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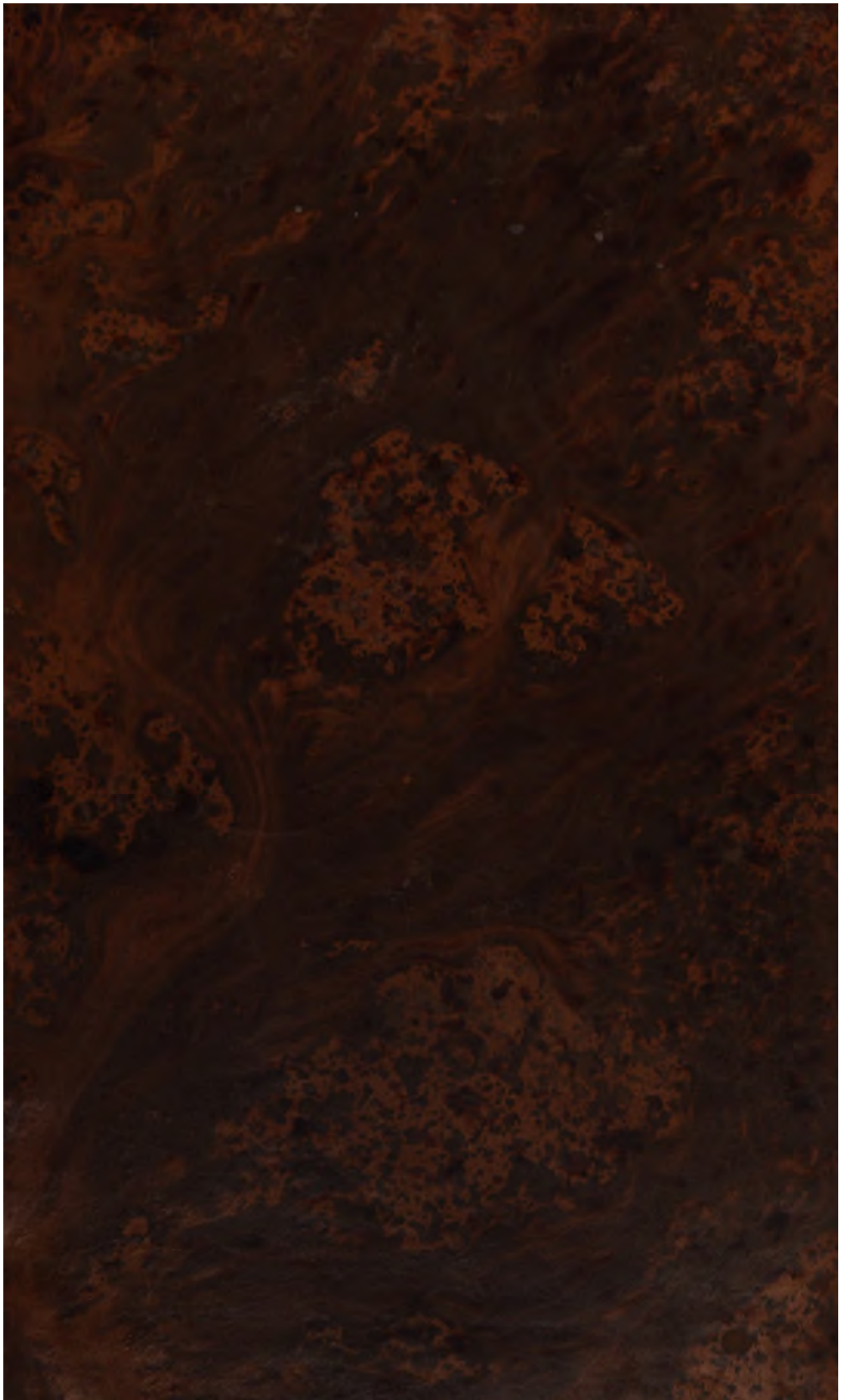
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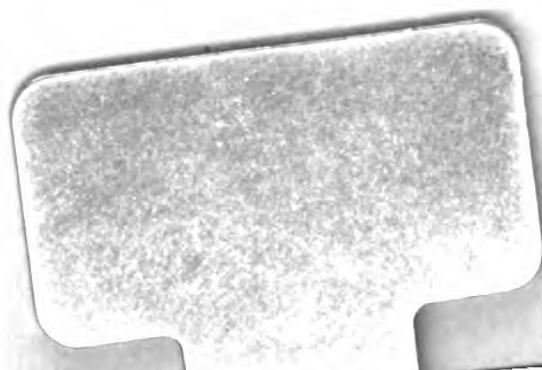
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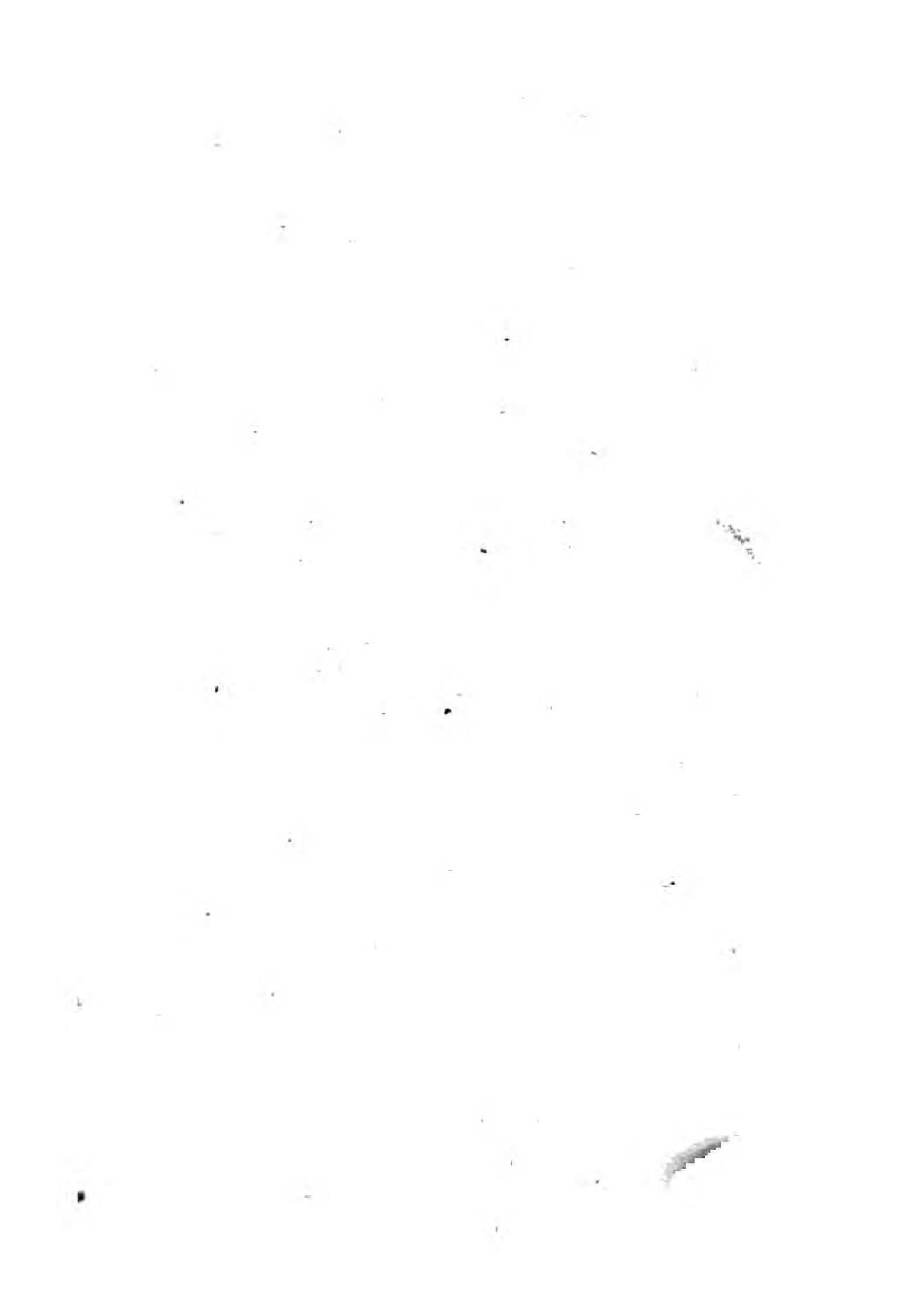


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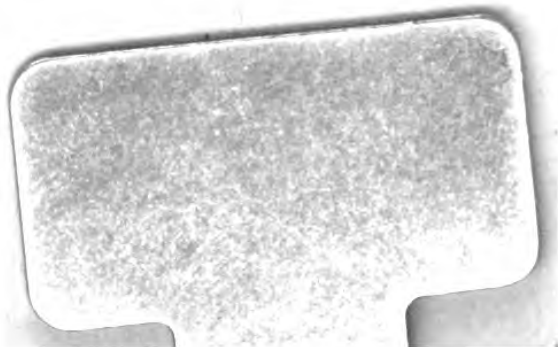


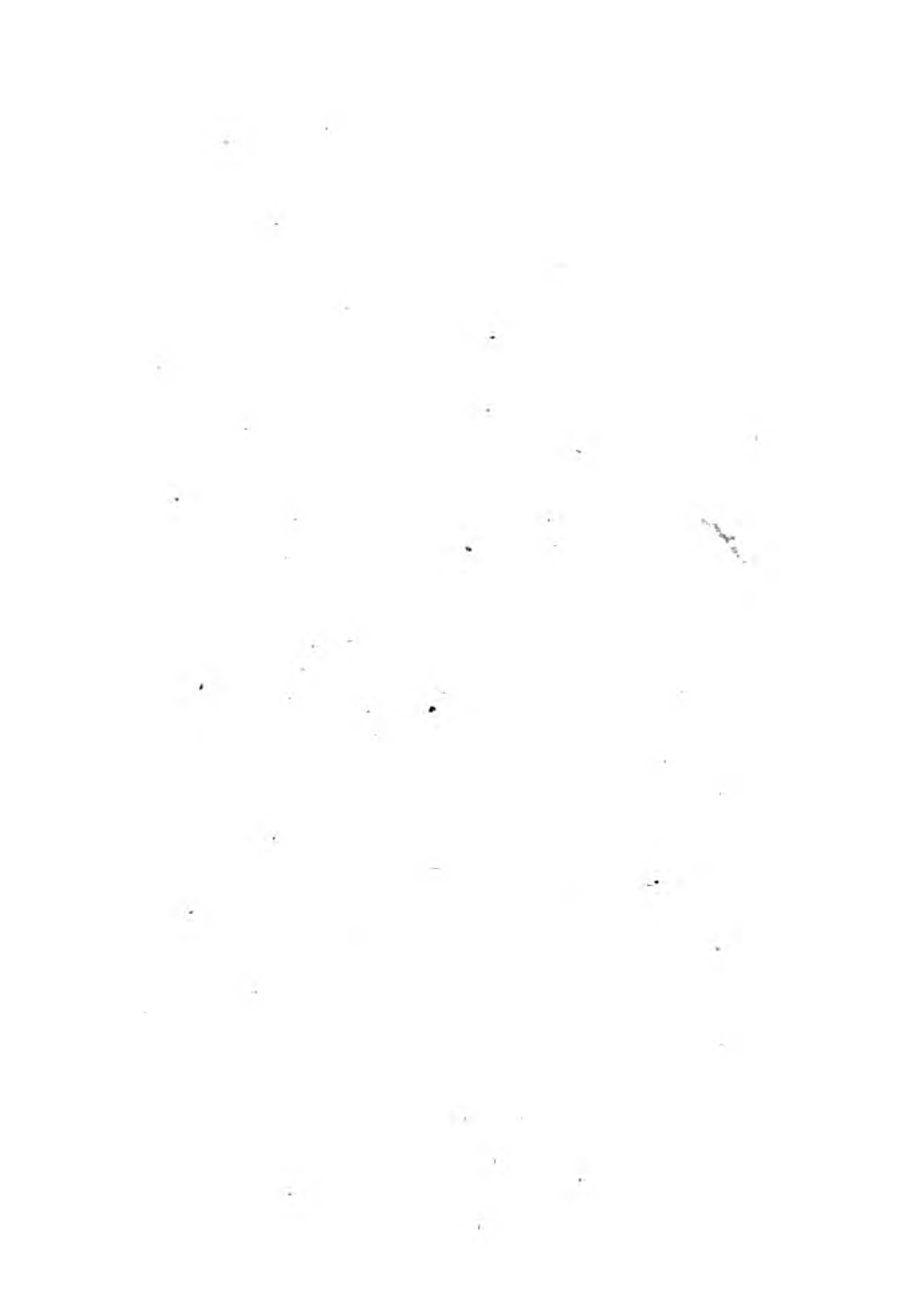
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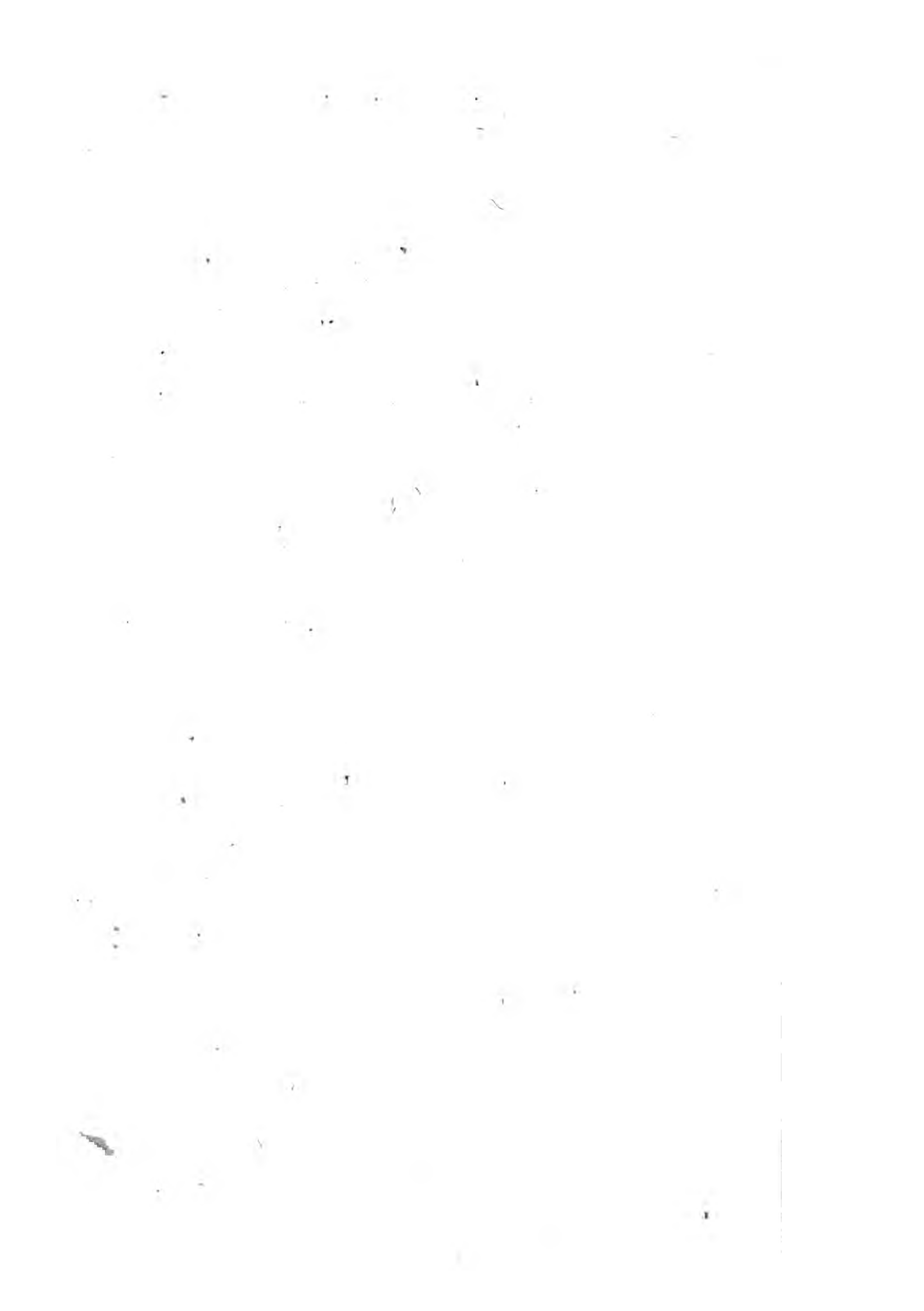


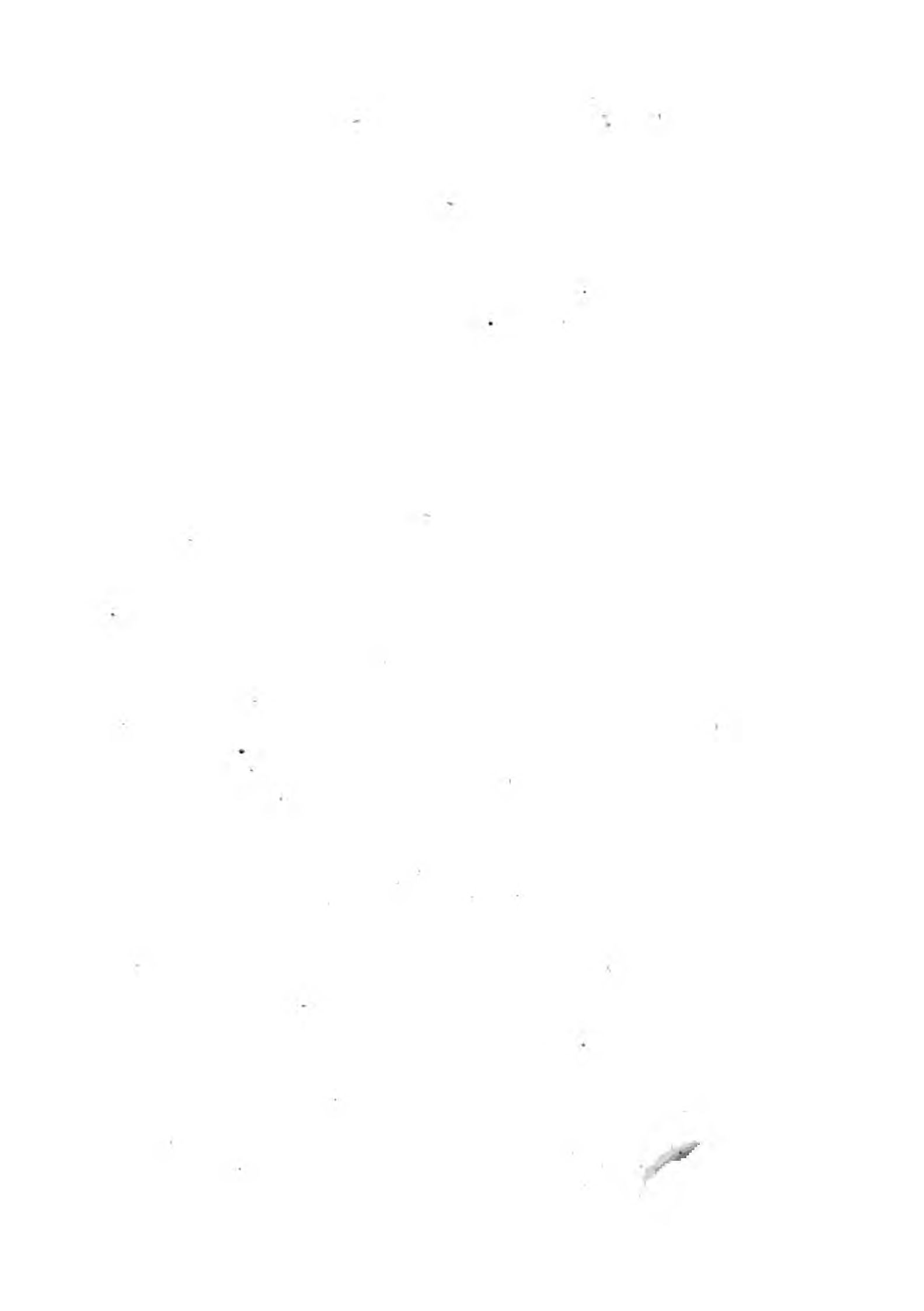


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P O E M S,

BY

*WILLIAM COWPER,*

Of the Inner Temple, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

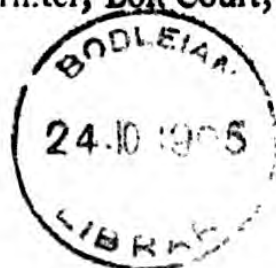
A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S  
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1803.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE history of the following production is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the *SOFA* for a subject. He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought, to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the Poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are, such, as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who

manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel therefore is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

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**THE TASK,**

**A POEM.**

**BOOK I.**



## ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

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

# THE TASK.

## BOOK I.

### THE SOFA.

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

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,  
Save their own painted skins, our fires had none.  
As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,

\* See Poems, vol. i.

Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile:  
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock  
Washed by the sea, or on the gravelly bank  
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,  
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.  
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next  
The birth-day of invention; weak at first,  
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.  
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs  
Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm  
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.  
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,  
And swayed the sceptre of his infant realms:  
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear  
May still be seen; but perforated fore,  
And drilled in holes, the solid oak is found,  
By worms voracious eating through and through.

At length a generation more refined  
Improved the simple plan; made three legs four,  
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,  
And over the seat, with plenteous wadding stuffed,  
Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,  
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought

And woven close, or needle-work sublime.  
There might ye see the piony spread wide,  
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lads,  
Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,  
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India smooth and bright  
With Nature's varnish; severed into stripes,  
That interlaced each other, these supplied  
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced  
The new machine, and it became a chair.  
But restless was the chair; the back erect  
Distressed the weary loins, that felt no ease;  
The slippery seat betrayed the sliding part,  
That pressed it, and the feet hung dangling down,  
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.  
These for the rich: the rest, whom fate had placed  
In modest mediocrity, content  
With base materials, sat on well-tanned hides,  
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,  
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,  
Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fixt,  
If cushion might be called, what harder seemed  
Than the firm oak, of which the frame was formed.

No want of timber then was felt or feared  
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood  
Ponderous and fixt by its own massy weight.  
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,  
An alderman of Cripplegate contrived;  
And some ascribe the invention to a priest  
Burly and big, and studious of his ease.  
But, rude at first, and not with easy slope  
Receding wide, they pressed against the ribs,  
And bruised the side; and, elevated high,  
Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.  
Long time elapsed or ever our rugged fires  
Complained, though incommodiouly pent in,  
And ill at ease behind. The ladies first  
'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.  
Ingenious fancy, never better pleased  
Than when employed to accommodate the fair,  
Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised  
The soft settee; one elbow at each end,  
And in the midst an elbow it received,  
United yet divided, twain at once.  
So fit two kings of Brentford on one throne;  
And so two citizens who take the air,  
Close packed, and smiling, in a chaise and one.

But relaxation of the languid frame,  
By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,  
Was bliss reserved for happier days. So slow  
The growth of what is excellent; so hard  
To attain perfection in this nether world.  
Thus first necessity invented stools,  
Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,  
And luxury the accomplished SOFA last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,  
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he,  
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour  
To sleep within the carriage more secure,  
His legs depending at the open door.  
Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk;  
The tedious rector drawling over his head;  
And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep  
Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,  
Nor his, who quits the box at midnight hour  
To slumber in the carriage more secure,  
Nor sleep enjoyed by curate in his desk,  
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,  
Compared with the repose the SOFA yields.

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

Nor sofa then I needed. Youth repairs  
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil  
Incurring short fatigue; and, though our years,  
As life declines, speed rapidly away,  
And not a year but pilfers as he goes  
Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep;  
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees  
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;  
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot,  
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,  
That play of lungs, inhaling and again  
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes  
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,  
Mine have not pilfered yet; nor yet impaired  
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that soothed  
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find  
Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.  
And witness, dear companion of my walks,  
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive  
Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as love,  
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth  
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—  
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.  
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,



And that my raptures are not conjured up  
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,  
But genuine, and art partner of them all.  
How oft upon yon eminence our pace  
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne  
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,  
While admiration feeding at the eye,  
And still unfated, dwelt upon the scene.  
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned  
The distant plough slow moving, and beside  
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,  
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy!  
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain  
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled over,  
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course  
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,  
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,  
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;  
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream  
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,  
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;  
Displaying on its varied side the grace  
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,  
Tall spire; from which the sound of cheerful bells

Just undulates upon the listening ear,  
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.  
Scenes must be beautiful, which daily viewed  
Please daily, and whose novelty survives  
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.  
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

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

But animated nature sweeter still,  
To sooth and satisfy the human ear.  
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one  
The live-long night: nor these alone, whose notes  
Nice fingered art must emulate in vain,  
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime  
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,  
The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl,  
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.  
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,  
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,  
And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought  
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!  
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,  
Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself!  
More delicate his timorous mate retires.  
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,  
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,  
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,  
The task of new discoveries falls on me.  
At such a season, and with such a charge,  
Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown,

A cottage, whither oft we fince repair:  
'Tis perched upon the green-hill top, but clofe  
Environed with a ring of branching elms,  
That overhang the thatch, itfelf unfeen  
Peeps at the vale below; fo thick befet  
With foliage of fuch dark redundant growth  
I called the low-roofed lodge the *peasant's nest*.  
And, hidden as it is, and far remote  
From fuch unpleafing founds, as haunt the ear  
In village or in town, the bay of curs  
Inceffant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,  
And infants clamorous whether pleafed or pained,  
Oft have I wifhed the peaceful covert mine.  
Here, I have faid, at leaft I fhould poffefs  
The poet's treasure, filence, and indulge  
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and fecure.  
Vain thought! the dweller in that ftill retreat  
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.  
Its elevated fcite forbids the wretch  
To drink fweet waters of the cryftal well;  
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,  
And, heavy-laden, brings his beverage home,  
Far fetched and little worth; nor feldom waits,  
Dependant on the baker's punctual call,

To hear his creaking panniers at the door,  
Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.  
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest!*  
If solitude make scant the means of life,  
Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,  
Be still a pleasing object in my view;  
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade  
Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,  
Now scorned, but worthy of a better fate.  
Our fathers knew the value of a screen  
From sultry suns: and, in their shaded walks  
And long protracted bowers, enjoyed at noon  
The gloom and coolness of declining day.  
We bear our shades about us; self-deprived  
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,  
And range an Indian waste without a tree.  
Thanks to \* Benevolus—he spares me yet  
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines;  
And, though himself so polished, still relieves  
The obsolete prolixity of shade.

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

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

The summit gained, behold the proud alcove  
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures  
The grand retreat from injuries impressed  
By rural carvers, who with knives deface  
The pannels, leaving an obscure, rude name  
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.  
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself  
Beats in the breast of man, that even a few  
Few transient years, won from the abysses abhorred  
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,  
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;



Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,  
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.  
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,  
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts  
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve  
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass  
The sycamore, capricious in attire,  
Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet  
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.  
Over these, but far beyond (a spacious map  
Of hill and valley interposed between),  
The Ouse, dividing the well-watered land,  
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,  
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,  
And such the re-ascent: between them weeps  
A little naiad her impoverished urn  
All summer long, which winter fills again.  
The folded gates would bar my progress now,  
But that the \* lord of this enclosed demesne,  
Communicative of the good he owns,

\* See the foregoing note.



Admits me to a share; the guiltless eye  
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.  
Refreshing change! where now the blazing fun?  
By short transition we have lost his glare,  
And stepped at once into a cooler clime.  
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn  
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice  
That yet a remnant of your race survives.  
How airy and how light the graceful arch,  
Yet awful as the consecrated roof  
Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath  
The chequered earth seems restless as a flood  
Brushed by the wind. So sportive is the light  
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,  
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,  
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves  
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced and spirits  
cheered,  
We tread the wilderness, whose well-rolled walks,  
With curvature of flow and easy sweep—  
Deception innocent—give ample space  
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;

Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms  
We may discern the thresher at his task.  
Thump after thump refounds the constant flail,  
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls  
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,  
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist  
Of atoms, sparkling in the noon-day beam.  
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,  
And sleep not; see him sweating over his bread  
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,  
But softened into mercy; made the pledge  
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.  
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel  
That nature rides upon, maintains her health,  
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads  
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.  
Its own revolvency upholds the world.  
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,  
And fit the limpid element for use,  
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,  
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed  
By restless undulation: even the oak

Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm :  
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel  
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,  
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm  
He held the thunder : but the monarch owes  
His firm stability to what he scorns,  
More fixt below, the more disturbed above.  
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,  
Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives  
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,  
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.  
The sedentary stretch their lazy length  
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,  
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek  
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,  
And withered muscle, and the vapid soul,  
Reproach their owner with that love of rest,  
To which he forfeits even the rest he loves.  
Not such the alert and active. Measure life  
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,  
And their's alone seems worthy of the name.  
Good health, and, its associate in the most,  
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,  
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;

The powers of fancy and strong thought are their's;  
Even age itself seems privileged in them,  
With clear exemption from its own defects.  
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front  
The veteran shows, and, gracing a gray beard  
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave  
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, ease, when courted most,  
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine  
Who ofteneft sacrifice are favoured least.  
The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,  
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found,  
Who, self-imprisoned in their proud saloons,  
Renounce the odours of the open field  
For the unscented fictions of the loom;  
Who, satisfied with only pencilled scenes,  
Prefer to the performance of a God  
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand!  
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art;  
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,  
None more admires the painter's magic skill,  
Who shows me that which I shall never see,  
Conveys a distant country into mine,

And throws Italian light on English walls:  
But imitative strokes can do no more  
Than please the eye—sweet Nature's every sense.  
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,  
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,  
And music of her woods—no works of man  
May rival these; these all bespeak a power  
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.  
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;  
'Tis free to all—'tis every day renewed;  
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.  
He does not scorn it, who, imprisoned long  
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey  
To fallow sickness, which the vapours, dank  
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,  
Escapes at last to liberty and light:  
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue;  
His eye relumines its extinguished fires;  
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is winged with joy,  
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.  
He does not scorn it, who has long endured  
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs,  
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed  
With acrid salts; his very heart athirst

To gaze at nature in her green array,  
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possessed  
With visions prompted by intense desire:  
Fair fields appear below, such as he left  
Far distant, such as he would die to find—  
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;  
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,  
And sullen sadness, that overshade, distort,  
And mar, the face of beauty, when no cause  
For such immeasurable woe appears,  
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair  
Sweet smiles, and bloomless transient than her own.  
It is the constant revolution, stale  
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,  
That palls and fatiates, and makes languid life  
A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.  
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart  
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast  
Is famished—finds no music in the song,  
No smartness in the jest; and wonders why.  
Yet thousands still desire to journey on,  
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.

The paralytic, who can hold her cards,  
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand  
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort  
Her mingled suits and sequences; and fits,  
Spectatrefs both and spectacle, a sad  
And silent cypher, while her proxy plays.  
Others are dragged into the crowded room  
Between supporters; and, once seated, sit,  
Through downright inability to rise,  
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.  
These speak a loud memento. Yet even these  
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he  
That overhangs a torrent to a twig.  
They love it, and yet loath it; fear to die,  
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.  
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,  
The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds  
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,  
And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long,  
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.  
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,  
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,

Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams  
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.  
The peasant too, a witness of his song,  
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.  
But save me from the gaiety of those,  
Whose head-aches nail them to a noon-day bed;  
And save me too from their's, whose haggard eyes  
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs  
For property stripped off by cruel chance;  
From gaiety, that fills the bones with pain,  
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The earth was made so various, that the mind  
Of desultory man, studious of change,  
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.  
Prospects, however lovely, may be seen  
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,  
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off  
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.  
Then snug enclosures in the sheltered vale,  
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,  
Delight us; happy to renounce awhile,  
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,  
That such short absence may endear it more.



Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,  
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts  
Above the reach of man. His hoary head,  
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner  
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,  
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist  
A girdle of half-withered shrubs he shows,  
And at his feet the baffled billows die.  
The common, overgrown with fern, and rough  
With prickly gorse, that shapeless and deformed  
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,  
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,  
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf  
Smells fresh, and rich in odoriferous herbs  
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense  
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days  
Saw better clad, in cloak of fatin trimmed  
With lace, and hat with splendid ribband bound.  
A serving maid was she, and fell in love  
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.  
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves  
To distant shores; and she would sit and weep

At what a failor suffers; fancy too  
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,  
Would oft anticipate his glad return,  
And dream of transports she was not to know.  
She heard the doleful tidings of his death—  
And never smiled again! and now she roams  
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,  
And there, unless when charity forbids,  
The livelong night. A tattered apron hides,  
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown  
More tattered still; and both but ill conceal  
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.  
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,  
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,  
Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,  
Though pinched with cold, asks never.—Kate is  
crazed.

I see a column of slow rising smoke  
O'ertop the lofty wood, that skirts the wild.  
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat  
Their miserable meal. A kettle, flung  
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,  
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,

Or vermin, or at best of cock purloined  
From his accustomed perch. Hard-faring race!  
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,  
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves un-  
quenched

The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide  
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,  
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.  
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more  
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,  
Conveying worthless dross into its place;  
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.  
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast  
In human mould, should brutalize by choice  
His nature; and, though capable of arts,  
By which the world might profit, and himself,  
Self-banished from society, prefer  
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil!  
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft  
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,  
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,  
Can change their whine into a mirthful note,  
When safe occasion offers; and with dance  
And music of the bladder and the bag,

Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.  
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy  
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;  
And, breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,  
Need other physic none to heal the effects  
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguished from the crowd  
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,  
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside  
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,  
The manners and the arts of civil life.  
His wants indeed are many; but supply  
Is obvious, placed within the easy reach  
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.  
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;  
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,  
And terrible to fight, as when she springs  
(If ever she spring spontaneous) in remote  
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,  
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,  
By culture tamed, by liberty refreshed,  
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.

War and the chase engross the savage whole ;  
War followed for revenge, or to supplant  
The envied tenants of some happier spot :  
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust !  
His hard condition with severe constraint  
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth  
Of wisdom, proves a school, in which he learns  
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,  
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.  
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,  
And thus the rangers of the western world,  
Where it advances far into the deep,  
Towards the Antarctic. Even the favoured isles  
So lately found, although the constant sun  
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,  
Can boast but little virtue; and inert  
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain  
In manners—victims of luxurious ease.  
These therefore I can pity, placed remote  
From all, that science traces, art invents,  
Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed  
In boundless oceans, never to be passed  
By navigators uninformed as they, .

Or ploughed perhaps by British bark again.  
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,  
Thee, gentle \* savage! whom no love of thee  
Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,  
Or else vain glory, prompted us to draw  
Forth from thy native bowers, to shew thee here  
With what superior skill we can abuse  
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.  
The dream is past; and thou hast found again  
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,  
And homestall thatched with leaves. But hast thou  
    found  
Their former charms? And having seen our state,  
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp  
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,  
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,  
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,  
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys  
Lost nothing by comparison with our's?  
Rude as thou art, (for we returned thee rude  
And ignorant, except of outward show)  
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart

\* Omai.

And spiritless, as never to regret  
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.  
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,  
And asking of the surge, that bathes thy foot,  
If ever it has washed our distant shore.  
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,  
A patriot's for his country: thou art sad  
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,  
From which no power of thine can raise her up.  
Thus fancy paints thee, and though apt to err,  
Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.  
She tells me too that duly every morn  
Thou climbest the mountain top, with eager eye  
Exploring far and wide the watery waste  
For sight of ship from England. Every speck  
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale  
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.  
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,  
And sends thee to thy cabin, well-prepared  
To dream all night of what the day denied.  
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait  
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,  
Disinterested good, is not our trade.  
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;

And must be bribed to compass earth again  
By other hopes and richer fruits than your's.

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



By riot and incontinence the worst.  
There, touched by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes  
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees  
All her reflected features. Bacon there  
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,  
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.  
Nor does the chissel occupy alone  
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much;  
Each province of her art her equal care.  
With nice incision of her guided steel  
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil  
So sterile with what charms soever she will,  
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.  
Where finds philosophy her eagle eye,  
With which she gazes at yon burning disk  
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?  
In London: where her implements exact,  
With which she calculates, computes, and scans,  
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now  
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?  
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,  
So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so supplied,  
As London—opulent, enlarged, and still  
Increasing, London? Babylon of old

Not more the glory of the earth than she,  
A more accomplished world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two  
That so much beauty would do well to purge;  
And show this queen of cities, that so fair  
May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.  
It is not seemly, nor of good report,  
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt  
To avenge than to prevent the breach of law:  
That she is rigid in denouncing death.  
On petty robbers, and indulges life  
And liberty, and oft-times honour too,  
To peculators of the public gold;  
That thieves at home must hang; but he, that puts  
Into his overgorged and bloated purse  
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.  
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,  
That, through profane and infidel contempt  
Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul  
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,  
The total ordinance and will of God;  
Advancing fashion to the post of truth,  
And centering all authority in modes

And customs of her own, till sabbath rites  
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,  
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.

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

There is a public mischief in your mirth;  
It plagues your country. Folly such as your's,  
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,  
Has made, what enemies could never have done,  
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,  
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.



THE TASK.

BOOK II.

## ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

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

# THE TASK.

## BOOK II.

### THE TIME-PIECE.

OH for a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless contiguity of shade,  
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,  
Of unsuccessful or successful war,  
Might never reach me more. My ear is pained,  
My soul is sick, with every day's report  
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled.  
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,  
It does not feel for man; the natural bond  
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax,  
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.  
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin  
Not coloured like his own; and having power



To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause  
Dooms and devotes him as a lawful prey.  
Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed  
Make enemies of nations, who had else  
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.  
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;  
And, worse than all, and most to be deplored  
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,  
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat  
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart  
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.  
Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,  
And having human feelings, does not blush,  
And hang his head, to think himself a man?  
I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,  
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth,  
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.  
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's  
Just estimation prized above all price,  
I had much rather be myself the slave,  
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.  
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?

And they themselves once ferried over the wave,  
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.  
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs  
Receive our air, that moment they are free;  
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.  
That is noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,  
And let it circulate through every vein  
Of all your empire; that where Britain's power  
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social intercourse,  
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,  
Between the nations in a world, that seems  
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,  
And by the voice of all its elements  
To preach the general doom\*. When were the  
winds

Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?  
When did the waves so haughtily overleap  
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?  
Fires from beneath, and meteors † from above,

\* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.

† August 18, 1763.

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

Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now  
Lie scattered, where the shapely column stood.  
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets  
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord

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

Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show  
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause;  
While God performs upon the trembling stage  
Of his own works his dreadful part alone.  
How does the earth receive him?—With what signs  
Of gratulation and delight her king?  
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,  
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,  
Disclosing paradise wherever he treads?  
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,  
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps  
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot.  
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,  
For he has touched them. From the extremest point  
Of elevation down into the abyss  
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.  
The rocks fall headlong, and the vallies rise,  
The rivers die into offensive pools,  
And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross  
And mortal nuisance into all the air.  
What solid was, by transformation strange,  
Grows fluid; and the fix'd and rooted earth,  
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,  
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl

Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense  
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs  
And agonies of human and of brute  
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,  
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene  
Migrates uplifted; and, with all its soil  
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out  
A new possessor, and survives the change.  
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought  
To an enormous and overbearing height,  
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice,  
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore  
Refitless. Never such a sudden flood,  
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,  
Possessed an inland scene. Where now the throng,  
That pressed the beach, and, hasty to depart,  
Looked to the sea for safety? They are gone,  
Gone with the reflux wave into the deep—  
A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,  
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes,  
Where beauty oft and lettered worth consume  
Life in the unproductive shades of death,  
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,  
And, happy in their unforeseen release

From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy  
The terrors of the day, that sets them free.  
Who then that has thee, would not hold thee fast,  
Freedom ! whom they that lose thee so regret,  
That even a judgment, making way for thee,  
Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake.

Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame  
Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,  
And in the furious inquest, that it makes  
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.  
The very elements, though each be meant  
The minister of man, to serve his wants,  
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws  
A plague into his blood; and cannot use  
Life's necessary means, but he must die.  
Storms rise to overwhelm him: or, if stormy  
winds

Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,  
And, needing none assistance of the storm,  
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.  
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,  
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,  
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,

And drown him in her dry and dusty gulphs.  
What then!—were they the wicked above all,  
And we the righteous, whose fast anchored isle  
Moved not, while their's was rocked, like a light skiff,  
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,  
And none than we more guilty. But, where all  
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts  
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark:  
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn  
The more malignant. If he spared not them,  
'Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,  
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!

Happy the man, who sees a God employed  
In all the good and ill, that chequer life!  
Resolving all events, with their effects  
And manifold results, into the will  
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.  
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend  
The least of our concerns (since from the least  
The greatest oft originate); could chance  
Find place in his dominion, or dispose  
One lawless particle to thwart his plan;  
Then God might be surpris'd, and unforeseen.

Contingence might alarm him, and disturb  
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.  
This truth philosophy, though eagle-eyed  
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;  
And, having found his instrument, forgets,  
Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,  
Denies the power, that wields it. God proclaims  
His hot displeasure against foolish men,  
That live an atheist life: involves the heaven  
In tempests: quits his grasp upon the winds,  
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague  
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,  
And putrify the breath of blooming health.  
He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend  
Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,  
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,  
And desolates a nation at a blast.  
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells  
Of homogeneal and discordant springs  
And principles; of causes, how they work  
By necessary laws their sure effects;  
Of action and re-action. He has found  
The source of the disease, that nature feels,  
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.



Thou fool! will thy discovery of the cause  
Suspend the effect, or heal it? Has not God  
Still wrought by means since first he made the world?  
And did he not of old employ his means  
To drown it? What is his creation less  
Than a capacious reservoir of means  
Formed for his use, and ready at his will?  
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve; ask of him,  
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught;  
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—  
My country! and, while yet a nook is left,  
Where English minds and manners may be found,  
Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime  
Be fickle, and thy year most part deformed  
With dripping rains, or withered by a frost,  
I would not yet exchange thy fullen skies,  
And fields without a flower, for warmer France  
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves  
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.  
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime  
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire  
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task:

But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake  
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart  
As any thunderer there. And I can feel  
Thy follies too; and with a just disdain  
Frown at effeminate, whose very looks  
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.

How, in the name of soldiership and sense,  
Should England prosper, when such things, as  
smooth

And tender as a girl, all effenced over  
With odours, and as profligate as sweet;  
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,  
And love when they should fight; when such as  
these

Presume to lay their hand upon the ark  
Of her magnificent and awful cause?  
Time was when it was praise and boast enough  
In every clime, and travel where we might,  
That we were born her children. Praise enough  
To fill the ambition of a private man,  
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,  
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.  
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them  
The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen

Each in his field of glory; one in arms,  
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap  
Of smiling victory that moment won,  
And Chatham heart-sick of his country's shame!  
They made us many foldiers. Chatham, still  
Consulting England's happiness at home,  
Secured it by an unforgiving frown,  
If any wronged her. Wolfe, wherever he fought,  
Put so much of his heart into his act,  
That his example had a magnet's force,  
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.  
Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such!  
Or all that we have left is empty talk  
Of old achievements, and despair of new.

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float  
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck  
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,  
That no rude favour maritime invade  
The nose of nice nobility! Breathe soft  
Ye clarionets; and softer fill ye flutes;  
That winds and waters, lulled by magic sounds,  
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore!  
True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.

True; we may thank the perfidy of France,  
That picked the jewel out of England's crown,  
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.  
And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state!  
A brave man knows no malice, but at once  
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,  
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.  
And, shamed as we have been, to the very beard  
Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved  
Too weak for those decisive blows, that once  
Ensured us mastery there, we yet retain  
Some small pre-eminence; we justly boast  
At least superior jockeyship, and claim  
The honours of the turf as all our own!  
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,  
And show the shame, ye might conceal at home,  
In foreign eyes! be grooms and win the plate,  
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—  
'Tis generous to communicate your skill  
To those that need it. Folly is soon learned:  
And under such preceptors who can fail!

There is a pleasure in poetic pains,  
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,

The expedients and inventions multiform,  
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms  
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—  
To arrest the fleeting images, that fill  
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,  
And force them fit, till he has penciled off  
A faithful likeness of the forms he views;  
Then to dispose his copies with such art,  
That each may find its most propitious light,  
And shine by situation, hardly less  
Than by the labour and the skill it cost;  
Are occupations of the poet's mind  
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought  
With such address from themes of sad import,  
That, lost in his own musings, happy man!  
He feels the anxieties of life, denied  
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.  
Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,  
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.  
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps  
Aware of nothing arduous in a task  
They never undertook, they little note  
His dangers or escapes, and haply find  
Their least amusement where he found the most.

But is amusement all? studious of song,  
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,  
I would not trifle merely, though the world  
Be loudest in their praise, who do no more.  
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?  
It may correct a foible, may chastise  
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,  
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;  
But where are its sublimer trophies found?  
What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaimed  
By rigour, or whom laughed into reform?  
Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed:  
Laughed at he laughs again; and stricken hard  
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,  
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore (and I name it filled  
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware  
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—  
The pulpit (when the satyrist has at last,  
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,  
Spent all his force and made no profelyte)—  
I say the pulpit (in the sober use  
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)

Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall  
stand,

The most important and effectual guard,  
Support, and ornament, of virtue's cause.

There stands the messenger of truth: there stands  
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear.

By him the violated law speaks out  
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.

He stabilishes the strong, restores the weak,  
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,  
And, armed himself in panoply complete  
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,  
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule  
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
The sacramental host of God's elect!

Are all such teachers?—would to heaven all were!  
But hark—the doctor's voice!—fast wedged between  
Two empirics he stands, and with swollen cheeks  
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far  
Than all invective is his bold harangue,  
While through that public organ of report  
He hails the clergy; and, defying shame,

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

I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,  
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose  
    life  
Coincident exhibit lucid proof  
That he is honest in the sacred cause.  
To such I render more than mere respect,  
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.  
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,



In conversation frivolous, in dress  
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse;  
Frequent in park with lady at his side,  
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes;  
But rare at home, and never at his books,  
Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;  
Constant at routs, familiar with a round  
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;  
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,  
And well-prepared, by ignorance and sloth,  
By infidelity and love of world,  
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave  
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride:  
From such apostles, oh ye mitred heads,  
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands  
On sculls, that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,  
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,  
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace  
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.  
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;  
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,  
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,

And natural in gesture; much impressed  
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
May feel it too; affectionate in look,  
And tender in address, as well becomes  
A messenger of grace to guilty men.  
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?  
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,  
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;  
Cry—hem; and reading what they never wrote,  
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,  
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene!

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

And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,  
When I am hungry for the bread of life?  
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and flames  
His noble office, and instead of truth,  
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock!  
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,  
And start theatric, practised at the glass!  
I seek divine simplicity in him,  
Who handles things divine; and all besides,  
Though learned with labour, and though much  
    admired,  
By curious eyes and judgments ill-informed,  
To me is odious as the nasal twang  
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,  
Mised by custom, strain celestial themes  
Through the prest nostril, spectacle-befrid.  
Some decent in demeanour while they preach,  
That task performed, relapse into themselves;  
And having spoken wisely at the close  
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,  
Whoever was edified, themselves were not!  
Forth comes the pocket mirror.—First we stroke  
An eye-brow; next compose a straggling lock;  
Then with an air most gracefully performed.

Fall back into our feat, extend an arm  
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,  
With handkerchief in hand depending low :  
The better hand more busy gives the nose  
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye  
With opera glafs, to watch the moving fcene,  
And recognize the flow-retiring fair.—  
Now this is fulsome; and offends me more  
Than in a churchman flovenly neglect  
And ruffic coarfenefs would. An heavenly mind  
May be indifferent to her houfe of clay,  
And flight the hovel as beneath her care;  
But how a body fo fantaftic, trim,  
And quaint, in its deportment and attire,  
Can lodge an heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He, that negotiates between God and man,  
As God's ambaffador, the grand concerns  
Of judgment and of mercy, fhould beware  
Of lightnefs in his fpeech. 'Tis pitiful  
To court a grin, when you fhould woo a foul;  
To break a jeft, when pity would infpire  
Pathetic exhortation; and to addrefs  
The skittifh fancy with facetious tales,

When sent with God's commission to the heart!  
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip  
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,  
And I consent you take it for your text,  
Your only one, till fides and benches fail.  
No: he was serious in a serious cause,  
And understood too well the weighty terms  
That he had taken in charge. He would not stoop  
To conquer those by jocular exploits,  
Whom truth and soberness assailed in vain.

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

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

All truth is from the sempiternal source  
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,  
Drew from the stream below. More favoured we  
Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain head.  
To them it flowed much mingled and defiled  
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams  
Illusive of philosophy, so called,  
But falsely. Sages after sages strove  
In vain to filter off a crystal draught  
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced  
The thirst than flaked it, and not seldom bred  
Intoxication and delirium wild.  
In vain they pushed inquiry to the birth  
And spring-time of the world! asked, Whence is  
man?  
Why formed at all? and wherefore as he is?  
Where must he find his Maker? with what rites  
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?

Or does he sit regardless of his works?  
Has man within him an immortal seed?  
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive  
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?  
Knots worthy of solution, which alone  
A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague  
And all at random, fabulous and dark,  
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life  
Defective and unfunctioned, proved too weak  
To bind the roving appetite, and lead  
Blind nature to a God not yet revealed.  
'Tis revelation satisfies all doubts,  
Explains all mysteries, except her own,  
And so illuminates the path of life,  
That fools discover it, and stray no more.  
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,  
My man of morals, nurtured in the shades  
Of Academus—is this false or true?  
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?  
If Christ, then why resort at every turn  
To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short  
Of man's occasions, when in him reside  
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathomed store?  
How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,

Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preached !  
Men that, if now alive, would fit content  
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,  
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,  
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too !

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



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

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive  
A wooden one; so we, no longer taught  
By monitors, that mother church supplies,  
Now make our own. Posterity will ask  
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine)  
Some fifty or an hundred lustrums hence,  
What was a monitor in George's days ?  
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,  
Of whom I needs must augur better things,  
Since heaven would fure grow weary of a world  
Productive only of a race like our's,  
A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.

We wear it at our backs. There, closely braced  
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard  
The prominent and most unsightly bones,  
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use  
Sovereign and most effectual to secure  
A form, not now gymnastic as of yore,  
From rickets and distortion, else our lot.  
But thus admonished, we can walk erect—  
One proof at least of manhood ! while the friend  
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.  
Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,  
And by caprice as multiplied as his,  
Just please us while the fashion is at full,  
But change with every moon. The sycophant,  
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date;  
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;  
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,  
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived ;  
And, making prize of all that he condemns,  
With our expenditure defrays his own.  
Variety's the very spice of life,  
That gives it all its flavour. We have run  
Through every change, that fancy at the loom  
Exhausted has had genius to supply ;

And, studious of mutation still, discard  
A real elegance, a little used,  
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.  
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys  
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,  
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires;  
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,  
Where peace and hospitality might reign.  
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,  
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows  
A form as splendid as the proudest there,  
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?  
A man of the town dines late, but soon enough,  
With reasonable forecast and dispatch,  
To insure a side box station at half price.  
You think perhaps so delicate his dress,  
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!  
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems  
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!  
The rout is folly's circle, which she draws  
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,  
That none, decoyed into that fatal ring,  
Unless by heaven's peculiar grace, escape.  
There we grow early gray, but never wise;

There form connexions, but acquire no friend ;  
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success ;  
Waste youth in occupations only fit  
For second childhood, and devote old age  
To sports, which only childhood could excuse.  
There they are happiest, who dissemble best  
Their weariness ; and they the most polite,  
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,  
Though at their own destruction. She, that asks  
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,  
And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)  
Make just reprisals ; and with cringe and shrug  
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.  
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,  
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,  
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,  
To her, who frugal only that her thrift  
May feed excesses she can ill afford,  
Is hackneyed home unlacquyed ; who in haste  
Alighting turns the key in her own door,  
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,  
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.  
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,  
On fortune's velvet altar offering up

Their last poor pittance—fortune, most severe  
Of goddeffes yet known, and costlier far  
Than all, that held their routs in Juno's heaven.—  
So fare we in this prison-house the world;  
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see  
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.  
They gaze upon the links, that hold them fast,  
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,  
Then shake them in despair, and dance again!

Now basket up the family of plagues,  
That waste our vitals; peculation, sale  
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds  
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,  
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen  
As the necessities their authors feel;  
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat  
At the right door. Profusion is the fire.  
Profusion unrestrained, with all that's base  
In character, has littered all the land,  
And bred, within the memory of no few,  
A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,  
A people, such as never was till now.  
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all,

That gives society its beauty, strength,  
Convenience, and security, and use:  
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapped  
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws  
Can seize the slippery prey: unties the knot  
Of union, and converts the sacred band,  
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.  
Profusion, deluging a state with lusts  
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,  
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,  
And warps, the consciences of public men,  
Till they can laugh at virtue; mock the fools  
That trust them; and in the end disclose a face,  
That would have shocked credulity herself,  
Unmasked, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—  
Since all alike are selfish, why not they?  
This does profusion, and the accursed cause  
Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls in ancient days,  
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth,  
Were precious, and inculcated with care,  
There dwelt a sage called Discipline. His head,  
Not yet by time completely silvered o'er,

Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,  
But strong for service still, and unimpaired.  
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile  
Played on his lips; and in his speech was heard  
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.  
The occupation dearest to his heart  
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke  
The head of modest and ingenuous worth,  
That blushed at its own praise; and press the youth  
Close to his side, that pleased him. Learning grew  
Beneath his care a thriving vigorous plant;  
The mind was well informed, the passions held  
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.  
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,  
That one among so many overleaped  
The limits of controul, his gentle eye  
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke:  
His frown was full of terror, and his voice  
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe,  
As left him not, till penitence had won  
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.  
But Discipline, a faithful servant long,  
Declined at length into the vale of years:  
A palsy struck his arm; his sparkling eye

Was quenched in rheums of age: his voice unfrung  
Grew tremulous, and moved derision more  
Than reverence in perverse rebellious youth.  
So colleges and halls neglected much  
Their good old friend; and Discipline at length  
O'erlooked and unemployed fell sick and died.  
Then study languished, emulation slept,  
And virtue fled. The schools became a scene  
Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilt,  
His cap well lined with logic not his own,  
With parrot tongue performed the scholar's part,  
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.  
Then compromise had place, and scrutiny  
Became stone blind; precedence went in truck,  
And he was competent whose purse was so.  
A dissolution of all bonds ensued;  
The curbs invented for the mulish mouth  
Of head-strong youth were broken; bars and bolts  
Grew rusty by disuse; and massy gates  
Forgot their office, opening with a touch;  
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,  
The tasseled cap and the spruce band a jest,  
A mockery of the world! What need of these  
For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,



Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oftener seen  
With belted waist and pointers at their heels,  
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learned,  
If aught was learned in childhood, is forgot;  
And such expence, as pinches parents blue,  
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,  
Is squandered in pursuit of idle sports  
And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name,  
That fits a stigma on his father's house,  
And cleaves through life inseparably close  
To him, that wears it. What can after-games  
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,  
The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,  
Add to such erudition, thus acquired,  
Where science and where virtue are professed?  
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast  
His folly, but to spoil him is a task,  
That bids defiance to the united powers  
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.  
Now blame we most the nurslings or the nurse?  
The children crooked, and twisted, and deformed;  
Through want of care; or her, whose winking eye  
And slumbering officitancy mars the brood?  
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge-

She needs herself correction; needs to learn,  
That it is dangerous sporting with the world,  
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,  
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—  
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,  
A man of letters, and of manners too!  
Of manners sweet as virtue always wears,  
When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.  
He graced a college\*, in which order yet  
Was sacred; and was honoured, loved, and wept,  
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.  
Some minds are tempered happily, and mixt  
With such ingredients of good sense, and taste  
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst  
With such a zeal to be what they approve,  
That no restraints can circumscribe them more  
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake;  
Nor can example hurt them: what they see  
Of vice in others but enhancing more  
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.

\* Ben'et Coll. Cambridge.

If such escape contagion, and emerge  
Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,  
And give the world their talents and themselves,  
Small thanks to those, whose negligence of sloth  
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,  
And left them to an undirected choice.

See then the quiver broken and decayed,  
In which are kept our arrows! Rusting there  
In wild disorder, and unfit for use,  
What wonder if, discharged into the world,  
They shame their shooters with a random flight,  
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine!  
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war  
With such artillery armed. Vice parries wide  
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,  
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not tracked the felon home, and found  
His birth-place and his dam? The country mourns,  
Mourns because every plague, that can infest  
Society, and that saps and worms the base  
Of the edifice, that policy has raised,  
Swarms in all quarters: meets the eye, the ear,

And suffocates the breath at every turn.  
Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself  
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:  
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts  
Of the robed pedagogue! Else let the arraigned  
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.  
So, when the Jewish leader stretched his arm,  
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,  
Spawned in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,  
Polluting Egypt: gardens, fields, and plains,  
Were covered with the pest; the streets were filled;  
The croaking nuisance lurked in every nook;  
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scaped;  
And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.



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THE TASK.

BOOK III.

## ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

*Self-recollection and reproof.—Address to domestic happiness.—Some account of myself.—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise.—Justification of my censures.—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher.—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions.—Domestic happiness addressed again.—Few lovers of the country.—My tame hare.—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden.—Pruning.—Framing.—Greenhouse.—Sowing of flower-seeds.—The country preferable to the town even in the winter.—Reasons why it is deserted at that season.—Ruinous effects of gaming and of expensive improvement.—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK III.

### THE GARDEN.

As one, who long in thickets and in brakes  
Entangled winds now this way and now that  
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;  
Or, having long in miry ways been foiled  
And fore discomfited, from flough to flough  
Plunging and half despairing of escape;  
If chance at length he find a greenward smooth,  
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,  
He chirrupps brisk his ear-erecting steed,  
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;  
So I, designing other themes, and called  
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,  
To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,



Have rambled wide. In country, city, feat  
Of academic fame (howe'er deserved),  
Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.  
But now with pleasant pace a cleaner road  
I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,  
Courageous and refreshed for future toil,  
If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and founding boards reflect  
Most part an empty ineffectual sound,  
What chance that I to fame so little known,  
Nor conversant with men or manners much,  
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope  
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far  
For me, enamoured of sequestered scenes,  
And charmed with rural beauty, to repose,  
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,  
My languid limbs, when summer fears the plains;  
Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft  
And sheltered Sofa, while the nitrous air  
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;  
There, undisturbed by folly, and apprized  
How great the danger of disturbing her,  
To muse in silence, or at least confine

Remarks, that gall so many, to the few  
My partners in retreat. Disgust concealed  
Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault  
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
Of Paradise, that hast survived the fall!  
Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,  
Or tasting long enjoy thee! too infirm,  
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets  
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect  
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup;  
Thou art the nurse of virtue, in thine arms  
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.  
Thou art not known where pleasure is adored,  
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist  
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm  
Of novelty, her fickle frail support;  
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,  
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love  
Joys, that her stormy raptures never yield.  
Forfaking thee what shipwreck have we made  
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!

Till prostitution elbows us aside  
In all our crowded streets; and senates seem  
Convened for purposes of empire less,  
Than to release the adulteress from her bond.  
The adulteress! what a theme for angry verse!  
What provocation to the indignant heart,  
That feels for injured love! but I disdain  
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,  
Cruel, abandoned, glorying in her shame!  
No:—let her pass, and chariotted along  
In guilty splendour shake the public ways;  
The frequency of crimes has washed them white,  
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,  
Whom matrons now of character unsmirched,  
And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.  
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time  
Not to be passed: and she, that had renounced  
Her sex's honour, was renounced herself  
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,  
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.  
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif,  
Desirous to return, and not received:  
But was an wholesome rigour in the main,  
And taught the unblemished to preserve with care

That purity, whose loss was loss of all.  
Men too were nice in honour in those days,  
And judged offenders well. Then he that sharped,  
And pocketted a prize by fraud obtained,  
Was marked and shunned as odious. He that sold  
His country, or was slack when she required  
His every nerve in action and at stretch,  
Paid with the blood, that he had basely spared,  
The price of his default. But now—yes, now,  
We are become so candid and so fair,  
So liberal in construction, and so rich  
In christian charity, (good-natured age!)  
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,  
Transgress what laws they may. Well dressed, well  
bred,  
Well equipaged, is ticket good enough  
To pass us readily through every door.  
Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,  
(And no man's hatred ever wronged her yet)  
May claim this merit still—that she admits  
The worth of what she mimics with such care,  
And thus gives virtue indirect applause;  
But she has burnt her mask not needed here,  
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts  
And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd  
Long since; with many an arrow deep infix  
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew  
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
There was I found by one, who had himself  
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,  
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.  
Since then, with few associates, in remote  
And silent woods I wander, far from those  
My former partners of the peopled scene;  
With few associates, and not wishing more.  
Here much I ruminatè, as much I may,  
With other views of men and manners now  
Than once, and others of a life to come.  
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray  
Each in his own delusions; they are lost  
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed  
And never won. Dream after dream ensues;  
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
And still are disappointed. Rings the world  
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,  
And add two thirds of the remaining half,  
And find the total of their hopes and fears

Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay  
As if created only like the fly,  
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,  
To sport their season, and be seen no more.  
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,  
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.  
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats  
Of heroes little known; and call the rant  
An history: describe the man, of whom  
His own coëvals took but little note,  
And paint his person, character, and views,  
As they had known him from his mother's womb.  
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,  
In which obscurity has wrapped them up,  
The threads of politic and shrewd design,  
That ran through all his purposes, and charge  
His mind with meanings that he never had,  
Or having kept concealed. Some drill and bore  
The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register, by which we learn,  
That he who made it, and revealed its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.  
Some, more acute, and more industrious still,  
Contrive creation; travel nature up

To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,  
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixed,  
And planetary some; what gave them first  
Rotation, from what fountain flowed their light.  
Great contest follows, and much learned dust  
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,  
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend  
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp  
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws  
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.  
Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums  
Should ever tease the lungs, and blear the sight  
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,  
That having wielded the elements, and built  
A thousand systems, each in his own way,  
They should go out in fume, and be forgot?  
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they  
But frantic, who thus spend it? all for smoke—  
Eternity for bubbles proves at last  
A senseless bargain. When I see such games  
Played by the creatures of a power, who swears  
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool  
To a sharp reckoning, that has lived in vain;  
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,

And prove it in the infallible result  
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart  
Dissolve in pity, and account the learned,  
If this be learning, most of all deceived.  
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps,  
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.  
Defend me therefore common sense, say I,  
From reveries so airy, from the toil  
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,  
Terribly arched and aquiline his nose,  
And overbuilt with most impending brows,  
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live  
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?  
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk  
As sweet as charity from human breasts.  
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,  
And exercise all functions of a man.  
How then should I and any man that lives  
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,  
Take of the crimson stream meandering there,  
And catechise it well; apply thy glass,



Search it, and prove now if it be not blood  
Congenial with thine own: and, if it be,  
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose  
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,  
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which  
One common Maker bound me to the kind?  
True; I am no proficient, I confess,  
In arts like your's. I cannot call the swift  
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,  
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath;  
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch  
The parallax of yonder luminous point,  
That seems half quenched in the immense abyss:  
Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest  
A silent witness of the headlong rage,  
Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,  
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.

God never meant that man should scale the heavens  
By strides of human wisdom. In his works,  
Though wondrous, he commands us in his word  
To seek him rather, where his mercy shines.  
The mind indeed, enlightened from above,  
Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause

The grand effect; acknowledges with joy  
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.  
But never yet did philosophic tube,  
That brings the planets home into the eye  
Of observation, and discovers, else  
Not visible, his family of worlds,  
Discover him, that rules them; such a veil  
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,  
And dark in things divine. Full often too  
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn  
Of nature, overlooks her author more;  
From instrumental causes proud to draw  
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.  
But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray  
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal  
Truths undiscerned but by that holy light,  
Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized  
In the pure fountain of eternal love,  
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees  
As meant to indicate a God to man,  
Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.  
Learning has borne such fruit in other days  
On all her branches: piety has found  
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer

Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.  
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage !  
Sagacious reader of the works of God,  
And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,  
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,  
And fed on manna ! And such thine, in whom  
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,  
Immortal Hale ! for deep discernment praised,  
And sound integrity, not more than famed  
For sanctity of manners undefiled.

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades  
Like the fair flower dishevelled in the wind ;  
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream :  
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,  
And we that worship him ignoble graves.  
Nothing is proof against the general curse  
Of vanity, that seizes all below.  
The only amaranthine flower on earth  
Is virtue ; the only lasting treasure, truth.  
But what is truth ? 'twas Pilate's question put  
To Truth itself, that deigned him no reply.  
And wherefore ? will not God impart his light  
To them that ask it ?—Freely—'tis his joy,

His glory, and his nature, to impart.  
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,  
Or negligent, inquirer not a spark.  
What's that, which brings contempt upon a book  
And him who writes it, though the style be neat,  
The method clear, and argument exact?  
That makes a minister in holy things  
The joy of many, and the dread of more,  
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—  
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,  
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?  
What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,  
That learning is too proud to gather up;  
But which the poor, and the despised of all,  
Seek and obtain, and often find unfought?  
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

O friendly to the best pursuits of man,  
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,  
Domestic life in rural leisure passed!  
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets;  
Though many boast thy favours, and affect  
To understand and choose thee for their own.  
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,

E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,  
Though placed in paradise, (for earth has still  
Some traces of her youthful beauty left)  
Substantial happiness for transient joy.  
Scenes formed for contemplation, and to nurse  
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,  
By every pleasing image they present,  
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,  
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;  
Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight  
To fill with riot, and defile with blood.  
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes  
We persecute, annihilate the tribes,  
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale  
Fearless and rapt away from all his cares;  
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,  
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;  
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,  
Be quelled in all our summer-months' retreat;  
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,  
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,  
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,  
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!  
They love the country, and none else, who seek

For their own sake its silence and its shade.  
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart  
Susceptible of pity, or a mind  
Cultured and capable of sober thought,  
For all the savage din of the swift pack,  
And clamours of the field?—Detested sport,  
That owes its pleasures to another's pain;  
That feeds upon the sob and dying shrieks  
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued  
With eloquence, that agonies inspire,  
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs?  
Vain tears, alas, and sighs, that never find  
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!  
Well—one at least is safe. One sheltered here  
Has never heard the sanguinary yell  
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.  
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,  
Whom ten long years' experience of my care  
Has made at last familiar; she has lost  
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,  
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.  
Yes—thou mayest eat thy bread, and lick the hand  
That feeds thee; thou mayest frolic on the floor  
At evening, and at night retire secure

To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed;  
For I have gained thy confidence, have pledged  
All that is human in me to protect  
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.  
If I survive thee I will dig thy grave;  
And, when I place thee in it, sighing say,  
I knew at least one here that had a friend\*.

How various his employments, whom the world  
Calls idle; and who justly in return  
Esteems that busy world an idler too.  
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,  
Delightful industry enjoyed at home,  
And nature in her cultivated trim  
Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad—  
Can he want occupation who has these?  
Will he be idle who has much to enjoy?  
Me therefore studious of laborious ease,  
Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,  
Not waste it, and aware that human life  
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,  
When He shall call his debtors to account,  
From whom are all our blessings; business finds  
E'en here: while sedulous I seek to improve,

\* See the note at the end of this volume.

At least neglect not, or leave unemployed,  
The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack  
Too oft, and much impeded in its work  
By causes not to be divulged in vain,  
To its just point—the service of mankind.  
He, that attends to his interior self,  
That has a heart, and keeps it; has a mind  
That hungers, and supplies it; and who seeks  
A social, not a dissipated life,  
Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve  
No unimportant, though a silent, task.  
A life all turbulence and noise may seem  
To him that leads it wise, and to be praised;  
But wisdom is a pearl with most success  
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.  
He that is ever occupied in forms,  
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,  
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequestered man  
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.  
Whether inclement seasons recommend  
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys  
With her, who shares his pleasures and his heart,



Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph,  
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book  
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused  
In selfish silence, but imparted oft,  
As aught occurs, that she may smile to hear,  
Or turn to nourishment, digested well.  
Or if the garden with its many cares,  
All well repaid, demand him, he attends  
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand  
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,  
Oft loitering lazily, if not o'erseen,  
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.  
Nor does he govern only or direct,  
But much performs himself. No works indeed,  
That ask robust tough sinews, bred to toil,  
Servile employ; but such as may amuse,  
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.  
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees  
That meet (no barren interval between)  
With pleasure more than e'en their fruits afford,  
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel;  
These therefore are his own peculiar charge;  
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,  
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,

Distempered, or has lost prolific powers,  
Impaired by age, his unrelenting hand  
Dooms to the knife: nor does he spare the soft  
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,  
But barren, at the expence of neighbouring twigs  
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick  
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left  
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint  
Large expectation, he disposes neat  
At measured distances, that air and sun,  
Admitted freely may afford their aid,  
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.  
Hence summer has her riches, autumn hence,  
And hence e'en winter fills his withered hand  
With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own\*.  
Fair recompense of labour well bestowed,  
And wise precaution; which a clime so rude  
Makes needful still, whose spring is but the child  
Of churlish winter, in her froward moods  
Discovering much the temper of her fire.  
For oft, as if in her the stream of mild  
Maternal nature had reversed its course,

\* *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.* VIRG.

She brings her infants forth with many smiles;  
But once delivered kills them with a frown.  
He therefore timely warned himself supplies  
Her want of care, screening and keeping warm  
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep  
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft  
As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,  
The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,  
And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,  
So grateful to the palate, and when rare  
So coveted, else base and disesteemed—  
Food for the vulgar merely—is an art  
That toiling ages have but just matured,  
And at this moment unaffayed in song.  
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,  
Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,  
And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains;  
And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye  
The solitary shilling. Pardon then,  
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,  
The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,  
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,

Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste  
Of critic appetite, no fordid fare,  
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,  
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,  
And potent to resist the freezing blast:  
For, ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf  
Deciduous, when now November dark  
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant  
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.  
Warily therefore and with prudent heed  
He seeks a favoured spot; that where he builds  
The agglomerated pile his frame may front  
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back  
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge  
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread  
Dry fern or littered hay, that may imbibe  
The ascending damps; then leisurely impose,  
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand  
From the full fork, the saturated straw.  
What longest binds the closest forms secure  
The shapely side, that as it rises takes,  
By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,

Sheltering the base with its projected eaves;  
The uplifted frame, compact at every joint,  
And overlaid with clear translucent glass,  
He settles next upon the sloping mount,  
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure  
From the dashed pane the deluge as it falls.  
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.  
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth  
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,  
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass  
Diffused, attain the surface: when, behold!  
A pestilent and most corrosive stream,  
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,  
And fast condensed upon the dewy fath,  
Asks egress; which obtained, the overcharged  
And drenched conservatory breathes abroad,  
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank;  
And purified rejoices to have lost  
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage  
The impatient fervour, which it first conceives  
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death  
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.  
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft  
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,

Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch  
The auspicious moment, when the tempered heat,  
Friendly to vital motion, may afford  
Soft fomentation, and invite the seed.  
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,  
And glossy, he commits to pots of size  
Diminutive, well filled with well-prepared  
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,  
And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds:  
These on the warm and genial earth, that hides  
The smoking manure and o'er spreads it all,  
He places lightly, and, as time subdues  
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep  
In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.  
Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick,  
And spreading wide their spongy lobes; at first  
Pale, wan, and livid; but assuming soon,  
If fanned by balmy and nutritious air,  
Strained through the friendly mats, a vivid green.  
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,  
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk  
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,  
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed  
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish;

Prolific all, and harbingers of more.  
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,  
And transplantation in an ampler space.  
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply  
Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,  
Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.  
These have their sexes! and, when summer shines,  
The bee transports the fertilizing meal  
From flower to flower, and e'en the breathing air  
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.  
Not so when winter scowls. Assistant art  
Then acts in nature's office, brings to pass  
The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not ye rich, (since luxury must have  
His dainties, and the world's more numerous half  
Lives by contriving delicates for you)  
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,  
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,  
That day and night are exercised, and hang  
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,  
That ye may garnish your profuse regales  
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry funs.  
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart

The process. Heat and cold, and wind, and steam,  
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming  
flies,

Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work  
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,  
And which no care can obviate. It were long,  
Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts,  
Which he that fights a season so severe  
Devises, while he guards his tender trust;  
And oft at last in vain. The learned and wise  
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song  
Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit:  
Of too much labour, worthless when produced:

Who loves a garden loves a green-house too.  
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,  
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,  
While the winds whistle and the snows descend.  
The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf  
Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast  
Of Portugal and western India there,  
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,  
Peep through their polished foliage at the storm,  
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.



The amomum there with intermingling flowers  
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts  
Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau,  
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.  
All plants, of every leaf, that can endure  
The winter's frown, if screened from his shrewd bite,  
Live there, and prosper. Those Aufonia claims,  
Levantine regions these; the Azores send  
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote  
Caffraia: foreigners from many lands,  
They form one social shade, as if convened  
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.  
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass  
But by a master's hand, disposing well  
The gay diversities of leaf and flower,  
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,  
And dress the regular yet various scene.  
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van  
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still  
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.  
So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,  
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;  
And so, while Garrick, as renowned as he,  
The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose

Some note of Nature's music from his lips,  
And covetous of Shakespeare's beauty, seen  
In every flash of his far-beaming eye.  
Nor taste alone and well-contrived display  
Suffice to give the marshalled ranks the grace  
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains  
Unfung, and many cares are yet behind,  
And more laborious; cares on which depend  
Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.  
The foil must be renewed, which often washed  
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,  
And disappoints the roots; the slender roots  
Close interwoven, where they meet the vase,  
Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch  
Must fly before the knife; the withered leaf  
Must be detached, and where it strews the floor  
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else  
Contagion, and disseminating death.  
Discharge but these kind offices, (and who  
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)  
Well they reward the toil. The fight is pleased,  
The scent regaled, each odoriferous leaf,  
Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad  
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,  
All healthful, are the employs of rural life,  
Reiterated as the wheel of time  
Runs round; still ending, and beginning still.  
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,  
That softly swelled and gaily dressed appears  
A flowery island, from the dark green lawn  
Emerging, must be deemed a labour due  
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.  
Here also grateful mixture of well-matched  
And sorted hues (each giving each relief,  
And by contrasted beauty shining more)  
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,  
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home;  
But elegance, chief grace, the garden shows,  
And most attractive, is the fair result  
Of thought, the creature of a polished mind.  
Without it all is gothic as the scene,  
To which the insipid citizen resorts  
Near yonder heath; where industry mispent,  
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,  
Has made a heaven on earth; with suns and moons  
Of close-rammed stones has charged the encum-  
bered soil,

And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.  
He therefore, who would see his flowers disposed  
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives  
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,  
Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene  
Shall break into its preconceived display,  
Each for itself, and all as with one voice  
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.  
Nor even then, dismissing as performed  
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.  
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind  
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid  
Of the smooth-shaven prop, and neatly tied  
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age  
For interest sake, the living to the dead.  
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused  
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,  
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen:  
Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub.  
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,  
Else unadorned, with many a gay festoon  
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well  
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.  
All hate the rank society of weeds,

Noifome, and ever greedy to exhaust  
 The impoverifhed earth; an overbearing race,  
 That, like the multitude made faction-mad,  
 Difurb good order, and degrade true worth.

Oh bleft feclufion from a jarring world,  
 Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat  
 Cannot indeed to guilty man reftore  
 Loft innocence, or cancel follies paf;,  
 But it has peace, and much fecures the mind  
 From all affaults of evil; proving ftill  
 A faithful barrier, not o'erleaped with eafe  
 By vicious custom, raging uncontrolled  
 Abroad, and defolating public life.  
 When fierce temptation, feconded within  
 By traitor appetite, and armed with darts  
 Tempered in hell, invades the throbbing breaft,  
 To combat may be glorious, and fuccefs  
 Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is fafe.  
 Had I the choice of fublunary good,  
 What could I wifh, that I poffefs not here?  
 Health, leifure, means to improve it, friendfhip,  
 peace,  
 No loofe or wanton, though a wandering, mufe,

And constant occupation without care.  
Thus blest I draw a picture of that bliss,  
Hopeless indeed that dissipated minds,  
And profligate abusers of a world  
Created fair so much in vain for them,  
Should seek the guiltless joys, that I describe,  
Allured by my report: but sure no less,  
That self-condemned they must neglect the prize,  
And what they will not taste must yet approve.  
What we admire we praise; and when we praise,  
Advance it into notice, that its worth  
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.  
I therefore recommend, though at the risk  
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,  
The cause of piety and sacred truth,  
And virtue, and those scenes, which God ordained  
Should best secure them and promote them most;  
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive  
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoyed.  
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,  
And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol.  
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he called,  
Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth  
To grace the full pavilion. His design

Was but to boast his own peculiar good,  
Which all might view with envy, none partake.  
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,  
And she, that sweetens all my bitters too,  
Nature, enchanting nature, in whose form  
And lineaments divine I trace a hand,  
That errs not, and find raptures still renewed,  
Is free to all men—universal prize.  
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want  
Admirers, and be destined to divide  
With meaner objects e'en the few she finds!  
Stripped of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,  
She loses all her influence. Cities then  
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines  
Abandoned, as unworthy of our love.  
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed  
By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;  
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure  
From clamour, and whose very silence charms;  
To be preferred to smoke, to the eclipse,  
That Metropolitan volcanos make,  
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day  
long;  
And to the stir of commerce, driving flow,

And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels?  
They would be, were not madnefs in the head,  
And folly in the heart; were England now,  
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,  
And undebauched. But we have bid farewell  
To all the virtues of thofe better days,  
And all their honeft pleasures. Mansions once  
Knew their own mafters; and laborious binds,  
Who had furvived the father, ferved the fon.  
Now the legitimate and rightful lord  
Is but a tranfient gueft, newly arrived,  
And foon to be fupplanted. He that faw  
His patrimonial timber caft its leaf,  
Sells the laft fcantling, and transfers the price  
To fome fhrewd fharper, ere it buds again.  
Eftates are landfapes, gazed upon awhile,  
Then advertifed, and auctioneered away.  
The country ftarves, and they, that feed the o'er-  
charged  
And fufteited lewd town with her fair dues,  
By a juft judgment ftrip and ftarve themfelves.  
The wings, that waft our riches out of fight,  
Grow on the gamefter's elbows; and the alert  
And nimble motion of thofe refliefs joints,



That never tire, soon fans them all away.  
Improvement too, the idol of the age,  
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes!  
The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!  
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode  
Of our forefathers—a grave whiskered race,  
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,  
But in a distant spot; where more exposed  
It may enjoy the advantage of the north,  
And aguish east, till time shall have transformed  
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.  
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;  
Woods vanish, hills subside, and vallies rise;  
And streams, as if created for his use,  
Pursue the track of his directing wand,  
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,  
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades—  
Ev'n as he bids! The enraptured owner smiles.  
'Tis finished, and yet, finished as it seems,  
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,  
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.  
Drained to the last poor item of his wealth,  
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplished plan,  
That he has touched, retouched, many a long day.

Labour'd, and many a night purfued in dreams,  
Juft when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven  
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy!  
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,  
When, having no ftake left, no pledge to endear  
Her intereft, or that gives her facred caufe  
A moment's operation on his love,  
He burns with moft intenfè and flagrant zeal  
To ferve his country. Minifterial grace  
Deals him out money from the public cheft;  
Or, if that mine be fhut, fome private purfe  
Supplies his need with an ufurious loan,  
To be refunded duly, when his vote  
Well-manag'd fhall have earned its worthy price.  
Oh innocent, compar'd with arts like thefe,  
Crape, and cocked piftol, and the whiffling ball  
Sent through the traveller's temples! He, that finds  
One drop of heaven's fweet mercy in his cup,  
Can dig, beg, rot, and perifh, well content,  
So he may wrap himfelf in honeft rags  
At his laft gasp; but could not for a world  
Fifh up his dirty and dependent bread  
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,  
Sordid and fickening at his own fuccefs.

Ambition, avarice, penury incurred  
 By endless riot, vanity, the lust  
 Of pleasure and variety, dispatch,  
 As duly as the swallows disappear,  
 The world of wandering knights and squires to town.  
 London ingulphs them all ! The shark is there,  
 And the shark's prey ; the spendthrift and the leech,  
 That sucks him. There the sycophant, and he  
 Who, with bare-headed and obsequious bows,  
 Begg a warm office, doomed to a cold jail  
 And groat per diem, if his patron frown.  
 The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp  
 Were charactèred on every statesman's door,  
 " BATTERED AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED  
 HERE."

These are the charms, that fully and eclipse  
 The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe,  
 That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,  
 The hope of better things, the chance to win,  
 The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,  
 That at the sound of winter's hoary wing  
 Unpeople all our counties of such herds  
 Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose  
 And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast  
 And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

Oh thou, resort and mart of all the earth,  
Chequered with all complexions of mankind,  
And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see  
Much that I love, and more that I admire,  
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,  
That pleasest and yet shockest me, I can laugh  
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,  
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!  
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,  
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—  
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,  
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour  
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,  
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.



THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

## ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

*The post comes in.—The newspaper is read.—The world contemplated at a distance.—Address to Winter.—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones.—Address to evening.—A brown study.—Fall of snow in the evening.—The waggoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houses.—The multitude of them censured.—The farmer's daughter: what she was—what she is.—The simplicity of country manners almost lost.—Causes of the change.—Desertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magistrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK IV.

### THE WINTER EVENING.

**H**ARK! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,  
That with its wearisome but needful length  
Besrides the wintry flood, in which the moon  
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—  
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,  
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen  
    locks;  
News from all nations lumbering at his back.  
True to his charge, the close-packed load behind,  
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern  
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;  
And having dropped the expected bag, pass on.  
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,



Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief  
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;  
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.  
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,  
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet  
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks  
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,  
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,  
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect  
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.  
But oh the important budget! ushered in  
With such heart-shaking music, who can say  
What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?  
Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,  
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?  
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed  
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,  
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,  
The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
The logic and the wisdom, and the wit,  
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;  
I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,  
And give them voice and utterance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn  
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,  
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,  
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.  
Not such his evening, who with shining face  
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed  
And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,  
Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage:  
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,  
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath  
Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,  
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.  
This folio of four pages, happy work!  
Which not e'vn critics criticise; that holds  
Inquisitive attention, while I read,  
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,  
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;  
What is it, but a map of busy life,  
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?  
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,  
That tempts ambition. On the summit see  
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;

He climbs, he pants, he grasps them! At his heels,  
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,  
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,  
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.  
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft  
Meanders lubricate the course they take;  
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved  
To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,  
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,  
However trivial all that he conceives.  
Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this praise;  
The dearth of information and good sense,  
That it foretells us always comes to pass.  
Cataracts of declamation thunder here;  
There forests of no meaning spread the page,  
In which all comprehension wanders lost;  
While fields of pleasantries amuse us there  
With merry descants on a nation's woes.  
The rest appears a wilderness of strange  
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,  
And lilies for the brows of faded age,  
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,  
Heaven, earth, and ocean, plundered of their sweets,  
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,

Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,  
Æthereal journies, submarine exploits,  
And Katterfelto, with his hair on' end  
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.

'Tis pleafant through the loop-holes of retreat  
To peep at fuch a world; to fee the ftir  
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;  
To hear the roar ſhe ſends through all her gates  
At a ſafe diſtance, where the dying ſound  
Falls a ſoft murmur on the uninjured ear.  
Thus fitting, and ſurveying thus at eaſe  
The globe and its concerns, I ſeem advanced  
To ſome ſecure and more than mortal height,  
That liberates and exempts me from them all.  
It turns ſubmitted to my view, turns round  
With all its generations; I behold  
The tumult, and am ſtill. The ſound of war  
Has loſt its terrors ere it reaches me;  
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride  
And avarice, that make man a wolf to man;  
Hear the faint echo of thoſe brazen throats,  
By which he ſpeaks the language of his heart,  
And ſigh, but never tremble at the ſound.

He travels and expatiates, as the bee  
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;  
The manners, customs, policy, of all  
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;  
He sucks intelligence in every clime,  
And spreads the honey of his deep research  
At his return—a rich repast for me.  
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,  
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes  
Discover countries, with a kindred heart  
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;  
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,  
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

Oh Winter, ruler of the inverted year,  
Thy scattered hair with fleet like ashes filled,  
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows  
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in clouds,  
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne  
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,  
But urged by storms along its slippery way,  
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seemest,  
And dreaded as thou art! Thou holdest the fun

A prisoner in the yet undawning east,  
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,  
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,  
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still  
Compensating his loss with added hours  
Of social converse and instructive ease,  
And gathering, at short notice, in one group  
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,  
Not less dispersed by day-light and its cares.  
I crown thee king of intimate delights,  
Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,  
And all the comforts, that the lowly roof  
Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours  
Of long uninterrupted evening, know.  
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;  
No powdered pert proficient in the art  
Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors  
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds  
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,  
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:  
But here the needle plies its busy task,  
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,  
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,

And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,  
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;  
A wreath, that cannot fade, or flowers, that blow  
With most success when all besides decay.  
The poet's or historian's page by one  
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;  
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds  
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes  
    out;  
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,  
And in the charming strife triumphant still;  
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge  
On female industry: the threaded steel  
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.  
The volume closed, the customary rites  
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal;  
Such as the mistress of the world once found  
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,  
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,  
And under an old oak's domestic shade,  
Enjoyed, spare feast! a radish and an egg.  
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,  
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play  
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:

Nor do we madly, like an impious world,  
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God,  
That made them, an intruder on their joys,  
Start at his awful name, or deem his praise  
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,  
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,  
While we retrace with memory's pointing wand,  
That calls the past to our exact review,  
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,  
The disappointed foe, deliverance found  
Unlooked for, life preserved and peace restored,  
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.  
Oh evenings worthy of the gods! exclaimed  
The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply,  
More to be prized and coveted than your's  
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,  
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is winter hideous in a garb like this?  
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,  
The pent-up breath of an unfavoury throng,  
To thaw him into feeling; or the smart  
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits  
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?



The self-complacent actor, when he views  
(Stealing a side-long glance at a full house)  
The slope of faces, from the floor to the roof,  
(As if one master-spring controuled them all)  
Relaxed into an univerval grin,  
Sees not a countenance there, that speaks of joy  
Half so refined or so sincere as our's.  
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks,  
That idleness has ever yet contrived  
To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,  
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.  
Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,  
Unfoiled, and swift, and of a silken sound;  
But the world's time is time in masquerade!  
Their's, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged  
With motley plumes; and, where the peacock shows  
His azure eyes, is tintured black and red  
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,  
Enfanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,  
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.  
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,  
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast  
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.  
Thus decked, he charms a world whom fashion blinds

To his true worth, most pleased when idle most;  
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.  
E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore  
The back-string and the bib, assume the dress  
Of womanhood, fit pupils in the school  
Of card-devoted time, and night by night  
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,  
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.  
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,  
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?  
As he that travels far oft turns aside  
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,  
Which seen delights him not; then coming home  
Describes and prints it, that the world may know  
How far he went for what was nothing worth;  
So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,  
With colours mixed for a far different use,  
Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing,  
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come Evening, once again, season of peace;  
Return sweet Evening, and continue long!  
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,  
With matron-step slow-moving, while the night

Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employed  
In letting fall the curtain of repose  
On bird and beast, the other charged for man  
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day:  
Not sumptuously adorned, nor needing aid,  
Like homely-featured night, of clustering gems;  
A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,  
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine  
No less than her's, not worn indeed on high  
With ostentatious pageanty, but set  
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,  
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.  
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,  
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:  
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours  
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;  
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;  
Or twining filken threads round ivory reels,  
When they command whom man was born to please;  
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze  
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied  
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,

Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk  
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,  
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps  
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile  
With faint illumination, that uplifts  
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits  
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.  
Not undelightful is an hour to me  
So spent in parlour twilight: such a gloom  
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,  
The mind contemplative, with some new theme  
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.  
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,  
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,  
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess  
Fearless a soul, that does not always think.  
Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild  
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,  
Trees, churches, and strange visages, expressed  
In the red cinders, while with poring eye  
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.  
Nor less amused have I quiescent watched  
The footy films, that play upon the bars  
Rendulous, and foreboding in the view

Of superstition, prophesying still,  
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.  
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose  
In indolent vacuity of thought,  
And sleeps and is refreshed. Meanwhile the face  
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask  
Of deep deliberation, as the man  
Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed and lost.  
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour  
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,  
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home  
The recollected powers; and snapping short  
The glassy threads, with which the fancy weaves  
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.  
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,  
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear  
The silence and the warmth enjoyed within!  
I saw the woods and fields at close of day  
A variegated show; the meadows green,  
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved  
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,  
Uprturned so lately by the forceful share.  
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile  
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed

By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each  
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves,  
That skirt the horizon, wore a fable hue,  
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.  
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!  
Which even now, though silently performed,  
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face  
Of universal nature undergoes.

Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes  
Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse,  
Softly alighting upon all below,  
Affimilate all objects. Earth receives  
Gladly the thickening mantle; and the green  
And tender blade, that feared the chilling blast,  
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world, so thorny, and where none  
Finds happiness unblighted; or, if found  
Without some thistle sorrow at its side;  
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin  
Against the law of love, to measure lots  
With less distinguished than ourselves; that thus  
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,  
And sympathise with others, suffering more.

Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks  
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.  
The wain goes heavily, impeded fore  
By congregated loads adhering close  
To the clogged wheels; and in its sluggish pace  
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.  
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,  
While every breath, by respiration strong  
Forced downward, is consolidated soon  
Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to bear  
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,  
With half-shut eyes, and puckered cheeks, and teeth  
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.  
One hand secures his hat, save when with both  
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,  
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.  
Oh happy; and in my account denied  
That sensibility of pain, with which  
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!  
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed  
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.  
The learned finger never need explore  
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful east,  
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone

Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.  
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;  
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,  
That drag the dull companion to and fro,  
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.  
Ah treat them kindly! rude as thou appearest,  
Yet show that thou hast mercy! which the great,  
With needless hurry whirled from place to place,  
Humane as they would seem, not always show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,  
Such claim compassion in a night like this,  
And have a friend in every feeling heart.  
Warmed, while it lasts, by labour, all day long,  
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,  
Ill clad and fed but sparsely, time to cool.  
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights  
Her scanty stock of brush-wood, blazing clear,  
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.  
The few small embers left she nurses well;  
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands,  
And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,  
Retires, content to quake, so they be warmed.  
The man feels least, as more inured than she



To winter, and the current in his veins  
More briskly moved by his feverer toil;  
Yet he too finds his own distress in their's.  
The taper soon extinguished, which I saw  
Dangled along at the cold finger's end  
Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf  
Lodged on the shelf, half-eaten without sauce  
Of savory cheese, or butter, costlier still;  
Sleep seems their only refuge: for alas,  
Where penury is felt the thought is chained,  
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few!  
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care,  
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just  
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,  
Skillet, and old carved chest, from public sale.  
They live, and live without extorted alms  
From grudging hands; but other boast have none  
To sooth their honest pride, that scorns to beg,  
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.  
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,  
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far  
A dry but independent crust, hard earned,  
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure  
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs

Of knaves in office, partial in the work  
Of distribution; liberal of their aid  
To clamorous importunity in rags,  
But oft-times deaf to suppliant, who would blush  
To wear a tattered garb however coarse,  
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:  
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused  
Because deserving, silently retire!  
But be ye of good courage! Time itself  
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase;  
And all your numerous progeny, well-trained  
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,  
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want  
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,  
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.  
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor  
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty with most, who whimper forth  
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe;  
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.  
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad  
For plunder; much solicitous how best  
He may compensate for a day of sloth

By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.  
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge,  
Plashed neatly, and secured with driven stakes  
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,  
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame  
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,  
An ass's burden, and, when laden most  
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.  
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard  
The well-stacked pile of riven logs and roots  
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave  
Unwrenched the door, however well secured,  
Where Chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps  
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the perch,  
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,  
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,  
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.  
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,  
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside  
His principle, and tempt him into sin  
For their support, so destitute. But they  
Neglected pine at home; themselves, as more  
Exposed than others, with less scruple made  
His victims, robbed of their defenceless all.

Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst  
Of ruinous ebriety, that prompts  
His every action, and imbrates the man.  
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck,  
Who starves his own; who persecutes the blood  
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates  
And wrongs the woman, he has sworn to love!

Pass where we may, through city or through town,  
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,  
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace  
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff  
Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the styes,  
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.  
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds  
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,  
The lackey, and the groom: the craftsman there  
Takes a Lethæan leave of all his toil;  
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,  
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,  
All learned, and all drunk! The fiddle screams,  
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed  
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard:  
Fierce the dispute whate'er the theme; while she,

Fell discord, arbitress of such debate,  
Perched on the sign-post, holds with even hand  
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays  
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride;  
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.  
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound  
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised  
As ornamental, musical, polite,  
Like those, which modern senators employ,  
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame!  
Behold the schools, in which plebeian minds  
Once simple are initiated in arts,  
Which some may practise with politer grace,  
But none with readier skill!—'tis here they learn  
The road, that leads from competence and peace  
To indigence and rapine; till at last  
Society, grown weary of the load,  
Shakes her incumbered lap, and casts them out.  
But censure profits little: vain the attempt  
To advertise in verse a public pest,  
That like the filth, with which the peasant feeds  
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.  
The excise is fattened with the rich result  
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,

For ever dribbling out their base contents,  
Touched by the Midas finger of the state,  
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.  
Drink, and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!  
Gloriously drunk obey the important call!  
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;—  
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fallen upon those happier days,  
That poets celebrate; those golden times,  
And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro sings,  
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.  
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts,  
That felt their virtues: innocence, it seems,  
From courts dismissed, found shelter in the groves;  
The footsteps of simplicity, impressed  
Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)  
Then were not all effaced: then speech profane,  
And manners profligate, were rarely found;  
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaimed.  
Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams  
Sat for the picture: and the poet's hand,  
Imparting substance to an empty shade,  
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.

Grant it: I still must envy them an age,  
That favoured such a dream; in days like these  
Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,  
That to suppose a scene where she presides,  
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.  
No: we are polished now. The rural lass,  
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,  
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,  
So dignified, that she was hardly less  
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,  
Is seen no more. The character is lost!  
Her head, adorned with lappets pinned aloft,  
And ribbands streaming gay, superbly raised,  
And magnified beyond all human size,  
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand  
For more than half the tresses it sustains;  
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form  
Ill-propped upon French heels; she might be deemed  
(But that the basket dangling on her arm  
Interprets her more truly) of a rank  
Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs.  
Expect her soon with foot-boy at her heels,  
No longer blushing for her awkward load,  
Her train and her umbrella all her care!

The town has tinged the country; and the stain  
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,  
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs  
Down into scenes still rural; but alas,  
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now!  
Time was when in the pastoral retreat  
The unguarded door was safe; men did not watch  
To invade another's right, or guard their own.  
Then sleep was undisturbed by fear, unscared  
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale  
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard  
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.  
But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,  
And slumbers unalarmed! Now, ere you sleep,  
See that your polished arms be primed with care,  
And drop the night-bolt;—ruffians are abroad;  
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat  
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear  
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.  
Ev'n daylight has its dangers; and the walk  
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious  
once  
Of other tenants than melodious birds,  
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.



Lamented change! to which full many a cause  
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.  
The course of human things from good to ill,  
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.  
Increase of power begets increase of wealth;  
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;  
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague,  
That seizes first the opulent, descends  
To the next rank contagious, and in time  
Taints downward all the graduated scale  
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.  
The rich, and they, that have an arm to check  
The licence of the lowest in degree,  
Desert their office; and themselves, intent  
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus  
To all the violence of lawless hands  
Resign the scenes, their presence might protect.  
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,  
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.  
The plump convivial parson often bears  
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays  
His reverence and his worship both to rest  
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.  
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;

When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,  
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,  
The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.  
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,  
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove  
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside  
In lucrative concerns. Examine well  
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean—  
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.  
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touched  
Corruption. Who so seeks an audit here  
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,  
Wild fowl or venison; and his errand speeds.

But faster far, and more than all the rest,  
A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark  
Of public virtue, ever wished removed,  
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.  
'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed  
The heart of merit in the meaner class.  
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage  
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,  
Seem most at variance with all moral good,  
And incompatible with serious thought.

The clown, the child of nature, without guile,  
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all  
But his own simple pleasures; now and then  
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair;  
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news:  
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears  
A bible-oath to be whate'er they please,  
To do he knows not what. The task performed,  
That infant he becomes the serjeant's care,  
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.  
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,  
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,  
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,  
Unapt to learn, and formed of stubborn stuff,  
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,  
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well:  
He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;  
He steps right onward, martial in his air,  
His form, and movement; is as smart above  
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears  
His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;  
And, his three years of heroism expired,  
Returns indignant to the flighted plough.  
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum

Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;  
And fights for the smart comrades he has left.  
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—  
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost  
His ignorance and harmless manners too.  
To swear, to game, to drink; to show at home  
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,  
The great proficiency he made abroad;  
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends;  
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart;  
To be a pest where he was useful once;  
Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now.

Man in society is like a flower  
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone  
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,  
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.  
But man, associated and leagued with man  
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond  
For interest-sake, or swarming into clans  
Beneath one head for purposes of war,  
Like flowers selected from the best, and bound  
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,  
Fades rapidly, and by compression marred

Contracts defilement not to be endured.  
Hence chartered boroughs are such public plagues;  
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps  
In all their private functions, once combined,  
Become a loathsome body, only fit  
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.  
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin  
Against the charities of domestic life,  
Incorporated seem at once to lose  
Their nature; and disclaiming all regard  
For mercy and the common rights of man,  
Build factories with blood, conducting trade  
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe  
Of innocent commercial justice red.  
Hence too the field of glory, as the world  
Mistake it, dazzled by its bright array,  
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,  
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,  
Is but a school, where thoughtlessness is taught  
On principle, where foppery atones  
For folly, gallantry for every vice.

But flighted as it is, and by the great  
Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,

Infected with the manners and the modes,  
It knew not once, the country wins me still.  
I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,  
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,  
But there I laid the scene. There early strayed  
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice  
Had found me, or the hope of being free.  
My very dreams were rural; rural too  
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,  
Sportive and jingling her poetic bells,  
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.  
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned  
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats  
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe  
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,  
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.  
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:  
New to my taste his Paradise surpassed.  
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue  
To speak its excellence. I danced for joy.  
I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age,  
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first  
Engaged my wonder; and admiring still,  
And still admiring, with regret supposed.

The joy half lost because not sooner found.  
There too enamoured of the life I loved,  
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit  
Determined, and possessing it at last  
With transports, such as favoured lovers feel,  
I studied, prized, and wished that I had known,  
Ingenious Cowley! and, though now reclaimed  
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,  
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit  
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.  
I still revere thee, courtly though retired;  
Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,  
Not unemployed; and finding rich amends  
For a lost world in solitude and verse.  
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works  
Is an ingredient in the compound man,  
Infused at the creation of the kind.  
And, though the Almighty Maker has throughout  
Discriminated each from each, by strokes  
And touches of his hand, with so much art  
Diversified, that two were never found  
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,  
That all discern a beauty in his works,  
And all can taste them: minds, that have been formed

And tutored with a relish more exact,  
But none without some relish, none unmoved.  
It is a flame, that dies not even there,  
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,  
Nor habits of luxurious city-life,  
Whatever else they smother of true worth  
In human bosoms; quench it or abate.  
The villas, with which London stands begirt,  
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,  
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,  
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer  
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!  
Ev'n in the stifling bosom of the town  
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms,  
That sooth the rich possessor; much consoled,  
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,  
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well  
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint  
That nature lives; that sight-refreshing green  
Is still the livery she delights to wear,  
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.  
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,  
The prouder fashions fronted with a range  
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,

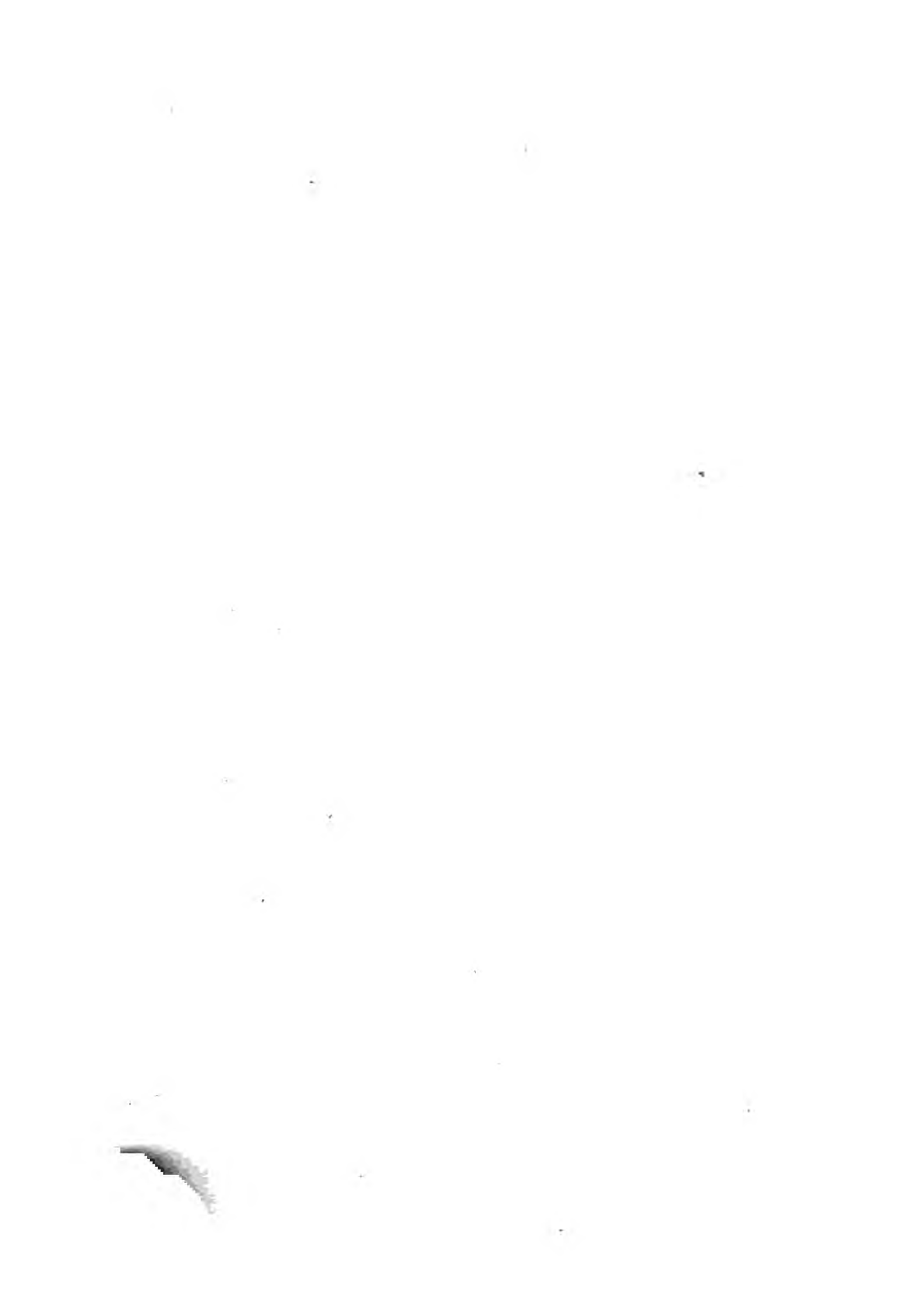


The Frenchman's \* darling? are they not all proofs  
That man, immured in cities, still retains  
His inborn inextinguishable thirst  
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss  
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?  
The most unfurnished with the means of life,  
And they, that never pass their brick-wall bounds  
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,  
Yet feel the burning instinct: over-head  
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,  
And watered duly. There the pitcher stands  
A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;  
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets  
The country, with what ardour he contrives  
A peep at nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,  
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys  
And harmless pleasures, in the thronged abode  
Of multitudes unknown; hail, rural life!  
Address himself who will to the pursuit  
Of honours, or emolument, or fame;

\* Mignonnette.

I fhall not add myfelf to fuch a chafe,  
Thwart his attempts, or envy his fuccefs.  
Some muft be great. Great offices will have  
Great talents. And God gives to every man  
The virtue, temper, underftanding, tafte,  
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall  
Juft in the niche, he was ordained to fill.  
To the deliverer of an injured land  
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, an heart  
To feel, and courage to redrefs her wrongs;  
To monarchs dignity; to judges fenfe;  
To artifts ingenuity and fkill;  
To me an unambitious mind, content  
In the low vale of life, that early felt  
A wifh for eafe and leifure, and ere long  
Found here that leifure and that eafe I wifhed.



THE TASK.

BOOK V.

## ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

*A. frosty morning.—The foddering of cattle.—The woodman and his dog.—The poultry.—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall.—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice.—Amusements of monarchs.—War, one of them.—Wars, whence.—And whence monarchy.—The evils of it.—English and French loyalty contrasted.—The Bastile, and a prisoner there.—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country.—Modern patriotism questionable, and why.—The perishable nature of the best human institutions.—Spiritual liberty not perishable.—The slavish state of man by nature.—Deliver him, Deist, if you can.—Grace must do it.—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated.—Their different treatment.—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free.—His relish of the works of God.—Address to the Creator.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK V.

### THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

"TIS morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb  
Ascending, fires the horizon; while the clouds,  
That crowd away before the driving wind,  
More ardent as the disk emerges more,  
Resemble most some city in a blaze,  
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray  
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,  
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,  
From every herb and every spiry blade  
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.  
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,  
In spite of gravity, and sage remark  
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,

Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance  
I view the muscular proportioned limb  
Transformed to a lean flank. 'The shapeless pair,  
As they designed to mock me, at my side  
Take step for step; and, as I near approach  
The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,  
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.  
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep  
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,  
And coarser grafs, upspearing o'er the rest,  
Of late unfightly and unseen, now shine  
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,  
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.  
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence  
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep  
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait  
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,  
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,  
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.  
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,  
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,  
His broad keen knife into the solid mass:  
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,  
With such undeviating and even force

He severs it away : no needless care,  
Left storms should overset the leaning pile  
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.  
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned  
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe  
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,  
From morn to eve his solitary task.  
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears  
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,  
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel  
Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk  
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow  
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;  
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.  
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl  
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,  
But now and then with pressure of his thumb  
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,  
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud  
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.  
Now from the roof, or from the neighbouring pale,  
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam  
Of smiling day, they gossiped side by side,  
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call



The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing  
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,  
Conscious and fearful of too deep a plunge.  
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves  
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye  
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved  
To escape the impending famine, often scared  
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.  
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care  
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,  
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned  
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes  
His wonted strut; and wading at their head  
With well-considered steps, seems to resent  
His altered gait and stateliness retrenched.  
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer  
The hills and vallies with their ceaseless songs,  
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?  
Earth yields them nought; the imprisoned worm  
    is safe  
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs  
Lie covered close; and berry-bearing thorns,  
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose)  
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.

The long protracted rigour of the year  
 Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes  
 Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,  
 As instinct prompts; self-buried ere they die.  
 The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,  
 Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now  
 Repays their labour more; and perched aloft  
 By the way-side, or stalking in the path,  
 Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,  
 Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,  
 Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.  
 The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,  
 O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,  
 Indurated and fixt, the snowy weight  
 Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,  
 And unperceived, the current steals away.  
 Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps  
 The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,  
 And wantons in the pebbly gulph below:  
 No frost can bind it there; its utmost force  
 Can but arrest the light and smoky mist,  
 That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.  
 And see where it has hung the embroidered banks  
 With forms so various, that no powers of art,

The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene !  
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high  
(Fantastic misarrangement !) on the roof  
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees  
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops,  
That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,  
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,  
And prop the pile they but adorned before.  
Here grotto within grotto safe defies  
The sun-beam ; there, embossed and fretted wild,  
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes  
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain  
The likeness of some object seen before.  
Thus nature works as if to mock at art,  
And in defiance of her rival powers ;  
By these fortuitous and random strokes  
Performing such inimitable feats,  
As she with all her rules can never reach.  
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,  
Because a novelty, the work of man,  
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Rus !  
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,  
The wonder of the North. No forest fell  
When thou wouldst build ; no quarry sent its stores

To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods,  
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.  
In such a palace Aristæus found  
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale  
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear:  
In such a palace poetry might place  
The armory of winter; where his troops,  
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy fleet,  
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,  
And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,  
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.  
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;  
No sound of hammer or of saw was there:  
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts  
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked  
Than water interfused to make them one.  
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,  
Illumined every side: a watery light  
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed  
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen  
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.  
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth  
And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound  
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,

That royal residence might well befit,  
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths  
Of flowers, that feared no enemy but warmth,  
Blushed on the pannels. Mirror needed none  
Where all was vitreous; but in order due  
Convivial table and commodious seat  
(What seemed at least commodious seat) were there;  
Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.  
The same lubricity was found in all,  
And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene  
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,  
And soon to slide into a stream again.  
Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke  
Of undesigned severity, that glanced  
(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,  
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.  
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show  
'Twas durable; as worthless, as it seemed,  
Intrinsically precious; to the foot  
Traucherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings. Some have  
    played  
At hewing mountains into men, and some

At building human wonders mountain-high.  
Some have amused the dull, sad years of life,  
(Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad)  
With schemes of monumental fame; and fought  
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,  
Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.  
Some seek diversion in the tented field,  
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.  
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wife,  
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well  
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands  
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds  
Are gratified with mischief; and who spoil,  
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.

When Babel was confounded, and the great  
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain  
Was split into diversity of tongues,  
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,  
These to the upland, to the valley those,  
God drave afunder, and assigned their lot  
To all the nations. Ample was the boon  
He gave them, in its distribution fair  
And equal; and he bade them dwell in peace.

Peace was awhile their care: they ploughed, and  
fowed,  
And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.  
But violence can never longer sleep  
Than human passions please. In every heart  
Are sown the sparks, that kindle fiery war;  
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.  
Cain had already shed a brother's blood:  
The deluge washed it out; but left unquenched  
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.  
Soon by a righteous judgment in the line  
Of his descending progeny was found  
The first artificer of death; the shrewd  
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,  
And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel  
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.  
Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,  
The sword and falchion their inventor claim;  
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.  
His art survived the waters; and ere long,  
When man was multiplied and spread abroad  
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call  
These meadows and that range of hills his own,  
The tasted sweets of property begat

Desire of more; and industry in some  
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,  
Made others covet what they saw so fair.  
Thus war began on earth: these fought for spoil,  
And those in self-defence. Savage at first  
The onset, and irregular. At length  
One eminent above the rest for strength,  
For stratagem, for courage, or for all,  
Was chosen leader; him they served in war,  
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds  
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?  
Or who so worthy to control themselves  
As he, whose prowess had subdued their foes?  
Thus war, affording field for the display  
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,  
Which have their exigencies too, and call  
For skill in government, at length made king.  
King was a name too proud for man to wear  
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,  
So dazzling in their eyes, who set it on,  
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.  
It is the abject property of most,  
That, being parcel of the common mass,  
And destitute of means to raise themselves,



They sink, and settle lower than they need.  
They know not what it is to feel within  
A comprehensive faculty, that grasps  
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,  
Almost without an effort, plans too vast  
For their conception, which they cannot move.  
Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk  
With gazing, when they see an able man  
Step forth to notice; and befotted thus  
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,  
"And be our admiration and our praise."  
They roll themselves before him in the dust,  
Then most deserving in their own account  
When most extravagant in his applause,  
As if exalting him they raised themselves.  
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound  
And sober judgment, that he is but man,  
They demi-deify and fume him so,  
That in due season he forgets it too.  
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,  
He gulps the windy diet; and ere long,  
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks  
The world was made in vain, if not for him.  
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges, born

To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,  
And sweating in his service, his caprice  
Becomes the soul that animates them all,  
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,  
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,  
An easy reckoning; and they think the same.  
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings  
Were burnished into heroes, and became  
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp;  
Storks among frogs, that have but croaked and died.  
Strange, that such folly, as lifts bloated man  
To eminence fit only for a god,  
Should ever drivel out of human lips,  
Even in the cradled weakness of the world!  
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind  
Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,  
And could discriminate and argue well  
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet  
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear  
And quake before the gods themselves had made:  
But above measure strange, that neither proof  
Of sad experience, nor examples set  
By some, whose patriot virtue has prevailed,  
Can even now, when they are grown mature

In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds  
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!  
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone  
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead  
A course of long observance for its use,  
That even servitude, the worst of ills,  
Because delivered down from fire to son,  
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.  
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock  
Of rational discussion, that a man,  
Compounded and made up like other men  
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust  
And folly in as ample measure meet,  
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,  
Should be a despot absolute, and boast  
Himself the only freeman of his land?  
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,  
Wage war, with any or with no pretence  
Of provocation given, or wrong sustained,  
And force the beggarly last doit by means,  
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch  
Of poverty, that thus he may procure  
His thousands, weary of penurious life,  
A splendid opportunity to die?

Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old  
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees  
In politic convention) put your trust  
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined  
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,  
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his way,  
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs  
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good  
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang  
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?  
We too are friends to loyalty. We love  
The king, who loves the law, respects his bounds,  
And reigns content within them: him we serve  
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:  
But recollecting still that he is man,  
We trust him not too far. King though he be,  
And king in England too, he may be weak,  
And vain enough to be ambitious still;  
May exercise amidst his proper powers,  
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:  
Beyond that mark is treason. He is our's  
To administer, to guard, to adorn, the state,  
But not to warp or change it. We are his  
To serve him nobly in the common cause,

True to the death, but not to be his slaves.  
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love  
Of kings, between your loyalty and our's.  
We love the man, the paltry pageant you :  
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,  
You the regardless author of its woes :  
We for the sake of liberty a king,  
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.  
Our love is principle, and has its root  
In reason, is judicious, manly, free ;  
Your's, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,  
And licks the foot, that treads it in the dust.  
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,  
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,  
I would not be a king to be beloved  
Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning praise,  
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,  
Not to the man, who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will  
Of a superior, he is never free.  
Who lives, and is not weary of a life  
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.  
The state, that strives for liberty, though foiled,

And forced to abandon what she bravely fought,  
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,  
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause  
 Not often unsuccessful: power usurped  
 Is weakness when opposed: conscious of wrong,  
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.  
 But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought  
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess  
 All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,  
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts;  
 The surest preface of the good they seek\*.

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more  
 To France than all her losses and defeats,  
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,  
 Her house of bondage, worse than that of old  
 Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille.  
 Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts;  
 Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,

\* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

That monarchs have supplied from age to age  
With music, such as suits their sovereign ears,  
The sighs and groans of miserable men!  
There's not an English heart, that would not leap  
To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know  
That ev'n our enemies, so oft employed  
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.  
For he, who values liberty, confines  
His zeal for her predominance within  
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him  
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.  
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,  
Immured though unaccused, condemned untried,  
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.  
There, like the visionary emblem seen  
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,  
And filleted about with hoops of brass  
Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone.  
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;  
And ever, as the fullen found is heard,  
Still to reflect, that though a joyless note  
To him, whose moments all have one dull pace,  
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large  
Account it music; that it summons some

To theatre, or jocund feast or ball:  
The wearied hireling finds it a release  
From labour; and the lover, who has chid  
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke  
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—  
To fly for refuge from distracting thought  
To such amusements, as ingenious woe  
Contrives, hard-shifting, and without her tools—  
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,  
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,  
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—  
To turn purveyor to an overgorged  
And bloated spider, till the pampered pest  
Is made familiar, watches his approach,  
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—  
To wear out time in numbering to and fro  
The studs, that thick emboss his iron door;  
Then downward and then upward, then afloat  
And then alternate; with a fickle hope  
By dint of change to give his tasteless task  
Some relish; till the sum, exactly found  
In all directions, he begins again—  
Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around  
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel



And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?  
That man should thus encroach on fellow man,  
Abridge him of his just and native rights,  
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold  
Upon the endearments of domestic life  
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,  
And doom him for perhaps an heedless word  
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,  
Moves indignation; makes the name of king  
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)  
As dreadful as the Manichean god,  
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.

'Tis liberty alone, that gives the flower  
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;  
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,  
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,  
Is evil: hurts the faculties, impedes  
Their progress in the road of science; blinds  
The eyesight of discovery; and begets  
In those that suffer it a fordid mind  
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit  
To be the tenant of man's noble form.  
Thee therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,

With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed  
By public exigence till annual food  
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,  
Thee I account still happy, and the chief  
Among the nations, seeing thou art free;  
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,  
Replete with vapours, and disposes much  
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine:  
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft  
And plausible than social life requires,  
And thou hast need of discipline and art  
To give thee what politer France receives  
From nature's bounty—that humane address  
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is  
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,  
Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl:  
Yet being free I love thee: for the sake  
Of that one feature can be well content,  
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,  
To seek no sublunary rest beside.  
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure  
Chains no where patiently; and chains at home,  
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.  
Then what were left of roughness in the grain

Of British natures, wanting its excuse  
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust  
And shock me. I should then with double pain  
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;  
And, if I must bewail the blessing lost,  
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,  
I would at least bewail it under skies  
Milder, among a people less austere;  
In scenes, which having never known me free,  
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.  
Do I forebode impossible events,  
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!  
But the age of virtuous politics is past,  
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.  
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,  
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes  
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp  
Designed by loud declaimers on the part  
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,  
Incurs derision for his easy faith  
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough:  
For when was public virtue to be found  
Where private was not? Can he love the whole  
Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend

Who is in truth the friend of no man there?  
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,  
 Who flights the charities, for whose dear sake  
 That country, if at all, must be beloved?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad  
 For England's glory, seeing it was pale  
 And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts  
 So loose to private duty, that no brain,  
 Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,  
 Can dream them trusty to the general weal.  
 Such were not they of old, whose tempered blades  
 Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,  
 And hewed them link from link: then Albion's sons  
 Were sons indeed; they felt a filial heart  
 Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs;  
 And, shining each in his domestic sphere,  
 Shone brighter still, once called to public view:  
 'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot  
 Forbids their interference, looking on,  
 Anticipate perforce some dire event;  
 And, seeing the old castle of the state,  
 That promised once more firmness, so assailed  
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,

Stand motionless expectants of its fall.  
All has its date below; the fatal hour  
Was registered in heaven ere time began.  
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works  
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,  
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.  
We build with what we deem eternal rock:  
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;  
And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,  
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty, un Sung  
By poets, and by senators unpraised,  
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers  
Of earth and hell confederate take away:  
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,  
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;  
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.  
'Tis liberty of heart derived from heaven,  
Bought with HIS blood, who gave it to mankind,  
And sealed with the same token. It is held  
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure  
By the unimpeachable and awful oath  
And promise of a God. His other gifts

All bear the royal stamp, that speaks them his,  
And are august; but this transcends them all.  
His other works, the visible display  
Of all-creating energy and might,  
Are grand no doubt, and worthy of the word  
That, finding an interminable space  
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,  
And made so sparkling what was dark before.  
But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,  
Smitten with the beauty of so fair a scene,  
Might well suppose the artificer divine  
Meant it eternal, had he not himself  
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,  
And still designing a more glorious far,  
Doomed it as insufficient for his praise.  
These therefore are occasional, and pass;  
Formed for the confutation of the fool,  
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;  
That office served, they must be swept away.  
Not so the labours of his love: they shine  
In other heavens than these that we behold,  
And fade not. There is paradise that fears  
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends  
Large prelibation oft to saints below.

Of these the first in order, and the pledge  
And confident assurance of the rest,  
Is liberty. A flight into his arms  
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,  
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,  
And full immunity from penal woe.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,  
Stripes and a dungeon; and his body serves  
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,  
Opprobrious residence he finds them all.  
Propense his heart to idols, he is held  
In silly dotage on created things,  
Careless of their Creator. And that low  
And sordid gravitation of his powers  
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force  
Resistless from the centre he should seek,  
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes  
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,  
To reach a depth profounder still, and still  
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss  
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.  
But ere he gain the comfortless repose  
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul

In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—  
What does he not? from lusts opposed in vain,  
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees  
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,  
Fortune, and dignity; the loss of all,  
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,  
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,  
Far worse than all the plagues, with which his sins  
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes  
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,  
And death still future. Not an hasty stroke,  
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave;  
But unrepealable enduring death.  
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:  
What none can prove a forgery may be true;  
What none but bad men wish exploded must.  
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud,  
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst  
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere;  
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.  
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust  
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,  
And seems dethroned and vanquished. Peace ensues,  
But spurious and short-lived; the puny child



Of self-congratulating pride, begot  
On fancied innocence. Again he falls,  
And fights again; but finds his best essay  
A presage ominous, portending still  
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.  
Till Nature, unavailing nature, foiled  
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,  
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now  
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause  
Perversely, which of late she so condemned;  
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn  
And tattered in the service of debauch,  
Covering his shame from his offended fight,

“ Hath God indeed given appetites to man,  
“ And stored the earth so plenteously with means  
“ To gratify the hunger of his wish;  
“ And doth he reprobate and will he damn  
“ The use of his own bounty? making first  
“ So frail a kind, and then enacting laws  
“ So strict, that less than perfect must despair?  
“ Falsehood! which who so but suspects of truth  
“ Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.  
“ Do they themselves, who undertake for hire

" The teacher's office, and dispense at large  
 " Their weekly dole of edifying strains,  
 " Attend to their own music? have they faith  
 " In what with such solemnity of tone  
 " And gesture they propound to our belief?  
 " Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice  
 " Is but an instrument, on which the priest  
 " May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,  
 " The unequivocal authentic deed,  
 " We find found argument, we read the heart."

Such reasonings (if that name must need belong  
 To excuses in which reason has no part)  
 Serve to compose a spirit well inclined  
 To live on terms of amity with vice,  
 And sin without disturbance. Often urged,  
 (As often as libidinous discourse  
 Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes  
 Of theological and grave import)  
 They gain at last his unresisted assent;  
 Till, hardened his heart's temper in the forge  
 Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,  
 He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,  
 Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;

Vain tampering has but fostered his disease ;  
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.  
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.  
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear  
Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth  
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,  
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps  
Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.  
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers  
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise :  
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,  
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,  
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verse.—  
Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high sounding brass,  
Smitten in vain ! such music cannot charm  
The eclipse, that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,  
And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.  
The STILL SMALL VOICE is wanted. He must speak,  
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect ;  
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change,  
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech  
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,

As if, like him of fabulous renown,  
 They had indeed ability to smoothe  
 The shag of savage nature, and were each  
 An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song :  
 But transformation of apostate man  
 From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,  
 Is work for Him that made him. He alone,  
 And he by means in philosophic eyes  
 Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves  
 The wonder; humanizing what is brute  
 In the lost kind, extracting from the lips  
 Of asps their venom, overpowering strength  
 By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause  
 Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,  
 Receive proud recompense. We give in charge  
 Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic muse  
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down  
 To latest times; and sculpture, in her turn,  
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass  
 To guard them, and to immortalize her trust:  
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,  
 To those, who posted at the shrine of truth

Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood  
Well spent in such a strife may earn indeed,  
And for a time ensure, to his loved land  
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;  
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,  
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed  
In confirmation of the noblest claim,  
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,  
To walk with God, to be divinely free,  
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.  
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown  
Till persecution dragged them into fame,  
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew  
—No marble tells us whither. With their names  
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:  
And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed  
The tyranny, that doomed them to the fire,  
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise\*.

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain

\* See Hume.

That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,  
Can wind around him, but he casts it off  
With as much ease as Samson his green wyths.  
He looks abroad into the varied field  
Of nature, and though poor perhaps, compared  
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,  
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.  
His are the mountains, and the vallies his,  
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy  
With a propriety that none can feel,  
But who, with filial confidence inspired,  
Can lift to heaven an unpretentious eye,  
And smiling say—" My Father made them all !"  
Are they not his by a peculiar right,  
And by an emphasis of interest his,  
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,  
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind  
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,  
That planned, and built, and still upholds, a world  
So clothed with beauty for rebellious man ?  
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap  
The loaded foil, and ye may waste much good  
In senseless riot; but ye will not find  
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,

A liberty like his, who, unimpeached  
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,  
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,  
And has a richer use of your's than you.  
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth  
Of no mean city; planned or ere the hills  
Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea  
With all his roaring multitude of waves.  
His freedom is the same in every state;  
And no condition of this changeful life,  
So manifold in cares, whose every day  
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:  
For he has wings, that neither sickness, pain,  
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.  
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there  
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds  
His body bound; but knows not what a range  
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain;  
And that to bind him is a vain attempt  
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste  
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,  
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before:

Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart  
 Made pure shall relish, with divine delight  
 'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.  
 Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone  
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb,  
 It yields them; or recumbent on its brow  
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread  
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away  
 From inland regions to the distant main.  
 Man views it, and admires; but rest content  
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,  
 But not its author. Unconcerned who formed  
 The paradise he sees, he finds it such,  
 And such well-pleas'd to find it, asks no more.  
 Not so the mind, that has been touch'd from heaven,  
 And in the school of sacred wisdom taught  
 To read his wonders, in whose thought the world,  
 Fair as it is, exist'd ere it was.  
 Not for its own sake merely, but for his  
 Much more, who fashion'd it, he gives it praise;  
 Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,  
 To earth's acknowledged sovereign, finds at once,  
 Its only just proprietor in Him.  
 The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed



New faculties, or learns at least to employ  
More worthily the powers she owned before,  
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze  
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked,  
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms  
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute;  
The unambiguous footsteps of the God,  
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,  
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.  
Much conversant with heaven, she often holds  
With those fair ministers of light to man,  
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,  
Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they  
With which heaven rang, when every star, in haste  
To gratulate the new-created earth,  
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God  
Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts,  
“ That navigate a sea that knows no storms,  
“ Beneath a vault unfulled with a cloud,  
“ If from your elevation, whence ye view  
“ Distinctly scenes invisible to man,  
“ And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet  
“ Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race  
“ Favoured as our's; transgressors from the womb,

“ And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,  
“ And to possess a brighter heaven than your’s?  
“ As one, who long detained on foreign shores,  
“ Pants to return, and when he sees afar  
“ His country’s weather-bleach’d and batter’d rocks,  
“ From the green wave emerging, darts an eye  
“ Radiant with joy towards the happy land;  
“ So I with animated hopes behold,  
“ And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,  
“ That show like beacons in the blue abyss,  
“ Ordained to guide the embodied spirit home  
“ From toilsome life to never-ending rest.  
“ Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires,  
“ That give assurance of their own success,  
“ And that infused from heaven must thither tend.”

So reads he nature, whom the lamp of truth  
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious word!  
Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,  
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,  
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built  
With means, that were not till by thee employed,  
Worlds, that had never been hadst thou in strength  
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.

They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power  
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears,  
That hear not, or receive not their report.  
In vain thy creatures testify of thee,  
Till thou proclaim thyself. Their's is indeed  
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine,  
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,  
And with the boon gives talents for its use.  
Till thou art heard, imaginations vain •  
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell;  
Yet, deemed oracular, lure down to death  
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.  
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,  
The glory of thy work; which yet appears  
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,  
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved  
Then skilful most when most severely judged.  
But chance is not; or is not where thou reignest:  
Thy providence forbids that fickle power  
(If power she be that works but to confound)  
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.  
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can  
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves  
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,

Or disregard our follies, or that fit  
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.  
Thee we reject, unable to abide  
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure,  
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause  
For which we shunned and hated thee before.  
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,  
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven  
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.  
A voice is heard, that mortal ears hear not  
Till thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice of song  
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works;  
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,  
And adds his rapture to the general praise.  
In that blest moment Nature, throwing wide  
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile  
The author of her beauties, who, retired  
Behind his own creation, works unseen  
By the impure, and hears his power denied.  
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,  
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!  
From thee departing they are lost, and rove  
At random without honour, hope, or peace.  
From thee is all, that sooths the life of man,

His high endeavour, and his glad success,  
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.  
But oh thou bounteous Giver of all good,  
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !  
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor;  
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

**T H E T A S K.**

**BOOK VI.**

## ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

*Bells at a distance.—Their effect.—A fine noon in winter.—A sheltered walk.—Meditation better than books.—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is.—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described.—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected.—God maintains it by an unre-mitted act.—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reprov'd.—Animals happy, a delightful sight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from scripture.—That proof illustrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them.—Their good and useful properties insisted on.—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals.—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man.—The groans of the creation shall have an end.—A view taken of the restoration of all things.—An invocation and an invitation of him who shall bring it to pass.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness.—Conclusion.*

# THE TASK.

## BOOK VI.

### THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

**T**HERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,  
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased  
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave,  
Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touched within us, and the heart replies.  
How soft the music of those village bells,  
Falling at intervals upon the ear  
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,  
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,  
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!  
With easy force it opens all the cells  
Where memory slept. Wherever I have heard  
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,



And with it all its pleasures and its pains.  
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,  
That in a few short moments I retrace  
(As in a map the voyager his course)  
The windings of my way through many years.  
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,  
It seemed not always short; the rugged path,  
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,  
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.  
Yet feeling present evils, while the past  
Faintly impresses the mind, or not at all,  
How readily we wish time spent revoked,  
That we might try the ground again, where once  
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)  
We missed that happiness we might have found!  
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,  
A father, whose authority, in show  
When most severe, and mustering all its force,  
Was but the graver countenance of love;  
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,  
And utter now and then an awful voice,  
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,  
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.  
We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand,

That reared us. At a thoughtless age, allured  
 By every gilded folly, we renounced  
 His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent  
 That converse, which we now in vain regret.  
 How gladly would the man recall to life  
 The boy's neglected fire! a mother too,  
 That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,  
 Might he demand them at the gates of death.  
 Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed  
 The playful humour; he could now endure,  
 (Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)  
 And feel a parent's presence no restraint.  
 But not to understand a treasure's worth  
 Till time has stolen away the flighted good,  
 Is cause of half the poverty we feel,  
 And makes the world the wilderness it is.  
 The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,  
 And, seeking grace to improve the prize they hold,  
 Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in his roughest mood;  
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon  
 Upon the southern side of the flant hills,  
 And where the woods fence off the northern bluff,

The season smiles, resigning all its rage,  
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue  
Without a cloud, and white without a speck  
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.  
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;  
And through the trees I view the embattled tower,  
Whence all the music. I again perceive  
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,  
And settle in soft musings as I tread  
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,  
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.  
The roof, though moveable through all its length  
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,  
And intercepting in their silent fall  
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.  
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.  
The redbreast warbles still, but is content  
With slender notes, and more than half suppressed:  
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light  
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes  
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,  
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.  
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,  
Charms more than silence. Meditation here

May think down hours to moments. Here the heart  
 May give an useful lesson to the head,  
 And learning wiser grow without his books.  
 Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
 Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells  
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men;  
 Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
 Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
 The mere materials with which wisdom builds,  
 Till smoothed and squared and fitted to its place,  
 Does but incumber whom it seems to enrich.  
 Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;  
 Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.  
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells,  
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits  
 Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled.  
 Some to the fascination of a name  
 Surrender judgment, hood-winked. Some the style  
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds  
 Of error leads them by a tune entranced.  
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear  
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,  
 And swallowing therefore without pause or choice  
 The total grist unfitted, husks and all.

But trees and rivulets whose rapid course,  
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,  
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,  
And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time  
Peeps through the moss, that clothes the hawthorn-  
root,

Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,  
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won  
By slow solicitation, seize at once  
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can power divine perform:  
More grand than it produces year by year,  
And all in sight of inattentive man?  
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,  
And in the constancy of nature's course,  
The regular return of genial months,  
And renovation of a faded world,  
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,  
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race  
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,  
How would the world admire! but speaks it less  
An agency divine, to make him know  
His moment when to sink and when to rise,

Age after age, than to arrest his course?  
 All we behold is miracle; but seen  
 So duly all is miracle in vain.  
 Where now the vital energy that moved,  
 While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph  
 Through the imperceptible meandering veins  
 Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch  
 Of unprolific winter has impressed  
 A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.  
 But let the months go round, a few short months,  
 And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,  
 Barren as lances, among which the wind  
 Makes wintry music, fighting as it goes,  
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,  
 And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,  
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have  
 lost.

Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,  
 Shall publish even to the distant eye  
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich  
 In streaming gold; fyinga, ivory pure;  
 The scentless and the scented rose; this red,  
 And of an humbler growth, the \* other tall,

\* The Guelder-rose.

And throwing up into the darkeſt gloom  
Of neighbouring cypreſs, or more ſable yew,  
Her ſilver globes, light as the foamy ſurf,  
That the wind ſevers from the broken wave;  
The lilac, various in array, now white,  
Now ſanguine, and her beauteous head now ſet  
With purple ſpikes pyramidal, as if  
Studious of ornament, yet unrefolved  
Which hue ſhe moſt approved, ſhe choſe them all;  
Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,  
But well compenſating her ſickly looks  
With never-cloying odours, early and late;  
Hypericum all bloom, ſo thick a ſwarm  
Of flowers, like flies clothing her ſlender rods,  
That ſcarce a leaf appears; mezerion too,  
Though leafleſs, well attired, and thick beſet  
With bluſhing wreaths, inveſting every ſpray;  
Althæa with the purple eye: the broom,  
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloyed,  
Her bloſſoms; and luxuriant above all  
The jaſmine, throwing wide her elegant ſweets,  
The deep dark green of whoſe unvarniſhed leaf  
Makes more conſpicious, and illumines more  
The bright profuſion of her ſcattered ſtars.—  
Theſe have been, and theſe ſhall be in their day;

And all this uniform uncoloured scene  
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,  
 And flush into variety again.  
 From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,  
 Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man  
 In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes  
 The grand transition, that there lives and works  
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God.  
 The beauties of the wilderness are his,  
 That makes so gay the solitary place  
 Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,  
 That cultivation glories in, are his.  
 He sets the bright procession on its way,  
 And marshals all the order of the year;  
 He marks the bounds, which winter may not pass,  
 And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,  
 Ruffet and rude, folds up the tender germ,  
 Uninjured, with inimitable art;  
 And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,  
 Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say that in the origin of things,  
 When all creation started into birth,  
 The infant elements received a law,



From which they swerve not since. That under force  
Of that controlling ordinance they move,  
And need not his immediate hand, who first  
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.  
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God  
The incumbrance of his own concerns, and spare  
The great artificer of all that moves  
The strefs of a continual act, the pain  
Of unremitted vigilance and care,  
As too laborious and severe a task.  
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,  
To span omnipotence, and measure might,  
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule  
And standard of his own, that is to-day,  
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.  
But how should matter occupy a charge  
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law  
So vast in its demands, unless impelled  
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,  
And under pressure of some conscious cause?  
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,  
Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.  
Nature is but a name for an effect,  
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire,

By which the mighty process is maintained,  
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose fight  
Slow circling ages are as transient days;  
Whose work is without labour; whose designs  
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts:  
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.  
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,  
With self-taught rites, and under various names,  
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,  
And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth  
With tutelary goddesses and gods,  
That were not; and commending as they would  
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.  
But all are under one. One spirit—His,  
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,  
Rules universal nature. Not a flower  
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,  
Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires  
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,  
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,  
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,  
The forms, with which he sprinkles all the earth.  
Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds  
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,

Or what he views of beautiful or grand  
In nature, from the broad majestic oak  
To the green blade, that twinkles in the sun,  
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.  
His presence, who made all so fair, perceived  
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene  
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.  
Though winter had been none, had man been true,  
And earth be punished for its tenant's sake,  
Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,  
So soon succeeding such an angry night,  
And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream  
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well strung and tuned  
To contemplation, and within his reach  
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,  
Would waste attention at the chequered board,  
His host of wooden warriors to and fro  
Marching and countermarching, with an eye  
As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridged  
And furrowed into frows, and with a hand  
Trembling, as if eternity were hung  
In balance on his conduct of a pin?

Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,  
Who pant with application misapplied  
To trivial toys, and, pushing ivory balls  
Across a velvet level, feel a joy  
Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds  
Its destined goal, of difficult access.  
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon  
To mifs, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop  
Wandering, and littering with unfolded filks  
The polished counter, and approving none,  
Or promising with smiles to call again.  
Nor him, who by his vanity seduced,  
And foothed into a dream that he discerns  
The difference of a Guido from a daub,  
Frequents the crowded auction: stationed there  
As duly as the Langford of the show,  
With glafs at eye, and catalogue in hand,  
And tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant  
And pedantry, that coxcombs learn with ease;  
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls  
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,  
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate  
That he has let it pass—but never bids!

Here unmolested, through whatever sign  
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,  
Nor freezing sky nor fultry, checking me,  
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.  
Ev'n in the spring and play-time of the year,  
That calls the unwonted villager abroad  
With all her little ones, a sportive train,  
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,  
And prink their hair with daifies, or to pick  
A cheap but wholesome fallad from the brook,  
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,  
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,  
Scarce shuns me; and the stock-dove unalarmed  
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends  
His long love-ditty for my near approach.  
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,  
That age or injury has hollowed deep,  
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,  
He has outlept the winter, ventures forth  
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,  
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play:  
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,  
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his  
brush,

And perks his ears, and stamps and cries aloud,  
 With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,  
 And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit  
 For human fellowship, as being void  
 Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike  
 To love and friendship both, that is not pleased  
 With sight of animals enjoying life,  
 Nor feels their happiness augment his own.  
 The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade  
 When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,  
 And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;  
 The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet,  
 That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,  
 Then stops and snorts, and throwing high his heels  
 Starts to the voluntary race again;  
 The very kine, that gambol at high noon,  
 The total herd receiving first from one,  
 That leads the dance a summons to be gay,  
 Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth  
 Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent  
 To give such act and utterance as they may  
 To ecstasy too big to be suppressed—

These, and a thousand images of bliss,  
With which kind nature graces every scene,  
Where cruel man defeats not her design,  
Impart to the benevolent, who wish  
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,  
A far superior happiness to their's,  
The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to his call,  
Who formed him from the dust, his future grave,  
When he was crowned as never king was since.  
God set the diadem upon his head,  
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood  
The new-made monarch, while before him passed,  
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,  
The creatures, summoned from their various haunts  
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.  
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,  
Or bounded only by a law, whose force  
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel  
And own, the law of universal love.  
He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy;  
No cruel purpose lurked within his heart,  
And no distrust of his intent in their's.

So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,  
Where kindness on his part, who ruled the whole,  
Begot a tranquil confidence in all,  
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.  
But sin marred all; and the revolt of man,  
That source of evils not exhausted yet,  
Was punished with revolt of his from him.  
Garden of God, how terrible the change  
Thy groves and lawns then witnessed! Every heart,  
Each animal of every name, conceived  
A jealousy and an instinctive fear,  
And, conscious of some danger, either fled  
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,  
Or growled defiance in such angry sort,  
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.  
Thus harmony and family accord  
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour  
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swelled  
To such gigantic and enormous growth,  
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.  
Hence date the persecution and the pain,  
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,  
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,  
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,



Or his base gluttony, are causes good  
And just in his account, why bird and beast  
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed  
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.  
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war  
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,  
Not satisfied to prey on all around,  
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs  
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.  
Now happiest they, that occupy the scenes  
The most remote from his abhorred resort,  
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,  
They feared, and as his perfect image loved.  
The wilderness is their's, with all its caves,  
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,  
Unvisited by man. There they are free,  
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrolled;  
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.  
Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude  
Within the confines of their wild domain:  
The lion tells him—I am monarch here—  
And if he spare him, spares him on the terms  
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn  
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.

In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,  
Or by necessity constrained, they live  
Dependent upon man; those in his fields,  
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.  
They prove too often at how dear a rate  
He sells protection.—Witness at his foot  
The spaniel dying for some venial fault  
Under dissection of the knotted scourge;  
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells  
Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,  
To madness; while the savage at his heels  
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury, spent  
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.  
He too is witness, noblest of the train  
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse:  
With unsuspecting readiness he takes  
His murderer on his back, and pushed all day  
With bleeding sides and flanks, that heave for life,  
To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.  
So little mercy shows who needs so much!  
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,  
Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.  
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts  
(As if barbarity were high desert)

The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise  
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose  
The honours of his matchless horse his own.  
But many a crime, deemed innocent on earth,  
Is registered in heaven; and these no doubt  
Have each their record, with a curse annexed.  
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,  
But God will never. When he charged the Jew  
To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise;  
And when the bush-exploring boy, that seized  
The young, to let the parent bird go free;  
Proved he not plainly that his meaner works  
Are yet his care, and have an interest all,  
All, in the universal Father's love?  
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,  
The charter was conferred, by which we hold  
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim  
O'er all we feed on power of life and death.  
But read the instrument, and mark it well:  
The oppression of a tyrannous control  
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield  
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,  
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute!

The Governor of all, himself to all  
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear  
The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp  
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs  
Of hunger unaffuaged, has interposed,  
Not feldom, his avenging arm, to smite  
The injurious trampler upon nature's law,  
That claims forbearance even for a brute.  
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;  
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike  
The blameless animal, without rebuke,  
On which he rode. Her opportune offence  
Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died.  
He sees that human equity is slack  
To interfere, though in so just a cause;  
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb  
And helpless victims with a sense so keen  
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength  
And such sagacity to take revenge,  
That oft the beast has seemed to judge the man.  
An ancient, not a legendary tale,  
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed,  
(If such who plead for Providence may seem  
In modern eyes) shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretched towards the setting sun,  
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,  
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he  
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,  
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.  
He journeyed; and his chance was as he went  
To join a traveller, of far different note,  
Evander, famed for piety, for years  
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.  
Fame had not left the venerable man  
A stranger to the manners of the youth,  
Whose face too was familiar to his view.  
Their way was on the margin of the land,  
O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base  
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.  
The charity, that warmed his heart, was moved  
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile  
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,  
As fearful of offending whom he wished  
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths  
Not harshly thundered forth or rudely pressed,  
But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.  
"And dost thou dream," the impenetrable man  
Exclaimed, "that me the lullabies of age,

“ And fantasies of dotards such as thou,  
“ Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?  
“ Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave  
“ Need no such aids, as superstition lends,  
“ To steel their hearts against the dread of death.”  
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand  
Pushed with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,  
And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought  
Of such a gulph as he designed his grave.  
But, though the felon on his back could dare  
The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed  
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,  
Or e'er his hoof had pressed the crumbling verge,  
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.  
The frenzy of the brain may be redressed  
By medicine well applied, but without graee  
The heart's insanity admits no cure.  
Enraged the more, by what might have reformed  
His horrible intent, again he sought  
Destruction, with a zeal to be destroyed,  
With sounding whip, and rowels dyed in blood.  
But still in vain. The Providence, that meant  
A longer date to the far nobler beast,  
Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake.

And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere  
Incurable obduracy evinced,  
His rage grew cool; and pleased perhaps to have  
    earned,  
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,  
With looks of some complacence he resumed  
His road, deriding much the blank amaze  
Of good Evander, still where he was left  
Fixt motionless, and petrified with dread.  
So on they fared. Discourse on other themes  
Ensuing seemed to obliterate the past;  
And tamer far for so much fury shown,  
(As is the course of rash and fiery men)  
The rude companion smiled, as if transformed.  
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,  
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.  
The impious challenger of Power divine  
Was now to learn that Heaven, though slow to wrath,  
Is never with impunity defied.  
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,  
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,  
Unbidden, and not now to be controlled,  
Rushed to the cliff, and having reached it, stood.  
At once the shock unseated him: he flew

Sheer o'er the craggy barrier; and immersed  
Deep in the flood, found, when he fought it not,  
The death he had deserved, and died alone.  
So God wrought double justice; made the fool  
The victim of his own tremendous choice,  
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends  
(Tho' graced with polished manners and fine sense,  
Yet wanting sensibility) the man,  
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.  
An inadvertent step may crush the snail,  
That crawls at evening in the public path;  
But he that has humanity, forewarned,  
Will tread aside and let the reptile live.  
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,  
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,  
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes  
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,  
The chamber, or refectory, may die:  
A necessary act incurs no blame.  
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,  
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,  
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:



There they are privileged; and he that hunts  
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,  
Disturbs the economy of nature's realm,  
Who, when she formed, designed them an abode.  
The sum is this. If man's convenience, health,  
Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims  
Are paramount, and must extinguish their's.  
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,  
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,  
As God was free to form them at the first,  
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.  
Ye therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons  
To love it too. The spring-time of our years  
Is soon dishonoured and defiled in most  
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand  
To check them. But alas! none sooner shoots,  
If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth,  
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.  
Mercy to him, that shows it, is the rule  
And righteous limitation of its act,  
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;  
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,  
And conscious of the outrage he commits,  
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Distinguished much by reason, and still more  
 By our capacity of grace divine,  
 From creatures, that exist but for our sake,  
 Which, having served us, perish, we are held  
 Accountable; and God some future day  
 Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse  
 Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.  
 Superior as we are, they yet depend  
 Not more on human help than we on their's.  
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given  
 In aid of our defects. In some are found  
 Such teachable and apprehensive parts,  
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,  
 Matched with the expertness of the brutes in their's,  
 Are oft-times vanquished and thrown far behind.  
 Some show that nice sagacity of smell,  
 And read with such discernment, in the port  
 And figure of the man, his secret aim,  
 That oft we owe our safety to a skill  
 We could not teach, and must despair to learn.  
 But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop  
 To quadruped instructors, many a good  
 And useful quality, and virtue too,  
 Rarely exemplified among ourselves.

Attachment never to be weaned, or changed  
By any change of fortune; proof alike  
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;  
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat  
Can move or warp; and gratitude for small  
And trivial favours, lasting as the life,  
And glistening even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms  
Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit  
Patiently present at a sacred song,  
Commemoration-mad; content to hear  
(Oh wonderful effect of music's power!)  
Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.  
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—  
(For was it less, what heathen would have dared  
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,  
And hang it up in honour of a man?  
Much less might serve, when all that we design  
Is but to gratify an itching ear,  
And give the day to a musician's praise.  
Remember Handel? Who, that was not born  
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,  
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?

Yes—we remember him; and while we praise  
 A talent so divine, remember too  
 That His most holy book, from whom it came,  
 Was never meant, was never used before,  
 To buckram out the memory of a man.  
 But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe;  
 And with a gravity beyond the size  
 And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed  
 Less impious than absurd, and owing more  
 To want of judgment than to wrong design.  
 So in the chapel of old Ely House,  
 When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,  
 Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,  
 The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,  
 And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,  
 Sung to the praise and glory of King George!  
 Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,  
 When time hath somewhat mellowed it, and made  
 The idol of our worship while he lived  
 The God of our idolatry once more,  
 Shall have its altar; and the world shall go  
 In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.  
 The theatre too small shall suffocate  
 Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits

Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return  
Ungratified. For there some noble lord  
Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's bunch,  
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,  
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp and stare,  
To show the world how Garrick did not act,  
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;  
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites  
And solemn ceremonial of the day,  
And called the world to worship on the banks  
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof  
That piety has still in human hearts  
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.  
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths;  
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance;  
The mulberry-tree was hymned with dulcet airs;  
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree  
Supplied such relics as devotion holds  
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.  
So 'twas an hallowed time: decorum reigned,  
And mirth without offence. No few returned,  
Doubtless, much edified, and all refreshed.  
—Man praises man. The rabble all alive  
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,

Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,  
 A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.  
 Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,  
 To gaze in's eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave  
 Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy:  
 While others, not so satisfied, unhorse  
 The gilded equipage, and turning loose  
 His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.  
 Why? what has charmed them? Hath he saved  
 the state?

No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.  
 Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,  
 That finds out every crevice of the head,  
 That is not sound and perfect, hath in their's  
 Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,  
 And his own cattle must suffice him soon.  
 Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,  
 And dedicate a tribute, in its use  
 And just direction sacred, to a thing  
 Doomed to the dust, or lodged already there.  
 Encomium in old time was poets' work;  
 But poets, having lavishly long since  
 Exhausted all materials of the art,  
 The task now falls into the public hand;

And I, contented with an humbler theme,  
Have poured my stream of panegyric down  
The vale of nature, where it creeps, and winds  
Among her lovely works with a secure  
And unambitious course, reflecting clear,  
If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.  
And I am recompensed, and deem the toils  
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine  
May stand between an animal and woe,  
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of nature in this nether world,  
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.  
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,  
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,  
The time of rest, the promised sabbath, comes.  
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh  
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course  
Over a sinful world; and what remains  
Of this tempestuous state of human things  
Is merely as the working of a sea  
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest:  
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds  
The dust, that waits upon his fultry march,

When fin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,  
 Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend  
 Propitious in his chariot paved with love;  
 And what his storms have blasted and defaced  
 For man's revolt shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet  
 Not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch:  
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung  
 To meaner music, and not suffer loss.  
 But when a poet, or when one like me,  
 Happy to rove among poetic flowers,  
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last  
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,  
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels  
 To give it praise proportioned to its worth,  
 That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems  
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,  
 Scenes of accomplished bliss; which who can see,  
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
 His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?  
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,



And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach  
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field  
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,  
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,  
Exults to see its thifty curse repealed.  
The various seasons woven into one,  
And that one season an eternal spring,  
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,  
For there is none to covet, all are full.  
The lion, and the libbard, and the bear  
Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon  
Together, or all gambol in the shade  
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.  
Antipathies are none. No foe to man  
Lurks in the serpent now: the mother sees,  
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand  
Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,  
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.  
All creatures worship man, and all mankind  
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place:  
That creeping pestilence is driven away;  
The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart  
No passion touches a discordant string,

But all is harmony and love. Disease  
 Is not: the pure and uncontaminate blood  
 Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.  
 One song employs all nations; and all cry,  
 "Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"  
 The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
 Shout to each other, and the mountain tops  
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy;  
 Till nation after nation taught the strain,  
 Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.  
 Behold the measure of the promise filled;  
 See Salem built, the labour of a God!  
 Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;  
 All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
 Flock to that light; the glory of all lands  
 Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,  
 And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,  
 \* Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;  
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,  
 And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.  
 Praise is in all her gates: upon her walls,

\* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,  
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there  
Kneels with the native of the farthest west;  
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,  
And worships. Her report has travelled forth  
Into all lands. From every clime they come  
To see thy beauty and to share thy joy,  
O Sion! an assembly such as earth  
Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.

Thus heaven-ward all things tend. For all were  
once

Perfect, and all must be at length restored.  
So God has greatly purposed; who would else  
In his dishonoured works himself endure  
Dishonour, and be wronged without redress.  
Haste then, and wheel away a shattered world,  
Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see  
(A fight to which our eyes are strangers yet)  
A world, that does not dread and hate his laws,  
And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair  
The creature is that God pronounces good,  
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.  
Here every drop of honey hides a sting;

Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers;  
 And ev'n the joy, that haply some poor heart  
 Derives from heaven, pure as the fountain is,  
 Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint  
 From touch of human lips, at best impure.  
 Oh for a world in principle as chaste  
 As this is gross and selfish! over which  
 Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,  
 That govern all things here, shouldering aside  
 The meek and modest truth, and forcing her  
 To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife  
 In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men:  
 Where violence shall never lift the sword,  
 Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,  
 Leaving the poor no remedy but tears:  
 Where he, that fills an office, shall esteem  
 The occasion it presents of doing good  
 More than the perquisite: where law shall speak  
 Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts  
 And equity; not jealous more to guard  
 A worthless form, than to decide aright:  
 Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,  
 Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)  
 With lean performance ape the work of love!

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,  
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,  
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine  
By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth;  
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,  
And overpaid its value with thy blood.  
Thy faints proclaim thee king; and in their hearts  
Thy title is engraven with a pen  
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.  
Thy faints proclaim thee king; and thy delay  
Gives courage to their foes; who, could they see  
The dawn of thy last advent, long-defired,  
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,  
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.  
The very spirit of the world is tired  
Of its own taunting question, asked so long,  
"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"  
The infidel has shot his bolts away,  
Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,  
He gleans the blunted shafts, that have recoiled,  
And aims them at the shield of truth again.  
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,  
That hides divinity from mortal eyes;  
And all the mysteries to faith proposed,

Infulted and traduced, are cast aside,  
 As uselefs, to the moles and to the bats.  
 They now are deemed the faithful, and are praised,  
 Who constant only in rejecting thee,  
 Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,  
 And quit their office for their error's fake.  
 Blind, and in love with darkness! yet even these  
 Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee  
 Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!  
 So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare  
 The world takes little thought. Who will may  
     preach,  
 And what they will. All pastors are alike  
 To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.  
 Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain:  
 For these they live, they sacrifice to these,  
 And in their service wage perpetual war  
 With conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,  
 And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth  
 To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,  
 High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.  
 Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down  
 The features of the last degenerate times,  
 Exhibit every lineament of these.

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,  
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,  
Due to thy last and most effectual work,  
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world!

He is the happy man, whose life ev'n now  
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;  
Who, doomed to an obscure but tranquil state,  
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,  
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the  
fruit

Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,  
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one  
Content indeed to sojourn while he must  
Below the skies, but having there his home.  
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search  
Of objects, more illustrious in her view;  
And, occupied as earnestly as she,  
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.  
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;  
He seeks not her's, for he has proved them vain.  
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds  
Pursuing gilded flies; and such he deems  
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.

Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,  
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth  
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,  
And shows him glories yet to be revealed.  
Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,  
And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams  
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird,  
That flutters least, is longest on the wing.  
Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,  
Or what achievements of immortal fame  
He purposes, and he shall answer—None.  
His warfare is within. There unfatigued  
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,  
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,  
And never withering wreaths, compared with which  
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.  
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,  
That as she sweeps him with her whistling filks  
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,  
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,  
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,  
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes  
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring  
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,

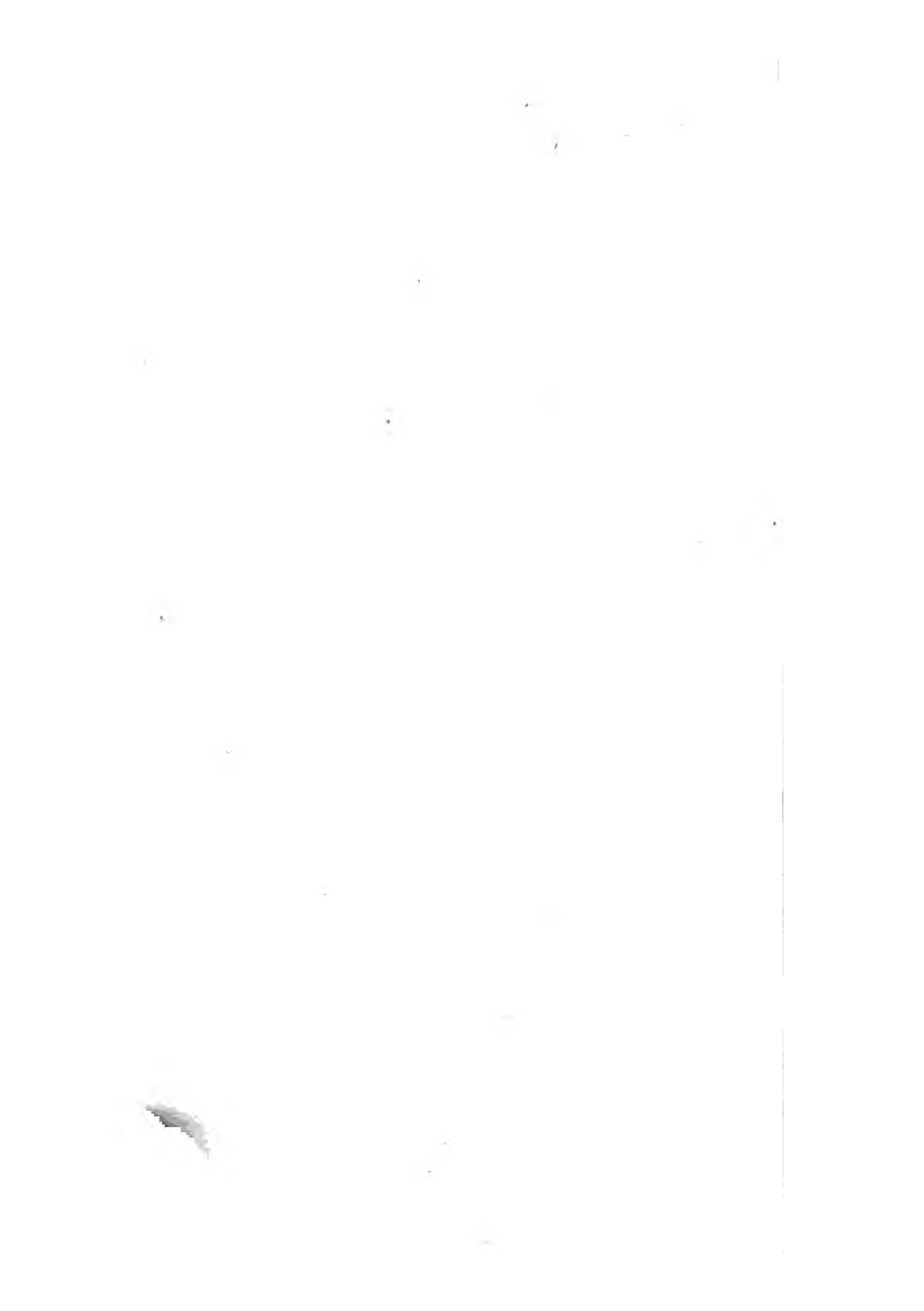


When, Isaac like, the solitary faint  
Walks forth to meditate at even-tide,  
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.  
Forgive him then, thou buffler in concerns  
Of little worth, an idler in the best,  
If, author of no mischief and some good,  
He seek his proper happiness by means,  
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.  
Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,  
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,  
Account him an incumbrance on the state,  
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.  
His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere  
Shine with his fair example, and though small  
His influence, if that influence all be spent  
In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,  
In aiding helpless indigence, in works,  
From which at least a grateful few derive  
Some taste of comfort in a world of wo,  
Then let the supercilious great confess  
He serves his country, recompenses well  
The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine  
He sits secure, and in the scale of life  
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.

The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,  
 Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;  
 But he may boast what few that win it can,  
 That if his country stand not by his skill,  
 At least his follies have not wrought her fall.  
 Polite refinement offers him in vain  
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual world  
 Draws gross impunity, and likes it well,  
 The neat conveyance hiding all the offence.  
 Not that he peevishly rejects a mode  
 Because that world adopts it. If it bear  
 The stamp and clear impression of good sense,  
 And be not costly more than of true worth,  
 He puts it on, and for decorum sake  
 Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.  
 She judges of refinement by the eye,  
 He by the test of conscience, and a heart  
 Not soon deceived; aware that what is base  
 No polish can make sterling; and that vice,  
 Though well perfumed and elegantly dressed,  
 Like an unburied carcase tricked with flowers,  
 Is but a garnished nuisance, fitter far  
 For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.  
 So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,

More golden than that age of fabled gold  
Renowned in ancient song; not vexed with care  
Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved  
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.  
So glide my life away! and so at last,  
My share of duties decently fulfilled,  
May some disease, not tardy to perform  
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,  
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,  
Beneath the turf, that I have often trod.  
It shall not grieve me then, that once, when called  
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,  
I played awhile, obedient to the fair,  
With that light task; but soon, to please her more,  
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,  
Let fall the unfinished wreath, and roved for fruit;  
Roved far, and gathered much: some harsh, 'tis true,  
Picked from the thorns and briars of reproof,  
But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some  
To palates, that can taste immortal truth;  
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.  
But all is in his hand, whose praise I seek.  
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,  
He regard not, though divine the theme.

'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime  
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,  
To charm his ear, whose eye is on the heart;  
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,  
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.



AN  
EPISTLE

TO

JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH—five and twenty years ago—  
Alas how time escapes! 'tis even so—  
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,  
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat }  
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!  
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,  
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days)  
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—  
Strange fluctuation of all human things!  
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,  
But distance only cannot change the heart:  
And, were I called to prove the assertion true,  
One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,  
Though nothing have occurred to kindle strife,  
We find the friends we fancied we had won,  
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?  
Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?  
No; gold they seemed, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,  
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,  
Dreading a negative, and overawed  
Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.  
Go, fellow!—whither?—turning short about—  
Nay. Stay at home—you are always going out.  
'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—  
For what?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.—  
A friend! Horatio cried, and seemed to start—  
Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.—  
And fetch my cloak; for though the night be raw  
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,  
And was his plaything often when a child;  
But somewhat at that moment pinched him close,  
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.

Perhaps his confidence just then betrayed,  
His grief might prompt him with the speech he  
    made;

Perhaps 'twas mere good-humour gave it birth,  
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.  
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,  
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain  
To prove an evil of which all complain,  
(I hate long arguments verborfely fpun)  
One ftory more, dear Hill, and I have done.  
Once on a time an emperor, a wife man,  
No matter where, in China or Japan,  
Decreed that whofoever fhould offend  
Againft the well-known duties of a friend,  
Convicted once fhould ever after wear  
But half a coat, and fhew his bofom bare.  
The punifhment importing this, no doubt,  
That all was naught within, and all found out.

Oh happy Britain! we have not to fear  
Such hard and arbitrary meafure here;



Else, could a law, like that which I relate,  
Once have the sanction of our triple state,  
Some few, that I have known in days of old,  
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;  
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,  
Might traverse England safely to and fro,  
An honest man, close-buttoned to the chin,  
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

**TIROCINIUM:**

**OR,**

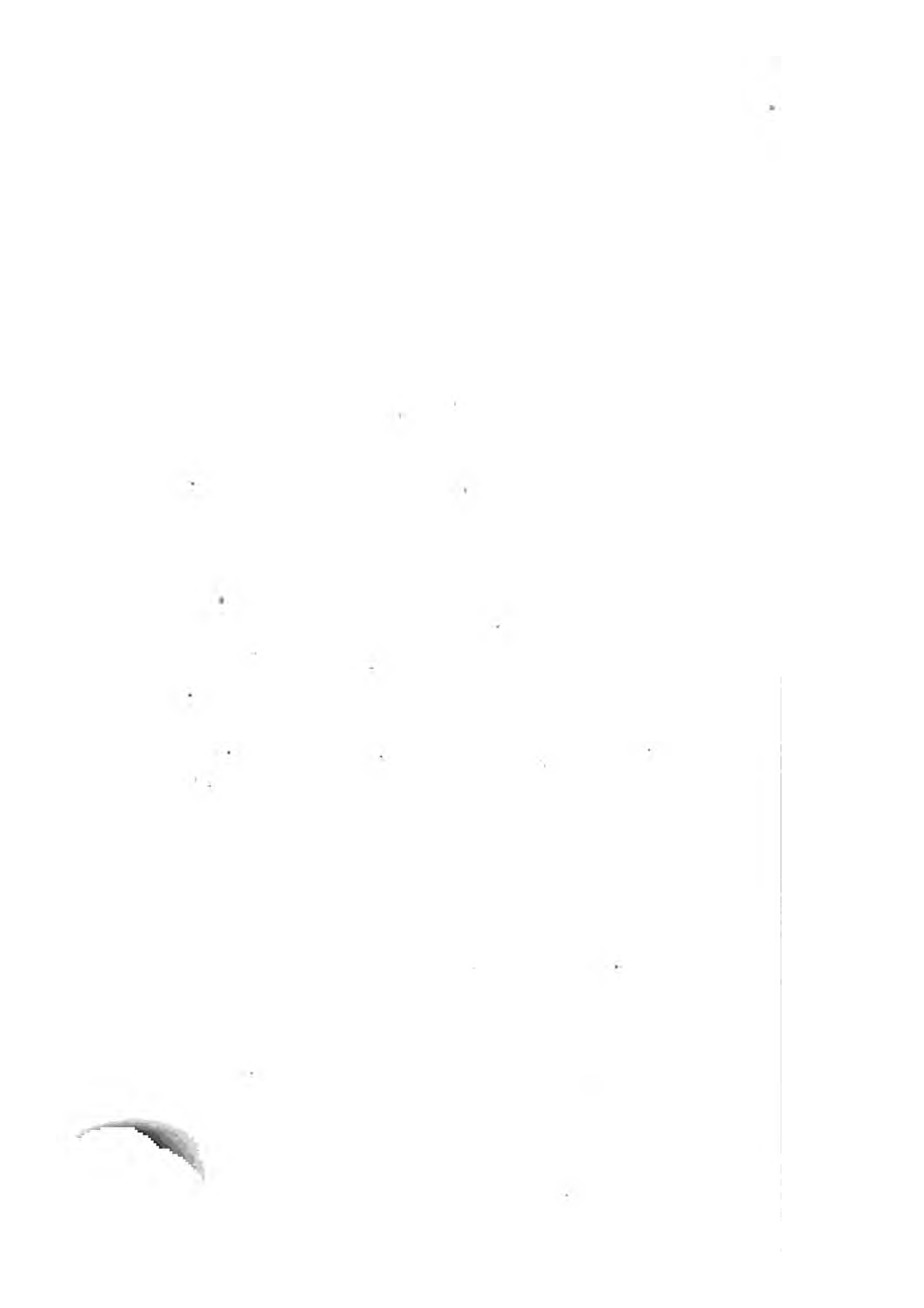
**A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.**

*Κεφάλαιον δὴ παιδείας ὀρθῆ τροφῆ.*

**PLATO.**

*Ἀρχὴ πολιτείας ἀπάσης νεῶν τροφῆ.*

**DIOG. LAERT.**



TO THE  
REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,  
RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,  
THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,  
THE FOLLOWING  
P O E M,  
RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION  
IN PREFERENCE TO  
AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,  
IS INSCRIBED,  
BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,  
*WILLIAM COWPER.*

*Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.*



## TIROCINIUM.

It is not from his form, in which we trace  
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,  
That man, the master of this globe, derives  
His right of empire over all that lives.  
That form indeed, the associate of a mind  
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,  
That form, the labour of almighty skill,  
Framed for the service of a free-born will,  
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,  
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.  
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,  
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.  
For her the memory fills her ample page  
With truths poured down from every distant age;  
For her amasses an unbounded store,  
The wisdom of great nations, now no more;

Though laden, not incumbered with her spoil;  
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil;  
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged;  
Still to be fed, and not to be furcharged.  
For her the fancy, roving unconfined,  
The present muse of every pensive mind,  
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue  
To nature's scenes than nature ever knew.  
At her command winds rise and waters roar,  
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;  
With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,  
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.  
For her the judgment, umpire in the strife  
That grace and nature have to wage through life,  
Quick-fighted arbiter of good and ill,  
Appointed sage preceptor to the will,  
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice  
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth  
To yon fair sun and his attendant earth?  
And, when descending he resigns the skies,  
Why takes the gentler moon her turn to rise,

Whom ocean feels through all his countless waves,  
And owns her power on every shore he laves?  
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,  
Fruitful and young as in their first career?  
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,  
Rocked in the cradle of the western breeze;  
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives  
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,  
Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews  
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—  
'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,  
Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,  
Had not its author dignified the plan,  
And crowned it with the majesty of man.  
Thus formed, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,  
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,  
The wildest scorner of his Master's laws  
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,  
To press the important question on his heart,  
“ Why formed at all, and wherefore as thou art ?”  
If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,  
The next mere dust and ashes in the grave;  
Endued with reason only to descry  
His crimes and follies with an aching eye;



With paffions, juft that he may prove, with pain,  
 The force he fpendſ againſt their fury vain;  
 And if, ſoon after having burnt, by turns,  
 With every luſt, with which frail nature burns,  
 His being end where death diſſolves the bond,  
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;  
 Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,  
 Stands ſelf-impeached the creature of leaſt worth,  
 And ufeleſs while he lives, and when he dies,  
 Brings into doubt the wiſdom of the ſkies.

Truths, that the learned purſue with eager thought,  
 Are not important always as dear-bought,  
 Proving at laſt, though told in pompous ſtrains,  
 A childiſh waſte of philoſophic pains;  
 But truths, on which depends our main concern,  
 That 'tis our ſhame and miſery not to learn,  
 Shine by the ſide of every path we tread  
 With ſuch a luſtre, he that runs may read.  
 'Tis true that, if to trifle life away  
 Down to the ſun-ſet of their lateſt day,  
 Then periſh on futurity's wide ſhore  
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,

Were all that Heaven required of human kind,  
And all the plan their destiny designed,  
What none could reverence all might justly blame,  
And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.  
But reason heard, and nature well perused,  
At once the dreaming mind is disabused.  
If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,  
Reflect his attributes, who placed them there,  
Fulfil the purpose, and appear designed  
Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing mind,  
'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose to invest  
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,  
Received his nobler nature, and was made  
Fit for the power, in which he stands arrayed,  
That first or last, hereafter if not here,  
He too might make his author's wisdom clear,  
Praise him on earth, or obstinately dumb  
Suffer his justice in a world to come.  
This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied  
To prove a consequence by none denied,  
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth  
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,  
That taught of God they may indeed be wise,  
Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most  
 A quickness, which in later life is lost:  
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,  
 Or guilty soon relenting into tears.  
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,  
 What friends we fought with, or what books we read,  
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care  
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare;  
 And wisely store the nursery by degrees  
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.  
 Neatly secured from being foiled or torn  
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,  
 A book (to please us at a tender age  
 'Tis called a book, though but a single page)  
 Presents the prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,  
 Which children use, and parsons—when they  
     preach.

Lipping our syllables, we scramble next  
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text;  
 And learn with wonder how this world began,  
 Who made, who marred, and who has ransomed,  
     man.

Points, which unless the scripture made them plain,  
 The wisest heads might agitate in vain.

O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing  
Back to the season of life's happy spring,  
I pleased remember, and while memory yet  
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;  
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale  
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;  
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,  
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;  
Witty, and well employed, and like thy Lord,  
Speaking in parables his flighted word;  
I name thee not, lest so despised a name  
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame;  
Yet ev'n in transitory life's late day,  
That mingles all my brown with sober gray,  
Revere the man, whose PILGRIM marks the road,  
And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.  
'Twere well with most, if books, that could engage  
Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age;  
The man, approving what had charmed the boy,  
Would die at last in comfort, peace and joy;  
And not with curses on his heart, who stole  
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.  
The stamp of artless piety impressed  
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,

The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,  
 Regards with scorn, though once received with awe;  
 And, warped into the labyrinth of lies,  
 That babblers, called philosophers, devise,  
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan  
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.  
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,  
 Assert the native evil of his heart,  
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof\*  
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough:  
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross  
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,  
 The young apostate sickens at the view,  
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves,  
 Opposed against the pleasures nature loves!  
 While self-betrayed, and wilfully undone,  
 She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.  
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange  
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.  
 'Time was, he closed as he began the day  
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray:

\* See 2 Chron. ch. xxvi. ver. 19.

The practice was a bond upon his heart,  
A pledge he gave for a consistent part;  
Nor could he dare presumptuously displease  
A power, confessed so lately on his knees.  
But now farewell all legendary tales,  
The shadows fly, philosophy prevails;  
Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves;  
Religion makes the free by nature slaves.  
Priests have invented, and the world admired  
What knavish priests promulgate as inspired;  
Till reason, now no longer overawed,  
Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud;  
And, common-sense diffusing real day,  
The meteor of the gospel dies away.  
Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth  
Learn from expert inquirers after truth;  
Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,  
Is not to find what they profess to seek.  
And thus, well-tutored only while we share  
A mother's lectures and a nurse's care;  
And taught at schools much mythologic stuff\*,  
But sound religion sparingly enough;

\* The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can

Our early notices of truth, disgraced,  
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,  
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once;  
 That in good time the stripling's finished taste  
 For loose expense, and fashionable waste,  
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last; }  
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,  
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,  
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten  
 In infidelity and lewdness men,  
 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,  
 That authors are most useful pawned or sold;  
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,  
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;  
 There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,  
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,  
 His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,  
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.

be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a school-boy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,  
Detain their adolescent charge too long;  
The management of tiros of eighteen  
Is difficult, their punishment obscene.  
The stout tall captain, whose superior size  
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,  
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix  
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.  
His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,  
With them is courage; his effrontery wit.  
His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,  
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,  
His hair-breadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,  
Transport them, and are made their favourite themes.  
In little bosoms such achievements strike  
A kindred spark; they burn to do the like.  
Thus, half-accomplished ere he yet begin  
To show the peeping down upon his chin;  
And, as maturity of years comes on,  
Made just the adept that you designed your son;  
To ensure the perseverance of his course,  
And give your monstrous project all its force,  
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,  
Or in one article of vice reclaimed,



Where no regard of ordinances is shown  
 Or looked for now, the fault must be his own.  
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,  
 Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking-  
     bout, }  
 Nor gambling practices, can find it out.  
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,  
 Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:  
 Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,  
 For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.  
 The slaves of custom and established mode,  
 With pack-horse constancy we keep the road,  
 Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,  
 True to the jingling of our leader's bells.  
 To follow foolish precedents, and wink  
 With both our eyes, is easier than to think:  
 And such an age as our's baulks no expense,  
 Except of caution and of common-sense;  
 Else sure notorious fact and proof so plain  
 Would turn our steps into a wiser train.  
 I blame not those, who with what care they can  
 O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan;  
 Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare  
 Promise a work, of which they must despair.

Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,  
 An ubiquarian presence and controul,  
 Elisha's eye, that when Gehazi strayed,  
 Went with him, and saw all the game he played?  
 Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves  
 Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.  
 Or if by nature sober, ye had then,  
 Boys as ye were, the gravity of men;  
 Ye knew at least, by constant proofs addressed  
 To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.  
 But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,  
 And evils, not to be endured, endure,  
 Left power exerted, but without success,  
 Should make the little ye retain still less.  
 Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth  
 Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth;  
 And in the firmament of fame still shines  
 A glory, bright as that of all the signs,  
 Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and di-  
 vines.

Peace to them all! those brilliant times are fled,  
 And no such lights are kindling in their stead.  
 Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays,  
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze;

And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,  
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.

Say muse, (for education made the song,  
No muse can hesitate or linger long)  
What causes move us, knowing as we must,  
That these *menageries* all fail their trust,  
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,  
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
We love the play-place of our early days;  
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone,  
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.  
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,  
The very name we carved subsisting still;  
The bench on which we sat while deep employed,  
Tho' mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet destroyed:  
The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,  
Playing our games, and on the very spot;  
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw  
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;  
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,  
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;

The pleasing spectacle at once excites  
Such recollection of our own delights,  
That viewing it, we seem almost to obtain  
Our innocent sweet simple years again.  
This fond attachment to the well-known place,  
Whence first we started into life's long race,  
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,  
We feel it ev'n in age, and at our latest day.  
Hark! how the fire of chits, whose future share  
Of classic food begins to be his care,  
With his own likenesses placed on either knee,  
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee;  
And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,  
That they must soon learn Latin, and to box;  
Then turning he regales his listening wife  
With all the adventures of his early life;  
His skill in coachmanship, or in driving chaise,  
In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays;  
What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,  
How he was flogged, or had the luck to escape;  
What sums he lost at play, and how he sold  
Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.  
Retracing thus his frolics, ('tis a name  
That palliates deeds of folly and of shame)

He gives the local bias all its sway;  
Resolves that were he played his sons shall play,  
And defines their bright genius to be shown  
Just in the scene, where he displayed his own.  
The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught,  
To be as bold and forward as he ought;  
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,  
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.  
Ah happy designation, prudent choice,  
The event is sure; expect it; and rejoice!  
Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,  
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,  
Excused the incumbrance of more solid worth,  
Are best disposed of where with most success  
They may acquire that confident address,  
Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,  
That scorn of all delights but those of sense,  
Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,  
With so much reason all expect from them.  
But families of less illustrious fame,  
Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,

Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,  
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,  
 What dream they of, that with so little care  
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?  
 They dream of little Charles or William graced  
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist;  
 They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,  
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.  
 The father, who designs his babe a priest,  
 Dreams him episcopally such at least;  
 And, while the playful jockey scours the room  
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,  
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride  
 In coach with purple lined and mitres on its side.  
 Events improbable and strange as these,  
 Which only a parental eye foresees,  
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease. }  
 But how? resides such virtue in that air,  
 As must create an appetite for prayer?  
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal,  
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,  
 To take the lead and be the foremost still  
 In all true worth and literary skill?

- " Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught  
 " The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!  
 " Church-ladders are not always mounted best  
 " By learned clerks and Latinists professed.  
 " The exalted prize demands an upward look,  
 " Not to be found by poring on a book.  
 " Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,  
 " Is more than adequate to all I seek.  
 " Let erudition grace him or not grace,  
 " I give the bauble but the second place;  
 " His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,  
 " Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.  
 " A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,  
 " Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.  
 " His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—  
 " There dawns the splendour of his future years;  
 " In that bright quarter his propitious skies  
 " Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.  
 " *Your Lordship, and Your Grace!* what school can  
     " teach  
 " A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?  
 " What need of Homer's verse or Tully's prose,  
 " Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?

" Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,  
 " Who flarve upon a dog's-eared Pentateuch,  
 " The parson knows enough, who knows a duke." }

Egregious purpose! worthily begun  
 In barbarous prostitution of your son;  
 Pressed on *his* part by means, that would disgrace  
 A scrivener's clerk or footman out of place,  
 And ending, if at last its end be gained,  
 In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.  
 It may succeed; and, if his sins should call  
 For more than common punishment, it shall;  
 The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth  
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,  
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,  
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.  
 The *royal letters* are a thing of course,  
 A king, that would, might recommend his horse;  
 And deans, no doubt, and chapters, with one voice,  
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.  
 Behold your bishop! well he plays his part,  
 Christian in name, and infidel in heart,  
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,  
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.



Dumb as a senator, and as a priest  
A piece of mere church-furniture at best;  
To live estranged from God his total scope,  
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.  
But fair although and feasible it seem,  
Depend not much upon your golden dream;  
For providence, that seems concerned to exempt  
The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,  
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,  
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;  
And therefore 'tis, that, though the fight be rare,  
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.  
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,  
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound;  
The most disinterested and virtuous minds,  
In early years connected, time unbinds;  
New situations give a different cast  
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste;  
And he, that seemed our counterpart at first,  
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.  
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,  
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.  
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,  
Whose scent and hues are rather guessed than known;

Each dreams that each is just what he appears,  
But learns his error in maturer years,  
When disposition, like a sail unfurled,  
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.  
If, therefore, ev'n when honest in design,  
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,  
'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart  
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,  
Than set your son to work at a vile trade  
For wages so unlikely to be paid.

Our public lives of puerile resort,  
That are of chief and most approved report,  
To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul,  
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.  
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass  
Unquestioned, though the jewel be but glass—  
That with a world, not often over-nice,  
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;  
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,  
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—  
Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame;  
And emulation is its specious name.

Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,  
 Feel all the rage that female rivals feel;  
 The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes  
 Not brighter than in their's the scholar's prize.  
 The spirit of that competition burns  
 With all varieties of ill by turns;  
 Each vainly magnifies his own success,  
 Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,  
 Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,  
 Deems his reward too great if he prevail,  
 And labours to surpass him day and night,  
 Less for improvement than to tickle spite.  
 The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;  
 It pricks the genius forward in its course,  
 Allows short time for play, and none for sloth;  
 And, felt alike by each, advances both:  
 But judge, where so much evil intervenes,  
 The end, though plausible, not worth the means.  
 Weigh, for a moment, classical desert  
 Against an heart depraved and temper hurt;  
 Hurt too perhaps for life; for early wrong  
 Done to the nobler part, affects it long;  
 And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause.  
 If you can crown a discipline, that draws  
 Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connexion formed for interest, and endeared  
By selfish views, thus censured and cashiered;  
And emulation, as engendering hate,  
Doomed to a no less ignominious fate;  
The props of such proud seminaries fall,  
The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.  
Great schools rejected then, as those that swell  
Beyond a size that can be managed well,  
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,  
And small academies win all the praise?  
Force not my drift beyond its just intent,  
I praise a school as Pope a government;  
So take my judgment in his language dressed,  
“Whate'er is best administered is best.”  
Few boys are born with talents that excel,  
But all are capable of living well;  
Then ask not, Whether limited or large?  
But, Watch they strictly, or neglect their charge?  
If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,  
While *morals* languish, a despised concern,  
The great and small deserve one common blame,  
Different in size, but in effect the same.  
Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,  
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most;

Therefore in towns and cities they abound,  
 For there the game they seek is easiest found;  
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,  
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.  
 If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,  
 Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,  
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill;  
 As, wheresoever taught, so formed, he will;  
 The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,  
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share.  
 But if, with all his genius, he betray,  
 Not more intelligent than loose and gay,  
 Such vicious habits, as disgrace his name,  
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;  
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred  
 The symptoms, that you see with so much dread;  
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone  
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.

Oh 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,  
 By all whom sentiment has not abused;  
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace  
 Of those, who never feel in the right place;

A fight surpassed by none that we can show,  
Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;  
A father blest with an ingenuous son,  
Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.  
How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,  
Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?  
He will not blush that has a father's heart,  
To take in childish plays a childish part;  
But bends his sturdy back to any toy,  
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy:  
Then why resign into a stranger's hand  
A task as much within your own command,  
That God and nature, and your interest too,  
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?  
Why hire a lodging in a house unknown  
For one, whose tenderest thoughts all hover round  
your own?

This second weaning, needless as it is,  
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!  
The indented stick, that loses day by day  
Notch after notch, till all are smoothed away,  
Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,  
With what intense desire he wants his home.

But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof  
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,  
Harmless, and safe, and natural, as they are,  
A disappointment waits him even there:  
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,  
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,  
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,  
His favourite stand between his father's knees,  
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,  
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,  
And, least familiar where he should be most,  
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.  
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect  
Of love by absence chilled into respect,  
Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired,  
Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesired?  
Thou well deserveest an alienated son,  
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;  
None that, in thy domestic snug recess,  
He had not made his own with more address,  
Though some perhaps that shock thy feeling mind,  
And better never learned, or left behind.  
Add too, that, thus estranged, thou canst obtain  
By no kind arts his confidence again;

That here begins with moſt that long complaint  
Of filial frankneſs loſt, and love grown faint,  
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years  
A parent pours into regardleſs ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees  
By ſlender threads, and ſwinging in the breeze,  
Which filthily bewray and fore diſgrace  
The boughs, in which are bred the unſeemly race;  
While every worm induſtriouſly weaves  
And winds his web about the rivelled leaves;  
So numerous are the follies, that annoy  
The mind and heart of every ſprightly boy;  
Imaginations noxious and perverſe,  
Which admonition can alone diſperſe.  
The encroaching nuisance aſks a faithful hand,  
Patient, affectionate, of high command,  
To check the procreation of a breed  
Sure to exhaust the plant, on which they feed.  
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,  
At ſtated hours, his freakiſh thoughts engage;  
Ev'n in his paſtimes he requires a friend  
To warn, and teach him ſafely to unbend,



O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,  
 Watch his emotions, and control their tide;  
 And levying thus, and with an easy sway,  
 A tax of profit from his very play,  
 To impress a value, not to be erased,  
 On moments squandered else, and running all to  
     waste.

And seems it nothing in a father's eye  
 That unimproved those many moments fly?  
 And is he well content his son should find  
 No nourishment to feed his growing mind,  
 But conjugated verbs and nouns declined? }  
 For such is all the mental food purveyed  
 By public hacknies in the schooling trade;  
 Who feed a pupil's intellect with store  
 Of syntax, truly, but with little more;  
 Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,  
 Machines themselves, and governed by a clock.  
 Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,  
 Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,  
 To improve this diet, at no great expense,  
 With favory truth and wholesome common sense;  
 To lead his son, for prospects of delight,  
 To some not steep, though philosophic, height,

Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes  
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,  
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,  
And the harmonious order of them all;  
To show him in an insect or a flower  
Such microscopic proof of skill and power,  
As, hid from ages past, God now displays  
To combat atheists with in modern days;  
To spread the earth before him, and commend,  
With designation of the finger's end,  
Its various parts to his attentive note,  
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;  
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,  
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame:  
And, more than all, with commendation due  
To set some living worthy in his view,  
Whose fair example may at once inspire  
A wish to copy what he must admire.  
Such knowledge gained betimes, and which ap-  
pears,  
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,  
Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,  
When health demands it, of athletic sort,

Would make him—what some lovely boys have  
    been,  
And more than one perhaps that I have seen—  
An evidence and reprehension both  
Of the mere school-boys lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally tied,  
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,  
Too busy to intend a meaner care  
Than how to enrich thyself, and next thine heir;  
Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art)  
But poor in knowledge, having none to impart:—  
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad;  
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad;  
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then  
Heard to articulate like other men;  
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,  
His phrase well chosen, clear and full of force;  
And his address, if not quite French in ease,  
Not English stiff, but frank, and formed to please;  
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts;  
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;  
Unpatronized, and therefore little known;  
Wife for himself and his few friends alone—

In him thy well-appointed proxy see,  
Armed for a work too difficult for thee;  
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,  
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth;  
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove  
The force of discipline when backed by love;  
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,  
His mind informed, his morals undefiled.  
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show  
No spots contracted among grooms below,  
Nor taint his speech with meannesses, designed  
By footman Tom for witty and refined.  
There, in his commerce with the liveried herd,  
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be feared;  
For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim  
An higher than a mere plebeian fame,  
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,  
To entertain a thief or two in pay,  
(And they that can afford the expense of more,  
Some half a dozen, and some half a score)  
Great cause occurs to save him from a band  
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand;  
A point secured, if once he be supplied  
With some such Mentor always at his side.

Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound  
 Were occupation easier to be found,  
 Were education, else so sure to fail,  
 Conducted on a manageable scale,  
 And schools that have out-lived all just esteem,  
 Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—  
 But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,  
 Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,  
 And, as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir  
 In all good faculties beneath his care,  
 Respect, as is but rational and just,  
 A man deemed worthy of so dear a trust.  
 Despised by thee, what more can he expect  
 From youthful folly than the same neglect?  
 A flat and fatal negative obtains  
 That instant upon all his future pains;  
 His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,  
 And all the instructions of thy son's best friend }  
 Are a stream choaked, or trickling to no end.  
 Doom him not then to solitary meals;  
 But recollect that he has sense, and feels;  
 And that, possessor of a soul refined,  
 An upright heart, and cultivated mind,

His post not mean, his talents not unknown,  
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.  
And, if admitted at thy board he sit,  
Account him no just mark for idle wit;  
Offend not him, whom modesty restrains  
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains;  
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath;  
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.—  
And, trust me, his utility may reach  
To more than he is hired or bound to teach;  
Much trash unuttered, and some ills undone,  
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,  
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,  
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan  
The world accounts an honourable man,  
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried  
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side;  
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove  
That any thing but vice could win thy love;—  
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,  
Chained to the routs that she frequents for life;

Who, juſt when induſtry begins to ſnore,  
Flies, winged with joy, to ſome coach-crowded door;  
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own  
With half the chariots and ſedans in town,  
Thyſelf meanwhile e'en ſhifting as thou mayeſt;  
Not very ſober though, nor very chaſte;—  
Or is thine houſe, though leſs ſuperb thy rank,  
If not a ſcene of pleaſure, a mere blank,  
And thou at beſt, and in thy ſobereſt mood,  
A trifler vain, and empty of all good;  
Though mercy for thyſelf thou canſt have none,  
Hear nature plead, ſhow mercy to thy ſon.  
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth  
Some miſchief fatal to his future worth,  
Find him a better in a diſtant ſpot,  
Within ſome pious paſtor's humble cot,  
Where vile example (your's I chiefly mean,  
The moſt ſeducing and the ofteſt ſeen)  
May never more be ſtamped upon his breaſt,  
Not yet perhaps incurably impreſſed.  
Where early reſt makes early riſing ſure,  
Diſeaſe or comes not, or finds eaſy cure,  
Prevented much by diet neat and plain;  
Or, if it enter, ſoon ſtarved out again:

Where all the attention of his faithful host,  
Discreetly limited to two at most,  
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,  
And not at last evaporate in air:  
Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind  
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,  
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,  
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,  
His virtuous toil may terminate at last  
In settled habit and decided taste.—  
But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,  
The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,  
Whom care and cool deliberation suit  
Not better much than spectacles a brute;  
Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,  
Deem it of no great moment whose, or where;  
Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,  
And much too gay to have any of their own.  
But courage, man! methought the muse replied,  
Mankind are various, and the world is wide:  
The ostrich, filliest of the feathered kind,  
And formed of God without a parent's mind,  
Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,  
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;



And, while on public nurseries they rely,  
Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,  
Irrational in what they thus prefer,  
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.  
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice  
May here and there prevent erroneous choice;  
And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,  
Yet make their progeny their dearest care,  
(Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may  
reach

Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach)  
Will need no stress of argument to enforce  
The expedience of a less adventurous course:  
The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;  
But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.

To you then, tenants of life's middle state,  
Securely placed between the small and great,  
Whose character, yet undebauched, retains  
Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,  
Who, wise yourselves, desire your son should learn  
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.  
Look round you on a world perversely blind;  
See what contempt is fallen on human kind;

See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,  
Great titles, offices and trusts disgraced,  
Long lines of ancestry, renowned of old,  
Their noble qualities all quenched and cold;  
See Bedlam's closetted and hand-cuffed charge  
Surpassed in frenzy by the mad at large;  
See great commanders making war a trade,  
Great lawyers, lawyers without study made;  
Churchmen, in whose esteem their blest employ  
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,  
Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves  
With gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;  
See womanhood despised, and manhood flamed  
With infamy too nauseous to be named,  
Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,  
Civitted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,  
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue  
On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,  
Now flushed with drunk'ness, now with whore-  
dom pale,  
Their breath a sample of last night's regale;  
See volunteers in all the vilest arts,  
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,

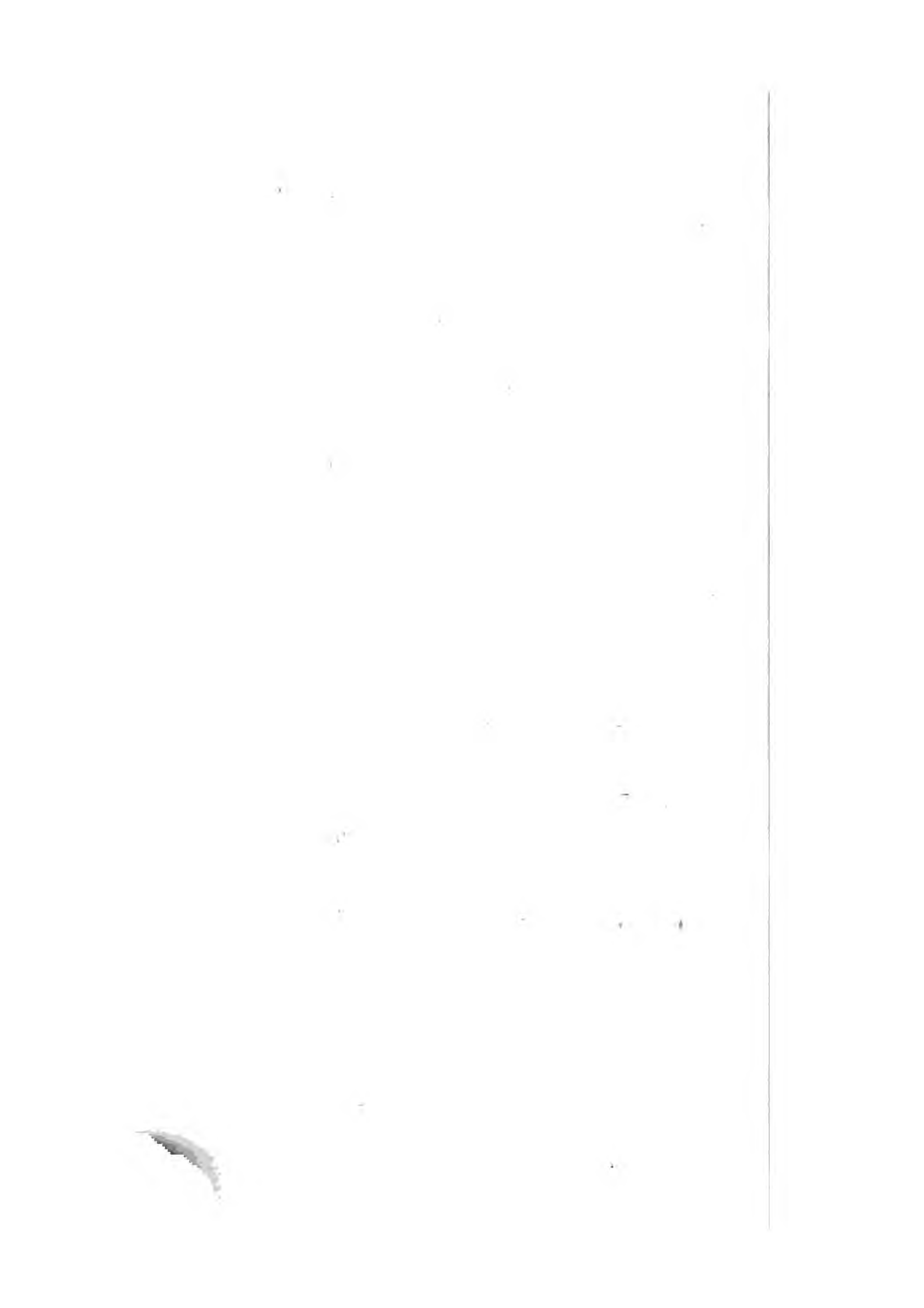
Designed by nature wise, but self-made fools;  
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.  
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,  
That though school-bred the boy be virtuous still;  
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,  
Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark:  
As here and there a twinkling star descried  
Serves but to show how black is all beside.  
Now look on him, whose very voice in tone  
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,  
And stroke his polished cheek of purest red,  
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,  
And say, My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,  
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,  
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,  
And trust for safety to a stranger's care;  
What character, what turn thou wilt assume  
From constant converse with I know not whom;  
Who there will court thy friendship, with what  
views,  
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose;  
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,  
Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.

Can't thou, the tear juſt trembling on thy lids,  
And while the dreadful riſque foreſeen forbids;  
Free too, and under no conſtraining force,  
Unleſs the ſway of cuſtom warp thy courſe;  
Lay ſuch a ſtake upon the loſing ſide,  
Merely to gratify ſo blind a guide?  
Thou can't not! Nature, pulling at thine heart,  
Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.  
Thou wouldeſt not, deaf to Nature's tendereſt plea,  
Turn him adrift upon a rolling ſea,  
Nor ſay, *Go thither*, conſcious that there lay  
A brood of aſps, or quickſands in his way;  
Then, only governed by the ſelf-ſame rule  
Of natural pity, ſend him not to ſchool.  
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,  
Thyſelf in miniature, thy fleſh, thy bone?  
And hopeſt thou not ('tis every father's hope)  
That, ſince thy ſtrength muſt with thy years elope,  
And thou wilt need ſome comfort to aſſuage  
Health's laſt farewell, a ſtaff of thine old age,  
That then, in recompenſe of all thy cares,  
Thy child ſhall ſhow reſpect to thy gray hairs,  
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,  
And give thy life its only cordial left?

Aware then how much danger intervenes,  
 To compass that good end, forecast the means.  
 His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;  
 Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.  
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,  
 Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,  
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base  
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.  
 But, if thou guard its sacred chambers sure  
 From vicious inmates and delights impure,  
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,  
 And keep him warm and filial to the last;  
 Or, if he prove unkind (as who can say  
 But, being man, and therefore frail, he may?)  
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,  
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

Oh barbarous! wouldest thou with a Gothic hand  
 Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools  
     i' th' land;  
 Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms,  
 Or turn them into shops and auction rooms?  
 A captious question, fir, (and your's is one)  
 Deserves an answer similar, or none.

Wouldest thou, possessor of a flock, employ  
(Apprized that he is such) a careless boy,  
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,  
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?  
Survey our schools and colleges, and see  
A sight not much unlike my simile.  
From education, as the leading cause,  
The public character its colour draws;  
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,  
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.  
And, though I would not advertise them yet,  
Nor write on each—*This Building to be Let,*  
Unless the world were all prepared to embrace  
A plan well worthy to supply their place;  
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,  
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,  
(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,  
Or better managed, or encouraged less.



TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

I.

THE swallows in their torpid state  
Compose their uselefs wing,  
And bees in hives as idly wait  
The call of early spring.

II.

The keenest frost that binds the stream  
The wildest wind that blows,  
Are neither felt nor feared by them  
Secure of their repose.

III.

But man, all feeling and awake,  
The gloomy scene surveys;  
With present ills his heart must ake,  
And pant for brighter days.

IV.

Old winter, halting o'er the mead,  
Bids me and Mary mourn;  
But lovely spring peeps o'er his head,  
And whispers your return.



## V.

Then April, with her sister May,  
 Shall chase him from the bowers,  
 And weave fresh garlands every day,  
 To crown the smiling hours.

## VI.

And, if a tear, that speaks regret  
 Of happier times, appear,  
 A glimpse of joy, that we have met,  
 Shall shine and dry the tear.

## CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON.

(NOW MRS. COURTNEY.)

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—  
 And meet perhaps never again;  
 The fun of that moment is set,  
 And seems to have risen in vain.

Catharina has fled like a dream—

(So vanishes pleasure, alas!)

But has left a regret and esteem,

That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,

Catharina, Maria, and I,

Our progress was often delayed

By the nightingale warbling nigh.

We paused under many a tree,

And much she was charmed with a tone

Less sweet to Maria and me,

Who had witnessed so lately her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,

And gave them a grace so divine,

As only her musical tongue

Could infuse into numbers of mine.

The longer I heard, I esteemed

The work of my fancy the more,

And ev'n to myself never seemed

So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed  
In number the days of the year,  
Catharina, did nothing impede,  
Would feel herself happier here;  
For the close woven arches of limes  
On the banks of our river I know,  
Are sweeter to her many times  
Than all that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endued  
With a well-judging taste from above,  
Then, whether embellished or rude,  
'Tis nature alone that we love.  
The achievements of art may amuse,  
May even our wonder excite,  
But groves, hills, and vallies, diffuse  
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess  
Catharina alone can rejoice,  
May it still be her lot to possess  
The scene of her sensible choice!

To inhabit a mansion remote  
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,  
And by Philomel's annual note  
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,  
To wing all her moments at home,  
And with scenes that new rapture inspire  
As oft as it suits her to roam,  
She will have just the life she prefers,  
With little to wish or to fear,  
And ours will be pleasant as hers,  
Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT (or if 'chance you hold  
That title now too trite and old)  
A man, once young, who lived retired  
As hermit, could have well desired,  
His hours of study closed at last,  
And finished his concise repast,  
Stopp'd his cruse, replaced his book  
Within its customary nook,  
And, staff in hand, set forth to share  
The sober cordial of sweet air,  
Like Isaac, with a mind applied  
To serious thought at evening-tide.  
Autumnal rains had made it chill,  
And from the trees, that fringed his hill,  
Shades flanting at the close of day  
Chilled more his else delightful way.  
Distant a little mile he spied  
A western bank's still sunny side,

And right toward the favoured place  
Proceeding with his nimblest pace,  
In hope to bask a little yet,  
Just reached it when the sun was set.

Your hermit, young and jovial, firs!  
Learns something from whate'er occurs—  
And hence, he said, my mind computes  
The real worth of man's pursuits.  
His object chosen, wealth or fame,  
Or other sublunary game,  
Imagination to his view  
Presents it decked with every hue,  
That can seduce him not to spare  
His powers of best exertion there,  
But youth, health, vigour to expend  
On so desirable an end.  
Ere long approach life's evening shades,  
The glow that fancy gave it fades;  
And, earned too late, it wants the grace,  
Which first engaged him in the chase.  
True, answered an angelic guide,  
Attendant at the senior's side—  
But whether all the time it cost  
To urge the fruitless chase be lost,

Must be decided by the worth  
Of that, which called his ardour forth:  
Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,  
Must cause him shame or discontent;  
A vicious object still is worse,  
Successful there he wins a curse;  
But he, whom ev'n in life's last stage  
Endeavours laudable engage,  
Is paid, at least in peace of mind,  
And sense of having well designed;  
And if, ere he attain his end,  
His fun precipitate descend,  
A brighter prize than that he meant  
Shall recompense his mere intent.  
No virtuous wish can bear a date  
Either too early or too late.

## THE FAITHFUL FRIEND.

THE green-house is my summer seat;  
My shrubs displaced from that retreat  
    Enjoyed the open air;  
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song  
Had been their mutual solace long,  
    Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang, as blithe as finches sing,  
That flutter loose on golden wing,  
    And frolic where they list;  
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,  
But that delight they never knew,  
    And therefore never missed.

But nature works in every breast;  
Instinct is never quite suppressed;  
    And Dick felt some desires,  
Which, after many an effort vain,  
Instructed him at length to gain  
    A pass between his wires.



The open windows seemed to invite  
The freeman to a farewell flight;  
    But Tom was still confined;  
And Dick, although his way was clear,  
Was much too generous and sincere  
    To leave his friend behind.

For, settling on his grated roof,  
He chirped and kissed him, giving proof  
    That he desired no more;  
Nor would forsake his cage at last,  
Till gently seized, I shut him fast,  
    A prisoner as before.

Oh ye, who never knew the joys  
Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,  
    Fandango, ball, and rout!  
Blush, when I tell you how a bird,  
A prison with a friend preferred  
    To liberty without.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,  
Thick overspread with moss and filky grafs,  
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,  
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,  
Reserved to solace many a neighbouring 'squire,  
That he may follow them through brake and briar,  
Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,  
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.  
A narrow brook, by rushy banks concealed,  
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;  
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,  
But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;  
And where the land slopes to its watery bourn,  
Wide yawns a gulph beside a ragged thorn;  
Bricks line the sides, but shivered long ago,  
And horrid brambles intertwine below;  
A hollow scooped, I judge in ancient time,  
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,  
 With which the fieldfare, wintry gueft, is fed;  
 Nor autumn yet had brushed from every fpray,  
 With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;  
 But corn was houfed, and beans were in the ftack,  
 Now therefore iffued forth the spotted pack,  
 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats  
 With a whole gamut filled of heavenly notes,  
 For which, alas! my deftiny fevere,  
 Though ears fhe gave me two, gave me no ear.

The fun, accomplifhing his early march,  
 His lamp now planted on heaven's topmoft arch,  
 When, exercife and air my only aim,  
 And heedlefs whither, to that field I came,  
 Ere yet with ruthlefs joy the happy hound  
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,  
 Or with the high-raifed horn's melodious clang  
 All Kilwick \* and all Dingle-derry \* rang.

Sheep grazed the field; fome with foft bofom  
 preffed  
 The herb as foft, while nibbling ftayed the reft;  
 Nor noife was heard but of the hafty brook,  
 Struggling, detained in many a petty nook.

\* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Efq.

All seemed so peaceful, that from them conveyed  
To me, their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,  
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,  
And from within the wood that crash was heard,  
Though not a hound from whom it burst appeared,  
The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that grazed,  
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,  
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,  
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round  
again;

But, recollecting with a sudden thought,  
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,  
They gathered close around the old pit's brink,  
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustomed long,  
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue;  
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees,  
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;  
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,  
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all:  
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,  
How glad they catch the larges of the skies;

But, with precision nicer still, the mind  
He scans of every loco-motive kind;  
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,  
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;  
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears  
Have all articulation in his ears;  
He spells them true by intuition's light,  
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,  
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused; surveying every face,  
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;  
Their periwigs of wool, and fears combined,  
Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind,  
That sage they seemed, as lawyers o'er a doubt,  
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;  
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,  
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;  
When thus a mutton, flatelier than the rest,  
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad, addressed.

Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard  
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be feared.  
Could I believe that winds for ages pent  
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,

And from their prison-house below arise,  
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,  
I could be much composed, nor should appear  
For such a cause to feel the slightest fear.  
Yourself have seen, what time the thunders rolled  
All night, we resting quiet in the fold.  
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone;  
I could expound the melancholy tone;  
Should deem it by our old companion made,  
The ass; for he, we know, has lately strayed,  
And being lost perhaps, and wandering wide,  
Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.  
But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear,  
That owns a carcase, and not quake for fear?  
Dæmons produce them doubtless, brazen-clawed  
And fanged with brass the dæmons are abroad;  
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit,  
That life to save, we leap into the pit.

Him answered then his loving mate and true,  
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

How? leap into the pit our life to save?  
To save our life leap all into the grave?  
For can we find it less? Contemplate first  
The depth how awful! falling there, we burst:

Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall  
 In part abate, that happiness were small;  
 For with a race like theirs no chance I see  
 Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.  
 Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,  
 Or be it not, or be it whose it may,  
 And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues  
 Of dæmons uttered, from whatever lungs,  
 Sounds are but sounds, and till the cause appear  
 We have at least commodious standing here.  
 Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast  
 From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,  
 For Reynard, close attended at his heels  
 By panting dog, tired man, and spattered horse,  
 Thro' mere good fortune, took a different course.  
 The flock grew calm again, and I, the road  
 Following, that led me to my own abode,  
 Much wondered that the silly sheep had found  
 Such cause of terror in an empty sound  
 So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound. }

## MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,  
 Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

B O A D I C E A.

AN ODE.

I.

WHEN the British warrior queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
Sought, with an indignant mien,  
Counsel of her country's gods,

II.

Sage beneath the spreading oak  
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;  
Every burning word he spoke  
Full of rage, and full of grief.

III.

Princess! if our aged eyes  
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
'Tis because resentment ties  
All the terrors of our tongues.



## IV.

Rome shall perish—write that word  
In the blood that she has spilt;  
Perish, hopeless and abhorred,  
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

## V.

Rome, for empire far renowned,  
Tramples on a thousand states;  
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—  
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

## VI.

Other Romans shall arise,  
Heedless of a soldier's name;  
Sounds, not arms shall win the prize,  
Harmony the path to fame.

## VII.

Then the progeny that springs  
From the forests of our land,  
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,  
Shall a wider world command.

## VIII.

Regions Cæsar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway;

Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they.

## IX.

Such the bard's prophetic words,  
Pregnant with celestial fire,  
Bending as he swept the chords  
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

## X.

She, with all a monarch's pride,  
Felt them in her bosom glow:  
Rushed to battle, fought, and died;  
Dying hurled them at the foe.

## XI.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,  
Heaven awards the vengeance due;  
Empire is on us bestowed,  
Shame and ruin wait for you.

## HEROISM.

**T**HERE was a time when Ætna's silent fire  
Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire;  
When, conscious of no danger from below,  
She towered a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.  
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound  
The blooming groves, that girdled her around.  
Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines  
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)  
The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,  
In peace upon her sloping sides matured.  
When on a day, like that of the last doom,  
A conflagration labouring in her womb,  
She teemed and heaved with an infernal birth,  
That shook the circling seas and solid earth.  
Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,  
And hang their horrors in the neighbouring skies,  
While through the stygian veil, that blots the day,  
In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.  
But oh! what muse, and in what powers of song,  
Can trace the torrent as it burns along?

Havoc and devastation in the van,  
It marches o'er the prostrate works of man.  
Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,  
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,  
See it an uninformed and idle mass;  
Without a foil to invite the tiller's care,  
Or blade, that might redeem it from despair.  
Yet time at length (what will not time achieve?)  
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.  
Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,  
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.  
Oh bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,  
Oh charming paradise of short-lived sweets!  
The self-same gale, that wafts the fragrance round,  
Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound:  
Again the mountain feels the imprisoned foe,  
Again pours ruin on the vale below.  
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,  
That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,  
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,  
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,  
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence,

Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires  
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires!  
Fast by the stream, that bounds your just domain,  
And tells you were ye have a right to reign,  
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,  
Studious of peace, their neighbours', and their own.  
Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue  
Their only crime, vicinity to you!  
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,  
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road;  
At every step beneath their feet they tread  
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!  
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress  
Before them, and behind a wilderness.  
Famine, and pestilence, her first-born son,  
Attend to finish what the sword begun;  
And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,  
And folly pays, refund at your return.  
A calm succeeds—but plenty, with her train  
Of heart felt joys, succeeds not soon again,  
And years of pining indigence must show  
What scourges are the gods that rule below.  
Yet man, laborious man by slow degrees,  
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease)

Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,  
Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,  
Rebuilds the towers, that smoked upon the plain,  
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce and reviving art  
Renew the quarrel on the conquerors part;  
And the sad lesson must be learned once more,  
That wealth within is ruin at the door.  
What are ye, monarchs, laurelled heroes, say,  
But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway?  
Sweet nature, stripped of her embroidered robe,  
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe;  
And stands a witness at truth's awful bar,  
To prove you there, destroyers as ye are.

Oh place me in some heaven-protected isle,  
Where peace, and equity, and freedom smile;  
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,  
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood;  
Where power secures what industry has won;  
Where to succeed is not to be undone;  
A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,  
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign!

ON THE RECEIPT OF  
MY MOTHER'S PICTURE  
OUT OF NORFOLK.

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN ANN BODHAM.

Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,  
The same, that oft in childhood solaced me;  
Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,  
“ Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!”  
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,  
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim  
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
Oh welcome guest, though unexpected here!  
Who biddest me honour with an artless song,  
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.  
I will obey, not willingly alone,  
But gladly, as the precept were her own:

And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,  
 Shall steep me in Elyfian reverie,  
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,  
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
 Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unseen, a kiss;  
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
 Ah that maternal smile! it answers—Yes. }  
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,  
 I saw the hearse, that bore thee slow away,  
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew  
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
 But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone  
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
 The parting sound shall pass my lips no more!  
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,  
 Oft gave me promise of a quick return.  
 What ardently I wished, I long believed,  
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived.



By disappointment every day beguiled,  
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,  
I learned at last submission to my lot,  
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;  
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,  
Drew me to school along the public way,  
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,  
'Tis now become a history little known,  
That once we called the pastoral house our own.  
Short lived possession! but the record fair,  
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,  
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced  
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
That thou mightest know me safe and warmly laid;  
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;  
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed  
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed:

All this, and more endearing still than all,  
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,  
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks,  
That humour interposed too often makes;  
All this still legible in memory's page,  
And still to be so to my latest age,  
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay  
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;  
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,  
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
I pricked them into paper with a pin,  
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)  
Could those few pleasant hours again appear,  
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them  
here?

I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—  
But no—what here we call our life is such,  
So little to be loved, and thou so much,

That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)  
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,  
Where spices breathe and brighter seasons smile,  
There fits quiescent on the floods, that show  
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
While airs impregnated with incense play  
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;  
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the  
shore,

“Where tempests never beat nor billows roar\*,”  
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide  
Of life, long since, has anchored at thy side.  
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
Always from port withheld, always distressed—  
Me howling winds drive devious, tempest tossed,  
Sails ript, seams opening wide, and compass lost,  
And day by day some current's thwarting force  
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.  
But oh the thought, that thou art safe, and he!  
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.

\* Garth.

My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—  
The son of parents passed into the skies.  
And now, farewell—time unrevoked has run  
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.  
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;  
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,  
Without the sin of violating thine;  
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,  
And I can view this mimic shew of thee,  
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—  
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

F R I E N D S H I P.

WHAT virtue or what mental grace  
But men unqualified and base  
Will boast it their possession?  
Profusion apes the noble part  
Of liberality of heart,  
And dulness of discretion.

If every polished gem we find,  
Illuminating heart or mind,  
Provoke to imitation;  
No wonder friendship does the same,  
That jewel of the purest flame,  
Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend  
The requisites that form a friend,  
A real and a sound one,  
Nor any fool he would deceive,  
But prove as ready to believe,  
And dream that he had found one.

Candid and generous and just,  
Boys care but little whom they trust,  
    An error soon corrected—  
For who but learns in riper years,  
That man, when smoothest he appears,  
    Is most to be suspected?

But here again a danger lies,  
Left, having misapplied our eyes  
    And taken trash for treasure,  
We should unwarily conclude  
Friendship a false ideal good,  
    A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare  
Is yet no subject of despair;  
    Nor is it wise complaining,  
If either on forbidden ground,  
Or where it was not to be found,  
    We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,  
That stands on fordid interest,  
    Or mean self-love erected;

Nor such as may awhile subsist  
Between the sot and sensualist,  
For vicious ends connected.

Who seek a friend, should come disposed  
To exhibit in full bloom disclosed  
The graces and the beauties,  
That form the character he seeks,  
For 'tis an union, that bespeaks  
Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,  
And equal truth on either side,  
And constantly supported;  
'Tis senseless arrogance to accuse  
Another of sinister views,  
Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice?  
It is indeed above all price,  
And must be made the basis;  
But every virtue of the soul  
Must constitute the charming whole,  
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide  
The closest knot, that may be tied,  
By ceaseless sharp corrosion;  
A temper passionate and fierce  
May suddenly your joy disperse  
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite  
In hopes of permanent delight—  
The secret just committed  
Forgetting its important weight,  
They drop through mere desire to prate,  
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright so'er the prospect seems,  
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams  
If envy chance to creep in;  
An envious man, if you succeed,  
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,  
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possessed  
So jealousy looks forth distressed  
On good, that seems approaching,



And if success his steps attend,  
Discerns a rival in a friend,  
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,  
Unless belied by common fame,  
Are sadly prone to quarrel,  
To deem the wit a friend displays  
A tax upon their own just praise,  
And pluck each others laurel.

A man renowned for repartee  
Will seldom scruple to make free  
With friendship's finest feeling,  
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,  
And say he wounded you in jest,  
By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear  
For tattlers, will be sure to hear  
The trumpet of contention;  
Asperion is the babblers trade,  
To listen is to lend him aid,  
And rush into dissension.

A friendship, that in frequent fits  
Of controversial rage emits  
The sparks of disputation,  
Like hand in hand insurance plates,  
Most unavoidably creates  
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul  
True as a needle to the pole,  
Their humour yet so various—  
They manifest their whole life through  
The needle's deviations too,  
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet  
On terms of amity complete,  
Plebeians must surrender,  
And yield so much to noble folk,  
It is combining fire with smoke,  
Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene  
(As Irish bogs are always green)  
They sleep secure from waking;

And are indeed a bog, that bears  
Your unparticipated cares  
Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix  
Their heterogeneous politics  
Without an effervescence,  
Like that of salts with lemon juice,  
Which does not yet like that produce  
A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,  
And make a calm of human life;  
But friends that chance to differ  
On points, which God has left at large,  
How freely will they meet and charge,  
No combatants are stiffer!

To prove at last my main intent  
Needs no expence of argument,  
No cutting and contriving—  
Seeking a real friend we seem  
To adopt the chymists golden dream,  
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,  
Some blemish in due time made known  
By trespass or omission;  
Sometimes occasion brings to light  
Our friend's defect long hid from sight,  
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man  
As circumspcctly as you can,  
And having made election,  
Beware no negligence of yours,  
Such as a friend but ill endures,  
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,  
That friends should be sincere and just,  
That constancy befits them,  
Are observations on the case,  
That favour much of common place,  
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,  
An architect requires alone  
To finish a fine building—

The palace were but half complete,  
If he could possibly forget  
The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,  
And proves by thumps upon your back  
How he esteems your merit,  
Is such a friend, that one had need  
Be very much his friend indeed  
To pardon or to bear it.

As familiarity of mind,  
Or something not to be defined,  
First fixes our attention ;  
So manners decent and polite,  
The same we practised at first sight,  
Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,  
" Say little and hear all you can."  
Safe policy but hateful—  
So barren sands imbibe the shower,  
But render neither fruit nor flower,  
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,  
Shall find me as reserved as he,  
No subterfuge or pleading  
Shall win my confidence again,  
I will by no means entertain  
A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas! at last  
These are but samples, and a taste  
Of evils yet unmentioned—  
May prove the task a task indeed,  
In which 'tis much if we succeed  
However well-intentioned.

Pursue the search, and you will find  
Good sense and knowledge of mankind  
To be at least expedient,  
And after summing all the rest,  
Religion ruling in the breast  
A principal ingredient.

The noblest Friendship ever shewn  
The Saviour's history makes known,  
Though some have turned and turned it;

And whether being crazed or blind,  
Or seeking with a biased mind,  
Have not, it seems, discerned it.

Oh Friendship! if my soul forego  
Thy dear delights while here below;  
To mortify and grieve me,  
May I myself at last appear  
Unworthy, base, and insincere,  
Or may my friend deceive me!

STANZAS

Subjoined to the Yearly Bill of Mortality of the  
Parish of

ALL-SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON,

Anno Domini 1787.

*Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,  
Regumque turres.*

HORACE.

Pale death with equal foot strikes wide the door  
Of royal halls, and hovels of the poor.

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run  
The Nen's barge-laden wave,  
All these, life's rambling journey done,  
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail  
Than in foregoing years?  
Did famine or did plague prevail,  
That so much death appears?



No; these were vigorous as their fires,  
Nor plague nor famine came;  
This annual tribute death requires,  
And never waves his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,  
And some are marked to fall;  
The axe will smite at God's command,  
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,  
With its new foliage on,  
The gay, the thoughtless, I have seen  
I passed—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the solemn truth,  
With which I charge my page;  
A worm is in the bud of youth,  
And at the root of age.

No present health can health insure  
For yet an hour to come;  
No medicine, though it often cure,  
Can always baulk the tomb.

And Oh! that humble as my lot,  
 And scorned as is my strain,  
 These truths, though known, too much forgot,  
 I may not teach in vain.

So prays your clerk with all his heart,  
 And ere he quits the pen,  
 Begs *you* for once to take *his* part  
 And answer all—Amen!

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,  
 FOR THE YEAR 1788.

*Quod adest, memento*

*Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis*

*Ritu feruntur.*

HOR.

Improve the present hour, for all beside  
 Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from heaven inspired, as sure presage  
 To whom the rising year shall prove his last;  
 As I can number in my punctual page,  
 And item down the victims of the past;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,  
On which the preſs might ſtamp him next to die;  
And, reading here his ſentence, how replete  
With anxious meaning, heaven-ward turn his eye!

Time then would ſeem moré precious than the joys,  
In which he ſports away the treaſure now;  
And prayer more reaſonable than the noiſe  
Of drunkards, or the muſic-drawing bow.

Then doubtleſs many a trifler, on the brink  
Of this world's hazardous and headlong ſhore,  
Forced to a pauſe, would feel it good to think,  
Told that his ſetting fun muſt riſe no more.

Ah ſelf-deceived! Could I prophetic ſay  
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,  
The reſt might then ſeem privileged to play;  
But, naming *none*, the Voice now ſpeaks to ALL.

Obſerve the dappled foreſters, how light  
They bound, and airy o'er the funny glade—  
One falls—the reſt, wide-ſcattered with affright,  
Vanish at once into the darkeſt ſhade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warned,  
Still need repeated warnings, and at last,  
A thousand awful admonitions scorned,  
Die self-accused of life run all to waste?

Sad waste! for which no after-thrift atones:  
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;  
Dew-drops may deck the turf that hides the bones,  
But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then ye living! by the mouths be taught  
Of all these sepulchres, instructors true,  
That, soon or late, death also is your lot,  
And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,  
FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—*Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.*

VIRG.

There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

“ Oh most delightful hour by man

“ Experienced here below,

“ The hour that terminates his span,

“ His folly, and his woe !

“ Worlds should not bribe me back to tread

“ Again life's dreary waste,

“ To see again my day o'erspread

“ With all the gloomy past.

“ My home henceforth is in the skies,

“ Earth, seas, and sun adieu !

“ All heaven unfolded to my eyes,

“ I have no fight for you.”

So spoke Aspasio, firm possess'd  
Of faith's supporting rod,  
Then breathed his soul into its rest,  
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few  
Sincere on virtue's side;  
And all his strength from scripture drew,  
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he feared,  
He hated, hoped, and loved;  
Nor ever frowned, or sad appeared,  
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,  
And evil felt within:  
But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,  
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last  
Called up from Earth to Heaven,  
The gulph of death triumphant pass'd,  
By gales of blessing driven.

*His* joys be *mine*, each Reader cries,  
 When my last hour arrives :  
 They shall be yours, my Verse replies,  
 Such only be your lives.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,  
 FOR THE YEAR 1790.

*Ne commonentem recta sperne.*

BUCHANAN.

Despise not my good counsel.

HE who sits from day to day,  
 Where the prisoned lark is hung,  
 Heedless of his loudest lay,  
 Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round  
 Nightly lifts his voice on high,  
 None, accustomed to the sound,  
 Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verfe-man I, and clerk,  
Yearly in my fong proclaim  
Death at hand—yourfelves his mark—  
And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,  
Publishing to all aloud—  
Soon the grave must be your home,  
And your only fuit, a fhroud.

But the monitory ftrain,  
Oft repeated in your ears,  
Seems to found too much in vain,  
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confefed  
Of fuch magnitude and weight,  
Grow, by being oft expreffed,  
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,  
Hear it often as we may;  
New as ever feem our fins,  
Though committed every day.



Death and judgment, Heaven and Hell—  
These alone, so often heard,  
No more move us than the bell  
When some stranger is interred.

Oh then, ere the turf or tomb  
Cover us from every eye,  
Spirit of instruction come,  
Make us learn that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,  
FOR THE YEAR 1792.

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere easas,  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!*

VIRG.

Happy the mortal, who has traced effects  
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,  
And Death, and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

THANKLESS for favours from on high,  
Man thinks he fades too soon;  
Though 'tis his privilege to die,  
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan  
His best concerns aright,  
Would gladly stretch life's little span  
To ages, if he might.

To ages in a world of pain,  
To ages, where he goes  
Galled by affliction's heavy chain,  
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,  
Enamoured of its harm!  
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,  
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power?  
Why deem we death a foe?  
Recoil from weary life's best hour,  
And covet longer woe?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft  
Her tale of guilt renews:  
Her voice is terrible though soft,  
And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared  
Man mourns his fleeting breath:  
All evils then seem light, compared  
With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him; there's the fear,  
That prompts the wish to stay:  
He has incurred a long arrear,  
And must despair to pay.

*Pay!*—follow Christ, and all is paid;  
His death your peace insures;  
Think on the grave where *he* was laid,  
And calm descend to *yours*.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,  
FOR THE YEAR 1793.

*De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.*

CIC. DE LEG.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things  
sacred be inviolate.

HE lives who lives to God alone,  
And all are dead beside;  
For other source than God is none  
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite  
His love as best we may:  
To make his precepts our delight,  
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring  
Of giddy joys comprized,  
Is falsely named, and no such thing,  
But rather death disguised,

Can life in them deserve the name,  
Who only live to prove  
For what poor toys they can disclaim  
An endless life above?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel;  
Much menaced, nothing dread;  
Have wounds, which only God can heal,  
Yet never ask his aid?

Who deem his house an useless place,  
Faith, want of common sense;  
And ardour in the Christian race,  
A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day,  
Which God asserts his own,  
Dishonour with unhallowed play,  
And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impressed  
On word and deed, imply  
The better part of man, unblest  
With life that cannot die;

Such want it, and that want uncured  
Till man resigns his breath,  
Speaks him a criminal, assured  
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!  
Yet so will God repay  
Sabbaths profaned without remorse,  
And mercy cast away.

INSCRIPTION  
FOR  
THE TOMB  
OF  
MR. HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think: a monitory rhyme  
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.

Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein;  
Seems it to say—"Health here has long to reign?"  
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye  
That beams delight? an heart untaught to fight?  
Yet fear. Youth, oft-times healthful and at ease,  
Anticipates a day it never sees;  
And many a tomb, like HAMILTON's, aloud  
Exclaims, "Prepare thee for an early shroud."



EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,  
Nor swifter greyhound follow,  
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,  
Nor e'er heard huntsman's hallo',

Old Tiney, furlieft of his kind,  
Who, nurfed with tender care,  
And to domestic bounds confined,  
Was ftill a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took  
His pittance every night,  
He did it with a jealous look,  
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread  
And milk, and oats, and ftraw;  
Thiftles, or lettuces inftead,  
With fand to fcour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,  
On pippins' ruffet peel,  
And, when his juicy salads failed,  
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,  
Whereon he loved to bound,  
To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,  
For then he lost his fear,  
But most before approaching showers,  
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons  
He thus saw steal away,  
Dozing out all his idle noons,  
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour' sake,  
For he would oft beguile  
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade  
He finds his long last home,  
And waits, in snug concealment laid,  
Till gentler Puffs shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,  
From which no care can save,  
And, partner once of Tiney's box,  
Must soon partake his grave.

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,  
Qui totum novennium vixit,  
Puls.  
Siste paulisper,  
Qui præteriturus es,  
Et tecum sic reputa—  
Nunc neque canis venaticus,  
Nec plumbum missile,  
Nec laqueus,  
Nec imbres nimii,  
Confecère  
Tamen mortuus est—  
Et moriar ego.

*The following Account of the Treatment of his Hares was inserted by Mr. Cowper in the Gentleman's Magazine, whence it is transcribed.*

In the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of any thing, that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and, soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present; and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me, as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the names I gave them—Pufs, Tiney, and Befs. Notwithstanding the

two feminine appellatives, I must inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in; each had a separate apartment, so contrived that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the day-time they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Pufs grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick), and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves

of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves also of that vine he found a favourite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull at it with all his force. Thus Pufs might be said to be perfectly tamed, the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney; upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention; but if, after his recovery, I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was however very entertaining in his way; even his furliness was matter of mirth, and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Befs, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Pufs was tamed by gentle usage;

Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Befs had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, when the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Befs, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening the cat being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Befs upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence, that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, distinguish each from all the rest; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them no two could be found exactly similar; a circumstance little suspected by those, who have not had opportunity to observe it. These creatures have a singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration, that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object.



A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem too to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favourites: to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once; his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind has taught me to hold the sportsman's amusement in abhorrence; he little knows what amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of those articles of diet, that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze, but it is an erroneous one, at least grass is not their staple; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sow-thistle, dent-de-lion, and lettuce, are their favourite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident that fine white sand is in great estimation with them; I suppose as a digestive. It happened that I was cleaning a bird-cage while the hares were with me; I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which, being at once directed to by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously;

since that time I have generally taken care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat: straw of any kind, especially wheat-straw, is another of their dainties; they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw never want them; it serves them also for a bed, and, if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk; they seem to resemble sheep in this, that, if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot; to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and filling a pan with it cut into small squares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night: during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin; for, though they are fond of the paring, the apple itself disgusts them. These however not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water; but so placed that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common briar, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in

his loins by a fall; Pufs is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he is grown more discreet and less frolicksome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel that had never seen a hare to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Pufs discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it: they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them; that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

MAY 28, 1784.

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*Memorandum found among Mr. Couper's papers.*

Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

This day died poor Pufs, aged eleven years eleven months. She died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain.

**THE END.**

T. Bensley, Printer, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, London.

