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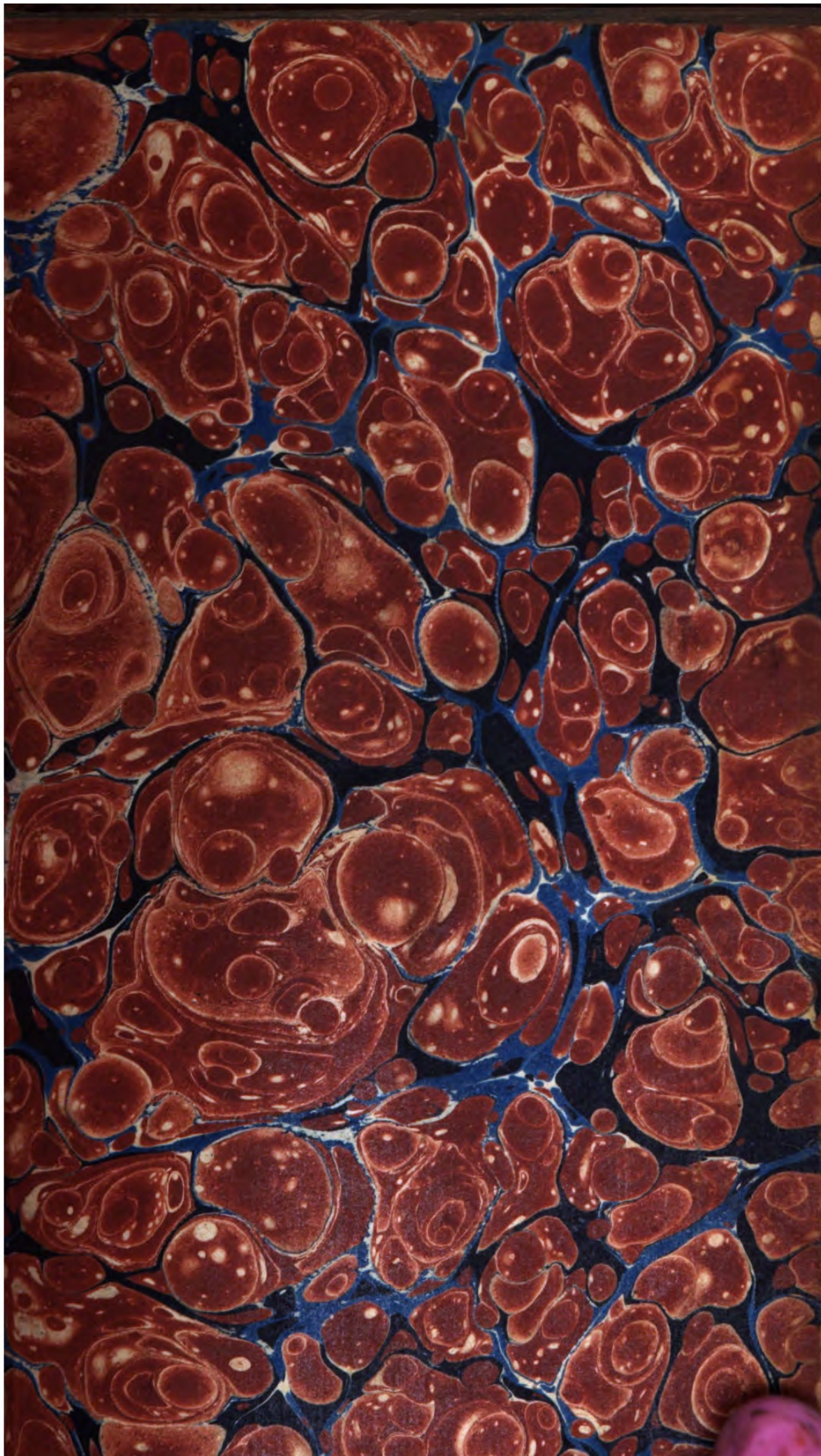
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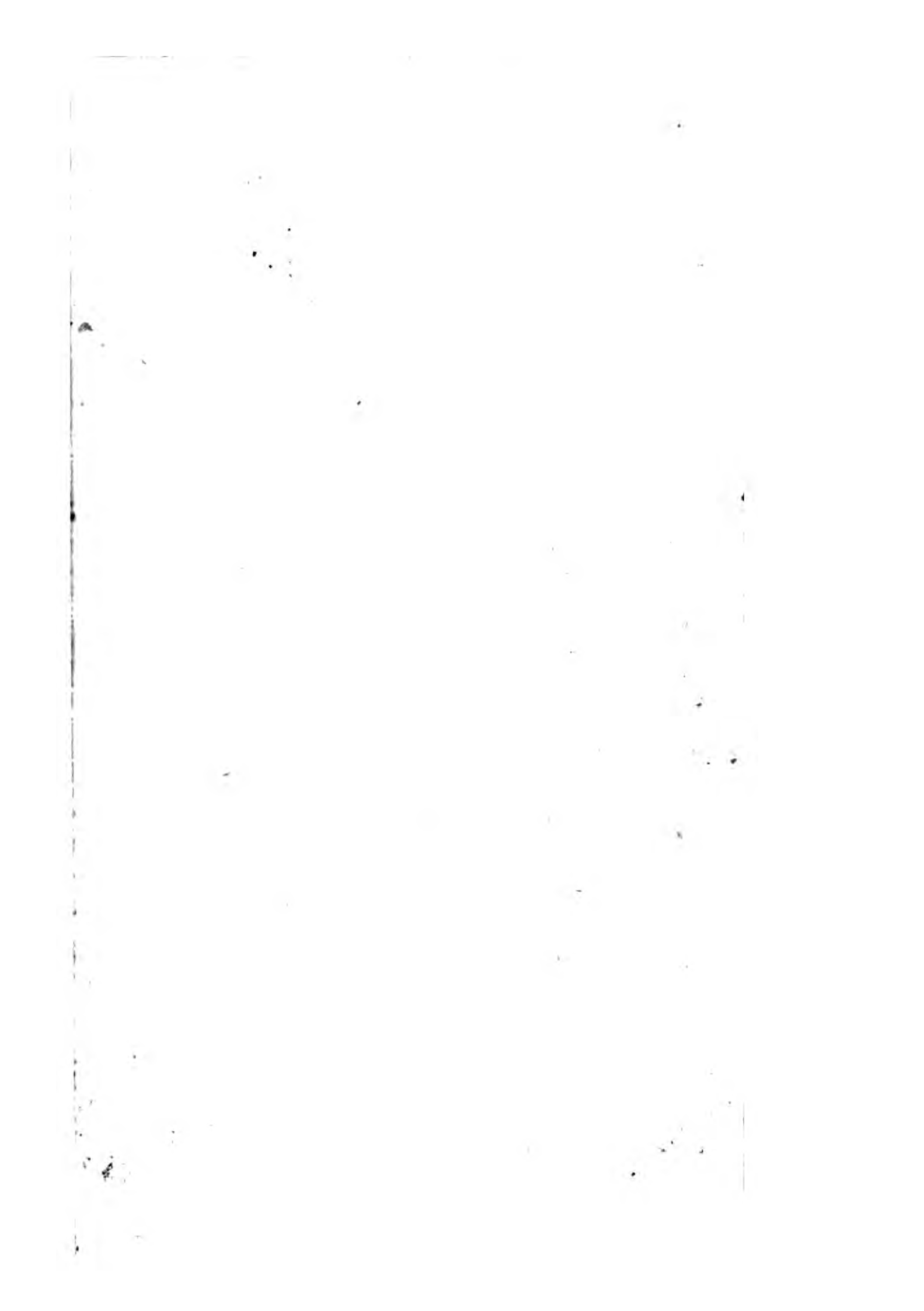
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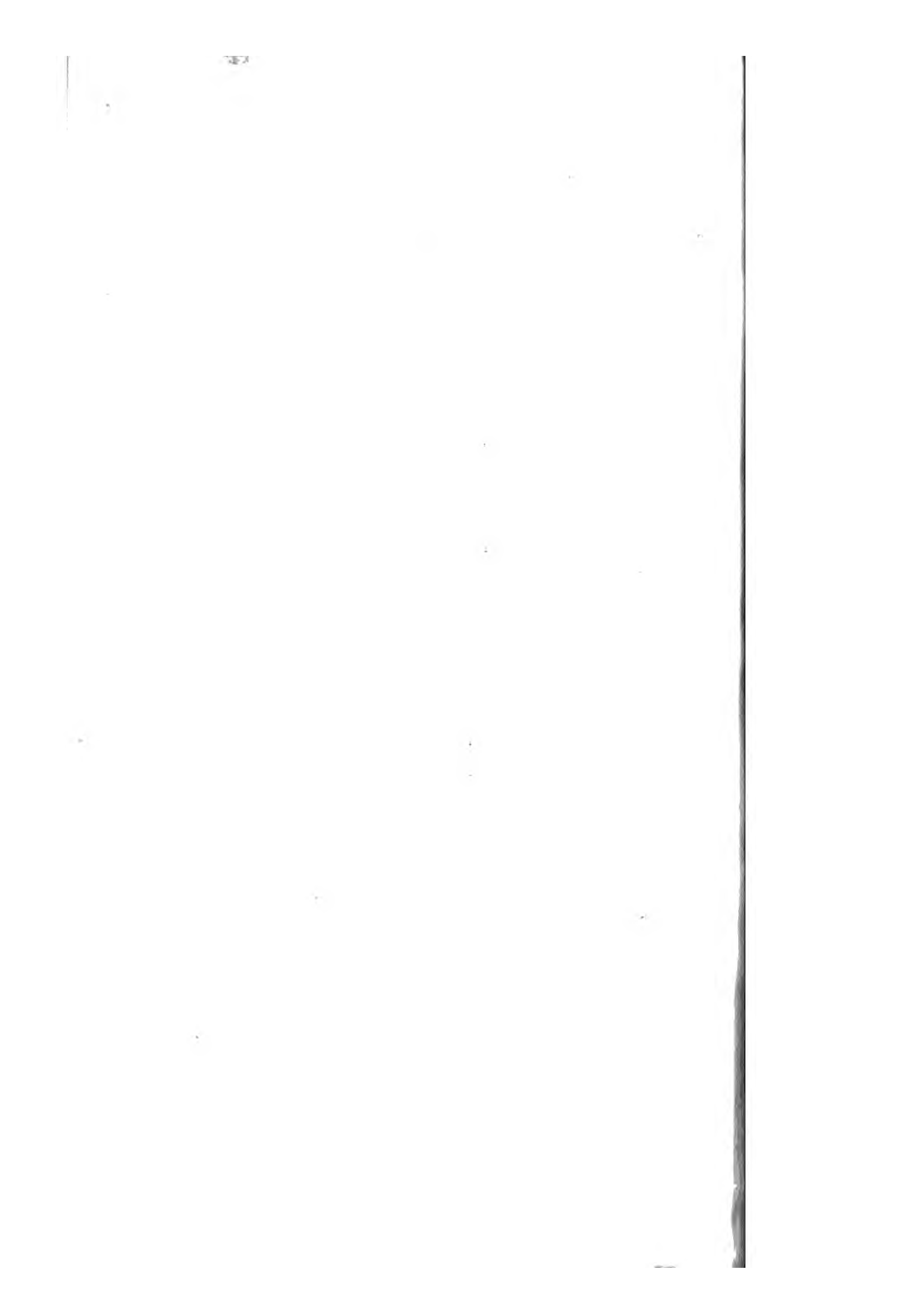




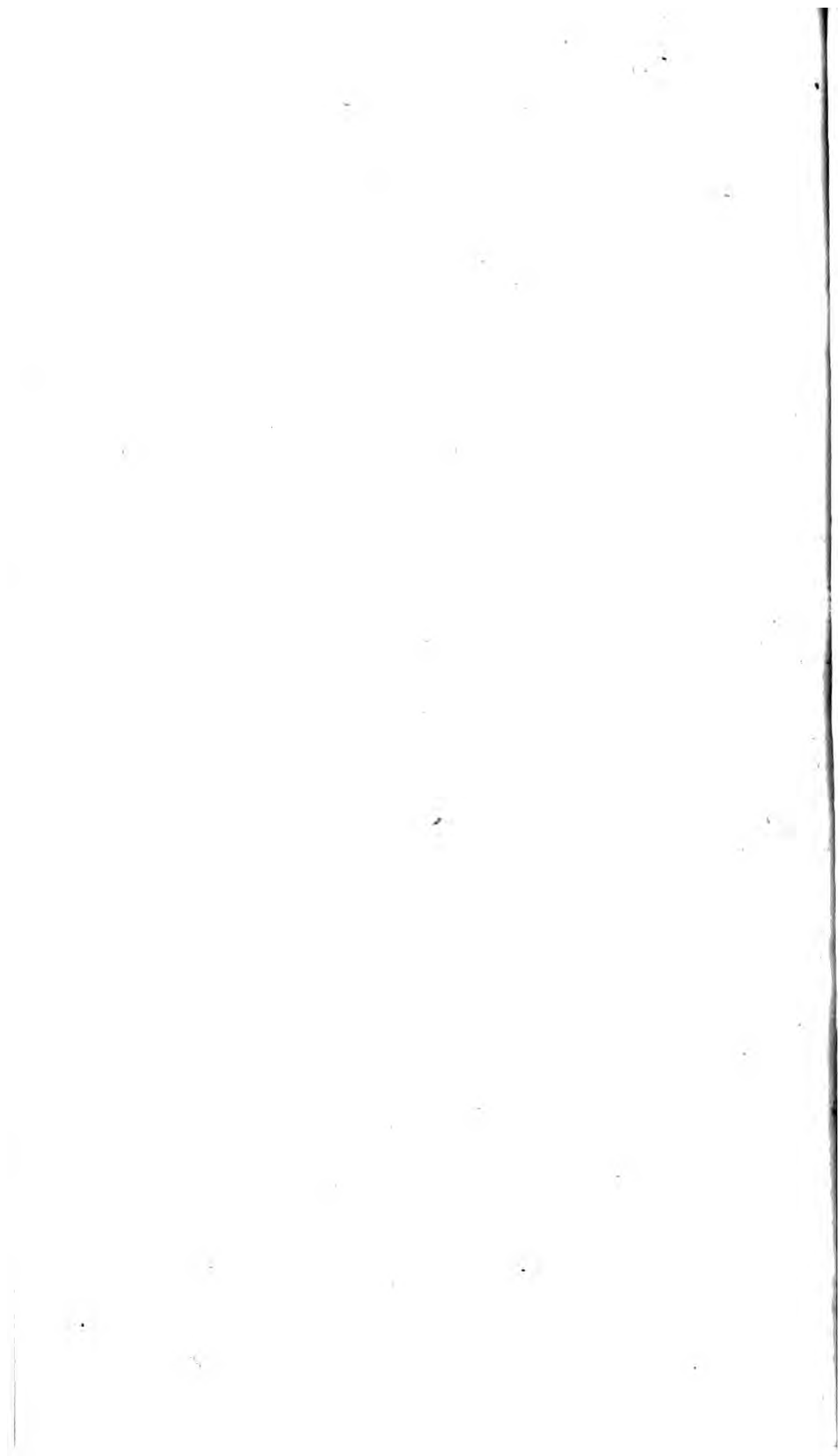
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P O E M S.



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POEMS:

BY

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE, LL.B.

Ipse per Ausonias Æneïa carmina gentes
Qui sonat, ingenti qui nomine pulsat Olympum;
Mæōniumque senem Romano provocat ore:
Forsitan illius nemoris latuisset in umbrâ
Quod canit, et sterili tantum cantâsset avenâ
Ignotus populi; si Mæcenate careret.

Paneg. ad Pisones, *Lucan.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SIXTH EDITION.

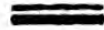
London:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD,
BOOKSELLER TO HER MAJESTY, 190, OPPOSITE ALBANY,
PICCADILLY.

1812.



DEDICATION.



TO THE

**RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY-RICHARD FOX,
LORD HOLLAND,**

OF HOLLAND, IN LINCOLNSHIRE;

LORD HOLLAND, OF FOXLEY;

AND

Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries.



MY LORD,

THAT the longest Poem in
this Collection was honoured by the notice
of your Lordship's Right Honourable and
ever-valued Relation, Mr. Fox; that it
should be the last which engaged his atten-

tion ; and that some parts of it were marked with his approbation ; are circumstances productive of better hopes of ultimate success, than I had dared to entertain before I was gratified with a knowledge of them : And the hope thus raised, leads me to ask permission that I may dedicate this Book to your Lordship, to whom that truly great and greatly lamented Personage was so nearly allied in family, so closely bound in affection, and in whose mind presides the same critical taste which he exerted to the delight of all who heard him. He doubtless united with his unequalled abilities, a fund of good nature ; and this possibly led him to speak favourably of, and give satisfaction to writers, with whose

productions he might not be entirely satisfied: nor must I allow myself to suppose his desire of obliging was withholden, when he honoured any effort of mine with his approbation: But, my Lord, as there was discrimination in the opinion he gave; as he did not veil indifference for insipid mediocrity of composition under any general expression of cool approval; I allow myself to draw a favourable conclusion from the verdict of One who had the superiority of intellect few would dispute, which he made manifest by a force of eloquence peculiar to himself; whose excellent judgment no one of his friends found cause to distrust, and whose acknowledged candour no enemy had the temerity to deny.

With such encouragement, I present my Book to your Lordship: the Account of the *Life and Writings of Lopez de Vega*, has taught me what I am to expect; I there perceive how your Lordship can write, and am there taught how you can judge of writers: my faults, however numerous, I know will none of them escape through inattention, nor will any merit be lost for want of discernment: My verses are before him who has written elegantly, who has judged with accuracy, and who has given unequivocal proof of abilities in a work of difficulty; — a translation of poetry, which few persons in this kingdom are able to read, and in the estimation of talents not hitherto justly appreciated. In

this view, I cannot but feel some apprehension : but I know also, that your Lordship is apprised of the great difficulty of writing well; that you will make such allowance for failures, if not too frequently repeated ; and, as you can accurately discern, so you will readily approve, all the better and more happy efforts of one, who places the highest value upon your Lordship's approbation, and who has the honour to be,

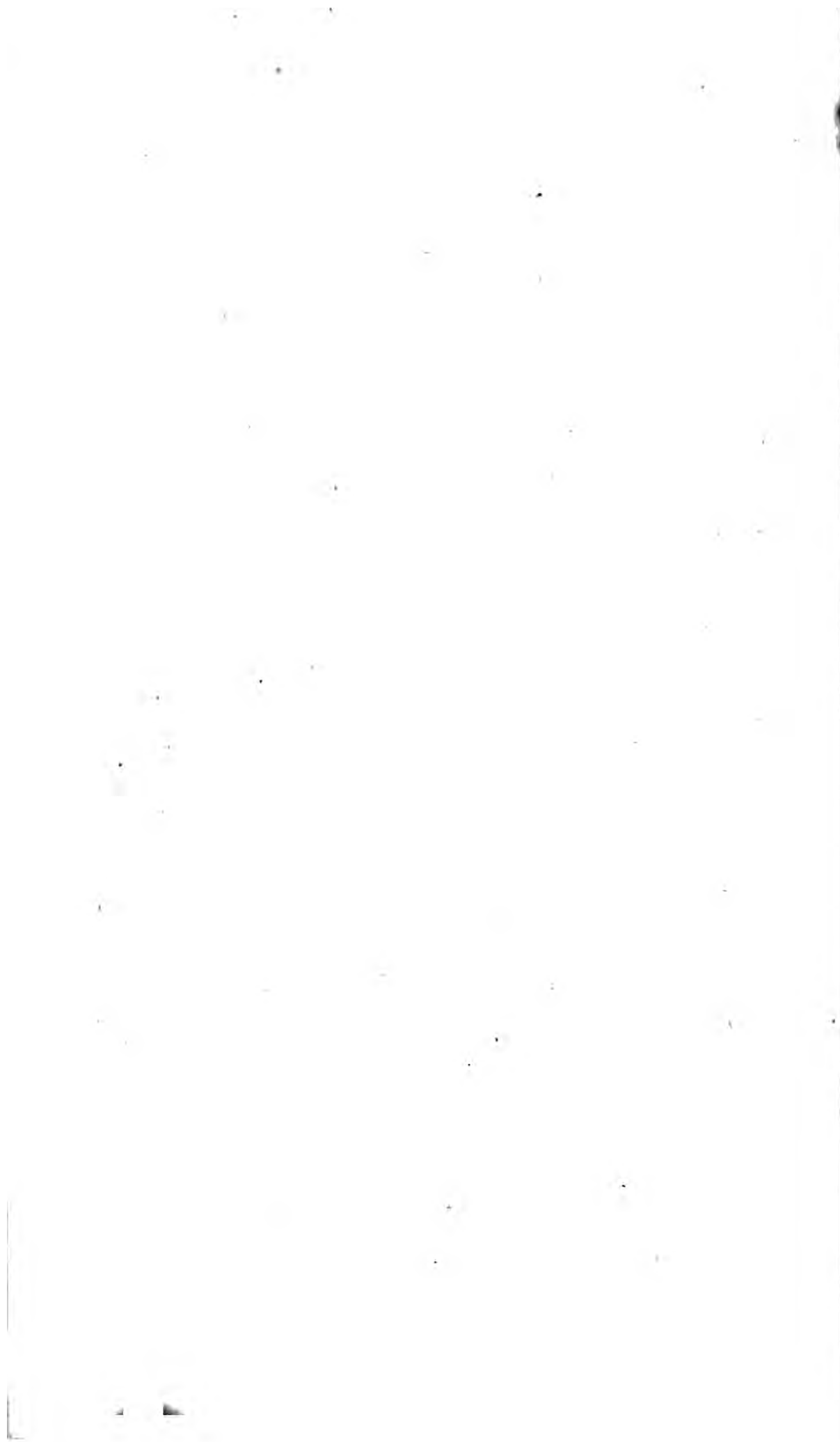
MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most faithful

and

obliged humble Servant,

GEO. CRABBE.



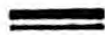
ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN this Edition of his Poems, the Author has endeavoured to avail himself of such remarks as have been communicated to him since the publication of his work; and, so far as the time allowed, he has sought to make the improvements suggested: he is nevertheless conscious that much remains to be done, and must entreat the indulgence of his readers, if they still perceive many places to which he ought to have directed his attention; some which required retrenchment; and not a few, which (with advantage to the book) might have been altogether expunged.

July 26, 1808.

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Feb 15	John Doe	10.00		(15.00)
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Aug 5	John Doe	10.00		(415.00)
Aug 10	John Doe	10.00		(425.00)
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Aug 20	John Doe	10.00		(445.00)
Aug 25	John Doe	10.00		(455.00)
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Sep 10	John Doe	10.00		(495.00)
Sep 15	John Doe	10.00		(505.00)
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Oct 30	John Doe	10.00		(605.00)
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Dec 20	John Doe	10.00		(725.00)
Dec 25	John Doe	10.00		(735.00)
Dec 30	John Doe	10.00		(745.00)
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TO THE READER.



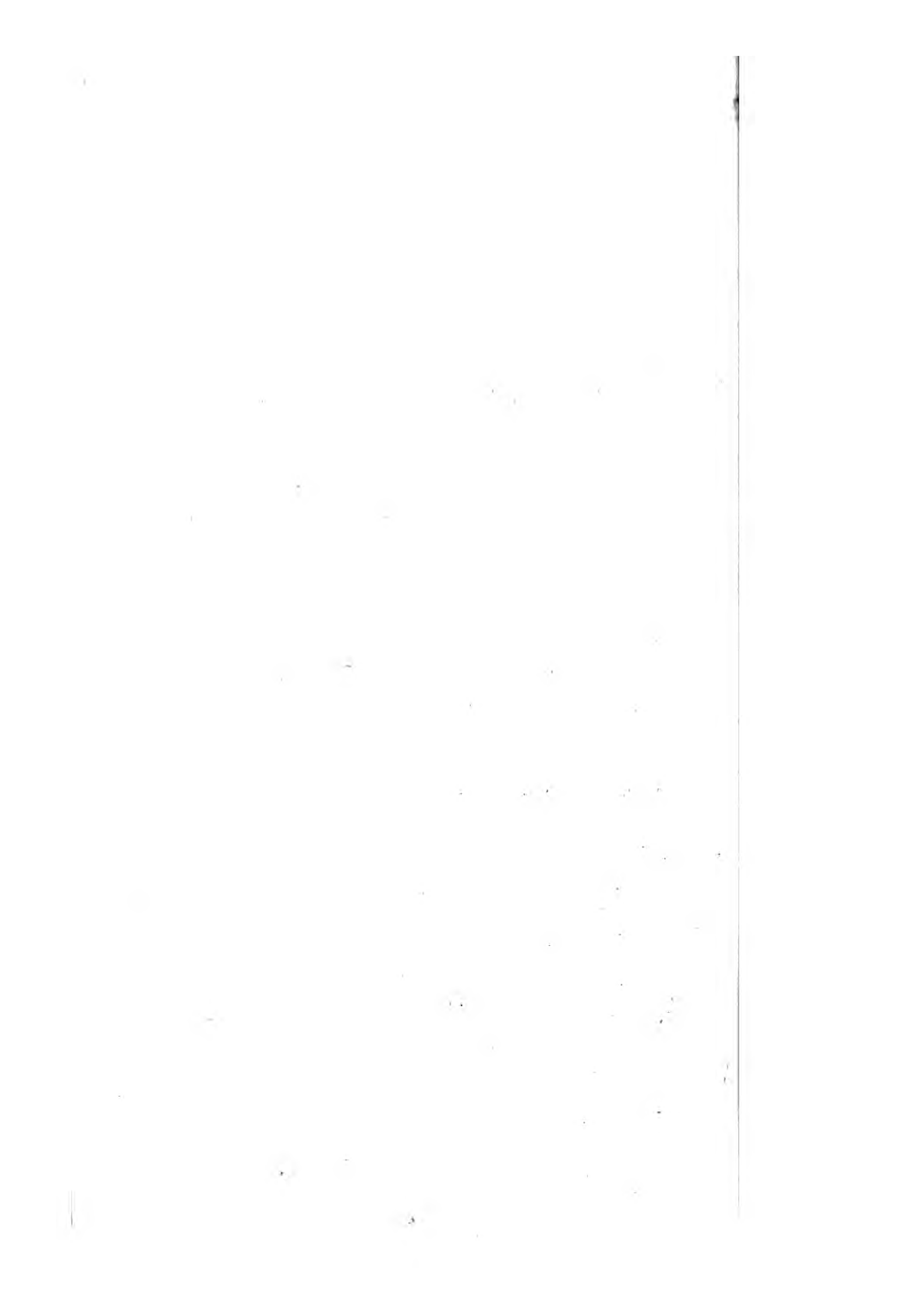
ANOTHER Edition of his Poems being called for, the Author is unwilling to present them to the public, still unaccompanied by his acknowledgment for the favourable reception given to the former impressions;—he therefore takes this occasion to express the pleasure he derives from the approbation of his readers, and his conviction that he has been treated with much lenity: this he perceives not only in their judgment, who in some degree form or guide the taste of the public, but likewise

in the indulgence evinced by his readers in general, who, finding something which they could approve, would not permit a want of correctness in some parts, or a want of interest in others, to destroy their more favourable opinion.

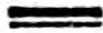
If it should be remarked that these faults are yet suffered to remain, the author takes the liberty of observing, that a revisal and correction of the work, such as would satisfy his readers and himself, would cause a greater alteration in the book, than those who already possess it, would consider as justified by the improvement; nor indeed is time allowed at present for such a purpose. The author likewise indulges a hope that it will be more satisfactory to many of his friends, when informed that he is devoting his leisure to new subjects, than if they considered him as en-

gaged in emendations of the former. Whatever may be the event of these attempts, he dares not flatter himself with so distant a view as any undertaking beyond them must appear; but should he be *then* unequal to the task of original composition, he may yet take upon him the lesser efforts his leisure may admit; he may endeavour to make smooth the asperities of negligent versification; he may take off the redundancies of description which has been considered as too elaborate; and he may strive to retouch and amend all such parts in narration or character as now appear with any thing obscure, uninteresting, or incomplete.

Muston, March 1809.



P R E F A C E.



ABOUT twenty-five years since, was published a poem called *The Library*; which, in no long time, was followed by two others, *The Village*, and *The Newspaper*: These, with a few alterations and additions, are here reprinted; and are accompanied by a poem of greater length, and several shorter attempts, now, for the first time, before the public; whose reception of them creates in their Author something more than common solicitude, because he conceives that, with the judgment to be formed of these

latter productions, upon whatever may be found intrinsically meritorious or defective, there will be united an inquiry into the relative degree of praise or blame, which they may be thought to deserve, when compared with the more early attempts of the same writer.

And certainly, were it the principal employment of a man's life to compose verses, it might seem reasonable to expect, that he would continue to improve as long as he continued to live; though, even then, there is some doubt whether such improvement would follow, and perhaps proof might be adduced to show it would not: but when, to this "*idle trade,*" is added some "*calling,*" with superior claims upon his time and attention, his progress in the art of

versification will probably be in proportion neither to the years he has lived, nor even to the attempts he has made.

While composing the first-published of these Poems, the Author was honoured with the notice and assisted by the advice of the Right Honourable EDMUND BURKE: part of it was written in his presence, and the whole submitted to his judgment; receiving, in its progress, the benefit of his correction: I hope therefore to obtain pardon of the reader, if I eagerly seize the occasion, and, after so long a silence, endeavour to express a grateful sense of the benefits I have received from this gentleman, who was solicitous for my more essential interests, as well as benevolently anxious for my credit as a writer.

I will not enter upon the subject of his extraordinary abilities; it would be vanity, it would be weakness in me to believe that I could make them better known or more admired than they now are: but of his private worth, of his wishes to do good, of his affability and condescension; his readiness to lend assistance when he knew it was wanted, and his delight to give praise where he thought it was deserved; of these I may write with some propriety. All know that his powers were vast, his acquirements various; and I take leave to add, that he applied them, with unremitting attention, to those objects which he believed tended to the honour and welfare of his country. But it may not be so generally understood that he was ever assiduous in the more private duties of a benevolent nature, that he

delighted to give encouragement to any promise of ability, and assistance to any appearance of desert: to what purposes he employed his pen, and with what eloquence he spake in the senate, will be told by many, who yet may be ignorant of the solid instruction, as well as the fascinating pleasantry, found in his common conversation, amongst his friends, and his affectionate manners, amiable disposition, and zeal for their happiness, which he manifested in the hours of retirement with his family.

To this gentleman I was indebted for my knowledge of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS, who was as well known to his friends for his perpetual fund of good-humour, and his unceasing wishes to oblige, as he was to the public for the extraordinary produc-

tions of his pencil and his pen. By him I was favoured with an introduction to Doctor JOHNSON, who honoured me with his notice, and assisted me, as Mr. BOSWELL has told, with remarks and emendations for a poem I was about to publish*. The Doctor had been often wearied by applications, and did not readily comply with requests, for his opinion; not from any unwillingness to oblige, but from a painful contention in his mind, between a desire of giving pleasure and a determination to speak truth. No man can, I think, publish a work without some expectation of satisfying those who are to judge of its merit: but I can, with the utmost regard to veracity,

* See the Life of S. Johnson, by Boswell, vol. iv. p. 185. 8vo. edit.

speaking my fears, as predominating over every pre-indulged thought of a more favourable nature, when I was told that a judge so discerning had consented to read and give his opinion of the *VILLAGE*, the poem I had prepared for publication. The time of suspense was not long protracted; I was soon favoured with a few words from Sir *JOSHUA*, who observed,—‘ If I knew how cautious *DOCTOR JOHNSON* was in giving commendation, I should be well satisfied with the portion dealt to me in his letter.’—Of that letter the following is a copy.:

“ SIR,

“ I have sent you back Mr. *CRABBE*’s Poem; which I read with great delight. It is original, vigorous,

“ and elegant. The alterations which I
“ have made, I do not require him to
“ adopt; for my lines are, perhaps, not
“ often better [than] his own: but he may
“ take mine and his own together, and per-
“ haps, between them, produce something
“ better than either.—He is not to think
“ his copy wantonly defaced: a wet sponge
“ will wash all the red lines away, and
“ leave the pages clean.—His Dedication*
“ will be least liked: it were better to con-
“ tract it into a short sprightly Address.

* Neither of these were adopted; the Author had written about that time, some Verses to the Memory of Lord ROBERT MANNERS, Brother to the late Duke of RUTLAND; and these, by a junction, it is presumed, not forced or unnatural, form the concluding part of the *Village*.

“ I do not doubt of Mr. CRABBE’S suc-
“ cess.

“ I am, SIR,

“ your most humble Servant,

“ SAM: JOHNSON.”

“ *March 4, 1783.*”

That I was fully satisfied, my readers will do me the justice to believe; and I hope they will pardon me, if there should appear to them any impropriety in publishing the favourable opinion expressed in a private letter: they will judge, and truly, that by so doing, I wish to bespeak their good opinion, but have no design of extorting their applause. I would not hazard an appearance so ostentatious to gratify my vanity, but I venture to do it in compliance with my fears.

After these was published the **NEWS-PAPER**: it had not the advantage of such previous criticism from any friends, nor perhaps so much of my own attention as I ought to have given to it; but the impression was disposed of, and I will not pay so little respect to the judgment of my readers, as now to suppress what they then approved.

Since the publication of this poem more than twenty years have elapsed, and I am not without apprehension, lest so long a silence should be construed into a blameable neglect of my own interest, which those excellent friends were desirous of promoting; or, what is yet worse, into a want of gratitude for their assistance; since it becomes me to suppose, they considered these first

attempts as promises of better things, and their favours as stimulants to future exertion. And here, be the construction put upon my apparent negligence what it *may*, let me not suppress my testimony to the liberality of those who are looked up to, as patrons and encouragers of literary merit, or indeed of merit of any kind: their patronage has never been refused, I conceive, when it has been reasonably expected or modestly required, and it would be difficult, probably, to instance, in these times and in this country, any one who merited or was supposed to merit assistance, but who nevertheless languished in obscurity or necessity for want of it; unless in those cases, where it was prevented by the resolution of impatient pride, or wearied by the solicitations of determined profligacy. And,

while the subject is before me, I am unwilling to pass silently over the debt of gratitude which I owe to the memory of two deceased noblemen, His Grace the late Duke **RUTLAND**, and the Right Honourable the Lord **THURLOW**: sensible of the honour done me by their notice and the benefits received from them, I trust this acknowledgment will be imputed to its only motive, a grateful sense of their favours.

Upon this subject I could dwell with much pleasure; but, to give a reason for that appearance of neglect, as it is more difficult, so, happily, it is less required. In truth, I have, for many years, intended a republication of these Poems, as soon as I should be able to join with them such other of later date as might not deprive me of

the little credit the former had obtained. Long indeed has this purpose been procrastinated : and if the duties of a profession, not before pressing upon me ; if the claims of a situation, at that time untried ; if diffidence of my own judgment, and the loss of my earliest friends, will not sufficiently account for my delay, I must rely upon the good-nature of my reader, that he will let them avail as far as he can, and find an additional apology in my fears of his censure.

These fears being so prevalent with me, I determined not to publish any thing more, unless I could first obtain the sanction of such opinion as I might with some confidence rely upon. I looked for a friend who, having the discerning taste of Mr.

BURKE, and the critical sagacity of Doctor JOHNSON, would bestow upon my MS. the attention requisite to form his opinion, and would then favour me with the result of his observations : and it was my singular good fortune to gain such assistance ; the opinion of a critic so qualified, and a friend so disposed to favour me. I had been honoured by an introduction to the Right Honourable CHARLES-JAMES FOX, some years before, at the seat of Mr. BURKE ; and being again with him, I received a promise that he would peruse any work I might send to him previous to its publication, and would give me his opinion. At that time, I did not think myself sufficiently prepared ; and when, afterwards, I had collected some poems for his inspection, I found my Right Honourable Friend en-

gaged by the affairs of a great empire, and struggling with the inveteracy of a fatal disease: at such time, upon such mind, ever disposed to oblige as that mind was, I could not obtrude the petty business of criticising verses: but he remembered the promise he had kindly given, and repeated an offer, which, though I had not presumed to expect, I was happy to receive. A copy of the Poems, now first published, was immediately sent to him, and (as I have the information from Lord HOLLAND, and his Lordship's permission to inform my readers) the poem which I have named *THE PARISH REGISTER*, was heard by Mr. FOX, and it excited interest enough, by some of its parts, to gain for me the benefit of his judgment upon the whole. Whatever he approved, the reader will readily believe, I

have carefully retained ; the parts he disliked are totally expunged, and others are substituted, which I hope resemble those, more conformable to the taste of so admirable a judge. Nor can I deny myself the melancholy satisfaction of adding, that this poem, (and more especially the story of *Phœbe Dawson**, with some parts of the second book,) were the last compositions of their kind, that engaged and amused the capacious, the candid, the benevolent mind of this great Man.

The above information I owe to the favour of the Right Honourable Lord HOLLAND ; nor this only, but to his Lordship

* See vol. i. page 103.

I am indebted for some excellent remarks upon the other parts of my MS. It was not indeed my good fortune then to know that my verses were in the hands of a Nobleman who had given proof of his accurate judgment as a critic, and his elegance as a writer, by favouring the public with an easy and spirited translation of some interesting scenes of a dramatic poet, not often read in this kingdom. The Life of Lopez de Vega was then unknown to me; I had, in common with many English readers, heard of him, but could not judge whether his far-extended reputation was caused by the sublime efforts of a mighty genius, or the unequalled facility of a rapid composer, aided by peculiar and fortunate circumstances. That any part of my MS. was honoured by the remarks of Lord HOL-

LAND, yields me a high degree of satisfaction, and his Lordship will perceive the use I have made of them, but I must feel some regret when I know to what small portion they were limited ; and discerning, as I do, the taste and judgment bestowed upon the verses of Lopez de Vega, I must perceive how much my own needed the assistance afforded to one, who cannot be sensible of the benefit he has received.

But how much soever I may lament the advantages lost, let me remember with gratitude the helps I have obtained. With a single exception, every poem in the ensuing collection has been submitted to the critical sagacity of a gentleman, upon whose skill and candour their Author could rely. To publish by advice of friends, has been se-

verely ridiculed, and that too by a poet, who probably, without such advice, never made public any verses of his own : in fact, it may not be easily determined who acts with less discretion, the writer who is encouraged to publish his works, merely by the advice of friends whom he consulted, or he who, against advice, publishes from the sole encouragement of his own opinion. These are deceptions to be carefully avoided, and I was happy to escape the latter, by the friendly attentions of the Reverend **RICHARD TURNER**, Minister of Great Yarmouth. To this gentleman I am indebted more than I am able to describe, or than he is willing to allow, for the time he has bestowed upon the attempts I have made. He is, indeed, the kind of critic for whom every poet should devoutly wish, and the

friend whom every man would be happy to acquire ; he has taste to discern all that is meritorious, and sagacity to detect whatsoever should be discarded ; he gives just the opinion an author's wisdom should covet, however his vanity might prompt him to reject it ; what altogether to expunge and what to improve he has repeatedly taught me, and, could I have obeyed him in the latter direction as I have invariably have in the former, the public would have found this collection more worthy its attention, and I should have sought the opinion of the critic more void of apprehension.

But whatever I may hope or fear, whatever assistance I have had or have needed, it becomes me to leave my verses to the judgment of the reader, without my endea-

vour to point out their merit or an apology for their defects : yet as, among the poetical attempts of one who has been for many years a priest, it may seem a want of respect for the legitimate objects of his study, that nothing occurs, unless it be incidentally, of the great subjects of Religion ; so it may appear a kind of ingratitude in a beneficed clergyman, that he has not employed his talent (be it estimated as it may) to some patriotic purpose ; as in celebrating the unsubdued spirit of his countrymen in their glorious resistance of those enemies, who would have no peace throughout the world, except that which is dictated to the drooping spirit of suffering humanity by the triumphant insolence of military success.

Credit will be given to me, I hope, when I affirm that subjects so interesting have the due weight with me, which the sacred nature of the one, and the national importance of the other, must impress upon every mind not seduced into carelessness for religion by the lethargic influence of a perverted philosophy, nor into indifference for the cause of our country by hyperbolic or hypocritical professions of universal philanthropy : but, after many efforts to satisfy myself by various trials on these subjects, I declined all further attempt, from a conviction that I should not be able to give satisfaction to my readers. Poetry of religious nature must indeed ever be clogged with almost insuperable difficulty : but there are doubtless to be found, poets who are well qualified to celebrate the una-

nimous and heroic spirit of our countrymen, and to describe in appropriate colours some of those extraordinary scenes, which have been and are shifting in the face of Europe, with such dreadful celerity; and to such I relinquish the duty.

It remains for me to give the reader a brief view of those articles in the following collection, which for the first time solicit his attention.

In the PARISH-REGISTER, he will find an endeavour once more to describe Village-Manners, not by adopting the notion of pastoral simplicity or assuming ideas of rustic barbarity, but by more natural views of the peasantry, considered as a mixed body of persons sober or profligate, and hence, in a great measure, contented or

miserable. To this more general description are added the various characters which occur in the three parts of a Register; Baptism, Marriages, and Burials.

If the BIRTH OF FLATTERY offer no moral, as an appendage to the fable, it is hoped that nothing of an immoral, nothing of improper tendency will be imputed to a piece of poetical playfulness; in fact, genuine praise, like all other species of truth, is known by its bearing full investigation; it is what the giver is happy that he can justly bestow, and the receiver conscious that he may boldly accept: but adulation must ever be afraid of inquiry, and must, in proportion to their degrees of moral sensibility,

Be shame "to him that gives and him that takes."

The verses in vol. ii. p. 159, want a title ; nor does the motto, although it gave occasion to them, altogether express the sense of the writer, who meant to observe that some of our best acquisitions, and some of our nobler conquests, are rendered ineffectual, by the passing away of opportunity and the changes made by time ; an argument that such acquirements and moral habits are reserved for a state of being in which they have the uses here denied them.

In the story of SIR EUSTACE GREY, an attempt is made to describe the wanderings of a mind first irritated by the consequences of error and misfortune, and afterwards soothed by a species of enthusiastic conversion, still keeping him insane : a task very difficult, and, if the presumption of

the attempt may find pardon, it will not be refused to the failure of the poet. It is said of our Shakspeare, respecting madness,

“ In that circle none dare walk but he :”—

yet be it granted to one, who dares not to pass the boundary fixed for common minds, at least to step near to the tremendous verge, and form some idea of the terrors that are stalking in the interdicted space.

When first I had written AARON, or THE GIPSEY, I had no unfavourable opinion of it ; and had I been collecting my verses at that time for publication, I should certainly have included this tale. Nine years have since elapsed, and I continue to judge the same of it, thus literally obeying one of the directions given by the prudence of

criticism to the eagerness of the poet : but how far I may have conformed to rules of more importance, must be left to the less partial judgment of the readers.

The concluding poem, entitled **WOMAN!**, was written at the time when the quotation from Mr. LEDYARD was first made public ; the expression has since become hacknied ; but the sentiment is congenial with our feelings, and though somewhat amplified in these verses, it is hoped they are not so far extended as to become tedious.

After this brief account of his subjects, the Author leaves them to their fate, not presuming to make any remarks upon the kinds of versification he has chosen, or the

merit of the execution : he has indeed brought forward the favourable opinion of his friends, and for that he earnestly hopes his motives will be rightly understood ; it was a step of which he felt the advantage while he foresaw the danger : he was aware of the benefit, if his readers would consider him as one who puts on a defensive armour against hasty and determined severity ; but he feels also the hazard, lest they should suppose he looks upon himself to be guarded by his friends, and so secure in the defence, that he may defy the fair judgment of legal criticism. It will probably be said, ‘ he has brought with him his testimonials to the bar of the public ;’ and he must admit the truth of the remark : but he begs leave to observe in reply, that, of those who bear testimonials

of any kind, the greater numbers feel apprehension, and not security; they are indeed so far from the enjoyment of victory, or the exultation of triumph, that, with all they can do for themselves, with all their friends have done for them, they are, like him, in dread of examination, and in fear of disappointment.

*Muston, Leicestershire,
September, 1807.*



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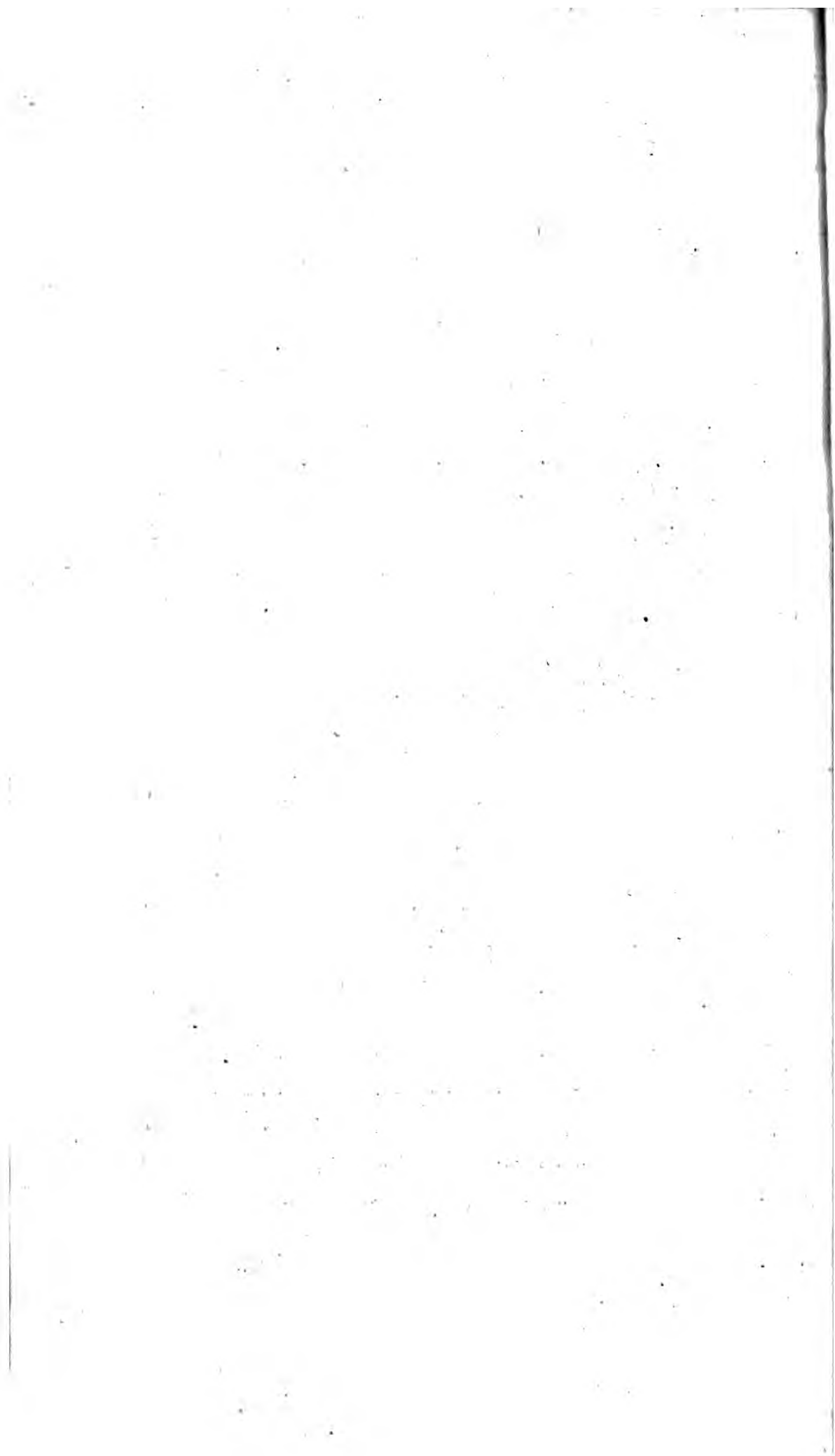
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THE VILLAGE:

A Poem.

IN TWO BOOKS.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

**The Subject proposed.—Remarks upon Pastoral Poetry.—
A Tract of Country near the Coast described.—An Im-
pooverished Borough.—Smugglers and their Assistants.—
Rude Manners of the Inhabitants.—Ruinous Effects of
a high Tide. — The Village Life more generally con-
sidered: Evils of it:—The Youthful Labourer.—The Old
Man:—his Soliloquy.—The Parish Workhouse: its Inha-
bitants.—The Sick Poor: their Apothecary.—The dying
Pauper.—The Village Priest.**

THE

VILLAGE.

BOOK I.

THE Village Life, and every Care that reigns
O'er youthful Peasants and declining Swains ;
What Labour yields, and what, that labour past,
Age, in its hour of languor, finds at last ;
What form the real Picture of the Poor,
Demand a Song—the Muse can give no more.

Fled are those times, when, in harmonious strains,
The rustic Poet prais'd his native Plains :

No Shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their Country's beauty or their Nymphs' rehearse ;
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our Lays fond CORYDONS complain,
And Shepherds' Boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains, alas ! they never feel.

On MINCIO's banks, in CÆSAR's bounteous reign,
If TITYRUS found the Golden Age again,
Must sleepy Bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song ?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where VIRGIL, not where Fancy, leads the way ?

Yes, thus the Muses sing of happy Swains,
Because the Muses never knew their pains :
They boast their Peasants' pipes ; but Peasants now
Resign their pipes and plod behind the plough ;
And few, amid the Rural-tribe, have time
To number syllables and play with rhyme ;

Save honest **Duck**, what son of **Verse** could share
The **Poet's** rapture and the **Peasant's** care ?
Or the great labours of the field degrade,
With the new peril of a poorer trade ?

From this chief cause these idle praises spring,
That themes so easy few forbear to sing ;
For no deep thought the trifling subjects ask,
To sing of **Shepherds** is an easy task :
The happy **Youth** assumes the common strain,
A **Nymph** his **Mistress** and himself a **Swain** ;
With no sad scenes he clouds his tuneful prayer,
But all, to look like her, is painted fair.

I grant indeed that fields and flocks have charms
For him that grazes or for him that farms ;
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious **Natives** of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads and dewy temples play ;

While some, with feebler heads and fainter hearts,
Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts:
'Then shall I dare these real ills to hide,
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?

No; cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other Shepherds dwell with other Mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the Cot,
As Truth will paint it and as Bards will not:
For you, ye Poor, of letter'd scorn complain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour and bow'd down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can Poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?

Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around,
So looks the Nymph whom wretched arts adorn,
Betray'd by Man, then left for Man to scorn;

Whose cheek in vain assumes the mimic rose,
While her sad eyes the troubled breast disclose ;
Whose outward splendour is but folly's dress,
Exposing most, when most it gilds distress.

Here joyless roam a wild amphibious race,
With sullen woe display'd in every face ;
Who, far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye.

Here too the lawless Merchant of the main
Draws from his plough th' intoxicated Swain ;
Want only claim'd the labour of the day,
But vice now steals his nightly rest away.

Where are the Swains, who, daily labour done
With rural games play'd down the setting sun ;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the pond'rous quoit obliquely fall ;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engag'd some artful stripling of the throng,

And fell beneath him, foil'd, while far around,
Hoarse triumph rose and rocks return'd the sound?
Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or, when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or, yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.

Here, wand'ring long, amid these frowning fields,
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race;
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,
Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run high,
On the tost vessel bend their eager eye;

Which to their coast directs its vent'rous way,
Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey.

As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land ;
While still for flight the ready wing is spread :
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled ;
Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cry'd, Ah ! hapless they who still remain ;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore ;
Till some fierce tide, with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away ;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to door,
And begs a poor protection from the poor !

But these are scenes where Nature's niggard hand
Gave a spare portion to the famish'd land ;
Hers is the fault, if here Mankind complain
Of fruitless toil and labour spent in vain ;

But yet in other scenes more fair in view,
Where Plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few—
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore,
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.

Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Thro' fens and marshy moors their steps pursue,
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew;

Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.

Amid this tribe too oft a manly pride
Strives in strong toil the fainting heart to hide ;
There may you see the Youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame ;
Yet, urg'd along, and proudly loth to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field :
Till long-contending nature droops at last,
Declining health rejects his poor repast,
His cheerless Spouse the coming danger sees,
And mutual murmurs urge the slow disease.

Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
'Though the head droops not, that the heart is well ;
Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,
Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share !
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal ;

Homely not wholesome, plain not plenteous, such
As you who praise would never deign to touch.

Ye gentle souls, who dream of Rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please ;
Go ! if the peaceful Cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if Peace be there ;
If Peace be his—that drooping weary Sire,
Or theirs, that Offspring round their feeble fire ;
Or hers, that Matron pale, whose trembling hand
'Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand !

Nor yet can Time itself obtain for these
Life's latest comforts, due respect and ease ;
For yonder see that hoary Swain, whose age
Can with no cares except its own engage ;
Who, propt on that rude staff, looks up to see
The bare arms broken from the withering tree,
On which, a boy, he climb'd the loftiest bough,
Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.

He once was chief in all the rustic trade ;
His steady hand the straightest furrow made ;
Full many a prize he won, and still is proud
To find the triumphs of his youth allow'd ;
A transient pleasure sparkles in his eyes,
He hears and smiles, then thinks again and sighs :
For now he journeys to his grave in pain ;
The rich disdain him ; nay, the poor disdain :
Alternate Masters now their Slave command,
Urge the weak efforts of his feeble hand,
And, when his age attempts its task in vain,
With ruthless taunts, of lazy poor complain *.
Oft may you see him, when he tends the sheep,
His winter-charge, beneath the hillock weep ;

* A pauper who, being nearly past his labour, is employed by different masters for a length of time, proportioned to their occupations.

Oft hear him murmur to the winds that blow
O'er his white locks and bury them in snow,
When, rous'd by rage and muttering in the morn,
He mends the broken hedge with icy thorn:—

“ Why do I live, when I desire to be

“ At once from Life and Life's long labour free ?

“ Like leaves in Spring, the young are blown away,

“ Without the sorrows of a slow decay ;

“ I, like yon wither'd leaf, remain behind,

“ Nipt by the frost and shivering in the wind ;

“ There it abides till younger buds come on,

“ As I, now all my fellow-swains are gone ;

“ Then, from the rising generation thrust,

“ It falls, like me, unnoticed to the dust.

“ These fruitful fields, these numerous flocks I see,

“ Are others' gain, but killing cares to me ;

“ To me the children of my youth are lords,

“ Cool in their looks, but hasty in their words :

“ Wants of their own demand their care ; and who
“ Feels his own want and succours others too ?
“ A lonely, wretched man, in pain I go,
“ None need my help and none relieve my woe ;
“ Then let my bones beneath the turf be laid,
“ And men forget the wretch they would not aid.”

Thus groan the Old, till, by disease opprest,
They taste a final woe and then they rest.

Theirs is yon House that holds the Parish-Poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door ;
There, where the putrid vapours, flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day ;—
There Children dwell who know no Parents' care ;
Parents, who know no Children's love, dwell there !
Heart-broken Matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken Wives and Mothers never wed ;
Dejected Widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled Age with more than childhood fears ;

The Lame, the Blind, and, far the happiest they !
The moping Idiot and the Madman gay.

Here too the Sick their final doom receive,
Here brought, amid the scenes of grief, to grieve,
Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow,
Mixt with the clamours of the crowd below ;
Here sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan,
And the cold charities of man to man :
Whose laws indeed for ruin'd Age provide,
And strong compulsion plucks the scrap from pride ;
But still that scrap is bought with many a sigh,
And pride embitters what it can't deny.

Say ye, opprest by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose ;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye, to read the distant glance ;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever-new disease ;

Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despis'd, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath,
Where all that's wretched paves the way for death?

Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters from the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between;
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives way
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:
Here, on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies,
Or wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;
No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Or promise hope till sickness wears a smile.

But soon a loud and hasty summons calls,
Shakes the thin roof, and echoes round the walls ;
Anon, a Figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit ;
With looks unalter'd by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go,
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries Fate and Physic in his eye :
A potent Quack, long vers'd in human ills,
Who first insults the victim whom he kills ;
Whose murd'rous hand a drowsy Bench protect,
And whose most tender mercy is neglect.

Paid by the Parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer ;
In haste he seeks the bed where Misery lies,
Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes ;
And, some habitual queries hurried o'er,
Without reply, he rushes on the door :

His drooping Patient, long inur'd to pain,
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain ;
He ceases now the feeble help to crave
Of Man; and silent sinks into the grave.

But ere his death some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears which " bold bad" men despise ;
Fain would he ask the Parish-Priest to prove
His title certain to the Joys above:
For this he sends the murmuring Nurse, who calls
The holy Stranger to these dismal walls :
And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
He, " passing rich with forty pounds a year ?"
Ah! no; a Shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little Flock :
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task,
As much as God or Man can fairly ask ;
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning and to feasts the night ;

None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chace, to cheer them or to chide ;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
And, skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play :
Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the Sick-Man's bed,
To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that e'en the pious feel ?

Now once again the gloomy scene explore,
Less gloomy now ; the bitter hour is o'er,
The Man of many Sorrows sighs no more.—
Up yonder hill, behold how sadly slow
The bier moves winding from the vale below ;
There lie the happy Dead from trouble free,
And the glad Parish pays the frugal fee :
No more, O Death! thy victim starts to hear
Churchwarden stern, or kingly Overseer ;

No more the Farmer claims his humble bow,
Thou art his lord, the best of tyrants thou !
Now to the church behold the Mourners come,
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb ;
The Village-Children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their ancient friend :
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch rul'd their little court ;
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all ;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand
Silent and sad, and gazing, hand in hand ;
While bending low, their eager eyes explore
The mingled relicks of the Parish-Poor :
The bell tolls late, the moping owl flies round,
Fear marks the flight and magnifies the sound ;
The busy Priest, detain'd by weightier care,
Defers his duty till the day of prayer ;

And, waiting long, the crowd retire distrest,
To think a Poor-Man's bones should lie unblest *.

* Some apology is due for the insertion of a circumstance by no means common: That it has been a subject for complaint in any place, is a sufficient reason for its being reckoned among the evils which may happen to the Poor, and which must happen to them exclusively; nevertheless, it is just to remark, that such neglect is very rare in any part of the kingdom, and in many parts is totally unknown.



THE VILLAGE:

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

There are found, amid the Evils of a laborious Life, some Views of Tranquillity and Happiness.—The Repose and Pleasure of a Summer Sabbath: interrupted by Intoxication and Dispute. — Village Detraction. — Complaints of the Squire. — The Evening Riots: — Justice. — Reasons for this unpleasant View of Rustic Life: the Effect it should have upon the Lower Classes; and the Higher.—These last have their peculiar Distresses: Exemplified in the Life and heroic Death of *Lord Robert Manners*.—Concluding Address to *His Grace the Duke of Rutland*.

THE
VILLAGE:

BOOK II.

NO longer truth, though shown in verse, disdain,
But own the Village-Life a life of pain:
I too must yield, that oft amid these woes
Are gleams of transient mirth and hours of sweet repose,
Such as you find on yonder sportive Green,
The 'Squire's tall gate and Churchway-walk between;
Where loitering stray a little tribe of friends,
On a fair Sunday when the sermon ends :

Then Rural Beaux their best attire put on,
To win their Nymphs, as other Nymphs are won ;
While those long wed go plain, and by degrees,
Like other husbands, quit their care to please.
Some of the sermon talk, a sober crowd,
And loudly praise, if it were preach'd aloud ;
Some on the labours of the week look round,
Feel their own worth, and think their toil renown'd ;
While some, whose hopes to no renown extend,
Are only pleas'd to find their labours end.

Thus, as their hours glide on, with pleasure fraught,
Their careful Masters brood the painful thought ;
Much in their mind they murmur and lament,
That one fair day should be so idly spent ;
And think that Heaven deals hard, to tithe their store
And tax their time for Preachers and the Poor.

Yet still, ye humbler friends, enjoy your hour,
This is your portion, yet unclaim'd of power ;

This is Heaven's gift to weary men opprest,
And seems the type of their expected rest:
But yours, alas! are joys that soon decay;
Frail joys, begun and ended with the day;
Or yet, while day permits those joys to reign,
The Village vices drive them from the plain.

See the stout Churl, in drunken fury great,
Strike the bare bosom of his teeming Mate!
His naked vices, rude and unrefin'd,
Exert their open empire o'er the mind;
But can we less the senseless rage despise,
Because the savage acts without disguise?

Yet here disguise, the City's vice, is seen,
And Slander steals along and taints the Green:
At her approach domestic peace is gone,
Domestic broils at her approach come on;
She to the Wife the Husband's crime conveys,
She tells the Husband when his Consort strays;

Her busy tongue, through all the little state,
Diffuses doubt, suspicion, and debate ;
Peace, tim'rous goddess! quits her old domain,
In sentiment and song content to reign.

Nor are the Nymphs that breathe the rural air
So fair as Cynthia's, nor so chaste as fair :
These to the Town afford each fresher face,
And the Clown's trull receives the Peer's embrace ;
From whom, should chance again convey her down,
The Peer's disease in turn attacks the Clown.

Here too the 'Squire, or 'squire-like Farmer, talk,
How round their regions nightly pilferers walk ;
How from their ponds the fish are borne, and all
The rip'ning treasures from their lofty wall ;
How meaner rivals in their sports delight,
Just rich enough to claim a doubtful right ;
Who take a licence round their fields to stray,
A mongrel race ! the poachers of the day.

And hark ! the riots of the Green begin,
That sprang at first from yonder noisy Inn ;
What time the weekly pay was vanish'd all,
And the slow Hostess scor'd the threat'ning wall ;
What time they ask'd, their friendly feast to close,
A final cup, and that will make them foes ;
When blows ensue that break the arm of toil,
And rustic battle ends the boobies' broil.

Save when to yonder Hall they bend their way,
Where the grave Justice ends the grievous fray ;
He who recites, to keep the Poor in awe,
The Law's vast volume—for he knows the Law :—
To him with anger or with shame repair
The injur'd Peasant and deluded Fair.

Lo ! at his throne the silent Nymph appears,
Frail by her shape, but modest in her tears ;
And while she stands abash'd, with conscious eye,
Some favourite Female of her Judge glides by,

Who views with scornful glance the Strumpet's fate,
And thanks the stars that made her Keeper great :
Near her the Swain, about to bear for life
One certain evil, doubts 'twixt war and wife ;
But, while the falt'ring Damsel takes her oath,
Consents to wed, and so secures them both.

Yet why, you ask, these humble crimes relate,
Why make the Poor as guilty as the Great ?
To show the Great, those mightier sons of Pride,
How near in vice the lowest are allied ;
Such are their natures and their passions such,
But these disguise too little, those too much :
So shall the man of power and pleasure see
In his own Slave as vile a wretch as he ;
In his luxurious Lord the Servant find
His own low pleasures and degenerate mind :
And each in all the kindred vices trace,
Of a poor, -blind, bewilder'd, erring race ;

Who, a short time in varied fortune past,
Die, and are equal in the dust at last.

And you, ye Poor, who still lament your fate,
Forbear to envy those you call the Great ;
And know, amid those blessings they possess,
They are, like you, the victims of distress ;
While sloth with many a pang torments her slave,
Fear waits on guilt, and danger shakes the brave.

Oh ! if in life one noble Chief appears,
Great in his name, while blooming in his years ;
Born to enjoy whate'er delights mankind,
And yet to all you feel or fear resign'd ;
Who gave up joys and hopes to you unknown,
For pains and dangers greater than your own :
If such there be, then let your murmurs cease,
Think, think of him, and take your lot in peace.

And such there was:—Oh ! grief, that checks our pride,
Weeping we say there was,—for MANNERS died :

Belov'd of Heav'n, these humble lines forgive,
That sing of Thee*, and thus aspire to live.

As the tall oak, whose vigorous branches form
An ample shade and brave the wildest storm,
High o'er the subject wood is seen to grow,
The guard and glory of the trees below ;
Till on its head the fiery bolt descends,
And o'er the plain the shatter'd trunk extends ;

* Lord ROBERT MANNERS, the youngest son of the Marquis of Granby and the Lady Frances Seymour, daughter of Charles Duke of Somerset, was born the 5th of February, 1758 ; and was placed with his brother, the late Duke of Rutland, at Eton-School, where he acquired, and ever after retained, a considerable knowledge of the classical authors.

Lord ROBERT, after going through the duties of his profession on board different ships, was made Captain of the *Resolution*, and commanded her in nine different actions, besides the last memorable one on the 2d of April, 1782, when, in breaking the French line of battle, he received the wounds which terminated his life, in the 24th year of his age.—See *the Annual Register*, printed for Mr. Dodsley.

Yet then it lies, all wond'rous as before,
And still the glory, though the guard no more :
So THOU, when every virtue, every grace,
Rose in thy soul, or shone within thy face ;
When, though the Son of GRANBY, Thou wert known
Less by thy Father's glory than thy own ;
When Honour lov'd and gave Thee every charm,
Fire to thy eye and vigour to thy arm ;
Then from our lofty hopes and longing eyes,
Fate and thy virtues call'd Thee to the Skies ;
Yet still we wonder at thy tow'ring fame,
And losing Thee, still dwell upon thy Name.

Oh ! ever honour'd, ever valued ! say,
What verse can praise Thee, or what work repay ?
Yet verse (in all we can) thy worth repays,
Nor trusts the tardy zeal of future days ;—
Honours for Thee thy country shall prepare,
Thee in their hearts, the good, the brave shall bear ;

To deeds like thine shall noblest chiefs aspire,
The Muse shall mourn Thee, and the world admiré.

In future times, when smit with Glory's charms,
The untry'd Youth first quits a Father's arms;—
“ Oh! be like him,” the weeping Sire shall say;
“ Like MANNERS walk, who walk'd in Honour's way;
“ In danger foremost, yet in death sedate,
“ Oh! be like Him in all things, but his fate!”

If for that Fate such public tears be shed,
That Victory seems to die now THOU art dead;
How shall a Friend his nearer hope resign,
That Friend a Brother, and whose soul was thine;
By what bold lines shall we his grief express,
Or by what soothing numbers make it less?

'Tis not, I know, the chiming of a song,
Nor all the powers that to the Muse belong,
Words aptly cull'd and meanings well exprest,
Can calm the sorrows of a wounded breast;

But Virtue, soother of the fiercest pains,
Shall heal that bosom, RUTLAND, where she reigns.

Yet hard the task to heal the bleeding heart,
To bid the still-recurring thoughts depart,
Tame the fierce grief and stem the rising sigh,
And curb rebellious passion, with reply ;
Calmly to dwell on all that pleas'd before,
And yet to know that all shall please no more ;—
Oh ! glorious labour of the soul, to save
Her captive powers, and bravely mourn the Brave.

To such these thoughts will lasting comfort give—
Life is not measur'd by the time we live :
'Tis not an even course of threescore years,
A life of narrow views and paltry fears,
Grey-hairs and wrinkles and the cares they bring,
That take from death the terrors or the sting ;
But 'tis the gen'rous Spirit, mounting high
Above the world, that native of the Sky ;

The noble Spirit, that, in dangers brave,
Calmly looks on, or looks beyond the grave :—
Such MANNERS was, so he resign'd his breath,
If in a glorious, then a timely death.

Cease then that grief and let those tears subside ;
If Passion rule us, be that passion pride ;
If Reason, Reason bids us strive to raise
Our fallen hearts, and be like Him we praise !
Or if Affection still the soul subdue,
Bring all his virtues, all his worth in view,
And let Affection find its comfort too :
For how can Grief so deeply wound the heart,
When Admiration claims so large a part ?

Grief is a foe, expel him then thy soul,
Let nobler thoughts the nearer views controul !
Oh! make the Age to come thy better care,
See other RUTLANDS, other GRANBYS there !

And as thy thoughts through streaming ages glide,
See other heroes die as MANNERS died :
And from their fate, thy Race shall nobler grow,
As trees shoot upwards that are prun'd below ;
Or as Old THAMES, borne down with decent pride,
Sees his young streams run warbling at his side ;
Though some, by art cut off, no longer run,
And some are lost beneath the summer's sun—
Yet the pure stream moves on, and as it moves
Its power increases and its use improves ;
While Plenty round its spacious waves bestow,
Still it flows on, and shall for ever flow.



THE
PARISH REGISTER:

A Poem.

IN THREE PARTS.

INTRODUCTION.

The Village Register considered, as containing principally the Annals of the Poor.—State of the Peasantry as meliorated by Frugality and Industry.—The Cottage of an industrious Peasant; its Ornaments.—Prints and Books.—The Garden; its Satisfactions.—The State of the Poor, when improvident and vicious.—The Row or Street, and its Inhabitants.—The Dwelling of One of these.—A Public House.—Garden and its Appendages.—Gamsters; rustic Sharpers, &c.—Conclusion of the Introductory Part.

THE PARISH REGISTER :

PART I.

BAPTISMS.

ARGUMENT.

The Child of the Miller's Daughter, and relation of her Misfortune.—A frugal Couple: their kind of Frugality.—Plea of the Mother of a natural Child: her Churching.—Large Family of *Gerard Ablett*: his apprehensions: Comparison between his State and that of the wealthy Farmer his Master: his Consolation.—An Old Man's Anxiety for an Heir: the Jealousy of another on having many.—Characters of the Grocer *Dawkins* and his Friend: their different kinds of Disappointment.—Three Infants named.—An Orphan Girl and Village School-mistress.—Gardener's Child: Pedantry and Conceit of the Father: his Botanical Discourse: Method of fixing the Embryo fruit of Cucumbers.—Absurd effects of Rustic Vanity: observed in the names of their children.—Relation of the Vestry Debate on a Foundling: *Sir Richard Monday*.—Children of various Inhabitants.—The poor Farmer.—Children of a Profligate: his Character and Fate.—Conclusion.

THE
PARISH REGISTER:

PART I.

Baptisms.

Tum porro puer (ut sævis projectus ab undis,
Navita) nudus humi jacet infans indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, — —

Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est,
Cui tantum in vitâ restat transire malorum.

Lucret. de Nat. Rerum, lib. 5.

THE Year revolves, and I again explore
The simple Annals of my Parish-Poor ;
What Infant-members in my flock appear,
What Pairs I blest in the departed year ;
And who, of Old or Young, or Nymphs or Swains,
Are lost to Life, its pleasures and its pains.

No Muse I ask, before my view to bring
The humble actions of the Swains I sing.—
How pass'd the Youthful, how the Old their days;
Who sank in sloth, and who aspir'd to praise;
Their tempers, manners, morals, customs, arts,
What parts they had, and how they 'mploy'd their parts;
By what elated, sooth'd, seduc'd, deprest,
Full well I know—these Records give the rest.

Is there a place, save one the Poet sees,
A land of love, of liberty and ease;
Where labour wearies not nor cares suppress
Th' eternal flow of rustic happiness;
Where no proud mansion frowns in awful state,
Or keeps the sunshine from the cottage-gate;
Where Young and Old, intent on pleasure, throng,
And half man's life is holiday and song?
Vain search for scenes like these! no view appears,
By sighs unruffled or unstain'd by tears;

Since vice the world subdued and waters drown'd,
Auburn and *Eden* can no more be found.

Hence good and evil mix'd, but Man has skill
And power to part them, when he feels the will !
Toil, care, and patience bless th' abstemious few,
Fear, shame, and want the thoughtless herd pursue.

Behold the Cot ! where thrives th' industrious Swain,
Source of his pride, his pleasure and his gain ;
Screen'd from the winter's wind, the sun's last ray
Smiles on the window and prolongs the day ;
Projecting thatch the woodbine's branches stop,
And turn their blossoms to the casement's top :
All need requires is in that Cot contain'd,
And much that taste untaught and unrestrain'd
Surveys delighted ; there she loves to trace,
In one gay picture, all the Royal Race ;
Around the walls are Heroes, Lovers, Kings ;
The print that shows them and the verse that sings.

Here the last *Lewis* on his throne is seen,
And there he stands imprison'd, and his Queen;
To these the Mother takes her Child and shows
What grateful duty to his God he owes;
Who gives to him, a happy home, where he
Lives and enjoys his freedom with the free;
When Kings and Queens, dethron'd, insulted, tried,
Are all these blessings of the Poor denied.

There is *King Charles*, and all his Golden Rules,
Who prov'd Misfortune's was the best of schools:
And there his Son, who, tried by years of pain,
Prov'd that misfortunes may be sent in vain.

The Magic-mill that grinds the gran'nams young,
Close at the side of kind *Godiva* hung;
She, of her favourite place the pride and joy,
Of charms at once most lavish and most coy,
By wanton act, the purest fame could raise,
And give the boldest deed the chastest praise.

There stands the stoutest *Ox* in England fed ;
There fights the boldest *Jew*, Whitechapel-bred ;
And here *Saint Monday's* worthy votaries live,
In all the joys that ale and skittles give.

Now lo! in Egypt's coast that hostile fleet,
By nations dreaded and by NELSON beat ;
And here shall soon another triumph come,
A deed of glory in a day of gloom ;
Distressing glory ! grievous boon of fate !
The proudest conquest, at the dearest rate.

On shelf of deal beside the cuckoo-clock,
Of cottage-reading rests the chosen stock ;
Learning we lack, not books, but have a kind
For all our wants, a meat for every mind :
The Tale for wonder and the Joke for whim,
The half-sung Sermon and the half-groan'd Hymn.

No need of classing ; each within its place,
The feeling finger in the dark can trace ;

“ First from the corner, farthest from the wall,”
Such all the rules and they suffice for all.

There pious works for Sunday's use are found ;
Companions for that Bible newly bound ;
That Bible, bought by sixpence weekly sav'd,
Has choicest prints by famous hands engrav'd ;
Has choicest notes by many a famous head,
Such as to doubt, have rustic readers led ;
Have made them stop to reason *why ?* and *how ?*
And, where they once agreed, to cavil now.

Oh ! rather give me commentators plain,
Who with no deep researches vex the brain ;
Who from the dark and doubtful love to run,
And hold their glimmering tapers to the sun ;
Who simple truth with nine-fold reasons back,
And guard the point no enemies attack.

Bunyan's fam'd *Pilgrim* rests that shelf upon,
A genius rare but rude was honest *John* ;

Not one who, early by the Muse beguil'd,
Drank from her well the waters undefil'd ;
Not one who slowly gain'd the hill sublime,
Then often sipp'd and little at a time ;
But one who dabbled in the sacred springs,
And drank them muddy, mix'd with baser things.

Here to *interpret dreams* we read the rules,
Science our own ! and never taught in schools ;
In moles and specks we Fortune's gifts discern,
And Fate's fix'd will from Nature's wanderings learn.

Of Hermit *Quarle* we read, in island rare,
Far from mankind and seeming far from care ;
Safe from all want, and sound in every limb ;
Yes ! there was he and there was care with him.

Unbound and heap'd, these valued works beside,
Laid humbler works, the pedler's pack supplied ;
Yet these, long since, have all acquir'd a name ;
The *Wandering Jew* has found his way to fame ;

And fame, denied to many a labour'd song,
Crowns *Thumb* the great, and *Hickerthrift* the strong.

There too is he, by wizard-power upheld,
Jack, by whose arm the giant-brood were quell'd :
His shoes of swiftness on his feet he plac'd ;
His coat of darkness on his loins he brac'd ;
His sword of sharpness in his hand he took,
And off the heads of doughty giants stroke :
Their glaring eyes beheld no mortal near ;
No sound of feet alarm'd the drowsy ear ;
No English blood their pagan sense could smell,
But heads dropt headlong, wondering why they fell.

These are the Peasant's joy, when, plac'd at ease,
Half his delighted offspring mount his knees.

To every cot the lord's indulgent mind
Has a small space for garden-ground assign'd ;
Here—till return of morn dismiss'd the farm—
The careful Peasant plies the sinewy arm,

Warm'd as he works, and casts his look around
On every foot of that improving ground:
It is his own he sees; his Master's eye
Peers not about, some secret fault to spy;
Nor voice severe is there, nor censure known;
Hope, profit, pleasure,—they are all his own.

Here grow the humble *cives*, and, hard by them,
The *leek* with crown globose and reedy stem;
High climb his pulse in many an even row,
Deep strike the ponderous roots in soil below;
And herbs of potent smell and pungent taste,
Give a warm relish to the night's repast.

Apples and cherries grafted by his hand,
And cluster'd nuts for neighbouring market stand.

Nor thus concludes his labour; near the cot,
The reed-fence rises round some fav'rite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,
Proud hyacinths, the least some florist's prize,
Tulips tall-stemm'd and pounc'd auriculas rise.

Here on a Sunday-eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends ;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem and gaily they agree.

What, though fastidious ears may shun the speech,
Where all are talkers and where none can teach ;
Where still the welcome and the words are old,
And the same stories are for ever told ;
Yet theirs is joy that, bursting from the heart,
Prompts the glad tongue these nothings to impart ;
That forms these tones of gladness we despise,
That lifts their steps, that sparkles in their eyes ;
That talks or laughs or runs or shouts or plays,
And speaks in all their looks and all their ways.

Fair scenes of peace ! ye might detain us long,
But vice and misery now demand the song ;
And turn our view from dwellings simply neat,
To this infected Row, we term our Street.

Here, in cabal, a disputatious crew
Each evening meet; the Sot, the Cheat, the Shrew :
Riots are nightly heard :—the curse, the cries
Of beaten Wife, perverse in her replies ;
While shrieking Children hold each threat'ning hand,
And sometimes life, and sometimes food demand :
Boys, in their first-stol'n rags, to swear begin,
And Girls, who heed not dress, are skill'd in gin :
Snarers and Smugglers here their gains divide ;
Ensnaring females here their victims hide ;
And here is one, the Sybil of the Row,
Who knows all secrets, or affects to know.
Seeking their fate, to her the simple run,
To her the guilty, theirs awhile to shun ;
Mistress of worthless arts, deprav'd in will,
Her care unblest and unrepaid her skill,
Slave to the tribe, to whose command she stoops,
And poorer than the poorest maid she dupes.

Between the road-way and the walls, offence
Invades all eyes and strikes on every sense :
There lie, obscene, at every open door,
Heaps from the hearth and sweepings from the floor,
And day by day the mingled masses grow,
As sinks are disembogued and kennels flow.

There hungry dogs from hungry children steal,
There pigs and chickens quarrel for a meal ;
There dropsied infants wail without redress,
And all is want and woe and wretchedness :
Yet should these boys, with bodies bronz'd and bare,
High-swoln and hard, outlive that lack of care—
Forc'd on some farm, the unexerted strength,
Though loth to action, is compell'd at length,
When warm'd by health, as serpents in the spring,
Aside their slough of indolence they fling.

Yet, ere they go, a greater evil comes—
See ! crowded beds in those contiguous rooms ;

Beds but ill parted, by a paltry screen,
Of paper'd lath or curtain dropt between ;
Daughters and Sons to yon compartments creep,
And Parents here beside their Children sleep :
Ye who have power, these thoughtless people part,
Nor let the ear be first to taint the heart.

Come! search within, nor sight nor smell regard ;
The true physician walks the foulest ward.
See! on the floor, what frowzy patches rest !
What nauseous fragments on yon fractur'd chest!
What downy-dust beneath yon window-seat !
And round these posts that serve this bed for feet ;
This bed where all those tatter'd garments lie,
Worn by each sex, and now perforce thrown by !
See! as we gaze, an Infant lifts its head,
Left by neglect and burrow'd in that bed ;
The Mother-gossip has the love suppress,
An Infant's cry once waken'd in her breast ;

And daily prattles, as her round she takes,
(With strong resentment) of the want she makes.

Whence all these woes?—From want of virtuous will,
Of honest shame, of time-improving skill;
From want of care t' employ the vacant hour,
And want of ev'ry kind but want of power.

Here are no wheels for either wool or flax,
But packs of cards—made up of sundry packs;
Here is no clock, nor will they turn the glass,
And see how swift th' important moments pass;
Here are no books, but ballads on the wall,
Are some abusive, and indecent all;
Pistols are here, unpair'd; with nets and hooks,
Of every kind, for rivers, ponds, and brooks;
An ample flask that nightly rovers fill,
With recent poison from the Dutchman's still;
A box of tools, with wires of various size,
Frocks, wigs and hats, for night or day disguise,
And bludgeons stout to gain or guard a prize.

To every house belongs a space of ground,
Of equal size, once fenc'd with paling round;
That paling now by slothful waste destroy'd,
Dead gorse and stumps of elder fill the void;
Save in the centre-spot, whose walls of clay
Hide sots and striplings at their drink or play:
Within, a board, beneath a til'd retreat,
Allures the bubble and maintains the cheat;
Where heavy ale in spots like varnish shows,
Where chalky tallies yet remain in rows;
Black pipes and broken jugs the seats defile,
The walls and windows, rhymes and reck'nings vile;
Prints of the meanest kind disgrace the door,
And cards, in curses torn, lie fragments on the floor.

Here his poor bird th' inhuman Cocker brings,
Arms his hard heel and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds.

Struck through the brain, depriv'd of both his eyes,
The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies ;
Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
And reel and stagger at each feeble blow :
When fall'n, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
His blood-stain'd arms, for other deaths assumes ;
And damns the Craven-fowl, that lost his stake,
And only bled and perish'd for his sake.

Such are our Peasants, those to whom we yield
Praise with relief, the fathers of the field ;
And these who take from our reluctant hands,
What *Burn* advises or the Bench commands.

Our Farmers round, well pleas'd with constant gain,
Like other farmers, flourish and complain.—
These are our groups ; our Portraits next appear,
And close our exhibition for the year.

WITH evil omen, we that year begin :

A Child of Shame,—stern Justice adds, of Sin,
Is first recorded;—I would hide the deed,
But vain the wish ; I sigh and I proceed :
And could I well th' instructive truth convey,
'Twould warn the giddy and awake the gay.

Of all the Nymphs, who gave our Village grace,
The *Miller's* Daughter had the fairest face :
Proud was the Miller ; money was his pride,
He rode to market, as our farmers ride,
And 'twas his boast, inspir'd by spirits, there,
His favourite *Lucy* should be rich as fair ;
But she must meek and still obedient prove,
And not presume, without his leave, to love.

A youthful *Sailor* heard him ;—“ Ha !” quoth he,
“ This *Miller's* Maiden is a prize for me ;
“ Her charms I love, his riches I desire,
“ And all his threats but fan the kindling fire ;

“ My ebbing purse, no more the foe shall fill,

“ But Love’s kind act and *Lucy* at the Mill.”

Thus thought the Youth, and soon the chace began,
Stretch’d all his sail, nor thought of pause or plan:
His trusty staff in his bold hand he took,
Like him and like his frigate, *Heart of Oak* ;
Fresh were his features, his attire was new ;
Clean was his linen and his jacket blue :
Of finest *jean*, his trowsers, tight and trim,
Brush’d the large buckle at the silver rim.

He soon arriv’d, he trac’d the Village-Green,
There saw the Maid, and was with pleasure seen ;
Then talk’d of love, till *Lucy*’s yielding heart
Confess’d ’twas painful, though ’twas right to part.

“ For ah ! my Father has a haughty soul,
“ Whom best he loves, he loves but to control ;
“ Me to some churl in bargain he’ll consign,
“ And make some tyrant of the Parish mine :

“ Cold is his heart, and he with looks severe
“ Has often forc’d, but never shed the tear ;
“ Save, when my Mother died, some drops express’d
“ A kind of sorrow for a Wife at rest:—
“ To me a Master’s stern regard is shown,
“ I’m like his steed, priz’d highly as his own ;
“ Strok’d but corrected, threaten’d when supplied,
“ His slave and boast, his victim and his pride.”
 ‘ Cheer up, my lass ! I’ll to thy father go,
 ‘ The *Miller* cannot be the Sailor’s foe ;
 ‘ Both live by Heaven’s free gale that plays aloud
 ‘ In the stretch’d canvass and the piping shroud ;
 ‘ The rush of winds, the flapping sails above,
 ‘ And rattling planks within, are sounds *we* love ;
 ‘ Calms are our dread ; when tempests plough the deep
 ‘ We take a reef, and to the rocking sleep.’
 “ Ha !” quoth the *Miller*, mov’d at speech so rash,
“ Art thou like me ? then where thy notes and cash ?

“ Away to *Wapping*, and a wife command,
“ With all thy wealth, a guinea, in thine hand ;
“ There with thy messmates quaff the muddy cheer,
“ And leave my *Lucy* for thy betters here.”

‘ Revenge ! revenge !’ the angry Lover cried,
Then sought the Nymph, and ‘ Be thou now my bride.’
Bride had she been, but they no priest could move
To bind in law, the couple bound by love.

What sought these Lovers then by day, by night ?
But stolen moments of disturb’d delight ;
Soft trembling tumults, terrors dearly priz’d,
Transports that pain’d and joys that agoniz’d :
Till, the fond Damsel, pleas’d with Lad so trim,
Aw’d by her Parent and entic’d by him,
Her lovely form from savage power to save,
Gave—not her hand—but ALL she could, she gave.

Then came the day of shame, the grievous night,
The varying look, the wandering appetite ;

The joy assum'd, while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
 The forc'd sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs ;
 And every art, long us'd, but us'd in vain,
 To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.

Too eager caution shows some danger's near,
 The bully's bluster proves the coward's fear ;
 His sober step, the drunkard vainly tries,
 And nymphs expose the failings they disguise.

First, whispering *Gossips* were in parties seen ;
 Then louder *Scandal* walk'd the Village-green ;
 Next babbling *Folly* told the growing ill,
 And busy *Malice* dropt it at the Mill.

“ Go ! to thy curse and mine,” the Father said,
 “ Strife and confusion stalk around thy bed ;
 “ Want and a wailing brat thy portion be,
 “ Plague to thy fondness, as thy fault to me ;—
 “ Where skulks the villain ?”——

— ‘ On the ocean wide

‘ My *William* seeks a portion for his bride.’—

“ Vain be his search! but, till the traitor come,
“ The higler’s cottage be thy future home ;
“ There with his antient shrew and care abide,
“ And hide thy head,—thy shame thou canst not hide.”

Day after day was pass’d in pains and grief,
Week follow’d week,—and still was no relief :
Her boy was born—no lads nor lasses came
To grace the rite or give the child a name ;
Nor grave conceited Nurse, of office proud,
Bore the young Christian roaring through the crowd :
In a small chamber was my office done,
Where blinks through paper’d panes the setting sun ;
Where noisy sparrows, perch’d on penthouse near,
Chirp tuneless joy and mock the frequent tear ;
Bats on their webby wings in darkness move,
And feebly shriek their melancholy love.

No Sailor came; the months in terror fled!
Then news arriv’d—He fought, and he was DEAD !

At the lone Cottage *Lucy* lives, and still
Walks for her weekly pittance to the Mill ;
A mean seraglio there her father keeps,
Whose mirth insults her, as she stands and weeps ;
And sees the plenty, while compell'd to stay,
Her Father's pride, become his harlot's prey.

Throughout the lanes, she glides, at evening's close,
And softly lulls her infant to repose ;
Then sits and gazes, but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon the rimpling of the brook ;
And sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow :
And she too murmurs and begins to find
The solemn wanderings of a wounded mind :
Visions of terror, views of woe succeed,
The mind's impatience, to the body's need ;
By turns to that, by turns to this a prey,
She knows what reason yields and dreads what madness
may.

Next, with their Boy, a decent Couple came,
And call'd him *Robert*, 'twas his Father's name ;
Three Girls preceded, all by time endear'd,
And future births were neither hop'd nor fear'd :
Blest in each other, but to no excess ;
Health, quiet, comfort, form'd their happiness ;
Love all made up of torture and delight,
Was but mere madness in this couple's sight :
Susan could think, though not without a sigh,
If she were gone, who should her place supply ;
And *Robert*, half in earnest, half in jest,
Talk of her Spouse when he should be at rest :
Yet strange would either think it to be told,
Their love was cooling or their hearts were cold.
Few were their acres,—but, with these content,
They were, each pay-day, ready with their rent :
And few their wishes—what their farm denied,
The neighbouring town, at trifling cost, supplied.

If at the Draper's window *Susan* cast
A longing look, as with her goods she pass'd,
And, with the produce of the wheel and churn,
Bought her a Sunday-robe on her return ;
True to her maxim, she would take no rest,
Till care repaid that portion to the chest :
Or if, when loitering at the Whitsun-fair,
Her *Robert* spent some idle shillings there ;
Up at the barn, before the break of day,
He made his labour for th' indulgence pay :
Thus both—that waste itself might work in vain—
Wrought double tides, and all was well again.

Yet, though so prudent, there were times of joy,
(The day they wed, the christening of the boy,)
When to the wealthier farmers there was shown,
Welcome unfeign'd, and plenty like their own ;
For *Susan* serv'd the great, and had some pride
Among our topmost people to preside :

Yet in that plenty, in that welcome free,
 There was the guiding nice frugality,
 That, in the festal as the frugal day,
 Has, in a different mode, a sovereign sway ;
 As tides the same attractive influence know,
 In the least ebb and in their proudest flow ;
 The wise frugality, that does not give
 A life to saving, but that saves to live ;
 Sparing not pinching, mindful though not mean,
 O'er all presiding, yet in nothing seen.

Recorded next a Babe of love I trace !
 Of many loves, the Mother's fresh disgrace ;—
 “ Again, thou harlot ! could not all thy pain,
 “ All my reproof, thy wanton thoughts restrain ?”
 ‘ Alas ! your Reverence, wanton thoughts, I grant,
 ‘ Were once my motive, now the thoughts of want ;
 ‘ Women like me, as ducks in a decoy,
 Swim down a stream and seem to swim in joy ;

‘ Your sex pursue us, and our own disdain,
‘ Return is dreadful and escape is vain.
‘ Would men forsake us and would women strive
‘ To help the fall’n, their virtue might revive.’

For rite of churching soon she made her way,
In dread of scandal, should she miss the day:—
Two Matrons came! with them she humbly knelt,
Their action copied and their comforts felt,
From that great pain and peril to be free,
Though still in peril of that pain to be;
Alas! what numbers, like this amorous Dame,
Are quick to censure but are dead to shame!

Twin-Infants then appear, a Girl, a Boy,
Th’ o’erflowing cup of *Gerard Ablett’s* joy:
One had I nam’d in every year that pass’d
Since *Gerard* wed! and twins behold at last!
Well pleas’d, the Bridegroom smil’d to hear—“ A vine
“ Fruitful and spreading round the walls be thine,

“ And branch-like be thine offspring ! ”—*Gerard* then
Look'd joyful love, and softly said, ‘ Amen.’
Now of that vine he'd have no more increase,
Those playful branches now disturb his peace :
Them he beholds around his table spread,
But finds, the more the branch, the less the bread ;
And while they run his humble walls about,
They keep the sunshine of good-humour out.

Cease, man, to grieve ! thy Master's lot survey,
Whom Wife and Children, thou and thine obey ;
A farmer proud, beyond a farmer's pride,
Of all around the envy or the guide ;
Who trots to market on a steed so fine,
That when I meet him, I'm asham'd of mine ;
Whose board is high up-heap'd with generous fare,
Wich five stout sons and three tall daughters share :
Cease, man, to grieve, and listen to his care.

A few years fled, and all thy boys shall be
Lords of a cot, and labourers like thee :

Thy girls unportion'd neighb'ring youths shall lead,
Brides from my church, and thenceforth thou art freed :
But then thy Master shall of cares complain,
Care after care, a long connected train ;
His sons for farms shall ask a large supply,
For farmers' sons each gentle miss shall sigh ;
Thy Mistress, reasoning well of life's decay,
Shall ask a chaise and hardly brook delay ;
The smart young Cornet who, with so much grace,
Rode in the ranks and betted at the race,
While the vext parent rails at deed so rash,
Shall d—n his luck, and stretch his hand for cash.
Sad troubles, *Gerard!* now pertain to thee,
When thy rich Master seems from trouble free ;
But 'tis one fate at different times assign'd,
And thou shalt lose the cares that he must find.

“ Ah !” quoth our village Grocer, rich and old,
“ Would I might one such cause for care behold !”

To whom his Friend, ' Mine greater bliss would be,
' Would Heav'n take those my spouse assigns to me.'

Aged were both, that *Dawkins, Ditchem* this,
Who much of marriage thought, and much amiss ;
Both would delay, the one, till—riches gain'd,
The Son he wish'd might be to honour train'd ;
His Friend—lest fierce intruding heirs should come,
To waste his hoard and vex his quiet home.

Dawkins, a dealer once, on burthen'd back
Bore his whole substance in a pedler's pack ;
To dames discreet, the duties yet unpaid,
His stores of lace and hyson he convey'd :
When thus enrich'd, he chose at home to stop,
And fleece his neighbours in a new-built shop ;
Then woo'd a Spinster blithe, and hop'd, when wed,
For love's fair favours and a fruitful bed.

Not so his Friend ;—on Widow fair and staid,
He fix'd his eye, but he was much afraid ;

Yet woo'd ; while she, his hair of silver hue,
Demurely notic'd and her eye withdrew :
Doubtful he paus'd—" Ah! were I sure," he cried,
" No craving children would my gains divide ;
" Fair as she is, I would my Widow take,
" And live more largely for my Partner's sake."

With such their views some thoughtful years they pass'd,
And hoping, dreading, they were bound at last.
And what their fate ! Observe them as they go,
Comparing fear with fear and woe with woe.
" Humphrey !" said *Dawkins* ! " envy in my breast,
" Sickens to see thee in thy children blest ;
" They are thy joys, while I go grieving home,
" To a sad Spouse, and our eternal gloom :
" We look despondency ; no infant near,
" To bless the eye or win the parent's ear ;
" Our sudden heats and quarrels to allay,
" And soothe the petty sufferings of the day :

“ Alike our want, yet both the want reprove,
 “ Where are, I cry, these pledges of our love?
 “ When she, like Jacob’s wife, makes fierce reply,
 “ Yet fond—Oh! give me children, or I die;
 “ And I return—still childless doom’d to live
 “ Like the vex’d Patriarch—Are they mine to give?
 “ Ah! much I envy thee thy boys, who ride
 “ On poplar branch and canter at thy side;
 “ And girls, whose cheeks thy chin’s fierce fondness know,
 “ And with fresh beauty at the contact glow.”
 ‘ Oh! simple friend,’ said *Ditchem*, ‘ wouldst thou gain
 ‘ A father’s pleasure, by a husband’s pain?
 ‘ Alas! what pleasure—when some vig’rous boy
 ‘ Should swell thy pride, some rosy girl thy joy;
 ‘ Is it to doubt, who grafted this sweet flower,
 ‘ Or whence arose that spirit and that power?
 ‘ Four years I’ve wed; not one has pass’d in vain:
 ‘ Behold the fifth! behold, a babe again!

My Wife's gay friends th' unwelcome imp admire,
' And fill the room with gratulation dire :
' While I in silence sate, revolving all
' That influence antient men, or that befall ;
' A gay pert guest—Heav'n knows his business—came ;
' A glorious boy, he cried, and what the name ?
' Angry I growl'd,—My spirit cease to tease,
' Name it yourselves,—*Cain, Judas*, if you please ;
' His father's give him,—should you that explore,
' The devil's or your's :—I said, and sought the door.
' My tender Partner not a word or sigh
' Gives to my wrath, nor to my speech reply ;
' But takes her comforts, triumphs in my pain,
' And looks undaunted for a birth again.'

Heirs thus denied afflict the pining heart,
And thus afforded, jealous pangs impart ;
Let, therefore, none avoid, and none demand
These arrows number'd for the giant's hand.

Then with their Infants three, the Parents came,
And each assign'd—'twas all they had—a name ;
Names of no mark or price ! of them not one
Shall court our view on the sepulchral stone,
Or stop the Clerk, th' engraven scrolls to spell,
Or keep the Sexton from the sermon bell.

An Orphan-Girl succeeds : ere she was born,
Her Father died, her Mother on that morn :
The pious Mistress of the school sustains
Her Parents' part, nor their affection feigns,
But pitying feels : with due respect and joy,
I trace the matron at her lov'd employ ;
What time the striplings, wearied e'en with play,
Part at the closing of the summer's day,
And each by different path returns the well-known way—
Then I behold her at her cottage-door,
Frugal of light ;—her bible laid before,

When on her double duty she proceeds,
Of time as frugal—knitting as she reads :
Her idle neighbours, who approach to tell
Some trifling tale, her serious looks compel
To hear reluctant,—while the lads who pass,
In pure respect, walk silent on the grass ;
Then sinks the day, but not to rest she goes,
Till solemn prayers the daily duties close.

But I digress, and lo ! an Infant train
Appear, and call me to my task again.

‘ Why *Lonicera* wilt thou name thy child ?’

I ask’d the *Gardener’s* Wife, in accents mild :

“ We have a right,” replied the sturdy dame ;—

And *Lonicera* was the infant’s name.

If next a son shall yield our *Gardener* joy,

Then *Hyacinthus* shall be that fair boy ;

And if a girl, they will at length agree,

That *Belladonna* that fair maid shall be.

High-sounding words our worthy Gardener gets,
And at his club to wondering swains repeats ;
He then of *Rhus* and *Rhododendron* speaks,
And *Allium* calls his onions and his leeks ;
Nor weeds are now, for whence arose the weed,
Scarce plants, fair herbs and curious flowers proceed ;
Where *Cuckoo-pints* and *Dandelions* sprung,
(Gross names had they our plainer sires among,)
There *Arums*, there *Leontodons* we view,
And *Artemisia* grows, where *Wormwood* grew.

But though no weed exists his garden round,
From *Rumex* strong our Gardener frees his ground,
Takes soft *Senicio* from the yielding land,
And grasps the armed *Urtica* in his hand.

Not DARWIN'S self had more delight to sing
Of floral courtship, in th' awaken'd Spring,
Than *Peter Pratt*, who simpering loves to tell,
How rise the *Stamens*, as the *Pistils* swell ;

How bend and curl the moist-top to the spouse,
And give and take the vegetable vows;
How those esteem'd of old, but tips and chives,
Are tender husbands and obedient wives;
Who live and love within the sacred bower,—
That bridal bed, the vulgar term a flower.

Hear *Peter* proudly, to some humble friend,
A wondrous secret, in his science, lend :—
“ Would you advance the nuptial hour, and bring
“ The fruit of Autumn with the flowers of Spring ;
“ View that light frame where *Cucumis* lies spread,
“ And trace the husbands in their golden bed,
“ Three powder'd *Anthers* ;—then no more delay,
“ But to the *Stigma*'s tip their dust convey ;
“ Then by thyself, from prying glance secure,
“ Twirl the full tip and make your purpose sure ;
“ A long-abiding race the deed shall pay,
“ Nor one unblest abortion pine away.”

T' admire their friend's discourse our swains agree,
And call it science and philosophy.

'Tis good, 'tis pleasant, through th' advancing year,
To see unnumber'd growing forms appear ;
What leafy-life from Earth's broad bosom rise !
What insect-myriads seek the summer skies !
What scaly tribes in every streamlet move !
What plummy people sing in every grove !
All with the year awak'd, to life, delight, and love.
Then names are good, for how, without their aid,
Is knowledge, gain'd by man, to man convey'd ?
But from that source shall all our pleasures flow ?
Shall all our knowledge be those names to know ?
Then He, with memory blest, shall bear away
The palm from GREW, and MIDDLETON, and RAY :
No ! let us rather seek, in grove and field,
What food for wonder, what for use they yield ;

Some just remark from Nature's people bring,
And some new source of homage for her *King*.

Pride lives with all ; strange names our rustics give
To helpless infants, that their own may live ;
Pleas'd to be known, they'll some attention claim,
And find some by-way to the house of fame.

The straightest furrow lifts the ploughman's art,
The hat he gain'd has warmth for head and heart ;
The bowl that beats the greater number down
Of tottering nine-pins, gives to fame the clown ;
Or, foil'd in these, he opes his ample jaws,
And lets a frog leap down, to gain applause ;
Or grins for hours, or tipples for a week,
Or challenges a well-pinch'd pig to squeak :
Some idle deed, some child's preposterous name,
Shall make him known and give his folly fame.

To name an infant meet our village-sires,
Assembled all, as such event requires ;
Frequent and full, the rural sages sate,
And speakers many urg'd the long debate,—
Some harden'd knaves, who rov'd the country round,
Had left a babe within the parish-bound.—
First, of the fact they question'd—" Was it true?"
The Child was brought—" What then remain'd to do ?
" Was 't dead or living ?" This was fairly prov'd,—
'Twas pinch'd, it roar'd, and every doubt remov'd.
Then by what name th' unwelcome guest to call,
Was long a question, and it pos'd them all ;
For he who lent it to a babe unknown,
Censorious men might take it for his own :
They look'd about, they gravely spoke to all,
And not one *Richard* answer'd to the call.
Next they inquir'd the day, when, passing by,
Th' *unlucky* peasant heard the stranger's cry :

This known,—how food and raiment they might give,
Was next debated—for the rogue would live;
At last, with all their words and work content,
Back to their homes the prudent Vestry went,
And *Richard Monday* to the Workhouse sent.
There was he pinch'd and pitied, thump'd and fed,
And duly took his beatings and his bread;
Patient in all control, in all abuse,
He found contempt and kicking have their use:
Sad, silent, supple; bending to the blow,
A slave of slaves, the lowest of the low;
His pliant soul gave way to all things base,
He knew no shame, he dreaded no disgrace.
It seem'd, so well his passions he suppress'd,
No feeling stirr'd his ever-torpid breast;
Him might the meanest pauper bruise and cheat,
He was a footstool for the beggar's feet;
His were the legs that ran at all commands;
They us'd on all occasions *Richard's* hands;

His very soul was not his own ; he stole
As others order'd, and without a dole ;
In all disputes, on either part he lied,
And freely pledg'd his oath on either side ;
In all rebellions *Richard* join'd the rest,
In all detections *Richard* first confess'd :
Yet, though disgrac'd, he watch'd his time so well,
He rose in favour, when in fame he fell ;
Base was his usage, vile his whole employ,
And all despis'd and fed the pliant boy.
At length, " 'tis time he should abroad be sent,"
Was whisper'd near him,—and abroad he went ;
One morn they call'd him, *Richard* answer'd not ;
They doom'd him hanging and in time forgot,
Yet miss'd him long, as each, throughout the clan,
Found he " had better spar'd a better man."

Now *Richard's* talents for the world were fit,
He'd no small cunning and had some small wit ;

Had that calm look which seem'd to all assent,
And that complacent speech which nothing meant :
He'd but one care, and that he strove to hide,
How best for *Richard Monday* to provide.
Steel, through opposing plates, the magnet draws,
And steelly atoms culls from dust and straws ;
And thus our hero, to his interest true,
Gold through all bars and from each trifle drew ;
But still more surely round the world to go,
This fortune's child had neither friend nor foe.

Long lost to us, at last our man we trace,—
Sir Richard Monday died at *Monday-place* :
His Lady's worth, his Daughter's we peruse,
And find his Grandsons all as rich as Jews :
He gave reforming charities a sum,
And bought the blessings of the blind and dumb ;
Bequeath'd to missions money from the stocks,
And bibles issued from his private box ;

But to his native place severely just,
He left a pittance bound in rigid trust ;—
Two paltry pounds, on every quarter's-day,
(At church produc'd) for forty loaves should pay ;
A stinted gift, that to the parish shows,
He kept in mind their bounty and their blows !

To farmers three, the year has giv'n a son,
Finch on the Moor, and *French*, and *Middleton*.
Twice in this year a female *Giles* I see,
A *Spalding* once, and once a *Barnaby* :—
A humble man is he, and, when they meet,
Our farmers find him on a distant seat ;
There for their wit he serves a constant theme,—
“ They praise his dairy, they extol his team,
“ They ask the price of each unrivall'd steed,
“ And whence his sheep, that admirable breed ?

“ His thriving arts they beg he would explain,
“ And where he puts the money he must gain.
“ They have their daughters, but they fear their friend
“ Would think his sons too much would condescend ;—
“ They have their sons who would their fortunes try,
“ But fear his daughters will their suit deny.”

So runs the joke, while *James*, with sigh profound,
And face of care, looks moveless on the ground ;
His cares, his sighs, provoke the insult more,
And point the jest—for *Barnaby* is poor.

Last in my list, five untaught lads appear ;
Their father dead, compassion sent them here,—
For still that rustic infidel denied
To have their names with solemn rite applied :
His, a lone house, by Deadman's Dyke-way stood ;
And his, a nightly haunt, in Lonely-wood :

Each village inn has heard the ruffian boast,
That he believ'd ' in neither God nor ghost ;
' That, when the sod upon the sinner press'd,
' He, like the saint, had everlasting rest ;
' That never priest believ'd his doctrines true,
' But would, for profit, own himself a Jew,
' Or worship wood and stone, as honest heathen do ;
' That fools alone on future worlds rely,
' And all who die for faith, deserve to die.'

These maxims,—part th' Attorney's Clerk profess'd,
His own transcendent genius found the rest.
Our pious matrons heard, and, much amaz'd,
Gaz'd on the man, and trembled as they gaz'd ;
And now his face explor'd and now his feet,
Man's dreaded foe, in this bad man, to meet :
But him our drunkards as their champion rais'd,
Their bishop call'd, and as their hero prais'd ;

Though most, when sober, and the rest, when sick,
Had little question whence his bishoprick.

But he, triumphant spirit ! all things dar'd,
He poach'd the wood and on the warren snar'd ;
'Twas his, at cards, each novice to trepan,
And call the wants of rogues the rights of man ;
Wild as the winds, he let his offspring rove,
And deem'd the marriage-bond the bane of love.

What age and sickness, for a man so bold,
Had done, we know not ;—none beheld him old :
By night, as business urg'd, he sought the wood,—
The ditch was deep,—the rain had caus'd a flood,—
The foot-bridge fail'd,—he plung'd beneath the deep,
And slept, if truth were his, th' eternal sleep.

These have we nam'd ; on life's rough sea they sail,
With many a prosperous, many an adverse gale !

Where passion soon, like powerful winds, will rage,
And prudence, wearied, with their strength engage:
Then each, in aid, shall some companion ask,
For help or comfort in the tedious task;
And what that help—what joys from union flow,
What good or ill, we next prepare to show,
And row, meantime, our weary bark ashore,
As SPENCER his—but not with SPENCER'S oar.*

* Allusions of this kind are to be found in the *Fairy-Queen*.
See the end of the first book, and other places.

THE PARISH REGISTER :

PART II.

MARRIAGES.

ARGUMENT.

Previous Consideration necessary: yet not too long Delay.—
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parison between an antient and youthful Partner to a
Young Man.—Prudence of *Donald* the Gardener.—Parish
Wedding: the compelled Bridegroom: Day of Marriage,
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THE
PARISH REGISTER:

PART II.

Marriages.

Nubere si quæ voles, quamvis properabitis ambo,
Differ; habent parvæ commoda magna moræ.
Ovid. Fast. lib. 3.

DISPOS'D to wed, e'en while you hasten, stay;
There's great advantage in a small delay:
Thus OVID sang, and much the wise approve
This prudent maxim of the Priest of Love:
If poor, delay for future want prepares,
And eases humble life of half its cares;

If rich, delay shall brace the thoughtful mind,
T' endure the ills that e'en the happiest find :
Delay shall knowledge yield on either part,
And shew the value of the vanquish'd heart ;
The humours, passions, merits, failings prove,
And gently raise the veil that's worn by love ;
Love, that impatient guide !—too proud to think
Of vulgar wants, of clothing, meat and drink,
Urges our amorous swains their joys to seize,
And then, at rags and hunger frighten'd, flees :
Yet not too long in cold debate remain,
Till age, refrain not—but if old, refrain.

By no such rule, would Gaffer *Kirk* be tried ;
First in the year he led a blooming bride,
And stood a wither'd elder at her side.
Oh ! *Nathan ! Nathan !* at thy years, trepann'd,
To take a wanton harlot by the hand !

Thou, who wert us'd so tartly to express
Thy sense of matrimonial happiness,
Till every youth, whose bans at church were read,
Strove not to meet, or meeting, hung his head;
And every lass forbore at thee to look,
A sly old fish, too cunning for the hook;—
And now at sixty, that pert dame to see,
Of all thy savings mistress, and of thee;
Now will the lads, rememb'ring insults past,
Cry, "What, the wise-one in the trap at last!"

Fie! *Nathan!* fie! to let an artful jade
The close recesses of thine heart invade;
What grievous pangs! what suffering she'll impart,
And fill with anguish that rebellious heart;
For thou wilt strive incessantly, in vain,
By threatening speech, thy freedom to regain:
But she for conquest married, nor will prove
A dupe to thee, thine anger, or thy love;

Clamorous her tongue will be ;—of either sex,
 She'll gather friends around thee and perplex
 Thy doubtful soul ;—thy money she will waste,
 In the vain ramblings of a vulgar taste ;
 And will be happy to exert her power,
 In every eye, in thine, at every hour.

Then wilt thou bluster—“ No ! I will not rest,
 “ And see consum'd each shilling of my chest :”
 Thou wilt be valiant,—“ When thy cousins call,
 “ I will abuse and shut my door on all :”
 Thou wilt be cruel !—“ What the law allows,
 “ That be thy portion, my ungrateful spouse !
 “ Nor other shillings shalt thou then receive,
 “ And when I die”——“ What ! may I this believe ?
 “ Are these true tender tears ? and does my *Kitty* grieve ?
 “ Ah ! *crafty vixen*, thine old-man has fears ;
 “ But weep no more ! I'm melted by thy tears ;
 “ Spare but my money ; thou shalt rule ME still,
 “ And see thy cousins—there ! I burn the will.”—

Thus, with example sad, our year began,
A wanton vixen and a weary man ;
“ But had this tale in other guise been told,”
Young let the lover be, the lady old,
And that disparity of years shall prove
No bane of peace, although some bar to love :
'Tis not the worst, our nuptial ties among,
That joins the antient bride and bridegroom young ;—
Young wives, like changing winds, their power display,
By shifting points and varying day by day ;
Now zephyrs mild, now whirlwinds in their force,
They sometimes speed, but often thwart our course :
And much experienc'd should that pilot be,
Who sails with them on life's tempestuous sea.
But like a trade-wind is the antient dame,
Mild to your wish and every day the same ;
Steady as time, no sudden squalls you fear,
But set full-sail and with assurance steer ;

Till every danger in your way be past,
And then she gently, mildly breathes her last ;
Rich you arrive, in port awhile remain,
And for a second venture sail again.

For this, blithe *Donald* southward made his way,
And left the lasses on the banks of *Tay* ;
Him to a neighbouring garden fortune sent,
Whom we beheld, aspiringly content :
Patient and mild he sought the dame to please,
Who rul'd the kitchen and who bore the keys.
Fair *Lucy* first, the laundry's grace and pride,
With smiles and gracious looks, her fortune tried ;
But all in vain she prais'd his " pawky eyne,"
Where never fondness was for *Lucy* seen :
Him the mild *Susan*, boast of dairies, lov'd,
And found him civil, cautious, and unmov'd :
From many a fragrant simple, *Catharine's* skill
Drew oil and essence from the boiling still ;

But not her warmth, nor all her winning ways,
From his cool phlegm could *Donald's* spirit raise :
Of beauty heedless, with the merry mute,
To Mistress *Dobson* he preferr'd his suit ;
There prov'd his service, there address'd his vows,
And saw her mistress,—friend,—protectress,—spouse ;
A butler now, he thanks his powerful bride,
And, like her keys, keeps constant at her side.

Next at our altar stood a luckless pair,
Brought by strong passions and a warrant there ;
By long rent cloak, hung loosely, strove the bride,
From ev'ry eye, what all perceiv'd, to hide.
While the boy-bridegroom, shuffling in his pace,
Now hid awhile and then expos'd his face ;
As shame alternately with anger strove,
The brain confus'd with muddy ale to move :
In haste and stammering he perform'd his part,
And look'd the rage that rankled in his heart ;

(So will each lover inly curse his fate,
Too soon made happy and made wise too late:)
I saw his features take a savage gloom,
And deeply threaten for the days to come.
Low spake the lass, and lisp'd and minc'd the while,
Look'd on the lad and faintly tried to smile ;
With soften'd speech and humbled tone she strove
To stir the embers of departed love :
While he, a tyrant, frowning walk'd before,
Felt the poor purse and sought the public door,
She sadly following in submission went,
And saw the final shilling foully spent ;
Then to her father's hut the pair withdrew,
And bade to love and comfort long adieu !

Ah ! fly temptation, youth, refrain ! refrain !

I preach for ever ; but I preach in vain !

Two summers since, I saw, at Lammas Fair,
The sweetest flower that ever blossom'd there,

When *Phæbe Dawson* gaily cross'd the Green,
In haste to see and happy to be seen :
Her air, her manners, all who saw, admir'd ;
Courteous though coy, and gentle though retir'd ;
The joy of youth and health her eyes display'd,
And ease of heart her every look convey'd ;
A native skill her simple robes express'd,
As with untutor'd elegance she dress'd :
The lads around admir'd so fair a sight,
And *Phæbe* felt, and felt she gave, delight.
Admirers soon of every age she gain'd,
Her beauty won them and her worth retain'd ;
Envy itself could no contempt display,
They wish'd her well, whom yet they wish'd away.
Correct in thought, she judg'd a servant's place
Preserv'd a rustic beauty from disgrace ;
But yet on Sunday-eve in Freedom's hour,
With secret joy she felt that beauty's power,

When some proud bliss upon the heart would steal,
That, poor or rich, a beauty still must feel.—

At length, the youth, ordain'd to move her breast,
Before the swains with bolder spirit press'd ;
With looks less timid made his passion known,
And pleas'd by manners, most unlike her own ;
Loud though in love and confident though young ;
Fierce in his air and voluble of tongue ;
By trade a tailor, though, in scorn of trade,
He serv'd the Squire, and brush'd the coat he made :
Yet now, would *Phæbe* her consent afford,
Her slave alone, again he'd mount the board ;
With her should years of growing love be spent,
And growing wealth :—She sigh'd and look'd consent.

Now, through the lane, up hill, and cross the green,
(Seen by but few, and blushing to be seen—
Dejected, thoughtful, anxious, and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walk'd the silent maid :

Slow through the meadows rov'd they, many a mile
Toy'd by each bank and trifled at each stile ;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly colour'd what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimm'd the false prospect with prophetic tears.—
Thus pass'd th' allotted hours, till lingering late,
The lover loiter'd at the master's gate ;
There he pronounc'd adieu ! and yet would stay,
Till chidden—sooth'd—intreated—forc'd away ;
He would of coldness, though indulg'd, complain,
And oft retire and oft return again ;
When, if his teasing vex'd her gentle mind,
The grief assum'd, compell'd her to be kind !
For he would proof of plighted kindness crave,
That she resented first and then forgave,
And to his grief and penance yielded more,
Than his presumption had requir'd before.—

Ah ! fly temptation, youth ; refrain ! refrain,
Each yielding maid and each presuming swain !

Lo ! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience striving with her pains ;
Pinch'd are her looks, as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing and whose hopes are fled ;
Pale her parch'd lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnotic'd from their channels flow ;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again ;—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes ;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, her anxious soul alarms.
With water burthen'd, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay ;

Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in th' adhesive ground ;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind as strength the frame forsakes :
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path but not her peace she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains ;
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits :
In vain, they come, she feels th' inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief ;
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distrest,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repress,
The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies ;

Unfee'd, the calls of Nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allur'd by praise ;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort and departs in peace.

Friend of distress ! the mourner feels thy aid,
She cannot pay thee, but thou wilt be paid.

But who this child of weakness, want, and care ?
'Tis *Phæbe Dawson*, pride of *Lammas-Fair* ;
Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love-inspiring lies :
Compassion first assail'd her gentle heart,
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart :
“ And then his prayers ! they would a savage move,
“ And win the coldest of the sex to love : ”—
But ah ! too soon his looks success declar'd,
Too late her loss the marriage-rite repair'd ;
The faithless flatterer then his vows forgot,
A captious tyrant or a noisy sot ;

If present, railing, till he saw her pain'd ;
If absent, spending what their labours gain'd ;
Till that fair form in want and sickness pin'd,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind.

Then fly temptation, youth ; resist, refrain !
Nor let me preach for ever and in vain !

Next came a well-drest pair, who left their coach,
And made, in long procession, slow approach :
For this gay bride had many a female-friend,
And youths were there, this favour'd youth t' attend :
Silent, nor wanting due respect, the crowd
Stood humbly round, and gratulation bow'd ;
But not that silent crowd, in wonder fix'd,
Not numerous friends, who praise and envy mix'd,
Nor nymphs attending near to swell the pride
Of one more fair, the ever-smiling bride ;

Nor that gay bride adorn'd with every grace,
Nor love nor joy triumphant in her face,
Could from the youth's, sad signs of sorrow chase:
Why didst thou grieve? wealth, pleasure, freedom thine;
Vex'd it thy soul, that freedom to resign?
Spake Scandal truth? "Thou didst not then intend
" So soon to bring thy wooing to an end?"
Or, was it, as our prating rustics say,
To end as soon, but in a different way?
'Tis told thy *Phillis* is a skilful dame,
Who play'd uninjur'd with the dangerous flame:
That, while, like *Lovelace*, thou thy coat display'd,
And hid the snare for her affection laid,
Thee, with her net, she found the means to catch,
And at the amorous see-saw, won the match: *
Yet others tell, the Captain fix'd thy doubt,
He'd call thee brother, or he'd call thee out:—

* *Clarissa*, vol. vii. *Lovelace's Letter*.

But rest the motive—all retreat too late,
Joy like thy bride's should on thy brow have sate ;
The deed had then appear'd thine own intent,
A glorious day, by gracious fortune sent,
In each revolving year to be in triumph spent.
Then in few weeks that cloudy brow had been
Without a wonder or a whisper seen ;
And none had been so weak as to inquire,
“ Why pouts my Lady ?” or “ why frowns the Squire ?”
How fair these names, how much unlike they look
To all the blurr'd subscriptions in my book :
The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
Tapering yet stout, like pine-trees in his grove ;
While free and fine the bride's appear below,
As light and slender as her jasmines grow.
Mark now in what confusion, stoop or stand,
The crooked scraw's of many a clownish hand,
Now out, now in, they droop, they fall, they rise,
Like raw recruits drawn forth for exercise ;

Ere yet reform'd and modell'd by the drill,
The free-born legs stand striding as they will.

Much have I tried to guide the fist along,
But still the blunderers plac'd their blottings wrong :
Behold these marks uncouth ! how strange that men,
Who guide the plough, should fail to guide the pen :
For half a mile, the furrows even lie ;
For half an inch the letters stand awry ;—
Our peasants, strong and sturdy in the field,
Cannot these arms of idle students wield :
Like them, in feudal days, their valiant lords
Resign'd the pen and grasp'd their conqu'ring swords ;
They, to rob clerks and poor dependent men,
Left the light duties of the peaceful pen ;
Nor to their ladies wrote, but sought to prove,
By deeds of death, their hearts were fill'd with love.

But yet, small arts have charms for female eyes ;
Our rustic nymphs, the beau and scholar prize ;

Unletter'd swains and ploughmen coarse, they slight,
For those who dress and amorous scrolls indite.

For *Lucy Collins* happier days had been,
Had Footman *Daniel* scorn'd his native green ;
Or when he came an idle coxcomb down,
Had he his love reserv'd for lass in town ;
To *Stephen Hill* she then had pledg'd her truth,—
A sturdy, sober, kind, unpolish'd youth ;
But from the day, that fatal day she spied
The pride of *Daniel*, *Daniel* was her pride.
In all concerns was *Stephen* just and true ;
But coarse his doublet was and patch'd in view,
And felt his stockings were and blacker than his shoe ;
While *Daniel's* linen all was fine and fair,—
His master wore it and he deign'd to wear :
(To wear his livery, some respect might prove ;
To wear his linen, must be sign of love :)

Blue was his coat, unsoil'd by spot or stain ;
His hose were silk, his shoes of Spanish-grain ;
A silver knot his breadth of shoulder bore ;
A diamond buckle blaz'd his breast before—
Diamond he swore it was ! and show'd it as he swore ;
Rings on his fingers shone ; his milk-white hand
Could pick-tooth case and box for snuff command :
And thus, with clouded cane, a fop complete,
He stalk'd, the jest and glory of the street.
Join'd with these powers, he could so sweetly sing,
Talk with such toss and saunter with such swing ;
Laugh with such glee and trifle with such art,
That *Lucy's* promise fail'd to shield her heart.

Stephen, meantime, to ease his amorous cares,
Fix'd his full mind upon his farm's affairs ;
Two pigs, a cow, and wethers half a score,
Increas'd his stock, and still he look'd for more.
He, for his acres few, so duly paid,
That yet more acres to his lot were laid ;

Till our chaste nymphs no longer felt disdain,
And prudent matrons prais'd the frugal swain ;
Who thriving well, through many a fruitful year,
Now cloth'd himself anew, and acted overseer.

Just then poor *Lucy*, from her friend in town,
Fled in pure fear, and came a beggar down ;
Trembling at *Stephen's* door, she knock'd for bread,—
Was chidden first, next pitied, and then fed ;
Then sat at *Stephen's* board, then shar'd in *Stephen's* bed :
All hope of marriage lost in her disgrace,
He mourns a flame reviv'd, and she a love of lace.

Now to be wed, a well-match'd couple came ;
Twice had old *Lodge* been tied, and twice the dame ;
Tottering they came and toying, (odious scene !)
And fond and simple, as they'd always been.
Children, from wedlock we by laws restrain ;
Why not prevent them, when they're such again ?

Why not forbid the doating souls, to prove
Th' indecent fondling of preposterous love ?
In spite of prudence, uncontroll'd by shame,
The amorous senior woos the toothless dame,
Relating idly, at the closing eve,
The youthful follies he disdains to leave ;
Till youthful follies wake a transient fire,
When arm in arm they totter and retire.

So a fond pair of solemn birds, all day,
Blink in their seat and doze the hours away ;
Then by the moon awaken'd, forth they move,
And fright the songsters with their cheerless love.

So two sear trees, dry, stunted, and unsound,
Each other catch, when dropping to the ground ;
Entwine their wither'd arms 'gainst wind and weather,
And shake their leafless heads and drop together.

So two cold limbs, touch'd by Galvani's wire,
Move with new life and feel awaken'd fire ;

Quivering awhile, their flaccid forms remain,
Then turn to cold torpidity again.

“ But ever frowns your Hymen ? man and maid,
“ Are all repenting, suffering or betray'd ?”
Forbid it, Love ! we have our couples here,
Who hail the day in each revolving year :
These are with us, as in the world around ;
They are not frequent, but they may be found.
Our farmers too, what though they fail to prove,
In Hymen's bonds, the tenderest slaves of love,
(Nor, like those pairs whom sentiment unites,
Feel they the fervour of the mind's delights ;)
Yet coarsely kind and comfortably gay,
They heap the board and hail the happy day :
And though the bride, now freed from school, admits,
Of pride implanted there, some transient fits ;
Yet soon she casts her girlish flights aside,
And in substantial blessings rests her pride.

No more she moves in measur'd steps ; no more
Runs, with bewilder'd ear, her music o'er ;
No more recites her French, the hinds among,
But chides her maidens in her mother-tongue ;
Her tambour-frame she leaves and diet spare,
Plain work and plenty with her house to share ;
Till, all her varnish lost, in few short years,
In all her worth, the farmer's wife appears.

Yet not the ancient kind ; nor she who gave
Her soul to gain—a mistress and a slave :
Who not to sleep allow'd the needful time ;
To whom repose was loss, and sport a crime ;
Who, in her meanest room (and all were mean),
A noisy drudge, from morn till night was seen ;—
But she, the daughter, boasts a decent room,
Adorn'd with carpet, form'd in Wilton's loom ;
Fair prints along the paper'd wall are spread ;
There, *Werter* sees the sportive children fed,
And *Charlotte*, here, bewails her lover dead.

'Tis here, assembled, while in space apart
Their husbands, drinking, warm the opening heart,
Our neighbouring dames, on festal days, unite
With tongues more fluent and with hearts as light ;
Theirs is that art, which English wives alone
Profess—a boast and privilege their own ;
An art it is, where each at once attends
To all, and claims attention from her friends,
When they engage the tongue, the eye, the ear,
Reply when list'ning, and when speaking hear :
The ready converse knows no dull delays,
“ But double are the pains, and double be the praise*.”

Yet not to those alone who bear command,
Heav'n gives a heart to hail the marriage band ;
Among their servants, we the pairs can show,
Who much to love and more to prudence owe :

* Spenser.

Reuben and *Rachel*, though as fond as doves,
Were yet discreet and cautious in their loves ;
Nor would attend to *Cupid's* wild commands,
Till cool reflection bade them join their hands :
When both were poor, they thought it argued ill
Of hasty love to make them poorer still ;
Year after year, with savings long laid by,
They bought the future dwelling's full supply ;
Her frugal fancy cull'd the smaller ware,
The weightier purchase ask'd her *Reuben's* care ;
Together then their last year's gain they threw,
And lo ! an auction'd bed, with curtains neat and new.

Thus both, as prudence counsell'd, wisely stay'd,
And cheerful then the calls of Love obey'd :
What if, when *Rachel* gave her hand, 'twas one
Embrown'd by Winter's ice and Summer's sun ?
What if, in *Reuben's* hair, the female eye
Usurping grey among the black could spy ?

What if, in both, life's bloomy flush was lost,
And their full autumn felt the mellowing frost?
Yet time, who blow'd the rose of youth away,
Had left the vigorous stem without decay;
Like those tall elms, in Farmer *Frankford's* ground,
They'll grow no more,—but all their growth is sound;
By time confirm'd and rooted in the land,
The storms they've stood, still promise they shall stand.

These are the happier pairs, their life has rest,
Their hopes are strong, their humble portion blest;
While those more rash to hasty marriage led,
Lament th' impatience which now stints their bread:
When such their union, years their cares increase,
Their love grows colder, and their pleasures cease;
In health just fed, in sickness just reliev'd;
By hardships harass'd and by children griev'd;
In petty quarrels and in peevish strife,
The once fond couple waste the spring of life:

But when to age mature those children grown,
Find hopes and homes and hardships of their own,
The harass'd couple feel their lingering woes
Receding slowly, 'till they find repose.
Complaints and murmurs then are laid aside,
(By reason these subdued and those by pride);
And, taught by care, the patient man and wife
Agree to share the bitter-sweet of life;
(Life that has sorrow much and sorrow's cure,
Where they who most enjoy shall much endure :)
Their rest, their labours, duties, sufferings, prayers,
Compose the soul and fit it for its cares;
Their graves before them and their griefs behind,
Have each a med'cine for the rustic mind;
Nor has he care to whom his wealth shall go,
Or who shall labour with his spade and hoe;
But as he lends the strength that yet remains,
And some dead neighbour on his bier sustains,

(One with whom oft he whirl'd the bounding flail,
Toss'd the broad coite or took th' inspiring ale,)
“ For me,” (he meditates,) “ shall soon be done
“ This friendly duty, when my race be run;
“ 'Twas first in trouble as in error past,
“ Dark clouds and stormy cares whole years o'er cast,
“ But calm my setting day and sunshine smiles at last:
“ My vices punish'd and my follies spent,
“ Not loth to die but yet to live content,
“ I rest:”—then casting on the grave his eye,
His Friend compels a tear and his own griefs a sigh.

Last on my list appears a match of love,
And one of virtue;—happy may it prove!—
Sir Edward Archer is an amorous knight,
And maidens chaste and lovely shun his sight;
His Bailiff's Daughter suited much his taste,
For *Fanny Price* was lovely and was chaste;

To her the Knight with gentle looks drew near,
And timid voice assum'd, to banish fear.—

- “ Hope of my life, dear sovereign of my breast,
“ Which, since I knew thee, knows not joy nor rest;
“ Know, thou art all that my delighted eyes,
“ My fondest thoughts, my proudest wishes prize;
“ And is that bosom—(what on earth so fair !)
“ To cradle some coarse peasant's sprawling heir ?
“ To be that pillow which some surly swain
“ May treat with scorn and agonise with pain ?
“ Art thou, sweet maid, a ploughman's wants to share,
“ To dread his insult, to support his care ;
“ To hear his follies, his contempt to prove,
“ And (oh ! the torment !) to endure his love ;
“ Till want and deep regret those charms destroy,
“ That time would spare, if time were pass'd in joy ?
“ With him, in varied pains, from morn till night,
“ Your hours shall pass ; yourself a ruffian's right ;

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- “ Your softest bed shall be the knotted wool ;
“ Your purest drink the waters of the pool ;
“ Your sweetest food will but your life sustain,
“ And your best pleasure be a rest from pain ;
“ While, through each year, as health and strength abate,
“ You’ll weep your woes and wonder at your fate ?
“ And cry, ‘ Behold,’ as life’s last cares come on,
“ ‘ My burthens growing when my strength is gone.’
“ Now turn with me, and all the young desire,
“ That taste can form, that fancy can require ;
“ All that excites enjoyment, or procures
“ Wealth, health, respect, delight, and love, are yours :
“ Sparkling, in cups of gold, your wines shall flow,
“ Grace that fair hand, in that dear bosom glow ;
“ Fruits of each clime, and flowers, through all the year,
“ Shall on your walls and in your walks appear ;
“ Where all beholding, shall your praise repeat,
“ No fruit so tempting and no flower so sweet :

“ The softest carpets in your rooms shall lie,
“ Pictures of happiest loves shall meet your eye,
“ And tallest mirrors, reaching to the floor,
“ Shall show you all the object I adore ;
“ Who, by the hands of wealth and fashion drest,
“ By slaves attended and by friends carest,
“ Shall move, a wonder, through the public ways,
“ And hear the whispers of adoring praise.
“ Your female friends, though gayest of the gay,
“ Shall see you happy and shall, sighing, say,
“ While smother’d envy rises in the breast,—
“ ‘ Oh ! that we liv’d so beauteous and so blest !’
“ Come then, my mistress, and my wife ; for she
“ Who trusts my honour is the wife for me ;
“ Your slave, your husband, and your friend employ,
“ In search of pleasures we may both enjoy.”
To this the Damsel, meekly firm, replied :
‘ My Mother lov’d, was married, toil’d, and died ;

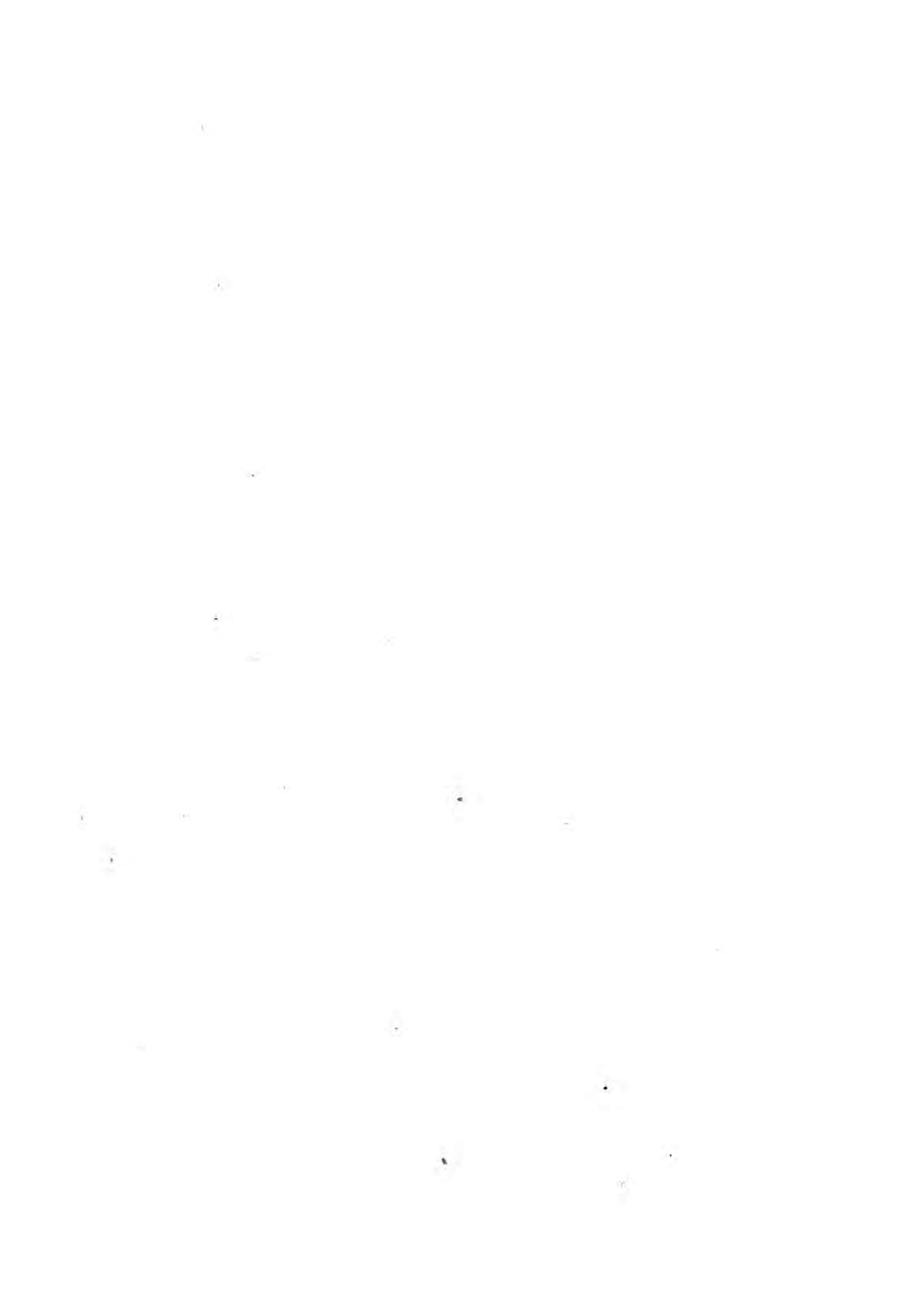
‘ With joys, she’d griefs, had troubles in her course,
‘ But not one grief was pointed by remorse;
‘ My mind is fix’d, to Heaven I resign,
‘ And be her love, her life, her comforts mine.’

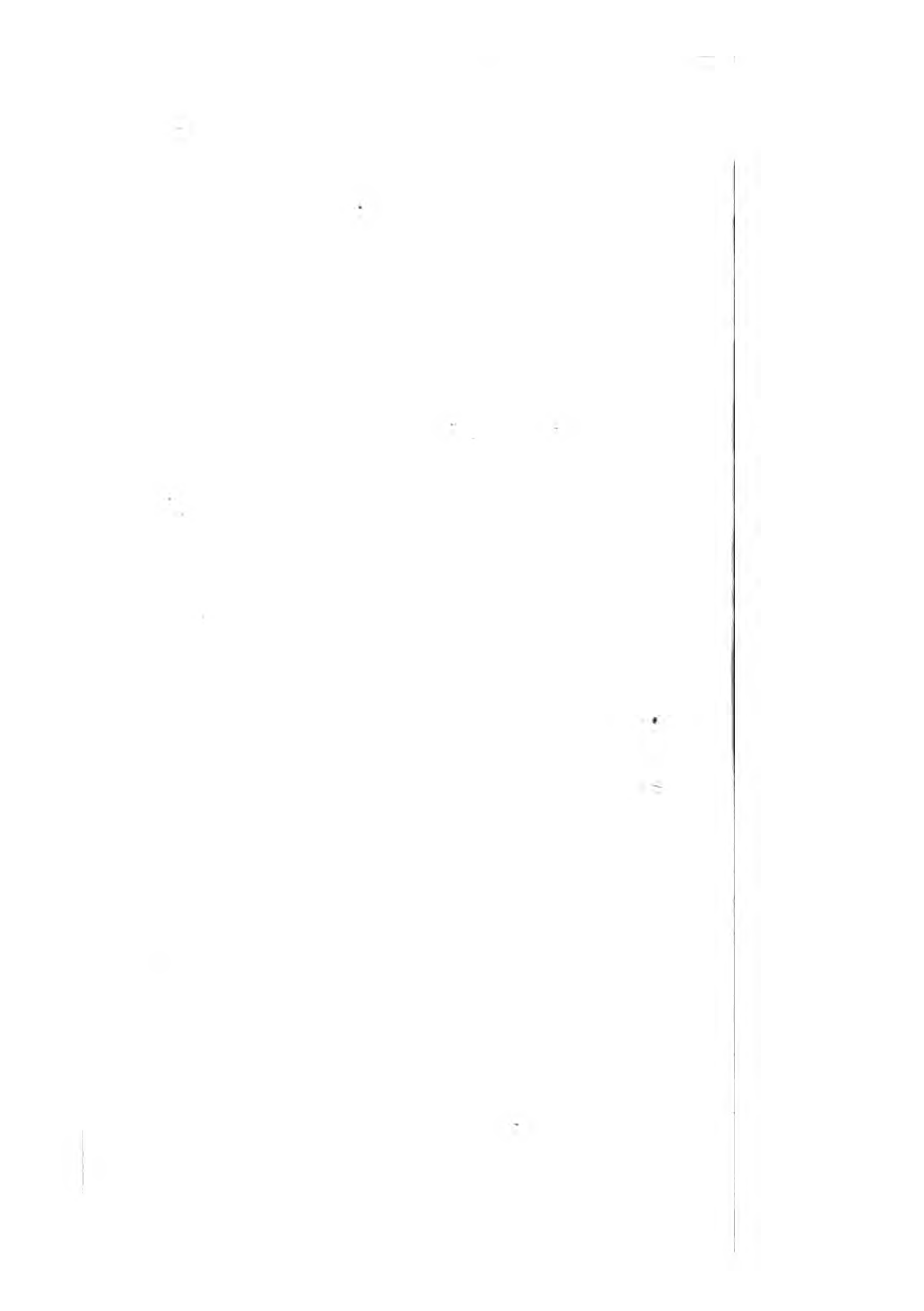
Tyrants have wept ; and those with hearts of steel,
Unus’d the anguish of the heart to heal,
Have yet the transient power of virtue known,
And felt th’ imparted joy promote their own.

Our Knight relenting, now befriends a youth,
Who to the yielding maid had vow’d his truth ;
And finds in that fair deed a sacred joy,
That will not perish and that cannot cloy ;—
A living joy, that shall its spirit keep,
When every beauty fades and all the passions sleep.



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