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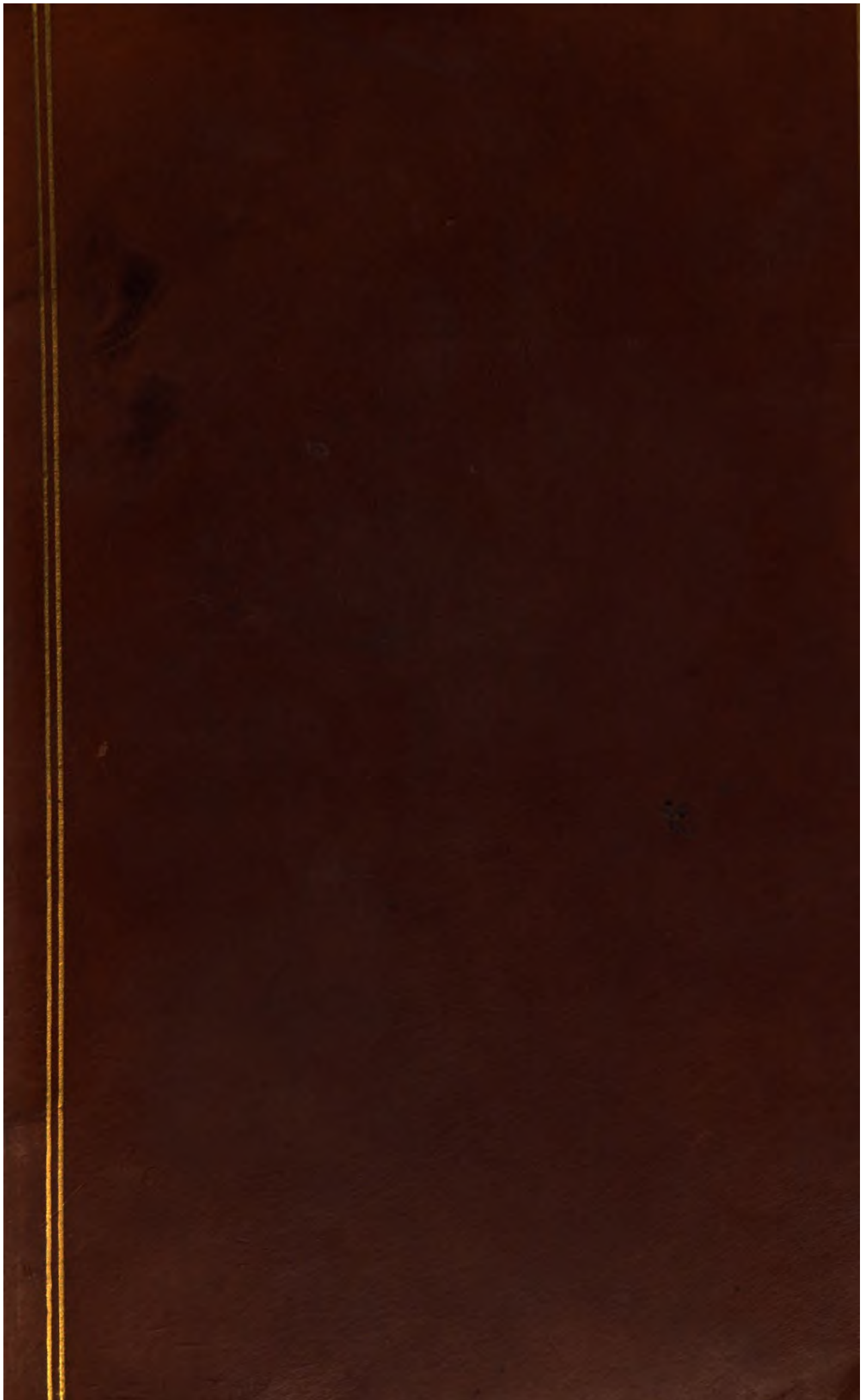
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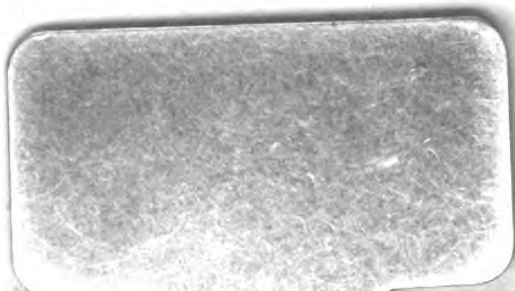


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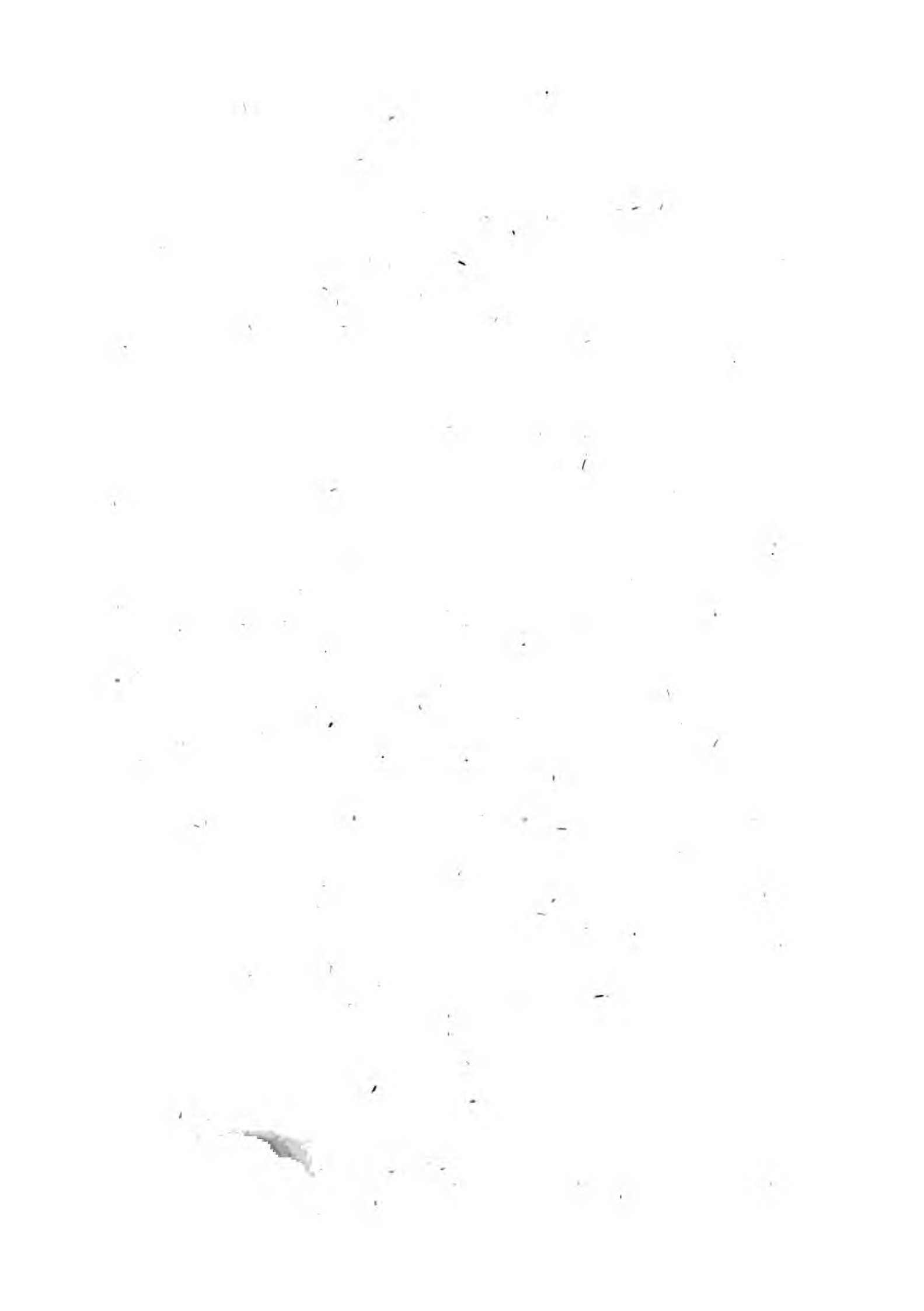
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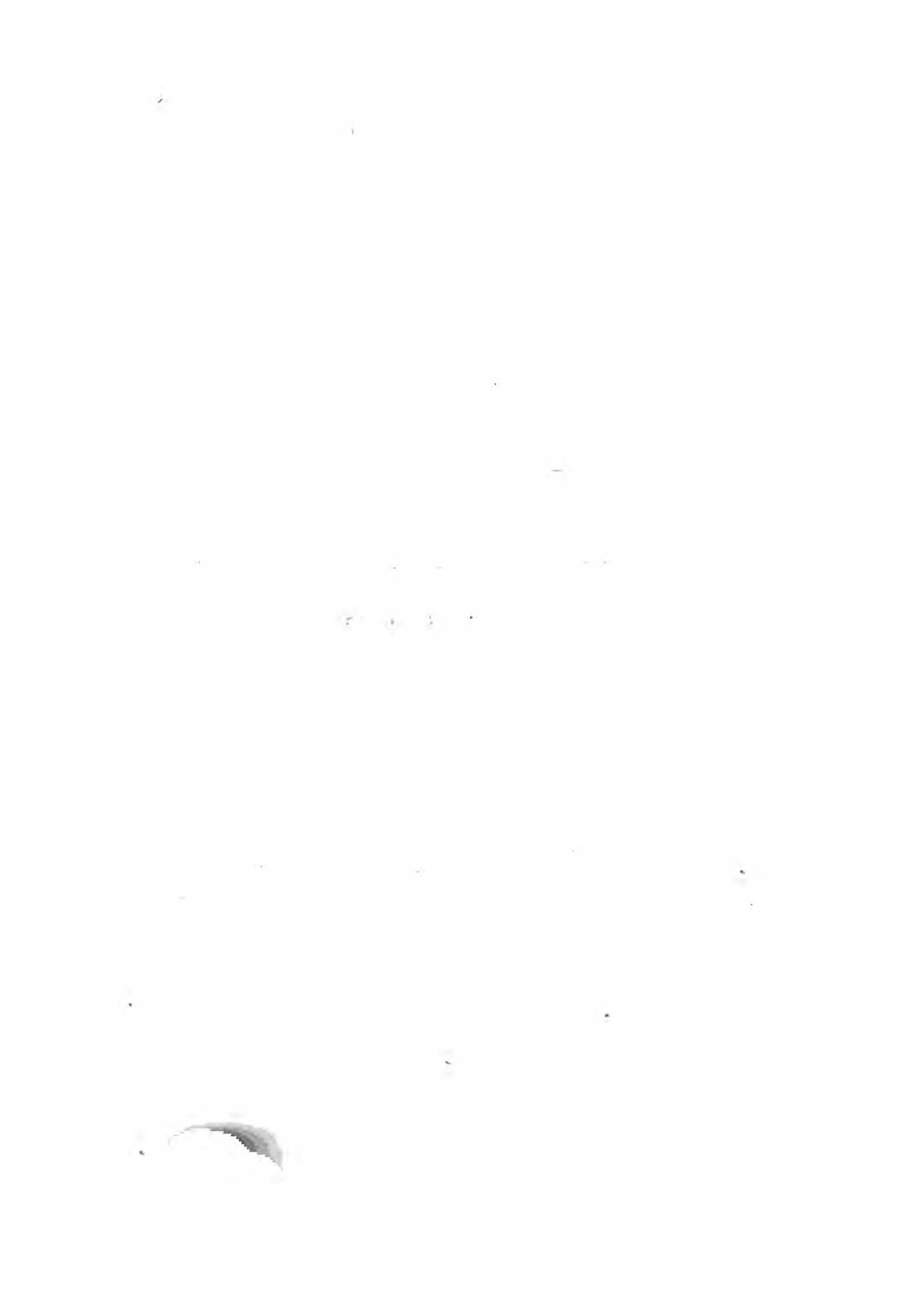
1848







TALES.



TALES.

BY

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE, LL. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

SIXTH EDITION.

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VOL. II.

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TALES.

VOL. II.

B

TALE XI.

EDWARD SHORE.

Seem they grave or learned ?
Why, so didst thou—Seem they religious ?
Why, so didst thou ; or are they spare in diet,
Free from gross passion, or of mirth or anger,
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest compliment,
Not working with the eye without the ear,
And but with purged judgment trusting neither ?
Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem.
Henry V. Act II. Scene 2.

Better I were distract,
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by strong imagination lose
The knowledge of themselves.
Lear, Act IV. Scene 6.

TALE XI.

EDWARD SHORE.

GENIUS! thou gift of Heav'n ! thou light divine !
Amid what dangers art thou doom'd to shine !
Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,
Oft damp thy vigour, and impede thy course ;
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain
Thy nobler efforts, to contend with pain ;
Or Want (sad guest !) will in thy presence come,
And breathe around her melancholy gloom ;
To life's low cares will thy proud thought confine,
And make her sufferings, her impatience, thine.

Evil and strong, seducing passions prey
On soaring minds, and win them from their way ;
Who then to Vice the subject spirits give,
And in the service of the conqu'ror live ;
Like captive *Sampson* making sport for all,
Who feared their strength, and glory in their fall.

Genius, with virtue, still may lack the aid
Implor'd by humble minds and hearts afraid ;
May leave to timid souls the shield and sword
Of the tried Faith, and the resistless Word ;
Amid a world of dangers venturing forth,
Frail, but yet fearless, proud in conscious worth,
Till strong temptation, in some fatal time,
Assails the heart, and wins the soul to Crime ;
When left by Honour, and by Sorrow spent,
Unus'd to pray, unable to repent ;
The nobler powers that once exalted high
Th' aspiring man, shall then degraded lie :
Reason, through anguish, shall her throne forsake,
And strength of mind but stronger madness make.

When *Edward Shore* had reach'd his twentieth year,
He felt his bosom light, his conscience clear ;
Applause at school the youthful hero gain'd,
And trials there with manly strength sustain'd :
With prospects bright upon the world he came,
Pure love of virtue, strong desire of fame :
Men watch'd the way his lofty mind would take,
And all foretold the progress he would make.

Boast of these friends, to older men a guide,
Proud of his parts, but gracious in his pride ;
He bore a gay good-nature in his face,
And in his air were dignity and grace ;

Dress that became his state and years he wore,
And sense and spirit shone in *Edward Shore*.

Thus while admiring friends the Youth beheld,
His own disgust their forward hopes repell'd ;
For he unfix'd, unfixing look'd around,
And no employment but in seeking found ;
He gave his restless thoughts to views refin'd,
And shrank from worldly cares with wounded mind.

Rejecting trade, awhile he dwelt on laws,
“ But who could plead, if unapprov'd the cause ? ”
A doubting, dismal tribe physicians seem'd,
Divines o'er texts and disputations dream'd ;
War and its glory he perhaps could love,
But there again he must the cause approve.

Our Hero thought no deed should gain applause,
Where timid virtue found support in laws ;
He to all good would soar, would fly all sin,
By the pure prompting of the will within ;
“ Who needs a law that binds him not to steal,”
Ask'd the young teacher, “ can he rightly feel ?
“ To curb the will, or arm in honour's cause,
“ Or aid the weak—are these enforc'd by laws ?
“ Should we a foul, ungenerous action dread,
“ Because a law condemns th' adulterous bed ?
“ Or fly pollution, not for fear of stain,
“ But that some statute tells us to refrain ?

“ The grosser herd in ties like these we bind,
“ In virtue’s freedom moves th’ enlighten’d mind.”

‘ Man’s heart deceives him,’ said a friend : “ Of course,”
Replied the Youth, “ but, has it power to force?
“ Unless it forces, call it as you will,
“ It is but wish, and proneness to the ill.”

‘ Art thou not tempted?’ “ Do I fall?” said *Shore*;
‘ The pure have fallen,’—“ Then are pure no more;
“ While reason guides me, I shall walk aright,
“ Nor need a steadier hand, or stronger light;
“ Nor this in dread of awful threats, design’d
“ For the weak spirit and the grov’ling mind;
“ But that, engag’d by thoughts and views sublime,
“ I wage free war with grossness and with crime.”
Thus look’d he proudly on the vulgar crew,
Whom statutes govern, and whom fears subdue.

Faith, with his virtue, he indeed profess’d,
But doubts depriv’d his ardent mind of rest;
Reason, his sovereign mistress, fail’d to show
Light through the mazes of the world below;
Questions arose, and they surpass’d the skill
Of his sole aid, and would be dubious still;
These to discuss he sought no common guide,
But to the doubters in his doubts applied;
When all together might in freedom speak,
And their lov’d truth with mutual ardour seek.

Alas ! though men who feel their eyes decay
Take more than **common** pains to find their way,
Yet, when for this they ask each other's aid,
Their mutual purpose is the more delay'd :
Of all their doubts, their reasoning clear'd not one,
Still the same spots were present in the sun ;
Still the same scruples haunted *Edward's* mind,
Who found no rest, nor took the means to find.

But though with shaken faith, and s'lave to fame,
Vain and aspiring on the world he came ;
Yet was he studious, serious, moral, grave,
No passion's victim, and no system's slave ;
Vice he oppos'd, indulgence he disdain'd,
And o'er each sense in conscious triumph reign'd.

Who often reads, will sometimes wish to write,
And *Shore* would yield instruction and delight ;
A serious drama he design'd, but found
'Twas tedious travelling in that gloomy ground ;
A deep and solemn story he would try,
But grew asham'd of ghosts, and laid it by ;
Sermons he wrote, but they who knew his creed,
Or knew it not, were ill dispos'd to read ;
And he would lastly be the nation's guide,
But, studying, fail'd to fix upon a side ;
Fame he desir'd, and talents he possess'd,
But lov'd not labour, though he could not rest,

Nor firmly fix the vacillating mind,
That, ever working, could no centre find,

'Tis thus a sanguine Reader loves to trace
The *Nile* forth rushing on his glorious race;
Calm and secure the fancied Traveller goes
Through sterile deserts and by threat'ning foes:
He thinks not then of Africk's scorching sands,
Th' Arabian sea, the Abyssinian bands,
Fasils * and *Michaels*, and the robbers all,
Whom we politely chiefs and heroes call?
He of success alone delights to think,
He views that fount, he stands upon the brink,
And drinks a fancied draught, exulting so to drink.

In his own room, and with his books around,
His lively mind its chief employment found;
Then idly busy, quietly employ'd,
And, lost to life, his visions were enjoy'd:

* *Fasil* was a Rebel Chief, and *Michael* the General of the Royal army in *Abyssinia*, when Mr. *Bruce* visited that country. In all other respects their characters were nearly similar. They are both represented as cruel and treacherous; and even the apparently strong distinction of *loyal* and *rebellious* is in a great measure set aside, when we are informed that *Fasil* was an open enemy, and *Michael* an insolent and ambitious controller of the Royal person and family.

Yet still he took a keen inquiring view
Of all that crowds neglect, desire, pursue ;
And thus abstracted, curious, still, serene,
He, unemploy'd, beheld life's shifting scene ;
Still more averse from vulgar joys and cares,
Still more unfitted for the world's affairs.

There was a house where *Edward* oft-times went,
And social hours in pleasant trifling spent ;
He read, convers'd and reason'd, sang and play'd,
And all were happy while the idler stay'd ;
Too happy one, for thence arose the pain,
Till this engaging trifler came again.

But did he love ? We answer, day by day,
The loving feet would take th' accusom'd way,
The amorous eye would rove as if in quest
Of something rare, and on the mansion rest ;
The same soft passion touch'd the gentle tongue,
And *Anna's* charms in tender notes were sung ;
The ear too seem'd to feel the common flame,
Sooth'd and delighted with the fair-one's name ;
And thus as love each other part possess'd,
The heart, no doubt, its sovereign power confess'd.

Pleas'd in her sight, the Youth requir'd no more ;
Not rich himself, he saw the Damsel poor ;
And he too wisely, nay, too kindly lov'd,
To pain the being whom his soul approv'd.

A serious Friend our cautious Youth possess'd,
And at his table sat a welcome guest ;
Both unemploy'd, it was their chief delight
To read what free and daring authors write ;
Authors who lov'd from common views to soar
And seek the fountains never trac'd before ;
Truth they profess'd, yet often left the true
And beaten prospect, for the wild and new.
His chosen Friend his fiftieth year had seen,
His fortune easy, and his air serene ;
Deist and Athiest call'd ; for few agreed
What were his notions, principles, or creed ;
His mind repos'd not, for he hated rest,
But all things made a query or a jest ;
Perplex'd himself, he ever sought to prove
That man is doom'd in endless doubt to rove ;
Himself in darkness he profess'd to be,
And would maintain that not a man could see.

The youthful Friend, dissentient, reason'd still
Of the soul's prowess, and the subject-will ;
Of virtue's beauty, and of honour's force,
And a warm zeal gave life to his discourse :
Since from his feelings all his fire arose,
And he had interest in the themes he chose.

The Friend, indulging a sarcastic smile,
Said—' Dear Enthusiast ! thou wilt change thy style,

‘ When Man’s delusions, errors, crimes, deceit,
‘ No more distress thee, and no longer cheat.’

Yet lo! this cautious Man, so coolly wise,
On a young Beauty fixt unguarded eyes;
And her he married: *Edward* at the view
Bade to his cheerful visits long adieu;
But haply err’d, for this engaging Bride
No mirth suppress’d, but rather cause supplied:
And when she saw the friends, by reasoning long,
Confus’d if right, and positive if wrong;
With playful speech and smile, that spoke delight,
She made them careless both of wrong and right.

This gentle Damsel gave consent to wed,
With school and school-day dinners in her head:
She now was promis’d choice of daintiest food,
And costly dress, that made her sovereign good;
With walks on hilly heath to banish spleen,
And summer-visits when the roads were clean.
All these she lov’d, to these she gave consent,
And she was married to her heart’s content.

Their manner this—the Friends together read,
Till books a cause for disputation bred;
Debate then follow’d, and the vapour’d Child
Declar’d they argued till her head was wild;
And strange to her it was that mortal brain
Could seek the trial, or endure the pain.

•

Then as the Friend repos'd, the younger Pair
Sat down to cards, and play'd beside his chair ;
Till he awaking, to his books applied,
Or heard the music of th' obedient Bride :
If mild the evening, in the fields they stray'd,
And their own flock with partial eye survey'd ;
But oft the Husband, to indulgence prone,
Resum'd his book, and bade them walk alone.

' Do, my kind *Edward* ! I must take mine ease,
' Name the dear girl, the planets, and the trees ;
' Tell her what warblers pour their evening song,
' What insects flutter, as you walk along ;
' Teach her to fix the roving thoughts, to bind
' The wandering sense, and methodize the mind.'

This was obey'd ; and oft when this was done,
They calmly gaz'd on the declining sun ;
In silence saw the glowing landscape fade,
Or, sitting, sang beneath the arbour's shade :
Till rose the moon, and on each youthful face
Shed a soft beauty, and a dangerous grace.

When the young Wife beheld in long debate
The friends, all careless as she seeming sate ;
It soon appear'd, there was in one combin'd
The nobler person and the richer mind :
He wore no wig, no grisly beard was seen,
And none beheld him careless or unclean ;

Or watch'd him sleeping :—we indeed have heard
Of sleeping beauty, and it has appear'd ;
'Tis seen in infants, there indeed we find
The features soften'd by the slumbering mind ;
But other beauties, when dispos'd to sleep,
Should from the eye of keen inspector keep :
The lovely nymph who would her swain surprise,
May close her mouth, but not conceal her eyes ;
Sleep from the fairest face some beauty takes,
And all the homely features, homelier makes ;
So thought our Wife, beholding with a sigh
Her sleeping Spouse, and *Edward* smiling by.

A sick Relation for the Husband sent,
Without delay the friendly Sceptic went ;
Nor fear'd the youthful Pair, for he had seen
The Wife untroubled, and the friend serene :
No selfish purpose in his roving eyes,
No vile deception in her fond replies :
So judg'd the Husband, and with judgment true,
For neither yet the guilt or danger knew.

What now remain'd ? but they again should play
Th' accustom'd game, and walk th' accustom'd way ;
With careless freedom should converse or read,
And the Friend's absence neither fear nor heed :
But rather now they seem'd confus'd, constrain'd ;
Within their room still restless they remain'd,
And painfully they felt, and knew each other pain'd.—

Ah! foolish men! how could ye thus depend,
One on himself, the other on his friend?

The youth with troubled eye the Lady saw,
Yet felt too brave, too daring to withdraw;
While she, with tuneless hand the jarring keys
Touching, was not one moment at her ease;
Now would she walk, and call her Friendly Guide,
Now speak of rain, and cast her cloak aside;
Seize on a book, unconscious what she read,
And restless still, to new resources fled;
Then laugh'd aloud, then tried to look serene,
And ever chang'd, and every change was seen.

Painful it is to dwell on deeds of shame—
The trying day was past, another came;
The third was all remorse, confusion, dread,
And (all too late!) the fallen Hero fled.

Then felt the Youth, in that seducing time,
How feebly Honour guards the heart from crime;
Small is his native strength; man needs the stay,
The strength imparted in the trying day;
For all that Honour brings against the force
Of headlong passion, aids its rapid course;
Its slight resistance but provokes the fire,
As wood-work stops the flame, and then conveys it
higher.

The Husband came ; a Wife by guilt made bold
Had, meeting, sooth'd him, as in days of old ;
But soon this fact transpir'd ; her strong distress,
And his Friend's absence, left him nought to guess.

Still cool, tho' griev'd, thus prudence bade him write—
' I cannot pardon, and I will not fight ;
' Thou art too poor a culprit for the laws,
' And I too faulty to support my cause :
' All must be punish'd ; I must sigh alone,
' At home thy victim for her guilt atone ;
' And thou unhappy ! virtuous now no more,
' Must loss of fame, peace, purity deplore ;
' Sinners with praise will pierce thee to the heart,
' And Saints deriding, tell thee what thou art.'

Such was his fall ; and *Edward*, from that time,
Felt in full force the censure and the crime—
Despis'd, asham'd ; his noble views before,
And his proud thoughts, degraded him the more :
Should he repent—would that conceal his shame ?
Could peace be his ? It perish'd with his fame :
Himself he scorn'd, nor could his crime forgive,
He fear'd to die, yet felt asham'd to live :
Griev'd, but not contrite was his heart ; oppress'd,
Not broken ; not converted, but distress'd ;
He wanted will to bend the stubborn knee,
He wanted light the cause of ill to see,
To learn how frail is man, how humble then should be ;

For faith he had not, or a faith too weak
To gain the help that humbled sinners seek ;
Else had he pray'd—to an offended God
His tears had flown a penitential flood ;
Though far astray, he would have heard the call
Of mercy—' Come ! return thou prodigal ;'
Then, though confus'd, distress'd, asham'd, afraid,
Still had the trembling penitent obey'd ;
Though faith had fainted, when assail'd by fear,
Hope to the soul had whisper'd, ' Persevere !'
Till in his Father's house an humbled guest,
He would have found forgiveness, comfort, rest.

But all this joy was to our Youth denied
By his fierce passions and his daring pride ;
And shame and doubt impell'd him in a course,
Once so abhorr'd, with unresisted force.
Proud minds and guilty, whom their crimes oppress,
Fly to new crimes for comfort and redress ;
So found our fallen Youth a short relief
In wine, the opiate Guilt applies to Grief,—
From fleeting mirth that o'er the bottle lives,
From the false joy its inspiration gives ;
And from associates pleas'd to find a friend,
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend,
In all those scenes where transient ease is found,
For minds whom sins oppress, and sorrows wound.

Wine is like anger ; for it makes us strong,
Blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong ;
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long :
Thus led, thus strengthen'd in an evil cause,
For Folly pleading, sought the Youth applause ;
Sad for a time, then eloquently wild,
He gaily spoke as his companions smil'd ;
Lightly he rose, and with his former grace
Propos'd some doubt, and argued on the case ;
Fate and fore-knowledge were his favourite themes—
How vain man's purpose, how absurd his schemes :
“ Whatever is, was ere our birth decreed ;
“ We think our actions from ourselves proceed,
“ And idly we lament th' inevitable deed ;
“ It seems our own, but there's a power above
“ Directs the motion, nay, that makes us move ;
“ Nor good nor evil can you beings name,
“ Who are but Rooks and Castles in the game ;
“ Superior natures with their puppets play,
“ Till, bagg'd or buried, all are swept away.”

Such were the notions of a mind to ill
Now prone, but ardent, and determin'd still :
Of joy now eager, as before of fame,
And screen'd by folly when assail'd by shame,
Deeply he sank ; obey'd each passion's call,
And us'd his reason to defend them all.

Shall I proceed, and step by step relate
The odious progress of a Sinner's fate ;
No—let me rather hasten to the time
(Sure to arrive) when misery waits on crime.

With Virtue, Prudence fled ; what *Shore* possess'd
Was sold, was spent, and he was now distress'd :
And Want, unwelcome stranger, pale and wan,
Met with her haggard looks the hurried Man ;
His pride felt keenly what he must expect
From useless pity and from cold neglect.

Struck by new terrors, from his friends he fled,
And wept his woes upon a restless bed ;
Retiring late, at early hour to rise,
With shrunken features, and with bloodshot eyes :
If sleep one moment clos'd the dismal view,
Fancy her terrors built upon the true ;
And night and day had their alternate woes,
That baffled pleasure, and that mock'd repose ;
Till to despair and anguish was consign'd
The wreck and ruin of a noble mind.

Now seiz'd for debt, and lodg'd within a jail,
He tried his friendships, and he found them fail ;
Then fail'd his spirits, and his thoughts were all
Fix'd on his sins, his sufferings, and his fall :
His ruffled mind was pictur'd in his face,
Once the fair seat of dignity and grace :

Great was the danger of a man so prone
To think of madness, and to think alone ;
Yet pride still liv'd, and struggled to sustain
The drooping spirit and the roving brain ;
But this too fail'd : a Friend his freedom gave,
And sent him help the threat'ning world to brave ;
 ave solid counsel what to seek or flee,
But still would stranger to his person be :
In vain ! the truth determin'd to explore,
He trac'd the Friend whom he had wrong'd before.

This was too much ; both aided and advis'd
By one who shunn'd him, pitied, and despis'd :
He bore it not ; 'twas a deciding stroke,
And on his reason like a torrent broke ;
In dreadful stillness he appear'd awhile,
With vacant horror and a ghastly smile ;
Then rose at once into the frantic rage,
That force controll'd not, nor could love assuage.

Friends now appear'd, but in the Man was seen
The angry Maniac, with vindictive mien ;
Too late their pity gave to care and skill
The hurried mind and ever-wandering will ;
Unnotic'd pass'd all time, and not a ray
Of reason broke on his benighted way ;
But now he spurn'd the straw in pure disdain,
And now laugh'd loudly at the clinking chain.

Then as its wrath subsided, by degrees
The mind sank slowly to infantine ease ;
To playful folly, and to causeless joy,
Speech without aim, and without end, employ ;
He drew fantastic figures on the wall,
And gave some wild relation of them all ;
With brutal shape he join'd the human face,
And idiot smiles approv'd the motley race.

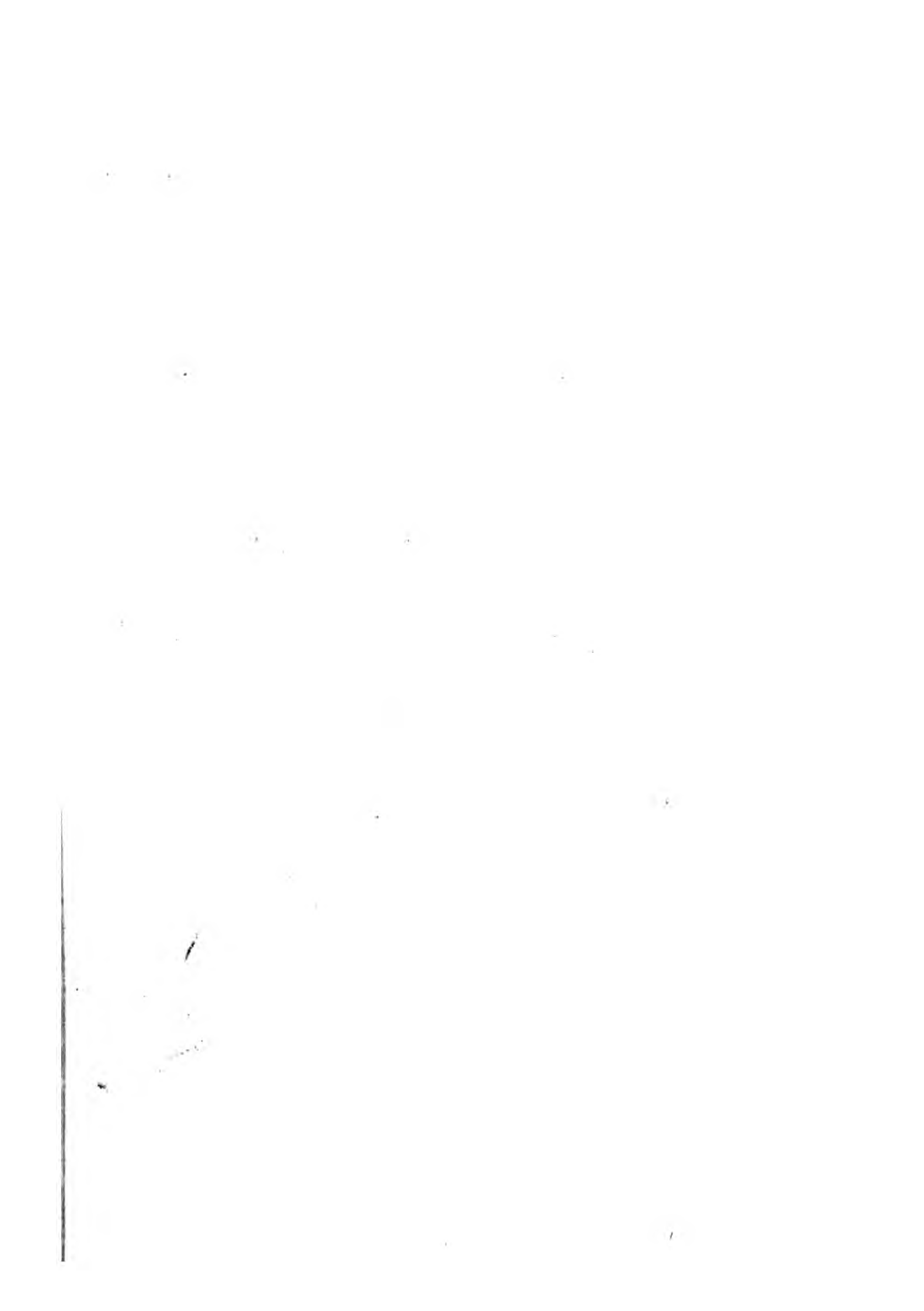
Harmless at length th' unhappy man was found,
The spirit settled, but the reason drown'd ;
And all the dreadful tempest died away,
To the dull stillness of the misty day.

And now his freedom he attain'd—if free,
The lost to reason, truth, and hope, can be ;
His friends, or wearied with the charge, or sure
The harmless wretch was now beyond a cure,
Gave him to wander where he pleas'd, and find
His own resources for the eager mind ;
The playful children of the place he meets,
Playful with them he rambles through the streets ;
In all they need, his stronger arm he lends,
And his lost mind to these approving friends.

That gentle Maid, whom once the Youth had lov'd,
Is now with mild religious pity mov'd ;
Kindly she chides his boyish flights, while he
Will for a moment fix'd and pensive be ;

And as she trembling speaks, his lively eyes
Explore her looks, he listens to her sighs ;
Charm'd by her voice, th' harmonious sounds invade
His clouded mind, and for a time persuade :
Like a pleas'd Infant, who has newly caught
From the maternal glance a gleam of thought ;
He stands enrapt, the half-known voice to hear,
And starts, half-conscious, at the falling tear.

Rarely from town, nor then unwatch'd, he goes,
In darker mood, as if to hide his woes ;
Returning soon, he with impatience seeks
His youthful friends, and shouts, and sings, and speaks ;
Speaks a wild speech with action all as wild—
The children's leader, and himself a child ;
He spins their top, or, at their bidding, bends
His back, while o'er it leap his laughing friends ;
Simple and weak, he acts the boy once more,
And heedless children call him *Silly Shore*.



TALE XII.

'SQUIRE THOMAS ;
OR,
THE PRECIPITATE CHOICE.

Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain,
Too intricate t' unloose ———
Lear, Act II. Scene 2.

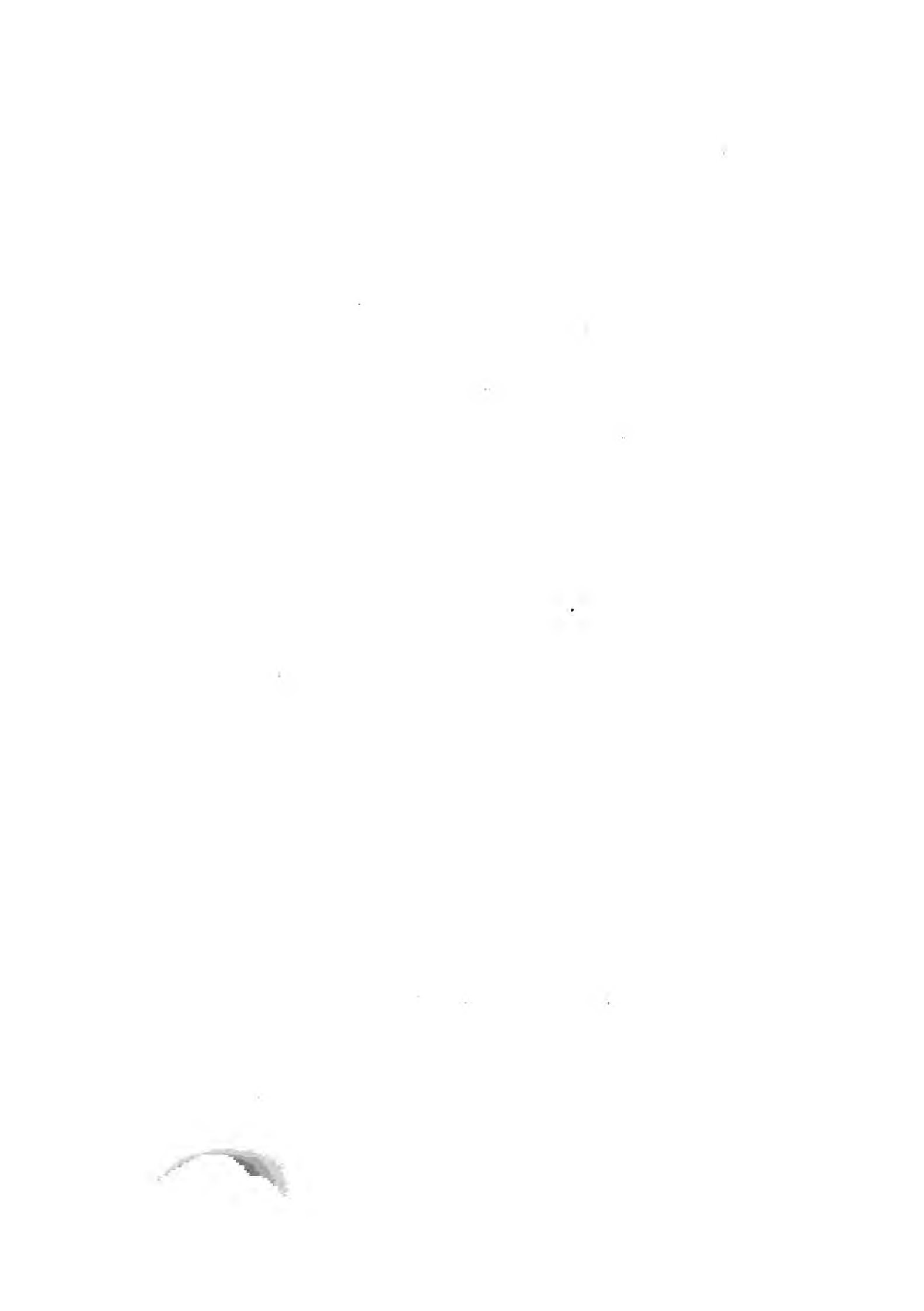
My other self, my Counsel's Consistory,
My Oracle, my Prophet,———
I as a Child will go by thy direction.
Richard III. Act II. Scene 2.

If I do not have pity upon her, I'm a villain ;
If I do not love her, I am a Jew.
Much Ado about Nothing, Act II. Scene 2.

Women are soft, mild, pitiable, flexible,
But thou art obdurate, flinty, rough; remorseless.
3 Henry VI. Act I. Scene 4.

He must be told of it, and he shall, the office
Becomes a Woman best ; I'll take it upon me ;
If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister.
Winter's Tale, Act II. Scene 2.

Disguise—I see thou art a wickedness.
Twelfth Night, Act II. Scene 2.



TALE XII.

'SQUIRE THOMAS.

'SQUIRE *Thomas* flatter'd long a wealthy Aunt,
Who left him all that she could give or grant;
Ten years he tried, with all his craft and skill,
To fix the sovereign Lady's varying will;
Ten years enduring at her board to sit,
He meekly listen'd to her tales and wit;
He took the meanest office man can take,
And his Aunt's vices for her money's sake:
By many a threat'ning hint she wak'd his fear,
And he was pain'd to see a rival near;
Yet all the taunts of her contemptuous pride
He bore, nor found his grov'ling spirit tried:
Nay, when she wish'd his parents to traduce,
Fawning he smil'd, and justice call'd th' abuse;
' They taught you nothing, are you not at best,'
Said the proud Dame, ' a trifler, and a jest ?'
' Confess you are a fool !'—he bow'd and he confess'd.

This vex'd him much, but could not always last :
The Dame is buried, and the trial past.

There was a Female, who had courted long
Her Cousin's gifts, and deeply felt the wrong ;
By a vain Boy forbidden to attend
The private councils of her wealthy friend,
She vow'd revenge, nor should that crafty boy
In triumph undisturb'd his spoils enjoy ;
He heard, he smil'd, and when the Will was read,
Kindly dismiss'd the Kindred of the dead ;
" The dear deceas'd," he call'd her, and the crowd
Mov'd off with curses deep and threat'nings loud.

The Youth retir'd, and, with a mind at ease,
Found he was rich, and fancied he must please :
He might have pleas'd, and to his comfort found
The Wife he wish'd, if he had sought around ;
For there were Lasses of his own degree,
With no more hatred to the state than he :
But he had courted spleen and age so long,
His heart refus'd to woo the fair and young ;
So long attended on caprice and whim,
He thought attention now was due to him ;
And as his flattery pleas'd the wealthy Dame,
Heir to the wealth he might the flattery claim ;
But this the Fair, with one accord, denied,
Nor wav'd for Man's caprice the Sex's pride :

There is a season when to them is due
Worship and awe, and they will claim it too ;
' Fathers,' they cry, ' long hold us in their chain,
' Nay, tyrant Brothers claim a right to reign ;
' Uncles and Guardians we in turn obey,
' And Husbands rule with ever-during sway ;
' Short is the time when Lovers at the feet
' Of Beauty kneel, and own the slavery sweet ;
' And shall we this our triumph, this the aim
' And boast of female power, forbear to claim ?
' No ! we demand that homage, that respect,
' Or the proud rebel punish and reject.'

Our Hero, still too indolent, too nice
To pay for Beauty the accustom'd price,
No less forbore t' address the humbler Maid,
Who might have yielded with the price unpaid ;
But liv'd, himself to humour and to please,
To count his money, and enjoy his ease.

It pleas'd a neighbouring 'Squire to recommend
A faithful Youth, as servant to his friend ;
Nay, more than servant, whom he prais'd for parts
Ductile yet strong, and for the best of hearts ;
One who might ease him in his small affairs,
With tenants, tradesmen, taxes, and repairs ;
Answer his letters, look to all his dues,
And entertain him with discourse and news.

The 'Squire believ'd, and found the trusted Youth
A very pattern for his care and truth ;
Not for his virtues to be prais'd alone,
But for a modest mien and humble tone ;
Assenting always, but as if he meant
Only to strength of reasons to assent :
For was he stubborn, and retain'd his doubt,
Till the more subtle 'Squire had forc'd it out ;
' Nay, still was right, but he perceiv'd that strong
' And powerful minds could make the right the wrong.'

When the 'Squire's thoughts on some fair damsel dwelt,
The faithful Friend his apprehensions felt ;
It would rejoice his faithful heart to find
A Lady suited to his Master's mind ;
But who deserv'd that Master ? who would prove
That hers was pure, uninterested love ?
Although a Servant, he would scorn to take
A Countess, till she suffer'd for his sake ;
Some tender spirit, humble, faithful, true,
Such, my dear Master ! must be sought for you.

Six months had pass'd, and not a Lady seen,
With just this love, 'twixt fifty and fifteen ;
All seem'd his doctrine or his pride to shun,
All would be woo'd, before they would be won ;
When the chance naming of a race and fair,
Our 'Squire dispos'd to take his pleasure there :

The Friend profess'd, ' although he first began
' To hint the thing, it seem'd a thoughtless plan :
' The roads, he fear'd, were foul, the days were short,
' The village far, and yet there might be sport.'

“ What ! you of roads and starless nights afraid ?
“ You think to govern ! you to be obey'd !”
Smiling he spoke, the humble friend declar'd
His soul's obedience and to go prepar'd.

The place was distant, but with great delight
They saw a race, and hail'd the glorious sight ;
The 'Squire exulted, and declar'd the ride
Had amply paid, and he was satisfied.
They gaz'd, they feasted, and, in happy mood,
Homeward return'd, and hastening as they rode ;
For short the day, and sudden was the change
From light to darkness, and the way was strange ;
Our hero soon grew peevish, then distress'd,
He dreaded darkness, and he sigh'd for rest :
Going, they pass'd a village ; but, alas !
Returning saw no village to repass ;
The 'Squire remember'd too a noble hall,
Large as a church, and whiter than its wall ;
This he had notic'd as they rode along,
And justly reason'd that their road was wrong ;
George, full of awe, was modest in reply—
' The fault was his, 'twas folly to deny ;

' And of his Master's safety were he sure,
 ' There was no grievance he would not endure.'
 This made his peace with the relenting 'Squire,
 Whose thoughts yet dwelt on supper and a fire ;
 When, as they reach'd a long and pleasant green,
 Dwellings of men, and next a man, were seen.

' My friend,' said *George*, ' to travellers astray
 ' Point out an inn, and guide us on the way ;'

The Man look'd up ; ' Surprising ! can it be
 ' My Master's Son ? as I'm alive, 'tis he.'

' How ! *Robin*,' *George* replied, ' and are we near
 ' My Father's house ? how strangely things appear !—
 ' Dear Sir, though wanderers, we at last are right,
 ' Let us proceed, and glad my Father's sight ;
 ' We shall at least be fairly lodg'd and fed,
 ' I can insure a supper and a bed ;
 ' Let us this night, as one of pleasure date,
 ' And of surprise : it is an act of Fate.'
 " Go on," the 'Squire in happy temper cried,
 " I like such blunder ! I approve such guide."

They ride, they halt, the Farmer comes in haste,
 Then tells his Wife how much their house is grac'd ;
 They bless the chance, they praise the lucky Son,
 That caus'd the error—Nay ! it was not one ;

But their good fortune—Cheerful grew the 'Squire,
Who found dependants, flattery, wine, and fire ;
He heard the jack turn round ; the busy Dame
Produc'd her damask ; and with supper came
The Daughter, dress'd with care, and full of maiden-
shame.

Surpris'd, our Hero saw the air and dress,
And strove his admiration to express ;
Nay ! felt it too—for *Harriot* was, in truth,
A tall fair beauty in the bloom of youth ;
And from the pleasure and surprise, a grace
Adorn'd the blooming Damsel's form and face ;
Then too, such high respect and duty paid
By all—such silent reverence in the Maid ;
Vent'ring with caution, yet with haste, a glance ;
Loth to retire, yet trembling to advance,
Appear'd the Nymph, and in her gentle Guest,
Stirr'd soft emotions till the hour of rest :
Sweet was his sleep, and in the morn again
He felt a mixture of delight and pain :
“ How fair, how gentle,” said the 'Squire, “ how meek,
“ And yet how sprightly, when dispos'd to speak !
“ Nature has bless'd her form, and Heaven her mind,
“ But in her favours Fortune is unkind ;
“ Poor is the Maid—nay, poor she cannot prove
“ Who is enrich'd with beauty, worth, and love.”

The 'Squire arose, with no precise intent
To go or stay—uncertain what he meant :
He mov'd to part—they begg'd him first to dine ;
And who could then escape from Love and Wine ;
As came the night, more charming grew the Fair,
And seem'd to watch him with a two-fold care :
On the third morn, resolving not to stay,
Though urg'd by Love, he bravely rode away.

Arriv'd at home, three pensive days he gave
To feelings fond and meditations grave ;
Lovely she was, and, if he did not err,
As fond of him as his fond heart of her ;
Still he delay'd unable to decide,
Which was the master-passion, Love or Pride :
He sometimes wonder'd how his friend could make,
And then exulted in, the night's mistake ;
Had she but fortune, " doubtless then," he cried,
" Some happier man had won the wealthy bride."

While thus he hung in balance, now inclin'd
To change his State, and then to change his Mind—
That careless *George* dropp'd idly on the ground
A Letter, which his crafty master found ;
The stupid Youth confess'd his fault, and pray'd
The generous 'Squire to spare a gentle Maid ;
Of whom her tender Mother, full of fears,
Had written much—' She caught her oft in tears,

‘ For ever thinking on a Youth above
 ‘ Her humble fortune—still she own’d not love ;
 ‘ Nor can define, dear Girl ! the cherish’d pain,
 ‘ But would rejoice to see the cause again :
 ‘ That neighbouring youth, whom she endur’d before,
 ‘ She now rejects, and will behold no more :
 ‘ Rais’d by her passion, she no longer stoops
 ‘ To her own equals, but she pines and droops,
 ‘ Like to a lily, on whose sweets the Sun
 ‘ Has withering gaz’d—she saw and was undone :
 ‘ His wealth allur’d her not—nor was she mov’d.
 ‘ By his superior state, himself she lov’d ;
 ‘ So mild, so good, so gracious, so genteel—
 ‘ But spare your Sister, and her love conceal ;
 ‘ We must the fault forgive, since she the pain must
 ‘ feel.’

“ Fault !” said the ‘Squire, “ there’s coarseness in the
 “ mind

“ That thus conceives of feelings so refin’d ;
 “ Here end my doubts, nor blame yourself, my friend,
 “ Fate made you careless—here my doubts have end.”

The way is plain before us—there is now
 The Lover’s visit first, and then the vow
 Mutual and fond, the marriage-rite, the Bride
 Brought to her home with all a husband’s pride ;
 The ‘Squire receives the prize his merits won,
 And the glad Parents leave the Patron-Son.

But in short time he saw with much surprise,
 First gloom, then grief, and then resentment rise,
 From proud, commanding frowns and anger-darting
 eyes :

“ Is there in *Harriot's* humble mind this fire,
 “ This fierce impatience ? ” ask'd the puzzled 'Squire :
 “ Has marriage chang'd her ? or the mask she wore
 “ Has she thrown by, and is herself once more ? ”

Hour after hour, when clouds on clouds appear,
 Dark and more dark, we know the tempest near ;
 And thus the frowning brow, the restless form,
 And threat'ning glance, forerun domestic storm :
 So read the Husband, and, with troubled mind,
 Reveal'd his fears—“ My Love, I hope you find
 “ All here is pleasant—but I must confess
 “ You seem offended, or in some distress ;
 “ Explain the grief you feel, and leave me to redress.”

‘ Leave it to you ? ’ replied the Nymph—‘ indeed !
 ‘ What—to the cause from whence the ills proceed ?
 ‘ Good Heaven ! to take me from a place, where I
 ‘ Had every comfort underneath the sky ;
 ‘ And then immure me in a gloomy place,
 ‘ With the grim Monsters of your ugly race,
 ‘ That from their canvass staring, make me dread
 ‘ Through the dark chambers where they hang, to tread !
 ‘ No friend nor neighbour comes to give that joy,
 ‘ Which all things here must banish or destroy :

‘ Where is the promis’d coach ? the pleasant ride ?
‘ Oh ! what a fortune has a Farmer’s bride !
‘ Your sordid pride has plac’d me just above
‘ Your hir’d domestics—and what pays me ? Love !
‘ A selfish fondness I endure each hour,
‘ And share unwitness’d pomp, unenvied power ;
‘ I hear your folly, smile at your parade,
‘ And see your favourite dishes duly made ;
‘ Then am I richly dress’d for you t’ admire,
‘ Such is my duty and my Lord’s desire ;
‘ Is this a life for youth, for health, for joy ?
‘ Are these my duties—this my base employ ?
‘ No ! to my father’s house will I repair,
‘ And make your idle wealth support me there ;
‘ Was it your wish to have an humble Bride
‘ For bondage thankful ? Curse upon your pride !
‘ Was it a Slave you wanted ? You shall see,
‘ That, if not happy, I at least am free ;
‘ Well, Sir, your answer :—silent stood the ’Squire,
As looks a Miser at his house on fire ;
Where all he deems is vanish’d in that flame,
Swept from the earth his substance and his name ;
So, lost to every promis’d joy of life,
Our ’Squire stood gaping at his angry Wife ;—
His fate, his ruin, where he saw it vain,
To hope for peace, pray, threaten, or complain ;
And thus, betwixt his wonder at the ill
And his despair—there stood he gaping still,

‘ Your answer, Sir—shall I depart a spot
 ‘ I thus detest ?’—“ Oh miserable lot !”
 Exclaim’d the Man. “ Go, serpent ! nor remain
 “ To sharpen wo by insult and disdain :
 “ A nest of harpies was I doom’d to meet ;
 “ What plots, what combinations of deceit !
 “ I see it now—all plann’d, design’d, contriv’d ;
 “ Serv’d by that Villain—by this Fury wiv’d—
 “ What fate is mine ! What wisdom, virtue, truth,
 “ Can stand, if Dæmons set their traps for Youth ?
 “ He lose his way ! vile dog ! he cannot lose
 “ The way a villain through his life pursues ;
 “ And thou, Deceiver ! thou afraid to move,
 “ And hiding close the Serpent in the Dove !
 “ I saw—but, fated to endure disgrace—
 “ Unheeding saw, the fury in thy face :
 “ And call’d it spirit—Oh ! I might have found
 “ Fraud and imposture—all the kindred round !
 “ A nest of Vipers” —————

————— ‘ Sir, I’ll not admit
 ‘ These wild effusions of your angry wit :
 ‘ Have you that value, that we all should use
 ‘ Such mighty arts for such important views ?
 ‘ Are you such prize—and is my state so fair,
 ‘ That they should sell their souls to get me there ?
 ‘ Think you that we alone our thoughts disguise ?
 ‘ When in pursuit of some contended prize,
 ‘ Mask we alone the heart, and soothe whom we despise !

‘ Speak you of craft and subtle schemes, who know
 ‘ That all your wealth you to deception owe ;
 ‘ Who play’d for ten dull years a scoundrel-part,
 ‘ To worm yourself into a Widow’s heart ?
 ‘ Now, when you guarded, with superior skill,
 ‘ That Lady’s closet, and preserv’d her Will,
 ‘ Blind in your craft, you saw not one of those
 ‘ Oppos’d by you might you in turn oppose ;
 ‘ Or watch your motions, and by art obtain
 ‘ Share of that wealth you gave your peace to gain ?
 ‘ Did conscience never’——

——“ Cease, Tormentor, cease—
 “ Or reach me poison——let me rest in peace !”

‘ Agreed—but hear me—let the truth appear ;’
 “ Then state your purpose—I’ll be calm and hear.”—
 ‘ Know then, this wealth, sole object of your care,
 ‘ I had some right, without your hand, to share ;
 ‘ My mother’s claim was just—but soon she saw
 ‘ Your power, compell’d, insulted, to withdraw :
 ‘ ’Twas then my Father, in his anger, swore
 ‘ You should divide the fortune, or restore ;
 ‘ Long we debated—and you find me now
 ‘ Heroic victim to a Father’s vow ;
 ‘ Like *Jephtha’s* Daughter, but in different state,
 ‘ And both decreed to mourn our early fate ;
 ‘ Hence was my Brother servant to your pride,
 ‘ Vengeance made him your slave—and me your Bride :

‘ Now all is known—a dreadful price I pay
‘ For our revenge—but still we have our day ;
‘ All that you love, you must with others share,
‘ Or all you dread from their resentment dare !
‘ Yet terms I offer—let contention cease :
‘ Divide the spoil, and let us part in peace.’

Our Hero trembling heard—he sat—he rose—
Nor could his motions nor his mind compose ;
He pac’d the room—and, stalking to her side,
Gaz’d on the face of his undaunted Bride ;
And nothing there but scorn and calm aversion spied.
He would have vengeance, yet he fear’d the law ;
Her friends would threaten, and their power he saw ;
“ Then let her go : ”—but oh ! a mighty sum
Would that demand, since he had let her come ;
Nor from his sorrows could he find redress,
Save that which led him to a like distress,
And all his ease was in his Wife to see
A wretch as anxious and distress’d as he :
Her strongest wish, the fortune to divide
And part in peace, his avarice denied ;
And thus it happen’d, as in all deceit,
The cheater found the evil of the cheat ;
The Husband griev’d—nor was the Wife at rest ;
Him she could vex, and he could her molest ;
She could his passion into frenzy raise,
But when the fire was kindled, fear’d the blaze :

As much they studied, so in time they found
The easiest way to give the deepest wound;
But then, like Fencers, they were equal still,
Both lost in danger what they gain'd in skill;
Each heart a keener kind of rancour gain'd,
And paining more, was more severely pain'd;
And thus by both were equal vengeance dealt,
And both the anguish they inflicted felt.

TALE XIII.

JESSE AND COLIN.

Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises, and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect.

Merry Wives of Windsor, Act II. Scene 2.

She hath spoken that she should not, I am sure of that ;
Heaven knows what she hath known.

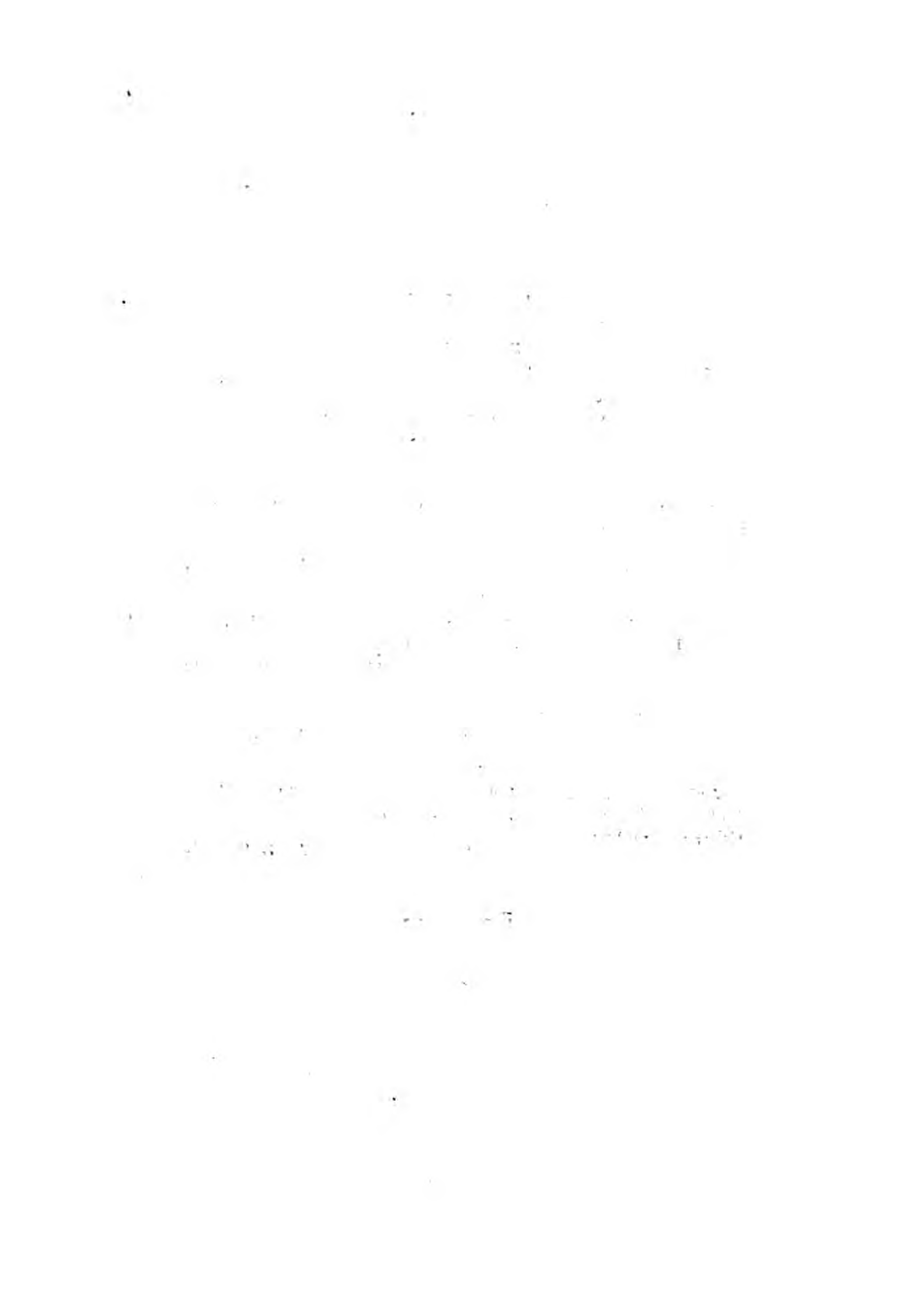
Macbeth, Act V. Scene 1.

Our house is hell, and thou a merry devil.

Merchant of Venice, Act II. Scene 3.

And yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit of too much, as they that starve with nothing ; it is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.

Merchant of Venice, Act I. Scene 2.



TALE XIII.

JESSE AND COLIN.

A VICAR died and left his Daughter poor—
It hurt her not, she was not rich before :
Her humble share of worldly goods she sold,
Paid every debt, and then her fortune told ;
And found, with youth and beauty, hope and health,
Two hundred guineas was her worldly wealth ;
It then remain'd to choose her path in life,
And first, said *Jesse*, “ Shall I be a wife ?—
“ *Colin* is mild and civil, kind and just,
“ I know his love, his temper I can trust ;
“ But small his farm, it asks perpetual care,
“ And we must toil as well as trouble share :
“ True, he was taught in all the gentle arts
“ That raise the soul, and soften human hearts ;
“ And boasts a Parent, who deserves to shine
“ In higher class, and I could wish her mine ;

Now by the morning mail the timid Maid
Was to that kind and wealthy Dame convey'd ;
Whose invitation, when her Father died,
Jesse as comfort to her heart applied ;
She knew the days her generous Friend had seen—
As wife and widow, evil days had been ;
She married early, and for half her life
Was an insulted and forsaken wife ;
Widow'd and poor, her angry father gave,
Mix'd with reproach, the pittance of a slave ;
Forgetful brothers pass'd her, but she knew
Her humbler friends, and to their home withdrew ;
The good old Vicar to her sire applied
For help, and help'd her when her sire denied ;
When in few years Death stalk'd thro' bower and hall,
Sires, sons, and sons of sons, were buried all :
She then abounded, and had wealth to spare
For softening grief she once was doom'd to share ;
Thus train'd in Misery's school, and taught to feel,
She would rejoice an orphan's woes to heal :
So *Jesse* thought, who look'd within her breast,
And thence conceiv'd how bounteous minds are blest.

From her vast mansion look'd the Lady down
On humbler buildings of a busy town ;
Thence came her friends of either sex, and all
With whom she liv'd on terms reciprocal :

They pass'd the hours with their accustom'd ease,
As guests inclin'd, but not compell'd to please ;
But there were others in the mansion found,
For office chosen, and by duties bound ;
Three female rivals, each of power possess'd,
Th' attendant-Maid, poor Friend, and kindred-Guest.

To these came *Jesse*, as a seaman thrown
By the rude storm upon a coast unknown :
The view was flattering, civil seem'd the race,
But all unknown the dangers of the place.

Few hours had pass'd, when, from attendants freed,
The Lady utter'd—' This is kind indeed ;
' Believe me, love ! that I for one like you
' Have daily pray'd, a friend discreet and true,
' Oh ! wonder not that I on you depend,
' You are mine own hereditary friend ?
' Harken, my *Jesse*, never can I trust
' Beings ungrateful, selfish, and unjust ;
' But you are present, and my load of care
' Your love will serve to lighten and to share :
' Come near me, *Jesse*—let not those below,
' Of my reliance on your friendship know ;
' Look as they look, be in their freedoms free—
' But all they say, do you convey to me.'

Here *Jesse's* thoughts to *Colin's* cottage flew,
And with such speed she scarce their absence knew.

‘ *Jane* loves her mistress, and should she depart,
 ‘ I lose her service, and she breaks her heart ;
 ‘ My ways and wishes, looks and thoughts she knows,
 ‘ And duteous care by close attention shows :
 ‘ But is she faithful ? in temptation strong ?
 ‘ Will she not wrong me ? ah ! I fear the wrong :
 ‘ Your father lov’d me ; now, in time of need,
 ‘ Watch for my good, and to his place succeed.

‘ Blood doesn’t bind—that Girl, who every day
 ‘ Eats of my bread, would wish my life away ;
 ‘ I am her *dear relation*, and she thinks
 ‘ To make her fortune, an ambitious minx !
 ‘ She only courts me for the prospect’s sake,
 ‘ Because she knows I have a will to make ;
 ‘ Yes, love ! my will delay’d, I know not how—
 ‘ But you are here, and I will make it now.

‘ That idle Creature, keep her in your view,
 ‘ See what she does, what she desires to do ;
 ‘ On her young mind may artful villains prey,
 ‘ And to my plate and jewels find a way ;
 ‘ A pleasant humour has the girl : her smile
 ‘ And cheerful manner, tedious hours beguile :
 ‘ But well observe her, ever near her be,
 ‘ Close in your thoughts, in your professions free.

‘ Again, my *Jesse*, hear what I advise,
 ‘ And watch a woman ever in disguise ;

‘ *Issop*, that widow, serious, subtle, sly—
‘ But what of this?—I must have company :
‘ She markets for me, and although she makes
‘ Profit; no doubt, of all she undertakes,
‘ Yet she is one I can to all produce,
‘ And all her talents are in daily use ;
‘ Depriv’d of her, I may another find
‘ As sly and selfish, with a weaker mind :
‘ But never trust her, she is full of art,
‘ And worms herself into the closest heart ;
‘ Seem then, I pray you, careless in her sight,
‘ Nor let her know, my love, how we unite.

‘ Do, my good *Jesse*, cast a view around,
‘ And let no wrong within my house be found ;
‘ That Girl associates with——I know not who
‘ Are her companions, nor what ill they do ;
‘ ’Tis then the Widow plans, ’tis then she tries
‘ Her various arts and schemes for fresh supplies ;
‘ ’Tis then, if ever, *Jane* her duty quits,
‘ And, whom I know not, favours and admits :
‘ Oh ! watch their movements all ; for me ’tis hard,
‘ Indeed is vain, but you may keep a guard ;
‘ And I, when none your watchful glance deceive,
‘ May make my will, and think what I shall leave.’

Jesse, with fear, disgust, alarm, surprise,
Heard of these duties for her ears and eyes ;

Heard by what service she must gain her bread,
And went with scorn and sorrow to her bed.

Jane was a servant fitted for her place,
Experienc'd, cunning, fraudulent, selfish, base ;
Skill'd in those mean humiliating arts
That make their way to proud and selfish hearts ;
By instinct taught, she felt an awe, a fear,
For *Jesse's* upright, simple character ;
Whom with gross flattery she awhile assail'd,
And then beheld with hatred when it fail'd ;
Yet trying still upon her mind for hold,
She all the secrets of the mansion told ;
And to invite an equal trust, she drew
Of every mind a bold and rapid view ;
But on the Widow'd Friend with deep disdain,
And rancorous envy, dwelt the treacherous *Jane* :—
In vain such arts ; without deceit or pride,
With a just taste and feeling for her guide,
From all contagion *Jesse* kept apart,
Free in her manners, guarded in her heart.

Jesse one morn was thoughtful, and her sigh
The Widow heard as she was passing by ;
And—' Well !' she said, ' is that some distant swain,
' Or aught with us, that gives your bosom pain ;
' Come, we are fellow-sufferers, slaves in thrall,
' And tasks and griefs are common to us all ;

‘ Think not my frankness strange : they love to paint
‘ Their state with freedom, who endure restraint ;
‘ And there is something in that speaking eye
‘ And sober mien, that prove I may rely :
‘ You came a stranger ; to my words attend,
‘ Accept my offer, and you find a friend ;
‘ It is a labyrinth in which you stray,
‘ Come, hold my clue, and I will lead the way.

‘ Good Heav’n ! that one so jealous, envious, base,
‘ Should be the mistress of so sweet a place ;
‘ She, who so long herself was low and poor,
‘ Now broods suspicious on her useless store ;
‘ She loves to see us abject, loves to deal
‘ Her insult round, and then pretends to feel ;
‘ Prepare to cast all dignity aside,
‘ For know your talents will be quickly tried ;
‘ Nor think, from favours past, a friend to gain,
‘ ’Tis but by duties we our posts maintain :
‘ I read her novels, gossip through the town,
‘ And daily go, for idle stories, down ;
‘ I cheapen all she buys, and bear the curse
‘ Of honest tradesmen for my niggard-purse ;
‘ And, when for her this meanness I display,
‘ She cries, “ I heed not what I throw away ;”
‘ Of secret bargains I endure the shame,
‘ And stake my credit for our fish and game ;
‘ Oft has she smil’d to hear “ her generous soul
‘ “ Would gladly give, but stoops to my controul :”

‘ Nay ! I have heard her, when she chanc’d to come
‘ Where I contended for a petty sum,
‘ Affirm ’twas painful to behold such care,
‘ “ But *Issop*’s nature is to pinch and spare :”
‘ Thus all the meanness of the house is mine,
‘ And my reward—to scorn her, and to dine.

‘ See next that giddy thing with neither pride
‘ To keep her safe, nor principle to guide ;
‘ Poor, idle, simple flirt ! as sure as fate
‘ Her maiden-fame will have an early date :
‘ Of her beware ; for all who live below
‘ Have faults they wish not all the world to know ;
‘ And she is fond of listening, full of doubt,
‘ And stoops to guilt to find an error out.

‘ And now once more observe the artful Maid,
‘ A lying, prying, jilting, thievish jade ;
‘ I think, my love, you would not condescend
‘ To call a low, illiterate girl, your friend :
‘ But in our troubles we are apt, you know,
‘ To lean on all who some compassion show ;
‘ And she has flexile features, acting eyes,
‘ And seems with every look to sympathise ;
‘ No mirror can a mortal’s grief express
‘ With more precision, or can feel it less ;
‘ That proud, mean spirit, she by fawning courts,
‘ By vulgar flattery, and by vile reports ;

‘ And, by that proof she every instant gives
‘ To one so mean, that yet a meaner lives.—

‘ Come, I have drawn the curtain, and you see
‘ Your fellow-actors, all our company ;
‘ Should you incline to throw reserve aside,
‘ And in my judgment and my love confide ;
‘ I could some prospects open to your view,
‘ That ask attention—and, till then, adieu.’

“ Farewell,” said *Jesse*, hastening to her room,
Where all she saw within, without, was gloom :
Confus’d, perplex’d, she pass’d a dreary hour,
Before her reason could exert its power ;
To her all seem’d mysterious, all allied
To avarice, meanness, folly, craft, and pride ;
Wearied with thought, she breath’d the garden’s air,
Then came the laughing Lass, and join’d her there.

‘ My sweetest friend has dwelt with us a week,
‘ And does she love us? be sincere and speak ;
‘ My Aunt you cannot—Lord ! how I should hate
‘ To be like her, all misery and state ;
‘ Proud, and yet envious, she disgusted sees
‘ All who are happy, and who look at ease.
‘ Let friendship bind us, I will quickly show
‘ Some favourites near us, you’ll be blest to know ;
‘ My Aunt forbids it—but, can she expect
‘ To soothe her spleen, we shall ourselves neglect ?

‘ *Jane* and the Widow were to watch and stay
 ‘ My free-born feet ; I watch’d as well as they ;
 ‘ Lo ! what is this ? this simple key explores
 ‘ The dark recess that holds the *Spinster’s* stores ;
 ‘ And led by her ill star, I chanc’d to see
 ‘ Where *Issop* keeps her stock of ratafie ;
 ‘ Us’d in the hours of anger and alarm,
 ‘ It makes her civil, and it keeps her warm ;
 ‘ Thus blest with secrets, both would choose to hide,
 ‘ Their fears now grant me what their scorn denied.

‘ My freedom thus by their assent secur’d,
 ‘ Bad as it is, the place may be endur’d ;
 ‘ And bad it is, but her estates, you know,
 ‘ And her beloved hoards, she must bestow ;
 ‘ So we can slyly our amusements take,
 ‘ And friends of dæmons, if they help us, make.’

“ Strange creatures these,” thought *Jesse*, half inclin’d
 To smile at one malicious and yet kind ;
 Frank and yet cunning, with a heart to love
 And malice prompt—the serpent and the dove ;
 Here could she dwell ? or could she yet depart ?
 Could she be artful ? could she bear with art ?—
 This splendid Mansion gave the Cottage grace,
 She thought a dungeon was a happier place ;
 And *Colin* pleading, when he pleaded best,
 Wrought not such sudden change in *Jesse’s* breast.

The wondering Maiden, who had only read
Of such vile beings, saw them now with dread ;
Safe in themselves—for nature has design'd
The creature's poison harmless to the kind ;
But all beside who in the haunts are found,
Must dread the poison, and must feel the wound.

Days full of care, slow weary weeks pass'd on,
Eager to go, still *Jesse* was not gone ;
Her time in trifling, or in tears she spent,
She never gave, she never felt content :
The Lady wonder'd that her humble guest
Strove not to please, would neither lie nor jest ;
She sought no news, no scandal would convey,
But walk'd for health, and was at church to pray ;
All this displeas'd, and soon the Widow cried :
' Let me be frank—I am not satisfied ;
' You know my wishes, I your judgment trust ;
' You can be useful, *Jesse*, and you must ;
' Let me be plainer, child—I want an ear,
' When I am deaf, instead of mine to hear ;
' When mine is sleeping, let your eye awake ;
' When I observe not, observation take ;
' Alas ! I rest not on my pillow laid,
' Then threat'ning whispers make my soul afraid ;
' The tread of strangers to my ear ascends,
' Fed at my cost, the minions of my friends ;
' While you, without a care, a wish to please,
' Eat the vile bread of idleness and ease.'

Th' indignant girl astonish'd answer'd—"Nay!
 " This instant, Madam, let me haste away,
 " Thus speaks my father's, thus an orphan's friend?
 " This instant, Lady, let your bounty end."

The Lady frown'd indignant—"What! she cried,
 ' A Vicar's Daughter with a Princess' pride!
 ' And Pauper's lot! but pitying I forgive;
 ' How, simple *Jesse*, do you think to live?
 ' Have I not power to help you, foolish Maid?
 ' To my concerns be your attention paid;
 ' With cheerful mind th' allotted duties take,
 ' And recollect I have a will to make.'

Jesse, who felt as liberal natures feel,
 When thus the baser their designs reveal,
 Replied—"Those duties were to her unfit,
 " Nor would her spirit to her tasks submit."

In silent scorn the Lady sate awhile,
 And then replied with stern contemptuous smile—

' Think you, fair Madam, that you came to share
 ' Fortunes like mine without a thought or care?
 ' A guest indeed! from every trouble free,
 ' Drest by my help, with not a care for me;
 ' When I a visit to your father made,
 ' I for the poor assistance largely paid;

‘ To his domestics I their tasks assign’d,
‘ I fix’d the portion for his hungry hind ;
‘ And had your Father (simple man !) obey’d
‘ My good advice, and watch’d as well as pray’d,
‘ He might have left you something with his prayers,
‘ And lent some colour for these lofty airs.—

‘ In tears ! my love ! Oh, then my soften’d heart
‘ Cannot resist—we never more will part ;
‘ I need your friendship—I will be your friend,
‘ And thus determin’d, to my will attend.’

Jesse went forth, but with determin’d soul
To fly such love, to break from such controul ;
“ I hear enough,” the trembling Damsel cried,
“ Flight be my care, and Providence my guide :
“ Ere yet a prisoner, I escape will make ;
“ Will, thus display’d, th’ insidious arts forsake,
“ And, as the rattle sounds, will fly the fatal snake.”

Jesse her thanks upon the morrow paid,
Prepar’d to go, determin’d though afraid.

‘ Ungrateful creature,’ said the Lady, ‘ this
‘ Could I imagine ?—are you frantic, Miss ?
‘ What ! leave your friend, your prospects—is it true ?
‘ This *Jesse* answer’d by a mild “ Adieu !”

The Dame replied, ‘ Then houseless may you rove,
‘ The starving victim to a guilty love ;
‘ Branded with shame, in sickness doom’d to nurse
‘ An ill-form’d cup, your scandal and your curse ;
‘ Spurn’d by its scoundrel father, and ill fed
‘ By surly rustics with the parish-bread !—
‘ Relent you not ?—speak—yet I can forgive ;
‘ Still live with me’—“ With you,” said *Jesse*, “ live ?”
“ No ! I would first endure what you describe,
“ Rather than breathe with your detested tribe ;
“ Who long have feign’d, till now their very hearts
“ Are firmly fix’d in their accursed parts ;
“ Who all profess esteem, and feel disdain,
“ And all, with justice, of deceit complain ;
“ Whom I could pity, but that, while I stay,
“ My terror drives all kinder thoughts away ;
“ Grateful for this, that when I think of you,
“ I little fear what poverty can do.”

The angry Matron her attendant *Jane*
Summon’d in haste to soothe the fierce disdain :

‘ A vile detested wretch !’ the Lady cried,
‘ Yet shall she be, by many an effort, tried,
‘ And, clogg’d with debt and fear, against her will abide ;
‘ And once secur’d, she never shall depart
‘ Till I have prov’d the firmness of her heart ;

‘ Then when she dares not, would not, cannot go,
‘ I’ll make her feel what ’tis to use me so.’

The pensive *Colin* in his garden stray’d,
But felt not then the beauties it display’d ;
There many a pleasant object met his view,
A rising wood of oaks behind it grew ;
A stream ran by it, and the village-green
And public road were from the gardens seen ;
Save where the pine and larch the bound’ry made,
And on the rose-beds threw a softening shade.

The Mother sat beside the garden-door,
Dress’d as in times ere she and hers were poor ;
The broad-lac’d cap was known in ancient days,
When Madam’s dress compell’d the village praise ;
And still she look’d as in the times of old,
Ere his last farm the erring husband sold ;
While yet the Mansion stood in decent state,
And paupers waited at the well-known gate.

“ Alas ! my Son !” the Mother cried, “ and why.
“ That silent grief and oft-repeated sigh ?
“ True we are poor, but thou hast never felt
“ Pangs to thy father for his error dealt ;
“ Pangs from strong hopes of visionary gain,
“ For ever rais’d, and ever found in vain.

“ He rose unhappy ! from his fruitless schemes,
“ As guilty wretches from their blissful dreams ;
“ But thou wert then, my Son, a playful child,
“ Wondering at grief, gay, innocent, and wild ;
“ Listening at times to thy poor mother’s sighs,
“ With curious looks and innocent surprise ;
“ Thy father dying, thou, my virtuous boy,
“ My comfort always, wak’d my soul to joy ;
“ With the poor remnant of our fortune left,
“ Thou hast our station of its gloom bereft :
“ Thy lively temper, and thy cheerful air,
“ Have cast a smile on sadness and despair ;
“ Thy active hand has dealt to this poor space
“ The bliss of plenty and the charm of grace ;
“ And all around us wonder when they find
“ Such taste and strength, such skill and power combin’d ;
“ There is no mother, *Colin*, no not one,
“ But envies me so kind, so good a son ;
“ By thee supported on this failing side,
“ Weakness itself awakes a parent’s pride :
“ I bless the stroke that was my grief before,
“ And feel such joy that ’tis disease no more ;
“ Shielded by thee, my want becomes my wealth—
“ And sooth’d by *Colin*, sickness smiles at health ;
“ The old men love thee, they repeat thy praise,
“ And say, like thee were youth in earlier days ;
“ While every village-maiden cries, ‘ How gay,
“ ‘ How smart, how brave, how good is *Colin Grey* !’

“ Yet art thou sad ; alas ! my Son, I know
“ Thy heart is wounded, and the cure is slow ;
“ Fain would I think that *Jesse* still may come
“ To share the comforts of our rustic home :
“ She surely lov’d thee ; I have seen the maid,
“ When thou hast kindly brought the Vicar aid—
“ When thou hast eas’d his bosom of its pain,
“ Oh ! I have seen her—she will come again.”

The Matron ceas’d ; and *Colin* stood the while
Silent, but striving for a grateful smile ;
He then replied—‘ Ah ! sure, had *Jesse* stay’d,
‘ And shar’d the comforts of our sylvan shade ;
‘ The tenderest duty and the fondest love
‘ Would not have fail’d that generous heart to move ;
‘ A grateful pity would have rul’d her breast,
‘ And my distresses would have made me blest.

‘ But she is gone, and ever has in view
‘ Grandeur and taste—and what will then ensue ?
‘ Surprise and then delight in scenes so fair and new ;
‘ For many a day, perhaps for many a week,
‘ Home will have charms, and to her bosom speak ;
‘ But thoughtless ease, and affluence, and pride,
‘ Seen day by day, will draw the heart aside :
‘ And she at length, though gentle and sincere,
‘ Will think no more of our enjoyments here.’

Sighing he spake—but hark! he hears th' approach
Of rattling wheels! and lo! the evening-coach;
Once more the movement of the horses' feet
Makes the fond heart with strong emotion beat:
Faint were his hopes, but ever had the sight
Drawn him to gaze beside his gate at night;
And when with rapid wheels it hurried by,
He griev'd his Parent with a hopeless sigh;
And could the blessing have been bought—what sum
Had he not offer'd, to have *Jesse* come?
She came—he saw her bending from the door,
Her face, her smile, and he beheld no more;
Lost in his joy—the mother lent her aid
T' assist and to detain the willing Maid;
Who thought her late, her present home to make,
Sure of a welcome for the Vicar's sake:
But the good Parent was so pleas'd, so kind,
So pressing *Colin*, she so much inclin'd,
That night advanc'd; and then so long detain'd,
No wishes to depart she felt, or feign'd;
Yet long in doubt she stood, and then perforce remain'd.

Here was a lover fond, a friend sincere;
Here was content and joy, for she was here:
In the mild evening, in the scene around,
The maid, now free, peculiar beauties found;
Blended with village-tones, the evening-gale
Gave the sweet night-bird's warblings to the vale;

The youth embolden'd, yet abash'd, now told
His fondest wish, nor found the Maiden cold ;
The mother smiling whisper'd—" Let him go
" And seek the licence !"—*Jesse* answer'd, ' No :'
But *Colin* went.—I know not if they live
With all the comforts wealth and plenty give ;
But with pure joy to envious souls denied,
To suppliant meanness and suspicious pride ;
And village-maids of happy couples say,
" They live like *Jesse Bourn* and *Colin Grey*."

TALE XIV.

THE STRUGGLES OF CONSCIENCE.

I am a villain ; yet I lie, I am not ;
Fool ! of thyself speak well :—Fool ! do not flatter.
My Conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale.
Richard III. Act V. Scene 3.

My Conscience is but a kind of hard Conscience,
The fiend gives the more friendly counsel.
Merchant of Venice, Act II. Scene 2.

Thou hast it now—and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for it.
Macbeth, Act III. Scene 1.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
Puck from the memory a rooted sinew,
Rase out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart ?
Macbeth, Act V. Scene 3.

Soft ! I did but dream—
Oh ! coward Conscience, how dost thou afflict me !
Richard III. Act V. Scene 3.

TALE XIV.

THE STRUGGLES OF CONSCIENCE.

A SERIOUS Toyman in the City dwelt,
Who much concern for his religion felt ;
Reading, he chang'd his tenets, read again,
And various questions could with skill maintain ;
Papist and Quaker if we set aside,
He had the road of every traveller tried ;
There walk'd awhile, and on a sudden turn'd
Into some bye-way he had just discern'd :
He had a nephew, *Fulham*—*Fulham* went
His Uncle's way, with every turn content ;
He saw his pious kinsman's watchful care,
And thought such anxious pains his own might spare,
And he, the truth obtain'd, without the toil, might share.
In fact, young *Fulham*, though he little read,
Perceiv'd his Uncle was by fancy led ;
And smil'd to see the constant care he took,
Collating creed with creed, and book with book.

At length the senior fix'd ; I pass the sect
He call'd a Church, 'twas precious and elect ;
Yet the seed fell not in the richest soil,
For few disciples paid the Preacher's toil ;
All in an attic-room were wont to meet,
These few disciples at their Pastor's feet ;
With these went *Fulham*, who, discreet and grave,
Follow'd the light his worthy Uncle gave ;
Till a warm Preacher found a way t' impart
Awakening feelings to his torpid heart :
Some weighty truths, and of unpleasant kind,
Sank, though resisted, in his struggling mind ;
He wished to fly them, but compell'd to stay,
Truth to the waking Conscience found her way ;
For though the Youth was call'd a prudent lad,
And prudent was, yet serious faults he had ;
Who now reflected—" Much am I surpris'd,
" I find these notions cannot be despis'd ;
" No ! there is something I perceive at last,
" Although my Uncle cannot hold it fast ;
" Though I the strictness of these men reject,
" Yet I determine to be circumspect ;
" This man alarms me, and I must begin
" To look more closely to the things within ;
" These sons of zeal have I derided long,
" But now begin to think the laughers wrong ;
" Nay ! my good Uncle, by all teachers mov'd,
" Will be preferr'd to him who none approv'd,
" Better to love amiss than nothing to have lov'd."

Such were his thoughts, when Conscience first began
To hold close converse with th' awaken'd man :
He from that time reserv'd and cautious grew,
And for his duties felt obedience due ;
Pious he was not, but he fear'd the pain
Of sins committed, nor would sin again.
Whene'er he stray'd, he found his Conscience rose,
Like one determin'd what was ill t' oppose,
What wrong t' accuse, what secret to disclose ;
To drag forth every latent act to light,
And fix them fully in the actor's sight :
This gave him trouble, but he still confess'd
The labour useful, for it brought him rest.

The Uncle died, and when the Nephew read
The will, and saw the substance of the dead—
Five hundred guineas, with a stock in trade—
He much rejoic'd, and thought his fortune made ;
Yet felt aspiring pleasure at the sight,
And for increase, increasing appetite :
Desire of profit, idle habits check'd,
(For *Fulham's* virtue was to be correct) ;
He and his Conscience had their compact made—
“ Urge me with truth, and you will soon persuade ;
“ But not,” he cried, “ for mere ideal things
“ Give me to feel those terror-breeding stings.”

‘ Let not such thoughts,’ she said, ‘ your mind confound,
‘ Trifles may wake me, but they never wound ;

‘ In them indeed there is a wrong and right,
 ‘ But you will find me pliant and polite ;
 ‘ Not like a Conscience of the dotard kind,
 ‘ Awake to dreams, to dire offences blind :
 ‘ Let all within be pure, in all beside
 ‘ Be your own master, governor, and guide ;
 ‘ Alive to danger, in temptation strong,
 ‘ And I shall sleep our whole existence long.’

“ Sweet be thy sleep,” said *Fulham*, “ strong must be
 “ The tempting ill that gains access to me ;
 “ Never will I to evil deed consent,
 “ Or, if surpris’d, oh ! how will I repent !
 “ Should gain be doubtful, soon would I restore
 “ The dangerous good, or give it to the poor ;
 “ Repose for them my growing wealth shall buy—
 “ Or build—who knows?—an hospital like Guy ?—
 “ Yet why such means to soothe the smart within,
 “ While firmly purpos’d to renounce the sin ?”

Thus our young Trader and his *Conscience* dwelt
 In mutual love, and great the joy they felt ;
 But yet in small concerns, in trivial things,
 “ She was,” he said, “ too ready with the stings ;”
 And he too apt, in search of growing gains,
 To lose the fear of penalties and pains :
 Yet these were trifling bickerings, petty jars,
 Domestic strifes, preliminary wars ;

He ventur'd little, little she express'd
Of indignation, and they both had rest.

Thus was he fix'd to walk the worthy way,
When profit urg'd him to a bold essay :—
A time was that when all at pleasure gam'd
In lottery-chances, yet of law unblam'd ;
This *Fulham* tried, who would to him advance
A pound or crown, he gave in turn a chance
For weighty prize—and should they nothing share,
They had their crown or pound in *Fulham's* ware ;
Thus the old stores within the shop were sold
For that which none refuses, new or old.

Was this unjust? yet *Conscience* could not rest,
But made a mighty struggle in the breast ;
And gave th' aspiring man an early proof,
That should they war he would have work enough ;
' Suppose,' said she, ' your vended numbers rise
' The same with those which gain each real prize,
' (Such your proposal), can you ruin shun ?'
" A hundred thousand," he replied, " to one ;"
' Still it may happen,' " I the sum must pay,"
' You know you cannot,' " I can run away ;"
' That is dishonest,'—" Nay, but you must wink
" At a chance-hit ; it cannot be, I think :
" Upon my conduct as a whole decide,
" Such trifling errors let my virtues hide ;

" Fail I at Meeting? am I sleepy there?
 " My purse refuse I with the Priest to share?
 " Do I deny the poor a helping hand?
 " Or stop the wicked women in the Strand?
 " Or drink at club beyond a certain pitch?
 " Which are your charges? Conscience, tell me which?"

"'Tis well,' said she, 'but—' "Nay, I pray, have done—
 " Trust me, I will not into danger run."

The lottery drawn, not one demand was made,
Fulham gain'd profit and increase of trade;
 " See now," said he—for Conscience yet arose—
 " How foolish 'tis such measures to oppose;
 " Have I not blameless thus my state advanc'd?"—
 ' Still,' mutter'd Conscience, 'still it might have
 ' chanc'd;'
 " Might!" said our Hero, " who is so exact
 " As to inquire what might have been a fact?"

Now *Fulham's* shop contain'd a curious view
 Of costly trifles elegant and new;
 The papers told where kind mammas might buy
 The gayest toys to charm an infant's eye;
 Where generous beaux might gentle damsels please,
 And travellers call who cross the land or seas,
 And find the curious art, the neat device
 Of precious value and of trifling price.

Here *Conscience* rested, she was pleas'd to find
No less an active than an honest mind ;
But when he nam'd his price, and when he swore,
His *Conscience* check'd him, that he ask'd no more,
When half he sought had been a large increase
On fair demand, she could not rest in peace :
(Beside th' affront to call th' adviser in,
Who would prevent, to justify the sin ?)
She therefore told him, that ' he vainly tried
' To soothe her anger, conscious that he lied ;
' If thus he grasp'd at such usurious gains,
' He must deserve, and should expect her pains.'

The charge was strong ; he would in part confess
Offence there was—But, who offended less ?
“ What ! is a mere assertion call'd a lie ?
“ And if it be, are men compell'd to buy ?
“ 'Twas strange that *Conscience* on such points should
“ dwell,
“ While he was acting (he would call it) well ;
“ He bought as others buy, he sold as others sell ;
“ There was no fraud, and he demanded cause
“ Why he was troubled, when he kept the laws ?”

' My laws ?' said *Conscience*, “ What,” said he, “ are
“ thine ?
“ Oral or written, human or divine ?
“ Show me the chapter, let me see the text ;
“ By laws uncertain subjects are perplex'd ;

“ Let me my finger on the statute lay,
 “ And I shall feel it duty to obey.”

‘ Reflect,’ said *Conscience*, ‘ ’Twas your own desire
 ‘ That I should warn you—does the compact tire ?
 ‘ Repent you this ? then bid me not advise,
 ‘ And rather hear your passions as they rise ;
 ‘ So you may counsel and remonstrance shun,
 ‘ But then remember it is war begun ?
 ‘ And you may judge from some attacks, my friend,
 ‘ What serious conflicts will on war attend.’

“ Nay, but,” at length the thoughtful man replied,
 “ I say not that ; I wish you for my guide ;
 “ Wish for your checks and your reproofs—but then
 “ Be like a *Conscience* of my fellow-men ;
 “ Worthy I mean, and men of good report,
 “ And not the wretches who with conscience sport :
 “ There’s *Bice* my friend, who passes off his grease
 “ Of pigs for bears’, in pots a crown a-piece ;
 “ His *Conscience* never checks him when he swears
 “ The fat he sells is honest fat of bears ;
 “ And so it is, for he contrives to give
 “ A drachm to each—’tis thus that tradesmen live :
 “ Now why should you and I be over-nice,
 “ What man is held in more repute than *Bice* ?”

Here ended the dispute ; but yet ’twas plain
 The parties both expected strife again :

Their friendship cool'd, he look'd about and saw
Numbers who seem'd unshackled by his awe ;
While like a school-boy he was threaten'd still,
Now for the deed, now only for the will ;
Here Conscience answer'd, ' To thy neighbour's guide
' Thy neighbour leave, and in thine own confide.'

Such were each day the charges and replies,
When a new object caught the Trader's eyes ;
A Vestry-Patriot, could he gain the name,
Would famous make him, and would pay the fame ?
He knew full well the sums bequeath'd in charge
For schools, for alms-men, for the poor, were large ;
Report had told, and he could feel it true,
That most unfairly dealt the trusted few ;
No partners would they in their office take,
Nor clear accounts at annual meetings make ;
Aloud our Hero in the vestry spoke
Of hidden deeds, and vow'd to draw the cloak ;
It was the poor man's cause, and he for one
Was quite determin'd to see justice done ;
His foes affected laughter, then disdain,
They too were loud and threat'ning, but in vain :
The pauper's friend, their foe, arose and spoke again :
Fiercely he cried, " Your garbled statements show
" That you determine we shall nothing know ;
" But we shall bring your hidden crimes to light,
" Give you to shame, and to the poor their right."

Virtue like this might some approval ask—
But Conscience sternly said, ‘ You wear a mask ?’
“ At least,” said *Fulham*, “ if I have a view
“ To serve myself, I serve the public too.”

Fulham, though check’d, retain’d his former zeal,
And this the cautious rogues began to feel :
‘ Thus will he ever bark,’ in peevish tone,
An Elder cried—‘ the cur must have a bone :’
They then began to hint, and to begin
Was all they needed—it was felt within ;
In terms less veil’d an offer then was made,
Though distant still, it fail’d not to persuade :
More plainly then was every point propos’d,
Approv’d, accepted, and the bargain clos’d.
‘ Th’ exulting Paupers hail’d their Friend’s success,
‘ And bade adieu to murmurs and distress.’

Alas ! their Friend had now superior light,
And, view’d by that, he found that all was right ;
“ There were no errors, the disbursements small,
“ This was the truth, and truth was due to all.”

And rested Conscience ? No ! she would not rest,
Yet was content with making a protest :
Some acts she now with less resistance bore,
Nor took alarm so quickly as before :
Like those in towns besieged, who every ball
At first with terror view and dread them all,

But, grown familiar with the scenes, they fear
The danger less, as it approaches near ;
So Conscience, more familiar with the view
Of growing evils, less attentive grew :
Yet he who felt some pain, and dreaded more,
Gave a peace-offering to the angry poor.

Thus had he quiet—but the time was brief,
From his new triumph sprang a cause of grief ;
In office join'd, and acting with the rest,
He must admit the sacramental test :
Now, as a Sectary, who had all his life,
As he supposed, been with the Church at strife,
(No rules of hers, no laws had he perus'd,
Nor knew the tenets he by rote abus'd) ;
Yet Conscience here arose more fierce and strong,
Than when she told of robbery and wrong ;
' Change his religion ! No ! he must be sure
' That was a blow no conscience could endure.'

Though friend to virtue, yet she oft abides
In early notions, fix'd by erring guides ;
And is more startled by a call from those,
Then when the foulest crimes her rest oppose ;
By error taught, by prejudice misled,
She yields her rights, and fancy rules instead ;
When Conscience all her stings and terror deals,
Not as truth dictates, but as fancy feels :

And thus within our Hero's troubled breast,
Crime was less torture than the odious test.
New forms, new measures, he must now embrace,
With sad conviction that they warr'd with grace ;
To his new church no former friend would come,
They scarce preferr'd her to the Church of *Rome* :
But thinking much, and weighing guilt and gain,
Conscience and he commuted for her pain ;
Then promis'd *Fulham* to retain his creed,
And their peculiar paupers still to feed ;
Their attic-room (in secret) to attend,
And not forget he was the Preacher's friend ;
Thus he propos'd, and Conscience, troubled, tried,
And wanting peace, reluctantly complied.

Now care subdued, and apprehensions gone,
In peace our Hero went aspiring on ;
But short the period—soon a quarrel rose,
Fierce in the birth, and fatal in the close ;
With times of truce between, which rather prov'd
That both were weary, than that either lov'd.

Fulham ev'n now dislik'd the heavy thrall,
And for her death would in his anguish call,
As *Rome's* mistaken friend exclaim'd, *Let Carthage fall !*
So felt our Hero, so his wish express'd,
Against this powerful Sprite—*delenda est* :
Rome in her conquest saw not danger near,
Freed from her rival, and without a fear ;

So, Conscience conquer'd, men perceive how free,
But not how fatal such a state must be.
Fatal not free our Hero's ; foe or friend,
Conscience on him was destin'd to attend :
She dos'd indeed, grew dull, nor seem'd to spy
Crime following crime, and each of deeper dye ;
But all were notic'd, and the reckoning time
With her account came on—crime following crime.

This, once a foe, now Brother in the Trust,
Whom *Fulham* late describ'd as fair and just,
Was the sole Guardian of a wealthy Maid,
Plac'd in his power, and of his frown afraid :
Not quite an idiot, for her busy brain
Sought, by poor cunning, trifling points to gain ;
Success in childish projects her delight,
She took no heed of each important right.

The friendly parties met—the Guardian cried,
' I am too old ; my sons have each a Bride :
' *Martha*, my Ward, would make an easy Wife,
' On easy terms I'll make her yours for life ;
' And then the creature is so weak and mild,
' She may be sooth'd and threaten'd as a child ;'—
“ Yet not obey,” said *Fulham*, “ for your fools,
“ Female and male, are obstinate as mules.”

Some points adjusted, these new friends agreed,
Propos'd the day, and hurried on the deed.

‘ ’Tis a vile act,’ said *Conscience*—“ it will prove,”
Replied the bolder Man, “ an act of love ;
“ Her wicked Guardian might the Girl have sold
“ To endless misery for a Tyrant’s gold ;
“ Now may her life be happy—for I mean
“ To keep my temper even and serene :”
‘ I cannot thus compound,’ the Spirit cried,
‘ Nor have my laws thus broken and defied :
‘ This is a fraud, a bargain for a Wife ;
‘ Expect my vengeance, or amend your life.’

The Wife was pretty, trifling, childish, weak ;
She could not think, but would not cease to speak :
This he forbad—she took the caution ill,
And boldly rose against his sovereign will ;
With idiot-cunning she would watch the hour,
When friends were present, to dispute his power :
With tyrant-craft, he then was still and calm,
But rais’d in private terror and alarm :
By many trials, she perceiv’d how far
To vex and teaze, without an open war ;
And he discover’d that so weak a mind
No art could lead, and no compulsion bind ;
The rudest force would fail such mind to tame,
And she was callous to rebuke and shame ;
Proud of her wealth, the power of law she knew,
And would assist him in the spending too :
His threat’ning words with insult she defied,
To all his reasoning with a stare replied ;

And when he begg'd her to attend, would say,
' Attend I will—but let me have my way.'

Nor rest had Conscience : ' While you merit pain
' From me,' she cried, ' you seek redress in vain.'
His thoughts were grievous : " All that I possess
" From this vile bargain, adds to my distress ;
" To pass a life with one who will not mend,
" Who cannot love, nor save, nor wisely spend,
" Is a vile prospect, and I see no end ;
" For if we part, I must of course restore
" Much of her money, and must wed no more.

" Is there no way?"—here *Conscience* rose in power,
' Oh! fly the danger of this fatal hour ;
' I am thy Conscience faithful, fond, and true,
' Ah fly this thought, or evil must ensue ;
' Fall on thy knees, and pray with all thy soul,
' Thy purpose banish, thy design controul ;
' Let every hope of such advantage cease,
' Or never more expect a moment's peace.'

Th' affrighten'd Man a due attention paid,
Felt the rebuke, and the command obey'd.

Again the Wife rebell'd, again express'd
A love for pleasure—a contempt of rest ;
' She, whom she pleas'd, would visit, would receive
' Those who pleas'd her, nor deign to ask for leave.'

" One way there is," said he ; " I might contrive
 " Into a trap this foolish thing to drive ;
 " Who pleas'd her, said she ?—I'll be certain who—"
 ' Take heed,' said Conscience, ' what thou mean'st to do ;
 ' Ensnare thy Wife ?'—" Why yes," he must confess,
 " It might be wrong—but there was no redress ;
 " Beside, to think," said he, " is not to sin."
 ' Mistaken Man !' replied the Power within.
 No guest unnotic'd to the Lady came,
 He judg'd th' event with mingled joy and shame ;
 Oft he withdrew, and seem'd to leave her free,
 But still as watchful as a lynx was he ;
 Meanwhile the Wife was thoughtless, cool, and gay,
 And, without virtue, had no wish to stray.

Though thus oppos'd, his plans were not resign'd ;
 " Revenge," said he, " will prompt that daring mind ;
 " Refus'd supplies, insulted and distress'd,
 " Enrag'd with me, and near a favourite guest—
 " Then will her vengeance prompt the daring deed,
 " And I shall watch, detect her, and be freed."

There was a Youth—but let me hide the name,
 With all the progress of this deed of shame ;
 He had his views—on him the Husband cast
 His net, and saw him in his trammels fast.

' Pause but a moment—think what you intend,'
 Said the rous'd Sleeper : ' I am yet a friend ;

‘ Must all our days in enmity be spent?’
“ No !” and he paus’d—“ I surely shall repent :”
Then hurried on—the evil plan was laid,
The Wife was guilty, and her Friend betray’d,
And *Fulham* gain’d his wish, and for his will was paid.

Had crimes less weighty on the Spirit press’d,
This troubled Conscience might have sunk to rest ;
And, like a foolish guard, been brib’d to peace,
By a false promise, that offence should cease ;
Past faults had seem’d familiar to the view,
Confus’d if many, and obscure though true ;
And Conscience, troubled with the dull account,
Had dropp’d her tale, and slumber’d o’er th’ amount :
But, struck by daring guilt, alert she rose,
Disturb’d, alarm’d, and could no more repose ;
All hopes of friendship, and of peace, were past,
And every view with gloom was overcast.
Hence from that day, that day of shame and sin,
Arose the restless enmity within ;
On no resource could *Fulham* now rely,
Doom’d all expedients, and in vain, to try ;
For *Conscience*, rous’d, sat boldly on her throne,
Watch’d every thought, attack’d the foe alone,
And with envenom’d sting drew forth the inward groan :
Expedients fail’d that brought relief before,
In vain his alms gave comfort to the poor,
Give what he would, to him the comfort came no more :

Not prayer avail'd, and when (his crimes confess'd)
 He felt some ease—she said—‘ are they redress'd ?
 ‘ You still retain the profit, and be sure,
 ‘ Long as it lasts, this anguish shall endure.’

Fulham still tried to soothe her, cheat, mislead ;
 But *Conscience* laid her finger on the Deed,
 And read the crime with power, and all that must suc-
 ceed :

He tried t'expel her, but was sure to find
 Her strength increas'd by all that he design'd ;
 Nor ever was his groan more loud and deep,
 Than when refresh'd she rose from momentary sleep.

Now desperate grown, weak, harass'd, and afraid,
 From new allies he sought for doubtful aid ;
 To thought itself he strove to bid adieu,
 And from devotions to diversions flew ;
 He took a poor domestic for a slave,
 (Though *Avarice* griev'd to see the price he gave) ;
 Upon his board, once frugal, press'd a load
 Of viands rich, the appetite to goad ;
 The long-protracted meal, the sparkling cup,
 Fought with his gloom, and kept his courage up :
 Soon as the morning came, there met his eyes
 Accounts of wealth, that he might reading rise ;
 To profit then he gave some active hours,
 Till food and wine again should renovate his powers :

Yet, spite of all defence, of every aid,
 The watchful Foe her close attention paid ;
 In every thoughtful moment, on she press'd,
 And gave at once her dagger to his breast ;
 He wak'd at midnight, and the fears of sin,
 As waters, through a bursten dam, broke in ;
 Nay, in the banquet, with his friends around,
 When all their cares and half their crimes were drown'd,
 Would some chance act awake the slumbering fear,
 And care and crime in all their strength appear ;
 The news is read, a guilty Victim swings,
 And troubled looks proclaim the bosom-stings ;
 Some Pair are wed ; this brings the Wife in view,
 And some divorc'd : this shows the parting too ;
 Nor can he hear of evil word or deed,
 But they to thought, and thought to sufferings lead.

Such was his life—no other changes came,
 The hurrying day, the conscious night the same ;
 The night of horror—when he starting cried,
 To the poor startled Sinner at his side ;
 “ Is it in law ? am I condemn'd to die ?
 “ Let me escape !—I'll give—oh ! let me fly—
 “ How ! but a Dream—no Judges ! Dungeon ! Chain !
 “ Or these grim Men !—I will not sleep again.—
 “ Wilt thou, dread Being ! thus thy promise keep ?
 “ Day is thy time—and wilt thou murder sleep ?
 “ Sorrow and Want repose, and wilt thou come,
 “ Nor give one hour of pure untroubled gloom ?

“ Oh ! Conscience ! Conscience ! Man’s most faithful
“ friend,
“ Him canst thou comfort, ease, relieve, defend ;
“ But if he will thy friendly checks forego,
“ Thou art, oh ! woe for me, his deadliest foe !”

TALE XV.

A D V I C E ;

OR,

THE 'SQUIRE AND THE PRIEST.

His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports—
And never noted in him any study,
Any retirement, any sequestration.

Henry V. Act I. Scene 1.

I will converse with iron-witted fools,
With unrespective boys; none are for me,
Who look into me with considerate eyes.

Richard III. Act IV. Scene 2.

You cram these words into mine ears, against
The stomach of my sense.

Tempest, Act II. Scene 1.



TALE XV.

THE 'SQUIRE AND THE PRIEST.

A WEALTHY Lord of far-extended land
Had all that pleas'd him plac'd at his command ;
Widow'd of late, but finding much relief
In the world's comforts, he dismiss'd his grief ;
He was by marriage of his daughters eas'd,
And knew his sons could marry if they pleas'd ;
Meantime in travel he indulg'd the boys,
And kept no spy nor partner of his joys.

These joys, indeed, were of the grosser kind,
That fed the cravings of an earthy mind ;
A mind that, conscious of its own excess,
Felt the reproach his neighbours would express.
Long at th' indulgent board he lov'd to sit,
Where joy was laughter, and profaneness wit ;
And such the Guest and manners of the Hall,
No wedded Lady on the 'Squire would call ;

Here reign'd a Favourite, and her triumph gain'd
O'er other favourites who before had reign'd ;
Reserv'd and modest seem'd the Nymph to be,
Knowing her Lord was charm'd with modesty ;
For he, a sportsman keen, the more enjoy'd,
The greater value had the thing destroy'd.

Our 'Squire declar'd, that, from a Wife releas'd,
He would no more give trouble to a Priest ;
Seem'd it not, then, ungrateful and unkind,
That he should trouble from the Priesthood find ?
The Church he honour'd, and he gave the due
And full respect to every Son he knew ;
But envied those who had the luck to meet
A gentle Pastor, civil, and discreet ;
Who never bold and hostile sermon penn'd,
To wound a sinner, or to shame a Friend ;
One whom no being either shunn'd or fear'd,
Such must be lov'd wherever they appear'd.

Not such the stern old Rector of the time,
Who sooth'd no culprit, and who spar'd no crime ;
Who would his fears and his contempt express,
For irreligion and licentiousness ;
Of him our Village Lord, his guests among,
By speech vindictive prov'd his feelings stung.

' Were he a bigot,' said the 'Squire, ' whose zeal
Condemn'd us all, I should disdain to feel :

‘ But when a man of parts, in College train’d,
‘ Prates of our conduct—who would not be pain’d ?
‘ While he declaims (where no one dares reply)
‘ On men abandon’d, grov’ling in the sty
‘ (Like beasts in human shape) of shameless luxury.
‘ Yet with a patriot’s zeal I stand the shock
‘ Of vile rebuke, example to his flock :
‘ But let this Rector, thus severe and proud,
‘ Change his wide surplice for a narrow shroud ;
‘ And I will place within his seat a Youth,
‘ Train’d by the Graces, to explain the Truth ;
‘ Then shall the flock with gentle hand be led,
‘ By Wisdom won, and by Compassion fed.’

This purpos’d Teacher was a Sister’s Son,
Who of her children gave the Priesthood one ;
And she had early train’d for this employ
The pliant talents of her College-Boy :
At various times her letters painted all
Her Brother’s views—the manners of the Hall ;
The Rector’s harshness, and the mischief made
By chiding those whom Preachers should persuade :
This led the Youth to views of easy life,
A friendly Patron, an obliging Wife ;
His tithe, his glebe, the garden and the steed,
With books as many as he wish’d to read.

All this accorded with the Uncle’s will ;
He lov’d a Priest compliant, easy, still ;

Sums he had often to his favourite sent,
 ' To be,' he wrote, ' in manly freedom spent ;
 ' For well it pleas'd his spirit to assist
 ' An honest Lad, who scorn'd a Methodist :'
 His Mother too, in her maternal care,
 Bade him of canting hypocrites beware ;
 Who from his duties would his heart seduce,
 And make his talents of no earthly use.

Soon must a trial of his worth be made—
 The ancient Priest is to the tomb convey'd ;
 And the Youth summon'd from a serious friend,
 His guide and host, new duties to attend.

Three months before the Nephew and the 'Squire
 Saw mutual worth to praise and to admire ;
 And though the one too early left his wine,
 The other still exclaim'd—' My Boy will shine :
 ' Yes, I perceive that he will soon improve,
 ' And I shall form the very guide I love ;
 ' Decent abroad, he will my name defend,
 ' And, when at home, be social and unbend.'

The plan was specious, for the mind of *James*
 Accorded duly with his Uncle's schemes :
 He then aspir'd not to a higher name,
 Than sober Clerks of moderate talents claim ;
 Gravely to pray, and rev'rendly to preach,
 Was all he saw, good Youth ! within his reach :

Thus may a mass of sulphur long abide,
Cold and inert, but, to the flame applied,
Kindling it blazes, and consuming turns
To smoke and poison, as it boils and burns.

James, leaving College, to a Preacher stray'd ;
What call'd, he knew not—but the call obey'd :
Mild, idle, pensive, ever led by those
Who could some specious novelty propose ;
Humbly he listen'd, while the Preacher dwelt
On touching themes, and strong emotions felt ;
And in this night was fix'd that pliant will
To one sole point, and he retains it still.

At first his care was to himself confin'd ;
Himself assur'd, he gave it to mankind :
His zeal grew active—honest, earnest zeal,
And comfort dealt to him, he long'd to deal ;
He to his favourite Preacher now withdrew,
Was taught to teach, instructed to subdue ;
And train'd for ghostly warfare, when the call
Of his new duties reach'd him from the Hall.

Now to the 'Squire, although alert and stout,
Came unexpected an attack of gout ;
And the griev'd Patron felt such serious pain,
He never thought to see a church again :

Thrice had the youthful Rector taught the crowd,
Whose growing numbers spoke his powers aloud,
Before the Patron could himself rejoice
(His pain still lingering) in the general voice ;
For he imputed all this early fame
To graceful manner, and the well-known name ;
And to himself assum'd a share of praise,
For worth and talents he was pleas'd to raise.

A month had flown, and with it fled disease ;
What pleas'd before, began again to please :
Emerging daily from his chamber's gloom,
He found his old sensations hurrying home ;
Then call'd his Nephew, and exclaim'd, ' My Boy,
' Let us again the balm of life enjoy ;
' The foe has left me, and I deem it right,
' Should he return, to arm me for the fight.'

Thus spoke the 'Squire, the favourite Nymph stood by,
And view'd the Priest with insult in her eye :
She thrice had heard him when he boldly spoke
On dangerous points, and fear'd he would revoke :
For *James* she lov'd not—and her manner told,
' This warm affection will be quickly cold :'
And still she fear'd impression might be made
Upon a subject, nervous and decay'd ;
She knew her danger, and had no desire
Of reformation in the gallant 'Squire ;

TALE XV.] THE 'SQUIRE AND THE PRIEST.

And felt an envious pleasure in her breast
To see the Rector daunted and distress'd.

Again the Uncle to the Youth applied—
' Cast, my dear Lad, that cursed gloom aside :
' There are for all things time and place ; appear
' Grave in your pulpit, and be merry here :
' Now take your wine—for woes a sure resource,
' And the best prelude to a long discourse.'

James half obey'd, but cast an angry eye
On the fair Lass, who still stood watchful by ;
Resolving thus, " I have my fears—but still
" I must perform my duties, and I will ;
" No love, no interest, shall my mind controul ;
" Better to lose my comforts than my soul ;
" Better my Uncle's favour to abjure,
" Than the upbraidings of my heart endure."

He took his glass, and then address'd the 'Squire
" I feel not well, permit me to retire."
The 'Squire conceiv'd that the ensuing day
Gave him these terrors for the grand essay,
When he himself should this young Preacher try,
And stand before him with observant eye ;
This rais'd compassion in his manly breast,
And he would send the Rector to his rest :
Yet first, in soothing voice—' A moment stay,
' And these suggestions of a friend obey ;

‘ Treasure these hints, if fame or peace you prize—
‘ The bottle emptied, I shall close my eyes.

‘ On every Priest a two-fold care attends,
‘ To prove his talents, and insure his friends :
‘ First, of the first—your stores at once produce,
‘ And bring your reading to its proper use :
‘ On doctrines dwell, and every point enforce
‘ By quoting much, the scholar’s sure resource ;
‘ For he alone can show us on each head
‘ What ancient Schoolmen and sage Fathers said :
‘ No worth has knowledge, if you fail to show
‘ How well you studied and how much you know :
‘ Is Faith your subject, and you judge it right
‘ On theme so dark to cast a ray of light ;
‘ Be it that faith the Orthodox maintain,
‘ Found in the Rubrick, what the Creeds explain ;
‘ Fail not to show us on this ancient faith
‘ (And quote the passage) what some Martyr saith :
‘ Dwell not one moment on a faith that shocks
‘ The minds of men sincere and orthodox ;
‘ That gloomy faith, that robs the wounded mind
‘ Of all the comfort it was wont to find
‘ From virtuous acts, and to the soul denies
‘ Its proper due for alms and charities ;
‘ That partial faith, that, weighing sins alone,
‘ Lets not a virtue for a fault atone ;
‘ That starving faith, that would our tables clear,
‘ And make one dreadful Lent of all the year ;

' And cruel too, for this is faith that rends
' Confiding beauties from protecting friends ;
' A faith that all embracing, what a gloom
' Deep and terrific o'er the land would come !
' What scenes of horror would that time disclose !
' No sight but misery, and no sound but woes ;
' Your nobler faith, in loftier style convey'd,
' Shall be with praise and admiration paid :
' On points like these your hearers all admire
' A preacher's depth, and nothing more require ;
' Shall we a studious youth to *College* send,
' That every clown his words may comprehend ?
' 'Tis for your glory, when your hearers own
' Your learning matchless, but the sense unknown.

' Thus honour gain'd, learn now to gain a friend,
' And the sure way is—never to offend ;
' For, *James*, consider—what your neighbours do
' Is their own business, and concerns not you :
' Shun all resemblance to that forward race
' Who preach of sins before a sinner's face ;
' And seem as if they overlook'd a pew,
' Only to drag a failing man in view :
' Much should I feel, when groaning in disease,
' If a rough hand upon my limb should seize ;
' But great my anger, if this hand were found
' The very Doctor's, who should make it sound :
' So feel our minds, young Priest, so doubly feel,
' When hurt by those whose office is to heal.

‘ Yet of our duties you must something tell,
‘ And must at times on sin and frailty dwell ;
‘ Here you may preach in easy, flowing style,
‘ How errors cloud us, and how sins defile :
‘ Here bring persuasive tropes and figures forth,
‘ To show the poor that wealth is nothing worth ;
‘ That they, in fact, possess an ample share
‘ Of the world’s good and feel not half its care ;
‘ Give them this comfort, and, indeed, my gout
‘ In its full vigour causes me some doubt ;
‘ And let it always, for your zeal, suffice,
‘ That Vice you combat, in the abstract—Vice :
‘ The very captious will be quiet then,
‘ We all confess we are offending Men :
‘ In lashing sin, of every stroke beware,
‘ For sinners feel, and sinners you must spare ;
‘ In general satire, every Man perceives
‘ A slight attack, yet neither fears nor grieves ;
‘ But name th’ offence, and you absolve the rest,
‘ And point the danger at a single breast.

‘ Yet are these sinners of a class so low,
‘ That you with safety may the lash bestow ;
‘ Poachers, and drunkards, idle rogues, who feed
‘ At others’ cost, a mark’d correction need :
‘ And all the better sort, who see your zeal,
‘ Will love and reverence for their Pastor feel ;
‘ Reverence for one who can inflict the smart,
‘ And love, because he deals them not a part.

‘ Remember well what love and age advise,
‘ A quiet Rector is a parish prize ;
‘ Who in his learning has a decent pride,
‘ Who to his people is a gentle guide ;
‘ Who only hints at failings that he sees ;
‘ Who loves his glebe, his patron, and his ease,
‘ And finds the way to fame and profit is to please.’

The Nephew answer'd not, except a sigh
And look of sorrow might be term'd reply ;
He saw the fearful hazard of his state,
And held with truth and safety strong debate ;
Nor long he reason'd, for the zealous Youth
Resolv'd, though timid, to profess the truth ;
And though his Friend should like a lion roar,
Truth would he preach, and neither less nor more.

The bells had toll'd—arriv'd the time of prayer,
The flock assembled, and the 'Squire was there :
And now can Poet sing, or Proseman say,
The disappointment of that trying day ?

As he who long had train'd a favourite steed,
(Whose blood and bone gave promise of his speed),
Sanguine with hope, he runs with partial eye
O'er every feature, and his bets are high ;
Of triumph sure, he sees the Rivals start,
And waits their coming with exulting heart ;

Forestalling glory, with impatient glance,
And sure to see his conquering steed advance ;
The conquering steed advances—luckless day !
A rival's *Herod* bears the prize away.
Nor second his, nor third, but lagging last,
With hanging head he comes, by all surpass'd ;
Surprise and wrath the owner's mind inflame,
Love turns to scorn, and glory ends in shame ;—
Thus waited, high in hope, the partial 'Squire,
Eager to hear, impatient to admire :
When the young Preacher in the tones that find
A certain passage to the kindling mind ;
With air and accent strange, impressive, sad,
Alarm'd the Judge—he trembled for the Lad ;
But when the text announc'd the power of grace,
Amazement scowl'd upon his clouded face,
At this degenerate Son of his illustrious race ;
Staring he stood, till hope again arose,
That *James* might well define the words he chose :
For this he listen'd—but, alas ! he found
The Preacher always on forbidden ground.

And now the Uncle left the hated pew,
With *James*, and *James's* conduct in his view :
A long farewell to all his favourite schemes !
For now no craz'd Fanatic's frantic dreams
Seem'd vile as *James's* conduct, or as *James* :

All he had long derided, hated, fear'd,
This, from the chosen Youth the Uncle heard ;—
The needless pause, the fierce disorder'd air,
The groan for sin, the vehemence of prayer,
Gave birth to wrath, that, in a long discourse
Of grace, triumphant rose to four-fold force :
He found his thoughts despis'd, his rules transgress'd,
And while the anger kindled in his breast,
The pain must be endur'd that could not be express'd :
Each new idea more inflam'd his ire,
As fuel thrown upon a rising fire :
A hearer yet, he sought by threatening sign
To ease his heart, and awe the young Divine ;
But *James* refus'd those angry looks to meet,
Till he dismiss'd his flock, and left his seat :
Exhausted then he felt his trembling frame,
But fix'd his soul—his sentiments the same ;
And therefore wise it seem'd to fly from rage,
And seek for shelter in his Parsonage :
There, if forsaken, yet consol'd to find
Some comforts left, though not a few resign'd ;
There, if he lost an erring parent's love,
An honest Conscience must the cause approve ;
If the nice palate were no longer fed,
The mind enjoy'd delicious thoughts instead ;
And if some part of earthly good was flown,
Still was the tithe of ten good farms his own.

Fear now, and discord, in the village reign,
The cool remonstrate, and the meek complain ;
But there is war within, and wisdom pleads in vain :
Now dreads the Uncle, and proclaims his dread,
Lest the Boy-Priest should turn each rustic head ;
The certain converts cost him certain wo,
The doubtful fear lest they should join the foe :
Matrons of old, with whom he us'd to joke,
Now pass his Honour with a pious look ;
Lasses, who met him once with lively airs,
Now cross his way, and gravely walk to prayers :
An old Companion, whom he long has lov'd,
By coward fears confess'd his conscience mov'd ;
As the third bottle gave its spirit forth,
And they bore witness to departed worth,
The Friend arose, and he too would depart :—
' Man,' said the 'Squire, ' thou wert not wont to start ;
' Hast thou attended to that foolish Boy,
' Who would abridge all comforts, or destroy ?'

Yes, he had listen'd, who had slumber'd long,
And was convinc'd that something must be wrong :
But, though affected, still his yielding heart,
And craving palate, took the Uncle's part ;
Wine now oppress'd him, who, when free from wine,
Could seldom clearly utter his design ;
But though by nature and indulgence weak,
Yet, half converted, he resolv'd to speak ;

And, speaking, own'd, ' that in his mind the Youth
 ' Had gifts and learning, and that truth was truth ;
 ' The 'Squire he honour'd, and, for his poor part,
 ' He hated nothing like a hollow heart :
 ' But 'twas a maxim he had often tried,
 ' That right was right, and there he would abide ;
 ' He honour'd learning, and he would confess,
 ' The Preacher had his talents—more or less :
 ' Why not agree? he thought the young Divine
 ' Had no such strictness—they might drink and dine ;
 ' For them sufficient—but he said before,—
 ' That truth was truth, and he would drink no more.'

This heard the 'Squire with mix'd contempt and pain,
 He fear'd the Priest this recreant sot would gain.
 The favourite Nymph, though not a convert made,
 Conceived the Man she scorn'd her cause would aid ;
 And when the spirits of her Lord were low,
 The Lass presum'd the wicked cause to show :
 ' It was the wretch'd life his Honour led,
 ' And would draw vengeance on his guilty head ;
 ' Their loves (Heav'n knew how dreadfully distress'd
 ' The thought had made her!) were as yet unblest'd :
 ' And till the Church had sanction'd'—Here she saw
 The wrath that forc'd her trembling to withdraw.

Add to these outward ills, some inward light,
 That show'd him all was not correct and right :

Though now he less indulg'd—and to the poor,
From day to day, sent alms from door to door;
Though he some ease from easy virtues found,
Yet Conscience told him he could not compound;
But must himself the darling sin deny,
Change the whole heart—but here a heavy sigh
Proclaim'd, 'How vast the toil! and ah! how weak am I!'

James too has trouble—he divided sees
A parish, once harmonious and at ease:
With him united are the simply meek,
The warm, the sad, the nervous, and the weak;
The rest his Uncle's, save the few beside,
Who own no doctrine, and obey no guide;
With stragglers of each adverse camp, who lend
Their aid to both, but each in turn offend.

Though zealous still, yet he begins to feel
The heat too fierce, that glows in vulgar zeal;
With pain he hears his simple friends relate
Their week's experience, and their woful state:
With small temptation struggling every hour,
And bravely battling with the tempting power;
His native sense is hurt by strange complaints
Of inward motions in these warring saints;
Who never cast on sinful bait a look,
But they perceive the Devil at the hook:
Griev'd, yet compell'd to smile, he finds it hard
Against the blunders of conceit to guard;

He sighs to hear the jests his converts cause,
He cannot give their erring zeal applause ;
But finds it inconsistent to condemn
The flights and follies he has nurs'd in them :
These, in opposing minds, contempt produce,
Or mirth occasion, or provoke abuse ;
On each momentous theme disgrace they bring,
And give to Scorn her poison and her sting.



TALE XVI.

THE CONFIDANT.

Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy
To follow still the changes of the Moon,
With fresh suspicion ?

Othello, Act III. Scene 3.

Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks,
And given my treasure and my rights in thee
To thick-ey'd musing and curs'd melancholy ?

1 Henry IV. Act II. Scene 3.

It is excellent
To have a Giant's strength, but tyrannous
To use it as a Giant.

Measure for Measure, Act II. Scene 2.

TALE XVI.

THE CONFIDANT.

ANNA was young and lovely—in her eye
The glance of beauty, in her cheek the dye ;
Her shape was slender, and her features small,
But graceful, easy, unaffected all :
The liveliest tints her youthful face disclos'd,
There beauty sparkled and there health repos'd ;
For the pure blood that flush'd that rosy cheek,
Spoke what the heart forbad the tongue to speak ;
And told the feelings of that heart as well,
Nay, with more candour than the tongue could tell :
Though this fair Lass had with the wealthy dwelt,
Yet, like the damsel of the cot she felt ;
And, at the distant hint or dark surmise,
The blood into the mantling cheek would rise.

Now *Anna's* station frequent terrors wrought,
In one whose looks were with such meaning fraught ;

For on a Lady, as an humble friend,
It was her painful office to attend.

Her duties here were of the usual kind—
And some the body harass'd, some the mind :
Billets she wrote, and tender stories read,
To make the Lady sleepy in her bed ;
She play'd at whist, but with inferior skill,
And heard the summons as a call to drill ;
Music was ever pleasant till she play'd
At a request that no request convey'd ;
The Lady's tales with anxious looks she heard,
For she must witness what her friend averr'd ;
The Lady's taste she must in all approve,
Hate whom she hated, whom she lov'd must love ;
These with the various duties of her place,
With care she studied, and perform'd with grace ;
She veil'd her troubles in a mask of ease,
And show'd her pleasure was a power to please.

Such were the Damsel's duties ; she was poor—
Above a servant, but with service more :
Men on her face with careless freedom gaz'd,
Nor thought how painful was the glow they rais'd ;
A wealthy few to gain her favour tried,
But not the favour of a grateful bride ;
They spoke their purpose with an easy air,
That shamed and frighten'd the dependent fair ;

Past time she view'd, the passing time to cheat,
But nothing found to make the present sweet ;
With pensive soul she read life's future page,
And saw dependent, poor, repining age.

But who shall dare t' assert what *years* may bring,
When wonders from the passing *hour* may spring?—
There dwelt a Yeoman in the place, whose mind
Was gentle, generous, cultivated, kind ;
For thirty years he labour'd ; Fortune then
Plac'd the mild rustic with superior men :
A richer *Stafford* who had liv'd to save,
What he had treasur'd to the poorer gave ;
Who with a sober mind that treasure view'd,
And the slight studies of his youth renew'd :
He not profoundly, but discreetly read,
And a fair mind with useful culture fed ;
Then thought of marriage, “ But the great,” said he,
“ I shall not suit, nor will the meaner me :”
Anna he saw, admir'd her modest air ;
He thought her virtuous, and he knew her fair ;
Love rais'd his pity for her humble state,
And prompted wishes for her happier fate ;
No pride in money would his feelings wound,
Nor vulgar manners hurt him and confound :
He then the Lady at the Hall address'd,
Sought her consent, and his regard express'd ;
Yet if some cause his earnest wish denied,
He begg'd to know it, and he bow'd and sigh'd.

The Lady own'd that she was loth to part,
 But prais'd the Damsel for her gentle heart,
 Her pleasing person, and her blooming health ;
 But ended thus, ' Her virtue is her wealth.'

" Then is she rich !" he cried, with lively air ;
 " But whence, so please you, came a lass so fair ?"

' A placeman's child was *Anna*, one who died
 ' And left a widow by afflictions tried ;
 ' She to support her infant daughter strove,
 ' But early left the object of her love ;
 ' Her youth, her beauty, and her orphan-state
 ' Gave a kind Countess interest in her fate ;
 ' With her she dwelt, and still might dwelling be,
 ' When the *Earl's* folly caus'd the Lass to flee ;
 ' A second Friend was she compell'd to shun,
 ' By the rude offers of an uncheck'd son ;
 ' I found her then, and with a mother's love
 ' Regard the gentle girl whom you approve ;
 ' Yet, e'en with me protection is not peace,
 ' Nor man's designs, nor beauty's trial, cease ;
 ' Like sordid boys by costly fruit they feel,
 ' They will not purchase, but they try to steal.'

Now this good Lady, like a witness true,
 Told but the truth, and all the truth she knew ;
 And 'tis our duty and our pain to show
 Truth this good Lady had not means to know.

Yes, there was lock'd within the Damsel's breast,
A fact important to be now confess'd ;
Gently, my Muse, th' afflicting tale relate,
And have some feeling for a sister's fate.

Where *Anna* dwelt, a conquering Hero came,—
An Irish Captain, *Sedley* was his name ;
And he too had that same prevailing art,
That gave soft wishes to the Virgin's heart ;
In years they differ'd ; he had thirty seen
When this young Beauty counted just fifteen ;
But still they were a lovely lively pair,
And trod on earth as if they trod on air.

On Love, delightful theme! the Captain dwelt
With force still growing with the hopes he felt ;
But with some caution and reluctance told,
He had a father crafty, harsh, and old ;
Who, as possessing much, would much expect,
Or both, for ever, from his love reject :
Why then offence to one so powerful give,
Who (for their comfort) had not long to live ?

With this poor prospect the deluded Maid,
In words confiding, was indeed betray'd ;
And, soon as terrors in her bosom rose,
The Hero fled; they hinder'd his repose ;

Depriv'd of him, she to a parent's breast
Her secret trusted, and her pains impress'd :
Let her to Town (so prudence urg'd) repair,
To shun disgrace, at least to hide it there ;
But ere she went, the luckless Damsel pray'd
A chosen friend might lend her timely aid ;
“ Yes ! my soul's sister, my *Eliza*, come,
“ Hear her last sigh, and ease thy *Anna*'s doom :”
“ 'Tis a fool's wish,' the angry father cried,
But, lost in troubles of his own, complied ;
And dear *Eliza* to her friend was sent,
T' indulge that wish, and be her punishment :
The time arriv'd, and brought a tenfold dread ;
The time was past, and all the terror fled ;
The infant died ; the face resum'd each charm,
And reason now brought trouble and alarm :
“ Should her *Eliza*—no ! she was too just,
“ Too good and kind—but ah ! too young to trust :”
Anna return'd, her former place resum'd,
And faded beauty with new grace re-bloom'd ;
And if some whispers of the past were heard,
They died innoxious, as no cause appear'd ;
But other cares on *Anna*'s bosom press'd,
She saw her father gloomy and distress'd ;
He died o'erwhelm'd with debt, and soon was shed
The filial sorrow o'er a mother dead ;
She sought *Eliza*'s arms, that faithful friend was wed ;
Then was compassion by the Countess shown,
And all th' adventures of her life are known.

And now beyond her hopes—no longer tried
By slavish awe—she liv'd a Yeoman's bride ;
Then bless'd her lot, and with a grateful mind
Was careful, cheerful, vigilant, and kind ;
The gentle Husband felt supreme delight,
Bless'd by her joy, and happy in her sight ;
He saw with pride in every friend and guest
High admiration and regard express'd ;
With greater pride, and with superior joy
He look'd exulting on his first-born boy ;
To her fond breast the Wife her infant strain'd,
Some feelings utter'd, some were not explain'd ;
And she enraptur'd with her treasure grew,
The sight familiar, but the pleasure new.

Yet there appear'd within that tranquil state
Some threat'ning prospect of uncertain fate ;
Between the married when a secret lies,
It wakes suspicion from enforc'd disguise ;
Still thought the Wife upon her absent Friend,
With all that must upon her truth depend ;
“ There is no being in the world beside,
“ Who can discover what that Friend will hide ;
“ Who knew the fact, knew not my name or state,
“ Who these can tell cannot the fact relate ;
“ But thou, *Eliza*, canst the whole impart,
“ And all my safety is thy generous heart.”

Mix'd with these fears—but light and transient these—
Fled years of peace, prosperity, and ease ;
So tranquil all that scarce a gloomy day,
For days of gloom unmix'd prepar'd the way :
One eve, the Wife, still happy in her state,
Sang gaily thoughtless of approaching fate ;
Then came a letter, that (receiv'd in dread
Not unobserv'd) she in confusion read ;
The substance this—' Her friend rejoic'd to find
' That she had riches with a grateful mind ;
' While poor *Eliza* had from place to place
' Been lured by hope to labour for disgrace ;
' That every scheme her wandering husband tried,
' Pain'd while he liv'd and perish'd when he died.'
She then of want in angry style complain'd,
Her child a burthen to her life remain'd,
Her kindred shunn'd her prayers, no friend her soul
sustain'd :

' Yet why neglected? Dearest *Anna* knew
' Her worth once tried, her friendship ever true ;
' She hoped, she trusted, though by wants oppress'd,
' To lock the treasur'd secret in her breast ;
' Yet, vex'd by trouble, must apply to one,
' For kindness due to her for kindness done.'

In *Anna's* mind was tumult, in her face
Flushings of dread had momentary place ;

“ I must,” she judg’d, “ these cruel lines expose,
“ Or fears, or worse than fears, my crime disclose.”

The letter shown, he said, with sober smile :—
‘ *Anna*, your Friend has not a friendly style ;
‘ Say, where could you with this fair lady dwell,
‘ Who boasts of secrets that she scorns to tell ?
“ At school,” she answer’d, he ‘ at school !’ replied ;
‘ Nay, then I know the secrets you would hide ;
‘ Some early longings these, without dispute,
‘ Some youthful gaspings for forbidden fruit :
‘ Why so disorder’d, Love ? are such the crimes
‘ That give us sorrow in our graver times ?
‘ Come, take a present for your Friend, and rest
‘ In perfect peace—you find you are confess’d.’

This cloud, though past, alarm’d the conscious Wife,
Presaging gloom and sorrow for her life ;
Who to her answer join’d a fervent prayer,
That her *Eliza* would a sister spare ;
If she again—but was there cause ?—should send,
Let her direct—and then she nam’d a friend :
A sad expedient untried friends to trust,
And still to fear the tried may be unjust ;
Such is his pain, who, by his debt oppress’d,
Seeks by new bonds a temporary rest.

Few were her peaceful days till *Anna* read
The words she dreaded, and had cause to dread :—

‘ Did she believe, did she, unkind, suppose
‘ That thus *Eliza*’s friendship was to close ?
‘ No! though she tried, and her desire was plain,
‘ To break the friendly bond, she strove in vain ;
‘ Ask’d she for silence ? why so loud the call,
‘ And yet the token of her love so small ?
‘ By means like these will you attempt to bind
‘ And check the movements of an injur’d mind ?
‘ Poor as I am, I shall be proud to show
‘ What dangerous secrets I may safely know :
‘ Secrets to men of jealous minds convey’d,
‘ Have many a noble house in ruins laid ;
‘ *Anna*, I trust, although with wrongs beset,
‘ And urg’d by want, I shall be faithful yet ;
‘ But what temptation may from these arise,
‘ To take a slighted woman by surprise,
‘ Becomes a subject for your serious care—
‘ For who offends, must for offence prepare.’

· Perplex’d, dismay’d, the Wife foresaw her doom ;
A day deferr’d was yet a day to come ;
But still, though painful her suspended state,
She dreaded more the crisis of her fate ;
Better to die than *Stafford*’s scorn to meet,
And her strange Friend perhaps would be discreet ;
Presents she sent, and made a strong appeal
To woman’s feelings, begging her to feel ;
With too much force she wrote of jealous men,
And her tears falling spoke beyond the pen ;

Eliza's silence she again implor'd,
And promis'd all that prudence could afford.

For looks compos'd and careless, *Anna* tried;
She seem'd in trouble, and unconscious sigh'd;
The faithful Husband who devoutly lov'd
His silent partner, with concern reprov'd:
' What secret sorrows on my *Anna* press,
' That love may not partake, nor care redress?
" None, none," she answer'd, with a look so kind,
That the fond man determin'd to be blind.

A few succeeding weeks of brief repose
In *Anna's* cheek reviv'd the faded rose;
A hue like this the western sky displays,
That glows awhile, and withers as we gaze.

Again the Friend's tormenting letter came—
' The wants she suffer'd were affection's shame;
' She with her child a life of terrors led,
' Unhappy fruit! but of a lawful bed;
' Her friend was tasting every bliss in life,
' The joyful mother, and the wealthy wife;
' While she was plac'd in doubt, in fear, in want,
' To starve on trifles that the happy grant;
' Poorly for all her faithful silence paid,
' And tantaliz'd by ineffectual aid;
' She could not thus a beggar's lot endure,
' She wanted something permanent and sure;

‘ If they were friends, then equal be their lot,
‘ And she was free to speak if they were not.’

Despair and terror seiz’d the Wife, to find
The artful workings of a vulgar mind :
Money she had not, but the hint of dress
Taught her new bribes, new terrors to redress :
She with such feeling then describ’d her woes,
That envy’s self might on the view repose ;
Then to a mother’s pains she made appeal,
And painted grief like one compell’d to feel.

Yes! so she felt, that in her air, her face,
In every purpose, and in every place ;
In her slow motion, in her languid mien,
The grief, the sickness of her soul, were seen.

Of some mysterious ill, the Husband sure,
Desir’d to trace it, for he hoped to cure ;
Something he knew obscurely, and had seen
His Wife attend a cottage on the Green ;
Love, loth to wound, endur’d conjecture long,
Till fear would speak, and spoke in language strong.

‘ All I must know, my *Anna*—truly know
‘ Whence these emotions, terrors, troubles flow ;
‘ Give me thy grief, and I will fairly prove
‘ Mine is no selfish, no ungenerous love.’

Now *Anna's* soul the seat of strife became,
Fear with respect contended, love with shame ;
But fear prevailing was the ruling guide,
Prescribing what to show and what to hide.

“ It is my friend,” she said—“ but why disclose
“ A woman’s weakness struggling with her woes ?
“ Yes, she has griev’d me by her fond complaints,
“ The wrongs she suffers, the distress she paints ;
“ Something we do—but she afflicts me still,
“ And says, with power to help, I want the will ;
“ This plaintive style I pity and excuse,
“ Help when I can, and grieve when I refuse ;
“ But here my useless sorrows I resign,
“ And will be happy in a love like thine.”

The Husband doubted, he was kind but cool :—
‘ ’Tis a strong friendship to arise at school ;
‘ Once more then, Love, once more the sufferer
‘ aid,—
‘ I too can pity, but I must upbraid ;
‘ Of these vain feelings then thy bosom free,
‘ Nor be o’erwhelm’d by useless sympathy.’

The Wife again dispatch’d the useless bribe,
Again essay’d her terrors to describe ;
Again with kindest words entreated peace,
And begg’d her offerings for a time might cease.

A calm succeeded, but too like the one
That causes terror ere the storm comes on :
A secret sorrow liv'd in *Anna's* heart,
In *Stafford's* mind a secret fear of art ;
Not long they lasted—this determin'd Foe
Knew all her claims, and nothing would forego ;
Again her letter came, where *Anna* read,
' My child, one cause of my distress, is dead :
' Heav'n has my infant ;' " Heartless wretch !" she cried,
" Is this thy joy !"—' I am no longer tied ;
' Now will I, hast'ning to my Friend, partake
' Her cares and comforts, and no more forsake ;
' Now shall we both in equal station move,
' Save, that my Friend enjoys a husband's love.'

Complaint and threats so strong, the Wife amaz'd,
Who wildly on her cottage-neighbour gaz'd ;
Her tones, her trembling, first betray'd her grief,
When floods of tears gave anguish its relief.

She fear'd that *Stafford* would refuse assent,
And knew her selfish friend would not relent ;
She must petition, yet delay'd the task,
Asham'd, afraid, and yet compell'd to ask ;
Unknown to him some object fill'd her mind,
And, once suspicious, he became unkind ;
They sate one evening, each absorb'd in gloom,
When, hark ! a noise and rushing to the room,
The Friend tripp'd lightly in, and laughing said, ' I come.'

Anna receiv'd her with an anxious mind ;
And meeting whisper'd, " Is *Eliza* kind ?"
Reserv'd and cool, the Husband sought to prove
The depth and force of this mysterious love.
To nought that passed between the Stranger-Friend
And his meek Partner seem'd he to attend ;
But, anxious, listen'd to the lightest word
That might some knowledge of his Guest afford ;
And learn the reason one to him so dear
Sould feel such fondness, yet betray such fear.

Soon he perceiv'd this uninvited Guest,
Unwelcome too, a sovereign power possess'd ;
Lofty she was and careless, while the meek
And humbled *Anna* was afraid to speak :
As mute she listen'd with a painful smile,
Her friend sate laughing and at ease the while,
Telling her idle tales with all the glee
Of careless and unfeeling levity.
With calm good sense he knew his Wife endued,
And now with wounded pride her conduct view'd ;
Her speech was low, her every look convey'd—
" I am a slave, subservient and afraid."
All trace of comfort vanish'd if she spoke,
The noisy Friend upon her purpose broke ?
To her remarks with insolence replied,
And her assertions doubted or denied ;
While the meek *Anna* like an infant shook,
Wo-struck and trembling at the serpent's look.

‘ There is,’ said *Stafford*, ‘ yes, there is a cause—
 ‘ This creature frights her, overpowers and awes :’
 Six weeks had pass’d—‘ In truth, my Love, this Friend
 ‘ Has liberal notions ; what does she intend ?
 ‘ Without a hint she came, and will she stay
 ‘ Till she receives the hint to go away ?’

Confus’d the Wife replied, in spite of truth,
 “ I love the dear companion of my youth :”
 ‘ ’Tis well,’ said *Stafford* ; ‘ then your loves renew ;
 ‘ Trust me, your rivals, *Anna*, will be few.’

Though playful this, she felt too much distress’d
 T’ admit the consolation of a jest ;
 Ill she repos’d, and in her dreams would sigh,
 And murmuring forth her anguish beg to die ;
 With sunken eye, slow pace, and pallid cheek,
 She look’d confusion, and she fear’d to speak.

All this the Friend beheld, for, quick of sight,
 She knew the Husband eager for her flight ;
 And that by force alone she could retain
 The lasting comforts she had hope to gain ;
 She now perceiv’d, to win her post for life,
 She must infuse fresh terrors in the Wife ;
 Must bid to friendship’s feebler ties adieu,
 And boldly claim the object in her view ;
 She saw the Husband’s love, and knew the power
 Her friend might use in some propitious hour.

Meantime the anxious Wife, from pure distress
Assuming courage, said, " I will confess ;"
But with her children felt a parent's pride,
And sought once more the hated truth to hide:

Offended, griev'd, impatient, *Stafford* bore
The odious change, till he could bear no more ;
A friend to truth, in speech and action plain,
He held all fraud and cunning in disdain ;
But fraud to find, and falsehood to detect,
For once he fled to measures indirect.

One day the Friends were seated in that Room
The Guest with care adorn'd, and nam'd her Home :
To please the eye, there curious prints were plac'd,
And some light volumes to amuse the taste ;
Letters and music, on a table laid,
The favourite studies of the fair betray'd ;
Beneath the window was the toilet spread,
And the fire gleam'd upon a crimson bed.

In *Anna's* looks and falling tears were seen,
How interesting had their subjects been ;
' Oh ! then,' resum'd the Friend, ' I plainly find
' That you and *Stafford* know each other's mind ;
' I must depart, must on the world be thrown,
' Like one discarded, worthless and unknown ;
' But, shall I carry, and to please a foe,
' A painful secret in my bosom ? No !

‘ Think not your Friend a reptile you may tread
 ‘ Beneath your feet, and say, the worm is dead ;
 ‘ I have some feeling, and will not be made
 ‘ The scorn of her whom love cannot persuade :
 ‘ Would not your word, your slightest wish, effect
 ‘ All that I hope, petition, or expect ?
 ‘ The power you have, but you the use decline—
 ‘ Proof that you feel not, or you fear not mine.
 ‘ There was a time, when I, a tender maid,
 ‘ Flew at a call, and your desires obey’d ;
 ‘ A very mother to the child became,
 ‘ Consol’d your sorrow, and conceal’d your shame ;
 ‘ But now, grown rich and happy, from the door
 ‘ You thrust a bosom-friend, despis’d and poor ;
 ‘ That child alive, its mother might have known
 ‘ The hard, ungrateful spirit she has shown.’

Here paus’d the Guest, and *Anna* cried at length—
 “ You try me, cruel friend ! beyond my strength ;
 “ Would I had been beside my infant laid,
 “ Where none would vex me, threaten or upbraid.”

In *Anna*’s looks the Friend beheld despair ;
 Her speech she soften’d, and compos’d her air ;
 Yet, while professing love, she answer’d still—
 ‘ You can befriend me, but you want the will.’
 They parted thus, and *Anna* went her way,
 To shed her secret sorrows, and to pray.

Stafford, amus'd with books, and fond of home,
By reading oft dispell'd the evening gloom ;
History or tale—all heard him with delight,
And thus was pass'd this memorable night.

The listening Friend bestow'd a flattering smile,
A sleeping boy the mother held the while ;
And ere she fondly bore him to his bed,
On his fair face the tear of anguish shed.

And now his task resum'd, ' My tale,' said he,
' Is short and sad, short may our sadness be !'—

' The Caliph *Harun*, * as historians tell,
' Rul'd, for a tyrant, admirably well ;
' Where his own pleasures were not touch'd, to men
' He was humane, and sometimes even then ;
' *Harun* was fond of fruits, and gardens fair,
' And wo to all whom he found poaching there :
' Among his pages was a lively Boy,
' Eager in search of every trifling joy ;
' His feelings vivid, and his fancy strong,
' He sigh'd for pleasure while he shrank from wrong ;

* The Sovereign here meant is the *Haroun Alraschid*, or *Harun al Rashid*, who died early in the ninth century ; he is often the hearer, and sometimes the hero, of a Tale in the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*.

‘ When by the Caliph in the garden plac’d
‘ He saw the treasures which he long’d to taste ;
‘ And oft alone he ventur’d to behold,
‘ Rich hanging fruits with rind of glowing gold ;
‘ Too long he staid forbidden bliss to view,
‘ His virtue failing, as his longings grew ;
‘ Athirst and wearied with the noon-tide heat,
‘ Fate to the garden led his luckless feet ;
‘ With eager eyes and open mouth he stood,
‘ Smelt the sweet breath, and touch’d the fragrant food ;
‘ The tempting beauty sparkling in the sun
‘ Charm’d his young sense—he ate, and was undone :
‘ When the fond glutton paused, his eyes around
‘ He turn’d, and eyes upon him turning, found ;
‘ Pleas’d he beheld the spy, a brother-Page,
‘ A friend allied in office and in age ;
‘ Who promis’d much that secret he would be,
‘ But high the price he fixed on secrecy.

‘ Were you suspected, my unhappy friend,’
Began the Boy, ‘ where would your sorrows end ?
‘ In all the palace there is not a page
‘ The Caliph would not torture in his rage ;
‘ I think I see thee now impal’d alive,
‘ Writhing in pangs—but come, my friend ! revive ;
‘ Had some beheld you, all your purse contains
‘ Could not have sav’d you from terrific pains ;
‘ I scorn such meanness ; and, if not in debt,
‘ Would not an asper on your folly set.

‘ The hint was strong; young *Osmyn* search’d his store
‘ For bribes, and found he soon could bribe no more;
‘ That time arriv’d, for *Osmyn*’s stock was small;
‘ And the young tyrant now possess’d it all;
‘ The cruel Youth, with his companions near,
‘ Gave the broad hint that rais’d the sudden fear;
‘ Th’ ungenerous insult now was daily shown,
‘ And *Osmyn*’s peace and honest pride were flown;
‘ Then came augmenting woes, and fancy strong
‘ Drew forms of suffering, a tormenting throng;
‘ He felt degraded, and the struggling mind
‘ Dar’d not be free, and could not be resign’d;
‘ And all his pains and fervent prayers obtain’d,
‘ Was truce from insult, while the fears remain’d.

‘ One day it chanc’d that this degraded Boy
‘ And tyrant-Friend were fix’d at their employ;
‘ Who now had thrown restraint and form aside,
‘ And for his bribe in plainer speech applied;
‘ Long have I waited, and the last supply
‘ Was but a pittance, yet how patient I!
‘ But give me now what thy first terrors gave,
‘ My speech shall praise thee, and my silence save.

‘ *Osmyn* had found, in many a dreadful day,
‘ The Tyrant fiercer when he seem’d in play;
‘ He begg’d forbearance; I have not to give,
‘ Spare me awhile, although ’tis pain to live;

‘ Oh! had that stolen fruit the power possess’d
‘ To war with life, I now had been at rest.

‘ So fond of death,’ replied the Boy, ‘ ’tis plain
‘ Thou hast no certain notion of the pain ;
‘ But to the Caliph were a secret shown,
‘ Death has no pain that would be then unknown.

‘ Now,’ says the story, ‘ in a closet near,
‘ The Monarch seated, chanc’d the Boys to hear ;
‘ There oft he came, when wearied on his throne,
‘ To read, sleep, listen, pray, or be alone.

‘ The tale proceeds, when first the Caliph found
‘ That he was robb’d, although alone he frown’d ;
‘ And swore in wrath, that he would send the Boy
‘ Far from his notice, favour, or employ ;
‘ But gentler movements sooth’d his ruffled mind,
‘ And his own failings taught him to be kind.

‘ Relenting thoughts then painted *Osmyn* young,
‘ His passion urgent, and temptation strong ;
‘ And that he suffer’d from that villain-Spy
‘ Pains worse than death till he desir’d to die ;
‘ Then if his morals had receiv’d a stain,
‘ His bitter sorrows made him pure again :
‘ To Reason, Pity lent her powerful aid,
‘ For one so tempted, troubled, and betray’d ;

‘ And a free pardon the glad Boy restor’d
‘ To the kind presence of a gentle Lord;
‘ Who from his office and his country drove
‘ That traitor-Friend, whom pains nor pray’rs could move;
‘ Who rais’d the fears no mortal could endure,
‘ And then with cruel av’rice sold the cure.

‘ My tale is ended ; but, to be applied,
‘ I must describe the place where Caliphs hide :’

Here both the Females look’d alarm’d, distress’d,
With hurried passions hard to be express’d.

‘ It was a closet by a chamber plac’d,
‘ Where slept a Lady of no vulgar taste ;
‘ Her Friend attended in that chosen Room
‘ That she had honour’d and proclaim’d her Home ;
‘ To please the eye were chosen pictures plac’d,
‘ And some light volumes to amuse the taste ;
‘ Letters and music on a table laid,
‘ For much the Lady wrote, and often play’d ;
‘ Beneath the window was a toilet spread,
‘ And a fire gleam’d upon a crimson bed.’

He paus’d, he rose ; with troubled joy the Wife
Felt the new era of her changeful life ;
Frankness and love appear’d in *Stafford’s* face,
And all her trouble to delight gave place.

Twice made the Guest an effort to sustain
Her feelings, twice resum'd her seat in vain,
Nor could suppress her shame, nor could support her pain :
Quick she retir'd, and all the dismal night
Thought of her guilt, her folly, and her flight ;
Then sought unseen her miserable home,
To think of comforts lost, and brood on wants to come.

TALE XVII.

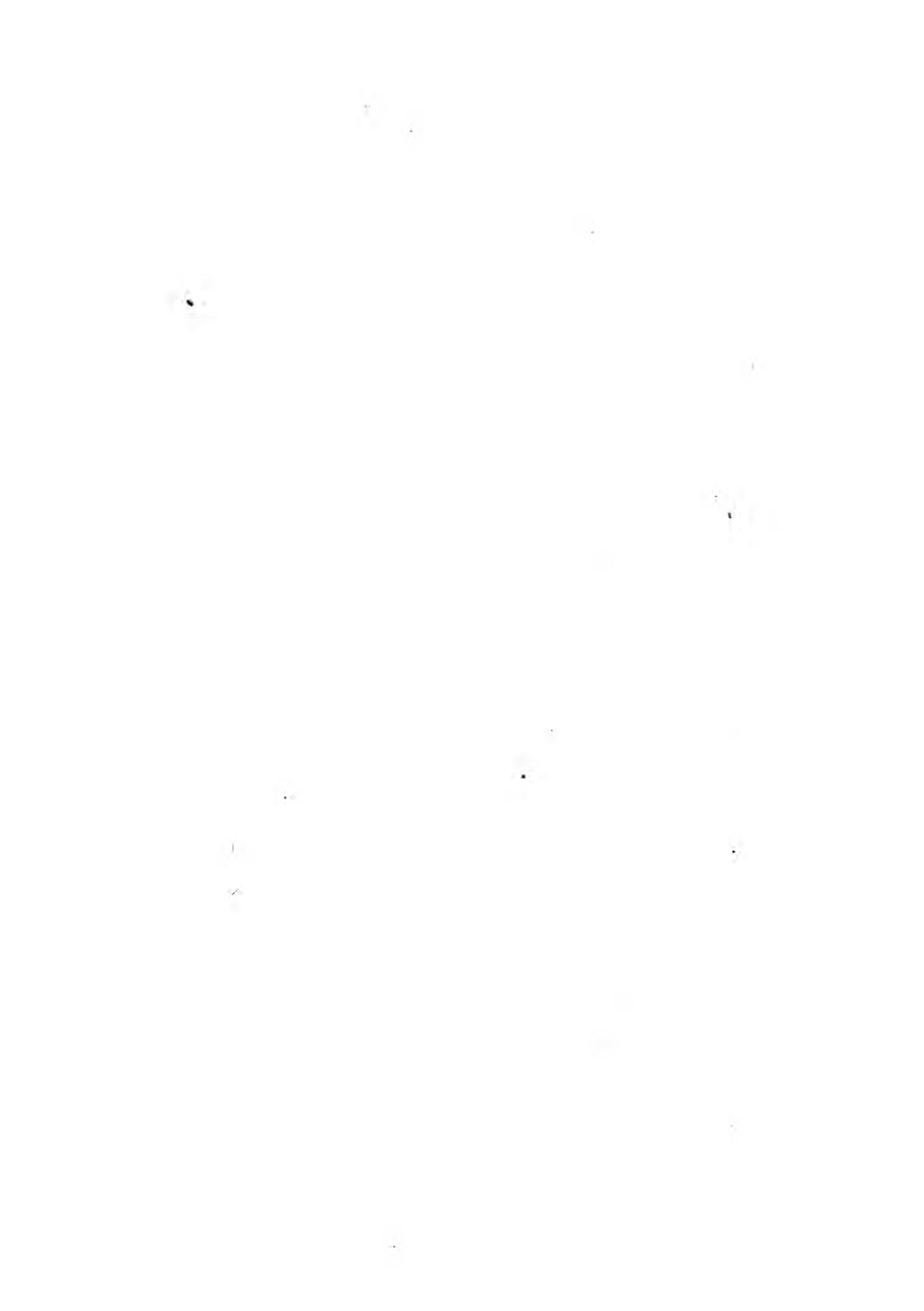
R E S E N T M E N T.

She hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet, notwithstanding, being incens'd, is flint——
Her temper, therefore, must be well observ'd.
2 Henry IV. Act IV. Scene 4.

Three or four wenches where I stood, cried—"Alas!
good soul!" and forgave him with all their hearts: but there is no heed
to be taken of them: if Cæsar had stabb'd their Mothers, they would
have done no less.

Julius Cæsar, Act I. Scene 2.

How dost? Art cold?
I'm cold myself—Where is the straw, my fellow?
The act of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious.
King Lear, Act III. Scene 2.



TALE XVII.

RESENTMENT.

FEMALES there are of unsuspecting mind,
Easy and soft, and credulous and kind ;
Who, when offended for the twentieth time,
Will hear th' offender and forgive the crime :
And there are others whom, like these to cheat,
Asks but the humblest effort of deceit ;
But they, once injur'd, feel a strong disdain,
And, seldom pardoning, never trust again ;
Urg'd by religion, they forgive—but yet
Guard the warm heart, and never more forget :
Those are like wax—apply them to the fire,
Melting, they take th' impressions you desire ;
Easy to mould, and fashion as you please,
And again moulded with an equal ease :
Like smelted iron these the forms retain,
But once impress'd will never melt again.

A busy port, a serious Merchant made
His chosen place to re-commence his trade ;
And brought his Lady, who, their children dead,
Their native seat of recent sorrow fled ;
The Husband duly on the quay was seen,
The Wife at home became at length serene ;
There in short time the social couple grew
With all acquainted, friendly with a few ;
When the good Lady, by disease assail'd,
In vain resisted—hope and science fail'd :
Then spake the female friends, by pity led,
“ Poor Merchant *Paul* ! what think ye ? will he wed ?
“ A quiet, easy, kind, religious Man,
“ Thus can he rest ?—I wonder if he can.”

He too, as grief subsided in his mind,
Gave place to notions of congenial kind ;
Grave was the Man, as we have told before ;
His years were forty—he might pass for more ;
Compos'd his features were, his stature low,
His air important, and his motion slow ;
His dress became him, it was neat and plain,
The colour purple and without a stain ;
His words were few, and special was his care,
In simplest terms his purpose to declare ;
A man more civil, sober, and discreet,
More grave and courteous, you could seldom meet :
Though frugal he, yet sumptuous was his board,
As if to prove how much he could afford ;

For though reserv'd himself, he lov'd to see
His table plenteous, and his neighbours free :
Among these friends he sat in solemn style,
And rarely soften'd to a sober smile ;
For this, observant friends their reasons gave—
' Concerns so vast would make the idlest grave ;
' And for such man to be of language free,
' Would seem incongruous as a singing tree :
' Trees have their music, but the birds they shield,
' The pleasing tribute for protection yield ;
' Each ample tree the tuneful choir defends,
' As this rich Merchant cheers his happy friends !'

In the same town it was his chance to meet
A gentle Lady, with a mind discreet ;
Neither in life's decline, nor bloom of youth,
One fam'd for maiden modesty and truth :
By nature cool, in pious habits bred,
She look'd on lovers with a Virgin's dread :
Deceivers, rakes, and libertines were they,
And harmless beauty their pursuit and prey ;
As bad as giants in the ancient times,
Were modern lovers, and the same their crimes :
Soon as she heard of her all-conquering charms,
At once she fled to her defensive arms ;
Conn'd o'er the tales her maiden Aunt had told,
And, statue-like, was motionless and cold ;
From prayer of love, like that *Pygmalion* pray'd,
Ere the hard stone became the yielding Maid—

A different change in this chaste Nymph ensued,
 And turn'd to stone the breathing flesh and blood :
 Whatever youth describ'd his wounded heart,
 " He came to rob her, and she scorn'd his art ;
 " And who of raptures once presum'd to speak,
 " Told listening maids he thought them fond and weak ;
 " But should a worthy Man his hopes display
 " In few plain words, and beg a *yes* or *no* ;
 " He would deserve an answer just and plain,
 " Since adulation only mov'd disdain—
 " Sir, if my friends object not, come again."

Hence, our grave Lover, though he lik'd the face,
 Prais'd not a feature—dwelt not on a grace :
 But in the simplest terms declar'd his state,
 ' A widow'd Man, who wish'd a virtuous Mate ;
 ' Who fear'd neglect, and was compell'd to trust
 ' Dependants wasteful, idle, or unjust ;
 ' Or should they not the trusted stores destroy,
 ' At best, they could not help him to enjoy ;
 ' But with her person, and her prudence blest,
 ' His acts would prosper, and his soul have rest :
 ' Would she be his ?—“ Why, that was much to say ;
 " She would consider : he awhile might stay ;
 " She lik'd his manners, and believ'd his word ;
 " He did not flatter, flattery she abhorr'd :
 " It was her happy lot in peace to dwell—
 " Would change make better what was now so well ?

“ But she would ponder:”—‘ This,’ he said, ‘ was kind,’
And begg’d to know ‘ when she had fix’d her mind.’

Romantic Maidens would have scorn’d the air,
And the cool prudence of a mind so fair ;
But well it pleas’d this wiser Maid to find
Her own mild virtues in her Lover’s mind.

His worldly wealth she sought, and quickly grew
Pleas’d with her search, and happy in the view
Of vessels freighted with abundant stores,
Of rooms whose treasures press’d the groaning floors ;
And he of clerks and servants could display
A little army, on a public day ;
Was this a Man like needy Bard to speak
Of balmy lip, bright eye, or rosy cheek ?

The sum appointed for her widow’d state,
Fix’d by her Friend, excited no debate ;
Then the kind Lady gave her hand and heart,
And, never finding, never dealt with art :
In his engagements she had no concern ;
He taught her not, nor had she wish to learn :
On him in all occasions she relied,
His word her surety, and his worth her pride.

When ship was launch’d and Merchant *Paul* had
share,
A bounteous feast became the Lady’s care ;

Who then her entry to the dinner made,
In costly raiment, and with kind parade.

Call'd by this duty on a certain day,
And robed to grace it in a rich array ;
Forth from her room, with measur'd step she came,
Proud of th' event, and stately look'd the Dame :
The Husband met her at his study-door—
' This way, my Love—one moment and no more :
' A trifling business—you will understand,
' The law requires that you affix your hand ;
' But first attend, and you shall learn the cause,
' Why forms like these have been prescrib'd by laws ;'
Then from his chair a Man in black arose,
And with much quickness hurried off his prose :
That '*Ellen Paul* the wife, and so forth, freed
' From all controul, her own the act and deed,
' And forasmuch'——said she, " I've no distrust,
" For he that asks it is discreet and just ;
" Our friends are waiting—where am I to sign ?—
" There !——Now be ready when we meet to dine."

This said, she hurried off in great delight,
The ship was launch'd, and joyful was the night.

Now, says the Reader and in much disdain,
This serious Merchant was a rogue in grain ;
A treacherous wretch, an artful, sober knave,
And ten times worse for manners cool and grave ;

And she devoid of sense, to set her hand
To scoundrel deeds she could not understand.

Alas! 'tis true; and I in vain had tried
To soften crime, that cannot be denied;
And might have labour'd many a tedious verse
The latent cause of mischief to rehearse:
Be it confess'd, that long, with troubled look,
This Trader view'd a huge accompting book;
(His former marriage for a time delay'd
The dreaded hour, the present lent its aid);
But he too clearly saw the evil day,
And put the terror, by deceit, away;
Thus by connecting with his sorrows, crime,
He gain'd a portion of uneasy time.—
All this too late the injur'd Lady saw,
What law had giv'n, again she gave to law;
His guilt, her folly—these at once impress'd
Their lasting feelings on her guileless breast.

“ Shame I can bear,” she cried, “ and want sustain,
“ But will not see this guilty wretch again;”
For all was lost, and he, with many a tear,
Confess'd the fault—she turning scorn'd to hear.
To legal claims he yielded all his worth,
But small the portion, and the wrong'd were wroth;
Nor to their debtor would a part allow;
And where to live he knew not—knew not how.

The Wife a cottage found, and thither went
The suppliant Man, but she would not relent :
Thenceforth she utter'd with indignant tone,
“ I feel the misery, and will feel alone ;”—
He would turn servant for her sake, would keep
The poorest school ; the very streets would sweep,
To show his love—“ It was already shown :
“ And her affliction should be all her own.
“ His wants and weakness might have touch'd her heart,
“ But from his meanness she resolv'd to part.”

In a small alley was she lodged beside
Its humblest poor, and at the view she cried :
“ Welcome—yes ! let me welcome, if I can,
“ The fortune dealt me by this cruel Man ;
“ Welcome this low thatch'd roof, this shatter'd door,
“ These walls of clay, this miserable floor ;
“ Welcome my envied neighbours ; this, to you,
“ Is all familiar—all to me is new :
“ You have no hatred to the loathsome meal ;
“ Your firmer nerves no trembling terrors feel,
“ Nor, what you must expose, desire you to conceal ;
“ What your coarse feelings bear without offence,
“ Disgusts my taste, and poisons every sense :
“ Daily shall I your sad relations hear,
“ Of wanton women, and of men severe ;
“ There will dire curses, dreadful oaths abound,
“ And vile expressions shock me and confound ;
“ Noise of dull wheels, and songs with horrid words,
“ Will be the music that this lane affords ;

“ Mirth that disgusts, and quarrels that degrade
“ The human mind, must my retreat invade :
“ Hard is my fate ! yet easier to sustain,
“ Than to abide with guilt and fraud again ;
“ A grave impostor ! who expects to meet,
“ In such grey locks and gravity, deceit ?
“ Where the sea rages, and the billows roar,
“ Men know the danger, and they quit the shore ;
“ But, be there nothing in the way descried,
“ When o’er the rocks smooth runs the wicked tide—
“ Sinking unwarn’d, they execrate the shock,
“ And the dread peril of the sunken rock.”

A frowning World had now the Man to dread,
Taught in no arts, to no profession bred :
Pining in grief, beset with constant care,
Wandering he went, to rest he knew not where.

Meantime the Wife—but she abjur’d the name—
Endur’d her lot, and struggled with the shame ;
When lo ! an Uncle on the mother’s side,
In nature something, as in blood allied,
Admir’d her firmness, his protection gave,
And show’d a kindness she disdain’d to crave.

Frugal and rich the Man, and frugal grew
The sister-mind, without a selfish view ;
And further still—the temp’rate pair agreed
With what they sav’d the patient poor to feed :

His whole estate, when to the grave consign'd,
Left the good Kinsman to the kindred mind ;
Assur'd that law, with spell secure and tight,
Had fix'd it as her own peculiar right.

Now to her ancient residence remov'd,
She liv'd as Widow, well endow'd and lov'd ;
Decent her table was, and to her door
Came daily welcom'd the neglected poor :
The absent sick were sooth'd by her relief,
As her free bounty sought the haunts of grief ;
A plain and homely charity had she,
And lov'd the objects of her alms to see ;
With her own hands she dress'd the savoury meat,
With her own fingers wrote the choice receipt ;
She heard all tales that injur'd Wives relate,
And took a double interest in their fate ;
But of all Husbands not a wretch was known,
So vile, so mean, so cruel, as her own.

This bounteous Lady kept an active spy,
To search th' abodes of want, and to supply ;
The gentle *Susan* serv'd the liberal Dame—
Unlike their notions, yet their deeds the same :
No practis'd villain could a victim find,
Than this stern Lady more completely blind ;
Nor (if detected in his fraud) could meet
One less dispos'd to pardon a deceit ;

The wrong she treasur'd, and on no pretence
Receiv'd th' offender, or forgot th' offence :
But the kind Servant, to the thrice-prov'd knave,
A fourth time listen'd, and the past forgave.

First in her youth, when she was blithe and gay,
Came a smooth Rogue, and stole her love away ;
Then to another and another flew,
To boast the wanton mischief he could do :
Yet she forgave him, though so great her pain,
That she was never blithe or gay again.

Then came a Spoiler, who, with villain-art,
Implor'd her hand, and agoniz'd her heart ;
He seiz'd her purse, in idle waste to spend
With a vile wanton, whom she call'd her friend ;
Five years she suffered—he had revell'd five—
Then came to show her he was just alive ;
Alone he came, his vile Companion dead ;
And he, a wandering Pauper, wanting bread ;
His body wasted, wither'd life and limb,
When this kind soul became a slave to him :
Nay ! she was sure that, should he now survive,
No better Husband would be left alive ;
For him she mourn'd, and then alone and poor,
Sought and found comfort at her Lady's door :
Ten years she serv'd, and, mercy her employ,
Her tasks were pleasure, and her duty, joy.

Thus liv'd the Mistress and the Maid, design'd
Each other's aid—one cautious, and both kind :
Oft at their window, working, they would sigh
To see the aged and the sick go by ;
Like wounded bees, that at their home arrive,
Slowly and weak, but labouring for the hive.

The busy people of a Mason's yard
The curious Lady view'd with much regard ;
With steady motion she perceiv'd them draw
Through blocks of stone the slowly-working saw ;
It gave her pleasure and surprise to see
Among these men the signs of revelry :
Cold was the season, and confin'd their view,
Tedious their tasks, but merry were the crew ;
There she beheld an aged Pauper wait,
Patient and still, to take an humble freight ;
Within the paniers on an ass he laid
The ponderous grit, and for the portion paid ;
This he re-sold, and, with each trifling gift,
Made shift to live, and wretched was the shift.

Now will it be by every Reader told
Who was this humble Trader, poor and old.—
In vain an Author would a name suppress,
From the least hint a Reader learns to guess ;
Of Children lost, our Novels sometimes treat,
We never care—assur'd again to meet :

In vain the Writer for concealment tries,
We trace his purpose under all disguise;
Nay, though he tells us they are dead and gone,
Of whom we wot—they will appear anon;
Our favourites fight, are wounded, hopeless lie,
Survive they cannot—nay! they cannot die;
Now, as these tricks and stratagems are known,
'Tis best, at once, the simple truth to own.

This was the Husband—in an humble shed
He nightly slept, and daily sought his bread:
Once for relief the weary Man applied;
'Your Wife is rich,' the angry Vestry cried;
Alas! he dar'd not to his Wife complain,
Feeling her wrongs, and fearing her disdain:
By various methods he had tried to live,
But not one effort would subsistence give:
He was an Usher in a School, till noise
Made him less able than the weaker boys;
On messages he went, till he in vain
Strove names, or words, or meanings to retain;
Each small employment in each neighbouring town,
By turn he took, to lay as quickly down:
For, such his fate, he fail'd in all he plann'd,
And nothing prosper'd in his luckless hand.

At his old home, his motive half suppress'd,
He sought no more for riches, but for rest:

There liv'd the bounteous Wife, and at her gate
 He saw in cheerful groups the needy wait ;
 ' Had he a right with bolder hope t' apply ?'
 He ask'd—was answer'd, and went groaning by :
 For some remains of spirit, temper, pride,
 Forbade a prayer he knew would be denied.

Thus was the grieving Man, with burthen'd ass,
 Seen day by day along the street to pass :
 " Who is he, *Susan* ? who the poor old Man ?
 " He never calls—do make him, if you can."—
 The conscious Damsel still delay'd to speak,
 She stopp'd confus'd, and had her words to seek ;
 From *Susan*'s fears the fact her Mistress knew,
 And cried—" The Wretch ! what scheme has he in
 " view ?
 " Is this his lot?—but let him, let him feel—
 " Who wants the courage, not the will to steal."

A dreadful winter came, each day severe,
 Misty when mild, and icy-cold when clear ;
 And still the humble dealer took his load,
 Returning slow, and shivering on the road :
 The Lady, still relentless, saw him come,
 And said—" I wonder, has the Wretch a home ?"
 ' A hut ! a hovel !'—" Then his fate appears
 " To suit his crime ;"—' Yes, Lady, not his years ;—
 ' No ! nor his sufferings—nor that form decay'd :—
 " Well ! let the Parish give its Paupers aid :

“ You must the vileness of his acts allow ;”
“ And you, dear Lady, that he feels it now :”
“ When such dissemblers on their deeds reflect,
“ Can they the pity they refus’d expect ?
“ He that doth evil, evil shall he dread.”—
“ The snow,’ quoth *Susan*, ‘ falls upon his bed—
“ It blows beside the thatch—it melts upon his head.’—
“ ’Tis weakness, Child, for grieving guilt to feel :”
“ Yes, but he never sees a wholesome meal ;
“ Through his bare dress appears his shrivell’d skin,
“ And ill he fares without, and worse within :
“ With that weak body, lame, diseas’d, and slow,
“ What cold, pain, peril, must the sufferer know !”
“ Think on his crime.”—“ Yes, sure ’twas very wrong ;
“ But look, (God bless him !) how he gropes along.’—
“ Brought me to shame.”—“ Oh ! yes, I know it all—
“ What cutting blast ! and he can scarcely crawl ;
“ He freezes as he moves—he dies ! if he should fall :
“ With cruel fierceness drives this icy sleet—
“ And must a Christian perish in the street,
“ In sight of Christians ?—There ! at last, he lies ;—
“ Nor unsupported can he ever rise :
“ He cannot live.’—“ But is he fit to die ?”—
Here *Susan* softly mutter’d a reply,
Look’d round the room—said something of its state,
Dives the rich, and *Lazarus* at his gate ;
And then aloud—“ In pity do behold
“ The Man affrighten’d, weeping, trembling, cold :

‘ Oh ! how those flakes of snow their entrance win
 ‘ Through the poor rags, and keep the frost within ;
 ‘ His very heart seems frozen as he goes,
 ‘ Leading that starv’d companion of his woes :
 ‘ He tried to pray—his lips, I saw them move,
 ‘ And he so turn’d his piteous looks above ;
 ‘ But the fierce wind the willing heart oppos’d,
 ‘ And, ere he spoke, the lips in misery clos’d :
 ‘ Poor suffering object ! yes, for ease you pray’d,
 ‘ And God will hear—he only, I’m afraid.’

“ Peace ! *Susan*, peace ! Pain ever follows Sin,”—
 Ah ! then, thought *Susan*, when will ours begin ?
 ‘ When reach’d his home, to what a cheerless fire
 ‘ And chilling bed will those cold limbs retire !
 ‘ Yet ragged, wretched as it is, that bed
 ‘ Takes half the space of his contracted shed ;
 ‘ I saw the thorns beside the narrow grate,
 ‘ With straw collected in a putrid state :
 ‘ There will he, kneeling, strive the fire to raise,
 ‘ And that will warm him, rather than the blaze :
 ‘ The sullen, smoky blaze, that cannot last
 ‘ One moment after his attempt is past :
 ‘ And I so warmly and so purely laid,
 ‘ To sink to rest—indeed, I am afraid.’—
 “ Know you his conduct ?”—‘ Yes, indeed, I know—
 ‘ And how he wanders in the wind and snow ;
 ‘ Safe in our rooms the threat’ning storm we hear,
 ‘ But he feels strongly what we faintly fear.’

“ *Wilful* was rich, and he the storm defied ;
“ *Wilful* is poor, and must the storm abide ;”
Said the stern Lady—“ ’Tis in vain to feel ;
“ Go and prepare the chicken for our meal.”

Susan her task reluctantly began,
And utter’d as she went—‘ The poor old Man !’—
But while her soft and ever-yielding heart
Made strong protest against her Lady’s part,
The Lady’s self began to think it wrong,
To feel so wrathful and resent so long.

“ No more the Wretch would she receive again,
“ No more behold him—but she would sustain ;
“ Great his offence, and evil was his mind—
“ But he had suffer’d, and she would be kind :
“ She spurn’d such baseness, and she found within
“ A fair acquittal from so foul a sin ;
“ Yet she too err’d, and must of Heaven expect
“ To be rejected, him should she reject.”

Susan was summon’d—“ I’m about to do
“ A foolish act, in part seduc’d by you ;
“ Go to the Creature—say that I intend,
“ Foe to his sins, to be his sorrow’s friend ;
“ Take for his present comforts, food and wine,
“ And mark his feelings at this act of mine :
“ Observe if shame be o’er his features spread,
“ By his own Victim to be sooth’d and fed ;

“ But, this inform him, that it is not love
“ That prompts my heart, that duties only move :
“ Say, that no merits in his favour plead,
“ But miseries only, and his abject need ;
“ Nor bring me grov’ling thanks, nor high-flown praise ;
“ I would his spirits, not his fancy raise :
“ Give him no hope that I shall ever more
“ A man so vile to my esteem restore ;
“ But warn him rather, that, in time of rest,
“ His crimes be all remember’d and confess’d :
“ I know not all that form the sinner’s debt,
“ But there is one that he must not forget.”

The mind of *Susan* prompted her with speed
To act her part in every courteous deed :
All that was kind she was prepar’d to say,
And keep the lecture for a future day !
When he had all life’s comforts by his side,
Pity might sleep, and good advice be tried.

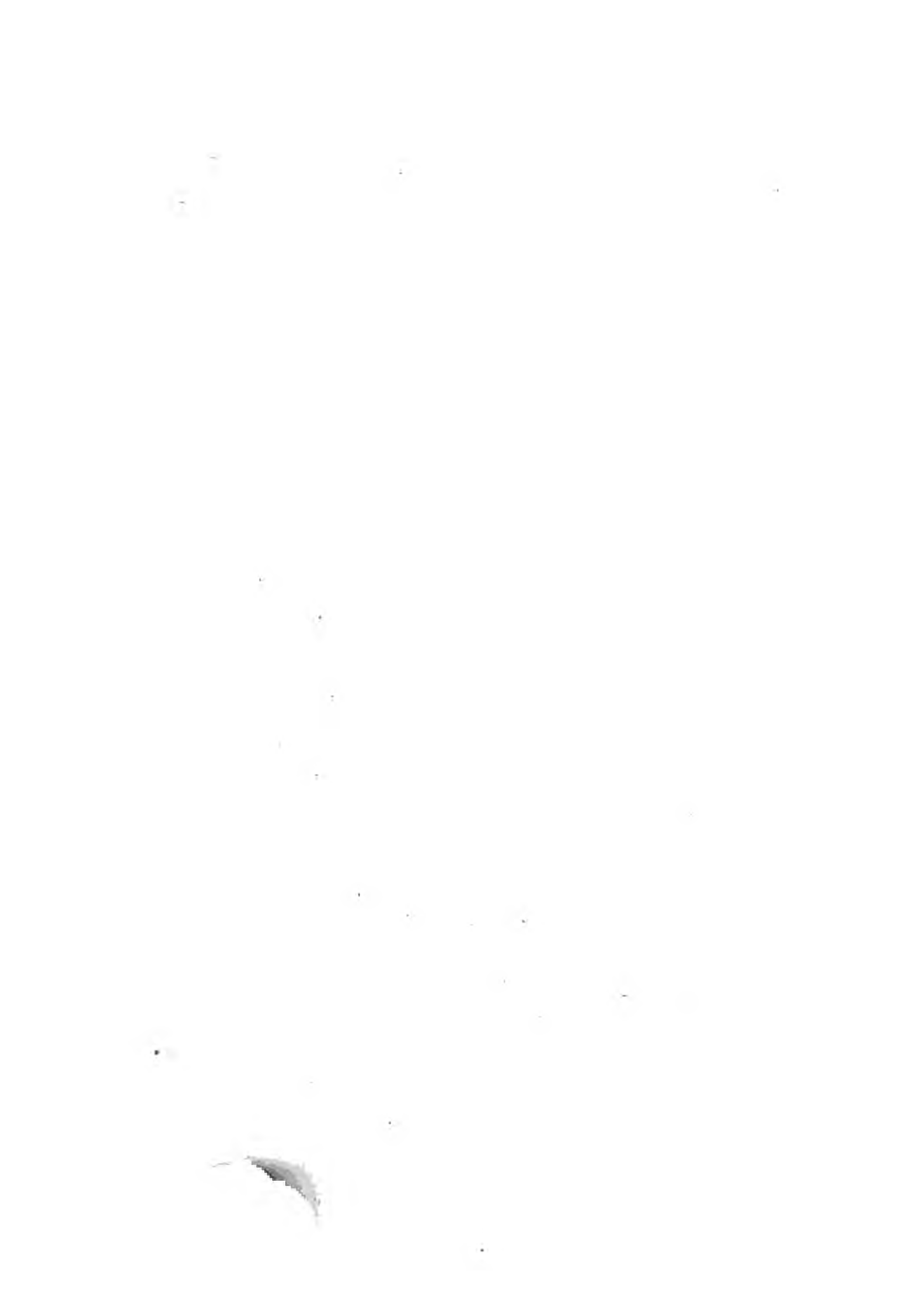
This done, the Mistress felt dispos’d to look,
As self-approving on a pious book :
Yet, to her native bias still inclin’d,
She felt her act too merciful and kind ;
But when, long musing on the chilling scene
So lately past—the frost and sleet so keen—
The Man’s whole misery in a single view—
Yes ! she could think some pity was his due.

Thus fix'd, she heard not her Attendant glide
With soft slow step—till, standing by her side,
The trembling Servant gasp'd for breath, and shed
Relieving tears, then utter'd—' He is dead !'

“ Dead !” said the startled Lady ; ‘ Yes, he fell
‘ Close at the door where he was wont to dwell ;
‘ There his sole friend, the Ass, was standing by,
‘ Half dead himself, to see his Master die.’

“ Expir'd he then, good Heaven ! for want of food ?”
‘ No ! crusts and water in a corner stood ;—
‘ To have this plenty, and to wait so long,
‘ And to be right too late, is doubly wrong :
‘ Then, every day to see him totter by,
‘ And to forbear—Oh ! what a heart had I !’

“ Blame me not, Child ; I tremble at the news :”
‘ 'Tis my own heart,’ said *Susan*, ‘ I accuse :
‘ To have this money in my purse—to know
‘ What grief was his, and what to grief we owe ;
‘ To see him often, always to conceive
‘ How he must pine and languish, groan and grieve ;
‘ And every day in ease and peace to dine,
‘ And rest in comfort !—what a heart is mine !’—



TALE XVIII.

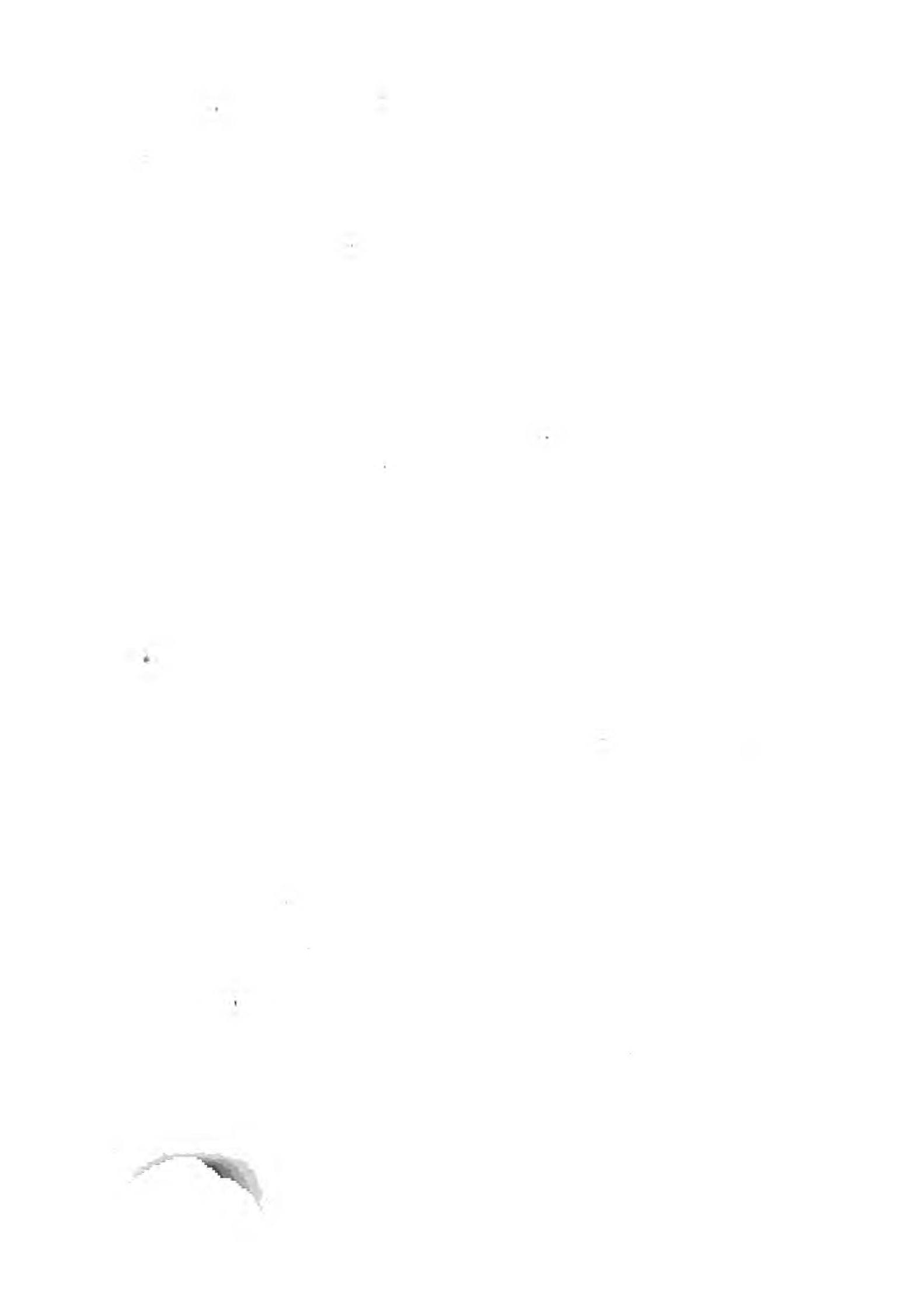
THE WAGER.

'Tis thought your deer doth hold you at a bay.
Taming the Shrew, Act V. Scene 2.

I choose her for myself,
If she and I are pleas'd, what's that to you?
——, Act V. Scene 2.

Let's send each one to his wife,
And he whose wife is most obedient
Shall win the wager.
——, Act V. Scene 2.

Now by the world it is a lusty wench,
I love her ten times more than e'er I did.
——, Act II. Scene 1.



TALE XVIII.

THE WAGER.

COUNTER and *Clubb* were men in trade, whose pains,
Credit, and prudence, brought them constant gains;
Partners and punctual, every friend agreed
Counter and *Clubb* were men who must succeed.
When they had fix'd some little time in life,
Each thought of taking to himself a wife :
As men in trade alike, as men in love
They seem'd with no according views to move ;
As certain ores in outward view the same,
They show'd their difference when the magnet came.
Counter was vain : with spirit strong and high,
'Twas not in him like suppliant swain to sigh :
" His wife might o'er his men and maids preside,
" And in her province be a judge and guide ;
" But what he thought, or did, or wish'd to do,
" She must not know, or censure if she knew ;

“ At home, abroad, by day, by night, if he
“ On aught determin’d, so it was to be :
“ How is a man,” he ask’d, “ for business fit,
“ Who to a female can his will submit ?
“ Absent awhile, let no inquiring eye
“ Or plainer speech presume to question why :
“ But all be silent ; and, when seen again,
“ Let all be cheerful—shall a wife complain ?
“ Friends I invite, and who shall dare t’ object,
“ Or look on them with coolness or neglect ?
“ No ! I must ever of my house be head,
“ And, thus obey’d, I condescend to wed.”

Clubb heard the speech—‘ My Friend is nice,’ said he,
‘ A wife with less respect will do for me :
‘ How is he certain such a prize to gain ?
‘ What he approves, a lass may learn to feign,
‘ And so affect t’ obey till she begins to reign ;
‘ Awhile complying, she may vary then,
‘ And be as wives of more unwary men ;
‘ Beside, to him who plays such lordly part,
‘ How shall a tender creature yield her heart ?
‘ Should he the promis’d confidence refuse,
‘ She may another more confiding choose ;
‘ May show her anger, yet her purpose hide,
‘ And wake his jealousy, and wound his pride.
‘ In one so humbled, who can trace the friend ?
‘ I, on an equal, not a slave, depend ;

‘ If true, my confidence is wisely plac’d,
‘ And being false, she only is disgrac’d.’

Clubb, with these notions, cast his eye around,
And one so easy soon a partner found.
The Lady chosen was of good repute ;
Meekness she had not, and was seldom mute ;
Though quick to anger, still she lov’d to smile ;
And would be calm if men would wait awhile :
She knew her duty, and she lov’d her way,
More pleas’d in truth to govern than obey ;
She heard her Priest with reverence, and her Spouse
As one who felt the pressure of her vows ;
Useful and civil, all her friends confess’d—
Give her her way, and she would choose the best ;
Though some indeed a sly remark would make—
Give it her not, and she would choose to take.

All this, when *Clubb* some cheerful months had spent,
He saw, confess’d, and said he was content.

Counter meantime selected, doubted, weigh’d,
And then brought home a young complying Maid ;—
A tender creature, full of fears as charms,
A beauteous nursling from its mother’s arms ;
A soft, sweet blossom, such as men must love,
But to preserve must keep it in the stove :
She had a mild, subdued, expiring look—
Raise but the voice, and this fair creature shook ;

Leave her alone, she felt a thousand fears—
 Chide, and she melted into floods of tears ;
 Fondly she pleaded and would gently sigh,
 For very pity, or she knew not why ;
 One whom to govern none could be afraid—
 Hold up the finger, this meek thing obey'd ;
 Her happy Husband had the easiest task—
 Say but his will, no question would she ask ;
 She sought no reasons, no affairs she knew,
 Of business spoke not, and had nought to do.

Oft he exclaim'd, “ How meek ! how mild ! how kind
 “ With her ’twere cruel but to seem unkind ;
 “ Though ever silent when I take my leave,
 “ It pains my heart to think how hers will grieve ;
 “ ’Tis Heaven on earth with such a wife to dwell,
 “ I am in raptures to have sped so well ;
 “ But let me not, my Friend, your envy raise,
 “ No ! on my life, your patience has my praise.”

His Friend, though silent, felt the scorn implied—
 ‘ What need of patience ?’ to himself he cried :
 ‘ Better a woman o’er her house to rule,
 ‘ Than a poor child just hurried from her school ;
 ‘ Who has no care, yet never lives at ease ;
 ‘ Unfit to rule, and indispos’d to please ;
 ‘ What if he govern, there his boast should end,
 ‘ No husband’s power can make a slave his friend.’

It was the custom of these Friends to meet
With a few neighbours in a neighbouring street ;
Where *Counter* oft-times would occasion seize,
To move his silent Friend by words like these :
“ A man,” said he, “ if govern’d by his wife,
“ Gives up his rank and dignity in life ;
“ Now, better fate befalls my Friend and me”—
He spoke, and look’d th’ approving smile to see.

The quiet Partner, when he chose to speak,
Desir’d his Friend, ‘ another theme to seek ;
‘ When thus they met, he judg’d that state-affairs
‘ And such important subjects should be theirs ;’
But still the Partner, in his lighter vein,
Would cause in *Clubb* affliction or disdain ;
It made him anxious to detect the cause
Of all that boasting—‘ Wants my friend applause ?
‘ This plainly proves him not at perfect ease,
‘ For, felt he pleasure, he would wish to please.—
‘ These triumphs here for some regrets atone—
‘ Men who are blest, let other men alone.’
Thus made suspicious, he observ’d and saw
His Friend each night at early hour withdraw ;
He sometimes mention’d *Juliet’s* tender nerves,
And what attention such a wife deserves :
‘ In this,’ thought *Clubb*, ‘ full sure some mystery lies—
‘ He laughs at me, yet he with much complies,
‘ And all his vaunts of bliss are proud apologies.’

With such ideas treasur'd in his breast,
He grew compos'd, and let his anger rest ;
Till *Counter* once (when wine so long went round
That Friendship and Discretion both were drown'd)
Began in teasing and triumphant mood
His evening banter—"Of all earthly good,
" The best," he said, " was an obedient spouse,
" Such as my Friend's—that every one allows ;
" What if she wishes his designs to know ?
" It is because she would her praise bestow ;
" What if she wills that he remains at home ?
" She knows that mischief may from travel come.
" I, who am free to venture where I please,
" Have no such kind preventing checks as these ;
" But mine is double duty, first to guide
" Myself aright, then rule a house beside ;
" While this our Friend, more happy than the free,
" Resigns all power, and laughs at liberty."

' By Heaven,' said *Clubb*, ' excuse me if I swear,
' I'll bet a hundred guineas, if he dare,
' That uncontroll'd I will such freedoms take,
' That he will fear to equal—there's my stake.'

" A match !" said *Counter*, much by wine inflam'd ;
" But we are friends—let smaller stake be nam'd :
" Wine for our future meeting, that will I
" Take and no more—what peril shall we try ?"

‘ Let’s to *Newmarket*,’ *Clubb* replied ; ‘ or choose
‘ Yourself the place, and what you like to lose ;
‘ And he who first returns, or fears to go,
‘ Forfeits his cash—’ Said *Counter*, “ Be it so.”

The friends around them saw with much delight
The social war, and hail’d the pleasant night ;
Nor would they further hear the cause discuss’d,
Afraid the recreant heart of *Clubb* to trust.

Now sober thoughts return’d as each withdrew,
And of the subject took a serious view ;
“ ’Twas wrong,” thought *Counter*, “ and will grieve my
“ love ;”
‘ ’Twas wrong,’ thought *Clubb*, ‘ my wife will not ap-
‘ prove ;
‘ But friends were present ; I must try the thing,
‘ Or with my folly half the town will ring.’

He sought his Lady—‘ Madam, I’m to blame,
‘ But was reproach’d, and could not bear the shame ;
‘ Here in my folly—for ’tis best to say
‘ The very truth—I’ve sworn to have my way ;
‘ To that *Newmarket*—(though I hate the place,
‘ And have no taste or talents for a race,
‘ Yet so it is—well, now prepare to chide—)
‘ I laid a wager that I dar’d to ride ;

‘ And I must go : by Heaven, if you resist
 ‘ I shall be scorn’d, and ridiculed, and hiss’d ;
 ‘ Let me with grace before my friends appear,
 ‘ You know the truth, and must not be severe ;
 ‘ He too must go, but that he will of course ;
 ‘ Do you consent ?—I never think of force.’

“ You never need,” the worthy Dame replied ;
 “ The husband’s honour is the woman’s pride ;
 “ If I in trifles be the wilful wife,
 “ Still for your credit I would lose my life ;
 “ Go ! and when fix’d the day of your return,
 “ Stay longer yet, and let the blockheads learn,
 “ That though a wife may sometimes wish to rule,
 “ She would not make th’ indulgent man a fool ;
 “ I would at times advise—but idle they
 “ Who think th’ assenting husband *must* obey.”

The happy Man, who thought his Lady right
 In other cases, was assur’d to-night ;
 Then for the day with proud delight prepar’d,
 To show his doubting friends how much he dar’d.

Counter—who grieving sought his bed, his rest
 Broken by pictures of his Love distress’d—
 With soft and winning speech the Fair prepar’d ;
 “ She all his councils, comforts, pleasures shar’d :

“ She was assur’d he lov’d her from his soul,
“ She never knew and need not fear controul ;
“ But so it happen’d—he was griev’d at heart,
“ It happen’d so, that they awhile must part—
“ A little time—the distance was but short,
“ And business call’d him—he despis’d the sport ;
“ But to *Newmarket* he engag’d to ride
“ With his friend *Clubb*,” and there he stopp’d and sigh’d.

Awhile the tender creature look’d dismay’d,
Then floods of tears the call of grief obey’d :—

‘ She an objection ! No !’ she sobb’d, ‘ not one ;
‘ Her work was finish’d, and her race was run ;
‘ For die she must, indeed she would not live
‘ A week alone, for all the world could give ;
‘ He too must die in that same wicked place ;
‘ It always happen’d—was a common case ;
‘ Among those horrid horses, jockeys, crowds,
‘ ’Twas certain death—they might bespeak their shrouds ;
‘ He would attempt a race, be sure to fall—
‘ And she expire with terror—that was all ;
‘ With love like hers she was indeed unfit
‘ To bear such horrors, but she must submit.’

“ But for three days, my Love ! three days at most—”
‘ Enough for me ; I then shall be a ghost—’

“ My honour’s pledg’d ;”—‘ Oh yes, my dearest life,
 ‘ I know your honour must outweigh your wife ;
 ‘ But ere this absence, have you sought a friend ?
 ‘ I shall be dead—on whom can you depend ?—
 ‘ Let me one favour of your kindness crave,
 ‘ Grant me the stone I mention’d for my grave.—’

“ Nay, Love, attend—why, bless my soul—I say
 “ I will return—there—weep no longer—nay !—”
 ‘ Well! I obey, and to the last am true,
 ‘ But spirits fail me ; I must die ; adieu !’

“ What, Madam ! must ?—’tis wrong—I’m angry—
 “ zounds !

“ Can I remain and lose a thousand pounds ?”

‘ Go then, my love ! it is a monstrous sum,
 ‘ Worth twenty wives—go, love ! and I am dumb—
 ‘ Nor be displeas’d—had I the power to live,
 ‘ You might be angry, now you must forgive ;
 ‘ Alas ! I faint—ah ! cruel—there’s no need
 ‘ Of wounds or fevers—this has done the deed.’

The Lady fainted, and the Husband sent
 For every aid, for every comfort went ;
 Strong terror seiz’d him ; “ Oh ! she lov’d so well,
 “ And who th’ effect of tenderness could tell ?”

She now recover'd, and again began
 With accent querulous—' Ah! cruel man—'
 Till the sad Husband, conscience-struck, confess'd,
 'Twas very wicked with his Friend to jest ;
 For now he saw that those who were obey'd,
 Could like the most subservient feel afraid ;
 And though a wife might not dispute the will
 Of her liege Lord, she could prevent it still.

The morning came, and *Clubb* prepar'd to ride
 With a smart boy, his servant and his guide ;
 When, ere he mounted on the ready steed,
 Arriv'd a letter, and he stopp'd to read.

" My Friend," he read—" our journey I decline,
 " A heart too tender for such strife is mine ;
 " Yours is the triumph, be you so inclin'd ;
 " But you are too considerate and kind :
 " In tender pity to my *Juliet's* fears
 " I thus relent, o'ercome by love and tears ;
 " She knows your kindness ; I have heard her say,
 " A man like you 'tis pleasure to obey :
 " Each faithful wife, like ours, must disapprove
 " Such dangerous trifling with connubial love ;
 " What has the idle world, my Friend, to do
 " With our affairs ? they envy me and you :
 " What if I could my gentle spouse command—
 " Is that a cause I should her tears withstand ?

“ And what if you, a friend of peace, submit
“ To one you love—is that a theme for wit ?
“ ’Twas wrong, and I shall henceforth judge it weak
“ Both of submission and controul to speak :
“ Be it agreed that all contention cease,
“ And no such follies vex our future peace ;
“ Let each keep guard against domestic strife,
“ And find nor slave nor tyrant in his wife.”

‘ Agreed,’ said *Clubb*, ‘ with all my soul agreed’—
And to the boy, delighted, gave his steed ;
‘ I think my friend has well his mind express’d,
‘ And I assent ; such things are not a jest.’

“ True,” said the Wife, “ no longer he can hide
“ The truth that pains him by his wounded pride :
“ Your Friend has found it not an easy thing,
“ Beneath his yoke, this yielding soul to bring ;
“ These weeping willows, though they seem inclin’d
“ By every breeze, yet not the strongest wind
“ Can from their bent divert this weak but stubborn kind ;
“ Drooping they seek your pity to excite,
“ But ’tis at once their nature and delight ;
“ Such women feel not ; while they sigh and weep,
“ ’Tis but their habit—their affections sleep ;
“ They are like ice that in the hand we hold,
“ So very melting, yet so very cold ;

“ On such affection let not man rely,
“ The Husbands suffer, and the ladies sigh :
“ But your friend’s offer let us kindly take,
“ And spare his pride for his vexation’s sake ;
“ For he has found, and through his life will find,
“ ’Tis easiest dealing with the firmest mind—
“ More just when it resists, and, when it yields, more
“ kind.”



TALE XIX.

THE CONVERT.

A Tapster is a good trade,
And an old cloak makes a new jerkin,
A wither'd serving-man, a fresh tapster.
Merry Wives of Windsor, Act I. Scene 3.

A fellow, sir, that I have known go about with my troll-my-dames.
Winter's Tale, Act IV. Scene 2.

I myself, sometimes leaving the fear of Heaven
on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am forced to
shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch.
Merry Wives of Windsor, Act II. Scene 2.

Yea, and at that very moment,
Consideration like an Angel came,
And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him.
Henry V. Act I. Scene 1.

I have liv'd long enough ; my May of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf ;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have.
Macbeth, Act V. Scene 3.

TALE XIX.

THE CONVERT.

SOME to our Hero have a hero's name
Denied, because no father's he could claim ;
Nor could his mother with precision state
A full fair claim to her certificate ;
On her own word the marriage must depend—
A point she was not eager to defend :
But who, without a father's name, can raise
His own so high, deserves the greater praise ;
The less advantage to the strife he brought,
The greater wonders has his prowess wrought ;
He who depends upon his wind and limbs,
Needs neither cork or bladder when he swims ;
Nor will by empty breath be puff'd along,
As not himself—but in his helpers—strong.

Suffice it then, our Hero's name was clear,
For, call *John Dighton*, and he answer'd ' Here !'

But who that name in early life assign'd,
He never found, he never tried to find ;
Whether his kindred were to *John* disgrace,
Or *John* to them, is a disputed case ;
His infant-state ow'd nothing to their care—
His mind neglected, and his body bare ;
All his success must on himself depend,
He had no money, counsel, guide, or friend ;
But in a market-town an active boy
Appear'd, and sought in various ways employ ;
Who soon, thus cast upon the world, began
To show the talents of a thriving man.

With spirit high *John* learn'd the world to brave,
And in both senses was a ready knave ;
Knave as of old, obedient, keen, and quick,
Knave as at present, skill'd to shift and trick ;
Some humble part of many trades he caught,
He for the builder and the painter wrought ;
For serving-maids on secret errands ran,
The waiter's helper, and the hostler's man ;
And when he chanc'd (oft chanc'd he) place to lose,
His varying genius shone in blacking shoes :
A midnight fisher by the pond he stood,
Assistant poacher, he o'erlook'd the wood ;
At an election *John*'s impartial mind
Was to no cause nor candidate confin'd ;
To all in turn he full allegiance swore,
And in his hat the various badges bore :

His liberal soul with every sect agreed,
Unheard their reasons, he receiv'd their creed ;
At Church he deign'd the organ-pipes to fill,
And at the Meeting sang both loud and shrill :
But the full purse these different merits gain'd,
By strong demands his lively passions drain'd ;
Liquors he lov'd of each inflaming kind,
To midnight revels flew with ardent mind ;
Too warm at cards, a losing game he play'd,
To fleecing beauty his attention paid ;
His boiling passions were by oaths express'd,
And lies he made his profit and his jest.

Such was the boy, and such the man had been,
But fate or happier fortune chang'd the scene ;
A fever seiz'd him, " He should surely die—"
He fear'd, and lo ! a friend was praying by ;
With terror mov'd, this Teacher he address'd,
And all the errors of his youth confess'd :
The good man kindly clear'd the Sinner's way
To lively hope, and counsell'd him to pray ;
Who then resolv'd, should he from sickness rise,
To quit cards, liquors, poaching, oaths, and lies :
His health restor'd, he yet resolv'd, and grew
True to his masters, to their Meeting true ;
His old companions at his sober face
Laugh'd loud, while he, attesting it was grace,
With tears besought them all his calling to embrace :

To his new friends such convert gave applause,
Life to their zeal, and glory to their cause :
Though terror wrought the mighty change, yet strong
Was the impression, and it lasted long ;
John at the lectures due attendance paid,
A convert meek, obedient, and afraid.
His manners strict, though form'd on fear alone,
Pleas'd the grave friends, nor less his solemn tone,
The lengthen'd face of care, the low and inward groan :
The stern good men exulted, when they saw
Those timid looks of penitence and awe ;
Nor thought that one so passive, humble, meek,
Had yet a creed and principles to seek.

The faith that Reason finds, confirms, avows,
The hopes, the views, the comforts she allows—
These were not his, who by his feelings found,
And by them only, that his faith was sound ;
Feelings of terror these, for evil past,
Feelings of hope, to be receiv'd at last ;
Now weak, now lively, changing with the day,
These were his feelings, and he felt his way.

Sprung from such sources, will this faith remain.
While these supporters can their strength retain :
As heaviest weights the deepest rivers pass,
While icy chains fast bind the solid mass ;
So, born of feelings, faith remains secure,
Long as their firmness and their strength endure :

But when the waters in their channel glide,
A bridge must bear us o'er the threat'ning tide;
Such bridge is Reason, and there Faith relies,
Whether the varying spirits fall or rise.

His Patrons, still dispos'd their aid to lend,
Behind a counter plac'd their humble friend;
Where pens and paper were on shelves display'd,
And pious pamphlets on the windows laid:
By nature active, and from vice restrain'd,
Increasing trade his bolder views sustain'd;
His friends and teachers, finding so much zeal
In that young convert whom they taught to feel,
His trade encourag'd, and were pleas'd to find
A hand so ready, with such humble mind.

And now, his health restor'd, his spirits eas'd,
He wish'd to marry, if the Teachers pleas'd.
They, not unwilling, from the virgin-class
Took him a comely and a courteous lass;
Simple and civil, loving and belov'd,
She long a fond and faithful partner prov'd;
In every year the Elders and the Priest
Were duly summon'd to a christening feast;
Nor came a babe, but by his growing trade,
John had provision for the coming made;
For friends and strangers all were pleas'd to deal
With one whose care was equal to his zeal.

In human friendships, it compels a sigh,
 To think what trifles will dissolve the tie.
John, now become a master of his trade,
 Perceiv'd how much improvement might be made ;
 And as this prospect open'd to his view,
 A certain portion of his zeal withdrew ;
 His fear abated—" What had he to fear—
 " His profits certain, and his conscience clear ?"
 Above his door a board was plac'd by *John*,
 And ' *Dighton, Stationer,*' was gilt thereon ;
 His window next, enlarg'd to twice the size,
 Shone with such trinkets as the simple prize ;
 While in the shop with pious works were seen
 The last new play, review, or magazine :
 In orders punctual, he observ'd—" the books
 " He never read, and could he judge their looks ?
 " Readers and critics should their merits try,
 " He had no office but to sell and buy ;
 " Like other traders, profit was his care ;
 " Of what they print, the authors must beware.
 He held his Patrons and his Teachers dear,
 But with his trade—they must not interfere.

'Twas certain now that *John* had lost the dread
 And pious thoughts that once such terrors bred ;
 His habits varied, and he more inclin'd
 To the vain world, which he had half resign'd :
 He had moreover in his brethren seen,
 Or he imagin'd, craft, conceit, and spleen ;

“ They are but men,” said *John*, “ and shall I then
“ Fear man’s controul, or stand in awe of men ?
“ ’Tis their advices (their Convert’s rule and law),
“ And good it is—I will not stand in awe.”

Moreover *Dighton*, though he thought of books
As one who chiefly on the title looks,
Yet sometimes ponder’d o’er a page to find,
When vex’d with cares, amusement for his mind ;
And by degrees that mind had treasur’d much
From works his teachers were afraid to touch :
Satiric novels, poets bold and free,
And what their writers term philosophy ;
All these were read, and he began to feel
Some self-approval on his bosom steal.
Wisdom creates humility, but he
Who thus collects it, will not humble be :
No longer *John* was fill’d with pure delight,
And humble reverence in a Pastor’s sight ;
Who, like a grateful zealot, listening stood,
To hear a man so friendly and so good ;
But felt the dignity of one who made
Himself important by a thriving trade ;
And growing pride in *Dighton’s* mind was bred
By the strange food on which it coarsely fed.

‘ Their Brother’s fall the grieving Brethren heard,
The pride indeed to all around appear’d ;

The world his friends agreed had won the soul
 From its best hopes, the man from their controul :
 To make him humble, and confine his views
 Within their bounds, and books which they peruse ;
 A deputation from these friends select,
 Might reason with him to some good effect ;
 Arm'd with authority, and led by love,
 They might those follies from his mind remove ;
 Deciding thus, and with this kind intent,
 A chosen body with its speaker went.

‘ *John,*’ said the Teacher, ‘ *John,*’ with great concern
 ‘ We see thy frailty, and thy fate discern—
 ‘ Satan with toils thy simple soul beset,
 ‘ And thou art careless, slumbering in the net ;
 ‘ Unmindful art thou of thy early vow ;
 ‘ Who at the morning-meeting sees thee now ?
 ‘ Who at the evening ? where is brother *John* ?
 ‘ We ask—are answer’d, To the Tavern gone ;
 ‘ Thee on the Sabbath seldom we behold,
 ‘ Thou canst not sing, thou’rt nursing for a cold :
 ‘ This from the Churchmen thou hast learn’d, for they
 ‘ Have colds and fevers on the Sabbath-day ;
 ‘ When in some snug warm room they sit, and pen
 ‘ Bills from their ledgers, (world-entangled men !)

‘ See with what pride thou hast enlarg’d thy shop ;
 ‘ To view thy tempting stores, the heedless stop ;

‘ By what strange names dost thou these baubles know,
 ‘ Which wantons wear, to make a sinful show ?
 ‘ Hast thou in view these idle volumes plac’d
 ‘ To be the pander of a vicious taste ?
 ‘ What’s here ! a book of dances !—you advance
 ‘ In goodly knowledge—*John*, wilt learn to dance !
 ‘ How ! “ Go—” it says, and “ *to the devil go !*
 ‘ “ *And shake thyself !*” I tremble—but ’tis so—
 ‘ Wretch as thou art, what answer canst thou make ?
 ‘ Oh ! without question, thou wilt go and shake.
 ‘ What’s here ? the *School for Scandal*—pretty schools !
 ‘ Well, and art thou proficient in the rules ?
 ‘ Art thou a pupil, is it thy design
 ‘ To make our names contemptible as thine ?
 ‘ *Old Nick, a Novel !* oh ! ’tis mighty well—
 ‘ A fool has courage when he laughs at hell ;
 ‘ *Frolic and Fun*, the humours of *Tim Grin* ;
 ‘ Why, *John*, thou grow’st facetious in thy sin ;
 ‘ And what ? *the Archdeacon’s Charge*—’tis mighty well—
 ‘ If Satan publish’d, thou wouldst doubtless sell ;
 ‘ Jests, novels, dances, and this precious stuff,
 ‘ To crown thy folly we have seen enough ;
 ‘ We find thee fitted for each evil work—
 ‘ Do print the *Koran* and become a Turk.

‘ *John*, thou art lost, success and worldly pride
 ‘ O’er all thy thoughts and purposes preside,
 ‘ Have bound thee fast, and drawn thee far aside

‘ Yet turn ; these sin-traps from thy shop expel,
 ‘ Repent and pray, and all may yet be well.

‘ And here thy wife, thy *Dorothy* behold,
 ‘ How fashion’s wanton robes her form infold !
 ‘ Can grace, can goodness with such trappings dwell ?
 ‘ *John*, thou hast made thy wife a *Jezebel* :
 ‘ See ! on her bosom rests the sign of sin,
 ‘ The glaring proof of naughty thoughts within ;
 ‘ What ! ’tis a cross ; come hither—as a friend,
 ‘ Thus from thy neck the shameful badge I rend.’

“ Rend, if you dare,” said *Dighton* ; “ you shall find
 “ A man of spirit, though to peace inclin’d ;
 “ Call me ungrateful ! have I not my pay
 “ At all times ready for the expected day ?—
 “ To share my plenteous board you deign to come,
 “ Myself your pupil, and my house your home ?
 “ And shall the persons who my meat enjoy,
 “ Talk of my faults, and treat me as a boy ?
 “ Have you not told how *Rome*’s insulting priests
 “ Led their meek Laymen like a herd of beasts ;
 “ And by their fleecing and their forgery made
 “ Their holy calling an accursed trade ?
 “ Can you such acts and insolence condemn,
 “ Who to your utmost power resemble them ?

“ Concerns it you what books I set for sale ?
 “ The tale perchance may be a virtuous tale ;

“ And for the rest, ’tis neither wise nor just,
“ In you, who read not, to condemn on trust ;
“ Why should th’ Archdeacon’s Charge your spleen
“ excite ?
“ He, or perchance th’ Archbishop, may be right.

“ That from your meetings I refrain, is true ;
“ I meet with nothing pleasant—nothing new ;
“ But the same proofs, that not one text explain,
“ And the same lights, where all things dark remain ;
“ I thought you Saints on earth—but I have found
“ Some sins among you, and the best unsound ;
“ You have your failings, like the crowds below,
“ And at your pleasure hot and cold can blow :
“ When I at first your grave department saw,
“ (I own my folly), I was fill’d with awe ;
“ You spoke so warmly, and it seems so well,
“ I should have thought it treason to rebel ;
“ Is it a wonder that a man like me
“ Should such perfection in such teachers see ;
“ Nay, should conceive you sent from Heav’n to brave
“ The host of sin, and sinful souls to save ?
“ But as our reason wakes, our prospects clear,
“ And failings, flaws, and blemishes appear.

“ When you were mounted in your rostrum high,
“ We shrank beneath your tone, your frown, your eye ;

“ Then you beheld us abject, fallen, low,
“ And felt your glory from our baseness grow ;
“ Touch’d by your words, I trembled like the rest,
“ And my own vileness and your power confess’d :
“ These, I exclaim’d, are men divine, and gaz’d
“ On him who taught, delighted and amaz’d ;
“ Glad when he finished, if by chance he cast
“ One look on such a sinner, as he pass’d.

“ But when I view’d you in a clearer light
“ And saw the frail and carnal appetite ;
“ When, at his humble pray’r, you deign’d to eat,
“ Saints as you are, a civil Sinner’s meet ;
“ When as you sat contented and at ease,
“ Nibbling at leisure on the ducks and peas,
“ And, pleas’d some comforts in such place to find,
“ You could descend to be a little kind ;
“ And gave us hope, in Heaven there might be room
“ For a few souls beside your own to come ;
“ While this world’s good engag’d your carnal view,
“ And like a sinner you enjoy’d it too ;
“ All this perceiving, can you think it strange
“ That change in you should work an equal change ?”

‘ Wretch that thou art,’ an Elder cried, ‘ and gone
‘ For everlasting.’——“ Go thyself,” said *John* ;
“ Depart this instant, let me hear no more ;
“ My house my castle is, and that my door.”

The hint they took, and from the door withdrew,
And *John* to Meeting bade a long adieu ;
Attach'd to business, he in time became
A wealthy man of no inferior name.
It seem'd, alas ! in *John's* deluded sight,
That all was wrong because not all was right ;
And when he found his Teachers had their stains,
Resentment and not Reason broke his chains :
Thus on his feelings he again relied,
And never look'd to Reason for his guide :
Could he have wisely view'd the frailty shown,
And rightly weigh'd their wanderings and his own,
He might have known that men may be sincere,
Though gay and feasting on the savoury cheer ;
That doctrines sound and sober they may teach,
Who love to eat with all the glee they preach ;
Nay ! who believe the duck, the grape, the pine,
Were not intended for the dog and swine :
But *Dighton's* hasty mind on every theme
Ran from the truth, and rested in th' extreme :
Flaws in his friends he found, and then withdrew
(Vain of his knowledge) from their virtues too.
Best of his books he lov'd the liberal kind,
That, if they improve not, still enlarge the mind ;
And found himself, with such advisers, free
From a fix'd creed, as mind enlarg'd could be.
His humble Wife at these opinions sigh'd,
But her he never heeded till she died ;

He then assented to a last request,
And by the Meeting-window let her rest ;
And on her stone the sacred text was seen,
Which had her comfort in departing been.

Dighton with joy beheld his trade advance,
Yet seldom publish'd, loth to trust to chance ;
Then wed a Doctor's sister—poor indeed,
But skill'd in works her husband could not read ;
Who, if he wish'd new ways of wealth to seek,
Could make her half-crown pamphlet in a week :
This he rejected, though without disdain,
And choose the old and certain way to gain.

Thus he proceeded ; trade increas'd the while,
And Fortune woo'd him with perpetual smile :
On early scenes he sometimes cast a thought,
When on his heart the mighty change was wrought ;
And all the ease and comfort Converts find,
Was magnified in his reflecting mind :
Then on the Teacher's priestly pride he dwelt,
That caus'd his freedom, but with this he felt
The danger of the free—for since that day
No guide had shown, no Brethren join'd his way ;
Forsaking one, he found no second creed,
But reading doubted, doubting what to read.

Still, though reproof had brought some present pain,
The gain he made was fair and honest gain ;

He laid his wares indeed in public view,
But that all traders claim a right to do :
By means like these, he saw his wealth increase,
And felt his consequence, and dwelt in peace.

Our Hero's age was threescore years and five,
When he exclaim'd, " Why longer should I strive ?
" Why more amass, who never must behold
" A young *John Dighton* to make glad the old ?"
(The sons he had, to early graves were gone,
And girls were burdens to the mind of *John*.)
" Had I boy, he would our name sustain,
" That now to nothing must return again ;
" But what are all my profits, credit, trade,
" And parish-honours ?—folly and parade."

Thus *Dighton* thought, and in his looks appear'd
Sadness, increas'd by much he saw and heard :
The Brethren often at the shop would stay,
And make their comments ere they walk'd away :
'They mark'd the window, fill'd in every pane,
With lawless prints of reputations slain ;
Distorted forms of men with honours grac'd,
And our chief rulers in derision plac'd :
Amaz'd they stood, remembering well the days,
When to be humble was their brother's praise ;
When at the dwelling of their friend they stopp'd
To drop a word, or to receive it dropp'd ;

Where they beheld the prints of men renown'd,
 And far-fam'd Preachers pasted all around ;
 (Such mouths! eyes! hair! so prim! so fierce! so sleek!
 They look'd as speaking what is wo to speak):
 On these the passing Brethren lov'd to dwell—
 How long they spake! how strongly! warmly! well!
 What power had each to dive in mysteries deep,
 To warm the cold, to make the harden'd weep;
 To lure, to fright, to soothe, to awe the soul,
 And list'ning flocks to lead and to controul!

But now discoursing, as they linger'd near,
 They tempted *John* (whom they accus'd) to hear
 Their weighty charge—' And can the lost-one feel,
 ' As in the time of duty, love, and zeal;
 ' When all were summon'd at the rising sun,
 ' And he was ready with his friends to run;
 ' When he, partaking with a chosen few,
 ' Felt the great change, sensation rich and new?
 ' No! all is lost, her favours Fortune shower'd
 ' Upon the man, and he is overpower'd;
 ' The world has won him with its tempting store
 ' Of needless wealth, and that has made him poor:
 ' Success undoes him; he has risen to fall,
 ' Has gain'd a fortune, and has lost his all;
 ' Gone back from Sion, he will find his age
 ' Loth to commence a second pilgrimage;
 ' He has retreated from the chosen track;
 ' And now must ever bear the burden on his back.'

Hurt by such censure, *John* began to find
Fresh revolutions working in his mind ;
He sought for comfort in his books, but read
Without a plan or method in his head ;
What once amus'd, now rather made him sad,
What should inform, increas'd the doubts he had ;
Shame would not let him seek at Church a guide,
And from his Meeting he was held by pride ;
His Wife derided fears she never felt,
And passing Brethren daily censures dealt ;
Hope for a son was now for ever past,
He was the first *John Dighton*, and the last ;
His stomach fail'd, his case the Doctor knew,
But said, ' he still might hold a year or two ;'
" No more !" he said, " but why should I complain ?
" A life of doubt must be a life of pain :
" Could I be sure—but why should I despair ?
" I'm sure my conduct has been just and fair ;
" In youth indeed I had a wicked will,
" But I repented, and have sorrow still :
" I had my comforts, and a growing trade
" Gave greater pleasure than a fortune made ;
" And as I more possess'd and reason'd more,
" I lost those comforts I enjoy'd before,
" When reverend guides I saw my table round,
" And in my guardian guest my safety found :
" Now sick and sad, no appetite, no ease,
" Nor pleasure have I, nor a wish to please ;

“ Nor views, nor hopes, nor plans, nor taste have I,
“ Yet sick of life, have no desire to die.”

He said and died; his trade, his name is gone,
And all that once gave consequence to *John*.

Unhappy *Dighton!* had he found a friend,
When conscience told him it was time to mend;
A friend discreet, considerate, kind, sincere,
Who would have shown the grounds of hope and fear;
And prov'd that spirits, whether high or low,
No certain tokens of man's safety show;
Had Reason rul'd him in her proper place,
And Virtue led him while he lean'd on Grace;
Had he while zealous been discreet and pure,
His knowledge humble, and his hope secure;—
These guides had plac'd him on the solid rock,
Where Faith had rested, nor receiv'd a shock;
But his, alas! was plac'd upon the sand,
Where long it stood not, and where none can stand.

TALE XX.

THE BROTHERS.

A Brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practice may ride easy.

King Lear, Act I. Scene 2.

He lets me feed with hinds,
Tears me the place of Brother.

As You Like It, Act I. Scene 1.

'Twas I, but 'tis not I: I do not shame
To tell you what I was, being what I am.

As You Like It, Act IV. Scene 3.

TALE XX.

THE BROTHERS.

THAN old *George Fletcher*, on the British coast,
Dwelt not a seaman who had more to boast;
Kind, simple, and sincere—he seldom spoke,
But sometimes sang and chorus'd—'*Hearts of Oak* ;'
In dangers steady, with his lot content,
His days in labour and in love were spent.

He left a Son so like him, that the old
With joy exclaim'd, ' 'Tis *Fletcher* we behold ;'
But to his Brother when the kinsmen came,
And view'd his form, they grudg'd the father's name.

George was a bold, intrepid, careless lad,
With just the failings that his father had ;
Isaac was weak, attentive, slow, exact,
With just the virtues that his father lack'd.

George liv'd at sea : upon the land a guest—
He sought for recreation, not for rest—
While, far unlike, his Brother's feebler form
Shrank from the cold, and shudder'd at the storm ;
Still with the Seaman's to connect his trade,
The boy was bound where blocks and ropes were made.

George, strong and sturdy, had a tender mind,
And was to *Isaac* pitiful and kind ;
A very father, till his art was gain'd,
And then a friend unwearied he remain'd :
He saw his Brother was of spirit low,
His temper peevish, and his motions slow ;
Not fit to bustle in a world, or make
Friends to his fortune for his merit's sake :
But the kind Sailor could not boast the art
Of looking deeply in the human heart ;
Else had he seen that this weak Brother knew
What men to court—what objects to pursue ;
That he to distant gain the way discern'd,
And none so crooked but his genius learn'd.

Isaac was poor, and this the Brother felt ;
He hir'd a house, and there the Landman dwelt ;
Wrought at his trade, and had an easy home,
For there would *George* with cash and comforts come
And when they parted, *Isaac* look'd around,
Where other friends and helpers might be found.

He wish'd for some port-place, and one might fall,
He wisely thought, if he should try for all ;
He had a vote—and, were it well applied,
Might have its worth—and he had views beside ;
Old *Burgess Steel* was able to promote
An humble man who serv'd him with a vote ;
For *Isaac* felt not what some tempers feel,
But bow'd and bent the neck to *Burgess Steel* ;
And great attention to a Lady gave,
His ancient friend, a maiden spare and grave :
One whom the visage long and look demure
Of *Isaac* pleas'd—he seem'd sedate and pure ;
And his soft heart conceiv'd a gentle flame
For her who waited on this virtuous Dame :
Not an outrageous love, a scorching fire,
But friendly liking and chastis'd desire ;
And thus he waited, patient in delay,
In present favour and in Fortune's way.

George then was coasting—war was yet delay'd,
And what he gain'd was to his Brother paid ;
Nor ask'd the Seaman what he sav'd or spent :
But took his grog, wrought hard, and was content ;
Till war awak'd the land, and *George* began
To think what part became a useful man :
“ Press'd I must go, why, then, 'tis better far
“ At once to enter like a British tar,
“ Than a brave captain and the foe to shun,
“ As if I fear'd the music of a gun.”

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- “ Go not !” said *Isaac*—“ You shall wear disguise :”
 “ What !” said the Seaman, “ clothe myself with
 “ lies ?” —
 ‘ Oh ! but there’s danger.’—“ Danger in the fleet ?
 “ You cannot mean, good brother, of defeat ;
 “ And other dangers I at land must share—
 “ So now adieu ! and trust a brother’s care.”

Isaac awhile demurr’d—but, in his heart,
 So might he share, he was dispos’d to part :
 The better mind will sometimes feel the pain
 Of benefactions—favour is a chain ;
 But they the feeling scorn, and what they wish, disdain ;—
 While beings form’d in coarser mould will hate
 The helping hand they ought to venerate ;
 No wonder *George* should in this cause prevail,
 With one contending who was glad to fail :
 “ *Isaac*, farewell ! do wipe that doleful eye ;
 “ Crying we came, and groaning we may die.
 “ Let us do something ’twixt the groan and cry :
 “ And hear me, Brother, whether pay or prize,
 “ One half to thee I give and I devise :
 “ For thou hast oft occasion for the aid
 “ Of learn’d physicians, and they will be paid :
 “ Their wives and children, men support, at sea,
 “ And thou, my Lad, art wife and child to me :
 “ Farewell !—I go where hope and honour call,
 “ Nor does it follow that who fights must fall.”

Isaac here made a poor attempt to speak,
And a huge tear mov'd slowly down his cheek;
Like *Pluto's* iron drop, hard sign of grace,
It slowly roll'd upon the rueful face,
Forc'd by the striving will alone its way to trace.

Years fled—war lasted—*George* at sea remain'd,
While the slow Landman still his profits gain'd :
A humble place was vacant—he besought
His Patron's interest, and the office caught ;
For still the Virgin was his faithful friend,
And one so sober could with truth commend,
Who of his own defects most humbly thought,
And their advice with zeal and reverence sought :
Whom thus the Mistress prais'd, the Maid approv'd,
And her he wedded whom he wisely lov'd.

No more he needs assistance—but, alas !
He fears the money will for liquor pass ;
Or that the Seaman might to flatterers lend,
Or give support to some pretended friend :
Still he must write—he wrote, and he confess'd
That, till absolv'd, he should be sore distress'd ;
But one so friendly would, he thought, forgive
The hasty deed—Heav'n knew how he should live ;
' But you,' he added, ' as a man of sense,
' Have well consider'd danger and expense :
' I ran, alas ! into the fatal snare,
' And now for trouble must my mind prepare ;

‘ And how, with children, I shall pick my way,
 ‘ Through a hard world, is more than I can say :
 ‘ Then change not, Brother, your more happy state,
 ‘ Or on the hazard long deliberate.’

George answer’d gravely, “ It is right and fit,
 “ In all our crosses, humbly to submit :
 “ Your apprehensions are unwise, unjust ;
 “ Forbear repining, and expel distrust.”—
 He added, “ Marriage was the joy of life,”
 And gave his service to his Brother’s Wife ;
 Then vow’d to bear in all expense a part,
 And thus concluded, “ Have a cheerful heart.”

Had the glad *Isaac* been his Brother’s guide,
 In these same terms the Seaman had replied ;
 At such reproofs the crafty Landman smil’d,
 And softly said—‘ This creature is a child.’

Twice had the gallant ship a capture made—
 And when in port the happy crew were paid,
 Home went the Sailor, with his pocket stor’d,
 Ease to enjoy, and pleasure to afford ;
 His time was short, joy shone in every face,
Isaac half fainted in the fond embrace :
 The wife resolv’d her honour’d guest to please,
 The Children clung upon their Uncle’s knees ;
 The grog went round, the neighbours drank his health,
 And *George* exclaim’d—“ Ah ! what to this is wealth ?

“ Better,” said he, “ to bear a loving heart,
 “ Than roll in riches——but we now must part !”

All yet is still—but hark ! the winds o’ersweep
 The rising waves, and howl upon the deep ;
 Ships late becalm’d on mountain-billows ride—
 So life as threaten’d, and so man is tried.

Ill were the tidings that arriv’d from sea,
 The worthy *George* must now a cripple be ;
 His leg was lopp’d ; and though his heart was sound,
 Though his brave Captain was with glory crown’d—
 Yet much it vex’d him to repose on shore,
 An idle log, and be of use no more :
 True, he was sure that *Isaac* would receive
 All of his Brother that the foe might leave ;
 To whom the Seaman his design had sent,
 Ere from the port the wounded hero went :
 His wealth and expectations told, he ‘ knew
 ‘ Wherein they fail’d, what *Isaac*’s love would do ;
 ‘ That he the grog and cabin would supply,
 ‘ Where *George* at anchor during life would lie.’

The Landman read—and, reading, grew distress’d :—
 ‘ Could he resolve t’ admit so poor a guest ?
 ‘ Better at Greenwich might the Sailor stay,
 ‘ Unless his purse could for his comforts pay ;
 ‘ So *Isaac* judg’d, and to his Wife appeal’d,
 ‘ But yet acknowledg’d it was best to yield :

‘ Perhaps his pension with what sums remain
 ‘ Due or unsquander’d, may the man maintain ;
 ‘ Refuse we must not.’—With a heavy sigh
 The Lady heard, and made her kind reply :—
 “ Nor would I wish it, *Isaac*, were we sure
 “ How long his crazy building will endure ;
 “ Like an old house, that every day appears
 “ About to fall—he may be propp’d for years ;
 “ For a few months, indeed, we might comply,
 “ But these old batter’d fellows never die.”

The hand of *Isaac*, *George* on entering took,
 With love and resignation in his look ;
 Declar’d his comfort in the fortune past,
 And joy to find his anchor safely cast ;
 “ Call then my nephews, let the grog be brought,
 “ And I will tell them how the ship was fought.”

Alas ! our simple Seaman should have known,
 That all the care, the kindness, he had shown,
 Were from his Brother’s heart, if not his memory, flown :
 All swept away to be perceiv’d no more,
 Like idle structures on the sandy shore ;
 The chance amusement of the playful boy,
 That the rude billows in their rage destroy.

Poor *George* confess’d, though loth the truth to find,
 Slight was his knowledge of a Brother’s mind :

The vulgar pipe was to the Wife offence,
The frequent grog to *Issac* an expense ;
Would friends like hers, she question'd, " choose to
 " come,
" Where clouds of poison'd fume defil'd a room ?
" This, could their Lady-friend, and *Burgess Steel*,
" (Teaz'd with his Worship's asthma) bear to feel ?
" Could they associate or converse with him—
" A loud rough sailor with a timber limb ?"

Cold as he grew, still *Isaac* strove to show,
By well-feign'd care, that cold he could not grow ;
And when he saw his Brother look distress'd,
He strove some petty comforts to suggest ;
On his Wife solely their neglect to lay,
And then t' excuse it, is a woman's way ;
He too was chidden when her rules he broke,
And then she sicken'd at the scent of smoke.

George, though in doubt, was still consol'd to find
His Brother wishing to be reckon'd kind :
That *Isaac* seem'd concern'd by his distress,
Gave to his injur'd feelings some redress ;
But none he found dispos'd to lend an ear
To stories, all were once intent to hear :
Except his Nephew, seated on his knee,
He found no creature car'd about the sea ;
But *George* indeed—for *George* they call'd the boy,
When his good Uncle was their boast and joy—

Would listen long, and would contend with sleep,
 To hear the woes and wonders of the deep ;
 Till the fond Mother cried—" That man will teach
 " The foolish boy his loud and boisterous speech."
 So judg'd the Father—and the boy was taught
 To shun the Uncle, whom his love had sought.

The mask of kindness now but seldom worn,
George felt each evil harder to be borne ;
 And cried (vexation growing day by day),
 " Ah ! brother *Isaac* !—What ! I'm in the way !"
 ' No ! on my credit, look ye, No ! but I
 ' Am fond of peace, and my repose would buy
 ' On any terms—in short, we must comply :
 ' My Spouse had money—she must have her will—
 ' Ah ! Brother—marriage is a bitter pill.'—

George tried the Lady—" Sister, I offend ;"
 ' Me ?' she replied—" Oh no !—you may depend
 ' On my regard—but watch your Brother's way,
 ' Whom I, like you, must study and obey.'

" Ah !" thought the Seaman, " what a head was mine,
 " That easy birth at Greenwich to resign !
 " I'll to the parish"—but a little pride,
 And some affection, put the thought aside.

Now gross neglect and open scorn he bore
 In silent sorrow—but he felt the more :

The odious pipe he to the kitchen took,
Or strove to profit by some pious book.

When the mind stoops to this degraded state,
New griefs will darken the dependent's fate ;
' Brother !' said *Isaac*, ' you will sure excuse
' The little freedom I'm compell'd to use :
' My Wife's relations—(curse the haughty crew)—
' Affect such niceness, and such dread of you :
' You speak so loud—and they have natures soft—
' Brother——I wish——do go upon the loft !'

Poor *George* obey'd, and to the garret fled,
Where not a being saw the tears he shed :
But more was yet requir'd, for guests were come,
Who could not dine if he disgrac'd the room.
It shock'd his spirit to be esteem'd unfit
With an own brother and his wife to sit ;
He grew rebellious—at the Vestry spoke
For weekly aid——they heard it as a joke :
' So kind a Brother, and so wealthy——you
' Apply to us ?——No ! this will never do :
' Good neighbour *Fletcher*,' said the Overseer,
' We are engag'd—you can have nothing here !'

George mutter'd something in despairing tone,
Then sought his loft, to think and grieve alone ;
Neglected, slighted, restless on his bed,
With heart half broken, and with scraps ill fed ;

Yet was he pleas'd, that hours for play design'd
Were given to ease his ever-troubled mind ;
The Child still listen'd with increasing joy,
And he was sooth'd by the attentive Boy.

At length he sicken'd, and this duteous Child
Watch'd o'er his sickness, and his pains beguil'd ;
The Mother bade him from the loft refrain,
But, though with caution, yet he went again ;
And now his tales the Sailor feebly told,
His heart was heavy, and his limbs were cold :
The tender Boy came often to entreat
His good kind friend would of his presents eat ;
Purloin'd or purchas'd, for he saw, with shame,
The food untouch'd that to his Uncle came ;
Who, sick in body and in mind, receiv'd
The Boy's indulgence, gratified and griev'd.

“ Uncle will die ! ” said *George*—the piteous Wife
Exclaim'd, ‘ she saw no value in his life ;
‘ But, sick or well, to my commands attend,
‘ And go no more to your complaining Friend.’
The Boy was vex'd, he felt his heart reprove
The stern decree.——What ! punish'd for his love !
No ! he would go, but softly to the room,
Stealing in silence—for he knew his doom.

Once in a week the Father came to say,
‘ *George*, are you ill ? ’—and hurried him away ;

Yet to his Wife would on their duties dwell,
And often cry, ' Do use my Brother well :'
And something kind, no question, *Isaac* meant,
Who took vast credit for the vague intent.

But truly kind, the gentle Boy essay'd
To cheer his Uncle, firm, although afraid ;
But now the Father caught him at the door,
And, swearing—yes, the Man in Office swore,
And cried, ' Away ! How ! Brother, I'm surpris'd,
' That one so old can be so ill advis'd :
' Let him not dare to visit you again,
' Your cursed stories will disturb his brain ;
' Is it not vile to court a foolish boy,
' Your own absurd narrations to enjoy ?
' What ! sullen !—ha ! *George Fletcher* ? you shall see,
' Proud as you are, your bread depends on me !'

He spoke, and, frowning, to his dinner went,
Then cool'd and felt some qualms of discontent ;
And thought on times when he compell'd his Son
To hear these stories, nay, to beg for one :
But the Wife's wrath o'ercame the Brother's pain,
And shame was felt, and Conscience rose in vain.

George yet stole up, he saw his uncle lie
Sick on the bed, and heard his heavy sigh :
So he resolv'd, before he went to rest,
To comfort one so dear and so distress'd ;

Then watch'd his time, but with a child-like art,
 Betray'd a something treasur'd at his heart ;
 Th' observant Wife remark'd, ' the Boy is grown
 ' So like your Brother, that he seems his own ;
 ' So close and sullen ! and I still suspect
 ' They often meet—do watch them and detect ?'

George now remark'd that all was still as night,
 And hasten'd up with terror and delight ;
 ' Uncle !' he cried, and softly tapp'd the door ;
 ' Do let me in'—but he could add no more ;
 The careful Father caught him in the fact,
 And cried,—' You serpent ! is it thus you act ?
 ' Back to your Mother !'—and, with hasty blow,
 He sent th' indignant Boy to grieve below ;
 Then at the door an angry speech began—
 ' Is this your conduct ?—is it thus you plan ?
 ' Seduce my child, and make my house a scene
 ' Of vile dispute—What is it that you mean ?—
 ' *George*, are you dumb ? do learn to know your friends,
 ' And think awhile on whom your bread depends :
 ' What ! not a word ? be thankful I am cool—
 ' But, Sir, beware, nor longer play the fool ;
 ' Come ! Brother, come ! what is it that you seek
 ' By this rebellion ?—Speak, you villain speak !—
 ' Weeping ! I warrant—sorrow makes you dumb :
 ' I'll ope your mouth, impostor ! if I come :
 ' Let me approach—I'll shake you from the bed,
 ' You stubborn dog—Oh God ! my Brother's dead !—'

Timid was *Isaac*, and in all the past
He felt a purpose to be kind at last ;
Nor did he mean his Brother to depart,
Till he had shown this kindness of his heart :
But day by day he put the cause aside,
Induced by av'rice, peevishness, or pride.

But now awaken'd, from this fatal time
His conscience *Isaac* felt, and found his crime:
He rais'd to *George* a monumental stone,
And there retir'd to sigh and think alone ;
An ague seiz'd him, he grew pale, and shook—
“ So,” said his Son, “ would my poor Uncle look.”
‘ And so, my Child, shall I like him expire :’
“ No ! you have physic and a cheerful fire.”
‘ Unhappy sinner ! yes, I’m well supplied
‘ With every comfort my cold heart denied.’
He view’d his Brother now, but not as one
Who vex’d his Wife by fondness for her Son ;
Not as with wooden limb, and seaman’s tale,
The odious pipe, vile grog, or humbler ale :
He now the worth and grief alone can view,
Of one so mild, so generous, and so true ;
‘ The frank, kind Brother, with such open heart,
‘ And I to break it——’twas a Dæmon’s part !’

So *Isaac* now, as led by conscience, feels,
Nor his unkindness palliates or conceals ;

“ This is your folly,” said his heartless Wife :
 ‘ Alas ! my folly cost my Brother’s life ;
 ‘ It suffer’d him to languish and decay,
 ‘ My gentle Brother, whom I could not pay,
 ‘ And therefore left to pine, and fret his life away.”

He takes his Son, and bids the boy unfold
 All the good Uncle of his feelings told,
 All he lamented—and the ready tear
 Falls as he listens, sooth’d, and griev’d to hear.

‘ Did he not curse me, Child?’—“ He never curs’d,
 “ But could not breathe, and said his heart would
 “ burst :”
 ‘ And so will mine :’—“ Then, Father, you must pray ;
 “ My Uncle said it took his pains away.”

Repeating thus his sorrows, *Isaac* shows
 That he, repenting, feels the debt he owes,
 And from this source alone his every comfort flows.
 He takes no joy in office, honours, gain ;
 They make him humble, nay, they give him pain ;
 ‘ These from my heart,’ he cries, ‘ all feeling drove,
 ‘ They made me cold to nature, dead to love ;’
 He takes no joy in home, but sighing, sees
 A Son in sorrow, and a Wife at ease ;
 He takes no joy in office—see him now,
 And *Burgess Steel* has but a passing bow ;

Of one sad train of gloomy thoughts possess'd,
He takes no joy in friends, in food, in rest—
Dark are the evil days, and void of peace the best.
And thus he lives, if living be to sigh,
And from all comforts of the world to fly,
Without a hope in life—without a wish to die.



TALE XXI.

THE LEARNED BOY.

Like one well studied in a sad ostent,
To please his grandam,
Merchant of Venice, Act II. Scene 2.

And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail,
Unwillingly to school.
As You Like It, Act II. Scene 7.

He is a better scholar than I thought he was——
He has a good sprag memory.
Merry Wives of Windsor, Act IV. Scene I.

One that feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which out of use, and stal'd by other men,
Begin his fashion.
Julius Cæsar, Act IV. Scene 1.

Oh! torture me no more—I will confess.
2 Henry VI. Act III. Scene 3.

TALE XXI.

THE LEARNED BOY.

An honest man was Farmer *Jones*, and true,
He did by all as all by him should do ;
Grave, cautious, careful, fond of gain was he,
Yet fam'd for rustic hospitality :
Left with his children in a widow'd state,
The quiet man submitted to his fate ;
Though prudent Matrons waited for his call,
With cool forbearance he avoided all ;
Though each profess'd a pure maternal joy,
By kind attention to his feeble boy :
And though a friendly Widow knew no rest,
Whilst neighbour *Jones* was lonely and distress'd ;
Nay, though the maidens spoke in tender tone
Their hearts' concern to see him left alone—
Jones still persisted in that cheerless life,
As if 'twere sin to take a second wife.

Oh ! 'tis a precious thing, when wives are dead,
To find such numbers who will serve instead :
And in whatever state a man be thrown,
'Tis that precisely they would wish their own ;
Left the departed infants—then their joy
Is to sustain each lovely girl and boy :
Whatever calling his, whatever trade,
To that their chief attention has been paid ;
His happy taste in all things they approve,
His friends they honour, and his food they love ;
His wish for order, prudence in affairs,
And equal temper, (thank their stars !) are theirs ;
In fact, it seem'd to be a thing decreed,
And fix'd as fate, that marriage must succeed ;
Yet some like *Jones*, with stubborn hearts and hard,
Can hear such claims, and show them no regard.

Soon as our Farmer, like a General, found
By what strong foes he was encompass'd round—
Engage he dar'd not, and he could not fly,
But saw his hope in gentle parley lie ;
With looks of kindness then, and trembling heart,
He met the foe, and art oppos'd to art.

Now spoke that foe insidious—gentle tones,
And gentle looks, assum'd for Farmer *Jones* :
' Three girls,' the Widow cried, ' a lively three
' To govern well—indeed it cannot be.'

“ Yes,” he replied, “ it calls for pains and care :
“ But I must bear it;”—‘ Sir, you cannot bear ;
‘ Your son is weak, and asks a Mother’s eye :’
“ That, my kind friend, a Father’s may supply ;”
‘ Such growing griefs your very soul will teaze ;’
“ To grieve another would not give me ease—
“ I have a Mother”—‘ She, poor ancient soul !
‘ Can she the spirits of the young controul ?
‘ Can she thy peace promote, partake thy care,
‘ Procure thy comforts, and thy sorrows share ?
‘ Age is itself impatient, uncontroul’d :’
“ But Wives like Mothers must at length be old.”
‘ Thou hast shrewd servants—they are evils sore ;’
“ Yet a shrewd Mistress might afflict me more.”
‘ Wilt thou not be a weary wailing man ?’
“ Alas ! and I must bear it as I can.”

Resisted thus, the Widow soon withdrew,
That in his pride the Hero might pursue ;
And off his wonted guard, in some retreat,
Find from a foe prepar’d entire defeat :
But he was prudent, for he knew in flight
These Parthian warriors turn again and fight :
He but at freedom, not at glory aim’d,
And only safety by his caution claim’d.

Thus, when a great and powerful state decrees,
Upon a small one, in its love, to seize—

It vows in kindness to protect, defend,
And be the fond ally, the faithful friend ;
It therefore wills that humbler State to place
Its hopes of safety in a fond embrace ;
Then must that humbler State its wisdom prove,
By kind rejection of such pressing love ;
Must dread such dangerous friendship to commence,
And stand collected in its own defence :—
Our Farmer thus the proffer'd kindness fled,
And shunn'd the love that into bondage led.

The Widow failing, fresh besiegers came,
To share the fate of this retiring Dame :
And each foresaw a thousand ills attend
The man, that fled from so discreet a friend ;
And pray'd, kind soul ! that no event might make
The harden'd heart of Farmer *Jones* to ache.

But he still govern'd with resistless hand,
And where he could not guide he would command :
With steady view in course direct he steer'd,
And his fair daughters lov'd him, though they fear'd ;
Each had her school, and as his wealth was known,
Each had in time a household of her own.

The Boy indeed was, at the Grandam's side,
Humour'd and train'd, her trouble and her pride :
Companions dear, with speech and spirits mild,
The childish widow and the vapourish child ;

This nature prompts ; minds uninform'd and weak
In such alliance ease and comfort seek ;
Push'd by the levity of youth aside,
The cares of man, his humour, or his pride,
They feel, in their defenceless state, allied :
The child is pleas'd to meet regard from age,
The old are pleas'd ev'n children to engage ;
And all their wisdom, scorn'd by proud mankind,
They love to pour into the ductile mind ;
By its own weakness into error led,
And by fond age with prejudices fed.

The Father, thankful for the good he had,
Yet saw with pain a whining timid Lad ;
Whom he instructing led through cultur'd fields,
To show what Man performs, what nature yields :
But *Stephen*, listless, wander'd from the view,
From beasts he fled, for butterflies he flew,
And idly gaz'd about, in search of something new.
The lambs indeed he lov'd, and wish'd to play
With things so mild, so harmless, and so gay ;
Best pleas'd the weakest of the flock to see,
With whom he felt a sickly sympathy.

Meantime, the Dame was anxious, day and night,
To guide the notions of her Babe aright,
And on the favourite mind to throw her glimmering
light ;

Her Bible-stories she impress'd betimes,
And fill'd his head with hymns and holy rhimes ;
On powers unseen, the good and ill, she dwelt,
And the poor Boy mysterious terrors felt ;
From frightful dreams, he waking sobb'd in dread,
Till the good Lady came to guard his bed.

The Father wish'd such errors to correct,
But let them pass in duty and respect :
But more it griev'd his worthy mind to see
That *Stephen* never would a Farmer be ;
In vain he tried the shiftless Lad to guide,
And yet 'twas time that something should be tried :
He at the village-school perchance might gain
All that such mind could gather and retain ;
Yet the good Dame affirm'd her favourite child
Was apt and studious, though sedate and mild ;
' That he on many a learned point could speak,
' And that his body, not his mind, was weak.'

The Father doubted—but to school was sent
The timid *Stephen*, weeping as he went :
There the rude lads compell'd the child to fight,
And sent him bleeding to his home at night ;
At this the Grandam more indulgent grew,
And bade her Darling ' shun the beastly crew ;
' Whom *Satan* rul'd, and who were sure to lie,
' Howling in torments, when they came to die.'

This was such comfort, that in high disdain
He told their fate, and felt their blows again :
Yet if the Boy had not a hero's heart,
Within the school he play'd a better part,
He wrote a clean fine hand, and at his slate,
With more success than many a hero, sate ;
He thought not much indeed—but what depends
On pains and care, was at his finger's ends.

This had his Father's praise, who now espied
A spark of merit, with a blaze of pride :
And though a farmer he would never make,
He might a pen with some advantage take ;
And as a clerk that instrument employ,
So well adapted to a timid boy.

A London Cousin soon a place obtain'd,
Easy but humble—little could be gain'd :
The time arriv'd when youth and age must part,
Tears in each eye, and sorrow in each heart ;
The careful Father bade his Son attend
To all his duties and obey his Friend ;
To keep his Church and there behave aright,
As one existing in his Maker's sight,
Till acts to habits led, and duty to delight :
“ Then try, my boy, as quickly as you can,
“ T' assume the looks and spirit of a man ;
“ I say, be honest, faithful, civil, true,
“ And this you may, and yet have courage too :

“ Heroic men, their country’s boast and pride,
 “ Have fear’d their God, and nothing fear’d beside ;
 “ While others daring, yet imbecile, fly
 “ The power of man, and that of God defy :
 “ Be manly then, though mild, for, sure as fate,
 “ Thou art, my *Stephen*, too effeminate ;
 “ Here, take my purse, and make a worthy use
 “ (’Tis fairly stock’d) of what it will produce :
 “ And now my blessing, not as any charm
 “ Or conjuration ; but ’twill do no harm.”

Stephen, whose thoughts were wandering up and
 down,

Now charm’d with promis’d sights in *London-town*,
 Now loth to leave his Grandam—lost the force,
 The drift and tenour of this grave discourse ;
 But, in a general way, he understood
 ’Twas good advice, and meant, ‘ My Son, be good ;’
 And *Stephen* knew that all such precepts mean,
 That lads should read their Bible, and be clean.

The good old Lady, though in some distress,
 Begg’d her dear *Stephen* would his grief suppress ;
 • Nay, dry those eyes, my child—and, first of all,
 • Hold fast thy faith, whatever may befall :
 • Hear the best preacher, and preserve the text
 • For meditation, till you hear the next ;
 • Within your Bible night and morning look—
 • There is your duty, read no other book ;

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- ‘ Be not in crowds, in broils, in riots seen,
‘ And keep your conscience and your linen clean :
‘ Be you a *Joseph*, and the time may be,
‘ When kings and rulers will be rul’d by thee.’

“ Nay,” said the Father——‘ Hush, my Son,’ re-
plied
The Dame——‘ The Scriptures must not be denied.’

The Lad, still weeping, heard the wheels approach,
And took his place within the evening coach,
With heart quite rent asunder : On one side
Was love, and grief, and fear, for scenes untried ;
Wild-beasts and wax-work fill’d the happier part
Of *Stephen*’s varying and divided heart :
This he betray’d by sighs and questions strange,
Of famous shows, the Tow’r, and the Exchange.

Soon at his desk was plac’d the curious Boy,
Demure and silent at his new employ :
Yet as he could, he much attention paid
To all around him, cautious and afraid ;
On older Clerks his eager eyes were fix’d,
But *Stephen* never in their council mix’d :
Much their contempt he fear’d, for if like them,
He felt assur’d he should himself contemn ;
‘ Oh ! they were all so eloquent, so free,
‘ No ! he was nothing—nothing could he be :

‘ They dress so smartly, and so boldly look,
 ‘ And talk as if they read it from a book ;
 ‘ But I,’ said *Stephen*, ‘ will forbear to speak,
 ‘ And they will think me prudent and not weak.
 ‘ They talk, the instant they have dropp’d the pen,
 ‘ Of singing-women and of acting-men ;
 ‘ Of plays and places where at night they walk
 ‘ Beneath the lamps, and with the ladies talk ;
 ‘ While other ladies for their pleasure sing,
 ‘ Oh ! ’tis a glorious and a happy thing :
 ‘ They would despise me, did they understand
 ‘ I dare not look upon a scene so grand ;
 ‘ Or see the plays when critics rise and roar,
 ‘ And hiss and groan, and cry—Encore ! encore !—
 ‘ There’s one among them looks a little kind ;
 ‘ If more encourag’d, I would ope my mind.’

Alas ! poor *Stephen*, happier had he kept
 His purpose secret, while his envy slept ;
 Virtue, perhaps, had conquer’d, or his shame
 At least preserv’d him simple as he came.
 A year elapsed before this Clerk began
 To treat the rustic something like a man ;
 He then in trifling points the youth advis’d,
 Talk’d of his coat, and had it moderniz’d ;
 Or with the lad a Sunday-walk would take,
 And kindly strive his passions to awake ;
 Meanwhile explaining all they heard and saw,
 Till *Stephen* stood in wonderment and awe :

To a neat garden near the town they stray'd,
Where the Lad felt delighted and afraid ;
There all he saw was smart, and fine, and fair—
He could but marvel how he ventur'd there :
Soon he observ'd, with terror and alarm,
His friend enlock'd within a lady's arm,
And freely talking—' But it is,' said he,
' A near relation, and that makes him free ;'
And much amaz'd was *Stephen*, when he knew
This was the first and only interview :
Nay, had that lovely arm by him been seiz'd,
The lovely owner had been highly pleas'd :
' Alas !' he sigh'd, ' I never can contrive,
' At such bold, blessed freedoms to arrive ;
' Never shall I such happy courage boast,
' I dare as soon encounter with a ghost.'

Now to a play the friendly couple went,
But the Boy murmur'd at the money spent ;
' He lov'd,' he said, ' to buy, but not to spend—
' They only talk awhile, and there's an end.'

' Come, you shall purchase books,' the Friend re-
plied ;
' You are bewilder'd, and you want a guide ;
' To me refer the choice, and you shall find
' The light break in upon your stagnant mind !'

The cooler Clerks exclaim'd, ' In vain your art
 ' T' improve a cub without a head or heart ;
 ' Rustics though coarse, and savages though wild,
 ' Our cares may render liberal and mild ;
 ' But what, my friend, can flow from all these pains !
 ' There is no dealing with a lack of brains.'—

' True I am hopeless to behold him man,
 ' But let me make the booby what I can :
 ' Though the rude stone no polish will display,
 ' Yet you may strip the rugged coat away.'

Stephen beheld his books—' I love to know
 ' How money goes—now here is that to show :
 ' And now,' he cried, ' I shall be pleas'd to get
 ' Beyond the Bible—there I puzzle yet.'

He spoke abash'd—' Nay, nay !' The Friend replied,
 ' You need not lay the good old Book aside ;
 ' Antique and curious, I myself indeed
 ' Read it at times, but as a man should read ;
 ' A fine old work it is, and I protest,
 ' I hate to hear it treated as a jest ;
 ' The book has wisdom in it, if you look
 ' Wisely upon it, as another book :
 ' For superstition (as our Priests of Sin
 ' Are pleas'd to tell us) makes us blind within :

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- ‘ Of this hereafter—we will now select
‘ Some works to please you, others to direct ;
‘ Tales and Romances shall your fancy feed,
‘ And reasoners form your morals and your creed.’

The books were view’d, the price was fairly paid,
And *Stephen* read undaunted, undismay’d :
But not till first he paper’d all the row,
And plac’d in order, to enjoy the show ;
Next letter’d all the backs with care and speed,
Set them in ranks, and then began to read.

The love of order,—I the thing receive
From reverend men, and I in part believe,—
Shows a clear mind and clean, and whoso needs
This love, but seldom in the world succeeds ;
And yet with this some other love must be,
Ere I can fully to the fact agree ;
Valour and study may by order gain,
By ordersovereigns hold more steady reign ;
Through all the tribes of nature order runs,
And rules around in systems and in suns :
Still has the love of order found a place,
With all that’s low, degrading, mean, and base,
With all that merits scorn, and all that meets disgrace :
In the cold Miser, of all change afraid,
In pompous Men in public seats obey’d ;

In humble Placemen, Heralds, solemn drones,
Fanciers of Flowers, and Lads like *Stephen Jones* ;
Order to these is armour and defence,
And love of method serves in lack of sense.

For rustic youth could I a list produce
Of *Stephen's* books, how great might be the use ;
But evil fate was theirs—survey'd, enjoy'd
Some happy months, and then by force destroy'd ;
So will'd the Fates—but these, with patience read,
Had vast effect on *Stephen's* heart and head.

This soon appear'd—within a single week
He op'd his lips, and made attempt to speak ;
He fail'd indeed—but still his Friend confess'd
The best have fail'd, and he had done his best :
The first of swimmers, when at first he swims,
Has little use or freedom in his limbs ;
Nay, when at length he strikes with manly force,
The cramp may seize him, and impede his course.

Encourag'd thus, our Clerk again essay'd
The daring act, though daunted and afraid ;
Succeeding now, though partial his success,
And pertness mark'd his manner and address,
Yet such improvement issued from his books,
That all discern'd it in his speech and looks ;

He ventur'd then on every theme to speak,
And felt no feverish tingling in his cheek ;
His friend approving, hail'd the happy change,
The Clerks exclaim'd—' 'Tis famous, and 'tis strange.'

Two years had pass'd ; the Youth attended still,
(Though thus accomplish'd) with a ready quill ;
He sat th' allotted hours, though hard the case,
While timid Prudence ruled in Virtue's place ;
By promise bound, the Son his letters penn'd
To his good parent, at the quarter's end.

At first he sent those lines, the state to tell
Of his own health, and hoped his friends were well ;
He kept their virtuous precepts in his mind,
And needed nothing—then his name was sign'd :
But now he wrote of Sunday walks and views,
Of actor's names, choice novels, and strange news ;
How coats were cut, and of his urgent need
For fresh supply, which he desir'd with speed.
The Father doubted, when these letters came,
To what they tended, yet was loth to blame :
“ *Stephen* was once *my duteous son*, and now
“ *My most obedient*—this can I allow ?
“ Can I with pleasure or with patience see
“ A boy at once so heartless, and so free ?”

But soon the kinsman heavy tidings told,
That love and prudence could no more withhold :

‘ *Stephen*, though steady at his desk, was grown
 ‘ A rake and coxcomb—this he griev’d to own ;
 ‘ His cousin left his church, and spent the day
 ‘ Lounging about in quite a heathen way ;
 ‘ Sometimes he swore, but had indeed the grace
 ‘ To show the shame imprinted on his face :
 ‘ I search’d his room, and in his absence read
 ‘ Books that I knew would turn a stronger head ;
 ‘ The works of Atheists half the number made,
 ‘ The rest were lives of harlots leaving trade ;
 ‘ Which neither man nor boy would deign to read,
 ‘ If from the scandal and pollution freed :
 ‘ I sometimes threaten’d, and would fairly state
 ‘ My sense of things so vile and profligate ;
 ‘ But I’m a cit, such works are lost on me—
 ‘ They’re knowledge, and (good Lord !) philosophy.’

“ Oh, send him down,” the Father soon replied ;
 “ Let me behold him, and my skill be tried ;
 “ If care and kindness lose their wonted use,
 “ Some rougher medicine will the end produce.”

Stephen with grief and anger heard his doom—
 ‘ Go to the farmer? to the rustic’s home ?
 ‘ Curse the base threat’ning—’ “ Nay, child, never curse ;
 “ Corrupted long, your case is growing worse ;”—
 ‘ I!’ quoth the youth, ‘ I challenge all mankind
 ‘ To find a fault ; what fault have you to find ?

‘ Improve I not in manner, speech, and grace ?
‘ Inquire—my friends will tell it to your face ;
‘ Have I been taught to guard his kine and sheep ?
‘ A man like me has other things to keep ;
‘ This let him know,’—“ It would his wrath excite ;
“ But come prepare, you must away to-night ;”
‘ What ! leave my studies, my improvements leave,
‘ My faithful friends and intimates to grieve !’—
“ Go to your father, *Stephen*, let him see
“ All these improvements; they are lost on me.”

The Youth, though loth, obey’d, and soon he saw
The Farmer-Father, with some signs of awe ;
Who kind, yet silent, waited to behold
How one would act, so daring, yet so cold :
And soon he found, between the friendly pair
That secrets pass’d which he was not to share ;
But he resolv’d those secrets to obtain,
And quash rebellion in his lawful reign.

Stephen, though vain, was with his Father mute,
He fear’d a crisis, and he shunned dispute ;
And yet he long’d with youthful pride to show,
He knew such things as farmers could not know ;
These to the Grandam he with freedom spoke,
Saw her amazement, and enjoy’d the joke :
But on the Father when he cast his eye,
Something he found that made his valour shy ;

And thus there seem'd to be a hollow truce,
Still threat'ning something dismal to produce.

Ere this the Father at his leisure read
The Son's choice volumes, and his wonder fled ;
He saw how wrought the works of either kind,
On so presuming, yet so weak a mind ;
These in a chosen hour he made his prey,
Condemn'd, and bore with vengeful thoughts away ;
Then in a close Recess the couple near,
He sat unseen to see, unheard to hear.

There soon a trial for his patience came,
Beneath were plac'd the Youth and ancient Dame,
Each on a purpose fix'd—but neither thought,
How near a foe, with power and vengeance fraught.

And now the Matron told, as tidings sad,
What she had heard of her beloved Lad ;
How he to graceless, wicked men gave heed,
And wicked books would night and morning read ;
Some former lectures she again began,
And begg'd attention of her little man ;
She brought, with many a pious boast, in view
His former studies, and condemn'd the new :
Once he the names of Saints and Patriarchs old,
Judges and Kings, and Chiefs and Prophets, told ;
Then he in winter-nights the Bible took,
To count how often in the sacred book

The sacred name appear'd, and could rehearse
Which were the middle chapter, word, and verse,
The very letter in the middle plac'd,
And so employ'd the hours that others waste.

' Such wert thou once; and now, my child, they say
' Thy faith like water runneth fast away;
' The Prince of Devils hath, I fear, beguil'd
' The ready wit of my back-sliding child.'

On this, with lofty looks, our Clerk began
His grave rebuke, as he assum'd the man—

' There is no Devil,' said the hopeful Youth,
' Nor Prince of Devils; that I know for truth:
' Have I not told you how my books describe
' The arts of priests and all the canting tribe?
' Your Bible mentions Egypt, where it seems
' Was *Joseph* found when *Pharaoh* dream'd his dreams;
' Now in that place, in some bewilder'd head,
' (The learned write) religious dreams were bred:
' Whence thro' the earth, with various forms combin'd,
' They came to frighten and afflict mankind,
' Prone (so I read) to let a priest invade
' Their souls with awe, and by his craft be made
' Slave to his will, and profit to his trade:
' So say my books, and how the rogues agreed
' To blind the victims, to defraud and lead;

‘ When Joys above to ready Dupes were sold,
 ‘ And Hell was threaten’d to the shy and cold.

‘ Why so amaz’d, and so prepar’d to pray ?
 ‘ As if a Being heard a word we say :
 ‘ This may surprise you ; I myself began
 ‘ To feel disturb’d, and to my Bible ran ;
 ‘ I now am wiser—yet agree in this,
 ‘ The book has things that are not much amiss ;
 ‘ It is a fine old work, and I protest
 ‘ I hate to hear it treated as a jest ;
 ‘ The book has wisdom in it, if you look
 ‘ Wisely upon it as another book ;’—

‘ Oh ! wicked ! wicked ! my unhappy child,
 ‘ How hast thou been by evil men beguil’d !’

‘ How ! wicked, say you ? you can little guess
 ‘ The gain of that which you call wickedness ;
 ‘ Why, sins you think it sinful but to name
 ‘ Have gain’d both wives and widows wealth and fame ;
 ‘ And this because such people never dread
 ‘ Those threaten’d pains ; hell comes not in their head ;
 ‘ Love is our nature, wealth we all desire,
 ‘ And what we wish ’tis lawful to acquire ;
 ‘ So say my books—and what beside they show,
 ‘ ’Tis time to let this honest Farmer know :

‘ Nay, look not grave, am I commanded down
‘ To feed his cattle and become his clown?
‘ Is such his purpose? then he shall be told
‘ The vulgar insult——’

——“ Hold, in mercy hold——”

‘ Father, oh! father! throw the whip away;
‘ I was but jesting, on my knees I pray—
‘ There, hold his arm—oh! leave us not alone:
‘ In pity cease, and I will yet atone
‘ For all my sin—’ In vain; stroke after stroke,
On side and shoulder, quick as mill-wheels broke;
Quick as the patient’s pulse, who trembling cried,
And still the Parent with a stroke replied;
Till all the medicine he prepar’d was dealt,
And every bone the precious influence felt;
Till all the panting flesh was red and raw,
And every thought was turn’d to fear and awe;
Till every doubt to due respect gave place—
Such cures are done when doctors know the case.

‘ Oh! I shall die—my father! do receive
‘ My dying words; indeed I do believe;
‘ The books are lying books, I know it well,
‘ There is a Devil, oh! there is a hell;
‘ And I’m a sinner: spare me, I am young,
‘ My sinful words were only on my tongue;
‘ My heart consented not; ’tis all a lie:
‘ Oh! spare me then, I’m not prepar’d to die.’

“ Vain, worthless, stupid wretch !” the Father cried,
“ Dost thou presume to teach ? art thou a guide ?
“ Driveller and dog, it gave the mind distress
“ To hear thy thoughts in their religious dress ;
“ Thy pious folly mov’d my strong disdain,
“ Yet I forgave thee for thy want of brain :
“ But *Job* in patience must the man exceed,
“ Who could endure thee in thy present creed ;
“ Is it for thee, thou idiot, to pretend
“ The wicked cause a helping hand to lend ?
“ Canst thou a judge in any question be ?
“ Atheists themselves would scorn a friend like thee.—

“ Lo ! yonder blaze thy worthies ; in one heap
“ Thy scoundrel-favourites must for ever sleep :
“ Each yields its poison to the flame in turn,
“ Where whores and infidels are doom’d to burn ;
“ Two noble faggots made the flame you see,
“ Reserving only two fair twigs for thee ;
“ That in thy view the instruments may stand,
“ And be in future ready for my hand :
“ The just mementos that, though silent, show
“ Whence thy correction and improvements flow ;
“ Beholding these, thou wilt confess their power,
“ And feel the shame of this important hour.

“ Hadst thou been humble, I had first design’d,
“ By care from folly to have freed thy mind ;

“ And when a clean foundation had been laid,
“ Our Priest, more able, would have lent his aid :
“ But thou art weak, and force must folly guide,
“ And thou art vain, and pain must humble pride :
“ Teachers men honour, learners they allure ;
“ But learners teaching, of contempt are sure ;
“ Scorn is their certain meed, and smart their only cure !”

THE END.

