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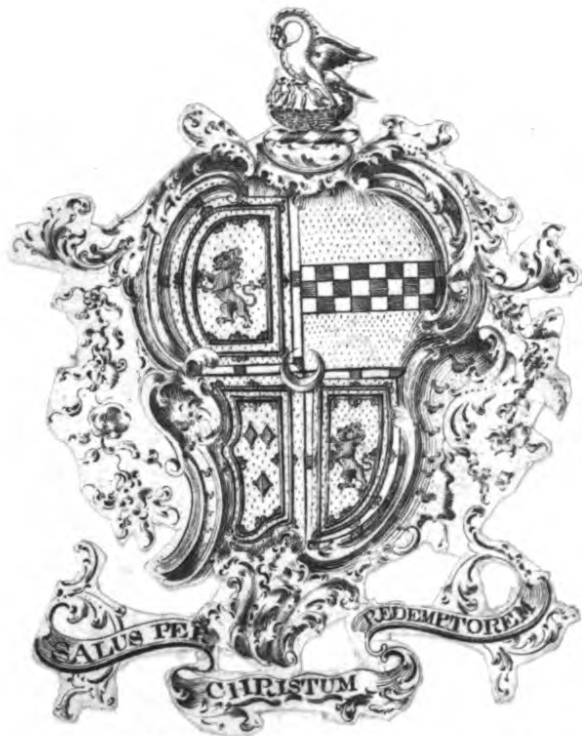
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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF
ENGLISH



*Stuart, of Carnock
Esq^r. S*

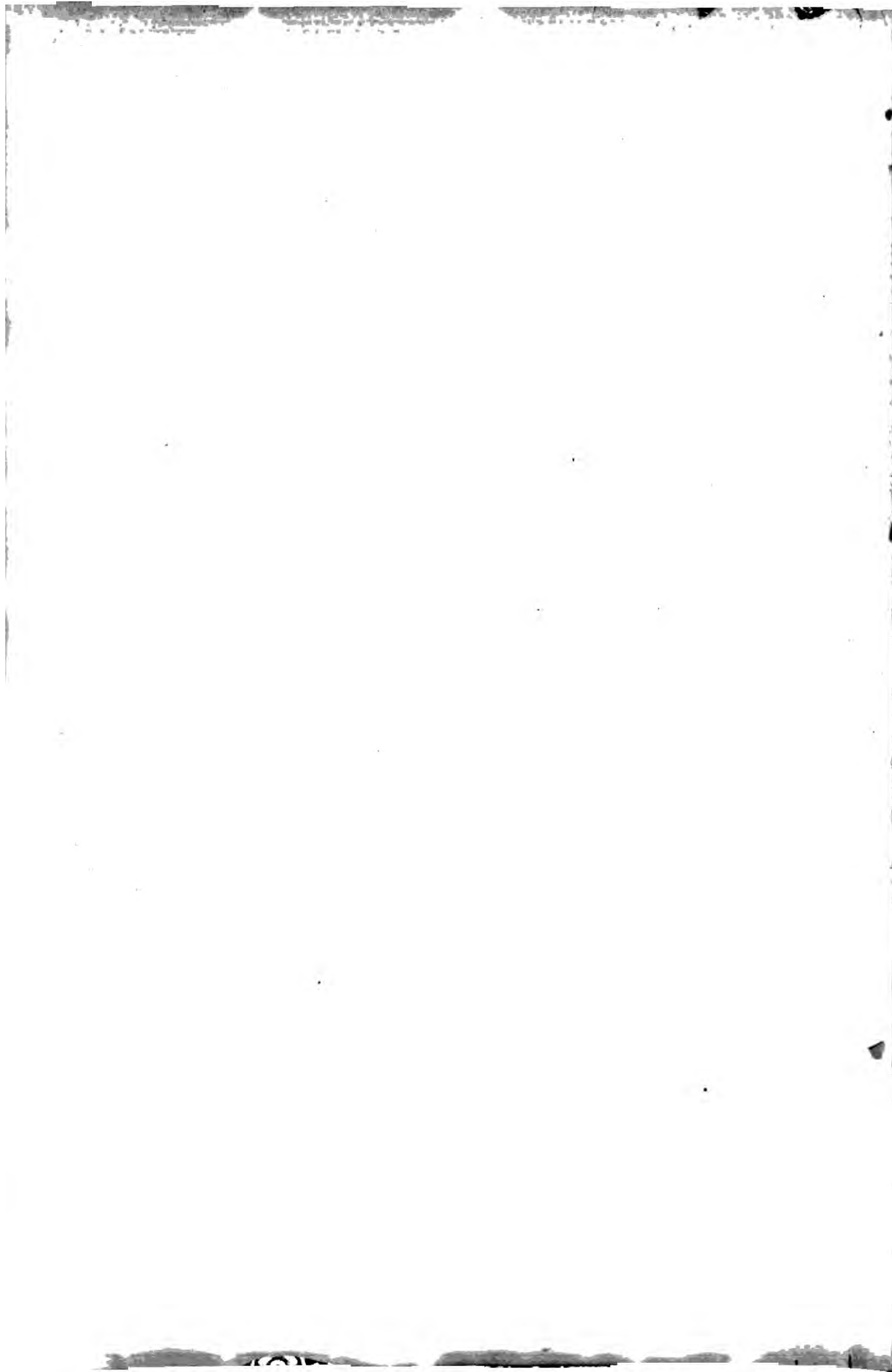
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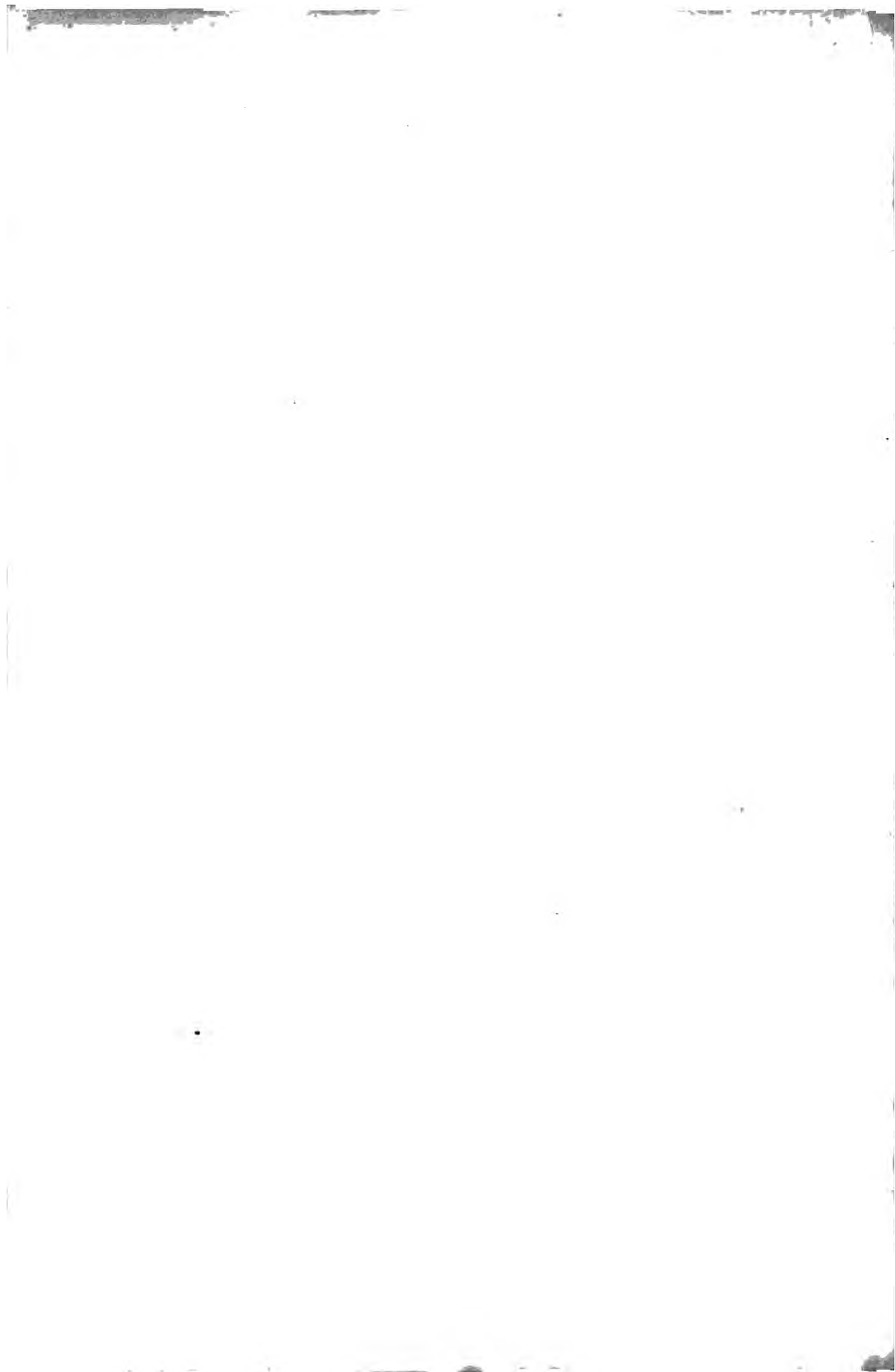
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Gift of J. A. Stuart. to Mary Osborne
Burnett 17th Jan 1854. -
of Kemnay. }



THE
REMAINS
OF
HENRY KIRKE WHITE,
OF NOTTINGHAM,

LATE OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE ;

With an Account of his

LIFE,
BY ROBERT SOUTHEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

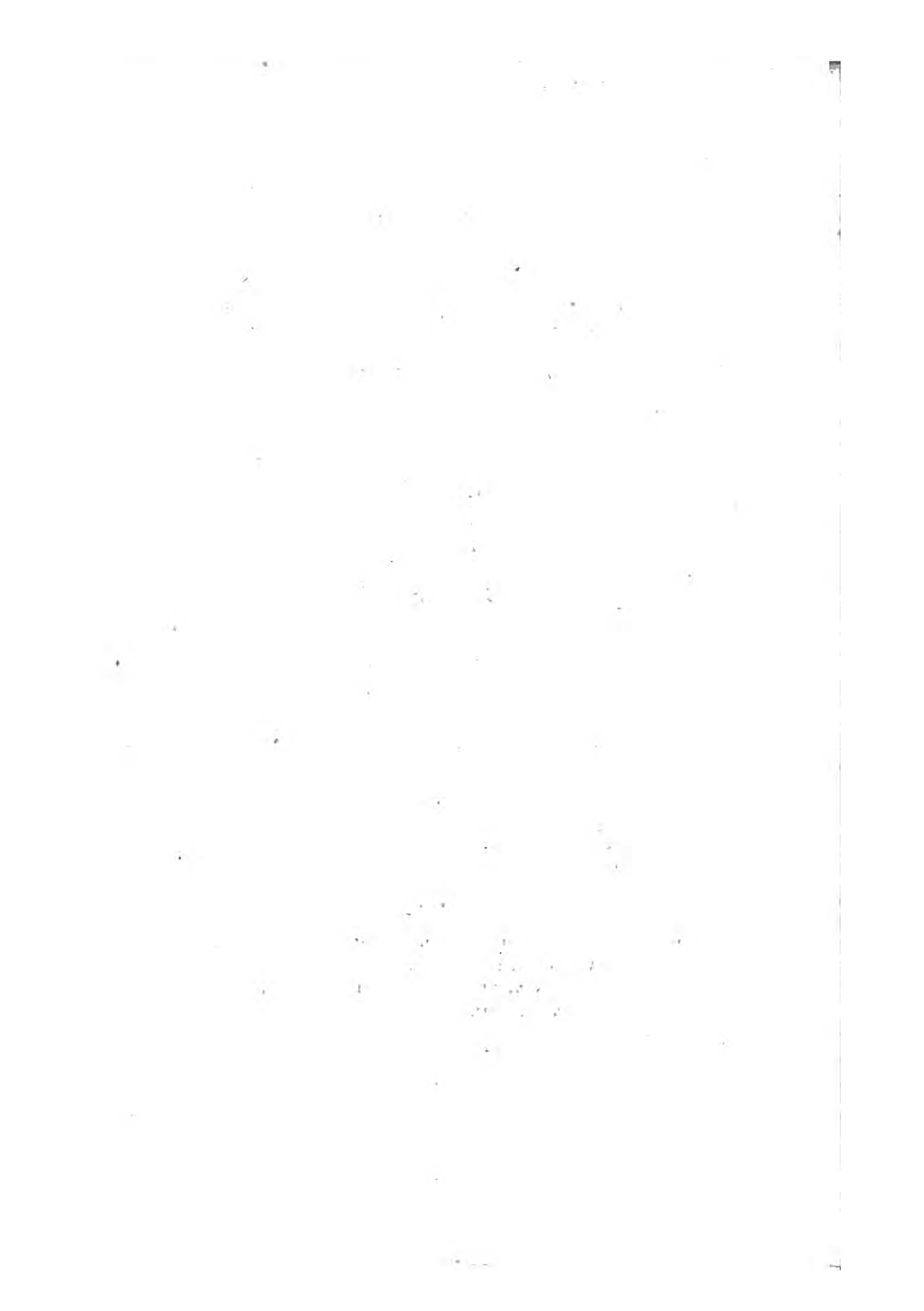
VOL. II.

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PRINTED FOR VERNOR, HOOD, AND SHARPE ; LONGMAN, HURST,
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AND S. TUPMAN, NOTTINGHAM ;

At the Union Printing Office, St. John's Square, by W. Wilson.

1807.



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ERRATA.

Page 5, line 8, *dele* " the."

----- 71, --- 18, *for* " our," *read* " one."

----- 73, *for* " happonian," *read* " Lapponian."

----- 119, last line, *for* " weed," *read* " meed."

----- 120, line 13, *for* " on," *read* " in."

CLIFTON GROVE.

VOL. II.

B

**This, and the following Poems, are reprinted from the little
volume which Henry published in 1803.**

TO
HER GRACE
THE
DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE,

THE FOLLOWING
TRIFLING EFFUSIONS

OF
A VERY YOUTHFUL MUSE,

ARE
BY PERMISSION DEDICATED,

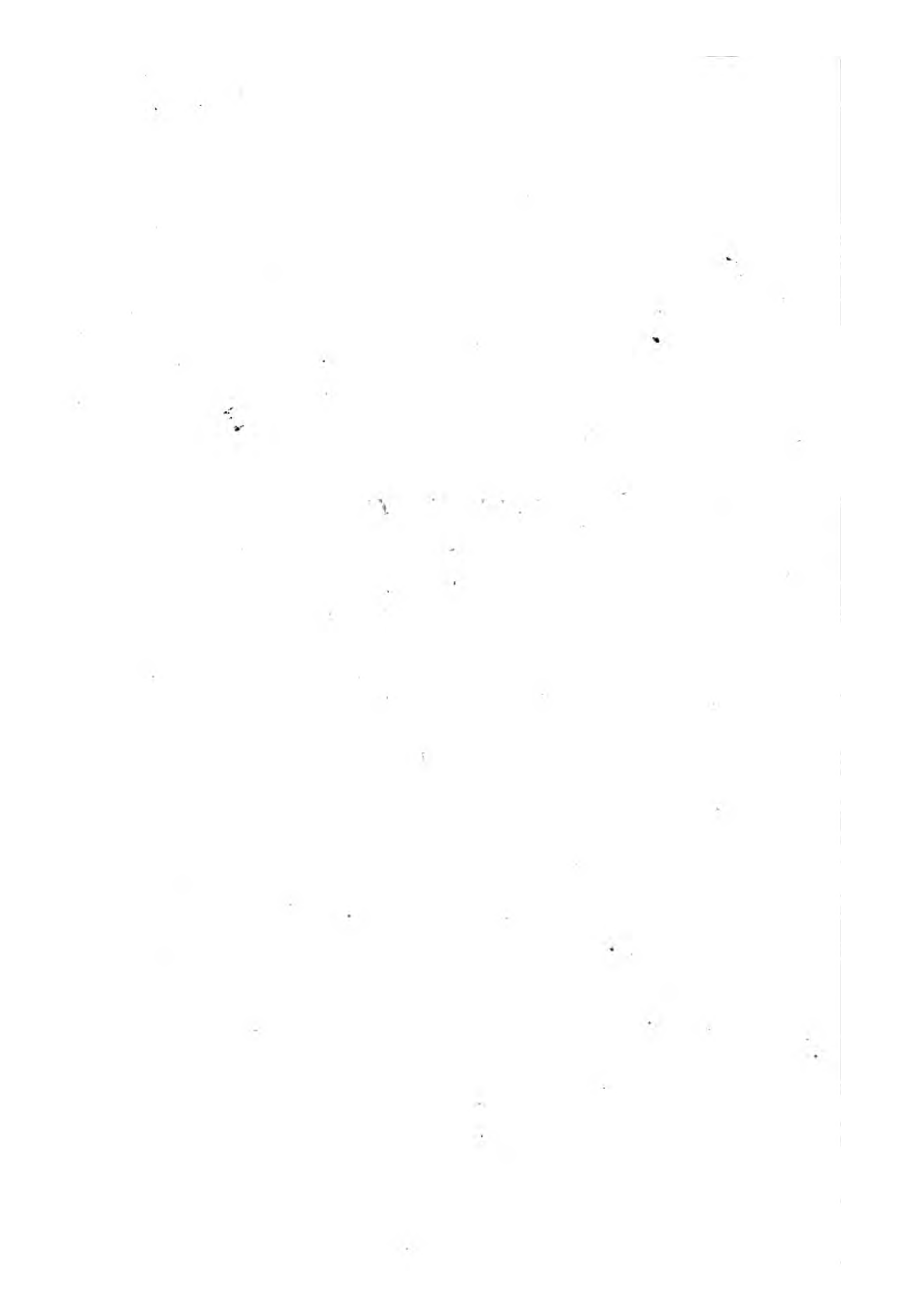
By her Grace's

MUCH OBLIGED

AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,

HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

NOTTINGHAM.



PREFACE.



THE following attempts in Verse, are laid before the Public with extreme diffidence. The Author is very conscious that the juvenile efforts of a youth, who has not received the polish of Academical discipline, and who has been but sparingly blessed with opportunities for the prosecution of scholastic pursuits, must necessarily be defective in the accuracy and finished elegance, which mark the works of the man who has passed his life in the retirement of his study, furnishing his mind with images, and at the same time attaining the power of disposing those images to the best advantage.

The unpremeditated effusions of a Boy, from his thirteenth year employed, not in the acquisition of literary information, but in the more active business of life, must not be expected to exhibit any considerable portion of the correctness of a Virgil, or the vigorous compression of a Horace. Men are not, I believe, frequently known to bestow much labour on their amusements; and these Poems were, most of them, written merely to beguile a leisure hour, or to fill up the languid intervals of studies of a severer nature.

PREFACE.

Πας το οικειος εργον αγαπῶ. “*Every one loves his own work;*” says the Stagyrīte; but it was no overweening affection of this kind, which induced this publication. Had the author relied on his own judgment only, these Poems would not, in all probability, ever have seen the light.

Perhaps it may be asked of him, what are his motives for this publication? He answers—simply these: The facilitation through its means of those studies which, from his earliest infancy, have been the principal objects of his ambition; and the increase of the capacity to pursue those inclinations which may one day place him in an honourable station in the scale of society.

The principal Poem in this little collection (Clifton Grove) is, he fears, deficient in numbers, and harmonious coherency of parts. It is, however, merely to be regarded as a description of a nocturnal ramble in that charming retreat, accompanied with such reflections as the scene naturally suggested. It was written twelve months ago, when the author was in his sixteenth year.—The Miscellanies are some of them the productions of a very early age.—Of the Odes, that “*To an early Primrose,*” was written at thirteen,—the others are of a later date.—The Sonnets are chiefly irregular; they have, perhaps, no other claim to that specific denomination, than that they consist only of fourteen lines.

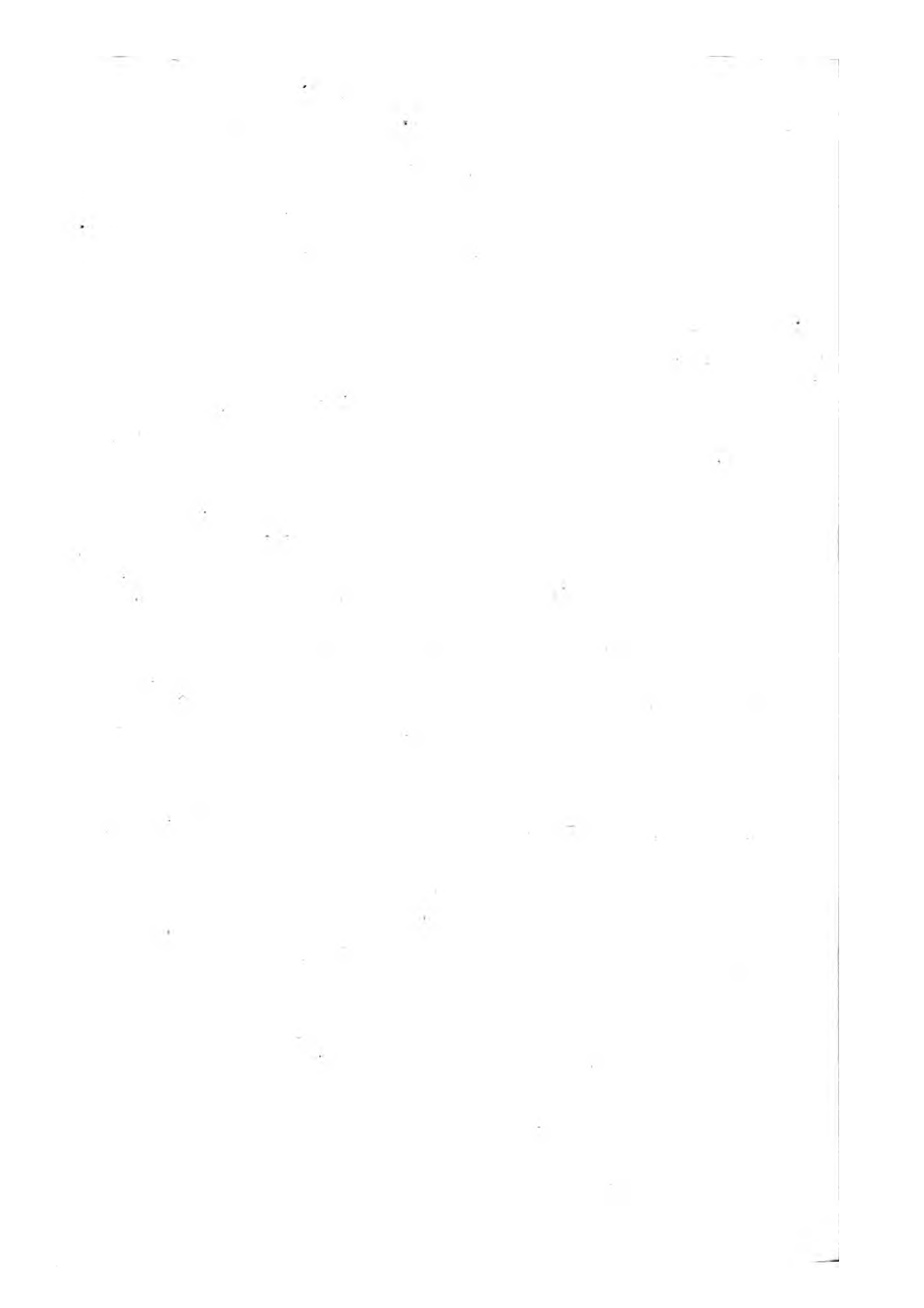
Such are the Poems, towards which I entreat the

PREFACE.

lenity of the Public. The Critic will doubtless find in them much to condemn, he may likewise, possibly, discover something to commend. Let him scan my faults with an indulgent eye, and in the work of that correction which I invite, let him remember, he is holding the iron Mace of Criticism over the flimsy superstructure of a youth of seventeen, and remembering that, may he forbear from crushing by too much rigour, the painted butterfly, whose transient colours may otherwise be capable of affording a moment's innocent amusement.

H. K. WHITE.

NOTTINGHAM.



TO MY LYRE.

AN ODE.

I.

THOU simple Lyre!—Thy music wild
Has serv'd to charm the weary hour,
And many a lonely night has 'guil'd,
When even pain has own'd, and smil'd,
Its fascinating power.

II.

Yet, oh my Lyre! the busy crowd
Will little heed thy simple tones;
Them, mightier minstrels harping loud
Engross,—and thou, and I, must shroud
Where dark oblivion 'thrones.

III.

No hand, thy diapason o'er,
Well skill'd, I throw with sweep sublime;
For me, no academic lore
Has taught the solemn strain to pour,
Or build the polish'd rhyme.

IV.

Yet thou to *Sylvan* themes canst sear;
Thou know'st to charm the *woodland* train:
The rustic swains believe thy power
Can hush the wild winds when they roar,
And still the billowy main.

10

V.

These honours, Lyre, we yet may keep,
I, still unknown, may live with thee,
And gentle zephyr's wing will sweep
Thy solemn string, where low I sleep,
Beneath the alder tree.

VI.

This little dirge will please me more
Than the full requiem's swelling peal;
I'd rather than that crouds should sigh
For me, that from some kindred eye
The trickling tear should steal.

VII.

Yet dear to me the wreath of bay,
Perhaps from me debarr'd;
And dear to me the classic zone,
Which snatch'd from learning's labour'd throne,
Adorns the accepted bard.

VIII.

And O! if yet 'twere mine to dwell
Where Cam, or Isis, winds along,
Perchance, inspired with ardour chaste,
I yet might call the ear of taste
To listen to my song.

IX.

Oh! then, my little friend, thy style
I'd change to happier lays,
Oh! then, the cloister'd glooms should smile,
And through the long the fretted aisle
Should swell the note of praise.

CLIFTON GROVE.

A Sketch in Verse.

LO! in the west, fast fades the lingering light,
And day's last vestige takes its silent flight.
No more, is heard the woodman's measur'd stroke
Which, with the dawn, from yonder dingle broke ;
No more, hoarse clamouring o'er the uplifted head,
The crows assembling, seek their wind-rock'd bed ;
Still'd is the village hum—the woodland sounds
Have ceas'd to echo o'er the dewy grounds,
And general silence reigns, save when below,
The murmuring Trent is scarcely heard to flow ;
And save when, swung by 'nighted rustic late,
Oft, on its hinge, rebounds the jarring gate :
Or, when the sheep-bell, in the distant vale,
Breathes its wild music on the downy gale.

Now, when the rustic wears the social smile,
Releas'd from day and its attendant toil,
And draws his household round their evening fire,
And tells the oft-told tales that never tire :
Or, where the town's blue turrets dimly rise,
And manufacture taints the ambient skies,
The pale mechanic leaves the labouring loom,
The air-pent hold, the pestilential room,
And rushes out, impatient to begin
The stated course of customary sin :

Now, now, my solitary way I bend
 Where solemn groves in awful state impend,
 And cliffs, that boldly rise above the plain,
 Bespeak, blest Clifton ! thy sublime domain.
 Here, lonely wandering o'er the sylvan bower,
 I come, to pass the meditative hour ;
 To bid awhile, the strife of passion cease,
 And woo the calms of solitude, and peace.
 And oh ! thou sacred power, who rear'st on high
 Thy leafy throne where waving poplars sigh !
 Genius of woodland shades ! whose mild controul
 Steals with resistless witchery to the soul,
 Come with thy wonted ardour, and inspire
 My glowing bosom with thy hallowed fire.
 And thou too, fancy ! from thy starry sphere,
 Where to the hymning orbs thou lend'st thine ear,
 Do thou descend, and bless my ravish'd sight,
 Veil'd in soft visions of serene delight.
 At thy command the gale that passes by
 Bears in its whispers mystic harmony.
 Thou wav'st thy wand, and lo ! what forms appear !
 On the dark cloud what giant shapes career !
 The ghosts of Ossian skim the misty vale,
 And hosts of Sylphids on the moon-beam sail.

This gloomy alcove, darkling to the sight,
 Where meeting trees create eternal night ;
 Save, when from yonder stream, the sunny ray,
 Reflected gives a dubious gleam of day ;

Recalls endearing to my alter'd mind,
 Times, when beneath the boxen hedge reclin'd
 I watch'd the lapwing to her clamorous brood;
 Or lur'd the robin to its scatter'd food;
 Or woke with song the woodland echo wild,
 And at each gay response delighted, smil'd.
 How oft, when childhood threw its golden ray
 Of gay romance, o'er every happy day,
 Here, would I run, a visionary boy,
 When the hoarse tempest shook the vaulted sky,
 And fancy-led, beheld the Almighty's form
 Sternly careering on the eddy storm;
 And heard, while awe congeal'd my inmost soul,
 His voice terrific, in the thunders roll.
 With secret joy, I view'd with vivid glare,
 The volley'd lightnings cleave the sullen air;
 And, as the warring winds around revil'd,
 With awful pleasure big,—I heard and smil'd.
 Belov'd remembrance!—Memory which endears
 This silent spot to my advancing years.
 Here, dwells eternal peace, eternal rest,
 In shades like these to live, is to be blest.
 While happiness evades the busy croud
 In rural coverts loves the maid to shroud.
 And thou, too, Inspiration, whose wild flame
 Shoots with electric swiftness thro' the frame,
 Thou here, dost love to sit, with up-turn'd eye,
 And listen to the stream that murmurs by,
 The woods that wave, the grey-owls silken flight,
 The mellow music of the listening night.

Congenial calms ! more welcome to my breast
 Than maddening joy in dazzling lustre drest,
 To Heaven my prayers, my daily prayers I raise,
 That ye may bless my unambitious days,
 Withdrawn, remote, from all the haunts of strife
 May trace with me the lowly vale of life,
 And when her banner death shall o'er me wave
 May keep your peaceful vigils on my grave.
 Now, as I rove, where wide the prospect grows,
 A livelier light upon my vision flows.
 No more above, the embracing branches meet ;
 No more the river gurgles at my feet,
 But seen deep, down the cliffs impending side
 Through hanging woods, now gleams its silver tide.
 Dim is my up-land path,—across the Green
 Fantastic shadows fling,—yet oft between
 The chequer'd glooms, the moon her chaste ray sheds,
 Where knots of blue-bells droop their graceful heads,
 And beds of violets blooming 'mid the trees,
 Load with waste fragrance the nocturnal breeze.

Say, why does man, while to his opening sight,
 Each shrub presents a source of chaste delight,
 And nature bids for him her treasures flow,
 And gives to him alone, his bliss to know,
 Why does he pant for vice's deadly charms ?
 Why clasp the syren pleasure to his arms ?
 And suck deep draughts of her voluptuous breath,
 Though fraught with ruin, infamy, and death ?

Could he who thus to vile enjoyments clings,
 Know what calm joy from purer sources springs,
 Could he but feel how sweet, how free from strife,
 The harmless pleasures of a harmless life,
 No more his soul would pant for joys impure,
 The deadly chalice would no more allure,
 But the sweet potion he was wont to sip,
 Would turn to poison on his conscious lip.

Fair Nature! thee, in all thy varied charms,
 Fain would I clasp for ever in my arms :
 Thine, are the sweets which never, never sate,
 Thine, still remain, through all the storms of fate.
 Though not for me, 'twas Heaven's divine command
 To roll in acres of paternal land,
 Yet still, my lot is blest, while I enjoy
 Thine opening beauties with a lover's eye.

Happy is he, who, though the cup of bliss
 Has ever shunn'd him when he thought to kiss,
 Who, still in abject poverty, or pain,
 Can count with pleasure what small joys remain :
 Though were his sight convey'd from zone to zone,
 He would not find one spot of ground his own,
 Yet, as he looks around, he cries with glee,
 These bounding prospects all were made for me ;
 For me, yon waving fields their burthen bear,
 For me, yon labourer guides the shining share,
 While happy I, in idle ease recline,
 And mark the glorious visions as they shine.

This is the charm, by sages often told,
 Converting all it touches into gold.
 Content can soothe, where'er by fortune placed,
 Can rear a garden in the desert waste.

How lovely, from this hill's superior height,
 Spreads the wide view before my straining sight!
 O'er many a varied mile of lengthening ground,
 E'en to the blue-ridged hills remotest bound
 My ken is borne, while o'er my head serene,
 The silver moon illumines the misty scene,
 Now shining clear, now darkening in the glade,
 In all the soft varieties of shade.

Behind me, lo! the peaceful hamlet lies,
 The drowsy god has seal'd the cotter's eyes.
 No more, where late the social faggot blaz'd,
 The vacant peal resounds, by little rais'd ;
 But, lock'd in silence, o'er Arion's * star
 The slumbering night rolls on her velvet car ;
 The church-bell tolls, deep-sounding down the glade,
 The solemn hour, for walking spectres made ;
 The simple plough-boy, wakening with the sound,
 Listens aghast, and turns him startled round,
 Then stops his ears, and strives to close his eyes,
 Lest at the sound some grisly ghost should rise.

* The Constellation Delphinus. For authority for this appellation, vide Ovid's Fasti. B. 11, 113.

Now ceas'd the long, the monitory toll,
 Returning silence stagnates in the soul ;
 Save when, disturb'd by dreams, with wild affright,
 The deep-mouth'd mastiff bays the troubled night ;
 Or where the village ale-house crowns the vale,
 The creaking sign-post whistles to the gale.
 A little onward let me bend my way,
 Where the moss'd seat invites the traveller's stay.
 That spot, oh ! yet it is the very same ;
 That hawthorn gives it shade, and gave it name ;
 There yet the primrose opes its earliest bloom,
 There yet the violet, sheds its first perfume,
 And in the branch that rears above the rest
 The robin unmolested builds its nest.
 'Twas here, when hope presiding o'er my breast,
 In vivid colours every prospect drest ;
 'Twas here, reclining, I indulg'd her dreams,
 And lost the hour in visionary schemes.
 Here, as I press once more the ancient seat,
 Why, bland deceiver ! not renew the cheat ?
 Say, can a few short years this change atchieve,
 That thy illusions can no more deceive !
 Time's sombrous tints have every view o'erspread,
 And thou too, gay Seducer ! art *thou* fled ?
 Tho' vain thy promise, and the suite severe,
 Yet thou could'st guile misfortune of her tear,
 And oft thy smiles across life's gloomy way,
 Could throw a gleam of transitory day.
 How gay, in youth, the flattering future seems ;
 How sweet is manhood in the infants' dreams ;

The dire mistake too soon is brought to light,
 And all is burie'd in redoub'ed night.
 Yet some can rise superior to the pain,
 And in their breasts the charmer hope retain :
 While others, dead to feeling, can survey
 Unmov'd, their fairest prospects fade away :
 But yet a few there be,—too soon o'ercast!
 Who shrink unhappy from the adverse blast,
 And woo the first bright gleam, which breaks the gloom,
 To gild the silent slumbers of the tomb.
 So, in these shades, the early primrose blows,
 Too soon deceiv'd by suns, and melting snows :
 So falls untimely on the desert waste,
 Its blossoms withering in the northern blast.

Now pass'd whate'er the upland heights display,
 Down the steep cliff I wind my devious way ;
 Oft rousing, as the rustling path I beat,
 The timid hare from its accustom'd seat.
 And oh ! how sweet this walk o'er-hung with wood,
 That winds the margin of the solemn flood !
 What rural objects steal upon the sight !
 What rising views prolong the calm delight !
 The brooklet branching from the silver Trent,
 The whispering birch by every zephyr bent,
 The woody island, and the naked mead,
 The lowly hut half hid in groves of reed,
 The rural wicket, and the rural style,
 And frequent interspers'd, the woodman's pile.

Above, below, where'er I turn my eyes,
 Rocks, waters, woods, in grand succession rise.
 High up the cliff the varied groves ascend,
 And mournful larches o'er the wave impend.
 Around, what sounds, what magic sounds arise,
 What glimm'ring scenes salute my ravish'd eyes ;
 Soft sleep the waters on their pebbly bed,
 The woods wave gently o'er my drooping head,
 And swelling slow, comes wafted on the wind,
 Lorn Progne's note from distant copse behind.
 Still, every rising sound of calm delight
 Stamps but the fearful silence of the night ;
 Save, when is heard, between each dreary rest,
 Discordant, from her solitary nest,
 The owl, dull screaming to the wandering moon,
 Now riding, cloud-wrapt, near her highest noon :
 Or when the wild-duck, southering, hither rides,
 And plunges sullen in the sounding tides.

How oft, in this sequester'd spot, when youth
 Gave to each tale the holy force of truth,
 Have I lone linger'd, while the milk-maid sung
 The tragic legend, till the woodland rung !
 That tale, so sad ! which, still to memory dear,
 From its sweet source can call the sacred tear.
 And (lull'd to rest stern reason's harsh control)
 Steal its soft magic to the passive soul.
 These hallow'd shades,—these trees that woo the wind,
 Recall its faintest features to my mind.

A hundred passing years, with march sublime,
 Have swept beneath the silent wing of time,
 Since, in yon hamlet's solitary shade,
 Reclusely dwelt the far-fam'd Clifton Maid,
 The beauteous MARGARET; for her each swain
 Confest in private his peculiar pain,
 In secret sigh'd, a victim to despair,
 Nor dar'd to hope to win the peerless fair.
 No more, the shepherd on the blooming mead
 Attun'd to gaiety his artless reed,
 No more entwin'd the pansied wreath, to deck
 His favourite wether's unpolluted neck,
 But listless, by yon babbling stream reclin'd,
 He mix'd his sobbings with the passing wind,
 Bemoan'd his hapless love, or boldly bent,
 Far from these smiling fields, a rover went,
 O'er distant lands, in search of ease to roam,
 A self-will'd exile from his native home.

Yet not to all the maid express'd disdain,
 Her BATEMAN lov'd, nor lov'd the youth in vain.
 Full oft, low whispering o'er these arching boughs,
 The echoing vault responded to their vows,
 As here deep hidden from the glare of day,
 Enamour'd oft, they took their secret way.

Yon bosky dingle, still the rustics name;
 'Twas there the blushing maid confess'd her flame.
 Down yon green lane they oft were seen to hie,
 When evening slumber'd on the western sky.

That blasted yew, that mouldering walnut bare,
Each bears memento's of the fated pair.

One eve, when Autumn loaded ev'ry breeze
With the fall'n honours of the mourning trees,
The maiden waited at the accustomed bower,
And waited long beyond the appointed hour,
Yet Bateman came not;—o'er the woodland drear,
Howling portentous, did the winds career;
And bleak and dismal on the leafless woods,
The fitful rains rush'd down in sudden floods.
The night was dark; as now-and-then, the gale
Paus'd for a moment,—Margaret listen'd, pale;
But thro' the covert to her anxious ear,
No rustling footstep spoke her lover near.
Strange fears now filled her breast,—she knew not why,
She sigh'd, and Bateman's name was in each sigh.
She hears a noise,—'tis he—he comes at last.
—Alas! 'twas but the gale which hurried past,
But now she hears a quickening footstep sound,
Lightly it comes, and nearer does it bound;
'Tis Bateman's self,—He springs into her arms,
'Tis he that clasps, and chides her vain alarms.
“ Yet why this silence?—I have waited long,
“ And the cold storm has yell'd the trees among,
“ And now thou'rt here my fears are fled—yet speak,
“ Why does the salt tear moisten on thy cheek?
“ Say, what is wrong?”—Now, through a parting cloud,
The pale moon peer'd from her tempestuous shroud,

And Bateman's face was seen ;—'twas deadly white,
And sorrow seem'd to sicken in his sight.

“ Oh, speak my love !” again the maid conjur'd,

“ Why is thy heart in sullen woe immur'd ?”

He rais'd his head, and thrice essay'd to tell,

Thrice from his lips the unfinish'd accents fell ;

When thus at last reluctantly he broke

His boding silence, and the maid bespoke.

“ Grieve not, my love, but ere the morn advance,

“ I, on these fields must cast my parting glance ;

“ For three long years, by cruel fate's command,

“ I go to languish in a foreign land.

“ Oh, Margaret ! omens dire have met my view,

“ Say, when far distant, wilt thou bear me true ?

“ Should honours tempt thee, and should riches fee,

“ Wouldst thou forget thine ardent vows to me,

“ And on the silken couch of wealth reclin'd,

“ Banish thy faithful Bateman from thy mind ?”

Oh ! why, replies the maid, my faith thus prove,

Canst thou ! ah, canst thou, then suspect my love !

Hear me, just God ! if, from my traitorous heart,

My Bateman's fond remembrance e'er shall part,

If, when he hail again his native shore,

He find his Margaret true to him no more,

May fiends of hell, and every power of dread,

Conjoin'd, then drag me from my perjur'd bed,

And hurl me headlong down these awful steeps,

To find deserved death in yonder deeps ! *

* This part of the Trent is commonly called “ *The Clifton Deep*s.”

Thus spake the maid, and from her finger drew
 A golden ring, and broke it quick in two ;
 One half she in her lovely bosom hides,
 The other, trembling, to her love confides.
 " This bind the vow," she said, " this mystic charm,
 " No future recantation can disarm,
 " The rite vindictive does the fates involve,
 " No tears can move it, no regrets dissolve."

She ceas'd. The death-bird gave a dismal cry,
 The river moan'd, the wild gale whistled by,
 And once again the lady of the night,
 Behind a heavy cloud withdrew her light.
 Trembling, she view'd these portents with dismay :
 But gently Bateman kiss'd her fears away :
 Yet still he felt conceal'd a secret smart,
 Still melancholy bodings fill'd his heart.

When to the distant land the youth was sped,
 A lonely life the moody maiden led.
 Still would she trace each dear, each well-known walk,
 Still by the moonlight to her love would talk,
 And fancy, as she paced among the trees,
 She heard his whispers in the dying breeze.
 Thus two years glided on, in silent grief ;
 The third, her bosom own'd the kind relief ;
 Absence had cool'd her love,—the impoverish'd flame
 Was dwindling fast, when lo ! the tempter came ;
 He offer'd wealth, and all the joys of life,
 And the weak maid became another's wife !

Six guilty months had mark'd the false one's crime,
 When Bateman hail'd once more his native clime.
 Sure of her constancy, elate he came,
 The lovely partner of his soul to claim.
 Light was his heart, as up the well-known way
 He bent his steps—and all his thoughts were gay.
 Oh! who can paint his agonizing throes,
 When on his ear the fatal news arose.
 Chill'd with amazement,—senseless with the blow,
 He stood a marble monument of woe.
 Till call'd to all the horrors of despair,
 He smote his brow, and tore his horrent hair;
 Then rush'd impetuous from the dreadful spot,
 And sought those scenes, (by memory ne'er forgot)
 Those scenes, the witness of their growing flame,
 And now like witnesses of Margaret's shame.
 'Twas night—he sought the river's lonely shore,
 And trac'd again their former wanderings o'er.
 Now on the bank in silent grief he stood,
 And gaz'd intently on the stealing flood.
 Death in his mein, and madness in his eye,
 He watch'd the waters as they murmur'd by;
 Bade the base murderess triumph o'er his grave—
 Prepar'd to plunge into the whelming wave.
 Yet still he stood irresolutely bent,
 Religion sternly stay'd his rash intent.
 He knelt.—Cool play'd upon his cheek the wind,
 And fann'd the fever of his maddening mind.
 The willows wav'd, the stream it sweetly swept,
 The paly moonbeam on its surface slept,

And all was peace;—he felt the general calm
 O'er his rack'd bosom shed a genial balm:
 When casting far behind his streaming eye,
 He saw the Grove,—in fancy, saw *her* lie,
His Margaret, lull'd in Germain's* arms to rest,
 And all the demon rose within his breast.
 Convulsive now, he clench'd his trembling hand,
 Cast his dark eye once more upon the land,
 Then, at one spring he spurn'd the yielding bank,
 And in the calm deceitful current sank.

Sad, on the solitude of night, the sound,
 As in the stream he plung'd was heard around:
 Then all was still,—the wave was rough no more,
 The river swept as sweetly as before,
 The willows wav'd, the moonbeam shone serene,
 And peace returning brooded o'er the scene.

Now, see upon the perjur'd fair one hang
 Remorse's glooms and never-ceasing pang.
 Full well she knew, repentant now too late,
 She soon must bow beneath the stroke of fate.
 But, for the babe she bore beneath her breast,
 The offended God prolong'd her life unblest.
 But fast the fleeting moments roll'd away,
 And near, and nearer drew the dreaded day;
 That day, foredoom'd to give her child the light,
 And hurl its mother to the shades of night.

* Germain is the traditionary name of her husband.

The hour arrived, and from the wretched wife
 The guiltless baby struggled into life.—
 As night drew on, around her bed, a band
 Of friends and kindred kindly took their stand ;
 In holy prayer they pass'd the creeping time,
 Intent to expiate her awful crime.
 Their prayers were fruitless.—As the midnight came,
 A heavy sleep oppress'd each weary frame.
 In vain they strove against the o'erwhelming load,
 Some power unseen their drowsy lids bestrode.
 They slept, 'till in the blushing eastern sky
 The bloomy morning oped her dewy eye ;
 Then wakening wide they sought the ravish'd bed,
 But lo ! the hapless Margaret was fled ;
 And never more the weeping train were doom'd
 To view the false one, in the deeps intomb'd.

The neighbouring rustics told that in the night
 They heard such screams, as froze them with affright ;
 And many an infant at its mother's breast,
 Started dismayed, from its unthinking rest.
 And even now, upon the heath forlorn,
 They shew the path, down which the fair was borne.
 By the fell demons, to the yawning wave,
 Her own, and murder'd lover's, mutual grave.

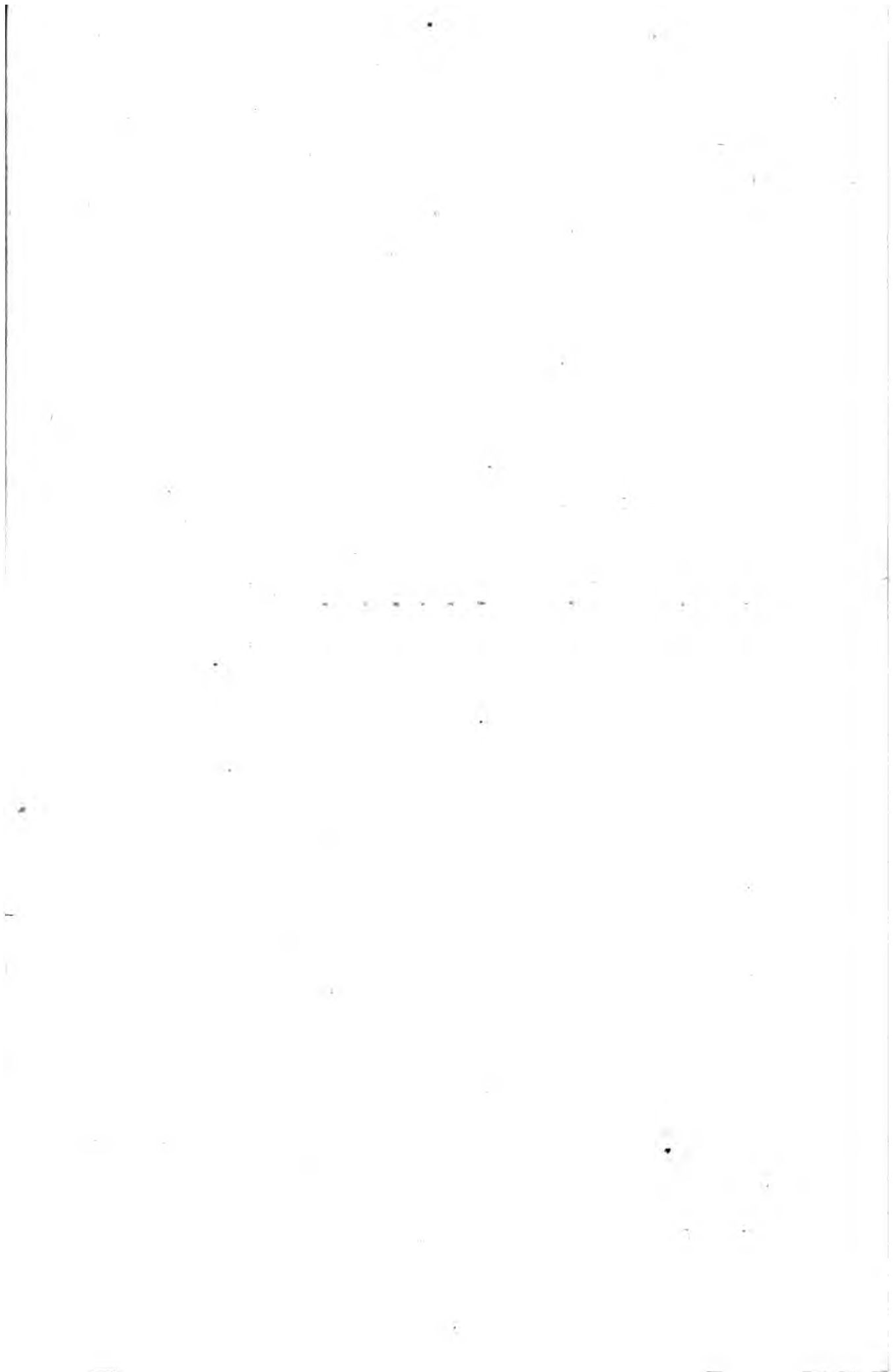
Such is the tale, so sad, to memory dear,
 Which oft in youth has charm'd my listening ear,
 That tale, which bade me find redoubled sweets
 In the drear silence of these dark retreats ;

And even now, with Melancholy power,
 Adds a new pleasure to the lonely hour.
 'Mid all the charms by magic Nature given
 To this wild spot, this sublunary heaven,
 With double joy enthusiast Fancy leans
 On the attendant legend of the scenes.
 This, sheds a fairy lustre on the floods,
 And breathes a mellow gloom upon the woods;
 This, as the distant cataract swells around,
 Gives a romantic cadence to the sound;
 This, and the deep'ning glen, the alley green,
 The silver stream, with sedgy tufts between,
 The massy rock, the wood-encompass'd leas,
 The broom-clad Islands, and the nodding trees,
 The lengthening vista, and the present gloom,
 The verdant pathway breathing waste perfume;
 These are thy charms, the joys which these impart
 Bind thee, blest Clifton! close around my heart.

Dear Native Grove! where'er my devious track,
 To thee will Memory lead the wanderer back.
 Whether in Arno's polish'd vales I stray,
 Or, where "Oswego's swamps" obstruct the day;
 Or wander lone, where wildering and wide,
 The tumbling torrent laves St. Gothard's side;
 Or, by old Tejo's classic margent muse,
 Or stand entranc'd with Pyrenean views;
 Still, still to thee, where'er my footsteps roam,
 My heart shall point, and lead the wanderer home.

When splendor offers, and when Fame incites,
I'll pause, and think of all thy dear delights,
Reject the boon, and weary'd with the change,
Renounce the wish which first induced to range;
Turn to these scenes, these well-known scenes once more,
Trace once again Old Trent's romantic shore,
And tir'd with worlds, and all their busy ways,
Here waste the little remnant of my days.
But, if the Fates should this last wish deny,
And doom me on some foreign shore to die;
Oh! should it please the world's supernal King,
That weltering waves my funeral dirge shall sing;
Or, that my corse, should on some desert strand,
Lie, stretch'd beneath the Simoöm's blasting hand;
Still, though unwept I find a stranger tomb,
My sprite shall wander through this favourite gloom,
Ride on the wind that sweeps the leafless grove,
Sigh on the wood-blast of the dark alcove,
Sit, a lorn spectre, on yon well-known grave,
And mix its moanings with the desert wave.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



GONDOLINE;

A BALLAD.



THE night it was dark, and the moon it shone
Serenely on the Sea,
And the waves at the foot of the rifted rock
They murmur'd pleasantly.

When Gondoline roam'd along the shore,
A maiden full fair to the sight;
Though love had made bleak the rose on her cheek,
And turn'd it to deadly white.

Her thoughts they were drear, and the silent tear
It fill'd her faint blue eye,
As oft she heard, in fancy's ear,
Her Bertrand's dying sigh.

Her Bertrand was the bravest youth
Of all our good King's men,
And he was gone to the Holy Land
To fight the Saracen.

And many a month had pass'd away,
 And many a rolling year,
 But nothing the maid from Palestine
 Could of her lover hear.

Full oft she vainly tried to pierce
 The Ocean's misty face;
 Full oft she thought her lover's bark
 She on the wave could trace.

And every night she placed a light
 In the high rock's lonely tower,
 To guide her lover to the land,
 Should the murky tempest lower.

But now despair had seiz'd her breast,
 And sunken in her eye:
 " Oh! tell me but if Bertrand live,
 " And I in peace will die."

She wander'd o'er the lonely shore,
 The Curlew scream'd above,
 She heard the scream with a sickening heart,
 Much boding of her love.

Yet still she kept her lonely way,
 And this was all her cry,
 " Oh! tell me but if Bertrand live,
 " And I in peace shall die."

And now she came to a horrible rift
All in the rock's hard side,
A bleak, and blasted oak, o'erspread
The cavern yawning wide.

And pendant from its dismal top
The deadly night-shade hung,
The hemlock, and the aconite,
Across the mouth were flung.

And all within, was dark, and drear,
And all without, was calm,
Yet Gondoline entered, her soul upheld
By some deep-working charm.

And, as she enter'd the cavern wide,
The moonbeam gleamed pale,
And she saw a snake on the craggy rock,
It clung by its slimy tail.

Her foot it slipp'd, and she stood aghast,
She trod on a bloated toad;
Yet still, upheld by the secret charm,
She kept upon her road.

And now upon her frozen ear
Mysterious sounds arose,
So, on the mountain's piny top,
The blustering North-wind blows.

Then furious peals of laughter loud
Were heard with thundering sound,
Till they died away, in soft decay,
Low whispering o'er the ground.

Yet still the maiden onward went,
The charm yet onward led,
Though each big glaring ball of sight
Seem'd bursting from her head.

But now a pale blue light she saw,
It from a distance came,
She followed, till upon her sight,
Burst full a flood of flame.

She stood appall'd; yet still the charm
Upheld her sinking soul,
Yet each bent knee the other smote,
And each wild eye did roll.

And such a sight as she saw there,
No mortal saw before,
And such a sight as she saw there,
No mortal shall see more.

A burning cauldron stood in the midst,
The flame was fierce, and high,
And all the cave so wide and long,
Was plainly seen thereby.

And round about the cauldron stout
Twelve withered witches stood:
Their waists were bound with living snakes,
And their hair was stiff with blood.

Their hands were gory too; and red
And fiercely, flamed their eyes;
And they were muttering indistinct
Their hellish mysteries.

And suddenly they join'd their hands,
And uttered a joyous cry,
And round about the cauldron stout
They danced right merrily.

And now they stopt; and each prepared
To tell what she had done,
Since last the Lady of the night,
Her waning course had run.

Behind a rock stood Gondoline,
Thick weeds her face did veil,
And she lean'd fearful forwarder,
To hear the dreadful tale.

The first arose: She said she'd seen
Rare sport, since the blind cat mew'd,
She'd been to sea, in a leaky sieve,
And a jovial storm had brew'd.

She call'd around the winged winds,
And raised a devilish rout ;
And she laugh'd so loud, the peals were heard
Full fifteen leagues about.

She said there was a little bark
Upon the roaring wave,
And there was a woman there who'd been
To see her husband's grave.

And she had got a child in her arms,
It was her only child,
And oft its little infant pranks
Her heavy heart beguil'd.

And there was too in that same bark,
A father, and his son ;
The lad was sickly, and the sire
Was old, and woe-begone.

And when the tempest waxed strong,
And the bark could no more it 'bide,
She said, it was jovial fun to hear
How the poor devils cried.

The mother clasp'd her orphan child
Unto her breast and wept ;
And sweetly folded in her arms
The careless baby slept.

And she told how, in the shape o' the wind
As manfully it roar'd,
She twisted her hand in the infant's hair
And threw it overboard.

And to have seen the mother's pangs,
'Twas a glorious sight to see ;
The crew could scarcely hold her down
From jumping in the sea.

The hag held a lock of the hair in her hand,
And it was soft and fair,
It must have been a lovely child,
To have had such lovely hair.

And she said, the father in his arms
He held his sickly son,
And his dying throes they fast arose,
His pains were nearly done.

And she throttled the youth with her sinewy hands,
And his face grew deadly blue ;
And the father he tore his thin grey hair,
And kiss'd the livid hue.

And then she told, how she bored a hole
In the bark, and it fill'd away :
And 'twas rare to hear, how some did swear,
And some did vow, and pray.

The man, and woman, they soon were dead,
The sailors their strength did urge ;
But the billows that beat, were their winding-sheet,
And the winds sung their funeral dirge.

She threw the infant's hair in the fire,
The red flame flamed high,
And round about the cauldron stout
They danced right merrily.

The second begun, she said she had done
The task that Queen Hecat' had set her,
And that the devil, the father of evil,
Had never accomplish'd a better.

She said, there was an aged woman
And she had a daughter fair,
Whose evil habits fill'd her heart
With misery and care.

The daughter had a paramour,
A wicked man was he,
And oft the woman, him against,
Did murmur grievously.

And the hag had worked the daughter up
To murder her old mother,
That then she might seize on all her goods,
And wanton with her lover.

And one night as the old woman
Was sick and ill in bed,
And pondering sorely on the life
Her wicked daughter led,

She heard her footstep on the floor,
And she rais'd her pallid head,
And she saw her daughter, with a knife,
Approaching to her bed.

And she said, my child, I'm very ill,
I have not long to live,
Now kiss my cheek, that ere I die
Thy sins I may forgive.

And the murderess bent to kiss her cheek,
And she lifted the sharp, bright knife,
And the mother saw her fell intent,
And hard she begg'd for life.

But prayers would nothing her avail,
And she scream'd loud with fear ;
But the house was lone, and the piercing screams
Could reach no human ear.

And though that she was sick, and old,
She struggled hard, and fought ;
The murderess cut three fingers through
Ere she could reach her throat.

And the hag she held the fingers up,
The skin was mangled sore,
And they all agreed a nobler deed
Was never done before.

And she threw the fingers in the fire,
The red flame flamed high,
And round about the cauldron stout
They danced right merrily.

The third arose: She said she'd been
To Holy Palestine;
And seen more blood in one short day,
Than they had all seen in nine.

Now Gondoline, with fearful steps,
Drew nearer to the flame,
For much she dreaded now to hear
Her hapless lover's name.

The hag related then the sports
Of that eventful day,
When on the well-contested field
Full fifteen thousand lay.

She said, that she in human gore,
Above the knees did wade,
And that no tongue could truly tell
The tricks she there had play'd.

There was a gallant featur'd youth,
Who like a hero fought ;
He kiss'd a bracelet on his wrist,
And every danger sought.

And in a vassal's garb disguis'd
Unto the knight she sues,
And tells him she from Britain comes
And brings unwelcome news.

That three days ere she had embark'd,
His love had given her hand,
Unto a wealthy Thane :—and thought
Him dead in holy land.

And to have seen how he did writhe
When this her tale she told,
It would have made a wizard's blood
Within his heart run cold.

Then fierce he spur'd his warrior steed,
And sought the battle's bed :
And soon all mangled o'er with wounds
He on the cold turf bled.

And from his smoking corse, she tore
His head, half clove in two,
She ceas'd, and from beneath her garb,
The bloody trophy drew.

The eyes were starting from their sockets,
The mouth it ghastly grinn'd,
And there was a gash across the brow,
The scalp was nearly skinn'd.

'Twas BERTRAND'S HEAD!! With a terrible scream,
The maiden gave a spring,
And from her fearful hiding-place
She fell into the ring.

The lights they fled,—the cauldron sunk,
Deep thunders shook the dome,
And hollow peals of laughter came
Resounding through the gloom.

Insensible, the maiden lay
Upon the hellish ground;
And still mysterious sounds were heard
At intervals around.

She woke,—she half arose,—and wild,
She cast a horrid glare,
The sounds had ceas'd, the lights had fled,
And all was stillness there.

And through an awning in the rock,
The moon it sweetly shone,
And shew'd a river in the cave
Which dismally did moan.

The stream was black, it sounded deep
 As it rush'd the rocks between,
 It offer'd well, for madness fired
 The breast of Gondoline.

She plunged in, the torrent moan'd
 With its accustomed sound,
 And hollow peals of laughter loud
 Again rebellow'd round.

The maid was seen no more.—But oft
 Her ghost is known to glide,
 At midnight's silent, solemn hour,
 Along the ocean's side.

LINES,

WRITTEN ON A SURVEY OF THE HEAVENS,

In the Morning, before Day-break.

YE many-twinkling stars, who yet do hold
 Your brilliant places in the sable vault
 Of night's dominions!—Planets, and central orbs
 Of other systems!—big as the burning sun,
 Which lights this nether globe,—yet to our eye,
 Small as the glow-worm's lamp!—To you I raise
 My lowly orisons, while all bewilder'd,
 My vision strays o'er your ethereal hosts,

Too vast, too boundless, for our narrow mind,
 Warp'd with low prejudices, to infold,
 And sagely comprehend. Thence higher soaring ;
 Through ye, I raise my solemn thoughts to him !
 The mighty founder of this wondrous maze,
 The great Creator ! Him ! who now sublime
 Wrapt in the solitary amplitude
 Of boundless space, above the rolling spheres
 Sits on his silent throne, and meditates.

The angelic hosts in their inferior Heaven,
 Hymn to their golden harps his praise sublime,
 Repeating loud, "The Lord our God is great,"
 In varied harmonies.—The glorious sounds
 Roll o'er the air serene—The Æolian spheres,
 Harping along their viewless boundaries,
 Catch the full note, and cry, "The Lord is great"
 Responding to the Seraphim.—O'er all,
 From orb to orb, to the remotest verge
 Of the created world, the sound is borne
 Till the whole universe is full of HIM.

Oh ! 'tis this heavenly harmony which now
 In fancy strikes upon my listening ear
 And thrills my inmost soul. It bids me smile
 On the vain world, and all its bustling cares,
 And gives a shadowy glimpse of future bliss.

Oh ! what is man, when at ambition's height,
 What even are kings, when balanced in the scale

Of these stupendous worlds! Almighty God!
 Thou, the dread author of these wond'rous works!
 Say, canst thou cast on me, poor passing worm,
 One look of kind benevolence?—Thou canst:
 For thou art full of universal love,
 And in thy boundless goodness wilt impart
 Thy beams as well to me, as to the proud,
 The pageant insects, of a glittering hour.

Oh! when reflecting on these truths sublime,
 How insignificant do all the joys,
 The gaudes, and honours of the world appear!
 How vain ambition!—Why has my wakeful lamp
 Outwatch'd the slow-pac'd night?—Why on the page,
 The schoolman's labour'd page, have I employ'd
 The hours devoted by the world to rest,
 And needful to recruit exhausted nature?
 Say, can the voice of narrow Fame repay
 The loss of health? or can the hope of glory,
 Lend a new throb unto my languid heart,
 Cool, even now, my feverish, aching brow,
 Relume the fires of this deep-sunken eye,
 Or paint new colours on this pallid cheek?

Say, foolish one—can that unbodied Fame,
 For which thou barterest health and happiness,
 Say, can it soothe the slumbers of the grave?
 Give a new zest to bliss? or chase the pangs
 Of everlasting punishment condign?
 Alas! how vain are mortal man's desires!

How fruitless his pursuits! Eternal God!
 Guide thou my footsteps in the way of truth,
 And oh! assist me so to live on earth,
 That I may die in peace, and claim a place
 In thy high dwelling.—All but this is folly,
 The vain illusions of deceitful life.

LINES,

SUPPOSED TO BE SPOKEN BY A LOVER, AT THE GRAVE OF
 HIS MISTRESS.

Occasioned by a Situation in a Romance.

MARY, the moon is sleeping on thy grave,
 And on the turf thy lover sad is kneeling,
 The big tear in his eye.—Mary awake,
 From thy dark house arise, and bless his sight
 On the pale moonbeam gliding. Soft, and low,
 Pour on the silver ear of night thy tale,
 Thy whisper'd tale, of comfort, and of love,
 To soothe thy Edward's lorn, distracted soul,
 And cheer his breaking heart.—Come, as thou didst,
 When o'er the barren moors the night-wind howl'd,
 And the deep thunders shook the ebon throne
 Of the startled night.—O! then, as lone reclining,
 I listen'd sadly, to the dismal storm,
 Thou, on the lambent lightnings wild careering
 Didst strike my moody eye:—dead pale thou wert,

Yet passing lovely.—Thou didst smile upon me,
 And oh! thy voice it rose so musical,
 Betwixt the hollow pauses of the storm,
 That at the sound the winds forgot to rave,
 And the stern demon of the tempest, charm'd
 Sunk on his rocking throne, to still repose,
 Lock'd in the arms of silence.

Spirit of her!

My only love!—O! now again arise,
 And let once more thine æery accents fall
 Soft on my listening ear. The night is calm,
 The gloomy willows wave in sinking cadence
 With the stream that sweeps below. Divinely swelling
 On the still air, the distant waterfall
 Mingles its melody;—and high, above,
 The pensive empress of the solemn night,
 Fitful, emerging from the rapid clouds,
 Shews her chaste face, in the meridian sky.
 No wicked elves upon the *Warlock-knoll*
 Dare now assemble at their mystic revels.
 It is a night, when from their primrose beds,
 The gentle ghosts of injur'd innocents,
 Are known to rise, and wander on the breeze,
 Or take their stand by the oppressor's couch,
 And strike grim terror to his guilty soul.
 The spirit of my love might now awake,
 And hold its custom'd converse.

Mary, lo!

Thy Edward kneels upon thy verdant grave,
 And calls upon thy name.—The breeze that blows

On his wan cheek, will soon sweep over him
 In solemn music, a funereal dirge,
 Wild and most sorrowful.—His cheek is pale,
 The worm that prey'd upon thy youthful bloom,
 It canker'd green on his.—Now lost he stands,
 The ghost of what he was, and the cold dew
 Which bathes his aching temples, gives sure omen
 Of speedy dissolution.—Mary, soon,
 Thy love will lay his pallid cheek to thine,
 And sweetly will he sleep with thee in death.

MY STUDY,

A Letter in Hudibrastic Verse.

YOU bid me, Ned, describe the place
 Where I, one of the rhyming race,
 Pursue my studies *con amore*,
 And wanton with the muse in glory.

Well, figure to your senses straight,
 Upon the houses topmost height,
 A closet, just six feet by four,
 With white-wash'd walls, and plaster floor.
 So noble large, 'tis scarcely able
 To admit a single chair and table :
 And (lest the muse should die with cold)
 A smoky grate my fire to hold ;

So wonderous small, 'twould much it pose
 To melt the ice-drop on one's nose ;
 And yet so big, it covers o'er
 Full half the spacious room and more.

A window vainly stuff'd about,
 To keep November's breezes out,
 So crazy, that the panes proclaim,
 That soon they mean to leave the frame.

My furniture, I sure may crack—
 A broken chair without a back ;
 A table, wanting just two legs,
 One end sustain'd by wooden pegs ;
 A desk—of that I am not fervent,
 The work of, Sir, your humble Servant ;
 (Who, though I say't, am no such fumbler)
 A glass decanter, and a tumbler,
 From which, my night-parched throat I lave,
 Luxurious, with the limpid wave.
 A chest of drawers, in antique sections,
 And saw'd by me, in all directions ;
 So small, Sir, that whoever views 'em,
 Swears nothing but a doll could use 'em.
 To these, if you will add a store,
 Of oddities upon the floor,
 A pair of globes, electric balls,
 Scales, quadrants, prisms and coblers' awls,
 And crowds of books, on rotten shelves,
 Octavos, folios, quartos, twelves ;

I think, dear Ned, you curious dog,
 You'll have my earthly catalogue.
 But stay,—I nearly had left out
 My bellows destitute of snout ;
 And on the walls,—Good Heavens ! why there
 I've such a load of precious ware,
 Of heads, and coins, and silver medals,
 And organ works, and broken pedals,
 (For I was once a building music,
 Though soon of that employ I grew sick)
 And skeletons of laws which shoot
 All out of one primordial root ;
 That you, at such a sight, would swear
 Confusion's self had settled there.
 There stands, just by a broken sphere,
 A Cicero without an ear,
 A neck, on which by logic good
 I know for sure a head *once* stood ;
 But who it was the able master,
 Had moulded in the mimic plaster,
 Whether 'twas Pope, or Coke, or Burn,
 I never yet could justly learn :
 But knowing well, that any head
 Is made to answer for the dead,
 (And sculptors first their faces frame,
 And after pitch upon a name,
 Nor think it ought of a misnomer
 To christen Chaucer's busto, Homer,
 Because they both have beards, which you know
 Will mark them well from Joan, and Juno,)

For some great man, I could not tell
But NECK might answer just as well,
So perch'd it up, all in a row
With Chatham, and with Cicero.

Then all around in just degree,
A range of portraits you may see,
Of mighty men, and eke of women
Who are no wit inferior *to* men.

With these fair dames, and heroes round,
I call my garret, classic ground.
For though confin'd, 'twill well contain
The ideal flights of Madam Brain.
No dungeon's walls, no cell confin'd,
Can cramp the energies of mind!
Thus, though my heart may seem so small,
I've friends, and 'twill contain them all ;
And should it e'er become so cold
That these, it will no longer hold,
No more may Heaven her blessings give ;
I shall not then be fit to live.

TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE.

MILD offspring of a dark and sullen sire !
 Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
 Was nurs'd in whirling storms
 And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young spring first question'd winter's sway,
 And dar'd the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
 Thee on this bank he threw
 To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
 Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale.
 Unnoticed, and alone,
 Thy tender elegance.

So Virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
 Of chill adversity, in some lone walk
 Of life, she rears her head
 Obscure and unobserv'd ;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows,
 Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
 And hardens her to bear
 Serene the ills of life.

SONNETS.

SONNET I.

To the River Trent. Written on Recovery from Sickness.

ONCE more, O TRENT! along thy pebbly marge
A pensive invalid, reduced, and pale,
From the close sick-room newly let at large,
Wooes to his wan-worn cheek the pleasant gale.
O! to his ear how musical the tale
Which fills with joy the throstle's little throat!
And all the sounds which on the fresh breeze sail
How wildly novel on his senses float!
It was on this that many a sleepless night,
As, lone, he watched the taper's sickly gleam,
And at his casement heard, with wild affright,
The owl's dull wing, and melancholy scream,
On this he thought, this, this, his sole desire,
Thus once again to hear the warbling woodland choir.

SONNET II.

GIVE me a cottage on some Cambrian wild,
Where, far from cities, I may spend my days:
And, by the beauties of the scene beguil'd,
May pity man's pursuits, and shun his ways.

While on the rock I mark the browsing goat,
 List to the mountain torrent's distant noise,
 Or the hoarse bittern's solitary note,
 I shall not want the world's delusive joys;
 But, with my little scrip, my book, my lyre,
 Shall think my lot complete, nor covet more;
 And when, with time, shall wane the vital fire,
 I'll raise my pillow on the desert shore,
 And lay me down to rest where the wild wave
 Shall make sweet music o'er my lonely grave,

—◆—

SONNET III*.

Supposed to have been addressed by a Female Lunatic to a Lady,

LADY, thou weepest for the Maniac's woe,
 And thou art fair, and thou, like me, art young,
 Oh may thy bosom never, never know,
 The pangs with which my wretched heart is wrung.
 I had a mother once—a brother too—
 (Beneath yon yew my father rests his head :)
 I had a lover once,—and kind, and true,
 But mother, brother, lover, all are fled!
 Yet, whence the tear which dims thy lovely eye?
 Oh! gentle lady—not for me thus weep,

* This Quatorzain had its rise from an elegant Sonnet, "occasioned by seeing a young Female Lunatic," written by Mrs. Lofft, and published in the Monthly Mirror.

The green sod soon upon my breast will lie,
 And soft, and sound, will be my peaceful sleep.
 Go thou, and pluck the roses while they bloom—
My hopes lie buried in the silent tomb.

SONNET IV.

Supposed to be written by the unhappy Poet Dermody, in a Storm,
 while on board a Ship in his Majesty's service.

LO! o'er the welkin the tempestuous clouds
 Successive fly, and the loud-piping wind
 Rocks the poor sea-boy on the dripping shrouds,
 While the pale pilot o'er the helm reclin'd,
 Lists to the changeful storm: and as he plies
 His wakeful task, he oft bethinks him, sad,
 Of wife, and little home and chubby lad,
 And the half-strangled tear bedews his eyes;
 I, on the deck, musing on themes forlorn,
 View the drear tempest, and the yawning deep,
 Nought dreading in the green sea's caves to sleep,
 For not for me, shall wife, or children mourn,
 And the wild winds will ring my funeral knell,
 Sweetly as solemn peal, of pious passing-bell.

SONNET V.

THE WINTER TRAVELLER.

GOD help thee, Traveller, on thy journey far ;
The wind is bitter keen,—the snow o'erlays
The hidden pits, and dangerous hollow-ways,
And darkness will involve thee.—No kind star
To-night will guide thee, Traveller,—and the war
Of winds and elements, on thy head will break,
And in thy agonizing ear the shriek,
Of spirits howling on their stormy car,
Will often ring appalling—I portend
A dismal night—and on my wakeful bed
Thoughts, Traveller, of thee, will fill my head,
And him, who rides where wind and waves contend,
And strives, rude cradled on the seas, to guide
His lonely bark through the tempestuous tide.

SONNET VI.

BY CAPEL LOFFT, ESQ.

This Sonnet was addressed to the Author of this Volume, and was occasioned by several little Quatorzains, misnomered Sonnets, which he published in the Monthly Mirror. He begs leave to return his thanks to the much-respected Writer, for the permission so politely granted, to insert it here, and for the good opinion he has been pleased to express of his productions.

YE, whose aspirings court the muse of lays,
 “ Severest of those orders which belong,
 “ Distinct and separate, to Delphic song,”
 Why shun the Sonnet’s undulating maze?
 And why its name, boast of Petrarchian days,
 Assume, its rules disown’d? whom from the throng
 The muse selects, their ear the charm obeys
 Of its full harmony:—they fear to wrong
 The *Sonnet*, by adorning with a name
 Of that distinguished import, lays, though sweet,
 Yet not in magic texture taught to meet
 Of that so varied and peculiar frame.
 O think! to vindicate its genuine praise
 Those it beseems, whose *Lyre* a favouring impulse sways.

SONNET VII.

Recantatory, in reply to the foregoing elegant Admonition.

LET the sublimer muse, who, wrapt in night,
 Rides on the raven pennons of the storm,
 Or o'er the field, with purple havoc warm,
 Lashes her steeds, and sings along the fight;
 Let her, whom more ferocious strains delight,
 Disdain the plaintive Sonnet's little form,
 And scorn to its wild cadence to conform,
 The impetuous tenor of her hardy flight.
 But me, far lowest of the sylvan train,
 Who wake the wood-nymphs from the forest-shade
 With wildest song;—Me, much behoves thy aid
 Of mingled melody, to grace my strain,
 And give it power to please, as soft it flows
 Through the smooth murmurs of thy frequent close.

SONNET VIII.

On hearing the Sounds of an Æolian Harp.

SO ravishingly soft upon the tide
 Of the infuriate gust, it did career,
 It might have sooth'd its rugged charioteer,
 And sunk him to a zephyr;—then it died,

Melting in melody ;—and I descried
 Borne to some wizard stream, the form appear
 Of Druid sage, who on the far-off ear
 Pour'd his lone song, to which the surge replied :
 Or thought I heard the hapless pilgrim's knell,
 Lost in some wild enchanted forest's bounds,
 By unseen beings sung ; or are these sounds,
 Such, as 'tis said, at night are known to swell
 By startled shepherd on the the lonely heath,
 Keeping his night-watch sad, portending death ?

SONNET IX.

WHAT art thou, MIGHTY ONE ! and where thy seat ?
 Thou broodest on the calm that cheers the lauds,
 And thou dost bear within thine awful hands,
 The rolling thunders and the lightnings fleet.
 Stern on thy dark-wrought car of cloud, and wind,
 Thou guid'st the northern storm at night's dead noon,
 Or on the red wing of the fierce Monsoon,
 Disturb'st the sleeping giant of the Ind.
 In the drear silence of the polar span
 Dost thou repose ? or in the solitude
 Of sultry tracts, where the lone caravan
 Hears nightly howl the tiger's hungry brood.
 Vain thought ! the confines of his throne to trace,
 Who glows through all the fields of boundless space.

A BALLAD.

BE hush'd, be hush'd, ye bitter winds,
Ye pelting rains a little rest ;
Lie still, lie still, ye busy thoughts,
That wring with grief my aching breast.

Oh, cruel was my faithless love,
To triumph o'er an artless maid ;
Oh, cruel was my faithless love,
To leave the breast by him betray'd.

When exil'd from my native home,
He should have wip'd the bitter tear ;
Nor left me faint and loon to roam,
A heart-sick weary wand'rer here.

My child moans sadly in my arms,
The winds they will not let it sleep ;
Ah, little knows the hapless babe,
What makes its wretched mother weep !

Now lie thee still, my infant dear,
I cannot bear thy sobs to see,
Harsh is thy father, little one,
And never will he shelter thee.

Oh, that I were but in my grave,
 And winds were piping o'er me loud,
 And thou, my poor, my orphan babe,
 Wert nestling in thy mother's shroud!

THE LULLABY

OF A FEMALE CONVICT TO HER CHILD, THE NIGHT
 PREVIOUS TO EXECUTION.

*SLEEP Baby mine, enkerchieft on my bosom,
 Thy cries they pierce again my bleeding breast;
 Sleep Baby mine, not long thou'lt have a mother,
 To lull thee fondly in her arms to rest.

Baby, why dost thou keep this sad complaining,
 Long from mine eyes have kindly slumbers fled;
 Hush, hush, my babe, the night is quickly waning,
 And I would fain compose my aching head.

Poor wayward wretch! and who will heed thy weeping,
 When soon an outcast on the world thou'lt be:
 Who then will soothe thee, when thy mother's sleeping,
 In her low grave of shame and infamy!

*Sir Philip Sidney has a Poem beginning "Sleep Baby mine."

**Sleep, Baby mine—To-morrow I must leave thee,
And I would snatch an interval of rest ;
Sleep these last moments, ere the laws bereave thee,
For never more thou'lt press a mother's breast.**

POEMS,

WRITTEN DURING, OR SHORTLY AFTER, THE PUBLICATION

OF

CLIFTON GROVE.



ODE,

ADDRESSED TO H. FUSELI, ESQ. R. A.

On seeing Engravings from his Designs.

MIGHTY Magician! who on Torneo's brow,
When sullen tempests wrap the throne of night,
Art wont to sit and catch the gleam of light
That shoots athwart the gloom opaque below ;
And listen to the distant death-shriek long
From lonely mariner foundering in the deep,
Which rises slowly up the rocky steep,
While the weird sisters weave the horrid song:
Or when along the liquid sky
Serenely chaunt the orbs on high,
Dost love to sit in musing trance
And mark the northern meteor's dance,
(While far below the fitful oar
Flings its faint pauses on the steepy shore.)
And list the music of the breeze,
That sweeps by fits the bending seas ;
And often bears with sudden swell
The shipwreck'd sailor's funeral knell,
By the spirits sung who keep
Their night watch on the treacherous deep,

And guide the wakeful Helms-man's eye
 To Helice in northern sky;
 And there upon the rock inclin'd
 With mighty visions fill'st the mind,
 Such as bound in magic spell
 Him* who grasp'd the gates of Hell,
 And bursting Pluto's dark domain
 Held to the day the Terrors of his reign.

Genius of Horror and romantic awe,
 Whose eye explores the secrets of the deep,
 Whose power can bid the rebel fluids creep,
 Can force the inmost soul to own its law;
 Who shall now, sublimest spirit,
 Who shall now thy wand inherit,
 From him † thy darling child who best
 Thy shuddering images exprest?
 Sullen of soul and stern and proud,
 His gloomy spirit spurn'd the croud,
 And now he lays his aching head
 In the dark mansion of the silent dead.

Mighty Magician! long thy wand has lain
 Buried beneath the unfathomable deep;
 And oh for ever must its efforts sleep,
 May none the mystic sceptre e'er regain.
 Oh yes, tis his!—Thy other son!
 He throws thy dark-wrought Tunic on,

* Dante.

† Ibid.

Fuesslin waves thy wand,—again they rise,
 Again thy wildering forms salute our ravish'd eyes.
 Him didst thou cradle on the dizzy steep
 Where round his head the volley'd light'nings flung,
 And the loud winds that round his pillow rung
 Wooed the stern infant to the arms of sleep.
 Or on the highest top of Teneriffe,
 Seated the fearless Boy, and bade him look
 Where far below the weather-beaten skiff
 On the gulph bottom of the ocean strook.
 Thou mark'dst him drink with ruthless ear
 The death-sob, and disdaining rest,
 Thou saw'st how danger fir'd his breast,
 And in his young hand couch'd the visionary spear.
 Then Superstition at thy call,
 She bore the boy to Odin's Hall,
 And set before his awe-struck sight
 The savage feast and spectred fight;
 And summon'd from his mountain tomb
 The ghastly warrior son of gloom,
 His fabled runic rhymes to sing
 While fierce Hresvelger flapp'd his wing;
 Thou shew'dst the trains the shepherd sees,
 Laid on the stormy Hebrides,
 Which on the mists of evening gleam
 Or croud the foaming desart stream;
 Lastly her storied hand she waves
 And lays him in Florentian caves;
 There milder fables lovelier themes
 Enwrap his soul in heavenly dreams,

There pity's lute arrests his ear,
 And draws the half reluctant tear;
 And now at noon of night he roves
 Along the embowering moonlight groves,
 And as from many a cavern'd dell
 The hollow wind is heard to swell,
 He thinks some troubled spirit sighs,
 And as upon the turf he lies,
 Where sleeps the silent beam of night,
 He sees below the gliding sprite,
 And hears in Fancy's organs sound
 Aërial music warbling round.

Taste lastly comes and smooths the whole,
 And breathes her polish o'er his soul;
 Glowing with wild, yet chasten'd heat,
 The wonderous work is now complete.

The Poet dreams:—The shadow flies,
 And fainting fast its image dies.
 But lo! the Painter's magic force
 Arrests the phantoms fleeting course;
 It lives—It lives—the canvas glows,
 And tenfold vigour o'er it flows.
 The Bard beholds the work atchiev'd,
 And as he sees the shadow rise,
 Sublime before his wandering eyes,
 Starts at the image his own mind conceiv'd.

ODE,

ADDRESSED TO THE EARL OF CARLISLE, K.G.

RETIRED, remote from human noise,
 A humble Poet dwelt serene,
 His lot was lowly, yet his joys
 Were manifold I ween.
 He laid him by the brawling brook
 At eventide to ruminare,
 He watched the swallow swimming round,
 And mused, in reverie profound,
 On wayward man's unhappy state,
 And pondered much, and paused on deeds of antient date.

II. 1.

" Oh, 'twas not always thus," he cried,
 " There was a time, when genius claimed
 Respect from even towering pride,
 Nor hung her head ashamed:
 But now to wealth alone we bow,
 The titled, and the rich alone,
 Are honoured, while meek merit pines,
 On penury's wretched couch reclines,
 Unheeded in his dying moan,
 As overwhelmed with want and woe, he sinks unknown.

III. 1.

Yet was the muse not always seen
 In poverty's dejected mien,

Not always did repining rue,
 And misery her steps pursue,
 Time was, when nobles thought their titles graced,
 By the sweet honours of poetic bays,
 When Sidney sung his melting song,
 When Sheffield joined the harmonious throng,
 And Lyttleton attuned to love his lays.
 Those days are gone—alas, for ever gone!
 No more our nobles love to grace
 Their brows with anadems, by genius won,
 But arrogantly deem the muse as base;
 How differently thought the sires of this degenerate race!"

I. 2.

Thus sang the minstrel:—still at eve
 The upland's woody shades among
 In broken measures did he grieve,
 With solitary song.
 And still his shame was aye the same,
 Neglect had stung him to the core;
 And he, with pensive joy did love
 To seek the still congenial grove,
 And muse on all his sorrows o'er,
 And vow that he would join the abjured world no more.

II. 2.

But human vows, how frail they be!
 Fame brought Carlisle unto his view,
 And all amaz'd, he thought to see
 The Augustan age anew.

Filled with wild rapture, up he rose,
 No more he ponders on the woes,
 Which erst he felt that forward goes,
 Regrets he'd sunk in impotence,
 And hails the ideal day of virtuous eminence.

III. 2.

Ah! silly man, yet smarting sore,
 With ills which in the world he bore,
 Again on futile hope to rest,
 An unsubstantial prop at best,
 And not to know one swallow makes no summer!
 Ah, soon he'll find the brilliant gleam,
 Which flashed across the hemisphere,
 Illumining the darkness there,
 Was but a simple solitary beam,
 While all around remained in custom'd night.
 Still leaden ignorance reigns serene,
 In the false court's delusive height,
 And only our Carlisle is seen,
 To illumine the heavy gloom with pure and steady light.

 DESCRIPTION OF A SUMMER'S EVE.

DOWN the sultry arc of day,
 The burning wheels have urged their way,
 And Eve along the western skies
 Sheds her intermingling dyes.

Down the deep, the miry lane,
 Creaking comes the empty wain,
 And Driver on the shaft-horse sits,
 Whistling now and then by fits;
 And oft, with his accustom'd call,
 Urging on the sluggish Ball.
 The barn is still, the master's gone,
 And Thresher puts his jacket on,
 While Dick, upon the ladder tall,
 Nails the dead kite to the wall,
 Here comes shepherd Jack at last,
 He has penned the sheep-cote fast,
 For 'twas but two nights before,
 A lamb was eaten on the moor:
 His empty wallet *Rover* carries,
 Nor for Jack, when near home, tarries,
 With lolling tongue he runs to try,
 If the horse-trough be not dry.
 The milk is settled in the pans,
 And supper messes in the cans;
 In the hovel carts are wheeled,
 And both the colts are drove a-field;
 The horses are all bedded up,
 And the ewe is with the tup.
 The snare for Mister Fox is set,
 The leaven laid, the thatching wet,
 And Bess has slink'd away to talk
 With Roger in the holly-walk.

Now on the settle all, but Bess,
 Are set to eat their supper mess;

And little Tom, and roguish Kate,
Are swinging on the meadow-gate.
 Now they chat of various things,
 Of taxes, ministers, and kings,
 Or else tell all the village news,
 How madam did the 'squire refuse;
 How parson on his tythes was bent,
 And landlord oft distrained for rent.
 Thus do they talk, till in the sky
 The pale ey'd moon is mounted high,
 And from the alehouse drunken Ned
 Had reeled — then hasten all to bed.
 The mistress sees that lazy Kate
 The happing coal on kitchen grate
 Has laid — while master goes throughout,
 Sees shutters fast, the mastiff out,
 The candles safe, the hearths all clear,
 And nought from thieves or fire to fear;
 Then both to bed together creep,
 And join the general troop of sleep.

TO CONTEMPLATION.

COME, pensive sage, who lovest to dwell
In some retired Lapponian cell,
Where far from noise, and riot rude,
Resides sequestered solitude.

Come, and o'er my longing soul
 Throw thy dark and russet stole,
 And open to my duteous eyes,
 The volume of thy mysteries.

I will meet thee on the hill,
 Where, with printless footstep still
 The morning, in her buskin grey,
 Springs upon her eastern way ;
 While the frolic zephyrs stir,
 Playing with the gossamer,
 And, on ruder pinions borne,
 Shake the dew drops from the thorn.
 There, as o'er the fields we pass,
 Brushing with hasty feet the grass,
 We will startle from her nest,
 The lively lark with speckled breast,
 And hear the floating clouds among
 Her gale-transported matin-song,
 Or on the upland stile embowered,
 With fragrant hawthorn snowy flowered,
 Will sauntering sit, and listen still,
 To the herdsman's oaten quill,
 Wafted from the plain below ;
 Or the heifers frequent low ;
 Or the milkmaid in the grove,
 Singing of one that died for love.
 Or when the noon-tide heats oppress,
 We will seek the dark recess,

Where, in the embowered translucent stream,
 The cattle shun the sultry beam,
 And o'er us, on the marge reclin'd,
 The drowsy fly her horn shall wind,
 While echo, from her ancient oak,
 Shall answer to the woodman's stroke ;
 Or the little peasant's song,
 Wandering lone the glens among,
 His artless lip with berries died,
 And feet through ragged shoes descried.

But oh, when evening's virgin queen
 Sits on her fringed throne serene,
 And mingling whispers rising near,
 Steal on the still reposing ear ;
 While distant brooks decaying round,
 Augment the mixed dissolving sound,
 And the zephyr flitting by,
 Whispers mystic harmony.
 We will seek the woody lane,
 By the hamlet, on the plain,
 Where the weary rustic nigh,
 Shall whistle his wild melody,
 And the croaking wicket oft
 Shall echo from the neighbouring croft ;
 And as we trace the green path lone,
 With moss and rank weeds overgrown,
 We will muse on pensive lore,
 Till the full soul brimming o'er,

Shall in our upturn'd eyes appear,
Embodied in a quivering tear.
Or else, serenely silent, set
By the brawling rivulet,
Which on its calm unruffled breast,
Rears the old mossy arch impress'd,
That clasps its secret stream of glass,
Half hid in shrubs and waving grass,
The wood-nymphs lone secure retreat,
Unpressed by fawn or sylvan's feet,
We'll watch in eve's ethereal braid,
The rich vermilion slowly fade ;
Or catch, faint twinkling from afar,
The first glimpse of the eastern star,
Fair vesper, mildest lamp of light,
That heralds in imperial night :
Meanwhile, upon our wondering ear,
Shall rise, though low, yet sweetly clear,
The distant sounds of pastoral lute,
Invoking soft the sober suit
Of dimmest darkness—fitting well
With love, or sorrow's pensive spell,
(So erst did music's silver tone,
Wake slumbering chaos on his throne.)
And haply then, with sudden swell,
Shall roar the distant curfew bell,
While in the castles mouldering tower,
The hooting owl is heard to pour
Her melancholy song, and scare
Dull silence brooding in the air.

• Meanwhile her dusk and slumbering car,
 Black suited night drives on from far,
 And Cynthia's 'merging from her rear,
 Arrests the waxing darkness drear,
 And summons to her silent call
 Sweeping in their airy pall,
 The unshrived ghosts, in fairy trance,
 To join her moonshine morrice-dance;
 While, around the mystic ring,
 The shadowy shapes elastic spring,
 Then with a passing shriek they fly,
 Wrapt in mists along the sky,
 And oft are by the shepherd seen,
 In his lone night-watch on the green.

Then, hermit, let us turn our feet,
 To the low Abbey's still retreat,
 Embowered in the distant glen,
 Far from the haunts of busy men,
 Where, as we sit upon the tomb,
 The glow-worms light may gild the gloom,
 And shew to fancy's saddest eye,
 Where some lost hero's ashes lie.
 And oh! as through the mouldering arch,
 With ivy filled and weeping larch,
 The night gale whispers sadly clear,
 Speaking dear things to fancy's ear,
 We'll hold communion with the shade,
 Of some deep-wailing ruined maid—

Or call the ghost of Spenser down,
 To tell of woe and fortune's frown ;
 And bid us cast the eye of hope,
 Beyond this bad world's narrow scope.
 Or if these joys, to us denied,
 To linger by the forest's side ;
 Or in the meadow or the wood,
 Or by the lone romantic flood ;
 Let us in the busy town,
 When sleep's dull streams the people drown,
 Far from drowsy pillows flee,
 And turn the church's massy key ;
 Then, as through the painted glass,
 The moon's faint beams obscurely pass ;
 And darkly on the trophied wall,
 Her faint ambiguous shadows fall ;
 Let us, while the faint winds wail,
 Through the long reluctant aisle,
 As we pace with reverence meet,
 Count the echoings of our feet ;
 While from the tombs, with confess'd breath,
 Distinct responds the voice of death.
 If thou, mild sage, wilt condescend,
 Thus on my footsteps to attend,
 To thee my lonely lamp shall burn,
 By fallen Genius' sainted urn ;
 As o'er the scroll of Time I pore,
 And sagely spell of ancient lore,
 Till I can rightly guess of all
 That Plato could to memory call,

And scan the formless views of things ;
 Or with old Egypt's fetter'd kings,
 Arrange the mystic trains that shine
 In night's high philosophic mine ;
 And to thy name shall e'er belong
 The honours of undying song.

ODE

TO THE GENIUS OF ROMANCE.

OH! thou who in my early youth,
 When Fancy wore the garb of truth,
 Wert wont to win my infant feet,
 To some retir'd, deep-fabled seat,
 Where by the brooklet's secret tide,
 The midnight ghost was known to glide;
 Or lay me in some lonely glade,
 In native Sherwood's forest shade,
 Where Robin Hood, the outlaw bold,
 Was wont his sylvan courts to hold ;
 And there as musing deep I lay,
 Would steal my little soul away,
 And all thy pictures represent,
 Of siege and solemn tournament;
 Or bear me to the magic scene,
 Where clad in greaves and gaberdine,
 The warrior knight of chivalry,
 Made many a fierce enchanter flee ;

And bore the high-born dame away,
 Long held the fell magician's prey.
 Or oft would tell the shuddering tale
 Of murders, and of goblins pale,
 Haunting the guilty baron's side,
 (Whose floors with secret blood were died,)
 Which o'er the vaulted corridore,
 On stormy nights was heard to roar,
 By old domestic, waken'd wide
 By the angry winds that chide.
 Or else the mystic tale would tell,
 Of Greensleeve, or of Blue-Beard fell.

* * *

THE SAVOYARD'S RETURN.

I.

OH! yonder is the well-known spot,
 My dear, my long-lost native home!
 Oh! welcome is yon little cot,
 Where I shall rest, no more to roam!
 Oh! I have travell'd far and wide,
 O'er many a distant foreign land;
 Each place, each province, I have tried,
 And sung and danced my saraband.
 But all their charms could not prevail,
 To steal my heart from yonder vale.

II.

Of distant climes the false report
It lur'd me from my native land ;
It bade me rove—my sole support
My cymbals and my saraband.
The woody dell, the hanging rock,
The chamois skipping o'er the heights ;
The plain adorn'd with many a flock,
And, oh! a thousand more delights,
That grace you dear belov'd retreat,
Have backward won my weary feet.

III.

Now safe return'd, with wandering tired,
No more my little home I'll leave ;
And many a tale of what I've seen
Shall whyle away the winter's eve.
Oh! I have wander'd far and wide,
O'er many a distant foreign land ;
Each place, each province, I have tried,
And sung and danced my saraband.
But all their charms could not prevail,
To steal my heart from yonder vale.

LINES

Written Impromptu, on reading the following passage in Mr. Capel Lofft's beautiful and interesting Preface to Nathaniel Bloomfield's Poems, just published:—"It has a mixture of the sportive, which deepens the impression of its melancholy close. I could have wished, as I have said in a short note, the conclusion had been otherwise. The sours of life less offend my taste than its sweets delight it."

GO to the raging sea, and say, "be still,"
 Bid the wild lawless winds obey thy will ;
 Preach to the storm, and reason with despair,
 But tell not Misery's son *that life is fair!*

Thou, who in Plenty's lavish lap hast roll'd,
 And every year with new delight hast told,
 Thou, who recumbent in the lacquer'd barge,
 Hast dropt down Joy's gay stream of pleasant marge,
Thou may'st extol life's calm, untroubled sea,
 The storms of misery never burst on *thee!*

Go to the mat, where squalid want reclines,
 Go to the shade obscure, where Merit pines ;
 Abide with him whom penury's charms control,
 And bind the rising yearnings of his soul,
 Survey his sleepless couch, and standing there,
 Tell the poor pallid wretch, *that life is fair!*

Press thou the lonely pillow of his head,
 And ask why sleep his languid eyes has fled;

Mark his dew'd temples, and his half-shut eye,
 His trembling nostrils, and his deep-drawn sigh,
 His mutt'ring mouth, contorted with despair,
 And ask if genius could inhabit there.

Oh yes! that sunken eye with fire once gleam'd,
 And rays of light from its full circlet stream'd ;
 But now Neglect has stung him to the core,
 And Hope's wild raptures thrill his breast no more ;
 Domestic Anguish winds his vitals round,
 And added Grief compels him to the ground.
 Lo! o'er his manly form, decay'd, and wan,
 The shades of death with gradual steps steals on ;
 And the pale mother pining to decay,
 Weeps for her boy, her wretched life away.

Go, child of fortune! to his early grave,
 Where o'er his head obscure the rank weeds wave ;
 Behold the heart-wrung parent lay her head
 On the cold turf, and ask to share his bed.
 Go, child of Fortune, take thy lesson there,
 And tell us then that life is *wond'rous fair!*

Yet Lofft, in thee, whose hand is still stretch'd forth,
 T' encourage genius, and to foster worth ;
 On thee, th' unhappy's firm, unfailing friend,
 'Tis just that every blessing should descend ;
 'Tis just that life to thee should only shew,
 Her fairer side but little mix'd with woe.

WRITTEN IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

SAD solitary *Thought*, who keep'st thy vigils,
 Thy solemn vigils, in the sick man's mind ;
 Communing lonely with his sinking soul,
 And musing on the dubious glooms that lie
 In dim obscurity before him,—thee,
 Wrapt in thy dark magnificence, I call
 At this still midnight hour, this awful season,
 When on my bed, in wakeful restlessness,
 I turn me wearisome ; while all around,
 All, all save me, sink in forgetfulness ;
 I only wake to watch the sickly taper
 Which lights me to my tomb.—Yes, 'tis the hand
 Of death I feel press heavy on my vitals,
 Slow sapping the warm current of existence.
 My moments now are few—The sand of life
 Ebbs fastly to its finish.—Yet a little,
 And the last fleeting particle will fall
 Silent, unseen, unnoticed, unlamented.
 Come then, sad *Thought*, and let us meditate,
 While meditate we may.—We have now
 But a small portion of what men call time
 To hold communion ; for even now the knife,
 The separating knife, I feel divide
 The tender bond that ties my soul to earth.
 Yes, I must die—I feel that I must die ;
 And though to me has life been dark and dreary,
 Though Hope for me has smil'd but to deceive,
 And disappointment still pursued her blandishments ;

Yet do I feel my soul recoil within me
 As I contemplate the dim gulph of death,
 The shuddering void, the awful blank—futuraity.
 Aye, I had plann'd full many a sanguine scheme
 Of earthly happiness,—romantic schemes,
 And fraught with loveliness; and it is hard
 To feel the hand of death arrest one's steps,
 Throw a chill blight o'er all one's budding hopes,
 And hurl one's soul untimely to the shades,
 Lost in the gaping gulph of blank oblivion.
 Fifty years hence, and who will hear of Henry?
 Oh! none;—another busy brood of beings
 Will shoot up in the interim, and none
 Will hold him in remembrance. I shall sink,
 As sinks a stranger in the crowded streets
 Of busy London';—Some short bustle's caus'd,
 A few enquiries, and the crowds close in,
 And all's forgotten.—On my grassy grave
 The men of future times will careless tread,
 And read my name upon the sculptured stone;
 Nor will the sound, familiar to their ears,
 Recall my vanish'd memory.—I did hope
 For better things!—I hop'd I should not leave
 The earth without a vestige;—Fate decrees
 It shall be otherwise, and I submit.
 Henceforth, oh world, no more of thy desires!
 No more of hope! the wanton vagrant Hope!
 I abjure all.—Now other cares engross me,
 And my tir'd soul, with emulative haste,
 Looks to its God, and prunes its wings for Heaven.

PASTORAL SONG.

COME, Anna! come, the morning dawns,
Faint streaks of radiance tinge the skies ;
Come let us seek the dewy lawns,
And watch the early lark arise ;
While nature clad in vesture gay,
Hails the lov'd return of day.

Our flocks that nip the scanty blade
Upon the moor, shall seek the vale ;
And then, secure beneath the shade,
We'll listen to the throstle's tale ;
And watch the silver clouds above,
As o'er the azure vault they rove.

Come, Anna! come, and bring thy lute,
That with its tones, so softly sweet,
In cadence with my mellow flute,
We may beguile the noon-tide heat.
While near the mellow bee shall join,
To raise a harmony divine.

And then at eve, when silence reigns,
Except when heard the beetle's hum ;
We'll leave the sober-tinted plains,
To these sweet heights again we'll come ;
And thou to thy soft lute shalt play
A solemn vesper to departing day.

ODE

TO MIDNIGHT.

SEASON of general rest, whose solemn still
 Strikes to the trembling heart a fearful chill,
 But speaks to philosophic souls delight ;
 Thee do I hail, as at my casement high,
 My candle waning melancholy by,
 I sit and taste the holy calm of night.

Yon pensive orb that through the ether sails,
 And gilds the misty shadows of the vales,
 Hanging in thy dull rear her vestal flame ;
 To her, while all around in sleep recline,
 Wakeful I raise my orisons divine,
 And sing the gentle honours of her name ;

While Fancy lone o'er me her votary bends,
 To lift my soul her fairy visions sends,
 And pours upon my ear her thrilling song ;
 And Superstition's gentle terrors come,
 See, see yon dim ghost gliding through the gloom !
 See round yon church-yard elm what spectres throng !

Meanwhile I tune, to some romantic lay,
 My flageolet,—and as I pensive play,
 The sweet notes echo o'er the mountain scene :
 The traveller late journeying o'er the moors,
 Hears them aghast,—(while still the dull owl pours
 Her hollow screams each dreary pause between).

Till in the lonely tower he spies the light,
 Now faintly flashing on the glooms of night,
 Where I, poor muser, my lone vigils keep ;
 And 'mid the dreary solitude serene,
 Cast a much-meaning glance upon the scene,
 And raise my mournful eye to Heaven and weep.

ODE

TO THOUGHT.

Written at Midnight.

I.

HENCE away vindictive thought !
 Thy pictures are of pain ;
 The visions through thy dark eye caught,
 They with no gentle charms are fraught,
 So prithee back again.
 I would not weep,
 I wish to sleep,
 Then why, thou busy foe, with me thy vigils keep ?

II.

Why dost o'er bed and couch recline?
 Is this thy new delight?
 Pale visitant.—It is not thine
 To keep thy sentry through the mine,
 The dark vault of the night;
 'Tis thine to die,
 While o'er the eye,
 The dews of slumber press, and waking sorrows fly.

III.

Go thou and bide with him who guides
 His bark through lonely seas;
 And as reclining on his helm,
 Sadly he marks the starry realm,
 To him thou mayst bring ease;
 But thou to me
 Art misery,
 So prithee, prithee plume thy wings and from my pillow flee.

IV.

And Memory pray what art thou?
 Art thou of pleasure born?
 Does bliss untainted from thee flow?
 The rose that gems thy pensive brow,
 Is it without a thorn?
 With all thy smiles,
 And witching wiles,
 Yet not unfrequent bitterness thy mournful sway defiles.

V.

The drowsy night-watch has forgot
 To call the solemn hour ;
 Lull'd by the winds he slumbers deep,
 While I in vain, capricious sleep,
 Invoke thy tardy power ;
 And restless lie,
 With unclos'd eye,
 And count the tedious hours as slow they minute by.

 GENIUS,

AN ODE.

I. 1.

MANY there be who, through the vale of life,
 With velvet pace, unnoticed, softly go,
 While jarring discord's inharmonious strife
 Awakes them not to woe.
 By them unheeded, carking care,
 Green-ey'd grief, and dull despair ;
 Smoothly they pursue their way,
 With even tenor, and with equal breath ;
 Alike through cloudy, and through sunny day,
 Then sink in peace to death.

II. 1.

But ah! a few there be whom griefs devour,
 And weeping woe, and disappointment keen,
 Repining penury, and sorrow sour,
 And self-consuming spleen.
 And these are Genius' favourites: these
 Know the thought-thron'd mind to please,
 And from her fleshy seat to draw
 To realms where Fancy's golden orbits roll,
 Disdaining all but 'wilderer raptures law,
 The captivated soul.

III. 1.

Genius, from thy starry throne,
 High above the burning zone,
 In radiant robe of light array'd,
 Oh hear the plaint by thy sad favourite made,
 His melancholy moan.
 He tells of scorn, he tells of broken vows,
 Of sleepless nights, of anguish-ridden days,
 Pangs that his sensibility uprouse
 To curse his being, and his thirst for praise.
 Thou gav'st to him, with treble force to feel,
 The sting of keen neglect, the rich man's scorn,
 And what o'er all does in his soul preside
 Predominant, and tempers him to steel,
 His high indignant pride.

I. 2.

Lament not ye, who humbly steal through life,
 That Genius visits not your lowly shed ;
 For ah, what woes and sorrows ever rife,
 Distract his hapless head !
 For him awaits no balmy sleep,
 He wakes all night, and wakes to weep ;
 Or, by his lonely lamp he sits,
 At solemn midnight, when the peasant sleeps,
 In feverish study, and in moody fits
 His mournful vigils keeps.

II. 2.

And oh! for what consumes his watchful oil?
 For what does thus he waste life's fleeting breath?
 'Tis for neglect and penury he doth toil,
 'Tis for untimely death.
 Lo! where dejected pale he lies,
 Despair depicted in his eyes,
 He feels the vital flame decrease,
 He sees the grave, wide-yawning for its prey,
 Without a friend to soothe his soul to peace,
 And cheer the expiring ray.

III. 2.

By Sulmo's bard of mournful fame,
 By gentle Otway's magic name,

By him, the youth, who smil'd at death,
 And rashly dar'd to stop his vital breath,
 Will I thy pangs proclaim ;
 For still to misery closely thou'rt allied,
 Though gaudy pageants glitter by thy side,
 And far resounding fame.
 What though to thee the dazzled millions bow,
 And to thy posthumous merit bend them low ;
 Though unto thee the monarch looks with awe,
 And thou, at thy flash'd car, dost nations draw,
 Yet ah ! unseen behind thee fly
 Corroding anguish, soul-subduing pain,
 And discontent that clouds the fairest sky :
 A melancholy train.
 Yes, Genius, thee a thousand cares await,
 Mocking thy deriding state ;
 Thee, chill Adversity will still attend,
 Before whose face flies fast the summer's friend,
 And leaves thee all forlorn ;
 While leaden Ignorance rears her head and laughs,
 And fat Stupidity shakes his jolly sides,
 And while the cup of affluence he quaffs
 With bee-eyed wisdom, Genius derides,
 Who toils, and every hardship doth outbrave,
 To gain the meed of praise, when he is mouldering in
 his grave.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO THE MOON.

I.

MILD orb who floatest through the realm of night,
 A pathless wanderer o'er a lonely wild ;
 Welcome to me thy soft and pensive light,
 Which oft in childhood my lone thoughts beguil'd.
 Now doubly dear as o'er my silent seat,
 Nocturnal study's still retreat,
 It casts a mournful melancholy gleam,
 And through my lofty casement weaves,
 Dim through the vine's encircling leaves,
 An intermingled beam.

II.

These feverish dews that on my temples hang,
 This quivering lip, these eyes of dying flame ;
 These the dread signs of many a secret pang,
 These are the meed of him who pants for fame !
 Pale Moon, from thoughts like these divert my soul ;
 Lowly I kneel before thy shrine on high ;
 My lamp expires ;—beneath thy mild control,
 These restless dreams are ever wont to fly.

Come kindred mourner, in my breast,
 Soothe these discordant tones to rest,
 And breathe the soul of peace ;
 Mild visitor, I feel thee here,
 It is not pain that brings this tear,
 For thou hast bid it cease.

Oh! many a year has pass'd away,
 Since I beneath thy fairy ray,
 Attun'd my infant reed ;
 When wilt thou, Time, those days restore,
 Those happy moments now no more,

* * * * *

When on the lake's damp marge I lay,
 And mark'd the northern meteor's dance ;
 Bland Hope and Fancy ye were there,
 To inspire my trance.
 Twin sisters faintly now ye deign,
 Your magic sweets on me to shed,
 In vain your powers are now essay'd,
 To chace superior pain.

And art thou fled, thou welcome orb,
 So swiftly pleasure flies ;
 So to mankind in darkness lost,
 The beam of ardour dies.
 Wan Moon thy nightly task is done,
 And now encurtain'd in the main,
 Thou sinkest into rest ;
 But I, in vain, on thorny bed,
 Shall woo the god of soft repose—

* * * * *

FRAGMENT.

OH! thou most fatal of Pandora's train,
 Consumption! silent cheater of the eye;
 Thou com'st not robed in agonizing pain,
 Nor mark'st thy course with Death's delusive dye,
 But silent and unnoticed thou dost lie;
 O'er life's soft springs thy venom dost diffuse,
 And, while thou givest new lustre to the eye,
 While o'er the cheek are spread health's ruddy hues,
 E'en then life's little rest thy cruel power subdues.

Oft I've beheld thee in the glow of youth,
 Hid 'neath the blushing roses which there bloom'd;
 And dropt a tear, for then thy cankering tooth
 I knew would never stay, till all consum'd,
 In the cold vault of death he were entomb'd.

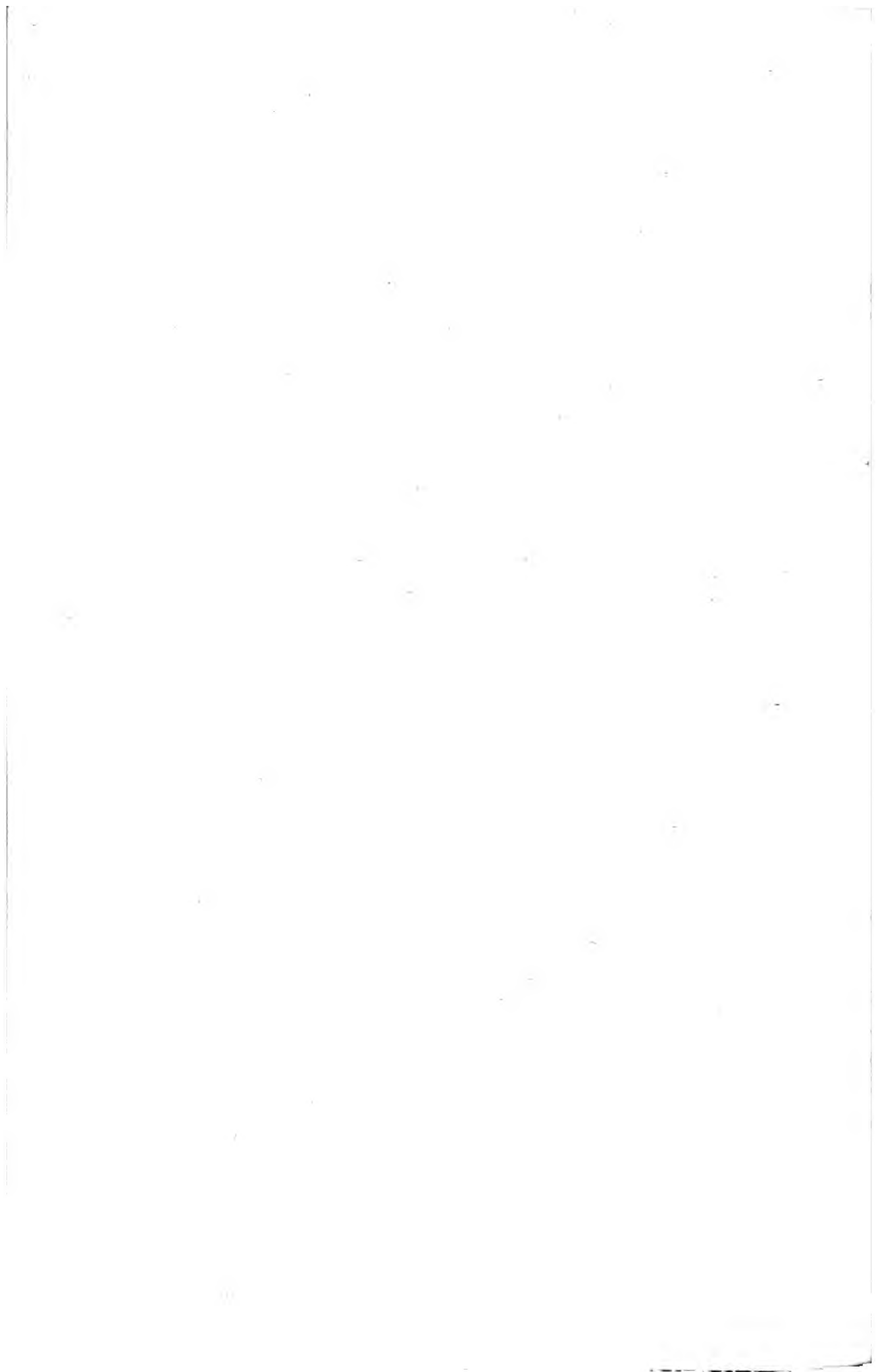
But oh! what sorrow did I feel, as swift,
 Insidious ravager, I saw thee fly
 Through fair Lucina's breast of whitest snow,
 Preparing swift her passage to the sky.
 Though still intelligence beam'd in the glance,
 The liquid lustre of her fine blue eye;
 Yet soon did languid listlessness advance,
 And soon she calmly sunk in death's repugnant trance.

Even when her end was swiftly drawing near,
And dissolution hover'd o'er her head ;
Even then so *beauteous* did her form appear,
That none who saw her but admiring said,
Sure so much beauty never could be dead.
Yet the dark lash of her expressive eye,
Bent lowly down upon the languid——

* * * * *



SONNETS.



SONNETS.

TO CAPEL LOFFT, ESQ.

LOFFT, unto thee, one tributary song,
The simple Muse, admiring, fain would bring;
She longs to lisp thee to the listening throng,
And with thy name to bid the woodlands ring.
Fain would she blazon all thy virtues forth,
Thy warm philanthropy, thy justice mild,
Would say how thou didst foster kindred worth,
And to thy bosom snatch'd misfortune's child:
Firm she would paint thee, with becoming zeal,
Upright, and learned, as the Pylvian sire,
Would say how sweetly thou could'st sweep the lyre,
And shew thy labours for the public weal,
Ten thousand virtues tell with joys supreme,
But ah! she shrinks abash'd before the arduous theme.

TO THE MOON.

WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER.

SUBLIME, emerging from the misty verge
Of the horizon dim, thee, Moon, I hail,
As sweeping o'er the leafless grove, the gale
Seems to repeat the year's funereal dirge.
Now Autumn sickens on the languid sight,
And falling leaves bestrew the wanderer's way,
Now unto thee, pale arbitress of night,
With double joy my homage do I pay.
When clouds disguise the glories of the day,
And stern November sheds her boisterous blight,
How doubly sweet to mark the moony ray
Shoot through the mist from the ethereal height,
And, *still unchang'd*, back to the memory bring
The smiles Favonian of life's earliest spring.

WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF A FRIEND.

FAST from the West the fading day-streaks fly,
And ebon night assumes her solemn sway ;
Yet here alone, unheeding time, I lie,
And o'er my friend still pour the plaintive lay.
Oh ! 'tis not long since, George, with thee I woo'd,
The maid of musings by yon moaning wave ;
And hail'd the moon's mild beam, which now renew'd
Seems sweetly sleeping on thy silent grave !
The busy world pursues its boisterous way,
The noise of revelry still echoes round ;
Yet I am sad while all beside is gay ;
Yet still I weep o'er thy deserted mound.
Oh ! that like thee I might bid sorrow cease,
And 'neath the green-sward sleep—the sleep of peace.

TO MISFORTUNE.

MISFORTUNE, I am young,—my chin is bare,
And I have wonder'd much when men have told,
How youth was free from sorrow and from care,
That thou should'st dwell with me, and leave the old.
Sure dost not like me!—Shrivell'd hag of hate,
My phiz, and thanks to thee, is sadly long;
I am not either, Beldame, over strong;
Nor do I wish at all to be thy mate,
For thou, sweet Fury, art my utter hate.
Nay, shake not thus thy miserable pate;
I am yet young and do not like thy face;
And lest thou should'st resume the wild-goose chace,
I'll tell thee something all thy heat to assuage,
—— Thou wilt not hit my fancy in my age.

AS thus oppress'd with many a heavy care,
 (Though young yet sorrowful,) I turn my feet
 To the dark woodland,—longing much to greet
The form of peace, if chance she sojourn there;
Deep thought and dismal, verging to despair,
 Fills my sad breast;—and tir'd with this vain coil,
 I shrink dismay'd before life's upland toil.
And as amid the leaves the evening air,
Whispers still melody,—I think ere long,
 When I no more can hear, these woods will speak;
 And then a sad smile plays upon my cheek,
And mournful phantasies upon me throng,
And I do ponder with most strange delight,
On the calm slumbers of the dead-man's night.

TO APRIL.

EMBLEM of life! see changeful April sail
In varying vest along the shadowy skies,
Now, bidding Summer's softest zephyrs rise,
Anon, recalling Winter's stormy gale,
And pouring from the cloud her sudden hail ;
Then, smiling through the tear that dims her eyes,
While Iris with her braid the welkin dyes,
Promise of sunshine, not so prone to fail.
So, to us sojourners in life's low vale,
The smiles of Fortune flatter to deceive,
While still the Fates the web of Misery weave.
So Hope exultant spreads her äery sail,
And from the present gloom, the soul conveys,
To distant summers, and far happier days.

YE unseen spirits, whose wild melodies,
At evening rising slow, yet sweetly clear,
Steal on the musing poet's pensive ear,
As by the wood-spring stretch'd supine he lies ;
When he who now invokes you, low is laid,
His tir'd frame resting on the earth's cold bed ;
Hold ye your nightly vigils o'er his head,
And chaunt a dirge to his reposing shade !
For he was wont to love your madrigals ;
And often by the haunted stream that laves
The dark sequester'd woodland's inmost caves,
Would sit and listen to the dying falls,
Till the full tear would quiver in his eye,
And his big heart would heave with mournful ecstasy.

TO A TAPER.

'TIS midnight.—On the globe dead slumber sits,
And all is silence—in the hour of sleep ;
Save when the hollow gust, that swells by fits,
In the dark wood roars fearfully and deep.
I wake alone to listen and to weep,
To watch, my taper, thy pale beacon burn ;
And, as still memory does her vigils keep,
To think of days that never can return.
By thy pale ray I raise my languid head,
My eye surveys the solitary gloom ;
And the sad meaning tear, unmixt with dread,
Tells thou dost light me to the silent tomb.
Like thee I wane ;—like thine my life's last ray
Will fade in loneliness, unwept, away.

**YES, 'twill be over soon,—This sickly dream
Of life will vanish from my feverish brain ;
And death my wearied spirit will redeem
From this wild region of unvary'd pain.
Yon brook will glide as softly as before,—
Yon landscape smile,—yon golden harvest grow,—
Yon sprightly lark on mounting wing will soar,
When Henry's name is heard no more below.
I sigh when all my youthful friends caress,
They laugh in health, and future evils brave ;
Them shall a wife and smiling children bless,
While I am mouldering in my silent grave.
God of the just,—Thou gavest the bitter cup ;
I bow to thy behest, and drink it up.**

TO CONSUMPTION.

GENTLY, most gently, on thy victim's head,
Consumption, lay thine hand!—Let me decay,
Like the expiring lamp, unseen, away,
And softly go to slumber with the dead.
And if 'tis true what holy men have said,
That strains angelic oft foretell the day
Of death, to those good men who fall thy prey,
O let the aërial music round my bed,
Dissolving sad in dying symphony,
Whisper the solemn warning in mine ear;
That I may bid my weeping friends good b'ye,
Ere I depart upon my journey drear:
And smiling faintly on the painful past,
Compose my decent head, and breathe my last.

Version from Deo Beatus

THY judgments, Lord, are just; thou lov'st to wear
 The face of pity, and of love divine;
But mine is guilt—thou must not, can'st not, spare,
 While Heaven is true, and equity is thine.
Yes, oh, my God!—such crimes as mine, so dread,
 Leave but the choice of punishment to thee;
Thy interest calls for judgment on my head,
 And even thy mercy dares not plead for me!
Thy will be done—since 'tis thy glory's due,
 Did from mine eyes the endless torrents flow;
Smite—it is time—though endless death ensue,
 I bless the avenging hand that lays me low.
But on what spot shall fall thine anger's flood,
That has not first been drench'd in Christ's atoning blood?



POEMS
OF A LATER DATE.

VOL. II.

I

TO A FRIEND IN DISTRESS,

Who, when Henry reasoned with him calmly, asked,

“ If he did not feel for him.”

“ DO I not feel!” The doubt is keen as steel.
Yea, I do feel—most exquisitely feel ;
My heart can weep, when from my downcast eye
I chase the tear, and stem the rising sigh :
Deep buried there I close the rankling dart,
And smile the most when heaviest is my heart.
On this I act—whatever pangs surround,
'Tis magnanimity to hide the wound.
When all was new, and life was in its spring,
I liv'd an unlov'd solitary thing ;
Even then I learnt to bury deep from day,
The piercing cares that wore my youth away.
Even then I learnt for others' cares to feel,
Even then I wept I had not power to heal ;
Even then, deep-sounding through the nightly gloom,
I heard the wretched's groan, and mourn'd the wretched's
doom.

Who were my friends in youth?—The midnight fire—
The silent moon-beam, or the starry choir ;
To these I 'plain'd, or turn'd from outer sight,
To bless my lonely taper's friendly light ;

I never yet could ask, howe'er forlorn,
 For vulgar pity mixt with vulgar scorn ;
 The sacred source of woe I never ope,
 My breast's my coffer, and my God's my hope.
 But that I *do* feel, time, my friend, will shew,
 Though the cold croud the secret never know ;
 With them I laugh—yet when no eye can see,
 I weep for nature, and I weep for thee.
 Yes, thou did'st wrong me, * * * ; I fondly thought,
 In thee I'd found the friend my heart had sought ;
 I fondly thought that thou could'st pierce the guise,
 And read the truth that in my bosom lies ;
 I fondly thought ere Time's last days were gone,
 Thy heart and mine had mingled into one !
 Yes—and they yet will mingle. Days and years
 Will fly, and leave us partners in our tears :
 We then shall feel that friendship has a power,
 To soothe affliction in her darkest hour ;
 Time's trial o'er, shall clasp each other's hand,
 And wait the passport to a better land.

Thine,

H. K. WHITE.

Half past 11 o'clock at night.

CHRISTMAS-DAY,

1804.

YET once more, and once more, awake, my harp,
 From silence and neglect—one lofty strain ;
 Lofty, yet wilder than the winds of Heaven,
 And speaking mysteries, more than words can tell,
 I ask of thee ; for I, with hymnings high,
 Would join the dirge of the departing year.

Yet with no wintry garland from the woods,
 Wrought of the leafless branch, or ivy sear,
 Wreath I thy tresses, dark December ! now ;
 Me higher quarrel calls, with loudest song,
 And fearful joy, to celebrate the day
 Of the Redeemer.—Near two thousand suns
 Have set their seals upon the rolling lapse
 Of generations, since the day-spring first
 Beamed from on high !—Now to the mighty mass
 Of that increasing aggregate, we add
 One unit more. Space, in comparison,
 How small, yet mark'd with how much misery ;
 Wars, famines, and the fury, Pestilence,
 Over the nations hanging her dread scourge ;
 The oppressed, too, in silent bitterness,
 Weeping their sufferance ; and the arm of wrong
 Forcing the scanty portion from the weak,
 And stepping the lone widow's couch with tears.

So has the year been character'd with woe
 In Christian land, and mark'd with wrongs and crimes ;
 Yet 'twas not thus *He* taught—not thus *He* liv'd,
 Whose birth we this day celebrate with prayer
 And much thanksgiving.—He, a man of woes,
 Went on the way appointed,—path, though rude,
 Yet borne with patience still :—He came to cheer
 The broken hearted, to raise up the sick,
 And on the wandering and benighted mind
 To pour the light of truth.—O task divine !
 O more than angel teacher ! He had words
 To soothe the barking waves, and hush the winds ;
 And when the soul was toss'd in troubled seas,
 Wrapt in thick darkness and the howling storm,
 He, pointing to the star of peace on high,
 Arm'd it with holy fortitude, and bade it smile
 At the surrounding wreck.—
 When with deep agony his heart was rack'd,
 Not for himself the tear-drop dew'd his cheek,
 For *them* He wept, for *them* to Heaven He pray'd,
 His persecutors —“ Father, pardon them,
 They know not what they do.”

Angels of Heaven,

Ye who beheld him fainting on the cross
 And did him homage, say, may mortal join
 The hallelujahs of the risen God ?
 Will the faint voice and grovelling song be heard
 Amid the seraphim in light divine ?
 Yes, he will deign, the Prince of Peace will deign,
 For mercy, to accept the hymn of faith,

Low though it be and humble.—Lord of life,
 The Christ, the Comforter, thine advent now
 Fills my uprising soul.—I mount, I fly
 Far o'er the skies, beyond the rolling orbs ;
 The bonds of flesh dissolve, and earth recedes,
 And care, and pain, and sorrow, are no more.

* * * * *

NELSONI MORS.

YET once again, my harp, yet once again,
 One ditty more, and on the mountain ash
 I will again suspend thee. I have felt
 The warm tear frequent on my cheek, since last,
 At even-tide, when all the winds were hush'd,
 I woke to thee, the melancholy song.
 Since then with *Thoughtfulness*, a maid severe,
 I've journey'd, and have learn'd to shape the freaks
 Of frolic fancy to the line of truth ;
 Not unrepining, for my froward heart
 Still turns to thee, mine harp, and to the flow
 Of spring-gales past—the woods and storied haunts
 Of my not songless boyhood.—Yet once more,
 Not fearless, I will wake thy tremulous tones,
 My long neglected harp.—He must not sink ;
 The good, the brave—he must not, shall not sink
 Without the weed of some melodious tear.

Though from the Muse's chalice I may pour
 No precious dews of Aganippe's well,
 Or Castaly,—though from the morning cloud
 I fetch no hues to scatter on his hearse :
 Yet will I wreath a garland for his brows,
 Of simple flowers, such as the hedge-rows scent
 Of Britain, my lov'd country ; and with tears
 Most eloquent, yet silent, I will bathe
 Thy honour'd corse, my *Nelson*, tears as warm
 And *honest* as the ebbing blood that flow'd
 Fast from thy *honest* heart.—Thou Pity too,
 If ever I have lov'd, with faltering step,
 To follow thee on the cold and starless night,
 To the top crag of some rain-beaten cliff ;
 And as I heard the deep gun bursting loud
 Amid the pauses of the storm, have pour'd
 Wild strains, and mournful, to the hurrying winds,
 Thy dying soul's viaticum ;—if oft
 Amid the carnage of the field I've sate
 With thee upon the moonlight throne, and sung
 To cheer the fainting soldier's dying soul,
 With mercy and forgiveness—visitant
 Of Heaven—sit thou upon my harp,
 And give it feeling, which were else too cold
 For argument so great, for theme so high.

How dimly on that morn the sun arose,
 'Kerchieft in mists, and tearful, when —————

* * * * *

HYMN.

In Heaven we shall be purified, so as to be able to endure
the splendors of the Deity.

I.

AWAKE, sweet harp of Judah, wake,
Retune thy strings for Jesus' sake ;
We sing the Saviour of our race,
The Lamb, our shield and hiding-place.

II.

When God's right arm is bar'd for war,
And thunders clothe his cloudy car,
Where, where, oh where, shall man retire,
To escape the horrors of his ire?

III.

'Tis he, the Lamb, to him we fly,
While the dread tempest passes by ;
God sees his Well-beloved's face,
And spares us in our hiding place.

IV.

Thus while we dwell in this low scene,
The Lamb is our unfailing screen ;
To him, though guilty, still we run,
And God still spares us for his Son.

V.

While yet we sojourn here below,
 Pollutions still our hearts o'erflow
 Fallen, abject, mean, a sentenced race,
 We deeply need a hiding place.

VI.

Yet courage—days and years will glide,
 And we shall lay these clods aside ;
 Shall be baptiz'd in Jordan's flood,
 And wash'd in Jesus' cleansing blood.

VII.

Then pure, immortal, sinless, freed,
 We through the Lamb shall be decreed ;
 Shall meet the Father face to face,
 And need no more a hiding place.

The last stanza of this hymn was added extemporaneously, by Henry, one summer evening, when he was with a few friends on the Trent, and singing it, as he was used to do on such occasions.

A HYMN,

FOR FAMILY WORSHIP.

I.

O LORD, another day is flown,
And we, a lonely band,
Are met once more before thy throne,
To bless thy fostering hand.

II.

And wilt thou bend a listening ear,
To praises low as ours ?
Thou wilt ! for Thou dost love to hear
The song which meekness pours.

III.

And Jesus thou thy smiles wilt deign,
As we before thee pray ;
For thou didst bless the infant train,
And we are less than they.

IV.

O let thy grace perform its part,
And let contention cease ;
And shed abroad in every heart
Thine everlasting peace !

V.

Thus chasten'd, cleans'd, entirely thine,
 A flock by Jesus led;
 The Sun of Holiness shall shine,
 In glory on our head.

VI.

And thou wilt turn our wandering feet,
 And thou wilt bless our way;
 'Till worlds shall fade, and faith shall greet
 The dawn of lasting day.

 THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

I.

WHEN marshall'd on the nightly plain,
 The glittering host bestud the sky;
 One star alone, of all the train,
 Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

II.

Hark! hark! to God the chorus breaks,
 From every host, from every gem;
 But one alone the Saviour speaks,
 It is the star of Bethlehem.

III.

Once on the raging seas I rode,
 The storm was loud,—the night was dark,
 The ocean yawn'd,—and rudely blow'd
 The wind that toss'd my foundering bark.

IV.

Deep horror then my vitals froze,
 Death-struck, I ceas'd the tide to stem ;
 When suddenly a star arose,
 It was the star of Bethlehem.

V.

It was my guide, my light, my all,
 It bade my dark forebodings cease ;
 And through the storm, and dangers' thrall,
 It led me to the port of peace.

VI.

Now safely moor'd—my perils o'er,
 I'll sing, first in night's diadem,
 For ever and for evermore,
 The star !—The star of Bethlehem!

A HYMN.

O LORD, my God, in mercy turn,
 In mercy hear a sinner mourn!
 To thee I call, to thee I cry,
 O leave me, leave me not to die!

I strove against thee, Lord, I know,
 I spurn'd thy grace, I mock'd thy law;
 The hour is past—the day's gone by,
 And I am left alone to die.

O pleasures past, what are ye now
 But thorns about my bleeding brow?
 Spectres that hover round my brain,
 And aggravate and mock my pain.

For pleasure I have given my soul;
 Now, Justice, let thy thunders roll!
 Now vengeance smile—and with a blow,
 Lay the rebellious ingrate low.

Yet Jesus, Jesus! there I'll cling,
 I'll croud beneath his sheltering wing;
 I'll clasp the cross, and holding there,
 Even me, oh bliss!—his wrath may spare.

MELODY.

Inserted in a Collection of Songs selected, and originally published, by the Rev. J. Plumptre, of Clare Hall, Cambridge.

I.

YES, once more that dying strain,
Anna, touch thy lute for me;
Sweet, when Pity's tones complain,
Doubly sweet is melody.

II.

While the Virtues thus inweave
Mildly soft the thrilling song;
Winter's long and lonesome eve,
Glides unfelt, unseen along.

III.

Thus when life hath stolen away,
And the wintry night is near;
Thus shall virtue's friendly ray,
Age's closing evening cheer.

SONG.—BY WALLER.

A lady of Cambridge lent Waller's Poems to Henry, and when he returned them to her, she discovered an additional stanza written by him at the bottom of the song here copied.

GO, lovely rose !
 Tell her that wastes her time and me,
 That now she knows,
 When I resemble her to thee,
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
 And shuns to have her graces spied ;
 That had'st thou sprung
 In deserts, where no men abide,
 Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
 Of beauty from the light retired ;
 Bid her come forth,
 Suffer herself to be desired,
 And not blush so to be admired.

Then die, that she
 The common fate of all things rare
 May read in thee ;
 How small a part of time they share,
 That are so wonderous sweet and fair.

[Yet, though thou fade,
 From thy dead leaves let fragrance rise ;
 And teach the maid,
 That goodness Time's rude hand defies,
 That virtue lives when beauty dies.]

H. K. WHITE.

" I AM PLEAS'D, AND YET I'M SAD."

I.

WHEN twilight steals along the ground,
 And all the bells are ringing round,
 One, two, three, four, and five ;
 I at my study window sit,
 And wrapt in many a musing fit,
 To bliss am all alive.

II.

But though impressions calm and sweet,
 Thrill round my heart a holy heat,
 And I am inly glad ;
 The tear-drop stands in either eye,
 And yet I cannot tell thee why,
 I am pleas'd, and yet I'm sad.

III.

The silvery rack that flies away,
 Like mortal life or pleasure's ray,
 Does that disturb my breast?
 Nay what have I, a studious man,
 To do with life's unstable plan,
 Or pleasure's fading vest?

IV.

Is it that here I must not stop,
 But o'er yon blue hill's woody top,
 Must bend my lonely way?
 Now surely no, for give but me
 My own fire-side, and I shall be
 At home where'er I stray.

V.

Then is it that yon steeple there,
 With music sweet shall fill the air,
 When thou no more can'st hear?
 Oh no! oh no! for then forgiven,
 I shall be with my God in Heaven,
 Releas'd from every fear.

VI.

Then whence it is I cannot tell,
 But there is some mysterious spell
 That holds me when I am glad;
 And so the tear-drop fills my eye,
 When yet in truth I know not why,
 Or wherefore I am sad.

SOLITUDE.

IT is not that my lot is low,
That bids this silent tear to flow ;
It is not grief that bids me moan,
It is that I am all alone.

In woods and glens I love to roam,
When the tir'd hedger hies him home ;
Or by the woodland pool to rest,
When pale the star looks on its breast.

Yet when the silent evening sighs,
With hallow'd airs and symphonies,
My spirit takes another tone,
And sighs that it is all alone.

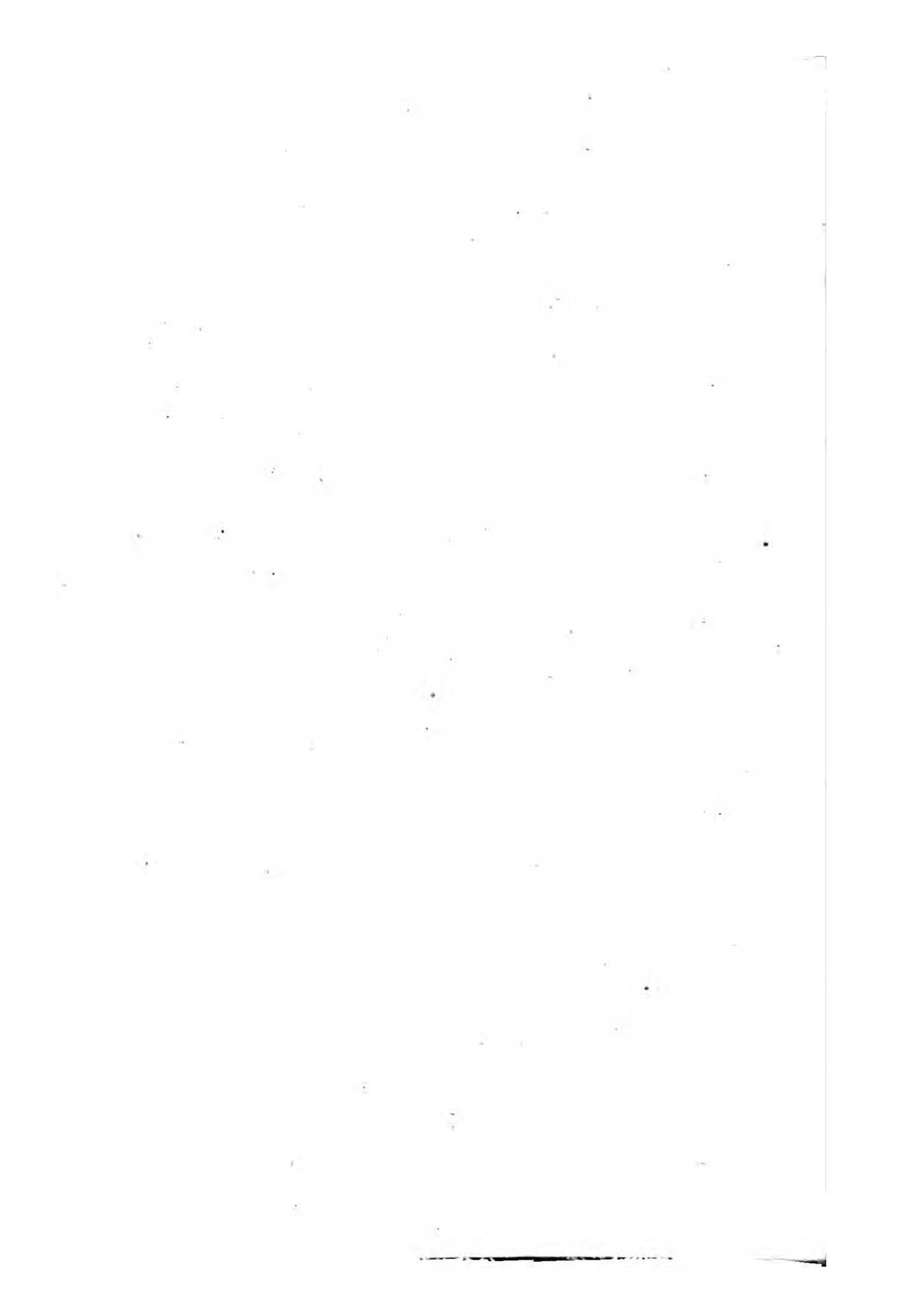
The autumn leaf is sear and dead,
It floats upon the water's bed ;
I would not be a leaf, to die
Without recording sorrows sigh !

The woods and winds, with sullen wail,
Tell all the same unvaried tale ;
I've none to smile when I am free,
And when I sigh, to sigh with me.

Yet in my dreams a form I view,
That thinks on me and loves me too ;
I start, and when the vision's flown,
I weep that I am all alone.

IF far from me the Fates remove
Domestic peace, connubial love ;
The prattling ring, the social cheer,
Affection's voice, affection's tear ;
Ye sterner powers that bind the heart,
To me your iron aid impart !
O teach me, when the nights are chill,
And my fire-side is lone and still ;
When to the blaze that crackles near,
I turn a tir'd and pensive ear,
And nature conquering bids me sigh,
For love's soft accents whispering nigh ;
O teach me, on that heavenly road,
That leads to Truth's occult abode,
To wrap my soul in dreams sublime,
Till earth and care no more be mine.
Let blest philosophy impart
Her soothing measures to my heart ;
And while with Plato's ravish'd ears,
I list the music of the spheres ;
Or on the mystic symbols pore,
That hide the Chald's sublimer lore ;
I shall not brood on summers gone,
Nor think that I am all alone.

FANNY! upon thy breast I may not lie!
Fanny! thou dost hear me when I speak!
Where art thou, love?—Around I turn my eye,
And as I turn, the tear is on my cheek.
Was it a dream? or did my love behold
Indeed my lonely couch?—Methought the breath
Fann'd not her bloodless lip; her eye was cold
And hollow, and the livery of death
Invested her pale forehead.—Sainted maid,
My thoughts oft rest with thee in thy cold grave,
Through the long wintry night, when wind and wave
Rock the dark house where thy poor head is laid.
Yet hush! my fond heart, hush! there is a shore
Of better promise; and I know at last,
When the long Sabbath of the tomb is past,
We two shall meet in Christ to part no more.



FRAGMENTS.

These fragments are Henry's latest compositions; and were, for the most part, written upon the back of his mathematical papers, during the few moments of the last year of his life, in which he suffered himself to follow the impulse of his genius,

FRAGMENTS.

I.

SAW'ST thou that light? exclaim'd the youth, and paus'd;
Through yon dark firs it glanced, and on the stream
That skirts the woods, it for a moment play'd.
Again, more light it gleam'd,—or does some sprite
Delude mine eyes with shapes of wood and streams,
And lamp far beaming through the thicket's gloom,
As from some bosom'd cabin, where the voice
Of revelry, or thrifty watchfulness,
Keeps in the lights at this unwonted hour?
No sprite deludes mine eyes,—the beam now glows
With steady lustre.—Can it be the moon,
Who hidden long by the invidious veil
That blots the Heavens, now *sets* behind the woods?—
No moon to-night has look'd upon the sea
Of clouds beneath her, answered Rudiger,
She has been sleeping with Endymion.

* * * * *

II.

The pious man,
In this bad world, when mists and couchant storms
Hide Heaven's fine circlet, springs aloft in faith
Above the clouds that threat him, to the fields
Of ether, where the day is never veil'd
With intervening vapours; and looks down
Serene upon the troublous sea, that hides
The earth's fair breast, that sea whose nether face
To grovelling mortals frowns and darkens all;
But on whose billowy back, from man conceal'd
The glaring sunbeam plays.

III.

LO! on the eastern summit, clad in grey,
Morn, like a horseman girt for travel, comes;
And from his tower of mist,
Night's watchman hurries down.

IV.

THERE was a little bird upon that pile ;
 It perch'd upon a ruined pinnacle,
 And made sweet melody.
 The song was soft, yet cheerful, and most clear,
 For other note none swell'd the air but his.
 It seem'd as if the little chorister,
 Sole tenant of the melancholy pile,
 Were a lone hermit, outcast from his kind,
 Yet withal cheerful.—I have heard the note
 Echoing so lonely o'er the aisle forlorn,
 ———Much musing—

V.

O PALE art thou, my lamp, and faint
 Thy melancholy ray ;
 When the still night's unclouded saint
 Is walking on her way.
 Through my lattice leaf-embower'd,
 Fair she sheds her shadowy beam ;
 And o'er my silent sacred room,
 Casts a checquer'd twilight gloom ;
 I throw aside the learned sheet,
I cannot chuse but gaze, she looks so mildly sweet.

Sad vestal why art thou so fair,
Or why am I so frail?

Methinks thou lookest kindly on me, Moon,
And cheerest my lone hours with sweet regards!
Surely like me thou'rt sad, but dost not speak
Thy sadness to the cold unheeding croud;
So, mournfully compos'd, o'er yonder cloud
Thou shinest, like a cresset, beaming far
From the rude watch-tower, o'er the Atlantic wave.

 VI.

O GIVE me music—for my soul doth faint;
I am sick of noise and care, and now mine ear
Longs for some air of peace, some dying plaint,
That may the spirit from its cell unsphere.

Hark how it falls! and now it steals along,
Like distant bells upon the lake at eve,
When all is still; and now it grows more strong,
As when the choral train their dirges weave,
Mellow and many-voiced; where every close,
O'er the old minster roof, in echoing waves reflows.

Oh! I am wrapt aloft. My spirit soars
 Beyond the skies, and leaves the stars behind.
 Lo! angels lead me to the happy shores,
 And floating pæans fill the buoyant wind.
 Farewell! base earth, farewell! my soul is freed,
 Far from its clayey cell it springs,—

* * * * *

VII.

AH! who can say, however fair his view,
 Through what sad scenes his path may lie!
 Ah! who can give to others' woes his sigh,
 Secure his own will never need it too!

Let thoughtless youth its seeming joys pursue,
 Soon will they learn to scan, with thoughtful eye,
 The illusive past and dark futurity;
 Soon will they know—

* * * * *

VIII.

AND must thou go, and must we part!
 Yes, Fate decrees, and I submit;
 The pang that rends in twain my heart,
 Oh, Fanny, dost thou share in it!

Thy sex is fickle,—when away,
 Some happier youth may win thy—

IX.

SONNET.

WHEN I sit musing on the checquer'd past,
 (A term much darken'd with untimely woes,)
 My thoughts revert to her, for whom still flows
 The tear, though half disown'd;—and binding fast
 Pride's stubborn cheat to my too yielding heart,
 I say to her, she robb'd me of my rest,
 When that was all my wealth.—'Tis true my breast
 Received from her this wearying lingering smart;
 Yet ah! I cannot bid her form depart;
 Though wrong'd, I love her—yet in anger love,
 For she was most unworthy.—Then I prove
 Vindictive joy; and on my stern front gleams,
 Thron'd in dark clouds, inflexible * * *
 The native pride of my much injur'd heart.

X.

WHEN high romance o'er every wood and stream,
 Dark lustre shed, my infant mind to fire ;
 Spell-struck, and fill'd with many a wondering dream,
 First in the groves I woke the pensive lyre.
 All there was mystery then, the gust that woke
 The midnight echo was a spirit's dirge ;
 And unseen fairies would the moon invoke,
 To their light morrice by the restless surge.
 Now to my sober'd thought, with life's false smiles,
 Too much * *
 The vagrant Fancy spreads no more her wiles,
 And dark forebodings now my bosom fill.

 XI.

HUSH'D is the lyre—the hand that swept
 The low and pensive wires,
 Robb'd of its cunning, from the task retires.

Yes—it is still—the lyre is still ;
 The spirit which its slumbers broke,
 Hath pass'd away,—and that weak hand that woke,
 Its forest melodies hath lost its skill.

Yet I would press you to my lips once more,
 Ye wild, yet withering flowers of poësy ;
 Yet would I drink the fragrance which ye pour,
 Mix'd with decaying odours ; for to me
 Ye have beguil'd the hours of infancy,
 As in the wood-paths of my native —

* * * * *

 XII.

ONCE more, and yet once more,
 I give unto my harp a dark-woven lay ;
 I heard the waters roar,
 I heard the flood of ages pass away.
 O thou, stern spirit, who dost dwell
 In thine eternal cell,
 Noting, grey chronicler ! the silent years ;
 I saw thee rise,—I saw the scroll complete,
 Thou spakest, and at thy feet,
 The universe gave way.

T I M E.

A POEM.

VOL. II.

L

This poem was begun either during the publication of Clifton Grove or shortly afterwards. Henry never laid aside the intention of completing it, and some of the detached parts were among his latest productions.

T I M E.

A POEM.

GENIUS of musings, who, the midnight hour
Wasting in woods or haunted forests wild,
Dost watch Orion in his arctic tower,
Thy dark eye fix'd as in some holy trance ;
Or, when the volley'd lightnings cleave the air,
And Ruin gaunt bestrides the winged storm,
Sitt'st in some lonely watch-tower—where thy lamp,
Faint-blazing, strikes the fisher's eye from far,
And, 'mid the howl of elements, unmov'd
Dost ponder on the awful scene, and trace
The vast *effect* to its superior source,—
Spirit, attend my lowly benison !
For now I strike to themes of import high
The solitary lyre ; and borne by thee
Above this narrow cell, I celebrate
The mysteries of Time !

Him who, august,

Was ere these worlds were fashioned,—ere the sun
 Sprang from the east, or Lucifer display'd
 His glowing cresset in the arch of morn,
 Or Vesper guilded the serener eve.
 Yea, He *had been* for an eternity;
 Had swept unvarying from eternity
 The harp of desolation,—ere his tones,
 At God's command, assum'd a milder strain,
 And startled on his watch, in the vast deep,
 Chaos's sluggish sentry, and evok'd
 From the dark void the smiling universe.

Chain'd to the grovelling frailties of the flesh,
 Mere mortal man, unpurged from earthly dross,
 Cannot survey, with fix'd and steady eye,
 The dim uncertain gulph, which now the muse,
 Adventurous, would explore;—but dizzy grown,
 He topples down the abyss.—If he would scan
 The fearful chasm, and catch a transient glimpse
 Of its unfathomable depths, that so
 His mind may turn with double joy to God,
 His only certainty and resting place;
 He must put off a while this mortal vest,
 And learn to follow, without giddiness,
 To heights where all is vision, and surprise,
 And vague conjecture:—He must waste by night
 The studious taper, far from all resort
 Of crouds and folly, in some still retreat;
 High on the beetling promontory's crest,

Or in the caves of the vast wilderness,
 Where compass'd round with nature's wildest shapes,
 He may be driven to centre all his thoughts
 In the great architect, who lives confest
 In rocks, and seas, and solitary wastes.

So has divine philosophy, with voice
 Mild as the murmurs of the moonlight wave,
 Tutor'd the heart of him, who now awakes,
 Touching the chords of solemn minstrelsy,
 His faint, neglected song—intent to snatch
 Some vagrant blossom from the dangerous steep
 Of poësy, a bloom of such an hue,
 So sober, as may not unseemly suit
 With Truth's severer brow ; and one withal
 So hardy as shall brave the passing wind
 Of many winters,—rearing its meek head
 In loveliness, when he who gather'd it
 Is number'd with the generations gone.
 Yet not to me hath God's good providence
 Given studious leisure *, or unbroken thought,
 Such as he owns,—a meditative man,
 Who from the blush of morn to quiet eve
 Ponders, or turns the page of wisdom o'er,
 Far from the busy croud's tumultuous din ;
 From noise and wrangling far, and undisturb'd
 With Mirth's unholy shouts. For me the day.

* The author was then in an attorney's office.

Hath duties which require the vigorous hand
 Of stedfast application, but which leave
 No deep improving trace upon the mind.
 But be the day another's;—let it pass!
 The night's my own!—They cannot steal my night!
 When Evening lights her folding-star on high,
 I live and breathe, and in the sacred hours
 Of quiet and repose my spirit flies,
 Free as the morning, o'er the realms of space,
 And mounts the skies, and imp's her wing for heaven.

Hence do I love the sober-suited maid;
 Hence Night's my friend, my mistress, and my theme,
 And she shall aid me *now* to magnify
 The night of ages,—*now* when the pale ray
 Of star-light penetrates the studious gloom,
 And at my window seated,—while mankind
 Are lock'd in sleep, I feel the freshening breeze
 Of stillness blow, while, in her saddest stole,
Thought, like a wakeful vestal at her shrine,
 Assumes her wonted sway.

Behold the world

Rests, and her tir'd inhabitants have paus'd
 From trouble and turmoil. The widow now
 Has ceas'd to weep, and her twin orphans lie
 Lock'd in each arm, partakers of her rest.
 The man of sorrow has forgot his woes;
 The outcast that his head is shelterless,
 His griefs unshar'd.—The mother tends no more
 Her daughter's dying slumbers, but, surprised

With heaviness, and sunk upon her couch,
 Dreams of her Bridals. Even the hectic, lull'd
 On Death's lean arm to rest, in visions wrapt,
 Crowning with hope's bland wreath his shuddering nurse,
 Poor victim! smiles.—Silence and deep repose
 Reign o'er the nations; and the warning voice
 Of nature utters audibly within
 The general moral:—tells us that repose,
 Deathlike as this, but of far longer span,
 Is coming on us—that the weary crouds,
 Who now enjoy a temporary calm,
 Shall soon taste lasting quiet, wrapt around
 With grave-clothes; and their aching, restless heads
 Mouldering in holes and corners unobserv'd,
 'Till the last trump shall break their sullen sleep.

Who needs a teacher to admonish him
 That flesh is grass?—That earthly things are mist?
 What are our joys but dreams? and what our hopes
 But goodly shadows in the summer cloud?
 There's not a wind that blows but bears with it
 Some rainbow promise:—Not a moment flies
 But puts its sickle in the fields of life,
 And mows its thousands, with their joys and cares.
 'Tis but as yesterday since on yon stars,
 Which now I view, the Chaldee shepherd* gaz'd,
 In his mid-watch observant, and dispos'd

* Alluding to the first astronomical observations made by the Chaldee shepherds.

The twinkling hosts as fancy gave them shape.
 Yet in the interim what mighty shocks
 Have buffeted mankind,—whole nations raz'd,—
 Cities made desolate,—the polish'd sunk
 To barbarism, and once barbaric states
 Swaying the wand of science and of arts ;
 Illustrious deeds and memorable names
 Blotted from record, and upon the tongue
 Of grey tradition voluble no more.

Where are the heroes of the ages past ?
 Where the brave chieftains, where the mighty ones
 Who flourish'd in the infancy of days ?
 All to the grave gone down. On their fallen fame
 Exultant, mocking at the pride of man,
 Sits grim *Forgetfulness*.—The warrior's arm
 Lies nerveless on the pillow of its shame ;
 Hush'd is his stormy voice, and quench'd the blaze
 Of his red eye-ball.—Yesterday his name
 Was mighty on the earth—To-day—'tis what ?
 The meteor of the night of distant years,
 That flash'd unnoticed, save by wrinkled eld,
 Musing at midnight upon prophecies,
 Who at her lonely lattice saw the gleam
 Point to the mist-pois'd shroud, then quietly
 Clos'd her pale lips, and lock'd the secret up
 Safe in the charnel's treasures.

O how weak
 Is mortal man ! how trifling—how confin'd
 His scope of vision. Puff'd with confidence,

His phrase grows big with immortality,
 And he, poor insect of a summer's day,
 Dreams of eternal honours to his name ;
 Of endless glory and perennial bays.
 He idly reasons of eternity,
 As of the train of ages,—when, alas !
 Ten thousand thousand of his centuries
 Are, in comparison, a little point,
 Too trivial for accompt.—O it is strange,
 'Tis passing strange, to mark his fallacies ;
 Behold him proudly view some pompous pile,
 Whose high dome swells to emulate the skies,
 And smile, and say, my name shall live with this
 'Till Time shall be no more ; while at his feet,
 Yea, at his very feet, the crumbling dust
 Of the fallen fabric of the other day,
 Preaches the solemn lesson.—He *should* know,
 That Time must conquer. That the loudest blast
 That ever fill'd Renown's obstreperous trump,
 Fades in the lapse of ages, and expires.
 Who lies inhum'd in the terrific gloom
 Of the gigantic pyranid? or who
 Rear'd its huge walls? Oblivion laughs and says,
 The prey is mine.—They sleep, and never more
 Their names shall strike upon the ear of man,
 Their memory burst its fetters.

Where is *Rome*?

She lives but in the tale of other times ;
 Her proud pavilions are the hermit's home,
 And her long colonnades, her public walks,

Now faintly echo to the pilgrim's feet
 Who comes to muse in solitude, and trace,
 Through the rank moss reveal'd, her honour'd dust,
 But not to Rome alone has Fate confin'd
 The doom of ruin; cities numberless,
 Tyre, Sidon, Carthage, Babylon, and Troy,
 And rich Phœnicia—they are blotted out,
 Half-razed from memory, and their very name
 And *being* in dispute.—Has Athens fallen?
 Is polish'd Greece become the savage seat
 Of ignorance and sloth? and shall *we* dare

* * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *

And empire seeks another hemisphere.
 Where now is Britain?—Where her laurell'd names,
 Her palaces and halls? Dash'd in the dust.
 Some second Vandal hath reduced her pride,
 And with one big recoil hath thrown her back
 To primitive barbarity.—Again,
 Through her depopulated vales, the scream
 Of bloody superstition hollow rings,
 And the scarr'd native to the tempest howls
 The yell of deprecation.—O'er her marts,
 Her crouded ports, broods Silence; and the cry
 Of the low curlew, and the pensive dash
 Of distant billows, breaks alone the void,
 Even as the savage sits upon the stone
 That marks where stood her capitols, and hears
 The bittern booming in the weeds, he shrinks

From the dismaying solitude.—Her bards
 Sing in a language that hath perished ;
 And their wild harps, suspended o'er their graves,
 Sigh to the desert winds a dying strain.

Meanwhile the arts, in second infancy,
 Rise in some distant clime ; and then perchance
 Some bold adventurer, fill'd with golden dreams,
 Steering his bark through trackless solitudes,
 Where, to his wandering thoughts, no daring prow
 Hath ever plough'd before,—espies the cliffs
 Of fallen Albion.—To the land unknown
 He journeys joyful ; and perhaps descries
 Some vestige of her ancient stateliness ;
 Then he, with vain conjecture, fills his mind
 Of the unheard-of race, which had arriv'd
 At science in that solitary nook,
 Far from the civil world ; and sagely sighs
 And moralizes on the state of man.

Still on its march, unnoticed and unfelt,
 Moves on our being. We do live and breathe,
 And we are gone. The spoiler heeds us not.
 We have our spring-time and our rottenness ;
 And as we fall, another race succeeds
 To perish likewise.—Meanwhile nature smiles—
 The seasons run their round—the sun fulfills
 His annual course—and heaven and earth remain
 Still changing, yet unchanged—still doom'd to feel

Endless mutation in perpetual rest.
 Where are conceal'd the days which have elaps'd?
 Hid in the mighty cavern of *the past*;
 They rise upon us only to appal,
 By indistinct and half-glimps'd images,
 Misty, gigantic, huge, obscure, remote.

Oh it is fearful, on the midnight couch,
 When the rude rushing winds forget to rave,
 And the pale moon, that through the casement high
 Surveys the sleepless muser, stamps the hour
 Of utter silence,—it is fearful then
 To steer the mind, in deadly solitude,
 Up the vague stream of probability;
 To wind the mighty secrets of *the past*,
 And turn the key of time!—Oh who can strive
 To comprehend the vast, the awful truth,
 Of the *eternity that hath gone by*,
 And not recoil from the dismaying sense
 Of human impotence? The life of man
 Is summ'd in birth-days and in sepulchres;
 But the Eternal God had no beginning;
 He hath no end. Time had been with him
 For *everlasting*, ere the dædal world
 Rose from the gulph in loveliness.—Like him
 It knew no source, like him 'twas uncreate.
 What is it then?—The past Eternity!
 We comprehend a *future* without end;
 We feel it possible that even yon sun

May roll for ever; but we shrink amaz'd—
 We stand aghast, when we reflect that Time
 Knew no commencement.—That heap age on age,
 And million upon million, without end,
 And we shall never span the void of days
 That were, and are not but in retrospect.
 The Past is an unfathomable depth,
 Beyond the span of thought;—'tis an elapse
 Which hath no mensuration, but hath been
 For ever and for ever.

Change of days

To us is sensible; and each revolve
 Of the recording sun conducts us on
 Further in life; and nearer to our goal.
 Not so with Time,—mysterious chronicler,
 He knoweth not mutation;—centuries
 Are to his being as a day, and days
 As centuries.—Time past, and Time to come,
 Are always equal; when the world began
 God had existed from eternity.

* * * *

Now look on man

Myriads of ages hence.—Hath Time elapsed?
 Is he not standing in the self-same place
 Where once we stood?—The same Eternity
 Hath gone before him, and is yet to come:
 His *past* is not of longer span than ours,
 Though myriads of ages intervened;
 For who can add to what has neither sum,
 Nor bound, nor source, nor estimate, nor end!

Oh, who can compass the Almighty mind?
 Who can unlock the secrets of the High?
 In speculations of an altitude,
 Sublime as this, our reason stands confest
 Foolish, and insignificant, and mean.
 Who can apply the futile argument
 Of finite beings to infinity?
 He might as well compress the universe
 Into the hollow compass of a gourd,
 Scoop'd out by human art; or bid the whale
 Drink up the sea it swims in.—Can the less
 Contain the greater? or the dark obscure
 Infold the glories of meridian day?
 What does philosophy impart to man
 But undiscover'd wonders?—Let her soar
 Even to her proudest heights,—to where she caught
 The soul of Newton and of Socrates,
 She but extends the scope of wild amaze
 And admiration. All her lessons end
 In wider views of God's unfathom'd depths.

Lo! the unletter'd hind, who never knew
 To raise his mind excursive, to the heights
 Of abstract contemplation; as he sits
 On the green hillock, by the hedge-row-side,
 What time the insect swarms are murmuring,
 And marks, in silent thought, the broken clouds
 That fringe, with loveliest hues, the evening sky,
 Feels in his soul the hand of nature rouse
 The thrill of gratitude, to him who form'd

The goodly prospect ; he beholds the God
 Thron'd in the west ; and his reposing ear
 Hears sounds angelic in the fitful breeze,
 That floats through neighbouring copse, or fairy brake,
 Or lingers playful on the haunted stream.
 Go with the cotter to his winter fire,
 Where o'er the moors the loud blast whistles shrill,
 And the hoarse ban-dog bays the icy moon ;
 Mark with what awe he lists the wild uproar,
 Silent, and big with thought ; and hear him bless
 The God that rides on the tempestuous clouds
 For his snug hearth, and all his little joys.
 Hear him compare his happier lot with his
 Who bends his way across the wintry wolds,
 A poor night-traveller, while the dismal snow
 Beats in his face, and, dubious of his path,
 He stops, and thinks, in every lengthening blast,
 He hears some village mastiff's distant howl,
 And sees, far streaming, some lone cottage light ;
 Then, undeceiv'd, upturns his streaming eyes,
 And clasps his shivering hands ; or, overpowered,
 Sinks on the frozen ground, weigh'd down with sleep,
 From which the hapless wretch shall never wake.
 Thus the poor rustic warms his heart with praise
 And glowing gratitude.—He turns to bless,
 With honest warmth, his Maker and his God.
 And shall it e'er be said, that a poor hind,
 Nurs'd in the lap of Ignorance, and bred
 In want and labour, glows with nobler zeal
 To laud his Maker's attributes, while he

Whom starry science in her cradle rock'd,
 And Castaly enchasten'd with its dew,
 Closes his eyes upon the Holy Word ;
 And, blind to all but arrogance and pride,
 Dares to declare his infidelity,
 And openly condemn the Lord of Hosts !
 What is philosophy, if it impart
 Irreverence for the Deity—or teach
 A mortal man to set his judgment up
 Against his Maker's will?—The Polygar,
 Who kneels to sun or moon, compar'd with him
 Who thus perverts the talents he enjoys,
 Is the most bless'd of men!—Oh ! I would walk
 A weary journey, to the furthest verge
 Of the big world, to kiss that good man's hand,
 Who, in the blaze of wisdom and of art,
 Preserves a lowly mind ; and to his God,
 Feeling the sense of his own littleness,
 Is as a child in meek simplicity !
 What is the pomp of learning? the parade
 Of letters and of tongues?—E'en as the mists
 Of the grey morn before the rising sun,
 That pass away and perish.

Earthly things

Are but the transient pageants of an hour ;
 And earthly pride is like the passing flower,
 That springs to fall, and blossoms but to die.
 'Tis as the tower erected on a cloud,
 Baseless and silly as the school-boy's dream.

Ages and epochs that destroy our pride,
 And then record its downfall, what are they
 But the poor creatures of man's teeming brain?
 Hath Heaven its ages; or doth Heaven preserve
 Its stated æras? Doth the Omnipotent
 Hear of to-morrows or of yesterdays?
 There is to God nor future nor a past:
 Thron'd in his might, all times to him are present;
 He hath no lapse, no past, no time to come;
 He sees before him one eternal *now*.
 Time moveth not!—our being 'tis that moves;
 And we, swift gliding down life's rapid stream,
 Dream of swift ages and revolving years,
 Ordain'd to chronicle our passing days:
 So the young sailor in the gallant bark,
 Scudding before the wind, beholds the coast
 Receding from his eyes, and thinks the while,
 Struck with amaze, that he is motionless,
 And that the land is sailing.

Such, alas!

Are the illusions of this proteus life!
 All, all is false.—Through every phasis still
 'Tis shadowy and deceitful.—It assumes
 The semblances of things, and specious shapes;
 But the lost traveller might as soon rely
 On the evasive spirit of the marsh,
 Whose lantern beams, and vanishes, and flits,
 O'er bog, and rock, and pit, and hollow-way,
 As we on its appearances.

On earth

There is nor certainty, nor stable hope.
 As well the weary mariner, whose bark
 Is toss'd beyond Cimmerian Bosphorus,
 Where storm and darkness hold their drear domain,
 And sunbeams never penetrate, might trust
 To expectation of serener skies,
 And linger in the very jaws of death,
 Because some peevish cloud were opening,
 Or the loud storm had bated in its rage ;
 As we look forward in this vale of tears
 To permanent delight—from some slight glimpse
 Of shadowy, unsubstantial happiness.

The good man's hope is laid far, far beyond
 The sway of tempests, or the furious sweep
 Of mortal desolation.—He beholds,
 Unapprehensive, the gigantic stride
 Of rampant ruin, or the unstable waves
 Of dark vicissitude.—Even in death,
 In that dread hour, when, with a giant pang,
 Tearing the tender fibres of the heart,
 The immortal spirit struggles to be free,
 Then, even then, that hope forsakes him not,
 For it exists beyond the narrow verge
 Of the cold sepulchre.—The petty joys
 Of fleeting life indignantly it spurn'd,
 And rested on the bosom of its God.
 This is man's only reasonable hope ;
 And 'tis a hope which, cherish'd in the breast,
 Shall not be disappointed.—Even He,

The Holy One—Almighty—who elanced
 The rolling world along its airy way ;
 Even He will deign to smile upon the good,
 And welcome him to these celestial seats,
 Where joy and gladness hold their changeless reign.

Thou proud man, look upon yon starry vault,
 Survey the countless gems which richly stud
 The night's imperial chariot ;—Telescopes
 Will shew thee myriads more, innumeros
 As the sea-sand ;—Each of those little lamps
 Is the great source of light, the central sun
 Round which some other mighty sisterhood
 Of planets travel,—Every planet stock'd
 With living beings impotent as thee.
 Now, proud man—now, where is thy greatness fled?
 What art thou in the scale of universe?
 Less, less than nothing !—Yet of thee the God
 Who built this wonderous frame of worlds is careful,
 As well as of the mendicant who begs
 The leavings of thy table. And shalt thou
 Lift up thy thankless spirit, and contemn
 His heavenly providence ! Deluded fool,
 Even now the thunderbolt is wing'd with death,
 Even now thou totterest on the brink of Hell.

How insignificant is mortal man,
 Bound to the hasty pinions of an hour !
 How poor, how trivial in the vast conceit
 Of infinite duration, boundless space !

God of the universe—Almighty One—
 Thou who dost walk upon the winged winds,
 Or with the storm, thy rugged charioteer,
 Swift and impetuous as the northern blast,
 Ridest from pole to pole;—Thou who dost hold
 The forked lightnings in thine awful grasp,
 And reinest-in the earthquake, when thy wrath
 Goes down towards erring man,—I would address
 To thee my parting pæan ; for of thee,
 Great beyond comprehension, who thyself
 Art time and space, sublime-infinitude,
 Of thee has been my song!—With awe I kneel
 Trembling before the footstool of thy state,
 My God, my Father!—I will sing to thee
 A hymn of laud, a solemn canticle,
 Ere on the cypress wreath, which overshades
 The throne of Death, I hang my mournful lyre,
 And give its wild strings to the desert gale.
 Rise, son of Salem, rise, and join the strain,
 Sweep to accordant tones thy tuneful harp,
 And, leaving vain laments, arouse thy soul
 To exultation. Sing hosanna, sing,
 And halleluiah, for the Lord is great,
 And full of mercy! He has thought of man ;
 Yea, compass'd round with countless worlds, has thought
 Of we poor worms, that batten in the dews
 Of morn, and perish ere the noonday sun.
 Sing to the Lord, for he is merciful ;
 He gave the Nubian lion but to live,
 To rage its hour, and perish: but on man

He lavish'd immortality, and Heaven.
 The eagle falls from her aërial tower,
 And mingles with irrevocable dust ;
 But man from death springs joyful,
 Springs up to life and to eternity.
 Oh that, insensate of the favouring boon,
 The great exclusive privilege bestow'd
 On us unworthy trifles, men should dare
 To treat with slight regard the proffer'd Heaven,
 And urge the lenient, but All-Just, to swear
 In wrath, " They shall not enter in my rest."
 Might I address the supplicative strain
 To thy high footstool, I would pray that thou
 Would'st pity the deluded wanderers,
 And fold them, ere they perish, in thy flock.
 Yea, I would bid thee pity them, through him,
 Thy well-beloved, who, upon the cross,
 Bled a dread sacrifice for human sin,
 And paid, with bitter agony, the debt
 Of primitive transgression.

Oh ! I shrink,
 My very soul doth shrink, when I reflect
 That the time hastens, when, in vengeance cloth'd,
 Thou shalt come down to stamp the seal of fate
 On erring mortal man. Thy chariot wheels
 Then shall rebound to earth's remotest caves,
 And stormy Ocean from his bed shall start
 At the appalling summons. Oh ! how dread,
 On the dark eye of miserable man,
 Chasing his sins in secrecy and gloom,

Will burst the effulgence of the opening Heaven ;
 When to the brazen trumpet's deafening roar,
 Thou and thy dazzling cohorts shall descend,
 Proclaiming the fulfilment of the word !
 The dead shall start astonish'd from their sleep !
 The sepulchres shall groan and yield their prey,
 The bellowing floods shall disembody their charge
 Of human victims.—From the farthest nook
 Of the wide world shall troop the risen souls,
 From him whose bones are bleaching in the waste
 Of polar solitudes, or him whose corpse,
 Whelm'd in the loud Atlantic's vexed tides,
 Is wash'd on some Carribean prominence,
 To the lone tenant of some secret cell
 In the Pacific's vast * * * realm,
 Where never plummet's sound was heard to part
 The wilderness of water ; they shall come
 To greet the solemn advent of the Judge.

Thou first shalt summon the elected saints
 To their apportion'd Heaven ; and thy Son,
 At thy right hand, shall smile with conscious joy
 On all his past distresses, when for them
 He bore humanity's severest pangs.
 Then shalt thou seize the avenging scymiter,
 And, with a roar as loud and horrible
 As the stern earthquake's monitory voice,
 The wicked shall be driven to their abode,
 Down the immitigable gulph, to wail
 And gnash their teeth in endless agony.

* * *

Rear thou aloft thy standard.—Spirit rear
 Thy flag on high!—Invincible, and throned
 In unparticipated might. Behold
 Earth's proudest boasts, beneath thy silent sway,
 Sweep headlong to destruction, thou the while,
 Unmov'd and heedless, thou dost hear the rush
 Of mighty generations, as they pass
 To the broad gulph of ruin, and dost stamp
 Thy signet on them, and they rise no more.
 Who shall contend with Time—unvanquish'd Time,
 The conqueror of conquerors, and lord
 Of desolation?—Lo! the shadows fly,
 The hours and days, and years and centuries,
 They fly, they fly, and nations rise and fall.
 The young are old, the old are in their graves.
 Heardst thou that shout? It rent the vaulted skies;
 It was the voice of people,—mighty crouds,—
 Again! 'tis hush'd—Time speaks, and all is hush'd;
 In the vast multitude now reigns alone
 Unruffled solitude. They all are still;
 All—yea, the whole—the incalculable mass,
 Still as the ground that clasps their cold remains.

Rear thou aloft thy standard.—Spirit rear
 Thy flag on high! and glory in thy strength.
 But do thou know, the season yet shall come,
 When from its base thine adamantine throne
 Shall tumble; when thine arm shall cease to strike,
 Thy voice forget its petrifying power;

When saints shall shout, and *Time shall be no more.*
 Yea, he doth come—the mighty champion comes,
 Whose potent spear shall give thee thy death-wound,
 Shall crush the conqueror of conquerors,
 And desolate stern desolation's lord.
 Lo! where he cometh! the Messiah comes!
 The King! the Comforter! the Christ!—He comes
 To burst the bonds of death, and overturn
 The power of Time.—Hark! the trumpet's blast
 Rings o'er the Heavens!—They rise, the myriads rise—
 Even from their graves they spring, and burst the chains
 Of torpor,—He has ransomed them, * *

Forgotten generations live again,
 Assume the bodily shapes they own'd of old,
 Beyond the flood:—The righteous of their times
 Embrace and weep,—they weep the tears of joy.
 The sainted mother wakes, and, in her lap,
 Clasps her dear babe, the partner of her grave,
 And heritor with her of Heaven,—a flower
 Wash'd by the blood of Jesus from the stain
 Of native guilt, even in its early bud.
 And hark! those strains, how solemnly serene
 They fall, as from the skies—at distance fall—
 Again more loud.—The halleluiahs swell;
 The newly-risen catch the joyful sound;
 They glow, they burn; and now, with one accord,
 Bursts forth sublime from every mouth the song
 Of praise to God on high, and to the Lamb
 Who bled for mortals.

* * * * *

Yet there is peace for man.—Yea, there is peace,
Even in this noisy, this unsettled scene ;
When from the croud, and from the city far,
Haply he may be set (in his late walk
O'ertaken with deep thought) beneath the boughs
Of honeysuckle, when the sun is gone,
And with fixt eye, and wistful, he surveys
The solemn shadows of the Heavens sail,
And thinks the season yet shall come, when Time
Will waft him to repose, to deep repose,
Far from the unquietness of life—from noise
And tumult far—beyond the flying clouds,
Beyond the stars, and all this passing scene,
Where change shall cease, and Time shall be no more.

* * * * *

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THE CHRISTIAD,

A DIVINE POEM.


This was the work which Henry had most at heart. His riper judgment would probably have perceived that the subject was ill chosen. What is said so well in the *Censura Literaria* of all scriptural subjects for narrative poetry, applies peculiarly to this. "Any thing taken from it leaves the story imperfect; any thing added to it disgusts, and almost shocks us as impious. As Omar said of the Alexandrian Library, we may say of such writings, if they contain only what is in the scriptures they are superfluous; if what is not in them they are false."—It may be added, that the mixture of mythology makes truth itself appear fabulous.

There is great power in the execution of this fragment.—In editing these remains, I have, with that decorum which it is to be wished all editors would observe, abstained from informing the reader what he is to admire and what he is not; but I cannot refrain from saying, that the two last stanzas greatly affected me, when I discovered them written on the leaf of a different book, and apparently long after the first canto; and greatly shall I be mistaken if they do not affect the reader also.

THE CHRISTIAD,

A DIVINE POEM.

BOOK I.



I.

I SING the CROSS!—Ye white rob'd angel choirs,
Who know the chords of harmony to sweep;
Ye who o'er holy David's varying wires,
Were wont of old your hovering watch to keep,
Oh, now descend! and with your harpings deep,
Pouring sublime the full symphonious stream
Of music,—such as soothes the saint's last sleep,
Awake my slumbering spirit from its dream,
And teach me how to exalt the high mysterious theme.

II.

Mourn ! Salem, mourn ! low lies thine humbled state
Thy glittering fanes are levell'd with the ground !
Fallen is thy pride !—Thine halls are desolate !
Where erst was heard the timbrel's sprightly sound,
And frolic pleasures tripp'd the nightly round,
There breeds the wild fox lonely,—and aghast
Stands the mute pilgrim at the void profound,
Unbroke by noise, save when the hurrying blast
Sighs, like a spirit, deep along the cheerless waste.

III.

It is for this, proud Solyma ! thy towers
Lie crumbling in the dust ; for this forlorn
Thy genius wails along thy desert bowers,
While stern destruction laughs, as if in scorn,
That thou didst dare insult God's eldest-born ;
And, with most bitter persecuting ire,
Pursued his footsteps till the last day-dawn
Rose on his fortunes—and thou saw'st the fire
That came to light the world in one great flash expire,

IV.

Oh! for a pencil dipt in living light,
 To paint the agonies that Jesus bore!
 Oh! for the long-lost harp of Jesse's might,
 To hymn the Saviour's praise from shore to shore;
 While seraph hosts the lofty pæan pour,
 And Heaven enraptur'd lists the loud acclaim!
 May a frail mortal dare the theme explore?
 May he to human ears his weak song frame?
 Oh! may he dare to sing Messiah's glorious name?

V.

Spirits of pity! mild Crusaders come!
 Buoyant on clouds around your minstrel float;
 And give him eloquence who else were dumb,
 And raise to feeling and to fire his note!
 And thou, Urania! who dost still devote
 Thy nights and days to God's eternal shrine,
 Whose mild eyes 'lumin'd what Isaiah wrote,
 Throw o'er thy bard that solemn stole of thine,
 And clothe him for the fight with energy divine.

VI.

When from the temple's lofty summit prone,
 Satan o'ercome, fell down; and 'throned there,
 The Son of God confest, in splendor shone;
 Swift as the glancing sunbeam cuts the air,
 Mad with defeat, and yelling his despair,

* * * * *

Fled the stern king of Hell—and with the glare
 Of gliding meteors, ominous and red,
 Shot athwart the clouds that gathered round his head.

VII.

Right o'er the Euxine, and that gulph which late
 The rude Massagetæ ador'd—he bent
 His northering course,—while round, in dusky state,
 The assembling fiends their summon'd troops augment;
 Cloth'd in dark mists, upon their way they went,
 While as they pass'd to regions more severe,
 The Lapland sorcerer swell'd, with loud lament,
 The solitary gale; and, fill'd with fear,
 The howling dogs bespoke unholy spirits near,

VIII.

Where the North Pole, in moody solitude,
 Spreads her huge tracks and frozen wastes around ;
 There ice-rocks pil'd aloft, in order rude,
 Form a gigantic hall ; where never sound
 Startled dull Silence' ear, save when profound,
 The smook-frost mutter'd : there drear Cold for aye
 'Thrones him,—and fix'd on his primæval mound,
 Ruin, the giant, sits ; while stern Dismay
 Stalks like some woe-struck man along the desert way.

IX.

In that drear spot, grim Desolation's lair,
 No sweet remain of life encheers the sight ;
 The dancing heart's blood in an instant there
 Would freeze to marble.—Mingling day and night,
 (Sweet interchange which makes our labours light,
 Are there unknown ; while in the summer skies
 The sun rolls ceaseless round his heavenly height,
 Nor ever sets till from the scene he flies,
 And leaves the long bleak night of half the year to rise.

X.

'Twas there, yet shuddering from the burning lake,
 Satan had fix'd their next consistory ;
 When parting last he fondly hop'd to shake
 Messiah's constancy,—and thus to free
 The powers of darkness from the dread decree
 Of bondage, brought by him, and circumvent
 The unerring ways of him whose eye can see
 The womb of Time, and in its embryo pent,
 Discern the colours clear of every dark event.

XI.

Here the stern monarch stay'd his rapid flight,
 And his thick hosts, as with a jetty pall,
 Hovering obscur'd the north star's peaceful light,
 Waiting on wing their haughty chieftain's call.
 He, meanwhile, downward, with a sullen fall,
 Dropt on the echoing ice. Instant the sound
 Of their broad vans was hush'd, and o'er the hall,
 Vast and obscure, the gloomy cohorts bound,
 Till, wedg'd in ranks, the seat of Satan they surround.

XII.

High on a solium of the solid wave,
Prankt with rude shapes by the fantastic frost,
He stood in silence ;—now keen thoughts engrave
Dark figures on his front ; and, tempest-tost,
He fears to say that every hope is lost.
Meanwhile the multitude as death are mute :
So ere the tempest on Malacca's coast,
Sweet Quiet gently touching her soft lute,
Sings to the whispering waves the prelude to dispute.

XIII.

At length collected, o'er the dark Divan,
The arch-fiend glanced, as by the Boreal blaze
Their downcast brows were seen,—and thus began
His fierce harangue.—“ Spirits! our better days
Are now elaps'd ; Moloch and Belial's praise
Shall sound no more in groves by myriads trod.
Lo! the light breaks!—The astonished nations gaze!
For us is lifted high the avenging rod!
For, spirits, this is He—this is the Son of God!

XIV.

What then!—shall Satan's spirit crouch to fear?
 Shall he who shook the pillars of God's reign,
 Drop from his unnerv'd arm the hostile spear?
 Madness! The very thought would make me fain
 To tear the spanglets from yon gaudy plain,
 And hurl them at their Maker!—Fix'd as fate
 I am his Foe!—Yea, though his pride should deign
 To soothe mine ire with half his regal state,
 Still would I burn with fixt unalterable hate.

XV.

Now hear the issue of my curst emprise,
 When from our last sad synod I took flight,
 Buoy'd with false hopes, in some deep-laid disguise,
 To tempt this vaunted Holy One to write
 His own self-condemnation;—in the plight
 Of aged man in the lone wilderness,
 Gathering a few stray sticks, I met his sight;
 And leaning on my staff seem'd much to guess
 What cause could mortal bring to that forlorn recess.

XVI.

Then thus in homely guise I featly fram'd
 My lowly speech—" Good Sir, what leads this way
 " Your wandering steps? must hapless chance be blam'd
 " That you so far from haunt of mortals stray?
 " Here have I dwelt for many a lingering day,
 " Nor trace of man have seen.—But how! methought
 " Thou wert the youth on whom God's holy ray
 " I saw descend in Jordan, when John taught
 " That he to fallen man the saving promise brought."

XVII.

" I am that man," said Jesus; " I am he.
 " But truce to questions—Can'st thou point my feet
 " To some low hut, if haply such there be
 " In this wild labyrinth, where I may meet
 " With homely greeting, and may sit and eat;
 " For forty days I have tarried fasting here,
 " Hid in the dark glens of this lone retreat,
 " And now I hunger; and my fainting ear
 " Longs much to greet the sound of fountains gushing near."

XVIII.

Then thus I answer'd wily.—“ If, indeed,
 “ Son of our God thou be'st, what need to seek
 “ For food from men?—Lo! on these flint stones feed,
 “ Bid them be bread! Open thy lips and speak,
 “ And living rills from yon parch'd rock will break.”
 Instant as I had spoke, his piercing eye
 Fix'd on my face;—the blood forsook my cheek,
 I could not bear his gaze; my mask slipped by;
 I would have shunn'd his look, but had not power to fly.

XIX.

Then he rebuked me with the holy word—
 Accursed sounds! but now my native pride
 Return'd, and by no foolish qualm deterr'd,
 I bore him from the mountain's woody side,
 Up to the summit, where, extending wide
 Kingdoms and cities, palaces and fanes,
 Bright sparkling in the sunbeams, were descried,
 And in gay dance, amid luxuriant plains,
 Tripp'd to the jocund reed the emasculated swains.

XX.

"Behold," I cried, "these glories! scenes divine!
 "Thou whose sad prime in pining want decays,
 "And these, O rapture! these shall all be thine,
 "If thou wilt give to me, not God, the praise.
 "Hath he not given to indigence thy days?
 "Is not thy portion peril here and pain?
 "Oh! leave his temples, shun his wounding ways!
 "Seize the tiara! these mean weeds disdain,
 "Kneel, kneel, thou man of woe, and peace and splendour gain."

XXI.

"Is it not written," sternly he replied,
 "Tempt not the Lord thy God?" Frowning he spake,
 And instant sounds, as of the ocean tide,
 Rose, and the whirlwind from its prison brake,
 And caught me up aloft, till, in one flake,
 The sidelong volley met my swift career,
 And smote me earthward.—Jove himself might quake
 At such a fall; my sinews crack'd, and near,
 Obscure and dizzy sounds seem'd ringing in mine ear.

XXII.

Senseless and stunn'd I lay ; till casting round
 My half unconscious gaze, I saw the foe
 Borne on a car of Roses to the ground,
 By volant angels ; and as sailing slow
 He sunk, the hoary battlement below,
 While on the tall spire slept the slant sun-beam,
 Sweet on the enamour'd zephyr was the flow
 Of heavenly instruments. Such strains oft seem,
 On star-light hill, to soothe the Syrian shepherd's dream.

XXIII.

I saw blaspheming. Hate renew'd my strength ;
 I smote the ether with my iron wing,
 And left the accursed scene.—Arriv'd at length
 In these drear halls, to ye, my peers ! I bring
 The tidings of defeat. Hell's haughty king
 Thrice vanquish'd, baffled, smitten, and dismay'd !
 O shame ! Is this the hero who could fling
 Defiance at his Maker, while array'd,
 High o'er the walls of light rebellion's banners play'd !

XXIV.

Yet shall not Heaven's bland minions triumph long ;
 Hell yet shall have revenge.—O glorious sight,
 Prophetic visions on my fancy throng,
 I see wild agony's lean finger write
 Sad figures on his forehead!—Keenly bright
 Revenge's flambeau burns! Now in his eyes
 Stand the hot tears,—immantled in the night,
 Lo! he retires to mourn!—I hear his cries,—
 He faints—he falls—and, lo!—'tis true, ye powers, he dies."

XXV.

Thus spake the chieftain,—and as if he view'd
 The scene he pictured, with his foot advanced,
 And chest inflated, motionless he stood,
 While under his uplifted shield he glanced,
 With straining eye-ball' fix'd, like one entranced,
 On viewless air;—thither the dark platoon
 Gaz'd wondering, nothing seen, save when there
 danced
 The northern flash, or fiend late fled from noon,
 Darken'd the disk of the descending moon.

XXVI.

Silence crept stilly through the ranks.—The breeze
 Spake most distinctly. As the sailor stands,
 When all the midnight gasping from the seas
 Break boding sobs, and to his sight expands,
 High on the shrouds the spirit that commands
 The ocean-farer's life ; so stiff—so sear
 Stood each dark power ;—while through their nu-
 merous bands
 Beat not one heart, and mingling hope and fear
 Now told them all was lost, now bade revenge appear.

XXVII.

One there was there, whose loud defying tongue
 Nor hope nor fear had silenced, but the swell
 Of overboiling malice. Utterance long
 His passion mock'd, and long he strove to tell
 His labouring ire ; still syllable none fell
 From his pale quivering lip, but died away
 For very fury ; from each hollow cell
 Half sprang his eyes, that cast a flamy ray,
 And * * * * *

XXVIII.

" This comes," at length burst from the furious chief,
 " This comes of distant counsels! Here behold
 " The fruits of wily cunning! the relief
 " Which coward policy would fain unfold,
 " To soothe the powers that warr'd with Heaven of
 old!
 " O wise! O potent! O sagacious snare!
 " And lo! our prince—the mighty and the bold,
 " There stands he, spell struck, gaping at the air,
 " While Heaven subverts his reign, and plants her stan-
 dard there."

XXIX.

Here, as recover'd, Satan fix'd his eye
 Full on the speaker; dark it was and stern;
 He wrapt his black vest round him gloomily,
 And stood like one whom weightiest thoughts concern.
 Him Moloch mark'd, and strove again to turn
 His soul to rage. Behold, behold, he cried,
 The lord of Hell, who bade these legions spurn
 Almighty rule—behold he lays aside
 The spear of just revenge, and shrinks, by man defied.

XXX.

Thus ended Moloch, and his [burning] tongue
 Hung quivering, as if [mad] to quench its heat
 In slaughter. So, his native wilds among,
 The famish'd tiger pants, when near his seat,
 Press'd on the sands, he marks the traveller's feet,
 Instant low murmurs rose, and many a sword
 Had from its scabbard sprung; but toward the seat
 Of the arch-fiend all turn'd with one accord,
 As loud he thus harangued the sanguinary horde,



Ye powers of Hell, I am no coward. I proved this
 of old; who led your forces against the armies of Jeho-
 vah? Who coped with Ithuriel, and the thunders of the
 Almighty? Who, when stunned and confused ye lay on
 the burning lake, who first awoke, and collected your
 scattered powers? Lastly, who led you across the un-
 fathomable abyss to this delightful world, and established
 that reign here which now totters to its base. How,
 therefore, dares yon treacherous fiend to cast a stain on
 Satan's bravery? he who preys only on the defenceless—
 who sucks the blood of infants, and delights only in acts

of ignoble cruelty and unequal contention. Away with the boaster who never joins in action, but, like a cormorant, hovers over the field, to feed upon the wounded, and overwhelm the dying. True bravery is as remote from rashness as from hesitation ; let us counsel coolly, but let us execute our counselled purposes determinately. In power we have learnt, by that experiment which lost us Heaven, that we are inferior to the Thunder-bearer ; In subtlety—in subtlety alone we are his equals. Open war is impossible.

* * * * *

Thus we shall pierce our Conqueror, through the race
 Which as himself he loves ; thus if we fall,
 We fall not with the anguish, the disgrace,
 Of falling unrevenged. The stirring call
 Of vengeance rings within me ! Warriors all,
 The word is vengeance, and the spur despair.
 Away with coward wiles!—Death's coal-black pall
 Be now our standard!—Be our torch, the glare
 Of cities fir'd ! our fifes, the shrieks that fill the air !

Him answering rose Mecashpim, who of old,
 Far in the silence of Chaldea's groves,
 Was worshipp'd, God of Fire, with charms untold
 And mystery. His wandering spirit roves,
 Now vainly searching for the flame it loves,
 And sits and mourns like some white robed sire,
 Where stood his temple, and where fragrant cloves
 And cinnamon upheap'd the sacred pyre,
 And nightly magi watch'd the everlasting fire.

He wav'd his robe of flame, he cross'd his breast,
 And sighing—his papyrus scarf survey'd,
 Woyen with dark characters; then thus address'd
 The troubled counsel.

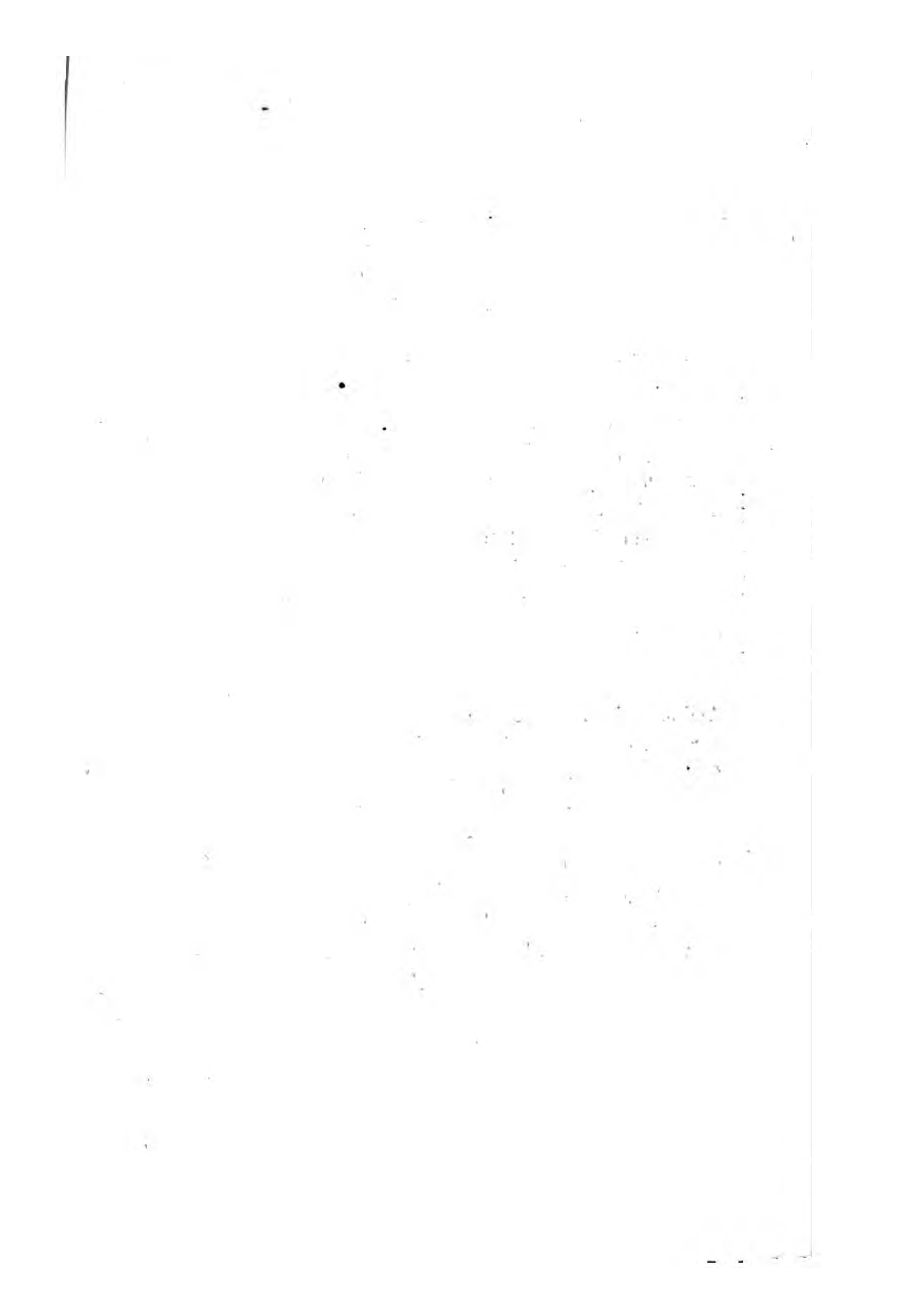
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I.

Thus far have I pursued my solemn theme
 With self-rewarding toil;—thus far have sung
 Of godlike deeds, far loftier than beseem
 The lyre, which I in early days have strung;
 And now my spirits faint, and I have hung
 The shell, that solaced me in saddest hour,
 On the dark cypress! and the strings which rung
 With Jesus' praise, their harpings now are o'er,
 Or when the breeze comes by moan and are heard no more.

And must the harp of Judah sleep again,
 Shall I no more re-animate the lay!
 Oh! thou who visitest the sons of men,
 Thou who dost listen when the humble pray,
 One little space prolong my mournful day!
 One little lapse suspend thy last decree!
 I am a youthful traveller in the way,
 And this slight boon would consecrate to thee,
 Ere I with Death shake hands, and smile that I am free.

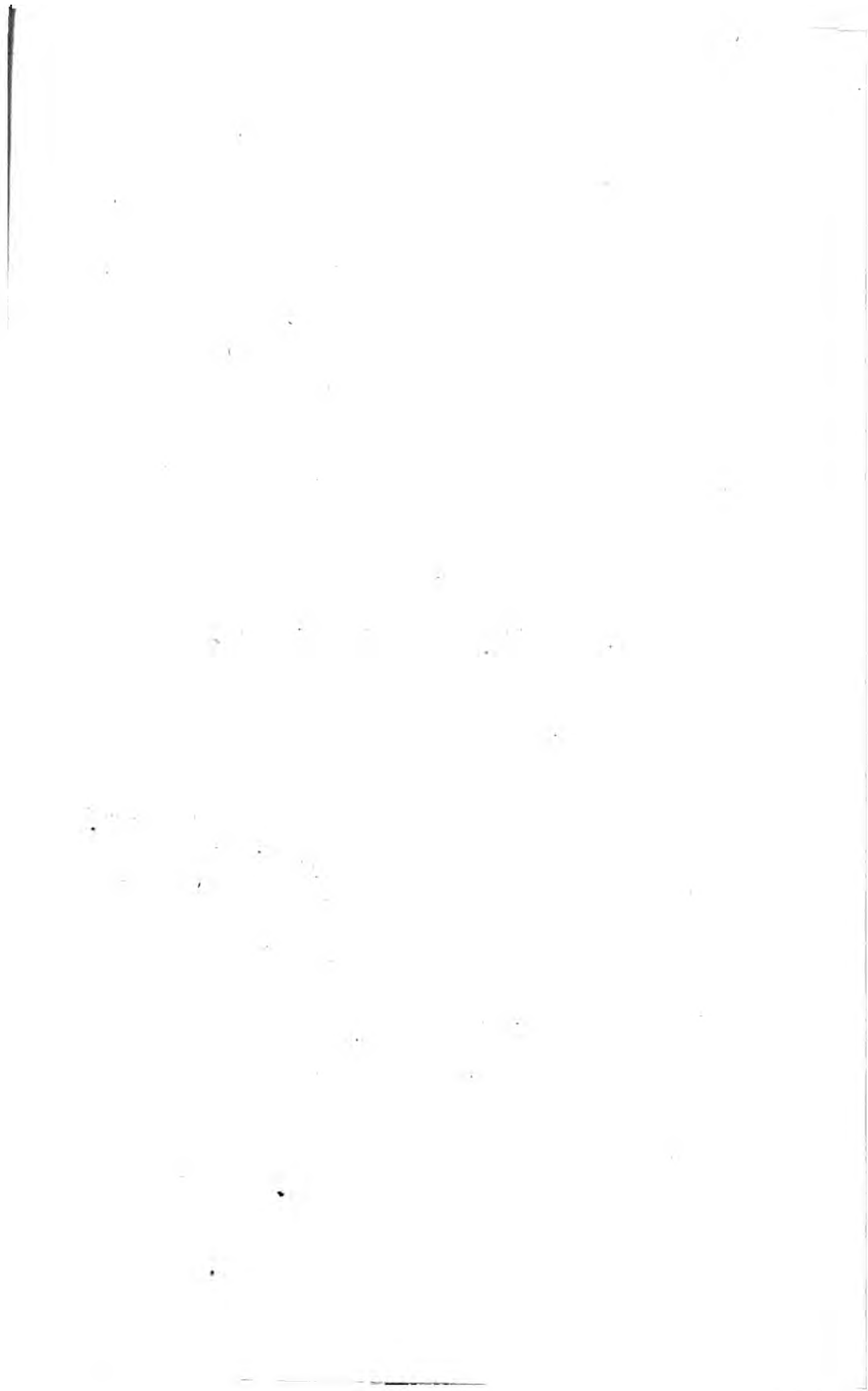
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PROSE COMPOSITIONS.

VOL. II.





REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH POETS.

IMITATIONS.

THE sublimity and unaffected beauty of the sacred writings are in no instance more conspicuous, than in the following verses of the 18th Psalm.

“ He bowed the heavens also and came down: and darkness was under his feet.

“ And he rode upon a cherub and did fly: yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind.”

None of our better versions have been able to preserve the original graces of these verses. That wretched one of Thomas Sternhold, however, (which, to the disgrace and manifest detriment of religious worship, is generally used) has, in this solitary instance, and then perhaps by accident, given us the true spirit of the Psalmist, and has surpassed not only Merrick; but even the classic Buchanan*. This version is as follows.

* That the reader may judge for himself, Buchanan's translation is subjoined.

Utque suum dominum terræ demittat in orbem
Leniter inclinat jussum fastigia cælum:

“ The Lord descended from above,
 “ And bowed the heavens high,
 “ And underneath his feet he cast
 “ The darkness of the sky.

“ On cherubs and on cherubims
 “ Full royally he rode,
 “ And on the wings of mighty winds
 “ Came flying all abroad.”

Dryden honoured these verses with very high commendation, and, in the following lines of his *Annus Mirabilis*, has apparently imitated them, in preference to the original.

“ The duke less numerous, but in courage more,
 “ On wings of all the winds to combat flies.”

And in his *Ceyx and Alcyone*, from Ovid, he has—

“ And now sublime she rides upon the wind,”

*Succedunt pedibus fuscæ caliginis umbræ;
 Ille vehens currum volucris, cui flammeus ales
 Lora tenens levibus ventorum adremigat alis
 Se circum fulgo nebularum involvit amictu,
 Prætenditque cavas piceas in nubibus undas.*

This is somewhat too harsh and prosaic, and there is an unpleasant cacophony in the terminations of the 5th and 6th lines.

which is probably imitated, as well as most of the following, not from Sternhold, but the original. Thus Pope,

“ Not God alone in the still calm we find,
“ He mounts the storm and rides upon the wind.”

And Addison—

“ Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.”

The unfortunate Chatterton has—

“ And rides upon the pinions of the wind.”

And Gray—

“ With arms sublime that float upon the air.”

Few poets of eminence have less incurred the charge of plagiarism than Milton; yet many instances might be adduced of similarity of idea and language with the scripture, which are certainly more than coincidences, and some of these I shall, in a future number, present to your readers. Thus the present passage in the Psalmist was in all probability in his mind when he wrote—

———“ And with mighty wings outspread,
“ Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss.”

Par. Lost, L. 20, B. 1.

The third verse of the civ. Psalm—

“ He maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind,”—

is evidently taken from the before-mentioned verses in the xviiiith Psalm, on which it is perhaps an improvement. It has also been imitated by two of our first poets, Shakspeare and Thomson. The former in *Romeo and Juliet*—

“ Bestrides the lazy paced clouds,
“ And sails upon the bosom of the air.”

The latter in *Winter*, l. 199—

—————“ Till Nature’s King who oft
“ Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
“ And on the wings of the careering winds
“ Walks dreadfully serene.”

As these imitations have not before, I believe, been noticed, they cannot fail to interest the lovers of polite letters; and they are such as at least will amuse your readers in general. If the sacred writings were attentively perused, we should find innumerable passages from which our best modern poets have drawn their most admired ideas; and the enumerations of these instances, would perhaps attract the attention of many persons to

those volumes, which they now perhaps think to contain every thing tedious and disgusting, but which, on the contrary, they would find replete with interest, beauty, and true sublimity.

STERNHOLD AND HOPKINS.

MR. EDITOR,

IN your Mirror for July, a Mr. William Toone has offered a few observations on a paper of mine, in a preceding number, containing remarks on the versions and imitations of the 9th and 10th verses of the 18th psalm, to which I think it necessary to offer a few words by way of reply; as they not only put an erroneous construction on certain passages of that paper, but are otherwise open to material objection.

The object of Mr. Toone, in some parts of his observations, appears to have been to refute something which he *fancied* I had advanced, tending to establish the general merit of Sternhold and Hopkins's translation of the Psalms; but he might have saved himself this unnecessary trouble, as I have decidedly condemned it as mere doggrel, still preserved in our churches, to the detriment of religion: And the version of the passage in question is adduced as a brilliant, though probably accidental, exception to the general character of the work. What necessity, therefore, your correspondent could see for "*hoping that I should think with him, that the sooner the old version of the psalms was consigned to oblivion, the better it would be for rational devotion,*" I am perfectly at a loss to imagine.

This concluding sentence of Mr. Toone's paper, which I consider as introduced merely by way of rounding the period, and making a graceful exit, needs no further animadversion. I shall therefore proceed to examine the objections of the "worthy clergyman of the church of England," to these verses cited by your correspondent, by which he hopes to prove, that Dryden, Knox, and the numerous other eminent men who have expressed their admiration thereof, to be little better than ideots.—The first is this :

"*Cherubim* is the plural of *Cherub*; but our versioner, by adding an *s* to *it*, has rendered them both plurals." By adding an *s* to what? If the pronoun *it* refer to cherubim, as according to the construction of the sentence it really does, the whole objection is nonsense.—But the worthy gentleman no doubt *meant* to say, that Sternhold had rendered them both plurals, by the addition of an *s*, to *cherub*. Even in this sense, however, I conceive the charge to be easily obviated; for, though cherubim is doubtless usually considered as the plural of cherub, yet the two words are frequently so used in the Old Testament as to prove, that they were often applied to separate ranks of beings. One of these, which I shall cite, will dispel all doubt on the subject.

"And within the oracle he made *two cherubims* of olive tree, *each* ten cubits high."

1 *Kings*, v. 23. *Chap.* vii.

The other objection turns upon a word with which it is not necessary for me to interfere; for I did not quote these verses as instances of the merit of Sternhold, or his version, I only asserted, that the lines which I then copied, viz.

The Lord descended from above, &c.

were truly noble and sublime. Whether, therefore, Sternhold wrote *all the winds* (as asserted by your correspondent, in order to furnish room for objection) or *mighty winds*, is of no import. But if this really be a subsequent alteration, I think at least there is no improvement; for when we conceive the winds as assembling from all quarters, at the omnipotent command of the Deity, and bearing him with their united forces from the heavens, we have a more sublime image, than when we see him as flying merely on *mighty winds*, or as driving his team (or troop) of angels on a *strong* tempest's *rapid* wing, with *most amazing swiftness*, as *elegantly* represented by *Brady and Tate* *.

* How any man, enjoying the use of his senses, could prefer the contemptible version of Brady and Tate of this verse to Sternhold's, is to me inexplicable. The epithets which are introduced would have disgraced a school-boy, and the majestic imagery of the original is sacrificed to make room for tinsel and fustian.

The chariot of the king of kings,
Which active troops of angels drew;
On a strong tempest's rapid wings,
With most amazing swiftness flew.

I differ from your correspondent's opinion, that these verses, so far from possessing sublimity, attract the reader merely by their *rumbling sound*: And here it may not be amiss to observe, that the true sublime does not consist in high sounding words, or pompous magnificence; on the contrary, it most frequently appears clad in native dignity and simplicity, without art, and without ornament.

The most elegant critic of antiquity, Longinus, in his treatise on the sublime, adduces the following passage from the book of Genesis, as possessing that quality in an eminent degree.

*“ God said let there be light, and there was light:—
Let the earth be, and earth was*.”*

From what I have advanced on this subject, I would not have it inferred, that I conceive the version of Sternhold and Hopkins, generally speaking, to be superior to that of Brady and Tate; for, on the contrary, in almost every instance except that abovementioned, the latter possesses an indubitable right to pre-eminence. Our language, however, cannot yet boast one version possessing the true spirit of the original; some are beneath contempt, and the best has scarcely attained mediocrity. Your correspondent has quoted some verses from Tate,

* The critic apparently quoted from memory, for we may search in vain for the latter part of this sentence.

in triumph, as comparatively excellent; but, in my opinion, they are also instances of our general failure in sacred poetry: they abound in those *ambitiosa ornamenta* which do well to please women and children, but which disgust the man of taste.

To the imitations already noticed of this passage, permit me to add the following.

“ But various Iris Jove’s commands to bear,
Speeds on the wings of winds through liquid air.”

Pope’s Iliad, B. 2.

“ Miguel cruzando os pelagos do vento.”

Carlos Reduzido, Canto I. by Pedro de Azevedo Tojal, an ancient Portuguese poet of some merit.

REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH POETS.

WARTON,

THE poems of Thomas Warton are replete with a sublimity, and richness of imagery, which seldom fail to enchant: every line presents new beauties of idea, aided by all the magic of animated diction. From the inexhaustible stores of figurative language, majesty, and sublimity, which the ancient English poets afford, he has culled some of the richest and the sweetest flowers. But, unfortunately, in thus making use of the beauties of other writers, he has been too unsparing; for the greater number of his ideas, and nervous epithets, cannot, strictly speaking, be called his own; therefore, however we may be charmed by the grandeur of his images, or the felicity of his expression, we must still bear in our recollection, that we cannot with justice bestow upon him the highest eulogium of genius—that of originality.

It has, with much justice, been observed, that Pope, and his imitators, have introduced a species of refinement into our language, which has banished that nerve and pathos, for which Milton had rendered it eminent, Harmonious modulations, and unvarying exactness of measure, totally precluding sublimity and fire, have reduced our fashionable poetry to mere sing-song. But

Thomas Warton, whose taste was unvitiated by the frivolities of the day, immediately saw the intrinsic worth of what the world then slighted. He saw, that the ancient poets contained a fund of strength, and beauty of imagery, as well as diction, which, in the hands of genius would shine forth with redoubled lustre. Entirely rejecting, therefore, modern niceties, he extracted the honied sweets from these beautiful, though neglected flowers. Every grace of sentiment, every poetical term, which a false taste had rendered obsolete, was by him revived and made to grace his own ideas; and though many will condemn him, as guilty of plagiarism, yet few will be able to withhold the tribute of their praise.

The peculiar forte of Warton seems to have been in the sombre-descriptive. The wild airy flights of a Spenser; the "chivalrous feats of barons bold;" or the "cloister'd solitude," were the favourites of his mind. Of this his bent he informs us in the following lines.

Through Pope's soft song though all the graces breathe,
 And happiest art adorns his attic page,
 Yet does my mind with sweeter transport glow,
 As at the root of mossy trunk reclin'd,
 In magic Spenser's wildly warbled song
 I see deserted Una wander wide
 Through wasteful solitudes and lurid heaths,
 Weary, forlorn; than where the fated * fair

* Belinda. Vide Pope's Rape of the Lock.

Upon the bosom bright of silver Thames,
 Launches in all the lustre of brocade,
 Amid the splendours of the laughing sun ;
 The *gay description* palls upon the sense
 And coldly strikes the mind with feeble bliss.

Pleasures of Melancholy.

Warton's mind was formed for the grand and the sublime. Were his imitations less verbal, and less numerous, I should be led to imagine, that the peculiar beauties of his favourite authors had sunk so impressively into his mind, that he had unwittingly appropriated them as his own; but they are in general such as to preclude the idea.

To the metrical, and other intrinsic ornaments of style, he appears to have paid due attention. If we meet with an uncouth expression, we immediately perceive that it is peculiarly appropriate, and that no other term could have been made use of with so happy an effect. His poems abound with alliterative lines. Indeed, this figure seems to have been his favourite; and he studiously seeks every opportunity to introduce it: however, it must be acknowledged, that his "daisy-dappled dales," &c. occur too frequently.

The poem on which Warton's fame (*as a poet*) principally rests, is the "Pleasures of Melancholy," and (notwithstanding the perpetual recurrence of ideas which are borrowed from other poets) there are few pieces

which I have perused with more exquisite gratification. The gloomy tints with which he overcasts his descriptions; his highly figurative language; and, above all, the antique air which the poem wears, convey the most sublime ideas to the mind,

Of the other pieces of this poet, some are excellent, and they all rise above mediocrity. In his sonnets he has succeeded wonderfully; that written at Winslade, and the one to the river Lodon, are peculiarly beautiful, and that to Mr. Gray is most elegantly turned. The "Ode on the approach of Summer," is replete with genius and poetic fire; and even over the Birth-day odes, which he wrote as poet laureat, his genius has cast energy and beauty. His humourous pieces, and satires, abound in wit, and, in short, taking him altogether, he is an ornament to our country and our language, and it is to be regretted, that the profusion with which he has made use of the beauties of other poets, should have given room for censure:

I should have closed my short, and I fear jejune essay on Warton, but that I wished to hint to your truly elegant and acute Stamford correspondent (whose future remarks on Warton's imitations I await with considerable impatience) that the passage in the pleasures of Melancholy—

————— or *ghostly* shape,
At distance seen, invites, with beck'ning hand,
Thy lonesome steps,

which he supposes to be taken from the following in Comus,

Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names,

is more probably taken from the commencement of Pope's elegy on an unfortunate lady—

What beck'ning ghost, along the moonlight shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?

The original idea was possibly taken from Comus by Pope, from whom Warton, to all appearance, again borrowed it.

Were the similarity of the passage in Gray, to that in Warton, less striking and verbal, I should be inclined to think it only a remarkable coincidence; for Gray's biographers inform us, that he commenced his elegy in 1742, and that it was completed in 1744, being the year which he particularly devoted to the muses, though he did not "*put the finishing stroke to it,*" until 1750. The Pleasures of Melancholy were published in 4to. in 1747. Therefore Gray *might* take his third stanza from Warton; but it is rather extraordinary that the *third stanza* of a poem should be taken from another, published *five* years after that poem was begun, and *three* after it was understood to be completed; one cir-

cumstance, however, seems to render the supposition of its being a plagiarism somewhat more probable, which is, that the stanza in question is not essential to the connexion of the preceding and antecedent verses ; therefore it might have been added by Gray, when he put the "*finishing stroke*" to his piece in 1750.

CURSORY REMARKS ON TRAGEDY.

THE pleasure which is derived from the representation of an affecting tragedy, has often been the subject of enquiry among philosophical critics, as a singular phenomenon.—That the mind should receive gratification from the excitement of those passions which are in themselves painful, is really an extraordinary paradox, and is the more inexplicable since, when the same means are employed to rouse the more pleasing affections, no adequate effect is produced.

In order to solve this problem, many ingenious hypotheses have been invented. The Abbe Du Bos tells us that the mind has such a natural antipathy to a state of listlessness and langour, as to render the transition from it to a state of exertion, even though by rousing passions in themselves painful, as in the instance of tragedy, a positive pleasure. Monsieur Fontenelle has given us a more satisfactory account. He tells us that pleasure and pain, two sentiments so different in themselves, do not differ so much in their cause;—that pleasure, carried too far, becomes pain, and pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure. Hence that the pleasure we derive from tragedy is a pleasing sorrow, a modulated pain. David Hume, who has also written upon this subject, unites the two systems, with this addition, that the painful emotions ex-

cited by the representation of melancholy scenes, are further tempered, and the pleasure is proportionably heightened by the eloquence displayed in the relation—the art shewn in collecting the pathetic circumstances, and the judgment evinced in their happy disposition.

But even now I do not conceive the difficulty to be satisfactorily done away. Admitting the postulatam which the Abbe Du Bos assumes, that langour is so disagreeable to the mind as to render its removal positive pleasure, to be true; yet, when we recollect, as Mr. Hume has before observed, that were the same objects of distress which give us pleasure in tragedy set before our eyes in reality, though they would effectually remove listlessness, they would excite the most unfeigned uneasiness, we shall hesitate in applying this solution in its full extent to the present subject. M. Fontenelle's reasoning is much more conclusive; yet I think he errs egregiously in his premises, if he means to imply that any modulation of pain is pleasing, because, in whatever degree it may be, it is still pain, and remote from either ease or positive pleasure: and if by moderated pain he means any uneasy sensation abated, though not totally banished, he is no less mistaken in the application of them to the subject before us.—Pleasure may very well be conceived to be painful, when carried to excess, because it there becomes exertion, and is inconvenient. We may also form some idea of a pleasure arising from moderated pain, or the transition from the disagreeable to the less disagreeable; but this cannot in any wise be applied to

the gratification we derive from a tragedy, for there no superior degree of pain is left for an inferior. As to Mr. Hume's addition of the pleasure we derive from the art of the poet, for the introduction of which he has written his whole dissertation on tragedy, it merits little consideration. The self-recollection necessary to render this art a source of gratification, must weaken the illusion; and whatever weakens the illusion, diminishes the effect.

In these systems it is taken for granted that all those passions are excited which are represented in the drama. This I conceive to have been the primary cause of error, for to me it seems very probable that the only passion or affection which is excited, is that of sympathy, which partakes of the pleasing nature of pity and compassion, and includes in it so much as is pleasing of hope and apprehension, joy and grief.

The pleasure we derive from the afflictions of a friend is proverbial—every person has felt, and wondered why he felt, something soothing in the participation of the sorrows of those dear to his heart; and he might, with as much reason, have questioned why he was delighted with the melancholy scenes of tragedy. Both pleasures are equally singular; they both arise from the same source. Both originate in sympathy.

It would seem natural that an accidental spectator of a cause in a court of justice, with which he is perfectly unacquainted, would remain an uninterested auditor of

what was going forward. Experience tells us, however, the exact contrary. He immediately, even before he is well acquainted with the merits of the case, espouses one side of the question, to which he uniformly adheres, participates in all its advantages, and sympathizes in its success. There is no denying that the interest this man takes in the business is a source of pleasure to him; but we cannot suppose one of the parties in the cause, though his interest must be infinitely more lively, to feel an equal pleasure, because the painful passions are in him really roused, while in the other sympathy alone is excited, which is in itself pleasing. It is pretty much the same with the spectator of a tragedy. And, if the sympathy is the more pleasing, it is because the actions are so much the more calculated to entrap the attention, and the object so much the more worthy. The pleasure is heightened also in both instances by a kind of intuitive recollection, which never forsakes the spectator; that no bad consequences will result to him from the action he is surveying. This recollection is the more predominant in the spectator of a tragedy, as it is impossible in any case totally to banish from his memory that the scenes are fictitious and illusive. In real life we always advert to futurity, and endeavour to draw inferences of the probable consequences: but the moment we take off our minds from what is passing on the stage to reasonings thereupon, the illusion is dispelled, and it again recurs that it is all fiction.

If we compare the degrees of pleasure we derive from

the perusal of a novel and the representation of a tragedy, we shall observe a wonderful disparity. In both we feel an interest, in both sympathy is excited. But in the one, things are merely *related* to us as *having passed*, which it is not attempted to persuade us ever did *in reality* happen, and from which, therefore, we never can deceive ourselves into the idea that any consequences whatever will result; in the other, on the contrary, the actions themselves pass before our eyes; we are not tempted to ask ourselves whether they did ever happen; we see them happen, we are the witnesses of them, and were it not for the meliorating circumstances before-mentioned, the sympathy would become so powerful as to be in the highest degree painful.

In tragedy, therefore, every thing which can strengthen the illusion should be introduced, for there are a thousand draw-backs on the effect, which it is impossible to remove, and, which have always so great a force, as to put it out of the power of the poet to excite sympathy in a too painful degree. Every thing that is improbable, every thing which is out of the common course of nature should, for this reason, be avoided, as nothing will so forcibly remind the spectator of the unrealness of the illusion.

It is a mistaken idea, that we sympathize sooner with the distresses of kings, and illustrious personages, than with those of common life. Men are, in fact, more inclined to commiserate the sufferings of their equals, than

of those whom they cannot but regard rather with awe than pity, as superior beings, and to take an interest in incidents which might have happened to themselves, sooner than in those remote from their own rank and habits. It is for this reason that Æschylus censures Euripides, for introducing his kings in rags, as if they were more to be compassionated than other men.

Πρῶτον μὲν τὰς βασιλευσῶνας ῥάκιαμπισχων, ἢ ἔλεεινοὶ
 Τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φαίνουσι εἶναι.

Some will, perhaps, imagine that it is in the power of the poet to excite our sympathy in too powerful a degree, because at the representation of certain scenes, the spectators are frequently affected so as to make them shriek out with terror. But this is not sympathy; it is horror, it is disgust, and is only witnessed when some act is committed on the stage so cruel and bloody, as to make it impossible to contemplate it even in idea without horror.

Nec pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,
 Aut humana palàm coquat exta nefarius Atreus.

Hor. Ars Poet. l. 185.

It is for this reason, also, that many fine German dramas cannot be brought on the English stage, such as the Robbers of Schiller, and the Adelaide of Wulfingen, by Kotzebüe; they are too horrible to be *read* without violent emotions, and Horace will tell you what an immense difference there is in point of effect between a relation and a representation.

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
 Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
 Ipse sibi tradit spectator.

Ars Poet. l. 180.

I shall conclude these desultory remarks, strung together at random, without order or connection, by observing what little foundation there is for the general outcry in the literary world, against the prevalence of German dramas on our stage. Did they not possess uncommon merit, they would not meet with such general approbation. Fashion has but a partial influence, but they have drawn tears from an audience in a barn as well as in a theatre royal; they have been welcomed with plaudits in every little market town in the three kingdoms, as well as in the metropolis. Nature speaks but one language; she is alike intelligible to the peasant, and the man of letters; the tradesman, and the man of fashion. While the Muse of Germany shall continue to produce such plays as the *Stranger and Lovers Vows**, who will not rejoice that translation is able to naturalize her efforts in our language.

* I speak of these plays only, as adapted to our stage by the elegant pens of Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Inchbald.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. I.]

There is a mood
 (I sing not to the vacant and the young)
 There is a kindly mood of Melancholy,
 That wings the soul and points her to the skies.

DYER.

PHILOSOPHERS have divested themselves of their natural apathy, and poets have risen above themselves, in descanting on the pleasures of Melancholy. There is no mind so gross, no understanding so uncultivated, as to be incapable, at certain moments, and amid certain combinations, of feeling that sublime influence upon the spirits, which steals the soul from the petty anxieties of the world,

“ And fits it to hold converse with the Gods.”

I must confess, if such there be who never felt the divine abstraction, I envy them not their insensibility. For my own part, it is from the indulgence of this soothing power, that I derive the most exquisite of gratifications. At the calm hour of moonlight, amid all the sublime serenity, the dead stillness of the night; or when the howling storm rages in the heavens, the rain pelts on my roof, and the winds whistle through the

crammies of my apartment, I feel the divine mood of melancholy upon me; I imagine myself placed upon an eminence, above the crowds who pant below in the dusty tracks of wealth and honour. The black catalogue of crimes and of vice; the sad tissue of wretchedness and woe, passes in review before me, and I look down upon man with an eye of pity and commiseration. Though the scenes which I survey be mournful, and the ideas they excite equally sombre; though the tears gush as I contemplate them, and my heart feels heavy with the sorrowful emotions they inspire, yet are they not unaccompanied with sensations of the purest and most ecstatic bliss.

It is to the spectator alone that melancholy is forbidding; in herself she is soft and interesting, and capable of affording pure and unalloyed delight. Ask the lover why he muses by the side of the purling brook, or plunges into the deep gloom of the forest? Ask the unfortunate, why he seeks the still shades of solitude? or the man who feels the pangs of disappointed ambition, why he retires into the silent walks of seclusion? and he will tell you, that he derives a pleasure therefrom, which nothing else can impart. It is the delight of melancholy; but the melancholy of these beings is as far removed from that of the philosopher, as are the narrow and contracted complaints of selfishness, from the mournful regrets of expansive philanthropy; as are the desponding intervals of insanity, from the occasional depressions of benevolent sensibility.

The man who has attained that calm equanimity which qualifies him to look down upon the petty evils of life with indifference; who can so far conquer the weakness of nature, as to consider the sufferings of the individual of little moment, when put in competition with the welfare of the community, is alone the true philosopher. His melancholy is not excited by the retrospect of his own misfortunes; it has its rise from the contemplation of the miseries incident to life, and the evils which obtrude themselves upon society, and interrupt the harmony of nature. It would be arrogating too much merit to myself, to assert that I have a just claim to the title of a philosopher, as it is here defined; or to say that the speculations of my melancholy hours are equally disinterested: be this as it may, I have determined to present my solitary effusions to the public: they will at least have the merit of novelty to recommend them, and may possibly, in some measure, be instrumental in the melioration of the human heart, or the correction of false prepossessions. This is the height of my ambition: this once attained, and my end will be fully accomplished. One thing I can safely promise, though far from being the coinages of a heart at ease, they will contain neither the querulous captiousness of misfortune, nor the bitter taunts of misanthropy. Society is a chain of which I am merely a link; all men are my associates in error, and though some may have gone farther in the ways of guilt than myself, yet it is not in me to sit in judgment upon them: it is mine to treat them rather in pity than in anger, to lament their

crimes, and to weep over their sufferings. As these papers will be the amusement of those hours of relaxation, when the mind recedes from the vexations of business, and sinks into itself, for a moment of solitary ease, rather than the efforts of literary leisure; the reader will not expect to find in them unusual elegance of language, or studied propriety of style. In the short and necessary intervals of cessation from the anxieties of an irksome employment, one finds little time to be solicitous about expression. If, therefore, the fervour of a glowing mind express itself in too warm and luxuriant a manner, for the cold ear of dull propriety; let the fastidious critic find a selfish pleasure in descrying it. To criticism melancholy is indifferent. If learning cannot be better employed, than in declaiming against the defects, while it is insensible to the beauties of a performance, well may we exclaim with the poet:—

Ω ἑυμένης ἀγνοια ὡς ἀρωμός τις ἔῃ
 Οταν οἱ συ ἔ εχῶς ὄντως σ' ἔκ αγνοει.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. II.]

But (wel-a-day) who loves the Muses now?
 Or helps the climber of the sacred hyll?
 None leane to them; but strive to disalow
 All heavenly dewes the goddesses distill.

Wm. Browne's Shepheard's Pipe. Eg. 5.

IT is a melancholy reflection, and a reflection which often sinks heavily on my soul, that the sons of Genius generally seem predestined to encounter the rudest storms of adversity, to struggle, unnoticed, with poverty and misfortune. The annals of the world present us with many corroborations of this remark; and, alas! who can tell how many unhappy beings, who might have shone with distinguished lustre among the stars which illumine our hemisphere, may have sunk unknown beneath the pressure of untoward circumstances; who knows how many may have shrunk, with all the exquisite sensibility of genius, from the rude and riotous discord of the world, into the peaceful slumbers of death. Among the number of those whose talents might have elevated them to the first rank of eminence, but who have been overwhelmed with the accumulated ills of poverty and misfortune, I do not hesitate to rank a young man whom I once accounted it my greatest happiness to be able to call my friend.

CHARLES WANELY was the only son of an humble village rector, who just lived to give him a liberal education, and then left him, unprovided for and unprotected, to struggle through the world as well as he could. With a heart glowing with the enthusiasm of poetry and romance, with a sensibility the most exquisite, and with an indignant pride, which swelled in his veins, and told him he was a man—my friend found himself cast upon the wide world, at the age of sixteen, an adventurer, without fortune and without connection. As his independent spirit could not brook the idea of being a burthen to those whom his father had taught him to consider only as allied by blood, and not by affection, he looked about him for a situation, which would ensure to him, by his own exertions, an honourable competence. It was not long before such a situation offered, and Charles precipitately articulated himself to an attorney, without giving himself time to consult his own inclinations, or the disposition of his master. The transition from Sophocles and Euripedes, Theocritus and Ovid, to Finche and Wood, Coke and Wynne, was striking and difficult; but Charles applied himself with his wonted ardour to his new study, as considering it not only his interest, but his duty so to do. It was not long, however, before he discovered that he disliked the law, that he disliked his situation, and that he despised his master. The fact was, my friend had many mortifications to endure, which his haughty soul could ill brook. The attorney to whom he was articulated was one of those narrow-minded beings, who consider wealth as alone entitled to

respect. He had discovered that his clerk was *very* poor, and *very* destitute of friends, and thence he *very* naturally concluded, that he might insult him with impunity. It appears, however, that he was mistaken in his calculations. I one night remarked that my friend was unusually thoughtful. I ventured to ask him, whether he had met with any thing particular to ruffle his spirits. He looked at me for some moments significantly, then, as if roused to fury by the recollection—"I have," said he, vehemently, "I have, I have. He has insulted me grossly, and I will bear it no longer." He now walked up and down the room with visible emotion.—Presently he sat down.—He seemed more composed. "My friend," said he, "I have endured much from this man. I conceived it my duty to forbear, but I have forborne until forbearance is blameable: and, by the Almighty, I will never again endure what I have endured this day. But not only this man; every one thinks he may treat me with contumely, because I am poor and friendless. But I am a man, and will no longer tamely submit to be the sport of fools and the foot-ball of caprice. In this spot of earth, though it gave me birth, I can never taste of ease. Here I must be miserable. The principal end of man is to arrive at happiness. Here I can never attain it; and here therefore I will no longer remain. My obligations to the rascal who calls himself my master are cancelled by his abuse of the authority I rashly placed in his hands. I have no relations to bind me to this particular place." The tears started in his eyes as he spoke, "I have no tender ties to bid me stay, and

why *do* I stay? The world is all before me. My inclination leads me to travel; I will pursue that inclination: and, perhaps, in a strange land I may find that repose which is denied to me in the place of my birth. My finances, it is true, are ill able to support the expenses of travelling: but what then—Goldsmith, my friend,” with rising enthusiasm, “Goldsmith traversed Europe on foot, and I am as hardy as Goldsmith. Yes, I will go, and, perhaps, ere long, I may sit me down on some towering mountain, and exclaim, with him, while a hundred realms lie in perspective before me,

“Creation’s heir, the world, the world is mine.”

It was in vain I entreated him to reflect maturely, ere he took so bold a step: he was deaf to my importunities, and the next morning I received a letter informing me of his departure. He was observed about sun-rise, sitting on the stile, at the top of an eminence, which commanded a prospect of the surrounding country, pensively looking towards the village. I could divine his emotions, on thus casting probably a last look on his native place. The neat white parsonage house, with the honeysuckle mantling on its wall, I knew would receive his last glance; and the image of his father would present itself to his mind, with a melancholy pleasure, as he was thus hastening, a solitary individual, to plunge himself into the crowds of the world, deprived of that fostering hand which would otherwise have been his support and guide.

From this period Charles Wanely was never heard of at L——, and, as his few relations cared little about him, in a short time it was almost forgotten that such a being had ever been in existence.

About five years had elapsed from this period, when my occasions led me to the continent. I will confess, I was not without a romantic hope, that I might again meet with my lost friend; and that often, with that idea, I scrutinized the features of the passengers. One fine moonlight night, as I was strolling down the grand Italian Strada di Toledo, at Naples, I observed a crowd assembled round a man, who, with impassioned gestures, seemed to be vehemently declaiming to the multitude. It was one of the Improvisatori, who recite extempore verses in the streets of Naples, for what money they can collect from the hearers. I stopped to listen to the man's metrical romance, and had remained in the attitude of attention some time, when, happening to turn round, I beheld a person very shabbily dressed, steadfastly gazing at me. The moon shone full in his face. I thought his features were familiar to me. He was pale and emaciated, and his countenance bore marks of the deepest dejection. Yet, amidst all these changes, I thought I recognized Charles Wanely. I stood stupified with surprise. My senses nearly failed me. On recovering myself, I looked again, but he had left the spot the moment he found himself observed. I darted through the crowd, and ran every way which I thought he could have gone, but it was all to no purpose. Nobody knew

him. Nobody had even seen such a person. The two following days I renewed my enquiries, and at last discovered the lodgings where a man of his description had resided. But he had left Naples the morning after his form had struck my eyes. I found he gained a subsistence by drawing rude figures in chalks, and vending them among the peasantry. I could no longer doubt it was my friend, and immediately perceived that his haughty spirit could not bear to be recognized in such degrading circumstances, by one who had known him in better days. Lamenting the misguided notions which had thus again thrown him from me, I left Naples, now grown hateful to my sight, and embarked for England. It is now nearly twenty years since this rencounter, during which period he has not been heard of: and there can be little doubt that this unfortunate young man has found in some remote corner of the continent an obscure and an unlamented grave.

Thus, those talents which were formed to do honour to human nature, and to the country which gave them birth, have been nipped in the bud by the frosts of poverty and scorn, and their unhappy possessor lies in an unknown and nameless tomb, who might, under happier circumstances, have risen to the highest pinnacle of ambition and renown.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. III.]

Few know that elegance of soul refin'd
 Whose soft sensation feels a quicker joy
 From melancholy's scenes, than the dull pride
 Of tasteless splendor and magnificence
 Can e'er afford.

Warton's Melancholy.

IN one of my midnight rambles down the side of the Trent, the river which waters the place of my nativity, as I was musing on the various evils which darken the life of man, and which have their rise in the malevolence and ill-nature of his fellows, the sound of a flute from an adjoining copse attracted my attention. The tune it played was mournful, yet soothing. It was suited to the solemnity of the hour. As the distant notes came wafted at intervals on my ear, now with gradual swell, then dying away on the silence of the night, I felt the tide of indignation subside within me, and give place to the solemn calm of repose. I listened for some time in breathless ravishment. The strain ceased, yet the sounds still vibrated on my heart, and the visions of bliss which they excited, still glowed on my imagination. I was then standing in one of my favourite retreats. It was a little alcove, overshadowed with willows, and a mossy seat at the back invited to

rest. I laid myself listlessly on the bank. The Trent murmured softly at my feet, and the willows sighed as they waved over my head. It was the holy moment of repose, and I soon sunk into a deep sleep. The operations of fancy, in a slumber, induced by a combination of circumstances so powerful and uncommon, could not fail to be wild and romantic in the extreme. Methought I found myself in an extensive area, filled with an immense concourse of people. At one end was a throne of adamant, on which sat a female, in whose aspect I immediately recognized a divinity. She was clad in a garb of azure, on her forehead she bore a sun, whose splendour the eyes of many were unable to bear, and whose rays illumined the whole space, and penetrated into the deepest recesses of darkness. The aspect of the goddess at a distance was forbidding, but on a nearer approach it was mild and engaging. Her eyes were blue and piercing, and there was a fascination in her smile which charmed as if by enchantment. The air of intelligence which beamed in her look, made the beholder shrink into himself with the consciousness of inferiority; yet the affability of her deportment, and the simplicity and gentleness of her manners soon re-assured him, while the bewitching softness which she could at times assume, won his permanent esteem. On enquiry of a by-stander who it was that sat on the throne, and what was the occasion of so uncommon an assembly, he informed me that it was the goddess of wisdom, who had at last succeeded in regaining the dominion of the earth, which folly had so long usurped. That she sat there in her ju-

dicial capacity, in order to try the merits of many who were supposed to be the secret emissaries of Folly. In this way I understood Envy and Malevolence had been sentenced to perpetual banishment, though several of their adherents yet remained among men, whose minds were too gross to be irradiated with the light of wisdom. One trial I understood was just ended, and another supposed delinquent was about to be put to the bar. With much curiosity I hurried forwards to survey the figure which now approached. She was habited in black, and veiled to the waist. Her pace was solemn and majestic, yet in every movement was a winning gracefulness. As she approached to the bar, I got a nearer view of her, when what was my astonishment to recognize in her the person of my favourite goddess Melancholy. Amazed that she whom I had always looked upon as the sister and companion of Wisdom, should be brought to trial as an emissary and an adherent of Folly, I waited in mute impatience for the accusation which could be framed against her.—On looking towards the centre of the area, I was much surprised to see a bustling little *Cit* of my acquaintance, who, by his hemming and clearing, I concluded was going to make the charge. As he was a self-important little fellow, full of consequence and business, and totally incapable of all the finer emotions of the soul, I could not conceive what ground of complaint *he* could have against Melancholy, who, I was persuaded, would never have deigned to take up her residence for a moment in *his* breast. When I recollected, however, that

he had some sparks of ambition in his composition, and that he was an envious carping little mortal, who had formed the design of shouldering himself into notice by decrying the defects of others, while he was insensible to his own, my amazement and my apprehensions vanished as I perceived he only wanted to make a display of his own talents, in doing which I did not fear his making himself sufficiently ridiculous.

After a good deal of irrelevant circumlocution, he boldly began the accusation of Melancholy. I shall not dwell upon many absurd and many invidious parts of his speech, nor upon the many blunders in the misapplication of words, such as "*deduce*" for "*detract*," and others of a similar nature, which my poor friend committed in the course of his harangue, but shall only dwell upon the material parts of the charge.

He represented the prisoner as the offspring of *Idleness* and *Discontent*, who was at all times a sulky, sullen, and "*eminently useless*" member of the community, and not unfrequently a very dangerous one. He declared it to be his opinion, that in case she were to be suffered to prevail, mankind would soon become "*too idle to go*," and would all lie down and perish through indolence, or through forgetting that sustenance was necessary for the preservation of existence; and concluded with painting the horrors which would attend such a depopulation of the earth, in such colours as made many

weak minds regard the goddess with fear and abhorrence.

Having concluded, the accused was called upon for her defence. She immediately, with a graceful gesture, lifted up the veil which concealed her face, and discovered a countenance so soft, so lovely, and so sweetly expressive, as to strike the beholders with involuntary admiration, and which, at one glance, overturned all the flimsy sophistry of my poor friend the citizen; and when the silver tones of her voice were heard, the murmurs which until then had continually arisen from the crowd were hushed to a dead still, and the whole multitude stood transfixed in breathless attention. As near as I can recollect, these were the words in which she addressed herself to the throne of wisdom.

I shall not deign to give a DIRECT answer to the various insinuations which have been thrown out against me by my accuser. Let it suffice that I declare my true history, in opposition to that which has been so artfully fabricated to my disadvantage. In that early age of the world, when mankind followed the peaceful avocations of a pastoral life only, and contentment and harmony reigned in every vale, I was not known among men; but when, in process of time, Ambition and Vice, with their attendant evils, were sent down as a scourge to the human race, I made my appearance. I am the offspring of Misfortune and Virtue, and was sent by Hea-

ven to teach my parents how to support their afflictions with magnanimity. As I grew up, I became the intimate favourite of the wisest among men. I was the bosom friend of Plato, and other illustrious sages of antiquity, and was then often known by the name of Philosophy, though, in present times, when that title is usurped by mere makers of experiments, and inventors of blacking-cakes, I am only known by the appellation of Melancholy. So far from being of a discontented disposition, my very essence is pious and resigned contentment. I teach my votaries to support every vicissitude of fortune with calmness and fortitude. It is mine to subdue the stormy propensities of passion and vice, to foster and encourage the principles of benevolence and philanthropy, and to cherish and bring to perfection the seeds of virtue and wisdom. Though feared and hated by those who, like my accuser, are ignorant of my nature, I am courted and cherished by all the truly wise, the good, and the great; the poet woos me as the goddess of inspiration; the true philosopher acknowledges himself indebted to me for his most expansive views of human nature; the good man owes to me that hatred of the wrong and love of the right, and that disdain for the consequences which may result from the performance of his duties, which keeps him good; and the religious flies to me for the only clear and unencumbered view of the attributes and perfections of the Deity. So far from being idle, my mind is ever on the wing in the regions of fancy, or that true philosophy which opens the book of human nature, and raises the soul above the evils in-

cident to life. If I am useless, in the same degree were Plato and Socrates, Locke and Paley useless: it is true that my immediate influence is confined, but its effects are disseminated by means of literature over every age and nation, and mankind, in every generation, and in every clime, may look to me as their remote illuminator, the original spring of the principal intellectual benefits they possess. But as there is no good without its attendant evil, so I have an elder sister, called Phrenzy, for whom I have often been mistaken, who sometimes follows close on my steps, and to her I owe much of the obloquy which is attached to my name, though the puerile accusation which has just been brought against me turns on points which apply more exclusively to myself.

She ceased, and a dead pause ensued. The multitude seemed struck with the fascination of her utterance and gesture, and the sounds of her voice still seemed to vibrate on every ear. The attention of the assembly, however, was soon recalled to the accuser, and their indignation at his baseness rose to such a height, as to threaten general tumult, when the goddess of wisdom arose, and waving her hand for silence, beckoned the prisoner to her, placed her on her right hand, and with a sweet smile acknowledged her for her old companion and friend. She then turned to the accuser, with a frown of severity so terrible that I involuntarily started with terror for my poor misguided friend, and with the violence of the start I awoke, and instead of the throne

of the goddess of wisdom, and the vast assembly of people, beheld the first rays of the morning peeping over the eastern cloud, and instead of the loud murmurs of the incensed multitude, heard nothing but the soft gurgling of the river at my feet, and the rustling wing of the sky-lark, who was now beginning his first matin song.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. IV.]

Σκοπησαμενος εὑρισκον εδαμως αν αλλως ε'τος διαπραξαμενος.

Isocr.

THE world has often heard of fortune-hunters, legacy-hunters, popularity-hunters, and hunters of various descriptions—one diversity, however, of this very extensive species has hitherto eluded public animadversion; I allude to the class of friend-hunters,—men who make it the business of their lives to acquire friends, in the hope, through their influence, to arrive at some desirable point of ambitious eminence. Of all the mortifications and anxieties to which mankind voluntarily subject themselves, from the expectation of future benefit, there are, perhaps, none more galling, none more insupportable than those attendant on friend-making.—Shew a man that you court his society, and it is a signal for him to treat you with neglect and contumely. Humour his passions, and he despises you as a sycophant. Pay implicit deference to his opinions, and he laughs at you for your folly. In all he views you with contempt, as the creature of his will, and the slave of his caprice. I remember I once solicited the acquaintance, and coveted the friendship of one man, and, thank God, I can yet say, (and I hope on my death-bed I shall be able to say the same,) of ONLY one man.

Germanicus was a character of considerable eminence in the literary world. He had the reputation not only of an enlightened understanding and refined taste, but of openness of heart and goodness of disposition. His name always carried with it that weight and authority which are due to learning and genius in every situation. His manners were polished, and his conversation elegant. In short, he possessed every qualification which could render him an enviable addition to the circle of every man's friends. With such a character, as I was then very young, I could not fail to feel an ambition of becoming acquainted, when the opportunity offered, and in a short time we were upon terms of familiarity. To ripen this familiarity into friendship, as far as the most awkward diffidence would permit, was my strenuous endeavour. If his opinions contradicted mine, I immediately, without reasoning on the subject, conceded the point to him, as a matter of course that he must be right, and by consequence that I must be wrong. Did he utter a witticism, I was sure to laugh; and if he looked grave, though nobody could tell why, it was mine to groan. By thus conforming myself to his humour, I flattered myself I was making some progress in his good graces, but I was soon undeceived. A man seldom cares much for that which cost him no pains to procure. Whether Germanicus found me a troublesome visitor, or whether he was really displeased with something I had unwittingly said or done, certain it is, that when I met him one day, in company with persons of apparent figure, he had lost all recollection of my features. I called upon

him, but Germanicus was not at home. Again and again I gave a hesitating knock at the great man's door—all was to no purpose. He was still not at home. The sly meaning, however, which was couched in the sneer of the servant the last time, that, half ashamed of my errand, I made my enquiries at his house, convinced me of what I ought to have known before—that Germanicus was at home to all the world save me. I believe, with all my seeming humility, I am a confounded proud fellow at bottom; my rage at this discovery, therefore, may be better conceived than described. Ten thousand curses did I imprecate on the foolish vanity which led me to solicit the friendship of my superior, and again and again did I vow down eternal vengeance on my head, if I ever more condescended *thus* to *court* the acquaintance of man. To this resolution I believe I shall ever adhere. If I am destined to make any progress in the world, it will be by my own individual exertions. As I elbow my way through the crowded vale of life, I will never, in any emergency, call on my selfish neighbour for assistance. If my strength give way beneath the pressure of calamity, I shall sink without *his* whine of hypocritical condolence: and if I do sink, let him kick me into a ditch, and go about his business. I asked not his assistance while living—it will be of no service to me when dead.

Believe me, reader, whoever thou mayest be, there are few among mortals whose friendship, when acquired, will repay thee for the meanness of solicitation. If a

man voluntarily holds out his hand to thee, take it with caution. If thou find him honest, be not backward to receive his proffered assistance, and be anxious, when occasion shall require, to yield to him thine own. A real friend is the most valuable blessing a man can possess, and, mark me, it is by far the most rare. It is a black swan. But, whatever thou mayest do, *solicit* not friendship. If thou art young, and would make thy way in the world, bind thyself a seven year's apprentice to a city tallow-chandler, and thou mayest in time come to be lord mayor. Many people have made their fortunes at a taylor's board. Perriwig makers have been known to buy their country seats, and bellows menders have started their curricles; but seldom, very seldom, has the man who placed his dependance on the friendship of his fellow men, arrived at even the shadow of the honours to which, through that medium, he aspired. Nay, even if thou shouldst find a friend ready to lend thee a helping hand, the moment, by his assistance, thou hast gained some little eminence, he will be the first to hurl thee down to thy primitive, and now, perhaps, irremediable obscurity.

Yet I see no more reason for complaint on the ground of the fallacy of human friendship, than I do for any other ordonnance of nature, which may *appear* to run counter to our happiness. Man is naturally a selfish creature, and it is only by the aid of philosophy that he can so far conquer the defects of his being, as to be capable of disinterested friendship. *Who*, then, can ex-

pect to find that benign disposition which manifests itself in acts of disinterested benevolence and spontaneous affection, a common visitor? Who can preach philosophy to the mob*?

The recluse, who does not easily assimilate with the herd of mankind, and whose manners with difficulty bend to the peculiarities of others, is not likely to have many *real friends*. His enjoyments, therefore, must be solitary, lone, and melancholy. His only friend is himself. As he sits immersed in reverie by his midnight fire, and hears without the wild gusts of wind fitfully careering over the plain, he listens sadly attentive; and as the varied intonations of the howling blast articulate to his enthusiastic ear, he converses with the spirits of the departed, while, between each dreary pause of the storm, he holds solitary communion with himself. Such is the social intercourse of the recluse; yet he frequently feels the soft consolations of friendship. A heart formed for the gentler emotions of the soul, often feels as strong an interest for what are called *brutes*, as most bipeds affect to feel for each other. Montaigne had his cat; I have read of a man whose only friend was a large spider; and Trenck, in his dun-

* By the word mob here, the author does not mean to include merely the lower classes. In the present acceptation, it takes in a great part of the mob of quality: men who are either too ignorant, or too much taken up with base and grovelling pursuits, to have room for any of the more amiable affections.

geon, would sooner have lost his right hand, than the poor little mouse, which, grown confident with indulgence, used to beguile the tedious hours of imprisonment with its gambols. For my own part, I believe my dog, who, at this moment, seated on his hinder legs, is wistfully surveying me, as if he was conscious of all that is passing in my mind:—my dog, I say, is as sincere, and, whatever the world may say, nearly as *dear* a friend as any I possess; and, when I shall receive that summons which may not now be far distant, he will whine a funeral requiem over my grave, more piteously than all the hired mourners in Christendom. Well, well, poor Bob has had a kind master of me, and, for my own part, I verily believe there are few things on this earth I shall leave with more regret than this faithful companion of the happy hours of my infancy.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. V.]

*Un Sonnet sans defect vaut seul un long poeme.
 Mais en vain mille auteurs y pensent arriver ;
 A peine
 peut-on admirer deux ou trois entre mille :*

Boileau.

THERE is no species of poetry which is better adapted to the taste of a melancholy man than the sonnet. While its brevity precludes the possibility of its becoming tiresome, and its full and expected close accords well with his dejected and perhaps somewhat languid tone of mind, its elegiac delicacy and querimonious plaintiveness come in pleasing consonance with his feelings.

This elegant little poem has met with a peculiar fate in this country: half a century ago it was regarded as utterly repugnant to the nature of our language, while at present it is the popular vehicle of the most admired sentiments of our best living poets. This remarkable mutation in the opinions of our countrymen may, however, be accounted for on plain and common principles. The earlier English sonnetters confined themselves, in general, too strictly to the Italian model, as well in the disposition of the rhymes as in the cast of the ideas. A

sonnet, with them, was only another word for some metaphysical conceit, or clumsy antithesis, contained in fourteen harsh lines, full of obscure inversions and ill-managed expletives. They bound themselves down to a pattern, which was in itself faulty, and they met with the common fate of servile imitators, in retaining all the defects of their original, while they suffered the beauties to escape in the process. Their sonnets are like copies of a bad picture: however accurately copied, they are still bad. Our contemporaries, on the contrary, have given scope to their genius in the sonnet without restraint, sometimes even growing licentious in their liberty, setting at defiance those rules which form its distinguishing peculiarity, and, under the name of sonnet, soaring or falling into ode or elegy. Their compositions, of course, are impressed with all those excellencies which would have marked their respective productions in any similar walk of poetry.

It has never been disputed that the sonnet first arrived at celebrity in the Italian: a language which, as it abounds in a musical similarity of terminations, is more eminently qualified to give ease and elegance to the legitimate sonnet, restricted as it is to stated and frequently-recurring rhymes of the same class. As to the inventors of this little structure of verse, they are involved in impenetrable obscurity. Some authors have ascribed it singly to Guitone D'Arezzo, an Italian poet of the thirteenth century, but they have no sort of authority to adduce in support of their assertions. Arguing upon probabilities, with some slight co-incidental corroborations,

I should be inclined to maintain that its origin may be referred to an earlier period; that it may be looked for amongst the Provençals, who left scarcely any combination of metrical sounds unattempted; and who, delighting as they did in sound and jingle, might very possibly strike out this harmonious stanza of fourteen lines. Be this as it may, Dante and Petrarch were the first poets who rendered it popular, and to Dante and Petrarch therefore we must resort for its required rules.

In an ingenious paper of Dr. Drake's "Literary Hours," a book which I have read again and again with undiminished pleasure, the merits of the various English writers in this delicate mode of composition, are appreciated with much justice and discrimination. His veneration for Milton however has, if I may venture to oppose my judgment to his, carried him too far in praise of his sonnets. Those to the Nightingale and to Mr. Lawrence are, I think, alone entitled to the praise of *mediocrity*, and, if my memory fail me not, my opinion is sanctioned by the testimony of our late illustrious biographer of the poets.

The sonnets of Drummond are characterised as exquisite. It is somewhat strange, if this description be just, that they should so long have sunk into utter oblivion, to be revived only by a species of black-letter *mania*, which prevailed during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and of which some vestiges yet remain; the more especially as Dr. Johnson, to whom they could scarcely be

unknown, tells us, that "The fabric of the sonnet has *never* succeeded in our language." For my own part, I can say nothing of them. I have long sought a copy of Drummond's works, and I have sought it in vain; but from specimens which I have casually met with, in quotations, I am forcibly inclined to favour the idea, that, as they possess natural and pathetic sentiments, clothed in tolerably harmonious language, they are entitled to the praise which has been so liberally bestowed on them.

Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* consists of a number of sonnets, which have been unaccountably passed over by Dr. Drake, and all our other critics who have written on this subject. Many of them are eminently beautiful. The works of this neglected poet may occupy a future number of my lucubrations.

Excepting these two poets, I believe there is scarcely a writer who has arrived at any degree of excellence in the sonnet, until of late years, when our vernacular bards have raised it to a degree of eminence and dignity, among the various kinds of poetical composition, which seems almost incompatible with its very circumscribed limits.

Passing over the classical compositions of Warton, which are formed more on the model of the Greek epigram, or epitaph, than the Italian sonnet, Mr. Bowles and Charlotte Smith are the first modern writers who

have met with distinguished success in the sonnet. Those of the former, in particular, are standards of excellence in this department. To much natural and accurate description, they unite a strain of the most exquisitely tender and delicate sentiment; and, with a nervous strength of diction, and a wild freedom of versification, they combine an euphonious melody, and consonant cadence, unequalled in the English language. While they possess, however, the superior merit of an original style, they are not unfrequently deformed by instances of that ambitious singularity which is but too frequently its concomitant. Of these the introduction of rhymes long since obsolete is not the least striking. Though, in some cases, these revivals of antiquated phrase have a pleasing effect, yet they are oftentimes uncouth and repulsive. Mr. Bowles has almost always thrown aside the common rules of the sonnet; his pieces have no more claim to that specific denomination than that they are confined to fourteen lines. How far this deviation from established principle is justifiable, may be disputed; for if, on the one hand, it be alledged that the confinement to the stated repetition of rhymes, so distant and frequent, is a restraint which is not compensated by an adequate effect; on the other, it must be conceded, that these little poems are no longer *sonnets* than while they conform to the rules of the sonnet, and that the moment they forsake them, they ought to resign the appellation.

The name bears evident affinity to the Italian *sonáre*, “to *resound*”—“*sing around*,” which originated in the

Latin *sonans*,—*sounding, jingling, ringing*: or, indeed, it may come immediately from the French *sonner*, to sound, or ring, in which language, it is observable, we first meet with the word *sonnette*, where it signifies *a little bell*, and *sonnettier* a maker of little bells; and this derivation affords a presumption, almost amounting to certainty, that the conjecture before advanced, that the sonnet originated with the Provençals, is well founded. It is somewhat strange that these contending derivations have not been before observed, as they tend to settle a question which, however intrinsically unimportant, is curious, and has been much agitated.

But, wherever the name originated, it evidently bears relation only to the peculiarity of a set of chiming and jingly terminations, and of course can no longer be applied with propriety where that peculiarity is not preserved.

The single stanza of fourteen lines, properly varied in their correspondent closes, is, notwithstanding, so well adapted for the expression of any pathetic sentiment, and is so pleasing and satisfactory to the ear, when once accustomed to it, that our poetry would suffer a material loss were it to be disused through a rigid adherence to mere propriety of name. At the same time, our language does not supply a sufficiency of similar terminations, to render the strict observance of its rules at all easy or compatible with ease or elegance. The only question, there-

fore, is, whether the musical effect produced by the adherence to this difficult structure of verse overbalance the restraint it imposes on the poet, and, in case we decide in the negative, whether we ought to preserve the denomination of *sonnet*, when we utterly renounce the very peculiarities which procured it that cognomen.

In the present enlightened age, I think it will not be disputed that mere jingle and sound ought invariably to be sacrificed to sentiment and expression. Musical effect is a very subordinate consideration; it is the gilding to the cornices of a Vitruvian edifice; the colouring to a shaded design of Michael Angelo. In its place it adds to the effect of the whole, but when rendered a principal object of attention, it is ridiculous and disgusting. Rhyme is no necessary adjunct of true poetry. Southey's *Thalaba* is a fine poem, with no rhyme, and very little measure or metre; and the production which is reduced to mere prose by being deprived of its jingle, could never possess, in any state, the marks of inspiration.

So far, therefore, I am of opinion that it is advisable to renounce the Italian fabric altogether. We have already sufficient restrictions laid upon us by the metrical laws of our native tongue, and I do not see any reason, out of a blind regard for precedent, to tie ourselves to a difficult structure of verse, which probably originated with the Troubadours, or wandering bards, of France and Normandy, or with a yet ruder race; one which is not

productive of any rational effect, and which only pleases the ear by frequent repetition, as men who have once had the greatest aversion to strong wines and spirituous liquors, are, by habit, at last brought to regard them as delicacies.

In advancing this opinion, I am aware that I am opposing myself to the declared sentiments of many individuals whom I greatly respect and admire. Miss Seward (and Miss Seward is in herself a host) has, both theoretically and practically, defended the Italian structure. Mr. Capel Lofft has likewise favoured the world with many sonnets, in which he shews his approval of the legitimate model, by his adherence to its rules, and many of the beautiful poems of Mrs. Lofft, published in the *Monthly Mirror*, are likewise successfully formed by those rules. Much, however, as I admire these writers, and ample as is the credence I give to their critical discrimination, I cannot, on mature reflection, subscribe to their position of the expediency of adopting this structure in our poetry, and I attribute their success in it more to their individual powers, which would have surmounted much greater difficulties, than to the adaptibility of this foreign fabric to our stubborn and intractable language.

If the question, however, turn only on the propriety of giving to a poem a name which must be acknowledged to be entirely inappropriate, and to which it can have no sort of claim, I must confess that it is manifestly

indefensible; and we must then either pitch upon another appellation for our quatorzain, or banish it from our language; a measure which every lover of true poetry must sincerely lament.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. VI.]

Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Gray.

POETRY is a blossom of very delicate growth; it requires the maturing influence of vernal suns, and every encouragement of culture and attention, to bring it to its natural perfection. The pursuits of the mathematician, or the mechanical genius, are such as require rather strength and insensibility of mind, than that exquisite and finely-wrought susceptibility, which invariably marks the temperament of the true poet; and, it is for this reason, that while men of science have, not unfrequently, arisen from the abodes of poverty and labour, very few legitimate children of the Muse have ever emerged from the shades of hereditary obscurity.

It is painful to reflect how many a bard now lies, nameless and forgotten, in the narrow house, who, had he been born to competence and leisure, might have usurped the laurels from the most distinguished personages in the temple of Fame. The very consciousness of merit itself often acts in direct opposition to a stimulus to exertion, by exciting that mournful indignation at

suppositious neglect, which urges a sullen concealment of talents, and drives its possessor to that misanthropic discontent which preys on the vitals, and soon produces untimely mortality. A sentiment like this has, no doubt, often actuated beings, who attracted notice, perhaps, while they lived, only by their singularity, and who were forgotten almost ere their parent earth had closed over their heads;—beings who lived but to mourn and to languish for what they were never destined to enjoy, and whose exalted endowments were buried with them in their graves, by the want of a little of that superfluity which serves to pamper the debased appetites of the enervated sons of luxury and sloth.

The present age, however, has furnished us with two illustrious instances of poverty bursting through the cloud of surrounding impediments, into the full blaze of notoriety and eminence. I allude to the two Bloomfields—bards who may challenge a comparison with the most distinguished favourites of the Muse, and who both passed the day-spring of life in labour, indigence, and obscurity.

The author of the *Farmer's Boy* hath already received the applause he justly deserved. It yet remains for the *Essay on War* to enjoy all the distinction it so richly merits, as well from its sterling worth, as from the circumstances of its author. Whether the present age will be inclined to do it full justice, may indeed be feared. Had Mr. Nathaniel Bloomfield made his appearance in

the horizon of letters prior to his brother, he would undoubtedly have been considered as a meteor of uncommon attraction; the critics would have admired, because it would have been the fashion to admire. But it is to be apprehended that our countrymen become enured to phenomena:—it is to be apprehended, that the frivolity of the age cannot endure a repetition of the uncommon:—that it will no longer be the rage to patronize indigent merit: that the *beau monde* will therefore neglect, and that, by a necessary consequence, the critics will sneer!!

Nevertheless, sooner or later, merit will meet with its reward; and though the popularity of Mr. Bloomfield may be delayed, he *must*, at one time or other, receive the meed due to his deserts. Posterity will judge impartially; and if bold and vivid images, and original conceptions, luminously displayed, and judiciously apposed, have any claim to the regard of mankind, the name of Nathaniel Bloomfield will not be without its high and appropriate honours.

Rousseau very truly observes, that with whatever talent a man may be born, the art of writing is not easily obtained. If this be applicable to men enjoying every advantage of scholastic initiation, how much more forcibly must it apply to the offspring of a poor village tailor, untaught, and destitute both of the means and the time necessary for the cultivation of the mind! If the art of writing be of difficult attainment to those who

make it the study of their lives, what must it be to him, who, perhaps, for the first forty years of his life, never entertained a thought that any thing he could write would be deemed worthy of the attention of the public!—whose only time for rumination was such as a sedentary and sickly employment would allow; on the tailor's board, surrounded with men, perhaps, of depraved and rude habits, and impure conversation!

And yet, that Mr. N. Bloomfield's poems display acuteness of remark, and delicacy of sentiment, combined with much strength, and considerable *selection* of diction, few will deny. The Pæan to Gunpowder would alone prove both his power of language, and the fertility of his imagination; and the following extract presents him to us in the still higher character of a bold and vivid *painter*. Describing the field after a battle, he says,

Now here and there, about the horrid field,
 Striding across the dying and the dead,
 Stalks up a man, by strength superior,
 Or skill and prowess in the arduous fight,
 Preserv'd alive:—fainting he looks around;
 Fearing pursuit—not caring to pursue.
 The supplicating voice of bitterest moans,
 Contortions of excruciating pain,
 The shriek of torture, and the groan of death,
 Surround him;—and as Night her mantle spreads,
 To veil the horrors of the mourning field,

With cautious step shaping his devious way,
 He seeks a covert where to hide and rest :
 At every leaf that rustles in the breeze
 Starting, he grasps his sword ; and ev'ry nerve
 Is ready strain'd, for combat or for flight.

P. 12, *Essay on War.*

If Mr. Bloomfield had written nothing besides the Elegy on the Enclosure of Honington Green, he would have had a right to be considered as a poet of no mean excellence. The heart which can read passages like the following, without a sympathetic emotion, must be dead to every feeling of sensibility.

STANZA VI.

The proud city's gay wealthy train,
 Who nought but refinement adore,
 May wonder to hear me complain
 That Honington Green is no more ;
 But if to the church you ere went,
 If you knew what the village has been,
 You will sympathize while I lament
 The enclosure of Honington Green.

VII.

That no more upon Honington Green
 Dwells the matron whom most I revere,
 If by pert observation unseen,
 I e'en now could indulge a fond tear.

Ere her bright morn of life was o'er cast,
 When my senses first woke to the scene,
 Some short happy hours she had past
 On the margin of Honington Green.

VIII.

Her parents with plenty were blest,
 And num'rous her children, and young,
 Youth's blossoms her cheek yet possest,
 And Melody woke when she sung:
 A widow so youthful to leave,
 (Early clos'd the blest days he had seen)
 My father was laid in his grave,
 In the church-yard on Honington Green.

* * * * *

XXI.

Dear to me was the wild thorny hill,
 And dear the brown heath's sober scene;
 And youth shall find happiness still,
 Though he rove not on common or green.

* * * * *

XXII.

So happily flexile man's make,
 So pliantly docile his mind,
 Surrounding impressions we take,
 And bliss in each circumstance find.

The youths of a more polish'd age
Shall not wish these rude commons to see ;
To the bird that's enur'd to the cage,
It would not be bliss to be free.

There is a sweet and tender melancholy pervades the *elegiac ballad* efforts of Mr. Bloomfield, which has the most indescribable effects on the heart. Were the versification a little more polished, in some instances, they would be read with unmixt delight. It is to be hoped that he will cultivate this engaging species of composition, and, (if I may venture to throw out the hint) if judgment may be formed from the poems he has published, he would excel in sacred poetry. Most heartily do I recommend the lyre of David to this engaging bard. Divine topics have seldom been touched upon with success by our modern Muses: they afford a field in which he would have few competitors, and it is a field worthy of his abilities.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. VII*.]

IF the situation of man, in the present life, be considered in all its relations and dependencies, a striking inconsistency will be apparent to a very cursory observer. We have sure warrant for believing that our abode here is to form a comparatively insignificant part of our existence, and that on our conduct in this life will depend the happiness of the life to come: yet our actions daily give the lie to this proposition, inasmuch as we commonly act like men who have no thought but for the present scene, and to whom the grave is the boundary of anticipation. But this is not the only paradox which humanity furnishes to the eye of a thinking man. It is very generally the case, that we spend our whole lives in the pursuit of objects, which common experience informs us are not capable of conferring that pleasure and satisfaction which we expect from their enjoyment. Our views are uniformly directed to one point;—*happiness*, in whatever garb it be clad, and under whatever figure shadowed, is the great aim of the busy multitudes,

* My predecessor, the Spectator, considering that the seventh part of our time is set apart for religious purposes, devoted every seventh lucubration to matters connected with Christianity, and the severer part of morals: I trust none of my readers will regret that, in this instance, I follow so good an example.

whom we behold toiling through the vale of life, in such an infinite diversity of occupation, and disparity of views. But the misfortune is, that we seek for happiness where she is not to be found, and the cause of wonder, that the experience of ages should not have guarded us against so fatal and so universal an error.

It would be an amusing speculation to consider the various points after which our fellow mortals are incessantly straining, and in the possession of which they have placed that imaginary chief good, which we are all doomed to covet, but which, perhaps, none of us, in this sublunary state, can attain. At present, however, we are led to considerations of a more important nature. We turn from the inconsistencies observable in the prosecution of our subordinate pursuits, from the partial follies of individuals to the general delusion which seems to envelope the whole human race;—the delusion under whose influence they lose sight of the chief end of their being—and cut down the sphere of their hopes and enjoyments to a few rolling years, and that too in a scene where they know there is neither perfect fruition nor permanent delight.

The faculty of contemplating mankind in the abstract, apart from those prepossessions which, both by nature and the power of habitual associations, would intervene to cloud our view, is only to be obtained by a life of virtue and constant meditation, by temperance, and purity of thought. Whenever it is attained, it must greatly tend

to correct our motives—to simplify our desires—and to excite a spirit of contentment and pious resignation. We then, at length, are enabled to contemplate our being, in all its bearings, and in its full extent, and the result is that superiority to common views, and indifference to the things of this life, which should be the fruit of all *true* philosophy, and which, therefore, are the more peculiar fruits of that system of philosophy which is called the Christian.

To a mind thus sublimed, the great mass of mankind will appear like men led astray by the workings of wild and distempered imaginations—visionaries who are wandering after the phantoms of their own teeming brains, and their anxious solicitude for mere matters of worldly accommodation and ease, will seem more like the effects of insanity than of prudent foresight, as they are esteemed. To the awful importance of futurity he will observe them utterly insensible, and he will see, with astonishment, the few allotted years of human life wasted in providing abundance they will never enjoy, while the eternity they were placed here to prepare for, scarcely employs a moment's consideration. And yet the mass of these poor wanderers in the ways of error, have the light of truth shining on their very foreheads. They have the revelation of Almighty God himself, to declare to them the folly of worldly cares, and the necessity of providing for a future state of existence. They know by the experience of every preceding generation, that a very small portion of joy is allowed to the poor

sojourners in this vale of tears, and that too, embittered with much pain and fear; and yet every one is willing to flatter himself that he shall fare better than his predecessor in the same path, and that happiness will smile on him which hath frowned on all his progenitors.

Still it would be wrong to deny the human race all claim to temporal felicity. There may be comparative, although very little positive happiness;—whoever is more exempt from the cares of the world and the calamities incident to humanity—whoever enjoys more contentment of mind, and is more resigned to the dispensations of Divine Providence—in a word, whoever possesses more of the true spirit of christianity than his neighbours, is comparatively happy. But the number of these it is to be feared, is very small. Were all men equally enlightened by the illuminations of truth, as emanating from the spirit of Jehovah himself, they would all concur in the pursuit of virtuous ends by virtuous means—as there would be no vice, there would be very little infelicity. Every pain would be met with fortitude, every affliction with resignation. We should then all look back to the past with complacency, and to the future with hope. Even this unstable state of being would have many exquisite enjoyments—the principal of which would be the anticipation of that approaching state of beatitude to which we might then look with confidence, through the medium of that atonement of which we should be partakers, and our acceptance, by virtue of which, would be sealed by that purity of mind

of which human nature is, *of itself*, incapable. But it is from the mistakes and miscalculations of mankind, to which their fallen natures are continually prone, that arises that flood of misery which overwhelms the whole race, and resounds wherever the footsteps of man have penetrated. It is the lamentable error of placing happiness in vicious indulgencies, or thinking to pursue it by vicious means. It is the blind folly of sacrificing the welfare of the future to the opportunity of immediate guilty gratification, which destroys the harmony of society, and poisons the peace not only of the immediate procreators of the errors—not only of the identical actors of the vices themselves, but of all those of their fellows who fall within the reach of their influence or example, or who are in any wise connected with them by the ties of blood.

I would therefore exhort you earnestly—you who are yet unskilled in the ways of the world—to beware on what object you centre your hopes. Pleasures may allure—pride or ambition may stimulate, but their fruits are hollow and deceitful, and they afford no sure, no solid satisfaction. You are placed on the earth in a state of probation—your continuance here will be, at the longest, a very short period, and when you are called from hence you plunge into an eternity, the completion of which will be in correspondence to your past life, unutterably happy or inconceivably miserable. Your fate will probably depend on your early pursuits—it will be these which will give the turn to your cha-

racter and to your pleasures. I beseech you therefore, with a meek and lowly spirit, to read the pages of that book, which the wisest and best of men have acknowledged to be the word of God. You will there find a rule of moral conduct, such as the world never had any idea of before its devulgation. If you covet earthly happiness, it is only to be found in the path you will find there laid down, and I can confidently promise you, in a life of simplicity and purity, a life passed in accordance with the divine word, such substantial bliss, such unruffled peace, as is no where else to be found. All other schemes of earthly pleasure are fleeting and unsatisfactory. They all entail upon them repentance and bitterness of thought. This alone endureth for ever—this alone embraces equally the present and the future—this alone can arm a man against every calamity—can alone shed the balm of peace over that scene of life when pleasures have lost their zest, and the mind can no longer look forward to the dark and mysterious future. Above all beware of the ignis fatuus of false philosophy: that must be a very defective system of ethics, which will not bear a man through the most trying stage of his existence, and I know of none that will do it but the christian.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. VIII.]

Ὅστις λόγους γὰρ παρακαταθήκην ὡς λαβῶν
 Ἐξεῖπεν, ἀδικός ἐστιν, ἢ ἀκρατὴς ἄγαν.
 — ἴσως δὲ γ' εἰσὶν ἀμφοτέρω κακοί.

ANAXANDRIDES APUD SUIDAM.

MUCH has been said of late on the subject of *inscriptive writing*, and that, in my opinion, to very little purpose. Dr. Drake, when treating on this topic, is, for once, inconclusive; but his essay does credit to his discernment, however little it may honour him as a promulgator of the laws of criticism: the exquisite specimens it contains prove that the doctor has a feeling of propriety and general excellence, although he may be unhappy in defining them. Boileau says, briefly, "*Les inscriptions doivent être simples, courtes, et familiares.*" We have, however, many examples of this kind of writing in our language which, although they possess none of these qualities, are esteemed excellent. Akenside's classic imitations are not at all *simple*, nothing *short*, and the very reverse of *familiar*, yet who can deny that they are beautiful, and in some instances appropriate? Southey's inscriptions are noble pieces;—for the opposite qualities of tenderness and dignity, sweetness of imagery and terseness of moral, unrivalled; they are

perhaps wanting in propriety, and (which is the criterion) produce a much better effect in a book, than they would on a column or a cenotaph. There is a certain chaste and majestic gravity expected from the voice of tombs and monuments, which probably would displease in epitaphs never intended to be engraved, and inscriptions for obelisks which never existed.

When a man visits the tomb of an illustrious character, a spot remarkable for some memorable deed, or a scene connected by its natural sublimity with the higher feelings of the breast, he is in a mood only for the nervous, the concise, and the impressive; and he will turn with disgust alike from the puerile conceits of the epigrammatist, and the tedious prolixity of the herald. It is a nice thing to address the mind in the workings of generous enthusiasm. As words are not capable of exciting such an effervescence of the sublimer affections, so they can do little towards increasing it. Their office is rather to point these feelings to a beneficial purpose, and by some noble sentiment, or exalted moral, to impart to the mind that pleasure, which results from warm emotions when connected with the virtuous and the generous.

In the composition of inscriptive pieces, great attention must be paid to local and topical propriety. The occasion, and the place, must not only regulate the tenor, but even the style of an inscription: for what, in

one case, would be proper and agreeable, in another would be impertinent and disgusting. But these rules may always be taken for granted, that an inscription should be unaffected and free from conceits; that no sentiment should be introduced of a trite or hacknied nature; and that the design and the moral to be inculcated should be of sufficient importance to merit the reader's attention, and ensure his regard. Who would think of setting a stone up in the wilderness to tell the traveller what he knew before, or what, when he had learnt for the first time, was not worth the knowing? It would be equally absurd to call aside his attention to a simile or an epigrammatic point. Wit, on a monument, is like a jest from a judge, or a philosopher cutting capers. It is a severe mortification to meet with flippancy where we looked for solemnity, and meretricious elegance, where the occasion led us to expect the unadorned majesty of truth.

That branch of inscriptive writing which commemorates the virtues of departed worth, or points out the ashes of men who yet live in the admiration of their posterity is, of all others, the most interesting, and, if properly managed, the most useful.

It is not enough to proclaim to the observer that he is drawing near to the reliques of the deceased genius,—the occasion seems to provoke a few reflections. If these be *natural*, they will be in unison with the feel-

ings of the reader, and, if they tend where they ought to tend, they will leave him better than they found him. But these reflections must not be too much prolonged. They must rather be hints than dissertations. It is sufficient to start the idea, and the imagination of the reader will pursue the train to much more advantage than the writer could do by words.

Panegyric is seldom judicious in the epitaphs on *public characters*, for if it be deserved, it cannot need publication; and if it be exaggerated, it will only serve to excite ridicule. When employed in memorizing the retired virtues of domestic life, and qualities which, though they only served to cheer the little circle of privacy, still deserved, from their unfrequency, to triumph, at least for a while, over the power of the grave, it may be interesting and salutary in its effects. To this purpose, however, it is rarely employed. An epitaph-book will seldom supply the exigencies of character; and men of talents are not always, even in these favoured times, at hand to eternize the virtues of private life.

The following epitaph, by Mr. Hayley, is inscribed on a monument to the memory of Cowper, in the church of *East Dereham*:

“ Ye who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents dignified by sacred zeal;
Here to devotion’s bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper’s dust !

England, exulting in his spotless fame,
 Ranks with her dearest sons his fav'rite name :
 Sense, Fancy, Wit, conspire not all to raise
 So clear a title to affection's praise ;
 His highest honours to the heart belong ;
 His virtues form'd the magic of his song."

"This epitaph," says a periodical critic*, "is simply elegant, and appropriately just." I regard this sentence as peculiarly unfortunate, for the epitaph seems to me to be *elegant* without *simplicity*, and *just* without *propriety*. No one will deny that it is correctly written, and that it is not destitute of grace ; but in what consists its simplicity I am at a loss to imagine. The initial address is laboured, and circumlocutory. There is something artificial rather than otherwise in the personification of England, and her ranking the poet's *name* "with her dearest sons," instead of, with *those of* her dearest sons, is like ranking poor John Doe with a proper *bona fide* son of Adam, in a writ of arrest. Sense, fancy, and wit, "raising a title," and that to "affection's praise," is not very simple, and not over intelligible. Again, the epitaph is just, because it is strictly true ; but it is by no means, therefore, appropriate. Who that would turn aside to visit the ashes of Cowper, would need to be told that England ranks him with her favourite sons, and that sense, fancy, and wit were not his greatest honours, for that his virtues formed the magic of his

* The Monthly Reviewer.

song: or who, hearing this, would be the better for the information. Had Mr. Hayley been employed in the monumental praises of a private man, this might have been excusable, but, speaking of such a man as Cowper, it is idle. This epitaph is not appropriate, therefore, and we have shewn that it is not remarkable for simplicity. Perhaps the respectable critics themselves may not feel inclined to dispute this point very tenaciously. Epithets are very convenient little things for rounding off a period; and it will not be the first time that truth has been sacrificed to verbosity and anti-thesis.

To measure lances with Hayley may be esteemed presumptuous; but probably the following, although much inferior as a composition, would have had more effect than his polished and harmonious lines.

INSCRIPTION FOR A MONUMENT,

TO THE MEMORY OF COWPER.

Reader! if with no vulgar sympathy
 Thou view'st the wreck of genius and of worth,
 Stay thou thy footsteps near this hallow'd spot.
 Here Cowper rests. Although renown have made
 His name familiar to thine ear, this stone
 May tell thee that his virtues were above

The common portion :—that the voice, now hush'd
 In death, was once serenely querulous
 With pity's tones, and in the ear of woe
 Spake music. Now forgetful at thy feet
 His tir'd head presses on its last long rest,
 Still tenant of the tomb ;—and on the cheek,
 Once warm with animation's lambent flush,
 Sits the pale image of unmark'd decay.
 Yet mourn not. He had chos'n the better part ;
 And these sad garments of mortality
 Put off, we trust, that to a happier land
 He went, a light and gladsome passenger.
 Sigh'st thou for honours, reader? Call to mind
 That glory's voice is impotent to pierce
 The silence of the tomb ! but virtue blooms
 Ev'n on the wrecks of life, and mounts the skies!
 So gird thy loins with lowliness, and walk
 With Cowper on the pilgrimage of Christ.

This inscription is faulty from its length, but if a painter cannot get the requisite effect at one stroke, he must do it by many. The laconic style of epitaphs is the most difficult to be managed of any, inasmuch as most is expected from it. A sentence standing alone on a tomb, or a monument, is expected to contain something particularly striking ; and when this expectation is disappointed, the reader feels like a man who, having been promised an excellent joke, is treated with a stale

conceit, or a vapid pun. The best specimen of this kind, which I am acquainted with, is that on a French general:

“ Siste, Viator; Heroem calcas!”
Stop traveller; thou treadest on a hero!

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. IX.]

Scires è sanguine natos.

Ovid.

IT is common for busy and active men to behold the occupations of the retired and contemplative person with contempt. They consider his speculations as idle and unproductive: as they participate in none of his feelings, they are strangers to his motives, his views, and his delights: they behold him elaborately employed on what they conceive forwards none of the interests of life, contributes to none of its gratifications, removes none of its inconveniencies: they conclude, therefore, that he is led away by the delusions of futile philosophy, that he labours for no good, and lives to no end. Of the various frames of mind which they observe in him, no one seems to predominate more, and none appears to them more absurd than sadness, which seems, in some degree, to pervade all his views, and shed a solemn-tinge over all his thoughts. Sadness, arising from no personal grief, and connected with no individual concern, they regard as moon-struck melancholy, the effect of a mind overcast with constitutional gloom, and diseased

with habits of vain and fanciful speculation.—“ We can share with the sorrows of the unfortunate,” say they, “ but this monastic spleen merits only our derision: it tends to no beneficial purpose, it benefits neither its possessor nor society.” Those who have thought a little more on this subject than the gay and busy crowd, will draw conclusions of a different nature. That there is a sadness, springing from the noblest and purest sources, a sadness friendly to the human heart, and, by direct consequence to human nature in general, is a truth which a little illustration will render tolerably clear, and which, when understood in its full force, may probably convert contempt and ridicule into respect.

I set out then with the proposition that the man who thinks deeply, especially if his reading be extensive, will, unless his heart be very cold and very light, become habituated to a pensive, or, with more propriety, a mournful cast of thought. This will arise from two more particular sources—from the view of human nature in general, as demonstrated by the experience both of past and present times, and from the contemplation of individual instances of human depravity and of human suffering. The first of these is, indeed, the last in the order of time, for his general views of humanity are in a manner consequential, or resulting from the special, but I have inverted that order for the sake of perspicuity.

Of those who have occasionally thought on these subjects, I may, with perfect assurance of their reply, enquire what have been their sensations when they have, for a moment, attained a more enlarged and capacious notion of the state of man in all its bearings and dependencies. They have found, and the profoundest philosophers have done no more, that they are enveloped in mystery, and that the mystery of man's situation is not without alarming and fearful circumstances. They have discovered that all they know of themselves is that they live, but that from whence they came, or whither they are going, is by Nature altogether hidden; that impenetrable gloom surrounds them on every side, and that they even hold their morrow on the credit of to-day, when it is, in fact, buried in the vague and indistinct gulph of the ages to come!—These are reflections deeply interesting, and lead to others so awful, that many gladly shut their eyes on the giddy and unfathomable depths which seem to stretch before them. The meditative man, however, endeavours to pursue them to the farthest stretch of the reasoning powers, and to enlarge his conceptions of the mysteries of his own existence, and the more he learns, and the deeper he penetrates, the more cause does he find for being serious, and the more inducements to be continually thoughtful.

If, again, we turn from the condition of mortal existence, considered in the abstract, to the qualities and characters of man, and his condition in a state of society, we see things, perhaps, equally strange and in-

initely more affecting.—In the œconomy of creation, we perceive nothing inconsistent with the power of an all-wise and all-merciful God. A perfect harmony runs through all the parts of the universe. Plato's syrens sing not only from the planetary octave, but through all the minutest divisions of the stupendous whole: order, beauty, and perfection, the traces of the great architect, glow through every particle of his work. At man, however, we stop: there is one exception. The harmony of order ceases, and vice and misery disturb the beautiful consistency of creation, and bring us first acquainted with positive evil. We behold men carried irresistibly away by corrupt principles and vicious inclinations, indulging in propensities, destructive as well to themselves as to those around them; the stronger oppressing the weaker, and the bad persecuting the good! we see the depraved in prosperity, the virtuous in adversity, the guilty unpunished, the undeserving overwhelmed with unprovoked misfortunes. From hence we are tempted to think, that He, whose arm holds the planets in their course, and directs the comets along their eccentric orbits, ceases to exercise his providence over the affairs of mankind, and leaves them to be governed and directed by the impulses of a corrupt heart, or the blind workings of chance alone. Yet this is inconsistent both with the wisdom and the goodness of the Deity. If God permit evil, he causes it: the difference is casuistical.—We are led, therefore, to conclude, that it was not always thus: that man was created in a far different and

far happier condition; but that, by some means or other, he has forfeited the protection of his Maker.— Here then is a mystery.—The ancients led by reasonings alone, perceived it with amazement, but did not solve the problem. They attempted some explanation of it by the lame fiction of a golden age and its cession, where, by a circular mode of reasoning, they attribute the introduction of vice to their gods having deserted the earth, and the desertion of the gods to the introduction of vice*. This, however, was the logic of the poets; the philosophers disregarded the fable, but did not dispute the fact it was intended to account for. They often hint at human degeneracy, and some unknown curse hanging over our being, and even coming into the world along with us. Pliny, in the preface to his seventh book, has this remarkable passage, “The

* Και τότε δη προς ὄλυμπον ἀπο χθονος ἑυρυοδείης,
 Λευκοῖσιν φαρεῶσσι καλυψαμένω χροα καλον,
 Ἀθανάτων μετα φῦλον ἴτον, προλιπονί' ἀνδρωπας
 Αἰδως και Νεμεσις* τα δε λειψεται αλγεα λυγρα
 Θνητοις ἀνδρωποισι, κακx δ' ἐκ ἴσσεται ἀλλη.

Hesiod. Opera et Dies. Lib. 1. L. 195.

Victa jacet Pietas: et Virgo cæde madentes,
 Ultima cœlestum terras Astræa reliquit.

Ovid. Metamor. L. 1. Fab. 4.

Paulatim deinde ad Superos Astræa recessit,
 Hac comite atque duæ pariter fugere sorores

Juvenal, Sat. vi. L. 19.

animal about to rule over the rest of created animals, lies weeping, bound hand and foot, making his first entrance upon life with sharp pangs, and *this, for no other crime, than that he is born man.*—Cicero, in a passage, for the preservation of which we are indebted to St. Augustine, gives a yet stronger idea of an existing degeneracy in human nature—“Man,” says he, “comes into existence, not as from the hands of a mother, but of a step-dame nature, with a body feeble, naked, and fragile, and a mind exposed to anxiety and care, abject in fear, unmeet for labour, prone to licentiousness, in which, however, there still dwell some sparks of the divine mind, though obscured, and, as it were, in ruins.” And, in another place, he intimates it as a current opinion, that man comes into the world as into a state of punishment expiatory of crimes committed in some previous stage of existence, of which we now retain no recollection.

From these proofs, and from daily observation and experience, there is every ground for concluding that man is in a state of misery and depravity quite inconsistent with the happiness for which, by a benevolent God, he must have been created. We see glaring marks of this in our own times. Prejudice alone blinds us to the absurdity and the horror of those systematic murders which go by the name of wars, where man falls on man, brother slaughters brother, where death, in every variety of horror, preys “*on the finely-fibred human frame,*” and where the cry of the widow and the orphan

rise up to heaven long after the thunder of the fight and the clang of arms have ceased, and the bones of sons, brothers, and husbands slain are grown white on the field. Customs like these vouch, with most miraculous organs, for the depravity of the human heart, and these are not the most mournful of those considerations which present themselves to the mind of the thinking man.

Private life is equally fertile in calamitous perversion of reason and extreme accumulation of misery. On the one hand, we see a large proportion of men sedulously employed in the eduction of their own ruin, pursuing vice in all its varieties, and sacrificing the peace and happiness of the innocent and unoffending to their own brutal gratifications; and, on the other, pain, misfortune, and misery, overwhelming alike the good and the bad, the provident and the improvident. But, too general a view would distract our attention: let the reader pardon me if I suddenly draw him away from the survey of the crowds of life to a few detached scenes. We will select a single picture at random. The character is common.

Behold that beautiful female who is rallying a well-dressed young man with so much gaiety and humour. Did you ever see so lovely a countenance? There is an expression of vivacity in her fine dark eye which quite captivates one; and her smile, were it a little less bold, would be bewitching. How gay and careless she seems! One would suppose she had a very light and happy

heart. Alas! how appearances deceive! This gaiety is all feigned. It is her business to please, and beneath a fair and painted outside she conceals an unquiet and forlorn breast. When she was yet very young, an engaging but dissolute young man took advantage of her simplicity, and of the affection with which he had inspired her, to betray her virtue. At first, her infamy cost her many tears; but habit wore away this remorse, leaving only a kind of indistinct regret, and, as she fondly loved her betrayer, she experienced, at times, a mingled pleasure even in this abandoned situation. But this was soon over. Her lover, on pretence of a journey into the country, left her for ever. She soon afterwards heard of his marriage, with an agony of grief which few can adequately conceive, and none describe. The calls of want, however, soon subdued the more distracting ebullitions of anguish. She had no choice left; all the gates of virtue were shut upon her, and though she really abhorred the course, she was obliged to betake herself to vice for support. Her next keeper possessed her person without her heart. She has since passed through several hands, and has found, by bitter experience, that the vicious, on whose generosity she is thrown, are devoid of all feeling but that of self-gratification, and that even the wages of prostitution are reluctantly and grudgingly paid. She now looks on all men as sharpers. She smiles but to entangle and destroy, and while she simulates fondness, is intent only on the extorting of that, at best poor pittance, which her necessities loudly demand. Thoughtless as she may

seem, she is not without an idea of her forlorn and wretched situation, and she looks only to sudden death as her refuge, against that time when her charms shall cease to allure the eye of incontinence, when even the lowest haunts of infamy shall be shut against her, and, without a friend or a hope, she must sink under the pressure of want and disease.

But we will now shift the scene a little, and select another object. Behold you poor weary wretch, who, with a child wrapt in her arms, with difficulty, drags along the road. The man, with a knapsack, who is walking before her, is her husband, and is marching to join his regiment. He has been spending, at a dram shop, in the town they have just left, the supply which the pale and weak appearance of his wife proclaims was necessary for her sustenance. He is now half drunk, and is venting the artificial spirits which intoxication excites, in the abuse of his weary help-mate behind him. She seems to listen to his reproaches in patient silence. Her face will tell you more than many words, as, with a wan and meaning look, she surveys the little wretch who is asleep on her arm. The turbulent brutality of the man excites no attention: she is pondering on the future chance of life, and the probable lot of her heedless little one.

One other picture, and I have done. The man pacing with a slow step and languid aspect over yon prison court, was once a fine dashing fellow, the admi-

ration of the ladies, and the envy of the men. He is the only representative of a once respectable family, and is brought to this situation by unlimited indulgence at that time when the check is most necessary. He began to figure in genteel life at an early age. His misjudging mother, to whose sole care he was left, thinking no alliance too good for her darling, cheerfully supplied his extravagance, under the idea that it would not last long, and that it would enable him to shine in those circles where she wished him to rise. But he soon found that habits of prodigality once well gained, are never eradicated. His fortune, though genteel, was not adequate to such habits of expense. His unhappy parent lived to see him make a degrading alliance, and come in danger of a jail, and then died of a broken heart. His affairs soon wound themselves up. His debts were enormous, and he had nothing to pay them with. He has now been in that prison many years, and since he is excluded from the benefit of an insolvency act, he has made up his mind to the idea of ending his days there. His wife, whose beauty had decoyed him, since she found he could not support her, deserted him for those who could, leaving him without friend or companion, to pace, with measured steps, over the court of a country jail, and endeavour to beguile the lassitude of imprisonment, by thinking on the days that are gone, or counting the squares in his grated window in every possible direction, backwards, forwards, and across, till he sighs to find the sum always the same, and that the more anxiously

we strive to beguile the moments in their course, the more sluggishly they travel.

If these are accurate pictures of some of the varieties of human suffering, and if such pictures are common even to triteness, what conclusions must we draw as to the condition of man in general, and what must be the prevailing frame of mind of him who meditates much on these subjects, and who, unbracing the whole tissue of causes and effects, sees Misery unvariably the offspring of Vice, and Vice existing in hostility to the intentions and wishes of God? Let the meditative man turn where he will, he finds traces of the depraved state of Nature, and her consequent misery. History presents him with little but murder, treachery, and crime of every description. Biography only strengthens the view, by concentrating it. The philosophers remind him of the existence of evil, by their lessons how to avoid or endure it; and the very poets themselves, afford him pleasure, not unconnected with regret, as either by contrast, exemplification, or deduction, they bring the world and its circumstances before his eyes.

That such a one then is prone to sadness, who will wonder? If such meditations are beneficial, who will blame them. The discovery of evil naturally leads us to contribute our mite towards the alleviation of the wretchedness it introduces. While we lament vice, we learn to shun it ourselves, and to endeavour, if pos-

sible, to arrest its progress in those around us; and in the course of these high and lofty speculations, we are insensibly led to think humbly of ourselves, and to lift up our thoughts to him who is alone the fountain of all perfection, and the source of all good.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. X.]

La rime est une esclave, et ne doit qu' obeir.*Boileau, L'art Poetique.*

EXPERIMENTS in versification have not often been successful. Sir Philip Sidney, with all his genius, great it undoubtedly was, could not impart grace to his hexameters, or fluency to his sapphies. Spenser's *stanza* was new, but his *verse* was familiar to the ear, and though his rhymes were frequent even to satiety, he seems to have avoided the awkwardness of novelty, and the difficulty of unpractised metres. Donne had not music enough to render his broken rhyming couplets sufferable, and neither his wit, nor his pointed satire were sufficient to rescue him from that neglect which his uncouth and rugged versification speedily superinduced.

In our times Mr. Southey has given grace and melody to some of the Latin and Greek measures, and Mr. Bowles has written rhyming heroics, wherein the sense is transmitted from couplet to couplet, and the pauses are varied with all the freedom of blank verse, without exciting any sensation of ruggedness, or offending the nicest ear. But these are minor efforts: the former of these exquisite poets has taken a yet wider range, and in his "Thalaba, the Destroyer," has spurned at all the received

laws of metre, and framed a fabric of verse altogether his own.

An innovation, so bold as that of Mr. Southey, was sure to meet with disapprobation and ridicule. The world naturally looks with suspicion on systems which contradict established principles, and refuse to quadrate with habits, which, as they have been used to, men are apt to think cannot be improved upon. The opposition which has been made to the metre of Thalaba, is, therefore, not so much to be imputed to its want of harmony, as to the operation of existing prejudices; and it is fair to conclude, that, as these prejudices are softened by usage, and the strangeness of novelty wears off, the peculiar features of this lyrical frame of verse, will be more candidly appreciated, and its merits more unreservedly acknowledged.

Whoever is conversant with the writings of this author, will have observed and admired that greatness of mind, and comprehension of intellect, by which he is enabled, on all occasions, to throw off the shackles of habit and prepossession. Southey never treads in the beaten track; his thoughts, while they are those of nature, carry that cast of originality which is the stamp and testimony of genius. He views things through a peculiar phasis, and while he has the feelings of a man, they are those of a man almost abstracted from mortality, and reflecting on, and painting the scenes of life, as if he were a mere spectator, uninfluenced by his own connection

with the objects he surveys. To this faculty of bold discrimination I attribute many of Mr. Southey's peculiarities as a poet. He never seems to enquire how other men would treat a subject, or what may happen to be the usage of the times; but filled with that strong sense of fitness, which is the result of bold and unshackled thought, he fearlessly pursues that course which his own sense of propriety points out.

It is very evident to me, and, I should conceive, to all who consider the subject attentively, that the structure of verse, which Mr. Southey has promulgated in his *Thalaba*, was neither adopted rashly, nor from any vain emulation of originality. As the poet himself happily observes, "*It is the arabesque ornament of an arabian tale.*" No one would wish to see the Joan of Arc in such a garb; but the wild freedom of the versification of *Thalaba* accords well with the romantic wildness of the story; and I do not hesitate to say, that, had any other known measure been adopted, the poem would have been deprived of half its beauty, and all its propriety. In blank verse it would have been absurd; in rhyme insipid. The lyrical manner is admirably adapted to the sudden transitions and rapid connections of an arabian tale, while its variety precludes tædium, and its full, because unshackled, cadence satisfies the ear with legitimate harmony. At first, indeed, the verse may appear uncouth, because it is new to the ear; but I defy any man, who has any feeling of melody, to peruse the whole poem, without pay-

ing tribute to the sweetness of its flow, and the gracefulness of its modulations.

In judging of this extraordinary poem, we should consider it as a genuine lyric production,—we should conceive it as recited to the harp, in times when such relations carried nothing incredible with them. Carrying this idea along with us, the admirable art of the poet will strike us with tenfold conviction; the abrupt sublimity of his transitions, the sublime simplicity of his manner, and the delicate touches by which he connects the various parts of his narrative, will then be more strongly observable, and we shall, in particular, remark the uncommon felicity with which he has adapted his versification; and in the midst of the wildest irregularity, left nothing to shock the ear, or offend the judgment.

W.

MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. XI.]

THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE.

FEW histories would be more worthy of attention than that of the progress of knowledge, from its first dawn to the time of its meridian splendor, among the ancient Greeks. Unfortunately, however, the precautions which, in this early period, were almost generally taken to confine all knowledge to a particular branch of men; and when the Greeks began to contend for the palm among learned nations, their backwardness to acknowledge the sources from whence they derived the first principles of their philosophy, have served to wrap this interesting subject in almost impenetrable obscurity. Few vestiges, except the Egyptian hieroglyphics, now remain of the learning of the more ancient world. Of the two millions of verses said to have been written by the Chaldean Zoroaster*, we have no relicks; and the oracles which go under his name are pretty generally acknowledged to be spurious.

* Pliny.

The Greeks unquestionably derived their philosophy from the Egyptians and Chaldeans. Both Pythagoras and Plato had visited those countries for the advantage of learning; and if we may credit the received accounts of the former of these illustrious sages, he was regularly initiated in the schools of Egypt, during the period of twenty-two years that he resided in that country, and became the envy and admiration of the Egyptians themselves. Of the Pythagorean doctrines we have some accounts remaining; and nothing is wanting to render the systems of Platonism complete and intelligible. In the dogmas of these philosophers, therefore, we may be able to trace the learning of these primitive nations, though our conclusions must be cautiously drawn, and much must be allowed to the active intelligence of two Greeks. Ovid's short summary of the philosophy of Pythagoras deserves attention.

——— Isque, licet cœli regione remotos
 Mente Deos adiit: et quæ natura negabat
 Visibus humanis oculis ea pectoris hausit.
 Cumque animo et vigili perspexerat omnia curâ;
 In medium discenda dabat: cœtumque silentum,
 Dictaque mirantum, magni primordia mundi
 Et rerum causas et quid natura docebat,
 Quid Deus: unde nives: quæ fulminis esset origo
 Jupiter an venti, discussa nube tonarent,
 Quid quateret terras: quâ sidera lege mearent
 Et quodcumque latet.

If we are to credit this account, and it is corroborated by many other testimonies, Pythagoras searched deeply into natural causes. Some have imagined, and strongly asserted, that his central fire was figurative of the sun, and, therefore, that he had an idea of its real situation; but this opinion, so generally adopted, may be combated with some degree of reason. I should be inclined to think, Pythagoras gained his idea of the great, central, vivifying, and creative fire from the Chaldeans, and that, therefore, it was the representative not of the sun but of the Deity. Zoroaster taught that there was one God, Eternal, the Father of the Universe: he assimilated the Deity to light, and applied to him the names of Light, Beams, and Splendor. The Magi, corrupting this representation of the Supreme Being, and, taking literally what was meant as an allegory or symbol, supposed that God was this central fire, the source of heat, light, and life, residing in the centre of the universe; and from hence they introduced among the Chaldeans the worship of fire. That Pythagoras was tainted with this superstition is well known. On the testimony of Plutarch, his disciples held, that in the midst of the world is fire, or in the midst of the four elements is the fiery globe of Unity, or Monad—the procreative, nutritive, and excitative power. The sacred fire of Vesta, among the Greeks and Latins, was a remain of this doctrine.

As the limits of this paper will not allow me to take

in all the branches of this subject, I shall confine my attention to the opinions held by these early nations of the nature of the Godhead.

Amidst the corruptions introduced by the Magi, we may discern, with tolerable certainty, that Zoroaster taught the worship of the one true God; and Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato, who had all been instituted in the mysteries of the Chaldeans, taught the same doctrine. These philosophers likewise asserted the omnipotence and eternity of God; and that he was the creator of all things, and the governor of the universe. Plato decisively supported the doctrines of future rewards and punishments; and Pythagoras, struck with the idea of the omnipresence of the Deity, defined him as *animus per universas mundi partes omnemque naturam commens atque diffusus, ex quo omnia quæ nascuntur animalia vitam capiunt**—An intelligence moving upon, and diffused over all the parts of the universe and all nature, from which all animals derive their existence. As for the swarm of gods worshipped both in Egypt and Greece, it is evident they were only esteemed as inferior deities. In the time of St. Paul, there was a temple at Athens inscribed to the unknown God: and Hesiod makes them younger than the earth and heaven.

* Lactantius Div. Inst. lib. cap. 5, etiam, Minneius Felix. "Pythagoræ Deus est animus per universum rerum naturam commens atque intentus ex quo etiam animalium omnium vita capiatur.

Εξ αρχῆς ἡς Γαίῃ καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ἐτίχθη
 Οἱ τ' ἐκ τῶν εὐγενῶν θεοὶ δωτήρες ἑσών.

THEOG.

If Pythagoras, and the other philosophers who succeeded him, paid honour to these gods, they either did it through fear of encountering ancient prejudices, or they reconciled it by recurring to the Dæmonology of their masters, the Chaldeans, who maintained the agency of good and bad dæmons, who presided over different things, and were distinguished into the powers of light and darkness, heat and cold. It is remarkable, too, that amongst all these people, whether Egyptians or Chaldeans, Greeks or Romans, as well as every other nation under the sun, sacrifices were made to the gods, in order to render them propitious to their wishes, or to expiate their offences—a fact which proves, that the conviction of the interference of the Deity in human affairs is universal; and what is much more important, that this custom is primitive, and derived from the first inhabitants of the world.

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MELANCHOLY HOURS.

[No. XII.]

WHILE the seat of empire was yet at Byzantium, and that city was the centre, not only of dominion, but of learning and politeness, a certain hermit had fixed his residence in a cell, on the banks of the Athyras, at the distance of about ten miles from the capital. The spot was retired, although so near the great city, and was protected, as well by woods and precipices, as by the awful reverence with which, at that time, all ranks beheld the character of a recluse. Indeed the poor old man, who tenanted the little hollow, at the summit of a crag, beneath which the Athyras rolls its impetuous torrent, was not famed for the severity of his penances, or the strictness of his mortifications. That he was either studious, or protracted his devotions to a late hour, was evident, for his lamp was often seen to stream through the trees which shaded his dwelling, when accident called any of the peasants from their beds at unseasonable hours. Be this as it may, no miracles were imputed to him; the sick rarely came to petition for the benefit of his prayers, and, though some both loved him, and had good reason for loving him, yet many undervalued him for the want of that very austerity which the old man seemed most desirous to avoid.

It was evening, and the long shadows of the Thracian

mountains were extending still farther and farther along the plains, when this old man was disturbed in his meditations by the approach of a stranger. "How far is it to Byzantium?" was the question put by the traveller: "Not far to those who know the country," replied the hermit, "but a stranger would not easily find his way through the windings of these woods, and the intricacies of the plains beyond them. Do you see that blue mist which stretches along the bounding line of the horizon as far as the trees will permit the eye to trace it? That is the Propontis; and higher up on the left, the city of Constantinople rears its proud head above the waters. But I would dissuade thee, stranger, from pursuing thy journey farther to night. Thou may'st rest in the village, which is half way down the hill; or if thou wilt share my supper of roots, and put up with a bed of leaves, my cell is open to thee." "I thank thee, father," replied the youth, "I am weary with my journey, and will accept thy proffered hospitality." They ascended the rock together. The hermit's cell was the work of Nature. It penetrated far into the rock, and in the innermost recess was a little chapel, furnished with a crucifix, and a human skull, the objects of the hermit's nightly and daily contemplation, for neither of them received his adoration. That corruption had not as yet crept into the christian church. The hermit now lighted up a fire of dry sticks, (for the nights are very piercing in the regions about the Hellespont and the Bosphorus); and then proceeded to prepare their vegetable meal. While he was thus employed, his young guest surveyed, with surprize, the dwelling

which he was to inhabit for the night. A cold rock-hole on the bleak summit of one of the Thracian hills, seemed to him a comfortless choice, for a weak and solitary old man. The rude materials of his scanty furniture still more surprised him. A table fixed to the ground, a wooden bench, an earthen lamp, a number of rolls of papyrus and vellum, and a heap of leaves in a corner, the hermit's bed, were all his stock. "Is it possible," at length he exclaimed, "that you can tenant this comfortless cave, with these scanty accommodations, through choice. Go with me, old man, to Constantinople, and receive from me those conveniences which befit your years." "And what art thou going to do at Constantinople, my young friend," said the hermit, "for thy dialect bespeaks thee a native of more southern regions. Am I mistaken, art thou not an Athenian?" "I am an Athenian," replied the youth, "by birth, but I hope I am not an Athenian in vice. I have left my degenerate birth-place, in quest of happiness. I have learned from my master, Speusippus, a genuine assertor of the much belied doctrines of Epicurus, that as a future state is a mere phantom and vagary of the brain, it is the only true wisdom to enjoy life while we have it. But I have learned from him also, that virtue alone is true enjoyment. I am resolved therefore to enjoy life, and that too with virtue, as my companion and guide. My travels are begun with the design of discovering where I can best unite both objects; enjoyment the most exquisite, with virtue the most perfect. You perhaps may have reached the latter, my good father, the former you have certainly

missed. To-morrow I shall continue my search. At Constantinople I shall laugh and sing with the gay, meditate with the sober, drink deeply of every unpolluted pleasure, and taste all the fountains of wisdom and philosophy. I have heard much of the accomplishments of the women of Byzantium. With us, females are mere household slaves; here, I am told, they have *minds*. I almost promise myself that I shall marry, and settle at Constantinople, where the loves and graces seem alone to reside, and where even the *women have minds*. My good father, how the wind roars about this aerial nest of yours, and here you sit, during the long cold nights, all alone, cold and cheerless, when Constantinople is just at your feet, with all its joys, its comforts, and its elegancies. I perceive that the philosophers of our sect, who succeeded Epicurus, were right, when they taught that there might be virtue without enjoyment, and that virtue without enjoyment is not worth the having." The face of the youth kindled with animation as he spake these words, and he visibly enjoyed the consciousness of superior intelligence. The old man sighed, and was silent. As they ate their frugal supper, both parties seemed involved in deep thought. The young traveller was dreaming of the Byzantine women: his host seemed occupied with far different meditations. "So you are travelling to Constantinople in search of happiness," at length exclaimed the hermit, "I too have been a suitor of that divinity, and it may be of use to you to hear how I have fared. The history of my life will serve to fill up the interval before we retire to rest, and my experience may

ot prove altogether useless to one who is about to go the same journey which I have finished.

“These scanty hairs of mine were not always grey, nor these limbs decrepid: I was once, like thee, young, fresh, and vigorous, full of delightful dreams and gay anticipations. Life seemed a garden of sweets, a path of roses; and I thought I had but to chuse in what way I would be happy. I will pass over the incidents of my boyhood, and come to my maturer years. I had scarcely seen twenty summers, when I formed one of those extravagant and ardent attachments, of which youth is so susceptible. It happened, that, at that time, I bore arms under the emperor Theodosius, in his expedition against the Goths, who had overrun a part of Thrace. In our return from a successful campaign, we staid some time in the Greek cities, which border on the Euxine. In one of these cities I became acquainted with a female, whose form was not more elegant than her mind was cultivated, and her heart untainted. I had done her family some trivial services, and her gratitude spoke too warmly to my intoxicated brain to leave any doubt on my mind that she loved me. The idea was too exquisitely pleasing to be soon dismissed. I sought every occasion of being with her. Her mild persuasive voice seemed like the music of heaven to my ears, after the toils and roughness of a soldier's life. I had a friend too, whose converse, next to that of the dear object of my secret love, was most dear to me. He formed the third in all our meetings, and beyond the enjoyment of the society of these two, I

had not a wish. I had never yet spoken explicitly to my female friend, but I fondly hoped we understood each other. Why should I dwell on the subject? I was mistaken. My friend threw himself on my mercy. I found that he, not I, was the object of her affections. Young man, you may conceive, but I cannot describe, what I felt as I joined their hands. The stroke was severe, and for a time, unfitted me for the duties of my station. I suffered the army to leave the place without accompanying it; and thus lost the rewards of my past services, and forfeited the favour of my sovereign. This was another source of anxiety and regret to me, as my mind recovered its wonted tone. But the mind of youth, however deeply it may feel for a while, eventually rises up from dejection, and regains its wonted elasticity. That vigour by which the spirit recovers itself from the depths of useless regret, and enters upon new prospects with its accustomed ardour, is only subdued by Time. I now applied myself to the study of philosophy, under a Greek master, and all my ambition was directed towards letters. But ambition is not quite enough to fill a young man's heart. I still felt a void there, and sighed as I reflected on the happiness of my friend. At the time when I visited the object of my first love, a young christian woman, her frequent companion, had sometimes taken my attention. She was an Ionian by birth, and had all the softness and pensive intelligence which her countrywomen are said to possess when unvitiated by the corruptions so prevalent in that delightful region. You are no stranger to the contempt with which the

Greeks then treated, and do still, in some places, treat the christians. This young woman bore that contempt with a calmness which surprised me. There were then but few converts to that religion in those parts, and its profession was therefore more exposed to ridicule and persecution from its strangeness. Notwithstanding her religion, I thought I could love this interesting and amiable female, and, in spite of my former mistake, I had the vanity to imagine I was not indifferent to her. As our intimacy increased, I learned, to my astonishment, that she regarded me as one involved in ignorance and error, and that, although she felt an affection for me, yet she would never become my wife, while I remained devoted to the religion of my ancestors. Piqued at this discovery, I received the books, which she now for the first time put into my hands, with pity and contempt. I expected to find them nothing but the repositories of a miserable and deluded superstition, more presuming than the mystical leaves of the Sibyls, or the obscure triads of Zoroaster. How was I mistaken! There was much which I could not at all comprehend; but, in the midst of this darkness, the effect of my ignorance, I discerned a system of morality, so exalted, so exquisitely pure, and so far removed from all I would have conceived of the most perfect virtue, that all the philosophy of the Grecian world seemed worse than dross in the comparison. My former learning had only served to teach me that something was wanting to complete the systems of philosophers. Here that invisible link was supplied, and I could even then observe a harmony and consistency in

the whole, which carried irresistible conviction to my mind. I will not enlarge on this subject. Christianity is not a mere set of opinions to be embraced by the understanding. It is the work of the heart as well as the head. Let it suffice to say, that, in time, I became a christian and the husband of Sapphira.

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THE END.

