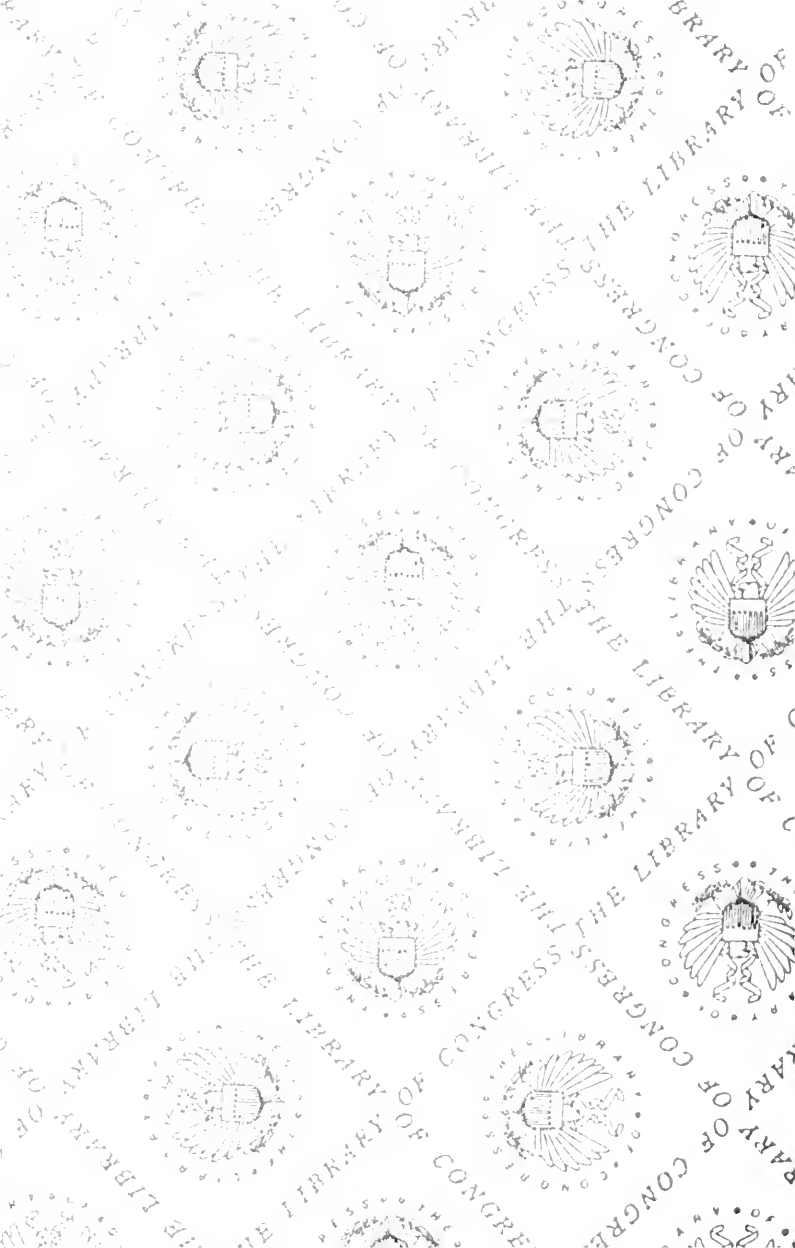
To form unreal wants: why heaven-born
Truth,

And Moderation fair, wore the red marks
Of superstition's scourge: why licensed Pain,
That cruel spoiler, that embosomed foe,
Embittered all our bliss. Ye good, dis-
tressed!

Ye noble few! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view—which only
saw

A little part—deemed evil, is no more:
The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.





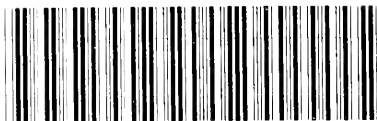
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