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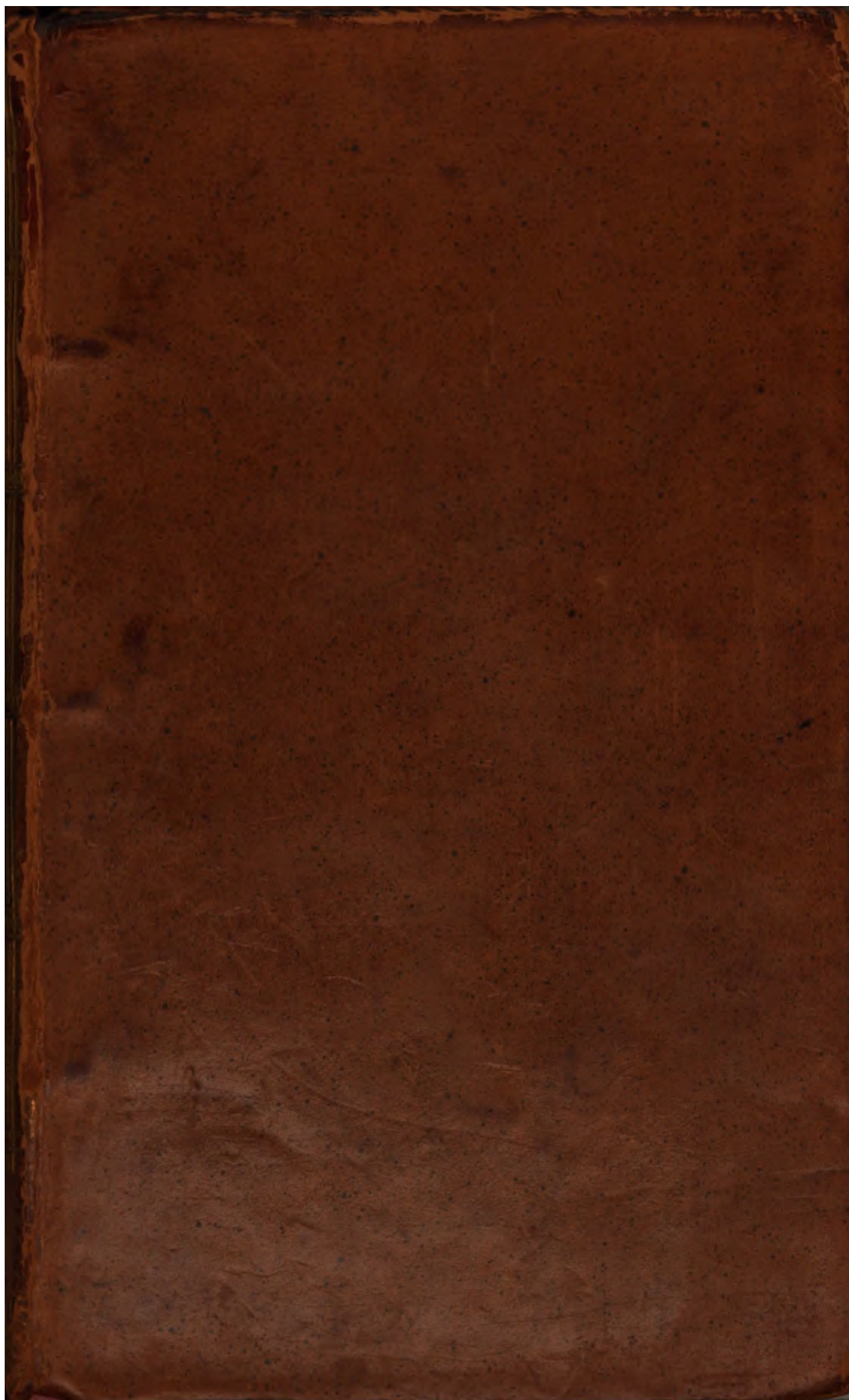
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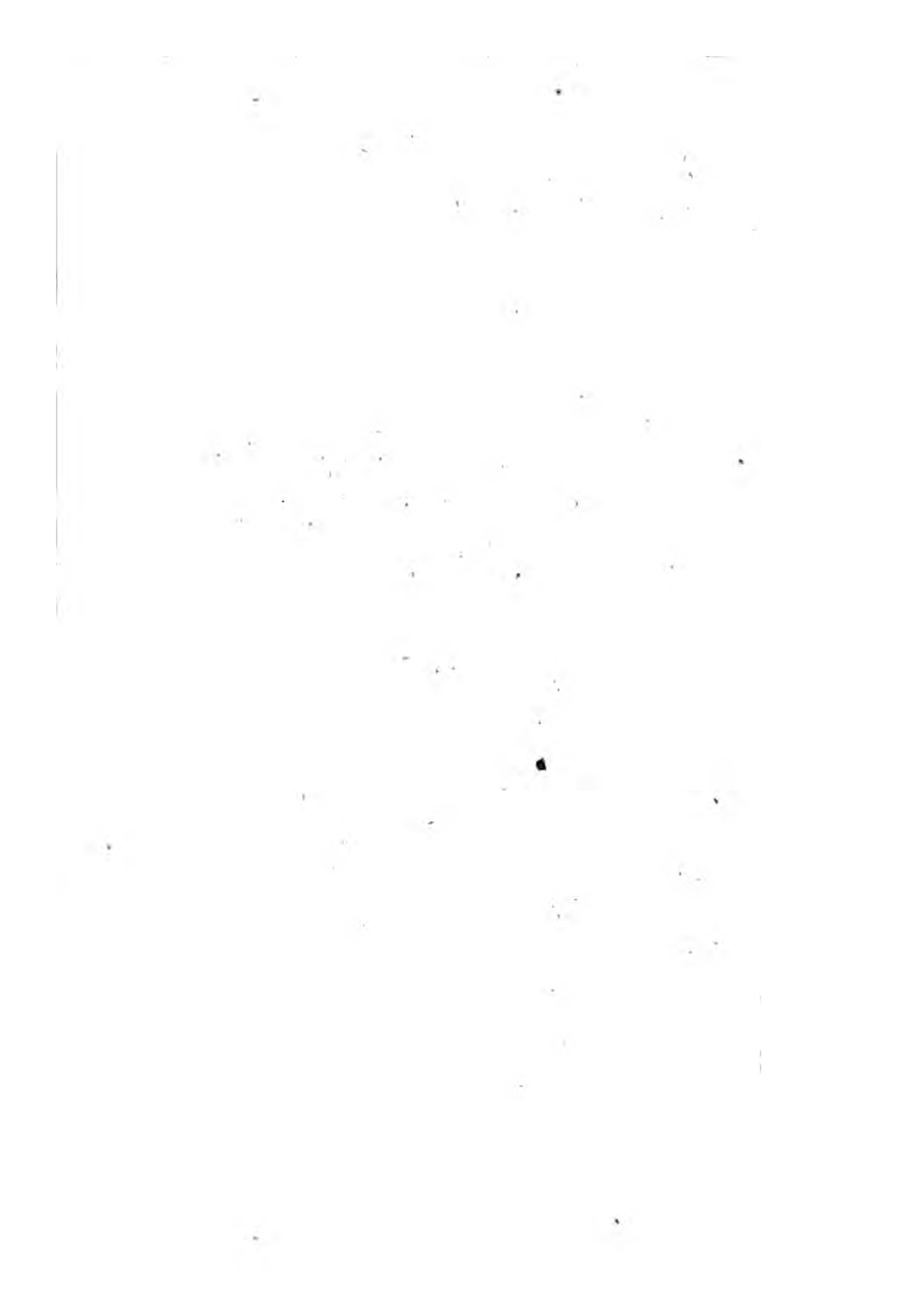


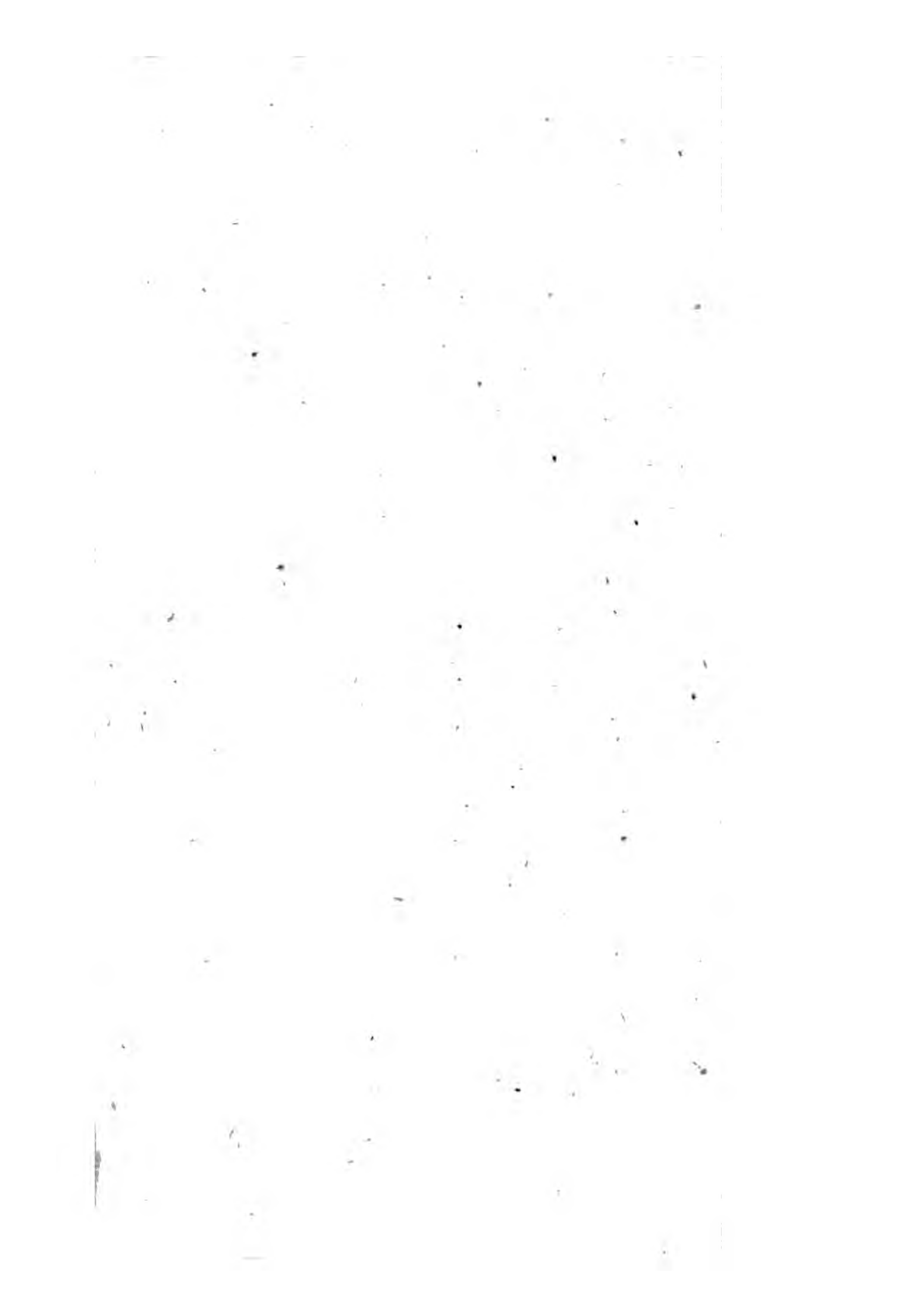
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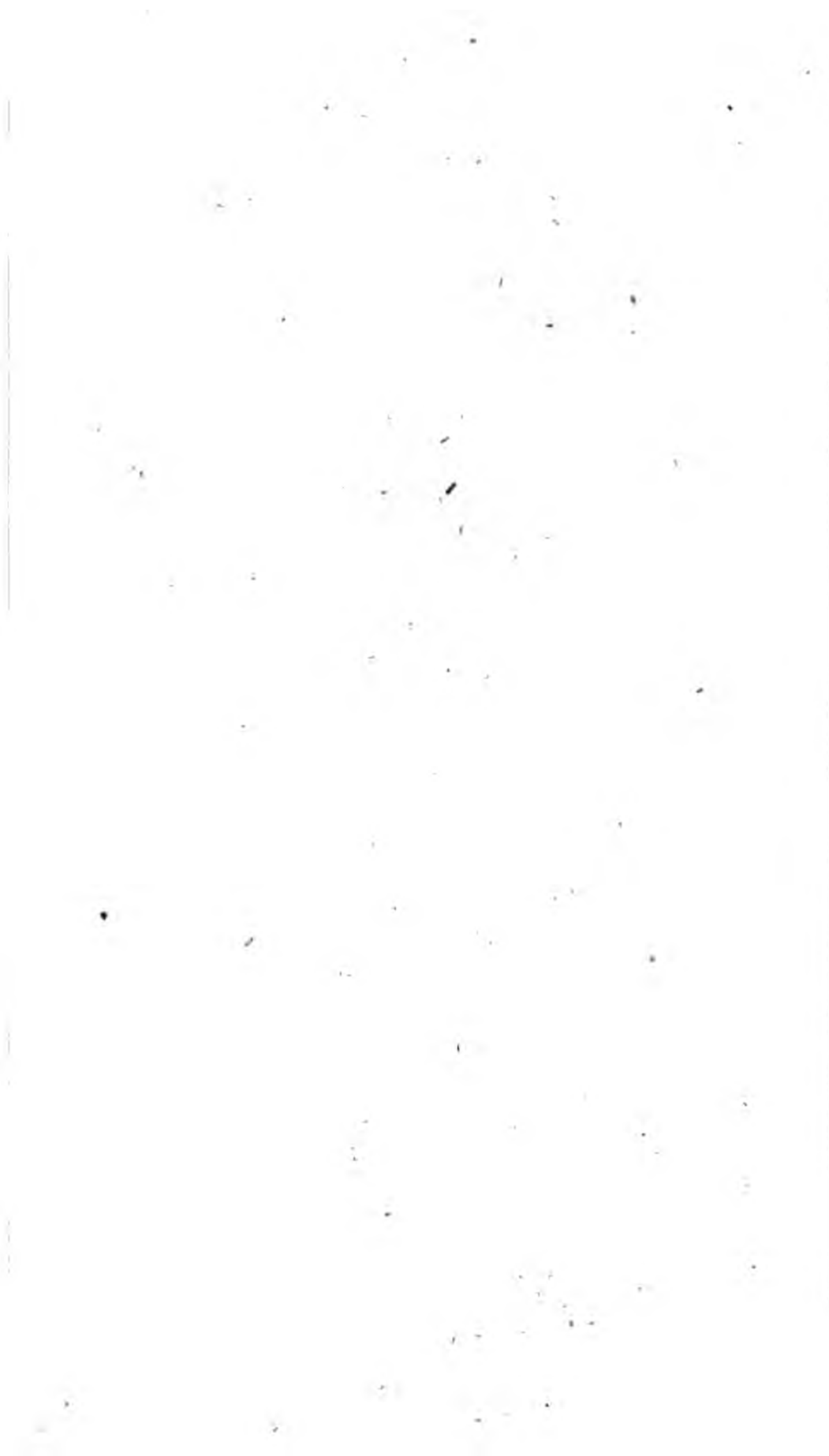


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THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS.

WITH
PREFACES,
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME THE FIFTY-FIRST.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY H. BALDWIN;

FOR C. BATHURST, J. BUCKLAND, W. STRAHAN, J. RIVINGTON AND SONS, T. DAVIES, T. PAYNE, L. DAVIS, W. OWEN, B. WHITE, S. CROWDER, T. CASLON, T. LONGMAN, B. LAW, E. AND C. DILLY, J. DODSLEY, H. BALDWIN, J. WILKIE, J. ROBSON, J. JOHNSON, T. LOWNDES, T. BECKET, G. ROBINSON, T. CADELE, W. DAVIS, J. NICHOLS, F. NEWBERY, T. EVANS, J. RIDLEY, R. BALDWIN, G. NICOL, LEIGH AND SOTHEBY, J. BEW, N. CONANT, J. MURRAY, W. FOX, J. BOWEN.

M D C C L X X I X .



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OF
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VOLUME II.

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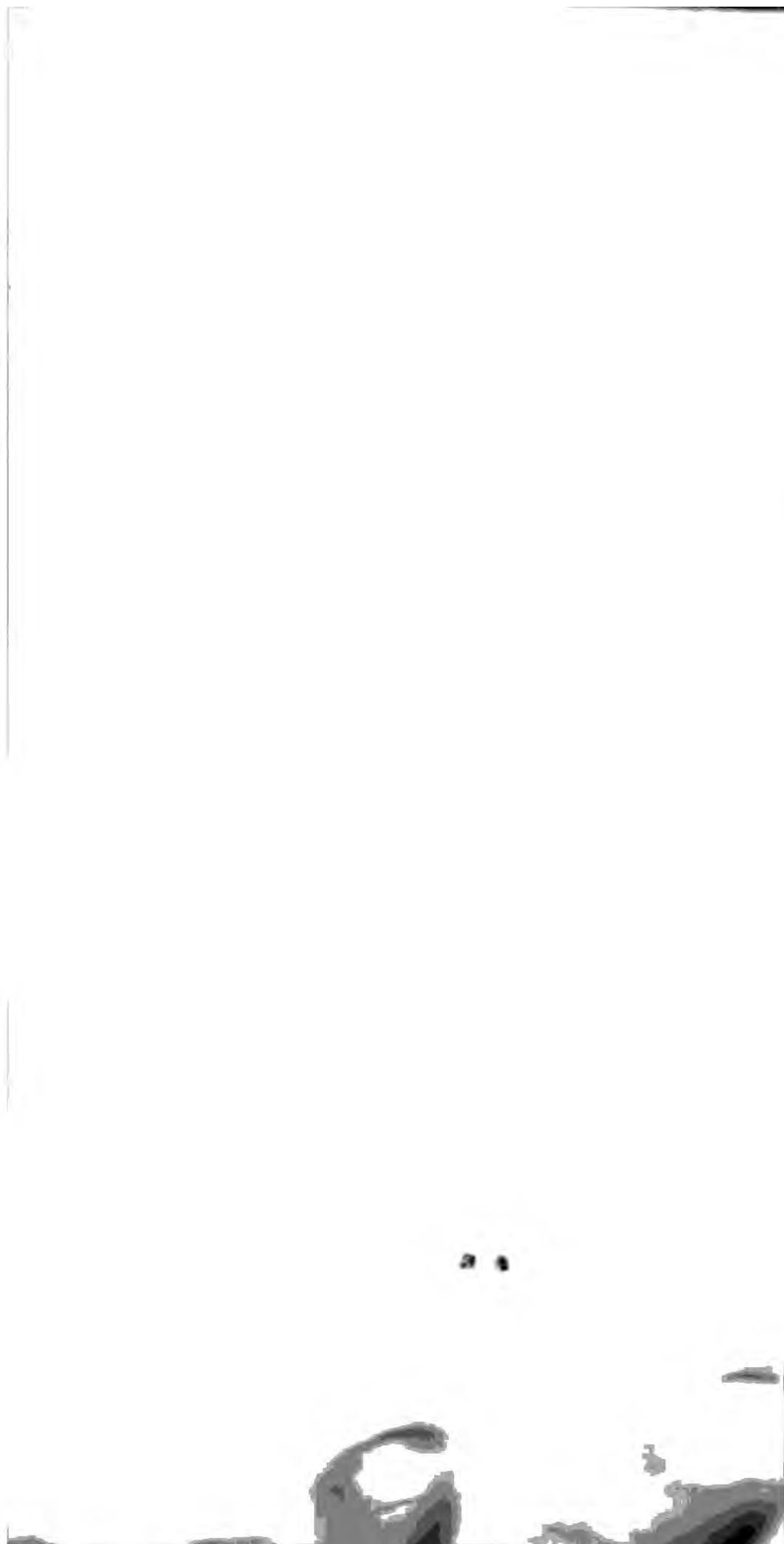
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THE
COMPLAINT:
OR,
NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

VOL. II.

B

PREFACE.

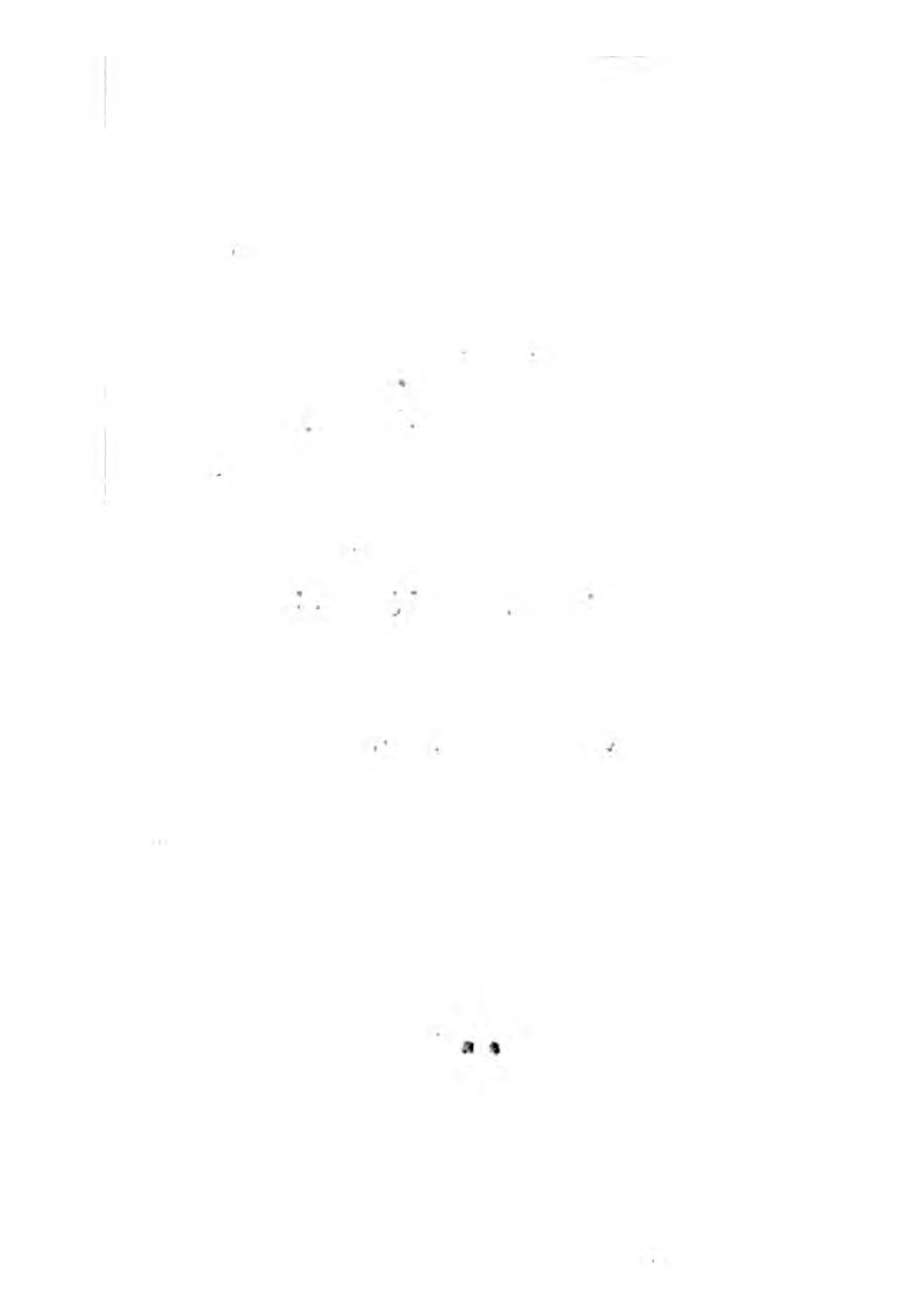


THE
COMPLAINT:
OR,
NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

VOL. 7

4

PREFACE.



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B

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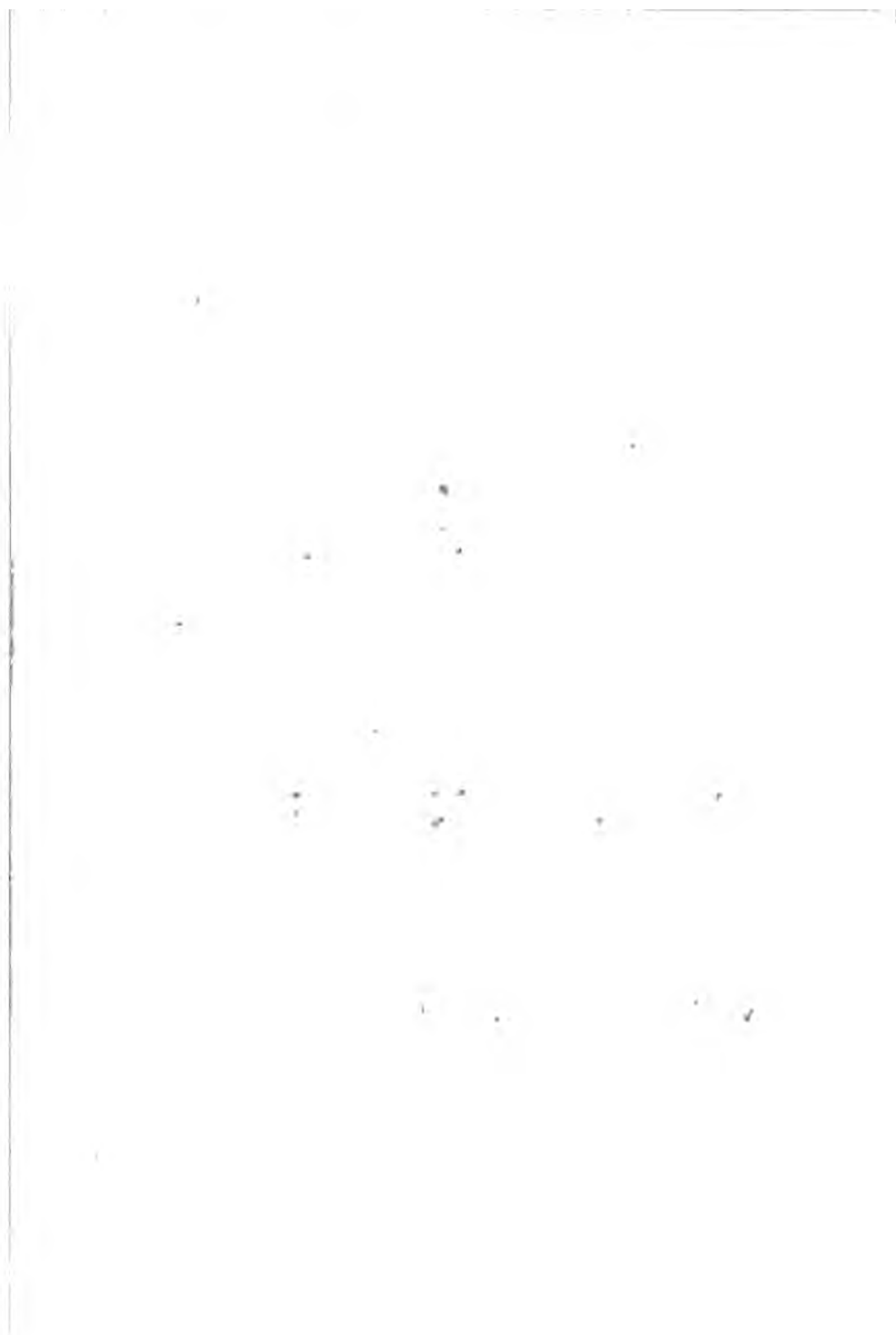


THE
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PREFACE.



THE
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PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

AS the occasion of this Poem was *real*, not *fictitious*; so the method pursued in it, was rather *imposed*, by what spontaneously arose in the author's mind on that occasion, than *meditated* or *designed*. Which will appear very probable from the nature of it. For it differs from the common mode of Poetry, which is, from long narrations to draw short morals. Here, on the contrary, the narrative is short, and the morality arising from it makes the bulk of the Poem. The reason of it is, That the facts mentioned did naturally pour these moral reflections on the thought of the writer.

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT THE FIRST.

ON

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR ONSLOW,
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TIR'D Nature's sweet restorer, balmy *Sleep!*
 He, like the world, his ready visit pays
 Where Fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes;
 Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
 And lights on lids unfullied with a tear. 5
 From short (as usual) and disturb'd repose,
 I wake: How happy they, who wake no more!
 Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.
 I wake, emerging from a sea of dreams
 Tumultuous; where my wreck'd desponding thought, 10
 From wave to wave of *fancied* misery,

At random drove, her helm of reason lost.
 Though now restor'd, 'tis only change of pain,
 (A bitter change!) severer for severe.
 The *Day* too short for my distress; and *Night*, 15
 Ev'n in the *zenith* of her dark domain,
 Is sunthine to the colour of my fate.

Night, fable goddess! from her *ebon* throne,
 In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
 Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumbering world. 20
 Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound!
 Nor eye, nor listening ear, an object finds;
 Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the general pulse
 Of life stood still, and nature made a pause;
 An awful pause! prophetic of her end. 25
 And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd;
Fate! drop the curtain; I can lose no more.

Silence and *Darkness!* solemn sisters! twins
 From ancient *Night*, who nurse the tender thought!
 To *Reason*, and on *Reason* build *Resolve*, 30
 (That column of true majesty in man)
 Assist me: I will thank you in the grave;
 The grave, your kingdom: *There* this frame shall fall
 A victim sacred to your dreary shrine.
 But what are ye?— 35

Thou, who didst put to flight
 Primæval *Silence*, when the morning stars,
 Exulting, shouted o'er the rising ball;
 O Thou, whose word from solid *darkness* struck
 That spark, the sun; strike wisdom from my soul; 40
 My

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT I. 5

My soul, which flies to Thee, her trust, her treasure,
As misers to their gold, while others rest.

Through this opaque of *Nature*, and of *Soul*,
This double night, transmit one pitying ray,
To lighten, and to cheer. O lead my mind, 45
(A mind that fain would wander from its woe)
Lead it through various scenes of *Life* and *Death*;
And from each scene, the noblest truths inspire.
Nor less inspire my *Conduct*, than my *Song*;
Teach my best reason, reason; my best will 50
Teach rectitude; and fix my firm resolve
Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrear:
Nor let the phial of thy vengeance, pour'd
On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.

The bell strikes *One*. We take no note of time 55
But from its loss. To give it then a tongue,
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
It is the *knell* of my departed hours:
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood. 60
It is the *signal* that demands dispatch:
How much is to be done? My hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—On what? a fathomless abyss;
A dread eternity! how surely *mine*! 65
And can eternity belong to me,
Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour?

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
How passing wonder He, who made him such! 70

Who centred in our make such strange extremes !

From different natures marvelously mixt,

Connexion exquisite of distant worlds !

Distinguish'd *link* in Being's endless chain !

Midway from *Nothing* to the *Deity* !

75

A beam ethereal, fully'd, and absorpt !

Though fully'd and dishonour'd, still divine !

Dim miniature of greatness absolute !

An heir of glory ! a frail child of dust !

Helpless immortal ! insect *infinite* !

80

A worm ! a god !—I tremble at myself,

And in myself am lost ! at home a stranger,

Thought wanders up and down, surpriz'd, aghast,

And wondering at her *own* : How reason reels !

O what a miracle to man is man,

85

Triumphantly distress'd ! what joy, what dread !

Alternately transported, and alarm'd !

What can preserve my life ! or what destroy !

An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave ;

Legions of angels can't confine me there.

90

'Tis past conjecture ; all things rise in proof :

While o'er my limbs *sleep's* soft dominion spread,

What though my soul fantastic measures trod

O'er fairy fields ; or mourn'd along the gloom

Of pathless woods ; or, down the craggy steep

95

Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool ;

Or scal'd the cliff ; or danc'd on hollow winds,

With antic shapes, wild natives of the brain ?

Her ceaseless flight, though devious, speaks her nature

Of subtler essence than the trodden clod ;

100

Active

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT I. 7

Active, aërial, towering, unconfin'd,
 Unfetter'd with her gross companions fall.
 Ev'n silent night proclaims my soul *immortal*:
 Ev'n silent night proclaims eternal day.
 For human weal, heaven husbands all events; 105
 Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.

Why then *their* loss deplore, that are not lost?
 Why wanders wretched thought their tombs around,
 In infidel distress? Are *Angels* there?
 Slumbers, rak'd up in dust, ethereal fire? 110

They live! they greatly live a life on earth
 Unkindled, unconceiv'd; and from an eye
 Of tenderness let heavenly pity fall
 On me, more justly number'd with the dead.

This is the desert, *this* the solitude: 115
 How populous, how vital, is the grave!
This is creation's melancholy vault,
 The vale funereal, the sad *cypress* gloom;
 The land of apparitions, empty shades!
 All, all on earth, is *Shadow*, all beyond 120
 Is *Substance*; the reverse is folly's *creed*:
 How solid all, where change shall be no more!

This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
 The twilight of our day, the vestibule;
Life's theatre as yet is shut, and death, 125
 Strong death, alone can heave the massy bar,
 This gross impediment of clay remove,
 And make us *embryos* of existence free,
 From *real* life, but little more remote
 Is *he*, not yet a candidate for light, 130

The *future* embryo, slumbering in his fire.
 Embryos we must be, till we burst the shell,
 Yon ambient azure shell, and spring to life,
 The life of gods, O transport! and of man.

Yet man, fool man! *here* buries all his thoughts; 135
 Inters celestial hopes without one sigh.

Prisoner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,
Here pinions all his wishes; wing'd by heaven
 To fly at infinite; and reach it there,

Where *seraphs* gather immortality, 140

On life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God.

What golden joys ambrosial clustering glow,
 In His full beam, and ripen for the just,
 Where momentary ages are no more!

Where time, and pain, and chance, and death expire! 145

And is it in the flight of threescore years,
 To push eternity from human thought,
 And smother souls immortal in the dust?

A soul immortal, spending all her fires,
 Wasting her strength in strenuous idleness, 150

Thrown into tumult, raptur'd or alarm'd,
 At ought this scene can threaten or indulge,

Resembles *ocean* into tempest wrought,

To waft a feather, or to drown a fly.

Where falls this censure? It o'erwhelms myself; 155

How was my heart incrust'd by the world!

O how self-fetter'd was my groveling soul!

How, like a worm, was I wrapt round and round

In silken thought, which reptile *Fancy* spun,

Till darken'd *Reason* lay quite clouded o'er 160

With

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT I. 9

With soft conceit of endless comfort *here*,
 Nor yet put forth her wings to reach the skies !
 Night-visions may befriend (as sung above) :
 Our *waking* dreams are fatal. How I dreamt
 Of things impossible ! (Could sleep do more ?) 165
 Of joys perpetual in perpetual change !
 Of stable pleasures on the tossing wave !
 Eternal sunshine in the storms of life !
 How richly were my noon-tide trances hung
 With gorgeous tapestries of pictur'd joys ! 170
 Joy behind joy, in endless perspective !
 Till at death's toll, whose restless iron tongue
 Calls daily for his millions at a meal,
 Starting I woke, and found myself undone.
 Where now my phrenzy's pompous furniture ? 175
 The *cobweb'd* cottage, with its ragged wall
 Of mouldering mud, is *royalty* to me !
 The *spider's* most attenuated thread
 Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie
 On earthly bliss ; it breaks at every breeze. 180
 O ye blest scenes of permanent delight !
 Full, above measure ! lasting, beyond bound !
 A *perpetuity* of bliss is bliss.
 Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
 That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy, 185
 And quite unparadise the realms of light.
 Safe are you lodg'd above these rolling spheres ;
 The baleful influence of whose giddy dance
 Sheds sad vicissitude on all beneath.
Mere teems with revolutions every hour ; 190
 And

And rarely for the better ; or the *best*,
 More mortal than the *common* births of fate.
 Each *moment* has its sickle, emulous
 Of *Time's* enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
 Strikes *empires* from the root ; each *moment* plays 295
 His little weapon in the narrower sphere
 Of sweet *domestic* comfort, and cuts down
 The fairest bloom of sublunary blifs.

Blifs ! sublunary blifs !—proud words, and vain !
 Implicit treason to divine decree ! 200

A bold invasion of the rights of heaven !
 I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air.
 O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace !
 What darts of agony had mis'd my heart !

Death ! great proprietor of all ! tis thine 205
 To tread out empire, and to quench the stars.

The sun himself by thy permission shines ;
 And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.
 Amid such mighty plunder, why exhaust
 Thy *partial* quiver on a mark so mean ? 210

Why thy *peculiar* rancour wreak'd on me ?

Insatiate archer ! could not *one* suffice ?

Thy shaft flew *thrice* ; and *thrice* my peace was slain ;
 And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

O Cynthia ! why so pale ? Dost thou lament 215

Thy wretched neighbour ? Grieve to see thy wheel
 Of ceaseless change outwhirl'd in human life ?

How wanes my *borrow'd* blifs ! from *fortunes* smile,
 Precarious courtesy ! not *virtue's* sure,

Self-given, *solar* ray of sound delight. 220

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT I. 11

In every vary'd posture, place, and hour,
 How widow'd every thought of every joy!
 Thought, busy thought! too busy for my peace!
 Through the dark postern of time long elaps'd,
 Led softly, by the stillness of the night, 225
 Led, like a murderer, (and such it proves!)
 Strays (wretched rover!) o'er the pleasing *past*;
 In quest of wretchedness pervesely strays;
 And finds all desert *now*; and meets the ghosts
 Of my departed joys; a numerous train! 230
 I rue the riches of my former fate;
 Sweet comfort's blasted clusters I lament;
 I tremble at the blessings once so dear;
 And every pleasure pains me to the heart.

Yet why *complain*? or why complain for one? 235
 Hangs out the sun his lustre but for me,
 The *single* man? Are angels all beside?
 I mourn for millions: 'Tis the common lot;
 In *this* shape, or in *that*, has fate entail'd
 The mother's throes on all of woman born, 240
 Not more the children, than sure heirs, of *pain*.

War, Famine, Pest, Volcano, Storm, and Fire,
 Intestine broils, *Oppression*, with her heart
 Wrapt up in triple brags, besiege mankind.
 God's image disinherited of day, 245
Here, plung'd in mines, forgets a sun was made.
There, beings deathless as their haughty lord,
 Are hammer'd to the galling oar for life;
 And plow the winter's wave, and reap despair.
Some, for hard masters, broken under arms, 250

In

In battle lopt away, with half their limbs,
 Beg bitter bread through realms their valour fav'd,
 If so the tyrant, or his minion, doom.
Want, and incurable *disease*, (fell pair!)
 On hopeless multitudes remorseless seize 255
 At once; and make a refuge of the grave.
 How groaning *hospitals* eject their dead!
 What numbers groan for sad admission there!
 What numbers, once in *fortune's* lap high-fed,
 Solicit the cold hand of charity! 260
 To shock us more, solicit it in vain!
 Ye silken sons of pleasure! since in pains
 You rue more modish visits, visit *here*,
 And breathe from your debauch: *give*, and reduce
Surfeit's dominion o'er you: but so great 265
 Your impudence, you blush at what is right.
 Happy! did sorrow seize on *such* alone.
 Not *prudence* can defend, or *virtue* save;
 Disease invades the chastest temperance;
 And punishment the guiltless; and alarm, 270
 Through thickest shades, pursues the fond of peace.
 Man's caution often into danger turns;
 And his guard, falling, crushes him to death.
 Not *happiness* itself makes good her name;
 Our very wishes give us not our wish. 275
 How distant oft the thing we doat on most,
 From that for which we doat, *felicity*!
 The *smoothest* course of nature has its pains;
 And *truest* friends, through error, wound our rest.
 Without misfortune, what calamities! 280
 And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT I. 13

And what hostilities, without a foe !
 Nor are foes wanting to the best on earth.
 But endless is the list of human ills,
 And sighs might sooner fail, than cause to sigh.

A part how small of the terraqueous globe 285
 Is tenanted by man ! the rest a *waste*,
 Rocks, deserts, frozen seas, and burning sands :
 Wild haunts of monsters, poisons, stings, and death.
 Such is earth's melancholy map ! but, far
 More sad ! this earth is a true map of *man*. 290

So bounded are its haughty lord's *delights*
 To *woe's* wide empire ; where deep *troubles* toss,
 Loud *sorrows* howl, invenom'd *passions* bite,
 Ravenous *calamities* our vitals seize,
 And threatening *fate* wide opens to devour. 295

What then am I, who sorrow for *myself* ?
 In age, in infancy, from others' aid
 Is all our hope ; to teach us to be *kind*.
That, nature's *first*, *last* lesson to mankind ;
 The selfish heart deserves the pain it feels. 300

More generous sorrow, while it sinks, exalts ;
 And conscious virtue mitigates the pang.
 Nor virtue, more than *prudence*, bids me give
 Swoln thought a *second* channel ; who divide,
 They weaken too, the torrent of their grief. 305

Take then, O *World* ! thy much-indebted tear :
 How sad a sight is human happiness,
 To those whose thought can pierce beyond an hour !
 O thou ! whate'er thou art, whose heart exults !
 Wouldst thou I should congratulate thy fate ? 310

I know

I know thou wouldst; thy pride demands it from me.
 Let thy pride pardon, what thy nature needs,
 The salutary censure of a friend.

Thou happy *wretch*! by blindness thou art blest;
 By dotage dandled to perpetual smiles. 315

Know, *smiler*! at thy peril art thou pleas'd;
 Thy pleasure is the promise of thy pain.

Misfortune, like a creditor severe,
 But rises in demand for her delay;
 She makes a scourge of past prosperity, 320
 To sting thee more, and double thy distress.

Lorenzo, fortune makes her court to thee,
 Thy fond heart dances, while the *Syren* sings.
 Dear is thy welfare; think me not unkind;
 I would not damp, but to secure thy joys. 325

Think not that *fear* is sacred to the storm:
 Stand on thy guard against the *smiles* of fate.
 Is heaven tremendous in its frowns? Most sure;
 And in its favours formidable too:

Its favours here are trials, not rewards; 330
 A call to duty, not discharge from care;
 And should alarm us, full as much as woes;
 Awake us to their *cause* and *consequence*;

And make us tremble, weigh'd with our desert;
 Awe nature's tumult, and chastise her joys, 335
 Lest, while we clasp, we kill them; nay, invert
 To worse than *simple* misery, their charms.

Revolted joys, like foes in civil war,
 Like bosom friendships to resentment sour'd,
 With rage envenom'd rise against our peace. 340

Beware

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT I. 15

Beware what earth calls happiness; beware
 All joys, but joys that never can expire.
 Who builds on less than an *immortal* base,
 Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death.

Mine dy'd with thee, Philander! thy last sigh 345
 Dissolv'd the charm; the disenchant'd earth
 Lost all her lustre. Where her glittering towers?
 Her golden mountains, where? all darken'd down
 To naked waste; a dreary vale of tears;
 The great magician's dead! Thou poor, pale piece 350
 Of out-cast earth, in darkness! what a change
 From yesterday! Thy darling hope so near,
 (Long-labour'd prize!) O how ambition flush'd
 Thy glowing cheek! Ambition truly great,
 Of virtuous praise. *Death's* subtle seed within 355
 (Sly, treacherous miner!) working in the dark,
 Smil'd at thy well-concerted scheme, and beckon'd
 The worm to riot on that rose so red,
 Unfaded ere it fell; one moment's prey!

Man's foresight is *conditionally* wise; 360
 Lorenzo! wisdom into folly turns
 Oft, the first instant, its idea fair
 To labouring thought is born. How dim our eye!
 The *present* moment terminates our sight;
 Clouds, thick as those on doomsday, drown the *next*; 365
 We penetrate, we prophecy in vain.
Time is dealt out by particles; and each,
 Ere mingled with the streaming sands of life,
 By Fate's inviolable oath is sworn
 Deep silence, "Where eternity begins." 370

By nature's law, what may be, may be *now* ;
 There 's no prerogative in human hours.
 In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,
 Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn ?
 Where is to-morrow ? In another world. 375
 For numbers this is certain ; the reverse
 Is sure to none ; and yet on this *perhaps*,
 This *peradventure*, infamous for lies,
 As on a rock of adamant, we build
 Our mountain hopes ; spin out eternal schemes, 380
 As we the fatal sisters could out-spin,
 And, big with life's futurities, expire.
 Not ev'n Philander had bespoke his shroud :
 Nor had he cause ; a warning was deny'd :
 How many fall as sudden, not as safe ! 385
 As sudden, though for years admonish'd home.
 Of human ills the last extreme beware,
 Beware, Lorenzo ! a *slow sudden* death.
 How dreadful that deliberate surprize !
 Be wise to-day ; 'tis madness to defer ; 390
 Next day the fatal precedent will plead ;
 Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time ;
 Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
 And to the mercies of a moment leaves 395
 The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
 If not so frequent, would not This be strange ?
 That 'tis so frequent, *This* is stranger still.
 Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears
 The palm, " That all men are about to live," 400
 All

For ever on the brink of being born.
 All pay themselves the compliment to think
 They one day shall not drivel : and their pride
 On this reversion takes up ready praise ;
 At least, their own ; their *future* selves applaud ; 405
 How excellent that life they *ne'er* will lead !
 Time lodg'd in their *own* hands is *folly's* vails ;
 That lodg'd in *fate's*, to *wisdom* they consign ;
 The thing they can't but *purpose*, they *postpone* ;
 'Tis not in *folly*, not to scorn a fool ; 410
 And scarce in human *wisdom* to do more.
 All promise is poor dilatory man,
 And that through every stage : when young, indeed,
 In full content we, sometimes, nobly rest,
 Unanxious for *ourselves* ; and only wish, 415
 As duteous sons, our *fathers* were more wise.
 At *thirty* man *suspects* himself a fool ;
Knows it at *forty*, and reforms his plan ;
 At *fifty* chides his infamous delay,
 Pushes his prudent purpose to *resolve* ; 420
 In all the magnanimity of thought
 Resolves ; and re-resolves ; then dies the same.

And why ? Because he thinks himself immortal.
 All men think all men mortal, but Themselves ;
 Themselves, when some alarming shock of fate 425
 Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread ;
 But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
 Soon close ; where, past the shaft, no trace is found.
 As from the *wing* no scar the sky retains ;
 The parted wave no furrow from the *keel* ; 430

So dies in human hearts the thoughts of death.
 Ev'n with the tender tear which nature sheds
 O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave.
 Can I forget Philander? That were strange!
 O my full heart!—But should I give it vent, 435
 The longest night, though longer far, would fail,
 And the *lark* listen to my *midnight* song.

The spritely *lark's* shrill matin wakes the morn;
Grief's sharpest thorn hard pressing on my breast,
 I strive, with wakeful melody, to cheer 440
 The fullen gloom, sweet Philomel! like Thee,
 And call the stars to listen: every star
 Is deaf to mine, enamour'd of thy lay.
 Yet be not vain; there are, who thine excel,
 And charm through distant ages: wrapt in shade, 445
 Prisoner of darkness! to the silent *hours*,
 How often I repeat their rage divine,
 To lull my griefs, and steal my heart from woe!
 I roll their raptures, but not catch their fire.
 Dark, though not blind, like thee, Mæonides! 450
 Or, Milton! thee; ah, could I reach your strain!
 Or *His*, who made Mæonides our *Own*.
Man too He sung: *immortal* man I sing;
 Oft bursts my song beyond the bounds of life;
 What, *now*, but immortality can please? 455
 O had *He* press'd his theme, pursued the track,
 Which opens out of darkness into day!
 O had he, mounted on his wing of fire,
 Soar'd where I sink, and sung *immortal* man!
 How had it blest mankind, and rescued me! 460

NIGHT

NIGHT THE SECOND.

O N

TIME, DEATH, AND FRIENDSHIP.

T O T H E

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF WILMINGTON.

"*WHEN the Cock crew, he wept*"—smote by that
eye,

Which looks on me, on all: That power, who bids
This midnight centinel, with clarion shrill,
 Emblem of that which shall awake the dead,
 Rouse souls from slumber, into thoughts of *heaven*. 5
 Shall I too weep? Where then is fortitude?
 And, fortitude abandon'd, where is man?
 I know the terms on which he sees the light;
 He that is born, is lifted; life is war;
 Eternal war with woe. Who bears it best, 10
 Deserves it least.—On *other* themes I'll dwell.
 Lorenzo! let me turn *my* thoughts on thee,
 And *thine*, on themes may profit; profit there,
 Where most thy need. Themes, too, the genuine growth
 Of dear Philander's dust. He *thus*, though dead, 15
 May still befriend—What themes? *Time's wondrous*
price,

C 2

Death,

Death, Friendship, and Philander's final scene.
 So could I touch these themes, as might obtain
 Thine ear, nor leave thy heart quite disengag'd,
 The good deed would delight me; half impress
 On my dark cloud an Iris; and from grief
 Call glory—Dost thou mourn Philander's fate?
 I know thou say'st it: Says thy *life* the same?
 He mourns the dead, who lives as they desire.
 Where is that thirst, that avarice of Time,
 (O glorious avarice!) thought of death inspires,
 As rumour'd robberies endear our gold?
 O *Time!* than gold more sacred; more a load
 Than lead, to fools; and fools *reputed* wise.
 What *moment* granted man without account?
 What *years* are squander'd, *wisdom's* debt unpaid!
 Our wealth in days, all due to *that* discharge.
 Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he 's at the door,
 Insidious *Death!* should his strong hand arrest,
 No composition sets the prisoner free.
Eternity's inexorable chain
 Fast binds; and vengeance claims the full arrear.
 How late I shudder'd on the brink! how late
 Life call'd for her last refuge in despair!
 That *Time* is mine, O Mead! to thee I owe;
 Fain would I pay thee with *Eternity*.
 But ill my genius answers my desire;
 My sickly song is mortal, past thy cure.
 Accept the will;—*that* dies not with my strain.
 For what calls *thy* disease, Lorenzo? not
 For *Esculapian*, but for *moral* aid.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 21

Thou think'st it folly to be wise too soon.
Youth is not rich in *Time*, it may be poor;
 Part with it as with money, sparing; pay
 No moment, but in purchase of its worth; 50
 And what its worth, ask death-beds; they can tell.
 Part with it as with life, reluctant; big
 With holy hope of nobler time to come;
 Time higher aim'd, still nearer the great *mark*
 Of men and angels; virtue more divine. 55

Is this our *duty*, *wisdom*, *glory*, *gain*?
 (*These* heaven benign in vital union binds)
 And sport we like the natives of the bough,
 When vernal suns inspire? *Amusement* reigns
 Man's great demand: To trifle, is to live: 60
 And is it then a trifle, too, to die?

Thou say'st I *preach*, Lorenzo, 'tis confess.
 What if, for once, I preach thee quite *awake*?
 Who wants *amusement* in the flame of battle?
 Is it not treason, to the soul *immortal*, 65
 Her foes in arms, eternity the prize?
 Will toys amuse, when medicines cannot cure?
 When spirits ebb, when life's enchanting scenes
 Their lustre lose, and lessen in our sight,
 As lands, and cities with their glittering spires, 70
 To the poor shatter'd bark, by sudden storm
 Thrown off to sea, and soon to perish there?
 Will toys amuse? No: Thrones will then be toys,
 And earth and skies seem dust upon the scale.

Redeem we time?—Its loss we dearly buy. 75
 What pleads Lorenzo for his high-priz'd sports?

He pleads *Time's* numerous *blanks*; he loudly pleads
 The straw-like *trifles* on life's common stream.
 From whom those *blanks* and *trifles*, but from *thee*.
 No *blank*, no *trifle*, nature made, or meant.
 Virtue, or *propos'd* virtue, still be thine;
This cancels thy complaint at once, *This* leaves
 In *act* no *trifle*, and no *blank* in time.
This greatens, fills, immortalizes all;
This, the blest art of turning all to gold;
This, the good heart's prerogative to raise
 A royal tribute from the poorest hours;
 Immense revenue! every moment *pays*.
 If nothing more than *purpose* in thy power;
 Thy purpose firm, is equal to the deed:
 Who does the best his circumstance allows,
 Does well, acts nobly; angels could no more.
 Our *outward* act indeed admits restraint;
 'Tis not in things o'er *thought* to domineer;
 Guard well thy thought; our thoughts are heard
 heaven.

On all important *Time*, through every age,
 Though much, and warm, the wise have urg'd; the man
 Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour.
 "I've lost a day"—the prince who nobly cry'd
 Had been an emperor without his crown;
 Of Rome, say, rather, lord of human race:
 He spoke, as if deputed by mankind.
 So should all speak: So *reason* speaks in all:
 From the soft whispers of that God in man,
 Why fly to folly, why to phrenzy fly,

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 23

For rescue from the *blessing* we possess ?
 Time the supreme !— *Time* is Eternity ;
 Pregnant with all eternity can give ;
 Pregnant with all, that makes archangels smile.
 Who murders time, he crushes in the birth 110
 A power ethereal, only *not* ador'd.
 Ah ! how unjust to nature and himself,
 Is thoughtless, thankless, inconsistent man !
 Like children babbling nonsense in their sports,
 We censure nature for a span too short ; 115
 That span too short, we tax as tedious too ;
 Torture invention, all expedients tire,
 To lash the lingering moments into speed,
 And whirl us (happy riddance !) from ourselves.
 Art , brainless *Art* ! our furious charioteer 120
 (For *Nature's* voice unfitt'd would recall)
 Drives headlong towards the precipice of death ;
 Death, most our dread ; death *thus* more dreadful made :
 O what a riddle of absurdity !
 Leisure is pain ; takes off our chariot wheels ; 125
 How heavily we drag the load of life !
 Blest leisure is our curse ; like that of Cain,
 It makes us wander ; wander earth around
 To fly that tyrant, thought. As Atlas groan'd
 The world beneath, we groan beneath an hour. 130
 We cry for mercy to the next amusement ;
 The next amusement mortgages our fields ;
 Slight inconvenience ! prisons hardly frown,
 From hateful *Time* if prisons set us free.
 Yet when *Death* kindly tenders us relief, 135

We call him cruel ; years to moments shrink,
 Ages to years. The telescope is turn'd.
 To man's false optics (from his folly false)
Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
 And seems to creep, decrepit with his age ; 140
 Behold him, when past by ; what then is seen,
 But his broad pinions swifter than the winds ?
 And all mankind, in contradiction strong,
 Rueful, aghast ! cry out on his career.

Leave to thy foes these errors, and these ills ; 145
 To nature just, their *Cause* and *Cure* explore.
 Not short heaven's bounty, boundless our expence ;
 No niggard, nature ; men are prodigals.
 We *waste*, not *use* our time ; we breathe, not live.
 Time *wasted* is existence, *us'd* is life. 150
 And *bare existence*, man, to *live* ordain'd,
 Wrings, and oppresses with enormous weight.
 And why ? since *Time* was given for use, not waste,
 Injoin'd to fly ; with tempest, tide, and stars,
 To keep his speed, nor ever wait for man ; 155
Time's use was doom'd a pleasure : waste, a pain ;
 That man might *feel* his error, if unseen :
 And, feeling, fly to labour for his cure ;
 Not, blundering, split on idleness for ease.
 Life's cares are comforts ; such by heaven design'd ; 160
 He that has none, must make them, or be wretched.
 Cares are employments, and without employ
 The soul is on a rack ; the rack of *rest*,
 To souls most adverse ; action all their joy.

Here

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 25

Here then, the riddle, mark'd above, unfolds; 165
 Then time turns torment, when man turns a fool.
 We rave, we wrestle, with *Great Nature's Plan*;
 We thwart the Deity; and 'tis decreed,
 Who thwart his will, shall contradict their own.
 Hence our unnatural quarrels with ourselves; 170
 Our thoughts at enmity; our bosom-broil;
 We push *Time* from us, and we wish him back;
 Lavish of lustrums, and yet fond of life;
Life we think long, and short; *Death* seek, and shun:
 Body and soul, like peevish man and wife, 175
 United jar, and yet are loth to part.

Oh the dark days of vanity! while here,
 How tasteless! and how terrible, when gone!
 Gone! they ne'er go; when past, they haunt us still;
 The spirit walks of every day deceas'd; 180
 And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns.
 Nor death, nor life delight us. If time *past*,
 And time *possess*, both pain us, what can please?
 That which the Deity to please ordain'd,
 Time *us'd*. The man who consecrates his hours 185
 By vigorous effort, and an honest aim,
 At once he draws the sting of life and death;
 He *walks with Nature*; and her paths are peace.

Our error's cause and cure are seen: See next
 Time's *Nature, Origin, Importance, Speed*; 190
 And thy great *Gain* from urging his career.—
 All-sensual man, because untouch'd, unseen,
 He looks on *Time* as nothing. Nothing else
 Is truly man's; 'tis fortune's—Time 's a god.

Hast *thou* ne'er heard of *Time's* omnipotence? 195
For, or *against*, what wonders he can do!
 And *will*: To stand blank *neuter* he disdains.
 Not on *those terms* was *Time* (heaven's stranger!) sent
 On his important embassy to man.
 Lorenzo! no: On the long-destin'd hour, 200
 From everlasting ages growing ripe,
 That memorable hour of wondrous birth,
 When the Dread Sire, on emanation bent,
 And big with nature, rising in his might,
 Call'd forth creation (for then *Time* was born), 205
 By Godhead streaming through a thousand worlds;
 Not on *those terms*, from the great days of heaven,
 From old eternity's mysterious orb,
 Was *Time* cut off, and cast beneath the skies;
 The skies, which watch him in his new abode, 210
 Measuring his motions by revolving spheres;
 That horologe machinery divine.
 Hours, days, and months, and years, his children, play,
 Like numerous wings around him, as he flies:
 Or, rather, as unequal plumes, they shape 215
 His ample pinions, swift as darted flame,
 To gain his goal, to reach his antient rest,
 And join anew *Eternity* his fire;
 In his *immutability* to nest,
 When worlds, that count his circles *now*, unhing'd 220
 (Fate the loud signal sounding) headlong rush
 To *timeless* night and chaos, whence they rose.
 Why spur the speedy? Why with levities
 New wing thy short, short day's too rapid flight?

Know'ft

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 27

Know'st thou, or what thou dost, or what is done? 225
 Man flies from *Time*, and *Time* from man; too soon
 In sad divorce this double flight must end:
 And then, where are we? where, Lorenzo! then
 Thy sports? thy pomps?—I grant thee, in a state
 Not unambitious; in the *ruffled* shroud, 230
 Thy Parian tomb's *triumphant arch* beneath.
 Has *Death* his fopperies? Then well may *Life*
 Put on her plume, and in her rainbow shine.
 Ye *well-array'd*! ye lilies of our land!
 Ye lilies *male*! who neither toil, nor spin, 235
 (As sister lilies *might*) if not so wise
 As Solomon, more sumptuous to the sight!
 Ye *delicate*! who nothing can support,
 Yourselves most insupportable! for whom
 The winter rose-must blow, the sun put on 240
 A brighter beam in Leo; filky-soft
 Favonius breathe still softer, or be chid;
 And other worlds send odours, sauce, and song,
 And robes, and notions, fram'd in foreign looms!
 O ye Lorenzos of our age! who deem 245
 One moment unamus'd, a misery
 Not made for feeble man! who call aloud
 For every bawble drivell'd o'er by sense;
 For rattles, and conceits of every cast,
 For change of follies, and relays of joy, 250
 To drag your patient through the tedious length
 Of a short winter's *day*—say, fages! say,
 Wit's oracles! say, dreamers of gay dreams!

How

How will you weather an *eternal night*,
Where such expedients fail? 1

O treacherous *Conscience*! while she seems to sleep
On *rose* and *myrtle*, lull'd with *fyren* song;
While she seems, nodding o'er her charge, to drop
On headlong *Appetite* the slacken'd rein,
And give us up to *licence*, unrecall'd, 2
Unmark'd;—see, from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes every fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills.

Not the gross *Act* alone employs her pen;
She reconnoitres *Fancy's* airy band, 2
A watchful foe! the formidable spy,
Listening, o'erhears the whispers of our camp:
Our dawning purposes of heart explores,
And steals our embryos of iniquity.

As all-rapacious usurers conceal 25
Their doom-day-book from all-consuming heirs;
Thus, with indulgence most severe, she treats
Us spendthrifts of inestimable *Time*;
Unnoted, notes each moment misapply'd;
In leaves more durable than leaves of brass 27
Writes our whole history; which *Death* shall read
In every pale delinquent's private ear;
And *Judgement* publish; publish to more worlds,
Than this; and endless age in groans resound.

Lorenzo, *such* that *Sleeper* in thy breast! 28
Such is her slumber; and her vengeance *such*
For slighted counsel; *such* thy future peace!
And think'st thou still thou canst be wise *too soon*?

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 29

But why on *Time* so lavish is my song?
 On this great *theme* kind *Nature* keeps a school, 285
 To teach her sons herself. Each night we die,
 Each morn are born anew: Each day, a life!
 And shall we kill each day? If *Trifling* kills;
 Sure *Vice* must butcher. O what heaps of slain
 Cry out for vengeance on us! *Time* destroy'd 290
 Is *Suicide*, where more than *Blood* is spilt.
 Time flies, death urges, knells call, heaven invites,
 Hell threatens: All exerts; in effort, all;
 More than creation labours!—labours *more*?
 And is there in creation what, amidst 295
 This tumult universal, wing'd dispatch,
 And ardent energy, supinely yawns?—
Man sleeps; and *Man* alone; and *Man*, whose fate,
 Fate irreversibile, intire, extreme,
 Endless, hair-hung, breeze-shaken, o'er the gulph 300
 A moment trembles; drops! and *Man*, for whom
 All else is in alarm! *Man*, the sole cause
 Of this surrounding storm! and yet he sleeps,
 As the storm rock'd to rest.—Throw *Years* away?
 Throw *Empires*, and be blameless. Moments seize; 305
 Heaven's on their wing: A moment we may wish,
 When worlds want wealth to buy. Bid *Day* stand still,
 Bid him drive back his car, and reimport
 The period past, re-give the given hour.
 Lorenzo, *more* than miracles we want; 310
 Lorenzo—O for yesterdays to come!
 Such is the language of the man *awake*;
 His ardour such, for what *oppresses* thee.

And

And is his ardour vain, Lorenzo? No;
 That *more* than miracle the gods indulge; 315
To-day is *Yesterday* return'd; return'd
 Full power'd to cancel, expiate, raise, adorn,
 And reinstate us on the Rock of peace.
 Let it not share its predecessor's fate;
 Nor, like its elder sisters, die a fool. 320
 Shall it evaporate in fume? fly off
 Fuliginous, and stain us deeper still?
 Shall we be poorer for the plenty pour'd?
 More wretched for the clemencies of heaven?
 Where shall I find *Him*? Angels! tell me where. 325
You know him: He is near you: Point him out:
 Shall I see glories beaming from his brow?
 Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?
 Your golden wings, *now* hovering o'er him, shed
 Protection; now, are waving in applause 330
 To that blest son of foresight! lord of fate!
 That awful independent on *To-morrow*!
 Whose *work is done*; who triumphs in the *Past*;
 Whose *Yesterdays* look backwards with a smile;
 Nor, like the Parthian, wound him as they fly; 335
 That common, but opprobrious lot! past hours,
 If not by guilt, yet wound us by their flight,
 If folly bounds our prospect by the grave,
 All feeling of futurity benumb'd;
 All god-like passion for eternal quench't; 340
 All relish of realities expir'd;
 Renounc'd all correspondence with the skies;
 Our freedom chain'd; quite wingless our desire;

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 31

In sense dark-prison'd all that ought to soar ;
 Prone to the centre ; crawling in the dust ; 345
 Dismounted every great and glorious aim ;
 Embruted every faculty divine ;
 Heart-bury'd in the rubbish of the world.
 The world, that gulph of souls, immortal souls,
 Souls elevate, angelic, wing'd with fire 350
 To reach the distant skies, and triumph there
 On thrones, which shall not mourn their masters chang'd ;
 Though we from *Earth* ; *Ethereal*, they that fell.
 Such veneration due, O man, to man.
 Who venerate themselves, the world despise. 355
 For what, gay friend ! is this *escutcheon'd* world,
 Which hangs out Death in one eternal night ;
 A night, that glooms us in the noon-tide ray,
 And wraps our thought, at banquets, in the shroud ?
 Life's little stage is a small eminence, 360
 Inch-high the grave above ; that home of man,
 Where dwells the multitude : We gaze around ;
 We read their monuments ; we sigh ; and while
 We sigh, we sink ; and *are* what we deplor'd ;
 Lamenting, or lamented, all our lot ! 365
 Is death at distance ? No : He has been on thee,
 And given sure earnest of his final blow.
 Those hours that lately smil'd, where are they now ?
 Pallid to thought, and ghastly ! drown'd, all drown'd
 In that great deep, which nothing dissembogues ! 370
 And, dying, they bequeath'd thee small renown.
 The rest are on the wing : How fleet their flight !
 Already has the fatal train took fire ;

A mo-

A moment, and the world 's blown up *to thee* ;
The 'sun is darkness, and the stars are dust. 375

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours ;
And ask them, what report they bore to heaven ;
And how they might have borne more welcome news.
Their answers form what men *Experience* call ;
If *Wisdom's* friend, her best ; if not, worst foe. 380

O reconcile them ! Kind *Experience* cries,
" There 's nothing here, but what as nothing weighs ;
" The more our joy, the more we know it vain ;
" And by success are tutor'd to despair."
Nor *is* it only thus, but *must* be so. 385

Who knows not this, though grey, is still a child.
Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire,
Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.

Art thou so moor'd thou canst not disengage,
Nor give thy thoughts a ply to future scenes ? 390

Since, by *Life's* passing breath, blown up from earth,
Light, as the summer's dust, we take in air
A moment's giddy flight, and fall again ;
Join the dull mass, increase the trodden soil,
And sleep, till earth herself shall be no more ; 395

Since *then* (as emmets, their small world o'erthrown)
We, fore amaz'd, from out earth's ruins crawl,
And rise to fate extreme of foul or fair,

As man's own choice (controuler of the skies !)
As man's despotic will, perhaps *one* hour, 400
(O how omnipotent is time !) decrees ;

Should not each *warning* give a strong alarm ?
Warning, far less than that of bosom torn

From

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 33

From bosom, bleeding o'er the sacred dead !
 Should not each *dial* strike us as we pass, 405
 Portentous, as the *written wall*, which struck,
 O'er midnight bowls, the proud Assyrian pale,
 Ere-while high-flusht with insolence and wine ?
 Like *that*, the dial speaks ; and points to thee,
 Lorenzo ! loth to break thy banquet up : 410
 " O man, thy kingdom is departing from thee ;
 " And, while it lasts, is emptier than my shade."
 Its silent language such : nor need'st thou call
 Thy *Magi*, to decypher what it means.
 Know, like the Median, fate is in thy walls : 415
 Dost ask, *How ? Whence ?* Belshazzar-like, amaz'd ?
 Man's make incloses the sure seeds of death ;
Life feeds the murderer : Ingrate ! he thrives
 On her own meal, and then his nurse devours.
 But here, Lorenzo, the delusion lies ; 420
 That *solar shadow*, as it measures life,
 It life resembles too : life speeds away
 From point to point, though seeming to stand still.
 The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth :
 Too subtle is the movement to be seen ; 425
 Yet soon man's hour is up, and we are gone.
Warnings point out our danger ; Gnomons, time :
 As *these* are useless when the sun is set :
 So *those*, but when more glorious *Reason* shines.
Reason should judge in all ; in reason's eye, 430
 That sedentary shadow travels hard.
 But such our gravitation to the wrong,
 So prone our hearts to whisper what we wish,

'Tis later with the wife than he's aware :
 A Wilmington goes slower than the sun : 435
 And all mankind mistake their time of day ;
 Ev'n age itself. Fresh hopes are hourly sown
 In furrow'd brows. To gentle life's descent
 We shut our eyes, and think it is a plain.
 We take fair days in winter, for the spring ; 440
 And turn our blessings into bane. Since oft
 Man must *compute* that age he cannot *feel*,
 He scarce believes he's older for his years.
 Thus, at life's latest eve, we keep in store
 One disappointment sure, to crown the rest ; 445
 The disappointment of a promis'd hour.

On *This*, or similar, Philander ! thou
 Whose mind was moral, as the preacher's tongue ;
 And strong, to wield all science, worth the name ;
 How often we talk'd down the summer's sun, 450
 And cool'd our passions by the breezy stream !
 How often thaw'd and shorten'd winter's eve,
 By conflict kind, that struck out latent truth,
 Best found, so sought ; to the *Recluse* more coy !
 Thoughts disentangle passing o'er the lip ; 455
 Clean runs the thread ; if not, 'tis thrown away,
 Or kept to tie up nonsense for a song ;
 Song, fashionably fruitless ; such as stains
 The *Fancy*, and unhallow'd *Passion* fires ;
 Chiming her faints to Cytherea's fane. 460

Know'st thou, Lorenzo ! what a friend contains ?
 As bees *mixt Nectar* draw from fragrant flowers,
 So men from Friendship, *Wisdom* and *Delight* ;

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 35

Twins ty'd by nature, if they part, they die.
Hast thou no friend to set thy mind abroad? 465

Good Sense will stagnate. Thoughts shut up want air,
And spoil, like bales unopen'd to the sun.
Had thought been all, sweet speech had been deny'd;
Speech, thought's canal! speech, thought's criterion too!
Thought in the mine, may come forth gold, or dross; 470
When coin'd in word, we know its *real* worth.

If sterling, store it for thy future use;
'Twill buy thee benefit; perhaps, renown.
Thought, too, deliver'd, is the more possess'd;
Teaching, we learn; and, giving, we retain 475
The births of intellect; when dumb, forgot.

Speech ventilates our intellectual fire;
Speech burnishes our mental magazine;
Brightens, for ornament; and whets, for use.
What numbers, sheath'd in erudition, lie, 480

Plung'd to the hilts in venerable tomes,
And rusted in; who might have borne an edge,
And play'd a sprightly beam, if born to speech;
If born blest heirs of half their mother's tongue!
'Tis thought's exchange, which, like th' alternate
push 485

Of waves conflicting, breaks the learned scum,
And defecates the student's standing pool.

In *Contemplation* is his proud resource?
'Tis poor, as proud, by *Converse* unsustain'd.
Rude thought runs wild in *Contemplation's* field; 490
Converse, the menage, breaks it to the bit
Of due restraint; and *emulation's* spur

Gives graceful energy, by rivals aw'd.
 'Tis converse qualifies for solitude;
 As exercise, for salutary rest. 495
 By that untutor'd, *Contemplation* raves;
 And *Nature's* fool, by *Wisdom* is undone.
Wisdom, though richer than Peruvian mines,
 And sweeter than the sweet ambrosial hive,
 What is she, but the means of *Happiness*? 500
 That unobtain'd, than folly more a fool;
 A melancholy fool, without her bells.
Friendship, the means of wisdom, richly gives
 The precious end, which makes our wisdom wise.
Nature, in zeal for human amity, 505
 Denies, or damps, an *undivided* joy.
 Joy is an import; joy is an exchange;
 Joy flies monopolists: it calls for *Two*;
 Rich fruit! heaven-planted! never pluckt by *One*.
 Needful auxiliars are our friends, to give 510
 To *social* man true relish of himself.
 Full on ourselves, descending in a line,
Pleasure's bright beam is feeble in delight:
 Delight intense is taken by rebound;
 Reverberated pleasures fire the breast. 515
 Celestial *Happiness*, when'er she stoops
 To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
 And one alone, to make her sweet amends
 For absent heaven—the bosom of a friend;
 Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft, 520
 Each other's pillow to repose divine.
 Beware the counterfeit; in *Passion's* flame

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 37

Hearts melt, but melt like ice, soon harder froze.
 True love strikes root in *Reason*; passion's foe :
Virtue alone entenders us for life : 525

I wrong her much—entenders us for ever :
 Of *Friendship's* fairest fruits, the fruit most fair
 Is *Virtue* kindling at a rival fire,
 And, *emulously*, rapid in her race.
 O the soft enmity ! endearing strife ! 530
 This carries friendship to her noon-tide point,
 And gives the rivet of eternity.

From *Friendship*, which outlives my former themes,
 Glorious survivor of old *Time* and *Death* !
 From Friendship, thus, that flower of heavenly seed ; 535
 The wise extract earth's most Hyblean bliss,
 Superior wisdom, crown'd with smiling joy.

But for whom blossoms this Elysiac flower ?
Abroad They find, who cherish it at *Home*.
 Lorenzo ! pardon what my love extorts, 540
 An honest love, and not afraid to frown.
 Though choice of follies fasten on the *Great*,
 None clings more obstinate than fancy fond
 That sacred friendship is their easy prey ;
 Caught by the wafture of a golden lure, 545
 Or fascination of a high-born smile.

Their smiles, the *Great*, and the *Coquet*, throw out
 For Others hearts, tenacious of their Own ;
 And we no less of ours, when *such* the bait.
 Ye fortune's cofferers ! Ye powers of wealth ! 550
 Can gold gain friendship ? Impudence of hope !
 As well mere man an angel might beget.

Love, and Love only, is the loan for love.
 Lorenzo! pride repress; nor hope to find
 A friend, but what has found a friend in Thee. 555
 All like the purchase; few the price will pay;
 And this makes friends such miracles below.
 What if (since daring on so nice a theme)
 I shew thee friendship Delicate, as Dear,
 Of tender violations apt to die? 560
Reserve will wound it; and *Distrust*, destroy.
 Deliberate in all things with thy friend.
 But since friends grow not thick on every bough,
 Nor every friend unrotten at the core;
 First, on thy friend, deliberate with Thyself; 565
 Pause, ponder, sift; not Eager in the choice,
 Nor Jealous of the chosen; Fixing, Fix;
 Judge before friendship, then confide till death.
 Well, for thy friend; but nobler far for Thee;
 How gallant danger for earth's highest prize! 570
 A friend is worth all hazards we can run.
 " Poor is the friendless master of a world:
 " A world in purchase for a friend is gain."
 So sung He (angels hear that angel sing!
 Angels from friendship gather half their joy) 575
 So sung Philander, as his friend went round
 In the rich *ichor*, in the generous blood
 Of Bacchus, purple god of joyous wit,
 A brow solute, and ever-laughing eye.
 He drank long health, and virtue, to his friend; 580
 His friend, who warm'd him more, who more inspir'd.
Friendship's the wine of life; but friendship *new*

(Not

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 39

(Not such was His) is neither Strong, nor Pure.
 O! for the bright complexion, cordial warmth,
 And elevating spirit, of a friend, 585
 For twenty summers ripening by my side;
 All feculence of falsehood long thrown down;
 All social virtues rising in his soul;
 As crystal clear; and smiling as they rise!
Here Nectar flows; it sparkles in our sight; 590
 Rich to the taste, and genuine from the heart
 High-flavour'd bliss for gods! on earth how rare!
 On earth how *lost*!—Philander is no more.

Think'ft thou the theme intoxicates my song?
 Am I too warm?—Too warm I cannot be. 595
 I lov'd him much; but now I love him more.
 Like birds, whose beauties languish, half-conceal'd,
 Till, mounted on the wing, their glossy plumes
 Expanded shine with azure, green, and gold;
 How blessings brighten as they take their flight! 600
 His flight Philander took; his upward flight,
 If ever soul ascended. Had he dropt,
 (That eagle genius!) O had he let fall
 One feather as he flew; I, then, had wrote,
 What friends might flatter; prudent foes forbear; 605
 Rivals scarce damn; and Zoilus reprieve.
 Yet what I can, I must: it were profane
 To quench a glory lighted at the skies,
 And cast in shadows his illustrious close.
 Strange! the theme most affecting, most sublime, 610
 Momentous most to man, should sleep un Sung!
 And yet it sleeps, by genius unawak'd,

Painim or *Christian*; to the blush of wit.
 Man's highest triumph! man's profoundest fall!
 The *Death-bed* of the just! is yet undrawn
 By mortal hand; it merits a Divine:
 Angels should paint it, angels ever *There*;
 There, on a post of honour, and of joy.

Dare I presume, then? but Philander bids;
 And glory tempts, and inclination calls—
 Yet am I struck; as struck the foul, beneath
 Aërial *Groves* impenetrable gloom;
 Or, in some mighty *Ruin's* solemn shade;
 Or, gazing by pale lamps on *high-born Dust*,
 In vaults; thin courts of poor unflatter'd kings;
 Or, at the midnight *Altar's* hallow'd flame.
 Is it religion to proceed? I pause—

And enter, aw'd, the temple of my theme.
 Is it his death-bed? No: it is his shrine:
 Behold him, there, just rising to a god.

The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
 Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
 Of *virtuous* life, quite in the verge of heaven.
 Fly, ye profane! If not, draw near with awe,
 Receive the blessing, and adore the chance,
 That threw in this *Bethesda* your disease;
 If unrestor'd by This, despair your cure.
 For, *Here*, resistless demonstration dwells;
 A death-bed's a detector of the heart.

Here tir'd *diffimulation* drops her masque,
 Through life's grimace, that mistress of the scene!
Here Real, and Apparent, are the Same.

You

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT II. 41

You see the *Man*; you see his hold on heaven;
 If found his virtue; as Philander's, found.
 Heaven waits not the last moment; owns her friends 645
 On this side death; and points them out to men,
 A lecture, silent, but of sovereign power!
 To vice, confusion; and to virtue, peace.

Whatever farce the boastful hero plays,
Virtue alone has majesty in death; 650
 And greater still, the more the tyrant frowns.
 Philander! he severely frown'd on thee.

"No warning given! Unceremonious fate!
 "A sudden rush from life's meridian joy!
 "A wrench from all we *love*! from all we *are*! 655
 "A restless bed of pain! a plunge opaque
 "Beyond conjecture! feeble *Nature's* dread!
 "Strong *Reason's* shudder at the dark unknown!
 "A sun extinguish'd! a just-opening grave!
 "And Oh! the last, last, what? (can words express? 660
 "Thought reach it?) the last—*Silence* of a friend!"

Where are those horrors, that amazement, where,
 This hideous group of ills, which singly shock,
 Demand from man?—I thought him man till *now*. 664

Through nature's wreck, through vanquish'd agonies,
 (Like the stars struggling through this midnight gloom)
 What gleams of joy! what more than human peace!

Where, the frail mortal? the poor abject worm?
 No, not in death, the *Mortal* to be found.
 His conduct is a legacy for All. 670

Richer than *Mammon's* for his single heir.
 His comforters he comforts; Great in ruin,

With

With unreluctant grandeur, *gives*, not *yields*
His soul sublime ; and closes with his fate.

How our hearts burnt within us at the scene ! 675

Whence this brave bound o'er limits fixt to man ?

His God sustains him in his final hour !

His final hour brings glory to his God !

Man's glory heaven vouchsafes to call her own.

We gaze, we weep ; mixt tears of grief and joy ! 680

Amazement strikes ! devotion bursts to flame !

Christians Adore ! and *Infidels* Believe.

As some tall tower, or lofty mountain's brow,
Detains the sun, illustrious from its height ;

While rising vapours, and descending shades, 685

With damps, and darkness, drown the spacious vale ;

Undamp't by doubt, undarken'd by despair,

Philander, thus, augustly rears his head,

At that black hour, which general horror sheds

On the low level of th' inglorious throng : 690

Sweet *Peace*, and heavenly *Hope*, and humble *Joy*,

Divinely beam on his exalted soul ;

Destruction gild, and crown him for the skies,

With incommunicable lustre, bright.

NIGHT THE THIRD.

N A R C I S S A.

T O

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF PORTLAND.

“ Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes.”

VIRG.

FROM *Dreams*, where thought in fancy's maze
runs mad,

To *Reason*, that heaven-lighted lamp in man,
Once more I wake; and at the destin'd hour,
Punctual as lovers to the moment sworn,
I keep my assignation with my woe. 5

O! lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
Lost to the noble fallies of the soul!
Who think it solitude, to be Alone.

Communion sweet! communion large and high!
Our *Reason*, *Guardian Angel*, and our *God!* 10

Then nearest These, when Others most remote;
And All, ere long, shall be remote, *but* These.

How dreadful, *Then*, to meet them all alone,
A stranger! unacknowledg'd! unapprov'd!

Now woo them; wed them; bind them to thy breast; 15
To win thy wish, creation has no more.

Or

Or if we wish a *fourth*, it is a Friend—
 But friends, how mortal, dangerous the desire !
 Take Phœbus to yourselves, ye basking bards !
 Inebriate at fair fortune's fountain-head ;
 And reeling through the wilderness of joy ;
 Where *Sense* runs savage, broke from *Reason's* chain
 And sings false peace, till smother'd by the pall.
 My fortune is unlike ; unlike my song ;
 Unlike the deity my song invokes.

I to *Day's* soft-ey'd sister pay my court,
 (Endymion's rival !) and her aid implore ;
 Now first implor'd in succour to the *Muse*.

Thou, who didst lately borrow * Cynthia's form,
 And modestly forego thine Own ! O Thou, 3
 Who didst thyself, at midnight hours, inspire !
 Say, why not Cynthia patroness of song ?
 As thou her crescent, she thy character
 Assumes ; still more a goddess by the change.

Are there demurring wits, who dare dispute 3
 This revolution in the world *inspir'd* ?
 Ye train Pierian ! to the *Lunar* sphere,
 In silent hour, address your ardent call
 For aid immortal ; less her brother's right.
 She, with the spheres harmonious, nightly leads 40
 The mazy dance, and hears their matchless strain,
 A strain for gods, deny'd to mortal ear.

Transmit it heard, thou silver queen of heaven !
 What title, or what name, endears thee most ?
 Cynthia ! Cyllené ! Phœbe !—or dost hear 45

With

* At the duke of Norfolk's masquerade.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 45

With higher gust, fair Portland of the skies !
 Is that the soft enchantment calls thee down,
 More powerful than of old Circean charm ?
 Come ; but from heavenly banquets with thee bring
 The soul of song, and whisper in my ear 50
 The theft divine ; or in propitious dreams
 (For dreams are Thine) transfuse it through the breast
 Of thy first votary—But not thy last ;
 If, like thy *Namesake*, thou art ever kind.

And kind thou wilt be ; kind on such a theme ; 55
 A theme so like thee, a quite *lunar* theme,
 Soft, modest, melancholy, female, fair !
 A theme that rose all pale, and told my soul,
 'Twas *Night* ; on her fond hopes perpetual night ;
 A night which struck a damp, a deadlier damp, 60
 Than that which smote me from Philander's tomb.
 Narcissa follows, ere his tomb is clos'd.

Woes cluster ; rare are *solitary* woes ;
 They love a train, they tread each other's heel ;
 Her death invades *his* mournful right, and claims 65
 The grief that started from my lids for Him :

Seizes the faithless, alienated tear,
 Or shares it, ere it falls. So frequent death,
 Sorrow he *more* than causes, he confounds ;
 For human sighs his rival strokes contend, 70
 And make distress, distraction. Oh Philander !

What was thy fate ? A double fate to me ;
 Portent, and pain ! a menace, and a blow !
 Like the black raven hovering o'er my peace,
 Not less a bird of omen, than of prey. 75

It

It call'd Narcissa long before her hour ;
 It call'd her tender soul, by break of blifs,
 From the first blossom, from the buds of joy ;
 Those few our noxious fate unblasted leaves
 In this inclement clime of human life. 80

Sweet harmonist ! and Beautiful as sweet !
 And Young as beautiful ! and Soft as young !
 And Gay as soft ! and Innocent as gay !
 And Happy (if aught Happy *here*) as good !
 For fortune fond had built her nest on high. 85

Like birds quite exquisite of note and plume,
 Transfixt by *fate* (who loves a lofty mark),
 How from the summit of the grove she fell,
 And left it unharmonious ! All its charms
 Extinguist in the wonders of her song ! 90

Her song still vibrates in my ravisht ear,
 Still melting there, and with voluptuous pain
 (O to forget her !) thrilling through my heart !

Song, Beauty, Youth, Love, Virtue, Joy ! this group
 Of bright ideas, flowers of paradise, 95

As yet unforfeit ! in one blaze we bind,
 Kneel, and present it to the skies ; as All
 We guess of heaven : and *these* were all her own.
 And she was mine ; and I was—*was* !—most blest—
 Gay title of the deepest misery ! 100

As bodies grow more ponderous, robb'd of life ;
 Good lost weighs more in grief, than gain'd in joy.
 Like blossom'd trees o'erturn'd by vernal storm,
 Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay ;
 And if in death still lovely, lovelier There ; 105

Far

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 47

Far lovelier! pity swells the tide of love.
 And will not the severe excuse a sigh?
 Scorn the proud man that is ashamed to weep;
 Our tears *indulg'd* indeed deserve our shame.
 Ye that e'er lost an angel! pity me. 110

Soon as the lustre languisht in her eye,
 Dawning a dimmer day on human sight;
 And on her cheek, the residence of spring,
 Pale omen sat; and scatter'd fears around
 On all that saw (and who would cease to gaze, 115
 That once had seen?) with haste, parental haste,
 I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid north,
 Her native bed, on which bleak Boreas blew,
 And bore her nearer to the sun; the sun
 (As if the sun could envy) checkt his beam, 120
 Deny'd his wonted succour; nor with more
 Regret beheld her drooping, than the bells
 Of lilies; fairest lilies, not so fair!

Queen lilies! and ye painted populace!
 Who dwell in fields, and lead ambrosial lives; 125
 In morn and evening dew, your beauties bathe,
 And drink the sun; which gives your cheeks to glow,
 And out-blush (*mine* excepted) every fair;
 You gladlier grew, ambitious of her hand,
 Which often cropt your odours, incense meet 130
 To thought so pure! Ye lovely fugitives!
 Coeval race with man! for man you smile;
 Why not smile *at* him too? You share indeed
 His sudden pangs; but not his constant pain.

So man is made, nought ministers delight, 1
 By what his glowing passions can engage;
 And glowing passions, bent on aught below,
 Must, soon or late, with anguish turn the scale;
 And anguish, after rapture, how severe!
 Rapture? Bold man! who tempt'ft the wrath divine, 2
 By plucking fruit denied to mortal taste,
 While *here*, presuming on the rights of heaven.
 For transport dost thou call on every hour,
 Lorenzo? At thy friend's expence, be wise;
 Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart; 3
 A broken reed, at best; but, oft, a spear;
 On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.

Turn, hopeless thought! turn from her:—Thoug
 repell'd
 Repenting rallies, and wakes every woe.
 Snatch'd ere thy prime! and in thy bridal hour! 14
 And when kind fortune, with thy lover, smil'd!
 And when high flavour'd thy fresh opening joys!
 And when blind man pronounc'd thy bliss complete!
 And on a foreign shore; where strangers wept!
 Strangers to Thee; and, more surprising still, 15
 Strangers to Kindness, wept: their eyes let fall
 Inhuman tears; strange tears! that trickled down
 From marble hearts! obdurate tendernefs!
 A tendernefs that call'd them more severe;
 In spite of nature's soft persuasion, steel'd; 16
 While *nature* melted, *superstition* rav'd;
That mourn'd the dead; and *this* denied a grave.

Thei

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 49

Their sighs incens'd; sighs foreign to the will!
 Their will the *tiger* suck'd, outrag'd the storm.
 For, oh! the curst ungodliness of zeal! 165
 While *sinful flesh* relented, *spirit* nurs'd
 In blind *infallibility's* embrace,
 The *fainted spirit* petrify'd the breast;
 Deny'd the charity of dust, to spread
 O'er dust! a charity their dogs enjoy. 170
 What could I do? What succour? What resource?
 With pious sacrilege, a grave I stole;
 With impious piety, that grave I wrong'd;
 Short in my duty; coward in my grief!
 More like her murderer, than friend, I crept, 175
 With soft-suspended step, and muffled deep
 In midnight darkness, *whisper'd* my last sigh.
 I *whisper'd* what should echo through their realms;
 Nor writ her name, whose tomb should pierce the skies.
 Presumptuous fear! How durst I dread her foes, 180
 While nature's loudest dictates I obey'd?
 Pardon necessity, blest shade! Of grief
 And indignation rival bursts I pour'd;
 Half execration mingled with my prayer;
 Kindled at man, while I his God ador'd; 185
 Sore grudg'd the savage land her sacred dust;
 Stamp'd the curst soil; and with humanity
 (Denied Narcissa) wish'd them all a grave.
 Glows my resentment into guilt? What guilt
 Can equal violations of the dead? 190
 The dead how sacred! Sacred is the dust
 Of this heaven-labour'd form, crect, divine!

This heaven-assum'd majestic robe of earth,
 He deign'd to wear, who hung the vast expanse
 With azure bright, and cloath'd the sun in gold.
 When every passion sleeps that can offend ;
 When strikes us every motive that can melt ;
 When man can wreak his rancour *uncontrol'd*,
 That strongest curb on insult and ill-will ;
Then, spleen to dust ? the dust of innocence ?
 An angel's dust ?—This Lucifer transcends ;
 When he contended for the patriarch's bones,
 'Twas not the strife of malice, but of pride ;
 The strife of pontiff pride, not pontiff gall.

For less than This is shocking in a race
 Most *wretched*, but from streams of mutual love ;
 And *uncreated*, but for love divine ;
 And, but for love divine, this moment, *lost*,
 By fate reorb'd, and sunk in endless night.
 Man hard of heart to man ! Of horrid things
 Most horrid ! 'Mid stupendous, highly strange !
 Yet oft his courtesies are smoother wrongs ;
 Pride brandishes the favours He confers,
 And contumelious his humanity :
 What then his vengeance ? Hear it not, ye stars !
 And thou, pale moon ! turn paler at the sound ;
 Man is to man the forest, surest ill.
 A previous blast foretels the rising storm ;
 O'erwhelming turrets threaten ere they fall ;
 Volcanos bellow ere they disemboque ;
 Earth trembles ere her yawning jaws devour ;
 And smoke betrays the wide-consuming fire ;



Ruin from man is most conceal'd when near,
 And sends the dreadful tidings in the blow.
 Is this the flight of fancy? Would it were! 225
 Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings, but himself,
 That hideous sight, a *naked* human heart.
 Fir'd is the Muse? And let the Muse be fir'd:
 Who not inflam'd, when what he speaks, he feels,
 And in the nerve most tender, in his friends? 230
 Shame to mankind! Philander had his foes:
 He felt the truths I sing, and I in Him.
 But He, nor I, feel more: past ills, Narcissa!
 Are sunk in Thee, thou recent wound of heart!
 Which bleeds with other cares, with other pangs; 235
 Pangs numerous, as the numerous ills that swarm'd
 O'er thy distinguish'd fate, and, clustering There
 Thick as the locusts on the land of Nile,
 Made death more deadly, and more dark the grave.
 Reflect (if not forgot my touching tale) 240
 How was each circumstance with aspics arm'd?
 An asp, Each! and All, an Hydra woe:
 What strong Herculean virtue could suffice?—
 Or is it virtue to be conquer'd Here?
 This hoary cheek a train of tears bedews; 245
 And each tear mourns its own *distinct* distress;
 And each distress, distinctly mourn'd, demands
 Of grief still more, as heighten'd by the whole.
 A grief like *this* proprietors excludes:
 Not friends alone such obsequies deplore; 250
 They make Mankind the mourner; carry sighs
 Far as the fatal *Fame* can wing her way;

And turn the gayest thought of gayest age,
Down their right channel, through the vale of death.

The vale of death! that hush'd Cimmerian vale, 255
Where *darkness*, brooding o'er unfinish'd fates,
With raven wing incumbent, waits the day
(Dread day!) that interdicts all future change!
That subterranean world, that land of ruin!
Fit walk, Lorenzo, for proud human thought! 260
There let my thought expatiate, and explore
Balsamic truths, and healing sentiments,
Of all most wanted, and most welcome, *here*.
For gay Lorenzo's sake, and for thy own,
My soul! "The fruits of dying friends survey; 265
"Expose the *vain* of life; weigh life and death;
"Give death his eulogy; thy fear subdue;
"And labour that first palm of noble minds,
"A manly scorn of terror from the tomb."

This harvest reap from thy Narcissa's grave. 270
As poets feign'd from Ajax' streaming blood
Arose, with grief inscrib'd, a mournful flower;
Let wisdom blossom from my mortal wound.
And *first*, of dying friends; what fruit from these?
It brings us more than triple aid; an aid 275
To chase our *thoughtlessness*, *fear*, *pride*, and *guilt*.

Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,
To damp our brainless ardors; and abate
That glare of life, which often blinds the wise.
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth 280
Our rugged pass to death; to break those bars
Of terror, and abhorrence, nature throws

Cross

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 53

Cross our obstructed way; and, thus to make
Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm.

Each friend by fate snatch'd from us, is a plume 285

Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,
 Which makes us stoop from our aerial heights,

And, damp't with omen of our own decease,

On drooping pinions of ambition lower'd,
 Just skim earth's surface, ere we break it up, 290

O'er putrid earth to scratch a little dust,
 And save the world a nuisance. Smitten friends

Are angels sent on errands full of love;

For us they languish, and for us they die:

And shall they languish, shall they die, in vain? 295

Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hovering shades,

Which wait the revolution in our hearts?

Shall we disdain their silent, soft address;

Their posthumous advice, and pious prayer?

Senseless, as herds that graze their hallow'd graves, 300

Tread under-foot their agonies and groans;

Frustrate their anguish, and destroy their deaths?

Lorenzo! no; the thought of death indulge;

Give it its wholesome empire! let it reign,

That kind chastiser of thy soul in joy! 305

Its reign will spread thy glorious conquests far,

And still the tumults of thy ruffled breast:

Auspicious æra! golden days, begin!

The thought of death shall, like a god, inspire.

And why not think on death? Is life the theme 310

Of every thought? and wish of every hour?

And song of every joy? Surprising truth!

The beaten spaniel's fondness not so strange.
 To wave the numerous *ills* that seize on life
 As their own property, their lawful prey ; 315
 Ere man has measur'd half his weary stage,
 His *luxuries* have left him no reserve,
 No maiden relishes, unbroach'd delights ;
 On cold serv'd repetitions he subsists,
 And in the tasteless *present* chews the *past* ; 320
 Disgusted chews, and scarce can swallow down.
 Like lavish ancestors, his earlier years
 Have disinherited his future hours,
 Which starve on *orts*, and *glean* their former field.
 Live ever here, Lorenzo!—shocking thought ! 325
 So shocking, they who wish, disown it too ;
 Disown from shame, what they from folly crave.
 Live ever in the womb, nor see the light ?
 For what live ever here ?—With labouring step
 To tread our former footsteps ? Pace the round 330
 Eternal ? To climb life's worn, heavy wheel,
 Which draws up nothing new ? To beat, and beat
 The beaten track ? To bid each wretched day
 The former mock ? To surfeit on the *same*,
 And yawn our joys ? Or thank a misery 335
 For change, though sad ? To see what we have seen ?
 Hear, till unheard, the same old flabber'd tale ?
 To taste the tasted, and at each return
 Less tasteful ? O'er our palates to decant
 Another vintage ? Strain a flatter year, 340
 Through loaded vessels, and a laxer tone ?
 Crazy machines to grind earth's wasted fruits !
 Ill-ground,

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 55

Ill-ground, and worse concocted ! Load, not life !
 The *rational* foul kennels of excess !
 Still-streaming thorough-fares of dull debauch ! 345
 Trembling each gulp, lest death should snatch the bowl.

Such of our *fine-ones* is the wish refin'd !
 So would they have it : elegant desire !
 Why not invite the bellowing stalls, and wilds ?
 But such examples might their riot awe. 350

Through want of virtue, that is, want of thought,
 (Though on *bright thought* they father all their flights)
 To what are they reduc'd ? To love, and hate,
 The same vain world ; to censure, and espouse,
 This painted shrew of life, who calls them fool 355

Each moment of each day ; to flatter bad
 Through dread of worse ; to cling to this rude rock,
 Barren, *to them*, of good, and sharp with ills,
 And hourly blacken'd with impending storms,
 And infamous for wrecks of human hope— 360

Scar'd at the gloomy gulph, that yawns beneath.
 Such are their triumphs ! such their pangs of joy !
 'Tis time, high time, to shift this dismal scene.

This *hugg'd*, this *hideous* state, what art can cure ?
 One only ; but that one, what all may reach ; 365

Virtue—*she*, wonder-working goddess ! charms
 That *rock* to bloom ; and tames the *painted shrew* ;
 And, what will more surprize, Lorenzo ! gives
 To life's sick, nauseous *iteration*, change ;
 And straightens nature's circle to a line. 370

Believ'st thou this, Lorenzo ? lend an ear,
 A patient ear, thou 'lt blush to disbelieve.

A languid, leaden, iteration reigns,
 And ever must, o'er those, whose joys are joys
 Of sight, smell, taste: the cuckow-seasons sing 375
 The same dull note to such as nothing prize,
 But what those seasons, from the teeming earth,
 To doating *sense* indulge. But nobler minds,
 Which relish fruits unripen'd by the *sun*,
 Make their days various; various as the dyes 380
 On the dove's neck, which wanton in *his* rays.
 On minds of dove-like innocence possess'd,
 On lighten'd minds, that bask in virtue's beams,
 Nothing hangs tedious, nothing *old* revolves
 In *that*, for which they long; for which they live. 385
 Their glorious efforts, wing'd with heavenly hope,
 Each rising morning sees still higher rise;
 Each bounteous dawn its novelty presents
 To worth maturing, *new* strength, lustre, fame;
 While nature's circle, like a chariot-wheel 390
 Rolling *beneath* their elevated aims,
 Makes their fair prospect fairer every hour;
 Advancing *virtue*, in a line to *bliss*;
Virtue, which Christian motives best inspire!
 And *bliss*, which Christian schemes alone ensure? 395
 And shall we then, for virtue's sake, commence
 Apostates; and turn infidels for joy?
 A truth it is, few doubt, but fewer trust,
 "He sins against *this* life, who flights the *next*."
 What is this life? How few their favourite know! 400
 Fond in the dark, and blind in our embrace,
 By passionately loving life, we make

Lov'd

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 57

Lov'd life unlovely; hugging her to death.
 We give to Time Eternity's regard;
 And, dreaming, take our passage for our port. 405
 Life has no value as an end, but means;
 An end deplorable! a means divine!
 When 'tis our all, 'tis nothing; worse than nought;
 A nest of pains: when held as nothing, much:
 Like some fair humourists, life is most enjoy'd, 410
 When courted least; most worth, when disesteem'd:
 Then 'tis the seat of comfort, rich in peace;
 In prospect richer far; important! awful!
 Not to be mention'd, but with shouts of praise!
 Not to be thought on, but with tides of joy! 415
 The mighty basis of eternal bliss!
 Where now the *barren rock*? the *painted shrew*?
 Where now, Lorenzo! life's *eternal round*?
 Have I not made my triple promise good?
 Vain *is* the world; but only to the vain. 420
 To what compare we then this varying scene,
 Whose worth ambiguous rises, and declines?
 Waxes, and wanes? (In all propitious, *Night*
 Assists me here) compare it to the moon;
 Dark in herself, and indigent; but rich 425
 In *borrow'd* lustre from a higher sphere.
 When gross guilt interposes, labouring earth,
 O'ershadow'd, mourns a deep eclipse of joy;
 Her joys, at brightest, pallid, to that font
 Of full effulgent glory, whence they flow. 430
 Nor is that glory distant: Oh Lorenzo!
 A good man, and an angel! these between

How

How thin the barrier! what divides their fate?
 Perhaps a moment, or perhaps a year;
 Or, if an age, it is a moment still; 435
 A moment, or eternity's forgot.

Then be, what once they were, who now are gods;
 Be what Philander was, and claim the skies.

Starts timid nature at the gloomy pass?
 The *soft transition* call it; and be cheer'd: 440

Such it is often, and why not to Thee?
 To hope the best, is pious, brave, and wise;
 And may itself *procure*, what it *presumes*.

Life is much flatter'd, death is much traduc'd;
 Compare the rivals, and the kinder crown. 445

“*Strange competition!*”—True, Lorenzo! strange!
 So little *Life* can cast into the scale.

Life makes the soul dependent on the dust;
Death gives her wings to mount above the spheres.
 Through chinks, styl'd organs, dim *life* peeps at light; 450

Death bursts th' involving cloud, and all is day;
 All eye, all ear, the disembod' d power.

Death has feign'd evils, *nature* shall not feel;
Life, ill's substantial, *wisdom* cannot shun.

Is not the mighty *mind*, that son of heaven! 455
 By tyrant *life* dethron'd, imprison'd, pain'd?

By *death* enlarg'd, ennobled, deify'd?

Death but intombs the body; *life* the soul.

“Is *death* then guiltless? How he marks his way
 “With dreadful waste of what deserves to shine! 460

“Art, genius, fortune, elevated power!

“With various lustres *these* light up the world,

“Which

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 59

“ Which *death* puts out, and darkens human race.”

I grant, Lorenzo! this indictment just:

The sage, peer, potentate, king, conqueror! 465

Death humbles these; more barbarous *life*, the man.

Life is the triumph of our mouldering clay;

Death, of the spirit infinite! divine!

Death has no dread, but what frail *life* imparts;

Nor *life* true joy, but what kind *death* improves. 470

No bliss has *life* to boast, till death can give

Far greater; *life* 's a debtor to the grave,

Dark lattice! letting in eternal day.

Lorenzo! blush at *fondness* for a *life*,

Which sends celestial souls on errands vile, 475

To cater for the sense; and serve at boards,

Where every ranger of the wilds, perhaps

Each reptile, justly claims our upper hand.

Luxurious feast! a soul, a soul immortal,

In all the dainties of a brute bemoir'd! 480

Lorenzo! blush at *terror* for a *death*,

Which gives thee to repose in festive bowers,

Where nectars sparkle, angels minister,

And more than angels share, and raise, and crown,

And eternize, the birth, bloom, bursts of bliss. 485

What need I more? O *death*, the palm is thine.

Then welcome, death! thy dreaded harbingers,

Age, and *disease*; *disease*, though long my guest;

That plucks my nerves, those tender strings of life;

Which, pluck'd a little more, will toll the bell, 490

That calls my few friends to my funeral;

Where feeble nature drops, perhaps, a tear,

While

While reason and religion, better taught,
 Congratulate the dead, and crown his tomb
 With wreath triumphant. Death is victory ; 495
 It binds in chains the raging ills of life :
Lust and *ambition*, *wrath* and *avarice*,
 Dragg'd at his chariot-wheel, applaud his power.
 That ills corrosive, cares importunate,
 Are not *immortal* too, O death ! is thine. 500
 Our day of dissolution !—name it right ;
 'Tis our great pay-day ; 'tis our harvest, rich
 And ripe : what though the fickle, sometimes keen,
 Just scars us as we reap the golden grain ?
 More than thy balm, O Gilead ! heals the wound. 505
Birth's feeble cry, and *death's* deep dismal groan,
 Are slender tributes low-tax'd nature pays
 For mighty gain : the gain of each, a life !
 But O ! the last the former so transcends,
Life dies, compar'd ; *Life* lives beyond the grave. 510
 And feel I, *death* ! no joy from thought of thee ?
Death, the great counsellor, who man inspires
 With every nobler thought, and fairer deed !
Death, the deliverer, who rescues man !
Death, the rewarder, who the rescued crowns ! 515
Death, that absolves my birth ; a curse without it !
 Rich *death*, that realizes all my cares,
 Toils, virtues, hopes ; without it a chimera !
Death, of all pain the period, not of joy ;
 Joy's *source*, and *subject*, still subsist unhurt ; 520
 One, in my soul ; and one, in her great Sire ;
 Though the four winds were warring for my dust.

Yes,

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT III. 61

Yes, and from winds, and waves, and central night,
Though prison'd there, my dust too I reclaim,
(To dust when drop proud nature's proudest spheres) 525
And live *intire*. Death is the crown of life:
Were death deny'd, poor man would live in vain;
Were death deny'd, to live would not be life;
Were death deny'd, ev'n fools would wish to die.
Death wounds to cure: we fall; we rise; we reign! 530
Spring from our fetters; fasten in the skies;
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight:
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost.
This king of terrors is the prince of peace.
When shall I die to vanity, pain, death? 535
When shall I *die*?—When shall I live for ever?

NIGHT THE FOURTH.
THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH.

CONTAINING

Our only Cure for the Fear of Death; and proper
Sentiments of that inestimable Blessing.

T O

THE HONOURABLE MR. YORKE.

A Much-indebted Muse, O Yorke! intrudes.
Amid the smiles of fortune, and of youth,
Thine ear is patient of a serious song,
How deep implanted in the breast of man
The dread of death! I sing its sovereign cure. 5
Why start at death? Where is he? Death arriv'd,
Is past; not come, or gone, he 's never *here*.
Ere hope, sensation fails; black-boding man
Receives, not suffers; death's tremendous blow.
The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave; 10
The deep damp vault, the darkness, and the worm;
These are the hugbears of a winter's eve,
The terrors of the living, not the dead.
Imagination's fool, and error's wretch,
Man makes a death, which nature never made; 15
Then on the point of his own fancy falls;
And feels a thousand deaths, in fearing one.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 63

But were death frightful, what has *age* to fear?
 If prudent, age should meet the friendly foe,
 And shelter in his hospitable gloom. 20

I scarce can meet a monument, but holds
 My younger; every date cries—"Come away."
 And what recalls me? Look the world around,
 And tell me what: the wisest cannot tell.

Should any born of woman give his thought 25
 Full range, on just *dislike's* unbounded field;
 Of things, the vanity; of men, the flaws;
 Flaws in the *best*; the many, flaw all o'er;
 As *leopards*, spotted, or, as *Ethiops*, dark;
 Vivacious *ill*; *good* dying immature; 30

(How immature, *Narcissa's* marble tells!)
 And at his death bequeathing endless pain;
 His heart, though bold, would sicken at the sight,
 And spend itself in sighs, for *future* scenes.

But grant to life (and just it is to grant 35
 To *lucky* life) some perquisites of joy;
 A time there is, when, like a thrice-told tale,
 Long-rifled life of sweet can yield no more,
 But from our *comment* on the comedy,

Pleasing *reflections* on parts well sustain'd, 40
 Or purpos'd *emendations* where we fail'd,
 Or hopes of plaudits from our candid Judge,
 When, on their exit, souls are bid unrobe,
 Toss *fortune* back her tinsel, and her plume,
 And drop this mask of flesh behind the scene. 45

With me, that time is come; my world is dead;
 A new world rises, and new manners reign:

Foreign

Foreign comedians, a spruce band! arrive,
 To push me from the scene, or hiss me there.
 What a pert race starts up! the strangers gaze, 50
 And I at them; my neighbour is unknown;
 Nor that the worst: Ah me! the dire effect
 Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
 Of old so gracious (and let that suffice),
 My very master knows me not.— 55

Shall I dare say, peculiar is the fate?
 I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.
 An object ever pressing dims the sight,
 And hides behind its ardour to be seen.
 When in his courtiers ears I pour my plaint, 60
 They drink it as the nectar of the great;
 And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.
Refusal! canst thou wear a smoother form?

Indulge me, nor conceive I drop my theme:
 Who cheapens life, abates the *Fear of Death*: 65
 Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
 Court favour, yet untaken, I besiege;
 Ambition's ill-judg'd effort to be rich.
 Alas! ambition makes my little less;
 Embittering the possess: Why wish for more? 70
Wishing, of all employments, is the worst;
 Philosophy's reverse; and health's decay!
 Were I as plump as stall'd theology,
Wishing would waste me to this shade again.
 Were I as wealthy as a South-Sea dream, 75
Wishing is an expedient to be poor.
Wishing, that constant *heltic* of a fool;

Caught

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 65

Caught at a court ; purg'd off by purer air,
And simpler diet ; gifts of rural life !

Blest be that hand divine, which gently laid 80
My heart at rest, beneath this humble shed.

The world 's a stately bark, on dangerous seas,
With pleasure seen, but boarded at our peril ;

Here, on a single plank, thrown safe ashore,
I hear the tumult of the distant throng, 85

As that of seas remote, or dying storms :

And meditate on scenes, more silent still ;

Pursue my theme, and fight the *Fear of Death*.

Here, like a shepherd gazing from his hut,
Touching his reed, or leaning on his staff, 90

Eager *ambition's* fiery chace I see ;

I see the circling hunt, of noisy men,

Burst law's inclosure, leap the mounds of right,

Pursuing, and pursued, each other's prey ;

As wolves, for rapine ; as the fox, for wiles ; 95

Till *Death*, that mighty hunter, earths them all.

Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour ?

What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame ?

Earth's highest station ends in, " Here he lies,"

And " dust to dust " concludes her noblest song. 100

If this song lives, posterity shall know

One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,

Who thought ev'n gold might come a day too late ;

Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his scheme

For future vacancies in church or state ; 105

Some avocation deeming it—to die,

Unbit by rage canine of *dying rich* ;
 Guilt's blunder! and the loudest laugh of hell.

O my coëvals! remnants of yourselves!
 Poor human ruins, tottering o'er the grave! 110
 Shall we, shall aged men, like aged trees,
 Strike deeper their vile root, and closer cling,
 Still more enamour'd of this wretched soil?
 Shall our pale, wither'd hands, be still stretch'd out,
 Trembling, at once, with eagerness and age? 115
 With avarice and convulsions, grasping hard?
 Grasping at air! for what has earth beside?
 Man wants but little; nor that little, long;
 How soon must he resign his very dust,
 Which frugal nature lent him for an hour! 120
 Years *unexperienc'd* rush on numerous ills;
 And soon as man, *expert* from time, has found
 The *key* of life, it opes the gates of death.

When in this vale of years I backward look,
 And miss such numbers, numbers too of such, 125
 Firmer in health, and greener in their age,
 And stricter on their guard, and fitter far,
 To play life's subtle game, I scarce believe
 I still survive: and am I fond of life,
 Who scarce can think it possible, I live? 130
 Alive by miracle! or, what is next,
 Alive by Mead! if I am still alive,
 Who long have bury'd what gives life to live,
 Firmness of nerve, and energy of thought.
 Life's lee is not more *shallow*, than *impure*, 135
 And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 67

And *vapid*; *Sense* and *Reason* shew the door,
Call for my bier, and point me to the dust.

O thou great arbiter of life and death!

Nature's immortal, immaterial sun!

Whose all-prolific beam late call'd me forth 140

From darkness, teeming darkness, where I lay

The worm's inferior, and, in rank, beneath

The dust I tread on, high to bear my brow,

To drink the spirit of the golden day,

And triumph in existence; and could know 145

No motive, but my bliss; and hast ordain'd

A rise in blessing! with the *Patriarch's* joy,

Thy call I follow to the land *unknown*;

I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust;

Or life, or death, is equal; neither weighs: 150

All weight in this—O let me live to thee!

Though *nature's* terrors, *thus*, may be repress'd;

Still frowns grim *Death*; guilt points the tyrant's spear.

And whence all human guilt? From death forgot.

Ah me! too long I set at nought the swarm 155

Of friendly warnings, which around me flew;

And smil'd, unsmitten: small my cause to smile!

Death's admonitions, like shafts upwards shot,

More dreadful by delay, the longer ere

They strike our hearts, the deeper is their wound; 160

O think how deep, Lorenzo! *here* it stings:

Who can appease its anguish? how it burns!

What hand the barb'd, invenom'd, thought can draw?

What healing hand can pour the balm of peace,

And turn my sight undaunted on the tomb? 165

With joy,—with grief, that *healing hand* I see;
 Ah! too conspicuous! it is fix'd on high.
 On *high*?—What means my phrensy? I blaspheme;
 Alas! how *low*! how far beneath the skies!
 The skies it form'd; and now it bleeds for *me*— 170
 But bleeds the balm I want—yet still it *bleeds*;
 Draw the dire steel—ah no! the dreadful blessing
 What heart or can sustain, or dares forego?
 There hangs all human hope; that nail supports
 The falling universe: that gone, we drop; 175
 Horror receives us, and the dismal wish
 Creation had been smother'd in her birth—
 Darkness his curtain, and his bed the dust;
 When stars and sun are dust beneath his throne!
 In heaven itself can such indulgence dwell? 180
 O what a groan was there! a groan *not His*.
 He seiz'd our dreadful right; the load sustain'd;
 And heav'd the mountain from a guilty world.
 A thousand worlds, *so* bought, were bought too dear;
 Sensations *new* in angels bosoms rise; 185
 Suspend their song; and make a pause in bliss.
 O for *their* song; to reach my lofty theme!
 Inspire me, *Night*! with all thy tuneful spheres;
 Whilst I with *seraphs* share seraphic themes,
 And shew to men the dignity of man; 190
 Lest I blaspheme my subject with my song.
 Shall *pagan* pages glow celestial flame,
 And *christian* languish? on our hearts, not heads,
 Falls the foul infamy: my heart! awake.
 What can awake thee, unawak'd by *this*, 195

“ Expended

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 69

“ Expended deity on human weal ? ”

Feel the *great truths*, which burst the tenfold night

Of *heathen* error, with a golden flood

Of endless day : to feel, is to be fir'd ;

And to believe, Lorenzo ! is to feel. 200

Thou most indulgent, most tremendous Power !

Still more tremendous, for thy wondrous love !

That arms, which awe more awful, thy commands ;

And foul transgression dips in sevenfold night !

How our hearts tremble at thy love immense ! 205

In love immense, inviolably just !

Thou, rather than thy *justice* should be stain'd,

Didst stain the *Cross* ; and work of wonders far

The greatest, that thy dearest far might bleed.

Bold thought ! shall I dare speak it, or repress ? 210

Should man more *execrate*, or *boast*, the guilt

Which rous'd such vengeance ? which such love inflam'd ?

O'er guilt (how mountainous !) with out-stretch'd arms,

Stern *justice* and soft-smiling *love* embrace,

Supporting, in full majesty, thy throne, 215

When seem'd its majesty to need support,

Or *that*, or *man*, inevitably lost ;

What, but the *fathomless* of thought divine,

Could labour such expedient from despair,

And rescue *both* ? both rescue ! both exalt ! 220

O how are both exalted by the *deed* !

The wondrous deed ! or shall I call it *more* ?

A wonder in Omnipotence itself !

A mystery no less to gods than men !

Not *thus*, our infidels th' *Eternal* draw, 225
 A God all o'er, consummate, absolute,
 Full-orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete:
They set at odds heaven's jarring attributes;
 And, with one excellence, another wound;
 Maim heaven's perfection, break its equal beams, 230
 Bid *mercy* triumph over—God himself,
 Undeify'd by their opprobrious praise:
 A God *all* mercy, is a God unjust.

Ye brainless wits! ye baptiz'd infidels!
 Ye worse for mending! wash'd to fouler stains! 235
 The ransom was paid down; the fund of heaven,
 Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,
 Amazing, and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
 All price beyond: though curious to compute,
 Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum: 240
 Its value vast, ungrasp'd by minds *create*,
 For ever hides, and glows, in the *Supreme*.

And was the ransom paid? it was: and paid
 (What can exalt the bounty more?) for *you*.
 The sun beheld it—no, the shocking scene 245
 Drove back his chariot: *Midnight* veil'd his face;
 Not such as *this*; not such as nature makes;
 A *midnight* nature shudder'd to behold;
 A *midnight* new! a dread eclipse (without
 Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown! 250
Sun! didst thou fly thy Maker's pain? Or start
 At that enormous load of human guilt,
 Which bow'd his blessed head; o'erwhelm'd his cross;
 Made groan the centre; burst earth's marble womb,
 With

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 71.

With pangs, strange pangs! deliver'd of her dead? 255
 Hell howl'd; and heaven that hour let fall a tear;
 Heaven wept, that men might smile! heaven bled, that man
 Might never die! —————

And is devotion virtue? 'Tis *compell'd*.

What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these? 260
 Such contemplations mount us; and should mount
 The mind still higher; nor ever glance on man,
 Unraptur'd, uninflam'd.—Where roll my thoughts
 To rest from wonders? other wonders rise;
 And strike where'er they roll: my soul is caught: 265
 Heaven's sovereign blessings, clustering from the cross,
 Rush on her, in a throng, and close her round,
 The prisoner of amaze!—In his blest *life*
 I see the *path*, and in his *death* the *price*,
 And in his great *ascent* the *proof* supreme 270
 Of immortality.—And did he rise?

Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
 He rose! he rose! he burst the bars of death.
 Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
 And give the king of glory to come in. 275

Who is the king of glory? he who left
 His throne of glory, for the pang of death!
 Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
 And give the king of glory to come in.
 Who is the king of glory? he who slew 280
 The ravenous foe, that gorg'd all human race!
 The king of glory, he, whose glory fill'd
 Heaven with amazement at his love to man;

And with divine complacency beheld
Powers most illumin'd, wilder'd in the theme. 285

The theme, the joy, how then shall *man* sustain?
 Oh the burst gates! crush'd sting! demolish'd throne!
 Last gasp! of vanquish'd death. Shout earth and heaven!
 'This *sum of good* to man. *Whose* nature, then,
 Took wing, and mounted with him from the tomb! 290
 Then, then, I rose; then first *humanity*
 Triumphant past the crystal ports of light,
 (Stupendous guest!) and seiz'd eternal youth,
 Seiz'd in *our* name. E'er since, 'tis blasphemous
 To call man mortal. Man's mortality 295

Was, then, transferr'd to death; and heaven's duration
 Unalienably seal'd to this frail frame,
 This child of dust—Man, all-immortal! hail;
 Hail, heaven! all lavish of strange gifts to man!
 Thine all the glory; man's the boundless bliss. 300

Where am I rapt by this triumphant theme,
 On christian joy's exulting wing, above
 Th' Aonian mount!—Alas! small cause for joy!
 What if to pain immortal? if extent
 Of being, to preclude a close of woe? 305

Where, then, my boast of immortality?
 I boast it still, though cover'd o'er with guilt;
 For guilt, not innocence, his life he pour'd;
 'Tis guilt alone can justify his death;
 Nor that, unless his death can justify 310

Relenting guilt in heaven's indulgent sight.
 If, sick of folly, I relent; he writes
 My name in heaven, with that inverted spear

(A spear

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 73

(A spear deep-dipt in blood!) which pierc'd his side,
 And open'd there a font for all mankind, 315
 Who strive, who combat crimes, to drink, and live:
This, only this, subdues the fear of death.

And what is *this*?—Survey the wondrous cure:
 And at each step, let higher wonder rise!

“ Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon 320
 “ Through means that speak its value infinite!
 “ A pardon bought with blood! with blood divine!
 “ With blood divine of him, I made my foe!
 “ Persisted to provoke! though woo'd, and aw'd,
 “ Blest, and chastis'd, a flagrant rebel still! 325
 “ A rebel, 'midst the thunders of his throne!
 “ Nor I alone! a rebel universe!
 “ My species up in arms! not one exempt!
 “ Yet for the foulest of the foul, he dies,
 “ Most joy'd, for the redeem'd from deepest guilt! 330
 “ As if our race were held of highest rank;
 “ And Godhead dearer, as more kind to man!”

Bound, every heart! and every bosom, burn!
 O what a scale of miracles is here!
 Its lowest round, high planted on the skies; 335
 Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
 Of man or angel! O that I could climb
 The wonderful ascent, with equal praise!
Praise! flow for ever (if astonishment
 Will give thee leave): my praise! for ever flow; 340
 Praise ardent, cordial, constant, to high heaven
 More fragrant, than Arabia sacrific'd,
 And all her spicy mountains in a flame.

So

So dear, so due to heaven, shall *praise* descend,
 With her soft plume (from *plausive* angels wing 345
 First pluck'd by man) to tickle mortal ears,
 Thus diving in the pockets of the great?
 Is *praise* the perquisite of every paw,
 Though black as hell, that grapples well for gold?
 Oh love of gold! thou meanest of amours! 350
 Shall *praise* her odours waste on virtue's dead,
 Embalm the base, perfume the stench of guilt,
 Earn dirty bread by washing Æthiops fair,
 Removing filth, or sinking it from sight,
 A scavenger in *scenes*, where *vacant* posts, 355
 Like gibbets yet untenanted, expect
 Their future ornaments? From courts and thrones,
 Return, apostate *praise*! thou vagabond!
 Thou prostitute! to thy first love return,
 Thy first, thy greatest, once unrival'd theme. 360
 There flow redundant; like Meander flow,
 Back to thy fountain; to that Parent Power,
 Who gives the tongue to sound, the thought to soar,
 The soul to *be*. Men homage pay to men,
 Thoughtless beneath whose dreadful eye they bow 365
 In mutual awe profound of clay to clay,
 Of guilt to guilt; and turn their back on thee,
Great Sire! whom thrones celestial ceaseless sing:
 To prostrate angels, an amazing scene!
 O the presumption of man's awe for man! 370
 Man's Author! End! Restorer! Law! and Judge!
 Thine, all; day thine, and thine this gloom of *night*,
 With all her wealth, with all her radiant worlds:
 What,

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 75

What, night eternal, but a frown from thee?
 What, heaven's meridian glory, but thy smile? 375
 And shall not *praise* be thine, not human praise?
 While heaven's high host on *hallelujahs* live?
 O may I breathe no longer, than I breathe
 My soul in praise to Him, who gave my soul,
 And all her infinite of prospect fair, 380
 Cut through the shades of hell, *great Love!* by thee
 Oh most Adorable! most Unador'd!
 Where shall that praise begin, which ne'er should end?
 Where'er I turn, what claim on all applause!
 How is *night's* fable mantle labour'd o'er, 385
 How richly wrought with attributes divine!
 What *wisdom* shines! what *love!* this midnight pomp,
 This gorgeous arch, with golden worlds inlay'd!
 Built with divine ambition! nought to thee;
 For others this profusion: Thou, apart, 390
 Above! beyond! Oh tell me, mighty Mind!
 Where art thou? Shall I dive into the *deep*?
 Call to the *sun*, or ask the roaring *winds*,
 For their Creator? Shall I question loud
 The *thunder*, if in that th' Almighty dwells? 395
 Or holds He furious *storms* in streighten'd reins,
 And bids fierce *whirlwinds* wheel his rapid car?
 What mean these questions?—Trembling I retract;
 My prostrate soul adores the *present* God:
 Praise I a distant deity? He tunes 400
 My voice (if tun'd); the nerve, that writes, sustains:
 Wrapt in his being, I resound his praise:
 But though past *all* diffus'd, without a shore,

His

His essence; *local* is his throne (as meet),
 To gather the dispersed (as standards call
 The lifted from afar): to fix a point, 405
 A central point, collective of his sons,
 Since *finite* every nature but his own.

The nameless *He*, whose nod is *nature's* birth;
 And *nature's* shield, the shadow of his hand; 410
 Her dissolution, his suspended smile!
 The great *First-Last*! pavilion'd high he sits,
 In darkness from excessive splendor borne,
 By gods unseen, unless through lustre lost.
 His glory, to created glory, bright, 415
 As that to central horrors; he looks down
 On all that soars; and spans immensity.

Though *night* unnumber'd worlds unfolds to view,
 Boundless creation! what art thou? A beam,
 A mere effluvium of his majesty: 420
 And shall an atom of this atom-world
 Mutter, in dust and sin, the theme of heaven?
 Down to the centre should I send my thought
 Through beds of glittering ore, and glowing gems,
 Their beggar'd blaze wants lustre for my lay; 425
 Goes out in darkness: if, on towering wing,
 I send it through the boundless vault of stars!
 The stars, though rich, what dross their gold to *thee*,
 Great! good! wise! wonderful! eternal King!
 If to those *conscious stars* thy throne around, 430
 Praise ever-pouring, and imbibing bliss;
 And ask their strain; they want it, *more* they want,
 Poor their abundance, humble their sublime,

Languid

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 77

Languid their energy, their ardour cold,
 Indebted still, their highest rapture burns; 435
 Short of its mark, defective, though divine.

Still more—This theme is man's, and man's alone;
 Their vast appointments reach it not: they see
 On earth a bounty not indulg'd on high;
 And downward look for heaven's superior praise! 440

First-born of Ether! high in fields of light!
 View man, to see the glory of your God!
 Could angels envy, they had envy'd *here*;
 And some *did* envy; and the rest, though gods,
 Yet still gods *unredeem'd* (there triumphs man, 445

Tempted to weigh the dust against the skies)
 They less would *feel*, though more adorn, my theme.

They sung *Creation* (for in that they shar'd):

How rose in melody, that child of love!

Creation's great superior, man! is thine; 450

Thine is *redemption*; they just gave the key:

'Tis thine to raise, and eternize, the song;

Though human, yet divine; for should not *this*

Raise man o'er man, and kindle seraphs *here*?

Redemption! 't was creation more sublime; 455

Redemption! 't was the labour of the skies;

Far *more* than labour—It was *death* in heaven.

A truth so strange! 't were bold to think it true;

If not far bolder still to disbelieve!

Here pause, and ponder: was there death in heaven? 460

What then on earth? On earth, which struck the blow?

Who struck it? Who?—O how is *man* enlarg'd

Seen through this medium! how the pigmy towers!

How counterpois'd his origin from dust!
 How counterpois'd, to dust his sad return! 465
 How voided his vast distance from the skies!
 How near he presses on the seraph's wing!
 Which is the seraph? Which the born of clay?
 How this demonstrates, through the thickest cloud
 Of guilt, and clay condens'd, the son of heaven! 470
 The *double* son; the made, and the re-made!
 And shall heaven's double property be lost?
 Man's double madness only can destroy.
 To man the bleeding cross has promis'd *all*;
 The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace; 475
 Who gave his life, what grace shall He deny?
 O ye! who, from this *Rock of ages*, leap,
 Apostates, plunging headlong in the deep!
 What cordial joy, what consolation strong,
 Whatever winds arise, or billows roll, 480
 Our interest in the master of the storm!
 Cling *there*, and in wreck'd nature's ruins *smile*;
 While vile apostates *tremble* in a calm.
 Man! know thyself. All wisdom centres there:
 To none man seems ignoble, but to man; 485
 Angels that grandeur, men o'er-look, admire:
 How long shall human nature be *their* book,
 Degenerate mortal! and *unread* by Thee?
 The beam dim *reason* sheds shews wonders There;
 What high contents! Illustrious faculties! 490
 But the grand *comment*, which displays at full
 Our human height, scarce sever'd from divine,
 By heaven compos'd, was publish'd on the *Cross*.

Who

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 79

Who looks on That, and sees not in himself
An awful stranger, a terrestrial god? 498

A glorious partner with the Deity
In that high attribute, immortal life?
If a God bleeds, he bleeds not for a worm:
I gaze, and, as I gaze, my mounting soul
Catches strange fire, Eternity! at Thee; 500

And drops the world—or rather, more enjoys:
How chang'd the face of nature! how improv'd!
What seem'd a chaos, shines a glorious world,
Or, what a world, an Eden; heighten'd all!
It is another scene! another self! 505

And still another, as time rolls along;
And that a *self* far more illustrious still.
Beyond long ages, yet roll'd up in shades
Unpierc'd by bold conjecture's keenest ray,
What evolutions of surprising fate! 510

How nature opens, and receives my soul
In boundless walks of raptur'd thought! where gods
Encounter and embrace me! What new births
Of strange adventure, foreign to the sun;
Where what now charms, perhaps, whate'er exists, 515
Old *time*, and fair *creation*, are forgot!

Is this extravagant? Of man we form
Extravagant conception, to be just:
Conception unconfin'd wants wings to reach him:
Beyond its reach, the Godhead only, more. 520

He, the great Father! kindled at one flame
The world of rationals; one spirit pour'd
From spirit's awful fountain: pour'd himself
Through

Through all their souls; but not in equal stream,
 Profuse, or frugal, of th' aspiring God, 525
 As his wife plan demanded; and when past
 Their various trials in their various spheres,
 If they *continue* rational, as made,
 Resorbs them all into Himself again;
 His throne their centre, and his smile their crown. 530
 Why doubt we, then, the *glorious truth* to sing,
 Though yet *unsung*, as deem'd, perhaps, too bold?
 Angels are men of a superior kind;
 Angels are men in lighter habit clad,
 High o'er celestial mountains wing'd in flight; 535
 And men are angels, loaded for an hour,
 Who wade this miry vale, and climb with pain,
 And slippery step, the bottom of the steep.
 Angels their failings, mortals have their praise;
 While *Here*, of corps ethereal, such enroll'd, 540
 And summon'd to the *glorious Standard* soon,
 Which flames eternal crimson through the skies.
 Nor are our *brothers* thoughtless of their kin,
 Yet absent; but not absent from their love.
 Michael has fought our battles; Raphael sung 545
 Our triumphs; Gabriel on our errands flown,
 Sent by the Sovereign: and are these, O man!
 Thy friends, thy warm allies? and Thou (shame burn
 The cheek to cinder!) rival to the brute?
Religion's All. Descending from the skies 550
 To wretched man, the goddess in her left,
 Holds out *this* world, and, in her right, the *next*;
Religion! the sole voucher man is man;

Supporter

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 81

Supporter sole of man above himself ;
 Ev'n in this night of frailty, change, and death, 555

She gives the soul a soul that acts a god.

Religion! Providence! an After-state!

Here is firm footing ; *here* is solid rock!

This can support us ; all is sea besides ;

Sinks under us ; bestorms, and then devours. 560

His hand the good man fastens on the skies,

And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

As when a wretch, from thick, polluted air,

Darkness, and stench, and suffocating damps,

And dungeon-horrors, by kind fate, discharg'd, 565

Climbs some fair eminence, where ether pure

Surrounds him, and Elysian prospects rise,

His heart exults, his spirits cast their load ;

As if new-born, he triumphs in the change ;

So joys the soul, when, from inglorious aims, 570

And sordid sweets, from feculence and froth

Of ties terrestrial, set at large, she mounts

To *Reason's* region, her own element,

Breathes hopes immortal, and affects the skies.

Religion! thou the soul of happiness ; 575

And, groaning Calvary, of thee! *There* shine

The noblest truths ; *there* strongest motives sting ;

There sacred violence assaults the soul ;

There, nothing but *compulsion* is forborn.

Can love allure us ; or can terror awe? 580

He weeps!—the falling drop puts out the sun ;

He sighs—the sigh earth's deep foundation shakes.

If in his love so terrible, what then

His wrath inflam'd? his tendernefs on fire?
 Like foft, fmoth oil, outblazing other fires? 585
 Can prayer, can praife, avert it?—Thou, my *All!*
 My theme! my infpiration! and my crown!
 My ftrength in age! my rife in low eftate!
 My foul's ambition, pleaſure, wealth!—my world!
 My light in darknefs! and my life in death! 590
 My boaft through time! blifs through eternity!
 Eternity, too ſhort to ſpeak thy praife!
 Or fathom thy profound of love to man!
 To man of men the meaneft, ev'n to me;
 My facrifice! my God!—what things are theſe! 595
 What then art Thou? by what name ſhall I call Thee?
 Knew I the name devout archangels uſe,
 Devout archangels ſhould the name enjoy,
 By me unrival'd; thouſands more ſublime,
 None half ſo dear, as that, which, though unſpoke, 600
 Still glows at heart: O how omnipotence
 Is loſt in love! Thou great Philanthropiſt!
 Father of angels! but the friend of man!
 Like Jacob, fondeſt of the younger born!
 Thou, who didſt ſave him, ſnatch the ſmoking brand 605
 From out the flames, and quench it in thy blood!
 How art thou pleas'd, by bounty to diſtreſs!
 To make us groan beneath our gratitude,
 Too big for birth! to favour, and confound;
 To challenge, and to diſtance all return! 610
 Of lavish love ſtupendous heights to ſoar,
 And leave praife panting in the diſtant vale!
 Thy right, too great, defrauds thee of thy due;

And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 83

And sacrilegious our sublimest song.
 But since the naked *will* obtains thy smile, 615
 Beneath this monument of praise *unpaid*,
 And future life symphonious to my strain,
 (That noblest hymn to heaven!) for ever lie
 Intomb'd my *fear of death!* and every fear,
 The dread of every evil, but Thy frown. 620

Whom see I yonder, so demurely smile?
 Laughter a labour, and might break their rest.
 Ye quietists, in homage to the skies!
 Serene! of soft address! who mildly make
 An unobtrusive tender of your hearts, 625
 Abhorring violence! who *halt* indeed;
 But, for the blessing, *wrestle* not with heaven!
 Think you my song too turbulent? too warm?
 Are *passions*, then, the pagans of the soul?
Reason alone baptiz'd? alone *ordain'd* 630

To touch things sacred? Oh for warmer still!
 Guilt chills my zeal, and age benumbs my powers;
 Oh for an humbler heart! and prouder song!
 Thou, my much-injur'd theme! with that soft eye
 Which melted o'er doom'd Salem, deign to look 635
 Compassion to the coldness of my breast;
 And pardon to the winter in my strain.

Oh ye cold-hearted, frozen, formalists!
 On such a theme, 'tis impious to be calm;
 Passion is reason, transport temper, *here*. 640
 Shall heaven, which gave us ardour, and has shewn
 Her own for man so strongly, not disdain
 What smooth emollients in theology,

Recumbent virtue's downy doctors, preach;
That prose of piety, a lukewarm praise? 645

Rise odours sweet from incense *uninflam'd*?

Devotion, when lukewarm, is undevout;

But when it glows, its heat is struck to heaven;

To human hearts her golden harps are strung;

High heaven's *orchestra* chaunts *amen* to man. 650

Hear I, or dream I hear, their distant strain,

Sweet to the soul, and tasting strong of heaven,

Soft-wafted on celestial *pity's* plume,

Through the vast spaces of the universe,

To cheer me in this melancholy gloom? 655

Oh when will *death* (now stinglefs), like a friend,

Admit me of their choir? O when will *death*

This mouldering, old, partition-wall throw down?

Give beings, one in nature, one abode?

Oh death divine! that giv'st us to the skies! 660

Great *future!* glorious patron of the *past*,

And *present!* when shall I thy shrine adore?

From nature's *continent*, immensely wide,

Immensely blest, this little *isle of life*,

This dark, incarcerating *colony*, 665

Divides us. Happy day! that breaks our chain;

That manumits; that calls from exile home;

That leads to nature's great *metropolis*,

And re-admits us, through the *guardian* hand

Of elder brothers, to our *Father's* throne; 670

Who hears our Advocate, and, through his wounds

Beholding man, allows *that* tender name.

'Tis this makes *Christian triumph* a command:

'Tis

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 85

'Tis this makes joy a *duty* to the wife;

'Tis impious in a good man to be sad. 675

See thou, Lorenzo! where hangs all our hope?
 Touch'd by the *Cross*, we live; or, *more* than die;
 That *touch* which touch'd not angels; more divine
 Than that which touch'd confusion into form,
 And darkness into glory; partial *touch!* 680

Ineffably pre-eminent regard!
 Sacred to man, and sovereign through the whole
 Long golden chain of miracles, which hangs
 From heaven through all duration, and supports
 In one illustrious and amazing plan, 685

Thy welfare, *nature!* and thy God's renown;
That touch, with charm celestial, heals the soul
 Diseas'd, drives pain from guilt, lights life in death,
 Turns earth to heaven, to heavenly thrones transforms
 The ghastly ruins of the mouldering tomb. 690

Dost ask me when? When he who dy'd returns;
 Returns, how chang'd! Where then the man of woe?
 In glory's terrors all the Godhead burns;
 And all his courts, exhausted by the tide
 Of deities triumphant in his train, 695

Leave a stupendous solitude in heaven;
 Replenish'd soon, replenish'd with increase
 Of pomp, and multitude; a radiant band
 Of angels new; of angels from the *tomb*.

Is this by fancy thrown remote; and rise 700
 Dark doubts between the promise and event?
 I send thee not to volumes for thy cure;
 Read Nature; Nature is a friend to truth;

Nature is *Christian* ; preaches to mankind ;
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed. 705

Hast thou ne'er seen the comet's flaming flight ?
Th' illustrious stranger passing, terror sheds
On gazing nations ; from his fiery train
Of length enormous, takes his ample round
Through depths of ether ; coasts unnumber'd worlds, 710
Of more than solar glory ; doubles wide
Heaven's mighty cape ; and then revisits earth,
From the long travel of a thousand years.

Thus, at the destin'd period, shall return
He, once on earth, who bids the comet blaze: 715
And, with Him, *all* our triumph o'er the tomb.

Nature is dumb on this important point ;
Or hope precarious in low whisper breathes ;
Faith speaks aloud, distinct ; ev'n *adders* hear ;
But turn, and dart into the dark again. 720

Faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death,
To break the shock blind *nature* cannot shun,
And lands thought smoothly on the farther shore.
Death's terror is the mountain *faith* removes ;
That mountain barrier between man and peace. 725

'Tis *faith* disarms destruction ; and absolves
From every clamorous charge, the guiltless tomb.

Why disbelieve ? Lorenzo !—“ *Reason* bids,
“ All-sacred reason.”—Hold her sacred still ;
Nor shalt thou want a rival in thy flame : 730
All-sacred *reason* ! source, and soul, of all
Demanding praise, on earth, or earth above !
My heart is thine : deep in its inmost folds,

Live

Live thou with life ; live dearer of the two.
 Wear I the blessed Cross, by fortune stamp'd 735
 On passive nature, before thought was born ?
 My birth's blind bigot ! fir'd with *local* zeal !
 No ; *reason* re-baptis'd me when adult ;
 Weigh'd true, and false, in her impartial scale ;
 My heart became the convert of my head ; 740
 And made that choice, which once was but my fate.
 " On argument alone my faith is built :"
Reason pursued is *faith* ; and, unpursued
 Where proof invites, 'tis reason, then, no more :
 And such our *proof*, That, or our *faith* is right, 745
 Or *reason* lies, and heaven design'd it *wrong* :
 Absolve we This ? What, then, is blasphemy ?
 Fond as we are, and justly fond, of *faith*,
Reason, we grant, demands our first regard ;
 The mother honour'd, as the daughter dear. 750
Reason the root, fair *faith* is but the flower ;
 The fading flower shall die ; but *reason* lives
 Immortal, as her Father in the skies.
 When *faith* is virtue, *reason* makes it so.
 Wrong not the Christian ; think not reason *yours* : 755
 'Tis *reason* our great *Master* holds so dear ;
 'Tis *reason's* injur'd rights His wrath repents ;
 'Tis *reason's* voice obey'd His glories crown ;
 To give lost *reason* life, He pour'd his own :
 Believe, and shew the reason of a man ; 760
 Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God ;
 Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb :
 Through *reason's* wounds alone thy *faith* can die ;

Which dying, tenfold terror gives to death,
And dips in *venom* his twice-mortal sting. 765

Learn hence what honours, what loud *pæans*, due
To those, who push our *antidote* aside ;
Those boasted friends to *reason*, and to *man*,
Whose fatal love stabs every joy, and leaves
Death's terror heighten'd, gnawing on his heart. 770

These pompous sons of *reason* idoliz'd
And vilify'd at once ; of *reason* dead,
Then deify'd, as monarchs were of old ;
What conduct plants proud laurels on their brow ?
While *love of truth* through all their camp resounds, 775
They draw *pride's* curtain o'er the noon-tide-ray,
Spike up their inch of reason, on the point
Of philosophic wit, *call'd* Argument ;
And then, exulting in their taper, cry,
“ Behold the sun :” and, Indian-like, adore. 780

Talk they of *morals* ? O thou bleeding Love !
Thou maker of *new* morals to mankind !
The *grand* morality is love of Thee.
As wise as Socrates, if such they were,
(Nor will they 'bate of that sublime renown) 785
As wise as Socrates, might justly stand
The definition of a modern fool.

A Christian is the highest stile of man :
And is there, who the blessed Cross wipes off,
As a foul blot from his dishonour'd brow ? 790
If angels tremble, 'tis at such a sight :
The wretch they quit, desponding of their charge,
More struck with grief or wonder, who can tell ?

Ye

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT IV. 89

Ye sold to sense! ye citizens of earth!

(For such alone the Christian banner fly) 795

Know ye how wise your choice, how great your gain?

Behold the picture of earth's happiest man:

" He calls his wish, it comes; he sends it back,

" And says, he call'd another; that arrives,

" Meets the same welcome; yet he still calls on; 800

" Till *one* calls him, who varies not his call,

" But holds him fast, in chains of darkness bound,

" Till nature dies, and judgment sets him free;

" A freedom far less welcome than his chain."

But grant man happy; grant him happy long; 805

Add to life's highest prize her latest hour;

That hour, so late, is nimble in approach,

That, like a post, comes on in full career:

How swift the shuttle flies, that weaves thy shroud!

Where is the fable of thy former years? 810

Thrown down the gulph of time; as far from Thee

As they had ne'er been thine; the day in hand,

Like a bird struggling to get loose, is going;

Scarce now possess'd, so suddenly 'tis gone;

And each swift moment fled, is death advanc'd 815

By strides as swift: Eternity is All;

And whose Eternity? Who triumphs there?

Bathing for ever in the font of bliss!

For ever basking in the Deity!

Lorenzo! who?—Thy conscience shall reply. 820

O give it leave to speak; 't will speak ere long,

Thy leave unask'd: Lorenzo! hear it now,

While useful its advice, its accent mild.

By

By the great edict, the divine decree,
Truth is deposited with man's *last hour*; 825
 An honest hour, and faithful to her trust;
Truth, eldest daughter of the Deity;
Truth, of his council, when he made the worlds;
 Nor less, when he shall judge the worlds he made;
 Though silent long, and sleeping ne'er so sound, 830
 Smother'd with errors, and oppress'd with toys,
 That heaven-commission'd hour no sooner calls,
 But, from her cavern in the soul's abyss,
 Like him they fable under *Ætna* whelm'd,
 The goddess, bursts in thunder, and in flame; 835
 Loudly convinces, and severely pains.
 Dark *dæmons* I discharge, and *Hydra* stings;
 The keen vibration of bright *truth*—is Hell:
 Just definition! though by schools untaught.
 Ye deaf to truth! peruse this Parson'd page, 840
 And trust, for once, a prophet, and a priest;
 "Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die*."

NIGHT

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

T H E R E L A P S E.

T O T H E

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LITCHFIELD.

L ORENZO! to recriminate is just.
 Fondness for fame is avarice of air.
 I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.
 Praise no man e'er deserv'd, who fought no more.
 As just thy *second charge*. I grant the *Muse* 5
 Has often blusht at her degenerate sons,
 Retain'd by *sense* to plead her filthy cause;
 To raise the low, to magnify the mean,
 And subtilize the gross into refin'd :
 As if to magic numbers' powerful charm 10
 'Twas given, to make a *civet* of their song
 Obscene, and sweeten ordure to perfume.
Wit, a true pagan, deifies the brute,
 And lifts our swine-enjoyments from the mire.
 The fact notorious, nor obscure the cause. 15
 We wear the chains of *pleasure*, and of *pride*.
These share the man; and these distract him too;
 Draw different ways, and clash in their commands.
Pride, like an eagle, builds among the stars;
 But *pleasure*, lark-like, nests upon the ground. 20
 Joys

YOUNG'S POEMS.

92

Joys shar'd by brute-creation, *pride* repents ;
Pleasure embraces : Man would *both* enjoy,
 And both *at once* : a point how hard to gain !
 But, what can't wit, when stung by strong desire ?

Wit dares attempt this arduous enterprize. 25

Since joys of *sense* can't rise to *reason's* taste ;
 In subtle *sophistry's* laborious forge,

Wit hammers out a reason *new*, that stoops
 To sordid scenes, and meets them with applause.

Wit calls the *graces* the chaste zone to loose ; 30

Nor less than a *plump god* to fill the bowl :

A thousand phantoms, and a thousand spells,

A thousand opiates scatters, to delude,

To fascinate, inebriate, lay asleep,

And the fool'd mind delightfully confound. 35

Thus that which shock'd the *judgment*, shocks no more ;

That which gave *pride* offence, no more offends.

Pleasure and *pride*, by nature mortal foes,

At war eternal, which in man shall reign,

By *wit's* address, patch up a fatal peace, 40

And hand in hand lead on the rank debauch,

From rank, refin'd to delicate and gay.

Art, cursed art ! wipes off th' indebted blush

From nature's cheek, and bronzes every shame.

Man smiles in ruin, glories in his guilt, 45

And infamy stands candidate for praise.

All writ by man in favour of the soul,

These *sensual ethics* far, in bulk, transcend.

The flowers of eloquence, profusely pour'd

O'er spotted vice, fill half the letter'd world. 50

Can

Can powers of genius exorcise their page,
And consecrate enormities with song ?

But let not these inexpiable strains
Condemn the Muse that knows her dignity ;
Nor meanly stops at *time*, but holds the world 55

As 'tis, in nature's ample field, a point,
A point in her esteem ; from whence to start,
And run the round of universal space,
To visit Being universal there,
And Being's Source, that utmost flight of mind ! 60

Yet, spite of this so vast circumference,
Well knows, but what is *moral*, nought is *great*.
Sing *syrens* only ? Do not angels sing ?
There is in *poesy* a decent pride,
Which well becomes her when she speaks to *prose*, 65
Her younger sister ; haply, not more wise.

Think'ft thou, Lorenzo ! to find pastimes here ?
No guilty passion blown into a flame,
No foible flatter'd, dignity disgrac'd,
No fairy field of fiction, all on flower, 70
No rainbow colours, *here*, or silken tale :
But solemn *counsels*, images of awe,
Truths, which eternity lets fall on man
With double weight, through these revolving spheres,
This death-deep silence, and incumbent shade : 75
Thoughts, such as shall revisit your last hour ;
Visit uncall'd, and live when life expires ;
And thy dark pencil, *midnight* ! darker still
In melancholy dipt, embrowns the whole.

Yet this, even *this*, my laughter-loving friends ! 80

Lorenzo !

Lorenzo ! and thy brothers of the smile !
 If, what imports you most, can most engage,
 Shall steal your ear, and chain you to my song.
 Or if you fail me, know, the wise shall taste
 The truths I sing ; the truths I sing shall feel ; 85
 And, feeling, give assent ; and their assent
 Is ample recompence ; is more than praise.
 But chiefly thine, O Litchfield ! nor mistake ;
 Think not un-introduc'd I force my way ;
 Narcissa, not unknown, not unally'd, 90
 By virtue, or by blood, illustrious youth !
 To thee, from blooming *amaranthine* bowers,
 Where all the language *harmony*, descends
 Uncall'd, and asks admittance for the Muse :
 A Muse that will not pain thee with thy praise ; 95
 Thy praise she drops, by *nobler* still inspir'd.

O Thou ! Blest Spirit ! *whether* the supreme,
 Great antemundane Father ! in whose breast
 Embryo creation, unborn being, dwelt,
 And all its various revolutions roll'd 100
 Present, though future ; prior to themselves ;
 Whose breath can blow it into nought again ;
Or, from his throne some delegated power,
 Who, studious of our peace, dost turn the thought
 From vain and vile, to solid and sublime ! 105
 Unseen thou lead'st me to delicious draughts
 Of inspiration, from a purer stream,
 And fuller of the god, than that which burst
 From fam'd Castalia : nor is yet allay'd
 My sacred thirst ; though long my soul has rang'd 110

Through pleasing paths of *moral*, and *divine*,
By thee sustain'd, and lighted by the Stars.

By *them* best lighted are the paths of *thought*;
Nights are their *days*, their most illumin'd hours.

By *day*, the soul, o'erborne by life's career, 115
Stunn'd by the din, and giddy with the glare,
Reels far from reason, jostled by the throng.

By *day* the soul is passive, all her thoughts
Impos'd, precarious, broken ere mature.

By *night*, from objects free, from passion cool, 120
Thoughts uncontrol'd, and unimpres'd, the births
Of pure election, arbitrary range,

Not to the limits of *one* world confin'd;

But from *ethereal* travels light on *earth*,

As voyagers drop anchor, for repose. 125

Let Indians, and the gay, like Indians, fond
Of feather'd fopperies, the sun adore:

Darkness has more divinity for me;

It strikes thought inward; it drives back the soul

To settle on Herself, our point supreme! 130

There lies our theatre! there sits our judge.

Darkness the curtain drops o'er life's dull scene;

'Tis the kind hand of Providence stretcht out

'Twixt man and vanity; 'tis *reason's* reign,

And *virtue's* too; these tutelary shades 135

Are man's *asylum* from the tainted throng.

Night is the good man's *friend*, and *guardian* too;

It no less *rescues* virtue, than *inspires*.

Virtue, for ever frail, as fair, below,

Her tender nature suffers in the croud, 140

Nor

Nor touches on the world, without a stain :
 The world's infectious ; few bring back at eve,
 Immaculate, the manners of the morn.
 Something we *thought*, is blotted ; we *resolv'd*,
 Is shaken ; we *renounc'd*, returns again. 145
 Each *salutation* may slide in a fin
 Unthought before, or fix a former flaw.
 Nor is it strange : *light, motion, concourse, noise*,
 All, scatter us abroad ; thought outward-bound,
 Neglectful of our home affairs, flies off 150
 In fume and dissipation, quits her charge,
 And leaves the breast unguarded to the foe.
 Present example gets within our guard,
 And acts with *double* force, by few repell'd.
Ambition fires ambition ; *love of gain* 155
 Strikes, like a pestilence, from breast to breast ;
Riot, pride, perfidy, blue vapours breathe ;
 And *inhumanity* is caught from man,
 From smiling man. A slight, a single glance,
 And shot at random, often has brought home 160
 A sudden fever, to the throbbing heart,
 Of *envy, rancour, or impure desire*.
 We see, we hear, with peril ; *safety* dwells
 Remote from *multitude* ; the world's a school
 Of *wrong*, and what proficients swarm around ! 165
 We must, or imitate, or disapprove ;
 Must list as their accomplices, or foes ;
That stains our innocence ; *this* wounds our peace.
 From nature's birth, hence, *wisdom* has been smit
 With sweet recess, and languisht for the shade. 170

This

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 97

This sacred shade, and solitude, what is it?
 'Tis the felt presence of the Deity.
 Few are the faults we flatter when alone.
Vice sinks in her allurements, is ungilt,
 And looks, like other objects, black by night. 175
 By night an Atheist half-believes a God.

Night is fair virtue's immemorial friend;
 The conscious moon, through every distant age,
 Has held a lamp to *wisdom*, and let fall,
 On *contemplation's* eye, her purging ray. 180

The fam'd Athenian, he who woo'd from heaven
Philosophy the fair, to dwell with men,
 And form their manners, not inflame their pride,
 While o'er his head, as fearful to molest
 His labouring mind, the stars in silence slide, 185
 And seem all gazing on their future guest,
 See him soliciting his ardent suit

In *private* audience: all the live-long night,
 Rigid in thought, and motionless, he stands;
 Nor quits his theme, or posture, till the sun 190
 (Rude drunkard rising rosy from the main!)
 Disturbs his nobler intellectual beam,
 And gives him to the tumult of the world.

Hail, precious moments! stol'n from the black waste
 Of murder'd time! Auspicious *midnight*! hail! 195
 The world excluded, every passion hush,
 And open'd a calm intercourse with heaven,
Here the soul sits in council; ponders *past*,
 Predestines *future* action; sees, not feels,
 Tumultuous life, and reasons with the storm; 200

All her lyes answers, and *thinks* down her charms.

What awful joy! What mental liberty!

I am not pent in darknes; rather say

(If not too bold) in darknes I'm embower'd.

Delightful gloom! the cluſtering thoughts around 205

Spontaneous riſe, and bloſſom in the ſhade;

But droop by day, and ficken in the *ſun*.

Thought borrows light elſewhere; from that *fiſt* fire,

Fountain of animation! whence deſcends

Urania, my celeftial gueſt! who deigns 210

Nightly to viſit me, ſo mean; and *now*,

Conſcious how needful diſcipline to man,

From pleaſing dalliance with the charms of *night*

My wandering thought recalls, to what excites

Far other beat of heart! Narciſſa's tomb! 215

Or is it feeble nature calls me back,

And breaks my ſpirit into grief again?

Is it a Stygian vapour in my blood?

A cold, ſlow puddle, creeping through my veins?

Or is it thus with all men?—Thus with all. 220

What are we? How unequal! Now we ſoar,

And now we ſink; to be the *ſame*, tranſcends

Our preſent prowels. Dearly pays the *ſoul*

For lodging ill; too dearly rents her clay.

Reaſon, a baffled counſellor! but adds 225

The bluſh of weakneſs to the bane of woe.

The nobleſt ſpirit, fighting her hard fate,

In this damp, duſky region, charg'd with ſtorms,

But feebly flutters, yet untaught to fly;

Or, flying, ſhort her flight, and ſure her fall. 230

Our

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 99

Our utmost strength, when down, to rise again ;
And not to *yield*, though *beaten*, all our praise.

'Tis vain to seek in men for more than man.
Though proud in promise, big in previous thought,
Experience damps our triumph. I, who late, 235

Emerging from the shadows of the grave,
Where *grief* detain'd me prisoner, mounting high,
Threw wide the gates of everlasting day,
And call'd mankind to glory, shook off *pain*,
Mortality shook off, in æther pure, 240

And struck the stars ; *now* feel my spirits fail ;
They drop me from the zenith ; down I rush,
Like him whom fable fledg'd with waxen wings,
In sorrow drown'd—but not in sorrow lost.
How wretched is the man who never mourn'd ! 245

I dive for precious pearl in *sorrow's* stream :
Not so the thoughtless man that *only* grieves :
Takes all the torment, and rejects the gain
(Inestimable gain !) and gives heaven leave
To make him but more wretched, not more wise. 250

If wisdom is our lesson (and what else
Ennobles man ? what else have angels learnt ?)
Grief ! more proficient in thy school are made,
Than *genius*, or *proud learning*, e'er could boast.
Voracious learning, often over-fed, 255
Digests not into sense her motley meal.

This *book-case*, with dark booty almost burst,
This *forager* on others' wisdom, leaves
Her native farm, her *reason*, quite untill'd.
With mixt manure she surfeits the rank soil, 260

Dung'd, but not dress'd; and rich to beggary.
 A pomp untameable of weeds prevails.
 Her *servant's* wealth, incumber'd *wisdom* mourns.
 And what says *genius*? "Let the dull be *wise*."
Genius, too hard for right, can prove it wrong; 265
 And loves to boast, where blush men less inspir'd.
 It pleads exemption from the laws of *sense*;
 Considers *reason* as a leveler;
 And scorns to share a blessing with the croud.
 That wise it *could* be, thinks an ample claim 270
 To *glory*, and to *pleasure* gives the rest.
 Crassus but sleeps, Ardelio is undone.
Wisdom less shudders at a fool, than wit.
 But *wisdom* smiles, when humbled mortals weep.
 When *sorrow* wounds the breast, as ploughs the glebe, 275
 And hearts obdurate feel her softening shower;
 Her seed celestial, then, glad *wisdom* sows;
 Her golden harvest triumphs in the soil.
 If so, Narcissa! welcome my *Relapse*;
 I'll raise a tax on my calamity, 280
 And reap rich compensation from my pain.
 I'll range the plenteous intellectual field;
 And gather every thought of sovereign power
 To chase the moral maladies of man;
Thoughts, which may bear transplanting to the skies, 285
 Though natives of this coarse penurious soil;
 Nor wholly wither *there*, where *seraphs* sing,
 Refin'd, exalted, not annull'd, in heaven.
Reason, the sun that gives them birth, the same
 In either clime, though more illustrious *there*. 290

These



THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 101

These choicely cull'd, and elegantly rang'd,
 Shall form a garland for Narcissa's tomb;
 And, peradventure, of no fading flowers.

Say on what themes shall puzzled choice descend?

"Th' importance of contemplating the tomb; 295

"*Why* men decline it; *suicide's* foul birth;

"The various *kind of grief*; the *faults of age*;

"And *death's dread character*—invite my song."

And, first th' importance of our end survey'd.

Friends counsel quick dismissal of our grief: 300

Mistaken kindness! our hearts heal *too soon*.

Are *they* more kind than *he*, who struck the blow?

Who bid it do his errand in our hearts,

And banish peace, till *nobler guests* arrive,

And bring it back, a true and endless peace? 305

Calamities are *friends*: As glaring *day*

Of these unnumber'd lustres robs our sight;

Prosperity puts out unnumber'd thoughts

Of import high, and light divine, to man.

The man how blest, who, sick of gaudy scenes, 310

(Scenes apt to thrust between Us and Ourselves!)

Is led by choice to take his favourite walk,

Beneath *death's* gloomy, silent, cypress shades,

Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray;

To read his monuments, to weigh his dust, 315

Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs!

Lorenzo! read with me Narcissa's stone;

(Narcissa was thy favourite) let us read

Her *moral* stone; few doctors preach so well;

Few orators so tenderly can touch 320

The feeling heart. What *pathos* in the *date*!
 Apt words can strike: and yet in them we see
 Faint images of what we, *here*, enjoy.

What cause have *we* to build on length of life?
Temptations seize, when *fear* is laid asleep; 325
 And ill foreboded is our strongest guard.

See from her tomb, as from an humbler shrine,
Truth, radiant goddess! fallies on my soul,
 And puts *delusion's* dusky train to flight;
 Dispels the mists our sultry *passions* raise, 330
 From objects low, terrestrial, and obscene;
 And shews the *real* estimate of things;
 Which no man, unafflicted, ever saw;
 Pulls off the veil from *virtue's* rising charms;
 Detects *temptation* in a thousand lyes. 335

Truth bids me look on men, as *autumn* leaves,
 And all they bleed for, as the summer's dust,
 Driven by the whirlwind: lighted by her beams,
 I widen my horizon, gain new powers,
 See things invisible, feel things remote, 340
 Am present with futurities; think nought
 'To man so foreign, as the joys *possess*;
 Nought so much his, as those beyond the grave.

No *folly* keeps its colour in *her* sight;
 Pale *worldly wisdom* loses all her charms; 345
 In pompous promise, from her schemes profound,
 If future fate she plans, 'tis all in leaves,
 Like Sibyl, unsubstantial, fleeting blifs!
 At the first blast it vanishes in air.

Not so, *celestial*: wouldst thou know, Lorenzo! 350

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 103

How differ *worldly wisdom*, and *divine*?
 Just as the waning, and the waxing moon.
 More empty *worldly wisdom* every day;
 And every day more fair her *rival* shines.
 When *later*, there 's less time to play the fool. 355

Soon our whole term for wisdom is expir'd
 (Thou know'st she calls no council in the grave):
 And everlasting fool is writ in fire,
 Or *real* wisdom wafts us to the skies.

As worldly schemes resemble Sibyls' leaves, 360
 The good man's days to Sibyls' books compare,
 (In antient story read, thou know'st the tale)
 In price still rising, as in number less,
 Inestimable quite his final hour.

For That who thrones can offer, offer thrones; 365
 Insolvent worlds the purchase cannot pay.

"Oh let me die his death!" all nature cries.
 "Then live his life."—All nature falters there.
 Our great physician daily to consult,

To commune with the *grave*, our only cure. 370

What grave prescribes the best?—A friend's; and yet,
 From a friend's grave how soon we disengage!
 Ev'n to the dearest, as his marble, cold.

Why are friends raviht from us? 'Tis to bind,
 By soft *affection's* ties, on human hearts, 375
 The thought of death, which *reason*, too supine,
 Or misemploy'd, so rarely fastens *there*.

Nor reason, nor affection, no, nor both
 Combin'd, can break the witchcrafts of the world.
 Behold, th' inexorable hour at hand! 380

Behold, th' inexorable hour forgot !
 And to forget it, the chief *aim* of life,
 Though well to ponder it, is life's chief *end*.
 Is death, that ever threatening, ne'er remote,
 That all-important, and that only sure, 385
 (Come when he will) an unexpected guest ?
 Nay, though invited by the loudest calls
 Of blind *imprudence*, unexpected still ?
 Though numerous messengers are sent before,
 To warn his great arrival. What the cause, 390
 The wondrous cause, of this mysterious ill ?
 All heaven looks down astonish'd at the sight.
 Is it, that life has sown her *joys* so thick,
 We can't thrust in a single care between ?
 Is it, that life has such a swarm of *cares*, 395
 'The thought of death can't enter for the throng ?
 Is it, that *time* steals on with downy feet,
 Nor wakes *indulgence* from her golden dream ?
To-day is so like *yesterday*, it cheats ;
 We take the lying sister for the same. 400
 Life glides away, Lorenzo ! like a brook ;
 For ever changing, unperceiv'd the change.
 In the same brook none ever bath'd him twice :
 To the same life none ever twice awoke.
 We call the brook the same ; the same we think 405
 Our life, though still more rapid in its flow ;
 Nor mark the *much*, irrevocably laps'd,
 And mingled with the sea. Or shall we say
 (Retaining still the brook to bear us on)
 That life is like a vessel on the stream ? 410

In

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 105

In life embark'd, we smoothly down the tide
 Of *time* descend, but not on *time* intent;
 Amus'd, unconscious of the gliding wave;
 Till on a sudden we perceive a shock;
 We start, awake, look out; what see we there? 415
 Our brittle bark is burst on Charon's shore.

Is this the cause *death* flies all human thought?
 Or is it *judgment*, by the *will* struck blind,
 That domineering mistress of the soul!
 Like *him* so strong, by Dalilah the fair? 420
 Or is it *fear* turns startled *reason* back,
 From looking down a precipice so steep?
 'Tis dreadful; and the dread is wisely plac'd,
 By nature, conscious of the make of man.
 A dreadful friend it is, a terror kind, 425
 A flaming sword to guard the tree of life.
 By that unaw'd, in life's most smiling hour,
 The *good man* would repine; would *suffer* joys,
 And burn impatient for his promis'd skies.
 The *bad*, on each punctilious pique of pride, 430
 Or gloom of humour, would give rage the rein;
 Bound o'er the barrier, rush into the dark,
 And mar the schemes of Providence below.

What groan was that, Lorenzo?—Furies! rise;
 And drown in your less execrable yell 435
 Britannia's shame. There took her gloomy flight,
 On wing impetuous, a black fullen soul,
 Blasted from hell, with horrid lust of death.
 Thy friend, the brave, the gallant Altamont,
 So call'd, so thought—And *then* he fled the field. 440
 Less

Less base the fear of death, than fear of life.

O Britain, infamous for suicide!

An *island* in thy manners, far disjoin'd

From the whole world of *rational*s beside!

In ambient waves plunge thy polluted head, 445

Wash the dire stain, nor shock the continent.

But thou be shock'd, while I detect the cause

Of *self-assault*, expose the monster's birth,

And bid *abhorrence* hiss it round the world.

Blame not thy clime, nor chide the distant sun; 450

The sun is innocent, thy clime absolv'd:

Immoral climes kind nature never made.

The cause I sing, in Eden might prevail,

And proves, It is thy folly, not thy fate.

The soul of man (let man in homage bow, 455

Who names his *soul*), a native of the skies!

High-born, and free, her freedom should maintain,

Unfold, unmortgag'd for *earth's* little bribes.

Th' illustrious stranger, in this foreign land,

Like strangers, jealous of her dignity, 460

Studious of home, and ardent to return,

Of *earth* suspicious, *earth's* enchanted cup

With cool reserve light touching, should indulge,

On *immortality*, her godlike taste,

There take large draughts; make her chief banquet

there. 465

But some reject this sustenance divine;

To beggarly vile appetites descend;

Ask alms of *earth* for guests that came from *heaven*:

Sink into slaves; and sell, for *present* hire,

Their

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 107

Their rich reversion, and (what shares its fate) 470
 Their native *freedom*, to the prince who sways
 This nether world. And when his payments fail,
 When his foul basket gorges them no more,
 Or their pall'd palates loath the basket full;
 Are instantly, with wild demoniac rage, 475
 For breaking all the chains of Providence,
 And bursting their confinement; though fast barr'd
 By laws divine and human; guarded strong
 With *horrors* doubled to defend the pass,
 The blackest, *nature*, or *dire guilt* can raise; 480
 And moated round with fathomless *destruction*,
 Sure to receive, and whelm them in their fall.

Such, Britons! is the *cause*, to you unknown,
 Or worse, o'erlook'd; o'erlook'd by magistrates,
Thus criminals themselves. I grant the deed 485
 Is madness; but the madness of the *heart*.

And what is that? Our utmost bound of guilt.
 A sensual, unreflecting life, is big
 With monstrous births, and *Suicide*, to crown
 The black infernal brood. The bold to break 490
 Heaven's law supreme, and desperately rush
 Through sacred *nature's* murder, on their own,
 Because they never *think of death*, they die.

'Tis equally man's duty, glory, gain,
 At once to shun, and meditate, his end. 495

When by the bed of languishment we sit,
 (The seat of *wisdom*! if our choice, not fate)
 Or, o'er our dying friends, in anguish hang,
 Wipe the cold dew, or fix the sinking head,

Number their moments, and, in every clock, 500
 Start at the voice of an Eternity ;
 See the dim lamp of life just feebly lift
 An agonizing beam, at us to gaze,
 Then sink again, and quiver into death,
 That most pathetic herald of our own ; 505
 How read we such sad scenes? As sent to man
 In perfect vengeance? No; in pity sent,
 To melt him down, like wax, and then impress,
 Indelible, *death's* image on his heart ;
 Bleeding for others, trembling for himself. 510
 We bleed, we tremble, we forget, we smile.
 The mind turns fool, before the cheek is dry.
 Our quick-returning *folly* cancels all ;
 As the tide rushing rases what is writ
 In yielding sands, and smooths the letter'd shore. 515
 Lorenzo! hast thou ever weigh'd a *sigh*?
 Or study'd the philosophy of *tears*?
 (A science, yet unlectur'd in our schools!
 Hast thou descended deep into the breast,
 And seen their source? If not, descend with me, 520
 And trace these briny rivulets to their springs.
 Our funeral tears from different causes rise,
 As if from separate cisterns in the soul,
 Of *various kinds*, they flow. From tender hearts,
 By soft contagion call'd, *some* burst at once, 525
 And stream obsequious to the leading eye.
Some ask more time, by curious *art* distill'd.
Some hearts, in secret hard, unapt to melt,
 Struck by the magic of the public eye,

Like

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 109

Like Moses' smitten rock, gush out amain. 530

Some weep to share the fate of the deceas'd,
So high in merit, and to them so dear.

They dwell on praises, which they think they share ;
And thus, without a blush, commend themselves.

Some mourn, in proof, that something they could
love : 535

They weep not to *relieve* their grief, but *show*.

Some weep in perfect justice to the dead,
As conscious all their love is in arrear.

Some mischievously weep, not unappriz'd,
Tears, sometimes, aid the conquest of an eye. 540

With what address the soft Ephesians draw
Their fable net-work o'er entangled hearts !
As seen through crystal, how their roses glow,
While *Liquid pearl* runs trickling down their cheek ?

Of her's not prouder Egypt's wanton queen, 545
Carousing gems, herself dissolv'd in love.

Some weep at *death*, abstracted from the *dead*,
And celebrate, like Charles, their own decease.

By kind construction some are *deem'd* to weep,
Because a decent veil conceals their joy. 550

Some weep in earnest, and yet weep in vain ;
As deep in indiscretion, as in woe.

Passion, blind passion ! impotently pours
Tears, that deserve more tears ; while *reason* sleeps ;
Or gazes like an idiot, unconcern'd ; 555

Nor comprehends the meaning of the storm ;
Knows not it speaks to *her*, and her *alone*.

Irrationals all sorrow are beneath,

That

That noble gift! that privilege of man!
 From *sorrow's* pang, the birth of endless joy. 560
 But *these* are barren of that birth divine :
 They weep impetuous, as the summer storm,
 And full as short! The cruel *grief* soon tam'd,
 They make a pastime of the stings tale ;
 Far as the deep resounding knell, they spread 565
 The dreadful news, and hardly feel it more.
 No grain of *wisdom* pays them for their *woe*.

Half-round the globe, the tears pump'd up by *death*
 Are spent in watering vanities of life ;
 In making *folly* flourish still more fair. 570
 When the sick soul, her wonted stay withdrawn,
 Reclines on earth, and sorrows in the dust ;
 Instead of learning, *there*, her *true support*,
 Though there thrown down her true support to learn.
 Without heaven's aid, impatient to be blest, 575
 She crawls to the next shrub, or bramble vile,
 Though from the stately cedar's arms she fell ;
 With stale, forsworn embraces, clings anew,
 The stranger weds, and blossoms, as before,
 In all the fruitless fopperies of life : 580
 Presents her *weed*, well fancy'd, at the ball,
 And raffles for the *death's head* on the ring.

So wept Aurelia, till the destin'd youth
 Stept in, with his receipt for making smiles,
 And blanching fables into bridal bloom. 585
 So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate ;
 Who gave that angel boy, on whom he doats ;
 And dy'd to give him, orphan'd in his birth!

Not

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 111

Not such, Narcissa, my distress for Thee.
 I'll make an altar of thy sacred tomb, 590
 To sacrifice to wisdom. What wast Thou?
 "Young, gay, and fortunate!" Each yields a theme.
 I'll dwell on each, to shun thought more severe;
 (Heaven knows I labour with severer still!)
 I'll dwell on each, and quite exhaust thy death. 595
 A soul without reflection, like a pile
 Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.

And, first, thy *youth*. What says it to grey hairs!
 Narcissa, I'm become *thy* pupil *now*—
 Early, bright, transient, chaste, as morning dew, 600
 She sparkled, was exhal'd, and went to heaven.
Time on this head has snow'd; yet still 'tis borne
 Aloft; nor thinks but on *another's* grave.
 Cover'd with shame I speak it, *age* severe
 Old worn-out vice sets down for virtue fair; 605
 With graceless gravity, chastising youth,
 That youth chastis'd surpassing in a fault,
 Father of all, forgetfulness of death:
 As if, like objects pressing on the sight,
Death had advanc'd too near us to be seen: 610
 Or, that life's loan *time* ripen'd into right;
 And men might plead prescription from the grave;
 Deathless, from repetition of reprieve.
 Deathless? far from it! *such* are dead already;
 Their hearts are bury'd, and the world their grave. 615

Tell me, some god! my guardian angel! tell,
 What thus infatuates? what enchantment plants
 The phantom of an age 'twixt us and death

Already

Already at the door? He knocks, we hear,
 "And yet we will not hear. What mail defends 620
 Our untouch'd hearts? What miracle turns off
 The pointed thought, which from a thousand quivers
 Is daily darted, and is daily shunn'd?
 We stand, as in a battle, throngs on throngs
 Around us falling; wounded oft ourselves; 625
 Though bleeding with our wounds, immortal still!
 We see time's furrows on another's brow,
 And death intrench'd, preparing his assault;
 How few themselves in that just mirror see!
 Or, seeing, draw their inference as strong! 630
There death is certain; doubtful *here*: he *must*,
 And *soon*; we *may*, within an *age*, expire.
 Though grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green;
 Like damag'd clocks, whose hand and bell dissent;
Folly sings Six, while *Nature* points at Twelve. 635
 Absurd *longevity*! More, more, it cries:
 More life, more wealth, more trash of every kind.
 And wherefore mad for more, when relish fails?
Object, and *appetite*, must club for joy;
 Shall *folly* labour hard to mend the bow, 640
 Baubles, I mean, that strike us from *without*,
 While *nature* is relaxing every string?
 Ask *thought* for joy; grow rich, and hoard *within*.
 Think you the soul, when this life's rattles cease,
 Has nothing of more manly to succeed? 645
 Contract the taste immortal; learn ev'n now
 To relish what *alone* subsists hereafter.
Divine, or *none*, henceforth your joys for ever.

Of

Of *age* the glory is, to *wish* to die.
 That wish is *praise*, and *promise*; it applauds 650
 Past life, and promises our future blifs.
 What weakness see not children in their fires?
 Grand-climacterical absurdities!
 Grey-hair'd authority, to faults of youth,
 How shocking: It makes folly thrice a fool; 655
 And our first childhood might our last despise.
Peace and *esteem* is all that age can hope.
 Nothing but *wisdom* gives the *first*; the *last*,
 Nothing, but the *repute of being wise*.
Folly bars both; our age is quite undone. 660

What folly can be ranker? Like our shadows,
 Our wishes lengthen, as our sun declines.
 No wish should loiter, *then*, this side the grave.
 Our hearts should leave the world, before the knell
 Calls for our carcases to mend the soil. 665
 Enough to live in tempest, die in port;
Age should fly concourse, cover in retreat
 Defects of *judgment*; and the *will's* subdue;
 Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
 Of that vast ocean it must fail so soon; 670
 And put *good-works* on board; and wait the wind
 That shortly blows us into worlds unknown;
 If *unconsider'd* too, a dreadful scene!

All should be prophets to themselves; foresee
 Their future fate; their future fate foretaste; 675
 This art would waste the bitterness of death.
 The *thought* of death alone, the *fear* destroys.
 A disaffection to that precious thought

Is more than *midnight* darkness on the soul,
Which sleeps beneath it, on a *precipice*, 680
Puff'd off by the first blast, and lost for ever.

Dost ask, Lorenzo, why so warmly prest,
By repetition hammer'd on thine ear,
The thought of death? That thought is the machine,
The grand machine! that heaves us from the dust, 685
And rears us into men. That thought, ply'd home,
Will soon reduce the ghastly *precipice*

O'er-hanging hell, will soften the descent,
And gently slope our passage to the grave;
How warmly to be wish'd! What heart of flesh 690
Would trifle with tremendous? dare extremes?
Yawn o'er the fate of infinite? What hand,
Beyond the blackest brand of censure bold,
(To speak a language *too well* known to Thee)
Would at a moment give its *All* to chance, 695
And *stamp* the die for an eternity?

Aid me, Narcissa! aid me to keep pace
With *destiny*; and ere her scissars cut
My thread of life, to break this tougher thread
Of moral death, that ties me to the world. 700

Sting thou my slumbering *reason* to send forth
A thought of observation on the foe;
To sally; and survey the rapid march
Of his ten thousand messengers to man;
Who, Jehu-like, behind him turns them all, 705
All *accident* apart, by *nature* sign'd,
My warrant is gone out, though dormant yet;
Perhaps behind one moment lurks my fate.

Must

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 115

Must I then *forward* only look for death?

Backward I turn mine eye, and find him there. 710

Man is a self-survivor every year.

Man, like a stream, is in perpetual flow.

Death 's a destroyer of quotidian prey.

My *youth*, my *noon-tide*, His; my *yesterday*;

The bold invader shares the *present* hour. 715

Each moment on the former shuts the grave.

While man is growing, life is in decrease;

And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.

Our birth is nothing but our death begun;

As tapers waste, that instant they take fire. 720

Shall we then fear, lest that should come to pass,

Which comes to pass each moment of our lives?

If fear we must, let *that* death turn us pale,

Which murders *strength* and *ardour*; what remains

Should rather call on death, than dread his call. 725

Ye partners of my fault, and my decline!

Thoughtless of death, but when your neighbour's knell

(Rude visitant!) knocks hard at your dull sense,

And with its thunder scarce obtains your ear!

Be death your theme, in every place and hour; 730

Nor longer want, ye monumental Sires!

A brother tomb to tell you ye shall die.

That death you *dread* (so great is nature's skill!)

Know, you shall *court* before you shall enjoy.

But you are learn'd; in volumes, deep you sit; 735

In wisdom, shallow: pompous ignorance!

Would you be still more learned than the learn'd?

Learn well to know how much need not be known,

And what that *knowledge*, which impairs your *sense*.
 Our needful knowledge, like our needful food, 740
 Unhedg'd, lies open in life's common field;
 And bids all welcome to the vital feast.
 You scorn what lies before you in the page
 Of *nature*, and *experience*, moral truth;
 Of indispenfable, eternal fruit; 745
 Fruit, on which mortals feeding, turn to gods:
 And dive in *science* for distinguish'd names,
 Dishonest fomentation of your pride!
 Sinking in virtue, as you rise in fame.
 Your learning, like the *lunar* beam, affords 750
 Light, but not heat; it leaves you undevout,
 Frozen at heart, while speculation shines.
 Awake, ye curious indagators! fond
 Of knowing all, but what avails you known.
 If you would learn *death's character*, attend. 755
 All casts of conduct, all degrees of health,
 All dies of fortune, and all dates of age,
 Together shook in his impartial urn,
 Come forth at random: or, if choice is made,
 The choice is quite *sarcastic*, and insults 760
 All bold conjecture, and fond hopes of man.
 What countless multitudes not only *leave*,
 But deeply *disappoint* us, by their deaths!
 Though great our sorrow, greater our surprize.
 Like other tyrants, *death* delights to smite, 765
 What, smitten, most proclaims the pride of power,
 And arbitrary nod. His joy supreme,
 To bid the wretch survive the fortunate;
 i The

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 117

The feeble wrap th' athletic in his shroud ;
 And weeping fathers build their childrens tomb : 770

Me Thine, Narcissa !—What though short thy date ?

Virtue, not rolling funs, the mind matures.

That life is long, which answers life's great end.

The time that bears no fruit, deserves no name ;

The man of wisdom is the man of years. 775

In hoary youth Methuselems may die ;

O how *misdated* on their flattering tombs !

Narcissa's *youth* has lectur'd me thus far.

And can her *gaiety* give counsel too ?

That, like the Jews fam'd oracle of gems, 780

Sparkles instruction ; such as throws new light,

And opens more the *character of death* ;

Ill known to thee, Lorenzo ! *This* thy vaunt :

“ Give death his due, the wretched, and the old ;

“ Ev'n let him sweep his rubbish to the grave ; 785

“ Let him not violate kind nature's laws,

“ But own man born to *live* as well as *die*.”

Wretched and *old* thou giv'st him ; *young* and *gay*

He takes ; and *plunder* is a tyrant's joy.

What if I prove, “ That farthest from the *fear*, 790

“ Are often nearest to the *stroke* of Fate ?”

All, more than common, menaces an end.

A blaze betokens brevity of life :

As if bright embers should emit a flame,

Glad spirits sparkled from Narcissa's eye, 795

And made youth younger, and taught life to live.

As nature's opposites wage endless war,

For *this* offence, as treason to the deep

Inviolable stupor of his reign,
 Where *lust*, and turbulent *ambition*, sleep, 800
Death took swift vengeance. As he life detests,
 More life is still more odious ; and, reduc'd
 By conquest, aggrandizes more his power.
 But *wherefore* aggrandiz'd ? By heaven's decree,
 'To plant the soul on her eternal guard, 805
 In awful expectation of our end.
Thus runs death's dread commission : " Strike, but so
 " As most alarms the living by the dead."
 Hence *stratagem* delights him, and *surprize*,
 And cruel sport with man's securities. 810
 Not simple conquest, triumph is his aim ;
 And, where least fear'd, there conquest triumphs most.
This proves my bold assertion not too bold.

What are *his* arts to lay our fears asleep ?
 Tiberian arts his purposes wrap up 815
 In deep dissimulation's darkest night.
 Like princes unconfest in foreign courts,
 Who travel under cover, *death* assumes
 The name and look of *life*, and dwells among us.
 He takes all shapes that serve his black designs : 820
 Though master of a wider empire far
 Than that, o'er which the Roman eagle flew.
 Like Nero, he 's a fidler, charioteer,
 Or drives his *phaeton*, in female guise ;
 Quite unsuspected, till, the wheel beneath, 825
 His disarray'd oblation he devours.

He most affects the forms least like himself,
 His slender self. Hence burly corpulence

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 119

Is his familiar wear, and sleek disguise.
 Behind the rosy bloom he loves to lurk, 830
 Or ambush in a smile; or wanton dive
 In dimples deep; love's eddies, which draw in
 Unwary hearts, and sink them in despair.
 Such, on Narcissa's couch he loiter'd long
 Unknown; and, when detected, still was seen 835
 To *smile*; such peace has innocence in death!
 Most happy they! whom least his arts deceive.
 One eye on *death*, and one full fix'd on *heaven*,
 Becomes a mortal, and immortal man.
 Long on his wiles a piqu'd and jealous spy, 840
 I've seen, or dreamt I saw, the tyrant *dress*;
 Lay by his horrors, and put on his smiles.
 Say, Muse, for thou remember'st, call it back,
 And shew Lorenzo the surprizing scene;
 If 'twas a dream, his genius can explain. 845
 'Twas in a circle of the *gay* I stood.
Death would have enter'd; *Nature* push'd him back;
 Supported by a doctor of renown,
 His point he gain'd. Then artfully *dismist*
 The sage; for *death* design'd to be conceal'd. 850
 He gave an old vivacious *usurer*
 His meagre aspect, and his naked bones;
 In gratitude for plumping up his prey,
 A pamper'd *spendthrift*; whose fantastic air,
 Well-fashion'd figure, and cockaded brow, 855
 He took in change, and underneath the pride
 Of costly linen, tuck'd his filthy shroud.
 His crooked bow he straiten'd to a cane;

And hid his deadly shafts in Myra's eye.

The dreadful masquerader, thus equipt, 860

Out-fallies on adventures. Ask you where ?

Where is he not ? For his peculiar haunts,

Let *this* suffice ; sure as night follows day,

Death treads in *pleasure's* footsteps round the world,

When *pleasure* treads the paths, which *reason* shuns. 865

When, against *reason*, *riot* shuts the door,

And *gaiety* supplies the place of *sense*,

Then, foremost at the banquet and the ball,

Death leads the dance, or stamps the deadly die ;

Nor ever fails the midnight bowl to crown. 870

Gaily carousing to his gay compeers,

Only he laughs, to see them laugh at him,

As absent far : and when the revel burns,

When *fear* is banish'd, and triumphant thought,

Calling for all the joys beneath the moon, 875

Against him turns the key ; and bids him sup

With their progenitors—He drops his mask ;

Frowns out at full ; they start, despair, expire.

Scarce with more sudden terror and surprize,

From his black masque of nitre, touch'd by fire, 880

He bursts, expands, roars, blazes, and devours.

And is not this triumphant treachery,

And *more than simple conquest*, in the fiend ?

And now, Lorenzo, dost thou wrap thy soul

In soft security, because unknown 885

Which moment is commission'd to destroy ?

In *death's* uncertainty thy danger lies.

Is *death* uncertain ? Therefore Thou be fixt ;

Fixt

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 121

Fixt as a centinel, all eye, all ear,
All expectation of the coming foe. 890

Rouse, stand in arms, nor lean against thy spear;
Lest slumber steal one moment o'er thy soul,
And *fate* surprize thee nodding. Watch, be strong;
Thus give each day the merit, and renown,
Of dying well; though doom'd but once to die. 895
Nor let life's *period* hidden (as from most)
Hide too from Thee the precious *use* of life.

Early, not sudden, was Narcissa's fate.
Soon, not surprizing, *death* his visit paid.
Her thought went forth to meet him on his way, 900
Nor *gaiety* forgot it was to die:

Though *fortune* too (our third and final theme),
As an accomplice, play'd her gaudy plumes,
And every glittering gewgaw, on her sight,
To dazzle, and debauch it from its mark. 905

Death's dreadful advent is the mark of man;
And every thought that misses it, is blind.
Fortune, with *youth* and *gaiety*, conspir'd
To weave a *triple* wreath of happiness
(If happiness on earth) to crown her brow. 910

And could *death* charge through such a shining shield?

That shining shield *invites* the tyrant's spear,
As if to damp our elevated aims,
And strongly preach humility to man.

O how portentous is prosperity! 915

How, comet-like, it threatens, while it shines!
Few years but yield us proof of *death's* ambition,
To cull his victims from the fairest fold,

And

And sheath his shafts in all the pride of life.
 When flooded with abundance, purpled o'er 920
 With recent honours, bloom'd with every bliss,
 Set up in ostentation, made the gaze,
 The gaudy centre, of the public eye,
 When *fortune* thus has tofs'd her child in air,
 Snatcht from the covert of an humble state, 925
 How often have I seen him dropt at once,
 Our morning's envy! and our evening's sigh!
 As if her bounties were the signal given,
 The flowery wreath to mark the sacrifice,
 And call death's arrows on the destin'd prey. 930
High fortune seems in cruel league with *fate*.
 Ask you for what? To give his war on man
 The deeper dread, and more illustrious spoil;
 Thus to keep daring mortals more in awe.
 And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime 935
 Of life? To hang his airy nest on high,
 On the slight timber of the topmost bough,
 Rockt at each breeze, and menacing a fall?
 Granting grim *death* at equal distance *there*;
 Yet *peace* begins just where *ambition* ends. 940
 What makes man wretched? Happiness *deny'd*?
 Lorenzo! no: 'Tis happiness *disdain'd*.
She comes too meanly drest to win our smile;
 And calls herself *Content*, a homely name!
 Our flame is *transport*, and *content* our scorn. 945
Ambition turns, and shuts the door against her,
 And weds a *coil*, a *tempest*, in her stead;
 A *tempest* to warm *transport* near of kin.

Unknowing

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 123

Unknowing what our mortal state admits,
 Life's modest joys we ruin, while we raise ; 950
 And all our ecstasies are wounds to peace ;
 Peace, the full portion of mankind below.

And since thy peace is dear, ambitious youth !
 Of fortune fond ! as thoughtless of thy fate !
 As late I drew *death's* picture, to stir up 955
 Thy wholesome fears ; now, drawn in contrast, see
 Gay *fortune's*, thy vain hopes to reprimand.
 See, high in air, the sportive goddess hangs,
 Unlocks her casket, spreads her glittering ware,
 And calls the giddy winds to puff abroad 960
 Her random bounties o'er the gaping throng.
 All rush rapacious ; friends o'er trodden friends ;
 Sons o'er their fathers, subjects o'er their kings,
 Priests o'er their gods, and lovers o'er the fair,
 (Still *more* ador'd) to snatch the golden shower. 965

Gold glitters most, where *virtue* shines no more ;
 As stars from absent suns have leave to shine.
 O what a precious pack of votaries
 Unkennel'd from the prisons, and the stews,
 Pour in, all opening in their idol's praise ; 970
 All, ardent, eye each wafture of her hand,
 And, wide-expanding their voracious jaws,
 Morfel on morfel swallow down unchew'd,
 Untasted, through mad appetite for more ;
 Gorg'd to the throat, yet lean and ravenous still. 975
 Sagacious All, to trace the smallest game,
 And bold to seize the greatest. If (blest chance !)
 Court-zephyrs sweetly breathe, they launch, they fly,
 O'er

O'er just, o'er sacred, all-forbidden ground,
 Drunk with the burning scent of place or power, 980
 Staunch to the foot of lucre, till they die.

Or, if for men you take them, as I mark
 Their manners, thou their various fates survey.
 With aim mis-measur'd, and impetuous speed,
Some darting, strike their ardent wish far off, 985
 Through fury to possess it: *Some* succeed,
 But stumble, and let fall the taken prize.

From *some*, by 'sudden blasts, 'tis whirl'd away,
 And lodg'd in bosoms that ne'er dreamt of gain.
 To *some* it sticks so close, that, when torn off, 990
 Torn is the man, and mortal is the wound.

Some, o'er-~~enamour'd~~ of their bags, run mad,
 Groan under gold, yet weep for want of bread.
 Together *some* (unhappy rivals!) seize,
 And rend abundance into poverty; 995

Loud croaks the raven of the law, and smiles:
 Smiles too the goddess; but smiles most at those,
 (Just victims of exorbitant desire!)

Who perish at their own request, and, whelm'd
 Beneath her load of lavish grants, expire. 1000

Fortune is famous for her numbers slain,
 The number small, which happiness can bear.
 Though *various* for a while their fates; at last
 One curse involves them all: at death's approach,
 All read their riches backward into loss, 1005
 And mourn, in just proportion to their store.

And *death's* approach (if orthodox my song)
 Is hasten'd by the lure of *fortune's* smiles.

And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT V. 125

And art thou still a glutton of bright gold?
 And art thou still rapacious of thy ruin? 1010

Death loves a shining mark, a signal blow;
 A blow, which, while it executes, alarms;
 And startles thousands with a single fall.
 As when some stately growth of oak, or pine,
 Which nods aloft, and proudly spreads her shade, 1015
 The sun's defiance, and the flock's defence;
 By the strong strokes of labouring hinds subdued,
 Loud groans her last, and, rushing from her height,
 In cumbrous ruin, thunders to the ground:
 The conscious forest trembles at the shock, 1020
 And hill, and stream, and distant dale, resound.

These high-aim'd darts of *death*, and these alone,
 Should I collect, my quiver would be full.
 A quiver, which, suspended in mid air,
 Or near heaven's *archer*, in the zodiack, hung, 1025
 (So could it be) *should* draw the public eye,
 The gaze and contemplation of mankind!
 A constellation awful, yet benign,
 To guide the *gay* through life's tempestuous wave;
 Nor suffer them to strike the common rock, 1030
 "From greater danger to grow more secure,
 "And, wrapt in happiness, forget their fate."

Lyfander, happy past the common lot,
 Was warn'd of danger, but too *gay* to fear.
 He woo'd the fair *Aspasia*: she was kind: 1035
 In youth, form, fortune, fame, they both were blest:
 All who knew, envy'd; yet in envy lov'd:
 Can fancy form more finish'd happiness?

Fixt was the nuptial hour. Her stately dome
 Rose on the founding beach. The glittering spires 1040
 Float in the wave, and break against the shore :
 So break those glittering shadows, human joys.
 The faithless morning smil'd : he takes his leave,
 To re-embrace, in ecstasies, at eve.
 The rising storm forbids. The news arrives : 1045
 Untold, she saw it in her servant's eye.
 She felt it seen (her heart was apt to feel) ;
 And, drown'd, without the furious ocean's aid,
 In suffocating sorrows, shares his tomb.
 Now, round the sumptuous, bridal monument, 1050
 The guilty billows innocently roar ;
 And the rough sailor passing, drops a tear.
 A tear?—Can tears suffice?—But not for *me*.
 How vain our efforts ! and our arts how vain !
 The *distant* train of thought I took to shun, 1055
 Has thrown me on my fate—*These* died together ;
 Happy in ruin ! *undivorc'd* by death !
 Or ne'er to meet, or ne'er to part, is peace—
 Narcissa ! Pity bleeds at thought of thee.
 Yet thou wast only *near* me ; not *myself*. 1060
 Survive *myself*?—*That* cures all other woe.
 Narcissa lives ; Philander is forgot.
 O the soft commerce ! O the tender ties,
 Close-twisted with the fibres of the heart !
 Which, broken, break them ; and drain off the soul 1065
 Of human joy ; and make it pain to live—
 And is it then to live ? When *such* friends part,
 'Tis the survivor dies—My heart, no more.

NIGHT

NIGHT THE SIXTH.
THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.
IN TWO PARTS,

Containing the NATURE, PROOF, and IMPORTANCE,
of IMMORTALITY.

PART THE FIRST.

Where, among other Things, GLORY and RICHES
are particularly considered.

T O

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY PELHAM,
FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF THE TREASURY,
AND CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

P R E F A C E.

FEW ages have been deeper in dispute about religion than this. The dispute about religion, and the practice of it, seldom go together. The shorter, therefore, the dispute the better. I think it may be reduced to this single question, *Is man immortal, or is he not?* If he is not, all our disputes are mere amusements, or trials of skill. In this case, *truth, reason, religion*, which give our discourses such pomp and solemnity,

solemnity, are (as will be shewn) mere empty sound, without any meaning in them. But if man is immortal, it will behove him to be very serious about eternal consequences; or, in other words, to be truly religious. And this great fundamental truth, unestablished, or unawakened in the minds of men, is, I conceive, the *real* source and support of all our infidelity; how remote soever the particular objections advanced may seem to be from it.

Sensible appearances affect most men much more than *abstract reasonings*; and we daily see *bodies* drop around us, but the *soul* is invisible. The power which *inclination* has over the *judgment*, is greater than can be well conceived by those that have not had an experience of it; and of what numbers is it the sad interest that souls should not survive! The heathen world confessed, that they *rather* hoped, than *firmly believed* immortality! And how many heathens have we still amongst us! The sacred page assures us, that life and immortality is brought to light by the Gospel: but by how many is the Gospel rejected, or overlooked! From these considerations, and from my being, accidentally, privy to the sentiments of some particular persons, I have been long persuaded that most, if not all, our infidels (whatever name they take, and whatever scheme, for argument's sake, and to keep themselves in countenance, they patronize) are supported in their deplorable error, by some doubt of their *immortality*, at the bottom. And I am satisfied, that men once thoroughly convinced of their immortality, are not far from being

Christians. For it is hard to conceive, that a man fully conscious eternal pain or happiness will certainly be his lot, should not earnestly, and impartially, enquire after the surest means of escaping one, and securing the other. And of such an earnest and impartial inquiry, I well know the consequence.

Here, therefore, in proof of this most fundamental truth, some plain arguments are offered; arguments derived from principles which Infidels admit in common with Believers; arguments, which appear to me altogether irresistible; and such as, I am satisfied, will have great weight with all, who give themselves the small trouble of looking seriously into their own bosoms, and of observing, with any tolerable degree of attention, what daily passes round about them in the world. If some arguments shall, *here*, occur, which others have declined, they are submitted, with all deference, to better judgments in this, of all points the *most* important. For, as to the Being of a God, that is no longer disputed; but it is undisputed for this reason *only*; *viz.* because, where the least pretence to reason is admitted; it must for ever be indisputable. And of consequence no man can be betrayed into a dispute of that nature by *vanity*; which has a principal share in animating our modern combatants against other articles of our Belief.

N I G H T VI.

SHE * (for I know not yet her name in heaven)
 Not early, like Narcissa, left the scene;
 Nor sudden, like Philander. What avail?
 This seeming mitigation but inflames;
 This fancy'd medicine heightens the disease. 5
 The longer known, the closer still she grew;
 And gradual parting is a gradual death.
 'Tis the grim tyrant's engine, which extorts,
 By tardy pressure's still encreasing weight,
 From hardest hearts, confession of distress. 10
 O the long, dark approach through years of pain,
 Death's gallery! (might I dare to call it so)
 With dismal *doubt*, and fable *terror*, hung;
 Sick *hope's* pale lamp its only glimmering ray:
 There, fate my melancholy walk ordain'd, 15
 Forbid *self-love* itself to flatter, there.
 How oft I gaz'd, prophetically sad!
 How oft I saw her dead, while yet in smiles!
 In smiles she sunk *her* grief to lessen *mine*.
 She spoke me comfort, and increas'd my pain. 20
 Like powerful armies trenching at a town,
 By slow, and silent, but resistless sap,
 In his pale progress gently gaining ground,
Death urg'd his deadly siege; in spite of art,
 Of all the balmy blessings nature lends 25
 To succour frail humanity. Ye stars!
 (Not now *first* made familiar to my sight)

And

* Referring to Night V.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VI. 131

And thou, O moon! bear witness; many a night
 He tore the pillow from beneath my head,
 Ty'd down by sore attention to the shock, 30
 By ceaseless depredations on a life
 Dearer than that he left me. Dreadful post
 Of observation! darker every hour!
 Less dread the day that drove me to the brink,
 And pointed at eternity below; 35
 When my soul shudder'd at futurity;
 When, on a moment's point, th' important dye,
 Of life and death spun doubtful, ere it fell,
 And turn'd up life; my title to more woe.
 But why more woe? More comfort let it be. 40
 Nothing is dead, but that which wish'd to die;
 Nothing is dead, but wretchedness and pain;
 Nothing is dead, but what incumber'd, gall'd,
 Block'd up the pass, and barr'd from *real life*.
 Where dwells *that* wish most ardent of the wise? 45
 Too dark the sun to see it; highest stars
 Too low to reach it; *death*, great *death* alone,
 O'er stars and sun, triumphant, lands us there.
 Nor dreadful our *transition*; though the mind,
 An artist at creating self-alarms, 50
 Rich in expedients for inquietude,
 Is prone to paint it dreadful. Who can take
Death's portrait true? The tyrant never *sat*.
 Our sketch all random strokes, conjecture all;
 Close shuts the grave, nor tells one single tale. 55
Death, and his image rising in the brain,
 Bear faint resemblance; never are alike;

Fear shakes the pencil; *Fancy* loves excess;
 Dark *Ignorance* is lavish of her shades:
 And *these* the formidable picture draw. 60

But grant the worst; 'tis past; new prospects rise;
 And drop a veil eternal o'er her tomb.
 Far other views our contemplation claim,
 Views that o'erpay the rigours of our life;
 Views that suspend our agonies in death. 65

Wrapt in the thought of *immortality*,
 Wrapt in the single, the triumphant thought!
 Long life might lapse, age unperceiv'd come on;
 And find the soul unfated with her theme.

Its *nature, proof, importance*, fire my song. 70

O that my song could emulate my soul!
 Like her, immortal. No!—the soul disdains
 A mark so mean; far nobler hope inflames;
 If endless ages can outweigh an hour,
 Let not the *laurel*, but the *palm*, inspire. 75

Thy *nature, immortality!* who knows?
 And yet who knows it not? It is but life
 In stronger thread of brighter colour spun,
 And spun for ever; dipt by cruel fate
 In Stygian dye, how *black*, how *brittle here!* 80

How short our correspondence with the sun!
 And while it lasts, inglorious! Our best deeds,
 How wanting in their weight! Our highest joys
 Small cordials to support us in our pain,
 And give us strength to suffer. But how *great* 85

To mingle interests, converse, amities,
 With all the sons of *reason*, scatter'd wide

Through

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VI. 133

Through habitable space, wherever born,
 Howe'er endow'd! To live free citizens
 Of universal nature! To lay hold 90
 By more than feeble *faith* on the *Supreme!*
 To call heaven's rich unfathomable mines
 (Mines, which support archangels in their state)
 Our own! To rise in science, as in bliss,
 Initiate in the secrets of the skies! 95
 To read creation; read its mighty plan
 In the bare bosom of the Deity!
 The plan, and execution, to collate!
 To see, before each glance of piercing thought,
 All cloud, all shadow, blown remote; and leave 100
 No mystery—but that of Love Divine,
 Which lifts us on the seraph's flaming wing,
 From earth's *aceldama*, this field of blood,
 Of inward anguish, and of outward ill,
 From darkness, and from dust, to *such* a scene! 105
 Love's element! true joy's illustrious home!
 From earth's sad contrast (now deplor'd) more fair!
 What exquisite vicissitude of fate!
 Blest absolution of our blackest hour!
 Lorenzo, these are thoughts that make man Man, 110
 The wise illumine, aggrandize the great.
 How great (while yet we tread the kindred clod,
 And every moment fear to sink beneath
 The clod *we* tread; soon trodden by our sons)
 How great, in the wild whirl of *Time's* pursuits, 115
 To stop, and pause, involv'd in high presage,
 Through the long vista of a thousand years,

To stand contemplating our distant selves,
 As in a magnifying mirror seen,
 Enlarg'd, Ennobled, Elevate, Divine! 120
 To prophesy our own futurities ;
 To gaze in thought on what all thought transcends !
 To talk, with fellow-candidates, of joys
 As far beyond conception as desert,
 Ourselves th' astonish'd talkers, and the tale! 125
 Lorenzo, swells thy bosom at the thought ?
 The swell becomes thee : 'Tis an honest pride.
 Revere thyself ;—and yet thyself despise.
 His *nature* no man can o'er-rate ; and none
 Can under-rate his *merit*. Take good heed, 130
 Nor there be modest, where thou should'st be proud ;
 That almost universal error shun.
 How *just* our pride, when we behold *those* heights !
 Not those *ambition* paints in air, but those
Reason points out, and ardent *virtue* gains ; 135
 And angels emulate ; our pride how just !
 When mount we ? When these shackles cast ? When quit
 This cell of the creation ? This small nest,
 Stuck in a corner of the universe,
 Wrapt up in fleecy cloud, and fine-spun air ? 140
 Fine-spun to sense ; but gross and feculent
 To souls celestial ; souls ordain'd to breathe
 Ambrosial gales, and drink a purer sky ;
 Greatly triumphant on *Time's* farther shore,
 Where *virtue* reigns, enrich'd with full arrears ; 145
 While *pomp imperial* begs an alms of peace.
 In empire high, or in proud science deep,

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VI. 135

Ye born of earth! on what can you confer,
 With half the dignity, with half the gain,
 The gust, the glow of rational delight, 150
 As on *this* theme, which angels praise and share?
 Man's fates and favours are a theme in heaven.

What wretched repetition cloy's us *here*!

What periodic potions for the sick!
 Distemper'd bodies! and distemper'd minds! 155
 In an *Eternity*, what scenes shall strike!
 Adventures thicken! novelties surprize!
 What webs of wonder shall unravel, *there*!
 What full day pour on all the paths of heaven,
 And light th' Almighty's footsteps in the deep! 160
 How shall the blessed day of our discharge
 Unwind, at once, the labyrinths of fate,
 And straiten its inextricable maze!

If inextinguishable thirst in man

To know; how rich, how full, our banquet *there*! 165
There, not the *moral* world alone unfolds;
 The world *material*, lately seen in shades,
 And, in those shades, by fragments only seen,
 And seen those fragments by the *labouring* eye,
 Unbroken, then, illustrious and intire, 170
 Its ample sphere, its universal frame,
 In full dimensions, swells to the survey;
 And enters, at one glance, the ravisht sight.
 From some superior point (where, who can tell?
 Suffice it, 'tis a point where gods reside) 175
 How shall the stranger man's illumin'd eye,
 In the vast ocean of unbounded space,

Behold an infinite of floating worlds
 Divide the crystal waves of æther pure,
 In endless voyage, without port? The *least* 180
 Of these disseminated orbs, how great!
 Great as they are, what numbers These surpass,
 Huge, as Leviathan, to that small race,
 Those twinkling multitudes of little life,
 He swallows unperceiv'd? *Stupendous* These! 185
 Yet what are these stupendous to the *whole*?
 As particles, as atoms ill perceiv'd;
 As circulating globules in our veins;
 So vast the plan. Fecundity divine!
 Exuberant Source! perhaps, I wrong thee still. 190
 If admiration is a source of joy,
 What transport hence! yet this the least in heaven.
 What *this* to that illustrious robe *He* wears,
 Who tost this mass of wonders from his hand,
 A specimen, an earnest of his power? 195
 'Tis to *that* glory, whence all glory flows,
 As the mead's meanest floweret to the sun,
 Which gave it birth. But what, this sun of heaven?
 This bliss supreme of the supremely blest?
 Death, only death, the question can resolve. 200
 By death, cheap-bought th' ideas of our joy;
 The *bare* ideas! solid happiness
 So distant from its shadow chas'd below.
 And chase we still the phantom through the fire,
 O'er bog, and brake, and precipice, till death? 205
 And toil we still for sublunary pay?
 Defy the dangers of the field and flood,
 Or,

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Or, spider-like, spin out our precious All,
 Our *more* than vitals spin (if no regard
 To great futurity) in curious webs 210
 Of subtle thought, and exquisite design;
 (Fine net-work of the brain!) to catch a fly!
 The momentary buzz of vain renown!
 A *name!* a mortal immortality!

Or (meaner still!) instead of grasping air, 215
 For sordid *lucre* plunge we in the mire?
 Drudge, sweat, through every shame, for every gain,
 For vile contaminating trash; throw up
 Our hope in heaven, our dignity with man?
 And deify the dirt, matur'd to gold? 220
Ambition, avarice; the two *dæmons* these,
 Which goad through every flogh our human herd,
 Hard travel'd from the cradle to the grave.
 How low the wretches stoop! How steep they climb!
 These *dæmons* burn mankind; but most possess 225
 Lorenzo's bosom, and turn out the skies.

Is it in *time* to hide *eternity*?
 And why not in an atom on the shore
 To cover ocean? or a mote, the sun?
Glory and *wealth!* have they this blinding power? 230
 What if to *them* I prove Lorenzo blind?
 Would it surprize thee? Be thou then surpriz'd;
 Thou *neither* know'st: their *nature* learn from me.

Mark well, as foreign as *these subjects* seem,
 What close connexion ties them to my theme. 235
 First, what is *true* ambition? The pursuit
 Of glory, nothing *less* than man can share.

Were

Were they as vain as gaudy-minded man,
 As flatulent with fumes of self-applause,
 Their arts and conquests *animals* might boast, 240
 And claim their *laurel* crowns, as well as We;
 But not *celestial*. *Here we stand alone*;
 As in our form, distinct, pre-eminent;
 If *prone* in thought, our stature is our shame:
 And man should blush, his forehead meets the skies. 245
 The *visible* and *present* are for brutes,
 A slender portion! and a narrow bound!
 These *reason*, with an energy divine,
 O'erleaps; and claims the *future* and *unseen*;
 The vast unseen! the future fathomless! 250
 When the great soul buoys up to this high point,
 Leaving gross *nature's* sediments below,
 Then, and then only, Adam's offspring quits
 The sage and hero of the fields and woods,
 Asserts his rank, and rises into man. 255
This is ambition: *This* is *human* fire.

Can *parts* or *place* (two bold pretenders!) make
 Lorenzo great, and pluck him from the throng?

Genius and *art*, ambition's boasted wings,
 Our boast but ill deserve. A feeble aid! 260
 Dedalian enginery! If These alone
 Assist our flight, *fame's* flight is *glory's* fall.
 Heart merit wanting, mount we ne'er so high,
 Our height is but the gibbet of our name.
 A celebrated wretch, when I behold; 265
 When I behold a genius bright, and base,
 Of towering talents, and terrestrial aims;

Methinks

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Methinks I see, as thrown from her high sphere,
 The glorious fragments of a soul immortal,
 With rubbish mix'd, and glittering in the dust. 270
 Struck at the splendid, melancholy sight,
 At once *compassion* soft, and *envy*, rise—
 But wherefore envy? Talents angel-bright,
 If wanting worth, are shining instruments
 In false ambition's hand, to finish faults 275
 Illustrious, and give infamy renown.

Great *ill* is an atchievement of great *powers*.
 Plain sense but rarely leads us far astray.
Reason the means, *affections* chuse our end;
 Means have no merit, if our end amiss. 280
 If wrong our hearts, our heads are right in vain;
 What is a Pelham's head, to Pelham's heart?
 Hearts are proprietors of all applause.
 Right ends, *and* means, make wisdom: Worldly-wise
 Is but *half*-witted, at its highest praise. 285

Let *genius* then despair to make thee great;
 Nor flatter *station*: What is station high?
 'Tis a proud mendicant; it boasts, and begs;
 It begs an alms of homage from the throng,
 And oft the throng denies its charity. 290
 Monarchs and ministers are awful names;
 Whoever wear them, challenge our devoir.
 Religion, public order, both exact
External homage, and a supple knee,
 To beings pompously set up, to serve 295
 The meanest slave; *all more* is merit's due,
 Her sacred and inviolable right;

Nor

Nor ever paid the *monarch*, but the *man*.
 Our hearts ne'er bow but to superior *worth*;
 Nor ever fail of their allegiance there. 300
 Fools, indeed, drop the *man* in their account,
 And vote the *mantle* into majesty.
 Let the *small savage* boast his silver fur;
 His royal robe unborrow'd, and unbought,
 His *own*, descending fairly from his fires. 305
 Shall man be proud to wear *his* livery,
 And souls in *ermin* scorn a soul without?
 Can *place* or lessen us, or aggrandize?
 Pygmies are pygmies still, though perch'd on Alps;
 And pyramids are pyramids in vales. 310
 Each man makes his own stature, builds himself:
 Virtue alone outbuilds the *pyramids*:
 Her monuments shall last, when Egypt's fall.
 Of these sure truths dost thou demand the cause?
 The cause is lodg'd in *immortality*. 315
 Hear, and assent. Thy bosom burns for power;
 What station charms thee? I'll install thee there;
 'Tis thine. And art thou greater than *before*?
 Then thou before wast something *less* than man.
 Has thy new post betray'd thee into pride? 320
 That treacherous pride betrays thy dignity;
 That pride defames humanity, and calls
 The being mean, which *staffs* or *strings* can raise.
 That pride, like hooded hawks, in darkness soars,
 From blindness bold, and towering to the skies. 325
 'Tis born of *ignorance*, which knows not man;
 An angel's second; nor his second, long.

A Nero

A Nero quitting his imperial throne,
 And courting glory from the tinkling string,
 But faintly shadows an immortal soul, 330
 With empire's self, to pride, or rapture, fir'd.
 If nobler motives minister no cure,
 Ev'n vanity forbids thee to be vain.

High worth is elevated place: 'tis more;
 It makes the post stand candidate for Thee; 335
 Makes more than monarchs, makes an honest man;
 Though no *exchequer* it commands, 'tis wealth;
 And though it wears no *ribband*, 'tis renown;
 Renown, that would not quit thee, though disgrac'd,
 Nor leave thee pendent on a master's smile. 340

Other ambition nature interdicts;
 Nature proclaims it most absurd in man,
 By pointing at his origin, and end;
 Milk, and a swathe, *at first*, his whole demand;
 His whole domain, *at last*, a turf, or stone; 345
 To whom, *between*, a world may seem too small.

Souls *truly* great dart forward on the wing
 Of *just* ambition, to the grand result,
 The *curtain's* fall; *there*, see the buskin'd chief
 Unshod behind this momentary scene; 350
 Reduc'd to his own stature, low or high,
 As vice, or virtue, sinks him, or sublimes;
 And laugh at this fantastic mummery,
 This antic prelude of grotesque events,
 Where dwarfs are often stilted, and betray 355
 A littleness of soul by worlds o'er-run,
 And nations laid in blood. Dread sacrifice

To *Christian* pride! which had with horror shock'd
The darkeſt *pagans* offer'd to their gods.

O thou *moſt Christian* enemy to peace! 360
Again in arms? Again provoking fate?
That prince, and That alone, is truly great,
Who draws the ſword reluctant, gladly ſheathes;
On empire builds what empire far outweighs,
And makes his throne a ſcaffold to the ſkies. 365

Why *this* ſo rare? Becauſe forgot of all
The day of death; that venerable day,
Which ſits as judge; that day, which ſhall pronounce
On all our days, abſolve them, or condemn.
Lorenzo, never ſhut thy thought againſt it; 370
Be *levees* ne'er ſo full, afford it room,
And give it audience in the *cabinet*.

That friend conſulted, flatteries apart,
Will tell the fair, if thou art great, or mean.

To doat on aught may leave us, or be left, 375
Is That *ambition*? Then let flames *deſcend*,
Point to the centre their inverted ſpires,
And learn humiliation from a ſoul,
Which boaſts her lineage from celeftial fire.

Yet *theſe* are they the world pronounces wiſe; 380
The world, which cancels nature's right and wrong,
And caſts *new* wiſdom: ev'n the grave man lends
His ſolemn face, to countenance the coin.

Wiſdom for parts is madneſs for the whole.
This ſtamps the paradox, and gives us leave 385
To call the wiſeſt weak, the richeſt poor,
The moſt ambitious, unambitious, mean;

In

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In triumph, mean; and abject, on a throne.
 Nothing can make it less than mad in man,
 To put forth all his ardour, all his art, 390
 And give his soul her full unbounded flight,
 But reaching *Him*, who gave her wings to fly.
 When blind ambition quite mistakes her road,
 And downward pores, for that which shines above,
 Substantial happiness, and true renown; 395
 Then, like an idiot, gazing on the brook,
 We leap at stars, and fasten in the mud;
 At glory grasp, and sink in infamy.

Ambition! powerful source of good and ill!
 Thy strength in man, like length of wing in birds, 400
 When disengag'd from earth, with greater ease
 And swifter flight transports us to the skies;
 By toys entangled, or in guilt bemir'd,
 It turns a curse; it is our chain, and scourge,
 In this dark dungeon, where confin'd we lie, 405
 Close-grated by the sordid bars of *sense*;
 All prospect of eternity shut out;
 And, but for *execution*, ne'er set free.

With error in *ambition* justly charg'd,
 Find we Lorenzo wiser in his *wealth*? 410
 What if thy rental I reform? and draw
 An inventory *new* to set thee right?
 Where thy *true treasure*? Gold says, "Not in me:"
 And, "Not in me," the diamond. Gold is poor;
 India's insolvent: seek it in thyself, 415
 Seek in thy naked self, and find it there;
 In *being* so descended, form'd, endow'd;

Sky-

Sky-born, sky-guided, sky-returning race!
 Erect, immortal, rational, divine!
 In *senses*, which inherit earth, and heavens; 420
 Enjoy the various riches *nature* yields;
 Far nobler! *give* the riches they enjoy;
 Give taste to fruits; and harmony to groves;
 Their radiant beams to gold, and gold's bright fire;
 Take in, at once, the landscape of the world, 425
 At a small inlet, which a grain might close,
 And half create the wondrous world they see.
 Our *senses*, as our *reason*, are divine.
 But for the magic organ's powerful charm,
 Earth were a rude, uncolour'd chaos, still. 430
Objects are but th' occasion; ours th' *exploit*;
 Ours is the cloth, the pencil, and the paint,
 Which nature's admirable picture draws;
 And beautifies creation's ample dome.
 Like Milton's Eve, when gazing on the lake, 435
 Man makes the matchless image, man admires.
 Say then, Shall man, his thoughts all sent abroad,
 Superior wonders in himself forgot,
 His admiration waste on objects round,
 When heaven makes him the soul of all he sees? 440
 Absurd! not rare! so great, so mean, is man.
 What wealth in *senses* such as these! What wealth
 In *fancy*, fir'd to form a fairer scene
 Than *sense* surveys! In *memory's* firm record,
 Which, should it perish, could this world recall 445
 From the dark shadows of o'erwhelming years!
 In colours fresh, originally bright,

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Preserve its portrait, and report its fate !
 What wealth in *intellect*, that sovereign power !
 Which *sense* and *fancy* summons to the bar ; 450
 Interrogates, approves, or reprehends ;
 And from the mass those *underlings* import,
 From their materials sifted, and refin'd,
 And in *truth's* balance accurately weigh'd,
 Forms *art*, and *science*, *government*, and *law* ; 455
 The solid basis, and the beauteous frame,
 The vitals, and the grace of *civil* life !
 And *manners* (sad exception !) set aside,
 Strikes out, with master hand, a copy fair
 Of *His* idea, whose indulgent thought 460
 Long, long, ere chaos teem'd, plann'd *human* blifs.

What *wealth* in souls that soar, dive, range around,
 Disdaining limit, or from place, or time ;
 And hear at once, in thought extensive, hear
 Th' Almighty *Fiat*, and the *Trumpet's* sound ! 465
 Bold, on creation's outside walk, and view
 What was, and is, and *more* than e'er shall be ;
 Commanding, with omnipotence of thought,
 Creations new in fancy's field to rise !
 Souls, that can grasp whate'er th' Almighty made, 470
 And wander wild through things impossible !
 What *wealth*, in *faculties* of endless growth,
 In quenchless *passions* violent to crave,
 In *liberty* to chuse, in *power* to reach,
 And in *duration* (how thy riches rise !) 475
 Duration to *perpetuate*—boundless blifs !

Ask you, what *power* resides in feeble man
 That bliss to gain? Is *virtue's*, then, unknown?
 Virtue, our present peace, our future prize.
 Man's unprecious, natural estate, 480
 Improveable at will, in virtue lies;
 Its tenure sure; its income is divine.

High-built abundance, heap on heap! for what?
 To breed new wants, and beggar us the more;
 Then, make a richer scramble for the throng? 485
 Soon as this feeble pulse, which leaps so long
 Almost by miracle, is tir'd with play,
 Like rubbish from dislodging engines thrown,
 Our magazines of hoarded trifles fly;
 Fly diverse; fly to foreigners, to foes; 490
 New masters court, and call the former fool
 (How justly!) for dependance on their stay.
 Wide scatter, first, our play-things; then, our dust.

Dost court abundance for the sake of peace?
 Learn, and lament thy self-defeated scheme: 495
 Riches enable to be richer still;
 And, *richer still*, what mortal can resist?
 Thus wealth (a cruel task-master!) enjoins
 New toils, succeeding toils, an endless train!
 And murders peace, which taught it first to shine. 500
 The poor are *half* as wretched as the rich;
 Whose proud and painful privilege it is,
 At once, to bear a double load of woe;
 To feel the stings of *envy*, and of *want*,
 Outrageous want! both Indies cannot cure. 505

A com-

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VI. 147

A competence is vital to content.

Much wealth is corpulence, if not disease;

Sick, or incumber'd, is our happiness,

A *competence* is all we can enjoy.

O be content, where heaven can give no more! 510

More, like a flash of water from a lock,

Quickens our spirits' movement for an hour;

But soon its force is spent, nor rise our joys

Above our native temper's common stream.

Hence disappointment lurks in every prize, 515

As bees in flowers; and stings us with success.

The rich man, who denies it, proudly feigns;

Nor knows the wise are privy to the lye.

Much learning shews how little mortals *know*;

Much wealth, how little worldlings can enjoy: 520

At best, it babies us with endless toys,

And keeps us children till we drop to dust.

As monkeys at a mirror stand amaz'd,

They fail to find what they so plainly see;

Thus men, in shining riches, see the face 525

Of happiness, nor know it is a shade;

But gaze, and touch, and peep, and peep again,

And wish, and wonder it is absent still.

How few can rescue opulence from want!

Who lives to *nature*, rarely can be poor; 530

Who lives to *fancy*, never can be rich.

Poor is the man in debt; the man of gold,

In debt to *fortune*, trembles at her power.

The man of *reason* smiles at her, and death.

O what a patrimony this! A *being* 535

L 2 Of

Of such inherent strength and majesty,
 Not worlds possess can raise it; worlds destroy'd
 Can't injure; which holds on its glorious course,
 When thine, O *Nature!* ends; too blest to mourn
 Creation's obsequies. What treasure, *this!* 540

The *Monarch* is a beggar to the Man.

Immortal! Ages past, yet nothing gone!
 Morn without eve! a race without a goal!
 Unshorten'd by progression infinite!

Futurity for ever future! Life 545

Beginning still where computation ends!

'Tis the description of a *Deity!*

'Tis the description of the *meanest slave:*

The meanest slave dares then Lorenzo scorn?

The meanest slave thy *sovereign* glory shares. 550

Proud youth! fastidious of the *lower* world!

Man's *lawful* pride includes humility;

Stoops to the lowest; is too great to find

Inferiors; all immortal! brothers all!

Proprietors *eternal* of thy love. 555

Immortal! What can strike the *sense* so strong,

As this the *soul?* It thunders to the thought;

Reason amazes; *gratitude* o'erwhelms;

No more we slumber on the brink of fate;

Rous'd at the sound, th' exulting soul ascends, 560

And breathes her native air; an air that feeds

Ambitions high, and fans ethereal fires;

Quick kindles all that is divine within us;

Nor leaves one loitering thought beneath the stars.

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Has not Lorenzo's bosom caught the flame? 565

Immortal! Were but *one* immortal, how
Would others envy! How would thrones adore!
Because 'tis common, is the blessing lost?

How *this* ties up the bounteous hand of heaven!
O vain, vain, vain, all else! *Eternity!* 570

A glorious, and a *needful* refuge, *that*,
From vile imprisonment, in abject views.

'Tis *immortality*, 'tis that alone,
Amid life's *pains*, *abasement*, *emptiness*,
The soul can *comfort*, *elevate*, and *fill*. 575

That only, and that amply, this performs;
Lifts us above life's pains, her joys above;
Their terror *those*, and *these* their lustre lose;
Eternity depending covers all;

Eternity depending all atchieves; 580

Sets earth at distance; casts her into shades;
Blends her distinctions; abrogates her powers;
The low, the lofty, joyous, and severe,
Fortune's dread frowns, and fascinating smiles,
Make one promiscuous and neglected heap, 585
The man beneath; if I may call him man,
Whom *Immortality's* full force inspires.

Nothing terrestrial touches his high thought;
Suns shine unseen, and thunders roll unheard,
By minds quite conscious of their high descent, 590

Their present province, and their future prize;
Divinely darting upward every wish,
Warm on the wing, in glorious *absence* lost!

Doubt you this truth? Why labours your belief?
 If earth's whole orb by some due distanc'd eye 595
 Were seen at once, her towering Alps would sink,
 And level'd Atlas leave an even sphere.
 Thus *earth*, and all that earthly minds admire,
 Is swallow'd in *Eternity's* vast round.

To that stupendous view when souls awake, 600
 So large of late, so mountainous to man,
Time's toys subside; and *equal* all below.

Enthusiastic, this? Then all are weak,
 But rank enthusiasts. To this godlike height
 Some souls have soar'd; or martyrs ne'er had bled. 605
 And all *may* do, what has by *man* been done.

Who, beaten by these sublunary storms,
 Boundless, interminable joys can weigh,
 Unraptur'd, unexalted, uninflam'd?

What slave *unblest*, who from to-morrow's dawn 610
 Expects an empire? He forgets his chain,
 And, thron'd in thought, his *absent* sceptre waves.

And what a sceptre waits us! what a throne!
 Her own immense appointments to compute,
 Or comprehend her high prerogatives, 615
 In this her dark minority, how toils,
 How vainly pants, the human soul divine!
Too great the bounty seems for earthly joy;
 What heart but *trembles* at so strange a bliss?

In spite of all the truths the Muse has sung, 620
 Ne'er to be priz'd enough! enough revolv'd!
 Are there who wrap the world so close about them,
 They see no farther than the clouds; and dance

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On heedless vanity's fantastic toe,
 Till, stumbling at a straw, in their career, 625
 Headlong they plunge, where end both dance and song?
 Are there, Lorenzo? Is it possible?
 Are there on earth (let me not call them men)
 Who lodge a soul immortal in their breasts;
 Unconscious as the mountain of its ore; 630
 Or rock, of its inestimable gem?
 When rocks shall melt, and mountains vanish, *these*
 Shall know their treasure; treasure, *then*, no more.
 Are there (still more amazing!) who resist
 The rising thought? who smother, in its birth, 635
 The glorious truth? who struggle to be brutes?
 Who through this bosom-barrier burst their way,
 And, with revers'd ambition, strive to sink?
 Who labour downwards through th' opposing powers
 Of instinct, reason, and the world against them, 640
 To dismal hopes, and shelter in the shock
 Of endless night; night darker than the grave's?
 Who fight the proofs of immortality?
 With horrid zeal, and execrable arts,
 Work all their engines, level their black fires, 645
 To blot from man this attribute divine,
 (Than vital blood far dearer to the wife)
 Blasphemers, and rank atheists to *themselves*?
 To contradict them, see all nature rise!
 What object, what event, the moon beneath, 650
 But argues, or endears, an after-scene?
 To *reason* proves, or weds it to *desire*?
 All things proclaim it *needful*; some advance

One precious step beyond, and prove it *sure*.
 A thousand arguments swarm round my pen, 655
 From *heaven*, and *earth*, and *man*. Indulge a few
 By nature, as her *common habit*, worn;
 So *pressing* Providence a truth to teach,
 Which truth untaught, all other truths were vain.
 Thou! whose all-providential Eye surveys, 660
 Whose Hand directs, whose Spirit fills and warms
 Creation, and holds empire far beyond!
 Eternity's Inhabitant august!
 Of two Eternities amazing Lord!
 One past, ere man's or angel's had begun; 665
 Aid! while I rescue from the foe's assault
Thy glorious Immortality in *man*:
 A theme for ever, and for all, of weight,
 Of moment infinite! but relish'd most
 By those who love Thee most, who most adore. 670
Nature, thy daughter, ever-changing birth
 Of Thee the Great *Immutable*, to man
 Speaks wisdom; is his oracle supreme;
 And he who most consults her, is most wise.
 Lorenzo, to this heavenly Delphos haste; 675
 And come back all-immortal; all-divine:
 Look nature through, 'tis *revolution* all;
 All change; no death. Day follows night; and night
 The dying day; stars rise, and set, and rise;
 Earth takes th' example. See, the Summer gay, 680
 With her green chaplet, and ambrosial flowers,
 Droops into pallid Autumn: Winter grey,
 Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,
 Blows

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VI. 153.

Blows Autumn, and his golden fruits, away :
Then melts into the Spring: Soft Spring, with
breath 685

Favonian, from warm chambers of the south,
Recalls the *first*. All, to re-flourish, fades;
As in a wheel, all sinks, to re-ascend.
Emblems of man, who passes, not expires.

With this minute distinction, emblems just, 690
Nature revolves, but man *advances*; both
Eternal, *that* a circle, *this* a line.

That gravitates, *this* soars. Th' aspiring soul,
Ardent, and *tremulous*, like flame, ascends,
Zeal and *humility* her wings, to heaven. 695

The world of matter, with its various forms,
All dies into new life. Life born from death
Rolls the vast mass, and shall for ever roll.
No single atom, once in being, lost,

With change of counsel charges the Most High. 700.

What hence infers Lorenzo? Can it be?
Matter immortal? And shall *Spirit* die?
Above the nobler, shall less noble rise?
Shall Man alone, for whom all else revives,
No resurrection know? Shall Man alone, 705
Imperial Man! be sown in barren ground,
Less privileg'd than grain, on which he feeds?

Is Man, in whom alone is power to prize
The bliss of being, or with previous pain.
Deplore its period, by the spleen of fate, 710
Severely doom'd *death's* single unredeem'd?

If nature's *revolution* speaks aloud,
 In her *gradation*, hear her louder still.
 Look nature through, 'tis neat *gradation* all.
 By what minute degrees her scale ascends ! 715
 Each middle nature join'd at each extreme,
 To that above it join'd, to that beneath.
 Parts, into parts reciprocally shot,
 Abhor divorce : what love of union reigns !
 Here, dormant matter waits a call to life ; 720
 Half-life, half-death, join there ; here, life and sense ;
 There, sense from reason steals a glimmering ray ;
 Reason shines out in man. But how preserv'd
 The chain unbroken upward, to the realms
 Of incorporeal life ? those realms of bliss, 725
 Where death hath no dominion ? Grant a make
 Half-mortal, half-immortal ; earthy, part,
 And part ethereal ; grant the soul of man
 Eternal ; or in man the series ends,
 Wide yawns the gap ; connexion is no more ; 730
 Check'd *reason* halts ; her next step wants support ;
 Striving to climb, she tumbles from her scheme ;
 A scheme, *analogy* pronounc'd so true ;
Analogy, man's surest guide below.
 Thus far, *all nature* calls on thy belief. 735
 And will Lorenzo, careless of the call,
 False attestation on all nature charge,
 Rather than violate his league with death ?
 Renounce his reason, rather than renounce
 The dust belov'd, and run the *risque* of heaven ? 740
 O what indignity to deathless souls !

What

What treason to the majesty of man!

Of man *immortal*! Hear the lofty style:

“ If so decreed, th’ Almighty Will be done.

“ Let earth dissolve, yon pondrous orbs descend, 745

“ And grind us into dust. The *soul* is safe;

“ The *man* emerges; mounts above the wreck,

“ As towering flame from *nature’s* funeral pyre;

“ O’er devastation, as a gainer, smiles;

“ His charter, his inviolable rights, 750

“ Well pleas’d to learn from thunder’s impotence,

“ Death’s pointless darts, and hell’s defeated storms.”

But these chimeras touch not thee, Lorenzo!

The glories of the world thy sevenfold *shield*.

Other ambition than of crowns in air, 755

And superlunary felicities,

Thy bosom warm. I’ll cool it, if I can;

And turn those glories that inchant, against thee.

What ties thee to *this* life, proclaims the *next*.

If wise, the cause that wounds thee is thy cure. 760

Come, my *ambitious*! let us mount together

(To mount, Lorenzo never can refuse);

And from the clouds, where pride delights to dwell,

Look down on earth.—What see’st thou? Wondrous things!

Terrestrial wonders, that eclipse the skies. 765

What lengths of labour’d lands! what loaded seas!

Loaded by man, for pleasure, wealth, or war!

Seas, winds, and planets, into service brought,

His art acknowledge, and promote his ends.

Nor can th’ eternal rocks his will withstand; 770

What

What level'd mountains ! and what lifted vales !
 O'er vales and mountains sumptuous cities swell,
 And gild our landscape with their glittering spires.
 Some mid the wondering waves majestic rise ;
 And Neptune holds a mirror to their charms. 775
 Far greater still ! (what cannot mortal might ?)
 See, wide dominions ravish'd from the deep !
 The narrow'd deep with indignation foams.
 Or southward turn ; to *delicate* and *grand*,
 The finer arts there ripen in the sun. 780
 How the tall temples, as to meet their gods,
 Ascend the skies ! the proud triumphal arch
 Shews us half heaven beneath its ample bend.
 High through mid air, *here*, streams are taught to flow ;
 Whole rivers, *there*, laid by in basons, sleep. 785
Here, plains turn oceans ; *there*, vast oceans join
 Through kingdoms channel'd deep from shore to shore ;
 And chang'd creation takes its face from man.
 Beats thy brave breast for formidable scenes,
 Where fame and empire wait upon the sword ? 790
 See fields in blood ; hear naval thunders rise ;
 Britannia's voice ! that awes the world to peace.
 How yon enormous mole projecting breaks
 The mid-sea, furious waves ! Their roar amidst,
 Out-speaks the Deity, and says, " O main ! 795
 " Thus far, nor farther ; *new* restraints obey."
 Earth 's disembowel'd ! measur'd are the skies !
 Stars are detected in their deep recess !
 Creation widens ! vanquish'd *nature* yields !

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VI. 157

Her secrets are extorted! *art* prevails! 800

What monument of genius, spirit, power!

And now, Lorenzo! raptur'd at this scene,

Whose glories render heaven superfluous! say,

Whose footsteps these?—*Immortals* have been here.

Could less than souls immortal this have done? 805

Earth 's cover'd o'er with proofs of souls immortal;

And proofs of immortality *forgot*.

To flatter thy grand foible, I confess,

These are *ambition's* works: and these are great:

But *this*, the least immortal souls can do; 810

Transcend them all—But what can these transcend?

Dost ask me what?—One sigh for the *distrest*.

What then for *infidels*? A deeper sigh.

'Tis *moral grandeur* makes the mighty man:

How *little* they, who think aught *great* below! 815

All our ambitions death defeats, but one;

And that it crowns. Here cease we: but, ere long,

More powerful *proof* shall take the field against thee,

Stronger than death, and smiling at the tomb.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

BEING

THE SECOND PART

OF

THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

CONTAINING

THE NATURE, PROOF, AND IMPORTANCE,
OF IMMORTALITY.

P R E F A C E.

AS we are at war with the power, it were well if we were at war with the manners, of France. A land of *levity* is a land of *guilt*. A *serious mind* is the native soil of every virtue; and the single character that does true honour to mankind. The *soul's immortality* has been the favourite theme with the *serious* of all ages. Nor is it strange; it is a subject by far the most interesting, and important, that can enter the mind of man. Of highest moment this subject always *was* and always *will be*. Yet this its highest moment seems to admit of *increase*, at this day; a sort of *occasional* importance is superadded to the *natural* weight of it; if
that

that opinion which is advanced in the preface to the preceding *Night*, be just. It is there supposed, that all our *infidels*, whatever scheme, for argument's sake, and to keep themselves in countenance, they patronize, are betrayed into their deplorable error, by some doubts of their *immortality*, at the bottom. And the more I consider this point, the more I am persuaded of the truth of that opinion. Though the distrust of a *futurity* is a strange error; yet it is an error into which *bad* men may *naturally* be distressed. For it is impossible to bid defiance to final ruin, without some refuge in imagination, some presumption of escape. And what presumption is there? There are but two in nature; but two, within the compass of human thought. And these are—That either God *will* not, or *can* not punish. Considering the divine attributes, the *first* is too gross to be digested by our strongest wishes. And since *omnipotence* is as much a divine attribute as *holiness*, that God *cannot* punish, is as absurd a supposition, as the former. God certainly can punish as long as wicked men exist. In non-existence, therefore, is their only refuge; and, consequently, non-existence is their strongest wish. And strong wishes have a strange influence on our opinions; they bias the judgment in a manner, almost, incredible. And since on *this* member of their *alternative*, there are some very small *appearances* in their *favour*, and none at all on the *other*, they catch at this reed, they lay hold on this chimæra, to save themselves from the shock and horror of an *immediate* and *absolute* despair.

On

On reviewing my subject, by the light which *this* argument, and others of like tendency, threw upon it, I was more inclined than ever to pursue it, as it appeared to me to strike directly at the main root of *all* our infidelity. In the following pages it is, accordingly, pursued at large; and some arguments for immortality, new at least to me, are ventured on in them. There also the writer has made an attempt to set the gross absurdities and horrors of *annihilation* in a fuller and more affecting view, than is (I think) to be met with elsewhere.

The gentlemen, for whose sake this attempt was chiefly made, profess great admiration for the wisdom of heathen antiquity: what pity it is they are not sincere! If they were sincere, how would it mortify them to consider, with what contempt and abhorrence their notions would have been received by *those* whom they so much admire! What degree of contempt and abhorrence would fall to their share, may be conjectured by the following matter of fact (in my opinion) extremely memorable. Of all their heathen worthies, Socrates (it is well known) was the most guarded, dispassionate, and composed: yet this great master of temper was angry; and angry at his last hour; and angry with his friend; and angry for what deserved acknowledgement; angry for a right and tender instance of true friendship towards him. Is not this surprizing? What could be the cause? The cause was for his honour; it was a truly noble, though, perhaps, a too punctilious, regard for *immortality*: for his friend
asking

asking him, with such an affectionate concern as became a friend, "Where he should deposit his remains?" it was resented by Socrates, as implying a dishonourable supposition, that he could be so mean, as to have a regard for any thing, even in himself, that was *not immortal*.

This fact well considered would make our infidels withdraw their admiration from Socrates; or make them endeavour, by their imitation of this illustrious example, to share his glory: and, consequently, it would incline them to peruse the following pages with candour and impartiality: which is all I desire; and that, for *their* sakes: for I am persuaded, that an unprejudiced infidel must, necessarily, receive some advantageous impressions from them.

July 7, 1744.

CONTENTS OF THE SEVENTH NIGHT.

IN the sixth Night arguments were drawn, from *Nature*, in proof of *immortality*: here, others are drawn from *Man*: from his *Discontent*, Ver. 29; from his *Passions* and *Powers*, 64; from the gradual growth of *Reason*, 81; from his fear of *Death*, 86; from the nature of *Hope*, 104, and of *Virtue*, 139, &c. from *Knowledge* and *Love*, as being the most essential properties of the soul, 253; from the *Order of Creation*, 290, &c. from the nature of *Ambition*, 337, &c. *Avarice*, 460; *Pleasure*, 477; a digression on the grandeur of the *Passions*, 521. *Immortality* alone renders our present state intelligible, 545. An objection from the Stoics disbelief of immortality answered, 585. Endless questions unresolvable, but on supposition of our *immortality*, 606. The natural, most melancholy, and pathetic complaint of a worthy man, under the persuasion of no *futurity*, 653, &c. The gross absurdities and horrors of *annihilation* urged home on Lorenzo, 842, &c. The soul's vast *importance*, 990, &c. from whence it arises, 1078. The *Difficulty* of being an infidel, 1131, the *Infamy*, 1148, the *Cause*, 1183, and the *Character*, 1203, of an infidel state. What *true free-thinking* is, 1217. The *necessary* punishment of the false, 1271. Man's ruin is from *himself*, 1303. An infidel accuses himself of *guilt*, and *hypocrisy*; and that of the worst sort, 1319. His obligation to *Christians*, 1337. What danger he incurs by *Virtue*, 1345. *Vice* recommended to him, 1364. His high pretences to *Virtue* and *Benevolence*, exploded, 1373. The conclusion, on the nature of *Faith*, 1427. *Reason*, 1439; and *Hope*, 1443; with an apology for this attempt, 1470.

NIGHT

N I G H T VII.

HEAVEN gives the needful, but neglected, call.
 What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts,
 To wake the soul to sense of future scenes ?
Deaths stand, like *Mercurys*, in every way,
 And kindly point us to our journey's end. 5
 Pope, who couldst make immortals! art thou dead ?
 I give thee joy : nor will I take my leave ;
 So soon to follow. Man but dives in death ;
 Dives from the sun, in fairer day to rise ;
 The grave, his subterranean road to bliss. 10
 Yes, infinite indulgence plann'd it so ;
 Through various parts our glorious story runs ;
Time gives the preface, *endless age* unrolls
 The volume (ne'er unroll'd !) of human fate.
This, earth and skies * *already* have proclaim'd. 15
 The world's a prophecy of worlds to come ;
 And who, what God foretels (who speaks in *things*,
 Still louder than in *words*) shall dare deny ?
 If *nature's* arguments appear too weak,
 Turn a new leaf, and stronger read in *man*. 20
 If man sleeps on, untaught by what he *sees*,
 Can he prove infidel to what he *feels* ?
 He, whose blind thought futurity denies,
 Unconscious bears, Bellerophon! like thee,
 His own indictment ; he condemns himself ; 25

M 2

Who

* Night the Sixth.

Who reads his bosom, reads immortal life;
Or, *nature*, there, imposing on her sons,
Has written fables; man was made a *lye*.

Why *discontent* for ever harbour'd there?
Incurable consumption of our peace! 30

Resolve me, why the *cottager* and *king*,
He whom sea-sever'd realms obey, and he
Who steals his whole dominion from the waste,
Repelling winter blasts with mud and straw,
Disquieted alike, draw sigh for sigh, 35
In fate so distant, in complaint so near?

Is it, that things *terrestrial* can't content?
Deep in rich pasture, will thy flocks complain?
Not so; but to their master is deny'd
To share their sweet *serene*. Man, ill at ease, 40
In this, not *his own* place, this foreign field,
Where nature foddors him with other food
Than was ordain'd his cravings to suffice,
Poor in abundance, famish'd at a feast,
Sighs on for something *more*, when *most* enjoy'd. 45

Is heaven then kinder to thy flocks than thee?
Not so; thy pasture richer, but remote;
In part, remote; for that remoter part
Man bleats from *instinct*, though perhaps, debauch'd
By *sense*, his reason sleeps, nor dreams the cause. 50
The cause how obvious, when his reason wakes!
His grief is but his grandeur in disguise;
And discontent is *immortality*.

Shall sons of æther, shall the blood of heaven,
Set up their hopes on earth, and stable *here* 55
With

With brutal acquiescence in the mire?
 Lorenzo! no! they shall be nobly pain'd;
 The glorious *foreigners*, distress'd, shall sigh
 On thrones; and thou *congratulate* the sigh:
 Man's misery declares him born for bliss; 60
 His *anxious* heart asserts the truth I sing,
 And gives the *sceptic* in his head the lye.

Our heads, our hearts, our *passions*, and our *powers*,
 Speak the same language; call us to the skies;
 Unripen'd *these* in this inclement clime, 65
 Scarce rise above conjecture and mistake;
 And for this land of trifles *those* too strong
 Tumultuous rise, and tempest human life:
 What prize on earth can pay us for the storm?
 Meet objects for our *passions* heaven ordain'd, 70
 Objects that challenge all their fire, and leave
 No fault, but in defect: Blest Heaven! avert
 A bounded ardour for unbounded bliss!
 O for a bliss *unbounded!* far beneath
 A soul immortal, is a mortal joy. 75

Nor are our *powers* to perish immature;
 But, after feeble effort *here*, beneath
 A brighter sun, and in a nobler soil,
 Transplanted from this sublunary bed,
 Shall flourish fair, and put forth all their bloom. 80

Reason progressive, *instinct* is complete;
 Swift *instinct* leaps; slow *reason* feebly climbs.
Brutes soon their zenith reach; their little all
 Flows in at once; in ages they no more
 Could know, or do, or covet, or enjoy. 85

Were *man* to live coëval with the sun,
 The patriarch-pupil would be learning still;
 Yet, dying, leave his lesson half unlearnt.
 Men perish in advance, as if the sun
 Should set ere noon, in *eastern* oceans drown'd; 90
 If fit, with *dim, illustrious* to compare,
 The sun's *meridian* with the *soul* of man.
 To man, why, step-dame *nature!* so severe?
 Why thrown aside thy master-piece half-wrought,
 While meaner efforts thy last hand enjoy? 95
 Or, if abortively poor man must die,
 Nor reach, what reach he might, why die in *dread?*
 Why curst with foresight? Wise to misery?
 Why of his proud prerogative the prey?
 Why less pre-eminent in rank, than pain? 100
 His *immortality* alone can tell;
 Full ample fund to balance all amiss,
 And turn the scale in favour of the just!
 His *immortality* alone can solve
 The darkest of *ænigmas*, human *hope*; 105
 Of all the darkest, if at death we die.
Hope, eager hope, th' assassins of our joy,
 All *present* blessings treading under foot,
 Is scarce a milder tyrant than *despair*.
 With no past toils content, still planning new, 110
Hope turns us o'er to death alone for ease.
Possession, why more tasteless than *pursuit*?
 Why is a wish far dearer than a crown?
 That wish accomplish'd, why, the grave of bliss?
 Because, in the *great future* bury'd deep, 115
 Beyond

Beyond our plans of empire, and renown,
Lies *all* that man with ardour should pursue;
And He who made him, bent him to the right.

Man's heart th' Almighty to the *future* sets,
By secret and inviolable springs; 120

And makes his hope his sublunary joy.

Man's heart eats all things, and is hungry still;
"More, more!" the glutton cries: for something *new*

So rages appetite, if man can't mount,

He *will* descend. He starves on the *possest*. 125

Hence, the world's master, from ambition's spire,

In Caprea plung'd; and div'd beneath the brute.

In that rank fly why wallow'd empire's son

Supreme? Because he could no higher fly;

His *riot* was *ambition* in despair. 130

Old Rome consulted birds; Lorenzo! thou,
With more success, the flight of *hope* survey;
Of restless hope, for ever on the wing.

High-perch'd o'er every thought that falcon sits,

To fly at all that rises in her sight; 135

And, never stooping, but to mount again

Next moment, she betrays her aim's mistake,

And owns her quarry lodg'd beyond the grave.

There should it fail us (it must fail us there,

If *being* fails) more mournful riddles rise, 140

And *virtue* vies with *hope* in mystery.

Why *virtue*? Where its praise, its being, fled?

Virtue is true self-interest pursued:

What true self-interest of *quite*-mortal man?

To close with all that makes him happy *here*. 145

If vice (as sometimes) is our friend on earth,
 Then vice is virtue ; 'tis our *sovereign* good.
 In *self-applause* is virtue's golden prize ;
 No self-applause attends it on *thy* scheme :
 Whence self-applause ? From conscience of the right. 150
 And what is right, but means of happiness ?
 No means of happiness when *virtue* yields ;
 That basis failing, falls the building too,
 And lays in ruin every *virtuous* joy.

The rigid guardian of a blameless heart, 155
 So long rever'd, so long reputed wise,
 Is weak ; with rank knight-errandries o'er-run.
 Why beats thy bosom with illustrious dreams
 Of self-exposure, laudable, and great ?
 Of gallant enterprize, and glorious death ? 160
 Die for thy country ?—Thou romantic fool !
 Seize, seize the plank thyself, and let her sink :
 Thy *country* ! what to Thee ?—The *Godhead*, what ?
 (I speak with awe !) though He should bid thee bleed ?
 If, with thy blood, thy *final* hope is spilt, 165
 Nor can Omnipotence reward the blow,
 Be deaf ; preserve thy being ; disobey.

Nor is it disobedience : know, Lorenzo !
 Whate'er th' Almighty's subsequent command,
 His first command is *this* :—" Man, love thyself." 170
 In this alone, free-agents are *not* free.
 Existence is the basis, bliss the prize ;
 If *virtue* costs existence, 'tis a crime ;
 Bold violation of our law *supreme*,
 Black suicide ; though nations, which consult 175

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 169

Their gain, at thy expence, resound applause.

Since *virtue's* recompence is doubtful, *here,*

If man dies wholly, well may we demand,

Why is man *suffer'd* to be good in vain ?

Why to be good in vain, is man *injoin'd* ? 180

Why to be good in vain, is man *betray'd* ?

Betray'd by traitors lodg'd in his own breast,

By sweet complacencies from virtue felt ?

Why whispers *nature* lyes on virtue's part ?

Or if blind *instinct* (which assumes the name 185

Of sacred conscience) plays the fool in man,

Why *reason* made accomplice in the cheat ?

Why are the *wisest* loudest in her praise ?

Can man by *reason's* beam be led astray ?

Or, at his peril, *imitate his God* ? 190

Since virtue *sometimes* ruins us on earth,

Or *both* are true; or man survives the grave.

Or man survives the grave; or own, Lorenzo,

Thy boast supreme, a wild absurdity.

Dauntless thy spirit; cowards are thy scorn. 195

Grant man *immortal*, and thy scorn is just.

The man *immortal*, rationally brave,

Dares rush on death—because he cannot die.

But if man loses All, when life is lost,

He lives a coward, or a fool expires. 200

A *daring* infidel (and such there are,

From pride, example, lucre, rage, revenge,

Or pure *heroical* defect of thought),

Of all earth's madmen, most deserves a chain.

When to the grave we follow the renown'd 205

For

For valour, virtue, science, all we love,
 And all we praise; for *worth*, whose noon-tide beam,
 Enabling us to think in higher style,
 Mends our ideas of ethereal powers;
 Dream we, that lustre of the *moral* world 210
 Goes out in stench, and rottenness the close?
 Why was he wise to *know*, and warm to *praise*,
 And strenuous to *transcribe*, in human life,
 The Mind Almighty? Could it be, that fate,
 Just when the lineaments began to shine, 215
 And dawn the Deity, should snatch the draught,
 With night eternal blot it out, and give
 The skies alarm, lest *angels* too might die?
 If human souls, why not angelic too
 Extinguish'd? and a *solitary* God, 220
 O'er ghastly ruin, frowning from his throne?
 Shall we this moment gaze on God in man?
 The next, lose man for ever in the dust?
 From dust we disengage, or man *mistakes*;
 And there, where least his judgment fears a flaw, 225
Wisdom and *worth* how boldly he commends!
Wisdom and *worth* are sacred names; rever'd,
 Where not embrac'd; applauded! deify'd!
 Why not *compassion'd* too? If spirits die,
 Both are calamities, *inflicted* both, 230
 To make us but more wretched: *Wisdom's* eye
 Acute, for what? To spy more miseries;
 And *worth*, so recompens'd, new-points their stings.
 Or man surmounts the grave, or gain is loss,
 And worth exalted *humbles* us the more. 235

Thou

Thou wilt not patronize a scheme that makes
Weakness and *vice*, the refuge of mankind.
 "Has virtue, then, no joys?"—Yes, joys *dear-bought*.
 Talk ne'er so long, in this imperfect state,
 Virtue and vice are at eternal war. 240

Virtue's a combat; and who fights for nought?
 Or for precarious, or for small reward?
 Who virtue's *self-reward* so loud resound,
 Would take degrees *angelic* here below,
 And *virtue*, while they compliment, betray, 245
 By feeble motives, and unfaithful guards.

The crown, th' *unfading* crown, her soul inspires:
 'Tis That, and That alone, can countervail
 The body's treacheries, and the *world's* assaults:
 On earth's poor pay our famish'd virtue dies. 250
 Truth incontestable! In spite of all
 A Bayle has preach'd, or a Voltaire believ'd.

In man the more we dive, the more we see
 Heaven's signet stamping an *immortal* make.
 Dive to the bottom of his soul, the base 255
 Sustaining all; what find we? *Knowledge, Love*.
 As light and heat, essential to the sun,
These to the soul. And *why*, if souls expire?
 How little lovely *here*? How little known?
 Small *knowledge* we dig up with endless toil; 260
 And *love* unfeign'd may purchase perfect hate.

Why starv'd, on earth, our *angel* appetites;
 While *brutal* are indulg'd their fulsome fill?
 Were then capacities *divine* conferr'd,
 As a mock-diadem, in savage sport, 265

Rank

Rank insult of our pompous *poverty*,
 Which reaps but pain, from seeming claims so fair?
 In future age lies no redress? And shuts
Eternity the door on our complaint?
 If so, for what strange ends were mortals made! 270
 The worst to *wallow*, and the best to *weep*;
 The man who merits most, must most complain:
 Can we conceive a disregard in heaven,
 What the worst *perpetrate*, or best *endure*?
This cannot be. To *love*, and *know*, in man 275
 Is boundless appetite, and boundless power;
 And these demonstrate boundless objects too.
 Objects, powers, appetites, heaven suits in All;
 Nor, *nature* through, e'er violates this sweet,
 Eternal concord, on her tuneful string. 280
 Is *man* the sole exception from her laws?
Eternity struck off from human hope,
 (I speak with truth, but veneration too)
 Man is a monster, the reproach of heaven,
 A stain, a dark impenetrable cloud 285
 On nature's beauteous aspect; and deforms,
 (Amazing blot!) deforms her with her *lord*.
 If such is man's allotment, *what* is heaven?
 Or own the soul *immortal*, or blaspheme.
 Or own the soul immortal, or invert 290
 All *order*. Go, mock-majesty! go, man!
 And bow to thy superiors of the stall;
 Through every scene of *sense* superior far:
 They graze the turf untill'd; they drink the stream
 Unbrew'd, and ever full, and un-embitter'd 295
 With

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 173

With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs;
 Mankind's peculiar! *reason's* precious dower!
 No foreign clime *they* ransack for their robes;
 Nor brothers cite to the litigious bar;
Their good is good intire, unmixt, unmarr'd; 300
 They find a paradise in every field,
 On boughs *forbidden* where no curses hang:
 Their *ill* no more than strikes the sense; unstretcht
 By previous dread, or murmur in the rear:
 When the *worst* comes, it comes unfear'd; one stroke 305
 Begins, and ends, their woe: they die but *once*;
 Blest, incommunicable privilege! for which
 Proud man, who rules the globe, and reads the stars,
Philosopher, or *hero*, fights in vain.
 Account for this prerogative in brutes. 310
 No day, no glimpse of day, to solve the knot,
 But what beams on it from *eternity*.
 O sole, and sweet solution! That unties
 The difficult, and softens the severe;
 The cloud on *nature's* beauteous face dispels; 315
 Restores bright *order*; casts the brute beneath;
 And re-inthrones us in supremacy
 Of joy, ev'n *here*: admit immortal life,
 And virtue is *knight-errantry* no more;
 Each *virtue* brings in hand a golden dower, 320
 Far richer in reversion: *Hope* exults;
 And though much bitter in our cup is thrown,
 Predominates, and gives the taste of heaven.
 O wherefore is the Deity so kind?
 Astonishing beyond astonishment! 325

Heaven

Heaven our reward—for heaven enjoy'd *below*.

Still unsubdued thy stubborn *heart*?—For *there*
The traitor lurks who doubts the truth I sing.
Reason is guiltless; *will* alone rebels.

What, in that stubborn heart, if I should find 330
New, unexpected witnesses against thee?

Ambition, pleasure, and the love of gain!
Canst thou suspect, that *these*, which make the soul
The *slave* of earth, should own her *heir* of heaven?

Canst thou suspect what makes us *disbelieve* 335
Our immortality, should prove it *sure*?

First, then, *ambition* summon to the bar.
Ambition's shame, extravagance, disgust,
And *inextinguishable nature*, speak.

Each much *deposes*; hear them in their turn. 340

Thy soul, how passionately fond of *fame*!
How anxious, that fond passion to conceal!
We blush, detected in designs on praise,
Though for best deeds, and from the best of men;
And why? Because *immortal*. Art divine 345
Has made the body tutor to the soul;

Heaven kindly gives our blood a *moral* flow;
Bids it ascend the glowing cheek, and there
Upbraid that little heart's inglorious aim,
Which stoops to court a character from man; 350
While o'er us in tremendous judgment sit
Far more than man, with *endless* praise, and blame.

Ambition's boundless appetite out-speaks
The verdict of its *shame*. When souls take fire
At high presumptions of their own desert, 355

Out

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 175

One age is poor applause; the mighty shout,
 The thunder by the living *few* begun,
 Late time must echo; worlds unborn, resound.
 We wish our names *eternally* to live:
 Wild dream, which ne'er had haunted human thought, 360
 Had not our natures been *eternal* too.

Instinct points out an interest in hereafter;
 But our blind *reason* sees not *where* it lies;
 Or, seeing, gives the substance for the shade.

Fame is the shade of immortality, 365
 And in itself a shadow. Soon as caught,
 Contemn'd; it shrinks to nothing in the grasp.
 Consult th' ambitious, 'tis ambition's cure.

“And is This all?” cry'd Cæsar at his height,
Disgusted. This *third* proof ambition brings 370
 Of immortality. The first in fame,
 Observe him near, your envy will abate:
 Sham'd at the disproportion vast, between
 The passion and the purchase, he will sigh
 At *such* success, and blush at his renown. 375

And why? Because far richer prize invites
 His heart; far more illustrious glory calls;
 It calls in whispers, yet the deafest hear.

And can ambition a *fourth* proof supply?
 It can, and stronger than the former three; 380
 Yet quite o'er-look'd by some *reputed* wife.
 Though disappointments in ambition *pain*,
 And though success *disgusts*; yet still, Lorenzo!
 In vain we strive to pluck it from our hearts;
 By nature planted for the noblest ends. 385

Abfurd the fam'd advice to Pyrrhus given,
 More prais'd, than ponder'd; specious, but unfound;
 Sooner that hero's *fword* the world had quell'd,
 Than *reason*, his ambition. Man *must* soar.

An obstinate activity within, 390

An insuppressive spring, will tofs him up
 In spite of *fortune's* load. Not kings alone,
 Each villager has his ambition too ;

No *Sultan* prouder than his fetter'd slave :
 Slaves build their little Babylons of straw, 395

Echo the proud Assyrian in their hearts,
 And cry,—“ Behold the wonders of my might !”

And why ? Because *immortal* as their lord ;

And souls immortal must for ever heave

At something great ; the glitter, or the gold ; 400

The praise of mortals, or the praise of heaven.

Nor absolutely vain is *human* praise,

When human is supported by *divine*.

I 'll introduce Lorenzo to Himself ;

Pleasure and *pride* (bad masters !) share our hearts, 405

As love of *pleasure* is ordain'd to guard

And feed our bodies, and extend our race ;

The love of *praise* is planted to protect,

And propagate the glories of the mind.

What is it, but the *love of praise*, inspires, 410

Matures, refines, embellishes, exalts,

Earth's happiness ? From *that*, the delicate,

The grand, the marvellous, of *civil* life,

Want and *convenience*, under-workers, lay

The basis, on which *love of glory* builds. 415

Not

Nor is *thy* life, O *virtue* ! less in debt
 To praise, thy secret stimulating friend.
 Were men not *proud*, what merit should we miss !
Pride made the virtues of the pagan world.
 Praise is the salt that seasons *right* to man, 420
 And whets his appetite for *moral* good.
 Thirst of applause is virtue's *second* guard ;
Reason, her first ; but reason wants an aid ;
 Our *private* reason is a flatterer ;
 Thirst of applause calls *public* judgment in, 425
 To poise our own, to keep an even scale,
 And give endanger'd virtue fairer play.

Here a *fifth* proof arises, stronger still :
 Why this so nice construction of our hearts ?
 These delicate moralities of *sense* ; 430
 This *constitutional* reserve of aid
 To succour virtue, when our *reason* fails ;
 If virtue, kept alive by care and toil,
 And, oft, the mark of injuries on earth,
 When labour'd to maturity (its bill 435
 Of disciplines, and pains, unpaid) must die ?
 Why freighted-rich, to dash against a rock ?
 Were man to perish when most fit to live,
 O how mis-spent were all these stratagems,
 By skill divine invowen in our frame ! 440
 Where are heaven's holiness and mercy fled ?
 Laughs heaven, at once, at *virtue*, and at *man* ?
 If not, why *that* discourag'd, *this* destroy'd ?

Thus far *ambition*. What says *avarice* ?
 This *her* chief maxim, which has long been *Thine* : 445

"The wise and wealthy are the same,"—I grant it.
 To store up treasure, with incessant toil,
This is man's province, *this* his highest praise.
 To this great end keen *instinct* stings him on.
 To guide that instinct, *reason!* is thy charge; 450
 'Tis thine to tell us where *true* treasure lies:
 But, reason failing to discharge her trust,
 Or to the deaf discharging it in vain,
 A blunder follows; and blind *industry*,
 Gall'd by the spur, but stranger to the course, 455
 (The course where stakes of more than gold are won)
 O'er-loading, with the cares of distant age,
 The jaded spirits of the *present* hour,
 Provides for an *eternity* below.

"Thou shalt not covet," is a wise command; 460
 But bounded to the wealth the sun surveys:
 Look farther, the command stands quite revers'd,
 And *avarice* is a virtue most divine.
 Is *faith* a refuge for our *happiness*?
 Most sure: and is it not for *reason* too? 465
 Nothing *this* world unriddles, but the *next*.
 Whence inextinguishable thirst of gain?
 From inextinguishable life in man:
 Man, if not meant, by *worth*, to reach the *skies*,
 Had wanted wing to fly so far in *guilt*. 470
 Sour grapes, I grant, *ambition*, *avarice*,
 Yet still their root is *immortality*:
 These its wild growths so bitter, and so base,
 (Pain and reproach!) *religion* can reclaim,
 Refine, exalt, throw down their poisonous lee, 475
 And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 179

And make them sparkle in the bowl of *bliss*.

See, the *third witness* laughs at bliss remote,
And falsely promises an Eden here :

Truth she shall speak for once, though prone to lye,
A common cheat, and *Pleasure* is her name. 480

To pleasure never was Lorenzo deaf ;
Then hear her now, now *first* thy *real* friend.

Since nature made us not more fond than *proud*
Of happiness (whence hypocrites in joy !
Makers of mirth ! artificers of smiles !) 485

Why should the joy most poignant *sense* affords
Burn us with blushes, and rebuke our pride ?—

Those heaven-born blushes tell us man *descends*,
Ev'n in the zenith of his *earthly* bliss :

Should *reason* take her infidel repose, 490

This honest *instinct* speaks our lineage high ;

This instinct calls on darkness to conceal

Our rapturous relation to the stalls.

Our *glory* covers us with noble *shame*,

And he that 's unconfounded, is *unmann'd*. 495

The man that blushes is not quite a *brute*.

Thus far with Thee, Lorenzo ! will I close,

Pleasure is good, and man for pleasure made ;

But pleasure full of glory, as of joy ;

Pleasure, which neither *blushes*, nor *expires*. 500

The witnesses are heard ; the cause is o'er ;

Let *conscience* file the sentence in her court,

Dearer than *deeds* that half a realm convey :

Thus seal'd by truth, th' authentic record runs.

" Know, All; know, infidels,—unapt to know! 505
 " 'Tis *immortality* your nature solves;
 " 'Tis *immortality* decyphers man,
 " And opens all the mysteries of his make.
 " Without it, half his *instincts* are a riddle;
 " Without it, all his *virtues* are a dream. 510
 " His very *crimes* attest his dignity;
 " His fateless thirst of *pleasure, gold, and fame,*
 " Declares him born for blessings *infinite*:
 " What less than infinite makes un-aburd
 " *Passions*, which *all* on earth but more inflames? 515
 " Fierce passions, so mis-measur'd to *this* scene,
 " Stretch'd out, like eagles wings, beyond our nest,
 " Far, far beyond the worth of all below,
 " For *earth* too large, presage a nobler flight,
 " And evidence our title to the *skies*." 520

Ye gentle theologues, of calmer kind!
 Whose constitution dictates to your pen,
 Who, cold yourselves, think ardour comes from hell!
 Think not our passions from *corruption* sprung,
 Though to corruption now they lend their wings; 525
 That is their *mistress*, not their *mother*. All
 (And justly) *reason* deem divine: I see,
 I feel a grandeur, in the *passions* too,
 Which speaks their high descent, and glorious end;
 Which speaks them rays of an eternal fire. 530
 In Paradise itself they burnt as strong,
 Ere Adam fell; though wiser in their aim,
 Like the proud Eastern, struck by providence,
 What though our *passions* are run mad, and stoop

With

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 181

With low, terrestrial appetite, to graze 535
 On trash, on toys, dethron'd from high desire?
 Yet still, through their disgrace, no feeble ray
 Of greatness shines, and tells us, whence they fell:
 But *these* (like that fall'n monarch when reclaim'd),
 When *reason* moderates the rein aright, 540
 Shall re-ascend, remount their former sphere,
 Where once they soar'd illustrious; ere seduc'd
 By wanton Eve's debauch, to stroll on earth,
 And set the sublunary world on fire.

But grant their phrensy lasts; their phrensy fails 545
 To disappoint *one* providential end,
 For which heaven blew up ardour in our hearts:
 Were *reason* silent, boundless *passion* speaks
 A future scene of boundless *objects* too,
 And brings glad tidings of *eternal* day. 550
Eternal day! 'Tis that enlightens All;
 And All, by that enlighten'd, proves it *sure*.
 Consider man as an *immortal* being,
 Intelligible All; and All is great;
 A crystalline transparency prevails, 555
 And strikes full lustre through the human sphere:
 Consider man as *mortal*, All is dark,
 And wretched; *reason* weeps at the survey.

The learn'd Lorenzo cries, "And let her weep,
 " Weak, *modern* reason: *Antient* times were wise. 560
 " *Authority*, that venerable guide,
 " Stands on my part; the fam'd Athenian porch
 " (And who for wisdom so renown'd as they?)
 " Deny'd this immortality to man."

I grant it; but affirm, they *prov'd* it too. 565

A riddle this!—Have patience; I'll explain.

What noble vanities, what moral flights,
Glittering through their romantic wisdom's page,
Make us, at once, despise them, and admire?

Fable is flat to these high-season'd fires; 570

They leave th' extravagance of song below.

“Flesh shall not feel; or, feeling, shall enjoy

“The dagger or the rack; to them, alike

“A bed of roses, or the burning bull.”

In men exploding all beyond the grave, 575

Strange doctrine, This! As *doctrine*, it was strange;

But not, as *prophecy*; for such it prov'd,

And, to their own amazement, was fulfill'd:

They feign'd a firmness *Christians* need not feign.

The *Christian* truly triumph'd in the flame: 580

The *Stoic* saw, in double wonder lost,

Wonder at Them, and wonder at Himself,

To find the bold adventures of his thought,

Not bold, and that he strove to lye in vain.

Whence, then, those thoughts? Those towering
thoughts, that flew 585

Such monstrous heights?—From *instinct*, and from *pride*.

The glorious *instinct* of a deathless soul,

Confus'dly conscious of her dignity,

Suggested truths they could not understand.

In *lust's* dominion, and in *passion's* storm, 590

Truth's system broken, scatter'd fragments lay,

As light in chaos, glimmering through the gloom:

Smit with the pomp of lofty sentiments,

Pleas'd

Pleas'd *pride* proclaim'd, what *reason* disbeliev'd.
Pride, like the Delphic priestess, with a swell, 195
 Rav'd nonsense, destin'd to be *future* sense,
 When life *immortal*, in full day, should shine;
 And *death's dark shadows* fly the gospel sun.
They spoke, what nothing but *immortal* souls
 Could speak; and thus the truth they question'd, prov'd.

Can then *absurdities*, as well as *crimes*,
 Speak man *immortal*? All things speak him so.
 Much has been urg'd: and dost thou call for more?
 Call; and with endless questions be distress'd,
 All unresolvable, if *earth* is all. 605

“ Why life, a moment; infinite, desire?
 “ Our wish, Eternity? Our home, the Grave?
 “ Heaven's *promise* dormant lies in human *hope*;
 “ Who *wishes* life immortal, proves it too.
 “ Why happiness pursued, though never found? 610
 “ Man's thirst of happiness declares *It is*,
 “ (For nature never gravitates to nought);
 “ That thirst unquench'd declares *It is not Here*.
 “ *My Lucia, Thy Clarissa*, call to thought;
 “ Why *cordial friendship* riveted so deep, 615
 “ As hearts to pierce at first, at parting, rend,
 “ If friend, and friendship, vanish in an hour?
 “ Is not This torment in the mask of joy?
 “ Why by *reflection* marr'd the joys of *sense*?
 “ Why *past*, and *future*, preying on our hearts, 620
 “ And putting all our *present* joys to death?
 “ Why labours *reason*? *instinct* were as well;

" Instinct far better ; what can *chuse*, can *err* :
 " O how *infallible* the thoughtless brute !
 " 'Twere well his *Holiness* were half as sure. 625
 " *Reason* with *inclination*, why at war ?
 " Why sense of *guilt* ? why *conscience* up in arms ?"
Conscience of guilt, is prophecy of pain,
 And bosom-council to decline the blow.
Reason with inclination ne'er had jarr'd, 630
 If nothing future paid forbearance Here :
 Thus on—These, and a thousand pleas uncall'd,
 All *promise*, some *ensure*, a second scene ;
 Which, were it *doubtful*, would be dearer far
 Than all things else most *certain* ; were it *false*, 635
 What *truth* on earth so precious as the lye ?
This world it gives us, let what will ensue ;
 This world it gives, in that high cordial, *hope* :
 The future of the present is the soul :
 How *this* life groans, when sever'd from the *next* ! 640
 Poor mutilated wretch, that disbelieves !
 By dark distrust his being cut in two,
 In *both* parts perishes ; *life* void of joy,
 Sad prelude of *Eternity* in pain !
 Couldst thou persuade me, the next life could fail 645
 Our ardent wishes ; how should I pour out
 My bleeding heart in anguish, *new*, as deep !
 Oh ! with what thoughts, thy *hope*, and my *despair*,
 Abhorr'd annihilation ! blasts the soul,
 And wide extends the bounds of human woe ! 650
 Could I believe Lorenzo's system true,
 In *this* black channel would my ravings run.

" Grief

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 185

- “ Grief from the *future* borrow'd peace, ere while.
“ The future *vanish'd!* and the present *pain'd!*
“ Strange import of unprecedented ill! 655
“ Fall, how profound! Like Lucifer's, the fall!
“ Unequal fate! His fall, without his guilt!
“ From where fond *hope* built her pavilion high,
“ The gods among, hurl'd headlong, hurl'd at once
“ To night! To *nothing*, darker still than night! 660
“ If 't was a *dream*, why wake me, my worst Foe,
“ Lorenzo! boastful of the name of Friend!
“ O for delusion! O for error still!
“ Could vengeance strike much stronger than to plant
“ A *thinking* being in a world like This, 665
“ Not over-rich before, *now* beggar'd quite;
“ More curst than at the *fall?*—The sun goes out!
“ The thorns shoot up! What thorns in every thought!
“ Why sense of better? It imbitters worse.
“ Why sense? why life? If but to sigh, then sink 670
“ To what I was! *twice* nothing! and much woe!
“ Woe, from heaven's bounties! woe from what was
“ went
“ To flatter most, high *intellectual powers*.
“ *Thought, virtue, knowledge!* blessings, by *thy* scheme,
“ All poison'd into pains. First, *knowledge*, once 675
“ My soul's ambition, *now* her greatest dread.
“ To *know myself*, true wisdom?—No, to shun
“ That shocking science, parent of despair!
“ Avert thy mirror: if I see, I die.
“ *Know my Creator?* Climb His blest abode 680
“ By painful speculation, pierce the veil,
“ Dive.

- " Dive in His nature, read His attributes,
 " And gaze in admiration—on a *foe*,
 " Obtruding life, with-holding happiness!
 " From the full rivers that surround his throne, 685
 " Not letting fall one drop of joy on man;
 " Man gasping for one drop, that he might cease
 " To curse his birth, nor envy *reptiles* more!
 " Ye sable clouds! ye darkest shades of night!
 " Hide *Him*, for ever hide Him, from my thought, 690
 " Once all my comfort; source, and soul of joy!
 " Now leagu'd with furies, and with * *Thee*, against me.
 " *Know His achievements?* Study His renown?
 " Contemplate this amazing universe,
 " Dropt from His hand, with miracles replete! 695
 " For what? 'Mid miracles of nobler name,
 " To find one miracle of *misery*?
 " To find the Being, which alone can *know*
 " And *praise* His works, a blemish on His praise?
 " Through nature's ample range, in thought, to stroll.
 " And start at *man*, the single mourner There,
 " Breathing high hope! chain'd down to pangs, and
 " death?
 " Knowing is suffering: and shall *virtue* share
 " The sigh of *knowledge*?—Virtue shares the sigh.
 " By straining up the steep of *excellent*, 705
 " By battles fought, and, from temptation, won,
 " What gain she, but the pang of seeing worth,
 " *Angelic* worth, soon shuffled in the dark
 " With every vice, and swept to *brutal* dust?
 " Merit

* Lorenzo.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 187

- “ Merit is madness ; virtue is a crime ; 710
 “ A crime to *reason*, if it costs us pain
 “ *Unpaid* : what pain, amidst a thousand more,
 “ To think the most *abandon'd*, after days
 “ Of triumph o'er their betters, find in death
 “ As *soft* a pillow, nor make *fouler* clay ! 715
 “ *Duty ! Religion !*—These, our duty done,
 “ Imply reward. *Religion* is mistake.
 “ *Duty !*—There 's none, but to repel the cheat.
 “ Ye cheats ! away ! ye daughters of my pride !
 “ Who feign yourselves the favourites of the skies : 720
 “ Ye towering hopes ! abortive energies !
 “ That toils, and struggle, in my *lying* breast,
 “ To scale the skies, and build presumptions There,
 “ As I were heir of an *Eternity*.
 “ Vain, vain ambitions ! trouble me no more. 725
 “ Why travel far in quest of sure defeat ?
 “ As bounded as my being, be my wish.
 “ All is inverted, *wisdom* is a fool.
 “ *Sense !* take the rein ; blind *passion !* drive us on ;
 “ And, *ignorance !* befriend us on our way ; 730
 “ Ye *new*, but *truest* patrons of our peace !
 “ Yes ; give the *pulse* full empire ; live the *brute*,
 “ Since, as the brute, we die. The *sum* of man,
 “ Of Godlike man ! to *revel*, and to *rot*.
 “ But not on equal terms with *other* brutes : 735
 “ *Their* revels a more poignant relish yield,
 “ And safer too ; *they* never poisons chuse.
 “ *Instinct*, than *reason*, makes more wholesome meals,
 “ And sends all-marring murmur far away.

“ For

- " For *sensual* life they best philosophize ; 740
 " *Theirs*, that *serene*, the *sages* fought in vain :
 " 'Tis *man* alone expostulates with heaven ;
 " *His*, all the *power*, and all the *cause*, to mourn.
 " Shall *human* eyes *alone* dissolve in tears ?
 " And bleed, in anguish, none but *human* hearts ? 745
 " The wide-stretch'd realm of *intellectual* woe,
 " Surpassing *sensual* far, is All our Own.
 " In *life* so fatally distinguish'd, why
 " Cast in one lot, confounded, lump'd, in *death* ?
 " Ere yet in being, was mankind in guilt ? 750
 " Why thunder'd this peculiar *clause* against us,
 " *All-mortal* and *All-wretched* !—Have the *skies*
 " Reasons of state, their subjects may not scan,
 " Nor *humbly* reason, when they *solely* sigh ?
 " *All-mortal*, and *All-wretched* !—'Tis too much : 755
 " Unparallel'd in nature : 'tis too much
 " On being *unrequested* at Thy hands,
 " Omnipotent ! for I see nought but *power*.
 " And why see That ? Why *thought* ? To toil, and eat,
 " Then make our bed in darkness, needs no thought. 761
 " What superfluities are *reasoning* souls !
 " Oh give Eternity ! or Thought destroy.
 " But without thought our curse were half unfelt ;
 " Its blunted edge would spare the throbbing heart ;
 " And, *therefore*, 'tis bestow'd, I thank thee, *Reason* ! 765
 " For aiding *life's* too small calamities,
 " And giving being to the dread of *death*.
 " Such are thy bounties !—Was it then too much

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 189

- " For *me*, to trespass on the brutal rights ?
 " Too much for *heaven* to make one emmet more ? 770
 " Too much for *chaos* to permit my mass
 " A longer stay with essences unwrought,
 " Unfashion'd, *untormented* into man ?
 " Wretched *preferment* to this round of pains !
 " Wretched capacity of phrenzy, *thought* ! 775
 " Wretched capacity of dying, *life* !
 " *Life, thought, worth, wisdom*, All (O foul revolt !)
 " *Once* friends to peace, gone over to the foe.
 " *Death*, then, has chang'd his nature too : O death !
 " Come to my bosom, thou best gift of heaven ! 780
 " Best friend of man ! since man is man no more.
 " Why in this thorny *wilderness* so long,
 " Since there 's no *promis'd land's* ambrosial bower,
 " To pay me with its honey for my stings ?
 " If needful to the selfish schemes of heaven 785
 " To sting us sore, why *mockt* our misery ?
 " Why this so sumptuous insult o'er our heads ?
 " Why this illustrious canopy display'd ?
 " Why so magnificently lodg'd *despair* ?
 " At stated periods, sure-returning, roll 790
 " These *glorious orbs*, that mortals may compute
 " Their length of labours, and of pains ; nor lose
 " Their misery's full measure ?—Smiles with flowers,
 " And fruits, promiscuous, ever-teeming *earth*,
 " That man may languish in *luxurious* scenes, 795
 " And in an Eden mourn his wither'd joys ?
 " Claim earth and skies man's admiration, due
 " For *such* delights ! Blest *animals* ! too wise
 " To

Charm *riches*? Why chuse beggary in the grave,
 Of every hope a bankrupt! and for ever?
Ambition, pleasure, avarice, persuade thee
 To make that world of glory, rapture, wealth, 860
 They * lately *prov'd*, the soul's supreme desire.

What art thou made of? Rather, how Unmade?
 Great *nature's* master-appetite destroy'd!
 Is endless life, and happiness, despis'd?
 Or both wish'd, *here*, where neither can be found? 865
 Such man's perverse, eternal war with heaven!
 Dar'st thou persist? And is there nought on earth,
 But a long train of transitory forms,
 Rising, and breaking, millions in an hour?
 Bubbles of a fantastic deity, blown up 870
 In sport, and then in cruelty destroy'd?
 Oh! for what crime, unmerciful Lorenzo!
 Destroys thy scheme the *whole* of human race?
 Kind is fell Lucifer, compar'd to Thee:
 Oh! spare this *waste* of being half-divine; 875
 And vindicate th' *æconomy* of heaven.

Heaven is all love; all joy in giving joy:
 It never had created, but to *blest*:
 And shall it, then, strike off the list of life,
 A being blest, or worthy *so* to be? 880
 Heaven starts at an *annihilating* God.

Is That, all *nature* starts at, thy desire?
 Art such a clod to wish thyself *all* clay?
 What is that dreadful wish?—The dying groan
 Of *nature*, murder'd by the blackest guilt. 885

What

* In Night VI.

What deadly poison has thy nature drunk ;
 To nature undebauch'd no shock so great ;
 Nature's *first* wish is *endless happiness* ;
Annihilation is an after-thought,
 A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies. 890
 And, oh ! what depth of horror lies inclos'd !
 For non-existence no man ever wish'd,
 But, first, he wish'd the Deity destroy'd.

If so ; what words are dark enough to draw
 Thy picture true ? The darkest are too fair. 895
 Beneath what baleful planet, in what hour
 Of desperation, by what fury's aid,
 In what infernal posture of the soul,
 All hell invited, and all hell in joy
 At such a birth, a birth so near of kin, 900
 Did thy foul *fancy* whelp so black a scheme
 Of *hopes* abortive, *faculties* half-blown,
 And *deities begun*, reduc'd to dust ?

There 's nought (thou say'st) but one eternal flux
 Of feeble essences, tumultuous driven 905
 Through *time's* rough billows into *night's* abyfs.
 Say, in this rapid *tide* of human ruin,
 Is there no *rock*, on which man's tossing thought
 Can rest from terror, dare his fate survey,
 And boldly think it *something* to be born ? 910
 Amid such hourly wrecks of being fair,
 Is there no central, all-sustaining *base*,
 All-realizing, all-connecting *power*,
 Which, as it call'd forth all things, can *recall*,
 And force *destruction* to refund her spoil ? 915

Command the grave restore her taken prey?
 Bid death's dark vale its human harvest yield,
 And *earth*, and *ocean*, pay their debt of man,
 True to the grand deposit trusted *there*?
 Is there no *potentate*, whose out-stretch'd arm, 920
 When ripening time calls forth th' appointed hour,
 Pluck'd from foul *devastation's* famish'd maw,
 Binds *present*, *past*, and *future*, to his throne?
 His throne, how glorious, thus divinely grac'd,
 By germinating beings clustering round! 925
 A garland worthy the divinity!
 A throne, by heaven's omnipotence *in smiles*,
 Built (like a *pharos* towering in the waves)
 Amidst immense effusions of his love!
 An ocean of *communicated* blifs! 930
 An all-prolific, all-preserving God!
This were a God indeed.—And such *is* man,
 As here presum'd: he rises from his fall.
 Think'st thou Omnipotence a naked root,
 Each blossom fair of Deity destroy'd? 935
 Nothing is dead; nay, nothing sleeps; each soul,
 That ever animated human clay,
 Now wakes; is on the wing: and where, O where,
 Will the swarm settle?—When the *trumpet's* call,
 As founding brass, collects us, round heaven's throne 940
 Conglob'd, we bask in everlasting day,
 (Paternal splendor!) and adhere for ever.
 Had not the soul this *outlet* to the skies,
 In this vast vessel of the universe,

How

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 195

How should we gasp, as in an empty void! 945

How in the pangs of famish'd *hope* expire!

How bright *my* prospect shines! how gloomy, *thine!*

A trembling world! and a devouring God!

Earth, but the Shambles of Omnipotence!

Heaven's face all stain'd with causeless massacres 950

Of countless millions, born to feel the pang

Of being *lost*. Lorenzo! can it be?

This bids us shudder at the thoughts of *life*.

Who would be born to such a phantom world,

Where nought substantial but our misery? 955

Where joy (if joy) but heightens our distress,

So soon to perish, and revive no more?

The greater *such* a joy, the *more* it pains.

A world, so far from *great* (and yet how great

It shines to thee!) there 's nothing *real* in it; 960

Being, a shadow; *consciousness*, a dream:

A dream, how dreadful! Universal blank

Before it, and behind! Poor man, a spark

From non-existence struck by wrath divine,

Glittering a moment, nor that moment sure, 965

'Midst upper, nether, and surrounding *night*,

His sad, sure, sudden, and eternal tomb!

Lorenzo! dost thou *feel* these arguments?

Or is there nought but *vengeance* can be felt?

How hast thou dar'd the deity dethrone? 970

How dar'd *indict* Him of a world like this?

If *such* the world, creation was a crime;

For what is crime but cause of misery?

Retract, blasphemers! and unriddle *this*,

Of endless arguments *above, below,* 975

Without us, and within, the short result—

“ *If man's immortal, there's a God in heaven.*”

But wherefore such redundancy? such waste

Of argument? One sets *my* soul at rest!

One obvious; and at hand, and, oh!—at *heart.* 980

So just the skies, Philander's life so pain'd,

His heart so pure; *that, or succeeding scenes*

Have palms to give, or ne'er had he been born.

“ *What an old tale is this!*” Lorenzo cries.—

I grant this argument is old; but truth 985

No years impair; and had not this been true,

Thou never hadst despis'd it for its age.

Truth is immortal as thy soul; and *fable*

As fleeting as thy joys: be wise, nor make

Heaven's highest blessing, vengeance; O be wise! 990

Nor make a curse of *immortality.*

Say, know'st thou what *it* is, or what *thou* art?

Know'st thou th' *importance* of a soul immortal?

Behold this midnight glory: worlds on worlds!

Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze; 995

Ten thousand add; add twice ten thousand more;

Then weigh the whole; *one* soul outweighs them all;

And calls th' astonishing magnificence

Of *unintelligent* creation *poor.*

For this, believe not *me*; no *man* believe; 1000

Trust not in words, but deeds; and deeds no less

Than those of the Supreme; nor His, a few;

Consult them *all*; consulted, all proclaim

Thy soul's importance: tremble at thyself;

For

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 197

For whom *Omnipotence* has wak'd so long: 1005
 Has wak'd, and work'd, for ages; from the birth
 Of nature to this *unbelieving* hour.

In this small province of His vast domain
 (All *nature* bow, while I pronounce His Name!)
 What has God done, and not for *this* sole end, 1010
 To rescue souls from death? The *soul's high price*
 Is writ in all the conduct of the skies.

The *soul's high price* is the *Creation's Key*.
 Unlocks its mysteries, and naked lays
 The genuine cause of every deed divine: 1015

That is the *chain of ages*, which maintains
 Their obvious correspondence, and unites
 Most distant periods in one blest design:

That is the *mighty hinge*, on which have turn'd
 All revolutions, whether we regard 1020

The *natural, civil, or religious*, world;
 The former two but servants to the third:
 To that their duty done, they both expire,
 Their *masks* new-cast, forgot their *deeds renown'd*;
 And angels ask, "Where once they shone so fair?" 1025

To lift us from this abject, to sublime;
 This flux, to permanent; this dark, to day;
 This foul, to pure; this turbid, to serene;
 This mean, to mighty!—for *this* glorious end

Th' Almighty, rising, his long sabbath broke! 1030
 The world was made; was ruin'd; was restor'd;
 Laws from the skies were publish'd; were repeal'd;
 On *earth* kings, kingdoms, rose; kings, kingdoms, fell;
 Fam'd faces lighted up the *pa₃an* world;

Prophets from Sion darted a keen glance 1035
 Through distant age; faints travel'd; martyrs bled;
 By wonders sacred nature stood control'd;
 The living were translated; dead were rais'd;
 Angels, and *more* than angels, came from heaven;
 And, oh! for *this*, descended lower still; 1040
 Guilt was hell's gloom; astonish'd at his guest,
 For one short moment Lucifer ador'd:
 Lorenzo! and wilt thou do less?—For *this*,
 That *hallo'd* page, fools scoff at, was inspir'd,
 Of all these truths thrice venerable code! 1045
Deists! perform your quarantine; and then
 Fall prostrate, ere you touch it, lest you die.
 Nor less intently bent *infernal* powers
 To mar, than those of *light*, *this* end to gain.
 O what a scene is here!—Lorenzo! wake! 1050
 Rise to the thought; exert, expand thy soul
 To take the vast idea: it denies
 All *else* the name of great. Two warring worlds!
 Not Europe against Afric; warring worlds!
 Of *more* than mortal! mounted on the wing! 1055
 On ardent wings of energy and zeal,
 High-hovering o'er this little brand of strife!
 This sublunary ball—But strife, for what?
 In their own cause conflicting? No; in *thine*,
 In *man's*. His *single* interest blows the flame; 1060
 His the sole stake; his fate the trumpet sounds,
 Which kindles war immortal. How it burns!
 Tumultuous swarms of deities in arms!
 Force, force opposing, till the waves run high,

And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 199

And tempest nature's universal sphere. 1065

Such opposites eternal, stedfast, stern,

Such foes implacable, are *good*, and *ill*;

Yet man, vain man, would mediate peace between them.

Think not this fiction, "*There was war in heaven.*"

From heaven's high crystal mountain, where it hung, 1070

Th' Almighty's out-stretch'd arm took down his bow,

And shot his indignation at the *deep* :

Re-thunder'd *bell*, and darted all her fires.

And seems the stake of little moment still ?

And slumbers *man*, who singly caus'd the storm ? 1075

He sleeps.—And art thou shock'd at *mysteries* ?

The greatest, Thou. How dreadful to reflect,

What ardour, care, and counsel *mortals* cause

In breasts divine ! how little in their own !

Where-e'er I turn, how new *proofs* pour upon me ! 1080

How happily this wondrous view supports

My former argument ! How strongly *strikes*

Immortal life's full demonstration, *here* !

Why this exertion ? Why this strange regard

From heaven's Omnipotent indulg'd to man ?— 1085

Because, in man, the glorious dreadful power,

Extremely to be pain'd, or blest, *for ever*.

Duration gives importance ; swells the price.

An angel, if a creature of a day,

What would he be ? A trifle of no weight ; 1090

Or stand, or fall ; no matter which ; he 's gone.

Because Immortal, therefore is indulg'd

This strange regard of deities to dust.

Hence heaven looks down on earth with all her eyes :

Hence, the soul's mighty moment in her fight: 1095

Hence, every soul has partisans above,

And every thought a critic in the skies :

Hence, clay, vile clay ! has angels for its guard,

And every guard a passion for his charge :

Hence, from all age, the cabinet divine 1100

Has held high counsel o'er the fate of man.

Nor have the clouds those gracious counsels hid ;

Angels undrew the curtain of the throne,

And Providence came forth to meet mankind :

In various modes of emphasis and awe, 1105

He spoke his will, and trembling *nature* heard ;

He spoke it loud, in thunder and in storm.

Witness, thou Sinai ! whose cloud-cover'd height,

And shaken basis, own'd the present God ;

Witness, ye *billows* ! whose returning tide, 1110

Breaking the chain that fasten'd it in air,

Swept Egypt, and her menaces, to hell :

Witness, ye *flames* ! th' Assyrian tyrant blew

To sevenfold rage, as impotent, as strong :

And thou, *earth* ! witness, whose expanding jaws 1115

Clos'd o'er * *presumption's* sacrilegious sons :

Has not each element, in turn, subscrib'd

The *soul's* high price, and sworn it to the wife ?

Has not flame, ocean, æther, earthquake, strove

To strike *this truth* through adamantine man ? 1120

If not all adamant, Lorenzo ! hear ;

All is delusion ; *nature* is wrapt up,

In tenfold night, from *reason's* keenest eye ;

There

* Korah, &c.



THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 201

There 's no confidence, meaning, plan, or end,
In all beneath the sun, in all above, 1125

(As far as man can penetrate), or heaven
Is an immense, inestimable prize ;
Or all is Nothing, or that prize is all.—

And shall each *toy* be still a match for heaven, ' 1
And full equivalent for groans below ? 1130

Who would not give a trifle to *prevent*
What he would give a thousand worlds to *cure* ?

Lorenzo ! thou hast seen (if thine to see)
All *nature*, and her God (by nature's *course*,
And nature's *course control'd*) declare for me : 1135

The skies above proclaim, " *immortal man* !"
And, " *man immortal* !" all below resounds.

The world 's a system of theology,
Read by the greatest strangers to the schools ;
If *honest*, learn'd ; and *sages* o'er a plough. 1140

Is not, Lorenzo ! then, impos'd on thee
This hard alternative ; or, to renounce
Thy *reason*, or thy *sense* ; or, to *believe* ?

What then is *unbelief* ? 'Tis an exploit ;
A strenuous enterprize : to gain it, man 1145

Must burst through every bar of common sense,
Of common shame, magnanimously wrong ;
And what rewards the sturdy combatant ?

His prize, *repentance* ; *infamy*, his crown.
But wherefore, *infamy* ?—For want of *faith*, 1150

Down the steep precipice of *wrong* he slides ;
There 's nothing to support him in the *right*.
Faith in the future wanting is at least

In *embryo*, every weakness, every guilt ;
 And strong temptation ripens it to *birth*. 1155

If *this* life's gain invites him to the deed,
 Why not his country fold, his father slain ?
 'Tis virtue to pursue our good supreme ;
 And his supreme, his *only* good is *here*.

Ambition, *avarice*, by the wise disdain'd, 1160
 Is perfect *wisdom*, while mankind are *fools*,
 And think a turf, or tomb-stone, covers all :
These find employment, and provide for *sense*
 A richer pasture, and a larger range ;

And *sense* by right divine ascends the throne, 1165
 When *virtue's* prize and prospect are no more ;
Virtue no more we think the will of heaven.

Would heaven quite *beggar* virtue, if belov'd ?

“ Has *virtue* charms ? ”—I grant her heavenly fair ;
 But if unportion'd, all will *interest* wed ; 1170
 Though *that* our admiration, *this* our choice.

The virtues grow on *immortality* ;
 That root destroy'd, they wither and expire.
 A Deity believ'd, will nought avail ;
Rewards and *punishments* make God ador'd ; 1175
 And *hopes* and *fears* give *conscience* all her power.

As in the dying parent dies the child,
Virtue, with *immortality*, expires.

Who tells me he denies his soul immortal,
 Whate'er his boast, has told me, *He 's a knave*. 1180

His *duty* 'tis, to love himself *alone* ;
 Nor care though mankind perish, if he smiles.
 Who thinks ere long the man shall *wholly* die,

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 203

Is dead already ; nought but *brute* survives.

And are there such ?—Such candidates there are 1185
For *more* than death ; for utter loss of being,
Being, the basis of the Deity !

Ask you the *cause* ?—The cause they will not tell :

Nor *need* they : Oh the sorceries of *sense* !

They work this transformation on the soul, 1190

Dismount her, like the serpent at the fall,
Dismount her from her native wing (which soar'd
Ere-while ethereal heights), and throw her down,
To lick the dust, and *crawl* in such a thought.

Is it in words to paint you ? O ye fall'n ! 1195

Fall'n from the wings of *reason*, and of *hope* !

Erect in stature, prone in appetite !

Patrons of pleasure, posting into pain !

Lovers of argument, averse to sense !

Boasters of liberty, fast bound in chains ! 1200

Lords of the wide creation, and the shame !

More *senseless* than th' *irrationals* you scorn !

More *base* than those you rule ! Than those you pity,

Far more *undone* ! O ye most infamous

Of beings, from superior dignity ! 1205

Deepest in woe from means of boundless bliss !

Ye curst by blessings infinite ! because

Most highly favour'd, most profoundly lost !

Ye motly mass of *contradiction* strong !

And are you, too, convinc'd, your souls fly off 1210

In exhalation soft, and die in air,

From the full flood of evidence *against* you ?

In the coarse drudgeries and sinks of *sense*,

Your

Your souls have quite worn out the make of heaven,
 By vice new-cast, and creatures of your own: 1215
 But though you can *deform*, you can't *destroy*;
 To *curse*, not *uncreate*, is all your power.

Lorenzo! this black brotherhood renounce;
 Renounce St. Evremont, and read St. Paul.
 Ere, rapt by miracle, by *reason* wing'd, 1220
 His mounting mind made long abode in heaven.
This is freethinking, unconfin'd to *parts*,
 To send the soul, on curious travel bent,
 Through all the provinces of human thought;
 To dart her flight through the whole sphere of man; 1225
 Of this vast universe to make the tour;
 In each recess of *space*, and *time*, at home;
 Familiar with their wonders; diving deep;
 And, like a prince of boundless interests *there*,
 Still most ambitious of the most remote; 1230
 To look on *truth* unbroken, and intire;
 Truth in the *system*, the full orb; where truths
 By truths enlighten'd, and sustain'd, afford
 An arch-like, strong foundation, to support
 Th' incumbent weight of absolute, complete 1235
Conviction; here, the more we press, we stand
 More firm; who most *examine*, most *believe*.
Parts, like half-sentences, confound; the *whole*
 Conveys the sense, and God is understood;
 Who not in *fragments* writes to human race: 1240
 Read his *whole* volume, sceptic! then reply.

This, this, is thinking free, a thought that grasps
 Beyond a grain, and looks beyond an hour.

Turn

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 205

Turn up thine eye, survey this midnight scene ;
 What are earth's kingdoms, to yon boundless orbs, 1245
 Of human souls, one day, the destin'd range ?
 And what yon boundless orbs, to godlike *man* ?
 Those numerous worlds that throng the firmament,
 And ask more space in heaven, can roll at large
 In man's capacious thought, and still leave room 1250
 For ampler orbs, for *new* creations, there.

Can *such* a soul contract itself, to gripe
 A point of no dimension, of no weight ?
 It can ; it does : the *world* is such a point :
 And, of *that* point, how *small* a part enslaves ! 1255

How small a part—of *nothing*, shall I say ?
 Why not ?—*Friends*, our *chief* treasure ! how they drop !
 Lucia, Narcissa fair, Philander, gone !

The *grave*, like fabled Cerberus, has op'd
 A triple mouth ; and, in an awful voice, 1260
 Loud calls my soul, and utters all I sing.

How the world falls to pieces round about us,
 And leaves us in a ruin of our joy !

What says this *transportation* of my friends ?
 It bids me love the place where *now* they dwell, 1265
 And scorn this wretched spot, they leave so poor.

Eternity's vast *ocean* lies before thee ;

There ; there, Lorenzo ! thy Clarissa fails.

Give thy mind sea-room ; keep it wide of *earth*,
 That rock of souls *immortal* ; cut thy cord ; 1270

Weigh anchor ; spread thy sails ; call every wind ;
 Eye thy *Great Pole-star* ; make the land of life,

Two kinds of life has *double-natur'd* man,

And

And two of death; the *last* far more severe.
 Life *animal* is nurtur'd by the sun; 1275
 Thrives on his bounties, triumphs in his beams.
 Life *rational* subsists on higher food,
 Triumphant in *His* beams, who made the day.
 When we leave *that* sun, and are left by *this*,
 (The fate of all who die in stubborn guilt) 1280
 'Tis *utter* darkness; strictly *double* death.
 We sink by no *judicial* stroke of heaven,
 But nature's *course*; as sure as plumbets fall.
 Since God, or man, must alter, ere they meet,
 (Since light and darkness blend not in one sphere) 1285
 'Tis manifest, Lorenzo! *who* must change.
 If, then, that *double death* should prove thy lot,
 Blame not the bowels of the Deity;
 Man shall be blest, as far as man *permits*.
 Not man alone, all *rationals*, heaven arms 1290
 With an illustrious, but tremendous, power
 To counter-act its own most gracious ends;
 And this, of strict necessity, not choice;
That power deny'd, *men, angels*, were no more
 But passive engines, void of praise or blame. 1295
 A nature *rational* implies the power
 Of being blest, or wretched, as we please;
 Else idle *reason* would have nought to do;
 And he that would be barr'd capacity
 Of pain, courts incapacity of bliss. 1300
 Heaven *wills* our happiness, *allows* our doom;
Invites us ardently, but not *compels*;
 Heaven but *persuades*, almighty man *decrees*;

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 207

Man is the maker of immortal fates.

Man falls by man, if finally he falls ; 1305

And fall he *must*, who learns from *death* alone,

The dreadful secret—That he lives for Ever.

Why *this* to Thee ?—Thee yet, perhaps, in doubt

Of second life ? But wherefore doubtful still ?

Eternal life is nature's ardent wish : 1310

What ardently we wish, we *soon* believe :

Thy *tardy* faith declares that wish destroy'd :

What has destroy'd it ?—Shall I tell thee what ?

When *fear'd the future*, 'tis no longer wish'd ;

And, when unwish'd, we *strive* to disbelieve. 1315

“ *Thus infidelity our guilt betrays.*”

Nor that the *sole* detection ! Blush, Lorenzo !

Blush for hypocrisy, if not for guilt.

The *future fear'd* ?—An *infidel*, and fear ?

Fear what ? A *dream* ? A *fable* ?—How thy dread, 1320

Unwilling evidence, and therefore *strong*,

Affords my cause an undesign'd support !

How *disbelief* affirms what it denies !

“ *It, unawares, asserts immortal life.*”—

Surprising ! *infidelity* turns out 1325

A *creed*, and a *confession of our sins* :

Apostates, *thus*, are orthodox divines.

Lorenzo ! with Lorenzo clash no more ;

Nor longer a *transparent* vizard wear.

Think'st thou, Religion *only* has her mask ? 1330

Our infidels are Satan's hypocrites,

Pretend the worst, and, at the bottom, *fail*.

When visited by thought (thought *will* intrude),

Like

Like him they serve, they *tremble*, and *believe*.
 Is there hypocrisy so foul as this ; 1335
 So fatal to the welfare of the world ?
 What *detestation*, what *contempt*, their due !
 And, if unpaid, be thank'd for their escape
That Christian candour they *strive* hard to scorn :
 If not for that asylum, they might find 1340
 A hell on *earth* ; nor 'scape a worse *below*.
 With insolence, and impotence of thought,
 Instead of racking fancy, to *refute*,
 Reform thy manners, and the truth *enjoy*.—
 But shall I dare confess the dire result ? 1345
 Can thy proud *reason* brook so black a brand ?
 From *purser manners*, to *sublimier faith*,
 Is nature's unavoidable ascent ;
 An *honest* deist, where the gospel shines,
 Matur'd to nobler, in the *Christian* ends. 1350
 When that blest change arrives, e'en cast aside
 This song superfluous ; *life immortal* strikes
 Conviction, in a flood of light *divine*.
 A *Christian* dwells, like * Uriel, in the sun ;
 Meridian evidence puts *doubt* to flight ; 1355
 And ardent *hope* anticipates the skies.
 Of *that* bright sun, Lorenzo ! scale the sphere ;
 'Tis easy ! it invites thee ; it descends
 From heaven to wooe, and waft thee whence it came :
 Read and revere the *sacred page* ; a page 1360
 Where triumphs *immortality* ; a page
 Which not the whole *creation* could produce ;

Which

* Milton.

Which not the *conflagration* shall destroy,
 'Tis printed in the mind of gods for ever,
 In nature's ruins not one letter lost. 1365

In proud disdain of what ev'n gods adore,
 Dost smile?—Poor wretch! thy guardian angel weeps.
Angels, and *men*, assent to what I sing;
Wits smile, and thank me for my *midnight dream*.

How vicious hearts fume phrenzy to the brain! 1370
Parts push us on to pride, and pride to shame;
 Pert *infidelity* is *wit's* cockade,
 To grace the brazen brow that braves the skies,
 By *loss of being*, dreadfully secure.

Lorenzo! if *thy* doctrine wins the day, 1375
 And drives my dreams, defeated, from the field;
 If *This* is All, if *earth* a *final* scene,
 Take heed; stand fast; be sure to be a *knave*,
 A knave in grain! ne'er deviate to the *right*:
 Should'st thou be *good*—how infinite thy loss! 1380
Guilt only makes *annihilation* gain.

Blest scheme! which life deprives of *comfort*, death
 Of *hope*; and which vice *only* recommends.
 If so, *where*, infidels! your bait thrown out
 To catch weak converts? *where* your lofty boast 1385
 Of *zeal for virtue*, and of *love to man*?
 Annihilation! I confess, in *these*.

What can *reclaim* you? Dare I hope profound
Philosophers the converts of a *song*?
 Yet know, *its* * *title* flatters *you*, not *me*; 1390
 Yours be the praise to make *my* title good;

Mine, to bless heaven, and triumph in *your* praise.
 But since so pestilential your disease,
 Though sovereign is the medicine I prescribe,
 As yet, I'll neither triumph, nor despair: 1395
 But hope, ere long, my *midnight dream* will wake
 Your hearts, and teach your *wisdom*—to be wise:
 For why should souls immortal, made for bliss,
 E'er wish (and wish in vain!) that souls could die?
 What ne'er *can* die, oh! grant to *live*; and crown 1400
 The wish, and aim, and labour of the skies;
Increase, and *enter* on the joys of heaven:
 Thus shall my title pass a *sacred* seal,
 Receive an *imprimatur* from Above,
 While angels shout—*An Infidel Reclaim'd!* 1405
 To close, Lorenzo! spite of all my pains,
Still seems it strange, that thou should'st live *for ever*?
 Is it *less* strange, that thou should'st live *at all*?
This is a miracle; and *That* no more.
 Who gave beginning, can exclude an end. 1410
 Deny thou *art*: Then, doubt if thou *shalt be*.
 A miracle with miracles inclos'd,
 Is man: and starts his faith at what is *strange*?
 What less than wonders, from the *wonderful*;
 What less than miracles, from God, can flow? 1415
Admit a God—that mystery supreme!
 That cause uncaus'd! all other wonders cease;
 Nothing is marvellous for *Him* to do:
 Deny *Him*—all is mystery besides;
 Millions of mysteries! *Each* darker far, 1420
 Than *that* thy wisdom would, unwisely, shun.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VII. 211

If *weak* thy faith, why chuse the harder side?

We nothing *know*, but what is marvellous;

Yet what is marvellous, we can't *believe*.

So *weak* our reason, and so *great* our God, 1425

What most surprizes in the *sacred page*,

Or full as strange, or stranger, *must* be true.

Faith is not *reason's* labour, but repose.

To *faith*, and *virtue*, why so backward, man?

From hence:—The *present* strongly strikes us all; 1430

The *future*, faintly; can we, then, be *men*?

If men, Lorenzo! the *reverse* is right.

Reason is man's peculiar: *Sense*, the brute's.

The *present* is the scanty realm of *sense*;

The *future*, *reason's* empire unconfin'd: 1435

On *that* expending all her godlike power,

She plans, provides, expatiates, triumphs, *there*;

There, builds her *blessings*! There, expects her *praise*;

And nothing asks of *fortune*, or of *men*.

And what is *reason*? Be she, thus, defin'd; 1440

Reason is *upright stature* in the *soul*.

Oh! be a *man*; and strive to be a *god*.

“ For what? (thou say'st) To damp the joys of life?”

No; to give *heart* and *substance* to thy joys.

That tyrant, *hope*; mark how she domineers; 1445

She bids us quit realities, for dreams;

Safety and peace for hazard, and alarm;

That tyrant o'er the tyrants of the soul,

She bids *ambition* quit its taken prize,

Spurn the luxuriant branch on which *it* sits, 1450

Though bearing crowns, to spring at *distant* game;

And plunge in toils and dangers—for repose.
 If *hope* precarious, and of things, when gain'd,
 Of little moment, and as little stay,
 Can sweeten toils, and dangers into joys ; 1455
 What then, *that* hope, which nothing can defeat,
 Our leave unask'd? Rich hope of boundless blifs!
 Blifs, past *man's* power to paint it; *time's* to close!
This hope is earth's most estimable prize :
This is man's portion, while no more than man : 1460
Hope, of all passions, most befriends us *here* ;
 Passions of prouder name befriend us less.
Joy has her *tears* ; and *transport* has her *death* ;
Hope, like a cordial, innocent, though strong,
 Man's heart, at once, *inspirits*, and *serenes* ; 1465
 Nor makes him pay his wisdom for his joys ;
 'Tis all our present state can *safely* bear,
 Health to the frame! and vigour to the mind !
 A joy attemper'd! a *chastis'd* delight !
 Like the fair summer evening, mild, and sweet ! 1470
 'Tis man's full cup; his paradise below!
 A blest hereafter, *then*, or hop'd, or gain'd,
 Is All; our *whole* of happiness: full proof,
 I chose no trivial or inglorious *theme*.
 And know, ye foes to song! (well-meaning men, 1475
 Though quite forgotten * half your Bible's praise!)
Important truths, in spite of *verse*, may please :
Grave minds your praise; nor can you praise too much:
 If there is weight in an Eternity,
 Let the *grave* listen;—and be *graver* still. 1480

NIGHT

* The poetical parts of it.

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

V I R T U E's A P O L O G Y;

O R,

THE MAN OF THE WORLD ANSWERED.

IN WHICH ARE CONSIDERED,

The Love of this Life; the Ambition and Pleasure,
with the Wit and Wisdom of the World.

AND has all nature, then, espous'd my part?
Have I brib'd heaven and earth to plead against thee?
And is thy soul *immortal*?—What remains?
All, All, Lorenzo!—Make immortal, blest.
Unblest immortals!—What can shock us more? 5
And yet Lorenzo still affects *the world*;
There, stows his treasure; thence, his title draws,
Man of the world (for such wouldst thou be call'd)
And art thou proud of that inglorious style?
Proud of reproach? for a reproach it *was*, 10
In antient days; and CHRISTIAN—in an age,
When men were men, and not ashamed of heaven—
Fir'd their ambition, as it crown'd their joy.
Sprinkled with dew from the Castalian font,
Fain would I re-baptize thee, and confer 15
A purer spirit, and a nobler name.

P 3

Thy

Thy fond attachments fatal, and inflam'd,
 Point out my path, and dictate to my song:
 To Thee, the *world how fair!* How strongly strikes
Ambition! and gay *pleasure* stronger still! 20
 Thy triple bane! the triple bolt that lays
 Thy virtue dead! Be *these* my triple theme;
 Nor shall thy *wit*, or *wisdom*, be forgot.

Common the theme; not so the song; if she
 My song invokes, Urania, deigns to smile. 25
 The charm that chains us to the world, her foe,
 If she dissolves, the *man of earth*, at once,
 Starts from his trance, and sighs for other scenes;
 Scenes, where these sparks of night, these *stars*, shall shine
 Unnumber'd suns (for all things, as they *are*, 30
 The blest behold;) and, in one glory, pour
 Their blended blaze on man's astonish'd sight;
 A blaze—the least illustrious object *there*.

Lorenzo! since *eternal* is at hand,
 To swallow *time's* ambitions; as the vast 35
 Leviathan, the bubbles vain, that ride
 High on the foaming billow; what avail
 High titles, high descent, attainments high,
 If unattain'd our *higbest?* O Lorenzo!
 What lofty thoughts, these elements above, 40
 What towering hopes, what fallies from the sun,
 What grand surveys of destiny divine,
 And pompous presage of unfathom'd fate,
 Should roll in bosoms, where a spirit burns,
 Bound for eternity! In bosoms read 45
 By *Him*, who foibles in archangels sees!

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 219

On human hearts *He* bends a jealous eye,
 And marks, and in heaven's register inrolls,
 The rise, and progress, of each option there;
 Sacred to doomsday! *That* the page unfolds, 50
 And spreads us to the gaze of gods and men.

And what an option, O Lorenzo! thine?
 This world! and This, unrival'd by the skies!
 A world, where lust of *pleasure, grandeur, gold,*
 Three *demons* that divide its realms between them, 55
 With strokes alternate buffet to and fro

Man's restless heart, their sport, their flying ball;
 Till, with the giddy circle sick, and tir'd,
 It pants for peace, and drops into despair.
 Such is the world Lorenzo sets above 60

That glorious *promise* angels were esteem'd
 Too *mean* to bring; a promise, their *Ador'd*
 Descended to communicate, and press,
 By counsel, miracle, life, death, on man.

Such is the world Lorenzo's wisdom wooes, 65
 And on its thorny pillow seeks repose;
 A pillow, which, like opiates ill-prepar'd,
 Intoxicates, but not composes; fills

The visionary mind with gay chimæras,
 All the wild trash of sleep, without the rest; 70
 What *unfeign'd* travel, and what dreams of joy!

How frail, men, things! how momentary, both!
 Fantastic chace of shadows hunting shades!
 The *gay*, the *busy*, equal, though unlike;
 Equal in wisdom, differently wise! 75
 Through flowery meadows, and through dreary wastes,

One bustling, and one dancing, into death.
 There 's not a day, but, to the man of thought,
 Betrays some secret, that throws new reproach
 On life, and makes him sick of seeing more. 80

The scenes of *business* tell us—"What are men;"
 The scenes of *pleasure*—"What is all beside;"
There, others we despise; and *Here*, ourselves.
 Amid *disgust* eternal, dwells delight?
 'Tis *approbation* strikes the string of joy. 85

What wondrous prize has kindled this career,
 Stuns with the din, and choaks us with the dust,
 On life's gay stage, one inch above the grave?
 The *proud* run up and down in quest of eyes;
 The *sensual*, in pursuit of something worse; 90
 The *grave*, of gold; the *politic*, of power,
 And all, of other butterflies, as vain!
 As eddies draw things frivolous and light,
 How is man's heart by *vanity* drawn in;
 On the swift circle of returning toys, 95
 Whirl'd, straw-like, round and round, and then ingulph'd;
 Where gay delusion darkens to despair!

"*This is a beaten track.*"—Is this a track
 Should not be beaten? never beat enough,
 Till enough learn'd the truths it would inspire. 100
 Shall Truth be silent, because Folly *frowns*?
 Turn the world's history; what find we there,
 But *fortune's* sports, or *nature's* cruel claims,
 Or *woman's* artifice, or *man's* revenge,
 And endless inhumanities on man? 105
 Fame's trumpet seldom sounds, but, like the knell,

It

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 217

It brings bad tidings : how it hourly blows
 Man's misadventures round the listening world !
 Man is the tale of narrative old *time* ;
 Sad tale ; which high as Paradise begins ; 110
 As if, the toil of travel to delude,
 From stage to stage, in his eternal round,
 The *days*, his daughters, as they spin our hours
 On *fortune's* wheel, where accident unthought
 Oft, in a moment, snaps life's strongest thread, 115
 Each, in her turn, some tragic story tells,
 With, now-and-then, a wretched farce between,
 And fills his chronicle with human woes.

Time's daughters, true as those of men, deceive us ;
 Not one, but puts some cheat on all mankind : 120
 While in their *father's* bosom, not yet *ours*,
 They flatter our fond hopes ; and promise much
 Of amiable ; but hold *him* not o'erwise,
 Who dares to trust them ; and laugh round the year,
 At still-confiding, still-confounded, man, 125
 Confiding, though confounded ; hoping on,
 Untaught by trial, unconvinc'd by proof,
 And ever-looking for the never-seen.
 Life to the last, like harden'd felons, lyes ;
 Nor owns itself a cheat, till it expires. 130
 Its little joys go out by One and One,
 And leave poor man, at length, in perfect night ;
 Night darker, than what, *now*, involves the pole.

O Thou, who dost permit these ills to fall,
 For gracious ends, and would'st that man should mourn !
 O Thou, whose hands this goodly fabric fram'd,

Who

Who know'ſt it beſt, and would'ſt that man ſhould know !

What is this ſublunary world ? A vapour ;

A vapour all it holds ; itſelf, a vapour ;

From the damp bed of chaos, by Thy beam 140

Exhal'd, ordain'd to ſwim its deſtin'd hour

In ambient air, then melt, and diſappear.

Earth's days are number'd, nor remote her doom ;

As mortal, though leſs tranſient, than her ſons ;

Yet they doat on her, as the world and they 145

Were both eternal, ſolid ; Thou, a dream.

They doat ! on what ? *Immortal* views apart,

A region of outſides ! a land of ſhadows !

A fruitful field of flowery promiſes !

A wilderneſs of joys ! perplex'd with doubts, 150

And ſharp with thorns ! a troubled *ocean*, ſpread

With bold adventurers, their *all* on board !

No ſecond hope, if here their fortune frowns ;

Frown ſoon it *muſt*. Of various rates they fail,

Of enſigns various ; All alike in This, 155

All reſtleſs, anxious ; toſt with hopes, and fears,

In calm'eſt ſkies ; obnoxious *All* to ſtorm ;

And ſtormy the moſt general blaſt of life :

All bound for happineſs ; yet few provide

The chart of *knowledge*, pointing where it lies ; 160

Or *virtue's* helm, to ſhape the courſe deſign'd :

All, more or leſs, capricious fate lament,

Now liſted by the tide, and now reſorb'd,

And farther from their wiſhes than before :

All, more or leſs, againſt each other daſh, 165

To mutual hurt, by gulleſts of paſſion driven,

And

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And suffering more from folly, than from fate.

Ocean ! Thou dreadful and tumultuous home
Of dangers, at eternal war with man !

Death's capital, where most he domineers, 170

With all his chosen *terrors* frowning round,
(Though lately feasted high at * Albion's cost)
Wide-opening, and loud-roaring still for more !

Too faithful mirror ! how dost thou reflect
The melancholy face of human life ! 175

The strong resemblance tempts me farther still :

And, haply, Britain may be deeper struck

By *moral truth*, in such a mirror seen,

Which nature holds for ever at her eye.

Self-flatter'd, unexperienc'd, high in hope, 180

When *young*, with sanguine cheer, and streamers gay,

We cut our cable, launch into the world,

And fondly dream each wind and star our friend ;

All, in some darling enterprize embark'd :

But where is he can fathom its extent ? 185

Amid a multitude of artless hands,

Ruin's sure perquisite ! her lawful prize !

Some steer aright ; but the black blast blows hard,

And puffs them wide of hope : with hearts of proof,

Full against wind and tide, *some* win their way ; 190

And when strong effort has deserv'd the port,

And tugg'd it into view, 'tis won ! 'tis lost !

Though strong their oar, still stronger is their fate :

They strike ; and while they triumph, they expire.

In strefs of weather, *most* ; *some* sink outright ; 195

O'er

* Admiral Balchen, &c.

O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close ;
 To-morrow knows not they were ever born.
Others a short memorial leave behind,
 Like a flag floating, when the bark 's ingulph'd ;
 It floats a moment, and is seen no more : 200
 One Cæsar lives ; a thousand are forgot.
 How few, beneath auspicious planets born,
 (Darlings of Providence ! fond fate's elect !)
 With swelling sails make good the promis'd port,
 With all their wishes freighted ! yet ev'n These, 205
 Freight with all their wishes, soon complain ;
 Free from misfortune, not from nature free,
 They still are men ; and when is man secure ?
 As fatal *time*, as *storm* ! the rush of years
 Beats down their strength ; their numberless escapes 210
 In ruin end ; and, now, their proud success
 But plants *new* terrors on the victor's brow :
 What pain to quit the world, just made their own,
 Their nest so deeply drown'd, and built so high !
 Too low they build, who build beneath the stars. 215
 Woe then apart (if woe apart can be
 From mortal man), and fortune at our nod,
 The gay ! rich ! great ! triumphant ! and august !
 What are they ?—The *most* happy (strange to say !)
 Convince *me* most of human misery ; 220
 What are they ? Smiling wretches of *to-morrow* !
 More wretched, *then*, than e'er their slave *can* be ;
 Their treacherous blessings, at the day of need,
 Like other faithless friends, unmask, and sting :
Then, what provoking indigence in wealth ! 225
 What

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 221

What aggravated impotence in power !
 High titles, *then*, what insult of their pain !
 If that sole anchor, equal to the waves,
Immortal hope ! defies not the rude storm,
 Takes comfort from the foaming billows' rage, 230
 And makes a welcome harbour of the tomb.

Is This a *sketch* of what thy soul admires ?
 " But here (thou say'st) the miseries of life
 " Are huddled in a group. A more distinct
 " Survey, perhaps, might bring thee better news." 235
 Look on life's stages : they speak plainer still ;
 The plainer they, thee deeper wilt thou sigh.
 Look on thy lovely boy ; in him behold
 The best that can befall the best on earth ;
 The boy has virtue by his *mother's* side : 240
 Yes, on Florello look : a *father's* heart
 Is tender, though the *man's* is made of stone ;
 The truth, through such a medium seen, may make
 Impression deep, and fondness prove thy friend.

Florello lately cast on this rude coast 245
 A helpless infant ; now a heedless child ;
 To poor Clarissa's throes, thy care succeeds ;
 Care full of love, and yet severe as hate !
 O'er thy soul's joy how oft thy fondness frowns !
 Needful austerities his will restrain ; 250
 As thorns fence-in the tender plant from harm.
 As yet, his *reason* cannot go alone ;
 But asks a sterner nurse to lead it on,
 His little heart is often terrify'd ;
 The blush of morning, in his cheek, turns pale ; 255

Its

Its pearly dew-drop trembles in his eye;
 His harmless eye! and drowns an angel there.
 Ah! what avails his innocence? The task
 Injoin'd must discipline his early powers;
 He learns to sigh, ere he is known to sin; 260
 Guiltless, and sad! a wretch before the fall!
 How cruel this! more cruel to forbear.
 Our *nature* such, with *necessary* pains,
 We purchase prospects of *precarious* peace:
 Though not a *father*, This might steal a sigh. 265
 Suppose him disciplin'd aright (if not,
 'Twill sink our poor account to poorer still);
 Ripe from the tutor, proud of liberty,
 He leaps inclosure, bounds into the world!
 The world is taken, after ten years toil, 270
 Like antient Troy; and all its joys his own.
 Alas! the world's a tutor more severe;
 Its lessons hard, and ill deserve his pains;
 Unteaching All his virtuous nature taught,
 Or books (fair virtue's advocates!) inspir'd. 275
 For who receives him into public life?
 Men of the world, the terræ-filial breed,
 Welcome the modest stranger to their sphere,
 (Which glitter'd long, at distance, in his sight)
 And, in their hospitable arms, inclose: 280
 Men, who think nought so strong of the romance,
 So rank knight-errant, as a real friend:
 Men, that act up to *reason's* golden rule,
 All weakness of *affection* quite subdued:
 Men, that would blush at being thought sincere, 285

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 223

And feign, for glory, the *few* faults they want;
That love a lye, where truth would pay as well;
As if, to Them, *vice* shone her own reward.

Lorenzo! canst thou bear a shocking sight?
Such, for Florello's sake, twill now appear: 290
See, the steel'd files of season'd veterans,
Train'd to the world, in burnish'd falsehood bright;
Deep in the fatal stratagems of peace;
All soft sensation, in the throng, rubb'd off;
All their keen purpose, in politeness, sheath'd; 295
His friends eternal—during interest;
His foes implacable—when worth their while;
At war with every welfare, but their own;
As wise as Lucifer; and half as good;
And by whom none, but Lucifer, can gain— 300
Naked, through These (so common fate ordains),
Naked of heart, his cruel course he runs,
Stung out of All, most amiable in life,
Prompt truth, and open thought, and smiles unfeign'd;
Affection, as his species, wide diffus'd; 305
Noble presumptions to mankind's renown;
Ingenuous trust, and confidence of love.

These claims to joy (if mortals joy might claim)
Will cost him many a sigh; till time, and pains,
From the slow mistress of this school, *Experience*, 310
And her assistant, pausing, pale, *Distrust*,
Purchase a dear-bought clue to lead his youth
Through serpentine obliquities of life,
And the dark labyrinth of human-hearts.
And happy! if the clue shall come so cheap; 315

For,

For, while we learn to fence with public guilt,
 Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
 If less than heavenly virtue is our guard.
 Thus, a strange kind of curst necessity
 Brings down the sterling temper of his soul, 320
 By base alloy, to bear the current stamp,
Below call'd wisdom; sinks him into safety;
 And brands him into credit with the *world*;
 Where specious titles dignify disgrace,
 And nature's injuries are arts of life; 325
 Where brighter reason prompts to bolder crimes;
 And heavenly talents make infernal hearts;
 That unfurmountable extreme of guilt!
 Poor Machiavel! who labour'd hard his plan,
 Forgot, that genius need not go to school; 330
 Forgot, that man, without a tutor wife,
 His plan had practis'd, long before 't was writ.
 The world 's all *title-page*; there 's no *contents*;
 The world 's all *face*; the man who shews his *heart*,
 Is whooted for his nudities, and scorn'd. 335
 A man I knew, who liv'd upon a smile;
 And well it fed him; he look'd plump and fair;
 While rankest venom foam'd through every vein.
 Lorenzo! what I tell thee, take not ill!
 Living, he fawn'd on every *fool* alive; 340
 And, dying, curs'd the *friend* on whom he liv'd.
 To such proficients thou art half a faint.
 In foreign realms (for thou hast travel'd far)
 How curious to contemplate two state-rooks,
 Studious their nests to feather in a trice; 345

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 225

With all the *necromantics* of their art,
 Playing the game of *faces* on each other,
 Making court sweet-meats of their latent gall,
 In foolish hope, to steal each other's trust ;
 Both cheating, both exulting, both deceiv'd ; 350
 And, sometimes, both (let earth rejoice) undone !
 Their parts we doubt not ; but be That their shame ;
 Shall men of talents, fit to rule mankind,
 Stoop to mean wiles, that would disgrace a fool ;
 And lose the thanks of those few friends they serve ? 355
 For who can thank the man, he cannot *see* ?

Why so much cover ? It defeats itself.

Ye, that know all things ! know ye not, mens hearts
 Are therefore known, *because* they are conceal'd ?
 For why conceal'd ?—The cause they need not tell. 360
 I give him joy, that 's aukward at a lye ;
 Whose feeble nature *truth* keeps still in awe ;
 His incapacity is his renown.

'Tis great, 'tis manly, to disdain *disguise* ;
 It shews our spirit, or it proves our strength, 365
 Thou say'st, 'Tis *needful* : is it therefore *right* ?
 Howe'er, I grant it some small sign of grace,
 To strain at an excuse : and wouldst thou then
 Escape that cruel *need* ? Thou may'st, with ease ;
 Think no post *needful* that demands a knave. 370

When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
 So Pulteney thought : think better if you can.

But this, how rare ! the public path of life
 Is dirty :—yet, allow that dirt its due,
 It makes the noble mind more noble still : 375

The world's no neuter; it will wound, or save;
Or virtue quench, or indignation fire.

You say, The world, well-known, will make a *man*:
The world, well-known, will give our hearts to heaven,
Or make us *demons*, long before we die. 383

To shew how fair the world, *thy* mistress, shines,
Take *either* part, sure ills attend the choice;
Sure, though not equal, detriment ensues.

Not *virtue's*-self is deify'd on earth;
Virtue has her relapses, conflicts, foes; 385
Foes, that ne'er fail to make her feel their hate.

Virtue has her peculiar set of pains.
True friends to virtue, *last*, and *least*, complain;
But if *they* sigh, can *others* hope to smile?

If *wisdom* has her miseries to mourn, 390
How can poor *folly* lead a happy life?

And if *both* suffer, what has earth to boast,
Where he *most* happy, who the *least* laments!
Where *much*, *much* patience, the most envy'd state,
And *some* forgiveness, needs, the best of friends? 395
For friend, or happy life, who looks not higher,
Of neither shall he find the shadow *here*.

The world's sworn advocate, without a fee
Lorenzo smartly, with a smile, replies;
" Thus far thy song is right; and All must own, 400
" *Virtue has her peculiar set of pains.*—
" And *joys peculiar* who to *vice* denies?
" If vice it is, with nature to comply:
" If *pride*, and *sense*, are so predominant,
" To *check*, not *overcome*, them, makes a faint, 405
" Can

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 227

“ Can nature in a plainer voice proclaim
 “ *Pleasure*, and *glory*, the chief good of man ?”
 Can *pride*, and *sensuality*, rejoice ?
 From purity of thought, all *pleasure* springs ;
 And, from an humble spirit, all our *peace*. 410
Ambition, *pleasure* ! let us talk of These :
 Of These, the *Porch*, and *Academy*, talk'd ;
 Of These, each following age had much to say :
 Yet, unexhausted, still, the needful theme.
 Who talks of *these*, to mankind all at once 415
 He talks ; for where the faint from either free ?
 Are These thy refuge ?—No : these rush upon thee ;
 Thy vitals seize, and *vulture-like*, devour :
 I 'll try, if I can pluck thee from thy rock,
Prometheus ! from this barren ball of earth ; 420
 If *reason* can unchain thee, thou art free.

And, first, thy *Caucasus*, ambition, calls ;
 Mountain of torments ! eminence of woes !
 Of courted woes ! and courted through mistake !
 'Tis not ambition charms thee ; 'tis a cheat 425
 Will make thee start, as *H—* at his *Moor*.
 Dost grasp at greatness ? First, know what it is :
 Think'st thou thy greatness in *distinction* lies ?
 Not in the feather, wave it e'er so high,
 By *fortune* stuck, to mark us from the throng, 430
 Is glory lodg'd : 'tis lodg'd in the reverse ;
 In that which joins, in that which equals, All,
 The monarch and his slave ;—“ A deathless soul,
 “ Unbounded prospect, and immortal kin,
 “ A Father God, and brothers in the skies ;” 435

Elder, indeed, in time; but less remote
 In excellence, perhaps, than thought by man;
 Why greater what can fall, than what can rise?
 If still delirious, now, Lorenzo! go;
 And with thy full-blown brothers of the world, 440
 Throw scorn around thee; cast it on thy slaves;
 Thy slaves, and equals: how scorn cast on Them
 Rebounds on Thee! if man is mean, as man,
 Art thou a god? If *fortune* makes him so,
 Beware the consequence: a maxim That, 445
 Which draws a monstrous picture of mankind,
 Where, in the drapery, the *man* is lost;
 Externals fluttering, and the soul forgot.
 Thy greatest glory, when dispos'd to boast,
 Boast *that* aloud, in which thy servants share. 450
 We wisely strip the steed we mean to buy:
 Judge we, in their comparisons, of *men*?
 It nought avails thee, *where*, but *what*, thou art;
 All the distinctions of this little life
 Are quite cutaneous, foreign to the man, 455
 When, through death's streights, *earth's* subtle serpents
 creep,
 Which wriggle into wealth, or climb renown.
 As crooked Satan the forbidden tree,
 They leave their party-colour'd robe behind,
 All that now glitters, while they rear aloft 460
 Their brazen crests, and hiss at us below.
 Of fortune's *fucus* strip them, yet alive;
 Strip them of body, too; nay, closer still,
 Away with all, but *moral*, in their minds;
 And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 229

And let, what then remains, impose their name, 465
 Pronounce them Weak, or Worthy; Great, or Mean.
 How mean that snuff of glory *fortune* lights,
 And *death* puts out! Dost thou demand a test,
 A test, at once, infallible, and thort,
 Of *real* Greatness? That man Greatly lives, 470
 Whate'er his fate, or fame, who Greatly dies;
 High-flush'd with hope, where heroes shall despair.
 If *this* a true criterion, many courts,
 Illustrious, might afford but few grandees.

Th' Almighty, from his throne, on earth surveys 475
 Nought Greater, than an honest, Humble Heart;
 An Humble Heart, *His* residence! pronounc'd
His second seat; and rival to the skies.
 The private path, the secret acts of men,
 If noble, far the noblest of our lives! 480
 How far above Lorenzo's glory fits
 Th' illustrious master of a name *unknown*;
 Whose worth unrival'd, and unwitness'd, loves
 Life's sacred shades, where gods converse with men;
 And *peace*, beyond the world's conceptions, smiles! 485
 As thou (now dark), before we part, shalt see.

But thy Great Soul this *skulking* glory scorns.
 Lorenzo's sick, but when Lorenzo's seen;
 And, when he shrugs at public business, lyes.
 Deny'd the public eye, the public voice, 490
 As if he liv'd on others' breath, he dies.
 Fain would he make the world his pedestal;
 Mankind the gazers, the sole figure, He.
 Knows he, that mankind praise against their will,

And mix as much detraction as they can? 495
 Knows he, that faithless *fame* her whisper has,
 As well as trumpet? That his vanity
 Is so much tickled from not hearing *All*?
 Knows this all-knower, that from itch of praise,
 Or, from an itch more fordid, when he shines 500
 Taking his country by five hundred ears,
 Senates at once admire him, and despise,
 With modest laughter lining loud applause,
 Which makes the smile more mortal to his fame?
 His *fame*, which (like the mighty Cæsar), crown'd 505
 With laurels, in full senate, greatly falls,
 By *seeming* friends, that honour, and destroy.
 We rise in glory, as we sink in pride:
 Where boasting ends, there dignity begins:
 And yet, mistaken beyond all mistake, 510
 The blind Lorenzo's proud—of being proud;
 And dreams himself ascending in his fall.
 An eminence, though fancy'd, turns the brain:
 All vice wants *hellebore*; but of all vice,
Pride loudest calls, and for the largest bowl; 515
 Because, unlike all other vice, it flies,
 In *fact*, the point, in *fancy* most pursued.
 Who court applause, oblige the world in *this*;
 They gratify man's passion to *refuse*.
 Superior honour, when *assum'd*, is *lost*; 520
 Ev'n good men turn *banditti*, and rejoice,
 Like Kouli-Kan, in plunder of the proud.
 Though somewhat disconcerted, steady still
 To the *world's* cause, with half a face of joy,

Lorenzo

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 231

Lorenzo cries—"Be, then, *ambition* cast; 525

"Ambition's dearer far stands unimpeach'd,

"Gay *pleasure*! proud *ambition* is her slave;

"For Her, he soars at *great*, and hazards *ill*;

"For Her, he fights, and bleeds, or overcomes;

"And paves his way, with crowns, to reach Her smile:

"Who can resist her charms?"—Or, *should*? Lorenzo!

What mortal shall resist, where angels yield?

Pleasure's the mistress of ethereal powers;

For her contend the rival gods above;

Pleasure's the mistress of the world below; 535

And well it was for man, that *pleasure* charms;

How would All stagnate, but for *pleasure*'s ray!

How would the frozen stream of action cease!

What is the pulse of this so busy world?

The love of *pleasure*: that, through every vein, 540

Throws motion, warmth; and shuts out death from life.

Though various are the tempers of mankind,

Pleasure's gay family hold All in chains:

Some most affect the black; and some, the fair;

Some honest *pleasure* court; and some, obscene. 545

Pleasures *obscene* are various, as the throng

Of passions, that can *err* in human hearts;

Mistake their objects, or transgress their bounds.

Think you there's but one whoredom? Whoredom, All,

But when our *reason* licenses delight. 550

Dost doubt, Lorenzo? Thou shalt doubt no more.

Thy father chides thy gallantries; yet hugs

An ugly, common harlot, in the dark;

A rank adulterer with others' *gold*!

And that hag, *vengeance*, in a corner, charms. 553

Hatred her brothel has, as well as *love*,

Where horrid *epicures* debauch in blood.

Whate'er the motive, *pleasure* is the mark :

For Her, the black assassin draws his sword ;

For Her, dark statesmen trim their midnight lamp, 560

To which no *single* sacrifice may fall ;

For Her, the saint abstains ; the miser starves ;

The Stoic proud, for *pleasure*, pleasure scorn'd ;

For Her, *affliction's* daughters grief indulge,

And find, or hope, a luxury in tears ; 565

For Her, guilt, shame, toil, danger, we defy ;

And, with an aim *voluptuous*, rush on death.

Thus universal her despotic power !

And as her empire wide, her praise is just.

Patron of pleasure ! doater on delight ! 570

I am thy rival ; pleasure I profess ;

Pleasure the purpose of my gloomy song.

Pleasure is nought but virtue's gayer name ;

I wrong her still, I rate her worth too low ;

Virtue the root, and pleasure is the flower ; 575

And honest Epicurus' foes were fools.

But this sounds harsh, and gives the *wise* offence ;

If o'erstrain'd wisdom still retains the *name*.

How knits *austerity* her cloudy brow,

And blames, as bold, and hazardous, the *praise* 580

Of *pleasure*, to mankind, *unprais'd*, too dear !

Ye modern Stoics ! hear my soft reply ;

Their senses men *will* trust : we can't impose ;

Or, if we could, is imposition right ?

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 233

Own *honey sweet*; but, owning, add this *sting*; 585

“ When mixt with poison, it is deadly too.”

Truth never was indebted to a lye.

Is nought but *virtue* to be prais'd, as good?

Why then is health preferr'd before disease?

What nature loves *is* good, without *our* leave. 590

And where no future drawback cries, “ *Beware* ;”

Pleasure, though not from *virtue*, *should* prevail.

'Tis balm to life, and gratitude to heaven;

How cold our thanks for bounties unenjoy'd!

The *love* of *pleasure* is man's eldest-born, 595

Born in his cradle, living to his tomb;

Wisdom, her *younger* sister, though more *grave*,

Was meant to *minister*, and not to mar,

Imperial *pleasure*, queen of human hearts.

Lorenzo! Thou, her majesty's renown'd, 600

Though uncoift counsel, learned in *the world*!

Who think't thyself a Murray, with disdain

May't look on me. Yet, my Demosthenes!

Canst thou plead *pleasure's* cause as well as I?

Know't thou her *nature*, *purpose*, *parentage*? 605

Attend my song, and thou shalt know them all;

And know Thyself; and know thyself to be

(Strange truth!) the most abstemious man alive.

Tell not Calista; she will laugh thee dead;

Or send thee to her hermitage with L——. 610

Absurd presumption! Thou who never knew't

A serious thought! shalt thou dare dream of joy?

No man e'er found a *happy life* by chance;

Or yawn'd it into being, with a wish;

Or

Or, with the snout of groveling *appetite*, 615
 E'er smelt it out, and grubb'd it from the dirt.
 An *art* it is, and must be learnt; and learnt
 With unremitting effort, or be lost;
 And leaves us perfect blockheads, in our bliss.
 The clouds may drop down titles and estates; 620
Wealth may seek Us; but *wisdom* must be fought;
 Sought before all; but (how unlike all else
 We seek on earth!) 'tis never sought in vain.

First, *pleasure's* birth, rise, strength, and grandeur, see.
 Brought forth by *wisdom*, nurs'd by *discipline*, 625
 By *patience* taught, by *perseverance* crown'd,
 She rears her head majestic; round her throne,
 Erected in the bosom of the just,
 Each virtue, lifted, forms her manly guard.
 For what are *virtues*? (Formidable name!) 630
 What, but the fountain, or defence, of joy?
 Why, then, commanded? Need mankind commands,
 At once to *merit*, and to *make*, their bliss?—
 Great Legislator! scarce so great, as kind!
 If men are rational, and love delight, 635
 Thy gracious law but flatters human choice;
 In the transgression lies the penalty;
 And they the most indulge, who most obey.

Of *pleasure*, next, the final cause explore;
 Its mighty *purpose*, its important *end*. 640
 Not to turn *human* brutal, but to build
Divine on human, *pleasure* came from heaven.
 In aid to *reason* was the goddess sent;
 To call up all its strength by such a charm.

Pleasure,

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 235

Pleasure, first, succours *virtue* ; in return, 645
Virtue gives *pleasure* an eternal reign.

What, but the pleasure of food, friendship, faith,
 Supports life *natural*, *civil*, and *divine* ?

'Tis from the pleasure of repast, we live ;

'Tis from the pleasure of applause, we please ; 650

'Tis from the pleasure of belief, we pray

(All prayer would cease, if unbeliev'd the prize):

It serves ourselves, our species, and our God ;

And to serve more, is past the sphere of man.

Glide, then, for ever, pleasure's sacred stream ! 655

Through Eden, as Euphrates ran, it runs,

And fosters every growth of happy life ;

Makes a new Eden where it flows ;—but such

As *must* be lost, Lorenzo ! by thy fall.

“*What mean I by thy fall ?*”—Thou 'lt shortly see, 660

While pleasure's *nature* is at large display'd ;

Already sung her *origin*, and *ends*.

Those glorious ends, by kind, or by degree,

When *pleasure* violates, 'tis then a vice,

And vengeance too ; it hastens into pain. 665

From due refreshment, life, health, reason, joy ;

From wild excess, pain, grief, distraction, death ;

Heaven's justice *this* proclaims, and *that* her love.

What greater evil can I wish my foe,

Than his full draught of pleasure, from a cask 670

Unbroach'd by *just authority*, ungaug'd

By *temperance*, by *reason* unrefin'd ?

A thousand dæmons lurk within the lee.

Heaven, others, and ourselves ! uninjur'd *these*,

Drink

Drink deep ; the deeper, then, the more divine ; 675

Angels are angels, from indulgence *there* ;

'Tis unrepenting pleasure makes a god.

Dost think thyself a god from other joys ?

A victim rather ! shortly sure to bleed.

The wrong *must* mourn : can heaven's appointments fail ?

Can man outwit Omnipotence ? Strike out

A self-wrought happiness unmeant by *Him*

Who made us, and the world we would enjoy ?

Who forms an instrument, ordains from whence

Its dissonance, or harmony, shall rise. 685

Heaven bade the soul this mortal frame inspire ;

Bade virtue's ray divine inspire the soul

With unprecarious flows of vital joy ;

And, without breathing, man as well might hope

For life, as without piety, for peace. 690

“ Is *virtue*, then, and *piety* the same ? ”

No ; piety is more ; 'tis virtue's source ;

Mother of every worth, as that of joy.

Men of the world this doctrine ill digest ;

They smile at piety ; yet boast aloud 695

Good-will to men ; nor know they strive to part

What *nature* joins ; and thus confute themselves.

With *piety* begins all good on earth ;

'Tis the first-born of rationality.

Conscience, her first law broken, wounded lies ; 700

Enfeebled, lifeless, impotent to good ;

A feign'd affection bounds her utmost power.

Some we can't love, but for the Almighty's sake ;

A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man ;

Some

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 237

Some sinister intent taints all he does ; 705
 And, in his kindest actions, he 's unkind.

On piety, humanity is built ;
 And, on humanity, much happiness ;
 And yet still more on piety itself.
 A soul in commerce with her God, is heaven ; 710
 Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life ;
 The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart.

A Deity believ'd, is joy begun ;
 A Deity ador'd, is joy advanc'd ;
 A Deity belov'd, is joy matur'd. 715
 Each branch of piety delight inspires ;

Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,
 O'er death's dark gulph, and all its horror hides ;
Praise, the sweet exhalation of our joy,
 That joy exalts, and makes it sweeter still ; 720
Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream
 Of glory on the consecrated hour
 Of man, in audience with the Deity.

Who worships the *Great God*, that instant joins
 The first in heaven, and sets his foot on hell. 725

Lorenzo! when wast Thou at church *before* ?
 Thou think'st the service long : but is it just ?
 Though just, unwelcome : thou hadst rather tread
 Unhallow'd ground ; the Muse, to win thine ear,
 Must take an air less solemn. She complies. 730

Good conscience ! at the sound *the world* retires ;
 Verse disaffects it, and Lorenzo smiles ;
 Yet has she her *seraglio* full of charms ;
 And such as age shall heighten, not impair.

Art

Art thou dejected? Is thy mind o'ercast? 735
 Amid her fair-ones, thou the fairest chuse,
 To chase thy gloom.—“ Go, fix some weighty *truth* ;
 “ Chain down some *passion* ; do some *generous good* ;
 “ Teach *ignorance* to see, or *grief* to smile ;
 “ Correct thy *friend* ; befriend thy greatest *foe* ; 740
 “ Or with warm heart, and confidence divine,
 “ Spring up, and lay strong hold on *Him* who made thee.”
 Thy gloom is scatter'd, sprightly spirits flow ;
 Though wither'd is thy vine, and harp unstrung.
 Dost call the bowl, the viol, and the dance, 745
 Loud mirth, mad laughter? Wretched comforters!
 Physicians! more than half of thy disease.
Laughter, though never censur'd yet as sin,
 (Pardon a thought that only *seems* severe)
 Is half-immoral: is it much indulg'd? 750
 By venting spleen, or dissipating thought,
 It shews a *scorner*, or it makes a *fool* ;
 And sins, as hurting others, or ourselves.
 'Tis *pride*, or *emptiness*, applies the straw,
 That tickles little minds to mirth effuse ; 755
 Of grief approaching, the portentous sign!
 The house of laughter makes a house of woe.
 A man *triumphant* is a monstrous sight ;
 A man *dejected* is a sight as mean.
 What cause for *triumph*, where such ills abound? 760
 What for *dejection*, where presides a Power,
 Who call'd us into being to be blest?
 So grieve, as conscious, grief may rise to joy ;
 So joy, as conscious, joy to grief may fall.

Most

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 239

Most true, a wise man never will be sad ; 765
 But neither will sonorous, bubbling mirth,
 A shallow stream of happiness betray :
 Too happy to be sportive, he 's serene.

Yet wouldst thou laugh (but at thy own expence)
 This counsel strange should I presume to give— 770
 “ Retire, and read thy *Bible*, to be gay.”
 There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace ;
 Ah ! do not prize them less, because inspir'd,
 As thou, and thine, are apt and proud to do.
 If *not* inspir'd, that pregnant page had stood, 775
 Time's treasure ! and the wonder of the wise !
 Thou think'st, perhaps, thy *soul* alone at stake ;
 Alas !—Should men mistake thee for a *fool* ;—
 What man of taste for genius, wisdom, truth,
 Though tender of thy fame, could interpose ? 780
 Believe me, sense, *here*, acts a double part,
 And the true *critic* is a *Christian* too.

But *these*, thou think'st, are gloomy paths to joy.—
 True joy in sunshine ne'er was found at first ;
 They, first, themselves offend, who greatly please ; 785
 And travel only gives us sound repose.
 Heaven *sells* all pleasure ; effort is the price ;
 The joys of conquest are the joys of man ;
 And *glory* the victorious *laurel* spreads
 O'er *pleasure's* pure, perpetual, placid stream. 790

There is a time, when toil must be preferr'd,
 Or joy, by mis-tim'd fondness, is undone.
 A man of *pleasure* is a man of *pains*.
 Thou wilt not take the trouble to be blest.

False joys, indeed, are born from want of thought; 795
From thoughts full bent, and energy, the *true*;

And that demands a mind in equal poize,
Remote from gloomy grief, and glaring joy.

Much joy not only speaks small happiness,
But happiness that shortly must expire. 800

Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, stand?

And, in a tempest, can reflection live?

Can joy, like thine, secure itself an hour?

Can joy, like thine, meet accident unshock'd?

Or ope the door to honest poverty? 805

Or talk with threatening death, and not turn pale?

In such a world, and such a nature, *these*

Are needful fundamentals of delight:

These fundamentals give delight *indeed*;

Delight, pure, delicate, and durable; 810

Delight, unshaken, masculine, divine;

A constant, and a sound, but *serious* joy.

Is joy the daughter of severity?

It is:—yet far my doctrine from severe.

“ Rejoice for ever :” It becomes a man; 815

Exalts, and sets him nearer to the gods.

“ Rejoice for ever !” *Nature* cries, “ Rejoice ;”

And drinks to man, in her nectareous cup,

Mixt up of delicates for every sense;

To the great Founder of the bounteous feast, 820

Drinks glory, gratitude, eternal praise;

And he that will not *pledge her*, is a churl.

Ill firmly to support, *good* fully taste,

Is the whole science of felicity:

Yet

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 241

Yet *sparing pledge*: her bowl is not the best 825

Mankind can boast.—“ A rational repast ;

“ Exertion, vigilance, a mind in arms,

“ A military discipline of thought,

“ To foil *temptation* in the doubtful field ;

“ And ever-waking ardor for *the right*.” 830

’Tis *these* first give, then guard, a chearful heart.

Nought that is *right*, think little ; well aware,

What reason bids, God bids ; by *His* command

How aggrandiz’d, the smallest thing we do !

‘Thus, *nothing* is insipid to the wise ; 835

To thee, insipid all, but what is *mad* ;

Joys season’d high, and tasting strong of guilt.

“ *Mad!* (thou reply’st, with indignation fir’d)

“ Of antient sages proud to tread the steps,

“ I follow *nature*.”—Follow *nature* still, 840

But look it be thine *own*: Is *conscience*, then,

No part of *nature*? Is she not *supreme*?

Thou regicide ! O raise her from the dead !

Then, follow *nature* ; and resemble God.

When, spite of *conscience*, pleasure is pursued, 845

Man’s nature is *unnaturally* pleas’d :

And what ’s unnatural is painful too

At intervals, and must disgust ev’n Thee !

The *fact* thou know’st ; but not, perhaps, the *cause*.

Virtue’s foundations with the world’s were laid ; 850

Heaven mixt her with our make, and twisted close

Her sacred interests with the strings of life.

Who breaks her awful mandate, shocks himself,

His better self: and is it greater pain,

Our *soul* should murmur, or our *dust* repine ? 855
 And one, in their eternal war, *must* bleed.

If one *must* suffer, which should least be spar'd ?
 The pains of mind surpass the pains of sense :
 Ask, then, the gout, what torment is in guilt.
 The joys of *sense* to *mental* joys are mean : 860

Sense on the present only feeds ; the soul
 On past, and future, forages for joy.
 'Tis hers, by retrospect, through *time* to range ;
 And forward *time's* great sequel to survey.
 Could human courts take vengeance on the *mind*, 865
 Axes might rust, and racks and gibbets fall :
 Guard, then, thy mind, and leave the rest to fate.

Lorenzo ! wilt thou never be a man ?
 The man is dead, who for the body lives,
 Lur'd, by the beating of his pulse, to list 870
 With every lust, that wars against his peace :
 And sets him quite at variance with himself.
 Thyself, first, know ; then love : a *self* there is
 Of virtue fond, that kindles at her charms.

A *self* there is, as fond of every vice, 875
 While every virtue wounds it to the heart :
Humility degrades it, *justice* robs,
 Blest *bounty* beggars it, fair *truth* betrays,
 And god-like *magnanimity* destroys.

This self, when rival to the former, scorn ; 880
 When not in competition, kindly treat,
 Defend it, feed it :—But when virtue bids,
 Toss it, or to the fowls, or to the flames.
 And why ? 'Tis love of *pleasure* bids thee bleed ;

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 243

Comply, or own self-love *extinct*, or *blind*. 885

For what is *vice*? Self-love in a mistake:
A poor blind merchant buying joys too dear.
And *virtue*, what? 'Tis self-love in her wits,
Quite skilful in the market of delight.

Self-love's good sense is love of that dread Power, 890
From whom herself, and all she can enjoy.

Other self-love is but disguis'd self-hate;
More mortal than the malice of our foes;
A self-hate, *now*, scarce felt; *then* felt full-fore,
When being, curst; extinction, loud implor'd; 895
And every thing preferr'd to what we *are*.

Yet *this* self-love Lorenzo makes his choice:
And, in this choice triumphant, boasts of joy.
How is his want of happiness betray'd,
By disaffection to the present hour! 900

Imagination wanders far afield:
The future pleases: why? The present pains.—
“But that's a *secret*.” Yes, which all men know;
And know from Thee, discover'd unawares.

Thy ceaseless agitation, restless roll 905
From cheat to cheat, impatient of a pause;
What is it?—'Tis the cradle of the soul,
From *instinct* sent, to rock her in disease,
Which her physician, *Reason*, will not cure.
A poor expedient! yet thy best; and while 910
It mitigates thy pain, it *owns* it too.

Such are Lorenzo's wretched remedies!
The weak have remedies; the wise have joys.
Superior wisdom is superior bliss.

And what sure mark distinguishes the wise ? 915
 Consistent wisdom ever wills the same ;
 Thy fickle wish is ever on the wing.
 Sick of herself, is *folly's* character ;
 As *wisdom's* is, a modest self-applause.
 A change of evils is *thy* good supreme ; 920
 Nor, but in motion, canst thou find thy rest.
 Man's greatest strength is shewn in standing still.
 The first sure symptom of a mind in health,
 Is rest of heart, and pleasure felt at home.
False pleasure from abroad her joys imports ; 925
 Rich from within, and self-sustain'd, the *true*.
 The *true* is fixt, and solid as a rock ;
 Slippery the *false*, and tossing, as the wave.
This, a wild wanderer on earth, like Cain ;
That, like the fabled, self-enamour'd boy, 930
 Home-contemplation her supreme delight ;
 She dreads an interruption from without,
 Smit with her own condition ; and the more
 Intense she gazes, still it charms the more.
 No man is happy, till he thinks, on earth 935
 There breathes not a more happy than himself :
 Then envy dies, and love o'erflows on All ;
 And love o'erflowing makes an angel Here.
 Such angels, All, intitled to repose
 On *Him* who governs fate : though tempest frowns, 940
 Though nature shakes, how soft to lean on heaven !
 To lean on *Him*, on whom archangels lean !
 With inward eyes, and silent as the grave,
 They stand collecting every beam of thought,

Till

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 245

Till their hearts kindle with divine delight; 945
 For all their thoughts, like angels, seen of old
 In Israel's dream, come from, and go to, heaven :
 Hence, are *they* studious of sequester'd scenes ;
 While noise, and dissipation, comfort *thee*.

Were all men happy, revelings would cease, 950
 That opiate for inquietude within.

Lorenzo ! never man was truly blest,
 But it compos'd, and gave him such a cast,
 As *folly* might mistake for want of joy.
 A cast, unlike the triumph of the proud ; 955
 A modest aspect, and a smile at heart.

O for a joy from thy Philander's spring !
 A spring perennial, rising in the breast,
 And permanent, as pure ! no turbid stream
 Of rapturous exultation, swelling high ; 960
 Which, like land-floods, impetuous pour a while,
 Then sink at once, and leave us in the mire.

What does the man, who transient joy prefers ?
 What, but prefer the bubbles to the stream ?

Vain are all sudden fallies of delight ; 965
 Convulsions of a weak, distemper'd joy.
 Joy 's a fixt state ; a tenure, not a start.
 Bliss there is none, but *unprecarious* bliss :
 That is the gem : sell All, and purchase That.

Why go a-begging to contingencies, 970
 Not gain'd with ease, nor safely lov'd, if gain'd ?
 At good fortuitous, draw back, and pause ;
 Suspect it ; what thou canst ensure, enjoy ;
 And nought but what thou giv'st thyself, is sure.

Reason perpetuates joy that reason gives, 975
 And makes it as immortal as herself :
 To mortals, nought immortal, but their worth.
 Worth, conscious worth ! should *absolutely* reign ;
 And other joys ask leave for their approach ;
 Nor, unexamined, ever leave obtain. 980
 Thou art all anarchy ; a mob of joys
 Wage war, and perish in intestine broils ;
 Not the least promise of internal peace !
 No bosom-comfort ! or unborrow'd bliss !
 Thy thoughts are vagabonds ; All outward-bound, 985
 'Mid sands, and rocks, and storms, to cruise for pleasure ;
 If gain'd, dear-bought ; and better miss'd than gain'd.
 Much pain must expiate what much pain procur'd.
Fancy, and *sense*, from an infected shore,
 Thy cargo bring ; and pestilence the prize. 990
 Then, such thy thirst (insatiable thirst !
 By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more !)
Fancy still cruises, when poor *sense* is tir'd.
 Imagination is the Paphian shop,
 Where feeble happiness, like Vulcan, lame, 995
 Bids foul *ideas*, in their dark recess,
 And hot as hell (which kindled the black fires),
 With wanton art, those fatal arrows form,
 Which murder all thy time, health, wealth, and fame.
 Wouldst thou receive them, other thoughts there are, 1000
 On angel-wing, descending from above,
 Which these, with art divine, would counter-work,
 And form celestial armour for thy peace.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 247

In *this* is seen imagination's *guilt* ;
 But who can count her *follies* ? She betrays thee, 1005
 To think in grandeur there is something great.
 For works of curious art, and antient fame,
 Thy genius hungers, elegantly pain'd ;
 And foreign climes must cater for thy taste.
 Hence, what disaster !—Though the price was paid, 1010
 That persecuting priest, the Turk of Rome,
 Whose foot (ye gods !) though cloven, must be kifs'd,
 Detain'd thy dinner on the Latian shore ;
 (Such is the fate of honest Protestants !)
 And poor *magnificence* is starv'd to death. 1015
 Hence just resentment, indignation, ire !—
 Be pacify'd; if *outward* things are great,
 'Tis magnanimity great things to scorn ;
 Pompous expences, and parades august,
 And courts, that insalubrious foil to peace. 1020
 True happiness ne'er enter'd at an eye ;
 True happiness resides in things unseen.
 No smiles of *fortune* ever blest the bad,
 Nor can her frowns rob *innocence* of joys ;
That jewel wanting, triple crowns are poor : 1025
 So tell his *Holiness*, and be reveng'd.

Pleasure, we both agree, is man's chief good ;
 Our only contest, what deserves the name.
 Give *pleasure's* name to nought, but what has pass'd
 Th' authentic seal of *reason* (which, like Yorke, 1030
 Demurrs on what it passes), and defies
 The tooth of time ; when past, a pleasure still ;
 Dearer on trial, lovelier for its age,

And doubly to be priz'd, as it promotes
Our future, while it forms our present, joy. 1035

Some joys the future overcast; and some
Throw all their beams that way, and gild the tomb.

Some joys endear eternity; some give
Abhorr'd annihilation dreadful charms.

Are rival joys contending for thy choice? 1040

Consult thy *whole existence*, and be safe;
That oracle will put all doubt to flight.

Short is the lesson, though my lecture long,
Be good—and let heaven answer for the rest.

Yet, with a sigh o'er all mankind, I grant 1045

In this our day of proof, our land of hope,
The *good man* has his clouds that intervene;

Clouds, that *obscure* his sublunary day,

But never *conquer*: ev'n the *best* must own,

Patience, and *resignation*, are the pillars 1050

Of human peace on earth. The pillars, These:

But those of Seth not more remote from Thee,

Till *this* heroic lesson thou hast learnt;

To frown at *pleasure*, and to smile in *pain*.

Fir'd at the prospect of unclouded bliss, 1055

Heaven in reversion, like the sun, as yet

Beneath th' horizon, cheers us in this world;

It sheds, on souls susceptible of light,

The glorious dawn of our eternal day.

“ This (says Lorenzo) is a fair harangue: 1060

“ But can harangues blow back strong nature's stream;

“ Or stem the tide heaven pushes through our veins,

“ Which sweeps away man's impotent resolves,

“ And

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 249

“ And lays his labour level with the *world?*”

Themselves men make their comment on mankind;
And think nought *is*, but what they find at home:
Thus, weakness to chimæra turns the truth.

Nothing romantic has the Muse prescrib'd.

* Above, Lorenzo saw the man of earth,
The *mortal man*; and wretched was the sight. 1070

To balance that, to comfort, and exalt,
Now see the *man immortal*: him, I mean,
Who lives as such; whose heart, full-bent on heaven,
Leans all *that* way, his bias to the stars.

The world's dark shades, in contrast set, shall raise 1075
His lustre more; though bright, without a foil:
Observe his awful portrait, and admire;
Nor stop at wonder; imitate, and live.

Some angel guide my pencil, while I draw,
What nothing less than angel can exceed! 1080

A man on earth devoted to the skies;
Like ships in seas, while *in, above* the world.

With aspect mild, and elevated eye,
Behold him seated on a mount serene,
Above the fogs of *sense*, and *passion's* storm; 1085
All the black cares, and tumults, of this life,
Like harmless thunders, breaking at his feet,
Excite his pity, not impair his peace.

Earth's genuine sons, the sceptred, and the slave,
A mingled mob! a wandering herd! he sees, 1090
Bewilder'd in the vale; in all unlike!
His full reverse in all! what higher praise?

What

* In a former Night,

What stronger demonstration of the right ?

The present all *their* care ; the future, *his*.

When public welfare calls, or private want, 1095

They give to fame ; his bounty *he* conceals.

Their virtues varnish nature ; *his* exalt.

Mankind's esteem *they* court ; and *he*, his own.

Theirs, the wild chace of *false* felicities ;

His, the compos'd possession of the *true*. 1100

Alike throughout is *his* consistent peace,

All of one colour, and an even thread ;

While party-colour'd shreds of happiness,

With hideous gaps between, patch up for *them*

A madman's robe ; each puff of *fortune* blows 1105

The tatters by, and shews their nakedness.

He sees with other eyes than *theirs* : where *they*

Behold a *sun*, *he* spies a *Deity* ;

What makes *them* only smile, makes *him* adore.

Where *they* see *mountains*, *he* but *atoms* sees ; 1110

An *empire*, in *his* balance, weighs a *grain*.

They things terrestrial worship, as divine :

His hopes immortal blow them by, as dust,

That dims his sight, and shortens his survey,

Which longs, in Infinite, to lose all bound. 1115

Titles and honours (if they prove his fate)

He lays aside to find his dignity ;

No dignity *they* find in aught besides.

They triumph in externals (which conceal

Man's real glory), proud of an eclipse. 1120

Himself too much *he* prizes to be proud,

And nothing thinks so great in man, as *man*.

To

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 251

Too dear *he* holds his interest, to neglect
 Another's welfare, or his right invade;
Their interest, like a lion, lives on prey. 1125
They kindle at the shadow of a wrong;
 Wrong *he* sustains with temper, looks on heaven,
 Nor stoops to think his injurer his foe;
 Nought, but what wounds his virtue, wounds his peace.
 A cover'd heart *their* character defends; 1130
 A cover'd heart *denies* him half his praise:
 With nakedness his innocence agrees;
 While *their* broad foliage testifies their fall.
Their no joys end, where *his* full feast begins:
His joys create, *Theirs* murder, future bliss. 1135
 To triumph in existence, *his* alone;
 And *his* alone, triumphantly to think
 His *true* existence is not yet begun.
 His glorious course was, yesterday, complete;
 Death, then, was welcome; yet life still is sweet. 1140
 But nothing charms Lorenzo, like the firm,
 Undaunted breast—And whose is that high praise?
They yield to pleasure, though they danger brave,
 And shew no fortitude, but in the field;
 If there they shew it, 'tis for glory shewn; 1145
 Nor will that cordial always man *their* hearts.
 A cordial *his* sustains, that cannot fail;
 By pleasure unshooked, unbroke by pain,
He shares in that Omnipotence he trusts.
 All-bearing, all-attempting, till he falls; 1150
 And when he falls, writes VICI on his shield.
 From magnanimity, all *fear* above;

From

From nobler recompence, above *applause* ;
Which owes to man's *short* out-look all its charms.

Backward to credit what he never felt, 1155
Lorenzo cries,—“ Where shines this miracle ?
“ From what root rises this *immortal man* ?”

A root that grows not in Lorenzo's ground ;
The root dissect, nor wonder at the *flower*.

He follows nature (not like * thee) and shews us 1160
An uninverted system of a man.

His *appetite* wears *reason's* golden chain,
And finds, in due restraint, its luxury.
His *passion*, like an eagle well reclaim'd,
Is taught to fly at nought, but Infinite. 1165

Patient his *hope*, un-anxious is his *care*,
His *caution* fearless, and his *grief* (if grief
The gods ordain) a stranger to despair.

And why?—Because, affection, more than meet,
His wisdom leaves not disengag'd from heaven. 1170

Those secondary goods that smile on earth,
He, loving in *proportion*, loves in *peace*.
They most the world enjoy, who least admire.
His *understanding* 'scapes the common cloud
Of fumes, arising from a boiling breast. 1175

His head is clear, because his heart is cool,
By worldly competitions uninflam'd.

The moderate movements of his soul admit
Distinct ideas, and matur'd debate,

An eye impartial, and an even scale; 1180
Whence judgment found, and unrepenting choice.

Thus,

* See page 241. ver. 838.

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Thus, in a double sense, the *good* are wise ;
 On its own dunghill, wiser than the world.
 What, then, the world ? It *must* be doubly weak ;
 Strange truth ! as soon would they believe their *Creed*.

Yet thus it is ; nor otherwise *can* be ;
 So far from aught romantic, what I sing.
 Bliss has no being, virtue has no strength,
 But from the prospect of immortal life.
 Who think earth all, or (what weighs just the same) 1190
 Who care no farther, *must* prize what it yields ;
 Fond of its fancies, proud of its parades.
 Who thinks earth nothing, *can't* its charms admire ;
He can't a foe, though most malignant, hate,
 Because that hate would prove his greater foe. 1195
 'Tis hard for *them* (yet who so loudly boast
 Good-will to men ?) to love their dearest friend ;
 For may not he invade their *good supreme*,
 Where the least jealousy turns love to gall ?
 All shines to *them*, that for a season shines. 1200
 Each act, each thought, *he* questions, " What its weight,
 " Its colour what, a thousand ages hence ?"—
 And what it *there* appears, he deems it *now*.
 Hence, pure are the recesses of his soul.
 The god-like man has nothing to conceal. 1205
 His virtue, constitutionally deep,
 Has *habit's* firmness, and *affection's* flame ;
 Angels, ally'd, descend to feed the fire ;
 And *death*, which others slays, makes him a god.
 And now, Lorenzo ! bigot of this world ! 1210
 Wont to disdain poor bigots caught by heaven !

Stand

Stand by thy *scorn*, and be reduc'd to *naught* :
 For what art thou ?—Thou boaster ! while thy glare,
 Thy gaudy grandeur, and mere worldly worth,
 Like a broad mist, at distance, strikes us most ; 1215
 And, like a mist, is nothing when at hand ;
His merit, like a mountain, on approach,
 Swells more, and rises nearer to the skies,
 By promise *now*, and, by possession, *soon*,
 (*Too soon, too much*, it cannot be) his own. 1220
 From this thy just *annihilation* rise,
 Lorenzo ! rise to *something*, by reply.
 The world, thy client, listens, and expects ;
 And longs to crown thee with immortal praise.
 Canst thou be silent ? No ; for *wit* is thine ; 1225
 And wit talks *most*, when *least* she has to say,
 And *reason* interrupts not her career.
 She 'll say—*That mists above the mountains rise* ;
 And, with a thousand pleasantries, amuse ;
 She 'll sparkle, puzzle, flutter, raise a dust, 1230
 And fly conviction, in the dust she rais'd.
 Wit, how delicious to man's dainty taste ?
 'Tis precious, as the vehicle of *sense* ;
 But, as its substitute, a dire disease.
 Pernicious talent ! flatter'd by the world, 1235
 By the blind world, which thinks the talent rare.
 Wisdom is rare, Lorenzo ! wit abounds ;
Passion can give it ; sometimes *wine* inspires
 The lucky flash ; and *madness* rarely fails.
 Whatever cause the spirit strongly stirs, 1240
 Confers the bays, and rivals thy renown.

For

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 255

For thy renown, 't were well, was this the worst ;
Chance often hits it ; and, to pique thee more,
 See *dullness*, blundering on vivacities,
 Shakes her sage head at the calamity, 1245
 Which has expos'd, and let her down to thee.
 But *wisdom*, awful wisdom ! which inspects,
 Discerns, compares, weighs, separates, infers,
 Seizes the right, and holds it to the last ;
 How rare ! in senates, synods, fought in vain ; 1250
 Or if *there* found, 'tis sacred to the *few* ;
 While a lewd prostitute to multitudes,
 Frequent, as fatal, *wit* : in civil life,
Wit makes an enterpriser ; *sense*, a man.
Wit hates authority ; commotion loves, 1255
 And thinks herself the lightning of the storm.
 In *states*, 'tis dangerous ; in *religion*, death :
 Shall *wit* turn Christian, when the dull *believe* ?
Sense is our *helmet*, *wit* is but the plume ;
 The *plume* exposes, 'tis our *helmet* saves. 1260
Sense is the diamond, weighty, solid, sound ;
 When cut by *wit*, it casts a brighter beam ;
 Yet, *wit* apart, it is a diamond still.
Wit, widow'd of *good sense*, is worse than nought ;
 It hoists more sail to run against a rock. 1265
 Thus, a *half*-Chesterfield is quite a fool ;
 Whom *dull* fools scorn, and bless their want of wit.
 How ruinous the rock I warn thee shun,
 Where Syrens sit, to sing thee to thy fate !
 A *joy*, in which our *reason* bears no part, 1270
 Is but a *farrow* tickling, ere it stings.

Let

Let not the cooings of the world *allure* thee ;
 Which of her lovers ever found her true ?
Happy! of this bad world who little know ?—
 And yet, we much must know her, to be *safe*. 1275
 To *know* the world, not *love* her, is thy point ;
 She gives but little, nor that little, long.
 There is, I grant, a triumph of the pulse ;
 A dance of spirits, a mere froth of joy,
 Our *thoughtless agitation's* idle child, 1280
 That mantles high, that sparkles, and expires,
 Leaving the soul more vapid than before.
 An *animal* ovation ! such as holds
 No commerce with our *reason*, but subsists
 On juices, through the well-ton'd tubes, well-strain'd ;
 A nice machine ! scarce ever tun'd aright ;
 And when it jars—thy Syrens sing no more,
 Thy dance is done ; the *demi-god* is thrown
 (Short apotheosis !) beneath the *man*,
 In coward gloom immers'd, or fell despair. 1290
 Art thou yet *dull enough* despair to dread,
 And startle at destruction ? If thou art,
 Accept a buckler, take it to the field ;
 (A field of battle is this mortal life !)
 When danger threatens, lay it on thy heart ; 1295
 A single sentence proof against the *world*.
 “ *Soul, body, fortune!* Every good pertains
 “ To one of these ; but prize not all alike ;
 “ The goods of fortune to thy body's health,
 “ Body to soul, and soul submit to God.” 1300
 Wouldst thou build lasting happiness ? Do this ;

Th' inverted *pyramid* can never stand.

Is this truth doubtful? It outshines the sun;
Nay, the sun shines not, but to shew us this,
The single lesson of mankind on earth. 1305

And yet—yet, what? No news! mankind is mad;
Such mighty numbers list against the right,
(And what can't numbers, when bewitch'd, atchieve!)
They talk themselves to something like belief,
That all earth's joys are theirs: As Athens' fool 1310
Grinn'd from the port, on every sail his own.

They grin; but wherefore? and how long the laugh?
Half ignorance, their mirth; and half, a lye;
To cheat the world, and cheat themselves, they smile.
Hard either task! The most abandon'd own, 1315
That *others*, if abandon'd, are undone:

Then, for themselves, the moment *reason* wakes,
(And Providence denies it long repose)
O how laborious is their gaiety!
They scarce can swallow their ebullient spleen, 1320
Scarce muster patience to support the farce,
And pump sad laughter till the curtain falls.
Scarce, did I say? Some cannot fit it out;
Oft their own daring hands the curtain draw,
And shew us *what* their joy, by their despair. 1325

The clotted hair! gor'd breast! blaspheming eye!
Its impious fury still alive in death!
Shut, shut the shocking scene.—But heaven denies
A cover to such guilt; and so should man.
Look round, Lorenzo! see the reeking blade, 1330
Th' invenom'd phial, and the fatal ball;

The strangling cord, and suffocating stream ;
 The loathsome rottenness, and foul decays ;
 From raging riot (flower suicides !)

And *pride* in these, more execrable still ! 1335

How horrid all to thought !—But horrors, these,
 That vouch the truth ; and aid my feeble song.

From *vice, sense, fancy*, no man can be blest :

Bliss is too great, to lodge within an hour :

When an immortal being aims at bliss, 1340

Duration is essential to the name.

O for a joy from *reason* ! Joy from that,

Which makes man *man* ; and, exercis'd aright,

Will make him *more* : A *bounteous* joy ! that gives,

And promises ; that weaves, with art divine, 1345

The richest prospect into present peace :

A joy *ambitious* ! Joy in common held

With thrones ethereal, and their greater far ;

A joy high-privileg'd from chance, time, death !

A joy, which *death* shall double, *judgment* crown ! 1350

Crown'd higher, and still higher, at each stage,

Through blest eternity's long day ; yet still,

Not more remote from *sorrow*, than from *Him*,

Whose lavish hand, whose love stupendous, pours

So much of Deity on guilty dust. 1355

There, O my Lucia ! may I meet thee there,

Where not thy presence can improve my bliss !

Affects not this the *sages of the world* ?

Can nought *affect* them, but what *fools* them too ?

Eternity, depending on an hour, 1360

Makes *serious thought* man's wisdom, joy, and praise.

THE COMPLAINT, NIGHT VIII. 259

Nor need you blush (though sometimes your designs
May shun the light) at your designs on heaven :
Sole point ! where *over-bashful* is your blame.

Are you not *wise* ?—You know you are : Yet hear 1365

One truth, amid your numerous schemes, mislaid,
Or overlook'd, or thrown aside, if seen ;

“ Our schemes to plan by *this* world, or the *next*,

“ Is the sole difference between wise and fool.”

All *worthy men* will weigh you in *this* scale ; 1370

What wonder then, if *they* pronounce you *light* ?

Is *their* esteem alone not worth your care ?

Accept my simple scheme of *common sense* :

Thus, save your fame, and make *two* worlds your own.

The world *replies* not ;—but the world *persists* ; 1375

And puts the *cause* off to the longest day,

Planning evasions for the day of doom.

So far, at that *re-hearing*, from redress,

They then turn *witnesses* against themselves :

Hear that, Lorenzo ! nor be wise to-morrow. 1380

Haste, haste ! A man, by nature, is in haste ;

For who shall answer for another hour ?

'Tis highly prudent, to make *one* sure friend ;

And that thou canst not do, this side the skies.

Ye sons of earth ! (nor *willing* to be more !) 1385

Since *verse* you think from priestcraft somewhat free,

Thus, in an age so gay, the Muse plain truths

(Truths, which, at church, you *might* have heard in prose)

Has ventur'd into light ; well-pleas'd the verse

Should be forgot, if you the truths retain ; 1390

And crown her with your welfare, not your praise.
 But *praise* she need not fear : I see my fate ;
 And headlong leap, like Curtius, down the gulph.
 Since many an ample *volume*, mighty *tome*,
 Must die ; and die unwept ; O thou minute, 1395
 Devoted *page* ! go forth among thy foes ;
 Go, nobly proud of martyrdom for truth,
 And die a double death : mankind, incens'd,
 Denies thee long to live : nor shalt thou rest
 When thou art dead ; in Stygian shades arraign'd 1400
 By Lucifer, as traitor to his throne ;
 And bold blasphemer of his friend—the world ;
 The world, whose legions cost him slender pay,
 And *volunteers* around his banner swarm ;
 Prudent, as Prussia, in her zeal for Gaul ! 1405
 “ Are all, then, fools ? ” Lorenzo cries,—Yes, all,
 But such as hold *this* doctrine (new to thee) ;
 “ The mother of true wisdom is the *will* ” ;
 The noblest *intellect*, a fool without it.
World-wisdom much has done, and more may do, 1410
 In arts and sciences, in wars and peace ;
 But art and science, like thy wealth, will leave thee,
 And make thee twice a beggar at thy death.
This is the *most* indulgence can afford ;—
 “ *Thy wisdom all can do, but—make thee wise.* ”
 Nor think this censure is severe on thee :
 Satan, thy master, I dare call a dunce.

C O N T E N T S

O F

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