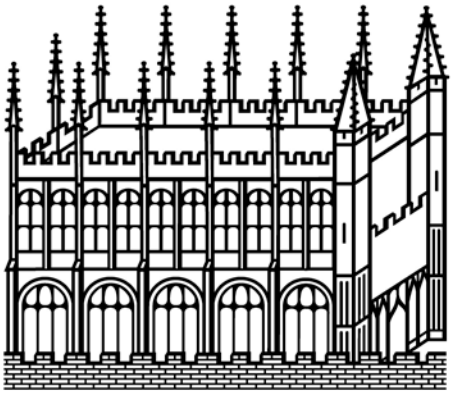

THE

POEMS

OF

WILLIAM COLLINS.

WITH NOTES

SELECTED FROM THE EDITIONS

OF

LANGHORNE, AND MRS. BARBAULD,

AND ORIGINAL;

TOGETHER WITH

DR. JOHNSON'S LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM CROWE,

PUBLIC ORATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

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*** *The Notes in the following pages are, first, those of the Author's Edition in* 1746; *these are without any signature: so likewise are the Notes to the Ode on the Highland Superstitions, which are taken from the Edinburgh publication of that piece. The remaining Notes are either selected from the Editions of Langhorne and Mrs. Barbauld, or are original Notes of the present Editor; and all these are distinguished by the initials of their respective names.*

John and James Keene, Printers,
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THE

LIFE OF COLLINS,

BY DR. JOHNSON.

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester, on the 25th day of December, 1721. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warton* has kindly informed me, admitted scholar of Winchester College, where he was educated by Dr. Burton.* His English exercises were better than his Latin.

He first courted the notice of the public by some verses "To a Lady Weeping," published in 'The Gentleman's Magazine.'

* I cannot here pass over the names of these excellent men, without a grateful acknowledgment of my lasting obligation to them. They were my only Schoolmasters in the Latin and Greek languages; and to them I am indebted for my education in Winchester College, during seven years, till the Election in 1764, when I left school; and more fortunate than my master Warton, or his schoolfellow Collins, I succeeded to New College in the year following.—C.

In 1740, he stood first in the list of the scholars to be received in succession at New College; but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a commoner of Queen's College, probably with a scanty maintenance; but was, in about half a year, elected a demy of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a bachelor's degree, and then suddenly left the university; for what reason I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pockets. He designed many works; but his great fault was irresolution; or the frequent calls of immediate necessity broke his scheme, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose. A man doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much disposed to abstracted meditation, or remote inquiries. He published proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth, and with keen resentment of his tasteless successor.* But probably not

* The immediate successor of Leo X. was Adrian VI., who died in about a year. He is not the Pope reproached here for his want of taste. but Clement VII., who came next. He was, like Leo X., of the House of Medici; and the world was disappointed in that he did not patronize literature and the fine arts, after the example of his relation and other princes of that munificent family. Collins and Dr. Johnson were both of that condition and adventure, which might easily induce them to feel and express some keen dislike of such a ch racter.—C.

a page of his history was ever written. He planned several tragedies, but he only planned them. He wrote now and then odes and other poems, and did something, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's Poetics, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He showed me the guineas safe in his hand.* Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a

* In the year 1746 he had spirit and resolution enough to publish his Odes: but the sale was by no means successful; and hence it was that the author, conceiving a just indignation against a blind and tasteless age, burnt the remaining copies with his own hand.—L.

A letter from Dr. Warton to his brother, which must have been written between May, 1745, (see p. 40) and this publication, gives the following account: Collins met me at Guildford Races, when I wrote out for him my Odes, and he likewise communicated some of his to me; and being both in very high spirits, we took courage, resolved to join our forces, and to publish them immediately. You will see a very pretty one of Collins's, on the death of Colonel

lieutenant-colonel, left him about £2000; a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust. The guineas were then repaid, and the translation neglected.

But man is not born for happiness. Collins, who, while he *studied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no sooner *lived to study*, than his life was assailed by more dreadful calamities—disease, and insanity.

Having formerly written his character,* while, perhaps, it was more distinctly impressed upon my memory, I shall insert it here.

"Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is only reconciled by

Ross. It is addressed to a lady, who was Ross's intimate acquaintance, and who, by the way, is Miss Bett Goddard. Collins is not to publish the Odes unless he gets 10 guineas for them. I returned from Milford last night, where I left Collins with my mother and sister, and he sets out to day for London.—Wool's Warton, p. 15.

* In the Poetical Calender, a Collection of Poems, by Fawkes and Woty, 1763.

a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.

"This was, however, the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance, were always desired by him, but not always attained. Yet, as diligence is never wholly lost, if his efforts sometimes caused harshness and obscurity, they likewise produced, in happier moments, sublimity and splendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence led him to oriental fictions, and allegorical imagery; and, perhaps, while he was intent upon description, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but somewhat obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.*

* Dr. Johnson, in his letters to Dr. Warton, expressed his opinion of Collins in more favourable and friendly terms.

How little can we venture to exult in any intellectual powers or literary attainments, when we consider the condition of poor Collins. I knew him a few years ago, full of hopes and full of projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, and strong in retention. This busy and forcible mind is now under the government of those who lately could not have been able to comprehend the least and most narrow of all his designs. Is he to pass the

"His morals were pure, and his opinions pious; in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed almost unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said, that, at least, he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation.

"The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and sadness. He languished some years under-

remainder of his life in misery and degradation, perhaps with a complete consciousness of his calamity? Letter, March 8, 1754. —Wool's Warton, p. 219.

What becomes of poor dear Collins? I wrote him a letter, which he never answered. I suppose writing is very troublesome to him. That man is no common loss. The moralists all talk of the uncertainty of fortune and the transitoriness of beauty: but it is yet more dreadful to consider, that the powers of the mind are equally liable to change; that understanding may make its appearance and depart; that it may blaze and expire. April 15, 1756.—Ib. p. 239.

that depression of mind which enchains the faculties without destroying them, and leaves reason the knowledge of right without the power of pursuing it. These clouds, which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to disperse by travel, and passed into France; but found himself constrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for some time confined in a house of lunatics, and afterwards retired to the care of his sister in Chichester, where death, in 1756, came to his relief.*

"After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a visit at Islington, where he was waiting for his sister, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of disorder discernible in his mind by any but himself, but he had withdrawn from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to the school. When his friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a man of letters had chosen, 'I have but one book,' said Collins, 'but that is the best.'"

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

He was visited at Chichester, in his last illness, by his learned friends, Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom

* Mr. Collins was in stature somewhat above the middle size; of a brown complexion; keen, expressive eyes; and a fixed, sedate aspect: which, from intense thinking, had contracted an habitual frown.—L.

he spoke with disapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not sufficiently expressive of Asiatic manners, and called them his Irish Eclogues. He showed them, at the same time, an Ode, inscribed to Mr. John Hume, on the Superstitions of the Highlands; which they thought superior to his other works, but which no search has yet found.*

His disorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness,—a deficiency rather of his vital than his intellectual powers. What he spoke wanted neither judgment nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel soon after his uncle's death; and, with the usual weakness of men so diseased, eagerly snatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and seduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthensome to himself.

To what I have formerly said of his writings, may be added, that his diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of common order, seeming to think, with some late candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion,

* It is inserted in the present and late editions.

clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants. As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure.

"There is a curious anecdote of this singular and unfortunate man, which will shew what a quick feeling and sensibility he possessed from his earliest days. The boys on the foundation at Winchester College are lodged in seven chambers. Collins belonged to the same chamber with William Smith of Chichester, afterwards Treasurer of the Ordnance; by whom he was observed one morning to be particularly depressed and melancholy. Being pressed to disclose the cause, he at last said it was in consequence of a dream: for this he was laughed at, but desired to tell what it was; he said, he dreamed that he was walking in the fields where there was a lofty tree; that he climbed it, and when he had nearly reached the top, a great branch, upon which he had got, failed with him, and let him fall to the ground. This account caused more ridicule; and he was asked how he could possibly be affected by this common consequence of a school-boy adventure, when he did not pretend, even in imagination and sleep, to have received any hurt, he replied, that the Tree was the Tree of Poetry.

The first time that Mr. Smith saw him, after they had left the College, was at an interval of twelve or fourteen

years; and when, in a deplorable state of mind, he had been long under confinement: but no sooner had his old school-fellow on this occasion presented himself, than he exclaimed, 'Smith, do you remember my Dream!'

It does not appear that the topic was further dwelt upon. It is probable indeed that his enfeebled mind was exhausted by this effort, or sudden burst of anguished recollection. The presence of this old friend, altogether unexpected, and at so long an interval, drew to a point all that his miserable mind had been long brooding over, under the accumulated pressure of disease, distraction, and despair; which being interpreted, was plainly this—'I feel and know that I have attained high poetical distinction and eminence; but I have, by my irregularities, sadly deprived myself of that hope which I fostered from my cradle, and know that I was otherwise destined to have realized—I have impaired and overturned my mind, that rare faculty, by which I was to have sustained the *Poetical Character*, (a boon scarce ever, and, perhaps, *of all the Sons of Soul, to one only imparted*, p. 31.) When I was climbing with success, and had got high in the Tree, my grossness broke its branch under me, and I fell to the ground instead of reaching the top.'

"This anecdote Mr. Smith related to Dr. Busby, late Dean of Rochester, who was, like himself, a Wykehamist, and a native of Sussex."

For the foregoing paragraph I am indebted to a learned and intimate Friend, to whom Dr. Busby used to relate the story; and who, being unwilling it should be forgotten,

communicated it to me, to be employed as is here done. It is indeed to his advice and liberal assistance that the present Edition of his favourite Poet is owing.—C.

The character which Dr. Johnson has given of his friend can hardly be perused without exciting some degree of surprise. He allows him no poetical faculty whatever, without making a considerable detraction from it. 'He had employed his mind upon works of fiction, and subjects of fancy: but he had indulged some peculiar habits of thinking, which led him to flights of imagination, surpassing the bounds of nature: with these flights he was delighted; but they were such, that the mind could not be reconciled to them without a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. Even for this he had rather an inclination than a genius; and did not always attain what he always desired; which was the grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance.' Here is the same charge against Collins which he had brought against Cowley, and those of his class. 'What was vicious was produced by a voluntary deviation from nature, in pursuit of something new and strange.'—*Life of Cowley.* His praise of Collins is scanty, and merely negative. 'His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurnished with knowledge either of books or life, but sometimes obstructed in its progress by deviation in quest of mistaken beauties.'

To answer this injurious representation by a naked assertion to the contrary might be sufficient, for it is not supported by any proof or example: but he who will consider how the Odes of Gray have been treated by the same critic, will not require any circumstantial refutation of what he has advanced respecting these of Collins. In fact he had no congenial feeling with either of those Poets. He could perceive the extravagance of Donne and his School; and he has successfully detected and exposed them; but there were others endued with a fancy not irregular or illegitimate, who could soar to a height beyond his view.

Collins's poetry is not indeed of the first order: it exhibits no display of the human heart, or the secret workings of passion; nor do we find in it any sublime doctrines of religious or moral wisdom, which are the highest excellencies of the art. But there is another species of poetry, whose excellence consists and terminates in the exercise of a strong and lively imagination, displaying itself in active and unbounded excursions, and clothing its objects in metaphor and allegory. Among the British Poets of this class, Collins is entitled to the first rank, perhaps to the chief place. In his poetry there is no fantastical conceptions like those of the metaphysical poets (as Dr. Johnson calls them); nothing like wit, in the common acceptance of the word. There is sometimes obscurity; for unusual and sublime ideas cannot always be plainly expressed, especially in figurative language: but at other times his manner is so comprehensive and clear as to call

for admiration. I shall confine myself to a single instance: He describes Pity as having *eyes of dewy light;* by which is signified the sympathy she feels, and the comfort that she brings. The idea is the same that Homer conceived, when, describing the countenance of Andromache, he said it was δακρυοεν γελασασα, smiling in tears. Homer expressed it in simple terms; Collins clothed it in a rich fancy dress; and such is the general character of his compositions.

The subordinate parts of Collins's poetry are noticed by Dr. Johnson only to be condemned; and that by mere assertions without any proof. To such a mode of criticism the proper answer is, an appeal to the poetry itself; which, in my judgment, does not merit the reproach he has thrown upon it. Among the faults imputed is this,—'his lines are commonly of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants.' Slow motion is not necessarily a fault; it often expresses the sense, and then is proper, and a beauty: but they are clogged with consonants. The consonants may not be more numerous in his lines than in others, and the whole body of English Verse; in that case the charge falls not on him, but on the language.* This is matter for computation.

* The Latin poets were sensible of a defect in their own language, not unlike this: it was rough and unmusical. Tanta est sermo Græcus Latino jucundior (says Quintilian) ut nostri poetæ quoties dulce carmen esse voluerunt illorun id nominibus exornent.

Joshua Steele, the author of Prosodia Rationalis, informs us that in the English tongue the proportion of consonants to vowels (taking them not as written, but sounded in pronunciation,) is as 3 to 2. P. 168. In verse the proportion must be greater, because of the frequent contractions, as here,—

T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n.—Pope.

If the consonants in a verse be only as 3 to 2, it may pass for smooth and flowing: in the general body of English poetry the proportion is greater than that: in the line from Pope here quoted, the proportion is nearly as 2 to 1. He would be an ill-natured critic who should make the number of its consonants an objection to the following couplet:

Existence saw him spurn her boundless reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.—Dr. Johnson.

Collins, taking all his poems, has fewer in proportion.

In his Life of Gray, Dr. Johnson says, 'there has of late arisen a practise of giving to adjectives, derived from substantives, the termination of participles; such as the *cul-*

Lib. 12, c. 10. After their example Milton very frequently renders his lines more vocal, by the introduction of foreign names.

From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Sehon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Eleäle to th' Asphaltic pool.—P. L.: B. 1, 407.—C.

tured plain, and *daisied* bank: but I was sorry to see, in the lines of a scholar like Gray, the *honied* spring.' I agree with Dr. Johnson in his censure of such epithets; but they are not of late origin. Above a century before he wrote Milton had them; as *honied* thigh, (from which, perhaps, Gray borrowed it) and *buskin'd* stage: (Il Pens. 102.) from which Collins, who did not borrow much, seems to have taken *buskin'd* Muse.—P. 19. Still the words are not pleasing, nor formed agreeably to the genius of our tongue; and they often make a harsh phrase; as in this verse of Collins,—

Even humble Harting's *cottag'd* vale.—See p. 43.

But, besides this, there is no other so harsh in all his poems.

His rhymes should have obtained some notice from Dr. Johnson, for they deserve commendation: being in quality equal to those of our most correct versifiers. They are exact:* *i. e.* there is no difference in the vowel sound, or the consonants following it. They are varied: *i. e.* the same rhymes do not soon, or often, recur: in the short pieces (Ode to Mercy, to Peace, the Dirge) there is no repetition. They are never made by little insignificant words. Double rhymes are frequently introduced, and with good effect. A double rhyme gives a sprightliness to the verse, it being a

* Identical rhymes are a fault only in our modern poetry: the most careful rhymers are not quite free from it. Collins has four identical rhymes; but of these two are in his Ode on the Highland Superstitions; which is not a finished poem, and therefore not to be so strictly scrutinized.—C.

trochaic foot, which is a brisk and quick measure. Sometimes the entire line is composed of trochaics, as these,—

Happier, hopeless Fair, if never
Her rash hand with vain endeavour.—Poetical Character.

And the second of these—

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure ?—The Passions.

Such passages (and many others are like them) might also serve to exempt his lines from being characterized as slow and clogged with consonants. I think it needless to enter into his defence upon the rest.

His reputation has extended beyond the limits of his own country. In 1814 an Italian translation of his Odes was published at Piacenza, in a handsome 4to. Edition, by G. B. Martelli,* an Advocate of that City. It is dedicated to Sir Robert Wilson, who has kindly informed me that the Italians consider it as a work of great merit. Of the style and versification they are the proper and competent judges: of other points I may venture to speak: it is somewhat diffuse, sufficiently faithful, and very clear. As the work is hardly known in England, a specimen will be given at the close of this volume.

* Martelli translated all the Odes which Collins published, except only that to Liberty. The piece contains nothing to give just offence; but for a man who lives within the dominions of Francis II., the chief Member of the Holy Alliance, the omissi was prudent.—C.

ORIENTAL ECLOGUES.*

ECLOGUE I.

SELIM; OR, THE SHEPHERD'S MORAL.

Scene, A VALLEY NEAR BAGDAT.—Time, THE MORNING.

YE Persian maids, attend your poet's lays,
And hear how shepherds pass their golden days.
Not all are blest, whom Fortune's hand sustains
With wealth in courts, nor all that haunt the plains:
Well may your hearts believe the truths I tell;
'Tis virtue makes the bliss, where'er we dwell.

Thus Selim sung, by sacred Truth inspir'd;
Nor praise, but such as Truth bestow'd, desir'd:
Wise in himself, his meaning songs convey'd
Informing morals to the shepherd maid;
Or taught the swain that surest bliss to find,
What groves nor streams bestow, a virtuous mind.

* The scenery and subjects of the following eclogues alone are Oriental; the style and colouring are purely European.—L.

When sweet and blushing, like a virgin bride,
The radiant morn resum'd her orient pride,
When wanton gales along the valleys play,
Breathe on each flower, and bear their sweets away;
By Tigris' wandering waves he sat and sung
This useful lesson for the fair and young.

Ye Persian dames, he said, to you belong,
Well may they please the morals of my song:
No fairer maids, I trust, than you are found,
Grac'd with soft arts, the peopl'd world around!
The morn that lights you, to your love supplies
Each gentler ray delicious to your eyes:
For you those flowers her fragrant hands bestow,
And your's the love that kings delight to know.
Yet think not these, all beauteous as they are,
The best kind blessings Heaven can grant the fair!
Who trust alone in beauty's feeble ray,
Boast but the worth Bassora's pearls display;
Drawn from the deep we own their surface bright,
But, dark within, they drink no lustrous light:

Such are the maids, and such the charms they boast,
By sense unaided, or to virtue lost.
Self flattering sex! your hearts believe in vain
That Love shall blind, when once he fires the swain;
Or hope a lover by your faults to win,
As spots on ermine beautify the skin:

Who seeks secure to rule, be first her care
Each softer virtue that adorns the fair;
Each tender passion man delights to find,
The lov'd perfections of a female mind!

Blest were the days, when Wisdom held her reign,
And shepherds sought her on the silent plain;
With Truth she wedded in the secret grove,
Immortal Truth, and daughters bless'd their love.

O haste, fair maids! ye Virtues come away,
Sweet Peace and Plenty lead you on your way!
The balmy shrub for you shall love our shore,
By Ind excell'd or Araby no more.

Lost to our fields, for so the fates ordain,
The dear deserters shall return again.
Come thou, whose thoughts as limpid springs are clear,
To lead the train, sweet Modesty appear:
Here make thy court amidst our rural scene,
And shepherd-girls shall own thee for their queen.
With thee be Chastity, of all afraid,
Distrusting all, a wise, suspicious maid;
But man the most—not more the mountain doe
Holds the swift falcon for her deadly foe.
Cold is her breast, like flowers that drink the dew;
A silken veil conceals her from the view.

No wild desires amidst thy train be known,
But Faith, whose heart is fix'd on one alone:
Desponding Meekness, with her down-cast eyes,
And friendly Pity, full of tender sighs;
And Love the last: by these your hearts approve;
These are the virtues that must lead to love.

Thus sung the swain; and ancient legends say,
The maids of Bagdat verified the lay:
Dear to the plains, the Virtues came along,
The shepherds lov'd, and Selim bless'd his song.

ECLOGUE II.

HASSAN; OR, THE CAMEL DRIVER.

Scene, THE DESERT.—Time, MID-DAY.

IN silent horror o'er the boundless waste
The driver Hassan with his camels past:
One cruise of water on his back he bore,
And his light scrip contain'd a scanty store;
A fan of painted feathers in his hand,
To guard his shaded face from scorching sand.
The sultry sun had gain'd the middle sky,
And not a tree and not a herb was nigh;

The beasts, with pain, their dusty way pursue,
Shrill roar'd the winds, and dreary was the view!
With desperate sorrow wild, th' affrighted man
Thrice sigh'd, thrice struck his breast, and thus began:
" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!"

Ah! little thought I of the blasting wind,
The thirst or pinching hunger that I find!
Bethink thee, Hassan, where shall Thirst asswage,
When fails this cruise, his unrelenting rage?
Soon shall this scrip its precious load resign;
Then what but tears and hunger shall be thine?

Ye mute companions of my toils, that bear
In all my griefs a more than equal share!
Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
Or moss-crown'd fountains mitigate the day,
In vain ye hope the green delights to know,
Which plains more blest, or verdant vales bestow:
Here rocks alone, and tasteless sands are found,
And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.
" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!"

Curst be the gold and silver which persuade
Weak men to follow far fatiguing trade!

The lily peace outshines the silver store,
And life is dearer than the golden ore:
Yet money tempts us o'er the desert brown,
To every distant mart and wealthy town.
Full oft we tempt the land, and oft the sea:
And are we only yet repay'd by thee?
Ah! why was ruin so attractive made,
Or why fond man so easily betray'd?
Why heed we not, while mad we haste along,
The gentle voice of peace, or pleasure's song?
Or wherefore think the flowery mountain's side,
The fountain's murmurs, and the valley's pride,
Why think we these less pleasing to behold,
Than dreary deserts, if they lead to gold?
" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way!"

O cease, my fears!—all frantic as I go,
When thought creates unnumber'd scenes of woe,
What if the lion in his rage I meet!—
Oft in the dust I view his printed feet:
And fearful! oft, when day's declining light
Yields her pale empire to the mourner night,
By hunger rous'd, he scours the groaning plain,
Gaunt wolves and sullen tigers in his train:
Before them Death with shrieks directs their way,
Fills the wild yell, and leads them to their prey.

" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way."

At that dead hour the silent asp shall creep,
If aught of rest I find, upon my sleep:
Or some swoln serpent twist his scales around,
And wake to anguish with a burning wound.
Thrice happy they, the wise contented poor,
From lust of wealth, and dread of death secure!
They tempt no deserts, and no griefs they find;
Peace rules the day, where reason rules the mind.
" Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
" When first from Schiraz' walls' I bent my way!

O hapless youth! for she thy love hath won,
The tender Zara will be most undone!
Big swell'd my heart, and own'd the powerful maid,
When fast she dropt her tears, as thus she said:
" Farewell the youth whom sighs could not detain,
" Whom Zara's breaking heart implor'd in vain!
" Yet as thou go'st, may every blast arise
" Weak and unfelt as these rejected sighs!
" Safe o'er the wild, no perils mayst thou see,
" No griefs endure, nor weep, false youth, like me."
O let me safely to the fair return,
Say with a kiss, she must not, shall not, mourn;
O! let me teach my heart to lose its fears,
Recall'd by Wisdom's voice, and Zara's tears.

He said, and call'd on Heaven to bless the day,
When back to Schiraz' walls he bent his way.

ECLOGUE III.

ABRA; OR, THE GEORGIAN SULTANA.

Scene, A FOREST.—Time, THE EVENING.

IN Georgia's land, where Tefflis' towers are seen,
In distant view along the level green,
While evening dews enrich the glittering glade,
And the tall forests cast a longer shade,
What time 'tis sweet o'er fields of rice to stray,
Or scent the breathing maize at setting day;
Amidst the maids of Zagen's peaceful grove,
Emyra sung the pleasing cares of love.

Of Abra first began the tender strain,
Who led her youth with flocks upon the plain:
At morn she came those willing flocks to lead,
Where lilies rear them in the watery mead;
From early dawn the live-long hours she told,
'Till late at silent eve she penn'd the fold.
Deep in the grove, beneath the secret shade,
A various wreath of odorous flowers she made

* Gay-motley'd pinks and sweet jonquils she chose,
The violet blue that on the moss-bank grows;
All-sweet to sense, the flaunting rose was there:
The finish'd chaplet well adorn'd her hair.

Great Abbas chanc'd that fated morn to stray,
By love conducted from the chace away;
Among the vocal vales he heard her song,
And sought the vales and echoing groves among:
At length he found, and woo'd the rural maid;
She knew the monarch, and with fear obey'd.
" Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
" And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"

The royal lover bore her from the plain;
Yet still her crook and bleating flock remain:
Oft as she went, she backward turn'd her view,
And bad that crook and bleating flock adieu.
Fair happy maid! to other scenes remove,
To richer scenes of golden power and love!
Go leave the simple pipe, and shepherd's strain;
With love delight thee, and with Abbas reign.
" Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
" And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"

Yet midst the blaze of courts she fix'd her love
On the cool fountain, or the shady grove;

* That these flowers are found in very great abundance in some of the provinces of Persia; see the modern history of Mr. Salmon.

Still with the shepherd's innocence her mind
To the sweet vale, and flowery mead inclin'd;
And oft as spring renew'd the plains with flowers,
Breath'd his soft gales, and led the fragrant hours,
With sure return she sought the sylvan scene,
The breezy mountains, and the forests green.
Her maids around her mov'd, a duteous band!
Each bore a crook all rural in her hand:
Some simple lay, of flocks and herds they sung;
With joy the mountain, and the forest rung.
" Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
" And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"

And oft the royal lover left the care
And thorns of state, attendant on the fair;
Oft to the shades and low-roof'd cots retir'd,
Or sought the vale where first his heart was fir'd:
A russet mantle, like a swain, he wore,
And thought of crowns and busy courts no more.
" Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd,
" And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"

Blest was the life that royal Abbas led:
Sweet was his love, and innocent his bed.
What if in wealth the noble maid excel;
The simple shepherd-girl can love as well.
Let those who rule on Persia's jewell'd throne,
Be fam'd for love, and gentlest love alone;

Or wreathe like Abbas, full of fair renown,
The lover's myrtle with the warrior's crown.
O happy days! the maids around her say;
O haste, profuse of blessings, haste away!
" Be every youth like royal Abbas mov'd;
" And every Georgian maid like Abra lov'd!"

ECLOGUE IV.

AGIB AND SECANDER; OR, THE FUGITIVES.

Scene, A MOUNTAIN IN CIRCASSIA.—Time, MIDNIGHT.

IN fair Circassia, where, to love inclin'd,
Each swain was blest, for every maid was kind;
At that still hour, when awful midnight reigns,
And none, but wretches, haunt the twilight plains;
What time the moon had hung her lamp on high,
And past in radiance thro' the cloudless sky;
Sad o'er the dews, two brother shepherds fled,
Where wildering fear and desperate sorrow led:
Fast as they prest their flight, behind them lay
Wide ravag'd plains, and vallies stole away.
Along the mountain's bending sides they ran,
'Till faint and weak Secander thus began:

SECANDER.

O stay thee, Agib, for my feet deny,
No longer friendly to my life, to fly.
Friend of my heart, O turn thee and survey,
Trace our sad flight thro' all its length of way!
And first review that long-extended plain,
And yon wide groves, already past with pain!
Yon ragged cliff, whose dangerous path we tried!
And last this lofty mountain's weary side!

AGIB.

Weak as thou art, yet hapless must thou know
The toils of flight, or some severer woe!
Still as I haste, the Tartar shouts behind,
And shrieks and sorrows load the saddening wind:
In rage of heart, with ruin in his hand,
He blasts our harvests, and deforms our land.
Yon citron grove, whence first in fear we came,
Droops its fair honours to the conquering flame:
Far fly the swains, like us, in deep despair,
And leave to ruffian bands their fleecy care.

SECANDER.

Unhappy land, whose blessings tempt the sword,
In vain, unheard, thou call'st thy Persian lord!
In vain thou court'st him, helpless, to thine aid,
To shield the shepherd, and protect the maid!
Far off, in thoughtless indolence resign'd,
Soft dreams of love and pleasure sooth his mind:

'Midst fair sultanas lost in idle joy,
No wars alarm him, and no fears annoy.

AGIB.

Yet these green hills, in summer's sultry heat,
Have lent the monarch oft a cool retreat.
Sweet to the sight is Zabran's flowery plain,
And once by maids and shepherds lov'd in vain!
No more the virgins shall delight to rove
By Sargis' banks, or Irwan's shady grove;
On Tarkie's mountain catch the cooling gale,
Or breathe the sweets of Aly's flowery vale:
Fair scenes! but, ah! no more with peace possest,
With ease alluring, and with plenty blest.
No more the shepherd's whitening tents appear,
Nor the kind products of a bounteous year;
No more the date, with snowy blossoms crown'd!
But Ruin spreads her baleful fires around.

SECANDER.

In vain Circassia boasts her spicy groves,
For ever fam'd for pure and happy loves:
In vain she boasts her fairest of the fair,
Their eye's blue languish, and their golden hair!
Those eyes in tears their fruitless grief must send;
Those hairs the Tartar's cruel hand shall rend.

AGIB.

Ye Georgian swains that piteous learn from far
Circassia's ruin, and the waste of war;

Some weightier arms than crooks and staffs prepare,
To shield your harvests, and defend your fair:
The Turk and Tartar like designs pursue,
Fix'd to destroy, and stedfast to undo.
Wild as his land, in native deserts bred,
By lust incited, or by malice led,
The villain Arab, as he prowls for prey,
Oft marks with blood and wasting flames the way;
Yet none so cruel as the Tartar foe,
To death inur'd, and nurst in scenes of woe.

He said; when loud along the vale was heard
A shriller shriek, and nearer fires appear'd:
Th' affrighted shepherds thro' the dews of night,
Wide o'er the moon light hills renewed their flight.

The passions of men are uniform; but, modified by climate, government, manners, and local circumstances, they present an inexhaustible variety, from the Song of Solomon, breathing of cassia, myrrh, and cinnamon, to the Gentle Shepherd of Ramsay, whose damsels carry the milking pails through the frost and snows of their less genial, but not less pastoral country. The province of Pastoral may, in this way, be enlarged to take in all the beautiful and all the grand appearances of nature, which observation or reading may have brought the poet acquainted with.—B.

These Eclogues may be considered as spirited sketches of a new kind of Pastoral, which is susceptible of unlimited variety and improvement.—B.

ODES,

DESCRIPTIVE AND ALLEGORICAL.

The genius of Collins was capable of every degree of excellence in lyric poetry. Possessed of a native ear for all the varieties of harmony and modulation, susceptible of the finest feelings of tenderness and humanity, but, above all, carried away by that high enthusiasm, which gives to imagination its strongest colouring, he was, at once, capable of soothing the ear with the melody of his numbers, of influencing the passions by the force of his *Pathos*, and of gratifying the fancy by the luxury of description.

In consequence of these powers he chose such subjects for his lyric essays as were most favourable for the indulgence of description and allegory; where he could exercise his powers in moral and personal painting; where he could exert his invention in conferring new attributes on images or objects already known and described; where he might give an uncommon eclat to his figures, by placing them in happier attitudes, or in more advantageous lights, and introduce new forms from the moral and intellectual world into the society of impersonated beings.

Such, no doubt, were the privileges which the poet expected, and such were the advantages he derived from the descriptive and allegorical nature of his themes.

It seems to have been the whole industry of our author (and it is, at the same time, almost all the claim to moral excellence his writings can boast) to promote the influence of the social virtues, by painting them in the fairest and happiest lights.

If, therefore, it should appear to some readers, that he has been more industrious to cultivate description than sentiment; it may be observed, that his descriptions themselves are sentimental, and answer the whole end of that species of writing, by embellishing every feature of virtue, and by conveying, through the effects of the pencil, the finest moral lessons to the mind.

After these apologies for the *descriptive* turn of the following odes, something remains to be said on the origin and use of *allegory* in poetical composition.

It is not the verbal but the sentimental allegory, not allegorical expression (which, indeed, might come under the term of *metaphor*) but allegorical imagery, that is here in question.

At the birth of letters, in the transition from hieroglyphi-

cal to literal expression, it is not to be wondered if the custom of expressing ideas by personal images, which had so long prevailed, should still retain its influence on the mind, though the use of letters had rendered the practical application of it superfluous. Those who had been accustomed to express strength by the image of an elephant, swiftness by that of a panther, and courage by that of a lion, would make no scruple of substituting, in letters, the symbols for the ideas they had been used to represent.

Here we plainly see the origin of *allegorical expression*, that it arose from the *ashes* of hieroglyphics; and if to the same cause we should refer that figurative boldness of style and imagery which distinguish the oriental writings, we shall, perhaps, conclude more justly, than if we should impute it to the superior grandeur of eastern genius.

From the same source with the *verbal*, we are to derive the *sentimental* allegory, which is nothing more than a continuation of the metaphorical or symbolical expression of the several agents in an action, or the different objects in a scene.

The latter most peculiarly comes under the denomination of allegorical imagery; and in this species of allegory we include the impersonation of passions, affections, virtues and vices, &c. on account of which, principally, the following odes were properly termed by their author, allegorical.—L.

ODE TO PITY.

O THOU, the friend of man assign'd,
With balmy hands his wounds to bind,
And charm his frantic woe:
When first Distress, with dagger keen,
Broke forth to waste his destin'd scene,
His wild unsated foe!

By Pella's Bard,* a magic name,
By all the griefs his thought could frame,
Receive my humble rite:
Long, Pity, let the nations view
Thy sky-worn robes of tenderest blue,
And eyes of dewy light!

But wherefore need I wander wide
To old Ilissus' distant side,
Deserted stream, and mute?
Wild Arun† too has heard thy strains,
And Echo, 'midst my native plains,
Been sooth'd by Pity's lute.

* Euripides, who was buried at Pella, a city of Macedonia, after residing there about three years.—C.

† A river in Sussex.—The mention of Otway, born as well as Collins near the Arun, probably suggested to his melancholy and indignant mind, an

There first the wren thy myrtles shed
On gentlest Otway's infant head,
  To him thy cell was shewn;
And while he sung the female heart,
With youth's soft notes unspoil'd by art,
  Thy turtles mix'd their own.

Come, Pity, come, by fancy's aid,
Ev'n now my thoughts, relenting Maid,
  Thy temple's pride design:
Its southern site, its truth complete
Shall raise a wild enthusiast heat,
  In all who view the shrine.

There Picture's toil shall well relate,
How chance or hard involving fate
  O'er mortal bliss prevail:
The buskin'd Muse shall near her stand,
And sighing prompt her tender hand,
  With each disastrous tale.

There let me oft, retir'd by day,
In dreams of passion melt away,
  Allow'd with thee to dwell:

analogy in their fates which he has forborne to express. They both were the objects of pity, from that circumstance which a liberal mind would least wish to become so—pecuniary distresses.—B.

There waste the mournful lamp of night,
Till, Virgin, thou again delight
To hear a British shell!

ODE TO FEAR.

THOU, to whom the world unknown
With all its shadowy shapes is shewn;
Who seest appall'd th' unreal scene,
While Fancy lifts the veil between:
Ah Fear! ah frantic Fear?
I see, I see thee near.
I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye!
Like thee I start, like thee disorder'd fly,
For, lo what monsters in thy train appear!
Danger, whose limbs of giant mould
What mortal eye can fix'd behold?
Who stalks his round, an hideous form,
Howling amidst the midnight storm,
Or throws him on the ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep:
And with him thousand phantoms join'd,
Who prompt to deeds accurs'd the mind:
And those, the fiends, who near allied,
O'er nature's wounds, and wrecks preside;

While Vengeance, in the lurid air,
Lifts her red arm, expos'd and bare:
On whom that ravening Brood of fate,
Who lap the blood of Sorrow, wait;
Who, Fear, this ghastly train can see,
And look not madly wild, like thee?

EPODE.

In earliest Greece, to thee, with partial choice,
The grief-full Muse addrest her infant tongue;
The maids and matrons, on her awful voice
Silent and pale in wild amazement hung.

Yet he, the Bard* who first invok'd thy name,
Disdain'd in Marathon its power to feel:
For not alone he nurs'd the poet's flame,
But reach'd from Virtue's hand the patriot's steel.

But who is he, whom later garlands grace,
Who left a while o'er Hybla's dews to rove,
With trembling eyes thy dreary steps to trace,
Where thou and Furies shar'd the baleful grove?†

* Æschylus.—In his play, entitled Eumenides (Furies), he introduced a chorus of 50 persons, whose habits, gestures, and appearance altogether, were so formidable, as to terrify the whole audience. Æschylus fought at the battle of Marathon.—C.

† The allusion here is to the Œdipus Coloneus of Sophocles, which contains the most sublime scene in the whole compass of the Grecian Drama, of that kind of sublimity which arises from the obscure, and is calculated to produce terror.—See Œd. Col. v. 1658.—C.

Wrapt in thy cloudy veil th' incestuous Queen*
Sigh'd the sad call her son and husband heard,
When once alone it broke the silent scene,
And he the wretch of Thebes no more appear'd.

O Fear, I know thee by my throbbing heart,
Thy withering power inspir'd each mournful line,
Tho' gentle pity claim her mingled part,
Yet all the thunders of the scene are thine!

* Jocasta.—This is a little inaccurate: it was not Jocasta who called, nor was the call sighed out:—

Ην μεν σιωπη· φθεγμα δ' εξαιφνης τινος
Θωυξεν αυλον, ωςε πανλας ορθιας
Σλησαι φοβῳ δεισανλας εξαιφνης τριχας·
Καλει γαρ αυλον πολλα πολλακις Θεος,
Ω ουλος ουλος Οιδιπους, κτλ. v. 1694.

——— there was silence for a while;
But sudden he was summon'd by a voice
That made our hairs all stand on end who heard it;
Some deity so loud and often called
'Thou, Œdipus ———

The person who makes this report goes on to relate, that Œdipus then ordered them all to depart except Theseus, who alone was to witness his end.

ως δ' απηλθομεν
Χρονῳ βραχει ςραφενλες, εξαπειδομεν
Τον Ανδρα, τον μεν, ουδαμου παρονλ' ετι,
Ανακλα δ' αυτον ομμαλων επισκιον
Χειρ' αντεχονλα κραλος, ως δεινου τινος
Φοβου φανενλος, ουδ' ανασχελου βλεπειν. v. 1718.

At his command we came away;
When shortly after turning round to view,

ANTISTROPHE.

Thou who such weary lengths hast past,
Where wilt thou rest, mad Nymph, at last?
Say, wilt thou shroud in haunted cell,
Where gloomy Rape and Murder dwell?
Or in some hollow'd seat,
'Gainst which the big waves beat,
Hear drowning seamen's cries in tempest brought!
Dark Power, with shuddering meek submitted thought,
Be mine, to read the visions old,
Which thy awakening bards have told:
And, lest thou meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true.
Ne'er be I found, by thee over-aw'd,
In that thrice-hallow'd eve* abroad,
When ghosts, as cottage-maids believe,
Their pebbled beds permitted leave,
And goblins haunt from fire or fen,
Or mine, or flood, the walks of men!

Him we saw not, for he was gone; but Theseus
Stood with his hand o'ershadowing his eyes,
As from a fearful sight intolerable.

The mysterious fate of the British King Arthur is recorded in our old English ballad, with some circumstances that may remind us of this Grecian catastrophe.—See Percy's Ant. Songs, vol. 3.—C.

* The eve which was hallowed, one might imagine, should rather be free from all these objects of fear, as Shakspeare represents it:—

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,

O thou whose spirit most possest
The sacred seat of Shakspeare's breast!
By all that from thy prophet broke,
In thy divine emotions spoke!
Hither again thy fury deal,
Teach me but once like him to feel:
His cypress wreath my meed decree,
And I, O Fear, will dwell with thee!*

> The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
> And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad,
> The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
> No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm;
> So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.—Hamlet, A. 1, S. I.

which have been thus translated;—

> Et quotiês redeunt natalia tempora Christi
> Nocturnas gallum usque ferunt cantare per horas:
> Tum quoque & innocuas stellas tenebrasque salubres
> Esse ferunt; illo nam tempore dira vetantur
> Spectra suis exire locis, lemuresque latescunt,
> Et sagis lædendi est interdicta potestas;
> Tanta est sacratæ reverentia credita nocti.—C.

* It is difficult to keep entirely separate the active and passive qualities of allegorical personages: difficult to say whether such a thing as Fear should be the agent in inspiring, or the victim agitated by the passion. In this ode the latter idea prevails; for Fear appears in the character of a nymph pursued, like Dryden's Honoria, by the ravening brood of Fate. She is distracted by the ghastly train conjured up by Danger, and hunted through the world without being suffered to take repose: yet this idea is somewhat departed from, when the poet endeavours to propitiate Fear, by offering her, as a suitable abode, *the cell where Rape and Murder dwell;*

ODE TO SIMPLICITY.

O thou by Nature taught,
To breathe her genuine thought,
In numbers warmly pure, and sweetly strong:
Who first on mountains wild,
In Fancy, loveliest child,
Thy babe, and Pleasure's, nurs'd the powers of song!

Thou, who with hermit heart
Disdain'st the wealth of art,
And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trailing pall:
But com'st a decent maid,
In Attic robe array'd,
O chaste, unboastful nymph, to thee I call!

By all the honey'd store
On Hybla's* thymy shore,

or a cave whence she may hear *the cries of drowning seamen.* She then becomes the Power who delights in inflicting fear. But perhaps the reader is an enemy to his own gratification, who investigates the attributes of these shadowy beings, with too nice and curious an eye.—B.

* Hybla is a mountain in Sicily; but this allegorical imagery of the honey store, the blooms, and murmurs of Hybla, alludes to the sweetness and beauty of the Attic poetry.—L.

By all her blooms, and mingled murmurs dear,
By her, whose love-lorn woe,
In evening musings slow,
Sooth'd sweetly sad Electra's poet's* ear:

By old Cephisus deep,†
Who spread his wavy sweep
In warbled wanderings round thy green retreat,
On whose enamel'd side,
When holy Freedom died,
No equal haunt allur'd thy future feet.

* Milton, in his 8th sonnet, says—

- - - - - "The repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet, had the power
To save th' Athenian walls from ruin bare."

This refers to a story in Plutarch: that when Lysander had taken Athens, and intended to destroy that city, he was diverted from his purpose by hearing some lines sung from the Electra of Euripides. But Collins alludes to the Electra of Sophocles, and to the following passage in that drama.

Νηπιος ὁστις των οικ[ρως
Οιχομενων γονεων επιλαθεται·
Εμε γ' ἁ γονοεσσ' αραρε φρενας
Ἁ Ιτυν, αιεν Ιτυν γ' ολοφυρ[αι
Ορνις αλ[υζομενη, Διος αγ[ελος. v. 145.

Base is the wretch, and senseless, who forgets
The loss of parents barbarously slain;
But her I love, who still repeating calls
Iteus, dear Iteus, in her ceaseless grief,
The melancholy bird, Jove's messenger.—C.

† Cephisus is the name of a river in Beotia, and of another which runs near Athens. Vid. Cellar. Geo. L 2, C 13.—C.

O sister meek of Truth,
To my admiring youth,
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse!
The flowers that sweetest breathe,
Tho' beauty cull'd the wreath,
Still ask thy hand to range their order'd hues.

While Rome could none esteem,
But virtue's patriot theme,
You lov'd her hills, and led her laureate band:
But staid to sing alone
To one distinguish'd throne,*
And turn'd thy face, and fled her alter'd land.

No more, in hall or bower,
The passions own thy power,
Love, only love her forceless numbers mean:
For thou hast left her shrine,
Nor olive more, nor vine,
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

Tho' taste, tho' genius bless
To some divine excess,

* The Poet cuts off the prevalence of simplicity among the Romans with the age of Augustus; and indeed it did not continue much longer; most of the compositions after that date giving into false and artificial ornaments.

"No more in hall or bower," &c.

In these lines, the writings of the Provencal poets are principally alluded to, in which simplicity is generally sacrificed to rhapsodies of romantic love.—L.

Faint's the cold work till thou inspire the whole;
What each, what all supply,
May court, may charm our eye,
Thou, only thou can'st raise the meeting soul!

Of these let others ask,
To aid some mighty task,
I only seek to find thy temperate vale:
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O Nature, learn my tale.

ODE ON THE POETICAL CHARACTER.

As once, if not with light regard,
I read aright that gifted Bard,
(Him whose school above the rest
His loveliest Elfin queen has blest)
One, only one, unrival'd Fair*,
Might hope the magic girdle wear,
At solemn turney hung on high,
The wish of each love-darting eye;

Lo! to each other nymph in turn applied,
As if, in air unseen, some hovering hand,

* Florimel, See Spenser. Leg. 4th.

Some chaste and angel-friend to virgin-fame,
With whisper'd spell had burst the starting band,
It left unblest her loath'd dishonour'd side;
Happier hopeless Fair, if never
Her baffled hand with vain endeavour
Had touch'd that fatal zone to her denied!

Young Fancy thus, to me divinest name,
To whom, prepar'd and bath'd in heaven,
The cest of amplest power is given,
To few the god-like gift assigns,
To gird their blest prophetic loins,
And gaze her visions wild, and feel unmix'd her flame.
The band, as fairy legends say,
Was wove on that creating day,
When He, who called with thought to birth
Yon tented sky, this laughing earth,
And drest with springs, and forests tall,
And pour'd the main engirting all.
Long by the lov'd Enthusiast woo'd,
Himself in some diviner mood,*

* It is difficult to reduce to any thing like a meaning, this strange, and by no means reverential, fiction concerning the Divine Being. Probably the obscure idea that floated in the mind of the author was this: that true poetry being a representation of nature, must have its archetype in those ideas of the supreme mind which originally gave birth to nature; and therefore, that no one should attempt it without being conversant with the fair and beautiful, the true and perfect, both in moral ideas, the *shadowy tribes of mind*, and the productions of the natural world.—B.

No one who is acquainted with Collins's writings will suspect him, here or elsewhere, of the least intentional irreverence. But to say of the Deity, that he is at any time, or upon any occasion, in a *diviner mood*, is an

Retiring, sate with her alone,
And plac'd her on his sapphire throne,
The whiles, the vaulted shrine around,
Seraphic wires were heard to sound,
Now sublimest triumph swelling,
Now on love and mercy dwelling;
And She, from out the veiling cloud,
Breath'd her magic notes aloud:
And Thou, thou rich-hair'd youth of morn,
And all thy subject life was born!
The dangerous passions kept aloof,
Far from the sainted growing woof:
But near it sate extatic Wonder,
Listening the deep applauding thunder:
And Truth, in sunny vest array'd,
By whose the tarsol's* eyes were made;
All the shadowy tribes of Mind,
In braided dance their murmurs join'd,
And all the bright uncounted Powers,
Who feed on heaven's ambrosial flowers.
Where is the Bard, whose soul can now
Its high presuming hopes avow?
Where he who thinks, with rapture blind,
This hallow'd work for him design'd?

unguarded expression, and neither reverend nor true. The works of his creation may be more or less divine; but He himself is the same in all his perfections, whether creating the soul of a man, or the body of a worm.—C.

* The tarsol is the gyr-hawk: tarsol, or tiercelet, being an old term in falconry.—B.

High on some cliff, to heaven up-pil'd,
Of rude access, of prospect wild,
Where, tangled round the jealous steep,
Strange shades o'erbrow the vallies deep,
And holy Genii guard the rock,
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock,
While on its rich ambitious head,
An Eden, like his own, lies spread.
I view that oak,* the fancied glades among,
By which as Milton lay, his evening ear,
From many a cloud that dropp'd ethereal dew,
Nigh spher'd in heaven its native strains could hear;
On which that antient trump he reach'd was hung:
  Thither oft his glory greeting,
  From Waller's myrtle shades retreating,
With many a vow from Hope's aspiring tongue,
My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue;
  In vain—Such bliss to one alone,
  Of all the sons of soul was known,
  And Heaven, and Fancy, kindred powers,
  Have now o'erturn'd th' inspiring bowers,
Or curtain'd close such scene from every future view.

ODE.—Written in the Year Mdccxlvi.

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!

* See, in the Author's Life, the account of a remarkable dream which he had while at school: to that school-dream we undoubtedly owe this ode, and this turn of it.*

When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod,
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By Fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall a-while repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

ODE TO MERCY.

STROPHE.

O THOU, who sitt'st a smiling bride
By Valour's arm'd and awful side,
Gentlest of sky-born forms, and best ador'd,
  Who oft with songs, divine to hear,
  Win'st from his fatal grasp the spear,
And hid'st in wreaths of flowers his bloodless sword!
  Thou who, amidst the deathful field,
  By godlike chiefs alone beheld,
Oft with thy bosom bare art found,
Pleading for him the youth who sinks to ground:
  See, Mercy, see, with pure and loaded hands,
  Before thy shrine my country's Genius stands,
And decks thy altar still, tho' pierc'd with many a wound!

ANTISTROPHE.

When he whom even our joys provoke,
The Fiend of Nature join'd his yoke,
And rush'd in wrath to make our isle his prey;
  Thy form, from out thy sweet abode,
  O'ertook him on his blasted road,
And stopp'd his wheels, and look'd his rage away.
  I see recoil his sable steeds,
  That bore him swift to savage deeds,
Thy tender melting eyes they own;
O Maid, for all thy love to Britain shown,
  Where Justice bars her iron tower,
  To thee we build a roseate bower,
Thou, thou shalt rule our queen, and share our monarch's
    throne!

ODE TO LIBERTY.*

STROPHE.

WHO shall awake the Spartan fife,
And call in solemn sounds to life,
The youths, whose locks divinely spreading,†
  Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue,

* A high tribute of praise was paid to this piece by the illustrious Sir William Jones, who copied a considerable part of it in his spirited Latin Ode, *ad Libertatim*, as he himself informs his readers.—Works, vol. 10, p. 394, 8vo. 1807.

† An allusion to the customs the Spartans had of arranging their hair before a battle.—B.

At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,
  Applauding Freedom lov'd of old to view ?
What new Alcæus,* fancy-blest,
Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,
  At Wisdom's shrine awhile its flame concealing,
(What place so fit to seal a deed renown'd ?)
  Till she her brightest lightnings round revealing,
It leap'd in glory forth, and dealt her prompted wound!
    O Goddess, in that feeling hour,
  When most its sounds would court thy ears,
    Let not my shell's misguided power,
  E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful tears.
No, Freedom, no, I will not tell,
How Rome, before thy weeping face,
With heaviest sound, a giant-statue, fell,†

* A Greek poet, the reputed author of a very popular Song, in which are these lines:—

Εν μυρϑ κλαδι το ξιφος φορησω,
Ωσπερ Αρμοδιος κ' Αριστογειϑων,
Οταν τον τυραννον κϑανετην,
Ισονομους τ' Αθηνας εποιησαϑην.

In mirtle wreathed I'll bear the sword,
As young Harmodius, and the bold
Aristogeiton did of old,
When by a just and sudden stroke
Th' usurping tyrant's rod they broke,
And to the Athenian State her equal laws restored.—C.

† The Author confounds the times of the Republic with those of the Empire, in order, by blending the glories of each, to delight the imagination with an era more free than the later, more splendid than the earlier period

Push'd by a wild and artless race,
From off its wide ambitious base,
When Time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
And all the splendid work of strength and grace,
With many a rude repeated stroke,
And many a barbarous yell, to thousand fragments broke.

EPODE.

2.

Yet even, where'er the least appear'd,
Th' admiring world thy hand rever'd;
Still, 'midst the scattered states around,
Some remnants of her strength were found;
They saw, by what escap'd the storm,
How wonderous rose her perfect form;
How in the great, the labour'd whole,
Each mighty master pour'd his soul!
For sunny Florence, seat of art,
Beneath her vines preserv'd a part,
Till they, whom science lov'd to name,
(O who could fear it?) quench'd her flame.
And lo, an humbler relic laid
In jealous Pisa's olive shade!
See small Marino joins the theme,
Tho' least, not last in thy esteem;
Strike, louder strike th' ennobling strings
To those, whose merchant sons were kings;

of its history: for surely that Rome, which was overthrown by the northern sons of spoil, had no claim to draw down the tears of Freedom at her fall.—B.

To him, who, deck'd with pearly pride,
In Adria weds his green-hair'd bride:
Hail port of glory, wealth, and pleasure,
Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure:
Nor e'er her former pride relate,
To sad Liguria's bleeding state,
Ah no! more pleased thy haunts I seek,
On wild Helvetia's mountains bleak:
(Where, when the favour'd of thy choice,
The daring archer* heard thy voice;
Forth from his eyrie rous'd in dread,
The ravening Eagle northward fled.)
Or dwell in willow'd meads more near,
With those† to whom thy Stork is dear:
Those whom the rod of Alva bruis'd,
Whose crown a British queen refus'd!
The magic works, thou feel'st the strains,
One holier name alone remains;
The perfect spell shall then avail,
Hail Nymph, ador'd by Britain, hail!

* Tell.—For an account of the celebrated event referred to see Voltaire's Epistle to the King of Prussia.—L.

† The Dutch, amongst whom there are very severe penalties for those who are convicted of killing this bird. They are kept tame in almost all their towns, and particularly at the Hague, of the arms of which they make a part. The common people of Holland are said to entertain a superstitious sentiment, that if the whole species of them should become extinct, they should lose their liberties.

ANTISTROPHE.

Beyond the measure vast of thought,
The works, the wizzard Time has wrought!
The Gaul, 'tis held of antique story,
Saw Britain link'd to his now adverse strand,*
No sea between, nor cliff sublime and hoary,
He pass'd with unwet feet thro' all our land.
To the blown Baltic then, they say,
The wild waves found another way,
Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains rounding;
Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise,
A wide wild storm even Nature's self confounding,
Withering her giant sons with strange uncouth surprise,
This pillar'd earth so firm and wide,
By winds and inward labours torn,
In thunders dread was push'd aside,
And down the shouldering billows born.
And see, like gems,† her laughing train,
The little isles on every side,
Mona,‡ once hid from those who search the main.
Where thousand Elfin shapes abide,

* This tradition is mentioned by several of our old historians. Some naturalists too have endeavoured to support the probability of the fact, by arguments drawn from the correspondent disposition of the two opposite coasts. I don't remember that any poetical use has been hitherto made of it.

† From Milton. the sea-girt *isles*,
That *like* to rich and various *gems* inlay
The unadorned bosom of the deep.—Comus, v. 21.

‡ There is a tradition in the isle of Man, that a mermaid becoming enamoured of a young man of extraordinary beauty, took an opportunity of

And Wight who checks the westering tide,
For thee consenting heaven has each bestowed,
A fair attendant on her sovereign pride:
To thee this blest divorce she ow'd,
For thou hast made her vales thy lov'd, thy last abode!

SECOND EPODE.

Then too, 'tis said, an hoary pile,
'Midst the green navel* of our isle,
Thy shrine in some religious wood,
O soul-enforcing Goddess, stood!
There oft the painted native's feet
Were wont thy form celestial meet:
Tho' now with hopeless toil we trace
Time's backward rolls, to find its place;
Whether the fiery-tressed Dane,
Or Roman's self o'erturn'd the fane,
Or in what heaven-left age it fell,
'Twere hard for modern song to tell.

meeting him one day as he walked on the shore, and opened her passion to him, but was received with a coldness, occasioned by his horror and surprise at her appearance. This however was so misconstrued by the sea-lady that, in revenge for his treatment of her, she punished the whole island, by covering it with a mist, so that all who attempted to carry on any commerce with it, either never arrived at it, but wandered up and down the sea, or were on a sudden wrecked upon its cliffs.

* This metaphor comes from the Greek. Both Pindar and Euripides call the Temple at Delphi—the *Navel* of the world.

It is found in Milton:—

Within the *Navel* of this hideous wood. Comus, v. 520.—C.

Yet still, if truth those beams infuse
Which guide at once, and charm the Muse,
Beyond yon braided clouds that lie,
Paving the light-embroider'd sky:
Amidst the bright pavilion'd plains,
The beauteous Model still remains.
There happier than in islands blest,
Or bowers by Spring or Hebe drest,
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,
In warlike weeds, retired in glory,
Hear their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to th' immortal string.

How may the poet now unfold,
What never tongue or numbers told?
How learn delighted, and amaz'd,
What hands unknown that fabric rais'd?
Even now, before his favour'd eyes,
In Gothic pride it seems to rise!
Yet Grecia's graceful orders join,
Majestic thro' the mix'd design;
The secret builder knew to chuse,
Each sphere-found gem of richest hues:
Whate'er heaven's purer mold contains,
When nearer suns emblaze its veins;
There on the walls the patriot's sight
May ever hang with fresh delight,
And, grav'd with some prophetic rage,
Read Albion's fame thro' every age.

Ye forms divine, ye laureate band,
That near her inmost altar stand!
Now sooth her, to her blissful train
Blithe Concord's social form to gain:
Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep
Even Anger's blood-shot eyes in sleep:
Before whose breathing bosom's balm,
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm;
Her let our sires and matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravag'd shore,
Our youths, enamour'd of the fair,
Play with the tangles* of her hair,
Till, in one loud applauding sound,
The nations shout to her around,
O how supremely art thou blest,
Thou, Lady, thou shalt rule the west!

ODE TO A LADY,†

ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL CHARLES ROSS IN THE ACTION AT FONTENOY.

WRITTEN MAY, MDCCXLV.

WHILE, lost to all his former mirth,
Britannia's Genius bends to earth,

* The *Tangles* of Neæra's hair.—Milton's Lycides, v. 69.
† Miss Elizabeth Goddard. See Life.

And mourns the fatal day:
While stain'd with blood he strives to tear
Unseemly from his sea-green hair
The wreaths of cheerful May:

The thoughts which musing pity pays,
And fond remembrance loves to raise,
Your faithful hours attend:
Still Fancy, to herself unkind,
Awakes to grief the soften'd mind,
And points the bleeding friend.

By rapid Scheld's descending wave
His country's vows shall bless the grave,
Where'er the youth is laid:
That sacred spot the village hind
With every sweetest turf shall bind,
And Peace protect the shade.

O'er him, whose doom thy virtues grieve,
Aerial forms shall sit at eve,
And bend the pensive head!
And, fallen to save his injur'd land,
Imperial Honour's awful hand
Shall point his lonely bed!

The warlike dead of every age,
Who fill the fair recording page,

Shall leave their sainted rest,
And, half reclining on his spear,
Each wondering chief by turns appear,
To hail the blooming guest.

Old Edward's sons, unknown to yield,
Shall crowd from Cressy's laurell'd field,
And gaze with fix'd delight:
Again for Britain's wrongs they feel,
Again they snatch the gleamy steel,
And wish th' avenging fight.

But lo where, sunk in deep despair,
Her garments torn, her bosom bare,
Impatient Freedom lies!
Her matted tresses madly spread,
To every sod, which wraps the dead,
She turns her joyless eyes.

Ne'er shall she leave that lowly ground,
Till notes of triumph bursting round
Proclaim her reign restor'd:
Till William* seek the sad retreat,
And, bleeding at her sacred feet,
Present the sated sword.

* Duke of Cumberland, second son of George II., at that time Commander of the British forces.—C.

If, weak to soothe so soft an heart,
These pictur'd glories nought impart,
To dry thy constant tear:
If yet, in Sorrow's distant eye,
Expos'd and pale thou seest him lie,
Wild war insulting near:

Where'er from time thou court'st relief,
The Muse shall still, with social grief,
Her gentlest promise keep:
Even humble Harting's cottag'd vale
Shall learn the sad repeated tale,
And bid her shepherds weep.

ODE TO EVENING.*

IF aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,†
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear
Like thine own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales,

O Nymph reserv'd, while now the bright hair'd sun,
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,

* The measures of this admired Ode are the same which Milton used in his translation of Horace, B. 1, O. 5; but Lyric *poetry*, without rhyme, not being suitable to the English *taste*, it has very rarely been attempted.—C.

† might we but hear—
Or sound of *pastoral* reed with *oaten stops*.—Milton's Comus, v. 340.

With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-eyed bat,
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,*

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim born in heedless hum:
Now teach me, Maid compos'd,
To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers stealing thro' thy dark'ning vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow, I hail
Thy genial lov'd return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

* What time the gray-fly *winds* her sultry *horn*.—Milton's Lycides, v. 21.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin 'midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod
By thy religious gleams.

Or if chill blustring winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light:

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling thro' the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrieking train,
And rudely rends thy robes:

So long regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy favourite name!

ODE TO PEACE.

O Thou, who bad'st thy turtles bear
Swift from his grasp thy golden hair,
And sought'st thy native skies:
When War, by vultures drawn from far,
To Britain bent his iron car,
And bade his storms arise!

Tir'd of his rude tyrannic sway,
Our youth shall fix some festive day,
His sullen shrines to burn:
But thou, who hear'st the turning spheres,
What sounds may charm thy partial ears,
And gain thy blest return!

O Peace, thy injur'd robes up-bind!
O rise, and leave not one behind
Of all thy beamy train:
The British lion, Goddess sweet,
Lies stretch'd on earth to kiss thy feet,
And own thy holier reign.

Let others court thy transient smile,
But come to grace thy western isle,
By warlike Honour led!
And, while around her ports rejoice,
While all her sons adore thy choice,
With him for ever wed!

THE MANNERS. AN ODE.

FAREWELL, for clearer ken design'd,
The dim-discover'd tracts of mind:
Truths which, from action's paths retir'd,
My silent search in vain requir'd!
No more my sail that deep explores,
No more I search those magic shores,
What regions part the world of soul,
Or whence thy streams, Opinion, roll:
If e'er I round such Fairy field,
Some power impart the spear and shield,
At which the wizzard Passions fly,
By which the giant Follies die!

Farewell the porch, whose roof is seen,
Arch'd with th' enlivening olive's green:
Where Science, prank'd in tissued vest,
By Reason, Pride, and Fancy drest,
Comes like a bride, so trim array'd,
To wed with Doubt in Plato's shade!

Youth of the quick uncheated sight,
Thy walks, Observance, more invite!
O thou, who lov'st that ampler range,
Where life's wide prospects round thee change,

And, with her mingled sons allied,
Throw'st the prattling page aside:
To me in converse sweet impart,
To read in man the native art,
To learn, where Science sure is found,
From Nature as she lives around:
And gazing oft her mirror true,
By turns each shifting image view!
Till meddling Art's officious lore,
Reverse the lessons taught before,
Alluring from a safer rule,
To dream in her enchanted school;
Thou, heaven, whate'er of great we boast,
Hast blest this social science most.

Retiring hence to thoughtful cell,
As Fancy breathes her potent spell,
Not vain she finds the charmful task,
In pageant quaint, in motley mask;
Behold, before her musing eyes,
The countless Manners round her rise;
While ever varying as they pass,
To some Contempt applies her glass:
With these the white-rob'd Maids combine,
And those the laughing Satyrs join!
But who is he whom now she views,
In robe of wild contending hues?

Thou by the passions nurs'd; I greet
The comic sock that binds thy feet!
O Humour, thou whose name is known,
To Britain's favour'd isle alone:
Me too amidst thy band admit,
There where the young-eyed healthful Wit,
(Whose jewels in his crisped hair
Are plac'd each other's beams to share,
Whom no delights from thee divide)
In laughter loos'd attends thy side!

By old Miletus * who so long
Has ceas'd his love-inwoven song:
By all you taught the Tuscan maids,
In chang'd Italia's modern shades:
By him,† whose Knight's distinguish'd name
Refin'd a nation's lust of fame;
Whose tales even now, with echoes sweet,
Castilia's Moorish hills repeat:
Or him,‡ whom Seine's blue nymphs deplore,
In watchet weeds on Gallia's shore,

* Alluding to the Milesian tales, some of the earliest romances.

The Milesian and Tuscan romances were by no means distinguished for humour; but as they were the models of that species of writing in which humour was afterwards employed, they are, probably, for that reason only, mentioned here.—L.

† Cervantes.

‡ Le Sage, author of the incomparable adventures of Gil Blas de Santillane, who died in Paris in the year 1747.

Who drew the sad Sicilian * maid,
By virtues in her sire betrayed:

O Nature boon, from whom proceed
Each forceful thought, each prompted deed;
If but from thee I hope to feel,
On all my heart imprint thy seal!
Let some retreating Cynic find
Those oft-turn'd scrolls I leave behind,
The Sports and I this hour agree,
To rove thy scene-full world with thee!

THE PASSIONS.

AN ODE FOR MUSIC.

WHEN Music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Throng'd around her magic cell,
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possest beyond the Muse's painting;

* The Story of Blanche (see Gil Blas, b. 2, ch. 4,) has more to do with the high passions than with manners.—B.

By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturb'd, delighted, rais'd, refin'd.
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fir'd,
Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspir'd,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatch'd her instruments of sound,
And as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful heart,
Each, for madness rul'd the hour,
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
  Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
  Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rush'd, his eyes on fire,
  In lightnings own'd his secret stings,
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
  And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woeful measures wan Despair——
  Low sullen sounds his grief beguil'd,
A solemn, strange, and mingled air,
  'Twas sad by fits, by starts, 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
  What was thy delighted measure?

Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bad the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong,
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She call'd on Echo still thro' all the song;
And where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope enchanted smil'd, and wav'd her golden hair.

And longer had she sung,—but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose,
He threw his blood-stain'd sword in thunder down,
And, with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe.
And ever and anon he beat
The doubling drum with furious heat;
And tho' sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied,
Yet still he kept his wild unalter'd mien,
While each strain'd ball of sight seem'd bursting from his [head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were fix'd,
Sad proof of thy distressful state,
Of differing themes the veering song was mix'd,
And now it courted Love, now raving called on Hate.

With eyes up-rais'd, as one inspir'd,
Pale Melancholy sat retir'd,
And from her wild sequester'd seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Pour'd through the mellow horn her pensive soul:
And dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels join'd the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole,
Or o'er some haunted streams with fond delay,
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace, and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

But O, how alter'd was its sprightlier tone!
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunters' call to Faun and Dryad known;
The oak-crown'd Sisters, and their chaste-ey'd Queen,
Satyrs and sylvan-boys were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green;
Brown Exercise rejoic'd to hear,
And Sport leapt up, and seiz'd his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's extatic trial,
He with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand address,

But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he lov'd the best.
They would have thought, who heard the strain.
They saw in Tempe's vale her native maids,
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kiss'd the strings,
Love fram'd with Mirth, a gay fantastic round,
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound,
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O Music, sphere-descended maid,
Friend of pleasure, wisdom's aid,
Why, Goddess, why to us denied?
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As in that lov'd Athenian bower,
You learn'd an all-commanding power,
Thy mimic soul, O nymph endear'd,
Can well recal what then it heard.
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that god-like age,
Fill thy recording Sister's page—

'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age,
Even all at once together found
Cæcilia's mingled world of sound—
O bid our vain endeavours cease,
Revive the just designs of Greece,
Return in all thy simple state!
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

AN EPISTLE,

ADDRESSED TO SIR THOMAS HANMER, ON HIS EDITION OF SHAKSPEARE'S WORKS.

WHILE born to bring the Muse's happier days,
A patriot's hand protects a poet's lays,
While nurs'd by you she sees her myrtles bloom,
Green and unwither'd o'er his honour'd tomb
Excuse her doubts, if yet she fears to tell
What secret transports in her bosom swell:
With conscious awe she hears the critic's fame,
And blushing hides her wreath at Shakspeare's name.
Hard was the lot those injur'd strains endur'd,
Unown'd by science, and by years obscur'd:
Fair Fancy wept; and echoing sighs confess'd
A fixt despair in every tuneful breast.

Not with more grief th' afflicted swains appear,
When wintry winds deform the plenteous year;
When lingering frosts the ruin'd seats invade
Where Peace resorted, and the Graces play'd.

Each rising art by just gradation moves,
Toil builds on toil, and age on age improves:
The Muse alone unequal dealt her rage,
And grac'd with noblest pomp her earliest stage.
Preserv'd thro' time, the speaking scenes impart
Each changeful wish of Phædra's tortur'd heart:
Or paint the curse, that mark'd the * Theban's reign,
A bed incestuous, and a father slain.
With kind concern our pitying eyes o'erflow,
Trace the sad tale, and own another's woe.

To Rome remov'd, with wit secure to please,
The comic Sisters kept their native ease.
With jealous fear declining Greece beheld
Her own Menander's art almost excell'd!
But every Muse essay'd to raise in vain
Some labour'd rival of her tragic strain;
Ilissus' laurels, tho' transferr'd with toil,
Droop'd their fair leaves, nor knew the unfriendly soil.

As arts expir'd, resistless Dulness rose;
Goths, priests, or Vandals,—all were Learning's foes.

* The Oedipus of Shophocles.

Till *Julius first recall'd each exil'd maid,
And Cosmo own'd them in th' Etrurian shade:
Then deeply skill'd in love's engaging theme,
The soft Provencal pass'd to Arno's stream:
With graceful ease the wanton lyre he strung,
Sweet flow'd the lays—but love was all he sung,
The gay description could not fail to move,
For, led by nature, all are friends to love.

But heaven, still various in its works, decreed
The perfect boast of time should last succeed.
The beauteous union must appear at length,
Of Tuscan fancy, and Athenian strength:
One greater Muse Eliza's reign adorn,
And even a Shakspeare to her fame be born.

Yet ah! so bright her morning's opening ray,
In vain our Britain hoped an equal day!
No second growth the western isle could bear,
At once exhausted with too rich a year.
Too nicely Jonson knew the critic's part;
Nature in him was almost lost in art.
Of softer mold the gentle Fletcher came,
The next in order, as the next in name.
With pleas'd attention 'midst his scenes we find
Each glowing thought, that warms the female mind;
Each melting sigh, and every tender tear,
The lover's wishes, and the virgin's fear,

* Julius II., the immediate predecessor of Leo. X.

His* every strain the Smiles and Graces own ;
But stronger Shakspeare felt for man alone ;
Drawn by his pen, our ruder passions stand
Th' unrivall'd picture of his early hand,

† With gradual steps, and slow, exacter France
Saw Art's fair empire o'er her shores advance :
By length of toil a bright perfection knew,
Correctly bold, and just in all she drew.
Till late Corneille, with ‡Lucan's spirit fir'd,
Breath'd the free strain, as Rome and He inspir'd :
And classic judgment gain'd to sweet Racine
The temperate strength of Maro's chaster line.

But wilder far the British laurel spread,
And wreaths less artful crown our poet's head.
Yet He alone to every scene could give
Th' historian's truth, and bid the manners live.
Wak'd at his call I view, with glad surprise,
Majestic forms of mighty monarchs rise.
There Henry's trumpets spread their loud alarms,
And laurel'd Conquest waits her hero's arms.

* Their characters are thus distinguished by Mr. Dryden.

† About the time of Shakspeare, the poet Hardy was in great repute in France. He wrote, according to Fontenelle, six hundred plays. The French poets after him applied themselves, in general, to the correct improvement of the stage, which was almost totally disregarded by those of our own country —Jonson excepted.

‡ The favourite author of the elder Corneille.

Here gentler Edward claims a pitying sigh,
Scarce born to honours, and so soon to die!
Yet shall thy throne, unhappy infant, bring
No beam of comfort to the guilty king:
The * time shall come, when Glo'ster's heart shall bleed
In life's last hours, with horror of the deed:
When dreary visions shall at last present
Thy vengeful image in the midnight tent:
Thy hand unseen the secret death shall bear,
Blunt the weak sword, and break th' oppressive spear.

Where'er we turn, by fancy charm'd, we find
Some sweet illusion of the cheated mind.
Oft, wild of wing, she calls the soul to rove
With humbler nature, in the rural grove;
Where swains contented own the quiet scene,
And twilight fairies tread the circled green:
Dress'd by her hand, the woods and valleys smile,
And Spring diffusive decks th' inchanted isle.

O more than all in powerful genius blest,
Come, take thine empire o'er the willing breast!
Whate'er the wounds this youthful heart shall feel,
Thy songs support me, and thy morals heal!
There every thought the poet's warmth may raise,
There native music dwells in all the lays.

* Tempus erit Turno, magno cùm optaverit emptum
Intactum Pallanta, &c.

O might some verse with happiest skill persuade
Expressive Picture to adopt thine aid!
What wondrous draughts might rise from every page!
What other Raphaels charm a distant age!

Methinks even now I view some free design,
Where breathing Nature lives in every line:
Chaste and subdued the modest lights decay,
Steal into shades, and mildly melt away.
—And see, where *Anthony, in tears approv'd,
Guards the pale relics of the chief he lov'd:
O'er the cold corse the warrior seems to bend,
Deep sunk in grief, and mourns his murder'd friend!
Still as they press, he calls on all around,
Lifts the torn robe, and points the bleeding wound.

But † who is he, whose brows axalted bear
A wrath impatient, and a fiercer air?
Awake to all that injur'd worth can feel,
On his own Rome he turns th' avenging steel.
Yet shall not war's insatiate fury fall,
(So heaven ordains it) on the destin'd wall.
See the fond mother, 'midst the plaintive train,
Hung on his knees, and prostrate on the plain!
Touch'd to the soul, in vain he strives to hide
The son's affection, in the Roman's pride:

* See the tragedy of Julius Cæsar.
† Coriolanus. See Mr. Spence's Dialogue on the Odyssey.

O'er all the man conflicting passions rise,
Rage grasps the sword, while Pity melts the eyes.

Thus, generous Critic, as thy Bard inspires,
The sister Arts shall nurse their drooping sires;
Each from his scenes her stores alternate bring,
Blend the fair tints, or wake the vocal string:
Those Sibyl-leaves, the sport of every wind,
(For poets ever were a careless kind)
By thee dispos'd, no farther toil demand,
But, just to Nature, own thy forming hand.

So spread o'er Greece, th' harmonious whole unknown,
Even Homer's numbers charm'd by parts alone.
Their own Ulysses scarce had wander'd more,
By winds and waters cast on every shore:
When rais'd by fate, some former Hanmer joined
Each beauteous image of the boundless mind;
And bade, like thee, his Athens ever claim
A fond alliance with the Poet's name.

DIRGE—IN CYMBELYNE.

SUNG BY GUIDERIUS AND ARVIRAGUS OVER FIDELE, SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

TO fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring

Each opening sweet, of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing Spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove,
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew;
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The red-breast oft at evening hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss and gather'd flowers
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain
In tempests shake the sylvan cell,
Or 'midst the chace on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Belov'd, till life can charm no more;
And mourn'd, till Pity's self be dead.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THOMSON,

THE SCENE OF THE FOLLOWING STANZAS IS SUPPOSED TO LIE ON THE THAMES, NEAR RICHMOND.

IN yonder grave a Druid lies
Where slowly winds the stealing wave!
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise
To deck its Poet's sylvan grave!

In yon deep bed of whisp'ring reeds
His airy harp* shall now be laid,
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds,
May love thro' life the soothing shade.

Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in Pity's ear
To hear the Woodland Pilgrim's knell,

Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar
To bid his gentle spirit rest!

And oft as Ease and Health retire
To breezy lawn, or forest deep

* The Harp of ÆOLUS, of which see a description in the CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

The friend shall view yon whitening * spire,
And 'mid the varied landscape weep:

But, Thou, who own'st that earthly bed,
Ah! what will every dirge avail?
Or tears, which Love and Pity shed
That mourn beneath the gliding sail!

Yet lives there one, whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimm'ring near?
With him, sweet bard, may Fancy die,
And Joy desert the blooming year.

But thou, lorn stream, whose sullen tide
No sedge-crown'd Sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend!

And see, the fairy valleys fade,
Dun night has veil'd the solemn view!
Yet once again, dear parted shade,
Meek Nature's Child, again adieu!

* The genial meads assign'd to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom;

* Richmond Church.

* Thomson resided in the neighbourhood of Richmond some time before his death.

Their hinds, and shepherd-girls shall dress
With simple hands thy rural tomb.

Long, long, thy stone, and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes,
O! vales, and wild woods, shall He say,
In yonder grave Your Druid lies!

AN ODE, ON THE POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

Considered as the Subject of Poetry.

SUBSCRIBED TO MR. JOHN HOME.

HOME, thou return'st from Thames, whose Naiads long
Have seen thee lingering with a fond delay
Mid those soft friends, whose hearts some future day
Shall melt perhaps to hear thy tragic song.
Go, not unmindful of that cordial Youth,*
Whom, long endear'd, thou leav'st by Lavant's side,
Together let us wish him lasting truth,
And joy untainted with his destin'd bride.
Go, nor regardless, while these numbers boast
My short-liv'd bliss, forget my social name:
But think, far off, how, on the southern coast,
I met thy friendship with an equal flame!

* A gentleman of the name of Barrow, who introduced Home to Collins.

Fresh to that soil thou turn'st, where every vale
Shall prompt the poet, and his song demand:
To thee thy copious subjects ne'er shall fail;
Thou need'st but take thy pencil to thy hand,
And paint what all believe, who own thy genial land.

There must thou take perforce thy Doric quill;
'Tis Fancy's land to which thou sett'st thy feet;
Where still, 'tis said, the fairy people meet,
Beneath each birken shade, on mead or hill.
There each trim lass, that skims the milky store,
To the swart tribes their creamy bowls allots;
By night they sip it round the cottage-door,
While airy minstrels warble jocund notes.
There, every herd, by sad experience, knows
How, wing'd with fate, their elf-shot arrows fly,
When the sick ewe her summer food forgoes,
Or, stretch'd on earth, the heart-smit heifers lie.
Such airy beings awe th' untutor'd swain:
Nor thou, tho' learn'd, his homelier thoughts neglect;
Let thy sweet Muse the rural faith sustain;
These are the themes of simple sure effect,
That add new conquests to her boundless reign,
And fill with double force her heart-commanding strain.

Ev'n yet preserv'd, how often may'st thou hear,
Where to the Pole the Boreal mountains run,
Taught by the father, to his listening son,
Strange lays, whose power had charm'd a Spencer's ear.

At every pause, before thy mind possest,
Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around
With uncouth lyres, in many-colour'd vest,
Their matted hair with boughs fantastic crown'd:
Whether thou bidd'st the well-taught hind repeat
The choral dirge that mourns some chieftain brave,
When every shrieking maid her bosom beat,
And strew'd with choicest herbs his scented grave;
Or, whether sitting in the shepherd's shiel,*
Thou hear'st some sounding tale of war's alarms;
When at the bugle's call, with fire and steel,
The sturdy clans pour'd forth their brawny swarms,
And hostile brothers met to prove each other's arms.

'Tis thine to sing, how, framing hideous spells,
In Sky's lone isle, the gifted wizzard-seer;
Lodg'd in the wintry cave with Fate's fell spear,
Or in the depth of Uist's dark forests dwells:
How they, whose sight such dreary dreams engross,
With their own vision oft astonish'd droop;
When, o'er the watery strath, or quaggy moss,
They see the gliding ghosts unbodied troop.
Or, if in sports, or on the festive green,
Their destin'd glance some fated youth descry,
Who now, perhaps, in lusty vigour seen,
And rosy health, shall soon lamented die.

* A summer hut, built in the high part of the mountains, to tend their flocks in the warm season, when the weather is fine.

For them the viewless forms of air obey:
Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair.
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
And heartless oft, like moody madness stare
To see the phantom train their secret work prepare.

To monarchs dear, some hundred miles astray,
Oft have I seen Fate give the fatal blow!
The Seer in Sky, shrieked as the blood did flow,
When headless Charles warm on the scaffold lay!
As Boreas threw his young Aurora* forth,
In the first year of the first George's reign,
And battles rag'd in welkin of the North,
They mourn'd in air, fell, fell Rebellion slain!
And as, of late, they joy'd in Preston's fight,
Saw, at sad Falkirk, all their hopes near crown'd!
They rav'd! divining thro' their second sight,
Pale, red Culloden, where these hopes were drown'd!
Illustrious William!† Britain's guardian name!
One William sav'd us from a tyrant's stroke;
He, for a sceptre gain'd heroic fame,
But thou, more glorious, Slavery's chain hast broke,
To reign a private man, and bow to Freedom's yoke!

* It is highly probable, that Collins meant the first appearance of the Northern Lights, which happened about the year 1715; from this circumstance, that no ancient writer has taken notice of them; nor any modern, previous to the above period.

† The Duke of Cumberland, who defeated the Pretender at Culloden.

These too thou 'lt sing! for well thy magic Muse
Can to the topmost heaven of grandeur soar,
Or stoop to wail the swain that is no more.
Ah, homely swains! your homeward steps ne'er lose;
Let not dank Will* mislead you to the heath:
Dancing in mirky night, o'er fen and lake,
He glows, to draw you downward to your death,
In his bewitch'd, low, marshy, willow brake.
What tho' far off, from some dark dell espied,
His glimmering mazes cheer the excursive sight?
Yet turn, ye wanderers, turn your steps aside,
Nor trust the guidance of that faithless light;
For watchful, lurking, 'mid th' unrustling reed,
At those mirk hours the wily monster lies,
And listens oft to hear the passing steed,
And frequent round him rolls his sullen eyes,
If chance his savage wrath may some weak wretch surprise.

Ah, luckless swain, o'er all unblest, indeed!
Whom late bewilder'd in the dank, dark fen,
Far from his flocks and smoaking hamlet then,
To that sad spot where hums the sedgy weed:
On him, enrag'd, the fiend, in angry mood,
Shall never look with pity's kind concern,
But instant, furious, raise the whelming flood
O'er its drown'd banks, forbidding all return!

* A fiery meteor, called Will-with-the-Wisp, Jack-with-the-Lantorn, &c. It hovers over fenny and marshy places.

Or, if he meditate his wish'd escape,
To some dim hill that seems uprising near,
To his faint eye, the grim and grisly shape,
In all its terrors clad, shall wild appear.
Meantime the watery surge shall round him rise,
Pour'd sudden forth from every swelling source!
What now remains but tears and hopeless sighs?
His fear-shook limbs have lost their youthly force,
And down the waves he floats, a pale and breathless corse!

For him in vain his anxious wife shall wait,
Or wander forth to meet him on his way;
For him in vain, at to-fall of the day,
His babes shall linger at th' unclosing gate:
Ah, ne'er shall he return! Alone, if night
Her travell'd limbs in broken slumbers steep,
With drooping willows drest his mournful sprite
Shall visit sad, perchance, her silent sleep:
Then he, perhaps, with moist and watery hand,
Shall fondly seem to press her shuddering cheek,
And with his blue-swoln face before her stand,*
And, shivering cold, these piteous accents speak:
"Pursue, dear wife, thy daily toils, pursue,
At dawn or dusk, industrious as before;
Nor e'er of me one helpless thought renew,
While I lie weltering on the osier'd shore,
Drown'd by the Kelpie's*wrath, nor e'er shall aid thee more."

* The water-fiend.

Unbounded is thy range; with varied skill
Thy Muse may, like those feathery tribes which spring
From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing
Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,
To that hoar pile which still its ruin shows;
In whose small vaults a Pigmy-folk* is found,
Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows,
And culls them, wond'ring, from the hallow'd ground!
Or thither,† where, beneath the showery west,
The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid:
Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest,
No slaves revere them, and no wars invade:
Yet frequent now at midnight solemn hour,
The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,
And forth the monarchs stalk with sovereign power,
In pageant robes, and wreath'd with sheeny gold,
And on their twilight tombs aërial council hold.

But O! o'er all, forget not Kilda's race,
On whose bleak rocks, which brave the washing tides,
Fair Nature's daughter, Virtue, yet abides;
Go, just as they, their blameless manners trace!
Then to my ear transmit some gentle song
Of those whose lives are yet sincere and plain;

* One of the Hebrides is called the isle of Pigmies: it is reported that several miniature bones of the human species have been dug up in the ruins of a chapel there.

† Icolmkill, one of the Hebrides, where near sixty of the ancient Scottish, Irish, and Norweg'an kings are interred.

Their bounded walks the rugged cliffs along,
And all their prospect, but the wintry main.
With sparing temperance, at the needful time,
They drain the sainted spring; or, hunger-prest,
Along the Atlantic rock undreading climb,
And of its eggs despoil the solan's* nest.
Thus blest, in primal innocence they live,
Sufficed and happy with their frugal fare,
Which tasteful toil and hourly danger give:
Hard is their shallow soil, and bleak, and bare,
Nor ever vernal bee was heard to murmur there.

Nor need'st thou blush that such false themes engage
Thy gentle mind, of fairer stores possest;
For not alone they touch the village breast,
But fill'd in elder time the historic page.
There Shakspeare's self, which every garland crown'd,
Flew to those fairy climes his fancy sheen;
In musing hour his wayward sisters found,
And with their terrors drest the magic scene;
From them he sung, when, 'mid his bold design,
Before the Scot, afflicted and aghast,
The shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line
Thro' the dark cave in gleamy pageant past.
Proceed; nor quit the tales which, simply told,
Could once so well my answering bosom pierce;

* An aquatic bird, like a goose; on the eggs of which the inhabitants of St. Kilda often subsist.

Proceed, in forceful sounds and colour bold,
The native legends of thy land rehearse;
To such adapt thy lyre, and suit thy powerful verse.

In scenes like these, which, daring to depart
From sober truth, are still to Nature true,
And call forth fresh delight to Fancy's view,
The heroic Muse employ'd her Tasso's art.
How have I trembled, when, at Tancred's stroke,
Its gushing blood the gaping cypress pour'd!
When each live plant, with mortal accents spoke,
And the wild blast upheaved the vanish'd sword!
How have I sat, when piped the pensive wind,
To hear his harp by British Fairfax strung!
Prevailing poet! whose undoubting mind
Believed the magic wonders which he sung!
Hence, at each sound, imagination glows!
Hence, at each picture, vivid life starts here!
Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness flows!
Melting it flows, pure, murmuring, strong, and clear,
And fills th' impassion'd heart, and wins the harmonious ear!

All hail, ye scenes, that o'er my soul prevail!
Ye splendid friths and lakes, which, far away,
Are by smooth Annan* fill'd, or pastoral Tay,*
Or Don's* romantic springs, at distance hail!

* * * Three rivers in Scotland.

The time shall come, when I, perhaps, may tread
Your lowly glens, o'erhung with spreading bloom,
Or o'er your stretching heaths, by Fancy led,
Or o'er your mountains creep in awful gloom!
Then will I dress once more the faded bower
Where Jonson sat in Drummond's* classic shade;
Or crop from Tiviotdale, each lyric flower,
And mourn on Yarrow's banks, where Willy's laid!
Meantime, ye Powers, that on the plains which bore
The cordial Youth, on Lothian's plains† attend!
Where'er Home dwells, on hill or lowly moor,
To him I lose your kind protection lend,
And, touch'd with love like mine, preserve my absent friend!

* Ben Jonson paid a visit on foot, in 1619, to the Scotch poet, Drummond, at his seat of Hawthornden, within 4 miles of Edinburgh.

† Barrow, it seems, was at Edinburgh University, which is in the county of Lothian.

These popular superstitions are enumerated with equal taste and knowledge of the subject. The information is chiefly taken from Martin's Description of the Western Islands of Scotland, published 1703.—B.

SU LA TOMBA DI FEDELE.

[FROM G. B. MARTELLI.]

I freschi doni eterei
Di Flora e i molli odori
Fia che le ninfe spandano
E i semplici pastori,
Facil tributo ingenuo
Su questa tomba erbosa,
In cui fra l'ombre tacite
Il muto cener posa
Dell' animoso ed ilare
Garzon, Fedel nomato,
A cui di vita il tenero
Stame recise il fato.
Spettro ululante e misero,
Allor che il mondo tace,
Di questa selva inospite
Non turberà la pace:
A sozze maghe e luride
Ignota fia quest' urna;
Nè qui traranno i demoni
La lor schiera notturna.
Ma le Sirene eteree
Faran l' avello intorno
Di rugiadose e fulgide
Arcane perle adorno:

E qui porrà la rondine
D' eterna primavera
Di rose elette e florido
Musco suo nido a sera.
Allor che il vento querulo
E la pioggia frequente
Fra le procelle scuotono
La tua dimora algente,
E allor che il raggio tremulo
Dell' alba il ciel ravviva,
E s' ode intorno il sonito
Della caccia festiva,
Su te, Garzon, cui l'invido
Rapì destin severo,
Su te dolce patetico
Ritornerà il pensiero,
Te alla memoria reduce
Ogni solinga scena
Farà; per te di lagrime
Fia perenne la vena;
E fia per te sollecito
Il cor che ti lamenta,
In fin che piaccia il vivere,
E la pietà sia spenta.

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