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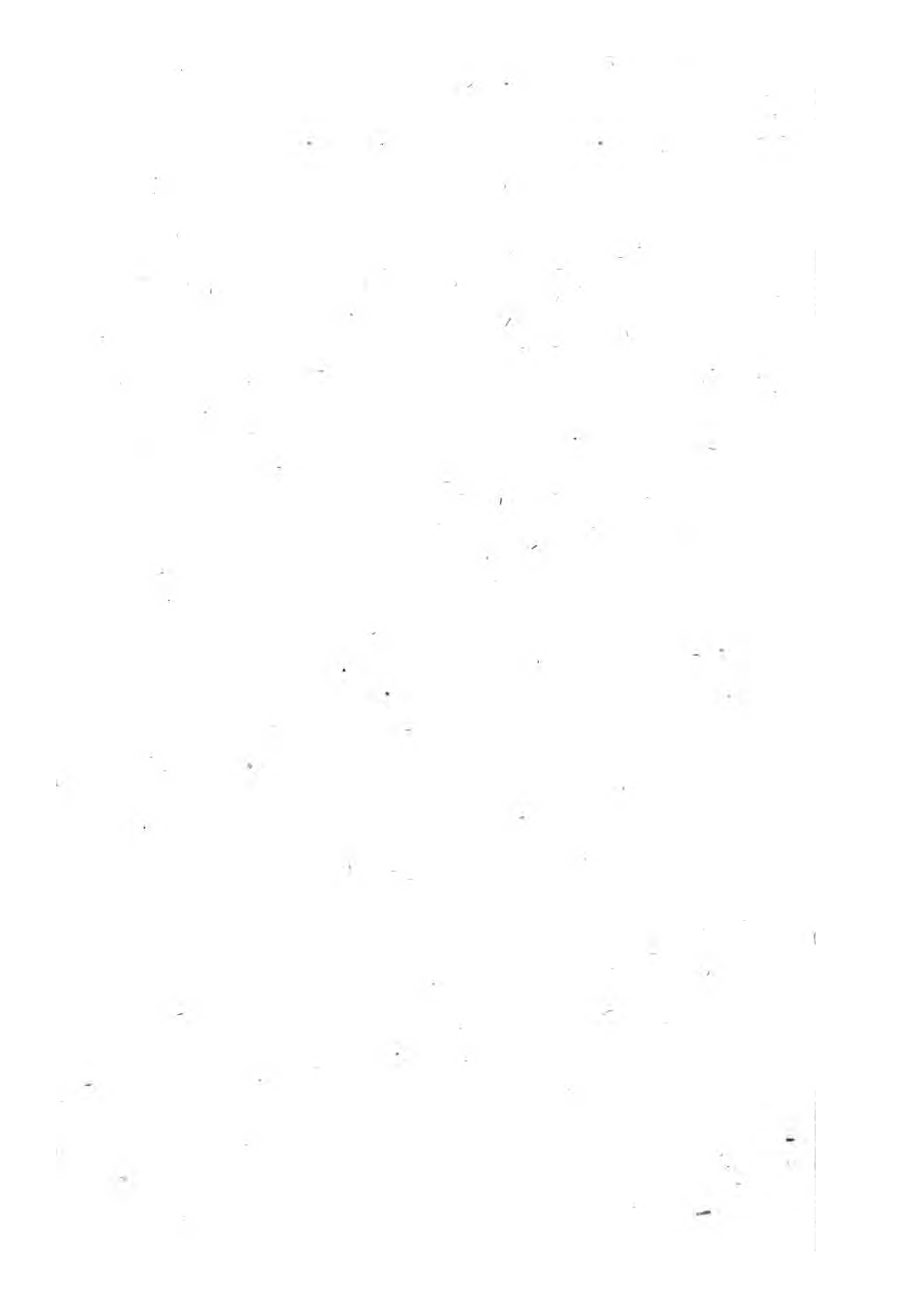


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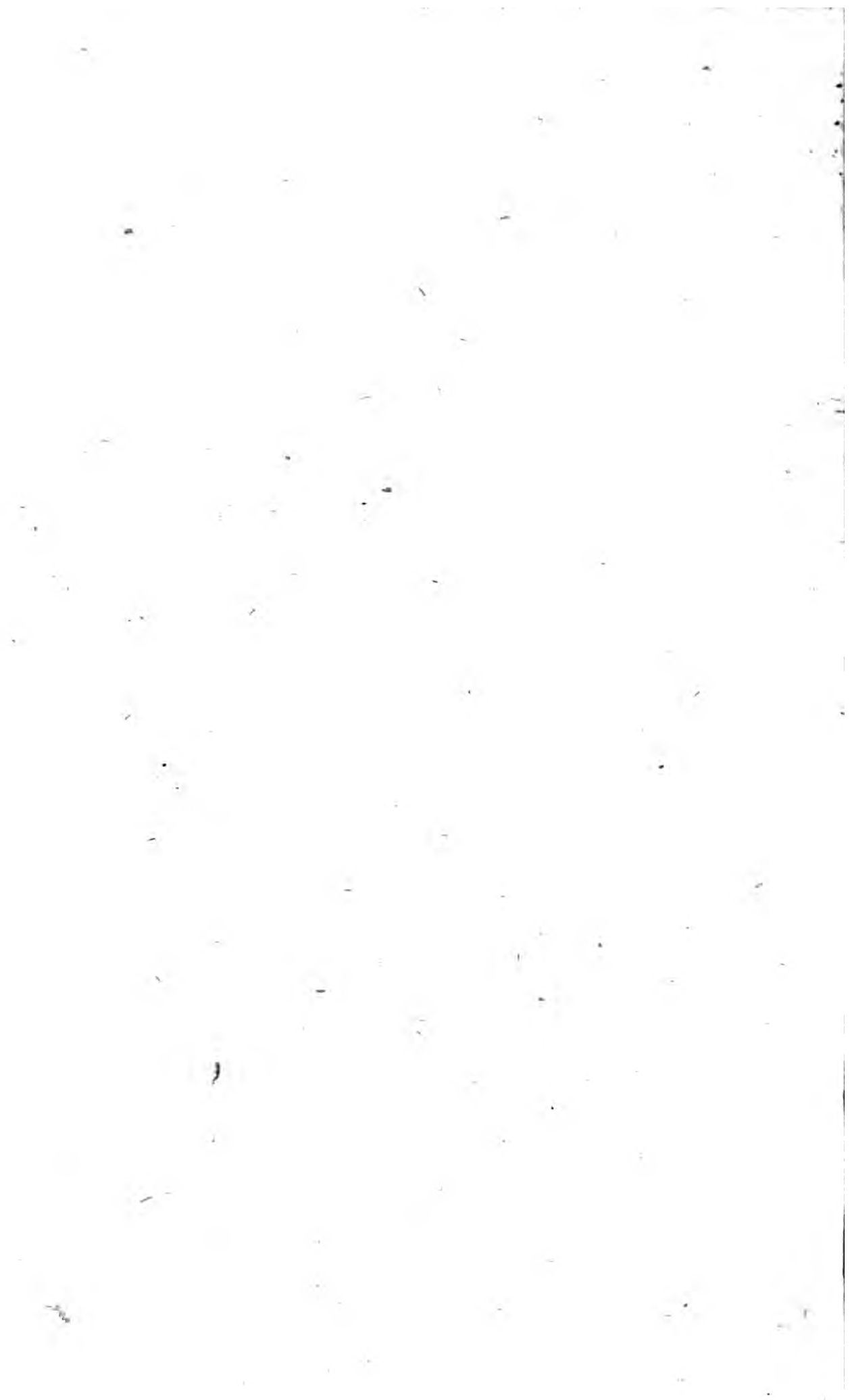




Johnson f. 716







Mary Franklin



Coriand. Del.

Rochwell sculp.

Published for the Proprietors.

Mary Franklin

NIGHT THOUGHTS,

ON

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

By **EDWARD YOUNG, LL. D.**

WITH THE

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR;

AND

NOTES, CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

LONDON :

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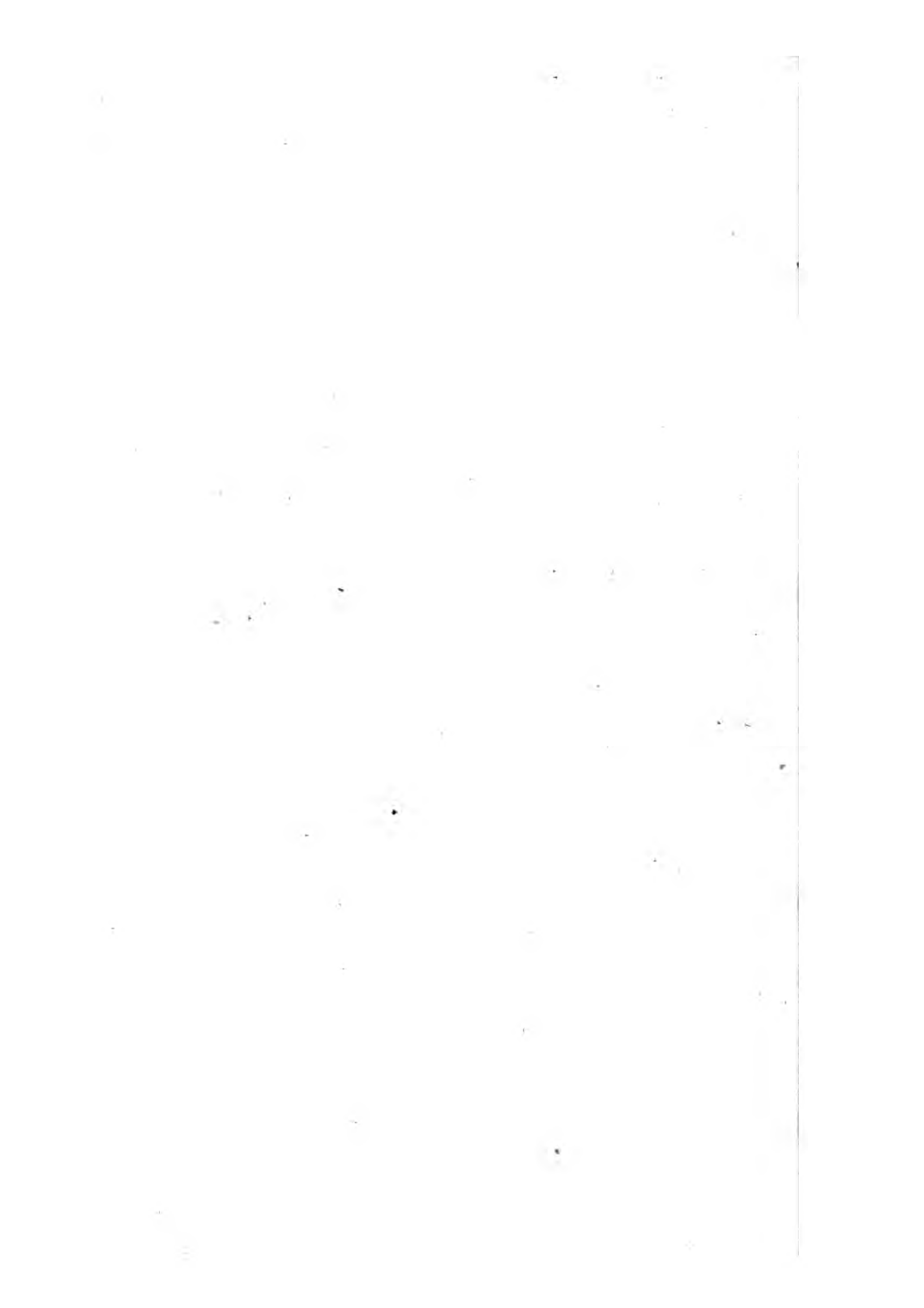
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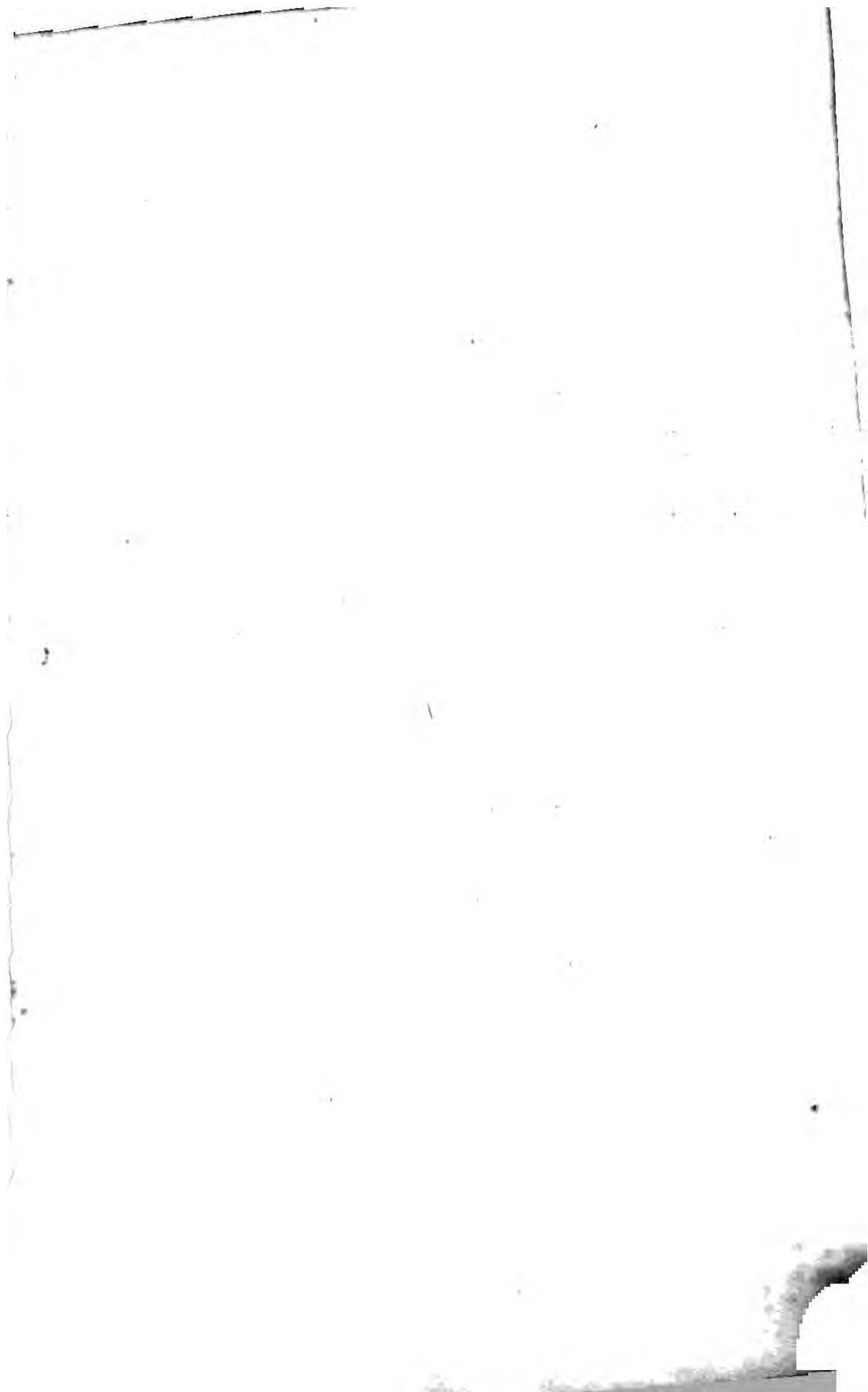
1801.



THE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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 narration 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.







Edward Young, D.D.

London. Published Jan^y 1. 1800 by T. Hays in Pall Mall.

THE
LIFE OF DR. YOUNG.

THE pen of biography cannot be better employed, than in the service of an author, who displayed eminent genius and abilities in the cause of virtue and religion. Such was Dr. Young, the subject of these Memoirs.

His father, whose name was also Edward Young, was Fellow of Winchester College, Rector of Upham in Hampshire, and, in the latter part of his life, Dean of Sarum; chaplain to William and Mary, and afterward to Queen Ann. Jacob tells us that the latter, when Princess Royal, did him the honour to stand godmother to our poet; and that, upon her ascending the throne, he was appointed Clerk of the Closet to her Majesty.

It does not appear that this gentleman distinguished himself in the Republic of Letters, otherwise than by a Latin Visitation Sermon, preached in 1686, and by two volumes of Sermons, printed in

1702, and which he dedicated to Lord Bradford, through whose interest he probably received some of his promotions. The Dean died at Sarum in 1705, aged 63; after a very short illness, as appears by the exordium of Bishop Burnet's sermon at the Cathedral on the following Sunday. "Death (said he) has been of late walking round us, and making breach upon breach upon us, and has now carried away the head of this body with a stroke; so that he, whom you saw *a week ago* distributing the holy mysteries, is now laid in the dust. But he still lives in the many excellent directions he has left us, both how to live and how to die."

Our author, who was an only son, was born at his father's rectory, in 1681, and received the first part of his education (as his father had formerly done) at Winchester College; from whence, in his 19th year, he was placed on the foundation of New College, Oxford; whence again, on the death of the Warden in the same year, he was removed to Corpus Christi. In 1708, Archbishop Tension nominated him to a law fellowship at All Souls, where, in 1714, he took the degree of Bachelor of Civil Law, and five years afterward that of Doctor.

Between the acquisition of these academic honours, Young was appointed to speak the Latin *Oration* on the foundation of the Codrington Library; which he afterwards printed, with a dedication to the Ladies of that family, in English.

In this part of his life, our author is said not to have been that ornament to virtue and religion which he afterwards became. This is easy to be accounted for. He had been released from parental authority by his father's death; and his genius and conversation had introduced him to the notice of the witty and profligate Duke of Wharton*, and his gay companions, by whom his finances might be improved, but not his morals. This is the period at which Pope is said to have told Warburton, our young author had "much genius without common sense:" and it should seem likewise, that he possessed a zeal for religion with little of its practical influence; for, with all his gaiety and ambition, he was an advocate for Revelation and Christianity. Thus when Tindal, the atheistical philosopher, used to spend much of his time at All Souls, he complained: "The other boys I can always answer, because I know whence they have their arguments, which I have read an hundred times; but that fellow Young, is continually pestering me with something of his own."

This apparent inconsistency is rendered the more striking from the different kinds of composition in which, at this period, he was engaged: *viz.* a political Panegyric on the new Lord Lansdowne, and a sacred Poem on The Last Day, which was

* At the instigation of this peer, he was once candidate for a seat in Parliament, but without success, and the expences were paid by Wharton.

written in 1710, but not published till 1713. It was dedicated to the Queen, and acknowledges an obligation, which has been differently understood, either as referring to her having been his god-mother, or his patron; for it is inferred from a couplet of Swift's, that Young was a pensioned advocate of government :

“ Whence Gay was banish'd in disgrace,
 “ Where Pope will never shew his face,
 “ Where Y—— must torture his invention,
 “ To flatter knaves, or lose his pension.”

This, however, might be mere report, at this period, since Swift was not over nice in his authorities, and nothing is more common than to suppose the advocate, and the flatterer of the great, an hireling. Flattery seems indeed to have been our poet's besetting sin through life; but if interest was his object, he must have been frequently disappointed: and to those disappointments we probably owe some of his best reflections upon human life.

Of his Last Day, (his first considerable performance) Dr. Johnson observes, that it “ has an equality and propriety which he afterwards either never endeavoured for, or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and few are mean; yet the whole is languid: the plan is too much extended, and a succession of images divides and weakens the general conception: But the great reason why the reader is disappointed is, that the thought of The Last Day makes every man

“ more than poetical, by spreading over his mind
“ a general obscurity of sacred horror, that op-
“ presses distinction and disdains expression.”
The subject is indeed truly awful, and was pecu-
liarly affecting to this celebrated critic, who never
could, without trembling, meditate upon death,
or the eternal world. The poet’s theological sys-
tem, moreover, was not, at least when he wrote
this, the most consistent and evangelical: I mean
he had not those views of the Christian Atonement,
and of pardoning grace, which give such a glory
to his Night Thoughts, and would much more have
illuminated this composition. All the preparation
he seems to have there in view, is

“ By tears and groans, and never-ceasing care,
“ And all the pious violence of prayer,”

to fit himself for the Tribunal. Moreover, the pro-
ject of future misery is too awful for poetic enlarge-
ment, and makes the piece too terrible to be read
with pleasure; while the attempt to *particularize*
the solemnities of judgment, lowers their sublimity,
and makes some parts of the description, as Dr.
Johnson has observed, appear mean, and even
bordering on burlesque. This poem, however, was
well received upon the whole, and the better for
being written by a layman; and it was commended
by the ministry and their party, because the dedi-
cation flattered their mistress and her govern-
ment—far too much, indeed, for the nature of the
subject.

Dr. Young's next poem was entitled, *The Force of Religion*, and founded on the deaths of Lady Jane Grey and her husband. "It is written with "elegance enough," according to Dr. Johnson; but was "never popular:" for "Jane is too heroic "to be pitied." The dedication of this piece to the Countess of Salisbury, was also *inexcuseably* fulsome, and, I think, profane. Indeed the author himself seems afterward to have thought so; for when he collected his smaller pieces into volumes, he very judiciously suppressed this and most of his other dedications.

In some part of his life Young certainly went to Ireland*, and was there acquainted with the eccentric Dean Swift; and his biographers seem agreed, that this was, most probably, during his connection with the Duke of Wharton, who went thither in 1717. But he cannot have long remained there, as in 1719, he brought out his first tragedy of *Busiris*, at Drury Lane, and dedicated it to the Duke of Newcastle. This tragedy had been written some years, though now first performed; for it is to our author's credit, that many of his works were laid by him a considerable time before they were offered to the public. Our great dramatic critic pronounces this piece "too far removed from "known life" to affect the passions.

* From his seventh satire it appears also, that he was once abroad, probably about this time, and saw a field of battle covered with the slain; and it is affirmed that once, with a classic in his hand, he wandered into the enemy's encampment, and had some difficulty to convince them, that he was only an *absent poet* and not a *spy*.

His next performance was *The Revenge*, the dramatic character of which is sufficiently ascertained by its still keeping possession of the stage. The hint of this is supposed to have been taken from *Othello*; "but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original."—The success of this induced him to attempt another tragedy, which was written in 1721, but not brought upon the stage for thirty years afterwards; and then without success, as we shall have farther occasion to observe. It has been remarked, that all his plays conclude with suicide*, and I much fear the frequent introduction of this unnatural crime upon the stage, has contributed greatly to its commission.

We have passed over our Author's Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job, in order to bring his dramatic performances together. The Paraphrase has been well received, and has often been printed with his *Night Thoughts*. This would be admired, perhaps, as much as any of his works, could we forget the original: but there is such a dignified simplicity even in our prose translation of the poetic parts of scripture, that we can seldom bear to see them reduced to rhyme, or modern measures.

His next, and one of his best performances, is entitled, *The Love of Fame the Universal Passion*, in Seven characteristic Satires, originally published separately, between the years 1725 and 1728. This,

* Our author seems early to have been enamoured with the Tragic Muse, and with the charms of melancholy. Dr. Ridley relates, that, when at Oxford, he would sometimes shut up his room, and study by a lamp, at mid-day.

according to Dr. Johnson, is a "*very great per-*
 "formance. It is said to be a series of epigrams,
 "and if it be, it is what the author intended: His
 "endeavour was at the production of striking dis-
 "tichs, and pointed sentences; and his distichs
 "have the weight of solid sentiment, and his points
 "the sharpness of resistless truth. His characters
 "are often selected with discernment, and drawn
 "with nicety; his illustrations are often happy, and
 "his reflections often just. His species of satire
 "is between those of Horace and Juvenal: he
 "has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of
 "numbers; and the morality of Juvenal, with
 "greater variety of images."—Swift indeed has
 pronounced of these Satires, that they should have
 been either "more merry, or more severe:" in that
 case, they might probably have caught the popular
 taste more; but this does not prove that they would
 have been better. The opinion of the Duke of
 Grafton, however, was of more worth than all the
 opinions of the wits, if it be true as related by Mr.
 Spence, that his grace presented the author with
 two thousand pounds. "Two thousand pounds for
 "a poem!" said one of the Duke's friends: to
 whom his grace replied, that he had made an ex-
 cellent bargain, for he thought it worth four.

On the accession of George I. Young flattered
 him with an Ode, called Ocean, to which was pre-
 fixed an introductory Ode to the King, and An
 Essay on Lyric Poetry: of these the most observa-
 ble thing is, that the poet and the critic could not

agree: for the Rules of the Essay condemned the Poetry, and the Poetry set at defiance the maxims of the Essay. The biographer of British poets has truly said, “ he had least success in his lyric attempts, in which he seems to have been under some malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at last is only turgid.”

We now leave awhile the works of our author, to contemplate the conduct of the man. About this time his studies took a more serious turn; and, forsaking the law, which he had never practised, when he was almost fifty he entered into orders, and was in 1728, appointed Chaplain to the King. One of Pope's biographers relates, that, on this occasion Young applied to his brother poet for direction in his studies, who jocosely recommended Thomas Aquinas, which the former taking seriously, he retired to the suburbs with the angelical doctor, till his friend discovered him, and brought him back.

His Vindication of Providence, and Estimate of Human Life, were published in this year; they have gone through several editions, and are generally regarded as the best of his prose compositions: But the plan of the latter never was completed. The following year he printed a very loyal sermon on King Charles's Martyrdom, intitled, An Apology for Princes. In 1730, he was presented by his college to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire, worth about £.300 a year, beside the lordship of the manor annexed to it. This year he relapsed again to poetry, and published a loyal

Naval Ode, and Two Epistles to Pope, of which nothing particular need be said.

He was married, in 1731, to Lady Elizabeth Lee, widow of Colonel Lee, and daughter to the Earl of Litchfield; and it was not long before she brought him a son and heir.

Sometime before his marriage, the Doctor walking in his garden at Welwyn, with this lady and another, a servant came to tell him a gentleman wished to speak to him. "Tell him," says the Doctor, "I am too happily engaged to change my situation." The ladies insisted that he should go, as his visitor was a man of rank, his patron, and his friend; and as persuasion had no effect on him, they took him, one by the right hand, and the other by the left, and led him to the garden-gate. He then laid his hand upon his heart, and in that expressive manner, for which he was so remarkable, uttered the following lines:

" Thus Adam look'd when from the garden driven,
 " And thus disputed orders sent from Heav'n:
 " Like him I go, but yet to go am loth:
 " Like him I go, for angels drove us both.
 " Hard was his fate, but mine still more unkind;
 " His Eve went with him, but mine stays behind."

Another striking instance of his wit is related in reference to Voltaire: who, while in England, (probably at Mr. Doddington's seat in Dorsetshire) ridiculed, with some severity, Milton's allegorical personages, *Sin* and *Death*; on which Young, who

was one of the company, immediately addressed him in the following extemporaneous distich :

“ Thou art so witty, profligate, and thin,
“ Thou seem'st a Milton, with his *Death* and *Sin*.”

Soon after his marriage, our author again indulged his poetical vein in two odes, called *The Sea Piece*, with a *Poetical Dedication to Voltaire*, in which the above incident seems alluded to in these lines,

“ On Dorset downs, when Milton's page
“ With *Sin* and *Death* provok'd thy rage.”

In 1734 he printed an *Argument for Peace*, which afterward, with several of his smaller pieces, and most of his dedications, was consigned by his own hand to merited oblivion: in which circumstance he deserves both the thanks and imitation of posterity.

About the year 1741 he had the unhappiness to lose his wife; her daughter by Colonel Lee, and this daughter's husband, Mr. Temple. What affliction he felt for their loss, may be seen in his *Night Thoughts*, written on this occasion. They are addressed to Lorenzo, a man of pleasure, and of the world; and who, it is generally supposed, was his own son, then labouring under his father's displeasure. His son-in-law is said to be characterized by Philander, and his Lady's daughter was certainly the person he speaks of under the appellation of Narcissa.—(See *Night III.* line 62.) In her last illness, which was a consumption, he accompanied her to Montpellier; or, as Mr. Croft says, to Lyons,

in the South of France, at which place she died soon after her arrival.

Being regarded as a heretic, she was denied christian burial, and her afflicted father was obliged to steal a grave, and inter her privately with his own hands*. (See Night III. line 162, &c.) In this celebrated poem he thus addresses Death :

* I take the liberty of inserting here a passage from a letter written by Mr. W. Taylor, from Montpellier, to his sister, Mrs. Moucher, in the preceding year 1789, which may be considered as curious, and will be interesting and affecting to the admirers of Dr. Young and his Narcissa :

“ I know you, as well as myself, are not a little partial to Dr.
 “ Young. Had you been with me in a solitary walk the other day, you
 “ would have shed a tear over the remains of his dear Narcissa. I was
 “ walking in a place called the King’s Garden ; and there I saw the
 “ spot where she was interred. Mr. J—, Mrs. H—, and myself,
 “ had some conversation with the gardener respecting it ; who told us,
 “ that about 45 years ago, Dr. Young was here with his daughter for her
 “ Health ; and that he used constantly to be walking backward and for-
 “ ward in this garden (no doubt, as he saw her gradually declining, to
 “ find the most solitary spot where he might shew his last token of
 “ affection, by leaving her remains as secure as possible from those
 “ savages, who would have denied her a christian burial: for at that
 “ time, an Englishman in this country was looked upon as an heretic,
 “ infidel, and devil. They begin now to verge from their bigotry, and
 “ allow them at least to be men, though not christians, I believe) ; and
 “ that he bribed the under gardener, belonging to his father, to let him
 “ bury his daughter, which he did ; pointed out the most solitary place,
 “ and dug the grave. The man, through a private door, admitted the
 “ Doctor at midnight, bringing his beloved daughter, wrapped up in a
 “ sheet, upon his shoulder : he laid her in the hole, sat down, and (as
 “ the man expressed it) ‘ *rained tears!*’ ‘ With pious sacrilege a grave

“ 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.

These lines have been universally understood of the above deaths; but this supposition can no way be reconciled with Mr. Croft’s dates, who says, Mrs. Temple died in 1736, Mr. Temple in 1740, and Lady Young in 1741. Which quite inverts the order of the poet, who makes Narcissa’s death follow Philander’s:

“ Narcissa follows e’er his tomb is clos’d.”

Night III. line 62.

There is no possible way to reconcile these contradictions: either we must reject Mr. Croft’s dates, for which he gives us no authority, or we must suppose the characters and incidents, if not entirely fictitious, as the author assures us that they are

“ I stole.’ The man who was thus bribed is dead, but the master is still
 “ living. Before the man died, they were one day going to dig, and
 “ set some flowers, &c. in this spot where she was buried. The man
 “ said to his master, ‘ Don’t dig there ; for, so many years ago, I bu-
 “ ried an English lady there.’ The master was much surprized ; and
 “ as Doctor Young’s book had made much noise in France, it led him
 “ to enquire into the matter ; and only two years ago it was known for
 “ a certainty that *that* was the place, and in this way: There was an
 “ English nobleman here, who was acquainted with the governor of
 “ this place ; and wishing to ascertain the fact, he obtained permission
 “ to dig up the ground, where he found some bones, which were
 “ examined by a surgeon, and pronounced to be the remains of a hu-
 “ man body: this, therefore, puts the authenticity of it beyond a
 “ doubt.”—See Evan. Mag. for 1797, p, 444.

not, were accommodated by poetic licence to his purpose. As to the character of Lorenzo, whether taken from real life, or moulded purely in the author's imagination, Mr. Croft has sufficiently proved that it could not intend his Son, who was but eight years old when the greater part of the Night Thoughts was written; for Night the Seventh is dated, in the original edition, July 1744.

For the literary merits of this work we shall again refer to the criticism of Dr. Johnson, which is seldom exceptionable, when he is not warped by political prejudices. "In his Night Thoughts," says the Doctor, speaking of our author, "he has exhibited a very wide display of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and striking allusions; a wilderness of thought, in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue, and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verse could not be changed for rhyme, but with disadvantage. The wild diffusion of the sentiments, and the digressive sallies of imagination, would have been compressed and restrained by confinement to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactness, but copiousness: particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole; and in the whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to Chinese plantations, the magnificence of vast extent and endless diversity."

So far Dr. Johnson.—Mr. Croft says, "Of these poems the two or three first have been perused

“ more eagerly and more frequently than the rest.
“ When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his ori-
“ ginal motive for taking up the pen was answered ;
“ his grief was naturally either diminished or ex-
“ hausted. We still find the same pious poet ; but
“ we hear less of Philander and Narcissa, and less
“ of the mourner whom he loved to pity.”

Notwithstanding one might be tempted, from some passages in the *Night Thoughts*, to suppose he had taken his leave of terrestrial things, in the alarming year 1745, he could not refrain from returning again to politics; but wrote *Poetical Reflections on the State of the Kingdom*, originally appended to the *Night Thoughts*, but never re-printed with them.

In 1753, his tragedy of *The Brothers*, written thirty years before, now first appeared upon the stage. It had been in rehearsal when Young took orders, and was withdrawn on that occasion. The Rector of Welwyn devoted £. 1000 to “*The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*,” and estimating the probable produce of this play at such a sum, he perhaps thought the occasion might sanctify the means; and not thinking so unfavourably of the stage as other good men have done, he committed the monstrous absurdity of giving a play for the propagation of the gospel! The author was, (as is often the case with authors) deceived in his calculation. *The Brothers* was never a favourite with the public: but that the society might not

suffer, the doctor made up the deficiency from his own pocket.

His next was a prose performance, entitled, "The Centaur not fabulous; in Six Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue." The third of these letters describes the death-bed of "the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont," whom report supposed to be Lord Euston. But whether Altamont or Lorenzo were real or fictitious characters, it is certain the author could be at no loss for models for them among the gay nobility, with whom he was acquainted.

In 1759 appeared his lively "Conjectures on Original Composition;" which, according to Mr. Croft, appear "more like the production of untamed, unbridled youth, than of jaded fourscore." This letter contains the pleasing account of the death of Addison, and his dying address to Lord Warwick—"See how a Christian can die!"

In 1762, but little before his death, Young published his last, and one of his least esteemed poems—"Resignation," which was written on the following occasion. Observing that Mrs. Boscawen, in the midst of her grief for the loss of the Admiral, derived consolation from a perusal of the Night Thoughts, her friend, Mrs. Montague, proposed a visit to the author, by whom they were favourably received; and were pleased to confess that his "unbounded genius appeared to greater advantage in the companion than even in the author; that the

“ Christian was in him a character still more inspired, more enraptured, more sublime than the poet, and that, in his ordinary conversation,

—— “ Letting down the golden chain from high,
“ He drew his audience upward to the sky.”

On this occasion, and at the request of these ladies, the author produced his Resignation, above-mentioned, and which has been so unmercifully treated by the critics; but it has, in some measure, been rescued from their hands by Dr. Johnson, who says, “ It was falsely represented as a proof of decaying faculties. There is Young in every stanza, such as he often was in his highest vigour.”

We now approach the closing scene of our author's life, of which, unhappily, we have few particulars. For three or four years before his death, he appears to have been incapacitated, by the infirmities of age, for public duty; yet he perfectly enjoyed his intellects to the last, and even his vivacity: for in his last illness, a friend mentioning the recent decease of a person who had long been in a decline, and observing, that he was quite worn to a *shell* before he died; “ Very likely,” replied the doctor; “ but what is become of the *kernel*?”—He is said to have regretted to another friend, that his Night Thoughts, of all his works most calculated to do good, were written so much above the understanding of common readers, as to contract their sphere of usefulness: This, however, ought not

perhaps to be regretted, since there is a great sufficiency of good books for common readers, and the style of that work will always introduce it where plainer compositions would not be read.

He died at his Parsonage House, at Welwyn, April 12, 1765, and was buried, according to his desire, by the side of his lady, under the altar-piece of that church: Which is said to be ornamented in a singular manner with an elegant piece of needle-work by Lady Young, and some appropriate inscriptions, painted by the direction of the doctor.

His best monument is to be found in his works; but a less durable one, in marble, was erected by his only son and heir, with a very modest and sensible inscription. This son, Mr. Frederick Young, had the first part of his education at Winchester school, and, becoming a scholar upon the foundation, was sent, in consequence thereof, to New College, in Oxford; but there being no vacancy (though the society waited for one no less than two years,) he was admitted in the meantime in Baliol, where he behaved so imprudently as to be forbidden the college*. This misconduct disobligerd his father so much, that it is said he never would see him

* Mr. Croft denies this circumstance, and calls the poet's son his *friend*. He does not, however, pretend to vindicate the conduct of the youth; but he relates his repentance and regret, which is far better. Perhaps it is not possible wholly to vindicate the father. Great genius, even accompanied with piety, is not always most ornamental to domestic life: and "the prose of ordinary occurrences," says Croft, "is beneath the dignity of poets."

afterwards: However, by his will he bequeathed to him the bulk of his fortune, which was considerable, reserving only a legacy to his friend Stevens, the hatter at Temple-gate; and 1000*l.* to his house-keeper, with his dying charge to see all his manuscripts destroyed; which may have been some loss to posterity, though none perhaps to his own fame.

Dr. Young, as a christian and divine, has been reckoned an example of primeval piety.—He was an able orator, but it is not known whether he composed many sermons: and it is certain that he published very few. The following incident does honour to his feelings: when preaching in his turn one Sunday at St. James's, finding he could not gain the attention of his audience, his pity for their folly got the better of all decorum; he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into a flood of tears.

His turn of mind was naturally solemn; and he usually, when at home in the country, spent many hours walking among the tombs in his own church-yard. His conversation, as well as writings, had all a reference to a future life; and this turn of mind mixed itself even with his improvements in gardening: He had, for instance, an alcove, with a bench so well painted in it, that at a distance it seemed to be real; but upon a nearer approach the deception was perceived, and this motto appeared:

INVISIBILIA NON DECIPIUNT.

The things unseen do not deceive us.

In another part of his garden was also this inscription :

AMBULANTES IN HORTO AUDIERUNT VOCEM DEI.

They heard the voice of God walking in the garden.

This seriousness occasioned him to be charged with gloominess of temper ; yet was he fond of rural sports and innocent amusements. He would sometimes visit the assembly and the bowling-green ; and we see in his satires that he knew how to laugh at folly. His wit was poignant, and always levelled at those who shewed any contempt for decency or religion ; an instance of which we have remarked in his extemporary epigram on Voltaire.

Dr. Young rose betimes, and engaged with his domestics in the duties of Morning Prayer. He is said to have read but little ; but he noted what he read, and many of his books were so swelled with folding down his favourite passages, that they would hardly shut. He was moderate in his meals, and rarely drank wine, except when he was ill ; being (as he used to say) unwilling to waste the succours of sickness on the stability of health. After a slight refreshment, he retired to rest early in the evening, even though he might have company who wished to prolong his stay.

He lived at a moderate expence, rather inclined to parsimony than profusion ; and seems to have possessed just conceptions of the vanity of the world : yet, (such is the inconsistency of man !) he courted honours and preferments at the borders of

the grave, even so late as 1758; but none were then conferred. It has however been asserted that he had a pension of 200l. a year from government, conferred under the auspices of Walpole.

At last, when he was full fourscore, the author of the *Night Thoughts*,

“ Who thought e'en gold itself might come a day too late,”

Was made Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager of Wales. What retarded his promotion so long it is not easy to determine. Some attribute it to his attachment to the Prince of Wales and his friends: and others assert, that the King thought him sufficiently provided for. Certain it is, that he knew no straits in pecuniary matters; and that, in the method he has recommended of estimating human life, honours are of little value.

His merits as an Author have already been considered in a review of his works: and nothing seems necessary to be added, but the following general characters of his composition, from Blair and Johnson.

Dr. Blair says (in his celebrated lectures):
 “ Among moral and didactic poets, Dr. Young is
 “ of too great eminence to be passed over without
 “ notice. In all his works, the marks of strong ge-
 “ nius appear. His *Universal Passion* possesses the
 “ full merit of that animated conciseness of style,
 “ and lively description of character, which I men-
 “ tion as requisite in satirical and didactic compo-
 “ sitions. Though his wit may often be thought

“ too sparkling, and his sentences too pointed, yet
 “ the vivacity of his fancy is so great, as to enter-
 “ tain every reader. In his Night Thoughts there is
 “ much energy of expression; in the three first,
 “ there are several pathetic passages; and scattered
 “ through them all, happy images and illusions, as
 “ well as pious reflections occur. But the senti-
 “ ments are frequently over-strained, and turgid;
 “ and the style is too harsh and obscure to be
 “ pleasing.”

The same critic has said of our author in another place, that his “ merit in figurative language is great
 “ and deserves to be remarked. No writer, ancient
 “ or modern, had a stronger imagination than Dr.
 “ Young, or one more fertile in figures of every
 “ kind; his metaphors are often new, and often na-
 “ tural and beautiful. But his imagination was
 “ strong and rich, rather than delicate and correct.”

These strictures may be thought severe; but it should be remembered, that an author derives far more honour from such a discriminate character, from a judicious critic, than from the indiscriminate commendation of an admirer. The following is the conclusion of Dr. Johnson’s critique, and shall conclude these memoirs.

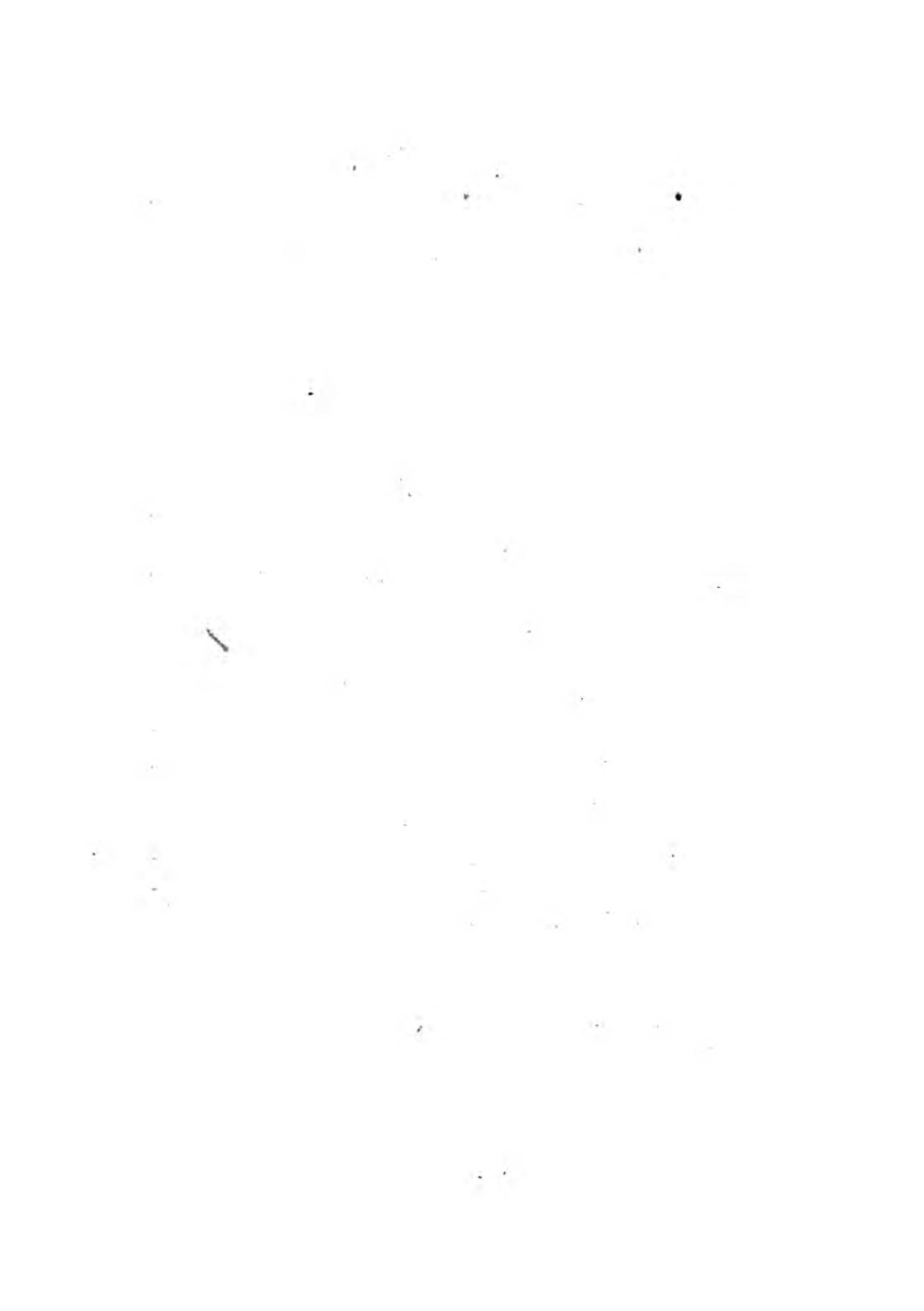
“ It must be allowed of Young’s poetry, that it
 “ abounds in thought, but without much accuracy
 “ or selection. When he lays hold of a thought, he
 “ pursues it beyond expectation, [and] sometimes
 “ happily, as in his parallel of *quicksilver* with *plea-*

“ *sure* which is very ingenious, very subtle,
 “ and almost exact

“ His versification is his own; neither his blank
 “ nor his rhyming lines have any resemblance to
 “ those of former writers; he picks up no hemi-
 “ sticks, he copies no favourite expressions; he
 “ seems to have laid up no stores of thought or
 “ diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous sugges-
 “ tions of the present moment. Yet I have reason
 “ to believe that, when once he had formed a new
 “ design, he then laboured it with very patient in-
 “ dustry, and that he composed with great labour
 “ and frequent revisions.

“ His verses are formed by no certain model; he
 “ is no more like himself in his different produc-
 “ tions, than he is like others. He seems never to
 “ have studied prosody, nor to have any direction,
 “ but from his own ear. But with all his defects he
 “ was a man of genius, and a poet.”

P. S. The materials of the above Life are taken from the Article referring to our author in Johnson's Lives of the Poets, written by Mr. Herbert Croft, with the Critique of Dr. Johnson, compared with the Biographia Britannica, and other respectable authorities.



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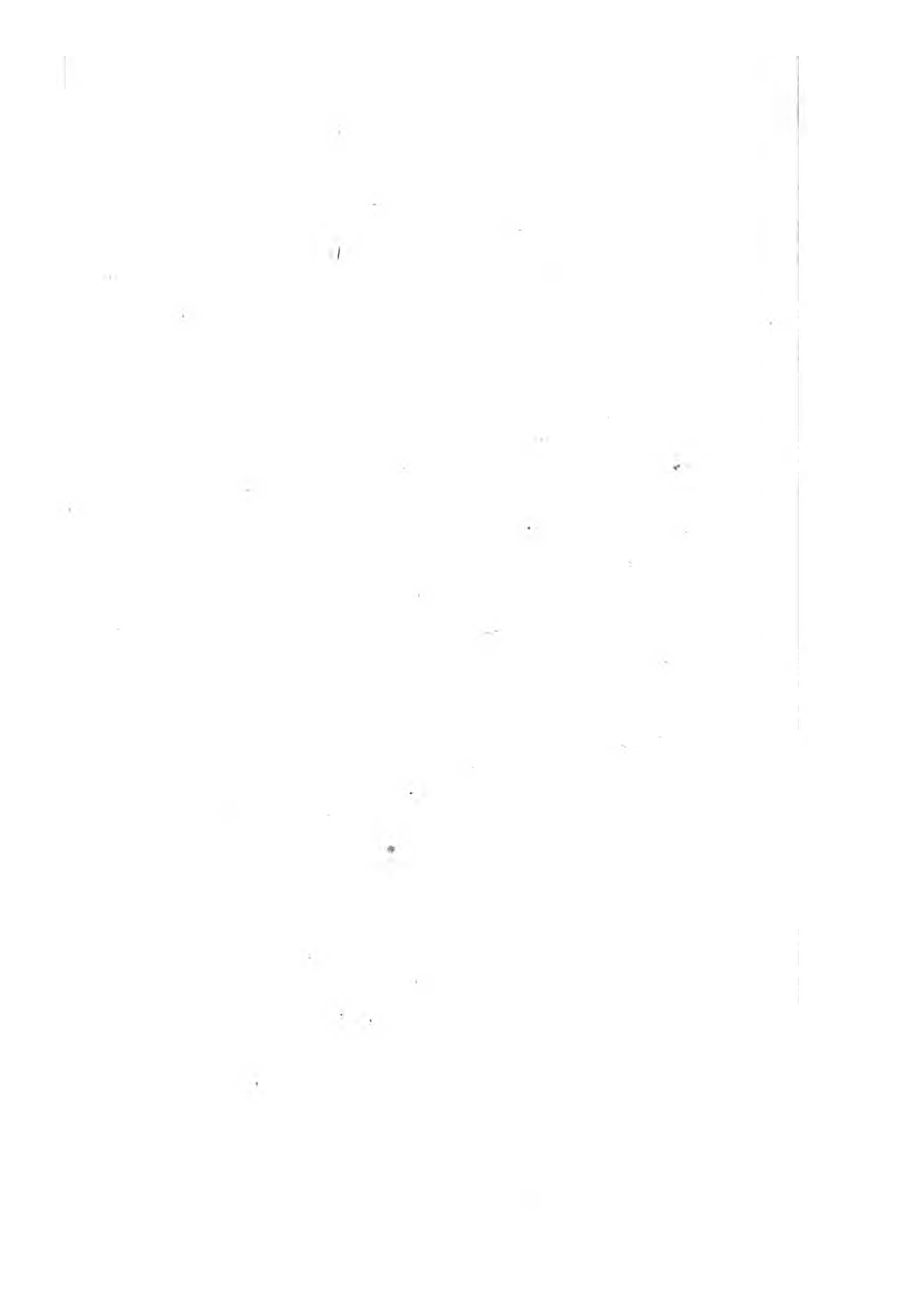
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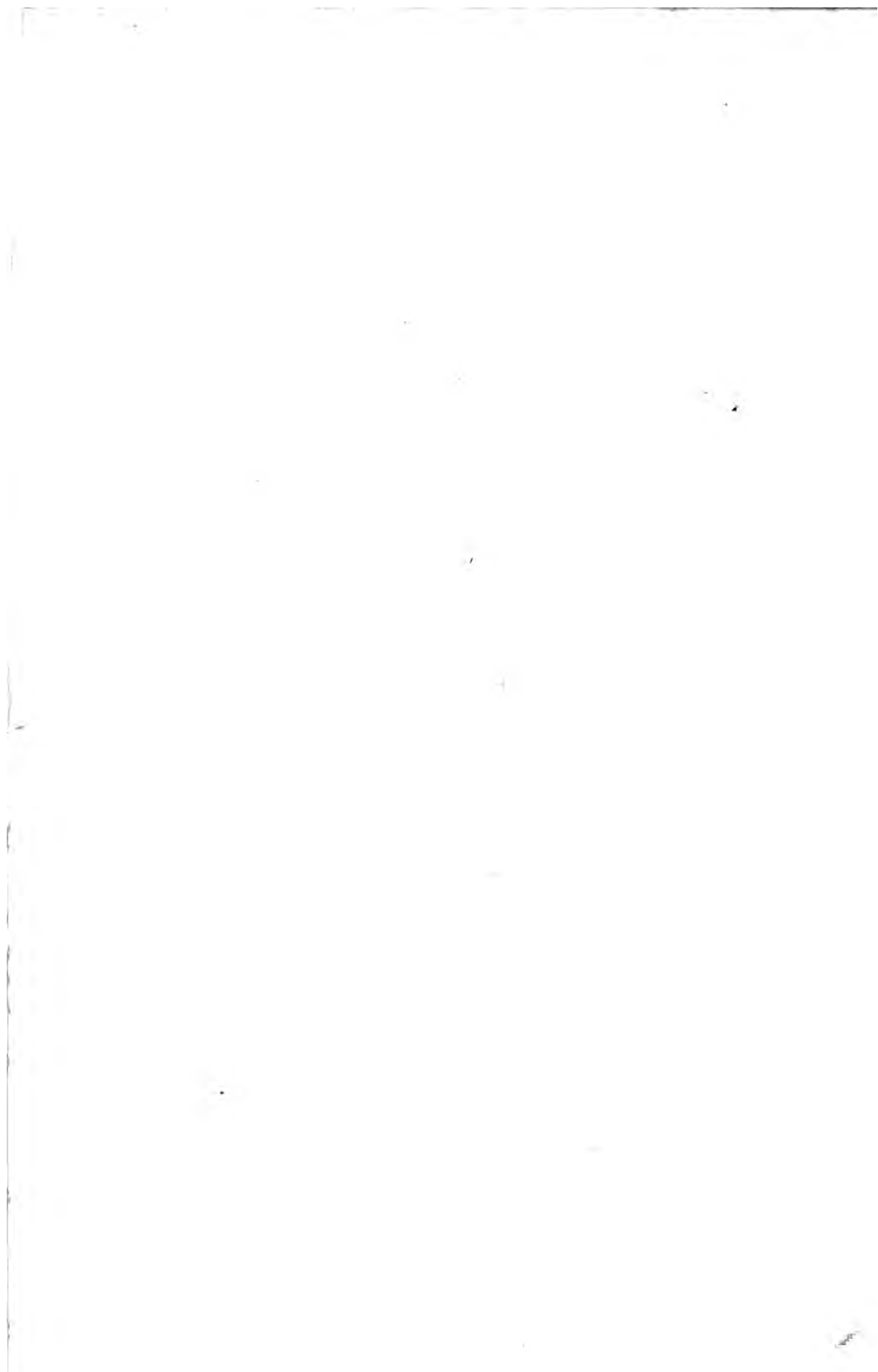
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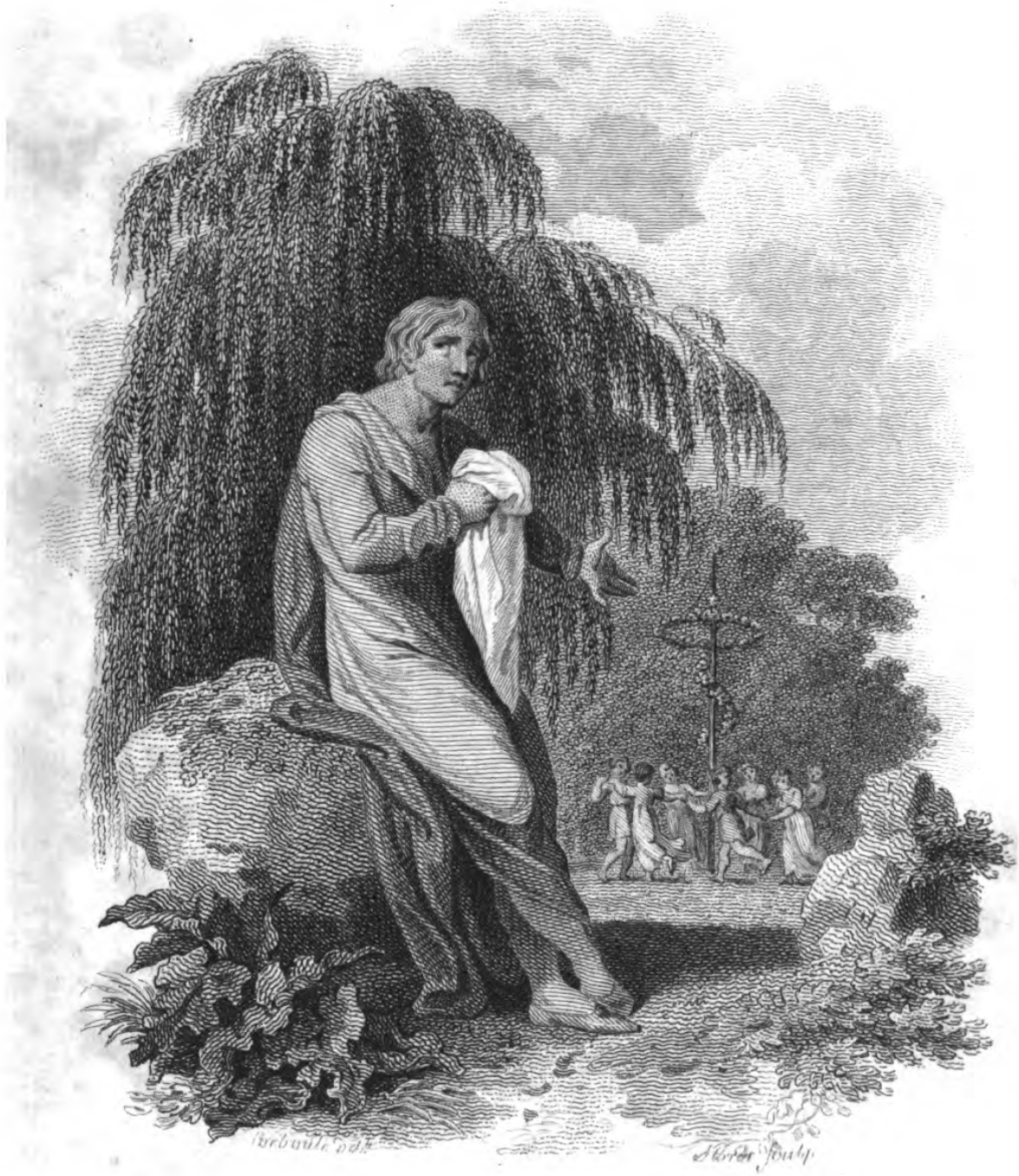
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*Take, then, O world! thy much indebted tear,
How sad a sight is human happiness,
To those whose thought can pierce beyond an hour!*

Night 1. Page 11.

London. Published Nov^r 3^o 1799 by T. H. Pinxtall Holborn.

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT I.

ON
LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

TO
THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR ONSLOW, ESQ.
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 pinions flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsully'd 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
 From wave to wave of fancy'd misery, 11
 At random drove, her helm of reason lost.
 Tho' now restor'd, 'tis only change of pain,
 (A bitter change!) severer for severe.
 The day too short for my distresses; and night, 15
 Ev'n in the zenith of her dark domain,
 Is sunshine to the colour of my fate.

Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne,
 In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
 Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world. 20
 Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound!
 Nor eye nor list'ning ear an object finds;
 Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the gen'ral 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

ON LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY. 3

That spark, the Sun, strike wisdom from my soul; 40
My soul, which flies to thee, her trust, her treasure,
As misers to their gold, while others rest.

Thro' 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 thro' 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.
It is the signal that demands dispatch: 61
How much is to be done? My hope 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 center'd in our make such strange extremes!
 From diff'rent natures, marvelously mix'd,
 Connection exquisite of distant worlds!
 Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
 Midway from nothing to the Deity! 75
 A beam ethereal, sully'd and absorpt!
 Tho' sully'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 wond'ring 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 spreads,
 What tho' 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, tho' devious, speaks her nature
 Of subtler essence than the trodden clod, 100
 Active, aërial, tow'ring, unconfin'd,

Unfetter'd with her gross companion's fall.
 E'en silent night proclaims my soul immortal;
 E'en 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 heav'nly 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, slumb'ring in his sire.
 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;
Inters celestial hopes without one sigh. 136

Pris'ner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,
Here pinions all his wishes; wing'd by Heav'n
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 clust'ring glow
In his full beam, and ripen for the just!
Where momentary ages are no more!
Where Time, and Pain, and Chance, and Death ex-
pire! 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 aught 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.
How was my heart incrust'd by the world! 156
O how self-fetter'd was my grov'ling 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 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 noontide 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's now my frenzy's pompous furniture? 175
 The cobwebb'd cottage, with its ragged wall
 Of mould'ring 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, 184
 That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,
 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.
 Here teems with revolutions ev'ry hour, 190
 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
 His little weapon in the narrow sphere 195
 Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
 The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.

Bliss! sublunary bliss!—proud words, and vain!
 Implicit treason to divine decree!

A bold invasion of the rights of Heav'n! 200
 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 miss'd my heart!

Death! great proprietor of all! 'tis thine
 To tread our empire, and to quench the stars. 205
 The sun himself by thy permission shines,
 And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.
 Amidst such mighty plunder, why exhaust
 Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean?

Why thy peculiar rancour wreak'd on me? 210
 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 bliss! from Fortune's smile,
 Precarious courtesy! not virtue's sure,
 Self-given, solar, ray of sound delight.

In ev'ry vary'd posture, place, and hour, 220
 How widow'd ev'ry thought of ev'ry joy!
 Thought, busy thought! too busy for my peace!
 Thro' the dark postern of time long elaps'd,

Led softly, by the stillness of the night,
 Led, like a murderer (and such it proves!) 225
 Strays (wretched rover!) o'er the pleasing past:
 In quest of wretchedness perversely strays,
 And finds all desert now; and meets the ghosts
 Of my departed joys, a num'rous train!
 I rue the riches of my former fate; 230
 Sweet Comfort's blasted clusters I lament;
 I tremble at the blessings once so dear,
 And ev'ry pleasure pains me to the heart.
 Yet why complain? or why complain for one?
 Hangs out the sun his lustre but for me, 235
 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,
 Not more the children than sure heirs of pain. 240
 War, famine, pest, volcano, storm and fire,
 Intestine broils, Oppression, with her heart
 Wrapt up in triple brass, besiege mankind.
 God's Image, disinherited of day,
 Here, plung'd in mines, forgets a sun was made; 245
 There, beings, deathless as their haughty lord,
 Are hammer'd to the galling oar for life;
 And plough the winter's wave, and reap despair.
 Some for hard masters, broken under arms,
 In battle lopp'd away, with half their limbs, 250
 Beg bitter bread thro' realms their valour sav'd,
 If so the tyrant, or his minions, doom.
 Want, and incurable disease (fell pair!)
 On hopeless multitudes remorseless seize

At once, and make a refuge of the grave. 255

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 ?

To shock us more, solicit it in vain ! 260

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

Your impudence, you blush at what is right. 265

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

Thro' 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 gives us not our wish.

How distant oft the thing we doat on most, 275

From that for which we doat, felicity !

The smoothest course of Nature has its pains,

And truest friends, thro' error, wound our rest.

Without misfortune, what calamities !

And what hostilities, without a foe ! 280

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

Is tenanted by man ? the rest a waste ; 285

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:
 So bounded are his haughty lord's delights 290
 To woe's wide empire, where deep troubles toss,
 Loud sorrows howl, envenom'd passions bite,
 Rav'nous calamities our vitals seize,
 And threat'ning Fate wide opens to devour.
 What then am I, who sorrow for myself? 295
 In age, in infancy, from other's 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:
 More gen'rous sorrow, while it sinks, exalts; 300
 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.
 Take, then, O world! thy much indebted tear: 305
 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? 309
 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.
 Know, Smiler! at thy peril art thou pleas'd; 315
 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 Heav'n tremendous in its frowns ? most sure ;
 And in its favours formidable too :
 Its favours here are trials, not rewards ; 530
 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 tumults, 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 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. 344

Mine dy'd with thee, PHILANDER ! thy last sigh
 Dissolv'd the charm ; the disenchant'd earth
 Lost all her lustre. Where, her glitt'ring tow'rs ?
 Her golden mountains, where ? all darken'd down

To naked waste ; a dreary vale of tears. 349
 The great magician's dead ! Thou poor pale piece
 Of outcast 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, treach'rous 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 :
 We penetrate, we prophecy in vain. 366
 Time is dealt out by particles, and each
 Are 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 our eternal schemes, 380
 As we the Fatal Sisters would outspin,
 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, tho' for years admonish'd home.
 Of human ills the last extreme beware;
 Beware, LORENZO! a slow sudden death.
 How dreadful that deliberate surprise!
 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
 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 applauds.
 How excellent that life they ne'er will lead! 406
 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 thro' ev'ry 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 thro' 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 thought 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, tho' longer far, would fail,
 And the lark listen to my midnight song.

The sprightly 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 sullen gloom, sweet Philomel ! like thee,

And call the stars to listen: ev'ry star
Is deaf to mine, enamour'd of thy lay.
Yet be not vain; there are, who thine excel, 444
And charm thro' distant ages. Wrapt in shade,
Pris'ner 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, tho' 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 bonds of life:
What now but immortality can please? 455
O had he press'd his theme, pursu'd the track
Which opens out of darkness into day!
O had he mounted on his wings of fire,
Soar'd where I sink, and sung immortal man!
How had it blest mankind, and rescu'd me! 460

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT II.

ON
TIME, DEATH, AND FRIENDSHIP.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF WILMINGTON.

WHEN the cock crew he wept,—smote by that eye
Which looks on me, on all; that pow'r who bids
This midnight centinel, with clarion shrill,
(Emblem of that which shall awake the dead) 4
Rouse souls from slumber into thoughts of Heav'n.
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 listed : 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, tho' dead, 15
 May still befriend—What themes ? Time's won-
 drous price,
 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'd 20
 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 thrift, that avarice of time, 25
 (O glorious avarice !) thought of death inspires,
 As rumour'd robb'ries 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 ? 30
 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 pris'ner free. 35
 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 ; 40
 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 45
 For Esculapian, but for moral aid.

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 Heav'n 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 confest.
 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 med'cines cannot cure ?
 When spirits ebb, when life's enchanting scenes

Their lustre lose, and lessen in cur sight,
 As lands and cities with their glitt'ring 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 num'rous 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. 80
 Virtue, or purpos'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. 85
 This the good heart's prerogative to raise
 A royal tribute from the poorest hours;
 Immense revenue! ev'ry moment pays.
 If nothing more than purpose in thy pow'r,
 Thy purpose firm is equal to the deed: 90
 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 thoughts to domineer;
 Guard well thy thought: our thoughts are heard in
 heav'n. 95

On all-important time, thro' ev'ry age,
 Tho' 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 ; 100
 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 frenzy fly, 105
 For rescue from the blessings 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 pow'r 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 ling'ring moments into speed,
 And whirl us (happy riddance !) from ourselves.
 Art, brainless art ! our furious charioteer, 120
 (For Nature's voice unstifled would recal)
 Drives headlong tow'rds 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 mercý 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 wind ?
 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 Heav'n'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 giv'n for use, not waste.
 Enjoin'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 blud'ring, split on idleness for ease. 159

Life's cares are comforts ; such by Heav'n design'd ;
 He that has none must make them, or be wretched.
 Cares are employments ; and without employ
 The soul is on the rack, the rack of rest,
 To souls most adverse ; action all their joy.

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 unnat'ral quarrel 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 ev'ry 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 vig'rous 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 errors cause and cure are seen ! see next

Time's nature, origin, importance, speed, 190
 And thy great aim 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 can he do!
 And will; to stand blank neuter he disdains.
 Not on those terms was Time (Heav'n'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 thro' a thousand worlds;
 Not on those terms, from the great days of heav'n,
 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 num'rous 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 ancient rest,

And join anew Eternity his sire ;
 In his immutability to nest, 219
 When worlds, that count his circles now, unhing'd
 (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'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 ; silky-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 ev'ry bauble drivell'd o'er by sense,
 For rattles and conceits of ev'ry cast ;
 For change of follies and relays of joy, 250
 To drag your patient thro' the tedious length
 Of a short winter's day——say, Sages, say!
 Wit's Oracles ; say, Dreamers of gay dreams ;
 How will you weather an eternal night,
 Where such expedients fail ? 255
 O treach'rous Conscience ! while she seems to
 sleep
 On rose and myrtle, lull'd with Syren 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, 260
 Unmark'd ;—see, from behind her secret stand,
 The sly informer minutes ev'ry fault,
 And her dread diary with horror fills.
 Not the gross act alone employs her pen ;
 She reconnoitres Fancy's airy band, 265
 A watchful foe ! the formidable spy,
 List'ning, o'erhears the whispers of our camp ;
 Our dawning purposes of heart explores,
 And steals our embryos of iniquity.
 As all-rapacious usurers conceal 270
 Their Doomsday-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 275
 Writes our whole history, which Death shall read
 In ev'ry pale delinquent's private ear,

And judgment publish; publish to more worlds
 Than this; and endless age in groans resound.
 LORENZO, such that sleeper in thy breast! 280
 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?
 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 destroyed 290
 Is suicide, where more than blood is spilt.
 Time flies, death urges, knells call, Heav'n 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 irreversible, entire, extreme, 299
 Endless, hair-hung, breeze-shaken, o'er the gulf
 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
 Heav'n'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 re-import
The period past, re-give the giv'n 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 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 Heav'n ?

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 flow'rs ?

Your golden wings, now hov'ring 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 backward 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 wounds us by their flight,
 If folly bounds our prospect by the grave,
 All feeling of futurity benumb'd ;
 All god-like passion for eternals quench'd ; 340
 All relish of realities expir'd ;
 Renounc'd all correspondence with the skies :
 Our freedom chain'd ; quite wingless our desire ;
 In sense dark-prison'd all that ought to soar ;
 Prone to the centre ; crawling in the dust ; 345
 Dismounted ev'ry great and glorious aim ;
 Embruted ev'ry faculty divine :
 Heart-bury'd in the rubbish of the world,
 The world, that gulf 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 ;
 Tho' 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 escûtcheon'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 monument ; 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 giv'n sure earnest of his final blow.
 Those hours which lately smil'd, where are they now?
 Pallid to thought, and ghastly! drown'd, all drown'd
 In that great deep, which nothing disembogues! 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 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 heav'n;
 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, tho' 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, sore amaz'd, from out earth's ruins crawl,



*'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours;
And ask them, what report they bore to heav'n;*

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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 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,
 Erewhile high-flush'd 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 Medean, Fate is in thy walls: 415
 Dost ask how? whence? Belshazzar-like, amaz'd!
 Man's make encloses 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 delussion lies; 420
 That solar shadow, as it measures life,
 It life resembles too: Life speeds away
 From point to point, tho' 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 wise than he's aware:
 A WILMINGTON goes slower than the sun; 435
 And all mankind mistake their time of day;
 E'en age itself. Fresh hopes are hourly sown
 In furrow'd brows. So 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 our 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 saints to Cytherea's fane. 460

Know'st thou, LORENZO, what a friend contains?
 As bees mix'd nectar draw from fragrant flow'rs,
 So men from Friendship, wisdom and delight;
 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 crite-
 rion too! 470

Thought in the mine may come forth gold or dross;
 When coin'd in words, 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; who might have borne an edge,
 And play'd a sprightly beam, if born to speech!
 If born blest heirs to 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. 489
 Rude thought runs wild in contemplation's field ;
 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's is outdone.
 Wisdom, tho' 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 ! Heav'n planted ! never pluck'd by one.
 Needful auxiliars are our friends, to give 510
 To social man true relish of himself.
 Full on ourselves descending on a line,
 Pleasure's bright beam is feeble in delight :
 Delight intense is taken by rebound ;
 Reverberated pleasures fire the breast. 515
 Celestial happiness ! whene'er she stoops
 To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
 And one alone, to make her sweet amends

For absent heav'n—the bosom of a friend ;
 Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft, 520
 Each other's pillow to repose divine.
 Beware the counterfeit; in passions flame
 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 flow'r of heav'nly seed,
 The wise extract earth's most Hyblean bliss, 536
 Superior Wisdom, crown'd with smiling joy.
 But for whom blossoms this Elysian flow'r?
 Abroad they find who cherish it at home.
 LORENZO, pardon what my love extorts, 540
 An honest love, and not afraid to frown.
 Tho' 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 other hearts, tenacious of their own ;
 And we no less of ours when such the bait.

Ye Fortune's cofferers! ye Pow'rs of Wealth; 550

You do your rent-rolls most felonious wrong,

By taking our attachment to yourselves.

Can gold gain friendship? Impudence of hope!

As well mere man an angel might beget.

Love, and love only, is the loan for love. 555

LORENZO, pride repress, nor hope to find

A friend, but what has found a friend in thee.

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) 560

I shew thee friendship delicate, as dear,

Of tender violations apt to die?

Reserve will wound it, and distrust destroy;

Deliberate on all things with thy friend:

But since friends grow not thick on ev'ry bough,

Nor ev'ry friend unrotten at the core; 566

First on thy friend delib'rate with thyself;

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. 571

How gallant danger for earth's highest prize!

A friend is worth all hazard we can run.

"Poor is the friendless master of a world:

"A world in purchase for a friend is gain." 575

So sung he (angels hear that angel sing!

Angels from friendship gather half their joy!)

So sung PHILANDER, as his friend went round

In the rich ichor, in the gen'rous blood

Of Bacchus, purple god of joyous wit, 580

A brow solute, and ever-laughing eye.
 He drank long health and virtue to his friend ;
 His friend ! who warm'd him more, who more inspir'd.
 Friendship's the wine of life ; but friendship new
 (Not such was his) is neither strong nor pure. 585
 O ! for the bright complexion, cordial warmth,
 And elevating spirit of a friend,
 For twenty summers rip'ning by my side ;
 All feculence of falsehood long thrown down ;
 All social virtues rising in his soul ; 590
 As crystal clear, and smiling as they rise !
 Here nectar flows ! it sparkles in our sight ;
 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. 595
 Think'st thou the theme intoxicates my song ?
 Am I too warm ?—Too warm I cannot be.
 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 600
 Expanded shine with azure, green, and gold ;
 How blessings brighten as they take their flight !
 His flight PHILANDER took ; his upward flight,
 If ever soul ascended. Had he dropt,
 (That eagle genius !) O had he let fall 605
 One feather as he flew, I then had wrote
 What friends might flatter, prudent foes forbear,
 Rivals scarce damn, and Zoilus reprieve.
 Yet what I can I must : it were profane
 To quench a glory lighted at the skies, 610
 And cast in shadows his illustrious close.

Strange ; the theme most affecting, most sublime,
 Momentous most to man, should sleep unsung !
 And yet it sleeps, by genius unawak'd,
 Painim or Christian, to the blush of Wit. 615

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. 620

Dare I presume, then ? but PHILANDER bids,
 And glory tempts, and inclination calls.
 Yet am I struck, as struck the soul beneath
 Aërial groves' impenetrable gloom,
 Or in some mighty ruin's solemn shade, 625
 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.

It is religion to proceed : I pause—
 And enter, aw'd, the temple of my theme. 630
 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 heav'n. 635
 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 : 640
 A death-bed's a detector of the heart.
 Here tir'd Dissimulation drops her mask,

Thro' Life's grimace, that mistress of the scene !
 Here real and apparent are the same.
 You see the man, you see his hold on heav'n, 645
 If sound his virtue ; as PHILANDER's, sound.
 Heav'n waits not the last moment ; owns her friends
 On this side Death, and points them out to men ;
 A lecture silent, but of sov'reign pow'r !
 To Vice confusion, and to Virtue peace. 650

Whatever farce the boastful hero plays,
 Virtue alone has majesty in Death,
 And greater still, the more the tyrant frowns.
 PHILANDER ! he severely frown'd on thee.
 " No warning giv'n ! unceremonious fate ! 655
 " A sudden rush from life's meridian joys !
 " A wrench from all we love ! from all we are !
 " A restless bed of pain ! a plunge opaque
 " Beyond conjecture ! feeble Nature's dread !
 " Strong Reason shudders at the dark unknown !
 " A sun extinguish'd ! a just opening grave ! 661
 " And, oh ! the last, last ; what ? (can words express,
 " Thought reach ?) the last, last—silence of a friend !"
 Where are those horrors, that amazement where,
 This hideous group of ills (which singly shock) 665
 Demands from man ?—I thought him man till now.

Thro' Nature's wreck, thro' vanquish'd agonies,
 (Like the stars struggling thro' this midnight gloom)
 What gleams of joy ? what more than human peace ?
 Where the frail mortal ? the poor abject worm ? 670
 No, not in death the mortal to be found.
 His conduct is a legacy for all,

Richer than Mammon's for his single heir.
 His comforters he comforts; great in ruin,
 With unreluctant grandeur gives, not yields, 675
 His soul sublime, and closes with his fate.
 How our hearts burn within us at the scene!
 Whence, this brave bound o'er limits fix'd to man
 His God sustains him in his final hour!
 His final hour brings glory to his God! 680
 Man's glory Heav'n vouchsafes to call her own.
 We gaze, we weep; mix'd tears of grief and joy!
 Amazement strikes! devotion bursts to flame!
 Christians adore! and infidels believe.

As some tall tow'r, or lofty mountain's brow,
 Detains the sun illustrious, from its height, 686
 While rising vapours and descending shades,
 With damps and darkness drown the spacious vale,
 Undamp't by doubt, undarken'd by despair,
 PHILANDER thus augustly rears his head, 690
 At that black hour which gen'ral horror sheds
 On the low level of th' inglorious throng:
 Sweet peace, and heav'nly hope, and humble joy,
 Divinely beam on his exalted soul;
 Destruction gild and crown him for the skies, 695
 With incommunicable lustre bright.

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT III.

NARCISSA.

Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes.

VIRG.

INSCRIBED TO
HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF P..

FROM dreams, where thought in Fancy's maze
runs mad,

To reason, that heav'n-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 sallies 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! 14
 Now woo them, wed them, bind them to thy breast:
 To win thy wish, creation has no more.
 Or, if we wish a fourth, it is a friend.—
 But friends, how mortal! dang'rous the desire.
 Take Phœbus to yourselves, ye basking bards!
 Inebriate at fair Fortune's fountain-head, 20
 And reeling thro' 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. 25
 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 30
 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 35
 This revolution in the world inspir'd?
 Ye train Pierian! to the lunar sphere,
 In silent hour, address your ardent call

* At the Duke of Norfolk's Masquerade.

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 Heav'n!

What title or what name endears thee most?

Cynthia! Cyllene! Phœbe!—or dost hear 45

With higher guest, fair P——d of the skies?

Is that the soft enchantment calls thee down,

More pow'rful than of old Circean charm?

Come, but from heav'nly banquets with thee bring

The soul of song, and whisper in mine ear 50

The theft divine; or in propitious dreams

(For dreams are thine) transfuse it thro' 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 makes 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 hov'ring o'er my peace,
 Not less a bird of omen than of prey. 75

It call'd NARCISSA long before her hour;
 It call'd her tender soul by break of bliss,
 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,
 Transfix'd by Fate (who loves a lofty mark)
 How from the summit of the grove she fell,
 And left it unharmonious! all its charm
 Extinguish'd in the wonders of her song; 90
 Her song still vibrates in my ravish'd ear,
 Still melting there, and with voluptuous pain
 (O to forget her!) thrilling thro' my hear!

Song, beauty, youth, love, virtue, joy! this group
 Of bright ideas, flow'rs of Paradise, 95
 As yet unforfeit! in one blaze we bind,
 Kneel, and present it to the skies, as all
 We guess of heav'n; 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 pond'rous robb'd of life,
Good lost weighs more in grief than gain'd in joy.
Like blossom'd trees o'erturn'd by venal storm,
Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay ;
And if in death still lovely, lovelier there, 105
Far lovelier ! Pity swells the tide of love.

And will not the severe excuse a sigh ?
Scorn the proud man that is asham'd to weep.
Our tears indulg'd, indeed deserve our shame.
Ye that e'er lost an angel, pity me ! 110

Soon as the lustre languish'd 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) check'd his beam, 120
Deny'd his wonted succour ; or 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 outblush (mine excepted) ev'ry 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 pass, but not his constant pain.

So man is made, nought ministers delight 135
 But 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! 139
 Rapture! bold man! who tempts the wrath divine,
 By plucking fruit deny'd to mortal taste,
 While here presuming on the rights of Heav'n.
 For transport dost thou call on ev'ry hour,
 LORENZO? At thy friend's expence be wise:
 Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart; 145
 A broken reed at best; but oft a spear:
 On its sharp point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires.

Turn, hopeless thought! turn from her.—Thought
 repell'd,

Resenting rallies, and wakes ev'ry woe.
 Snatch'd ere thy prime! and in thy bridal hour! 150
 And when kind fortune, with thy lover, smil'd!
 And when high-flavour'd thy fresh op'ning 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, 155
 Strangers to kindness, wept. Their eyes let fall
 Inhuman tears! strange tears! that trickled down
 From marble hearts! obdurate tenderness!
 A tenderness that call'd them more severe,
 In spite of Nature's soft persuasion steel'd! 160
 While Nature melted, Superstition rav'd!

That mourn'd the dead, and this deny'd a grave.
Their sighs incens'd ; sighs foreign to the will !
Their will the tiger suck'd, outrag'd the storm :
For, oh ! the curs'd ungodliness of zeal ! 165
While sinful flesh relented, spirit nurs'd
In blind infallibility's embrace,
The sainted 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 muffl'd deep
In midnight darkness, whisper'd my last sigh.
I whisper'd what should echo thro' 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 curs'd soil ; and with humanity
(Deny'd 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 heav'n-labour'd form, erect, divine !
 This heav'n-affum'd, majestic, robe of earth
 He deign'd to wear, who hung the vast expanse
 With azure bright, and cloth'd the sun in gold. 195
 When ev'ry passion sleeps that can offend ;
 When strikes us ev'ry motive that can melt ;
 When man can wreak his rancour uncontroul'd,
 That strongest curb on insult and ill-will ;
 Then, spleen to dust ! the dust of innocence ! 200
 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.
 Far less than this is shocking in a race 205
 Most wretched, but from streams of mutual love,
 And uncreated, but for love divine ;
 And, but for love divine, this moment lost,
 By Fate resorb'd, and sunk in endless night.
 Man hard of heart to man ! of horrid things 210
 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, 215
 And thou, pale Moon ! turn paler at the sound,
 Man is to man the sorest, surest ill.
 A previous blast foretels the rising storm :
 O'erwhelming turrets threaten ere they fall ;
 Volcanoes bellow ere they disembogue ; 220
 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
Heav'n's sov'reign 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! 234
Which bleeds with other cares, with other pangs;
Pangs num'rous as the num'rous ills that swarm'd
O'er thy distinguish'd fate, and clust'ring there,
Thick as the locust on the land of Nile,
Made death more deadly, and more dark the grave.
Reflect (if not forgot thy touching tale) 240
How was each circumstance with aspicks arm'd!
An aspick 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 the right channel, thro' the vale of death.

The vale of Death! that hush'd Cimmerian vale,
 Where Darkness brooding o'er unfinish'd fates, 256

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 thoughts 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 flow'r,

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 chace our thoughtlessness, fear, pride, and guilt.

Our dying friends come o'er us, like a cloud,

To damp our brainless ardours, and abate

'That glare of life which often blinds the wise.

Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth 280

Our rugged path to death; to break those bars

Of terror and abhorrence Nature throws
Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make
Welcome, as safe, our port from ev'ry storm. 284
Each friend by Fate snatch'd from us, is a plume
Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,
Which makes us stoop from our aerial heights,
And damp'd with omen of our own disease,
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 : 294
And shall they languish, shall they die, in vain ?
Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hov'ring shades,
Which wait the revolution in our hearts ?
Shall we disdain their silent, soft, address,
Their posthumous advice, and pious pray'r ? 299
Senseless as herds that graze their hallow'd graves,
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, 304
That kind chastiser of the soul in joy !
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 ev'ry thought ? and wish of ev'ry hour ?

And song of ev'ry joy ? Surprizing truth !
 The beaten spaniel's fondness not so strange.
 To wave the num'rous 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 lab'ring 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, tho' sad ? to see what we have seen ?
 Hear, till unheard, the same old slabber'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
 Thro' loaded vessels, and a laxer tone ?
 Crazy machines to grind earth's wasted fruits !

Ill ground, and worse concocted! load, not life!
The rational foul kennels of excess!
Still streaming thoroughfares 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
Thro' want of virtue, that is, want of thought,
(Tho' 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
Thro' 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 straighten's 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 374
 Of sight, smell, taste. The cuckoo-seasons sing
 The small 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 384
 In that for which they long, for which they live :
 Their glorious efforts, wing'd with heav'nly 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 ev'ry hour ;
 Advancing virtue in a line to bliss ;
 Virtue which Christian motives best inspire ! 394
 And bliss, which Christian schemes alone ensure !
 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 slights the next."'
 What is this life ? how few their fav'rite know ? 400
 Fond in the dark, and blind in our embrace,
 By passionately loving life, we make
 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 hum'rists, 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, lab'ring 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 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.
 Thro' chinks, styl'd organs, dim life peeps at light;
 Death bursts th' involving cloud, and all is day;
 All eye, all ear, the disembod' d pow'r.
 Death has feign'd evils nature shall not feel;
 Life, ill's substantial, wisdom cannot shun.
 Is not the mighty mind, that son of Heav'n, 455
 By tyrant Life dethron'd, imprison'd, pain'd!
 By death enlarg'd, ennobl'd, deify'd!
 Death but entombs the body, life the soul.

"Is death then guiltless? how he marks his way
 "With a dreadful waste of what deserves to shine!
 "Art, genius, fortune, elevated pow'r! 461
 "With various lustres these light up the world,
 "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 barb'rous Life the man.
Life is the triumph of our mould'ring clay ;
Death, of the spirit infinite ! divine !
Death hath 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 ev'ry 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 bemir'd ! 480
Lorenzo, blush at terror for a death
Which gives thee to repose in festive bow'rs,
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, tho' 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 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 pow'r.
 That ill's 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 tho' the sickle, sometimes keen,
 Just fear us as we reap the golden grain;
 More than thy balm, O Gilead, heals the wound.
 Birth's feeble cry, and Death's deep dismal groan,
 Are slender tributes low-tax'd Nature pays 507
 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.
 And feel I, Death, no joy from thought of thee?
 Death, the great counsellor, who man inspires 512
 With ev'ry nobler thought and fairer deed!
 Death, the deliverer, who rescues man!
 Death, the rewarder, who the rescu'd crowns!
 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,
 Tho' the four winds were warring for my dust.
 Yes, and from winds, and waves, and central night,
 Tho' prison'd there, my dust too I reclaim,
 (To dust when drop proud nature's proudest spheres)
 And live entire. Death is the crown of life. 526
 Were death deny'd, poor man would live in vain:

Were death deny'd, to live would not be life :
Were death deny'd, e'en fools would wish to die.
Death wounds to cure; we fall, we rise, we reign!
Spring from our fetters, fasten in the skies, 530
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 ?
When shall I die ?—when shall I live for ever ? 535

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT IV.

THE
CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH.

CONTAINING

THE ONLY CURE FOR THE FEAR OF DEATH, AND PROPER SENTIMENTS OF HEART ON THAT INESTIMABLE BLESSING.

INSCRIBED TO

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 sov'reign 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;

Night IV. **THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH.** 61

The deep damp vault, the darkness, and the worm;

These are the bugbears of a winter's eve, 12

The terrors of the living, not the dead.

Imagination's fool, and error's wretch,

Man makes a death which Nature never made;

Then on the point of his own fancy falls,

And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one,

 But were Death frightful, what has age to fear?

If prudent, age should meet his friendly foe,

And shelter in his hospitable gloom. 20

I scarce can meet a monument but holds

My younger; ev'ry 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 its death bequeathing endless pain;

His heart, tho'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-sustained, 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 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 loit'ring 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, can'st 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,
 Embitt'ring the possess'd. Why wish for more? 70
 Wishing, of all employments is the worst!
 Philosophy's reverse, and health's decay!

Night IV. THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH. 63

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 hectic of a fool,
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 dang'rous 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 pursu'd, each other's prey ; 95
As wolves for rapine, as the fox for wiles,

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.

If this song lives, posterity shall know 101

One, tho' in Britain born, with courtiers bred,

Who thought e'en 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, tott'ring 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 av'rice 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 num'rous 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 buried what gives life to live,
 Firmness of nerve, and energy of thought.

Night IV. THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH. 65

Life's lee is not more shallow than impure 135
And vapid: Sense and Reason shew the door,
Call for my bier, and point me to the dust.

☉ 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 couldst 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!

Tho' Nature's terrors thus may be repress,
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 upward shot,
More dreadful by delay, the longer ere
They strike our hearts, the deeper is their wound.
O think how deep, LORENZO! here it stings; 161
Who can appease its anguish? How it burns!
What hand the barb'd, envenom'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 frenzy? 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 heav'n 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,
 Much rather thou, who dost these spheres inspire!
 Whilst I with seraphs share seraphic themes, 190
 And shew to men the dignity of man,
 Lest I blaspheme my subject with my song.
 Shall Pagan pages glow celestial flame,
 And Christian languish? On our hearts, not heads,
 Fall the foul infamy. My heart, awake: 195
 What can awake thee, unawak'd by this,

“ 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; 200
And to believe, LORENZO, is to feel.

Thou most indulgent, most tremendous Pow'r!
Still more tremendous for thy wond'rous love!
That arms with awe more awful thy commands,
And foul transgression dips in sev'nfold night; 205
How our hearts tremble at thy love immense!
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. 210

Bold thought! shall I dare speak it, or repress?
Should man more execrate or boast the guilt
Which rous'd such vengeance; which such love in-
flam'd?

O'er guilt (how mountainous!) with outstretch'd arms
Stern Justice and soft smiling Love, embrace, 215
Supporting, in full majesty, thy throne,
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, 220
And rescue both? Both rescue! both exalt!
O how are both exalted by the deed!
The wond'rous deed! or shall I call it more?
A wonder in Omnipotence itself!
A mystery no less to gods than men! 225
Not thus our infidels th' Eternal draw,

A God all o'er, consummate, absolute,
 Full-orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete :
 They set at odds heav'n's jarring attributes,
 And with one excellence, another wound ; 230
 Maim heav'n's perfection, break its equal beams,
 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 ! 235
 Ye worse for mending ! wash'd to fouler stains !
 The ransom was paid down ; the fund of heav'n,
 Heav'n's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,
 Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
 All price beyond : tho' curious to compute, 240
 Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum :
 Its value vast ungraspt 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. 245
 The sun beheld it—No, the shocking scene
 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 250
 Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown !
 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 pangs, strange pangs ! deliver'd of her dead ?
 Hell howl'd ; and heav'n that hour let fall a tear :

Heav'n wept, that men might smile! heav'n bled,
that man

Might never die!—

And is devotion virtue? 'Tis compell'd. 260

What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these?

Such contemplations mount us, and should mount

The mind still high'r, nor ever glance on man

Unraptur'd, uninflam'd.—Where roll my thoughts

To rest from wonders? other wonders rise, 265

And strike where'er they roll: my soul is caught:

Heav'n's sov'reign blessings clust'ring from the cross,

Rush on her in a throng, and close her round

The pris'ner of amaze!—In his blest life

I see the path, and in his death, the price, 270

And in his great ascent, the proof supreme

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, 275

And give the King of Glory to come in.

Who is the King of Glory? He who left

His throne of glory for the pangs of death:

Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates,

And give the King of Glory to come in. 280

Who is the King of Glory? He who slew

The rav'nous foe that gorg'd all human race!

The King of Glory he, whose glory fill'd

Heav'n with amazement at his love to man,

And with divine complacency beheld 285

Pow'rs most illumin'd wilder'd in the theme.

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
heav'n,

This sum of good to man! whose nature then 290

Took wing, and mounted with him from the tomb.

Then, then, I rose; then first humanity

Triumphant past the crystal ports of light,

(Stupendous guest!) and seiz'd eternal youth, 294

Seiz'd in our name. E'er since 'tis blasphemous

To call man mortal. Man's mortality

Was then transferr'd to death; and heav'n's duration

Unalienably seal'd to this frail frame,

This child of dust.—Man, all-immortal! hail; 299

Hail, Heav'n, all lavish of strange gifts to man!

Thine all the glory, man's the boundless bliss.

Where am I wrapt 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 305

Of being, to preclude a close of woe,

Where, then, my boast of immortality?

I boast it still, tho' cover'd o'er with guilt:

For guilt, not innocence, his life he pour'd;

'Tis guilt alone can justify his death; 310

Nor that, unless his death can justify

Relenting guilt in heav'n's indulgent sight.

If, sick of folly, I relent, he writes

My name in heav'n with that inverted spear

(A spear deep-dipt in blood!) which pierc'd his side,

And open'd there a font for all mankind 316

Who strive, who combat crimes, to drink and live!
This, only this, subdues the fear of death.

And what is this?—survey the wond'rous cure,
And at each step let higher wonder rise! 320

“ Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
“ Thro' 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! tho' woo'd and aw'd, 325
“ Blest and chastis'd, a flagrant rebel still!
“ 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; 330
“ Most joy'd for the redeem'd from deepest guilt!
“ As if our race were held of highest rank,
“ And Godhead dearer as more kind to man!”

Bound, ev'ry heart! and ev'ry bosom, burn!
O what a scale of miracles is here! 335

Its lowest round high planted on the skies;
Its tow'ring summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel! Oh that I could climb
The wonderful ascent with equal praise!

Praise! flow for ever, (if astonishment 340
Will give thee leave) my praise! for ever flow;
Praise ardent, cordial, constant, to high heav'n
More fragrant than Arabia sacrific'd,
And all her spicy mountains in a flame. 344

So dear, so due to Heav'n, shall praise descend
With her soft plume (from plausive angels' wing

First pluck'd by man) to tickle mortal ears,
 Thus diving in the pockets of the great!
 Is praise the perquisite of ev'ry paw,
 Tho' black as hell, that grapples well for gold? 350
 Oh love of gold! thou meanest of amours!
 Shall praise her odours waste on virtues dead;
 Embalm the base, perfume the stench of guilt,
 Earn dirty bread by washing Ethiops fair;
 Removing filth, or sinking it from sight, 355
 A scavenger in scenes where vacant posts,
 Like gibbets yet untenanted, expect
 Their future ornaments? From courts and thrones
 Return, apostate Praise! thou vagabond!
 Thou prostitute! to thy first love return; 360
 Thy first, thy greatest, once unrival'd theme.
 There flow redundant, like Meander, flow
 Back to thy fountain, to that parent-pow'r
 Who gives the tongue to sound, the thought to soar,
 The soul to be. Men homage pay to men, 365
 Thoughtless beneath whose dreadful eye they bow,
 In mutual awe profound, of clay to clay,
 Of guilt to guilt, and turn their backs on thee,
 Great Sire! whom thrones celestial ceaseless sing,
 To prostrate angels an amazing scene! 370
 O the presumption of man's awe for man!—
 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 night eternal, but a frown from thee? 375
 What heay'n's meridian glory, but thy smile?

And shall not praise be thine, not human praise,
While heav'n's high host on hallelujahs live ?

O may I breathe no longer than I breathe
My soul in praise to H!M who gave my soul, 380
And all her infinite of prospect fair,

Cut thro' 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 ? 385

How is Night's sable mantle labour'd o'er,
How richly wrought with attributes divine !

What wisdom shines ! what love ! This midnight
pomp,

This gorgeous arch, with golden worlds inlaid !
Built with divine ambition ! nought to thee ; 390

For others this profusion. Thou, apart,
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 395

The thunder, if in that th' Almighty dwells ?
Or holds HE furious storms in streighten'd reins,
And bids fierce whirlwinds wheel His rapid car ?

What mean these questions !—Trembling I re-
tract ;

My prostrate soul adores the present God. 400
Praise I a distant Deity ? He tunes

My voice (if tun'd ;) the nerve that writes, sustains :
Wrapp'd in his being I resound his praise ;

But tho' past all diffus'd, without a shore
His essence, local is His throne (as meet) 405

To gather the dispers'd (as standards call
The listed from afar;) to fix a point,
A central point, collective of His sons,
Since finite ev'ry nature but his own.

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

Tho' night unnumber'd worlds unfolds to view,
Boundless Creation! what art Thou? A beam, 420
A mere effluvium of his majesty.
And shall an atom of this atom-world
Mutter, in dust and sin, the theme of heav'n!
Down to the centre should I send my thought,
Thro' beds of glitt'ring ore and glowing gems, 425
Their beggar'd blaze wants lustre for my lay:
Goes out in darkness: if, on tow'ring wing,
I send it thro' the boundless vault of stars,
(The stars, tho' rich, what dross their gold to Thee,
Great, good, wise, wonderful, eternal King!) 430
If to those conscious stars thy throne around,
Praise ever-pouring, and imbibing bliss,
And ask their strain; they want it, more they want,
Poor their abundance, humble their sublime,
Languid their energy, their ardour cold; 435
Indebted still, their highest rapture burns,

Short of its mark, defective, tho' 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, 440
And downward look for heav'n's superior praise!
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, tho' gods, 445
Yet still gods unredeem'd (there triumphs man,
Tempted to weigh the dust against the skies)
They less would feel, tho' more adorn my theme.
They sung creation (for in that they shar'd)
How rose in melody that child of Love! 450
Creation's great superior, man! is thine;
Thine is Redemption; they just gave the key,
'Tis thine to raise and eternize the song,
Tho' human, yet divine; for should not this
Raise man o'er man, and kindle seraphs here? 455
Redemption! 'twas creation more sublime;
Redemption! 'twas the labour of the skies:
Far more than labour—it was death in heav'n.
A truth so strange, 'twere bold to think it true,
If not far bolder still to disbelieve. 460

Here pause and ponder. Was there death in
heav'n?

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

Who struck it? Who?—O how is man enlarg'd,
Seen thro' this medium: How the pigmy tow'rs!
How counterpois'd his origin from dust! 465

How counterpois'd to dust his sad return !
 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, thro' the thickest cloud 470
 Of guilt and clay condens'd, the Son of Heav'n !
 The double Son ; the made, and the re-made !
 And shall heav'n's double property be lost ?
 Man's double madness only can destroy.
 To man the bleeding Cross has promis'd all ; 475
 The bleeding Cross has sworn eternal grace.
 Who gave this life, what grace shall he deny ?
 O ye, who from this rock of ages leap,
 Disdainful, plunging headlong in the deep !
 What cordial joy, what consolation strong, 480
 Whatever winds arise, or billows roll,
 Our int'rest's in the Master of the storm !
 Cling there, and in wreck'd Nature's ruin smile,
 While vile apostates tremble in a calm.
 Man, know thyself: all wisdom centres there. 485
 To none man seems ignoble but to man.
 Angels that grandeur, men o'erlook, admire :
 How long shall human nature be their book,
 Degen'rate mortal, and unread by thee ? 489
 The beam dim reason sheds, shews wonders there :
 What high contents ! illustrious faculties !
 But the grand comment, which displays at full
 Our human height, scarce sever'd from divine,
 By heav'n compos'd, was publish'd on the cross.
 Who looks on that, and sees not in himself 495
 An awful stranger, a terrestrial God ?

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 500
Catches strange fire, Eternity ! at thee,
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 ! 505
It is another scene ! another self !
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, 510
What evolutions of surprizing fate !
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 ; 515
Where what now charms, perhaps whate'er exists,
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. 521
He, the great Father ! kindled at one flame
The world of rationals ; one spirit pour'd
From spirit's awful fountain ; pour'd himself
Thro' all their souls, but not an equal stream, 525
Profuse, or frugal of th' inspiring God,
As his wise plan demanded ; and when past

Their various trials, in their various spheres,
 If they continue rational, as made,
 Resorbs them all into himself again, 530
 His throne their centre, and his smile their crown.

Why doubt we, then, the glorious truth to sing,
 Tho' yet unsung, as deem'd, perhaps, too bold?
 Angels are men of a superior kind;
 Angels are men in lighter habit clad, 535
 High o'er celestial mountains wing'd in flight;
 And men are angels, loaded for an hour,
 Who wade this miry vale, and climb with pain,
 And slipp'ry step, the bottom of the steep.

Angels their failings, mortals have their praise: 540
 While here, of corps ethereal, such enroll'd,
 And summon'd to the glorious standard soon,
 Which flames eternal crimson thro' the skies;
 Nor are our brothers thoughtless of their kin,
 Yet absent; but not absent from their love. 545

Michael has fought our battles; Raphael sung
 Our triumphs; Gabriel on our errands flown,
 Sent by the SOV'REIGN: and are these, O man,
 Thy friends, thy warm allies! and thou (shame, burn
 The cheek to cinder!) rival to the brute? 550

Religion's all. Descending from the skies
 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 sole of man above himself; 555
 E'en in this night of frailty, change, and death,
 She gives the soul a soul that acts a god.
 Religion! Providence! an after-state!

Here his firm footing; here his solid rock;
This can support us; all is sea besides: 560
Sinks under us; bestorms, and then devours. 71
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, 565
And dungeon-horrors, by kind fate discharg'd,
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; 570
So joys the soul, when from inglorious aims
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. 575

Religion! thou the soul of happiness,
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 forborne. 580
Can love allure us? or can terror awe?
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 tenderness on fire; 585
Like soft smooth oil, outblazing other fires?
Can pray'r, can praise, avert it?—Thou, my all!
My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!
My strength in age! my rise in low estate!

My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth!—my world!
 My light in darkness! and my life in death! 591
 My boast thro' time! bliss thro' eternity!
 Eternity, too short to speak thy praise,
 Or fathom thy profound of love to man!
 To man of men the meanest, e'en to me; 595
 My sacrifice! my God!—what things are these!
 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, 600
 None half so dear as that which, tho' unspoke,
 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! 605
 Thou who didst save him, snatch the smoking brand
 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; 610
 To challenge, and to distance all return!
 Of lavish love stupendous heights to soar,
 And leave praise panting in the distant vale!
 Thy right too great defrauds thee of thy due,
 And sacrilegious our sublimest song, 615
 But since the naked will obtains thy smile,
 Beneath this monument of praise unpaid,
 And future life symphonious to my strain,
 (That noblest hymn to Heav'n!) for ever lie

Night IV. THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH. 81

Intomb'd by fear of death! and ev'ry fear, 615
The dread of ev'ry evil but thy frown.

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 620
An unobtrusive tender of your hearts,
Abhorring violence! who halt indeed;
But, for the blessing, wrestle not with Heav'n!
Think you my song too turbulent? too warm?
Are passions, then, the pagans of the soul? 625
Reason alone baptiz'd! alone ordain'd
To touch things sacred? Oh for warmer still!
Guilt chills my zeal, and age benumbs my pow'rs:
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
Compassion to the coldness of my breast,
And pardon to the winter in my strain.

Oh ye cold-hearted, frozen, Formalists!
On such a scene 'tis impious to be calm. 635
Passion is reason, transport temper, here.
Shall Heav'n, 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, 640
That prose of piety, a lukewarm praise?
Rise odours sweet from incense uninflam'd?
Devotion when lukewarm is undevout;
But when it glows, its heat is struck to heav'n;
To human hearts her golden harps are strung; 645

High heav'n's orchestra chaunts Amen to man.
 Hear I, or dream I hear, their-distant strain,
 Sweet to the soul, and tasting strong of Heav'n,
 Soft wafted on celestial Pity's plume,
 Thro' the vast spaces of the universe, 650
 To cheer me in this melancholy gloom?
 Oh! when will death (now stingless) like a friend
 Admit me of their choir? Oh! when will death
 This mould'ring, old, partition-wall throw down?
 Give beings, one in nature, one abode? 655
 Oh death divine! that gives us to the skies!
 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, 660
 This dark incarcerating colony
 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, thro' the guardian hand 665
 Of elder brothers, to our Father's throne,
 Who hears our Advocate, and thro' his wounds
 Beholding man, allows that tender name.
 'Tis this makes Christian triumph a command;
 'Tis this makes joy a duty to the wise. 670
 'Tis impious in a good man to be sad.
 Seest 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, 675
 And darkness into glory: partial touch!

Ineffably pre-eminent regard!
Sacred to man, and sov'reign thro' the whole
Long golden chain of miracles, which hangs
From heav'n thro' all duration, and supports, 680
In one illustrious and amazing plan,
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 heav'n, to heav'nly thrones trans-
forms 685

The ghastly ruins of the mould'ring tomb.
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 690
Of deities triumphant in his train,
Leave a stupendous solitude in heav'n;
Replenish'd soon, replenish'd with increase
Of pomp and multitude; a radiant band
Of angels new, of angels from the tomb. 695

Is this by fancy thrown remote? and rise
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, 700
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.
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 705
Thro' depths of ether; coasts unnumber'd worlds,

Of more than solar glory; doubles wide
 Heav'n's mighty cape; and then revisits earth,
 From the long travel of a thousand years.
 Thus at the destin'd period shall return 710
 He, once on earth, who bids the comet blaze,
 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, 715
 But turn, and dart into the dark again.
 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, 720
 That mountain-barrier between man and peace.
 'Tis faith disarms Destruction, and absolves,
 From ev'ry clam'rous charge the guiltless tomb.
 Why disbelieve? LORENZO!—"Reason bids,
 "All-sacred Reason."—Hold her sacred still; 725
 Nor shalt thou want a rival in thy flame:
 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 thou with life; live dearer of the two. 730
 Wear I the blessed cross, by Fortune stamp'd
 On passive Nature before Thought was born!
 My birth's blind bigot! fir'd with local zeal;
 No; Reason re-baptiz'd me when adult;
 Weigh'd true and false in her impartial scale; 735
 My heart became the convert of my head,
 And made that choice which once was but my fate.

“ On argument alone my faith is built :”
Reason pursu’d is faith ; and unpursu’d,
Where proof invites, ’tis reason then no more : 740
And such our proof, that, or our faith is right,
Or reason lies, and Heav’n 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 ; 745
The mother honour’d, as the daughter dear.
Reason the root, fair Faith is but the flow’r :
The fading flow’r shall die, but reason lives
Immortal, as her Father in the skies,
When faith is virtue, reason makes it so. 750

Wrong not the Christian : think not reason your’s ;
’Tis reason our great Master holds so dear ;
’Tis reason’s injur’d rights his wrath resents ;
’Tis reason’s voice obey’d, his glories’ crown :
To give lost reason life, he pour’d his own. 755
Believe, and shew the reason of a man ;
Believe, and taste the pleasure of a god ;
Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.
Thro’ reason’s wounds alone thy faith can die ;
Which dying, tenfold terror gives to death, 760
And dips in venom his twice-mortal sting.

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 765
Death’s terror heighten’d gnawing on his heart.
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? 770
 While love of truth thro' all their camp resounds,
 They draw Pride's curtain o'er the noontide ray,
 Spike up their inch of reason on the point
 Of philosophic wit, call'd Argument,
 And then exulting in their taper, cry 775
 " Behold the sun ;" and, Indian-like, adore.

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, 780
 (Nor will they 'bate of that sublime renown)
 As wise as Socrates might justly stand
 The definition of a modern fool.

A Christian is the highest style of man.
 And is there who the blessed cross wipes off, 785
 As a foul blot, from his dishonour'd brow?
 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 sold to sense! ye citizens of earth! 790
 (For such alone the Christian banner fly)
 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, 795
 " Meets the same welcome; yet he still calls on;
 " 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.” 800

But grant man happy ; grant him happy long ;
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 ? 806

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 ; 810

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

LORENZO, who ?—thy conscience shall reply.

O give it leave to speak ; 'twill speak ere long,
Thy leave unask'd : LORENZO, hear it now,
While useful its advice, its accent mild.

By the great edict, the divine decree, 820

Truth is deposited with man's last hour ;

An honest hour, and faithful to her trust ;

Truth ! eldest daughter of the Deity !

Truth of his council when he made the worlds ? 824

Nor less, when he shall judge the worlds he made ;

Tho' silent long, and sleeping ne'er so sound,

Smother'd with errors, and oppress'd with toys,

That heav'n-commission'd hour no sooner calls,

But from her cavern in the soul's abyss,

Like him they fable under Ætna whelm'd, 830

The goddess bursts in thunder and in flame,
Loudly convinces, and severely pains.
Dark dæmons I discharge, and hydra-stings;
The keen vibration of bright truth—is hell;
Just definition! tho' by schools untaught. 835
Ye deaf to truth, peruse this parson'd page,
And trust, for once, a prophet and a priest:
' Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.'

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT V.

THE RELAPSE.

INSCRIBED TO THE

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LITCHFIELD.

LORENZO, to recriminate is just.
Fondness of fame is avaricé of air.
I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.
Praise no man e'er deserv'd, who sought no more.
As just thy second charge. I grant the muse 5
Has often blush'd at her degen'rate 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' pow'rful charm 10

'Twas giv'n to make a civet of their song

Obscene, and sweeten odour 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 shar'd by brute creation Pride resents;

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 of man 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 ev'ry 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 flow'rs of eloquence profusely pour'd
O'er spotted Vice, fill half the letter'd world. 50
Can pow'rs of genius exercise 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, 64
Which well becomes her when she speaks to Prose,
Her younger sister, haply not more wise.

Think'st 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 flow'r, 70

No rainbow-colours here, or silken tale;
 But solemn counsels, images of awe,
 Truths, which Eternity lets fall on man,
 With double weight, thro' 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 dipp'd, embrowns the whole.

Yet this, ev'n this, my laughter-loving friends!
 LORENZO! and thy brothers of the smile! 81
 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 truth 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 bow'rs,
 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, tho' future, prior to themselves;

Whose breath can blow it into nought again ;
Or from his throne some delegated pow'r,
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
Through pleasing paths of moral and divine, 111
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 uncontroul'd, and unimpress'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 stretch'd 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 crowd, 140
 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 sin
 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 languish'd for the shade. 170

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, thro' ev'ry 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 heav'n
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 lab'ring 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, ev'ry passion hush'd,
 And open'd a calm intercourse with Heav'n,
 Here the soul sits in council, ponders past,
 Predestines future action ; sees, not feels,
 Tumultuous life, and reasons with the storm ; 200
 All her lies answers, and thinks down her charms.

What awful joy ! what mental liberty !
 I am not pent in darkness ; rather say
 (If not too bold) in darkness I'm imbower'd.
 Delightful gloom ! the clust'ring thoughts around
 Spontaneous rise, and blossom in the shade,
 But droop by day, and sicken in the sun.
 Thought borrows light elsewhere ; from that first
 fire,

Fountain of animation ! whence descends
 Urania, my celestial 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 wand'ring thought recal's, 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 thro' 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 prowess. 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 utmost strength, when down, to rise again,
And not to yield, tho' beaten, all our praise.

'Tis vain to seek in men for more than man.
Tho' 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 pris'ner, mounting high,
Threw wide the gates of everlasting day,
And call'd mankind to glory, shook off pain,
Mortality shook off, in ether 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 Heav'n leave
To make him but more wretched, not more wise.

If wisdom is our lesson (and what else 251
Ennobles man? what else have angels learn'd?)
Grief! more proficients 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 bookcase, 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 drest, 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 leveller,
 And scorns to share a blessing with the crowd,
 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,
 And hearts obdurate feel her soft'ning show'r: 276
 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 ev'ry thought of sov'reign pow'r
 To chace the moral maladies of man ;
 Thoughts which may bear transplanting to the skies,

Tho' natives of this coarse penurious soil; 286
 Nor wholly wither there where seraphs sing,
 Refin'd, exalted, not annull'd in heav'n :
 Reason, the sun, that gives them birth, the same
 In either clime, tho' more illustrious there. 290
 These choicely cull'd, and elegantly rang'd
 Shall form a garland for NARCISSA's tomb,
 And peradventure, of no fading flow'rs.

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 kinds of grief; the faults of age ;
 " And death's dread character—invite my song."

And first, th'importance of our ends 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 rob our sight,
 Prosperity puts out unnumber'd thoughts
 Of import high, and light divine to man.

The man how bless'd, who, sick of gaudy scenes,
 (Scenes apt to thrust between us and ourselves !)
 Is led by choice to take his fav'rite 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 fav'rite) 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 humble shrine,
 Truth, radiant goddess! sallies on my soul,
 And puts Delusion's dusky train to flight;
 Dispels the mist 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 lies. 335

Truth bids me look on men as autumn-leaves,
 And all they bleed for as the summer's dust
 Driv'n by the whirlwind: lighted by her beams,
 I widen my horizon, gain new pow'rs,
 See things invisible, feel things remote, 340

Am present with futurities; think nought
 To man so foreign as the joys possess'd;
 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 bliss ;
At the first blast it vanishes in air.
Not so celestial. Would'st thou know, LORENZO, 350
How differ worldly wisdom and divine ?
Just as the waning and the waxing moon :
More empty worldly wisdom ev'ry day ;
And ev'ry 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 Sibyl's leaves, 360
The good man's days to Sibyl's books compare,
(In ancient 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 prescribeth the best ? — A friend's ; and yet
From a friend's grave how soon we disengage !
E'en to the dearest, as his marble, cold.
Why are friends ravish'd 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,
 Tho' well to ponder it, is life's chief end.
 Is death, that ever-threat'ning, 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,
 Tho' num'rous messengers are sent before,
 To warn his great arrival. What the cause, 390
 The wond'rous cause, of this mysterious ill?
 All Heav'n 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, tho' 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 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 scenes 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 sullen 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 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 rationals 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,
 Unsold, 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 heav'n ;
 Sink into slaves, and sell for present hire
 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 loathe the basket full,
Are instantly, with wild demoniac rage, 475
For breaking all the chains of Providence,
And bursting their confinement, tho' 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
Heav'n's law supreme, and desperately rush
Thro' 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 stay the sinking head,
Number their moments, and in ev'ry 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.
 LORENZO, hast thou ever weigh'd a sigh ! 516
 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 riv'lets to their springs.
 Our fun'ral tears from diff'rent causes rise :
 As if from sep'rate 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 MOSES' smitten rock, gush out amain : 530
 Some weep to share the fame 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 :
They weep not to relieve their grief, but shew. 536
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 drew
Their sable network o'er entangled hearts !
As seen thro' chrysal, 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 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 at the summer-storm,
And full as short ! the cruel grief soon tam'd,
They make a pastime of the stingless 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 wat'ring 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,
 Tho' there thrown down her true support to learn,
 Without Heav'n's aid, impatient to be blest, 575
 She crawls to the next shrub or bramble vile,
 Tho' from the stately cedar's arms she fell;
 With stale foresworn 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 sables 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 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;
 (Heav'n knows I labour with severer still!)
 I'll dwell on each, and quite exhaust thy death.)

A soul without reflection, like a pile 596
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 Heav'n.

Time on this head was 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's their grave.

Tell me, some God! my guardian-angel, tell 616

What thus infatuates? what enchantment plants

The phantom of an age 'twixt us and death,

Already at the door? He knocks; we hear him,

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

Tho' 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.
 Tho' 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 ev'ry 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 ev'ry 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 e'en now
 To relish what alone subsists hereafter.
 Divine, or none, henceforth, your joys for ever.
 Of age the glory is, to wish to die:
 That wish is praise and promise; it applauds 650
 Past life, and promises our future bliss.
 What weakness see not children in their sires!
 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 carcasses 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 subdue;

Walk thoughtful on the silent solemn shore

Of that vast ocean it must sail 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 sleep 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,

And rears us into men: That thought ply'd home,

Will soon reduce the ghastly precipice

O'erhanging 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 dye for an eternity?
 Aid me, NARCISSA! aid me to keep pace
 With Destiny, and, ere her scissars cut
 My thread of life, to break their tougher thread
 Of moral death that ties me to the world. 700
 Sting thou my slumb'ring 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, tho' dormant yet;
 Perhaps behind one moment lurks my fate.
 Must I, then, forward only look for death?
 Backward I turn mine eye, and find him there. 710
 Man is a self-survivor ev'ry year:
 Man, like a stream, is in perpetual flow.
 Death's a destroyer of quotidian prey:
 My youth, my noontide 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 ev'ry place and hour ; 730

Nor longer want, ye monumental Sires,

A brother-tomb to tell you, you 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,
In wisdom shallow. Pompous ignorance ! 736

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 indispensable, 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 dyes 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 !
 Tho' great our sorrow, greater our surprise.

Like other tyrants, Death delights to smite, 765
 What, smitten, most proclaims the pride of pow'r
 And arbitrary nod. His joy supreme,
 To bid the wretch survive the fortunate ;
 The feeble wrap th' athletic in his shroud ; 769
 And weeping fathers build their children's tomb :
 Me thine, NARCISSA !—What tho' short thy date !
 Virtue, not rolling suns, 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 Methusalems may die ;
 O how misdated on their flatt'ring tombs !

NARCISSA's youth has lectur'd me thus far :
 And can her gaiety give counsel too ?
 That, like the Jew's 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, “ the 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 pow’r.
But wherefore aggrandiz’d ? by Heav’n’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 surprise,
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 unconfess'd 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 :

'Tho' master of a wider empire far 821

Than that o'er which the Roman Eagle flew ;

Like Nero, he's a fiddler, 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

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 was Innocence in death !

Most happy they ! whom least his arts deceive.

One eye on death, and one full fix'd on heav'n,

Becomes a mortal and immortal man.

Long on his wiles a piqu'd and jealous spy 840

I've seen, or dream'd 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 surprising 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 dismiss'd
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 straightened to a cane,
And hid his deadly shafts in MYRA's eye.
The dreadful masquerader, thus equipp'd, 860

Outsallies 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.
When against Reason Riot shuts the door, 866

And Gaiety supplies the place of Sense,
Then, foremost, at the banquet and the hall,
Death leads the dance, or stamps the deadly dye ;
Nor ever fails the midnight bowl to crown. 870

Gaily carousing to his gay compeers,
INLY 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 surprise
 From his black mask 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 fix'd,
 Fix'd as a sentinel, 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 surprise thee nodding. Watch, be strong;
 Thus give each day the merit and renown
 Of dying well, tho' 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 surprising, Death his visit paid:
 Her thought went forth to meet him on his way,
 Nor Gaiety forgot it was to die. 901

Tho' Fortune, too (our third and final theme)
 As an accomplice, play'd her gaudy plumes,
 And ev'ry glitt'ring 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 thro' 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 sheath his shafts in all the pride of life.
When flooded with abundance, purpled o'er 920
With recent honours, bloom'd with ev'ry bliss,
Set up in ostentation, made the gaze,
The gaudy centre of the public eye;
When Fortune, thus, has toss'd her child in air,
Snatch'd 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 giv'n,
The flow'ry 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,
 Rock'd 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 dress'd to win our smiles,

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 toil, a tempest, in her stead;

A tempest to warm transport near a-kin.

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 glitt'ring 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 their fair,

(Still more ador'd) to snatch the golden show'r. 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 op'ning in their idol's praise! 970
All, ardent, eye each wafture of her hand,
And, wide-expanding their voracious jaws,
Morsel on morsel swallow down unchew'd,
Untasted, thro' mad appetite for more; 974
Gorg'd to the throat, yet lean and rav'nous still:
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 just, o'er sacred, all-forbidden ground, 979
Drunk with the burning scent of place or pow'r,
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 mismeasur'd, and impetuous speed,
Some, darting, strike their ardent wish far off, 985
Thro' 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 dream'd 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.
 Tho' various for awhile 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 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, 1014
 Which nods aloft, and proudly spreads her shade,
 The sun's defiance, and the flock's defence,
 By the strong strokes of lab'ring hinds subdu'd,
 Loud groans her last, and, rushing from her height,
 In cumb'rous 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 heav'n's archer in the zodiac 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 thro' 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.”

LYSANDER, 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 bless'd ;
 All who knew envy'd ; yet in envy lov'd ;
 Can Fancy form more finish'd happiness ?
 Fix'd was the nuptial hour. Her stately dome
 Rose on the sounding beach. The glitt'ring spires
 Float in the wave, and break against the shore : 1041
 So break those glitt'ring 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 dy'd 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! 1064
Which broken, break them, and drain off the soul
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.

PREFACE

TO

THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

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, are (as will be shewn) mere empty sounds, 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 are 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 satis-

fied, 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 the 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 disputable. 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.

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT VI.

THE
INFIDEL RECLAIMED.
IN TWO PARTS.

CONTAINING
THE NATURE, PROOF, AND IMPORTANCE OF IMMORTALITY.

PART I.

WHERE, AMONGST OTHER THINGS, GLORY AND RICHES ARE PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

INSCRIBED TO

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY PELHAM.

SHE* (for I know not yet her name in heav'n)
Not early, like NARCISSA, left the scene,
Nor sudden, like PHILANDER. What avail?
This seeming mitigation but inflames:
This fancy'd med'cine heightens the disease. 5

* Referring to Night Fifth.

VOL. I.

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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 increasing weight,
 From hardest hearts confession of distress. 10
 O the long dark approach, thro' years of pain,
 Death's gall'ry! (might I dare to call it so?)
 With dismal doubt and sable terror hung,
 Sick Hope's pale lamp its only glimm'ring 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 pow'rful 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 thou, O Moon! bear witness: many a night
 He tore the pillow from beneath my head,
 Ty'd down my sore attention to the shock 30
 By ceaseless depredations on a life
 Dearer than that he left me. Dreadful post
 Of observation! darker ev'ry hour!
 Less dread the day that drove me to the brink.
 And pointed out eternity below, 35
 When my soul shudder'd at futurity;

Night VI. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 131

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 past, 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, tho' the mind,
An artist at creating self-alarms, 50
Rich in expedient 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 unsated 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 int'rests, converse, amities,
 With all the sons of reason, scatter'd wide
 Thro' 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 heav'n'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?

Night VI. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 133

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!
Bless'd absolution of our blackest hour! 209

LORENZO, these are thoughts that make man, man,
The wise illumine, aggrandize the great.
How great (while yet we tread the kindred clod,
And ev'ry 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
Thro' the long visto 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,
 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 heav'n.

What wretched repetition cloy 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 surprise !

What webs of wonder shall unravel there !

What full day pour on all the paths of heav'n,

Night VI. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 135

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 straighten 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 lab'ring eye,

Unbroken, then, illustrious and entire, 170

Its ample sphere, its universal frame,

In full dimensions, swells to the survey,

And enters, at one glance, the ravish'd 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 ether 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!

Exub'rant source! perhaps I wrong thee still. 190

If admiration is a source of joy,
 What transport hence! yet this the least in heav'n.
 What this to that illustrious robe he wears,
 Who toss'd this mass of wonders from his hand
 A specimen, an earnest of his pow'r! 195
 'Tis to that glory, whence all glory flows,
 As the mead's meanest flow'ret to the sun
 Which gave it birth. But what this sun of heav'n?
 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 thro' 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, 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 network 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, thro' ev'ry shame, for ev'ry gain,
 For vile contaminating trash; throw up
 Our hope in heav'n, our dignity with man,
 And deify the dirt matur'd to gold? 220
 Ambition, Av'rice, the two dæmons these

Which goad thro' ev'ry slough 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? 229
Glory and wealth! have they this blinding pow'r!
What if to them I prove LORENZO blind?
Would it surprise thee! Be thou then surpris'd;
Thou neither know'st: their nature learn from me.

Mark well, as foreign as these subjects seem,
What close connection ties them to my theme. 235
First, what is true ambition? The pursuit
Of glory, nothing less than man can share.
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; 244
And man should blush, his forehead meets the skies.
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
 DÆDALIAN Engin'ry! 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 tow'ring talents, and terrestrial aims;
 Methinks I see, as thrown from her high sphere,
 The glorious fragments of a soul immortal,
 With rubbish mix'd, and glitt'ring 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 pow'rs:
 Plain sense but rarely leads us far astray.
 Reason the means, affections choose 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.

Night VI. **THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.** 139

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 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 sires. 305

Shall man be proud to wear his livery,
And souls in ermine scorn a soul without ?
Can place or lessen us, or aggrandize ?
Pigmies are pigmies still, tho' perch'd on Alps ;
And pyramids are pyramids in vales. 310

Each man makes his own stature, builds himself :
Virtue alone out-builds 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 pow'r;
 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 treach'rous 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 tow'ring to the skies. 325
 'Tis born of ignorance, which knows not man:
 An angel's second; nor his second long.
 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;
 Tho' no exchequer it commands, 'tis wealth;
 And tho' it bears no ribband, 'tis renown;
 Renown, that would not quit thee, tho' 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;

Night VI. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 141

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 thee 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 celestial 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 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! pow'rful 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,

Night VI. **THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.** 143

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-born, sky-guided, sky-returning race!
Erect, immortal, rational, divine!

In senses, which inherit earth, and heav'ns; 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 wond'rous world they see.
Our senses, as our reason, are divine.

But for the magic organ's pow'rful 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 heav'n 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;
 Preserve its portrait, and report its fate!
 What wealth in intellect, that sov'reign-power!
 Which sense, and fancy, summons to the bar; 550
 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 laws; 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 bliss.

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

Night VI. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 145

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,
And wander wild thro' things impossible! 471

What wealth, in faculties of endless growth,
In quenchless passions violent to crave,
In liberty to choose, in pow'r to reach,
And in duration (how thy riches rise!) 475
Duration to perpetuate—boundless bliss!

Ask you, what pow'r resides in feeble man
That bliss to gain? Is virtue, then, unknown?
Virtue, our present peace, our future prize.
Man's unprecarious, 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 disploding engines thrown,
Our magazines of hoarded trifles fly;
Fly diverse; fly to foreigners, to foes; 490
New masters court, and call the former fools
(How justly!) for dependence 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 first taught it to shine.
 The poor are half as wretched as the rich, 501
 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 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 heav'n can give no more ! 510
 More, like a flash of water from a lock,
 Quickens our spirit's 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 ev'ry prize, 515
 As bees in flow'rs, and stings us with success.

The rich man, who denies it, proudly feigns ;
 Nor knows the wise are privy to the lie.
 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 monkies 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 as a shade,
 But gaze, and touch, and peep, and peep again,
 And wish, and wonder it is absent still.

Night VI. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 147

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 pow'r.
The man of reason smiles at her, and death.
O what a patrimony this ! A being 535
Of such inherent strength and majesty,
Not worlds possest 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 loit'ring thought beneath the stars.

Has not LORENZO's bosom caught the flame?
 Immortal! Were but one immortal, how 566
 Would others envy! How would thrones adore!
 Because 'tis common, is the blessing lost?
 How this ties up the bounteous hand of heav'n!
 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, abasements, 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 pow'rs;
 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 ev'ry 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 distant eye 595
Were seen at once, her tow'ring 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 604
Some souls have soar'd; or martyrs ne'er had bled.
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 609

What slave unblest, who from to-morrow's dawn
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 prerogative, 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
 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 thro' this bosom-barrier burst their way;
 And, with revers'd ambition, strive to sink?
 Who labour downwards thro' th'opposing pow'rs
 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 slight 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 wise)
 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?





*See the summer gay,
With her green chaplet; and ambrosial flow'rs
Droops into palid Autumn; &c.*

Night 6. Page. 132

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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 heav'n, 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 heav'nly Delphos haste; 675
And come back all-immortal; all-divine:
Look Nature thro', '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 flow'rs,
Droops into pallid Autumn: Winter grey,

Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,
 Blows Autumn, and his golden fruits away : 684
 Then melts into the Spring : Soft Spring, with breath
 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 heav'n. 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 pow'r 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.

Night VI. **THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.** 153
 Look Nature thro', '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 glimm'ring 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; connection 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 risk of heav'n? 740
 O what indignity to deathless souls!
 What treason to the majesty of man!
 Of man immortal! Hear the lofty style:
 " If so decreed, th' Almighty will be done. 744

“ Let earth dissolve, yon pond’rous orbs descend,
 “ And grind us into dust : The soul is safe ;
 “ The man emerges ; mounts above the wreck,
 “ As tow’ring flame from Nature’s fun’ral 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 sev’nfold 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 enchant, 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 seest thou ? Won-
 d’rous things !
 Terrestrial wonders, that eclipse the skies. 765
 What lengths of labour’d lands ! what loaded seas !
 Loaded by men, 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 level’d mountains ! And what lifted vales !
 O’er vales and mountains sumptuous cities swell,
 And gild our landscape with their glitt’ring spires.

Night VI. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 155

Some 'mid the wond'ring 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 Heav'n beneath its ample bend,
High thro' mid air, here, streams are taught to flow ;
Whole rivers, there, lay'd by in basons, 'sleep. 785
Here, plains turn oceans ; there, vast oceans join
'Thro' 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 !
Her secrets are extorted ! Art prevails ! 800
What monument of genius, spirit, pow'r !
And now, LORENZO, raptur'd at this scene,
Whose glories render Heav'n 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 pow'rful proof shall take the field against thee,
Stronger than Death, and smiling at the tomb.

PREFACE

TO

PART II.

OF

THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

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 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 doubt 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 cannot, 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 chimera, to save themselves from the shock and horror of an immediate and absolute despair.

On reviewing my subject, by the light which this argument, and others of like tendency, throw 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 ('tis 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 acknowledgment; angry, for a right and tender instance of true friendship towards him. Is not this surprising? 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 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 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.

THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT VII.

BEING THE
SECOND PART
OF THE
INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

CONTAINING.
THE NATURE, PROOF, AND IMPORTANCE OF IMMORTALITY.

HEAV'N 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 Mercuries, in ev'ry 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 ;
 Thro' 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.
 The world's a prophecy of worlds to come ; 16
 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
 Who reads his bosom, reads immortal life ;
 Or, Nature, there, imposing on her sons,
 Has written fables ; man was made a lie.

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

* Night the Sixth.

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 heav'n 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, tho', 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 heav'n,
Set up their hopes on earth, and stable here, 55
With brutal acquiescence in the mire?
LORENZO, no! they shall be nobly pain'd;
The glorious foreigners, distrest, 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 lie.

Our heads, our hearts, our passions, and our pow'rs,
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 heav'n ordain'd, 70

Objects that challenge all their fire, and leave
 No fault but in defect: blest heav'n! 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 pow'rs 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

Night VII. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 165

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 enigmas, human hope ; 105
Of all the darkest, if at death we die.

Hope, eager hope, th' assassin 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 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 possess, 125

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

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

In that rank sty 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 ev'ry 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 pursu'd :
 What true self-int'rest of quite moral 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 sov'reign 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 ev'ry virtuous joy.
 The rigid guardian of a blameless heart, 155
 So long rever'd, so long reputed wise,
 Is weak ; with rank knight-errantries 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 !) tho' 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 ; tho' nations which consult 175
Their gain, at thy expence, resound applause.

Since virtue's recompense 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 enjoin'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 lies 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 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 pow'rs ;
 Dream we, that lustre of the moral world 110
 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 begin 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! deified!
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 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 treach'ries, 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

Heav'n'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 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 heav'n,
 What the worst perpetrate, or best endure?
 This cannot be. To love, and know, in man 275
 Is boundless appetite, and boundless pow'r;
 And these demonstrate boundless objects too.
 Objects, pow'rs, appetites, heav'n suits in all;
 Nor, nature thro', 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 heav'n,

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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 heav'n ?

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 ;

Thro ev'ry scene of sense superior far :

They graze the turf untill'd ; they drink the stream

Unbrew'd, and ever full, and unembitter'd 295

With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs ;

Mankind's peculiar ! Reason's precious dow'r !

No foreign clime they ransack for their robes !

Nor brothers cite to the litigious bar ;

Their good is good intire, unmix'd, unmar'd ; 300

They find a paradise in ev'ry 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 : 304

When the worst comes, it comes unfear'd ; one stroke

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, sighs 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 dow'r, 320
 Far richer in reversion: hope exults:
 And tho' much bitter in our cup is thrown,
 Predominates, and gives the taste of heav'n.
 O wherefore is the DEITY so kind?
 Astonishing beyond astonishment! 325
 Heav'n our reward—for heav'n enjoy'd below.
 Still unsubdu'd thy stubborn heart?—For there
 The traitor lurks, who doubts the truths I sing.
 Reason is guiltless; will alone rebels.
 What, in the 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 heav'n?
 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,
 Tho' for best deeds, and from the best of men;
 And why? Because immortal. Art divine 345
 Has made the body tutor to the soul:

Heav'n 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 judgments 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
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 int'rest 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'erlook'd by some reputed wise.

Tho' disappointments in ambition pain,
And tho' success disgusts ; yet still, LORENZO !
In vain we strive to pluck it from our hearts ;
By nature planted for the noblest ends. 385

Absurd the fam'd advice to Pyrrhus giv'n,
More prais'd than ponder'd ; specious, but unsound :
Sooner that hero's sword the world had quell'd,
Than reason his ambition. Man must soar.

An obstinate activity within, 390
An insuppressive spring, will toss 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 Heav'n.

Nor absolutely vain is human praise,
When human is supported by divine.
I'll introduce LORENZO to himself : 404
Pleasure and Pride (bad masters) share our hearts.

As love of pleasure is ordain'd to guard
And feed our bodies, and extend our race ;

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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
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 pain, unpaid) must die?
Why freighted rich to dash against a rock?
Were men to perish when most fit to live,

O how mis-spent were all these stratagems,
 By skill divine inwoven in our frame ? 440
 Where are heav'n's holiness and mercy fled ?
 Laughs heav'n, at once, at virtue, and at man ?
 If not, why that discourag'd, this destroy'd ?
 Thus far ambition. What says Avarice ? 444
 This her chief maxim, which has long been thine :
 "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'erloading, 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 av'rice 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,

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 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 pois'nous lee, 475
 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, tho' prone to lie,
 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 heav'n-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 mist'ries 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 sateless thirst of pleasure, gold, and fame,
 “ Declares him born for blessings infinite:
 “ What less than infinite, makes un-absurd 514
 “ Passions, which all on earth but more inflames?
 “ Fierce passions, so mis-measur'd to this scene,
 “ Stretch'd out, like eagle's 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 gentler 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,
 Tho' 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; tho' wiser in their aim.
Like the proud eastern, struck by providence,
What tho' our passions are run mad, and stoop
With low, terrestrial appetite, to graze 535
On trash, on toys, dethron'd from high desire?
Yet still, thro' their disgrace, a 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 frenzy lasts; their frenzy fails 545
To disappoint one providential end,
For which heav'n 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 chrystalline transparency prevails, 555
And strikes full lustre thro' 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: ancient times were wise.
"Authority, that venerable guide, 561
"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,
Glitt'ring thro' their romantic wisdom's page,
Make us, at once, despise them and admire!

Fable is flat to these high-season'd sires; 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 lie in vain.

Whence, then, those thoughts? Those tow'ring

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, glimm'ring thro' the gloom :
Smit with the pomp of lofty sentiments,
Pleas'd pride proclaim'd, what reason disbeliev'd.
Pride, like the Delphic priestess, with a swell, 595
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. 600

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,
All unresolvable, if earth is all. 605

“ Why life a moment ? Infinite, desire ?
“ Our wish, eternity ? Our home, the grave ?
“ Heav'n's promise dormant lies in human hope ;
“ Who wishes life immortal, proves it too.
“ Why happiness pursu'd, tho' 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 rivetted 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 choose, 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-counsel 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 lie ?
 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 !
 Poor, mutilated wretch, that disbelieves ! 641
 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 from the future borrow'd peace, e'er-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 'twas 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 ev'ry

“ thought !

“ Why sense of better ? It embitters worse. 669

“ Why sense ? Why life ? If but to sigh, then sink

“ To what I was ? Twice nothing ! and much woe !

“ Woe, from heaven's bounties !—Woe from what

“ was wont .

“ To flatter most, high intellectual pow'rs !

“ 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 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 atchievements? 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?
 “ Thro’ nature’s ample range, in thought to stroll,
 “ And start at man, the single mourner there, 701
 “ Breathing high hope! chain’d down to pangs and
 “ death?
 “ Knowing is suff’ring: and shall virtue share
 “ The sigh of knowledge;—Virtue shares the sigh,

* Lorenzo.

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- “ By straining up the steep of excellent, 705
“ By battles fought, and, from temptation, won,
“ What gains she, but the pang of seeing worth,
“ Angelic worth, soon shuffled in the dark
“ With ev’ry vice, and swept to brutal dust ?
“ 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 fav’rites of the skies :
“ Ye tow’ring hopes ! abortive energies ! 721
“ That toss 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 god-like 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 choose.
 “ Instinct, than reason, makes more wholesome
 “ meals,
 “ And sends all-marring murmur far away.
 “ For sensual life they best philosphize ; 740
 “ Theirs, that serene, the sages sought in vain :
 “ ’Tis man alone expostulates with heav’n ;
 “ His, all the pow’r, and all the cause, to mourn.
 “ Shall human eyes alone dissolve in tears ?
 “ And bleed, in anguish, none but human hearts ?
 “ The wide-stretch’d realm of intellectual woe, 746
 “ Surpassing sensual far, is all our own.
 “ In life so fatally distinguish’d, why
 “ Cast in one lot, confounded, lump’t, 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 sorely sigh ?
 “ All-mortal and all-wretched !—’Tis too much ;
 “ Unparallel’d in nature : ’Tis too much 756
 “ On being unrequested at thy hands,
 “ Omnipotent ! for I see nought but pow’r.
 “ And why see that ? Why thought ? To toil and
 “ eat,
 “ Then make our bed in darkness, needs no thought.
 “ What superfluities are reas’ning souls ! 761
 “ 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
“ For me to trespass on the brutal rights ?
“ Too much for heav’n to make one emmet more ?
“ Too much for chaos to permit my mass 771
“ A longer stay with essences unwrought,
“ Unfashion’d, untormented into man ;
“ Wretched preferment to this round of pains !
“ Wretched capacity of frenzy, thought !
“ Wretched capacity of dying life ! 775
“ Life, thought, worth, wisdom, all (O foul revolt !)
“ Once friends to peace, gone over to the foe.
 “ Death then has chang’d its nature too : O death !
“ Come to my bosom, thou best gift of heav’n ! 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 bow’r,
“ To pay me with its honey for my stings ?
“ If needful to the selfish schemes of heav’n 785
“ To sting us sore, why mock’d our misery ?
“ Why this so sumptuous insult o’er our heads ?
“ Why this illustrious canopy display ?
“ 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 flow’rs,
“ 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 wonder ; and too happy to complain !
 “ Our doom decreed demands a mournful scene :
 “ Why not a dungeon dark, for the condemn’d, 801
 “ Why not the dragon’s subterraneous den,
 “ For man to howl in ? Why not his abode
 “ Of the same dismal colour with his fate ?
 “ A Thebes, a Babylon, at vast expence 805
 “ Of time, toil, treasure, art, for owls and adders,
 “ As congruous, as, for man, this lofty dome,
 “ Which prompts proud thought, and kindles high
 “ desire ;
 “ If, from her humble chamber in the dust,
 “ While proud thought swells, and high desire in-
 “ flames, 810
 “ The poor worm calls us for her inmates there ;
 “ And, round us, death’s inexorable hand
 “ Draws the dark curtain close ; undrawn no more.
 “ Undrawn no more !—Behind the cloud of death,
 “ Once, I beheld a sun ; a sun which gilt 815
 “ That sable cloud, and turn’d it all to gold :
 “ How the grave’s alter’d ! Fathomless, as hell ;
 “ A real hell to those who dreamt of heav’n.
 “ Annihilation ! how it yawns before me !
 “ Next moment I may drop from thought, from sense,
 “ The privilege of angels, and of worms, 821
 “ An outcast from existence ! And this spirit,
 “ This all-pervading, this all-conscious soul,

“ This particle of energy divine,
“ Which travels nature, flies from star to star, 825
“ And visits gods, and emulates their pow’rs,
“ For ever is extinguish’d. Horror! Death;
“ Death of that death I fearless once survey’d!—
“ When horror universal shall descend,
“ And heav’n’s dark concave urn all human race, 830
“ On that enormous, unrefunding tomb,
“ How just this verse! this monumental sigh!”

*Beneath the lumber of demolish’d worlds,
Deep in the rubbish of the gen’ral wreck,
Swept ignominious to the common mass 835
Of matter, never dignify’d with life,
Here lie proud rationals; the sons of heav’n!
The lords of earth! The property of worms!
Beings of yesterday, and no to-morrow!
Who liv’d in terror, and in pangs expir’d! 840
All gone to rot in chaos; or, to make
Their happy transit into blocks or brutes,
Nor longer sully their CREATOR’S name.*

LORENZO, hear, pause, ponder, and pronounce.
Just is this history! If such is man, 845
Mankind’s historian, tho’ divine, might weep:
And dares LORENZO smile?—I know thee proud;
For once let pride befriend thee; pride looks pale
At such a scene, and sighs for something more.
Amid thy boasts, presumptions, and displays, 850
And art thou then a shadow? Less than shade!
A nothing? Less than nothing! To have been,
And not to be, is lower than unborn.

Art thou ambitious? Why then make the worm
 Thine equal? Runs thy taste of pleasure high? 855
 Why patronize sure death of ev'ry joy!
 Charm riches? Why choose begg'ry in the grave,
 Of ev'ry hope a bankrupt! and for ever?
 Ambition, pleasure, avarice persuade thee
 To make that world of glory, rapture, wealth, 860
 They *lately prov'd thy 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 heav'n!
 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' œconomy of heav'n.

Heav'n is all love; all joy in giving joy:
 It never had created, but to bless:
 And shall it, then, strike off the list of life,
 A being blest, or worthy so to be? 880
 Heav'n starts at an annihilating God.
 Is that, all Nature starts at, thy desire!

* In the Sixth Night.

Night VII. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 191

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 deadly poison has thy nature drank?
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
Thro' time's rough billows into night's abyss.
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 furvey,
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 pow'r,

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 rip'ning 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 clust'ring round! 925
 A garland worthy the Divinity!
 A throne, by Heav'n's omnipotence in smiles,
 Built (like a Pharos tow'ring in the waves)
 Amidst immense effusions of his love!
 An ocean of communicated bliss! 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 sounding brass, collects us, round heav'n's throne
 Conglob'd, we bask in everlasting day, 941
 (Paternal splendor!) and adhere for ever.
 Had not the soul this outlet to the skies,
 In this vast vessel of the universe,

Night VII. THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED. 193

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;

Heav'n'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.

Glitt'ring 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, blasphemer! 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 heav’n.”

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

Heav’n’s highest blessing, vengeance; O be wise!

Nor make a curse of immortality. 991

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; and 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 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 ev'ry 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 nat'ral, civil, or religious, world;
The former two, but servants to the third:
To that their duty done, they both expire,
Their mass new-cast, forgot their deeds renown'd;
And angels ask, "Where once they shone so fair?"
To lift us from this abject to sublime; 1026
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 re-
peal'd;
On earth, kings, kingdoms, rose; kings, king-
doms, fell;
Fam'd sages lighted up the pagan world;

Prophets from Sion darted a keen glance 1035
 Thro' distant age; saints travail'd; martyrs bled;
 By wonders sacred nature stood controul'd;
 The living were translated; dead were rais'd;
 Angels, and more than angels, came from heav'n;
 And, oh! for this, descended lower still; 1040
 Gilt 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 hallow'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 intensely bent infernal pow'rs
 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-hov'ring 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 tempest nature's universal sphere, 1065

This strange regard of deities to dust.

Hence, heav'n looks down on earth with all her
eyes ;

Hence, the soul's mighty moment in her sight ; 1095

Hence, ev'ry soul has partisans above,

And ev'ry thought a critic in the skies :

Hence, clay, vile clay ! has angels for its guard,

And ev'ry 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 shaking 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

Clos'd o'er presumption's sacrilegious sons § : 1116

Has not each element, in turn subscrib'd

The soul's high price, and sworn it to the wise ?

Has not flame, ocean, æther, earthquake, strove

To strike this truth thro' adamantine man ? 1120

* Exod. xix. 16. 18.

† Exod. xiv. 27.

‡ Dan. iii. 19.

§ Numb. xvi. 32.

If not all adamant, LORENZO, hear;
All is delusion, Nature is wrapt up,
In tenfold night, from reason's keenest eye;
There's no consistence, meaning, plan, or end,
In all beneath the sun, in all above, 1125

(As far as man can penetrate) or heav'n
Is an immense, inestimable prize;

Or all is nothing, or that prize is all.—

And shall each toy be still a match for heav'n?

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 controul'd) declare for me:

The skies above proclaim "Immortal man!" 1136

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, and thy sense; or, to believe?

What then is unbelief? 'Tis an exploit;

A strenuous enterprize: to gain it, man 1145

Must burst thro' ev'ry 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, ev'ry weakness, ev'ry guilt;
 And strong temptation ripens it to birth, 1155
 If this life's gain invites him to the deed,
 Why not his country sold, 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 tombstone 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 heav'n.
 Would heav'n quite beggar virtue, if belov'd?
 "Has virtue charms?"—I grant her heav'nly fair,
 But if unportion'd, all will int'rest wed; 1170
 Tho' 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 pow'r.
 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, tho' mankind perish, if he smiles.



Who thinks ere long the man shall wholly die,
Is dead already, nought but brute survives.

And are there such?—Such candidates there are
For more than death; for utter loss of being, 1186
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
Erewhile 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 souls have quite worn out the make of heav'n,
 By vice new-cast, and creatures of your own. 1215
 But tho' you can deform, you can't destroy;
 To curse, not uncreate, is all your pow'r.

LORENZO, this black brotherhood renounce;
 Renounce St. Evermont * and read St. Paul.
 Ere wrapt by miracle, by reason wing'd, 1220
 His mounting mind made long abode in heav'n.
 This is free thinking, unconfin'd to parts,
 To send the soul on curious travel bent,
 Thro' all the provinces of human thought;
 To dart her flight thro' the whole sphere of man;
 Of this vast universe to make the tour; 1226
 In each recess of space, and time, at home;
 Familiar with their wonders; diving deep;
 And, like a prince of boundless int'rests there,
 Still most ambitious of the most remote; 1230
 To look on truth unbroken, and entire;
 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 réply.

This, this, is thinking free, a thought that grasps
 Beyond a grain, and looks beyond an hour.

* An infidel writer.

Turn up thine eye, survey this midnight scene ;
What are earth's kingdoms, to yon boundless orbs,
Of human souls, one day, the destin'd range ? 1246
And what yon boundless orbs to godlike man ?
Those num'rous worlds that throng the firmament,
And ask more space in heav'n, can roll at large
In man's capacious thought, and still leave room
For ampler orbs ; for new creations, there. 1251

Can such a soul contract itself, or 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 ! 1264
It bids me love the place where now they dwell,
And scorn this wretched spot, they leave so poor.
Eternity's vast ocean lies before thee ;
There, there, LORENZO ! thy CLARISSA sails.
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 ev'ry wind ;
Eye thy great pole-star ; make the land of life.
Two kinds of life has double-natur'd man,

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 heav'n,
 But nature's course ; as sure as plummets fall.
 Since God, or man, must alter, e'er we meet, 1284
 (Since light and darkness blend not in one sphere)
 '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, heav'n arms 1290
 With an illustrious, but tremendous pow'r
 To counteract its own most gracious ends ;
 And this, of strict necessity, not choice :
 That pow'r deny'd, men, angels, were no more,
 But passive engines, void of praise or blame. 1295
 A nature rational implies the pow'r
 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
 Heav'n wills our happiness, allows our doom ;
 Invites us ardently, but not compels ;
 Heav'n but persuades, almighty man decrees ;
 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 destroyed 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

Unwilling evidence, and therefore strong, 1321

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 the mask? 1330

Our infidels are Satan's hypocrites,

Pretend the worst, and, at the bottom, fail.

When visited by thought (thought will intrude)

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 purer manners, to sublimer 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 heav'n to woo, 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 not the conflagration shall destroy;
 In nature's ruins not one letter lost :
 'Tis printed in the mind of gods for ever. 1365

* See Milton's Paradise Lost.

In proud disdain of what e'en 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 frenzy to the brain! 1370
Pants 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's the 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
Of zeal for virtue, and of love to man? 1386
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 heav'n, and triumph in your praise.
But since so pestilential your disease,
Tho' sov'reign is the med'cine I prescribe,

* The Infidel reclaimed.

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
 The wish, and aim, and labour of the skies; 1401
 Increase, and enter on the joys of heav'n :
 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.
 If weak thy faith, why choose 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;
The future, faintly: can we, then, be men? 1431
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 pow'r,
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
Tho' bearing crowns, to spring at distant game,
And plunge in toils and dangers—for repose.
If hope precarious, and if 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 bliss!
 Bliss, past man's pow'r 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:
 Hope, of all passions, most befriends us here; 1461
 Passions of prouder name befriend us less.

Joy has her tears, and transport has her death;
 Hope, like a cordial, innocent tho' 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!
 'Tis man's full cup; his paradise below! 1471

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. 1474

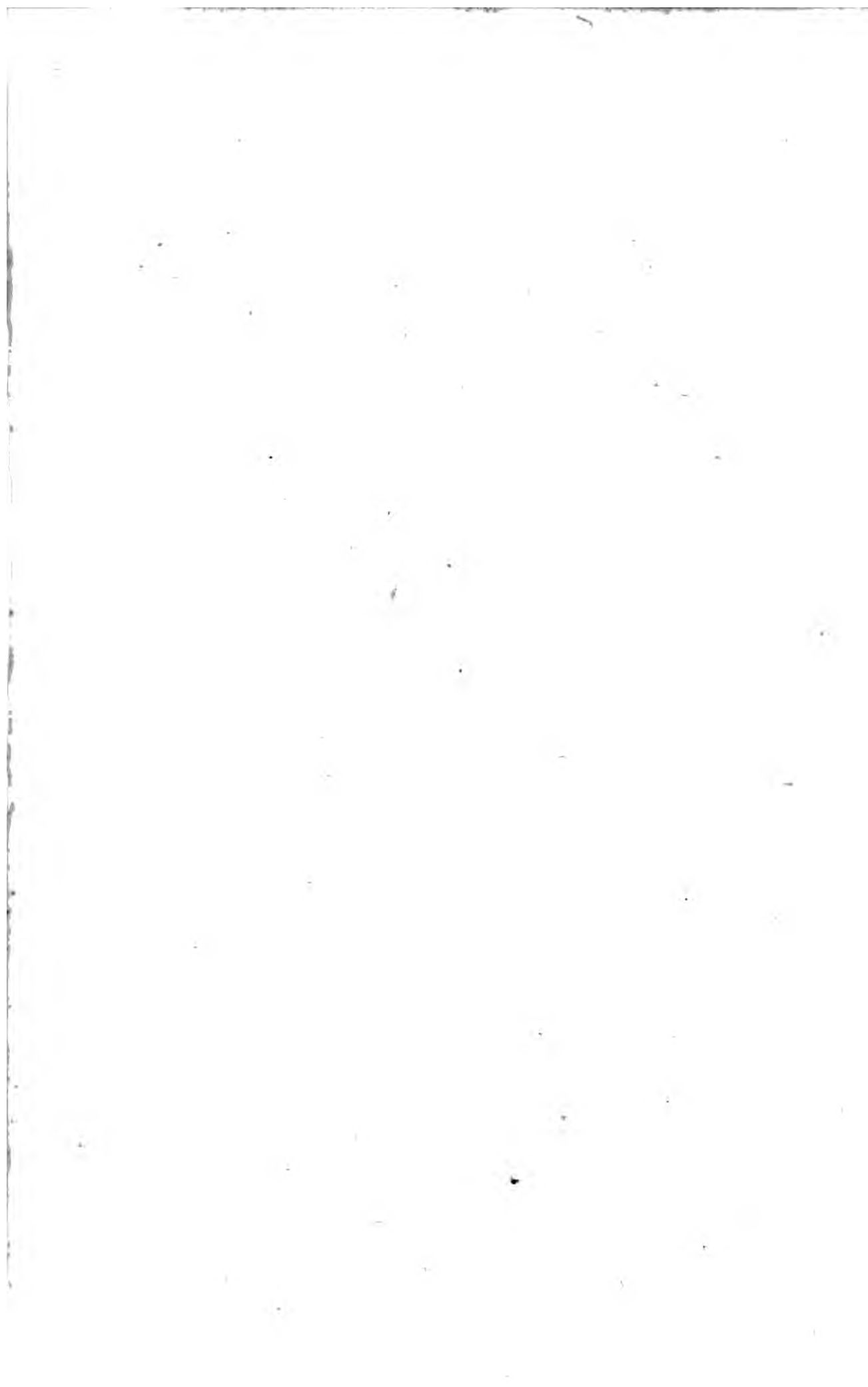
And know, ye foes to song! (well-meaning men,
 Tho' quite forgotten * half your Bible's praise!)
 Important truths, in spite of verse, may please:
 Grave minds you praise; nor can you praise too
 much,

If there is weight in an eternity,
 Let the grave listen;—and be graver still. 1480

* The poetical parts of it.

END OF VOL. I.

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THE
COMPLAINT.

NIGHT VIII.

VIRTUE'S APOLOGY ;

OR,

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 heav'n 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 the treasure ; thence, his title draws.
Man of the world ! (for such would'st thou be call'd)
And art thou proud of that inglorious style ?
Proud of reproach ? For a reproach it was, 10

In ancient days; and Christian,—in an age,
 When men were men, and not asham'd of heav'n,
 Fir'd their ambition, as it crown'd their joy.
 Sprinkled with dew's from the Castalian font,
 Fain would I re-baptize thee, and confer 15
 A purer spirit, and a nobler name.

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;
 Now 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 highest? O LORENZO!
 What lofty thoughts, these elements above, 40

Night VIII. VIRTUE'S APOLOGY. 3

What tow'ring hopes, what sallies 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!
On human hearts he bends a jealous eye,
And marks, and in heav'n'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, unrivall'd by the skies!
A world, where lust of pleasure, grandeur, gold,
Three dæmons that divide its realms between them,
With strokes alternate buffet to and fro 56
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 woos, 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 chimeras,
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 chase, of shadows hunting shades!
 The gay, the busy, equal, tho' unlike;
 Equal in wisdom, differently wise! 75

Thro' flow'ry meadows, and thro' 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 bus'ness 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 strings 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 pow'r;
 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 in-
 gulph'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 learnt the truths it would inspire. 100
 Shall truth be silent because folly frowns?

Night VIII. VIRTUE'S APOLOGY. 5

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 brings sad tidings! How it hourly blows
Man's misadventures round the list'ning 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, snap's 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'er-wise,
Who dares to trust them; and laugh round the year,
At still-confiding, still-confounded man; 125
Confiding, tho' confounded; hoping on,
Untaught by trial, unconvinc'd by proof,
And ever looking for the never seen:
Life to the last, like harden'd felon, lies;
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! 135

O Thou, whose hand this goodly fabric fram'd,
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, tho' 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 flow'ry 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 sail,
Of ensigns various; all alike in this, 155
All restless, anxious; toss'd with hopes and fears,
In calmest skies; obnoxious all to storm!
And stormy the most gen'ral 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 lifted 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 gusts of passion driv'n,
And suff'ring 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,
(Tho' lately feasted high at Albion's* cost)
Wide-op'ning, 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 event? 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,

* Admiral Balchen, &c.

And tugg'd it into view, 'tis won! 'tis lost!
 Tho' strong their oar, still stronger is their fate:
 They strike; and while they triumph, they expire.
 In stress of weather, most; some sink outright; 195
 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
 In ruin end: And, now, their proud success 211
 But plants new terrors on the victor's brow:
 What pain to quit the world, just made their own,
 Their nest so deeply down'd, and built so high!
 Too low they build, who build beneath the stars.
 Woe then apart (if woe apart can be 216
 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 treach'rous blessings, at the day of need,
Like other faithless friends, unmask, and sting :
Then, what provoking indigence in wealth ! 225
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 billow's 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."
Look on life's stages : They speak plainer still : 236
The plainer they, the 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, tho' the man's is made of stone :
The truth, thro' 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 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 pow'rs ;
 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 :
 Tho' 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 ancient 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 the 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 subdu'd :

Men, that would blush at being thought sincere, 285
And feign, for glory, the few faults they want :
That love a lie, 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, thro' 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 un-
feign'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 sigh ; till time and pains,
From the slow mistress of this school, experience,
And her assistant, pausing, pale distrust, 311
Purchase a dear bought clue, to lead his youth
Thro' serpentine obliquities of life,
And the dark labyrinth of human hearts.

And happy! if the clue shall come so cheap; 315
 For, while we learn to fence with public guilt,
 Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
 If less than heav'nly 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 heav'nly talents make infernal hearts!
 That unsurmountable 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 wise,
 His plan had practis'd, long before 'twas writ.
 The world's all title-page, there's no contents;
 The world's all face; the man who shews his heart,
 Is hooted 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 thro' ev'ry vein.
 LORENZO, what I tell thee, take not ill!
 Living, he fawn'd on ev'ry fool alive; 340
 And, dying, curs'd the friend on whom he liv'd.
 To such proficients thou art half a saint.
 In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far)
 How curious to contemplate two state-rooks,
 Studious their nests to feather in a trice, 345

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?
For who can thank the man he cannot see! 356

Why so much cover? It defeats itself.

Ye that know all things! know ye not men's hearts
Are therefore known, because they are conceal'd?
For why conceal'd?—The cause they need not tell.
I give him joy that's awkward at a lie; 361
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?
How'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 P—— 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:

Our virtue quench, or indignation fire.

You say, the world, well-known, will make a man :

The world, well-known, will give our hearts to heav'n,

Or make us dæmons, long before we die. 380

To shew how fair the world (thy mistress) shines,

Take either part, sure ills attend the choice :

Sure, tho' 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's 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 we 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 saint : 405

" 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's the saint 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 thro' 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 lodged: '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 flutt'ring, 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 caparisons, 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, thro' 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 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 short)
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
Nought greater, than an honest, humble heart; 476
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 sits
Th' illustrious master of a name unknown;
Whose worth unrivall'd, and unwitness'd, loves
Life's sacred shades, where gods converse with men;
And peace beyond the world's conception, smiles
As thou! (now dark) before we part, shalt see. 486

But thy great soul this skulking glory scorns.
LORENZO's sick, but when LORENZO's seen;
And when he shrugs at public bus'ness, lies;
Deny'd the public eye, the public voice, 490
And 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 sordid, 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
 With laurels, in full senate, greatly falls, 506
 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, tho' fancy'd, turns the brain;
 All vice wants hellebore; but of all vice,
 Pride loudest calls, and for the largest bowl; 515
 Because, all other vice unlike 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.

Tho' somewhat disconcerted, steady still
 To the world's cause, with half a face of joy,
 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:

Night VIII. VIRTUE'S APOLOGY. 19

“ Who can resist her charms ? ” — Or should ? Lo-
RENZO, 531

What mortals shall resist, where angels yield ?
Pleasure's the mistress of ethereal pow'rs ;
For her contend the rival gods above ;
Pleasure's the mistress of the world below ; 535
And well it is 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, thro' ev'ry vein, 540
Throws motion, warmth ; and shuts out death from
life.

Tho' various are the tempers of mankind,
Pleasure's gay family holds all in chains :
Some most affect the black ; and some the fair ;
Some honest pleasures court ; and some obscene ;
Pleasures obscene are various, as the throng 546
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 licences 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. 555
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,
 To which no single sacrifice may fall; 561
 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 pow'r.

And as her empire wide, her praise is just.
 Patron of pleasure! doater on delight! 570
 I am thy rival; pleasure I profess;
 Pleasure's 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 flow'r: 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?
 Own honey sweet, but, owning, add this sting; 585
 "When mixt with poison, it is deadly too."
 Truth never was indebted to a lie.
 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 heav'n;
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 youngest sister, tho' more grave,
Was meant to minister, and not to mar,
Imperial pleasure, queen of human hearts.
 LORENZO, thou, her majesty's renown'd, 600
Tho' uncoift, counsel, learned in the world!
Who think'st thyself a MURRAY, with disdain
May'st look on me. Yet, my DEMOSTHENES! *
Canst thou plead pleasure's cause as well as I?
Know'st 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'st
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, with the snout of grov'ling 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:

* A famous Grecian Orator.

And leave us perfect blockheads in our bliss.
 The clouds may drop down titles and estates ; 620
 Wealth may seek us ; but wisdom must be sought ;
 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, listed, 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 heav'n.
 In aid to reason was the goddess sent ;
 To call up all its strength by such a charm.
 Pleasure, first succours virtue ; in return, 645
 Virtue gives pleasure an eternal reign.
 What, but the pleasure of food, friendship, faith,
 Supports life nat'ral, 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 pray'r 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
 Thro' Eden, as Euphrates ran, it runs,
 And fosters ev'ry 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
 While pleasure's nature is at large display'd; 561
 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;
 Heav'n'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.
 Heav'n, others, and ourselves! Uninjur'd these,
 Drink deep; the deeper, then, the more divine;
 Angels are angels from indulgence there; 676
 '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 heav'n's appointments
fail? 680

Can man outwit Omnipotence? strike out
A self-wrought happiness unmeant by him
Who made us, and the world we should enjoy?
Who forms an instrument, ordains from whence
Its dissonance, or harmony, shall rise. 685

Heav'n bid the soul this mortal frame inspire;
Bid 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 ev'ry 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 pow'r,
Some we can't love, but for th' Almighty's sake;

A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man:
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 heav'n, 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
Pray'r ardent opens heav'n, 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 heav'n, and sets his foot on hell. 725

LORENZO, when wast thou at church before?
Thou think'st the service long: but is it just?
Tho' 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 thou dejected? Is thy mind o'ercast? 735
Amid her fair ones, thou the fairest choose,
To chase thy gloom—"Go fix some weighty truth,
"Chain down some passion; do some gen'rous 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,
 Tho' 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, tho' 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 ?
 What for dejection, where presides a pow'r, 761
 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 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—

Night VIII. VIRTUE'S APOLOGY. 27

“ Retire, and read thy Bible, to be gay.” 771

There truths abound of sov'reign 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,
Tho' 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 ;
And travel only gives us sound repose. 786

Heav'n 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 ;
From thought's full bent, and energy, the true ; 796
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 threat'ning 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 nectarious 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 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 ardour for the right ; ” 830
 ’Tis these, first give, then guard, a cheerful 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 ancient 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 pursu'd,
Man's nature is unnaturally pleas'd : 846
And what's unnatural, is painful too,
At intervals, and must disgust e'en thee !
The fact thou know'st ; but, not, perhaps, the cause
Virtue's foundations with the world's were laid ; 850
Heav'n mix'd her with our make, and twisted close
Her sacred int'rests 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 her's, by retrospect, thro' time to range ;

And forward time's great sequel to survey.
 Could human courts take vengeance on the mind,
 Axes might rust, and racks, and gibbets, fall; 866
 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 ev'ry 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 ev'ry vice, 875
 While ev'ry virtue wounds it to the heart;
 Humility degrades it, justice robs,
 Blest bounty beggars it, fair truth betrays,
 And godlike 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;
 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,
 From whom she springs, and all she can enjoy. 891
 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 sore,

When being, curst ; extinction, loud implor'd ; 895
And ev'ry 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 a-field :
The future pleases : Why ? The present pains.—
“But that's a secret” —Yes, which all men men know :
And know from thee, discover'd unawares.

The ceaseless agitation, restless rolls 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 ;
 Slipp'ry 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, entitled to repose
 On him who governs fate : Tho' tempest frowns,
 Tho' nature shakes, how soft to lean on heav'n ! 941
 To lean on him, on whom archangels lean !
 With inward eyes, and silent as the grave,
 They stand collecting ev'ry beam of thought,
 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, heav'n † :
 Hence, are they studious of sequest' red scenes !
 While noise, and dissipation, comfort thee.
 Were all men happy, revellings would cease, 950
 That opiate for inquietude within.
 LORENZO ! never man was truly blest,
 But it compos'd, and gave him such a cast,

* Narcissus.

† Genesis xxviii. 12.

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 rapt'rous exultation, swelling high ; 960
Which, like land-floods, impetuous pour awhile,
Then sink at once, and leave us in the mire.
What does the man, who transient joys prefers ?
What, but prefer the bubbles to the stream ?
 Vain are all sudden sallies of delight ; 965
Convulsions of a weak distemper'd joy.
Joy's a fix'd 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, unexamin'd, 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,
 Mid sands and rocks, and storms, to cruise for pleasure ; 986

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 counterwork,
 And form celestial armour for thy peace.

In this is seen imagination's guilt;
 But who can count her follies? She betrays thee,
 To think in grandeur there is something great. 1006
 For works of curious art, and ancient fame,
 Thy genius hungers, elegantly pain'd;
 And foreign climes must cater for thy taste.
 Hence, what disaster!—Tho' the price was paid,
 That persecuting priest, the Turk of Rome, 1011
 Whose foot (ye gods!) tho' cloven, must be kiss'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 soil 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,
Demurs on what it passes) and defies 1031
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, tho' my lecture long;

* The Pope.

Be good——and let heav'n 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
 Heav'n 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 :
 “ But can harangues blow back strong nature's
 stream ? 1061
 “ Or stem the tide heav'n pushes thro' our veins,
 “ Which sweeps away man's impotent resolves,
 “ And lays his labour level with the world ?”

Themselves men make their comment on man-
 kind ; 1065

And think nought is, but what they find at home :
 Thus weakness to chimera 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,

* In a former Night.

Now see the man immortal : him I mean,
Who lives as such ; whose heart, full bent on heav'n
Leans all that way, his bias to the stars.
The world's dark shades, in contrast set, shall raise
His lustre more ; tho' bright without a foil : 1076
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 at sea, 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 scepter'd, and the slave,
A mingled mob ! a wand'ring herd ! he sees, 1090
Bewilder'd in the vale ; in all unlike !
His full reverse in all ! What higher praise ?
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 chase of false felicities ;
His, the compos'd possession of the true. 1100
Alike throughout is his consistent piece,
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.
 Too dear he holds his int'rest, to neglect
 Another's welfare, or his right invade;
 Their int'rest, like a lion, lives on prey, 1125
 They kindle at the shadow of a wrong;
 Wrong he sustains with temper, looks on heav'n,
 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.

But nothing charms LORENZO, like the firm,
 Undaunted breast—And whose is that high praise ?
 They yield to pleasure, tho' 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 unsubstu'd, 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 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 flow'r.

He follows nature (not like * thee !) and shews us
 An uninverted system of a man. 1161
 His appetite wears reason's golden chain,

* I have conquer'd.

† See page 29, line 340.

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, unanxious 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 heav'n.
 Those secondary goods that smile on earth, 1171
 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 mod'rate movements of his soul admit
 Distinct ideas, and matur'd debate,
 An eye impartial, and an even scale ; 1180
 Whence judgment sound, and unrepenting choice.
 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 ; 1186
 So far from aught romantic what I sing.
 Bliss has no being, virtue has no strength,
 But from the prospect of immortal life.
 Who thinks earth all, or (what weighs just the same)
 Who cares no further, must prize what it yields: 1191
 Fond of its fancies ; proud of its parades.
 Who thinks earth nothing, can't its charms admire ;

He can't a foe, tho' 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 their 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 heav'n !
Stand by thy scorn, and be reduc'd to nought :
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 thy renown, 'twere well, was this the worst;
 Chance often hits it, and, to pique thee more,
 See, dulness blund'ring on vivacities,
 Shakes her sage head at the calamity, 1245
 Which has exposed, 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, sought 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 di'mond, weighty, solid, sound ;

When cut by wit, it casts a brighter beam ;

Yet wit apart, it is a di'mond 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 sorrow tickling, ere it stings.

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, thro' the well-ton'd tubes, well strain'd ;

A nice machine ! scarce ever tun'd aright; 1286
 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 ! Ev'ry 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
 Grinn'd from the port, on ev'ry sail his own. 1311

They grin ; but wherefore ? And how long the
 laugh ?
 Half ignorance, their mirth ; and half a lie ;
 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 sit 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 heav'n denies
A cover to such guilt ; and so should man.
Look round, LORENZO ! See the reeking blade,
Th' invenom'd phial, and the fatal ball ; 1331
The strangling cord, and suffocating stream ;
The loathsome rottenness, and foul decays
From raging riot, (slower 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!
 Crown'd higher, and still higher, at each stage,
 Thro' 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!

Affect 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.
 Nor need you blush (tho' sometimes your designs
 May shun the light) at your designs on heav'n:
 Sole point! where overbashful is your blame.

Are you not wise? You know you are. Yet hear
 One truth, amid your num'rous schemes, mislaid,
 Or over-look'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;
 And puts the cause off to the longest day, 1376

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.
 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.

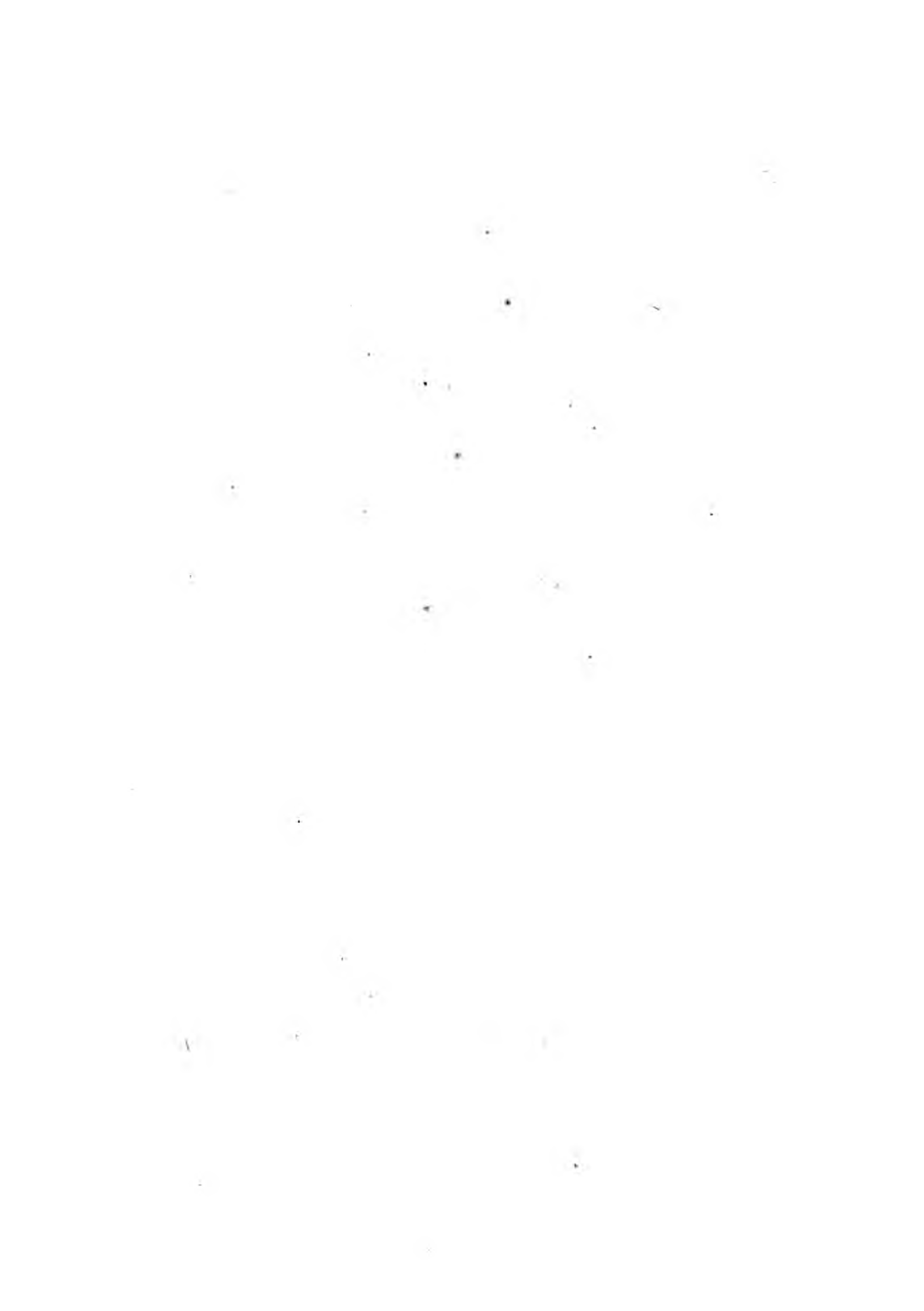
Ye sons of earth ! (nor willing to be more !)
 Since verse you think from priestcraft somewhat free,
 Thus, in an age so gay, the muse plain truths
 (Truths, which at church you might have heard in
 prose)

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
 By Lucifer, as traitor to his throne ; 1401
 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,
In arts and sciences, in wars, and peace ; 1411
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. 1417



*Then farewell Night! Of darkness, now, no more:
Joy breaks; shines; triumphs; 'tis eternal day.*
Night, 9. Ver. 2376



THE
CONSOLATION.

NIGHT IX.

Containing, among other things,

1. A MORAL SURVEY OF THE NOCTURNAL HEAVENS.
2. A NIGHT-ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

INSCRIBED TO HIS GRACE
THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,
ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF STATE.

—FATIS CONTRARIA FATA REPENDENS.
VIRG.

AS when a traveller, a long day past
In painful search of what he cannot find,
At night's approach, content with the next cot,
There ruminates, awhile, his labour lost;
Then cheers his heart with what his fate affords, 5
And chants his sonnet to deceive the time,
Till the due season calls him to repose:
Thus I, long travell'd in the ways of men,
And dancing, with the rest, the giddy maze,

Where disappointment smiles at hope's career ; 10
 Warn'd by the languor of life's ev'ning ray,
 At length have hous'd me in an humble shed :
 Where, future wand'ring banish'd from my thought,
 And, waiting, patient, the sweet hour of rest ;
 I chase the moments with a serious song. 15
 Song soothes our pains ; and age has pains to sooth.

When age, care, crime, and friends, embrac'd at
 heart,

Torn from my bleeding breast, and death's dark
 shade,

Which hovers o'er me, quench th' ethereal fire ;
 Canst thou, O night ! indulge one labour more ! 20
 One labour more indulge ! then sleep, my strain !
 Till, haply, wak'd by RAPHAEL's golden lyre,
 Where night, death, age, care, crime, and sorrow,
 cease

To bear a part in everlasting lays ;
 Tho' far, far higher set, in aim, I trust, 25
 Symphonious to this humble prelude here.

Has not the muse asserted pleasures pure,
 Like those above, exploding other joys ?
 Weigh what was urg'd, LORENZO ! Fairly weigh,
 And tell me, hast thou cause to triumph still ? 30
 I think thou wilt forbear a boast so bold.

But if, beneath the favour of mistake,
 Thy smile's sincere, not more sincere can be
 LORENZO's smile than my compassion for him.
 The sick in body call for aid : the sick 35
 In mind are covetous of more disease ;
 And when at worst, they dream themselves quite well.

Night IX. VIRTUE'S APOLOGY. 51

To know ourselves diseas'd, is half our cure,
When nature's blush by custom is wip'd off,
And conscience, deaden'd by repeated strokes, 40
Has into manners naturaliz'd our crimes,
The curse of curses is, our curse to love ;
To triumph in the blackness of our guilt
(As Indians glory in the deepest jet) ;
And throw aside our senses with our peace. 45
But, grant no guilt, no shame, no least alloy ;
Grant joy and glory, quite unsully'd shone ;
Yet, still it ill deserves LORENZO'S heart.
No joy, no glory, glitters in thy sight,
But, thro' the thin partition of an hour, 50
I see its sables wove by destiny ;
And that in sorrow bury'd ; this in shame ;
While howling furies ring the doleful knell ;
And conscience, now so soft thou scarce canst hear
Her whisper, echoes her eternal peal. 55
Where, the prime actors of the last year's scene ;
Their port so proud, their buskin, and their plume ?
How many sleep, who kept the world awake
With lustre, and with noise ! Has death proclaim'd
A truce, and hung his fated lance on high ! 60
'Tis brandish'd still, nor shall the present year
Be more tenacious of her human leaf,
Or spread of feeble life a thinner fall.
But needles monuments to wake the thought ;
Life's gayest scenes speak man's mortality, 65
Tho' in a style more florid, full as plain
As maufoleums, pyramids, and tombs.
What are our noblest ornaments but deaths

Turn'd flatterers of life, in paint or marble,
 The well stain'd canvas, or the featur'd stone ? 70
 Our fathers grace, or rather haunt, the scene.
 Joy peoples her pavilion from the dead.

“ Profest diversions ! cannot these escape ? ” —
 Far from it : These present us with a shroud,
 And talk of death, like garlands o'er a grave. 75
 As some bold plunderers, for bury'd wealth,
 We ransack tombs for pastime ; from the dust
 Call up the sleeping hero ; bid him tread
 The scene for our amusement : How like gods
 We sit, and, wrapt in immortality, 80
 Shed gen'rous tears on wretches born to die ;
 Their fate deploring, to forget our own.

What, all the pomps and triumphs of our lives,
 But legacies in blossom ! Our lean soil,
 Luxuriant grow, and rank in vanities, 85
 From friends interr'd beneath ; a rich manure !
 Like other worms, we banquet on the dead ;
 Like other worms, shall we crawl on, nor know
 Our present frailties, nor approaching fate ?

LORENZO ! such the glories of the world ! 90
 What is the world itself ? Thy world ? — A grave,
 Where is the dust that has not been alive ?
 The spade, the plough, disturb our ancestors ;
 From human mould we reap our daily bread.
 The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes, 95
 And is the ceiling of her sleeping sons.
 O'er devastation we blind revels keep ;
 Whole bury'd towns support the dancer's heel.
 The moist of human frame the sun exhales ;

Winds scatter, thro' the mighty void, the dry ; 100
Earth repossesses part of what she gave,
And the freed spirit mounts on wings of fire ;
Each element partakes our scatter'd spoils ;
As nature, wide, our ruins spread : man's death
Inhabits all things, but the thought of man. 105
Nor man alone ; his breathing bust expires,
His tomb is mortal ; empires die : Where, now,
The Roman ? Greek ? They stalk an empty name !
Yet few regard them in this useful light ;
Tho' half our learning is their epitaph. 110
When down thy vale, unlockt by midnight thought,
That loves to wander in thy sunless realms,
O death ! I stretch my views ; what visions rise !
What triumphs ! Toils imperial ! Arts divine
In wither'd laurels glide before my sight ! 115
What lengths of far-fam'd ages, billow'd high
With human agitation, roll along
In unsubstantial images of air !
The melancholy ghosts of dead renown,
Whisp'ring faint echoes of the world's applause : 120
With penitential aspect, as they pass,
All point at earth, and hiss at human pride,
The wisdom of the wise, and prancings of the great.
But, O LORENZO, far the rest above,
Of ghastly nature, and enormous size, 125
One form assaults my sight, and chills my blood,
And shakes my frame. Of one departed world
I see the mighty shadow : oozy wreath
And dismal sea-weed crown her !* o'er her urn

* The Deluge, referred to Genesis vii. 22.

Reclin'd, she weeps her desolated realms, 130
 And bloated sons ; and, weeping, prophecies
 Another's dissolution, soon, in flames.
 But, like CASSANDRA, prophecies in vain ;
 In vain, to many : not, I trust, to thee.

For, know'st thou not, or art thou loth to know, 135
 The great decree, the counsel of the skies ?
 Deluge and conflagration, dreadful pow'rs !
 Prime ministers of vengeance ! Chain'd in caves
 Distinct, apart the giant furies roar ;
 Apart ; or, such their horrid rage for ruin, 140
 In mutual conflict would they rise, and wage
 Eternal war, till one was quite devour'd.
 But not for this, ordain'd their boundless rage :
 When heav'n's inferior instruments of wrath,
 War, famine, pestilence, are found too weak 145
 To scourge a world for her enormous crimes,
 These are let loose, alternate : down they rush,
 Swift and tempestuous, from th' eternal throne,
 With irresistible commission arm'd,
 The world, in vain corrected, to destroy, 150
 And ease creation of the shocking scene.

Seest thou, LORENZO, what depends on man ?
 The fate of nature ; as for man, her birth.
 Earth's actors change earth's transitory scenes,
 And make creation groan with human guilt. 155
 How must it groan, in a new deluge whelm'd,
 But not of waters ! At the destin'd hour,
 By the loud trumpet summon'd to the charge,
 See, all the formidable sons of fire,
 Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play 160

Their various engines ; all at once disgorge
Their blazing magazines ; and take, by storm,
This poor terrestrial citadel of man.

Amazing period ! when each mountain-height
Out-burns Vesuvius ; rocks eternal pour 165
Their melted mass, as rivers once they pour'd ;
Stars rush ; and final ruin fiercely drives
Her plough-share o'er creation !—While aloft,
More than astonishment ! if more can be !
Far other firmament than e'er was seen, 170
Than e'er was thought by man ! Far other stars !
Stars animate, that govern these of fire ;
Far other sun !—A sun, O how unlike
The babe at Bethle'm ! How unlike the man
That groan'd on Calvary ! Yet he it is ; 175
That man of sorrows ! O how chang'd ! What pomp !
In grandeur terrible, all heav'n descends !
And gods, ambitious, triumph in his train.
A swift archangel with his golden wing,
As blots and clouds, that darken and disgrace 180
The scene divine, sweeps stars and suns aside.
And now, all dross remov'd, heav'n's own pure day,
Full on the confines of our æther, flames,
While (dreadful contrast !) far, how far beneath !
Hell bursting, belches forth her blazing seas, 185
And storms sulphureous ; her voracious jaws
Expanding wide, and roaring for her prey.

LORENZO, welcome to this scene ; the last
In nature's course ; the first in wisdom's thought.
This strikes, if aught can strike thee ; this awakes 190
The most supine ; this snatches man from death.

Rouse, rouse, **LORENZO**, then, and follow me,
 Where truth, the most momentous man can hear,
 Loud calls my soul, and ardour wings her flight.
 I find my inspiration in my theme ; 195
 The grandeur of my subject is my muse.

At midnight (when mankind is wrapt in peace,
 And worldly fancy feeds on golden dreams ;)
 To give more dread to man's most dreadful hour,
 At midnight, 'tis presum'd, this pomp will burst 200
 From tenfold darkness ; sudden as the spark
 From smitten steel ; from nitrous grain, the blaze.
 Man, starting from his couch, shall sleep no more !
 The day is broke, which never more shall close ;
 Above, around, beneath, amazement all ! 205
 Terror and glory join'd in their extremes !
 Our **GOD** in grandeur, and our world on fire !
 All nature struggling in the pangs of death !
 Dost thou not hear her ? Dost thou not deplore
 Her strong convulsions, and her final groan ? 210
 Where are we now ? Ah, me ! The ground is gone
 On which we stood, **LORENZO** ! While thou may'st,
 Provide more firm support, or sink for ever ! [late !
 Where ? How ? From whence ? Vain hope ! It is too
 Where, where, for shelter, shall the guilty fly, 215
 When consternation turns the good man pale ?

Great day ! for which all other days were made ;
 For which earth rose from chaos, man from earth ;
 And an eternity, the date of gods,
 Descended on poor earth-created man ; 220
 Great day of dread, decision, and despair !
 At thought of thee each sublunary wish

Lets go its eager grasp, and drops the world ;
 And catches at each reed of hope in heav'n.
 At thought of thee—And art thou absent then ? 225
 LORENZO, no ; 'tis here ;—it is begun ;—
 Already is begun the grand assize,
 In thee, in all : deputed conscience scales
 The dread tribunal, and forestals our doom ;
 Forestals ; and, by forestalling, proves it sure. 230
 Why on himself should man void judgment pass ?
 Is idle nature laughing at her sons ?
 Who conscience sent, her sentence will support,
 And God above assert that God in man.

Thrice happy they ! that enter now the court 235
 Heav'n opens in their bosom : but, how rare !
 Ah, me ! that magnanimity how rare !
 What hero, like the man who stands himself ;
 Who dares to meet his naked heart alone ;
 Who hears, intrepid, the full charge it brings, 240
 Resolv'd to silence future murmurs there !
 The coward flies ; and, flying, is undone.
 (Art thou a coward ? No) : the coward flies ;
 Thinks, but thinks slightly ; asks, but fears to know ;
 Asks, " What is truth ? " with PILATE ;* and retires ;
 Dissolves the court, and mingles with the throng ; 246
 Asylum sad ! from reason, hope, and heav'n !

Shall all, but man, look out with ardent eye,
 For that great day, which was ordain'd for man ?
 O day of consummation ! Mark supreme 250
 (If men are wise) of human thought ! nor least,
 Or in the sight of angels, or their King !
 Angels, whose radiant circles, height o'er height,

* John xviii. 38.

Order o'er order, rising, blaze o'er blaze,
 As in a theatre, surround this scene, 255
 Intent on man, and anxious for his fate.
 Angels look out for thee ; for thee, their Lord,
 To vindicate his glory ; and for thee,
 Creation universal calls aloud,
 To dis-involve the moral world, and give 260
 To nature's renovation brighter charms.

Shall man alone, whose fate, whose final fate,
 Hangs on that hour, exclude it from his thought ?
 I think of nothing else ; I see ! I feel it !
 All nature, like an earthquake, trembling round !
 All deities, like summer's swarms, on wing ! 266
 All basking in the full meridian blaze !
 I see the Judge enthron'd ! The flaming guard !
 The volume open'd ! Open'd ev'ry heart !
 A sun-beam pointing out each secret thought ! 270
 No patron ! Intercessor none ! Now past
 The sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour !
 For guilt no plea ! To pain, no pause ! no bound !
 Inexorable, all ! and all, extreme !
 Nor man alone ; the foe of God and man, 275
 From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain,
 And rears his brazen front, with thunder scar'd ;
 Receives his sentence, and begins his hell.
 All vengeance past, now, seems abundant grace :
 Like meteors in a stormy sky, how roll 280
 His baleful eyes ! He curses whom he dreads ;
 And deems it the first moment of his fall.
 'Tis present to my thought !—And yet where is it ?
 Angels can't tell me ; angels cannot guess
 The period ; from created beings lock'd 285

In darkness. But the process, and the place,
Are less obscure; for these may man inquire.
Say, thou great close of human hopes and fears!
Great key of hearts! Great finisher of fates;
Great end! and great beginning! Say, where art
thou? 290

Art thou in time, or in eternity?
Nor in eternity, nor time, I find thee.
These, as two monarchs, on their borders meet,
(Monarchs of all elaps'd, or unarriv'd!)
As in debate, how best their pow'rs ally'd 295
May swell the grandeur, or discharge the wrath
Of HIM whom both their monarchies obey.

Time, this vast fabric for him built (and doom'd
With him to fall) now bursting o'er his head;
His lamp, the sun, extinguish'd; from beneath 300
The frown of hideous darkness, calls his sons
From their long slumber; from earth's heaving
womb,

To second birth; contemporary throng!
Rous'd at one call, upstarting from one bed,
Prest in one crowd, appall'd with one amaze, 305
He turns them o'er, eternity! to thee.

Then (as a king depos'd disdains to live)
He falls on his own scythe; nor falls alone;
His greatest foe falls with him; Time and he
Who murder'd all time's offspring, death, expire.

Time was! Eternity now reigns alone! 311
Awful eternity! offended queen!
And her resentment to mankind, how just!
With kind intent; soliciting access,

How often has she knock'd at human hearts! 315
 Rich to repay their hospitality,
 How often call'd! and with the voice of God;
 Yet bore repulse, excluded as a cheat!
 A dream! while foulest foes found welcome there!
 A dream, a cheat, now, all things, but her smile.
 For, lo! her twice ten thousand gates thrown
 wide, 321
 As thrice from Indus to the frozen pole,
 With banners, streaming as the comet's blaze,
 And clarions, louder than the deep in storms,
 Sonorous as immortal breath can blow, 325
 Pour forth their myriads, potentates, and pow'rs,
 Of light, of darkness; in a middle field,
 Wide, as creation! populous, as wide!
 A neutral region! there to mark th' event
 Of that great drama, whose preceding scenes 330
 Detain'd them close spectators, thro' a length
 Of ages, rip'ning to this grand result:
 Ages, as yet unnumber'd, but by God;
 Who now, pronouncing sentence, vindicates
 The rights of virtue, and his own renown. 335
 Eternity, the various sentence past,
 Assigns the sever'd throng distinct abodes,
 Sulphureous, or ambrosial: What ensues?
 The deed predominant! the deed of deeds!
 Which makes a hell of hell, a heav'n of heav'n. 340
 The goddess, with determin'd aspect, turns
 Her adamant key's enormous size
 Thro' destiny's inextricable wards,
 Deep-driving ev'ry bolt, on both their fates.

Then, from the crystal battlements of heav'n, 345
Down, down she hurls it thro' the dark profound,
Ten thousand thousand fathom; there to rust,
And ne'er unlock her resolution more.

The deep resounds, and hell, thro' all her glooms,
Returns, in groans, the melancholy roar. 350

O how unlike the chorus of the skies!
O how unlike those shouts of joy, that shake
The whole ethereal! how the concave rings!
Nor strange! when deities their voice exalt;
And louder far than when creation rose, 355
To see creation's godlike aim, and end,
So well accomplish'd! so divinely clos'd!
To see the mighty dramatist's last act
(As meet) in glory rising o'er the rest.

No fancy'd god, a God indeed, descends, 360
To solve all knots; to strike the moral home;
To throw full day on darkest scenes of time;
To clear, commend, exalt, and crown the whole.
Hence, in one peal of loud, eternal praise,
The charm'd spectators thunder their applause; 365
And the vast void beyond, applause resounds.

What then am I?————

Amidst applauding worlds,
And worlds celestial, is there found on earth,
A peevish, dissonant, rebellious string, 370
Which jars in the grand chorus, and complains?
Censure on thee, LORENZO! I suspend,
And turn it on myself; how greatly due!
All, all is right, by God ordain'd or done;
And who, but God, resum'd the friends he gave? 375

And have I been complaining, then, so long ?
 Complaining of his favours, pain, and death ?
 Who, without pain's advice, would e'er be good ?
 Who, without death, but would be good in vain ?
 Pain is to save from pain ; all punishment, 380
 To make for peace ; and death, to save from death ;
 And second death to guard immortal life ;
 To rouse the careless, the presumptuous awe,
 And turn the tide of souls another way ;
 By the same tenderness divine ordain'd, 385
 That planted Eden, and high-bloom'd for man,
 A fairer Eden, endless, in the skies.

Heav'n gives us friends to bless the present scene ;
 Resumes them, to prepare us for the next.
 All evils natural are moral goods ; 390
 All discipline, indulgence, on the whole.
 None are unhappy ; all have cause to smile,
 But such as to themselves that cause deny.
 Our faults are at the bottom of our pains ;
 Error, in act, or judgment, is the source 395
 Of endless sighs : We sin, or we mistake,
 And nature tax, when false opinion stings.
 Let impious grief be banish'd, joy indulg'd,
 But chiefly then, when grief puts in her claim.
 Joy from the joyous, frequently betrays, 400
 Oft lives in vanity, and dies in woe.
 Joy, amidst ills, corroborates, exalts ;
 'Tis joy, and conquest ; joy, and virtue too.
 A noble fortitude in ills delights
 Heav'n, earth, ourselves ; 'tis duty, glory, peace.
 Affliction is the good man's shining scene ; 406

Prosperity conceals his brightest rays ;
As night to stars, woe lustre gives to man.
Heroes in battle, pilots in the storm,
And virtue in calamities, admire. 410

The crown of manhood is a winter-joy ;
An ever-green, that stands the northern blast,
And blossoms in the rigour of our fate.

'Tis a prime part of happiness, to know
How much unhappiness must prove our lot ; 415
A part which few possess ! I'll pay life's tax,
Without one rebel murmur, from this hour,
Nor think it misery to be a man ;
Who thinks it is shall never be a god.

Some ills we wish for, when we wish to live. 420

What spoke proud passion !—“ * Wish my being
lost !”

Presumptuous ! blasphemous ! absurd ! and false !
The triumph of my soul is,—That I am ;
And therefore that I may be—What ? **LORENZO !**
Look inward, and look deep ; and deeper still : 425
Unfathomably deep our treasure runs
In golden veins, thro' all eternity !
Ages, and ages, and succeeding still
New ages, where this phantom of an hour,
Which courts, each night, dull slumber, for repair,
Shall wake, and wonder, and exult, and praise, 431
And fly thro' infinite, and all unlock :
And (if deserv'd) by heav'n's redundant love,
Made half-adorable itself, adore ;
And find, in adoration, endless joy ! 435

* Referring to the First Night.

Where thou, not master of a moment here,
 Frail as the flow'r, and fleeting as the gale,
 May'st boast a whole eternity, enrich'd
 With all a kind Omnipotence can pour.
 Since Adam fell, no mortal, uninspir'd 440
 Has ever yet conceiv'd, or ever shall,
 How kind is God, how great (if good) is man.
 No man too largely from heav'n's love can hope,
 If what is hop'd he labours to secure.

Ills!—there are none! all gracious! none from
 thee; 445

From man full many! num'rous is the race
 Of blackest ill, and those immortal too,
 Begot by madness on fair liberty;
 Heav'n's daughter, hell debauch'd! her hand alone
 Unlocks destruction to the sons of men, 450
 Fast barr'd by thine; high-wall'd with adamant,
 Guarded with terrors reaching to this world,
 And cover'd with the thunders of thy law;
 Whose threats are mercies, whose injunctions, guides,
 Assisting, not restraining, reason's choice; 455
 Whose sanctions, unavoidable results
 From nature's course, indulgently reveal'd;
 If unreveal'd, more dang'rous, nor less sure.
 Thus, an indulgent father warns his sons,
 "Do this; fly that"—nor always tells the cause;
 Pleas'd to reward, as duty to his will, 461
 A conduct needful to their own repose.

Great God of wonders! (if, thy love survey'd,
 Aught else the name of wonderful retains)
 What rocks are these, on which to build our trust!

Night IX. THE CONSOLATION. 65

Thy ways admit no blemish; none I find; 466

Or this alone—"That none is to be found."

Not one, to soften censure's hardy crime;

Not one, to palliate peevish grief's complaint,

Who, like a dæmon murmuring, from the dust, 470

Dares into judgment call her judge.—Supreme!

For all I bless thee; most, for the severe;

* Her death—my own at hand—the fiery gulph,

That flaming bound of wrath omnipotent!

It thunders;—but it thunders to preserve; 475

It strengthens what it strikes; its wholesome dread

Averts the dreaded pain; its hideous groans

Join heav'n's sweet hallelujahs in thy praise,

Great source of good alone! How kind in all!

In vengeance kind! pain, death, GEHENNA, save.

Thus, in thy world material, mighty mind! 481

Not that alone which solaces, and shines,

The rough and gloomy, challenges our praise.

The winter is as needful as the spring;

The thunder as the sun: a stagnate mass 485

Of vapours breeds a pestilential air:

Nor more propitious the Favonian breeze

To nature's health, than purifying storms;

The dread volcano ministers to good.

Its smother'd flames might undermine the world.

Loud Ætnas fulminate in love to man; 491

Comets good omens are, when duly scann'd;

And, in their use, eclipses learn to shine.

Man is responsible for ills receiv'd!

Those we call wretched are a chosen band, 495

* Lucia.

Compell'd to refuge in the right, for peace.
 Amid my list of blessings infinite,
 Stand this the foremost, "That my heart has bled."
 'Tis heav'n's last effort of good will to man ;
 When pain can't bless, heav'n quits us in despair.
 Who fails to grieve, when just occasion calls, 501
 Or gieves too much, deserves not to be blest :
 Inhuman, or effeminate, his heart ;
 Reason absolves the grief, which reason ends.
 May heav'n ne'er trust my friend with happiness, 505
 Till it has taught him how to bear it well,
 By previous pain ; and made it safe to smile !
 Such smiles are mine, and such may they remain ;
 Nor hazard their extinction, from excess.
 My change of heart a change of style demands, 510
 The Consolation cancels the Complaint,
 And makes a convert of my guilty song.
 As when o'er-laboured, and inclin'd to breathe,
 A panting traveller, some rising ground,
 Some small ascent, has gain'd, he turns him round
 And measures with his eye the various vale, 516
 The fields, woods, meads, and rivers, he has past ;
 And, satiate of his journey, thinks of home,
 Endear'd by distance, nor affects more toils.
 Thus I, tho' small, indeed, is that ascent 520
 The muse has gain'd, review the paths she trod ;
 Various, extensive, beaten but by few,
 And, conscious of her prudence in repose,
 Pause ; and with pleasure meditate an end,
 Tho' still remote ; so fruitful is my theme. 525
 Thro' many a field of moral and divine

The muse has stray'd; and much of sorrow seen
 In human ways, and much of false and vain,
 Which none, who travel this bad road, can miss.
 O'er friends deceas'd full heartily she wept; 530
 Of love divine the wonders she display'd,
 Prov'd man immortal; shew'd the source of joy;
 The grand tribunal rais'd; assign'd the bounds
 Of human grief: in few, to close the whole,
 The moral muse has shadow'd out a sketch, 535
 Tho' not in form, nor with a RAPHAEL-stroke,
 Of most our weakness needs believe or do,
 In this our land of travel, and of hope,
 For peace on earth, or prospect of the skies.

What then remains?—Much! much! a mighty debt
 To be discharg'd; these thoughts, O night! are thine;
 From thee they came, like lovers' secret sighs, 542
 While others slept. So, CYNTHIA (poets feign)
 In shadows veil'd soft sliding from her sphere,
 Her shepherd cheer'd; of her enamour'd less, 545
 Than I of thee.—And art thou still unsung,
 Beneath whose brow, and by whose aid, I sing?
 Immortal silence!—Where shall I begin?
 Where end? Or how steal music from the spheres,
 To sooth their goddess? 550

O majestic night!

Nature's great ancestor! Day's elder-born!
 And fated to survive the transient sun!
 By mortals, and immortals, seen with awe!
 A starry crown thy raven brow adorns, 555
 An azure zone, thy waist; clouds, in heav'n's loom
 Wrought thro' varieties of shape and shade,

In ample folds of drapery divine,
 Thy flowing mantle form ; and heav'n throughout,
 Voluminously pour thy pompous train. 560

Thy gloomy grandeurs (nature's most august
 Inspiring aspect !) claim a grateful verse ;
 And, like a sable curtain starr'd with gold,
 Drawn o'er my labours past, shall close the scene.

And what, O man ! so worthy to be sung ? 565
 What more prepares us for the songs of heav'n ?
 Creation of archangels is the theme !

What, to be sung, so needful ? What so well
 Celestial joys prepares us to sustain ?
 The soul of man, His face design'd to see, 570

Who gave these wonders to be seen by man,
 Has here a previous scene of objects great
 On which to dwell ; to stretch to that expanse
 Of thought, to rise to that exalted height
 Of admiration, to contract that awe, 575

And give her whole capacities that strength,
 Which best may qualify for final joy.
 The more our spirits are enlarg'd on earth,
 The deeper draught shall they receive of heav'n.

Heav'n's King ! whose face unveil'd consummates
 Redundant bliss ! which fills that mighty void, [bliss ;
 The whole creation leaves in human hearts !

Thou who didst touch the lips of JESSE'S son,*
 Rapt in sweet contemplation of these fires,
 And set his harp in concert with the spheres ! 585

While of thy works material the supreme
 I dare attempt, assist my daring song,
 Loose me from earth's inclosure, from the sun's

* David, 1 Samuel xvi. 18, 24.

Night IX.

THE CONSOLATION.

69

Contracted circle set my heart at large ;
Eliminate my spirit, give it range 590
Thro' provinces of thought yet unexplor'd ;
Teach me, by this stupendous scaffolding,
Creation's golden steps, to climb to Thee.
Teach me with art great nature to controul,
And spread a lustre o'er the shades of night. 595
Feel I thy kind assent ? And shall the sun
Be seen at midnight, rising in my song ? [heart,
LORENZO ! come, and warm thee : thou, whose
Whose little heart, is moor'd within a nook
Of this obscure terrestrial, anchor weigh. 600
Another ocean calls, a nobler port ;
I am thy pilot, I thy prosperous gale.
Gainful thy voyage thro' yon azure main ;
Main, without tempest, pirate, rock, or shore ;
And whence thou may'st import eternal wealth, 605
And leave to beggar'd minds the pearl and gold.
Thy travels dost thou boast o'er foreign realms ?
Thou stranger to the world ! thy tour begin ;
Thy tour thro' nature's universal orb.
Nature delineates her whole chart at large, 610
On soaring souls, that sail among the spheres ;
And man how purblind, if unknown the whole !
Who circles spacious earth, then travels here,
Shall own, he never was from home before !
Come, my * PROMETHEUS, from thy pointed rock
Of false ambition, if unchain'd, we'll mount, 616
We'll innocently steal celestial fire,
And kindle our devotion at the stars ;

* Night the Eighth.

A theft that shall not chain, but set thee free.

Above our atmosphere's intestine wars, 620
 Rain's fountain-head, the magazine of hail ;
 Above the northern nests of feather'd snows,
 The brew of thunders, and the flaming forge
 That forms the crooked lightning ; 'bove the caves
 Where infant tempests wait their growing wings, 625
 And tune their tender voices to that roar,
 Which soon, perhaps, shall shake a guilty world ;
 Above misconstru'd omens of the sky,
 Far travell'd comet's calculated blaze,
 Elance thy thought and think on more than man.
 Thy soul, till now, contracted, wither'd, shrunk,
 Blighted by blasts of earth's unwholesome air,
 Will blossom here : spread all her faculties
 To these bright ardours ; ev'ry pow'r unfold,
 And rise into sublimities of thought. 635

Stars teach, as well as shine. At nature's birth,
 Thus, their commission ran—" Be kind to man."
 Where art thou, poor benighted traveller !
 The stars will light thee, tho' the moon should fall.
 Where art thou, more benighted ! more astray ! 640
 In ways immoral ? The stars call thee back ;
 And, if obey'd their counsel, set thee right.

This prospect vast, what is it ?—Weigh'd aright,
 'Tis nature's system of divinity,
 And ev'ry student of the night inspires. 645
 'Tis elder scripture, writ by God's own hand ;
 Scripture authentic ! uncorrupt by man.
 LORENZO, with my radius (the rich gift
 Of thought nocturnal !) I'll point out to thee

Its various lessons; some that may surprise 650
 An un-adept in mysteries of night;
 Little, perhaps, expected in her school,
 Nor thought to grow on planet, or on star.
 Bulls, lions, scorpions, monsters here we feign;
 Ourselves more monstrous, not to see what here 655
 Exists indeed;—a lecture to mankind.

What read we here?—Th' existence of a God?
 —Yes; and of other beings, man above;
 Natives of æther! Sons of higher climes!
 And, what may move LORENZO'S wonder more,
 Eternity is written in the skies, 661
 And whose eternity?—LORENZO! thine;
 Mankind's eternity. Nor faith alone,
 Virtue grows here; here springs the sov'reign cure
 Of almost ev'ry vice; but chiefly thine; 665
 Wrath, pride, ambition, and impure desire.

LORENZO, thou canst wake at midnight too,
 'Tho' not on morals bent: ambition, pleasure!
 Those tyrants I for thee so * lately fought,
 Afford their harass'd slaves but slender rest. 670
 Thou, to whom midnight is immoral noon,
 And the sun's noon-tide blaze, prime dawn of day;
 Not by thy climate, but capricious crime,
 Commencing one of our antipodes!
 In thy nocturnal rove, one moment halt, 675
 'Twixt stage and stage, of riot, and cabal;
 And lift thine eye (if bold an eye to lift,
 If bold to meet the face of injur'd heav'n)
 To yonder stars: for other ends they shine.

* Night the Eighth.

Than to light revellers from shame to shame, 680
 And thus, be made accomplices in guilt.

Why from yon arch, that infinite of space,
 With infinite of lucid orbs replete,
 Which set the living firmament on fire,
 At the first glance, in such an overwhelm 685
 Of wonderful, on man's astonish'd sight,
 Rushes Omnipotence?—To curb our pride ;
 Our reason rouse, and lead it to that pow'r,
 Whose love lets down these silver chains of light,
 To draw up man's ambition to himself, 690
 And bind our chaste affections to his throne.

Thus the three virtues, least alive on earth,
 And welcom'd on heav'n's coast with most applause,
 An humble, pure, and heav'nly-minded heart,
 Are here inspir'd :—And canst thou gaze too long ?

Nor stands thy wrath depriv'd of its reproof,
 Or un-upbraided by this radiant choir.

The planets of each system represent
 Kind neighbours ; mutual amity prevails ;
 Sweet interchange of rays, receiv'd, return'd ; 700
 Enlight'ning, and enlighten'd ! All, at once,
 Attracting, and attracted ! Patriot-like,
 None sins against the welfare of the whole ;
 But their reciprocal, unselfish aid
 Affords an emblem of millennial love. 705

Nothing in nature, much less conscious being,
 Was e'er created solely for itself,
 Thus man his sov'reign duty learns in this
 Material picture of benevolence.

And know, of all our supercilious race, 710

Thou most inflammable ; thou wasp of men !
Man's angry heart, inspected, would be found
As rightly set, as are the starry spheres ;
'Tis nature's structure, broke by stubborn will,
Breeds all that uncelestial discord there. 715
Wilt thou not feel the bias nature gave ?
Canst thou descend from converse with the skies,
And seize thy brother's throat?—For what?—a clod?
An inch of earth? The planets cry, “ forbear.”
They chase our double darkness ; nature's gloom, 720
And (kinder still!) our intellectual night.

And see, day's amiable sister sends
Her invitation in the softest rays
Of mitigated lustre ; courts thy sight,
Which suffers from her tyrant-brother's blaze. 725
Night grants thee the full freedom of the skies,
Nor rudely reprimands thy lifted eye ;
With gain, and joy, she bribes thee to be wise.
Night opens the noblest scenes, and sheds an awe,
Which gives those venerable scenes full weight, 730
And deep reception, in th' intender'd heart ;
While light peeps thro' the darkness, like a spy,
And darkness shews its grandeur by the light.
Nor is the profit greater than the joy,
If human hearts at glorious objects glow, 735
And admiration can inspire delight.

What speak I more, than I, this moment, feel !
With pleasing stupor first the soul it struck
(Stupor ordain'd to make her truly wise !)
Then into transport starting from her trance, 740
With love, and admiration, how she glows !

This gorgeous apparatus ; This display !
 This ostentation of creative pow'r !
 This theatre !—what eye can take it in ?
 By what divine enchantment was it rais'd, 745
 For minds of the first magnitude to launch
 In endless speculation, and adore ?
 One sun by day, by night ten thousand shine,
 And light us deep into the Deity ;
 How boundless in magnificence and might ! 750
 O what a confluence of ethereal fires,
 From urns un-number'd, down the steep of heav'n,
 Streams to a point, and centers in thy sight !
 Nor tarries there ; I feel it at my heart ;
 My heart, at once, it humbles and exalts ; 755
 Lays it in dust, and calls it to the skies.
 Who sees it unexalted, or unaw'd ?
 Who sees it, and can stop at what is seen ?
 Material offspring of Omnipotence !
 Inanimate, all-animating birth ! 760
 Work worthy Him who made it ! worthy praise !
 All praise ! praise more than human ! nor deny'd
 Thy praise divine ! But tho' man, drown'd in sleep,
 With-holds his homage, not alone I wake ;
 Bright legions swarm unseen, and sing, unheard 765
 By mortal ear, the glorious Architect,
 In this his universal temple hung
 With lustres, with innumerable lights,
 That shed religion on the soul ; at once,
 The temple, and the preacher ; O how loud 770
 It calls devotion ! genuine growth of night !
 Devotion ! daughter of astronomy !

An undevout astronomer is mad.

True ; 'all things speak a God : but in the small,
Men trace out him ; in great, he seizes man ; 775
Seizes and elevates, and wraps, and fills
With new enquiries, 'mid associates new.

Tell me, ye stars ! ye planets ! tell me, all
Ye starr'd, and planeted inhabitants ! What is it ?
What are these sons of wonder ! Say, proud arch ! 780
(Within whose azure palaces they dwell)
Built with divine ambition ! in disdain
Of limit built ! built in the taste of heav'n !
Vast concave ! ample dome ! Wast thou design'd
A meet apartment for the Deity ?— 785
Not so ; That thought alone thy state impairs,
Thy lofty sinks, and shallows thy profound,
And streightens thy diffusive ! dwarfs the whole,
And maks an universe an orrery.

But when I drop mine eye, and look on man,
Thy right regain'd, thy grandeur is restor'd, 791
O nature ! wide flies off th' expanding round.
As when whole magazines, at once, are fir'd,
The smitten air is hollow'd by the blow ;
The vast displosion dissipates the clouds ; 795
Shock'd æther's billows dash the distant skies ;
Thus (but far more) th' expanding round flies off,
And leaves a mighty void, a spacious womb
Might teem with new creation ; re-inflam'd
Thy luminaries triumph and assume 800
Divinity themselves. Nor was it strange,
Matter high-wrought to such surprising pomp,
Such godlike glory, stole the style of gods,

From ages dark, obtuse, and steep'd in sense ;
 For sure, to sense, they truly are divine, 805
 And half absolv'd idolatry from guilt ;
 Nay, turn'd it into virtue. Such it was
 In those, who put forth all they had of man
 Unlost, to lift their thought, nor mounted higher ;
 But, weak of wing, on planets perch'd ; and thought
 What was their highest, must be their ador'd. 811
 But they how weak, who could no higher mount !
 And are there then, LORENZO ! those, to whom
 Unseen and unexistent are the same ?
 And if incomprehensible is join'd, 815
 Who dare pronounce it madness to believe ?
 Why has the mighty Builder thrown aside
 All measure in his work ; stetch'd out his line
 So far, and spread amazement o'er the whole !
 Then (as he took delight in wide extremes) 820
 Deep in the bosom of his universe,
 Dropt down that reas'ning mite, that insect, man,
 To crawl, and gaze, and wonder at the scene ?—
 That man might ne'er presume to plead amazement
 For disbelief of wonders in himself. 825
 Shall God be less miraculous than what
 His hand has form'd ? Shall mysteries descend
 From un-mysterious ? Things more elevate,
 Be more familiar ? Uncreated lie
 More obvious than created, to the grasp 830
 Of human thought ? The more of wonderful
 Is heard in Him, the more we should assent.
 Could we conceive Him, God he could not be ;
 Or He not God, or we could not be men.

A God alone can comprehend a God ; 835

Man's distance how immense ! On such a theme,

Know this, LORENZO (seem it ne'er so strange ;)

Nothing can satisfy but what confounds ;

Nothing, but what astonishes, is true.

The scene thou seest, attests the truth I sing, 840

And ev'ry star sheds light upon thy creed.

These stars, this furniture, this cost of Heav'n,

If but reported, thou hadst ne'er believ'd ;

But thine eye tells thee, the romance is true.

The grand of nature is th' Almighty's oath, 845

In reason's court, to silence unbelief.

How my mind, op'ning at this scene, imbibes

The moral emanations of the skies,

While nought, perhaps, LORENZO less admires !

Has the Great Sov'reign sent ten thousand worlds

To tell us, He resides above them all, 851

In glory's unapproachable recess ?

And dare earth's bold inhabitants deny

The sumptuous, the magnificent embassy

A moment's audience ? Turn we, nor will hear 855

From whom they come, or what they would impart

For man's emolument ; sole cause that stoops

Their grandeur to man's eye ? LORENZO ! rouse ;

Let thought, awaken'd, take the lightning's wing,

And glance from east to west, from pole to pole.

Who sees, but is confounded, or convinc'd ? 861

Renounces reason, or a God adores ?

Mankind was sent into the world to see :

Sight gives the science needful to their peace ;

That obvious science asks small learning's aid. 865

Would'st thou on metaphysic pinions soar? 866
 Or wound thy patience amid logic thorns?
 Or travel history's enormous round?
 Nature no such hard task enjoins: She gave
 A make to man directive of his thought; 870
 A make set upright, pointing to the stars,
 As who should say, "Read thy chief lesson there."
 Too late to read this manuscript of heav'n,
 When, like a parchment-scroll, shrunk up by flames,
 It folds LORENZO'S lesson from his sight. 875
 Lesson how various! Not the God alone,
 I see His ministers; I see, diffus'd
 In radiant orders, essences sublime,
 Of various offices, of various plume,
 In heav'nly liveries, distinctly, clad, 880
 Azure, green, purple, pearl, or downy gold,
 Or all commix'd; they stand, with wings outspread,
 List'ning to catch the master's least command,
 And fly thro' nature, ere the moment ends;
 Numbers innumerable!—Well conceiv'd 885
 By pagan, and by christian! O'er each sphere
 Presides an angel, to direct its course,
 And feed, or fan, its flames; or to discharge
 Other high trusts unknown. For who can see
 Such pomp of matter, and imagine, mind, 890
 For which alone inanimate was made,
 More sparingly dispens'd? That nobler Son,
 Far liker the great Sire! 'Tis thus the skies
 Inform us of superiors numberless,
 As much, in excellence, above mankind, 895
 As above earth, in magnitude, the spheres.

These, as a cloud of witnesses, hang o'er us ;
In a throng'd theatre are all our deeds ;
Perhaps, a thousand demi-gods descend
On ev'ry beam we see, to walk with men. 900
Awful reflection ! Strong restraint from ill !
Yet, here, our virtue finds still stronger aid
From these ethereal glories sense surveys.
Something, like magic, strikes from this blue vault ;
With just attention is it view'd ? We feel 905
A sudden succour, unimplor'd, unthought ;
Nature herself does half the work of man.
Seas, rivers, mountains, forests, deserts, rocks,
The promontory's height, the depth profound
Of subterranean, excavated grots, 910
Black-brow'd, and vaulted high, and yawning wide
From nature's structure, or the scope of time ;
If ample of dimension, vast of size,
Ev'n these an aggrandizing impulse give ;
Of solemn thought enthusiastic heights 915
Ev'n these infuse.—But what of vast in these ?
Nothing ;—or we must own the skies forgot.
Much less in art.—Vain art ! Thou pigmy-pow'r !
How dost thou swell, and strut, with human pride,
To shew thy littleness ! What childish toys, 920
Thy watry columns squirted to the clouds !
Thy bason'd rivers, and imprison'd seas !
Thy mountains moulded into forms of men !
Thy hundred-gated capitals ! Or those
Where three days' travel left us much to ride ; 925
Gazing on miracles by mortals wrought,
Arches triumphal, theatres immense,

Or nodding gardens pendent in mid-air !
 Or temples proud to meet their Gods half-way !
 Yet these affect us in no common kind : 930
 What then the force of such superior scenes ?
 Enter a temple, it will strike an awe :
 What awe from this the Deity has built ?
 A good man seen, tho' silent, counsel gives :
 The touch'd spectator wishes to be wise : 935
 In a bright mirror his own hands have made,
 Here we see something like the face of God,
 Seems it not then enough, to say, **LORENZO !**
 To man abandon'd " Hast thou seen the skies ?"
 And yet, so thwarted nature's kind design 940
 By daring man, he makes her sacred awe
 (That guard from ill) his shelter, his temptation
 To more than common guilt, and quite inverts
 Celestial art's intent. The trembling stars
 See crimes gigantic stalking thro' the gloom, 945
 With front erect, that hide their head by day,
 And making night still darker by their deeds.
 Slumb'ring in covert, till the shades descend,
 Rapine and murder, link'd, now prowl for prey.
 The miser earths his treasure; and the thief, 950
 Watching the mole, half-beggars him ere morn.
 Now plots, and foul conspiracies, awake;
 And, muffling up their horrors from the moon,
 Havock and devastation they prepare,
 And kingdoms tott'ring in the field of blood. 955
 Now sons of riot in mid-revel rage.
 What shall I do? suppress it? or proclaim?—
 Why sleeps the thunder? Now, **LORENZO !** now,

His best friend's couch the rank adulterer
 Ascends secure ; and laughs at gods and men. 960
 Prepost'rous madmen, void of fear or shame,
 Lay their crimes bare to these chaste eyes of Heav'n;
 Yet shrink, and shudder at a mortal's sight !
 Were moon and stars for villains only made, 964
 To guide, yet screen them, with tenebrious light ?
 No ; they were made to fashion the sublime
 Of human hearts, and wiser make the wise.

Those ends were answer'd once ; when mortals
 liv'd

Of stronger wing, of aquiline ascent
 In theory sublime. O how unlike 970
 Those vermin of the night this moment sung,
 Who crawl on earth, and on her venom feed !
 Those ancient sages, human stars ! they met
 Their brothers of the skies, at midnight hour ; 974
 Their counsel ask'd ; and, what they ask'd, obey'd.
 The STAGIRITE, and PLATO, he who drank
 The poison'd bowl, and he of TUSCULUM,
 With him of CORDUBA (immortal names !)
 In these unbounded, and Elysian walks,
 An area fit for gods, and godlike men, 980
 They took their nightly round, thro' radiant paths
 By seraphs trod ; instructed, chiefly, thus,
 To tread in their bright footsteps here below ;
 To walk in worth still brighter than the skies,
 There, they contracted their contempt of earth ; 985
 Of hopes eternal kindled, there, the fire ;
 There, as in near approach, they glow'd, and grew
 (Great visitants !) more intimate with God,

More worth to men, more joyous to themselves.
 Thro' various virtues, they, with ardour, ran 990
 The zodiac of their learn'd, illustrious lives.

In christian hearts, O for a pagan zeal :
 A needful, but opprobrious pray'r ! As much
 Our ardour less, as greater is our light. 994
 How monstrous this in morals ! Scarce more strange
 Would this phenomenon in nature strike,
 A sun, that froze us, or a star, that warm'd.

What taught these heroes of the moral world ?
 To these thou giv'st thy praise, give credit too ;
 These doctors ne'er were pension'd to deceive thee,
 And pagan tutors are thy taste.—They taught, 1001
 That, narrow views betray to misery :
 That, wise it is to comprehend the whole :
 That virtue rose from nature, ponder'd well,
 The single base of virtue built to heav'n : 1005
 That, God and nature our attention claim :
 That, nature is the glass reflecting God,
 As, by the sea, reflected is the sun,
 Too glorious to be gaz'd on in his sphere :
 That, mind immortal loves immortal aims : 1010
 That, boundless mind affects a boundless space :
 That, vast surveys, and the sublime of things,
 The soul assimilate, and make her great ;
 That therefore, heav'n her glories, as a fund
 Of inspiration, thus spreads out to man. 1015
 Such are their doctrines ; such the night inspir'd.

And what more true ? What truth of greater
 weight

The soul of man was made to walk the skies ;
Delightful outlet of her prison here !
There, disincumber'd from her chains, the ties 1020
Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large ;
There, freely can respire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let loose all her pow'rs ;
And, undeluded, grasp at something great.
Nor, as a stranger, does she wander there ; 1025
But, wonderful herself, thro' wonder strays ;
Contemplating their grandeur, finds her own ;
Dives deep in their œconomy divine,
Sits high in judgment on their various laws,
And, like a master, judges not amiss. 1030
Hence greatly pleas'd, and justly proud, the soul
Grows conscious of her birth celestial ; breathes
More life, more vigour, in her native air ;
And feels herself at home among the stars ;
And, feeling, emulates her country's praise. 1035
What call we, then, the firmament, LORENZO!—
As earth the body, since the skies sustain
The soul with food, that gives immortal life,
Call it, the noble pasture of the mind ;
Which there expatiates, strengthens, and exults, 1040
And riots thro' the luxuries of thought.
Call it the garden of the Deity,
Blossom'd with stars, redundant in the growth
Of fruit ambrosial ; moral fruit to man.
Call it the breast-plate of the true high-priest, 1045
Ardent with gems oracular, that give,
In points of highest moment, right response ;
And ill neglected, if we prize our peace.
'Thus, have we found a true astrology ;

Thus, have we found a new, and noble sense, 1050
In which alone stars govern human fates.

O that the stars (as some have feign'd) let fall
Bloodshed, and havock, on embattled realms,
And rescu'd monarchs from so black a guilt!
Bourbon! this wish how gen'rous in a foe! 1055
Would'st thou be great, would'st thou become a god,
And stick thy deathless name among the stars,
For mighty conquests on a needle's point?

Instead of forging chains for foreigners,
Bastille thy tutor: grandeur all thy aim? 1060
As yet thou know'st not what it is: how great,
How glorious, then, appears the mind of man,
When in it all the stars, and planets, roll;
And what it seems, it is: great objects make
Great minds, enlarging as their views enlarge; 1065
Those still more godlike, as these more divine.

And more divine than these, thou canst not see.
Dazzled, o'erpow'r'd, with the delicious draught
Of miscellaneous splendors, how I reel
From thought to thought, inebriate, without end! 1070
An Eden, this! a Paradise unlost!

I meet the Deity in ev'ry view,
And tremble at my nakedness before him!
O that I could but reach the tree of life!
For here it grows, unguarded from our taste: 1075
No flaming sword denies our entrance here;
Would man but gather, he might live for ever.

LORENZO, much of moral hast thou seen.
Of curious arts art thou more fond? Then mark
The mathematic glories of the skies, 1080
In number, weight, and measure, all ordain'd.

LORENZO's boasted builders, chance, and fate,
Are left to finish his aerial tow'rs ;
Wisdom, and choice, their well known characters
Here deep impress ; and claim it for their own. 1085
Tho' splendid all, no splendor void of use ;
Use rivals beauty ; art contends with pow'r ;
No wanton waste, amid effuse expence ;
The great œconomist adjusting all
To prudent pomp, magnificently wise. 1090
How rich the prospect ! and for ever new !
And newest to the man that views it most ;
For newer still in infinite succeeds.
Then, these aerial racers, O how swift !
How the shaft loiters from the strongest string ! 1095
Spirit alone can distance the career.
Orb above orb ascending without end !
Circle in circle, without end, inclos'd !
Wheel within wheel ; EZEKIEL, like to thine* !
Like thine, it seems a vision, or a dream ; 1100
Tho' seen, we labour to believe it true !
What involution ! What extent ! What swarms
Of worlds, that laugh at earth ! immensely great !
Immensely distant from each other's spheres !
What then, the wond'rous space thro' which they
roll ? 1105
At once it quite ingulphs all human thought ;
'Tis comprehension's absolute defeat.
Nor think thou seest a wild disorder here ;
Thro' this illustrious chaos to the sight,
Arrangement neat, and chastest order, reign. 1110
The path prescrib'd, inviolably kept,

* Ezekiel x. 9, 10.

Upbraids the lawless sallies of mankind.
 Worlds, ever thwarting, never interfere ;
 What knots are ty'd ! How soon are they dissolv'd,
 And set the seeming married planets free ! 1115
 They rove for ever, without error rove ;
 Confusion unconfus'd : nor less admire
 This tumult untumultuous ; all on wing !
 In motion, all ! yet what profound repose !
 What fervid action, yet no noise ! as aw'd 1120
 To silence, by the presence of their Lord ;
 Or hush'd, by his command, in love to man,
 And bid let fall soft beams on human rest,
 Restless themselves. On you cærulean plain,
 In exultation to their God, and thine, 1125
 They dance, they sing eternal jubilee,
 Eternal celebration of his praise.
 But, since their song arrives not at our ear,
 Their dance perplex'd exhibits to the sight
 Fair hieroglyphic of his peerless pow'r. 1130
 Mark, how the labyrinthian turns they take,
 The circles intricate, and mystic maze,
 Wave the grand cypher of omnipotence ;
 To gods, how great ! how legible to man ! 1134
 Leaves so much wonder greater wonder still ?
 Where are the pillars that support the skies ?
 What more than ATLANTÉAN shoulder props
 Th' incumbent load ? What magic, what strange art,
 In fluid air these pond'rous orbs sustains ! 1139
 Who would not think them hung in golden chains ?
 —And so they are ; in the high will of Heav'n,
 Which fixes all ; makes adamant of air,
 Or air of adamant ; makes all of nought,

Or nought of all; if such the dread decree.

Imagine from their deep foundations torn 1145

The most gigantic sons of earth, the broad

And tow'ring Alps, all tost into the sea;

And, light as down, or volatile as air,

Their bulks enormous dancing on the waves,

In time, and measure, exquisite; while all 1150

The winds, in emulation of the spheres,

Tune their sonorous instruments aloft;

The concert swell, and animate the ball.

Would this appear amazing? What, then, worlds,

In a far thinner element sustain'd, 1155

And acting the same part, with greater skill,

More rapid movement, and for noblest ends?

More obvious ends to pass, are not these stars

The seats majestic, proud imperial thrones,

On which angelic delegates of heav'n, 1160

At certain periods, as the Sov'reign nods,

Discharge high trusts of vengeance, or of love;

To clothe, in outward grandeur, grand design,

And acts most solemn still more solemnize?

Ye citizens of air! what ardent thanks, 1165

What full effusion of the grateful heart,

Is due from man indulg'd in such a sight!

A sight so noble! and a sight so kind!

It drops new truths at ev'ry new survey!

Feels not LORENZO something stir within, 1170

That sweeps away all period? As these spheres

Measure duration, they no less inspire

The godlike hope of ages without end.

The boundless space, thro' which these rovers

take

Their restless roam, suggests the sister-thought 1175
 Of boundless time. Thus, by kind nature's skill,
 To man unlabour'd, that important guest,
 Eternity, finds entrance at the sight :
 And an eternity, for man ordain'd,
 Or these his destin'd midnight counsellors, 1180
 The stars, had never whisper'd it to man.
 Nature informs, but ne'er insults, her sons.
 Could she then kindle the most ardent wish
 To disappoint it?—That is blasphemy.
 Thus, of thy creed a second article 1185
 Momentous, as th' existence of a God,
 Is found (as I conceive) where rarely sought;
 And thou may'st read thy soul immortal, here.
 Here, then, LORENZO, on these glories dwell :
 Nor want the gilt, illuminated roof, 1190
 That calls the wretched gay to dark delights.
 Assemblies?—This is one divinely bright ;
 Here, unendanger'd in health, wealth, or fame,
 Range thro' the fairest, and the Sultan * scorn.
 He, wise as thou, no crescent holds so fair 1195
 As that, which on his turban awes a world ;
 And thinks the moon is proud to copy him.
 Look on her, and gain more than worlds can give,
 A mind superior to the charms of pow'r.
 Thou muffled in delusions of this life ! 1200
 Can yonder moon turn ocean in his bed,
 From side to side, in constant ebb and flow,
 And purify from stench his watry realms ?
 And fails her moral influence ? Wants she pow'r
 To turn LORENZO's stubborn tide of thought 1205

* The Emperor of Turkey.

From stagnating on earth's infected shore,
And purge from nuisance his corrupted heart ?
Fails her attraction when it draws to heav'n ?
Nay, and to what thou valu'st more, earth's joy !
Minds elevate, and panting for unseen, 1210
And defecate from sense, alone obtain
Full relish of existence undeflow'r'd,
The life of life, the zest of worldly bliss.

All else on earth amounts—to what ? To this :
“ Bad to be suffer'd ; blessings to be left : ” 1215
Earth's richest inventory boasts no more.

Of higher scenes be, then, the call obey'd.
O let me gaze !—Of gazing there's no end.
O let me think—Thought too is wilder'd here ;
In mid-way flight imagination tires ; 1220
Yet soon reprunes her wings to soar anew,
Her point unable to forbear or gain ;
So great the pleasure, so profound the plan !
A banquet this, where men and angels meet,
Eat the same manna, mingle earth, and heav'n. 1225
How distant some of these nocturnal suns !
So distant (says the sage) 'twere not absurd
To doubt, if beams, set out at nature's birth,
Are yet arriv'd at this so foreign world ;
Tho' nothing half so rapid as their flight. 1230

An eye of awe and wonder let me roll,
And roll for ever : who can satiate sight
In such a scene ? in such an ocean wide
Of deep astonishment ? Where depth, height,
breadth,
Are lost in their extremes ; and where to count 1235

The thick sown glories in this field of fire,
 Perhaps a seraph's computation fails.
 Now, go, ambition! boast thy boundless might
 In conquest, o'er the tenth part of a grain.

And yet LORENZO calls for miracles, 1240
 To give his tott'ring faith a solid base.
 Why call for less than is already thine?
 Thou art no novice in theology;
 What is a miracle?—'Tis a reproach,
 'Tis an implicit satire on mankind; 1245
 And while it satisfies, it censures too.
 To common-sense, great nature's course proclaims
 A Deity: when mankind falls asleep,
 A miracle is sent, as an alarm,
 To wake the world, and prove him o'er again, 1250
 By recent argument, but not more strong.
 Say, which imports more plenitude of pow'r,
 Or nature's laws to fix, or to repeal?
 To make a sun, or stop his mid-career?
 To countermand his orders, and send back 1255
 The flaming courier to the frightened east,
 Warm'd, and astonish'd, at his evening ray?
 Or bid the moon, as with her journey tir'd,
 In Ajalon's soft, flow'ry vale repose*?
 Great things are these; still greater, to create. 1260
 From Adam's bow'r look down thro' the whole train
 Of miracles;—Resistless is their pow'r?
 They do not, cannot, more amaze the mind,
 Than this, call'd unmiraculous survey,
 If duly weigh'd, if rationally seen, 1265

* Joshua x. 12, 13.

If seen with human eyes. The brute, indeed,
 Sees nought but spangles here; the fool, no more.
 Say'st thou, "The course of nature governs all?"
 The course of nature is the art of God.
 The miracles thou call'st for, this attest; 1270
 For say, could nature nature's course controul!
 But, miracles apart, who sees Him not
 Nature's controuler, author, guide, and end?
 Who turns his eye on nature's midnight face, 1274
 But must inquire—"What hand behind the scene,
 "What arm almighty, put these wheeling globes
 "In motion, and wound up the vast machine?
 "Who rounded in his palm these spacious orbs?
 "Who bowl'd them flaming thro' the dark profound,
 "Num'rous as glitt'ring gems of morning dew, 1280
 "Or sparks from populous cities in a blaze,
 "And set the bosom of old night on fire;
 "Peopled her desert, and made horror smile?"
 Or, if the military style delights thee,
 (For stars have fought their battles, leagu'd with
 man) 1285
 "Who marshals this bright host? Enrols their
 names?
 "Appoints their posts, their marches, and returns,
 "Punctual, at stated periods? who disbands
 "These vet'ran troops, their final duty done,
 "If e'er disbanded?"—He, whose potent word, 1290
 Like the loud trumpet, levy'd first their pow'rs
 In night's inglorious empire, where they slept
 In beds of darkness; arm'd them with fierce flames,
 Arrang'd and disciplin'd, and cloth'd in gold;

And call'd them out of chaos to the field, 1295
 Where now they war with vice and unbelief.
 O let us join this army! Joining these,
 Will give us hearts intrepid, at that hour,
 When brighter flames shall cut a darker night;
 When these strong demonstrations of a God 1300
 Shall hide their heads, or tumble from their spheres,
 And one eternal curtain cover all!

Struck at that thought, as new awak'd, I lift
 A more enlighten'd eye, and read the stars,
 To man still more propitious; and their aid 1305
 (Tho' guiltless of idolatry) implore;
 Nor longer rob them of their noblest name.
 O ye dividers of my time! Ye bright
 Accomptants of my days, and months, and years,
 In your fair kalendar distinctly mark'd! 1310
 Since that authentic, radiant register,
 Tho' man inspects it not, stands good against him;
 Since you, and years, roll on, tho' man stands still;
 Teach me my days to number, and apply
 My trembling heart to wisdom*; now beyond 1315
 All shadows of excuse for fooling on.
 Age smooths our path to prudence; sweeps aside
 The snares, keen appetite and passion spread
 To catch stray souls; and woe to that grey head,
 Whose folly would undo what age has done! 1320
 Aid, then, aid, all ye stars!—Much rather, thou,
 Great Artist! Thou, whose finger set aright
 This exquisite machine, with all its wheels,
 Tho' intervolv'd, exact; and pointing out

* Psalm xc. 12.

Life's rapid, and irrevocable flight, 1325
With such an index fair, as none can miss,
Who lifts an eye, nor sleeps till it is clos'd.
Open mine eye, dread Deity! to read
The tacit doctrine of thy works; to see
Things as they are, unalter'd thro' the glass 1330
Of worldly wishes. Time, eternity!
('Tis these, mismeasur'd, ruin all mankind)
Set them before me; let me lay them both
In equal scale and learn their various weight.
Let time appear a moment, as it is: 1335
And let eternity's full orb, at once,
Turn on my soul, and strike it into heav'n.
When shall I see far more than charms me now?
Gaze on creation's model in thy breast
Unveil'd, nor wonder at the transcript more? 1340
When, this vile, foreign, dust which smothers all
That travel earth's deep vale, shall I shake off?
When shall my soul her incarnation quit,
And, re-adopted to thy blest embrace,
Obtain her apotheosis in Thee? 1345
Dost think, LORENZO! this is wand'ring wide?
No, 'tis directly striking at the mark;
To wake thy dead devotion was my point;
And how I bless night's consecrating shades,
Which to a temple turn an universe; 1350
Fill us with great ideas full of heav'n,
And antidote the pestilential earth!
In ev'ry storm, that either frowns, or falls,
What an asylum has the soul in pray'r!
And what a fane is this, in which to pray! 1355

And what a God must dwell in such a fane !
 O what a genius must inform the skies !
 And is LORENZO's salamander-heart
 Cold, and untouch'd, amid these sacred fires ?
 O ye nocturnal sparks ! Ye glowing embers, 1360
 On heav'n's broad hearth ! who burn, or burn no
 more,
 Who blaze, or die, as great Jehovah's breath
 Or blows you, or forbears ; assist my song ;
 Pour your whole influence ; exercise his heart,
 So long possess ; and bring him back to man. 1365
 And is LORENZO a demurrer still ?
 Pride in thy parts provokes thee to contest
 Truths, which, contested, put thy parts to shame.
 Nor shame they more LORENZO's head than heart ;
 A faithless heart, how despicably small ! 1370
 Too strait, aught great, or gen'rous, to receive !
 Fill'd with an atom ! fill'd, and foul'd, with self !
 And self-mistaken ! Self, that lasts an hour !
 Instincts and passions, of the nobler kind,
 Lie suffocated there ; or they alone, 1375
 Reason apart, would wake high hope ; and open,
 To ravish'd thought, that intellectual sphere,
 Where order, wisdom, goodness, Providence,
 Their endless miracles of love display,
 And promise all the truly great desire. 1380
 The mind that would be happy, must be great ;
 Great in its wishes ; great in its surveys.
 Extended views a narrow mind extend ;
 Push out its corrugate, expansive make,
 Which, ere long, more than planets shall embrace.

A man of compass makes a man of worth ; 1386

Divine contemplate, and become divine.

As man was made for glory, and for bliss,

All littleness is in approach to woe ;

Open thy bosom, set thy wishes wide, 1390

And let in manhood ; let in happiness ;

Admit the boundless theatre of thought

From nothing, up to God ; which makes a man.

Take God from nature, nothing great is left ;

Man's mind is in a pit, and nothing sees ; 1395

Man's heart is in a jakes, and loves the mire.

Emerge from thy profound ; erect thine eye ;

See thy distress ! How close art thou besieg'd !

Besieg'd by nature, the proud sceptic's foe !

Inclos'd by these innumerable worlds, 1400

Sparkling conviction on the darkest mind,

As in a golden net of Providence,

How art thou caught, sure captive of belief !

From this thy blest captivity, what art,

What blasphemy to reason, sets thee free ! 1405

This scene is heav'n's indulgent violence :

Canst thou bear up against this tide of glory ?

What is earth bosom'd in these ambient orbs,

But, faith in God impos'd, and press'd on man ?

Dar'st thou still litigate thy desp'rate cause, 1410

Spite of these num'rous, awful, witnesses,

And doubt the deposition of the skies ?

O how laborious is thy way to ruin !

Laborious ! 'Tis impracticable quite ;

To sink beyond a doubt, in this debate, 1415

With all his weight of wisdom, and of will,

And crime flagitious, I defy a fool.
 Some wish they did; but no man disbelieves.
 God is a spirit; spirit cannot strike
 These gross material organs: God by man 1420
 As much is seen, as man a God can see
 In these astonishing exploits of pow'r.
 What order, beauty, motion, distance, size!
 Concertion of design, how exquisite!
 How complicate, in their divine police! 1425
 Apt means! great ends! consent to general good!
 Each attribute of these material gods,
 So long (and that with specious pleas) ador'd,
 A sep'rate conquest gains o'er rebel thought;
 And leads in triumph the whole mind of man. 1430
 LORENZO! this may seem harangue to thee;
 Such all is apt to seem, that thwarts our will.
 And dost thou, then, demand a simple proof
 Of this great master-moral of the skies,
 Unskill'd, or disinclin'd, to read it there? 1435
 Since 'tis the basis, and all drops without it,
 Take it, in one compact, unbroken chain.
 Such proof insists on an attentive ear;
 'Twill not make one amid a mob of thoughts,
 And, for thy notice, struggle with the world. 1440
 Retire;—the world shut out;—thy thoughts call
 home;—
 Imagination's airy wing repress;—
 Lock up thy senses;—let no passion stir;—
 Wake all to reason;—let her reign alone;—
 Then, in thy soul's deep silence, and the depth 1445
 Of nature's silence, midnight, thus inquire,

As I have done ;—and shall enquire no more.

In nature's channel, thus the questions run :—

“ What am I ? and from whence ?—I nothing,
“ know,

“ But that I am ; and, since I am, conclude 1450

“ Something eternal : had there e'er been nought,

“ Nought still had been : eternal there must be.

“ But what eternal ?—Why not human race ?

“ And ADAM's ancestors without an end ?

“ That's hard to be conceiv'd since ev'ry link 1455

“ Of that long-chain'd succession is so frail ;

“ Can ev'ry part depend, and not the whole ?

“ Yet grant it true : new difficulties rise ;

“ I'm still quite out at sea ; nor see the shore.

“ Whence earth, and these bright orbs ? Eternal too ?

“ Great matter was eternal ; still these orbs 1461

“ Would want some other father ;—much design

“ Is seen in all their motions, all their makes ;

“ Design implies intelligence and art : 1464

“ That can't be from themselves—or man ; that art

“ Man scarce can comprehend, could man bestow ?

“ And nothing greater, yet allow'd, than man.—

“ Who, motion, foreign to the smallest grain,

“ Shot thro' vast masses of enormous weight ?

“ Who bid brute matter's restive lump assume 1470

“ Such various forms, and gave it wings to fly ?

“ Has matter innate motion ? Then each atom,

“ Asserting its indisputable right

“ To dance, would form an universe of dust. 1474

“ Has matter none ? Then whence these glorious
forms,

“ And boundless flights, from shapeless, and repos'd ?

“ Has matter more than motion ? Has it thought,
 “ Judgment and genius ? Is it deeply learn’d
 “ In mathematics ? Has it fram’d such laws, 1479
 “ Which, but to guess, a Newton * made immortal?
 “ If so, how each sage atom laughs at me,
 “ Who think a clod inferior to a man !
 “ If art to form ; and counsel to conduct ;
 “ And that with greater far than human skill; 1484
 “ Resides not in each block ;—a Godhead reigns—
 “ Grant, then, invisible, eternal Mind ;
 “ That granted, all is solv’d.—But, granting that,
 “ Draw I not o’er me a still darker cloud ?
 “ Grant I not that which I can ne’er conceive ?
 “ A being without origin, or end !— 1490
 “ Hail, human liberty ! There is no God—
 “ Yet, why ? On either scheme that knot subsists ;
 “ Subsist it must, in God, or human race :
 “ If in the last, how many knots beside,
 “ Indissoluble all ?—Why choose it there, 1495
 “ Where, chosen, still subsist ten thousand more ;
 “ Reject it where, that chosen, all the rest
 “ Dispers’d, leave reason’s whole horizon clear ?
 “ This is not reason’s dictate ; reason says,
 “ Close with the side where one grain turns the scale ;
 “ What vast preponderance is here ! Can reason
 “ With louder voice exclaim—Believe a God ?
 “ And reason heard, is the sole mark of man.
 “ What things impossible must man think true,
 “ On any other system ? And how strange 1505
 “ To disbelieve, thro’ mere credulity !”
 If, in this chain, LORENZO finds no flaw,

* Sir Isaac Newton.

Let it for ever bind him to belief.
 And where's the link, in which a flaw he finds?
 And if a God there is, that God how great! 1510
 How great that pow'r, whose providential care
 Thro' these bright orbs' dark centres darts a ray!
 Of nature universal threads the whole!
 And hangs creation, like a precious gem,
 Tho' little, on the footstool of his throne! 1515
 That little gem, how large! a weight let fall
 From a fixt star, in ages can it reach
 This distant earth? Say, then, LORENZO! where,
 Where ends this mighty building? Where begin
 The suburbs of creation? Where the wall 1520
 Whose battlements look o'er into the vale
 Of non-existence, Nothing's strange abode?
 Say, at what point of space JEHOVAH dropp'd
 His slacken'd line, and laid his balance by;
 Weigh'd worlds, and measur'd infinite, no more?
 Where, rears his terminating pillar high 1526
 Its extra-mundane head; and says, to gods,
 In characters illustrious as the sun,

*I stand, the plan's proud period; I pronounce
 The work accomplish'd; the creation clos'd: 1530
 Shout, all ye gods! nor shout, ye gods, alone;
 Of all that lives, or, if devoid of life,
 That rests, or rolls, ye heights, and depths, resound!
 Resound! resound! ye depths, and heights, resound!*

Hard are these questions?—Answer harder still.
 Is this the sole exploit, the single birth, 1536

The solitary son of pow'r divine ?
 Or has th' Almighty Father, with a breath,
 Impregnated the womb of distant space ?
 Has he not bid, in various provinces, 1540
 Brother-creations the dark bowels burst
 Of night primæval; barren, now, no more ?
 And he the central Sun, transpiercing all
 Those giant-generations, which disport,
 And dance, as motes, in his meridian ray ; 1545
 That ray withdrawn, benighted, or absorb'd
 In that abyss of horror, whence they sprung ;
 While chaos triumphs, repossess of all
 Rival creation ravish'd from his throne ?
 Chaos ! of nature both the womb, and grave ! 1550
 Think'st thou, my scheme, LORENZO, spreads too
 wide ?
 Is this extravagant :—No ; this is just ;
 Just, in conjecture, tho' 'twere false in fact.
 If 'tis an error, 'tis an error sprung 1554
 From noble root, high thought of the Most High.
 But wherefore error ? Who can prove it such ?—
 He that can set Omnipotence a bound.
 Can man conceive beyond what God can do ?
 Nothing, but quite impossible, is hard.
 He summons into being, with like ease, 1560
 A whole creation, and a single grain.
 Speaks he the word ? a thousand worlds are born !—
 A thousand worlds ? There's space for millions
 more ;
 And in what space can his great fiat fail ?
 Condemn me not, cold critic ! but indulge 1565



The warm imagination : Why condemn ?
Why not indulge such thoughts, as swell our hearts
With fuller admiration of that pow'r,
Who gives our hearts with such high thoughts to
swell ?

Why not indulge in his augmented praise ? 1570
Darts not his glory a still brighter ray,
The less is left to chaos, and the realms
Of hideous night, where fancy strays aghast ;
And, tho' most talkative, makes no report ?

Still seems my thought enormous? Think again—
Experience' self shall aid thy lame belief. 1576
Glasses (that revelation to the sight !)

Have they not led us deep in the disclose
Of fine-spun nature, exquisitely small,
And, tho' demonstrated, still ill-conceiv'd ? 1580
If then, on the reverse, the mind would mount
In magnitude, what mind can mount too far,
To keep the balance, and creation poise ?

Defect alone can err on such a theme ;
What is too great, if we the cause survey ? 1585
Stupendous Architect ! Thou ! Thou art all !

My soul flies up and down in thoughts of Thee !
And finds herself but at the centre still !
I AM, thy name ! existence, all thine own !
Creation's nothing ; flatter'd much, if styl'd 1590
“ The thin, the fleeting atmosphere of God.”

O for the voice—of what? of whom ?—What voice
Can answer to my wants, in such ascent
As dares to deem one universe too small ?

Tell me, LORENZO ! (for now fancy grows, 1595
 Fir'd in the vortex of Almighty pow'r)
 Is not this home-creation, in the map
 Of universal nature, as a speck,
 Like fair BRITANNIA in our little ball !
 Exceeding fair, and glorious, for its size, 1600
 But, elsewhere, far out-measur'd, far outshone ?
 In fancy (for the fact beyond us lies)
 Canst thou not figure it, an isle, almost
 Too small for notice, in the vast of being ;
 Sever'd by mighty seas of unbuilt space, 1605
 From other realms ; from ample continents
 Of higher life, where nobler natives dwell :
 Less northern, less remote from Deity,
 Glowing beneath the line of the Supreme ; 1609
 Where souls in excellence make haste, put forth
 Luxuriant growths ; nor the late autumn wait
 Of human worth, but ripen soon to gods !
 Yet why drown fancy in such depths as these ?
 Return, presumptuous rover ! and confess
 The bounds of man ; nor blame them, as too small.
 Enjoy we not full scope in what is seen ? 1616
 Full ample the dominions of the sun !
 Full glorious to behold ! How far, how wide,
 The matchless monarch, from his flaming throne,
 Lavish of lustre, throws his beams about him, 1620
 Farther and faster than a thought can fly,
 And feeds his planets with eternal fires !
 This Heliopolis, by greater far,
 Than the proud tyrant of the Nile, was built ;
 And he alone, who built it, can destroy. 1625

Beyond this city, why strays human thought ?
One wonderful, enough for man to know !
One infinite, enough for man to range !
One firmament, enough for man to read !
O what voluminous instruction here ! 1630
What page of wisdom is deny'd him ? None ;
If learning his chief lesson makes him wise.
Nor is instruction, here, our only gain ;
There dwells a noble pathos in the skies,
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts.
How eloquently shines the glowing pole ! 1636
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonstrating great truths in style sublime.
Tho' silent, loud ! heard earth around ; above
The planets heard ; and not unheard in hell : 1640
Hell has her wonder, though too proud to praise.
Is earth, then, more infernal ? Has she those,
Who neither praise (LORENZO !) nor admire ?
LORENZO'S admiration, pre-engag'd,
Ne'er ask'd the moon one question, never held 1645
Least correspondence with a single star ;
Ne'er rear'd an altar to the Queen of heav'n
Walking in brightness ; or her train ador'd.
Their sublunary rivals have long since
Engross'd his whole devotion ; stars malign, 1650
Which made their fond astronomer run mad,
Darken his intellect, corrupt his heart ;
Cause him to sacrifice his frame and peace
To momentary madness, call'd delight.
Idolater, more gross than ever kiss'd 1655
The lifted hand to Luna, or pour'd out

The blood to Jove!—O 'Thou, to whom belongs
 All sacrifice! O Thou great Jove unfeign'd!
 Divine Instructor! thy first volume this,
 For man's perusal; all in capitals! 1660
 In moon and stars (heav'n's golden alphabet!)
 Emblaz'd to seize the sight; who runs, may read;
 Who reads, can understand. 'Tis unconfin'd
 To Christian land or Jewry; fairly writ,
 In language universal, to mankind: 1665
 A language lofty to the learn'd; yet plain
 To those that feed the flock, or guide the plough,
 Or, from its husk, strike out the bounding grain,
 A language, worthy the great mind, that speaks!
 Preface, and comment, to the sacred page! 1670
 Which oft refers its reader to the skies,
 As pre-supposing his first lesson there,
 And scripture-self a fragment, that unread,
 Stupendous book of wisdom, to the wise!
 Stupendous book! and open'd, Night, by thee. 1675
 By thee much open'd, I confess, O Night!
 Yet more I wish, but how shall I prevail?
 Say, gentle Night! whose modest, maiden beams
 Give us a new creation, and present
 The world's great picture soften'd to the sight; 1680
 Nay, kinder far, far more indulgent still,
 Say, thou, whose mild dominion's silver key,
 Unlocks our hemisphere, and sets to view
 Worlds beyond number; worlds conceal'd by day
 Behind the proud, and envious star of noon! 1685
 Canst thou not draw a deeper scene!—And shew
 The mighty Potentate, to whom belong

These rich regalia pompously display'd
 To kindle that high hope? Like him of Uz*,
 I gaze around; I search on ev'ry side— 1690

O for a glimpse of Him my soul adores!
 As the chas'd hart, amid the desart waste,
 Pants for the living stream; for Him who made her
 So pants the thirsty soul, amid the blank
 Of sublunary joys. Say, goddess! where? 1695
 Where blazes his bright court? Where burns his
 throne

Thou know'st; for thou art near him; by thee
 round

His grand pavilion, sacred fame reports,
 The sable curtain's drawn. If not, can none
 Of thy fair daughter-train, so swift of wing, 1700
 Who travel far, discover where he dwells,
 A star his dwelling pointed out below †.
 Ye Pleiades! Arcturus! Mazaroth!
 And thou, Orion ‡! of still keener eye!
 Say ye, who guide the wilder'd in the waves, 1705
 And bring them out of tempest into port!

On which hand must I bend my course to find him?
 These courtiers keep the secret of their King;
 I wake whole nights, in vain, to steal it from them.

I wake; and, waking, climb night's radiant scale.
 From sphere to sphere; the steps by nature set
 For man's ascent; at once to tempt and aid; 1712
 To tempt his eye, and aid his tow'ring thought;
 Till it arrives at the great goal of all.

* Job. † Matt. ii. 2.

‡ Names of several constellations in the heavens.

In ardent contemplation's rapid car, 1715
 From earth, as from my barrier, I set out.
 How swift I mount ! Diminish'd earth recedes ;
 I pass the moon ; and, from her farther side,
 Pierce heav'n's blue curtain ; strike into remote ;
 Where, with his lifted tube, the subtle sage 1720
 His artificial, airy journey takes,
 And no celestial lengthens human sight.
 I pause at every planet on my road,
 And ask for Him who gives their orbs to roll,
 Their foreheads fair to shine. From Saturn's ring,
 In which, of earths an army might be lost, 1726
 With the bold comet, take my bolder flight,
 Amid those sov'reign glories of the skies,
 Of independent, native lustre proud ;
 The souls of systems ! and the lords of life, 1730
 Thro' their wide empires !—What behold I now ?
 A wilderness of wonders burning round ;
 Where larger suns inhabit higher spheres ;
 Perhaps the villas of descending gods !
 Nor halt I here ; my toil is but begun ; 1735
 'Tis but the threshold of the Deity ;
 Or, far beneath it, I am grov'ling still.
 Nor is it strange ; I built on a mistake !
 The grandeur of his works, whence folly sought
 For aid, to reason sets his glory higher ; 1740
 Who built thus high for worms (mere worms to
 him)
 O where, LORENZO ! must the builder dwell ?
 Pause, then ; and for a moment, here respire—
 If human thought can keep its station here.

Where am I?—Where is earth?—Nay, where art
 thou, 1745

O sun?—Is the sun turn'd recluse?—And are
 His boasted expeditions short to mine!

To mine, how short! On nature's Alps I stand,
 And see a thousand firmaments beneath!

A thousand systems! as a thousand grains! 1750

So much a stranger, and so late arriv'd,

How can man's curious spirit not enquire,

What are the natives of this world sublime,

Of this so foreign, unterrestrial sphere,

Where mortal, untranslated, never stray'd? 1755

“ O ye, as distant from my little home,

“ As swiftest sun-beams in an age can fly!

“ Far from my native element I roam,

“ In quest of new, and wonderful, to man,

“ What province this, of his immense domain, 1760

“ Whom all obey? Or mortals here, or gods?

“ Ye bord'ers on the coasts of bliss! What are
 you?

“ A colony from heav'n? Or only rais'd,

“ By frequent visit from heav'n's neighbouring
 “ realms

“ To secondary gods, and half-divine?— 1765

“ Whate'er your nature, this is past dispute,

“ Far other life you live, far other tongue

“ You talk, far other thought, perhaps you think,

“ Than man. How various are the works of God!

“ But say, what thought? Is reason here enthron'd,

“ And absolute? Or sense in arms against her?

“ Have you two lights? Or need you no reveal'd?

- “ Enjoy your happy realms their golden age !
 “ And had your Eden an abstemious Eve !
 “ Or Eve’s fair daughters prove their pedigree, 1775
 “ And ask their Adams—‘ Who would not be wise ?’
 “ Or, if your mother fell, are you redeem’d ?
 “ And if redeem’d—is your Redeemer scorn’d ?
 “ Is this your final residence ? If not,
 “ Change you your scenes, translated ? Or by death ?
 “ And if by death, What death ?—Know you dis-
 “ ease ! 1781
 “ Or horrid war ?—With war, this fatal hour,
 “ Europa groans (so call we a small field,
 “ Where kings run mad.) In our world, death de-
 “ putes
 “ Intemperance to do the work of age : 1785
 “ And, hanging up the quiver nature gave him,
 “ As slow of execution, for dispatch
 “ Sends forth imperial butchers ; bids them slay
 “ Their sheep (the silly sheep they fleec’d before)
 “ And toss him twice ten thousand at a meal. 1790
 “ Sit all your executioners on thrones ?
 “ With you, can rage for plunder make a God ?
 “ And bloodshed wash out ev’ry other stain ?—
 “ But you, perhaps, can’t bleed ; from matter gross
 “ Your spirits clean, are delicately clad 1795
 “ In fine-spun ether, privileg’d to soar,
 “ Unloaded, uninfected : How unlike
 “ The lot of man ! How few of human race
 “ By their own mud unmurder’d ! How we wage
 “ Self-war eternal !—Is your painful day 1800
 “ Of hardy conflict o’er ? Or are you still

“ Raw candidates at school? And have you those
 “ Who disaffect reversions, as with us!—
 “ But what are we? You never heard of man,
 “ Or earth; the bedlam of the universe! 1805
 “ Where reason (undiseas’d with you) runs mad,
 “ And nurses folly’s children as her own;
 “ Fond of the foulest. In the sacred mount
 “ Of holiness, where reason is pronounc’d
 “ Infallible, and thunders like a god; 1810
 “ E’en there, by saints, the demons are outdone:
 “ What these think wrong, our saints refine to right!
 “ And kindly teach dull hell her own black arts;
 “ Satan, instructed, o’er their moral smiles.—
 “ But this, how strange to you, who know not
 “ man! 1815
 “ Has the least rumour of our race arriv’d?
 “ Call’d here Elijah, in his flaming car*?
 “ Past by you the good Enoch †, on his road
 “ To those fair fields, whence Lucifer was hurl’d:
 “ Who brush’d, perhaps, your sphere in his descent,
 “ Stain’d your pure crystal ether, or let fall 1821
 “ A short eclipse from his portentous shade?
 “ O! that the fiend had lodg’d on some broad orb
 “ Athwart his way; nor reach’d his present home,
 “ Then blacken’d earth with footsteps foul’d in
 “ hell, 1825
 “ Nor wash’d in ocean, as from Rome he past
 “ To Britain’s isle; too, too, conspicuous there!”
 But this is all digression; Where is he,
 That o’er heav’n’s battlements the felon hurl’d

* 2 Kings ii. 11.

† Genesis v. 24.

To groans, and chains, and darkness? Where is he
 Who sees creation's summit in a vale? 1831
 He, whom, while man is man, he can't but seek;
 And if he finds, commences more than man?
 O for a telescope his throne to reach!
 Tell me, ye learn'd on earth! or blest above! 1835
 Ye searching, ye Newtonian angels! tell,
 Where's your great Master's orb! His planets,
 where?

Those conscious satellites, those morning stars,
 First born of Deity! From central love,
 By veneration most profound, thrown off; 1840
 By sweet attraction, no less strongly drawn;
 Aw'd, and yet raptur'd, raptur'd yet serene;
 Past thought, illustrious, but with borrow'd beams;
 In still approaching circles, still remote,
 Revolving round the sun's eternal Sire! 1845
 Or sent, in lines direct on embassies
 To nations—in what latitude?—Beyond
 Terrestrial thought's horizon!—And on what
 High errands sent?—Here human effort ends;
 And leaves me still a stranger to his throne. 1850

Full well it might! I quite mistook my road.
 Born in an age more curious than devout;
 More fond to fix the place of heav'n, or hell,
 Than studious this to shun, or that secure.
 'Tis not the curious, but the pious path, 1855
 That leads me to my point: LORENZO! know,
 Without or star, or angel, for their guide,
 Who worship God, shall find him. Humble love,
 And not proud reason keeps the door of heav'n;

Love finds admission, where proud science fails.
Man's science is the culture of his heart ; 1861
And not to lose his plumbet in the depths
Of nature, or the more profound of God.
Either to know, is an attempt that sets
The wisest on a level with the fool. 1865
To fathom nature (ill-attempted here !)
Past doubt, is deep philosophy above ;
Higher degrees in bliss archangels take,
As deeper learn'd ; the deepest, learning still.
For what a thunder of Omnipotence 1870
(So might I dare to speak !) is seen in all !
In man ! in earth ! in more amazing skies !
Teaching this lesson, pride is loth to learn—
“ Not deeply to discern, not much to know,
“ Mankind was born to wonder, and adore.” 1875
And is there cause for higher wonder still,
Than that which struck us from our past surveys ?
Yes ; and for deeper adoration too.
From my late airy travel unconfin'd,
Have I learn'd nothing ? Yes, LORENZO ! This ;—
Each of these stars is a religious house ; 1881
I saw their altars smoke, their incense rise,
And heard hosannahs ring thro' ev'ry sphere,
A seminary fraught with future gods.
Nature all o'er is consecrated ground, 1885
Teeming with growths immortal, and divine,
The great Proprietor's all-bounteous hand
Leaves nothing waste, but sows these fiery fields
With seeds of reason, which to virtues rise
Beneath his genial ray ; and, if escap'd 1890

The pestilential blasts of stubborn will,
 When grown mature, are gather'd for the skies.
 And is devotion thought too much on earth,
 When beings, so superior, homage boast,
 And triumph in prostrations to the Throne? 1895

But wherefore more of planets, or of stars?
 Ethereal journies, and, discover'd there,
 Ten thousand worlds, ten thousand ways devout,
 All nature sending incense to the throne,
 Except the bold LORENZOS' of our sphere? 1900

Op'ning the solemn sources of my soul,
 Since I have pour'd, like feign'd Eridanus,
 My flowing numbers o'er the flaming skies,
 Nor see, of fancy, or of fact, what more
 Invites the muse—here turn we and review 1905

Our past nocturnal landscape wide:—then say,
 Say, then, LORENZO! with what burst of heart,
 The whole at once revolving in his thought,
 Must man exclaim, adoring, and, aghast?

“ O what a root! O what a branch is here! 1910

“ O what a father! what a family!

“ Worlds! systems! and creations!—And creations,

“ In one agglomerated cluster hung,

“ * Great Vine! on Thee, on Thee the cluster
 hangs;

“ The filial cluster! infinitely spread 1915

“ In glowing globes, with various being fraught;

“ And drinks (nectareous draught!) immortal life,

“ Or, shall I say (for who can say enough?)

“ A constellation of ten thousand gems!

* John xv. 1.

“ (And O, of what dimension ! of what weight !
“ Set in one signet, flames on the right hand
“ Of Majesty Divine ! The blazing seal,
“ That deeply stamps, on all created minds,
“ Indelible, His sov’ reign attributes, 1924
“ Omnipotence, and Love ! That, passing bound :
“ And this, surpassing that. Nor stop we here,
“ For want of pow’r in God, but thought in man.
“ Ev’n this acknowledg’d leaves us still in debt ;
“ If greater aught, that greater all is Thine, 1929
“ Dread Sire !—Accept this miniature of Thee ;
“ And pardon an attempt from mortal thought,
“ In which archangels might have fail’d unblam’d.”

How such ideas of th’ Almighty’s pow’r,
And such ideas of th’ Almighty’s plan,
(Ideas not absurd) distend the thought 1935
Of feeble mortals ! nor of them alone !
The fullness of the Deity breaks forth
In inconceivables to men, and gods.
Think, then, O think ; nor ever drop the thought ;
How low must man descend, when gods adore !—
Have I not, then, accomplish’d my proud boast ?
Did I not tell thee, “ We would mount,” LORENZO !
“ And kindle our devotion at the stars ?”

And have I fail’d ? And did I flatter thee ?
And art all adamant ? And dost confute 1945
All urg’d, with one irrefragable smile ?
LORENZO ! Mirth how miserable here !
Swear by the stars, by HIM who made them, swear,
Thy heart, henceforth, shall be as pure as they :
Then thou, like them, shalt shine ; like them shalt rise

From low to lofty ; from obscure to bright ;
 By due gradation, nature's sacred law.
 The stars, from whence ?—Ask chaos—He can tell.
 These bright temptations to idolatry,
 From darkness, and confusion, took their birth ;
 Sons of deformity ! From fluid dregs 1956
 Tartarean, first they rose to masses rude :
 And then, to spheres opaque ; then dimly shone ;
 Then brighten'd ; then blaz'd out in perfect day.
 Nature delights in progress ; in advance 1960
 From worse to better : but when minds ascend,
 Progress, in part, depends upon themselves.
 Heav'n aids exertion ; greater makes the great ;
 The voluntary little lessens more.
 O be a man and thou shalt be a god ! 1965
 And half self-made !—Ambition how divine !
 O thou, ambitious of disgrace alone !
 Still undevout ! Unkindled !—Tho' high taught,
 School'd by the skies ; and pupil of the stars ;
 Rank coward to the fashionable world ! 1970
 Art thou asham'd to bend thy knee to heav'n ?
 Curst fume of pride, exhal'd from deepest hell !
 Pride in religion is man's highest praise.
 Bent on destruction ! and in love with death !
 Not all these luminaries, quench'd at once, 1975
 Were half so sad, as one benighted mind,
 Which gropes for happiness, and meets despair.
 How, like a widow in her weeds, the night,
 Amid her glimm'ring tapers, silent sits !
 How sorrowful, how desolate, she weeps 1980
 Perpetual dews, and saddens nature's scene !

A scene more sad sin makes the darken'd soul,
All comfort kills, nor leaves one spark alive.

Tho' blind of heart, still open is thine eye :
Why such magnificence in all thou seest? 1985
Of matter's grandeur, know, one end is this,
To tell the rational, who gazes on it—

“ Tho' that immensely great, still greater He,
“ Whose breast, capacious, can embrace, and lodge,
“ Unburthen'd, nature's universal scheme ; 1990
“ Can grasp creation with a single thought ;
“ Creation grasp and not exclude its sire.” —

To tell him farther——“ It behoves him much
“ To guard th' important, yet depending, fate
“ Of being, brighter than a thousand suns! 1995
“ One single ray of thought outshines them all.” —

And if man hears obedient, soon he'll soar
Superior heights, and on his purple wing,
His purple wing bedrop'd with eyes of gold,
Rising, where thought is now deny'd to rise, 2000
Look down triumphant on these dazzling spheres.

Why then persist ?—No mortal ever liv'd
But, dying, he pronounc'd (when words are true !)
The whole that charms thee, absolutely vain ;
Vain, and far worse !—Think thou, with dying men ?
O condescend to think as angels think ! 2006
O tolerate a chance for happiness !

Our nature such, ill choice ensures ill fate ;
And hell had been, tho' there had been no God.
Dost thou not know, my new astronomer ! 2010
Earth, turning from the sun, brings night to man ;
Man turning from his God, brings endless night ;

Where thou canst read no morals, find no friend,
 Amend no manners, and expect no peace.
 How deep the darkness! and the groan how loud!
 And far, how far, from lambent are the flames! 2016
 Such is LORENZO'S purchase! such his praise!
 The proud, the politic LORENZO'S praise!
 Tho' in his ear, and levell'd at his heart,
 I've half read o'er the volume of the skies. 2020

For think not thou hast heard all this from me;
 My song but echoes what great nature speaks.
 What has she spoken? Thus the goddess spoke,
 Thus speaks for ever:—"Place at nature's head,
 "A Sov'reign, which o'er all things rolls his eye,
 "Extends his wing, promulgates his commands,
 "But, above all, diffuses endless good;
 "To whom for sure redress, the wrong'd may fly;
 "The vile for mercy; and the pain'd for peace:
 "By whom, the various tenants of these spheres,
 "Diversify'd in fortunes, place, and pow'rs, 2031
 "Rais'd in enjoyment, as in worth they rise,
 "Arrive at length (if worthy such approach)
 "At that blest fountain-head, from which they
 "stream;
 "Where conflict past redoubles present joy; 2035
 "And present joy looks forward on increase;
 "And that on more; no period! ev'ry step
 "A double boon! a promise, and a bliss."
 How easy sits this scheme on human hearts!
 It suits their make; it soothes their vast desires;
 Passion is pleas'd, and reason asks no more; 2041
 'Tis rational! 'Tis great!—But what is thine?

It darkens! shocks! excruciates! and confounds!
Leaves us quite naked, both of help and hope,
Sinking from bad to worse; few years, the sport
Of fortune; then, the morsel of despair. 2046

Say, then, LORENZO! (for thou know'st it well)
What's vice? Mere want of compass in our thought.
Religion, what?—The proof of common sense;
How art thou hooted, where the least prevails? 2050
Is it my fault, if these truths call thee fool?

And thou shalt never be miscall'd by me.
Can neither shame, nor terror, stand thy friend?
And art thou still an insect in the mire?
How, like thy guardian angel, have I flown; 2055
Snatch'd thee from earth; escorted thee thro' all
Th' ethereal armies; walk'd thee, like a god,
Thro' splendors of first magnitude, arrang'd
On either hand; clouds thrown beneath thy feet;
Close-cruiz'd on the bright paradise of God; 2060
And almost introduc'd thee to the throne!

And art thou still carousing for delight,
Rank poison; first, fermenting to mere froth,
And then subsisting into final gall?

To beings of sublime, immortal make, 2065
How shocking is all joy, whose end is sure!
Such joy more shocking still, the more it charms!
And dost thou choose what ends ere well-begun,
And infamous, as short? And dost thou choose
(Thou, to whose palate glory is so sweet) 2070

To wade into perdition, thro' contempt,
Not of poor bigots only, but thy own?
For I have peep'd into thy cover'd heart,

And seen it blush beneath a boastful brow ;
 For, by strong guilt's most violent assault, 2075
 Conscience is not disabled, not destroy'd.

O thou most awful being, and most vain !
 Thy will how frail ! how glorious is thy pow'r !
 Tho' dread eternity has sown her seeds
 Of bliss, and woe, in thy despotic breast ; 2080
 Tho' heav'n, and hell, depend upon thy choice,
 A butterfly comes cross, and both are fled.

Is this the picture of a rational ?
 This horrid image, shall it be more just ?
 LORENZO ! No : It cannot,—shall not be, 2085
 If there is force in reason ; or, in sounds,
 Chanted beneath the glimpses of the moon,
 A magic, at this planetary hour,
 When slumber locks the general lip, and dreams
 Thro' senseless mazes hunt souls uninspir'd. 2090

Attend—The sacred mysteries begin—
 My solemn night-born adjuration hear :
 Hear, and I'll raise thy spirit from the dust ;
 While the stars gaze on this enchantment new ;
 Enchantment not infernal, but divine ! 2095

“ By silence, death's peculiar attribute ;
 “ By darkness, guilt's inevitable doom ;
 “ By darkness, and by silence, sisters dread !
 “ That draw the curtain round night's ebon throne,
 “ And raise ideas, solemn as the scene ! 2100
 “ By night, and all of awful, night presents
 “ To thought or sense (of awful much, to both,
 “ The goddess brings !) By these her trembling fires,
 “ Like Vesta's ever burning ; and, like hers,

- “ Sacred to thoughts immaculate, and pure ! 2105
“ By these bright orators, that prove, and praise,
“ And press thee to revere the Deity ;
“ Perhaps too, aid thee, when rever'd awhile,
“ To reach his throne ; as stages of the soul,
“ Thro' which, at diff'rent periods, she shall pass,
“ Refining gradual, for her final height, 2111
“ And purging off some dross at ev'ry sphere !
“ By this dark pall thrown o'er the silent world !
“ By the world's kings, and kingdoms, most re-
 nown'd,
“ From short ambition's zenith set for ever ; 2115
“ Sad presage to vain boasters, now in bloom !
“ By the long list of swift mortality,
“ From Adam downward to this ev'ning knell,
“ Which midnight waves in fancy's startled eye ;
“ And shocks her with an hundred centuries, 2120
“ Round death's black banner throng'd in human
 “ thought
“ By thousands, now resigning their last breath,
“ And calling thee—wert thou so wise to hear !
“ By tombs o'er tombs arising ; human earth
“ Ejected to make room for—human earth. 2125
“ The monarch's terror ! and the sexton's trade !
“ By pompous obsequies, that shun the day,
“ The torch funereal, and the nodding plume,
“ Which makes poor man's humiliation proud ;
“ Boast of our ruin ! Triumph of our dust ! 2130
“ By the damp vault that weeps o'er royal bones ;
“ And the pale lamp that shews the ghastly dead,
“ More ghastly, thro' the thick incumbent gloom !

“ By visits (if there are) from darker scenes, 2134

“ The gliding spectre! and the groaning grave!

“ By groans, and graves, and miseries that groan

“ For the grave’s shelter! By desponding men,

“ Senseless to pains of death, from pangs of guilt!

“ By guilt’s last audit! By yon moon in blood,

“ The rocking firmament, the falling stars, 2140

“ And thunder’s last discharge, great nature’s knell!

“ By second chaos; and eternal night.”—

Be wise—Nor let PHILANDER blame my charm;

But own not ill-discharg’d my double debt;

Love to the living; duty to the dead. 2145

For know, I’m but executor; he left

This moral legacy! I make it o’er

By his command! PHILANDER hear in me;

And heav’n in both.—If deaf to these, Oh! hear

FLORELLO’s tender voice; his wheel depends 2150

On thy resolve; it trembles at thy choice;

For his sake—love thyself: Example strikes

All human hearts; a bad example more;

More still a father’s; that ensures his ruin.

As parent of his being, wouldst thou prove 2155

Th’ unnatural parent of his miseries,

And make him curse the being which thou gav’st?

Is this the blessing of so fond a father?

If careless of LORENZO! spare, Oh! spare,

FLORELLO’s father, and PHILANDER’s friend;

FLORELLO’s father ruin’d, ruins him; 2161

And from PHILANDER’s friend the world expects

A conduct, no dishonour to the dead.

Let passion do, what nobler motive should;

Let love, and emulation, rise in aid 2165

To reason; and persuade thee to be—blest.

This seems not a request to be deny'd;

Yet (such th' infatuation of mankind!)

'Tis the most hopeless, man can make to man.

Shall I, then, rise in argument, and warmth; 2170

And urge PHILANDER'S posthumous advice,

From topics yet unbroach'd?—

But, Oh! I faint! My spirits fail!—Nor strange!

So long on wing, and in no middle clime;

To which my great Creator's glory call'd; 2175

And calls—but, now, in vain. Sleep's dewy wand

Has strok'd my drooping lids, and promises

My long arrear of rest; the downy god

(Wont to return with our returning peace)

Will pay, ere long, and bless me with repose. 2180

Haste, haste, sweet stranger! from the peasant's cot,

The ship-boy's hammock, or the soldier's straw,

Whence sorrow never chas'd thee; with thee bring,

Not hideous visions, as of late; but draughts

Delicious of well-tasted, cordial, rest; 2185

Man's rich restorative; his balmy bath,

That supples, lubricates, and keeps in play,

The various movements of this nice machine,

Which asks such frequent periods of repair.

When tir'd with vain rotations of the day, 2190

Sleep winds us up for the succeeding dawn;

Fresh we spin on, till sickness clogs our wheels,

Or death quite breaks the spring, and motion ends.

When will it end with me?

— “Thou only know’st!

2195

“Thou! whose broad eye, the future and the past
 “Joins to the present; making one of three
 “To mortal thought! Thou know’st, and thou alone,
 “All-knowing! All unknown! And yet well known;
 “Near, tho’ remote! and, tho’ unfathom’d, felt!
 “And tho’ invisible, for ever seen! 2201
 “And seen in all! The great and the minute;
 “Each globe above, with its gigantic race,
 “Each flower, each leaf, with its small people
 swarm’d
 “(Those puny vouchers of Omnipotence!) 2205
 “To the first thought, that asks “From whence?”
 declare
 “Their common source. Thou fountain running o’er
 “In rivers of communicated joy!
 “Who gav’st us speech for far, far humbler themes!
 “Say, by what name shall I presume to call 2210
 “Him I see burning in these countless suns,
 “As Moses in the bush*? Illustrious mind!
 “The whole creation, less, far less, to thee,
 “Than that to the creation’s ample round. 2214
 “How shall I name thee?—How my labouring soul
 “Heaves underneath the thought, too big for birth!
 “Great system of perfection! Mighty cause
 “Of causes mighty! cause uncaus’d! Sole root
 “Of nature, that luxuriant growth of God!
 “First father of effects! that progeny 2220

* Exod. iii. 2.

- “ Of endless series; where the golden chains’
 “ Last link admits a period, who can tell ?
 “ Father of all that is, or heard, or hears !
 “ Father of all that is, or seen, or sees !
 “ Father of all that is, or shall arise ! 2225
 “ Father of this immeasurable mass
 “ Of matter multiform ; or dense, or rare ;
 “ Opaque, or lucid ; rapid, or at rest ;
 “ Minute, or passing bound ! In each extreme
 “ Of like amaze, and mystery to man. 2230
 “ Father of these bright millions of the night * !
 “ Of which the least full godhead had proclaim’d,
 “ And thrown the gazer on his knee—Or, say,
 “ Is appellation higher still, thy choice ?
 “ Father of matter’s temporary lords ! 2235
 “ Father of spirits ! Nobler offspring ! sparks
 “ Of high paternal glory ; rich-endow’d
 “ With various measures, and with various modes
 “ Of instinct, reason, intuition ; beams
 “ More pale, or bright from day divine, to break
 “ The dark of matter organiz’d (the ware 2241
 “ Of all created spirit) ; beams, that rise
 “ Each over other in superior light,
 “ Till the last ripens into lustre strong,
 “ Of next approach to godhead. Father fond 2245
 “ (Far fonder than e’er bore that name on earth)
 “ Of intellectual beings ! beings blest
 “ With pow’rs to please thee, not of passive ply
 “ To laws they know not ; beings lodg’d in seats

* The stars.

“ Of well-adapted joys, in different domes 2250
 “ Of this imperial palace for thy sons;
 “ Of this proud, populous, well-policy’d,
 “ Tho’ boundless habitation, plann’d by thee;
 “ Whose several clans their several climates suit;
 “ And transposition, doubtless, would destroy. 2255
 “ Or, oh! indulge, Immortal King! indulge
 “ A title, less august indeed, but more
 “ Endearing; ah! how sweet in human ears,
 “ Sweet in our ears, and triumph in our hearts!
 “ *Father of immortality to man!* 2260
 “ A theme that * lately set my soul on fire.—
 “ And thou the next! yet equal! Thou, by whom
 “ That blessing was convey’d; far more! was bought,
 “ Ineffable the price! by whom all worlds 2264
 “ Were made; and one, redeem’d! illustrious light
 “ From light illustrious! Thou, whose regal power,
 “ Finite in time, but infinite in space,
 “ On more than adamantine basis fix’d,
 “ O’er more, far more, than diadems, and thrones,
 “ Inviolably reigns; the dread of gods! 2270
 “ And Oh! the friend of man! beneath whose foot,
 “ And by the mandate of whose awful nod,
 “ All regions, revolutions, fortunes, fates,
 “ Of high, of low, of mind, and matter, roll
 “ Thro’ the short channels of expiring time, 2275
 “ Or shoreless ocean of eternity,
 “ Calm, or tempestuous (as thy spirit breathes)
 “ In absolute subjection!—And, O Thou

* Nights the Sixth and Seventh.

- “ The glorious third * ! distinct not separate !
 “ Beaming from both ? with both incorporate ! 2280
 “ And (strange to tell !) incorporate with dust !
 “ By condescension, as thy glory, great,
 “ Enshrin’d in man ! Of human hearts, if pure,
 “ Divine inhabitant ! The tie divine
 “ Of heav’n with distant earth ! By whom I trust,
 “ (If not inspir’d) uncensur’d this address . 2286
 “ To thee, to them—To whom ? Mysterious Power !
 “ Reveal’d—yet unreveal’d ! Darkness in light !
 “ Number in unity ! our joy ! our dread !
 “ The triple bolt that lays all wrongs in ruin ! 2290
 “ That animates all right, the triple sun !
 “ Sun of the soul ! her never-setting sun !
 “ Triune, unutterable, unconceiv’d,
 “ Absconding, yet demonstrable, great God !
 “ Greater than greatest ! better than the best ! 2295
 “ Kinder than kindest ! with soft pity’s eye,
 “ Or (stronger still to speak it) with thine own,
 “ From thy bright home, from that high firmament,
 “ Where thou, from all eternity, hast dwelt ;
 “ Beyond archangels’ unassisted ken ; 2300
 “ From far above what mortals highest call !
 “ From elevation’s pinnacle ! Look down,
 “ Through—what ? Confounding interval ! thro’ all,
 “ And more than lab’ring fancy can conceive ;
 “ Thro’ radiant ranks of essences unknown ; 2305
 “ Thro’ hierarchies from hierarchies detach’d ;
 “ Round various banners of Omnipotence,

* The Holy Ghost.

“ With endless change of rapt’rous duties fir’d ;
 “ Thro’ wond’rous beings, interposing swarms,
 “ All clust’ring at the call, to dwell in thee ; 2310
 “ Thro’ this wide waste of worlds ; this vista vast,
 “ All sanded o’er with suns ; suns turn’d to night
 “ Before thy feeblest beam—Look down, down, down
 “ On a poor breathing particle in dust,
 “ Or lower,—an immortal in his crimes. 2315
 “ High crimes forgive ; forgive his virtues too !
 “ Those smaller faults, half-converts to the right.
 “ Nor let me close these eyes, which never more
 “ May see the sun (tho’ night’s descending scale
 “ Now weighs up morn) unpity’d and unblest ! 2320
 “ In thy displeasure dwells eternal pain ;
 “ Pain, our aversion ; pain, which strikes me now ;
 “ And since all pain is terrible to man,
 “ Tho’ transient, terrible ; at thy good hour,
 “ Gently, ah gently, lay me in my bed, 2325
 “ My clay-cold bed ! by nature, now, so near ;
 “ By nature, near ; still nearer by disease !
 “ Till then, be this an emblem of my grave :
 “ Let it out-preach the preacher ; every night
 “ Let it out-cry the boy at Philip’s* ear ; 2330
 “ That tongue of death ! That herald of the tomb !
 “ And when (the shelter of thy wing implor’d)
 “ My senses sooth’d, shall sink in soft repose ;
 “ O sink this truth still deeper in my soul,
 “ Suggested by my pillow, sign’d by fate, 2335
 “ First, in fate’s volume, at the page of man—

* Philip king of Macedon.

“ *Man’s sickly soul, tho’ turn’d and toss’d for ever,*
 “ *From side to side, can rest on nought but thee ;*
 “ *Here, in full trust ; hereafter, in full joy ;*
 “ On thee, the promis’d, sure, eternal down 5340
 “ Of spirits, toil’d in travel thro’ this vale.
 “ Nor of that pillow shall my soul despond ;
 “ For—Love almighty ! Love almighty ! (Sing,
 “ Exult, creation ;) Love almighty, reigns !
 “ That death of death ! That cordial of despair !
 “ And loud eternity’s triumphant song ! 2346
 “ Of whom no more :—For, O thou Patron God* ;
 “ Thou God and mortal ! Thence more God to man !
 “ Man’s theme eternal ! Man’s eternal theme !
 “ Thou can’st not ’scape uninjur’d from our praise.
 “ Uninjur’d from our praise can he escape, 2351
 “ Who, disembosom’d from the Father, bows
 “ The heav’n of heav’ns, to kiss the distant earth ?
 “ Breathes out in agonies a sinless soul !
 “ Against the cross, death’s iron sceptre breaks !
 “ From famish’d ruin plucks her human prey ; 2356
 “ Throws wide the gates celestial to his foes !
 “ Their gratitude, for such a boundless debt,
 “ Deputes their suff’ring brothers to receive !
 “ And, if deep human guilt in payment fails ; 2360
 “ As deeper guilt, prohibits our despair !
 “ Injoins it, as our duty to rejoice !
 “ And (to close all) omnipotently kind,
 “ *Takes his delights among the sons of men† ?*”

* Jesus Christ.

† Prov. chap. viii. 31.

What words are these?—And did they come from
heav'n? 2365

And were they spoke to man? To guilty man?

What are all mysteries to love like this!

The song of angels, all the melodies

Of choral gods, are wafted in the sound;

Heal and exhilarate the broken heart, 2370

Tho' plung'd before, in horrors dark as night:

Rich prelibation of consummate joy!

Nor wait we dissolution to be blest.

This final effort of the moral muse,

How justly * titled! Nor for me alone; 2375

For all that read; what spirit of support,

What height of Consolation, crown my song!

Then farewell night! Of darkness now no more:

Joy breaks; shines; triumphs; 'tis eternal day.

Shall that which rises out of nought complain 2380

Of a few evils, paid with endless joys?

My soul! henceforth, in sweetest union join

The two supports of human happiness,

Which some erroneous think can never meet;

True taste of life, and constant thought of death;

The thought of death, sole victor of its dread! 2386

Hope be thy joy; and probity thy skill;

Thy patron he, whose diadem has dropp'd

Yon gems of heav'n; eternity, thy prize:

And leave the racers of the world their own, 2390

Their feather, and their froth, for endless toils.

They part with all for that which is not bread;

* The Consolation.

They mortify, they starve, on wealth, fame, power ;
And laugh to scorn, the fools that aim at more.

How must a spirit, late escap'd from earth, 2395

Suppose PHILANDER'S, LUCIA'S, OR NARCISSA'S,

The truth of things new-blazing in its eye,

Look back, astonish'd, on the ways of men,

Whose lives' whole drift is to forget their graves !

And when our present privilege is past, 2400

To scourge us with due sense of its abuse,

The same astonishment will seize us all.

What then must pain us, would preserve us now.

LORENZO ! 'tis not yet too late : LORENZO !

Seize wisdom, ere 'tis torment to be wise ; 2405

That is, seize wisdom, ere she seizes thee,

For what, my small philosopher ! is hell ?

'Tis nothing, but full knowledge of the truth,

When truth, resisted long, is sworn our foe ;

And calls eternity to do her right. 2410

Thus, darkness aiding intellectual light,

And sacred silence whisp'ring truths divine,

And truths divine converting pain to peace.

My song the midnight raven has outwing'd,

And shot, ambitious of unbounded scenes, 2415

Beyond the flaming limits of the world,

Her gloomy flight. But what avails the flight

Of fancy, when our hearts remain below ?

Virtue abounds in flatterers, and foes ;

'Tis pride, to praise her ; penance to perform. 2420

To more than words, to more than worth of tongue,

LORENZO ! rise, at this auspicious hour ;

An hour, when heav'n's most intimate with man ;

When, like a falling star, the ray divine
Glides swift into the bosom of the just ; 2425
And just are all, determin'd to reclaim ;
Which sets that title high, within thy reach.
Awake then: Thy PHILANDER calls: Awake!
Thou, who shalt wake, when the creation sleeps ;
When, like a taper, all these suns expire ! 2430.
When time, like him of Gaza * in his wrath,
Plucking the pillars that support the world,
In nature's ample ruins lies intomb'd ;
And midnight, universal midnight, reigns.

* Sampson, Judges xvi. 29, 30.

END OF THE NIGHT THOUGHTS.



NOTES,
CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY,
ON
THE NIGHT THOUGHTS.

CRITICISM has two leading objects ; the one to point out the latent beauties of an author, which are apt to escape the observation of common readers ; the other to detect his blemishes and defects. Though this last is far less agreeable to a liberal mind than the other, and has often the appearance of invidiousness, it is certainly the most useful, when done with candour and good humour ; and it is to this species of criticism that many owe their excellence in composition, and some of the best writers have not blushed to acknowledge it.

Both these objects will be kept in view in the following Notes ; and to these a third added, that of explaining such allusions as may appear obscure, and of supplying such facts and observations as may be necessary to elucidate the text.

NIGHT I.

The First Night was published in 1742, and is addressed to Arthur Onslow, Esq. then, and many years afterward, Speaker of the House of Commons ; a situation which he supported with great reputation and respectability.

The opening of this Poem, though it has been objected to, I cannot help reckoning among its beauties; and the description of 'Night,' upon her throne of ebony, is certainly poetical and sublime.

Though Young has less of imitation than any of our poets, these words, 'if dreams infest the grave,' (line 6) bring to our immediate recollection that fine passage of Shakespeare in his Hamlet:

'—————To die;—to sleep;—
' To sleep! perchance to dream! aye, there's the rub;
' For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
' When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
' Must give us pause.'—————

It is difficult to be sublime, without bordering upon the extravagant: Young found it so. Line 15 introduces a sentiment far too hyperbolic. Another poet would have thought it sufficient to have said, his fate was 'dark as midnight,' but Young complains,

'—————And night,
' Ev'n in the zenith of her dark domain,
' Is *sunshine* to the colour of my fate.'

And all this on account only of an affliction common to human nature, the bereavement of his family.

Lines 29 and 30. We have a striking incongruity and confusion in the metaphors. Silence and darkness are said to

{—————*Nurse* the tender thought
' To reason, and on reason *build* resolve,'

Which resolve again is reckoned a

' Column of true majesty in man.'

The term *nurse* should have been exchanged for some other more applicable to building, as to *raise* or *rear*: Thus Pope,

To *rear* the tender thought.

Line 39. There is something mean, though aspiring to grandeur, in comparing the creation of the sun to the striking a light with a tinder-box;

' O THOU! whose word from solid darkness *struck*
' That *spark*, the sun.'—————

Nor is the application of the same figure to the *striking a light* in the *soul* (line 40) more happy. How much more dignified is the simple language of the inspired writer.

He said—' Let light be, and light was.'

Another term censurable for its meanness occurs in line 105, where we are told

' For human weal Heav'n *husbands* all events.'

Which suggests a comparison between the conduct of Divine Providence, and the frugal management of a private family; a comparison not very honourable to Deity, nor very consistent with some other parts of the poem, in which nature is supposed rather to be prodigal than parsimonious in her proofs and evidence.

Notwithstanding these blemishes, the First Night contains several passages of peculiar merit. The passage at line 55, beginning,

‘The bell strikes one’———

Is peculiarly forcible and solemn.

The paradox in human nature, line 68 and sequel, is a good specimen of our author’s skill in the antithesis, which is his favourite figure. It may be too much dilated; but in many parts it is striking and beautiful, and there is a world of import in this line,

‘O what a miracle is man to man!’

One of Young’s most conspicuous faults, is the crowding his images too fast on the imagination, as in line 123 and sequel, where the present life is considered as the bud—the dawn—the vestibule—the embryo of our future being; all which ideas, however, have their beauty, particularly the last, in which man, in his present state, is compared to an insect sleeping in its shell—till death bursts his confinement, and opens the way to immortality; like the moth and butterfly, when they first expand their wings, drop the worm in which they had been entombed, and sail at liberty in the open atmosphere.

The comparison (line 164 and sequel) between human life and a dream, though not new, is well wrought.

The answer to this question, ‘Where is to-morrow?’ (line 375) is pointed and poetic. And the reflections on procrastination, (line 390 and sequel) just, and for the most part, excellent.

Whoever was intended by Philander, we learn that he died suddenly.

Line 384.—‘———A warning was denied.’

Line 450.—‘Dark, tho’ not blind like thee *Mæonides!*

‘Or *Milton*, thee.’———

Mæonides is a poetic name for Homer, who, as well as Milton, was blind in the latter part of his life.

It was Pope ‘who made *Mæonides* our own,’ (line 452) though the expression would now much better apply to Mr. Cowper.

From a letter preserved in Johnson, there appears to have subsisted an acquaintance, if not a friendship, between Pope and Young, [See Johnson, p. 366.] and that the latter requested from the former a prologue to one of his plays, which however does not appear to have been granted.

NIGHT II.

This is inscribed to the Earl of Wilmington. Our author has been accused, and not without reason, of flattery to the great: but when the charge has been carried to profaneness, as far as the Night Thoughts are in question, it appears unfounded. The famous line,

‘ And laughs at *Heaven, O Wilmington, and thee.*’

Appears simply to mean that this nobleman was on the side of heaven and virtue, and therefore exposed to the scorn of fools.

Line 1. “When the cock crew, he wept:” *i. e.* Peter. See Luke xxii. 60, 61.—Shakespeare has some beautiful reflections upon ‘the cock—the trumpet to the morn,’ in Hamlet.

Line 40.—‘That time is mine, O *Mead!* to thee I owe.’

The author appears to have been just recovered from a fit of illness, by the assistance of the celebrated Dr. *Mead*, then in full practice and high esteem.

Line 99.—‘I’ve lost a day’—the prince who nobly cry’d:’

Titius
Titius *i. e.* *Vespasian*, who thus exclaimed, whenever he let a day pass without some meritorious action.

Line 129.—‘—————As *Atlas* groan’d
‘The world beneath.’——

Atlas, a son of Jupiter and King of Mauritania, for his skill in astrology, was poetically said to bear the globe upon his shoulders. He was supposed, in the heathen mythology, to be afterwards changed into a mountain. The fact is, *Atlas* is a ridge of high mountains, whose tops are covered with the clouds, whence they were said poetically to support the heavens.

Line 139.—‘Time in advance,’ &c.

This picture of time is beautiful, and clear of our Author’s too frequent fault—minuteness: which is always inimical to the sublime. Nor is the comparison (line 213) of ‘hours, days, months, and years,’ to the ‘unequal plumes’ that compose his ‘ample pinions,’ without its beauties, though there is some confusion of metaphor in the preceding lines.

Line 172.—‘Lavish of *lustrums,*’

i. e. of sacrifices. The meaning is, though fond of life, we waste it in foolish sacrifices to vanity and trifles.

Line 256.—‘O treacherous conscience!’

This is another beautiful portrait, which shews the hand of a master;

and the succeeding idea of Death's reading the memorandums of Conscience to the dying, is original and striking.

The comparison between Night and Death, (line 286 and sequel) though not new, is well conducted, and the subsequent lines exhibit an uncommon strength of language, as well as sublimity of ideas.

Line 406.—'Portentous as the written wall.'

The reader, who unhappily knows but little of his Bible, may see the affecting narrative here alluded to, in the 5th chapter of Daniel.

There are several other fine passages in this poem, but I shall only point out the pathetic scene of a good man's death: which is finely drawn at line 633, and properly improved in the last paragraph but one. It is indeed a most important and instructive sight:

'Christians adore, and infidels believe.'

But, alas! how industrious are mankind to avoid, or to forget, rather than to improve it!

NIGHT III.

This night was originally inscribed to the Duchess of P——, which by line 46 must be Portland. This lady, it seems, at a recent masquerade given by the Duke of Norfolk, had worn the character of Cynthia, or the Moon, (see line 29) and was therefore, as the Author hints, more properly selected as a patroness of Night Thoughts.

The character of Narcissa, supposed to be Mrs. Temple, is drawn with exquisite delicacy and tenderness, and while her loss was yet fresh upon his memory, and his feelings still 'tremblingly alive,'—I have already expressed a suspicion of Mr. Croft's dates, and upon reviewing the subject, I am strongly disposed to believe that Philander (Mr. Temple) died before his amiable Narcissa; not only because the poet has given this order to the events, but also because we hear nothing of his accompanying her abroad, which it seems natural to expect he would have done rather than her father, or at least in company with him.

Line 81.—'Sweet harmonist,' &c.

This is one of the finest examples of the figure of repetition I ever remember to have read. And there is also a peculiar softness and melody in the language.

Line 116, &c.—‘ —————With haste, parental haste
 ‘ I flew, I snatch’d her from the rigid north,
 ‘ And bore her nearer to the sun.’

That is, he accompanied her to the south of France; but from line 121, it should seem the season was unfriendly to his wishes, ‘The sun denied his wonted succour, and she died.

Line 162.—‘ *That* mourn’d the dead, and *this* denied a grave.’

The circumstance of refusing christian burial to Protestants in Popish Countries, and the manner in which the author stole a grave for his daughter, is wrought up with much pathos: Perhaps however too much dilated, and mingled with some exceptionable lines—and the author’s resentment is more like the poet than the christian. The story of Michael and Satan is artfully introduced at line 201, compare *Jude*, ver. 9, but it wants perspicuity.

Line 172.—‘ With pious sacrilege a grave I stole.’

It appears by the extract of a letter just printed, that in order to obtain this, the Doctor bribed the under gardener, who dug the grave, and let him in by a private door, bearing his beloved daughter, wrapt up in a sheet, upon his shoulder. When he had laid her in this hole, he sat down, and as the man expressed it, “rained tears.”—It appears also, that sometime previous to this event, expecting the catastrophe, he had been seen walking solitarily backward and forward in this garden, as if to find the most solitary spot for his purpose.—See *Evangelical Magazine for November, 1797*.

Line 245.—‘ This hoary cheek a train of tears bedews,’ &c.

There is exquisite tenderness, and uncommon pathos in this passage, which gives to each individual tear a distinct object of distress, and magnifies each distress to a public and general calamity.

Line 255.—‘ The vale of Death, that hush’d *Cimmerian* vale.’

This alludes to a people of Italy, the *Cimmerii*, who are said to have resided in a valley so deep that the sun never reached it. A very proper emblem of the valley of the shadow of death.

Line 271.—‘ As poets feign’d, from *Ajax*’ streaming blood
 ‘ Arose, with grief inscrib’d, a mournful flow’r.’

Ajax, one of the most distinguished of the Grecian princes at the siege of Troy, killed himself, but was afterward feigned to be changed into a *violet*, the flower here alluded to.

Line 277.—‘ Our dying friends come o’er us like a cloud,’ &c.

Our Author often discovers much originality in the various lights in which he places the same object, as here the death of friends; and in this instance he has been careful to keep his images distinct, and not

spoiled them by confusedly running one into the other, as he sometimes did. Dying friends are a *cloud* to damp our improper ardour—*pioneers* to prepare our way—*plumes* from the wing of human vanity—and ‘*angels* sent on errands full of love.’

Line 211.—‘And feel I, Death, no joy from thought of thee?’

These concluding lines on Death have much point and animation, intermixed with some feeble lines and quaint expressions; faults very incidental to our Author; but which often serve as foils only to his beauties.

NIGHT IV.

This Night is inscribed to the honourable Mr. Yorke, since Earl of Hardwicke, to whom he acknowledges his muse to have been ‘much indebted,’ and who, it is said, intended to have laid our author under farther obligations by the living of Shenfield in Essex, if it had become vacant.

This Night has been decidedly preferred to the other eight; it certainly abounds with fine sentiments and beautiful imagery; but it is not necessary to disparage the others in order to commend this.

Line 66.—‘Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
‘Court favour yet untaken I besiege.’

This passage seems to have been prophetic, for if the Night Thoughts were published in 1744, as Mr. Croft assures us; his age could not at this time exceed sixty-three. It is observable, that fourteen years after this confession, the author solicited farther promotion, and received it exactly at fourscore. And yet, in this same Night, and but a few lines farther, (line 100) our Author tells us,

‘If this song lives, posterity shall know
‘One, tho’ in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
‘Who thought ev’n gold might come a day too late.’

Who can account for the inconsistencies even of wise and good men!

Line 166.—‘With joy—with grief, that healing hand I see!’

In this passage there is much sublimity of thought, and strength of expression; yet weakened by hyperbole, and the love of paradox and antithesis. The Author’s leading design is to form a strong contrast between the dignity and humiliation of our Redeemer; but in some parts it wants truth and propriety for its support. It was not the hand that bled upon the cross that ‘formed the skies:’ although the Creator and the Redeemer united in the same person: the different characters

must be referred to diverse natures, the human and divine. In short, it was the same *person*, but *not* the same *nature*, that both *formed* and *bled*.

Line 197.—‘Expended Deity on human weal.’

This verse has either no meaning or a false one: for Deity can suffer no change, no exanimation, nor exinanition: ‘expended Deity’ strikes me therefore as an impropriety that poetic licence will hardly justify.

Line 208.—‘Thou, rather than thy justice should be *stain’d*,
‘Didst *stain* the cross.’

This is a *pun* very unworthy both of the Author and the subject; and into which he appears to have been betrayed by the excessive love of antithesis.

Line 226.—‘Not thus our infidels th’ eternal draw.’

This, (if I may so speak) is a beautiful portrait of the Deity.

‘Full orb’d, in his whole round of rays complete.’

Both the language and the sentiment are correct, and the allusion to the celestial orb ingenious and pertinent: but the succeeding lines to ‘brainless wits,’ discover again too much the Author’s fondness for paradox and antithesis.

Line 246.—‘The sun beheld it—No.’

This allusion to the supernatural darkness at our Saviour’s crucifixion is admirable; and the idea of nature shuddering to behold it, is poetic and sublime. Who can read it without shuddering too?

Line 273.—‘Hear, O ye nations! Hear it, O ye dead!’

There is uncommon animation in this passage; and it is one of a very few instances, I have observed, in which the *words* of scripture have been quoted by our poets without weakening them.

Line 313.—‘If, sick of folly, I *relent*, he writes

‘My name in Heaven with that inverted spear

‘(A spear deep-dipt in blood!) which pierc’d his side,

‘And open’d there a font for all mankind,

‘Who *strive*, who combat crimes, to *drink* and live.’

The thought of writing the penitent’s name with the spear that pierced our Lord’s side, is new and striking; but I should have preferred the idea of *bathing* to drinking, as agreeing better with the idea of a font, and the more usual scripture phraseology—‘to *bathe* and live.’

I object more strongly, however, against some parts of this passage as false divinity. It is not merely *striving* that forms the *Christian* penitent: since our Lord says, ‘Many shall strive to enter in at the straight gate, and shall not be able.’ The fact is, our exertions must

be in God's strength, and not in our own, to be successful. A man is not crowned, says St. Paul, except he strive lawfully.

Line 321.—' Pardon for infinite offences,' &c.

This passage is one of the finest instances of poetic climax that I recollect; but the term *universe*, is too extensive for our Author's meaning: ' world' would have been better.

Line 345.—' So dear, so due to Heaven, shall praise descend

' With her soft plume—————
' ————— to tickle mortal ears,
' Then diving in the pockets of the great.'

The conceit of tickling the ear with a feather, though puerile and hacknied, may, perhaps, be tolerated; but surely a feather is an odd instrument to pick pockets with! Here is then a confusion of metaphors; not to say that this, and several following ideas, are much below the subject, and the terms too mean for poetry.

Line 413.—' The great First-Last! pavillion'd high he sits,

' In darkness from excessive splendour.'—

Few readers need be told that these lines are borrowed from Milton; but the idea is amplified and improved in the following lines:

' His glory to created glory, bright
' As that to central horrors.'

Line 475.—' To man the bleeding cross has promised all.'

From this, to the end of this book, it is endless to point out the beauties of our Author. On other subjects he is great; but on redemption he is carried beyond himself; and though his sublime raptures are mixed with a few weak or exceptionable expressions, these serve but as a foil to his innumerable beauties.

Line 551 —' Religion's all.'

This portrait of Religion is drawn in Young's best manner, and not spoiled by overcolouring.

Line 582.—' He weeps!—the falling drop puts out the sun.

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

These lines are very exceptionable. The conceit of blotting out the sun with a tear, and of producing an earthquake by a sigh, is puerile; and the expression *outré*.

Line 756.—' Wrong not the Christian,' &c.

This defence of the reasonableness of Christianity is certainly just and excellent: but it must be guarded. Revelation promulgates nothing inconsistent with our reason, but many things beyond it. Besides,

right reason must be distinguished from the false reasoning of infidels; which the author has exposed with exquisite irony at line 775 and sequel.

Line 781.—‘Talk they of morals,’ &c.

No encomium can exceed the merit of this and the succeeding passages, whether they be weighed in the scales of poetic or theological criticism. The painting at verse 799, ‘He calls his wish,’ &c. is perfectly accurate, and from nature.

Line 835.—‘Like him they fable under Etna whelm’d:’

That is, one of the giants whom the poets suppose to have been condemned to this station, and that from thence he belches up the flame and smoke that form the irruptions of that mountain.

NIGHT V.

Lady Betty Young was the daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, but it must be the young Earl to whom this Night is dedicated, because our author calls him (line 39) ‘Illustrious youth!’

Line 13.—Wit, a true pagan, deifies the brute.’

Our Author’s reflections on Wit and Pleasure, in the beginning of this Poem, are ingenious and poetical; and while they defend the application of poetry to sacred subjects, administer just reproof to those who pervert it to vicious and obscene purposes.

‘There is in poesy a decent pride.’

Line 97.—‘O thou, blest Spirit! whether the supreme

‘Great Antemundane Father!

‘Or from his throne some delegated pow’r.’—

I am not aware that Dr. Young’s orthodoxy has been called in question: on the contrary, he speaks remarkably clear and strong upon the divinity of Christ in the preceding Night: yet certainly these lines look very favourable to Arianism, when he questions whether the Holy Spirit be the Supreme Being or a delegated power: a question that had no proper relation to his subject; and, perhaps, systematic theology is never more out of its place than in poetry.

Line 107.—‘A purer stream,

‘And fuller of the god than that which burst

‘From fam’d Castalia.’

That is, the Fountain of the Muses, at the foot of Mount Parnassus, supposed to inspire all who drank of it.

Line 243.—‘ Like him whom fable fledg’d with waxen wings.’

Namely ; Icarus, the son of Dædalus, who having made himself waxen wings to fly with, flew so near the sun that the wax melted, and he fell into the sea, and was drowned.

Line 272.—‘ Crassus but sleeps ; Ardelio is undone.’

That is, men of a busy, active, lively temper, are exposed to more dangers than the phlegmatic and the dull : so our Author adds in the next line :

‘ Wisdom less shudders at a fool than wit.’

Line 310.—‘ The man how bless’d,’ &c.

These lines have been universally admired, and often quoted ; but not more than they deserve.

Line 317.—‘ Lorenzo, read with me Narcissa’s stone,
‘ Narcissa was thy fav’rite.’—————

I think we may gather from these words, that Lorenzo and Narcissa were real characters, and acquainted ; but not intimately related, as has been commonly supposed ; otherwise our poet might have probably called her his *sister* rather than his *favourite*.

Line 325.—‘ See from her tomb, as from an humble shrine,
‘ Truth, radiant goddess!’—————

This painting is inimitably beautiful, and the idea as just as beautiful. The amplification also aggrandizes, instead of enervating the sentiment, as sometimes is the misfortune of our Author.

Line 360.—‘ As worldly schemes resemble Sibyls’ leaves,
‘ The good man’s days to Sibyls’ books compare.’

The ancient story here alluded to runs thus : about five centuries before the Christian Æra, a strange old woman came to Tarquin the Proud (the last Tyrant of Rome under the name of king) and offered to sell him nine books, which, she said, were the oracles of the Sibyls. But he disputing the price, she went away and burned three of them, and returning with the other six, asked the same sum as before. Tarquin only laughed at the humour, upon which she left him again, and burned another three, and then came the third time and demanded the same price for the remaining three as at first for all the nine. Tarquin, beginning now to think there might be something extraordinary in the business, consulted the Augurs, who reproved his impiety, and directed him to pay the sum demanded : This he did, and the story says, the woman immediately vanished ; and the books were delivered to the care of two of the nobility appointed to be their keepers.

Some years afterward these oracles were all burned ; but fresh ones were collected, some of which are still preserved, but intermixed with the grossest forgeries.

Some authors assert, that the original oracles were written upon the leaves of trees, subject to be wafted with every breath of air, whence our Author's comparison between these and worldly schemes.

Line 339.—'The brave, the gallant Altamont!'

In the third letter of our Author's 'Centaur not Fabulous,' (dated November 1754) is described the death-bed of the 'gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont.' His last words were—'My principles have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife.' By the Night Thoughts, it appears that profligacy led to despair, and despair to suicide, the natural career of *Vice* and *Infidelity*. Public rumour considered this character as drawn from Lord Euston, but heightened, no doubt, (Like Lorenzo) in the colouring.

Line 442.—'O Britain! infamous for suicide!'

Our country is unhappily proverbial for this crime all over the continent; and 'to die like an Englishman,' is a common periphrasis for self-murder.—How horrid is it that one of our first writers for literary genius, should have been the advocate of this crime!—I mean the elegant, but sceptic Hume.

Young argues against it with all his force of genius and of eloquence; and no doubt brought it on the stage in order to render it more shocking; for it forms the catastrophe of all his tragedies. Experience has, however, I conceive, sufficiently demonstrated that the natural effect of theatrical representations is the reverse. Crimes may be rendered less shocking, nay, even fashionable, by being exhibited on the stage; but I know of no man who ever took a hearty aversion to vice, and fled from it, in consequence of such exhibitions.

Line 545.————— 'Egypt's wanton queen,
'Carousing gems, herself dissolv'd in love.'

Cleopatra, successively the mistress of Julius Cæsar and Marc Anthony, was equally famous for her beauty, eloquence, and wit on the one hand, and for her pride, lewdness, and extravagance on the other. She is said to have drank pearls dissolved by chymical art, which is the circumstance here alluded to.

Line 568.—'Half-round the globe the tears *pump'd up* by death,
'Are spent in wat'ring vanities of life.'

There is something beautiful in the general idea of watering our vanities with the tears shed for the death of our friends: but the expression of *pumping up* tears, is low, and borders on the burlesque.

Line 586.—'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.'

By this it seems Lorenzo had been married—Had lost his lady in child-birth—but that her offspring was spared, and was the father's darling:—all which circumstances abundantly prove that this character could not intend the Author's son, who was yet a boy himself; and they confirm the common opinion, that Lorenzo was a real character.

Line 649.—‘Of age the glory is to wish to die:’

But this was very far from the Author's own case, who was seeking fame, riches, and promotion to his latest years. What illustrious characters would poets be if they could live up to all the great maxims they inculcate!

The remainder of this Night is a fine specimen of didactic poetry, and abounds with fine sentiments and beautiful apothegms.

Line 780.—‘That, like the Jews' fam'd oracle of gems,
‘Sparkles instruction:’

A reference to the breast-plate of the Jewish high-priest, which was composed of twelve different gems, and gave oracular answers, as many learned men have supposed, by a particular lustre of certain letters engraved on them.

Line 815.—‘*Tiberian* arts his purposes wrap up,
‘In deep dissimulation's darkest night.’

The artifices of death are described here and in the context with inimitable wit and ingenuity: the above allusion is to the character of the Emperor Tiberius, a man famous, or rather infamous, for dissimulation.

Line 836.—‘Such peace has *Innocence* in death:’

It would have better become Dr. Young as a Christian divine, and have been more consistent with the doctrine of Night the Fourth, to have substituted *Piety* for *Innocence*. The Christian's peace in death, does not arise from a review of the innocence either of his heart or life: but from his sense of pardoning mercy through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ.

Line 846.—‘’Twas in a circle of the gay I stood’

The following portrait of death, and the history of his adventures, is beyond encomium; and inferior to no passage of the kind I ever met with. The moral is good, the wit exquisite, and the painting betrays the hand of a master in every line.

Line 958.—‘See high in air the sportive goddess,’ &c.

This picture is intended as a contrast to the preceding, to which it forms a proper companion, and must be admitted to be well drawn, though it does not equally strike us with its novelty.

Line 1033.—‘Lysander—————
‘Woo’d the fair Aspasia.’

This story is exquisitely tender. It was probably formed by the imagination of the poet; but is so much like real life, that it interests us equally as if we knew the fact. The application of it to the Author’s own distress is pathetic: it reminds him of his loss in the death of Lady Young: Lysander and Aspasia, Philander and Narcissa, are all, for the moment, now forgot, and lost in the recollection of her death; this

—————‘cures all other woe,’

by absorbing it.

—————‘When such friends part,
‘Tis the survivor dies.—My heart, no more!’

NIGHT VI.

The Preface to this Poem gives a just view of the Author’s design and plan. It is inscribed to Henry Pelham, then prime minister; a very celebrated statesman, and a worthy character.

Our Author has drawn his portrait in two distinct lines, the first his abilities.

‘So P—[Pelham] thought: think better if you can.’—Night viii. l. 372.
And in this Poem (line 282)

‘What is a Pelham’s head to Pelham’s heart?’

Line 1.—‘*She*—for I know not yet her name in heav’n.’—

Our Author refers here to the conclusion of his former Poem, and continues to bewail his lady in very pathetic numbers.

‘Too dark the sun to see it!—

These few lines go beyond hyperbole; they are mere bombast. Our Author’s strong imagination hurried him frequently into this fault.

Line 52.—————‘Who can take
‘Death’s portrait true?’

There is inimitable beauty in these lines, with that kind of obscurity, which, according to our best critics, is essential to the sublime.

Line 128.—‘ Revere thyself—and yet thyself despise.’

This is an admirable precept, and founded upon a just estimate of human nature, the true dignity of which consists in its immortality and mental powers. As to moral rectitude, it is absurd and contradictory to ascribe this to a fallen creature, until restored by grace.

Line 261.—‘ Dædalian engin’ry!’

Our Author compares Genius and Art to the artificial wings that, according to remote antiquity, Dædalus formed to fly with: intimating that, without integrity and virtue, these can be of little use to their possessors.

The whole of this Poem abounds with solid argument, forcible expression, and beautiful imagery; but affords little scope for notes, having few obscurities to explain—no striking faults—nor any passages eminently excellent: it is all good; but neither sinks into the errors, nor rises into the sublimities of the former Poems.

Line 603.—‘ Enthusiastic this? Then all are weak

‘ But rank enthusiasts.’

Enthusiasm is one of those equivocal terms which may be taken either in a good or bad sense. When it expresses only ardour in the esteem of objects beautiful and excellent in the arts and sciences, it always is commended, and why not in religion? But when taken for that ‘wildfire of the soul,’ which, disregarding both reason and revelation, leads its subjects into extravagancies inconsistent with both, it cannot be too cautiously avoided, or too pointedly condemned.—Enthusiasm, in its original import, implies *inspiration*: when the spirit is from God, it is divine: when from the opposite quarter—diabolical.

Line 702.—‘ Matter immortal, and shall spirit die?’

If there be a weak place in our Author’s argument, it is here. Many of the heathen, reasoning from analogy in a similar manner, formed a very dangerous conclusion. They supposed that as our material part originated from the earth, and after a variety of revolutions returns thither; so our spirits, being a kind of ethereal flame, kindled from the great Spirit of the universe, after animating human bodies, and, perhaps, those of various other animals, return again and are absorbed in its original source—which they called the soul of the world and of the universe. But this is a species of Atheism, and abhorrent from Christianity.

Analogical reasoning is good so far only as the analogy is clear and just: but the analogy between matter and spirit, if any, is too remote to found an argument thereon; and, it should seem it would rather infer the mortality of the soul than its immortality, since all matter is subject to corruption, though not to annihilation. The argument from the revolutions of nature is, however, more favourable to the doctrine of a resurrection, and that implies our immortality.

NIGHT VII.

Line 6.—‘*Pope*, who couldst make immortals, art thou dead?’

The preface to this Night is dated, July 7, 1744, soon after Mr. Pope’s death, between whom and our Author there was certainly an acquaintance, if not a friendship. Young on one occasion applied to him for a favour, which is supposed to have been a prologue to one of his tragedies: but it is not known that this was granted. Young addressed two Poetical Epistles to him, and speaks of him always with high respect: yet the Author of the ‘*Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*,’ who is thought to have depreciated his merit, dedicated that work to him, which, if done with his knowledge and consent, is supposed to involve an inconsistency.

Line 24.—‘Unconscious bears, Bellerophon! like thee,
‘His own indictment.’

Bellerophon, after he had killed his brother, put himself under the protection of the King of Argos, who sent him with letters to his father-in-law, desiring he might be punished.

Line 126.—‘Hence the world’s master, from ambition’s spire,
‘In Caprea plung’d; and div’d beneath the brute.’

This alludes to the Emperor Tiberius, who at first bore an honourable character; but in the close of his life, he retired to Caprea, a small island in the Mediterranean, where he indulged himself in every species of debauchery and vice.

Line 161.—‘Die for thy country! Thou romantic fool!’

The Author means to say, that to deny the immortality of the soul, annihilates at once all public and private virtues. With infidels, who deny a future state, patriotism is a jest, as well as other virtues.

Line 170.—‘His first command is this:—Man, love thyself.’

That is, the love of existence and of happiness is implanted in our nature: but this must be distinguished from that sordid principle which not only begins but ends in self.

‘Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
‘As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
‘The centre mov’d, a circle straight succeeds,
‘Another still, and still another spreads:
‘Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
‘His country next; and next all human race.’

POPE.

Line 290.—‘ Go, man!

‘ And bow to thy superiors of the stall.’

This is an admirable specimen of the Author’s talent at irony and satire. It is not epigrammic, for it stings in *every* line.

Line 396.—‘ Echo the proud Assyrian in their hearts.’

Read Daniel, chap. iv. from verse 28 to the end.

Line 574.—‘ A bed of roses, or the burning bull.’

This line alludes to two anecdotes of a very different nature. Phalaris, a celebrated tyrant of antiquity, had a brazen bull so constructed as to hold men in its inside, which, by heating it with a slow fire, were roasted to death therein. The only act of justice recorded of this man is, that he obliged the inventor to make the first experiment. But his subjects performed another act no less just, when they roasted the tyrant himself in the same machine.

The first part of the above verse, refers to one of the English martyrs in the reign of the tyrant Henry VIII. (Counsellor Bainham) who while roasting in the flames at Smithfield, for the cause of God and truth, cried out—‘ O ye papists! ye look for miracles—behold one here! for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were on a bed of down. To me it is a bed of roses.’

Line 652.—‘ In this black channel would my ravings run.’

There is something characteristically great and wild in the subsequent specimen of infidel reasonings; and the concluding epitaph on the demolished universe is admirable.

Line 931.—‘ An All-prolific, all-preserving God!

‘ This were a God indeed—and such is man.’

The ascription of deity to man, may be poetic, but it is hardly Christian. The subsequent comparison of the dead awakened by the last trumpet, to bees collected by a warming pan, (line 338 and sequel) reminds us of Homer’s use of the like simile; (Iliad, Book II.) but it suits much better with the design of the bard than the divine: and gives an air of ridicule to the serious numbers of our Author.

Line 994.—‘ Know’st thou th’ importance of a soul immortal?’

There is great beauty, strength, and justice, in this calculation of the worth of immortality, taking for granted that metaphysical axiom, that matter is incapable of sensation; for on this principle alone is the calculation just. All the insensible creation is not of equal value with one rational intelligence; nor all mortal concerns, comprehended in one great aggregate, of comparable importance with the concerns of one immortal soul; for this plain reason—there will arise a period in eternity, when the existence of each individual will be of longer dura-

tion than the temporal existence of all perishable beings summed together. Well, therefore, has Dr. Doddridge estimated, 'that the eternal salvation of one soul is of more importance than the temporal salvation of all the nations of the earth until the end of time.'

'The devastations of one dreadful hour,
'Shall the Creator's six day's work devour.
'A mighty, mighty ruin! yet one *soul*
'Has more to boast, and far outweighs the whole.

Line 1094.—'Hence, Heaven looks down on earth *with all her eyes.*'

The latter part of this verse is a low proverbial form of expression, and ought to have been avoided.

Line 1108.—'Witness, thou Sinai!'—

This refers to the giving of the law to Moses. Exodus xix. xx.

Line 1110.—'Witness, ye billows.'

Namely, those of the Red Sea, in which Pharaoh and his host were drowned. Exodus xiv. 27.

Line 1113.—'Witness, ye flames, th' Assyrian tyrant blew
'To seven-fold rage.'

Viz. The fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel iii. 19.

Line 1115.—'And thou, Earth, witness.'—

This alludes to the earthquake by which Korah and his rebellious company were devoured, with all their property.

Line 1119.—'Renounce St. Evremont, and read St. Paul.'

Mons. St. Evremont, was a celebrated free-thinker, and popular French writer of the last century.

Line 1159.—'The grave, like fabled Cerberus, has op'd
'A triple mouth.'

Cerberus was a monstrous three-headed dog, which the mythologists placed at the mouth of the infernal regions: the Poet compares the grave to this monster, on account of its devouring 'Lucia, Narcissa, and Philander,' as it were at once. Lucia is evidently intended for Lady Young, whose real name was Elizabeth. (See *Life*, Page 12.) But why denominated Lucia, I am at a loss to say. See above line 614, also Night VIII. line 1356.

Line 1268.—'There, there, Lorenzo! thy Clarissa sails.'

Clarissa was Lorenzo's lady, and died in childbed, as observed above.

Line 1290.—'Not man alone, all rationals, heaven arms
'With an illustrious, but tremendous pow'r,
'To counteract its own most gracious ends;
'And this of strict necessity, not choice.'

Our Author here ventures upon the knotty subject of necessity and free-agency, which is not well adapted to his purpose. Without following him into this inextricable maze, we may venture to observe and censure the rashness of his assertion; that free-agency counteracts the designs of heaven. Both scripture and philosophy, on the contrary agree, that it is by the instrumentality of free agents that Providence effects its great designs, and in nothing is infinite wisdom more beautifully displayed, than in the control of the guilty passions of mankind, and in the superintendance of the moral world. Though we admit the Author's general principle, that sinners are the cause of their own destruction, yet the proposition cannot be inverted, to say that they are also the cause of their own salvation. 'The wages of sin is death, but 'the gift of God, eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Line 1354.—'A Christian dwells, like Uriel, in the sun.'

This sentiment is beautiful, and would bear amplification. Milton (*Paradise Lost*, Book III.) makes Uriel, the angel of the sun, a resident in that celestial luminary; and Young compares a Christian to Uriel. His dwelling in the sun may be referred both to the meridian evidence of christianity, particularly to the doctrine of immortality, and to that glory which true piety casts around his character.

Line 1390.—'You know its *title* flatters you, not me.'

That is, the title of this Poem—'The Infidel Reclaimed.'

Line 1416, &c.—'Admit a God—————'

'————— All other wonders cease;

'Deny him—all is mystery besides.'

This is an accurate state of the controversy, as to the being of a God, and merits the most serious attention of every free-thinker. For in denying the existence of a Supreme Being, men certainly take the *harder*, as well as the *darker* side.

Line 1476.—'Though quite forgotten half your Bible's praise.'

That is, the poetic half, which includes the Psalms, Proverbs, the Prophecies, and various other passages of scripture, which are evidently poetic in the original.

NIGHT VIII.

Dr. Young in his 'True Estimate of Human Life' (See Life, page 11.) attempted to weigh the world, 'and all that it contains,' in the balances of the sanctuary. His design never was completed; but this Poem, in some measure, supplies the deficiency; for here he estimates 'the love of this life; the ambition and pleasure, with the wit and wisdom of the world;' and having maturely weighed them, pronounces them altogether 'lighter than vanity.'

Line 14.—'Sprinkled with dews from the Castalian font.'

The Fountain of the Muses.—Urania (line 25) is the Muse that is supposed to inspire celestial themes.

Line 34.—'Eternal is at hand

'To swallow Time's ambitious; as the vast
'Leviathan the bubbles vain.'——

By the *Leviathan* our Author understands the crocodile of Egypt in his paraphrase of Job; but the comparison here better agrees with the whale. As this monster swallows the bubble that rides upon the wave, so Eternity devours all the trifling concerns of time.

Line 46.—'By him who foibles in archangels sees.'

This verse alludes to the expression of Elihu, in Job, chap. iv. 18. 'He putteth no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly.'

Line 172.—'Who lately feasted high at Albion's cost.'

This alludes to the unhappy fate of Admiral Balchen, who was shipwrecked on the rocks of Scilly, in the year 1744, in the *Victory*, a first-rate man of war; and more than a thousand persons perished with him.

Line 240.—'The boy has virtue by his mother's side.'

Florello is the son of Lorenzo by poor Clarissa—'orphan'd in his birth;' and the manner in which he is introduced is a strong evidence that these are real characters.

Line 277.—'Men of the world, the terræ-filial breed:'

That is, 'the sons of earth.' This and the following verses are a very just description of the Chesterfield School, where want of manners is the only vice, and politeness and simulation are the primary virtues. See farther, line 1266.

Line 323.—'Poor Machiavel! who labour'd hard his plan,
'Forgot that genius need not go to school.'

This consummate politician was the first, perhaps, that reduced the diabolical principles of tyranny and dissimulation to a system, and

taught them as a science; not considering, that in vice and hypocrisy man is 'without a tutor wise.'

Line 419.—'Prometheus'

In the Greek mythology, the son of Iapetus and the Nymph Asia, an exquisite artist, who having formed a man of clay, animated it with celestial fire, which, by the assistance of Minerva, he had stolen from heaven; for which presumption he is fabled to have been chained by Jupiter to mount Caucasus, with a vulture constantly preying upon his liver, which grew by night as fast as it was devoured by day — 'Our author here compares ambition to this Mount Caucasus, the 'Mountain of Torments.'

Line 492.—'Fain would he make the world his pedestal;
'Mankind the gazers; the sole figure he.'

An admirable picture this of an ambitious man! and finely ridiculed; but debased by the following paltry lines:

Line 499, and sequel.—'Knows this all-knower, that from *itch* of praise,
'Or from an *itch* more sordid, when he shines
'Taking his country by five hundred ears.'

Line 522.—'Like Kouli Khan, in plunder of the proud.'

A famous tyrant of Persia, who like most conquerors, was celebrated by the extent of his massacres and plunder, and in the end, by his enormous cruelties brought down upon himself the vengeance of his subjects, being assassinated in 1747.

Line 549.—'Think you there's but one whoredom?'

Though this language is too coarse for the dignity of the subject, yet there is much merit in the succeeding imagery.

Line 602.—'Who think'st thyself a Murray——
'—— my Demosthenes.'

Murray, the late Earl of Mansfield, celebrated both for his legal knowledge and graceful eloquence, and who was at this time at the head of his profession at the bar.

Demosthenes the first orator of Greece, and indeed of all antiquity, as well as the chief pleader of his time.

Line 609.—'Tell not Calista: she will laugh thee dead;
'Or send thee to her hermitage with L——.'

Mr. Croft thinks this initial refers to the real name of Lorenzo, and that this is a decisive proof that some real character was intended. Of this last fact I have no doubt, but suppose few persons who attentively peruse the context will think that this mysterious initial can refer to Lorenzo, though I cannot pretend to say to whom it does refer.

Line 710.—‘ A soul in commerce with her God is heav’n.’

A finer sentiment than this never dropped from the pen of an uninspired writer. To have God *with us*, is heaven *here*: to be *with God*, is heaven *hereafter*.

Line 771.—‘ Retire and read thy Bible to be gay;
‘ There truths abound of sov’reign aid to peace.’

How salutary and how seasonable this advice! there is no book in the world calculated like the Bible to administer consolation, especially to the afflicted, oppressed, and broken-hearted.

Line 804.—‘ Can joy like thine meet accident unshock’d?’

This is the true test of peace and joy; the pleasures of the world may serve to flatter in the times of prosperity and ease; but to ‘ meet accident unshocked, to open the door to poverty, or to talk with threatening death,’ requires the consolation of the gospel. In all these cases we may say to the joys of sense and worldly pleasures, as Job said to his friends, ‘ miserable comforters are ye all, and physicians of no value!’

Line 930.—‘ That like the fabled, self-enamour’d boy :’

Namely, Narcissus, who, according to the poets, fell in love with his own image in the water, and pined away into a *daffodil*.

Line 946.———‘ Like angels seen of old
‘ In Israel’s dream :’

See Genesis xxviii.

Line 995.—‘ Imagination is the Paphian shop.’

The poets fable that Vulcan, the God of subterraneous fire, and husband of Venus, kept a smith’s shop at Paphos, made poisoned arrows, and forged thunderbolts for Jupiter.

Line 1011.—‘ That persecuting priest, the Turk of Rome.’

This alludes to some circumstances unknown at present: it seems that the Pope prohibited the exportation of some articles of luxury intended for the tables of the rich, which (poor creatures) disappointed them.

Line 1030.———‘ Like Yorke
‘ Demurs on what it passes :’———

Alluding to the Honourable Mr. Yorke, to whom the Fourth Night is dedicated.

Line 1051.———‘ The pillars, these :
‘ But those of Seth not more remote from thee.’

This alludes to a fabulous story in Josephus, who tells us (*Antiq. lib. i. c. 2.*) that Seth and his descendants applied to the study of the

sciences, and being informed by Adam, that the world should be destroyed twice, by water and by fire, they erected two pillars, one of stone and the other of brick, on which they inscribed their knowledge, supposing that one or other of them might remain for their posterity.

Line 1151.—‘ And when he falls writes *Vici* on his shield.’

That is; *I have conquered*: the Christian alone can sing of victory in death.

Line 1310.——— ‘ As Athens’ fool
‘ Grinn’d from the port on ev’ry sail his own.’

A famous ideot, who pleased himself with the idea that every ship which came into port was his, and seemed to enjoy it as much as if it had been really so.

Line 1393.—‘ And headlong leap, like Curtius, down the gulph.’

M. Curtius, was a noble Roman youth, who, in the fourth Century before Christ, sacrificed his life for the salvation of his country, on the following occasion: a violent earthquake having opened a dreadful chasm in the Forum, the oracle declared it would not close till some noble youth was thrown into it; Curtius, therefore, being armed and mounted on a stately horse, leaped directly into it.

NIGHT IX.

This last Poem is dedicated to the Duke of Newcastle, a celebrated statesman, and prime-minister under George II. who died in 1768.

Line 92.—‘ Where is the dust that has not been alive?’

This passage is inimitably beautiful and pathetic; and the following paragraph rises to the sublime.

Line 127.——— ‘ Of one departed world
‘ I see the mighty shadow.’———

This is a beautiful allusion to the deluge, which is elegantly personified in the succeeding verses. It was well imagined to make the Deluge predict the final conflagration, and agrees with the scripture, which represents Enoch, the patriarch, as predicting the latter event before the former took place. See Jude, ver. 14, &c.

Line 133.—‘ But, like Cassandra, prophesies in vain.’

Cassandra was endued with the gift of prophesy by Apollo, but afterwards, for deceiving, had this curse entailed upon her, that no one should believe her.

Line 159.—‘ See all the formidable sons of fire.’

There is sublimity and force in this description superior to that in our Author’s ‘ Last Day,’ because less minute. The Introduction of Christ himself, as infinitely more resplendant than the sun, has a grand effect.

Line 179.—‘ A swift arch-angel, with his golden wing,
‘ -----
‘ ----- Sweeps stars and suns aside.’

This is a striking proof how easy it is, by an injudicious line, to reduce the sublime to the ludicrous and extravagant. Our Author was proceeding admirably, when the sudden thought of comparing the *wing* of the archangel to a *besom* spoiled his imagery, and set him to *sweeping* suns and stars, not, however, as dust and rubbish, but ‘ as blots and ‘ clouds,’ as if these were the proper objects for the besom! But Homer sometimes nodded, and if our Author drops his wing here, it is speedily to rise the higher; for the succeeding passage, at ver. 197, is one of the most sublime in the whole work.

Line 229.—‘ Deputed conscience scales
‘ The dread tribunal, and forestalls our doom.’

Here again our Author flags, his muse forsakes him, and the poet degenerates into the tradesman, and talks of forestalling like a cheese-monger or a butcher. Nothing can palliate such gross improprieties.

Line 245.—‘ Asks, “ What is truth?” with Pilate, and retires.’

See John xviii. 38.

Line 336.—‘ Eternity, the various sentence past
‘ Assigns the sever’d thron’d distinct abodes.’

Another passage which discovers great depth of thought, and strong powers of imagination.

Line 471.—‘ Her death.’——

That is; the death of Lucia, which, as before observed, evidently intends Lady Young. This he considers as a dispensation, painful, but instructive:

‘ For all I bless thee, most for the severe.’

Line 543.—‘ So Cynthia, (poets feign;) &c.

The fable of Endymion’s amour with Diana, or the Moon, arises from ‘ his knowledge of astronomy; and as he passed the night on some high ‘ mountain, to observe the celestial bodies, it was reported that he was ‘ courted by the Moon.’

Line 549.—‘ O majestic Night!’

This portrait is in the true spirit of poetry, sublime and beautiful.

Line 720.—‘ And see Day’s amiable sister.’

That is, the Moon, whose beams are poetically represented as refreshing the vegetable creation, fainting from the intensesness of the sun’s rays.

Line 884.——— ‘ O’er each sphere
‘ Presides an angel:’

It was by this hypothesis many of the ancients, ignorant of the machinery of nature, accounted for the motions of the heavenly bodies.

Line 926.—‘ Or nodding gardens pendant in mid-air.’

This alludes to the *hanging gardens* (as they were called) in Babylon, which were raised to a great height on arches, and so thickly covered with mould, as to grow the largest trees, as well as shrubs and flowers.

Line 974.—‘ The Stagyrite, and Plato, he—who drank
‘ The poison’d bowl, and him of Tusculum,
‘ With him of Corduba.’———

Of this string of philosophers, the first intends Aristotle, the chief of the peripatetic philosophers, born at Stagyræ, in Macedon—The 3d, Socrates, put to death by poison—The 4th, Cicero, whose country residence was Tusculum—and the 5th, Seneca, the preceptor of Nero, and a sacrifice to his cruelty.

Line 1045.—‘ Call it the breast-plate of the true High-Priest.’

An allusion to the sacred ornaments of Aaron—See Exodus xxviii.

Line 1053 —‘ Bourbon —————
‘ Wouldst thou be great?’———

This address is to Lewis XV. of France, who copied the vices of his grandfather without his glory.

Line 1122.——— ‘ On yon cœrulean plain:’

That is; the ethereal expanse of the skies, where the planets in ‘ mystic maze’ perform their various revolutions.

Line 1257.—‘ In Ajalon’s soft flow’ry vale repose?’

See Joshua x. 12, 13.

Line 1358.——— ‘ Ye glowing embers,
‘ On heaven’s broad hearth,’ &c.

This comparison is mean in itself, and rendered more so by the manner in which it is dilated. Many figures will bear to be touched that will not bear to be amplified.

Line 1687.——— ‘ Like him of Uz
‘ I gaze around!’

An allusion to Job’s words, ‘ O that I knew where I might find him!’ as the following verses allude to the 42d Psalm.

Line 1715.—‘How swift I mount!’—————

There is something very sublime and animated in this ethereal tour; and the subsequent address is (in some parts at least) carried as high as human language seems capable of rising.

Line 1780.————— ‘With war this fatal hour
‘Europa groans.’—————

The reader will recollect that this was just before the unhappy rebellion of 1745, when France conspired with other powers to seat a Pretender on the English throne; a period of remarkable commotion in Europe. Would to God the language were not equally applicable to our own times!

The following reflections on conquerors and tyrants are remarkably severe; but who will say they are unjust or false!

Line 1900.————— ‘Like feign’d Eridanus:

A constellation in the form of a river of the same name in Italy.

Line 1910.————— ‘Creations
‘In one agglomerated cluster hung,
‘Great Vine, on thee.’

Dr. Johnson calls this ‘an unlucky thought:’—‘when it dropped into ‘his mind (says the critic) that the orbs floating in space might be called ‘the cluster of creation, he thinks on a cluster of grapes, and says they ‘all hang on the great Vine,’ that is, the Deity: but this idea was no doubt borrowed from the scriptures, where our Lord applies it to himself as the head of union with his people: but our Author extends the idea to the union and dependance between the Deity and the whole creation. See John xv.

Line 2070.—‘For I have *peep’d* into thy cover’d heart:’

The word *peep’d* is highly improper and even ludicrous, spoiling a sentiment otherwise just and beautiful.

Line 2200.—‘Each flower, each leaf, with its small people swarm’d.’

That is, the animalculæ, which the microscope discovers swarming upon every leaf, and every flower.

Line 2308.—‘All sanded o’er with suns:’—————

A mean idea! though evidently intended for sublime. The heavens have been poetically called, ‘the floor of his abode,’ but our Poet is the first, I presume, to inform us, that this *floor* is *sanded*!

Line 2326.—‘Let it outcry the boy at Philip’s ear.’

It is said, that Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, employed a boy to admonish him every morning of his mortality in these words—‘Philip, thou art a man!’

Line 2425.—When time, like him of Gaza in his wrath,' &c.

Alluding to Sampson's taking away the gates of the Philistines. See Judges xvi. 29, 30. The allusion here is not improper in itself; but I cannot altogether admire it as a final conclusion of the Night Thoughts; which, instead of opening into eternal day, abruptly close the subject in 'universal midnight.'

The reader, however, who has perused the work with a taste for serious reflection, and has condescended to take these remarks with him as a guide, will not close the work without confessing, that among all the Author's blemishes he has found a great variety of beauties, uncommon originality of thought, many passages of the true sublime, and, above all, the finest moral sentiments, and the most interesting religious truths; may they rest with all their just and infinite importance on our minds!

END OF THE NOTES.

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