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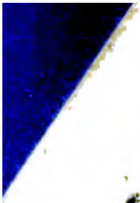
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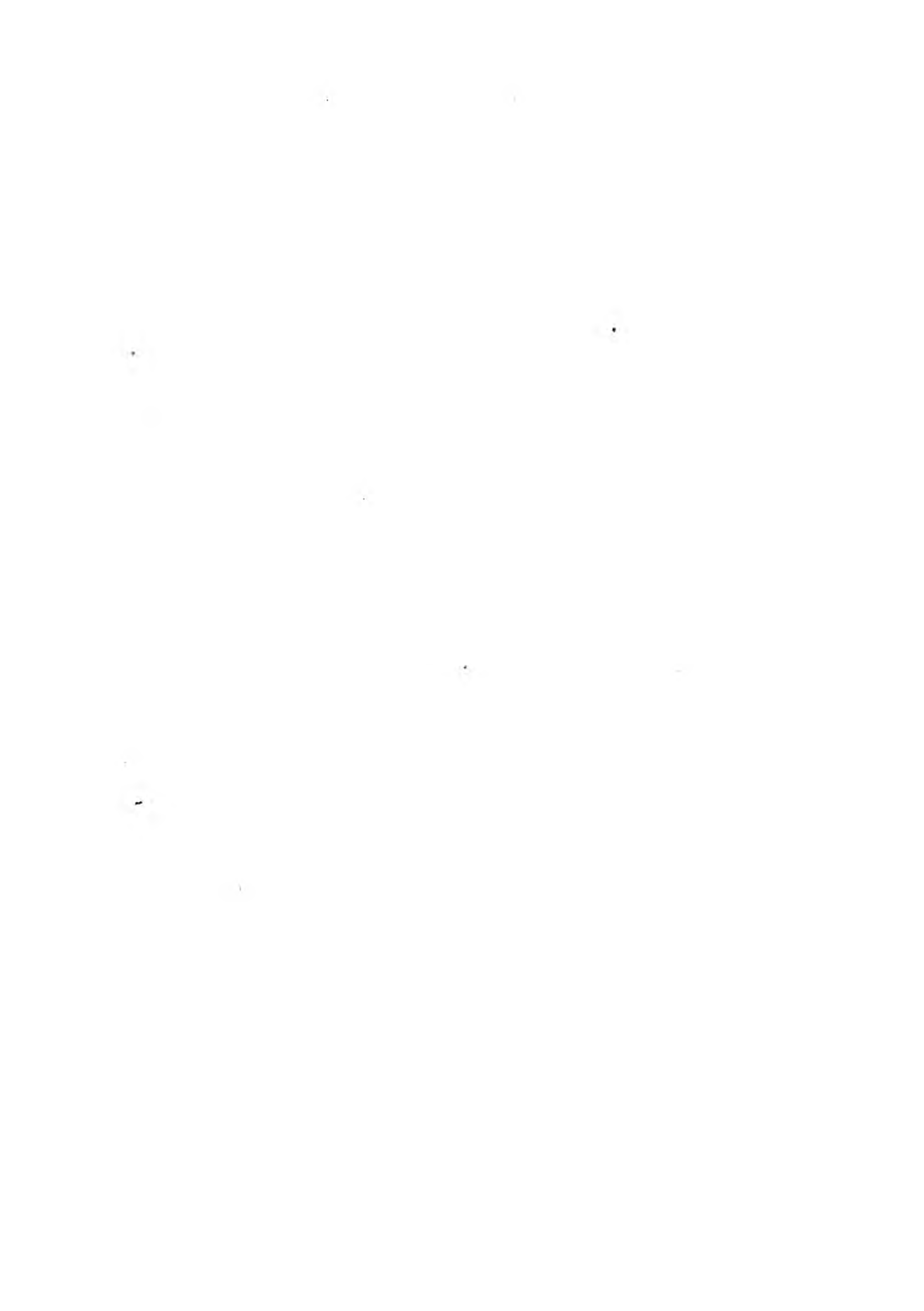


Francis H. Napier.

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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

A New Edition.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

PART I.

VOL. III.

B

DEDICATION.

TO ———.

*HAPPY the feeling from the bosom thrown
In perfect shape, whose beauty Time shall spare
Though a breath made it, like a bubble blown
For summer pastime into wanton air ;
Happy the thought best likened to a stone
Of the sea-beach, when, polished with nice care,
Veins it discovers exquisite and rare,
Which for the loss of that moist gleam atone
That tempted first to gather it. That here,
O chief of Friends ! such feelings I present,
To thy regard, with thoughts so fortunate,
Were a vain notion ; but the hope is dear,
That thou, if not with partial joy elate,
Wilt smile upon this gift with more than mild content !*

I.

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room ;
And hermits are contented with their cells ;
And students with their pensive citadels :
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy ; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells :
In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is : and hence to me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground :
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

II.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH.

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass ;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal :
Dark is the ground ; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, seems to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food ; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends ! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain ;
Oh ! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

III.

ADMONITION.

Intended more particularly for the perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

WELL may'st thou halt—and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode;—forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the Home must be if it were thine,
Eventhine, though fewthy wants!—Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt, and melt away.

IV.

“BELOVED Vale!” I said, “when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one.”
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none.
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crosst
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small!
A Juggler’s balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

v.

1801.

PELION and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled :
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold ;
And that inspiring Hill, which “ did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,”
Shines with poetic radiance as of old ;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds :
What was the great Parnassus’ self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw ? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far ; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

VI.

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among Men or Naiads sought
Notice or name!—It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will ;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Oftener than Ganges or the Nile ; a thought
Of private recollection sweet and still !
Months perish with their moons ; year treads on year ;
But, faithful Emma ! thou with me canst say
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they ;
The immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

VII.

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied ;
With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side,
And the glad Muse at liberty to note
All that to each is precious, as we float
Gently along ; regardless who shall chide
If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
Happy Associates breathing air remote
From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
Why have I crowded this small bark with you
And others of your kind, ideal crew !
While here sits One whose brightness owes its hues
To flesh and blood ; no Goddess from above,
No fleeting Spirit, but my own true Love ?

VIII.

THE fairest, brightest hues of ether fade ;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die ;
O Friend ! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade ;
Such strains of rapture as * the Genius played
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high ;
He who stood visible to Mirzah's eye,
Never before to human sight betrayed.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread !
The visionary Arches are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas ;
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

* See the Vision of Mirza in the Spectator.

IX.

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE,

Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.

PRAISED be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape ;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day ;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood ;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art ! which Morning, Noon-tide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry ;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

X.

“WHY, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings—
Dull, flagging notes that with each other jar?”
“Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far
From its own country, and forgive the strings.”
A simple answer! but even so forth springs,
From the Castalian fountain of the heart,
The Poetry of Life, and all *that* Art
Divine of words quickening insensate things.
From the submissive necks of guiltless men
Stretched on the block, the glittering axe recoils;
Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the toils
Of mortal sympathy; what wonder then
That the poor Harp distempered music yields
To its sad Lord, far from his native fields?

XI.

AERIAL ROCK—whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets my sight ;
When I step forth to hail the morning light ;
Or quit the stars with a lingering farewell—how
Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow ?
How, with the Muse's aid, her love attest ?
—By planting on thy naked head the crest
Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme !
That doth presume no more than to supply
A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
Rise, then, ye votive Towers ! and catch a gleam
Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.

XII.

TO SLEEP.

O GENTLE SLEEP! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no ;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child :
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled :
O gentle Creature ! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

XIII.

TO SLEEP.

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep !
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names ;
The very sweetest, Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep !
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering ; Balm that tames
All anguish ; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost ?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most !

XIV.

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one ; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky ;
I thought of all by turns, and yet I lie
Sleepless ! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees ;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep ! by any stealth :
So do not let me wear to-night away :
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth ?
Come, blessèd barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !

XV.

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST.

THE imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
Owns not a sylvan bower ; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
Ceilinged and roofed ; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure, for the tasks of Spring,
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell ;
And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding wing.
Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree bough,
And dimly-gleaming Nest,—a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow:
I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride !

XVI.

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN "THE COMPLETE ANGLER."

WHILE flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live thy name, meek Walton : Sage benign !
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
O, nobly versed in simple discipline—
Who found'st the longest summer day too short,
To thy loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook—
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
Are cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree ;
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from every nook
Of thy full bosom, gladsome Piety !

XVII.

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER.

BARD of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright ;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, ' deep embayed,
With green hills fenced, with ocean's murmur lulled ;'
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste ;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill !

XVIII.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION
OF A CERTAIN POEM.

See Milton's Sonnet, beginning, ' A Book was writ of late called " Tetrachordon. "'

A BOOK came forth of late, called PETER BELL ;
 Not negligent the style ;—the matter ?—good
 As aught that song records of Robin Hood ;
 Or Roy, renowned through many a Scottish dell ;
 But some (who brook those hackneyed themes full well,
 Nor heat, at Tam o' Shanter's name, their blood)
 Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a harpy brood,
 On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.
 Heed not, wild Rover once through heath and glen,
 Who mad'st at length the better life thy choice,
 Heed not such onset ! nay, if praise of men
 To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
 Lift up that grey-haired forehead, and rejoice
 In the just tribute of thy Poet's pen !

XIX.

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is mute ;
And Care—a comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and softliest reprehend ;
And Love—a charmer's voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse—else troubled without end :
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously—to soothe her aching breast ;
And, to a point of just relief, abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

XX.

TO S. H.

Excuse is needless when with love sincere
Of occupation, not by fashion led,
Thou turn'st the Wheel that slept with dust o'erspread ;
My nerves from no such murmur shrink,—tho' near,
Soft as the Dorhawk's to a distant ear,
When twilight shades darken the mountain's head.
She who was feigned to spin our vital thread
Might smile on work, O Lady, once so dear
To household virtues. Venerable Art,
Torn from the Poor ! yet shall kind Heaven protect
Its own ; though Rulers, with undue respect,
Trusting to crowded factory and mart
And proud discoveries of the intellect,
Heed not the pillage of man's ancient heart.

XXI.

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF WESTMORELAND,
ON EASTER SUNDAY.

WITH each recurrence of this glorious morn
That saw the Saviour in his human frame
Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-dame
Put on fresh raiment—till that hour unworn :
Domestic hands the home-bred wool had shorn,
And she who span it culled the daintiest fleece,
In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of Peace,
Whose temples bled beneath the platted thorn.
A blest estate when piety sublime
These humble props disdained not ! O green dales !
Sad may *I* be who heard your sabbath chime
When Art's abused inventions were unknown ;
Kind Nature's various wealth was all your own ;
And benefits were weighed in Reason's scales !

XXII.

DECAY OF PIETY.

OFT have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek,
Matrons and Sires—who, punctual to the call
Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
Through the long year the House of Prayer would seek :
By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
Of Easter winds, unscared, from hut or hall
They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
But with one fervour of devotion meek.
I see the places where they once were known,
And ask, surrounded even by kneeling crowds,
Is ancient Piety for ever flown ?
Alas ! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds
That, struggling through the western sky, have won
Their pensive light from a departed sun !

XXIII.

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND IN
THE VALE OF GRASMERE.

WHAT need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace ?
Angels of love, look down upon the place ;
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day !
Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
Even for such promise :—serious is her face,
Modest her mien ; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear ;
No disproportion in her soul, no strife :
But, when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

XXIV.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

YES ! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed ;
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit ? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour ;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

XXV.

FROM THE SAME.

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold :
Heaven-born, the Soul a heaven-ward course must hold ;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes : nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul : love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

XXVI.

FROM THE SAME. TO THE SUPREME BEING.

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray :
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed :
Of good and pious works thou art the seed,
That quickens only where thou say'st it may :
Unless thou shew to us thine own true way
No man can find it : Father ! thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread ;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

XXVII.

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh ! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find ?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee ? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss ?—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more ;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

XXVIII.

I.

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud—
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed ;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on ; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
“ Thou art our king, O Death ! to thee we groan.”
Those steps I mounted, as the vapours gave
Smooth way ; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven ; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone ;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave !

XXIX.

NOVEMBER, 1836.

II.

EVEN so for me a Vision sanctified
The sway of Death ; long ere mine eyes had seen
Thy countenance—the still rapture of thy mien—
When thou, dear Sister ! wert become Death's Bride :
No trace of pain or languor could abide
That change:—age on thy brow was smoothed—thy cold
Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
A loveliness to living youth denied.
Oh! if within me hope should ere decline,
The lamp of faith, lost Friend ! too faintly burn ;
Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
The bright assurance, visibly return :
And let my spirit in that power divine
Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

XXX.

AIR sleeps,—from strife or stir the clouds are free ;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea :
But list ! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child ! dear happy Girl ! if thou appear
Heedless—untouched with awe or serious thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year ;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

XXXI.

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go ?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array ;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow ?
What boots the inquiry ?—Neither friend nor foe
She cares for ; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark ?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark !

XXXII.

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed ;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad ;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look ;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer :
When will she turn, and whither ? She will brook
No tarrying ; where She comes the winds must stir :
On went She, and due north her journey took.

XXXIII.

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

XXXIV.

A VOLANT Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play,
On 'coignes of vantage' hang their nests of clay ;
How quickly from that aery hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion ! To the solid ground
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye ;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring ;
While the stars shine, or while day's purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring ;
Where even the motion of an Angel's wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

XXXV.

‘ WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment blind ;
‘ Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays ;
‘ Heavy is woe ;—and joy, for human-kind,
‘ A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze ! ’
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life’s dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined :
’Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer’s temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction’s heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow’s keenest wind.

XXXVI.

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood !
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in flocks ;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks,—
When she stands cresting the Clown's head, and mocks
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world : thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

XXXVII.

PERSONAL TALK.

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight :
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire ;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

XXXVIII.

CONTINUED.

“ YET life,” you say, “ is life ; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe ;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe.”
Even be it so : yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world’s true Worldlings, rank not me !
Children are blest, and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced ; partly at their feet,
And part far from them :—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet ;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave ; the meanest we can meet !

XXXIX.

CONTINUED.

WINGS have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure : wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world ; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good :
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear ;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor ;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

XL.

CONCLUDED.

NOR can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine ; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking ; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not ; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought :
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !
Oh ! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

XLI.

TO B. R. HAYDON.

HIGH is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

XLII.

FROM the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, GILLIES, rise : the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a wingèd steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heaven-ward they direct.—Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove :
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

XLIII.

FAIR Prime of life ! were it enough to gild
With ready sunbeams every straggling shower ;
And, if an unexpected cloud should lower,
Swiftly thereon a rainbow arch to build
For Fancy's errands,—then, from fields half-tilled
Gathering green weeds to mix with poppy flower,
Thee might thy Minions crown, and chant thy power,
Unpitied by the wise, all censure stilled.
Ah ! show that worthier honours are thy due ;
Fair Prime of life ! arouse the deeper heart ;
Confirm the Spirit glorying to pursue
Some path of steep ascent and lofty aim ;
And, if there be a joy that slights the claim
Of grateful memory, bid that joy depart.

XLIV.

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire !
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and yet ;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed debt
To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
Angels and gods ! we *struggle* with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
Depressed ; and then extinguished : and our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore !

XLV.

I HEARD (alas! 't was only in a dream)
Strains—which, as sage Antiquity believed,
By waking ears have sometimes been received
Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;
A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.
For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as he inspires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial Hollow *
Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires!
She soared—and I awoke, struggling in vain to follow.

* See the Phædon of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.

XLVI.

RETIREMENT.

IF the whole weight of what we think and feel,
Save only far as thought and feeling blend
With action, were as nothing, patriot Friend !
From thy remonstrance would be no appeal ;
But to promote and fortify the weal
Of our own Being is her paramount end ;
A truth which they alone shall comprehend
Who shun the mischief which they cannot heal.
Peace in these feverish times is sovereign bliss :
Here, with no thirst but what the stream can slake,
And startled only by the rustling brake,
Cool air I breathe ; while the unincumbered Mind,
By some weak aims at services assigned
To gentle Natures, thanks not Heaven amiss.

XLVII.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT.

CALVERT ! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked ; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth ;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse ; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate ;—
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth !
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

PART II.



I.

SCORN not the Sonnet ; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours ; with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart ; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound ;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound ;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief ;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow : a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways ; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet ; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few !

II.

Not Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions strange—
Not these *alone* inspire the tuneful shell ;
But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.
Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy ;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
Diaphanous because it travels slowly ;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever ;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.

III.

MARK the concentrated hazels that enclose
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns :—and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains.—Live, ye trees!
And thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep :
For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

IV.

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON
HILLS, YORKSHIRE.

DARK and more dark the shades of evening fell ;
The wished-for point was reached—but at an hour
When little could be gained from that rich dower
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us ; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed—a place for bell
Or clock to toll from ! Many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas how steadfast ! objects all for the eye
Of silent rapture ; but we felt the while
We should forget them ; they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

V.

——— ' they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.'

THESE words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight :
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed !
But now upon this thought I cannot brood ;
It is unstable as a dream of night ;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home :
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure :
These cleave to it ; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it : their fellowship is secure

VI.

SEPTEMBER, 1815.

WHILE not a leaf seems faded ; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask ; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware ;
And whispers to the silent birds, “ Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields.”
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature’s tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

VII.

NOVEMBER 1.

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head—
Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullyng wing,
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aërial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Have filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

VIII.

COMPOSED DURING A STORM.

ONE who was suffering tumult in his soul
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
Went forth—his course surrendering to the care
Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowled
Insidiously, untimely thunders growled ;
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
Soul-smitten ; for, that instant, did appear
Large space (mid dreadful clouds) of purest sky,
An azure orb—shield of Tranquillity ;
Invisible, unlooked-for, minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh !

IX.

TO A SNOW-DROP.

LONE Flower, hemmed in with snows and white as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, way-lay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend ;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise ! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers ;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snow-drop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years !

X.

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER.

With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea; and extracts of similar character from other Writers; transcribed by a female friend.

LADY ! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly-gleaming ore ;
And culled, from sundry beds, a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave
The azure brooks, where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs ; and ventured to explore
Dim shades—for reliques, upon Lethe's shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were resigned ;
And lo this Work !—a grotto bright and clear
From stain or taint ; in which thy blameless mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not austere ;
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.

XI.

TO THE LADY BEAUMONT.

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers ;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs—to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall ; and still, as Fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady ! which your feet shall rove.
Yes ! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring ;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

XII.

THERE is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know ;—'t was rightly said ;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their lightest chains ?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains !
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
At last, of hinderance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn ;
Bright, speckless, as a softly-moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed thorn.

XIII.

THE Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
“Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!”
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered ; dazzling the Beholder’s sight
As if to vindicate her beauty’s right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparagèd.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went, floating from her, darkening as it went ;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament ;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured—content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

XIV.

WHEN haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try ;
Like these frail snow-drops that together cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers ! if small to great
May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate ;
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command,
Might overwhelm, but could not separate !

XV.

HAIL, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour !
Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night ;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions.—Ancient Power !
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower,
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The self-same Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power ! brought forth ;
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between ;
The flood, the stars,—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth !

XVI.

WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
'How silently, and with how wan a face!'
Where art thou? Thou so often seen on high
Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And all the Stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company
In that keen sport along the plain of heaven;
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

XVII.

EVEN as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless :
The lake below reflects it not ; the sky,
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing ;—or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

XVIII.

THE stars are mansions built by Nature's hand ;
The sun is peopled ; and with Spirits blest,
Say, can the gentle Moon be unpossesst ?
Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow strand,
A habitation marvellously planned,
For life to occupy in love and rest ;
All that we see—is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage command.
Glad thought for every season ! but the Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring ;
And while the youthful year's prolific art—
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part.

XIX.

DESPONDING Father ! mark this altered bough,
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews ; what more unsightly now,
Its blossoms shrivelled, and its fruit, if formed,
Invisible ? yet Spring her genial brow
Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life : a Stripling's graces blow,
Fade and are shed, that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call :
In *all* men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope—in Parents, sinful *above* all.

XX.

CAPTIVITY.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

“ As the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller’s frame with deadlier chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,
Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray ;
So joys, remembered without wish or will,
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill,—
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state !
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late !—
O be my spirit, like my thraldom, strait ;
And, like mine eyes that stream with sorrow, blind !”

XXI.

ST. CATHERINE OF LEDBURY.

WHEN human touch (as monkish books attest)
Nor was applied nor could be, Ledbury bells
Broke forth in concert flung adown the dells,
And upward, high as Malvern's cloudy crest ;
Sweet tones, and caught by a noble Lady blest
To rapture ! Mabel listened at the side
Of her loved Mistress : soon the music died,
And Catherine said, ~~Here~~ *I set up my rest.*
Warned in a dream, the Wanderer long had sought
A home that by such miracle of sound
Must be revealed :—she heard it now, or felt
The deep, deep joy of a confiding thought ;
And there, a saintly Anchoress, she dwelt
Till she exchanged for heaven that happy ground.

XXII.

———' gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.'

THOUGH narrow be that old Man's cares, and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he seems :
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams ;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer ;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly rounds,
And counted them : and oftentimes will start—
For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL'S HOUNDS
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aërial grounds !

XXIII.

Four fiery steeds impatient of the rein
Whirled us o'er sunless ground beneath a sky
As void of sunshine, when, from that wide plain,
Clear tops of far-off mountains we descry,
Like a Sierra of cerulean Spain,
All light and lustre. Did no heart reply?
Yes, there was One;—for One, asunder fly
The thousand links of that ethereal chain;
And green vales open out, with grove and field,
And the fair front of many a happy Home;
Such tempting spots as into vision come
While Soldiers, weary of the arms they wield
And sick at heart of strife-ful Christendom,
Gaze on the moon by parting clouds revealed.

XXIV.

BROOK ! whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew ;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks ;
If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears ; no Naiad should'st thou be,—
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs :
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a better good ;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

XXV.

COMPOSED ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM.

DOGOMATIC Teachers, of the snow-white fur !
Ye wrangling Schoolmen, of the scarlet hood !
Who, with a keenness not to be withstood,
Press the point home, or falter and demur,
Checked in your course by many a teasing burr :
These natural council-seats your acrid blood
Might cool ;—and, as the Genius of the flood
Stoops willingly to animate and spur
Each lighter function slumbering in the brain,
Yon eddying balls of foam, these arrowy gleams,
That o'er the pavement of the surging streams
Welter and flash, a synod might detain
With subtle speculations, haply vain,
But surely less so than your far-fetched themes !

XXVI.

THIS, AND THE TWO FOLLOWING, WERE SUGGESTED BY MR. W.
WESTALL'S VIEWS OF THE CAVES, ETC. IN YORKSHIRE.

PURE element of waters ! wheresoe'er
Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts,
Green herbs, bright flowers, and berry-bearing plants,
Rise into life and in thy train appear :
And, through the sunny portion of the year,
Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursuivants :
And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants ;
And hart and hind and hunter with his spear,
Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
In man's perturbèd soul thy sway benign ;
And, haply, far within the marble belt
Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine
For grace and goodness lost, thy murmurs melt
Their anguish,—and they blend sweet songs with thine*.

* Waters (as Mr. Westall informs us in the letter-press prefixed to his admirable views) are invariably found to flow through these caverns.

XXVII.

MALHAM COVE.

WAS the aim frustrated by force or guile,
When giants scooped from out the rocky ground,
Tier under tier, this semicirque profound ?
(Giants—the same who built in Erin's isle
That Causeway with incomparable toil !)
O, had this vast theatric structure wound
With finished sweep into a perfect round,
No mightier work had gained the plausive smile
Of all-beholding Phœbus ! But, alas,
Vain earth ! false world ! Foundations must be laid
In Heaven ; for, 'mid the wreck of IS and WAS,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

XXVIII.

GORDALE.

AT early dawn, or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy Eve
Is busiest to confer and to bereave ;
Then, pensive Votary ! let thy feet repair
To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair
Where the young lions couch ; for so, by leave
Of the propitious hour, thou may'st perceive
The local Deity, with oozy hair
And mineral crown, beside his jagged urn,
Recumbent : Him thou may'st behold, who hides
His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn ;
Or (if need be) impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea tides !

XXIX.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1803.

EARTH has not any thing to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

XXX.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

YE sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth !
In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers
Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth ;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth :
Yet, O ye spires of Oxford ! domes and towers !
Gardens and groves ! your presence overpowers
The soberness of reason ; till, in sooth,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet ;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street—
An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown !

XXXI.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

SHAME on this faithless heart ! that could allow
Such transport, though but for a moment's space ;
Not while—to aid the spirit of the place—
The crescent moon clove with its glittering prow
The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady bough ;
But in plain daylight :—She, too, at my side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow !
Sweet Fancy ! other gifts must I receive ;
Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim ;
Take from *her* brow the withering flowers of eve,
And to that brow life's morning wreath restore ;
Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
Of these illusions, or they please no more.

XXXII.

RECOLLECTION OF THE PORTRAIT OF KING HENRY EIGHTH,
TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THE imperial Stature, the colossal stride,
Are yet before me ; yet do I behold
The broad full visage, chest of amplest mould,
The vestments 'broidered with barbaric pride :
And lo ! a poniard, at the Monarch's side,
Hangs ready to be grasped in sympathy
With the keen threatenings of that fulgent eye,
Below the white-rimmed bonnet, far-descried.
Who trembles now at thy capricious mood ?
'Mid those surrounding Worthies, haughty King,
We rather think, with grateful mind sedate,
How Providence educeth, from the spring
Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of good,
Which neither force shall check nor time abate !

XXXIII.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY (GEORGE THE THIRD).

WARD of the LAW!—dread Shadow of a King!
Whose realm had dwindled to one stately room;
Whose universe was gloom immersed in gloom,
Darkness as thick as life o'er life could fling,
Save haply for some feeble glimmering
Of Faith and Hope—if thou, by nature's doom,
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best?—Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell, silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!

XXXIV.

JUNE, 1820.

FAME tells of groves—from England far away—
* Groves that inspire the Nightingale to trill
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay ;
Such bold report I venture to gainsay :
For I have heard the choir of Richmond hill
Chanting, with indefatigable bill,
Strains that recalled to mind a distant day ;
When, haply under shade of that same wood,
And scarcely conscious of the dashing oars
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,
The sweet-souled Poet of the Seasons stood—
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,
Ye heavenly Birds! to your Progenitors.

* Wallachia is the country alluded to.

XXXV.

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE.

WHERE holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line ;
The turf unites, the pathways intertwine ;
And, wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,
Garden, and that Domain where kindred, friends,
And neighbours rest together, here confound
Their several features, mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends
With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave ;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave
Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

XXXVI.

COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF A CASTLE IN NORTH WALES.

THROUGH shattered galleries, 'mid roofless halls,
Wandering with timid footsteps oft betrayed,
The Stranger sighs, nor scruples to upbraid
Old Time, though he, gentlest among the Thralls
Of Destiny, upon these wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan Moon, upon the towers and walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of shade.
Relic of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
Time *loves* Thee! at his call the Seasons twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar;
And, though past pomp no changes can restore,
A soothing recompence, his gift, is thine!

XXXVII.

TO THE LADY E. B. AND THE HON. MISS P.

Composed in the Grounds of Plass Newidd, near Llangollen, 1824.

A STREAM, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
 Along the VALE OF MEDITATION * flows ;
 So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
 In Nature's face the expression of repose ;
 Or haply there some pious hermit chose
 To live and die, the peace of heaven his aim ;
 To whom the wild sequestered region owes,
 At this late day, its sanctifying name.

GLYN CAFAILLGARROCH, in the Cambrian tongue,
 In ours, the VALE OF FRIENDSHIP, let *this* spot
 Be named ; where, faithful to a low-roofed Cot,
 On Deva's banks, ye have abode so long ;
 Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
 Even on this earth, above the reach of Time !

* Glyn Myrwr.

XXXVIII.

TO THE TORRENT AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, NORTH WALES.

1824.

How art thou named? In search of what strange land
From what huge height, descending? Can such force
Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath not Pindus fed thee, where the band
Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with hand
Desperate as thine? Or come the incessant shocks
From that young Stream, that smites the throbbing rocks
Of Viamala? There I seem to stand,
As in life's morn; permitted to behold,
From the dread chasm, woods climbing above woods,
In pomp that fades not; everlasting snows;
And skies that ne'er relinquish their repose;
Such power possess the family of floods
Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

XXXIX.

IN THE WOODS OF RYDAL.

WILD Redbreast ! hadst thou at Jemima's lip
Pecked, as at mine, thus boldly, Love might say,
A half-blown rose had tempted thee to sip
Its glistening dews ; but hallowed is the clay
Which the Muse warms ; and I, whose head is grey,
Am not unworthy of thy fellowship ;
Nor could I let one thought—one motion—slip
That might thy sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed, no sparrow falleth to the ground ?
Who gives his Angels wings to speed through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue profound ;
Then peck or perch, fond Flutterer ! nor forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.

XL.

WHEN Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle
Like a Form sculptured on a monument
Lay couched ; on him or his dread bow unbent
Some wild Bird oft might settle and beguile
The rigid features of a transient smile,
Disperse the tear, or to the sigh give vent,
Slackening the pains of ruthless banishment
From his lov'd home, and from heroic toil.
And trust that spiritual Creatures round us move,
Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal ;
Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
To fettered wretchedness, that no Bastile
Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
Though man for brother man has ceased to feel.

XLI.

WHILE Anna's peers and early playmates tread,
In freedom, mountain-turf and river's marge ;
Or float with music in the festal barge ;
Rein the proud steed, or through the dance are led ;
Her doom it is to press a weary bed—
Till oft her guardian Angel, to some charge
More urgent called, will stretch his wings at large,
And friends too rarely prop the languid head.
Yet, helped by Genius—untired comforter,
The presence even of a stuffed Owl for her
Can cheat the time ; sending her fancy out
To ivied castles and to moonlight skies,
Though he can neither stir a plume, nor shout ;
Nor veil, with restless film, his staring eyes.

XLII.

TO THE CUCKOO.

Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.
The captive 'mid damp vaults unsunned, unaired,
Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach; and to the sick man's room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile search
May perish; time may come when never more
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar;
But, long as cock shall crow from household perch
To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the Spring!

XLIII.

TO ———.

[Miss not the occasion : by the forelock take
That subtle Power, the never-halting Time,
Lest a mere moment's putting-off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.]

“WAIT, prithee, wait !” this answer Lesbia threw
Forth to her Dove, and took no further heed ;
Her eye was busy, while her fingers flew
Across the harp, with soul-engrossing speed ;
But from that bondage when her thoughts were freed
She rose, and toward the close-shut casement drew,
Whence the poor unregarded Favorite, true
To old affections, had been heard to plead
With flapping wing for entrance. What a shriek
Forced from that voice so lately tuned to a strain
Of harmony !—a shriek of terror, pain,
And self-reproach ! for, from aloft, a Kite
Pounced,—and the Dove, which from its ruthless beak
She could not rescue, perished in her sight !

XLIV.

THE INFANT M—— M——.

UNQUIET Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Months each other chase,
And nought untunes that Infant's voice ; no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek ;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one enrapt with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light ;
A nursling couched upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

XLV.

TO —, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR.

SUCH age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite
Than flesh and blood; when'er thou meet'st my sight,
When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

XLVI.

TO ROTH A Q—.

ROTHA, my Spiritual Child! this head was grey
When at the sacred font for thee I stood;
Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
And shalt become thy own sufficient stay:
Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan! was the day
For stedfast hope the contract to fulfil;
Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
Embodied in the music of this Lay,
Breathed forth beside the peaceful mountain Stream*
Whose murmur soothed thy languid Mother's ear
After her throes, this Stream of name more dear
Since thou dost bear it,—a memorial theme
For others; for thy future self, a spell
To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.

* The River Rotha, that flows into Windermere from the Lakes of Grasmere and Rydal.

XLVII.

A GRAVE-STONE UPON THE FLOOR IN THE CLOISTERS OF
WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.

“*MISERRIMUS!*” and neither name nor date,
Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the stone ;
Nought but that word assigned to the unknown,
That solitary word—to separate
From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched one,
Who chose his Epitaph ?—Himself alone
Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
And claim, among the dead, this awful crown ;
Nor doubt that He marked also for his own
Close to these cloistral steps a burial-place,
That every foot might fall with heavier tread,
Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger, pass
Softly !—To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

XLVIII.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

DISCOVERED AT BISHOPSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE.

WHILE poring Antiquarians search the ground
Upturned with curious pains, the Bard, a Seer,
Takes fire :—The men that have been reappear ;
Romans for travel girt, for business gowned ;
And some recline on couches, myrtle-crowned,
In festal glee : why not ? For fresh and clear,
As if its hues were of the passing year,
Dawns this time-buried pavement. From that mound
Hoards may come forth of Trajans, Maximins,
Shrunk into coins with all their warlike toil :
Or a fierce impress issues with its foil
Of tenderness—the Wolf, whose suckling Twins
The unlettered ploughboy pities when he wins
The casual treasure from the furrowed soil.

XLIX.

1830.

CHATSWORTH! thy stately mansion, and the pride
Of thy domain, strange contrast do present
To house and home in many a craggy rent
Of the wild Peak ; where new-born waters glide
Through fields whose thrifty occupants abide
As in a dear and chosen banishment,
With every semblance of entire content ;
So kind is simple Nature, fairly tried !
Yet He whose heart in childhood gave her troth
To pastoral dales, thin-set with modest farms,
May learn, if judgment strengthen with his growth,
That, not for Fancy only, pomp hath charms ;
And, strenuous to protect from lawless harms
The extremes of favoured life, may honour both.

L.

A TRADITION OF OKEN HILL IN DARLEY DALE, DERBYSHIRE.

'Tis said that to the brow of yon fair hill
Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face from face,
Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still
Or feed, each planted on that lofty place
A chosen Tree ; then, eager to fulfil
Their courses, like two new-born rivers, they
In opposite directions urged their way
Down from the far-seen mount. No blast might kill
Or blight that fond memorial ;—the trees grew,
And now entwine their arms ; but ne'er again
Embraced those Brothers upon earth's wide plain ;
Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew
Until their spirits mingled in the sea
That to itself takes all, Eternity.

LI.

FILIAL PIETY.

(ON THE WAY-SIDE BETWEEN PRESTON AND LIVERPOOL.)

UNTOUCHED through all severity of cold ;
Inviolatè, whate'er the cottage hearth
Might need for comfort, or for festal mirth ;
That Pile of Turf is half a century old :
Yes, Traveller ! fifty winters have been told
Since suddenly the dart of death went forth
'Gainst him who raised it,—his last work on earth :
Thence has it, with the Son, so strong a hold
Upon his Father's memory, that his hands,
Through reverence, touch it only to repair
Its waste.—Though crumbling with each breath of air,
In annual renovation thus it stands—
Rude Mausoleum ! but wrens nestle there,
And red-breasts warble when sweet sounds are rare.

LII.

TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT.

[Painted at Rydal Mount, by W. Pickersgill, Esq., for St. John's College, Cambridge.]

Go, faithful Portrait ! and where long hath knelt
Margaret, the saintly Foundress, take thy place ;
And, if Time spare the colours for the grace
Which to the work surpassing skill hath dealt,
Thou, on thy rock reclined, though kingdoms melt
And states be torn up by the roots, wilt seem
To breathe in rural peace, to hear the stream,
And think and feel as once the Poet felt.
Whate'er thy fate, those features have not grown
Unrecognised through many a household tear
More prompt, more glad to fall than drops of dew
By morning shed around a flower half-blown ;
Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear !

LIII.

WHY art thou silent ! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair ?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant ?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant
(As would my deeds have been) with hourly care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know !

LIV.

TO B. R. HAYDON, ON SEEING HIS PICTURE OF NAPOLEON
BUONAPARTE ON THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA.

HAYDON! let worthier judges praise the skill
Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
And charm of colours ; *I* applaud those signs
Of thought, that give the true poetic thrill ;
That unencumbered whole of blank and still,
Sky without cloud—ocean without a wave ;
And the one Man that laboured to enslave
The World, sole-standing high on the bare hill—
Back turned, arms folded, the unapparent face
Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary place
With light reflected from the invisible sun
Set, like his fortunes ; but not set for aye
Like them. The unguilty Power pursues his way,
And before *him* doth dawn perpetual run.

LV.

UPON THE LATE GENERAL FAST, MARCH 1832.

RELUCTANT call it was ; the rite delayed ;
And in the senate some there were who doffed
The last of their humanity, and scoffed
At providential judgment, undismayed
By their own daring. But the people prayed
As with one voice ; their flinty heart grew soft
With penitential sorrow, and aloft
Their spirit mounted, crying, " God us aid !"
Oh that with aspirations more intense,
Chastised by self-abasement more profound,
This people, once so happy, so renowned
For liberty, would seek from God defence
Against far heavier ill, the pestilence
Of revolution, impiously unbound.

LVI.

IN my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud
Slowly surmounting some invidious hill,
Rose out of darkness : the bright Work stood still ;
And might of its own beauty have been proud,
But it was fashioned and to God was vowed
By Virtues that diffused, in every part,
Spirit divine through forms of human art :
Faith had her arch—her arch, when winds blow loud.
Into the consciousness of safety thrilled ;
And Love her towers of dread foundation laid
Under the grave of things ; Hope had her spire
Star-high, and pointing still to something higher ;
Trembling I gazed, but heard a voice—it said,
“ Hell-gates are powerless Phantoms when *we* build.”

LVII.

CONCLUSION.

TO —.

IF these brief Records, by the Muses' art
Produced as lonely Nature or the strife
That animates the scenes of public life *
Inspired, may in thy leisure claim a part ;
And if these Transcripts of the private heart
Have gained a sanction from thy falling tears,
Then I repent not. But my soul hath fears
Breathed from eternity ; for as a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies : now every day
Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel
Of the revolving week. Away, away,
All fitful cares, all transitory zeal !
So timely Grace the immortal wing may heal,
And honour rest upon the senseless clay.

* This line alludes to Sonnets which will be found in another Class.

MEMORIALS
OF
A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

MEMORIALS
OF
A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.
1803.



I.

DEPARTURE

FROM THE VALE OF GRASMERE. AUGUST, 1803.

THE gentlest Shade that walked Elysian plains
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains ;
Even for the tenants of the zone that lies
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to overleap
At will the crystal battlements, and peep
Into some other region, though less fair,
To see how things are made and managed there.
Change for the worse might please, incursion bold
Into the tracts of darkness and of cold ;
O'er Limbo lake with aëry flight to steer,
And on the verge of Chaos hang in fear.
Such animation often do I find,
Power in my breast, wings growing in my mind,

Then, when some rock or hill is overpast,
Perchance without one look behind me cast,
Some barrier with which Nature, from the birth
Of things, has fenced this fairest spot on earth.
O pleasant transit, Grasmere ! to resign
Such happy fields, abodes so calm as thine ;
Not like an outcast with himself at strife ;
The slave of business, time, or care for life,
But moved by choice ; or, if constrained in part,
Yet still with Nature's freedom at the heart ;—
To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
And luxuries extract from bleakest moors ;
With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
And having rights in all that we behold.
—Then why these lingering steps ? A bright adieu,
For a brief absence, proves that love is true ;
Ne'er can the way be irksome or forlorn
That winds into itself for sweet return.

II.

TO THE SONS OF BURNS,

AFTER VISITING THE GRAVE OF THEIR FATHER.

—◆—

‘The Poet’s grave is in a corner of the churchyard. We looked at it with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses—

‘ ‘Is there a man whose judgment clear,’ &c.’

Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-traveller.

’MID crowded obelisks and urns
 I sought the untimely grave of Burns ;
 Sons of the Bard, my heart still mourns
 With sorrow true ;
 And more would grieve, but that it turns
 Trembling to you !

Through twilight shades of good and ill
 Ye now are panting up life’s hill,
 And more than common strength and skill
 Must ye display ;
 If ye would give the better will
 Its lawful sway.

Hath Nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware !
But if the Poet's wit ye share,
 Like him can speed
The social hour—for tenfold care
 There will be need.

Even honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake,
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
 Your steps pursue ;
And of your Father's name will make
 A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retire,
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
 With service meet ;
There seek the genius of your Sire,
 His spirit greet ;

Or where, 'mid 'lonely heights and hows,'
He paid to Nature tuneful vows ;
Or wiped his honourable brows
 Bedewed with toil,
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs
 Upturned the soil ;

His judgment with benignant ray
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way ;
But ne'er to a seductive lay
 Let faith be given ;
Nor deem that ' light which leads astray,
 Is light from Heaven.'

Let no mean hope your souls enslave ;
Be independent, generous, brave ;
Your Father such example gave,
 And such revere ;
But be admonished by his grave,
 And think, and fear !

III.

ELLEN IRWIN :

OR,

THE BRAES OF KIRTLE*.

FAIR Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian maid
Adorned with wreaths of myrtle ;
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

* The Kirtle is a river in the southern part of Scotland, on the banks of which the events here related took place.

From many knights and many squires
The Bruce had been selected ;
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble Youth !
For it may be proclaimed with truth,
If Bruce hath loved sincerely,
That Gordon loves as dearly.

But what are Gordon's form and face,
His shattered hopes and crosses,
To them, 'mid Kirtle's pleasant braes,
Reclined on flowers and mosses ?
Alas that ever he was born !
The Gordon, couched behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing ;
Beholds them blest and blessing.

Proud Gordon maddened by the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,—
Rushed forth, and at the heart of Bruce
He launched a deadly javelin !
Fair Ellen saw it as it came,
And, starting up to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The Youth, her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
Thus, from the heart of her True-love,
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sailed away to Spain ;
And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish crescent.

But many days, and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched Knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing.
So, coming his last help to crave,
Heart-broken, upon Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye, who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkonnel churchyard view
The grave of lovely Ellen :
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid ;
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn *Hic jacet !*

IV.

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL.

(AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND.)

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower !
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head :
And those grey rocks ; that household lawn ;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn ;
This fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake ;
This little bay, a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—
In truth, unfolding thus, ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream ;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep !
Yet, dream or vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart :

God shield thee to thy latest years !
I neither know Thee, nor thy peers ;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away :
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness :
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer :
A face with gladness overspread !
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred !
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays ;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech :
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life !
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful ?
O happy pleasure ! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell ;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess !
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality :
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea ; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see !
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—any thing to thee !

Now thanks to Heaven ! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had ; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes :
Then, why should I be loth to stir ?
I feel this place was made for her ;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl ! from thee to part ;

For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall ;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all !

V.

GLEN-ALMAIN ;

OR,

THE NARROW GLEN.

IN this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN ;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one :
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death ;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent ;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And every thing unreconciled ;

In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet ;
But this is calm ; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed ?
Or is it but a groundless creed ?
What matters it ?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved ; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell :
It is not quiet, is not ease ;
But something deeper far than these :
The separation that is here
Is of the grave ; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead :
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race !
Lies buried in this lonely place.

VI.

STEPPING WESTWARD.



While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"

"*WHAT, you are stepping westward?*"—"Yea."

—"I would be a *wildish* destiny,

If we, who thus together roam

In a strange Land, and far from home,

Were in this place the guests of Chance :

Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,

Though home or shelter he had none,

With such a Sky to lead him on ?

The dewy ground was dark and cold ;

Behind, all gloomy to behold ;

And stepping westward seemed to be

A kind of *heavenly* destiny :

I liked the greeting ; 'twas a sound

Of something without place or bound ;

And seemed to give me spiritual right

To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake :
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy :
Its power was felt ; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

VII.

THE SOLITARY REAPER.

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts, and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again !

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

VIII.

ADDRESS

TO

KILCHURN-CASTLE, UPON LOCH AWE.



‘ From the top of the hill a most impressive scene opened upon our view,
 ‘ —a ruined Castle on an Island (for an Island the flood had made it) at
 ‘ some distance from the shore, backed by a Cove of the Mountain
 ‘ Cruachan, down which came a foaming stream. The Castle occupied
 ‘ every foot of the Island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out
 ‘ of the water,—mists rested upon the mountain side, with spots of sun-
 ‘ shine ; there was a mild desolation in the low grounds, a solemn
 ‘ grandeur in the mountains, and the Castle was wild, yet stately—not
 ‘ dismantled of turrets—nor the walls broken down, though obviously
 ‘ a ruin.’—*Extract from the Journal of my Companion.*

CHILD of loud-throated War ! the mountain Stream
 Roars in thy hearing ; but thy hour of rest
 Is come, and thou art silent in thy age ;
 Save when the wind sweeps by and sounds are caught
 Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.
 Oh ! there is life that breathes not ; Powers there are
 That touch each other to the quick in modes
 Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,

No soul to dream of. What art Thou, from care
Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,
Nor by soft Peace adopted ; though, in place
And in dimension, such that thou might'st seem
But a mere footstool to yon sovereign Lord,
Huge Cruachan, (a thing that meaner hills
Might crush, nor know that it had suffered harm ;))
Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims
To reverence, suspends his own ; submitting
All that the God of Nature hath conferred,
All that he holds in common with the stars,
To the memorial majesty of Time
Impersonated in thy calm decay !

Take, then, thy seat, Vicegerent unproved !
Now, while a farewell gleam of evening light
Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,
Do thou, in turn, be paramount ; and rule
Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods, unite
To pay thee homage ; and with these are joined,
In willing admiration and respect,
Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be called
Youthful as Spring.—Shade of departed Power,
Skeleton of unfleshed humanity,
The chronicle were welcome that should call
Into the compass of distinct regard
The toils and struggles of thy infancy !
Yon foaming flood seems motionless as ice ;

Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye,
 Frozen by distance ; so, majestic Pile,
 To the perception of this Age, appear
 Thy fierce beginnings, softened and subdued
 And quieted in character—the strife,
 The pride, the fury uncontrollable,
 Lost on the aërial heights of the Crusades * !

* The tradition is, that the Castle was built by a Lady during the absence of her Lord in Palestine.

 IX.

 ROB ROY'S GRAVE.

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known ; his grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small pinfold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A FAMOUS man is Robin Hood,
 The English ballad-singer's joy !
 And Scotland has a thief as good,
 An outlaw of as daring mood ;
 She has her brave ROB ROY !
 Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
 And let us chant a passing stave,
 In honour of that Hero brave !

HEAVEN gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart,
And wondrous length and strength of arm :
Nor craved he more to quell his foes,
Or keep his friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as *wise* as brave ;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong ;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave ;
As wise in thought as bold in deed :
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, “ What need of books ?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves :
They stir us up against our kind ;
And worse, against ourselves.

We have a passion—make a law,
Too false to guide us or control !
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few :
These find I graven on my heart :
That tells me what to do.

The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind !
With them no strife can last ; they live
 In peace, and peace of mind.

For why ?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
 And they should keep who can.

A lesson that is quickly learned,
A signal this which all can see !
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
 To wanton cruelty.

All freakishness of mind is checked ;
He tamed, who foolishly aspires ;
While to the measure of his might
 Each fashions his desires.

All kinds, and creatures, stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit :
'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
 And who is to submit.

Since, then, the rule of right is plain,
And longest life is but a day ;
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
 I'll take the shortest way."

And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer heat and winter snow :
The Eagle, he was lord above,
 And Rob was lord below.

So was it—*would*, at least, have been
But through untowardness of fate ;
For Polity was then too strong—
 He came an age too late ;

Or shall we say an age too soon ?
For, were the bold Man living *now*,
How might he flourish in his pride,
 With buds on every bough !

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains,
Would all have seemed but paltry things,
 Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never lingered here,
To these few meagre Vales confined ;
But thought how wide the world, the times
 How fairly to his mind !

And to his Sword he would have said,
“ Do Thou my sovereign will enact
From land to land through half the earth !
 Judge thou of law and fact !

'Tis fit that we should do our part ;
 Becoming, that mankind should learn
 That we are not to be surpassed
 In fatherly concern.

Of old things all are over old,
 Of good things none are good enough :—
 We'll shew that we can help to frame
 A world of other stuff.

I, too, will have my kings that take
 From me the sign of life and death :
 Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
 Obedient to my breath."

And, if the word had been fulfilled,
 As *might* have been, then, thought of joy !
 France would have had her present Boast ;
 And we our own Rob Roy !

Oh ! say not so ; compare them not ;
 I would not wrong thee, Champion brave !
 Would wrong thee nowhere ; least of all
 Here standing by thy grave.

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts,
 Wild Chieftain of a savage Clan !
 Hadst this to boast of ; thou didst love
 The *liberty* of man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thou would'st have nobly stirred thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For thou wert still the poor man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand ;
And all the oppressed, who wanted strength,
Had thine at their command.

Bear witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's heights,
And by Loch Lomond's braes !

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same ;
The proud heart flashing through the eyes,
At sound of ROB ROY's name.

X.

SONNET.

COMPOSED AT ——— CASTLE.

DEGENERATE Douglas ! oh, the unworthy Lord !
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggared and outraged !—Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old Trees ; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed :
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

XI.

YARROW UNVISITED.

(See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning

‘Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!’—)

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my ‘*winsome Marrow,*’
“Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow.”

“Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, ’tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow’s banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us ;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus ;
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow :
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow ?

What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under ?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn ;
My True-love sighed for sorrow ;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !

"Oh ! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing !
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock *,
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough ;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

* See Hamilton's Ballad as above.

Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow ;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow !
We will not see them ; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow ;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown !
It must, or we shall rue it :
We have a vision of our own ;
Ah ! why should we undo it ?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow !
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow !

If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy ;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow ! ”

XII.

SONNET

IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY,

An Invasion being expected, October 1803.

Six thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame ;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
O for a single hour of that Dundee,
Who on that day the word of onset gave !
Like conquest would the Men of England see ;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

XIII.

THE MATRON OF JEDBOROUGH AND HER HUSBAND.

At Jedborough, my companion and I went into private lodgings for a few days ; and the following Verses were called forth by the character and domestic situation of our Hostess.

AGE ! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers,
 And call a train of laughing Hours ;
 And bid them dance, and bid them sing ;
 And thou, too, mingle in the ring !
 Take to thy heart a new delight ;
 If not, make merry in despite
 That there is One who scorns thy power :—
 But dance ! for under Jedborough Tower,
 A Matron dwells who, though she bears
 The weight of more than seventy years,
 Lives in the light of youthful glee,
 And she will dance and sing with thee.

Nay ! start not at that Figure—there !
 Him who is rooted to his chair !
 Look at him—look again ! for he
 Hath long been of thy family.
 With legs that move not, if they can,
 And useless arms, a trunk of man,

He sits, and with a vacant eye ;
A sight to make a stranger sigh !
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom :
His world is in this single room :
Is this a place for mirthful cheer ?
Can merry-making enter here ?

The joyous Woman is the Mate
Of him in that forlorn estate !
He breathes a subterraneous damp ;
But bright as Vesper shines her lamp :
He is as mute as Jedborough Tower ;
She jocund as it was of yore,
With all its bravery on ; in times
When all alive with merry chimes,
Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
It roused the Vale to holiday.

I praise thee, Matron ! and thy due
Is praise, heroic praise, and true !
With admiration I behold
Thy gladness unsubdued and bold :
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent :
This do I see ; and something more ;
A strength unthought of heretofore !
Delighted am I for thy sake ;
And yet a higher joy partake :

Our Human-nature throws away
Its second twilight, and looks gay ;
A land of promise and of pride
Unfolding, wide as life is wide.

Ah ! see her helpless Charge ! enclosed
Within himself as seems, composed ;
To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
The strife of happiness and pain,
Utterly dead ! yet in the guise
Of little infants, when their eyes
Begin to follow to and fro
The persons that before them go,
He tracks her motions, quick or slow.
Her buoyant spirit can prevail
Where common cheerfulness would fail ;
She strikes upon him with the heat
Of July suns ; he feels it sweet ;
An animal delight though dim !
'Tis all that now remains for him !

The more I looked, I wondered more—
And, while I scanned them o'er and o'er,
Some inward trouble suddenly
Broke from the Matron's strong black eye—
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over-bright !
Nor long this mystery did detain
My thoughts ;—she told in pensive strain

That she had borne a heavy yoke,
Been stricken by a twofold stroke ;
Ill health of body ; and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.

So be it !—but let praise ascend
To Him who is our lord and friend !
Who from disease and suffering
Hath called for thee a second spring ;
Repaid thee for that sore distress
By no untimely joyousness ;
Which makes of thine a blissful state ;
And cheers thy melancholy Mate !

XIV.

FLY, some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-dale !
Say that we come, and come by this day's light ;
Fly upon swiftest wing round field and height,
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale ;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The kitten frolic, like a gamesome sprite,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near-approaching good that shall not fail :
And from that Infant's face let joy appear ;
Yea, let our Mary's one companion child—
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and wild—
Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

XV.

THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY.

A TALE TOLD BY THE FIRE-SIDE, AFTER RETURNING TO THE VALE
OF GRASMERE.

Now we are tired of boisterous joy,
Have romped enough, my little Boy !
Jane hangs her head upon my breast,
And you shall bring your stool and rest ;
This corner is your own.

There ! take your seat, and let me see
That you can listen quietly :
And, as I promised, I will tell
That strange adventure which befel
A poor blind Highland Boy.

A *Highland* Boy !—why call him so ?
Because, my Darlings, ye must know
That, under hills which rise like towers
Far higher hills than these of ours !
He from his birth had lived.

He ne'er had seen one earthly sight ;
The sun, the day ; the stars, the night ;
Or tree, or butterfly, or flower,
Or fish in stream, or bird in bower,
Or woman, man, or child.

And yet he neither drooped nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind ;
For God took pity on the Boy,
And was his friend ; and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know.

His Mother, too, no doubt, above
Her other children him did love :
For, was she here, or was she there,
She thought of him with constant care,
And more than mother's love.

And proud she was of heart, when clad
In crimson stockings, tartan plaid,
And bonnet with a feather gay,
To Kirk he on the sabbath day
Went hand in hand with her.

A dog too, had he ; not for need,
But one to play with and to feed ;
Which would have led him, if bereft
Of company or friends, and left
Without a better guide.

And then the bagpipes he could blow—
And thus from house to house would go ;
And all were pleased to hear and see,
For none made sweeter melody
 Than did the poor blind Boy.

Yet he had many a restless dream ;
Both when he heard the eagles scream,
And when he heard the torrents roar,
And heard the water beat the shore
 Near which their cottage stood.

Beside a lake their cottage stood,
Not small like ours, a peaceful flood ;
But one of mighty size, and strange ;
That, rough or smooth, is full of change,
 And stirring in its bed.

For to this lake, by night and day,
The great Sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills ;
And drinks up all the pretty rills
 And rivers large and strong :

Then hurries back the road it came—
Returns, on errand still the same ;
This did it when the earth was new ;
And this for evermore will do,
 As long as earth shall last.

And, with the coming of the tide,
Come boats and ships that safely ride
Between the woods and lofty rocks;
And to the shepherds with their flocks
Bring tales of distant lands.

And of those tales, whate'er they were,
The blind Boy always had his share ;
Whether of mighty towns, or vales
With warmer suns and softer gales,
Or wonders of the Deep.

Yet more it pleased him, more it stirred,
When from the water-side he heard
The shouting, and the jolly cheers ;
The bustle of the mariners
In stillness or in storm.

But what do his desires avail ?
For He must never handle sail ;
Nor mount the mast, nor row, nor float
In sailor's ship, or fisher's boat,
Upon the rocking waves.

His Mother often thought, and said,
What sin would be upon her head
If she should suffer this : " My Son,
Whate'er you do, leave this undone ;
The danger is so great."

Thus lived he by Loch-Leven's side
Still sounding with the sounding tide,
And heard the billows leap and dance,
Without a shadow of mischance,
Till he was ten years old.

When one day (and now mark me well,
Ye soon shall know how this befel)
He in a vessel of his own,
On the swift flood is hurrying down,
Down to the mighty Sea.

In such a vessel never more
May human creature leave the shore !
If this or that way he should stir,
Woe to the poor blind Mariner !
For death will be his doom.

But say what bears him ?—Ye have seen
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright ;
Gifts which, for wonder or delight,
Are brought in ships from far.

Such gifts had those seafaring men
Spread round that haven in the glen ;
Each hut, perchance, might have its own ;
And to the Boy they all were known—
He knew and prized them all.

The rarest was a Turtle-shell
Which he, poor Child, had studied well ;
A shell of ample size, and light
As the pearly car of Amphitrite,
That sportive dolphins drew.

And, as a Coracle that braves
On Vaga's breast the fretful waves,
This shell upon the deep would swim,
And gaily lift its fearless brim
Above the tossing surge.

And this the little blind Boy knew :
And he a story strange yet true
Had heard, how in a shell like this
An English Boy, O thought of bliss !
Had stoutly launched from shore ;

Launched from the margin of a bay
Among the Indian isles, where lay
His father's ship, and had sailed far—
To join that gallant ship of war,
In his delightful shell.

Our Highland boy oft visited
The house that held this prize ; and, led
By choice or chance, did thither come
One day when no one was at home,
And found the door unbarred.

While there he sate, alone and blind,
That story flashed upon his mind ;—
A bold thought roused him, and he took
The shell from out its secret nook,
And bore it on his head.

He launched his vessel,—and in pride
Of spirit, from Loch Leven's side,
Stepped into it—his thoughts all free
As the light breezes that with glee
Sang through the adventurer's hair.

A while he stood upon his feet ;
He felt the motion—took his seat ;
Still better pleased as more and more
The tide retreated from the shore,
And sucked, and sucked him in.

And there he is in face of Heaven.
How rapidly the Child is driven !
The fourth part of a mile, I ween,
He thus had gone, ere he was seen
By any human eye.

But when he was first seen, oh me
What shrieking and what misery !
For many saw ; among the rest
His Mother, she who loved him best,
She saw her poor blind Boy.

But for the child, the sightless Boy,
It is the triumph of his joy !
The bravest traveller in balloon,
Mounting as if to reach the moon,
Was never half so blessed.

And let him, let him go his way,
Alone, and innocent, and gay !
For, if good Angels love to wait
On the forlorn unfortunate,
This Child will take no harm.

But now the passionate lament,
Which from the crowd on shore was sent,
The cries which broke from old and young
In Gaelic, or the English tongue,
Are stifled—all is still.

And quickly with a silent crew
A boat is ready to pursue ;
And from the shore their course they take,
And swiftly down the running lake
They follow the blind Boy.

But soon they move with softer pace ;
So have ye seen the fowler chase
On Grasmere's clear unruffled breast
A youngling of the wild-duck's nest
With deftly-lifted oar.

Or as the wily sailors crept
To seize (while on the Deep it slept)
The hapless creature which did dwell
Erewhile within the dancing shell,
They steal upon their prey.

With sound the least that can be made,
They follow, more and more afraid,
More cautious as they draw more near ;
But in his darkness he can hear,
And guesses their intent.

“ *Lei-gha—Lei-gha* ”—he then cried out,
“ *Lei-gha—Lei-gha* ”—with eager shout ;
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray,
And what he meant was, “ Keep away,
And leave me to myself ! ”

Alas ! and when he felt their hands——
You’ve often heard of magic wands,
That with a motion overthrow
A palace of the proudest show,
Or melt it into air :

So all his dreams—that inward light
With which his soul had shone so bright—
All vanished ;—’twas a heartfelt cross
To him, a heavy, bitter loss,
As he had ever known.

But hark ! a gratulating voice,
With which the very hills rejoice :
'Tis from the crowd, who tremblingly
Have watched the event, and now can see
That he is safe at last.

And then, when he was brought to land,
Full sure they were a happy band,
Which, gathering round, did on the banks
Of that great Water give God thanks,
And welcomed the poor Child.

And in the general joy of heart
The blind Boy's little dog took part ;
He leapt about, and oft did kiss
His master's hands in sign of bliss,
With sound like lamentation.

But most of all, his Mother dear,
She who had fainted with her fear,
Rejoiced when waking she espies
The child ; when she can trust her eyes,
And touches the blind Boy.

She led him home, and wept amain,
When he was in the house again :
Tears flowed in torrents from her eyes ;
She kissed him—how could she chastise ?
She was too happy far.

Thus, after he had fondly braved
The perilous Deep, the Boy was saved ;
And, though his fancies had been wild,
Yet he was pleased and reconciled
To live in peace on shore.

And in the lonely Highland dell
Still do they keep the Turtle-shell ;
And long the story will repeat
Of the blind Boy's adventurous feat,
And how he was preserved.

Note.—It is recorded in Dampier's Voyages, that a boy, son of the captain of a Man-of-War, seated himself in a Turtle-shell, and floated in it from the shore to his father's ship, which lay at anchor at the distance of half a mile. In deference to the opinion of a Friend, I have substituted such a shell for the less elegant vessel in which my blind Voyager did actually entrust himself to the dangerous current of Loch Leven, as was related to me by an eye-witness.

MEMORIALS
 OF
 A TOUR IN SCOTLAND.
 1814.

I.

SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL RUIN UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS OF LOCH LOMOND, A PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE RETREAT OF A SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL, FROM WHOM THIS HABITATION ACQUIRED THE NAME OF

THE BROWNIE'S CELL.

I.

To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking fen,
 Or depth of labyrinthine glen ;
 Or into trackless forest set
 With trees, whose lofty umbrage met ;
 World-wearied Men withdrew of yore ;
 (Penance their trust, and prayer their store ;)
 And in the wilderness were bound
 To such apartments as they found ;
 Or with a new ambition raised ;
 That God might suitably be praised.

II.

High lodged the *Warrior*, like a bird of prey ;
Or where broad waters round him lay :
But this wild Ruin is no ghost
Of his devices—buried, lost !
Within this little lonely isle
There stood a consecrated Pile ;
Where tapers burned, and mass was sung,
For them whose timid Spirits clung
To mortal succour, though the tomb
Had fixed, for ever fixed, their doom !

III.

Upon those servants of another world
When madding Power her bolts had hurled,
Their habitation shook ;—it fell,
And perished, save one narrow cell ;
Whither, at length, a Wretch retired
Who neither grovelled nor aspired :
He, struggling in the net of pride,
The future scorned, the past defied ;
Still tempering, from the unguilty forge
Of vain conceit, an iron scourge !

iv.

Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race,
Who stood and flourished face to face
With their perennial hills ;—but Crime,
Hastening the stern decrees of Time,
Brought low a Power, which from its home
Burst, when repose grew wearisome ;
And, taking impulse from the sword,
And, mocking its own plighted word,
Had found, in ravage widely dealt,
Its warfare's bourn, its travel's belt !

v.

All, all were dispossessed, save him whose smile
Shot lightning through this lonely Isle !
No right had he but what he made
To this small spot, his leafy shade ;
But the ground lay within that ring
To which he only dared to cling ;
Renouncing here, as worse than dead,
The craven few who bowed the head
Beneath the change ; who heard a claim
How loud ! yet lived in peace with shame.

VI.

From year to year this shaggy Mortal went
(So seemed it) down a strange descent :
Till they, who saw his outward frame,
Fixed on him an unhallowed name ;
Him, free from all malicious taint,
And guiding, like the Patmos Saint,
A pen unwearied—to indite,
In his lone Isle, the dreams of night ;
Impassioned dreams, that strove to span
The faded glories of his Clan !

VII.

Suns that through blood their western harbour sought,
And stars that in their courses fought ;
Towers rent, winds combating with woods,
Lands deluged by unbridled floods ;
And beast and bird that from the spell
Of sleep took import terrible ;—
These types mysterious (if the show
Of battle and the routed foe
Had failed) would furnish an array
Of matter for the dawning day !

VIII.

How disappeared He?—ask the newt and toad,
Inheritors of his abode ;
The otter crouching undisturbed,
In her dank cleft ;—but be thou curbed,
O froward Fancy ! 'mid a scene
Of aspect winning and serene ;
For those offensive creatures shun
The inquisition of the sun !
And in this region flowers delight,
And all is lovely to the sight.

IX.

Spring finds not here a melancholy breast,
When she applies her annual test
To dead and living ; when her breath
Quickens, as now, the withered heath ;—
Nor flaunting Summer—when he throws
His soul into the briar-rose ;
Or calls the lily from her sleep
Prolonged beneath the bordering deep ;
Nor Autumn, when the viewless wren
Is warbling near the BROWNIE'S Den.

x.

Wild Relique ! beauteous as the chosen spot
In Nysa's isle, the embellished grot ;
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed—to lie
Safe from his step-dame Rhea's eye ;
Where bud, and bloom, and fruitage, glowed,
Close-crowding round the infant-god ;
All colours,—and the liveliest streak
A foil to his celestial cheek !

II.

COMPOSED AT CORA LINN,

IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER.

'—How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country ; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty.' *MS.*

LORD of the vale ! astounding Flood ;
The dullest leaf in this thick wood
Quakes—conscious of thy power ;
The caves reply with hollow moan ;
And vibrates, to its central stone,
Yon time-cemented Tower !

And yet how fair the rural scene !
For thou, O Clyde, hast ever been
Beneficent as strong ;
Pleased in refreshing dew to steep
The little trembling flowers that peep
Thy shelving rocks among.

Hence all who love their country, love
To look on thee—delight to rove
Where they thy voice can hear ;
And, to the patriot-warrior's Shade,
Lord of the vale ! to Heroes laid
In dust, that voice is dear !

Along thy banks, at dead of night
Sweeps visibly the Wallace Wight ;
Or stands, in warlike vest,
Aloft, beneath the moon's pale beam,
A champion worthy of the stream,
Yon grey tower's living crest !

But clouds and envious darkness hide
A Form not doubtfully descried :—
Their transient mission o'er,
O say to what blind region flee
These Shapes of awful phantasy ?
To what untrodden shore ?

Less than divine command they spurn ;
But this we from the mountains learn,
And this the valleys show ;
That never will they deign to hold
Communion where the heart is cold
To human weal and woe.

The man of abject soul in vain
Shall walk the Marathonian plain ;
Or thrid the shadowy gloom,
That still invests the guardian Pass,
Where stood, sublime, Leonidas
Devoted to the tomb.

Nor deem that it can aught avail
For such to glide with oar or sail
Beneath the piny wood,
Where Tell once drew, by Uri's lake,
His vengeful shafts—prepared to slake
Their thirst in Tyrants' blood.

III.

EFFUSION,

IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND ON THE BANKS OF THE BRAN,
NEAR DUNKELD.

—◆—

‘The waterfall, by a loud roaring, warned us when we must expect it. We were first, however, conducted into a small apartment, where the Gardener desired us to look at a picture of Ossian, which, while he was telling the history of the young Artist who executed the work, disappeared, parting in the middle—flying asunder as by the touch of magic—and lo! we are at the entrance of a splendid apartment, which was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions; the great cascade, opposite the window, which faced us, being reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling and against the walls.’—*Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-Traveller.*

WHAT He—who, mid the kindred throng
Of Heroes that inspired his song,
Doth yet frequent the hill of storms,
The stars dim-twinkling through their forms!
What! Ossian here—a painted Thrall,
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall;
To serve—an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen;
And, when the moment comes, to part
And vanish by mysterious art;

Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder ;
A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing ;
One loud cascade in front, and lo !
A thousand like it, white as snow—
Streams on the walls, and torrent-foam
As active round the hollow dome,
Illusive cataracts! of their terrors
Not stripped, nor voiceless in the mirrors,
That catch the pageant from the flood
Thundering adown a rocky wood.
What pains to dazzle and confound !
What strife of colour shape and sound
In this quaint medley, that might seem
Devised out of a sick man's dream !
Strange scene, fantastic and uneasy
As ever made a maniac dizzy,
When disenchanted from the mood
That loves on sullen thoughts to brood !

O Nature—in thy changeful visions,
Through all thy most abrupt transitions
Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime—
Ever averse to pantomime,
Thee neither do they know nor us
Thy servants, who can trifle thus ;
Else verily the sober powers
Of rock that frowns, and stream that roars,

Exalted by congenial sway
Of Spirits, and the undying Lay,
And Names that moulder not away,
Had wakened some redeeming thought
More worthy of this favoured Spot ;
Recalled some feeling—to set free
The Bard from such indignity !

* The Effigies of a valiant Wight
I once beheld, a Templar Knight ;
Not prostrate, not like those that rest
On tombs, with palms together prest,
But sculptured out of living stone,
And standing upright and alone,
Both hands with rival energy
Employed in setting his sword free
From its dull sheath—stern sentinel
Intent to guard St. Robert's cell ;
As if with memory of the affray
Far distant, when, as legends say,
The Monks of Fountain's thronged to force
From its dear home the Hermit's corse,
That in their keeping it might lie,
To crown their abbey's sanctity.
So had they rushed into the grot
Of sense despised, a world forgot,
And torn him from his loved retreat,
Where altar-stone and rock-hewn seat

* On the banks of the River Nid, near Knaresborough.

Still hint that quiet best is found,
Even by the *Living*, under ground ;
But a bold Knight, the selfish aim
Defeating, put the Monks to shame,
There where you see his Image stand
Bare to the sky, with threatening brand
Which lingering NID is proud to show
Reflected in the pool below.

Thus, like the men of earliest days,
Our sires set forth their grateful praise :
Uncouth the workmanship, and rude !
But, nursed in mountain solitude,
Might some aspiring artist dare
To seize whate'er, through misty air,
A ghost, by glimpses, may present
Of imitable lineament,
And give the phantom an array
That less should scorn the abandoned clay ;
Then let him hew with patient stroke
An Ossian out of mural rock,
And leave the figurative Man—
Upon thy margin, roaring Bran !—
Fixed, like the Templar of the steep,
An everlasting watch to keep ;
With local sanctities in trust,
More precious than a hermit's dust ;
And virtues through the mass infused,
Which old idolatry abused.

What though the Granite would deny
All fervour to the sightless eye ;
And touch from rising suns in vain
Solicit a Memnonian strain ;
Yet, in some fit of anger sharp,
The wind might force the deep-grooved harp
To utter melancholy moans
Not unconnected with the tones
Of soul-sick flesh and weary bones ;
While grove and river notes would lend,
Less deeply sad, with these to blend !

Vain pleasures of luxurious life,
For ever with yourselves at strife ;
Through town and country both deranged
By affectations interchanged,
And all the perishable gauds
That heaven-deserted man applauds ;
When will your hapless patrons learn
To watch and ponder—to discern
The freshness, the everlasting youth,
Of admiration sprung from truth ;
From beauty infinitely growing
Upon a mind with love o'erflowing—
To sound the depths of every Art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart ?

Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced
With baubles of theatric taste,

O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers
On motley bands of alien flowers
In stiff confusion set or sown,
Till Nature cannot find her own,
Or keep a remnant of the sod
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)
I mused ; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness.

IV.

YARROW VISITED,

SEPTEMBER, 1814.

(See Page 134.)

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted ;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness ;
Mild dawn of promise ! that excludes
All profitless dejection ;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding ?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding :
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers :
And Pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love ;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation :
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy ;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature ;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary !
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in ;
For manhood to enjoy his strength ;
And age to wear away in !
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather !
And what if I enwreathed my own !
'Twere no offence to reason ;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee ;
A ray of fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee !
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure ;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish ;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow !
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

SONNETS
DEDICATED TO LIBERTY.
PART I.

SONNETS

DEDICATED TO LIBERTY.

PART I.

I.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory!—I with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

II.

CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see ?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick, lame, and blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind,
A seemly reverence may be paid to power ;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower :
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown,
What hardship had it been to wait an hour ?
Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone !

III.

TO A FRIEND.

Composed near Calais, on the road leading to Ardres, August 7, 1802.

JONES ! as from Calais southward you and I
 Went pacing side by side, this public Way
 Streamed with the pomp of a too-credulous day *,
 When faith was pledged to new-born Liberty :
 A homeless sound of joy was in the sky ;
 The antiquated Earth, hopeful and gay,
 Beat like the heart of Man : songs, garlands, play,
 Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh !
 And now, sole register that these things were,
 Two solitary greetings have I heard,
 ‘ *Good morrow, Citizen !* ’ a hollow word,
 As if a dead man spake it ! Yet despair
 Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
 Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare.

* 14th July, 1790.

IV.

1801.

I GRIEVED for Buonaparté, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! The tenderest mood
Of that Man's mind—what can it be? what food
Fed his first hopes? what knowledge could *he* gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

V.

CALAIS, AUGUST 15, 1802.

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not names :
This is young Buonaparté's natal day,
And his is henceforth an established sway—
Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay !
Calais is not : and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames
His business as he likes. Far other show
My youth here witnessed, in a prouder time ;
The senselessness of joy was then sublime !
Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

VI.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous east in fee ;
And was the safeguard of the west : the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free ;
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day :
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

VII.

THE KING OF SWEDEN.

THE Voice of Song from distant lands shall call
To that great King ; shall hail the crownèd Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand ; or fall,
If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend ?
And what to him and his shall be the end ?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him ; for the illustrious Swede hath done
The thing which ought to be : He stands *above*
All consequences : work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve :
The heroes bless him, him their rightful son.

* See Note.

VIII.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men !
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den ;—
O miserable Chieftain ! where and when
Wilt thou find patience ? Yet die not ; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow :
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee ; air, earth, and skies ;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

IX.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1802.

Among the capricious acts of tyranny that disgraced those times, was the chasing of all Negroes from France by decree of the government: we had a Fellow-passenger who was one of the expelled.

DRIVEN from the soil of France, a Female came
From Calais with us, brilliant in array,—
A Negro Woman, like a lady gay,
Yet downcast as a woman fearing blame ;
Meek, destitute, as seemed, of hope or aim
She sate, from notice turning not away,
But on all proffered intercourse did lay
A weight of languid speech, or at the same
Was silent, motionless in eyes and face.
Yet still those eyes retained their tropic fire,
Which, burning independent of the mind,
Joined with the lustre of her rich attire
To mock the Outcast—O ye Heavens, be kind !
And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted Race !

X.

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF
LANDING.

HERE, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells ;—those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing ; and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore ;—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales ; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds ; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My Country ! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.

XI.

SEPTEMBER, 1802.

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood ;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France how near !
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk ; for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters ; yet what power is there !
What mightiness for evil and for good !
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity ;
Yet in themselves are nothing ! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only the Nations shall be great and free.

XII.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF
SWITZERLAND.

Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty !
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly striven :
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That mountain Floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !

XIII.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom !—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
The wealthiest man among us is the best :
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry ; and these we adore :
Plain living and high thinking are no more :
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

XIV.

LONDON, 1802.

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour :
England hath need of thee : she is a fen
Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart :
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

XV.

GREAT men have been among us ; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none :
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend :
They knew how genuine glory was put on ;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour : what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness ! unceasing change !
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road ;
But equally a want of books and men !

XVI.

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters, unwithstood,'
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

XVII.

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
But when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
But dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

XVIII.

OCTOBER, 1803.

ONE might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for men ; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favours : rural works are there,
And ordinary business without care ;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please !
How piteous then that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge ; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite :
Should come in phrensy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth !

XIX.

THERE is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear
Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall :
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
Their fetters in their souls. For who could be,
Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach that he must share
With Human-nature ? Never be it ours
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,
And know that noble feelings, manly powers,
Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine ;
And earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers
Fade, and participate in man's decline.

XX.

OCTOBER, 1803.

THESE times strike monied worldlings with dismay :
Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
With words of apprehension and despair :
While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
Sound, healthy, children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath ;
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death ?

XXI.

ENGLAND ! the time is come when thou should'st wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food ;
The truth should now be better understood ;
Old things have been unsettled ; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses ; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou would'st step between.
England ! all nations in this charge agree :
But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
Far—far more abject, is thine Enemy :
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight :
Oh grief that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee !

XXII.

OCTOBER, 1803.

WHEN, looking on the present face of things,
I see one Man, of men the meanest too !
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
With mighty Nations for his underlings,
The great events with which old story rings
Seem vain and hollow ; I find nothing great :
Nothing is left which I can venerate ;
So that almost a doubt within me springs
Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God !
I measure back the steps which I have trod ;
And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the strength
Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

XXIII.

TO THE MEN OF KENT. OCTOBER, 1803.

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a Soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment !
To France be words of invitation sent !
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath ;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before ;—
No parleying now ! In Britain is one breath ;
We all are with you now from shore to shore :—
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death !

XXIV.

WHAT if our numbers barely could defy
The arithmetic of babes, must foreign hordes,
Slaves, vile as ever were befooled by words,
Striking through English breasts the anarchy
Of Terror, bear us to the ground, and tie
Our hands behind our backs with felon cords?
Yields every thing to discipline of swords?
Is man as good as man, none low, none high?
Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout,
When in some great extremity breaks out
A people, on their own beloved Land
Risen, like one man, to combat in the sight
Of a just God for liberty and right.

XXV.

ANTICIPATION. OCTOBER, 1803.

SHOUT, for a mighty Victory is won !
On British ground the Invaders are laid low ;
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again !—the work is done.
Come forth, ye old men, now in peaceful show
And greet your sons ! drums beat and trumpets blow !
Make merry, wives ! ye little children, stun
Your grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise !
Clap, infants, clap your hands ! Divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
And even the prospect of our brethren slain,
Hath something in it which the heart enjoys :—
In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

XXVI.

NOVEMBER, 1806.

ANOTHER year!—another deadly blow!
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And We are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

O D E.

I.

WHO rises on the banks of Seine,
 And binds her temples with the civic wreath?
 What joy to read the promise of her mien!
 How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings beneath!
 But they are ever playing,
 And twinkling in the light,
 And, if a breeze be straying,
 That breeze she will invite;
 And stands on tiptoe, conscious she is fair,
 And calls a look of love into her face,
 And spreads her arms, as if the general air
 Alone could satisfy her wide embrace.
 —Melt, Principalities, before her melt!
 Her love ye hailed—her wrath have felt!
 But She through many a change of form hath gone,
 And stands amidst you now, an armèd creature,
 Whose panoply is not a thing put on,
 But the live scales of a portentous nature;
 That, having wrought its way from birth to birth,
 Stalks round—abhorred by Heaven, a terror to the Earth!

ii.

I marked the breathings of her dragon crest ;
 My Soul, a sorrowful interpreter,
 In many a midnight vision bowed
 Before the ominous aspect of her spear ;
 Whether the mighty beam, in scorn upheld,
 Threatened her foes,—or, pompously at rest,
 Seemed to bisect her orbèd shield,
 As stretches a blue bar of solid cloud
 Across the setting sun—and through all the fiery west.

iii.

So did she daunt the Earth, and God defy !
 And, wheresoe'er she spread her sovereignty,
 Pollution tainted all that was most pure.
 —Have we not known—and live we not to tell—
 That Justice seemed to hear her final knell ?
 Faith buried deeper in her own deep breast
 Her stores, and sighed to find them insecure !
 And Hope was maddened by the drops that fell
 From shades, her chosen place of short-lived rest.
 Shame followed shame, and woe supplanted woe—
 Is this the only change that time can show ?
 How long shall vengeance sleep ? Ye patient Heavens,
 how long ?
 —Infirm ejaculation ! from the tongue
 Of Nations wanting virtue to be strong
 Up to the measure of accorded might,
 And daring not to feel the majesty of right !

IV.

Weak Spirits are there—who would ask,
 Upon the pressure of a painful thing,
 The lion's sinews; or the eagle's wing ;
 Or let their wishes loose, in forest-glade,
 Among the lurking powers
 Of herbs and lowly flowers,
 Or seek, from saints above, *miraculous* aid—
 That Man may be accomplished for a task
 Which his own nature hath enjoined ;—and why ?
 If, when that interference hath relieved him,
 He must sink down to languish
 In worse than former helplessness—and lie
 Till the caves roar,—and, imbecility
 Again engendering anguish,
 The same weak wish returns, that had before deceived him.

V.

But Thou, supreme Disposer ! may'st not speed
 The course of things, and change the creed
 Which hath been held aloft before men's sight
 Since the first framing of societies,
 Whether, as bards have told in ancient song,
 Built up by soft seducing harmonies ;
 Or prest together by the appetite,
 And by the power, of wrong !

SONNETS.

PART II.



I.

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY.

A ROMAN Master stands on Grecian ground,
And to the people at the Isthmian Games
Assembled, He, by a herald's voice, proclaims
THE LIBERTY OF GREECE:—the words rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drowned ;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent !
And birds, high flying in the element,
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the sound !
Yet were the thoughtful grieved ; and still that voice
Haunts, with sad echoes, musing Fancy's ear :
Ah ! that a *Conqueror's* words should be so dear :
Ah ! that a *boon* could shed such rapturous joys !
A gift of that which is not to be given
By all the blended powers of Earth and Heaven.

II.

UPON THE SAME EVENT.

WHEN, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn
The tidings passed of servitude repealed,
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian Field,
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter scorn.
“’Tis known,” cried they, “that he, who would adorn
His envied temples with the Isthmian crown,
Must either win, through effort of his own,
The prize, or be content to see it worn
By more deserving brows.—Yet so ye prop,
Sons of the brave who fought at Marathon!
Your feeble spirits. Greece her head hath bowed,
As if the wreath of liberty thereon
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,
Which, at Jove’s will, descends on Pelion’s top.”

III.

TO THOMAS CLARKSON, ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL
FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

March, 1807.

CLARKSON ! it was an obstinate hill to climb :
How toilsome—nay, how dire—it was, by thee
Is known ; by none, perhaps, so feelingly :
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee.—O true yoke-fellow of Time,
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn !
The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn ;
And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness ; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind !

IV.

A PROPHECY. FEBRUARY, 1807.

HIGH deeds, O Germans, are to come from you !
Thus in your books the record shall be found,
' A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound—
ARMINIUS !—all the people quaked like dew
Stirred by the breeze ; they rose, a Nation, true,
True to herself—the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
She rose, and off at once the yoke she threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful trance ;
Those new-born Kings she withered like a flame.'
—Woe to them all ! but heaviest woe and shame
To that Bavarian who could first advance
His banner in accursed league with France,
First open traitor to the German name !

V.

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE,
1807.

CLOUDS, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror?—or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires?—But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
“Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!”

VI.

Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes
The genuine mien and character would trace
Of the rash Spirit that still holds her place,
Prompting the world's audacious vanities !
Go back, and see the Tower of Babel rise ;
The pyramid extend its monstrous base,
For some Aspirant of our short-lived race,
Anxious an aery name to immortalize.
There, too, ere wiles and politic dispute
Gave specious colouring to aim and act,
See the first mighty Hunter leave the brute—
To chase mankind, with men in armies packed
For his field-pastime high and absolute,
While, to dislodge his game, cities are sacked !

VII.

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A
TRACT, OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA.

1808.

Not 'mid the World's vain objects that enslave
The free-born Soul—that World whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave—
Not there ; but in dark wood and rocky cave,
And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds, that never shall be still :
Here, mighty Nature ! in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain ;
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way ;
And look and listen—gathering, whence I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

VIII.

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE SAME OCCASION.

I DROPPED my pen ; and listened to the Wind
That sang of trees up-torn and vessels tost—
A midnight harmony ; and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by chains confined
Of business, care, or pleasure ; or resigned
To timely sleep. Thought I, the impassioned strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
Like acceptance from the World will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past ;
And to the attendant promise will give heed—
The prophecy,—like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.

IX.

HÖFFER.

OF mortal parents is the Hero born
By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led ?
Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead
Returned to animate an age forlorn ?
He comes like Phœbus through the gates of morn
When dreary darkness is discomfited :
Yet mark his modest state ! upon his head,
That simple crest, a heron's plume, is worn.
O Liberty ! they stagger at the shock
From van to rear—and with one mind would flee,
But half their host is buried :—rock on rock
Descends :—beneath this godlike Warrior, see !
Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

X.

ADVANCE—come forth from thy Tyrolean ground,
Dear Liberty ! stern Nymph of soul untamed ;
Sweet Nymph, O rightly of the mountains named !
Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound
And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo, bound ;
Like Echo, when the hunter train at dawn
Have roused her from her sleep : and forest-lawn,
Cliffs, woods and caves, her viewless steps resound
And babble of her pastime !—On, dread Power !
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the herdsman's bower—
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

XI.

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE.

THE Land we from our fathers had in trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die :
This is our maxim, this our piety ;
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we *would* perform in arms—we must !
We read the dictate in the infant's eye ;
In the wife's smile ; and in the placid sky ;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us.—Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the heart !
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind !
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons grasped in fearless hands, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

XII.

ALAS ! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill ;
Or pains abstruse—to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill ;
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword?—Her haughty Schools
Shall blush ; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought ?

XIII.

AND is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true ?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails ?
Ah, no ! though Nature's dread protection fails,
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind ;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear ;
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which without industry they find.

XIV.

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal PAN ;
But more exalted, with a brighter train :
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain ?
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it Heaven !
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death :—else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality ?

XV.

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE.

IT was a *moral* end for which they fought ;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought ?
Nor hath that moral good been *vainly* sought ;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left, an impulse, and a claim
Which neither can be overturned nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep ! among your hills repose !
We know that ye, beneath the stern control
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquished soul :
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes,
Europe breaks forth ; then, Shepherds ! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.

XVI.

HAIL, Zaragoza ! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold ;
Such spectacle demands not tear or sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high
Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue : they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse ;
Disease consumed thy vitals ; War upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force :
Dread trials ! yet encountered and sustained
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And law was from *necessity* received.

XVII.

SAY, what is Honour?—'Tis the finest sense
Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation,—whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust ;
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust—
A Foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil :
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited ; but infamy doth kill.

XVIII.

THE martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corpses : drenched with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped with slain.
Yet see (the mighty tumult overpast)
Austria a Daughter of her Throne hath sold !
And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief. Oh ! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast !

XIX.

BRAVE Schill ! by death delivered, take thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes, 'mid the islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.

A meteor wert thou crossing a dark night ;
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star : such glory is thy right.

Alas ! it may not be : for earthly fame
Is Fortune's frail dependant ; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives ;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed ;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.

XX.

CALL not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee ;
Who slighted fear ; rejected steadfastly
Temptation ; and whose kingly name and state
Have ‘ perished by his choice, and not his fate !’
Hence lives He, to his inner self endeared ;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure*.

* See Note, to Sonnet VII. Page 181.

XXI.

LOOK now on that Adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune ; who, in cruel slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe'er a way was made
By the blind Goddess,—ruthless, undismayed ;
And so hath gained at length a prosperous height,
Round which the elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force !
Curses are *his* dire portion, scorn, and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath ;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

XXII.

Is there a power that can sustain and cheer
The captive chieftain, by a tyrant's doom,
Forced to descend into his destined tomb—
A dungeon dark ! where he must waste the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear ;
What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the rage
Of righteous Vengeance side by side appear,
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise :—
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters ? Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

XXIII.

1810.

AH! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallowed up, remote from ken
Of pitying human-nature? Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs!—Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

XXIV.

IN due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful corse in vestments white ;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose :
Then do a festal company unite
In choral song ; and, while the uplifted cross
Of Jesus goes before, the Child is borne
Uncovered to his grave : tis closed,—her loss
The Mother *then* mourns, as she needs must mourn ;
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief subdued,
Or joy returns to brighten fortitude.

XXV.

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF THOSE FUNERALS.

1810.

YET, yet, Biscayans ! we must meet our Foes
With firmer soul, yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom ; else 'twere worse than vain
To gather round the bier these festal shows.
A garland fashioned of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave :
Oh, bear the infant covered to his grave !
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good !
The awful light of heavenly innocence
Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier ;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

XXVI.

THE OAK OF GUERNICA.

The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1476, after hearing mass in the church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, repaired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain their *fueros* (privileges). What other interest belongs to it in the minds of this people will appear from the following

SUPPOSED ADDRESS TO THE SAME. 1810.

OAK of Guernica ! Tree of holier power
 Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
 (So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine
 Heard from the depths of its aërial bower—
 How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour ?
 What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
 Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
 The dews of morn, or April's tender shower ?
 Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
 Which should extend thy branches on the ground,
 If never more within their shady round
 Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
 Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
 Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.

XXVII.

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED SPANIARD.

1810.

WE can endure that He should waste our lands,
Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame
Return us to the dust from which we came ;
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands :
And we can brook the thought that by his hands
Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands
Which he will break for us he dares to speak,
Of benefits, and of a future day
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway ;
Then, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak ;
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear.

XXVIII.

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence !
I better like a blunt indifference,
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight : and be there joined
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve ;
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind ;
And piety towards God. Such men of old
Were England's native growth ; and, throughout Spain,
(Thanks to high God) forests of such remain :
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold ;
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

XXIX.

1810.

O'ERWEENING Statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth :
But from *within* proceeds a Nation's health ;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride
To the paternal floor ; or turn aside,
In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.
There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood ;
Who to their Country's cause have bound a life
Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given
To labour, and to prayer, to nature, and to heaven*.

* See Laborde's character of the Spanish people: from him the sentiment of these last two lines is taken.

XXX.

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERRILLAS.

HUNGER, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height—
These hardships ill sustained, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam : but as a flight
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,
So these,—and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long-practised art
And newly-kindled hope ; but they are fled—
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead :
Where now ?—Their sword is at the Foeman's heart !
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.

XXXI.

SPANISH GUERILLAS.

1811.

THEY seek, are sought ; to daily battle led,
Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their Foes,
For they have learnt to open and to close
The ridges of grim war ; and at their head
Are captains such as erst their country bred
Or fostered, self-supported chiefs,—like those
Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose ;
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.
In One who lived unknown a shepherd's life
Redoubted Viriatus breathes again ;
And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,
With that great Leader * vies, who, sick of strife
And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
In some green island of the western main.

* Sertorius.

XXXII.

1811.

THE power of Armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and space ;
But who the limits of that power shall trace
Which a brave People into light can bring
Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating
By just revenge inflamed ? No foot may chase,
No eye can follow, to a *fatal* place
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves.—From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near ;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

XXXIII.

1811.

HERE pause : the poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days ;
From hope, the paramount *duty* that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart—
That an *accursed* thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye ;
Nor—touched with due abhorrence of *their* guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity—
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny !

XXXIV.

THE FRENCH ARMY IN RUSSIA.

1812—13.

HUMANITY, delighting to behold
A fond reflection of her own decay,
Hath painted Winter like a traveller old,
Propped on a staff, and, through the sullen day,
In hooded mantle, limping o'er the plain,
As though his weakness were disturbed by pain :
Or, if a juster fancy should allow
An undisputed symbol of command,
The chosen sceptre is a withered bough,
Infirmly grasped within a palsied hand.
These emblems suit the helpless and forlorn ;
But mighty Winter the device shall scorn.

For he it was—dread Winter ! who beset,
Flinging round van and rear his ghastly net,
That host, when from the regions of the Pole
They shrunk, insane ambition's barren goal—

That host, as huge and strong as e'er defied
Their God, and placed their trust in human pride !
As fathers persecute rebellious sons,
He smote the blossoms of their warrior youth ;
He called on Frost's inexorable tooth
Life to consume in Manhood's firmest hold ;
Nor spared the reverend blood that feebly runs ;
For why—unless for liberty enrolled
And sacred home—ah ! why should hoary Age be bold ?

Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed,
But fleeter far the pinions of the Wind,
Which from Siberian caves the Monarch freed,
And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,
And bade the Snow their ample backs bestride,
And to the battle ride.

No pitying voice commands a halt,
No courage can repel the dire assault ;
Distracted, spiritless, benumbed, and blind,
Whole legions sink—and, in one instant, find
Burial and death : look for them—and descry,
When morn returns, beneath the clear blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy !

XXXV.

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

YE Storms, resound the praises of your King !
And ye mild Seasons—in a sunny clime,
Midway on some high hill, while father Time
Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring,
And loud and long of Winter's triumph sing !
Sing ye, with blossoms crowned, and fruits, and flowers,
Of Winter's breath surcharged with sleety showers,
And the dire flapping of his hoary wing !
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass ;
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain ;
Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the aërial zephyrs as they pass,
That old decrepit Winter—*He* hath slain
That Host, which rendered all your bounties vain !

XXXVI.

By Moscow self-devoted to a blaze
Of dreadful sacrifice ; by Russian blood
Lavished in fight with desperate hardihood ;
The unfeeling Elements no claim shall raise
To rob our Human-nature of just praise
For what she did and suffered. Pledges sure
Of a deliverance absolute and pure
She gave, if Faith might tread the beaten ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most High
Exalt his still small voice ;—to quell that Host
Gathered his power, a manifest ally ;
He, whose heaped waves confounded the proud boast
Of Pharaoh, said to Famine, Snow, and Frost,
“ Finish the strife by deadliest victory ! ”

XXXVII.

THE GERMANS ON THE HEIGHTS OF HOCKHEIM.

ABRUPTLY paused the strife ;—the field throughout
Resting upon his arms each warrior stood,
Checked in the very act and deed of blood,
With breath suspended, like a listening scout.
O Silence ! thou wert mother of a shout
That through the texture of yon azure dome
Cleaves its glad way, a cry of harvest home
Uttered to Heaven in ecstasy devout !
The barrier Rhine hath flashed, through battle-smoke,
On men who gaze heart-smitten by the view,
As if all Germany had felt the shock !
—Fly, wretched Gauls ! ere they the charge renew
Who have seen—themselves now casting off the yoke—
The unconquerable Stream his course pursue.

XXXVIII.

NOVEMBER, 1813.

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,
Our aged Sovereign sits, to the ebb and flow
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe,
Insensible. He sits deprived of sight,
And lamentably wrapt in twofold night,
Whom no weak hopes deceived ; whose mind ensued,
Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
Peace that should claim respect from lawless Might.
Dread King of Kings, vouchsafe a ray divine
To his forlorn condition ! let thy grace
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine ;
Permit his heart to kindle, and embrace
(Though it were only for a moment's space)
The triumphs of this hour ; for they are THINE !

XXXIX.

FEELINGS OF A FRENCH ROYALIST,

ON THE DISINTERMENT OF THE REMAINS OF THE DUKE D'ENGHEN.

DEAR Reliques! from a pit of vilest mould
Uprisen—to lodge among ancestral kings;
And to inflict shame's salutary stings
On the remorseless hearts of men grown old
In a blind worship; men perversely bold
Even to this hour,—yet, some shall now forsake
Their monstrous Idol if the dead e'er spake
To warn the living, truth were ever told
By aught redeemed out of the hollow grave:
O murdered Prince! meek, loyal, pious, brave!
The power of retribution once was given:
But 'tis a rueful thought that willow bands
So often tie the thunder-wielding hands
Of Justice sent to earth from highest Heaven!

XL.

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

(The last six lines intended for an Inscription.)

FEBRUARY, 1816.

INTREPID sons of Albion! not by you
Is life despised; ah no, the spacious earth
Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of birth,
So many objects to which love is due:
Ye slight not life—to God and Nature true;
But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
When duty bids you bleed in open war:
Hence hath your prowess quelled that impious crew.
Heroes!—for instant sacrifice prepared;
Yet filled with ardour and on triumph bent
'Mid direst shocks of mortal accident—
To you who fell, and you whom slaughter spared
To guard the fallen, and consummate the event,
Your Country rears this sacred Monument!

XLI.

SIEGE OF VIENNA RAISED BY JOHN SOBIESKI.

FEBRUARY, 1816.

O, FOR a kindling touch from that pure flame
 Which ministered, erewhile, to a sacrifice
 Of gratitude, beneath Italian skies,
 In words like these. ‘Up, voice of song! proclaim
 ‘Thy saintly rapture with celestial aim:
 ‘For lo! the Imperial City stands released
 ‘From bondage threatened by the embattled East,
 ‘And Christendom respire; from guilt and shame
 ‘Redeemed, from miserable fear set free
 ‘By one day’s feat, one mighty victory.
 ‘—Chant the Deliverer’s praise in every tongue!
 ‘The cross shall spread, the crescent hath waxed dim;
 ‘He conquering, as in joyful Heaven is sung,
 ‘HE CONQUERING THROUGH GOD, AND GOD BY HIM *.’

* See Filicaia’s Ode.

XLII.

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

FEBRUARY, 1816.

THE Bard—whose soul is meek as dawning day,
Yet trained to judgments righteously severe ;
Fervid, yet conversant with holy fear,
As recognising one Almighty sway :
He—whose experienced eye can pierce the array
Of past events ; to whom, in vision clear,
The aspiring heads of future things appear,
Like mountain-tops whose mists have rolled away—
Assoiled from all encumbrance of our time *,
He only, if such breathe, in strains devout
Shall comprehend this victory sublime ;
Shall worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
The triumph hail, which from their peaceful clime
Angels might welcome with a choral shout !

* ' From all this world's encumbrance did himself assoil.'—*Spenser*.

XLIII.

EMPERORS and Kings, how oft have temples rung
With impious thanksgiving, the Almighty's scorn !
How oft above their altars have been hung
Trophies that led the good and wise to mourn
Triumphant wrong, battle of battle born,
And sorrow that to fruitless sorrow clung !
Now, from Heaven-sanctioned victory, Peace is sprung ;
In this firm hour Salvation lifts her horn.
Glory to arms ! But, conscious that the nerve
Of popular reason, long mistrusted, freed
Your thrones, ye Powers ! from duty fear to swerve ;
Be just, be grateful ; nor, the oppressor's creed
Reviving, heavier chastisement deserve
Than ever forced unpitied hearts to bleed.

XLIV.

O D E

COMPOSED IN JANUARY, 1816.

————— Carmina possumus
 Donare, et pretium dicere muneri.
 Non incisa notis marmora publicis,
 Per quæ spiritus et vita redit bonis
 Post mortem ducibus
 ————— clarius indicant
 Laudes, quam ————— Pierides; neque,
 Si chartæ sileant quod bene feceris,
 Mercedem tuleris. ——— HOR. CAR. 8. LIB. 4.

I.

WHEN the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch
 On the tired household of corporeal sense,
 And Fancy, keeping unreluctant watch,
 Was free her choicest favours to dispense;
 I saw, in wondrous perspective displayed,
 A landscape more august than happiest skill
 Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;
 An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,

City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
And stately forest where the wild deer rove ;
Nor wanted lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
And scattered rural farms of aspect bright ;
And, here and there, between the pastoral downs,
The azure sea upswelled upon the sight.
Fair prospect, such as Britain only shows !
But not a living creature could be seen
Through its wide circuit, that, in deep repose,
And, even to sadness, lonely and serene,
Lay hushed ; till—through a portal in the sky
Brighter than brightest loop-hole, in a storm,
Opening before the sun's triumphant eye—
Issued, to sudden view, a glorious Form !
Earthward it glided with a swift descent :
Saint George himself this Visitant may be ;
And, ere a thought could ask on what intent
He sought the regions of humanity,
A thrilling voice was heard, that vivified
City and field and flood ;—aloud it cried—

“ Though from my celestial home,
“ Like a Champion, armed I come ;
“ On my helm the dragon crest,
“ And the red cross on my breast ;
“ I, the Guardian of this Land,
“ Speak not now of toilsome duty ;
“ Well obeyed was that command—
“ Whence bright days of festive beauty ;

" Haste, Virgins, haste!—the flowers which summer gave
 " Have perished in the field ;
 " But the green thickets plenteously shall yield
 " Fit garlands for the brave,
 " That will be welcome, if by you entwined ;
 " Haste, Virgins, haste ; and you, ye Matrons grave,
 " Go forth with rival youthfulness of mind,
 " And gather what ye find
 " Of hardy laurel and wild holly boughs—
 " To deck your stern Defenders' modest brows !
 " Such simple gifts prepare,
 " Though they have gained a worthier meed ;
 " And in due time shall share
 " Those palms and amaranthine wreaths
 " Unto their martyred Countrymen decreed,
 " In realms where everlasting freshness breathes !"

ii.

And lo ! with crimson banners proudly streaming,
 And upright weapons innocently gleaming,
 Along the surface of a spacious plain
 Advance in order the redoubted Bands,
 And there receive green chaplets from the hands
 Of a fair female train—
 Maids and Matrons, dight
 In robes of dazzling white ;
 While from the crowd bursts forth a rapturous noise
 By the cloud-capt hills retorted ;

And a throng of rosy boys
 In loose fashion tell their joys ;
 And grey-haired sires, on staffs supported,
 Look round, and by their smiling seem to say,
 Thus strives a grateful Country to display
 The mighty debt which nothing can repay !

III.

Anon before my sight a palace rose
 Built of all precious substances,—so pure
 And exquisite, that sleep alone bestows
 Ability like splendour to endure :
 Entered, with streaming thousands, through the gate,
 I saw the banquet spread beneath a Dome of state,
 A lofty Dome, that dared to emulate
 The heaven of sable night
 With starry lustre ; yet had power to throw
 Solemn effulgence, clear as solar light,
 Upon a princely company below,
 While the vault rang with choral harmony,
 Like some Nymph-haunted grot beneath the roaring sea.
 —No sooner ceased that peal, than on the verge
 Of exultation hung a dirge
 Breathed from a soft and lonely instrument,
 That kindled recollections
 Of agonised affections ;
 And, though some tears the strain attended,
 The mournful passion ended
 In peace of spirit, and sublime content !

IV.

But garlands wither ; festal shows depart,
Like dreams themselves ; and sweetest sound—

(Albeit of effect profound)

It was —and it is gone !

Victorious England ! bid the silent Art
Reflect, in glowing hues that shall not fade,
Those high achievements ; even as she arrayed
With second life the deed of Marathon

Upon Athenian walls ;

So may she labour for thy civic halls :

And be the guardian spaces

Of consecrated places,

As nobly graced by Sculpture's patient toil ;

And let imperishable Structures grow

Fixed in the depths of this courageous soil ;

Expressive signals of a glorious strife,

And competent to shed a spark divine

Into the torpid breast of daily life ;—

Records on which the morning sun may shine,

As changeful ages flow,

With gratulation thoroughly benign !

V.

And ye, Pierian Sisters, sprung from Jove
And sage Mnemosyne,—full long debarred
From your first mansions, exiled all too long

From many a hallowed stream and grove,
Dear native regions where ye wont to rove,
Chanting for patriot heroes the reward
 Of never-dying song !
Now (for, though Truth descending from above
The Olympian summit hath destroyed for aye
Your kindred Deities, *Ye* live and move,
And exercise unblamed a god-like sway)
Now, on the margin of some spotless fountain,
Or top serene of unmolested mountain,
Strike audibly the noblest of your lyres,
And for a moment meet the soul's desires !
That I, or some more favoured Bard, may hear
What ye, celestial Maids ! have often sung
Of Britain's acts,—may catch it with rapt ear,
And give the treasure to our British tongue !
So shall the characters of that proud page
Support their mighty theme from age to age ;
And, in the desert places of the earth,
When they to future empires have given birth,
So shall the people gather and believe
The bold report, transferred to every clime ;
And the whole world, not envious but admiring,
 And to the like aspiring,
Own—that the progeny of this fair Isle
Had power as lofty actions to achieve
As were performed in man's heroic prime ;
Nor wanted, when their fortitude had held
Its even tenor, and the foe was quelled,

A corresponding virtue to beguile
The hostile purpose of wide-wasting Time—
That not in vain they laboured to secure,
For their great deeds, perpetual memory,
And fame as largely spread as land and sea,
By Works of spirit high and passion pure!

THANKSGIVING ODE.

JANUARY 18, 1816.

—◆—
ADVERTISEMENT.

WHOLLY unworthy of touching upon the momentous subject here treated would that Poet be, before whose eyes the present distresses under which this kingdom labours could interpose a veil sufficiently thick to hide, or even to obscure, the splendour of this great moral triumph. If the author has given way to exultation, unchecked by these distresses, it might be sufficient to protect him from a charge of insensibility, should he state his own belief that the sufferings will be transitory. Upon the wisdom of a very large majority of the British nation rested that generosity which poured out the treasures of this country for the deliverance of Europe: and in the same national wisdom, presiding in time of peace over an energy not inferior to that which has been displayed in war, *they* confide, who encourage a firm hope, that the cup of our wealth will be gradually replenished. There will, doubtless, be no few ready to indulge in regrets and repinings; and to

feed a morbid satisfaction, by aggravating these burthens in imagination; in order that calamity so confidently prophesied, as it has not taken the shape which their sagacity allotted to it, may appear as grievous as possible under another. But the body of the nation will not quarrel with the gain, because it might have been purchased at a less price: and, acknowledging in these sufferings, which they feel to have been in a great degree unavoidable, a consecration of their noble efforts, they will vigorously apply themselves to remedy the evil.

Nor is it at the expense of rational patriotism, or in disregard of sound philosophy, that the author hath given vent to feelings tending to encourage a martial spirit in the bosoms of his countrymen, at a time when there is a general outcry against the prevalence of these dispositions. The British army, both by its skill and valour in the field, and by the discipline which rendered it, to the inhabitants of the several countries where its operations were carried on, a protection from the violence of their own troops, has performed services that will not allow the language of gratitude and admiration to be suppressed or restrained (whatever be the temper of the public mind) through a scrupulous dread lest the tribute due to the past should prove an injurious incentive for the future. Every man deserving the name of Briton adds his voice to the chorus which extols the exploits of his countrymen, with a consciousness, at times overpowering the effort, that they transcend all praise.—But this particular sentiment, thus irresistibly excited, is not sufficient. The nation would err grievously, if

she suffered the abuse which other states have made of military power, to prevent her from perceiving that no people ever was, or can be, independent, free, or secure, much less great, in any sane application of the word, without martial propensities and a cultivation of military virtues. Nor let it be overlooked, that the benefits derivable from these sources are placed within the reach of Great Britain, under conditions peculiarly favourable. The same insular position which, by rendering territorial incorporation impossible, utterly precludes the desire of conquest under the most seductive shape it can assume, enables her to rely, for her defence against foreign foes, chiefly upon a species of armed force from which her own liberties have nothing to fear. Such are the privileges of her situation ; and, by permitting, they invite her to give way to the courageous instincts of human nature, and to strengthen and refine them by culture.

But some have more than insinuated that a design exists to subvert the civil character of the English people by unconstitutional applications and unnecessary increase of military power. The advisers and abettors of such a design, were it possible that it should exist, would be guilty of the most heinous crime, which, upon this planet, can be committed. The author, trusting that this apprehension arises from the delusive influences of an honourable jealousy, hopes that the martial qualities he venerates will be fostered by adhering to those good old usages which experience has sanctioned ; and by availing ourselves of new means of indisputable promise : particularly by applying, in its utmost possible

extent, that system of tuition whose master-spring is a habit of gradually enlightened subordination ;—by imparting knowledge, civil, moral, and religious, in such measure that the mind, among all classes of the community, may love, admire, and be prepared and accomplished to defend, that country under whose protection its faculties have been unfolded, and its riches acquired ;—by just dealing towards all orders of the state, so that, no members of it being trampled upon, courage may every where continue to rest immoveably upon its ancient English foundation, personal self-respect ;—by adequate rewards, and permanent honours, conferred upon the deserving ;—by encouraging athletic exercises and manly sports among the peasantry of the country ;—and by especial care to provide and support Institutions, in which, during a time of peace, a reasonable proportion of the youth of the country may be instructed in military science.

The author has only to add, that he should feel little satisfaction in giving to the world these limited attempts* to celebrate the virtues of his country, if he did not encourage a hope that a subject, which it has fallen within his province to treat only in the mass, will by other poets be illustrated in that detail which its importance calls for, and which will allow opportunities to give the merited applause to PERSONS as well as to THINGS.

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *March* 18, 1816.

* The Ode was published along with other pieces, now interspersed through these Volumes.

XLV.

O D E .

THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

JANUARY 18, 1816.

 I.

HAIL, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night !
 Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude
 On hearts howe'er insensible or rude ;
 Whether thy punctual visitations smite
 The haughty towers where monarchs dwell ;
 Or thou, impartial Sun, with presence bright
 Cheer'st the low threshold of the peasant's cell !
 Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky
 In naked splendour, clear from mist or haze,
 Or cloud approaching to divert the rays,
 Which even in deepest winter testify
 Thy power and majesty,
 Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.
 — Well does thine aspect usher in this Day ;

As aptly suits therewith that modest pace
 Submitted to the chains
That bind thee to the path which God ordains
 That thou shalt trace,
Till, with the heavens and earth, thou pass away !
Nor less, the stillness of these frosty plains,
Their utter stillness, and the silent grace
Of yon ethereal summits white with snow,
(Whose tranquil pomp and spotless purity
 Report of storms gone by
 To us who tread below)
Do with the service of this Day accord.
— Divinest Object which the uplifted eye
Of mortal man is suffered to behold ;
Thou, who upon yon snow-clad Heights hast poured
Meek lustre, nor forget'st the humble Vale ;
Thou who dost warm Earth's universal mould,
And for thy bounty wert not unadored
 By pious men of old ;
Once more, heart-cheering Sun, I bid thee hail !
Bright be thy course to-day, let not this promise fail !

II.

'Mid the deep quiet of this morning hour,
All nature seems to hear me while I speak,
By feelings urged that do not vainly seek
Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
That stream in blithe succession from the throats

Of birds, in leafy bower,
 Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower.
 — There is a radiant though a short-lived flame,
 That burns for Poets in the dawning east;
 And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,
 When the captivity of sleep had ceased;
 But He who fixed immoveably the frame
 Of the round world, and built, by laws as strong,
 A solid refuge for distress—
 The towers of righteousness;
 He knows that from a holier altar came
 The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice;
 Knows that the source is nobler whence doth rise
 The current of this matin song;
 That deeper far it lies
 Than aught dependent on the fickle skies.

III.

Have we not conquered?—By the vengeful sword?
 Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity;
 That curbed the baser passions, and left free
 A loyal band to follow their liege Lord
 Clear-sighted Honour, and his staid Compeers,
 Along a track of most unnatural years;
 In execution of heroic deeds
 Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
 Of morning dew upon the untrodden meads,
 Shall live enrolled above the starry spheres.

He, who in concert with an earthly string
 Of Britain's acts would sing,
 He with enraptured voice will tell
 Of One whose spirit no reverse could quell;
 Of One that mid the failing never failed—
 Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed
 Shall represent her labouring with an eye
 Of circumspect humanity;
 Shall show her clothed with strength and skill,
 All martial duties to fulfil;
 Firm as a rock in stationary fight;
 In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
 Fierce as a flood-gate bursting at mid night
 To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream —
 Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!
 Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

IV.

And thus is *missed* the sole true glory
 That can belong to human story!
 At which they only shall arrive
 Who through the abyss of weakness dive.
 The very humblest are too proud of heart;
 And one brief day is rightly set apart
 For Him who lifteth up and layeth low;
 For that Almighty God to whom we owe,
 Say not that we have vanquished—but that we survive.

v.

How dreadful the dominion of the impure!
Why should the Song be tardy to proclaim
That less than power unbounded could not tame
That soul of Evil — which, from hell let loose,
Had filled the astonished world with such abuse
As boundless patience only could endure?
— Wide-wasted regions — cities wrapt in flame —
Who sees, may lift a streaming eye
To Heaven; — who never saw, may heave a sigh:
But the foundation of our nature shakes,
And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
When desolated countries, towns on fire,
 Are but the avowed attire
Of warfare waged with desperate mind
Against the life of virtue in mankind;
 Assaulting without ruth
 The citadels of truth;
While the fair gardens of civility,
 By ignorance defaced,
 By violence laid waste,
Perish without reprieve for flower or tree!

vi.

A crouching purpose — a distracted will —
Opposed to hopes that battered upon scorn,
And to desires whose ever-waxing horn
Not all the light of earthly power could fill;

Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient skill,
 And to celerities of lawless force;
 Which, spurning God, had flung away remorse —
 What could they gain but shadows of redress?
 — So bad proceeded propagating worse;
 And discipline was passion's dire excess.
 Widens the fatal web, its lines extend,
 And deadlier poisons in the chalice blend.
 When will your trials teach you to be wise?
 — O prostrate Lands, consult your agonies!

vii.

No more — the guilt is banished,
 And, with the guilt, the shame is fled;
 And, with the guilt and shame, the Woe hath vanished,
 Shaking the dust and ashes from her head!
 — No more — these lingerings of distress
 Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.
 What robe can Gratitude employ
 So seemly as the radiant vest of Joy?
 What steps so suitable as those that move
 In prompt obedience to spontaneous measures
 Of glory, and felicity, and love,
 Surrendering the whole heart to sacred pleasures?

viii.

Land of our fathers! loved by me
 Since the first joys of thinking infancy;
 Loved with a passion since I caught thy praise
 A Listener, at or on some patient knee,

With an ear fastened to rude ballad lays—
 Or of thy gallant chivalry I read,
 And hugged the volume on a sleepless bed!
 O England!—dearer far than life is dear,
 If I forget thy prowess, never more
 Be thy ungrateful Son allowed to hear
 Thy green leaves rustle, or thy torrents roar!
 But how can *He* be faithless to the past,
 Whose soul, intolerant of base decline,
 Saw in thy virtue a celestial sign,
 That bade him hope, and to his hope cleave fast!
 The Nations strove with puissance;—at length
 Wide Europe heaved, impatient to be cast,
 With *all* her living strength
 With *all* her armed Powers,
 Upon the offensive shores.

The trumpet blew a universal blast!
 But Thou art foremost in the field:—there stand:
 Receive the triumph destined to thy hand!
 All States have glorified themselves;—their claims
 Are weighed by Providence, in balance even;
 And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
 To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
 Dread mark of approbation, justly gained!
 Exalted office, worthily sustained!

IX.

Imagination—ne'er before content,
 But aye ascending, restless in her pride,

From all that man's performance could present—
 Stoops to that closing deed magnificent,
 And with the embrace is satisfied.
 Fly, ministers of Fame,
 What'e'r your means, whatever help ye claim,
 Bear through the world these tidings of delight!
 Hours, Days, and Months have borne them in the sight
 Of mortals, hurrying like a sudden shower
 That landward stretches from the sea
 The morning's splendours to devour
 In summer's loveliest hour :
 But this assurance travelled fraught with glee,
 And heart-sick Europe blessed its healing power.
 —*The shock is given—the Adversaries bleed !*
Lo, Justice triumphs ! Earth is freed !
 Joyful annunciation !—It went forth—
 It pierced the caverns of the sluggish North—
 It found no barrier on the ridge
 Of Andes—frozen gulfs became its bridge—
 The vast Pacific gladdens with the freight—
 Upon the Lakes of Asia 'tis bestowed—
 The Arabian desert shapes a willing road,
 Across her burning breast,
 For this refreshing incense from the West—
 Where snakes and lions breed,
 Where towns and cities thick as stars appear,
 Wherever fruits are gathered, and where'er
 The upturned soil receives the hopeful seed—
 While the Sun rules, and cross the shades of night—

The unwearied arrow hath pursued its flight !
The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,
 And in its sparkling progress read
Of virtue crowned with glory's deathless meed :
Tyrants exult to hear of kingdoms won,
And slaves are pleased to learn that mighty feats are done :
Even the proud Realm, from whose distracted borders
This messenger of good was launched in air,
France, conquered France, amid her wild disorders,
Feels, and hereafter shall the truth declare,
That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,
And utter England's name with sadly-plausive voice.

x.

 Preserve, O Lord ! within our hearts
 The memory of thy favour,
 That else insensibly departs,
 And loses its sweet savour !
Lodge it within us !—as the power of light
Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
Fixed on the front of Eastern diadems,
So shine our thankfulness for ever bright !
What offering, what transcendent monument
Shall our sincerity to Thee present ?
—Not work of hands ; but trophies that may reach
To highest Heaven—the labour of the Soul ;
That builds, as thy unerring precepts teach,
Upon the inward victories of each,
Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.

—Yet might it well become that City now,
 Into whose breast the tides of grandeur flow,
 To whom all persecuted men retreat ;
 If a new Temple lift her votive brow
 High on the shore of silver Thames—to greet
 The peaceful guest advancing from afar.
 Bright be the distant Fabric, as a star
 Fresh risen, and beautiful within !—there meet
 Dependence infinite, proportion just ;
 —A Pile that Grace approves, and Time can trust
 With his most sacred wealth, heroic dust !

xi.

But if the valiant of this land
 In reverential modesty demand
 That all observance, due to them, be paid
 Where their serene progenitors are laid ;
 Kings, warriors, high-souled poets, saint-like sages,
 England's illustrious sons of long, long ages ;
 Be it not unordained that solemn rites,
 Within the circuit of those Gothic walls,
 Shall be performed at pregnant intervals ;
 Commemoration holy, that unites
 The living generations with the dead ;
 By the deep soul-moving sense
 Of religious eloquence,—
 By visual pomp, and by the tie
 Of sweet and threatening harmony ;

Soft notes, awful as the omen
 Of destructive tempests coming,
 And escaping from that sadness
 Into elevated gladness ;
 While the white-robed choir attendant,
 Under mouldering banners pendant,
 Provoke all potent symphonies to raise
 Songs of victory and praise,
 For them who bravely stood unhurt, or bled
 With medicable wounds, or found their graves
 Upon the battle-field, or under ocean's waves ;
 Or were conducted home in single state,
 And long procession—there to lie,
 Where their sons' sons, and all posterity,
 Unheard by them, their deeds shall celebrate !

XII.

Nor will the God of peace and love
 Such martial service disapprove.
 He guides the Pestilence—the cloud
 Of locusts travels on his breath ;
 The region that in hope was ploughed
 His drought consumes, his mildew taints with death ;
 He springs the hushed Volcano's mine ;
 He puts the Earthquake on her still design,
 Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,
 And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink
 Cities and towns—'tis Thou—the work is Thine !

The fierce Tornado sleeps within thy courts—
 He hears the word—he flies—
 And navies perish in their ports ;
 For Thou art angry with thine enemies !
 For these, and for our errors
 And sins, that point their terrors,
 We bow our heads before Thee, and we laud
 And magnify thy name, Almighty God !
 But thy most awful instrument
 In working out a pure intent,
 Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter,—
 Yea, Carnage is thy daughter !
 Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,
 And for thy righteous purpose they prevail ;
 Thine arm from peril guards the coasts
 Of them who in thy laws delight :
 Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight,
 Tremendous God of battles, Lord of Hosts !

XIII.

 Forbear :—to Thee—
 With fervent thoughts, but in a gentler strain
 Of Contemplation, by no sense of wrong,
 (Too quick and keen) incited to disdain
 Of pity pleading from the heart in vain—
 To THEE —TO THEE
 Just God of christianised Humanity,
 On this appointed day shall thanks ascend,
 That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end,

And that we need no second victory !
 Ha ! what a ghastly sight for man to see ;
 And to the heavenly saints in peace who dwell,
 For a brief moment, terrible ;
 But, to thy sovereign penetration, fair,
 Before whom all things are, that were,
 All judgments that have been, or e'er shall be ;
 Links in the chain of thy tranquillity !
 Along the bosom of this favoured Nation,
 Breathe Thou, this day, a vital undulation !
 Let all who do this land inherit
 Be conscious of Thy moving spirit !
 Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance,—the sight,
 Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight ;
 Bless Thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
 When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
 And, at one moment, in one rapture, strive
 With lip and heart to tell their gratitude
 For thy protecting care,
 Their solemn joy—praising the Eternal Lord
 For tyranny subdued,
 And for the sway of equity renewed,
 For liberty confirmed, and peace restored !

But hark—the summons !—down the placid lake
 Floats the soft cadence of the church-tower bells ;
 Bright shines the Sun, as if his beams would wake
 The tender insects sleeping in their cells ;

Bright shines the Sun—and not a breeze to shake
The drops that tip the melting icicles.

O, enter now his temple gate!

Inviting words—perchance already flung
(As the crowd press devoutly down the aisle
Of some old Minster's venerable pile)
From voices into zealous passion stung,
While the tubed engine feels the inspiring blast,
And has begun—its clouds of sound to cast
Forth towards empyreal Heaven,
As if the fretted roof were riven.

Us, humbler ceremonies now await;
But in the bosom, with devout respect
The banner of our joy we will erect,
And strength of love our souls shall elevate:
For to a few collected in his name,
Their heavenly Father will incline an ear
Gracious to service hallowed by its aim;—
Awake! the majesty of God revere!

Go—and with foreheads meekly bowed
Present your prayers—go—and rejoice aloud—
The Holy One will hear!

And what, 'mid silence deep, with faith sincere,
Ye, in your low and undisturbed estate,
Shall simply feel and purely meditate—
Of warnings—from the unprecedented might,
Which, in our time, the impious have disclosed;
And of more arduous duties thence imposed
Upon the future advocates of right;

Of mysteries revealed,
And judgments unrepealed,
Of earthly revolution,
And final retribution,—
To his omniscience will appear
An offering not unworthy to find place,
On this high DAY of THANKS, before the Throne of Grace!



INSCRIPTIONS.

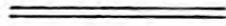
I.

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR GEORGE
BEAUMONT, BART., LEICESTERSHIRE.

1808.

THE embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign ;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.
One wooed the silent Art with studious pains :
These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains ;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindest powers sustain the Tree,
And Love protect it from all injury !
And when its potent branches, wide out-thrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,
Some future Poet meditate his lays ;

Not mindless of that distant age renowned
 When Inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
 The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
 In civil conflict met on Bosworth-field ;
 And of that famous Youth, full soon removed
 From earth, perhaps by Shakspeare's self approved,
 Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend beloved.



II.

IN A GARDEN OF THE SAME.

OFT is the medal faithful to its trust
 When temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust ;
 And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
 That things obscure and small outlive the great :
 Hence, when yon mansion and the flowery trim
 Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim,
 And all its stately trees, are passed away,
 This little Niche, unconscious of decay,
 Perchance may still survive. And be it known
 That it was scooped within the living stone,—
 Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
 Of labourer plodding for his daily gains,
 But by an industry that wrought in love ;
 With help from female hands, that proudly strove
 To aid the work, what time these walks and bowers
 Were shaped to cheer dark winter's lonely hours.

III.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART.,
AND IN HIS NAME, FOR AN URN, PLACED BY HIM AT THE
TERMINATION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED AVENUE, IN THE SAME
GROUNDS.

YE Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return ;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they have learned to frame a darksome aisle ;—
That may recal to mind that awful Pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
— There, though by right the excelling Painter sleep
Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep,
Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's private tear:
Hence, on my patrimonial grounds, have I
Raised this frail tribute to his memory ;
From youth a zealous follower of the Art
That he professed ; attached to him in heart ;
Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died.

IV.

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON.

BENEATH yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground,
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied Ruins of forlorn GRACE DIEU;
Erst a religious House, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth
To honourable Men of various worth:
There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child;
There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams
Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the buskined stage.
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie;
They perish;— but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne'er decays.

V.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL UPON A STONE IN THE WALL
OF THE HOUSE (AN OUT-HOUSE) ON THE ISLAND AT
GRASMERE.

RUDE is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintained
Proportions more harmonious, and approached
To closer fellowship with ideal grace.
But take it in good part: — alas! the poor
Vitruvius of our village had no help
From the great City; never, upon leaves
Of red Morocco folio saw displayed,
In long succession, pre-existing ghosts
Of Beauties yet unborn; the rustic Lodge
Antique, and Cottage with verandah graced,
Nor lacking, for fit company, alcove,
Green-house, shell-grot, and moss-lined hermitage.
Thou see'st a homely Pile, yet to these walls
The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
The new-dropped lamb finds shelter from the wind.
And hither does one Poet sometimes row
His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
With plenteous store of heath and withered fern,
(A lading which he with his sickle cuts,

Among the mountains) and beneath this roof
He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the Sheep,
Panting beneath the burthen of their wool,
Lie round him, even as if they were a part
Of his own Household: nor, while from his bed
He looks, through the open door-place, toward the lake
And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep —
Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy!

VI.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL ON A STONE, ON THE SIDE
OF THE MOUNTAIN OF BLACK COMB.

STAY, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy limbs
On this commodious Seat! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence, — from blackness named,
And, to far-travelled storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boisterous visitants
Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled!

Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,
To measure height and distance; lonely task,
Week after week pursued! — To him was given
Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestowed
On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvass Dwelling, colours, lines,
And the whole surface of the out-spread map,
Became invisible: for all around
Had darkness fallen—unthreatened, unproclaimed—
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment; total gloom,
In which he sate alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain's silent top!

1813.

See Vol. ii. p. 188.

VII.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL UPON A STONE, THE LARGEST
OF A HEAP LYING NEAR A DESERTED QUARRY, UPON ONE
OF THE ISLANDS AT RYDAL.

STRANGER! this hillock of mis-shapen stones
Is not a Ruin spared or made by time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the Cairn
Of some old British Chief: 'tis nothing more
Than the rude embryo of a little Dome
Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be built
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanced, Sir William having learned
That from the shore a full-grown man might wade,
And make himself a freeman of this spot
At any hour he chose, the prudent Knight
Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinished task.
The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps,
Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of that intended Pile, which would have been
Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
So that, I guess, the linnet and the thrush,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wondered at the work. But blame him not,
For old Sir William was a gentle Knight,
Bred in this vale, to which he appertained

With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
 And for the outrage which he had devised
 Entire forgiveness! — But if thou art one
 On fire with thy impatience to become
 An inmate of these mountains, — if, disturbed
 By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
 Out of the quiet rock the elements
 Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze
 In snow-white splendour,—think again; and, taught
 By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
 Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;
 There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,
 And let the redbreast hop from stone to stone.

1800.

 VIII.

INTENDED FOR A STONE IN THE GROUNDS OF RYDAL MOUNT.

IN these fair vales hath many a Tree
 At Wordsworth's suit been spared;
 And from the builder's hand this Stone,
 For some rude beauty of its own,
 Was rescued by the Bard:
 So let it rest; and time will come
 When here the tender-hearted
 May heave a gentle sigh for him,
 As one of the departed.

1830.

IX.

THE massy Ways, carried across these heights
By Roman perseverance, are destroyed,
Or hidden under ground, like sleeping worms.
How venture then to hope that Time will spare
This humble Walk? Yet on the mountain's side
A Poet's hand first shaped it; and the steps
Of that same Bard—repeated to and fro
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies
Through the vicissitudes of many a year—
Forbade the weeds to creep o'er its grey line.
No longer, scattering to the heedless winds
The vocal raptures of fresh poesy,
Shall he frequent these precincts; locked no more
In earnest converse with beloved Friends,
Here will he gather stores of ready bliss,
As from the beds and borders of a garden
Choice flowers are gathered! But, if Power may spring
Out of a farewell yearning—favoured more
Than kindred wishes mated suitably
With vain regrets—the Exile would consign
This Walk, his loved possession, to the care
Of those pure Minds that reverence the Muse.

X.

INSCRIPTIONS SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN AND NEAR
A HERMIT'S CELL.

1818.

I.

HOPES what are they?—Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass ;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy ?
Whispering harm where harm is not ;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot !

What is glory?—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare !
What is pride?—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship?—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made ;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected ;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog ;
Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog ;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller's eye it shone :
He hath hailed it re-appearing—
And as quickly it is gone ;

Such is Joy—as quickly hidden,
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth ?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before !)
Age ?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace ?—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing-knell !

XI.

INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK.

II.

PAUSE, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be
Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
Where silence yields reluctantly
Even to the fleecy straggler's bleat ;

Give voice to what my hand shall trace,
And fear not lest an idle sound
Of words unsuited to the place
Disturb its solitude profound.

I saw this Rock, while vernal air
Blew softly o'er the russet heath,
Uphold a Monument as fair
As church or abbey furnisheth.

Unsullied did it meet the day,
Like marble, white, like ether, pure ;
As if, beneath, some hero lay,
Honoured with costliest sepulture.

My fancy kindled as I gazed ;
 And, ever as the sun shone forth,
 The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
 And seemed the proudest thing on earth.

But frost had reared the gorgeous Pile
 Unsound as those which Fortune builds—
 To undermine with secret guile,
 Sapped by the very beam that gilds.

And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
 Fell the whole Fabric to the ground ;
 And naked left this dripping Rock,
 With shapeless ruin spread around !

XII.

III.

HAST thou seen, with flash incessant,
 Bubbles gliding under ice,
 Bodied forth and evanescent,
 No one knows by what device ?

Such are thoughts !—A wind-swept meadow
 Mimicking a troubled sea,
 Such is life ; and death a shadow
 From the rock eternity !

XIII.

NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE.

IV.

TROUBLED long with warring notions
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul's emotions
Unto Thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and welter
On the waves of discontent?

Parching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well ;
Rains, that make each hill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine tranquillity!

XIV.

v.

Not seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn ;
Not seldom Evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding Bark, untrue ;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous Oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die ;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify !

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee ;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy !

XV.

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON ST. HERBERT'S ISLAND, DERWENT-WATER.

IF thou in the dear love of some one Friend
Hast been so happy that thou know'st what thoughts
Will sometimes in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot ; and, Stranger ! not unmoved
Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of stones,
The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's Cell.
Here stood his threshold ; here was spread the roof
That sheltered him, a self-secluded Man,
After long exercise in social cares
And offices humane, intent to adore
The Deity, with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things,
In utter solitude.—But he had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man loved
As his own soul. And, when with eye upraised
To heaven he knelt before the crucifix,
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
Pealed to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle and thought
Of his Companion, he would pray that both
(Now that their earthly duties were fulfilled)

Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So prayed he :—as our chronicles report,
Though here the Hermit numbered his last day
Far from St. Cuthbert his beloved Friend,
Those holy Men both died in the same hour.

1800.

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF A CHILD.

SMALL service is true service while it lasts ;
Of Friends, however humble, scorn not one :
The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the Sun.

1824.

LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF THE COUNTESS OF LONSDALE.

NOV. 5, 1834.

LADY! a Pen (perhaps with thy regard,
Among the Favoured, favoured not the least)
Left, 'mid the Records of this Book inscribed,
Deliberate traces, registers of thought
And feeling, suited to the place and time
That gave them birth:—months passed, and still this hand,
That had not been too timid to imprint
Words which the virtues of thy Lord inspired,
Was yet not bold enough to write of Thee.
And why that scrupulous reserve? In sooth
The blameless cause lay in the Theme itself.
Flowers are there many that delight to strive
With the sharp wind, and seem to court the shower,
Yet are by nature careless of the sun
Whether he shine on them or not; and some,
Where'er he moves along the unclouded sky,
Turn a broad front full on his flattering beams:
Others do rather from their notice shrink,

Loving the dewy shade,—a humble band,
Modest and sweet, a progeny of earth,
Congenial with thy mind and character,
High-born Augusta!

Witness Towers, and Groves!

And Thou, wild Stream, that giv'st the honoured name
Of Lowther to this ancient Line, bear witness
From thy most secret haunts; and ye Parterres,
Which She is pleased and proud to call her own;
Witness how oft upon my noble Friend
Mute offerings, tribute from an inward sense
Of admiration and respectful love,
Have waited—till the affections could no more
Endure that silence, and broke out in song,
Snatches of music taken up and dropt
Like those self-solacing, those under-notes
Trilled by the redbreast, when autumnal leaves
Are thin upon the bough. Mine, only mine,
The pleasure was, and no one heard the praise,
Checked, in the moment of its issue, checked
And reprehended, by a fancied blush
From the pure qualities that called it forth.

Thus Virtue lives debarred from Virtue's meed;
Thus, Lady, is retiredness a veil
That, while it only spreads a softening charm
O'er features looked at by discerning eyes,
Hides half their beauty from the common gaze;

And thus, even on the exposed and breezy hill
Of lofty station, female goodness walks,
When side by side with lunar gentleness,
As in a cloister. Yet the grateful Poor
(Such the immunities of low estate,
Plain Nature's enviable privilege,
Her sacred recompence for many wants)
Open their hearts before Thee, pouring out
All that they think and feel, with tears of joy;
And benedictions not unheard in heaven:
And friend in the ear of friend, where speech is free
To follow truth, is eloquent as they.

Then let the Book receive in these prompt lines
A just memorial; and thine eyes consent
To read that they, who mark thy course, behold
A life declining with the golden light
Of summer, in the season of sere leaves;
See cheerfulness undamped by stealing Time;
See studied kindness flow with easy stream,
Illustrated with inborn courtesy;
And an habitual disregard of self
Balanced by vigilance for others' weal.

And shall the Verse not tell of lighter gifts
With these ennobling attributes conjoined
And blended, in peculiar harmony,
By Youth's surviving spirit? What agile grace!
A nymph-like liberty, in nymph-like form,

Beheld with wonder ; whether floor or path
Thou tread, or sweep—borne on the managed steed—
Fleet as the shadows, over down or field,
Driven by strong winds at play among the clouds.

Yet one word more—one farewell word—a wish
Which came, but it has passed into a prayer—
That, as thy sun in brightness is declining,
So—at an hour yet distant for *their* sakes
Whose tender love, here faltering on the way
Of a diviner love, will be forgiven—
So may it set in peace, to rise again
For everlasting glory won by faith.

THE EGYPTIAN MAID ;

OR,

THE ROMANCE OF THE WATER LILY.



[For the names and persons in the following poem, see the "History of the renowned Prince Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table;" for the rest the Author is answerable; only it may be proper to add, that the Lotus, with the bust of the Goddess appearing to rise out of the full-blown flower, was suggested by the beautiful work of ancient art, once included among the Townley Marbles, and now in the British Museum.]

WHILE Merlin paced the Cornish sands,
 Forth-looking toward the rocks of Scilly,
 The pleased Enchanter was aware
 Of a bright Ship that seemed to hang in air,
 Yet was she work of mortal hands,
 And took from men her name—THE WATER LILY.

Soft was the wind, that landward blew;
 And, as the Moon, o'er some dark hill ascendant,
 Grows from a little edge of light
 To a full orb, this Pinnacle bright
 Became, as nearer to the coast she drew,
 More glorious, with spread sail and streaming pendant.

Upon this wingèd Shape so fair
Sage Merlin gazed with admiration:
Her lineaments, thought he, surpass
Aught that was ever shown in magic glass;
Was ever built with patient care;
Or, at a touch, produced by happiest transformation.

Now, though a Mechanist, whose skill
Shames the degenerate grasp of modern science,
Grave Merlin (and belike the more
For practising occult and perilous lore)
Was subject to a freakish will
That sapped good thoughts, or scared them with defiance.

Provoked to envious spleen, he cast
An altered look upon the advancing Stranger
Whom he had hailed with joy, and cried,
“ My Art shall help to tame her pride—”
Anon the breeze became a blast,
And the waves rose, and sky portended danger.

With thrilling word, and potent sign
Traced on the beach, his work the Sorcerer urges ;
The clouds in blacker clouds are lost,
Like spiteful Fiends that vanish, crossed
By Fiends of aspect more malign ;
And the winds roused the Deep with fiercer scourges.

But worthy of the name she bore
Was this Sea-flower, this buoyant Galley ;
Supreme in loveliness and grace
Of motion, whether in the embrace
Of trusty anchorage, or scudding o'er
The main flood roughened into hill and valley.

Behold, how wantonly she laves
Her sides, the Wizard's craft confounding ;
Like something out of Ocean sprung
To be for ever fresh and young,
Breasts the sea-flashes, and huge waves
Top-gallant high, rebounding and rebounding !

But Ocean under magic heaves,
And cannot spare the Thing he cherished :
Ah ! what avails that she was fair,
Luminous, blithe, and debonair ?
The storm has stripped her of her leaves ;
The Lily floats no longer !—She hath perished.

Grieve for her,—she deserves no less ;
So like, yet so unlike, a living Creature !
No heart had she, no busy brain ;
Though loved, she could not love again ;
Though pitied, *feel* her own distress ;
Nor aught that troubles us, the fools of Nature.

Yet is there cause for gushing tears ;
So richly was this Galley laden ,
A fairer than herself she bore,
And, in her struggles, cast ashore ;
A lovely One, who nothing hears
Of wind or wave—a meek and guileless Maiden.

Into a cave had Merlin fled
From mischief, caused by spells himself had muttered ;
And while, repentant all too late,
In moody posture there he sate,
He heard a voice, and saw, with half-raised head,
A Visitant by whom these words were uttered ;

“ On Christian service this frail Bark
Sailed” (hear me, Merlin !) “ under high protection,
Though on her prow a sign of heathen power
Was carved—a Goddess with a Lily flower,
The old Egyptian’s emblematic mark
Of joy immortal and of pure affection.

Her course was for the British strand ;
Her freight, it was a damsel peerless ;
God reigns above, and Spirits strong
May gather to avenge this wrong
Done to the Princess, and her Land
Which she in duty left, sad but not cheerless.

And to Caerleon's loftiest tower
Soon will the Knights of Arthur's Table
A cry of lamentation send ;
And all will weep who there attend,
To grace that Stranger's bridal hour,
For whom the sea was made unnavigable.

Shame ! should a Child of royal line
Die through the blindness of thy malice :”
Thus to the Necromancer spake
Nina, the Lady of the Lake,
A gentle Sorceress, and benign,
Who ne'er embittered any good man's chalice.

“ What boots,” continued she, “ to mourn ?
To expiate thy sin endeavour :
From the bleak isle where she is laid,
Fetched by our art, the Egyptian Maid
May yet to Arthur's court be borne
Cold as she is, ere life be fled for ever.

My pearly Boat, a shining Light,
That brought me down that sunless river,
Will bear me on from wave to wave,
And back with her to this sea-cave ;—
Then Merlin ! for a rapid flight
Through air, to thee my Charge will I deliver.

The very swiftest of thy cars
Must, when my part is done, be ready ;
Meanwhile, for further guidance, look
Into thy own prophetic book ;
And, if that fail, consult the Stars
To learn thy course ; farewell ! be prompt and steady."

This scarcely spoken, she again
Was seated in her gleaming shallop,
That, o'er the yet-distempered Deep,
Pursued its way with bird-like sweep,
Or like a steed, without a rein,
Urged o'er the wilderness in sportive gallop.

Soon did the gentle Nina reach
That Isle without a house or haven ;
Landing, she found not what she sought,
Nor saw of wreck or ruin aught
But a carved Lotus cast upon the beach
By the fierce waves, a flower in marble graven.

Sad relique, but how fair the while !
For gently each from each retreating
With backward curve, the leaves revealed
The bosom half, and half concealed,
Of a Divinity, that seemed to smile
On Nina as she passed, with hopeful greeting.

No quest was hers of vague desire,
Of tortured hope and purpose shaken ;
Following the margin of a bay,
She spied the lonely Cast-away,
Unmarred, unstripped of her attire,
But with closed eyes,—of breath and bloom forsaken.

Then Nina, stooping down, embraced,
With tenderness and mild emotion,
The Damsel, in that trance embound ;
And, while she raised her from the ground,
And in the pearly shallop placed,
Sleep fell upon the air, and stilled the ocean.

The turmoil hushed, celestial springs
Of music opened, and there came a blending
Of fragrance, underived from earth,
With gleams that owed not to the sun their birth,
And that soft rustling of invisible wings
Which Angels make, on works of love descending.

And Nina heard a sweeter voice
Than if the Goddess of the flower had spoken :
“ Thou hast achieved, fair Dame ! what none
Less pure in spirit could have done ;
Go, in thy enterprise rejoice !
Air, earth, sea, sky, and heaven, success betoken.”

So cheered, she left that Island bleak,
A bare rock of the Scilly cluster ;
And, as they traversed the smooth brine,
The self-illumined Brigantine
Shed, on the Slumberer's cold wan cheek
And pallid brow, a melancholy lustre.

Fleet was their course, and when they came
To the dim cavern, whence the river
Issued into the salt-sea flood,
Merlin, as fixed in thought he stood,
Was thus accosted by the Dame ;
“ Behold to thee my Charge I now deliver !

But where attends thy chariot—where ?”—
Quoth Merlin, “ Even as I was bidden,
So have I done ; as trusty as thy barge
My vehicle shall prove—O precious Charge !
If this be sleep, how soft ! if death, how fair !
Much have my books disclosed, but the end is hidden.”

He spake ; and gliding into view
Forth from the grotto's dimmest chamber
Came two mute Swans, whose plumes of dusky white
Changed, as the pair approached the light,
Drawing an ebon car, their hue
(Like clouds of sunset) into lucid amber.

Once more did gentle Nina lift
The Princess, passive to all changes :
The car received her :—then up-went
Into the ethereal element
The Birds with progress smooth and swift
As thought, when through bright regions memory ranges.

Sage Merlin, at the Slumberer's side,
Instructs the Swans their way to measure ;
And soon Caerleon's towers appeared,
And notes of minstrelsy were heard
From rich pavilions spreading wide,
For some high day of long-expected pleasure.

Awe-stricken stood both Knights and Dames
Ere on firm ground the car alighted ;
Eftsoons astonishment was past,
For in that face they saw the last
Last lingering look of clay, that tames
All pride ; by which all happiness is blighted.

Said Merlin, " Mighty King, fair Lords,
Away with feast and tilt and tourney !
Ye saw, throughout this royal House,
Ye heard, a rocking marvellous
Of turrets, and a clash of swords
Self-shaken, as I closed my airy journey.

Lo ! by a destiny well known
 To mortals, joy is turned to sorrow ;
 This is the wished-for Bride, the Maid
 Of Egypt, from a rock conveyed
 Where she by shipwreck had been thrown ;
 Ill sight ! but grief may vanish ere the morrow."

" Though vast thy power, thy words are weak,"
 Exclaimed the King, " a mockery hateful ;
 Dutiful Child, her lot how hard !
 Is this her piety's reward ?
 Those watery locks, that bloodless cheek !
 O winds without remorse ! O shore ungrateful !

Rich robes are fretted by the moth ;
 Towers, temples, fall by stroke of thunder ;
 Will that, or deeper thoughts, abate
 A Father's sorrow for her fate ?
 He will repent him of his troth ;
 His brain will burn, his stout heart split asunder.

Alas ! and I have caused this woe ;
 For, when my prowess from invading Neighbours
 Had freed his Realm, he plighted word
 That he would turn to Christ our Lord,
 And his dear Daughter on a Knight bestow
 Whom I should choose for love and matchless labours.

Her birth was heathen ; but a fence
Of holy Angels round her hovered :
A Lady added to my court
So fair, of such divine report
And worship, seemed a recompence
For fifty kingdoms by my sword recovered.

Ask not for whom, O Champions true !
She was reserved by me her life's betrayer ;
She who was meant to be a bride
Is now a corse: then put aside
Vain thoughts, and speed ye, with observance due
Of Christian rites, in Christian ground to lay her."

" The tomb," said Merlin, " may not close
Upon her yet, earth hide her beauty ;
Not froward to thy sovereign will
Esteem me, Liege ! if I, whose skill
Wafted her hither, interpose
To check this pious haste of erring duty.

My books command me to lay bare
The secret thou art bent on keeping :
Here must a high attest be given,
What Bridegroom was for her ordained by Heaven :
And in my glass significant there are
Of things that may to gladness turn this weeping.

For this, approaching, One by One,
 Thy Knights must touch the cold hand of the Virgin;
 So, for the favoured One, the Flower may bloom
 Once more: but, if unchangeable her doom,
 If life departed be for ever gone,
 Some blest assurance, from this cloud emerging,

May teach him to bewail his loss;
 Not with a grief that, like a vapour, rises
 And melts; but grief devout that shall endure,
 And a perpetual growth secure
 Of purposes which no false thought shall cross,
 A harvest of high hopes and noble enterprises."

"So be it," said the King;—"anon,
 Here, where the Princess lies, begin the trial;
 Knights each in order as ye stand
 Step forth."—To touch the pallid hand
 Sir Agravaine advanced; no sign he won
 From Heaven or Earth;—Sir Kaye had like denial.

Abashed, Sir Dinas turned away;
 Even for Sir Percival was no disclosure;
 Though he, devoutest of all Champions, ere
 He reached that ebon car, the bier
 Whereon diffused like snow the Damsel lay,
 Full thrice had crossed himself in meek composure.

Imagine (but ye Saints! who can?)
How in still air the balance trembled—
The wishes, peradventure the despites
That overcame some not ungenerous Knights;
And all the thoughts that lengthened out a span
Of time to Lords and Ladies thus assembled.

What patient confidence was here!
And there how many bosoms panted!
While drawing toward the car Sir Gawaine, mailed
For tournament, his beaver vailed,
And softly touched; but, to his princely cheer
And high expectancy, no sign was granted.

Next, disencumbered of his harp,
Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a brother,
Came to the proof, nor grieved that there ensued
No change;—the fair Izonda he had wooed
With love too true, a love with pangs too sharp,
From hope too distant, not to dread another.

Not so Sir Launcelot;—from Heaven's grace
A sign he craved, tired slave of vain contrition;
The royal Guinever looked passing glad
When his touch failed.—Next came Sir Galahad;
He paused, and stood entranced by that still face
Whose features he had seen in noontide vision.

For late, as near a murmuring stream
He rested 'mid an arbour green and shady,
Nina, the good Enchantress, shed
A light around his mossy bed ;
And, at her call, a waking dream
Prefigured to his sense the Egyptian Lady.

Now, while his bright-haired front he bowed,
And stood, far-kenned by mantle furred with ermine,
As o'er the insensate Body hung
The enrapt, the beautiful, the young,
Belief sank deep into the crowd
That he the solemn issue would determine.

Nor deem it strange ; the Youth had worn
That very mantle on a day of glory,
The day when he achieved that matchless feat,
The marvel of the PERILOUS SEAT,
Which whosoe'er approached of strength was shorn,
Though King or Knight the most renowned in story.

He touched with hesitating hand—
And lo! those Birds, far-famed through Love's dominions,
The Swans, in triumph clap their wings ;
And their necks play, involved in rings,
Like sinless snakes in Eden's happy land ;—
“ Mine is she,” cried the Knight ;—again they clapped
their pinions.

“ Mine was she—mine she is, though dead,
And to her name my soul shall cleave in sorrow ;”
Whereat, a tender twilight streak
Of colour dawned upon the Damsel’s cheek ;
And her lips, quickening with uncertain red,
Seemed from each other a faint warmth to borrow.

Deep was the awe, the rapture high,
Of love emboldened, hope with dread entwining,
When, to the mouth, relenting Death
Allowed a soft and flower-like breath,
Precursor to a timid sigh,
To lifted eyelids, and a doubtful shining.

In silence did King Arthur gaze
Upon the signs that pass away or tarry ;
In silence watched the gentle strife
Of Nature leading back to life ;
Then eased his soul at length by praise
Of God, and Heaven’s pure Queen—the blissful Mary.

Then said he, “ Take her to thy heart,
Sir Galahad ! a treasure, that God giveth,
Bound by indissoluble ties to thee
Through mortal change and immortality ;
Be happy and unenvied, thou who art
A goodly Knight that hath no peer that liveth !”

Not long the Nuptials were delayed ;
And sage tradition still rehearses
The pomp the glory of that hour
When toward the altar from her bower
King Arthur led the Egyptian Maid,
And Angels carolled these far-echoed verses ;—

Who shrinks not from alliance
Of evil with good Powers,
To God proclaims defiance,
And mocks whom he adores.

A Ship to Christ devoted
From the Land of Nile did go ;
Alas ! the bright Ship floated,
An Idol at her prow.

By magic domination,
The Heaven-permitted vent
Of purblind mortal passion,
Was wrought her punishment.

The Flower, the Form within it,
What served they in her need ?
Her port she could not win it,
Nor from mishap be freed.

The tempest overcame her,
And she was seen no more ;
But gently, gently blame her—
She cast a Pearl ashore.

The Maid to Jesu hearkened,
And kept to him her faith,
Till sense in death was darkened,
Or sleep akin to death.

But Angels round her pillow
Kept watch, a viewless band ;
And, billow favouring billow,
She reached the destined strand.

Blest Pair ! whate'er befall you,
Your faith in Him approve
Who from frail earth can call you
To bowers of endless love !



ESSAY,

SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE.

(SEE THE END OF VOLUME II.)

WITH the young of both sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And, lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature; in which poetry has continued to be comprehended *as a study*.

Into the above classes the Readers of poetry may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but from the last

only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with Poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged obligation prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for them whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason!—When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge

its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or, if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind

back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burden of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine

arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (i. e. obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to over-rate the Authors by whom those truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathise with them, however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book.—To

these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious;—and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply, by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity:—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an ‘imperfect shadowing forth’ of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry; between religion—making up the deficiencies

of reason by faith ; and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason ; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription, and reconciled to substitutions ; and poetry—ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error ;—so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious ; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value ? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical ; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government ? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb ? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing any thing of its quickness ; and for active faculties, capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it ?—Among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same

time it must be observed—that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trust-worthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mis-taught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalise rightly to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end;—who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany,—confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily ‘into the region;’—men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives;—judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be

confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits—must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them:—it will be further found, that when Authors shall have at length raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes;—a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that can now endure to read the “Creation” of Dubartas? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the Faery Queen faded before it. The name of Spenser,

whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

‘ The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets *sage* ’—

are his own words ; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy : while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been *their* best friend. But he was a great power, and bears a high name : the laurel has been awarded to him.

A dramatic Author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him ; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted : but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shak-

speare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made but little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him*.—His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

* The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error 'touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay,' cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bargas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: 'the English, with their bouffon de Shakspeare, is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be 'a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties.' How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous poems, in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the

Sonnets; though in no part of the writings of this Poet is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an * act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of those little pieces, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in them: and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions—'there sitting where he durst not soar.'

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope in his youth could borrow from them without risk of its being known. Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated, I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of

* This flippant insensibility was publicly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakspeare's Sonnets, see Numbers, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.

those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised ; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication ; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the Pindaric Odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the *Paradise Lost* made its appearance. 'Fit audience find though few,' was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked ; this I believe to be true ; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were '*just to it*' upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years ; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends ; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. Take, from the number of purchasers, persons of this class, and also those who

wished to possess the Poem as a religious work, and but few I fear would be left who sought for it on account of its poetical merits. The demand did not immediately increase; 'for,' says Dr. Johnson, 'many more readers' (he means persons in the habit of reading poetry) 'than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford.' How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, fourth edition, 1686; Waller, fifth edition, same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know; but I well remember, that, twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to show—that, if Milton's work were not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early editions of the Paradise Lost were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only three-thousand copies of the Work were sold in eleven years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the Works of Shakspeare; which probably did not together make one-thousand Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the 'paucity of Readers.'—There were readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorized, then, to affirm,

that the reception of the *Paradise Lost*, and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous*.—How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the *Miscellanies* or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, every where impregnated with *original* excellence.

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles † in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal,

* Hughes is express upon this subject; in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers, he writes thus. 'It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful Edition of *Paradise Lost* that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed.'

† This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lispings in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of those arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which their author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, 'of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded.' The Pastorals, ludicrous to such as prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, 'became popular, and were

read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations.'

Something less than sixty years after the publication of the *Paradise Lost* appeared Thomson's *Winter*; which was speedily followed by his other *Seasons*. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? 'It was no sooner read,' says one of his contemporary biographers, 'than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for any thing in poetry, beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing any thing new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man.'

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting the nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the Paradise Lost and the Seasons does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the Iliad. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless *; those of

* *CORTES alone in a night-gown.*

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead;
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head.
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.

DRYDEN'S *Indian Emperor.*

Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity!—If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time holden in much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to those appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of the Seasons, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little *more*; though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception, that many would often fancy they recognised a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shown that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration must

in fact have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for ?—Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental common-places, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the Seasons the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps Damon and Musidora); these also are prominent in our collections of Extracts; and are the parts of his Work, which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him ‘an elegant and philosophical Poet;’ nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson’s genius as an imaginative poet * were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of the Seasons, pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope. In the Castle of Indolence (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious, and diction more pure. Yet

* Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the 2d Edition of his Seasons, and find that even *that* does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.

that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a few !

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable editions, and are universally known ; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the Seasons of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry ; collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, that appeared not long after its publication ; and had been modelled, as the authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was however ill suited to the then existing taste of city society ; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their

ill-imitated models sank, in this country, into temporary neglect ; while Burger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating, or imitating these Reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact * with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Burger (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Göethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine Poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had

* Shenstone, in his *Schoolmistress*, gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance, (See D'Israeli's 2d Series of the *Curiosities of Literature*) the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions, the commentary was dropped, and the People have since continued to read in seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.

not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe :

And soone she heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
'Tis I thy true-love call.

Which is thus tricked out and dilated :

Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen uber-all
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war ;
Doch nur das Fraulein immerdar,
Voll Fieberangst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte :
Da horch ! Ein susser Liebeston
Kam leis' empor geflogen.
" Ho, Trudchen, ho ! Da bin ich schon !
Risch auf ! Dich angezogen ! "

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson ! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian !
The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The

Editor of the "Reliques" had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance!—Open this far-famed Book!—I have done so at random, and the beginning of the "Epic Poem Temora," in eight Books, presents itself. 'The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds.' Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion.—Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature every thing is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; every

thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened,—yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steep of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Carborne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface.—Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his ‘ands’ and his ‘buts!’ and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, and Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own.—It is consistent that

Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as those pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon poems*,—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless.—Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the *Reliques of Percy*, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions!—I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who

would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the Reliques; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spenser? where Sidney? and, lastly, where he, whose rights as a poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated,—where Shakspeare?—These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have

(could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates—metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes?—The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these poems were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own

notion of the constitution of Fame has been given ; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value ;—they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain ; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this,—that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed : so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them ;—and much he will have in common ; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road :—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste

by which a truly original poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on men who may stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here.—TASTE, I would remind the reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, Imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of Taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious

and discreditable, being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, Imagination; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime;—are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering*; but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this

property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry!—
But,

‘ Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
Itself discharges on its foes.’

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid,—and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original writer, at his first appearance in the world.—Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian prince or general—stretched on his palanquin, and borne

by his slaves? No; he is invigorated and inspirited by his leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem—that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness; others—against which it struggles with pride: these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected—is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime,—if we consider what are the cares that occupy

the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word, *popular*, applied to new works in poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in every thing which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her power;—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are

most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits, without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal, the individual quickly *perishes*; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above—that, of *good* poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but

through the People? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

‘ ———Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge ——— ’

MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that *Vox Populi* which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is any thing of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the *PUBLIC*, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the *PEOPLE*. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evince something of the ‘*Vision and the Faculty divine* ;’ and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwith-

standing the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction ;—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

1815.

NOTES.

Dedicatory Sonnet, Page 2, two last lines.

'Something less than joy, but more than dull content.'

COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA.

Page 88. Line 1.

'Wild Redbreast,' &c.

This Sonnet, as Poetry, explains itself, yet the scene of the incident having been a wild wood, it may be doubted, as a point of natural history, whether the bird was aware that his attentions were bestowed upon a human, or even a living, creature. But a Redbreast will perch upon the foot of a gardener at work, and alight on the handle of the spade when his hand is half upon it—this I have seen. And under my own roof I have witnessed affecting instances of the creature's friendly visits to the chambers of sick persons, as described in the verses to the Redbreast, vol. i., page 253. One of these welcome intruders used frequently to roost upon a nail in the wall, from which a picture had hung, and was ready, as morning came, to pipe his song in the hearing of the Invalid, who had been long confined to her room. These attachments to a particular person, when marked and continued, used to be reckoned ominous; but the superstition is passing away.

Page 177. Line 1.

' Jones ! as from Calais southward.'

(See Dedication to Descriptive Sketches. Vol. I.)

This excellent Person, one of my earliest and dearest friends, died in the year 1835. We were under-graduates together of the same year, at the same college; and companions in many a delightful ramble through his own romantic Country of North Wales. Much of the latter part of his life he passed in comparative solitude; which I know was often cheered by remembrance of our youthful adventures, and of the beautiful regions which, at home and abroad, we had visited together. Our long friendship was never subject to a moment's interruption,—and, while revising these volumes for the last time, I have been so often reminded of my loss, with a not unpleasing sadness, that I trust the Reader will excuse this passing mention of a Man who well deserves from me something more than so brief a notice. Let me only add, that during the middle part of his life he resided many years (as Incumbent of the Living) at a Parsonage in Oxfordshire, which is the subject of one of the "Miscellaneous Sonnets." See page 84.

Sonnet VII. Page 181.

In this and a succeeding Sonnet on the same subject, let me be understood as a Poet availing himself of the situation which the King of Sweden occupied, and of the principles AVOWED IN HIS MANIFESTOS; as laying hold of these advantages for the purpose of embodying moral truths. This remark might, perhaps, as well have been suppressed; for to those who may be in sympathy with the course of these Poems, it will be superfluous; and will, I fear, be thrown away upon that other class, whose besotted admiration of the intoxicated despot hereafter placed in contrast with him, is the most melancholy evidence of degradation in British feeling and intellect which the times have furnished.

Page 200. Last Line.

' Danger which they fear, and honour which they understand not.'

Words in Lord Brooke's Life of Sir P. Sidney.

Sonnet xxxvii. Page 241.

The event is thus recorded in the journals of the day :—'When the Austrians took Hockheim, in one part of the engagement they got to the brow of the hill, whence they had their first view of the Rhine. They instantly halted—not a gun was fired—not a voice heard : they stood gazing on the river with those feelings which the events of the last fifteen years at once called up. Prince Schwartzberg rode up to know the cause of this sudden stop ; they then gave three cheers, rushed after the enemy, and drove them into the water.'

Page 245.

In this Sonnet I am under some obligations to one of an Italian author, to which I cannot refer.

Thanksgiving Ode. Page 264. Line 6.

' Discipline the rule whereof is passion.'

LORD BROOKE.

END OF VOL. III.

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